



THE LARGEST EUROPEAN  
INLAND WATERWAYS NETWORK

# ANNUAL REPORT

2023

Seine-Scheldt  
EEIG





# THE KEY POINTS OF THE PROJECT

**Seine-Scheldt: Europe's 1<sup>st</sup> high-capacity navigable waterway network**

The Seine-Scheldt network is the result of an unprecedented European cooperative project. It will link the Seine basin in France to the Scheldt basin in Belgium, thanks to the construction of a new waterway link, the Seine-Nord Europe Canal, alongside work to modernise and regenerate existing canals. Promoting intermodal transport and innovation, it is due to open in 2030.

The network will thus boost European transport options thanks to 1,100km of waterways, suitable for large vessels. Modern and efficient, Seine-Scheldt tackles some major European, as well as local, challenges: it encourages low-carbon transport to meet future economic and commercial needs and improves territorial continuity for an area with more than 40 million inhabitants.

The future Seine-Scheldt network is the result of a collaborative project led by France and Belgium. It is co-financed by the European Commission, the French Republic, the AFITF (France's transport infrastructure financing agency), water agencies, 4 French regions (Grand Est, Hauts-de-France, Île-de-France, Normandy) and 2 Belgian regions (Flanders and Wallonia), as well as departmental and intermunicipal authorities. Operational coordination is provided by the Seine-Scheldt European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG), which brings together 4 partners:



**1,100 km**  
OF HIGH-CAPACITY navigable waterways

**2**  
COUNTRIES CROSSED  
France and Belgium



— Seine-Scheldt modernisation  
— Seine-Nord Europe Canal

**5**  
MAJOR SEAPORTS,  
60 inland ports and  
90 marinas connected

**175,000** DIRECT/INDIRECT JOBS created  
**360** TOWNS AND MUNICIPALITIES near the network  
**+25%** OF TRAFFIC, from 2035

**1,700 HECTARES** OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS  
**150 MT** OF GOODS estimated to be transported by 2035

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## A MESSAGE FROM... OLIVIER MATRAT

**Manager of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG and Deputy Territorial Director of the Nord Pas-de-Calais department of Voies navigables de France.**



**Ten years after the agreement signed in Tallin, which defined the scope of Europe's first high-capacity inland waterway network, the rollout of Seine-Scheldt has entered an operational phase. Not only is it continuing to make progress, but it is now becoming more visible.** The concrete results of the long-term work carried out by our EEIG could be seen in 2023, which marked a number of major achievements. In particular there was the opening of the Vive-Saint-Bavon lock site in Flanders; the completion of the Haute-Seine upstream; the completion of the Scheldt crossing in Tournai; and the start of construction work on the Seine-Nord Europe Canal.

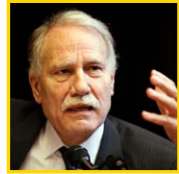
**Being awarded a fourth European grant of €506 million was another highlight of 2023.** This grant will allow us to carry on the ambitious work that has begun in France and Belgium. This means that we have now received almost €1.5 billion from the European Union since 2007 through the Connecting Europe Facility

(CEF). We see this huge, renewed support from the EU as both recognition of what has already been achieved and a vote of confidence for the future. It consolidates our ambition to create a coherent, efficient network in the three areas that are key to sustainable development: the economy, society and the environment.

We are now preparing for the next stages of this exceptional collective adventure. In January 2024, we applied for a grant as part of the latest call for projects under the 2024-2027 CEF. At the same time - as illustrated by the discussions we have just begun on ways to develop the use of alternative fuels on the future network - we are determined to keep looking to the future, well beyond the commissioning of Seine-Scheldt.







# INTERVIEW WITH DOMINIQUE RIQUET, MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**Dominique Riquet is a member of the European Parliament and was also mayor of Valenciennes and regional councillor for Nord-Pas-de-Calais. This local politician, who specialises in infrastructure and transport policy, talks to us about the Seine-Scheldt network, a project with which he is very familiar.**



## WHAT ARE YOUR VIEWS ON THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK?

It is an exemplary project on several levels. It is a key element of European transport policy, as it will link the French waterway network to the Belgian, German and Dutch networks, and beyond that, the Seine to Europe's inland waterways. It is also an essential component of the European Green Deal. It will encourage a modal shift from road to the means of transport that emits the least greenhouse gases, especially in areas where roads are particularly congested. A large pushed convoy means 100 fewer lorries on the road! As well as this, like all transport systems, Seine-Scheldt will encourage economic development and the creation of new jobs in the areas through which it passes. It will have a major impact on the flow of goods, but also has benefits when it comes to tourism. By connecting the Île-de-France, one of the world's major tourist destinations, to the countries of Northern Europe, where there is a long tradition of river cruises, it will boost growth in the sector. And it will itself be a tourist attraction, thanks to remarkable structures such as the future Somme Canal Bridge, the longest in Europe.

## YOU MENTIONED THE EUROPEAN GREEN DEAL: WHEN THE IDEA OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK WAS FIRST MOOTED, IT DID NOT YET EXIST AND THERE WAS LESS ENVIRONMENTAL PRESSURE...

That's true, but the desire to limit greenhouse gas emissions was there from the very beginning of the Seine-Scheldt project. And from the outset, this project has incorporated an environmental dimension that responds to the current rise in ecological concerns. The network is eco-designed, paying particular attention to energy efficiency and good water management. The way it is being rolled out preserves biodiversity and natural resources as much as possible, with a major focus on mitigation measures where necessary.

## IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL CONDITIONS FOR THE SUCCESS OF A PROJECT LIKE THIS, WHICH IS TACKLING MAJOR ISSUES, INVOLVING A LARGE NUMBER OF STAKEHOLDERS FROM SEVERAL COUNTRIES AND REGIONS, DEMANDING SUBSTANTIAL FUNDING AND WHICH IS PARTICULARLY COMPLEX IN TERMS OF IMPLEMENTATION?

Motivation, perseverance and consultation I would say. Although the context might be completely different, the stakeholders in the Seine-Scheldt network definitely have to be just as belligerent as my distant ancestor who designed the Canal du Midi, and who poured his entire fortune into the project. To succeed in such an undertaking, I also believe that you need inspiration and a great deal of enthusiasm.



Correcting the course of the Oise as part of the construction of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal

## ISN'T IT HARD TO MAINTAIN MOMENTUM AND ENTHUSIASM OVER TIME, KNOWING THAT SEINE-SCHELDT IS A LONG-TERM PROJECT, LAUNCHED SEVERAL DECADES AGO NOW AND SET TO CONTINUE FOR SEVERAL MORE YEARS BEFORE THE NETWORK IS FULLY UP AND RUNNING, WHICH IS DUE TO HAPPEN IN 2030?

The project will even continue well beyond 2030, as the network will then have to be managed in such a way that optimises its impact! A good way to maintain momentum over the years is to think about how extraordinarily innovative this project is. With Seine-Scheldt, we are really giving the waterway system a whole new dimension, in terms of the size of the structures, the volumes transported and the technology used, not to mention creativity... For a long time, inland waterways seemed to be frozen in time, when all other modes of transport were evolving. Seine-Scheldt is

giving us the chance to make up for lost time, to say goodbye once and for all to the old-fashioned image of the Freycinet gauge and barges being drawn by horses walking along the towpaths. And on top of all that, it's an amazing collective adventure! The construction of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal, a vital link in the chain of the Seine-Scheldt network, will mark our arrival in the 21<sup>st</sup> century all on its own, and for the Hauts-de-France area, which is leading the way in this project, this will be an epic instalment worthy of any of the great industrial events that have interspersed the history of our region.







# THE NEW SERVICE OFFERING IS TAKING SHAPE

In 2023, the implementation of Seine-Scheldt was marked by the completion of a number of major projects in both France and Belgium. Behind these achievements lies the new range of services that the future network will bring to waterway users and European citizens. A range of services that tackle the key challenges presented by sustainable regional development, whether in terms of the performance and competitiveness of river transport, innovation, the urban integration of waterways or protecting the environment. Illustrations.

Recalibration of the Condé-Pommeroeul Canal

©VNF-Ph. Houze

# WITH SEINE-SCHELDT, INLAND WATERWAYS ARE GAINING MOMENTUM

On 20 June 2023, the members of the Seine-Scheldt Intergovernmental Commission and Péter Balázs, European coordinator for the North Sea-Mediterranean corridor, attended the opening of the **new Flemish lock complex at Vive-Saint-Bavon**. Their presence demonstrates the extent to which this project, led by De Vlaamse Waterweg nv (DVW), meets the primary ambition of the network's architects: to optimise transport and logistics on inland waterways.

The first phase of the project involved replacing an existing lock with a new lock 280 metres long and 16 metres wide, very close to the old one. The challenge was to allow large vessels to travel here, capable of handling up to 4,500 tonnes of goods and three layers of containers, equivalent to the transport capacity of 220 lorries.

## A NEW LOCK AND A NEW QUAY

Unlike its predecessor, the new lock (which has been up and running since August 2020) is equipped with intermediate gates that divide the lock chamber in two.

This means it can operate like a smaller lock, allowing smaller barges to pass through more quickly, saving time and water during manoeuvres. On the site of the old lock, which has now been demolished, almost 400 metres of quay walls and a mortise quay have been built for transshipment operations and for the benefit of local industry. This supports the modal shift by considerably increasing transshipment capacity. As this dock is located in one of the few areas along the Lys where industrial companies can still start operating, it also creates opportunities for economic development.



New lock complex at Vive-Saint-Bavon

©Tom Bouysse



## A RENOVATED DAM AND A NEW SERVICE BUILDING

The ageing Vive-Saint-Bavon dam has been renovated to improve water level control. The electromechanical equipment has been replaced and the superstructure modernised. Architecturally, it forms a homogeneous whole with the new service building, which has been erected a hundred metres away. This multi-purpose building is used to manage lock operations as well as providing premises for crews including those responsible for maintaining and managing the Lys. There is also a reception room there dedicated to Seine-Scheldt, a first for the future network! Next to the dam, a fish ladder has been built so that aquatic species can migrate safely to France.

### A memorable number

Once the Seine-Scheldt network is fully operational, river freight traffic at Vive-Saint-Bavon is set to increase by a factor of 2.

## MORE EFFICIENT RIVER TRANSPORT

The Vive-Saint-Bavon site is located on a busy shipping route that currently handles almost 10 million tonnes of freight, and will play a major role in inland navigation in Flanders and on the Seine-Scheldt network. As well as being exemplary from an ecological point of view, it also boosts the performance of river transport for the benefit of the regional and European economy. When the Seine-Nord Europe Canal opens to navigation, annual freight traffic on the route is expected to double to 20 million tonnes.

# WITH SEINE-SCHELDT, INLAND WATERWAYS ARE BECOMING MORE COMPETITIVE

In 2023, the **renovation of the last of the four secondary locks on the Haute-Seine upstream**, at Champagne-sur-Seine, marked the end of an ambitious regeneration programme launched as part of the development of Seine-Scheldt. Rolled out by VNF, this programme was designed to increase the resilience and reliability of river transport in order to make it more competitive and thus encourage the modal shift towards waterways.

The four locks now referred to as "secondary" (Coudray-Montceaux, Vives-Eaux, La Cave and Champagne-sur-Seine) were in fact the first built on the Seine upstream of Paris in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. This work was carried out using techniques that have since become obsolete: for example, the side walls of the lock were sloped, which prevented the boats from mooring off the bank. Decades later, new, larger locks have been built at all four sites. The secondary locks, which are not used as much, had eroded. By renovating them, VNF had one objective: to have two working locks per site along the entire Seine as far as Champagne-sur-Seine.

### A memorable number

**6.75 million tonnes of goods passed through the four locks on the Haute-Seine upstream in 2022 (equivalent to 270,000 lorries avoided on the roads and a saving of 80,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>)**

## A STRATEGIC ROUTE

Because the high-capacity section of the upper Seine, which serves the Paris region and beyond, via the Oise and Marne rivers, the seaports of Rouen, Le Havre and Dunkirk, is a strategic part of the waterway network. It has also been growing rapidly for several years: in 2022, between 8,000 and 10,000 boats passed through each site, carrying a total of 6.75 million tonnes of goods, as well as a large number of pleasure boats. Having secondary locks on the Seine upstream of Paris consolidates the resilience and quality of the services offered. A viable alternative to the main locks on busy days, these locks make it possible to reduce waiting times and carry out work and maintenance without interrupting navigation. They are also a way of saving water resources.

## A COMPLETE TRANSFORMATION

The regeneration programme was implemented along the Seine from downstream to upstream between 2020 and 2023 at a total cost of €27.3m, including tax. This included civil engineering, gates, mooring equipment, automated systems and remote surveillance. Each of the locks has been completely refurbished, made safe and modernised thanks to major investment (between six and seven million euros per lock). VNF took the opportunity to prepare other future developments designed to further enhance the range of services offered to users. The groundwork has been done to introduce remote controls for all locks on high-capacity waterways, scheduled for 2027-2028.

## GREATER FLUIDITY AND CONSISTENCY

The work carried out is already making traffic more reliable and fluid, encouraging the modal shift to river transport. In the longer term, in conjunction with another project led by VNF (increasing the capacity of the Seine between Bray and Nogent, which will ensure continuity along the navigation route for 2,500-tonne vessels), the refurbishment of these four secondary locks should contribute to the overall economic performance of the Seine-Scheldt, by offering a coherent vision of the future network as far as the Hauts-de-France seafont.



New service building at the Vive-Saint-Bavon lock



Before/after renovation of the La Cave lock



# WITH SEINE-SCHELDT, INLAND WATERWAYS ARE INTRODUCING INNOVATION

The construction of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal, the missing link in the chain of the Seine-Scheldt network, began at the end of 2022 **by correcting the course of the river Oise at Montmacq**, between Noyon and Compiègne. This highly innovative scheme, led by the Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe (SCSNE), shows how the construction of a waterway infrastructure has made its grand entrance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

To make room for the future Seine-Nord Europe Canal, the course of the Oise had to be corrected, with a diversion of almost four kilometres.

## A TECHNICAL FEAT

This technical feat was achieved in several stages. First of all, a new bed was dug to the east of the Oise, and connected to the natural bed so that the river could gradually move in that direction. Some parts were then backfilled after a fish rescue operation to move the fish who were originally in the Oise. Work will continue until 2025. The final stage involves the creation of two hydraulic structures, including a spillway between the new branch of the Oise and the future Canal. The project also includes the construction of three bridges, one of which will span 105 metres.

## A RESPONSIBLE CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Correcting the course of the Oise represents SCSNE's first opportunity to implement its innovation policy, given the green light in 2023. First and foremost, this policy is about making sure that the work is carried out in a way that is socially responsible. To this end, a comprehensive review was carried out, looking at how to limit the consumption of energy and resources. This approach has resulted in new models that are good for the climate and the environment. The partial back-filling of the former bed of the Oise, for example, was carried out using materials from the site, as part of a strategy embracing short channels and a circular economy.



Construction of structures as part of correcting the course of the Oise

© JCHecquet



Satellite images of the site generated by artificial intelligence

Pleiades © CNES 2023, Distribution Airbus DS, Processed by Disaitek

Type de végétation : Haies  
Surface (m2) : 33 386

## A CONNECTED CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, WHERE COMMUNICATION IS KEY

SCSNE also wanted the site to be connected, with a focus on communication. A number of cutting-edge technological tools were tested during the earthworks, including autonomous machines using 3D machine control and GPS positioning systems. An experiment has also been launched that uses satellite images processed by artificial intelligence. There are a wide range of applications, from carrying out site surveys to monitoring work and its impact.

## A SUSTAINABLE INFRASTRUCTURE

Lastly, the SCSNE completed the work to correct the course of the Oise without losing sight of another ambition of its innovation policy: to make the Seine-Nord Europe Canal a sustainable, resilient infrastructure, that contributes to the ecological transition, in response to the huge challenges of these early days of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is why, in 2023, it launched a study into the use of artificial intelligence to manage how the future Canal operates. One of the many expected benefits of this includes optimised water management.



Correcting the course of the Oise

© JCHecquet

## A memorable number

To make way for the future Seine-Nord Europe Canal, almost 4 kilometres of the Oise have been diverted.



# WITH SEINE-SCHELDT, INLAND WATERWAYS ARE BECOMING AN INTEGRAL PART OF TOWNS AND CITIES

In the middle of April 2023, the launch of the new Scheldt crossing in Tournai, in Wallonia, was followed by a festive weekend during which local residents were invited to get back in touch with their river. In fact, the developments carried out under the direction of the Service public de Wallonie (SPW) are a fine illustration of the attention paid by the architects of the Seine-Scheldt network to the urban integration of the waterway.

It took six years of work to complete the makeover of the Scheldt crossing in Tournai. The operation was first and foremost a response to the challenge of travelling by waterway. The aim was to remove two bottlenecks. One by widening the navigable channel in the urban area by eight metres so that 2,000-tonne boats could pass through in complete safety: this meant replacing the old Pont à Ponts with a bridge with a thinner deck. The other by adapting the arches of the Pont des Trous, one of the most prestigious remaining examples of medieval military architecture in Belgium.

## REDEVELOPED QUAYS AND A WATERWAY STOP-OFF POINT

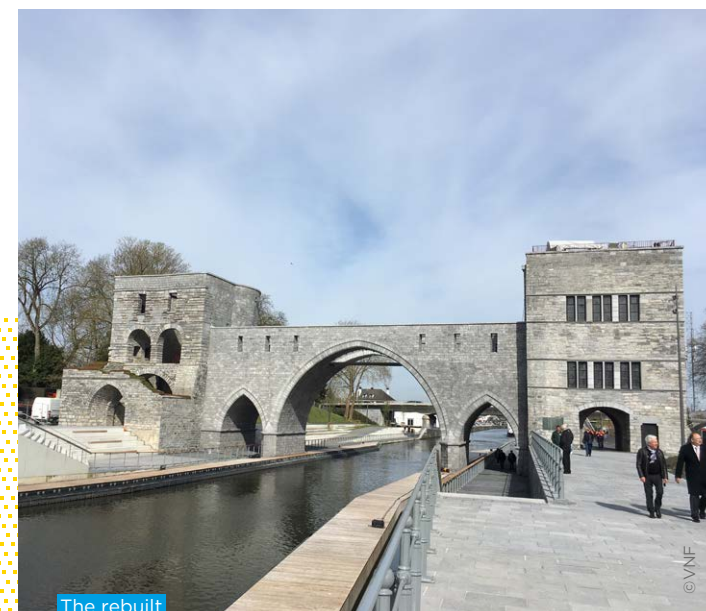
In order to make sure that the project also has benefits for local residents and local quality of life, it was also decided to redevelop 2.4 kilometres of ageing quays in the centre of Tournai. The aim was to make the area more attractive and encourage local residents to embrace soft mobility. In addition, a waterway stop-off point has been set up for boaters travelling along the river, where they can leave their boats for 48 hours and explore the town.

## PROMOTING HERITAGE

The SPW was faced with a real challenge when it came to preserving heritage and making sure that the developments did not detract from the town's historic character. It turned the locals' decision to rebuild the Pont des Trous into reality, while also preserving the key features that give it its identity. For example, the central arches of the bridge have been rebuilt using as many of the original stones as possible, salvaged during the demolition process.

## KEEPING LOCALS IN THE LOOP

As the work took place in the town centre, every effort was made to minimise the impact. As Tournai's busiest road for motorists, the Pont à Ponts was closed to traffic for only five weeks while it was replaced. Quite a feat! There was also a focus on communication and education, which are essential when it comes to informing the public about the different phases of the project, encouraging smooth progress and helping locals take ownership of the project.



The rebuilt Pont des Trous

### A memorable number

55 million euros were invested to complete the makeover of the Scheldt crossing in Tournai, giving the modal shift a real boost.

### A REVITALISED CITY

The metamorphosis of the Tournai crossing has already created a positive buzz for the town. The economic added value of widening the navigable channel is significant, boosting river traffic by 6% per year since 2020, as well as increasing investment and port activities. What's more, since work to improve the banks has been completed, a large number of property developments have sprung up along the river. By the end of 2023, 390 new homes had been built, were under construction or planning applications had been submitted.



Wetlands introduced as environmental compensation measure for the Condé-Pommeroeul Canal

# WITH SEINE-SCHELDT, WATERWAYS ARE PRESERVING OUR NATURAL HERITAGE

Recalibrating the **Condé-Pommeroeul canal** will give waterway users a direct link between the French and Belgian high-capacity networks. This symbolic cross-border project, led by the SPW and VNF, is also notable due to the focus on protecting biodiversity and the environment.

The Condé-Pommeroeul canal was closed in 1992 due to the large amount of silt that had built up. It is now undergoing a major recalibration operation representing an investment of 116 million euros. A large proportion of this budget - more than 15% - has been devoted to environmental initiatives designed to protect, stimulate and enhance the rich natural heritage of the area around the canal.

### A NEW WETLAND IS CREATED AND THE BANKS OF THE WATERWAY ARE IMPROVED

The first of these initiatives involved developing the Grands Marais de la Fosse Saint Pierre. This former mining pit was first used to hold the material dug up the Condé-Pommeroeul Canal. In 2017 work began to transform it into a wetland covering some 30 hectares, thanks to an ambitious ecological initiative. Restored to its natural state, the site flourished and quickly became home to a remarkable level of biodiversity, including numerous migratory and breeding birds. Now managed

and maintained by the Département du Nord, it also provides the region with some fundamental ecological services, such as water purification and flood control. VNF is also planning to create paths for pedestrians and cyclists along the 6-kilometre French section of the Condé-Pommeroeul Canal. This will establish better links between the waterway and the natural areas surrounding it, and the communities they pass through, as well as making them more accessible to the public.



## ADAPTING WORK TO THE PRESENCE OF WILDLIFE

Another environmental aspect of the project follows the discovery in 2021 of clues suggesting that Eurasian beavers, a protected species, were present near the site. Work was therefore suspended for several months while measures were taken to make sure it would not interfere with the presence of these animals. Taking advice from ecologists and environmental associations, VNF changed the order in which the work would be carried out in order to respect the beaver's ecological cycles. The public body has also invested in building replacement lodges and feeding areas. Lastly, improvements have been planned to give the animals easier access to the banks of the canal, the alluvial margins and nearby natural areas, such as the Chabaud-Latour pond. These initiatives have been a huge success, as a small population of beavers has now taken up residence in the area.



Protected sand martin

### Highly protected species

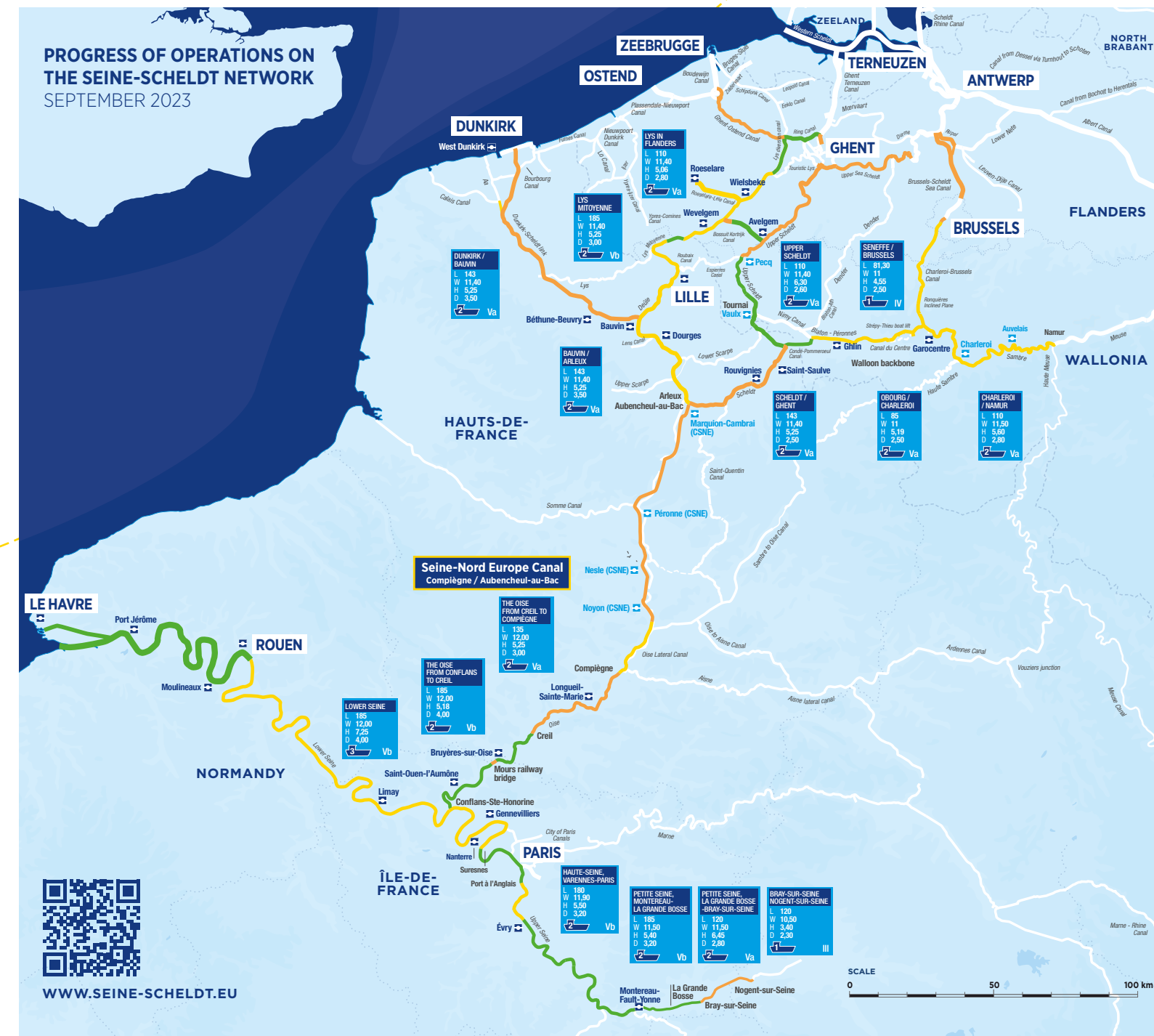
The Eurasian beaver is one of the many protected species found along the Seine-Scheldt route. Species that members of the EEIG and their partners are particularly keen to protect. The approach is the same in France and Belgium: prior to each project, environmental studies are carried out to identify protected species among the local fauna and flora, to determine any impact that the work will have on them and to put forward solutions to minimise or even avoid this impact.

Recent examples include:

- In Wallonia, the project to rectify a bend in the Sambre at Mornimont incorporated a range of solutions to preserve seven protected species of bat, as well as birds, butterflies and remarkable trees. In particular, the different stages of the project were reorganised to preserve the nesting season for certain species.

- In Flanders, as part of the work carried out on the river Lys, vegetation was planted on banks to provide a home for around ten protected species of bat, including the rare soprano pipistrelle, the pond bat and the lesser noctule. There was a particular emphasis on diversifying the varieties of plants and trees.
- In Yvelines, the project to renovate the Bougival locks had to be modified because almost 50 sand martins had made their nests in the side wall of the large lock. Only the least noisy work was carried out before their annual migration. And everything was done to preserve their peace and quiet, including adapting techniques used for the work involved.
- In the Oise department, 12 roots of a perennial plant, the marsh speedwell, which were found on the route of the future Seine-Nord Europe Canal, were transplanted with their substrate to a wetland area prepared to accommodate them. Protected from coypu and muskrats, they have flourished to such an extent that, a year later, there are around a hundred of them!

# MAP SHOWING THE PROGRESS OF THE NETWORK



Synthetic map compiled from maps supplied by Voies Navigables de France and SNCF and with the help of the Vlaamse Waterweg nv, SCSCNE and Service public de Wallonie. (Non-contractual document - produced by Transmanche Consultants)





# 2 THE ROLLOUT OF THE NETWORK CONTINUES

The last few months have reiterated this: Seine-Scheldt is gradually coming to fruition in all the areas it passes through, as the project is rolled out and the reciprocal commitments and objectives set out in the 2019 European Implementing Decision continue to materialise. An update on the major milestones achieved in 2023 and the new developments planned for 2024.

Dredging work on the Deûle

## UPDATE ON THE ROLLOUT OF SEINE-SCHELDT IN WALLONIA...



... with **Nicolas Dubois**, programme manager at the Service public de Wallonie (SPW)

**As well as the opening of the new Scheldt crossing at Tournai (see page 13), what were the main milestones in 2023 for the development of the Seine-Scheldt network in Wallonia?**

2023 saw the refurbishment of the two lock sites at Hensies and Pommeroeul in Wallonia. In the long term, this will save users travelling from the Walloon backbone a considerable amount of time (up to 12 hours). The year was also marked by the reopening of the Auvelais lock on the Sambre, following work to remove a bottleneck. Thanks to this work, we can now carry 10% more freight by boat. In addition, we have begun replacing the tracks, suspension and boat guides on the Ronquières Inclined Plane on the Brussels-Charleroi canal. We have also updated the strategic environmental study we carried out in 2010 and launched a navigability study focusing on the new waterway routes available to users.

**What new milestones will be achieved in 2024?**

This will be a year of major new projects, with a focus on the Walloon backbone. In particular, we will be launching the first of four works contracts for the development of the Nimy-Blaton canal, designed to accommodate class Va boats. We are also about to start work on doubling the capacity of the Obourg lock, again to accommodate class Va boats. The tenders are currently being analysed. The aim is to continue upgrading the waterway from Condé-sur-l'Escaut to class Va as far as Namur.



Modernising Auvelais lock





New road bridge between Bissegem and Marke

©DVW

## UPDATE ON THE ROLLOUT OF SEINE-SCHELDT IN FLANDERS...



... with **Frank Serpentier**, Seine-Scheldt investment project manager at De Vlaamse Waterweg nv (DVW)

**Apart from the official opening of the integrated lock site at Vive-Saint-Bavon (see page 9), what were the main milestones in 2023 in terms of establishing the Seine-Scheldt in Flanders?**

We completed the construction of two new bridges over the Lys, which have been opened to the public. One in April: the Pont du Lin, a bicycle bridge between Waregem and Wielsbeke. The other in June, a road bridge built between Bissegem and Marke. We have also continued to build new banks on section 140 of the Lys, between Deinze and Vive-Saint-Bavon. The year was also marked by the granting of several permits, including for the construction of the Steenbrugge bicycle bridge between Oostkamp and Bruges on the Ghent-Bruges canal. We should also mention an initiative that is not part of the Seine-Scheldt project, but which was important for inland waterway navigation in Flanders in 2023: the structural maintenance operation carried out at the Ooigem lock, the only entrance to the Roulers-Lys canal, with a five-week shutdown in August and September.



The Pont du Lin

©DVW

**What new milestones will be achieved in 2024?**

By June 2024, we should have completed the Pont du Barakken, a new bicycle bridge in Menin. The year will also see the start of work on several new bicycle bridges: the Pont Steenbrugge, which I have already mentioned, the Pont Lys at Ingelmunster on the Roulers-Lys canal and the Pont Bospoort at Halle on the Brussels-Charleroi canal. On the Lys Mitoyenne, this year will see the completion of work on the Wervicq crossing and a fish ladder at Menin. We will also be continuing the recalibration of section 140 of the Lys between Deinze and Vive-Saint-Bavon, a project that includes the construction of a bicycle bridge at Zulte.

## UPDATE ON THE ROLLOUT OF THE SEINE-NORD EUROPE CANAL...



... with **Jérôme Dezobry**, Chairman of the Executive Board of the Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe (SCSNE)

**In addition to the start of work on correcting the course of the Oise in section 1 (see page 12), what were the main milestones in 2023 as far as the construction of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal was concerned?**

Also in section 1, which covers 18 kilometres of canal in the Oise between Compiègne and Passel, the contract for the construction of the Montmacq-Cambronne-Lès-Ribécourt lock was awarded and environmental mitigation work continued. As far as sections 2, 3 and 4 between Passel and Aubencheul-au-Bac are concerned, we have carried out preparatory work, continued archaeological surveys, made progress on land development and built a first works quay on the Canal du Nord. It is also worth mentioning that France's National Council for the Protection of Nature (CNPN) published its (qualified) approval in June, as part of the environmental permit procedure. Another highlight was the "HQE Infrastructures Durables"® certification awarded to us in November by Certivea following an audit of the design phase for sections 2 to 4. In addition, the consultation process will continue in a variety of forms, still with one meeting a day - presence at markets, Canal walks, public meetings, meetings with farmers - and a policy will be established to promote tourism around the future Seine Nord-Europe Canal.



Information stand in the Somme area

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**What new milestones will be achieved in 2024?**

Construction work will be ramping up in section 1, with the launch of the Montmacq lock project in particular. For sections 2, 3 and 4, 2024 will see the end of the environmental permit procedure and the start of building work. We will also be gradually implementing the collaboration charter signed at the end of 2023 with Entreprises Fluviales de France, which aims to develop the use of waterway transport in the work involved in building the Canal.



Correcting the course of the Oise and construction of the first bridges

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# UPDATE ON THE ROLLOUT OF SEINE-SCHELDT IN THE HAUTS-DE-FRANCE AND THE SEINE BASIN...



... with **Olivier Matrat**, Deputy Territorial Director of the Nord-Pas-de-Calais department of Voies navigables de France (VNF) and manager of Seine-Scheldt EEIG

## What were the main milestones in 2023 in terms of establishing the Seine-Scheldt in the Hauts-de-France region?

We have almost completed the recalibration of the Deûle, a project which began in 2015, with the end of the third dredging campaign. With the work undertaken on the Lys, good progress is being made on most of the waterways now. From now on, we will be concentrating on more specific projects: extending and doubling the capacity of locks, turning basins, mooring areas etc. In 2023, we started work on extending the Quesnoy-sur-Deûle lock, to increase its length from 110 to 145 metres, like all the other locks in the Nord-Pas de Calais basin. Alongside this, we carried out preliminary studies on doubling the capacity of the Fontinettes lock at Arques. Finally, the year was marked by the commissioning of the new sediment transit and drying platform at Wambrechies, near Lille. This is a major step forward for the local circular economy, as this will prepare the sediment extracted from the canals for use in making concrete, for example. We are planning for the future!



New sediment transit and drying platform in Wambrechies



Work on the La Cave dam

## What new milestones will be achieved in 2024?

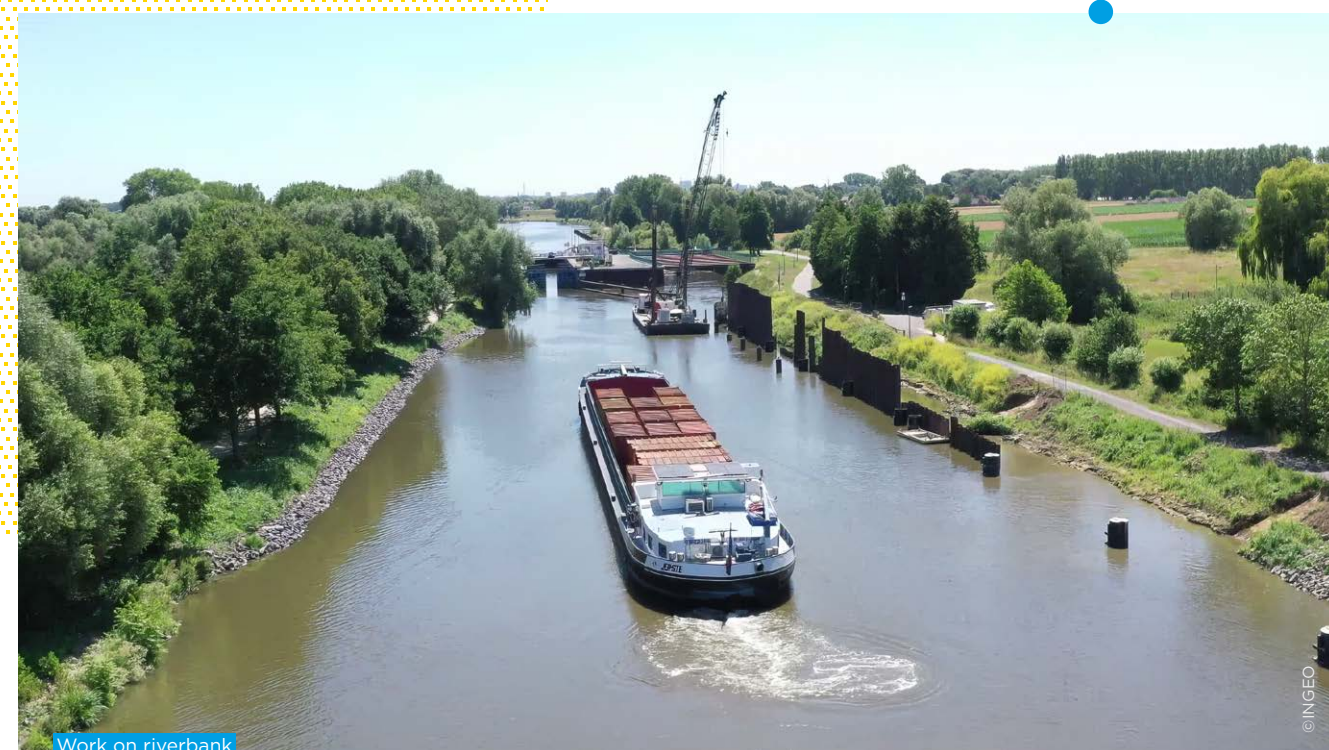
This year will see the second dredging campaign on the French section of the Lys Mitoyenne, between Deûlémont and Menin, and the beginning of the second phase of the project to lengthen the lock at Quesnoy-sur-Deûle. In addition to this, we will be gradually introducing a remote control system for the large locks by 2026, as well as carrying out studies into the construction of the turning basins, mooring areas and lock basins identified as priorities in the master plans drawn up in consultation with local stakeholders.

## What new milestones will be achieved in 2024?

In the Oise region, we hope to obtain an environmental permit for Magéo by the end of the year. In Seine-Aval, we will be completing the second part of the project to reinforce the Croissy dyke. Work will also begin on the Port-Mort dam and the project management studies for the Denouval dam. This year will also see the completion of work at Méricourt, which means that the whole lock site can be up and running again. In Seine-Amont, we will also be reopening the main lock at Evry, which has been renovated and modernised.

## And in the Seine Basin, apart from the completion of the regeneration programme for the four secondary locks on the Seine-Amont (see page 10), what were the main milestones set in 2023 in terms of establishing Seine-Scheldt?

In Seine-Amont, the project to modernise the Varennes dam was completed and the works contract for the Beaulieu dam was awarded. In Seine-Aval, at Port-Mort/Notre-Dame de la Garenne, work to renovate the cofferdam system has been completed, as has work to renovate lock no. 3. During the course of the year, we also completed the renovation of lock no. 2 at Méricourt and the civil engineering work on the Andrézy dam, the modernisation of the large lock and work to make the small lock at Bougival secure, as well as the first part of the work to reinforce the Croissy-sur-Seine dyke. As well as this, a new contract for signage and user services has been awarded. Finally, in the Oise region, the Magéo project to upgrade the river Oise between Compiègne and Creil so that it meets European classification standards has reached an important milestone, with the submission of the application for an environmental permit.



Work on riverbank defences on the Deûle



Renovated Lock No. 2 at Méricourt



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