



THE LARGEST EUROPEAN  
INLAND WATERWAYS NETWORK

# ANNUAL REPORT

2024

Seine-Scheldt  
EEIG





# THE PROJECT IN A NUTSHELL

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 waterways.

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

1,100 km  
OF HIGH-CAPACITY  
navigable waterways

2  
COUNTRIES CROSSED  
France and Belgium

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:



Co-funded by  
the European Union



Modernisation of Seine-Scheldt  
Seine-Nord Europe Canal

5  
MAJOR SEAPORTS,  
60 inland ports and  
90 marinas connected

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

1,700 hectares / 150 MT  
OF ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPROVEMENTS  
OF GOODS  
estimated to be transported by 2035



## A MESSAGE FROM... GILLES RYCKEBUSCH

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

### EDITORIAL BY GILLES RYCKEBUSCH

p. 5

### INTERVIEW WITH PAWEŁ WOJCIECHOWSKI

p. 6

### CHAPTER 1: A COLLECTIVE PUSH TO MAKE SEINE-SCHELDT A SUCCESS

A consolidated team effort

p. 8

An overview of operations and services

p. 9

Showcasing the work that has been done

p. 12

Information and consultation initiatives are gathering pace

p. 13

p. 14

### CHAPTER 2: NEW MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN ORDER TO TURN SEINE-SCHELDT INTO A REALITY

The rollout of Seine-Scheldt in Flanders...

p. 16

The rollout of Seine-Scheldt in Wallonia...

p. 17

The completion of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal...

p. 18

The rollout of Seine-Scheldt in

the Hauts-de-France and the Seine Basin...

p. 19

p. 20

### WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2025

p. 22

### MAP SHOWING THE PROGRESS OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK

p. 23



**2024 was a landmark year for our network.** After the new TEN-T regulation came into force, the North Sea-Mediterranean corridor (NSMED), merged with the Rhine-Alps corridor to form the North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean corridor (NSRM). This development adds a new dimension to Seine-Scheldt, strengthening its position as an essential link in the trans-European transport network.

**I would like to thank Peter Balàzs, coordinator of the NSMED corridor, for his ongoing support.** I would also like to pay tribute to the commitment of Paweł Wojciechowski, coordinator of the NSRM corridor: from the moment he took up his post, he honoured us with his presence on various occasions and has agreed to be the key contributor to this annual report.

**The European Commission has allocated Seine-Scheldt a fifth grant worth €300 million for 2024-2027.** As part of the Connecting Europe Facility, this brings the total amount of financial aid provided by the European Union to almost €1.8 billion since the project was launched. We welcome this very substantial investment and this renewed commitment, although we know that if we are to live up to our ambitions, meet our needs and ensure we respect our deadlines, it will have to be extended and increased in the coming years.

**We are aware of the specific context and the severe constraints,** particularly financial ones, that the EU and its member countries are currently experiencing. However, we also know how important Seine-Scheldt is for our collective future and how it offers solutions to the challenges of this 21<sup>st</sup> century. That is why we are more determined than ever to keep moving forward. Thanks to the additional milestones we achieved in 2024, the network is continuing to take shape in France and Belgium and is starting to become a reality. It is already rallying a community of stakeholders around it, creating real momentum for progress at a local, national and international level.

**However, we are still only halfway there.** We must continue to develop the waterway infrastructure and services in the regions involved. Alongside this, we need to work with all our stakeholders to make sure that the network is a success: this means anticipating and preparing for its arrival to maximise its usefulness to the economy and society. We will do our utmost, in the future as in the past, with the same levels of determination and enthusiasm.







# INTERVIEW WITH PAWEŁ WOJCIECHOWSKI

Coordinator of the North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean  
Trans-European transport corridor

Following on from the adoption of the new regulation for the Trans-European transport network (TEN-T), in September 2024 the European Commission appointed new European coordinators for the nine TEN-T corridors. They include: Paweł Wojciechowski, in charge of the North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean corridor, which now encompasses the Seine-Scheldt network.



## Why merge the Rhine-Alps and North Sea-Mediterranean corridors to create the North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean corridor?

The creation of the new North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean corridor reflects the EU's strategic vision for a more efficient, connected and sustainable transport network across Europe. The decision to merge the two corridors of the North Sea-Mediterranean and Rhine-Alps network into a single European transport corridor under the revised TEN-T regulation responds to a number of practical and logistical challenges, as well as improving the overall cohesion and functionality of Europe's transport infrastructure. One of the main objectives of European transport corridors is to ensure that infrastructure planning matches actual operational needs, at the same time as promoting a system that enables seamless transport between different modes – such as rail, road and inland waterways – on key routes essential to European trade and connectivity. The two previous corridors, the North Sea-Mediterranean and the Rhine-Alps, had many things in common. They have both

played a crucial role in the development of North-South transport routes linking the North Sea perimeter to southern Europe in the western Mediterranean. They also had critical urban nodes, ports and similar overlapping transport flows. Incorporating these corridors into the new TEN-T framework was a logical, proactive next step. It supports the EU's broader objectives of creating a seamless, interoperable transport network that can meet current and future transport needs in a way that is both economically and environmentally sustainable. The single corridor structure not only consolidates coordination, but it also helps Member States to streamline the planning and implementation processes for infrastructure improvements, while also contributing to the green and digital transitions in Europe's transport sector.

## What role does this new corridor play in the trans-European transport network, and what difference will its creation make?

While the TEN-T comprises nine corridors of equal importance designed to operate as an integrated network, the North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean corridor occupies an important position within the trans-European transport network due to its geographical location, as it links some of the economically strongest regions and most densely populated urban centres in Europe. The corridor spans eight European countries: Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Luxembourg, France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. It links regions that contribute to a large part of the EU economy. Major economic areas such as the Île-de-France region, the Rhine-Ruhr region, the Randstad and the industrial regions of northern Italy are all part of this corridor. The Île-de-France region alone contributed more than €760 billion to the EU economy in 2021,



Hensies lock on the Condé-Pommeroeul canal

followed by the northern Italian region of Lombardy with a contribution of €403 billion<sup>1</sup>. This new corridor boosts the resilience of the European supply chain by improving connectivity between the main centres of production and consumption. The North Sea and Mediterranean ports it encompasses are vital for trade, and this corridor ensures their efficient, sustainable connections with inland Europe, which is crucial for managing disruptions to global supply chains.

“THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK IS A HIGHLY STRATEGIC ELEMENT OF THE TEN-T, PARTICULARLY NOW THAT IT IS PART OF THE NEW NORTH SEA-RHINE-MEDITERRANEAN CORRIDOR.”

## As European coordinator, what is your view of the Seine-Scheldt network?

The Seine-Scheldt network is a highly strategic element of the TEN-T, particularly now that it is part of the new North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean corridor. In my opinion, this network is essential for improving the efficiency and sustainability of freight transport in Europe. Once its main component - the Seine-Nord Europe canal - is complete, the network will provide a direct, high-capacity river link between the Seine basin in France and the Scheldt basin in Belgium and the Netherlands, facilitating the movement of goods between major economic hubs such as Paris and the North Sea ports.







# 1 A COLLECTIVE PUSH TO MAKE SEINE-SCHELDT A SUCCESS

While continuing to coordinate the rollout of Seine-Scheldt in France and Belgium (read page 16), the members of the EEIG are already working together to optimise its economic, social and environmental benefits. A look back at the different forms this took in 2024.

Widening of the Nimy-Blaton-Péronnes canal

© SPW-DTJM-DGIT-PM-Warrier

Since Seine-Scheldt became a reality in the regions involved, the members of the EEIG have dedicated more and more time to a key component of their mission: **making sure that the network keeps all of its promises and lives up to the vision and ambitions that it embodies.** Because this is not just an exceptional infrastructure project: it brings with it **solutions to contemporary issues and will have a huge major economic, social and environmental impact.** It is all about, on the one hand, establishing a new transport offer that is multimodal, efficient and sustainable, in the heart of Europe, to support growth in the territories in question. And on the other hand, it is about supporting the major changes associated with the ecological transition underway within the EU. This two-fold objective took on even greater importance in 2024, with the integration of Seine-Scheldt into the major North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean TEN-T corridor, consolidating its strategic role in European transport policy. For several months now, De Vlaamse Waterweg nv (DVW), the Service public de Wallonie (SPW), Voies navigables de France (VNF) and the Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe (SCSNE) have been redoubling their efforts to ensure that the network is a success.

## A consolidated team effort

With Seine-Scheldt operating in six regions of France and Belgium, its success is linked first and foremost to the ability of the EEIG's members to create a dynamic, high-quality team spirit. The many years spent working together since the project was launched have forged solid links between them, guaranteeing fluid and productive exchanges.

These links were illustrated in 2024, for example, by **a seminar in Wallonia that brought together staff from the SPW and the SCSNE.** This initiative followed the completion of a vast urban development operation in 2023, that had been planned as part of the implementation of Seine-Scheldt: the new face given to the Scheldt crossing through the city of Tournai. The seminar was devoted to the exemplary information and consultation work carried out by the SPW throughout this large-scale project, marked in particular by the deconstruction and reconstruction of the famous Pont des Troux. Thanks to this opportunity, the SCSNE will be able to feed their shared experiences and best practices into the similar approach that it is taking in France to support the construction and commissioning of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal.

Seminar involving the Partnership and Territories team of the SCSNE with the SPW in Tournai

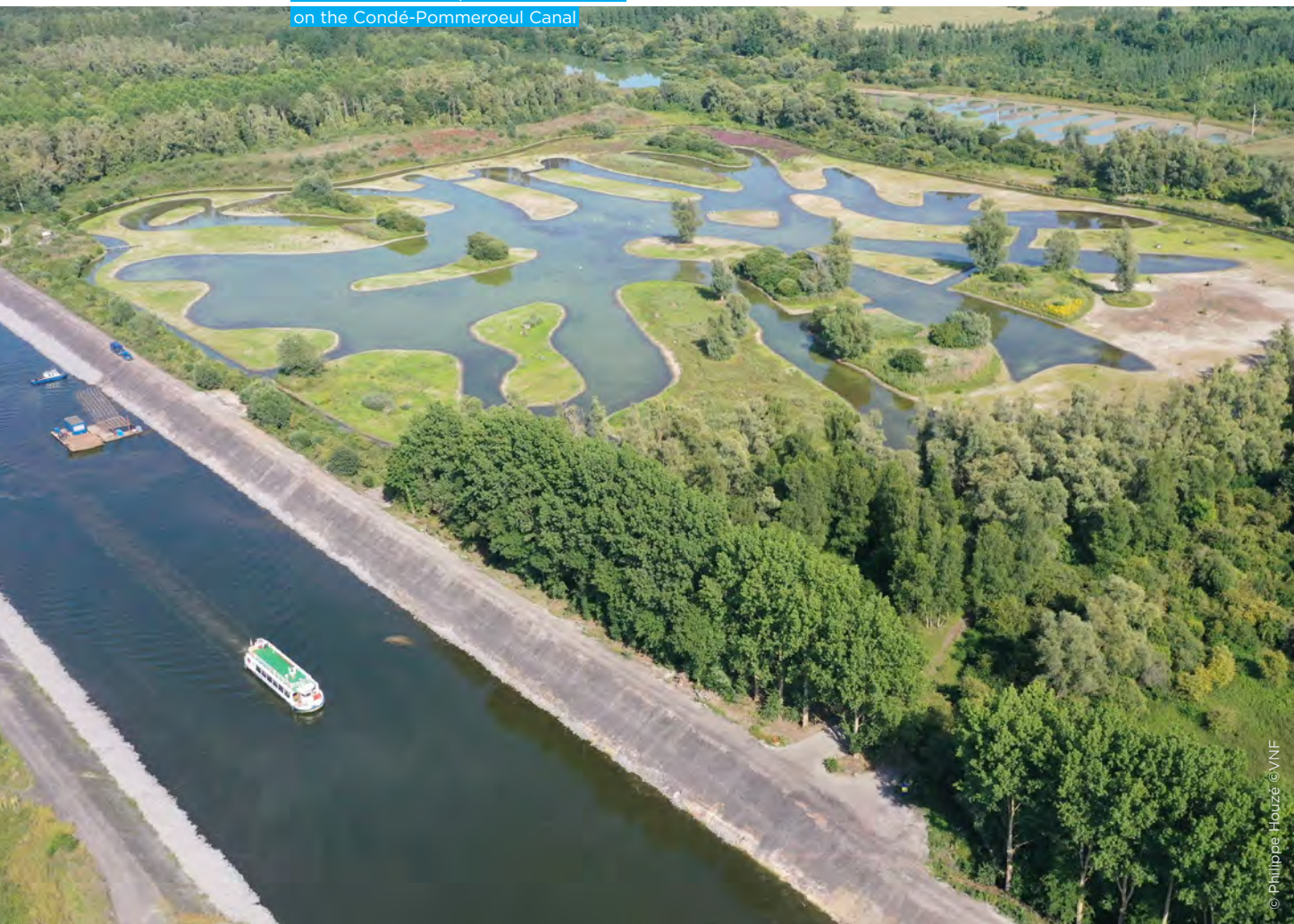


© SCSNE



**The members of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG work so closely together that they are now able to tackle any new challenges as a team.** This was demonstrated by VNF and the SPW's management of a situation that occurred shortly after the launch of the Condé-Pommeroeul canal at the end of 2023. The reopening of this canal is an important step in the rollout of the network. However, navigability tests revealed a difficult navigation area linked to sediment deposits. VNF and the SPW then brought in their engineering and hydraulic experts to investigate the causes of the issue and come up with solutions likely to resolve the problem permanently. These discussions led to the scheduling of additional dredging in spring 2024. The two partners decided to reopen navigation on 29 July for a trial period of six months. They also decided that at the end of this testing phase, the Condé-Pommeroeul canal could be closed again to measure sedimentation, assess the effectiveness of the measures taken to reduce it and, if necessary, supplement them with other solutions. The challenge was to ensure that the waterway was fully operational within a year.

Environmental compensation wetlands  
on the Condé-Pommeroeul Canal



© Philippe Houzé © VNF

## A productive dialogue with the European Union

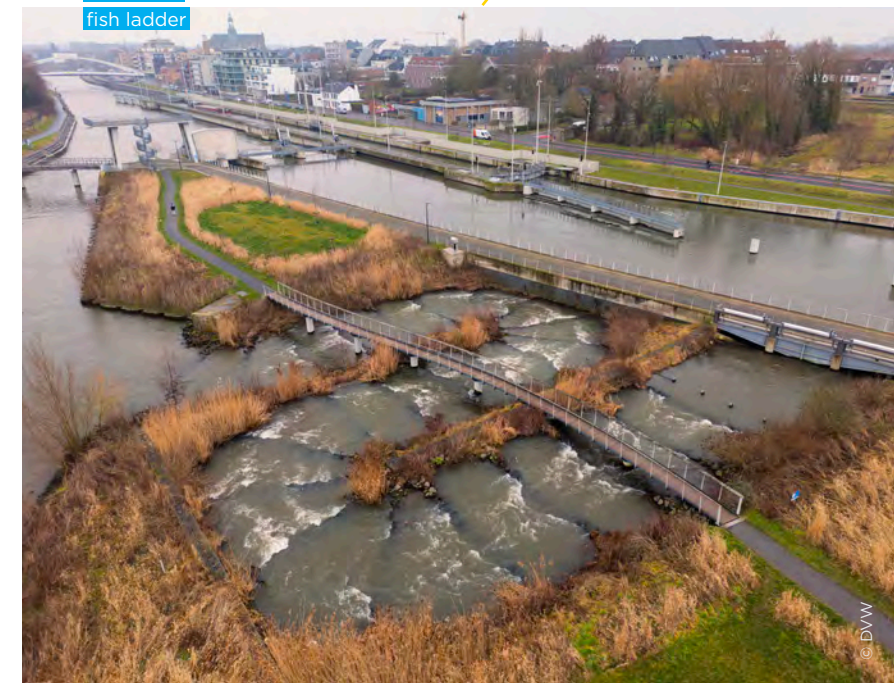
As soon as he was appointed coordinator of the new North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean trans-European transport corridor, Pawel Wojciechowski attended a number of meetings and events linked to Seine-Scheldt. For example, he attended the inauguration of the Méricourt locks on the Seine after four years of work managed by VNF. This involvement underlines the importance of the relationship between EEIG members and their European counterparts in the collective effort to promote the network. In 2024, they worked together on the revision of the Implementing Decision signed in 2019 with the European Commission, which serves as the roadmap for the development of Seine-Scheldt. It was officially adopted on 10 July. This was an opportunity to update the timetable for completing the various sections of the network and to extend its scope by adding new sections, such as the future Bray-Nogent waterway connection upstream of the Seine basin. In addition to its operational value, the revision of the Implementing Decision was an official reminder of

the ambitions of Seine-Scheldt and of Europe's long-term support. All in all, it is a forecast for the future that allows us to better anticipate and prepare for the commissioning of the network.



**The team spirit effort within the Seine-Scheldt EEIG has been enhanced by the acquisition of skills directly linked to the rollout of the network.** In Flanders, for example, this involves building five fish ladders to allow migratory fish to swim up and down the waterways: four on the Lys (otherwise known as the River Leie), at Vive-Saint-Bavon, Harelbeke, Menin and Merelbeke, and one on the Upper Scheldt, at Kerkhove. Three of the fish ladders are already in place. Over time, the DVW teams have developed considerable expertise in the design of these devices, learning how to adapt them to the locations in which they are installed. And they do not hesitate to share this expertise with their contacts at the SPW, VNF and the SCSNE. These additional skills are complemented by technological innovations. Also in Flanders, in 2024 DVW managed to develop two digital tools, working in collaboration with specialist partners. One is a model for managing river traffic on the Lys. The other is a system for assessing a project's resilience to climate change. Once these tools have been finalised, DVW intends to present them to the other members of the EEIG and discuss with them the possibility of extending their scope of use to the whole of Seine-Scheldt.

Harelbeke  
fish ladder



© DVW





Experts from the Seine-Scheldt EEIG's "alternative fuels" working group visit the port of Rotterdam

## An overview of operations and services

To maximise the impact of Seine-Scheldt, the members of the EEIG are committed to building a network whose operation and services are not only efficient, but also coherent and interoperable. With this in mind, they have set up **cross-disciplinary working groups for a number of areas, including water management and alternative fuels**. This cross-disciplinary work made good progress in 2024.

For example, a tender procedure was launched for an initial study on water management across the Seine-Scheldt network. The aim is to take stock of existing initiatives in this field in the six regions covered by the network and to identify areas for improvement.

The year was also marked by the launch of a comparative technical, economic and environmental study of alternative fuels. Against the backdrop of an intensifying battle against climate change, Seine-Scheldt will indeed contribute a great deal to the flagship goal of the European Green Pact: carbon neutrality by 2050. The study on alternative fuels fits in with this. Based on an inventory of what is currently in place, the study is designed to determine which fuels and refuelling and recharging solutions should be introduced for the network. A roadmap will then be drawn up to roll out these solutions taking into account technical, administrative, regulatory and financial aspects. There are many issues at stake. They include guaranteeing the reliability and competitiveness of waterway transport, preparing the network for the needs of the decades to come, and making sure that different technologies are compatible and interoperable. The establishment of biofuel refuelling stations (determined according to a methodology developed and tested in the Seine basin, taking into account the planned development of the waterway fleet and its engines) and alternative fuel production areas will also help to develop new skills and activities around the Seine-Scheldt basin.



Hydrogen containers at the BCTN terminal, Rotterdam



Hydrogen-powered barge at the BCTN terminal, Rotterdam

## The socio-economic impact of the network, a key issue

The first full socio-economic assessment of Seine-Scheldt dates back to 2021. It was carried out on behalf of the EEIG under the supervision of VNF teams, in collaboration with the SPW, DVW and the SCSNE. It looks into the impact of the network at two points in time, 2035 and 2070, covering the whole scope and encompassing all of the programmes launched. The results include, for example, 25% more waterway traffic from 2035, 2.3 million fewer heavy goods vehicles on the roads five to ten years after the network comes into service, and an estimated impact on flood management of €144 million. In 2024, the members of the EEIG discussed the possibility of extending this assessment to look at the geographical distribution of the network's impact. This would make it possible to better prepare for its arrival by providing a clearer picture of its impact on the regions in the medium and long term.



**25%** more traffic via waterways from 2035



**2.3 MILLION** heavy goods vehicles off the roads



**144 MILLION** euros saved in flood management

## Showcasing the work carried out

For some years now, Seine-Scheldt has been more than just a project. With the construction, renovation and modernisation operations launched by DVW, the SPW, VNF and the SCSNE, it is gradually becoming a reality. The members of the EEIG rely on this series of operations to promote the network and the impact it will have. **That is why they are encouraging the emergence of communities of stakeholders and development activities focusing on Seine-Scheldt.**

The inauguration of the modernised locks at Méricourt in France, on the Seine in Yvelines on 11 October 2024, is the perfect illustration of this. It marked the end of one of the largest projects undertaken by VNF in recent years, with financial support from the European Union and the Île-de-France region. The work was launched as part of the Seine-Scheldt project and took four years to complete. The aim was to make two locks, which dated back to the 1960s, more reliable, at the same time as extending one of the two locks. A new lock (and dam) control room has also been built, and navigation equipment has been installed for users (including floating bollards to make

mooring easier). The Méricourt locks can now accommodate more 180-metre long convoys.

As was highlighted at their launch, these are strategic structures for European inland waterway transport. The Méricourt site is located 60 kilometres from Paris, on a waterway that is connected to the major seaports of Rouen and Le Havre. In 2023, 7.5 million tonnes of goods passed through the site (the equivalent of 375,000 fewer lorries on the roads), as well as 13,560 tourist boats carrying more than 195,000 passengers.

Work on the two locks will optimise the management of this traffic. It should also increase the traffic by making this kind of transport more competitive, which will encourage a modal shift from road to water. This will have a positive impact on economic activity and employment. It will also lead to a significant reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and noise, while improving the safety and fluidity of road transport.



Méricourt lock site

© VNF - Yves Chénault





Obourg lock

© SPW-DTIN - DGT-PM Warpie

### Spotlight on the future Obourg lock

The members of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG do not always wait for the day of the inauguration to provide information about the network and its impact, sometimes getting involved as soon as the work begins. This is what the SPW did on 9 October 2024 when, in the presence of the representative of the Walloon Minister for Mobility and Infrastructure, it kicked off work on the construction of a high-capacity lock at Obourg, near Mons. This work, which is due to be completed in 2027, is being co-financed by the European

Union and Wallonia. The project involves building a new 12.5 metre by 149 metre lock alongside an existing lock. This one can only accommodate barges with a load capacity of 1,350 tonnes and a length of 96 metres. Once the second lock is in service, it will allow 2,000-tonne barges from France to use the Condé-Pommeroeul canal. They will be able to access the Strépy-Thieu boat lift, which already has a capacity of 2,000 tonnes. In addition to this increase in capacity, renovations are planned for the old Obourg lock, which will continue to operate. A turning basin will also be built, which is essential to let longer boats turn around after transshipping upstream from the site. All in all, as was pointed out at the launch of the project, this work will significantly improve the competitiveness of river transport on this route and encourage a modal shift in freight transport from road to water. This will result in economic, social and environmental benefits.

## Information and consultation initiatives are gathering pace

As Seine-Scheldt takes shape in France and Belgium, the members of the EEIG are offering more information and consultation initiatives around the project. These go well beyond the regulatory framework, and have two main objectives. The first is to facilitate the integration of the network in the regions it serves and to help communities and the general public take ownership of it. The second is to encourage future users of the network to get ready to take full advantage of its arrival, and then to provide them with appropriate advice and support. In 2024, DVW, the SPW, VNF and the SCSNE did even more work in these two areas, launching even more initiatives.

In Flanders, DVW has launched a programme to build 14 rest areas along 45 kilometres of the Lys, which will also serve as information points for Seine-Scheldt. The programme is being rolled out in collaboration with the local authorities concerned, who are involved in the design of these areas. The second meeting of the members of the eNES (Economisch Netwerk Seine-Schelde - Seine-Scheldt Economic Network) platform was also held on 16 May. Since it was established, this platform has been keeping future Flemish users of the network informed and maintaining a dialogue with them, before it is operational, in order to optimise its use and speed up the modal shift. Another notable initiative in 2024 took place on 24 September, when a regional charter for the Roeselare-Leie canal was signed by the municipal authorities, the province and the economic stakeholders. It brings together the vision and ambitions of the regional partners for the transition of the canal to the European Va gauge, planned as part of the rollout of the Seine-Scheldt project.



Signing the tourism development agreement for the Seine-Nord Europe Canal with regional partners

© Remi Feuilletois - Hauts-de-France Tourisme



"Canal Walk" in Pas-de-Calais

© SCSNE - Hikari

In Wallonia, the SPW has also communicated extensively on the network's progress. The 2024 Day of Inland Navigation and Intermodality, organised on 1 October in Seraing, provided a great opportunity to share information on the subject. Just like the 45-day public enquiry launched on 22 November following the decision to revise the environmental impact report for the projects designed to roll out Seine-Scheldt.

In France, VNF organised a local consultation in 2024 about doubling the size of the Fontinettes lock at Arques, on the Neufossé canal, in the Hauts-de-France region. From 14 October to 24 November, local residents, waterway users and all stakeholders had the opportunity to express their views and contribute to the future of this infrastructure. A number of events were planned to get everyone involved, including a public launch meeting and a feedback meeting.

For its part, the SCSNE has completed the regulatory consultation process (with an environmental public enquiry covering 76 municipalities and 89 kilometres) alongside continued efforts to find innovative ways of raising public awareness of the arrival of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal. As well as continuing its "Canal Walks" (walks along the route of the future waterway) and preparing for the opening of new Maisons du Canal (reception and information centres set up with local authorities), it has signed a partnership agreement

with the French Ministry of Education. This has resulted in the production of around twenty information sheets: intended for history, geography and life and earth sciences teachers, they illustrate various subjects on the school curriculum, using the Canal as an example.

Alongside this, the SCSNE has stepped up its dialogue with economic stakeholders. On 15 October, it signed a charter with Entreprises Fluviales de France, committing the partners to promoting the success of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal by getting waterway companies on board and helping them prepare for the opening of the new link. A few days earlier, on 9 October, it was laying the foundations for promoting the Canal as a tourist attraction by signing an agreement with Hauts-de-France Tourisme,

Oise Tourisme, Pas-de-Calais Tourisme, Somme Tourisme and the Département du Nord. All in all, in 2024, the SCSNE organised almost 400 meetings with a wide range of people and in a variety of formats.

**400**  
OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR  
COMMUNICATION  
in the local area

### The Seine-Scheldt network connected to European transport

The members of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG regularly join forces to spread the word about the network. In 2024, they took part in the major European mobility event, Connecting Europe Days. This event was organised between 2 and 5 April in Brussels by the European Commission, in collaboration with the Belgian Presidency of the EU. During the event there was a stand where visitors could see a map showing how the rollout of Seine-Scheldt is progressing in France, Flanders and Wallonia. Gilles Ryckebusch, VNF's Nord-Pas de Calais regional director and manager of the Seine-Scheldt EEIG, also took part in a round table discussion on the new North Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean European transport corridor, on the initiative of its coordinator Pawel Wojciechowski.



© VNF





# 2 NEW MILESTONES ACHIEVED IN ORDER TO TURN SEINE-SCHELDT INTO A REALITY

The Seine-Scheldt network continues to take shape in all the areas it passes through. This is illustrated by a number of major achievements in 2024, including the continuation of work to develop the Lys in Flanders, the launch of work to construct the Obourg lock in Wallonia, the completion of the first four bridges on the future Seine-Nord Europe Canal, progress on the project to lengthen the Quesnoy-sur-Deûle lock in the Hauts-de-France region and the full recommissioning of the Méricourt locks in the Seine basin. Update.

Construction of one of the first bridges on the Canal Seine-Nord Europe at Pimprez in Oise

© Jean-Christophe Hecquet

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



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

### What were the main achievements in 2024 in terms of establishing Seine-Scheldt in Flanders?

A number of projects continued, including the construction of new ecological banks on section 140 of the Lys, between Deinze and Vive-Saint-Bavon, as well as work on the quays on the Roeselare-Leie canal. The bridges kept us very busy during the year. Work continued on the construction of a bridge for cyclists and pedestrians at Nevele, over the Diversion canal. We started rebuilding the Bospoort bridge at Halle, as part of the work to bring the Brussels-Charleroi canal up to gauge IV, as well as embarking on work to raise the road bridge at Kuurne, over the Lys. The deck of the new cycle bridge in Menin was erected in September. We also secured a single permit for the reconstruction of the Lys bridge at Ingelmunster, on the Roeselare-Leie canal. Another highlight of 2024 was the start of work to develop the Waregem site at Vive-Saint-Eloi, on the Lys. This is the first project to recalibrate the section of river between Vive-Saint-Bavon and Harelbeke.

### What other milestones will be achieved in 2025?

If 2024 was a year of continuation, 2025 will be a year of transition. A number of projects are nearing completion, including the construction of the new bridges at Menin, Nevele and Kuurne, which will now be brought into service. At the same time, we will be launching new phases of construction work. In particular, work will begin to make it possible to recalibrate the upstream part of section 140 of the Lys in order to improve the gauge of the waterway; a fish ladder will be installed at Menin; a bridge over the Lys will be raised as it passes through Menin; and a cycle bridge will be built at Steenbrugge over the Ghent-Ostend canal.

Lock site at Vives-Saint-Bavon



Menin Bridge

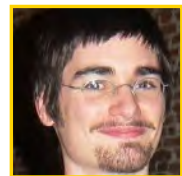




Condé-Pommeroeul Canal

© Ph. Houze

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



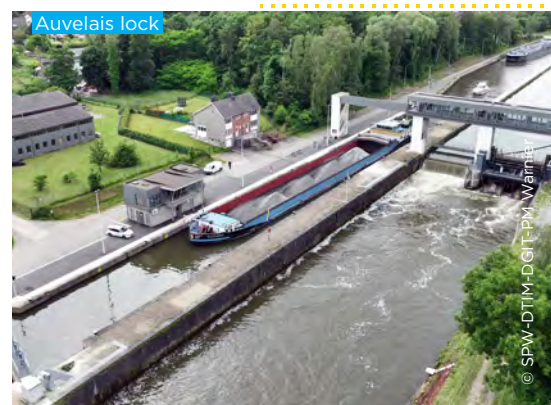
... with **Nicolas Dubois**, programme manager at the Service public de Wallonie (SPW)

### What were the main achievements in 2024 in terms of establishing Seine-Scheldt in Wallonia?

2024 was a pivotal year, marked by a lot of important deadlines. The Condé-Pommeroeul canal, the gateway to the Walloon backbone, was reopened to navigation in July, after being closed for 30 years. As soon as it was back in service, traffic was brisk, with an average of 240 commercial vessels a month. In the wake of this reopening, we tackled two bottlenecks on the route between Condé-sur-l'Escaut and Namur, where the challenge involved making the route accessible to class Va boats. On the one hand, we began work on widening the Nimy-Blaton canal. On the other, we started building the Obourg lock and the turning basin that will accompany it. In May 2024, we also completed work to deepen the Auvelais lock on the Sambre. Thanks to these achievements, the draughts on the river between Charleroi and Namur have been harmonised, resulting in a 10% increase in loading capacity on this route.

### What other milestones will be achieved in 2025?

We will be building on the work completed in 2024, in particular with the launch of the second of the three phases of work to develop the Nimy-Blaton canal. We will also carry on with work to modernise the waterway structures on the Basse Sambre so that they can be controlled remotely. Four out of eight of these structures have already been upgraded and benefit from extended navigation times on this route, optimising the service offered to users.



Auvelais lock

© SPW-DTJM-DDT-PW-Wallonie



Wallonia's Operations Centre (PEREX)

© SPW-DTJM-DD

## 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)

### What were the main achievements in 2024 in terms of establishing the Seine-Nord Europe Canal?

On section 1 – which covers 18 kilometres of canal in Oise between Compiègne and Passel – two new milestones have been reached. On the one hand, we have completed the construction of the first four bridges on the Canal. And on the other, we have made good progress correcting the course of the Oise, with the river now flowing along its new course for over a kilometre. This has made room for the Montmacq-Cambron-Lès-Ribécourt lock, construction of which began in September. For sections 2, 3 and 4, between Passel and Aubencheul-au-Bac, the highlight of 2024 was securing the environment permit on 9 August, following submission of the application in March and a public enquiry. This permit will allow us to continue work along the entire route, including the A2 motorway bypass. During the year, we also continued with archaeological surveys and excavations along the entire route. To date, 1,200 hectares have been assessed and excavation work has begun. Environmental improvements are also continuing. Almost half of the programme for section 1 has been completed, in other words 165 hectares, and all our proposals for the other sections have been approved.

Creating a pond on a compensation site in the North



© SCSNE

### What other milestones will be achieved in 2025?

The Montmacq-Cambron-Lès-Ribécourt lock will begin to appear and new contracts will be awarded, such as for the construction of the canal itself in section 1 and the 25-metre-high lock at Oisy-le-Verger. At the same time, preparatory work will continue, in particular environmental improvements. For example, we are going to start planting trees and restoring wetlands in sections 2, 3 and 4.



Completion of work to correct the course of the Oise and the first bridges

© Jean-Christophe Heque



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



... with **Gilles Ryckebusch**, 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 achievements in 2024 in terms of establishing Seine-Scheldt in the Hauts-de-France region?

We have made progress on the work to double the size of the Fontinettes lock at Arques, a major structure on the Dunkirk-Scheldt link: the first phase of the preliminary design studies has been completed and the second has begun. A new milestone has also been reached in the work to introduce remote controls for waterway structures, with the completion of the centralised control centre offices at Waziers. Another highlight of the year was the third dredging campaign, launched in the summer, to recalibrate the Lys Mitoyenne. The year also saw the continuation of work begun in 2023 to lengthen the lock at Quesnoy-sur-Deûle, on the Deûle-Lys section. In addition, after the official inauguration of the Condé-Pommeroeul canal at the end of 2023, navigability tests revealed a difficult navigation area linked to sediment deposits. They required additional dredging in the spring. Navigation was reopened at the end of July.

## What other milestones will be achieved in 2025?

The second phase of the preliminary studies looking at doubling the size of the Fontinettes lock is set to be completed. We will then be able to move on to the next stage with the launch of the environmental studies and the start of the regulatory procedures. Work on the Quesnoy-sur-Deûle lock will reach a new milestone in the spring with the installation of an additional gate, and by the end of 2025, the extended lock will be brought into service. But that isn't all, as work remains to be carried out on the pumping station and fish ladders. On the Lys, we are going to start dredging the land to widen and deepen the route.



Work to lengthen the Quesnoy-sur-Deûle lock

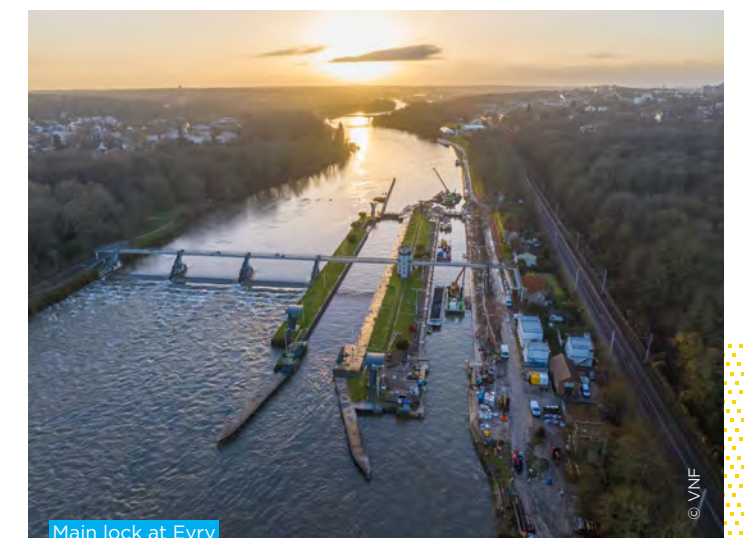
© BRL Ingénierie

## And in the Seine Basin, what were the main milestones achieved in 2024 in terms of establishing Seine-Scheldt?

The Compiègne centralised control centre was commissioned in June and inaugurated on 17 December. It remotely controls four sites on the upstream section of the Oise: Venette, Verberie, Sarron and Creil. Each of these sites comprises two locks and a flap dam, making a total of eight lock chambers, four dams and four remotely-managed fish ladders. On the Lower Seine, we finished the work involved in renovating the cofferdam system at the Port-Mort dam, as well as studies looking at the renovation of lock no. 4 at Notre-Dame-de-la-Garenne, adjacent to the dam. At Andrézy, renovation work on the civil engineering elements of the dam has been completed. At Croissy-sur-Seine, the second and final part of the work to reinforce the dyke has been completed. We also continued to renovate the Poses dam. One of the highlights of the year was the reopening of the Méricourt locks after four years of work to lengthen and renovate them. On the Upper Seine, a renovated, updated main lock at Évry has also been brought back into service.

In 2025, we hope to obtain an environmental permit for the Mageo project, which will upgrade the Oise so that it meets European classification standards. On the Lower Seine, we will be starting the final stage of work on the Poses dam and launching renovation work on lock no. 4 at Notre-Dame-de-la-Garenne. We will also be starting work on the complete renovation of one of the two sluice gates at Suresnes. Also in Suresnes, studies looking at the renovation of lock no. 3 are due to be approved. On the Upper Seine, if an environmental permit is granted, preparatory and compensation work for the reconstruction of the Beaulieu dam can begin. In addition, the project management studies for the construction of the Évry fish ladder should be completed, as should those for the deepening and lengthening of the Ablon lock.

Work to reinforce the Croissy dyke



Main lock at Évry

© VNF

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# WHAT'S IN STORE FOR 2025

## What to expect in 2025

Commissioning the Menin, Nevele and Kuurne bridges in Flanders

Work begins in Flanders

- recalibration of the upstream section 140 of the Lys;
- the fish ladder at Menin;
- the bridge over the Lys as it passes through Menin;
- a cycle bridge at Steenbrugge on the Ghent-Ostend canal.

Work continues on the Nimy-Blaton canal in Wallonia

Modernisation of the waterway structures on the Basse Sambre (Wallonia) so that they can be controlled remotely.

Work on the Montmacq-Cambronne-Lès-Ribécourt lock (Oise)

Installation of an extra gate on the Quesnoy-sur-Deûle lock (North) and commissioning of the same extended lock

Strat of the dredging cycles of the land on the Lys to widen and deepen the route

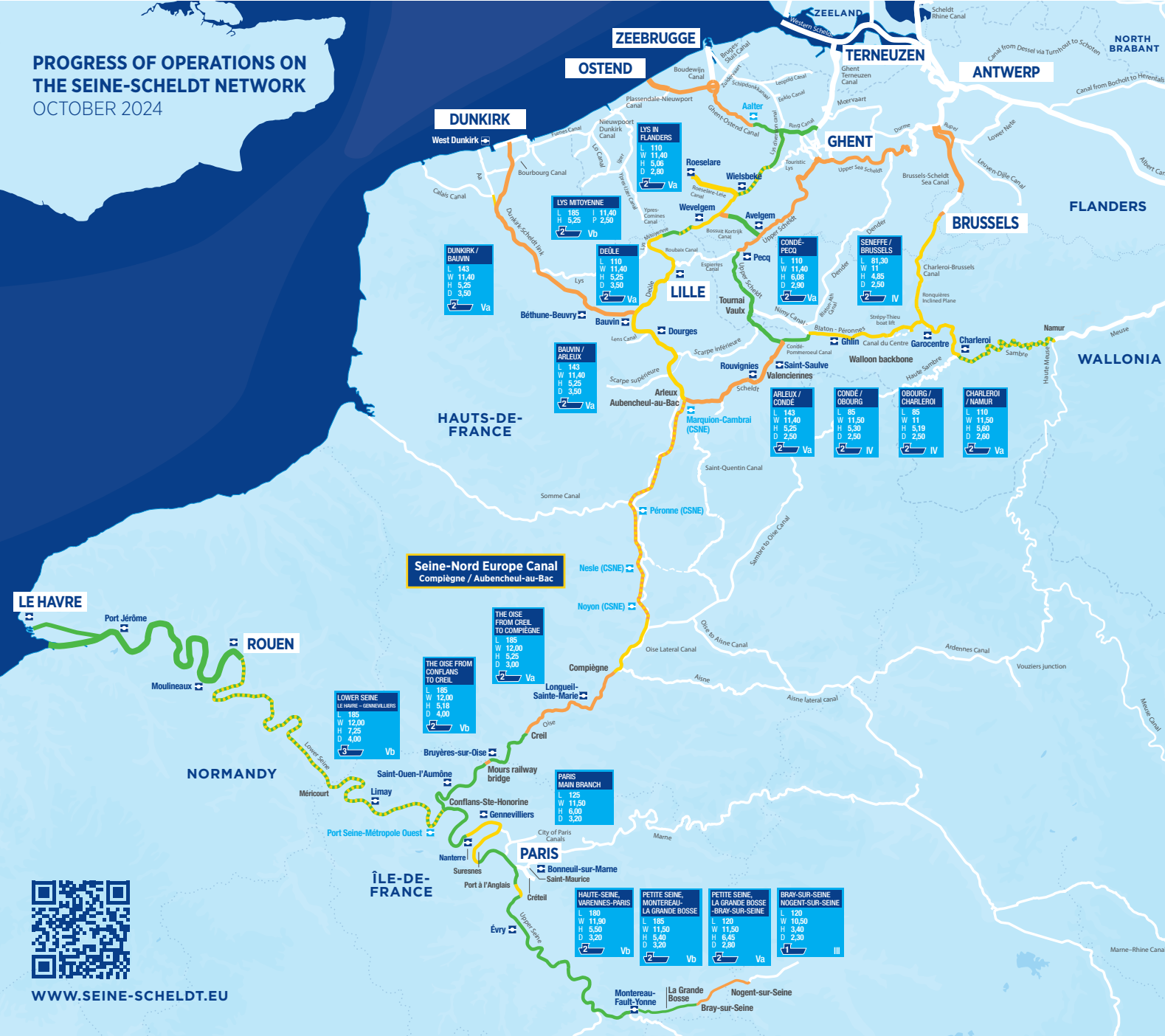
Final stage of work on the Poses dam (Lower Seine)

Start of renovation work on lock no. 4 at Notre-Dame-de-la-Garenne (Lower Seine)

Beginning of the complete renovation of one of the two sluice gates at Suresnes (Lower Seine)

Start of works to rebuild the Beaulieu dam (Upper Seine), subject to securing the environmental permit

# MAP SHOWING THE PROGRESS OF THE NETWORK



KEY

- IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EUROPEAN UNION'S IMPLEMENTING DECISION
- WORK UNDER WAY, SERVICE LEVEL ALREADY IMPROVED
- STRUCTURE IN OPERATION
- WORK UNDER WAY
- PREPARATORY WORK UNDER WAY
- STUDIES IN PROGRESS
- OUTSIDE THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK
- BORDER
- REGIONAL BOUNDARY

LE HAVRE MAJOR SEAPORTS AND EUROPEAN HUBS

- MULTIMODAL HUB (EXISTING)
- MULTIMODAL HUB (PLANNED)

DIMENSIONS IN METRES (2023)

|                       | MAX : 1 | MAX : 2 | MAX : 3 |
|-----------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| L Length              | 185     | 200     | 240     |
| W Width               | 12.00   | 12.50   | 13.50   |
| H Height under bridge | 5.25    | 5.50    | 5.75    |
| D Depth               | 3.00    | 3.20    | 3.50    |

SCALE  
0 50 100 km

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

ECMT CLASS

| ECMT CLASS | TON         |
|------------|-------------|
| III        | 650 - 1000  |
| IV         | 1000 - 1500 |
| Va         | 1000 - 3000 |
| Vb         | 3200 - 6000 |



# seine SCHELDT

THE LARGEST EUROPEAN  
INLAND WATERWAYS NETWORK

Méricourt lock site,  
on the Lower Seine

© VNF - Yves Chanoit

Follow the network's progress:

**seine-scheldt.eu**

 Réseau Seine-Escaut