seine scheldt

THE LARGEST EUROPEAN
INLAND WATERWAYS NETWORK

SEINE-SCHELDT EEIG
PROGRESS REPORT 2020

A SUSTAINABLE EUROPEAN TRANSPORT NETWORK AT THE SERVICE OF THE REGIONS

EEIG MEMBERS

Voies navigables de France *works on a daily basis to deliver the public service of the waterway aimed at fulfilling the following three missions: promoting sustainable inland waterway logistics, contributing to regional planning and providing global water management services.*

The Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe (SCSNE) *is a local public institution, which has been specifically created in order to coordinate the completion of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal (CSNE) between Compiègne and Aubencheul-au-Bac.*

De Vlaamse Waterweg nv *manages and operates the waterways as a powerful network that contributes to the economy, prosperity and quality of life in Flanders.*

The SPW Mobility and Infrastructures *initiates and coordinates the policies conducted by Wallonia in terms of the mobility of people and the transportation of goods.*

EDITORIAL

With each passing year, the importance of environmental and climate-related issues is being felt with increasing force. As a result, the issue of reconciling a dynamic economy with sustainable production and transport methods is pivotal. To meet this challenge, the waterways have many benefits. Energy sobriety, integration with the regions, capacity reserve, accessibility to congested agglomerations and productivity gains created by consolidated shipments are just some of the benefits that will give inland waterway transport a key role in the multimodal transport system that Europe needs.

In its Green Deal for Europe, the European Union aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 50% compared with the 1990 figures, by 2030. Regarding transportation, this must be reflected in a massive modal shift from road to sustainable transport modes such as waterway and rail transport. The proportion of inland waterway transport must therefore increase by 25% by 2030 and by 50% by 2050 to meet the challenges that have been set.

The Seine-Scheldt project, which will create a 1100 km network of large-gauge waterways in the heart of Europe, appears all the more relevant given the circumstances. In addition to the infrastructure itself, our ambition is to offer users a comprehensive and unified range of services across the entire network as well as support the energy transition of the sector.

During 2020, which was marked by the health crisis, inland waterway transport has shown great resilience. In the same vein, the work of the Seine-Scheldt network continued to progress with the renewed support of the French, Walloon and Flemish governments, as well as the European Union and the partner local authorities. As a result, it is with peace of mind and a certain resolve that we are taking on the coming year, which will be marked by the signing of a new financing agreement with the European Union for the 2021-2027 period.

EEIG members

CHAP. 1

A PROJECT WITH HIGH ADDED VALUE FOR THE ECONOMY

The Seine-Scheldt project will really speed up the modal shift towards the waterways.

For the regions concerned as well as the companies using inland waterway transport, this project can generate many opportunities for economic growth.

Container transport on the Seine at the Notre Dame de la Garenne weir (Port-Mort) -© Francis Cormon

CONNECTING FOUR FRENCH REGIONS AND TWO BELGIAN REGIONS

THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OF THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY.

The project consists in connecting four French regions and two Belgian regions (Normandie, Île-de-France, Grand Est and Hauts-de-France) by developing a 1100 km network of waterways. The programme is looking to regenerate the existing waterways, upgrade them to the large gauge and connect them up by creating the Seine Nord Europe Canal. (see map p. 5)

A key part of the project is the creation of a “missing link”: The Seine-Nord Europe canal. This new inland water infrastructure, which is over 100 km long, will link the Oise to the Dunkerque-Scheldt canal, going from Compiègne to Aubencheul-au-Bac, near Cambrai.

Its construction will be completed by the creation of four inland ports at Noyon, Nesle, Péronne and Marquion-Cambrai.

The Seine-Scheldt link will be backed by major investment programmes aimed at regenerating and modernising the existing network upstream and downstream of the future canal. The purpose of the work done so far is to adapt the waterways to the increase in traffic and to the changes in the fleets, to deliver goods safely and faster, to optimise and broaden the range of services and to enhance the complementary aspects of the inland waterways in relation to other transport modes.

1100 KM OF WATERWAYS TAILORED TO THE LARGE-GAUGE SHIPPING

Transportation of steel cables at the Évry lock © VNF

Albert Canal - Lock at Kwaadmechelen (Ham) - Flanders © De Vlaamse Waterweg nv

A NEW AND EFFECTIVE TRANSPORT OFFER AT THE SERVICE OF BUSINESSES

EFFICIENT AND FLEXIBLE TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS THAT WILL LEAD TO IMPROVEMENTS IN RELIABILITY, QUALITY AND PRODUCTIVITY.

The Seine-Scheldt project will give economic agents – large groups to small and medium-sized enterprises – an extensive and unsaturated transport space, serving a large number of inland ports, five seaports and numerous agglomerations.

This network will expand the supply and catchment areas of businesses by offering them a sustainable (see p. 9) and credible alternative to road transport. Thanks to the increased loading capacities associated with the large gauge, their transport costs will drop through shipment consolidation. Consequently, they will become more competitive, especially in sectors where the cost of transport is a key component of profitability (e.g. construction and public works, where it represents nearly 60% of the overall cost). The efficient and flexible transport solutions made available by the Seine-Scheldt project will also open up opportunities to improve their reliability, quality and productivity.

These advances will be reflected in superior economic performance, guaranteed long-term viability and a dynamic recruitment policy.

Traditional users of the waterways – particularly those sectors that are best suited to the inland waterway mode, such as the automotive, chemical, steel/metallurgy or agrifood sectors – will not be the only ones to benefit from the opening of the Seine-Scheldt network. The latter will also be a catalyst for growth in emerging waterway-related activities, such as urban waterway distribution and a circular economy, which is a fast-growing sector involved in the recycling and recovery of waste.

Beyond that, given the many opportunities offered by the waterways in the area of resource pooling and cooperation, the project is of interest to every economic agent that has to deal with road congestion in the north of Europe.

A CATALYST FOR GROWTH IN EMERGING WATERWAY-RELATED ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS URBAN WATERWAY DISTRIBUTION AND THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

CONSTRUCTION OF THE SEINE-NORD EUROPE CANAL, A GENERATOR OF BUSINESS AND JOBS

Posing a real technical and regional challenge, the construction of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal is an unprecedented example of a large decentralised project. Even before it is due to be commissioned at the end of 2028, the canal offers businesses and communities multiple opportunities to stimulate economic growth. The corresponding contracts to be awarded after public invitations to tender for the construction of the infrastructure will reach a total of about €3.5 billion.

The first contracts were launched in the autumn of 2020, with the process expected to be ramped up in 2021. In October 2020, the principles of the Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe purchasing policy were validated by the Supervisory Board. Whether it is to prepare the contracts or monitor their execution, this policy advocates transparency and openness to dialogue with the companies involved. It is also part of the region's sustainable development approach.

At the peak of the project, around 6,000 people will be working on the construction; an estimated 3,000 direct jobs will be created. The project's service-related activities (supply of equipment and materials, accommodation, catering and transportation of teams, etc.) will also generate many jobs.

Installation of the lock gates of the lock on the Lys at Vive-Saint-Bavon (Wielsbeke) - Flanders - May 2020
© De Vlaamse Waterweg nv

FLANDERS IS INVESTING IN ITS WATERWAY TERMINALS

In all the regions involved in the Seine-Scheldt project, initiatives are being undertaken to boost the impact on the economy and employment of this large-scale waterway network. In Flanders, for example, €4.6 million will be allocated to the renovation and extension of the Wielsbeke terminal on the Lys by the end of 2021. This multi-purpose transshipment centre plays a crucial role for regional inland navigation. The works, which started in May 2020, will both restore 255 metres of docks as well as the dock platforms, and add 70 metres of docks and 5,000 m² of dock platforms.

Along with the Provincial Development Agency of West Flanders, the inland waterway manager De Vlaamse Waterweg nv is also supervising the construction of a new terminal on the Roeselare-Leie Canal. Open to all, it will consist of a 230-metre dock and an 18,000 m² dock platform which will be used for storage purposes. Mainly used for the transshipment of bulk cargo, it will also be able to handle pallets. The two partners are seeking to use the new terminal to persuade more businesses – including those that do not have direct access to the inland waterways – to switch to the waterway mode for the shipping of their goods and raw materials.

A CATALYST FOR THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONS

AN ACCELERATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AREAS SURROUNDING THE NETWORK THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF REAL LOCAL ECOSYSTEMS

The impact of the Seine-Scheldt network is not limited to the private sector and extends to all the regions concerned: municipalities, inter-municipal authorities, départements, regions, countries and the European Union. Indeed, the project will underpin a vast trading area that will stimulate a modal shift.

In doing this, it will speed up the development of the areas surrounding the network through the construction of real local ecosystems. It will make the areas served more attractive to new entrants, enhance the land value along the 1100 km of waterways and stimulate the creation of new facilities in the logistics and industrial sectors.

The network will also expand the hinterland (i.e. area of influence of the land behind the coast) of the five connected seaports and contribute to the growth of foreign trade. What's more, the positive consequences of the rise in waterway and waterway-related* tourism (long-distance trips on large cruise ships in particular) are considerable.

The Seine-Scheldt project is already creating value for the regional economy. In France and Belgium, the work currently in progress on the project is generating investment, jobs, social integration and business activity. Given the scale of the work as well as its modernity and sustainable goals, it also promotes innovation and progress that is laying the groundwork for future growth.

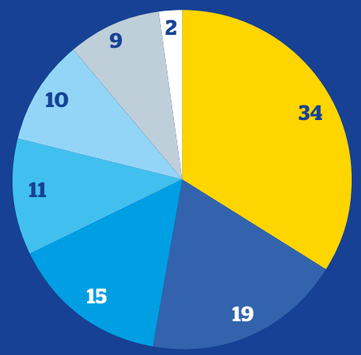
THE SEINE-SCHELDT PROJECT WILL MAKE THE AREAS SERVED MORE ATTRACTIVE TO NEW ENTRANTS, ENHANCE THE LAND VALUE ALONG THE 1100 KM OF WATERWAYS AND STIMULATE THE CREATION OF NEW FACILITIES IN THE LOGISTICS AND INDUSTRIAL SECTORS.

Work on the Lys at Harelbeke (Flanders) © De Vlaamse Waterweg nv

Roeselare-Leie Canal Site of the future Roeselare (Roulers) River Terminal © De Vlaamse Waterweg nv

**combines the activities on or around the inland waterways, i.e. water and land-based.*

KEY FIGURES



Breakdown of the inland waterway traffic (tonnes) by category of goods on the Seine-Scheldt sector by 2035.

- *Construction materials*
- *Agricultural products*
- *Chemical products and fertilisers*
- *Containers*
- *Energy products*
- *Chemical products and fertilisers*
- *Other goods*

14 millions

tonnes of goods are expected to transit through the Seine-Nord Europe Canal each year by 2035.

80%

of the new network traffic is the result of a modal shift from road to waterway transport.

Transport of goods on the Canal du Nord
© Didier Gauducheau

DEVELOPMENT AID FOR WATERWAY TRANSPORT IN FRANCE AND WALLONIA

A GLOBAL APPROACH TO DEVELOP THE WATERWAYS IN EUROPE COMBINED WITH INITIATIVES TO STIMULATE THE MODAL SHIFT

The Seine-Scheldt project is much more than a river infrastructure project. It is part of a global approach to develop the waterways in Europe combined with initiatives to stimulate a modal shift.

As a consequence, Wallonia put together a new aid plan for alternative modes of transport to road haulage in 2020 for the 2021-25 period. The previous one, which had been deployed since 2014, gave rise to several types of grants: investment grants for the development of freight transport by inland waterway or rail; grants for the technical adaptation of the Walloon inland waterway transport fleet; grants for the acquisition of a used inland navigation vessel; grants for regular inland container transport services.

To date, several dozen shippers and a few hundred boatmen have taken advantage of this aid, with subsidised investments valued in the tens of millions being made since the beginning. The new plan is essentially a continuation of the existing schemes while also incorporating and giving a higher priority to the need to change the fleet by focusing on alternative power units and the logistical transformation of the vessels.

SUBSIDISED INVESTMENTS VALUED IN THE TENS OF MILLIONS MADE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF THE PROJECT IN WALLONIA, AN ADDITIONAL BUDGET OF €175 MILLION ASSIGNED TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT IN FRANCE

In France, as part of the Recovery Plan, an additional budget of €175 million was assigned to the development of inland waterway transport.

For its part, Voies navigables de France is offering support schemes aimed at carriers and shippers for the greening of their fleets with the Modernisation and Innovation Aid Plan (“PAMI”) and stimulating the modal shift with the Modal Shift Aid Plan (“PARM”). This scheme provides financial support for businesses seeking to integrate the waterways into their logistics chain at each stage of the set-up of an inland waterway project: conducting feasibility studies, experiments, acquiring infrastructure and handling equipment.

CHAP. 2

A PROJECT THAT MEETS CONTEMPORARY ECOLOGICAL CHALLENGES

In line with the sustainable development model backed by the European Union, the Seine-Scheldt project fully incorporates the preservation of the environment and will be a significant asset in the fight against climate change.

Passenger transport on the Seine - © Françis Cormon

WALLONIA

Works that are respectful of air quality and biodiversity
As a sign of the importance of the environment for the agents of the Seine-Scheldt project: the Public Service of Wallonia, that manages the waterways, made the carbon footprint a criterion in awarding the contract to replace the Hérinnes weir on the Scheldt. This site also allows for the construction of two fishways. The current year saw the awarding of another contract: the environmental impact study conducted for the construction of three locks on the Charleroi-Brussels canal and a fourth at Obourg.

In 2021, Wallonia is continuing along the same path. During work to improve the Lys at the Comines crossing, an oxbow will be created, part of which will be left as the spawning area to encourage the reproduction of fish species. The peninsula separating the current Lys from the new channel will become a late cutting area, without plantations.

THE GREEN DEAL

IN 2020, THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION LAUNCHED ITS “GREEN DEAL”.

This new growth strategy, developed in response to the climate emergency and international environmental challenges, aims to make Europe the world’s leading ecological power. Funded to the tune of €1,000 billion over 10 years, it should allow the European Union to gradually achieve climate neutrality by 2050.

Part of this very ambitious plan is the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 55% between 1990 and 2030.

THE GOAL IS A 55% REDUCTION IN GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS BETWEEN 1990 AND 2030

THE INLAND WATERWAYS, A CLEAN MODE OF TRANSPORT TO DELIVER THE GREEN DEAL

BY PROMOTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF WATERWAY TRANSPORT IN NORTHERN EUROPE, THE SEINE-SCHELDT NETWORK WILL PLAY A MAJOR ROLE IN THE SUCCESS OF THE GREEN DEAL.

Indeed, the inland waterways are the transport mode that emits the smallest quantity of greenhouse gases and polluting particles per tonne of goods transported per kilometre. It is also the mode that releases the least pollutants into the atmosphere. A study carried out by AIR PARIF in 2015 showed, for example, that rail and waterway traffic account for only 1% of the nitrogen oxide emissions in Ile-de-France, compared with the figure of 65% for road traffic. The environmental performance of the waterways is enhanced by the energy transition initiated several over the last few years by the agents of the sector. This transition, which is bearing fruit with the development of clean engines for the fleets and the increasing use of renewable energies, will improve further in the years to come.

THE INLAND WATERWAYS ARE THE TRANSPORT MODE THAT EMITS THE LEAST GREENHOUSE GASES

Reconciling navigation and environment-Scheldt-Kain site
© SPW-M. Delaude

A NETWORK THAT IS RESPECTFUL OF THE ENVIRONMENT

THE ECOLOGICAL CHARACTER OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT PROJECT DOES NOT RELY EXCLUSIVELY ON ENERGY-RELATED BENEFITS OF INLAND WATERWAY TRANSPORT: THE PRESERVATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IS INTEGRAL TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT LINK.

This is all the more important given that, in France and Belgium, the project covers many protected natural spaces. The infrastructures, which are created or renovated as part of the project, are therefore designed to be eco-efficient. The projects are launched after environmental impact studies and conducted with the objective of preserving ecosystems as much as possible. Some examples to prove the point are the installation of fishways on the waterway constructions to ensure that they do not hinder the passage of fish species, the use of plant-based techniques to build and renovate the banks or the ecological requalification of the sites used to stock dredged sediments.

What's more, the work carried out is associated with measures designed to offset their environmental impact, such as replanting and creating wetlands.

For the construction of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal, the Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe, which sets itself the very highest standards, applies three principles to its design studies: "avoid, reduce, offset". The latter even goes beyond the carbon offset standards. For sector 1 of the site (from Compiègne to Passel in the Oise), the measures taken will increase biodiversity in the region in relation to the current situation. This includes 11.5 km of ecological banks, 11 acres of ponds and lakes and a total of 966 acres of environmental landscaping.

Indeed, the Environmental Authority and the National Council for the Protection of Nature have focused particular attention on the quality of many aspects of the environmental authorisation file. For this sector, the file concerned was drafted by the Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe (see also p. 22).

Footbridge and fishway on the Lys at Harelbeke (Flanders) © De Vlaamse Waterweg nv

THE INFRASTRUCTURES, WHICH ARE CREATED OR RENOVATED AS PART OF THE PROJECT, ARE THEREFORE DESIGNED TO BE ECO-EFFICIENT.

CANAL SEINE-NORD EUROPE

Reforestation operations in partnership with local agents

To compensate for the clearing work needed to build the Seine-Nord Europe Canal, the Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe is reforesting certain areas. These operations are focusing on the following two sectors: plantations for the timber industry and spaces open to the public.

After replanting 15 acres in 2017 (i.e. 3,800 trees) in Bienville, a call for projects in 2020 led to the selection of 12 winners in the départements of the Oise, Somme and Pas-de-Calais, to plant new forests or reforest 138 acres of land. As part of another environmental initiative, the Société du Canal Seine-Nord Europe has signed a new partnership with the horticultural school of Ribécourt-Dreslincourt and the Botanical Conservatory of Bailleul for the harvesting and cultivation of 4,000 seeds of white elms in the forest of Ourscamp/Carlepont. The students from the college have already completed the seeding operations. The seedlings will be transplanted on the project's offsetting sites from winter 2021.

Plantations Bienville Oise © SCSNE

Condé Pommeroeul aerial view © Philippe Houze

NORD PAS-DE-CALAIS

The eco-friendly development of the Lys Mitoyenne
The recalibration of the Lys Mitoyenne incorporates numerous environmental offsetting measures. This includes the development of branches of the Lys, which have been abandoned, in order to promote biodiversity. The Comines branch, for example, will be renatured and will meander again thanks to the recovery of sediments from the Lys.

A fishway will also be created downstream, at the level of the lock, to restore ecological continuity. In addition to the development of these two branches, some wetlands will be created in Deûlémont on a former sediment management site. Created between a pond and the towpath with unseeded topsoil, it will form an ideal space for the recolonisation of many amphibians.

SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

A KEY PART OF THE SEINE-SCHELDT PROJECT, NAMELY HYDRAULIC MANAGEMENT, ALSO PROVIDES A RESPONSE TO AN ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE.

The future network will be integrated into the major water cycle of the six regions served. Along the entire length of the route, particular care is being taken to preserve the flora and fauna, maintain ecological continuity and improve water quality. The project's stakeholders are working together on these issues and are committed to promote sustainable water management. The Public Service of Wallonia, which is the Walloon manager of the inland waterways, has just launched a study to assess the impacts of climate change on the water resources in the inland waterways. It will result in the development of a plan to adapt to these impacts involving changes to management practices and structural measures. To fight against the scarcity of water caused by rising temperatures, the prioritisation of certain water uses and the creation of new storage reservoirs, among other initiatives, could be considered.

THE PROJECT'S STAKEHOLDERS ARE WORKING TOGETHER ON THESE ISSUES AND ARE COMMITTED TO PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE WATER MANAGEMENT

KEY FIGURES

Large-gauge inland waterway transport emits up to **5 times less** greenhouse gases than **road transport** per tonne transported.

Among the environmental initiatives linked to the Seine-Scheldt project:

1700 acres of plantations and environmental improvements conducted within the context of the Seine-Nord Europe Canal

90 km of green banks developed along the Lys, in France and Belgium

5 inland waterway constructions in Flanders equipped with fishways (already fitted out in Harelbeke, Kerkhove and Wielsbeke; planned in Merelbeke and Menen)

CHAP. 3

NEW MILESTONES SET IN 2020

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, the work on the Seine-Scheldt network was maintained in 2020 and will continue in 2021.

Review of the main areas of progress made in 2020 in France and Belgium and major dates for 2021.

Condé Pommeroeul dredging - © PhilippeHouze

THE PROGRESS OF THE CANAL SEINE-NORD EUROPE PROJECT

18 KM BETWEEN COMPIÈGNE AND PASSEL, IN THE OISE

For sector 1 of the construction of the canal (18 km between Compiègne and Passel, in the Oise), 2020 saw the completion of the project studies and the continuation of land acquisitions and the releasing of the land. The procedure for examining the environmental authorisation, that was filed in April 2019, was also maintained in 2020, with a delayed submission owing to the health crisis.

As a result, the National Council for the Protection of Nature issued a favourable opinion in July 2020, thereby triggering the public environmental inquiry in the autumn. The Public Inquiry Commission issued a favourable opinion in December. This paves the way for the drafting of the environmental permit planned for 2021.

For sectors 2, 3 and 4 (89 km from Passel in the Oise to Aubencheul-au-Bac in the Nord), the project was specified with the pilot studies, which are currently being validated. The pilot studies were put together as part of the consultation: nearly 120 meetings were organised with elected officials, the farming sector and various associations, which resulted in more than 250 hours of talks.

The sealing of the canal is a challenge, for which the preparations began in autumn 2020 with the digging of an experimental basin at Cizancourt in the Somme. This had one objective, which was to test the various sealing solutions for the optimal long-term management of the water. The results of the tests are expected in the autumn of 2021.

THE PILOT STUDIES WERE PUT TOGETHER AS PART OF THE CONSULTATION

Digging works for an experimental basin at Cizancourt (Somme) © SCSNE

2021 CANAL SEINE-NORD EUROPE

April 2021

Environmental authorisation order for Sector 1.

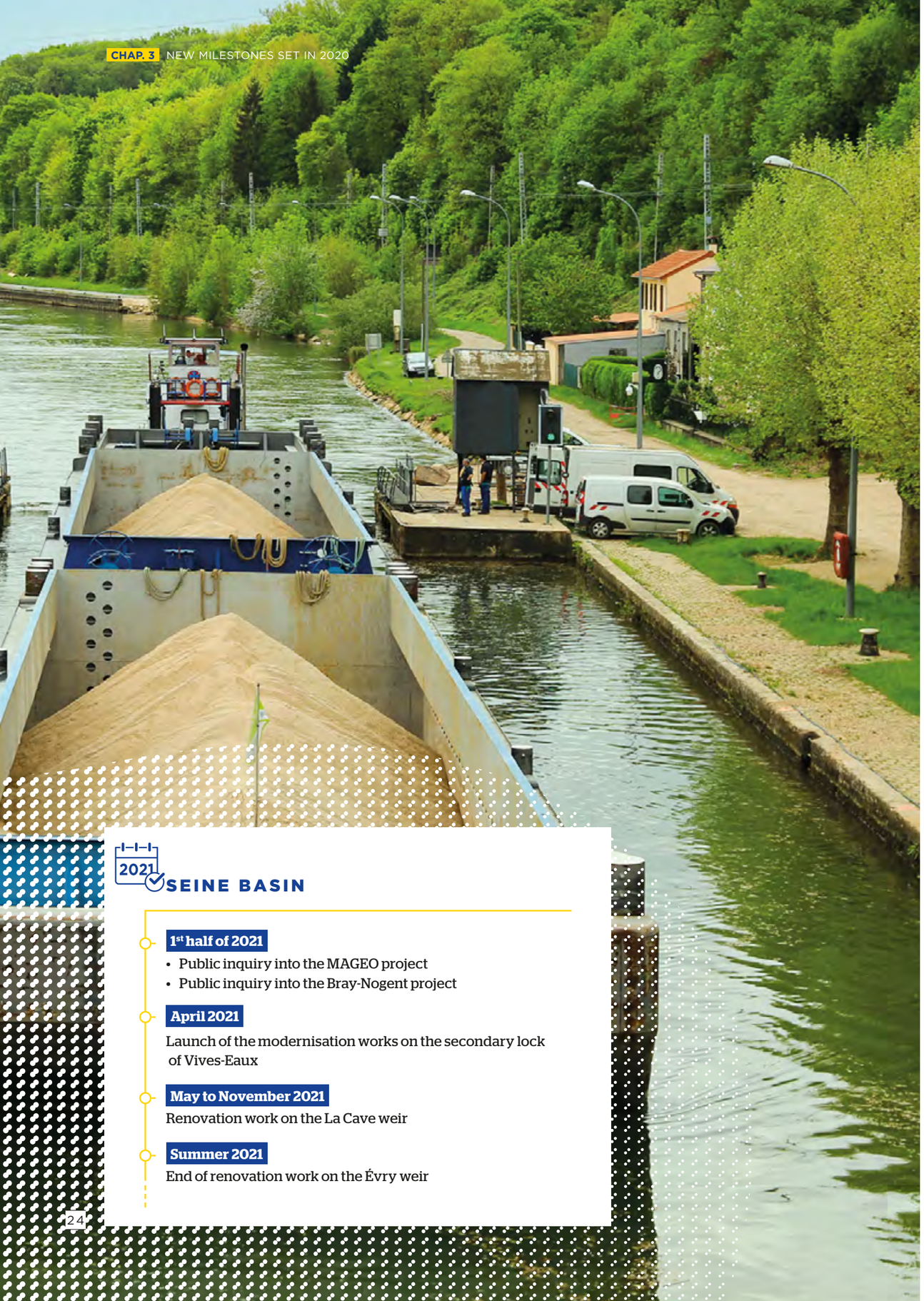
Spring-summer 2021

Beginning of the initial works on Sector 1 Compiègne-Passel: roundabouts at Choisy-au-Bac and Pimprez, docks in Ribécourt and Pimprez.

1st half of 2021

On Sectors 2, 3 and 4 Passel - Aubencheul-au-Bac, validation of the pilot studies (AVP), initiation of Project studies (PRO) and continuation of regional dialogue, including its extension to include the local population.

3D visual Noyon lock © AEI-ONE



2021

SEINE BASIN

1st half of 2021

- Public inquiry into the MAGEO project
- Public inquiry into the Bray-Nogent project

April 2021

Launch of the modernisation works on the secondary lock of Vives-Eaux

May to November 2021

Renovation work on the La Cave weir

Summer 2021

End of renovation work on the Évry weir

THE PROGRESS OF THE STUDIES AND WORKS IN THE SEINE BASIN

EUROPEAN GAUGE UPGRADE OF THE OISE BETWEEN COMPIÈGNE AND CREIL

On the Oise route, the MAGEO project studies (European gauge upgrade of the Oise between Compiègne and Creil) were started in March 2020 and two public consultation meetings were organised in December. In July, an initial version of the pilot studies was submitted for the reconstruction of the Mours rail bridge. The preliminary studies for the Venette boom were also validated.

On the Seine Aval (downstream) route, the pilot studies for the renovation of the Bougival locks were submitted in the autumn of 2020. The project studies are underway for the reinforcement of the Croissy-sur-Seine embankment and the renovation of the Andrésy weir. The first phase of renovation of the Port-Mort weir was completed in June. As for the extension and renovation of the Méricourt locks, they started in July, as did the modernisation work on the Poses weir.

On the Seine Amont (upstream) route, the contract for the renovation works on the Évry weir was awarded in March 2020. After validation in May of the pilot studies for the renovation of the secondary lock at Vives-Eaux, the design studies were submitted in September. Regarding the upgrade of the waterway link between Bray-sur-Seine and Nogent-sur-Seine, the project studies were started in June and the environmental authority issued its opinion on 4 November. Also in November, after the project studies were validated, the works contract for the renovation of the Cave weir was awarded. Finally, the renovation of the secondary lock at Coudray was completed in December.

Renovation of the secondary lock of Le Coudray -© VNF

Boat passing the small lock of Vives-Eaux - © VNF

"Grand Large" of Fresnes-sur-Escaut © Philippe Houze

PROGRESS OF STUDIES AND WORKS IN THE NORD-PAS-DE-CALAIS

THE RECALIBRATION OPERATIONS TO OPEN UP THE DEÛLE TO 3000-TONNE VESSELS OVER A 16.5 KM STRETCH IS ENTERING ITS FINAL PHASE WITH DREDGING DUE TO START IN 2021.

In September, a new stage was begun in the re-opening of the Condé-Pommerœul canal. It will last until 2022 and involve the removal of the widening sediments and earth in order to clear the channel of the old canal and upgrade it to the large gauge. The works will only be conducted on the waterway itself, thanks to a barge shuttle that will provide the connection with the Maing sediment management site. The sediment management sites located in the towns of Vieux-Condé, Condé-sur-l'Escaut and Fresnes-sur-Escaut – currently being completed – will take over in spring 2021. From August 2021, the bank defence works covering 11 km will be able to start following the dredging of the widening zones.

The year also saw progress made on the upgrading of the Lys Mitoyenne between Deûlémont and the lock of Comines. The widening and deepening work on a 5.6 km stretch will continue at the same time as the ecological landscaping works and the creation of a fishway at the Comines lock. Finally, after the major work already carried out on the Don and Grand Carré locks to guarantee a high level of safety and quality to the users of the waterway, the work to modernise the Denain lock will be able to start in September 2021.

The studies on the lengthening of the Quesnoy sur Deûle lock and the doubling of the Fontinettes lock will continue. The launch of the invitation to tender for the main works at Quesnoy is scheduled for 2021 as well as the recruitment of the project manager for Les Fontinettes.

ALL THESE OPERATIONS AIM TO FACILITATE INTERNAL NAVIGATION ON THE SEINE-SCHELDT LINK

Lys recalibration - Securing geotextile on a slope before laying the riprap © VNF

2021 NORD-PAS-DE-CALAIS

March 2021
Recalibration of the Deûle: start of dredging

April 2021
Lys Mitoyenne: commissioning of the Comines fishway

May 2021
Lengthening of the Quesnoy lock: start of works on bank defences and lock garages

August 2021
Reopening of the Condé-Pommerœul canal: continuation of dredging and start of works on the bank defences

September 2021
Restoration of the Denain lock: downtime

November 2021
Doubling of the Fontinettes lock: Award notice of the project management contract

Phase I inauguration of the work on the Tournai crossing: the Pont-à-Ponts
© SMC Systems

2021

WALLONIA

September 2021
Condé-Pommerœul: works on the refurbishment of the Hensies lock site is expected to finish

February 2021
Upper-Scheldt: works on the Hérinnes weir is expected to finish

December 2021
- Walloon Ridge: end of the works on the Walloon Ridge with the modifications to the locks of Marchienne, Gosselies and Viesville
- Walloon Ridge: the studies on NBP Canal development are expected to end

2021

FLANDERS

From 2021
Renovation of the docks on the Roeselare-Leie Canal

Start of 2021
Bissegem-Marke (Kortrijk – Lys) road bridge

Spring 2021
Lovelingbrug cycle and foot bridge (Deinze – Lys)

Mid 2021
Final design of the new Steenbruggebrug (Bruges-Oost Ghent-Ostend canal)

Summer 2021
- Cycle and foot pedestrian bridge at Ooigem (Wielsbeke) – Desselgem (Waregem) - Lys
- Green banks part 1 (Pand 140, between Deinze and Vive-Saint-Bavon – Lys)

2nd half of 2021
- Renovation of the banks and the towpath at Wervicq-Sud (Lys)
- Raising of the Kuurnebrug bridge (Kuurne) – Leie

THE PROGRESS MADE ON THE STUDIES AND WORKS IN WALLONIA

A FRANCO-BELGIAN CROSS-BORDER PROJECT, NAMELY THE RECALIBRATION OF THE LYS MITOYENNE, IS ALSO MAKING PROGRESS IN WALLONIA.

A Franco-Belgian cross-border project, namely the recalibration of the Lys Mitoyenne, is also making progress in Wallonia: a first section of European Vb gauge was filled with water in 2020 despite the difficulties that arose on the site following the discovery of explosives dating back to the First World War. On the Upper-Scheldt, the year was marked by further breakthroughs in the modernisation of the Tournai crossing, including the opening of the canal to the Va class, the completion of the docks as well as the start of the reconstruction of the Pont des Trous. Modernisation works and safety upgrades were also conducted on the Hérinnes weir. The refurbishment of the Walloon section of the Condé Pommeroeul canal continued, with the start of the safety improvements on the locks. Finally, studies were launched for the construction of four new locks on the Charleroi canal in Brussels, on the Walloon ridge.

THE PROGRESS MADE ON THE STUDIES AND WORKS IN FLANDERS

THREE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WERE COMPLETED IN 2020 IN FLANDERS.

As a result, a bridge, that was too low posing an obstacle to the waterway traffic, was replaced by a higher bridge at Ingelmunster on the Roeselare-Leie Canal. What's more, a weir and fishway were built at Kerkhove (Avelgem) on the Upper-Scheldt and the new lock at Vive-Saint-Bavon (Wielsbeke) was commissioned on the Lys at the beginning of August. Meanwhile, works were started on the renovation of the Wielsbeke terminal on the Lys and the installation of a new terminal on the Roeselare-Leie canal (see also p. 08). The work to replace a road bridge with a raised bridge over the Lys, between Ooigem (Wielsbeke) and Desselgem (Waregem), also started in 2020. Finally in November, demolition began in Menen in preparation of future developments, including a modification to the bends of the river.

THE NEW VIVE-SAINT-BAVON LOCK WAS COMMISSIONED

Installation of the lock gates of the Saint Bavon lock in Wielsbeke
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