

Ambitious Waterkracht project in Antwerp accelerates

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Waterkracht ('the power of water'), a water reuse project in the port of Antwerp, is proud to announce the next phase. Two years ago, Waterkracht was launched with the signing of a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding). Since then, intensive work has been done on the project and a lot of time has been invested in various pilot tests. These have been successfully completed, paving the way for the next phase of the project.

Transition to a sustainable port

Waterkracht is a project initiative of Ekopak, water-link, Aquafin and EPICo². Waterkracht aims to treat the effluent (= treated wastewater) of Antwerp residents and convert it into high-quality cooling water for the port of Antwerp. This circular operation will recycle 20 billion liters of water annually from 2026. This is the equivalent of the water consumption of 600,000 inhabitants. This initiative is an important milestone in the transition to a sustainable port by improving water efficiency and reducing pressure on freshwater resources through the reuse of alternative water sources.

Waterkracht in high gear

Since the 2022 announcement, intensive work has been done to analyze and study the project. Several pilot tests were conducted to examine the treated wastewater (effluent), and the most appropriate pipeline route was considered. This thorough preparation provided the necessary insights to take the next step: permitting and construction of the cooling water plant.

Ekopak will build a plant on the Covestro site where water treatment will take place. In fact, purified wastewater (effluent) is an excellent source for various reuse applications. The effluent supplied by Aquafin will be upgraded to cooling water in this new plant using membrane technology.

Waterkracht not only involves the construction of the cooling water plant. A new pipeline distribution network in the port, developed by water-link and financed by EPICo², will ensure that the cooling water is transported to industrial customers. With this, water-link is significantly driving up its capacity to supply industrial water in the port and confirming its role as a reliable partner for industry.

"In recent years, water-link has focused heavily on sustainable water management to protect our resources in times of drought. On the one hand, we have made investments to make classic drinking water as sustainable as possible. On the other hand, we are also focusing on circular water use for industry. Waterkracht is a leading example and we are looking forward to the next phase in this ambitious project," Koen De Schutter, CEO a.i. at water-link.

"The Waterkracht project is a world first, this is an exciting time for Ekopak and the other partners," says CEO at Ekopak, Pieter Loose, *"We are firmly convinced that with our expertise and know-how we will help make this project a success."*

“Every year Aquafin treats 800 billion liters of domestic wastewater until it is of good enough quality to be fed into a watercourse. At a large number of water treatment plants, the full flow of treated water is not needed to guarantee the quality of the watercourse during dry periods. That volume is the perfect basis for the production of drinking or process water and it also requires less energy to treat than dock water,” Jan Goossens, CEO of Aquafin.

Committing to circular water as part of the Blue Deal

We are facing more and more extreme weather conditions, requiring us to brace for the future. Every drop we can reuse is a drop we don't have to pump up from the ground or from surface water. This is why Waterkracht fits perfectly within the Flemish Government's 'Blue Deal' initiative, in which the fight against drought is tackled by focusing on circular water.

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This initiative falls within a program of the Flemish Environment Agency (VMM) that is part of the Blue Deal. The Blue Deal is a program launched by the Flemish Government in the fight against water scarcity and drought. The program includes more than 70 actions and 400 projects. With the Blue Deal, Flanders is moving towards less hardening, more humidification and maximum circular water use.



About Waterkracht

Waterkracht is a project initiative between Ekopak, EPICo² and water-link, with Aquafin as a partner. The parties are joining forces to upgrade treated wastewater (=effluent) from Antwerp households into cooling water for companies in the Port of Antwerp. The collaboration is a milestone in the transition to a sustainable port and is a leading example of public-private cooperation.

A new, high-tech cooling water plant to be built will bring 20 billion liters of Aquafin-treated wastewater to the much higher quality level of cooling water on an annual basis from 2026.

About Ekopak

Ekopak is a Belgian company specializing in solutions for industrial water treatment and wastewater treatment. Ekopak's solutions offer industrial customers the opportunity to significantly reduce their water consumption from the water mains network in a sustainable, dependable, and cost-effective manner and to treat their wastewater. Ekopak also enables its customers to disconnect from the regular water network and initiate circular water use. To this end, Ekopak focuses on optimizing water consumption with modular water treatment units that convert off-grid water sources, such as rainwater, surface water, and/or wastewater into purer water that can be used and reused in the customer's industrial processes.

All Ekopak shares are listed on Euronext Brussels (ticker EKOP).

www.ekopakwater.com

About water-link



The world cannot exist without water. People, businesses, and the living environment must always have access to water of the right quality, at the right time, and in the right quantity. This water must be supplied within the security of well-designed supply and drainage infrastructures.

Water-link offers this security through the production, distribution, and recycling of water. Water-link develops knowledge, shares it, and works on innovative solutions to safely and securely provide water to people and business at all times. This is how Water-link wants to inspire everyone to really use the power of water.

www.water-link.be

About Aquafin

Aquafin is responsible in Flanders for the financing, development, and operation of the supra-municipal infrastructure for sewage treatment. The company purifies waste water so that streams and rivers become clean again and water is in harmony with the living environment. Aquafin strives to achieve its objectives in a socially responsible manner. Which is why we are open to all initiatives that explore the sustainable reuse of purified waste water.

www.aquafin.be

About EPICo²

EPICo² (European Projects Investment Company) is a Benelux infrastructure fund that invests in socially relevant infrastructure projects. EPICo², with the Flemish investment company PMV as investor, invests in the development, construction and operation phases of infrastructure projects and companies in the Benelux and elsewhere in Europe. It focuses on socially relevant themes such as energy transition, digital transformation and sustainable mobility and transport.

www.epicofund.eu

For more information, contact:

Ekopak: Melissa Vanhoecke, marketing@ekopak.be+32 496 36 22 17
Pieter Loose, pieter.loose@ekopak.be, +32 475 40 38 71

Water-link: Koen De Schutter, koen.deschutter@water-link.be, 0476 36 00 91
Ann Vyliders: ann.vyliders@water-link.be , 0496 28 28 78

EPICo²: Frank Kindt: frank.kindt@pmv.eu, 0472 42 07 90