



Press release – December 2024

SOGESTRAN CHRISTENS ZULU 06, FRANCE'S FIRST HYDROGEN-POWERED INLAND VESSEL

The ZULU 06, the first hydrogen-powered inland vessel developed by the Sogestran Group, was christened today, December 3rd, in Paris by its godmother, Valérie Bouillon-Delporte, Executive Director of the Clean Hydrogen Partnership, in the presence of François Durovray, Minister of Transport.

This major technological breakthrough is the result of six years of research conducted by the Sogestran Group as part of the European Flagships project.

The project has benefited from the modernization and innovation support plan led by Voies Navigables de France and co-financed by ADEME and the Île-de-France Region.

A Technological Breakthrough for Sustainable Urban Logistics

The ZULU 06, measuring 55 meters in length, is designed to address the challenges of urban logistics in metropolitan centers. With a transport capacity of 400 tons of goods, this vessel is powered by two 200 kW fuel cells, supplied by 300 kg of decarbonized ("green") hydrogen stored at 300 bars. It boasts a range of 500 km, perfectly suited for urban distribution missions.

This hydrogen propulsion system is a first in France and represents a groundbreaking advancement in the mass transport of goods. More than just a vessel, the ZULU 06 aims to serve as a demonstrator for the energy transition and greener urban logistics.

"While the hydrogen industry is still under development, every contribution helps pave the way for its democratization and will ultimately shape a complete value chain. With the ZULU 06, we are taking a key step forward for inland waterway transport. This vessel embodies not only technological excellence but also Sogestran's commitment to sustainable and efficient mobility," said Pascal Girardet, Chairman and CEO of the Sogestran Group.

A French and European Success

The ZULU 06 is the result of a collective effort involving both public and private stakeholders in France and across Europe. The project was carried out as part of the European Flagships program, which aims to promote zero-emission solutions on European rivers. It received financial and technical support from the European Union (via the Clean Hydrogen Partnership) and from Voies Navigables de France (VNF) through the Modernization and Innovation Support Plan, co-financed by ADEME and the Île-de-France Region.

An Ambition Aligned with the National Hydrogen Strategy

The launch of the ZULU 06 is part of the national hydrogen strategy and France's commitments to green growth. It confirms the ability of inland waterway transport to play a key role in the decarbonization of mobility.

However, the hydrogen sector still has a long way to go before becoming a widely adopted solution. The Sogestran Group and all project stakeholders call for increased mobilization of all actors in the ecosystem – from financiers to support this transition, to public authorities for regulatory developments, and not forgetting the clients, who are true partners in this transformation.

"With the christening of the Zulu 06, we are witnessing a major breakthrough for inland waterway transport and the energy transition in France. This vessel, the first of its kind powered by hydrogen in France, embodies the country's commitment to sustainable, innovative, and decarbonized mobility. It demonstrates our ability to combine logistical performance with environmental respect. This project is a wonderful example of European cooperation and synergy between public and private stakeholders for green mobility that is both local and sustainable. We are taking a significant step in the decarbonization of transport. It is a strong signal of our determination to transform our transportation modes to make them more ecological and more resilient in the face of future challenges!" **François Durovray, French Minister Delegate for Transport.**

"The integration of fuel cells in the ZULU 06 inland vessel, which will be commercially operated in the heart of Paris, is a technical and regulatory success. This innovation paves the way for the decarbonization of freight and passenger transport on the inland waterways of France and Europe, using hydrogen produced from clean energy sources. Following the FLAGSHIPS project, other inland and maritime applications will help improve air quality, reduce noise, and drastically lower the carbon footprint of inland waterway transport." **Valérie Bouillon Delporte, Executive Director, Clean Hydrogen Partnership, and sponsor of the ZULU 06**

"Our group invests 15% of its annual revenue in research and development and in renewing our fleet. We work daily on the decarbonization of our activities from three perspectives: better design, better consumption, and better operation. We are experimenting with new technologies, whether new fuels or alternative propulsion systems. We would like to thank all of our partners, and especially the Clean Hydrogen Partnership, for initiating the European Flagships project." **Pierre-Yves Girardet, Shareholder and Director of the Sogestran Group**

The christening of the ZULU H2 demonstrates the feasibility of hydrogen technology in the inland waterway sector. Through its Modernization and Innovation Support Plan (PAMI), VNF, the Île-de-France Region, and ADEME, partners in this initiative, have financially supported this achievement, which marks a major step forward in the energy transition of inland waterway transport. This vessel symbolizes our collective commitment to decarbonized transport and a more sustainable future. We must now capitalize on the experience gained from this pioneering project." **Cécile Avezard, Director General, Voies Navigables de France (VNF)**

"Long awaited, this hydrogen-powered vessel is a true innovation, offering significant technological and regulatory advancements for the sector related to the use of hydrogen. By supporting this innovative project, the Île-de-France Region reaffirms its ambition: to triple inland waterway logistics flows and make inland waterway transport a strategic pillar for the economic development of our Region. This project is also part of the regional Hydrogen strategy implemented in November 2019 to support the development of local, decarbonized hydrogen production." **Valérie Péresse, President of the Île-de-France Region**

"The commissioning of the Zulu06 H2 is a major step forward for the hydrogen sector and the decarbonization of inland waterway logistics. Hydrogen proves its relevance in providing inland transport operators and their clients with a zero-emission solution capable of meeting their operational constraints. However, obstacles remain to scale up this type of deployment, whether in the integration of solutions, regulatory evolution, or financing for those committing to these innovations. But we are tackling these challenges with determination, as the hydrogen solution meets the sector's needs." **Philippe Boucly, President, France Hydrogène**

ZULU 06, un projet développé en partenariat avec :

ZULU 06, a project developed in partnership with:





About Sogestran

The Sogestran Group, through its subsidiary Compagnie Fluviale de Transport (CFT), is the French leader in inland waterway freight transport. The company operates on the Seine, Rhône, Loire, Rhine, and Danube rivers. CFT has over a hundred inland vessels and employs around 300 people (both navigators and shore staff).

Founded in 1948 in Le Havre, the Sogestran Group is a key player in transport and industrial logistics. Employing nearly 1,000 people in France and Northwestern Europe, the Group achieved a turnover of 352 million euros in 2023.

The Group's four main activities are:

- Inland waterway transport, its historical core business.
- Maritime transport, specializing in complex niches such as petrochemical products and military equipment.
- Multimodal transport, optimizing flows between seaports and inland areas.
- Industrial services, including the cleaning and management of tanks and wagons, as well as the storage of hazardous products.

Sogestran invests 15% of its annual revenue in research and development and fleet renewal, with the ambition to build a European group committed to a more sustainable economy.

Press contact :

Alix Gay – Communication manager of Sogestran Group – alix.gay@sogestran.com