



PRESS RELEASE
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COOPERATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN NORTH SEA PORT AND THE PORTS OF MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC SAGUENAY, SEPT-ÎLES, AND TROIS-RIVIÈRES

A strategic alliance to boost trade and accelerate the transition to more sustainable maritime transport between the Saguenay-St. Lawrence region and Northern Europe

Québec City, February 4, 2025 – On January 30, the port authorities of Montréal, Québec, Saguenay, Sept-Îles, and Trois-Rivières have approved a memorandum of understanding with North Sea Port. This initiative will strengthen supply chains between the Saguenay-St. Lawrence and North Sea maritime corridors, stimulating economic growth and fostering innovation.

This agreement builds on a memorandum of cooperation signed in March 2018 between the Port of Québec and North Sea Port. By integrating the ports of Montréal, Saguenay, Sept-Îles, and Trois-Rivières, the agreement establishes a framework for concrete actions in terms of trade, innovation, and energy transition, which will benefit the various stakeholders involved and the companies using the organizations in this partnership.

Boosting trade

The signatory ports are committed to promoting opportunities for the industries they serve, particularly in the bulk cargo sector. Working together, they will identify the most promising sectors and optimize logistics chains linking the hinterland of the Saguenay-St. Lawrence region and Northwestern Europe. These efforts will focus on business intelligence to improve port planning and operations.

Sparking innovation

The ports have launched initiatives to connect their customers with research institutes, universities, and start-ups. These initiatives will enable ports to become genuine laboratories for innovative maritime solutions. Sharing expertise and exploring new technologies, especially artificial intelligence, will bolster operational efficiency.

Promoting sustainable maritime transport

The ports will work together to reduce their carbon footprint, exploring low-emission solutions, greening port areas, and introducing alternative fuels. The agreement aims to define sustainable approaches for the medium and long term.



Quotes

“We’re proud to establish this collaborative partnership with North Sea Port, linking the Saguenay-St. Lawrence corridor with a vibrant region like the North Sea. The aim is to foster active collaboration between the two groups for mutually profitable benefits on important issues and opportunities like decarbonization, business intelligence, and innovation,” emphasized Julie Gascon, Olga Farman, Carl Laberge, Pierre D. Gagnon, and Gaétan Boivin, CEOs of the port authorities of Montréal, Québec, Saguenay, Sept-Îles, and Trois-Rivières respectively.

‘Canada is North Sea Port’s fourth most important trading partner in terms of cargo throughput. Our location in Western Europe is of great strategic importance for cooperation with the ports of Montréal, Québec, Saguenay, Sept-Îles en Trois-Rivières. Cooperation with these five Canadian ports can only be beneficial,’ said **Maarten den Dekker**, Chief Sustainability en Digital Officer of North Sea Port. This strategic agreement is a decisive step towards strengthening commercial and environmental relations between the two regions, with beneficial spin-offs for all partners involved. It also represents a milestone in the new cooperation agreement between Québec’s five Canadian port authorities.

About North Sea Port

North Sea Port is a cross-border port area stretching 60 km from Vlissingen, on the North Sea in the Netherlands, to Ghent, 32 km inland in Belgium, via Terneuzen. As a central hub in Western Europe, the port specializes in multimodal transportation (sea, rail, road, pipeline, and barge) and a wide range of goods. North Sea Port generates 12.7 billion euros in added value per year, ranking third among European ports. In terms of cargo throughput, it ranks ninth among Europe’s largest ports, with 66.3 million tonnes. The port area is home to 550 companies, creating 106,000 direct and indirect jobs.

North Sea Port is fully committed to becoming a climate-neutral port by 2050, which will be achieved through energy transition as well as the development of sustainable and efficient transportation.

About the Port of Montréal

Operated by the Montréal Port Authority (MPA), the Port of Montréal is the largest container port in Eastern Canada, a diversified transshipment hub that handles all types of cargo: containerized and non-containerized, liquid bulk, and dry bulk. As the only container port in Québec, it is a port of destination served by the world’s major shipping lines. It is also an intermodal hub with a unique service offering in North America, with its own rail network directly dockside connected to Canada’s two national rail networks. The MPA also operates a Cruise Terminal and a Port Centre.

The MPA integrates economic, social, and environmental components into its corporate initiatives. This commitment is governed by a sustainable development policy whose guiding principles focus on involvement, cooperation, and accountability. Port activity supports 590,000 jobs and generates \$93.5 billion in economic benefits annually.



About the Port of Québec

The Québec Port Authority, a non-profit organization, manages the Port of Québec which is strategically located to serve North America's industrial and agricultural heartland. This Canadian hub for international trade for both imports and exports is the only port in the province of Québec with a fifteen-metre water depth at low tide and a comprehensive intermodal infrastructure. The Port facilities create 12,000 jobs and generate about two billion dollars in economic activity each year.

With its 2035 Vision, the Port of Québec aims to be recognized by citizens for the responsible management of its territory, respect for the environment and protection of biodiversity while positioning itself as a world leader in establishing sustainable supply chains for a more resilient economy.

About the Port of Saguenay

A strategic intermodal hub and one of Canada's 17 port authorities, the Port of Saguenay is a year-round deepwater port with direct access to the North American rail and highway networks. It is widely known for its operational efficiency and high capacity for receiving and shipping dry and liquid bulk goods. The Port of Saguenay is one of Eastern Canada's largest shipping terminals for forest biomass to Europe. It is also responsible for international cruise ship operations in Saguenay, the busiest port of call along the Saguenay–St. Lawrence corridor in terms of ship and passenger traffic each year. The Port of Saguenay has one of Canada's largest industrial port sites, with nearly 12 square kilometres of land dedicated to large-scale industry adjacent to its marine terminal. Its development is guided by a vision focused on the responsible and sustainable growth of its activities.

About the Port of Sept-Îles

With diverse and efficient facilities, the Port of Sept-Îles is the largest mineral port in North America, with a projected volume of over 40 million tonnes in 2025. It is also recognized as the busiest port terminal for the primary aluminum industry in the Americas based on activity volume. In 2024, it received the award for Best Specialist Dry Bulk Port at the IBJ Awards 2024. The facilities at the Port of Sept-Îles play a vital and strategic role in the economy of Eastern Canada. Deeply committed to sustainable development, the Port pioneered the first environmental monitoring observatory for its marine ecosystem and established a research chair at Université Laval dedicated to coastal ecosystems and port activities.

About the Port of Trois-Rivières

As part of the 17 Canadian port authorities and active since 1882, the Port of Trois-Rivières provides a wide range of facilities and services to the marine industry year-round. It plays a key role in regional, national, and international economic development for major industrial sectors such as the aluminum industry, forestry, and agri-food. Each year, the Port of Trois-Rivières handles 60,000 trucks, 11,000 railcars, and 270 merchant and cruise ships from around 100 ports in over 40 countries worldwide. It manages over 4.2 million metric tonnes of cargo and supports more than 2,000 direct, indirect, and spin-off jobs.



– 30 –

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