



PRESS RELEASE

D Services Group, Event-M and Apex League launch the International Scheldt Days

New international platform aims to accelerate breakthroughs in improved water management

Ghent, 14th September 2026

Three private companies, an investment and consultancy group (D Services Group), an organiser of major events (Event-M) and an HR company (Apex League) today jointly announce the founding of the International Scheldt Days, an independent and international platform and stage that brings together knowledge, policy, capital and innovation around water management.

The initiative comes at a critical moment. Drought, heat, water shortages, and then again storms and flooding dominate the news across Europe. The Scheldt river basin is currently not meeting the objectives of the European Water Framework Directive: not a single water body achieves “good status”, and water quality has been declining in large parts of the river basin since 2015. At the same time, the fourth series of water management plans, stricter European standards and growing societal pressure will lead to faster and more coherent action.

“We will not meet the objectives of the Water Framework Directive with one big breakthrough, but step by step: by showcasing the many concrete achievements already delivered today, with targeted investment in scientific research for the areas we don’t yet understand, with innovations that can flow from that knowledge, and capital that can turn those innovations into solutions”, says Hilde Dujardin, director of D Services Group. “That requires structural collaboration between companies, innovators, academics and government: none of them can solve this problem alone.”

The aim is to create a meeting place, both physical and digital, for academics and researchers, investors and innovative companies, major infrastructure groups, and sectors such as chemicals and agriculture that can showcase their achievements, all together under one roof and open to the wider public; a scale that is currently missing in the sector.

“Ghent knows this dynamic. Forty years ago, Flanders Technology International put the city on the international map as a hub for innovation”, says Mathieu Foulon, director of



Event-M. *“With the International Scheldt Days, we want to unleash that same power for water management: a place where companies, innovators, investors, academics and public authorities meet not by chance, but systematically; in order to jointly undertake international achievements together.”*

For the founders, that human encounter and interaction is the heart of the initiative, rather than yet another conference built around reports and policy papers.

“Real progress in water management only happens when people meet each other in person: when a researcher gets a visit from an investor, when a student discovers water management programmes, or a jobseeker talks with an innovative company”, says Brecht Dhaene, director of Apex League. “That interpersonal contact is precisely what the International Scheldt Days make possible, and it’s what is missing today to truly make progress.”

The International Scheldt Days are organised independently, internationally and on a non-profit basis, funded by private companies.

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About the founders

D SERVICES GROUP bv (1 January 2024) integrates the former NAOME bvba (Network of Alliances, Outsourcing and Merger Experts bvba, founded in 2004) **specialised in business advisory services** for mergers and acquisitions, corporate restructuring and business process outsourcing; **in financial services and advisory**, with N²FINANCE (read “into finance”, 2010) a European network of experts in financial services, retail banking, payments and payment cards, who master the entire payments and card value chain, drawing on many years of practical experience and by bringing groundbreaking innovations to market; N²PAYMENTS (read “into payments”, 2015) specialised in advice, research and legal matters for organisations and individuals involved in the payment services industry; and N²PROFIT (read “into profit”, 2015) specialised in research into and advice on the profitability of business processes and organisations, and end-to-end quality research; **and in environmental and water management** with N²WATER (read “into water”, 2025) a network of experts in water management.





INTERNATIONALE SCHELEDAGEN
JOURNÉES INTERNATIONALES DE L'ESCAUT
INTERNATIONAL SCHELDT DAYS

EVENT-M turns ideas into living experiences. EVENT-M's business is the **organisation of events** that, by combining the best creative solutions with challenging technical production, can turn any (wild) idea into an unforgettable experience. EVENT-M specialises in the delivery of full-scale projects, logistical support, and special effects.



APEX LEAGUE is a Ghent-based consultancy, founded by Brecht Dhaene and located at Graaf van Vlaanderenplein in Ghent, **specialised in senior finance leadership and interim management**. The company matches experienced interim CFOs and finance managers with organisations undergoing transition, growth or crisis, with a strong presence in Antwerp, East and West Flanders. Apex League works with a select network of proven leaders and companies, focusing on a thorough understanding of the context, character and capabilities of each candidate. Drawing on his own experience as an entrepreneur, Brecht Dhaene emphasises rigorous preparation, timing and trust in getting the right person in the right place at the right time.

