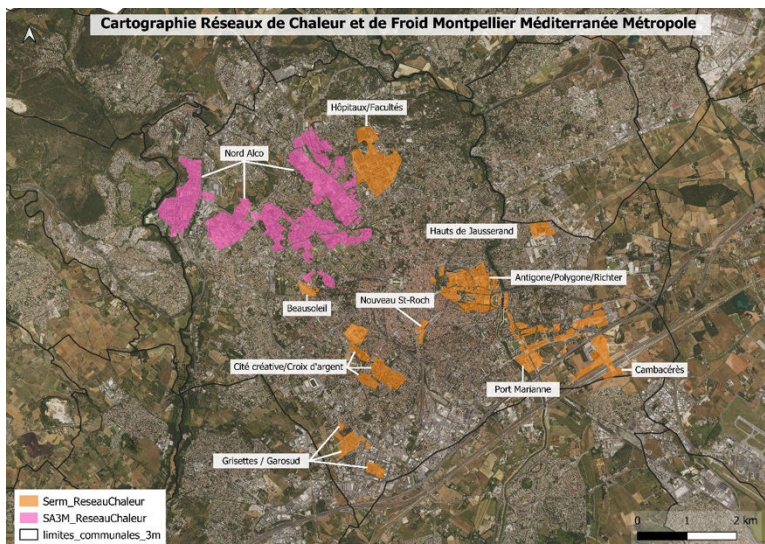
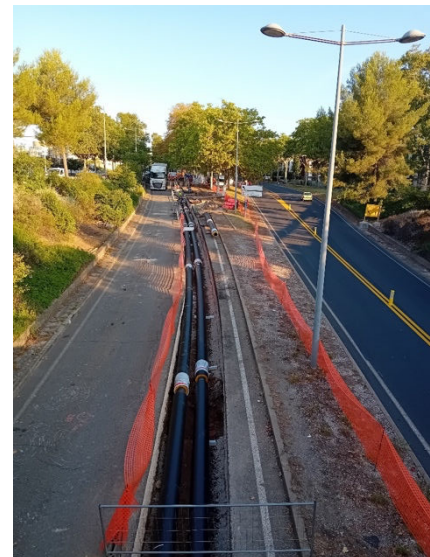


PRESS INFORMATION – 2024

Montpellier aims to triple the area served by a public heating network!

At the EnerGaïa Forum, to be held on December 11 and 12, 2024 at the Parc des Expositions in Montpellier, the Montpellier metropolis (34), a long-standing partner of the show, will be highlighting a number of projects designed to promote the region's transition. Among them, the creation of a new renewable heat network to supply the Mosson districts as far as the Hôpitaux/Facultés, called the “Réseau de Chaleur Nord Alco”. Meet Montpellier Méditerranée métropole at the EnerGaïa Forum Hall B2 Stand A45.



Nord Alco biomass boiler project

Top left: perspective of the route de Ganges boiler plant.

Bottom left: Network map, zooming in on Montpellier.

Right: Principle of a heating network.

Creation of the new “Réseau de Chaleur Nord Alco” heat network

In the face of the challenges of climate change and fuel poverty, renewable heating networks are a response that needs to be scaled up. In fact, thanks to their high rate of use of renewable energies, they help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. What's more, they enable us to use heat at a stable price, as it is less subject to changes in the cost of fossil fuels.

As part of the policy to develop heating networks in the area and to support the Metropole in implementing its PCAETs (Plan Climat Air Energie Territorial Solidaire), **the creation of a new renewable heating network to supply the Mosson districts as far as the Hôpitaux/Facultés, called the “Réseau de Chaleur Nord Alco” (North Alco Heating Network)** was approved by deliberation on July 11, 2023. The delegating authority has awarded this public service delegation contract to SA3M.

The primary aim of this project is to guarantee the lowest possible energy costs for users, while meeting the demanding environmental requirements, i.e. 80% renewable energy by 2030.

This project marks an acceleration in the connection of buildings to the heating network, enabling the surface area served to be doubled by 2028. This will involve laying 8 km of network in less than 18 months on major roads in the city of Montpellier, and eventually 21 km.

In view of the various mobility projects in the areas served by the heating network, the work of laying the pipes for the heating network had to be undertaken and completed within a very tight timeframe.

Deployment in progress

Thanks to close collaboration between local elected representatives, Metropolitan Council departments and SA3M, a program to build this heating network was completed in just 18 months.

The project was put together in consultation with the French Environment and Energy Management Agency (ADEME), resulting in a virtuous project that focused in particular on energy production and guaranteed the supply of local, sustainable wood heat.

Studies for heat distribution and energy production were carried out simultaneously.

On the network side, SA3M and its project manager, ARTELIA, set up a multi-awarded framework agreement, awarding the contract to 3 major companies in the heating network installation sector (SOGEACOLAS- SCAM). This type of contract made it possible to drastically reduce lead times and keep to the ambitious schedule.

On the energy production side, SA3M and its project management team, Imagine Architectures, in association with Merlin and Delhom Acoustique, worked on the optimized integration of a 16 MW biomass production facility on a narrow site at the entrance to the city, between two busy traffic arteries. In addition, by using an existing gas-fired boiler plant, investment costs and the land footprint were kept under control.

Work began in January 2024, under a tense traffic climate in Montpellier. Extensive communication was carried out in the areas where the heating networks were to be laid (billboards, flyers, e-mails).

Support from local elected representatives and the metropolitan authority's departments helped to explain the usefulness of the work and thus facilitate acceptance. Network routing was adapted to minimize the impact on road users. Temporary arrangements for cyclists and pedestrians were made to maintain safety. Special techniques will be used to avoid disrupting traffic on 3 major road crossings. Up to 8 teams will be working in parallel during the summer of 2024 to increase the pace of installation during this period, which will have less impact on traffic.

The challenge is considerable, and so far the work has been completed on schedule. The first tests of the biomass boiler plant are scheduled for early 2026, with optimum operation of the network from the following autumn.

Supplying more than 19,000 homes with renewable heat

This network will supply renewable heat to more than 19,000 housing equivalents, contributing to the Metropole's energy sovereignty. Ultimately, it will create 30 permanent, non-displaceable jobs and avoid 13,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions per year.

In particular, it will supply multi-family housing, public buildings, a hospital, educational establishments (schools, colleges, high schools and faculties) and student residences. The total investment is €64 million, including a €22 million subsidy from the Fonds Chaleur (Heat Fund) awarded by ADEME (the French Environment and Energy Management Agency).

Energy bill reduction of around €30 to €40/month for a 70 m² home with 4 occupants.

The Metropole currently has eight public heating networks. These networks use a variety of renewable energies, including biomass, geothermal energy, heat recovered from the methanization plant and wastewater. Today, the proportion of renewable energy is 67%, but the aim is to reach 80% by 2030, with development enabling the surface area served by a public heating network to triple by 2019.

About Forum EnerGaïa

An annual event with nationwide and international reach dedicated to renewable energy industry professionals, Forum EnerGaïa has been accompanying all the sector's stakeholders for 18 years. Initiated by the Occitanie/Pyrénées-Méditerranée Regional Authority, Forum EnerGaïa is today a showcase for the actions the authority is taking to promote the energy transition and achieve its objective of becoming the first positive energy region in Europe. SPL Occitanie Events, the organiser of the Forum EnerGaïa, is committed to an eco-responsible approach. It has been ISO 20121 certified by AFNOR since January 2021 for all its activities.

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