

Press release

Tuesday, 30 June 2026

Rijkswaterstaat launches development phase for near zero-emission emergency response towing vessels

Rijkswaterstaat has given the go-ahead for the research and development phase of the Power2Tow project. As part of this innovation partnership, three consortia will simultaneously develop new solutions for near zero-emission emergency towing vessels and the associated charging infrastructure at sea and on shore. To this end, Director-General Martin Wijnen signed the cooperation agreements with the three consortia on 30 June.

A distinctive feature of Power2Tow is that Rijkswaterstaat is entering the research and development phase together with the selected consortia. Within the innovation partnership, all three consortia have been commissioned and will receive remuneration to further develop and elaborate their proposed innovative solutions. This approach creates room for different technological directions and innovative ideas. The consortia will work on solutions for the vessels, charging infrastructure at sea and on shore, and the operational deployment of the overall system.

During the research and development phase, the proposals will be further developed, tested and assessed. Ultimately, one consortium will remain and will go on to actually realise the project for Rijkswaterstaat. This means that the contract for construction and operation can be awarded directly, without the need for a new tender procedure. Each consortium consists of a collaboration between various companies and/or organisations, each with its own expertise.

The consortia admitted to the research and development phase are:

- Kustkracht: Kotug International B.V., IHC Defence B.V. and Bluewater Energy Services B.V.
- Multtraship Ocean Towing B.V., Damen Shipbuilding & Cooperation B.V. and Stillstrom A/S
- Smit Terminals Europe B.V. & Smit Salvage B.V.

Safety and sustainability on the North Sea

With Power2Tow, Rijkswaterstaat is working towards future-proof emergency towing capability on the North Sea. The project concerns the development of three electric Emergency Response Towing

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Vessels (ERTVs), which can be charged at sea using wind energy. These vessels will, among other things, protect offshore wind farms from collisions involving vessels in distress. The development of charging infrastructure at sea and on shore, as well as the provision of services for a period of 25 years, also forms part of Power2Tow. The vessels will operate electrically as much as possible. Sustainable e-methanol will be used for emergency towing operations. This will provide an important boost to the further sustainability of shipping.

Part of the Rijksrederij Fleet Renewal programme

Power2Tow is part of the Fleet Renewal programme for the Rijksrederij. Through this programme, Rijkswaterstaat is working on the sustainable renewal of the government fleet. Power2Tow also contributes to the maritime sector agenda, "No guts, no Hollands glorie!", which sets out the ambition to give greater consideration to the strategic interests of the maritime manufacturing industry in government procurement processes. The Power2Tow project is being carried out in cooperation with the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management, the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, the Coastguard and the interdepartmental Rijksregiebureau Maritieme Maakindustrie.

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Note for the editors, not for publication:

About Royal IHC

Royal IHC is determined to play a leading role in making the maritime industry more efficient and sustainable.

Anchored in the rich Dutch maritime history, Royal IHC continues to expand its position as a leading supplier of maritime technology and craftsmanship. With the right expertise on board and driven by innovation, Royal IHC offers a clear competitive advantage to its global customers in the dredging, offshore, mining and defence industries.

With its equipment, vessels and services, Royal IHC provides reliable, integrated solutions to increase customers' operational efficiency and enable more sustainable solutions. In an ever-changing world, our goal remains to find the smartest and safest way forward for both our customers and Royal IHC employees.

For more information, please contact: press@royalihc.com

This press release can also be found on our website <https://www.royalihc.com/>