



MerConcept and SAS join forces to enhance sailing performance

Paris, March 10, 2026 – MerConcept, a purpose-driven company committed to sustainable maritime innovation and offshore racing, and SAS Institute, a global leader in data and AI, today announced a partnership to harness the power of data to improve sailing performance and advance decarbonised maritime transport.

Powered by the SAS Viya platform and SAS Visual Analytics, MerConcept's teams can now gain deeper, faster and more reliable insights into the factors that influence boat speed and behaviour. Until now, race teams had been limited to analysing just a handful of variables at a time. They can now combine and analyse nearly 80 parameters in real time—including speed, wind conditions, heel angle, sail settings and foil geometry—to better understand performance and identify tangible opportunities for optimisation.

Initial analyses of the SVR-LAZARTIGUE trimaran have already revealed new insights into the key drivers of boat performance.

The data analysis process has enabled the teams to organise their observations into distinct “behavioural profiles” of the boat. Using clustering techniques, they can now group sailing conditions according to shared patterns, across all points of sail, angles and wind strengths. This makes it possible to better understand how the trimaran responds in different conditions and identify the most effective settings for each behavioural profile.

In practical terms, this provides the crew with more precise decision-making support, from optimising sail and appendage configurations to managing trim and loads more effectively, while seeking the right balance between outright performance and energy efficiency.

“High-performance sailing has long relied on intuition and experience. With SAS, we are taking things to the next level by integrating advanced analytics capable of processing dozens of parameters simultaneously. This enables us to improve performance and uncover opportunities that were previously beyond our reach,” says **Cécile Andrieu, Co-CEO of MerConcept**.

“This partnership is a perfect example of how quickly our customers can put SAS Viya to work to address very tangible business challenges. The team’s ability to develop and use their own analyses after just a few hours of familiarisation was remarkable. Beyond sporting performance, this project paves the way for broader applications of AI and analytics, particularly in prediction,

*optimisation and, ultimately, sustainability across the maritime sector,” adds **Grégoire Ferreri**, Managing Director of SAS France.*

Next steps

Following this initial phase, focused on structuring and exploring the data, MerConcept and SAS are now turning their attention to the next technological and sporting developments of the project, with four key priorities:

- Developing more advanced machine learning models to automatically analyse boat behaviour, detect performance patterns and identify new opportunities for optimisation.
- Enhancing weather forecasting capabilities to incorporate a wider range of uncertainties, scenarios and environmental variables into race preparation and decision-making.
- Exploring new approaches to material and fibre optimisation, working alongside MerConcept’s R&D teams to better understand the relationship between design choices, operating constraints and observed performance on the water.
- Investigating future applications that support a more sustainable maritime model, particularly through improved energy efficiency and performance optimisation, with a focus on resource efficiency.

Testing has been underway since mid-2025 and will gradually be extended to the other boats in the MerConcept racing team. This will allow the teams to build on the experience gained, accelerate learning and strengthen the robustness of their analyses as more sailing data becomes available.

Beyond the initial insights gained from structuring and exploring the data, the partnership between MerConcept and SAS has a clear ambition: to prepare the boats and teams for one of the major events in offshore sailing, the Route du Rhum. This iconic race is the central focus for the year, serving both as a real-world testing ground for technological innovation and as a key sporting objective.

Ultimately, the ambition is to build on the insights gained through racing to inform broader approaches to decarbonised maritime mobility. These include optimising routes to reduce energy consumption, improving the efficiency of sailing propulsion systems, better integrating onboard renewable energy sources and reducing the carbon footprint of boats throughout their entire life cycle.

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About MerConcept

Founded in 2006, MerConcept is a purpose-driven company specialising in offshore racing and sustainable maritime innovation. Based in Concarneau, Brittany, France, MerConcept supports skippers and racing teams at every stage of their projects, from design and construction to project management.

Since 2020, MerConcept has expanded its commitment to decarbonised maritime mobility, with the ambition of transforming travel at sea through cutting-edge sustainable technologies. Guided by the vision of its founder, François Gabart, MerConcept combines performance with environmental responsibility to shape the future of maritime innovation.

About SAS

SAS is a global leader in data and AI. Through its software and industry-specific solutions, SAS helps organisations turn data into trusted decisions. SAS gives you THE POWER TO KNOW®.

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