

Press release



Paris, March 10th, 2026

From science to on-the-ground action, INRAE and SUEZ renew their strategic partnership to accelerate innovation in support of water, the environment and territories

Partners for more than 30 years, INRAE and SUEZ have renewed their partnership to advance scientific research in the fields of water, natural resources and climate. The collaboration has already resulted in 10 patent families, 8 doctoral theses, 35 scientific publications and more than 15 national and international conferences. SUEZ and INRAE are therefore continuing their joint efforts to translate scientific research into tangible innovations that benefit territories, citizens, local authorities, farmers and industry.

Amid the profound shifts driven by climate change and the loss of biodiversity, SUEZ and INRAE share a structured vision of scientific research to drive industrial innovation across the water and waste sectors. For 3 decades, joint teams have put this vision into practice through 3 priorities:

- **Circular economy and bioeconomy:** recover residual resources and develop low-carbon value chains for food, energy and agronomy.
- **Climate and resilience:** measure and reduce impacts, and strengthen the management of water and infrastructure to address risks and water stress.
- **Safeguarding resources and health:** detect, monitor and treat pollutants, ensure water reuse, and protect biodiversity and soils.

The renewal of the INRAE–SUEZ partnership for a further five years consolidates their shared agenda, built on scientific excellence, the industrial scale-up of innovations and rigorous assessment of benefits. As part of this renewed agreement, the partners will take concrete steps to maximise research impact and drive industrial innovation:

- Expand shared platforms and full-scale demonstrators on SUEZ and INRAE sites.
- Enhance the mobility of talent and know-how through CIFRE doctoral projects (Industrial Agreements for Training through Research), joint training and inter-team secondments.
- Broaden the innovation ecosystem via targeted calls for proposals, place-based collaborations and greater ambition at European level.

30 years of joint research delivering tangible innovations in resource preservation and recovery

Since the 1990s, SUEZ and INRAE have launched innovative projects focusing on key themes for the ecological transition of territories:

- Advancing anaerobic digestion solutions for organic matter that cut infrastructure costs — reducing digester volumes by up to 35% — while improving operational safety and, in turn, securing energy recovery from wastewater and organic waste treatment.
- Launching co-supervised PhD projects between INRAE and SUEZ on more sustainable wastewater treatment, improved forecasting of water resources under climate change, and enhanced treatment and recovery pathways for organic waste.

Xavier Girre, Chief Executive Officer of SUEZ, said: *“For over 160 years, SUEZ has placed science at the core of its mission. Our collaboration with INRAE, spanning 30 years, is testament to that*

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commitment. We are proud to work with INRAE — one of Europe’s leading academic research institutes — to harness science as a lever to preserve water, protect the environment and support the development of territories. Our complementary expertise is already delivering tangible industrial innovations. We are determined to build on this momentum together.”

Philippe Mauguin, Chairman and CEO of INRAE, added: *“After five highly productive years of collaboration and achievements, I am delighted that this partnership has been renewed. It underscores our shared ambition to advance R&D programmes that design and develop effective, resource-efficient and sustainable treatment solutions, supporting sustainable development across agriculture, food systems, the environment and the bioeconomy.”*

Innovation at SUEZ:

For 160 years, SUEZ has placed science and innovation at the core of its growth strategy, delivering cutting-edge water and waste management technologies and solutions for its clients. This ambition rests on first-rate research capabilities and close ties with academia, both essential to sustaining rigorous, world-class research in environmental and resource sciences. The Group mobilises 400 researchers and 1,300 experts across 10 research centres of excellence and Research in France and China, and holds a portfolio of 1,842 patents, including 42 filed in 2025. This innovation drive saw SUEZ ranked 37th in 2025, for the second year running, in the Top 50 patent applicants of France’s National Institute of Industrial Property, the only environmental services company to feature.

Partnerships and innovation at INRAE:

As Europe’s leading institute for agronomic and environmental research and among the world’s foremost, INRAE teams work to promote the sustainable development of agriculture, food systems, the environment and the bioeconomy. With 450 direct contracts in place with socio-economic stakeholders (companies, co-operatives, technical institutes, chambers of agriculture, interprofessional organisations, etc.) and leadership of five Carnot Institutes, including one focused on the bioeconomy, INRAE pursues a dynamic partnership and innovation strategy to accelerate the emergence of solutions. Each year, the institute files 140 disclosures of inventions and exploitable results, 30 patents and 8 plant variety certificates. Since 2000, 307 start-ups have been created in connection with INRAE, 107 of them directly spun out of the institute’s research.

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About INRAE:

INRAE, France's National Research Institute for Agriculture, Food and the Environment, is a leading force in research and innovation. It brings together a community of over 10,000 people—8,000 permanent staff and nearly 2,500 project-funded contract staff each year—working across 270 research, service and experimental units in 18 centres throughout France.

A mission-oriented institute, INRAE ranks among the world's foremost research organisations in agricultural and food sciences, plant and animal sciences, and ecology and environmental sciences. It is Europe's leading institute and the second-ranked research organisation worldwide specialising across the entire agriculture–food–environment continuum.

INRAE's ambition is to be a key driver of the transitions required to address major global challenges.

In response to population growth and the challenge of food security, climate change, resource scarcity and biodiversity loss, the institute plays a pivotal role in co-developing sustainable solutions with its research and development partners, helping farmers and all stakeholders across the food and forestry sectors to succeed in these transitions.

About SUEZ:

Faced with growing environmental challenges, SUEZ has been delivering essential services that protect and improve our quality of life for more than 160 years. SUEZ provides its customers with innovative and resilient solutions for water and waste services. With 40 000 employees across 40 countries, the Group works with customers to create value over the full lifecycle of their assets and services, and to drive their low carbon transition. In 2024, SUEZ provided drinking water for 68 million people worldwide and sanitation services for 44 million people. The Group generated 8 TWh of energy from waste and wastewater. In 2024, SUEZ has generated revenues of 9.2 billion euros.

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