

Paris, September 22nd, 2020

SUEZ launches the circular economy blockchain, and support the agricultural transition, the keystone of sustainable food

By 2050, agriculture will have to feed two billion more people, while it will face more and more restrictive imperatives in the future. Agriculture must also optimize food production by scaling down the use of chemical or fossil-based inputs (pesticides, fertilizers, plant health products, etc.). Agriculture needs to be repurposed, now more than ever against the backdrop of the current health crisis. SUEZ aspires to be the preferred partner of its municipal and industrial customers as well as farmers, working together to restore and preserve core elements like water, air and soil. In this context, SUEZ has planned for regulations by launching the circular economy blockchain.

The recent adoption of the French Circular Economy law strengthens the principle that waste is a renewable resource. As such, it confirms the agricultural recovery of wastewater treatment plant sludge. The latter is nitrogen-rich fertilizer, which also contains phosphorus and organic matter that can replace synthetic or mined fertilizers.

The blockchain leverages secure information storage and transmission technology to provide reporting on all wastewater treatment plant transactions. This applies throughout the organic matter value chain, from production to its return to the soil. Such technology ensures full transparency across the industry. SUEZ's SludgeAdvanced® portal boasts a fresh interface that is easy-to-use, providing information to the various stakeholders.

Sludge producers use the digital operating data to independently review the recovery process and proactively monitor developments in their channels. At the same time, it offers farmers a management tool for their input costs, delivering high-quality treated sludge. The blockchain communicates reliable information that is shared within the ecosystem¹. As a tool, it achieves first-class traceability and creates trust between industry stakeholders.

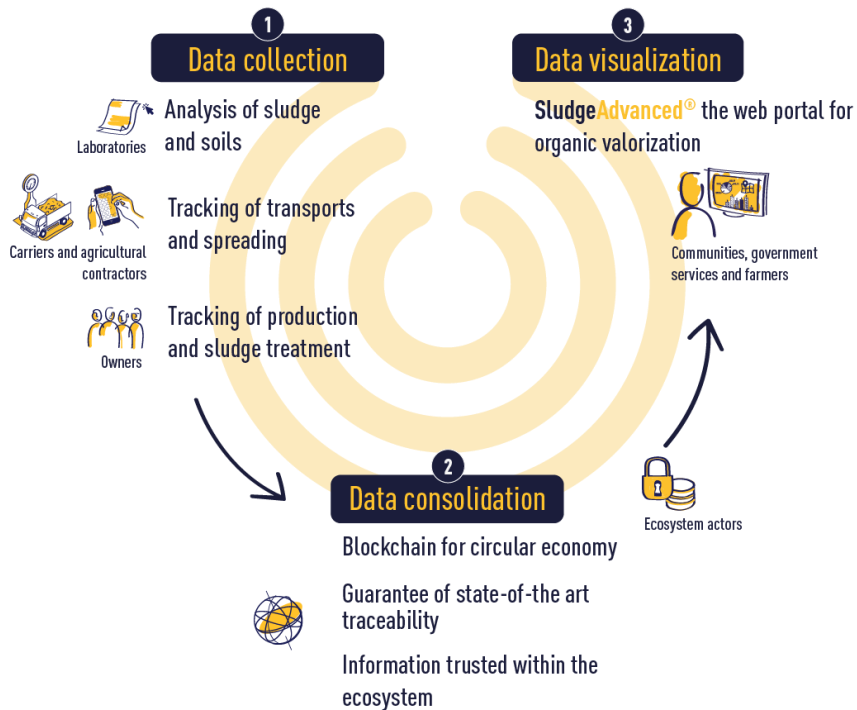
Annual French wastewater treatment sludge recovery avoids production of 6,000 tons of synthetic nitrogen in addition to 8,000 tons of phosphorus mineral extraction. Sludge recovery drives a virtuous cycle, supporting agriculture and limiting shipments as well as water prices. Return-to-the-soil activities reduce the carbon footprint of water and agricultural processing. They also combat the decline in soil organic matter.

By harnessing its proven expertise, the blockchain will soon integrate other traceability chains. To this end, it will increase confidence which is pivotal to the circular economy's success.

The Blockchain and [SludgeAdvanced](#)® marks a further milestone in SUEZ's innovative strategy in organic waste management and digitalization. In 2017, the Group launched [Organix](#)®, the first digital marketplace in France for organic waste. Organix® connects organic waste producers with methanation unit operators to convert waste into energy. In 2019, 64,000 tons of bio-waste passed through Organix®.

Diane Galbe, Group SEVP - Smart & Environmental Solutions BU and Strategy, commented: "Since we are convinced that organic waste return-to-soil activities are more virtuous than exclusively using chemicals, we transform such bio-waste into compost. We recover phosphorus from wastewater treatment plants, which we then recycle as fertilizers that replace mineral phosphates. A key health challenge lies in ensuring transparency between the organic waste supply chains. Our blockchain delivers fully secure and enhanced traceability of fertilizer materials. SUEZ's blockchain technology is the first of its kind in the industry. It strengthens confidence among sludge producers who trust our competitive edge as regards agricultural recovery. As a group, we have developed a robust database, which holds each and every stakeholder accountable. In doing so, we have instilled new confidence."

¹ Includes SUEZ, local community and industrial sludge producers, farmers, labs, carriers, agricultural contractors, French government-owned entities, Water Management Agencies and potential industrial treatment plants



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About SUEZ:

Since the end of the 19th century, SUEZ has built expertise aimed at helping people to constantly improve their quality of life by protecting their health and supporting economic growth. With an active presence on five continents, SUEZ and its 90,000 employees strive to preserve our environment's natural capital: water, soil, and air. SUEZ provides innovative and resilient solutions in water management, waste recovery, site remediation and air treatment, optimizing municipalities' and industries' resource management through "smart" cities and improving their environmental and economic performance. The Group delivers sanitation services to 64 million people and produces 7.1 billion m3 of drinking water. SUEZ is also a contributor to economic growth, with more than 200,000 jobs created directly and indirectly on an annual basis, and a provider of new resources, with 4.2 million tons of secondary raw materials produced. By 2030, the Group is targeting 100% sustainable solutions, with a positive impact on our environment, health and climate. SUEZ generated total revenue of €18.0 billion in 2019.

Find out more about the SUEZ Group
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SUEZ

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