Veolia stimulates social entrepreneurial approaches in the regions

A partner in the environment, and economic and social growth of regions, Veolia contributes worldwide to the emergence of a strong entrepreneurial dynamic around its businesses. In Mexico, Lyon and Toulouse, Veolia is supporting the creation of social enterprise incubators leading to innovative and promising developments.

For many years, Veolia has implemented actions and projects with social stakeholders worldwide. In France for example, it is active in the area of vocational integration with the Campus Veolia training facilities, or through its work with companies such as Elise to collect and recycle paper. It is also the case, again in France, with PIMMS (multiservice mediation & information points), and mechanisms to improve access to water in all developing countries such as the Grameen Veolia Water social business with Mohamad Yunus in Bangladesh.

Capitalizing on this experience, Veolia is now engaging in a new stage in the support it provides cities. Called POP UP, it involves creating social enterprise incubators within their regions.

Focusing on their public service mission, the circular economy and local services, Veolia’s businesses provide fertile ground for innovative systems to aid the development of social enterprises, adding impetus to a movement already under way.

“With POP UP, we are providing a platform where social partners can come and coach young start-ups that already have a promising idea or business just getting off the ground,” explains Eric Lesueur, CEO of INNOVE, Veolia’s new services incubator. “Both a catalyst and a mediator, Veolia makes its businesses available to start-ups to co-build innovative and effective solutions with the assistance of its recognized partners, such as Ashoka, the leading network of social entrepreneurs; ESSEC’s social incubator Antropia, the leader in France; or even Ticket For Change and its social entrepreneur tour of France.”

Social entrepreneur incubators in Toulouse, Lyon and Mexico

Veolia has joined in the Toulouse Métropole approach that has just created “Première Brique” (First Brick), the entry point for support pathways provided to social entrepreneurs. Its aim is to invent new forms of solidarity and create viable companies in the areas of water, waste, smart cities and sustainable cities.

In Mexico, the “SenseCube Agua Urbana” incubator has been created with a focus on urban water issues as a result of a partnership developed by Veolia with social entrepreneur networks MakeSense, Ashoka, Co et la collectivité through Mexico City’s water authority (Sacmex) and the Laboratorio para la Ciudad. Already, five start-up projects have been selected, such as “Conciencia Hídrica,” a start-up that is developing consumption management tools.

In Lyon Métropole (France), Veolia has established a partnership with Ronalpia and Ashoka to incubate social entrepreneurs in areas related to water and waste business in the region. So far, three structures have been incubated: CRESUS Rhône-Alpes (targeting over-indebtedness), IT code training school SIMPLON (to develop new apps for water service customers), and the start-up Vertuose which is seeking multiple outlets for the reuse of objects.
Other examples will follow in other regions. “We will incorporate the feedback from each involvement in the regions as part of a structured and efficient process to create economic and social value,” concludes Eric Lesueur.

Veolia group is the global leader in optimized resource management. With over 179,000 employees* worldwide, the Group designs and provides water, waste and energy management solutions that contribute to the sustainable development of communities and industries. Through its three complementary business activities, Veolia helps to develop access to resources, preserve available resources, and to replenish them.

In 2014, the Veolia group supplied 96 million people with drinking water and 60 million people with wastewater service, produced 52 million megawatt hours of energy and converted 31 million metric tons of waste into new materials and energy. Veolia Environnement (listed on Paris Euronext: VIE) recorded consolidated revenue of €24.4 billion* in 2014.

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(*) 2014 pro-forma figures, including Dalkia International (100%) and excluding Dalkia France.

Contacts

Media relations
Laurent Obadia  -  Sandrine Guendoul
Stéphane Galfré  -  Marie Bouvet
Tel.: +33 (0)1 71 75 19 27
stephane.galfre@veolia.com