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## Veolia Picks Partners: GreenRoad, Ostara and More

By [Jeff St. John](#) Mar. 15, 2011, 2:34pm PT [No Comments](#)

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French environmental engineering giant Veolia [said last year](#) that it would start working with startups that could offer innovations for its water, waste, transportation and energy businesses. On Tuesday, it announced the first five partners, including at least two — smart driving startup GreenRoad and wastewater-to-fertilizer startup Ostara — that could offer immediate assistance in real-world Veolia projects.

The French environmental engineering giant [launched its Veolia Innovation Accelerator \(VIA\) program](#) last year, but Tuesday's announcement at the Cleantech Forum in San Francisco is the first time it has named any partners. Veolia isn't making equity investments in the startups, but with its size and scope — 315,000 employees in 77 countries and annual revenues of about \$46 billion — it still has a lot to offer them in terms of technical support and access to markets.

In the case of GreenRoad, for example, Veolia has been piloting the startup's technology in buses operating in Atlanta, Ga. for the past six months. [GreenRoad's vehicle-embedded computers](#), GPS and cellular connections and web site monitoring system save fuel, reduce emissions and reduce accidents. (See our video interview with GreenRoad for our Green Overdrive show below).



Veolia's transportation projects are significant, and could get even larger as Veolia completes its [merger with French transport giant Transdev](#), which will create a company with sales of 8 billion euros (\$10.6 billion).

Phillipe Martin, Veolia's senior vice president of research and innovation, also said that Veolia could see immediate uses in its wastewater treatment business from startup [Ostara](#), which makes [technology that separates phosphorous from wastewater](#) to turn it into fertilizer. Likewise, Veolia partner [Advanced Cyclone Systems](#), or ACS, a Portuguese startup that separates particles from gases for pollution control or reuse in biomass conversion and gasification projects, will be installing its technology in Veolia biomass-to-energy projects in Europe.

Another Veolia partner is French startup [Envolure](#), which makes environmental diagnostic kits that can detect and identify organic components of waste streams about 10 times cheaper and faster than competing technologies, said Marie-Anne Brodschii, vice president of innovation at Veolia Environment. The startup is looking at designing kits specifically for Veolia and testing them in pilot projects including those Veolia is setting up with Ostara, Yves Dudal, Envolure president and co-founder, said.

The final Veolia partner announced Tuesday, the [CoSMo Company](#), is involved in a more experimental part of Veolia's business — the linking of water, waste, transportation and energy management systems in a city-wide environment. The startup cut its teeth in software modeling of complex systems for the biotech industry, but plans to develop modeling tools for Veolia to use in organizing its business lines into an integrated whole, CoSMo CEO Hugues de Bantel said at the Tuesday event.

That sounds a bit like the work [IBM, Cisco and Microsoft are doing to connect city networks](#) and IT systems into an integrated whole. Veolia is best known for its water and waste treatment expertise, but it's also doing quite a bit of work in smart grid-type systems, including its ["Reflexe" project in southern France](#), where it's integrating systems from French power giant Alstom and French consumer electronics company [Sagemcom](#).

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