

## CASE STUDY 5: – *Latu*



LATU Verde Programme - Management of solid recoverable waste in fulfilment of SDGs 1, 8, 10 and 13.

The LATU Verde Programme has the objective of reducing, **reusing and recycling the waste** generated by the Technological Laboratory of Uruguay (LATU in its Spanish acronym), and looks at the management of solid waste from the laboratory and businesses located in the LATU Technology Park and that of the Fray Bentos Unit on the Uruguayan coast.




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**YEAR, COUNTRY (CITY)**

2018, Uruguay (Montevideo)




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**COMPANY NAME:**

Laboratorio Tecnológico del Uruguay (LATU)




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**ECONOMIC ACTIVITY:**

Innovation, technology transference, analytical services, compliance assessment services, metrological and technological services.




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**COUNTRIES OF OPERATION:**

Uruguay




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**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:**

500




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**COMPANY WEBSITE:**

[www.latu.org.uy](http://www.latu.org.uy)




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**WEBSITE WHERE MORE INFORMATION ON GOOD PRACTICE CAN BE FOUND:**

<http://www.latu.org.uy/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/ReporteSustentabilidad.pdf>




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## CONTEXT

The Technological Laboratory of Uruguay (LATU) is a non-governmental organisation under public law, created in 1965 to provide services aimed at the production chain. LATU is a national and international benchmark in innovation, technological transference, promoting the culture of science and entrepreneurship, and developing technological platforms. Its services extend to Peru, Argentina and Paraguay, among other countries of South America.

Within the framework of its cycle of continuous improvement, in 2010 the LATU Verde Programme was created with the aim of reducing, reusing and recycling the waste generated in the institution. This programme looks at the management of solid waste from the laboratory and from the businesses located in the LATU Technology Park and that of the Fray Bentos Unit on the Uruguayan coast.

### SOME EXAMPLES OF ACTIONS TO MITIGATE THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF LATU ACTIVITY



To implement this, an agreement was drawn up with the Juan Cacharpa Sorters' Cooperative, within the framework of the cooperation agreement for the development of inclusive economic policies signed with the ART-PNUD programme in 2007. The cooperative operates in the area around the laboratory and does the weekly collection of solid recyclable waste, which is then resorted. As this waste has been previously sorted at the LATU facilities, a high percentage of it is marketable material in interme-

diate collection centres or can be recycled at industrial level. Through this programme, LATU participates in drawing up social inclusion policies, proposing a model of working in partnership that helps resolve problems in critical areas of the community.

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## MOTIVATION AND LEADERSHIP

Economic sustainability, socially responsible management and adapting to change are guiding values in the activity of LATU. Aware of the impact of human activity on the environment, LATU optimises its work dynamic to minimise the consumption of energy and water and the use of solvents and reagents, and manages different types of waste. This strategy is embedded in social responsibility with a focus on colleagues, clients, suppliers and society in general, and its progress and results are reflected in sustainability reports available to the public.

The General Management of LATU has been committed to this programme from the outset, with a guarantee which was formalised by assigning the necessary resources to be able to offer support and present the initiative to the whole managerial team of the organisation. Since then, the reach of the waste management programme has also been extended to hazardous and electronic waste. LATU also participates in various programmes to promote and develop circular economy at national level. The relevance to the plastics industry, that involves technicians and stakeholders of the organisation, is a highlight.

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## OBJECTIVES

To create an efficient system to manage solid waste, in accordance with the national norms in force, and an example to be replicated in other institutions, to achieve continuous improvement in the quality of the environment and of social and economic matters both in the immediate location and throughout the country.

This involves taking on a series of specific objectives as a basis and to ensure the continuity of the programme in line with the SDGs. Among these we can highlight:

- Continuously investigating regional and international trends in waste management for the purpose of anticipating or aligning with the needs of the organisation or the state of the art in waste processing and actions to mitigate environmental impact, in accordance with SDG 13.



- Developing a pilot experience to manage cellulosic waste and recyclable packaging to then extend it to the different types of waste generated by the organisation, thus achieving integrated and responsible management, also in line with SDG 13.
- Supporting initiatives of social inclusion through an associative working model, helping suppliers in situations of vulnerability to develop, an objective related to SDGs 8 and 10.

Similarly, LATU participates actively in achieving the objectives of the sorters' cooperative. For example, dignifying the sorting and recycling work as a task whose contribution is essential to the whole community; achieving an improvement in quality of life for the employees involved and their families; and finally, eradicating child labour in their area of operation, actions linked to the SDGs ODS 1, 8 and 10.

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## KEY STEPS

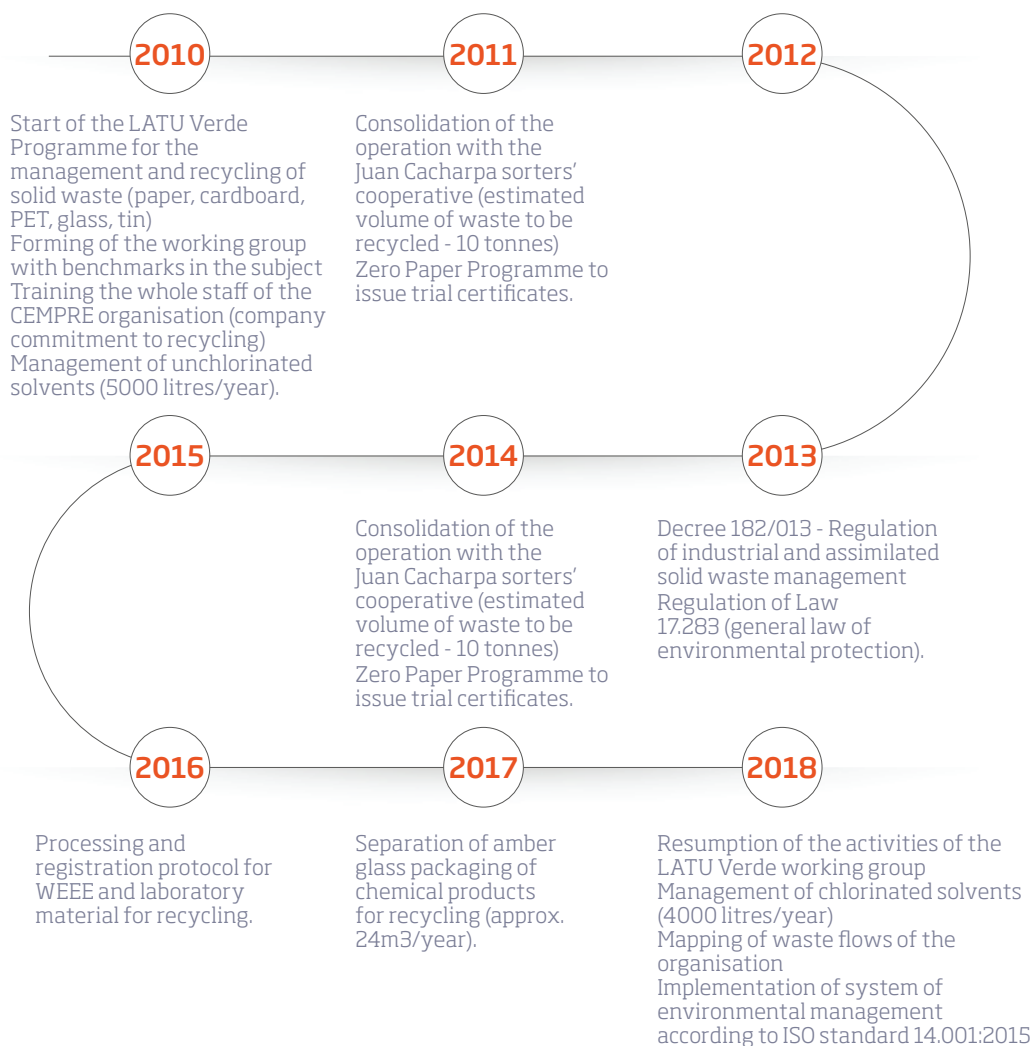
From its beginnings, LATU has incorporated management methodologies and transferred them to stakeholders. Although the term circular economy was not used at national level in 2009, the LATU Verde Programme originated from this rationale. Before implementing the programme, a mapping exercise was done to identify areas and processes in the organisation where improvements could be made to strengthen performance, from the economic, social and environmental points of view. Work was then done to establish the relevant stakeholders when joint initiatives were being created or in order to work on cultural barriers. The following were established as relevant groups: the staff of the organisation, contracted services that interact directly with the cooperative - such as the cleaning and security companies -, the cooperative and associates, other companies that rent offices in the LATU Technology Park, and the local government, as the body that establishes the regulatory standards. One relevant member was the Compromiso Empresarial Para el Reciclaje (CEMPRE) (Business commitment to recycling), an organisation of businesses committed to recycling that offered training and passed on basic knowledge of the subject.

The commitment of the management team was formalised through clear adherence to the programme and by assigning resources to manage and support it. This led to the forming of a multidisciplinary work team with specialists in local development, safety and security at work, communication, maintenance, standardisation and logistics. As for infrastructure, 120- and 240-litre plastic containers were acquired with different colours for different types of waste at each facility. In office areas, cardboard bins for recyclable paper were installed. In order to raise the awareness of the staff of the organisation a series of training sessions were organised by CEMPRE to reach all the staff of the organisation. Through various communication and aware-raising campaigns, the mission, reach and expected results of this programme have been disseminated.

The goals that were set for the programme were to have a single processing system for solid waste from LATU and to make an inventory of the waste from the whole organisation, a clear association of mutual benefit with the sorters' cooperative, the secure destruction of documents with sensitive information from the organisation and decreasing waste and emissions production. To reinforce measurement, work is being done to formalise some quantitative indicators to measure management performance and reinforce the measurement of internal and external impact. The programme's objectives are currently being revised to strengthen the contractual link with the cooperative as a service provider; making the operation more technical and scaling up the volume of work it handles. The new objectives seek to include other companies in the LATU Technology Park in the management of recoverable waste and the use of information technologies for better data handling.

LATU disseminates the results of the programme in the twice-yearly CSR reports. It also takes part in initiatives to promote circular economy at national level. One example is acting as the headquarters of the 2017 Foro de Economía Circular (Forum for the Circular Economy); and from the Centro Tecnológico del Plástico (CTPlas) (Technological Plastic Centre) dissemination and training activities have been created for the industries in the sector.

### EVOLUTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT ACTIONS IN LATU TRIGGERED BY THE LATU VERDE PROGRAMME





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## COMPANY INPUTS AND BENEFITS

To design and improve the programme, a working group was formed with benchmarks in the field of the environment and with delegates from the various areas of the organisation. By virtue of a proactive approach, LATU anticipated the environmental management of the organisation when the national environmental regulations came into force as the law on industrial waste. Implementing the LATU Verde Programme achieved successful separation of solid waste that could be recycled such as paper, cardboard, PET and tin with approximately 800 kg per month. As this is removed by the recycling cooperative with their transport unit, no transport costs are incurred by taking business waste to the points made available by municipal vehicles.



This initiative gave rise to systematic environmental management that spread to other types of waste generated by the organisation. Within the organisational objectives of LATU for 2018 are the certification of environmental management, according to ISO standards ISO 14.001:2015, and the alignment of internal practices with the environmental objectives adopted by organisations of the State. There have also been extensive benefits to the sorters' cooperative. This associative undertaking has had support from the Ministry of Social Development to become a social cooperative, which enables it to formalise its activity. Once the activities with LATU and the Chamber of Industries of Uruguay began, both supported the management of the cooperative in improving the working conditions of their employees.



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## **SOCIAL, ENVIRONMENTAL AND/OR GOVERNANCE BENEFITS**

Developing a methodology to ensure the frequency and minimum amount of the supply of recoverable waste has facilitated the planning and fulfilment of agreed commitments, and reinforced lasting links of mutual benefit between the cooperative and LATU. Training members of the cooperative in areas of management such as working with customers, administration and logistics has formalised their work and given it specialist significance and dignity.

CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have decreased because of the rationalisation of vehicle use, the optimisation of routes between user locations, the frequency of collection of solid recoverable waste and the extension of the lifecycle of these materials, among other factors. The volume of solid waste going to the municipal landfill site has decreased by approximately ten tonnes per year. This last factor has a positive impact on reducing soil pollution.

Developing procedures, as well as communication and awareness-raising campaigns concerning good environmental practice, has enabled actions to be performed in synergy across all areas of the organisation and integrated with other organisations operating in the area which are committed to environmental management



### CYCLE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATED WITH OPERATING THE LATU VERDE PROGRAMME

