

Brussels, 22 October 2012

## Solvay's rare earth recycling technology receives ICIS Award for Best Innovation for Sustainability

Solvay announced today that its Rare Earths Global Business Unit has received the ICIS\* Award 2012 for Best Innovation for Sustainability. The Award acknowledges the efforts for developing and implementing a distinctive recycling technology for the six rare earths contained in the fluorescent powders of used low-energy light bulbs. After recycling and reformulating the rare earths are returned to the low-energy light bulbs producers and reused in the new bulbs, making the life-cycle of these energy savers even more sustainable.

The technology was developed by a team managed by Nicolas Barthel, Head of the R&D Lab and Pilots at the Rare Earths Plant in La Rochelle, Jean-Jacques Braconnier, R&D Engineer for Industrial Process Development, Alain Rollat, Technology Development Manager, and Frederic Carencotte, Industrial Director of the Rare Earths Business Unit. They will receive the Award on December 7<sup>th</sup> in London.

*"We are proud to receive this award that recognizes the efforts of all the team members who cooperated on the design and development of this unique recycling technology,"* said Frederic Carencotte. *"This development clearly consolidates our technological leadership as rare earth formulations supplier. We are now able to offer our customers a closed loop for their fluorescent rare earth powders, which helps them to make their environmental footprints even smaller,"* he added.

Recycling units are already operational in two plants in France, Saint-Fons (Rhône-Alpes) and La Rochelle (Charente Maritime). They recycle the six different rare earths – lanthanum, cerium, terbium, yttrium, europium and gadolinium – contained in the fluorescent powders while preserving all their functional properties. The fluorescent powders that are treated in Saint-Fons are delivered by specialized companies that shred used low-energy light bulbs and separate the components. The plant in Saint-Fons extracts the rare earth concentrate after which the extracted powder is sent for separation to the La Rochelle plant, which has a unique expertise in separation technology unparalleled in Europe. The six rare earths are then reformulated by Solvay into fluorescent precursors to be reused in the manufacture of new lamps.

\* ICIS is a leading global provider of news and information for the chemical and energy sectors.

**SOLVAY** is an international chemical Group committed to sustainable development with a clear focus on innovation and operational excellence. It is realizing over 90% of its sales in markets where it is among the top 3 global leaders. Solvay offers a broad range of products that contribute to improving the quality of life and the performance of its customers in markets such as consumer goods, construction, automotive, energy, water and environment, and electronics. The Group is headquartered in Brussels, employs about 31,000 people in 55 countries and generated EUR 12.7 billion in net sales in 2011 (pro forma). Solvay S.A. (**SOLB.BE**) is listed on **NYSE Euronext** in Brussels and Paris (Bloomberg: **SOLB.BB** - Reuters: **SOLBt.BR**).

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