

ENERGY STORIES

A PRO ALLY Publication



Sophie Zurquiyah
VIRIDIEN

**Our Future
Energy Mix Play
is Asset-Light
and Data-Deep**

**CEO
SHOWCASE**
OCTOBER 2025





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Tunbosun Afolayan (TA), Managing Director at PRO ALLY sat down with Sophie Zurquiyah, CEO of Viridien, at the American Association of Petroleum Geologists (AAPG) 2025 International Conference and Exhibition which held in Rio de Janeiro Brazil, to discuss the company's recent repositioning, its sustainability mandate, how and where a leader in geoscience finds growth in the age of energy transition.

Viridien, the company formerly known as CGG, is no longer the seismic company you knew. It is now a leader in Geoscience, Advanced Technology, Earth data, Sensing & Monitoring, and Digital Solutions focused on helping clients develop their natural resources safely and sustainably.

The conversation with CEO Sophie Zurquiyah revealed a company that acknowledges its past while embracing a new, multi-sector, and asset-light future.

The Great Pivot: CGG Becomes Viridien

TA: Everyone knows CGG as the subsurface data acquisition and processing company. What is fundamentally different about the direction Viridien is taking now?

Sophie: We changed our name and brand to recognize a change in profile. The most significant shift since 2018 has been our exit from the acquisition business. We are now asset-light, focusing on these core areas where we have leading technology and market positions:

1. Geoscience: Processing and imaging of subsurface data.
2. Earth Data: Managing our valuable multi-client data library.
3. Sensing and Monitoring: Providing high-tech solutions for subsurface exploration, structural monitoring, defense, and underwater acoustics.

In short, we moved from being a full-service acquisition company to a full-ecosystem technology and data provider.

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Socializing Energy, Amplifying Impacts through Strategic Communication.

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Sustainability as a Business Driver

TA: How is Viridien approaching sustainability and innovation, particularly since its profile has changed so much?

Sophie: Sustainability is simply non-negotiable. It is what stakeholders, countries, and people expect. As a French company, we operate within a very tight and well-defined regulatory framework, leading to detailed annual ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) reporting.

We approach sustainability from two main angles:

1. Our Own Footprint: We have reduced our absolute carbon emissions by almost 80% since 2019. Since our emissions are primarily tied to the electricity used for our data centers, we can reduce them easily by switching to low-carbon electricity sources.
2. The Ecosystem Contribution: We help our clients reduce their own footprints. By producing the best images of the subsurface, we enable clients to drill fewer wells, drill better wells, and optimize production, directly lowering the industry's overall environmental impact.

This shift in focus, contributing to broader sustainability, is a key reason for our name change. It signals our long-term commitment to developing new businesses beyond oil and gas to support growth.

Beyond Oil & Gas: The New Extractive Focus

TA: In other words, you are really moving from an energy focus to a broader extractive sector focus?

Sophie: When we looked for new businesses, we leveraged our strengths in the subsurface and geoscience and in High-Performance Computing (HPC), which we rely on for our services. We are now leveraging these capabilities to support critical new opportunities.

A major focus is minerals and mining, a sector essential for the electrification of the economy. The world needs so much more copper and other new minerals for the energy transition. Our participation is similar to oil and gas; providing imaging and characterization of deposits, and even real-time monitoring solutions during production to help identify voids and image the subsurface while mining is underway. This is where we provide the supply chain data for the renewable revolution.

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The Challenge of Cyclical

TA: These are indeed great opportunities, but what are the key challenges in moving Viridien toward long-term sustainability and profitability?

Sophie: Volatility has been a key challenge. We operated in a very cyclical business, particularly tied to exploration. Historically, when clients need to save money in the short term, they tend to cut exploration spending because it is a long-term investment. This limits us in our ability to invest in new things. We have to be careful that we are generating the cash in the short term from our core businesses to be able to do these other things. That volatility was not easy to work with.

The Human Angle and Power Skills

TA: What is the human angle to sustainability at Viridien, and how are you carrying the staff along?

Sophie: Our people are our most critical assets. We are a service company, and our technology is created by people who also deliver the services. The feedback from clients is that the real value lies in how our people interact with them.

Hence, we are very selective. We take good care in recruiting and investing in development, making sure the training and career opportunities are there. At Viridien, we focus on gender diversity and ensure fair pay to keep employees engaged in order to do their best work.

TA: What critical soft skills do technical professionals need to succeed at Viridien?

Sophie: We are looking for people who do not settle for average, who are aiming high and are innate problem solvers. I would say, in general, critical thinking is really, really important. We look for people, like PhDs, who don't take things for granted and have to "go deep and dig until they get to the bottom of things."

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Looking Ahead

TA: How do you foresee the future of energy and Viridien's place in it?

Sophie: While I don't have a crystal ball, we all know oil and gas is here for the long run. The industry will continue to figure out how to do it a lot cleaner and better, but oil and gas will continue to be part of the mix, perhaps 50% of the energy mix in 2050. The growth may come from other sources, like solar and wind.

For sure, the future will be a balanced industry, continuing to ensure access to energy and environmental sustainability.

Viridien welcomes people excited by technology and advancing innovation. We are really doing super cool things. Anybody who does not settle for average and wants to push the boundaries of innovation, is welcome at Viridien.

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