

Santander launches the first real-time trades in Spain using we.trade, a blockchain platform that helps companies go international

- Nine leading European banks have founded we.trade, a new digital platform to boost business among companies.
- we.trade carries out its first trades with a small group of companies.

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Banco Santander and the new digital platform we.trade today announced in Spain the first real-time trade transactions among companies using blockchain. Over the past few days, 10 companies have completed seven international trade transactions via various banks across five countries using we.trade. Santander is a founding partner of we.trade, a joint venture owned by nine leading European banks which has developed a new blockchain-based platform with the aim of simplifying financial transactions for companies by addressing the challenge of managing, tracking and protecting domestic and international trade transactions. Santander Spain is already carrying out international trade transactions with several companies.

Many banks and companies are looking for a more efficient and cost-effective way to trade internationally. The we.trade solution, built on the IBM Blockchain Platform, powered by Hyperledger Fabric technology, offers banks' customers access to a user-friendly interface by leveraging innovative smart contracts, and opens up potential new trading opportunities.

Companies and SMEs can negotiate and complete orders, establish the terms of the trade agreement and access the financial services offered on the platform with complete security and trust in the knowledge that the company in the other country is a reliable and proven customer of a we.trade partner bank. The service is completely traceable and fast, and transactions can even include bank payment undertaking (new product), which removes all default risk, something that until now discouraged some companies from internationalising. This new service makes it possible to do business with a larger number of importers and exporters, driving internationalisation.

Roberto Mancone, chief operations officer at we.trade, said: "The we.trade platform is a live blockchain based trade platform. These transactions prove that we.trade is a robust and commercially viable proposition. We are delighted to have launched for the first time in the world, a blockchain based platform that enhances the overall customer experience when trading internationally. The next step will be getting buy-in from additional banks and their customers in Europe and further afield".

Mancone added: "This live trade is a massive achievement for all involved. Not only has we.trade built a technical solution, it has also managed to create real collaboration across multiple banks and increased the connectivity of the trade ecosystem. This really is collaboration at its finest".

we.trade was established by Deutsche Bank, HSBC, KBC, Natixis, Nordea, Rabobank, Santander, Société Générale and UniCredit to address the expectations of their customers and to make cross-border trades more straightforward. The consortium has succeeded in meeting each bank's internal governance and procedures requirements to make this innovation a reality.

Fernando Lardiés, head of Networking Banking at Banco Santander and the bank's representative on the board of directors of we.trade, said: "At Banco Santander, we want to help our clients grow and expand internationally by offering them the best services and technology. we.trade is a great example of how Santander innovates to meet its customers' needs".

This first deployment of this technology within the Santander Group has been carried out at Santander Spain by the Innovation and International Business teams, who selected and accompanied the companies in the first transactions.

Parm Sangha, GBS Blockchain Leader at IBM, stated: "As we.trade has moved from pilot applications to conducting live transactions across borders, it has demonstrated the power of blockchain technology in an enterprise setting. To convene a large network of regulated banks and demonstrate how blockchain technology can help them gain efficiencies and provide greater transparency in live transactions is a disruptive model that has the potential to reshape the future of global trade finance".

we.trade has carried out its first real-time transactions with a small group of companies. Over the coming months it will offer the service to all companies. we.trade is currently available in 11 countries in Europe: Germany, Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Finland, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and the UK. The plan is to expand into further markets in Europe and globally as more banking partners come on board.

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About we.trade

we.trade Innovation DAC is a joint-venture company owned by nine European banks. Started in January 2017 under the name of Digital Trade Chain, the nine-bank consortium officially announced we.trade at last SIBOS, in October 2017. Together with IBM, we.trade has developed a new digital trade platform to simplify trade finance processes for companies by addressing the challenge of managing, tracking and securing domestic and international trade transactions. we.trade develops and licenses the first blockchain trade platform for commercial clients and their banks available in the market. Clients can register to the platform via their banks. 10 major European banks have already guaranteed geographic and client coverage in 11 countries and additional banks will be able to offer we.trade to their clients in the coming months. we.trade was recently awarded 'Most innovative use of Blockchain in the Financial Sector 2018' at Blockchain Expo Europe. For more information on we.trade visit: www.we-trade.com

About Banco Santander

Banco Santander is a leading retail and commercial bank, founded in 1857 and headquartered in Spain. It has a meaningful market share in 10 core countries in Europe and the Americas, and is the largest bank in the euro zone by market capitalization. At the end of 2017, Banco Santander had EUR 986 billion in customer funds (deposits and mutual funds), 133 million customers, 13,700 branches and 200,000 employees. Banco Santander made attributable profit of EUR 6,619 million in 2017, an increase of 7% compared to the previous year.