

# ACT... FOR THE FUTURE

Water stress has become one of the greatest threats to our planet, which seems to be heading towards a foreseeable climate crisis. The success of strategies and policies against climate change requires the incorporation of water management as a strategic vector, and as a priority axis of action. It is a matter of contributing to the transition towards a model that reduces the problems of drought and water deficit, providing efficient solutions for a sustainable future for the planet.

For Aqualia, promoting a fair transition that reduces water and energy consumption, defining a strategy with fewer emissions and getting involved in the recovery and protection of ecosystems are unavoidable obligations to continue guaranteeing the sustainability of the planet. As the company focuses its activity on the end-to-end water cycle, it considers adaptation to climate change to be a crucial point. Therefore, Aqualia addresses this challenge through projects that contribute to combating the three great challenges of caring for the planet: pollution and climate change, water scarcity, and the circular economy.

These commitments are set out in its 2021 Sustainability Report, #Act. In the report, it consolidates its commitment to sustainability and calls for action to tackle, through leadership based on the highest ethical standards, the social and environmental challenges of the decade, which the company addresses in its 2021-2023 Strategic Sustainability Plan (PE-SA), which it maintains as a roadmap. #Act involves completing a three-year



Water is an essential natural resource for life, but at the same time, it is limited and scarce, as only 1% of the water on our planet is accessible and drinkable.

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cycle of listening and conversation with its stakeholders to respond to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A work materialised in the trilogy of reports "Listen" (2019), "Talk" (2020) and now "Act" (2021), and which responds to the request of all stakeholders to take action.

Over the past year, the company has carried out a new global listening process, involving all its stakeholders in LATAM, Europe, MENA, and the United States. A total of 5,700 people were consulted, and their opinions were incorporated into the company's 2023 Strategic Sustainability Plan, to build common goals and take on board the challenges in terms of the global agenda in each of the 17 countries in which it operates.

With this report, the company highlights its performance in each of the seven lines of the PESA, which have led to the achievement of three major milestones in 2021: internationalisation (the company is consolidating its position as an international manager of the end-to-end water cycle); digitalisation (a key axis that must provide value to customers, and closely linked to the third milestone); and sustainability (making progress in achieving the goals set out in the 2023 Strategic Sustainability Plan and taking this to all the territories where the company operates). These milestones have been achieved thanks to the promotion of the "Aqualia culture", which includes values such as transparency, sustainability, equality, and diversity, among others. A clear example is the Compliance model, already implemented in 96% of the



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organisation, a percentage that the company wants to increase to 100% by 2023.

### Energy optimisation and emissions reduction

In the Aqualia 2021 Sustainability Report, Aqualia uses data to show the impact of its management on the sustainability of the resource and on the environment in which it carries out its activity. Thus, it has promoted the Aqualia Water Analytics project (which in turn integrates the GEO geographic information system, Aqualia GESRED and the Scada Platform), which is available to administrations and citizens for the intelligent management of the end-to-end water cycle and more efficient consumption.

The company also prioritises work on energy optimisation and emissions reduction. Thus, in 2021 it has focused on achieving this target objective in 2023: that 50% of

energy comes from renewable sources, and to measure the carbon footprint in 100% of the countries where it operates. In relation to greenhouse gas emissions, the company has reduced them by 4%.

### A 3% year-on-year decrease in energy consumption

Reducing the energy consumption of the facilities has been a strategic line for Aqualia for years. As a result, the company works with the objective of continuous improvement in its optimisation. The response to the climate challenge focuses on energy management with four lines of action: calculation of the carbon footprint by country, improvement of the energy efficiency of the facilities, use of renewable energies, and transformation of its fleet of vehicles.

All this effort is reflected in the calculation of the company's carbon footprint in accordance with the guidelines of the



## 2021 Aqualia's Sustainability Report, #Act, is a call to action to face the social and environmental challenges of the decade



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UNE-ISO Standard. In the last year, the measures adopted have led to a 7% reduction in emissions compared to the previous year. Once again, the Spanish Climate Change Office has recognised the reduction of the footprint for the three-year period 2017-2019.

Every four years since 2016, Aqualia subjects a set of production facilities that consume more than 85% of the company's total consumption to energy audits (in

accordance with the ISO 50001-Energy Management Systems standard). Aqualia takes advantage of the opportunities for improvement detected in these audits and applies them to its operations. As a result of this dynamic work, the total energy consumed was reduced by 3% in 2021.

### **Commitment to clean energy**

Aqualia is firmly committed to a transition towards more sustainable ener-

gy sources. In the development of its concession activity in municipalities of all sizes, urban and rural, the company provides these populations with technologically advanced, sustainable facilities adapted to the characteristics of each territory. In this way, the company is extending its commitment to municipalities, facilitating their energy transition, reducing their carbon footprint, and meeting targets to mitigate the effects of



Nos encontramos en una era de incertidumbre en la que algunos acontecimientos hasta ahora inimaginables suceden a un ritmo vertiginoso. El estallido de la guerra en Ucrania, cuando todavía no hemos superado la pandemia, se une a los retos en materia de sostenibilidad que afrontamos como personas y como profesionales.

No ajeno a un contexto que nos pone a prueba se encuentra el agua, un recurso vital, y la correcta gestión de su ciclo integral condiciona muchos de los propósitos globales a los que como sociedad nos enfrentamos: los medioambientales, como la adaptación al cambio climático, la protección de la biodiversidad o el acceso a energías renovables; los sociales, como la accesibilidad al agua para personas y familias vulnerables y la concienciación social en cuanto al desarrollo económico de la misma; así como el desarrollo económico, puesto que la optimización de la gestión del ciclo del agua, su calidad y disponibilidad permiten mejorar el desarrollo y la calidad de vida de millones de personas.

En el siglo XXI el acceso universal al agua debe estar consensuado. Sin embargo, hoy más que nunca vemos amenazado nuestro derecho de acceso a este recurso tan vital a causa del cambio climático y el estrés hídrico, la contaminación, la falta de concienciación sobre el uso del agua, etc. ¿Cómo afronta Aqualia este momento tan convulso?

Es un escenario como el actual la respuesta no puede ser otra que la de actuar. Para Aqualia, actuar en nuestra posición como líderes en el sector, significa comprometernos de que nuestra forma de hacer y gestionar afecta directamente al bienestar de todos.

En este momento trascendente se demanda que haga posible reencontrar el equilibrio que necesitamos. Sin duda, el peso de la agenda geopolítica y la propia estrategia gestionada a través de los fondos de recuperación, movilización del capital público que, junto

climate change. In this way, in 2021, the projects initiated in 2020 continued to be developed, including:

The PPA (Power Purchase Agreement) to purchase 76 GWh per year of renewable energy (photovoltaic) for the next 9 years, which is estimated to reduce emissions by around 15,200 tCO<sub>2</sub> e/year.

The first phase of the project to install 3.2 MWp of photovoltaic panels has been completed, which will supply

26 consumption points, with an expected annual production of 5 GWh/year, which will result in a reduction of GHG emissions of around 1,000 tCO<sub>2</sub> e/year.

In 2021, the second phase of solar panel installation has also begun, which aims to reduce a further 820 tCO<sub>2</sub> e/year, through the installation of 3.14 MWp of photovoltaic panels, which will supply 52 consumption points. Within this measure, it is worth highlighting the installation of a

0.84 MWp photovoltaic park at the La Cartuja WWTP in Jerez de la Frontera.

However, in the last year, Aqualia reduced its consumption of fossil fuels by 12%, while 32% of the renewable energy used came from its own installations, PPA or purchase, out of the total energy consumed.

#### **Decarbonisation of the vehicle fleet**

Among the energy efficiency measures implemented as part of the plan to re-





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duce the carbon footprint, the line relating to transport is key due to its enormous impact on climate change. In this regard, Aqualia is immersed in a progressive renewal of the fleet of light vehicles for less polluting ones to meet its target set for 2022: the renewal of 90 of these vehicles.

In 2021, it also continued to develop innovative solutions to decarbonise its fleet:

★ *AD-VISor project: generation and supply of biomethane to vehicles:* this project enables the revalorisation of fatty waste from the livestock industry through its transformation into high added value bioproducts. The increase in biogas production during this process, and its enrichment with the ABAD Bioenergy® process, has made it possible to supply biomethane to service vehicles.

★ *Climate Project for a sustainable economy:* the third verification of the Climate Project of the Carbon Fund for a Sustainable Economy (FES-CO2), which aims to contribute to the construction of a low-carbon na-

tional production system, has been carried out.

★ *Innovation in municipal vehicles:* in 2021, 7% of the total fleet of vehicles in Spain was renewed with low CO2 emissions.

In the development and implementation of these initiatives, it is essential to understand the needs of each territory and its citizens and, consequently, to apply the best solutions adapted to achieve the objectives. In some cases, the key lies in the development of innovative technologies and responsible solutions in the end-to-end water cycle, which involve reducing consumption, generating clean energy and/or reducing environmental impact, with special interest in the fight against climate change.



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