

# IGNACIO MORCILLO

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER - WATER AT MINSAIT (INDRA)

## Minsait: Driving digitalisation in the water sector

**The water sector is facing more extreme challenges every day. Valuing and emphasizing the importance of this sector's activity is key, especially as more countries will experience water stress. Public-private collaboration has been a successful tool, and we must continue to promote these partnerships to achieve the objectives ahead of us.**

 ÁGUEDA GARCÍA DE DURANGO -  GONZÁLEZ-CEBRIÁN

Minsait, as Ignacio Morcillo, Business Development Manager for Water, tells us in this complete interview, supports the sector by offering its capabilities and solutions in the field of digitalisation.

**First of all, we would like to know your professional background up to the position you currently hold.**

My professional career has been linked to the water sector from the beginning. When I finished my degree in Agricultural Engineering at the Polytechnic University of Madrid, I obtained a scholarship to do my Final Project in Chile on wastewater treatment issues.

I started working at Canal de Isabel II – the water utility in Madrid – managing projects related to the water-energy nexus. It was then that I decided to specialise in the water sector, doing a Master

in Water Management and Technology taught by Aqualogy-UPC (nowadays Water School), where I had the opportunity to meet great water professionals. During those years, I participated in the creation of the Spanish chapter of the Young Water Professionals of the IWA.

Subsequently, I have worked in companies that offer advanced technological solutions for the digitalisation of water services. This has allowed me to know the market in Spain, UK and LATAM.

To complement my education, I recently graduated from IESE's Executive MBA. Interested in future digitalisation strategies, I joined Minsait, a Spanish multinational company, a leader in digital technology.

**As Global Business Development Manager - Water at Minsait, what would you say are the objectives of the department you lead?**

At Minsait, we want to serve the water market, taking into account our capacity in other sectors. Within this market, I am responsible for the water unit, from which we deal with projects in the water sector at an international level, with a significant presence in Spain, the Philippines and LATAM.

Our main objectives at the water unit are to identify the needs of the sector to generate the right offer as well as the needs of our individual clients, in order to help them prioritise and undertake their digitalisation projects as part of the digital transformation of their companies.

To this end, we rely on product management and on other companies in our group to offer a suite of solutions based on the Onesait platform and specific technologies suited for the operation of processes in both water supply and sanitation. We work on the integration of measurements, data processing (ML, AI...), and modernisation of applications. We also provide consulting services for transformation and change management projects and we are strategic partners of the leaders in business software (CRM, ERP...).

**How is the company driving the activities of the water sector?**

We truly believe that the sector has tremendous potential, both in Spain and globally, due to the challenges we face in terms of sustainability, extreme weather phenomena and climate change.

In this context, within Minsait, more resources are being allocated to advance the sector, adapting the entire portfolio of solutions to the new market demands. All the technology, experience and knowledge acquired over the years in sectors which are further advanced in terms of digitalisation is enabling us to position ourselves with a strong value proposition for the water sector.

**"Transparency with the user is fundamental for progress in the water sector. We must make it visible and value the sector's activity"**





## Supporting companies in their digital transformation is essential to obtain the desired results and manage change



For example, in the electricity sector we are working on the Siord Project, an information system for distribution networks that allows us to interconnect the information from the systems of the different operators in real-time. This type of project is fully transferable to the management by public water authorities.

**We are currently going through a crisis that is resulting in rising energy costs. How do you think this increase is affecting the water sector?**

Unfortunately, the current energy crisis is seriously impacting operators. Many of the operating contracts that are in place are becoming unsustainable due to the increase in energy costs and inflation. We must take into account that the average energy consumption of integrated water cycle management is close to 1 kWh/m<sup>3</sup>. Desalination and wastewater treatment, because of the processes involved, are the most energy-intensive services water utilities provide.

These types of operations are the most critical nowadays and those that are suffering the most in order to be able to provide their services. Precisely in the area of wastewater treatment, I would like to highlight our product Oblysis, a disruptive technology that makes it possible to reduce the energy consumption of the

biological process of activated sludge in a WWTP by up to 40%. This energy-saving measure can be integrated into a global energy management platform that allows operators to continuously monitor and optimise their operations to increase energy efficiency.

**Minsait is a strategic partner for companies going digital. How would you describe the process of providing support to these companies?**

Indra is one of the leading global technology and consulting companies, a technology partner for the key operations of its clients' businesses around the world. In this sense, we not only work by offering our own digital solutions or implementing software from strategic partners, but also, thanks to our extensive experience worldwide, we provide excellence in end-to-end support to our clients.

Some of the hallmarks of the company are a solid analysis of the starting points combined with realistic objectives, continuous monitoring, improvement analysis and post-implementation support.

We specialise in prioritising digital projects, articulating transformation offices and collaborating with companies in change management. Throughout the process of digitalisation of water companies, I am certain that new talent will



be attracted, facilitating the coexistence of very different profiles with different needs and aspirations, which are essential for the transformation.

**Cybersecurity is a key issue when it comes to digitalisation. What role does it play at Minsait, and what projects are being carried out in this regard?**

Cybersecurity has been part of Minsait's core solutions since its inception. However, two years ago, with the acquisition of the company SIA, it has become one of the company's strategic commitments. SIA is an international leader in cyberse-



curity and offers differentiating solutions and services in the market. With this incorporation, our team has more tools to support our clients and advise them in their implementations with a 360° vision and with a commitment to sustainability and the continuity of public services.

We are undertaking very diverse projects such as the implementation of cybersecurity plans, business continuity plans or digital signature projects. Let's not forget that the water sector has critical infrastructure that must be properly secured in the convergence between OT and IT, to avoid undesirable cyber attacks.

**In which countries does Minsait operate in the water market? What are your growth prospects in this regard?**

We are present in more than 140 countries around the world, working on different projects simultaneously. Within the water sector, we have a significant presence in LATAM and the Philippines, but we are also working in other geographies through projects dealing with a diversity of topics. We currently have projects in countries such as Italy, Chile, Brazil, Peru, Mexico, the Philippines and Spain, among others.

Although the growth of the company is fundamentally organic, in 2019 we ac-

quired the US company Advanced Control Systems, adding to our current offer our own manufacturing of SCADA and network operating systems. With this acquisition, our presence in the United States also gains great relevance, with the possibility of attending new opportunities.

**Finally, how does digitalisation improve operational efficiency?**

Digitalisation is a process that, among other things, seeks to reduce the operating costs of water services in the long term, diagnose with greater certainty and help to achieve better planning. Investing in digitalisation is a strategic commitment, promoted by Europe and being adopted by leading companies.

If we compare the water sector with the electricity sector, we could say that it is lagging behind in digitalisation. This can be explained by the fact that water management is usually the responsibility of local governments and, with some exceptions, there are no economies of scale. However, there are many similarities between the two sectors. All the digital solutions that have already proven to improve management in the electricity sector can be replicated in the water sector. Asset and infrastructure management, many of them critical, are a core activity. The challenges and needs of industrial plants are similar, and the obsolescence of networks, the need for modernisation, maintenance optimisation, and digitalisation of processes... are similar.

Transferring the successful experiences of other utilities is a challenge ahead of our team, dedicated to offering solutions to the water sector.

**"Minsait is allocating more resources to advance the sector, adapting the entire portfolio of solutions to the new market demands"**