

Saur, the unseen partner in our everyday lives

An investigation and booklet by artist Muriel Douru



■ Foreword

As an author and illustrator of documentary graphic novels, I often work alongside grassroots stakeholders with a real commitment to **community and social cohesion** (I have worked collaboratively with the NGO Médecins du Monde, the Loire Atlantique Education Service, Mission Locale in Besançon and the Nantes Public Health Agency, for example).

As a water system operator, Saur provides a **public utility** service that remains unseen and taken for granted by many people. So it was with great enthusiasm that I accepted the Group's invitation to explore all aspects of what it does as the basis for creating an illustrated deliverable that would unite the company and its partners around a **shared vision for protecting our oceans**. The project also aims to draw on the feedback and experiences shared by Group employees to shape **transformative visions** for the future.

The booklet you are now holding is the result of that work. It contains the distilled learnings gained from my site visits and discussions with Saur group people in Vannes, Issy-Les-Moulineaux, La Baule, Milan and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. Conceived as a thought-provoking source of information, it acts as a bridge between field employees and their head office colleagues, and between the business lines of the Group. It highlights the tremendous **human energy** that drives this miracle we no longer think consciously about: the constant supply of high-quality water directly into our homes.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Saur group for commissioning me to carry out this **exciting project**, as well as all the welcoming and enthusiastic people I met in the course of my exploration, and who put their trust in my ability to tell their stories.

Enjoy your reading!

Muriel Douru

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Our oceans, a world under threat

Our oceans cover **70%** of the Earth's surface, produce more than half the oxygen we breathe, and directly feed 3 billion people.

So its health is clearly essential to our survival.

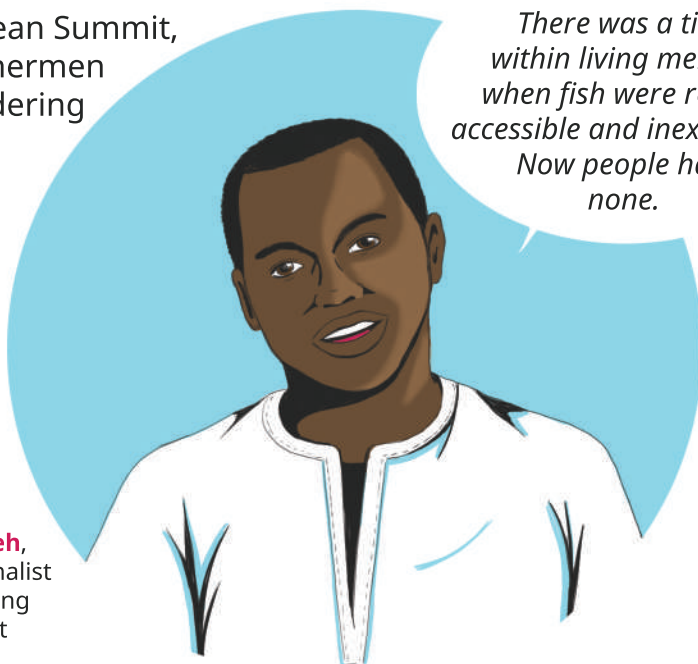


Now a major stakeholder in the global economy, it generates 61% of the world's GDP, but not in a fairly balanced way.

At the 2025 World Ocean Summit, traditional African fishermen condemned the plundering of their waters by large-scale Western and Chinese fishing companies.

There was a time within living memory when fish were readily accessible and inexpensive. Now people have none.

Mustapha Manneh,
Investigative journalist
and Gambian fishing
community activist



Before 1975 and the effective introduction of the London Fisheries Convention, there were no international controls to prevent marine pollution or the dumping of hazardous materials into our oceans. To give you an example, estimates suggest that there are around 200,000 barrels of radioactive waste at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean.



But pollution of our seas has not stopped since then; quite the contrary, in fact.

From chemical to acoustic, luminous and plastic invasion, the seabed is subject to many human-imposed stresses.



The equivalent of a garbage truck's worth of plastic is being dumped into our oceans every minute!

At the current rate of pollution, there will be more plastic than fish in our oceans by 2050.



Saur, a company dedicated to our most vital resource

From field technicians to managers, everyone at Saur agrees that water is much more than a marketable product; it is **the cornerstone of its identity**. Water resources are crucial from operational, economic, social, and environmental perspectives.



Water is an incredible subject and the people I've met are passionate about it. When a town or city experiences flooding, 200 skilled people respond immediately. They could easily be likened to firefighters, but they're not valued in the same way as firefighters. They also provide a constant daily service, because when we turn on the tap, our guys are there behind the scenes managing that flow.

Patrick Blethon,
Executive chairman
of the Saur group

The company exists to manage the water cycle, from drinking water treatment and supply to sanitation and wastewater treatment, in the knowledge that it is delivering a vital public **service mission**.

We have the continual responsibility to manage water, an essential and vital public resource that is under considerable stress, particularly as a result of climate change and its effects.



Estelle Grelier,
CEO of Saur France

The **attachment** that the Group employees have to water resources transcends geographical boundaries. It is reflected, from field technicians to managers, in a shared environmental awareness, which is unanimously held, though it is expressed with varying degrees of intensity depending on individual experience.



*Water is insanely precious,
but we know that it's becoming more scarce.
The purpose of regulation is not to save
the planet, because the planet doesn't need us.
It's more about saving
humanity.*

Bénédicte Peyrol, Group Vice-president of CSR,
Strategy, Communication, Marketing
and Public affairs,
France

*Nature
has given us a very great deal.
It's now up to us to give something back.
Sustainable development isn't a destination
to be reached, but an unending journey
that must guide every
industrial decision.*

Marzia Chiesa,
Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer,
Sodai, Italy



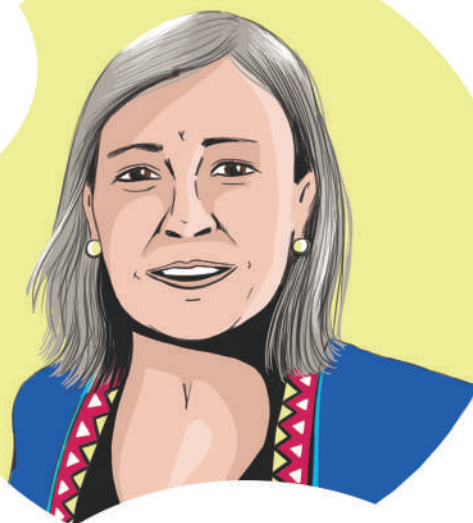
*People just don't know
how water gets to their tap.
They don't think: "It's thanks to Saur
that I can take a shower!" or "Isn't it great
that there are wastewater treatment plants
to deal with my poop!". Considering its true
value and all the work that goes into supplying
it, tap water is cheap, especially when you
compare it with the cost of bottled water.
How many products do you know
that are delivered directly to
your home 24/7?*



Quentin Josso,
Manager of Saur Solidarities, France

*My vision
of the future is complicated
because of the environmental situation,
the challenges are significant,
and we will continue working to avoid
as many problems as possible.*

Mercedes Fernandez Couto Gomez,
General Manager of Emalsa,
Canary Islands



*By 2050, between
40 and 50% of people
around the world will not have
easy access to water: that's an
enormous number and a huge
challenge. It's also why
I joined Saur.*

Etienne Chaigne,
Chief Information Officer, Saur France,
France

*I see the climate changing
and evolving; the seasons are shifting,
summers are getting longer and winters
are warmer. Sandstorms from the Sahara,
which we are used to here in the Canary Islands,
are now much more frequent and last longer.
We have an extremely delicate ecosystem,
dependent on a narrow temperature
range and a stable climate,
and little by little this balance
is being disrupted.*

Miguel Ángel Mendoza de la Nuez,
Manager of Operations, Barranco Seco Wastewater
Treatment Plant (EDAR), Emalsa,
Canary Islands



■ The Canaries, a legacy of water culture

Respect for water resources is even higher among employees living and working on these islands. Not only because they are surrounded by the sea, but also because they have a tradition of struggling to access clean drinking water on a daily basis.



Here in Las Palmas, in our grandparents' time, we did not have water every day of the week. It arrived by boat and was distributed.



Elena Gil Cruz,
Environmental Technician, Emalsa,
Canary Islands

At home, we pay attention to how we consume, how we spend. Water in particular. We buy second hand clothes and phones, mine, for example, is 10 years old!

Jesús Rey de Viñas García,
Technical Director, Emalsa,
Canary Islands

The lack of water and its scarcity in the past few years have meant that people here have a permanent focus on water resources, and the level of that concern is clear from the fact **that water consumption per capita is lower than in mainland Spain.**

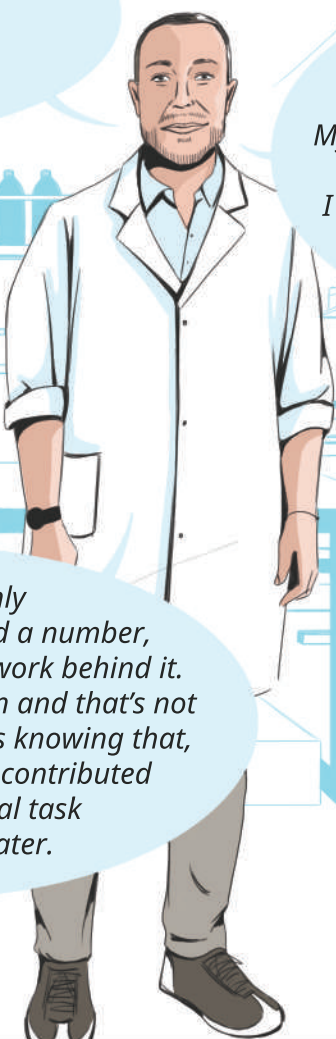


A stylized illustration of a woman with long, dark, wavy hair, smiling. She is wearing a blue collared shirt. The background behind her is a bright yellow circle.

*My parents always said:
"If you're washing your hands,
turn off the tap; while you are soaping
yourself in the shower, turn off the tap!"
And I do the same with
my children.*

Taïda Sebastian Garcia,
Environmental Technician, Emalsa,
Canary Islands

It's hardly surprising that
such a strong heritage has
led to professional vocations
and a keen sense of
commitment.

A stylized illustration of a man with short hair and a beard, wearing a white lab coat over a light blue shirt and grey trousers. He is standing in a laboratory setting with shelves of bottles and equipment in the background.

*Water is my world,
that's how it is.
I love the beach,
I like knowing what
I eat and drink.*

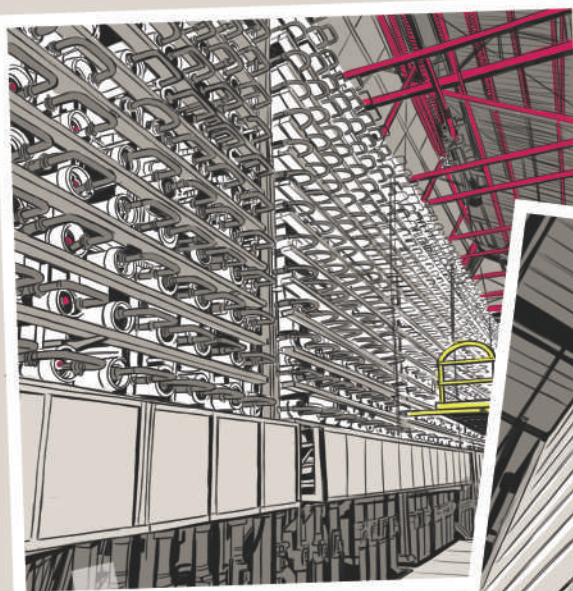
*For me,
that's essential
and that's my job.
My daily motivation is to work
in the laboratory because
I must guarantee the quality
of the water
we produce.*

*Customers only
see a piece of paper and a number,
but they don't realize the work behind it.
This work is not well known and that's not
a problem. What matters is knowing that,
at the end of the day, I contributed
to the fundamental task
of protecting water.*

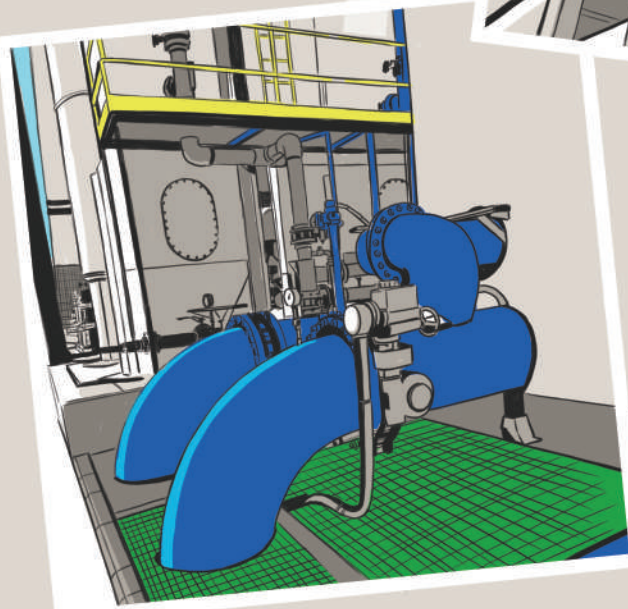
A red arrow pointing from the text block to the illustration of Antonio Rosales Coya.

Antonio Rosales Coya,
Laboratory Technician
at the Integral water cycle
analysis and quality control
center in Gran Canaria,
Emalsa, Canary Islands

This sense of responsibility is felt all the more keenly in these islands, where everyone **depends** on the company's facilities. The EDAM LP III (Estación Desaladora de Agua de Mar Las Palmas 3) desalination plant supplies **80%** of the water consumed by the 300,000 residents of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, the largest city in the Canary Islands.



This plant showcases state-of-the-art reverse osmosis technology, whose reliability is a source of pride for employees.



Gigantic reservoirs store enough water to guarantee 5 days' supply for the island's residents, but this level of dependence on one desalination plant puts its maintenance under **considerable pressure**, and has led the local authorities to commission a second facility on the other side of the city.

The Canary Islands' economy is heavily dependent on tourism, and Emalsa employees regret the fact that the precious value they place on water as a result of their culture and the work they do is rarely understood or appreciated by the tourists who visit here year-round.

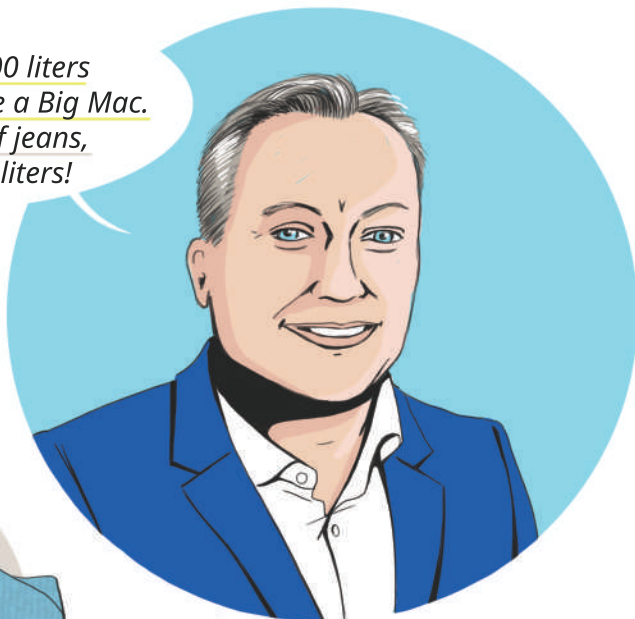
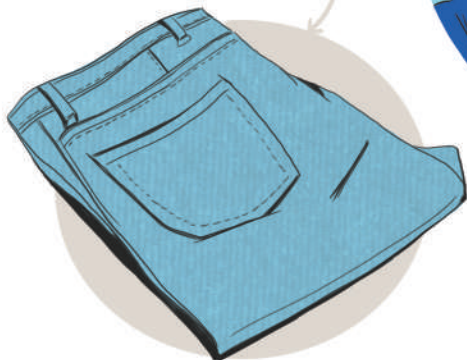
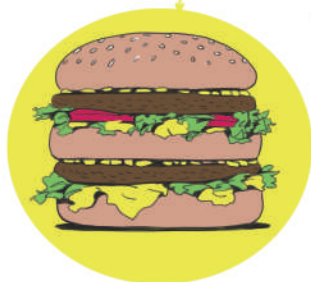
While I was showering in my Las Palmas hotel the evening after I visited the plant, I had a revelation.



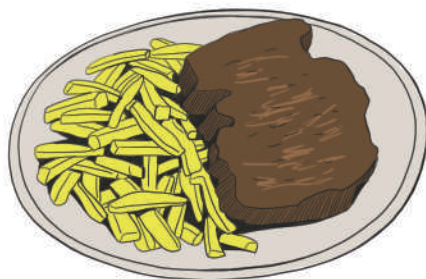
The iceberg below the surface

But water consumption is about a lot more than what comes out of our taps. A colossal amount of water is used for purposes we can't see and rarely think about. It is the water that goes into manufacturing the products we use every day.

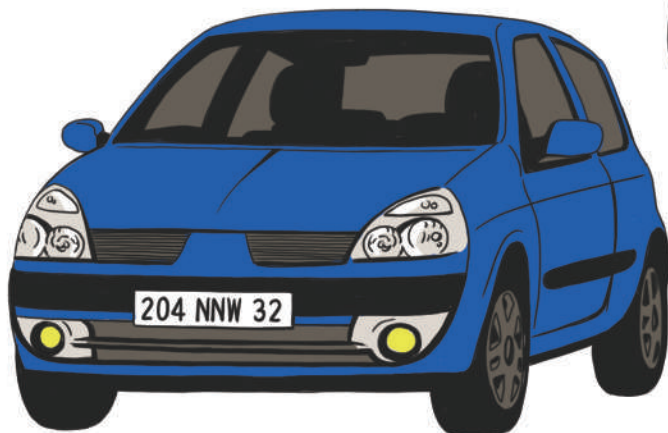
*It takes 2,400 liters
of water to make a Big Mac.
For a pair of jeans,
it's 10,000 liters!*



Patrick Blethon, Executive chairman
of the Saur group



One steak = 1,500 liters of water



Producing one car
= 35,000 liters of water



One pair of leather shoes
= 8,000 liters of water

The strategic challenges posed by industry and agriculture

Household consumption represents only a very small share of total water consumption compared with the **two largest consumers**.

▶ **70% of water is used by agriculture and 20% by industry.**

These sectors are therefore identified by the Group as markets offering **economic growth opportunities** and ecological challenges, while also stimulating innovation.

In Italy, one of Sodai's key facilities treats water used by primary rail operator Trenitalia to clean its trains and remove graffiti. The water used by the railway company is initially drinking water, but Sodai advocates for trains to be washed with treated and recycled water.

We are working to support the evolution of regulatory frameworks, encouraging water-intensive industrial sectors to integrate water sustainability pathways into their business models and long-term strategies.

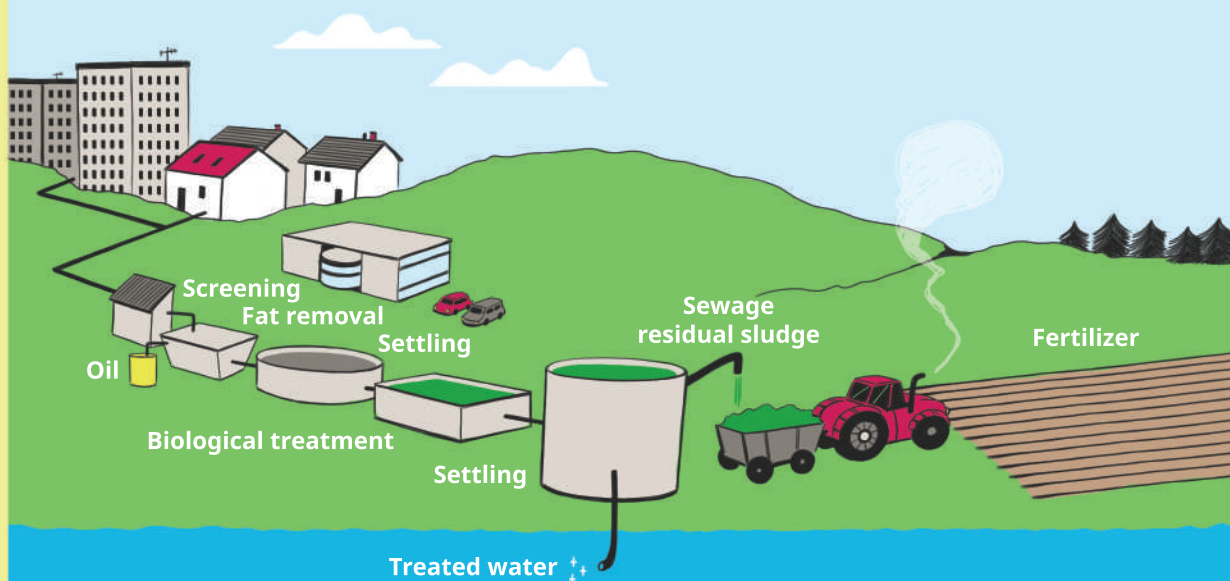
Marzia Chiesa,
Chief Strategy
and Sustainability
Officer, Sodai,
Italy

Like industry, agriculture also plays a central role in the Group's thinking, not only because it is the main consumer of water resources, but also because it is a source of complex pollution and offers a market for the circular water economy.

In **Spain**, water leaving wastewater treatment plants having passed through a series of rigorous quality controls is used to irrigate farmland.

In France, strict regulations mean that this use of treated water accounts for less than **1%** of all treated wastewater. Long-awaited by the agricultural industry, fields may now be irrigated with treated wastewater thanks to a 2024 relaxation of regulations.

Conversely, **sewage sludge** recovery is not permitted in the Canary Islands.



An essential partner in the water cycle, whether through the absorption of recycled water or the use of residual sludge as fertilizer, agriculture is a priority issue subject to cultural resistance and... political decision-making.



We serve industry and agriculture in two ways: we produce water to a specific quality, because there are many standards to be met in the manufacture of pharmaceuticals, and we also treat water leaving the production site, because all water discharged into the natural environment must comply with standards. For example, the controversial Duplomb law in France enabled a highly dangerous pesticide to be released back into the network, so we now have to treat that as well.

Bénédicte Peyrol, Group Vice-president of CSR, Strategy, Communication, Marketing and Public affairs, France

It's a particularly thorny issue since the final clear-up bill is not shared equally.

The current model is less than fair, because domestic users are paying for industrial water use and a large proportion of the water used by agriculture. It's for this reason that we are campaigning for a governance structure that includes the full range of regional and local stakeholders.



Estelle Grelier, CEO of Saur France

Awareness of the essential role we play for communities

As we've seen, managing a resource as precious as water is a source of great satisfaction for Group employees. The respect this inspires flows down from the highest levels of the management structure...

Patrick Blethon,
Executive chairman
of the Saur group



During the Covid pandemic, doctors, nurses and other medical staff were on the frontline of keeping everyone safe, but who were right behind them as a second line of defense? Our field operations staff.

Estelle Grelier,
CEO of Saur France

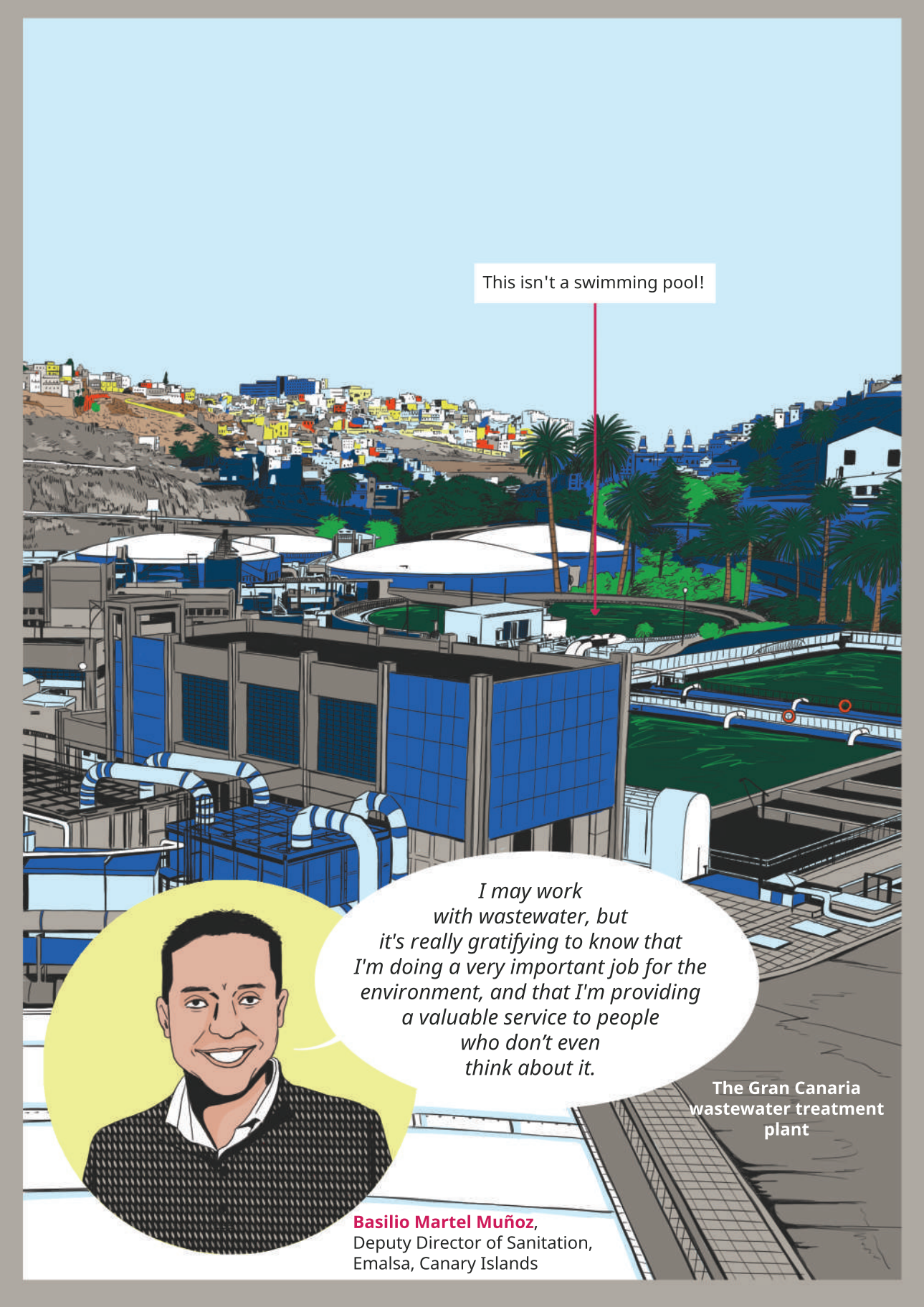
Our employees are the firefighters who are resisting the effects of climate change all day every day. Their awareness of the issues involved is much higher than you might think.

... right down to frontline operations staff.

Mickaël Roseau,
Leak detector,
Saur France,
France



We feel like we've done a great job when we locate a leak, and we're even happier when it's fixed, because then we'll know how many cubic meters of water we've saved from being wasted.



This isn't a swimming pool!



*I may work
with wastewater, but
it's really gratifying to know that
I'm doing a very important job for the
environment, and that I'm providing
a valuable service to people
who don't even
think about it.*

The Gran Canaria
wastewater treatment
plant

Basilio Martel Muñoz,
Deputy Director of Sanitation,
Emalsa, Canary Islands

Saur, a necessary but unseen company

The invisibility of the service they deliver is a recurring theme among the Group employees.

They often regret the fact that the public is unaware of the complex logistics, maintenance and uncompromising controls essential for continuous delivery of the one resource essential to their survival.



*Local residents
see drinking water as a fact of life.
They are unaware of the logistics,
maintenance and controls essential
to their continued existence.*

**Juan Carlos
Mayor Gonzalez,**
Instrumentation
technician for drinking
water and sanitation,
Emalsa, Canary Islands

**Pierre
Jacquemot,**
Group Energy Manager,
France

*The service we deliver
is absolutely essential. If your cell
phone stops working, you can do without it,
but when there's no drinking water
and the toilets don't work,
it's a bit more urgent!*



Skills that are essential... but undervalued

The frequently expressed satisfaction around working in a **socially useful** job cannot mask the strains felt by field operations staff.

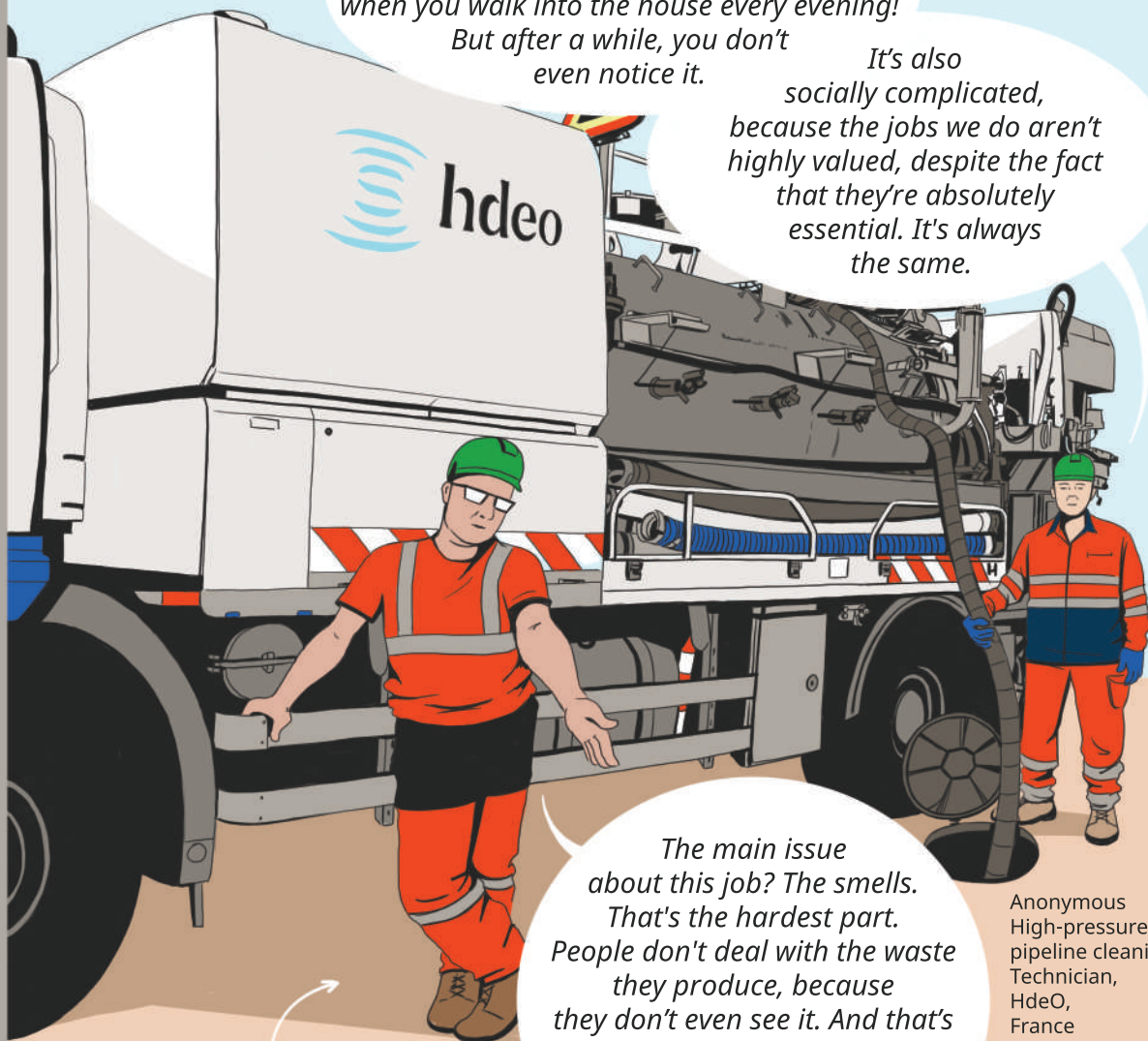
*The smell is a pain
in the ass for the first 3 or 4 months,
especially when your wife yells at you
when you walk into the house every evening!
But after a while, you don't
even notice it.*

*It's also
socially complicated,
because the jobs we do aren't
highly valued, despite the fact
that they're absolutely
essential. It's always
the same.*

*The main issue
about this job? The smells.
That's the hardest part.
People don't deal with the waste
they produce, because
they don't even see it. And that's
the way they like it. It's a way
of delegating their problems
to others.*

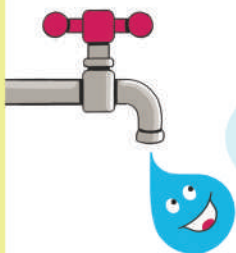
Jacky Benoit,
High-pressure pipeline
cleaning Technician,
HdeO,
France

Anonymous
High-pressure
pipeline cleaning
Technician,
HdeO,
France



Saur, managing ecology at the source

The company's environmental responsibilities are indivisible from the vital resource it manages, and are focused on efficiency and the circular economy. The main areas in terms of efficiency are **water conservation and lower energy consumption**.



I'm so precious that Saur does everything it can to recover or reuse me!

Our economic model has been based on the assumption that 'the more people consume, the greater our revenue is', but we've now moved away from that model, because we can see that it is finite.

We now encourage people to protect and conserve water resources so that we don't collectively saw off the branch we are all sitting on.

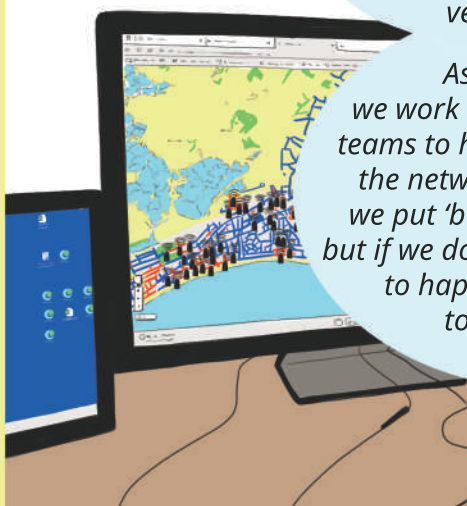


Estelle Grelier,
CEO of Saur France

From leak detection to the use of AI, everything we do is aimed at achieving high rates of network efficiency.

We are currently at 91% network efficiency in this sector, which is a very good level!

As leak detectors, we work closely with the repair teams to help reduce losses from the network. Most of the time, we put 'band-aids' on the leaks, but if we don't want the same thing to happen again, we have to lay new pipes.



Mickaël Roseau,
Leak detector,
Saur, France

The challenge of reusing water is a constant priority. It's an effective solution for coping with future water stress, but its use in practice varies from one country to another. Our restrictive legislative framework in **France** means its use is very limited here...

Loïc Canno,
Director, Hydro West
& Centre-West,
France

We have the technologies we need to reuse wastewater, but regulatory constraints prevent us from doing so. This water may not be drinkable, but it has been treated, and could easily be used to clean certain roads or to flush pipelines, but it's still being discharged into the environment at the moment.

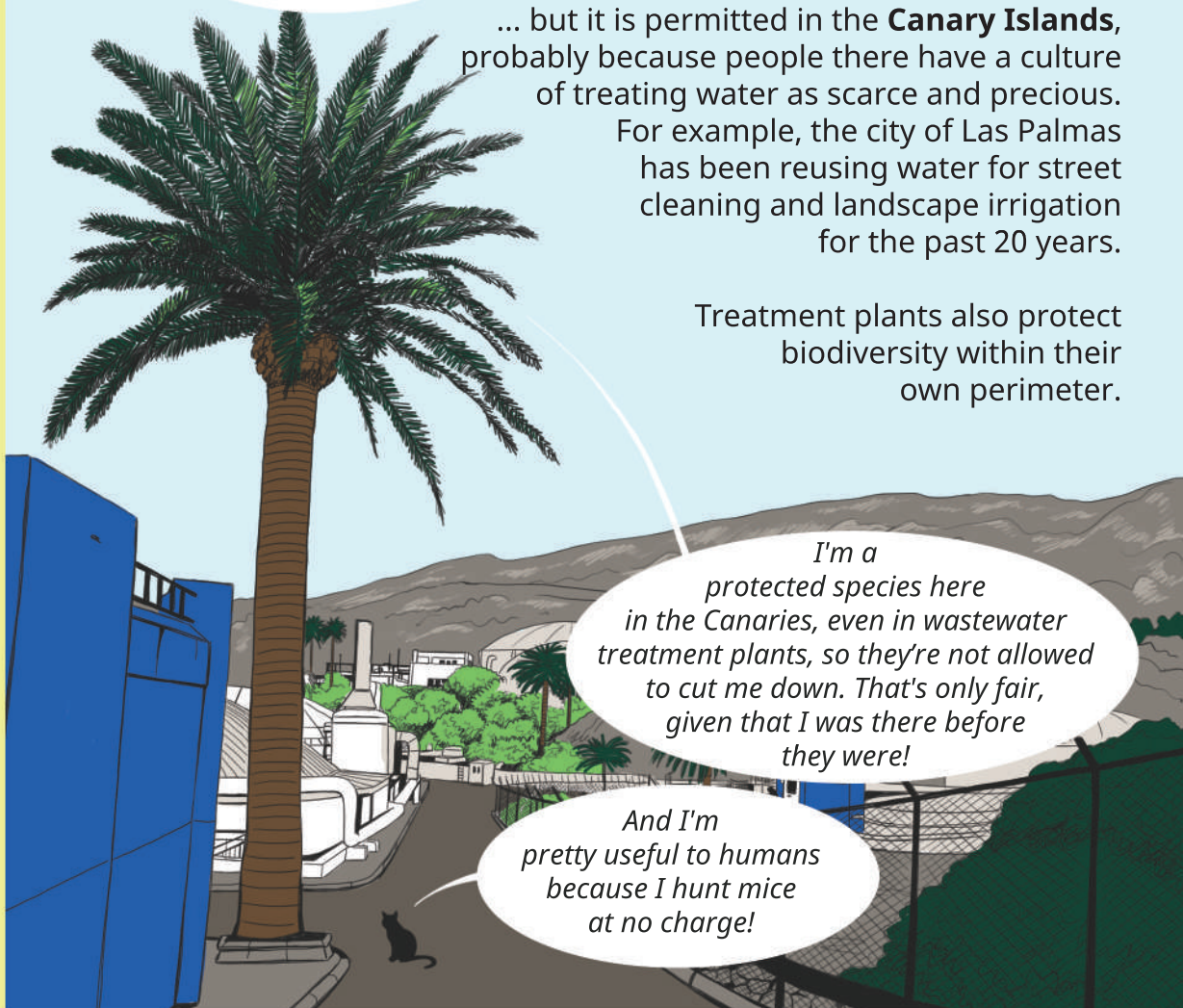


... but it is permitted in the **Canary Islands**, probably because people there have a culture of treating water as scarce and precious. For example, the city of Las Palmas has been reusing water for street cleaning and landscape irrigation for the past 20 years.

Treatment plants also protect biodiversity within their own perimeter.

I'm a protected species here in the Canaries, even in wastewater treatment plants, so they're not allowed to cut me down. That's only fair, given that I was there before they were!

And I'm pretty useful to humans because I hunt mice at no charge!



Driving innovation to protect water resources

The Group employees have no shortage of **imagination** when it comes to putting the theory of paradigm shifts into practice.

In the Canary Islands

Emalsa has set itself the target of converting wastewater treatment plants into biofactories in which water is no longer a waste product, but a recoverable one, in the same way as sludge is used to generate biogas.

In Italy

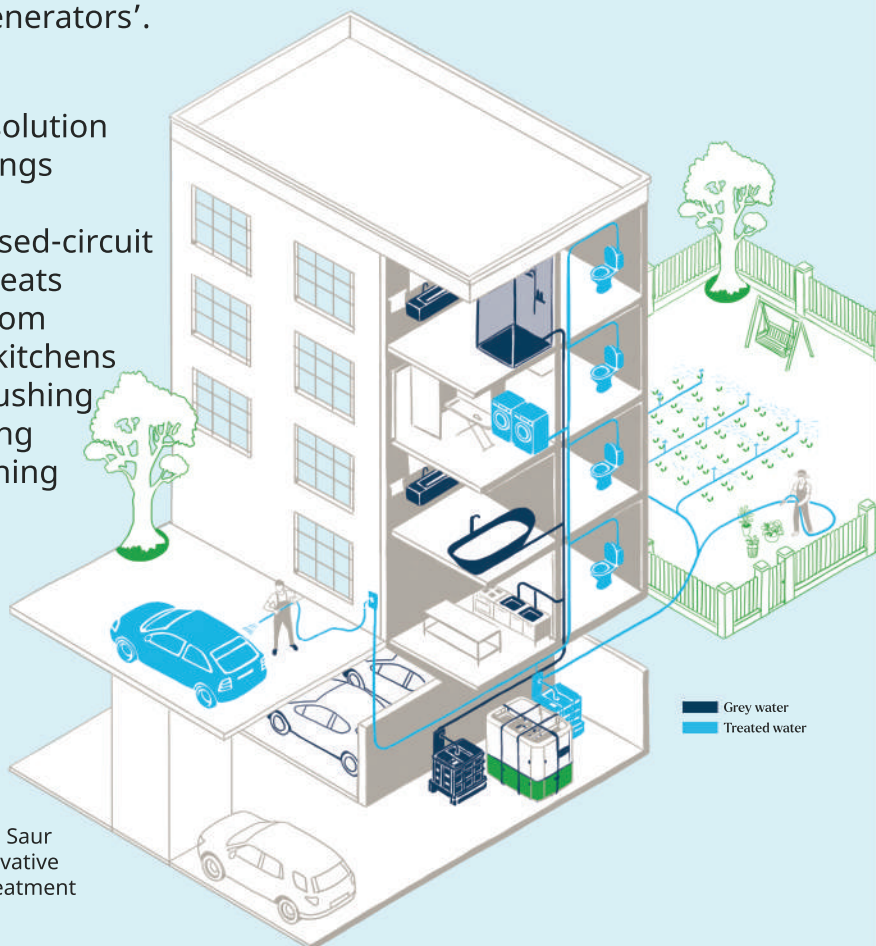
The Sodai teams have implemented a blockchain-based system that assigns a unique 'identity card' to each cubic meter of water recycled to facilitate traceability, transparency and the creation of innovative 'water credits'.

The system gives users the opportunity to become 'new water generators'.

In France

The **Odalie*** solution for new buildings introduces an innovative closed-circuit system that treats wastewater from showers and kitchens for reuse in flushing toilets, watering plants or washing vehicles.

*Odalie has been developed out of the partnership between Saur and InovaYa, an innovative specialist in water treatment technologies.



Saur, managing energy demand at source

Saving water on the one hand, and energy on the other.

Decarbonizing the company is more than just an ethical challenge. It's also a strategic challenge, because it spans all the issues involved in financial limitations, technological innovation and operational transformation. But short-termism discourages investment.

Pierre Jacquemot,
Group Energy Manager,
France

In the past, site operating concession agreements ran for 20 or 30 years. Today, they're between 5 and 10 years. That's great in terms of encouraging competition! But at the same time, the shorter payback time discourages investment in on-site solar power generation, for example.



The new EU Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive requires large wastewater treatment plants to be energy neutral by 2045, but the Group is committed to reducing its carbon footprint now.

In terms of its facilities...

Our business is electricity-intensive, which is another way of saying that our wastewater treatment plants use a great deal of energy. We also use AI to reduce consumption and optimize operation in real time. But AI can also be predictive! This allows us to do things we didn't know how to do previously, and to speed up other processes. So our challenge isn't just about saving money; it's also about reducing our energy consumption.

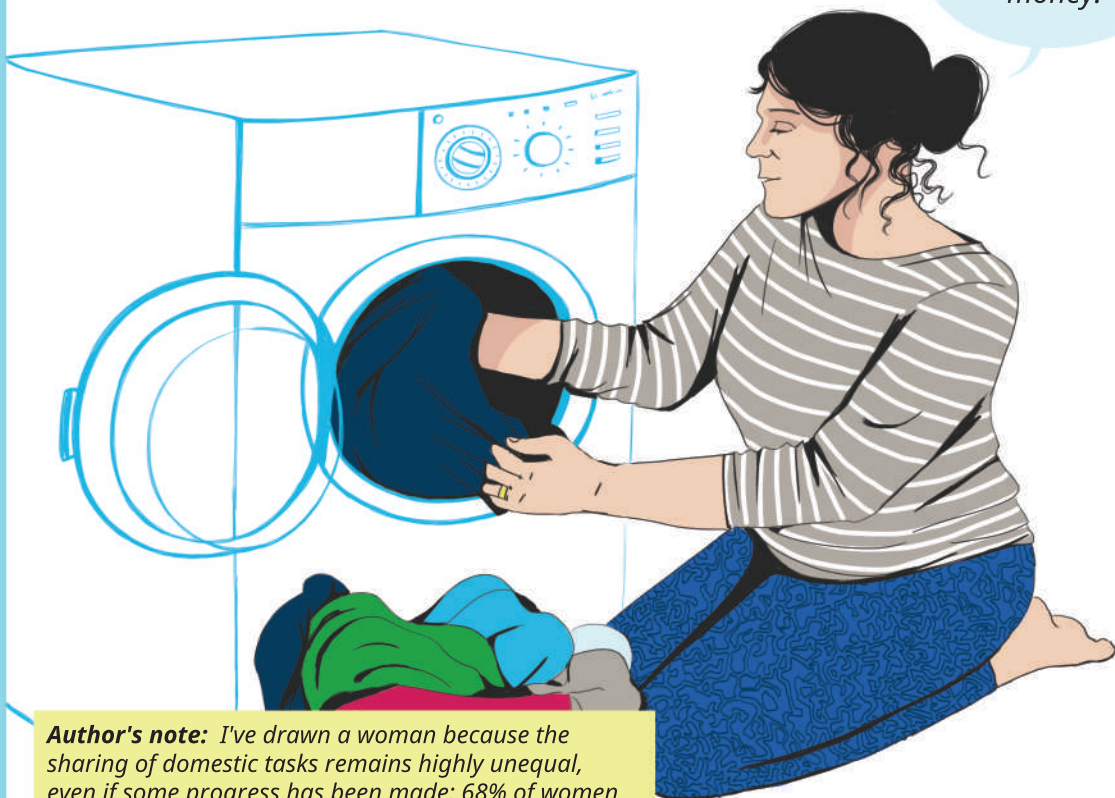


Etienne Chaigne,
Chief Information Officer, France

... in terms of usage...

I'll do the washing
tonight.

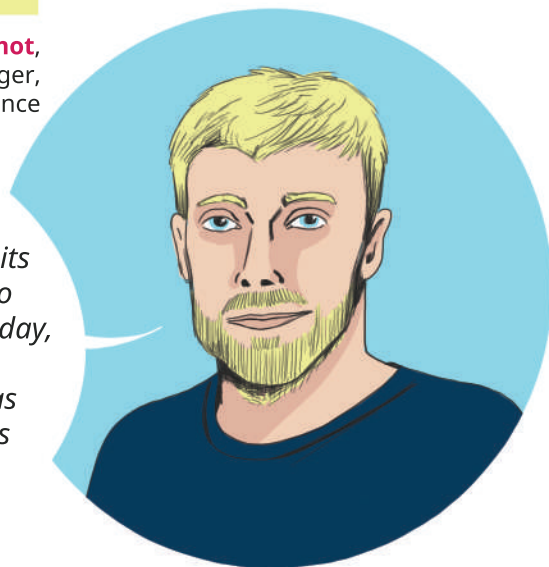
That way,
I'll be saving
money!



Author's note: I've drawn a woman because the sharing of domestic tasks remains highly unequal, even if some progress has been made: 68% of women cook or clean every day, compared with 43% of men (Source: Observatoire des Inégalités - 2025).

Pierre Jacquemot,
Group Energy Manager,
France

*The ability
to generate energy from renewable
sources has outpaced changes in the habits
of consumers, who still think it's better to
use energy at night rather than during the day,
whereas the opposite is now true!
Renewable energy has to be consumed as
and when it is generated, which requires
a change of consumer behavior.*



... and in terms of its vehicle fleet, which is currently responsible for a quarter of all Group CO2 emissions. A project is now underway to replace 2,500 Saur-branded vehicles with electric alternatives.

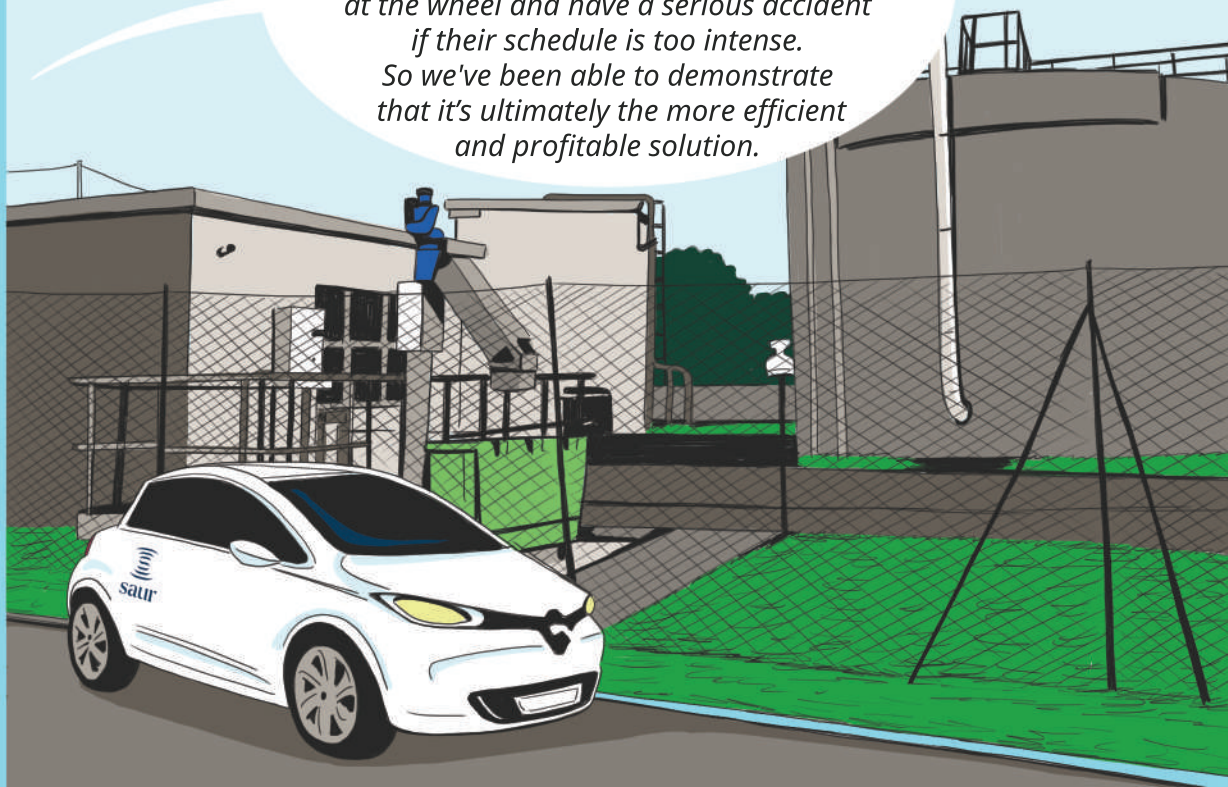
*Political involvement
is a real game-changer.*

*As long as we fail to introduce
meaningful financial or other incentives
for private individuals and companies,
the pace of change will be slow.*

*Here, within a month of central
government introducing an incentive
tax rate, we had our roadmap in place
and all the companies have followed
that lead. Regulation can be
a very positive catalyst
for change.*

*There are
definite benefits, not only
in terms of fuel costs, noise and
pollution, but also road safety.
Research has shown that electric car
drivers tend to be more respectful of
speed limits because they're keeping
a close eye on the range between
battery charges.*

*You might think
that a sales representative who has
to stop every 2 hours to recharge the
EV battery isn't working efficiently.
But that same employee could fall asleep
at the wheel and have a serious accident
if their schedule is too intense.
So we've been able to demonstrate
that it's ultimately the more efficient
and profitable solution.*



■ CSR... without realizing it!

The example of the sales representative driving is an instance of CSR... **even though it is not explicitly identified as such.**

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) means the contribution made by a company to succeeding in the challenges of sustainable development, and encourages businesses to deliver a positive impact for society, at the same time as remaining economically viable.

Although it is embedded in the Saur group's operational and financial management, its real role is not always understood, even by Group employees.



Bénédicte Peyrol,
Group Vice-president of CSR,
Strategy, Communication,
Marketing and
Public affairs,
France

*When I told
one of our operations staff
I was the CSR VP, she said:
"What's CSR?"*

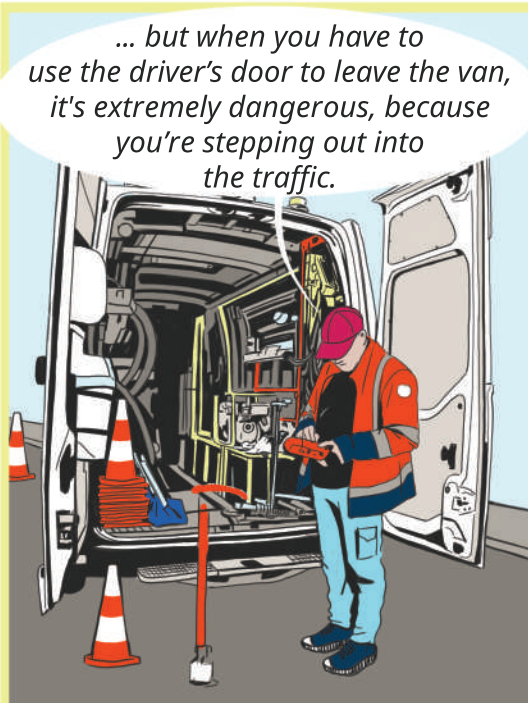
*But it's super-complicated to explain
what a CSR department actually does,
right across the entire
business.*

*We're involved
in HR issues like gender
equality, disability, etc.,
as well as the challenges
faced by operations
departments and
environmental
services.*

*I see CSR as being
all about bringing people around
the table to do things better than
we currently do and encouraging
a spirit of shared commitment
and ambition.*

CSR, the ethical driving force of the company

Nevertheless, it's when employees refer to it indirectly in terms of occupational health and safety that CSR becomes a practical reality.



Not always identified by its acronym, **CSR** is sometimes restricted in terms of scope or questioned in principle...

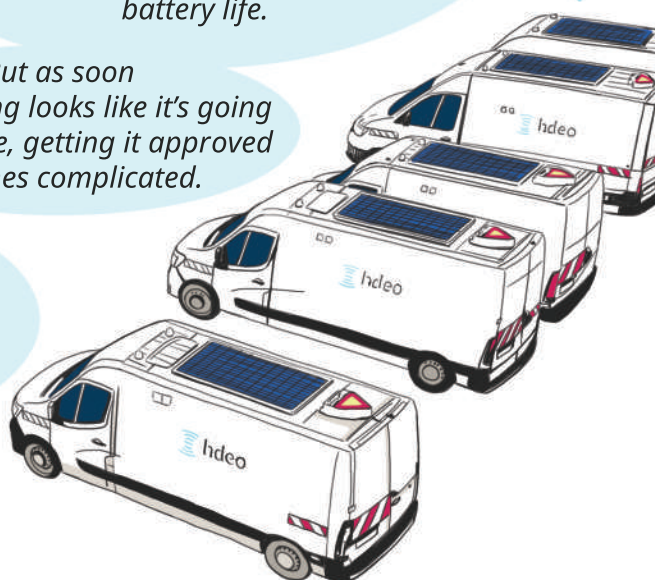


We wanted to install solar panels on van roofs because doing so would be consistent with our fleet electrification strategy. And the operational benefits are clear: longer tool battery life, fewer recharges, lower fuel consumption and longer vehicle battery life.

But as soon as something looks like it's going to cost more, getting it approved becomes complicated.

It's easy to see how CSR sometimes finds itself confronted by financial realities, despite the fact that everyone understands it's part of a coherent CSR approach that will pay off in the long term.

Loïc Canno,
Director of Hydro West
and Centre-West,
France



... but, far from being met with disapproval from employees, it is actually seen as an **ethical commitment by the company** and an effective driving force for change that has knock-on effects for every sector of the business. Even the most unexpected.

I've always said that environmental improvements begin with finance. And I've been criticized for that. But it's a mistake to think that the environmental transition can be delivered without long-term financial commitments: it's financial mechanisms that guide investment, allow us to structure the business for the long term and make our commitments credible.



Patrick Blethon,
Executive chairman
of the Saur group

Addressing CSR issues has begun a trend towards greener funding, because global financial sources, and European sources in particular, are now imposing many restrictions and ambitions around these issues. These requirements are much less stringent in the USA, and even more so under our own government, which focuses primarily on challenging companies.

Sustainability-linked bonds provide a form of borrowing that is partially dependent on meeting CSR criteria. Saur will measure three specific criteria: its carbon emissions, the percentage of women in executive leadership roles and, for example, network efficiency. If these criteria are not met, the interest rate on the debt will increase.

There's also a second asset class known as green bonds. Let's say I raise €500 million by issuing green bonds. As the debt issuer, I then commit that this €500 million will be used solely for eco-friendly projects or those that contribute to achieving sustainable development ambitions.

At Saur, we've issued green bonds, but we call them 'blue' because water is our business. We are the first to do this, and we see it as a way of highlighting the fact that our investments won't be solely green, but also blue, because they'll be focused on water supply, wastewater treatment, management or improvement projects, as well as on protecting and conserving water resources.

Alice Schmauch,
Chief Financial Officer,
France



CSR, the economic driving force of the company

CSR is regularly met with skepticism, fueled by a shifting political and regulatory landscape. With public discourse downplaying its importance and sometimes inconsistent standards pile up, some employees feel that CSR is 'out of touch with reality'. **Another burdensome task** to be managed.

A view shared from top management...

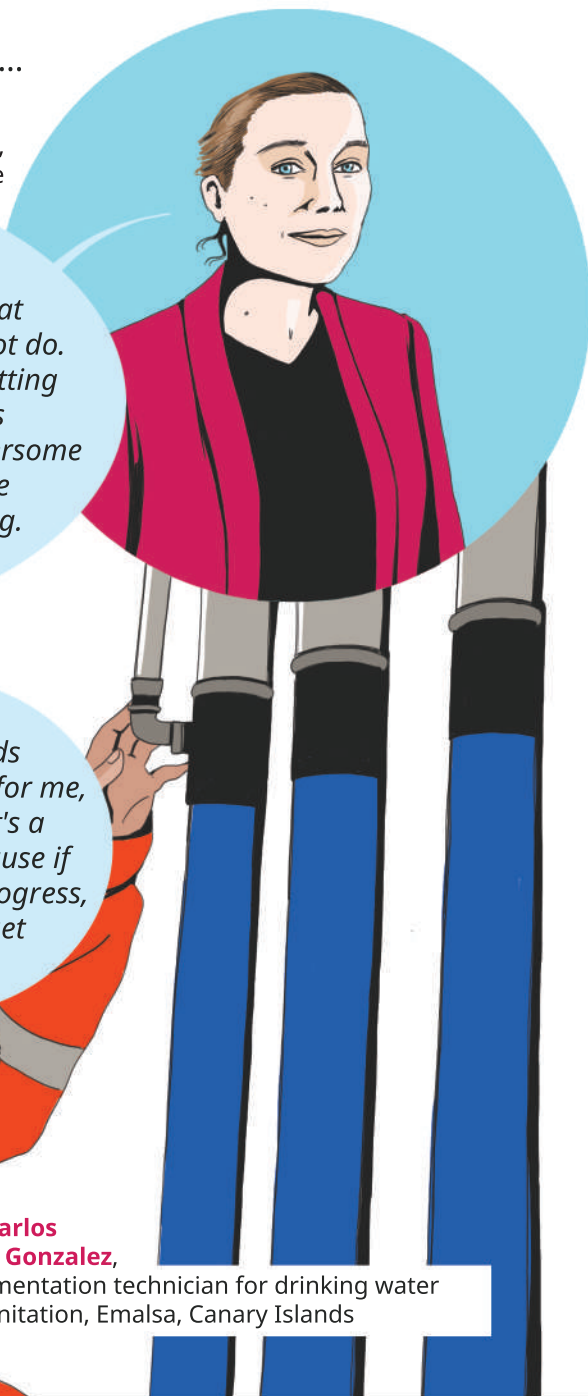
Alice Schmauch,
Chief Financial Officer,
France

There is sometimes a dichotomy between what is imposed on companies versus the prevailing discourse and what central government does or rather does not do. Meanwhile, Europe presses ahead with setting standards in ways that are sometimes counterproductive, because they are cumbersome to implement, technocratic and involve significant obligations around reporting. It's rather disconnected from reality!

... to local stakeholders.

Restrictions and standards mean more work for me, but I think that's a good thing, because if you're going to progress, you have to get organized.

Juan Carlos Mayor Gonzalez,
Instrumentation technician for drinking water and sanitation, Emalsa, Canary Islands



Nevertheless, CSR is never a secondary issue or an isolated constraint. It is inextricably linked to the **economic survival of the company**. It structures its choices, makes it more competitive, and is 100% consistent with its long-term strategy.

*CSR is not a cost;
it's a strategic lever.
It shapes the way we drive
innovation, interact with our
customers and stay
competitive over
the long term.*

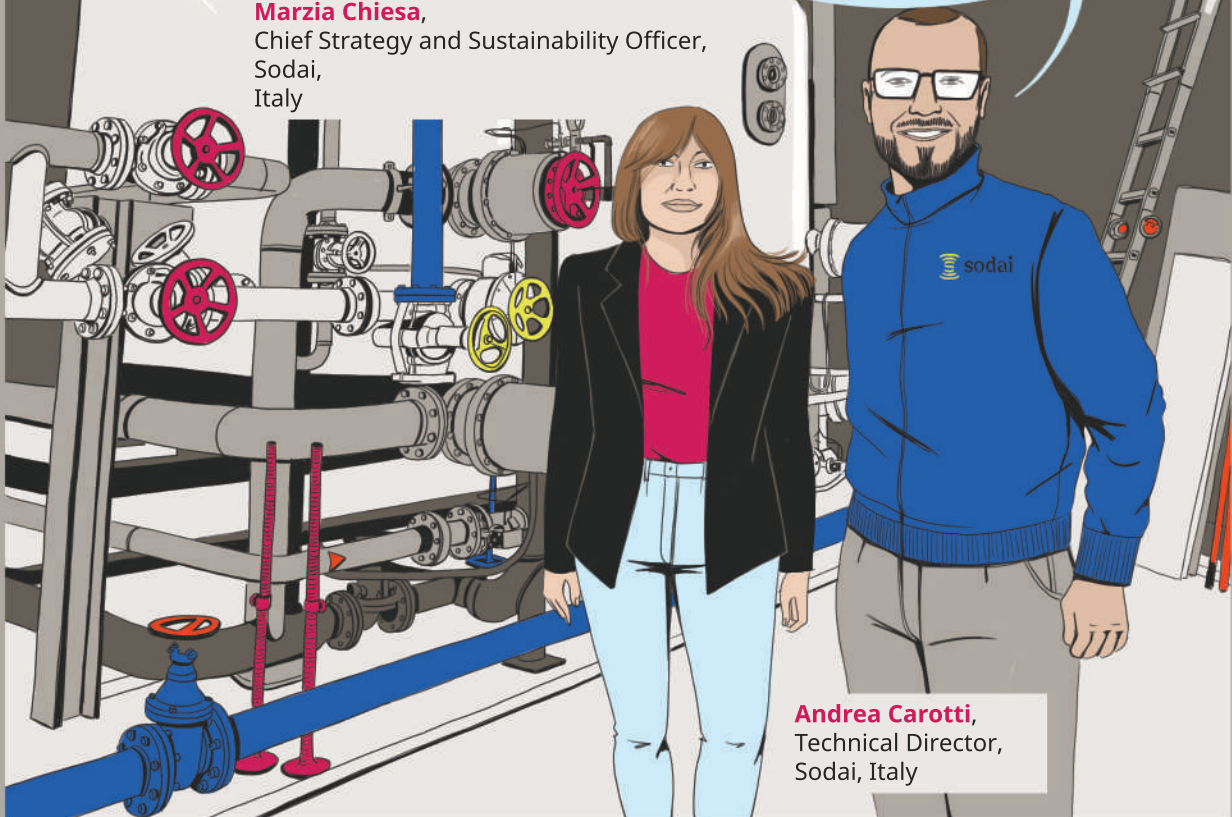
*When sustainability
issues become integral to business
decision-making, environmental impact
and financial performance feed off each
other, and on the professional and
personal levels, the knowledge that we
are contributing to protecting
and conserving water makes
the work we do even more
meaningful.*

*Despite the belief
of many entrepreneurs
that neglecting the environment
will mean higher profits,
comparative data show
that the opposite
is the case.*

*Sustainable development
is not a cost; it is an investment
in the future. Inaction today will expose
businesses and society to significantly
higher costs in the future, as they are
forced to address the inevitable
impacts of climate change and
environmental damage.*

Marzia Chiesa,
Chief Strategy and Sustainability Officer,
Sodai,
Italy

Andrea Carotti,
Technical Director,
Sodai, Italy



Saur, women on the frontline

The other aim is to **increase the proportion of women employed in the company**. The Group has set the target of having **40%** of executive leadership positions occupied by women by 2030 to ensure full compliance with the French Rixain legislation of 2021, which focuses on ending gender inequality in corporate governance.

Women are still largely under-represented in corporate governance. I think we need to ensure that at least 30% of Executive Committee members are women in order to change attitudes towards women in senior roles, so that their presence becomes more natural, because if we don't, women will remain marginalized.

With 30% representation, I'll no longer be speaking as the Executive Committee woman, but as an Executive Committee member.

A lot of my team members are women, which makes a change! It's also quite amusing to see how increasing the number of women employed by companies, especially those in positions of responsibility, triggers reactions that aren't always positive, whereas when those in similar positions are all men, no one has anything to say about it!

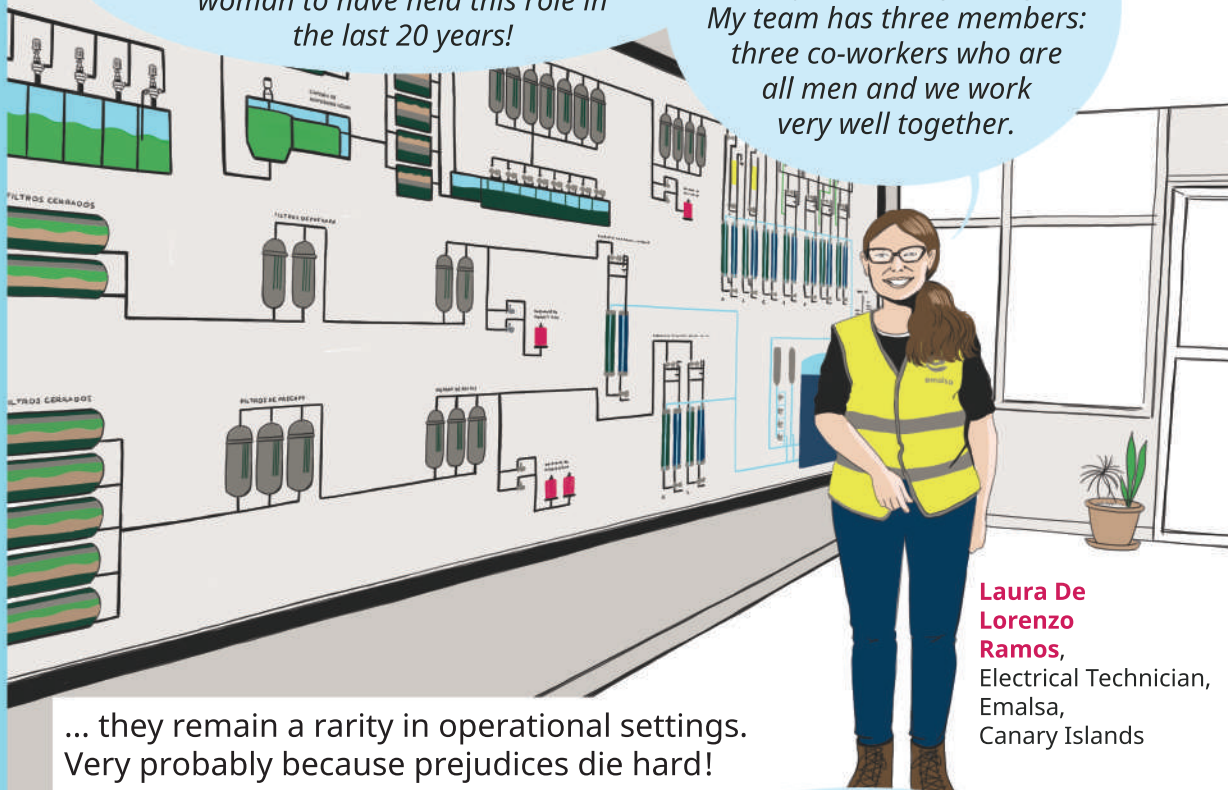
Alice Schmauch,
Chief Financial Officer,
and her team, France



Although the women I met in operational roles, offices and treatment plants say they haven't experienced sexism...

I'm in charge of highly technical aspects of plant operations. I've been with the company for 20 years, and I'm the only woman to have held this role in the last 20 years!

It was challenging at first, of course, but I've never had a problem with anyone disrespecting me. My team has three members: three co-workers who are all men and we work very well together.



Laura De Lorenzo Ramos,
Electrical Technician,
Emalsa,
Canary Islands

... they remain a rarity in operational settings. Very probably because prejudices die hard!

I think it's a physical job, of course, but with today's tools, it can be done equally well by men and women.

I think there are still a lot of prejudices about this issue.



Mickaël Roseau,
Leak detector,
Saur France

Whether from teachers, family members or friends, the preconceived ideas women face during their studies have real **societal consequences**: although girls tend to be the higher achievers academically, fewer of them go on to study math in higher education than boys, and ultimately they account for only **24%** of all working engineers!

I've never felt that being a woman in this world has been any kind of practical hindrance to my career. Quite the contrary, in fact. The technical teams include a large number of male colleagues, who have always treated me with respect, and I've never had any problems about making myself heard and being listened to. I actually feel that being a woman can bring a quiet calm to conversations and discussions.

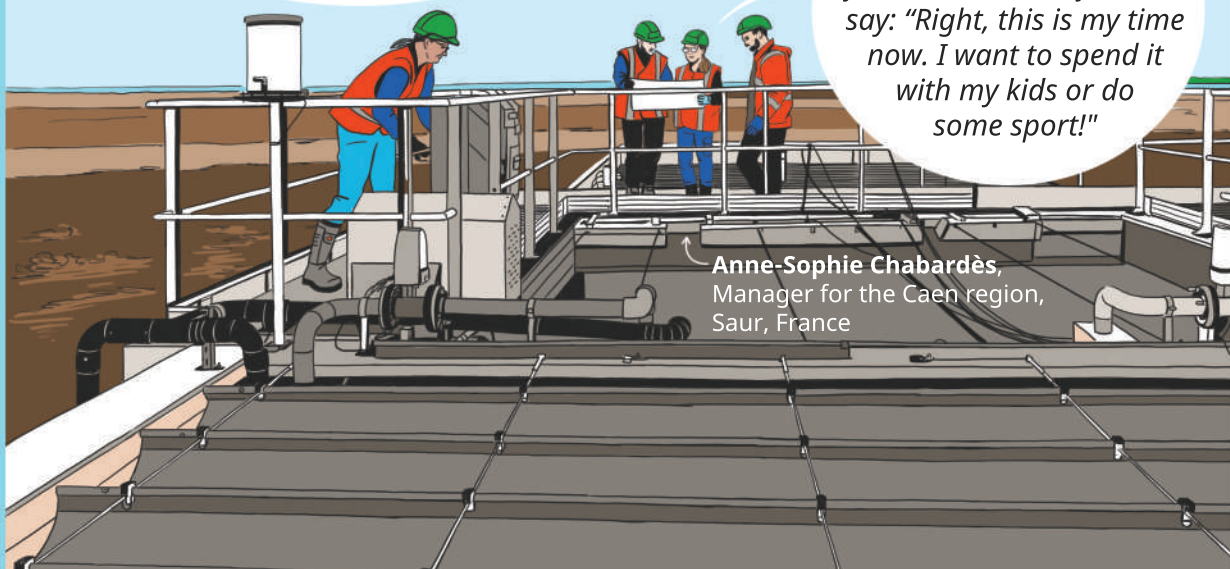
There was a time when I was the only woman at a meeting, but that's no longer the case. Even the cuts of our workwear have changed, and are now designed and made to fit women's bodies, which was definitely not the case in the past.

In the job I do, I can't see that there's any difference in physical demands or abilities between men and women. The thing that really sets us apart is, of course, motherhood. I have 3 children now, and my pregnancies haven't held me back in progressing my career, but it does demand a lot of organization.

In a job like mine, which is all about maintaining continuity of service, you need someone who can stand in for you when you're not available. My husband provides that support very well, but I'm absolutely aware that not all women are so fortunate.

A healthy work/life balance is essential. Sometimes you just have to be selfish and say: "Right, this is my time now. I want to spend it with my kids or do some sport!"

Anne-Sophie Chabardès,
Manager for the Caen region,
Saur, France



On the other hand, women in management feel they have to work harder than men and continually **prove their worth**. It's as if they have to 'earn' their place. They also speak about the sexism they've been subjected to in their careers.

At the start of my career, it certainly wasn't easy. I was a young woman in a traditional, male-dominated environment. I tried to minimize these aspects, even adopting a more masculine style of dress, but it wasn't enough. I remember a meeting at which I had to present a project.



Marzia Chiesa,
Chief Strategy
& Sustainability
Officer, Sodai,
Italy

I was one of the first women in the Group to make it to operations manager, back in the 90s. When I was appointed Managing Director, I was the first woman in the company and the first Spanish woman to occupy that post.

Early in my career, a city councilman said at a working lunch: "Mercedes is great because she works like a man! She never cries or complains." He said it to be positive about me, but the way he said it was clearly not the best.

Mercedes Fernandez Couto Gomez,
Managing Director, Emalsa,
Canary Islands

I was the only woman there, the youngest in the room and clearly not 'one of them'. So much so that before the meeting had even started, one of them came up to me and asked...



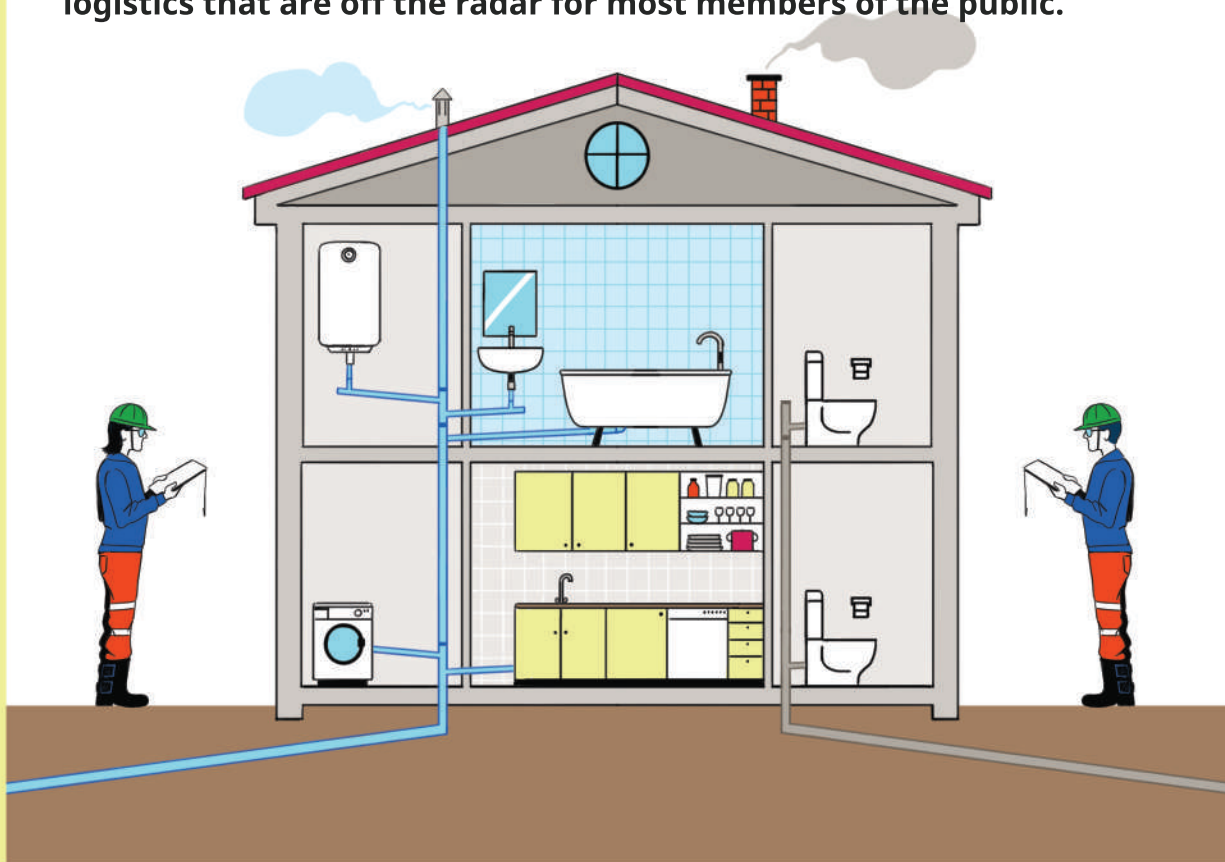
Saur, a ship prepared to weather the storm

To conclude, Saur is a company operating in a sector of industry gripped by systemic change, in which environmental, financial and human issues are interacting to transform a traditional industrial enterprise into a mission to **safeguard the common good**.

Me!



The employees I met in France, Italy and the Canary Islands clearly share a strong ethical conscience, and are keen to remind everyone that access to clean drinking water is reliant on complex **human and technical logistics that are off the radar for most members of the public**.



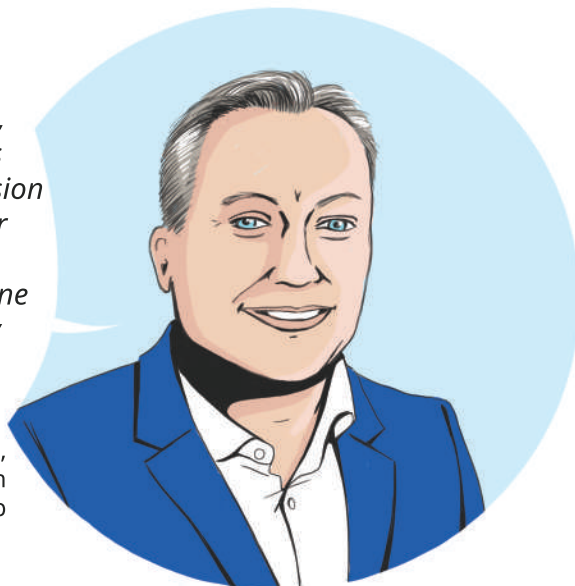
As both a citizen and a consumer, this investigation conducted at the request of the Saur group has given me a new **behind-the-scenes** insight into the water that flows from my tap 24/7 and what happens to my organic waste.

If everyone could see what goes on in the Group's plants and facilities, it would probably change our water consumption habits, and everyone would be able to embrace the company's **mantra**...

Give water the value it deserves

Water is more than just a service: it's a pact between humans and the natural world, and our teams are the prime guardians of that pact. Their work, vigilance and passion are raising the profile of what had never been visible in the past, and embody this collective responsibility. And if everyone could appreciate the extent of this daily commitment, we would all become protectors of water.

Patrick Blethon,
Executive Chairman
of the Saur Group



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