



Environment secretary Daisee Aguilera put in an appearance last week at an event showcasing cutting-edge strategies in water management, Encuentro para la Innovación en la Gestión de Agua (4.0), a series of day-long meditations organised by Spain's association of water supply and sanitation, AEAS, and the Bilbao Bizkaia water consortium.

The gathering served to shed light on the innovative aspects of the digitalisation currently afoot in urban water management, and provide a look at some of the challenges ahead—in general strategies, public contracts, integrated project management, and development of everything from sanitation and purification to distribution.

Formentera spotlighted the cutting-edge hallmarks of Smart Water Island, a system that lets local water supplier Aqualia automatically track water use from remote locations, boosting both the speed and efficiency of the local grid.

Pioneer system in the Balearics

The scheme's rollout, including installation of 2394 water metres, will be complete by year end. The system is the first of its kind in the Balearics and does not directly impact water rates.

Smart readings of metres give Aqualia the ability to track real-time consumption while eliminating the need for in-person visits to housing tracts and individual dwellings. The automatic remote-reading apparatus works by dispatching data feeds every eight seconds directly to the Sant Francesc-based command central where a software programme calculates billing information.

With the Smart Aqua app, ratepayers even have access to an hourly breakdown of their consumption. The app gives customers the possibility of tracking water use even when away from home. The system detects leaks localised in homes and even signals other potential

irregularities, thus preventing sky-high bills due to associated water loss.

Secretary Aguilera called it “a leap forward in terms of the tools we have to monitor the grid, and how we measure efficiency, which stood at 89.57% in 2017. Taken together, she said, the system “makes our water use more sustainable and ensures a more sound distribution, both of which are crucial on an island like Formentera”.

Aguilera also took time in her presentation to discuss the management model used by Aliança per l'Aigua, an agency that works with the public and private sectors and civil society to promote sustainable water use in the Balearics and Formentera, where “every drop counts as we move closer to striking a balance between growth and responsible administration of our natural resources”.