



Obras Sanitarias del Estado

The Company

O.S.E. is a State Company that has over 50 years of experience in the supply of drinking water and the treatment of waste water.

It is a sound Organization that has the support of the Government of the Republic of Uruguay and the daily commitment of 4,250 employees who are qualified to perform their duties in the different areas needed for the vital service provided by the company.

The high level of competence of O.S.E. is reflected in the quality of life of the citizens of the whole territory since the drinking water service covers 3,100,000 inhabitants throughout the year, 24 hours a day, by means of 890,067 connections. These figures show that 98% of the population is covered by the service, which constitutes the highest level in Latin America.

The quality of the water provided is, on the international scale, among the highest standards and therefore, based on this excellence and on the optimal number of people covered by the service, Uruguay has nearly eradicated epidemic outbreaks and isolated diseases transmitted by water. For these reasons it is the only country of the Americas that did not have any cases of cholera during the epidemic that scourged the continent between the years 1991 and 2000.

The Administration believes that its priority is the permanent improvement of its management so as to continue on the path of efficiency. This will allow it to provide its service to the largest quantity of towns as soon as possible, regardless of the number of inhabitants or their socioeconomic condition.



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Brief historical description

Montevideo, the capital of the country, has had a running water service since 1871. At the beginning the service was part of a concession given by the State to private companies but in 1950 it became a part of the state resources, and when the State Sanitary Works Administration was created in 1952 the company assumed the responsibility. Nowadays O.S.E. is a decentralized service which works in coordination with the Ministry of Housing, Territorial Planning, and Environment.

The Organic Law of the Administration has expressly determined its competence:

Article 2

The provision of the drinking water service (in the whole territory of the Republic) and sewage service (except Montevideo).

The power to build devices for water treatment and for treating the sewage system effluents or to acquire already built ones and then transfer them to third parties in the country or abroad in exchange for a remuneration. It may do that with devices whose manufacturing technology belongs to it.

Article 3

The provision of sanitary works service and the mission of the Organization shall have a basically hygienic orientation and social reasons shall be given priority over economic reasons.

Systems applied

The most important water supply system of Uruguay, from a quantitative point of view, is that of Montevideo and its surrounding area. The water source for this service is the Santa Lucía river. The Water Purification and Pumping Plant is located in Aguas Corrientes, department of Canelones. This plant carries out the whole process for treating the water that is consumed by the capital of the country and a large part of the department of Canelones. Its production capacity covers the needs of the system and it can provide a safe water supply 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to a population of 1,700,000.



The above system is used together with OSE's Autonomous Water-Treatment Plants Program for providing drinking water. This program was created to solve the problems of quality, service discontinuation and restrictions on the supply that appeared in several towns of the provinces of the country in the nineties.

The big inconvenience was that problems with drinking water supply appeared in places in which conventional treatment systems could not be applied as fast and effectively as needed.

The program consisted of designing, building and installing Compact and Transportable Water-Treatment Plants. The UPAs became the fundamental technological tools for achieving the objectives proposed.



OSE has successfully implemented National Programs, providing a drinking water service that covers 98% of the population of Uruguay



Only 1% is fresh water and 95 % of this quantity is underground water.

O.S.E. is a company that:

Has over 50 years of experience and the support of the Government of the Republic of Uruguay, as well as the commitment of 4,250 employees.

Designs and operates simple and practical solutions, using technologies that perfectly adapt to difficult socioeconomic realities.

Has technical staff that is highly qualified to work in the design, implementation and operation of the UPA Program

Together with its commercial representatives, has implemented over 50 successful international projects, has acquired a high level of efficiency and has developed a successful public and private strategy that has allowed it to have access to international markets.

Has successfully implemented National Programs, providing a drinking water service that covers 98% of the population of Uruguay. It is a country that stands out because of systematically applying a program with these characteristics throughout its territory.

Has the technological capability and necessary know-how to deal with your drinking water requirements.



Water on a World Scale

Water is an important element for the development of life. However, it has become a scarce element at present. About half the world population does not have safe drinking water.



Even though our planet is made up mainly of water, only 1% of it is fresh water and 95 % of this quantity is underground water. Therefore, 80% of health problems in developing countries is connected with the lack of drinking water or the pollution of the water used for consumption.

According to data from the United Nations (UNICEF), 1,400 million children live in poor conditions and due to this almost none of them has access to the supply of controlled, safe drinking water. Consequently, over 11 million children die annually.

In accordance with the preamble of the Charter of the World Health Organization, one of the fundamental rights of a human being is to achieve the maximum possible degree of health. Therefore, in view of the unfair present situation, which is progressing, it is urgent to find adequate solutions for this problem.

Governments have to implement strategies involving effectiveness, efficiency, wisdom, capacity to innovate and truly understand a new conception, capable of seriously solving existing requirements.



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