

The Stone Soup Leadership Institute's Blue Economy Initiative



Clean Water Management Pathway

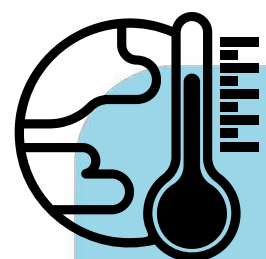
Clean Water Management Champion



Ioanna Silva Pereira
NOVA
School of Business & Economics

The Water Challenge in Portugal

Clean Water Management is becoming a resilience priority.



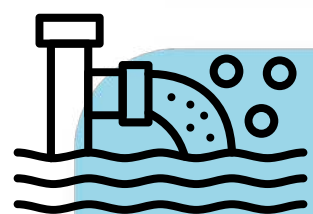
Climate Pressure

Droughts and floods are becoming more frequent.



Water Scarcity

Regions, agriculture, tourism, and cities are under pressure.



Ageing Infrastructure

Old systems make the water network less resilient.



Need for Skilled People

Long-term water planning requires trained professionals.

Interview Insights



- **Teresa Fernandes** – Águas do Algarve
 - Communication and Environmental Education
 - Focus: Projeto de Dessalinização, public communication, environmental education.



- **Luis Simas** – ERSAR (Entidade Reguladora dos Serviços de Águas e Resíduos)
 - Senior Advisor of the ERSAR Board
 - Focus: drinking water quality, regulation, and sector standards



Challenges Holding the Sector Back

The sector is strong, but under pressure.

- Funding does not match investment needs
- Water should be higher on the political agenda
- Salary limits make recruitment/retention harder
- Young people lack awareness of water careers
- Gap between academic learning and practical skills
- New risks: microplastics, cybersecurity, emergency response

Emerging Opportunities

Where young people can enter the sector:

- Desalination and water reuse
- Digital monitoring and data science
- Cybersecurity for water systems
- Circular economy and sustainability
- Water quality, regulation, and compliance
- Public education and behaviour change



Job Projections & Future Career Pathways

Water investment is creating demand for technical, operational, and digital roles.

Evidence of Job Demand:

€420M

Investment in Águas de Portugal water & wastewater infrastructure

7,400+ jobs

Expected during implementation stage

1.6M workers

EU employment in broader water/waste/remediation sector

Roles expected to grow:

Technical

- Civil engineers
- Mechanical engineers
- Maintenance teams and technicians

Digital

- Data/GIS specialists
- Monitoring technicians
- Cybersecurity specialists

Note: not all are permanent jobs, but they show employment demand linked to water infrastructure investment.

Case Study: Algarve Desalination Project

A real case of future clean water jobs

- Responds to drought, tourism pressure, and rising water demand
- Adds a **new water source** beyond rainfall
- Creates demand for engineers, lab staff, maintenance, mechanics, electrotechnics, designers, and operators
- Shows why water projects need **both infrastructure and skilled people**



Recommendations

How Portugal can prepare the next generation:

- Put water among Portugal's top political priorities
- Increase investment in water infrastructure
- Promote “professions of water” in schools and universities
- Expand internships, site visits, and job shadowing
- Strengthen technical and vocational training
- Build partnerships between companies, regulators, and universities





A CALL TO ACTION

**The Clean Water Management sector in Portugal
represents €2.8B.**

**Let's invest in the people and skills needed to
protect every drop.**