



Odial Solutions

# Annual report

ACTIVITY &  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT

# 2024

# A message from the CEO

## Our ten-year anniversary!

You heard right, it's ten years since Odial Solutions Group was founded! We became independent of Vergnet SA in August 2014 and set out for the world of village water systems in Africa. So what have we been up to over the last decade? What changes have taken place?

In short, three types of changes have occurred:

**Firstly, the technical solutions** have progressed. We confirmed our positioning on the market for drinking water supply systems of all sizes, aiming to meet the needs of villagers, who are increasingly calling for improved water services. However, we need to bear in mind that the human-powered pump market is still alive and kicking, and that this solution is the only economically viable option in terms of maintenance costs and long-lasting service in small villages. We have also moved from a product-based approach towards a project-based approach in order to manage the entire infrastructure installation chain and guarantee both water quality and construction lead times.

**Our role has changed.** We started out as an equipment manufacturer and diversified to include services. We saw a real need to provide sustainable business management solutions for the systems we install. Several financial backers and governments have made commitments to support this process, encouraging our strategy.

**And finally, new business models are now used.** We have moved from a market based entirely on public subsidies for development projects, which are complex to manage and, above all, not guaranteed, to a wider range of funding sources, which helps put our operations on a more stable and predictable footing. We designed and developed a new business model for funding water supplies in rural areas while improving services.

And to conclude, we doubled our turnover between 2014 and 2024, from €10m to €20m.

### ● **How does the next decade look?**

We are approaching the future with clarity and conviction. Africa is portrayed as the continent of the future, but it has faced multiple upsets for a range of reasons in recent years, with relatively extensive consequences, hampering our ability





to provide support to people, particularly in rural areas. Nonetheless, these people will lead the way in the future.

We hope that the new landscape forged by these changes will drive progress in Africa and bring the stability required for future developments. After this point, we will need to adapt so that we can work efficiently in the new configuration.

Our drive to succeed remains unchecked, we have the confidence we need to move forward and we remain convinced that common sense will win the day.

Perseverance, commitment, drive and trust are our key values.

**Thierry Barbotte**  
CEO

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# The DMD's editorial

## 2023, a year of change

### ● **Diversifying activities to bring modern solutions**

1/3 - 2/3: this is the current breakdown of our business by turnover at Vergnet Hydro, split between the sale of hand pumps (the highly acclaimed Vergnet-HPV hydropumps) and the construction of drinking water supplies in African villages and towns (DWS).

We're gradually moving away from our original business, to focus increasingly on the public works sector, selling hydraulic parts. We had foreseen this change in the market: the market for drinking water access solutions in sub-Saharan Africa reflects the demands of policy-makers. The key to development is to modernise the way that water is delivered to the people. The aim can be summed up in the slogan "One household, one tap". Not only in urban areas, but in rural regions too, and this is Vergnet Hydro's core business.

### ● **Restructuring teams to adapt to the new model**

This change in our business has naturally had an impact on Vergnet Hydro's internal organisation. We are gradually moving away from a business selling products—our HPV pumps—to a project development activity, DWS. However, rolling out a project to build a drinking water supply network requires a considerable level of commitment and follow-up, making it far more complex and time-consuming than simply shipping equipment "off the shelf".

To calculate the dimensions of a water supply network, design a pumping station or reservoir, hire subcontractors to construct buildings, hook up electrotech cabinets and connect hydraulic equipment, our company needs to become an EPC (Engineering Procurement and Construction) company, encompassing a wide range of skills and requiring meticulous coordination.

To achieve this, Vergnet Hydro overhauled its internal organisation in 2023. The Sales and Operations Department became the Sales and Projects Department, with a Sales unit, an Engineering unit dedicated to projects from the bidding stage through to implementation, and a Project Support unit. The Operations Department provides increased expertise in purchasing, logistics, shipment preparation and flow management.

At the same time, and in line with the corporate strategy we defined in 2020, we are strengthening our local presence in Africa, so that we can assign more services to our sub-Saharan employees. We are promoting our African subsidiaries and training young engineers and technicians on the ground; they are fresh out of school but poorly prepared for the reality of implementing projects in the field. We are hiring experienced local project managers to implement and oversee our projects in these countries; they are our "eyes on the ground".

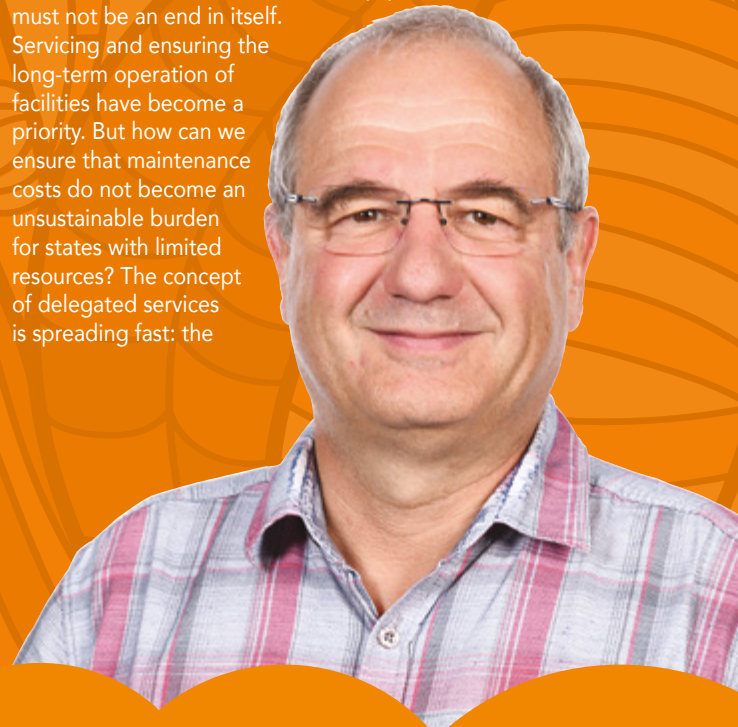
In France, we are adapting our ERP system to track projects more efficiently. Although we are an SME, we are introducing concepts used in large-scale industry to better control risks, correct discrepancies and define priorities. The performance and satisfaction of our customers remain our core concerns.

We are already applying this adapted organisation to the DWS projects we are involved in: the Treasury project in Côte d'Ivoire, and the water supply projects in Mali, Niger and Chad.

### ● **Adapting to changes in the African market for access to drinking water, without forsaking the past**

While we are slowly exiting the HPV market, we are not completely forsaking it. First, because the construction of drinking water supply systems is still a long way from meeting the needs of the entire rural population. Villagers still rely on the human-powered pump as their primary means of accessing water. When it comes to after-sales service and creating new water access points, Vergnet Hydro remains very actively involved, always ready to listen to its customers. This is confirmed by the HPV equipment contracts that the company signed in 2023, for example with the public authorities of Côte d'Ivoire and Togo.

Finally, under the impetus of the Sustainable Development Goals, governments have turned their attention to the maintenance of water distribution equipment. Investment must not be an end in itself. Servicing and ensuring the long-term operation of facilities have become a priority. But how can we ensure that maintenance costs do not become an unsustainable burden for states with limited resources? The concept of delegated services is spreading fast: the





user no longer pays for the water, but for the distribution service. And it's much easier to convince users of the notion of service and payment when getting water is no longer a chore, requiring them simply to turn a tap rather than walking, pumping and carrying the water they need for their family every day.

Uduma intends to spearhead this approach in rural Africa. It is testing different water service management models in the field. Uduma signs public service delegation contracts with local authorities, for example in Mali for a fleet of human-powered pumps, in Burkina Faso for a series of drinking water supply systems, or in Côte d'Ivoire for autonomous water distribution points (Treasury project). This enables the company to collect both technical and financial data on a daily basis; this data will then help define the best management model for drinking water supply installations in a context where the purchasing power of rural populations remains limited. Uduma is also working to adapt equipment

to facilitate the daily lives of users but also the management and maintenance of this equipment. The automatic solar standpipe is one example.

The media reports tend to imply that certain regions of Africa are currently experiencing significant political and economic turmoil, causing much concern. Nonetheless, there is still a huge overall need for infrastructure. The Odial Solutions group and all its subsidiaries are firmly committed to supporting the development of these countries.

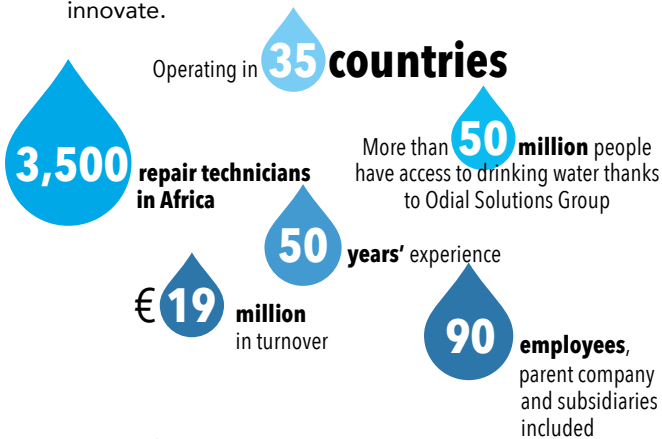
**Christophe Leger,**  
Deputy Managing Director

## About us

### Our mission statement

*Africa, the source of our commitments to the planet!*

Drawing on 50 years of history and experience in supplying water and energy, we continue to work with populations in rural or isolated regions to tackle the challenges that they face. Our aim is to guarantee everyone a future in which well-being goes hand-in-hand with protecting resources. Think, adapt, innovate.



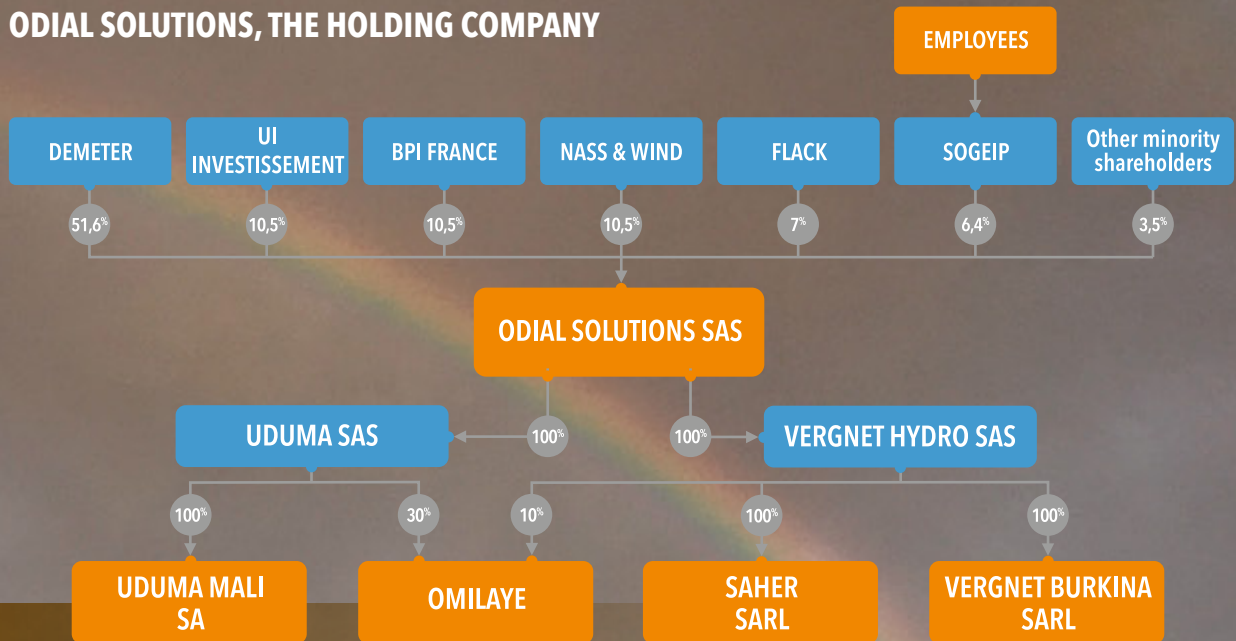
### A brief history

- 1974** Marc Vergnet invents the HPV pump in Burkina Faso
- 1976-1988** 30,000 pumps are distributed, primarily in Côte d'Ivoire, Mali and Burkina Faso
- 1988** Vergnet SA is founded with head offices in Ingré (Loiret, France), covering all pump activity
- 2000** A range of tanks is added to meet growing demand for piped water supply construction

- 2004** Vergnet Hydro is created to separate the water business from the energies business within the Vergnet Group
- 2009** Vergnet Hydro supports its partners to become piped water supply and pump operators under delegated public service contracts
- 2014** Vergnet Hydro is spun off from Vergnet SA Group and becomes part of the newly created Odial Solutions Group
- 2015** An innovative subsidiary, Uduma, is created to supply drinking water to rural populations in sub-Saharan Africa
- 2016** An Uduma concept demonstrator is set up in Burkina Faso (financed by UNICEF)
- 2017** Vergnet Hydro launches an ergonomic manual "deep well" pump, the MPV60
- 2018** Vergnet Hydro sets up the first solar desalination unit using direct solar energy (Mozambique)
- 2019** The first solar power plant, Burkina Faso  
UDUMA's innovative drinking water service is rolled out for 560,000 rural dwellers in Mali
- 2020** The Odial Solutions Group redefines its strategy and adopts a Purpose Strategy  
Vergnet Hydro launches its ergonomic manual "deep well" pump, the MPV100
- 2021** Vergnet Hydro launches the automatic solar standpipe (BFA)
- 2022** Together with the Eranove Group, Uduma and Vergnet Hydro create the Beninese drinking water management company, Omilayé.

# About us

## ODIAL SOLUTIONS, THE HOLDING COMPANY



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## Corporate ambassador of the United Nations Global Compact

Odial Solutions is one of the 21 corporate ambassadors of the United Nations Global Compact (2022-2024 mandate). The Group and all its employees are committed to promoting the values of the Global Compact in its ecosystems and to supporting the Global Compact in the Centre-Val de Loire region.

With more than 19,000 members in 164 countries and 70 local networks, the Global Compact is the largest international initiative for sustainable development and corporate social responsibility (CSR).



## Products and construction

From the most isolated sites...

### Manual pumps



... to small towns

### Piped water supply systems



# About us



## Services



Local sales outlets



Increasing awareness among locals



Electronic payment



Data analysis



Service continuity



Ongoing maintenance and monitoring



Data collection and transfer



# Core business and United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

A core business making a major contribution to two SDGs



**Goal 6.1: Access to drinking water**

By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.

**Goal 6.b: Community water management**

Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.



**Goal 1.4: Access to resources**

By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.

## We contribute directly to four more SDGs



**Goal 3.3:**

**Communicable diseases**  
By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, waterborne diseases and other communicable diseases.



**Goal 5.a:**

**Rights and access to resources**  
Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.



**Goal 7.1:**

**Access to energy**  
By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.

**Goal 7.2:**

**Renewable energy**  
By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.



**Goal 17.3:**

**Additional financial resources**  
Mobilise additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.

## We contribute indirectly to nine other SDGs



## **CÔTE D'IVOIRE:** **AUTOMATIC SOLAR STANDPIPE (BFA):** **Saher now delivers a 24/7 drinking water service** **to 8,000 Ivoirians**



### **A project combining social innovation (water service) and technological innovation (automatic solar standpipe or BFA) in several rural locations**

Saher installed 17 Vergnet Hydro automatic solar standpipes (BFAs), which will be used to provide a 24/7 drinking water service to 8,000 Ivoirians over the next five years. By lending its support to this project, which combines social innovation (water service) and technological innovation (BFA) in these rural com-

munities, German cooperation (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ) has demonstrated its trust in Saher's expertise and professionalism.

The automatic solar standpipe is an autonomous system that offers uninterrupted community water point management. Based on a solution used successfully in Africa for fifteen years, the automatic solar standpipe has been designed to meet the evolving requirements of drinking water service operators in semi-urban and rural areas of sub-Saharan Africa. It is a photovoltaic, cashless

(electronic) and fully secure solar solution. Out of the 17 standpipes included in the project, two have been built into a building façade (BFA kits).

### **The drinking water service was commissioned at each of the 17 water points in June 2023**

These 17 standpipes were installed at the end of the first semester 2023. Information campaigns for the local authorities, awareness-raising initiatives targeting the local populations



and training for technical staff began at the start of the year, so that the drinking water service could be operational in all localities by June 2023. Saher's service also includes data collection which will help form a better understanding of requirements and then improve the scaling of future projects.

This project is part of the Grüne Bürger Energie (GBE) programme backed by German cooperation and aimed at the productive use of renewable energy and the electrification of social infrastructures in Africa.

## Innovation

Announcing the Vergnet Hydro Integrated Automatic Solar Standpipe Kit (BFA Kit)! Our 2-in-1 product, an automatic standpipe and community water point designed for peri-urban and rural areas in Africa, is now available in a version that can be built into any building.

### Integrated Automatic Standpipe Kit (BFA\* Kit)

THE CASHLESS DRINKING WATER MANAGEMENT SOLUTION, AVAILABLE 24/7, COMPETITIVE AND COMPATIBLE WITH STANDARDS IN SEMI-URBAN AND RURAL AREAS IN AFRICA

**15 years' experience in Africa**  
This autonomous automatic standpipe offers uninterrupted community water point management.




The BFA kit integrated into an existing construction, without the VERGNET HYDRO plate

- 1 The user simply enters their RFID key to draw water. The water cuts off when the key is removed.
- 2 With its solar panel, the BFA kit is entirely autonomous. No radio or telecommunications link is required.
- 3 Except for the solar panel, all components of this BFA kit are fixed onto a steel plate protected with an anti-corrosion coating. The system is therefore highly resistant to external hazards such as weather conditions and repeated use.
- 4 Credit on the key can be reloaded using an electronic payment terminal secured with data encryption.
- 5 All the components are designed for quick and easy maintenance.
- 6 The BFA kit operates when water pressure is at least 0.2 bars.
- 7 A stand-alone version is available. This does not require an existing construction.

#### MAIN COMPONENTS




Integrated BFA kit with the VERGNET HYDRO set-up (optional)



Key containing an RFID chip



Electronic payment terminal



Wireless communication (offline) from any smartphone to configure the automatic system and read the operating data

EASY TO INSTALL • EASY TO USE • EASY TO MAINTAIN

\* Borne Fontaine Automatique = Automatic Standpipe, in French.



## Testimonies

*“The drinking water service supplied from the first 17 Automatic Solar Standpipes fitted in Côte d’Ivoire and funded via the Green People’s Energy for Africa (GBE) project headed by German cooperation, is proving a great success with our users and is increasingly profitable.”*

- *Wagna Mota, Managing Director of Saher,*
  - *Myriam Toguyeni, Projects Officer at Saher,*
  - *and Konan Lambert Amani, Operations Officer at Saher,*
- played an active role at the capitalisation workshop for this project led by GIZ (20 September 2023, Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire).*



## Exhibition



*A huge thank you to German cooperation (GIZ) for exhibiting an Automatic Solar Standpipe (BFA) at the Alliance for Rural Electrification 2023 Energy Access Investment Forum (EAIF) in Abidjan (Côte d’Ivoire) on 15 March 2023.*

### **Video:** **BFA: an innovative solution for a truly inclusive water service**

Uduma shared a video on YouTube entitled: “BFA: an innovative solution for a truly inclusive water service”. Essentially, the aim is to demonstrate, in just two minutes, that the BFA is the solution for a sustainable drinking water service in the most isolated and/or sparsely populated regions (rural and peri-urban areas), but also in areas where security is compromised in Burkina Faso and Mali.

 <https://youtu.be/w7Ffa0O4x0g>





# Contributing to the geographic retention of rural African populations

**S**

## ustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG6) of the United Nations 2030 Agenda

aims to provide universal and fair access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services by 2030. However, in sub-Saharan Africa, 55% of those living in rural areas do not currently have access to basic drinking water (Joint Monitoring Programme, UNICEF, WHO, 2019). Odial Solutions' core business supports achieving SDG6. The services its companies provide are responses to **Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** ("Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food") and to the recognition by the UN of access to drinking water as a **human right** in 2010. Through their **technical and social innovations**, the Group's companies are **eliminating the economic and political barriers** that have historically blocked access to sustainable services in sub-Saharan Africa.

## Some key statistics

**1.2 million more people** gained access to drinking water thanks to projects by Odial Solutions Group in sub-Saharan Africa in 2023:

Piped water supply projects first inaugurated in 2023:

**8,000 people** have benefited from the BFA project in Côte d'Ivoire, described on page 10

**1,000 people** have benefited from the

"Dwalé site" (RDC) project, described on page 14

**25,000 people** have benefited from the "Djabal Camp" (Chad) project, described on page 14

Management contracts for water distribution points:

**7,300 new subscribers** to the Vergnet Burkina drinking water service in 2023

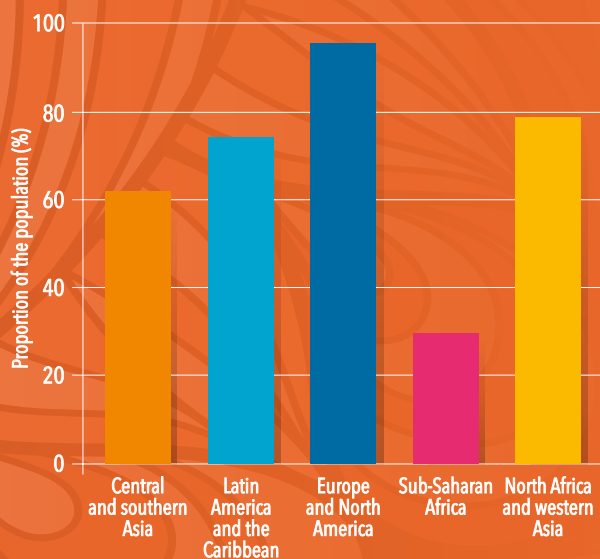
**79,200 new subscribers** to the Uduma Mali drinking water service in 2023.

**2,649 human-operated pumps** sold, benefiting **1.06 million people**.

**6.3 million people** benefited from regular maintenance of their human-operated pump in 2023

**442,000 people** saw large-scale maintenance carried out on their human-operated pump in 2023

Proportion of the population using safely managed drinking water services (2021, [www.sdg6data.org](http://www.sdg6data.org), WHO, UNICEF).



# Contributing to the geographic retention of rural African populations

## DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: a solar-powered drinking water system to supply refugee populations



that supply the 65 farms included in the NTSIO project (HANNES SEIDEL FOUNDATION and the European Union), a few miles from Dwalé.

This new drinking water supply system collects water from a river via a recovery tank, using a submerged electric pump powered by photovoltaic panels providing 15.6 kWp. The water is then treated by chlorine injection. VERGNET HYDRO supplied the equipment (pump, photovoltaic panels, chlorination system, etc.) and oversaw the works. ASDC carried out the civil engineering work (water towers, standpipes, equipment room, etc.) and installed the equipment (solar power plant, pipes, pump, etc.).

The water is stored several hundred metres higher up in two metal tanks, each set on a concrete structure. The first (30 m<sup>3</sup>) tank supplies the village at two standpipes via a 6-kilometre network of pipes, while the other (10 m<sup>3</sup>) tank irrigates an agricultural area. A total of 60 m<sup>3</sup> of water is therefore available for distribution on a daily basis.

THE CONGOLESE ASSOCIATION FOR SUPPORT TO COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (ACADEC) entrusted the installation of a solar-powered drinking water system to supply the refugee populations at the Dwalé site (Batéké Plateau, Democratic Republic of Congo) to a consortium comprising the company VERGNET HYDRO and THE ASSOCIATION FOR SOLIDARITY AND DEVELOPMENT FOR THE DRC (ASDC, Kinshasa, DRC). In 2016, VERGNET HYDRO provided and installed the two hybrid solar/generator water supply networks

## OMILAYÉ IN 2023 950,000 users, 1,230 employees and service providers, €1.65 million in turnover...

In 2023, Beninese operator OMILAYÉ supplied 1.5 million m<sup>3</sup> of drinking water to 950,000 people in Benin, generating revenue of FCFA 1,083 million (€1.65 million). OMILAYÉ has already received 629 requests for private connections,

284 of which were made without a promotional campaign. In December 2023, OMILAYÉ was providing a continuous drinking water service via 245 drinking water supply systems (DWS), compared with 121 in December 2022. The availability

## Solarisation

*The 25,000 Sudanese refugees living in the Djabal camp and residents of the town of Goz Beïda (Chad) now benefit from drinking water pumped by solar energy. The UNHCR appointed Vergnet Hydro to bring solar power to some of the many boreholes that supply the camp and the town, using five solar systems and three hybrid systems combining solar panels and generators (June 2023).*



*Christophe Leger, Deputy Managing Director of VERGNET HYDRO, and Dominique Da Cruz, Managing Director of OMILAYÉ, accompanied by OMILAYÉ employees, can be seen taking stock of some of the DWSs now managed by OMILAYÉ.*





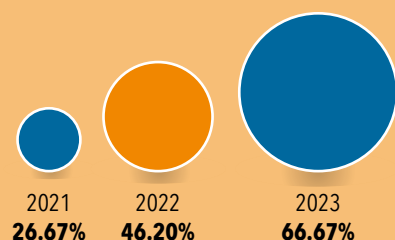
## Disruptive innovation

As part of the MEDEF International corporate mission in Washington (30 May – 2 June 2023), Thierry BARBOTTE, CEO of ODIAL SOLUTIONS, spoke at an INTERNATIONAL FINANCE CORPORATION (IFC, WORLD BANK) seminar on essential services funding in Africa. He presented an innovative public-private partnership (PPP) model, through which drinking water supply projects for sub-Saharan rural and suburban areas can be properly supported over the long term.

**Our customers' environmental, social, health and safety (ESHS) requirements are constantly rising.**

**IMPORTANT:** In 2023, all the tenders we participated in required a specific document as the minimum ESHS standard: the Environmental and Social Management Plan, the Environmental, Social, Health and Safety Methodology, or the Environmental, Social, Health and Safety Plan.

Percentage of calls for tender requiring at least one indicator of our ESHS commitment, among all the calls for tender to which we responded.



rate rose from 55% to 84% in just one year, as a result of an emergency works programme putting the priority on replacing generators and pumps. The operator's staff carried out more than 2,000 physico-chemical analyses (pH, chlorine, turbidity) and 150 bacteriological analyses in 2023.

OMILAYÉ now has 1,230 employees and service providers, including 88 permanent staff (15 managers) and 900 pump operators. Among

the 88 permanent staff, 49 have already taken training courses, with 73% of these courses completed by 31 December 2023.

### Omilayé's short-term action plan:

Action	Deadline	Leader(s)
Renewing all obsolete equipment and structures	September 2025	ANAEPMR/OMILAYÉ
Increase the density of and extend new water supply networks	December 2027	ANAEPMR/OMILAYÉ
Increase individual connections	Ongoing	ANAEPMR/OMILAYÉ
Improve the measurement of water volumes extracted and define a profile for each DWS	June 2024	ANAEPMR/OMILAYÉ
Identify average consumption trends and establish alert thresholds	September 2024	OMILAYÉ
Segment the network with high subscriber density	June 2024	OMILAYÉ
Generate higher demand	December 2024	OMILAYÉ
Pursue the campaign to reduce leaks in pipes	Ongoing	OMILAYÉ



## Urban hydraulics

Between July and October 2023, SAHER constructed and equipped two boreholes, laid 26 km of pipes and built a 150 m<sup>3</sup> water tower in Manfla (population 11,000) in Côte d'Ivoire. The project was financed by the MARAHOUE REGIONAL COUNCIL.

# Rallying employees around the Group's purpose

**O**

DIAL SOLUTIONS is a simplified joint stock company ("Société par actions simplifiée") incorporated in France.

We work to both French law and international labour standards: staff representatives to defend workers' rights, no forced labour, no child labour, etc.

And we go beyond these international standards. ODIAL SOLUTIONS guarantees high levels of well-being and a positive atmosphere at work for all our teams.

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## Some key statistics

**28.79%** of days worked in 2023 were **worked from home** (for employees based in Ingré) (27.11% in 2022).

**2.6%** of days lost through sick leave out of the total number of days worked by employees based in Ingré in 2023 (2% in 2022)

**14%** staff turnover across all ODIAL SOLUTIONS companies in 2023 (24.4% in 2022) 9 new arrivals and 19 departures.

**31%** of staff at ODIAL SOLUTIONS GROUP companies **were women** in 2023 (28.84% in 2022).

**55%** of employees based in Ingré (aside from those on work-study training schemes) **were able to take at least one training course** in 2023 (69% in 2022).

On average, each staff member received 13 hours of training during the year (39 hours in 2022).

Average age of Group employees:

**43**

Average length of service: **5 years**.

## Supporting the skills ramp-up of the Group's workforce

The ODIAL SOLUTIONS GROUP hosted 4 people for training in 2023

Group companies welcomed 4 trainees in 2023:

Name	Apprentice or intern	Qualification in view	Assignment	Company
Antoine COLLIN	Intern	BTS Accounting (higher vocational diploma)	Support with accounting tasks	ODIAL SOLUTIONS
Prince Richel TCHOUMKEU TEMB	Job shadowing intern	Junior high school certificate	Hydro	VERGNET
Tanguy DUPUIS	Job shadowing intern	Junior high school certificate	Internship	UDUMA
Valentin MAHÉ	Job shadowing intern	Junior high school certificate	Internship	VERGNET



Antoine COLLIN



Valentin MAHÉ



Prince Richel TCHOUMKEU TEMB

Tanguy DUPUIS

## Obtention of the 2023 Rainer Arnhold Fellowship

Mikael DUPUIS, Deputy Managing Director of UDUMA, was selected for the prestigious RAINER ARNHOLD FELLOWSHIP for 2023, awarded by the MULAGO FOUNDATION! Every year, this fellowship supports leaders who put forward promising solutions to tackle poverty. Its programme aims to help them design and deliver their solutions at scale.







**Information session and exchange of good technical practices**

ODIAL SOLUTIONS employees from Burkina Faso, France, Côte d'Ivoire and Mali gathered in Côte d'Ivoire in January 2023 for an information session and an exchange of best technical practices. Items on the agenda included the installation of a VERGNET HYDRO Automatic Standpipe Kit (BFA kit) and the maintenance of a photovoltaic-powered water distribution point.



**Continuously improving the quality of life in the workplace**

**A policy to foster diversity and combat discrimination**

In 2023, ODIAL SOLUTIONS published its policy to foster diversity and combat discrimination. Since 1974, ODIAL SOLUTIONS and its subsidiaries have been providing solutions to the people who are most discriminated against when it comes to drinking water access in sub-Saharan Africa: those living in rural areas. These solutions also improve the daily lives of the women and girls who are largely responsible for fetching water in these areas. In addition, when these solutions are part of a water service, they create income-generating opportunities for the most disadvantaged members of these communities: women, the elderly and people with disabilities.

**Team building**

*A fun and relaxing day on Assinie beach (Côte d'Ivoire) for staff at SAHER.*



**Global Compact**

*The first meeting of the CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE CIRCLE (or Centrais Circle) of the Global Compact was held at the offices of ODIAL SOLUTIONS, a Global Compact corporate ambassador on 9 November 2023. The day's theme? Transforming the value chain.*

# Rallying employees around the Group's purpose



## ◆ Chair massage and reflexology sessions

Every month since 2017, practitioners have offered six chair massage sessions and six reflexology sessions to employees at the Group's head office. In 2023, 60.6% of staff made use of this service.

## ◆ Team-building meals

Once a quarter, Ingré-based staff get together for an informal meal. In 2023, they enjoyed Creole specialities in April, a barbecue in July, sweet and savoury pancakes in October, and Christmas dinner in December.

## 2030 Agenda

*"ODIAL SOLUTIONS and its subsidiaries VERGNET HYDRO and UDUMA are making a tangible contribution to achieving the Sustainable Development Goal of Clean Water and Sanitation (SDG6). In 2022, 1.11 million people benefited from access to drinking water as a result of our actions, almost 500,000 from major maintenance work on our equipment, and over 7 million people from routine maintenance. To these figures, we can add the positive impacts of our activities on SDG1 End poverty, SDG3 Good health and well-being, SDG5 Gender equality and more," said Christophe LEGER at the GLOBAL COMPACT MEETING IN THE CENTRE-VAL DE LOIRE REGION (23 May 2023, CCI Loiret in Orléans).*



## Art

*At ODIAL SOLUTIONS, we promote work by African artists on our communications materials. This is a way of supporting the artists both financially and by giving them exposure through our Group's high profile. Details from paintings by Cameroonian artist Samuel DALLÉ, for example, feature on the Group's 2024 greetings cards and calendars.*





# Reducing the environmental impact of the Group's activities



Through its industrial and commercial activities, **Odial Solutions** provides solutions that help people become **more resilient**

**to climate change**, in places where it is particularly devastating, such as sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, our company combines **a culture of reuse and waste reduction with a genuine commitment to the environment.**

## Some key statistics

We reinforced the climate change resilience of **1.2 million people** who are most vulnerable to the risks in 2023.

**Electricity consumption** per staff member per day worked at our Ingré site went up by **1.15%** between 2022 and 2023.

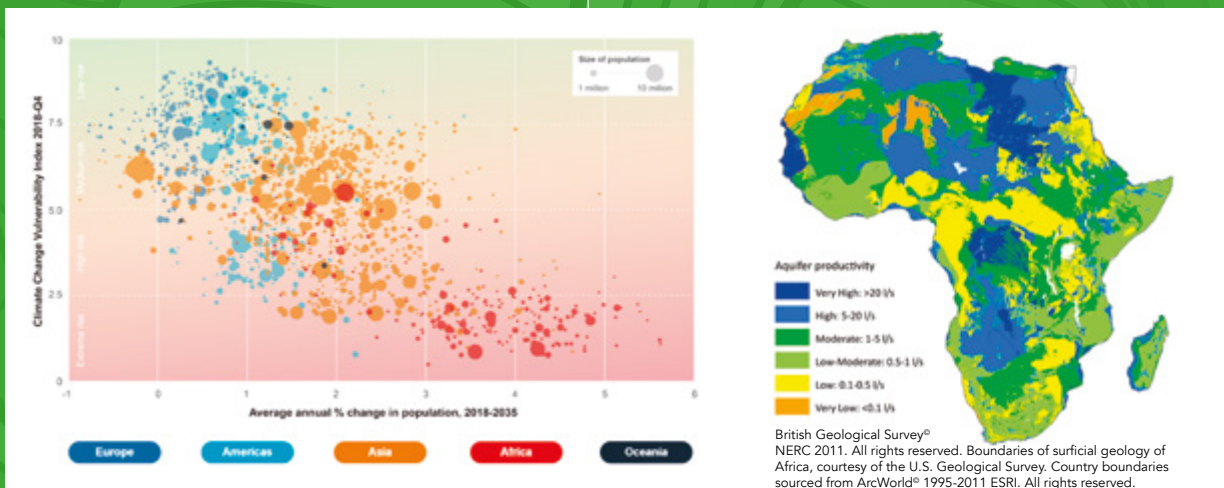
**Water consumption** per staff member per day worked at our Ingré site went up by **1%** between 2022 and 2023.

## Products and services to strengthen resilience to climate change

### Fighting the repercussions of climate change

For 45 years, ODIAL SOLUTIONS GROUP has been offering drinking water supply solutions to rural populations in sub-Saharan Africa, in other words, to those most affected by global warming. The company's products and services strengthen these populations' resilience to the impacts of climate change. This is completely in line with Sustainable Development Goal 13 (take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts).

Another significant factor is that the Group's products and services encourage the use of groundwater rather than surface water. Groundwater is far more prolific and sustainable than surface water, and its use actually features among the actions recommended to reinforce the resilience of populations to climate change (Groundwater resilience to climate change in Africa, British Geological Survey Open Report, 2011).



Climate Change Vulnerability index 2018 (Verisk Maplecroft)

African groundwater can easily support the needs of rural communities (0.1-0.3 L/s).

British Geological Survey<sup>®</sup> NERC 2011. All rights reserved. Boundaries of surficial geology of Africa, courtesy of the U.S. Geological Survey. Country boundaries sourced from ArcWorld<sup>®</sup> 1995-2011 ESRI. All rights reserved.

# Reducing the environmental impact of the Group's activities

## Limiting the environmental impacts of facilities

The invitations to tender for rural hydraulics projects to which ODIAL SOLUTIONS GROUP companies respond often specify pumps that are oversized or distribution systems that are inefficient with regard to the real needs of populations. Wherever possible, the Group's technical teams propose alternatives that are less energy-intensive and have a smaller environmental footprint.

Since 2019, we have developed a comprehensive Environmental, Social, Health and Safety (ESHS) implementation and safeguard plan, which we adapt to the context of the projects we carry out,

according to the country and the legislation in place.

Where it is financially viable, our teams will always choose a solution powered by solar energy over a solution powered by fossil fuels.

We also choose materials (stainless steel, galvanised steel, etc.) that guarantee that all the facilities we install are free from metal particle pollution.

## Limiting the volumes drawn from groundwater

It is impossible to estimate the volumes of water wasted (through non-consumption) by villagers in sub-Saharan Africa using manual pumps or other supply systems to draw their drinking water. What is certain is that charging by the litre for drinking water is an efficient way to fight wastage. Consequently, the management strategies offered by UDUMA limit the volumes drawn from groundwater.

## Ecological commitments

### Now members of the COQ VERT community

In 2023, ODIAL SOLUTIONS, VERGNET HYDRO and UDUMA joined the COQ VERT community, a network of 2,000 French companies committed to the ecological and energy transition. This community fosters the sharing of expertise and collective emulation for the climate. It is headed by BPIFRANCE with support from the ADEME and the French Ministry for the Ecological Transition.

### ISO 14001: VERGNET HYDRO is addressing its environmental impact

VERGNET HYDRO has been certified ISO 14001:2015 since November 2021. The baseline year is 2022. The company is therefore now capable of assessing the global environmental impact of its activities. It has also identified areas for improvement, drawn up an action plan to reduce its environmental impact, and developed monitoring



indicators to ensure that the action plan is working as intended. VERGNET HYDRO has also chosen to integrate quality, environment and CSR within one and the same policy, with the publication of a QE-CSR policy and the updating of the VERGNET HYDRO Environment policy.





Out of the 2.72 tonnes of wooden pallets returned to the recycler BURBAN PALETTES in 2022, two thirds were reused as pallets and the remaining third were recycled as biofuel.

### ◆ A 73% waste recovery ratio

As part of its ISO 14001 certification, VERGNET HYDRO now calculates its waste recycling ratio on the Ingré site (France) every year. It stood at 73% in 2022 (89.62% in 2021). Of the 1.32 tonnes of paper/cardboard waste produced in 2022 by our French teams, 99.25% was recycled in the paper industry. And, out of the 2.72 tonnes of wooden pallets returned to the recycler BURBAN PALETTES in 2022, 1.87 tonnes (68.75%) were reused as pallets and 0.85 tonnes (31.25%) were recycled as biofuel.

### ◆ Carbon offsetting: a patronage agreement with GERES

ODIAL SOLUTIONS and its subsidiaries undertake to offset annually the carbon impact of their air travel, and contribute to the collective effort to achieve carbon neutrality by providing financial support for projects with a positive impact on the environment in the nations of the South. To this end, the Group has signed a patronage agreement with the international development and solidarity NGO, GERES ([www.geres.eu](http://www.geres.eu)), which supports it in this approach.



### ◆ 82% of the Group's suppliers and service providers are headquartered in France

ODIAL SOLUTIONS' responsible procurement charter (adopted in 2020) aims to minimise the Group's carbon footprint, notably by reducing transport distances. The charter therefore makes geographical proximity a key criterion when choosing service providers and suppliers. In 2023, 72% by value of the ODIAL SOLUTIONS GROUP'S suppliers and service providers were European (85% in 2022), 56% were French, and 13% were based in the Centre-Val de Loire region (compared to 16% in 2022). Of the suppliers and service providers (excluding works) that we worked with in 2023, 82% are based in France. Our Purchasing department also favours full deliveries over partial deliveries, and systematically works in compliance with ISPM15.

### ◆ Responsible packaging

When packaging our own products for dispatch, we do not use polystyrene chips which could be scattered when a package is opened or during transport, polluting African rural environments. Our packaging materials are recyclable and, where possible, reusable. They mainly consist of wood, cardboard and the like. Pallets are International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures number 15 (ISPM 15) compliant.

## Video:

Thierry BARBOTTE and Christophe LEGER, respectively CEO and Deputy Managing Director, talk about ODIAL SOLUTIONS' commitment to the climate. This clip, produced by the Global Compact to coincide with COP 28, is one of a series of videos focused on SMEs and their impact on the climate.

 <https://youtu.be/WxUmdMgwtdE>



**Christophe LEGER**  
Directeur Général Adjoint - Odial Solutions

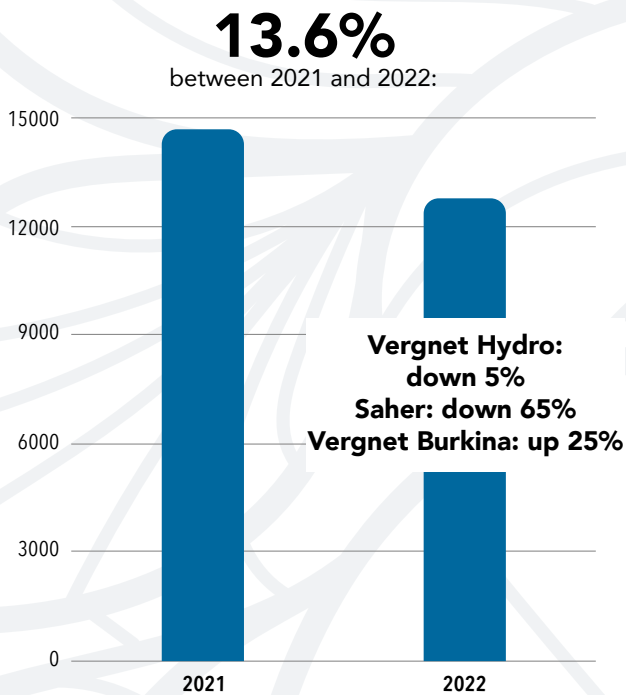


# Reducing the environmental impact of the Group's activities

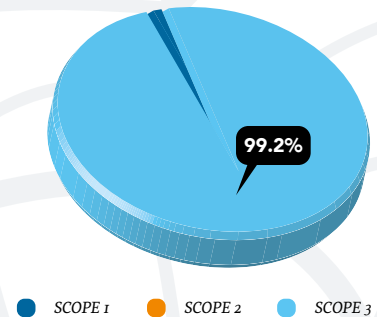
## ◆ Bilan Carbone® carbon footprint analysis for all the Group's activities in 2022

ODIAL SOLUTIONS has carried out an initial estimate of the quantity of greenhouse gases emitted by its operations and those of all its subsidiaries (excluding OMILAYÉ): SAHER, UDUMA, UDUMA MALI, VERGNET BURKINA and VERGNET HYDRO. To this end, the company used the Bilan Carbone® method (developed by ADEME) to assess its activities in 2022. The results show that:

**Vergnet Hydro and its subsidiaries reduced their greenhouse gas emissions by**

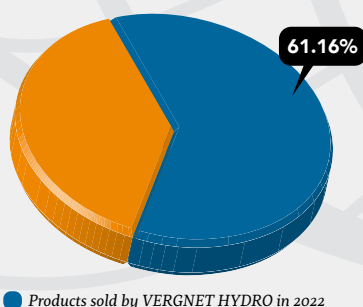


**99%**  
of our 2022 Carbon Footprint can be attributed to **Scope 3 emissions:**



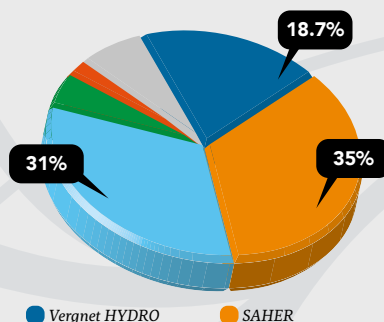
**The manufacturing of products sold by VERGNET HYDRO accounts for more than**

**60%**  
of our total greenhouse gas emissions in 2023:

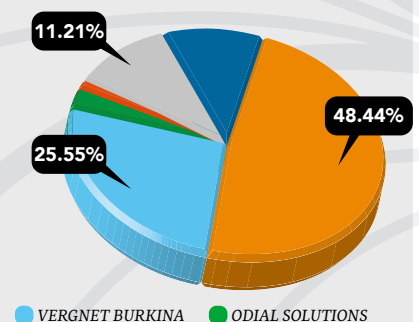


**The Group's African entities emit the most greenhouse gases:**

**for Scope 1**  
(vehicles used to travel to worksites):

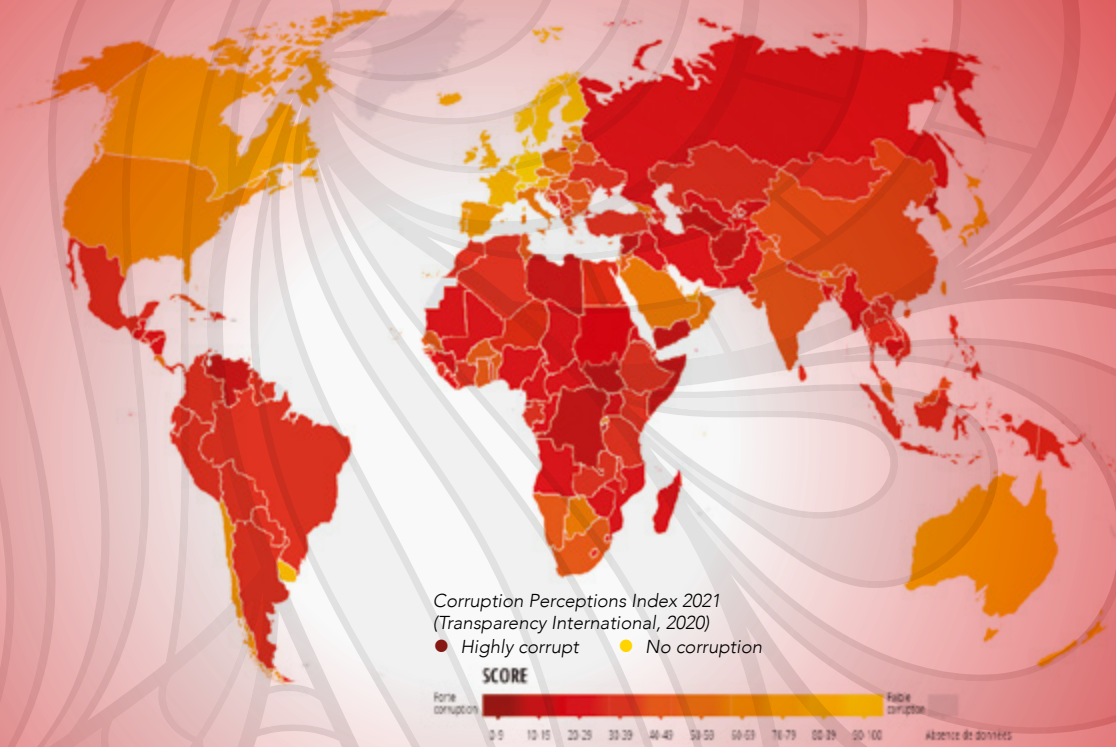


**for Scope 2**  
(national electricity generation that emits more carbon than power generated in France):





# Promoting fair and transparent governance



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**T**he ODIAL SOLUTIONS GROUP meets the transparency requirements of its international financial backers and, through its Uduma subsidiary, has put in place an efficient response to fraud and clientelism in the management of water in sub-Saharan Africa.

## International tenders require transparency

Most of our Group's business (more than half its revenue) is generated by responding to international tenders put out by financial institutions such as the WORLD BANK, THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK and the like. These major international institutions have been zealously fighting fraud and corruption since the late 1990s. As well as inserting suspensive conditions into their tenders, they have also created units to investigate these issues, such as the WORLD BANK'S INTEGRITY Vice Presidency and THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK'S INTEGRITY and Anti-Corruption Department.

Moreover, when we respond to a call for tenders issued by one of these international institutions, we and all the other candidate companies sign a charter stating explicitly that we will comply with a set of strict ethics

Article continues

# Promoting fair and transparent governance

## International tenders require transparency (cont.)

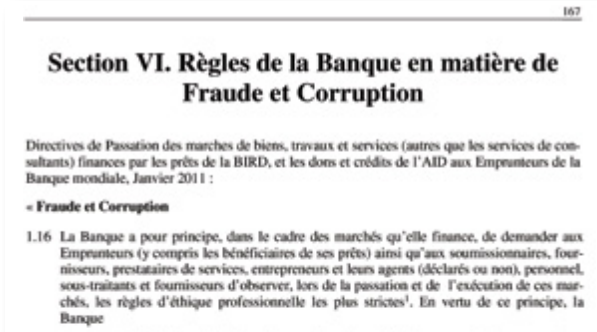
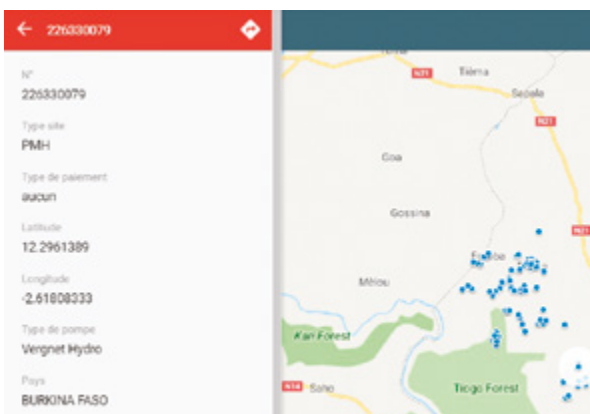
guidelines. In doing this, we rule out both corruption and all forms of fraudulent, collusive, coercive and obstructive practice. These commitments are particularly important to us. We cannot afford to run the risk of, for example, being struck off the list of companies eligible to respond to WORLD BANK tenders.

## How UDUMA brings transparency

The UDUMA model's viability and durability are based on the fact that the villagers pay for every litre of drinking water drawn at any water distribution point managed by UDUMA. Although the sums collected are modest, they are sufficient to pay the pump operators, repair technicians and kiosk staff, and also to purchase the necessary parts, payment terminals, etc. Complete transparency in the transactions between the villagers and the pump operators is therefore a prerequisite of the UDUMA model.



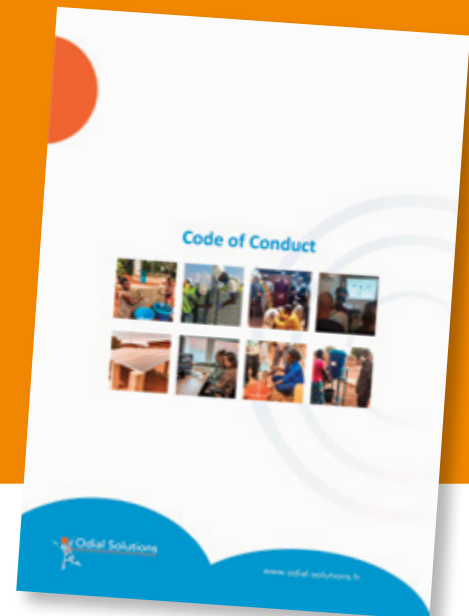
This transparency is guaranteed by the automatic correlation between the volumes of water drawn at an UDUMA water point and the volumes of water billed by the pump operator responsible for this same water distribution point. Because of this, it is impossible for pump operators to distribute water other than through a transaction recorded by UDUMA. The transaction is



Extract from a bid submitted in response to a tender by THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK.

## Code of Conduct

Over 50 years, the women and men who have helped to develop the Odial Solutions group and its subsidiaries have chiselled out a demanding set of professional ethics, now enshrined in our Code of Conduct, encompassing areas such as the protection of the environment, the protection of workers, and the rights of local communities and residents.



all the more transparent since it is entirely electronic (cashless payment).

Hence, the UDUMA model intrinsically brings transparency to the water management sector in sub-Saharan Africa, the area of the world that needs it most (Corruption Perceptions Index 2020, Transparency International). It also enables public authorities and financial backers to check installations are working and ensure funds have been spent correctly.



## 2023's new recruits



**Marine  
MULLER-CISSE**

Marine is a seasoned professional with a decade's experience in developing and managing international projects, and a strong interest in social business. She specialises in the management of innovative water services in West Africa. She joined **UDUMA** in February 2023 as **Project Manager**, overseeing the development and management of projects in the various subsidiaries.



**Richard  
TIE BI GOHI**

Richard is a water and sanitation engineer, and has worked in the urban and rural water sector in Côte d'Ivoire for over 3 years. He joined SAHER as a **Bids and Projects Officer** in May 2023.

## Sustainable Development Action Plan 2018–2023

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### Our Sustainable Development Leads:

#### ◆ What is the role of an SD Lead?

- to act as a driving force by proposing tangible actions in their field,
- to keep up-to-date with the company's actions in their field,
- to provide support in reporting information
- on performance (ESG expectations of shareholders, banks, CoP of the Global Compact) and for the Sustainable Development plan, in their field,
- to act as ambassadors for their field: awareness-raising, information, feedback, etc.

#### ◆ Who are they?



**Ethics Lead**

Thierry  
BARBOTTE,  
CEO, ODIAL  
SOLUTIONS



**Security Lead**

Christophe  
LEGER, Deputy  
Managing  
Director,  
VERGNET  
HYDRO.



**Workplace  
Health and  
Safety Lead**

Florian  
LAMBERT,  
Management  
Controller,  
VERGNET  
HYDRO



**Sexual  
harassment and  
gender-related  
matters Lead**

Brigitte  
MAINGUET,  
Bids and  
Administration  
Assistant,  
VERGNET  
HYDRO



**QE-CSR Lead**

Audrey  
QUENTIN,  
Executive  
Assistant,  
ODIAL  
SOLUTIONS



**Building Lead**

Emmanuel  
THOMAS,  
Production  
Manager,  
VERGNET  
HYDRO

## Contributing to the geographic retention of rural African populations



**1** Anticipate the needs of our customers, consumers, users and financial backers: new service offerings, innovative financing models, new types of water points.

**2** Develop and apply methodologies and tools to minimise the environmental, social and societal impact of our projects.

## Rallying employees around the Group's purpose



**1** Develop and apply a policy to foster diversity and combat discrimination.

**2** Carry out a regular audit of the Group's employee engagement (or workplace climate survey).

**3** Adapt the Group's "wellness" offering to employees' expectations.

**4** Increase the number of short in-house training courses to combine skills development and interactions between departments.

**5** Update the induction plan for new company recruits.

**6** Help employees to optimise their workstation ergonomics, in workshops, in offices and when working from home: awareness-raising by professionals and provision of suitable equipment.

**7** Organise informal events that bring people together.

**8** Boost the Group's employer brand.



## Reducing the environmental impact of the Group's activities



- 1 Study the possibility of issuing carbon credits
- 2 Implement the measures required to renew VERGNET HYDRO's ISO14001 certification.
- 3 Calculate the annual Carbon Footprint (scopes 1, 2 and 3) for ODIAL SOLUTIONS and its subsidiaries.
- 4 Continuously develop and promote the Group's energy efficiency plan.
- 5 Continue to reduce the waste volumes (particularly non-recovered waste) generated by production processes.
- 6 Decrease the amount and optimise the processing of non-production-related waste (e.g. from offices, kitchens, workshops, etc.) : encouraging eco-friendly habits, sorting waste.
- 7 Examine the possibility of installing one or more charging points for electric vehicles in the car park at the Group's head office.
- 8 Purchase carbon credits to offset GHG emissions linked to air travel by Group employees.

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## Promoting fair and transparent governance



- 1 Facilitate the company's Sustainable Development governance (SD Committee, themed half-yearly meetings, working groups).
- 2 Coordinate the Group's network of Sustainable Development Leads.
- 3 Ensure that the Group's whistleblowing procedure (Sapin 2 law) functions as intended.
- 4 Continue to develop tools that give stakeholders a permanent view of the activity at each of the drinking water points managed by the Group.
- 5 Keep our stakeholders informed about our environmental, social and societal practices: United Nations Global Compact, shareholders, customers, users, partners, suppliers, etc.
- 6 Extend the list of indicators measuring the environmental, social and societal impacts of our activities to the populations using our products and services. Consider field surveys and statistical studies.



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