



Thematic Week 8: Water And Society

Quality of the water services and public perception

**Water utility concerns in relation to
Water Service provision to
Consumers**

António Bento Franco

EPAL – Empresa Portuguesa das Águas Livres, Portugal



Mission of the Water Utility

To supply consumers with good quality water, with adequate pressure, without interruptions and with regard to the essential aspects of social and environmental responsibility and of economic efficiency.

Social Responsibility – water is vital to life. The price should reflect a balance between financial viability of the company and impact on consumer's finances.

Environmental Responsibility – to promote efficient use of water.

1. Minimising water losses along the system from extraction and treatment to transport and distribution
2. Making customers aware of how to use water efficiently.

Management of demand.

Economic Responsibility – to promote best use of capital investment in order to guarantee economic and financial sustainability of the company

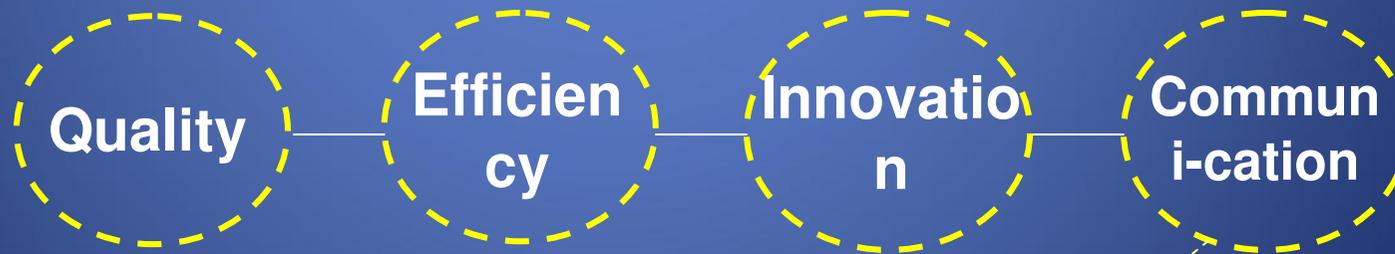




The relationship between the Water Utility and their customers implies certain peculiarities:

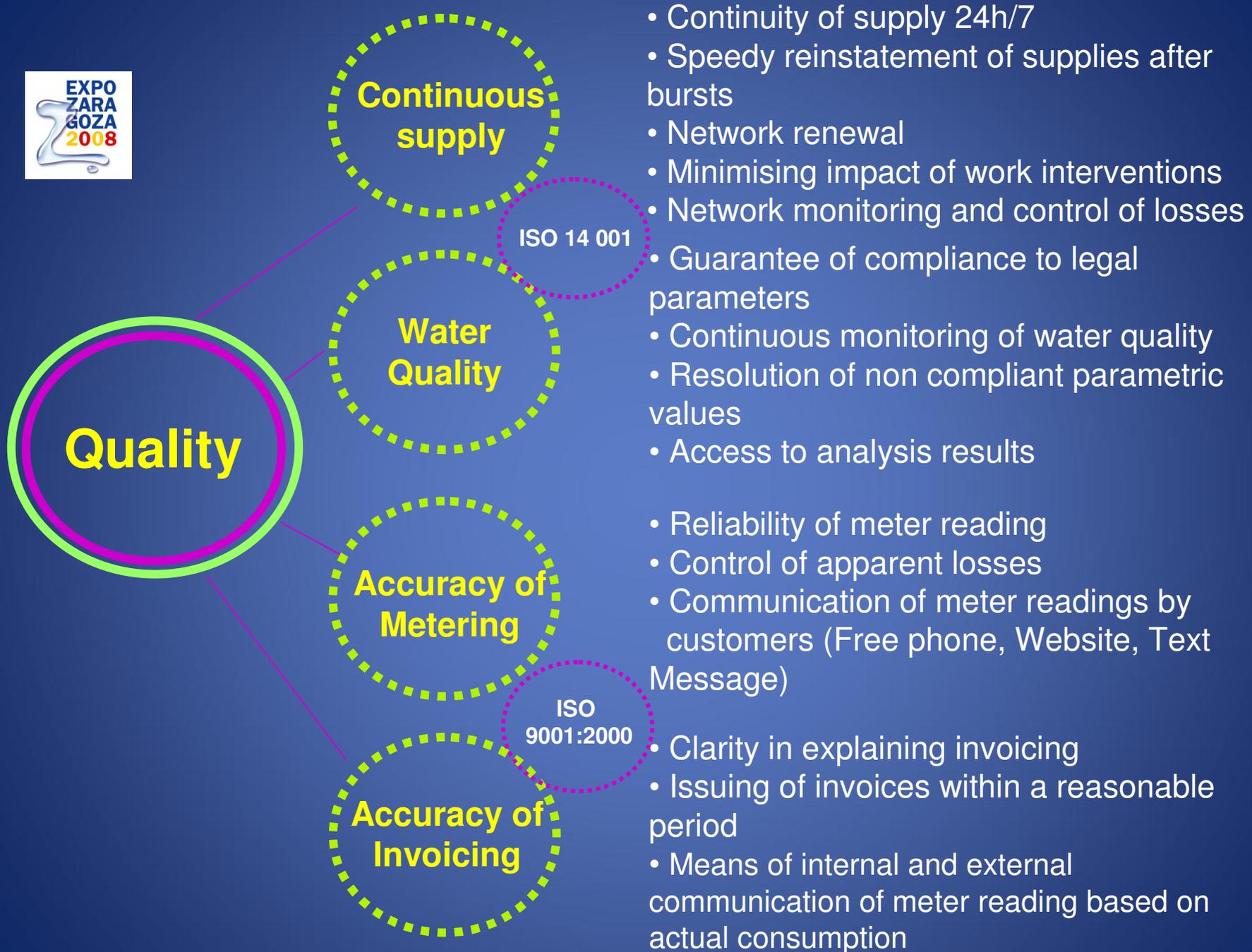
- The customer has no option over their supplier, a fact which increases responsibility of the Water Utility (natural monopoly);
- The product is scarce and essential to life;
- The provision of this service has a strong social and environmental impact;
- The distribution of water has an impact on public health.

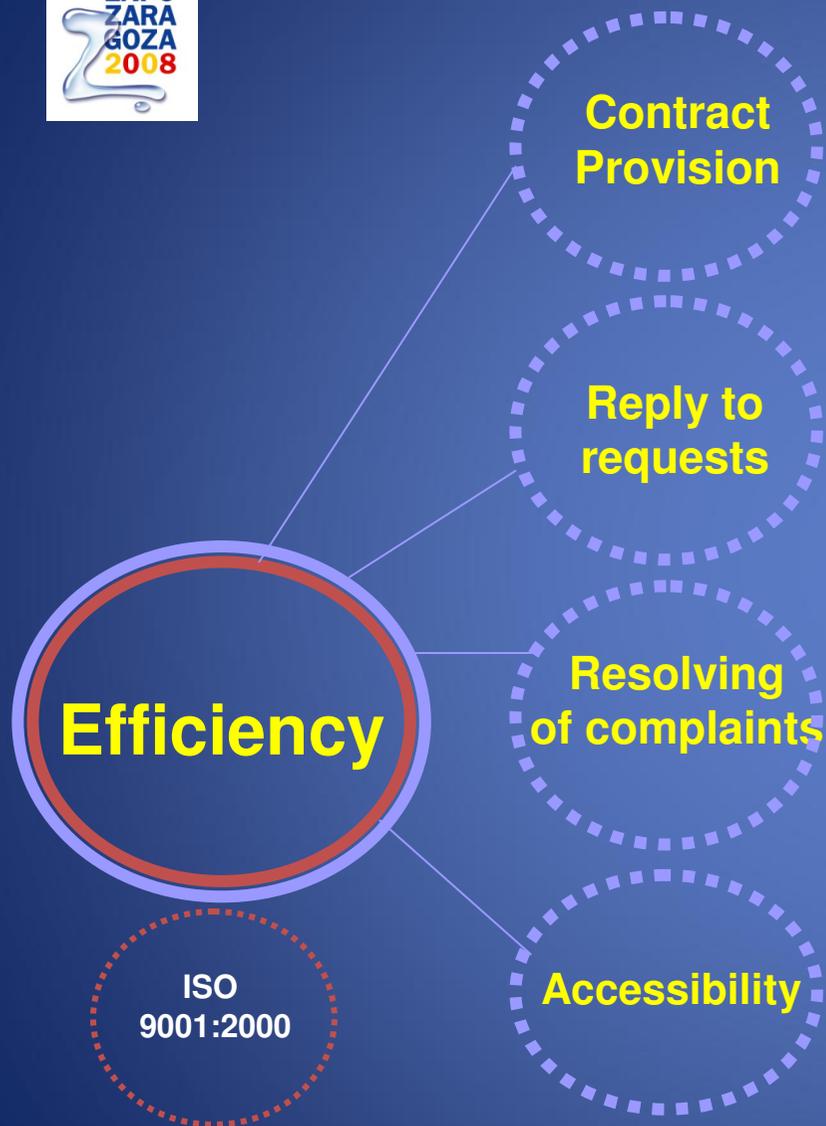
The Water Utility must guarantee:



SLAs - Service Level Agreement







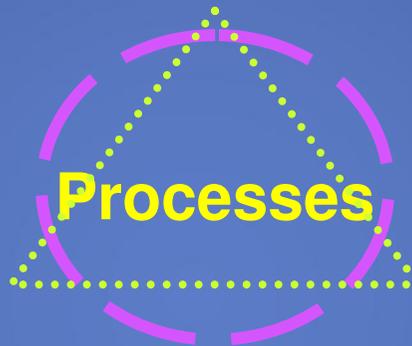
- Rapid approval of projects for domestic networks
- Installation of water meters within a short time
- Rapid Customer Service
- Diversity of payment methods
- Information – Regulations and Client Manual
- Rapidity in burst repairs
- Speed in domestic service (repairs, replacement of service valves, leak detection)
- Speed in supply reinstatement
- Rapidity in service to homes (blocked meters, dripping pipes, lack of water)
- Rapidity in correcting invoices
- Diversity of communication channels available to the consumer: Contact Centre, Shops, Free phone for reporting leaks, meter readings and lack of water, e-mail, Text Message, Website



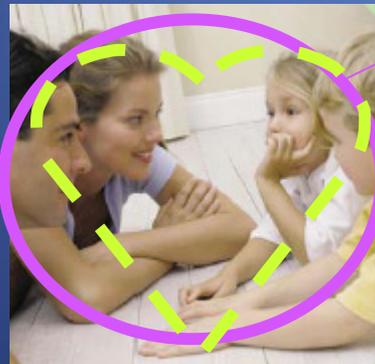
Relining
Mobile GIS
Installation of service
connections under
pressure



CRM
PDA's - on-line information to
customers about field services and
meter readings
AMR and Telemetry
Flow and pressure monitoring
systems



Client Service



- Diversity of Payment Methods
- Digital Water Account
- Interactive Website
- Text Message meter readings and notifications
- E-Newsletters

Communication and Involvement

Customer Satisfaction Index

Listening to customer comments
Implement improvements
Communicate continuously

Control of Complaints

Free independent evaluation!
Identify critical service aspects and correct what is wrong



Communication of interruptions to supply

Information to customers about dates and period of programmed supply interruptions and reinstatement following bursts

Communication Campaigns

Water Tariffs, Water Quality, Efficient Use, Payment Methods, Communication of Meter Readings, Digital Invoice, Website downloads, e-newsletters, leaflets, etc

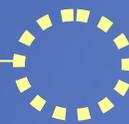


Excellence Service Levels (SLAs)

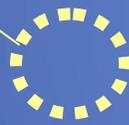
Analysis of Benchmarking



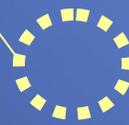
Completion of Contract and installation of meter within 24h



Programmed meter readings undertaken within 4h and domestic assistance within 2h



Reply to written complaints within 15 days



Interruptions to supply resolved within 6h



Analysis of new supply processes within 30 days and connection within 5 days