

Fact Sheet #2

Reuse of reclaimed water in Spain

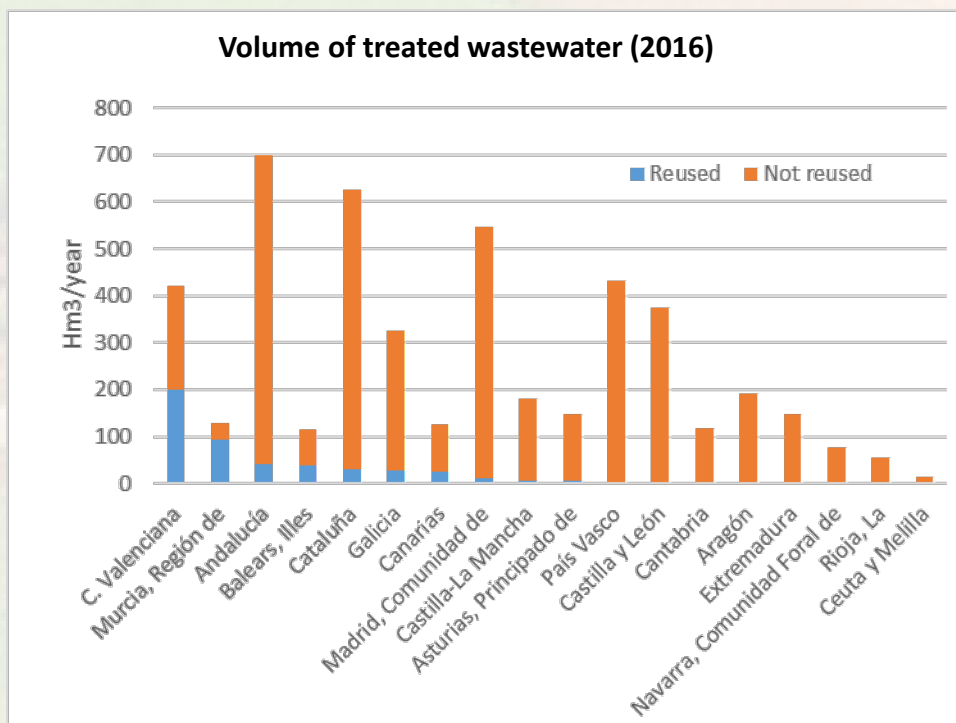
Introduction

The growing pressure on water sources and the perspective of diminishing availability are pushing the agenda for the quest of alternatives. New technological advances and legal instruments are improving the availability of treated urban wastewater for crop irrigation. Reclamo project aims to investigate how to optimize the process of water reuse for irrigation to achieve an efficient and sustainable management of water resources. This factsheet is part of 3 factsheets that describe the current state of water reuse in Spain.

Infrastructure and supplied volume for reuse

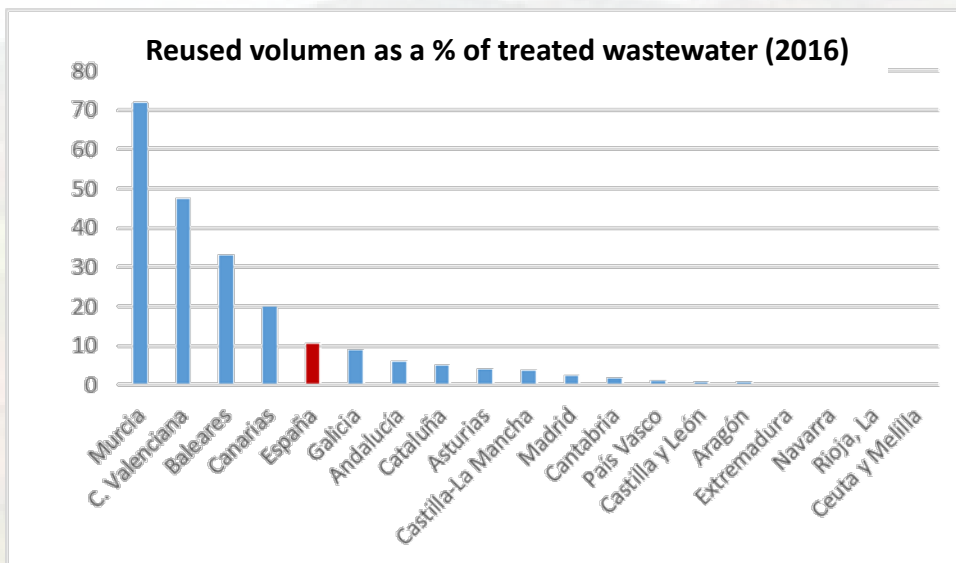
Spain stands out as the country with the higher yearly reuse volume of the European Union, with a quantity that exceeds the 300 hm³ per year. Albeit a high volume, it lacks behind the expectations set in the 2012 National Plan for Water Reuse, which set an objective above 1000 hm³/year for 2020.

The accurate quantities of reused volumes remain elusive, since different administrations provide different volumes: infrastructure capacity, wastewater treated to reuse quality standards, treated water actually reused, etc.



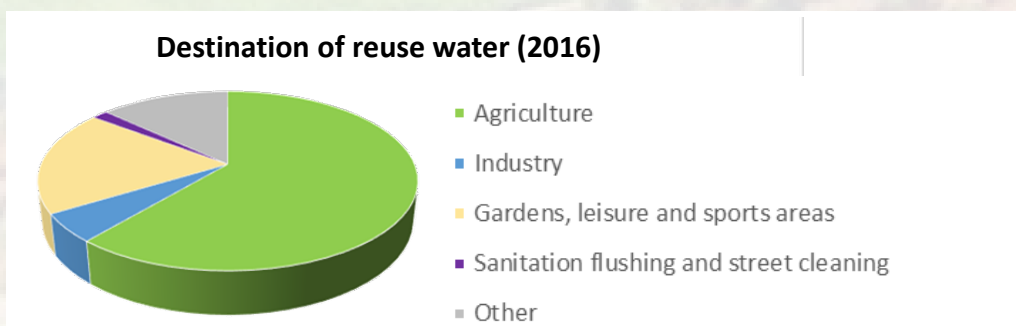
The figure shows that the river basins with lower average precipitations and in the islands have resorted to wastewater recycling

While the country as a whole reuses 10% of its wastewater, there are huge regional differences. The region of Murcia in the South East of Spain, with a buoyant export industry of fruits and vegetables but scarce availability of water recycles up to 70% of its wastewater. Neighbouring Comunitat Valenciana and the islands follow. On the other end of the chart, northern regions like Navarra and la Rioja with higher precipitation, or rainfed-crop regions like Aragón and Extremadura show negligible ratios of recycled water.



Destination of reused water

According to the available data for year 2016, more than 60% of treated water for reuse in Spain was destined for agriculture. Being the biggest consumer of water in Spain, it is natural that agricultural activity is the most impacted by water scarcity and the most interested in alternative sources. Gardens, leisure and sport area irrigation (21%) is the second largest consumer, mostly represented by irrigation of public parks and golf courses. Industrial use represents only a 5% of the total, while street cleaning represents a tiny proportion, restricted to big cities.



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