

# DIAGNOSIS, ASSESSMENT AND OPTIMISATION OF THE DESIGN AND OPERATION OF MUNICIPAL MBRs

**Sara Gabarrón Fernández**

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Universitat de Girona

PHD THESIS

**Diagnosis, assessment and optimisation of the design  
and operation of municipal MBRs**

Sara Gabarrón Fernández

2014





Universitat de Girona

PhD Thesis

**Diagnosis, assessment and optimisation of the design  
and operation of municipal MBRs**

Two annexes included  
(Annex A and Annex B)

Sara Gabarrón Fernández

2014

Supervisors: Prof. Ignasi Rodriguez-Roda Layret and Dr. Joaquim Comas Matas

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of Girona (Experimental Science and Sustainability PhD Programme)



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Certifiquen:

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Que aquest treball, titulat "Diagnosis, assessment and optimisation of the design and operation of municipal MBRs", que presenta la llicenciada en Química Sara Gabarrón Fernández per a l'obtenció del títol de doctor, ha estat realitzat sota la nostra direcció i que compleix els requeriments per poder optar a Menció Europea.

I perquè en prengueu coneixement i tingui els efectes que corresponguin, presentem davant la Facultat de Ciències de la Universitat de Girona l'esmentada Tesi, signant aquesta certificació,

Girona, 31 de Març de 2014

Ignasi Rodriguez-Roda

Joaquim Comas Matas



*Al Pare, Mare,*

*Llorenç*

*I Alexis*





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## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

**The following list contains the *journal publications* resulting from this PhD thesis:**

- Gabarrón, S.,** Dalmau, M., Comas, J., Rodriguez-Roda, I., 2014. State-of-the-art of design and operational issues of seven full-scale membrane bioreactors for wastewater treatment. To be submitted to *Water Practice and Technology*.
- Gabarrón, S.,** Ferrero, G., Dalmau, M., Comas, J., Rodriguez-Roda, I., 2014. Assessment of energy-saving strategies and operational costs in full-scale membrane bioreactors. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 134, 8-14.
- Gabarrón, S.** Dalmau, M., Porro, J., Comas, J., Rodriguez-Roda, I., 2014. Optimisation of BNR and operational costs of a full-scale MBR through a model-based approach. Submitted to *Bioresource Tehcnology*.
- Gabarrón, S.,** Gómez, M., Monclús, H., Rodriguez-Roda, I., Comas, J., 2013. Ragging phenomenon characterisation and impact in a full-scale MBR. *Water Science and Technology*, 67(4), 810-816.
- Gabarrón, S.,** Gómez, M., Dvorak, L., Ruzickova, I., Rodriguez-Roda, I., Comas, J., 2014. Effects of operational conditions, chemical cleanings and pre-treatment improvements in a MBR affected by ragging phenomenon. Submitted to *Separation Science and Technology*. Status: Under Review.



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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

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ACA	Catalan water agency
AE	Aeration energy
ASM	Activated sludge model
ASM2d	Activated sludge model no. 2d
BOD	Biological oxygen demand
BW	Backwashing BWP: chemical reagents are back-flown using the back-wash pump inside the membrane reactor BWG= chemical reagents are back-flown under gravity inside the membrane
C	Carbon
CAS	Conventional activated sludge
CEB	Chemically-enhanced backwash
CIP	Cleaning in place
COD	Chemical oxygen demand
CSS	Coarse suspended solids
CST	Capillary suction time
DC	Declogging (manual) cleaning Adc: acid declogging cleaning Bdc: basic declogging cleaning
DO	Dissolved oxygen
EPS	Extra polymeric substance
EQ	Efluent quality
F/M	Food to microorganisms ratio
FI	Filamentous index
FR	Fouling rate FRtrend : $dFR/dt$
FS	Flat sheet
HF	Hollow fibre
IFAS	Integrated fixed-film activated sludge
LMH	Unit for flux, $L \cdot m^{-2} \cdot h^{-1}$
MBR	Membrane bioreactor
MC	Maintenance cleaning
MF	Microfiltration
MLSS	Mixed liquor suspended solids
MLVSS	Mixed Liquor volatile suspended solids
MPE	Membrane performance enhancer
MSRE	Mean square relative error
MT	Multitubular
N	Nitrogen

NF	Nanofiltration
$\text{NH}_4^-\text{-N}$	Amonia-nitrogen concentration
$\text{NO}_2^-\text{-N}$	Nitrite-nitrogen concentration
$\text{NO}_3^-\text{-N}$	Nitrate-nitrogen concentration
OC	Operational costs
O&M	Operation and maintenance
OPEX	Operating expenditures
P	Phosphorous
PF	Permeate filtration
PE	Pumping energy
PSD	Particle size distribution
PVDF	Polyvinylidene fluoride
R	Relaxation
RC	Recovery cleaning
RO	Reverse oasmosis
SCADA	Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition
SAD	Specific aeration demand
	<i>SADm: Air flow per membrane area</i>
	<i>SADp: Air flow per permeate volume unit</i>
SED	Specific energy demand
SMP	Soluble microbial product
SVI	Sludge volumetric index
TKN	Total Kjeldahl nitrogen concentration
TMP	Transmembrane pressure
TSS	Total suspended solids
UF	Ultrafiltration
WWTP	Wastewater treatment plant

RESUM

RESUMEN

SUMMARY



## RESUM

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En els darrers anys s'ha incrementat l'atenció en el tractament d'aigües residuals. L'escassetat d'aigua i l'entrada en vigor de normatives més restrictives en quant a la conservació de les masses d'aigua i a l'eliminació de contaminants, han fomentat l'ús de tecnologies més avançades com els bioreactors de membranes (BRM, acrònim en anglès, MBR). Els BRMs proporcionen un efluent de qualitat elevada, pràcticament lliure de sòlids en suspensió, el qual esdevé una font molt valuosa d'aigua regenerada. A més a més, els costos associats a aquesta tecnologia han disminuït considerablement en els darrers anys, fet que ha contribuït en la seva acceptació. Malgrat aquesta significativa evolució, els BRM encara són considerats a dia d'avui una tecnologia poc competitiva energèticament i d'operació més complexa que els sistemes convencionals. Per aquest motiu és necessari treballar en la línia de l'optimització del disseny i l'operació dels BRMs, per tal de poder considerar-los una opció viable, no només des d'un punt de vista tecnològic, sinó també econòmic.

En aquest sentit, l'objectiu d'aquesta tesi es **centra en la diagnosi, avaluació i optimització del disseny i l'operació dels bioreactors de membranes** pel tractament d'aigües residuals urbanes. Concretament, l'estudi s'ha realitzat dins del marc de treball de set estacions depuradores d'aigües residuals (EDARs) municipals amb tecnologia BRM presents a Catalunya.

En primer lloc s'ha dut a terme la diagnosi de l'estat del disseny i operació dels BRMs, així com la determinació de les problemàtiques associades a aquesta tecnologia, tant a nivell internacional com específic de les EDARs amb tecnologia BMR a Catalunya. Les problemàtiques identificades s'han classificat en tres categories: limitacions de disseny, avaries mecàniques (de la instrumentació i de les membranes) i els problemes operacionals. Tot i que l'estudi ha mostrat una millora del disseny del pre-tractament i del procés de filtració en els BRM més recents, s'ha pogut diagnosticar les principals limitacions de disseny. D'altra banda, l'entrada d'objectes externs i el deteriorament dels mòduls de membranes, han estat els motius dels trencaments de membranes observats en les dues EDARs estudiades de més antiguitat. Per últim, tot i que s'ha determinat l'aparició d'escumes com el problema més habitual en els set BRMs, en realitat la presència de *clogging* (acumulació de sòlids sobre i entre les membranes), la presència d'aire en el canal de permeat, les complicacions a l'hora de realitzar les neteges químiques i els baixos rendiments de l'eliminació del nitrogen, s'han identificat com els problemes que més dificulten l'operació d'aquesta tecnologia. A més a més, tots els explotadors de les EDARs estudiades han coincidit en què els costos són la principal limitació d'aquesta tecnologia.

Per aquest motiu, s'han avaluat les estratègies d'optimització realitzades i els corresponents costos d'operació dels darrers últims quatre anys de cada una de les set EDARs. Concretament, s'ha determinat la gestió hidràulica com l'element clau per optimitzar les ràtios de consum energètic. Per poder optimitzar els consums, és essencial operar el BRM a valors pròxims als de disseny, o bé, establir una estratègia hidràulica que permeti treballar en les condicions més òptimes, tal i com han fet la majoria d'EDARs estudiades. Al marge de la gestió hidràulica, s'han determinat optimitzacions aplicades al reactor biològic (instal·lació de sistemes de control d'aire) i al procés de filtració (disminució del flux i de la concentració de sòlids i la instal·lació de sistemes de control d'aire) que han aconseguit millores significatives en els consums energètics de fins a un 16%. Així mateix, l'avaluació del desglossament dels costos de les EDARs ha mostrat com a factors més rellevants els costos de personal i d'energia.

A partir de la diagnosi realitzada, dos dels problemes operacionals observats a les EDARs de Catalunya s'han estudiat més en detall per tal d'intentar caracteritzar-los i solucionar-los.

El primer estudi experimental s'ha centrat en una de les problemàtiques diagnosticades de *clogging*, anomenada **ragging** i que consisteix en l'acumulació de fibres tèxtils sobre i entre les membranes. Aquest fenomen ha mostrat un gran deteriorament del procés de filtració, tant a escala pilot com real. A més a més, s'ha demostrat que les neteges químiques són ineficients davant d'aquest fenomen, ja que no poden eliminar les aglomeracions de fibres enganxades, i per tant, és necessari recórrer a les neteges manuals per recuperar valors acceptables de filtració. D'altra banda, l'avaluació de diferents condicions d'operació ha demostrat que la disminució d'entre un 10 i un 20% del cabal de filtració, pot millorar lleugerament l'operació del BRM sota aquest fenomen. Malgrat això, només l'eliminació d'elevada concentració de fibres a l'entrada (superior a  $40 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) permetria l'eradicació d'aquest problema. Amb aquesta finalitat, diferents estratègies de millora del pretractament, basades en l'addició de floculant catiónics i la disminució de la llum de pas del tamís de filtració, s'estudien també en aquest treball.

El segon estudi experimental s'ha enfocat en l'**optimització de l'eliminació biològica de nitrogen i els costos d'operació** mitjançant l'ús d'eines de simulació. Primerament, s'ha dut a terme una caracterització de l'afluent, fangs actius i efluent per tal d'entendre el sistema i poder desenvolupar i calibrar un model que representés l'operació del sistema estudiat. L'anàlisi d'escenaris basat en les simulacions ha permès determinar les millors estratègies d'operació en base als costos, l'eliminació de nutrients i la qualitat microbiològica dels fangs (per evitar la proliferació de bacteres filamentoses). Concretament, la implementació de la disminució de la consigna d'oxigen del tanc aerobi a la planta real, ha obtingut millores tant en rendiments d'eliminació de nitrogen, com en els costos, i alhora, ha mantingut la qualitat del fang i del procés de filtració. A més a més, s'han avaluat els costos i l'efecte d'afegir una font de matèria orgànica externa a l'entrada per equilibrar la ràtio de C i N i assegurar una desnitrificació completa.

La recerca presentada en aquesta tesi ha permès diagnosticar l'estat del disseny i l'operació dels BRMs municipals a Catalunya, alhora que ha mostrat possibles vies d'optimització que permeten millorar l'operació i els costos associats a aquesta tecnologia.

## RESUMEN

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En los últimos años se ha incrementado la atención en el tratamiento de aguas residuales. La escasez de agua y la entrada en vigor de normativas más restrictivas en cuanto a la conservación de las masas de agua y a la eliminación de contaminantes, han fomentado el uso de tecnologías más avanzadas como los bioreactores de membranas (BRM, acrónimo en inglés, MBR). Los BRMs proporcionan un efluente de elevada calidad, prácticamente libre de sólidos en suspensión, el cual se considera una fuente muy valiosa de aguas regeneradas. Además, los costes asociados a esta tecnología han disminuido considerablemente a lo largo de los últimos años, contribuyendo a su aceptación. Pese a esta significativa evolución, los BRMs todavía se consideran una tecnología poco competitiva energéticamente y de operación más compleja que los sistemas convencionales. Por este motivo es necesario trabajar en la línea de la optimización del diseño y la operación de los BRMs, para poder considerarlos una opción viable, no solamente desde un punto de vista tecnológico, sino también económico.

En este sentido, el objetivo de esta tesis se centra en la **diagnóstico, evaluación y optimización del diseño y operación de los bioreactores de membranas** para el tratamiento de aguas residuales urbanas. Concretamente, el estudio se ha llevado a cabo dentro del marco de trabajo de siete estaciones depuradoras de aguas residuales (EDARs) municipales presentes en Cataluña.

En primer lugar se ha realizado la diagnóstico del estado del diseño y la operación de los BRM, así como la determinación de las problemáticas asociadas con esta tecnología, tanto a nivel internacional como específico de las EDARs con tecnología BRM en Cataluña. Las problemáticas identificadas se han clasificado en tres categorías: limitaciones de diseño, averías mecánicas (relacionadas con la instrumentación y las membranas) y problemas operacionales. Aunque el estudio ha mostrado una mejora en el diseño del pretratamiento y del proceso de filtración en los BRMs más recientes, ha sido posible diagnosticar las principales limitaciones de diseño presentes. Por otro lado, la entrada de objetos externos y el deterioro de las membranas han sido los motivos de las roturas de las membranas observadas en las dos EDARs de más antigüedad. Por último, aunque se ha determinado la aparición de espumas como el problema más habitual en los siete BRMs, en realidad, la presencia de clogging (acumulación de sólidos sobre y entre las membranas), la presencia de aire en el canal de permeado y los bajos rendimientos de eliminación del nitrógeno, se han identificado como los problemas que más dificultan la operación de esta tecnología. Además, todos los explotadores de las EDARs estudiadas han coincidido en que los costes son la principal limitación de esta tecnología.

Por este motivo, se han evaluado las estrategias de optimización realizadas y los correspondientes costes de operación de los últimos cuatro años de cada una de las siete EDARs. Concretamente se ha determinado que la gestión hidráulica es el elemento clave para optimizar los ratios de consumo energético. Para poder optimizar los consumos, es esencial operar el BRM a valores próximos a los de diseño, o bien, establecer una estrategia de gestión hidráulica que permita trabajar en las condición más óptimas, tal y como han hecho la mayoría de EDARs estudiadas. Al margen de la gestión hidráulica, se han determinado optimizaciones aplicadas en el reactor biológico (instalación de sistemas de control de aire) y en el proceso de filtración (disminución del flujo y de la concentración de sólidos y la instalación de sistemas de control de aire) que han conseguido mejoras significativas en los consumos energéticos de hasta un 16%. Así mismo, la evaluación del desglose de los costes de las EDARs ha mostrado como factores más relevantes los costes de personal y de energía.



A partir de la diagnosis realizada, dos de los problemas operacionales observados en las EDARs de Cataluña se han estudiado detalladamente para intentar caracterizarlos y solucionarlos.

El primer estudio experimental se ha centrado en una de las problemáticas diagnosticadas de *clogging*, llamada *ragging* y que consiste en la acumulación de fibras textiles sobre y entre las membranas. Este fenómeno ha provocado un gran deterioro del proceso de filtración, tanto en planta piloto como real. Además, se ha demostrado que las limpiezas químicas son ineficientes frente a este fenómeno, ya que no pueden eliminar las aglomeraciones de fibras enganchadas en las membranas, y por lo tanto, es necesario recorrer a las limpiezas manuales para recuperar valores aceptables de filtración. Por otro lado, la evaluación de diferentes condiciones de operación ha demostrado la que la disminución de entre un 10 y 20% el caudal de filtración, puede mejorar ligeramente la operación del BRM bajo la presencia de este fenómeno. A pesar de esta mejora, tan solo la eliminación de la elevada concentración de fibras presente en el agua de entrada (superior a  $40 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) permitiría la erradicación de este problema. Con esta finalidad, diferentes estrategias de mejora del pretratamiento, basadas en la adición de floculante catiónico y la disminución de luz de paso de los tamices de filtración, también se han estudiado en este trabajo.

El segundo estudio experimental se ha basado en la optimización de la eliminación biológica de nitrógeno y de los costes de operación mediante el uso de herramientas de simulación. Primeramente, se ha llevado a cabo una caracterización del agua de entrada, de los fangos activos y del efluente con la finalidad de entender el sistema y poder desarrollar y calibrar un modelo que represente la operación del sistema estudiado. El análisis de escenarios centrado en las simulaciones ha permitido determinar las mejores estrategias de operación en base a los costes, la eliminación de nutrientes y la calidad microbiológica de los fangos (para evitar la proliferación de las bacterias filamentosas). Concretamente, la implementación de la disminución de la consigna de oxígeno del tanque aerobio en la planta real, ha obtenido mejoras tanto en los rendimientos de eliminación de nitrógeno, como en los costes, a la misma vez que ha mantenido la calidad del fango y del proceso de filtración. Además, se han evaluado los costes y el efecto de añadir una fuente de materia orgánica externa en la entrada para equilibrar la ratio de C / N y garantizar una desnitrificación completa.

La investigación presentada en esta tesis ha permitido diagnosticar el estado del diseño y la operación de los BRMs municipales en Cataluña, a la vez ha mostrado posibles vías de optimización que permiten mejorar la operación y los costes asociados a esta tecnología.

## SUMMARY

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In recent years attention to wastewater treatment has increased. Global water stress and water scarcity, together with the new regulations demanding more stringent discharge limits are the driving forces behind using ever more advanced technologies such as membrane bioreactors (MBR). As MBR technology provides a high quality effluent with a low concentration of suspended solids, this makes it a highly valuable source of regenerated water. Moreover, the significant mitigation of the high costs associated with this technology has contributed to its acceptance. Despite their considerable evolution, MBRs are still considered costly and more complex in design and operation than activated sludge systems with tertiary treatment and this is why working on optimising MBR design and operation is still necessary in order to be able to consider this technology not only technologically viable, but also economically viable.

Therefore, the objective of this thesis is based on diagnosing, assessing and optimising the design and operation of membrane bioreactors used for treating municipal wastewater. Specifically, this thesis study has been carried out within the framework of seven municipal wastewater treatment plants (WWTP) which use MBR technology and are located in Catalonia.

Firstly, the design and operational issues of the MBRs have been diagnosed, together with determining the main operational problems related to the technology. Initially, a general evaluation of the operational issues of MBRs worldwide was conducted, and then a further evaluation which focused solely on seven Catalan WWTP MBRs was carried out. The main problems identified have been classified into three different categories: design limitations, mechanical breakdowns (instrumentation and membranes) and operational problems. Despite significant improvements observed in pre-treatment and filtration process designs, some key design limitations were identified. In addition, foreign bodies entering membranes and the deterioration of the membrane module structure were the origins of the broken membranes observed in the two oldest MBRs studied. Finally, despite the foaming phenomenon having been identified as the most common operational problem in the MBRs studied, other problems such as clogging (solids agglomeration within or at the entrance to membrane channels), the presence of air in the permeate line, or low denitrification removal efficiency, highlighted more serious issues in the MBR process. Moreover, all of the MBR operators surveyed agreed that operational costs are the foremost limitation of this technology.

For this reason, the optimisation strategies applied in each full-scale MBR and the resulting costs for the past four years were assessed. As a result, hydraulic load management has been determined as the key issue in controlling energy consumption ratios. In order to optimise energy consumption, it is essential to operate the MBR close to its design values or to establish a hydraulic strategy which allows the closest to optimal operating conditions possible; as all the full-scale MBRs studied have done. Aside from the hydraulic management, optimizations in the biological process (installation of automatic control systems for biological aeration) and of the filtration process (reduction of the operational flux or mixed liquor suspended solid concentration and installation of control system for membrane air scours) were determined. These optimisation strategies achieved significant reductions in the energy consumption ratios (average reductions of up to 16%). Additionally, the WWTP cost breakdown evaluation determined personnel and energy costs as the most significant outlay.

From the diagnosis carried out, two of the operational problems identified in the Catalan MBRs were exhaustively evaluated in order to characterise and optimise them.

The first experimental study was focused on one of the diagnosed clogging behaviours, namely ragging which consists on the textile fibre accumulation within or at the membrane channels. This phenomenon has been shown to cause a serious deterioration of the filtration performance, both in the pilot and full-scale MBRs. Moreover, chemical cleanings or backwashing did not alleviate this problem because these cleanings were inefficient in removing the rags attached to the membranes. In fact manual cleaning was required to recover reasonable filtration conditions. On the other hand, an evaluation of different operational conditions showed that an operational flux reduction between 10 and 20 % resulted in slight membrane permeability recoveries. However, only the removal of the high textile fibre concentrations (higher than  $40 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) from the influent could avoid this problem. Therefore, strategies based on the flocculants addition and the sieve's hole size reduction to optimise the pre-treatment were also evaluated in this study.

The second experimental study was centred on biological nitrogen removal and operational costs optimisations through model-based approaches. First of all, the influent, activated sludge and effluent were characterised in order to better understand the system. This evaluation allowed for the development and calibration of a model which represents the operation of the MBR studied. The scenario analysis, based on the costs, the effluent quality and the microbiological quality of the activated sludge (in order to avoid the proliferation of filamentous bacteria), enabled the best optimisation strategies to be identified. Specifically, implementing the dissolved oxygen set-point reduction in the full-scale MBR achieved improvements in both nitrogen removal efficiencies and costs and, at the same time, maintained sludge and filtration process qualities. In addition, the costs and the effects of adding an external carbon source to ensure an adequate C/N ratio in the influent and achieve a complete denitrification process were evaluated.

The research carried out in this thesis has enabled the design and operation of the municipal MBRs in Catalonia to be diagnosed while, at the same time, presenting several optimisation strategies to improve the operation and costs of this technology.

# I NTRODUCTION



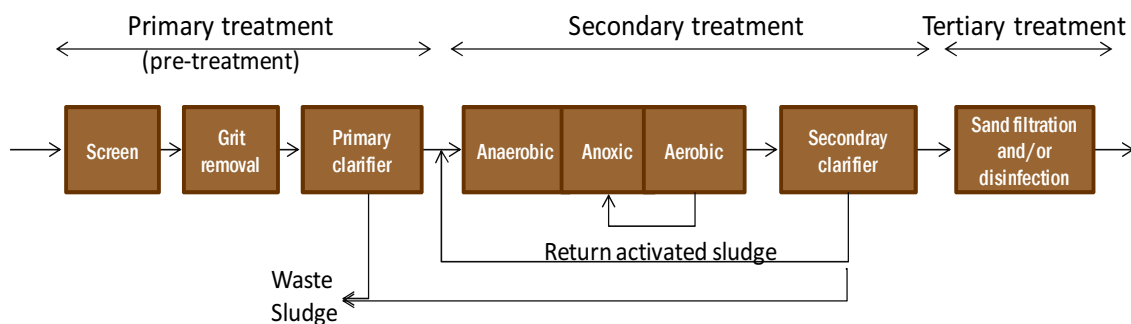
# CHAPTER 1

FUNDAMENTALS

## 1.1. ACTIVATED SLUDGE PROCESS

The activated sludge system has gained increasing importance since its development in the early 1900s by Arden and Lockett, becoming widely used around the world in the biological treatment of municipal and industrial wastewater. In particular, the activated sludge process utilises aeration, mixing, recirculation and sedimentation of the activated biomass in order to remove organic and nutrient constituents from wastewater. This process normally forms part of the complete treatment scheme carried out in a wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) (Metcalf and Eddy, 2003).

In order to avoid maintenance or operational problems arising during the process, wastewater treatment usually starts with the removal of floatable substances and coarse materials through the pre-treatment steps. There is then usually the primary settler afterwards where approximately one-half of the suspended solids and a portion of the organic matter are removed by sedimentation. After the primary treatment, the biological treatment, (i.e., the activated sludge process) is where the organic carbon, ammonium and phosphate are removed by the microorganisms. The combination of anaerobic, anoxic and aerobic compartments together with the internal recycle flows, which follow a specified sequence, is essential for the nutrient removal processes. Subsequently, the biomass is separated from the treated wastewater through a sedimentation process in a secondary clarifier. The settled sludge is then either returned to the biological process (return activated sludge, RAS) or removed from the activated sludge process for further treatment and disposal, i.e., waste activated sludge (WAS). Moreover, if an improved quality effluent is required, an additional treatment (tertiary treatment) such as sand filtration and/or disinfection can be incorporated. Figure 1.1 shows the typical layout of a conventional activated sludge (CAS) process.



**Figure 1.1.** Typical scheme of a biological wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) with a conventional activated sludge (CAS) process, adapted from Metcalf & Eddy (2003).

CAS processes are known worldwide for their advantages such as stable processes under easy operation and enabling good effluent quality at moderate costs. Nevertheless, the performance of the secondary clarifier is the key factor in achieving good effluent qualities. Thus, the weak

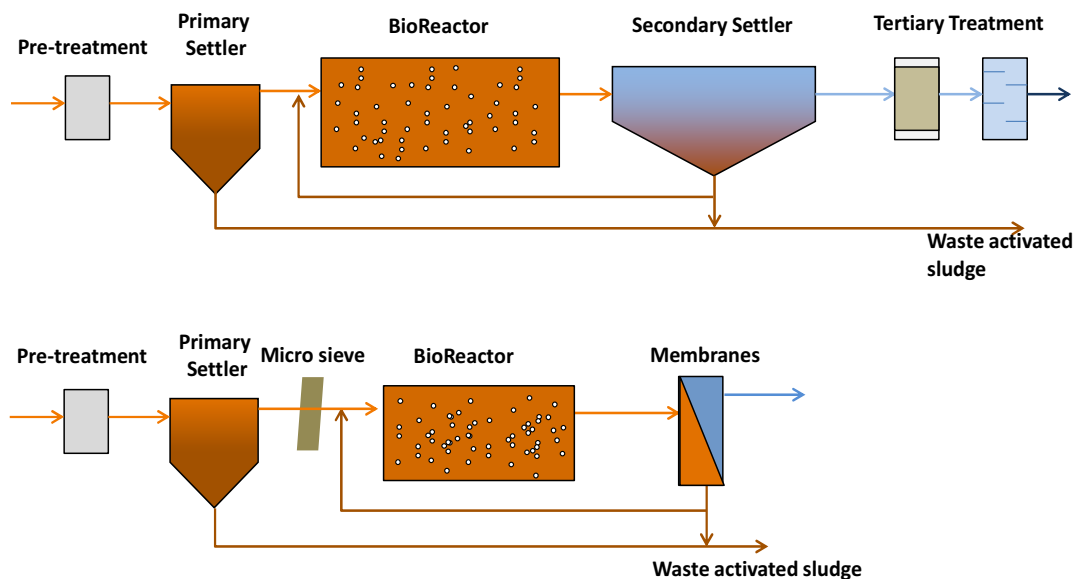
points of this technology are not only dependent on the activated sludge settling properties, but also on the large space required for its installation.

In order to deal with these drawbacks, new technologies have come to the fore over the last decade. One of the most popular being membrane bioreactors (MBR) which are used in a large number of wastewater treatment facilities because of their compactness and efficiency in solid-liquid separation.

## 1.2.MBR TECHNOLOGY

### 1.2.1. Definition

MBR technology is based on the combination of a biological process together with a membrane-based filtration process. Essentially, the membrane system replaces the solids separation function for the secondary clarifiers in conventional activated sludge systems, as it is shown in Figure 1.2. Depending on the membrane typology utilised, the filtration process is considered microfiltration or ultrafiltration.



**Figure 1.2.** Simple scheme of a conventional activated sludge system with tertiary treatment (top) and a membrane bioreactor system (bottom).

### 1.2.2. Fundamentals of membrane filtration

For wastewater purposes, membrane filtration is defined as a pressure –or vacuum- driven separation, where the membranes act as a physical barrier, designed to exclude fine particles. The degree of selectivity depends on the pore size of the membrane, thus making it possible to classify water separation processes as: (i) microfiltration (MF), (ii) ultrafiltration (UF), (iii) nanofiltration (NF) and (iv) reverse osmosis (RO) (Figure 1.3).



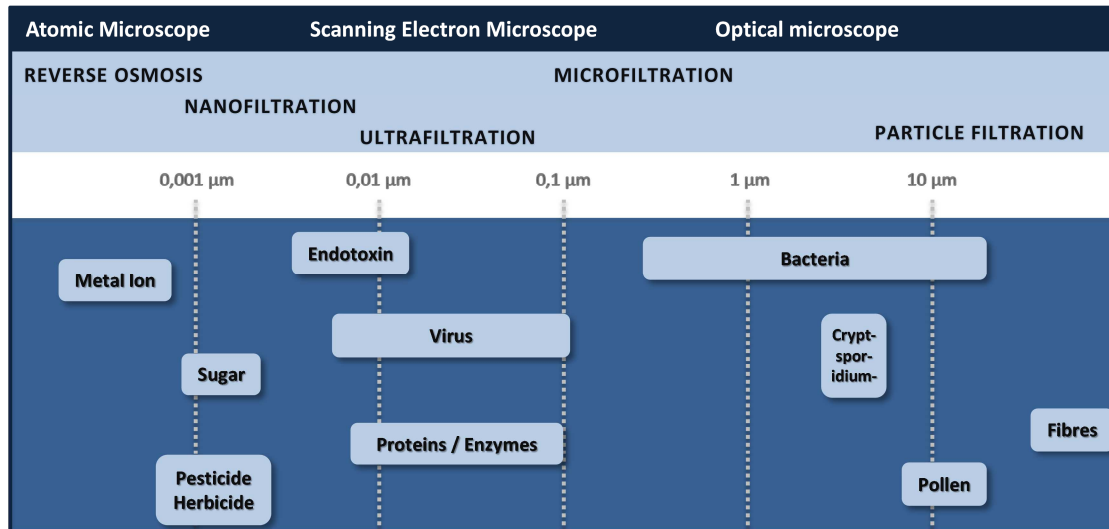


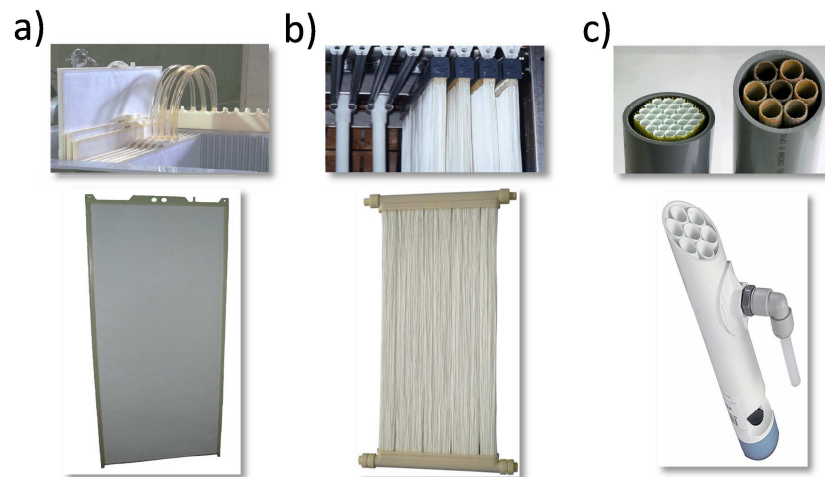
Figure 1.3. Selection of membrane pore size, adapted from Judd (2011)..

MF deals with the removal of particulate or suspended material ranging in size from 0.1 to 10  $\mu\text{m}$  retaining bacteria and colloids, while UF is usually used to separate viruses and part of organics in the 0.01 to 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  range. On the other hand, NF membranes with a pore size of 0.001 to 0.1  $\mu\text{m}$  are capable of separating small organics and multivalent ions, while RO can deal with the removal of singly charged ions smaller than 0.001  $\mu\text{m}$ . In all cases, the permeate or filtrate is the liquid phase able to pass through the membranes, whereas the rejected part is commonly called retentate.

According to Judd (2011), the ideal membrane configuration is identified by:

- a high membrane area to module bulk volume ratio (or packing density),
- a high degree of turbulence for mass transfer promotion on the feed side,
- a low energy expenditure per water product unit volume,
- a low cost per unit area of membrane,
- a design that facilitates cleaning, and
- a design that permits modularization.

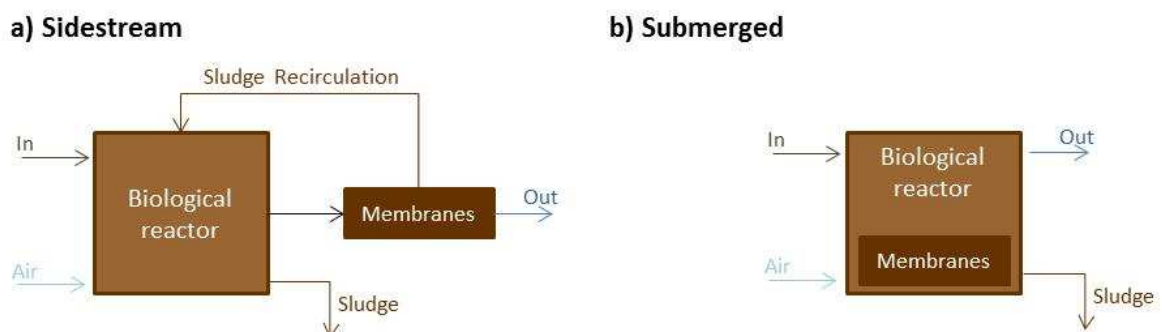
In general, there are six principal membrane configurations currently in use: flat sheet (FS), hollow fibre (HF), (multi)tubular (MT), capillary tube (CT), pleated filter cartridge (FC) and spiral-wound (SW). Among these configurations, only the first three are suited to MBR technology (Figure 1.4) (Judd, 2011).



**Figure 1.4.** Main membrane configurations: (a) FS, (b) HF, (c) MT.

### 1.2.3. MBRs configuration

Depending on the membranes' filtration location, different MBR configurations are known: external and submerged MBR (Figure 1.5). Submerged MBR systems, with the membrane directly immersed in the bioreactor are usually preferred for domestic wastewater treatment over a side-stream configuration, which is basically used in leachate treatment and industrial wastewater.



**Figure 1.5.** Process configurations of a membrane bioreactor: (a) sidestream and (b) Submerged, adapted from Judd (2011).

### 1.2.4. MBRs key parameters

#### 1.2.4.1. Activated sludge process

There are several operational and design parameters that determine the characteristics of an activated sludge process. Specifically, MBR process operates over a considerable different range of parameters than CAS process. The main operational parameters are described below:

- **Mixed liquor suspended solids (MLSS):** is the concentration of suspended solids in mixed liquor (mixture of raw or settled wastewater and activated sludge) contained in

an aeration basin in the activated sludge process, usually expressed in milligrams per litre ( $\text{mg}\cdot\text{l}^{-1}$ ). MBR systems can be operated under higher MLSS ( $5\text{-}15\text{ g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) than CAS.

- **Hydraulic Retention Time (HRT)** is the amount of time that wastewater spend to pass through the aeration tank. Changes in HRT can affect biological activity.

$$\text{HRT} = \frac{\text{Volume of aeration basin (l)}}{\text{Flow (l}\cdot\text{h}^{-1})}$$

- **Solids Retention Time (SRT)** is the average time a sludge molecule remains in the system. SRT is used to maintain the proper amount of activated sludge in the aeration tanks and is a critical design and operational parameter. MBR process operates at higher SRT values (10-30 days) than CAS (5-20 days).

$$\text{SRT} = \frac{\text{MLSS (g}\cdot\text{l}^{-1}) \cdot \text{Volume of aeration basins (l)}}{(\text{TSS}_{\text{waste}}(\text{g}\cdot\text{l}^{-1}) \cdot \text{Q}_{\text{waste}}(\text{l}\cdot\text{d}^{-1})) + (\text{TSS}_{\text{effluent}}(\text{g}\cdot\text{l}^{-1}) \cdot \text{Q}_{\text{effluent}}(\text{l}\cdot\text{d}^{-1}))}$$

Where *MLSS* are mixed liquor suspended solids, *TSS<sub>waste</sub>* are total suspended solids in the waste flow, *Q<sub>waste</sub>* is waste flow rate, *TSS<sub>effluent</sub>* is total suspended solids in the effluent and *Q<sub>effluent</sub>* is effluent flow rate..

- **Food to microorganism (F/M)** is a measurement of the food entering the activated sludge process and the microorganisms in the aeration tanks.

$$\frac{\text{F}}{\text{M}} = \frac{\text{BOD (g}\cdot\text{l}^{-1}) \cdot \text{Q}_{\text{influent}}(\text{l}\cdot\text{d}^{-1})}{\text{MLSS (g}\cdot\text{l}^{-1}) \cdot \text{Volume of the aeration basins (l)}}$$

Where *BOD* is Biochemical oxygen demand and *Q<sub>influent</sub>* is influent flow rate.

#### 1.2.4.2. Filtration process

The key elements in any membrane process that have to be monitored are listed below:

- **Permeate flux** is the flow through a specific membrane surface. Usually expressed as LMH

$$\text{Flux} = \frac{\text{flow (l}\cdot\text{h}^{-1})}{\text{membrane surface (m}^2\text{)}} = [\text{l}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\text{h}^{-1}] \text{ expressed as LMH}$$

- **Transmembrane pressure (TMP)** is the pressure required to achieve a specific flux. It is usually expressed as bars.
- **Membrane permeability** is the relation between the flux and the TMP, and is expressed as  $\text{LMH}\cdot\text{bar}^{-1}$ .

$$\text{Permeability} = \frac{\text{flux}}{\text{TMP}} = [\text{LMH} \cdot \text{bar}^{-1}]$$

- **Specific aeration demand (SAD)** is the air flow per membrane area (**SAD<sub>m</sub>**) or per permeate volume unit (**SAD<sub>p</sub>**).

$$SAD_m = \frac{\text{air flow (m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}\text{)}}{\text{membrane surface (m}^2\text{)}}$$

$$SAD_p = \frac{\text{air flow (m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}\text{)}}{\text{permeate flow (m}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}\text{)}}$$

### 1.2.5. Key drivers for MBR technology implementation

The increasing global water stress and local water scarcity, together with new regulations, have focused attention on wastewater treatment technologies able to produce a high effluent quality, such as the MBRs. Specifically, the MBR provides an effluent free of suspended solids, with low turbidity and partially disinfected, permitting the idea of using the water as an alternative water source. These effluent properties can deal with requirements imposed by recently introduced regulations demanding more stringent discharge limits and are acting as the driving force for implementing this technology, e.g. EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive (91/271/EEC), the EC Bathing Water Directive in Europe, or the Clean Water Protection Act (2009). Moreover, the confidence in and acceptance of the MBR process has increased thanks to technological developments and membrane technology advances. Thus, the significant mitigation of the high costs associated with this technology (Figure 1.6), despite still being the most significant barrier to this technology, has been crucial in the widespread installation of MBRs.

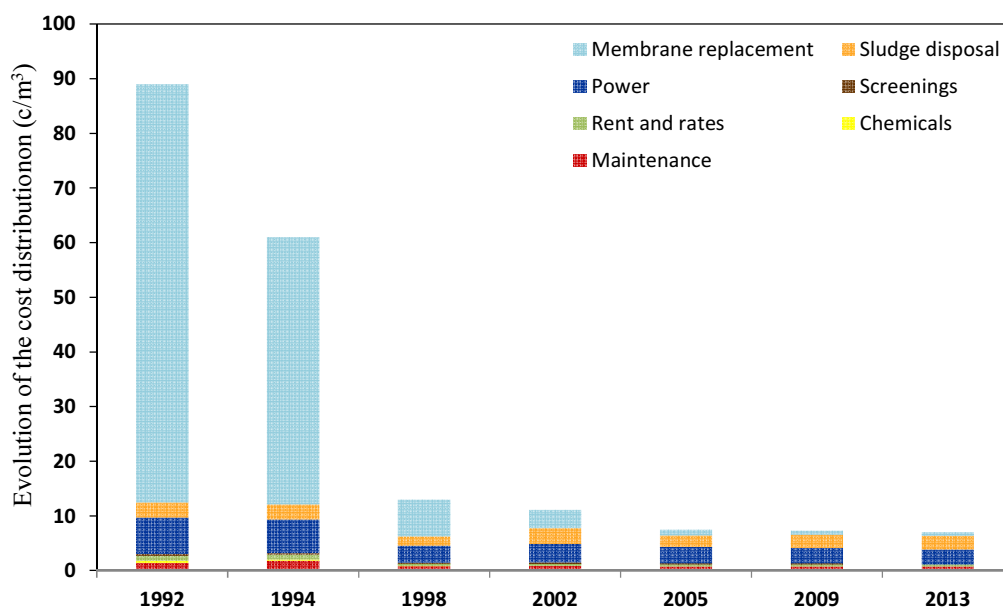
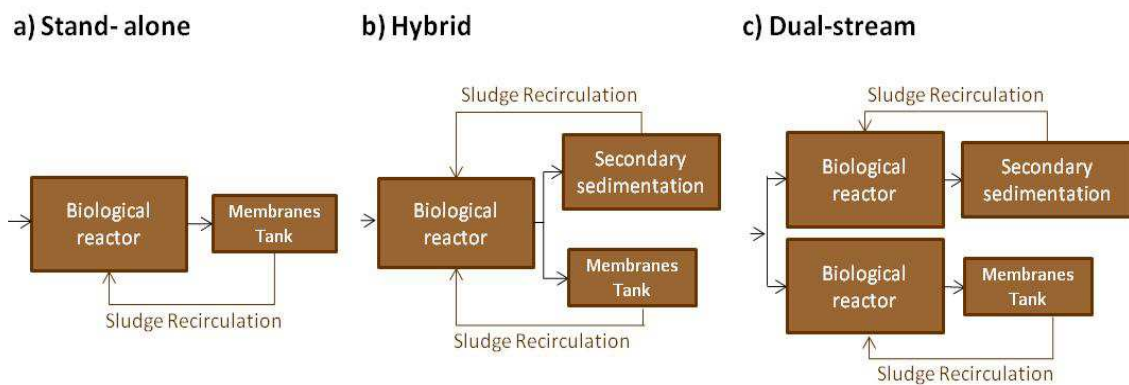


Figure 1.6. Evolution of the total cost and its distribution, adapted from Verrecht *et al.*, (2009).

In addition, MBR technology has been determined as a cost-effective option in the case of upgrading and retrofitting existing wastewater treatment plants, especially those based on a conventional activated sludge process. In that sense, two main configurations are identified: Stand-alone and Hybrid. While the Stand-alone configuration is based on replacing existing secondary treatments in the MBR process, the Hybrid Process is characterised by maintaining a part of the previous secondary process (Figure 1.7a and 1.7b). A further option consists of maintaining two complete parallel lines in a dual-stream configuration (Figure 1.7c). The second biological process can be the existing CAS system or other advanced technology, such as the integrated fixed activated sludge (IFAS). These MBR retrofitting solutions have been demonstrated to be good solutions for small space requirements, achieving high capacity-to-footprint ratio together with high quality effluent with a high potential for water reuse and design flexibility.



**Figure 1.7.** Schematic representation of a stand-alone (a), hybrid (b) and dual-stream (c) configurations.

### 1.2.6. MBR market development

The use of MBRs is rapidly advancing around the world in terms of research, technology and commercial applications (GIA, 2012). It has been reported that the MBR market is growing faster than the market for other types of membranes systems (BCC, 2011; Judd, 2011) and nowadays MBRs are present in more than 200 countries (Icon, 2008). The predominant driving force behind the global growth of the MBR market is a steady decrease in price and energy consumption levels compared with earlier models sold in the 1990s (Frost & Sullivan, 2008).

The MBR global market was valued at USD 838.2 million in 2011 and was projected to increase up to USD 3.44 billion by 2018 (Frost and Sullivan, 2013). This represents a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 22.4% over this time period. Another estimate stipulates that the global MBR operation is expected to grow from 3,879 thousand cubic meters·day<sup>-1</sup> in 2011 to 12,344 thousand cubic meters·day<sup>-1</sup> by 2017, at an estimated CAGR of

20.8% for the period 2012 to 2017 (Market and Market, 2012). As of year 2011, Asia-Pacific leads MBR market with a share of 41.2% in terms of value, followed by Europe and North America. Moreover, MBRs used for treating municipal and domestic wastewater had the largest market value and were found in the largest treatment facility (BCC, 2011).

A review of the municipal market share across the MBR product suppliers revealed that the original three suppliers (GE Zenon, Kubota and Mitsubishi Rayon Engineering) still dominate the market. By the end of 2009, these three suppliers provided around 3500 installations of the approximately 5000 municipal installations existing all over the world (Santos and Judd, 2010). Despite the predominance of these suppliers, a wide range of products are available, with at least 32 other membrane suppliers with wastewater treatment MBR reference sites (Judd, 2011).

Focusing on the European market, the first full-scale MBR municipal WWTP was commissioned and constructed in 1998 in Porlock (UK, 3,800 population equivalent (p.e.)). It was soon followed by WWTPs in Büchel and Rödingen (Germany, 1999, 1,000 and 3,000 p.e., respectively), and in Perthes-en-Gâtinais (France, 1999, 4,500 p.e.) (Lesjean and Huisjes, 2008). In 2002, 154 MBR units could be counted, among 15% were for municipal applications. Both municipal and industrial sectors saw a sharp increase in the following years. In the subsequent three years, the market growth rate was linear with at least 50 industrial and 20 municipal plants per year. In 2006, the total number of MBR plants in operation was 111 (Lesjean *et al.*, 2009) and 38 of them had a nominal capacity greater than  $5,000 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{d}^{-1}$ . By the end of 2008, more than 800 commercial MBR (industrial and municipal) plants were in operation around Europe, of which 37 MBR plants had a capacity greater than  $5,000 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{d}^{-1}$  (Lesjean and Huisjes, 2008).

Among European countries, the number and capacities of MBRs has soared in Spain in recent years (Figure 1.8). The first MBR was installed in 2002 and nine years later, 45 MBRs were in operation with a total capacity of around  $170,000 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{day}^{-1}$ . Taking into account the existing and the projected MBR facilities, the total capacity expected by 2014 is  $247,000 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{day}^{-1}$ . These facilities are mainly located in areas more prone to suffering water scarcity episodes (due to weather conditions) and with high levels of tourism. As with the international market, Kubota and GE Zenon lead the Spanish market accounting the 70% of the total facilities (Iglesias *et al.*, 2012).

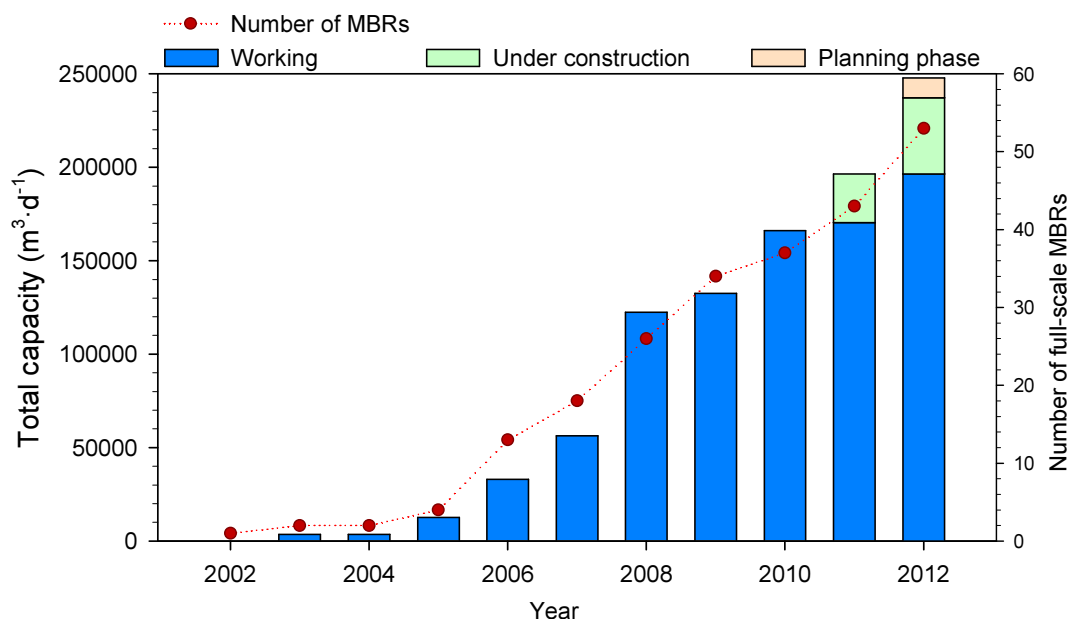


Figure 1.8. MBR market evolution in Spain from 2002 to 2012, adapted from Iglesias *et al.*, 2012.

### 1.2.7. MBR prospects and limitations

Despite the previously mentioned advantages offered by the MBRs, this technology is associated with some limitations which still restrict its expansion. Table 1.1 summarises the main advantages and limitations affecting MBR technology.

Table 1.1. Main advantages and limitations of the MBR technology (Judd, 2011).

ADVANTAGES	LIMITATIONS
High quality effluent (possible effluent reuse)	High capital costs
Small footprint	High O&M costs (fouling control, membrane cleaning chemicals)
Long sludge retention times (reduced sludge production)	Limited membrane lifetime (eventual membrane replacement)
Compact system (high volumetric loading rates)	Rigorous pre-treatment (to prevent membrane damage or clogging)
Effluent suitable for reuse applications	Require qualified operators
Suitable for upgrade old WWTPs	

Despite the high amount of research done on MBR technology, there is still a gap between the basic research and the users' requirements. While the majority of the research is focused on fouling phenomena (31 %, Santos *et al.*, 2011), this matter is not considered the main issue by the user. On the contrary, issues such as clogging or pre-treatment, which are one of the main user concerns, still require further research and development. Similarly, design and operational strategies aimed at reducing operational costs should be further studied in order to be able to consider MBR technology as a cost-effective alternative for water reuse.

# OBJECTIVES





# CHAPTER 2

## OBJECTIVES



The main objective of this thesis is **to diagnose, assess and optimise the design and operation of municipal MBRs**. To reach this objective the following sub-objectives were outlined:

- Diagnose the main design and operational characteristics and problems of municipal MBRs.
- Assess the long-term operation and costs of municipal MBRs.
- Identify and evaluate process optimisation strategies in municipal MBRs.
- Implement and monitor process optimisation strategies in pilot and full-scale MBRs.

In order to achieve these objectives, this thesis has been structured in three different blocks with the corresponding goals:

- **Block 1: Diagnosis of municipal MBR design and operation:**
  - Review of design and MBR operational issues; focusing on the seven municipal MBRs located in Catalonia.
  - Identify existing design limitations and operational problems in the seven full-scale municipal MBRs.
  
- **Block 2: Assessment of municipal MBR operation**
  - Long-term evaluation of the influent and effluent water quality, hydraulic management and operational costs.
  - Identification of the operational strategies applied in each facility and the economic and process performance benefits achieved.
  
- **Block 3: Optimisation of municipal MBRs:**
  - Exhaustive analysis of two full-scale MBRs in order to characterise and optimise the operational problems identified. The two operational problems studied and optimised were:
    - *Ragging phenomenon*: study of the ragging phenomenon effects in pilot and full-scale MBRs to suggest possible optimisation strategies to improve the process.
    - *Process efficiency and costs*: improvement of nutrient removal efficiencies, reduce operational costs and maintain filtration performance.



# METHODOLOGY



# CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY



The research methodology followed in this thesis is presented in this chapter. Firstly, the procedure followed to collect all design and operational data is described. Secondly, the different data analyses applied are listed. Finally, the pilot plant and the seven full-scale MBRs studied are presented together with the tools and methods used for the experimental studies.

### **3.1.DATA COLLECTION**

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To evaluate the design and operation of the MBRs studied (presented in section 3.3.1), together with the identification of MBR problems and possible optimisation strategies, the procedure described below has been followed:

#### ***3.1.1. State of the art of design and operational parameters of full-scale MBRs***

A bibliographic review of the main design and operational parameters used for full-scale MBRs facilities was completed. Specifically, data from the membranes suppliers' manuals (GE Zenon, Kubota) and from books on membrane applications (Judd, 2011; WEF, 2011) were evaluated. Troubleshooting information was also reviewed from recognised specialised online professional forums (i.e. LinkedIn: MBR group and mbrsite.com).

#### ***3.1.2. Design and construction data collection of the seven full-scale MBRs***

The construction projects of the seven full-scale MBRs were provided by the Catalan Water Agency (ACA). Likewise, historical data regarding nutrient removal efficiencies and energy consumption ratios was obtained.

#### ***3.1.3. Questionnaires development***

Two different questionnaires were developed with a view to capturing all the plant parameters, and specifically, those related to pre-treatment, biological treatment and membrane filtration. Specifically, one questionnaire was focused on MBR operation, while the other was based on the diagnosis of the main operational problems observed in each facility. The templates of both questionnaires are attached in **Annex A**.

#### ***3.1.4. Visits to the full-scale MBRs, face-to-face interviews and communication with the plant managers and water authorities.***

Questionnaires were originally sent to the plant operators and corroborated by information arising from engineering design projects. Inconsistencies or points of contention were discussed at length directly with the operators during the face-to-face interviews.

### 3.1.5. Reports of each full-scale MBR

Based on the information gathered, an exhaustive report on the design and operation of each full-scale MBR was made. All the reports are attached in **Annex B**. These reports were the basis for all the following evaluations, studies and experiments carried out during this thesis.

## 3.2. DATA ANALYSIS

### 3.2.1. Processed data

Influent and effluent water quality, hydraulic loads and cost data for the available period of time (between two and four years of operation) from the seven full-scale MBRs was processed. Cost evaluation was focused on operational expenditure (OPEX) and energy consumption values. Data analysis of all these parameters was based on the same established protocol for each facility, calculating monthly and yearly average values from daily and weekly measured values. On the other hand, several MBR operational parameters were monitored during the assessments and experimental studies carried out. Specifically, online data (i.e. flux, TMP, DO) were recorded and stored in supervisory control and data acquisition systems, as is mentioned in **Chapters 6, 7 and 8**.

### 3.2.2. Calculations

The processed data was used to calculate different parameters related to filtration performance and chemical cleaning efficiencies. Table 3.1 shows the main calculations applied and the chapter where each one is described in detail.

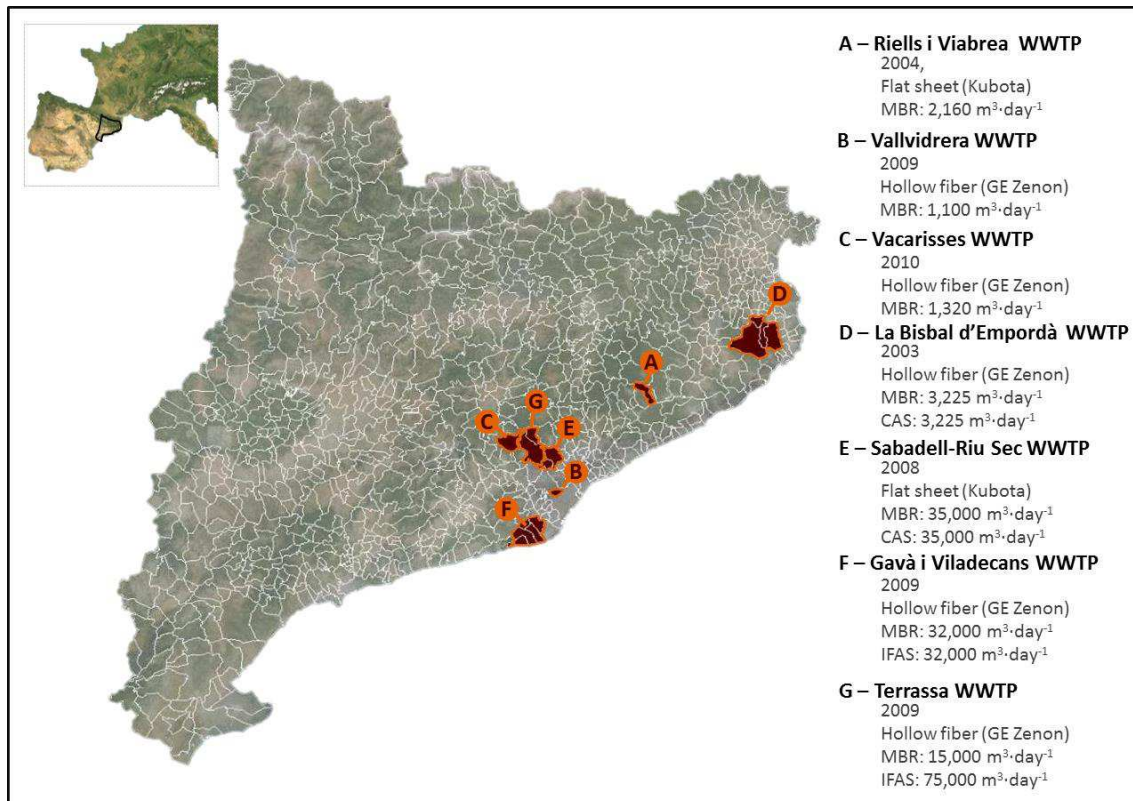
**Table 3.1.** Calculations for evaluating MBR performance and chemical cleaning efficiencies.

Calculation	Described
Permeability recovery	Chapter 6
TMP recovery	Chapter 7
Fouling rates	Chapter 7
Critical flux	Chapter 7

## 3.3. EXPERIMENTAL STUDIES

### 3.3.1. Full-scale MBRs

Seven full-scale MBR plants treating municipal wastewater were under investigation during this research work. These MBR installations were located in Catalonia (NE of Spain), as is shown in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1.** Location and key information (year of commissioning, type of membranes and design capacity) of each full-scale MBR.

All the facilities studied are the result of the refurbishment of existing plants due to the need to increase the capacity of the facilities with physical space limitations, and improve effluent quality. The seven MBR plants can be divided into the following categories:

- three stand-alone MBRs (A, B, C);
- one “hybrid” process (D), where the existing oxidation ditch has been retrofitted with an aerated buffer tank and a membrane filtration tank while maintaining the secondary settler to treat peak flows and deal with wet weather conditions;
- one CAS-MBR “dual-stream” WWTP (E) with two complete parallel treatment lines: MBR and conventional activated sludge treatment, where the MBR treats 30% of the influent flow and the remaining influent flow is treated by a conventional activated sludge system followed by secondary settlers;
- two IFAS-MBR “dual-stream” WWTPs with two complete parallel treatment lines: MBR and integrated fixed-film activated sludge (IFAS) (F – Dispersed Media IFAS Systems, G – Fixed Media IFAS Systems). The MBRs treat 40% and 15% of the influent, respectively, and the remainder of the flow is treated by the IFAS technology line followed by secondary settlers.

All the plants studied are designed for nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorous) removal, with the exception of Plant B. The membrane technologies used in the plants are GE Zenon hollow fibre (HF), used in five of the facilities, and Kubota flat sheet (FS), installed in two of the facilities.

Apart from the full-scale MBR reports presented in the Annex **B**, **Chapters 5 and 6** include a general description of the main design and operational parameters for each full-scale MBR. Moreover, **Chapters 7 and 8** describe in detail the optimisation of two full-scale MBRs (D and G), respectively.

### **3.3.2. Pilot plant MBR**

A pilot plant was installed in an MBR WWTP (D). The pilot plant used hollow fibre membranes (GE Zenon) and treated wastewater with the same characteristics as the full-scale MBR (D). A detailed description of the pilot plant MBR is presented in **Chapter 7**.

### **3.3.3. Modelling tools**

A modeling simulation platform (WEST ®, mikebydhi.com) was used for describing the biological (ASM2d, Henze *et al.*, 1999) and the membrane filtration process behavior (resistance-in-series model, Dalmau *et al.*, 2013) of the full-scale MBR (G). Moreover, the risk of settling problems of a microbiological origin was also evaluated through a qualitative risk assessment model (Comas *et al.*, 2008). All modeling tools and procedures are carefully described in **Chapter 8**.

### **3.3.4. Analytical methods**

Various analytical methods were used throughout this thesis to determine and quantify different parameters in the liquid phase and the solid phase of each system.

**Chapters 7 and 8** include an exhaustive description of the methods used for the wastewater and mixed liquor suspended solids (MLSS) characterization. The majority of the methods applied are in accordance with Standard Methods for the Examination of Water and Wastewater (Apha, 2005) or UNE-EN-ISO regulations (Aenor, 2011). Likewise, the non-standardised methodologies used are based on cited references and methodologies already published.



# RESULTS



BLOCK 1  
DIAGNOSIS





# CHAPTER 4

## STATE OF THE ART OF DESIGN AND OPERATIONAL ISSUES OF SEVEN FULL-SCALE MBR FOR MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER TREATMENT

*Redrafted from:*

**Gabarrón, S., Dalmau, M., Comas, J., Rodriguez-Roda, I., 2014.** *State-of-the-art of design and operational issues of seven full-scale membrane bioreactors for wastewater treatment. To be submitted to Water Practice and Technology.*

Gabarrón, S., Dalmau, M., Comas, J., Rodriguez-Roda, I. "State-of-the-art of design and operational issues of seven full-scale membrane bioreactors for wastewater treatment". To be submitted to *Water Practice and Technology*

<http://www.iwaponline.com/wpt/>

## Introduction

Prior to the onset global financial crisis, the market for membrane bioreactors (MBRs) had been growing at a rate of ~11% (Hanft, 2006), with municipal wastewater treatment applications apparently making up 44% of all the systems installed (Kraume and Drews 2010). It is widely acknowledged that MBRs offer the key advantages of smaller footprint and a very high effluent quality, with microorganism and solids removal in particular, compared the conventional activated sludge process (CAS) (Judd, 2011).

However, MBRs are costly and more complex in design and operation than CAS plants, mainly due to the fouling phenomenon, demanding regular maintenance to maintain membrane cleanliness (Judd 2011). Specifically, Le-Clech 2010 reviewed the MBR operational issues, determining as the main limitations: Pre-treatment and clogging, fouling and fouling control, aeration and oxygen transfer, membrane integrity and expected lifetime and energy consumption and cost consideration. Afterwards, Santos et al. (2011) surveyed to membrane product suppliers, technology suppliers, end users, and consultants what was the main technical problem that prevents MBRs working as they should? The problems identified in this study were: screening and pre-treatment (22%), membrane and aerator clogging (19%), hydraulic overloading or system under design (17%), membrane fouling or fouling resistance (15%), automation or control (9%), membrane cleaning (6%), sludge quality (5%), energy (3%), operator knowledge (2%) and uneven aeration (2%). It was possible to find relationships between the listed topics, concluding that the aggregate percentage value of the number of responses pertaining to fouling, cleaning and overloading is 38%, less than the aggregate value for clogging and screening (41%). According to these studies, although membrane fouling captures most attention accounting for around 31% of all MBR papers published (Santos et al., 2011), there are much bigger concerns for MBR users (Le-Clech, 2010; Santos et al., 2011; Le-Clech et al., 2005).

Focusing on the full-scale municipal MBRs recently commissioned, seven facilities were updated with this technology between 2003 and 2010 in Catalonia (Spain). This region is located in the Mediterranean zone, characterised by seasonal and regional water scarcity imposed by weather conditions and tourism. These factors have driven MBR implementation aimed at (i) conserving freshwater resources through indirect water reuse (e.g. aquifer recharge through river bed infiltration), (ii) improving of effluent quality for discharge to accomplish the stricter legislations, and (iii) increasing plants capacity with physical space limitations through retrofitting of membrane technology.

BLOCK 2

**ASSESSMENT**



# CHAPTER 5

## ASSESSMENT OF ENERGY-SAVING STRATEGIES AND OPERATIONAL COSTS IN FULL-SCALE MEMBRANE BIOREACTORS

*Redrafted from:*

**Gabarrón, S., Ferrero, G., Dalmau, M., Comas, J., Rodriguez-Roda, I., 2014. Assessment of energy-saving strategies and operational costs in full-scale membrane bioreactors. *Journal of Environmental Management*, 134, 8-14.**

## 5.1. INTRODUCTION

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Membrane bioreactor (MBR) technology combines biological treatment with a membrane filtration process, replacing the gravitational sedimentation unit of conventional activated sludge systems. Since the biomass is filtered in a highly aerated tank, biological nutrient removal processes can be achieved in this compartment (Judd, 2011). The advantages of MBRs, such as their small footprint and high effluent quality, together with the decreasing cost of membranes, have made this technology a very attractive option for municipal applications (Libralato *et al.*, 2012; Brepols *et al.*, 2010; Judd, 2011). However, operating expenditures (OPEX) are still one of the main factors affecting practical availability of this technology, mainly due to membrane aeration, permeability loss, and membrane replacements (Brepols *et al.*, 2010; Judd, 2011).

Energy consumption in MBRs was reported to be three times higher than that in conventional activated sludge systems combined with advanced tertiary treatment (Gnirss and Dittrich, 2000), but the gap has been narrowed significantly in recent years by the optimisation of process settings and control (Van Bentem *et al.*, 2008; Ferrero *et al.*, 2012). Aeration is a major energy consumer (Fenu *et al.*, 2010; Brepols *et al.*, 2010; Judd, 2010), often exceeding 50% of the total energy consumption, and membrane aeration accounts for a minimum of 35% of the energy consumption (Krzeminsky *et al.*, 2012a, 2012b). However, different values were recently published by Barillon *et al.* (2013), who reported that the air scouring for the membranes together with the aeration of activated sludge account for 60-80% of the energy consumption of the biological treatment step. These authors reported energy consumption values in the range of 0.7-10.8 kWh·m<sup>-3</sup> (Krzeminski *et al.*, 2012a) and 0.5-0.7 kWh·m<sup>-3</sup> (Barillon *et al.*, 2013) when operating the MBRs at optimal conditions with hydraulic loads close to the design flow. Nevertheless, strategies to optimise aeration rates for membrane cleaning remain a challenge in terms of energy consumption (Judd, 2011; Verrecht *et al.*, 2008).

Applying energy optimisation strategies, such as reducing the membrane tank aeration capacity or reducing the membrane feed operation time for membrane tanks that are not in operation, achieved energy reductions of 5-20% (Van Bentem *et al.*, 2008; Barillon *et al.*, 2013). However, the hydraulic load has been demonstrated to be one of the most important parameters influencing MBR energy efficiency (Krzeminsky *et al.*, 2012a; Barillon *et al.*, 2013) because aeration rates are not proportional to the treated flow. For this reason, operating the plant close to the design flow is one of the key points in reducing energy consumption.

In addition, hybrid MBRs which are usually result of a retrofit of an existing plant by adding a membrane bioreactor and conserving the secondary clarifiers to treat peak flows, allow for the possibility of operating continuously at optimal design conditions, resulting in a more energy-

efficient operation (Maere *et al.*, 2013).. Krzeminski *et al.* (2012b) calculated a 17% reduction of OPEX without substantial differences in effluent quality when a hybrid MBR- Conventional activated sludge systems facility was compared to a stand-alone MBR.

## 5.2. OBJECTIVE

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Despite the need to reduce MBR energy costs to make this technology more competitive compared to conventional treatments, few studies provide a global energy picture of full-scale MBRs. For this reason, an exhaustive evaluation of the operational costs of seven full-scale MBRs located in Spain was conducted. Specifically, a review of the main optimisation strategies applied and their impact on the energy consumption rates were studied and discussed. This paper reviews the operational parameters and energy consumption values for time periods between two and four years for full-scale MBRs. Then, the energy-saving strategies applied in each facility and their respective impacts on energy consumption values are evaluated. Finally, the OPEX values for the optimised facilities are presented.

## 5.3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

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### 5.3.1. Characteristics of full-scale MBR facilities

Seven facilities located in Northeast Spain were surveyed from 2009 to 2012. The surveyed MBR installations are the result of the refurbishment of existing plants due to the need to increase the capacity of the facilities with physical space limitations (Table 5.1). The seven plants can be divided into the following categories:

- three stand-alone MBRs (A, B, C);
- one “hybrid” process (D), where the existing oxidation ditch has been retrofitted with an aerated buffer tank and a membrane filtration tank while maintaining the secondary settler to treat peak flows and wet weather conditions;
- one “dual-stream” WWTP (E) with two complete parallel treatment lines: MBR and conventional activated sludge treatment, where the MBR treats 30% of the influent flow and the remaining influent flow is treated by a conventional activated sludge system followed by secondary settlers;
- two “dual-stream” WWTPs with two complete parallel treatment lines: MBR and integrated fixed-film activated sludge (IFAS) (F – Dispersed Media IFAS Systems, G – Fixed Media IFAS Systems). The MBRs treat 40% and 15% of the influent, respectively, and the remainder of the flow is treated by the IFAS technology line followed by secondary settlers.



All of the plants are designed for nutrient (nitrogen and phosphorous) removal, with the exception of plant B. The membrane technologies used in the plants are GE Zenon hollow fibre (HF), used in five of the facilities, and Kubota flat sheet (FS), installed in two of the facilities.

**Table 5.1.** MBR plants, general information (HF: hollow fibre; FS: flat sheet).

WWTP	Year of commissioning	WWTP Design capacity (m <sup>3</sup> day <sup>-1</sup> )	MBR design capacity (m <sup>3</sup> day <sup>-1</sup> )	Type of membranes	Primary settler or buffer tank
A –MBR	2004	2,160	2,160	FS	No
B –MBR	2009	1,100	1,100	HF	No
C –MBR	2010	1,320	1,320	HF	No
D – hybrid MBR-CAS*	2003	6,225	3,225	HF	Yes
E – dual-stream MBR-CAS*	2008	65,000	35,000	FS	Yes
F – dual-stream MBR-IFAS**	2009	64,000	32,000	HF	Yes
G – dual-stream MBR-IFAS**	2009	90,000	15,000	HF	Yes

\*CAS: Conventional activated sludge process

\*\* Integrated fixed-film activated sludge process

Focusing on the MBR process of each full-scale facility, the main design parameters are described in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2.** MBR design parameters.

PARAMETER	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Design flux [L m <sup>-2</sup> h <sup>-1</sup> ]	21	18	18	23	24	25	27
Membrane model	Kubota EK 400	ZeeWeed 500d	ZeeWeed 500d	ZeeWeed 500c	Kubota EK 400	ZeeWeed 500d	ZeeWeed 500d
Number of modules	14	80	96	264	192	1,848	720
Membrane area [m <sup>2</sup> ]	4,410	2,526	3,030	5,808	61,440	58,400	22,752
SAD <sub>m</sub> *[mh <sup>-1</sup> ]	0.65	0.31	0.31	0.37	0.53	0.33	0.31
SAD <sub>p</sub> **[m <sup>3</sup> m <sup>-3</sup> ]	31.9	17.5	17.09	15.9	22.1	14.4	11.4

\*SAD<sub>m</sub>: Specific aeration demand per membrane surface

\*\*SAD<sub>p</sub>: Specific aeration demand per permeate flow

### **5.3.2. Data collection and analysis**

During the surveys, data were gathered by (i) reviewing design and construction projects, (ii) submitting a questionnaire survey to the plant managers, and (iii) interviewing the plant operators.

For each plant, it was possible to record the treatment scheme, the water quality data of the influent and effluent, the control strategy adopted, the energy consumption rates, and the OPEX values for the available time period (between two and four years of operation).

Data analysis was based on the same established protocol for each facility: monthly and yearly average values were calculated from daily and weekly measured values.

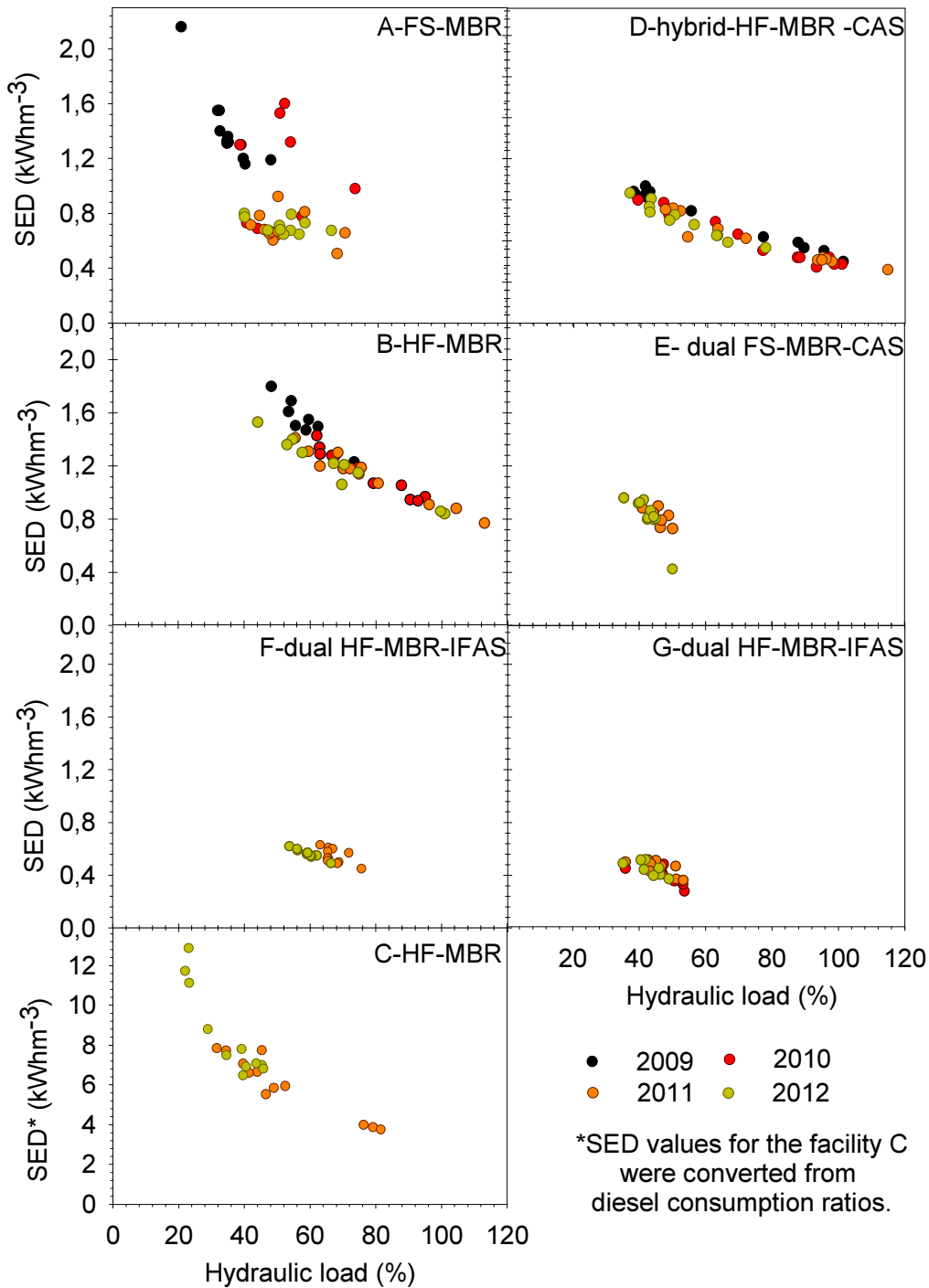
The energy consumption data, reported in kWh, were based on the electric power consumed at each full-scale plant, with the exception of plant C, where the energy consumption that was originally reported in litres of diesel was converted into kWh. The specific energy demand (SED) data were reported as the electricity consumption of the entire WWTP per volume of treated wastewater and expressed as  $\text{kWh}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$ . SED trends were calculated by adjusting the SED values to an exponential decay function. The operating costs presented were collected for the last year studied (2012) for all of the facilities to avoid divergences on the taxes and rates.

## **5.4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

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### **5.4.1. Influence of the hydraulic load on energy consumption**

The influence of the hydraulic load, expressed as a percentage of the design flow value, on the energy consumption for the entire full-scale facility, including all of the plant units (pre-treatment, biological process, MBR, and sludge treatment), is shown in Figure 5.1. Specifically, monthly average SED and hydraulic load values for are presented for facilities A, B, and D for four years (2009-2012) and for facilities C, E, F, and G for two years (2011-2012).



**Figure 5.1.** Specific energy demand normalised to the daily flow for the seven full-scale MBRs.

A clear dependence of the SED values on the hydraulic load was observed, with SED values ranging from  $0.51 \text{ kW}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$  at approximately 70% of the design hydraulic load to  $2.1 \text{ kW}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$  at 22% of the hydraulic load for the A-FS-MBR case study. For the B-HF-MBR, the SED ranged from  $0.77 \text{ kWh}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$  at 118% to  $1.80 \text{ kWh}^{-1}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$  at 42% of the hydraulic load. These values are in agreement with recently published values (Palmowski *et al.*, 2010).

For the C-HF-MBR, although the SED values were considerably higher because the kWh·m<sup>-3</sup> values were recalculated from diesel consumption (the C-HF-MBR was temporarily operating via an on-site generator), the same trend was observed.

The hybrid HF-MBR energy consumption values ranged from 0.39 to 1 kWh·m<sup>-3</sup>, having a similar trend as the stand-alone MBRs; the influent flow was treated by MBR technology unless the influent flow was higher than the MBR capacity. Moreover, this facility has a buffer tank for hydraulic management. The global hydraulic load strategy is based on the daily accumulation of influent flow in the buffer tank during the most under loaded periods to ensure that the MBR will continue filtering throughout the night. This step was taken because this facility operated under a reduced energy tariff during the night hours.

For dual-stream configurations, the hydraulic load and range of SED values were smaller, with SED values ranging from 0.71 to 0.97 kWh·m<sup>-3</sup> for FS-MBR-conventional activated sludge, from 0.45 to 0.63 kWh·m<sup>-3</sup> for F-HF-MBR-IFAS, and from 0.19 to 0.53 kWh·m<sup>-3</sup> for G-HF MBR-IFAS. Two different hydraulic strategies were applied in these three dual-stream MBR facilities: the flow treated through the membranes was defined in advance for E and G, whereas the flow was a percentage of the influent flow in D. In the case of facility G, a constant operational flow for the MBR was defined to reduce costs; the selected operational flow is the maximum flow permitted to maintain good filtration performance (and a minimum number of chemical cleanings), while simultaneously allowing for a 10/30 cyclic aeration process.

#### 5.4.2. Optimisation strategies for energy saving

Table 5.3 summarises the optimisation strategies applied in the full-scale MBRs surveyed.

**Table 5.3.** Optimisation strategies applied in optimised facilities.

Facility	Optimisation strategies	Date Applied
A – FS-MBR	Reduction of membranes and biological mixed liquor suspended solids (MLSS) concentration	January 2011
	Modification of biological tank aeration	June 2011
	Maintenance action	June 2011
B – HF-MBR	Installation of a control system for biologic tank aeration	2011/2012
	Modification of the permeate/backwash cycles	2011
	Modification of the membrane airflow	May 2012
D – hybrid MBR-CAS*	Installation of a control system for biologic tank aeration	Summer 2011
	Reduction of the permeate flux	September/October 2011
	Installation of a control system for membrane aeration	April 2012

\*Conventional activated sludge process

Detailed descriptions of the optimisation strategies applied for each facility are provided below.

##### 5.4.2.1. Optimisation strategies in stand-alone MBRs

## FS-MBR

In the last four years of operation for the FS-MBR (A) facility, the maximum hydraulic load achieved was 73%, whereas the global average was  $47 \pm 11\%$ . This facility was completely underloaded, and there were no possibility of equalising the flow, making energy consumption highly dependent on the hydraulic load. However, as shown in Figure 5.1, different trends were distinguishable due to several operational modifications and maintenance processes applied to reduce the energy consumption. Specifically, the actions applied (listed chronologically) were:

- *Reduction of the MLSS concentration (2011)*: Three different MLSS operational scenarios could be distinguished: MLSS concentrations higher than  $20 \text{ g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ , between  $15$  and  $20 \text{ g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ , and lower than  $15 \text{ g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  (Figures 5.2 and 5.3); different ranges of energy consumption can be associated with each MLSS scenario.
- *Modification of the biological tank aeration (2011)*: Specifically, it was observed that due to the high aeration of the membrane tank, it is possible to operate with intermittent aeration in the biological tank and therefore reduce the energy consumption. Moreover, this intermittent aeration made it possible to achieve a complete nitrogen removal process due to the alternation of anoxic and aerobic conditions in the reactor.
- *Maintenance action*: A butterfly valve obstructed the permeate pipe and led to TMP values of 400-700 mbar. After replacing the valve, TMP values for 2012 were close to 200 mbar.

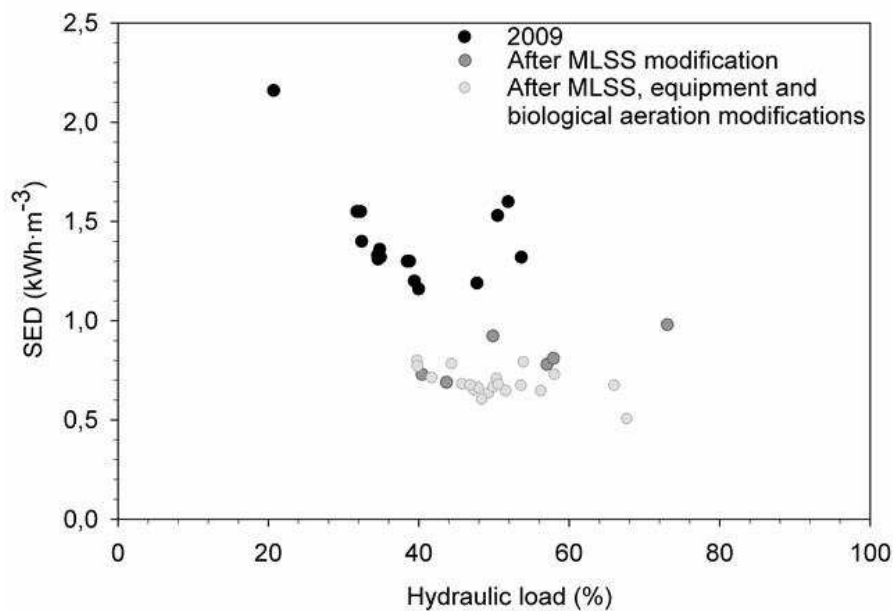


Figure 5.2. Specific energy demand versus hydraulic load.

For this FS-MBR, the MLSS concentration was considered the most important parameter for SED optimisation. Specifically, a significant decrease in MLSS concentration resulted in an intense reduction of the SED values because the MLSS concentration has an impact on the oxygen transfer performance; specifically, a reduced MLSS concentration leads to a decreased aeration efficiency (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2012) because the alpha factor drops when the MLSS concentration increases (Krampe and Krauth, 2003; Germain *et al.*, 2007). Given the same hydraulic load, the SED values are lowest for MLSS concentrations lower than  $15 \text{ g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  (Figure 5.3).

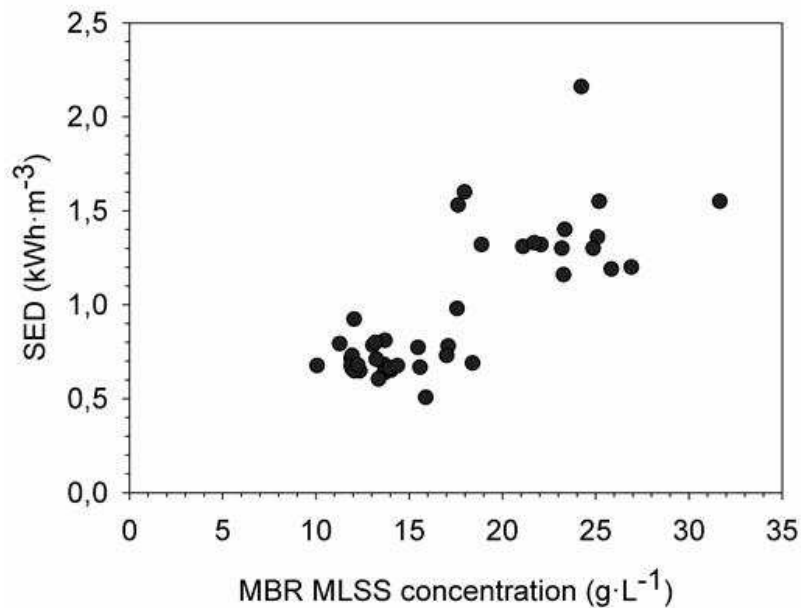


Figure 5.3. Specific energy demand versus MBR MLSS concentration.

As shown in Figure 5.2, these optimisation strategies allowed for a reduction in the yearly average SED value from  $1.12$  to  $0.71 \text{ kWh}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$ . Specifically, the highest hydraulic load achieved for the optimised full-scale system (67%) correlates with a facility-wide SED value of  $0.507 \text{ kWh}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$ . This value is significantly lower than the energy ratios reported by Krzeminski *et al.* (2012a) for FS-MBRs operating at optimal conditions of  $0.7 \text{ kWh}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$ . Furthermore, Barillon *et al.* (2013) presented energy consumption values related only to FS-MBRs air-scouring in the range of  $0.45$ - $0.55 \text{ kWh}\cdot\text{m}^{-3}$ , emphasising the success of the energy-saving strategies applied in the A-FS-MBR.

### **HF-MBR**

The optimisation strategies adopted in the B-HF-MBR included:

- *Installation of a control system for biological tank aeration (2011)*. Daily flow and organic load were not constant throughout the day. The flow and F/M decreased at

- night, making it possible to decrease the aeration during this period. Specifically, a control program was installed, splitting the night hours into different groups, in which the reduction (turbo blower working at its lowest capacity) and cessation of the aeration flow were alternated to reduce the energy consumption (Estany *et al.*, 2013).
- *Modification of the permeate/backwash cycles (2011)*. The filtration cycles were modified, increasing the filtration cycle time from 10 to 20 min (Estany *et al.*, 2013). Other authors (Mannina and Cosenza, 2013) reported that an increase in the duration of the backwashing and filtration relative to the manufacturer's values did not have a significant effect on the energy demand due to the low energy requirement for permeate extraction/backwashing. However, the reduction in backwashing times allowed for operation at a higher net flux and an increase in the non-working periods of the membranes (relaxation mode).
  - *Modification of the membrane airflow (May 2012)*: During dry-weather conditions, when only one filtration tank was required due to low influent flow, the most economical aeration strategy (10/30 intermittent aeration (Buer and Cumin, 2010)) was not allowed, as it was necessary to use the less energy efficient 10/10 aeration. In this situation, the substitute biological tank turbo blower (airflow:  $380 \text{ Nm}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ ) was used instead of the membrane's turbo blower (airflow:  $800 \text{ Nm}^3 \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ ). This modification allowed a reduced airflow to be provided to the membranes while maintaining a nearly constant SADm value (before:  $0.31 \text{ m} \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ , after:  $0.29 \text{ m} \cdot \text{h}^{-1}$ ) and thus without experiencing any increase in membrane fouling.

In the B-HF-MBR facility, there was no possibility to equalise the flow, except in wet-weather conditions when the overloading influent flow could be stored in an empty tank. However, this tank could not be used as a normal buffer tank for non-overloaded conditions. Figure 5.1 presents a reduction in the SED values throughout the year, regardless of the hydraulic load values, due to the optimisation strategies applied. These optimisation strategies did not affect the filtration performance of the membranes but successfully reduced the energy consumption (Figure 5.4). In the last four years, it was not necessary to increase the number of maintenance cleanings applied (always once per week), and the average TMP values per cycle were maintained within the same range (2009: 0.08 bar, 2012: 0.10 bar). Moreover, the MBR effluent quality has not deteriorated with the implementation of the optimisation strategies.

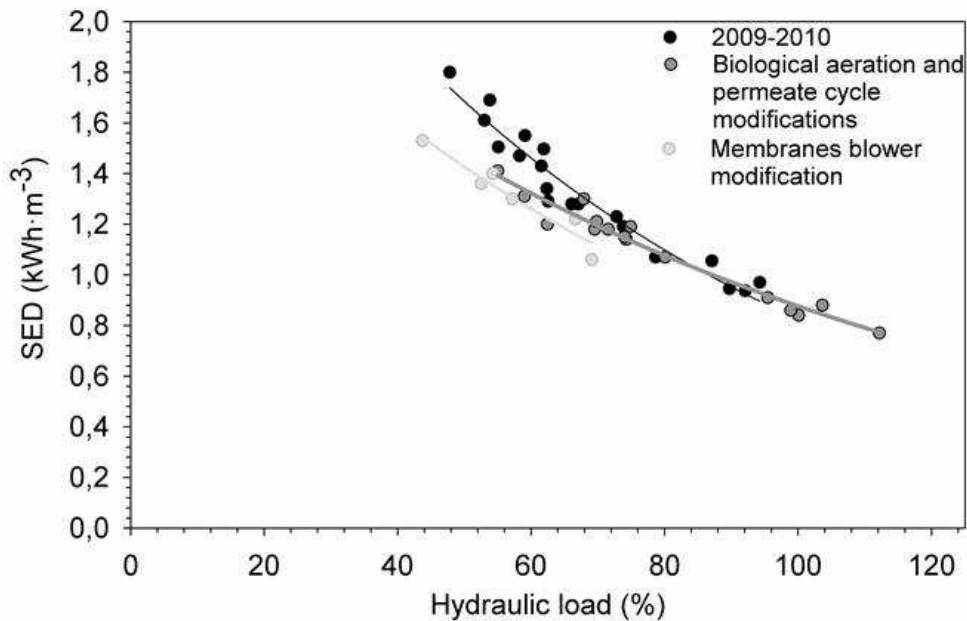


Figure 5.4. Specific energy demand versus hydraulic load rates for different years of operation.

Specifically, comparing the SED trends in 2009-2010 to the values obtained after modifications of the biological aeration and permeate cycles, an average SED reduction of 11.4% was observed. Similarly, after modifications to the membrane blower, the SED was reduced by an additional 4.5%. Thus, the modifications reduced the SED by an average of 16%. A reduction in the yearly average SED values from 1.54 to 1.12 kWh·m<sup>3</sup> was observed.

Moreover, Figure 5.4 illustrates that the energy saving strategies were successful for the most underloaded conditions (conditions where the difference between SED values before and after the optimisations were greatest). However, more data will be necessary to determine the amount of energy saved in underloaded conditions.

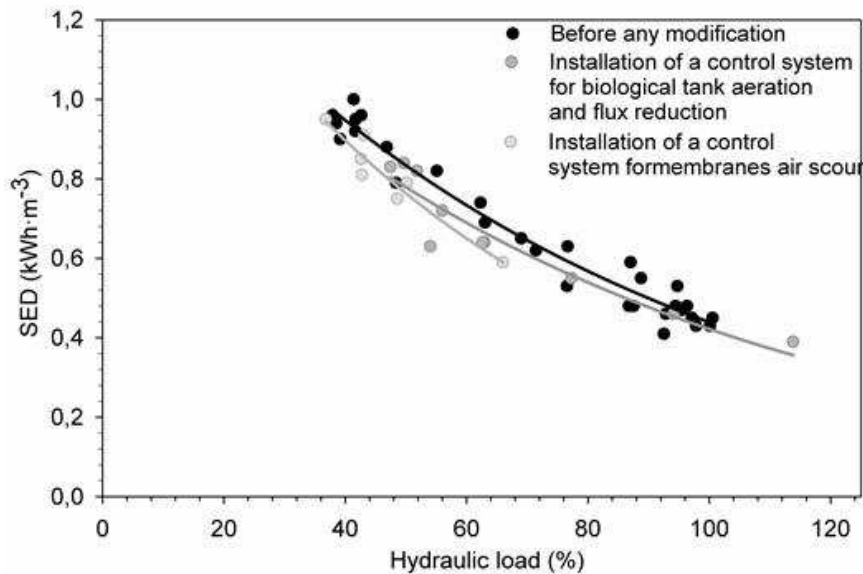
Once the energy-saving strategies were applied, it was possible to operate with an energy consumption of 0.84 kWh·m<sup>-3</sup> when the hydraulic load was close to the design flow. This SED value is close to the value in Krzemiski *et al.* (2012a) of 0.7 kWh·m<sup>-3</sup> for optimal HF-MBR conditions; however, the value is still far from the value of 0.4 kWh·m<sup>3</sup> achieved for the fully optimised MBR unit at the Ulu Pandan wastewater treatment plant in Singapore (Tao *et al.*, 2010).

#### 5.4.2.2. Optimisation strategies in the hybrid HF-MBR- conventional activated sludge

As part of the general hydraulic management for dry-weather conditions (described in section 5.4.1), some other optimisation strategies were applied to reduce the energy consumption of the process. Specifically, the modifications are listed chronologically:



- *Installation of a closed-loop control system for biological tank aeration (applied in summer 2011).* An aeration control system based on the ammonia concentration in the oxidation ditch was installed. The aeration flow was increased or decreased depending on the ammonia concentration. It also considered the energy tariff (with a reduced energy tariff during the night hours).
- *Reduction of the permeate flux (applied in September/October 2011).* The instantaneous permeate flux was close to  $27 \text{ L}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$ , leading to clogging and fouling problems, which made it necessary to apply several chemical cleanings and force the permeate pumps to achieve a constant flow. The instantaneous flux was reduced to  $23 \text{ L}\cdot\text{m}^{-2}\cdot\text{h}^{-1}$ .
- *Membrane air-scouring reduction (applied in April 2012):* The air flow applied to one of the two installed MBR tanks was reduced. This air-scouring control system regulates the air flow rate depending on the membrane fouling rates (for which the design air flow is the maximum rate). A maximum 15% reduction of the average airflow provided to the optimised MBR line was achieved compared to the MBR line without this control system (Ferrero *et al.*, 2011).



**Figure 5.5.** Specific energy demand versus hydraulic load rates before and after the optimisation changes.

Figure 5.5 presents the values and trends before and after each modification. Comparing the trends presented, it was possible to observe an average reduction of 5.8% of the SED values after the installation of the biological aeration control system and the flux reduction. Similarly, a further average reduction of 8.9% was observed when the membrane air-scouring reduction was applied. For this reason, the combination of the three optimisation strategies applied achieved an average 14.5% reduction of the SED values.

### 5.4.3. Operational costs

Once the described energy-saving strategies were applied to the surveyed MBR facilities (2012), the global operational costs ranged from 0.46 to 0.57 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for HF MBRs (B, C), 0.35 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for the FS MBR (A), 0.21 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for the HF hybrid MBR-conventional activated sludge (D), approximately 0.13 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for HF dual-stream MBR-IFAS (F, G), and 0.23 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for the FS dual-stream MBR-conventional activated sludge. The hybrid and dual MBR-conventional activated sludge values are in agreement with the recently reported hybrid MBR-conventional activated sludge global costs of 0.24 €·m<sup>-3</sup> (Krzeminski *et al.*, 2012b).

The higher costs are attributed to the WWTPs that treat all of the flow with MBR technology (A, B, and C); these WWTPs also have the smallest MBR capacity. Moreover, comparing the two stand-alone HF-MBRs (B, C), the MBR with the greater capacity has a higher cost ratio than the smaller-capacity MBR, due to its lower utilization ratio (hydraulic loads were 71% and 51%, respectively for B and C).

The breakdown of operational costs for the different categories (i.e., personnel staff, general analysis and maintenance, power and electricity, sludge treatment and chemical reagents) for the seven full-scale facilities is shown in Figure 5.6.

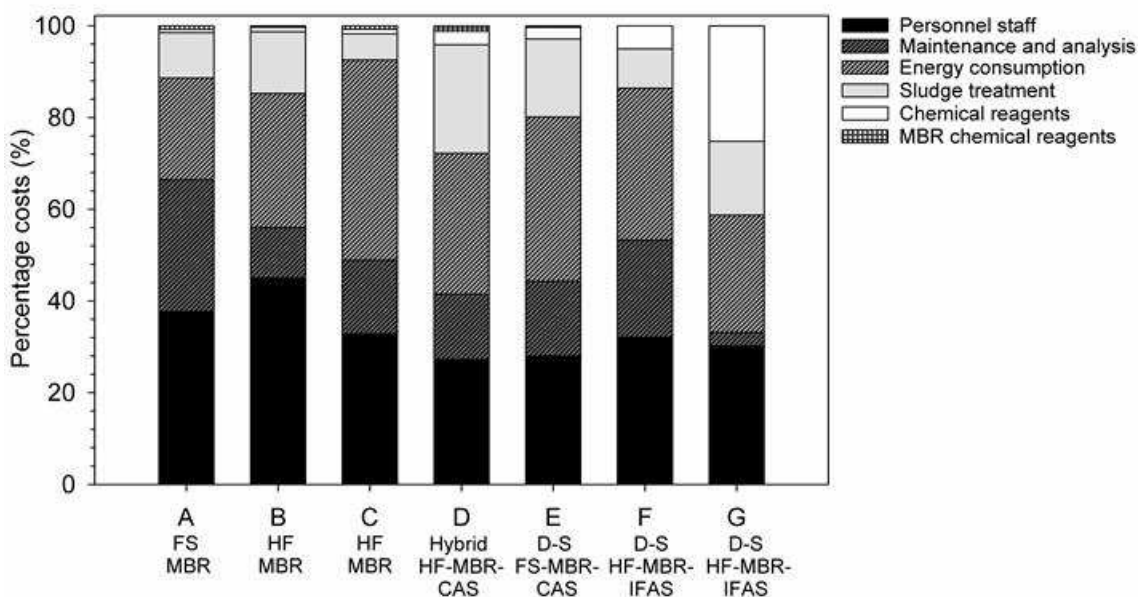


Figure 5.6. Breakdown of the costs.

The results for all facilities are consistent with other recent studies (Brepols *et al.*, 2010; Verrecht *et al.*, 2012), where the high magnitude of personnel costs relative to the total cost was shown to be the determinant, even more so for the stand-alone MBR facilities, with values from 32 to 45% of the total costs. Energy consumption represented between 22 and 43% of the total

costs for the stand-alone MBRs and from 25 to 35% for the dual and hybrid MBR configurations.

For the stand-alone MBRs, sludge and waste treatments ranged from 5 to 13% of the total costs, representing costs between 0.028 and 0.05 €·m<sup>-3</sup>. However, in agreement with other studies (Brepols *et al.*, 2010), higher maintenance costs were associated with the oldest WWTPs (A).

Focusing on the membrane cleaning, the chemical reagent demands for the seven full-scale MBRs were evaluated. The reagents most widely used for membrane cleaning are sodium hypochlorite (NaClO) and citric acid. The specific NaClO demands in kg per year per m<sup>2</sup> membrane surface of the four facilities A, B, D, and G are 1.22, 0.48, 1.28, and 0.26, respectively, whereas the demand for citric acid is significantly lower at 0.06 kg y<sup>-1</sup>m<sup>-2</sup> for D and 0.04 for G. Although the FS configuration is known for having easier operation and maintenance (chemical cleaning frequency) compared to the HF configuration (Santasmás *et al.*, 2013), these results illustrate that the oldest facilities (A and D) incur the highest specific chemical demand, regardless of the membrane type (HF or FS).

#### 5.4.4. Discussion

The possibility of equalizing the flow by using a buffer tank is considered an energy saving strategy, since permits to increase the average membrane utilization (Verrecht *et al.*, 2010). Although some facilities have design limitations preventing the equalization of influent flow, a successful reduction of SED values and trends was observed over all of the optimisation changes applied. Specifically, facility A exhibited a high reduction of the average SED starting in 2011, regardless of the hydraulic load values. Similarly, the B-HF-MBR displayed the lowest SED average value in 2012, although the hydraulic load for this year was lower than those in 2010 and 2011. D also reduced its energy consumption, presenting a lower annual SED in 2012 ( $0.74 \pm 0.13$  kWh·m<sup>-3</sup>) than in 2009 ( $0.78 \pm 0.21$  kWh·m<sup>-3</sup>), although the hydraulic load average was lower for 2012 ( $53 \pm 12\%$ ) than for 2009 ( $62 \pm 25\%$ ).

A number of optimisation strategies were applied simultaneously or within a very short time frame, making it difficult to identify which part of the energy reduction can be attributed to each control action. However, the optimisation strategies applied, either for the biological or filtration process, were effective for both technologies (HF and FS), displaying a strong correlation between the operational parameters and SED trends. The reduction of MLSS, both in the biological system and membrane tank for an FS-MBR, resulted in a strong TMP and SED trend reduction. Similarly, the flux reduction of the HF-MBR decreased the TMP values, and the air-scour control system implemented permitted a reduction of the airflow provided to the membranes (due to the improvement of fouling rates). Consequently, a decrease in energy

consumption ratios was achieved. In all cases, aeration control for biological and membrane processes proved to be an efficient option for energy saving, illustrating possible ways to reduce the greatest contribution to operational energy without compromising nutrient removal or filtration performance.

## **5.5.CONCLUSIONS**

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The operational costs of a stand-alone, hybrid, and dual full-scale MBR have been evaluated. The design limitations regarding the lack of buffer tanks to equalise the flows restrict the possibilities for optimisation and reveal the hydraulic load as the main determinant factor for energy consumption rates. However, several effective optimisation strategies were presented in this paper. Specifically, modifications of the biological process (installation of control systems for biological aeration) and of the filtration process (reduction of the MLSS concentration or the flux and installation of control systems for membrane air scouring) were applied. After implementing these strategies, the yearly SED in FS and HF stand-alone MBRs was reduced from 1.12 to 0.71 and from 1.54 to 1.12 kWh<sup>-1</sup>m<sup>-3</sup>, respectively, regardless of their similar yearly averaged hydraulic loads. The strategies applied in the hybrid MBR, namely, buffering the influent flow and optimisation of both biological aeration and membrane air-scouring, reduced the SED values by 14%. These improvements led to global operational costs from 0.46 to 0.57 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for the HF MBRs, 0.35 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for the FS MBR, values higher than the reported 0.21 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for the HF hybrid MBR-conventional activated sludge, approximately 0.13 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for the HF dual-stream MBR-IFAS, and 0.23 €·m<sup>-3</sup> for the FS dual-stream MBR-conventional activated sludge. Moreover, the energy consumption and personnel staff costs were determined as the most important fractions of these operational costs for stand-alone MBR facilities. It was also observed that the oldest facilities have the highest chemical cleaning reagent consumption, regardless of the membrane type (HF or FS).

These results illustrate that the increasing knowledge acquired regarding MBRs allows for the application of several energy-saving strategies to significantly reduce MBR operational costs. Therefore, it is a clear necessity to continue working on MBR optimisation to allow their reconsideration as an energy competitive option.



BLOCK 3

**OPTIMISATION**



# CHAPTER 6

## RAGGING PHENOMENON CHARACTERISATION AND IMPACT IN A FULL-SCALE MBR

*Redrafted from:*

**Gabarrón, S.,** Gómez, M., Monclús, H., Rodríguez-Roda, I., Comas, J., 2013. Ragging phenomenon characterisation and impact in a full-scale MBR. *Water Science and Technology*, 67(4), 810-816.



## 6.1. INTRODUCTION

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Membrane bioreactors (MBRs) combine activated sludge treatment with membrane filtration to provide a number of widely acknowledged advantages over conventional activated sludge treatment. These include a smaller footprint, due to the elimination of secondary settlers, the possibility of working with high mixed liquor suspended solids concentrations, limited sludge production and a high effluent quality with high nutrient removal efficiencies (Judd 2011). However, the technology is constrained by the tendency for the membrane permeability to decrease, demanding periodic physical and chemical cleaning which then increases operating and capital costs, the latter through the requirement of extensive pre-treatments (Frechen *et al.*, 2008).

Although most of the scientific articles about MBR systems suggest membrane surface fouling as being the main operational limitation for the filtration component and impact of different operation conditions on membrane fouling and EPS production (Dvorak *et al.*, 2011), recent studies of full-scale MBR operation have shown that clogging phenomenon and inefficient pre-treatment are of primary concern to the practitioner community (Santos *et al.*, 2011), and that clogging is measurable both at pilot (Zsirai *et al.*, 2012) and full scale (Mason *et al.*, 2010; Stefanski *et al.*, 2011). Clogging arises when agglomeration of solids takes place within or at the entrance to the membrane channels, affecting the permeability of the filtration process (Judd, 2011). Clogging can be categorised as “sludging” or “ragging”. Sludging refers to the filling of membrane channels with sludge solids and depends on process design (membrane module and aerator, pre-treatment), flux and flux distribution, and membrane aeration distribution (Lebegue *et al.*, 2009; Zsirai *et al.*, 2012). Ragging (or “braiding”) is the term used to define the blocking of membrane channels with particles agglomerated as long rag-like particles (Mason *et al.*, 2010; Judd, 2011). It is more relevant in municipal wastewater treatment plants, since the rags are primarily made up of cellulosic fibres and hairs (Frechen *et al.*, 2008; Schier *et al.*, 2009; Stefanski *et al.*, 2011), possibly relating to the disposal of cotton wool-based products to sewer (Stefanski *et al.*, 2011).

Sludge quality strongly depends on feed sewage characteristics, and it has been assumed by most practitioners that the clogging propensity relates primarily to the level of pre-treatment applied (Itokawa *et al.*, 2008; Lesjean *et al.*, 2008; Brepols *et al.*, 2010). However, the most recent evidence suggests that agglomeration into rags takes place within the treatment process, notwithstanding the rigour of the upstream screening step, and that ragging propensity can be estimated from the coarse suspended solids (CSS) concentration, defined as those solids retained by a mesh of ~2 mm (Stefanski *et al.*, 2011). Since there have been no other published

analyses of rags, the report by Stefanski *et al.* (2011) contained purely physical analyses, it is unclear as to whether cotton wool is the exclusive cause of rag formation.

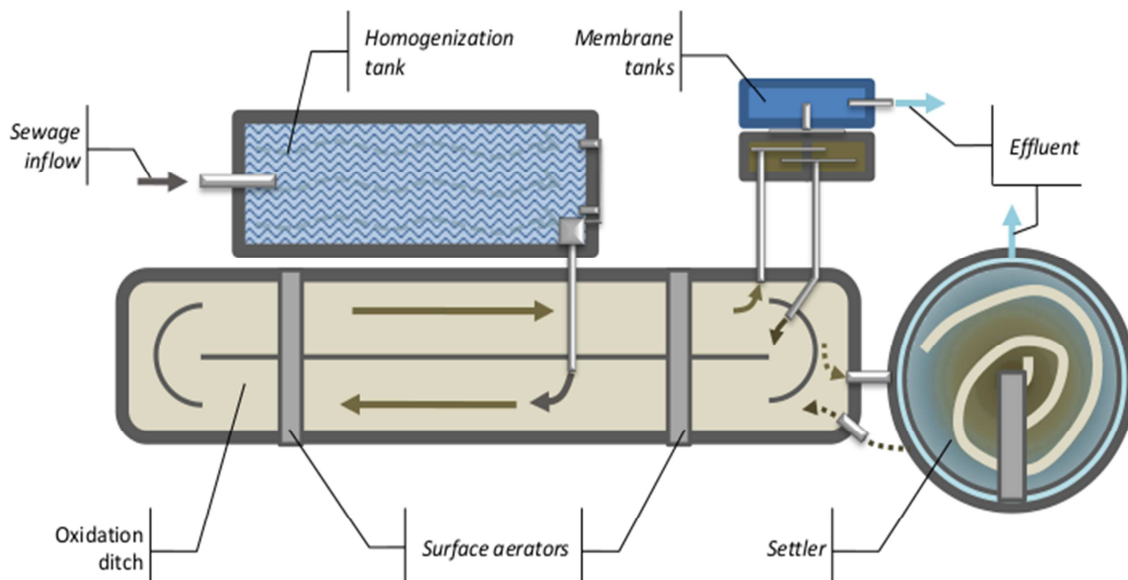
## 6.2. OBJECTIVE

This chapter aims to provide further insight into the ragging phenomena in iMBRs through the identification of a) the impact of ragging on MBR permeability, b) the most appropriate cleaning method for the removal of rags, and c) the composition and characterization of ragging substances. This study was conducted on a full-scale immersed MBR visibly affected by ragging.

## 6.3. METHODS

### 6.3.1. Wastewater Treatment Facility

A full-scale MBR facility treating municipal wastewater and located in the north-east of Spain was evaluated. This WWTP has a hybrid configuration comprising pre-treatment based on coarse screen (8 cm), grit chamber, buffering (1110 m<sup>3</sup>), fine screening (1 mm), a carousel bioreactor and two MBR tanks (A and B), with classical sedimentation employed during peak flows (Brepols *et al.*, 2008a). The facility treats a maximum daily flow of 3,225 m<sup>3</sup>/day by membrane ultrafiltration and the possible overflow through the settling process. Figure 6.1 schematically describes the WWTP configuration.



**Figure 6.1.** Full-scale MBR diagram.

A detailed description of the MBR and the cleaning methods applied are presented in Table 6.1. The effluent flow rate and the trans-membrane pressure (TMP) were respectively monitored by

a flowmeter and a pressure gauge and data stored in a supervisory control and data acquisition system (SCADA).

**Table 6.1.** Full-scale MBR characteristics and cleaning methods applied ( $SAD_m$ : Specific aeration demand with respect to membrane area).

Volume of each membranes tank	$m^3$	30
Manufacturer, membrane model		Zenon, 500c
Membrane material, configuration		PTFE, Hollow fibre,
Fibre, pore diameter	mm, $\mu m$	1900, 0.04
Total membrane area (both tanks)	$m^2$	5808
$SAD_m$	$Nm^3 \cdot m^{-2} \cdot h^{-1}$	0.405
Filtration cycle		10 min filtration/ 40 sec backpulse (adding $\approx 6.3 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$ of NaClO)
Average flux	LMH	$27 \pm 1$
Types of cleanings:		
Maintenance cleaning (MC)		Backwashing with a solution of $140 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$ of NaClO and $200 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$ of EDTA for 45 minutes
Recovery cleaning (RC)		Backwashing with a basic or acid solution and soaking the membranes in this solution for 6-12 hours.
Basic recovery cleaning (bRC)		RC using a NaClO (hypochlorite sodium) solution of $1,500 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$
Acid recovery cleaning (aRC)		RC using a $C_6H_8O_7$ (citric acid) solution of $1,500 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$
Declogging (manually) (DC)		Removing membranes from the tank and cleaning them manually by removing the solids adhered to the membrane

### 6.3.2. Sampling and analytical methods

Sludge samples from the membrane tanks were taken from sample points in the recirculation pipework. Influent samples were taken downstream of the fine-screen.

Concentrations of mixed liquor suspended solids and mixed liquor volatile suspended solids (MLSS and MLVSS, respectively) were determined according to the (APHA, 2005) standard methods 2540D and 2540C. Sludge volume index (SVI) was determined according to Metcalf and Eddy (2003). The dewaterability of the different mixed liquor samples was evaluated by the capillary suction time (CST, Triton electronics Ltd., type 304 B). Filterability was determined using the protocol described by Kubota® through filtration of 50 mL of sample through a 2-4  $\mu m$  pore disc filter (ALPL1244185) under gravity. Each CST and filterability measurement was performed at least three times until a standard deviation of less than 5% was attained from triplicate measurements. The PSD was measured with a particle size analyzer (Beckman Coulter LS 13 320) using the Universal Liquid Module and including the PIDS to measure the small particles.

Filtered supernatant was analyzed for soluble microbial product (SMP). Extraction of bound EPS (extracellular polymeric substances) from the sludge samples was through the cationic exchange resin method of Froelund *et al.*, (1996). Protein concentration was measured spectrophotometrically using Lowry method (Lowry *et al.*, 1951) as modified by Peterson (1979). Polysaccharides content was analyzed using Dubois method (Dubois *et al.*, 1956) using a 5% phenol concentration (Raunkjaer *et al.*, 1994).

Both sludge and influent coarse suspended solid (CSS) concentration measurement was carried out according to Stefanski *et al.*, (2011) using mesh sizes of 0.063 mm, 0.4 mm, 1 mm, 1.5 mm, 2 mm, 4 mm and 5 mm. The coarse solids reconstitution test (CSSR) was also applied for all the solids retained in all the meshes used.

Influent textile fibres identification and characterisation was conducted by applying the standard the methodology described by UNE-EN-ISO regulation (AENOR, 2011). These determinations were based on the quantitative analysis of each fibres typology (protein, polyamide, cotton, acrylic and polyester) using different solvents (hypochlorite sodium, formic acid, sulphuric acid and dimethylformamide) and microscopic analysis. The fibres content of the sludge adhered on the membranes was determined by microscopic analysis using a Nikon eclipse E200 microscope and contrast-phase determinations (Ford and Roff, 1954; Greaves, 1995).

### 6.3.3. Permeability recovery calculation

The permeability recovery has been calculated as Zsirai *et al.* (2012) described:

$$\text{Permeability recovery} = \frac{L_c - L_{\text{end}}}{L_{\text{start}} - L_{\text{end}}} * 100$$

Where  $L_c$  is the permeability immediately after cleaning,  $L_{\text{end}}$  the permeability at the end of the previous test recorded immediately before the clean, and  $L_{\text{start}}$  the permeability after the cleaning of the previous test. The permeability recovery can be higher than 100% when is calculated by this way due to the possibility of increase the efficiency of the latest cleaning, obtaining lower values for the permeability than the one used at the beginning.

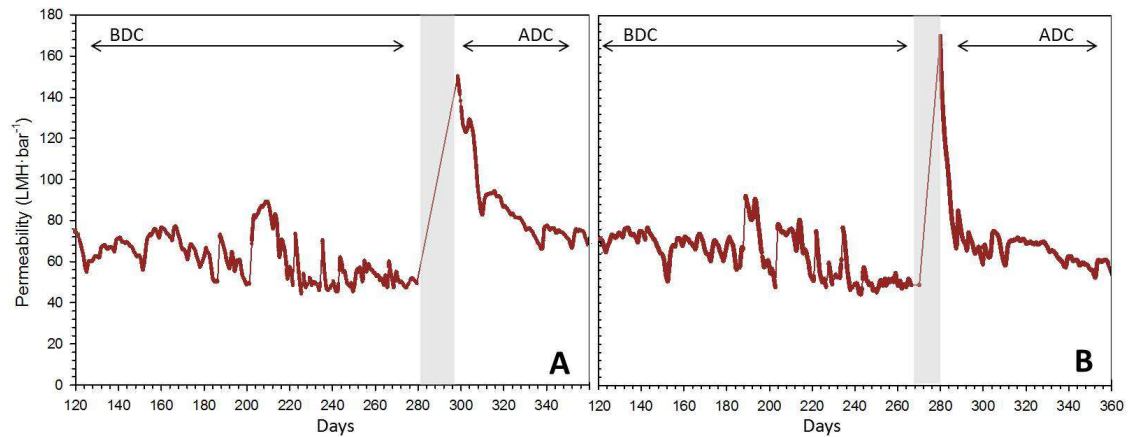
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## 6.4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

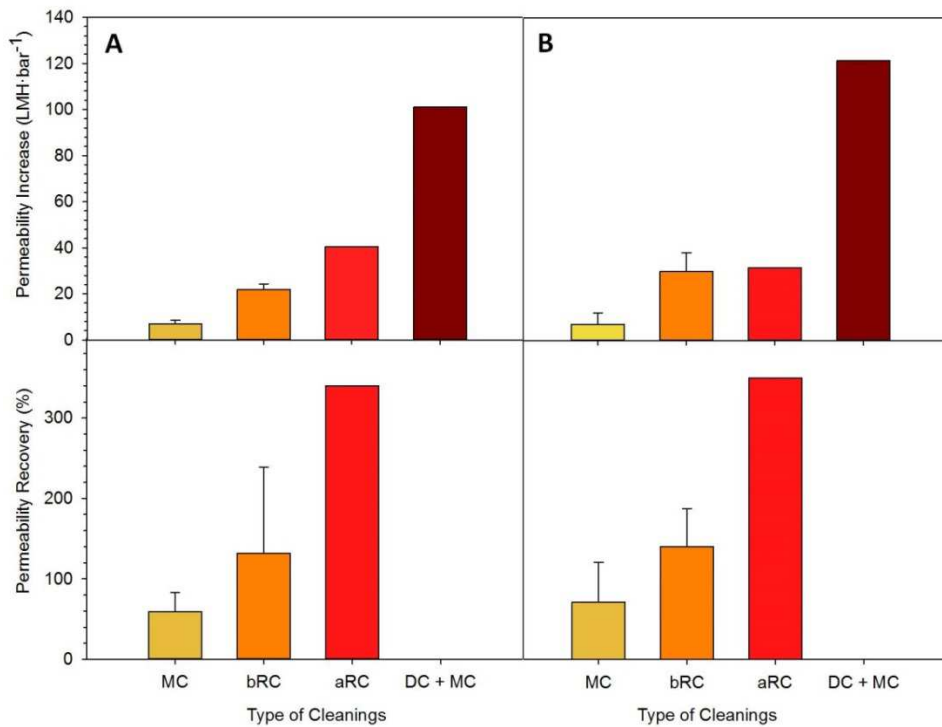
### 6.4.1. Permeability evaluation

The evolution of permeability for both MBR tanks (A and B) is represented in Figure 6.2. Permeability values (K) were extremely low at below  $60 \text{ LMH}\cdot\text{bar}^{-1}$ , generally considered unsustainable for MBR operation (Judd 2011). Fourteen and sixteen chemical cleans were applied to the tanks A and B respectively during the period from 120 to 270 or 280 days prior to

manual cleaning. Cleans comprised ten maintenance and four recovery cleanings for Tank A and twelve maintenance and four recovery cleans for Tank B. All the maintenance cleans (MC) employed sodium hypochlorite ( $140 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) and EDTA ( $200 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ). Three of the four recovery cleans were basic (bRC) using  $1.5 \text{ g/L}$  sodium hypochlorite while the other one was an acid recovery cleaning (aRC) of  $1.5 \text{ g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  citric acid. Mean permeability recoveries obtained from each type of cleaning prior to the “declogging” cleaning (DC), the manual removal of accumulated solids, are shown in Figure 6.3.



**Figure 6.2.** Permeability values of each tank during 2011. (a) Permeability tank A and (b) permeability tank B. BDC: Before Declogging Cleaning. ADC: After Declogging Cleaning.



**Figure 6.3.** Average permeability recoveries and permeability increases after each chemical cleaning applied of each tank (a) and (b). It was not possible to calculate the permeability recovery for the declogging cleanings.

Recovery cleans were found to be at least twice as efficient as maintenance cleans, and acid recovery clean more efficient than basic ones (as expected because textile fibres are soluble at low pH). However, recovered permeability values were insignificant compared to those obtained by declogging (DC), indicating chemical cleaning to be largely ineffective at removing gross accumulated solids associated with “sludging”.

Whilst DC, provided a significant permeability recovery, after ten days of operation the permeability values dropped by 68-88% of the cleaned state. During the two month period following the DC, 5 and 7 maintenance cleanings were applied again to Tanks A and B respectively. Whilst the maintenance cleaning applied after the DC were slightly more efficient than the ones applied before (BDC:  $7 \pm 3$  LMH·bar<sup>-1</sup> ADC:  $10 \pm 5$  LMH·bar<sup>-1</sup>), this improvement was insignificant compared to the overall loss of permeability from “reclogging” – the accumulation of solids following the DC. Evaluated permeability trends (dK/dt) between all chemical cleans revealed permeability decline to be greater when clogging was more pronounced (Figure 6.4). Pearson coefficient test showed no correlation between permeability decline values (dK/dt, (LMH/bar)/day) and recovery permeability. These results corroborate recent reports of rapid clogging from pilot scale studies (Zsirai *et al.*, 2012).

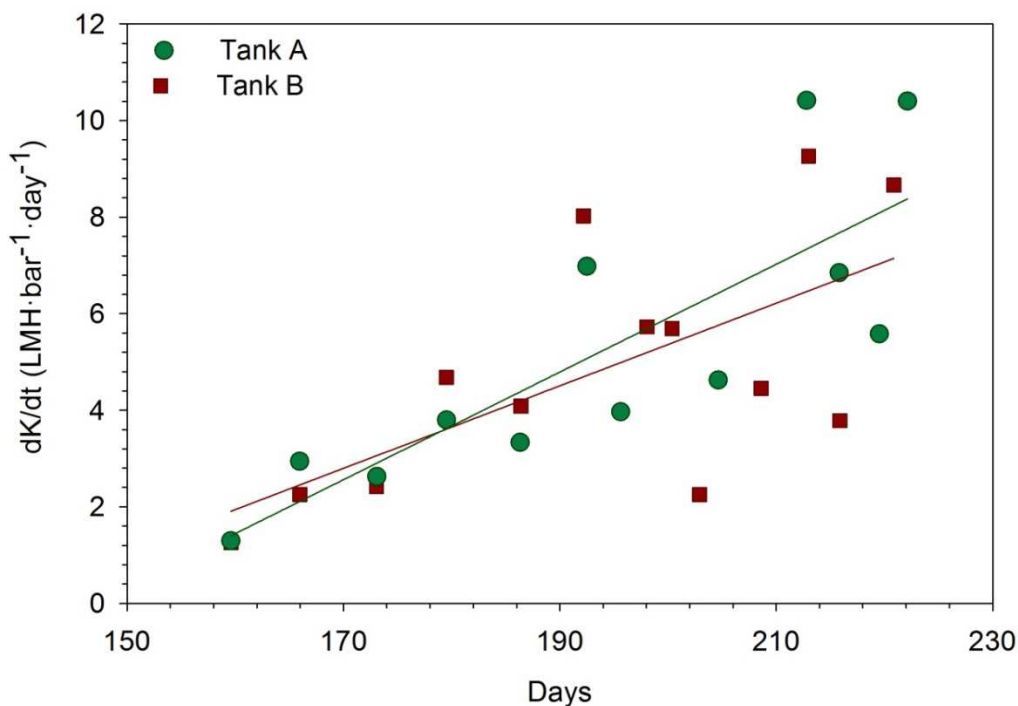


Figure 6.4. dK/dt after each chemical cleaning applied before the DC.

Nowadays, to maintain a sustainable operation and minimise cleaning frequency at the full scale facility affected by ragging, the permeate flux was slightly reduced (from 27 to 24 LMH).

### 6.4.2. Sludge characterisation

Visual inspection of the membrane modules conducted prior to manual cleaning revealed significant clogging at the top of the membrane cassettes (Figure 6.5) with a highly adherent “slimy” material filling the membrane interstices and severely restricting their physical movement. The sludge sampled from the membrane tank revealed little significant change in the key bulk properties of MLSS, MLVSS, SVI, CST, PSD and filterability throughout the study (Table 6.2), with the low CST and SVI values indicating good sludge quality (Khongnakorn and Wisniewski, 2010; Lousada-Ferreira, 2010). Likewise, there were no foaming episodes during the study.

**Table 6.2.** MBR sludge properties.

Parameter	Units	Average (all studied period)
MLSS	mg·L <sup>-1</sup>	6000 ± 1400
MLVSS	%	78 ± 3
SVI	ml	290 ± 90
Filterability	ml	30 ± 3
CST	S	62 ± 10
EPS	mg·g SSV <sup>-1</sup>	13 ± 3
Soluble proteins	mg·g SSV <sup>-1</sup>	2.7 ± 0.8
Soluble polysaccharides	mg·g SSV <sup>-1</sup>	3.7 ± 0.6
Bound proteins	mg·g SSV <sup>-1</sup>	3.5 ± 1.2
Bound polysaccharides	mg·g SSV <sup>-1</sup>	3.4 ± 1.5
PSD (% volume)	µm	77 ± 10



**Figure 6.5.** Pictures of the ragged membranes. (a) Top of the cassette (b) inside the cassette.

A qualitative “ragging propensity” test (Stefanski *et al.*, 2011) was applied to the sludge adhered to the membranes through successive CSS fractionation (5 mm down to 63  $\mu\text{m}$ ). The test demonstrated reconstitution of the suspended solids as rags, which were self-supporting when suspended. The rags were around 50 mm in length for the solids retained in the smallest mesh size (0.063 mm), up to 70-120 mm for the solids taken from the larger mesh size ranges (0.4 – 2 mm). No rags were observed for the largest mesh sizes of 4 and 5 mm. The mechanical integrity of the reconstituted rags was unaffected by the application of either detergent or hypochlorite, corroborating the reports of Stefanski *et al.* (2011). This measurement gives an idea of the pre-treatment requirement to minimize ragging phenomenon in MBR facilities.

#### **6.4.3. Textile fibre concentration and characterisation**

The WWTP influent was analysed to determine the quantity and structure of textile fibres and cellulosic material possibly affecting filtration performance. Samples from the WWTP entrance were screened at different screen ratings. The mean fibre concentration in the influent was  $42 \pm 21 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ , mostly below 1 mm in size: 38 % 0.06-0.4 mm, 52 % 0.4-1 mm, 10 % 1 -2 mm. Characterisation of the fibre material revealed them to be primarily cotton and cellulosic in origin (73 %), with protein-based materials such as wool and other animal hairs (22 %) making up much of the remainder along with small amounts of polyamides (3 %), and polyester (2 %). Furthermore, optical microscopic analysis of the agglomerated rags revealed them to comprise primarily cotton fibres, in keeping with the observations of Stefanski *et al.* (2011) who also identified cotton-based filaments as being the root cause of ragging in MBRs.

#### **6.4.4. Evaluation of the flux reduction improvements**

As described before, operating at 27-28 LMH the TMP easily reached values higher than 0.5 bars, requiring a high amount of chemical cleanings. After reducing the flux to 23 LMH (and after a period of stabilization) the TMP was about 0.35-0.4 bars (Figure 6.6). It helped the MBR performance and reduced the number of chemical cleanings required.

On the other hand, the permeability values slightly improved after the flux modification (Figure 6.7). Comparing the permeability values before the flux modification (average values from day 348 to day 408) and the values of the same two months one year later (average between days 715-775), an average increase from 57.6 to 61.5  $\text{LMH}\cdot\text{bar}^{-1}$  was observed.



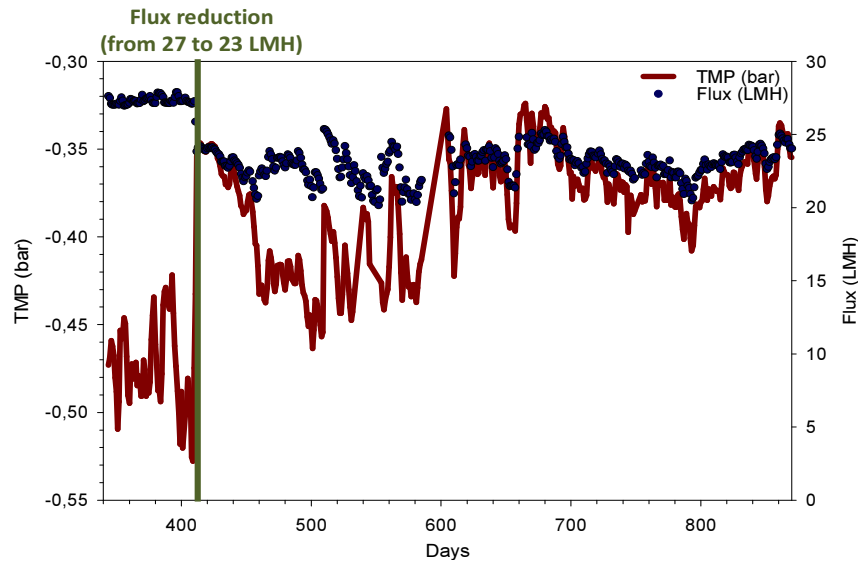


Figure 6.6. TMP and flux values before and after the flux modification

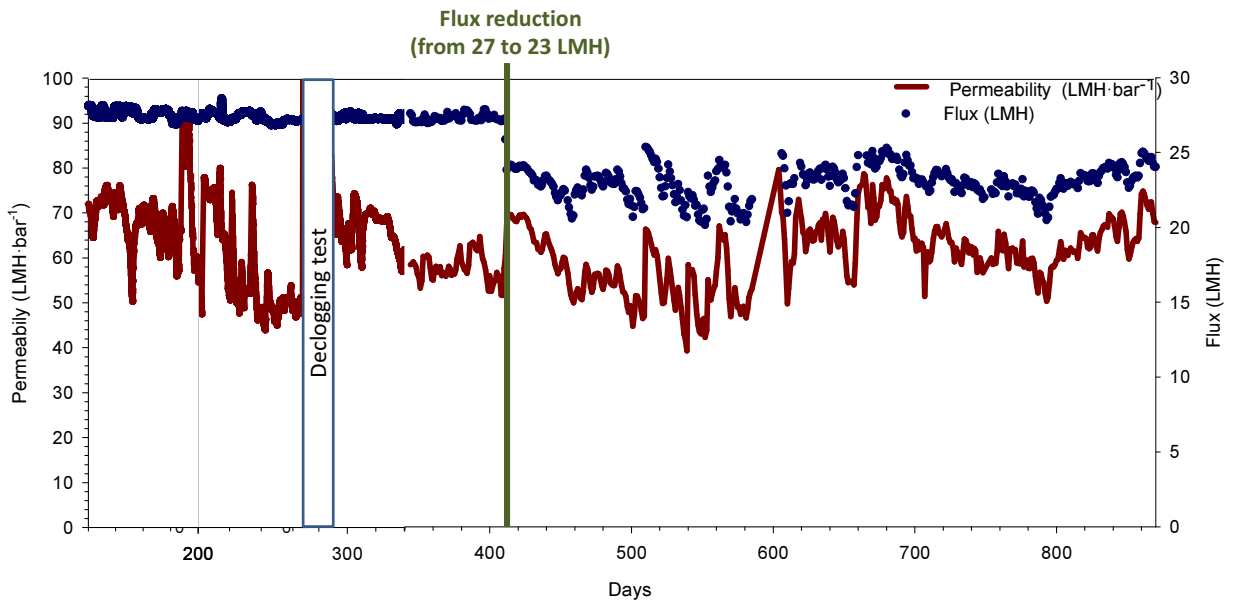


Figure 6.7. Permeability and flux values before and after the flux modification.

#### 6.4.5. Ragging phenomenon generalisation

Ragging is not exclusive to one membrane configuration but to all. Despite the fact that ragging behavior in membranes filtration process is described as the blocking of membrane channels with particles agglomerated as long rag-like particles (Mason et al., 2010), some variants in the behavior/effects of this phenomenon in front of the different configurations are known (Water Expert, 2014). While in FS configuration the rags can get trapped around the aeration systems reducing the physical cleaning of the membranes, in HF configurations the rags can block the interstitial gaps between the fibers. Both effects can seriously affect the filtration performance, causing inevitable operational problems. For this reason, many membrane suppliers have been

forced to increase their screening demands (Klegraf and Lahnsteiner, 2008), and some even strongly recommend to have an active fine screen on the recirculation line (Water Expert, 2014).

From the studied full-scale MBRs, only the facility treating the effluent of a big laundry has experienced the ragging phenomenon. However, more long-term experiences are required in order to determine if the concentration of cotton-fibres present in the urban wastewater is enough to form the rags and cause ragging problems in the future. In this sense, the methodologies described in this chapter can be useful to identify, quantify and characterise the presence of rags in the influent and sludge samples of the full-scale MBRs.

## **6.5.CONCLUSIONS**

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The performance of a full-scale membrane bioreactor affected by ragging, the agglomeration of small textile filaments into long rags or braids, has been investigated. Ragging was demonstrated using a previously published qualitative empirical test, and was identified as being the cause of significant permeability decline which remained largely unaffected by the routine maintenance chemical cleans applied. Whilst declogging, the manual removal of accumulated solids, provided a significant permeability recovery, after ten days of operation the permeability values returned to 68-88% of the pre-cleaned state. Ragging was thus demonstrated as being significant and rapid for this installation, and to be unmitigated by the action of either chemical cleaning or backwashing.

Examination of the solids accumulated within the MBR membrane revealed them to form self supporting rags of 70-120 mm in length. Optical analysis of these fibres indicated that they were formed primarily of cotton filaments. Analysis of the MBR plant influent revealed the presence of textile fibres at an average concentration of  $40 \pm 20 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ , also primarily composed of cotton (> 70 %). The short length of these fibres (< 1 mm) evidently allows them to pass through the pre-treatment stage, including fine screening to 1 mm, and agglomerate as rags within the membrane. The empirical test revealed the clogging solids to form mechanically stable 70-120 mm long rags when suspended in air.

It was concluded that ragging by cotton filaments presents a serious challenge to MBR operation, notwithstanding the application of a fine screen upstream of the process and the low values of the classical bulk sludge filterability determinants such as capillary suction time. Relatively easy to detect, but almost impossible to solve, pre-treatment improvement, manual cleaning and permeate flux reduction are the only options to minimise ragging impact over MBR performance. A slightly permeability and TMP improvements were achieved through the flux reduction from 27 to 23 LMH.



# CHAPTER 7

## RAGGING IN A PILOT PLANT MBR: EFFECT OF OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS, CHEMICAL CLEANINGS AND PRE-TREATMENT IMPROVEMENTS

*Redrafted from:*

**Gabarrón, S.,** Gómez, M., Dvorak, L., Ruzickova, I., Rodriguez-Roda, I., Comas, J., 2014. *Effects of operational conditions, chemical cleanings and pre-treatment improvements in a MBR affected by ragging phenomenon. Submitted to Separation Science and Technology. Status: Under Review.*

## 7.1. INTRODUCTION

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Due to many advantages such as high effluent quality, smaller footprint and possibility of wastewater reclamation, membrane bioreactors (MBRs) are increasing on their popularity at the last two decades. Implementation of membrane separation into the technological link allows an operation of WWTP under increased sludge retention time and activated sludge concentration, independently on sludge sedimentation characteristics (Judd, 2011). Besides all these mentioned advantages, two main disadvantages still remain: higher capital and operational costs, and membrane fouling.

An extensive effort has been made to understand the nature of fouling of MBRs, observing that all the parameters involved in the design and operation of MBR processes have an influence on membrane fouling (Drews, 2010; Judd, 2011). To overcome this fouling problem, submerged MBR systems are often operated under subcritical flux conditions in order to maintain a sustainable permeability.

However, while majority of articles dealing with the membrane fouling are focused on extracellular polymeric substances (EPS) and activated sludge characteristics (Dvořák *et al.*, 2011; Van den Broeck *et al.*, 2012; Gómez *et al.*, 2012; Meng *et al.*, 2006b), there are only few papers discussing the importance of wastewater pre-treatment. Survey carried out by Santos *et al.* (2011) showed the importance to study intensively the clogging phenomena. This survey revealed that 41 % of MBR practitioners found screenings and clogging as the main impediments to sustainable immersed MBR operation. There are two recognised groups of clogging behaviors: sludging and ragging.

While sludging is primarily caused by a combination of insufficient surface aeration of hollow fibre membrane and specific sludge characteristics, ragging was defined by Stefanski *et al.* (2011) as phenomena caused by textile fibres passing through the mechanical pre-treatment by the screens and creating later rags on hollow fibre surface. These rags are formed predominantly by cotton wool (Stefanski *et al.*, 2011) and further from hair and different fibres. Previous published study by Gabarrón *et al.* (2013) reported a case study of a full-scale MBR with high fibres content in the influent, resulting in big permeability decline caused by the rags formation.

On the other hand, cleaning protocols are very important in order to control the fouling and clogging phenomenon. Many membrane suppliers recommended sodium hypochlorite as the cleaning solution, which is capable to remove sufficiently a gel layer and pore blockage fouling from the membrane. Gel layer formation and pore blockage fouling is mainly caused by colloidal and soluble organic fractions (such as EPS and SMP) and inorganic substances.

However, although chemical cleaning is applied in most full-scale submerged MBR plants (Matos *et al.*, 2011), little information about chemical CIP and particularly about cleaning of ragging phenomena is available in current literature (Koseoglu *et al.*, 2012; Lyko *et al.*, 2008; Zsirai *et al.*, 2012).

## **7.2.OBJECTIVE**

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The aim of this study was to identify the effects of different operational conditions and different chemical cleanings on the TMP behaviour of a MBR affected by the ragging phenomenon and determine a pre-treatment optimisation to reduce the textile fibres entrance.

## **7.3. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

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### **7.3.1. Wastewater characterization and pretreatment**

The MBR pilot-plant (Figure 7.1) was placed in a full-scale municipal WWTP. The raw influent was characterised for having a high presence of textile fibres. Specifically, the mean fibre concentration was  $42\pm 21 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ . The fibre size was mostly smaller than 1 mm and about 50 % of fibres had size in the range of 0.4 – 1.0 mm. Characterization of the fibre material revealed that fibres were primarily made of cotton and cellulose (73 %), with protein based materials as wool and polyamides (3 %) and polyester (2 %). The inlet flow in the full-scale WWTP (average daily flow  $3225 \text{ m}^3\cdot\text{d}^{-1}$ ) was mechanically pre-treated by coarse screens (8 cm), grit chamber, fine screens (1 mm), fat trap, aerated buffer tank ( $1110 \text{ m}^3$ ) and by the fine sieves (1 mm). Pre-treated wastewater went further into the Carrousel activated sludge reactor of WWTP.

### **7.3.2. Pilot-plant description**

MBR pilot-plant (flow scheme is shown in Figure 7.1) was continuously fed with mixed liquor taken directly from the Carrousel reactor of the WWTP. The average feed MLSS concentration was  $3.1 \text{ g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  ranging from 2.9 to  $3.7 \text{ g}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ . The MBR pilot-plant had an overall volume of 30 L (working volume 25 L) and was equipped with an ultra-filtration hollow fibre module (ZW – 10, nominal pore size of  $0.04 \mu\text{m}$ , PVDF), with a total membrane surface of  $0.93 \text{ m}^2$ . The operational cycles of 10 minutes of filtration and 40 seconds of backwashing were kept constant during all experiments. The effluent flow rate and the trans-membrane pressure were monitored by a flowmeter and a pressure gauge with data storage, respectively.

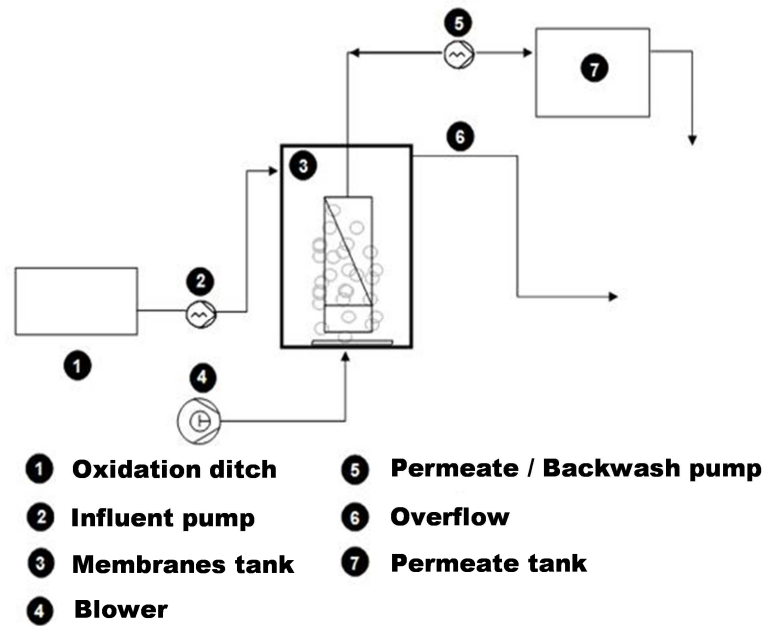


Figure 7.1. MBR pilot-plant scheme.

### 7.3.3. Experiments description

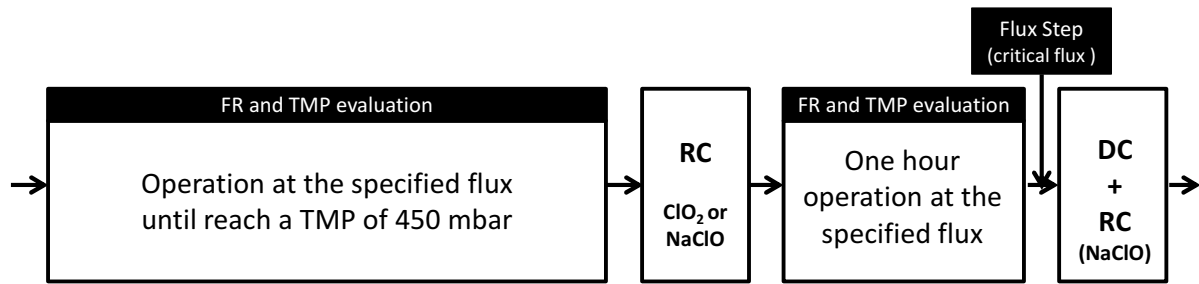
Six different experiments based on four different operational conditions and two different chemical cleaning reagents were undertaken.

The four experiments designed to evaluate the effect of different operational conditions were based on the flux and the sludge properties modification. Specifically, one experiment was performed at 26 LMH and the three others at 21.5 LMH. Under operational flux of 21.5 LMH, sludge with three different biomass characteristics was further tested. Concretely, MLSS concentrations of 6.5 and 5.1 g·L<sup>-1</sup> were evaluated. Moreover, a foaming sludge with high presence of *M. Parvicella* (FI: 4.6) was used during the third experiment.

During other two experiments, the operational flux was fixed at 21.5 LMH and two different chemical cleaning reagents were tested for RC. The procedure followed for each of two experiments is described in the next section (7.3.4).

### 7.3.4. Recovery cleaning (RC) and declogging cleaning (DC) procedure

To determine the efficiency of the recovery cleanings (RC) and declogging (manual) cleanings (DC) an exhaustive evaluation of the fouling rates, TMP and critical fluxes (before and after each cleaning) was conducted. Figure 7.2 shows the scheme of the followed procedure for both experiments.



**Figure 7.2.** Individual procedures/steps (including their order) applied during the RC and DC efficiency determination.

The MBR pilot-plant was run until achieving absolute TMP values of 450 mbar at 21.5 LMH. Afterwards, a RC was applied as follows: the chemical solution was backwashed into the membranes tank and the membranes were submerged in this solution for 12 hours. Two different chemical solutions were used for the RC membranes: NaClO (1000 mg·L<sup>-1</sup>) and ClO<sub>2</sub> (380 mg·L<sup>-1</sup>, prepared by TwinOxide® technology). Concentration of NaClO solution was chosen according to Brepols *et al.* (2008b) and Wei *et al.* (2011). Concentration of ClO<sub>2</sub> solution was determined based on “oxidation equivalent” recalculation. According to Ulrich (2010), the conversion factor of oxidation equivalent between ClO<sub>2</sub> and NaClO is approximately 2.6. After the RC, the membranes tank was emptied and filled again with stabilised sludge from the full-scale MBR to start the filtration process. One hour operation was run before the flux step determination in order to determine the TMP and FR values. After each flux step test, the membranes were removed from the reactor, and a manually declogging cleaning of the membranes (DC) followed by a recovery cleaning (RC) using NaClO was performed.

### 7.3.5. Flux step examination and critical flux determination

Flux step examination was carried out in accordance with Le-Clech *et al.* (2003). TMP increase for fixed duration, i.e. 2 × 5 minutes and constant flux during the each step (increase of flux in step about 5 LMH) was measured. Values of TMP were recorded every 10 seconds. Flux steps were carried out till increase of TMP values over 500 mbar. Based on gained data, fouling rate and critical flux according to Tiranuntakul *et al.* (2011) were calculated.

### 7.3.6. Fouling rates (FR) and TMP recovery

Fouling rates (FR) calculation was based on the methodology described by Monclús *et al.* (2011):

- (i) Data is recorded for processing in each permeate cycle (9 minutes), and the permeate flow rate and TMP are recorded online every 10 seconds. The initial data from the cycle



are not taken into account in order to avoid non-representative values after backwashing or relaxation. After that, data are filtered to outliers (Ferrero *et al.*, 2011). Once the data are filtered, flux and permeability are automatically calculated.

- (ii) A fouling rate (FR) per cycle is obtained as the slope of all values of TMP per each cycle according to the following calculation:

$$FR = \left( \frac{TMP}{dt} \right)_{\text{cycle}} \quad (\text{mbar s}^{-1})$$

If the fouling phenomenon increases, it is directly reflected on the FR. However, this method requires working under constant fluxes because FR is directly related to the flux applied (Le-Clech *et al.*, 2003).

- (iii) Then FR values are averaged hourly or daily at the end of the hour or day, respectively. Graphical representation of the FR averaged hourly and daily, together with filtered TMP also averaged hourly or daily is obtained. Moreover, FR increment trends were calculated according to the following calculation:

$$FR_{\text{trend}} = \left( \frac{FR}{dt} \right) \quad (\text{mbar s}^{-1} \cdot \text{d}^{-1})$$

Considering constant operational flux, the TMP recovery was adapted from Zsirai *et al.* (2012) permeability recovery ratio calculation, as follows:

$$\text{TMP recovery (\%)} = \left( \frac{TMP_{\text{end}} - TMP_{\text{c}}}{TMP_{\text{end}} - TMP_{\text{start}}} \right)_{\text{cycle}}$$

Where  $TMP_{\text{c}}$  is the permeability immediately after cleaning,  $TMP_{\text{end}}$  represents the permeability at the end of the previous test recorded immediately before the cleaning, and  $TMP_{\text{start}}$  means the permeability after the cleaning of the previous test. Since there is a possibility of removing part of fouling which was not removed by previous cleaning (resulting in lower permeability values than the ones observed at the beginning of the test), the recovery of permeability can be higher than 100 % when it is calculated according to this formula.

### 7.3.7. Analytical methods

The concentrations of nitrogen species,  $PO_4\text{-P}$ ,  $SO_4\text{-S}$ ,  $COD_{\text{T}}$ ,  $COD_5$  and  $BOD_5$  were measured according to the Standard methods for the examination of water and wastewater (APHA, 2005). Mixed liquor suspended solids (MLSS) concentrations were analyzed gravimetrically also in accordance with the Standard methods (APHA, 2005). Sludge volume index (SVI) was determined according to Metcalf and Eddy (2003). The dewaterability of the different mixed liquor samples was evaluated by measuring the capillary suction time (Triton electronics Ltd., type 304 B) with CST papers and the 6 mL cartridge for good dewaterable sludge. Microscopic examinations were done using a Nikon model Eclipse E200 microscope and the microscope

pictures were recorded using the Zeiss KS100.3 software. Filamentous index (FI) was determined based on the subjective method for filamentous bacteria abundance scoring suggested by Eikelboom (2000).

Influent coarse suspended solid concentration measurements were carried out according to Stefanski *et al.* (2011) using mesh sizes of 0.063 mm, 0.4 mm, 1 mm, 1.5 mm, 2 mm, 4 mm and 5 mm. Sludge samples were taken directly from the Carrousel reactor of the WWTP. Influent samples were taken downstream of the fine screens.

### **7.3.8. Flocculation test**

Cationic flocculant named N 1460 (mixture of 10 mole % dimethylaminoethyl acrylatebenzyl chloride quaternary salt and 90 mole % acrylamide) and MPE were used for the flocculation tests. Concentrations of 100, 150, 200, 500 and 700 mg·L<sup>-1</sup> were tested for MPE, and 50, 75, 100, 150 and 200 mg·L<sup>-1</sup> for N 1460 flocculant. The tests were conducted directly with the incoming wastewater and after one hour of mixing (9 L of sample).

## **7.4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

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In order to characterise the effects of different operational conditions and chemical cleanings on a MBR affected by ragging phenomenon, six different experiments were undertaken. Four different tests were carried out in order to evaluate the effect of modifying flux and the sludge conditions on the filtration performance. Moreover, the efficiencies of the chemical cleaning procedures using two different reagents were evaluated through the fouling rates, the TMP recovery ratios and the critical flux values. Finally, a strategy how to improve the pre-treatment and reduce the textile fibres entrance was done.

### **7.4.1. Operational conditions**

Firstly, a flux step test was carried out to determine the critical flux of the new membranes with this influent and sludge properties. Figure 7.3 shows the TMP and Flux values obtained during the flux step test. Using the flux linearity methodology (Tiranuntakul *et al.*, 2011), the maximum operational flux applied in the trials was 26.8 LMH. Once the critical flux was determined, four different experiments were performed.

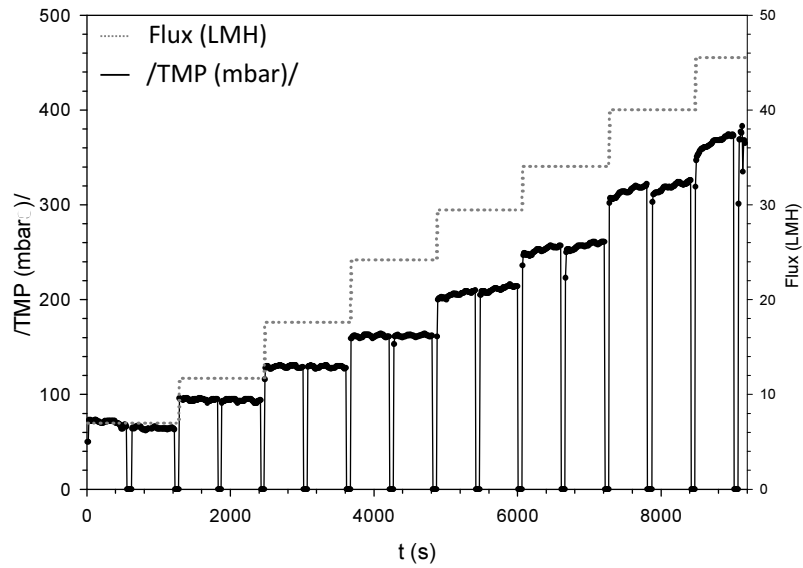


Figure 7.3. TMP and flux values observed during the flux step test.

#### 7.4.1.1. Flux effect

Figure 7.4 shows the TMP profile and constant flux achieved for each experiment. In all the cases, the daily variation of the TMP profile was correlated to the daily temperature variation. Night periods, with the lowest temperatures, very well correlated with the highest daily TMP values (Figure 7.5). Moreover, the experiment with the lowest TMP daily variability (experiment 4) corresponded with period of days with the lowest temperature variability.

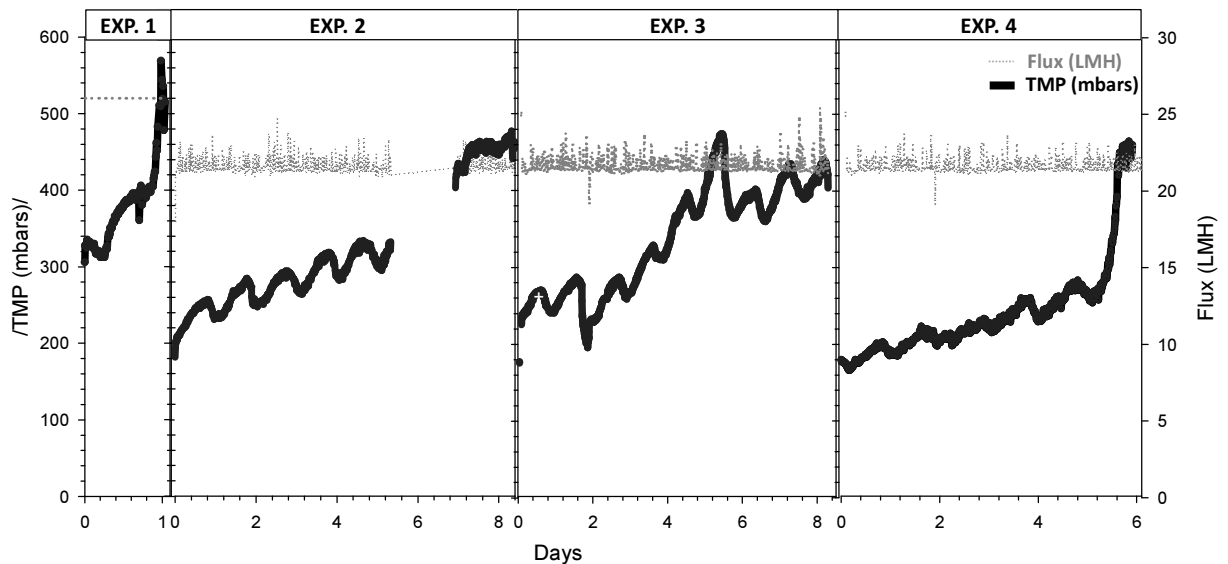
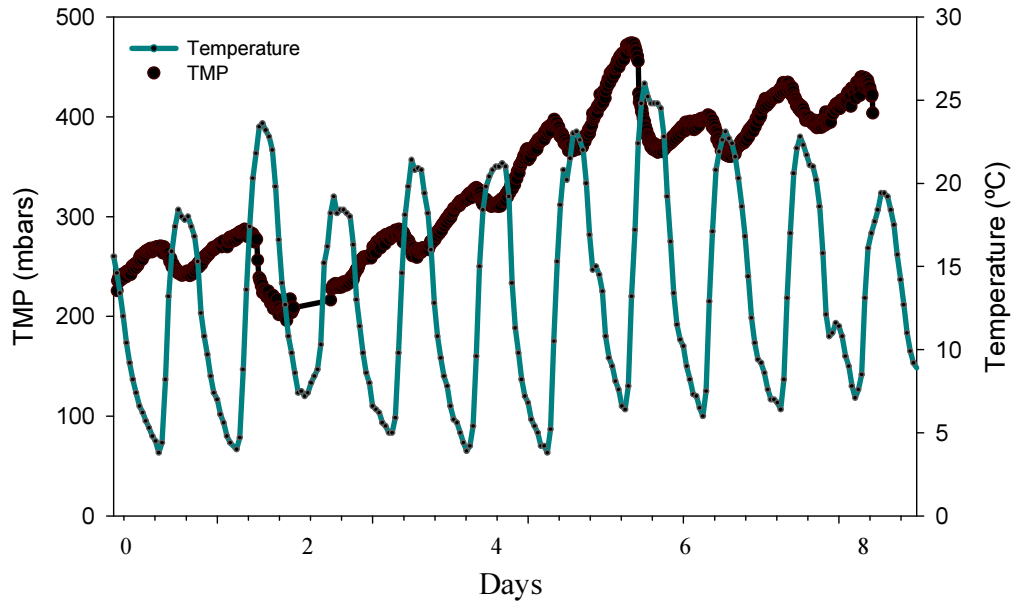


Figure 7.4. TMP and flux values for each experiment.



**Figure 7.5.** TMP and temperature values during the experiment 2.

The first experiment was performed close to the critical flux conditions with an operational flux of 26 LMH (Figure 7.4 – exp. 1). Under these conditions, TMP values increased very fast achieving TMP values higher than 500 mbar after one day of operation. Previous studies, where the MBR was operated at critical flux conditions, a three-stage mechanism map for membrane fouling was observed (Ng and Ng, 2010; Zhang *et al.*, 2006). However, under ragging phenomenon operation, only two stages were identified; (i) long-term rise (linear or exponential), and (ii) sudden TMP rise. It was not possible to identify the first stage, defined as initial short rise, due to the high TMP values achieved from the start of the operation. This was caused by fast rags formation on the membranes surface taking place immediately after the start of filtration. Additionally, the backwashing cycles were not efficient enough to remove that.

When the flux was reduced from 26 to 21.5 LMH, but operating at similar MLSS concentrations, the operation time without requiring any chemical cleaning increased from 1 to 8 days. Moreover, the TMP profile observed for the two experiments under-critical flux conditions showed only one-stage fouling mechanism. On contrary, the 4th experiment, which was conducted under different biomass properties, obtained a flux evolution profile similar to the experiment 1, being also possible to identify two different stages for membrane fouling. FR increment trends of  $-0.0118$  and  $-4.824 \text{ mbar}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{d}^{-1}$  were determined for the stage one and two, respectively, of the experiment one. Similarly, experiment four obtained FR values of  $-0.0075 \text{ mbar}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{d}^{-1}$  for the stage one and  $-0.3255 \text{ mbar}\cdot\text{s}^{-1}\cdot\text{d}^{-1}$  for the stage two. For both cases, an increment of two orders of magnitude was observed from one stage to the other.

#### 7.4.1.2. Biomass properties effect

Experiments 2, 3 and 4 were carried out at the same flux of 21.5 LMH. The initial conditions of each ones showed FR values in the same order (-0.0184, -0.020 and -0.0148 mbar·s<sup>-1</sup> for experiments 2, 3 and 4, respectively) and similar TMP values (Figure 7.4). However, despite the initial similar conditions, different TMP profiles were observed. This fact was caused by different biomass properties of each experiment (Table 7.1).

**Table 7.1.** Operational conditions during the experiments 2, 3 and 4.

EXP.	Average flux (LMH)	MLSS (g·L <sup>-1</sup> )	CST (s/MLSS g·L <sup>-1</sup> )	SVI (L/MLSS g·L <sup>-1</sup> )	FI	Foaming presence
2	21.5	6.4 ± 0.8	15.2	307 ± 16	3.5	No
3	21.5	5.1 ± 0.6	13.5	308 ± 50	3.5	No
4	21.5	5.6	12.1	378 ± 30	4.6	Yes

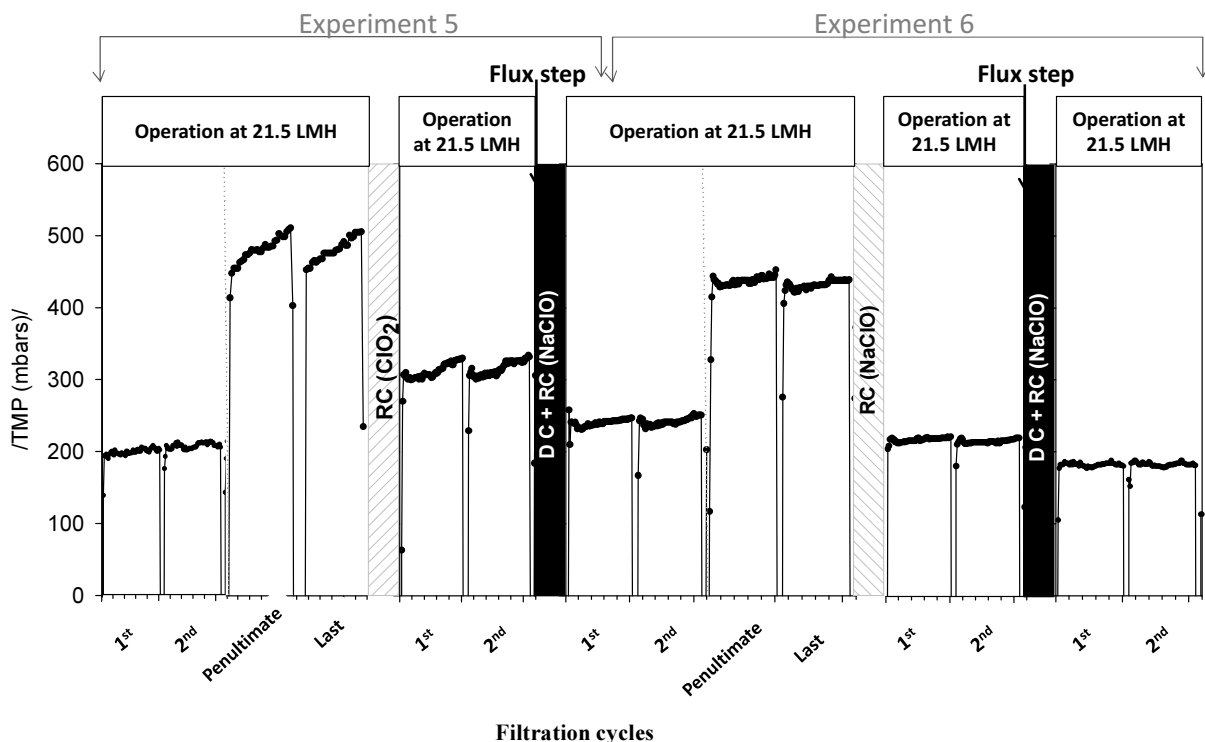
Comparing the experiments 2 and 3, it was observed that the exp. 2 had a higher final FR values (-0.2258 mbar·s<sup>-1</sup>) than experiment 3 (-0.0818 mbar·s<sup>-1</sup>), but both of them reached the highest TMP value allowed at almost the same time – 8 days. These values indicated that the reduction of the MLSS concentration achieved lower reversible fouling (lower FR), but did not affect the irreversible fouling caused by the rags deposition on the membranes surface.

On the other hand, all the experiment 4 was conducted under a bloom of *M. Parvicella* conditions which caused a foaming episode. This sludge foaming affected the TMP behavior, being possible to observe that the TMP profile had a more similar trend to the experiment 1 than to the experiments 2 and 3. Moreover, the maximum allowed TMP value was achieved faster than in the experiment 2 and 3, indicating that the foaming phenomenon deteriorated even more the filtration performance. Despite the fact that there is not a general concern about the effect of the filamentous bacteria on the fouling phenomenon (Li *et al.*, 2008; Wang *et al.*, 2006), results of this study are in agreement with the recent studies where more serious fouling phenomenon was detected under presence of filamentous bacteria (Pan *et al.*, 2010; Tian *et al.*, 2011). Similarly, Bugge *et al.* (2013) observed that the filamentous bacteria, including *M. parvicella*, affected the sludge floc properties significantly and decreased the drainage properties. However, this situation was not reflected on the CST, which showed the lowest values and consequently the best filterability and dewaterability sludge conditions (Wang *et al.*, 2006), to the experiment 4.

### 7.4.2. Chemical cleaning strategies

Two different experiments were performed in order to determine the efficiency of the RC and DC-RC cleanings. These experiments were based on the TMP recovery ratio and the fouling rates evaluation. Moreover, flux step test was applied to determine the critical flux after each RC and compared with the critical flux achieved with the new membranes.

Figure 7.6 shows two initial and two final filtration cycles before and after each RC and DC-RC cleanings. The experiment 5 used  $\text{ClO}_2$  as an oxidation reagent for the RC and achieved a TMP recovery of 87 %. The following DC-RC reached an extra TMP recovery of 6 %. It represented a total TMP recovery of 93 % in comparison with initial TMP value. On the other hand, during the experiment 6 with  $\text{NaClO}$  applied for the RC, 95 % of the TMP recovery was achieved followed by DC-RC resulting in extra 9 %. It showed that the application of these two cleanings reached a TMP recovery of 109 %. This indicates that part of the irreversible fouling was not removed in the previous experiment 5, i.e. by RC ( $\text{ClO}_2$ ) + DC-RC. However, this remaining part of irreversible fouling was removed with the chemical cleanings applied in the experiment 6.



**Figure 7.6.** Initial and final cycles before and after each chemical cleaning.

In terms of critical fluxes, values of 21.8 LMH for  $\text{ClO}_2$  and 24.9 LMH for  $\text{NaClO}$  were achieved after RC applications. This represented 81.3 % and 92.9 % of the critical flux achieved with the clean membranes. It also demonstrated the highest efficiency of the  $\text{NaClO}$  RC. Figure

7.7 shows the appearance of the membranes: (A) clogged, (B) cleaned with NaClO and (C) cleaned with ClO<sub>2</sub>. Concretely, the ClO<sub>2</sub> reagent showed a higher bleaching power, being observed whiter rags attached to the membranes than in the case of NaClO RC. However, the highest oxidation power of ClO<sub>2</sub> influenced negatively on the rags elimination, particularly due to the fibre structure disruption resulting in finer cotton fibres which adhere more to the membrane surface.



**Figure 7.7.** Pictures of membrane: (a) before recovery cleaning, and after recovery cleaning by NaClO (b) and by ClO<sub>2</sub> (c).

The critical flux, FR and TMP calculations are methodologies widely used for determining the chemical cleaning recovery efficiencies (Le-Clech *et al.*, 2003; Monclús *et al.*, 2011; Zsirai *et al.*, 2012), nevertheless, results of this study indicate that they are not fully representative for MBR operating under ragging conditions. Specifically, these methodologies showed high RC efficiencies (higher than 80 % for both chemicals) while the rags attached to the membranes were not removed by this cleaning methodology, and consequently, not recovering the

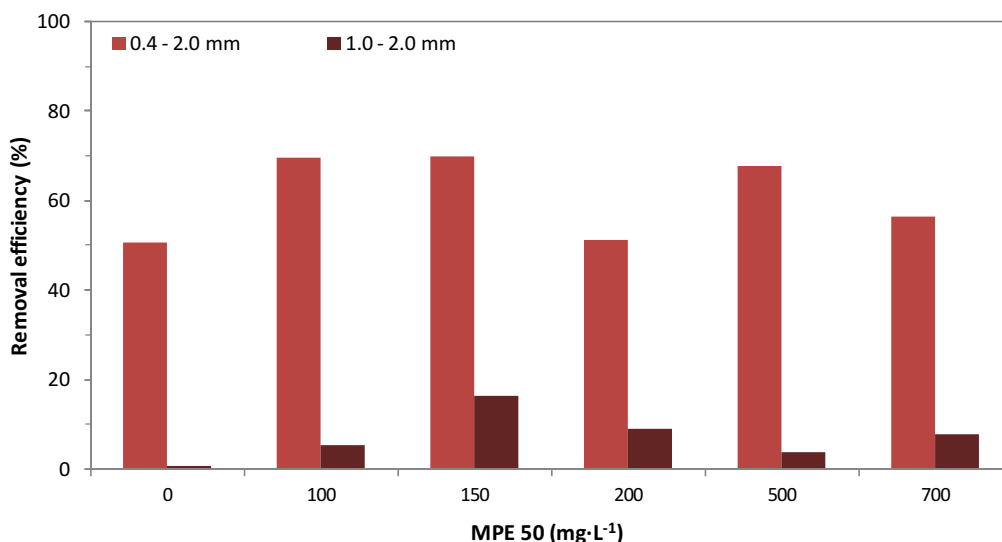
membrane surface lost due to the rags presence. Only the DC-RD allowed achieving the initial filtration conditions, however, the rapid attachment of the rags on the membranes surface quickly deteriorate the filtration performance again.

#### **7.4.3. Optimization of pre-treatment (mechanical with and without flocculant addition)**

To minimise textile fibres content and their influence on rag formation on hollow fibre membrane surface, their removal from the WWTP influent was essential. Other authors (e.g. Frechen *et al.*, 2008) started to study the pre-treatment efficiency not only focusing on the suspended solids removal, but also based on the ability to remove braids. Likewise, it has been demonstrated that the choice of the adequate geometry of the sieve, together with the addition of cationic polymer can successfully improve the wastewater sieving process (Rusten and Ødegaard, 2006). However, there is still question how to design the optimal pre-treatment system (Schier *et al.*, 2009). Thus, several pre-treatment improvements are presented in this section. First, the sieve test directly with the wastewater without flocculant addition was performed. Wastewater samples were taken after the grit chamber and pre-treatment by 1 mm screens with horizontal slit. As can be seen in Figures 7.8 and 7.9, average textile fibres elimination by 0.4 mm sieve reached approx. 51 %. Thereafter, addition of the two flocculants (MPE 50 and N 1460) was tested. Influence of five different doses on fibres removal efficiency as well as changes in chemical parameters of wastewater was assessed. The results related to the fibres removal efficiency are plotted in Figures 7.8 and 7.9.

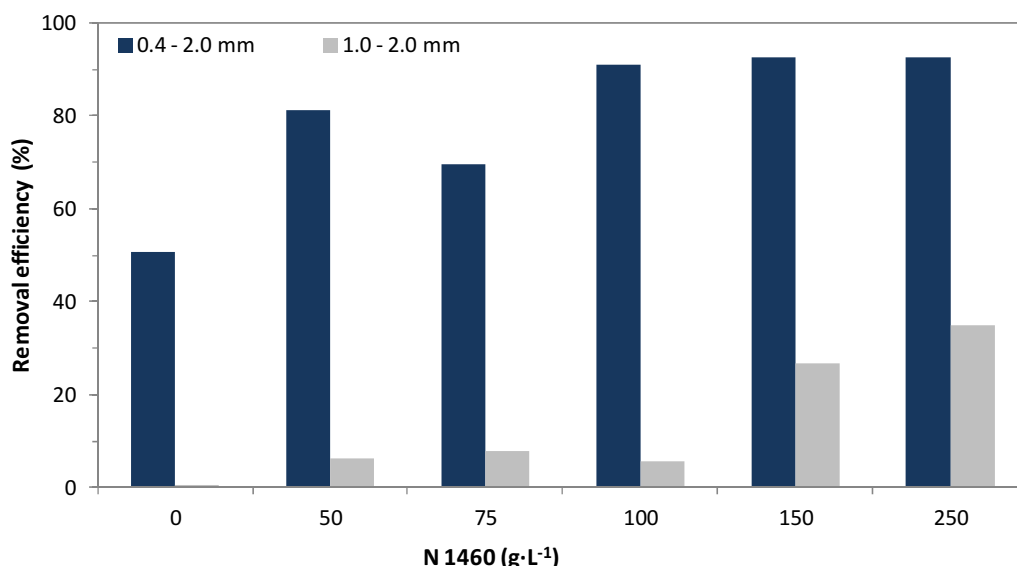
In case of MPE 50 flocculant addition, its concentration of  $150 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  was found to be the optimal for rags forming particles removal after jar tests. A 69.9 % elimination of textile fibres was reached when 0.4 mm sieve was used, while a 16.4 % removal was obtained by 1 mm sieve. Due to the possibility of nutrient content decline when using flocculant addition, which can result in lack of them for activated sludge microorganisms, chemical composition was monitored. The concentrations of the following chemical parameters were monitored:  $\text{NO}_3\text{-N}$ ,  $\text{NO}_2\text{-N}$ ,  $\text{NH}_4\text{-N}$ ,  $\text{TKN}_T$ ,  $\text{TKN}_S$ ,  $\text{PO}_4\text{-P}$ ,  $\text{SO}_4\text{-S}$ ,  $\text{COD}_T$ ,  $\text{COD}_S$  and  $\text{BOD}_5$ . These parameters were analyzed in the original samples as well as after one hour's mixing with MPE 50 and sieving. Despite the  $\text{COD}_T$  concentration decreased about 12 % and slight declines were observed for  $\text{TKNT}$  (4.1 %),  $\text{TKNS}$  (2.6 %) and  $\text{BOD}_5$  (2.6 %) compared to original wastewater. These values did not exceed the standard removal efficiencies of conventional primary treatment (Metcalf and Eddy, 2003; Schier *et al.*, 2009). It showed that the MPE 50 addition and sieving would not affect the nutrient content in the biological reactor.





**Figure 7.8.** Impact of MPE 50 flocculant addition on removal of textile fibres with diameter larger than 0.4 mm and 1.0 mm from wastewater.

N 1460 flocculant addition was also tested and obtained results were compared to the flocculant MPE 50. In combination with sieving, N 1460 showed higher fibre removal efficiency than MPE 50. In the case of 0.4 mm sieving, concentration of 150 mg·L<sup>-1</sup> was found out as an optimum for maximal textile fibres removal (as it also was for MPE 50). The removal efficiency reached 92.6 % when flocculant N 1460 was dosed and 69.9 % for flocculant MPE 50. When 1 mm sieves were used, textile fibres removal efficiency reached 34.8 % for concentration of N 1460 of 250 mg·L<sup>-1</sup>. The results of these tests are shown in Figure 7.9.



**Figure 7.9.** Impact of N 1460 flocculant addition on removal of textile fibres with diameter larger than 0.4 mm and 1.0 mm from wastewater.

As in the case of MPE 50 jar tests, organic matter and nutrient parameters were measured in order to identify appropriate effect of the N 1460 addition on the wastewater characteristics.

When the combination of 0.4 mm sieving and N 1460 flocculant ( $150 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) was used, declines in concentrations were as follow: 26 % for  $\text{COD}_T$ , 4.6 % for  $\text{NH}_4\text{-N}$  and 4.1 % for  $\text{TKN}_T$ . On the other hand, when 1 mm sieves and dose of  $250 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  of N 1460 was used, the changes in chemical parameters were less than 1 %. In addition, these both flocculants are known as flux enhancers (Zhang *et al.*, 2010; Collins *et al.*, 2006) since they show significant benefits on the filtration performances when they are added in the active sludge. Thus, if some free flocculants remain in the pre-treated wastewater, it does not negatively influence the filtration process.

## 7.5.CONCLUSIONS

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The hydraulic performance of an MBR pilot-plant affected by ragging phenomenon was evaluated under different operational conditions. The fouling behaviour was characterised by the fast increase of the fouling rate and TMP. This was caused by the attached rags on the membranes that could not be recovered through the backwashing cleanings. The operation time without any chemical cleaning increased from 1 to 8 days when the operational flux decreased from 26 to 21.5 LMH. The MLSS concentration decline resulted in fouling rates improvement. However, it did not affect the irreversible fouling related to the rags accumulated on the membranes. On the contrary, the increase of filamentous bacteria in the activated sludge negatively affected fouling leading to shorter time period needed for reaching the highest allowed TMP.

The chemical cleanings evaluation indicated that despite the fact that the critical flux, fouling rate and TMP calculations showed high RC efficiencies (higher than 80 % for both chemicals), the rags attached to the membranes were not removed by this cleaning methodology. Only the DC-RD allowed to achieve the initial filtration conditions, however, the rapidly attachment of the rags on the membranes surface quickly deteriorate the filtration performance again.

The optimised mechanical pre-treatment with flocculant addition showed promising results for ragging prevention. The highest removal efficiencies were achieved when a combination of mechanical pre-treatment of 0.4 mm sieve and  $150 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  of MPE 50 and N 1460 were used. Moreover, dosing of these flocculants did not show any negative influence on nutrient content decline in the wastewater.



# CHAPTER 8

## OPERATIONAL OPTIMISATION OF A FULL-SCALE MBR THROUGH A MODEL-BASED APPROACH

*Redrafted from:*

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Gabarrón, S. Dalmau, M., Porro, J., Comas, J., Rodriguez-Roda, I. "Optimisation of BNR and operational costs of a full-scale MBR through a model-based approach". Submitted to *Bioresource Technology*

<http://www.journals.elsevier.com/bioresource-technology/>

## Introduction

Stricter effluent limits imposed on wastewater treatment plants over the past few decades have advanced treatment technology and increased the need for process optimization. Membrane bioreactors (MBRs), one of the more advanced treatment technologies utilized today, have become an excellent alternative to the conventional activated sludge (CAS) process for municipal wastewater treatment, especially when water reuse is needed (Judd, 2011). This is due to the well-known advantages offered by MBR systems such as: lower footprint, lower sludge production, and higher effluent quality with nearly complete absence of pathogenic bacteria in the effluent (Judd, 2011).

However, operational costs still remain as one of the main obstacles of this technology (Judd, 2011; Drews, 2010), mainly due to the aeration (Brepols et al., 2010; Judd, 2011). Aeration is not only used for the membranes compartment, but also for the biological tanks, where it can also represent a significant amount of the operational costs (Verretch et al., 2008, 2010b), such as approximately 50% of the energy consumption of conventional activated sludge plants (Ingildsen et al., 2002), and approximately 17 % of MBR processes (Krzeminski et al., 2012).

For membranes tanks, aeration is used for both to maintain in suspension the mixed liquor suspended solids, and to reduce fouling by scouring on the membrane surface (Germain et al., 2007; Judd, 2011). This high amount of aeration used in MBRs provides a dissolved oxygen (DO) concentration in the membranes compartment reaching upwards of 4 mg·L<sup>-1</sup> (Chu and Li, 2005), which can negatively impact the nitrogen removal efficiency of the MBR system, especially when this high DO concentration is transferred to the head of the process in a high mixed liquor recycle flow, typically employed for denitrification. This high DO concentration can deteriorate the required anoxic conditions for denitrifying bacteria, which are facultative bacteria that energetically prefer oxygen versus nitrate as the terminal electron acceptor (Tchobanoglous et al., 2003), hence limiting the reduction of nitrate. This is especially critical when the organic matter in the influent wastewater is limited for consuming the high DO present in the mixed liquor recycle, and as the electron donor source for heterotrophic denitrification.

Since most MBR plants are operated conservatively based upon manufacturers' recommendations, there has been limited research on full-scale MBR process optimization. Modeling and simulation tools are invaluable, in terms of time and effort needed to test different "what if" optimization strategies for improving effluent quality and reducing energy operational costs (Rivas et al., 2008), as well as for providing insight on underlying mechanisms affecting process performance. Therefore, opportunities exist for the application of modeling and simulation for investigating full-scale MBR process optimization.



GENERAL

DISCUSSION





# CHAPTER 9

GENERAL DISCUSSION

**MBRs** are one of the most **advanced technologies for wastewater treatment** utilised today, with around 5,000 municipal facilities in more than 200 countries being reported (Icon, 2008; Santos and Judd, 2010) and this is due to the well-known advantages related to the high effluent quality and the small footprint offered by this innovative technology. However, MBRs are still considered costly and more complex in design and operation than activated sludge systems with conventional tertiary treatment. In this sense, despite the large amount of research into MBR technology, there is still a gap between basic research priorities and actual operator requirements.

**This thesis aims to contribute to extending the knowledge on the diagnosis, assessment and optimization of full-scale municipal MBRs.** Catalonia was chosen as a reference of a water scarce area in Europe. **Seven submerged municipal MBRs** were installed in Catalonia between 2003 and 2010 with capacities ranging from 1,100 to 35,000  $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{d}^{-1}$  providing an aggregated capacity of almost 100,000  $\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{day}^{-1}$ . These facilities included MBRs with stand-alone, hybrid and dual-stream configurations and with the two most popular membranes typologies (hollow fibres -HF- and flat sheet -FS).

The different situations and characteristics of these seven full-scale MBRs meant that all the MBR life cycle steps (start-up, steady-state and optimised operation) were able to be covered and similar configurations on different scales to be evaluated. However, the particularities of some of the facilities studied complicated the data evaluation process, meaning it was not possible to compare all the desired parameters.

The review of the status of the MBRs in Catalonia is of interest to both academia and those operating the plants. For this reason, two collaboration projects were conducted at the request of the Catalan Water Agency (ACA): i) General diagnosis of design, operation and maintenance issues and ii) detailed assessment of operational strategies and costs applied in the full-scale MBRs over the past four years. Thanks to this collaboration with ACA, it has been possible to access all the public and private data required to carry out these studies. After these initial collaboration projects, two experimental studies were conducted in two full-scale facilities in order to solve those specific operational problems previously identified.

With **MBR design evaluation**, significant improvements were observed from the first to the latest MBR installed in Catalonia. Not only has the design of these facilities improved over the years, but so has decision-makers' knowledge regarding MBR requirements which has increased markedly. Focusing on pre-treatment, while recent studies have shown the need to define the optimal configuration to prevent the membranes clogging or damage (Schier *et al.*, 2009; Frechen *et al.*, 2008), the experience in the MBRs studied determined that the round-hole

sieve with small hole-sizes (1 or 0.5 mm) is the preferred option. Similarly, the manufacturers' improvements to the robustness of hollow fibre cassettes and to the membranes air-scour with "cyclic aeration" concept were progressively introduced into the systems, demonstrating the rapid evolution of MBR technology and its market. For the HF-MBRs it was possible to compare the different filtration performances, but for the FS-MBRs it was not possible as there are only two facilities with FS and the dimensions and configurations between them differed too much to be able to conclude anything from their operational parameters comparison.

On the other hand, the fact that all WWTPs studied were existing facilities retrofitted with the MBR technology, conditioned the design and, consequently, the operation of this technology. Some of the **design limitations** identified could be avoided with a proper design of all WWTP units according to membrane process requirements. For instance, the decrease of the sludge thickening system efficiency, due to the lowest settleability of the MBR wasted sludge (associated with the smaller size of activated sludge flocs, Cıçek *et al.*, 1999; Monser and Siegrist, 2006), could have been avoided if the system installed had been chosen according to membrane sludge characteristics. The list of design limitations presented in this thesis can be useful for further MBR implementations.

The fact that the WWTPs are facilities retrofitted with the MBR technology, is also related to the matter that most of the MBRs installed in Catalonia are over dimensioned, observing very low hydraulic load values. This situation requires hydraulic strategies to be defined because, as other authors have reported (Krzeminski *et al.*, 2012a; Barillon *et al.*, 2013), the management of the hydraulic load has been determined as the crucial issue in controlling **energy consumption ratios**. It is mainly because the membrane aeration rates are not proportional to the treated flow. This hydraulic management is easier for the facilities with lamination tanks because they enable the influent flow to be regulated. However, this is not the most common situation in Catalonia. For facilities combining MBR systems with other technologies (CAS or IFAS), different strategies were applied. Specifically, the most economically viable strategy was based on fixing a constant flow to be treated by the MBR by selecting the maximum flow permitted while maintaining good filtration performance (always below the critical flux) and by allowing 10/30 cyclic aeration. However, this option is only applicable in cases where the alternative technology (i.e. CAS or IFAS) can deal with a variable hydraulic and mass load without affecting the removal processes and the final effluent quality.

Besides the lack of knowledge and experience with this technology, the restrictions imposed by the manufacturers through the contract guarantees also limit the **optimization strategies** applied by the MBR operators. It was observed that most of the facilities operated the filtration process according to the manufacturers' recommendations. However, the three oldest facilities have

introduced some improvements in recent years, when the guarantees had expired or had almost expired, and which have successfully achieved energy and operational improvements. Specifically, modifications of the biological process (installation of automatic control systems for biological aeration) and of the filtration process (reduction of the operational flux or mixed liquor suspended solid concentration and installation of control systems for membrane air scours) were applied in HF and FS stand-alone and hybrid MBRs. These adjustments allowed for significant reductions in the average yearly energy consumptions (i.e., reductions of 16 % for stand-alone HF-MBR and 14.5 % for hybrid HF-MBR).

The detailed analysis of operational costs from the past four years determined that, although the HF membranes are well-known for requiring more chemical cleanings than FS membranes, the highest chemical reagents consumptions were associated with the oldest facilities, regardless of the membranes typology (HF or FS). Similarly, it was observed that a high number of chemical cleanings (approximately one maintenance cleaning per week) are applied regularly in all the facilities. This could be the reason why the fouling phenomenon was not considered an operational problem by the MBR operators and which is in agreement with recently published surveys (Santos *et al.*, 2011), where the fouling phenomenon was not considered the most important MBR problem either, whereas, paradoxically it is the issue most studied by the researchers. However, three out of seven plant managers experienced problems when applying the maintenance procedures, due to the difficulties in achieving the exact conditions (i.e., reaching the required chemical concentration ) described by the membrane manufacturers.

The foaming phenomenon was the most common **operational problem** identified in our survey (it was present in all the facilities). In six out of seven facilities, the foaming phenomenon had a biological origin and appeared at least once a year due to temperature and influent load variations. It is widely known that the MBR operational conditions (i.e. high sludge retention time and total bacteria retention) favour the presence of foaming. However, in the MBRs studied, this phenomenon has mainly been associated to the high temperature variation present in this geographical region, with a high presence of *M.parvicella* being detected during the cooler seasons. Although this study was only focused on the MBR part of the hybrid and dual systems, it has reported that foaming episodes were also present in the alternative technology (CAS or IFAS).

In the presence of this phenomenon, the effluent quality was not affected using MBRs, unlike in CAS systems. However, other operational issues related to the complex instrumentation required for its operation were observed in the MBRs. For instance, during the membrane filtration process, the membrane must be completely covered in order to avoid any damage.

Hence, the presence of foaming could lead to an incorrect level measurement interrupting the filtration process.

Although high foaming was present, other problems such as the clogging phenomenon, low nitrogen removal performance and the presence of air in the permeate line, showed more serious effects on the MBR process. Specifically, cases of both clogging types (sludging and ragging) were observed, presenting in both cases strong negative effects in the filtration performance. Similarly, low denitrification removal efficiency was observed in three of the full-scale MBRs. The reason being an increase in dissolved oxygen (DO) in the anoxic tank due to the recirculation flow from the membranes tank, which contains a high DO concentration.

On the other hand, some broken membranes were found in the two oldest facilities studied (one HF and one FS-MBR) after five and seven years of service, respectively. However, the origin of the membrane damage was completely different in each case. On one hand, HF membranes experienced a fault in module structure because this MBR uses an older version of the HF cassettes, which have subsequently been improved in the new cassette version installed in the other four HF-MBRs studied. On the other hand, FS membranes were damaged due to foreign bodies entering, clearly demonstrating the importance of covering the tanks and improving the pre-treatment unit. Both sources of origin could have been avoided with more restrictive pre-treatment and MBR technology and configuration improvements as observed in the newest facilities studied, for this reason, longer membrane life times are expected in the newest facilities. Thus, although some manufacturers talk about an average life-span of 10 years or longer (Cote *et al.*, 2012; Nishimori *et al.*, 2010), there is still the need for more long-term experience to be able to evaluate the membrane lifetime concept.

From the operational problems identified in the full-scale MBRs, **two of them were exhaustively evaluated** in order to characterise and solve the problem of those specific WWTPs. These collaboration studies enabled not only the evaluation of the full-scale MBR facilities, but also the experimentation (through campaign samplings and simulation tests) and the implementation of some modifications in full-scale systems, transforming the suggested strategies into real achievements.

**The first experimental study was carried out in the D MBR facility**, which reported filtration problems whose cause was unknown. TMP reached extremely high values (over 450 mbars), resulting in permeability decay and requiring an increase in the frequency of the chemical cleaning. Despite the number of chemical cleanings applied, they were inefficient at recovering the TMP values.

For this reason, it was decided to conduct an exhaustive examination of the MBR operation. The results showed good performance of the membrane equipment (i.e., sieves, aeration and hydrodynamic pumps), good sludge properties and non-deteriorated nutrient removal efficiencies. As was concluded from both ragging studies, conventional analytical methods for wastewater (i.e., nutrients and suspended solid concentrations) and sludge characterization (i.e., filterability, CST, EPS) were not able to identify the high presence of textile fibres in the system. Consequently, the membrane damage or deterioration was suggested as the most likely origin of the problem. In order to test this hypothesis a visual inspection was required, which involved personnel costs and was time consuming. It was during this inspection test, that it was revealed that the membranes were not damaged, but instead, there was the presence of a large number of rags attached to the membranes.

The analysis of these rags concluded that they were formed by an agglomeration of very small textile fibres. Characterizing and quantifying these rags was not straightforward at all. It was because so few studies about this phenomenon have been published and no standard methods were defined to quantify fibres in this type of sample. Thus, methodologies described by other authors (Stefanski *et al.*, 2011) had to be applied and combined with recognised European legislations (UNE-EN-ISO Regulations).

This, in turn, pointed out the problem of an inefficient pre-treatment, which, despite the fact that it was working properly for standard municipal particulate pollutants, was not enough to prevent the entrance of these small fibres. By quantifying the fibres in the influent a very high concentration of fibres (more than  $40 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ ) was revealed, one much higher than is to be expected in conventional municipal wastewater. This was corroborated when the same fibre quantifying protocol was applied in other MBR-WWTPs (D and G facilities) and their presence was negligible. This confirmed that this high amount of fibres in the influent came from a specific industrial discharge (i.e. laundry industry). However, only punctual samples were feasible with the fibre quantifying methodologies applied, and so it was not possible to reach a daily profile of the textile fibre concentrations in the influent.

From the evaluation of the operation parameters of this facility, the fact that the filtration performance had seriously deteriorated in the presence of these fibres was able to be demonstrated. The deterioration in filtration performance due to the ragging phenomenon was corroborated in two HF systems on completely different scales (pilot-plant and full-scale), showing that the hydrodynamic and aeration configurations were not the determining factors for this phenomenon. In both cases, chemical cleanings were inefficient at removing the rags attached to the membranes. Similarly, both systems reached a more sustainable operation by reducing the filtration flux. However, since the membrane acts as a physical barrier which

retains any textile fibre introduced into the system, the removal of the textile fibres from the influent wastewater was determined as essential to avoid this problem. One solution proposed was based on adding cationic flocculants to the influent wastewater, which, in lab batch experiments, managed to achieve removal ratios of 90% of the fibres present. However, despite the efficiency showed by this methodology, the costs associated to implementing this could be significantly high. For this reason, the definitive solution suggested was to identify the industry which was actually discharging the large amount of textile fibres and to evaluate their screening treatment prior to discharge.

The **second practical study** was originally focused on the evaluation of the effects of the membranes' sludge recirculation on the anoxic conditions of the biological reactor and the denitrification process. **Full-scale MBR (G)** was selected because it has the most advanced recirculation system, which allowed the membrane recirculation flow to be diverted to the anoxic or the aerobic tank as depending on the DO concentration of this sludge flow (if DO is higher than  $2 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  to the aerobic tank and if it is lower than  $2 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  then the recirculation is sent to the anoxic tank). During the first experimental campaign carried out in order to characterise the MBR operation (3 days), it was observed that the DO concentration of the membranes' recirculation flow was always higher than  $2 \text{ mg}\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$  and consequently, it was always recirculated to the aerobic tank. From the first exhaustive evaluation, the following information was also concluded:

- With this configuration, the DO concentration in the anoxic zone was almost  $0 \text{ mg O}_2\cdot\text{L}^{-1}$ . This first evaluation illustrated how a more consistent design can avoid operational problems. In this case, the biological tank and the membrane compartments were completely redesigned during the membrane implementation, making it possible to add this recirculation control. Moreover, the use of the internal recirculation (from the aerobic to the anoxic tank) ensured that the nitrates return for the denitrification process
- A high daily variation in nutrient and organic matter concentration. High peaks of nitrogen were observed, detecting a lack of organic matter during several periods in the day, thus affecting the denitrification process.
- Despite the high concentration of the membrane tank DO, oxidising processes were almost finished before the membrane tanks. Therefore, the membranes aeration was not used for biological purposes. This suggested several optimization strategies related to DO optimization. In that sense, recent studies presented strategies to use the membrane tank as a biological oxidising process, allowing the reduction of the oxygen requirements in the previous tank (Odriozola *et al.*, 2013).

To investigate the viability of the optimisation strategies, modeling tools were used. Generally, model-based optimisation studies explore all possible options defined by the ranges of

operational parameters by means of scenario analysis to identify the ideal theoretical strategies. In this case, the optimisation strategies explored and the conditions were based on the MBR possibilities being tested through simulation studies of only those strategies that could be applied in the full-scale MBRs. Specifically the optimisation strategies to improve the denitrification process were based on the modification of the aerobic tank DO set-point and of the recirculation rate values. The model-based scenario analysis suggested reducing the DO set-point in the aerobic compartment, which would enable the improvement of the denitrification and the reduction of the aeration costs.

The simulation tool used for this evaluation process was a deterministic model (ASM2d), which carefully describes the biological degradation of organic matter, nitrogen and phosphorus, but this does not successfully reproduce the filtration performance or the operational problems of microbiological origin (such as filamentous foaming or bulking). For these reasons, a qualitative risk model was also applied to ensure that the DO set-point reduction did not negatively affect the microbiology of the activated sludge. Thanks to this evaluation, the modification applied was not only the optimal one described with the deterministic model (which consisted of reducing the DO set-point from 1.2 to 0.5 mg O<sub>2</sub>·L<sup>-1</sup>), but also the best scenario that did not show any increment in the risk of the bulking or foaming presence (reducing to 0.8 mg O<sub>2</sub>·L<sup>-1</sup>). In regards to the filtration performance, the parameters, described by the deterministic model, of the biological process that could affect the filtration process (i.e., MLSS, and DO aerobic) were evaluated through the different simulations, expecting that no significant changes should be observed on the permeability profile.

After all these assessments, the reduction of the DO set-point was implemented in the full-scale MBR, achieving successful results (27 % reduction of NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>-N concentration in the effluent and 7 % in aeration cost savings). Moreover, this modification did not show any negative impact on the permeability performance or the biomass properties. However, the lack of organic matter in the influent limited the optimisation rates and consequently, the possibility of adding a carbon source was studied. Generally, when the organic matter concentration is limited in the influent, the only solution applied is an external carbon source addition, with its consequent rise in costs, as was demonstrated by the model simulations. This study, not only demonstrates the viability of a model-based approach for MBR optimisation, but also presents the prospect of improving the process (such as the denitrification) through an energy-saving strategy.

**In general terms**, the design limitations and operational problems identified can act as a troubleshooting list to help operators identify and solve problems and help designers prevent problems or improve future MBRs. Likewise, the energy saving strategies applied can be extrapolated to other facilities and similar energy consumption reductions can be expected.



Further work should continue on MBR optimisation in order to consider them as an energy competitive option when water reuse is required.



# CONCLUSIONS



# CHAPTER 10

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

This thesis presented the **diagnosis, assessment and optimisation of municipal MBRs**. The main conclusions that can be drawn from this work detailed in the following:

An exhaustive diagnosis of the MBR design and operation was conducted in order to review the status of this technology in Catalonia (**Chapter 4**). From this evaluation it was concluded:

- Significant improvements in MBR design (i.e. the pre-treatment and membrane configurations) have been observed from the first to the latest MBR installed in Catalonia.
- Different operational strategies for aeration, fluxes, permeate cycles and chemical cleanings have been reviewed for the HF and FS MBRs.
- The main design and operational issues surveyed have been classified into three different categories, with inter-relationships between them:
  - i) Design limitation. The most common design limitations identified were: a lack of sensors and instrumentation, physical space limiting visual inspections and highlighting inefficiencies in the SCADA, inefficiencies in foaming trapping systems and in sludge dewatering systems.
  - (ii) Membranes and equipment failure. Due to the presence of foreign bodies (FS – MBR) or due to a faulty module structure (HF-MBR) the two oldest MBRs exhibited broken membranes after six and seven years of operation, respectively, and consequently these broken membranes had to be replaced. In addition, a list was compiled of the main MBR instrumentation and damaged equipment.
  - (iii) Operational problems. Foaming was determined as the most common operational problem. However, operators considered the worst operational problems to be the clogging phenomenon, a low nitrogen removal performance and the presence of air in the permeate line. Membrane fouling was not mentioned by any of the plant operators.
- Energy costs were considered to be the main drawback of the MBR technology by all the operators, revealing the need to find feasible optimisation strategies to minimise the operational costs of this technology.

For these reasons, the operational strategies and costs of stand-alone, hybrid and dual full-scale MBRs have been assessed over their past four years of operation (**Chapter 5**). From these assessments:

- Hydraulic load was determined the crucial factor for energy consumption rates.
- Several successful energy optimisation strategies have been presented:
  - Biological process: Installation of an automatic control system for the biological aeration.

- 
- Filtration process: Reduction of the MLSS concentration in the membrane compartment, reduction of the flux and installation of control systems for membrane air scouring.

On applying these strategies successful reductions in the specific yearly energy demand were achieved (i.e., reductions of 16 % for stand-alone HF-MBR and 14.5 % for hybrid HF-MBR).

- The evaluation of the operational cost distribution identified energy consumption and personnel as the major cost factors in the stand-alone MBRs.

These results have produced several successful energy-saving strategies that could be applied in other MBR facilities to significantly reduce MBR operational costs.

Two operational problems were carefully characterised and optimised in two full-scale MBRs: Ragging phenomenon (**Chapters 6 and 7**) and process efficiency and cost optimisation (**Chapter 8**).

The characterisation and optimisation of the ragging phenomenon was conducted in pilot (**Chapter 6**) and full-scale MBRs (**Chapter 7**). The main conclusions from both studies are listed below:

- Ragging phenomenon was identified as being the cause of significant permeability decline, both in the pilot and full-scale MBR.
- Ragging phenomenon is unmitigated by either chemical cleaning or backwashing. Neither maintenance nor recovery chemical cleanings were efficient at removing the rags attached to the membranes.
- In the full-scale MBR, whilst declogging (manual removal of accumulated solids) provided a significant permeability recovery, after 10 days of operation the permeability values returned to 68–88% of the pre-cleaned state. Similar behaviour in the TMP and fouling rates were observed in the pilot-plant MBR.
- Classical approach sludge characterization tests were not able to alert the presence of ragging phenomenon, showing, in both studies, good sludge properties (i.e. SVI, PSD) and filterability results (i.e. low CST values).
- Examination of the solids accumulated within the MBR membrane fibres revealed them to have formed self-supporting rags 70–120 mm in length, primarily fashioned from cotton filament. The origin of the rag formation was related to the high presence of textile fibres in the influent wastewater ( $40 \pm 20 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$ ), also primarily composed of cotton (>70%). The

short length of these fibres (<1 mm) allowed them to pass through the pre-treatment stage, including fine screening to 1 mm, and agglomerate as rags within the membrane.

- The operational flux reduction resulted in slight membrane permeability recoveries, both in pilot and full-scale MBRs. Similarly, in the pilot-plant scale it was possible to improve the performance by reducing the suspended solids concentration, while a deterioration of the performance was observed under foaming presence. However, only the removal of the fibres from the influent could completely avoid this problem. In that sense, promising results for ragging preventions have been achieved from an optimised mechanical pre-treatment with flocculant addition.

The second full-scale optimisation study was focused on process efficiency and cost optimisation (**Chapter 8**). The main conclusions from this study are listed next:

- The carbon source limitation on the influent seriously affected the nitrogen removal efficiencies, despite the good sludge and filtration properties observed.
- After identifying the biological and physical opportunities for improvement, the strategies for optimising the nitrogen removal efficiencies and reducing the operational costs were focused on the modification of the aerobic DO set-point and of the recirculation flow rate.
- The best viable optimisation strategy was identified using a model-based approach:
  - Effluent quality and operational costs were evaluated using a deterministic model that was developed and validated to reproduce the operation of a full-scale MBR.
  - The microbiology related operational problems of the activated sludge were evaluated through a qualitative risk model.
- Specifically, the best optimisation strategy implemented in the full-scale MBR was based on reducing the DO set-point from 1.2 to 0.8 mg·L<sup>-1</sup>, and maintaining the recirculation flow rate.

The DO set-point modification achieved a maximum improvement in nitrogen removal efficiency of 27% and a slight reduction in the biological aeration cost (7%) without affecting the sludge properties or the filtration performance. These results verified the robustness of the model-based approach. However, the daily effluent NO<sub>3</sub><sup>-</sup>-N peaks could only be reduced (by approximately 30%) with an external carbon source. While these optimisation strategies were identified for the plant studied, they could be generalised and be considered for optimisation of other full-scale MBRs.

The studies and results presented in this thesis illustrate that in MBR design and operation there is still room for improvement. Process performance and costs can be significantly bettered. Further research should continue in order to consider MBR as an energy competitive option when water reuse is required.



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# CHAPTER 11

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# ANNEXES



# ESTACIÓN DEPURADORA DE AGUAS RESIDUALES

Calendario de visitas	Representantes _____	Representantes EDAR
1ª Visita		
2ª Visita		
3ª Visita		

**INFORMACIÓN DE CONTACTO**

<b>Nombre EDAR</b>	
<b>Nombre adm. Act.</b>	
<b>Nombre explotador</b>	
<b>Teléfono EDAR</b>	
<b>E-mail EDAR</b>	
<b>Dirección EDAR</b>	
<b>Responsable de la EDAR</b>	
<b>Móvil responsable de la EDAR</b>	

**IMAGEN EDAR**

**DIAGRAMA DE FLUJO (SIMPLIFICADO) EDAR**



**INFORMACIÓN BÁSICA**

<b>Año de puesta en marcha</b>	
<b>Año ampliación</b>	
<b>Población equivalente de diseño</b>	
<b>Población saneada</b>	
<b>Punto de abocamiento</b>	
<b>Obra de llegada</b>	
<b>Capacidad de diseño [m<sup>3</sup>/día]</b>	
<b>Municipios asistidos</b>	
<b>Cuenca</b>	
<b>Km de colectores</b>	
<b>Nombre de bombeos (externos)</b>	
<b>Nombre emisarios</b>	
<b>Km emisarios</b>	

**PARÁMETROS DE DISEÑO**

	<b>Influente</b>	<b>Efluente</b>
<b>DBO<sub>5</sub> [ppm]</b>		
<b>MES [ppm]</b>		
<b>DQO [ppm]</b>		
<b>N [ppm]</b>		
<b>P [ppm]</b>		

<b>ESQUEMA CONFIGURACIÓN</b>		
	<b>Tipos-Unidades</b>	<b>Número de líneas</b>
<b>Pre-tratamiento</b>		
<b>Tratamiento primario</b>		
<b>Tratamiento secundario</b>		
<b>MBR</b>		
<b>Tratamiento terciario</b>		
<b>Tratamiento de fangos</b>		
<b>Trac. adicionales - agua servicio</b>		

<b>DATOS FÍSICOS UNIDADES LÍNEA DE AGUA</b>			
<b>Unidades</b>	<b>Volumen [m<sup>3</sup>]</b>	<b>Superficie [m<sup>2</sup>]</b>	<b>Observaciones</b>
<b>Pozo de gruesos</b>			
<b>Desarenado – Desengrasado</b>			
<b>Homogeneizador</b>			
<b>Decantador primario</b>			
<b>Reactor Biológico</b>			
<b>Tanque de membranas</b>			
<b>Decantador secundario</b>			

## REACTOR BIOLÓGICO – MBR – MEMBRANAS

Esquema reactor biológico y/o MBR (tanque de membranas):

CAUDALES			
	Valores diseño	Valores operación	Observaciones
Influyente total EDAR [m <sup>3</sup> /h]			
Influyente línea MBR [m <sup>3</sup> /h]			
Caudal permeado MBR [m <sup>3</sup> /h]			
Caudal recirculación externa [m <sup>3</sup> /h]			
Permeado MBR [m <sup>3</sup> /h]			
Flujo permeado MBR [LMH]			

**Estrategia de gestión de caudales del MBR:**

Gestión de puntas, puesta en marcha y paro de trenes según el caudal, uso del tanque de laminación, punto en qué se desvía el caudal cuando hay puntas que sobrepasan la capacidad de la EDAR, etc.

## INFORMACIÓN RELACIONADA CON LAS MEMBRANAS

DESCRIPCIÓN MEMBRANAS	
Flujo diseño (LMH)	
Tipos de membranas	
Marca y Modelo	
Trenes y cassetes	
Módulos	
Superficie total membranas [m <sup>2</sup> ]	

Parámetros	Diseño	Operación
Flujo de aireación [Nm <sup>3</sup> /h]		
SAD <sub>m</sub> [m/h]		
SAD <sub>p</sub>		
Tipo aireación [intermitente/continua]		
TSS en reactor biológico [mg/l]		
TSS en tanque membranas [mg/l]		
Caudal Contralavado [m <sup>3</sup> /h]		
Presión Transmembrana (Permeado)		
Presión Transmembrana (contralavado)		
Ciclos de trabajo		
Adición de reactivos a los contralavados		
Limpieza de mantenimiento		
Limpieza de recuperación		
Inspección visual		

### INFORMACIÓN RELACIONADA CON LAS MEMBRANAS

Instrumentación	Número	Marca /modelo	Material	Observaciones

Bombas	Número	Marca /modelo	Material	Observaciones: ¿trabajan al máximo? ¿Tienen variador de frecuencia o trabajan a piñón fijo?

Unidades de control / servicios eléctricos	Número	Marca /modelo	Observaciones

## MONITORAGE Y SEGUIMIENTO DE PARÁMETROS ANALÍTICOS

### RENDIMENTOS

**	Influente	Efluente	Rendimiento (%)
DBO <sub>5</sub> [ppm]			
MES [ppm]			
DQO [ppm]			
N [ppm]			
P [ppm]			

\*\*Medias anuales. Adjuntar fichero con resultados analíticos.

- ¿Tiene lugar la adición de reactivos para la eliminación química del fósforo? ¿Cuáles? ¿Dosificación? ¿En qué punto del proceso?

### ANALÍTICAS:

#### INTERNAS:

PARÁMETROS	Punto de muestreo (influente, efluente, biológico y/o membranas)	Periodicidad	Observaciones
DQO <small>(total, soluble)</small>			
DBO <sub>5</sub>			
MES			
N			
P			
<i>E. Coli</i>			
Distribución tamaño partícula			
EPS <small>(soluble, ligado)</small>			
OTROS:			

#### EXTERNAS:

- ¿Tienen lugar de forma rutinaria analíticas externas de otros parámetros? ¿Cuáles?

PROBLEMAS DE OPERACIÓN		
	SI/NO	OBSERVACIONES
Rotura de módulos por acumulación de sólidos entre las fibras.		
Ensuciamiento ( <i>fouling</i> ) Valores de TMP muy elevados		
Rotura de las membranas.		
Necesidad de reforzar la estructura que sostiene las membranas.		
Problemas relacionados con la obturación excesiva o rotura de los tamices de entrada al reactor de membranas. Mantenimiento del tamiz.		
Mala distribución del aire en el sistema de agitación de las membranas, generando una acumulación de sólidos en la parte final del casete.		
Problemas asociados a la elevada gasificación que tiene lugar en el tanque de membranas. Ejemplo: formación de bolsas de aire en la línea de recirculación que pueden alterar las lecturas del caudal.		
Presencia de aire en las tuberías de permeado que provoca alteraciones en las lecturas del caudal.		
Colmatación - obturación de las membranas ( <i>clogging</i> ) debida a la acumulación de fangos más compacto o de material fibroso en la superficie de éstas.		
Formación de espumas (¿origen?)		
Falta de instrumentación de recambio.		
Falta de instrumentación para poder seguir correctamente la evolución de las membranas (para poder realizar la inspección visual, ...).		
Problemas con el sistema de control, o bien, con la falta de autonomía para poder cambiar las consignas del sistema de control.		
OTROS:		



## AVERÍAS TÍPICAS

AVERÍAS MECÁNICAS	PRESeNCIA? (Sí/No)	FRECUENCIA (Indicar la periodicitat en què es produeix aquest incident)	POSIBLE MOTIVO Y SOLUCIÓN
<b>TAMÍZ DE FINOS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Saturación del tamiz</li> <li>• Rotura del tamiz o piezas del tamiz</li> </ul>			
<b>SONDAS</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sonda Oxígeno</li> <li>• Sonda de nivel</li> <li>• Sonda de presión transmembrana</li> <li>• Otras (especificar)</li> </ul>			
<b>BOMBAS:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bomba de recirculación</li> <li>• Bomba de vacío</li> <li>• Bomba de dosificación del hipoclorito</li> <li>• Otras (especificar)</li> </ul>			
<b>VALVULAS:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Neumáticas</li> <li>• Antiretorno</li> <li>• Otrass (especificar)</li> </ul>			
<b>COMPRESORES</b>			
<b>SOPLANTES</b>			
<b>Desgaste/corrosión tuberías e instrumentación en contacto de las soluciones de limpieza</b>			
<b>Otros (especificar)</b>			
<b>MEJORAS REALIZADAS EN LA OPERACIÓN DEL MBR</b>			

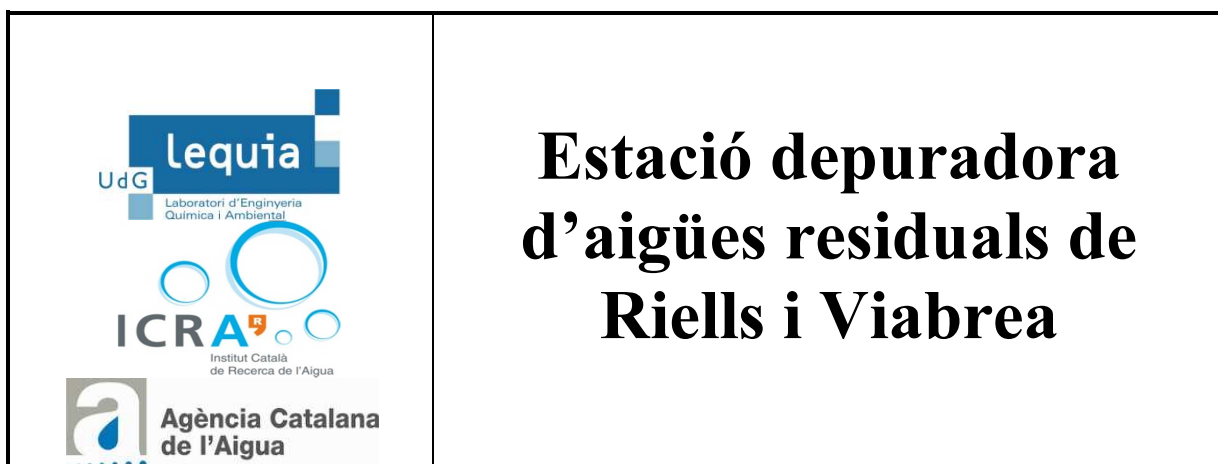
## CONSUMOS ENERGÉTICOS

Situación	Consumos Estimados o Reales
Antes MBR	
Después MBR	

### Preguntas:

¿Se dispone de valores de consumos totales? ¿Qué equipos contabilizan?

¿Se dispone de valores de consumos de MBR?



<b>Calendari de visites oficials</b>	<b>Representants ICRA i LEQUIA-UdG</b>	<b>Representants EDAR</b>
<b>1ª Visita (Riells i Viabrea)</b>	Ignasi Rodriguez-Roda Sara Gabarrón	Joan Enric
<b>2ª Visita (Oficines BCN)</b>	Giuliana Ferrero Ignasi Rodriguez-Roda Sara Gabarrón	Joan Enric
<b>3ª Visita (Oficines BCN)</b>	Ignasi Rodriguez-Roda Sara Gabarrón	Antoni Lucas Moragas
<b>4ª Visita</b>	Sara Gabarrón Iván Brun	Emilia Moruno Anna Arnau Albert Legido

## 1.-INTRODUCCIÓ

L'estació depuradora d'aigües residuals de Riells i Viabrea va ser construïda el 1993. La prestació del servei de tractament d'aigües residuals és realitzada mitjançant l'empresa Cadagua i l'administració actuant és el Consell Comarcal de la Selva i tracta de manera integrada tota l'aigua procedent dels nuclis urbans de Riells i Viabrea, amb un cabal de disseny 2.160 m<sup>3</sup>/dia.

Figura 1.- Municipi que assisteix l'EDAR



Degut a que la depuradora antiga va ser superada en la seva capacitat de disseny, va ser necessari dur a terme una modificació i ampliació de l'EDAR l'any 2004. Considerant la limitació d'espai que tenia l'EDAR per a ampliar la seva capacitat, es va optar per instal·lar un nou tanc amb tecnologia de membranes, mantenint el reactor secundari convencional, tot i que en desús (mantenint-lo exclusivament per si algun dia el tanc de membranes no es troba operatiu). Actualment no hi ha cap tipus de reutilització de l'aigua tractada.

## 2. DIAGRAMA DE FLUX I DADES DE DISSENY

El diagrama de flux de l'EDAR de Riells i Viabrea (figura 2) està format per una línia principal d'aigües amb les següents unitats de tractament: pou de graves (TRH= entre 2 i 10 min), reixes verticals (de 50mm de pas lliure), desbast de fons on s'hi troba instal·lat un tamís dinàmic de 3mm de llum de pas, pou de bombament (volum: 15m<sup>3</sup>) des d'on l'aigua és impulsada al reactor biològic (volum: 450 m<sup>3</sup>) i tancs de membranes (150 m<sup>3</sup> cada tanc). Aquesta línia disposa de dos sobreexidors (un en el pou de gruixuts inicial i l'altre, en el pou de bombament cap al reactor biològic) amb unes reixes de grossos (30 mm de pas) per seguretat.

L'aigua que s'obté de la microfiltració és enviada directament a la riera de Sant Llop, sense cap tractament terciari.

La línia de fangs està formada per un dipòsit espessidor, seguit d'una deshidratació mitjançant una centrífuga.

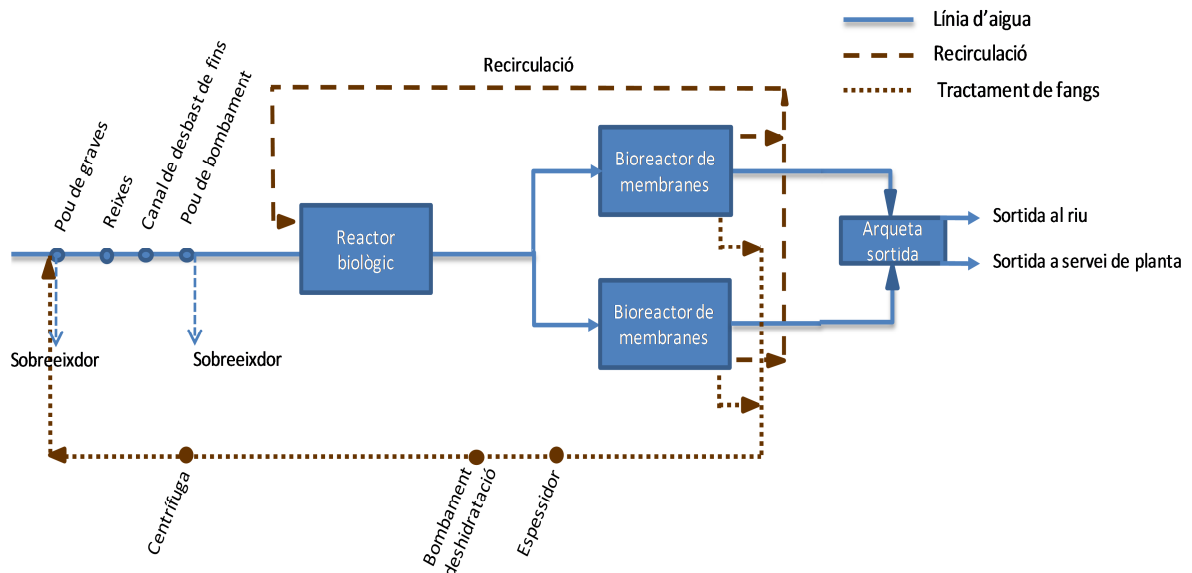


Figura 2.- Esquema del de tractament d'aigües residuals de l'EDAR de Riells i Viabrea.

La taula 1 recull les principals característiques del tamís de fins instal·lat específicament a l'EDAR de Riells i Viabrea per poder treballar amb tecnologia MBR:

Taula 1.- Paràmetres d'operació i disseny del tamís (específic per a MBR).

<b>Marca</b>	Wieseman
<b>Model</b>	FS-304.27.120.3
<b>Característiques físiques</b>	Tipus malla
<b>Pas de llum</b>	3 mm
<b>Cabal màxim</b>	450 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>Manteniment</b>	Neteges automàtiques continuades

Les membranes utilitzades són de làmina plana, de la marca comercial KUBOTA®, concretament, del model EK, que disposa de mòduls de dos pisos. El nombre total de mòduls és de 14 (7 per cada línia), obtenint una superfície total de 4.410 m<sup>2</sup> (taula 2). El flux d'aeració és de 2.880 m<sup>3</sup>/h (valor del cabal de disseny, ja que no hi ha cabalímetre). Aquesta aeració té lloc de forma continuada.

**Taula 2.- Paràmetres de disseny del tanc de membranes.**

<b>Flux de disseny</b>	21 LMH
<b>Model</b>	EK 400
<b>Mida de porus</b>	0,45 $\mu\text{m}$
<b>Mòduls</b>	14 (7 per línia)
<b>Superfície de membrana</b>	4.410 $\text{m}^2$
<b>Flux d'aeració</b>	2.880 $\text{m}^3/\text{h}$
<b>SADm</b>	0,65 $\text{m}^3/\text{m}^2 \cdot \text{h}$
<b>Tipus d'aeració</b>	Continuada
<b>Volum del tanc de membranes</b>	300 $\text{m}^3$

### 3.- OPERACIÓ DEL BIOREACTOR DE MEMBRANES

La gestió hidràulica de l'EDAR de Riells i Viabrea es caracteritza per la possibilitat de regular el cabal d'entrada al tanc de membranes mitjançant la variació de volum del reactor biològic.

Concretament, el reactor biològic opera de forma que pugui tenir lloc l'eliminació de la matèria orgànica i el nitrogen, encara que no es troba dissenyada per a l'eliminació del nitrogen. Per aconseguir-ho, l'aeració en aquest reactor és discontinua, airejant durant 5 minuts (condicions òxiques, perquè tingui lloc la nitrificació amb un setpoint de  $2 \text{ mg} \cdot \text{L}^{-1}$  d'oxigen) i 30 minuts en condicions anòxiques (sense aeració, condicions perquè tingui lloc la desnitrificació). No hi ha eliminació química de fòsfor.

Els sensors de nivell que hi ha al reactor biològic són els que determinen si les bombes de recirculació (bombes que van del reactor biològic al tanc de membranes, anomenades també bombes de recirculació) s'engeguen o no. D'altra banda, hi ha unes recirculacions que funcionen per gravetat que van del tanc de membranes al reactor biològic.

Quan el nivell del tanc és suficient per arrancar les bombes de permeat, primer de tot arranquen les bufants de forma automàtica i posteriorment, les bombes de permeat. Quan el nivell torna a baixar, primer de tot es paren les bombes de permeat i a continuació les bufants.

A més a més, si durant un període de 55 minuts no ha entrat aigua en un tanc concret, s'activa l'aeració d'aquest durant 5 minuts, per evitar que decantin els fangs.

D'altra banda, els principals paràmetres d'operació de les membranes es mostren a la taula 3.

**Taula 3.- Paràmetres d'operació del tanc de membranes.**

<b>SSLM membranes</b>	Actualment 13-600 -13.800 ppm
<b>Cicles de treball</b>	Cicles de 10 min: 9 min filtrant + 1 min relaxació
<b>Aeració</b>	Continuada
<b>Neteja de manteniment</b>	TMP < -0,3 bars 1,5-2h, tanc amb licor mescla NaClO 0,5% Ocasionalment: A. cítric
<b>Neteja de recuperació</b>	-----
<b>Inspecció visual</b>	No té lloc de forma rutinària, ja que no hi ha un espai específic on realitzar-la.

### **Històric**

Durant els primers anys, degut a que el cabal que es tractava era d'aproximadament 200 m<sup>3</sup>/dia, el protocol d'activació de la filtració de les membranes contemplava la possibilitat de fer-ho mitjançant l'activació de les bombes o bé, per efecte sifó si el cabal era molt baix.

Concretament el funcionament depenia del cabal a tractar. Les dues possibilitats d'operació en funció del cabal eren:

- $Q < 16\text{m}^3/\text{h}$  – s'activava l'efecte sifó.
- $Q > 16\text{m}^3/\text{h}$  – Arranca la bomba al màxim ( la seva única posició) 50 m<sup>3</sup>/h.

Actualment, degut a que el cabal que es tracta és sempre superior aquest protocol d'operació no es troba en funcionament. Concretament, no hi ha l'opció d'utilitzar l'efecte sifó per a cabals tan baixos, sinó que s'opera sempre amb l'arrencada de la bomba directament a un cabal 50 m<sup>3</sup>/h.

Durant 4 anys (2005, 2006, 2007 i 2008) només funcionava un tanc de membranes, degut al cabal tan baix que arribava a l'EDAR. S'anava alternant el tanc en funcionament i es deixava amb aigua neta (sense airejar) el tanc que no es trobava operatiu. Es realitzava una neteja de manteniment a l'any, tot i que les pressions no ho requerien.

## **4.- RENDIMENTS EDAR**

Segons els cabals mitjans mensuals i diaris (taula 4) es pot observar que el cabal d'operació de l'EDAR ha augmentat considerablement del 2009 al 2010, fet que influencia en la seva operació, tal i com s'ha comentat a l'apartat anterior.

**Taula 4.- Cabals mitjans mensuals i diaris tractats per l'EDAR**

	2009	2010
Cabal mitjà mensual (m <sup>3</sup> /mes)	23.140 ± 4.180	33.470 ± 7.290
Cabal mitjà diari (m <sup>3</sup> /mes)	760 ± 140	1.100 ± 240

Tot i que l'EDAR té la capacitat per tractar 2.165 m<sup>3</sup>/dia, ha estat possible tractar fins a un cabal diari puntual màxim de 3.680 m<sup>3</sup>/dia.

La mitjana anual dels valors dels resultats analítics de l'EDAR de Riells i Viabrea es mostren a la taula 5. Les analítiques internes es duen a terme de forma quinzenal (DBO<sub>5</sub> i nitrogen), setmanal (fòsfor) o bé tres cops per setmana (DQO i MES). També es duu a terme una determinació de la qualitat microbiològica a l'any. D'altra banda, de forma quinzenal es duu a terme una analítica externa de DBO<sub>5</sub> quinzenal, juntament amb analítiques puntuals de contra mostra dels diversos paràmetres analitzats (realitzades per l'empresa Tecnoambiente).

**Taula 5.- Rendiments eliminació nutrients i matèria orgànica EDAR Riells i Viabrea.**

2010	Influent	Efluent	Rendiments
DQO	287 ± 211 ppm	13 ± 5 ppm	93 ± 4%
DBO <sub>5</sub>	126 ± 66 ppm	3 ± 1 ppm	97 ± 1%
MES	179 ± 179 ppm	1 ± 0 ppm	99 ± 1%
Ntotal	25 ± 11 ppm	9 ± 5 ppm	59 ± 3%
Ptotal	7 ± 2 ppm	4 ± 2 ppm	43 ± 18

Es pot observar que l'EDAR té una baixa eliminació del fòsfor, això és degut a que no té cap addició de reactius químics com per eliminar-lo químicament.

## 5.- CONUMS I COSTOS D'OPERACIÓ

La mitjana anual, juntament amb els valors màxims i mínims de consums energètics obtinguts durant l'any 2009 per metre cúbic d'aigua es mostren a la taula 6.

**Taula 6.- Consums energètics EDAR Riells i Viabrea**

Situació	Consums
Gener-Juny 2011	0,69 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>
Mitjana any 2009	1,4 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>
Màxim 2009	2,16 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>
Mínim	1,16 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>



Els consums de reactius per a la realització de les neteges químiques i els consums de polielectrolit per al tractament de fangs es mostren a la següent taula 7.

Taula 7.- Consums reactius químics de l'EDAR Riells i Viabrea

Situació	Consums	
	2009	2011
NaClO	4.200 kg /any	4,5 m3*
Polielectrolit	12 ±4 kg/TMS	

\*Durant els tres primers mesos van ser utilitzats 4,5 m3 d'hipoclorit sòdic. A partir del moment en què es va solucionar el problema que feia augmentar la pressió dels tancs no s'ha consumit més reactiu.

## 6.- DIAGNOSI DE LA TECNOLOGIA MBR

Els principals problemes d'operació i limitacions de disseny relacionats amb la tecnologia de membranes que s'han diagnosticat durant els anys d'operació de l'EDAR es llisten a continuació, mitjançant la classificació de problemes existents en l'actualitat i problemes diagnosticats al llarg dels anys de funcionament de l'EDAR.

### Actuals:

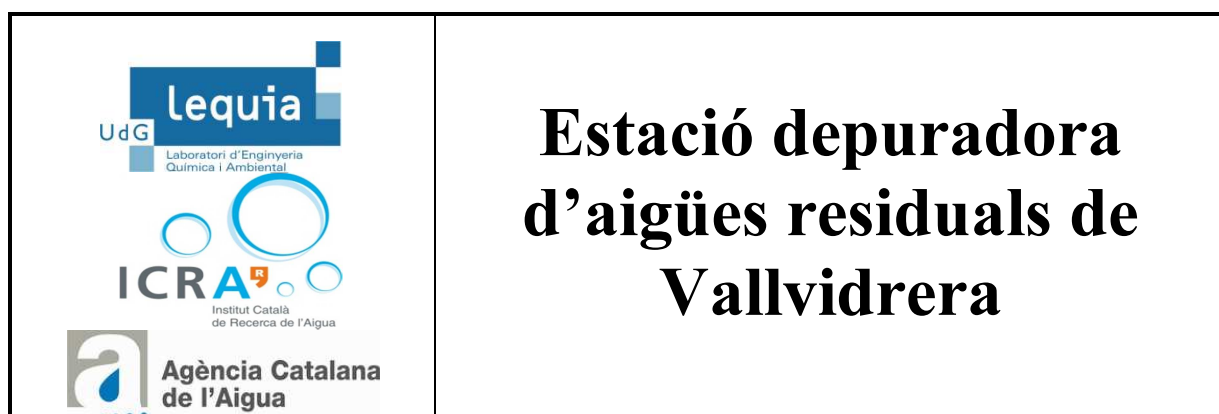
- Ineficiència del tamís: Concretament, l'eficiència del tamís és limitada, ja que permet el pas de cabells i materials en forma de fibra, els quals van a parar als tubs de permeat de membranes, afectant-ne el seu funcionament.
- Limitació d'espai. No hi ha un espai específic on es puguin realitzar les inspeccions visuals.
- Limitació d'equipament i instrumentació. S'han detectat diversos problemes relacionats amb limitacions d'equipament i instrumentació de l'EDAR:
  - El tanc contenidor de les membranes és de ferro i es troba considerablement oxidat. Ha estat necessari realitzar alguna soldadura a l'estructura per tancar els forats que s'han format a causa de l'oxidació.
  - Els conductes i recipients instal·lats per a la realització dels rentats químics (addició d'hipoclorit o àcid cítric) són susceptibles a la corrosió.
  - No disposa de sistemes d'eliminació d'escumes, ni de separació de greixos consistent.
- Seguiment i tractament de dades. El sistema de control no contempla els valors TMP. Únicament indica estat d'alarma quan la TMP és molt elevada, però no arriba a realitzar cap acció.

### Històrics (alguns poden causar alguna repercussió a l'actualitat)

- Estat de les membranes, clogging i fouling:

- Aparició de fulles clavades en els cartutxos de membranes. Va ser necessari talar el pi situat entre el tanc de membranes i el reactor biològic per evitar que caiguessin fulles a aquests compartiments i poguessin fer malbé les membranes.
- Increment dels valors de la TMP, arribant a valors inferiors a -0,5 bars. Aquest problema va ser solucionat mitjançant el canvi de les vàlvules de papallona que no funcionaven bé i feien necessari que les bombes de permeat treballassin més.
- Concentracions de sòlids molt elevades fins que es va prohibir (ACA) sobrepassar el valor de 15.000 ppm de sòlids (2010).
- Aparició de conjunts de materials fibrosos (anomenats de forma col·loquial “cabelleres”) en el tanc de membranes. Va ser possible identificar-les en la inspecció visual realitzada pel subministrador. Podria estar relacionat amb el baix rendiment del tamís.
- Avaries mecàniques:
  - Sensors de TMP. Abans eren de la marca SIEMENS ® i es feien malbé constantment. Actualment són de la marca Endress+Hauser.
  - Comportes mecàniques de les bombes de permeat. Aquestes es van fer malbé degut a les bombolles que apareixien a la canonada de permeat.
- Problemes amb la formació d'escumes. Al 2009 va haver-hi l'aparició d'escumes, l'origen de les quals es desconeixia.
- Aparició d'aire en el conducte de permeat. Les bombolles d'aire en el conducte de permeat van ocasionar problemes a les bombes de permeat ( problema llistat a les avaries mecàniques).
- Problemes a l'hora de realitzar les neteges de manteniment. Va ser necessari adaptar el protocol de neteja del fabricant a les instal·lacions. Concretament, ha estat necessari realitzar la neteja de forma que es garanteixi que el reactiu químic addicionat ompli completament cadascun dels mòduls del tanc. Cal anar obrint i tancant aixetes de forma manual per assegurar que cadascun dels mòduls es trobi omplert.
- Degradació de l'hipoclorit sòdic. Per evitar la degradació de l'hipoclorit sòdic, aquest reactiu es compra cada cop que es vol realitzar una neteja de les membranes, ja que cada consumeix un dipòsit sencer cada cop que es realitza la neteja dels dos tancs.
- Analítiques:

Determinació d'E.coli poc rigorosa en el permeat, obtenint-se valors molt fluctuants que no permeten acceptar aquesta analítica com a indicatiu de l'estat de la membrana, ni del procés.



<b>Calendari de visites oficials</b>	<b>Representants ICRA i LEQUIA-UdG</b>	<b>Representants EDAR</b>
<b>1<sup>a</sup> Visita</b> 19.07.2010	Giuliana Ferrero Quim Comas Sara Gabarrón	Rut Estany
<b>2<sup>a</sup> Visita</b> 22.09.2010	Giuliana Ferrero Quim Comas Sara Gabarrón	Rut Estany
<b>3<sup>a</sup> Visita</b> 21.12.2010	Giuliana Ferrero Sara Gabarrón	Rut Estany

## 1. INTRODUCCIÓ

La depuradora de Vallvidrera va ser construïda el 1975 i des de llavors tracta de manera integrada tota l'aigua procedent dels nuclis urbans de Vallvidrera, de les Planes i de la zona del Tibidabo, alhora que contribueix a la protecció de la riera de Vallvidrera (Parc Natural de la Serra de Collserola). Actualment, la prestació del servei de tractament d'aigües és realitzada mitjançant l'Empresa Metropolitana de Sanejament, S.A (EMSSA).



**Figura 1.** Situació geogràfica de les zones assistides per l'EDAR de Vallvidrera

L'any 2009 es va realitzar una ampliació de l'EDAR per tal de poder absorbir en una primera part, un cabal molt superior al cabal de disseny en les etapes de pre-tractament, mitjançant el manteniment del reactor biològic i reconvertint-lo en un tanc de laminació i alhora, augmentant la capacitat global de l'EDAR, mitjançant la instal·lació d'un bioreactor de membranes com a tractament secundari. La nova depuradora es troba dissenyada per tractar un cabal de 1.100 m<sup>3</sup>/dia.

Les instal·lacions han estat dissenyades incorporant una sèrie de mesures destinades a minimitzar els impactes ambientals. Un exemple, és que tant les instal·lacions de pretractament de l'aigua, com les de tractaments de fangs són cobertes, ventilades i desodoritzades, per tal d'evitar olors a l'exterior.

La depuradora de Vallvidrera es troba dissenyada per a funcionar amb un alt grau d'automatització i mitjançant un telecomandament es pot realitzar part de la seva gestió des de la planta depuradora de Sant Feliu de Llobregat.

Actualment no hi ha cap tipus de reutilització de l'aigua tractada mitjançant el tractament d'aquesta EDAR.

## 2. DIAGRAMA DE FLUX I DADES DE DISSENY

El diagrama de flux de l'EDAR de Vallvidrera (figura 2) està format per una línia principal d'aigües amb les següents unitats de tractament: tanc pulmó i de laminació (500 m<sup>3</sup>), pou de graves (5 m<sup>3</sup>), reixes de gruixuts (12 mm de pas), tamís (3 mm de pas), dessorrador i tamís de fins (1 mm de pas), reactor biològic (492 m<sup>3</sup>), pou de bombament (90 m<sup>3</sup>) i tanc de membranes (25 m<sup>3</sup>). Hi ha la possibilitat d'addicionar clorur fèrric a l'entrada del reactor biològic per a l'eliminació química del fòsfor. L'EDAR també disposa d'una línia de desinfecció de l'aigua tractada, mitjançant l'addició d'hipoclorit sòdic, però actualment es troba en desús.

La línia de fangs està formada per un espessidor per gravetat, en un tanc circular de rasquetes de 4m de diàmetre, un dipòsit d'emmagatzematge airejat i una centrífuga, per acabar enviant el fang a compostatge.

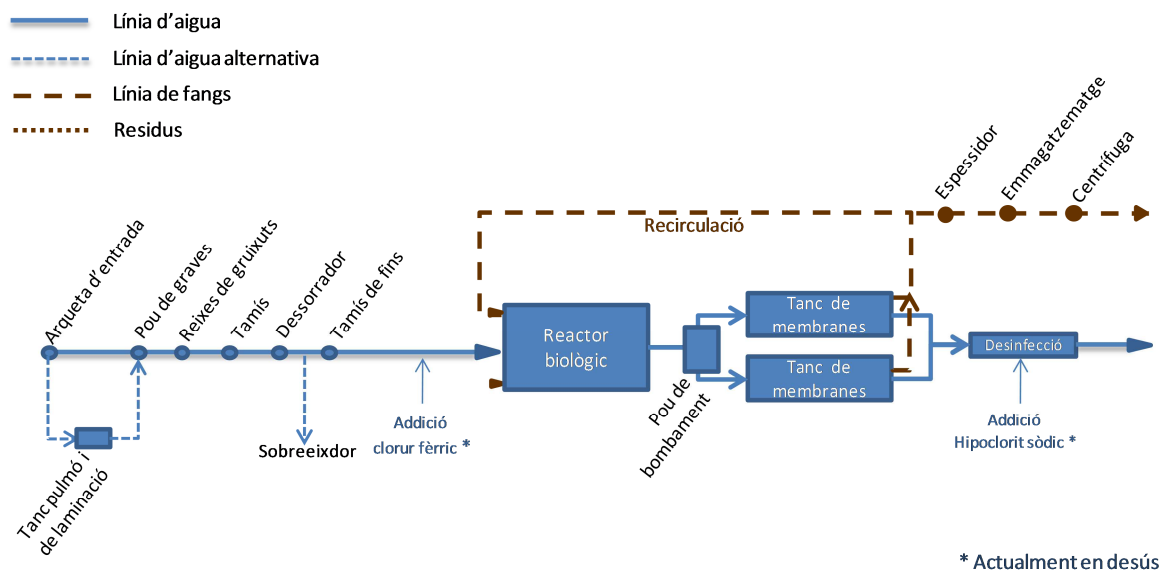


Figura 2.-Esquema general de les etapes de l'EDAR de Vallvidrera.

Atesa la major capacitat del pretractament (275 m<sup>3</sup>/h), respecte al tractament biològic (69 m<sup>3</sup>/h), la planta disposa d'un sobreeixidor previ al tamisatge de fins, que permet abocar a la riera l'excés d'aigua pre-tractada, fonamentalment en cas de pluja.

La taula 1 recull les principals característiques del tamís de fins instal·lat específicament a l'EDAR de Vallvidrera per poder treballar amb tecnologia MBR.

Taula 1.- Paràmetres d'operació i disseny del tamís específic per MBR.

<b>Marca</b>	HUBER
<b>Model</b>	ROTMATAT 780-1
<b>Característiques físiques</b>	<i>Tipus malla, rotatori</i>
<b>Pas de llum</b>	1 mm
<b>Cabal màxim</b>	90 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>Manteniment</b>	Neteges automàtiques continuades

El manteniment del tamís és automàtic, tot i que de forma puntual ha estat necessari realitzar alguna neteja manual, mitjançant aigua a pressió per treure el possible excés de sòlids que hi pogués haver.

El reactor biològic es troba format per tres càmeres anòxiques i una zona òxica, essent el volum total de les zones anòxiques de 207 m<sup>3</sup>, mentre que el de la zona òxica de 285 m<sup>3</sup>. Aquest bioreactor es troba dissenyat per a eliminar biològicament la matèria orgànica i el nitrogen, i químicament el fòsfor, mitjançant l'addició de clorur fèrric. Actualment, però no s'està duent a terme l'addició de clorur fèrric per a l'eliminació del fòsfor.

Les membranes instal·lades són de fibra buida submergides de la marca comercial ZENON®, model *ZeeWeed 500d*. Es disposa de dos cassets amb 40 mòduls cadascun (80 mòduls en total), havent-hi una capacitat extra a cada casset que els permetria instal·lar-hi 8 mòduls més, en cas que fos necessari augmentar-ne la capacitat (taula 2). La superfície de cadascun dels mòduls és de 31,58 m<sup>2</sup>, donant lloc a una superfície total de 2.526 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Taula 2.-** Paràmetres de disseny de les membranes.

<b>Flux de disseny</b>	18 LMH
<b>Model</b>	ZeeWeed 500d
<b>Mida de porus</b>	0,04 µm
<b>Mòduls</b>	80 (40 per línia)
<b>Superfície de membrana</b>	2.526 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Flux d'aeració</b>	800 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>SADm</b>	0,31 m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> ·h
<b>Tipus d'aeració</b>	Intermitent, alternant a les dues zones diferenciades del tanc la següent seqüència d'aeració: - 10'' airejant - 30'' sense airejar
<b>Volum del tanc de membranes</b>	25 m <sup>3</sup>

### 3. OPERACIÓ DEL BIOREACTOR DE MEMBRANES

La gestió hidràulica de l'EDAR de Vallvidrera es caracteritza per la possibilitat de treballar amb el tanc pulmó o de laminació en cas que el cabal d'entrada sigui superior al de disseny. Alhora, el reactor biològic disposa d'una zona de regulació del volum, a partir del qual es bombeja l'aigua cap al tanc de membranes.

Aquest pou de bombament disposa de 4 bombes (3+1 de recanvi) que, el funcionament de les quals ve determinat per una sonda de nivell i una boia de seguretat. Segons el nivell es desvia el cabal cap a un o els dos tancs de membranes. Els tancs de membrana disposen també de sondes de nivells, les quals regulen el cabal de filtració de les membranes, que té un perfil variable.

Els principals paràmetres d'operació de les membranes de filtració es mostren a la taula 3.

Taula 3.- Paràmetres d'operació de les membranes

<b>SSLM membranes</b>	6.000 – 8.000 ppm
<b>Cicles de treball</b>	Alternant els dos cicles següents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 min permeant + 30 seg relaxant</li> <li>- 10 min permeant + 30 seg contraentant.</li> </ul>
<b>Neteja de manteniment</b>	Freqüència: Setmanal (quinzenal a l'estiu i/o a cabals baixos). Tanc ple* NaClO 200-500 ppm. Ocasionalment: À.Cítric 200ppm
<b>Neteja de recuperació</b>	Freqüència: semestral/anual Tanc amb aigua NaClO 1.000 ppm. Ocasionalment: À.Cítric 2.000 ppm
<b>Inspecció visual</b>	No tenen lloc de forma rutinària.

\*Inicialment es feia amb el tanc buit, però va modificar-se el protocol.

Les **neteges de manteniment** tenen lloc de forma setmanal, excepte en mesos d'estiu o de cabals baixos, és a dir, mesos en què els trens han estat en mode *stand by* més temps, on tenen lloc de forma quinzenal. Concretament, s'han dut a terme 36 neteges de manteniment en el tanc 1 durant l'any 2010 i 35 en el tanc 2.

Al llarg de l'any 2010, tan sols s'ha realitzat una sola **neteja de recuperació**, hi ha estat en el tanc 1. Aquesta neteja ha estat realitzada utilitzant hipoclorit sòdic com a reactiu i ha tingut una durada de 2 dies.

### 4. RENDIMENTS EDAR

Els cabals mitjans ( $m^3/\text{dia}$  i  $m^3/\text{mes}$ ) tractats per l'EDAR des de la instal·lació de la tecnologia de membranes són els que es mostren a la taula 4.

**Taula 4.-** Cabals d'aigua tractats

Cabal	2009 (maig –desembre)	2010
m <sup>3</sup> /mes	19.450 ±2.600	25.400 ± 4.400
m <sup>3</sup> /dia	640 ± 80	840 ± 140

Els rendiments d'eliminació de nutrients de l'EDAR, des de la instal·lació del MBR, són els que es mostren a la taula 5.

**Taula 5.-** Resultats seguiment analític 2009 - 2010

	2009 (maig –desembre)			2010		
	Entrada	Afluent	Rendiments	Entrada	Afluent	Rendiments
DQO	752 ± 87 ppm	27 ± 4 ppm	96 ± 1%	646 ± 192 ppm	36 ± 9 ppm	94 ± 2%
DBO <sub>5</sub>	324 ± 48 ppm	1 ± 0 ppm	99 ± 1%	245 ± 55 ppm	1 ± 0 ppm	99 ± 1%
MES	353 ± 60 ppm	1 ± 0 ppm	99 ± 1%	275 ± 81 ppm	1 ± 0 ppm	99 ± 1%
Ntotal	80 ± 9 ppm	11 ± 2 ppm	83 ± 3%	61 ± 14 ppm	11 ± 4 ppm	80 ± 12%
Ptotal	8 ± 1 ppm	4 ± 1 ppm	41 ± 7%	6 ± 1 ppm	3 ± 1 ppm	48 ± 10%

## 5. CONSUMS I COSTOS D'OPERACIÓ

Els consums per metre cúbic d'aigua tractada de l'EDAR abans i després de la instal·lació de la nova tecnologia es mostren a la següent taula 6.

**Taula 6.-** Consums energètics.

Situació	Consums
Abans MBR	0,36 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>
2009 (Març –Desembre MBR)	1,54 ± 0,17 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>
2010 (MBR)	1,16 ± 0,17 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>

Es pot observar que hi ha hagut una disminució considerable dels ratis de consums elèctrics del primer al segon any d'operació. Això pot se degut a l'estabilització d'operació de la planta, juntament amb el fet de què l'any 2010 el cabal d'aigua tractat és considerablement superior, i per tant, el rati de consums disminueix.

I els consums i costos de reactius químics per a la realització de les neteges químiques i tractament de fangs des de la instal·lació de la tecnologia de membranes es mostren a la taula 7.



**Taula 7.- Consums de reactius**

Situación	2009		2010	
	Consums	Costos	Consums	Costos
NaClO	----- Març 2009 – Juliol 2010: $1 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{any}^{-1} - 197 \text{ €} \cdot \text{any}^{-1}$			
Polielectròlit	$360 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{any}^{-1} *$ $21 \pm 1 \text{ Kg} \cdot \text{TMS}^{-1}$	$864 \text{ €} \cdot \text{any}^{-1} *$	$600 \text{ kg} \cdot \text{any}^{-1}$ $29 \pm 11 \text{ Kg} \cdot \text{TMS}^{-1}$	$1.619 \text{ €} \cdot \text{any}^{-1}$

\*Cal considerar que del gener al Maig l'EDAR no disposava de centrífuga, fet que justifica el consum tan baix de polielectròlit.

## 6. DIAGNOSI DE LA TECNOLOGIA MBR

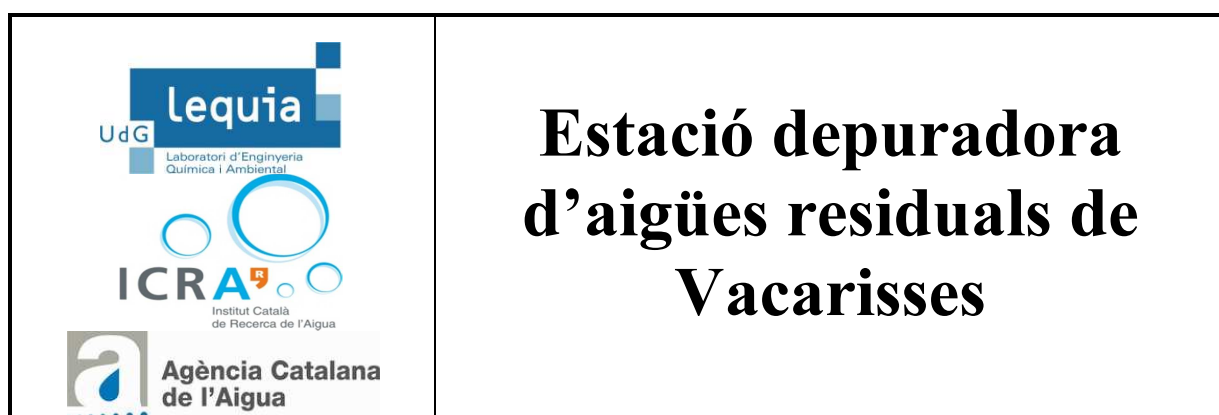
Els problemes d'operació i les limitacions de disseny referents a la tecnologia de membranes de l'EDAR diagnosticats es descriuen a continuació:

- Recobriments reactor biològic i pou de regulació del cabal. El reactor biològic i el tanc de regulació del cabal previs a les membranes es trobaven descoberts i molt a prop dels límits de l'EDAR on hi ha un elevat nombre d'arbres. Va ser necessari tapar aquests tancs per evitar que les fulles dels arbres caiguessin al tanc, i poguessin arribar a fer malbé les membranes.

### Avaries mecàniques:

- Al principi de començar a treballar amb la tecnologia de membranes van haver-hi problemes amb el grup de pressió, és a dir, amb la membrana de dins del calderí de l'aigua tractada. Afortunadament es trobava en garantia.
- Un compressor es va fer malbé. Es recomana tenir-ne un de recanvi, ja que són bàsics per al funcionament del MBR.
- Desgast de les peces de les vàlvules neumàtiques que regulen el cabal d'aire de les membranes, amb la necessitat de canviar-les. Ja se n'han canviat quatre.
- Problemes amb la formació d'escumes. S'han observat episodis en què hi havia la presència de *M. parvicella*, fent necessària l'addició manual de PAX per reduir-les. Aquests episodis van tenir lloc a principis de maig, quan hi va haver el canvi de temperatura. La planta disposa d'una telescòpica que recull les escumes, però quan n'hi ha moltes és insuficient.
- Línia de fangs: Els fangs arriben a l'espessidor amb una concentració molt elevada d'oxigen dissolt i nitrats, fent que moltes vegades el fang floti i dificulti molt el procés.
- Problemes a l'hora de realitzar les neteges de manteniment. Aparició d'aire en el conducte de permeat. Quan s'acaba de realitzar la neteja i es torna a posar en funcionament el tren, el valor de la TMP es queda bloquejat a valors positius (d'entre 0,2 i 0,3 bars) als dos trens. Aquest fet és degut a problemes de cavitació a les bombes de permeat. Per solucionar-ho cal purgar durant uns 40 minuts la bomba de permeat per treure tot l'aire, i llavors es pot començar a filtrar una altra vegada.

- Degradació de l'hipoclorit sòdic. Cada cop que es realitza una neteja de manteniment es comprova quina és la concentració d'hipoclorit sòdic del reactiu de partida, ja que s'ha observat que hi ha una elevada degradació d'aquest reactiu. Per garantir la concentració desitjada d'hipoclorit en els rentats, s'ajusta la velocitat de la bomba que proporciona aquest reactiu, segons la concentració obtinguda en l'anàlisi al laboratori. Normalment amb un mes ja es troba considerablement degradat l'hipoclorit (fent necessari ajustar la bomba).
- Abocaments puntuals. De forma puntual tenen lloc abocaments de gasoil i d'altres substàncies amb coloració i textures peculiars a l'EDAR. S'està investigant quina és la seva procedència. Mentrestant, cal estar atents per intentar atenuar l'entrada d'aquests productes perquè no afectin al procés. Les mesures que es duen a terme quan es detecta aquesta entrada de components consisteixen en desviar aquest influent per la línia d'aigua alternativa cap al tanc de laminació i diluir-lo. Des d'aquest punt, es va incorporant poc a poc a la línia d'aigües convencional, de forma que no afecti tant al procés.
- Limitació d'espai. No hi ha espai específic per a realitzar la inspecció visual, ni tampoc d'una zona externa preparada per la realització de proves.
- Limitacions recirculacions: La recirculació del tanc de membranes retorna els fangs al tanc anòxic (única opció). La concentració d'oxigen en aquest tanc es veu incrementada, tot i que a l'haver-hi tres compartiments anòxics, la desnitrificació hi té lloc correctament.
- Limitació d'equipament i instrumentació. No s'ha detectat la limitació d'instrumentació. No obstant, el sistema de recollida d'escumes és insuficient.



**Calendari de  
visites oficials**

**Representants  
ICRA i LEQUIA-UdG**

**Representants  
EDAR**

**1<sup>a</sup> Visita**

Giuliana Ferrero  
Joaquim Comas  
Sara Gabarrón

Maria Jou  
Pilar Boira

**2<sup>a</sup> Visita**

Sara Gabarrón

Pilar Boira

**3<sup>a</sup> Visita**

Sara Gabarrón

Marta Vicente

## 1. INTRODUCCIÓ

L'estació depuradora d'aigües residuals (EDAR) de Vacarisses va ser construïda el 1998. A l'inici de l'estudi (2010-2011) la prestació del servei de tractament d'aigües es realitzava a través de l'Empresa Mina Pública d'aigües de Terrassa S.A- Sorea S.A UTE II, però actualment és Acciona Agua S.A. l'empresa encarregada de la prestació del servei. L'EDAR tracta l'aigua procedent dels nuclis de la vessant de la riera de Sant Jaume, al terme municipal d'aquest municipi. Es preveu que el cabal que tracta aquesta EDAR augmenti pròximament, com a conseqüència de la connexió d'altres sectors a aquesta planta. Actualment la planta té un cabal de disseny de 1.320 m<sup>3</sup>/dia.



*Figura 1.-Imatge de l'EDAR de*

Concretament, la remodelació de l'EDAR ha estat necessària per poder incloure processos que permetin la reducció dels compostos nitrogenats mitjançant processos biològics, l'eliminació del fòsfor químicament i el control estricte dels abocaments. Alhora, s'ha ampliat la capacitat de disseny de l'EDAR, degut a que aquesta es trobava gairebé al límit de saturació. Actualment aquesta EDAR es troba en funcionament, tot i que en el moment de realització de l'estudi es trobava en la darrera fase de la posada en funcionament.

## 2. DIAGRAMA DE FLUX I DADES DE DISSENY

El diagrama de flux de l'EDAR de Vacarisses (figura 2) està format per les següents unitats: pou de graves, reixa de gruixuts (20 mm de pas), tamís de gruixuts (4 mm de pas), dessorador-desgreixador, tamís de fins (0,5mm de pas), tanc de regulació del cabal (63 m<sup>3</sup>), reactors biològics (reactor nou 355 m<sup>3</sup>, reactor remodelat 183 m<sup>3</sup>), tanc d'homogeneïtzació dels bioreactors (15 m<sup>3</sup>), tancs de membranes (50 m<sup>3</sup>).

D'altra banda, la línia de fangs es troba formada per una arqueta de recirculació i purga dels fangs, espessiment per gravetat i una posterior deshidratació mecànica mitjançant una centrífuga. L'addició de clorur fèrric té lloc a l'arqueta de recirculació i purga.

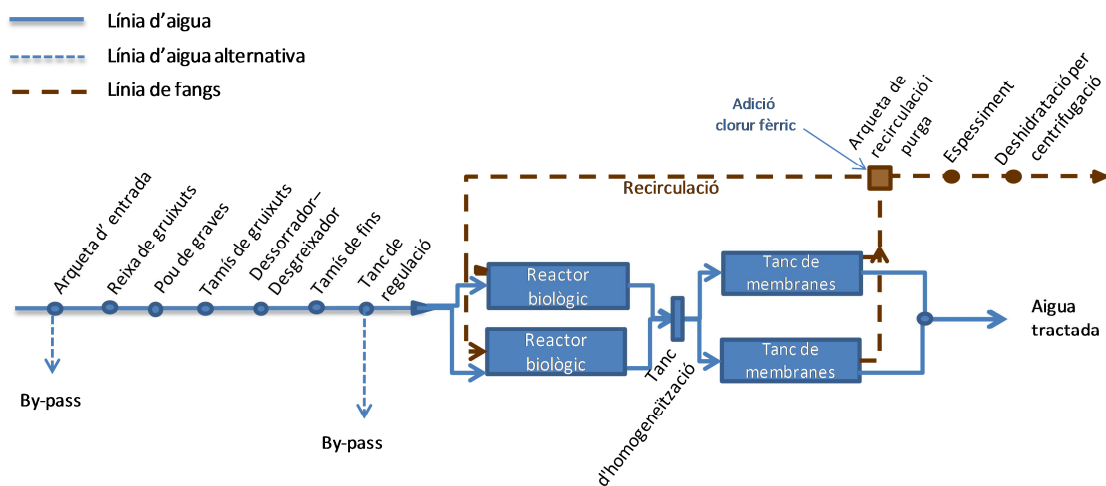


Figura 2.-Esquema general de les etapes de l'EDAR de Vacarisses

La taula 1 recull les principals característiques del tamís rotatori instal·lat específicament a l'EDAR de Vacarisses per a poder treballar amb tecnologia MBR:

Taula 1.- Característiques del tamís.

<b>Marca</b>	Hidrodena
<b>Model</b>	RFH- 6 -600
<b>Característiques físiques</b>	Tamis rotatori, tipus malla
<b>Pas de llum</b>	0,5 mm
<b>Cabal màxim</b>	70 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>Manteniment automàtic</b>	Neteges automàtiques continuades

Els reactors biològics disposen d'una zona anòxica (35% del volum total), seguida d'una zona òxica, que permeten l'eliminació del nitrogen i de la matèria orgànica. Aquests reactors disposen d'una sonda d'oxigen i d'una Redox per permeten realitzar el seguiment dels processos.

Les membranes instal·lades a l'EDAR són de fibra buida, concretament de la marca comercial ZENON®, i del model ZeeWeed 500d (taula 2). Disposa de dos trens amb un casset a cadascun d'ells i per tant, amb un total de 96 mòduls (48 per tren). En cadascun dels trens hi ha espai disponible per instal·lar-hi un altre casset, en cas que es volgués ampliar la seva capacitat de

tractament. La superfície total de membrana instal·lada és de 3.030 m<sup>2</sup>. L'aeració que té lloc és intermitent, alternant el costat esquerra i el dret dels cassets amb intervals de 10 segons i amb un flux d'aeració de 940 Nm<sup>3</sup>/h .

**Taula 2.-** Principals característiques de disseny de les membranes de l'EDAR Vacarisses.

<b>Flux de disseny</b>	<b>18 LMH</b>
<b>Model</b>	ZENON ® ZeeWeed 500d
<b>Mida de porus</b>	0,04 µm
<b>Mòduls</b>	96 (48 per línia)
<b>Superfície de membrana</b>	3.030 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Flux d'aeració</b>	940 Nm <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>SADm</b>	0,31 m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> ·h
<b>Tipus d'aeració</b>	Intermitent 10"/10" o 10"/30"

### 3. OPERACIÓ DEL BIOREACTOR DE MEMBRANES

La gestió hidràulica de l'EDAR de Vacarisses es caracteritza per l'ús d'un tanc de regulació del cabal just abans dels reactors biològics. Aquest tanc es troba dissenyat per recol·lectar les aigües procedents del pretractament i distribuir-les de la següent manera:

- 2/3 del cabal a la línia de nova construcció (dirigeix el cabal cap al nou reactor biològic).
- 1/3 del cabal a la línia remodelada (dirigeix el cabal cap al reactor biològic remodelat).

Actualment, només es troba en funcionament una de les dues línies de reactors biològics, concretament, la línia nova que permet tractar 2/3 del cabal de disseny. A la línia vella remodelada que permet tractar 1/3 del cabal de disseny ja s'han finalitzat les obres, però no s'ha posat en funcionament ja que amb la nova línia es pot dur a terme el procés de tractament de tot l'influent que arriba actualment a la planta.

A continuació, té lloc l'homogeneïtzació dels cabals provinents de les dues línies de reactors biològics en una cambra de recollida, des d'on es reparteix el cabal als dos tancs de membranes que tenen la mateixa capacitat.

El nivell de l'arqueta de recollida i bombeig de licor mescla (recirculació i purga) és el que determinarà el nombre de tancs en funcionament, deixant en mode *stand by* (airejant de forma intermitent però sense filtrar) els que no tinguin prou nivell.

Els tancs de membranes disposen de sensors de nivells que determinen les alçades del licor mescla en els tancs i avisen mitjançant alarmes de les possibles irregularitats dels nivells. D'aquesta manera es garanteix que les membranes no es quedin al descobert.

Les bombes de permeat tenen un regulador de freqüència. Aquest variador permet variar el cabal de les bombes de 35-70 m<sup>3</sup>/h. La seqüència és: primer s'engega una bomba, comença a 35 m<sup>3</sup>/h i si és necessari puja fins a 50 m<sup>3</sup>/h, després engega l'altre tren i si entre els dos no aconsegueixen baixar el nivell el cabal de les bombes pugem fins a 70 m<sup>3</sup>/h

Els principals paràmetres d'operació de les membranes es mostren a la taula 3.

**Taula 3.- Paràmetres d'operació dels MBR.**

<b>SSLM membranes</b>	< 8.750 ppm
<b>Cicles de treball</b>	10 minuts permeant, (o nivell mínim) 30 segons
<b>Aeració</b>	Intermitent (cicles de 10'':10'')
<b>Neteja de manteniment</b>	Freqüència: setmanal 1h, tanc amb licor mescla NaClO 50-150 ppm o A.cítric.
<b>Neteja de recuperació*</b>	Freqüència: semestral o bé, quan la permeabilitat s'hagi reduït un 50% 6-12h, tanc amb aigua NaClO 1.000 -1.500 ppm o A.cítric 2.000 ppm
<b>Inspecció visual</b>	Puntual

\* No se n'ha dut a terme cap encara.

#### 4. RENDIMENTS EDAR

L'EDAR de Vacarisses fa poc temps que es troba en funcionament i per tant, no es disposa de valors de rendiments representatius. Tot i així, a la següent taula es mostren els rendiments obtinguts durant aquest període d'estabilització del procés (període set-des 2010):

**Taula 4.- Rendiments mitjans període de posada en funcionament.**

Paràmetres	Rendiments abans MBR	2010 ( set-des)
<b>DQO</b>	75 %	89 %
<b>DBO<sub>5</sub></b>	82 %	96 %
<b>MES</b>	87 %	98 %
<b>N total</b>	60 %	79 %
<b>P total</b>	--	--

valors dels rendiments obtinguts amb la tecnologia de membranes són orientatius, ja que els resultats són obtinguts a partir dels dos primers mesos del període de posada en funcionament.

## 5. CONSUMS I COSTOS D'OPERACIÓ

Els consums relacionats amb la instal·lació de la tecnologia de membranes són els que es mostren a continuació:

**Taula 5- Consums energètics EDAR.**

Situació	Consum Estimats
2009 (abans MBR)	0,3 l gasoil /m <sup>3</sup>
2010 (amb MBR)	0,66 l gasoil /m <sup>3</sup>

Actualment l'EDAR funciona mitjançant la utilització de gasoil, ja que no disposa d'electricitat. S'espera en breu, solucionar aquesta limitació.

## 6. DIAGNOSI TECNOLOGIA MBR

En el moment de l'estudi la planta es trobava en posada en funcionament i per tant, la diagnosi va determinar:

- Encara s'havien de definir els paràmetres que es podrien seguir i graficar des de l'ordinador central de l'EDAR.
- El sistema SCADA encara no es trobava tancat, i per tant, es podia accedir a tots els paràmetres (temps dels cicles de rentats, concentracions reactius químics,...) sense cap tipus de restricció o limitació. Actualment la planta es troba en funcionament i ja es disposa d'una contrasenya per poder regular els paràmetres de l'SCADA.

Els problemes d'operació de l'EDAR i de la instrumentació referent a la tecnologia de membranes, juntament amb les limitacions de disseny diagnosticades a l'EDAR durant aquest període de posada en funcionament són els que es descriuen a continuació:

- Limitació d'espai. No hi ha un espai específic per a la realització de les inspeccions visuals, ni tampoc de cap espai per a la realització de proves als cassets.
- Limitacions recirculacions. La recirculació procedent del tanc de membranes retorna els fangs exclusivament a la zona anòxica del bioreactor, fet que fa que la concentració d'oxigen en aquesta zona augmenti considerablement i per tant, no tingui lloc correctament el procés de desnitrificació.
- Limitació d'equipament i instrumentació: En el moment de l'estudi no es disposava de variadors de freqüència en les bufants de la zona òxica fet que impossibilitava la regulació del cabal d'oxigen i no es podia disminuir el cabal d'aire. Alhora, si es paraven les bufants, al no haver-hi cap agitador en aquest compartiment, els fangs sedimentaven i podien haver-hi complicacions a l'hora de bombejar-los cap al tanc de membranes. Aquest fet feia que actualment, la concentració d'oxigen al tanc fos massa elevada com per poder dur a terme els processos biològics correctament. Actualment es troba en fase d'instal·lació els



variadors de freqüència i es disposa d'un airejador per evitar la precipitació dels fang. D'aquesta manera s'espera obtenir la concentració d'oxigen desitjada en el reactor.

- Línia de fangs. S'ha observat que els fangs obtinguts del tanc de membranes són més difícils de deshidratar, en comparació amb els obtinguts amb el tractament de fangs convencional (reactor biològic + decantador secundari).



**Calendari de visites oficials**

**1ª Visita**

**2ª Visita**

**3ª Visita**

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Giuliana Ferrero  
Joaquim Comas  
Sara Gabarrón

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EDAR**

Joan Valls

Joan Valls

Joan Valls  
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## 1. INTRODUCCIÓ i ANTECEDENTS

L'estació depuradora d'aigües residuals (EDAR) de la Bisbal d'Empordà va ser construïda l'any 1993. Actualment, la prestació del servei de tractament d'aigües es realitza a través de l'UTE SyD Aguas XXIII, i tracta de forma integrada tota l'aigua procedent dels nuclis urbans de la Bisbal d'Empordà, Corçà, Cruïlles, Monells, Sant Sadurní de l'Heura, Forallac (Vulpellac) i pròximament també de Casavells. El cabal de disseny és de 6.225 m<sup>3</sup>/d.



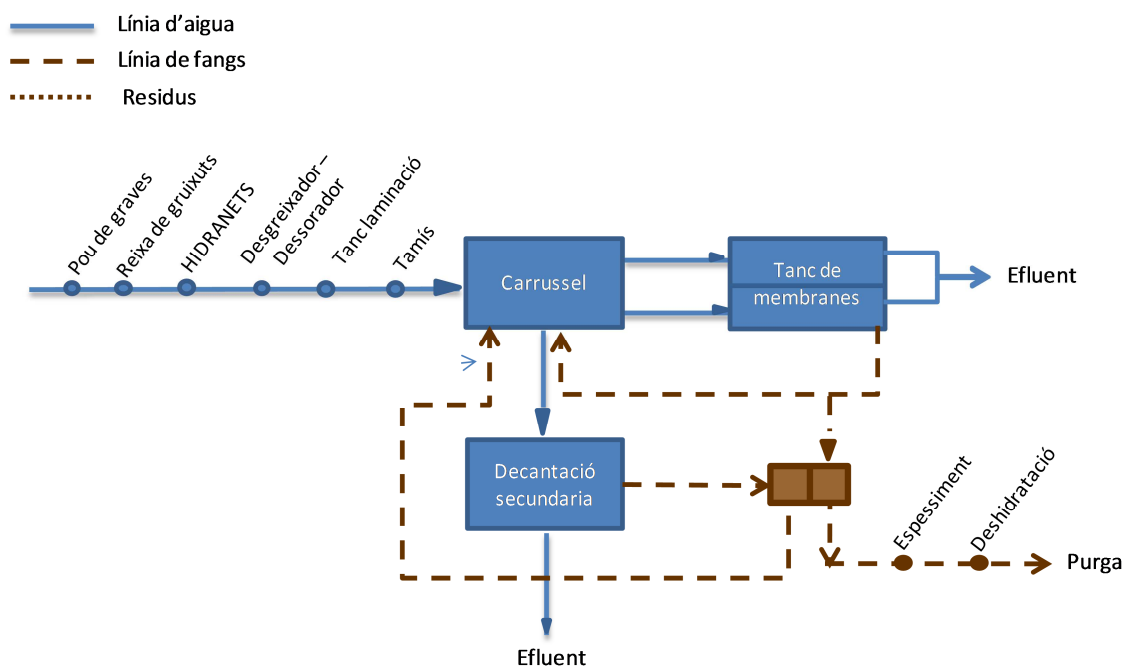
**Figura 1.-** Situació de les poblacions assistides per l'EDAR de la Bisbal d'Empordà.

Degut als problemes relacionats amb la infiltració d'aigua als claveguerams i la contaminació per nitrats a les aigües subterrànies, l'any 2003 es va plantejar una modificació i ampliació de l'EDAR. Concretament, s'hi va instal·lar un tanc d'homogeneïtzació i un bioreactor de membranes (MBR) que pot tractar fins a 3.225 m<sup>3</sup>/d, mantenint la decantació secundària per tractar el cabal que excedeixi la capacitat de disseny del MBR. Actualment no es reutilitza l'aigua tractada per l'EDAR, excepte per la recàrrega de l'aquífer mitjançant el riu Daró.

## 2. DIAGRAMA DE FLUX I DADES DISSENY

El diagrama de flux de l'EDAR de la Bisbal d'Empordà (figura 2) està format per una línia principal d'aigües amb un pou de graves, reixa de grossos (pas de llum de 8 cm), tamís de grossos del tipus HIDRANET® (llum de pas d'1 mm), desgreixador – dessorrador, tanc de laminació (volum de 1.112 m<sup>3</sup>), tamís rotatori (pas de llum d'1 mm), carrussel d'oxidació (volum de 3.500 m<sup>3</sup>), tanc de membranes dissenyat per eliminar nitrogen biològicament (volum aproximat de 30 m<sup>3</sup>) i decantador secundari (volum de 925 m<sup>3</sup> i àrea superficial de 314 m<sup>2</sup>).

La línia de fangs està formada per un espessidor (volum de 316 m<sup>3</sup>) i deshidratació mitjançant centrifugació (addició de polielectrolit catiònic, aproximadament 2 gr/L). Previ al carrousel d'oxidació es produeix l'addició de clorur de ferro (16 Kg/dia de FeCl<sub>3</sub> al 40%) per a l'eliminació química del fòsfor.



**Figura 2.-** Diagrama de flux de l'EDAR La Bisbal d'Empordà

La taula 1 recull les principals característiques del tamís rotatori instal·lat específicament a la EDAR de la Bisbal d'Empordà per poder treballar amb tecnologia de membranes .

**Taula 1.-** Característiques de disseny i operació del tamís.

<b>Marca</b>	Contec
<b>Model</b>	DF 45
<b>Característiques físiques</b>	Tamís rotatori, tipus malla
<b>Pas de llum</b>	1 mm
<b>Cabal màxim</b>	216 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>Manteniment automàtic</b>	Neteges automàtiques continudes

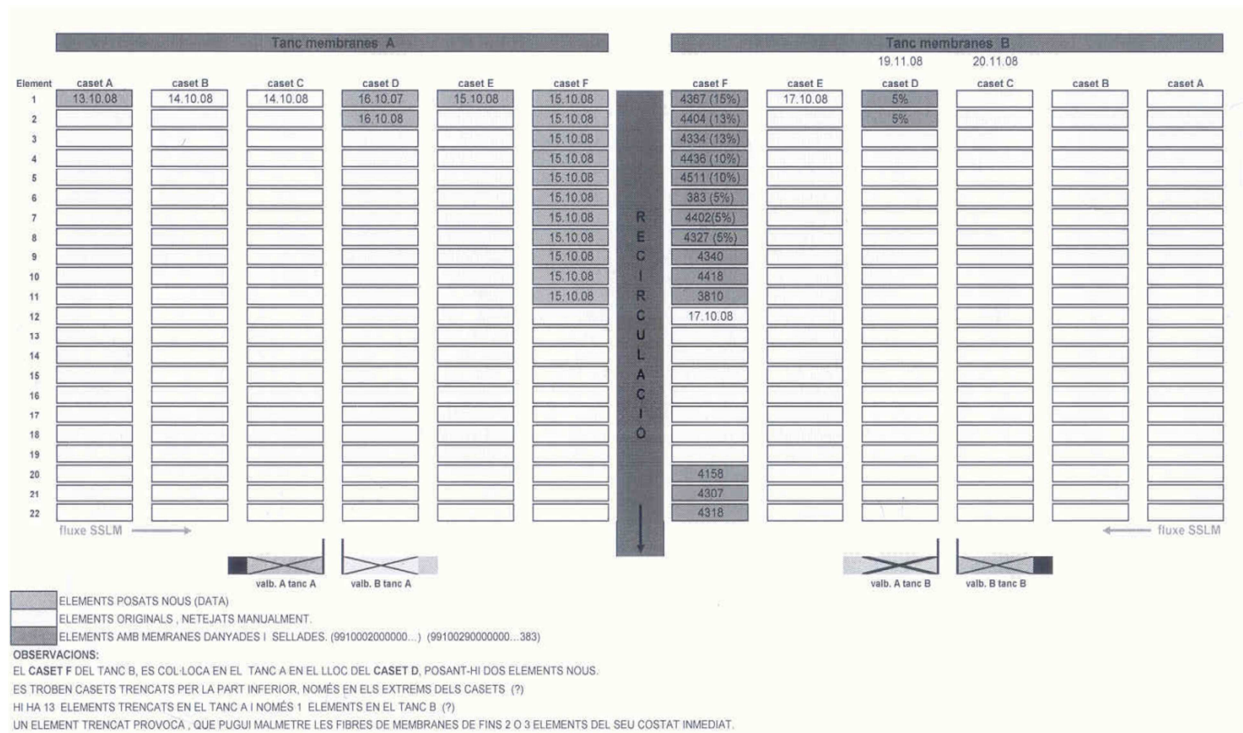
El reactor biològic té una configuració de carrousel d'oxidació dissenyat per eliminar biològicament la matèria orgànica i el nitrogen.

Les membranes utilitzades són de fibra buida, de la marca comercial ZENON®, model ZeeWeed 550c. Disposa de dos tancs amb sis cassets cadascun d'ells i amb un total de 264 mòduls. La superfície total de membrana és de 5.808 m<sup>2</sup> (Taula 2). L'aeració és intermitent amb un flux de 2.136 Nm<sup>3</sup>/h que es reparteix alternativament cada 6 segons entre les dues zones dels tancs.

**Taula 2.-** Principals característiques de disseny de les membranes de l'EDAR La Bisbal d'Empordà

<b>Flux de disseny</b>	23 LMH
<b>Model</b>	ZENON® ZeeWeed 500c
<b>Mòduls</b>	264 (132 per línia)
<b>Mida de porus</b>	0,04 µm
<b>Superfície de membrana</b>	5.808 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Flux d'aeració</b>	2.136 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>SADm</b>	0,37 m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> ·h
<b>Tipus d'aeració</b>	Intermitent (6'' airejant /6'' sense aeració)
<b>Volum tanc de membranes</b>	30 m <sup>3</sup>

Al llarg dels anys, algunes membranes que estaven malmeses han estat substituïdes o segellades i per tant, no es troben operatives. La figura 3 mostra l'estat actual i la situació dels elements modificats.



**Figura 3.-** Estat actual de la distribució de mòduls de membranes als dos tancs del MBR.

Es pot observar que la majoria de mòduls malmesos o bé, els nous mòduls que han reemplaçat els danyats s'han agrupat en la zona central del contenidor de membranes per poder-les tenir més controlades.

### 3. OPERACIÓ DEL BIOREACTOR DE MEMBRANES

La gestió hidràulica de l'EDAR de la Bisbal d'Empordà es caracteritza per l'ús d'un tanc de laminació i la variació del volum del carrousel, juntament amb la possibilitat de treballar amb un decantador secundari si el cabal a tractar excedeix la capacitat de la línia de membranes.

El volum del carrousel és el que gestiona l'entrada del licor mescla cap al tanc de membranes mitjançant una sonda de nivell, derivant cap al decantador secundari el cabal que excedeixi el màxim de disseny de les membranes.

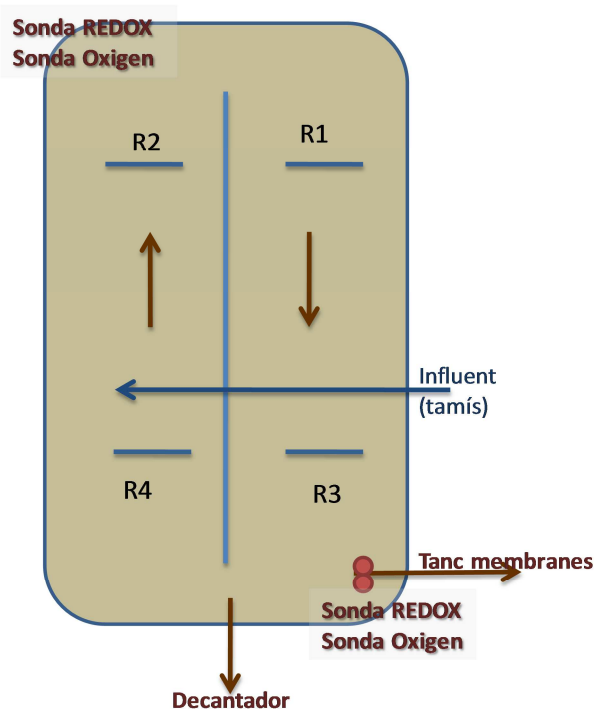


Figura 4.- Esquema del carrousel d'oxidació.

Els rotors del carrousel (R1, R2, R3 i R4 de la figura 4) treballen de manera alternada i estan regulats en base als valors de les sondes de concentració d'oxigen dissolt i potencial d'oxidació-reducció instal·lades. El sistema de control fixa els punts de consigna necessaris per garantir l'eliminació biològica del nitrogen.

Des del carrousel es bombeja cap a membranes un cabal de licor mescla de  $166 \text{ m}^3/\text{h}$  cap a cada tren de membranes, dels quals la meitat són filtrats mitjançant les membranes i l'altra meitat són retornats cap al carrousel.

De forma automatitzada, les sondes de nivell del carrousel determinen si cal tenir els dos trens de membranes en marxa o si amb un n'hi ha prou, deixant en mode *stand by* (airejant de forma discontinua i sense filtrar) el tren que no es requereix pel tractament. També es pot aturar de

manera manual un dels dos trens de membranes (o els dos), parant filtració i aeració al mateix temps.

Els principals paràmetres d'operació de les membranes es mostren a la taula 3.

**Taula 3.-** Principals paràmetres d'operació de les membranes de l'EDAR La Bisbal d'Empordà

<b>SSLM membranes</b>	8.000 ppm
<b>Cicles de treball</b>	10 minuts permeant, 40 segons contrarentant amb l'addició de NaOCl ( $\approx 6,3$ ppm)
<b>Neteja de manteniment*</b>	Freqüència: TMP < -0,4 bars 1,5-2h, tanc amb licor mescla NaClO 140 ppm i EDTA 200 ppm
<b>Neteja de recuperació*</b>	Freqüència: semestral 6-12h, tanc amb aigua NaClO 1.000 -1.500 ppm i HCl o Àcid cítric 2.600 ppm
<b>Inspecció visual</b>	Cada 2 o 3 mesos

*\*Les concentracions són calculades in situ a l'EDAR, considerant que no hi ha degradació de l'hipoclorit sòdic en el tanc contenidor d'aquest reactiu, és a dir, que la concentració de partida de l'hipoclorit sòdic és sempre 150 ppm.*

Els cicles de treball es caracteritzen per addicionar NaClO en els contrarentats. La concentració d'hipoclorit sòdic addicionada en cada rentat és aproximadament 6,3 ppm. D'altra banda, les neteges de manteniment només es realitzen quan els valors de la TMP són elevats (concretament, quan són inferiors a -0,4 bars) i s'afegeix una concentració de 140 ppm d'hipoclorit sòdic i 200 ppm d'EDTA. L'addició d'EDTA té lloc per evitar la precipitació de l'hipoclorit sòdic amb els carbonats, ja que actua com agent complexant dels cations. Referent a la neteja de recuperació, és necessària l'addició d'àcid clorhídric per aconseguir arribar al pH recomanat pel fabricant per a la realització d'aquesta neteja (pH=2).

#### 4. RENDIMENTS

Els cabals mitjans ( $m^3/\text{dia}$  i  $m^3/\text{mes}$ ) tractats per l'EDAR des de la instal·lació de la tecnologia de membranes són els que es mostren a la taula 4.

**Taula 4.-** Cabals d'aigua tractats

Cabal	EDAR
$m^3/\text{mes}$	113.070 $\pm$ 44.150
$m^3/\text{dia}$	3.730 $\pm$ 1.500

El cabal tractat per la tecnologia de membranes és com a màxim de 3.225 m<sup>3</sup>/dia, essent el cabal restant el tractat mitjançant la tecnologia secundària convencional. No és possible la determinació exacte del cabal tractat mitjançant la tecnologia MBR, ja que no es disposa de cabalímetres per fer-ho.

Les mitjanes dels rendiments d'eliminació de matèria orgànica (DQO i DBO<sub>5</sub>), matèries en suspensió (MES) i nutrients (nitrogen i fòsfor totals) obtinguts al llarg del 2009 es mostren a taula 5, on es distingeixen els valors de qualitat de l'efluent de l'MBR i de l'efluent provinent de la decantació secundària.

**Taula 5.- Rendiments del paràmetres analítics**

2009	Entrada	Afluent	Rendiment	Afluent	Rendiment
	EDAR	Decantació	Decantació	MBR	MBR
<b>DQO</b>	954 ppm	31 ppm	93%	20 ppm	98%
<b>DBO<sub>5</sub></b>	493 ppm	--	--	8 ppm	98%
<b>MES</b>	404 ppm	18 ppm	91%	5 ppm	98%
<b>N total</b>	55 ppm	4 ppm	92%	2,1 ppm	96%
<b>P total</b>	8,7 ppm	2 ppm	61%	1,6 ppm	83%

A part d'aquestes analítiques, es realitzen altres analítiques més exhaustives:

- Compostos orgànics volàtils: Tricloetilè, tetracloretilè, cloroform, 1,2- Dicloretà, Tetraclorur de carboni.
- Metalls: plom, ferro, calci, potassi, magnesi, sodi, manganès.
- Paràmetres microbiològics: recompte coliforms fecals, recomptes espores C.S.R, Investigació virus enteropatogènics sobre *E.coli*, *Salmonella spp*, *Pseudomonas ssp*, *Enterococcus faecalis* i detecció *Legionella*.

## 5. CONSUMS I COSTOS D'OPERACIÓ

Els consums relacionats amb la instal·lació de la tecnologia de membranes són els que es mostren a continuació:

**Taula 6.- Consums energètics .**

Situació	Consum
<b>2003 (abans MBR)</b>	0,26 Kw.h/m <sup>3</sup>
<b>2009 (amb MBR)</b>	0,70 Kw.h/m <sup>3</sup>



Els costos i consums referents als reactius químics necessaris per a les neteges, l'eliminació del fòsfor i el tractament de fangs del 2009 i 2010 són els que es mostren a la taula 7.

**Taula 7.-** Consums i costos referents als reactius de l'EDAR de la Bisbal d'Empordà.

Situación	2009		2010	
	Consums	Costos	Consums	Costos
<b>NaClO</b>	4.320 Kg/any	878 €/any	7.434 Kg/any	1.511 €/any
<b>EDTA</b>	200 Kg/any	610 €/any	350 Kg/any	1.068 €/any
<b>Àcid cítric</b>	0	---	400 Kg/any	588 €/any
<b>Àcid clorhídric</b>	0	---	150 kg/any	293 €/any
<b>Clorur fèrric</b>	5.840 Kg/any*	1.227 €/any	5.840 Kg/any*	1.227 €/any
<b>Polielectròlit</b>	2.815 Kg /any 11 ± 1 Kg /TMS	(€/any)	1.770 Kg/any**	(€/any)

\*Aproximat: 16 Kg/dia.

\*\* Consums del gener al novembre del 2010

## 6. DIAGNOSI DE LA TECNOLOGIA DE MEMBRANES

Els principals problemes d'operació i limitacions de disseny relacionats amb la tecnologia de membranes que s'han diagnosticat en aquesta EDAR es mostren a continuació:

### - Episodi de trencament de membranes:

Durant l'última neteja manual (2008) es van reemplaçar 15 elements filtrants, la majoria dels quals en el tanc A (14). Al realitzar aquesta neteja es va observar que els elements que estaven al voltant dels elements trencats (aproximadament 14 elements més) es trobaven deteriorats degut a que el suport inferior de PVC estava trencat i colpejava les altres membranes. En el tanc



**Figura 5.-** Imatge dels mòduls malmesos i dels nous reemplaçats.

B, en canvi, no es va trobar cap element fet malbé.

Els elements que presentaven fibres fetes malbé es van arreglar (tallant i segellant les fibres deteriorades amb una silicona especial). Posteriorment, es van col·locar tots els elements arreglats conjuntament en un casset del tanc B per tenir-los controlats.

- Problemes amb la formació d'escumes. Les escumes alteraven les mesures de les sondes de nivell (que són d'ultrasons) del carrousel, provocant que els valors que indicaven fossin diferents als reals. Concretament, aquestes feien aturar les bombes d'alimentació del bioreactor cap a membranes a nivells massa baixos, provocant que els rotors quedessin al descobert i per tant, no s'airegés el bioreactor i romangués en condicions anòxiques durant unes hores. Cal tenir en compte que aquesta sonda ha de treballar amb un marge molt petit de nivell, concretament, disposa de 10 cm de diferència entre nivell màxim i nivell mínim del bioreactor.

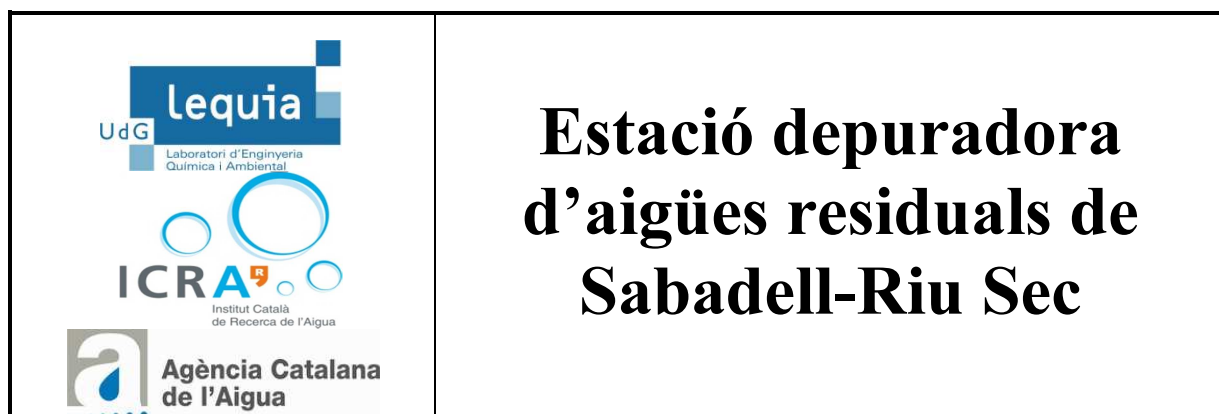
- Avaries mecàniques:

- Bombes de buit. Es fan malbé degut a la calç i cal canviar-les per noves. Concretament ha estat necessari canviar-ne 3 en 5 anys.
- Compressor. Es fa malbé, fent necessari canviar-lo per un de nou. És recomanable tenir-ne de recanvi, ja que és un equip bàsic per al funcionament de l'EDAR.
- Vàlvules neumàtiques. S'espantllen degut al desgast mecànic que provoca el fet que estiguin constantment girant, per alternar l'aeració. Es recomana tenir-ne de recanvi ja que és una avaria freqüent.
- Sondes hidrostàtiques tanc de membranes. Ha estat necessari canviar per noves les sondes hidrostàtiques avariades degut a incrustacions.
- Bombes dosificació hipoclorit sòdic. Ha estat necessari canviar peces de les bombes, ja que s'hi formen moltes incrustacions.
- Vàlvules antiretorn (PVC) de l'hipoclorit sòdic. Es fan malbé i s'encallen, fent necessari canviar-les per noves.
- Canonades de dosificació d'hipoclorit sòdic. Amb una freqüència de cada 5 o 6 mesos, és necessari canviar-les degut a la corrosió provocada per l'hipoclorit sòdic.

- Limitació d'equipament i instrumentació.

- Els totalitzadors del cabal de permeat no diferencien si s'està filtrant o contrarentant, degut a que en totes dues accions i a que el sistema de connexió de fluxos que hi ha, el flux té el mateix sentit.
- No es disposa de sistemes d'eliminació d'escumes, ni de separació de greixos.

- Seguiment i tractament de dades. El processament de dades històriques de l'EDAR de la Bisbal per al seguiment del procés de filtració és limitat. Es disposa d'un programa gràfic molt simple, degut a el programa (SCADA) del qual es disposa no permet un fàcil accés a les dades i dificulta la descàrrega de dades.



**Calendari de  
visites oficials**

**Representants  
ICRA i LEQUIA-UdG**

**Representants  
EDAR**

**1<sup>a</sup> Visita**

Quim Comas  
Giuliana Ferrero  
Sara Gabarrón

Adolfo Pino  
Anja Berglind  
Núria Saperas

**2<sup>a</sup> Visita**

Ignasi Rodriguez-Roda  
Sara Gabarrón

Adolfo Pino  
Anja Berglind  
Núria Saperas

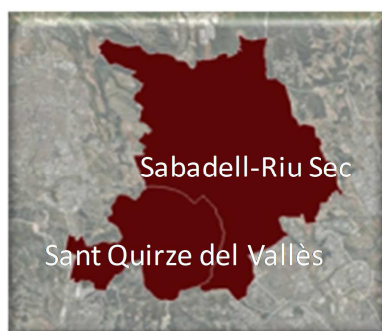
**3<sup>a</sup> Visita**

Sara Gabarrón  
Hèctor Monclús  
Sergi Casas

Adolfo Pino

## 1.- INTRODUCCIÓ

L'estació depuradora d'aigües residuals (EDAR) de Sabadell-Riu Sec tracta de manera integrada l'aigua procedent del sector oest de Sabadell i tot Sant Quirze del Vallès. L'ens gestor de l'EDAR és l'Ajuntament de Sabadell i el servei d'explotació i manteniment es presta mitjançant CASSA. Actualment, la prestació del servei de tractament d'aigües és realitzada mitjançant la Companyia Aigües Sabadell, S.A. El cabal de disseny de l'EDAR és de 35.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia.



**Figura 1.-** Figura de la zona tractada per l'EDAR de Sabadell-

Aquesta EDAR va ser inicialment construïda en dues fases: una primera el 1990 on només es va construir un tractament primari amb una capacitat de 50.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia, i una segona fase, el 1995 on es completava la fase anterior amb un tractament secundari però per només una part del cabal, 33.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia.

Ara bé, des de l'inici del seu funcionament es va anar enregistrant un increment gradual de les càrregues contaminants, fins al punt de sobrepassar la capacitat de disseny de les instal·lacions, fent necessari que al 2006 s'iniciessin les obres d'ampliació. Concretament, al 2008 s'hauria d'haver posat en marxa la nova línia de tractament mitjançant tecnologia de membranes, però per problemes tècnics, aquesta encara es troba en període de posada en funcionament.

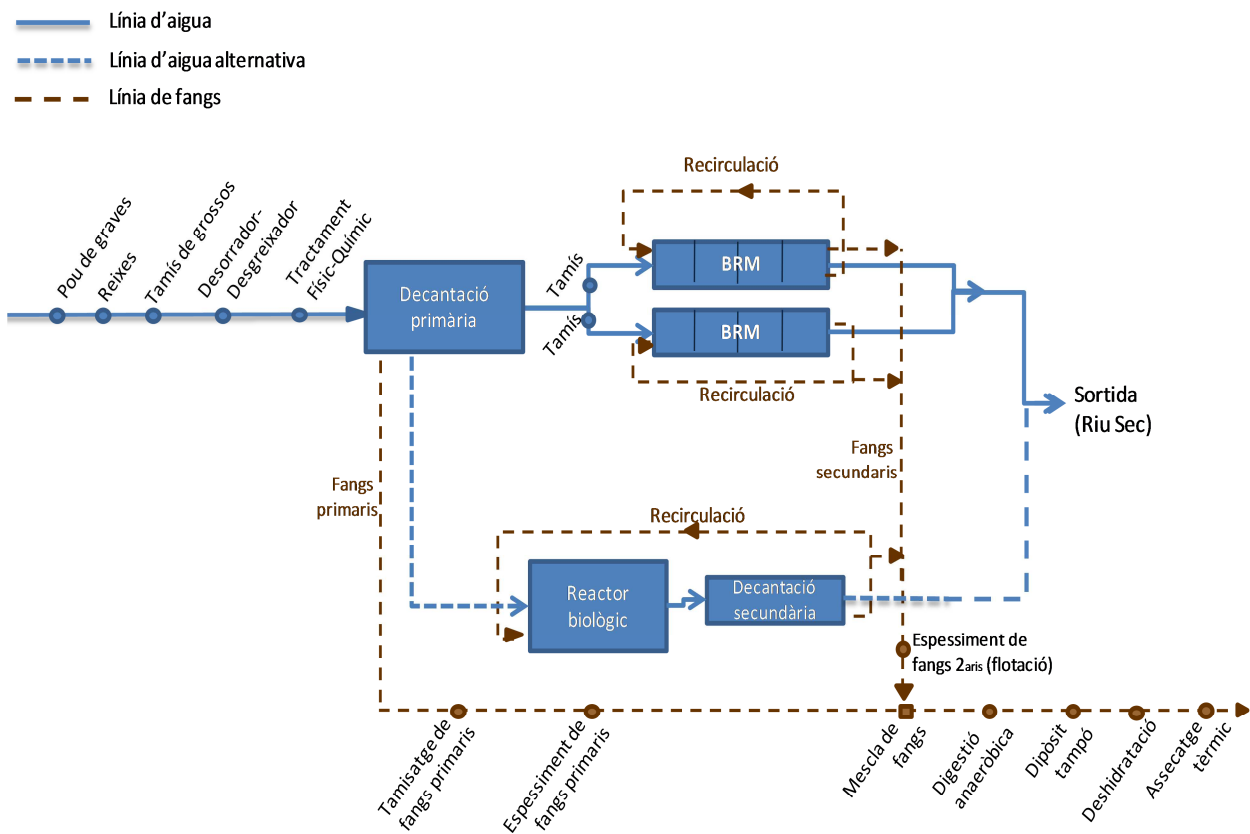
## 2. DIAGRAMA DE FLUX I DADES DE DISSENY

El diagrama de flux de l'EDAR de Sabadell-Riu Sec (figura 2) està format per una línia principal d'aigües amb les següents unitats de tractament: pou de graves (100 m<sup>3</sup>), reixes verticals (de 50 mm de pas lliure), tamís de gruixuts de 3mm, dessorrador-desgreixador (amb un cabal de 1.300 m<sup>3</sup>/h), reactor físic-químic (1.186 m<sup>3</sup>/h) i decantació primària (3.775 m<sup>3</sup>). En aquest punt el cabal pot ser repartit entre dues línies amb tractaments secundaris diferents:

reactor biològic + decantació secundària convencional i reactor biològic amb tecnologia de membranes.

- La línia amb tecnologia MBR es troba formada per: tamís (de 2 mm de llum de pas), dues línies amb quatre bioreactors de membranes cadascuna (amb un volum total de 6.900 m<sup>3</sup> per línia).
- Línia amb decantació secundària convencional: reactor biològic (7.000 m<sup>3</sup>), decantador secundari (7.126 m<sup>3</sup>).

D'altra banda, la línia de fangs es troba formada per les següents unitats: tamisatge de fangs primaris, espessiment de fangs primaris, espessiment de fangs secundaris, mescla de fangs, digestió anaeròbia, dipòsit tampó, deshidratació i assecatge tèrmic.



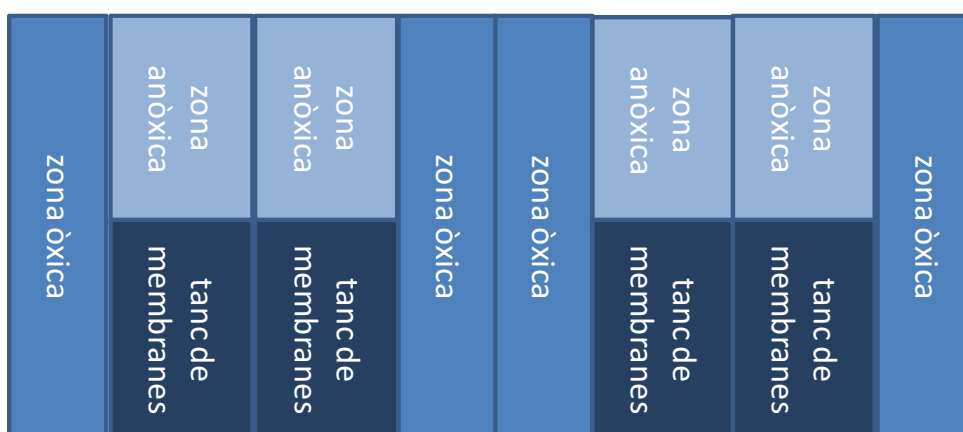
**Figura 2.-** Diagrama de flux de l'EDAR de Sabadell-Riu SEC.

La taula 1 recull les principals característiques del tamisos de fins instal·lats específicament a l'EDAR de Sabadell-Riu Sec per poder treballar amb tecnologia MBR. Concretament hi ha 4 tamisos de fins, un operatiu i un de reserva en cadascuna de les dues línies.

**Taula 1.-** Paràmetres d'operació i disseny del tamís (específic per a MBR)

<b>Marca</b>	Huber
<b>Model</b>	Rotamat
<b>Característiques físiques</b>	<i>Tipus malla, rotatiu.</i>
<b>Pas de llum</b>	2 mm
<b>Cabal màxim</b>	1.200 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>Manteniment</b>	Neteges automàtiques continuades

El tractament d'aigües mitjançant la tecnologia de membranes es divideix en dues línies diferenciades, cadascuna de les quals es troba formada per quatre bioreactors de membranes independents. Concretament, cadascun dels MBR té un compartiment anòxic (535 m<sup>3</sup>), un aeròbic (630 m<sup>3</sup>) i un tanc de membranes (560 m<sup>3</sup>), comunicats per una recirculació que es troba situada en la part inferior del tanc (figura 3).



**Figura 3.-** Esquema d'una de les dues línies de tractament amb tecnologia MBR. Es pot observar que hi ha 4 MBR diferenciats amb les seves corresponents zones anòxiques, òxiques i tancs de membranes.

Les membranes utilitzades són de làmina plana, de la marca comercial KUBOTA®, concretament, del model EK, que disposa de mòduls de dos pisos. El nombre total de mòduls és de 192, i per tant, 76.800 cartutxos, obtenint-se una superfície total de 61.440 m<sup>2</sup> (taula 2). El flux total d'aeració és de 32.256 m<sup>3</sup>/h per a cada reactor. Aquesta aeració té lloc de forma continuada.

**Taula 2.-** Paràmetres de disseny del tanc de membranes.

<b>Flux de disseny</b>	25 LMH
<b>Model</b>	EK
<b>Mòduls</b>	192 (24 mòduls x 2 (pis 1 + pis 2) x 4 MBR)
<b>Mida de porus</b>	0,45 µm
<b>Superfície de membrana</b>	61.440 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Flux d'aeració</b>	32.256 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>SADm</b>	0,53 m <sup>3</sup> / m <sup>2</sup> ·h
<b>Tipus d'aeració</b>	Continuada
<b>Volum del tanc de membranes</b>	560 m <sup>3</sup> cada tanc de membranes

### 3.- OPERACIÓ DEL BIOREACTOR DE MEMBRANES

La gestió hidràulica de l'EDAR es caracteritzarà per tractar tot l'influent mitjançant les línies de tractament amb tecnologia de membranes, i no utilitzar la línia amb tractament secundari convencional.

El tractament mitjançant tecnologia MBR permet tractar 35.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia i el cabal mitjà que arribar a la planta és, aproximadament, 28.000 – 29.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia. Això permet que aquesta tecnologia pugui tractar tot l'influent, incloent els cabals puntes que tenen lloc de forma ocasional.

La gestió d'aquest tractament és mitjançant el cabal impulsat per les bombes d'elevació a biològic, el qual determina el nombre de trens que cal tenir en funcionament en cada moment. Els trens que no es trobin en funcionament, restaran en mode *stand by* (amb la recirculació operativa i airejant de forma discontinua però sense filtrar) els reactors que no tinguin prou volum. Aquesta aturada i marxa de reactors es realitza de forma alternada, mitjançant l'SCADA, evitant que hi hagi cap reactor que estigui massa temps sense filtrar. Cal tenir en compte que el marge de volum que del qual es disposa per regular el cabal en els reactors és de 0,5 m d'alçada a cada MBR.

Actualment, cal tenir en compte, que com a mínim hi ha d'haver dos reactors en funcionament alhora, ja que les bufadores que proporcionen aire a les membranes subministren un cabal d'aire massa elevat com per treballar amb un sol MBR.

D'altra banda, els principals paràmetres d'operació de les membranes es mostren a la taula 3:

**Taula 3.-** Paràmetres d'operació del tanc de membranes.

<b>SSLM membranes</b>	Actualment 12.000-13.000 ppm
<b>Cicles de treball</b>	Cicles de 10 min: 9 min filtrant + 1 min contrantrentat
<b>Aeració</b>	Continuada
<b>Neteja de manteniment</b>	TMP < -0,2 bars 1,5-2h, tanc amb licor mescla NaClO 0,5% Ocasionalment: A. cítric
<b>Neteja de recuperació</b>	-----
<b>Inspecció visual</b>	No té lloc de forma rutinària

Les neteges de manteniment, tal i com es descriu a la taula, es duen a terme quan els valors de les pressions transmembrana (TMP) ho requereixen. Concretament, el sistema de control disposa de dues alarmes d'avís i una acció física segons els valor de la TMP: avís de possible embrutiment, necessitat de realitzar una neteja de manteniment, i darrerament, aturada dels mòduls amb pressió elevada.

#### 4.- RENDIMENTS MBR

L'EDAR de Sabadell es troba dissenyada per a l'eliminació biològica del nitrogen i la matèria orgànica, juntament amb l'eliminació química del fòsfor. L'addició del reactiu químic per a l'eliminació del fòsfor (PAX) té lloc en el físic -químic i està previst afegir-ne també a la sortida, per garantir que la concentració de fòsfor a la sortida sigui la desitjada.

#### 5.- CONSUMS I COSTOS D'OPERACIÓ

La mitjana anual, juntament amb el valor del consum energètics abans de la instal·lació de la tecnologia MBR i l'actual són els que es mostren a la taula 5.

**Taula 5.-** Consums energètics EDAR Riells i Viabrea

Situació	Consums
Abans MBR	0,4 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>
Període de posada en marxa MBR (MBR + decantador convencional en funcionament)	≈ 0,7 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>



El valor del consum energètic obtingut a partir de la instal·lació dels bioreactors de membranes és orientatiu, ja que encara es troba en període de posada en funcionament. Tot i així, ja s'ha observat un augment considerable els costos energètics.


## 6.- DIAGNOSI TECNOLOGIA MBR

La planta es troba actualment en període de posada en funcionament, fet que fa que línia convencional encara es trobi operativa per tractar gran part del cabal d'entrada a la planta. Els principals problemes i limitacions detectats durant aquest període es descriuen a continuació.

- Problemes amb la formació d'escumes. Episodis severos d'escumes. Els possibles orígens plantejats d'aquestes escumes són:
  - Arribada d'un influent industrial carregat de tensioactius, sabons i d'altres compostos que generen escumes.
  - Elevada aeració en el reactor biològic, degut a la intensa "graella de difusors" que hi ha a la part inferior del tanc i que eleva tota la matèria en suspensió.
  - Tamisos previs al MBR provoquen una aeració molt elevada en el l'influent, generant un elevat nombre d'escumes abans d'entrar en el bioreactor.
  - Bacteris filamentosos. No s'ha observat una presència molt elevada d'aquests microorganismes en el microscopi.
  
- Aparició d'aire en el conducte de permeat. S'han observat possibles problemes de cavitació a les bombes de permeat. Hauria estat necessari canviar les bombes (actualment són de la marca ITUR, típiques de la indústria petrolera), per bombes noves (podrien ser de la marca comercial Grundfos, típiques de la indústria cervesera) capaces d'evitar els problemes de cavitació deguts a la possible presència de bombolles en el canal de permeat. La solució que s'ha pres és crear un sistema de circulació del permeat (mitjançant l'elevació d'aquest) que evita l'aparició de d'aire en les canonades de permeat.
  
- Limitació d'equipament i instrumentació.
  - Sobredimensionament del pre-tractament. Degut a la ubicació en què s'han instal·lat els tamisos de fins ha estat necessari disposar de 4 tamisos ( 2 en ús i dos de reserva), en comptes de 2 en ús + 1 de reserva, que són els que haguessin estat necessaris per a tractar tot el cabal.
  - Limitació d'instrumentació. S'ha considerat que la instrumentació de la que disposa l'EDAR és insuficient per al seguiment de les membranes. Concretament, es considera necessària la següent instrumentació:
    - **Sonda de nivell a la part superior del tanc** per comprovar que la sonda que hi ha situada a la part inferior del tanc mesuri correctament, ja que hi ha la possibilitat que la lectura d'aquesta es vegi fortament afectada per la concentració tan elevada d'escumes que hi ha al bioreactor.
    - **Sonda de terbolesa en el permeat.** Seria molt útil per indicar l'estat de les membranes.
    - **Sonda d'amoní.** Les consignes d'oxigen podrien anar associades a la concentració d'amoní present en el bioreactor, i no a la concentració d'oxigen per a millorar el procés.
    - **Sondes de sòlids en els reactor.**

○ **Sondes REDOX en el bioreactor.**

- Línia de fangs. Es pressuposa que els espessidors per flotació dels quals disposa la planta no funcionaran correctament, com a conseqüència de la naturalesa del fang obtingut de MBR.
- Limitació regulació cabal d'aigua. Bombes i reguladors del cabal d'aigua a les diferents línies de tractament limitades. Ha estat necessari modificar el sistema de distribució de cabal, ja que el que s'havia instal·lat inicialment no permetia distribuir el cabal entre els diferents MBR de forma homogènia, ni tampoc permetia variar els cabals a repartir entre la línia tractament convencional i les línies MBR, complicant considerablement el procés.
- Limitació dimensionament cabal aire.
  - Problemes amb les bufadores que es van instal·lar inicialment. Ha estat necessari canviar-les totes ja que no proporcionaven el cabal suficient per a les membranes. Concretament s'ha passat de disposar de 10 bufadors MPR a 11 Aerzen amb cabal unitari superior.
  - Disseny del cabal d'aire que les bufants aporten a les membranes limitat. KUBOTA ® recomana treballar amb una concentració d'entre 7 -11 l/cartutxo.min i el sistema d'aportació d'aire s'ha dissenyat per proporcionar com a màxim 8 l/cartutxo.min. Es considera que aquest dimensionament és totalment insuficient, ja que com a mínim hi hauria d'haver la possibilitat de treballar per sobre del valor mínim recomanat pel fabricant.

	<h1>Estació depuradora d'aigües residuals de Gavà-Viladecans</h1> <p>(Gener 2011)</p>
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**Calendari de  
visites oficials**

**1<sup>a</sup> Visita**  
**28.07.2010**

**2<sup>a</sup> Visita**  
**26.08.2010**

**3<sup>a</sup> Visita**  
**29.12.2010**

**Representants**  
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Sara Gabarrón

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Sara Gabarrón

Ignasi Rodriguez-Roda  
Sara Gabarrón

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**EDAR**

Xavier Rodriguez  
Ferdinando Fiumara

Lucas Moragas  
Xavier Rodriguez  
Ferdinando Fiumara  
Jossep Gassó

Jossep Gassó

## 1. INTRODUCCIÓ

L'Estació depuradora d'aigües residuals (EDAR) de Gavà i Viladecans va ser construïda el 1986. Les seves instal·lacions i capacitats van ser ampliades l'any 2009. Actualment l'EDAR tracta de forma integrada l'aigua procedent de Gavà i Viladecans, Sant Climent de Llobregat, Castelldefels, Sant Boi de Llobregat i les Botigues de Sitges.



**Figura 1.-** Figura dels municipis assistits per l'EDAR de Gavà i Viladecans.

Dins del marc de recuperació mediambiental del tram baix del riu Llobregat i en particular, per contribuir a garantir el bon estat del sistema deltaic constituït per la llacuna de l'Estany de la Murtra i pels canals associats, va resultar necessari ampliar la capacitat de tractament d'aquesta EDAR, afegint els processos de nitrificació/desnitrificació, d'eliminació química de fòsfor i de filtració. La solució projectada es va centrar en el tractament biològic, desinfecció i bombament de retorn, deixant intactes els processos de pretractament, tractaments primaris i de fangs.

Concretament, es va remodelar l'EDAR obtenint-se una configuració formada per dues línies de tractament: línia de tractament mitjançant la tecnologia de membranes i línia d'IFAS (*Integrated Fixed-film Activated Sludge*), alhora que es va afegir un tractament terciari al procés.

D'aquesta manera, es va dissenyar una EDAR amb capacitat per tractar 64.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia, és a dir, 32.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia per línia. D'aquesta manera es podria regenerar el 50% de la capacitat de tractament que correspon a la capacitat màxima de reutilització de la zona i fa referència al cabal d'aigua tractat mitjançant la línia amb tecnologia de membranes.

Actualment s'està duent a terme la posada en funcionament, i per tant, la constructora Ferroviaria és la que gestiona les operacions que es duen a terme la posta en marxa de la línia de membranes de l'EDAR. Un cop es consideri per finalitzada aquesta primera part del procés, l'empresa explotadora de l'EDAR serà EMSSA.

## 2. DIAGRAMA DE FLUX I DADES DE DISSENY

La línia d'aigües de l'EDAR de Gavà està formada per (figura 2): pou de graves ( 42 m<sup>3</sup>), tres reixes (50 mm de pas), cargols d'Arquímedes (tenen una capacitat d'elevació de 6.000 m<sup>3</sup>/h), tamís de gruixuts (3 mm de pas), dessorador – desgreixador i decantadors primaris (dos de rectangulars i dos de circulars). A continuació el tractament es divideix en dues línies: MBR i IFAS.

- **Línia d'IFAS**

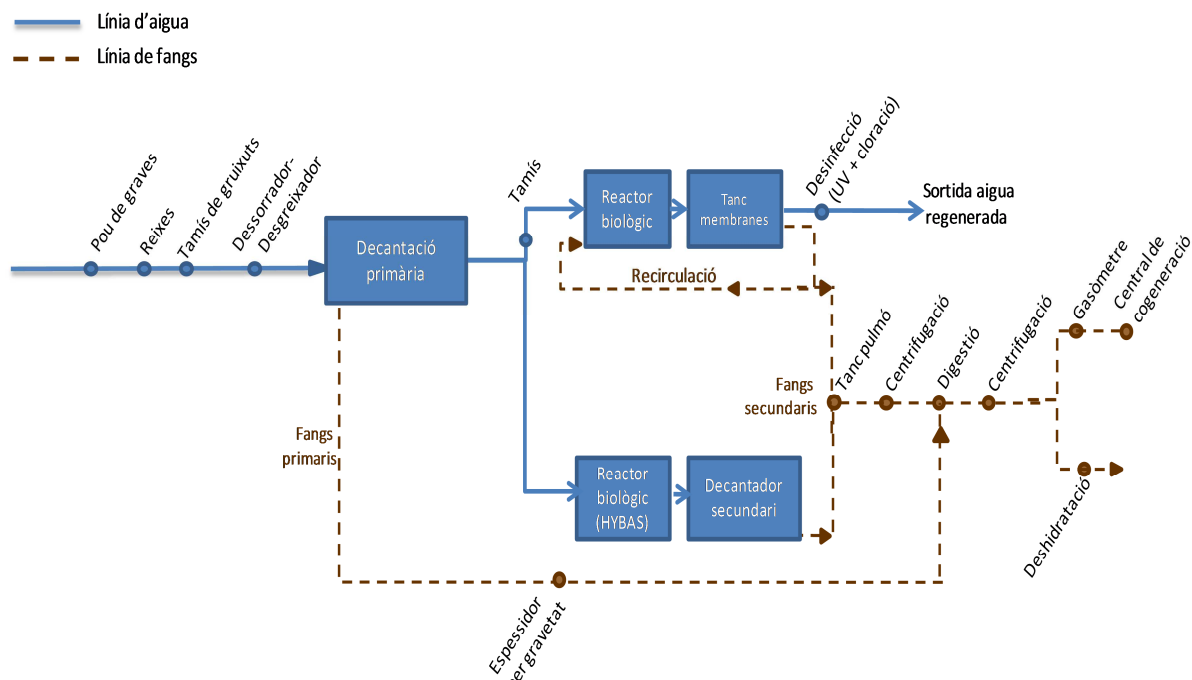
La línia d'IFAS, concretament, anomenat HYBAS (marca comercial d'Anoxkaldnes), parteix d'un reactor biològic que treballa mitjançant el sistema híbrid, és a dir, amb part de la biomassa fixada i l'altre part en suspensió. Es disposa de dos reactors amb les següents zones cadascun: zona de barreja de l'influent, dues zones anòxiques ( 2.070 m<sup>3</sup> i 860 m<sup>3</sup>, respectivament) i dues zones òxiques (3.075 m<sup>3</sup> en total). Seguidament, es disposa de dos decantadors secundaris convencionals, a partir del qual s'obté l'aigua de sortida d'aquesta línia.

- **Línia de membranes**

La línia de membranes està formada per: tamís (dos tamisos de llum de pas d'1mm, es disposa de tres tamisos en funcionament i un de reserva), dos reactors biològics (volum de 11.440 m<sup>3</sup>) formats per tres compartiments cadascun d'ells (anòxic, aeròbic i anòxic), canal d'alimentació dels tancs de membranes, tanc de membranes (912 m<sup>3</sup>), i darrerament un procés desinfecció mitjançant una cloració i l'aplicació de rajos UV. Aquesta aigua tractada arriba a un dipòsit, dimensionat per donar lloc a un temps de residència hidràulica de 2 hores (a cabal mig).

Es disposa de dos sobreexidors: un abans del tamisat d'1mm i un altre en el canal d'alimentació (posterior al tamís) per assegurar la desviació del cabal si hi ha problemes d'operació o excessos de cabal.

La línia de fangs es troba formada per un espessidor per gravetat pels fangs primaris, els quals s'ajunten amb fangs secundaris en un digestor, un cop aquests han passat per un tanc pulmó (punt d'unió dels fangs secundaris de les dues línies) i una centrifuga. A continuació la combinació dels fangs digerits són enviats a una altra centrifuga, des d'on s'envien a deshidratar.



**Figura 2.-** Diagrama de flux de l'EDAR de Gavà - Viladecans

La taula 1 recull les principals característiques del tamís de fins instal·lat específicament a l'EDAR de Gavà i Viladecans per poder treballar amb tecnologia MBR:

**Taula 1.-** Paràmetres d'operació i disseny del tamís (específic per a MBR)

<b>Marca</b>	Huber
<b>Model</b>	ROTAMAT 1800-1
<b>Característiques físiques</b>	Tamís rotatiu, tipus malla
<b>Pas de llum</b>	1 mm
<b>Cabal màxim</b>	1.000 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>Manteniment</b>	Neteges automàtiques continuades

El manteniment automàtic del rotatamís consisteix en dos tipus de neteges: una a baixa pressió, que té lloc segons el nivell (aigua d'entrada i sortida del tamís) i una segona d'altra pressió que es troba programada perquè es dugui a terme un cop al dia.

La configuració del reactor biològic es caracteritza per tenir 3 compartiments diferenciats: primera zona anòxica (3.200 m<sup>3</sup>), zona òxica (2.000 m<sup>3</sup>) i segona zona anòxica (6.800 m<sup>3</sup>). A continuació es troba una darrera zona òxica diferenciada que correspondria al tanc de membranes (volum de 1.300 m<sup>3</sup>).

Les membranes utilitzades són de la marca ZENON®, concretament són el model *ZeeWeed 500d* (taula 3). S'hi troben instal·lats un nombre total de 1.848 mòduls, distribuïts en 6 línies de

7 cassets, havent-hi per tant, 42 cassets amb 44 mòduls a cadascun d'ells. Per tant, es disposa d'una superfície total de membrana de 58.347 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Taula 3.-** Paràmetres de disseny referent al tanc de membranes.

<b>Flux de disseny</b>	<b>25 LMH</b>
<b>Model</b>	Zenon ZeeWeed 500d
<b>Mòduls</b>	1.848
<b>Mida de porus</b>	0,04 µm
<b>Superfície de membrana</b>	58.400 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Flux d'aeració</b>	17.600 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>SADm</b>	0,33 m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> ·h
<b>Tipus d'aeració</b>	Intermitent (alternant els següents cicles als diferents trens) : - Nombre de trens en funcionament parell: 10'' airejant - 30'' sense aeració - Nombre de trens en funcionament imparell: 10'' airejant – 10'' sense aeració
<b>Volum del tanc de membranes</b>	912 m <sup>3</sup>

L'aeració que té lloc a les membranes és de 17.600 m<sup>3</sup>/h, i s'aplica de forma intermitent. Segons el nombre de trens que hi hagi operatius, i per tant, el nombre de bufadores que hi hagi d'haver en funcionament, es podrà proporcionar l'aire mitjançant el cicles d'aeració que proporcionen un estalvi energètic superior (10''/30'') o bé, mitjançant cicles més conservatius (10''/10'').

## 2. OPERACIÓ DEL BIOREACTOR DE MEMBRANES

La gestió hidràulica de l'EDAR de Gavà- Viladecans es caracteritza per regular el cabal mitjançant unes comportes entre les dues línies de l'EDAR, concretament, el 50% cap a cada línia.

El nombre de trens o línies de membranes que estaran en funcionament vindrà determinat pel cabal. Cada línia disposa d'un cabal nominal que serà al qual treballaran, ja que sempre treballaran a cabal màxim. Les línies que no sigui necessari tenir operatives, restaran en mode "stand by", és a dir, airejant de forma discontinua però sense filtrar.

**Taula 4.-** Paràmetres d'operació del tanc de membranes.

<b>SSLM membranes</b>	Aproximadament 10.000 ppm
<b>Cicles de treball</b>	10 minuts filtrant i 30 segons contrarentant
<b>Neteja de manteniment</b>	Freqüència: Setmanal Tanc ple NaClO 200-500 ppm. Ocasionalment: À.Cítric 200ppm
<b>Neteja de recuperació</b>	Freqüència: semestral/anual o bé, quan la TMP és inferior a -0,5 bars Tanc amb aigua NaClO 1.000 ppm
<b>Inspecció visual</b>	No té lloc de forma rutinària

Les neteges de manteniment tenen lloc de forma rutinària quan el tren ha estat en funcionament durant una setmana, és a dir, quan el tren ha estat operatiu 168 hores. D'altra banda, encara no s'ha dut a terme cap neteja de recuperació. De moment no es preveu que siguin necessàries neteges utilitzant com a reactiu químic l'àcid cítric, tot i que es considerarà la possibilitat si no s'obtenen els rendiments desitjats amb les neteges amb hipoclorit sòdic.

Cal destacar que aquesta EDAR disposa d'unes instal·lacions molt complertes per poder dur a terme una inspecció visual de les membranes. Concretament, consta d'un pont grua per poder extreure les membranes, d'un tanc de proves i d'una terrassa on es poden dur a terme els rentats.

#### 4.- RENDIMENTS EDAR

Els cabals mitjans d'aigua tractada per la línia amb tecnologia de membranes són els que es mostren a la taula 5. Aquests cabals són el 50% del cabal total que arriba a l'EDAR.

**Taula 5.-** Cabals d'aigua tractats

Cabal	2010 (Juny – Novembre)
m <sup>3</sup> /mes	816.100 ± 146.700
m <sup>3</sup> /dia	26.700 ± 4.600

L'EDAR es troba dissenyada per eliminar biològicament el nitrogen i la matèria orgànica. No es té prevista l'eliminació química del fòsfor fins l'any 2013. A continuació es mostren els rendiments obtinguts durant el període de posada en funcionament del tractament



**Taula 6.-** Rendiments mitjans període juny-novembre d'eliminació nutrients i matèria orgànica EDAR Gavà i Viladecans.

2010 (juny – Novembre)	Influent	Efluent	Rendiments
DQO	910 ± 150 ppm	38 ± 1 ppm	96 ± 1 %
DBO <sub>5</sub>	430 ± 100 ppm	1 ± 0 ppm	99 ± 1 %
MES	400 ± 80 ppm	1 ± 0 ppm	99 ± 1 %
Ntotal	60 ± 10 ppm	8 ± 3 ppm	85 ± 9 %
Ptotal	10 ± 2 ppm	3 ± 1 ppm	66 ± 12 %

Els rendiments mostrats a la taula 6 són del període de posada en funcionament, i per tant, són orientatius, ja que hi ha hagut canvis operacionals considerables durant aquest temps estudiat.

## 5.- CONSUMS I COSTOS D'OPERACIÓ

La planta disposa d'un programa de gestió energètica. Concretament es disposa d'uns analitzadors de corrent connectats a l'ordinador, que permeten saber el què consumeixen les diferents unitats de membranes. Alhora, es disposa dels consums globals de l'EDAR.

Degut a que la planta es troba en procés de posada en funcionament no es disposa dels valors energètics, ara bé, de forma global s'ha observat que el consum energètic global ha augmentat considerablement (taula 6).

**Taula 6.-** Consums energètics EDAR Gavà Viladecans

Situació	Consums
Abans MBR	0,4 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>
Període de posada en marxa MBR (MBR + HYBAS)	≈ 0,6 kW·h·m <sup>-3</sup>

Les despeses de reactius químics per a les neteges de manteniment previstos són els que es mostren a continuació:

**Taula 7.-** Consums de reactius

Reactiu	Consums NaOCl	Consums anuals totals de les neteges de manteniment
<b>Neteja manteniment</b>	60 l/neteja · per tren	18.720 l totals/ any*
<b>Neteja recuperació</b>	820 l/neteja · per tren	11.480 l totals/any

\*Estimació anual considerant els consums per neteja i tren.

En els consums de reactius no s'ha considerat els consums d'hipoclorit referents a les neteges de recuperació, ja que encara no se n'ha dut cap a terme i no es sap quin consum de reactiu tindran. Alhora, no s'han considerat despeses referents a l'àcid cítric, ja que tampoc se'n tenen valors de referència de la quantitat i freqüència amb què se'n gastarà.

## 6.- DIAGNOSI TECNOLOGIA MBR

Els principals problemes i limitacions de disseny referents a la tecnologia de membranes detectats durant aquest període de posada en funcionament es descriuen a continuació:

- Problemes amb la degradació del NaClO. Problemes a l'hora de realitzar les neteges. No s'observava cap millora en els valors de la pressió transmembrana un cop es realitzaven les neteges de manteniment. Es va observar que això era degut a que el reactiu del qual es partia (hipoclorit sòdic) s'havia evaporat i per tant, no es realitzaven correctament els rentats.
- Avaries mecàniques:
  - Avaries en les sondes de pressió transmembrana
  - Tamisos: Trencament de les cintes que aguanten les malles del tamís.
  - SCADA. Problemes diversos amb la instal·lació i funcionament de l'SCADA. Aquests han estat un dels motius principals pel qual no es va realitzar l'entrega a temps.
- Problemes amb la formació d'escumes. El principal problema detectat durant aquesta posta en marxa és l'aparició d'un elevat nombre d'escumes com a conseqüència del retorn de fangs al biològic procedents del bioreactor de membranes. La primera acció realitzada per disminuir-les és la instal·lació d'una bomba helicoïdal a la sortida del biològic, just a abans de l'entrada al reactor de membranes perquè reculli els flotants i els retorni cap a capçalera. La capacitat màxima d'aquesta bomba és de 15 m<sup>3</sup>/h. D'altra banda, com que hi ha la hipòtesi de que aquesta aparició d'escumes és deguda a *M. parvicella*, s'està qüestionant la possibilitat d'addicionar algun reactiu com el PAX per disminuir-ne la concentració.
- Limitació recirculació. Degut a que la recirculació del tanc de membranes es dirigeix directament al compartiment anòxic del reactor biològic, s'observen problemes de desnitrificació, ja que aquest compartiment perd les seves condicions anòxiques com a conseqüència de l'elevada concentració d'oxigen que conté la recirculació.
- Línia de fangs. S'ha observat que els fangs obtinguts del tanc de membranes són més difícils de deshidratar i es pressuposa que es requeriran de quantitats més elevades de polielectrolit per al seu tractament.
- Automatització i control. Sistema de control tan automatitzat que genera un nombre massa elevat d'alarmes, fent que al final no se'ls presti l'atenció que deurien.



**Calendari de  
visites oficials**

**Representants  
ICRA i LEQUiA-UdG**

**Representants  
EDAR**

**1ª Visita**  
**30.06.2010**

**2ª Visita**  
**22.09.2010**

**3ª Visita**  
**26.10.2010**

**4ª Visita**  
**12.02.2013**

Giuliana Ferrero  
Joaquim Comas  
Sara Gabarrón

Joaquim Comas  
Giuliana Ferrero  
Sara Gabarrón

Joaquim Comas  
Sara Gabarrón

Sara Gabarrón  
Hèctor Monclús

Cristina Fàbregas  
Juanma Hidalgo

Cristina Fàbregas  
Juanma Hidalgo

Cristina Fàbregas  
Juanma Hidalgo

Iñiqui Garcia

## 1. INTRODUCCIÓ

L'estació depuradora d'aigües residuals (EDAR) de Terrassa va ser construïda el 1994 i, actualment, la prestació del servei de tractament d'aigües és realitzada a través de DAM Aguas, fins al 2011 era prestada per UTE MINA PUBLICA TERRASSA-AQUAGEST MEDIO AMBIENTE . L'EDAR tracta de forma integrada tota l'aigua procedent dels nuclis urbans de Terrassa, una zona de Matadepera i una zona de Sant Quirze del Vallès.



**Figura 1.-**Imatge de les poblacions a les quals presta servei l'EDAR de l'EDAR de Terrassa

L'any 2009 es va remodelar l'EDAR, instal·lant-hi una línia de tractament d'aigües residuals mitjançant la tecnologia de membranes (MBR) i una altra línia amb tecnologia IFAS. La remodelació va consistir en l'adequació dels quatre reactors existents mitjançant la implementació en els mateixos de la tecnologia IFAS, per a una capacitat de 75.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia. A més a més, es va construir un cinquè reactor biològic dotat amb la tecnologia MBR per a una capacitat de 15.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia, per a mantenir en funcionament i amb garanties l'EDAR, durant el període de les obres d'ampliació. Es va escollir la tecnologia de membranes perquè permetia assegurar el la qualitat de l'aigua durant aquest període d'obres ocupant un espai físic molt reduït. El cabal de disseny total de l'EDAR és de 90.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia.

Actualment no hi ha cap tipus de reutilització de l'aigua tractada per part de l'EDAR, ara bé, just a la sortida d'aquesta EDAR s'hi troba instal·lat un tractament terciari que proporciona aigua als camps de golf de la zona de l'EDAR. Aquest terciari es troba gestionat pels mateixos propietaris dels camps de golf.

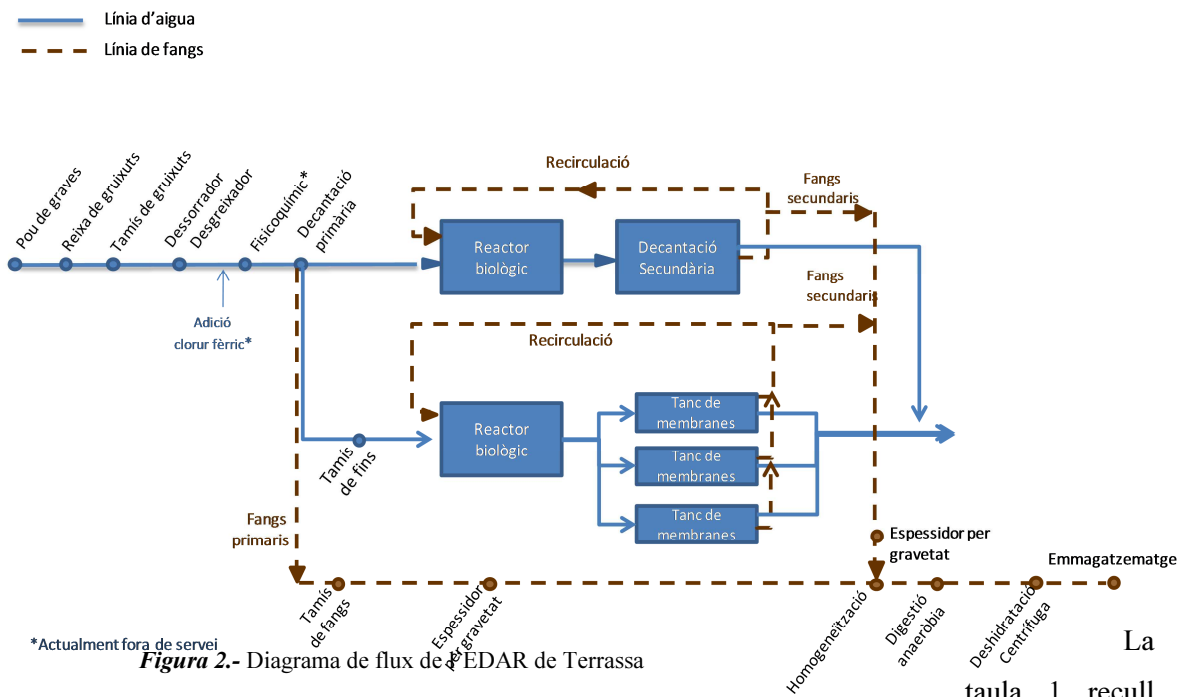
## 2. DIAGRAMA DE FLUX I DADES DE DISSENY

El diagrama de flux de l'EDAR de Terrassa (figura 2) està format per una línia d'aigües formada per un pretractament i tractament primari comú per a tota l'EDAR, i a continuació dues línies de tractament secundari diferenciades. La línia comú es troba formada per un pou de graves, des d'on mitjançant uns cargols d'Arquímedes s'envia l'aigua a una reixa de gruixuts

(50 mm de llum de pas) i posteriorment a un tamís de gruixuts (6 mm de pas), seguit d'un dessorrador -desgreixador, un fisicoquímic (que actualment es troba en desús) que conté dos tancs de mescla, un de mescla ràpida i un altre de lenta, i és on té lloc l'addició de clorur fèrric per a per eradicar les olors i finalment, una decantació primària (es disposa de tres decantadors de 3.775 m<sup>3</sup> cadascun). Des d'aquest decantador primari és des d'on té lloc la repartició de cabal a les dues línies de tractament secundari:

- **Línia amb tecnologia IFAS**  
 Disposa de quatre reactors biològics (volum de 5.500 m<sup>3</sup>) amb tecnologia IFAS (llits mòbils) per afavorir els processos biològics. L'efluent obtingut d'aquests reactors es distribueix entre tres decantadors secundaris (volum de 5.424 m<sup>3</sup>). Aquesta línia es troba dissenyada per poder tractar 75.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia.
- **Línia amb tecnologia de membranes**  
 Disposa d'un tamís de fins (llum de pas d'1 mm) previ al bioreactor (4.136 m<sup>3</sup>), i seguidament, tres tancs de membranes (392 m<sup>3</sup>) dissenyats per tractar un cabal màxim total de 15.000 m<sup>3</sup>/dia.

La línia de fangs està formada per un tamís de fangs i un procés d'espessiment per gravetat per als fangs primaris. Els fangs secundaris són espessits per decantació i homogeneïtzats amb els fangs primaris ja espessits. A continuació té lloc la digestió anaeròbica i la deshidratació mitjançant les centrífugues (concretament n'hi ha 4) dels fangs, per esser posteriorment emmagatzemats.



les principals característiques del tamís rotatori instal·lat específicament per poder treballar amb la tecnologia MBR.

**Taula 1.-** Paràmetres de disseny del tamís rotatori.

<b>Marca</b>	Contec
<b>Model</b>	DF 60
<b>Característiques físiques</b>	Tamís rotatori, tipus malla
<b>Pas de llum</b>	1 mm
<b>Cabal màxim</b>	626 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>Manteniment</b>	Neteges automàtiques continuades

El reactor biològic del compartiment de membranes es troba dividit en diferents compartiments: dues zones anòxiques (volum total anòxic: 1.740 m<sup>3</sup>) i dues zones òxiques (volum òxic total: 2.396 m<sup>3</sup>).

Les membranes utilitzades són de fibra buida, de la marca comercial ZENON®, model ZeeWeed 500d. Disposa de tres tancs amb 5 cassets cadascun d'ells i amb un total de 720 mòduls que proporcionen una superfície de membrana total de 22.752 m<sup>2</sup> (taula 2). L'aeració és intermitent, amb un flux de 2.370 Nm<sup>3</sup>/h per a cada tanc, proporcionant aquest cabal durant 10 segons en una zona del tanc i després, restant 30 segons sense aeració (període en que s'airegen les altres zones seguint la mateixa seqüència d'intermitència d'aeració).

**Taula 2.-** Paràmetres de disseny de les membranes.

<b>Flux de disseny</b>	27 LMH
<b>Model</b>	ZENON® ZeeWeed 500d
<b>Mida de porus</b>	0,04 µm
<b>Mòduls</b>	720
<b>Superfície de membrana</b>	22.752 m <sup>2</sup>
<b>Flux d'aeració</b>	7.110 m <sup>3</sup> /h
<b>SADm</b>	0,31 m <sup>3</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> ·h
<b>Tipus d'aeració</b>	Intermitent, 10'' airejant – 30'' sense airejar
<b>Volum tanc de membranes</b>	391,97 m <sup>3</sup>

### 3.- OPERACIÓ DEL BIOREACTOR DE MEMBRANES

La gestió hidràulica de l'EDAR es caracteritza per fixar un cabal pràcticament constant per a línia de membranes i tractar la resta del cabal entrant mitjançant la línia amb tecnologia IFAS.

Concretament, el cabal mitjà tractat per la línia de membranes al 2012 és de  $7.000 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{d}^{-1}$  (any 2009  $7.500 \pm 2.300 \text{ m}^3 \cdot \text{d}^{-1}$ ).

Els principals paràmetres d'operació de les membranes es mostren a la taula 3.

**Taula 3.-** Paràmetres d'operació de les membranes

<b>SSLM membranes</b>	4.000 ppm
<b>Cicles de treball</b>	10 minuts permeant, 30 segons relaxació (des de l'Agost 2012, anteriorment es duien a terme contrarentats)
<b>Neteja de manteniment</b>	Freqüència: setmanal 1,5-2h, tanc amb licor mescla NaClO 200 ppm
<b>Neteja de recuperació</b>	Freqüència: semestral 6-12h, tanc amb aigua NaClO 1.000 -1.500 ppm o A.cítric 2.000 ppm
<b>Inspecció visual</b>	No es duen a terme de forma rutinària

De forma setmanal, tenen lloc **neteges de manteniment** utilitzant hipoclorit sòdic o àcid cítric com a reactiu, segons convingui. Concretament, durant el primer any de funcionament es van realitzar 48 neteges de manteniment (40 amb NaClO i 8 amb àcid cítric) en el tren A, 50 neteges en el tren B (38 amb NaClO i 12 amb àcid cítric) i 41 neteges en el tren C (34 amb NaClO i 7 amb àcid cítric). Actualment les neteges de manteniment es duen a terme únicament amb hipoclorit sòdic (any 2012).

D'altra banda, de forma semestral tenen lloc **neteges de recuperació**. Concretament, durant el primer any de funcionament es van realitzar 11 neteges de recuperació en el tren A (6 amb NaClO i 5 amb àcid cítric), 7 en el tren B (3 amb NaClO i 4 amb àcid cítric) i 5 en el tren C (2 amb NaClO i 3 amb àcid cítric).

No s'ha establert cap rutina per dur a terme les inspeccions visuals, tot i que es disposa de les instal·lacions necessàries per a fer-ho.

#### 4. RENDIMENTS EDAR

Els cabals d'operació de l'EDAR i de la línia de membranes des de la posada en marxa del MBR són els que es mostren a la taula 4.

**Taula 4.- Cabals d'aigua tractats**

Cabal	MBR	EDAR
$\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{mes}^{-1}$	226.650 ± 70.270	1.327.260 ± 121.850
$\text{m}^3 \cdot \text{dia}^{-1}$	7.554 ± 2.342	43.890 ± 3.870

Les mitjanes dels rendiments obtinguts des de la instal·lació de la tecnologia MBR es mostren a la següent taula 5.

**Taula 5.- Rendiments EDAR Terrassa**

Nov. 2009	Entrada	Entrada	Afluent	Rendiment	Afluent	Rendiment
Juny 2010	EDAR	MBR	MBR	MBR	EDAR	EDAR
<b>DQO</b>	578 ± 56 ppm	340 ± 30 ppm	52 ± 3 ppm	83 ± 4 %	69 ± 15 ppm	87 ± 4 %
<b>DBO<sub>5</sub></b>	297 ± 47 ppm	211 ± 19 ppm	7 ± 3 ppm	97 ± 1 %	9 ± 3 ppm	96 ± 2 %
<b>MES</b>	281 ± 33 ppm	108 ± 10 ppm	2 ± 1 ppm	98 ± 1 %	12 ± 9 ppm	95 ± 4 %
<b>N total</b>	96 ± 15 ppm	78 ± 16 ppm	13 ± 2 ppm	83 ± 3 %	38 ± 15 ppm	59 ± 11 %
<b>P total</b>	8 ± 1 ppm	6 ± 1 ppm	3 ± 1 ppm	48 ± 11 %	3 ± 1 ppm	67 ± 4 %

A part d'aquestes analítiques se'n realitzen de més exhaustives:

- E.coli de forma mensual
- OUR i anàlisi microscòpic del reactor biològic de forma quinzenal i setmanal respectivament.
- 

## 5. CONSUMS I COSTOS D'OPERACIÓ

Els consums relacionats amb la instal·lació de la tecnologia de membranes són els que es mostren a continuació

**Taula 6.- Consums EDAR Terrassa**

Situació	Consum *
<b>2009 -2010 (MBR)</b>	0,43 Kw.h·m <sup>-3</sup>

\*Aquest valor només fa referència als costos referents a la instrumentació de la línia de membranes, sense incloure les despeses referents a les bufadores del reactor biològic.

Els consums anuals de reactius químics utilitzats per a les neteges de les membranes, i el tractament de fangs es mostren a la taula 7.



**Taula 7.- Rendiments EDAR Terrassa**

Reactiu	Consum *	
	Abans MBR	MBR + IFAS
NaOCl (15 %) *	---	6.000 kg
Àcid cítric *	---	1.000 Kg
Cl <sub>3</sub> Fe 40%	39.000 ± 7.200 Kg /mes	43 ± 5 kg /mes
Polielectrolit aniònic**	160 ± 80 Kg/mes	140 ± 70 Kg/mes
Polielectrolit catiònic ***	2.600 ± 650 Kg/mes	2.000 ± 280 Kg/mes
	9 ± 1 Kg/TMS	8 ± 1 Kg/TMS

\*Inclou neteges de manteniment i recuperació dels MBR des del febrer al Novembre 2010.

\*\* Afegit al físic-químic

\*\*Deshidratació de fangs

## 6. DIAGNOSI DE LA TECNOLOGIA MBR

L'EDAR disposa d'un servei d'assistència 24 hores contractat, que assessora i controla remotament el procés relacionat amb la tecnologia de membranes.

Els principals problemes d'operació i limitacions de disseny relacionats amb la tecnologia de membranes que s'ha diagnosticat en aquesta EDAR es descriuen a continuació:

- Reactor biològic descobert. S'han presenciat episodis puntuals d'entrada de cossos externs en el bioreactor, els quals han ocasionat que s'haguessin de parar les línies en funcionament per a buidar el tancs de membranes, i evitar així, que aquestes es poguessin fer malbé. Això ha estat degut a que el bioreactor (posterior al tamís d'1 mm) es troba totalment descobert. No obstant, aquests episodis es consideren anecdòtics i en durant els anys 2011 i 2012 no s'ha produït cap altre incident greu.
- Avaries mecàniques observades des de l'inici d'operació del MBR:
  - Bomba que mostreja l'afluent de forma automàtica, desviant una petita part d'aquest afluent cap a una sonda de terbolesa en línia. Cada 2 mesos s'espantlla.
  - Sonda oxigen donava molts problemes. Va ser necessari canviar-la per poder garantir la fiabilitat de les seves lectures (abans era de la marca comercial Endress-Hauser i ara Hach lange).
  - En el moment de la posada en marxa, la impulsió de recirculació feia retrocedir el propi fang que es recirculava, provocant que les concentracions augmentessin molt ràpidament. Es va posar una clapeta a la impulsió de cada bomba per tal d'evitar aquest retrocés.
- Problemes amb la formació d'escumes. La presència de tensioactius a l'entrada sol ser habitual. Aquest fet ha ocasionat episodis puntuals d'escumes elevades en el bioreactor, en els moments en què la concentració d'aquests reactius a l'entrada ha estat més elevat.
- Problemes a l'hora de realitzar les neteges de recuperació.

- Ha estat necessari modificar el protocol de neteja, assegurant que el bioreactor es buidi el màxim possible i intentant minimitzar la quantitat de fangs que queda restant en el tanc abans d'emplenar-lo d'aigua per a la neteja. Això s'ha aconseguit mitjançant la realització de diversos cicles de rentat i buidat del tanc abans de començar amb la neteja de recuperació. Aquesta modificació ha estat necessària degut a que la concentració del reactiu químic disminuïa considerablement i de forma ràpida amb presència de restes de fangs en el tanc quan s'afegia el reactiu químic, i per tant, no es complien les característiques descrites en el protocol de la neteja, també ha estat necessari desenvolupar un mètode per poder dur a terme la determinació de la concentració d'hipoclorit sòdic en les neteges. No hi ha cap sensor, ni instrument capaç de mesurar concentracions de clor tan elevades (1.000 -1.500 ppm).
- Limitació d'equipament i instrumentació.
  - Ubicació sondes de sòlids en el tanc de membranes: Es considera la possibilitat de què les sondes de sòlids dels tancs de membranes no es trobin ubicades en un bon lloc del tanc, ja que els valors que proporciona són considerablement diferents als valors obtinguts per les analítiques al laboratori.
  - La planta disposa de dos sistemes d'extracció d'escumes. El primer va ser instal·lat quan es va construir el MBR però no és eficient, mentre que posteriorment es va instal·lar un bombament que permet retornar les escumes per no perdre els sòlids, o bé, purgar-les en casos extrems. D'altra banda, es disposa d'aspersors distribuïts per reactor biològic i el canal de recirculació per afavorir que no es formin les escumes. Tot i aquestes mesures, l'eliminació o extracció d'escumes no és eficient.
- Línia de fangs. S'ha observat que els fangs obtinguts són més difícils de deshidratar. Aquest fet ha ocasionat problemes en el sistema de flotació de la línia de fangs de l'EDAR. No obstant, no ha estat possible diagnosticar si això és degut al MBR o als IFAS, o bé, ambdós.

Automatització i control. Sistema de control tan automatitzat que genera un nombre massa elevat d'alarmes, fent que al final no se'ls presti l'atenció que deuriem