



**SOCIAL &
ENVIRONMENTAL
SUSTAINABILITY
REPORT** 2024



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CIIMAR SOCIAL & ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY REPORT 2024

CIIMAR - Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research

www.ciimar.up.pt

Graphic design and layout: Pedro Daniel

MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD



Prof. Vitor Vasconcelos
President of the Board

CIIMAR's mission in the area of sustainability stems from our social and environmental responsibility, which is visible in many of our actions, both internally and externally.

In this report, we briefly present CIIMAR's main responsibilities in terms of its governance, and in environmental and social responsibilities, revealing the performance indicators that we use to measure them during 2024. The 17 Sustainable Development Challenges launched by the United Nations and the issues raised by the UN Ocean Decade are two fundamental instruments for defining our strategic lines.

However, we do not forget the issues at regional, national and international level, such as the Smart Specialisation Strategies (RIS3) for the North of Portugal and the country as a whole, the cross-border RIS3, North of Portugal - Galicia, as well as important instruments at European level such as the Green Deal, Mission StarFish and many challenges launched by the Horizon Europe and Inter-reg programmes. Our connection with the users of our technologies is essential and therefore our participation in major mobilisation programmes, such as those financed by the PRR – Blue Bioeconomy Pact and HUBAZUL, is essential. CIIMAR is also a signatory to the Porto Climate Pact and a member of the Local Monitoring Council of the Matosinhos Municipal Climate Action Plan.

Creating conditions for a better working environment and respect for employees are essential so that together we can make CIIMAR a better institution with a greater impact on society.



2021 United Nations Decade
2030 of Ocean Science
for Sustainable Development



ABOUT CIIMAR

CIIMAR - Interdisciplinary Centre of Marine and Environmental Research - is a leading **research and advanced training institution** of the University of Porto, working at the frontier of Ocean Knowledge and Innovation.

CIIMAR's mission is to harbour transdisciplinary research, technological development, and training, contributing to **advancements in scientific knowledge and the sustainability of the marine environment, as well as coastal and freshwater ecosystems**. CIIMAR positions itself as a national and international reference center for the acquisition and dissemination of scientific knowledge in this field, as well as for the training of future generations of researchers and society as a whole.

CIIMAR is a Research Unit within the national scientific system, integrating the associated laboratory CIMAR-LA and participating in collaborative laboratories. It is evaluated and funded by FCT, receiving an Excellent classification for the 2020-2023 period. CIIMAR is a **private non-profit association**, founded in 2000 and recognized as a public utility entity since 2021. CIIMAR's General Assembly is composed of collective public entities (University of Porto, Polytechnic Institute of Porto and APDL) and private entities (ALGAPLUS, AlIMicroalgae, Flatlantic, Soja de Portugal, Hydromod, Oceano Fresco, RiaSearch, Ecoinside, Tintex, SONAE MC and NGC). The members elect the Board of Directors, consisting of five members, responsible for overseeing and defining the policy for scientific and technical activities, as well as supervising daily management. The **CIIMAR Scientific Council**, composed of all PhD members of the institution, serves as an internal body with general responsibilities for advising and monitoring scientific and technical activities.



1. GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

2024 is the first year in which companies are required to report in accordance with the EU's **Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD)** (2022/2464/EU), which expands the previous Non-Financial Reporting Directive (NFRD) and the sustainability reporting requirements of the European Sustainability Reporting Standards (ESRS). Although CIIMAR is not obligated to comply with CSRD, we actively choose to align our sustainability report with its key principles to show transparency, commitment and support for Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices. This commitment is visible in our reporting namely in the inclusion of impact materiality, the structuring of the report in the areas and subtopics of environmental, social and governance areas, and by following the digital and transparent reporting guidelines.

1.1 CIIMAR'S GOVERNANCE MODEL AND COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

The Center has an **Ethics Committee** whose mission is to ensure and uphold ethical standards, protecting and guaranteeing integrity, dignity, honesty, and ethical quality in the marine and environmental science research conducted at CIIMAR. CIIMAR's organizational model also includes an [External Scientific Advisory Committee](#), which provides independent evaluation and guidance on the institution's scientific activities. This board is composed of four distinguished members of the international scientific community.

Sustainability is a core value of CIIMAR's organizational culture and governance model. Our Sustainability Policy is guided and implemented with a strong commitment to Social and Environmental Sustainability. Through its research and ongoing activities, CIIMAR actively contributes to the implementation and dissemination of values associated with the numerous **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** outlined in the United Nations 2030 Agenda.



The implementation of CIIMAR's Sustainability Plan is overseen by the **Social & Environmental Sustainability Office**, which works in close collaboration with the Board. This process is supported by the integrated efforts of various organizational units and internal services, which are essential for defining, implementing and monitoring the proposed measures. Key contributors include CIIMAR Green Lab, Health and Safety, Human Resources, Legal Support, Onboarding, Public Procurement, Advanced Training & Careers, Maintenance & Security, the Image, Communication & Outreach Office, the Equity Commission, the Commission for the Prevention and Combat of Workplace Harassment, the PhD Students' Committee, Bioterium of Aquatic Organisms (BOGA), CIIMAR Sport and the Environmental Monitoring and Interpretation Centers (CMIA) of Matosinhos and Vila do Conde.

CIIMAR is an active member of [Green Labs Portugal](#), an association dedicated to promoting and supporting sustainability initiatives in laboratories while fostering collaboration among various institutions. By bringing together motivated teams across Portugal and encouraging the sharing of knowledge and resources on sustainable laboratory practices, the initiative aims to drive change within the Portuguese research community, promoting more environmentally conscious research practices. The CIIMAR Green Lab specifically focuses on **reducing the ecological footprint** of the research center's laboratory activities, including energy and water consumption as well as recyclable urban waste management.

CIIMAR is firmly committed to upholding the principles of **freedom and ethical conduct in research**, professional responsibility, adherence to best research practices, recognition of scientific careers, good working conditions and training opportunities. Additionally, it is dedicated to gender equality, equity, non-discrimination and the protection of intellectual property rights.

CIIMAR has been reinforcing its commitment to **social and environmental sustainability** by voluntarily committing to standards that go beyond regulatory requirements. It strives to raise the bar for norms and procedures related to social development, environmental protection and fundamental rights. To fulfill these commitments, CIIMAR continuously deepens its understanding of its operational reality, identifying and implementing effective measures to reduce the environmental impact of research and daily activities, enhance the well-being and safety of its members and promote awareness and training across the entire community.

To achieve these goals, CIIMAR has developed a [Comprehensive Annual Social and Environmental Sustainability Plan since 2023](#). This plan includes various initiatives and indicators designed to integrate social and environmental considerations into the center's structure and daily operations, while also setting annual goals. Similarly, this Sustainability Report seeks to objectively and concisely compile the actions and performance indicators related to sustainability developed by CIIMAR throughout 2024.



1.2. REGULATORY AND ETHICAL COMMITMENTS

CIIMAR's global activities and daily actions are guided by our Ethical and Regulatory Principles, in particular:

- Complying with and respecting **legal, regulatory and normative requirements**, as well as additional requirements subscribed to or implemented in the different dimensions of commitments to environmental and social sustainability.
- Adopting a proactive attitude and measures aimed at **reducing the ecological footprint and negative environmental impacts** resulting from institutional activities, promoting a more conscious and rational use of resources, and raising awareness among all stakeholders about the importance of adopting good practices to reduce environmental impact, including sharing scientific knowledge related to Sustainability with the CIIMAR community and society at large.
- Promoting the acquisition of products and services based on **clear and impartial responsibility criteria** for selecting suppliers/ service providers, aiming to honor institutional commitments to sustainability.
- Creating a **work environment that promotes respect** and guarantees individual and collective rights, diversity, equity, well-being and the continuous improvement of working conditions.
- Investing in human capital and promoting the creation of an **inclusive and informed community**, fostering recruitment, capacity building, qualification, training and professional development aimed at achieving quality professional performance.

In addition to complying with applicable general legislation, CIIMAR has been adhering to ethical practices and principles recognized and suitable for its field of action, as well as the ethical standards documented in the various national, sectoral, and institutional codes of ethics, some of which are listed below:

CODES OF CONDUCT

CIIMAR has developed various ethical and conduct standards to ensure proper performance by CIIMAR staff, both internally and externally, contributing to an institutional image and practices of equality, equity, inclusion, rigor, transparency, efficiency, and competence.

The [Code of Conduct, Prevention, and Combating Harassment at Work](#) aims to adopt and promote a policy that seeks to prevent, identify, eliminate, and punish situations likely to constitute workplace harassment.

CIIMAR's [Gender Equality Plan](#) defines a policy of non-discrimination and equitable access in hiring processes for any career (technical and administrative staff, researchers, fellows), ensuring that no candidate can be privileged, benefited, harmed or deprived of any right or exempted from any duty based on factors such as age, gender, sexual orientation, pregnancy or parental status, marital status, family situation, economic situation, education, origin or social condition, genetic heritage, ancestry, reduced work capacity,

disability, chronic illness, appearance or physical characteristics, nationality, ethnicity or race, territory of origin, language, religion, political or ideological beliefs or union membership. According to Decree-Law No. 29/2001 of February 3, candidates with disabilities have preference in cases of equal classification, which takes precedence over any other legal preference.

CIIMAR also subscribes to the principles, rules, and procedures of the [European Code of Conduct for Research Integrity](#). This Code must be known and applied to all professionals affiliated with CIIMAR at all stages of their career, including affiliated researchers, visiting researchers, technicians, fellows, students, and other collaborators, regardless of the nature of their contract.

ORBEA - ANIMAL WELFARE BODY

At CIIMAR, the use of animals for experimental or educational purposes complies with legal and animal welfare regulations, which are reviewed by the members of [ORBEA](#) and the Directorate-General for Food and Veterinary Affairs. CIIMAR is also a signatory of the Transparency Agreement on Animal Research in Portugal. This initiative, supported by the scientific community in collaboration with the European Animal Research Association (EARA), aims to promote openness and transparency regarding the use of animals in research.





QUALITY CERTIFICATION

CIIMAR obtained its initial certification under **ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management System** – in January 2021, and it has since been renewed without non-conformities. Each year, goals and objectives are set for each service within the scope of ISO 9001 implementation, which are regularly monitored. This allows for an assessment of the current situation and the potential need for adjustments or even the establishment of more ambitious targets to foster continuous improvement among employees and processes.

In line with this commitment, preparations are underway for the implementation of **EN ISO 17025** (accreditation of processes/analyses for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories) and the recognition process through the **Human Resources Strategy for Researchers**.

PORTO CLIMATE PACT

In line with its commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility, CIIMAR has signed the [Porto Climate Pact](#), joining a collective effort to accelerate the city's **transition toward carbon neutrality** by 2030. This initiative, promoted by the Municipality of Porto, brings together organizations and individuals to foster collaboration, share knowledge, and implement concrete actions aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By participating in the Pact, CIIMAR reinforces its dedication to climate action, actively contributing to the broader goal of making Porto a national and European leader in decarbonization and environmental sustainability.





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2. SOCIAL COMMITMENTS

In 2024, numerous Social and Environmental Sustainability initiatives and policies were implemented. CIIMAR's strong commitment to environmental and social responsibility led to significant advancements in this area throughout the year, namely in workplace well-being, equality, equity and professional development, with flexible work policies, expanded health services, and the creation of the Training & Careers Office. Among the implemented measures in 2024, the following stand out:

122

sports events
for the community

172

free psychology
consultations

215

professional
training courses

35

certified advanced
training courses

129 219

individuals reached
in literacy, communication
and outreach activities

35

scientific exhibitions
and artistic competitions

152

public events

34 574

followers
across all media platforms

2.1 EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING AND WORK-LIFE BALANCE (ESRS S1)

PROVIDE CONDITIONS FOR A BALANCED PROFESSIONAL, FAMILY AND PERSONAL LIFE

- Encourage remote work and flexible work hours for researchers and administrative staff.
- Birthday leave for employees.

FOSTER ORGANIZATIONAL WELL-BEING BY CREATING A SHARED SPACE FOR COLLABORATION AND INTERACTION AMONG EMPLOYEES

- Events promoting interaction between members: Welcoming party for CIIMAR PhD students (February 2024), **CIIMAR Anniversary Celebration** (March 2024), **CIIMAR Annual Meeting** (September 2024), **Christmas lunch** (December 2024).
- Implementation and maintenance of the “**Tea Corner**” and “**Eco-friendly Dishwashing Station**” in the common area, aiming to promote community habits and the use of organic products among CIIMAR members.
- Support internal CIIMAR community groups: **CIIMAR Sport**, that organises sports events for the community, **Green Lab**, which focuses on promoting sustainable practices at the CIIMAR labs, the **PhD Student Committee**, which provides a shared space for support among PhD students, and **CIIMAR A Jogar**, a group that regularly gathers over shared-interest in board games.



PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

- Biweekly **yoga** classes at the CIIMAR facilities (over 80 classes with 20 regular participants).
- Organisation of **football** (30 matches with over 60 participants) and padel games for CIIMAR members.
- Organisation of **volleyball** games (3 matches with circa 20 participants).
- **Running** and trail group (with 34 members) and collective participation in 6 trail runs: the Trail Santa Iria (February 2024, 6 people), VII Trail de Esposende (March 2024, 9 people), Trail Santa Apolónia (April 2024, 2 people), Trilhos da Cividade (October 2024, 6 people), Mini Trail Santinho (November 2024, 5 people), VIII Trail Este Românico (December 2024, 4 people); and in 3 running events: Matosinhos Half-Marathon (May 2024, 2 people), Corrida Porto de Leixões (June 2024, 9 people) and Corrida de São João (June 2024, 4 people).



PROVIDE OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH SERVICES

- 110 Occupational Health consultations.
- 172 Psychology consultations, with extension of this offer to grant holders.

2.2 DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI) (ESRS S1)

IMPLEMENT THE GENDER EQUALITY POLICY

- Establishment of an “Equity Commission” responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of Gender Equality Plans and other initiatives aimed at fostering a more inclusive and diverse workplace.
- Full payment of the Christmas and holiday stipend for employees on parental leave.
- Celebration of the International Day of Women in Science with the attribution of the **Blue Woman Talent Award CIIMAR**, awarded by vote to Patrícia Todo Bom.



PROMOTE EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION IN CIIMAR'S CROSS-CUTTING MATTERS

- Availability of a “Suggestion Box” in the building’s break room to encourage the submission of new ideas to the Management.

2.3 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT (ESRS S1)

RECOGNITION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Awarding of the Nautilus Prize for: International Project, Media Project, Article of the Year and Media Article.

PROVIDE CONTINUOUS EDUCATION AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- A total of 215 professional training courses (including Laboratory Safety, Biosafety, Fire Safety, and Internal Safety and Good Practices Training) were conducted for the CIIMAR community.
- 35 Certified **Advanced Training** courses were organised for the scientific community
- 44 PhD, 133 Master’s and 87 Bachelor’s thesis and internships were supervised and completed at CIIMAR in 2024.
- The creation of the Training & Careers Office, dedicated to structuring educational and training programmes for the CIIMAR community and for setting CIIMAR as a reference educational center.



2.4 COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL IMPACT (ESRS S3, S4)

CONTRIBUTE TO SOCIAL SOLIDARITY ACTIONS

- Participation in the “Pirilampo Mágico” campaign to raise donations to the National Federation of Social Solidarity Cooperatives.
- **Donation of items** and donations collected in the CIIMAR Circular events to social work associations (more details in section 2.2).

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SCIENTIFIC LITERACY AND EDUCATION

CIIMAR is dedicated to improving scientific literacy in the fields of Ocean and environmental sciences, as well as promoting greater knowledge and awareness of global environmental issues, fostering an informed society committed to adopting more sustainable behaviors. CIIMAR has an extensive educational program for schools across various educational levels, which includes visits to CIIMAR, lectures, field trips, experimental activities, games, conversations with scientists, beach cleanups, and training sessions for teachers.

Considering all the **literacy, communication and outreach activities**, namely outdoor activities, public lectures, exhibitions, scientific seminars, workshops, teacher’s trainings and public events, the activities reached over **129 219 individuals**, including students, educators and the general public.



CIIMAR also develops **educational activities** in collaboration with various entities and national programs, including “Ciência Viva Clubs in Schools” and several municipal councils. In total in the year of 2024, 386 educational activities were carried out in schools with circa 9476 participants, and 199 school visits, with 5088 participants, to the CIIMAR building took place.

In 2024, CIIMAR participated and organised several high-visibility public events such as the **CIIMAR Open Day**, which attracted 17 000 visitors, the **Mostra U. Porto**, the European Researchers Night and Encontro Ciência 2024. These events provided direct engagement with various sectors of society, enhancing public awareness and perception of the Center.



CIIMAR hosted **35 scientific exhibitions** designed to present important environmental and scientific topics to the public in an engaging and accessible way. Notable exhibitions include “**BlueHub**”, “**BioBank**”, “**Mergulho nas Florestas Marinhas**”, “**Vamos perguntar à Natureza?**”, “**Monstros Marinhos**”, created in collaboration with artist Ricardo Nicolau de Almeida, and “**Mar de Plástico**”. In 2024, CIIMAR also organized the **3rd Scientific Photography Contest**, with the finalist photographs showcased during the CIIMAR Open Day, and was a partner in the organization of the photographic contest “**Wiki Loves Earth Portugal**”, in collaboration with Wikimedia Portugal.

CIIMAR organizes a significant number of **seminars, public lectures, and debates**, often in collaboration with other organizations, to disseminate scientific knowledge to diverse audiences. The institute holds weekly scientific seminars under the names Oceanus, Neptune, and Nautilus, aimed at the CIIMAR community but also open to the public. Additionally, CIIMAR runs the seminar series “**Conversa com Ciência**” and “**Café com Ciência**”, in partnership with the Serralves Foundation and the CMIA of Matosinhos and Vila do Conde, respectively, targeting the general public. In 2024, a total of 92 public lectures were organized, reaching a public of 12 155 people.



A promotional poster for a CIIMAR seminar. At the top, it features the CIIMAR logo and logos for the 'centro de monitorização e interpretação ambiental' in Matosinhos and Vila do Conde. The main title is 'CAFÉ COM CIÊNCIA SEMINAR' in large, bold letters. Below it, the topic is 'Mineração de mar profundo: problemática e investigação'. Three icons indicate the date 'Quarta-feira, 16 October 2024', the time '11h30', and the 'Online Format'. A circular portrait of the speaker, Marlene Pinheiro, is on the right. At the bottom, there is a link to 'Visit Our Website www.ciimar.up.pt' and the CIIMAR logo.

CIIMAR collaborated as a scientific partner in the [BioBlitz Serralves](#) in partnership with the Serralves Foundation engaging over 500 participants and promoting greater knowledge and direct interaction with various fauna and flora groups.

CIIMAR manages two **Environmental Monitoring and Interpretation Centers (CMIA)** through cooperation agreements with the Municipalities of [Vila do Conde](#) and [Matosinhos](#). These local centers are dedicated to scientific outreach and environmental education, with a strong focus on ocean and marine ecosystems. They play a crucial role in bridging scientific research and society, promoting environmental management and fostering a deeper understanding of marine ecosystems. The CMIA's offer diverse and

complementary educational programs tailored for all audiences, especially students, including hands-on workshops conducted at the centers, in schools, or in the field, as well as exhibitions and interactive activities.

Additionally, media engagement - including press, radio, and television - along with the management of CIIMAR's social media platforms ([Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#), [BlueSky](#), [YouTube](#)) and official website (www.ciimar.up.pt), has significantly increased the visibility and recognition of CIIMAR's research and ongoing sustainability initiatives. In 2024, CIIMAR also joined a new platform BlueSky, in efforts to join the online conversation about science communication. In this past year, a total of 685 news articles were published across various media outlets, and 2304 social media posts were shared about CIIMAR, with a total of 34 574 followers across all platforms.





3. ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

CIIMAR, as a research center in marine and environmental sciences and technologies, recognizes the fundamental importance of adopting sustainable practices in its management and research activities. We integrate environmental criteria as key factors in creating value and ensuring the sustainability of our research, innovation, advanced training, policy support, and knowledge dissemination, reinforcing our strategy and institutional image.

In order to further decrease the negative and increase the positive environmental impact of our actions and to promote sustainable and regenerative practices, CIIMAR has implemented various measures such as:

10 kg/month of pipette tip boxes plastic recycled in partnership with Precious Plastic	294 items donated to local charities in the “Circular markets”	100 second-hand items circulated within the community in the “Circular markets”	40 ponds created and restored for biodiversity
60 adult books in 8 languages circulated in the “CIIMAR Book Sharing”	6 beach cleaning initiatives	70 kg of plastic collected at the beach cleaning with Ecoinside	

3.1 SUSTAINABLE RESOURCE MANAGEMENT (ESRS E1, E3, E5)

REDUCE WATER CONSUMPTION (ESRS E3)

Regarding water consumption, CIIMAR continued to invest in the promotion of measures among employees to reduce water usage.

In the Bioterium of Aquatic Organisms (BOGA), most experimental systems operate under a Recirculating Aquaculture System (RAS), allowing better water quality control and preventing excessive water consumption. At CIIMAR, three types of water are distributed: municipal freshwater, dechlorinated freshwater, and seawater. Dechlorinated freshwater is obtained by removing chlorine from municipal water through aeration and chemical filtration systems. It is mainly used in BOGA's experimental rooms, where it is essential for maintaining freshwater aquatic organisms, as well as in the preparation of ultrapure and deionized water in some laboratories. Seawater is collected at the entrance of Porto de Leixões and undergoes successive treatment through disc filters (40, 100, 130, and 200 µm), a sand filter, an ultraviolet filter, cartridge filters (25 µm), and activated carbon filters before being distributed across different areas of the facility and some laboratories on the second floor. Seawater is crucial for BOGA's operations, as more than 80% of its experimental systems rely on saltwater or brackish water.



Table 1 presents the total consumption of different types of water at CIIMAR and BOGA between 2021 and 2024. During this period, there was a significant increase in freshwater consumption in 2023 associated with the resource demand for trials with trout. However, in 2024, the **total annual consumption lowered** to the values of 2022. The decrease in total water consumption at the headquarters in 2023 was notable (-1473 m³) and was particularly significant in the consumption of dechlorinated freshwater (-1260 m³). This fact is likely related to the reduction of the number of experimental trials with freshwater species (namely trout) at BOGA, which require a continuous water renewal throughout the trials to comply with water quality requirements and animal welfare, in contrast to the less consuming toxicology trials. Furthermore, in the last three months of the year, no new animals were introduced into BOGA, which decreases the water consumption associated with the introductory quarantine period.

Table 1. Total value of water consumption at the CIIMAR headquarters from 2021 to 2024. Values preceded by a downward arrow (↓) indicate a decrease in comparison to the previous year.

	2021	2022	2023	2024
	3041	3566	5153	↓3680
	1955	2813	↓2260	↓2047
	1086	↓753	2893	↓1633
WATER	1412	↓931	2420	↓1544
	598	↓492	↓357	↓302.5
	814	↓439	2063	↓1241.5
	1765	1927	2212	2344.5

REDUCE ENERGY CONSUMPTION (ESRS E1)

CIIMAR continued to develop a strategy aimed at reducing energy consumption and, consequently, greenhouse gas emissions. This strategy encompasses both research activities and the management and administration of the center, with the goal of minimizing our environmental footprint. Ongoing measures include the implementation of a timer system to turn off lights in common areas and laboratories outside working hours and the adoption of a shared lab equipment system, namely auto-clave and washing machines, to optimize usage and reduce energy consumption.

Table 2 compares energy consumption across different floors and facilities at CIIMAR between 2021 and 2024. Overall, there was a reduction in energy consumption, with the highest value in 2022. The only exception is floor 2 (laboratories and offices)

energy consumption, possibly due to the growing number of people working at the headquarters. The energy consumption at BOGA, associated with the continuous operation of various experimental systems, significantly decreased in 2024 (-58 195 m³), which further highlights the impact of applied energy efficiency measures.

Table 2. Total value of electrical energy consumption at the CIIMAR headquarters from 2021 to 2024. Values preceded by a downward arrow (↓) indicate a decrease in comparison to the previous year.

	2021	2022	2023	2024
ELECTRICITY	Total energy consumption (kWh)	323999	348938	↓335696
	3rd floor energy consumption (kWh)	59552	78711	↓69789
	2nd floor energy consumption (kWh)	111242	111789	113776
	BOGA (kWh)	154205	158438	↓93936



REDUCE PAPER CONSUMPTION (ESRS E5)

With multiple printers available at the headquarters, CIIMAR has installed message boards displaying the daily number of printed sheets to raise awareness about paper waste. Additionally, recycling stations have been placed near the printers to promote proper waste separation and panels were installed in all the bathrooms at the headquarters promoting the conscious use of paper towels.

Table 3 presents the number of printed sheets over the past three years, showing a significant increase in 2023 and a slight increase in 2024. This rise may be linked to the growing number of staff and students at CIIMAR’s headquarters. To counteract this trend, internal communication channels have been increasingly digitized to reduce reliance on printed materials. However, despite these measures, the number of printed sheets remains high. Therefore, additional steps should be taken to further reduce paper usage, in line with the goals outlined in [CIIMAR’s Social & Environmental Sustainability Plan for 2025](#).

Table 3. Number of printed paper sheets per month at the CIIMAR headquarters from 2022 to 2024. Values preceded by a downward arrow (↓) indicate a decrease in comparison to the previous year.

		2022	2023	2024
PRINTED PAPER	Total copies per month	3816	8054	8548
	Black & white copies per month	2195	4459	4569
	Color copies per month	1621	3595	3978

3.2 SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT, MOBILITY AND COMMITMENTS (ESRS E1, E2, S2)

PROMOTE SUSTAINABLE MOBILITY (ESRS E1)

- Celebration of World Bicycle Day (June 2024) with a bike ride, picnic, and an open yoga class at Parque da Cidade



PRIORITIZE ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL SUSTAINABILITY IN THE PROCUREMENT OF GOODS AND SERVICES (ESRS E1, S2)

CIIMAR applies a supplier evaluation method through the Laborders platform, where the person responsible for each order must assess the supplier based on various satisfaction criteria, including sustainability. This approach aims to integrate environmental criteria into the supplier selection process, taking on the role of a change agent in the value chain and collaborating with corporate clients and suppliers in risk management and improving their environmental performance.

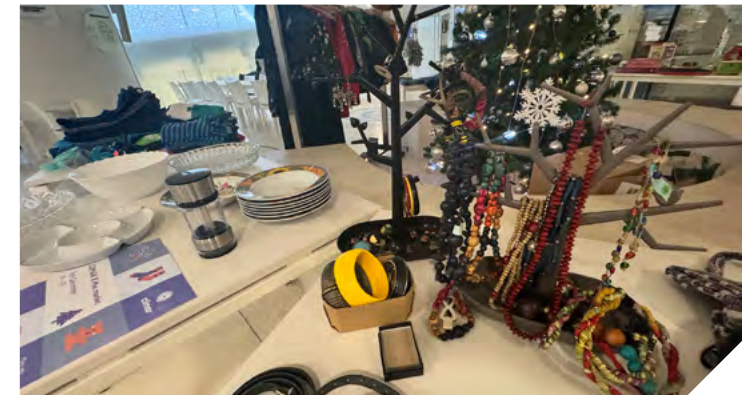
To raise awareness among suppliers and CIIMAR members about our concerns regarding the environmental impact of our activities and relationships, as well as to encourage the adoption of sustainable best practices, the following statement has been included in the email signature field of CIIMAR's public procurement communications:

“The adoption of environmentally friendly practices in CIIMAR’s laboratories and common areas is part of our mission. Choosing more sustainable resources, materials, and services with lower environmental impact is increasingly important to us.”

3.3 CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND WASTE MANAGEMENT (ESRS E5)

PROMOTE CIRCULARITY

- **CIIMAR Circular Markets** are an initiative aimed at reducing consumption and promoting the circular use of second-hand items within the community. In 2024, two circular markets were organised. The first in May, had **59 items circulated, and 66 items and 30€ donated** to the Centro São Cirilo that empowers people and families going through a period of social vulnerability. On December 16, CIIMAR held its Circular X-mas Market, where members of the institution shared items they no longer needed, turning them into beautiful and sustainable holiday gifts. The event **circulated 41 items, and donated 228 items and 306€** to Associação A Casa do Caminho that supports children at risk and their families.
- **CIIMAR's Book Sharing** is a small shared library, where all members can leave pre-loved books in exchange for others. This initiative has circulated over **60 children books in 4 languages, and over 60 adult books in 8 languages.**
- **Coolers collection** campaign is an initiative that aims to repurpose and redirect otherwise discarded cooler packs that are received with cold pack-



ages orders, considering these are toxic and non-recyclable. A partnership was established with the lab material manufacturer NZYTech, where the coolers are sent back to this provider for reuse in future orders.

- The lab material brand Enzifarma contacted CIIMAR to offer nearly-expired **1000 µL pipette tip boxes**. Considering that some lab protocols do not require sterile material, these tips have been distributed for free to research groups. This collaboration is a great way of avoiding plastic waste, and we are thankful for Enzifarma's gesture.
- **Precious Racks Campaign.** Throughout 2024, CIIMAR continued its efforts to reduce the environmental footprint of CIIMAR's laboratories, particularly focusing on the recycling of laboratory plastics. Under the slogan "Sustainability Starts in Our Labs" the Precious Racks campaign was continued, collecting approximately 10kg per month of micropipette tip racks that are not recyclable through mainstream recycling. These racks were transformed into various long-lasting utility items, in partnership with Precious Plastic Portugal, namely the shelves for the new communal "Tea Corner".



INCENTIVES FOR WASTE REDUCTION AND INCREASED RECYCLING

Waste management policies have evolved towards the sustainable management of materials to protect, preserve and improve environmental quality, safeguard human health, ensure the efficient and rational use of natural resources, promote circular economy principles, enhance the use of renewable energy, reduce dependence on imported resources, create new economic opportunities and contribute to long-term competitiveness.

- Recycling of paper, plastic and glass. Since 2023, CIIMAR has distributed and maintained approximately 30 differentiated containers for the selective collection and recycling of paper, plastic and glass at strategic locations, both in laboratories and in the dining areas and corridors of the offices. In 2024, new message boards were installed to encourage better paper separation and collection.

3.4 CHEMICAL AND ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION (ESRS E2, E4)

HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS (ESRS E2)

CIIMAR is committed to identifying and replacing hazardous chemicals with environmental-friendly alternatives or implementing alternative laboratory techniques that do not require such chemicals. The cooperation and knowledge sharing among all stakeholders help to identify and track technological advancements, enabling the implementation of improvements that protect the environment.

Chemical and biological waste (which can be hazardous to the environment) is an integral part of normal laboratory research activities. The management of this waste aims to prevent and minimize negative impacts on public health and the environment. We handle hazardous waste responsibly, in accordance with the General Waste Management Regime. Waste classification is carried out according to the List Of Waste Regulations to facilitate better management and tracking of the waste generated. These chemical and biological wastes are collected by a specialized company and subsequently treated, with the possibility of being refined, reused, or discarded. The table below shows the waste values generated over the last three years.



Table 4. Discarded volume of Hazardous Chemicals, in tons, at CIIMAR between 2021 and 2024. Codes are listed according to the List Of Waste Regulations. Values preceded by an upward arrow (↑) indicate an increase in comparison to the previous year.

		2021	2022	2023	2024
06 01 06	Other acids	0.400	0.382	0.323	↑0.440
06 02 05	Other bases	0.084	0.072	0.042	↑0.044
06 04 04	Wastes containing mercury				↑0.00006
06 04 05	Wastes containing other heavy metals	0.051	0.006	↑0.050	0.036
14 06 02	Other halogenated solvents and solvent mixtures	0.410	↑0.470	0.526	↑0.535
14 06 03	Other solvents and solvent mixtures	1.220	0.968	0.675	↑0.727
15 01 10	Packaging containing residues of or contaminated by hazardous substances	0.567	0.322	0.235	↑0.260
15 02 02	Absorbents, filter materials (including oil filters not otherwise specified), wiping cloths, protective clothing contaminated by hazardous substances				↑0.119
16 01 14	Antifreeze fluids containing hazardous substances				↑0.019
16 03 03	Inorganic wastes containing hazardous substances	0.854	0.697	↑0.550	↑0.825
16 05 06	Laboratory chemicals, consisting of or containing hazardous substances, including mixtures of laboratory chemicals	0.547	0.167	↑0.188	↑0.584
18 01 03	Wastes whose collection and disposal is subject to special requirements in order to prevent infection	0.310	↑2.781	↑3.379	2.539
18 01 01	Sharp objects	0.691	↑0.995	↑1.499	1.412
	TOTAL	5.134	↑6.860	↑7.467	↑7.540

PROTECTION, CREATION AND RESTORATION OF ECOSYSTEMS (ESRS E4)

CIIMAR actively promotes numerous initiatives and projects aimed at the creation, restoration, and protection of valuable ecosystems, as well as fostering active citizenship. These efforts include the creation and restoration of ponds, marine algae reforestation, and river and beach clean-up activities. Among the key projects in 2024, notable initiatives included MoRe Porto, Charcos com Vida, Maelstrom, SeaGrassRIAwild, BlueForests and BlueForestring. One significant achievement was the construction of **14 new ponds** and the **restoration of 26 ponds**, which serve as notable biodiversity conservation sites and provide valuable educational spaces for hands-on experiences with nature and wildlife.

CIIMAR also promoted **6 beach cleaning initiatives** in 2024, including the organization of a volunteer activity with the company **Ecoinside**, which collected ca. 70 kg of plastic, and the **MAELSTROM Sunset Beach Cleanup** in Vila do Conde, which mobilized about 100 participants.







4. CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

This report provides a summary of the Social and Environmental Sustainability initiatives implemented by CIIMAR in 2024, in alignment with the goals and metrics defined by the [Social and Environmental Sustainability Plan for 2024](#). In order for CIIMAR to adopt the best practices in this field and reinforce our commitment to sustainable development, this document follows the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standards and is structured according to the ESG dimensions (Environmental, Social, and Corporate Governance).

The CIIMAR **Social and Environmental Sustainability Report 2024**, as well as previous editions of the CIIMAR Sustainability reports and plans, is available in digital format and can be accessed on the CIIMAR website at www.ciimar.up.pt/reports-plans. This interactive report provides additional information through various hyperlinks to external websites and internal CIIMAR pages.

The annual commitment to the development of the Social and Environmental Sustainability Plan and Report ensures a structured and comprehensive approach in defining and planning our sustainability measures. These measures, coordinated by various internal offices and organizational units, allow for a thorough monitoring, evaluation, and reporting of the implemented actions in a systematic and objective manner.

CIIMAR reaffirms its commitment to adopting best practices in environmental and social sustainability and integrating sustainability policies and principles into its organizational culture, governance model, research, and daily activities. The institution is dedicated to becoming a leading Scientific Research Center in this field, demonstrating both ambition and responsibility in its sustainability efforts.



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