

E-BOOK

# Eco-friendly bathrooms guide



In this special guide, we dive into the world of eco-friendly bathroom design, exploring some of the latest products which promote water and energy saving and asking how retailers can sell these bathroom solutions to sometimes sceptical customers.

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# How to get water wise

With energy bills skyrocketing and sustainability in the news, consumers are increasingly eco-conscious. Their concerns range from saving water and climate change to gas and electricity costs.

The bathroom industry has been ahead of the eco-conscious curve, working for years to create products that conserve resources. This is demonstrated in the technology employed in many modern bathrooms.

In sustainable bathroom design, water is at the top of the list, but research performed in 2020 by [Water UK](#) shows that UK homeowners are seriously out of touch with the reality of their water use. It found that homeowners vastly underestimate their daily use, with 46% of people believing their household uses 20 litres of water daily, when the real figure is about 142 litres per person daily. This means an average UK family could use a whopping 500 litres each day (or more)!



In 2019, the [Environment Agency](#) reported that 15 of the 23 water companies operating in England are rated as under 'serious stress,' and it's likely getting worse.

Saving water is clearly necessary as we face an uncertain future due to climate change. Considering that roughly 63% of a household's water is used in the bathroom, it makes sense that bathroom manufacturers lead the way in water-saving technology.

There are many questions to answer:

- ▶ What are the latest eco-friendly products?
- How can manufacturers support their retailers?
- How can retailers best sell sustainable bathroom products?
- ▶ How can retailers and designers help their clients create a bathroom solution with loads of style plus green credentials?



## Toilets and showers lead the way in green design

In the past decade, showers, taps, toilets and baths have made great strides with water-saving and sustainable design.

Recent product launches include [Geberit's Sigma Concealed Cistern](#) with dual flush technology, which can limit water use to just 4.5 litres.

[Duravit](#) has seen significant growth in sales of its shower toilets to homeowners who have used them in hotels. Plus the recent pandemic has emphasized their hygienic benefits.

Duravit's most recent development, Hygiene Flush, incorporates technology that allows toilets to flush on 6 litres or as low as 3.5 litres and still be effective in cleaning the bowl, according to the company.



Duravit's HygieneFlush

Holly Aspinall, Channel Marketing Manager for Retail and GAC at Geberit, comments: “There’s a perception that water-saving bathroom products sacrifice on usability and performance. However, investing in an effective cistern like this, coupled with a high quality, eco-friendly toilet will not only save on water but will also perform immaculately and stand the test of time.

“It’s imperative to remember that even small changes in the bathroom can make a huge difference when all put together. A double-button, dual flush plate, such as the stylish Geberit Sigma 21 or 50, is a great way to introduce a new water-saving element into any bathroom. The dual flush has the added functionality of a ‘light’ flush option, effectively reducing water usage with every flush.”



**Geberit AquaClean Mera  
Comfort in White Alpine**

Showering is another area where consumers can take some convincing when it comes to the eco-friendly option, but, as Aspinall says, products with modern technology should perform well and last for years.

New Zealand brand [Methven](#) has been particularly pioneering with its patented Aurajet halo-shaped shower heads, which can save up to 50% on energy costs and up to 55% on the cost of water used in the shower.

Its Aurajet Aio Overhead Drencher, shown in matte black, is reported to be the brand's 'most invigorating shower experience yet,' delivering a full-bodied spray with maximum body contact and all-over warmth. The 200mm chrome-plated drencher is water efficient without compromising luxurious spray performance, while an engineered polymer with hydrophobic properties resists limescale build-up.

[Hansgrohe](#) has also been selling its eco-credentials, with EcoSmart technology. Its Crometta S Showerpipe 240 1jet EcoSmart with thermostatic shower mixer, for example, uses 9 litres of water per minute vs the 12 litres of a standard shower model — so a significant saving.



Methven's Aurajet Aio overhead drencher and Aio rail shower

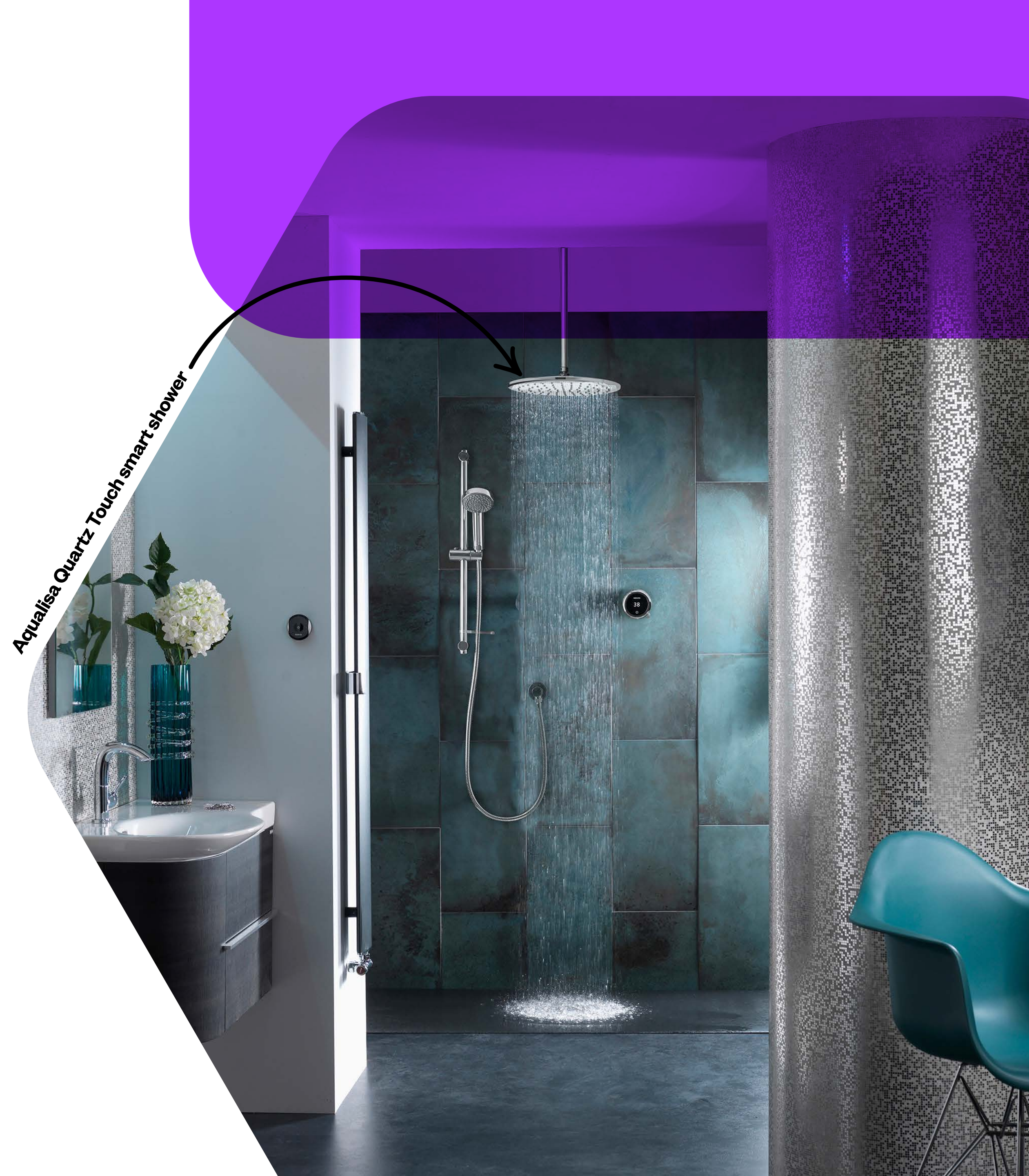


Crometta S Showerpipe 240 1jet EcoSmart with thermostatic shower

In addition to shower head design and water-limiting technology, smart technology can promote water savings. [Aqualisa's](#) Quartz Touch incorporates smart features including the ability to set shower duration using the [ShowerMe app](#), which monitors how much water each family member uses. The shower also can be set to 'Eco' mode during installation, which promises savings of up to 30% of water consumption while still maintaining shower performance.

### Key takeaways

- 1 Modern technology means saving water no longer equates to poor or decreased performance
- 2 Homeowners wildly underestimate their water usage, but you can educate them
- 3 Even small changes in the bathroom make a difference when added together



# Energy saving is essential

In addition to saving water, saving energy is also vital — this is true particularly in the bathroom, as any appliance that heats water uses additional energy.

‘Cold start’ technology is a fairly new innovation. With this technology, the boiler is only engaged when the hot tap is turned on, rather than by default, as is the case with most traditional bathroom mixers.

“This ensures that taps produce cold — rather than hot — water by default,” [Roca](#) UK & Ireland brand manager, Natalie Bird, notes. “The handle can be turned to the left to introduce hot water gradually. It’s only at this point that the boiler is engaged, so cold start can contribute towards saving energy for the homeowner.”

This technology can now be found in products including Roca’s Ona collection which also features sanitaryware made from the Spanish brand’s proprietary and eco-friendly Fineceramic material, which is said to be just as hard-wearing as ceramic, but lighter and thinner in profile due to the addition of a strengthening mineral called corundum.



Roca Ona basin and basin mixer

Duravit's FreshStart feature ensures that cold water alone flows to the tap and hot water is only added when the user deliberately moves the handle to the left. The Duravit No.1 series has been developed to incorporate MinusFlow, where the actual water flowing through the mixer taps is limited to 3.5 litres/minute.

**Vado's** EcoTurn technology is also designed to reduce hot water usage when not required — reducing hot water waste, helping to prolong the lifespan of the boiler and saving the user money.

Another brand that says it takes its eco-consciousness seriously is **Grohe**, and its latest launch — the Grohe Plus with LED display — promises ample high-tech water-saving technology. A modern take on a classic design, it comes with a chic acrylic screen which hosts an LED temperature display, resulting in considered consumption, the company says. The tap further reduces water consumption thanks to its spray function, which allows the user to easily switch between a sustainable standard spray of 5.7 litres/minute and an even greener water-saving flow of 4 litres/minute by just waving a hand over the lit icon.



Vado EcoTurn basin mixer

Grohe Bau Cosmo E sensor-activated tap in Chrome



In 2021, Grohe announced its movement towards a circular economy by launching four of their best-selling products as Cradle to Cradle Certified®. According to the German manufacturer, its C2C concept enables it to ‘drastically reduce the use of new resources, as a product is designed and manufactured with the intent of using its components in its end-of-life-phase for the creation of new products.’

As well as being C2C certified, the Grohe BauEdge and Grohe Eurosmart taps are each enhanced with SilkMove ES technology, where ES stands for energy saving.

“The technology prevents the unnecessary use of hot water by supplying only cold water with the lever in the middle position, offering sustainability in everyday functionality as well as manufacturing and the product end-of-life phase,” the company says.

### **Key takeaway**

Cold start technology is a good way of saving energy, but app-controlled technology also plays a part, allowing users to set the temperature of their shower, for example, before the water is running.



# Form defines function

While brassware and toilets are the main contenders in the water-saving arena, clever design means that bathing can also be less water intensive. A number of manufacturers have discovered that with better ergonomic shaping, a bath can offer a luxurious experience and use much less water than a traditional tub.

For example, with its 'double dip' design, the Cabrits freestanding tub by [Victoria + Albert](#) has been contoured to fit the body. As a consequence, it is the most water efficient in the Victoria + Albert collection with a maximum volume of only 176 litres, rather than 300 litres in a standard tub or 400 litres in a freestanding bath.



**Cabrits freestanding tub  
by Victoria + Albert**

The VitrA Balance bath also saves water thanks to its economical design. It features a slightly shallower depth accompanied by a more generous angled reclining end, meaning less water — only 130 litres is required to fill the bath with no loss of comfort for the bather, the company says.

Where sanitaryware and shower trays are concerned, the eco-credentials tend to be hidden within the materials themselves — usually very hardwearing composites made using at least some recycled or recyclable material.

Victoria + Albert's QuarryCast is one, as is Roca's Fineceramic, Corian, Caesarstone's quartz and Cosentino's Silestone.

In addition, both [Bette](#) and [Kaldewei](#) offer shower trays and surfaces made from enamelled steel.



VitrA Balance bath

In fact, in early 2023, Kaldewei introduced a new 100% recyclable steel enamel — certified bluemint® Steel — that is said to reduce emissions by 70%.

The use of CO2-reduced steel is particularly important as it helps Kaldewei achieve specific climate targets. They are now able to offer customers a premium product that combines modern luxury in the form of exquisite materials and elegant design along with sustainability. The company calls this ‘luxsustainability.’

Silestone® HybriQ® by Cosentino promises high resistance & hardness, easy daily maintenance and high colour consistency. It’s made of a hybrid formulation of mineral raw materials, such as quartz, and recycled materials. Cosentino’s production process is an environmental success story, since it uses 99% recycled water and 100% renewable electric energy, as well as reused raw materials.



Kaldewei  
Superplan Zero

Silestone® HybriQ® by  
Cosentino in Ethereal Noctis



## Key takeaways

- 1 Cold start technology and infrared sensor taps are excellent tools for water saving.
- 2 If the customer wants a bath and is interested in water saving, opt for an ergonomic model that uses less water.
- 3 Some eco-credentials are built into the material of the product, so are not immediately apparent to end customers.



# Selling green

When it comes to selling greener products, demonstration is ideal. With demonstration, you can sell benefits that would otherwise be intangible, particularly with products like low-flow WCs and showers — it's easier to prove the technology to sceptical consumers if you have a working model. Where demonstration isn't possible, point-of-sale (POS) and marketing material should be placed around the showroom. You could also show products working in virtual reality using [Virtual Worlds 4D Theatre](#). You could even display an image showing how much water a household typically uses.

You can also direct customers to products with the [Unified Water Label](#) to show consumption. Be the expert and make sure you know the answers to likely questions.

Roca's Natalie Bird comments that retailers must make water and energy-saving products more relatable to the homeowner by helping them understand what's in it for them. "This means outlining the eco as well as the financial benefits — of particular interest right now considering rising energy costs."



Ebru Bircan, Leader Marketing Activation UK, LIXIL EMENA & GROHE UK, adds: “Retailers can use their knowledge and influence to encourage customers to move to more sustainable products by explaining the long-term benefits to the bottom line. Once a more environmentally friendly product is in-situ, consumers can expect savings on future bills (both energy and water if metered). And while it might be philanthropic, there is a sense of satisfaction that comes from knowing they’ve selected something which is better for the planet.”

While interest in sustainability may be driven by a desire to save money on water and energy, a growing number of consumers are also concerned with how and where and what the product is made from.

In addition, Bircan notes that utilising up-selling and cross-selling skills when speaking to customers about sustainable alternatives could prove fruitful. Customers may be surprised how quickly savings can compensate for the initial outlay. Explain how installing an infra-red tap will have a positive impact on water bills due to less waste or how a sustainable feature doesn’t mean compromising on design.



“Elsewhere, retailers making it easier for customers to quickly spot greener alternatives by adding point-of-sale information around the showroom can result in great interest: Is a particular tap going to reduce water wastage by a certain percentage? Retailers can proudly display this through graphics and POS signage, so it’s easier for customers to absorb sustainability-minded information as they’re browsing.”

Finally, up-selling and cross-selling are much easier when you have intuitive, easy-to-use bathroom planning software offered by Cyncly, such as [Compusoft’s Innoplus](#) or [Virtual Worlds](#). These software solutions include comprehensive catalogues featuring the brands mentioned here and more, making it easy to quickly switch between products and changes to bathroom designs can be made in minutes. In addition, the 3D photorealistic renders show designs in their best possible light.



## Key takeaways

- 1 Ensure you have a few working models on display, particularly of products consumers might be hesitant about
- 2 Make products relatable by telling the consumer what they have to gain in energy and water saving
- 3 Make sure you know your products and have plenty of marketing material for the customer
- 4 Choose a comprehensive, intuitive and easy-to-use bathroom planning design software, such as those offered by Cyncly: Innoplus by Compusoft or Virtual Worlds

# Identifying water-wise products

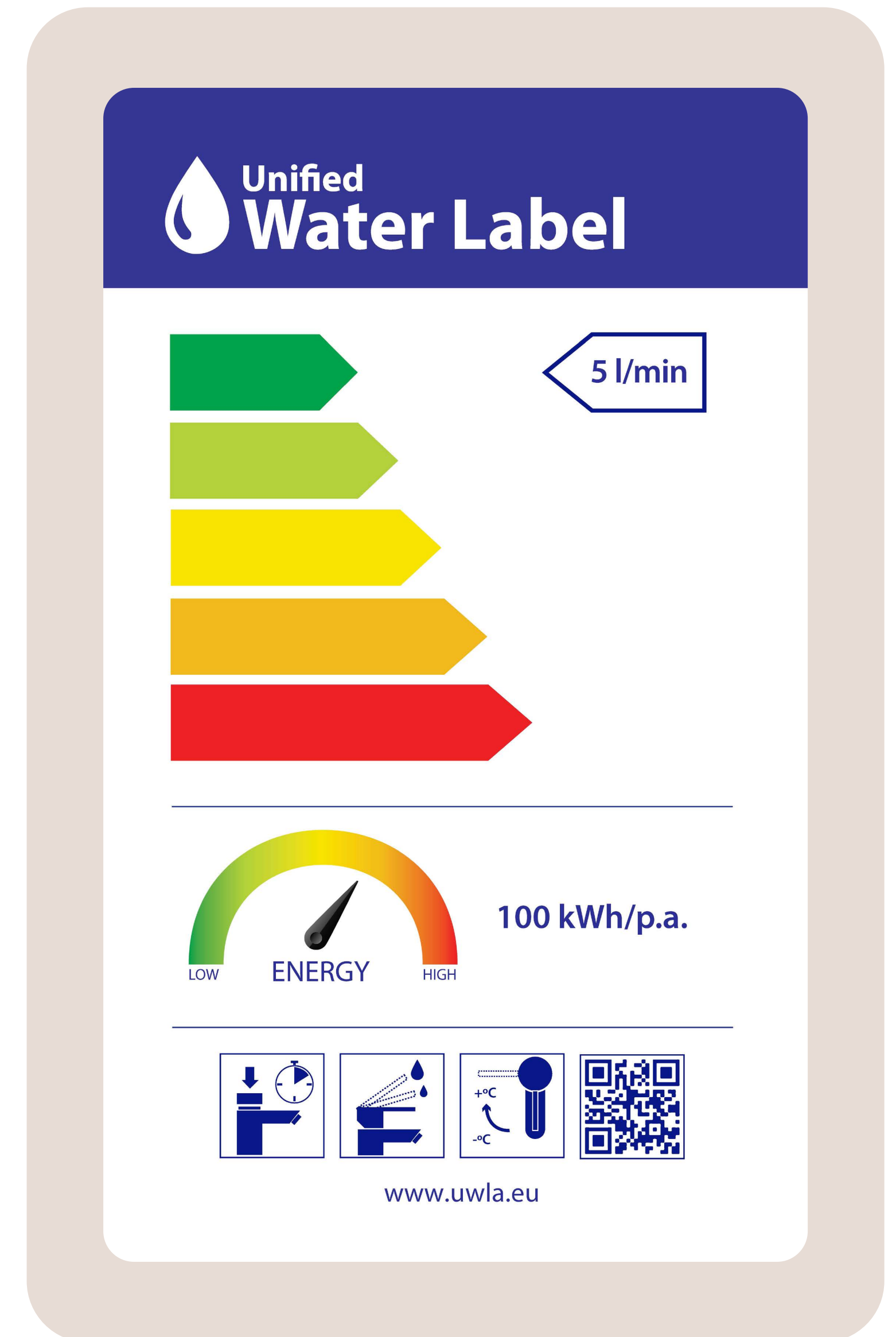
The [Unified Water Label](#) (UWL) is a Europe-wide initiative by the bathroom industry. The aim is to support the goal of governments to reduce water use and energy waste with the introduction of innovative and technologically advanced products.

The UWL provides a common label that offers clear, concise and easy-to-understand messaging about a product's water and energy usage.

The UWL has experienced strong growth, boasting a group of 10,500 architects and specifiers who use the database and calculator for over 150,000 projects, with 160 brands and supporters. It is a smart tool well established in the KBB sector across Europe, which has been identified within the ISO Standard 31600:2022 as best practice.

The UWL is gaining in visibility, with international retailer IKEA being the latest company to include the label on packaging and its website. Other major retailers, buying groups and manufacturers are also making their support for the label more visible, increasing consumer awareness and education. The UWL has also launched an educational project, taking the water matters message into schools.

Retailers and designers can look up which brands are registered and download free marketing material from the UWL website.





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and life to spaces



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