

Building a better, greener future for the world

Manuel Couto Alves, President and CEO, MCA Group, reveals how the leading construction firm has evolved to support innovative sustainability



In just over two decades, you have transformed MCA Group from a small construction firm based in Guimarães, northern Portugal, into a global and highly diversified engineering, procurement, construction (EPC) and finance group. Could you describe the group’s evolution and the values you have instilled that have driven the group toward an innovative and sustainable future?

The group was founded in 1998 as a regional Portuguese company focused on public infrastructure and then grew throughout the nation. We started our sustained internationalization process in 2006 in Portuguese-speaking Africa. This introduced us to very different cultural working regimes, which gave us experience in overcoming difficulties and turning them into opportunities that strengthened us as a company. Another characteristic of MCA Group’s evolution is that it has always understood that new projects in emerging markets must have a local governance structure, with adequate technological resources.

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MCA Group is now a truly global business, very much in tune with today’s challenges and with a strong brand of projects. In recent years the world has developed a different sensitivity to the green economy, environmental sustainability and renewable energies. MCA Group wants to contribute to building a sustainable future, we want to be part of the solution by developing projects with private and public entities. We know this green future is where we are going and where we want to go, but never forget where we came from and don’t neglect the other sectors of our activity that we continue to develop. MCA Group has never stopped evolving. Currently, we are present in over 10 geographic markets and we operate in 11 sectors of activity, from construction to the environment and renewable energies, including maritime works and coastal protection, roads and integrated infrastructures. Summing up our history, present and future, what stands out is that we always work with ambition and innovation.


What does sustainability mean to you personally?

As one of the first organizations to have ISO 9001 and 18001 certification for construction operations in sub-Saharan Africa, MCA Group has always focused on environmental and social sustainability. Our training and development pro-


gram for employees, local families and communities continues to set us apart, for instance. As do our multiple corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs covering health, agriculture, gender equality, sports and road safety that we design and execute with our own resources. This year, as part of the fight against COVID-19, we have developed specific CSR projects in Portugal and Angola, and made submissions to other countries, such as Mexico and Kenya. As well as donations of materials and services, we created the MCA Medical Council that offers support and advice in telemedicine that takes advantage of Portugal’s experiences and procedures. The group also now defines its investment strategy, corporate governance, risk analysis, technological partnerships and commitment to new sectors within the scope of the green economy.

What are some of the company’s new projects that are based on green, sustainable practices at the environmental and social level?


We are introducing modular concepts into Africa and Latin America that are adaptable to each context for a complete solution that mitigates the dangers of inadequately deposited and untreated waste. We are adamant about promoting the conversion of waste as an economic resource and mitigating the impact of waste on the sub-soil and atmosphere. These projects are being developed in Mexico, Kenya and Angola. In addition, MCA Group is now in the execution phase of our first biorefinery for converting polluting residual oils into more environmentally friendly biofuel, which will be completed in the last quarter of 2020. In order to help the effort to change Europe’s energy matrix, we aim to position this pilot initiative as one of the projects to replicate, depending on its degree of efficiency. We have also created a startup in Austria that specializes in the development of EPC projects for anaerobic digestion centers that will allow the use of organic waste as a resource, resulting in several emerging and necessary sub-products within the scope of green bioenergy and the production of high-quality organic biofertilizers. This company is currently operating in central Europe and will be expanding to other regions where the MCA Group already operates.



MCA Group operates in **over 10 countries** on 3 continents



In the last decade, MCA Group has executed projects worth **more than \$1.4 billion**



MCA Group’s current pipeline of projects is valued at **nearly \$3,2 billion**



At the moment, we are involved and very committed to one of the largest solar projects in Africa, which is in Angola, a country that has taken the introduction of renewable energies as a determining factor for social and environmental development. The priority focus of our strategy is development, engineering, construction and project financing in markets where this paradigm fits. I see renewable energy as strategic for the future of MCA Group on the African continent. The cost of producing renewable energy is now more competitive than conventional sources of production worldwide and this is most evident in Africa, where many countries don’t yet have a very comprehensive electricity grid and use a lot of diesel generation in the regions furthest from main cities. The introduction of renewable energy in these markets will greatly reduce the need to import fossil fuel, replacing it with an indigenous and clean energy source.

We have studied the technological evolution that has happened in the sector and with the advances in lithium batteries, for example, we hope to be able to build independent off-grid energy systems that are free of fossil fuels in the very near future. In this way, we will be able to deliver clean electricity to populations that live furthest from power generation centers. There is a lot of appetite from financial institutions to accompany us in this strategy and to finance green deals, as they also have to meet their own ambitious sustainability goals. With this type of project, they are able to associate their financing with initiatives that have positive environmental, social and economic impacts. Our Angolan solar project will be one of many that we are going to build on the continent.

Your company has a remarkable track record in planning, designing, financing and building critical infrastructure across continents. MCA Group’s flagship projects include Puerta Mayor in Spain and the Douro Marina in Portugal. What made these particular projects such a success?

These two projects were very important for MCA Group’s learning curve and new business models. Only by bringing together an experienced team was it possible to successfully complete the Portuguese city of Oporto’s Douro Marina, which we carried out on a development, engineering, construction, project financing, operation and maintenance basis. Today, enabled by MCA Group, it has become one of the gateways of this fantastic city. It was a demanding maritime project involving a large internal team, which allowed us to train the group to develop its operations and achieve the correct environmental certifications. Our Puerta Mayor project on the outskirts of Madrid, which is operated by our company BCM, also proved to be a great success. This MCA development and EPC project extended to an area of about 200 hectares. It has become a major reference point in Southern Europe and we have gone on to complete similar operations in other areas of Spain.



What geographic regions do you see new growth coming from in the next decade?

The group’s strategy is to consolidate the markets where we have greater representation, such as Portugal, Spain and Angola—places where we have had a constant and diversified presence for years. We are currently in a transition phase with projects and are waiting for better socioeconomic conditions in order to mitigate the risks in Mozambique, São Tomé and Príncipe. The new countries in which we are betting on gradual growth, and which have passed to the “introduction” phase with technical and administrative structures in place, are Uganda, Kenya, Cameroon, Mexico and Germany, via Austria, where we have finished the first phase of acclimatizing to the market.

We are focused on specific projects, be they in the construction of roads of national and regional scope, waste treatment centers or biofuel industries. The projects we are involved with in 2020 that are most representative of MCA Group are a public railway initiative in Portugal, which we start this month, a biorefinery in Portugal that will be completed in September, field work for our Angolan solar projects, which began in October, and various ongoing projects in Spain.

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Manuel Couto Alves, President and CEO, MCA Group

Is there anything else you would like to highlight about MCA Group?

We are an experienced company used to overcoming complex challenges. For example, during the COVID-19 crisis, we had the vision and speed to adapt our activity, and never stopped working or even slowed down. We owe a lot to the professionalism of our directors and employees, and our executive committee started to meet weekly by teleconference, which allowed us to make ongoing decisions while closely monitoring the evolution of the pandemic context. We followed healthcare organizations’ guidelines, and adapted new rules for productivity and the development of remote projects with excellent results.

We have the highest management standards, respect societies and local communities, have an ethical and sustainable commitment to the environment, and are concerned about hiring local workers. For 15 years, we have taken on projects in international territories, which we have carried out with dedication and quality that has earned the trust of our customers and partners. We act as if we were a company listed on the stock exchange, without yet being so.

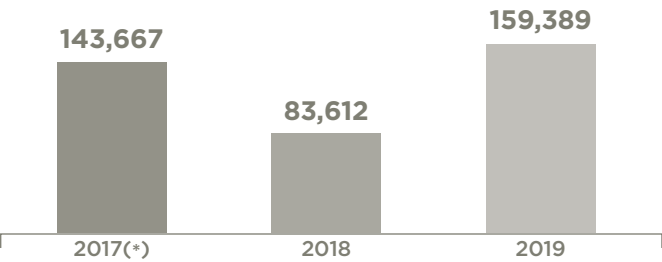
A global partner for development that goes much further than others

MCA Group stands out for its competence, experience, responsiveness, innovation and commitment to sustainability



Impressive financial performance

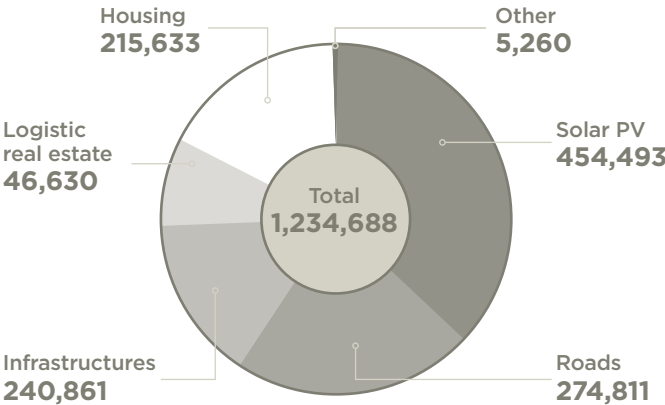
Turnover
thousands of euros



(*) Unaudited figures

Projects confirmed in 2019

thousands of euros



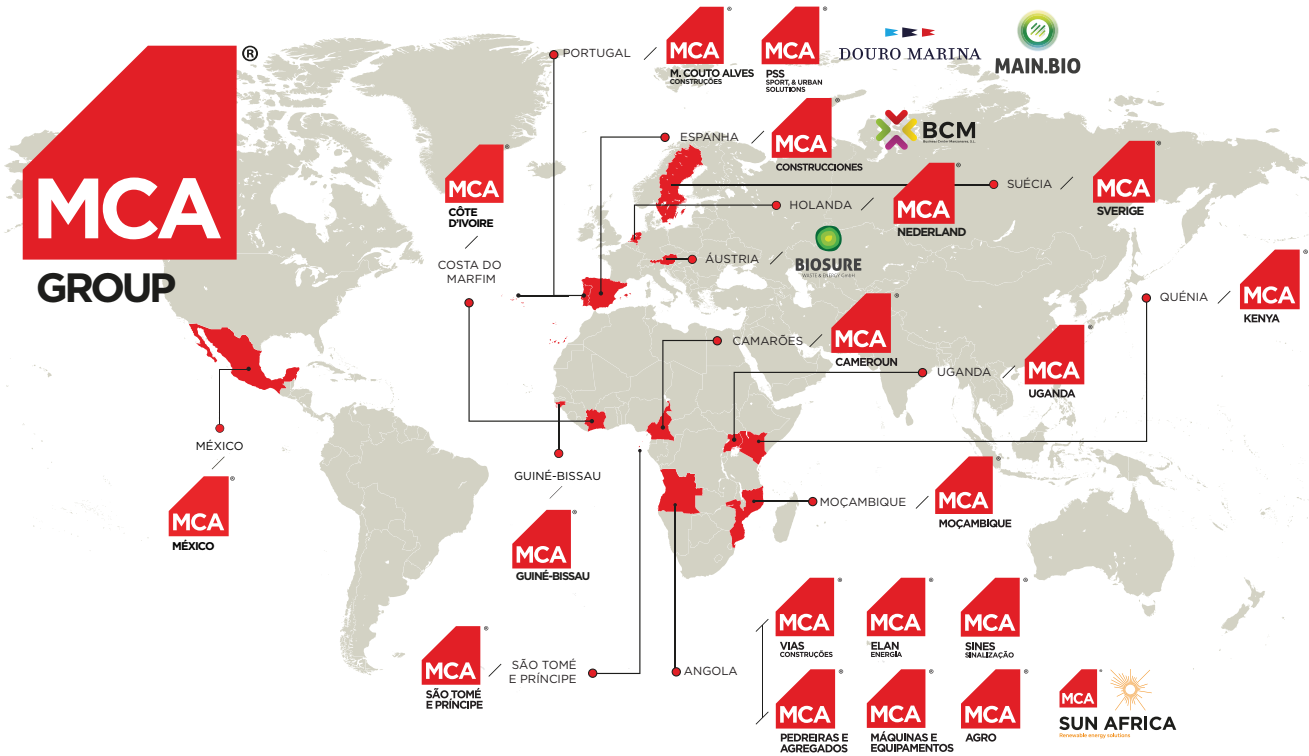
MCA Group has a growing global footprint

Currently, MCA Group is active in over 10 countries on three continents

Europe	Lusophone Africa	Anglophone Africa	Francophone Africa	North America
Portugal Since 1998	Angola Since 2006	Uganda Since 2017	Ivory Coast Since 2016	Mexico Since 2019
Spain Since 2008	Mozambique Since 2009	Kenya Since 2018	Cameroon Since 2018	The U.S. Since 2019
Netherlands Since 2017	S.Tomé & Príncipe Since 2016			
Austria Since 2019	Guinea Bissau Since 2019			

Consolidated international presence

MCA Group has the confidence of its worldwide clients



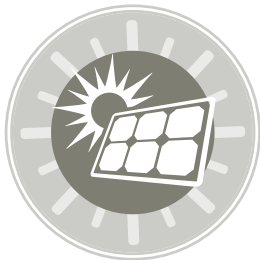
A rich pipeline of diverse projects focused on engineering, construction, integrated and specialized infrastructures

MCA Group is experiencing continuous and sustained growth



Environment sector

Waste treatment and biofuels
€227,084,396



Green energy sector

Solar
€890,000,000



Infrastructure sector

Roads, ports, airports, railway and other infrastructures
€1,061,132,611



Construction sector

Housing and civil construction, corporate real estate, sports and other projects
€998,734,851

Total = €3,176,951,858

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