

Modern Water taps demand in Middle East

WATER, in case anyone hasn't noticed, is becoming a rather scarce commodity.

So it is probably not just investors in AIM-listed Modern Water, the technology group that has commercialised what it calls "manipulated osmosis technology", that should be pleased the company is making progress.

The group last week said that it has produced the first water from its desalination plant in Oman, where the country's Ministry of Power and Water has agreed to buy up the water to supply to the Al-Khaluf region.

The company is hoping its plant in Oman will act as a showcase for the rest of the Middle East, a region that for obvious reasons may be among the first to suffer from water shortages, but a part of the world that also has the resources to pay for expensive desalination projects.

"The start-up of the Al-Khaluf plant is a major breakthrough for Modern Water," said the executive chairman, Neil McDougall. "Spending on desali-

nation and other water-related technologies in the Middle East continues to increase and so we are delighted to have a commercial plant operating in the region that can also act as a showcase for potential clients."

There was yet more good news from the company when it disclosed separately last week that its Cymtox subsidiary, in which it has a 76 per cent stake, has achieved its first revenues. Cymtox is a company that produces equipment for measuring water toxicity levels and has already signed several contracts with a company in China, which will increasingly demand clean water supplies because of urbanisation, rising industrial output and pressure to reduce pollution.

President Kennedy was once quoted as saying: "If we could ever competitively, at a cheap rate, get fresh water from salt water, this would be in the long-range interests of humanity and would dwarf any other scientific accomplishment." Let's see if Modern Water can live up to the mantle.



Modern Water has set up a desalination plant in the Al Khaluf region of Oman