Iberdrola's digital factory: the energy of change
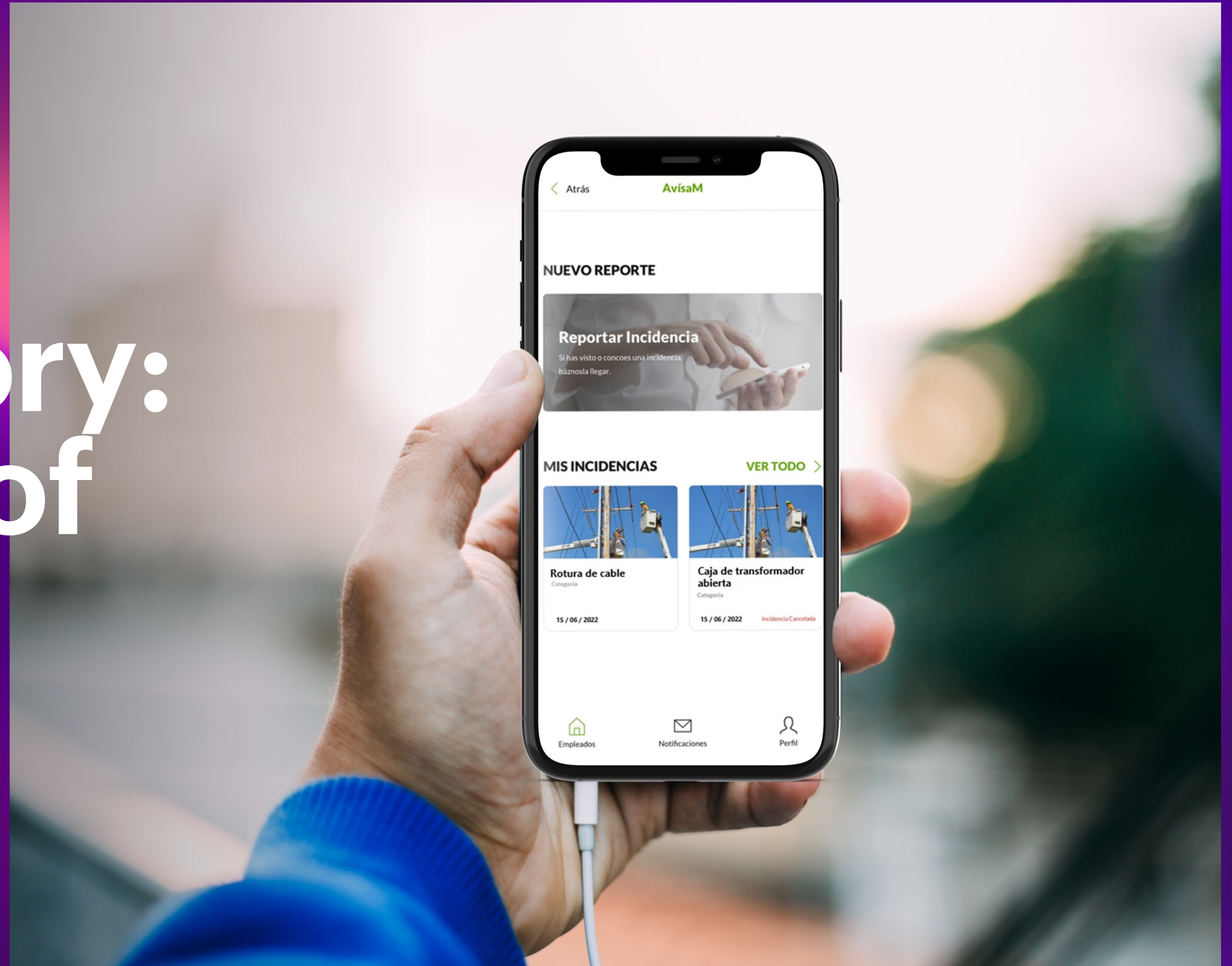
Electric utility powers digital transformation

Toward a differentiating model

Spanish multinational electric utility Iberdrola is highly focused on digital transformation across its operations. Iberdrola Distribución (i-DE), the part of Iberdrola that is in charge of bringing energy to more than 11 million homes, wanted to improve the experience and efficiency of its teams. It knew that flexibility, agility and innovation were the switches it needed to open the way to a new understanding of relationships.

When you have more than 4,000 workers—employees and contractors that are deployed across administration, IT, client engagement, and asset maintenance and management in the field—it is essential that their interactions are fluid and effective to ensure the greatest possible efficiency across processes.
To improve the experience of its workers,

Iberdrola knew it would need to change its business model.

In addition, it's important to note that the utilities sector, specifically the segment providing electricity, is at a crucial inflexion point: In the race towards zero emissions, the role of these players in the global economy is growing. Maintaining a fluid relationship between workers is therefore more important than ever.

Iberdrola identified flexibility, agility and innovation as key levers to unlock new levels of understanding between staff, improve their experience and efficiency, and drive effective communication with customers. It determined the need to design and launch a series of digital applications to drive this transformation across its operations and processes.

A solution factory

Accenture analyzed i-DE's needs, then proposed going a step further by creating a software factory and developing a digital hub to accelerate the transformation that the organization was seeking.

To address Iberdrola's challenges, Accenture established a Digital Factory at the Accenture Industry X Center in Bilbao. Here, multidisciplinary teams from Accenture, including teams from Accenture Song, Technology, Strategy & Consulting and Avanade (a joint venture between Microsoft and Accenture), work hand in hand with the i-DE team.

At this innovation hub, the teams work to ideate and develop the digital applications originally defined by i-DE, but also the capabilities and services that will allow the distribution arm of Iberdrola to transform inspiration into tangible, scalable, practical and effective ideas.

The Digital Factory is developing three types of digital products:

- Fast mobile applications, such as AvísaM, which allows all i-DE employees to report anomalies related to assets, as well as other incidents that they identify in their day-to-day work.

- Desktop apps aimed at specific departments, such as Plademer, which focuses on accelerating and digitizing the entire process of managing responses to meteorological situations.

- More complex cross-departmental applications, such as Flora, in which people in several internal and external roles work together to facilitate communication between Iberdrola managers and contractors for felling and pruning processes.

When tech meets human ingenuity

All of these applications are completely user-oriented, aimed at specific and real needs.

The capabilities and services offered by the Digital Factory have also led i-DE to experiment with other ways of working. These include the Safari methodology for exploring ideas, Design Thinking techniques to accelerate the design of digital products, and Kanban for maintenance and application of the Agile methodology for the development of initiatives.

As part of this transformation process, innovation proposals focused on employees and contractors have also emerged. These include a safety helmet for field professionals which detects falls and sets off alarms, and the design of an autonomous robot to inspect substations.
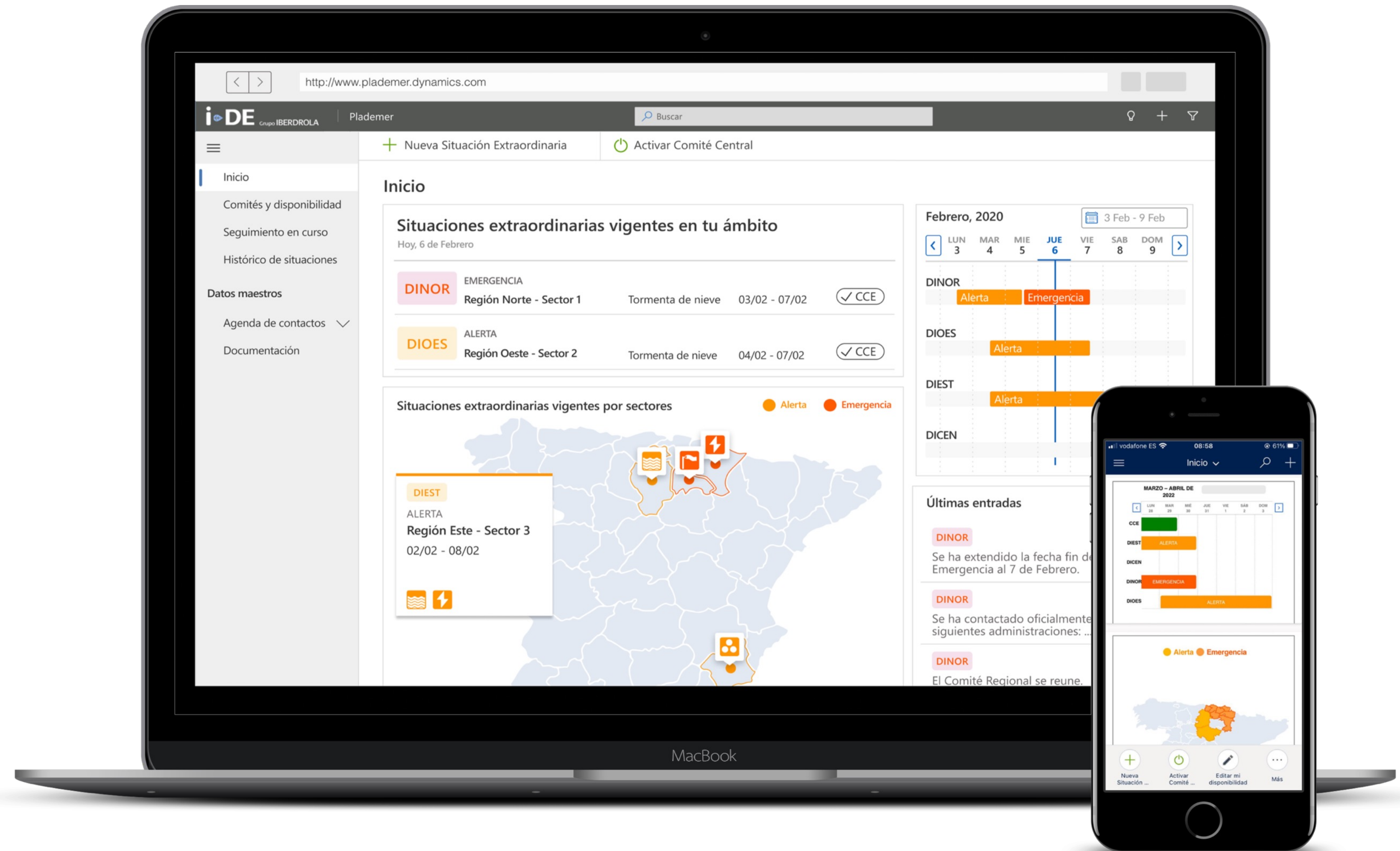
Value 360

The implementation of the solutions born in the Digital Factory has helped redefine i-DE's operating and governance model, while supporting the development of numerous applications.

Since establishing the Digital Factory, i-DE has evolved quickly, implementing a transformation that exceeds its initial objectives. The solutions and proposals that have come out of this innovation hub translate into tangible improvements across several aspects of the business:

- **Optimization of processes.** With end-to-end solutions, project development definition deadlines have shortened, reducing time-to-market. The use of agile methodologies makes it possible to have a minimum viable product (MVP) of a mobile app in just 15 days or, for a more complex app, in three months. In fact, productivity has tripled—for example, the company has gone from launching one application a year to launching three or four that are integrated with back-end systems.

- **Greater employee satisfaction.** The incorporation of user experience and user interface (UX/UI) experts in the definition of applications facilitates the adoption of digital tools. This has resulted in a better experience for both the staff and the contractors. As users are incorporated at the beginning of each development, they help define solutions that solve concrete and tangible needs.

- **Better responsiveness.** The need for flexibility and the ability to redirect resources based on various events became clear during the COVID-19 pandemic. To deal with pandemic impacts, key mobile applications were generated in three business days. These included a survey to enable staff to report their health status to human resources teams, and a passport for field professionals to carry the updated safe-conduct permissions with them. This responsiveness remains important in other situations that may arise, such as new legal needs.

A valuable difference

Accenture and i-DE will continue to work together in the Digital Factory, using innovation and new technologies to realize Iberdrola's evolving digital transformation vision.

Disclaimer

This content is provided for general information
purposes and is not intended to be used in
place of consultation with our professional
advisors. This document refers to marks owned
by third parties. All such third-party marks are
the property of their respective owners. No
sponsorship, endorsement or approval of this
content by the owners of such marks is
intended, expressed or implied.