



press release

Bologna, 30 July 2021

The world's first AWS-certified drinking water plant is located in Bologna and managed by Hera

The certification process for the Val di Setta plant, located in Sasso Marconi and serving Bologna's main aqueduct, has been successfully completed, confirming Hera's ongoing commitment to managing and protecting water resources. Internationally, the Hera Group is the first utility to receive certification for a drinking water plant

As of today, Hera's Sasso Marconi (BO) drinking water plant, which also supplies Bologna, is certified by the AWS (Alliance for Water Stewardship), the leading international standard that encourages a responsible use of water resources and acts as the global benchmark in this area. The Hera Group is the first utility in the world to obtain this certification for a drinking water plant and the third largest in Italy.

The AWS standard is designed to help companies and individuals implement responsible practices and protect this resource, improving their efficiency and addressing current and future water challenges such as drought, climate change and population growth. It is typically used in the manufacturing sector, adopted by major multinational companies, and is recommended by the United Nations. Obtaining this certification is a rigorous process that includes a range of actions, criteria and indicators on how to manage water, both within the plant and outside of it, across the board, submitting the industry's best practices to a worldwide scientific committee.

A clear path, with no observations, and important benefits in terms of efficiency and water resource protection

In the case of the Val di Setta drinking water plant, the certification was completed without any nonconformities. The process is rarely so clear-cut, rewarding Hera's commitment over the past year, the length of the entire process.

The efficiency measures implemented in 2020 for managing the drinking water plant led to an overall improvement in the use of resources during the plant's operations. For example, the filter washing phase was optimized thanks to a priorly conducted study, leading to an overall saving coming to roughly 2,400 cubic meters of water per day in water treatment and purification. The AWS also certifies the degree of efficiency, and the Val di Setta plant is outstanding in this regard: to introduce one litre of drinking water into the aqueduct, it takes 1.1 from the environment, compared to an average amount of 1.7 litres for 1 litre of bottled water.

Increased good practices at the heart of the certification

This certification is also centred around involving the local community in good practices. The Alliance for Water Stewardship is in fact a global organization created with the main goal of raising public awareness on issues related to water scarcity and the proper use of water. The certification must therefore also indicate that the party in question is committed to communicating the importance of water, promoting its efficient and responsible use in the local area and sharing good management practices with other local figures. The AWS thus aims at creating local and international networks of companies actively involved in managing water resources.

38 million cubic metres of water per year, for 34 municipalities

Hera's drinking water plant in Sasso Marconi takes water from the Reno river and the Setta stream, makes it drinkable and serves 34 municipalities in the Bologna area, including the capital, with a total of almost 800,000 inhabitants. 42% of the overall drinking water supplied in the province comes from here, with an average of 38 million cubic metres per year. The plant works on a continuous cycle and is fully

automated and controlled 24 hours a day by the Hera Group's remote control centre, so that the slightest change in the service is reported and it is possible to intervene in real time, even remotely.

"The virtuous management of water for us is fundamental, and with this certification we wish to formalize our commitment even more strongly. This is why we chose the Val di Setta drinking water plant", comments Susanna Zucchelli, Group's Water Manager. "One of the most important plants, it supplies important institutional and industrial facilities, and can therefore contribute to forming the sort of local network that is highly desired by this standard and enables us to share actions and best practices. One example is the collaboration initiated some time ago with Philip Morris, which has a large plant in Valsamoggia, served by our water treatment plant."

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