

Waste and Water Management in Hera Group

Solid infrastructures for a long-term sustainable strategy

Photo by Silvia Camporesi: construction phase of the biomethane plant of Sant'Agata Bolognese

Waste management

Commitment to a sustainable waste management

As the leading Italian operator in waste management, the Hera Group is committed every day to providing an efficient and responsible service, fully respecting local communities and the environment in which it operates. Aware of its role as a benchmark in the sector, Hera adopts innovative and sustainable approaches, promoting separate collection, recycling and the reuse of materials, with the aim of minimising the environmental impact of waste.

Hera consistently invests in cutting-edge technologies to optimise the collection, treatment and disposal of waste, reducing emissions and supporting the transition towards a circular economy. The Group is also dedicated to raising public awareness, encouraging virtuous behaviours and promoting environmental education campaigns.

Partnerships with communities for waste reduction and reuse

The Hera Group has been carrying out waste reduction projects for many years in collaboration with local non-profit organisations and with the support of Last Minute Market, a social enterprise and spin-off accredited by the University of Bologna, which promotes the fight against waste and environmental sustainability. “CiboAmico”, “FarmacoAmico” and “Cambia il finale” are structured and consolidated initiatives that promote good habits around reuse and generate positive social impacts thanks to the activities carried out by the non-profit organisations involved, in line with the principles of social responsibility and environmental protection of the Hera Group.

Launched in 2009, “CiboAmico” is a specific action developed by the company to promote the development of the circular economy, connecting different local entities with a focus on shared social responsibility, providing concrete help to those most in need. The recovered meals are donated to non-profit organisations that provide hospitality and assistance to people in difficulty on a daily basis. There are eight company canteens where the project is run: Bologna, Granarolo dell’Emilia, Rimini, Ferrara, Ravenna, Modena, Forlì and Cesena. Since the beginning of the project, a total of approximately 155 thousand meals have been donated (approximately 17 thousand in 2024 alone), worth approximately 634 thousand euro. This has prevented the production of over 68 tons of waste (over 150 bins) and the emission of over 280 tons of CO2.

At the end of 2017, CiboAmico expended beyond company canteens to get commercial businesses involved in the fight against waste in Modena, Imola and Bologna. FarmacoAmico is the project promoted by Hera to collect non-expired medicine and create a community reuse network in the area with the aim of preventing waste production by spreading good practices and supporting organisations that help vulnerable segments of the community. Intact medicine, still valid for at least six months and in an adequate state of conservation, is reused by non-profit organisations operating in local or decentralised cooperation projects.

Launched in 2013, FarmacoAmico now relies on the support of 38 municipalities in the Emilia-Romagna Region, 214 pharmacies and 36 non-profit organisations, some of which operate in Italy and others abroad, as well as various partners, institutions, trade associations and the corporate landscape. Since the beginning of the project, approximately 600 thousand packages of medicine have been collected and sent for reuse (approximately 80 thousand in 2024 alone) with a total economic value of over 7.3 million euro, which partially and potentially corresponds to lower costs for the National Health System.

The Cambia il Finale (Change the Ending) project, now in its eleventh year, makes it possible to collect any items in good condition that would otherwise be disposed of as bulky waste and allow them to be reused, thanks to a network of non-profit organisations distributed over the area served, in order to give new life to goods donated by residents and collected from homes, replacing the service offered by Hera aimed at recycling or disposal. Fifteen non-profit organisations were partners in the project at the end of 2024, distributed throughout the Emilia-Romagna region served by Hera, guaranteeing coverage of all main cities. Since the beginning of the project, over 6.6 thousand tons of waste have been avoided (over a thousand in 2024 alone), bringing great savings to the benefit of the environment and lower costs related to waste collection.



Waste management

Recycling activities

- Recycling of plastic

In the plastics recycling market, Group subsidiary Aiplast Spa, one of Italy's main operators in the flexible plastics segment, will continue along its path of growth, increasing volumes of recycling and, at the same time, expanding the range of polymers processed thanks to the development of an innovative multi-matrix plant. The increasing European legislative trend with Single use plastics (SUP) and Packaging and packaging waste regulation (PPWR) will cause progressive growth in demand, against which the Plan expects to double the plants in Novara for polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene terephthalate (PET) regeneration, alongside innovative projects such as the Imola plant for carbon fibre recovery, inaugurated in March 2025, and the one for the regeneration of high quality rigid plastics under construction in Modena.

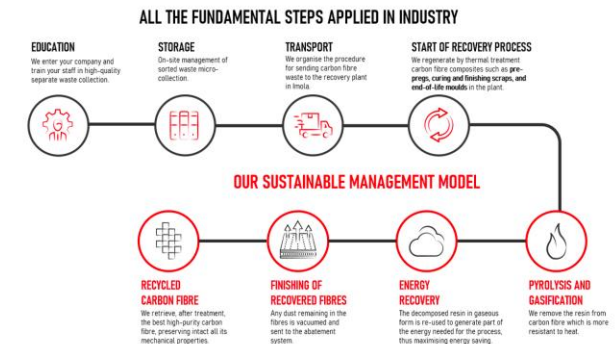
- Recycling of carbon fibre

The Fib3r project is the result of an important three-year experiment carried out in collaboration with the Department of Industrial Chemistry at the University of Bologna and the technology partner Curti, a leading company in the production of automatic machines for industrial applications.

The carbon fibre recovery plant in Imola can process various types of carbon fibre composite waste, such as processing scraps, pre-impregnated materials (prepreg), finishing waste, moulds, and end-of-life products.

The facility consists of two independent pyro-gasification lines, which process 1,100 kg of incoming waste per day (550 kg per line), with the corresponding energy recovery from the process gases generated during treatment. These gases are used to feed the burners in the pyrolysis section, in order to reduce methane consumption. The plant, which will operate continuously 24/7, will be able to produce 160 tonnes (80 tonnes per line) per year of recycled fibres (rCF – recovered carbon fibre).

Starting from the study and optimisation of the process on a pilot plant in collaboration with the University of Bologna and Curti S.p.A., the best technologies were selected for the industrial plant built by Herambiente, with particular attention paid to the highest standards of environmental protection, reliability and operational safety, technological innovation in both process and product, and high energy efficiency. By ensuring maximum sustainability and full traceability of the production process, our customers are able to complete the circle of the circular economy. A fully traceable supply chain guarantees transparency and quality throughout the entire process, from the collection of waste materials at the customers' premises to treatment, right up to the return to the company of recycled carbon fibre, ready to be processed anew.



Waste management

How we treat hazardous waste

Hera, through its subsidiary Herambiente, adopts a rigorous approach to hazardous waste management, fully complying with all European and national regulations regarding safety, traceability, and disposal. The process is divided into several stages:

- **Collection and Safe Transport:** Waste is collected in suitable containers and transported using specialised vehicles equipped with safety systems to prevent accidental spills.
- **Identification and Traceability:** Each waste item is identified by specific codes and monitored at every stage, from production to disposal, ensuring complete traceability.
- **Pretreatment:** Before the final treatment, waste undergoes processes such as stabilisation, neutralisation, or inertisation to reduce the hazardousness of the substances.
- **Disposal or Recovery:** Waste is then sent for thermal treatment (controlled incineration) or other processes such as material or energy recovery, always in compliance with the best available techniques (BAT).

Hera is committed to reduce hazardous waste disposal, also thanks to cutting-edge facilities that reduce the volumetry, and promotes a series of initiatives to constantly improve hazardous waste management and raise awareness among communities and businesses about the importance of correct treatment:

- **Technological Innovation:** Investment in cutting-edge facilities that reduce emissions and maximise the efficiency of treatment processes.
- **Training and Information:** Training courses for staff and awareness campaigns aimed at clients and communities, to promote a culture of safety and prevention.
- **Environmental Certifications:** Adoption of certified management systems (ISO 14001, EMAS) that guarantee compliance with the highest environmental standards.
- **Research and Development:** Collaboration with universities and research centres to develop new solutions for the treatment and recovery of hazardous waste.
- **Transparency and Social Responsibility:** Publication of sustainability reports and ongoing dialogue with authorities and local communities.

Hera and Eni have entered into a partnership for the recovery of used oils. Hera has strengthened the collection of used oils by introducing 300 dedicated containers in the areas it serves. Around 800 tonnes of used oil are collected each year, which are then processed to be reused as lubricants or for energy recovery. This increasingly widespread service, by encouraging proper recovery, also aims to prevent environmentally harmful behaviour.

Hera has also developed recycling centres in every municipality where it operates, allowing residents to bring their hazardous waste for proper disposal. Responsible behaviour by citizens is rewarded with discounts on their bills.



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Waste Management targets



HAZARDOUS WASTE REDUCTION

Hera offers **drop-off points for disposing** of a wide range of categories of third parties (household and business clients) waste (including certain hazardous waste) and a **door-to-door collection** of certain types of hazardous waste (such as batteries and pharmaceuticals) at specific businesses. **Hazardous waste treatment facilities are constantly monitored through screenings, EIA and audits.** To encourage the reduction of hazardous waste production, Hera is implementing a **“Pay for Use” billing** which rewards responsible waste sorting and recycling; **to reduce hazardous waste improper treatments**, the Group has started a **partnership with Eni Rewind** to strengthen the certified activities. **Hera do not produce nor handles radioactive waste** (Italian law enforces to have a special license for this activity).



SOLID WASTE REDUCTION

Hera approach to own and third parties waste management follow the circular economy principles: starts from **minimizing waste at source**, then to **material and energy recovery** and, only as last resort, disposal in landfills. The Group is committed to further **decrease solid waste production and the use of landfills**: thanks to efficient measures carried out on treatment processes and plants, the use of complex technologies to recover as much as possible material from the incoming flow and **awareness campaigns to promote recycling, sorted waste and/or their reuse** (i.e. “Scart”, “Cambia il finale”, “FarmacoAmico”, “Rifiutologo”, “Trashware”), the Group expect to achieve ambitious targets (having already achieved in advance UN ‘30 goals on landfill disposal).

Targets	2027	2030
Reduce use of landfills for urban waste	<4%	<2%
Increase recycling rate in urban waste	78%	>80%
Increase plastic recycled by Aliplast	+122% vs 2017	+150% vs 2017



ALIPLAST & THE NEW PLASTICS ECONOMY GLOBAL COMMITMENT

Hera is the only Italian multiutility company that signed the New Plastics Economy Global Commitment, launched by the Ellen MacArthur Foundation in collaboration with UNEP. The Group has committed to **increase by 2025 plastics collected in the served areas by 30%; plastics sorted and sent to be recycled by the Group’s plants by 50% and plastic recycled by Aliplast by 70%** (Group subsidiary). Aliplast manages the integrated plastic cycle, transforming waste into a finished product, mainly PE film, PET sheet and granules/flakes of the main polymers. To further improve the business, Hera will also: 1) complete an innovative plant by 2024, for the **production of high-quality recycled polymers for the IT and electronic sector** in Modena; 2) complete a new plant by 2025, for the **recycling of carbon fiber**, which is especially reusable in the automotive sector.

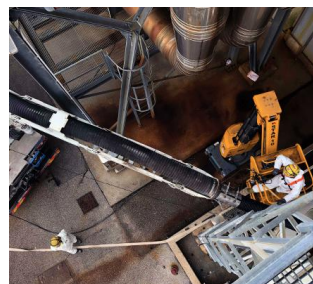
Soil remediation activities

Hera is firmly committed to the remediation of contaminated land or sites where facilities are being decommissioned, adopting advanced strategies to minimise negative environmental impacts. The company recognises that soil protection is essential to ensure a sustainable future, in line with the principles of the circular economy and corporate social responsibility. Through concrete and innovative initiatives, Hera aims to restore value to the affected areas and safeguard the health of local communities.

Thanks to the soil remediation activities carried out by the subsidiary ACR, national leader in soil remediation, Hera is able to reclaim contaminated land. These interventions employ cutting-edge technologies that enable the removal of pollutants and harmful agents, drastically reducing risks to the environment and public health.

As part of its initiatives, Hera promotes the reuse of soil as a valuable resource in the construction of infrastructure, avoiding disposal in landfill. 673,000 square metres of soil has been reused in the construction of infrastructure in the period from 2018 to 2024 (75% of total soil involved).

Hera integrates the use of phytoremediation plants into its projects, a natural and sustainable solution for water purification and soil quality improvement. These systems make use of specific plants' abilities to absorb and neutralise pollutants, encouraging the restoration of biological cycles and the renaturalisation of compromised areas. Phytoremediation is a virtuous example of how nature can be an ally in the fight against pollution.



Landfills post closure management

The management of exhausted landfills represents a crucial phase in the waste cycle, as it aims to ensure environmental safety and the protection of public health even after disposal activities have ended. Hera Group adopts rigorous procedures in compliance with current regulations for the management of landfills once their operational capacity has been exhausted.

An exhausted landfill is a waste disposal facility that has reached its maximum authorised capacity and has ceased to accept new material. At this stage, management focuses on securing, monitoring and maintaining the site to prevent negative environmental impacts.

The stages of post-operational management

- Closure and securing

At the end of operations, Hera proceeds to close the landfill according to a plan approved by the competent authorities. This includes the permanent covering of the waste with layers of impermeable materials and the construction of rainwater drainage systems, in order to avoid infiltration and the formation of leachate.

- Environmental monitoring

Hera carries out constant monitoring of environmental matrices such as soil, groundwater, air and leachate. Monitoring stations and piezometric wells are installed to check for any contamination, in accordance with legal requirements.

- Biogas management

The biogas produced by the degradation of organic waste is captured through specific systems and, where technically possible, enhanced for energy production. Alternatively, it is treated to reduce its environmental impact.

- Maintenance and control

Hera is responsible for maintaining the infrastructure (barriers, covers, leachate and biogas collection and treatment plants) and for monitoring the stability of the site.

- Environmental restoration and long-term surveillance

The post-management phase can last for decades. Hera carries out environmental restoration of the area, promoting natural rewilding and, where possible, landscape redevelopment. The company remains responsible for supervising and preventing environmental risks even after closure, as required by law. During the period in which landfills are in use, provisions are set aside to feed the post-mortem fund, which is intended to ensure the long-term economic sustainability of management activities following closure.

- Involvement of local communities

A key aspect in the process of closing an exhausted landfill is the active involvement of local communities. A constant dialogue with local entities makes it possible to integrate local needs and strengthen the sense of shared responsibility in environmental protection.

- Renewables development

Hera is committed to enhancing these decommissioned sites by installing photovoltaic panels on exhausted landfills, thus transforming areas once used for waste disposal into productive spaces for renewable energy generation



Water Risk Management

Governance

Water risk management within the Hera Group is considered a strategic priority, entrusted directly to the Board of Directors. This body holds the ultimate responsibility for supervising, approving, and guiding policies and strategies related to the sustainable management of water resources. The Board regularly monitors water-related risks and opportunities, ensuring that decisions taken are consistent with sustainability objectives and current regulations.

Water Risk Assessment

Hera begins its water risk management process by systematically identifying and assessing risks across its operations. This includes evaluating both natural and human-induced hazards such as droughts, flooding, contamination, infrastructure failures, and regulatory changes. The company utilises advanced modelling tools, risk mapping, and scenario analysis to understand the likelihood and potential impact of these risks.

Integration of Risk Assessments into Corporate Strategy

The results of the water risk assessments are incorporated into Hera's corporate strategy. The company uses this information to define targeted action plans, direct investments, and update its environmental policies. Integration takes place both in multi-year planning and in daily operational management, ensuring that strategic decisions consider current and future water risks.

Mitigation and Adaptation Initiatives

Based on the risk assessment results, Hera has implemented numerous mitigation and adaptation initiatives. These include optimising water abstraction and distribution processes, adopting innovative technologies for monitoring water networks, reducing losses, and resorting to alternative sources. Furthermore, Hera promotes awareness campaigns for responsible water use and actively collaborates with local authorities and stakeholders to develop shared solutions for climate change adaptation.

Water risk management programs

Hera implements comprehensive water risk management programs focused on efficient water use, quality of the purified water, and risk mitigation. These programs are integrated into the company's overall risk management strategy and aim to ensure sustainable water resource management.

The **identification and assessment of risks** is managed annually through the Enterprise risk management process, **that covers own operations, supply chain and product use phase**. Within this process, both risks and mitigation actions are identified, verifying risk events and their impact.

The risk scenario linked to the suspension of water distribution due to natural events was identified, foreseeing the possibility of a prolonged drought event, assessing potential reputational repercussions resulting from a prolonged service suspension in areas without multiple-feed network systems (**impact-related water risks considered in risk assessment**). The mitigation strategy to reduce this risk includes the use of tankers, the definition of operational guidelines for a systematic approach to the emergency and the evaluation of more structural remediation measures.

With reference to **dependency-related risks**, Hera has established a consolidated methodology for the classification of drought risk differentiated on the basis of the local context. The methodology, which is still being defined, includes a series of initiatives aimed at quantifying the impact of climate change on water distribution networks and identifying solutions to improve network resilience. In order to better monitor drought in the aqueduct systems managed, the Drought status monitoring platform (resilient dashboard) has been consolidated, updated in near real time, calculating a Global drought score to assess the water system criticality. In particular, the key variables – such as temperature and rainfall, flow rates of springs, levels of rivers, reservoirs and wells – are compared with the historical records to analyse their statistical trend in aqueduct macro-areas. Through a dynamic weighing system, the resilient dashboard allows the state of water criticality of the macro-areas to be monitored, also in relation to the trend in water demand. In 2024, this tool was improved to create prospective scenarios providing a medium-term view of the drought status of an aqueduct system.

The risk-based approach involves:

- **Assessment of future water quantities available** through the use of the “Water Stress” indicator of the World resources institute’s Aqueduct database and the Drought status monitoring platform that calculates a Global drought score to assess the water system criticality also in a looking forward mode. More specifically, the WRI identifies areas with high water stress. Based on these parameters, Hera develops strategies to reduce water consumption efficiently.
- **Assessment of future water quality-related risks** that involves the control of emerging contaminants and the verification of the vulnerability degree of drinking water systems with regard to the direct and indirect impacts induced by climate change. Hera has always provided for structured prevention and control plans that guarantee its customers good drinking water, in compliance with regulatory requirements and with a constant surveillance carried out through the planning of well targeted controls on the entire drinking water production chain, from supply sources to distribution.
- **Assessment of impacts on local stakeholders** from a prolonged services suspension. Hera engages with stakeholders, including policy makers, NGOs, and communities, to address water-related risks and promote responsible water management.
- **Assessment of future potential regulatory changes** at a local level or possible situations of regulatory instability. The Group’s organisational structure liaises with national and local authorities and carries out extensive consultation with institutional stakeholders, actively taking part in working groups established by authorities and adopting a transparent, co-operative, proactive approach

Water efficiency management programs

At Hera, we understand the crucial role water plays in our reference areas. We are dedicated to managing this resource efficiently and responsibly across all our activities. This enables us to assess and monitor our water usage, pinpoint areas for improvement, and take tangible steps to lessen our environmental footprint. The implementation of this program is a forward-looking investment. By executing it, we not only diminish our environmental impact but also ensure water security for the local communities we serve. At Hera, we firmly believe that efficient water management is a collective responsibility. Hence, we collaborate with our suppliers, customers, and communities to foster the responsible use of this essential resource.

The responsibility for the water stewardship strategy lies with top management and the Board of Directors, who set the guidelines, approve targets, and constantly monitor results.

Hera is committed to reporting annually on progress made towards set objectives, by publishing clear and transparent data in the annual report and sustainability reports. Regular communication of results ensures maximum transparency towards stakeholders, investors, and the community.

Water use assessment to identify opportunities for water efficiency improvements

Monitoring and analysis enable us to gain a comprehensive understanding of our water usage patterns, pinpoint the areas with the highest consumption, and develop strategies to optimize water use. Therefore, we consistently monitor water usage across all our operations, with a process that includes:

- Collection and analysis of data on water consumption in all our operations
- Identification of significant water consumption activities
- Monitoring of water consumption in order to detect leakages or consumptions that are not aligned with the targets
- Assessment of water usage outcomes and enhancements based on the findings

Actions to reduce water consumption

We undertake a variety of initiatives to decrease water usage in our operations. Some examples of the measures we implement are:

- Programs for water saving
- Installation of water saving devices
- Installation of water meters
- Advanced monitoring with the district water system
- Reuse of purified water

Actions to improve wastewater quality

At Hera, we recognize the environmental impact of wastewater and take stringent actions to enhance the quality of the water we release. These actions are implemented across all our facilities, encompassing everything from using the best available technologies, to optimizing processes and monitoring of effluents:

- Strict adherence to regulatory and legal limits
- Process and technology improvements and updates
- Periodic monitoring of water quality in the Group's laboratories
- Wastewater treatment in Group's plants
- Audit on the wastewater management system

Water efficiency management programs

Establishment of targets to reduce water use

Hera has been engaged in initiatives to reduce and improve consumption efficiency. To this end, a Water Management Project aimed at saving, reusing and recovering water was launched. The project concerns all aqueduct water consumption of all the Group's Companies in the areas where Hera Spa manages the aqueduct service.

Most of the planned interventions for reducing water consumption have already been implemented, while some already identified actions remain to be carried out to reach the target set at -26.5% by 2030.

Investments for Water service resilience

Hera expects that, by 2028, 99% of its network will undergo predictive maintenance and 27,400 km of the network will be districted. These improvements will enhance the reliability and efficient use of water resources. Additionally, numerous upgrades to the water supply system, interconnection of aqueduct systems, and upgrades to adduction networks will help ensure a stable and resilient water supply.

Application of water recycling

We actively encourage the use of purified water from our treatment plants by forming partnerships with consortia and agricultural companies. This approach reduces water withdrawals and minimizes the environmental footprint of these activities. Additionally, water reuse processes are implemented in the industrial processes of both the Hera Group and industrial clients.

Awareness training provided to employees on water efficiency management programs

Water management programs are dependent on the engagement and commitment of all Hera's employees. For this reason, training programs are provided to increase awareness of the importance of water quality and the reduction of its use. Internal and external awareness campaigns are conducted to promote water saving practices and responsible water consumptions.

R&D and Innovation

Hera continually invests in research and development to identify innovative solutions in water management, promoting the adoption of new digital technologies and advanced processes that improve the efficiency and resilience of its plants. Innovation is a fundamental pillar for anticipating and responding to future challenges in the water sector. Among the most significant projects Hera has participated in are: the use of satellites to identify network leaks, the use of cosmic rays to detect network leaks, and the use of pilot technologies to estimate aquifer water reserves.

Partnerships with Companies and Independent Institutions

Collaboration with other sector companies, universities and independent research centres is an integral part of Hera's strategy. Through partnerships and shared projects, we promote knowledge exchange, experimentation with new solutions, and the dissemination of best water stewardship practices at both national and international levels. For example, in 2024 an agreement was signed with the other major Italian water service companies to develop advanced research activities in synergy with universities and research bodies.

Water Management targets



EFFLUENTS

The Group is committed to **reduce, reuse and recycle effluents as much as possible** even if own activities produce negligible wastewater. The Group manages more than 400tmc of fresh water/y and the wastewater of about 4m customers. Group procedures to carry out **controls and to handle anomalies/non-conformities of wastewater discharges in the served areas are compliant with both UE and Italian regulations**. In addition, all emergency interventions in the areas affected by 2022 floods, financed by the Government, such as sewage and aqueduct grids, purification plants, sewage lifts and drinking water reservoirs were carried out by Hera and completed in 2023. All the water used by Hera's customers or by the Group's plants is collected in the sewage network, which leads to depuration treatment plants (99.8% of customers are connected to the Group's depuration facilities), where it is purified before being reused for industrial/agricultural purposes (11.9%) or discharged back into the environment (88.1%).



WASTEWATER PURIFICATION QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Hera is committed to **achieve a performance beyond compliance**, with a specific action plan. In 2023 the Group managed the sewerage and purification service in 228 municipalities. According to our compliance plan for the **sewage and depuration** sector, by 2025 we expect to achieve **100% compliance for urban areas >2,000 p.e.** while in urban areas of 10,000 p.e. and more, additional **24 interventions to upgrade the urban wastewater discharges treatment** will be implemented **by 2030**. It's worth mentioning that our "smart" wastewater purification plant of Servola, has ZERO-impact on local marine species and it is currently purifying 100% of the treated water.



REDUCE CONSUMPTIONS & LOSSES

Hera is strongly committed to **reduce its own water consumption and that of customers and suppliers** and tools are offered to help customers to reduce their consumptions (Consumption Log for households; Water Management portal for business users). **Internal water consumption registered a 25.5% reduction in 2024 (vs 2017)** due to specific water saving activities and achieving the target of **26.5% by 2030**. Leak detection was consolidated with predictive algorithms. Hera's **linear loss ratio is now 8.1 m³/km/day** against the national average of 17.9 m³/km/day reported by ARERA. **Target by 2027: 7.4 m³/km/day.**

MIn cubic meter	2017	2022	2023	2024	Target 2030
Internal Water Consumption	1.53	1.22	1.20	1.13	1.12
Decrease on 2017 consumptions		-20.5%	-21.5%	-25.5%	-26.5%



REUSE OF WASTEWATER

An innovative **power-to-gas plant closely integrated with the municipal wastewater treatment** process is being built at the IDAR wastewater treatment plant in Bologna. Thanks to a 1 MW electrolyser, it will be possible to **exploit surplus renewable electricity to produce green hydrogen** through the electrolysis of water; the hydrogen will then be combined with the CO₂ naturally present in the biogas produced in the treatment plant itself (in the digesters or from sewage sludge) and **converted into methane**. At the same plant, a membrane upgrading system is also planned for the **production of additional biomethane (800,000 m³) from biogas**, also coming from the wastewater treatment plant's digesters.