



Eni opens its bio-refinery in Gela

Opened in August 2019, the refinery is the most innovative biofuel plant in Europe. It can take loads of up to 100% second-generation raw material.

Gela, Caltanissetta, 25 September 2019 – Eni has opened the most innovative bio-refinery in Europe at Gela. Launched in August 2019, the plant has a processing capacity of up to 750,000 tonnes a year and will be able to treat increasing quantities of used vegetable oil, animal fat, algae and by-products to produce high-quality biofuels.

All the petrochemical plants built in Gela since 1962 have closed down. In addition to the €294 million that has been spent so far on reconverting the refineries, Eni plans to invest another €73 million for further preliminary activities and pre-treating biomass, which will be finished by the third quarter of 2020 and will supply the bio-refinery with second-generation raw material, from waste, raw vegetable oil and advanced material.

The process of converting the traditional refinery into a bio-refinery began in April 2016 and took more than 3 million hours of work by Eni's employees and third parties to finish. Significantly, there were also no accidents along the way. To create the Ecofining™ plant, the two existing desulphurisation units were modified and a steam reforming unit was built to produce hydrogen. Hydrogen is a basic ingredient in hydrogenated vegetable oil (HVO), the biodiesel that, when added to fossil diesel at 15%, makes the premium fuel Enidiesel+.

"It's a very important day for us. In Venice, we were the first in the world to convert a traditional refinery into a bio-refinery," says Eni's CEO, Claudio Descalzi, "and now we're opening our second, which is even more innovative. It's a fresh example of Italian excellence. This is a big step forwards on our path to decarbonization, something we have been pursuing for some time but have stepped up in the last five years, investing in efficiency and in particular in green energy production, renewables and the circular economy. We have been doing this by transforming organic and inorganic substances, minimising waste and getting value out of rubbish and waste material, whilst at the same time developing research, technologies and industrial initiatives that will represent valuable future lines of business for Eni. It is an important milestone on this path and we are reaching it right here in Italy. Gela is leading the charge. Besides its new bio-refinery, the site is also home to the pilot waste-to-fuel plant, which has been transforming organic waste into bio-oil, biomethane and water since last December. It is destined to become Eni's workshop for applying the most advanced technologies in the field of renewables and renewables."

Eni has more than 1,000 employees at the site in Gela, 426 of whom work at the bio-refinery.

Building the bio-refinery in Gela will allow Eni to improve in all environmental fields, emitting more than 70% fewer emissions (of SO₂, NO_x, CO₂ and dust) than traditional production cycles. Elsewhere on the environmental front, we are carrying on reclamation, on which we have spent more than €800 million since 2000.

There will be several operations to improve the visual impact of the site. The highest of the old flares will be demolished, as the chimney already has been. It will be replaced by a shorter one with less environmental impact. A lot of other infrastructure will be demolished, including tanks, shelters and facilities for gas recovery, diesel desulphurisation and petrol blending. The skyline in the industrial area is set to improve thanks to work lasting until 2022, including demolishing the SNOX chimney, no longer in use.

Eni's biorefinery in Gela is designed for treating advanced and unconventional loads up to 100% of processing capacity. It is one of the few bio-refineries in the world with such high operating flexibility. Gela is defined by its ability to process "unconventional" second-generation raw material from waste from food production, regenerated used cooking oil (RUCO), animal fat (tallow) and by-products from processing vegetable oil. This makes it an innovative plant with high environmental sustainability that can process loads that would otherwise be disposed of – at the cost of the community and the environment – using them instead for fuel, promoting the circular economy.

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