

MAPEI AND IREN: CIRCULAR ECONOMY AGREEMENT FOR REUTILISING RECYCLED POLYMERS FOR ROAD INFRASTRUCTURES

Agreement signed for implementing and innovative technology for making more durable and sustainable road surfaces

Milan, 8th April 2021 – **Mapei**, one of the world's leading manufacturers of chemicals for the building industry, and **Iren**, one of the most important and dynamic multi-utilities on the Italian scene, have signed an agreement to use thermoplastic polymers deriving from innovative recycling processes to make long-lasting and sustainable road surfaces.

The project, which Iren is managing through its subsidiary **I.Blu**, a leading national operator in the industry for selecting and recycling plastic packaging from differentiated waste collection, is a virtuous example of the circular economy and is aimed at implementing innovative technology enabling a significant increase in the life-cycle of road surfaces.

This agreement, which is the first time a multi-utility has worked directly with a manufacturer, both highly committed to sustainability in their respective realms of business, is both an important business deal and an innovative project.

Mapei is fully committed to providing new sustainable technology for manufacturing bituminous conglomerates for making road surfaces out of techno-polymers developed by Mapei in partnership with Iren through its subsidiary I.Blu.

Joint tests carried out with the help of Milan Polytechnic's Road Laboratory led to the discovery of formals, which, thanks to the use of these additives, can be used to make longer-lasting and more sustainable asphalts that are ideal for roads, motorways, industrial estates, airports, and logistics/business centres.

Bituminous conglomerates (asphalts) incorporating these techno-polymer additives can be used to create surfaces whose life cycle is longer than other surfaces of the same thickness, thereby reducing maintenance costs and increasing resistance to permanent deformation due to heavy loads. They also increase resistance to heat excursions and UVA rays, resulting in less surface wear-and-tear and reducing risks, particularly for bicycles and motorbikes.

Over the years before the agreement was signed, the partnership between Mapei and I.Blu resulted in the construction of the surfaces of some of Italy's main airports, confirming the effectiveness of this new technology.

"This agreement is particularly important in the realm of new technology designed to extend the life-cycle of paving and surfaces and stop them from degrading - so Marco Squinzi noted, Mapei's CEO - . Mapei has great faith in the future of this market and recently created a new Road Engineering line focused around technology and products in the field of bituminous conglomerates and major local/provincial road engineering works. The circular economy also calls for research into durability. The use of innovative technology for more permanent and longer-lasting projects for extending the lifecycle of both new and renovated structures needs to become a shared commitment in the realms of infrastructures and building. The fact that this can be achieved through the use of secondary raw materials adds value to a project that is now an integral part of Mapei's policy to make sustainability a pillar of its own business".

"The agreement arranged with Mapei – so Massimiliano Bianco told us, Iren's CEO - perfectly interprets our own concept of a multicircle economy, our long-term industrial vision focused on conscientious and efficient use of resources. After I.Blu became part of the Group in 2020, our company was able to take another step forward both in terms of industrial innovation and the economic-environmental enhancement of waste cycles, making it a leading national company in the selection of COREPLA plastics and the handling of plasmix, a process for recycling waste plastics that notably increases the percentage of waste recycled as a material. The partnership with Mapei boosts this process even further, allowing us to complete the cycle by using thermoplastic polymers in bituminous conglomerates".



Mapei

Founded in 1937 in Milan, Mapei is now one of the world's leading manufacturers of chemical products for the building industry and has contributed to the construction of some of the most important architectural and infrastructural works worldwide. With 90 subsidiaries operating in 57 countries and 83 manufacturing plants in 36 different nations, the Group employs over 10,500 staff worldwide. In 2019 Mapei had a consolidated turnover of €2.8 billion. The foundations for the success of the company are specialisation, internationalisation, research & development and sustainability.

Iren

Iren, one of the most important and dynamic multiutilities on the Italian scene, operates in the sectors of electrical energy, gas, thermal energy for teleheating, and the management of integrated water services, environmental services and technological services. The company recently formulated a new growth strategy moving beyond the conventional concept of a circular economy to introduce what is called a multicircle economy: this vision, highly sustainable in the long term, emphasises the multi-business nature of a multiutility, whose multiple operations are all based on the responsible use of resources. The Group supplies its services on a multiregional basis employing over 8000 staff and has a portfolio of approximately 1.9 million clients in the energy sector, serving approximately 2.8 million inhabitants with its integrated water cycle and over 3 million inhabitants with its environmental cycle. It is the nation's leading national player in the teleheating industry for commercialised thermal energy, third in the water industry in terms of cubic metres managed and in environmental services in terms of the amount of waste it handles, fifth in the gas industry for sales to end customers and fifth in electrical energy in terms of the electricity it sells.

Approximately 76% of the Group's energy production is eco-friendly.

For further information

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