

## **Water infrastructure: only 11% of “ERDF” 2014–2020 projects completed**

*In Italy only one out of ten of the over 2,000 projects funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) related to water has been completed. For the 2021–2027 cycle, only 5 out of 542 (1%) are finished. These figures, compiled by the Centro Studi Enti Locali, will be presented at Accadueo, the international water service trade fair, taking place from October 7–9 at BolognaFiere*

Only 11% of the 2,023 projects funded by the European Regional Development Fund under the 2014–2020 programming cycle and aimed at water resources and wastewater were actually completed. These are some of the findings to be presented and discussed at the upcoming edition of **Accadueo**, for over thirty years the only trade fair in Italy exclusively dedicated to the civil and industrial water sector, will take place from October 7 to 9 at BolognaFiere, organized by **BolognaFiere Water&Energy**, based on data from Opencoesione (Presidency of the Council – Department for Cohesion Policies and the South) and updated as of April 30, 2025\*.

According to the analysis by the Centro Studi Enti Locali, over 8 out of 10 projects (83%) are still in progress, and 58 (3% of the total) have not yet been started. In the previous 2007–2013 programming cycle, only half of the planned water-related projects were completed (1,145 out of 2,273). In the cycle before that (2000–2006), the completion rate was significantly higher: 1,402 out of 1,726, or 81% of the total.

*“Modernizing Italy’s water networks and developing management models are now top priorities,” stated **Paolo Angelini, CEO of BolognaFiere Water&Energy**. “Accadueo will be an important opportunity for concrete dialogue between institutions and businesses. Only through discussion and a shared vision can we overcome the chronic inability to fully utilize cohesion funds and direct investments toward structural, sustainable, and timely interventions.”*

*“We must act urgently on the distribution, treatment, and efficient use of water resources,” added **Nicola Tonveronachi, CEO of the Centro Studi Enti Locali**, “especially in a context marked by climate change and evolving civil and industrial needs coexisting with long-standing deficiencies in Italy’s water infrastructure”.*

The most common types of projects include modernization, extension, or maintenance of urban water distribution networks; collection and disposal of domestic and industrial wastewater; construction or upgrading of wastewater treatment plants; infrastructure for water withdrawal and transport for civil and industrial use; and projects supporting agriculture and efficient irrigation practices.

Data from the current 2021–2027 programming cycle show a decrease in the number of water-related ERDF-funded projects (542 compared to 2,023 in the previous cycle). This

reduction is likely influenced by the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR), which allocated significant resources to the water sector: €2 billion for primary water infrastructure to ensure supply security and €1.92 billion for reducing losses in water distribution networks, including digitization and monitoring. As of now, only 5 projects from the current cycle have been completed (1% of the total), 366 are underway (68%), and nearly one in three (168 out of 542) have not yet started.

*\*Research titled “The Future of Water: Which Management Models Have Proven Most Efficient in the Management of Water Resources,” commissioned by BFW.*

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#### **ABOUT BFW**

*BFW is a joint venture founded in 2021 by BolognaFiere and Mirumir with the goal of developing a business project that promotes knowledge and sharing around the economic and social value of water and its new technological applications (<https://www.bfw.it>). BFW organizes Accadueo, the leading water industry event in Italy and internationally for over 30 years (<https://www.accadueo.com>). It is held in Bari in even years and in Bologna in odd years.*

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#### **For more information**

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