

EDISON NEXT WITH IRIS CERAMICA GROUP FOR H2 FACTORY, THE FIRST GREEN HYDROGEN-POWERED CERAMIC SLAB INDUSTRY

Milan/Fiorano Modenese 12 July 2023 – **Iris Ceramica Group**, world leader in the production of innovative solutions and high-end, large technical ceramic slabs for design, furnishing and architecture market, and **Edison Next**, Edison Group's Company that leads clients and territories in their decarbonisation and ecological transition journey, announce the signature of an agreement for the development of **H2 Factory™**, the new production plant in **Castellarano** (province of Reggio Emilia) **which will use green hydrogen – powered by renewable energy – produced using a pioneering, bespoke system.**

With this agreement, Iris Ceramica Group and Edison Next are launching the **first project for the decarbonisation of the ceramics industry using green hydrogen**. This initiative marks the start of a new journey towards the decarbonisation of a particularly energy-intensive industrial sector¹, the contribution of which is crucial for achieving the energy transition objectives both for the country and the **ceramic district** – concentrated between the provinces of Modena and Reggio Emilia – **which is a strategic area** for this production sector. Skill, technology, innovation and the determination to believe in a virtuous path towards decarbonisation are the key elements for the first **“green” ceramic industry.**

“The start of this virtuous energy transition path with Iris Ceramica Group is the first significant step towards the decarbonisation of a key sector for the Country,” Giovanni Brianza, Edison Next CEO, declared, “Iris Ceramica Group represents an excellence of Italian manufacturing around the world, and its history shows the ability to tackle and win this challenge.”

“For energy-intensive sectors, decarbonisation means having the courage to rethink processes, intervening in the heart of production systems through the introduction of innovative technologies with the aim of guaranteeing environmental sustainability, as well as the competitive performance of the sector in the international markets.” Brianza continues, “This project, based on the production and use of green hydrogen in an industrial sector, is part of Edison strategy, which is investing in this energy vector through several projects for the benefit of industrial clients.”

The partnership between Iris Ceramica Group and Edison Next marks the start of the second phase of an ambitious project. The first step towards decarbonisation has been completed, with Iris Ceramica Group working in the past year and a half on the feasibility study and implementation of the H2 Factory™ developed using **the highest design standards**, suitable for hosting the green hydrogen production system. The use of this energy vector in the production process in fact requires **special measures**, not only in terms of facilities – the kiln engineered to be powered with a blend of hydrogen and natural gas – but also in **strategic construction works**, including **rainwater collection tanks**, the **photovoltaic system on the roof of the factory** and **specific hydrogen production and storage areas**. The company has also installed all the hydrogen distribution systems throughout the plant.

The factory, which will be powered by hydrogen starting from 2025, will produce **large slabs in 4D Ceramics** – the fourth dimension refers precisely to sustainability –, large full-body **technical ceramic surfaces** in thicknesses 12 and 20 mm, which are particularly ideal for the luxury furnishing sector.

¹ So-called Hard to Abate

“We are looking at a new dawn for the ceramic industry and the sector as a whole. The underlying principle of our green hydrogen factory is what I define a new industrial humanism, with a central focus on sustainability and all its factors: environmental, social and economic. The challenge is to assure significant savings of CO₂ in the next 2 years, paving the way for the ceramic sector and the whole district, demonstrating that even an energy-intensive industry can become a virtuous “net zero” energy transition model. We hope that other companies will follow our example, to the advantage of the whole community, also leading to the training of new professional expertise,” declared **Federica Minozzi**, CEO of Iris Ceramica Group.

“Despite the unique scenarios of the past few years that have particularly affected the supply chain, changed the paradigms and demanded the review of our business plans, we have continued to work stubbornly, overcoming obstacles and choosing the best synergies. With the technical support and highly valuable services of Edison Next, we aim to achieve carbon neutrality in our production of ceramic slabs by 2030. There is a guiding thread that binds economy to ecology, as my father expressed so well in the 1960s with the equation: Economy=Ecology. We believe in and support a new industrial culture of know-how, that in this necessary ecological transition sees an opportunity for change, for a better present and a better tomorrow,” Federica Minozzi concluded.

For the Iris Ceramica Group *H2 Factory*TM in Castellarano, Edison Next will build 1 MW green hydrogen production system based on electrolysis, powered by renewable energy. This is a part of Iris Ceramica Group's investment **of 50 million euros for the construction of the new hydrogen-driven factory for the production of large slabs.**

The electrolyser will use rainwater withdrawn from collection tanks, thus fostering virtuous water management in accordance with circular economy's principles. The project also involves the installation of another 1.2 MW photovoltaic system, in addition to the existing 2 MW one.

The hydrogen will be used particularly to feed the kiln, using a mix up to 50% of natural gas, while a kiln 100% hydrogen powered is under study.

The expected production, around **132 tonnes of green hydrogen per year**, will replace about **500,000 cubic metres of methane gas per year**. Right from the start, the blend will reduce significantly the **carbon dioxide**, saving around **900 tonnes of CO₂ per year²**.

This agreement is a key step along Iris Ceramica Group's decarbonisation journey, which may involve the development of green hydrogen production systems in other holding's factories.

Edison Next

Edison Next supports customers and territories along their decarbonization journey and ecological transition, leveraging on a platform of innovative, efficient solutions to optimise consumption and decarbonisation. Technology and digital tools play a key role, in order to maximize competitiveness and performance. Edison Next also operates in the circular economy and environmental services sector and is committed to support the development of biomethane and hydrogen markets. Edison Next has competences and assets to supply

² Certified by LEAP s.c.ar.l. Laboratorio Energia ed Ambiente Piacenza

integrated solutions through an end-to-end approach: from energy and environmental consulting and the definition of decarbonisation targets, through to the identification of a roadmap and the relevant solutions, the design and implementation of solutions and the monitoring of results. Technological innovation and research and development are essential both for seizing new opportunities in the energy sector and for successfully addressing the present challenges of climate and economic changes. This is why Edison Next is strongly committed to environmental protection, energy optimisation and the development of green gases.

Iris Ceramica Group

Sustainability, innovation and excellent quality for pioneering ceramic slabs and surfaces: Iris Ceramica Group is a world benchmark in the design and development of high-end natural ceramic materials for innovative solutions and architecture, design and furnishing projects. With over 60 years of business experience, the Group works in over one hundred countries, with a very clear vocation: to re-engineer ceramics to improve the interaction between people and the environment they live in thanks to this natural material, one of the most noble and high-performing in the world. Iris Ceramica Group, which has around 1500 employees worldwide, has its headquarters in Fiorano Modenese, and production sites in Italy, between the provinces of Modena and Reggio Emilia, in addition to two production sites abroad, in Germany and the United States. The Group works in the high-end market with different historical brands, recognised as some of the most important players on the international scene. Among the most prestigious in the design and architecture field: Ariostea, Fiandre Architectural Surfaces, FMG - Fabbrica Marmi e Graniti, Iris Ceramica, Porcelaingres, SapienStone and Stonepeak.

Edison press office <http://www.edison.it/it/contatti-2>; <http://www.edison.it/it/media>

Elena Distaso, +39 338 2500609, elena.distaso@edison.it;

Lucia Caltagirone, + 39 331 6283718, lucia.caltagirone@edison.it;

Marta Mazzacano, +39 335 7749819, marta.mazzacano1@edison.it

Iris Ceramica Group press office

Francesca Cuoghi, +39 331 6493219 fcuoghi@iris-group.it

Maria Grazia Pacchioni, +39 331 6954076 mpacchioni@iris-group.it