

# HERA

Sector: Utilities

## OUTPERFORM

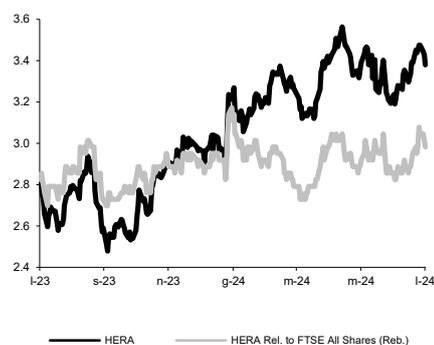
Price: Eu3.38 - Target: Eu4.00

## 2Q24 Results Show Excellent Bottom Line Growth

 Federico Pezzetti +39-02-77115.268  
 federico.pezzetti@intermonte.it

Stock Rating			
Rating:	Unchanged		
Target Price (Eu):	Unchanged		
	2024E	2025E	2026E
Chg in Adj EPS	0.3%	0.2%	0.2%

### HERA - 12M Performance



Stock Data			
Reuters code:	HRA.MI		
Bloomberg code:	HER IM		
Performance	1M	3M	12M
Absolute	5.8%	-0.3%	19.7%
Relative	4.1%	-0.4%	6.2%
12M (H/L)	3.56/2.48		
3M Average Volume (th):	2,454.29		

Shareholder Data	
No. of Ord shares (mn):	1,490
Total no. of shares (mn):	1,490
Mkt Cap Ord (Eu mn):	5,035
Total Mkt Cap (Eu mn):	5,035
Mkt Float - Ord (Eu mn):	2,542
Mkt Float (in %):	50.5%
Main Shareholder:	
Municipality of Bologna	9.7%

Balance Sheet Data	
Book Value (Eu mn):	3,301
BVPS (Eu):	2.46
P/BV:	1.4
Net Financial Position (Eu mn):	-4,113
Enterprise Value (Eu mn):	9,223

■ **2Q24 results broadly in line with expectations.** On the macro front, 2Q saw a rebound of gas and electricity prices (+3.5% and 14.5% QoQ respectively) although these were still well below last year (-18% and -11% YoY), while demand was relatively flat for electricity (+1.5% YoY) but lower for gas (-10% YoY). On the production front, hydroelectric remained strong (+55% YoY) as did solar (+24%) but thermal power generation was weak (-15%). In this context, Hera's operating results contained no major surprises, with EBITDA up 2.4% YoY, mainly driven by: 1) recovering profitability in electricity sales and a continuation of the positive impact of protected market contracts; 2) a decrease in the energy efficiency contribution in the gas division (end of Superbonus); 3) strong growth in regulated business thanks to the WACC update and the increase in the RAB; 4) some growth at the Environment division despite the negative impact of the decrease in electricity prices on WTE production. In more detail: 2Q24 EBITDA closed at Eu316mn (+2.4% YoY and in line with expectations), EBIT at Eu139mn (flat YoY; in line), and adj. net income at Eu75mn (+26% YoY; 16% above expectations) thanks to lower provisions (end of Superbonus and falling energy prices) and particularly low financial charges (reduction in resale of credits). Net debt closed at Eu4,064mn (Eu4,256mn expected, NFP/EBITDA at 2.7x) on the back of Eu179mn in CapEx (+10% YoY) and a reduction of some Eu150mn in working capital thanks in part to the impact of the backlog of payments for the Superbonus.

■ **Key messages from the conference call.** Supply business: since 1st July 1mn new clients on the gradual protection regime entered the Hera portfolio out of 1.4mn won in the auction at the beginning of the year; moreover, Hera has already managed to gain c.150k free market clients that were part of the 1.4mn (with transfers to the free market coming faster than had been expected); Waste business: treatment performance remains positive with rising volumes (+170k tons special waste in 6 months, solid, liquid and also from urban collection) with prices stable and in some cases even rising (especially for liquid waste). ACR Reggiani continued its excellent performance in urban reclamation and regeneration. WTE energy sales should close the year flat YoY from Eu-3mn in 1H. Net debt: during the call, management provided FY24 guidance of around Eu4.1bn.

■ **Change in estimates and target price.** Following 2Q24 results, we have left our estimates substantially unchanged. Our Eu4.00 target is also confirmed, still calculated as a 50/50 combination of a DCF model and a multiple-based approach.

■ **OUTPERFORM confirmed (target Eu4.00).** We continue to believe that the group is well placed to benefit from its leadership in the Waste business, further growth in its retail customer base and a strategy built around the concepts of resilience and environmental and digital transition. Moreover, Hera's financial flexibility (Eu1.5bn firepower for further market expansion) enables it to continue to seize opportunities for growth in its core markets, which are still highly fragmented. The group is trading at 6.1x 2024E EV/EBITDA, a multiple broadly in line with the sector average. OUTPERFORM confirmed.

Key Figures & Ratios	2022A	2023A	2024E	2025E	2026E
Sales (Eu mn)	20,630	15,564	13,941	12,554	12,710
EBITDA Adj (Eu mn)	1,295	1,495	1,501	1,516	1,547
Net Profit Adj (Eu mn)	322	375	416	426	432
EPS New Adj (Eu)	0.216	0.252	0.279	0.286	0.290
EPS Old Adj (Eu)	0.216	0.252	0.278	0.285	0.290
DPS (Eu)	0.125	0.140	0.145	0.150	0.155
EV/EBITDA Adj	6.7	5.3	6.1	6.2	6.1
EV/EBIT Adj	13.8	10.6	11.9	11.6	11.5
P/E Adj	15.6	13.4	12.1	11.8	11.6
Div. Yield	3.7%	4.1%	4.3%	4.4%	4.6%
Net Debt/EBITDA Adj	3.3	2.6	2.7	2.8	2.8

**DISCLAIMER (for more details go to [DISCLAIMER](#))**

**IMPORTANT DISCLOSURES**

The reproduction of the information, recommendations and research produced by Intermonte SIM contained herein and of any its parts is strictly prohibited. None of the contents of this document may be shared with third parties without authorisation from Intermonte.

This report is directed exclusively at market professional and other institutional investors (Institutions) and is not for distribution to person other than "Institution" ("Non-Institution"), who should not rely on this material. Moreover, any investment or service to which this report may relate will not be made available to Non-Institution.

The information and data in this report have been obtained from sources which we believe to be reliable, although the accuracy of these cannot be guaranteed by Intermonte. In the event that there be any doubt as to their reliability, this will be clearly indicated. The main purpose of the report is to offer up-to-date and accurate information in accordance with regulations in force covering "recommendations" and is not intended nor should it be construed as a solicitation to buy or sell securities.

This disclaimer is constantly updated on Intermonte's website [www.intermonte.it](http://www.intermonte.it) under LEGAL INFORMATION. Valuations and recommendations can be found in the text of the most recent research and/or reports on the companies in question. For a list of all recommendations made by Intermonte on any financial instrument or issuer in the last twelve months consult the [PERFORMANCE](#) web page.

Intermonte distributes research and engages in other approved activities with respect to Major U.S. Institutional Investors ("Majors") and other Qualified Institutional Buyers ("QIBs"), in the United States, via Plural Securities LLC under SEC 15a-6 guidelines. Intermonte is not registered as a broker dealer in the United States under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the "Exchange Act"), and is not a member of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation ("SIPC"). Plural Securities LLC is registered as a broker-dealer under the Exchange Act and is a member of SIPC.

**ANALYST CERTIFICATION**

For each company mentioned in this report the respective research analyst hereby certifies that all of the views expressed in this research report accurately reflect the analyst's personal views about any or all of the subject issuer (s) or securities. The analyst (s) also certifies that no part of their compensation was, is or will be directly or indirectly related to the specific recommendation or view in this report.

The analyst (s) responsible for preparing this research report receive(s) compensation that is based upon various factors, including Intermonte's total profits, a portion of which is generated by Intermonte's corporate finance activities, although this is minimal in comparison to that generated by brokerage activities.

Intermonte's internal procedures and codes of conduct are aimed to ensure the impartiality of its financial analysts. The exchange of information between the Corporate Finance sector and the Research Department is prohibited, as is the exchange of information between the latter and the proprietary equity desk in order to prevent conflicts of interest when recommendations are made.

The analyst responsible for the report is not a) a resident of US; b) an associated person of a U.S. broker-dealer; c) supervised by a supervisory principal of a U.S. broker-dealer. This Research Report is distributed in the U.S. through Plural Securities LLC, 950 3rd Ave, Suite 1702, NY 10022, USA.

**GUIDE TO FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH**

The main methods used to evaluate financial instruments and set a target price for 12 months after the investment recommendation are as follows:

- Discounted cash flow (DCF) model or similar methods such as a dividend discount model (DDM)
- Comparison with market peers, using the most appropriate methods for the individual company analysed: among the main ratios used for industrial sectors are price/ earnings (P/E), EV/EBITDA, EV/EBIT, price /sales.
- Return on capital and multiples of adjusted net book value are the main methods used for banking sector stocks, while for insurance sector stocks return on allocated capital and multiples on net book value and embedded portfolio value are used
- For the utilities sector comparisons are made between expected returns and the return on the regulatory asset base (RAB)

Some of the parameters used in evaluations, such as the risk-free rate and risk premium, are the same for all companies covered, and are updated to reflect market conditions. Currently a risk-free rate of 4.0% and a risk premium of 5.5% are being used.

Frequency of research: quarterly.

Reports on all companies listed on the S&PMB40 Index, most of those on the MIDEX Index and the main small caps (regular coverage) are published at least once per quarter to comment on results and important newsflow.

A draft copy of each report may be sent to the subject company for its information (without target price and/or recommendations), but unless expressly stated in the text of the report, no changes are made before it is published.

Explanation of our ratings system:

BUY: stock expected to outperform the market by over 25% over a 12 month period;

OUTPERFORM: stock expected to outperform the market by between 10% and 25% over a 12 month period;

NEUTRAL: stock performance expected at between +10% and -10% compared to the market over a 12 month period;

UNDERPERFORM: stock expected to underperform the market by between -10% and -25% over a 12 month period;

SELL: stock expected to underperform the market by over 25% over a 12 month period.

Prices: The prices reported in the research refer to the price at the close of the previous day of trading

**CURRENT INVESTMENT RESEARCH RATING DISTRIBUTIONS**

Intermonte SIM is authorised by CONSOB to provide investment services and is listed at n° 246 in the register of brokerage firms.

As at 30 June 2024 Intermonte's Research Department covered 116 companies. Intermonte's distribution of stock ratings is as follows:

BUY:	23.97 %
OUTPERFORM:	49.59 %
NEUTRAL:	25.61 %
UNDERPERFORM	00.83 %
SELL:	00.00 %

The distribution of stock ratings for companies which have received corporate finance services from Intermonte in the last 12 months (49 in total) is as follows:

BUY:	38.78 %
OUTPERFORM:	51.02 %
NEUTRAL:	10.20 %
UNDERPERFORM	00.00 %
SELL:	00.00 %

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

In order to disclose its possible conflicts of interest Intermonte SIM states that:

**Intermonte is acting as financial advisor to Retex S.p.A. – Società Benefit in relation to the voluntary public tender offer launched on Alkemy S.p.A.**

**Intermonte is acting as financial advisor to Eagle S.p.A. and intermediary responsible for coordinating the collection of sale requests in relation to the sell-out procedure on Greenthesis S.p.A.**

Intermonte SIM has provided in the last 12 months / provides / may provide investment banking services to the following companies: Aedes, Civitanavi Systems, Cy4Gate, Esprinet, GPI, Greenthesis (formerly Ambienthesis), Growens, Illimity Bank, Maire Tecnimont, SAES Getters, Tinexta, Unidata and WIIT.

**Intermonte SIM is acting as counterparty to WIIT Fin S.r.l. in connection with call and put options having WIIT S.p.A. shares and dividends as reference underlying.**

Intermonte SIM is Specialist and/or Corporate Broker and/or Sponsor and/or Broker in charge of the share buy back activity of the following Companies: Abitare In, Alkemy, Anima Holding, Antares Vision, Aquafil, Avio, Banca Ifis, Banca Sistema, Civitanavi Systems, Cyberoo, Cy4gate, DHH, EL.En, Elica, Emak, Esprinet, Fimit - Fondo Alpha, Fine Foods, Franchi Umberto Marmi, Go Internet, GPI, Greenthesis (formerly Ambienthesis), IEG, Iervolino & Lady Bacardi Entertainment, IndelB, Intred, Luvè, Matica Fintec, Mondadori, Notorious Pictures, Omer, Pharmanutra, Reevo, Relatech, Reply, Revo Insurance, Reway, Sababa Security, Saes Getters, Sclucker Frames, Servizi Italia, Sesa, Seri Industrial, Somec, Star7, SyS-Dat Group, Talea, Tamburi, Tinexta, Tesmec, The Italian Sea Group, TXT, Unidata, Webuild and WIIT.

Intermonte SIM has a contractual commitment to act as liquidity provider on behalf of third parties for the following company: Banca Sistema.

Intermonte SIM performs as a market maker for the following companies: A2A, Anima, Atlantia, Autogrill, Azimut Holding, BAMI, Banca Generali, Banca Mediolanum, Brembo, Buzzi, CNHI, Enel, ENI, Exor, Fineco, FCA, FTMIB, Generali, Italgas, Iren, Intesa Sanpaolo, Leonardo, Mediobanca, Moncler, Mediaset, Pirelli&C, Prysmian, Poste, Ferrari, Saipem, Snam, STM, Tenaris, Telecom Italia, Telecom Italia sav, Terna, UBI, Unicredit, Unipol, UnipolSai.

Intermonte SIM, through Websim, which constitute the digital division of Intermonte, acts as a Financial Content Provider on the following companies: Abitare In, Alkemy, Allcore, Almamwave, Banca Sistema, Bifire S.P.A., B&C Speakers, Casta Diva Group, Cleanbnb, Cofe, Crowdfundme, Cube Labs, Cy4gate, Cyberoo, Digital Bros, Digital Magics, Digitouch, Doxee, Edilziacrobatica Spa, Eles, Elica, Emak, Energy, Esi, Esprinet, Eviso, Fae Technology, Fiera Milano, Fope, FOS, Franchi Umberto Marmi, Giglio Group, GPI, High Quality Food, Ikonisys, Intercos, Intred, ISCC Fintech, Lemon Sistemi, Lventure Group, Maps Group, Masi Agricola, Matica Fintec, Neodecortech, Notorious Pictures, Oldata, Osai Automation System, Racing Force Group, Relatech, Reti, Sclucker Frames, SG Company, Solid World Group, Spindox Digital Soul, Talea, Tamburi, Tesmec, Tinexta, TMP Group, Tps Group, Trendevice, Ulisse Biomed, WIIT.

Intermonte SIM SpA holds net long or short positions in excess of 0.5% of the overall share capital in the following issuers:

Emittente	%	Long/Short

**© Copyright 2024 by Intermonte SIM - All rights reserved**

It is a violation of national and international copyright laws to reproduce all or part of this publication by email, xerography, facsimile or any other means. The Copyright laws impose heavy liability for such infringement. The Reports of Intermonte SIM are provided to its clients only. If you are not a client of Intermonte SIM and receive emailed, faxed or copied versions of the reports from a source other than Intermonte SIM you are violating the Copyright Laws. This document is not for attribution in any publication, and you should not disseminate, distribute or copy this e-mail without the explicit written consent of Intermonte SIM.

INTERMONTE will take legal action against anybody transmitting/publishing its Research products without its express authorization.

INTERMONTE Sim strongly believes its research product on Italian equities is a value added product and deserves to be adequately paid.

Intermonte Sim sales representatives can be contacted to discuss terms and conditions to be supplied the INTERMONTE research product.

INTERMONTE SIM is MIFID compliant - for our Best Execution Policy please check our Website [MIFID](#)

Further information is available