

Italy

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Italy's Lubricants Market: Stability, Specialisation, and Trends

Italy remains one of Europe's most distinctive lubricants markets, shaped by an ageing vehicle fleet, a strong manufacturing base, and a recycling system that sets the benchmark for the continent.

A few large companies cover more than half of the market, while the remaining 50% is fragmented into a large number of small and medium-sized manufacturers, particularly in the industrial sector, where products are often high-tech.

In 2024, Italian lubricant consumption reached around 384,000 tonnes, split almost evenly between industrial (50.5%) and automotive (49.5%) use. Industrial demand reflects Italy's well-diversified manufacturing sector, from precision engineering to heavy industry. Automotive lubricants, meanwhile, benefit from the country's unusually high car density—over 41 million passenger cars are on the road, equivalent to roughly 701 per 1,000 inhabitants.

The Italian car parc is among the oldest in Western Europe, a factor that supports lubricant demand. Older vehicles tend to require more frequent oil changes, and with electric vehicles (EVs) still accounting for only 7.5% of new car registrations in 2024, internal combustion engines will dominate the market well into the next decade.

Circular Leadership

Italy is a European leader in used oil management. Under the CONOU extended producer responsibility scheme, around 188,000 tonnes of waste oil were collected in 2024, with approximately 98% regenerated into base oils. This circular economy model has delivered environmental benefits and supported a growing market for re-refined base oil (RRBO) products.

For suppliers, participation in the scheme is not just a compliance obligation but a commercial advantage. Customers—particularly in industrial markets—are increasingly seeking sustainability credentials alongside technical performance.

Italy's lubricants market shows short-term resilience, with June's rebound highlighting growth in industrial oils, though overall first-half performance remained broadly flat.

The automotive sector continues to demonstrate strength, supported by the country's ageing vehicle fleet and high car density, with marine lubricants and other engine oils recording standout gains. Industrial demand, however, remains under pressure, driven largely by the steep decline in process oils, although specialty niches such as metalworking fluids, food-grade oils, and high-performance greases present opportunities for growth. Sustainability remains a clear competitive advantage, with Italy's leadership in oil regeneration positioning re-refined base oils (RRBOs) as a strategic driver of future expansion. The country also has a wealth of expertise in biolubricants, which often form the basis of original formulations, particularly in the MWF sector. While volumes are expected to remain stable, value growth is forecast at mid-single digits annually, with the market projected to rise from USD 3.26 billion in 2024 to USD 4.94 billion by 2033, driven by synthetics, semi-synthetics, and extended-drain formulations. Financially, Q1/Q2 2025 results showed total volumes at 217,530 tonnes (+0.4% YoY), or 194,800 tonnes (-0.7%) on an adjusted basis, with automotive consumption reaching 98,300 tonnes (+3.5%)—led by marine oils (+15%) and other engine oils (+25.7%)—while industrial oils contracted to 96,500 tonnes (-4.5%), largely due to a sharp 29.9% drop in process oils, albeit less severe than the previous month.

Italy's lubricants market may not offer headline growth in volumes, but it rewards expertise, service, and sustainability. With a customer base that values proven performance and compliance, suppliers able to combine technical excellence with circular economy credentials will find Italy a resilient and profitable market for years to come. The June 2025 rebound highlights the market's inherent stability, even as industrial oils face cyclical challenges.