



MANUFACTURE

Nearshoring of a low-price product – Arena's swimming goggle case

By [Susa Schreiner](#) | 16 April 2025

In two years Arena has set up a highly automated production line for swim goggles in Campogalliano, Modena, with a focus on quality control, market proximity and cost efficiency through automation and short transportation routes. It has devoted these years to research on and further development of an existing model of swimming goggles and the creation of new precision machines – some of them made in Asia. What follows is an overview of Arena's nearshoring.

The One Plus, a model of swim goggles, began rolling off the production line this year at **LAR**, a company specializing in plastic injection molding. The decision go "Made in Italy" for an inexpensive entry-level model is certainly an entrepreneurial gamble, but it will probably pay off quickly, in light of general developments. For **Arena** is in good company with its nearshoring approach.

In recent years, many European companies have started to relocate their production from Asia back to Europe. According to a survey conducted by **Buck Consultants International** in 2022, around 60 percent of supply chain managers plan to bring back parts of their production from Asia and the US. A fifth of respondents said they would be moving most of their production back to Europe. The main reasons are increased costs for global supply chains, geopolitical tensions and the increasing importance of flexibility and proximity to markets.



Source: Arena

Arena's swimming goggle: Made in Italy

Arena's decision to have one of its swim goggles produced in Italy again probably falls in line with this transformation. After two years of development, the highly automated production line in Campogalliano was inaugurated in 2024, and full production has begun this year. The plant has a capacity for 1.5 million swim goggles a year. And The One Plus will be among the Italian province's products.

Equipped with a new anti-fog technology, this model is a further development of an existing entry-level model, but its retail price is far from steep, ranging from €25 (regular) to €30 (mirrored). For Arena, then, "Made in Europe" does not necessarily mean premium segment.

LAR factory with production line for Arena

In 2024, the LAR factory, which specializes in plastic injection molding, inaugurated a separate production line for Arena. LAR is convinced that its collaboration with Arena is a long-term project. After all, producing the goggles has meant developing proprietary processes and building high-precision machines. Arena CEO **Peter Graschi** underscores the long-term nature of the project: "Our plan is to further expand our production facility in Italy, not only in terms of volume but also in terms of capacity."

The problem suggests a sometimes frightening reality, but its solution can provide a blueprint for other trades. According to LAR plant manager **Riccardo Monari**, no company in Europe could produce molds for swimming goggles. To find what he was looking for Monari had to look to Asia. The technology for the anti-fog coatings was also specially developed to prevent chromatic aberrations and color distortions while ensuring consistently high lens quality.



Source: Arena

LAR production line for Arena.

Greg Steyger, Director Racing & Equipment at Arena, says: "It was a real challenge to make an already versatile and successful product like The One even better. After almost two years of intensive research and development, we are proud to present a goggle that meets the highest standards and is still affordable."

The production line LAR has built for the purpose is automated. It caused a few sleepless nights, according to Monari, but now it runs like Swiss clockwork.

1.5m annual capacity

LAR can produce 1.5 million pairs of The One Plus per year. Arena produces a total of 4.5 million swim goggles per year, a third of which are now produced in Italy. Two production lines are available for this purpose. Production is carried out in strict compliance with European quality and environmental standards. The automated process is ISO 14064-certified. Nevertheless, the production of spectacle frames traditionally involves a number of manual processes, like the assembly of individual components. There are 30 employees in Campogalliano who assemble up to 1,600 spectacles a day and prepare them for dispatch.



Source: Arena

Arena CEO Graschi: "Quality and sustainability"

With the new production line in Italy, Arena is reaffirming both its commitment to innovation and the importance of local production, as Graschi explains: "Made in Italy is increasingly becoming synonymous with quality and sustainability in the world of swimming."

