

press release

Bologna, 22 February 2018

Top Utility 2018, Hera confirms its place at the top of Italy's sustainability rankings

The Hera Group comes out on top again at the sixth edition of the Award, which analyses and promotes the performance levels of the country's main public utility companies.

Achieving excellence in any field or industry is no easy feat, doing so year after year even less so. Yet this is exactly what the Hera Group has succeeded in doing at the sixth edition of Top Utility Analysis, which declared the Bologna-based Group to be Italy's most eco-sustainable public service company out of 100 contenders.

The report, drawn up by independent company Althesys, rewarded Hera for its “attention to efficient use of energy and resources, improved corporate social responsibility results and the centrality of sustainability to its strategy”. This acknowledgement - a repeat of the recognition obtained in the same area in 2015 - follows the Top Utility Absolute award received in 2013 and the Top Utility Communication award of 2014.

A shared goal throughout the company, sustainability is the subject of a specific yearly report that ensures all parties can count on complete up-to-the-minute information on the Group's social and environmental impact. The sustainability report is constantly evolving. Following last year's introduction of an indicator showing what proportion of gross operating margin is generated by activities that respond to UN Global Agenda 2030 goals, next year will see an in-depth overhaul to ensure ever-more effective representation of the direct links between actions taken and the contribution to sustainable development.

A clear example of this takes the form of the biomethane plant being built at Sant'Agata Bolognese, expected to come on line in the last quarter of 2018. It has been cited by the Global Compact as a world-class example of how to achieve UN Agenda goal n. 7 (“Clean, accessible energy”). Once fully operational, the use of innovative anaerobic digestion and upgrading technologies will allow the facility to produce 20,000 tons of high-quality natural fertiliser and 8 million cubic metres of biomethane (a 100% renewable fuel) from the separate collection of organic waste every year. This is a major project that aims to convert and modernise an existing facility without taking up any more land. It will save over 6,000 tons of oil a year and provide tangible proof that sustainability is, indeed, the way

USEFUL LINKS

- [Hera group and Corporate Social Responsibility](#)

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forward. A way forward that starts with families, by collecting and using their kitchen scraps (i.e. the separated organic waste) and ends with real local benefits in the form of a gas that can, for example, power private vehicles or public transport, with immediate improvements in air quality.

While that's just one of many examples of how Hera efficiently blends innovation with sustainable development (a wider set of activities was assessed by the survey), it does, perhaps, best represent how the Group's commitment to sustainability translates into a variety of sound initiatives which positively impact quality of life.

“We're extremely proud to see our commitment to sustainability acknowledged yet again”, commented Filippo Bocchi, the Hera Group's Corporate Social Responsibility Manager. “The award underscores Hera's capacity to develop innovative models and tools that identify future trends and provide practical responses to the area's needs. A further, significant contribution to that capacity also stems from membership of international bodies such as CE100 and CEO Water Mandate, excellent motivators towards continuous improvement. Environmental and social goals - which also reflect those laid out in the UN Agenda - have, now, become a strategic element in Group planning and play a key role in determining the direction to be taken. It is, then, ever-more essential to provide an accurate sustainability report that, starting with the very next edition, is capable of modernising itself while maintaining the highest levels of compliance with key international standards”.