

A photograph of a large-scale construction site for a biomethane plant. The image shows several massive, curved, metallic structures in various colors (purple, green, blue, yellow) that form a complex, overlapping framework. The background is a clear, light blue sky. The overall scene conveys a sense of industrial scale and modern infrastructure.

# *Stakeholder Engagement Programs in Hera Group*

*Solid infrastructures for a long-term sustainable strategy*

*Photo by Silvia Camporesi: construction phase of the biomethane plant of Sant'Agata Bolognese*

# Stakeholder Engagement Programs (1/4)

We believe it is essential to maintain an **open dialogue with all our stakeholders**. Our approach is based on corporate social responsibility and sustainable development and it focuses on our stakeholders' legitimate expectations. **Responding to their requests, balancing them and incorporating them into our corporate strategies**, allows us to generate tangible value in the local area.

We have defined a **stakeholder map**. For each category we have identified:

- The **composition** and the **objectives**
- The **priorities**
- **Listening, dialogue** and **consultation activities** during the year

The **engagement and dialogue programs** for local stakeholders, applied in all the territories in which Hera operates, are:

- **Hera LABs**: local multi-stakeholder boards that Hera provides to the local areas in which it delivers its services to open a structured channel for listening to and discussing with local communities
- **Area Managers** to facilitate relations with the reference areas
- **regular surveys** to understand perception of the Group and projects on local stakeholders
- **whistleblowing portal**
- the **Ethics and Sustainability Committee reporting channel**

With reference to the involvement of local communities near Hera plants, **impact assessments are carried out** and channels of dialogue and discussion are set up, with the **patronage and support of the Municipalities that coordinate the various interest groups** such as committees, associations, purpose-driven cooperatives, **to discuss the interventions and activities to be carried out in order to listen to requests and perform actions together**, insofar as possible and in line with the construction needs. Other non-verbal communications are expressed on the panels around the construction sites, which describe the works in progress and indicate the stakeholders and other entities that support and/or are involved in the works. **Regular updates on projects are provided and feedbacks from local stakeholders are collected.**

**The channels of dialogue and discussion with communities** should be set up during authorisation and/or construction of the works and/or management of the plant by the Municipality in which it is located. In general, this **involves public meetings, technical round tables, reporting of activities within open board committees.**

# Stakeholder Engagement Programs (2/4)

Since 2011, the Group has operated a **web portal dedicated to consumer associations**: a section of the Group's corporate website **reserved exclusively for representatives of the main associations operating in the areas served by the Group**, who act as key intermediaries for the Company in its relations with end customers. Through this interface with Hera, consumer associations can manage complaints and cases, thereby preventing disputes and reducing response and resolution times. In 2025, the consumer associations portal recorded 5,258 visitors (up 33% compared to 2024) and a total of 15,404 page views (up 37% compared to the previous year). In addition to the portal, the representatives and staff of the associations also have access to the standard email and telephone contact details, which, together with the web section, constitute a dedicated communication channel for them. In 2025, this channel handled cases relating to 341 customers (compared to 384 in 2024), all of which were resolved positively, with an average handling time of 3 working days.

Furthermore, with the aim of cultivating positive relationships and **fostering an ongoing open dialogue**, in 2025 Hera once again organised **regular meetings for the provincial and local representatives of consumer associations in the areas it serves in Emilia-Romagna**; these meetings have been held online since 2020. In total, two meetings were held in 2025, involving a total of 24 representatives from the main associations operating in the region. During the meetings, topics of interest to the associations were discussed, including the presentation of the new bill, the progress of the Water Leakage Fund, the protection system (progress of ARERA conciliations and the extension of the protection system to waste management), the performance of the channel dedicated to consumer associations, a description of Inrete Distribuzione Energia's end-to-end metering management process and customer technical services, and the presentation of the 2024 editions of the sustainability reports *In Buone Acque* and *Sulle Tracce dei Rifiuti*. As in previous years, dialogue with the associations remained open and active throughout the year, including through the organisation of two further meetings, again held online, in response to requests for information from certain associations in the Modena and Bologna areas, which were required for monitoring the integrated water system.

The Central Communication and External Relations Department is responsible for managing the engagement of consumer associations.

The **Rifiutologo** is a **tool for dialogue with citizens and customers**: a free, feature-rich app dedicated to environmental services. In addition to providing support for proper separated waste collection, it enables users to interact with environmental services and make the best use of them: it is available online, both on Hera's website and as a mobile app for smartphones and tablets. The app is geolocated and provides information and services in the municipalities where Hera manages environmental services. Overall, in 2025, it recorded nearly seven million sessions and almost 600,000 active users. One of the main features is the 'waste search' function, which allows users to check whether their waste is being disposed of correctly in the separate collection system, consult the door-to-door collection schedules for their area, set up notifications to remind them when to put out their waste, check information on the nearest recycling centre, and find information on points of interest such as special separate collection schemes, mobile collection points, and material distribution points. In addition, users can also download illustrative materials.

# Stakeholder Engagement Programs (3/4)

**The environmental reporting feature enables users to report issues** such as abandoned waste or damaged bins using georeferenced photographs; in 2025, 224,000 such reports were made, almost 5% more than in the previous year. The barcode scanning feature enables users to identify packaging materials based on product barcodes and determine the correct disposal method; throughout the year, approximately 203,000 requests were made using the barcode scanning function. To date, more than 1,900,000 barcodes of products in circulation in Italy have been registered. The app also allows users to book free home collection of bulky waste (and, in municipalities where the service is available, garden waste as well). The Rifiutologo app is also available through the Alexa Skill, the voice assistant that users can ask for all kinds of information about waste collection.

The Central Environmental Services and Fleets Department is responsible for this engagement activity

Another tool for involving the Group's customers is **MyHera**, the mobile app for managing supply quickly and easily. In this app, it is possible to pay bills and check historical bills, submit readings, monitor consumption, view the map of the nearest ecological stations and Hera branches, as well as supply points. In the application, it is possible to **get help with contracts and payments**, learn about new commercial offers, arrange a bulky waste collection service, **make environmental reports and notify the emergency service** in the event of faults in the water network. In 2025, a new version of the app was released with a revised organisation of content and the browsing layout, in order to facilitate access to the various features and to get it ready for an everincreasing number of integrations with other company tools.

Hera Comm is responsible for this engagement activity.

Consumers and end users also have two other channels of communication with the Hera Group:

- the Ethics and Sustainability Committee, which should be contacted about any violations of the Code of Ethics;
- the whistleblowing channel, directed to the Supervisory Body, for suspected violations of the Model for the prevention of corruption or Italian Law 231 fraud or other alleged crimes or offences of another nature, including in relation to gender equality (e.g. Harassment).

Customer service is also available to customers and residents served by the Hera Group, through a call centre with a toll-free number, and the technical call centre service, open 24/7 with 15 toll-free numbers to provide an emergency service, in addition to numerous branches located throughout the country.

# Hera LABs

# Hera relations with local Municipalities

Among the main processes of involvement of local communities are the HeraLABs, overseen by the Central Department for Relations with Local Authorities, i.e. the multi-stakeholder councils that the Hera Group has activated since 2013 in the territories in which it operates.

The primary objective of these participatory processes is to provide the territories in which Hera provides its services with a structured channel for listening and dialogue.

Between 2013 and 2025, HeraLAB held 133 meetings, engaging 175 local stakeholders and devoting a total of 3,300 hours to listening. Participation in the LABs is free of charge; the attendance fee paid to participants is allocated to local sustainability projects. As at the end of 2025, 142,700 euro had been donated to 28 public and non-profit organisations.

The initiatives are divided into eight areas for potential cooperation, focusing on energy efficiency, production and distribution of renewable energy. The main actions include supporting small and medium-sized companies with the adoption of energy efficiency measures, the strengthening of the electricity grid and the promotion of photovoltaic selfconsumption for companies, both on-site and off-site, to stabilise energy costs and reduce environmental impact. Integrated projects are also being developed, such as Energy parks, which combine renewable production and storage systems, and Renewable Energy Communities, applied to both condominiums and production areas, through cooperative models that encourage participation and shared management. These initiatives aim to strengthen the links between companies, residents and the local area, promoting a more sustainable and resilient energy system.



In 2025, the Area Management functions, which had previously formed part of the Central Strategy, Regulation and Local Authorities Department, established a new unit dedicated entirely to fostering closer ties between the Group and the regions it serves, called the Central Local Authority Relations Department, which reports directly to senior management. In line with past practice, the new department continuously manages relations with municipalities in the Emilia Romagna region. The Area Managers continue to act as the interface between local authorities and all the Group's activities: they oversee institutional relations, with a particular focus on public administrators, facilitate operational relations between the relevant technical units, and support HeraLAB's activities. The organisational structure aims to simplify the relationship between municipalities and Hera's complex organisation, through a privileged dialogue and an overall view of the areas of focus and the sensitivities of the local communities with regard to the Group's businesses. Therefore, relations with local authorities enable direct and accessible contact to respond to requests regarding both regulated and liberalised public services. Following the 2024 local elections, which involved around 80% of the municipalities served in Emilia-Romagna, in 2025, the Area Managers launched a special listening initiative aimed at over 200 administrators from the municipalities served in Emilia-Romagna, using a qualitative and quantitative survey to identify the areas on which to focus dialogue initiatives. The study identified Hera's network services and environmental operations as the areas to which local authorities assign a strategic role in achieving local development objectives and in which it is most important to invest in targeted mutual engagement initiatives. In addition, work continued on mentoring and supporting the HeraLABs, facilitating the necessary coordination between relations with local authorities and relations with other local stakeholders. Finally, in 2025, Area Managers managed over 4,500 interactions with local stakeholders. The majority of these engagements concerned the integrated water service (36%) and environmental services (26%), followed by other network services (9%), the market area (8%) and general corporate issues (13%).

In Friuli-Venezia Giulia and Veneto, relations with shareholder municipalities and other local authorities served by the Group are managed through AcegasApsAmga's Local Authority Relations department. Throughout 2025, AcegasApsAmga's Area Managers provided ongoing support in the areas served, initiating approximately 450 opportunities for contact with more than 210 municipalities and establishing themselves as a key point of reference for the company's business units in their dialogue with local authorities. The topics discussed mainly concerned public lighting (30%), energy services (28%), the water cycle (13%), corporate issues (9%), environmental services (8%) and cross-cutting technical services (7%).

