

03

Our approach to People and Communities

Safety and excellence are two indispensable cornerstones that can steer us in all the relationships we build with our customers, partners and the communities we serve. They help us to achieve one of our most cherished targets: **our customers' complete satisfaction.**

That is why we are continually improving the quality of our services and strive to be an added value for the communities where we operate. We want **to grow together with our communities:** it is the kind of future we are aiming for. At the same time, we firmly believe that only by **valuing our people** can we really make a difference, today and tomorrow.



Learn
more



Our stakeholders: a relationship built on caring and attentive listening

[ESRS 2 SBM-2]

Stakeholder engagement is a key area of focus for us to fully understand the impacts, positive and negative, that our business can have on the outside world. Understanding our impacts is a preliminary step towards identifying mitigating measures and is an opportunity for our growth and enrichment.

257

stakeholders
engaged

Stakeholder Engagement

In 2024, we conducted our double materiality assessment by means of a dedicated survey, engaging **257 stakeholders**, including workers, suppliers, customers, financial institutions, universities, social partners, the Workers' Council and senior management. The feedback received enabled us to identify the most material matters for Markas and to steer our strategic targets. In the light of regulatory developments, Markas is committed to updating its double materiality assessment to ensure it complies with official guidelines and offers an ever more comprehensive and detailed vision of the company and its context.

Our stakeholders



Employees



Social partners
and works councils



Customers



Suppliers



Research
institutes
/universities



Financial
institutions

In addition, we engage our stakeholders continually through various channels and interactive tools, as summarised in the following table.

Stakeholder	Channels and tools used	Results
Employees	Questionnaires Satisfaction surveys Personal relationships Markas People For You	We have strengthened the corporate organisation and defined targeted policies, designed to meet their needs
Customers	Questionnaires Interviews Business relations	We have enhanced service personalisation to precisely respond to our customers' specific needs
Suppliers	Questionnaires Interviews Business relations Audits Vendor Ratings	Through the supplier qualification system, Markas fosters continual and constructive dialogue with stakeholders, aimed at sharing common approaches and working in synergy
Social partners	Questionnaires Periodic meetings	We have obtained common definitions on collective bargaining, introduced specific agreements and formalised new company policies
Research institutes /universities	Questionnaires Partnerships	We have set up R&D groups for each division and optimised processes and operational solutions
Financial institutions	Questionnaires Periodic meetings	We have subscribed to ESG rating systems and begun the structured monitoring of economic and sustainability performance

Our people: our first priority

[ESR51]

We promote a corporate culture based on respect for human rights, on integrating diversity and on developing talent. A goal we pursue through an integrated system of corporate policies and certifications able to involve all our workers, in the broadest possible sense.



+13,000

workers

94.6%

permanent
contracts

82.6%

of workforce are women

96

different nationalities

2

days per week of smart
working for employees

91,172

hours of training

7.8

hours of training for
each worker

439

workers involved in
performance evaluations

Our certifications:



Gender Equality Certification (Uni/PdR 125)

This certification is demonstration of Markas's inclusive business model and commitment to the value of diversity. Factors contributing to certification include impartial selection and hiring processes, a structured skills assessment system, awareness-raising initiatives, and continuous training programmes that support genuine career development opportunities. In addition, certification has provided us with an objective and structured tool to ensure that remuneration reflects each individual's skills and professional contribution, with positive effects also on supplier selection.



Family Audit and Family-Friendly Employer Certifications

These certifications are aimed at promoting a work-life balance within a company, generating positive impacts along the entire value chain



Personalmanage- ment - Diversität & Inklusion (ISO 30415:2021)

This is a commitment that involves the appointment of Diversity and Inclusion managers and the organisation of workshops to raise awareness among managers, events that provide opportunities for regular meetings with operational and regional managers in order to gather feedback and foster constructive and continual dialogue, with major repercussions for the selection of suppliers.



SA8000 Certification

International standard that promotes and ensures respect for human rights and ethical working conditions within organisations

At all our facilities, we provide an inclusive and diverse work environment, where everybody – irrespective of their background, gender, sexual orientation or generation – feels welcome. Indeed, our **Diversity & Inclusion Policy** stipulates that, during the employees selection process, a candidate's background, age, gender or disability are not grounds for discrimination.

Spurred on by our **Family Audit certification**, at Markas Italy we introduced a **policy on new parents**, based on the belief that parenting should be shared within the family and not exclusively the woman's responsibility. In light of this, at the end of parental leave, both the mother and the father can request to work part-time, available until the child is six years old, with the option to return to full-time work.

Our deep-rooted conviction that every person has the same value has always pushed us to adopt equal pay criteria based exclusively on experience and individual skills. Obtaining **Gender Equality Certification** was a further step forwards in this direction, **reaffirming Markas' commitment to maintaining almost no pay differential between men and women**, in line with previous years. Furthermore, it gave us an impartial and structured tool for verifying that pay genuinely reflects the abilities and professional contribution of each worker.

Italy's Best Employer for Women 2024

We have been recognised as "Italy's Best Employers for Women 2024" in a study by the Istituto Tedesco Qualità e Finanza (ITQF), in conjunction with La Repubblica Affari & Finanza newspaper.

The study was based on an independent survey involving about **10,000 employees of 1,750 Italian companies with a workforce of over 300**. It positioned us among the best Italian companies in terms of: the employment of women, a company culture with a particular focus on sustainability, the provision of professional and managerial training, and policies on the family and equal opportunities.

Top Female Workplace 2024

Markas Austria was nominated Top Female Workplace 2024 by **SHEconomy**.

This recognition, based on independent research and genuine feedback collected anonymously on platforms such as kununu, highlights the company's commitment to fostering a corporate culture that actively values and supports women. It is also further evidence of the high professional standards for which the company is recognised.



We promote numerous **company welfare** initiatives to improve the quality of life, both professional and personal.



Corporate Benefits digital platform

to access discounts on products and services.



Company gym

open 24/7 with favourable rates and something for all fitness levels.



Company canteen

favourable rates at the sites in Bolzano, Vigasio and San Defendente in Cervasca.



Babysitting

free service to support workers at the facility in Bolzano and the surrounding area by looking after children when the nursery schools are closed for the holidays.



Variable remuneration bonus and supplementary agreements

financial incentives awarded on achieving specific targets agreed between those concerned (workers, the company and social partners).



Language courses

provided free, in English and German, to enhance our people's language skills.

Markas People For You

Following the first satisfaction survey, the need emerged to enhance relations and dialogue between Markas facilities and contractors. For this reason, we designed the **Markas People For You** programme, aimed at further developing and valuing our contracted personnel who deliver Markas services everyday. The programme entails a series of monthly appointments on the contractor's premises, during which personnel from one of our facilities provide useful information, such as how to read pay packets, managing the employment relationship, workplace health and safety and welfare. Between 2022 and 2024, we met with more than **4,300 employees** from about 70 different contractors and in 30 cities.

In 2024, we also introduced a dedicated telephone advisory service for our contracted personnel, available Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 12:30 pm and 1 pm to 5 pm, to support them with any needs or requests.

In 2025, we aim to take a further step: the initiative will become multi-channel and will be accompanied by the launch of a dedicated app for our people.

Markas Lab Ideas

In 2024, we launched **our second** in-house contest **Markas Lab Ideas**, which involved over 120 workers from Italy, Austria and Germany, collecting 151 suggestions on aspects such as sustainable mobility, saving water, digitalisation and environmental protection.

This initiative is a practical means of encouraging our workers' direct participation, inviting them to suggest innovative ideas on material aspects for the company. It has strengthened their sense of belonging and generated real proposals for future company actions, promoting a culture that focuses ever more on sustainability and participation.



Markas People Survey

For us, satisfaction surveys are an essential tool for listening attentively to our people. For example, Markas Austria regularly conducts employee surveys to collect opinions, requirements and suggestions for improvement, integrating them into strategic decision-making. The most recent survey was in October 2024 and involved around **700 people**.

At Markas Italy, the surveys are conducted every two years, the last one being in 2024, in which over **1,300 people** took part, a number that has grown since the first survey.

This was an important indication for us: it meant that an increasing number of our employees want to make their voice heard.

The survey provided a variety of important feedback, a starting point for continually improving the Markas work environment:

- Occupational safety: 88.7% of employees say they received the information and protective equipment required;
- Greater awareness of benefits: 72.3% of employees know about company benefits (+37.7% compared to 2022). This is the result of work aimed at improving internal communication and familiarising people with programmes like Markas People For You and Markas Lab Ideas, useful tools like the Corporate Benefits company discount platform, and the launch of agreements with Alperia on energy supplies;
- Enhanced relationships with managers: 84.6% of respondents said their manager is available and easy to contact. A positive sign and the result in part of training on leadership that we have extended to plant managers and service managers;
- Equity and inclusion: 86.1% of employees believe that all workers at Markas are treated fairly, regardless of gender, age, background, orientation or other personal attributes. This demonstrates our commitment to a welcoming and inclusive work environment, already recognised by the Gender Equality and Diversity & Inclusion Certifications.
- 80.1% said they are proud to work at Markas.



Wide-ranging social responsibility: workers on the value chain

[ESRS S2]

Our commitment to social responsibility, certified by our compliance with the SA8000 international standard, extends not only to our workforce, but also to workers along the entire value chain, in that we recognise their rights and importance.

For this reason, we have adopted a **supplier qualification system** that defines the minimum requirements for engaging a supplier in sustainability terms, regarding environmental, social and governance aspects. As proof of this, we request that suppliers support their statements with a series of documents.

In this way, we ascertain that the supplier complies with the **SA8000 standard**.

All our employees, including those operating along the value chain, may report irregular, unlawful or anomalous conduct through our whistleblowing channel, which is fully confidential and available to all stakeholders, internal and external.

Equal access to work for people with disabilities

Wishing to actively contribute to a fairer and more responsible growth model, we have decided to promote inclusion along our value chain with an initiative that combines environmental sustainability with support for the workplace integration of people with disabilities, whether physical or mental.

Markas Austria, for example, has set up a broad and structured diversity and inclusion (D&I) programme, which envisages the appointment of a D&I manager to oversee the implementation of appropriate measures as well as recruitment policies focused on diversity, including by working with other companies, such as NEBA and MyAbility.

Our ties with communities

[ESRS S3]

Our operations are not centralised at a single site, but extend across the region at socially significant institutions such as hospitals, schools and retirement homes, with which we share the common goal of supporting the local community. Our commitment to the affected communities is thus an important factor for consolidating corporate social responsibility.



Through our activities, we have a **positive impact on the communities** in which we operate. Specifically, we support vulnerable communities by working with local cooperatives and **promote local development** by prioritising local suppliers.

Libera Terra and Markas

In 2024, we began working with **Libera Terra**, out of which came a supply agreement in 2025. Libera Terra recovers assets freed from the Mafia, developing them to create high quality products, ensuring respect for human dignity and the environment by using the land to grow organic crops. Libera Terra's mission is to promote autonomous and independent cooperatives that can have a positive impact and feed a virtuous economic system.

For **Markas Italy**, this collaboration is far more than a simple supply agreement: it is a tangible commitment to an ethical and sustainable model that creates value for people and for the community. The initiative embodies our principles of social and environmental responsibility and strengthens our determination to contribute to an economy built on fairness, quality and transparency.

INITIATIVES ADOPTED TO SUPPORT COMMUNITIES

In 2024, we worked with **over 20 social cooperatives** in various regions of Italy.

We have set up 28 apprenticeships with social cooperatives and training bodies, focused on inclusion.

As a labour-intensive business, **we are a major employer in the local area**, including workers from 96 different nationalities, a real integration success. An initiative of which we are especially proud is having integrated, in Austria, about 60 people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.

~60

people hired who had fled the conflict in Ukraine

We have strengthened our commitment to social inclusion along the value chain, collaborating again this year with the GWB social cooperative in Bolzano. This business, which employs people with cognitive and physical disabilities, prepared and wrapped our corporate Christmas presents.

In addition to these initiatives, **we have partnered with Confindustria** to support women's leadership in the economic sphere, taking part in and promoting numerous local events and institutional meetings. The goal was to promote an inclusive entrepreneurial culture, based on equal opportunities, as well as to create spaces for dialogue and personal growth for women in leadership roles, or aspiring to them.

Major initiatives emerging from this partnership include the series of "She" events.

We promote local development and reduce our environmental impact by procuring local products.

We serve 11 Italian regions. In 8 of these regions, 100% of the fresh bread is sourced from local suppliers, and in 5 regions, 100% of the fruit and vegetables is locally sourced. Furthermore, in the Friuli region, 54% of purchased trout is local, while in Piedmont, over 95% of the beef is quality-certified by Coalvi, a consortium which protects the Piedmont breed.

In Liguria, over 90% of the fresh basil is local, and in Trentino-Alto Adige, 89% of yoghurts are produced locally.

Closer to our customers and users

[ESRS S4]

Number of customer satisfaction surveys conducted



26
2022



20
2023



34
2024

To ensure high quality standards, we have developed a system of actions and policies, through which we demonstrate our commitment to the satisfaction and protection of our customers and users.

Since 2024, we have structured in a more systematic way **our initiatives of attentively listening to and engaging our customers and users**, making *customer satisfaction* surveys a strategic tool to guide our continuous improvement.

In the **Food** division, customers are focused on the end consumer and allow us to promptly identify any criticalities, such as problems of service quality, leading to measures targeted at internal processes and the product/service offering. The information collected also guides menu development, increasingly sensitive to nutritional requirements and food preferences.

In the **Clean** division, on the other hand, initiatives are focused on the hospital ward coordinators, key to ensuring uninterrupted daily operations. Through their direct involvement, we collect valuable inputs to optimise services and together build improvement plans shared with customers.

Continuous attentive listening enables us to anticipate the development of customers' and users' needs, strengthening our commitment **to offering ever higher quality services** and to continually improving our performance.

In 2024, for the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, we introduced a multilingual digitised questionnaire in order to extend engagement in *customer satisfaction* surveys to users whose mother tongue is not Italian. The initiative was a real step towards **greater inclusivity and accessibility**, enabling a broader audience of users to give their opinion on the service received, especially within a multi-ethnic context.

The introduction of a digitised system improved the effectiveness of user involvement, ensuring its continuity. This measure not only contributes to continuously improving services by analysing responses, but also to pursuing the UN's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 10, on reducing inequalities.

The SWOT Analysis is a marketing intelligence activity conducted every two years by Markas' Marketing & Communication function. The aim is to analyse existing services to identify strengths, weak points, opportunities and challenges, based on market trends, competitor benchmarks and skills and observations within the company.

The process also actively involves the production and sales force, through interdisciplinary workshops that encourage comparison between strategic vision and daily operations.

The results of these analyses have led to new innovative offerings in line with the needs of our customers, such as:

- Smart Care, for support services,
- Smart Logistics, for effective intra-hospital transport in health care.

An approach that brings us ever closer
to our customers and their needs.



A food safety policy

Our users' well-being is central to our food services. Our food safety system, designed to ensure ingredients can be traced throughout the production process, takes great care over certain fundamental aspects:

- Dedicated management of special diets, with care over food allergies and intolerances;
- A gluten-free guarantee with appropriate and specific methods to avoid the contamination of culinary preparations intended for coeliacs;
- A focus on specific dietary choices to prevent cross-contamination with ingredients deemed unsuitable for the dietary requirements of users, which may also be ethical or religious in nature.

- Respect for the agro-food chain where applicable, for culinary preparations using organic produce.

The **traceability of ingredients** and the adoption of specific menus and recipes underpin the safeguards for those users with allergies, intolerances and ethical-religious requirements. This system is, therefore, our solid commitment to ensuring **equal and safe access** to the service for all users with specific dietary needs, allowing each consumer to make aware and well-informed choices.

SUPPLIERS' IMPORTANCE AND ROLE

We operate in a competitive industry, where quality, efficiency and reliability are crucial for satisfying our customers' expectations. Most of our activities develop through bids for tender, governed by ever more complex regulations, within an interconnected network of customer and supplier relations. Within this context, suppliers also take on a strategic role: like customers, they are key stakeholders with which we build solid relationships focused on continuous improvement.

Specifically, for canteen catering services, we work with suppliers that are selected not least for their geographical proximity, so as to ensure local products that are always fresh and high in quality.



The structure of the supplier qualification system

It is divided into 3 stages:

- 1. Incoming,**
at a supplier's
initial
engagement
- 2. During the delivery
of the supply**
(checks take place
through *vendor rating*)
- 3. Through
second-party audits,**
on the supplier's premises

175

suppliers

Only in 2024, we worked with **175 foodstuff suppliers**, helping to maintain the high standard of our services and to reinforce customer trust.

For other product categories, we depend on distributors with which we have long-standing, stable agreements, able to ensure continuity and reliability. For chemical products and equipment, we use consolidated international partnerships, selected not only for the quality of their product offerings but also for their respect for human rights and current regulations. All this enables us to build a robust and responsible chain, directly benefiting the end customer in terms of quality delivered.

All our suppliers undergo a rigorous **qualification process**, which sets the minimum requirements for engaging and maintaining a relationship. Specifically, we verify compliance with the principles of the SA8000 standard: their violation not only reduces their compliance score but is also a criteria for potential exclusion. Failure to meet such criteria results in the immediate suspension of the business relationship.

Vendor rating is an IT control system for collecting information used in assessing supplier performance; it gives our Food&Beverage Procurement, Materials Procurement and Equipment Procurement offices the option to process, in an organised and structured way, statistics on the quality of the services offered by the supplier.

The qualification and monitoring system is aligned across the three countries, apart from minor differences owing to discrepancies in the requirements and conditions of each country.

The qualification process entails scouting, market analysis, the filling in of a specific questionnaire and a structured assessment. The entire procedure is managed through a digital system – the **Supplier Portal** – which enables the transparent and efficient monitoring of all stages of the relationship. In this way, we can ensure the same quality and care, along the entire supply chain, that our customers expect from us each day.