Gas Distributors GD4S For Sustainability

MFF - Recommendations

EU funding for competitiveness

To safeguard Europe's long-term **competitiveness**, **energy resilience**, and **climate neutrality**, the future Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) must place **greater strategic emphasis on renewable and low-carbon molecules—particularly hydrogen and biomethane**. These energy carriers are essential for decarbonising sectors where electrification alone is insufficient. At the same time, they offer flexibility and storage capacity that are critical to stabilising the energy system and reducing the EU's dependence on fossil fuel imports.

Hydrogen and biomethane will play a crucial role in ensuring renewable energy for households and long-term supply security for European industry and businesses. Their widespread deployment can help **protect industrial competitiveness by providing clean, reliable alternatives to conventional fuels, especially in energy-intensive sectors.** Supporting these molecules also presents an opportunity to drive innovation, enable new business models, and maintain the EU's leadership in clean technologies.

Distribution System Operators (DSOs) serve a key bridging function in this transition. As the interface between energy production and end users, DSOs are vital for ensuring that renewable and low-carbon gases are safely and efficiently made available to consumers,including households, mobility, SMEs, and industrial users. **EU funding should acknowledge this role by enabling infrastructure upgrades and repurposing, digitalisation, and better system integration at the distribution level—essential steps for accelerating the shift to cleaner energy.**

A more focused and impactful European Competitiveness Fund should **support the scale-up of renewable and low-carbon gases across the entire value chain—from research and innovation to industrial deployment and manufacturing.** It is essential that future financial instruments are designed to de-risk private investment and facilitate the commercialisation of strategic technologies. Equally, EU funding must become more accessible, with simplified procedures and greater coherence, to ensure that it reaches a wider range of beneficiaries and delivers maximum impact.

As the Commission prepares its proposal for the next MFF, it is imperative that the new framework builds on lessons from the current period**. The future EU budget should be aligned with the Union's strategic objectives, including sustainable growth and energy sovereignty.**

Technologies such as hydrogen and biomethane, which deliver both environmental and economic benefits, should be at the heart of this agenda. A streamlined, investment-focused MFF - alongside with binding targets for renewable gas production - can make a decisive contribution by mobilising public and private capital to accelerate the green and industrial transition.

Gas Distributors GD4S For Sustainability

MFF - Recommendations

Implementing EU funding with Member States and regions

The post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) presents a crucial opportunity to align the EU's long-term budget with the Union's most pressing strategic goals—climate neutrality, energy security, competitiveness, and cohesion. In this context, **the next generation of EU funding programmes must give targeted support to renewable and low-carbon molecules, in particular hydrogen and biomethane.** These technologies are indispensable for decarbonising the European energy system while maintaining affordability, resilience, and industrial competitiveness.

As the EU transitions to a climate-neutral economy, **renewable gases will play a vital role in ensuring a fair and inclusive shift across all regions**. **Hydrogen and biomethane enable a broader energy mix that supports economic and territorial cohesion by diversifying energy sources, improving supply security, and facilitating the decarbonisation of rural and industrial areas.** These molecules are particularly relevant for regions that are less suited to full electrification or which rely heavily on local agricultural and bio-based resources.

In this transition, Distribution System Operators (DSOs) are critical actors, functioning as a bridge between energy production and consumption. Their role is especially important in rural and semi-urban areas, where **they facilitate the injection of locally produced green gases into the grid and its delivery to households, businesses, and industry**. In the coming decade DSO's can take the same role for hydrogen, in rural areas there will be solar plants and wind farms. By converting sustainable electricity into hydrogen and injection in the existing gas grid, unnecassery investment in electricity grids is prevented but more important sustainable electricity can effectively be stored in molecules for the winter season. **EU funding—especially in cohesion policy and energy infrastructure—should reflect and reinforce the role of DSOs in adapting networks, integrating decentralised renewable gas sources.**

Looking ahead, the next MFF must be both simpler and more effective**. It should offer coherent support across regions and sectors, avoiding fragmentation between programmes and ensuring that funding mechanisms are accessible to public and private stakeholders alike.** Stronger integration between investment and reform planning, as proposed by the Commission, offers a chance to channel funding where it is most needed—such as the scale-up of renewable gas production and infrastructure, skills development, and regional transition planning.

Financial support should focus on unlocking private capital through EU guarantees, blending mechanisms, and innovation funding, helping to bring strategic energy technologies from lab to market. At the same time**, regional programmes must be empowered to tailor investment to local strengths—such as agricultural waste for biomethane or industrial demand for hydrogen—so that every region can participate in and benefit from the green transition.**

In summary, the future EU long-term budget should **prioritise renewable and low-carbon molecules as part of a broader strategic investment in sustainable, competitive, and cohesive growth.** Funding instruments must **support infrastructure, innovation, and deployment, while maintaining a strong territorial dimension.** Hydrogen and biomethane are not only energy vectors—they are enablers of a just, resilient, and future-proof European economy.

MFF - Recommendations

EU funding for cross-border education, training and solidarity, youth, media, culture, and creative sectors, values, and civil society

The post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) must reflect Europe's commitment not only to its strategic industrial and climate objectives, but also to the **active engagement of its citizens, civil society, and regions in shaping the green transition. Hydrogen and biomethane—renewable and low-carbon molecules—have a vital role to play in ensuring that the EU's climate and energy transition is socially inclusive, regionally balanced, and economically sustainable.** These technologies must be recognised not only as industrial tools, but as enablers of resilience, equity, and opportunity across Europe.

The EU's next generation of programmes should foster awareness, education, and engagement around the role of clean energy in Europe's future. Cross-border education and training initiatives should be **designed to include knowledge and skills related to renewable gases, energy systems, and distribution networks,** particularly targeting young people, students, apprentices, and early-career professionals. Building this capacity is essential for empowering the next generation of clean energy innovators, technicians, and system operators.

Furthermore, **the green transition must include all communities—urban, rural, and remote. Investments in hydrogen and biomethane infrastructure, supported by Distribution System Operators (DSOs), can help revitalise regions by stimulating local economies, supporting bio-based industries, and creating sustainable jobs.** These developments should be accompanied by strong communication, cultural and civic engagement, and public participation efforts, supported through EU programmes aimed at culture, civil society, and values. Citizens should understand how their regions are contributing to the transition and be part of shaping it.

Civic dialogue and democratic participation around the energy transition are also critical. Programmes that support democratic values, citizen engagement, and civil society should **integrate themes such as energy sovereignty, climate justice, and access to clean energy as fundamental rights.** Civil society organisations and local authorities will be key partners in ensuring transparency, trust, and social buy-in for new energy technologies and infrastructure.

To achieve all this, EU funding must be both strategic and accessible. **Simpler programme design, clearer application processes, and more flexible funding rules will ensure broader participation from educational institutions, youth organisations, cultural actors, and grassroots civil society.** These groups are essential allies in fostering a well-informed, united, and forward-looking European society capable of embracing and benefiting from the green transition.

In conclusion, the future MFF should integrate clean energy and climate action across all funding strands, including those that focus on values, culture, education, and youth. By doing so, the EU will not only invest in infrastructure and technology, but also in people, communities, and shared European values—making the green transition a collective European story.