

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



# Sustainability Charter

Decarbonising the gas  
grid as a key enabler for  
a climate neutral society

February 2022



# Executive Summary



Gas Distributors for Sustainability (GD4S) brings together the seven largest gas Distribution System Operators (DSOs) in France (GRDF), Greece (EdaThess), Italy (Italgas), Ireland (Gas Networks Ireland), Portugal (Galp Gas Natural Distribuição), Spain (Nedgia) and Romania (Distrigaz Sud Retele). As an Association, we are committed to improving the sustainability of our business operations, to ensure a better planet. Together, we are collaborating in a shared drive towards a reliable, safe, and sustainable future gas network. We are united in contributing to the European objective of carbon neutrality by 2050.

Written jointly by our seven member DSOs, our first GD4S Sustainability Charter defines our collective approach to sustainability, sharing our commitments across the three sustainability pillars of **Environmental, Social and Governance**, all of which are aligned with the **United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs).

In presenting these commitments we are establishing our sustainability ambition and we are proud to share this in our first Charter, which is signed and endorsed by all our members. In defining these commitments, and by monitoring and measuring against scheduled reporting principles for each, we are striving to improve and enhance our sustainability credentials collectively.

Our intention is to reflect upon our role in energy transition and focus on the areas where we can apply the most direct influence. As Distribution System Operators (DSOs), we are eager to work with the various stakeholders to achieve this. We recognise our responsibility to act and leverage GD4S in a collaborative way to nurture positive change.

**GD4S is pleased to present this Sustainability Charter, which provides us with a framework for our sustainability journey and an opportunity for us to present sustainable actions which will serve us all for the future.**



# Charter Summary



Our commitments focus on three key areas: **Planet, People and Grids.**



The nine commitments demonstrate our ambition to embrace all three pillars of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals: **Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG).**



Each commitment is illustrated by **case studies from the members of GD4S** to highlight some of the work we have undertaken to date.

The roadmap below outlines the milestones which will contribute to the achievement of our long-term commitments. Prioritising certain activities, it reflects the nature of our operations and our role in driving forward the energy transition and sustainability discourse at a European level.

<b>Timeline</b>	<b>2022</b> →	<b>2022</b> →	<b>2023</b> →	<b>2025</b> →	<b>2031</b>
	Publication of the Sustainability Charter	GD4S member companies collaborate to develop first Progress Report	Disclosure of the first Progress Report and new stakeholder dialogue	Second Progress Report and new stakeholder dialogue	Publication of an updated Sustainability Charter

This Sustainability Charter is a key initial step on our collective journey to deliver our sustainability commitments while strengthening our economic performance. It also takes a holistic approach to positioning gas Distribution System Operators (DSOs) as central in facilitating Europe's transition to a competitive, inclusive and sustainable economy.



**Our vision is that gas DSOs will be key in Europe's transition to a more sustainable society and economy for all.**

# Charter Commitments Overview

This initiative brought together a wide range of stakeholders to review and discuss the materiality of our Sustainability Charter and its long-term commitments. Such stakeholder engagement is an integral part of our activities. Through open dialogue, we can better understand and address the material issues of our key stakeholders as we develop our long-term plans for the future.



## Environmental commitments

GD4S member companies are committed to measure and report on:

<b>1</b>	<b>Reduce greenhouse gas and methane emissions in our operations and improve energy efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our companies' carbon footprint emissions and reduction</li> <li>• Reductions in methane emissions and network damage</li> <li>• Our companies' energy efficiency savings across our operations</li> </ul>
<b>2</b>	<b>Contribute to the energy transition through the distribution and integration of low carbon and renewable energy sources in our grids</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The increasing volumes of renewable gases in our network</li> <li>• Research and development programmes on renewable gases</li> </ul>
<b>3</b>	<b>Promote the circular economy and protect biodiversity</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proportion of waste reduced and valorised</li> <li>• Our actions taken to protect biodiversity</li> </ul>



## Social commitments

GD4S member companies are committed to measure and report on:

<b>4</b>	<b>Promote a corporate culture that fosters equal and fair treatment of our workers and their continuous development in a safe workplace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The diversity in our workforce</li> <li>• The actions taken to upskill our workforce</li> <li>• The actions taken to promote safety in the workplace</li> </ul>
<b>5</b>	<b>Provide quality service and a safe supply of gas that meets the needs of our customers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our actions to keep our networks safe</li> <li>• Our actions to help our customers manage their energy consumption</li> <li>• Our actions taken to provide a quality consumer experience</li> </ul>
<b>6</b>	<b>Strive to impact society positively in the territories where we operate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our actions to raise awareness about energy and develop educational programmes</li> <li>• Our actions taken to create positive benefits in the territories where we operate</li> <li>• Our actions to embed sustainable procurement processes</li> </ul>



## Governance commitments

GD4S member companies are committed to measure and report on:

<b>7</b>	<b>Practise fair and transparent advocacy and prevent corruption</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our lobbying activities</li> <li>• Our internal processes to prevent corruption and promote ethical practices</li> </ul>
<b>8</b>	<b>Disclose performance transparently</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our sustainability performance</li> <li>• Our economic contributions to society</li> </ul>
<b>9</b>	<b>Enhance dialogue with stakeholders</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our stakeholder engagement frameworks</li> <li>• The development of our stakeholder engagement plans</li> <li>• Our regular materiality assessments</li> </ul>

## Key Stakeholders



**Authorities and policy makers**



**Investors and shareholders**



**Energy & utility sector**



**Our workforce**



**Consumers**



**Academia / think tanks**



**Civil society**

# Delivering Best Practice

The GD4S Sustainability Charter is a collective framework that complements our individual company initiatives and shows our commitment to making a difference for the planet, for people and for our businesses. We are already implementing additional voluntary initiatives and day-to-day actions to achieve our sustainability goals.

**Highlighting the role of the gas DSOs, the Charter lays out key strategies in areas that are critical to Sustainable Development, encompassing economic, environmental, and social aspects which need to be addressed simultaneously. With this ambition, GD4S and its members are focused on actions and on delivering best practice across our collective operations.**

Our best practice examples, which appear throughout the Charter, showcase how our member companies are already contributing positively to sustainability.

Review these examples below in full, together with many more, in the GD4S Sustainability Charter.



**Participation in OGMP 2.0 Initiative**  
Best practice examples by Italgas, GRDF and Nedgia

**Biodiversity enhancement programme**  
Best practice example by Gas Networks Ireland

**Inclusion of renewable gas into the Nedgia distribution gas grid**  
Best practice example by Nedgia

**Green Pipeline Project – injecting green hydrogen into the gas network**  
Best practice example by Galp Gás Natural Distribuição (GGND)



**Digital Factory: changing people's way of working**  
Best practice example by Italgas

**Safety awareness programme**  
Best practice example by EDA THESS

**Dual education programme 'Energy for my job'**  
Best practice example by Distrigaz Sud Rețele



**Digital interface to interact with clients**  
Best practice example by Distrigaz Sud Rețele

**Disclosure of sustainability performances**  
Best practice provided by GRDF

**Ethical and Anticorruption Charter**  
Best practice example by Italgas



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