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Gasunie Transport Services B.V.
Postbus 181
9700 AD Groningen
Alkmaar, 3rd December 2025

Subject: VGN view on the GTS Investment Plan 2026

Dear Madam/Sir,

Vereniging Gasopslag Nederland (hereafter: **VGN**) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the draft Investment Plan 2026 (hereinafter: **IP 2026**) as published by Gasunie Transport Services B.V. (hereafter: **GTS**) on 3rd November 2025. The IP 2026 provides an overview of planned expansion and replacement investments of GTS from 2026 to 2035.

VGN would like to compliment GTS on the transparency generated with the IP 2026. All the tables of projects and investments help to understand the investments of GTS. Nevertheless, we have two requests for further transparency regarding this IP 2026.

As a general remark, VGN does not have the required expertise or detailed knowledge to be able to make an assessment on the individual investments that are included in the IP 2026. We rely on the Authority for Consumers and Markets (hereinafter: **ACM**) and the Ministry of Green Growth and Climate (hereinafter: **KGG**) to have the necessary expertise and knowledge for an assessment of and efficiency analysis of the proposed investments. VGN would like to stress the assessment should be about the necessity ("noodzakelijkheid") of the investment and not only the reasonableness ("redelijkheid") of the investment.

Below VGN shares its view on the content of the IP 2026, first in a more general context of the declining gas market and secondly on specific topics.

Should you have any queries regarding the above, please do not hesitate to contact VGN.

We reserve all rights

Yours sincerely,

René van der Vegt
Chairman Working Group
Vereniging Gasopslag Nederland

1. Declining gas market and exit plan

Last month VGN submitted a “zienswijze”¹ on the draft Method Decision of the ACM. In the “zienswijze” VGN gives an analysis of the declining Dutch gas market and the likely impact on the tariffs that GTS charges. One of the key issues highlighted is the lack of an exit plan by GTS. Due to the declining gas market, GTS will need less assets (compressor stations, QC facilities etc) in the future and should make a long-term strategic asset plan. The IP 2026 would have been an ideal place to share such an exit plan with the stakeholders of GTS.

Formally an exit plan is not yet required. However, in a recent consultation² by KGG regarding the implementation of the EU directive 2024/1788 in the Dutch energy law, KGG clearly stated that an “ontmantelings plan” should be part of an investment plan. Also, the EU directive will be legally in force as of the 5th of August 2026. EU directive 2024/1788, article 55, 2c states on the content of the investment plan:

(c) in the case of natural gas, include comprehensive and detailed information on infrastructure that can or is to be decommissioned;

It should be noted that the EU directive 2024/1788, article 55, also states that

4. The regulatory authority shall consult all actual or potential system users on the ten-year network development plan in an open and transparent manner.

VGN is very concerned that despite these very clear legal signals and despite repeated request by the market parties there is still no sign of the GTS exit plan. While on the one hand GTS is proactive, e.g. with investment plans regarding Methane Emissions before it is necessary, on the other hand GTS is inactive with regards to the exit plan, even though the EU directive clearly states GTS should have an exit plan. GTS also does not make any mention of this requirement in section 3.2.4 on the Decarbonisation package.

¹ <https://www.acm.nl/system/files/documents/zienswijze-vereniging-gasopslag-nederland-op-ontwerpmethodebesluit-gts-2027-2031.pdf>

² https://www.internetconsultatie.nl/implementatiewet_decarbonisatiepakket/b1

Without an exit plan it is almost impossible to reduce the GTS tariffs. A recent report³ by the Slovakian regulator (EUstream) showed that GTS is twice as expensive as the EU average in terms of MWh gas transported per 100 km.

2026	
EURcent / 1 MWh transported / 100km	average of the min- max (1y a 10y contract)
SK TSO - after benchmark adjustment	100,0
CZ TSO	25,5
BE TSO	27,4
DK TSO	123,2
NL TSO	158,7
HU TSO	28,0
DE TSO	121,4
DE TSO	53,2
DE TSO	78,8
DE TSO	83,1
DE TSO	47,5
PL TSO	77,8
AT TSO	56,1
IT TSO	49,3
BG TSO	46,3
FR TSO	149,3
SI TSO	115,1
RO TSO	57,2
average, without EUS	76,4
minimum, without EUS	25,5
maximum, without EUS	158,7

Although this benchmark includes utilisation rate, it does show the serious concern about the tariffs in the Netherlands relative to other countries.

³ The Final Consultation Document on information referred to in Article 26(1) of the Commission Regulation (EU) 2017/460 of 16 March 2017 establishing a network code on harmonised transmission tariff structures for gas (hereinafter referred also to as "Consultation"); page 19

2. Scenarios used in the IP 2026

The analysis by GTS is very thorough and based on the NBNL scenarios. VGN would like to see an additional analysis of the impact of the recent tariff increases on the transit of gas in paragraph 2.7. VGN expects that the tariff increase will have a negative effect on the transit volumes and thus lead to even higher tariffs.

VGN believes that the following statement on page 46 may be true historically but that rising transportation tariffs will greatly diminish these flows:

They show that exports from the Netherlands to neighbouring countries are greater in winter than in summer, indicating that Dutch storage facilities help meet flexibility needs abroad as well. Imports are higher in summer than in winter, allowing surpluses to be stored in storage facilities for use in the winter in the Netherlands and its neighbouring countries.

Also, under the new EU directive, demand-side response should be taken into consideration but currently such an analysis is missing.

In general, the scenarios used by GTS provide valuable information to market participants. As such it would be good if GTS can also include the estimates for storages, production and LNG in Figure 2.24: "Transmission/transport capacity for domestic and transit", such that it aligns with the GTS tariff proposal for 2026.

3. Investments

The IP 2026 contains a detailed overview of the investments executed in 2023 and 2024. VGN assumes that ACM will do a thorough check if these investments are efficient and notes that there is an average overrun on the investments of more than 30% on regular investments and more than 20% on major investments.

VGN notes that the investments for 2023 and 2024 in the IP 2026 differ from the investments in the recent tariff decision by the ACM⁴. VGN would like GTS to explain the differences as it seems that more investments are charged via the tariffs than are incorporated in the IP 2026.

Investments reported by GTS over the 2023 – 2024 period.

Type	GTS investeringsplan	tariefbesluit
Regular	116,247,461	154,742,519
Major	667,128,933	718,886,230

⁴Rekenmodule-bij-tarievenbesluit-gts-2026; tabblad 11. Investeringen (WUI+ombouw) Regel 26-50 tabblad 12. Investeringen (bijschatten) Regel 94-127

VGN notes that figure 0.1 provides an overview of the total investments in the period 2025-2035. To enable a good understanding of which investments in this IP2026 are subject of approval by ACM and the Ministry of KGG, VGN requests GTS to provide a chart or table in its final IP 2026 with a distinction of the total investments in:

1. Investments that have been approved by ACM and/or the Ministry of KGG in previous IPs and Addenda to IPs.
2. Investments that are subject of approval by ACM and the Ministry of KGG early 2026
3. Potential investments that might become part of future IPs and/or addenda to IPs.

Furthermore, VGN requests GTS to provide a breakdown of the investment per year that are subject of approval by ACM and the Ministry of KGG early 2026 into the following categories:

1. Regular investments gas transport
2. Regular investments connections
3. Regular investments quality conversion
4. Connections
5. Diversions

Both overviews will help market participants to better understand the impact of the IP 2026 on future gas transport tariffs.

4. Peakshaver

VGN is surprised by the continued investments. Over the past years GTS has made several announcements about the changing role of the Peak Shaver in terms of capacity, transport and/or quality conversion. VGN does not have the means to check if the announcements made by GTS are valid. However, given the drastically reducing gas flows in the past years and also expected for the coming years, VGN expects that at some stage the Peak Shaver is no longer a required asset. As such VGN would like to know if the decommissioning of the Peak Shaver is an option and if not at the moment, then at which point in time GTS expects the Peakshaver to be decommissioned.

VGN expects that ACM and KGG will thoroughly check the necessity of any additional investments by GTS in the Peakshaver. VGN also notes the very high energy costs of the Peakshaver of almost 4M⁵ per year over the years 2022-2024 on top of the Opex costs of 10M⁶.

5. Strategic storage

In the IP 2026 on page 53 GTS makes a statement on strategic storage.

It is also important for there to be a strategic storage facility, an emergency supply, until 2030 and beyond. GTS will bring forth a separate advisory report regarding the usefulness and necessity of a strategic storage facility to increase the resilience of the gas system. GTS will also make a separate advisory report on the proposed closure of Norg.

VGN believes that the IP 2026 is not the right place for making statements on strategic storage, certainly not without also stating the huge costs involved in such an option and stating that the benefit of strategic storage also goes to neighbouring countries.

⁵ ACM Excel sheet GTS tarieven 2026; Tab “15. Operationele Kosten” cell, F21, F24, F27

⁶ ACM Excel sheet GTS tarieven 2026; Tab “7. Input IC Peakshaver” cell J27-J28

6. Gas prices and volatility

In the paragraph on the TTF on page 53 GTS makes the following statement:

Liquidity ensures that the market value is reflected in the prices, though this still does not guarantee (permanently) low gas prices.

VGN finds it strange that a TSO should make a statement about where the gas prices should be. It is the role of a TSO to facilitate the gas market, but the statement seems to suggest that GTS has a preferred position on where the gas prices should be.

7. Biomethane related investments

In the paragraph on Biomethane on page 58 GTS makes the following statement:

The biomethane production is currently growing much less rapidly than desired due to various obstacles and discouraging factors.

VGN agrees with this statement and assumes that GTS also only makes those investments that are required for actual new Biomethane production. GTS should avoid a situation where it increases capacity which is in the end not used by the market, like during the open seasons around 2010⁷.

8. Methane regulation

VGN agrees with GTS that there is no “proportionaliteits” clause in the new methane regulation. However, that does not mean that there should be no proportionality check on the investments done by GTS. The addendum does not include information on how much methane emission is reduced by the investment. Such information would allow a check on the necessity of the investments and the amount of reduced CO2 equivalent and then check if the investment is proportional to the savings.

Also, according to our information, the methane lost during metering and measuring is exempted from the methane regulation and no investments are required to prevent the very small methane venting during metering and measuring. VGN would like to know how much of the GTS investments are related to prevent methane emissions from measuring and metering.

⁷ Frontier Stranded cost in Dutch gas infrastructure and implications, March 2020