a regulatory-informed briefing · 2026

WASP IPU

eu data centre energy efficiency package

Mandatory by design

How the EU's emerging 2026 Data Centre Energy Efficiency Package reshapes the case for fuel infrastructure — and why clean fuel now belongs in your efficiency story.

for data centre operators · design engineers · facilities directors

The package never says "fuel polishing." It doesn't need to.

The 2026 Data Centre Energy Efficiency Package does not mention fuel polishing or fuel offloading by name. By tightening the focus on environmental impact, energy-performance reporting, and minimum standards for backup power, it quietly turns these systems from a discretionary maintenance task into an enabling practice for compliance.

For operators, the practical consequence is straightforward. The condition of your stored fuel, the efficiency of your fuel transfer equipment, and your ability to evidence both are increasingly relevant to how your facility's performance is assessed and reported.

Degraded fuel, inefficient pumps, and undocumented maintenance no longer sit quietly in the background. They increasingly surface in your energy reporting, your sustainability rating, and your audit trail.

This briefing sets out the three regulatory shifts driving that change, what each means in practice, and how to get your fuel infrastructure audit-ready.

From "nice to have" to "have to prove it"

Backup power has always been the insurance policy that data centre operators hope never to claim on. Generators are tested, fuel is stored, and for the most part the fuel system stays out of sight.

The 2026 package changes the incentives. It is an emerging framework — a reporting regime, a rating scheme, and a pathway towards minimum performance standards — rather than a single rulebook. It does not regulate fuel polishing directly. Instead it creates an environment where clean, well-managed, well-documented fuel becomes one of the most practical ways to support the new expectations on emissions, efficiency, and transparency.

Three specific regulatory shifts are responsible.

01 Environmental Impact Assessments now reach the generators.

02 A rating scheme that prices in fuel quality.

03 Reporting that goes beyond PUE.

01

environmental impact assessments

Environmental Impact Assessments now reach the generators

New European Commission proposals from late 2025 and early 2026 clarify an important point. A data centre itself may not always require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), but its emergency power generators can — particularly for facilities exceeding **50 MW of thermal output**.

These assessments are carried out at the planning and approval stage, and they ask operators to show that backup systems are efficient and that emissions are controlled. Stored fuel that has degraded burns dirtier, producing higher particulate emissions exactly when the generators are running and being scrutinised.

Advanced fuel offloading skids with integrated filtration and polishing are a direct way to keep stored fuel — whether HVO or diesel — in the condition needed to burn cleanly, which strengthens the emissions case an assessment examines.

what this means for you

If your site sits near or above the 50 MW thermal threshold, the quality of your stored fuel is increasingly relevant to your environmental case, not just your maintenance schedule. Clean fuel is evidence.

02

eu-wide rating scheme

A rating scheme that makes efficiency visible

The draft regulation for the EU-wide rating scheme, expected in Q2 2026, is designed to increase transparency around the energy and environmental resources a data centre consumes — metrics such as energy use, water, renewable share and heat reuse. Alongside it, the Commission is working towards minimum performance standards.

For backup power, "performance" is not only about whether the generators start. It includes the reliability and efficiency of the fuel supply that feeds them. BS 5410, the code of practice for liquid-fuel installations, already calls for filtration to protect generators against the hygroscopic nature of biofuels — about as close as today's standards come to naming fuel polishing. Two things follow:

- **Inefficient fuel transfer feeds the energy figures.** Old, high-friction pumps and poor fuel quality make engines and motors work harder for the same job. That extra energy use is exactly the kind of figure the rating reads.
- **Polishing supports a credible sustainability story.** Systems that hold fuel at ISO 4406 cleanliness standards — for example **18/16/13 or better** — are a recognised industry reference for what a well-run facility looks like.

what this means for you

Fuel cleanliness and pump efficiency are no longer purely engineering choices. They influence the energy performance a public-facing rating reflects — the rating that customers, regulators, and investors will read.

03

energy efficiency directive (eed)

Reporting that goes beyond PUE

Under the updated Energy Efficiency Directive (EED), data centres must report more than Power Usage Effectiveness. They have to provide a detailed breakdown of energy performance, including non-IT energy use.

Because the package places so much weight on transparency and comparability, operators are increasingly expected to understand the energy contribution of auxiliary systems — fuel infrastructure included — even where it sits outside the formal reporting fields.

This is where continuous fuel polishing earns its place in the report. A kidney-loop polishing system draws a small, steady amount of electricity. In return it prevents the far larger energy waste and carbon spikes that occur when generators run on degraded fuel during testing. Under the package's "efficiency first" principle, that trade-off is exactly the kind of decision operators are well placed to document.

For high-consumption sites, mandatory energy audits under **Article 11** apply to facilities above **10 TJ** of annual consumption. While the audit does not specify fuel records, continuous polishing logs can serve as straightforward evidence of preventative maintenance when those audits come around. BS 5410 reinforces the point: it ties fuel-testing frequency to recirculation — tanks with a recirculation device need testing every **six months**, those without every **three** — so continuous polishing both eases the testing burden and generates the records an audit looks for.

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what this means for you

Polishing is more than a maintenance task. Treated well, it becomes a documented, reportable energy-management measure — and the record it produces is an audit asset.

The three shifts at a glance

system	change under the 2026 package	strategic response
Fuel offloading	Greater emphasis on leak detection and spill prevention during fuel receiving, in line with environmental-resource goals.	Upgrade to smart skids with digital flow meters and **ATEX-certified automated shut-offs**.
Fuel polishing	Supports "highly efficient" backup power claims and the move to long-term HVO storage.	Integrate automated 24/7 polishing into the **Building Management System (BMS)** for continuous reporting.
Certification	Mandatory energy audits (Article 11) for high-consumption sites above 10 TJ.	Use polishing and maintenance records to evidence **preventative-maintenance compliance** during audits.

Why this matters now

The first EED reporting cycle has already passed its initial 15 May 2026 deadline, and the EU-wide rating scheme is landing through Q2 2026. Many operators are now auditing their fuel infrastructure for one of two reasons: to improve the initial sustainability rating they have just been assigned, or to be ready before the next reporting cycle and the first round of Article 11 energy audits.

The common thread is that fuel infrastructure decisions made quietly years ago — the pumps that were specified, the polishing that was deferred, the records that were never kept — are now feeding into formal assessments and ratings. The operators getting ahead of this are treating fuel as part of their efficiency story rather than an afterthought to it.

One partner for the full chain the package now scrutinises

Wasp IPU designs, manufactures, installs, and services fuel management systems for the world's largest data centres and power generation facilities. The four specialist businesses behind the brand — **IPU, Wasp PFS, MLA Filtration, and Separ** — are now unified, so one partner covers the full chain. Compliance is not a single product: it runs from the skid that receives the fuel to the records that prove how it has been maintained.

01 **Fuel offloading skids**

Digital flow metering and ATEX-certified automated shut-offs, built for the leak-detection and spill-prevention standards the package emphasises.

02 **Automated fuel polishing systems**

Hold stored fuel at ISO 4406 cleanliness levels and run continuously, supporting the long-term storage of HVO.

03 **BMS integration**

Polishing and fuel-condition data feed straight into your building management system and your reporting, rather than living on a clipboard.

04 **Filtration expertise**

Across the MLA, Wasp PFS, and Separ ranges — matched to the fuel and the engine rather than sold from a catalogue.

05 **Serial-number lifecycle tracking**

On every system we build, so the maintenance and provenance records an Article 11 audit asks for already exist.

06 **One UK team**

Designing, building, installing, and servicing the system. The people who build it are the people who maintain it.

Engineered, not assembled. Built in the UK, serving more than 90 countries, with over 60 years of engineering heritage behind every system.

Five questions to ask before your next reporting cycle

01 Do we know the current ISO 4406 cleanliness of our stored fuel, and can we evidence it?

02 Are our fuel offloading and transfer systems efficient enough to avoid dragging down our energy rating?

03 Is our polishing continuous and logged, or reactive and undocumented?

04 Does our fuel-condition data feed into our BMS and our reporting, or sit outside it?

05 If an Article 11 auditor asked for our preventative-maintenance records tomorrow, could we produce them?

If any of those answers is uncertain, your fuel infrastructure is worth a closer look before the next assessment.

Talk to an engineer

Wasp IPU works with data centre operators and design engineers to specify, build, and maintain fuel infrastructure that stands up to the 2026 standards. If you want to understand where your fuel systems sit against the new requirements, talk to our team.

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This briefing offers regulatory-informed insight into the emerging 2026 EU Data Centre Energy Efficiency Package and the Energy Efficiency Directive as understood at the time of writing. The package does not name fuel polishing or fuel cleanliness; the links drawn here are a practical interpretation intended to support best practice, not a statement of legal requirement. It is general guidance, not legal or regulatory advice. Operators should confirm the specific obligations that apply to their facilities.