



# ElectraLink's Services for the Gas Industry

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## **ElectraLink's Background and Experience:**

ElectraLink was created in 1998 as an independent service to provide data transfer between market participants in the retail electricity industry.

Competition and interoperability in the electricity retail market is underpinned by a number of core industry processes, e.g. change of supplier and settlement processes. The details of these processes are governed by a range of industry codes. Performing these processes is enabled by using standardised data flow messages, which are published in the Data Transfer Catalogue (DTC). In addition, a standard means of sending and receiving these messages is ensured through the provision of the Data Transfer Service (DTS) – a regulated network services that ensures the secure and auditable communication of data flows between users of the service.

The GB electricity Distribution Network Operators (DNOs) are obliged to ensure the provision of the DTS in accordance with their licenses (Licence Condition 37). In order to discharge their obligation, the DNOs collectively created and own ElectraLink Ltd, which is responsible for the procurement and management of the DTS over its Data Transfer Network (DTN).

In addition to its services for the electricity industry, ElectraLink is also a major provider of services for the Gas industry too.

ElectraLink provides governance services for SPAA one of the key Gas industry codes.

In addition, ElectraLink's network is connected to a substantial proportion of Gas Industry participants and is used for communication of RGMA and NOSI messages. ElectraLink continues to expand these services.

## **SPAA**

The Supply Point Administration Agreement (SPAA) provides robust retail Gas Industry Governance arrangements.

ElectraLink has been contracted to provide Secretarial and Administration Services to SPAA Ltd since its inception in 2004. This gives ElectraLink great knowledge of the workings of the Gas industry.



## RGMA

Historically within gas, National Grid had a monopoly on meter asset provision and meter asset maintenance, the modern day MAP and MAM roles respectively. There are now many examples where the asset provision function is provided by someone different than National Grid. Organisations such as Meterfit/Calvin, Macquarie and, on a smaller scale, Utility Funding Limited have significantly altered the landscape from where it was some 10 years ago. In addition National Grid's decision not to install smart gas meters will assure that such industry change will continue.

Among other outputs, the review produced a RGMA baseline document, which included details of standard processes and data flows that all market participants (predominantly Supplier, MAMs and MAPs) should use to facilitate metering competition and ensure core retail market processes could continue to be carried out efficiently. The baseline processes and dataflows (called file types within gas) were designed specifically for the domestic market.

Furthermore, the RGMA baseline does not mandate the use of a particular means of communicating the defined flows. Consequently parties may agree amongst themselves on a multilateral or bilateral basis how they plan to communicate information with one another.

Over the years this has enable competition on data exchange with the majority of the Big 6 Suppliers and their commercial agents using ElectraLink's Data Transfer Network (DTN) to facilitate RGMA communications whilst a few others continue to use xoserve's original IX network or even email exchange

## Data Services

In February 2012, ElectraLink was granted the capability to develop Data Services, by intercepting, analysing and aggregating regulated market data sent over the DTN, by the users of the DTS. The DTS users who represent the main GB electricity retail market participants (i.e. suppliers, DNOs and their agents), recognised that the information could provide a great deal of value to help the industry improve its performance.

With appropriate permissions these reporting services could also be extended to the Gas industry.

ElectraLink has the necessary expertise to design, develop and implement data transfer services for the competitive energy market. Our experience, impartiality and proven track record places us in a position to offer the best value with tailored services. This is borne out with our enviable reputation in the UK energy market for providing high quality, cost effective data and network based services to meet the needs of our clients.



## Strengths of the ElectraLink Network Service:

ElectraLink connects suppliers (electricity and gas), settlements organisations, distribution network operators, metering services companies (electricity and gas), MAPs (electricity and gas) and wider energy market stakeholders across the UK. We have undertaken significant investment in setting up, procuring and maintaining the infrastructure assets upon which the DTS operates. Continual and carefully managed investment in our central industry platform has ensured that the service operates on highly scalable, modern technologies to meet our customers' current and future requirements.

All our messaging services benefit from the strengths of ElectraLink's Data Transfer Service (DTS), which can be best summarised as follows:

- **Security:** using encryption, digital signatures and a virtual private network, ElectraLink ensures that sensitive customer information is never compromised.
- **Audit:** information about every message is recorded in a central database, which market participant can query in real time so that they have up to date information about their data.
- **Reliability:** the system is reliable by design, as proven by consistently exceeding service levels.
- **Resilience:** allows for service-wide and customer-specific disaster recovery facilities as well as being supported 24/7.
- **Tools:** a variety of different tools are provided which allow customers to manage their data.

### The ElectraLink Solution – New gas data flows:

As the market is evolving new communication requirements are being defined. For instance the need to communicate installation issues between Suppliers, their agents and Gas distribution network operators.

All market participants connect to the DTN via a "Gateway", for those stakeholders who do not presently have a Gateway ElectraLink can implement a DTN connection which can be as simple as a VPN connection through a Remote User Gateway (RUG). This connection method has been designed to support smaller volume users.

ElectraLink is able to define, create and baseline additional bespoke data flows outside of the defined industry codes in standard industry formats.

The use of standardised industry formats improve the consistency of the data to and from Gas market participants and therefore increase their efficiencies and reduce errors.



ElectraLink is in a unique position to provide industry stakeholders with the opportunity to send and receive large amounts of data securely and swiftly using the Data Transfer Network (DTN) to improve operational performance. We are able to carry this out with the only established central market infrastructure platform that can transmit defined flows between suppliers and their agents for the gas and electricity industry.

To better understand what ElectraLink can do for the gas industry please contact us on: 0207 432 3000 or [sales@electralink.co.uk](mailto:sales@electralink.co.uk).