RGMA Service

Introduction

ElectraLink provides competitive RGMA communication services to the Gas industry. This paper gives more details of the background and details of the service we provide.

Background

Between 2000 and 2003, Ofgem and the industry completed the Review of Gas Metering Arrangements (RGMA). The purpose of the review was to enable and facilitate competition in the provision of metering services.

The introduction of metering competition within the UK changed the landscape particularly as far as metering provision and maintenance, were concerned.

Suppliers now have a choice as to where the funding of assets come from and who provides the ongoing maintenance of the assets within their respective portfolios.

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.

Alongside the RGMA baseline, the Supply Point Administration Agreement (SPAA) was created as an overarching regulated multi-party agreement to standardise the rules and processes that are necessary to ensure effective supply point administration and customers can effectively and efficiently change supplier. Parties to the SPAA include Gas Suppliers, Gas Transporters (GTs) and their agents.

The industry worked together to review and add the relevant parts of the RGMA baseline as a schedule to the SPAA, thus providing the SPAA with the technical processes and data flows necessary to deliver its more general requirements. Adding the RGMA baseline to the SPAA also ensured that the baseline became governed by effective change management processes.

The RGMA Baseline

The baseline provides detailed processes and file type definitions to enable the communication of instructions, responses and information between participants involved in the provision, registration, operation and maintenance of metering assets in the regulated domestic retail gas market.

In particular, the RGMA baseline is intended for use by MAMs, MAPs, Meter Workers, Gas Act Owners, and the existing Suppliers, Shippers and GTs. The processes covered by the baseline include:

- Asset installation
- Asset removal
- Asset exchange
- Reposition
- Change of Gas Act Owner
- Change of supplier
- Emergency
- Change of MAM

There are 19 formally recognised file types defined in the baseline. The files have been designed flexibly so they may be used to support multiple processes. The file types and the processes are:

Table 1 - Summary of file types as defined in the SPAA

Ref:	File Type	File Reference	Related Physical Process Flows
1.	Request Job	15.1 Request Job – ORJOB	1B – Request Asset Installation
			2B – Request Asset Removal
			3B – Request Asset Exchange

2.	Notify Metering Job Details	15.2 Notify Metering Job – ONJOB (This may be work completed, or the status e.g. re-planned)	1C/D – Pre-notification of Asset Installation
			2C/D – Pre-notification of Asset Removal
			3C/D– Pre-notification of Asset Exchange
			1J /K – Notification of Asset Installation
			2J /K – Notification of Asset Removal
			3J /K – Notification of Asset Exchange
3.	Request Metering Quotation	15.3.1 Request Metering Quote – ORQUO	P6C – Request Metering Price
		15.3.2 Notify Metering Quote – ONQUO	P6G – Notify Metering Price
4.	Notify Agent Change	15.4 Notify Change of Agent – ONAGE	6N / 8A – Notification of De-Appointment
			6P / 8C – Notify New MAM of their Appointment
5.	Request Metering Details	15.5 Request Metering Details – ORDET – Request for information.	6R – Request for Transfer of Asset Information
6.	Notify Metering Details	15.6 Notify Metering Details – ONDET. MAM to	6T /8D – Transfer of Metering details Update

		MAM Provision of latest information.	
7.	Notify Update Details	15.7 Notify Update Metering Details – ONUPD	2L & 3L – Notify Asset Collection Details
			6U / 8E / 8F – Notification of successful transfer
8.	Response	The following are response files:	
		RRJOB – Request Job	1BR – Request Asset Installation
			2BR – Request Asset Removal
			3BR – Request Asset Exchange
		RNJOB – Notify Metering Job Details	1CR/DR – Pre-notification of Asset Installation
			2CR/DR – Pre-notification of Asset Removal
			3CR/DR – Pre-notification of Asset Exchange
			1JR /KR – Notification of Asset Installation
			2JR /KR – Notification of Asset Removal
			3JR /KR – Notification of Asset Exchange

		RRQUO- Request Metering Quote	6PCR
		RNQUO – Notify Metering Quote	6PGR
		RNAGE – Notify Agent Change	6PR (6Q) & 8CR – Appointment Request
			6NR (6S) & 7AR – Confirmation of De-Appointment
		RRDET – Request Metering Details	6RR – Request Metering Details
		RNDET – Notify Metering Details	6TR & 8DR – Notify Metering Details
		RNUPD – Notify Update Details	2LR & 3LR – Notify Asset Collection Details
			6UR, 8ER & 8FR – Notify Update Changes (confirm successful transfer of information following CoS)
9.	MDD Change	'15.9 MDD Change' ONMDD	MDD Record – Market Domain Notification and Market Domain Refresh.
		(No response anticipated)	

In addition to the file types described above, Suppliers. MAMs and MAPs sometimes use two alternative file types – the RESPN and OSUPD. The RESPN is a general response flow and may be used instead of the response flows listed above. The OSUPD flow is a general update of customer/meter details and is used in addition to the flows described above.

How does the RGMA baseline fit into the bigger picture?

The RGMA baseline provides details for ensuring common processes and flows/file types are used. However it does not cover all aspects of the provision of gas metering services and acknowledges that participants may mutually agree to use other flows to ensure the delivery of non-core services.

Furthermore, the SPAA and the RGMA baseline do 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.

RGMA flows are specifically focussed on the administration of assets at supply points in the retail domestic gas market. They do not replace or duplicate flows used for gas settlement or gas Pre-payment purposes, the central registration of supply points or other pre-existing Network Code flows.

The RGMA baseline is being updated in response to the implementation of the Smart Metering Implementation Programme (SMIP), to support changes in the roles of and ways that market participants manage meters in the future

ElectraLink's RGMA Service

ElectraLink was involved in the original definition and design of systems and processes to facilitate the RGMA baseline. We worked with suppliers and their agents to define and develop a commercial solution that would enable the processes and dataflows in the RGMA baseline to be communicated alongside electricity defined flows. This allowed participants to make use of the same infrastructure for the provision of both gas and electricity messages. The DTN is the only communications network in GB to support the exchange of information in relation to both the electricity and gas retail markets.

The provision of this service is on a commercial basis and ElectraLink continues to expand the number of participants using its service.

ElectraLink's RGMA service ensures the following:

- 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 participants can query in real time so that they have up to date information about the status of their communications;
- Reliability - the systems reliability is proven by it consistently exceeding its service levels;
- Delivery acknowledgements - all messages are automatically acknowledged so the sender has confirmation of succesfull transmission;
- Resilience – service-wide and customer-specific disaster recovery facilities are provided as well as 24/7 support;
- Webtools – a number of online tools are provided which allow customers to manage and review their data.

About ElectraLink

Thought leaders, innovators and with a proven track record as facilitators in making things happen, ElectraLink was created in 1998 to provide an independent, secure and low cost service to transfer data between the players operating in the deregulated UK electricity industry.

The company operates a state-of-the-art data transfer service which underpins customer switching, meter interoperability and other business processes critical to a competitive energy market. ElectraLink has subsequently diversified successfully into providing gas data transfer and services to support the codes governing the operation of the gas and electricity markets. In 2012 the company was granted permission by its users to provide data analytics and benchmarking on the market data processed by its data transfer network.

We are the only people who do what we do. A truly independent organisation owned by the UK's Electricity Distribution Network Operators (DNOs), ElectraLink has a unique capability to provide energy market data transfer and analytics as we're connected to, and sit at the heart of, the UK energy industry.

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