

Elster smart metering: medium-sized utility packages

Successful pilots and partial roll-outs from a single source

Smart metering is a hot topic even for medium-sized utility companies, for which they are preparing and which are already usefully applied in various end-customer segments. Successful implementation and safe investments, however, play an important role here. With this as the background, Elster has now developed an attractive package of hardware, software and services especially for small and medium-sized utilities.

With the founding of an interdivisional smart metering competence centre, the Group has adapted to meet the extended range of demands within this topic. From its site in Mainz-Kastel, the international team at Elster Integrated Solutions (EIS) advises energy supply companies even beyond the borders of Europe. EIS takes on smart metering projects, which range from the meter through the communication technology up to meter data management.

Project management and service

Meters Comm. modules Software

For EIS, essential success factors for projects of this kind in the field of SMEs lie in reducing the complexity as much as possible and in having the entire responsibility held by a single supplier, despite the required interoperability. Consequently, Elster now offers standardized multi-divisional packages for electricity, gas and water, which are based on a reasonably reduced number of proven solution variants and components.

Smart meters

For the gas sector, the package refers to the proven Elster diaphragm gas meters, which can be upgraded to smart meters with the use of Absolute ENCODER technology and plug-in communication modules. They are connected to an electricity meter or an external MUC (multi-utility controller) module via M-Bus.

From 2011, Elster water meters will also be part of the standard package, which will be connected via M-Bus in a way similar to that for gas meters described above.

Communication technology

The Elster Group is itself a manufacturer of communication modules and is therefore an expert in wireless, GPRS and PLC communication technology. For the smart meter packages on offer therefore, Elster can also provide for the safe transfer of meter data.

Software

With the EIServer, the Elster Group offers a powerful MDMS (meter data management system). This package comprises all the functions particularly relevant for SMEs which have been compiled from the EIServer's very rich functionality. It begins with meter data reading and validation and covers many important analyses, evaluations and applications. This also includes a workflow for the deployment of smart meters. The solution is available as part of the "Software as a Service" concept (see previous article) for installations from 1000 metering points. Therefore the customer does not need to buy or operate any software, but rather the software is provided as a service.

Services

The most important service component is the project management, where Elster sees itself as being responsible for the entire success of the project. The services range from consultancy through to the acceptance of the project and relate to all elements of the smart metering package. Even services provided by the customer can be incorporated by us to the required extent.

Summary

Using the comprehensive solution packages approach, Elster offers a means of combining project success and investment security which is especially suited to the sector of small and medium-sized utilities, thanks to its high level of standardization.

We are in a good position with regard to all grid media, so feel free to turn to us for more information.

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