

BEST PRACTICES FOR A SUCCESSFUL SMART TECHNOLOGY ROLL-OUT

ESMIG is keen to share different countries' experiences of their smart meter roll-outs. Following discussions with members and other stakeholders from across the EU we have condensed their experiences into 10 key recommendations for countries preparing for a roll-out. These are grouped in three main themes: making the market ready, planning the roll-out and getting consumers on board through targeted communication.



Making the market ready for the roll-out and its implications

01

Ensure the market is prepared to realise the benefits:

Business models and incentives must be in place to ensure competitiveness, to encourage service providers to offer tools and a good value proposition for consumers. For example, if not enough saving tools are offered on the market, reaching the energy savings target will be much more difficult. A recent report from VaasaETT highlights the impact of feedback tools on realising energy savings – you can access it on the ESMIG website, under “Publications”.

02

All relevant stakeholders need to be able to make optimal use of the data provided by smart meters.

For grid operators, becoming a data-driven company will be essential in seizing the benefits offered by the smart meters. That implies structural changes to handle, analyse and make use of this data to optimise the grid. Consumers and retailers need to have timely and non-discriminatory access to smart meter data to be able to enjoy the tools and services that offer them the benefits this data brings.





Planning and executing the roll-out

03

Proper and inclusive planning with realistic expectations and timeline:

as with any project, there needs to be a phase of research, consultation with all relevant stakeholders to create a detailed and realistic plan. Contingency time and budgets are also important, alongside risk management, for taking into consideration unexpected events, such as strength of signal communications in certain type of properties*.

04

Collaboration is key: since a lot of different parties are involved in the roll-out, it is essential that everyone is working towards a common goal and participating in the preparations of the roll-out. The business case of the smart meter roll-out is societal, so multiple stakeholders stand to benefit from it. However, all of these benefits need to be realised for a positive business case.

05

Pilots can help to assess new technologies, but... :

Pilots can help assess AMI technologies, project approaches and provide consumer behavioral insights, as long as they have a representative pool – at least 2% of the network. Field testing should be used for mitigation of risks, business case validation and the planning of changes in business processes. Moreover, the lessons learned should be shared and, where necessary, the policy adapted to incorporate new approaches.

06

Prepare the installation process properly and monitor this process.

Too often installation problems occur, because installers are new on the job. Consumers need to be at home more than once to solve installation issues and they are not well informed.

*Problems with PLC and radio communication are occurring with up to 5% of the installed meters.

Getting consumers on board



07

Create a smart media campaign to share information and describe the necessity and benefits of the roll-out. Consistency and proactivity are essential here, as any small mistake will be picked up by the media and could have a huge negative impact on the adoption of smart meters by consumers.

08

Focus on the benefits: while direct benefits in terms of savings are important to emphasize, these are not sufficient to get the attention of consumers. However, combined with the overall societal benefits – the need for a clean and flexible energy system, the need for data in order to optimise the system and prevent blackouts, the message is more powerful and convincing for consumers.

Create consumer trust:

the smart meters and related products need to have security and privacy by default and by design. In addition, consumers need to be made aware of their rights with regards to smart meters and the data provided.

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Make sure all consumers' concerns and questions are addressed, with, for example, an accessible, transparent and responsive customer service number and website.

