



midata in the energy sector

Frequently asked questions

About the project, approach and outcomes

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Department for
Business, Energy
& Industrial Strategy



Department for
Digital, Culture
Media & Sport



Cabinet Office



Government
Digital Service



The
Alan Turing
Institute

What is consumer data?

Consumer data is the term used for values captured about a customer by an energy supplier. This includes, but is not limited to:

- the address of the property being supplied with energy,
- the current supplier of energy to the customer,
- the details of the meter used at the property,
- the date that the current contract with the supplier started,
- the date that the current contract will end with the supplier,
- the current method of payment used by the customer,
- whether the customer benefits from the warm house discount
- the current energy usage of the customer,
- the current tariff being used by the customer for their energy,
- the current cost for energy supply to the customer.

We will be exploring the data to be included as part of this next phase.

What problem or opportunity is this project trying to solve?

Consumer data is currently held by suppliers and is often of inconsistent quality. Being able to access this data is typically a slow process. For example, consumers must manually input their data to a third party website or app in order to make a price comparison or to complete a switch online. This can lead to errors, inaccuracies and there are difficulties in finding all the required information from a bill. For those wishing to develop new products and services, this can mean an inability to prove their new ideas or generate the confidence needed for consumers to sign up.

The drive for a digital economy in the United Kingdom has produced a 'Big-Data' revolution. This has caused people to consider whether we are using data effectively, whether appropriate safeguards are in place to protect personal data and how we can best put data to work in generating the benefits we all need and demand.

Our evidence base for this is from surveying over 400 businesses and individuals, 5 open forums with over 60 representatives, 75 formal responses to a call for evidence by Ofgem (46) and by Government (29) and engagement with nearly 50 young people about energy and data.

How is this project organised?

The project is cross-governmental and integrated which means the team all come together to deliver the outcomes. The departments involved are:

- Office for Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem)
- Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS)

- Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS)
- Government Digital Service (GDS)
- Cabinet Office (CO)

The departments have each committed to provide resources for the project. The project has external expertise providing challenge, support and knowledge to assured we deliver the best outcome. They include:

- Open Data Institute
- Energy Systems Catapult
- Alan Turing Institute

The project is governed by a project board. This board is empowered by each of the participants to make decisions, authorise resources and discuss critical issues. The board meet on a monthly basis. The terms of reference, management arrangements and governance will be published.

Why is the project cross-governmental now?

Following the review of the call for evidence and discussions with digital leads across Government, it was decided that the project had the best chance of success by bringing people together. In many cases, they were already working on parts of the project and by coming together, can be more efficient and effective.

What approach is the project going to take?

The project will form three development teams; the standard design authority, user engagement forum and industry delivery group. The people in these teams will come from the sector and may include consumers, interest groups, suppliers, other organisations in the energy sector and innovation organisations. The teams will each meet on a monthly basis with a core project principle for each meeting from the following initial list:

- The mandate for consumers to share data
- The threshold for those who will be providing access to data
- The standards required for the data to be consistent, high quality and secure
- The consent of the consumer to share data with others
- The verification of a consumer to assure that consent was valid
- The assurance of consistency, quality and appropriateness
- The compliance with the standards and enforcement of non-compliance

As each team produces outputs, it will be shared with the other teams to test, trial and challenge. The project board will oversee and direct

the work of these teams. As each principle is completed, it will be published and shared with the wider community. The chairs of each team will sit on the project board.

What is the standard design authority?

This team will be focused upon the design of the standard. At a basic level, the standard will define which data needs to be shared, in what format and to which standard of security protocol it needs to be shared. The standard will set the minimum quality requirements for the data and how this will be assured and enforced. As part of the security protocol, the team will consider how to implement a system of consent and verification.

What is the user engagement forum?

This team will be focused upon the needs of users. This team may include consumers, innovators and those with an interest in using the data that would become available. This will consider which sets of data held about a consumer would be needed to design new services. Coupled with this will be a prioritisation and assessment of how appropriate it would be to share this data. It will consider how the data may be shared, the process to provide consent and the protections needed for consumers. This team will test and prototype the standards being produced by the standard design authority.

What is the industry delivery group?

This team will be focused upon the impact and deliverability of the standard in the sector. This team will include suppliers and those upon which there will be a cost or resource impact of the project. The team will consider the costs of developing and implementing solutions to comply with the data standard. It will consider the benefits of the data standard and the timescale needed to deliver it. The team will assess the outputs of the standard design authority once they have been tested by the user engagement forum.

How much time is needed to be part of a team?

We will be asking for a minimum time commitment of 1.5 days per month. This is a 0.5 day meeting plus 1 day preparing and following up. If you are chairing a team, this commitment would be 3 days per month due to attendance at the project board.

What are the outputs to be delivered by the project?

The project will deliver a data standard, a compliance and enforcement regime and a license condition.

What are the timescales for the project?

The project will launch the first 'Project Lab' in July 2018.

Development is planned between August 2018 and February 2019. Formal consultation is planned between December 2018 and January 2019. There is an expectation for early adoption by April 2019 and for the project to be closed by June 2019.

How does this project fit into the bigger picture?

There are a number of related projects and activities underway at the moment. The project will remain in close communication and alignment with them. These include:

- UK data and digital strategy (led by DCMS)
- Data as infrastructure (led by Centre for Digital Built Britain)
- Consumer green paper (led by BEIS)
- Smart data review (led by BEIS)
- Cost of energy review (led by BEIS)
- Market information services (led by XOServe/GemServe)
- Smart systems and flexibility (led by Ofgem)
- Faster, more reliable switching programme (led by Ofgem)
- Smart metering (led by BEIS and Ofgem)
- Settlement reform (led by Ofgem)
- CMA database remedy and check your energy deal (led by Ofgem)

We are keen to avoid duplication and have agreed that these projects may join sessions we run to engage with you and to provide input.

Why should I get involved?

This project doesn't want to work in isolation. It is seeking to coauthor and collaborate so that we all have the chance to consider these issues and how we may address them. You can help shape the solution.

What should I do next?

Get in touch with us – consumerdata@ofgem.gov.uk - and we will add you to our list of people interested in the project. Please indicate whether you wish to be kept informed through our regular communications and if you would like to join one of the development teams.

We will be seeking to publish updates on a monthly basis.