

New market area „Trading Hub Europe“ harmonises IT landscape

Merger of NetConnect Germany and GASPOOL Balancing Services, including their existing GAS-X balancing systems

German unity on the gas market since October 2021

“The decisive factors for our good cooperation were constant open exchange, discussions about specialist processes and assessments within the project teams to take the right path. The balancing and billing processes for the entire German market area work smoothly.”

Stephan Alaerds,

Program & Project
Management,
Trading Hub Europe
GmbH

On 1 October 2021, the two gas market areas in Germany became one: the Trading Hub Europe (THE). By 2017, the various balancing group grid operators had consolidated into the two market area managers of GASPOOL Balancing Services and NetConnect Germany.

Prior to the merger, both companies were already using the GAS-X BKN solution for handling time-critical balancing processes, commercial billing vis-à-vis balancing group managers and communication with all market participants.

The merger created a market area with 15 transmission grids, around 750 downstream grids and over 15,000 balancing groups and sub-balancing accounts. Two worlds had to be merged.

Key points



- Timetable_6 months ahead of schedule. In order to start with the THE market area for the new gas year, the start date was brought forward from 04/2022 to 10/2021.



- Data_2.5 TByte of process data from the past 10 years from 2 productive databases had to be consolidated, imported into the target database and checked.



- Transition_6 hours for seamless transition of communication processes from two IT systems in two data centres to THE's consolidated IT solution.



- Project duration + pandemic_24 months for the merger. The project started in 2019, continued in 2020 under the applicable Coronavirus restrictions, and was successfully completed on schedule by 1 October 2021.

Challenges

The biggest challenge was harmonising the processes and system landscapes used in both companies. For each existing process, the future target process had to be defined.

To determine the future IT landscape, all IT systems and interfaces in the existing system landscapes had to be evaluated. On this basis, the necessary adjustments to the IT systems were defined and communicated to the service providers. In parallel, the migration path for the existing process data and the cut-over planning for the start date of 1 October 2021 were developed.

All of this was done in sub-projects. In between, regular coordination meetings were held to keep the common goal in sight. Due to the pandemic, most of the reconciliation events had to be held remotely.

Our solution

Sopra Steria accompanied the merger as project partner. The technology company was already working with both market area managers before the project began - as the provider of the GAS-X solution, which was used in both houses.

With the existing process expertise as well as the technology know-how in dealing with highly available systems and large data volumes, Sopra Steria developed proposals for the seamless transition. The GAS-X software was extended to meet the new requirements of Trading Hub Europe, and existing processes were merged.

The data was moved in two steps:

1. Migration of the data of the first company. After that, the starting signal for the new Trading Hub Europe system was given one month before 1 October 2021, and the processes of the first former market area were handled.

2. This was followed by the takeover of the second company, so that in October the move was completed and the Trading Hub Europe system was launched throughout the market area.

Sopra Steria will continue to support the new market area manager in handling time-critical allocation processes, balancing, billing of balancing groups, grid accounts and balancing energy. In addition, the display and input of process data is enabled via the Trading Hub Europe customer portal.

How we worked together

The merging of systems, processes and data took place as an agile project. This gave everyone involved the possibility to continuously adjust the solution as required over the long course of the project. Necessary adjustments could be kept well in view with this project setting and the team size could be scaled on short notice. By working in several sub-project teams, it was possible to work on different task areas in parallel.

Sopra Steria was familiar with the people and work of the two market area managers through the GAS-X collaboration. This benefited the project teams. Even though the pandemic measures made direct contact impossible for much of the project, collaboration and communication worked well.

Results and benefits

The Trading Hub Europe market area started on time on 1 October 2021 well ahead of the German Federal Network Agency's target date of 1 April 2022.

All legacy data could be processed smoothly on the new GAS-X system of Trading Hub Europe in the newly defined processes. During the migration of data from two existing GAS-X systems, the source systems continued to operate. The transition was thus seamless for the German gas market without any interruptions.

Since then, the market processes of the market area manager for the entire German gas market have been handled on a daily basis on the new uniform balancing system of Trading Hub Europe, resulting in significant synergies in grid operations.

About the customer

Since 1 October 2021 Trading Hub Europe GmbH has been the market area manager for the all-German market area Trading Hub Europe and operates the market area in accordance with the „Cooperation Agreement between Operators of Gas Supply Grids Located in Germany“ pursuant to Section 20 (1b) EnWG.

The high-pressure pipeline system of the transmission grid operators in the Trading Hub Europe market area across Germany will have a total length of around 40,000 km and connect more than 700 downstream grids.

gas-x¹®

About Sopra Steria

Sopra Steria, a European leader in consulting, digital services and software development, helps its clients drive their digital transformation to obtain tangible and sustainable benefits. 47,000 experts in over 30 countries provide end-to-end solutions to make large companies and organisations more competitive by combining in-depth knowledge of a wide range of business sectors and innovative technologies with a fully collaborative approach. Sopra Steria places people at the heart of everything it does and is committed to making the most of digital technology to build a positive future for its clients.

The world is how we shape it

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