

MP Extranet Broker Guidelines

Version: 1.0

Status: Approved

Issue date: March 2010



Gemserv Limited
10 Fenchurch Street
London
EC3M 3BE

Company Reg. No: 4419 878

Tel: +44 (0) 20 7090 1000
Fax: +44 (0) 20 7090 1001

niemesh.amin@gemserv.com
www.gemserv.com

I Change History

Version	Status	Issue date	Author	Reason For Change
0.1	Draft	28/07/2009	Babatunde Sodeke	New document
0.2	Draft	16/09/2009	Niamesh Amin	Updated following industry review
0.3	Draft	17/09/2009	Niamesh Amin	Following internal review
0.4	Draft	17/02/2010	Niamesh Amin	Incorporate RMDS, ESNB and Gemserv review
0.5	Draft	19/02/2010	Niamesh Amin	Further Internal Review
1.0	Approved	02/03/2010	Niamesh Amin	RMDS Approved

II Document Controls

Name	Role	Responsibility	Date
Reviewer(s): Peter Varley	Assurance Body	Technical review	17/09/2009 10/02/2010 18/02/2010
John Forde	ESB Networks	Technical review	10/02/2010
Authorisation: Conor Garrigan	RMDS Manager	Authorised for use	02/03/2010

III Circulation

Name	Role	Reason for Issue
	RMDS	Publication to Market Participants

IV References



Reference	Document Name	Version	Issue date	Status
	Administration of the ESB Extranet for Suppliers	Approved		

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1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The Retail Market Participant Extranet Website (Extranet) provides Suppliers with the ability to view MPRN data held by MRSO, thus facilitating customer switching. This document sets out the design and operations guidelines with which any automated enquiry application (Broker Solution) that interacts with the Extranet must comply and the processes that ESB Networks will apply in operations support for these.

1.2 Applicability and Scope

These guidelines apply to all organizations that have been approved to operate in the Republic of Ireland Retail Electricity Market and cover the use of automation to initiate enquiries on the Extranet in relation to the MPRN tab.

1.3 Glossary of Terms

This glossary is for use with this document only and shall not supersede any terms duplicated in other industry documents.

Term	Acronym	Description
Extranet		means the Retail Market Participant Extranet website provided by ESB or any substitute or replacement thereof
Broker Solution		Market Participant's automated method of interrogating the Extranet.
ISU System		The central market system for processing all market activities.

1.4 Background

In September 2008 Market Participants requested the provision of an automated alternative to the manual Extranet service whereby a Market Participant would be able to send an automated enquiry to the ESB Networks database and retrieve the results, identical to those obtained manually from the Extranet but linking these into an application. This new service would facilitate the suppliers in allowing verification of MPRN details, prior to sending a request for a Change of Supplier, more efficiently.

Since the implementation of the Extranet, Supplier(s) have developed bespoke "Broker Solutions" in order to push enquiries to the Extranet and capture the return data into their application.

ESB Networks has supported these during the short term on the understanding that lessons learnt will be captured and retro-fitted as required. These guidelines encapsulate these lessons to date and will be updated in the light of future experience.

There are a number of inherent issues within the Intranet technology which affect the design and operation of a Broker Solution. These include:

- The Extranet is hosted on a system (ISU system) whose architecture is designed for a batch processing environment, and is not optimised for a high volume of real time queries using web technologies.
- The ISU system supports all market functions and is subject to heavy loading from time to time. Implementation of a Broker Solution can increase the load significantly if not adequately controlled. This could result in a degradation of all services and to all market participants;
- A response to a query cannot be guaranteed. At times of heavy usage the ISU system may become busy and communications threads can time out and be dropped. This method of communication is different from the batch processing technology that is used extensively within the market design where a market message is queued and a response is guaranteed.

The guidelines recommended within this document are aimed at minimising such issues in order for the Extranet to function as smoothly and fairly as possible for all Market Participants.

1.5 Conditions Precedent

The Extranet is provided by ESB Networks, whose aim is to make the site available to Suppliers at all times and with reasonable response. In order to minimise the potential of service disruption arising from a Broker Solution, guidelines underpinned by the following conditions have been developed:

- The Extranet is made available subject to the principle of "fair use" in which all Suppliers are entitled to use the service and receive a reasonable response. If the actions of any Supplier result in a degradation of availability or response to other Suppliers this is in contravention of this "fair use" principle.
- The Supplier accepts that access to, and the provision of data on, the site may not be uninterrupted. Additionally, Suppliers accept that response times cannot be guaranteed.
- In order to be granted access to the Extranet, organizations must have signed the 'Extranet Access Agreement' (as part of the Registration Process) which applies to any Broker Solution.

- All Broker Solutions which inter-operate with the Extranet shall be subject to some level of independent Assurance prior to live operation, to ensure that the design includes these guidelines so that the risk of an adverse impact has been minimised.
- Any Extranet Broker Solution must be used only for the purposes of supporting registration of retail electricity customers within the Irish Retail Electricity Market and comply with the Republic of Ireland's Data Protection Act.
- ESB Networks are responsible for all operational aspects of the central systems including maintaining acceptable service levels for all Market Participants and may take any action that is necessary in order to do so.
- The Supplier must be prepared to respond to changes to the Extranet pages' HTML structure. Where possible there will be notice of this but on occasion it may change without notice and Suppliers accept this.
- The development and installation of a Broker Solution is outside the scope of the established ROI Electricity Market Design and does not provide any Supplier with a right to use considerations of their Broker Solution to challenge or refute technical changes that may be required from time to time to the Market Design or the central Market systems.

2. Guidelines

2.1 Design Guidelines

All Market Participants are expected to comply with the guidelines below.

The process and procedures associated with the administration and security of the extranet is covered in an associated document "Administration of the ESB Extranet for Suppliers".

The following guidelines must be incorporated within the design of all Broker Solutions:

- Queries must be manually initiated and be for a single MPRN.
In order to minimise the impact that automated queries will have on the Extranet service, queries through a Broker Solution must remain manually initiated and result in the retrieval of data for a single MPRN.
- The Broker Solution must cater for any queries that have timed out due to the lack of a response.

- No MPRN should be queried more than once by the same broker mechanism within a period of twenty four hours.
A caching mechanism should form part of the Broker Solution design if it is required to cater for multiple enquiries on the same MPRN.
- Where a change is made to a Supplier's Broker Solution or the associated operational procedures, impacting on its ability to inter-operate with the Extranet (e.g. if there is a change to the software) the Supplier shall ensure that the change has been managed in such a way that the risk of an adverse impact on the Extranet service has been minimised.
- Suppliers must declare to the RMDS their intention to automate Extranet requests prior to doing so.
- Broker solutions and the associated operations procedures, and any changes to them, will be subject to independent Assurance as determined by the RMDS.

2.2 Operations Guidelines

2.2.1 Suppliers

- Any Broker Solution should utilise only one connection to service all of their requests.
Whatever the number of Users that any Supplier's Broker Solution may have connected to it, the application should use only one connection to inter-operate with the Extranet. Given the limited pool of connections available, this will ensure there are connections available to service other Suppliers and should not impair the efficiency of the Broker Solution itself.
- The Supplier must nominate, and provide contact details to ESB Networks for, its Extranet Broker Solution Administrator and an alternate.
- The Supplier must declare to ESB Networks the "username" that is intended for use with their Broker Solution and only use the named "username" for initiating broker queries.
- Users should be trained in acceptable use.
Suppliers are expected to train their staff in the use of the Extranet and make them aware of the Extranet Broker Solution guidelines.
- The Supplier's Broker Solution may be required to undertake a pilot implementation phase in the live environment to monitor the Broker Solution impact and the query traffic volumes.

2.2.2 ESB Networks

In administering and maintaining the Extranet service, ESB Networks shall comply with the following:

- The available Extranet channels will be divided into two groups, one for "manual" queries and one for "broker" initiated queries.

- All broker queries will be directed to a broker channel but manual queries may use any channel.
- Wherever possible Suppliers will be given advance notice of any planned changes to the HTML structure of nominated Extranet pages. If unexpected changes do occur ESB Networks will offer an explanation of how this occurred to the next scheduled Industry Governance Group.
- If Extranet response becomes unacceptable due to the load being placed on it by one or more Broker Solutions, ESB Networks will:
 - inform the nominated contact(s) or their alternate that they are in contravention of the Extranet Broker Guidelines;
 - agree an amount of time for the contact to take corrective action, this time to be no more than 30 minutes;
 - if neither the nominated contact nor their alternate can be reached, or effective corrective action is not taken by the Broker contact in the agreed time, ESB Networks will adjust Extranet parameters in favour of other users until the overload situation is resolved. This may involve disabling one or more broker IDs temporarily.
- All deviations from the Extranet Broker Guidelines will be reported to the Supplier involved and a tally of such reports will be included in the statistics provided to the Industry Governance Group.
- If contravention of the Extranet Broker Guidelines continues or is repeated continually by any Supplier's Extranet Broker Solution, the RMDS & the CER will be notified. Direction will be taken from the CER on the discontinuance of the offending Broker User until the CER is satisfied that the Supplier has taken effective corrective action
- ESB Networks will monitor broker usage, advise any planned Extranet changes and provide statistics to the Industry Governance Group as required by that group from time to time.

3. Annex A: Declaration

This declaration by an appropriate company executive expresses an agreement on behalf of your organisation to the terms and conditions outlined for the Extranet Broker Solution. A director or senior manager would be appropriate.

DECLARATION BY COMPANY EXECUTIVE			
We confirm that to implement a Extranet Broker Solution:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• we have understood the guidelines and will incorporate these principles in our design and operation of the Broker solution;• we will ensure that all of our Broker Solution users have been provided adequate training in these guidelines;• We will use reasonable endeavours to ensure that there is no negative impact on the Extranet Service by the use of our Broker Solution			
COMPANY NAME:			
Signed on behalf of the Company by :			
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Print Name	Signature	Position	Date

