Edig@s Protocol

Edig@s Release Periods

Background Paper for:

CBP 2003-003/02 Edig@s Protocol

CBP 2007-005/01 Edig@s Release Periods

1 Content

The purpose of this document is to provide background information for CBP 2003/003/02 Edig@s Protocol and CBP 2007/005/01 Edig@s Release Periods.

The first part of the document explains the business case that these CBPs address. The subsequent sections detail the implications of adopting the CBPs and a brief overview of the Edig@s history.

2 Business case

EDIG@S has become the de facto electronic message standard used in the exchange of commercial information between Traders & Shippers, TSOs, DSOs and Producers within the European Gas Supply Chain. The EDIG@S standard specifies the business information requirements and the way it must be structured in an electronic document.

The Edig@s standard covers the kernel phases of the dry gas process flow within the European Gas Supply Chain.

There have been a number of versions of Edig@s over the years many of which are still in use. The support of multiple versions of Edig@s is both time consuming and costly for the companies that have to deal with a multitude of parties using different versions.

The aim of the CBPs is to:

- Recommend the use of the latest version of Edig@s so that the most pertinant functionality and technology is promoted across the industry;
- Rationalise the number of versions that have to be supported; and
- Propose a timetable for the transition of from older versions to the newer recommendation.
- Diminish the overall costs for the European Gas Industry by reducing the portfolio of different technologies that is required for communication between parties.

3 The process that led to the CBP

3.1 Development of functionality and technology

The Business Rules Working Group identified a number of processes that required the development of Edig@s messages.

The messages in question were developed by the Edig@s workgroup using the EDIFACT syntax.

Since that development, technology has advanced and there has been a move from industry to make use of the new technology, XML, rather than EDIFACT. Consequently Edig@s has produced V4.0 if its electronic documents which supports both the new XML syntax and the older EDIFACT syntax.

3.2 Development of versioning process

In agreement with the Executive Committee the Edig@s WG will from now on support only two versions of Edig@s, the current version and the preceding version. Details of how the process works and how the versions are approved are described in the CBP "Edig@s Release Periods".

4 Edig@s V4.0

The CBPs recommend the use of the current version of the Edig@s protocol (V4.0) for the exchange of sales, infrastructure and service information between parties in the European gas market. It also confirms that the previous version V3.2 shall continue to be supported until V4.0 is replaced by a newer version.. It also describes a transition period over which support for older versions (V2.0 and V2.2) will be phased out.

Version 4.0 proposes two different electronic document syntaxes for its implementation: EDIFACT and XML. Up to version 4.0 only the EDIFACT syntax has been supported. The CBPs define a second transition period over which the EDIFACT format of Version 4.0 will be phased out.

5 EDIG@S VERSIONING PROCESS

5.1 Governance

The Executive committee of EASEE-gas, based on the recommendation of the Edig@s Message, Codification and Maintenance workgroup, is responsible for authorizing the initialization and publication of a new Edig@s version.

The Executive committee of EASEE-gas, based on the recommendation of the Edig@s Message, Codification and Maintenance workgroup, is responsible for determining the timescale for releasing and retiring Edig@s versions.

5.2 Clarification of rules, outlined in the CBP

A new official version shall be published approximately every 2 years.

Each draft version shall be published 2 months prior to release on the Edig@s-homepage for comments.

On publication, a disposition of comment will be made available.

The previous official version will become a supported version.

A new version has a 4 year life-cycle (2 official + 2 supported years).

5.3 Status

The Official version: is the current version published on the Edig@s website. The Executive committee of EASEE-gas recommends the use of this version as soon as it is feasible.

The Supported version: is the version that the current version replaces. This version will no longer evolve functionally.

All versions prior to the supported version will no longer be supported. All associated documentation of these versions will no longer be available on the Edig@s website and no queries will be satisfied concerning these versions.

6 Marketing & Support plan

The marketing & support plan includes:

- A link from the EASEE-gas website to the Edig@s website which contains the current Edig@s version as well as the supported version.
- Development and maintenance of a presentation package.
- Distribution of all new developments to the EASEE-gas secretariat for redistribution to EASEE-gas Members.
- Creation of a support group for new version implementation

  During the implementation of a new version, the support group, a subset of the Edig@s workgroup, will assist Edig@s users wishing to implement the new version.
- Identification of all existing implementations

All relevant documentation is freely available on the Edig@s website (http://www.edigas.org/).

7 The Edig@s Message Codification & Maintenance Working Group

The Edig@s Message Codification & Maintenance Working Group (Edig@s WG) currently consists of 14 members:

1	BP Gas	(Trader, Shipper & Producer)	UK
2	Distrigas	(Trader & Shipper)	Belgium
3	Dong Energy	(Trader & Shipper)	Denmark
4	E.On Ruhrgas	(Trader & Shipper)	Germany
5	Eni SpA	(Trader & Shipper)	Italy
6	Fluxys	(Transporter)	Belgium
7	Gas Transport Services	(Transporter)	Netherlands
8	Gassco	(Transporter)	Norway
9	Gaz de France	(Trader & Shipper)	France
10	Gaz System	(Transporter)	Poland
11	GRT Gaz	(Transporter)	France
12	JSC Gazprom/Gazprom Export	(Producer & Transporter/Trader & Shipper)	Russia
13	StatoilHydro	(Trader, Shipper & Producer)	Norway
14	Wingas Transport	(Transporter)	Germany

8 Additional information about Edig@s

8.1 History of Edig@s

In 1983, Distrigas in Belgium, Gaz de France in France, Ruhrgas in Germany and Gasunie in the Netherlands signed a document on a standard way of sending and receiving operational data and messages between the dispatching centres. This document was called the GASNET-Protocol. Ten years after, beside the four "owners" of the protocol, another 10 companies, national and international, are using this protocol for their data exchange.

At the end of 1995 one of the users, Statoil Norway, who experienced first problems raised by a lot of messages to handle, initiated to look for a more international standard for communication. In May 1996, a Workgroup was formed, in which Statoil and each of the owners was represented by one member. The first goal of this Workgroup was to make an inventory of all the messages used, to gather them and to choose an international EDI standard.

At the end of 1996, EDIFACT was chosen as the standard syntax for the development of the Edig@s messages.

In 2007, more than 120 companies use Edig@s for their operational requirements with their business partners.

8.2 Need for an EDI standard

WHAT IS EDI?

Electronic Data Interchange or simply EDI is the exchange of structured business information between trading partners in an organised, standardised manner, using agreed communication methods.

ADVANTAGES OF EDI

The major advantage of EDI is that it permits the rapid transmission and comprehension of data from computer to computer, making the control of the commercial activities far more efficient and cost effective. In addition, the ability to exchange information through EDI offers an opportunity for the data to be fed directly into the in-house system application, thereby saving time on data preparation and data re-entry.

The elimination of data re-entry, such as a web-based man machine interface, also caters for the elimination of associated errors, the direct transfer of data from one application to another safeguards the integrity of the data.

As the data transmitted is no longer meant to be read by an operator, but is destined to be integrated into the in-house application, this data can be reduced to strictly dynamic data in coded form whenever possible. This caters for compact data transmissions.

Those are only a few examples of the multiple advantages linked to EDI. Properly implemented EDI offers a wide range of opportunities to make business more efficient.

At the beginning of Edig@s, EDIFACT has emerged as the global multi-sectorial standard, which permits to transmit data between partners.

The initial versions of Edig@s (prior to Version 4.0) made use of a subset of the EDIFACT syntax with specific "gas" codes. The Edig@s workgroup defined the messages needed for the gas market and developed them to cover the gas companies requirements.

With the new Version 4.0, the Edig@s workgroup has taken the opportunity to introduce XML as an alternative syntax in addition to the existing EDIFACT syntax.. The main justification for introducing the XML syntax is that XML has now become the international interchange standard for levels of the IT industry including information exchange. It is better structured and is supported by an extremely large number of software products.