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CRE provides guidelines on developing smart metering systems for the natural gas retail market¹

Smart metering is designed to provide customers with precise information on how much gas they use every month, rather than every six months. Another advantage of the project is that it allows customers to immediately check their actual consumption when any change is made to the contract (change of supplier, connection or disconnection). Suppliers will be able to connect an energy display unit to the meter, enabling them to provide customers with new services aimed at controlling energy use.

CRE has based its guidelines on the work carried out by the consultation group on the development of smart gas metering systems, which brought together market players and consumer groups. The guidelines define the conditions for GrDF to launch a smart metering pilot project, in which any of the stakeholders who wish to may take part. In addition, CRE will carry out a study analysing the cost of the project in relation to the expected advantages for the consumer and developing the technical and financial aspects in more detail, preparing the way to the decision regarding deployment.

According to the planned schedule, the technical and financial study will be completed by the end of the second quarter of 2010 and the experimental stage of the project should be finalised by the end of 2010. The decision to launch the project is scheduled to be taken by the beginning of 2011 at the latest. Deployment will then go ahead as of 2012.

As regards synergy between GrDF's smart metering project for gas and ERDF's Linky Project for electricity, CRE recommends coordinating a schedule for installing the smart meters at customers' sites, where local resources allow, to reduce the need for customers to be present at the site and to share deployment costs.

Founded on 24 March 2000, the French Energy Regulatory Commission (CRE) is an independent administrative body. It works to guarantee smooth and efficient operation of the electricity and natural gas markets for the benefit of the end-user. It also works to guarantee the absence of discriminatory practices, cross-subsidies or restrictions on competition.

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¹ See the CRE Deliberation at the address below:

<http://www.cre.fr/fr/content/download/8916/156522/file/090903ComptageEvolueDetailGaz.pdf>