

European Smart Metering Alliance (ESMA)

Case study contact	BEAMA (British Electrotechnical and Allied Manufacturers' Association)
Programme	Intelligent Energy Europe (SAVE) - 2005 Call
Total Budget	€1,207,725
EC Contribution	€603,868
Consortium	14 partners from 9 Member States and 1 Associated State (Norway) with UK coordinator (BEAMA)
Project duration	36 months

ESMA EUROPEAN SMART METERING ALLIANCE



ESMA aims to define and spread best practice in smart metering across the European Union and maximise the resulting energy savings. "Smart metering" covers a variety of functions made possible by electronic meters and communications networks. They provide benefits to utilities through better operation and reduced costs. They also make it possible for final customers to get more information about their energy usage. Trials have shown that this can reduce energy consumption.

The project has produced a series of reports on key aspects of smart metering that have fed into a Best Practice Guide for the use of utilities, regulators and other stakeholders, published in 2008. In addition, an Alliance has been established linking all key stakeholders, giving them a forum to deal with the issues arising from the introduction of smart metering.

ESMA also produces an Annual Report on the progress of smart metering and a series of reports on the current status of smart metering, including an assessment of the energy savings to be expected from energy usage feedback from smart metering. These reports are aimed at all stakeholders involved in smart metering, especially Utilities and Regulators charged with implementing the metering and billing aspects of the Energy End-Use Efficiency and ESCO Directives.

The coordinator

BEAMA is a grouping consisting of 14 Associations, representing some 350 companies in the Electrotechnical and Allied Manufacturing Industries in the UK. BEAMA represents an industry with a turnover of £13 billion a year and which employs over 137,000 people. BEAMA represents the Electrotechnical Industry to the UK government and its European counterparts. It provides a wide range of services to both members and to the industry, including Legal, Statistics, Standards, Commercial, Overseas Marketing, Technology and Environmental.

Role in project

BEAMA coordinated the project. This was BEAMA's first IEE project, although the individual who led the project had previous experience of European projects from the JOULE programme in FP5, and BEAMA had been a participant in two FP6 projects.

Proposal preparation

Preparing the proposal involved a great deal of work. BEAMA had heard of other proposals where drafting the Work Packages was shared around and it was found difficult to get a common style and ensure all material arrived to deadlines. Therefore BEAMA took the lead throughout and wrote most parts of the proposal. Although this places a great burden on the coordinator, BEAMA consider it better to have a single author since this ensures a coherent and unified proposal. The Coordinator should be the partner with the greatest interest in the success of the project; this is more important than previous experience.

BEAMA did not experience any serious problems in assembling the consortium. The project was inspired by a conference at the Joint Research Centre at Ispra (Italy), and evolved naturally from there. Ispra gave some guidance throughout.

Project implementation

Since this is an IEE project, BEAMA interacted with the Intelligent Energy Agency (now part of the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation (EACI)), rather than the Commission. The contract negotiation stage was uneventful. In this case, there seemed to be little real negotiation or attempt made to reduce budget or modify the work programme to any significant degree. It cannot be assumed that this approach will be taken to all contract negotiation as it depends on the individual circumstances within each proposal. The Agency insisted on adding a requirement to translate report summaries into 8 languages. In BEAMA's experience, agency officials are helpful and constructive but are very busy, so it can be hard to get hold of them. Also, it was difficult to get a response to requests to make changes to the work programme after the project had started.

The consortium has worked together well. Different partners were made responsible for taking the lead on different work packages and this worked well, although in a few cases the coordinator had to step in and take over to get the work back on track. Project meetings were held twice a year, initially at the premises of one of the partners but now often in the margins of other events where smart metering can be promoted. In BEAMA's experience, the budget was barely adequate for these project meetings, which needed to be longer to develop the esprit de corps in the consortium and provide time for information exchange between the partners. BEAMA found that setting up a project intranet was very worthwhile.

Key benefits

For BEAMA, the main benefit was the output of the project, namely the establishment of the Smart Metering Alliance and the production of the Guide. Growth in the market for smart meters will open up new markets for their membership, as well as producing significant energy efficiency savings for the Utilities.

The experience of the project also gave BEAMA a better insight into the Brussels machinery and how directives etc. are developed. This has enabled them to make their input into policy debates in a more targeted manner.

As a manufacturers' association BEAMA does not get much opportunity to engage with academics and others; the ESMA project provided such an opportunity which was very useful.

Although BEAMA is not involved in any follow up projects, the experience of ESMA has not deterred it if a suitable project came along.

Advice for anyone submitting a proposal and delivering a project

- Try to get the right disciplines in the consortium from the outset.
- Ensure that everyone has a clear idea (the same!) of what you want to do.
- Start filling in the application forms at the earliest opportunity; if you are the coordinator you may need to help others fill them in.
- If possible, have the proposal written by a single author, rather than by committee.
- Expect the unexpected – the Commission may make requests you have not foreseen.
- Do not expect the Commission/ Agency official to be able to sort out your problems.

Key summary points

- It is vital to have a committed coordinator, and all partners working to an agreed common vision.
- Do not expect too much from the Commission or Agency official assigned to your project as they are very busy due to the large number of projects that they manage.

More information on the European Smart Meter Alliance can be found at <http://www.esma-home.eu>

This case study was produced in conjunction with BEAMA and focuses on their experience of preparing a proposal and participating in an IEE funded project. The views are those of the participant and not the Executive Agency for Competitiveness and Innovation nor the Energie Helpline UK. If you have queries on the IEE Programme please contact the Helpline.