

# Elia: high voltage relationship with Steria

Elia is a key player in the Belgian energy market. The organization manages the high tension network, used for the transportation of electricity from power providers to industry customers and electricity distributors. Steria develops and maintains different Elia's business IT systems.

Elia owns and manages the Belgian high tension network. The company holds the legal and natural monopoly in this field. Customers whom Elia transports high tension electricity for, are Belgium's 130 largest industrial companies and about 25 managers of electricity distribution networks. Elia is an independent organization, at the service of its stakeholders. Elia employs 1,250 people and has a revenue of about 750 million euro. "We are the operator of the high tension transporting system", explains Jan Gesquière, CFO at Elia. "The liberalisation of the energy market has increased the technical complexity to follow-up all energy flows." As it is impossible to store electricity, the overall management of the electricity flows is very complex, resulting in an equally complex IT environment that supports Elia's activities. Elia has an ICT department of 60 employees, working on an annual IT budget of 40 million. The organization designs its own IT strategy, but relies on several external parties for the developments. "This is the case especially for the energy focused applications."

## Deep business knowledge

As a partner for Elia, Steria's activities are mostly concentrated on development and maintenance. "Obviously, Steria's business knowledge and flexibility is an advantage for Elia. For example, when laws and regulations change, Steria needs to adapt the applications according to Elia's business specifications." The partnership between Elia and Steria has been evolving over the past seven years. Steria's long running expertise in the energy market provided the organization

with deep business knowledge to support the ever-changing demand for IT support. As the energy market is a rapidly changing environment, Elia frequently relies on Steria to adapt its IT applications to these evolving business needs in a precise and timely manner. "IT is very important for the management of an organization like ours", adds Jan Gesquière. "More and more, we work on a European level, in which IT is absolutely necessary to keep everything under control."

Steria is involved in the development and maintenance of IT applications in four functional domains. One of the most important applications for Elia's business manages maintenance works on the actual high tension network power lines and electricity pylons. The application allows balancing the dispatching of electricity transmission planning and the maintenance jobs. "Whenever we need to cut a line – for maintenance or other infrastructure works – it is very important we can plan this ahead. This way, we make sure we keep supplying the right volume of energy to our customers, using a different routing." Other applications Steria developed for Elia include a solution for volume prevision and one for balancing supply and demand on the network. "Because of the impossibility to store electricity, we need to predict supply and demand. This way we can provide our customers with the right energy capacity at the right time. Predicting supply and demand, and keeping the right balance between supply and demand on the network allows us to avoid both black-outs – when

supplies don't suffice – and overcapacity." Last but not least, Steria also developed an application that collects and combines pre-invoicing information from Elia's systems.



**Jan Gesquière**, CFO at Elia: "With the IT applications, Steria helps us run a business with a very complex supply and demand structure."