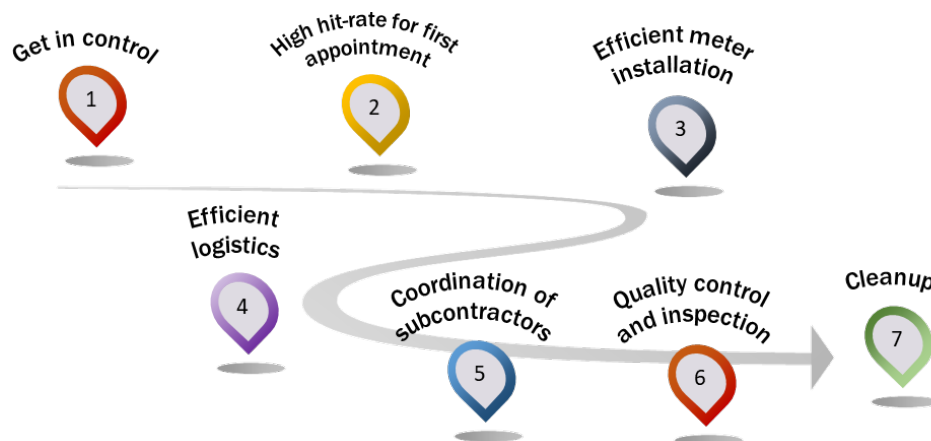




## Top 7 insights for a successful smart meter rollout project

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**With the use of the isMobile Smart Meter Rollout deployment tool, years of experience have provided insights on complex smart meter rollout projects in a large scale. There are several challenges, but if you are aware of them ahead you can handle them at an early stage and succeed with every project.**

isMobile has experience from both first and second wave implementations in several projects, where each project has built on previous experiences. These experiences have shaped a pre-defined process that aligns to the demands these types of complex projects face in different stages of a smart meter rollout project.

Listed here are the top seven insights for a successful smart meter rollout project:

### 1) Get in Control

With a massive volume of work assignments in a million-meter rollout project, the demands on planning and planners are high. Back-office teams are handling resources and dispatching work throughout the entire process in different geographical areas, with several teams and individuals.

In the early stages you need to get control of these main areas to assist the back-office with the right information at the right time in every step of the way during the project:

- ✓ Requirements for smooth creation of workorders and integration of business system and processes to the deployment tool.
- ✓ Ensure communication with all stakeholders during the smart meter rollout process.
- ✓ Area- and resource management to plan and dispatch the work to be done with optimization regarding resource planning, real drive times and fast optimization results.
- ✓ Monitoring and visualizing performance of work in real-time – statistics and KPI in every step of the way.
- ✓ Handling logistics, cleanup and quality control.

An advantage for back-office teams is to have access to:

- Scheduling based on maps, positioning and optimization.
- Automation and optimization due to real-time changes.
- Real-time monitoring, reports and KPI visibility.

Finally, choose key performance indexes (KPI's) in an early stage of the smart meter rollout project. This ensures the ability to control and adapt both process and way of working along the way.



## **2) High-hit rate for the first appointment**

A high-hit rate for the first appointment saves time and effort. A good way to achieve that is to inform and interact with the end-customer about the exchange in an early stage and adapt the best way to communicate for the specific project.

Some options to consider for how to interact with the end-customer are for example, using automatic emails, sms/text, letter generation and my pages linked to a customer portal. It can also prove to be quite significant for the end-customer to receive some information in advance and the possibility to receive reminder notifications before the exchange.

Detailed information about the exchange and benefits of a new smart meter along with allowing re-booking with new pre-scheduled and optimized timeslots, also builds trust and good conditions for a smooth exchange.

A Customer portal with an easy to access, clear, self-guided user interface simplifies interactions and provides a possibility to document specific information and requests regarding the time for the exchange. This will also help determine when the technician can have access to the meter.

Along with optimized planning of driving-routes for the most efficient navigation and the ability to communicate with customers, it's also good for the technician to have easy access to customer contact information to send a text message or make a call.

Easy access for the technician to the address and contact information of the customer helps to plan the best routes and provide the information needed to contact the customer in advance to notify them of their arrival or any changes to the planned installation. A detailed report can be sent immediately notifying the back-office should a technician not be able to perform the scheduled work for the reason stated in the report. The assignments not performed can be replanned directly or handled separately in the clean-up phase of the process.

### 3) Efficient Meter Installation

As soon as the technician has access to the meter, it is essential to maximize efficiency and reduce the time and effort spent on the installation. This can be achieved by ensuring they have that the right tools, solid support for when things do not go according to plan but most importantly, adequate field-office equipment.



The use of a smart phone application and sensors for managing and validating data inputs will assist in streamlining the process and minimize the time required.

With real-time access to detailed workorder information, customer contacts and user interface guide through the exchange process has also proven to be crucial in these exchanges.

The application should be easy-to-use and focus on the necessary functionality for quick data capturing. There are mobile device features that can facilitates work significantly, for example:

- Offline support for continuity without network coverage
- Media documentation, photo/video
- Use of bar code scanner, RFID to input information in reports
- Validation of input in prefilled Forms
- Communication control
- Local probing of readings and change of tariff using optical interface
- Use of GPS position
- Label printing
- Automatic integration with Logistics system

Measuring efficiency and result in real-time by status updates on workorder by workorder acceptance, arrival on-site, leaving site, workorder closed etc. along with operational reporting on activity, time, material, technical notations etc. enables back-office to predict and give the right support and conditions for upcoming exchanges.

#### **4) Efficient Logistics**

Ensure new meters are available when it is the right time to exchange current meters, while keeping track of goods from the production site, central storage, regional warehouse and during transportation to the final installation site.



It should be an effortless process to move items to where they are needed in order to minimize time spent on logistics. During transport it's good to be able to track the goods, both as singular articles and on pallets. This can be done by barcode scanning using smart phones/tablets combined with internal/external scanners. This helps to facilitate the move of several objects or pallets without spending excessive time scanning single articles.

Logistics in smart meter rollout projects includes the handling and processing of old exchanged meters, which must be removed, transported and recycled properly. This can easily be handled with the same technical solution to ensure stock control and follow-up reporting.

#### **5) Coordinate subcontractors**

A smart meter rollout project handles a lot of resources supplied by different subcontractors in different stages of the project. These needs to be handled and coordinated in a similar way in order to get in control and manage challenges arising during the project. Having control of the progress and quality of exchange by each subcontractor, allows the project manager to act early and have a good communication to solve issues as they arise.

The subcontractors are recommended to be handled as separate teams to operate simultaneously in a smooth way with all teams in the same deployment tool. There is also an option to engage subcontractors in the same team, which then demands parameters/rules and prioritization for how to dispatch workorders and separate them in follow-up reports. They can also have different calendars that can be used for balancing work.

#### **6) Quality control**

To ensure the exchange of meters is operated in the correct way and with continues improvement, quality control and inspection are recommended. It's essential to agree on and set goals for quality controls and parameters for selection with the sponsor of the project.

Inspections are recommended to be performed continuously both randomly and planned in different areas to ensure safety and meet set quality requirements.

The quality controls can be planned and executed in parallel with ongoing exchanges and on separate occasions. The controls can be executed by the technicians during the exchange or by dedicated inspectors. They can be performed and validated on site by using parameters for validation built-in a mobile device and manually tests.

The planning of quality control and inspection can use the same optimization that is used for planning meter exchanges to handle available resources in the most effective way.

To ensure customer satisfaction and gain important feedback to improve future communication and exchange processes, a customer satisfaction survey is recommended to be performed after the exchange.

## **7) Clean-up**

Clean-up can be initiated for a variety of reasons, e.g. quality controls and inspection performed on site, remote readings indicating an error, if the process and communication failed to grant access to the meter or if the supply of tools and meters fails.

To minimize the issues of clean-up and time spent on correction, there are some considerations to take in to account and put into focus:

- High hit-rate for first appointment.
- Streamlining the process of quality controls on site. To be able to handle any issue directly saves important time and effort.
- Checklist and technical-support for quality control and inspection with validation built in.
- Effective logistics
- Detailed report on cause and actions for correction to ensure future efficiency.

## **Read more**

If you would like to know more, please visit our website and read more about isMobile Smart Meter Rollout deployment, download our brochure and book a demo of isMobile Smart Meter Rollout deployment tool.

isMobile web: <https://www.ismobile.com/smart-meter-rollout>