



White paper

Optimising utility portfolio profitability and risk with data, AI, and partnerships

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Become a strategic partner that uses data, analytics, and generative AI (genAI) to deliver those desired outcomes at scale

The moment has arrived

For UK and EU industrial and commercial (I&C) suppliers, energy has moved from a back-office line item to a board-level priority. Data-driven and informed decision-makers are moving beyond point solutions to a platform mindset, recognising that change is occurring structurally, not just cyclically.

What's driving this change?

Elevated prices compared with pre-crisis norms. Increased regulatory scrutiny across the continent. And customers wanting outcomes they can measure, such as resilience, cost efficiency, and a better experience.

The game is afoot

Winners in this environment will recognise that the opportunity is not merely to sell power more cleverly but to become a strategic partner that uses data, analytics, and generative AI (genAI) to deliver those desired outcomes at scale. The shift is already under way, and those who move first will shape the market.



Markets are converging on data-led, multi-asset platforms rather than one-off projects. Differences in metering standards, incentive structures, and disclosure cadence remain, but these are execution details rather than barriers



Market transformation now in the UK and EU

Across Europe, clean-energy investment is accelerating. And with it, regulation that brings emissions and energy data into mainstream reporting. The [EU's REPowerEU](#) plan and the [UK's Net Zero Strategy](#) provide clear directional signals. Markets are converging on data-led, multi-asset platforms rather than one-off projects.

Energy transitions see biogas and biomethane gain ground in global energy consumption

According to IEA, in the power sector, renewables will "provide two-thirds of electricity supply worldwide by 2040 (up from one-quarter today). Of this, solar PV and wind power together provide 40%, with a further 25% from dispatchable renewables including hydro and bioenergy."

Differences in metering standards, incentive structures, and disclosure cadence remain, but these are execution details rather than barriers. What truly matters is that suppliers now operate within a system that rewards efficiency, transparency, and foresight.

Pressures mount

Persistent cost pressures have made energy risk a strategic concern for every business, from small enterprises to global manufacturers. The disclosure frameworks driving this shift – CSRD, EU ETS and CBAM on the continent, UK ETS and SECR domestically – are transforming emissions and consumption data into auditable financial information. Compliance is no longer an administrative exercise. It's a competitive differentiator. Additionally, corporate boards are being pressured to produce auditable reports that can withstand regulatory and investor scrutiny, driving demand for traceable, system-generated data rather than spreadsheet-led disclosures. Meanwhile, capital remains available but selective, favouring suppliers that offer standardised propositions, strong governance, and credible delivery partnerships.

Suppliers are also pursuing portfolio optimisation in addition to their decarbonisation efforts. Volatility, grid constraints, and capital discipline are pushing suppliers and customers alike to focus on value-stacking – flexibility, optimisation, and risk reduction – enabled by data and analytics as energy becomes a financial and risk asset as well as a sustainability lever.

Markers ahead

The outcome is a market that prioritises agility and insight. Energy suppliers capable of uniting operational data, regulatory acumen, and customer-centric platforms are emerging as transformation partners rather than commodity providers. Those that align data, analytics, and partnerships today will define the competitive landscape of tomorrow.



Recognising this nuance allows suppliers to segment by both customer size and operational profile. The key is to tailor value propositions that meet different risk, cost, and compliance thresholds

Segmentation and the data opportunity

Transition needs are not defined by size alone. Sector matters as much as scale. An energy-intensive manufacturing SME can look more like a large industrial than a small retailer. A professional-services enterprise may prioritise renewable procurement and automated reporting over on-site generation. Recognising this nuance allows suppliers to segment by both customer size and operational profile. The key is to tailor value propositions that meet different risk, cost, and compliance thresholds. Consider the following.

Large I&C portfolios tend to:

- Integrate platforms that optimise multiple sites.
- Manage corporate PPAs.
- Enable participation in flexibility markets.
- Automate disclosure.

SMEs, by contrast, prefer:

- Turnkey, capex-light bundles that provide predictable pricing
- Self-service tools.
- Compliance that “just works.”

The common denominator is data

A data flywheel underpins each model. By unifying smart-meter, IoT, and building-management data with market feeds, suppliers can forecast load, segment customers precisely, and recommend asset or contracting strategies with confidence. Each new participant strengthens the dataset, improving performance for all.

Don't forget genAI

GenAI amplifies this effect, accelerating tender responses, standardising compliance, guiding field engineers with real-time context, and generating concise decision briefs for executives. The value is pragmatic – faster cycles, better accuracy, and measurable gains in customer satisfaction – not hype.

Partnership allows suppliers to access specialist capabilities in analytics, technology, and compliance without delaying transformation



Partnership models and implementation realities

Regulatory pressure, decarbonisation timelines, and supply chain capability gaps are driving many suppliers to decide whether to build, buy, or partner to survive the shift. Suppliers and customers are favouring capex-light, platform-enabled models that demonstrate near-term returns and operational resilience, reinforcing the appeal of partnership-led and energy-as-a-service approaches.

In practice, the fastest and lowest-risk route to progress is often partner first, build where it differentiates.

Partnership advantages

Partnership allows suppliers to access specialist capabilities in analytics, technology, and compliance without delaying transformation. Common approaches include:

- Revenue-share or energy-as-a-service (EaaS) models that align incentives.
- Preferred-supplier or white-label agreements that preserve customer ownership
- Joint ventures for asset-heavy programmes requiring shared investment.

However, structure alone does not guarantee success. Effective governance, encompassing customer ownership, data and intellectual-property rights, revenue attribution, performance guarantees, and liability sharing, must be established from the outset. When these foundations are clear, partnership becomes a force multiplier rather than a constraint.

Challenges to overcome

Implementation challenges remain, especially given fragmented metering estates, uneven smart-meter roll-outs, and varying data-maturity levels across the market. Yet these obstacles are manageable. Other challenges include:

- **Grid constraint acknowledgment:** The UK/EU market often faces significant constraints due to Distribution System Operator (DSO) capacity. A purpose-built platform can help improve execution realism and market alignment.
- **Cybersecurity visibility:** Cyber-risk when integrating IoT and Building Management Systems (BMS) may be addressed by connecting them to Operational Technology (OT) for added trust, technical credibility, and executive reassurance.

A common data layer with robust governance and security allows suppliers to integrate diverse systems, optimise multiple assets, and make regulatory compliance a repeatable workflow instead of a quarterly scramble. Governance, often viewed as a constraint, is in fact the foundation that makes large-scale innovation repeatable and secure.

This is exactly where a partner like EXL can help translate strategy into scalable delivery.

By combining deep utilities expertise with advanced analytics and AI, EXL enables energy suppliers to unify operations, automate compliance, and accelerate decision-making across both SME and I&C portfolios

EXL's platform-led and project-ready stance

As the market pivots to data-led transformation, EXL brings a platform-led, project-ready approach to bear. By combining deep utilities expertise with advanced analytics and AI, EXL enables energy suppliers to unify operations, automate compliance, and accelerate decision-making across both SME and I&C portfolios.

From the ground up

The company's data-engineering capabilities integrate IoT, building energy management, and market data into a single analytics-ready environment. From that foundation, analytics and genAI models forecast demand, manage emissions, generate proposals and disclosures, and strengthen customer engagement through data-driven recommendations. A seamless digital experience layer turns those insights into action via dashboards, alerts, and audit-ready trails that enhance transparency and build trust.

Sustaining momentum

To ensure sustained adoption, EXL's change management frameworks embed these new capabilities into day-to-day operations, ensuring technology delivers measurable business value rather than sitting idle. These efforts converge in clear outcomes:

- **Resilience** improves through predictive maintenance, portfolio optimisation, and readiness for flexibility across markets.
- **Reduced unit cost-to-serve** through platform-driven operations, faster tenders, and capital-light financing models.
- **Customer retention** increases as transparency and tailored service strengthen relationships across both SME and large-enterprise segments.

The way forward

EXL provides a defined on-ramp encompassing a six- to eight-week diagnostic and pilot programme that establishes data foundations, tests a priority use case (such as automated compliance for a multi-site SME portfolio or flexibility value-stacking for a large industrial customer), and defines a clear path to scale. The approach minimises risk, proves immediate value, and sets the stage for broader digital transformation.





What to do next

To capture this emerging opportunity, energy suppliers should begin by clarifying their segmentation thesis, combining size and sector analysis to tailor propositions to both economics and regulation.

Establishing a common data layer comes next. This entails creating a secure foundation on which analytics and automation can operate. From there, governance must be codified, aligning risk appetite with customer-ownership goals.

GenAI should also be deployed where it compounds value – streamlining proposals, simplifying disclosures, and improving field performance – all within enterprise-grade guardrails that ensure data integrity and compliance.

Finally, suppliers must pilot, measure, and scale using metrics that matter, such as:



Cost
avoided



Emissions verified
through audit trails



Resilience
gains



Time-to-
proposal



Win
rate



Retention
improvement

The bottom line

Progress in this market will be defined not by intent but by execution. Those who integrate data, AI, and partnership into their core strategy will not only meet the demands of today's energy transition but set the pace for the decade ahead.

To learn more, download our detailed whitepaper or visit us at EXLservice.com



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