

# Capacity Portal: simplifying the work of our customers

The customers, for whom we transport their gas on our network, represent a valuable stakeholder for us. Listening and dialogue has enabled us to improve our gas transmission service and make it ever more flexible. We made a further step forward in this direction in 2009, by making a new online service available to our customers: the Capacity Portal, which was developed to respond to the changing scenario and to the emergence of new needs.

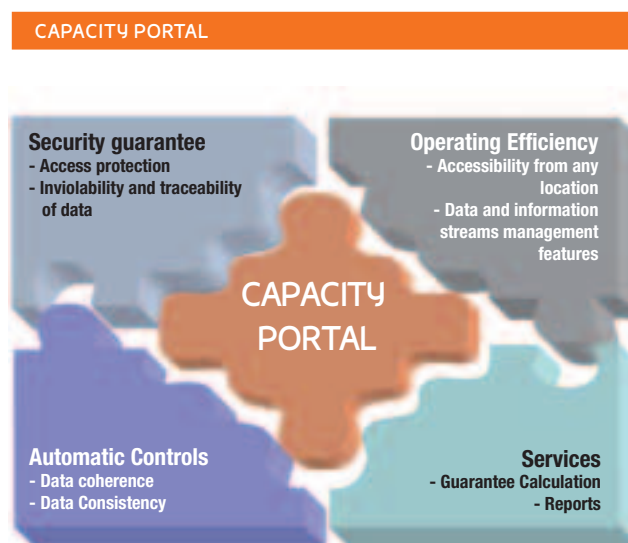
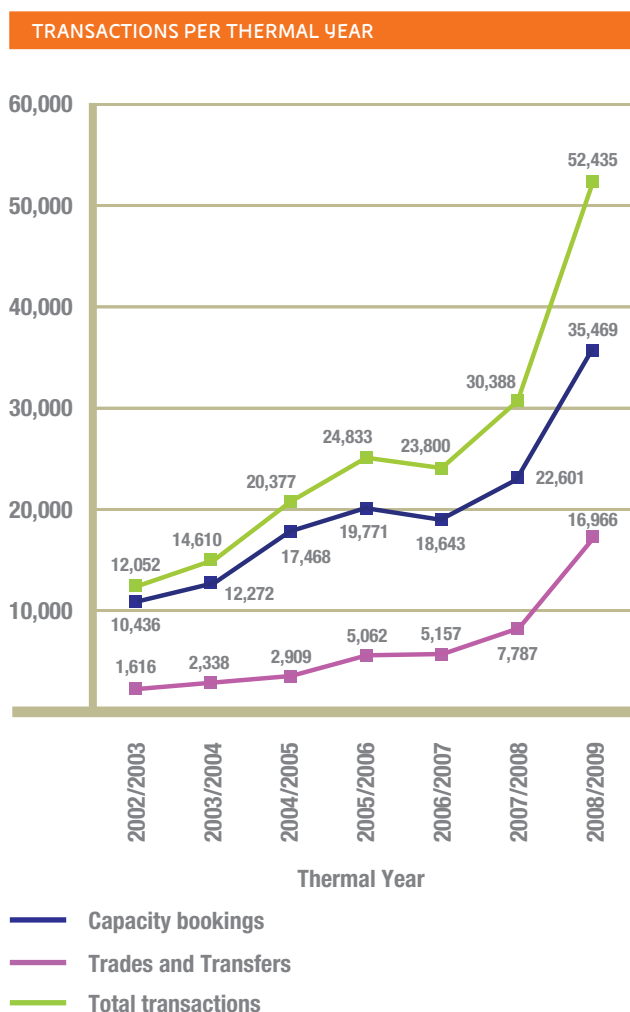
In recent years there has been a constant increase in the number of customers of the transmission service: from 30 in 2002 to 70 in 2009. The introduction of new contractual processes with different time periods has resulted in an increase in the number of requests for access to the network, with significant growth both in demand for transmission capacity (bookings carried out by Snam Rete Gas for its customers) and in the number of transmission capacity exchanges (trades and transfers between the customers themselves). These bookings and exchanges involved movements of around € 1.423 million in the 2008-2009 thermal year.

To respond to the emergence of new requirements, we have set up a computer system called "Capacity Portal", which is used on on-line web platforms. Our objective was straightforward: simplify and speed up the required activities by our customers to reserve transmission capacity, and also manage the exchange of communications between the company and the customers with tools having full legal and contractual force.

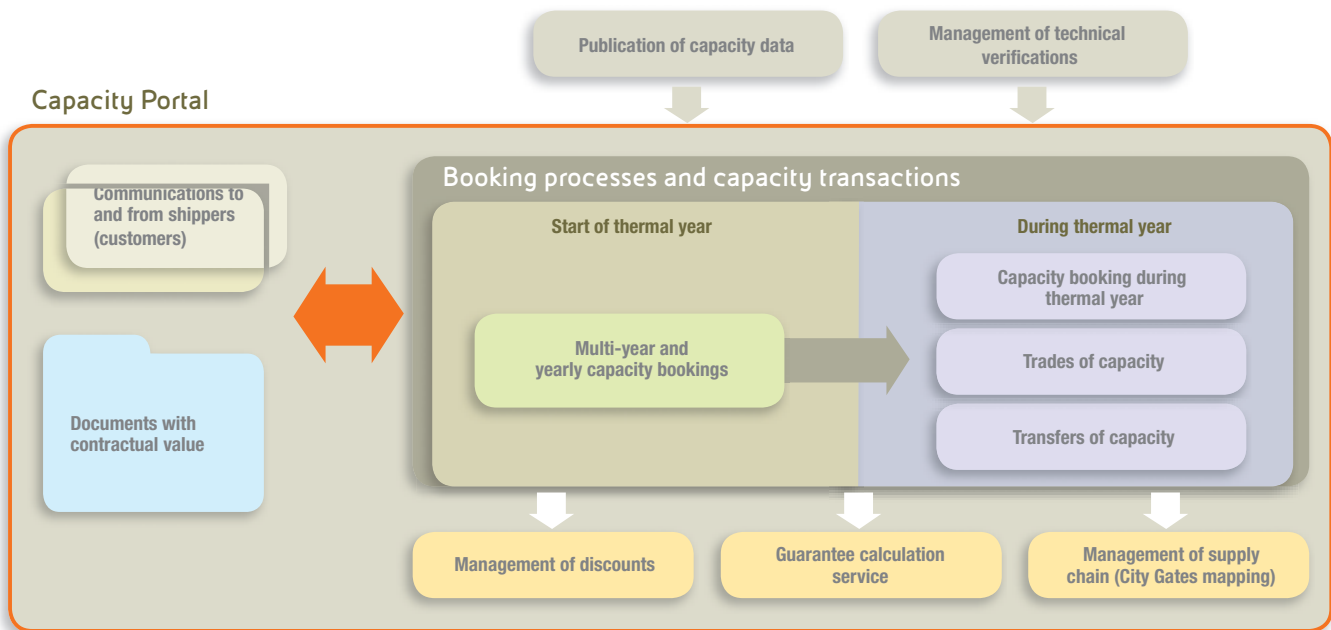
Our project was not developed in a sterile laboratory, but involved our customers right from the outset. During the design phase we considered their requirements, carefully analysing all requests, reports and suggestions that were sent in to us by the customers at this point. We organised meetings with them to discuss the functions and features of the Capacity Portal and to incorporate suggestions for improvement. The high level of participation and the pro-active contribution of our customers demonstrated the level of interest, not just in the subject matter, but also in the method of approach.

In less than a year, we succeeded in implementing the web application and, from July onwards, we gradually rolled out the online functionality for the annual and multi-year booking processes that take place in August, with the ability to display, via a series of reports, the state of progress of the activities carried out through the Portal.

From September to December, the Capacity Portal was incrementally implemented so as to be able to manage all of the various different and complex types of capacity bookings and capacity transactions.



CAPACITY PORTAL



To guarantee the security and confidentiality of the information handled, access to the Capacity Portal by the customers is achieved by means of assigning a username and accesses protected by password, while operators authorised to work on behalf of the various companies are given access profiles that are differentiated according with their necessities.

The launch of the Capacity Portal has resulted in several advantages, both for the company and for the customers, including:

- improvement of the communication activities and verification of the data exchanged, with the guarantee that the information streams and the services are consistent with the Network Code and with reference regulations;
- high degree of automation in managing the processes;
- elimination, via the introduction of automatic checks at data entry time, of the risk of material errors and errors in the information required to request the transmission service, owing to the incompleteness, incoherence and/or inconsistency of the requests coming from the customers;

- improvement of customers' operations, since the system allows access from any computer station with an internet connection 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, independently of the computer's location.

The Capacity Portal also allows customers to use additional online services like managing discounts, mapping the commercial supply chain, calculating bank guarantees, and ancillary reports.

The importance of implementing the Capacity Portal was further demonstrated by the exceptional increase in capacity bookings and transactions conducted in the initial months of the 2009-2010 thermal year.

The customers, in this initial period of use, have put forward requests for possible improvements to be made to the system. These requests have been evaluated, categorised and prioritised and starting in 2010 work will begin on implementing those considered to be most significant.