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Autodesk MapGuide®  
AutoCAD®  
Oracle Spatial



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GIS Manager,  
Romande Energie

# Electric Utility Integrates Critical Network Data and Saves Time and Money

Romande Energie unifies spatial information with Autodesk Topobase and Oracle to boost operational efficiency

## Project Summary

Romande Energie delivers electricity throughout the Canton Vaud and a part of the Canton Valais in Switzerland. One of the largest energy providers in Switzerland, Romande Energie serves more than 180,000 customers in 322 communities. As the Swiss energy market moved towards deregulation, Romande Energie recognized that it needed to increase operational efficiency in order to thrive. The company decided to implement an integrated GIS (geographic information system) based on Autodesk Topobase technology to help it achieve its operational goals. Since deploying an integrated GIS, Romande Energie has been able to:

- Deliver real-time spatial data to almost five times more employees
- Integrate GIS data with customer information stored within SAP
- Modify and maintain spatial data cost-effectively using in-house resources
- Save time and money by eliminating the need to maintain multiple sets of data
- Address customer needs and questions more quickly

## The Challenge

Romande Energie was formed by the merger of two smaller, regional power providers in 1994. Although the company continued to maintain its spatial information in two separate systems, Romande Energie decided to standardize its design system on AutoCAD-based applications, such as Autodesk Map 3D. Often, asset data needed to reside in both the design and GIS systems. Romande Energie not only had to maintain duplicate sets of data for the same asset, but also because the file types were incompatible, staffers were forced to reconcile the data manually—a tedious and time-consuming process.

With deregulation coming to the Swiss energy market, Romande Energie decided that it could no longer waste valuable time maintaining duplicate data sets. The company also realized that by moving to a unified system it would be able to streamline the flow of asset data beyond the GIS and design departments. “After the merger, the teams continued working with the systems they were used to,” says Stephane Laurion, head of Romande Energie’s land registry office and GIS manager. Eventually, Stephane Laurion explains, “We put out an invitation to tender for the construction of a unified system in 2002.”



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### The Solution

#### Leveraging Familiar Technology

Romande Energie reviewed proposals from eight technology providers and chose Autodesk Topobase, which is based on the familiar AutoCAD interface, to manage and integrate the company's design and GIS data. The company then decided to store its data within Oracle Spatial. “We chose Topobase because its electricity application is well adapted,” says Laurion. “The fact that its solution relies on Autodesk GIS products is also useful for us, as there is already an AutoCAD culture in-house.”

Because of the challenges presented by Romande Energie's old processes, the company was eager to implement Autodesk Topobase quickly. After thoroughly testing the relevant translation tables, the team began the automated data transfer process. According to Stephane Laurion, Romande Energie accomplished the translation process without any loss of data or interruption in the company's workflow. He says, “Half of all projects in informatics are never successful and 40 percent are realized too late. I'm very happy that our project belongs to the ten percent of successful projects. This is for me, my colleagues, and for the management an absolute positive achievement.”

#### Full System Integration

Romande Energie's unified GIS went live in September of 2003. Because Autodesk and Oracle solutions are all based on open standards, Romande Energie easily integrated the unified GIS with other critical enterprise systems, including the company's SAP customer database. With a single GIS database maintaining network information, Romande Energie's problems with data duplication and incompatible files—and the corresponding workflow redundancies—have been eliminated.

Now Romande Energie is able to design, plan, and execute complete asset management projects more quickly. For instance, when the company needs to lay a new cable, the electricity

department's engineers are able to reconcile their designs with current geospatial data very quickly using Autodesk Topobase. The company's engineers no longer waste time working with multiple sets of asset data. “We had two distinct databases for low and medium voltage, which is no longer the case today,” recalls Laurion.

Romande Energie has also extended the value of its integrated data by making the data available over the Internet with Autodesk's web mapping solutions. Romande Energie employees—even those with no design or GIS expertise—use Autodesk MapGuide to request maps that instantly display real-time spatial data and tabular information, such as customer records. “With the old system, we had to program all requests,” explains Stephane Laurion. “Now, we can prepare a score of common requests and users are able to execute those requests via the Autodesk MapGuide interface.”

### The Result

#### Delivering Better Service and Cutting Costs

Since turning to Autodesk Topobase, Oracle, and Autodesk MapGuide, Romande Energie has increased the number of employees with access to asset data from only 32 to more than 150. Those employees are using up-to-date, location-based information to help the company improve operational efficiencies and meet the competitive challenges presented by deregulation. For instance, customer service agents are able to answer customer inquiries faster and with more detail, and engineers now devote more of their time and expertise to maintaining and enhancing network infrastructure. As a result, the company has become more responsive to customer needs while saving time and money.

#### For More Information

To learn more about how Autodesk Topobase and other Autodesk applications are helping utilities save time and money, visit us on the web at [www.autodesk.com/infrastructure](http://www.autodesk.com/infrastructure).