

Tariff Tribe

Bundled Business Led Tariffs

A report written by Future Energy Associates Limited for the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero, as part of funded Non-Domestic Smarter Tariff Comparisons Innovation Programme.

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We are especially grateful to the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero for their support and guidance. We would also like to thank our collaborators, partners, and the entire Tariff Tribe team whose hard work, creativity, and dedication made this phase of the project possible.

Your contributions have been fundamental in helping us build a fairer, more transparent energy market for small businesses. Thank you.



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Executive Summary

[Tariff Tribe](#) was developed as part of the [Non-Domestic Smarter Tariff Comparisons Innovation Programme](#) funded under the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero's (DESNZ) Flexibility Innovation Programme, within the broader [Net Zero Innovation Portfolio](#). Delivered by Future Energy Associates, a company that builds data and software products for the renewable transition, the programme aimed to accelerate the development of innovative tools and approaches to enable smarter, fairer energy procurement for smaller non-domestic consumers in scope of the smart meter mandate. The programme's key objective was to incentivise the development of innovative solutions that use customer data (including half-hourly consumption data) to provide tailored advice, recommendations, and comparisons of energy tariffs—whether standard, time-of-use (ToU), or bundled with flexibility technologies or services. The scope of the project focused on microbusinesses to Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs). This included a diverse set of users from sectors such as hospitality, retail, office-based businesses, manufacturing, and third-sector organisations.

Tariff Tribe, a smarter tariff platform, was developed with the goal of creating a price signal for renewables in the small business energy market. The platform aims to enable SMEs to access fairer, more transparent energy deals while rewarding consumption patterns that align with renewable generation. The motivation for Tariff Tribe originated from TariffScanner, an FEA owned data product that provides tariff data to various market participants, including suppliers, brokers, and industry analysts. While analysing power prices for small businesses, we identified a significant disparity between the prices SMEs pay for energy and the day-ahead wholesale market prices. This highlighted potential inefficiencies in how small businesses procure energy, particularly in accessing cost-reflective and time-dependent pricing structures.

In phases 2 and 3 of the programme (Feb 2024 - Mar 2025) an Alpha and Beta version of Tariff Tribe was developed and launched. This included smart meter data integration (SMETs and AMR) with consumer consent, supplier marketplace enhancements, and advanced tariff comparison functionalities. By end of the programme, consumers could securely sign-up to Tariff Tribe, add their meters, see insights into their consumption usage and potential cost savings (ToU compared to constant rate tariff), and be put into a bundle. Participating suppliers were able to bid on bundles (at scheduled auctions), following which, consumers could be recommended a new energy contract which they could choose to accept and switch to.

Extensive market engagement activity took place with SMEs, suppliers, and regulatory bodies e.g. OFGEM and RECCo, strengthening the ecosystem for future scalability. By the end of the project, the platform had been fully developed, launched, and demonstrated, with several small-scale live auctions successfully conducted. A number of SMEs completed the full process and secured new energy contracts (with constant rate tariffs), achieving tangible cost savings. Throughout the project Tariff Tribe was able to achieve over £20,000 aggregated annual savings for businesses when compared to their previous energy bill. The platform achieved Technology Readiness Level 9 (System proven and ready for full commercial deployment). Future work includes running the first ToU tariff auction.

Platform overview

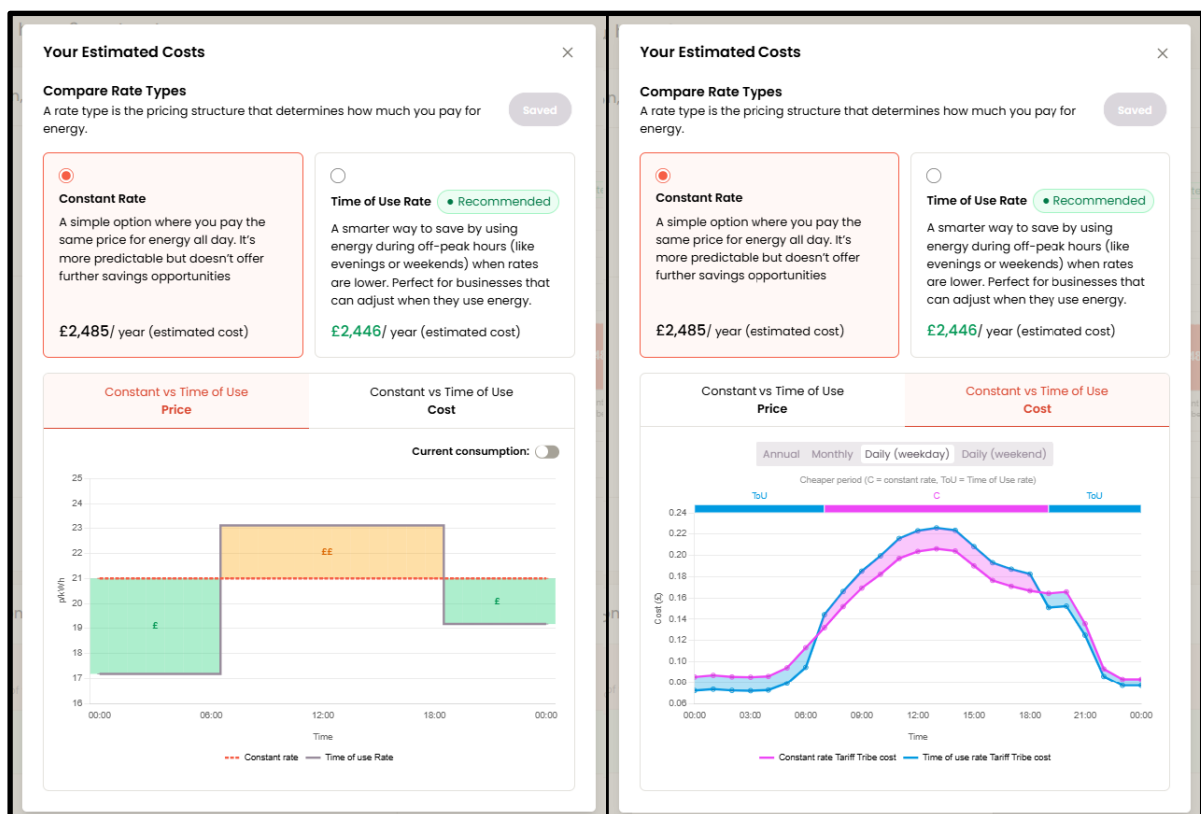
[Tariff Tribe](#) is a marketplace where, using their smart meter data, small businesses can secure energy deals and energy suppliers can acquire customers through a competitive auction process. The platform groups businesses based on their actual energy consumption, forming bundles that align with specific demand profiles. These bundles are then presented in an auction, where energy suppliers bid competitively to serve the aggregated demand. This approach ensures that SMEs benefit from tariffs matched to their consumption patterns while also securing better rates through supplier competition. The bundling approach provides an opportunity for suppliers to provide bespoke quotes that aim to provide better prices for consumers.

SME Onboarding and Tariff Comparison

The onboarding process allows SMEs with smart meters to:

- Register their business with Tariff Tribe and consent for Tariff Tribe to securely retrieve their half-hourly consumption data on their behalf.
- Compare tariff structures (Constant-rate/ToU) to assess potential cost savings.
- Receive tariff recommendations based on their actual energy usage patterns.

Figure 1. Comparison of estimated electricity costs under constant rate and ToU Tariffs



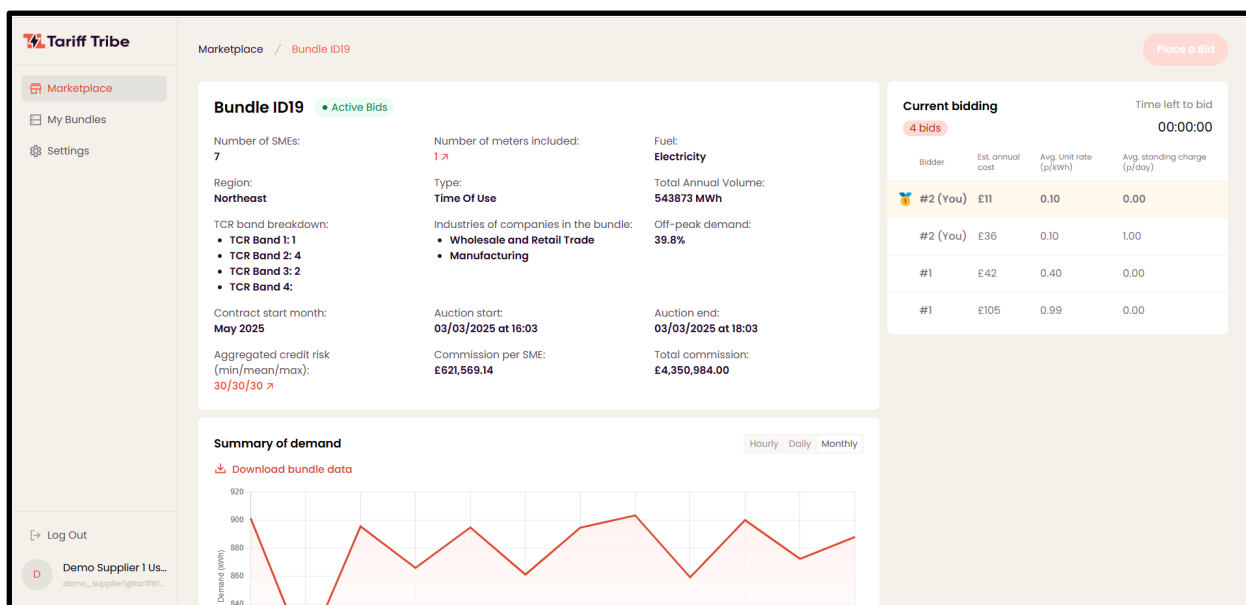
Notes: Screenshot of the Tariff Tribe platform's user interface showing a cost comparison for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) between a Constant Rate tariff and a Time of Use (ToU) Rate tariff.

Supplier marketplace and auctions

The supplier marketplace enables energy suppliers to bid on bundled SME demand, promoting competitive pricing. Auctions are structured to:

- Ensure optimal pricing for SMEs through supplier competition.
- Encourage the adoption of ToU tariffs by demonstrating cost savings.
- Provide suppliers with aggregated, anonymised consumption data to facilitate accurate pricing strategies.

Figure 2. Example of Tariff Tribe supplier auction interface for bundled SME demand



Notes: Screenshot of the Tariff Tribe platform's auction interface displaying an active supplier bidding process for a bundle of SME electricity demand.

Market engagement

Direct engagement with SMEs

Tariff Tribe engaged with over 1,000 SMEs through a combination of direct outreach, industry events, and workshops. These engagements aimed to educate SMEs on tariff options, understand their pain points in the energy market, and facilitate their onboarding onto the platform.

Methods of engagement included:

- Direct outreach via door-to-door visits and cold messaging.
- Participation in over 36 industry and SME networking events.
- Workshops and webinars focused on energy savings and tariff comparisons.
- Indirect engagement through energy brokers.

Key challenges identified among SMEs included:

- Lack of awareness of alternative tariff options, particularly Time-of-Use (ToU) tariffs.
- Difficulties in comparing tariffs, often due to complex contract structures and opaque pricing.
- Concerns about switching suppliers, particularly around contract termination fees and potential disruptions.

Challenges in engaging SMEs with the platform included:

- Scepticism towards energy switching platforms and energy brokers.
- Difficulty in obtaining necessary documentation, such as recent energy bills required for onboarding.
- Limited decision-making capacity amongst staff engaged, with many SMEs deferring energy procurement decisions to accountants or financial advisors.

Moving forward, engagement strategies will focus on increasing trust through case studies, streamlining the onboarding process, and providing guidance on the benefits of ToU tariffs.

Engagement with energy suppliers

Tariff Tribe engaged with 20+ energy suppliers in the non-domestic market, with nine suppliers formally signing Third-Party Intermediary (TPI) agreements to participate in the platform. Of these, six suppliers showed willingness to provide bespoke pricing for SME demand bundles by participating in the live bidding auction process. Supplier engagement has revealed significant differences in operational capabilities and priorities, with some suppliers focusing on

automation and digital processes, while others maintain traditional pricing and risk assessment methods.

Key reported pain points for suppliers in relation to ToU tariffs included administrative complexities in switching SMEs to ToU tariffs, a lack of systems integration between their pricing models and real-time smart meter data, and the challenge of adapting existing billing systems to handle half-hourly settlements. Some suppliers are highly digital and can price dynamically, while others rely on manual price books and rigid contract structures. Supplier hesitancy around offering dynamic ToU tariffs remains a challenge due to the additional operational complexity involved in implementation including pricing complexity, billing system limitations and the ability to market those tariffs to businesses.

Indirect engagement with SMEs through brokers and industry bodies

Energy brokers / TPIs play a key role in SME energy procurement, often acting as intermediaries between businesses and suppliers. Brokers typically operate on commission-based models and use proprietary software platforms. The innovation of the Tariff Tribe platform is that it securely integrates smart meter data, offers core functionality for constant rate tariffs and ability to include ToU tariffs, and provides transparency of broker fees. Brokers have shown interest in integrating Tariff Tribe's platform to enhance automation and improve tariff selection, but adoption depends on reducing manual administrative tasks.

Industry bodies, including RECCo and Citizens Advice, advocate for increased transparency and fairness in SME energy procurement, including around practices and transparency of commission structures. These organisations seek reforms to improve market regulation, enforce clearer contract terms, and provide SMEs with greater visibility into tariff options. By continuing collaboration with these bodies, Tariff Tribe aims to align its platform with ongoing policy initiatives to drive better outcomes for SMEs.

Commercial potential and future development

Cost and benefits analysis

Tariff Tribe demonstrated that significant savings are possible for SMEs by determining the best tariff structure based on actual consumption data rather than simply finding the lowest rate within an existing tariff structure. Initial results indicated that SMEs using Tariff Tribe to get a new contract achieved total aggregated annual savings of over £20,000 (£20,980) when compared to their previous contracts. Our findings suggest that optimising tariff structure is more beneficial than just comparing fixed-rate tariffs across suppliers, as it allows SMEs to align their energy consumption with lower-cost periods.

Additionally, suppliers indicated that they can offer lower pricing through volume aggregation and the inclusion of smart-metered customers, who generally have lower operating costs. This means SMEs benefit not only from a more suitable tariff structure but also from preferential pricing not generally available to smaller customers. These combined factors highlight the cost-effectiveness for SMEs using Tariff Tribe compared to traditional broker-led procurement.

Future roadmap for Tariff Tribe

Commercial development

Tariff Tribe aims to expand across the broker market while simultaneously growing through direct SME engagement. By integrating with brokers, the platform can extend its reach and improve transparency in the brokerage process. Additionally, we intend to develop functionality to support half-hourly metered sites, allowing businesses with more complex energy needs to benefit from more accurate tariff structures.

Technical development

Our focus is on improving operational capabilities by streamlining contracting processes to enhance efficiency. We plan to enable half-hourly metered sites (i.e. profile class 0) to be included in our auctions, ensuring that businesses with more granular energy data can access competitive pricing. Furthermore, we will work with suppliers to identify and address barriers to ToU tariff adoption, developing solutions that facilitate the transition for suppliers without existing processes to support these tariffs.

Contact Information

For further details on the programme, or to collaborate with Tariff Tribe, please reach out:

- **Industry enquiries:** clem@tarifftribe.co.uk

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