

Douala, 26 October 2023

## Prepaid meter fraud: what you need to know.

In its Electricity Newsletter for the second quarter of 2023, Eneo reported on a follow-up meeting on anti-fraud operations involving ARSEL (the regulator), consumer associations, and Eneo.

The new types of fraud identified and taken into account involve prepaid meters to a much greater extent. Fraud reports on this type of meter are growing exceptionally fast. In the first half of 2023, **62%** of fraud cases detected in Douala were on prepaid meters, compared with **38%** on standard postpaid meters. Unscrupulous customers have used a variety of techniques to prevent these meters from recording consumption. These include "*shunting*", "*direct connection*", "*faulty relays*", "*modifying or adding components that interfere with the proper recording of power consumption on the meter's measuring circuit*", "*installing a dummy neutral*", etc.

The three parties meeting in Kribi reaffirmed that the fight against fraud is a necessity and that it must be conducted with the utmost respect for the rules and the dignity of customers. Eneo reassured them that any suspicion of malpractice on the part of its employees during installation checks would be treated with the utmost seriousness and that those concerned would be sanctioned if the investigations confirmed the allegations", according to the Newsletter.

In fact, customers with prepaid meters may receive adjustment bills under the following conditions:

- 1. Converting illegal consumers to customers:** Customers found connected directly to the Eneo network without a meter are normally connected to the network with a prepaid meter, without having to pay the connection fees in advance. Their regularisation bill in the system will take into account the connection costs (*meter KIT, cables, and other accessories*) and a lump sum for energy consumed before conversion to a normal customer.
- 2. Normal customers with a prepaid connection found in an irregular situation.** These irregularities are detected during unannounced inspections of installations. **62%** of customers found committing fraud in Douala and Yaoundé during the first half of 2023 had connections with prepaid meters. Unscrupulous customers have used a variety of techniques to prevent these meters from recording consumption normally. These include "*shunting*", "*direct connection*", "*faulty relays*", "*modifying or adding components that interfere with the proper recording of power consumption on the meter measuring circuit*", "*installing a dummy neutral*", etc.
- 3. Customer classified in a category other than their own.** Professional customers subscribed as a household customer, ordinary customers subscribed as Eneo employees. Eneo employees benefit from a free quota, beyond which the KWH only costs them CFA 5 francs.



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## ANNOUNCEMENT

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It should also be noted that in prepaid mode, Eneo does not charge subscription fees - also known as **Consumption Deposit (ASC)** - if by any chance a prepaid customer is charged ASC by mistake, they are urged to complain to their agency. The agency will not hesitate to cancel the bill.

Eneo is open to requests from any customer who has doubts about a bill they received. All complaints are examined, if necessary by means of a second opinion or videos that the control teams are required to provide. If the customer's allegations prove to be well-founded, their rights are restored. If the contrary is true, the customer is asked to pay the adjustment bill. Customers have the right to take their case to the regulator if they are not satisfied with Eneo's handling of their complaint.

Eneo Communication