

# FOST PLUS



**”THE COGNOS SOLUTION HELPS US TO TURN COLLECTED PACKAGING INTO A VALUABLE SECONDARY RAW MATERIAL AT MINIMAL COST COMPARED TO OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES.”**

**– KURT TIERENS, ICT MANAGER, FOST PLUS**

The creation of FostPlus in 1994 was a direct answer to European Directive 94/62/EC on packaging and packaging waste. In 1996 the Flemish, Walloon and Brussels regions signed an Interregional Cooperation Agreement to implement the European Directive into national law. An Interregional Packaging Commission was set up to deal with administrative and supervisory tasks, and to formulate opinions.

FOST Plus is the only body accredited by the Interregional Packaging Commission in the field of household packaging waste. Its members represent producers and importers of packaging, packaged products and packaging materials, distribution companies, and trade federations. The creation of FOST Plus resulted from a proactive approach by the private sector to bring a sustainable solution to household packaging waste management, in cooperation with all the players involved in the system (industry, consumers, municipalities, intermunicipal authorities, recyclers, etc.).

By the end of 2003, 6,244 companies had become FOST Plus members, representing over 93% of the household packaging sold on the Belgian market.

## **CHALLENGES FACED**

- Fulfill information obligations to the Interregional Packaging Commission, including yearly reporting
- Cope with growing data streams and historical data repositories as the organization grows older
- Eliminate time-consuming ad hoc reporting solutions producing varying quality reporting at irregular intervals.

The take-back obligation imposed on FOST Plus encompasses an information obligation to the Interregional Packaging Commission, including yearly reporting. To fulfill this obligation, FOST Plus has to process its members' declarations of the product and packaging quantities they place on the market. Downstream, the organization also has to control all collection and sorting activities, in three waste segments: glass, paper, and cardboard, plus the PMD category (Plastic bottles and flasks, Metal packaging, and Drink cartons). It needs to produce comprehensive and consistent data as a basis for its internal and external reporting, including towards municipalities and intermunicipal companies from the three Regions. “The older the organization grew, the more obvious it became that our ad hoc solutions (such as SQL queries by key users or the IT department, or exporting data to Excel files) no longer met our standards,” said Kurt Tierens, ICT Manager, FOST Plus.

“Data volumes grew year by year and new needs arose, like comparing data between different years, performing more detailed analyses or drilling down to the root causes of certain phenomena.”

In 2001, the FOST Plus management decided to create a Business Intelligence environment including a data warehouse, an ETL solution (for extraction, transformation and loading of data into the data warehouse) and operational & managed reporting and multidimensional analysis.

### STRATEGY FOLLOWED

In 2002, FOST Plus began selecting a provider for its Business Intelligence needs in the upstream direction, i.e. to its external controlling bodies. The existing hardware and software environments had to be respected.

“With the help of our ICT partner we went into great detail analyzing all the functional facilities of the solutions offered by five different vendors,” Kurt Tierens recalled. “We looked at extraction, transformation and loading capacities, the data storage environment (including multi-dimensional functionalities), access control and security management, and ease of access to reports and inquiries via a Web browser.” Cost of ownership, performance, and management were also essential criteria.

Cognos was chosen because of the all-round nature of its solution, the excellent ETL capacities, including on a Unix platform, the outstanding metadata management, the forthcoming centralized security provisions, the user-friendly end-user functionality of both client/server and Web-based nature and the high level of integration.

For its downstream information provision needs (i.e. to its external waste collecting and recycling partners), FOST Plus chose the Cognos solution for ETL, reporting, analysis, and publishing of standard reports. Some 200 external partners can consult daily updated reports via the Internet. An external database is used via an ASP model, hosted by an independent provider.

### BENEFITS REALIZED

- Changes can be implemented easily and fast to answer flexibly the varying needs of external partners
- Powerful, yet secure environment (security is important for FOST Plus due to the confidential nature of the information it gathers)
- Mix of client-server (key users and developers) with thin client model (internal and external end-users).

FOST Plus chose to implement all aspects of its business into the Cognos environment. “We managed to build a powerful information provision and management solution, with fast and easy drill-down possibilities”, said Kurt Tierens.

The Cognos solution continues to deliver fast and easy, yet highly secure access to reports, notwithstanding the huge data volumes filling up the data warehouse. “To give an idea: we receive around 7,500 declarations a year from our members. Each declaration can contain from just a few to up to 20,000 product descriptions, subdivided into many basic materials...,” said Kurt Tierens. “This successful implementation proves that Business Intelligence also offers huge benefits to smaller organizations like FOST Plus, which has only some 60 employees.”

### TECHNICAL ENVIRONMENT

- HP 9000 Unix server
- Oracle RDBMS

### COGNOS SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED

- Extraction, Transformation and Loading
- Operational and Managed Reporting
- Multidimensional Analysis

For any further information, please visit [www.fostplus.be](http://www.fostplus.be) or contact Cognos at +32 (0)2 712 10 42 or at [infobelux@cognos.com](mailto:infobelux@cognos.com).



[WWW.COGNOS.BE](http://WWW.COGNOS.BE)  
[WWW.COGNOS.LU](http://WWW.COGNOS.LU)

Cognos, and the Cognos logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Cognos Incorporated in the United States and/or other countries. All other names are trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective companies.