

# BELGIAN DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, FOOD CHAIN SAFETY, AND ENVIRONMENT



**“BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE CONSIDERABLY ENHANCED OVERALL TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGHOUT OUR DEPARTMENT, ALLOWING US TO STAY WITHIN VERY NARROW BUDGET MARGINS AND TO SPEND THE TAXPAYER’S MONEY MORE WISELY.”**

–GEORGES LEENEN, DIRECTOR OF MANAGEMENT, BUDGET & MANAGEMENT CONTROL – LOGISTICS, FOD VVVL

The creation of the FOD VVVL (Federal Government Department of Public Health, Food Chain Safety and Environment) in 2002 marked the culmination of ten years of successive far-reaching reforms of the Belgian civil services. This department is charged with drafting and applying policies that guarantee and improve the quality of life in general, of food, and of the environment.

## CHALLENGES FACED

- Visibility into over- or under-spending of budgets.
- Insight into budget allocations, expenditures, and payment terms.
- Accountability for and reduction of processing and cycle times.
- Rapid detection of deviations from key performance Indicators.
- Budgetary transparency.

In 1995 two large federal ministries – Public Health and Social Affairs – were merged into a “super-ministry”, only to be split up again into several Federal Government Departments in 2002. “On the whole, even these fundamental changes did not raise too many organizational problems for our service, since both ministries used the same financial system”, observes Georges Leenen, Director of Management, Budget & Management Control – Logistics at FOD VVVL.

Since 1989 extensive business re-engineering efforts had been undertaken to improve the quality of inputs and outputs and reduce cycle time, but the creation of the Federal Government Department in 2002, with the

appointment of a new Board of Directors, offered the perfect opportunity to modernize the Budget & Management Control Service. Out of ten directors, eight were recruited from the private sector. The era of business intelligence could begin.

## STRATEGY FOLLOWED

In consultation with Ardati, its long-time management consultant and software integrator, the Federal Government Department chose Cognos solutions for reporting, analysis, and performance management. Cognos was selected for its user-friendly interface, the clarity of its reports, the high number of visualization possibilities and features, and its excellent drill-down capabilities. “We were well aware that we could only succeed if the introduction of business intelligence was matched with a number of organizational measures throughout the department. We already had the full support of the Board of Directors, but we had to secure commitment on all other levels”, recalls Georges Leenen. The introduction of business intelligence was also supported by a service level agreement signed by almost all the parties involved. The role of the “budget owners” was clarified and budget and management control correspondents now meet monthly to identify areas where further quality and cycle time improvements can be made. Targets and bottlenecks are discussed during monthly presentations to the Board of Directors.



THE NEXT LEVEL OF PERFORMANCE™

### **BENEFITS REALIZED**

- Proactive management control and improved accountability throughout the department.
- Clear and immediate information on over-or under-spending in human resources, operations, and ICT.
- Optimized payment processes for improved relationships with suppliers.
- Better support of the budgeting process.
- Detailed and accurate information for budget control operations.

At the end of a short implementation period, the system was fully operational and delivering its first impressive results. A telling example is the progress achieved in the payment process. The legal limit for payment of suppliers' invoices is 50 days. The department set the target of 32 days, but soon cut average payment time down to only 19 days. "In the longer term, this should correct the negative image and eliminate prejudices that still surround the public services. But there are other fields where our department's performance stands up to comparison even on an international scale", notes Georges Leenen. "Our business intelligence system allows us to stay within very narrow budget margins and thus to spend the taxpayer's money more wisely. Take our staff expenditures, for example: monthly follow-up allows us to fine-tune recruitment to budget allocations. Last year we spent 99.8% of our budget."

### **TECHNICAL ENVIRONMENT**

- Source Database: DB2
- Target Database: SQL Server

### **COGNOS SOLUTIONS IMPLEMENTED**

- Scorecarding
- Multidimensional analysis
- Managed reporting

### **WHY COGNOS?**

Cognos is the world leader in business intelligence and enterprise planning software. Our solutions for corporate performance management let organizations drive performance with planning, budgeting and consolidation, monitor it with alerts and scorecarding, and understand it with business intelligence reporting and analysis. Cognos is the only vendor to support all of these key management activities in a complete, integrated solution. Founded in 1969, Cognos now serves more than 23,000 customers in over 135 countries.



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