SOA PLATFORM INTEGRATES STATE AGENCIES, STREAMLINES CITIZEN PROCESSES

FLEMISH GOVERNMENT

/// CASE STUDY

EDS
an HP company

When the Minister-President of the Flemish Government launched an e-government initiative to free citizens from the burden of repetitive paperwork, EDS, an HP company, delivered a revolutionary service-oriented architecture (SOA) platform that now enables citizens to complete tasks online in just minutes, while saving the government millions.

The government wanted to reduce the administrative burden on citizens

Approximately 55 percent of Belgium's 10 million citizens are Flemish and reside in Flanders, the nation's northern Dutch-speaking region. Yet, regardless of where one lives, Belgium affords every child the birthright of government subsidization to support and strengthen the family unit. Whether they are infants or young adults bound for college, children are entitled to benefits as long as the correct paperwork is filed on their behalf. However, with 75 disparate agencies and departments in the Flemish administration, purchasing a bus pass or applying for child benefits often required submitting the same information to multiple agencies at multiple times. These manual paper-based processes created costly backlogs for the government and delayed distribution of benefits to Flemish citizens. So, with help from EDS, the Flemish Government set out to revolutionize the way it gathered and exchanged citizen data.

EDS' SOA platform seamlessly integrated government agencies and departments

A team of 20 EDS specialists contributed to the service-oriented architecture (SOA) project. They are part of a consortium of 450 staff, managing up to 100 simultaneous projects on any given day at the Flemish Government. After an initial assessment and road map in September 2005, EDS started working on the core solution, a state-of-the-art, inter-agency data exchange platform known as Maximum Data Sharing Between Administrations and Agencies (MAGDA).

MAGDA is supported by EDS' SOA, which provides one common Web services platform for the Flemish Government's 75 agencies and departments. MAGDA allows access to the authentic sources of citizen and enterprise information, harnessing reusable technologies and applications that can be easily adapted to different government administrations, from the federal to the local level. As a result, MAGDA allows agencies to deploy new citizen-focused Web-enabled services swiftly and seamlessly, vastly improving citizen services.

With data centralized and stored in one place, all communications with citizens are focused and deliberate, minimizing correspondence and duplicate requests for information. Citizens simply have to enter personal data once and can expect their information to be consistent, up-to-date and complete across all of the agencies with which they interact.

Here's how it works. Citizens log on to Flemish e-government services and applications using electronic ID cards, which automatically transfer data to the state registry. Therefore, if a citizen is applying for benefits such as a bus pass, for example, the system bypasses preliminary identity questions, allowing users to complete tasks quicker and with less red tape.

Every company in Belgium also has a unique ID that when accessing government services online gives government administrators access to the company's comprehensive profile from production to personnel.

With MAGDA, citizens can apply for government benefits online

EDS delivered the SOA framework and services in different releases, all on time and within budget. Today, when a child turns 18, parents no longer have to fill out extensive paperwork and mail proof of school attendance to the government to extend the child's education benefits. Now, data is automatically transferred to the agency that is responsible for the payment of that benefit, and benefits are automatically delivered to the student's family.

Obtaining a bus ticket for a child once required going to the city council to request proof of family size and then taking that information to a retail outlet to purchase the ticket. Today, using a digital ID card, citizens can validate family composition and purchase bus tickets online in minutes.

Students can now apply for scholarships online without having to mail such personal information as income statements to the Department of Education. A digital ID card is all it takes, and MAGDA retrieves the relevant data from the state's registry. The platform protects citizen privacy by ensuring the highest levels of security and organizational control.

By streamlining redundant, labor-intensive manual processes, MAGDA optimizes information gathering and ensures more complete, accurate data. What's more, the solution lays the foundation for migrating all government tasks to the Web, even local government processes such as applying for permits to build a house. The Flemish Government is currently working to develop a digital process that connects communities to the state MAGDA solution. So, for instance, if a person wants to build a home, an architect could upload renderings and blueprints to the Web, making them instantly accessible to all of the agencies involved in approving the project, ultimately expediting the home-building process.

Standardization also creates processing efficiencies, virtually eliminating data duplication and human error, while driving government costs down. In fact, the government saved Đ8 million in the first year with a projected savings of Đ40 million after five years. EDS delivered the SOA framework and services in different releases, all done on time and within budget.

The real advantage of the MAGDA solution, however, is that government officials can quickly implement new policy decisions and continually expand and enhance the solution to meet the changing needs of Flemish citizens.

"Within the Flemish Government, 25 agencies and departments are already using MAGDA with 50 more on the waiting list to be implemented in the next few months."

Geert Mareels
e-Government Manager

Flemish Administration

INDEPENDENT COMPONENTS ENABLE SOA'S MULTIPLATFORM CAPABILITIES

MAGDA delivers Web services that are technology-independent components defined by a behavior and interface. The same service can be deployed as an XML document or a text version and can be provided via FTP (asynchronous) or HTTP(S)/SOAP (synchronous) protocol. This enables the multiplatform capability of the SOA.

Developers and users employ different technologies such as Java, .Net and Coolgen applications, proving that a well-designed architecture of services can integrate a diversity of technologies, without having to migrate legacy systems to other technologies.

Services featured
- Applications Development Services
- Composite Application and Portal Services
- Integration and SOA Services

About EDS

EDS, an HP company, is a leading global technology services provider, delivering business solutions to its customers. EDS founded the information technology outsourcing industry more than 46 years ago. Today, EDS delivers a broad portfolio of information technology and business process outsourcing services to customers in the manufacturing, financial services, healthcare, communications, energy, transportation, and consumer and retail industries, and to governments around the world.

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