Provincie Zuid-Holland Fully Digitalizes Work Processes

OpenText ECM Suite enables improved service delivery

Industry
Public Sector

Customer

**provincie HOLLAND
ZUID**

Business Challenges
- Continually accounting for processes, procedures, and expenses in a transparent, verifiable manner was difficult
- Challenging service delivery to citizens and businesses that was not optimal or digital
- Inefficient and ineffective way of creating and processing files

Business Solution
- OpenText Content Server
- OpenText ECM Suite

Business Benefits
- 90 percent of all applications and appeals digitally settled
- Highly reliable registration of all relevant data
- Internal transparency
- Significant cost savings

Efficient and transparent provincial services

Provincie Zuid-Holland (PZH) (the province of South Holland) has a payroll of 2,000 employees, who work in the organisation's central office in The Hague and several branch offices throughout the region. Its activities comprise a wide range of policy areas, such as the environment, spatial planning and housing, soil and rural areas, and economy and employment. The province exchanges a large amount of information with its customers—citizens and businesses—with regard to activities such as granting subsidies, settling appeals, decision-making processes, and assessing zoning plans.

Digitising services

Daan de Haas is head of the Application Services office at PZH. He relates how communications with customers have gradually changed during the last decade: "In 2003, the Dutch government decided that service delivery to its customers should be made more efficient and effective by means of IT. This decision triggered us to start the Digital Route project in 2004. As a consequence, we had to renovate our IT infrastructure, improve and digitise our work processes and file creation procedures, and introduce digital services via an eCounter. At the same time, we were involved in the eProvince initiative, a collaborative project of all 12 Dutch provinces."

Verifiable records are critical

For a government body such as PZH, accurate record-keeping of all file processing activities and the relevant data streams is of crucial importance. The Government Information Act dictates that the organization must be able to justify and prove that its service delivery to citizens and businesses is both legal and transparent at all times. Take the settlement of appeals, for instance, or the approximately 3,000 decisions the PZH makes every month on a wide range of subjects: from the filling of ditches and zoning plans to the purchase of office supplies. Even the latter expenses must be verifiable.

The choice for OpenText

"We initiated a tender procedure for the Digital Route project and chose Siemens/Atos as our systems integrator," de Haas explains. "OpenText was selected as the supplier of an integrated solution for the intranet, internet, document management, and e-forms. We used OpenText Content Server and OpenText ECM Suite to implement a completely new integrated Document Management System (iDMS). This system allows us to save all data at two separate locations and use multiple, extremely reliable backup procedures.

ecm suite

"Thanks to the OpenText solution, Provincie Zuid-Holland was able to successfully achieve the government's aim of fully digital service delivery to both citizens and businesses. The efficiency of our processes was increased considerably, improving our service quality and enabling us to assess our decision-making processes in a more transparent manner."

Daan de Haas,
Head of Application Services, Provincie Zuid-Holland, The Netherlands

Successful implementation

In addition to the technical rollout of the various components of the OpenText ECM Suite, PZH was faced with the challenge of changing the organisation structure and the accompanying workflows and authorisations for expenditure above a pre-determined amount and for taking certain decisions.

For example, staff in the post room noticed a significant change in the nature of their activities—their work changed from manually handling incoming mail to scanning and digitising all documents. For that purpose, the mail for all PZH locations is sent to the organisation's central office in The Hague. Once the documents have been digitised, they are uploaded to iDMS, which automatically sends the file to the mailbox of the right employee. The selection of the right employee is based on the newly defined workflows. In addition, the employee receives a digital notification in his task list.

Successful daily practice

The OpenText system has been in use for a few years, and de Haas takes stock. "I am completely satisfied," he says. "iDMS is a true spider in the web of our organisation. Our system now contains approximately 4.5 million documents, and we digitally process around 30,000 decisions each year. Let me give you an example from daily practice. One of our main tasks is supervising local governments' finances by approving or refusing their budget plans. Suppose a municipality wants to make a change to an already submitted budget plan. They can notify us of these changes using a web-based form that was generated by OpenText, adding the original budget plan as an attachment. The information from the web form is sent to the responsible internal employee via a digital workflow. After reviewing the change request, he uses iDMS to generate a letter of approval or refusal. This letter is then sent directly from the system to the municipality involved."

Benefits

OpenText's solution offers PZH many substantial benefits. Ninety percent of all applications and appeals are now processed digitally, mostly via an eCounter on the PZH website. This eliminates lengthy and inefficient paper trails and reduces the chance of human errors to an absolute minimum.

Internal transparency is much improved and very high now, which allows prompt submission of data for Public Information Act purposes or audit trails, if needed. For instance, PZH can accurately verify which files were used for a particular legal decision.

Using the OpenText solution, all relevant data is recorded in an extremely reliable manner. PZH reports that as a result, the quality of their services has increased because they easily meet the required terms for resolving cases.

Also, PZH has achieved significant cost savings because fewer employees can do the same amount of work.

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Future OpenText innovation session

"We have already planned an innovation session with OpenText, aimed at discussing new opportunities of the system. Think for example of integrating the use of iPads or digitally capturing the decisions taken during meetings," explains de Haas, thinking of the future. "But for now I am extremely pleased with what we have managed to achieve with the help of OpenText!"

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