

Dynamics NAV delivers MFAT greater productivity worldwide



BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) is the Government's principal adviser and negotiator on foreign and trade policy issues. Through its diplomatic and consular service, it is charged by Government to ensure that New Zealand's voice is heard abroad, that our security and economic interests are advanced, and that the rights and safety of New Zealanders abroad are protected.

The Ministry's primary role is to recognise and understand international trends, opportunities and risks that affect New Zealand, and offer the Government advice on how best to protect and advance New Zealand's well-being. In this way it contributes to the Government's overall objective of transforming New Zealand into a dynamic, knowledge-based economy and society, underpinned by the values of fairness, opportunity and security for all.

The Ministry currently has 50 Overseas Posts spread over 45 countries. Over 500 staff are employed in Wellington and a further 620 overseas.

THE PROJECT

In early 2005 MFAT embarked upon a project to replace their Oracle Financials system. The Finance Division wanted to significantly reduce the time spent on processing transactions so that more time could be focused on high value activities.

The objectives were to:

- Streamline operational accounting processes.
- Provide ready access to relevant Financial Management information to staff and Managers throughout the Ministry.
- Improve operational and regulatory reporting.
- Develop a comprehensive trend analysis capability to support the development of policy and the achievement of strategic Financial Management goals.

Following a very rigorous tendering process MFAT chose Microsoft Dynamics NAV over other solutions, and selected technology partner Topaz Solutions for the implementation.

"We chose Microsoft Dynamics NAV because the system met our complex functionality needs especially in the area of foreign currency handling. Other challenges for us included multiple global sites and receiving timely, accurate and complete transactional information from those global sites into Wellington. Topaz gave us confidence that they were

committed, pragmatic, with the experience and skills to deliver a successful project.." said Phil Goulin, MFAT's CFO.

In July 2006 the Ministry went live with their new FMIS solution in Wellington, and pilot posts Manila and Apia shortly thereafter. The rollout of a further 43 Overseas Posts occurred over the next several months. This was the largest Dynamics NAV implementation to date in New Zealand and is supported by Topaz Solutions via MFAT's head office in Wellington.

At the Go Live celebrations, MFAT's CFO Phil Goulin commented that "... the project had been a great success, thanks to a lot of hard work by all the parties involved. The system was delivered on time and under budget".

John Lockhart, Relationship Manager for Topaz said "One of the many factors in the success of the project was the determination of both parties, at the outset, to work together in a true spirit of partnership".

To formally record this determination, and in addition to the normal contracts covering the implementation, MFAT and Topaz jointly agreed a "Partnership Protocol" which set out the principles which would underpin their relationship.

The principles included the need to work together in a way which recognised the responsibilities of the parties to their respective stakeholders and also working on the basis of "no surprises" - keeping each other informed on issues and working towards joint resolution whilst still respecting the independent view of the other party.

Rob Taylor, Topaz's project manager for the project said "the MFAT team were great to work with. They were disciplined, followed good process and were clear about their requirements."

THE BENEFITS

The system is already delivering the benefits that the Ministry set out to achieve. When MFAT conducted a recent post project implementation survey with users around the world they received a 95% response to the questionnaire. The results of the survey showed that 92% of users found the system easier to use, 97% reported that they were able to work faster and 89% said they were more productive. "This was a great result." said Phil Goulin, "Especially given the short time that the system has been fully rolled out".

"Working with Topaz, we developed a partnership based on mutual trust, confidence in each other's abilities and open communications"

PHIL GOULIN, CFO
Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

The Facts

> MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS & TRADE:

Government's principal adviser and negotiator on foreign and trade policy issues. 50 Overseas Posts in 45 countries. Over 1100 staff.

> THE CHALLENGE:

- Streamline operational accounting processes.
- Provide ready access to relevant Financial Management information to staff and Managers throughout the Ministry.
- Improve operational and regulatory reporting.
- Develop a comprehensive trend analysis capability to support the development of policy and the achievement of strategic Financial Management goals.

> THE SOLUTION:

Microsoft Dynamics NAV implemented and supported by Topaz Solutions, delivered on time and under budget.

> BENEFITS:

Dynamics NAV is providing MFAT users throughout the world with an easy to use system delivering higher levels of productivity, faster processing and more flexible reporting.

