

IT System Supporting Common Agricultural Policy

for Agricultural Market Agency

Case Study

Agricultural Market Agency

Project duration: December 2002 – November 2003. Types of services provided:

- analysis, design and development;
- implementation;
- systems integration;
- preparation of documentation and manuals;
- system acceptance tests;
- trainings;
- authorised service.

Capgemini, Ernst and Young were a partner of Comarch S.A. in this project and carried out 10% of the work.

The Agricultural Market Agency (AMA) was created for the purpose of implementing the state intervention policy with view to stabilising the market of agri-food products and securing of the agricultural revenues. The AMA is also responsible for collecting and management of state reserves of food products. In addition, new fields of AMA's activities are laid down by the sector's laws that adjust particular agricultural markets to the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy requirements.

The main objective of the contract was the efficient and effective task management for which the AMA (as a paying agency) was to be responsible after the Polish accession to the European Union. The way to this objective led through designing, developing and implementing the IT system.

The main risks of the project identified by the AMA even before launching the tender procedure were:

- fundamental changes in Community legislation and the withdrawal by the EU of certain CAP mechanisms that would result in abandoning the implementation of certain components.
- drafted administration procedures could turn out to be useless in the Polish reality, which might have caused the necessity to change them and the need to improve software accordingly.
- lack of Polish legislation regulating the issues directly related to CAP mechanisms could make the preparation of detailed assumptions for the IT system difficult.
- lack of experience among software users, relevant to the use of CAP mechanisms, might have delayed the implementation of the IT system and thus make it more difficult.
- necessity to carry on parallel projects concerning other CAP mechanisms to be administered by the AMA might have resulted in difficulties with the integration of the IT system.

A public tender was launched to find a contractor to deal with the implementation of the complex IT system. Consortium of Comarch S.A. and Cap Gemini Ernst and Young won the tender. The contractor's task was to design, develop and implement the IT system supporting the AMA activities concerning the Common Agricultural Policy. The system had to be provided with mechanisms for inputting, transferring, collecting and managing data. It also needed to enable the analysis of these data and support the presentation of the results in an appropriate way (printouts, reports). From technical point of view, the system had to be multi-tiered and operate in distributed, WAN-based (Wide Area Network) environment. The subject of order was carried out in 5 phases:

Phase I

- Elaboration of a general concept of the IT database system
- Specification of requirements and the analysis of the database subsystem for the registration of CAP participants.
- Specification of requirements and the analysis of the database subsystem managing the financial securities lodged by the CAP beneficiaries (bank guarantees, etc);
- Specification of requirements and the analysis of the database subsystem automating the mechanism of trade regulations;
- Specification of requirements and the analysis of the database subsystems automating the mechanism of intervention purchases and sales of some agricultural products;
- Elaboration of a document containing the description of minimum hardware configuration and of standard software understood as system software, administrative software, database management system, etc., which enables a proper functioning of the system in the AMA Headquarters and Regional Branches;
- Delivery of scanning, OCR, and archiving software;
- Presentation of the recommended hardware system configuration and of methods for communication between system elements in WAN and LAN along with the justification of the architecture of the proposed solutions, particularly from the viewpoint of system reliability and quality.

Phase II:

- Elaboration of testing methodology, including all-system and subsystem acceptance tests;
- Design, implementation and testing of the database subsystem for the registration of CAP participants;
- Installation and preparation for use of the pilot version of the subsystem for the registration of CAP participants in the AMA Headquarters and three selected Regional Branches, as well as the carrying out of quantity tests;
- Design, implementation and testing of the other database subsystems.

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Phase III

- Preparation of functional-operational, technical and administrator's documentation for the above-mentioned systems, on paper and in electronic form, with use of the CASE tool (Oracle Designer or equivalent);
- Preparation of detailed manuals for system users;
- Installation and preparation for use of the above-mentioned subsystems in the AMA Headquarters;
- Installation and preparation for use of the above-mentioned subsystems in all AMA Regional Branches;
- Integration of particular subsystems;
- The proper configuration of the database, operating system, database server, application server, mail server, WWW server and workstations on the basis of the suggested computer hardware and software;
- Transmitting all source codes to the Beneficiary with copyright for the above-mentioned subsystems.

Phase IV

- Trainings for database and system administrators in the AMA Headquarters and each Regional Branch;
- Trainings intended for users covering the use of the created applications;
- Preparation of a document containing the rules of servicing by the authorised service during the guarantee and post-guarantee period.

Phase V

- On-the-fly training of 4-8 employees of the AMA IT Office during the system and software development so that they can carry out works on modification and development of the IT system after the completion of the contract.

At least once a month, on a day established by the AMA, sessions held by Contractor representatives and by the Project Supervising Committee took place in order to evaluate the work progress. A formal protocol was signed. It included the attendance list, the elements of the contract completed during the reporting period and agreements reached during the session. The Committee was also responsible for making the suggestions concerning the protocols from subsequent work phases. People not being members of the Project Supervising Committee were allowed to participate in the meetings.

The computer system had to support inputting and processing data forwarded (among others) by the European Commission, users of particular procedures, customs service, and reference laboratories.

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