

Better traceability, more security: the future of certification is available today thanks to BPM



The Challenge

In early 2004, Intalio was proposed to address the following challenge:

- A country must automate 250,000,000 processes
- Each process can take up to five years to complete
- The macro process map has 250,000 steps
- Each step would require 100 lines of Java code
- The system is designed for 100,000 farmers, few hundred veterinary practices and up to 50 larger organizations
- Changes must be applied on a regular basis
- The country's food supply is at stake

Indeed the Animal Health Services (GD, <http://www.gddeventer.com/>) which can be seen as the execution arm of the Dutch Agriculture cabinet realized with the foot and mouth disease that its current certification program needed to be tailored to provide faster time-to-market in releasing eradication and prevention programs.

GD key expertise is to develop animal health programs for every animal species. The company defines and implements certification programs to help governments and industries to monitor and quickly react to animal diseases.

The system supporting the certification program known as COS-A quickly became a plate of spaghetti: many systems were interconnected with several integration points which caused longer test periods delaying the release of new features to support the COS-A certification program.

Prof. Dr. A. Pijpers,
Director of the Dutch
Animal Health Service

“Via a central software application, we bundle our certification programs for all animal species into one system, thus making them work together.”

Adopting a BPMS

The new challenges faced by GD led them to consider adopting a true Business Process Management approach. In order to provide real business improvements, it was very important to retrieve visibility on the current supporting applications integration to clearly separate the tasks and responsibilities of the human end-users and monitor each step of the processes.

Furthermore in order to avoid the well-known translation problem between business requirements and new system implementation; it was essential to find a tool that provides a common view of the processes to certification managers, quality consultants and IT developers; this view being the ‘Process View’.

GD decided to select Intalio as the BPMS to design and execute their processes. The key decision points were that Intalio was the only solution to provide a Zero-Code™ development paradigm thanks to Intalio|Designer, a design tool where processes are designed and implemented visually; and Intalio|Server is the only process server in the market to support long running processes in a distributed environment. Getting a reliable and scalable Process Server that could run thousands of processes was a key decision factor as well as the ability to support all the workflow patterns.

The selection process clearly illustrated that Intalio had the only BPMS to address those challenges.

“Actually, Intalio was quick to recognize (unlike other BPMS contestants) that given the sheer volume of certification processes running at GD, these could never be implemented as long-running processes in a performing way. A mechanism for breaking up the long-running processes, proposed by Alexsys and Perfect Connection, was one of the ground-breaking arguments for GD to adopt Intalio as the BPMS system.” acknowledged Patrick van Voorn, CTO and Martijn Brakkee Systems Architect from Perfect Connection

Patrick Van Voorn,
CTO,
PerfectConnection

“Actually, Intalio was quick to recognize (unlike other BPMS contestants) that given the sheer volume of certification processes running at GD, these could never be implemented as long-running processes in a performing way. A mechanism for breaking up the long-running processes, proposed by Alexsys and Perfect Connection, was one of the ground-breaking arguments for GD to adopt Intalio as the BPMS system.”

Implementing Business Processes

GD appointed a team of experts to develop the next generation of COS-A: COS-B. Two system integrators, Perfect Connection (<http://www.perfectconnection.nl>) in the Netherlands and Alexsys in Belgium, partnered to bring Intalio expertise, integration expertise as well as knowledge about GD and the agriculture sector. The Project Manager was provided by Agri Information Partners (<http://www.agripartner.nl>).

In total 25 people from GD, Perfect Connection and Alexsys contributed to the development of the project.

Overcoming the COS-B challenges proved to be exciting for the entire team. “We were defining the limits of Intalio|Server and in the end, Intalio was ready for the tough challenges we encountered” said Gert-Jan van Alem, COS-B Project Manager.

Intalio showed its commitment by opening the communication channels with its support team which is described by GD development team as a “team where the knowledge level is high and where incidents are quickly taken in hands and solved”.

During the course of the project the COS-B team first embraced the BPM approach by learning new thinking patterns and certification managers with no technical background started working with the IT people by using Intalio|Designer to design the processes...a gap was bridged!

Over the past 2 years, the project team developed several reusable components and split the project between 230 business processes and 60 technical processes all developed visually in Intalio|Designer.

COS-B today

COS-B is composed of three main components:

- COS-B Registrative: a registry that records certification data before and after carrying out operational processes. It offers users insight into the running certification processes and their history. It also provides opportunities for human intervention.
- COS-B Orchestrator: This technical layer seats between the process engine and the processes. It provides technical services such as deciding to bind a generic event to a specific version of a product processes.
- COS-B Intalio Process Engine: Runs the processes.

Today COS-B interconnects end-users with 8 different backend systems to run 18 certification programs for all the cows and pigs in the Netherlands. Each certification process known as a 'Product Process' is carried out on the basis of the Deming cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act). In every cycle, the results can lead to authorized conclusions which control the actions taken.

- Plan: Prepare a certification task
- Do: Execute the task such as taking blood samples and testing them for a particular animal disease
- Check: Validate the test results
- Act: Initiate follow-up processes based on the outcome of the Check step

More than 40 end-users are using COS-B on a daily basis.

As Prof. Dr. A. Pijpers, Director of the Dutch Animal Health Service defines COS-B:

"Via a central software application, we bundle our certification programs for all animal species into one system, thus making them work together.

With the central system, we are able to work more efficiently and intervene faster when an animal disease breaks out, even when several species are involved. We are also able to process foreign data."

This central application is COS-B and it runs on top of Intalio|BPMS.



SUCCESS STORY



COS-B Tomorrow

GD is implementing new processes today to respond to latest disease breakthrough.

“GD is a very innovative company that has proven that BPM technologies can be applied in a pragmatic manner to enhance the way companies really work. Thanks to Intalio|BPMS, GD is able to react more rapidly to new diseases affecting the Dutch livestock” said Arnaud Blandin, EMEA Manager for Intalio.

About Intalio

Intalio is the leading vendor of Open Source BPMS and helps organizations of all sizes get the most return on investment from their Service-Oriented Architecture (SOA) by developing and deploying new business processes without having to write code.

Founded in July 1999, Intalio is a privately-held, venture-backed company located in Redwood City, California. For more information on Intalio, please call 650-596-1800 (US) or +41 (44) 586 56 98 (EMEA). You can also visit www.intalio.com.

About GD

GD is a market-oriented organization primarily for the improvement of animal health and safety of animal products. Veterinary specialists provide farmers and veterinary practitioners with assistance and advice not only for the fight against infectious diseases but also regarding aspects of animal husbandry and animal welfare. GD was founded in 1919 by and for farmers, with the objective of preventing and eradicating animal diseases. GD was a foundation until 2000. In 2000 GD was converted into a private company.

Its mission is to supply knowledge on animals and their quality characteristics in relation to their health and the production of safe food. As an independent organization GD provides services to the industry, governments, the primary sector, laboratories and veterinarians.

