STATE GOVERNMENT OF HESSE, GERMANY

SAP ENABLES ONLINE APPLICATIONS THAT SAVE CITIZENS A TRIP TO CITY HALL

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Jörg Kremer, Project Lead, Regional Board of Gießen, Germany

QUICK FACTS

Company

- Name: State government of Hesse, Germany
- Location: Wiesbaden, Germany
- Industry: Public sector – administration
- Products and services: Range of government services for state residents, including online application submission management
- Web site: www.eah.hessen.de
- Implementation partners: SAP® Custom Development and SAP Consulting organizations

Challenges and Opportunities

- Build a central platform for uniform, statewide business registration processes in line with the European Union Services Directive
- Establish a single point of contact to support communications with multiple authorities

Objectives

- Implement a secure, citizen-friendly portal for submitting online applications
- Use an integrated IT system to connect citizens, the economy, and the public authorities while incorporating technical procedures

SAP Solutions and Services

- Online application management developed by SAP Custom Development
- SAP NetWeaver® Composition Environment offering
- SAP NetWeaver Portal component

Implementation Highlights

- Solution developed via the ideal combination of expertise of government and SAP team members
- Solution integrated with the government's existing software landscape

Why SAP

- Holistic approach to setting up an integrated e-government platform
- Flexible integration of technical procedures
- System-agnostic solution offering on-the-fly scalability in a stable architecture
- Sound development partnership with SAP Custom Development to help ensure the innovation's future viability

Benefits

- Provides faster, around-the-clock access to administrative services for citizens, companies, and employees via one-stop government concept
- Enables smooth continuity in electronic application submission and processing
- Saves time, effort, and expenses via fast online application management
- Unifies methods via platform concept and facilitates further automated processing of the procedures involved

HESSEN

These days, anyone looking to handle the many aspects of business registration in the German state of Hesse no longer has to worry about finding the right authorities and waiting for hours for their number to come up. Freelancers, entrepreneurs, and other self-employed individuals can now take care of their affairs online – around the clock and with minimal bureaucratic effort. Hesse's central service point, EAH, makes this possible with the help of software and consulting from SAP.

An EU Mandate to Facilitate Service Business Start-Up

The development of Hesse's new central service point is set against the background of a wider European Union initiative. The European Union Services Directive, which was adopted at the end of 2009, requires member states to simplify procedures and formalities with which service providers need to comply. In particular, the directive requires states to remove unnecessary burdens and to make it easier for someone to start a service business and, if relevant, carry out cross-border transactions. One of the key obligations under the directive is setting up single points of contact, through which service providers can obtain all relevant information and deal with all administrative formalities without the need to contact several authorities. A single point of contact also has to be accessible from remote locations and by electronic means.

Hesse Government Thinks Outside the Box

Seeking to limit both costs and administrative red tape, the state government of Hesse began thinking outside the box. It decided to implement an online application procedure that now enables citizens who have gone or are looking to go into business for themselves – from attorneys and craftspeople to proprietors of restaurants – to found, expand, or even close their companies. This has made time-consuming trips to city hall a thing of the past. The underlying platform, EAH, aids citizens in filling out the corresponding forms and guides the process through all of the municipal authorities and various chambers until the state's official response is received. Thanks to this effort, the state of Hesse has also fulfilled a key component of the European Union Services Directive.

Hesse's government functionaries had recognized the potential in realizing uniform online application services throughout the state at an early stage. The next step was an intensive, solution-oriented dialogue with consultants from SAP. "By combining their expertise, our teams and the contingent from SAP were able to develop and implement an ideal solution," says project lead Jörg Kremer of the regional board of Gießen, Germany. Developed under the leadership of this body, along with affiliated authorities in nearby Kassel and Darmstadt, Hesse's electronic application management system went live throughout the state in December 2009. The solution follows the principles of service-oriented architecture and is based on the SAP NetWeaver® technology platform. It also integrates smoothly into the government's existing software landscape. "We opted for SAP because we can now implement enhancements and new online offers in short order, which reduces our development costs," Kremer explains.

Streamlined Electronic Applications

Meanwhile, support for XÖV (XML) standards used by Germany's public authorities facilitates end-to-end electronic processing by enabling the platform to prepare data from submitted forms in a format comprehensible to the subsequent technical processes. This also facilitates the return trip, in

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which the state's official responses to applications are stored securely in the online system. During the implementation project, ensuring secure digital communications between applicants and those responsible for their queries proved particularly challenging. Thanks to the solution's flexible architecture, however, the teams were able to meet all of the authentication-related requirements.

Those working on the project also needed to account for the needs of users who do not have a digital signature. Using ad hoc certificates, applicants can now use their recently updated German identification cards to sign electronic documents with a qualified signature. The few minutes this requires is a definite improvement over the weeks simply applying for a signature card used to take. This innovative new procedure has attracted attention far beyond the state boundaries of Hesse. In fact, the initiative – jointly developed by the state of Hesse, Bundesdruckerei GmbH, and SAP – was presented to a broad audience of experts from Germany and the rest of the world at CeBIT 2011.

Benefits Now and Future Potential

Jörg Kremer offers a positive recap of the project: "Our online application management system is a proven solution we'll have no problem enhancing to deal with any kind of application – be it social benefits, parking permits, parental leave benefits, absentee voting, fishing permits, or numerous other services."

In terms of Hesse's would-be service providers, the project has succeeded. Referring to EAH users, Kremer says, "When [our clients] need information or to fill out forms, applicants no longer have to leave their homes or heed fixed office hours. The EAH portal is always open." The marriage of innovative governmental thinking and state-of-the-art SAP technology is also enhancing Hesse's appeal to businesspeople. "Innovative IT solutions designed for public administration have long since become standard tools in the field; they're the key to staying in touch with citizens and cutting through red tape," says Lars Witteck, president of the regional board of Gießen. "An electronic application management system, for example, is helping the state of Hesse further increase its attractiveness as a business location."

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Dr. Lars Witteck, President, Regional Board of Gießen, Germany

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