AUSTRIAN FEDERAL MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND RESEARCH

SAP® BusinessObjects™ SOLUTIONS ENABLE TRANSPARENCY AND CENTRALIZED DATA

"Due to our new, innovative reporting setup, we can plan and implement control measures more effectively and, above all, faster than ever before."

Dr. Karlheinz Töchterle, Austrian Federal Minister of Science and Research, Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research

QUICK FACTS

Company

- Name: Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research (Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, or BMWF)
- Location: Vienna, Austria
- Industry: Public sector
- Products and services: Central hub for scientific research and academic training in Austria
- Employees: 386
- Web site: www.bmwf.gv.at
- Implementation partners: SAP® Consulting; SIAB Business Solutions GmbH & Co. KG; Institut für Verwaltungsmanagement GmbH (IVM), an Austrian company specializing in public sector management

Challenges and Opportunities

- Implement bottom-up and top-down planning procedures, including comment management and midyear budget checks
- Efficiently transfer knowledge to key users
- Take account of the differences in planning logic between public and private sectors

Objectives

- Simplify decentralized budgeting with centralized data storage
- Set up flexible reporting with a wide range of analysis options

SAP Solutions and Services

- SAP BusinessObjects™ Planning and Consolidation application, version for the Microsoft platform
- SAP BusinessObjects Business Intelligence (BI) platform

Implementation Highlights

- Project completed on schedule and with the required level of quality
- High level of productivity resulting from the use of familiar user interfaces
- Coaching-oriented approach to implementation

Why SAP

- The possibility to maintain, operate, and develop the application within the responsibility of the specialist department, without the need of external support
- Low complexity and a high degree of flexibility

Benefits

- Central control of the decentralized planning process by the specialist user departments
- Uniform data basis for plan and actual data, including flexible analysis options
- High degree of transparency and, as a result, greater understanding of budgetary issues among employees
- Standard reporting and budget control
- Successful build-up of expertise in the user department

Existing Environment

SAP ERP application deployed in all Austrian government ministries

Third-Party Integration

- Database: SQL
- Hardware: HP Server
- Operating system: Microsoft Windows 7

BMWF

Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung

Science and research are key drivers of social and economic progress. Based in Vienna, Austria, the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research (Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung, or BMWF) considers its central duties to be the targeted promotion and furthering of science and research and of communication between students, teachers, researchers, and all scientific and research stakeholders.

Before implementing the SAP® BusinessObjects™ Planning and Consolidation application and the SAP BusinessObjects Business Intelligence (BI) platform, the ministry did not have a central planning tool for budgetary matters. Rather, it used Microsoft Excel documents to distribute, change, and consolidate data – a time-consuming and error-prone process. The ministry therefore wanted to simplify and harmonize its decentralized budgeting processes – based on centralized data storage – and also have the option of carrying out a midyear budget check.

"During our search for the appropriate software to support these plans and processes, we carried out a proof of concept to evaluate the applications on offer from SAP and Cognos. We opted for the SAP BusinessObjects solution due to its flexibility and ease of use," says Philipp Otto, a module manager at BMWF, describing the reason behind the final decision.

Peter Wanka, head of the ministry's budget department, adds, "The important thing for us was that we would be able to start using the solution quickly and easily, and that our user department would be able to define and model the planning processes itself."

Better Transparency

Another key criterion for the ministry of science and research was that both bottom-up and top-down processes can be clearly mapped and consolidated in a single system. "We have already carried out two budget planning runs with SAP BusinessObjects software and were able to save time and create greater transparency than we've ever had before," says Wanka. "And, thanks to the standardized reporting procedures, we were able to achieve a greater understanding of budgetary issues at all levels of the hierarchy."

Now, the ministry can document its budgeting processes cleanly and, supported by flexible reporting, it has the option of carrying out midyear budget checks. The specialist user department can compare and analyze actual and planning data and thus identify which sections of the budget have already been exhausted. As a result, it can react more quickly and flexibly whenever adjustments are required.

Coaching-Oriented Approach

For the implementation, BMWF worked with SAP Consulting, SIAB Business Solutions GmbH & Co KG, and the Institut für Verwaltungsmanagement GmbH (IVM). IVM is an Austrian company that specializes in public sector management. Knowledge transfer was an important element for success; BMWF wanted to ensure that the implementation team could efficiently transfer knowledge to key users. As it turned out, the team was instrumental in helping BMWF rapidly gain a high level of productivity. A coaching-oriented approach to training, along with the use of familiar user interfaces, helped the end-user community get up and running quickly.

The ministry of science and research chose the coaching-oriented approach for the implementation, which meant that extensive expertise was built up in the user department within a very short space of time. This was a major factor in the project's success. "The implementation was completed on time, within budget, and with the required level of quality. It ran smoothly from beginning to end," reports Otto.

Nevertheless, the task of mapping the budget proved to be particularly challenging. The public and private sectors have differing budget requirements, which meant that the implementation team had to take into account customer-specific planning logic. However, because SAP BusinessObjects software is highly flexible, it was possible to map these special features very effectively.

"We can deploy budget resources effectively, economically, and transparently for the benefit of Austria as a center of scientific expertise and of the scientific community as a whole."

Dr. Karlheinz Töchterle, Austrian Federal Minister of Science and Research, Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research

And, thanks to the innovative approach of using budget components rather than budget structure logic, it was possible to achieve a quantum leap in terms of the transparency and traceability of budget planning and management at the ministry.

Excellent Results

The new solution proved to be highly productive from the start and enjoyed excellent user buy-in. This was mainly due to the fact that the ministry's IT users were already familiar with Microsoft Excel – the front end used in the solution – and were able to put their existing expertise to optimal use.

Dr. Karlheinz Töchterle, Austrian Federal Minister of Science and Research, concludes with a summary of the benefits to BMWF, saying, "The new system offers me, as Austria's Federal Minister for Science and Research, a completely new dimension in budgetary control. The introduction of budget components as a basis for budget planning, budget controlling, and reporting means that – for the first time – we can map the projects and programs that are to be executed within the budget clearly and transparently. Due to our new, innovative reporting setup, we can plan and implement control measures more effectively and, above all, faster than ever before.

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Philipp Otto, Module Manager, Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research

The initial project was completed on schedule and met all requirements with the desired level of quality. BMWF now has plans to take on additional projects using the SAP BusinessObjects Planning and Consolidation application and the SAP BusinessObjects BI platform. "We realized during the project that SAP BusinessObjects solutions can do a whole lot more than we had originally included in our plans," explains Peter Wanka. "Nevertheless, we decided to concentrate on achieving our defined objectives. We will map our forecasting, reporting, and controlling processes with SAP BusinessObjects software in a future project."

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