THE BRITISH COUNCIL
ELECTRONIC CONNECTIVITY TO SUPPORT GLOBAL BANKING

QUICK FACTS

Industry
Public sector

Revenue
£705 million (US$ 1.1 billion)

Employees
7,377

Headquarters
London

Web Site
www.britishcouncil.org

SAP® Solutions and Services
Establishing global electronic banking connectivity with SAP NetWeaver® Process Integration technology

The British Council is the United Kingdom's international organization for cultural diplomacy and educational relations – offering programs and services in more than 100 countries around the world. Using SAP NetWeaver® Process Integration technology, The British Council worked with Standard Chartered Bank to establish electronic banking connectivity that helped eliminate manual processes and provided support for more efficient centralized operations.

Key Challenges
- Implement efficient electronic banking connectivity across several regions
- Gain cost-effective, centralized control of payments and receivables
- Eliminate labor-intensive manual processes
- Improve data security
- Support a shared services center

Why SAP Was Selected
- Integration with organization's current SAP software landscape
- Opportunity to leverage SAP solutions already in use
- Desire to automate integration between The British Council's SAP ERP and banking partners
- Best fit for business needs, with greater functionality than competitors' solutions

Implementation Best Practices
- As part of a banking transformation program, conducted projects with Standard Chartered Bank in Sub-Saharan Africa and Central South Asia
- Established a host-to-host mechanism that could be used with Standard Chartered Bank globally
- Included representatives from financial organization on project team
- Addressed issues in regional rollouts with localized training
- Improved alignment and deployment by having the bank mirror the Council's project structure

Low Total Cost of Ownership
- Used single global blueprint to facilitate on-time regional rollouts
- Leveraged existing SAP software and in-house expertise
- Supported solution with in-house resources
- Consolidated 5 finance hubs to 1 global center supporting 110 countries
- Reduced IT support and costs as a result of the simplified IT landscape

Financial and Strategic Benefits
- Scalable and replicable banking solutions for use in global implementations
- Ability to collate multiple payments in a single file transfer
- Greater visibility into banking information with real-time updates to the SAP® ERP application environment
- Ability to spend more time on analysis, such as evaluating payment strategies and country-level costs
- Enhanced collaboration with banking partners

Operational Benefits
- Centralized control of banking transactions
- Improved efficiency with automated processes that replaced manual file transfers
- Significantly decreased amount of time to conduct management control checks
- Improved data security with system- and network-level encryption
- Gained greater ability to streamline workforce by reducing reliance on regional resources
- Reduced size of global finance operations, resulting in substantial annual cost savings

BRITISH COUNCIL

SAP®

"The future success of The British Council as an organization will depend heavily on using our ERP system to ensure efficient payment and receivables processing at our locations around the world."

Peter Lay, Head of Treasury and Banking, The British Council

www.sap.com/contactsap

Connecting the United Kingdom to the World

Since the 1930s, The British Council has worked in countries around the world to promote wider knowledge of the United Kingdom. Today the organization runs cultural and educational programs in more than 100 nations – from sponsoring music projects in the Middle East to teaching the English language to millions across the globe.

To support these worldwide activities, The British Council needs efficient business processes that it can apply on a global basis. Recently this international organization collaborated with Standard Chartered Bank in key geographies to develop more automated and secure electronic banking processes.

Leveraging an SAP® Software Infrastructure

The British Council wanted to take full advantage of efficiencies created by its global implementation of the SAP ERP application. The British Council with Standard Chartered Bank began using SAP NetWeaver® Process Integration (SAP NetWeaver PI) technology to create the interfaces necessary to support the electronic banking integration that would help The British Council achieve its efficiency goal.

To facilitate worldwide rollouts, The British Council focused on establishing a repeatable global solution that could be fine-tuned for local requirements. It also provided on-site training to help ensure regional adoption. As Peter Lay, Head of Treasury and Banking at The British Council, notes, this approach enabled the organization "to move the solution from Beijing to Delhi without great difficulty."

Creating Global Benefits

"The British Council is quite unique in its geographic spread," explains Lay, "but we have been able to automate payments in many of the countries in which we operate. And what's been so brilliant about the solution is that we can run our payments from one centralized location and without manual intervention." The British Council was able to consolidate 5 finance hubs into 1 global center that supports 110 countries.

Greater automation has also improved process efficiency. For example, The British Council has significantly reduced the time needed to conduct management control. Electronic processes have been automated, replacing file transfers between the organization and Standard Chartered Bank that were once handled on a one-by-one basis.

Improved visibility into transactional data enables The British Council to spend more time on strategic analysis. This includes examining country-level costs and evaluating the impact of different payment frequencies. With such efficiency and insight, The British Council has been able to combine multiple payments in a single bank transfer and rationalize the number of bank accounts it has in many regions.

Alex Chaplin, Director of Global Business Services at The British Council, points out another key benefit of the banking solutions – improved security and reliability. "In today's internet connected world with enhanced risk of identity compromise, information security is an important concern for The British Council," says Chaplin, "especially financial information and personal data. The automation and technical integration has provided security capability both at system and data transfer network level."

Looking Ahead to Future Improvements

The British Council's banking solutions also support the organization's goal to centralize operations and reduce the reliance on regional resources. In fact, The British Council expects to see even greater benefits when it further consolidates five shared services centers into one through additional process and system improvements.

Working together, The British Council and Standard Chartered Bank continue to extend repeatable banking solutions to other countries, and now the two organizations are looking at additional ways to use SAP NetWeaver PI. As Chaplin sees it, "We have established a real springboard from which we can further improve all sorts of processes."

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