

# MINISTRY OF DEFENCE DEFENCE COMMUNICATION SERVICES AGENCY (DCSA)



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## INTEGRATING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AT THE MOD—HOW THE DEFENCE COMMUNICATION SERVICES AGENCY USES COGNOS TO IMPROVE BUSINESS ANALYSIS AND CUT REPORTING TIME AND EFFORT.

### INTRODUCTION

As part of the UK's Defence Communication Services Agency (DCSA), the Application Service Provider (ASP) group undertakes development, maintenance and support of defence logistics and business applications, and provides in-house software and systems support for the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force.

### THE CHALLENGE

Until recently, each division within the MoD reported to different management teams using performance management statistics based on their own service level agreements (SLAs). The MoD realised this was an ineffective use of resources, failed to provide senior management with strategic decision support and made comparisons of performance across divisions difficult.

The ASP group was tasked with ensuring that the 150 applications and databases under its control, some of which are up to 30 years old, are supported, enhanced and developed to accurately integrate performance information from all the systems.

In order to collate a consistent set of metrics across all divisions, the ASP group decided to roll out a business intelligence (BI) solution to underpin a balanced scorecard approach to performance management, including metrics on resource consumption, service delivery, business processes, people management, learning and growth.

The team wanted to streamline report production across the organisation and provide increased visibility of resources to ensure that finite resources were directed to where they were most needed.

### WHY CHOOSE COGNOS?

The DCSA had already carried out a technology assessment and selected Cognos as a preferred BI supplier.

Choosing Cognos for its proven balanced scorecard capabilities, ability to handle data residing in a multiplicity of data stores and comprehensive range of BI and Corporate Performance Management (CPM) functions, the ASP group then ran a proof of concept on metrics covering six different internal processes.

In particular, it wanted to prove that performance data residing in an industry standard service management product (in this case, a call centre help desk) could be automatically extracted and fed into the performance management application. Cognos matched these requirements most closely.

“Cognos was the most open system, and had the best web capabilities. That's the reason we chose it,” said Trevor Purches, Process Improvement Manager at the ASP group. “We didn't want a system that was fixed on one database, nor one that created lots of traffic across the network. Openness and flexibility were key.”



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“In addition, we wanted a common reporting tool that was easy for people to use, and would save money through consolidating licence fees, as users would not be using disparate reporting solutions from a range of vendors. The Cognos solution met those requirements too.”

## WHAT HAS IT ACHIEVED?

The ASP group is now using a combination of Cognos Metrics Manager for tracking performance, Cognos ReportNet for producing reports and Cognos PowerPlay for data analysis. This has enabled the organisation to consolidate disparate data sources into a single set of key performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs can be presented to the entire organisation and tailored for use at any level of management.

Data covering a variety of metrics is collected from different data sources and entered into Cognos Metrics Manager. Metrics include service delivery, where data from the helpdesk database is analysed daily to help manage incidents and assess the percentage of incidents fixed within the agreed SLAs, and staff management, which measures training and investment in personnel and ensures appraisals and training plans are completed on time.

The reporting capabilities are also used to track general business processes, such as whether improvement schemes are on target, and if health and safety actions have been completed. One scorecard even tracks business risk.

“Ultimately, we are trying to bring about a culture change and give visibility of metrics to managers at all levels of the organisation,” said Trevor. “There is still a little way to go, but managers are being encouraged to monitor performance more proactively so they can identify and implement change for the better, not just review old reports.”

He added: “No project is without its challenges, and the main one was integrating lots of different systems and applications. We expected these kinds of challenges and there were some frustrations, but overall it worked out well.”

## THE BENEFITS

The system has shown it can automate the production of management reports. The automation of just one report has saved one day of work each month, allowing managers to spend more time acting on performance data rather than its collation and giving them better visibility of information from across the whole organisation. As a result, decisions are made faster and are more informed.

Being able to share reports over the web is a real step forward for the ASP. For the first time, the system has allowed managers geographically dispersed across the UK to collaborate online, helping to make faster decisions to help meet strategic objectives. “Having a web-based tool is a big bonus. In fact, our policy is now to make all new applications web-based, to improve collaboration and sharing of ideas and report findings,” said Trevor.

The Cognos system has also allowed data to be extracted immediately as accurate reports from systems, such as the helpdesk database, which users would previously have had to manually create and adjust by hand before giving to management.

“We actually use the system to produce reports for the next level up of management reports,” added Trevor. “This is more effective than collating data from the individual reports manually.”

## PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

The ASP group is also looking to develop a benefits tracking system based on the Cognos solution, and aims to cascade the metrics down to all levels of the organisation so teams have visibility of progress in relation to their own performance targets.

Finally, the group aims to teach managers more about the benefits of effective metrics and how they can measure factors that will actually help them. It seems to be working – Cognos ReportNet is now being used in other business units across the MoD, and the Directorate of Information Services Delivery, another group within the DCSA, is looking to have common processes in place for all performance management applications across the organisation.

“Making metrics more customer-focused is our key role. In that way, we hope the reports will be used more by managers to actually improve efficiency and make better informed decisions supporting our customer’s needs,” concluded Trevor Purches.



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