



Dutch Defense Ministry Ready for Biggest Data Migration and Data Quality Project in Its History

Informatica and Systems Integration Partner KVL Support Switch to SAP, and help ensure the business and IT have joint responsibility for project outcomes.

CHALLENGES

- Support the migration of 70 legacy systems to SAP
- Gain insight into the extent of data corruption
- Obtain reliable information to support management reporting

ADVANTAGES

- Standardized methodology for all data migration projects provides efficiency gains
- Data cleansing and enrichment results in enhanced information quality and greater transparency
- Use of Informatica Platform saves time and development and maintenance costs

PRODUCTS

- Informatica PowerCenter®
- Informatica Data Quality
- Informatica Data Explorer™

SERVICES

- Informatica Professional Services

SOLUTIONS

- Data Migration

“The cooperation with the Informatica and KVL consultants has been excellent. They work as a single unit with our own IT people. This has been an important factor in creating our data migration road map.”

— Jaap Timmers, shared services data migration project manager, Ministry of Defense

As part of its SPEER (Strategic Process Enabled ERP Re-engineering) program, the Dutch Defense Ministry is migrating to a single ERP application for all of the armed forces. Seventy aging legacy systems that four organizations—army, air force, navy, and gendarmerie—use will eventually disappear, so all of the data from these systems will have to be migrated to SAP.

To support this huge data migration, the Ministry created a data migration road-map methodology based on the Informatica® Platform. Business and IT now have joint responsibility for project outcomes, so they always have to be reading from the same page.

As a result, the Informatica solution will be used as the standard process for all migrations within the various armed forces.

The Organization and the SPEER Program

The Ministry is one of the Netherlands’ largest employers, with nearly 70,000 civilian and military employees. It consists of the administrative staff, the navy, the army, the air force, the gendarmerie, the command service centers, and the defense equipment organization. These are jointly responsible for maintaining peace and security in the Netherlands, and for peacekeeping missions abroad. The Ministry depends on high-quality information, and eight years ago, to maintain the best possible support for peace operations, it began its SPEER (Strategic Process Enabled ERP Re-engineering) program. This aims to improve data sharing within and between the armed forces so that they can work together in a standardized and effective manner. As part of SPEER, 70 aging legacy systems will be replaced by a single new system—SAP. Once this large-scale project is rolled out, 12,000 employees will need to adopt the new system.

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The Informatica Platform Is the Basis for Data Integration

The SAP rollout began five years ago. The Informatica Platform was chosen after an extensive European tender process to decrypt and integrate data from the different forces’ systems and store it in one place. The Informatica Platform served as the basis to build a data integration engine, which is now operated as a shared service for all such projects.

Owing to issues relating to scalability, inaccurate data, and different data formats, it later became clear that simply transferring data from one application to another was not enough. There were a number of other challenges associated with the Ministry having their own individual systems, which centered on different forces input data in different ways.

“Before we could switch to SAP, we needed to be clear where the differences lay, what data was missing, and what data was duplicated on the system,” says Jaap Timmers, the Ministry’s shared services data migration project manager. “Migrated data needs to be usable in the new system, so we don’t want it to be incomplete or of poor quality. Also, it’s about migrating not from one system to another, but from 70 systems to one, and management needed a better idea of the extent to which data had become corrupted.”

Timmers had to decide whether to re-input everything manually into SAP or to automate the migration process using software. He looked at other organizations that had carried out similarly large migration projects—particularly financial institutions, which regularly have to perform them following mergers and acquisitions. Although these involve completely different logistical processes from those used at the Ministry, Timmers increasingly realized that it was almost possible to automate migration projects.

Together with IVENT, the Ministry’s information provision and technology business group (including the former defense information and communications technology organization), Timmers wrote a European tender for a data quality solution. At that time, IVENT was involved with MisDef, or Defense Information Systems Management, a project designed to improve the quality of data within the Ministry. IVENT had found that it could not obtain reliable information from the legacy system, and a great deal of data was missing. Informatica won the tender.

Rolling Out the Solution

Together with the Ministry's Shared Service Desk (SSD) team and Informatica partner and system integrator KVL, Informatica Professional ServicesSM consultants began rolling out the Informatica Platform at the Ministry. The data migration road map (DMS) was set up using the new and existing Informatica tooling.

"We built the DMS from a number of components," Timmers recalls. "The data from existing systems is extracted by the data integration engine, which runs on Informatica PowerCenter™. It's then stored in a staging environment and prepared for migration to the new system." In practice, this means that the Ministry's data undergoes cleansing, enrichment, harmonization, and integration using Informatica Data Quality™. After these quality enhancements, the data is transferred using transformation and conversion rules to a second staging environment, where it complies with SAP requirements in terms of such issues as data field lengths and the use of prescribed units. Finally, it is migrated to SAP.

The DMS includes not just the hardware and software but also working specifications and procedures. "We elaborated the procedure for the data migration in a methodology, which describes how to carry out a quality-controlled migration in six stages," Timmers explains. "By introducing a standard method of reporting decisions and results, we can assess the quality assurance of the migration process, and also decentralize the preparation process. However, the most important aspect of the DMS is the availability of integrated knowledge which internal clients—the navy, army, air force, and gendarmerie—can use for their migration projects. This gives us significant benefits in terms of efficiency and transparency."

Cooperation Crucial to Project Success

According to Timmers, "Cooperation was crucial in drawing up the DMS—and together SAP, Informatica, and KVL all played an important part in this phase. It's not about individual successes. There's no point having a situation where Informatica PowerCenter is working fine but SAP is not online." Timmers says that organizing the project was also a significant challenge. "The staff involved were all specialists and perfectionists and had to work very closely both with outside parties and with one another." Clear agreements were also reached with internal clients, most of whom were managers. "The IT department sat down with clients at an early stage to identify their needs. This was a bit more time-consuming to start with, but the investment reaped dividends because projects could be delivered successfully after one or two attempts rather than five or six. It also created a great deal of mutual trust as we worked towards going live."

In a hierarchical organization such as the Ministry, the data migration process required something of a cultural revolution. "Business and IT now have joint responsibility for project outcomes, so they always have to be reading from the same page," says Timmers. "People need to be willing to step beyond their usual boundaries and share responsibility for the end result."

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First Successes and Future Plans

The first data migration project to be completed was financial administration, and some 40 legacy systems are now being migrated. In principle, all of the projects currently in the pipeline must use the DMS. This is being audited by the Defense Audit Service, which is looking in detail at how it fits together and whether it offers a watertight guarantee of quality.

“We now want to make further improvements to the services provided by the DMS,” Timmers says. “Our aim is to continue standardizing the procedures and the way it interfaces with clients, so that it can be offered by the line organization as a shared service at the end of next year. We want to make data migration a routine task over the coming year. Together with our partners SAP, KVL, and Informatica Professional Services, we’re confident that this will succeed.”

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ABOUT INFORMATICA

Informatica Corporation is the leading independent provider of enterprise data integration software and services. Using Informatica services and solutions, companies can access, discover, cleanse, integrate, and deliver data across enterprise systems to save costs, reduce complexity, ensure consistency, and empower the business. More than 3,600 companies worldwide rely on Informatica for their end-to-end enterprise data integration needs.



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