



The Netherlands streamlines
the registration of immigrants.

CHALLENGE

Dispersed registration and processing of information made efficiency, speed and quality difficult to guarantee.

SOLUTION

IND implemented Progress® Sonic ESB® to enable its chain partners to access information through a central database.

WHY PROGRESS® SOFTWARE

IND chose Sonic ESB based on the long-term ROI they expect to achieve, competitive pricing and Progress' demonstrated success with numerous other customers.

BENEFIT

The organization enhanced efficiency, optimized procedures, improved quality of decision-making and significant cost savings.

CASE STUDY

Thanks to the integration technology of Progress Software, the identification, registration and file processing of immigrants in the Netherlands is proceeding much more smoothly and efficiently.

Each year the Dutch Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) processes over 38,000 cases for naturalization and 20,000 cases for asylum as well as over 61,000 regular cases (requests for authorization for temporary stay, MVV). The registration and processing of all this data until now, was spread among the various departments (partners) who play a role in carrying out the immigration policy. Aspects such as efficiency, speed and quality were difficult to guarantee.

This is why the Ministry of Justice decided to further streamline the organization of the Immigrants departments. Administrative tasks were and still are passed on as much as possible to the IND, and the Immigrants departments and other partners involved with the immigration process are now working more closely together than before.

The result was that the technology that was behind the organization had to be reorganized and linked together. Progress Software provided the solution for the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) in the form of an Enterprise Service Bus (ESB). With this technology IND opens up its information to a central database, the Immigrants Basic Service (BVV).

Today, 25 departments of the police and the IND have been using the same personal data and information regarding the status of immigrants, which are stored in the BVV.

With Progress Sonic ESB, the data of all immigrants is registered unambiguously and can easily be consulted. In the future, other partners involved with the immigration process who need to consult this data will be connected to this database. The duplications of names that one service registers differently from the other will be a thing of the past.



The IND has been using the services and products of Progress Software for many years. They are very happy with their Sonic ESB implementation.

“In the past, the Koninklijke Marechaussee (Royal Military Police), the IND, the Immigrants departments (VD), the Central Reception Organization for Asylum Seekers (COA) and other partners involved with the process each used their own IT systems, registration procedures and their own software applications,” says Bob van Graft, Adjunct Director of the ICT department of the Immigration and Naturalization Service of the Ministry of Justice. “The result was that the same information was registered several times and in various ways, when of course it is better to register once and unequivocally. This is how the idea of the Immigrants Basic Service (BVV) came about.”

The joint database of the BVV comprises four components: the names of each immigrant registered, a reference index that gives information on what phase of the procedure the person is in, identification details and biometric details such as fingerprints.

Due to the direct collaboration between the various services, the timeframe of a file between the various partners can be reduced. This makes the procedures much quicker and increases the quality of the decisions.

“In the long term, as a result of the technology of Progress Software, we expect our efficiency to increase by 20 to 30 percent. This means a cost saving of 3 to 4 million Euros per year.”

— Bob van Graft
Adjunct Director of the
ICT Department

MESSAGE BROKER


The BVV operates from the ITO (IT organization of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The BVV is an open and transparent system that communicates with the various applications in every organization through a 'message broker' that is based on a pre-defined protocols book.

“The advantage of such a 'message broker' is that every partner can communicate in their own way through their own applications,” says Van Graft. A message broker is software that has two functions: it sends information via the message component (this is 'routing') and it transforms the supplied information. This transformation is necessary because the various applications work with different data formats.

Through such a message broker, all partners are able to acquire and search for the necessary information from their own software application. “In this way we avoid the scattered storage of information that used to cause so many problems. For example, when one department spelled a name differently from the other department this often used to cause confusion and bad communication,” says Van Graft.

ENTERPRISE SERVICE BUS

All the organizations involved or chain partners can choose the technology that they wish to use to communicate with the BVV. The IND has chosen Sonic ESB. But before this stage, the administrative procedures first had to be attuned to one another. “This coordination process has taken eighteen months,” says Van Graft. “During that time we have, for example, developed a protocol that enables us to determine who identifies and registers the immigrants and in what way. Only then could we deal with the informatics.”



“Computerization is a highly complex matter, whereby every organization has to make choices concerning certain solutions, both technical and organizational. Each time, you also have to decide what you want to keep and what you want to dispose of in both these areas.”

“From the very start we decided that we wanted to use open standards and Java technology, but at the time we still had to choose a supplier,” says Van Graft. “We consulted Microsoft, IBM, WebMethods, Progress Software and also market analyst Gartner, and eventually went for Progress Software.”

There were various reasons for this choice. “The philosophy of Progress Software fit in the best with our own vision of an open architecture with adapters. In addition, Philips Corporate IT from Eindhoven had positive experiences with Progress Software. Their practical experience was a good reference for us. For some time now, Gartner has been propagating the ESB as an important integration philosophy or standard, and this, too, creates trust. And finally the cost price, the ROI in the long term and the expected efficiency were important in our final decision.”

“Through the streamlining of the Immigrants departments, both at the organizational level and the ICT level, the many procedures can be handled more efficiently and more quickly. And that is ultimately in the interest of the immigrants themselves,” suggests Van Graft.

The decreasing number of new requests for asylum incidentally does not mean that the various chain partners will no longer have anything to do in the future. “The work simply shifts,” explains Van Graft. “The fact is that we notice that the numbers of asylum requests are decreasing, while at the same time the regular influx via visa requests or requests for Dutch nationality are on the rise. Also with these procedures the BVV database is proving its usefulness.”

QUICK IMPLEMENTATION

The IND decided to work with Progress Software’s Sonic ESB. The entire implementation process took about six months. “That is very quick, but thanks to the mutual trust between the IND and Progress Software we succeeded in completing the implementation by the end of June,” says Van Graft. During the execution of the project Progress Software passed on the necessary knowledge to the internal personnel of the IND.

The hardware infrastructure was tackled first. Afterwards a start was made on Sonic ESB, as a message broker between the BVV and INDIS, the information system of the IND. Parallel to this the functionality, the INDIS application was modified and expanded. In April and May the new technology was extensively tested. “Testing is very important, because sometimes things work well on paper but not necessarily in practice. As it involves a complex architecture, we have included a so-called ‘software switch’. This enables us to immediately revert to the old system if something goes wrong. Fortunately, however, we carried out long and extensive testing, which led to everything going well on our side when we went live.”

IMPROVED COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION AMONG PARTNERS

The transformation of the many small, relatively independently operating services to a smoothly collaborating network is not completed by a long way. At an organizational level, various activities are still being transferred or centralized.

The temporary project organization, Immigrants Project Coordination (PCV), will be discontinued at the end of this year, and its tasks will be taken over by the Directorate-General for International Affairs and Immigrants Affairs (DGI/AV). This is to be the new management organization for the entire immigration process. At a technical level, Sonic ESB also has to take care of the internal communication between the various systems and applications of the IND. What's more, the aim is that each partner eventually links up with the BVV, which now is not yet the case.

"It is not always easy to bring the separate services to this form of collaboration," says Van Graft. "In doing so they after all, lose part of their autonomy and they have to trust and communicate with the partners. This is not easy considering it was done differently for so many years. Be that as it may, ICT remains just a part of every computerization story, also in this case, and a lot of energy goes into the preparation process which helps to make a successful ultimate implementation possible," says Van Graft.

INCREASING EFFICIENCY AND REDUCING COSTS

Thanks to this computerization project, the Dutch immigration process has undergone a complete metamorphosis. From a fragmented collection of organizations, each with their own way of working, there arose a more tightly-knit organization of chain partners that in the future will all work in the same manner with the same centralized data.

"We are very pleased with the results up until now. In the long term, as a result of the technology of Progress Software we expect our efficiency to increase by 20 to 30 %. This means a cost saving of 3 to 4 million Euros per year," says Van Graft. He hopes that the other partners involved with immigration will connect to the central databank in the future and will also opt for the integration technology of Progress Software. "This can only benefit the streamlining of the entire immigration process," concludes Van Graft.

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Progress Software Corporation (Nasdaq: PRGS) provides application infrastructure software for the development, deployment, integration and management of business applications. Our goal is to maximize the benefits of information technology while minimizing its complexity and total cost of ownership.

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