SUCCESS STORY

EU – LISA

Making passport-free travel possible for more than 400 million Europeans.

Extending the scope of the inter-governmental information system by facilitating free movement within the Schengen Area of Europe.

The challenge

The Schengen Area of Europe was established by the 1985 Schengen Agreement between five countries. It aimed to gradually abolish checks at common borders between the member states. Since then membership of the Schengen Area has grown to 29 countries. The Schengen Information System (SIS) sits at the heart of this 'borderless' area. First rolled out in the 1990s, it enables the exchange of information between national border control, police, customs, visa, immigration, judicial and vehicle registration authorities in the Schengen Area.

Having proved its value in facilitating free movement and enabling co-operation between police and judicial services, the SIS had begun to reach the end of its viable life. The European Commission (EC) agreed to implement a new system, known as SIS ll. This would use state-of-the-art technology and incorporate more functionality. The challenge would be how to successfully involve all 29 member states and ensure the new system met with universal approval. The transition from the SIS to SIS ll also needed to be carried out without interruption to the service and had to incorporate a significant data migration. This was a huge challenge, necessitating the synchronisation of more than 300 IT systems across all member states.

Key points

- Successful migration of data from the legacy information system to SIS ll.

- Interconnection of multiple national information systems across Europe's Schengen Area.

- Combined business process consulting and technology implementation solution.

Solution

The EC awarded the contract for developing and delivering SIS ll to a consortium of Sopra Steria and HP. A state-of-the-art IT system, SIS ll consists of three components: a central system, Schengen states' national systems and a communication infrastructure between the central and national systems.

The Sopra Steria Interconnection Box (SIB) is also a key component. This is a software solution that enables member states' users to access the data on the central system and provides the means to integrate the various national systems with the centre. It ensures that users always receive the latest version of the messages exchanged between the national and central systems.

Delivering Transformation. Together.

sopra steria

How we worked together

The development and implementation of SIS ll was a highly collaborative and complex process. It had to balance the many different requirements and expectations of each member state.

The Sopra Steria team worked from numerous locations within the Schengen Area, including France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany and Spain. Team members also worked locally in several countries including Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Romania and Slovenia to incorporate specific business processes into the SIB solution.

With diverse skillsets and a disparate workforce, Sopra Steria recognised the importance of a strong programme management structure. In addition a senior level steering committee involving both Sopra Steria and the European Commission was complemented by both global and national programme management boards. This ensured on-going dialogue between stakeholders.

As the prime contractor in the consortium with HP, Sopra Steria's role included:
- Creation of a standardised Interface Control Document governing the communication between national and central systems
- Specifications, design and development, including a holistic test strategy and the design of test cases
- Development of central and national simulators allowing each country to develop and test their system's integration with SIS ll
- Overall project governance and coordination
- Implementation of the system
- Management of the data migration and intensive monitoring following go-live

Results and Benefits

SIS ll became operational on 9 April 2013. The migration of data was an important requirement. Steria had to carry this out without sight of the data itself due to high level of sensitivity of the information. Like its predecessor, SIS ll features a database containing 'alerts' (wanted persons, firearms, bank notes, vehicles and issued documents). SIS ll has been enhanced with new categories of alerts. These include stolen aircraft, boats, boat engines, containers, and industrial equipment. Improved functionality also includes the following:
- Biometric matching, primarily of fingerprints and photographs, for identification and verification
- Direct queries in the central system allowing fast access to data via standard searches
- Linking of alerts on persons, objects and vehicles supporting police investigation processes
- European arrest warrants attached to alerts identifying people wanted for arrest.
- Information on identity misuse to prevent misidentification of criminals.

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