

German Federal Government Integrates European Visa Information System (VIS)

Capgemini sd&m implements the VIS into the German visa processes at the Federal Office of Administration (BVA)

The Situation

After four years of debate, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union issued a regulation (EC 767/2008) for the installation of a Visa Information System (VIS). The VIS will contain the data of all short-term visas issued by the 28 countries of the Schengen Agreement. The purpose is to improve the implementation of the common visa policy, fight Visa-Shopping and provide data for the prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and other serious criminal offences.

In order to fulfil these requirements, the Bundesverwaltungsamt (BVA) - Germany's Federal Office of Administration - asked Capgemini sd&m in 2006 to design the strategy for the integration of VIS into the processes of the BVA by extending the existing national systems and implementing additional systems. In addition, Capgemini sd&m would support the work of the

BVA as a participant of the European VIS project group and in the context of the European test phases.

The Solution

Capgemini sd&m provided three specific areas of work to the BVA. Consultation was given in relation to the application of the VIS in the German process for national security. A strategy for the integration of the VIS was developed. Intensive support was given to the BVA for the analysis and annotation of the VIS concepts at the European level. In Germany, three VIS workshops were organized to present Germany's VIS strategy to the European Commission and other Schengen Member States.

Integration of the VIS into the German visa process

Capgemini sd&m extended the existing systems

“We are very satisfied with the flexible architecture of the developed systems. The service-oriented architecture allowed for a very dynamic integration of all accessing systems. The close cooperation with Capgemini sd&m during the whole project lifecycle was a key success factor for the VIS integration.”

**Matthias Kohlhage,
VIS Project Manager,
BVA**



to use both the VIS and the national visa database. System specifications and system design documents were written for these extensions. Once the integration was completed and tested, the BVA launched the software with the support of Capgemini sd&m.

Implementation of new systems for accessing the VIS data

A number of systems were implemented to provide the access and administration of the VIS data:

- the interface system which controls the communication between the national system and the VIS
- a national VIS administration and reporting system
- the system VIS-Internal Security, which provides additional access to the VIS data.

For each implemented and extended system, Capgemini sd&m wrote system specifications and system design documents. All systems were tested intensively before the launch by the BVA.

The technology used included:

- Operating System: UNIX (SLES 9 as well as SLES 10), Windows XP
- Application server: Tomcat 5.5, Websphere Application server 5.1, Borland Application Server 5.2
- Software Libraries: Hibernate 3.2, Spring 2.0, Apache Axis 2.0.

The Result

With the integration of the VIS into the national visa process, additional data can be used for visa decisions, thereby creating additional security within Germany.

Through a very transparent and highly automated integration with an emphasis on user comfort, the additional usage of the VIS within the national systems creates a minimal additional workload.

With the intensive support of Capgemini sd&m, Germany was among the first countries to fully integrate the VIS. The concept for this integration and the experiences gained during the implementation phase has provided a strong foundation for the VIS implementations in other Member States.

During the testing phase the team of employees from the BVA and Capgemini sd&m were able to identify bugs at a very early stage. As a result, the development of the central VIS was improved.

In addition, the BVA and Germany has gained an excellent reputation among other member states and the European Commission.

How the Federal Office of Administration and Capgemini sd&m Worked Together

The BVA and Capgemini sd&m worked together very closely on the integration of the VIS. For over half a year, members of Capgemini sd&m worked as members of the BVA VIS team in order to specify the integration of the VIS into the national

Visa system. Because of their extensive technical and business knowledge, Capgemini sd&m members were closely integrated into most of the activities of the BVA concerning VIS.

“ As a result of the great competence and dedication of the Capgemini sd&m team, Germany was one of the first Schengen Member states to possess VIS fully integrated in its central visa system. The flexible integration of such complex business process into our existing systems was a great accomplishment, with which we are very impressed.,,

**Ulrich Maßolle,
Senior Director, BVA**



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Approved by:
 Ulrich Maßolle, Senior Director, BVA
 Markus Voß, Senior Project Manager, Capgemini

In collaboration with

the Bundesverwaltungsamt

The Federal Office of Administration (Bundesverwaltungsamt - BVA) is the central service agency at federal level. With about 2,300 employees, it carries out more than 100 different tasks on behalf of the federal ministries and their remits. These tasks include

specialized tasks, centralized cross-sectional tasks and aids to modernization. It oversees the implementation of state-of-the-art technologies in the whole visa application process in Germany. Germany is becoming an ever more important hub in the national and international security architecture of Europe.