



Overview

Challenge

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency needed a more centralized system that would offer users with simple, streamlined and easy-to-understand reports accessible via the Web.

Why IBM?

After evaluating several solutions, the Canadian Food Inspection Agency chose the IBM Cognos BI product for its performance, flexibility and ease of use, along with IBM Cognos Professional Services to benefit from exceptional expertise.

Solution

The IBM Cognos 8 BI system enables more in-depth analysis of operations and increased insight into mission-critical data.

Benefits

Continuous access to key data; rich integration with multiple data sources; flexibility in slicing and dicing information for analysis; quick and easy access to a variety reports.

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– Karim Bechane, Manager, Enterprise Reporting, Information Management Division, Canadian Food Inspection Agency

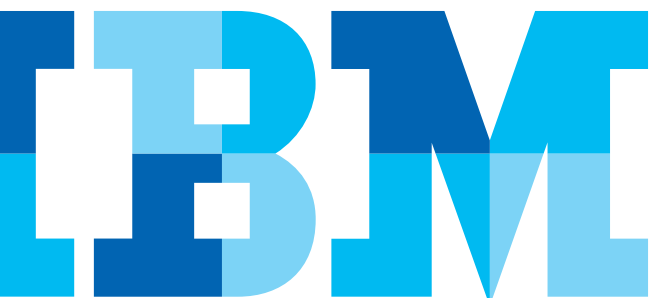
Canadian Food Inspection Agency gains valuable insight into data and centralized business intelligence solution, thanks to IBM Cognos products and services

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) supports the Government of Canada’s priorities for bolstering economic prosperity, strengthening security at the border, managing the safety of food supply, protecting the environment and contributing to the overall health of Canadian citizens. Its primary mission is to minimize and manage public health risks associated with the food supply and transmission of animal disease to humans. The CFIA is dedicated to safeguarding food, animals and plants, which enhances the health and well-being of Canada’s people, environment and economy. It also contributes to consumer protection and market access based on the application of science and standards.

Challenges faced

In order for Canadian government agencies to have as much data on hand as possible, there has been a historical need for unified information management. This information – including key industry regulations that often change, as well as historical data – can help executives make better business decisions. With these factors in mind, the CFIA needed a more centralized system from which to pull data, better access and management of information, and the ability to build and access reports more easily, and by more users.

Therefore, in 2006, the CFIA, with key support from its CIO, knew it needed to replace its largely manual processes with an easy-to-deploy business intelligence (BI) solution that also provided the ability to access data from its ERP system and data warehouse in a quicker, more structured manner to increase reporting efficiency. After evaluating several solutions, the CFIA selected IBM® Cognos® BI because it offered a straightforward user interface that could provide access to multiple data sources and make accessing reports less painful, and with less IT involvement.



Strategy followed

In 2008, the CFIA began its pilot deployment in the Fish and Seafood Program. This Program which focuses on verifying compliance with the standards related to quality, safety and identity of fish and seafood products processed in federal establishments or imported into Canada – required the ability to track and drill into data related to specific standards.

Before deploying IBM Cognos BI, the CFIA opted to leverage the IBM Cognos Education team to train users in advance of the deployment, as well as the IBM Cognos Professional Services team for their expertise in designing the right solution specific to the needs of the CFIA. The Professional Services team built a Project Success Plan (PSP) for the Fish and Seafood Program Reporting application, which shed insight into multiple approaches, deliverables, resource requirements, timeframes and estimated costs to analyze, design, develop, test and implement a fully functional solution based on the project requirements. Serving as an implementation “roadmap,” the PSP set the course and timeframe of the BI implementation for the CFIA.

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Working together, the IBM Cognos professional services team and CFIA’s IT team initially developed the report catalogs and made them available to the CFIA Report Administration Office within the Fish and Seafood Program. This office creates reports for other users – including senior management, inspectors, managers and those within field operations – and then makes them available via a shared network. Reports are deployed through IBM Cognos BI to a limited audience of about 100 users across the country. The reports focus on several key performance indicators (KPIs),

including how they are doing with inspections, whether they conducted enough inspections during a given time period, and overall, how the business is doing. The reports developed are then used to report back to the Government of Canada Parliament and Office of the Auditor General.

Once the pilot program was fully operational, the CFIA rolled out IBM Cognos BI to three additional areas in 2009, including the Fertilizer, Feeds and Processed Food Programs, and plans to roll IBM Cognos BI out to all Programs using a staged approach.

Benefits realized

Before using IBM Cognos BI, it could take days to aggregate data and build appropriate reports. Now, reports can be automatically created and delivered in an easily readable snapshot format to users when they need it most. Instead of pulling and integrating data manually from different sources, CFIA now performs data integration at the data warehouse level so that users can access all the data they need from a single, centralized source. This has dramatically shortened the process itself, and taken the manual work out of the process, while enabling employees to work from highly accurate data with a smaller risk for errors. The CFIA has also been able to reduce the reliance on IT to build reports, as users can now do that directly.

Additionally, by sending users to training (in particular, the power users) in advance of the deployment, users were ready to build and push out reports right away. This also lent nicely to quick uptake in user adoption, because, as Bechane notes, “the appetite for data comes when you start ‘eating,’ and we are at that point now where users are asking for more and more data, now that they know what’s possible.”

Looking back, Bechane notes that having the CIO as a key sponsor, and more importantly, having a strong partnership with the line of business management and users, were pivotal to the success of this initiative. With four departments already live with IBM Cognos BI solutions, the CFIA plans to roll out IBM Cognos BI to all of the 14 Programs within the organization.



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