PROJECT:
Partner
element61

Project requirements
- Streamline the planning of all services
- Avoid duplication of effort
- Integration with SAP ERP

SAP solution and service
- SAP Business Planning & Consolidation (BPC), NetWeaver version

Advantages
- A consistent planning tool simplifies support
- Dramatic time savings for planning evaluators
- Excel front-end is recognized by users
- Partly prefilled forms drastically reduce work

K.U. Leuven: Oldest University in the Low Countries Chooses Advanced Planning Solution

Properly channeling an organization employing over 9,000 people is a tricky business at best. The fact that it consists of various semi-autonomous departments is an additional challenge for the Catholic University of Leuven (K.U. Leuven). Until recently, each division was following its own planning method: a particularly messy situation that screamed for the consistent use of a planning tool. The Leuven Alma Mater chose SAP BPC NetWeaver, a tool that will simplify significantly the task of the central planning service.

K.U. Leuven consists of the central support services and three groups – divided into departments, faculties and research groups. Staff planning takes place at every level. Until 2010, however, no application was consistently used across the organization. This was especially a problem for the central services which had to process the different planning formats. “All the different planning forms, mainly Excel files without a consistent subdivision, had to be processed manually,” recalls Veerle Stallaert, Senior Business Consultant at K.U. Leuven. “This was double the work. It was therefore logical to switch to a system that could involve all the services.”

Building on the existing system

K.U. Leuven relies on SAP ERP to lead the whole HR policy in the right direction. The choice of SAP Business Planning and Consolidation (SAP BPC) was therefore logical. “For us it was crucial to have the NetWeaver version of SAP BPC, since our ERP system also runs on that platform,” continues Stallaert. “Having both software solutions in the same environment allows us to make a direct link and share data.”

Even though K.U. Leuven was very familiar with SAP ERP and NetWeaver, SAP BPC was uncharted territory for the University. Consequently, they looked for a consulting partner. “Right from the first meeting, element61 had us convinced of their qualities,” adds Stallaert. “They clearly had sufficient experience with SAP BPC. We chose to carry out the whole implementation in-house, coached by a element61 consultant. In retrospect, this was definitely a good choice.”

Own applications also enabled by NetWeaver

The project started in September 2009, with an analysis of the situation and outlining of the plans. Once a week on average,
“If all services use SAP BPC, I expect that the evaluators will require only half the time for the planning. And at the same time, the data is of a much better quality.”

Veerle Stallaert, Senior Business Consultant, K.U. Leuven

50% time saving

Obviously, the fact that SAP BPC uses Excel to input data is an advantage. This ensures that the transition is not too drastic,” comments Stallaert. “The evaluators at central level especially are those who will save a lot of time with SAP BPC. If everyone is fully involved and everything runs in a streamlined way, I expect that they will require only half the time to process the planning. And at the same time, the data will be greatly improved. In addition, report generation is made a lot easier by the use of ready-made templates. This also makes it easier to monitor planning.”

A flawless launch? “No, not quite,” admits Stallaert. “The startup procedure using the Windows terminal server is considered too restrictive and the performance could be further optimized. In this area, we are still expecting further assistance from SAP.”

Looking forward, at K.U. Leuven there are a number of projects in the pipeline in which the potential role of SAP BPC is being investigated. For the general operating budget, an implementation project with SAP BPC has already been started. What is more, K.U. Leuven has decided to entrust element61 with all the consultancy work around this solution for a period of three years.

K.U. Leuven was founded in 1425 and can call itself the oldest university in the Low Countries. After a long and eventful history, the University is today a modern academic institution – in fact, the largest in Belgium with over 38,000 students. Ever since the 16th century research has played a central role in the activities of the Leuven Alma Mater, which is reflected in the many successful scientific spin-offs from the University.