



Industry

Public sector

Business Issue

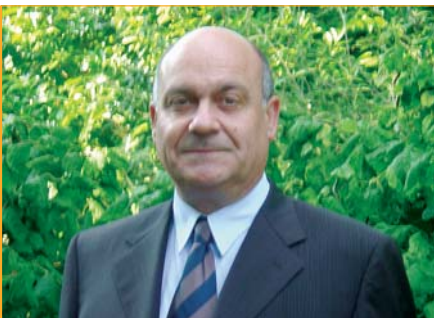
Make accurate health-policy recommendations

Solution

SAS® BI Server and SAS® ETL Server

Benefits

Faster collection and interpretation of data, accurate information on health related figures, accurate policy recommendations



"We not only use the SAS platform as an everyday operational solution; it also helps us to formulate specific policy recommendations for the federal Belgian government."

Luc Billion

IT Manager at the FPS Public Health

The Power to Know.

SAS platform watches over public health...

... and helps the FPS Public Health to formulate more accurate policies

The FPS Public Health (Federal Public Service Public Health, Safety of the Food Chain and the Environment) is responsible for developing health related policies and putting them into effect. To accomplish this, it needs to transform abstract medical data from across the country into concrete knowledge. In the past, much of this data lacked reliability. This jeopardized the successful execution of the FPS's mission. To resolve these problems, FPS's engineers implemented SAS data mining and reporting tools to precisely map the medical needs of the Belgian population.

How many heart surgeons does a given hospital have? What medicines do the nurses administer? How many beds are available in each local hospital? Accurate and up-to-date answers to these relatively simple questions are absolutely indispensable for the FPS Public Health to do its job properly. With more than 200 hospitals across Belgium, collecting and interpreting these data is far from evident. But with the right kind of information in hand, managers can determine the funding of each and every hospital.

Spend time interpreting data, not collecting it

"We collect an enormous amount of medical data from hospitals, group practices and physiotherapists on a regular basis", explains Thierry Gravet, CIO of the FPS Public Health. "This data encompass information on, for instance, the number of surgeons at a particular hospital, or the kind of medication used at a group practice. The information reaches us in raw and unwieldy form. In the past, we spent 95% of our time collecting the data and preparing it for

interpretation. With the new SAS platform, that has been reduced to 25%. We can now spend the remaining 75% on analyzing the information."

Accurate view of financial needs

Besides generating standard reports, the SAS tools allow users to dynamically retrieve the information they are interested in. Luc Billion, IT Manager at the FPS Public Health, explains why this is so important: "We have an obligation towards the Belgian population to correctly allocate federal subsidies. That is why we require accurate information on for instance the number of beds in any given hospital. Our organization needs these figures to determine the amount of funding. With the new SAS platform in place, that's information we can more easily retrieve now. Even more, thanks to the unique drill-down feature of the SAS tools, we can for instance investigate the evolution of the number of beds in a particular hospital. This allows us to spot irregularities and react accordingly."

Simulate changes before putting them in effect

The objective is to have the SAS platform accessed on the intranet throughout the FPS. Managers and decision makers can easily log on and dynamically generate reports to retrieve the information they want. That allows to not only generate reports from behind any workstation, but also simulate certain parameters in the model from any given location. "It is always a good idea to test changes before putting them into effect. Our managers, for instance, would like to know how they can optimize the number of beds in a

hospital without putting the public health in jeopardy. They can also benchmark the performance of the hospitals to mean values. All this valuable information is only a few clicks away."

Formulating policy recommendations

But the SAS tools are not merely meant for operational use. The FPS Public Health uses the information retrieved from the business intelligence server to formulate specific policy recommendations for the Belgian government. One of the things the FPS plans on doing, is evaluating the availability of ambulances. "Once the necessary data is received, the information can be analyzed with SAS. We can identify problems and inform the government of the situation. Policymakers can then decide what action to undertake. As such, SAS plays an important role in fulfilling the mission.

Cross-referenced reporting tools

The FPS Public Health installed the SAS platform at its Data Management department first. In the future however, its engineers will install it in more departments. This will make it possible to cross-reference information from different divisions in the FPS. Once completely installed, the SAS platform also allows to retrieve information from other governmental institutions such as

the Federal Department of Economics or Social Security. Luc Billion points out the advantages: "The SAS platform enables us to generate reports that cross-reference data from a wide variety of databases. For instance, how many physiotherapists does a given hospital have? What kind of medicines do they use? How many industrial accidents occurred in the last six months? How do these statistics influence the rating of the hospital as a whole? With this information, we can guarantee public health and make sure that every patient receives the best possible treatment."

Leaner, meaner and more flexible

The FPS Public Health chose SAS as their IT partner. Luc Billion explains why: "SAS offers a complete solution. Other companies merely offer tools. The SAS platform is a completely integrated technology and focuses on added value for the user. That way, it enables us to realize our mission. We already used SAS tools in the past, so we were quite familiar with their product portfolio. For those that needed the extra training, SAS organized instruction sessions for everybody that comes in contact with the tools. I would summarize by stating that SAS products have made our organization leaner, meaner and much more flexible than any other ICT company could."

How the Belgian FPS Public Health benefits from SAS

- Faster collection and interpretation of data
- Accurate and up-to-date information on health related figures
- Benchmarking of overall performance of hospitals against mean values
- Cross-referenced reporting
- More accurate policy recommendations
- Simulation tools to test changes before putting them in effect



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