



**Katelijne  
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## SAS OFFERS THE FLEXIBILITY OF STEPWISE EXPANSION

The National Institute for the Social Security of the Self-Employed (RSVZ-INASTI) publishes several annual documents with statistical information on the self-employed in Belgium. Producing those yearbooks however, has its downsides. It is costly, time-consuming, and only communicates static information to a limited number of people. RSVZ-INASTI wanted to change things for the better and decided to build a web-based, interactive statistical tool in order to create a dynamic environment for a larger audience. SAS proved to be the right partner. Because of its flexibility, SAS enables to develop the tool gradually and always within budget restrictions.

### Sector

Government

### Business Issue

Creating an interactive environment where a large audience can find information on the self-employed in Belgium while limiting operational expenses.

### Solution

SAS® BI Server, SAS® ENTERPRISE GUIDE®

### Benefits

- **Significant cost reduction:** the National Institute for the Social Security of the Self-Employed (RSVZ-INASTI) has practically eliminated the cost of publishing the printed yearbooks with the launch of the web-based statistical tool.
- **Improved service:** RSVZ-INASTI is able to reach a far larger audience with its on-line statistical tool. It also creates a more dynamic environment in which users can easily generate the statistics they desire and export them to Microsoft Excel or PDF for further analysis.
- **Gradual service expansion:** thanks to the flexibility of SAS, RSVZ-INASTI can easily and quickly add new statistics, databases, and other pertinent information. This also enables the institute to evolve according to annual budget limitations.

## BUILDING AN ON-LINE, INTERACTIVE STATISTICAL TOOL

### Statistical information on the self-employed in Belgium

RSVZ-INASTI is the key administrative center for the social security of the self-employed in Belgium. It, for instance, makes sure that they are insured properly, make the correct contributions, get their pensions, and get correct answers to a multitude of questions. Each year, the institute also publishes yearbooks containing a variety of statistical information on the self-employed population in Belgium. They contain evolutionary, statistical, and comparative data which are used for research purposes by universities and professional research agencies, among others. The data are also used by RSVZ-INASTI to answer questions from Parliament and other public authorities.

### Creating an open and dynamic environment

These yearbooks and the increasing amount of questions from Belgian public authorities weigh heavily on RSVZ-INASTI's operations. "Previously, putting together the yearbooks was a time-consuming and expensive task," explains Luc Lievens, statistician at RSVZ-INASTI. "For instance, those documents were published in Dutch and French, and each version was printed in 1,600 copies."

In 2007, RSVZ-INASTI decided to open up information to a larger audience, without sky-rocketing its budget. And it wanted to create a more dynamic environment in which users can create their own statistics. "We decided to create an on-line, interactive statistical tool," states Katelijne Minnaert, also a statistician at RSVZ-INASTI. "However, our yearly budget is limited. So we needed robust and flexible software, which we can gradually expand and adapt."

### Flexibility of SAS realizes cost-effective solution

SAS proved to be the best option. The flexibility of SAS enables RSVZ-INASTI to expand the scope of its statistical tool step-by-step. "Adding new data? Not a problem. We can easily integrate new internal as well as external data. This way we can build a giant data mart at our own pace," says Lievens.

Even a new statistical ratio can be added quickly. "In our opinion," continues Lievens, "SAS is the most robust and advanced statistical program available. It can automatically calculate each type of statistical ratio that we require. A table with the number of self-employed people in Belgium categorized by age and gender is now available in a matter of seconds. In addition, adding a new

“SAS provides RSVZ-INASTI the flexibility to gradually extend the scope of its statistical tool in line with its budget.”

**Katelijne Minnaert,**  
statistician at RSVZ-INASTI

“SAS enabled RSVZ-INASTI to improve its service, increase its customer base, and practically eliminate the cost of its yearbooks.”

ratio only requires including a new record in the system. We can easily do this ourselves. That is a major advantage, bearing in mind that we previously had to calculate all ratios manually.”

#### **A dynamic environment where users create their own reports**

SAS also brings interactivity to the table. Via the on-line tool, universities, professional researchers, and other users are able to put together their own report with the statistical ratios of their choice. “How many self-employed females are there in Belgium? Or, how has the number of co-working spouses evolved over the past five years? These are just two examples of the many statistical ratios that users can calculate themselves, just by selecting the appropriate parameters in the various dropdown menus,” points out Minnaert.

The tool also enables users to study the statistical information in greater depth. The reports are easily exported to Microsoft Excel where they can be subjected to additional calculations. The information can also be consulted in PDF format, enabling users to easily insert it into their own reports or presentations.

#### **On-line tool with limited access when necessary**

The printed yearbooks were dispersed to 1,600 addressees. The new RSVZ-INASTI tool however, reaches a far greater audience. Statistical information on the self-employed in Belgium is now available to people all over the world, ranging from research centers and interest groups to college students. And this at only a fraction of the time and costs of publishing the printed yearbooks.

The tool is freely available on the institute’s website. “Users do not require any password or login to access our statistical tool,” acknowledges Minnaert. “This doesn’t mean that all information on the self-employed is out in the open. Some information is considered private and therefore not accessible via the tool. In addition, we have the possibility of restricting access wherever it is appropriate. If necessary, SAS allows us to create various user profiles and attach certain access restrictions.”

#### **User-friendliness built in**

In order to be able to reach such a vast audience, RSVZ-INASTI stipulated certain conditions. Hence, the tool supports various browser technologies, such as Firefox

and Internet Explorer. It also enables users to immediately switch between two languages, without being redirected to the website’s homepage. If a user calculates a certain ratio in, for instance, Dutch he or she merely needs to click once to have the same information readily available in French. The users are also able to get to region-specific information by clicking on a map of Belgium.

“SAS was able to meet all of our requirements,” concludes Minnaert. “They enabled us to create a user-friendly, on-line, well-performing, dynamic environment for statistics on the social security of self-employed in Belgium. And they made sure we have a strong basis that we can steadily expand.”



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**OCTOBER 2009**

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