



UK UTILITY BECOMES MORE AGILE WITH IFS APPLICATIONS™

Since implementing component-based IFS Applications to manage its assets, Barking Power Station has improved its business processes thanks to the flexibility provided by the software. Now the company can retrieve and manage data in a way that is labour-saving and less prone to human error because data from different sources are handled in one and the same system, making duplicate entry unnecessary. And although the conditions for the implementation were unfavourable, the business applications went live ahead of schedule and within budget.

LEGACY SYSTEM BECAME OBSOLETE

Barking Power Station was commissioned in 1995 and managed its business processes with maintenance management and financials software packages. Early in 2000, the systems began to show signs of obsolescence. Tony O'Reilly, the station manager, explains, "In particular, the financials functionality was becoming increasingly unstable; in fact we were not sure it would take us through to the year-end and the package vendors had indicated that they would no longer be supporting the products. Our maintenance management system was satisfactory, but separating it from the financials software involved too much risk." A firm of consultants commissioned to analyse requirements mapped the station's business processes and compiled a shortlist. IFS was selected because it offered a single, seamless solution that integrated asset management with financials.

AGGRESSIVE IMPLEMENTATION TIMETABLE

As the instability of the legacy financials software became increasingly apparent, station management realised that the implementation of the IFS components would have to be brought forward and implemented under an extremely tight schedule. To meet statutory and year-end requirements, the software needed to be implemented within a single quarter. Subsequently, the IFS asset management, maintenance and inventory components were put in place. Despite the time constraints, everything was up and running ahead of time and within budget. O'Reilly comments, "We did all this during a critical part of our maintenance cycle, with hundreds of extra contractors on site and millions of records to be migrated, but it worked well for a number of reasons. First, we, IFS and DataForge, IFS' implementation partner, did our homework well. We appointed a project board, and found that the IFS people were good listeners, prepared to face issues and respond honestly. It's worth investing the time and effort to get things right from the beginning." By getting out in front of issues, such as

ABOUT BARKING POWER STATION

Barking Power Station, constructed between 1992 and 1995, is one of the largest independently-owned generating plants in the UK, being capable of generating 1000MW of electricity—about 2% of the peak electricity demand in England and Wales. The station uses Combined Cycle Gas Turbine (CCGT) technology, with gas as its primary fuel, and with NOx emissions as low as 25% of approved levels, the plant has one of the best environmental records in Europe for a gas-fired power plant. The power station has more than 80 employees.



resource allocation and responsibilities, it was possible to eliminate unnecessary discussions during sensitive phases of the project. With the commercial issues settled, technology issues that arose were easy to solve. The component structure of IFS Applications also contributed to a relatively smooth implementation constraints. O'Reilly continues, "IFS gave us the off-the-shelf software we wanted; in all we only needed one customisation. Not having to redesign our business processes meant that we could focus resources on other critical issues at the station during this period. IT projects are infamous for overrunning time and budgets, but we were able to ensure that this did not happen to us despite the unfavourable conditions we were working under. Knowing from the very start who was responsible for what made it easier to run the project. We'll have this system for a long time, so we were interested in building up a long-term relationship with IFS."

BETTER, MORE FLEXIBLE BUSINESS PROCESSES

One of the most obvious improvements seen since the implementation of the IFS software is the increase in productivity and the better utilisation of resources. In the past, data transfer across the interfaces between the systems was cumbersome and problematic. Information retrieval was very labour-intensive because data had to be imported and exported between systems. And even then, the depth of access was unsatisfactory because it did not allow users to drill down as far as they required. With IFS Applications, there are no intervening interfaces. All the data required is available from one system so users get faster access, and the risk of incurring errors while transferring data is minimal.

"The potential of the system is enormous," adds O'Reilly. "It gives us the flexibility we need and which we didn't previously possess. We're looking at expanding the solution to take in document management. It's attractive to be able to manage all procedures, drawings, archives, etc. in one and the same system. Linking these to the plant register would make life a lot easier for us."

O'Reilly concludes, "The benefit of dealing with a counterpart that listens and gets involved should not be underestimated. Our relationship with IFS is very good, and we know that whatever issues remain will be solved through dialogue and collaboration. IFS should be on the shortlist of any organisation in the business that is planning to purchase or upgrade business software."

BENEFITS

- Improved productivity
- More flexible business processes
- Better utilisation of resources
- Faster access to information
- More accurate data
- Smooth implementation despite unfavourable conditions

SOFTWARE

IFS Financials™
IFS Distribution™
IFS Maintenance™



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Tony O'Reilly
Station Manager