



CLIENT-CENTRED SYSTEM HELPS TRANSFORM SOCIAL SERVICES DELIVERY IN NEW ZEALAND

*Cúram Business
Application Suite™
Improves Outcomes for
Citizens.*

New Zealand's current population of 4.2 million is expected to exceed 5 million by 2051 and undergo significant change resulting in fewer children, more older people and further aging.

The Ministry of Social Development (MSD), *Te Manatu Whakahiato Ora*, provides strategic social policy advice to the New Zealand Government and social services to more than 1.2 million citizens. It also works in partnership with communities to maximize regional development and employment opportunities. MSD services include income support, employment services, child protection, student allowances and loans, as well as programs that support families. It also is responsible for the Ministry of Youth Development, Office for Disability Issues, Office of Senior Citizens and Office of Community and Voluntary Sector.

Since its inception, MSD has moved to transform New Zealand's social services delivery from a transaction-based approach to one that is focused on sustainable outcomes for its clients — children and young people, working age people, older people, families and communities — including their ability to achieve their own objectives.

Formed by a merger of several separate agencies, the Ministry had inherited the legacy service delivery systems and processes of those agencies. Yet it needed a client-centric IT solution to provide holistic service delivery, support key outcomes-based initiatives, meet e-government objectives, develop a flexible IT strategy and architecture, and transform the IT organization itself.

FOCUSING ON OUTCOMES

The Need for a Holistic Approach

With nine mission-critical systems inherited from seven organizations, MSD was experiencing several client management challenges. Systems had grown inconsistently, were difficult to navigate, and costly to modify. Clients were entering the social services system through multiple channels where data and capabilities were duplicated, and referrals were not driven by outcomes. Despite the large number of systems, a partially manual process was time consuming. According to Peter Hughes, Chief Executive of the Ministry, "We needed a system that enabled our staff to deliver a wrap-around service for the client."

“Our business used to be all about transactions. Now we focus on outcomes. Our goal is to help the people we work with to get on and be successful with their lives. We need to make sure our staff have the right tools to make that happen.”

*Peter Hughes, Chief Executive
Ministry of Social Development
(MSD)*

What’s more, the need for an outcomes-based approach was heightened by “work-first” efforts to help people get into and stay in the workforce. For MSD, this meant a greater focus on work outcomes from the start, including earlier offers of employment assistance to a wider range of clients, which ultimately required the ability to share information with other services and agencies.

Key Issues for IT

Disparate delivery systems made it difficult and cumbersome for MSD call center and branch staff to serve clients in a holistic way. A case manager had to use from seven to nine separate applications and switch between them 14 times in the correct order to complete the process and grant a benefit. Furthermore, the lack of automation required case managers to assess eligibility and create service plans by hand.

The bottom line: MSD needed an enterprise approach to the complete overhaul of its IT strategy to support its move to an outcomes-based business model. In addition, instead of a system designed around transactions and payments, it wanted one that would support eligibility determination; track progress; retain information about a client’s overall situation, needs and skills; and facilitate collaboration with other agencies. The Ministry wanted a robust but flexible IT strategy and architecture that could help transform the IT group itself.

Making the Case

MSD began a Client Management Initiative (CMI) to review and enhance how its clients were managed. The goals were to improve client service delivery support, meet the Government’s objective of assisting clients with a work-first approach, provide a technology platform to better support MSD into the future, and find a Client Relationship Management Solution (CMS) to address current systems constraints.

An open RFI process to identify a software platform for CMS was issued with the strategic objectives to:

- Streamline service planning process
- Consistently offer appropriate services to meet

client outcomes

- Reduce the number of systems staff must use
- Improve navigation across systems
- Create a central view of products and services associated with each client
- Streamline client information, maintenance and updates
- Capture robust information for management purposes
- Provide access to integrated information and service delivery
- Facilitate information sharing/collaboration

MSD AT A GLANCE

- 1.2 million clients
- 45 million payments annually
- 10,000 staff
- 292 locations
- 50,000 networked devices
- 340 IT staff supporting 5,000 IT changes annually

On the technology side, objectives were to develop a system that better integrated MSD’s diverse needs, reduced the number of legacy systems, improved their connectivity and reduced reliance on them. The CMS also needed to be more adaptable to changing Government requirements and technological advances.

Following a rigorous evaluation process, MSD selected the Cúram Business Application Suite™, designed specifically for social services.

Following a fit-gap analysis of the Cúram platform, MSD issued an RFP for an implementation partner to assist with Proof of Concept and initial implementation. After due diligence on Cúram and system integrator HP, a successful Proof of Concept delivered a working prototype. The Ministry then built its business case which was approved by the New Zealand Cabinet.

Benefits from the platform include:

- Supporting access to services and programs, in addition to assessing eligibility
- Reducing the time and costs associated with implementing policy decisions

“To change the way we delivered services to clients, we needed a flexible system that put the client at the centre and was able to manage contacts, relationships, services and programmes, as well as payments.”

Peter Hughes

“We now have a simple, efficient system that enables front-line work and income staff to provide a better service for clients.”

Peter Hughes

MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT VISION

An inclusive New Zealand where all people are able to participate in the social and economic life of their communities.

- Integrating client data across the Ministry and potentially across different agencies
- Retaining key elements of the previous environment to achieve an ROI on past investment
- Leveraging a commercial off-the-shelf software solution
- An improved IT foundation to build from
- Enabling an outcomes-based business model through a client-centered, flexible system

Rather than investing in custom-built functionality, MSD chose a system that aligned with the client management process and transformed service delivery using Cúram’s COTS solution.

CLIENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SUCCESS

Business-IT Collaboration Was Key

CMS “Phase 1a” of an overall enterprise transformation for Work and Income established the Cúram Business Application Suite as the backbone of the solution. It was the largest IT project ever undertaken by MSD at the time; and it was delivered on time and on budget, with more functionality than originally anticipated, while having met every objective originally identified. All training was fully completed, all Work and Income Staff were fully deployed, and all handover documentation and processes were completed.

A One-Floor Approach

An integral part of the project’s success was incorporation of staff from both the technology and business teams at all levels. “We had the key IT people and key business people – as well as Cúram and our integrator – all sitting on the same floor,” Hughes said. “It was the most collaborative project we’ve done from infrastructure and hardware, through development, deployment and change management. Everything was self-contained, and everyone had a stake in what the others were doing.”

Another key factor was the strong commitment of senior management, who conducted a number of briefings to demonstrate the partnership between IT and the business. A dedicated internal change manager oversaw deployment of the work and managed the impact of the workplace change on staff.

Better Outcomes, Better Insights

As envisioned, CMS streamlines business processes and client interactions by reducing the number of systems staff must use to deliver services, while reducing system training requirements. It also gives MDS more functionality, configurable management control, and higher quality information for management. The new system provides an integrated, simplified approach to providing better service and meeting the Government’s objective of assisting communities with a work-first approach.

Implemented in all Work and Income Service Centers and Contact Centers, CMS allows staff to work proactively with their clients and provide more seamless and transparent service delivery. Approximately 3,500 members of staff currently use Cúram Software for functions including client screening, rule engines for service determination, and service plans. The new system enables planning for client outcomes from the initial contact with the client. It also gives a more accurate and holistic view of clients, provides dynamic caseload management, reduces processing times and helps clients receive the right services at the right times.

The result is better social outcomes for New Zealanders thanks to a more client-centered organization.

CMS enables integration of client data across the Ministry and facilitates collaboration with other agencies. Over time, the system draws together all information about clients’ overall situation, needs

“We looked for a system that we felt would be able to accommodate future changes to the way our services are delivered. Once we started focusing on getting better outcomes, we knew that we needed to work with other agencies and put our clients at the centre. Improved sharing of information across agencies has the potential to remove unnecessary duplication.”

Peter Hughes

“Over time, the information we are recording now will provide a more detailed picture of social, economic and cultural changes in New Zealand than we’ve collected from the benefit system before.”

Peter Hughes

and skills, streamlining administration time and supporting best practice case management. CMS also provides a more adaptable technology and business platform to support future government and Ministry objectives.

From a cost and agility perspective, MSD is saving the outside expenses of development and maintenance and is reducing external reliance for IT changes needed to reflect policy changes.

Building on Success

“We’re well placed to deal with business the way it is now and much better positioned for the future,” said Hughes.

MSD is leveraging knowledge from the CMS implementation in other initiatives. Two online initiatives at MSD use the existing technology backbone to move citizens from ‘in line to online,’ by providing a more accessible, streamlined method of applying for government assistance and receiving benefits.

Online Decision Support (ODS) enhances service delivery of end-to-end services for clients as they seek information, confirming entitlements and managing day to day transactions. From this project, MSD has an online based service delivery vehicle which provides:

- students with the ability to easily self-assess their eligibility for MSD administered financial assistance.
- students with an improved application experience by pre-filling forms with information we already have and creating a process that is based on their circumstances not by product.
- MSD with an application that supports its client management strategy
- MSD with the platform to provide self-assessment tools to all New Zealanders

The second of two online initiatives, Client Online Services (COS), identifies the Work and Income website as an alternate service delivery channel and has allowed MSD to:

- Use the web to provide information and services to clients, stakeholders, and partners while becoming more client – centric and user focused.
- Accelerate the design and delivery of the most commonly used services into the online channel where appropriate.
- Collaborate to offer “no wrong door” access to social services for common clients.
- Work with IT to build a secure and robust electronic infrastructure capable of expanding to support steadily more sophisticated online transactions by 2010.

MSD expects its new technology to be a strategic platform for future system solutions supporting MSD units as well as other agencies and countries around the world. This quest for improved social services delivery will ultimately see better outcomes for families and citizens in need.

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