

Decision case study

May 2013



Centralizing Business Management on a Single ERP

"While some of our staff had experience with SAP, Microsoft Dynamics still proved to be easier to use overall because it had a look and feel that was very similar to the other Microsoft products that our employees use every day."

Frans Monkwe, CIO, Agricultural Research Council

The Agricultural Research Council (ARC) set out on a mission. Formed in 1990 through an act of the Parliament of South Africa, the ARC has become the leading agricultural research and development center for the country. To support its growing organization, the ARC initially developed its own financial and project management system. Twenty-three years later, however, this system was still in use.

"Over time, our finance system evolved in a manner that had really become unmanageable," says Frans Monkwe, CIO of the ARC. At the same time, we needed to integrate other business areas with finance, such as human resources,

Headquartered in Hatfield, Pretoria, South Africa, the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) was established by the Agricultural Research Act 86 of 1990 and is the principal agricultural research institution in South Africa. The ARC is a schedule 3A public entity and has 11 institutes throughout the country.

Goals

- Improve insight and access to information
- Support companywide processes
- Ease IT support

Industry

- Government

Country or Region

South Africa

Customer Size

Approximately 3,000 employees

Number of Users

Approximately 1800 employees

Connect with the ARC

www.arc.agric.za

marketing, and supply chain management, so it wouldn't take an army of people to run a report."

Choosing Microsoft Dynamics over SAP

With a goal to support financial management, supply chain management, human resources, research and development, technology transfer, and marketing from a single system, the ARC reviewed the leading enterprise resource planning (ERP) systems available on the market and narrowed its choices down to either SAP or Microsoft Dynamics AX. Letting its business users ultimately drive the decision for what system they would use in the future, the ARC then chose to deploy Microsoft Dynamics AX based on one, key factor: ease of use.

Says Monkwe, "While some of our staff had experience with SAP, Microsoft Dynamics AX still proved to be easier to use overall because the familiar interface was very similar to the other Microsoft products that our employees use every day."

Monkwe also notes that the ability for Microsoft Dynamics AX to work with Microsoft SharePoint aided in the decision, enabling the company to take advantage of powerful collaborative capabilities on top of the core ERP system.

Microsoft Dynamics AX was also attractive from an IT perspective. "With SAP, the risk was that we would spend a lot of time training IT staff to support it and then lose those staff through normal turnover," says Monkwe. "Microsoft Dynamics AX, on the other hand, required a much more familiar IT skill set. We could train and crosstrain a wide range of our staff to support the solution, making the impact of turnover quite minimal."

Looking to the Future

Although the ARC is still in the early planning stages for its ERP rollout, the future looks bright. Says Monkwe, "With Microsoft Dynamics AX, we aim to integrate our entire business under a single, major platform. It will enable us to take charge over the operation and gain insight over what is happening in any area, from research and development all the way to technology transfer where we disseminate information to the public."

Next Steps

- [Connect with Microsoft Dynamics](#)
- [Learn about Microsoft Dynamics solutions for the public sector](#)
- [Read about other ways Microsoft Dynamics ERP solutions can reduce complexity and save millions of dollars over SAP](#)

For more information about Microsoft Dynamics, go to:
www.microsoft.com/dynamics

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