



Rabobank Improves Agility, Quality, and Compliance with ALM Solution

Company: The Rabobank Group
Website: www.rabobank.com
Company Size: 59,000 employees
Country or Region: The Netherlands
Industry: Banking

Company Profile

Based in The Netherlands, the Rabobank Group has activities in the field of banking, asset management, leasing, insurance, and real estate. It manages more than €752 billion (\$1 trillion) in assets.

Software and Services

- Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2012

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Stephen Ley, Team Manager Support
GFM IT & IT Tooling at Rabobank

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Looking to deliver innovations that benefit customers as well as cut costs in these challenging economic times, Rabobank thoroughly evaluated its application lifecycle management (ALM) processes and found room for improvement. The bank initiated a transition to agile development and then deployed Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2012 to fully support and standardize agile processes across the bank. The changes have improved responsiveness to business needs, raised application quality, and simplified compliance with regulations such as Sarbanes Oxley.

Business Needs

The Rabobank Group always tries to put its customers’ interests first. It was one of the first banks with Web-based banking and is currently investing more than €100 million (\$130 million) into virtualization and automation to enable its customers to bank anytime, anywhere. Rabobank recognizes that continued investment in the excellence of its information and communications technology (ICT) systems

is required to deliver excellent customer service.

In 2011, faced with an economic crisis in Europe, it wanted its IT investments to pay greater dividends. The bank conducted a thorough review of its application development and support groups, which are organized into five separate business lines. It found that a wide variety of tools were being used by the business analysts, developers, testers and support staff that

make up the teams. The tools were not integrated, which led to inefficiencies. "With the collection of tools we were using we did not have a clear view of the project," notes Arno Tersteeg, Global Head Professional Services IT Risk Management at Rabobank.

The teams were also using traditional waterfall development processes with months or years between releases and little feedback between teams during development cycles.

The bank saw an opportunity to quickly deliver high-value updates and reduce risk with the adoption of agile development methods. However, implementing an agile framework across the variety of tools proved to be difficult and the bank was unable to achieve the fast delivery times it wanted. With the help of Info Support, a Microsoft partner with gold-level competency in ALM, the bank set out to implement agile development with tools that embrace and support it.

Solution

After a thorough investigation, the bank selected Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2012 to support Microsoft .NET development and IBM Jazz for Java development. "Team Foundation Server was easy to implement and user-friendly and was quickly accepted. IBM Jazz was more difficult to implement and less intuitive for users," says Ley. "After a Team Foundation Server pilot with the Java team we decided to use it for business analysis, development, test, and support for both .NET and Java."

Extensive support from Info Support has helped the teams take advantage of the solution's capabilities and smoothly transition to Scrum. "We help to migrate their source code and existing tasks, requirements and test cases into Team Foundation Server. Then we have a workshop to create a backlog and set up sprints," says Marcel de Vries, Technology Manager, Microsoft Application Development at Info Support.

Info Support created a custom process

template based on Scrum that also included the change and release management processes required for Sarbanes Oxley compliance and internal auditing. "Since all of the data is in Team Foundation Server we can create reports to show that each backlog item has successfully passed a test case," says de Vries. Reports on velocity and burndown also provide valuable information for management to run projects more efficiently.

Rabobank is looking forward to the release of Microsoft Visual Studio Team Foundation Server 2013 to take advantage of integrated Git distributed version control, portfolio management, and Web-based test management. Git integration will make it easier to collaborate with vendors because Rabobank can merge their source changes in its repository and implement a continuous build process. Portfolio management will enable larger projects to better manage product backlog. The Web interface to Microsoft Test Manager will make it easier to involve more people in test planning and execution.

Benefits

Rabobank tried to implement agile process on its previous collection of disconnected tools, but didn't see the benefits. By facilitating the agile processes, Team Foundation Server has led to rapid adoption by the teams. "We need state of the art development processes to attract the best employees and stay ahead of our competitors through continuous innovation," says Tersteeg. "Using Team Foundation Server to support agile development methods enables us to provide more business value to the bank."

Improved responsiveness to business needs

– The initial goal for moving to agile was to speed time to market. "We had agile before Team Foundation Server but it was difficult to get short iterations between deployments. Team Foundation Server has enabled us to speed development. We can deliver more projects and deliver them faster," says Ley.

The new processes in Team Foundation Server have helped speed time to market by enabling more frequent updates, by enabling more work to be completed between updates, and by enabling product owners to ensure that the highest priority items are completed first. After the move to Team Foundation Server the bank has seen teams adopting one month or two week sprints to make updates quickly. On some projects the velocity, or the amount of work done in each sprint, has doubled, as the teams used Team Foundation Server to adopt a more agile style of work. Product owners and business analysts are also more involved in the project since they can see progress on backlog items. "We have a much more transparent process with Team Foundation Server. Not only for IT, our business partners can also help to prioritize tasks and see how the project is progressing," says Pieter Fortuin, Head of IT Operations, Rabobank International.

Improved Quality – By providing the reports and data to facilitate better decisions and improving team collaboration, Team Foundation Server is enabling Rabobank to improve the quality of its deployments. "In the past, testers tended to operate outside of the team. Now they are involved in sprint planning and they are able to give feedback early and often," says de Vries. "Since all of the tests are linked to source code and defect reports come complete with video recordings of the test it's much easier for developers to find and fix the issues." Traceability of the test cases back to requirements and stories ensures there are no gaps in the test processes.

Simplified Compliance Activities – The standardization that came from having one ALM solution will also help compliance efforts. "It's much easier for us to show Sarbanes-Oxley compliance now that we are using Team Foundation Server for application lifecycle management," says Teersteeg. "Instead of time consuming manual processes to collect code changes and test information we can just produce a report."