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Final Copy of Case Study

LOCATION:
Falls Church, VA, US

YEAR:
2011

STATUS:
Laureate

CATEGORY:
Collaboration

ORGANIZATION:
Organization of American States / Interamerican Commission on Human Rights (OAS/IACHR)

ORGANIZATION URL:
http://www.oas.org/en/default.asp

PROJECT NAME:
Petition/Cases Management System & Document Management System (PCMS & DMS)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Tracing its roots back to 1890, the Organization of American States is the world's oldest regional organization in operation. The very reason for this organization's existence is to promote intergovernmental collaboration. The OAS was established to achieve among its member states, as stated in Article 1 of its Charter, "an order of peace and justice, to promote their solidarity, to strengthen their collaboration, and to defend their sovereignty, their territorial integrity, and their independence." To help fulfill this charter, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) implemented an integrated Petition/Case Management System & Document Management System (PCMS & DMS) to better manage the internal lifecycle and external collaboration around petitions and cases related to human rights violations in the 35 countries of the Americas. This system allows a more efficient coordination among nations to protect the Human Rights of the almost 1 billion residents of the Americas. It manages all files received from Petitioners, Member States and Non-Governmental organizations electronically and supports 4 official languages (Spanish, English, Portuguese, and French). The system handles roughly 1,500 new petitions per year with 7,000 active petitions and approximately 200 weekly correspondences. The system has 17 automated workflows to route and organize 27 document types adhering to very stringent legal and privacy rules that require 146 policy aliases. Since going into production in April 2010, over 60,000 documents have been checked in.

SOCIETAL BENEFITS

It provides efficient coordination among the 35 member nations to protect the Human Rights (1 Billion residents), 1,500 new petitions per year with 7,000 active petitions and approximately 200 weekly correspondences. With 17 automated workflows to route and organize 27 document types adhering to very stringent legal and privacy rules.

PROJECT BENEFIT EXAMPLE

The integrated Petition/Case Management System & Document Management System (PCMS & DMS) was implemented to better manage all the files it receives from Petitioners, Member States and Non-Governmental organizations. While this system has proven impact on workforce efficiency and going green, the true uniqueness is its wide impact on Intergovernmental Collaboration. It manages all files received from Petitioners, Member States and Non-Governmental organizations electronically for the 35 independent states of the Americas supporting 4 official languages (Spanish, English, Portuguese, and French). Through the (PCMS/DMS) system all cases and related documentation are fully digital enabling: - centralized repository for all digitized documents (increased reliability, decreased physical storage costs) - enforced security model with confidentiality of sensitive information (increased reliability, better information sharing, decreased staff time) - search, find, filter, online collaboration, version control, document relation (decreased staff time, increased reliability, faster/better service) - reduced response time through automated workflows (decreased staff time, increased reliability, better management control) - keep track of deadlines, priorities and urgent matters. (better management control, increased reliability) - easy access to petition/case status and all the correspondence received (faster/better service, better management control, decreased staff time) - visibility of persons working on correspondence/petition/case (better management control, increased reliability, better auditability) - assignment of workload based on availability (faster/better service, increased management control) - generation of automatic letters on a daily basis (decreased staff time, faster/better service) - electronic signatures (decreased staff time, faster/better service) - eliminate manual distribution of daily correspondence (decreased staff time, faster/better service, increased reliability) - organization of lawyer's portfolios of petitions/cases through the use of a "virtual folder" (decreased staff time, faster/better service, increased reliability) The implementation of the system has dramatically changed the daily activities of the IACHR staff; evolving from a paper based environment to a digital & centralized unique repository, through the redefinition/streamlining of the business processes that regulates IACHR daily work. This improves the efficiency and management of Intergovernmental Collaboration relating to very sensitive Human Rights cases throughout the Americas.

IS THIS PROJECT AN INNOVATION, BEST PRACTICE? Yes

ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was carried out as a jointly effort between the OAS/IACHR and the OAS Department of Information and Technology Services (OAS/DOITS). A multidisciplinary team was assigned to the project; - OAS/IACHR held a couple of interviews with similar organizations (Inter-American Court of Human Rights; Canadian Human Rights Commission) in order to benchmark current and future internal business processes. - The government of Spain sponsored the project; followed up on its development and reviewed the final implementation. This is a true multinational effort. There are 63 permanent observer countries in the OAS. The new system impacts a broad range of stakeholders across the 35 independent states of the Americas (Petitioners, Member States and Non-Governmental organizations), providing more efficient and effective management of collaboration on Human Rights Cases. Cases can be very complicated as different combinations of the parties involved. For example currently OAS/IACHR is managing petitions of human rights violations between two member states (interstate petitions) that involve

multiple stakeholders in those states. This project is the first initiative within the OAS of implementing a corporate system to effectively manage unstructured information. After this successful implementation, the goal is to expand it to other key areas of the Organization, such as the General Assembly and Permanent Council, therefore becoming part of OAS's core systems. These initiatives is also part of an OAS mandate that aims to enforce: the majority of documents are processed in a digital format instead of on a paper based format; environmentally aware policies; promotion of physical space and maintenance reduction; and use of the best of breed technologies for record and document management. A second module will be implemented on the first quarter 2011 that will expand online access to petitions/cases with additional collaboration and case/petition auditing and status reporting. This initiative will allow is the basis of an Interamerican System Enterprise Architecture for the protection of human rights; which will enable a faster, more efficient and paperless system that protects almost 1 Billion people across the 35 member states. The 35 member nations of the OAS include: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, United States of America, Uruguay, Venezuela, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Jamaica, Grenada, Suriname, Dominica, Saint Lucia, Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, The Bahamas, St. Kitts & Nevis, Canada, Belize and Guyana.