Solomon Islands Government Case Study

Centralised Budgeting Software

Existing Process

The Solomon Islands Government Ministry of Finance were preparing budgets for Parliament using a combination of Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Access to set budgets in conjunction with their 29 Ministries, prepare a final version that is submitted to Parliament for approval, manage changes to the original budget throughout the fiscal year and determine account balances by checking actual expenditure through the finance software.

Problems with Existing Process

This process was difficult for multiple people to manage, lacked an audit trail, was difficult and time consuming to prepare timely reports and was not meeting reporting requirements of donors such as the UN and World Bank.   There was not one process but many patched work-arounds.

The Search for a Solution and Requirements

In 2009, looking to review options for procuring a better software solution, the Solomon Islands Government commenced a tender process and selected Isidore as the supplier of a solution.

The Solomon Islands Government wanted an easy transition from the existing process to the new process, which would address their requirements, which included:

- commencing use of the new budget software in the next budget cycle
- migration of all existing data including organisation structure and accounts
- simple architecture which would comply with their existing software and hardware architecture and would not require additional costs in additional the software
- was easy to use for all levels of staff, from Admin users to Finance staff and staff from other Ministries who may not be frequent
- provided more stringent auditing of data and changes
- captured changes, virements and warrants to the budget for comparison of the Initial Budget set by Parliament
- easily and quickly produce the budget summary document for submission to Cabinet
- provide fixed and ad-hoc reporting for use by all levels of staff
- integrate with the existing Finance system to share budget balances and use actuals within the budget software for balance updates

The Solution

Isidore reviewed the existing process and configured their existing Government Budgeting and Planning software to best suit the requirements.

This included:

- creating appropriate screens for data entry, review and reporting
- creating the output Budget Cabinet document, which lists all accounts, expected donors, funding and expenses and is printed on demand
- migrating the existing organisational data including all ministries and accounts and structures
- migrating the previous and current budget years data
- assistance with location of the software on an existing server
- installation of the software on Solomon Islands Government servers and network for access by all Ministries
- integration with the finance system, Microsoft AX, for live data sharing of actuals and budget balances
- training of all staff in group sessions and one-on-one general and admin users
- support for IT and business/finance staff with IT, functional and business process issues
- ongoing updates and maintenance

The Outcome

The Solomon Islands Government have been using Isidore CBMS for 8 years to successfully complete their Centralised Budgeting process for the Ministry of Finance. This has included an independent review of the software by the Australian Department of Finance and Deregulation which assessed the current solution as a lower risk than potentially transitioning to Microsoft AX for the complete Finance and Budgeting solution.

The Finance team at the Ministry of Finance have:

- reduced the production of their Cabinet submission document from 2 weeks to 1 day,
- increased the transparency of funding, particularly from donors
- reduced the time to create an initial budget, and what-if versions from several months to weeks,
- put a process in place to manage all variations to the budget by account code within each ministry along with a new streamlined business process, where remaining funds are available as a live value before invoices are raised,
- provided live budget balances by to the account code and Ministry level from direct integration with the Finance system,
- enjoyed live consolidation of budgets at all levels, from the entire Solomon Islands Government, down through all Ministries and by Programs, Account codes and Projects