



Dexia EP sets up its data warehousing system with DataStudio

●●● When Dexia Epargne Pension decided to set up a data warehousing project to drive all its activities, it opted to work with DataStudio. Already available on several of the company's other applications, DataStudio is today at the very heart of Dexia EP's IT system. Its ease-of-use, flexibility and ability to handle different types of data formats are largely responsible for these projects' success.

Dexia Epargne Pension is the life insurance subsidiary of the international financial group Dexia, itself the fruit of a 1996 merger of two main players in European local public sector financing: Crédit Local de France and the Credit Communal de Belgique. These two institutions were united with the Banque Internationale à Luxembourg (BIL) under the name Dexia in 1999, thereby forming an integrated group that was also one of the very first cross-border mergers in the European banking sector. Today, this European banking group is the world leader in financial services to the local public sector and is listed on the CAC 40 and the BEL 20.

Founded in 2001, Dexia Epargne Pension is the wholly-owned life insurance company of the Dexia Group. It offers a wide range of insurance products: individual life insurance, group life insurance, creditor's insurance, death insurance, protection insurance and long-term care insurance.

With a view to optimising follow-up on its activities, Dexia EP launched an ambitious project in 2007: setting up performance follow-up indicators for each of its activities. At this time, in order to handle the data of the various IT systems, Dexia EP relied on DataStudio to create its data warehouse.

A steering tool adapted to all needs

"Given the magnitude of the project, we broke it down into several parts", explains Yvon Corbé, IT Director at Dexia EP. In fact, before moving into the implementation phase, Dexia EP focused for several months on analyzing its data and its requirements with regard to indicators. *"This is an overall approach to steering, initiated by Dexia EP General Management, which concerns all activities. The data processing issue was therefore at the very heart of the project since we had to be able to bring together data from various environments."* Dexia EP was, in fact, faced with very heterogeneous forms of technology; production data was stored in Oracle, SQL Server or Access databases and even in some flat files. The multitude of data formats therefore necessitated using an ETL application to extract, transform and load the cleansed data into the federating data warehouse that would serve as a base for the steering project.

Yvon Corbé,
IT Director
Dexia EP

"DataStudio is not only cost-effective but also easy to use and very flexible, which allowed us to break the project down into different parts and to move ahead according to our needs without having to question the existing system at every step."

A cost-effective and simple solution

Following a market study, Dexia EP decided to compare two different solutions: the first was recommended by its service provider; the second, DataStudio, had already been deployed in the company during the implementation of its business software package, MASTER i. A number of interfaces between the production and the accounting system had then been deployed to generate critical accounting flows.

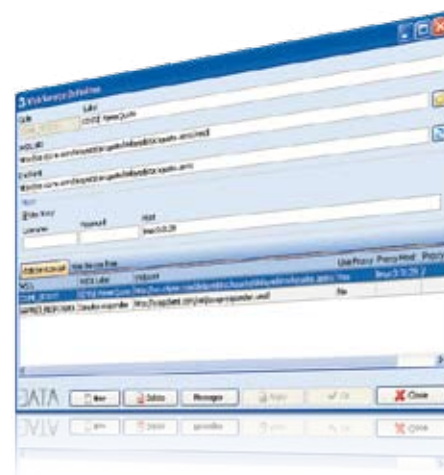
DataStudio had also been used to produce life insurance management reports (production and automated emailings). "Thanks to these different projects, we had developed skills using the product," notes Yvon Corbé. "At the time of selection for the steering project, this know-how concerning DataStudio played an important role. We already had trained employees, the tool was easy to use, flexible and one of the most cost-effective on the market. We thus opted for this solution and launched development as early as in May 2007."

It took approximately 60 man days at Dexia EP to set up the data flows of the project's first batch, which were required for loading its data warehouse. Experts from Data conducted the first developments, while Dexia EP took advantage on this phase of the project to work closely with the publisher to improve its skills with a view to handling the rest

of the project on its own. "The transfer of skills went well," observes Yvon Corbé, "and we were then able to start the development of the other batches with our own in-house teams."

By June 2008, the data flows of the first batch were operational and Dexia EP had deployed all of the necessary architecture for its steering project. Extremely satisfied with this first phase, Dexia EP is happy with its decision to go with a tool that is both easy to use and flexible: "The use of standard database programming language is a major reason why DataStudio is so accessible. Because we're working in familiar territory, we aren't thrown off by the product's operation and we can easily understand its behaviour."

The accessibility of DataStudio is also due to the open-endedness of the platform implemented. For Yvon Corbé, DataStudio makes it very easy to modify existing programs and thereby to integrate new data. "Insofar as we decided to break down our project into several batches in order to be able to quickly deliver activity monitoring indicators, the tool's flexibility is particularly important. It lets us gradually integrate new data sources according to our needs, without calling the existing system into question."



The Dexia Epargne Pension users can easily understand the solution

The solution

Gradual implementation of a data warehouse that gathers data from different sources for an overall steering project concerning all of the company's activities. With DataStudio, the company has:

- An ETL solution that covers all its needs with regard to data integration ;
- A flexible tool able to adapt data flows according to its evolving needs ;
- A cost-effective platform.

Dexia Epargne Pension

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