

AccTech *Success*

National Metrology Institute of South Africa (NMISA)

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Company Overview

The National Metrology Institute of South Africa (NMISA) is a technical infrastructure entity of the dti. It was established through the Measurement Units and Measurement Standards Act (Act 18 of 2006) on 1 May 2007. Prior to its establishment through the new Act, the NMISA was part of the CSIR and was mandated by the Measurement Units and National Measuring Standards Act (Act 76 of 1973, as amended by Act 24 of 1998).

In everyday life, we are in constant interaction with measurements and often take for granted that they are reliable and correct. From the speedometer reading on a motor vehicle to the mass of a loaf of bread - all these measurements must be traceable to a reference standard that is ultimately traceable to the seven SI Units (the metre (m); the second (s); Kelvin (K) (temperature); the kilogram (kg); Candela (cd) (optical power); the ampere (A) and the mole (mol) (amount of substance).

The NMISA mandate is to maintain the SI units and to maintain and develop primary scientific standards of physical quantities for South Africa and compare these standards with other national standards to ensure global measurement equivalence. It must also provide reference analysis in the case of a measurement dispute and maintain and develop primary methods for chemical analysis to certify reference materials for the country and the region. Its vision is to ensure that South Africa can prove measurement comparability and equivalence with the international community, in support of trade, in all national priority areas.

Business Challenge

“The process started when staff members from NMISA attended our bi-annual technology and productivity event at Microsoft,” says Tertius Zitzke, Chief Executive Officer of Gold Certified Partner AccTech Systems. The event features all the latest



SOLUTION OVERVIEW

CUSTOMER PROFILE

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BUSINESS SITUATION

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SOLUTION

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ACCPAC®

AccTech Systems (Pty) Ltd
P O Box 25334,
Monument Park
0105, South Africa
Head Office
Tel: 0861-11-1680
Fax: 0861-22-1680
Email: info@acctech.biz
Website: www.acctech.biz

Microsoft technologies and products coming onto the market, and one specific session caught the eyes of the NMISA staff.

“Of interest to them was the session on optimising Microsoft’s licensing models,” comments Zitzke. “They were up for a renewal and the licensing session sparked the initial discussion. We did a Software Asset Management (SAM) audit which highlighted the fact that as a government entity, they were not operating on the best possible licensing model. The audit clearly indicated that they were underutilising some of their licences. We provided them with a volume licensing proposal and as a result of the massive projected cost savings they decided to invest in the full Microsoft ‘stack’. This included SharePoint Server, Windows Server, Windows 7, the Office suite, Visio, the Microsoft Unified Communications solution, Microsoft Forefront security solutions and Microsoft’s Enterprise Project Management solution,” says Zitzke.

“There was nothing seriously wrong with the Linux solutions we were using,” says Jina. “Except for a few minor issues, they were still running okay. Our investment in SharePoint and resulting consolidation onto Microsoft Active Directory made us realise the business productivity gains and long term financial benefits we would achieve by going onto the full Microsoft stack. It also meant that we would get full integration into our other Line of Business systems, and as result, we are now phasing out all open source technologies.

Solution

“In the initial test phase we installed Windows 7 on 20 workstations to ensure that all our existing applications are running without glitches. The response from the users has been phenomenal and as result the rollout to the rest of the user base will follow shortly,” says Jina. “The Windows 7 rollout has taken priority and, the ease of user adoption and business systems integration as fast-tracked the other elements of the total Microsoft solution.

“NMISA made a strategic move to go from Open Source technologies to Microsoft,” says Aldo van Tonder, Chief Technology Officer, AccTech Systems. “What was exciting for us was that it was a competitive win from another technology. With their adoption of Windows 7 they were one of the first customers in Africa to rollout the latest operating system.

Business Benefits

“It’s not just monetary saving that is involved, it is the standardisation, resources and skills that are made available by using Microsoft technologies and products. The move from Open Source onto a Microsoft platform is all about the productivity gains,” van Tonder continued. “As an official Microsoft security adviser we do the security check on the environment to make sure it conforms to best practices and that the network infrastructure for the implementations are done in the optimal way. We are not doing managed support of the system because NMISA is fully competent to handle that. Where needed we do train staff members on site as each component is rolled out, using our advanced training methodologies.”

Jina went on: “Windows 7 is working perfectly with the open source products we still have. As result we can keep the old system going until we phase them all out. “We have a workforce of 120 staff in the organisation, of which 50 are mobile users. The rest are mostly office based HR, finance and support staff.

“Microsoft has done its homework on integration and there are a lot of benefits for us in moving to Microsoft,” Jina concluded.

BENEFITS

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SOFTWARE AND SERVICES

- Microsoft SharePoint® Server 2007
- Microsoft Windows Server 2008
- Microsoft SQL 2008
- Microsoft ISA 2007
- Microsoft Forefront™ Security
- Microsoft Windows® 7
- Microsoft Exchange as a Hosted Service
- Microsoft Office Professional
- Microsoft Office Visio®
- Microsoft Office Communicator 2007
- Microsoft Enterprise Project Management Solution

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