

ActionAid streamlines processes and data with Infor SunSystems Cloud

Enabling consistent financial data across global operations



Overview

ActionAid drives transparency and efficiency worldwide

ActionAid is an international charity for women and girls living in poverty and is active in 45 countries. The charity works in rural and urban communities across Africa, Asia and Latin America year-round, as well as responding to emergency situations arising from disasters or conflict.

As part of a 10-year strategy launched in 2017, ActionAid commenced a digital transformation programme designed to drive best practices across its financials, increase transparency to its stakeholders and maximise efficiency.



Challenge

- Disparate accounting systems
- Inefficient paper-based processes for many regions
- Lack of consistency across territories
- Need to improve data management and reporting time
- High costs



Infor solution

- Infor SunSystems Cloud selected following a strategic review
- Cloud-based platform to consolidate global financials
- Standardised processes and data for consistency
- Multi-currency support and local compliance capabilities



Outcome

- 253 users across 45 countries
- Consistent information across the global financial system
- Management accounts produced in less than half the previous time
- Finance teams empowered to become business partners

Challenge

Disparate systems slowed reporting and reduced consistency



ActionAid's operational structure is complex, managing programme implementation, campaigning and fundraising in every region. Throughout its history, it has innovated and evolved its approach to better address the structural drivers of poverty and injustice. Its accounting systems were previously disparate, with many regions reliant upon inefficient paper-based processes. Such an approach inevitably posed the risk of inaccuracies and impeded data availability for reporting.

As part of a 10-year strategy launched in 2017, ActionAid commenced a digital transformation programme designed to drive best practices across its financials, increase transparency to stakeholders and maximise efficiency. The first stages of this initiative were to review existing infrastructure and identify a number of key goals for the project. The team concluded that a modern, cloud-based platform was required to underpin global consolidation of all financials across the organisation, including the general secretariat, fundraising and implementation countries, using a global financial system.

Crucially, the solution needed to standardise processes and data for consistency, provide multi-currency capabilities and be configurable to support local regulatory and taxation requirements. This standardisation would also reduce training needs across the organisation.

Infor solution

Infor SunSystems Cloud supports global transformation



Following the review, ActionAid selected Infor™ SunSystems Cloud, including Infor Industry Cloud, which provides a standard technology framework for workflow, document management and more via the cloud.

The decision was based on an existing relationship with Infor spanning many years, as well as a thorough evaluation of Infor's solution capabilities against the organisation's digital transformation goals. A cloud model was identified as key to facilitating consistency and speed across every territory, minimising overheads and providing the scale to support future change.

Following an initial pilot focused on the general secretariat in Kenya, Malawi and the United Kingdom, the team identified key requirements and objectives for deployment. A detailed deployment plan and process were completed before the global rollout in 2018.

Outcome

Reducing costs and increasing transparency



With 253 users across 45 countries, ActionAid now records significant benefits. The core data model established during the design phase has enabled consistent information across the global financial system, while Infor's cloud model has established a platform from which finance staff can step up to business partnering roles.

The funding source code created during the design phase of the project enables income to be tracked in real time within the global financial system, allowing ActionAid to identify spending against donor budget lines and report back to donors on how funds have been used. For example, government and EU grants need to be coded in a different way than the Disasters and Emergencies Commission (DEC), and separated from non-profit organisations and trusts, such as The National Lottery. This granular insight enables trustees to demonstrate how funds from donors have been spent following a major event, or the extent to which regular appeal funds have supported the success of a particular project.

ActionAid can now generate management accounts in less than half the time it took previously. The solution is easy to use, reports are straightforward to create and there has been a real boost in confidence within the finance function, as well as improved communications across the organisation as a whole.

The ability to provide fast insights that support decision-making outside the finance function has improved perceptions of the finance teams, helping establish a reputation for delivering business insights and value-added information rather than simply crunching numbers.



"The cost savings we anticipate as a result of the deployment are important, but what's more important is that it enables our finance teams to become business partners and add value across the organisation."

Bridget Marango

International Director (People, Finance and Administration)
ActionAid

"In any charity activity, trust is imperative, and this means being completely transparent about how and where every penny is spent in a clear, concise manner. Through establishing this trusted relationship with our stakeholders, our supporters can see the positive impact resulting from their donations and this helps us to make more informed decisions on future activity."

Naushad Ahmed

Finance and System Improvement Manager Lead
ActionAid



About Infor

Infor is a global leader in business cloud software products for companies in industry-specific markets. Infor builds complete industry suites in the cloud and efficiently deploys technology that puts the user experience first, leverages data science, and integrates easily into existing systems. Over 67,000 organizations worldwide rely on Infor to help overcome market disruptions and achieve business-wide digital transformation.

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