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# A portal for teamwork and information sharing

↳ Yves vander Auwera,  
Director Staff Department ICT  
Shared Services, Fedict

## ICT SHARED SERVICES FOR FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

ICT skills in large companies are often dispersed among different departments. If you consolidate your ICT expertise and services in one single department you end up with an *ICT shared service* centre. This gives you tangible advantages such as lower costs, greater specialisation, better quality and continuity. This was also what four government services thought in 2003. They set up *ICT Shared Services*. Today the team works for eighteen government clients under the wing of Fedict. “We were growing fast”, says director Yves vander Auwera. “So, we needed a structured solution in order to gather and circulate information. We chose a portal with Microsoft technology.”

Yves vander Auwera is a man who likes challenges. He climbed two of the highest volcanoes in the world: Kilimanjaro in Tanzania and Cotopaxi in Ecuador. Almost 6000 metres high. The proofs of his exploits are framed in his office like a statement. “Challenges force you to give the best of yourself”, according to Yves vander Auwera. “*Challenging people* therefore is essential when it comes to good management. This is why *coaching* is also so important. With long-term vision as a kind of launch pad that goes beyond technological hype so that your team has a clear understanding of where you are headed. The challenging aspect of a *shared services* project is that you create a team beyond the limits of your own department or company.”

### TEAMWORK AND INFORMATION SHARING

“*ICT Shared Services* was an initiative set up by four federal government departments: the Chancellery, Budget & Management Control, Personnel & Organisation and Fedict”, continues Yves vander Auwera. “They entrusted *ICT Shared Services* among others with managing the PC park, telephony and e-mail traffic. Over the years we provided more and more services. And with great success, because *ICT Shared Services* now has eighteen clients including eight cabinets and different small government departments. It made total sense: thanks to shared services it is possible to take your applications and infrastructure to a higher level with a limited ICT budget.”

“Teamwork, information sharing and communication are critical success factors for shared services. Our first step was to build an intranet: *yourICT.net*. Users were able to use this for looking up documents and service catalogues for instance. But with our very strong growth the structure could not cope. In 2006 we opted for an alternative for the future: a portal using Microsoft Office SharePoint Server. With ITG Consulting – now Ordina – as its partner. The name remained unchanged: *yourICT.net*.”

### ACCESS PORTAL FOR SHARED SERVICES

SharePoint is a platform for sharing information and working together in teams

# Challenges force you to give the best of yourself.



and communities. It is integrated with the desktop applications, e-mail and web browser of Microsoft among others. "That's an advantage because it is compatible with our own architecture", explains Yves vander Auwera. "Our clients often use Microsoft Office components too. That was a deciding factor in our choice of SharePoint."

"*yourICT.net* became, literally, the gateway for our clients and our own staff to shared services. The portal provides speedy and simple access to critical information and knowledge, either from the workplace or from home. This improves the quality of decision-making and the implementation of those decisions. *yourICT.net* was strategic in ensuring the success of *ICT Shared Services*."

## GOAL ONE: OPTIMAL SERVICE

"The main goal of *yourICT.net* is to provide optimal service. The information goes from general news messages – about a maintenance interruption to the server for instance – to procedures, project documentation and methodologies. The procedures are the foundations of the service. Escalation procedures for instance are described in detail so that clients know exactly what they need to

do if there are problems. The procedures may differ from one client to another, or even one topic to another. The same approach applies to our internal processes: these are also clearly documented on the site for our own staff."

"The portal groups all information about important projects such as FEDCOM or e-Premier. The goal of FEDCOM is to modernise state bookkeeping procedures, while the goal of e-Premier is to eliminate the paperwork mountain for the council of ministers. On *yourICT.net* all the parties involved can look up the full information and documentation about these projects: from methodologies used to description of the architecture and how the user interfaces work."

## ACCESS TO APPLICATIONS AND REPORTS

The portal also serves as a junction box for a number of internal tools, applications and reports", adds Yves vander Auwera. "In the recent past we made a lot of dashboards and balanced scorecards with SAS software. You can gain access via the SharePoint portal in the same way as for new developments with Microsoft PerformancePoint. We apply the same methodology for handling incidents

and change requests using Computer Associates software. Clients do not have access to the tool itself, but they do have access to up-to-date reports. They are able to follow the status via the portal.

## STREAMLINING PROCESSES

You also create and manage workflows with SharePoint. Is this something for *ICT Shared Services*? "Indeed", confirms Yves vander Auwera. "We developed an application giving our staff access to the computer rooms via an approval process. You enter your request via *yourICT.net*. If it is accepted, then an e-mail is sent out automatically with instructions to the company that manages the computer rooms. At the same time, the client receives the confirmation that the problem is being dealt with. You can streamline a wide range of other processes in the same way such as recruitment procedures for new staff for example, or follow-up for incident management. E-services like these are high on our list of priorities."

## SECURED CONTENT, IN TWO LANGUAGES

Security was an important point of focus. "The portal gives users information that is tailored to their access rights", explains

"Thanks to shared services you can take your applications and infrastructure to a higher level with a limited ICT budget." Yves vander Auwera, Director Staff Department ICT Shared Services, Fedict



Yves vander Auwera. "An employee from Budget & Management Control for instance does not have access to information intended for Personnel and Organisation. We do this by defining user groups with rights and roles. These define what a user can do with the information and the individual documents: from just consulting it to total management of it."

"Another point that needed to be addressed was the bilingual aspect. Each page and each document exists in Dutch and French. You can switch from one language to another with one mouse click. All set up with standard functions."

## DEVELOPERS WHO THINK LIKE END USERS

"This project revealed yet again how important it is to *challenge* people. I do not look at things as a technologist, but as an end user. Our target group is made up of people who even have an aversion to IT. They also work with our solutions. My developers have to think like end users therefore. During the development phase and when documenting solutions. In this respect I am constantly *challenging* them."

"I place the same demands on external consultants. They all form part of the same



virtual team. With Ordina integration is seamless. Ordina also involves us in individual evaluations, which is great for co-operation."

"The portal is the result of teamwork", concludes Yves vander Auwera. "Ordina handled the total development. Should the need arise, my team can call on the expertise of an experienced SharePoint

competence centre. That's reassuring. Microsoft also made a valuable contribution – when setting up the structured documentation for instance and with the escalation of technical problems. That's out and out *Shared Services!*" //

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