



Movares

Movares has more control over projects thanks to a combination of TimeXtender, Azure and Power BI

The consultancy and engineering firm, Movares, coordinates complex projects in the field of mobility, infrastructure and climate adaptation. It had become impossible for them to maintain an at-a-glance overview of the financial results of these projects within their administrative system. E-mergo solved this problem through a combination of TimeXtender, Azure and Power BI. “In particular when you’re responsible for managing multiple projects, the clear colour-coded charts help provide an instant overview”, says Daniële ten Hoop, Information Management IT adviser at Movares who, along with project leader Roelof Oppenhuis, supervised the introduction.

Movares is a consultancy and engineering agency that strives to make the Netherlands more liveable, accessible and sustainable. Its 800 employees work on large projects where mobility, infrastructure, the digital transformation, climate adaptation, circular

emergo

Movares

“The project leaders are extremely happy with the project status overviews.”

Roelof Oppenhuis,
Project Leader

Solution Overview

Company name

Movares

Sector

Consultancy and engineering

Challenges

- Calculating actual costs was difficult using only AFAS
- Different versions of the truth from using Excel files

Solution

- TimeXtender data warehouse solution
- Azure Cloud
- Power BI dashboards

Benefits

- One version of the truth through TimeXtender
- Visual reporting with Power BI
- Easily scalable to more dashboards and/or data sources

TimeXtender & Microsoft Partner

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construction and the energy transition come together. Project leaders often have ten to fifteen projects on the go at one time. So it's crucial for them to be on top of the financial aspects of these projects and be able to see their current status at a glance. Movares was using AFAS software for its financial administration, but still felt it needed greater insight into its projects.

As a hands-on information management IT consultant on company-wide applications, Daniële was mainly involved in the initial phase of this project. "I choose the applications that will help make our organisation become better organised. I supervised this project from the quote phase through to proof of concept. At which point, Roelof became involved as project manager to take the project through to the start of the management phase."

The challenge

You can make a wide range of different analyses using

AFAS, but this financial software has its limits in terms of functionality, performance and visuals. "Sometimes you need thousands of records to calculate actual costs, and that's difficult using financial software" explains Daniële. "That's why we decided on a data warehouse. The AFAS software serves as the main source; but we can also link up other sources, such as planning systems or quality dashboards, so we can see, for example, how quality relates to costs."

To select the data warehouse and dashboard tooling, Movares brought in an information architect. What requirements did the reporting need to meet to be able to offer a solution to the limited information provided by AFAS? "You can always develop a large, complex and expensive solution," says Daniële. "But by narrowing our question right down, and paying close attention to the connection with the AFAS software, we ended up choosing E-mergo, in part because CAS (Conclusion AFAS Solutions) had already had good experiences with them."

It was decided to go for a combination of the cloud platform Microsoft Azure, the data management tool TimeXtender, and the data analytics and dashboard creation programme Power BI – sometimes referred to collectively as the 'Golden Triangle'. The E-mergo consultants Alexander Groenendijk and Bernard Wilmink were brought in to help Movares, Alexander for the TimeXtender part and Bernard for Power BI. "Project managers kept their own Excels of their projects," explains Alexander, "so there were different truths circulating within the organization, creating 'islands'. Reducing that to just one truth was actually the biggest challenge."

The approach

In May 2021, the two E-mergo consultants began developing a proof of concept: the project dashboard. In June, Bernard and Alexander held a number of intensive sessions with the Movares team, first to get the AFAS data into Timextender and from there to set up the first Power BI dashboard.

"Initial reactions to the dashboard were positive," says Roelof. "But there were also a few minor errors. This was mainly down to definition issues. So, for example, what exactly do you mean with a project by 'amount to be invoiced'? Ask five people and you'll get five different answers. The most important criterion is that you get a warning if work that's been done still hasn't been invoiced after more than 30 days. TimeXtender forces you to provide clear definitions." Daniële agrees:



“The great strength of TimeXtender is that it shows just one truth. From which you can create as many dashboards as you want. It’s a single point of truth.”

From the summer of 2021 through to January 2022, Movares themselves worked on these definitions. The first dashboard went live in mid-February. “Each dashboard triggered the need amongst project managers for additional information, and thus new dashboards,” explains Daniële. “In the beginning, we focused primarily on the financial-administrative processes. We chose Power BI because it makes the reports very visual, which suits the current generation, who are very visually oriented. Red and green traffic lights let you see immediately what’s going on.”

“A red light tells you that you need to act and if the entire dashboard is green, you don’t have to do anything,” explains Roelof. “Even if you’re leading some ten to fifteen projects, this still lets you maintain an overview.”

Movares now has prepaid support hours in case there are any questions for E-mergo. The goal is ultimately that Movares can manage on their own. Roelof has been the one who has worked most closely with E-mergo. “It has worked really well. Both Alexander and Bernard have spoken in depth with the users. They’re very good consultants who know what they’re talking about and work fast. I’m more than satisfied.”

“They guide you into making a choice,” adds Daniële, “without giving you the feeling you’re being pushed.”

Alexander and Bernard also found it an enjoyable project on which to work. “The nice thing was that you were in contact a lot with the business,” says Bernard. “The right people from Movares were involved, enabling you to ask questions, including addressing questions to CAS. We began every morning with a day start. It was all very well-organised, with everybody there ready to help you.”

Following the financial data project dashboards, a possible next step will be to develop dashboards for business line managers, senior management and controllers. “And we’re going to open up new sources, for example capacity planning and project plans,” explains Roelof. “Currently, we can see when the budget is used up, but not when the work is completely finished. We also want to use dashboarding to show, say, that our quality is good. For example, via KVM dashboards (quality/safety/environment) or to measure CO2 performance. We can also use these when reporting to certifying bodies.”

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Daniële ten Hoop,
Information Management IT Consultant

About E-mergo

The name E-mergo is derived from the Latin proverb 'Luctor et emergo' (I struggle and emerge). In Zeeland this signifies winning the battle against water. Obviously, we do not battle water, but we do make sure that companies keep their heads above water in the growing stream of data. Working from the motto 'Manage your data, innovate your business' we help you to get the most out of your data.

We do this using software from Qlik, Microsoft, Mendix and TimeXtender, for which we provide software, training, consultancy and support. Together we will help your company to create new business models and to reduce costs.

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The logo for Emergo, featuring the word "emergo" in a bold, teal, lowercase sans-serif font. The letter 'e' is stylized with a small loop at the bottom.

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