

HHNK builds a flexible future with Unit4



Hoogheemraadschap Hollands Noorderkwartier (HHNK)



By rethinking its finance strategy based on a unified Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform, HHNK has increased finance productivity and enabled the function to become a partner to the business.

This Dutch water authority is using the smart, best practice Unit4 platform to streamline and automate finance processes, using the timely, complete finance data to drive more efficient utility services delivery.

Key benefits include:

- Increased finance productivity, using a single, unified, and adaptive finance model
- Accelerated informed decision making based on a flexible view of finance
- Improved compliance and data governance

The water utility for North Holland

Almost all of the citizens of the North Holland province live below sea level. HHNK, the water authority for the northern part of the province, ensures that all 1.2 million residents are able to work and live in safety by keeping water securely behind solid dykes and by channelling excess water in the right direction. The organization is also responsible for sewage treatment and clean water in the region.

HHNK has a vision for finance transformation. The organization wants its finance function to focus less time on transaction processing and control and more time on strategic decision making. By putting finance data at the center of its operations, the finance function would become more closely aligned with other departments. The water authority would be able to achieve more efficient finance management at lower cost.

Standing in the way of this transformation was HHNK's legacy finance system. Outmoded and outdated, it relied on point-to-point integrations to other core applications, making it hard to share timely, complete data in support of finance and other operational decision making.

The order to cash process, for example, relied on multiple manual processes and point integrations that inhibited fast, efficient order management. The vendor

Industry

Local Government

Location

Heerhugowaard, NL

Size

1.2 million citizens and businesses

Product

Unit4 Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

Challenges

Replace legacy, stand-alone finance system, featuring point integrations and multiple, overlapping transaction processes

Key metrics



AGILITY

automated workflow streamlines and accelerates processes



UNIFIED FINANCE

a single, shared, trusted version of the truth

“Unit4 is changing the way our people think about finance. Seamless integration and interoperability enable our finance team to spend less time on transactions and more time on insights, decisions, and change.”

Jacintha Meijer

Project Lead, HHNK

management process was equally challenging, involving multiple steps to process and settle vendor invoices.

“We wanted to put complete finance data at people’s fingertips,” explains Jacintha Meijer, Project Lead. For HHNK, finance transformation involves real-time financial visibility and control across our people, processes, and systems. This way, we can improve decision support, while eliminating the risk and potential cost of non-compliance.”

Unified ledger accounting system

This is where Unit4 came in. HHNK deployed the Unit4 Financials ERP platform to create a unified ledger accounting system. This single model eliminates time lags, sub-ledgers, data fragmentation, and the reconciliation of different modules. HHNK’s finance data is consistent and always in balance – and the ledgers are all up to date.

“We have stayed very close to the pre-built Unit4 Finance functionality, both because the Unit4 system follows best practice and because customization can be complicated,” says Jacintha. “By keeping a standardized implementation, it becomes very easy to adapt to changes around the corner.”

Jacintha and her team began using the platform in early 2020, just as the Covid-19 pandemic struck. However, the lockdown didn’t stop the learning. “One of the great things about Unit4 Financials is the ease of use. During the pandemic, we were

all working from home, using split screens to share data and educate users. It’s so intuitive that our people picked it up very quickly.”

Unit4 Professional Services was instrumental in this fast, standardized roll-out. “It was great to have the Unit4 Professional Services team alongside us. They understood our business goals and our objectives. They were knowledgeable and extremely professional. Nothing was too much trouble. They collaborated with us whenever we came across a roadblock, and, over time, have become a trusted partner to HHNK,” says Jacintha.

Now that the development phase of the project is complete, Unit4 continues to fine-tune its role in the support phase. Jacintha adds, “We are now looking at ways to continually improve the system and the ways we are working together.”

Changing how people think about finance

By rethinking its finance technology and processes, HHNK has achieved real and lasting finance transformation. “Unit4 is changing the way our people think about finance. Seamless integration and interoperability enable our finance team to spend less time on transactions and more time on insights, decisions, and change,” she says.

According to Jacintha, “Finance is now faster than it was before. Single data entry, strong integration, and streamlined workflow processes all enable the HHNK team to work smarter. Under the previous ledger system, for example, people needed to

memorize or look up each code. Now, they simply click on an intuitive drop-down menu to find the one they need.

Master data has been similarly transformed. Jacintha again: “People used to have to email multiple forms to finance, which finance would then key in manually. Now, it’s all automated. Different departments in HHNK can develop orders, with the authorizations managed using automated workflow. This has made a huge difference to how we work.”

The barriers to finance transformation have been well and truly removed from HHNK. “You can’t underestimate the impact of Unit4 on our modernization strategy. We are now sharing complete, accurate finance data across our organization mixed with data from other systems. HHNK is ultimately more agile, more adaptive, and better positioned to keep the region safe from floods and supplied with sufficient clean water.”

