



VERA puts its customers first

Client
VERA

Sector
IT

Business operations
IT service provision and consultancy for local government organisations.

Challenge
Ensure IT infrastructure keeps pace with customer volumes and service requirements, without capital expenditure. Refocus the business on providing customers with the consultancy services they're asking for.

Services used
Cloud Infrastructure Service

Business results
Outsourcing infrastructure management releases internal resources to focus on consultancy. A pay-as-you-grow charging model lets infrastructure scale in line with growth. VERA's customers benefit from Colt's data centre and managed services expertise, including security and business continuity.



Colt's Cloud Infrastructure Service gives VERA and its customers a platform for the future

Infrastructure maintenance and management tasks were taking up too much time at IT consultancy VERA. By out-tasking server and operating system management to Colt, the company ensures its customers get the service levels they need, and can refocus its own resources on providing consultancy services. A pay-as-you-grow charging model means VERA can scale infrastructure in line with business growth without making capital investment.

IT consultancy and service provider VERA supports local government organisations in Belgium's Flemish Brabant province. VERA provides its customers with hosted IT services and advice and consultancy in areas like e-government. Since most local government bodies face the same challenges, they're increasingly expected to work together. VERA provides shared platforms and support for joint projects throughout the province.

The burden of infrastructure management

VERA serves around 85% of the local government organisations in Belgium's Flemish Brabant province. These include local authorities, social services organisations and police forces. Many of these organisations are too small to justify having their own in-house ICT teams. VERA was created by the province to provide these organisations with IT

services and applications, such as email and shared platforms for collaborative working, all of which used to run on VERA's own IT infrastructure. VERA realised, however, that what its customers increasingly needed was ICT consultancy, especially as the Belgian government is increasingly promoting e-government and similar IT-based initiatives. As VERA started to focus more on providing the advice and consultancy its customers needed, managing the infrastructure increasingly became a non-core activity that was taking up too much time and resource.

To continue supporting existing customers and applications, and accommodate new ones, VERA identified the need to upgrade its infrastructure. But the capital investment required would have taken up a high proportion of its provincial funding — money that VERA wanted to invest in developing its consultancy capabilities.

The company decided that the best way to meet both objectives was to out-task infrastructure management to a specialist third party.



// Colt's Cloud Infrastructure Service gives us the reliability and performance we were looking for. Long-term planning for IT requirements is often very difficult. Colt's pay-as-you-grow approach allows for flexible growth in line with our requirements at any given point in time, making our business more agile and responsive to customer demand. //

Freddy Deprez, General Manager, VERA

Reliability, scalability, performance

VERA issued a European government tender for replacement of its infrastructure by an externally managed service. Working with its local partner ICT Architect, Colt responded to the tender with a proposal based on Cloud Infrastructure Service. Freddy Deprez, General Manager of VERA, explains why he selected the Colt proposal:

"We chose Colt for the simplicity of the offer, the competitive pricing, and the sheer range of managed services Colt can provide: infrastructure, platform, software and desktop as a service. We liked the idea of being able to get everything we needed from a single provider. Colt has an excellent reputation and extensive expertise in managed services compared with other players in the marketplace."

Colt hosts VERA's infrastructure in one of its ISO 27001 security-certified data centres. This means all of VERA's customers, even the very smallest organisations, benefit from Colt's professional security expertise, business continuity capabilities and end-to-end SLAs. And because the infrastructure is virtualised, it can scale easily in line with changing needs.

"Colt's Cloud Infrastructure Service gives us the reliability and performance we were looking for," says Deprez. "Long-term planning for IT requirements is often very difficult. Colt's pay-as-you-grow approach allows for flexible growth in line with our requirements at any given point in time, making our business more agile and responsive to customer demand."

The migration of IT services from VERA's own server park to Colt's Cloud Infrastructure Service is taking place in stages. The rollout involves close collaboration between VERA, Colt and ICT Architect.

"VERA's business is developing rapidly," explains Gunther De Vleeschouwer, Managing Director at ICT Architect. "We work directly with VERA to understand their changing needs and communicate them to Colt, so that the Cloud Infrastructure Service can keep evolving to meet them."

The Belgian government uses cloud and outsourced computing models itself and is actively encouraging local government organisations to adopt them too. Because the agreement between Colt and VERA was based on a European government tender, it can be used as a blueprint for any local government organisation in the country that wants to migrate to Colt's cloud-based service.

Perfectly positioned to meet future challenges

The Cloud Infrastructure Service's pay-as-you-grow charging model lets VERA pay only for the capacity it uses. With no need for capital investment in servers and other infrastructure elements, the company can budget more easily and make more effective use of its funding resources. And relying on Colt for expert infrastructure management, monitoring and maintenance lets VERA's in-house teams concentrate on the company's growing consultancy business.

VERA is now looking to replace some of the services and applications it provides to its customers with equivalent Colt managed IT services. An agreement has already been reached to migrate the VERA email environment that supports 5,000 users across a number of Flemish Brabant government bodies, to a Colt hosted email service. In addition, one of the police forces in the province has moved its entire desktop environment to a Colt hosted virtual desktop solution, and other police districts are set to do the same.

"Colt's managed IT services enable us to meet our customers' infrastructure and application requirements confidently, with the reliability, scalability and cost control we were seeking. Our internal teams are now free to focus on providing the consultancy services our customers increasingly want," confirms Deprez.

Next step

To arrange a consultation or to discuss how Colt can help you visit: www.colt.net