

**COMET competency center for knowledge management** reduces administrative and maintenance effort through deployment of a standard project management software, improves cross-departmental communication and saves time and costs in grant controlling.

## Challenge

The Austrian competency center 'Know-Center' develops highly innovative IT solutions in the field of knowledge management. The 'K plus' program which has been replaced by 'COMET' in the meantime, supports the interface between science and economy in Austria. The central research fields of the Know-Center include, for instance, the improvement of intelligent IT services for the learning in communities or the development of new methods for finding knowledge in complex knowledge repositories.



The Know-Center initiates and implements different kinds of projects together with its projects partners. Depending on the provider of grants these range from commercial projects or national funding projects to international EU projects. Most project partners of the Know-Center belong to the industrial sector. Together with these partners future-oriented strategies are developed and implemented in the form of projects.

For the administration of project data the competency center had previously used a Microsoft Access database, for project time tracking an in-house developed tool, and for evaluations Microsoft Excel. Because of the growing complexity of the projects and the increasing amount of project data the project administration and maintenance of the database became more and more complicated. For optimizing the in-house solution comprehensive enhancements would have been necessary. Due to the already high maintenance efforts this was not considered reasonable.

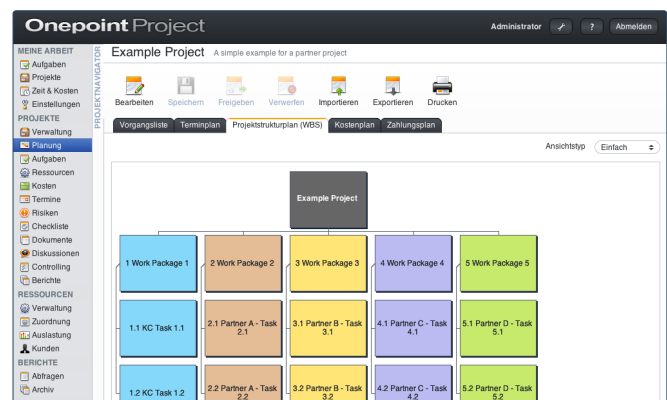
Additionally, optimal project planning and appropriate reporting of the projects could hardly be carried out by using the Access database. Particularly the planning of comprehensive EU projects was difficult and could not be performed in a standardized way. It also proved to be a major disadvantage that web-based access of all employees to up-to-date project information could not be provided.

- ✔ **Deployment of a standard software reduces maintenance efforts for the project environment and administrative costs**
- ✔ **Integrated resource utilization planning improves cross-departmental communication**
- ✔ **Prompt and regular tracking of actual time and estimations improves basis for decision making**
- ✔ **Easy and quick access to the central project repository facilitates grant controlling and saves time**

## Solution

Due to the increasing insufficiency of the before used solution the center started to look for an integrated project management system and decided to switch to Onepoint Project. The new project management software was instantly deployed throughout the company, both for funded and commercial projects. Onepoint Project made it possible to efficiently visualize all projects in a single tool for the first time.

It proved quite complicated to implement a central project management solution for a research center as the Know-Center. The project managers and employees are very creative and used to work dynamically. A standardized handling of projects could have been easily regarded as negative. However, in cooperation with Onepoint the employees could quickly be relieved of their fears. The flexible and easy-to-use project management solution is highly appreciated by the project managers in the meantime and also well accepted by the employees.



The use of sub-projects allowed for a better integration of the persons responsible for work packages. In order to render project management more dynamic and flexible, a series of projects was split into sub-projects that are equivalent to work packages from a conventional point of view. Through the visualization as an individual project the person responsible for the work package can take much more responsibility. Thus, the planning effort for bigger research projects can be divided up in a better way.

One more fundamental key feature of the software for the Know-Center is the open database structure by which all important project data for grant controlling can be accessed from Microsoft Excel at any time. For project progress and closure reports the planned and actual hours are exported from the Onepoint PostgreSQL database via the ODBC interface at the push of a button. In this way, existing Excel templates could even be further used in order to easily transform the project data into the format requested by the corresponding provider of grants.

*// Through Onepoint's project management software all information and project key figures that need to be reported to the providers of grants and project partners are centrally and easily accessible. When creating the reports I save a lot of time that I now spend on improved scheduling.*

**Dr. Erwin Duschnig, Managing Director of the Know-Center**

## Benefit

One major reason for the quick acceptance of Onepoint Project across the company was the efficient web-based access to the entire relevant project information. Thus, the efficiency of the project contributors' work has increased considerably. For instance, not only the actual hours can be tracked easily via a standard web browser now, but also estimations on the progress of the single work packages can be made.

The use of the project management solution also led to shorter communication channels, particularly across different departments. For example, communication can be carried out more efficiently when resolving resource conflicts due to the integrated resource utilization monitoring. Employees and project managers use also the commenting feature for work packages in order to easily and quickly document minor changes to the project.

With the smooth upgrade to version 9 of Onepoint Project time tracking could be optimized, too. Thanks to the now weekly-based time tracking the employees do accept the software even more, and in this way the project hours are recorded quicker and particularly more regularly. This improves also the quality of the actual values and therefore offers better decision criteria for evaluating the project progress.

The deployment of Onepoint Project is probably most useful for grant controlling – although the data is primarily accessed from Microsoft Excel. The improved quality and the more up-to-date status of the data make it easier for the managing director of the Know-Center, Dr. Erwin Duschnig, to retrieve the necessary information for the reports to the providers of grants. This saves time that can be spent on the optimization of the project and portfolio planning.

By the use of Onepoint Project the center can now benefit from a central project management system actively supporting the project tasks of all employees throughout the company. By replacing the previously used in-house solution not only high maintenance and development costs could be saved, but also a lot of time for the benefit of valuable employees who can now contribute more actively to the core business of the Know-Center.



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