

# CERN controls its finances with arcplan-based cockpit suite

*“The arcplan-powered management and reporting dashboard contributes decisively to improving and controlling financial activities. As a controlling instrument, it helps the Finance Department to harmonize operational processes and data with strategic goals and corporate governance. The cockpit’s ability to reliably provide key performance indicators frees the way for effective risk management.”*

Flavio Costa, IT Project Manager, CERN Finance and Procurement Department



## SECTOR

- Research

## SOLUTION

- Management Cockpit based on arcplan Enterprise

## COMPANY / COUNTRY

- CERN / Switzerland

## INFORMATION REQUIREMENTS

- Better access and visibility of accounting-related data for the Finance and Procurement Department
- Comprehensive overview of all financial activities

## SOFTWARE

- arcplan Enterprise 5
- Oracle database
- Oracle Business Application HR

## USERS

- 10 executive staff and specialist users

## BENEFITS

- Standard management of economic decision-making scenarios and resources planning
- Process transparency
- Fast support of processes related to decision-making

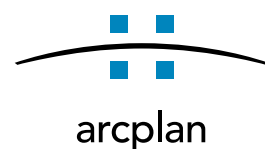
CERN is the largest particle physics research centre in the world. Around 9,000 visiting scientists from 500 educational institutions from more than 80 countries use the CERN systems for their research. The joint venture has an annual budget of around a billion euros and is financed by 20 member states, which expect detailed reports about project funding, outcomes, etc. In order to support CERN’s global mission and satisfy the demands of its financiers and researchers, CERN’s Finance and Procurement Department must effectively manage key processes such as individual project controlling and managing costs such as purchasing and services. In order to do so, an arcplan Enterprise-based cockpit solution was deployed to complement an Oracle data warehouse so that real-time performance monitoring can be conducted.

Information technology and data processing plays a decisive role in CERN laboratories and their administration. However, like many organizations, spreadsheets had become the de facto standard for data collection and analysis. However, managing financial performance with spreadsheets can be a manual, error prone process. With the growing number of research projects and stringent financial reporting requirements, the finance management team determined that they needed to be able to monitor financial processes and performance using measurable indicators and quality-assured information. CERN management selected a management cockpit based on arcplan Enterprise. A contributing factor in their decision was the cockpit methodology developed by arcplan partner Cockpit Group, which enables a fast, tailor-made presentation of all the important indicators. The management cockpit dashboard gives decision-makers precisely what is needed to address

- challenges of changing financial transactions,
- cost changes that will impact new and ongoing project descriptions, and
- developments in investment and resources planning.

## What happens in the Finance and Procurement Department – a full overview

With the arcplan Enterprise-based cockpit, financial controllers can for the first time get a comprehensive and timely picture of financial movements and cost factors throughout the entire research center, aided by more than 30 key performance indicators (KPIs). The dashboard reports the indicators, records them and fully analyzes projected and actual figures from capital assets, payments received, purchasing and contacts with external partners, service providers and co-workers. “This gives us a comprehensive global overview of financial influences and their concordance with the governance of the department,” explains CERN Finance and Procurement Department IT Project Manager Flavio Costa. Ten users from middle management and the executive team are at present working with the controlling system.



NET Research developed a unique way to use the arcplan Enterprise-based cockpit solution to visually depict and manage company processes. Via a graphical interface, controllers can call up performance-linked process data that compares results over different time periods and relates them to projected values. Instead of searching a database for matching Excel spreadsheets as before, now financial information is put in context and can be displayed by indicators automatically and aided by a drill-down function. The dashboard provides a meaningful performance picture of the current workload and performance data from various processes like purchasing, accounting, payment and treasury. At the same time, the arcplan solution has created conditions for risk management, which indicate striking deviations in the business-critical environment, aided by traffic-light functions. The user can thus immediately recognize imminent danger and take appropriate control measures.

### Core figures, strategy and risks under control

Along with the consolidation and planning of financial indicators, CERN management uses the system for trends reports and forecasts. "It's not just a matter of ad hoc analyses. Criteria for strategic decision-making that affect the entire organization are also of concern," stresses Costa. The open, flexible architecture of the arcplan technology ensures a close link between dashboard and data sources, in addition to fast information extraction from the ODBC database. The CERN cockpit does not require online analytical processing (OLAP) to provide excellent performance.

The arcplan Enterprise-based dashboard has fulfilled the expectations of the CERN controllers in every respect. The performance-related process parameters are considerably more meaningful than the report spreadsheets used before the introduction of the business intelligence system. The greater transparency of the technical processes used in Finance simplifies and improves controlling, as information provision and preparation via the dashboard solution has made redundant the time-consuming manual production of analyses.

### arcplan Information Services GmbH

arcplan provides platform-independent, simple and flexibly configurable solutions for analytical problems that fit seamlessly into existing IT infrastructures. The solutions link operational and strategic performance management with interactive scorecards and dashboards, which optimize the control of individual sections and the entire company. Today, arcplan has over 2,500 customers and 300,000 users worldwide.

[www.arcplan.com](http://www.arcplan.com)

### About Cockpit Group

Cockpit Group was founded in Belgium in 1989 by Professor Patrick Georges, a practicing neurosurgeon. Georges designed the management cockpit concept to make KPIs available to executive staff in a way that would enable them to record this data quickly and simply. The company implemented this concept in the cockpit suite, a solution based on arcplan Enterprise. Today, Cockpit Group is managed by Grégoire Talbot and over 200 management cockpits have since been implemented.

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