

«We will implement projects with COMIT in future as well.»  
 In 2006, the four cantonal banks of Nidwalden, Glarus, Obwalden and Appenzell implemented the overall banking solution from Finnova, with the help of COMIT. The banks felt the economic benefit of the project, the lowering of operating costs, for the first time in 2007.

Changing a platform is a project of considerable scope for a financial institution, considering the human resources as well as the financial investment. One of the greatest concerns in terms of choosing the platform relates to the project risk: Will the bank be able to continue its business during and directly after the implementation without any interruption?

The Sântis project demonstrates that a platform replacement can be carried out smoothly and without any problems. COMIT AG implemented the overall banking solution from Finnova at the cantonal banks of Nidwalden, Glarus, Obwalden and Appenzell according to plan and on schedule. «The COMIT staff achieved their goals and completed the projected successfully, even though it wasn't always easy,» summarises Markus Grünenfelder, CEO of the Nidwaldner Kantonalbank and chairman of the Sântis steering committee.

Project planning began in the autumn of 2004, and the project setup and the development of the IT infrastructure in Swisscom IT Services' data centre took place in the spring of 2005. COMIT achieved the first milestone – Finnova start-up at the Nidwaldner Kantonalbank as a pilot bank – on 3 January 2006. According to Markus Grünenfelder: «This cut-over was a very big success.» After that, by the end of each

quarter, another bank went online, namely the Glarner Kantonalbank on 1 April, the Obwaldner Kantonalbank on 1 July and the Appenzeller Kantonalbank on 1 October. To keep pace with this ambitious schedule, COMIT chose the productive Finnova installation of the Schwyzer Kantonalbank as a model. In doing so, a completely new platform setup was avoided. In order to keep future IT operating costs low, and to create optimum conditions for even more intensive collaboration, COMIT set up the four banks as multi-clients.

#### **A strong project team**

The right mix of banking, technical and organisational know-how characterised the 20-person project team under the leadership of Dr. Hans Schriber. The data migration specialists needed to have distinct knowledge of the AGIS platform being replaced, in addition to the Finnova platform and the peripheral systems to be newly connected. At the same time, knowledge based on many years of projects and methods flowed into the migration plan. «With such a tight schedule, every step has to be planned precisely, and every sub-project has to run like clockwork,» explains Hans Schriber.

Last but not least, one important factor of success had to do with the consistent application of experience and synergies. The lessons learned from the first implementation were



Markus Grünenfelder, CEO of the Nidwaldner Kantonalbank and chairman of the Sântis steering committee

optimally exploited not only within COMIT. Thanks to the project organisation, an active exchange of experience also took place in and between the banks. «Indeed, at times we had to recognise that bank employees and IT specialists did not speak the same language,» says Markus Grünenfelder. But, according to him, communication quickly improved after the initial difficulties.

Following the successful completion of the project, attention was focussed on the IT operation. Compared to the previous AGIS solution, the Sântis banks are expecting substantial cost savings while maintaining the same level of quality. COMIT is determined to meet the high demands in full. So far, according to Markus Grünenfelder, «the operation is running very well and is meeting our expectations and qualitative requirements.»

COMIT acts as a general contractor for the implementation of the Finnova solution at a fixed price. And today, it is the only contractual partner for the operation of the platform in the data centre of Swisscom IT Services.

**Questions for Markus Grünenfelder, CEO of the Nidwaldner Kantonalbank and chairman of the steering committee of the Sântis project.**

**How did the Sântis project come about?**

The so-called four 'small' banks in the AGI group recognised that the costs for the AGI system, which more than covered their needs, were constantly rising. This caused those four banks to look around the market for a system that met their needs at an adequate price. It quickly became clear that implementing such a project would be more efficient and cost-effective in a group of four banks (collective evaluation, the same source and target systems).

**How satisfied are you with the way the overall Sântis project went?**

The Sântis banks started this project together and finished it together in a successful manner. We are very satisfied with Finnova as a software supplier and COMIT as an implementation company.

**Was the decision in favour of Swisscom IT Services as the data centre partner the right one?**

Yes. We will begin to feel the complete economic benefit of the project, the lowering of operating costs, in 2007. However, we were able to achieve savings potentials as early as 2005 as a result of an investment stop with the AGI system, which of course was pursued as a consequence of our migration decision.

**How do you view COMIT's affiliation with Swisscom IT Services (SCIS)?**

It's no doubt a good thing, and it surely strengthens the position of SCIS and COMIT in today's IT environment.

**Will you implement future projects with COMIT as well?**

Yes. An initial one is already taking place in the area of op-risk management / Basel II.

**Services and scope of the project**

COMIT is responsible for implementing and operating the Finnova platform at the four Sântis banks. COMIT services include:

- the implementation project in the role of general contractor;
- connection to the third-party system to be adopted;
- development of the necessary IT infrastructure;
- data migration, test management and the cut-over;
- operation of the solution at the data centre of Swisscom IT Services.