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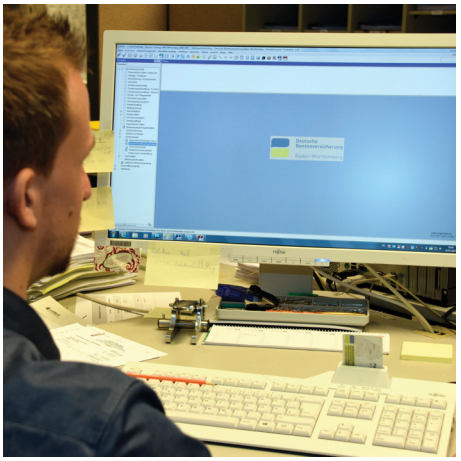
Case Study

German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg

Modernizing COBOL applications to meet new business challenges



Overview

Part of the national German Pension Fund, this regional organization manages the statutory pension insurance scheme for 6.6 million citizens in the state of Baden-Württemberg. Employing over 3,600 people, German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg pays out billions of Euros in pension plans every year.

Challenge

The German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg relies on core processes running smoothly to provide pensions and information services.

Falk-Oliver Bischoff, Head of IT at the German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg, said: "Our most critical business applications were developed decades ago in COBOL, running on mainframes. Over the years, we've added to the logic to update the applications as requirements change. As cost pressures are increasing while our organization becomes ever more digitized, we wanted to take major steps to modernize our applications to support citizen services in the years to come while reducing operating costs."

"As businesses and governments become increasingly digitized, Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) is helping us to modernize IT operations to better serve citizens in the digital age and remain highly attractive as an employer."

FALK-OLIVER BISCHOFF
Head of IT
German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg

Solution

As part of the initiative to modernize its wider IT landscape, the German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg migrated its COBOL programs from the z/OS mainframe operating system to SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for z Systems using Micro Focus™ Enterprise Server by OpenText™. Falk-Oliver Bischoff noted: "We want to make the best use of our resources, so we were one of the first organizations in our field to take this step. Moving from a traditional mainframe environment to a modern Linux configuration with Micro Focus Enterprise Server for our mission-critical COBOL business logic gives us more flexibility. Going forward, we can change the hardware platform seamlessly and run our applications on the most suitable infrastructure."

To adapt to changing demands more rapidly, the German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg

Deutsche Rentenversicherung Baden-Württemberg

At a Glance

- **Industry**
  Government—Federal
- **Location**
  Karlsruhe and Stuttgart, Germany
- **Challenge**
  To continue delivering the best level of service to citizens now and in the future, the German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg wanted to modernize its most critical business applications while improving the cost-efficiency of operations.
- **Products and Services**
  Micro Focus Visual COBOL for Eclipse
  Micro Focus COBOL Server
- **Success Highlights**
  + Secures a six-figure saving for its COBOL application environment
  + Enables developers to build, test and release new features faster
  + Ignites innovation and enables new business agility across the enterprise
  + Connects new developers with modern and familiar tools

> **"By running COBOL code on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for z Systems with Micro Focus Enterprise Server, we're future-proofing the logic for the years ahead, protecting core processes and many years of investment. At the same time, we have also reduced licensing costs, saving us a six-figure sum."**
>
> **FALK-OLIVER BISCHOFF**
> Head of IT
> German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg

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decided to replace its development environment with the modern, easy-to-use Micro Focus™ Visual COBOL for Eclipse by OpenText™.

Falk-Oliver Bischoff recalled: "We have been using Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) COBOL solutions for years, and knew that Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) provides excellent tools and top-notch support. We evaluated alternatives, which only confirmed that Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) was the best fit for us with the best performance."

Part of the organization's motivation was to make COBOL development more efficient and attractive to new talent. Falk-Oliver Bischoff remarked: "State-of-the-art tools make it easier for new staff to get started. Together with Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™), we ran in-depth training sessions to ensure that our valued employees got the skills they needed to come with us on this modernization journey. Now, they've come to appreciate the ease and productivity offered by a modern development environment."

Results

Thanks to Micro Focus™ Visual COBOL for Eclipse, the German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg can expand applications more easily to meet changing business requirements—now and in the future.

"Using Micro Focus Visual COBOL for Eclipse has helped to boost the agility of software development significantly," said Falk-Oliver Bischoff. "Our 30 developers in Baden-Württemberg can take decades' worth of mature COBOL code, and add new features quicker and more easily than ever with excellent tool support. The tool is used in all development locations where staff are working to enhance our system."

Falk-Oliver Bischoff added: "By using a modern integrated development environment, we've opened up application development to a new generation. We hired new developers who quickly started contributing to the team, helping us to add exciting features to our applications. Thanks to our Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) solution, new team members become productive faster and enjoy the advanced development experience they have become accustomed to from using other programming languages."

German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg also gained flexibility and cut costs. Falk-Oliver Bischoff noted: "By running COBOL code on SUSE Linux Enterprise Server for z Systems with Micro Focus Enterprise Server, we're future-proofing the logic for the years ahead, protecting core processes and many years of investment. At the same time, we have reduced licensing costs, saving us a six-figure sum."

Overall, the German Pension Fund Baden-Württemberg benefits extensively from the OpenText™ solutions and can use valuable COBOL business logic for longer to modernize applications step by step.

Falk-Oliver Bischoff concluded: "We wanted to take on a leading role within the German Pension Fund in renewing our IT, moving towards open source solutions and increasing flexibility to make the organization fit for the future. Today, other organizations are following our example and validating our approach. As businesses and governments become increasingly digitized, Micro Focus (now part of OpenText™) is helping us to modernize IT operations to better serve citizens in the digital age and remain highly attractive as an employer."

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