

# Met Office

Defining, managing, and measuring software delivery processes with Micro Focus® technology

## Overview

Founded in 1854, the Met Office is one of the world's leading providers of environmental and weather-related services. Its solutions and services meet the needs of many communities of interest—from the general public, government and schools, broadcasters and online media, civil aviation, and almost every other industry sector—in the UK and around the world. The Met Office has approximately 1,750 employees and 45 office locations.

The Met Office's role is to understand the science behind the weather, climate change, and the environment and to use its world-renowned expertise to provide forecasts and information that allow the public, government, and business

**“Industry research shows that on average IT projects overrun by some 84% in terms of time and 56% in terms of cost. Through working with Borland (now part of Micro Focus), we have been able to significantly improve our software delivery performance.”**

### NIGEL REED

Head of Technology Delivery  
Met Office

to make informed decisions about how best to capitalize on, mitigate, or adapt to the impacts of weather and climate.

## Challenge

In order to service its many customers, the Met Office relies heavily on the success and integrity of its technology. It processes 10 million pieces of weather information and issues 3,000 forecasts to organizations around the globe each day.

The Met Office prides itself on being a customer-focused business delivery organization. In order to provide the very highest service to its customers, every department within the organization is set up to meet the needs of its customers, including IT and software development. The Met Office invests significant sums of money in developing software projects, ensuring that it has the software to provide first-rate weather and climate services to its customers.

In order to improve the provisioning of better and more accurate forecasts to the public and other customers, the Met Office launched the MIDE (Met Office Integrated Development Environment) project as part of a wider ranging technology change program. This involved a new approach to development based around customer facing teams, an integrated software development methodology, and an integrated software development environment and toolset.



## At a Glance

### ■ Industry

Government

### ■ Location

United Kingdom

### ■ Challenge

The organization identified the need to bring new software products and services to market faster and more reliably.

### ■ Solution

Use Open Application Lifecycle Management to enable improved delivery of weather and climate products and services for customers throughout the world.

### ■ Results

- + Decreased the average time spent in exception by 40% and a near elimination of significant delays in key deliverables
- + Improved the efficiency of configuration managers by 30%
- + Improved internal customer satisfaction from 38% to 59%

The project was set up in recognition of the Met Office's software development capability as a key element to deliver the organization's strategic aims.

The Met Office identified the need to bring new software products and services to market faster and more reliably than previously in order to achieve its overall goals of enriching its customer service. However, at the same time, the organization also needed to drive its software production efficiency.

### Solution

Within such a fast-paced industry, the challenge for the Met Office's software development teams is to deliver software that consistently meets the expectations of customers and staff, has verified quality, and is delivered on time.

After many years of developing software, the Met Office found that its development environment had become fragmented and disjointed. It wanted to introduce standardized processes to align its IT capability with changing business requirements.

The Met Office recognized that in order to improve its delivery performance, it needed to be able to understand and define the requirements of its customers, both within the business and externally, but be sufficiently flexible to adapt when these requirements change. It needed a standardized development process along with staff with skills that could easily be transferred between projects and teams.

In order to ensure that its business functions are able to continue to offer customers the highest levels of service, the Met Office put in place a technology change program, including the use of

a development tool set to improve performance and advance the organization's strategic aims.

Within software development, the Met Office set about process evaluation and change to ensure that its software projects advanced the performance of the business as a whole.

The Met Office selected Micro Focus's Open Application Lifecycle Management (Open ALM) solution, including Micro Focus StarTeam®, Micro Focus Caliber, and Micro Focus Together®, as well as CodeGear JBuilder, CodeGear C++Builder, and Mercury testing tools, to enable improved delivery of Met Office weather and climate products and services for customers throughout the world. Initially, the Met Office signed a contract with Borland (now part of Micro Focus) to supply products and services to support the first phase of MIDE, consisting of six pilot projects, directly affecting about 50 staff across Technology and Applied Science. Subsequently, the main contract was signed for a roll out for up to 250 staff.

### Results

Using Micro Focus's Open ALM solution, the Met Office has enjoyed enhanced product development performance. The use of StarTeam has resulted in a 30% improvement in the efficiency of configuration managers in support of developers using the tool.

Project predictability has improved substantially, with a 40% decrease in the average time spent in exception and a near elimination of significant delays in key deliverables due to having more established and controlled delivery processes in place.

As Nigel Reed, Head of Technology Development at the Met Office, explains, "The reason we chose

Borland (now part of Micro Focus) was really two-fold. Partly it was the potential for integration of a toolset that covered the entire process. But also it was Borland's willingness to be flexible and work with us in a way that was centered on our needs.

"We selected Borland for more cost-effective software development, so we could get even better at meeting our customers' needs. Working together with Borland will help our staff to be focused on meeting customer requirements and to manage change where projects are modified late in the development, improving delivery of prototypes and finished products."

Indeed, since adopting the Open ALM solution as part of the wider change program, the delivery performance of the Met Office's software projects has improved dramatically. The Met Office uses a range of quantifiable measurements to assess its software development performance. This is made easier by the transparent, accountable nature of the Open ALM solution.

The Met Office has also benefited from the flexibility that the Open ALM solution has afforded it in terms of defining, managing, and measuring its own software delivery processes. As Reed observes, "Borland's open approach gives us the freedom of having a delivery process that is largely independent of any specific deployment platform or technology. It supports most of the tools and products that we use."

Overall, the Met Office has enjoyed a significant improvement in the predictability of project delivery. One of the problems that the Open ALM solution is helping to address within the Met Office has been that of software requirements capture and management. The need for the Met Office's software projects to reflect changes

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and developments within the organization is a critical reason for selecting an Open ALM solution as it fits in with the wider business objective of implementing a customer-centric approach to all of the Met Office's activity.

Dave Underwood, Deputy Director of Technology at the Met Office, notes: "The way in which we go about aligning our software development objectives with our overall business and customer needs has been developed a great

deal since we started working with Borland. Software development is never just a technology issue, and Borland has provided us with tools to help capture and manage the requirements of our customers."

As well as providing the Met Office with its Open ALM technology, Borland (now part of Micro Focus) has also helped improve the organization's internal software processes through its training and consultancy services.

The Met Office expects to have seen even greater benefits in terms of its software development performance by the time it finishes its overall change program.

Underwood concludes: "We've already seen a remarkable improvement in our delivery performance since we started working with Borland as part of the overall change program, and we are confident that this will continue over the next two years and beyond."

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**DAVE UNDERWOOD**

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