Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR), Province of Nova Scotia

Streamlined government, better living

Nova Scotia government standardizes on Adobe LiveCycle ES, creating internal efficiencies and making it easy for citizens to interact with government

Nova Scotia is comprised of 54 municipalities that serve nearly a million people. To modernize the way it does business, the government has centralized many interdepartment processes on Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite, making it simple and convenient for citizens to access and interact with essential government services using eForms and kiosks.

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Results
· Accelerated quarterly municipal reporting cycle from multiple months to one month
· Significantly accelerated new business application processes
· Improved data quality by 40% through reduced manual processes
· Accelerated time to issue new business permit from weeks or months to days or weeks
· Expected reduction of paper storage needs by 75%
· Anticipated full return on investment in one year

To support overarching provincial initiatives to reduce the government costs, increase focus on sustainable resources, and improve citizens' overall economic and social well being, Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations (SNSMR) is responsible for many front-line and direct interactions with citizens, businesses, and municipalities. SNSMR handles more than 50 million transactions that generate $500 million in revenue. The department is responsible for providing the best possible government services at the lowest possible cost to taxpayers. Its services range from issuing motor vehicle and marriage licenses to registering new births to land registration.

To meet its goals, SNSMR needed to implement modern business process automation software that would reduce internal complexities and redundancies, integrate with the organization's existing infrastructure, and provide easy-to-use portals for staff and citizens to record data online or offline without special software. On the back end, the platform needed to extract data and funnel it into a central Oracle database where it would be available for reuse across agencies. The solution also needed to meet stringent government security and privacy of information standards, as well as provide digital signature capabilities moving forward.

SNSMR sought a strategic technology partner that would support multiple business processing activities in a responsive, reliable, and cost-effective manner—a search that ended with adoption of Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite software, including LiveCycle Data Services ES, Adobe LiveCycle Forms ES, and Adobe LiveCycle Reader® Extensions ES.
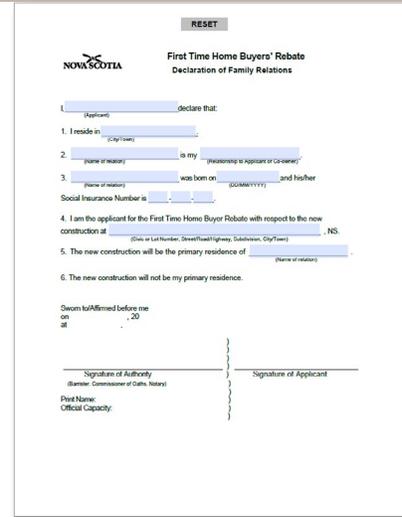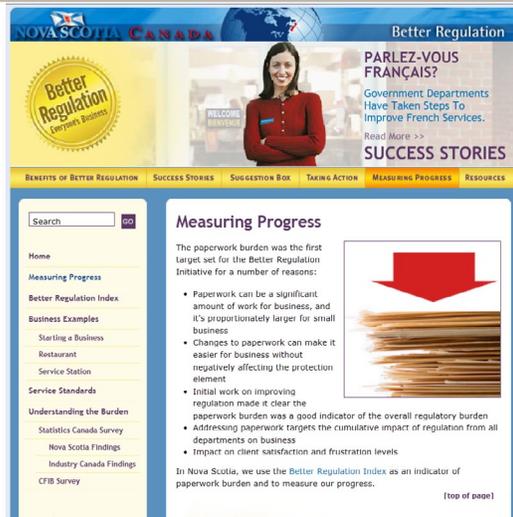
"Our first Adobe LiveCycle ES implementation automated and increased the efficiency of existing workflow, and we saw an immediate return on investment," says Gary Robitaille, director of IT for SNSMR. "We are now positioned to provide world-class service to our internal and external constituents with a low total cost of ownership." Subsequently, many eForms solutions have been built on Adobe LiveCycle ES and have been rolled out across provincial departments, helping to make Nova Scotia a more attractive place to do business.

One-stop municipal reporting
One highly visible Adobe LiveCycle ES implementation touches all 54 of Nova Scotia's municipalities, each of which is required to provide a wide variety of detailed financial and demographic information to the province. Required reports include tracking of capital projects, demographic updates, and requests to fund infrastructure items that include sidewalks, sewer plants, and other public facilities.

Previously, there was no consistent way for municipalities to submit data to the province. Hundreds of variously formatted spreadsheets would arrive by email from 54 different municipalities and staff spent an inordinate amount of time tracking files, manually extracting numbers, and compiling information to calculate budget totals.

Challenge
- Create an easy-to-use, modern business process automation system that streamlines core government processes and enables citizens to access essential services and interact with agencies
- Establish a cost-effective enterprise framework on top of existing infrastructure
- Build a long-term technology platform that integrates with back-end systems

Solution
Leverage Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite components for a robust, flexible business process automation system that delivers intuitive user experiences for internal and external stakeholders—making Nova Scotia a better place to live, work, and do business

Systems at a glance
Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite. Components used include:
- Adobe LiveCycle Forms ES
- Adobe LiveCycle Reader Extensions ES
- Adobe Live Cycle Data Services ES

It was difficult for SNSMR's Municipal Services division managers and staff to support so many siloed workflows—error rates were high due to re-keying, versioning was an issue, and reports often arrived incomplete. Overall confidence in the process was low, and it could take nine months to complete a typical quarterly reporting cycle—too long to enable effective decision-making.

Using interactive PDF forms inside the Adobe LiveCycle ES environment, the nine-month reporting cycle has been slashed to one month, resulting in an approximate 90% productivity gain while also improving the quality of the data. On a typical quarterly report, staff from engineering, capital planning, and finance enter data into the same file, working online or offline in a convenient, collaborative workflow.

"We embedded a significant amount of business logic into our PDF forms, which use web services to automatically pre-populate about 20% of the required information on the fly," says Robitaille. This eliminates the need for staff to track historical data, formats remain consistent, and the quality of the data is improved by approximately 40%.

There are two ways for municipalities to submit quarterly reports. When reports are submitted electronically, data is automatically extracted and saved into an Oracle database where custom back-end tools based on COGNOS roll up data into aggregated reports for analysis. If staff chooses to fill out PDF reports offline and submit them as email attachments, the system pulls XML data from the PDF files and saves it to the database.

"Since standardizing on Adobe LiveCycle ES using eForms for one-step municipal submissions, we have replaced cumbersome processes with highly efficient, flexible workflows," says Robitaille. Because the cost-effective implementation has been so well received, a huge demand for more process improvements using Adobe LiveCycle ES is evident across the enterprise.

Empowering citizens with more automated services
Most recently, Service Nova Scotia installed kiosks in hospitals where new parents can register the birth of their babies. The innovative solution built on Adobe LiveCycle ES reduces redundancies across five internal government agencies and one external partner, eliminates repetitive paperwork for parents, and helps ensure that data is consistent across service sectors.

Parents simply enter the baby's name, birth date, birth weight, hospital, doctor name, and other vital statistics. The data is automatically transmitted to a hospital employee who verifies the information against the baby's medical records. From there, the information is distributed to Service Canada, Revenue Canada, Municipal Relations, and other government organizations as well as to Medavie / Blue Cross to supply a provincial health card.

"With nearly 10,000 babies being born in Nova Scotia every year, our new kiosk system, powered by Adobe LiveCycle ES, will not only make registrations faster and easier for parents and staff, but it will also generate significant cost savings for the local government," says Robitaille.

A similar public-facing platform is being rolled out that handles end-of-life administrative issues in one step. Funeral directors can fill out a single PDF form that is automatically routed to appropriate departments that handle final tax returns, death certificates, closing out of social insurance numbers, and all the other necessary tasks associated with bereavement.

Supporting community prosperity

Additional LiveCycle ES implementations are also making it easier to do business in Nova Scotia, particularly in the food service sector—streamlining processes that are integral to the Province's long-term goal to centralize government. For example, to open a new restaurant an operator would previously have to fill out separate forms for an occupancy license, liquor license, food permit, signage, water treatment permit, and more—requiring significant amounts of work. Now, business owners need only to complete one intelligent PDF form, often reducing the time it takes to issue new business licenses from weeks and months to days and weeks, and consolidating permitting and licensing approvals across five departments into one form.

Moreover, LiveCycle ES projects are helping government decision-makers manage land use and gain insight into population patterns to guide the province's long-term planning. "LiveCycle ES solutions both online and at kiosks enable us to focus on the health of our communities. We can easily gather and analyze data around population growth, demographics, and fire and safety performance indicators," says Robitaille, who adds that the organization is committed to internally ramping up Live Cycle ES expertise to support future initiatives.

In addition to improving workflows for government employees and citizen services, Adobe LiveCycle ES is aiding sustainability efforts as well. From an environmental perspective, the space required to store paper forms will be reduced by 75%. "The green factor is huge," says Robitaille. "And we are assured that everyone is using the most current version of forms without having to continually print and redistribute paper."

Now that the inventive team at Service Nova Scotia has established its first wave of online and kiosk-based forms solutions they are beginning to look at other projects to further leverage the unit's investment in Adobe LiveCycle ES. "The commitment and product support we get from Adobe is exactly what we need to help us make life better for Nova Scotians now and in the future," says Robitaille.

For more information
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