Vattenfall

Developing an International Authority & Signatory Management Tool

Vattenfall needed a uniform solution for administering, assigning, and documenting power of attorney in its numerous companies. Within a few months, iC Consult implemented a flexible and sophisticated Authority & Signatory Management Tool (ASMT), thus laying the foundation for future extensions.

At a Glance

Sector:
Energy

Region:
Europe

Challenge:
Implementing a Group-wide Identity Access Governance (IAG) solution for administering power of attorney.

Products and Services:
Omada

Outcomes:
• High process reliability
• Higher throughput speed thanks to centralized, consolidated data
• Audit history of all processes and authorizations
• Expandable system framework for other processes

Overview

The Swedish energy company Vattenfall, with branches in Denmark, Germany, Finland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, is the fifth largest electricity producer in Europe. The company is part of a closely interwoven network of over 200 companies with approximately 14,000 employees in total.

Challenge

Numerous financial and personnel processes take place between the Vattenfall companies. Orders are placed, and must be countersigned, approved, and filed. This applies to companies with several hundred employees as well as micro-enterprises, external employees, and suppliers. In such a complex environment, traditional paper-based processes are slow and prone to errors. So a digitalized solution was needed that could clearly answer who at Vattenfall is authorized to approve which sub-process for which company, and at what amount. And not only for the numerous authorizations within the Group, but also beyond, taking into account the respective national regulations.

Solution

In 2010, Vattenfall Germany had already introduced a solution for digital adminis-tration of signing authorizations and powers of attorney. The tool had proven itself, but was limited to Germany. When a successor was required after eight years, the Group's board of directors decided to implement a company-wide system. Since the initially preferred, largely preconfigured standard solution could not be found, Vattenfall decided to develop its own ASMT. Omada was chosen as the software basis, with iC Consult taking over implementation as an external service provider.

The goal was to create a repository of all powers of attorney. Initially only for monetary projects, but later also for processes involving personnel powers of attorney – such as employee transfers.

A top priority was to create a stand-alone solution, independent of the existing IAM master system. Only the identity data would be transferred. In addition, all functionalities would be implemented using standard Omada features wherever possible.

„With ASMT, we are taking a key step into our digital future. Vattenfall now has audit-proof management of all authorizations and related processes, as well as an extremely flexible basis for integrating additional processes."

Axel Pinkert
Vice President Finance Business Support, Vattenfall

Process Manager and Project Leader Benjamin Mewes draws a clear conclusion: "Omada lets us use attributes to implement rights management within the matrix organization, very elegantly and legally compliant. Where classic IAM solutions focus only on identities and their authorizations in the system, ASMT enables us to address legal requirements and approvals in line with the respective business processes – even in different jurisdictions."

Outcome

It took just three months from project start at the beginning of 2019 to initial implementation.

A shop system was developed to depict the complexity of the various authorizations as clearly as possible. Authorizations can be applied for and managed there. Defined approval procedures guarantee a high level of security. And, in contrast to analog procedures, the lifecycle of authorizations can also be automated to a large extent. Images of the signatures can be uploaded. Various evaluation functions facilitate the overview and can be flexibly expanded.

Manual payment instructions were included in the system later on. The system automatically selects those employees who are allowed to issue payment instructions in the required amount. After an authorized signatory has digitally signed the order, a document is created in an audit-proof manner that clearly shows who signed which order and when.

All implemented approval processes can be handled much faster and more securely. Powers of attorney can be assigned for a limited period of time – e.g. for external employees – and thus expire automatically at project completion. A complete identity lifecycle also ensures that data is updated should the employee take on a different role within the organization.

Regardless of all the successes, it was clear from the outset that the implementation achieved by March 2019 could only be the first step. In the future, it will be a matter of integrating additional processes from the companies and business units.

Thus, in the medium term, all internal documents requiring signatures are to be processed and signed only within ASMT. Users simply select the desired business process. The entire workflow is then controlled by ASMT – rapidly, reliably, and audit-proof.

Although the finished solution appears highly individualized and customized, it is based almost entirely on the basic software. This high level of standardization not only facilitates maintenance, but also accelerates migration to new major releases: from several weeks to a few days.