

Dutch Healthcare Authority



“Our organization must work transparently and make decisions based on solid information. With Cognos and a single version of the truth this is now possible. What's more, we are able to quickly coordinate policy and its implementation.”

Anne-Christien de Zwart, Business Intelligence Competence Center, Dutch Healthcare Authority

The Dutch Healthcare Authority (NZa) came into existence in October 2006, having evolved from the National Health Tariffs Authority (CTG) and the Supervisory Board for Health Care Insurance (CTZ). The NZa is located in Utrecht and employs over 235 people. The task of the NZa is to monitor the healthcare markets in the Netherlands and ensure that citizens receive more care for their healthcare euro. With this mandate, the NZa turned to Cognos 8 BI to align the necessary data, people, and processes for effective monitoring.

Challenges faced

In October 2006, the Healthcare Market Regulation Act (WVG) came into force. Within this framework, the organization's mission was to create and monitor properly functioning healthcare markets. “Consumers must receive the best services and value for their euro,” says Anne-Christien de Zwart, Coordinator of the organization's Business Intelligence Competence Center (BICC). “By proactively monitoring the healthcare market, our mandate is to guarantee efficiency, market transparency, freedom of choice, and more access to quality care.”

In addition, the NZa focuses on management of the total costs by defraying the costs of care providers and monitoring the proper implementation of healthcare insurance regulations. In order to accomplish all of this, the NZa had to have its information services ready before the act's official start on October first. This was a formidable task given the circumstances.

“There was a great need for transparent and uniform information,” says De Zwart. “However, we were dealing with an organization in development, complex processes, new tasks, and highly educated, independent employees who desired a high degree of participation and flexibility. We also faced a technical challenge: there was an enormous amount of data we could not handle effectively in Excel, and there were data sources and data providers still in development.”

Industry:

- Government

Geography:

- The Netherlands

Information Needs:

- Large amounts of disparate data
- Need for transparency
- Faster reporting and analysis for customers and healthcare authorities.

Solution:

- Cognos 8 BI
- BI Competency Center (BICC)

Benefits:

- Reliable information and insight for decision-making
- Transparency of information for fulfilling compliance obligations
- Streamlined data access and processes.

Strategy followed

The NZa constructed a data warehouse, and fed it with data from the budget and rate information from healthcare institutions, the Diagnosis Treatment Combination Information System, and more. For presenting the data, the NZa opted for Cognos 8 Business Intelligence. Cognos 8 BI emerged as the best of the six they evaluated during the course of a European tendering process. With Cognos, the NZa developed flexible cubes and layered standard reports, which provide insight on and analysis of the various levels of care and rates provided by institutions.

A newly established BI Competency Center played an important role in the development of the data warehouse, the cubes, and the reports. “We did not want to depend on external consultants alone, but rather to build up and monitor the quality of the knowledge ourselves,” says De Zwart.



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In order to facilitate acceptance, the BICC invested in communication with the users. “We showed the users the possibilities and kept them informed of the progress. This was crucial,” says De Zwart.

Benefits realized

With the data warehouse and Cognos, the NZa has laid the foundation for good information services and proper performance of its tasks. “Our organization must work transparently and make decisions based on solid information,” says De Zwart. “This allows work to be done based on a single version of the truth.”

For its task of monitoring free market pricing, Cognos and the data warehouse provide the NZa with good insight into the rates used by the different institutions and the relationship of these rates to their market share. With the help of this information, the NZa can intervene in a timely way in the case of activities that interfere with free market processes. By streamlining information services, the NZa also ensures that policy and implementation are better and more quickly coordinated with each other. “We are able to advise the Ministry of Health on new policy based on an analysis of actual facts,” says De Zwart.

“The BICC team understands the business processes and the direction we are headed, and is close to the users. This makes it possible to optimally set up and maintain information services, taking into account the level of reliability desired by the Board of Directors, the manageability required by the IT department, and the flexibility desired by users. All of these roles are represented in the BICC.”

Next steps

“Both policy and our organization are still evolving,” says De Zwart. “As we evolve, the data warehouse and our use of Cognos will continue to grow as well.”

About Cognos

Cognos, the world leader in business intelligence and performance management solutions, provides world-class enterprise planning and BI software and services to help companies plan, understand and manage financial and operational performance.

Cognos brings together technology, analytical applications, best practices, and a broad network of partners to give customers a complete performance system. The Cognos performance system is an open and adaptive solution that leverages an organization’s ERP, packaged applications, and database investments. It gives customers the ability to answer the questions—*How are we doing? Why are we on or off track? What should we do about it?*—and enables them to understand and monitor current performance while planning future business strategies.

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