



The Australian Commonwealth's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) is charged with advancing the nation's interests on the international stage, including global, regional and bilateral perspectives.

Its responsibilities centre around providing advice to the Federal Government on foreign policy and trade including strengthening national security and enhancing Australia's international prosperity.

As the nation's lead agency managing Australia's international presence, DFAT supports a network of 96 overseas posts on five continents. There are over 4,200 staff located in Canberra as well as in domestic State and Territory offices while a further 2,400 people are employed overseas.

The Issue:

DFAT uses SAP as its corporate Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform as well as a bespoke barcode-based application to track and record all asset movements around the country as well as to and from Australia. Over time, DFAT experienced a series of issues associated with the tracking and auditing of their assets because their in-house barcode application was very slow and inefficient.

Keeping records of all asset movements was time consuming and interfered with the ability of staff to focus on their core responsibilities while annual audits to verify the integrity of asset data saw many people involved in a protracted process.

All the international offices had to perform their asset audits manually using a series of disconnected Microsoft Excel spreadsheets which meant that Head Office had little visibility of the true nature of asset databases and limited control over the processes that managed them.

As a result, the Department concluded it needed a more robust, integrated and dedicated system that would provide organisation-wide efficient asset tracking and real-time visibility across all DFAT offices around the world.



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The Solution:

After an extensive tender process, DFAT engaged Hardcat to help re-engineer asset management systems and processes within the Australian operations with the initial objective to increase the efficiency of capturing information about all asset movements to, from and within Australia.

Using the core Hardcat asset database plus Hardcat's Barcode module, DFAT easily exported the existing SAP asset data and simply reconfigured it for the Hardcat system. It was then a case of using mobile, handheld scanners fitted with Hardcat's CatScan module to quickly and efficiently start scanning in barcoded assets.

This allowed them to realise immediate productivity gains in both tracking asset movement and in the execution of their national audit processes.

Based on the success of Hardcat's domestic implementation, including being able to easily upload asset data to the enterprise SAP system across Australia, DFAT subsequently deployed CatScan loaded PDAs to all DFAT offices overseas. This system is now used to track all asset movements within the department and periodic asset audits. This includes recording the receipt and return of assets as well as all inter-office transfers.

As each of the individual international offices can leverage CatScan's synchronisation functions which automatically update data within the centralised asset register, head office in Canberra now has real time visibility of all its assets all over the world.

The Benefits:

DFAT has achieved enormous efficiencies in its operating procedures by using the Hardcat asset tracking solution enabling a large return on investment. It is estimated from within DFAT that the Hardcat solution has reduced the number of man-hours required to track assets and conduct audits by 50 per cent, which represents a bottom line figure in excess of \$120,000 and affords staff the use of that time to focus on more strategic endeavours.

Meanwhile, being able to supply accurate and up-to-date information of all assets globally, adds significantly to the broader value of the SAP system and the improved utilisation of assets across the enterprise.

Customer Profile:

www.dfat.gov.au

Oranisation:

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT)

Location:

Canberra, Australia
 Global (over 100 locations)

Industry:

Commonwealth Government of Australia

Product:

- Hardcat Asset Management
- Hardcat Bar-Code Module
- Hardcat CatScan

