

CAPITAL PROJECTS:

CASE STUDY

STRATEGIC INFORMATION SHARING AND PROTECTION

● **INDUSTRY**
Oil and Gas

● **COUNTRY**
United States, Southern Africa

ISSUE

Decentralized information exchange on a large capital project, risking potential project stoppage, litigation, and billions of dollars of lost revenue.

SERVICES DELIVERED

- Communication Strategy
- Information Architecture
- Policy & Process Development
- Security Administration
- Training Strategy & Curriculum

THE SOLUTION

- Control the flow of information
- Ensure dissemination of the correct content in an accurate and timely manner
- Properly restrict sensitive information

Mega-projects, especially those located in remote parts of the world lacking in supporting infrastructure, often entail more investment and risk than an individual company is willing to undertake alone.

This was the reality that our client found while engaged in a large capital project in southern Africa. Due to the massive scale of the endeavor, a network of global investment partners was engaged.

Recognizing that the dynamics of creating a project team, that grew from 12 to over 300 personnel in 24 months, coupled with the hazards of miscommunicating financial and technical information with its joint venture partners, this client turned to Access Sciences to mitigate the risk and drive efficient effective communications.

THE BUSINESS PROBLEM

Our client was contractually obligated to share confidential project information with each of the joint venture's non-operating partners, while simultaneously protecting that information from the other partners. The terms of the agreement also required that the operating partner withhold information from a financial partner if that partner was in financial arrears to the JV. Additionally, as the concessionaire, our client was similarly obligated to share information with several ministries of the host country.

THE BUSINESS VALUE

The combination of people, process, and tools in the newly created information infrastructure benefited our client, its JV partners, and the host country by:

- Empowering users to make informed decisions, thereby protecting information assets and reducing the likelihood of lost business and profits,
- Enriching the client's information governance program, facilitating contractual compliance, and safeguarding confidential information from being inadvertently exposed, and
- Tracking the frequency and nature of information requests and responses, analyzing data to identify trends and variations, and using this information to identify and make improvements.

THE RESULT

Our client now communicates more effectively with its partners using:

- A communication policy to provide guidance on how information should be disseminated.
- Well-defined processes and procedures to appropriately share and shield information while maintaining the client's corporate agility and minimizing impact to existing work practices.
- The client's existing document and workflow management system that adapted to automate the new processes.
- A communication coordinator to direct the exchange of project information and manage the information access rights of the partners.

THE BENEFIT

- ☑ Reduced risk, improved contractual compliance, and empowered partners to make informed business decisions.

ENABLING THE SECURED EXCHANGE OF TRUSTED INFORMATION

Recognizing and Mitigating Risk

Under the terms of the joint venture agreement, as the operating partner our client was obligated to provide financial and technical data needed by the investment partners to meet their own project commitments and secure continued investment participation. Errors in the information provided or unauthorized disclosure of information between partners could result in unraveled partnerships, loss of credibility, and even litigation. Unfortunately, managing information proved challenging for several reasons:

- No central repository, making it difficult to control the information
- Little guidance on who was authorized to send or receive information
- Insufficient security and access controls risked a breach of nondisclosure among the partners
- A lack of version control could result in cost and operational decisions being made based on out-of-date information

Our primary goal was to enable information consistency and sharing at the same time with the right people. A risk assessment of the organization revealed many of their pain points could be ameliorated by implementing policies and supporting guidelines. In designing the solution, it was important to maintain the client's corporate agility and minimize any impact on existing work practices.

Access Sciences developed a communication policy to provide guidance on how information should be disseminated, both internally and externally. It also defined content ownership regarding information sharing, clarifying when information requests should be fulfilled and when they should be funneled up.

To provide a support system, we designed a new function and role to coordinate the exchange of project information and manage the information access rights of the partners. A functional mailbox facilitated communication between the new role and project staff and served as a central collection point for relevant email communications. Documents were managed in a central repository to control versions and reduce duplicates.

The underlying moving pieces of the project required all involved to be comfortable and confident in the process and comply with their responsibilities regarding the exchange of information. To facilitate their desire and ability to comply, we communicated the importance and value of the new process and provided training materials. Think of it as future-proofing your information management strategy.