

douane.gouv.fr setting the standard for a modern public services portal

French Customs has created a single new portal that brings together two separate web based systems - one handling transactions and the other its institutional activities - to help modernise interactions with its various audiences and the services it offers. Developed with the help of Atos, using the most advanced technologies and methods, the new portal has won positive feedback from users.



Atos

« Over the years we have built up a relationship of trust with French Customs, which has enabled us to take a proactive approach and provide end-to-end support for them »

Jean-Marc Nahlovsky
Atos

The context

Merging two portals into one

Since the early 2000s, French Customs (the DGDDI) had been operating two main portals. The first, ProDouane.gouv.fr, was a transactional gateway giving businesses and personal customers access to around sixty

different on-line services. The second was the authority's corporate website, which provided these same audiences with information about the country's customs regulations and activities. But as the technical components of the two portals started to become obsolete, French Customs decided it was a good

opportunity to redesign both portals, to create a single modern gateway - featuring state-of-the-art technologies and usability techniques - that provides consistent, more straightforward access for all its audiences and addresses the latest security issues.

The challenge

Mobilising everyone around a major project

For French Customs, redesigning what is in effect both the gateway to all its online services and its corporate 'shop window' was a huge challenge, with numerous implications. First and foremost, the new portal needed to be built around a powerful, robust and secure architecture.

To ensure that it stays fully aligned with constantly evolving regulations and services, the new system also has to cope with frequent and rapid updates. And finally, when

it comes to usability and functionality, users need to feel that they are being actively supported when they are searching for information or accessing on-line services: with intuitive pathways reflecting different users' needs and areas of interest, an effective search engine, responsive design for mobile interactions, RGAA-compliant accessibility...

Beyond the great care that has been taken over the design and usability of the portal, the way that information is given to users also had to be rethought and formulated as

an integral part of the different 'user journey' for each type of audience. So most of the content has been rewritten to be much more user-focused, to guide users from their initial information gathering right through to completing their task using an on-line service. With IT operations teams in many different front-line departments responsible for various customs activities, the project to deliver the new portal was going to involve the mobilisation and coordination of a huge number of people at French Customs.

The solution

A hands-on approach using leading-edge technologies

With its decade-long track record of successfully maintaining the ProDouane system, French Customs turned to Atos to deliver this extraordinary project. Atos drew on its numerous experts and its network of specialist partners to support all the technological, functional and methodological aspects of the project. This included using cutting-edge technologies (including DRUPAL 8, HTML 5, Ansible...)

and the latest methods: SCRUM-based agile development, UX/UI to co-develop and optimise reporting, DevOps with users for continuous roll out, security by design...

This iterative and highly interactive approach meant that everyone - especially the front-line departments that provide the content - got fully involved in the project. A dedicated back-office was created to support this task, with an organisation structure, processes and tools designed to guarantee rapid and consistent production. A development kit has also been

created for those who are responsible for the various on-line procedures, to help them gradually harmonise the design and usability of their systems.

The agile approach - marked by regular opportunities to share concrete achievements - established a momentum that enabled the team to make rapid progress and to successfully overcome all the obstacles, including the all-important security audit which was passed hands down.

The results

An indisputable success

The new portal went live on 2 October 2019, and immediately proved its technical quality with excellent response times and very few glitches reported to the support team. The switchover to the new site was also a major technical operation, with no service interruptions thanks to the back-up portal, which enabled users to access all their usual services throughout the launch.

The new douane.gouv.fr site has been very well received by users, who appreciate the clarity of pathways and the more accessible content that is clearly focused around the tasks they want to carry out. The customer satisfaction rating among business users has jumped eight percentage points compared with ProDouane, and among SMEs it reached an all-time high of 94%.

What's more, this undeniable success story has caught the attention of many others in the public sector faced with similar challenges around modernising their portals.

For them, douane.gouv.fr is now seen as a real inspiration, both in terms of the results it has delivered and the way these results were achieved.

About French Customs

Reporting to the French Ministry of Public Action and Accounts (Ministère de l'Action et des Comptes publics) the Directorate-General of Customs and Excise (Direction générale des douanes et droits indirects, DGDDI) or French Customs has three main roles: to prevent fraud and large-scale international trafficking; to support economic activity by overseeing the flow of commercial goods and services; and to collect taxes (customs duties, VAT outside the EU, excise duties, environmental levies). Every year, French Customs collects around 13% of all state revenue.

For more information: atos.net/en/contact-us

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