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| North Sea Group**Download Documents** **Solution Overview** **Organization Profile**North Sea Group, headquartered in the Netherlands, operates in the downstream oil market. It has a global workforce of more than 350 and an annual turnover of around €6 billion in 2009.**Business Situation**The group wanted to consolidate its two existing IT infrastructures down to a single, virtualised platform to support the whole organisation.**Solution**North Sea Group worked with Microsoft and HP to create a reliable, high-performance infrastructure based on Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V and HP ProLiant servers.**Benefits*** High productivity
* Continued growth
* Greener IT
* Improved efficiency
* Maximum performance

**Partner(s)**Frontline Partnership**Software and Services**Windows Server 2008 R2Microsoft Exchange Server 2010Microsoft Dynamics NAVMicrosoft System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008 R2Microsoft Hyper-V**Vertical Industries**Oil and Gas Industry**Country/Region**Netherlandshttp://www.microsoft.com/casestudies/resources/Logos/286418.jpg |

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## North Sea Group

### Netherlands-Based Oil Firm Drives Growth with Consolidated Virtualised Environment

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| **North Sea Group—which delivers products and services to the oil market—was formed in 2009 after the merger of Van der Sluijs Groep and FNR+ Holding. To help drive growth, the group wanted to consolidate the IT infrastructures of the merged companies to a single, virtualised platform, delivering IT services to its offices and shipping vessels worldwide. The group chose a combination of Microsoft and HP solutions to build the infrastructure, and worked with Microsoft Gold Certified Partners Innovativ and Communicativ during deployment. Today, North Sea Group continues to expand and personnel maximise their productivity thanks to Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V, Microsoft Exchange Server 2010, and Microsoft Dynamics NAV running on energy-efficient HP hardware. The IT team, which centrally manages IT for the group’s offices and ships, is more productive, with additional time to focus on strategic projects.**Situation North Sea Group is one of the largest private companies in the Netherlands, with a workforce of more than 350 and an annual turnover of around €6 billion in 2009. The company is a major player in the downstream oil market in western Europe. It combines storage and distribution with the international trading and sale of mineral oils and biofuels. North Sea Group was established in 2009, after the merger of Van der Sluijs Groep and FNR+ Holding. The organisation conducts multiple operations. Among them, it supplies fuel to the shipping industry, sells oil products and logistics services to resellers and major oil companies, trades in fuel oils, and transports mineral oils from refineries to retailers. With so many time-sensitive operations, even minor disruptions can cause expensive delays that affect the firm’s revenue. This is why North Sea Group invests significant resources in IT solutions that help employees deliver its products and services.North Sea Group predicts continued growth, particularly in markets such as biofuels, and believes IT will play a crucial role in helping employees seize new business opportunities. With this in mind, the group considered the benefits of consolidating the infrastructures of the newly merged companies to support expansion more effectively. Patrick Mast, IT Manager of North Sea Group, says: “We decided that we could achieve our goals and reduce costs if all partners in the group operated on one platform.”

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|  | Patrick MastIT ManagerNorth Sea Group |  |

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The firm wanted to build a virtualised infrastructure for IT personnel to manage all offices from a single, redundant datacentre at the headquarters in Dordrecht. Key requirements included management simplicity and reliability. “There are just four systems administrators and three service desk staff to guarantee round-the-clock availability to all of our 350 employees, and particularly our trading division. We wanted to avoid complexity so that IT personnel could easily manage the infrastructure’s software, hardware, and network apparatus,” says Mast.Solution Mast assessed multiple providers and their offerings, but decided to build the new platform on Microsoft and HP solutions. “I have had very good experiences with both companies over the years. I worked at one of the first companies in the Netherlands to run Microsoft software on HP ProLiant servers,” says Mast. The organisation—which participates in the Technology Adoption Programme, an early adopter initiative from Microsoft—began working with Microsoft Gold Certified Partners Innovativ and Communicativ to build the platform. First, it put the Windows Server 2008 R2 operating system with Hyper-V technology at the heart of its centralised infrastructure. Then it installed Microsoft Exchange Server 2010 for email and messaging, Microsoft Dynamics NAV for business processes, and Microsoft System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008 R2 for monitoring. To support the Microsoft software and a trading application called CXL, the organisation constructed a fully redundant hardware platform based on HP. It features eight HP ProLiant BL460c server blades located in a HP BladeSystem c7000 enclosure and connected to iSCSI-based HP LeftHand P4500 storage. To help IT recover quickly in an emergency, North Sea Group distributed the infrastructure between the new data centre and a secondary site 10 kilometres away in Geertruidenberg. The work needed a high level of expertise, but the group avoided any delays due to the experience of its Microsoft Gold Certified Partners. Mast says: “Communicativ had a deep understanding of the latest Microsoft solutions, particularly Jaap Wesselius, who has received the Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) for Exchange Server.” Innovativ sent Microsoft MVPs for System Center to help North Sea Group implement the management software, and installation work was finished in one weekend.Benefits With a single infrastructure, North Sea Group can drive growth, providing employees with the IT support they need to take advantage of business opportunities. Personnel maximise their productivity thanks to the performance and reliability of the Microsoft solutions running on energy-efficient HP hardware. The IT team—which now centrally manages IT for the group’s offices and ships using broadband and mobile connections—is more productive, and has additional time to focus on strategic projects.**Maximised Productivity with Reliable Platform** Employees can be highly effective because the new platform delivers their business-critical solutions reliably. Mast says: “Downtime in the IT infrastructure would disrupt employees and quickly lead to significant costs because our transactions are time sensitive and high in value. The truth is that 99.9 per cent availability, including scheduled maintenance, is our minimum requirement—and we’ve always reached that goal with Microsoft and HP solutions.” **Driving Growth with Scalable Solution** Personnel also gain access to new services fast, and the IT team can easily support sudden increases in transactions due to the Microsoft virtualisation technology. With Windows Server 2008 R2 with Hyper-V, IT administrators can add virtual servers to the physical hosts in minutes, and scale the platform quickly to support growth. “There is no limit to the number of transactions the infrastructure can process,” says Mast. “Furthermore, the current infrastructure can easily deal with sudden growth, particularly in our operations in biofuels such as ethanol. In this domain, we’re also working together with the World Wildlife Fund to implement our activities in a socially responsible way.”**Greener IT Using Energy-Efficient Solution**

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Importantly for a business committed to sustainability, North Sea Group has reduced the power consumption of its IT. The organisation has established a single, high-density platform to serve the whole company, and deployed in-row cooling units within the server rooms to lower temperatures. The task of reducing power use is also helped by the servers’ thermo-efficient design and multicore processors from Intel. Mast says: “We now have much less hardware and a highly efficient Microsoft environment.” **Increased IT Productivity Through Simple Administration**IT personnel can focus more on innovation and strategic work because the new platform is simpler to manage with System Center Virtual Machine Manager 2008 R2. They use the solution to manage the physical and virtual servers centrally—planning, deploying, and optimising the infrastructure. Mast comments: “We provide business-related projects with more support because we spend less time on routine management. All components are fully hot pluggable, and we can rapidly provision and optimise the virtual machines with System Center Virtual Machine Manager.”**Tight Integration with Enhanced Performance** North Sea Group can develop safe in the knowledge that it has a reliable, high-performance IT platform built on Microsoft and HP solutions. Mast says: “The benefit of standardising on Microsoft and HP is that their solutions integrate well to deliver the support that employees need.” In addition, the company has just two points of contact for hardware and software, further reducing management time. Mast has particular praise for the Microsoft partner programme and the quality of its Microsoft Gold Certified Partners Innovativ and Communicativ. “We’ve taken on the role of early adopter of Microsoft solutions, so having access to such expertise is really important,” he says.Microsoft Server Product Portfolio For more information about the Microsoft server product portfolio, go to:www.microsoft.com/servers/default.mspxFor More Information For further information about Microsoft products and services, please visit:[www.microsoft.com/uk](http://www.microsoft.com/uk) or call 0870 60 10 100\*For hearing impaired customers with a Minicom, contact: 0870 50 30 400\*\*Lines are open 8am–6pm, Monday to Friday. Please note, numbers prefixed 0870 will be charged at national call rates. For details of national call rate charges, please contact your telecommunications provider.For more information about HP products and services, call or visit the website at: www.hp.comFor more information about Communicativ products and services, call or visit the website at: [www.communicativ.nl](http://www.communicativ.nl/)For more information about Innovativ products and services, call or visit the website at:[www.inovativ.nl](http://www.inovativ.nl/)For more information about North Sea Group products and services, call or visit the website at: www.northseagroup.comThis case study is for informational purposes only. MICROSOFT MAKES NO WARRANTIES, EXPRESS OR IMPLIED, IN THIS SUMMARY. |