



**National
Oceanography
Centre**

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G7 implements and supports Unit4 ERP for NOC

When a restructuring of government bodies forced the National Oceanography Centre (NOC) to move to a totally new ERP platform quickly, G7 Business Solutions led their implementation of Unit4 ERP and is now supporting the post go-live development of the system.

The NOC, one of the world's top oceanographic research institutions, has 650 staff based across two locations in the UK and at sea. It became an independent, self-governing charity in 2019, losing access to a government shared service Oracle platform. The organisation elected to replace it with the finance, HR, procurement and project planning modules of Unit4 Milestone 7 hosted on Unit4's Azure Cloud.

The NOC was undergoing wide-ranging business change as it moved from being financed by government and European Union grants to raising its own funds as a not-for-profit organisation. Its ERP project team was unfamiliar with the Unit4 system and faced a tight and immovable go-live deadline so needed external expertise. G7 was appointed initially as the implementation partner and then to provide longer term system support.

G7 recognised that the implementation would be pressured and embedded a team of its expert Unit4 consultants into the NOC to match and work alongside their in-house resources. They carried out knowledge transfer workshops before designing and building the finance, logistics, procurement and HR self-service applications. G7 also supported NOC through user acceptance testing and the go-live process.

Following a successful launch, the NOC then brought in a new project team of three to manage the next phase. G7 now supports the NOC with building on the original implementation and developing its Milestone 7 system in line with the organisation's vision and needs going forward. It provides both consultancy services on a project basis and also maintains the system through its Application Managed Service (AMS).

Sean Barrett, the NOC's ERP Manager, said: "We see these next two years as a period of continuous improvement, using G7's expertise to help us take the system to the next level."

The majority of G7's consultancy work is to facilitate the introduction of additional workstreams, such as a customised research module. Another recent major project has been the implementation of the people and project planner module, which will allow resource planning and budgeting data to feed into finance for more efficient tracking of spend. Making tax digital also goes live shortly and mobile apps are progressing to testing. The next phase includes the introduction of the expenses module, as well as ongoing issues such as automated email notifications to make work processes more efficient and reduce the number of outstanding tasks.

Barrett said: "We couldn't do the development in-house without G7's support. We work with a core team of five or six G7 consultants, who are experts in their own fields, and I've been nothing but happy."

On the AMS side, G7 deals with any system issues, such as bug fixes, that the NOC team passes on to them to resolve. AMS is a flexible solution, particularly when there are urgent, last minute work requests. "AMS gives us an extra resource," Barrett noted. "The biggest changes here have been in supporting HR where we've replaced a lot of manual work processes and people are using Unit4 much more efficiently. The work and results have been really pleasing."

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