



Francesca Harrison,
Deployment Manager at BNP Paribas



MANAGING EXPENSE CLAIMS: BNP PARIBAS CUTS THE PAPERWORK WITH ULYSSE T&E, IN EUROPE, ASIA AND THE UNITED STATES

When BNP Paribas, the leading bank in the euro zone, decided to streamline its travel and expense claim management process, to handle an annual work load of 250 000 travel events, a full study of all software solutions on the market was conducted. The chosen product: Ulysse T&E, by Etap-On-Line, for a rollout in 10 different countries in Europe, Asia and the United States.

With 138 000 employees in 88 countries and an annual net banking income of 29.7 billion euros, France based BNP Paribas ranks among the top international banks in continental Europe.

The group has a strong worldwide presence in many different fields, including retail banking, asset management, as well as corporate and investment banking. In such an organisation, managing travel and expense claims can be quite an issue. "On a group wide basis, we have to deal with close to 250 000 travel events each year, explains Francesca Harrison, deployment Manager at BNP Paribas. *Our most frequent destinations are Paris, London, New York, Singapore, Hong Kong, Geneva, Madrid and Moscow, where our largest sites are located. The average cost of transportation is 465 euros and the average*

cost of incurred expenses is close to 400 euros, including hotel room charges."

Yet, until recently, the submission of expense claims by the travelling staff and the associated approval process were mostly paper based. In many cases, an Excel spreadsheet template was used to gather transaction data in a uniform way, but the input of expenses in the local accounts payable system (from which the reimbursement process is performed) were managed manually.

▶ MOVING TO A PAPER FREE PROCESS

At the beginning of 2001, a decision was made to set up a group-wide solution for the management of travel expenses. The required features included an online expense claim creation process, interfaced with each traveller's credit card account, for automatic inclusion of transactions in the expense claims.

Also required was an automatic validation process to check items against BNP Paribas' travel policy, an online approval workflow, as well as an automatic interface with the accounts payable systems for expense reimbursement.

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A study of the major travel expense solutions available on the market was conducted with the assistance of the consultancy firm Arthur Andersen. "We set up a series of evaluation workshops and at the end of the day, we finally settled for Ulysse T&E." Among the features that made a difference was the multi-language translation of ▶

the Ulysse T&E application, including both user and administration screens. The BNP Paribas working group was responsible for defining the key requirements surrounding the hotel referencing feature, as well as Ulysse T&E's ability to itemize invoices into different expense categories, which are now part of Ulysse T&E' standard functionality. A hotel invoice can therefore be segmented into room cost, food, etc. Finally, the software's three tier technical architecture was identified as a strong security feature.

“ **A user friendly tool that turns out to be quite self explanatory** ”

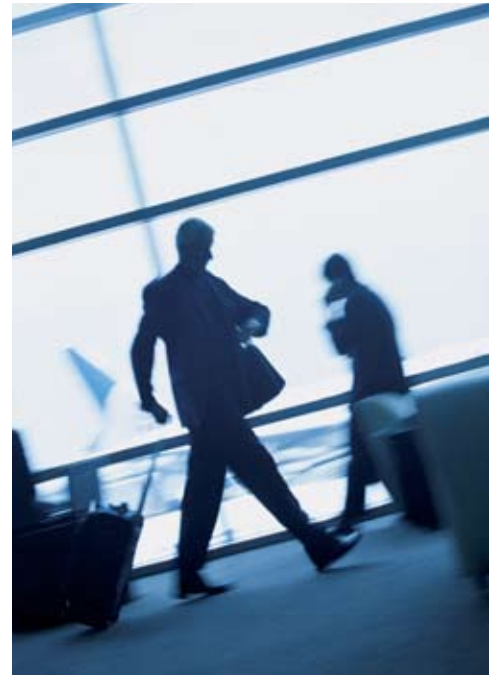
► A HASSLE FREE ROLLOUT

Implementing the Ulysse T&E application was handled internally by the group's procurement optimisation staff. Two initial pilot sites were set up, one English speaking based in London and one French speaking based in Paris. This was followed by a phase of marketing the Ulysse T&E solution to the group's different entities, with a focus on those with significant numbers of travellers and volumes of travel claims. "After a pilot phase conducted in London, the

software is now hosted internally on servers managed by the Paris IT staff. The system is accessed by all users and administrators over the corporate intranet. There have been no significant issue with the integration of Ulysse T&E with other BNP Paribas systems."

“ **Etap-On-Line has always handled our requests with a high level of reactivity and interest** ”

With no major incident in the rollout phase, BNP Paribas met its deadline of completing the deployment among all strategic group entities by the end of 2005. Over the course of 2006 and onward, deployment is continuing among other group entities. "User adoption has been relatively smooth and Ulysse T&E has been generally perceived as a user friendly tool that turns out to be quite self explanatory. Our corporate users appreciate Ulysse T&E's benefits as an integrated solution", says Francesca Harrison, who also expresses satisfaction in the level of support that was provided throughout the decision cycle: "From the early stages of project definition all the way down to rolling out the solution, Etap-On-Line has provided a valuable



support and working knowledge of expense claim processes. They have always handled our requests with a high level of reactivity and interest. They have always been happy to receive feedback and, where it made sense, included our suggestions in their product plan."

Today, at BNP Paribas, the system handles close to 20 000 active users in 10 countries, in Europe, Asia and the United States. Over 134 000 BNP Paribas claims were submitted through Ulysse T&E in 2006.

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