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Tim Tindall  
Commercial Director  
CICS

## CICS

# Bringing municipal finances up to date in multilingual South Africa

CICS is the developer of Munsoft, the financial application of choice for local authorities in South Africa. Using PROIV, CICS has kept pace with the flow of modernising legislation from central government.

CICS's Munsoft product is currently the only package in southern Africa that offers multilingual features. It was also the first application to incorporate South Africa's new rating laws. The speed with which CICS can react has turned Munsoft into the single most up-to-date application within the municipal marketplace.

### Picking up the pieces of a green-screen finance application

In 2001 a consortium of 30 municipal authorities in South Africa were running their finances on an ageing green-screen application written in Cobol. When the developer of that system went out of business, the users put support and maintenance out to tender.

It was an opportunity that Peter Balt of CICS couldn't resist.

"At the time we were managing a commercial finance package built in PROIV," he recalls. "I knew that some of our modules would fit the bill, but that other elements - metered services such

as electricity & water, property rates and services etc - were outside the scope of our software. Luckily we understood Cobol; we could maintain the existing package until we could replace it with something modern written in PROIV."

CICS won the tender and set about upgrading the software step by step. There was inevitably some resistance towards letting go of a tried-and-tested system. CICS had to convince its new customers that its own PROIV-based software, now renamed Munsoft, gave them the rock-solid reliability they needed.

### CICS and PROIV catch the tide of political change

While CICS was encouraging its customers to modernise, the South African government was also applying pressure. Legislation was forcing local authorities to report their finances in a similar way to commercial organisations. The two-pronged attack was a success. In mid 2003 they began replacing all the Cobol applications with Munsoft - apart from the billing module. Billing was the big challenge. It was the source of local government funding and the one aspect of municipal finances that directly affected local residents.



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PROIV made the job easier. CICS was able to concentrate on the underlying logic to develop an application that satisfied the demands of tax-payers, finance officers and central government regulators. Using just one developer they completed the project in a year.

### Speedy development in PROIV turns Munsoft into the pack leader

"That inherited green screen is no longer our Achilles heel," says Peter. "We now have a superb billing module based on Oracle and PROIV. It's leapfrogged us ahead of the opposition."

Tim Tindall, Peter's partner within CICS, agrees: "We're in a very good place at the moment. In Munsoft we have a superb system with clean screen layouts. There's no other application to match our PROIV-based software - and nothing that's been redeveloped in the new millennium to meet today's legislative challenges."

A telling example of the speed at which Munsoft can be adapted occurred when South African rating laws changed. One of CICS's customers decided it wanted to be the first municipality to adopt the new rules. The pressure was on CICS to meet its customer-driven, first-past-the-post deadline. But that's the kind of challenge CICS thrives on. They added the new requirements to their billing spec and still completed the software on time.

### PROIV's multilingual capability makes Munsoft unique in southern Africa

South Africa has 11 official languages, all of which are actively encouraged at local government level. So it was no surprise when CICS became the first Business Partner to upgrade to PROIV Version 6 and its multilingual features.

Tim Tindall explains: "When we're tendering for municipal software contracts, Munsoft's multilingual capability is a huge selling point. No other developer can offer that." The ability to publish in other languages has extended the market for Munsoft beyond South Africa. A recent customer is Luanda, the capital of Angola, where the official language is Portuguese.

### A PROIV shop with a bright future

With so much going for Munsoft, the outlook for CICS is good. During the first half of 2007, they signed up four new local authorities, a process that was helped by simplified licensing that covers the multiple sessions introduced with PROIV Version 6.

As Peter Balt says, "We're a PROIV shop. The product's good and we're committed. There's no other software in our portfolio."

links: [www.munsoft.co.za](http://www.munsoft.co.za)