FUJITSU

Server relocation of superlatives

In its capacity as IT service provider, Data Center Steuern (DCS) manages the IT systems and production workflows for processing and handling the tax administration programs of six federal states in northern Germany. In order for the tax procedures to continue to run smoothly in the future, DCS had no choice but to relocate its two data centers in Rostock and Schwerin to the twin data center. Due to the pandemic, the entire migration to the previously constructed infrastructure took place remotely, and the downtimes also had to be minimized.

The customer

Data Center Steuern (DCS), which is part of Dataport, provides IT services for the smooth running of production workflows and handling the programs of tax authorities in six German states: Bremen, Hamburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Lower Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt and Schleswig-Holstein. DCS processes the tax data of 17 million taxpayers. Administrative staff members access this data from approximately 27,500 workstations in 141 tax offices.

Sector: **Public administration**	Country: **Germany**	Employees: **3,500**	Website: **dataport.de**

The challenge

To set up the technical systems and virtually migrate two data centers during the COVID-19 pandemic without interrupting operation

The solution

- Migration of two BS2000 mainframe computers and more than 4,700 virtual machines to a future-oriented twin data center
- Comprehensive refreshing and exchange of network and computer infrastructure

"Thanks to the Fujitsu team's expertise and dedication, we managed to complete a mammoth project under extreme conditions, one that involved a relocation and an upgrade at the same time."

Jörg Neuber, Head of the DCS Control department, Dataport

100%

uninterrupted operation of the tax administration programs throughout the migration

Relocating servers behind the scenes

Due to the growing complexity of the IT infrastructure and the increasing requirements to be met, Data Center Steuern (DCS) had no choice but to move the two data centers of its tax agencies in Rostock and Schwerin to the twin data center in its Norderstedt and Hamburg-Alsterdorf locations. DCS was tasked with orchestrating this migration in 2018. In addition to a strict deadline, the tax offices also had one key requirement: to avoid impairing the ongoing IT processes in the tax agencies due to the move.

"This relocation resembled open-heart surgery," summarizes Jörg Neuber, who heads the DCS Control department at Dataport. Such an undertaking requires the support of a expert partner who not only has extensive knowledge of IT but also a thorough understanding of the special needs of a tax administration. Fujitsu has proven its skills in these very areas many times over during its long-time partnership with DCS, and the company also accompanied this mammoth project as the solution partner. The parties involved jointly developed a project concept that allowed to make the best possible use of the virtualized environment's advantages and to organize the migration processes as efficiently as possible during the relocation.

Distributed and yet seamlessly connected

The COVID-19 pandemic further complicated the project coordination requirements, not least due to supply bottlenecks for the necessary hardware components. The complete system migration and commissioning took place virtually and to a large extent while working from home. The only "physical" steps carried out on site were to install, assemble and cable the 52 server racks and to move the two BS2000 computers to the new locations—in compliance with the applicable hygiene regulations, of course.

The first meetings in the preparatory phase still took place in person. But when the pandemic broke out, all contact between the project partners was limited to virtual space. However, communication remained highly productive and on an equal footing by video conference, as Jörg Neuber confirms. "We got to know and appreciate each other during the preparations. Afterward, we still had the right chemistry even when working remotely, and everything ran like clockwork."

All-in-one relocation and upgrade

Most of the previous technology underwent a general overhaul during the migration. "We didn't perform a classic relocation but instead upgraded six-year-old systems to the state of the art," says Jörg Neuber. "We were able to increase the degree of virtualization to the extent that the underlying hardware components are only relevant where their performance parameters are concerned." During the course of the relocation, a migration database was created, which contains a number of new functions for security and financial aspects, for instance.