



## Virtualisation means less stress and fewer costs for East-West United Bank

Even for a relatively small bank such as the Luxembourg East-West United Bank, the IT infrastructure has to work perfectly. Important data must not be lost and the computer applications must enable decision-making that is at least as intelligent as at a large bank.

For this reason the East-West United Bank looked into whether it could use virtualisation to take care of disaster recovery more easily and cheaply. Also on the agenda was real business continuity. The idea was to achieve more secure operation while at the same time reducing costs and using less energy.

“For an SME such as the East-West United Bank, the best option for virtualisation was undoubtedly Microsoft Hyper-V,” states IT Supervisor François Thuillier. “We can virtualise our servers just as well as a large bank, at the fraction of the cost price.”



## Profile

The East-West United Bank has more than 35 years' experience in private banking in Luxembourg. It is a bank that listens attentively to the needs of all its customers and always proposes the best, individual strategy for savings and investments. The bank specialises in the Russian, Eastern European and other emerging markets.

## Challenge

Since the regulations in Luxembourg require that banks have a proven disaster recovery plan, the East-West United Bank looked into whether virtualisation would not only take care of disaster recovery but also provide additional benefits, such as real business continuity. The idea was to achieve smoother and more secure operation while at the same time reducing costs and using less energy.

## Solution

Over the past few years, the systematic optimisation of the East-West United Bank's server park and the transfer to Windows has resulted in the bank working in a much more stable way. Now, by also virtualising all the servers, people will be able to work without interruption.

## Advantages

- Lower costs, annual savings up to 30,000 euro
- Less energy consumption
- Real business continuity
- More peace of mind for the IT department
- High availability of applications
- Increased user comfort
- Easier to carry out maintenance
- Easier to test new software
- Small team manages large bank



"I think the Hyper-V is the same phenomenon as Exchange. This software will probably become a de facto standard. With two Hyper-V servers and a Microsoft System Centre included, you already have a high-quality and easily managed infrastructure at an unbeatable price. You even have hot back-up of the entire environment, applications and data, included in the features."

**Michel Ayme, IT specialist at East-West United Bank**



A relatively small bank such as the East-West United Bank just has fewer staff and smaller budgets than a large bank. As for the rest, all the requirements are the same. The IT infrastructure has to function perfectly, important data must not be lost and the computer applications must enable decision-making that is at least as intelligent as at a large bank. After all, the rules for reporting to the Luxembourg supervisory commission CSSF are just as stringent.

The regulations require that banks have a disaster recovery plan that enables them to restart their computer infrastructure in a very limited period of time without any data loss, so the East-West United Bank looked into whether virtualisation could achieve this as well as provide additional benefits. The idea was to achieve smoother and more secure operation while at the same time reducing costs and using less energy. IT specialist Michel Ayme: "I have been working with virtualisation for a relatively long time now and I am a certified professional in the three main software technologies for it, including Microsoft Hyper-V. This experience allowed us to make the best choice."

### A bank that runs on Windows

"For an SME like the East-West United Bank, this was undoubtedly Microsoft Hyper-V," confirms IT Supervisor François Thuillier. "We can virtualise our servers just as well as a large bank, and what's more at a fraction of the cost price. Moreover, it is very convenient that Microsoft has this technology because over the past few years we have been systematically transferring our applications to Windows servers. Temenos, the market leader in banking applications, supplied us with the Temenos T24 application on a Windows server. So we are running our bank on a Windows machine and it works, for virtually no money at all. Definitely when compared to the cost of the hardware and software of a competing banking application, which is what just about the entire sector in Luxembourg uses on a mainframe."

To guarantee disaster recovery, the East-West United Bank leased part of a large data centre elsewhere in Luxembourg. All the important data are sent there in real time. "However, we wanted to go a step further. Recovery is obviously a must in our sector, but real business continuity would provide us with even more benefits and actually give us more peace of mind as well. To be honest, up until three years ago we in the IT department did not always feel at ease about going off for the weekend or on holiday. By systematically

optimising our server park and transferring it to Windows, we are now able to work in a much more stable way. Now, by also virtualising our servers, we will be able to work without interruption."

### No more unnecessary stress

"Our colleagues especially will notice the difference," adds Michel Ayme. "Previously, if there was a small problem somewhere with the availability of an application, then the users suffered. They weren't able to carry on working efficiently, perhaps felt a bit stuck and then you quickly get unnecessary stress. We work as an internal supplier with a service-level agreement and now we will be able to go further than what the rules require. In fact, with an SLA you have to deliver more than just what is strictly necessary because only then do you get real user comfort."

Michel Ayme personally set up the proof-of-concept. "This definitely proved that server virtualisation is plug-and-play. Moreover, we used an ordinary PC as the hardware." After this successful proof-of-concept the East-West United Bank is going to set up the complete business continuity infrastructure during the course of 2010. Simac will advise them about the technological options and collaborate on the installation of networks and security. A fibre-optic connection between the main building and the outbuilding has already been taken care of. In the main building, the blade servers will be virtualised first. In the bank's second building there will be a sturdy virtualised server running the Enterprise version of the Windows Server operating system. This comes fully equipped for high availability and also includes a licence for four virtualised servers. The synchronisation to the external DRP location has been retained. Overall, the East-West United Bank should be saving up to 30,000 euros per year, significantly simplifying the maintenance and be able to work more easily in a more stable environment.

### Remote control

Michel Ayme: "If in the future there are problems with the hardware or with an application, then we can immediately switch between our different machines. This means everyone can carry on working without interruption. It is possible to control and manage all this remotely. An application or server can be moved

to another machine with a click of the mouse. In most cases we won't have to intervene at all because the software itself can decide whether to move applications and servers, whenever necessary. It also becomes easier to carry out maintenance or test new components of applications. I'm definitely looking forward to it."

The East-West United Bank is considering whether, later on, to also run the data storage on Windows. We still have to make the final decision," says Michel Ayme, "but having Window Storage Server as an operating system is definitely an interesting option. For instance, it offers an integrated snapshot function and the possibility of blocking certain types of document. The connections happen based on the relatively cheap standard protocol iSCSI and over standard Ethernet connections. After all, as a smaller company you don't want to bring in too many different and certainly not expensive suppliers. We don't have a team of dozens of IT workers here, keeping track of all the technologies and developments. Moreover, the software from Microsoft works at least as well as the much more expensive software used by previous employers for whom I worked. So we are very pleased with our choice."



"My daughter often reminds me that I have to think about Green IT and I can put her mind at rest. Soon we are going to be using considerably less energy. "

**François Thuillier, IT Supervisor at East-West United Bank.**



SIMAC ICT BELGIUM  
Zone Guldendelle  
Arthur De Coninckstraat 5  
B-3070 Kortenberg  
Tel: +32 (0)2 755 15 11  
Fax: +32 (0)2 755 17 00  
eMail: [info@simac.be](mailto:info@simac.be)  
URL: [www.simac.be](http://www.simac.be)