

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland

A Finnish product

Finnish government agency uses Adobe® LiveCycle® Enterprise Suite software to accelerate export applications approvals for more efficient business and improved relations with business partners

**Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland**Helsinki, Finland
www.formin.finland.fi**In partnership with**Tieto
www.tieto.com

Though home to only a little more than five million residents, Finland boasts a robust, highly integrated economy that outproduces many of its European and North American counterparts per capita. Foreign trade—exports, in particular—figure heavily into the Finnish economy. Finns export electronics, machinery, vehicles and other engineered metal products, and chemicals. Manufacturing exports represent roughly one-third of the country's nearly \$200 billion gross domestic product.

Charged with managing foreign trade policy and export control of dual-use goods is the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA). Among the bigger challenges for the Ministry is licensing dual-use goods, which are products or materials that can be used for civilian or military purposes.

"Historically, managing the flow of dual-use goods was a time-consuming process, involving a lot of manual forms, filing, and archiving," says Heikki Karri, a commercial counselor in the Unit for Export Control at Finland's Ministry for Foreign Affairs. "Now, the processes are automated using Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite software helping bring greater efficiency, control, and cost savings to an otherwise burdensome process."

Exporting made simpler

As part of the European Union (EU), Finnish exporters are subject to EU regulation. For exporters of dual-use goods, the requirements are stringent. Products to be exported to non-EU countries must each be licensed and approved by the Finnish MFA prior to shipping. Licenses specify how products can be used and to which countries or recipients they can be exported. Authorization for export is only granted after a formal application has been submitted, circulated, and approved by the appropriate personnel.

Applications range in length depending on the goods to be exported. In the past, exporters filled out the entire application manually and submitted it for approval through traditional mail or in person. Completed applications were manually circulated through various parts of the MFA depending on the type of good being exported and its destination, requiring several copies that made file management difficult and expensive.

"Our previous paper-based processes made it difficult to handle the nearly 350 applications we received each year with such a limited staff," says Karri. "Applications are reviewed on a case-by-case basis and some can be quite complex. Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite software helps take care of some of the more tedious aspects of our processes to accelerate completion of applications and help exporters meet the demands of their customers faster."

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Commercial counselor, Unit for Export Control,
Finland’s Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Challenge

- Managing large quantities of export license applications with limited staff
- Accelerating applications processing
- Reducing operating expenses while improving services to citizens and businesses

Solution

- Leverage Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite software to create digital forms templates to streamline application creation
- Use Adobe LiveCycle Reader Extensions ES to enable exporters to electronically complete and submit export license applications

Benefits

- Reduced application submission times from a week to a matter of minutes
- Improved data accuracy and security
- Lowered costs associated with printing, copying, and mailing
- Enabled more efficient handling of nearly 350 applications per year

Toolkit

Adobe LiveCycle Enterprise Suite software. Modules include:

- Adobe LiveCycle Forms ES
- Adobe LiveCycle Reader Extensions ES

Creating smarter, more efficient processes

Working with solutions partner Tieto, the Ministry is using Adobe LiveCycle ES software to streamline requesting and submitting applications by automating the process with six unique intelligent digital forms made available through the agency’s website. The forms templates are in Portable Document Format (PDF) and include built-in intelligence to guide applicants effortlessly through the application process. Applicants are issued secure login credentials to an extranet site, where they can store applications and the whole licensing history on their own.

The smart forms templates follow pre-established business rules that help ensure that applicants fill in only the information relevant to their application. Forms fields, enabled by Adobe LiveCycle Reader* Extensions ES appear automatically depending on the type of application and hide irrelevant information, making it easier for applicants to submit.

With applications ranging from simple notification of the use of EU general license to export application forms, intelligent digital forms play a crucial role in accelerating data collection and improving accuracy for faster processing and execution of requests. Once complete, applications can be submitted online instantly, saved to a desktop, or saved to the account and sent at the exporter’s convenience. In addition, individuals of an organization are authorized by strict identification procedures provided by the service of the Finnish Tax Administration to provide electronic identification numbers that serve as a signature to the applications. Applicants are notified that their request has been received via e-mail or text message, closing the loop of communication.

“The old system could take several days or a week just to get paper forms to the Ministry and any inconsistent or missing information could further delay application processing,” Karri says. “With Adobe LiveCycle ES software, the process is reduced to as little as just a few minutes.”

Protecting sensitive data exchanged between private companies and the Ministry is also a large concern. Paper-based processes present several obstacles to preventing information from leaking out or being accessed by unauthorized parties. Adobe LiveCycle ES software helps close those loopholes, eliminating many of the most common leak points found in paper-based processes. PDF files enable applicants to include all required paperwork—user statements, product specifications, and others—electronically in a single file. PDF files can be secured with controls that manage how or by whom a file can be viewed, edited, printed, or saved. Digital files are also subject to rigorous authentication processes, adding another layer of security to help ensure that only authorized recipients can access the information and protect data from manipulation.

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The Ministry is leveraging the expertise of Tieto by using Adobe LiveCycle ES software, including the Reader Extensions module, to address the 21st-century demands of international business. The new streamlined export licensing application process helps the Ministry process applications faster, enabling Finnish exporters to manage their businesses more efficiently and productively.

In the future, Karri expects the Ministry to continue to expand its deployment of Adobe software, integrating legacy back-end databases, and other automated processes to further reduce workload, costs, and data security risks posed by paper-based processes. "Digitizing application forms to make the process easier is just the first step," Karri says. "Already we've reduced processing time and materials costs substantially, while making the overall licensing model easier for exporters. Automating other areas with Adobe software will only enhance our gains and enable us to continue to improve our services to our citizens and business partners."

For more information

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