FLEXIBLE, FUTUREPROOF INFORMATION SECURITY MANAGEMENT

T-Systems manages global information security with flexible software platform BIC from GBTEC.

INDEX

KEY FACTS

INDUSTRY	ICT
COUNTRIES	20
EMPLOYEES	50.000

FIRST STEPS TO AN INTEGRATED GRC TOOL

T-Systems has received inquiries from individual customers regarding security management certifications since 2001. The company responded by certifying its sites step by step, which improved sustainability in the process. The next challenge was to standardize all sites to enable consistent quality standards. T-Systems opted for a centralized certification process, meaning that all security management rules would be developed centrally and implemented locally. The individual sites, therefore, now only needed to check that the methods were being used instead of having to check the methods themselves. This dramatically reduced the time needed for auditing by approximately one-third. The certification testing methods guaranteed a common security level for its clients. In response to a change in strategy, the company ran an inventory of its existing rules in 2008. It was then that it recognized the full extent and depth of its controls. Armin Plank, the responsible senior security manager, came to a surprising conclusion:

> **"We had 14.8 grams of paper per employee – with over 50,000 people on staff!"**

This collection included many completely different regulations. These ranged from internal guidelines, compliance policies and reporting rules to external certifications (e.g., ISO 27001), control mappings (e.g., COBIT) and compliance requirements. The task at hand was to combine these internal and external regulations to enable an integrated view.

T-Systems views the following areas in its security management system:

- Information protection
- IT security
- Physical security

T-Systems first built a set of controls with check lists as a more effective way to administer the enormous number of regulations. This original set contained 1,400 controls; today there are significantly fewer. All necessary controls, ranging from the action plan for individual employees to the requirements of stakeholders, are part of this integrated system. Armin Plank explained:

> **"We originally started with 1,400 controls. By improving our structures and consolidating similar topics, we now have around 900."**

OPTIMAL USAGE OF COLLECTED DATA

The responsible team at T-Systems began its search for a tool to simplify administration and maximize the benefits of its control system. Its control catalog is built in a cascading manner in order to delve into more detail depending on the control requirements. One of the main requirements for selecting a new tool was its ability to map this special design. Armin Plank explained:

> **"We have 36 companies that operate in 26 countries and have approximately 96 business units. In other words, we are talking about a huge vessel that we cannot steer without a clearly defined catalog."**

The project team also wanted a highly flexible solution that is easy to adapt in order to manage all risks and opportunities while generating value for all stakeholders. This included capabilities to:

- Administer controls and create references to the original rule authors
- Reuse entered data in various places
- Maintain the system without requiring constant support from the software vendor
- Make modifications to the tool to reflect external (e.g., legal) changes in regulations
- Use consistent terms to minimize the room for interpretation
- Empower employees to take actions with confidence

The team at T-Systems was determined to fulfill all these requirements with a single tool. It thoroughly examined the offerings on the market and tested the suitability of numerous solutions.

The team selected the software platform BIC from GBTEC because the overall package outweighed competitive products in several areas. The main reason, however, was that GBTEC was willing to adapt the capabilities of the tool to the exact specifications of T-Systems. Armin Plank explained:

> **"GBTEC was very flexible from the start. It showed a sincere interest in the specific process requirements at T-Systems and implemented them in their entirety."**

GBTEC also guaranteed to migrate the complete functionality of the platform into new versions. This was a clear advantage because it ensured that all customer specific modifications will be integrated in future releases as well.

A NEW START HAS BEEN MADE

An 18-month transition phase for the integrated GRC service (iGRCS) started after a short implementation phase. One of the most important tasks was to build acceptance among the employees. The team gained this buy-in by delivering answers to the following questions:

- How do I use the tool?
- What happens to the data that I enter?
- How does the reporting work?

The employees not only learned how to use the tool. They also discovered a whole new way to process their data. What ultimately convinced the users was the noticeable reduction in workload resulting from the new software solution. This is due to several factors:

- One data entry generates an average of 8 reliable compliance statements.
- Completing one control set produces an average of 22 reports, which were previously generated individually.
- Documentation processes run automatically.
- A single click shows who receives the data and in which level of detail.
- Reports are sent automatically.
- All activities, procedures and workflows are documented using audit-proof methods.
- Employees can act with confidence since the tasks and expectations are clear.
- Active, two-way reporting creates transparency for all employees.

The participation rate for the integrated GRS service has continually grown and currently lies at almost 100 %. The few exceptions are typically due to the changing functions of the participating employees. Armin Plank is satisfied with the results:

> **"Thanks to BIC, we have eliminated unnecessary duplications and gained the acceptance of our staff. Each individual user has seen personal benefits in using the software."**

About 200 users were asked whether the following areas improved or worsened with BIC:

- Performance of the assessment
- User friendliness of the tool
- Number of controls
- Redundancies in the controls
- Reporting functionality

The results showed that the employees experienced significant improvements virtually across the board. In particular, all respondents saw improvements in the "performance of the assessment" and "user-friendliness of the tool".

STEPS TOWARDS PROFESSIONALIZATION

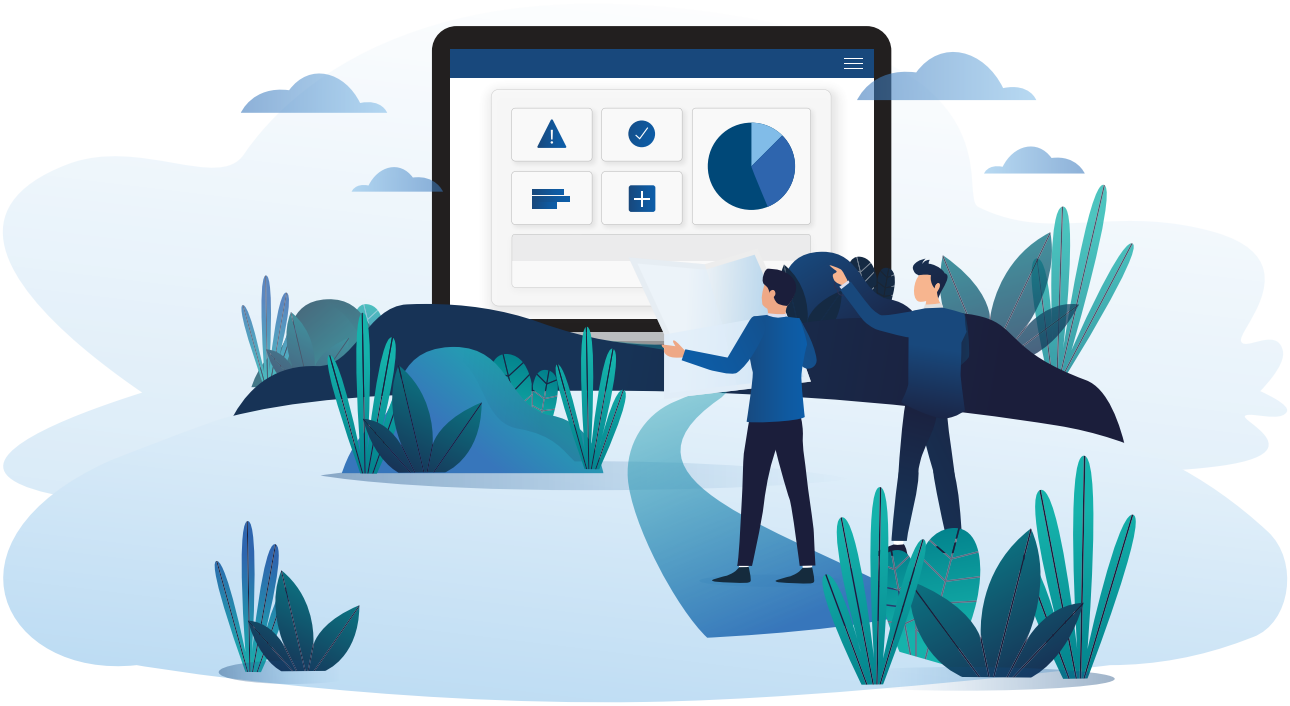
Currently, 400 users and 96 responsible users in the units deliver reports at T-Systems. On average, four people per business unit contribute to the reports. Each of these employees receives a quarterly control assessment containing the data from the previous quarter in order to check it and make any necessary modifications.
These self-assessments are then evaluated in reference to the business unit and the global average to identify the areas requiring actions and recommend further actions. Another important milestone was the successful integration of information security risks in the integrated GRC service. The local risks for 23 international business users are entered, evaluated, and consolidated into this system once a quarter. This risk management process was managed manually in spreadsheets for a long time. This process, however, was gradually integrated into the integrated GRC service and continually tested. The implementation was completed in 2014. In a final stage, risk reporting was adapted to the requirements of the employees and management. All participants were pleased that the central, integrated solution for information security risks lead to a drastic reduction in individual, time-consuming tasks, and local data storage. Further interfaces to security architecture management or audit management are planned in the future. Armin Plank added:

"Our users are highly satisfied with the risk management. Thanks to the positive feedback from the business users, we are able to replace disparate local systems with our integrated GRC service platform, which generates even more synergistic effects for us."

T-Systems currently makes modifications to BIC on its own and started a joint project with GBTEC to further develop the workflows. Since these customer-specific features were incorporated from the very beginning, migrating the platform to new versions works very well. The cooperation between T-Systems and GBTEC has also become more efficient over time. Whereas changes were previously made through informal requests, the companies now use a professional ticketing system.
Reporting has improved as well according to Armin Plank: "We are very satisfied with the reporting capabilities of BIC. Business users can create their own reports based on Excel, and we can decide to what extent individual users can change the parameters of their reports. We now need fewer report templates and can run operations more efficiently by saving costs during the development phase."

OUR JOINT PATH INTO THE FUTURE

The next strategic steps are to integrate BIC with e.g., technical surveying systems. Instead of entering the information by hand, the data can be automatically exported and transferred into the tool. To implement these tasks, T-Systems is planning a joint project with GBTEC to integrate the import interfaces for external systems to enable the co-management of external data. T-Systems is also considering mobile options to use the software platform and enable data entry and access to reports from smartphones and tablets. Other possibilities include the integration of other business areas, such as process or quality management, in the existing set of controls to enable more transparency. Armin Plank explained:
“Our penetration rate, unification and action transparency are significantly higher than in other strategic business areas – all thanks to BIC.”
The consolidation of various management domains is one of the most important challenges for T-Systems in the future. To enable this convergence, various business areas will modify their methods and use a combined set of controls. Armin Plank considers GBTEC a reliable partner on this path and foresees the advantages of BIC for his future plans:
The clear advantages of BIC are its easy modeling, fast implementation and the customizable functionality to unite various management domains.
T-Systems and GBTEC have laid a solid foundation to continue their cooperation and mutual journey in the future.



YOU WANT TO LEARN MORE?

Want to learn more about GRC with BIC Platform? Contact us by phone or email or simply participate in one of our numerous and free webinars!

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GRC IN THE GBTEC GROUP

We are motivated by the firm belief that digitalizing GRC processes sustainably drives the success of innovative organizations. Our efforts center on anchoring these processes efficiently in everyday business activities and corporate culture. We achieve this through our GRC software BIC GRC Solutions, which offers clients a choice of flexible, custom solutions or standard solutions with minimal implementation work depending on their unique needs. With BIC GRC Solutions, we provide a tool that supports our clients to achieve goals reliably, cope with uncertainty, act with integrity, and continually improve the maturity of their organizational GRC processes. The world's largest and most successful energy providers, insurance companies, banks, telecommunications companies and retailers place their trust in us and manage their GRC processes with BIC GRC Solutions.

T-Systems

With a footprint in more than 20 countries, 46,000 employees, and revenue of 8.2 billion euros (2015), T-Systems is one of the world's leading providers of information and communications technology (ICT). T-Systems offers a range of integrated solutions for business customers, including the secure operation of legacy systems and classic ICT services, the transformation to cloud-based services (including tailored infrastructure, platforms, and software) as well as new business models and innovation projects for the business fields of the future, such as data analytics, the Internet of Things, machine-to-machine (M2M) communication and Industrial Internet.