

# SA Tourism Leaves the Ordinary Behind

## industry:

Tourism

## country:

Middle East & Africa

## business challenge:

Misalignment amongst international operations with respect to software licensing practices was resulting in inefficiencies and unnecessary costs. Under-licencing of software assets laid the business open to risks associated with non-compliance

## solution:

Upgrade to a standardised, compliant operating platform and ensure that all Microsoft software is up to date, licensed and ready to serve the business

## services:

Planning, deployment and support services for Microsoft software licensing

## results:

- The entire organisation is now licensed, up to date, secure and compliant
- Standardising the software estate gives greater insight into ownership of assets, and the status of the software running on the organisation's network
- The Microsoft Enterprise agreement offers the best available pricing for the organisation's size and demands, optimising IT spend

## Executive Summary

As an organisation that views technology as a business-enabler, **SA Tourism saw value in developing and enforcing a central, standardised roadmap for its technology environment.**

The organisation collaborated with Dimension Data's Microsoft Solutions team to build an operational framework that would function as a strategic asset to the business, delivering tangible value to its operations. Using Microsoft Enterprise licensing, **SA Tourism's entire Microsoft software estate was licensed, brought up to date and compliant, and standardised across all ten international branches.** The operational benefits have been impressive. **The software is stable, reliable and secure. IT spend is optimised, and operational risk reduced.** SA Tourism now has a current, effective operating platform from which to run its complex international business, and its technology – simplified, optimised and improved – is running as a business enabler, rather than an obstacle to execution.

## Client Overview

Tourism represents one of South Africa's key economic sectors. Over ten million people visit its shores annually, contributing over R100 billion to its developing economy and creating over 500 000 jobs. SA Tourism markets South Africa attractions to the international community. It has a network of 10 international offices which promote South Africa as an attractive destination for leisure and business travellers.

## Business Challenge

SA Tourism had the will and the vision to adopt technology as an enabler for its business. As its global operations grew, it understood that technology could provide the bridge to connect its offices in international locations and introduce new synergies and effectiveness to its operations.

At the time, however, its operating environment was under-licensed and there was a high level of duplication of technology products and solutions. Aside from the duplication involved in multiple products performing the same function, the lapse in licensing exposed the business to the risk of fines, unfavourable publicity, embarrassment and the prospect of having to repurchase all its software. Older, unlicensed versions of the software also drew the risk of having no support, updates or security associated with them, should a breach or failure occur.



“As a business unit, we **had a vision of the standards and best practices we wanted to enforce**, in line with organisational codes. This solution has helped IT to become a true enabler to the business and **demonstrate that it can contribute immense value to the organisation**. It’s all about **delivering tangible benefits** – and that is what this solution has enabled us to do. ”

Anir Bidesi, General Manager for Business Information Systems at SA Tourism

## The Way Forward

The appointment of a new General Manager for Business Information Systems, Mr Anir Bidesi, paved the way to the standardisation and rationalisation of SA Tourism’s technology environment. One of his first objectives was to align all the branches so that they all operated on the same model. However, he needed a partner with the technical capability and product knowledge to help achieve this vision. Dimension Data recommended that SA Tourism enter into a Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement. When organisations expand and become more complex, it can become difficult to manage the explosion of growth and monitor each device that is using Microsoft applications. This is where a Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement demonstrates real business value. It’s a volume licensing programme for organisations that have 250 or more desktop computers. The programme provides a simple, flexible, and affordable way to buy the latest Microsoft software products.

## Solution Delivered

To begin the alignment process, SA Tourism approached Dimension Data to deploy Microsoft Enterprise licensing to 160 users in the South African office. The solution was subsequently rolled out to the ten foreign branch offices.

## Services Provided

SA Tourism has embarked on a new Business Information Systems (BIS) strategy.

Among the various BIS projects, the strategy included a move to a cloud-based e-mail service, with all 10 international offices hosted on the same domain. This would reduce branch offices’ dependency

on head office; reduce risk and introduce redundancy to the infrastructure.

Dimension Data assisted SA Tourism in resolving one of its most pressing concerns: To establish a standard platform to build and integrate systems based on the business need, which made Microsoft the logical port of call.

Following an audit of the IT estate, Dimension Data and SA Tourism met with Microsoft licensing specialists to determine which licensing agreement would best fit SA Tourism’s profile and to develop a shared vision and defined technology roadmap.

The first step to accelerating the pace and efficiency of SA Tourism’s global network of offices was to ensure they were aligned to a common platform. As the offices weren’t centrally managed, there was very little control over or insight into the status of the software and some of the offices. By centralising the global agreement, the IT department will have up to date information about the status of software running at all ten offices. A Microsoft Enterprise Agreement – which provides support as well as licensing and compliance – was implemented.

## Value Derived

Partnering with Dimension Data has given SA Tourism the advantage of working with a service provider that brings experience, market insight and a close relationship with Microsoft to the table. Dimension Data is a Microsoft Gold partner on five continents and has won 11 Microsoft Global Partner of the Year Awards over the last five years, an achievement unequalled by any of Microsoft’s other 400,000 partners worldwide.

SA Tourism now has greater control over its software investment. It receives monthly

updates through the software practice of Asset Management feature of the Enterprise Agreement, Software Assurance, means that SA Tourism automatically gets software updates as they are released, instead of having to upgrade and purchase them.

On the compliance front, the solution has accelerated SA Tourism’s compliance profile dramatically and bought it in line with accepted norms and practices. SA Tourism is now proud to state that it is now in compliance in terms of Software Asset Management best practice.

**Anir Bidesi, the General Manager for Business Information Systems at SA Tourism**, describes the business shift achieved by this successful deployment as follows:

“As a business unit, we had a vision of the standards and best practices we wanted to enforce. In line with organisational codes IT is a fundamental pillar in the business, but we need to bring our technology roadmap in line with the business objectives. Once we were able to marry the two, we were able to become a true enabler to the business and demonstrate that IT can contribute immense value to the organisation. Once that happens, there is a paradigm shift and we become an equal business unit or partner with other operational units. It’s all about delivering tangible benefits – and that is what this solution has enabled us to do.”

The solution also delivers enhanced information security. A standard operating system means that security and risk exposure are covered. Management tools give the ability to monitor the environment and be more proactive about keeping the operating environment up and running.

Operationally, the licensing agreement has made delivery of Microsoft's applications to the users more swift and effective, because they have access to the most up-to-date and secure versions available. Users are now guided by set policies, procedures, standards and guidelines, which adds another layer of security to operations because users are educated as to the optimal way to use the applications.

This solution also represents a critical first step towards virtualisation. By standardising the desktop environment on Windows 7, SA Tourism now has the option of reassessing its server strategy and possibly pursuing a virtualisation initiative, using Microsoft's Hyper-V technology.

Dimension Data also supports SA Tourism through educating users on the advances made in each new release so they can leverage new features and make the most of all the benefits the technology offers.