

# Renewal of Core Legacy Systems of Land Registry for the Netherlands

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**Key words:** legacy systems, renewal, project approach

## SUMMARY

Until the end of last year a comprehensive monolithic information system was used for the registration of land rights by the Dutch Land Registry. The technology on which this system was built, in the early 1980's, was outdated and could hardly be modified. Furthermore, loss of knowledge was at hand due to retirement of the developers. Hence, high maintenance costs, limited integration into the real estate chain as well as other registration databases along with insecurity as to continuity.

Following two failed attempts the developers went back to the drawing board and in 2015 the Land Registry kicked off the KOERS project in order to replace these legacy systems. Three main requirements were set in advance: ensuring the services of the Land Registry could continue undisturbed, providing for Straight Through Processing and easy maintenance and expandability.

From the previously failed attempts to replace this legacy systems, we had learned that we had to remain in control throughout the entire project. No fixed assignments externally, but only hiring competent developers. Furthermore, the scope of the project really should be kept as small as possible. Successfully go live first and then expand and optimize. The third lesson taught us that the traditional Waterfall approach to the project (first design, then build and then test as a whole) was inappropriate. For this reason we opted for an agile approach in which very small pieces of system were designed, built, tested and used.

The development approach that we chose turned out to be successful. The system was built incrementally by developing broad slices of functionality and testing in a shadow environment by end users. Every fortnight the conversion from legacy to the new KOERS system would take place. In the months preceding the launch of KOERS, the transition was practiced with dozens of adjacent

systems and the use of the shadow environment was also intensified in order to provide a clear and objective picture of remaining issues.

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