Ballast Nedam, one of the Netherlands’ largest construction and engineering companies, operates a large number of construction sites. Its operations require IT and storage systems to be accessible flexibly, quickly and securely. To ensure this accessibility, Ballast Nedam selected Hitachi Data Systems to update its legacy IT system. HDS deployed a solution composed of Hitachi Unified Storage, Hitachi Content Platform, Hitachi Data Protection Suite, Hitachi Dynamic Tiering and Hitachi Data Ingestor.

The Challenge: Share Growing Data Volumes

Ballast Nedam was faced with the challenge of managing growing amounts of data across over 45 construction sites. Each site would require efficient relocation once projects were completed. The company wanted to cost-effectively consolidate all of its storage needs while improving remote data access functionality.

Benefits at a Glance

- Improved IT efficiency and optimized storage requirements.
- Guaranteed seamless, speedy and secure file sharing.
- Cost-effective consolidation of storage needs and scalability for future growth.

As a forward-thinking business, we believe in the need to continuously improve and update our IT environment in order to stay ahead of competitors. In Hitachi Data Systems technology, we have found the perfect solution to support us in this endeavor.

Hendrik Heerema
IT Manager
Ballast Nedam

Ballast Nedam Acquires Flexible Hitachi Infrastructure for Complex Storage Needs, Future-Proofs Fast-Growing IT Environment
Ballast Nedam’s total data storage needs stood at approximately 73TB. Over the last 5 years, the company has experienced over 100% of data growth, year on year. Due to the nature of construction work, the company is unable to discard much of its old data. For example, various iterations of specific building and engineering drawings must be kept for future insurance claims. As such, not only was Ballast Nedam’s previous solution technically struggling to keep up with this growth, but it was also becoming increasingly costly to maintain. Additionally, whenever a building project begins, a remote Ballast Nedam office and corresponding IT system must be set up at the construction site. The burgeoning amounts of data that needed to be accessed would make this process increasingly complex.

Alongside the technical challenges, the company’s employees were experiencing challenges with the limitations of their file sharing capabilities. For Ballast Nedam employees, the ability to share files such as architectural drawings and regulatory information quickly and securely across all remote sites is a fundamental requirement. However, its previous IT system had reached full disk capacity and could not support this capability across all of the company’s locations. On the sites where it was possible, it was a complicated process for the user and expensive for the company. As such, Ballast Nedam realized it needed to deploy a new data storage solution that would cost-effectively give the company flexibility for its current data-intensive needs. At the same time, the solution needed to prepare for the rapidly expanding amounts of data to come.

During its search for a new solution, Ballast Nedam evaluated all the leading storage solutions available on the market. The company was looking for a flexible system to enable data to be stored centrally, but remain easily accessible from any of its many remote sites. It also required a high-performance solution that would allow flexible and fast sharing of critical files between users, regardless of their location, while still offering the highest levels of security.

The company’s fast-growing volumes of data also meant that Ballast Nedam was looking to expand capacity with a cost-effective solution that would provide the best total cost of ownership (TCO). The solution would also need to ensure that previously rapidly escalating associated costs could be controlled. Furthermore, as the company continued to grow, it required scalability to future-proof its expansion.

During its search process, Ballast Nedam worked with Hitachi TrueNorth Partner POR, the largest channel partner Hitachi has in the Netherlands. Following an extensive evaluation into which systems would meet its requirements, the company chose Hitachi Data Systems.

**The Solution: Flexible, Future-Proofed Platform**

Ballast Nedam chose the Hitachi storage solution because of its ability to significantly simplify and improve the company’s information management processes. It deployed Hitachi Unified Storage 110 (HUS 110) and Hitachi Unified Storage VM (HUS VM) to enable the storage, consolidation and management of all data types from a single central platform, while allowing for easy access across all of its numerous remote sites. Ballast Nedam was also looking for a solution that could virtualize its existing EMC VNX solution.

Hitachi TrueCopy remote replication software was implemented, which together with HUS 110 and HUS VM, could support the company’s most mission-critical data situations. TrueCopy provides immediate real-time and robust replication capabilities for data protection, disaster recovery and data migration purposes within distances of up to 190 miles (300km).

Ballast Nedam also deployed Hitachi Content Platform (HCP) for its ability to provide an archive solution for all of its data and a safe place for its critical architectural and engineering documents. These capabilities are particularly essential requirements to support the company’s intensive storage and archiving needs. The company was also looking for a solution that could improve its overall IT efficiency and automate operations, while simplifying and improving the efficiency of branch and remote office file services. HCP was also chosen for the added benefit that the solution enabled the easy management of the company’s sprawling Microsoft® SharePoint® environment, which was exploding exponentially across its many remote locations. These capabilities were boosted by the company’s selection of Hitachi Data Ingestor (HDI) to enable seamlessly scalable and backup-free storage for its remote offices.

Finally, to tackle the increasing complexity of its storage needs, Ballast Nedam rolled out Hitachi Data Protection Suite for its ability to provide lean backup and simplify data management in the company’s complex networked storage environment. These abilities are supported by Hitachi Dynamic Tiering software, chosen by Ballast Nedam to simplify storage administration and solve the complexities of implementing data lifecycle management.

> “Hitachi Content Platform provides us with the perfect solution to our intensive storage, archiving and sharing needs across our many remote offices, while also giving us the additional business benefit of improving our overall IT infrastructure.”

*Hendrik Heerema*
*IT Manager*
*Ballast Nedam*
"The Hitachi Data Systems solution we deployed stood out for being technically far above the competition. For example, Hitachi Content Platform provides us with the perfect solution to our intensive storage, archiving and sharing needs across our many remote offices, while also giving us the additional business benefit of improving our overall IT infrastructure. The fast implementation time of the Hitachi Data Systems solution and the dedication of Hitachi engineers also impressed us greatly," said Ballast Nedam IT Manager Hendrik Heerema.

Overall, the company was impressed with the Hitachi Data Systems future-proofed solution and forward-thinking strategy.

"Had we chosen one of Hitachi Data Systems’ competitors, whose solutions all seem to just offer the same features, we’d have been simply buying more storage with no view to Ballast Nedam’s future. Completely future-proof Hitachi solutions, on the other hand, not only technically beat the competition, but also provide us with the added value of cost-effectively managing our rapidly growing storage needs, and, more importantly, the flexibility to support whichever direction the company takes further down the line," continued Heerema.

Benefits: Cost-Effective Efficiency, Scalable Storage

While cost-efficiency was the initial driver for Ballast Nedam to review its data storage system, the company has seen various operational and performance benefits since its migration to Hitachi Data Systems. Overall, since implementation Ballast Nedam has seen its data management system significantly improve from a slow, complex and increasingly expensive procedure, to an easy-to-use, speedy and cost-effective process.

The company has successfully curbed its spiraling data management costs through deploying future-proofed Hitachi solutions. Designed to meet organizations’ rapidly growing data storage needs, these solutions offer a TCO unmatched by other solutions on the market.

The company’s intensive storage and file-sharing requirements are now fully supported and optimized. Not only can file sharing now take place across all the company’s remote sites, but the solution’s easy-to-use interface, high-performance and high-capacity capabilities also made it much easier and far quicker than before. These benefits have been visibly noted by Ballast Nedam employees.

Furthermore, Ballast Nedam has significantly optimized its storage requirements. Its data deduplication ratio has doubled since implementing the Hitachi Data Systems solution. Therefore, less storage space is needed to achieve the same results.

Other key benefits include:

- Increased employee productivity resulting from improved speed and ease-of-use of the Hitachi Data Systems solution.
- Consolidation of disparate data storage needs onto a single platform.
- Scalable data storage, which is essential for supporting the intensive archiving requirements associated with the company’s need to keep the majority of its data.
- Simplified storage management process for Ballast Nedam’s SharePoint deployment; this is a critical business application for the company’s intensive collaboration needs.

"Looking ahead, Ballast Nedam will be increasingly focused on project management, which means the growth of our data storage needs will be compounded. Furthermore, as a forward-thinking business, we believe in the need to continuously improve and update our IT environment in order to stay ahead of competitors. In Hitachi Data Systems technology, we have found the perfect solution to support us in this endeavor," concludes Heerema.