"We calculate that the HDS archiving solution, as an open platform implemented with 3rd-party software, will have paid for itself within a maximum of 2.5 years. Space and cost savings, combined with the industry-leading reliability and performance, give us confidence that our Hitachi storage environment will meet all our needs for some time to come."

Sasa Mitrovic
Head of IT Infrastructure and Operations Department
Raiffeisen Bank Serbia
Leading Serbian Financial Organization Invests in Enhanced Archiving with Hitachi Technology

Managing and protecting customer data is a critical business and legal requirement for Raiffeisen Bank Serbia, which is part of one of Europe’s leading financial institutions. After successfully implementing a Hitachi Virtual Storage Platform for its production environment, the bank installed 2 Hitachi Content Platform systems for its file and email archiving. Featuring data consolidation and replication, the new archive environment supports 5TB of data and is expected to deliver return on investment (ROI) in under 2.5 years. Data center space used for storage has been cut by 50%, driving significant efficiency and data management benefits across the board.

For the IT team at Raiffeisen Bank Serbia’s Belgrade headquarters, looking after information is a full-time and complex job. Industry regulations demand that all customer and business data are carefully cataloged and kept on file, sometimes for many years, to retain clear audit trails. Although this data must be easily accessible on demand, no matter how old or obscure it is, the bank must also make sure that it cannot be accessed by unauthorized users. Unsurprisingly, this all means that the bank requires a sophisticated IT platform, even as the need to operate as cost-effectively as possible remains a top priority.

Over the last 7 years, the bank has worked closely with Hitachi Data Systems to build an enterprise storage environment that offers the reliability, availability and performance that it needs to meet these stiff demands. The virtualized storage environment that supports its core banking applications, databases and backup is powered by Hitachi Universal Storage Platform® V and is to be migrated to the latest-generation Hitachi Virtual Storage Platform. “We’ve always been very satisfied not only by the standard-setting technology from HDS but also by the professionalism and expertise of its representatives,” explains Head of IT Infrastructure and Operations Department at Raiffeisen, Sasa Mitrovic.

When the time came to focus on refreshing and enhancing its storage archiving platform, Raiffeisen Bank Serbia naturally turned to the vendor that it had relied on for so many other mission-critical storage requirements. Its areas of focus were its file servers and email databases, both of which held sensitive business and client information in large volumes and a variety of unstructured formats. “We have to keep our archived data safe, no matter what,” says Head of Core Infrastructure Management Unit at Raiffeisen, Sreten Brborovic. "So, as well as implementing a reliable archiving platform, we wanted to put disaster recovery measures in place at the same time. This way, in the unlikely event of our main data center ceasing to function, all records would still be safe and reachable."

Build the Perfect Archive

The bank began by installing Hitachi Content Platform at its main data center location in Belgrade. The next step was to incorporate a process for replicating all archived data. To achieve this, a 2nd Hitachi Content Platform was installed at the bank’s secondary data center site. Data is replicated between the 2 locations to ensure business continuity in the event of any emergencies and to reinforce the bank’s ability to meet its compliance obligations around keeping archived data within easy reach at any time.

The newly installed archiving platform holds up to 5TB of archive data, which is generated by more than 1,500 users across the organization. Data compression is used to optimize the available capacity within the archive.

“We've relied on Hitachi Data Systems to help us build the efficient and comprehensive virtualized storage environment that we now have in place. It’s part of our strategic direction to continue to leverage its standard-setting technology and expertise for at least the next 3 years.”

Sreten Brborovic
Head of Core Infrastructure Management Unit
Raiffeisen Bank Serbia
Installation of the solution was a team effort. "We’ve worked with HDS for a number of years, and knew that the expertise of its local representatives would really help us create the most robust, reliable and secure archiving platform," comments Sasa Mitrovic. “This insight, along with the experience and know-how of our own IT staff, created a winning combination when it came to designing and implementing a disaster-recovery-ready archive environment for our critical email and file servers.”

It was important to Sreten Brborovic and his team that they could take ownership of the day-to-day operation and management of the new solution. “We have the skills in-house to administer our storage environment, including the archive element. And we wanted to ensure we kept this control, rather than relying on an external support team,” he explains. “This was another benefit of working with Hitachi Data Systems. While they have been constantly on hand to provide guidance and support where we need it, we’re also able to retain as much control and independence as we like, fitting updates and maintenance around our internal workloads and priorities.”

**Powerful Return on Investment**

With Hitachi Content Platform in place, the bank is seeing significant improvements in the efficiency of its storage environment. Thanks to the combination of an effective tiered storage model and data consolidation in the archive environment, it has reduced the space needed in its data center by 50%.

Having assessed the projected TCO savings that the new archiving platform will create, Raiffeisen Bank Serbia is expecting strong return on its investment as well. “We calculate that the HDS archiving solution will have paid for itself within a maximum of 2.5 years,” says Sasa Mitrovic. “These space and cost savings, combined with industry-leading reliability and performance of our Hitachi technology, give us confidence that our storage environment will meet all our needs for some time to come.” With fast, secure access to data stored across its production and archive environments, the bank has solidified its compliance stance. At the same time it has ensured that employees can carry out their roles efficiently to optimize customer service and business performance, even in the event of power outages or hardware failure.

Far from planning to relax now that the new solution is up and running, the team at Raiffeisen Bank Serbia is already working on its next initiative. Over the coming months, it will migrate its headquarters to a new building in New Belgrade, and the bank has invested in an additional Hitachi Virtual Storage Platform to support the new data center. “We’ve relied on Hitachi Data Systems to help us build the efficient and comprehensive virtualized storage environment that we now have in place,” concludes Sasa Mitrovic. “It’s part of our strategic direction to continue to leverage its standard-setting technology and expertise for forthcoming mid-term period.”