

## SUCCESS STORY

# HER MAJESTY'S PASSPORT OFFICE

Achieving public sector service excellence



Maintaining public service levels, with improved quality and accuracy

### The challenge

Sopra Steria and the Her Majesty's Passport Office work together to meet strict deadlines for the accurate processing of passport applications.

For Her Majesty's Passport Office, the accurate and on-time processing of over five million passport applications per annum is the 'front line' of service delivery: the point at which it is measured and judged by its customers, the general public.

Her Majesty's Passport Office faced the challenge of how to make something good even better when a long term contract for the provision of ICT transformation and business process outsourcing (BPO) services was re-tendered. The outsourced management of the front- end of the passport application process, including data verification and validation processes, was a key element of this.

It was awarded to Sopra Steria initially as part of the broader consortium delivering a wide ranging transformation programme and subsequently via a direct agreement with Sopra Steria.

### Key points

- Seamless transition to Sopra Steria with no degradation to service levels
- Data validation accuracy level of over 99%
- Ability to ramp up activity during the peak passport application season
- A consistent and high quality approach in all geographic locations
- Proactive monitoring of operational delivery as well as commercial and financial matters via a joint Contract Management Board

### Our solution

Her Majesty's Passport Office sought not only a seamless transition to Sopra Steria with no degradation in service, but also an improved service operating to more challenging service levels.

During a successful transition, over 250 people were integrated into the Sopra Steria business from the previous operator. Alison Tite, Sopra Steria's Client Director comments: "We met the demand for a seamless and on-time transition through close liaison with Her Majesty's Passport Office, the incumbent supplier and other members of the consortium all working in partnership."

The Sopra Steria BPO solution rests very much on its people. The team is responsible for receiving applications from the public, scanning them digitally, verifying the contents, checking the scanned documents for accuracy and making corrections where necessary, and banking payments received. With all these processes successfully completed, applications are then passed to Her Majesty's Passport Office to complete the examination process.

## How we worked together

Sopra Steria delivers its services from seven area passport offices across the UK. A core team of around 250 employees rises to over 350 at times of peak seasonal demand. They work to stringent service levels in order to meet the turnaround times demanded for three different levels of application: standard, fast-track one-week, and a premium, four hour, one-day service. For the premium service, Sopra Steria works to a one hour SLA.

Data validation is a core component of the service and a consistent accuracy level of over 99% is required from Sopra Steria. This is an enhancement to previous BPO service provider requirements. Not only has this new target been met every single month since shortly after the cut-over to Sopra Steria, but a close working relationship with colleagues at Her Majesty's Passport Office has also improved the mutual understanding of what defines an error and where it might occur. This has led to failure rates being halved.

Sopra Steria's renowned human touch is key to its ability to help Her Majesty's Passport Office meet its commitments. Alison Tite comments: "We need to be able to ramp up activity during the peak passport application season when applications can soar from 40,000 a week in December to 150,000 a week in April. In spite of stringent security clearance requirements, we are able to bring in many seasonal staff for peak periods and integrate them successfully within our permanent teams."

A series of relationship meetings at different levels within both organisations focus on service and strategic development. These extend from monthly service review meetings at both regional and national account level through to a formal monthly commercial review. A joint Contract Management Board looks at strategic and contractual matters and allows Sopra Steria to introduce innovation and discuss how further improvements and efficiencies could be made.

## Results and benefits

Her Majesty's Passport Office has not only maintained its levels of service to the public, but has benefited from Sopra Steria's improved quality and accuracy in data verification and validation processes.

- A true partnering approach, where issues and ideas are debated openly and constructively for mutual benefit
- The removal of unnecessary local variations in processing between area offices, leading to a consistent high quality approach in all locations
- A reduction in the time spent by passport office staff in correcting and challenging errors
- An efficiently resourced service that can scale up and maintain throughput during seasonal peaks
- Significant savings achieved via the novation of the BPO contract.

“ Sopra Steria has consistently demonstrated a clear commitment to partnering in the approach to all of its working with us. There is mutual respect across both organisations, which has allowed open, honest and challenging relationships at all levels to be well established.”

Dave Wilkinson  
Head of National  
Operations



Sopra Steria, European leader in digital transformation, provides one of the most comprehensive portfolios of end to end service offerings in the market: Consulting, Systems Integration, Software Development and Business Process Services. Sopra Steria is trusted by leading private and public organisations to deliver successful transformation programmes that address their most complex and critical business challenges.

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