

ABN Amro selects systems to underpin re-entry onto the international trade finance market

ABN Amro has put in place one part of its rebuild with a decision to take trade finance back office and front-end systems from CBA and Surecomp respectively. These will underpin the bank's intended move back into international trade finance, starting with Singapore and Hong Kong. There will be a single instance of IBAS in the Netherlands.

ABN is returning to the trade finance area after losing its previous activities, people and systems to RBS as part of the earlier break-up of the bank. 'We needed to get back out there,' says the bank's head of transaction solutions, IT, Menno van Dassen. In July of this year came the merger of Fortis Netherlands and ABN Amro. The Fortis name was dropped, with the combined entity coming under the ABN Amro brand. Fortis was using CBA's IBAS in the Netherlands, with its association with this system going back to the days of Mees & Hope and then MeesPierson (it briefly came off this system as part of a long-running and late implementation of CSI's Banktrade in the Netherlands but then reverted to IBAS as a result of the break-up of Fortis).

As such, ABN Amro has the Fortis-derived IBAS for its domestic business. ABN considered other back office systems for its international business but it is a niche market, Van Dassen points out, with not too many offerings. Fortis had experienced a very good relationship with CBA, he says, and IBAS was felt to be flexible and to offer a straightforward solution for adding new countries.

Fortis had already kicked off a search

for a front-end, which led to the selection of Surecomp's Allnet. Allnet will now be integrated with IBAS for the bank's existing domestic activities and will be rolled out for the re-entry into international markets. Allnet will also be interfaced to Sword Firecoseft's watchlist solution, the Global Filtering System. Surecomp spokesman, Murray Freeman, says the supplier was asked to perform a proof of concept, notably around the interfaces required, and 'it was more or less clear to us that, if we passed the

projects do not get in the way, the aim is to finalise Singapore and Hong Kong around February, says Van Dassen. New York and India are likely to follow, so too perhaps Frankfurt. All data and product definitions will be held on the central system and this will run both the domestic and international businesses. The bank will seek to offer a standard product set in all locations. It also aims to be self-sufficient, with Van Dassen expecting 90 per cent of new country roll-outs to be handled by the bank itself.

There are plenty of other projects under way or planned. The integration of the two banks' retail businesses onto ABN Amro's systems has been happening this year, with their merchant businesses due to go the same way next year. A decision is also likely by the end of next year in relation to a rationalisation of payment systems (with the bank deciding to leave this until the core systems are sorted out). New systems that do not have a major impact on the core, such as the addition of mobile payments, will probably happen in parallel. To avoid a lot of analysis and in-

fighting, it was decided that the ABN Amro systems would be used for all areas of the combined bank unless there was a very good business case for retaining Fortis ones. The bank is also adopting ABN Amro's outsource philosophy, rather than Fortis' in-house one, which is reflected in the move of Fortis' data centre and 360 staff to ABN Amro outsource partner, IBM, from 1st November 2010. All of the new management structure is in place, Van Dassen adds.



Rolf Hauge, CEO of CBA (centre) celebrates signing with Jack van der Meulen (left) and Menno van Dassen (right) ABN Amro

proof of concept, they would acquire our solution'. He adds: 'The project has kicked off immediately. The bank had its project team in place during the second half of the RFP process.' Meanwhile, IBAS will be interfaced to a range of systems including Temenos' T24 and FRSGlobal's reporting platform, plus the Bolero trade utility. The interface between IBAS and Allnet will be via XML messages.

The contracts with CBA and Surecomp were signed in October. Providing other

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