

Engineering and Zend: cutting through the red tape of social policies at the Italian Ministry of Employment



Company:	Engineering - http://eng.tdw.it/
Country:	Italy
Industry:	Software and services
Challenges:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of the "CIGS" funding application • Management of the application for attributing work permits for non EU workers in the entertainment industry
Solution:	Zend Platform, Zend Studio, Zend Framework

Overview

Engineering is the third largest ICT operator in Italy offering a full range of software and services. It consists of a group of 16 operating companies, each one specializing in a specific market segment or line of business. Engineering's role in the field of innovation and technology is clearly summed up by the following data:

- 35 national branches
- 2 EU headquarters in Brussels and Dublin
- 1 subsidiary in South America: "Engineering do Brasil" in Sao Paulo
- 6,000 IT specialists
- More than 700 million euros in revenues
- 7% market share

Strategic areas where their products are present:

- Finance
- Central Government and Public Administration
- Oil
- Industry
- Local Authorities
- Health
- Energy & Utilities
- Telecommunications

The Challenge



The CIGS application

"Zend tools enabled us to manage everything"

Alfredo Gemma,
Senior Project Manager for Engineering

Engineering works on projects for the Italian public administration and central government and is particularly involved in two major projects with the Ministry of Employment and National Social Security:

- Management of CIGS funding (*Cassa Integrazione Guadagni Straordinaria* - a financial aid available for employees in the case of long term interruption/suspension of their employment with a company)
- Management of permits for non-EU workers in the entertainment industry.

Managing a company's layoffs with the CIGS is, of course, mission-critical because it is socially useful. It is a way of supporting businesses in times of crisis and it ensures that employees receive a replacement income. Normally, in the case of company restructuring, reorganization or business conversion it is up to workers, clerical staff and managers to handle this themselves. As this is public money, everything has to be handled with complete transparency, fairness and optimization. Unfortunately, it is commonplace to imagine the State as a bureaucratic, uncaring and expensive institution. The combined waste of paper and of public funds is an image that seems to be imprinted on the collective mind. But this is not necessarily the case, in fact, increasingly, administrations use cutting edge tools to ensure services that are characteristic of advanced societies. Technology is an element that contributes greatly to achieving this goal.

The company Engineering was instrumental in the reorganization of services at the Ministry of Employment. They had to establish a system for facilitating the paperwork and for the complete digitization of information.

The Solution

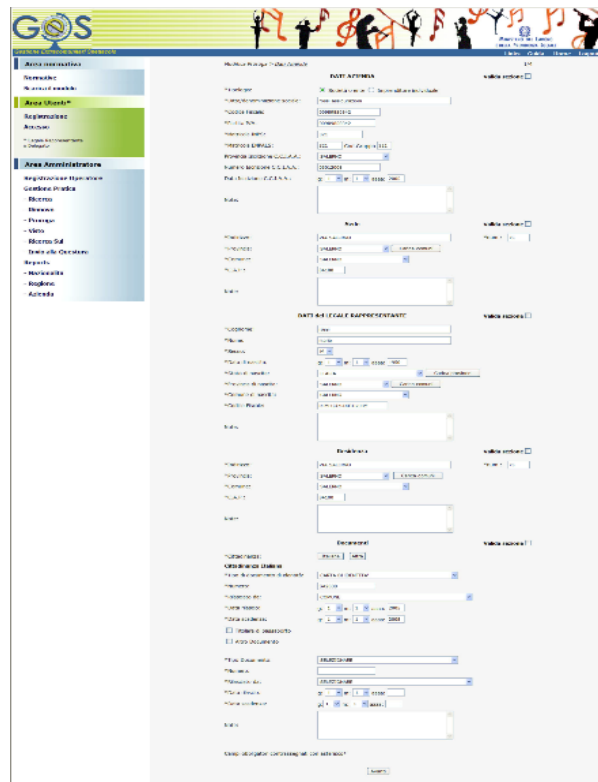
The solution had to be both easy to use and flexible. Engineering therefore focused on PHP for its "rapid development, efficiency, scalability and its appropriate use of resources," said Alfredo Gemma, Senior Project Manager for Engineering. "To be precise, we used PHP 5.2.3." Inevitably, therefore, Mr Gemma's decision to use a PHP development environment as advanced as Zend Studio together with the Zend Framework was a functional decision because of the excellent integration of these two products. The resulting solutions provided not only the management of a back end, but also of a front end for the applications which citizens and businesses can use for exchanging information via web services with social funding agencies, such as the INPS (*Istituto Nazionale Previdenza Sociale*—the national institute for social security) and the INAIL (*Istituto Nazionale Infortuni sul Lavoro*—the national institute for insurance for accidents in the workplace).

Obviously the problem was particularly complex, "but Zend tools enabled us to manage everything and we are completely satisfied with our choice." comments Mr Gemma, "Ten developers were involved in the two projects, they particularly liked the features of code completion, the wsdl (Web service description language) wizard and the integration with subversion. In short, Zend Studio is both a comprehensive and a coherent IDE".

However, development is only part of the life cycle of an application. Testing, debugging, operability and performance monitoring are also important. To make the architecture more efficient and to integrate the cluster comprising 4 PHP servers on which the applications run, they also used Zend Platform, the only application server for PHP that meets strategic requirements such as performance, management, integration and scalability.

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Application for managing permits for non EU workers in the entertainment industry

With these two projects the State achieved complete dematerialisation of documents and introduced the use of smart cards and digital signatures. The famous predictions made long ago by Nicholas Negroponte in *"Being Digital"* are certainly coming true even in areas which may appear more resistant to change.

A nice a success story both for the Italian Public Administration and for the company Engineering and one where PHP and Zend were crucial tools to enable such avant-garde applications.



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0220 -M-MOC-0908-R2-EN-Engineering