Centre for European Policy Studies

Improves How Time and Work are Managed

CEPS — Centre for European Policy Studies

Industry
Think Tanks

Company Size
Large

Products Used
Project Cost
TimeOff

Challenges

- (!) Manual systems to track time and projects unable to scale alongside CEPS business growth
- (!) No visibility into how much time should be worked across projects by researchers
- (!) Inability to capture and approve time off requests in a central location
- (!) Limited ability to forecast multiple, multi-year projects
- (!) Limited reporting capabilities to justify spend on research contracts

Founded in 1983, the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) is a leading think tank and forum for debate on European Union (EU) affairs, in areas including economic and social welfare policies, energy and climate change, foreign policy and financial institutions and markets. Based in Brussels, Belgium, CEPS' team of researchers work with an extensive network of partners, policy-makers and business representatives to disseminate its findings through publications and public events.

Challenges in managing multiple and multi-year projects

CEPS' funding comes from a variety of sources, with a significant portion of this coming from European Union research contracts and tenders awarded on a competitive basis by EU institutions, agencies and national governments. According to Sally Scott, Head of Finance and Administration at the Centre for European Policy Studies, as the CEPS' number of contracts grew, so did the urgency to move to a reliable timesheet system to allocate research hours against multiple projects.

"Previously our team of researchers didn't know how many hours to work on a project. As the contracts we secured increased in length and complexity – many spanning over three to four years – it became imperative for us to accurately manage the hours against the project budget," said Scott.

Another challenge was that CEPS needed to have visibility into time off submitted and accrued by researchers so that they could effectively manage a project over time – however, absences were tracked using paper-based processes, providing teams with limited visibility on who was available to work on projects in certain timeframes. CEPS also required better solutions to justify how many hours were being spent on a project to its funding sources. Using manual systems was no longer functional – visibility and accessibility was a critical driver in moving to a more automated solution.

A valuable solution to capture and forecast time with ease

After an extensive evaluation, CEPS chose Replicon for its easy-to-use interface

and its ability to manage all timesheets and time off taken and accrued in the cloud. The think tank implemented Replicon Project Cost, which captures time across multiple projects smoothly, giving management a holistic view of projects status, costs and deadlines. CEPS has different units for each research area, with an average of five to six people working on one project, while also being spread across several other projects. Using Replicon Project Cost, the think tank was impressed with the flexibility of the system to add projects and sub projects with ease, identify the right mix of people to work across tasks, and understand how researcher's availability impacted the status and delivery of projects.

In addition, Replicon TimeOff was implemented, which simplifies and streamlines time off requests and empowers employees to gain full visibility into time off balances. For CEPS, this also helps to forecast and better utilize people's time as they can identify any time off conflicts or upcoming absences to more effectively plan ahead.

"When you have hundreds of projects taking place simultaneously, it's absolutely vital to see the big picture and then drill into how best to allocate resources, while having the flexibility to adjust these resources over time as projects evolve. We also need to track internal activities, such as general administration tasks, and this process is a breeze with Replicon," said Scott.

Derive insights and drive future growth

Using Replicon's solutions, CEPS now has a straightforward process in allocating resources and managing hundreds of projects simultaneously from start to finish. Replicon plays a central role in how time is optimized, so that teams can reduce or increase the amount of resources spent on a project to meet deliverables and deadlines. For example, the solution includes a progress bar so that teams have a clear overview of how many hours have been used on each project so that time and budgets are effectively managed. Replicon's advanced reporting functionalities provide valuable insights to effectively view and manage all projects, through its dynamic charts and dashboards.

These reports have also supported the increasing requirement to provide records of where time and money is spent across projects to auditors or to various funding sources. Using Replicon Project Cost, CEPS eliminates the hassle and uncertainty in how time is tracked and reported, providing details on multiple tasks and projects in real time.

"Throughout the year I will review projects and update the details so that I can effectively manage resources across teams. This is where Replicon has been incredibly helpful to me personally - if I see that a certain project is not matching its estimate, I can then connect with the relevant project lead to discuss this and revise our forecasts as needed.

"A major advantage in using a cloud-based solution is that when auditors check our records, we can rest assured that we have identified any inaccuracies instantly, so that we present a clear audit trail of where time has been spent. We are always able to know and show where the money goes, and comply with the funding requirements of each and every research contract," said Scott.

As a result of deploying Replicon, the think tank's management team now has freed up time it had previously spent on conducting administrative tasks, and can more readily focus on key business priorities such as exploring additional research projects to pursue and collaborating with its network of partners and business partners. CEPS
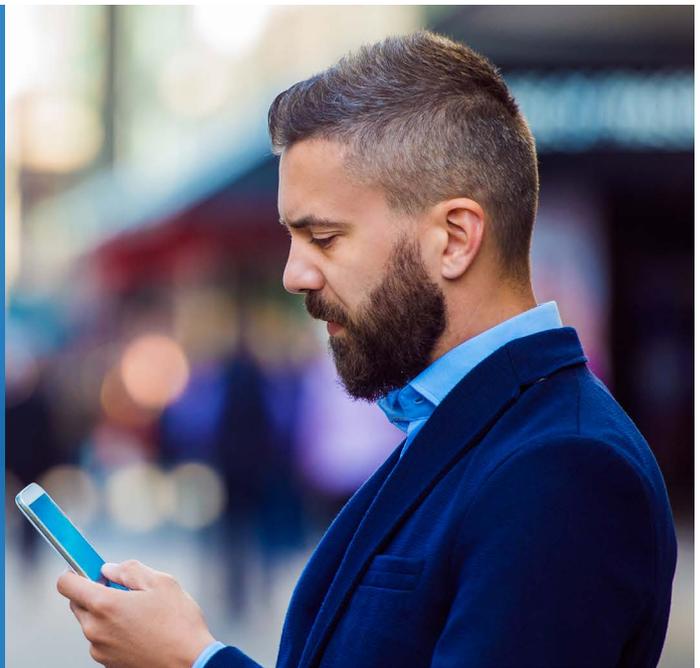

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Sally Scott, Head of Finance and Administration, Centre for European Policy Studies

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Sally Scott, Head of Finance and Administration, Centre for European

has exponentially increased the number and complexity of research contracts over the last few years, however it has not required additional headcount to effectively manage resources and projects.

"Introducing Replicon has simplified how time and work is managed, which is no small feat when you have many contracts being worked on simultaneously across the organization. While we're still to fully embrace what Replicon can offer, we now have well-established systems and processes in place to help better carry out high quality policy research for important European Union affairs and issues," Scott concluded.

Results

- ⊘ Effective resource visibility and allocation across multiple, multi-year projects
- ⊘ Automated system to submit and approve employee time off requests
- ⊘ More accurate data to report on project status and costs to auditors
- ⊘ Immediate insights into projects to adjust resources in an instant
- ⊘ Significantly reduced administrative time to focus on core research priorities

About Replicon

Replicon, the Time Intelligence company, has over 20 years of industry leadership and is pioneering a new approach to time management. Time Intelligence elevates time as a strategic asset within an organization, to improve operational productivity, performance, and profitability.

Replicon's Time Intelligence Platform offers solutions for global time and gross pay compliance, enterprise time management for ERP, business operations software for professional services, and an SDK for continued development - expanding the company's award-winning portfolio of cloud-based products, including complete solution sets for client billing, project costing, and time and attendance.

Replicon supports thousands of customers across 70 countries, with over 400 employees around the globe including the United States, Canada, India, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

Want to try it for your business?

Get your free trial now. Free one-on-one support is available throughout the trial: www.replicon.com/free-trial or contact us.

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