Citizens and tourists in Portugal's top holiday region get improved e-government services and information access with Cisco

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CUSTOMER NAME
· Globalgarve

LOCATION
· Faro, Portugal

INDUSTRY
· Public sector

COMPANY SIZE
· 10 employees

BUSINESS CHALLENGE
· Increase knowledge sharing between local organizations and local government bodies
· Disconnected approach to managing and providing public services and tourism information
· Wide disparity in level and quality of e-government services across the region
· Five million tourists visit the Algarve annually and that is increasing by 10 percent a year

NETWORK SOLUTION
· Cisco Data Center network solution
· Cisco network security technologies
· Cisco Wireless technologies
· Cisco LAN switching solutions

BUSINESS VALUE
· Delivers €360,000 in reduced network costs every year
· Improves provision of local government and community services to citizens
· E-government services improved by 40 percent in one year
· Algarve e-government services ranked as some of the best in Portugal
· Delivers a single, co-coordinated approach to supporting Algarve tourism

A Cisco Data Center network solution has enabled the Algarve – one of Portugal's most popular tourist regions – to improve e-government services for citizens and improve information access for tourists as well as saving €360,000 a year.

Business Challenge

The Algarve in Southern Portugal is one of the most popular tourist regions in Europe. It serves a population of around 400, 000 citizens and also attracts five million tourists every year, a figure which is estimated to grow at around 10 percent every year. As well as tourism, which accounts for 60 percent of total employment and 66 percent of the region's GDP (gross domestic product), local governments in the region wanted to improve e-Government services and promote a more knowledge-base economy. An initiative, called Algarve Digital was set up by Globalgarve – a public-private regional economic development agency – to help increase tourism in the region. Algarve Digital's remit is to provide greater cohesion across the region for both public and commercial services such as helping to improve information sharing and access to public services.

With the Internet proving to be an increasingly important element in delivering public services and helping holiday makers both decide where travel and manage travel logistics, Algarve Digital's objective was to modernize local government services and develop a more knowledge-based economy in the region. Across the Algarve, there was a disparity of e-government services from no web presence to interactive online facilities. In addition, Algarve Digital's remit was to consolidate the activities of local governments and other organizations in the region to provide a more co-coordinated approach to promoting tourism. Prior to Algarve Digital, each area within the region was managing information independently.

Network Solution

Globalgarve has deployed a Cisco Data Center network solution which comprises a data center in Faro, on the South coast of the Algarve, and a Cisco Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) connecting up around 160 locations in 16 cities in the Algarve, 75 percent of which are over optical fiber. The Cisco Data Center network architecture means that Globalgarve can centralize data and applications in a

single location – which is more secure and easier to manage – while using the Cisco MAN to provide high-speed and secure access to data and services from anywhere in the Algarve region.

The infrastructure, comprising Cisco Catalyst 6500, Catalyst 3560 and Catalyst 2960 Series Switches, supports a range of services for the region from hosting local government web sites and tourism portals to regional wireless hotspots. The Cisco Data Center hosts more than fifty portals belonging to local government, civil society institutions and tourism organizations. These include 13 local government websites from which citizens can access a range of services and information about their communities.

Cisco's Data Center infrastructure has enabled the region to set www.visitalgarve.pt which is a tourism portal providing information and access to a whole range of resources such as travel and accommodation, what to see, useful day-to-day information, weather updates and historical and cultural information. In addition, the Cisco infrastructure supports a network of PCs in 21 tourist offices around the region where tourists can access the Internet and tourist information services. During the holiday season – around June, July and August – this portal attracts around 200,000 different visitors with almost one million of page views every month.

The Cisco switching and routing technology also supports other services such as the http://geo.algarvedigital.pt website. This is a public geographical information system site with interactive maps and aerial images of the Algarve, providing 5,000 interactive points of interest and information such as location based real-time weather information, facilities like hotels, beaches and hospitals, and GPS co-ordinates for specific locations.

Cisco is helping Globalgarve deliver public access wireless hotspots across the whole region. Cisco 2811 Integrated Services Router and Cisco Aironet 1310 AG Series Wireless Access Points in regional capital town centers and other towns support wireless networking while Cisco network security – such as Cisco PIX Firewall Software – is used to protect the Algarve Digital network infrastructure.

Paulo Bernardo, CEO of Globalgarve says, "We can't compromise on the quality of our regional network infrastructure because it is so important to the economy of the Algarve. Cisco has been important for us in several projects – data center, wi-fi hotspots and municipal networks. The quality of the Cisco equipment ensures reliability and excellent performance. Having a partner with Cisco's reputation also means we get highly effective and fast response support."

Business Results

"Cisco is enabling the Algarve to realize the vision of Algarve Digital which is to use ICT as an instrument for the modernizing, developing and promoting this region," says Francisco Sousa, Algarve Digital Project Manager. "We have been able to adopt an integrated perspective which respects the autonomy and diversity of the various participants and provides regional coherence. Algarve Digital is all about avoiding dispersion and ensuring integration so that both the public and private sectors can deliver services that make a difference to the lives of citizens, consumers, workers and companies."

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> **Francisco Sousa, Algarve Digital Project Manager, Globalgarve**

The Cisco Data Center technology has enabled local governments in the Algarve to integrate a host of services and applications such as Internet, e-mail, Intranets and business applications using a single infrastructure across each local authority. There is a clear improvement in information access, both inside and outside each local authority that has lead to an improvement in quality and speed of service offered to citizens.

PRODUCT LIST

Routing and Switching
· Cisco Catalyst 6500 Series Switches
· Cisco Catalyst 3560 Series Switches
· Cisco Catalyst 2960 Series Switches
· Cisco 2811 Integrated Services Router
· Cisco Aironet 1310 AG Series
Security and VPN
· Cisco PIX Firewall Software
· Cisco Secure Access Control Server
  Solution Engine
· Cisco Network Analysis Module Software

The use of Cisco technology to help local governments provide better access to their services has resulted in several authorities in the region winning national recognition. In a national survey which assessed the usability, effectiveness and clarity of web services for Portugal's 308 local government authorities, several Algarve governments were ranked in the top 15 – Faro, second place; Vila Real de Santo António, fourth place; Albufeira, twelfth place; and São Brás de Alportel, fourteenth. The survey also showed that since the deployment of the Cisco Data Center solution, the whole of the Algarve region has seen a 40 percent improvement in the quality of e-government services. The facilities that these web services have helped to improve include the ability to report household water consumption; look up the status of local construction planning applications; access to online forms and documents and access to reports and information about local government activities.

"There is a clear cost reduction – in the order of €30,000 a month – because Cisco has enabled us to remove the need to pay for interconnections and because Cisco delivers much higher capacity," says Bernardo. "But the real improvements have been in the quality of service offered to the citizens, the support we have been able to give to increasing tourism in the region and the inclusion of all the municipal officials in a information sharing and network access. And we expect to see even more benefits and cost reductions as we look at deploying more services – such as voice over IP – across the Cisco infrastructure."

Globalgarve is planning to use the Cisco infrastructure to improve information sharing even more by linking up the individual networks of each the 16 local government organizations so that information and common services can be shared even more effectively.