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City of Fes

City of Fès Improves Citizen Transparency and Service Delivery with Cloud Power

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The city of Fès, Morocco, needed a way to more clearly quantify the needs of its citizens and the associated performance of its agencies. Because of the city's strong leadership and its demonstrated commitment to IT innovation, the African Development Bank (AfDB) chose Fès to test the AfDB City Dashboard, developed in collaboration with Microsoft and designed to help cities monitor their service performance.

"Ultimately, we are trying to improve people's lives and make African cities more prosperous. The City Dashboard will be a key tool in helping us meet those goals."

Jose Tonato
African Development Bank
Chief Urban Development Official

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Summary

As in any modern city, the government of Fès must support a host of civic needs, manage its budget, and attract private and foreign investment, all while coping with a population migration from rural areas to the urban core. In 2013, the African Development Bank (AfDB) chose Fès as the pilot city to test the City Dashboard, powered by the Windows 8 operating system and Microsoft Azure, and designed to help cities monitor their service performance.

Fès city officials and decision makers can use the dashboard to monitor up to 70 quantitative and qualitative socioeconomic, service-visibility, and quality-of-life indicators of urban prosperity and service performance. The city will gather data from local, regional, and national government sources, as well as from NGOs and the private sector, and manage the data with Microsoft Azure SQL Database. Once the database is up and running, Fès intends to deploy a public interface for the dashboard, so city residents can use it to monitor or access public services themselves.

With the City Dashboard, decision makers in Fès now have easy, quick, direct access to municipal, national, international, and commercial data—and the insights that they need to make decisions. Fès can build more transparent, more participatory governance, which will make it easier for the city to plan more effectively, attract more private and foreign direct investment, and deliver better services to its residents. After the success of the Fès pilot, the AfDB intends to replicate the program in other cities in Morocco and throughout Africa in 2014 and 2015. The City Dashboard will be a key tool in helping the AfDB identify issues and customize its urban development programs for the greatest impact on the lives and prosperity of urban residents in Africa.

Ancient City, Modern Challenges

Fès, Morocco, is an ancient city and a UNESCO World Heritage site, but it is also a modern metropolis, with a population of 1 million people. As in any modern city, the government of Fès must support a host of civic needs such as housing, education, water and power delivery, public transportation, and health and emergency services. It has to manage its budget and attract private and foreign investment to support municipal services and promote development, all while coping with a population migration from outlying rural areas to the urban core.

Since 2011, Fès has worked with the African Development Bank (AfDB), participating in the bank's Urban Development Strategy, which provides direct investment for infrastructure, encourages private-sector support for urban operations and services, and promotes better municipal governance. "A recent UN report rated governance among the most important factors influencing the prosperity of cities," says Stefan Atchia, Principal Transport

Solution Overview

Product and Services
Microsoft Azure
Windows

Industry
Government

Organization Size
Large (1,000 - 9,999 employees)

Country
Morocco

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Policy Specialist at the African Development Bank. "The problem is that many cities in Africa lack the resources to clearly quantify the needs of their citizens or the performance of their agencies."

Collaboration and Innovation

In 2013, the AfDB began collaborating with Microsoft to develop a City Dashboard, powered by the Windows 8 operating system and Microsoft Azure, the Microsoft cloud platform. The AfDB wanted to build the dashboard to help cities support urban governance by monitoring service performance. The bank chose Fès as the pilot city for the dashboard. "Fès is the right size and has the necessary cultural and economic assets," says José Tonato, Chief Urban Development Official at the African Development Bank. "Most importantly, Fès has a strong, effective mayor who was already upgrading the city's information infrastructure."

Better Service Performance, More Transparency

In May 2013, Fès, the AfDB, and Microsoft began a test of the City Dashboard. City officials and decision makers can use the dashboard to monitor up to 70 indicators of urban prosperity and service performance, including socioeconomic indicators such as population, per-capita income, and housing; service-availability indicators such as emergency response, health, and transporta-tion; and quality-of-life indicators such as environment, shelter, and civic engagement. At a glance, they can see how many students are enrolled in primary and secondary schools, the number of hospital beds or firefighters per capita, or how many fire-related deaths the city suffers per year. They can use the dashboard to compare indicators from several cities, creating benchmarks that can help foster innovation among local authorities to continuously improve service performance.

Fès and the AfDB are now focused on gathering data from local, regional, and national governments, NGOs, and the private sector, and managing the database with Microsoft Azure SQL Database. Once the database is up and running, Fès intends to deploy a public interface for the dashboard, so city residents can use it to monitor or access public services themselves. "The AfDB promotes transparency as the best way to effective governance," says Atchia. "The City Dashboard will help governments use social analytics to promote two-way conversations with their citizens."

The AfDB considers the Fès pilot project a success, thanks in large part to the IT Director and his team at the city of Fès. The AfDB now intends to replicate the program, targeting candidate cities in Morocco and throughout Africa in 2014 and 2015.

Direct Insight to Improve Lives

With the City Dashboard, decision makers in Fès now have easy, quick, direct insight into the data they need. Instead of hunting for the information in different departments and agencies, they will have everything readily available in a single location. "Now the mayor and his leadership team will have the insights they need to make the decisions they have to make," says Atchia. "They can see what's going right and what's going wrong, so they can act before challenges become crises."

The City Dashboard will help Fès build more transparent governance, plan more effectively, attract more private and foreign direct investment, and deliver better services. "Effective planning, more outside investment, and better service delivery all flow from good governance," says Atchia, "and good governance flows from transparency."

Once the dashboard is deployed in multiple cities, the AfDB will have a clearer picture of how African cities perform relative to other metropolitan areas. It will be able to better assess the effects of its urban development programs and target its own investments more effectively. "This will help us identify issues and customize policies for the greatest impact," says Tonato. "Ultimately, we are trying to improve people's lives and make African cities more prosperous. The City Dashboard will be a key tool in helping us meet those goals."

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