Over the last 10 years, VINCI Energies grew from €4 billion to close to €13 billion in sales through its acquisition of construction, facilities management and IT services companies. With 77,000 people in 53 countries, its managers struggled to effectively track and manage long-term, complex projects at its more than 1,800 business units. “Internal control on a global level was a nightmare,” says CIO Dominique Tessaro, because each of VINCI Energies’ acquisitions had its own enterprise resource planning (ERP) and other IT systems.

Different business units also used different methods for classifying and recording cost and progress on a myriad of small projects. That made it much harder to determine if, for example, a business unit was using revenue from one contract to cover losses in another. Running multiple applications such as ERP and email also increased IT management costs.

The first step was “to standardize as much as we could,” Tessaro says, creating one common network and a single email system. In 2014, VINCI Energies began evaluating a single ERP system to replace the 16 operated by the companies it had acquired.

“We were very clear from the beginning, we needed to build [this platform] with one chart of accounts, one set of customer data, one set of supplier data, one single source of the truth,” Tessaro says. The digital platform now serves more than 30,000 users around the world for everything from purchasing to sales, project tracking, and cost and equipment management, and is continually deployed to new acquisitions.

The new digital platform has allowed VINCI Energies to easily deploy mobile apps for everything from equipment management to expense reporting and time sheets.

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Energy and IT Services Giant Powers Up for a Future of Innovation

WITH A DIGITAL PLATFORM AND A COMMON ERP SYSTEM, VINCI ENERGIES PUTS DATA TRANSPARENCY, INTELLIGENCE AND CUTTING-EDGE TOOLS INTO EMPLOYEES’ HANDS.
track the cost of the project and determine if we make or lose money,” Tessaro says.

VINCI Energies has digitized the millions of invoices it processes each year, many of which come from smaller suppliers that email them as PDF files rather than as electronic transactions. Those PDF files are converted into XML files and entered in the ERP system, making it easier to validate the invoices and manage them from either a computer or a mobile device.

The company is also using machine learning to automate the reconciliation of bank statements with each customer invoice. Within three months of starting pilot projects at three companies, the machine learning applications have reached a 60% accuracy rate and are expected to reach 70% to 75% accuracy by the end of the year. Tessaro expects these capabilities to be rolled out over time to all VINCI Energies’ business units. This project may save thousands of worker days on the business unit side.

**Better Visibility Leads to Lower Costs**

The need for the digital platform, and its benefits, have been so obvious that the company sees no need to quantify the results. Senior management knew, says Tessaro, that maintaining multiple ERP systems for each business unit “would cost three, four, five times as much effort, and [even then] you’re not sure you’re ever done.” The use of common systems also reduces training time when employees move among business units. The single source of truth that comes with a single ERP system also reduces cost and risk. If the lack of a common ERP platform made it more difficult to detect a single financial discrepancy, he says, “you may lose millions of euros. CFOs or operational directors can see every business unit and drill down to a single posting to track everything from revenue to orders and find — and fix — problems earlier.”

Embedded analytics have allowed business managers, for the first time, to have real-time rather than batch information about the state of the business. A single screen provides color-coded indicators for 15 metrics, such as each business unit’s cash position or expenses compared to revenue, to signal where a project might need to be managed more closely.

According to Tessaro, adopting a digital platform requires long-term commitment. “Stay the course,” he says. “Don’t stop with a complex integration layer that sits atop multiple systems holding inconsistent data.” Without a single ERP system with a single master data set, Tessaro adds, “you will spend millions and get very little value.”

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**“CFOs or operational directors can see every business unit and drill down to a single posting to track everything from revenue to orders and find — and fix — problems earlier.”**

Dominique Tessaro, CIO, VINCI Energies

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