

GERMAN FEDERAL OFFICE SPEEDS I.T. MANAGEMENT BY 50% WITH RED HAT ANSIBLE TOWER



Bundesanstalt für
Landwirtschaft und Ernährung

SOFTWARE

Red Hat® Ansible® Tower

Red Hat Satellite

Red Hat Enterprise Linux®

Germany's Federal Office for Agriculture and Food, BLE, needed to make its infrastructure more efficient to meet ever-increasing demand for new specialized procedures. To simplify management and save time with automation, the department migrated from Debian and SUSE Linux to Red Hat Enterprise Linux, managed by Red Hat Satellite and automated with Red Hat Ansible Tower. By streamlining configuration and provisioning processes with automation, BLE has reduced risk associated with manual errors, ensured compliance with IT security requirements, and improved its service delivery to internal users in other departments.



GOVERNMENT

1,400 EMPLOYEES

4 OFFICES

"With Red Hat, we now have automation and support for the key parts of our infrastructure."

BASTIAN EHLENBECK
SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR, BLE

BENEFITS

- Reduced IT management and configuration time by more than 50%
- Decreased risk and simplified IT security compliance with automation
- Improved delivery of new servers and systems to cross-department users



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“Red Hat Ansible Tower is relatively simple compared to other tools and is very easy to understand.”

FABIAN SEELBACH
I.T. SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR, BLE

GOVERNMENT CLOUD MANDATE REQUIRES EFFICIENT I.T. OPERATIONS

The country's Federal Office for Agriculture and Food, Bundesanstalt für Landwirtschaft und Ernährung (BLE), works to strengthen sustainable agricultural, food, forestry, and fishery industries, as well as rural development. BLE also provides administrative and IT services to its parent organization, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and other German authorities.

However, the department was running its main infrastructure on Debian and SUSE Linux, which required its teams to manually configure systems and writing scripts. To improve its IT performance and processes, BLE sought to migrate to an operating system with more effective management tools and capabilities.

“We have nearly 1,000 systems to manage, and we were missing sufficient automation in our previous system, which is why we began looking for a new product,” said Bastian Ehlenbeck, systems administrator at BLE.

AUTOMATED CONFIGURATION AND DEPLOYMENT IN A LINUX ENVIRONMENT

To meet these challenges, BLE decided to migrate to Red Hat Enterprise Linux as its core operating system, running in BLE's datacenter. In addition, BLE uses Red Hat Satellite to manage deployment and installation of new virtual machines (VMs) and Red Hat Ansible Tower to automate many daily management tasks, such as configuration changes.

“We looked at competing products, like Puppet and Chef, but we chose Ansible for two main reasons,” said Ehlenbeck. “Firstly because of the quality of Red Hat's support, and secondly because the Red Hat Ansible Tower solution works best with our existing Red Hat environment. It makes sense to have an easy-to-use automation tool that's also from Red Hat, so any problems can be resolved more quickly. Every time we submitted a support ticket during the migration, Red Hat came back with a good answer and solved our issue.”

When the migration is complete, BLE will have around 1,000 VMs running on Red Hat Enterprise Linux, managed by Satellite and automated by Ansible Tower. These servers are used to run around 300 applications—mostly web applications for BLE, as well as its parent organization, the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, and its downstream business unit.

“We are waiting for the completion of our new datacenter, so we still have some legacy Debian and SUSE machines to migrate,” said Ehlenbeck. “But we really want to complete this move to a simpler strategy, where all of our servers are running Red Hat Enterprise Linux.”

TIME SAVINGS LEAD TO FASTER COMPLIANCE AND DELIVERY EFFICIENT CONFIGURATION AND MANAGEMENT

BLE has now automated and simplified its manual configuration tasks and in-house scripts using Satellite and Ansible Tower. By taking advantage of the easy-to-understand tools and capabilities provided by Ansible Tower, BLE's IT team of six people has quickly learned how to automate effectively, freeing time for more valuable work.

“Ansible Tower is relatively simple compared to other tools and is very easy to understand,” said Fabian Seelbach, IT systems administrator at BLE. “We have already replaced 99% of our scripts with Ansible Tower, and we are moving towards managing all of our applications this way. We save 50-60% of the time we previously spent on management and configuration.”

CUSTOMER CASE STUDY German federal office speeds IT management by 50% with Red Hat Ansible Tower**ABOUT RED HAT**

Red Hat is the world's leading provider of open source software solutions, using a community-powered approach to provide reliable and high-performing cloud, Linux, middleware, storage, and virtualization technologies. Red Hat also offers award-winning support, training, and consulting services. As a connective hub in a global network of enterprises, partners, and open source communities, Red Hat helps create relevant, innovative technologies that liberate resources for growth and prepare customers for the future of IT.

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More efficient management has resulted in significant time savings for BLE's operations unit, freeing up time for continuous optimization and regular maintenance of the department's Linux environment.

LOWER RISK, EASIER COMPLIANCE

Increased automation has also helped BLE reduce risk by minimizing the potential for configuration errors. Its infrastructure now runs in a smoother, more controlled manner, decreasing the number of daily maintenance requests.

Its new IT environment also helps BLE ensure it is compliant with all relevant government regulations.

"With OpenSCAP as part of Satellite, we can scan our system and automatically evaluate whether or not we are compliant," said Seelbach.

FASTER RESPONSE TO INTERNAL CUSTOMERS

Automation efforts supported by Satellite and Ansible Tower also help BLE's IT infrastructure teams respond to requests from users in other departments faster.

"For example, we are able to install servers faster for our developers," said Ehlenbeck. "Alternatively, if they need a content management system (CMS) set up, we can do that work quicker because of automation."

This improvement in response times is supported by timely expert guidance from Red Hat. "Red Hat responds within the expected time to take care of things. We're also happy with the quality of their answers, which are always easy to understand," said Ehlenbeck.

SUCCESS CREATES FOUNDATION FOR GOVERNMENT'S OPEN SOURCE FUTURE

Now that its core infrastructure is effectively managed and highly automated, BLE is successfully positioned to support future growth. "Our goal is that our applications can be used by many authorities, centrally operated in a federal computing center," said Ehlenbeck.

To build on its initial success, the department is evaluating additional Red Hat solutions, including Red Hat single-sign on (SSO) to streamline access credentials and processes, as well as Red Hat Middleware and Red Hat OpenShift® to add support for container technology.

"With Red Hat, we now have automation and support for the key parts of our infrastructure," said Ehlenbeck.

ABOUT BLE

Germany's Federal Office for Agriculture and Food (Bundesanstalt für Landwirtschaft und Ernährung, or BLE) carries out tasks related to agriculture, fishery, forestry, and food. It is the central service provider within the scope of the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture, supporting national and international research projects in the areas of agriculture, food, and consumer protection.



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