

# Belgian Ministry Of Finance

The **IN**side Story

*When the Belgian Ministry of Finance – also known as SPF Finance – needed a solution for the scanning, recognition, and processing of data from millions of VAT (Value-Added Tax) forms each year, they turned to Image Recognition Integrated Systems (I.R.I.S.). When I.R.I.S. selected scanners and software for the capture of these documents, they selected **Kodak Document Imaging Products**.*

*SPF Finance wanted a completely integrated system, which I.R.I.S. delivered, featuring a starting point of **Kodak i800 Series Scanners** and **Kodak Capture Software**. It needed to be a robust, fast solution, based on the high volume of VAT forms processed each year, including monthly or quarterly VAT returns (hand-printed or typed), the quarterly intracommunity statement, and the annual customer list. “We’re dealing with about four-million documents of different types and layouts to be processed per year, and the processing time is critical,” says **Christian Gillet**, Business Project Manager of the SPF Finance.*

After extensive study and research, I.R.I.S. developed and implemented an extensive, fully featured solution. Scanning is performed via several **Kodak i800** scanners, utilizing **Kodak Capture Software**. I.R.I.S.

**FastLink** is used to integrate **Kodak Capture Software** and **Formiris Pro**, the high-end form reading solution of I.R.I.S.

**Formiris Pro** is a multi-user, multi-station system – which controls the various scanning stations, recognition stations, correction and validation stations. I.R.I.S. **FlexForm** technology recognizes the

less-structured forms with variable layouts.

I.R.I.S. has also installed its own scalable Document Management System, I.R.I.S.

**DocCenter**, with **Searchirisweb** (consulting of the archives, data and images) to share and provide access to the scanned information (data and image) to all involved employees and units.



**Kodak i800 Series Scanner**

The **i800 Scanners**, featuring **Perfect Page** with **iThresholding**, are ideal for handling the vast array of documents and varied workflow. “The Ministry has already processed more than

1.6 million documents in less than six months,” notes **Pierre De Muelenaere**, CEO of I.R.I.S. “The **iThresholding** does a beautiful job of creating high-quality images from low- and high-contrast documents.”

**iThresholding** automatically adjusts both bitonal brightness and contrast for each

document. It then analyzes

the entire grayscale image to optimize the conversion to bitonal. Documents, like handwritten forms and faint copies, often become more legible in scans than the originals are to the human eye. The feature also reduces “noise” and extraneous marks, helping to create smaller file sizes.

## Situation

The Belgian Ministry of Finance, accumulating and processing over four-million VAT (Value-Added Tax) documents of differing types and formats annually, required a sophisticated document capture, storage and access solution.

## Objective

Implement a fast, advanced, integrated solution for scanning, recognition and processing of all VAT forms submitted by Belgian companies to the Ministry.

## Solution

A completely integrated combination of products from **Kodak** and **I.R.I.S.**, a Value-Added Reseller of **Kodak Document Imaging Products**, including **Kodak i800 Scanners** and a variety of hardware and software from **I.R.I.S.**

## Comments

“The Ministry has already processed more than 1.6 million documents in less than six months. The **iThresholding** [feature of the **Kodak i800 Scanners**] does a beautiful job of creating high-quality images from low- and high-contrast documents.”

~ **Pierre De Muelenaere**,  
CEO of **I.R.I.S.**

The complete I.R.I.S. solution features other innovative, productive advantages:

- **Powerful Scanning And Image Processing:** Thanks to the combination of the Kodak i800 Scanners and Kodak Capture Software.
- **Simultaneous Color/Bitonal Output:** Kodak Capture Software, I.R.I.S. FastLink and Formiris Pro support simultaneous color and bitonal output from the i800 Scanners.
- **Direct Scan Into The Image Database:** Documents are directly scanned into Formiris Pro's database, thanks to the I.R.I.S. FastLink module which synchronizes the operations of several scanning stations.
- **Image Indexing Management:** I.R.I.S. FastLink manages the indexing of the images scanned on the different workstations, and the imprinted process is controlled by Formiris Pro.
- **Powerful OCR And Advanced Voting ICR Engine:** Extremely high ICR accuracy is delivered through a sophisticated, proprietary, voting scheme for ICR recognition.
- **Flexible Forms:** Several forms used by the SPF Finance are of extremely variable layouts and are printed at multiple places. I.R.I.S. FlexForm

technology allows for exceptional recognition of these forms, that wouldn't be possible with traditional form recognition technology.

- **Correction And Validation Tools:** Sophisticated correction and validation tools assist in easily locating and correcting all recognition mistakes, and in finding all typing mistakes and inconsistencies.
- **Automatic Mailing Generation:** When VAT forms are not correctly completed, the operator generates letters (demand of clarification or "query"), personalized to and in the language of the citizen, with precise messages – all done with just one or two clicks of a mouse.
- **Automatic Audit Trail:** Complete tracking is kept for all modifications brought to the data of VAT forms by the operators, without any user intervention.
- **Uninterruptible Production:** Formiris Pro's robust architecture helps to assure the Ministry against any loss or interruption of the form-reading production (more than 40,000 forms per day), even in the case of a major disaster in one of the three sites.

### Teaming Up For Productivity

"I.R.I.S. has installed many large sites for form recognition," says De Muelenaere.

"The system installed at SPF Finance is very advanced and demonstrates how Kodak and I.R.I.S. solutions can be fully integrated to deliver the highest performance. This architecture delivers the processing power and the advanced functionality needed by many other large customers – such as government agencies; banks; and large accounts which need to process forms, exam sheets, surveys, checks, invoices, and so forth."

The complete network solution of the SPF Finance is located at three different sites (Namur, Gent and Brussels) and one central archive in Brussels. Each input site is equipped with high performance Kodak Scanners (scanning in black-and-white or in color, depending on requirements) and is equipped with scanning, correction and validation stations that run form reading and recognition software. Each site also features a local storage server permitting the stand-alone retention of the images, documents and indices, for approximately ten days.

"Thanks to this solution, we have reduced the encoding work of our employees to a minimum for VAT forms and have simplified the administrative work by centralizing the information," says Gillet.