

Cybersecurity flourishes at the Directorate for Agrarian Payments

Serbian government agency successfully blocks infections, streamlines security administration, and improves user experience



The Directorate for Agrarian Payments is a government agency that manages and distributes national subsidies to approximately 400,000 agricultural producers in Serbia. Operating within the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Water Management, the Directorate also manages and informs agricultural producers of other incentives, including those from international sources, such as the European Union.

THE CHALLENGE

This time, the Directorate for Agrarian Payments in Serbia was prepared. A centralized mail server for the Serbian government was infected and sent malicious emails disguised as colleagues of the recipients. While many users at various agencies unknowingly clicked the emails and the infection spread, the Directorate was spared. Because it was the only agency using Bitdefender, malicious emails were blocked and never reached the Directorate's employees.

Just a few years prior, the Directorate had felt this same pain. The Directorate's AVG security solution failed to block a ransomware attack and file shares were corrupted. While the agency restored all affected data from tape backups, operations were disrupted for two to three days. Soon after, the Directorate conducted proof-of-concept tests with security solutions from Bitdefender, ESET, and Kaspersky Labs.

Miloš Jelić, Head of Technical and System Support, the Directorate for Agrarian Payments, recalls, "We selected Bitdefender GravityZone because it offered the most complete security solution that included endpoint protection, Web traffic filtering, and USB device control. We also liked that the Bitdefender console provided a central view of our entire physical and virtual environment. During our testing, Bitdefender was the only solution that did not slow endpoint performance and run into installation issues."

THE SOLUTION

The Directorate for Agrarian Payments uses Bitdefender GravityZone to provide comprehensive protection across 325 endpoints, including Microsoft Windows workstations, as well as Microsoft Windows and VMware vSphere physical and virtual servers. Applications running on endpoints protected by Bitdefender include Microsoft Active Directory and Microsoft SQL Server.

Industry

Government

Headquarters

Belgrade, Serbia

Employees

400 employees (IT staff, 11)

Results

- Successful prevention of security breaches
- Installation across 300 endpoints executed in two hours
- Security administration time decreased from nine to five hours per week on average
- Reduced security-related trouble inquiries by 30 percent

Managed from a single console, GravityZone shields the Directorate from all threats and attack vectors with machine learning, behavioral analysis, ransomware protection, advanced anti-exploit, continuous monitoring of running processes, and risk assessment capabilities.

Fractal Dimension, a value-added reseller and distributor, implemented GravityZone and provides first-line Bitdefender technical support to the Directorate.

According to Jelić, deployment of Bitdefender was smooth: "The GravityZone installation went extremely well. We connected GravityZone to the Windows domain and it automatically removed the prior solution and installed on over 300 endpoints. The whole process took only a couple of hours."

THE RESULTS

Since switching to Bitdefender GravityZone, the Directorate has not experienced a single security breach. Even the occasional security incident has not disrupted operations and users no longer experience workstation performance degradation. In fact, Jelić estimates the volume of security-related trouble inquiries has dropped by 30 percent since the Directorate deployed GravityZone.

Another advantage of GravityZone is improved efficiency for the Directorate's IT staff.

Jelić explains, "Because GravityZone is easy to use and automatically resolves most incidents without our intervention, time we spend on security administration has decreased from nine to five hours on average per week. We have more time to work on other projects and peace of mind that our infrastructure is protected."

As a government agency, the Directorate must comply with standards set by the Serbian government, as well as the European Union.

Đuro Torbić, Head of Programming and Databases, the Directorate for Agrarian Payments, says, "Because of Bitdefender's comprehensive security protection, we can comply easily with security standards set by Serbia's government. We are also able to meet security requirements of the EU, which contributes funding for Serbia's farmers. These funds would be in jeopardy if we did not meet their standards."

The Directorate also places high value on the interaction with Bitdefender and the partner, Fractal Dimension.

Jelić notes, "We have excellent, productive working relationships with Fractal Dimension and Bitdefender. If we have a question or issue, Fractal Dimension is extremely responsive and engages Bitdefender if needed. We feel well supported by both firms and have benefitted from the excellent coordination and communication between Bitdefender and Fractal Dimension."

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Miloš Jelić, Head of Technical and System Support, the Directorate for Agrarian Payments

IT Environment

- Microsoft Active Directory
- Microsoft SQL Server
- VMware vSphere

Operating Systems

- Microsoft Windows

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