



**“Meisterplan has opened our eyes to resource constraints,” says Dr Felix Willing, CIO with Nordex, talking frankly to our editors. This comment highlights just one feature of the function-rich interactive and powerful project and portfolio management software solution provided by itdesign GmbH.**

Since 1985, Nordex SE headquartered in Rostock, Germany, has been pioneering the use of wind energy. Thanks to its nearly three decades of experience, the EPC is well positioned to handle an increasingly challenging regulatory environment and competitive industry. That is why it is as important as ever for Nordex to focus on its main goal – to develop innovative plants that produce electricity at the same cost as conventional power plants.

# Creating a coherent portfolio from many projects



Pictures: Nordex / itdesign

Dr Felix Willing

## IT department as the interface and the 'heart' of an engineering company

Nordex has consistently aligned itself with this goal in recent years. To achieve this, the management has implemented a bundle of new strategies:

- developed cheaper facilities with intelligent solutions in less windy areas
- reduced production costs and general operating costs
- initiated operational excellence programs

- focused on technical advantages and how to exploit them when positioning itself against competitor's promises in the industry.

Nordex's IT division is a crucial component in many of its activity and program packages. IT is the key to achieving ambitious business goals, lean processes, transparent interfaces, and efficient project and portfolio management.

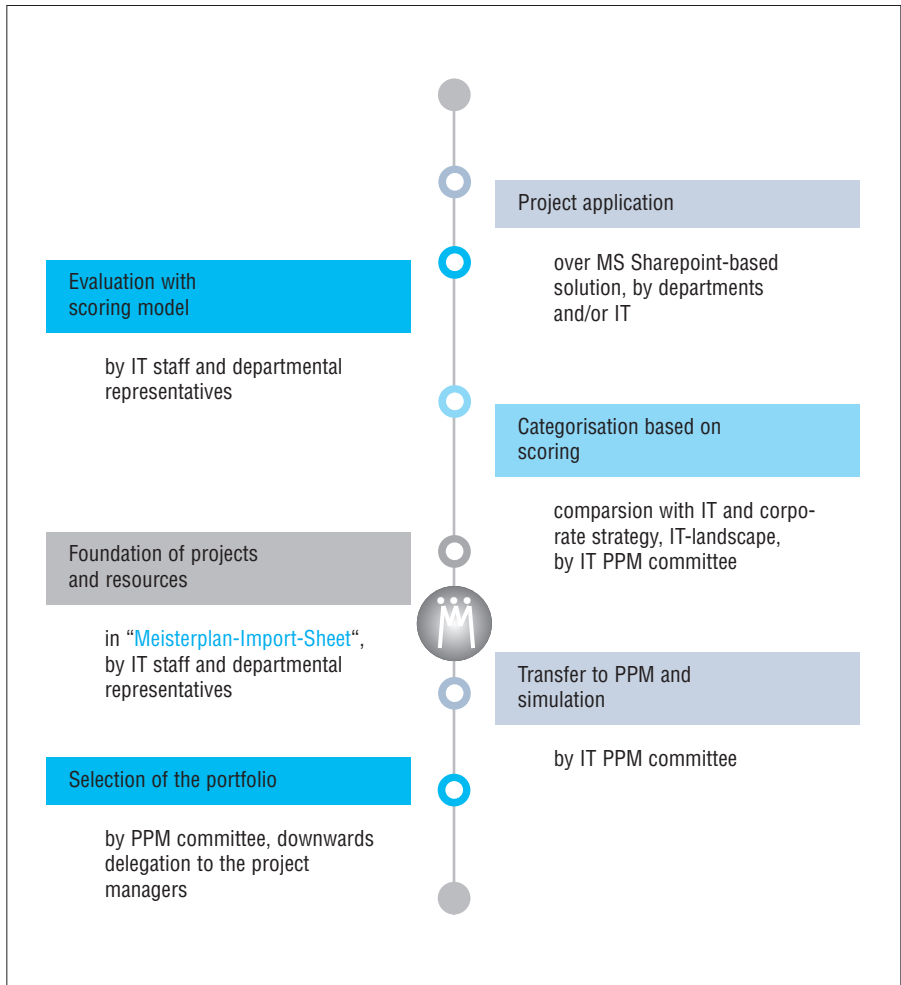
To have perfect collaboration, a company must execute efficient project portfolio management (PPM). That is where decisions are made regarding which planned projects are actually executed and at what costs. It is also where the determination of sufficient resources and time to engage the envisioned project portfolio takes place – and whether, or to what extent the projected outcome of

the portfolio will meet the overall goals of the company.

## The key ingredient to successful PPM – properly implementing the right projects

A Project Management Office (PMO) has taken over the task of managing in terms of planning and controlling the IT project portfolio. In doing so, the PMO uses specific software solutions. At Nordex, a PPM committee of IT executives has this responsibility. PPM is a key focus of Dr Felix Willing, CIO with Nordex since 2012. Prior to his arrival, too many scheduled IT projects had neither been selected nor prioritised, but were more or less implemented ad hoc as required by the requesting departments.

"It was obvious that we wouldn't reach the future requirements of the holding company



## Safe, fast and transparent: make the right project portfolio decisions

Meisterplan helps decision makers at Nordex to get a clear overview of project costs and the interdepartmental employee workloads. Via the provided graphical user interface, members of the PPM committee are able to simply simulate possible planning alternatives with a few clicks. They can compare and select different plans using the scenario functionality. While planning, the results of adjustments to projects and resources are visible interactively. Thus, precise portfolio plans can be created and comprehended. After the committee selects the right strategic plans, they can easily convert them into their existing reporting structures or display them via integrated Meisterplan reporting functionalities.

### "Meisterplan: ideal solution"

Dr Willing considers Meisterplan to be the ideal solution for executing professional project portfolio planning: "We intensively studied a variety of approaches and concepts for PPM. Meisterplan was very attractive with its slight learning curve and short implementation time. Our first project portfolio plan using our data within MS SharePoint was available within a few weeks. Meisterplan was seamlessly integrated into the IT planning process at Nordex."

However, quick and easy implementation is only one of the advantages. According to Dr Willing, "the decisive factor is that Meisterplan gives us a powerful tool for project prioritisation and analysis. We now have an overview of our entire project portfolio within minutes, and with interactive analysis included! IT departments often have complex project dependencies and resource constraints. Now with a glance, we can pinpoint our portfolio weaknesses. Best of all, we are able to simulate various scenarios and prioritisation when presenting portfolio decisions to the board."

Employee well-being has greatly benefited from the adoption of Meisterplan. "A well-planned project portfolio can prevent bottlenecks early on. Our employees seldom work past their limits which ensures good project results. Meisterplan quickly answers the most important question: Where are the portfolio constraints and how can we resolve them?" Dr Felix Willing sums it up: "Meisterplan is an eye-opener."

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with such an approach," explains Dr Willing, reflecting on the situation at that time, and adds: "As an essential lever, we focused on project portfolio management and applied that first."

In addition to the great challenge to create a coherent project portfolio from the large number of IT projects, the entire IT division suffered from staff shortages. This was in spite of established project management and possessing detailed project data. Unfortunately, a comprehensive overview of the entire portfolio was missing. Resources were not utilised optimally and projects could not be planned transparently.

In their search for a solution, Dr Willing's team evaluated various options – including the use of complex, enterprise-wide project management software. However, the team did not pursue this because of the effort involved. The CIO explains: "The well-designed approaches failed in practice owing to the great expense needed to integrate new projects or the inherent differences in project applications and organisational details." The question of how to transition from professional IT project management to an equally professional and successful pro-

ject portfolio management in IT still remained. In 2013, the Nordex IT division ventured a second attempt to answer this question.

And this time, the company made a find. Nordex's IT department introduced a new portfolio process which incorporates itdesign's PPM solution 'Meisterplan' at a crucial point. Today, the new PPM process comprises only a few steps. For Nordex, the following three aspects were of particular importance when choosing Meisterplan:

1. simple transfer of data from various sources, in this case MS SharePoint and MS Excel
2. intuitive possibilities for simulation of different scenarios
3. significant, intuitive management reports. Just with a few clicks, they are created quickly for decision-making.

These three key functionalities of Meisterplan were integrated into Nordex's portfolio planning procedures with minimal implementation effort. The imported project portfolio can now be displayed according to company-specific ranking. With much less time and effort, a transparent and weighted project portfolio of Nordex IT was created.

Source: itdesign 2015