

Slovenská sporiteľňa responds faster to banking demand with DevOps and Red Hat OpenShift



Slovenská sporiteľňa, part of Erste Group Bank AG, is the largest retail bank in Slovakia. To respond to customer demands for more modern features, the bank decided to adopt a DevOps approach and microservices-based IT architecture. By migrating its application environment to Red Hat OpenShift and automating processes with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform, the bank has reduced its provisioning and delivery times and increased its responsiveness, helping it compete in the fast-paced banking industry.

Software and services

Red Hat® OpenShift®
Container Platform

Red Hat OpenShift Online

Red Hat Ansible®
Automation Platform

Red Hat Consulting

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Partner

ELOS Technologies s.r.o.



Banking

4,069 employees

2.2 million customers

Benefits

- Streamlined provisioning with automation
- Established environment to support new DevOps approach
- Cut application release time from 3 months to one month

“We plan to migrate more of our products and services to Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform to become more responsive, shorten development time, and improve our overall customer experience. We see Red Hat as a critical part of our future success.”

Andrej Simkovic
Head of Automation and Technology,
Slovenská sporiteľňa



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“Together with our DevOps approach, Red Hat’s technology is helping us bring new banking features to our customers faster and more often.”

Juraj Tlstý
Director of IT Development,
Slovenská sporiteľňa (SLSP)

Meeting customer demand for modern banking features

Part of Erste Group Bank AG, Slovenská sporiteľňa (SLSP) is the largest retail bank in Slovakia. The 100-year-old bank offers a wide range of banking services to more than 2.2 million customers, including an online and mobile bank, George.

With rising demand from customers for more modern features in its products, SLSP needed a way to release new features more quickly and more often to stay competitive. In addition, the bank sought to simplify management by transforming the inflexible, costly, monolithic application infrastructure supporting its services.

“We have 500 applications running in 10 different environments,” said Andrej Simkovic, Head of Automation and Technology at SLSP. “This complex infrastructure is difficult to manage, and the level of time and effort needed is challenging to maintain.”

To shorten its service development cycle, reduce frequent outages due to bugs, and simplify management of its application environment, SLSP sought to adopt a container- and microservices-based IT architecture, supported by a collaborative DevOps approach.

Adopting an enterprise container platform with a DevOps approach

When looking for an enterprise open source container platform that would provide reliable IT infrastructure, SLSP chose Red Hat OpenShift due to its reputation for stability and the availability of local support.

“Red Hat OpenShift is backed not only by Red Hat, but also a large open source community,” said Simkovic. “We were also looking for a platform with strong automation capabilities. OpenShift provides automation for all stages of the development life cycle, from building to deployment.”

Based on Kubernetes, Red Hat OpenShift provides a modular, flexible platform and built-in automation capabilities for SLSP’s development, testing, and production environments. The bank also adopted Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform to create a playbook for automating time-intensive, manual provisioning tasks.

SLSP began a 3-phase approach to its business transformation. The first phase focused on establishing cross-functional agile teams that included analysts, business users, developers, and engineers. Next, during the processes phase, these teams worked together to optimize deployment processes and move from quarterly to monthly releases.

The final phase, focused on tools, included on-premise implementation of Red Hat OpenShift and Ansible Automation Platform. During this phase, SLSP’s teams worked with ELOS Technologies s.r.o., a local Red Hat Platinum Partner, and Red Hat Consulting to standardize and automate application development and deployment processes, as well as orchestration tasks for the bank’s private cloud. SLSP also engaged Red Hat Training to provide instruction on best practices for OpenShift administration.

Working across teams and vendors, SLSP completed implementation of its new application infrastructure in just 5 months. The first application developed on Red Hat OpenShift was Transparent Accounts, used by Slovakian politicians to disclose financial information, such as funding sources. While this first application was deployed in a public cloud environment on OpenShift Online, SLSP has since adopted Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform running in an on-premise environment.

Creating a modern banking environment

Streamlined provisioning with automation

Using the automation capabilities of Red Hat OpenShift, combined with Red Hat Ansible Automation Platform, has helped SLSP streamline its provisioning process for developers.

Previously, creating a new environment was a complicated process that required SLSP's operations teams to provision and configure a virtual machine (VM), its operating system, and an application server. Now, the company has automated manual provisioning tasks, saving time and reducing errors. Developers can use self-service Ansible Playbooks to provision new environments as needed – for example, to run a specific performance test. Security and compliance are built into this new approach.

"With Red Hat OpenShift, the provisioning process is handled through automation and takes no more than a few steps. It's much faster and much simpler," said Radim Janca, Lead DevOps Engineer at SLSP. "Instead of 5 days, we can provision new environments in just one day."

Reduced time to market with containers and microservices

Adopting a container- and microservices-based architecture, supported by automation capabilities, also SLSP helps deliver new applications and features to its customers faster. In addition to reducing time and effort for provisioning, automation has helped the bank save hundreds of days of developer work time by eliminating routine deployment tasks. As a result, SLSP can release new applications in just one month, compared to 3 months previously.

"With a microservices-based approach, automation is essential for deploying and managing applications running in hundreds or thousands of containers," said Janca. "We've cut a lot of the oversight work with our new Red Hat environment, which is helping us bring banking improvements to our customers faster and more often. We can also scale up faster and more easily to support a new product or feature or when we run a specific campaign, for example."

Established technology foundation for DevOps culture

With business competitiveness increasingly dependent on closer cooperation between development and operations teams, SLSP used OpenShift Container Platform to streamline its development processes and create an ideal environment for its new, collaborative DevOps approach.

"Previously, communication between departments was poor," said Simkovic. "Now, our development and operations teams work more closely together and focus on valuable work. The capabilities that OpenShift provides in support of this new, more agile culture was a key reason for choosing it."

SLSP has also extended this collaborative approach to other companies in the Erste Group by creating a community for sharing experiences and best practices between the group's other banks.

Banking on future success with Red Hat partnership

With the success of its first OpenShift project, SLSP is now migrating other applications to its OpenShift environment. For example, the bank plans to divide its monolithic branch banking application into 200 microservices, deployed on-premise on OpenShift. SLSP also plans to move to a hybrid cloud environment.

“Over the next 2 years, we plan to migrate more of our products and services Red Hat OpenShift Container Platform to become more responsive, shorten development time, and improve our overall customer experience,” said Simkovic. “We see Red Hat as a critical part of our future success.”

About Slovenská sporiteľňa

Slovenská sporiteľňa (SLSP) is the largest retail bank in Slovakia, with 2.2 million customers and 4,069 employees. Its internet and mobile banking service have half a million active users. It is part of the Austria-based Erste Group. <https://www.slsp.sk>

About Red Hat

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