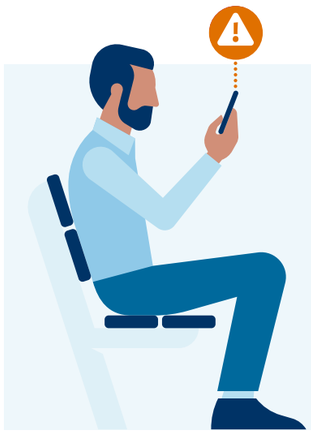
Tax Administration

Robotics Process Automation (RPA) at the Netherlands Tax Administration (NTA)

The Shared Service Organization Finance & Management Information (SSO F&MI) services the NTA organizational units in financial administration, information provision and authorization management, enabling them to focus on primary tasks (imposing/collecting taxes).



What is robotic process automation?

Robotic process automation (RPA) is a software technology that makes it easy to build, deploy, and manage software robots that emulate human actions interacting with digital systems and software. RPA automation enables users to create bots by observing human digital actions. Show your bots what to do, then let them do the work. Just like people, software robots can do things like understand what's on a screen, complete the right keystrokes, navigate systems, identify and extract data, and perform a wide range of defined actions. But software robots can do it faster and more consistently than people, without the need to get up and stretch or take a coffee break.

What are the business benefits of RPA?

It streamlines workflows, which makes organizations more profitable, flexible, and responsive

Increases employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity by removing mundane tasks from their workdays

RPA is non-invasive and can be rapidly implemented to accelerate digital transformation. And it's ideal for automating workflows that involve legacy systems that lack APIs, virtual desktop infrastructures (VDIs), or database access.

The RPA-invoicing process initiative in a nutshell

Before (manually performed):

Incoming invoice from supplier → Invoice placed in workflow of ERP-system by employee of SSO F&MI → Following steps in purchase-to-pay proces (out-of-scope)

Transition
Using RPA programming software to automate the middle step;
Introduction of a new virtual colleague;

After (using RPA):

Incoming invoice from supplier → RPA: invoice automatically placed in the workflow of ERP-system → Following steps in purchase-to-pay proces (out-of-scope)

Effectively saving 4 hours per day, becoming available for other activities.

Note: this initiative was performed in collaboration with the Shared Service Center of the Judicial Institutions Service of the Ministry of Justice and Security.

Other processes suitable for RPA

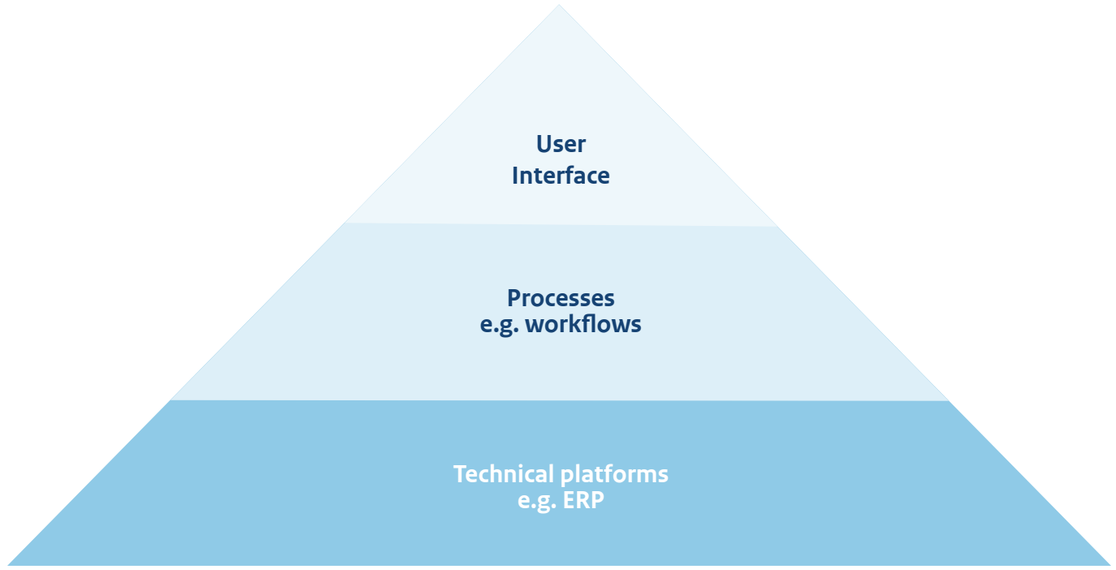
In addition to the invoicing process, SSO F&MI appointed more areas suitable for RPA, of which one simultaneously started in the field of authorization management (granting authorization for business applications), another area where there was a desire to automate manually performed activities. Results of this initiative were positive as well, similar to those of the invoice process initiative. Other suggestions done by employees in an earlier stage were collected and will be used to unroll RPA on a larger scale within SSO F&MI. Furthermore, practical experiences and lessons learned will be to the benefit of other units of the NTA who want to start with RPA (SSO F&MI communicating and informing others).

Follow-up

- Our initiative did not go unnoticed, being awarded an innovation prize by the director general of the NTA. Thus an additional incentive to expand our innovative- and RPA-activities, also relevant for our ICT-unit, introducing more “virtual employees in the house” (robots).
- RPA programming software can also be used for process mining. In light of already using it for RPA, investigating further opportunities in using RPA programming software will be started.
- Lastly, our ICT-unit gained new experiences in how to facilitate the NTA in implementing RPA from a technical perspective. Hence great enthusiasm to bring more initiatives to production.

Features virtual employee

- manual tasks
- clear process steps
- repetitive
- multiple sources of information
- high volumes



Facts

Building time
3 weeks

Testing
2 weeks

Robot operates 3 times per day
Running 5 minutes each time
Saving 4 hours per day