



Having used IFS Apps 7.5 for over 10 years, in 2023 SMD selected IFS partner Platned to execute a major upgrade from its legacy suite to the latest evergreen IFS Cloud™ solution. Maintaining an on-premise instance and critical integrations with advanced CAD engineering tools, the project was delivered on-schedule in 12 months, within budget, with a seamless go-live switchover for more than 250 users.

SMD's Digital Development Manager Lee Hammond explains, "IFS has been heavily embedded within our business and workflows for over 10 years. But we were using an outdated legacy version, IFS Apps 7.5, that was out of support. In addition, over time, people had started to leave the system to accomplish certain tasks, so it was clearly time to make the move to the latest release of IFS Cloud™," he says.

IFS Apps 7.5 capabilities were used across the business by multiple departments including Purchasing, Finance, Supply Chain, Parts, Engineering, Projects, Manufacturing, Servicing and time recording. SMD's offshore division also used the same instance of IFS to manage engineering and maintenance for vehicle and machine solutions deployed globally. Modules in new IFS Cloud™ ERP solution suite replicated all these functions whilst adding new, powerful AI-driven capabilities.

Strategic upgrade

The need to upgrade to IFS Cloud™ was essential for the company to move forwards. Says Lee, "We manufacture customer solutions that are worth millions of pounds. As we move towards a more data-driven business, we need the latest tools, systems and the abilities to engineer advanced capabilities."

Following a business value assessment, other ERP options including SAP and Microsoft Dynamics 365 were discounted in favour of uplifting to IFS Cloud™. At the same time, following evaluation, IFS partner Platned was selected to deliver the implementation. Explains Lee, "The project started the month I joined the company in October 2023, with go-live completed by end September 2024. The upgrade journey felt like it went quickly. Platned was well-organised in terms of the resource needed. The project was over the line well in advance, a week or so ahead of schedule, allowing us to hit our CEO's go-live deadline of end September," he says.

Platned delivers a seamless on-premise upgrade to IFS Cloud™ for subsea engineering company, SMD, embedding access to industrial AI.

About SMD

Employing over 280 staff, SMD provides advanced technology, systems and services for remotely operated and autonomous underwater solutions. SMD works across several global markets, such as renewable energy, oil & gas, telecoms, scientific, salvage and subsea minerals, to engineer excellence underwater. Committed to sustainability and diversity, SMD continues to push the boundaries of engineering to create a better future for all.

Benefits seen with Platned

- Smooth upgrade on time and within budget.
- Latest Evergreen, composable, AI-enabled IFS Cloud™ platform.
- Super-user training ensuring seamless adoption.
- IFS Cloud™ infrastructure management, maintenance and helpdesk support.

On-premise instance

The ability to configure IFS Cloud™ has allowed the core code to remain unmodified. Some minor differences in operation, mainly due to more robust permissions and security within IFS Cloud™, have been configured to replicate a few legacy functions from Apps 7.5. With maintaining IP security critical for the business, the implementation of IFS Cloud™ remains on-premise. “The business has continued to invest in up-to-date infrastructure, so there was no real business value in hosting it on Microsoft Azure,” says Lee.

Seamless adoption

In terms of users transitioning to the new platform, adoption has been smooth. Three training sessions prior go-live explained the basic changes to on-screen navigation, illustrating routine tasks like time-booking. A group of 20 super-users also received training early in the project, allowing SMD to be fully hands-on during testing cycles. Their platform knowledge was then also cascaded down to their teams, with further support from Platned where needed. “Establishing that core super-user base really helped us. Everyone was engaged, understood the time constraints, and wanted to see the project succeed,” says Lee.

Upgrade advice

With IFS Cloud™ now successfully serving some 250 users across two UK sites, what advice would Lee offer to others considering a partner-managed upgrade to IFS Cloud™? “I think understanding your current internal processes is key. Make sure that the experts who fully understand the workflows are involved in functional scoping and testing, and that they, alongside a team of super-users, are regularly engaged on-site to share their knowledge and feedback throughout. This project was my first experience with IFS, so the ability to lean on an experienced IFS Partner like Platned was invaluable,” he says.

95% of the project was delivered remotely, with the team on-site for key milestones and for a week post go-live to ensure business continuity. “Our Platned Project manager was exceptionally helpful throughout. Whenever challenges arose, they were quickly investigated and resolved. Nothing ever seemed to be a problem, any issues just got fixed. It was an outcome-driven collaboration by everyone,” Lee observes.

Managed Services

As a result of the project, SMD has now also signed up to Platned’s Managed Service and Support - the service monitors and maintains the infrastructure around IFS and provides a support desk for end users 24/7.

“We no longer have to worry about things like service performance. Anything unusual will be spotted and automatically rectified. Our in-house IT/Business Systems team is just five people and whilst I’m responsible for IFS, we also have other projects to deliver. It makes sense to let Platned deal with the day-to-day system operations. Whilst we fix the majority of support tickets ourselves, we now have the option to escalate any challenging issues to Platned,” says Lee.



When Platned made the switch and we went live, everything happened quietly. There was no drama. The system had been thoroughly tested, and everyone just transitioned. It was simply business as normal.

Lee Hammond,
Digital Development Manager, SMD

Looking ahead

Six months on, with IFS Cloud™ now bedded-in, SMD is looking to Platned to help with the second phase of the project. Explains Lee, “We’ve got some new automated machines for picking parts, and we’re in the process of digitising stores such as picking management. The upcoming 24R2 release of IFS has a new AI-enabled planning and scheduling engine, so we’ll be looking into that,” he says.

Find out more

For further details, e-mail info@platned.com, contact your local Platned office or visit our website at www.platned.com

