

The IBM logo is positioned in the top left corner of the image. It consists of the letters 'IBM' in a bold, white, sans-serif font, with horizontal lines through the letters. The background is a photograph of a modern, multi-story office building with a light-colored facade and numerous windows. The building has a curved design and a glass entrance area. The sky is clear and blue. The overall scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

Bringing new credit insights to customers faster

Ecofis helps Creditreform Group protect its industry-leading position

IBM Systems
5-minute read

Knowledge is power—especially when making critical business decisions, such as whether to engage with a new trade partner or invest in a venture. As a result, access to accurate and timely credit report information can translate into competitive advantage for an organization.



Creditreform Group seeks to deliver on this promise to its 160,000 members worldwide through industry-leading credit and risk management services. To ensure its members and customers always have access to the latest reports, Creditreform analyzes and updates over 1 billion business data records per year. Crunching through 200,000 annual reports as well as other data sources enables the company to provide solvency checks, marketing data and consulting services to optimize

cashflow and creditor management in 23 countries. Its IT service provider Ecomis GmbH provides the high-performance, high-availability technology foundations to make this happen.

Maik Röse, Head of Data Center Management & Infrastructure at Ecomis GmbH, says, “Our job at Ecomis is to make sure that all product teams, business departments and customers of Creditreform Group can work smoothly,

at any time. Data is at the core of the Creditreform business model, which means that fast and efficient data storage is essential for the group's business success."

Ecofis saw the move of its on-premises IT infrastructure to new data center facilities as an opportunity to review the environment. The company decided to look for ways to modernize while also cutting data center costs.

Peter Zens, Team Lead Storage Service + Data Center Infrastructure at Ecofis GmbH, comments, "Every rack and every component generate substantial costs when renting data center space. One goal was to boost cost efficiency. At the same time, we wanted to increase storage performance and availability to future-proof our business and make sure we continue to meet the demanding needs of our internal clients and external customers."

Increased
storage capacity
by 1.7x and
reduced
physical
footprint by

87

percent, saving data center costs

Delivers
insights to
end-customers
sooner through

2x

data warehouse acceleration

Improving performance, flexibility, and reliability

Ecofis worked with IBM Business Partner [Bechtle AG](#) and its [Bechtle IT System House Niederrhein](#) to refresh the storage technology supporting 4,100 business users worldwide. Together, the Ecofis and Bechtle teams evaluated four different vendor solutions.

The selection process was very well handled by Bechtle,” says Maik Röse. “In the end, the IBM Storage proposal offered the best technology at the best price. IBM listened to us and put together a solution that addressed our business needs very effectively.”

Working with Bechtle and IBM, Ecofis deployed [IBM® SAN Volume Controller](#) built with [IBM Spectrum Virtualize™](#) to run two separate storage clusters.

“With IBM Spectrum Storage and IBM FlashSystem, we implemented a modern, future-proof, extensible and environmentally friendly storage solution.”

Maik Röse, Head of Data Center Management & Infrastructure, Ecofis GmbH

At the heart of the implementation are NVMe-optimized [IBM FlashSystem® 7200](#) and [IBM FlashSystem 5100](#) enterprise flash arrays equipped with ultra-fast IBM FlashCore® technology.

To run mission-critical and custom-developed Java applications backed by Oracle and PostgreSQL databases, Ecofis connected 20 [Red Hat Virtualization](#) hosts to the IBM Storage clusters and runs over 2,000 virtual machines with [Red Hat Enterprise Linux](#).

With information and data services at the core of all Creditreform products, it was crucial for Ecofis to maximize availability for production and test workloads to ensure smooth development and operations processes. Consequently, the company opted to

run a high availability stretched cluster across two data centers, which mirrors all business data.

“With the new IBM Storage solution, we increased flexibility and reliability by deploying high availability across all environments and data centers,” explains Peter Zens. “In the past, we sometimes temporarily moved systems to storage environments without a full high-availability configuration. Now, we don’t have to take this risk. To make best use of our resources, it was essential for us to be able to read and write data via all cluster nodes. This goes beyond mere data replication, and this configuration is exactly where IBM Spectrum Virtualize stands out from the competition.”

Ecofis took advantage of the IBM team’s expertise to extract maximum value from the new implementation.

“The IBM team recommended the optimal configuration values for our storage and SAN environment and chose components that are proven to work together seamlessly, helping us maximize the performance of our new storage solution,” says Peter Zens. “Moving to a new technology with built-in intelligence, the guidance we got from the implementation team increases the returns we get on our investments.”

The company manages its data storage using the [IBM Storage Insights](#) and [IBM Spectrum Control™](#) solutions. Thanks to IBM and Bechtle, Ecofis can manage its dynamic storage solution more intelligently and better interpret key performance metrics to proactively monitor and optimize its environment.

Powering better business decisions worldwide

By accelerating performance with IBM FlashSystem, Ecofis enables Creditreform to deliver a faster service to customers, helping them keep up with the rapid pace of business today.

“Our new solution with IBM FlashCore technology provides much higher density and unparalleled performance,” adds Peter Zens. “Regular data warehouse tasks such as data loading and complex analytics now run twice as fast as before. By modernizing with IBM FlashSystem, we moved beyond spinning disks and can deliver much higher and more consistent storage throughput with lower latency and even higher reliability.”

In the past, Ecofis required eight full racks to provide one petabyte



of storage capacity. Now thanks to IBM FlashSystem with IBM FlashCore Modules, all storage equipment easily fits into a single rack and yet storage capacity has almost doubled to 1.7 PB.

“Data center space is very valuable for us,” remarks Peter Zens. “Thanks to the storage solution from IBM and Bechtle,

we need to install and manage significantly fewer components. That also means less cabling and lower risk of physical faults. We also reduced our cooling requirements and energy consumption, making our IT landscape a lot more environmentally friendly—and driving down our data center costs.”

The company standardized its storage management across its production and test environments, helping the team to increase availability and reduce overall administration complexity.

“As a small team, we value simple processes,” explains Peter Zens.

“In our experience, test and development workloads are just as important as production applications to many of our product development teams. Now we provide 24x7 availability and mirrored data storage for all systems, making load balancing, routine system maintenance and infrastructure disaster testing much easier by removing the need to coordinate every task with all the development teams across all business divisions.”

Since IBM Storage offers built-in business continuity and redundancy, Ecofis improved reliability further. “If there is any technical issue, we get a notification before our users

“Our new solution with IBM FlashCore technology provides much higher density and unparalleled performance.”

Peter Zens, Team Lead Storage Service + Data Center Infrastructure, Ecofis GmbH

even notice anything,” says Peter Zens. “The IBM solution architecture eliminates single points of failure, but in reality, we barely see any issues at all. And the easy-to-use administration interface is very intuitive. I can show my colleagues in less than an hour how to provision or extend storage volumes.”

Maik Röse concludes: “For four times in a row we have now chosen IBM Storage.

With IBM Spectrum Storage and IBM FlashSystem, we implemented a modern, future-proof, extensible and environmentally friendly storage solution. The implementation team from Bechtle and IBM has given us many valuable insights to make the most of this new solution.”



About Ecofis GmbH

[Ecofis GmbH](#) is the internal IT services provider of the Federation of Creditreform Associations, running all IT systems for the entire Creditreform Group. Headquartered in Neuss, Germany, Creditreform is a leader in company information, credit reporting and debt collection services. With about 4,100 employees globally, Creditreform generates sales annual sales revenue of EUR543 million.



About Bechtle AG

IBM Business Partner [Bechtle AG](#) is one of Europe's largest IT systems integrators. With 12,000 employees and 80 system houses in Germany, Austria and Switzerland including the [Bechtle IT System House Niederrhein](#), Bechtle specializes in implementing future-driven IT architectures for its customers. The company provides full IT lifecycle management and achieves annual sales revenues of EUR5.3 billion.

Solution components

- IBM® FlashSystem® 7200
- IBM FlashSystem 5100
- IBM SAN Volume Controller built with IBM Spectrum Virtualize™
- IBM Spectrum Control™
- IBM Storage Insights
- IBM Spectrum Virtualize™
- Red Hat® Enterprise Linux®
- Red Hat Virtualization

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Actual available storage capacity may be reported for both uncompressed and compressed data and will vary and may be less than stated.