

How British Business Bank scaled its guarantees portal fast enough to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic

BRITISH BUSINESS BANK CASE STUDY



Delivering the UK's COVID-19 support schemes thrust British Business Bank into the spotlight – and increased its workload significantly. As the IT provider managing the infrastructure for its Guarantees Portal, CACI quickly provided the scale needed to support delivery of the Bounce Back Loan Scheme (BBLs), the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CBILS) and the Coronavirus Large Business Interruption Loan Scheme (CLBILS). Businesses across the UK have to date benefitted from 1,559,226 government-guaranteed loans worth £70.7bn to support their cashflow through these three schemes delivered by the British Business Bank.



SUMMARY



When the government announced that it would back emergency business loans in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, British Business Bank was faced with a significant challenge.

As the UK's economic development bank, the Bank's mission is to make finance markets work better for smaller businesses, enabling them to prosper and grow. Before the crisis, it supported an impressive £8 billion of finance to some 98,000 smaller businesses.

But delivering the UK economy's coronavirus support schemes was another level altogether. Suddenly, the Bank's systems needed to handle a much larger volume of applications from these new schemes that – just eight months later – have provided a combined 1.56 million loans, totalling £70.72 billion.

What's more, the pressure was on to deliver that scale quickly. With businesses clamouring for help in the face of the UK's first nationwide lockdown, COVID-19 support was a national talking point. Lenders were queueing for accreditation to provide CBILS loans, and the Bank needed to respond at pace.

CACI went above and beyond to make sure we could deliver. Their hard work and flexibility have helped us turn a high-pressure situation into a success story.

Martin Jones, IT solution delivery director, british business bank

THE SCALE TO DEVELOP, TEST, AND IMPLEMENT – AGAINST THE CLOCK



The British Business Bank's coronavirus loan schemes are an important part of the government's overall support package. Businesses apply for a loan support through accredited lenders – who then process the application with the British Business Bank, so the government can ensure the relevant guarantee for the loan is in place.

In order to respond quickly, the Bank based delivery of the schemes on its existing lending platform for the Enterprise Finance Guarantee (EFG) programme. But to achieve this, it had to scale rapidly – to handle a much higher throughput of applications, via more than 100 different lenders.

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This also involved redesigning some aspects of the platform to deliver the new product and cope with demand; for example, using asynchronous processing to avoid unnecessary delays.

To accelerate the process further, the Bank quickly delivered an API, enabling lenders to integrate directly from their lending systems into the guarantee management platform.

These new requirements and features needed a major increase in capacity, as well as new environments to speed up development and testing. With businesses depending on the loans to get them through the crisis, this work needed to be done quickly.



A TRUE PARTNERSHIP – ENABLING DEPLOYMENT IN WEEKS, NOT MONTHS



At CACI, we immediately understood the importance of meeting this challenge – both for the Bank, and the UK economy. And as the infrastructure provider for the EFG platform, we moved quickly to dedicate resources to the project, including embedding a DevOps specialist within the Bank's Agile delivery team.

As a result, the Bank's team was able to accelerate delivery of the project in a matter of weeks, from the several months under normal circumstances.

Heidi Thompson, Head of Client Services for Digital Solutions, explains:



Engagement on this project was fast and with daily calls and regular meetings we quickly felt like an extended part of the team.

The British Business Bank is doing an incredible job, delivering rapid change to support UK businesses. We're doing everything we can to enable that work."

Heidi Thompson, Head of Client Services for Digital Solutions

THE OUTCOME:



140+
LENDERS



1.56
MILLION LOANS



£70.72 BILLION
OF VITAL BUSINESS SUPPORT



By 28 January, the new Guarantees Portal had enabled more than 140 accredited lenders to provide 1.56 million CBILS, BBLS & CLBILS loans, giving businesses access to £70.72 billion in much-needed support.

This remarkable turnaround was achieved while satisfying all relevant regulations and standards, with rigorous security testing and all design work documented and approved.

Meanwhile, the Bank's delivery team continues to innovate – refining the platform to accelerate loan applications still further – while also executing the rest of the Bank's important economic development work. And CACI helps, by providing the support for the Guarantees Portal that the Bank needs.

1.56 million
CBILS, BBLS &
CLBILS loans

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