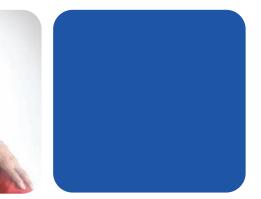SPV worked with Ivar Jacobson International's (IJI) certified partner XLENT to improve their way of working.

SPV used IJI's Iterative Essentials practice to successfully deliver its Co-ordinated Pension Information Statement project on-time and on-budget.

IJI's Iterative Essentials Practice helped de-risk the project and gave greater control for not only the Project Manager but also individual team members.

A two week review cycle ensured nothing was forgotten or missed and ensured the project was delivered on-time and with high-quality.

SPV

IJI's Essential Practices, XLENT and SPV
Team Up for an Improved Way of Working

IVAR JACOBSON
INTERNATIONAL

About SPV

The National Government Employee Pensions Board (SPV) was established in 1963 and is today one of Sweden's largest providers of pension administration. Its mandate is to calculate pension contributions and to provide forecasts and statistics to the government on pension information. SPV administers the state pension services to more than 500 000 employees and retirees and 400 employers. SPV pays approximately 287 000 pensions each month at an annual value of 12 billion SEK.

About XLENT

XLENT is a leading Nordic consultancy company with 200 employees working with customer-centred business and IT development. We help companies become more customer centric in areas from strategy to systems, applications and business operations. XLENT's consultancy operations are built around the notion of Customer Centricity. This concept can be applied within all industries and companies as well as within all business areas.

One Envelope - All State Pension Information

Each year SPV is mandated to distribute a personal pension statement to all present and past state employed workers detailing their retirement account. Due to the varying types of employees, years of service, salary, pension fund contributions, etc., this information is extremely varied and can be quite complex. Distributed to more than 550,000 people annually, the Co-ordinated Pension Information Statement is a large project within SPV that requires a wide range of skills and talents to ensure the smooth delivery of this important information. From determining the look and feel of the mailing to ensuring that the systems correlate and report the correct information to the correct recipient, the team in charge of the co-ordinated pension information statement works diligently each year to improve the quality of pension statement information distributed.

An Improved Way of Working

The systems development team had been very effective every year delivering on SPV's Co-ordinated Pension Information project. The team leader, however, was always looking for new ways of working that would bring even more accuracy, efficiency or successes to the project. "Our philosophy here at SPV is to build a culture that encourages and facilitates constant work improvement," said Eva-Lena Persson, System Administrator at SPV. "We felt that by working with Ivar Jacobson International's (IJI) certified partner XLENT and using the Essential Practices from IJI, we could create greater efficiencies with the parts of the unified process we were using."

Introducing Iterative Essentials

IJI's essential practices provide a way to systematically and verifiably address a particular aspect of a problem. The practice-based approach, gives software organizations like SPV the ability to focus on and change only what's needed—retaining those parts of the existing software process or approach that are working well. SPV, with guidance from XLENT, chose to use the Iterative Essentials practice to improve upon their successes by developing incrementally over a number of iterations.

The Iterative Essentials practice was introduced to allow SPV to split their project into series of smaller, self-contained, time-boxed mini-projects—which allows project teams to:

• Collaboratively and objectively plan, execute and track projects
• More effectively manage time, quality and cost expectations
• Demonstrate working software early in the project and gather important feedback from customers and users
• Be agile in responding to change
• More consistently deliver higher quality, more appropriate solutions
• Have an operational system available early in the project that incrementally grows into the completed system

De-Risking the Project

After six months of planning, development and implementation, the three teams totalling 15 members are now wrapping up the project and reviewing. The project was successfully delivered on-time, on-budget and with high quality results. "I think one of the greatest impacts IJI's Iterative Essentials Practice had on our team was the improvements made on our planning cycle," said Ms. Persson. "We worked within a two week iteration cycle. This two-week cycle of review created a very tangible and workable contract between the project leader and the team members. The project was de-risked as we had much greater control of our back-log items and more control for the project manager and for each team member. "This way of working really empowers the team members to build efficient and highly productive teams. I used the classic FIRO theory as a team essential for monitoring the teams performance over time and it is evident that teams need time to adjust and adapt to one another in order become efficient – that is one of the most crucial success factors."

Looking Ahead

As SPV wraps up their current Co-ordinated Pension Information Statement project for 2011, team leaders are reflecting on the successes and what should be reviewed for improvement for next year's mailing project. "I would definitely use the Iterative Essentials practice again," said Ms. Persson. "It was a much improved way of working for us here at SPV. I believe that the introduction of additional practices would be extremely beneficial and as we look ahead to next year's program, we can incrementally add new practices as we need them – rather than changing our complete way of working. This is a smart approach that complements and fosters our culture of continued advancement and improvement."

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About Ivar Jacobson International
Ivar Jacobson International is a global services company that helps software organizations transform and improve the way in which they develop software solutions as well as guide them in meeting the expectations of the business. **www.ivarjacobson.com**

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