

Callataÿ & Wouters rounds out core offering with Surecomp trade finance solutions

IBS Journal – News Core banking system vendor, Callataÿ & Wouters (C&W), and Surecomp, a trade finance systems specialist,

have joined forces to bring to market a core banking system with a fully-fledged trade finance capability.

C&W's Thaler and Surecomp's Alltra and Allnett have been interfaced and are now offered as a joint solution across the EMEA and Asia Pacific regions. There are no overlapping customers of the two vendors and no takers of the new offering, but Nicholas Searle, business development manager at C&W, indicates that the solution is currently participating in two RFPs, in the UK and Russia. Decisions on these selection processes are expected later this year.

'We have been looking for a trade finance partner for over a year,' says Searle. C&W was 'getting involved more and more in universal banking bids', with a requirement for complete systems replacement and trade finance functionality.

Although Thaler had some limited trade finance capability, it was decided to go 'for the best of breed via a partnership approach', rather than continue with an in-house development. C&W evaluated only global trade finance specialists, and after excluding those owned by competitors or having an incompatible or competing underlying technology, the list was narrowed to 'about three vendors'. It was also important for the company to operate in the same markets as C&W and to demonstrate 'willingness and responsiveness' to the vendor's proposition.

On C&W's side, the agreement is signed on a non-exclusive basis, says Searle. 'If a bank demanded we work with somebody else we'd be forced to do it.' For Surecomp, this tie-up is akin to 'marriage', says Murray Freeman, Surecomp's marketing communications manager. 'We are not a collector of partnerships. If we team with an organisation, then on our side it is exclusive. We want to channel all our energy and resources to that.' This is the vendor's first deal with a core banking supplier, says Freeman, and Surecomp 'will not replicate it in other parts of the world', provided the agreement is working out for both parties.

Freeman hopes that this partnership will help Surecomp reach the markets that otherwise would be closed to the vendor. 'The increased regulations – a result of the financial crisis – mean that the days of doing trade finance in Excel spreadsheets or on the back of an envelope are over and there is a need for dedicated systems,' he states. However, Surecomp's experience shows that a lot of banks do not go through RFI/RFP processes for a trade finance solution. 'Tying up with a core banking vendor will help us to reach that segment.' There are also banks that believe that a dedicated trade finance system is beyond their means, financially, so Surecomp hopes that a combination of a core solution and a trade finance system will be a more attractive and affordable proposition.