



Norway's Bærum Municipality builds NorVak platform to manage rapid vaccination rollout and reporting

City officials share their experience building the solution using Microsoft Power Platform

When countries around the world began distributing approved COVID-19 vaccines, the public health office of Bærum Municipality, Norway's fifth largest city, partnered with Avanade – a joint venture between Accenture and Microsoft – and Accenture to build a new platform, called NorVak, that could manage the end-to-end vaccination process and be integrated with Norway's national health registry.

We caught up with Tonje Vågørøy, head of Bærum Municipality's public health office, and Hilde Schjander Flugon, the city's digital project manager, to learn more about this critical implementation.



Q: As a global crisis, we all understand the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and the hope that many felt as vaccines were developed and approved. Can you speak about the specific challenges that led to building this platform?

A: Tonje Vågårøy: Our public health office had obviously been monitoring the situation around the world and saw it coming to Norway. We immediately thought it would be a smart move to get people together from all areas of Bærum to start developing strategies to deal with it. We knew this was going to be a huge challenge for the city.

We had brought together a vaccine task force in the early days of the pandemic, but when it became clear that the vaccines would be approved, we started really investigating how to support the rollout. With 90,000 citizens over the age of 18, we knew it would be a big undertaking. Overall, we are quite big, and we only have one place to vaccinate our citizens – a converted football center that could support up to 4,000 vaccinations per day.

Q: How did you handle logistics for vaccination campaigns prior to COVID-19?

A: Vågårøy: We had a system in place for vaccines – called HSPro – but we found that it required too many clicks to register vaccinations and lacked options for insights and control. We wanted to break out the population into different age groups to target. With HSPro, we didn't have that control – it was insufficient for what we needed. So, we needed help developing a new platform.

Q: How did you select Accenture and Avanade as your delivery partners?

A: Hilde Schjander Flugon: We held a mini competition with a group of companies where we shared our requirements and asked everyone to come up with a concept. We scored the submissions, and the team of Accenture and Avanade won. After that, we only had two weeks between when the decision was made and when the platform had to be launched.

Q: Why was Microsoft Power Platform the right platform on which to build the NorVak platform?

A: Flugon: We had a few criteria for the technology: It needed to be secure, because we are dealing with the confidential health data of our citizens. It also needed to be flexible, efficient, user-friendly and technically appropriate – it needed to be technically robust enough to do what we needed it to do. It also needed to integrate with our national registry so that you don't have to enter citizen information twice.

Vågårøy: That's right – it needed to integrate with our national health registry because, for the first time in Norway, the government mandated that we had to register vaccines in real time with the national vaccine registry – within 30 minutes of giving the shot. Normally with vaccinations, we'll input vaccination information for citizens in our local registry a few hours after their shot, and then later on we'll go and duplicate the record in the national registry. Now, it needed to happen all at once.

Flugon: Power Platform checked all the boxes.

Q: You mention you only had two weeks to build NorVak, which is ambitious. Were there any challenges along the way that the team had to overcome?

A: Flugon: One of the variables that made this difficult to control was that the national vaccination strategy changes multiple times, so the system – and our team's approach – needed to be able to change with it. Within a week, the strategy changed several times. Luckily, Power Platform was up to the task.



Q: Since going live, how has the system contributed to a successful vaccine rollout?

A: Vågårøy: We were early in getting high vaccine uptake in Bærum. We were lucky that we have a high rate of trust among our population. With NorVak, it was easy to see who was left, and we now have lots of time to reach those remaining, unvaccinated people. We hit our initial targets more quickly than other municipalities might have.

Flugon: Having statistics immediately available makes it easier for us to plan, because we always know how many people are left to be vaccinated in our priority groups. We know who we need to target next.

Q: How did the partnership between Bærum Municipality, Accenture and Avanade help ensure a positive outcome?

A: Flugon: We wouldn't have come so far if we hadn't worked so closely together – all the architects from Bærum, Avanade, Accenture and the health department. We had daily meetings, lots of discussions at all hours of the day. It had to be like that because things were changing all the time.

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Vågårøy: All of the people from Accenture and Avanade really quickly became a part of our team. Going into this project, I didn't know anything about technology and didn't know them, but in a very short amount of time we became a successful working group together.

Q: What's next for the NorVak platform once the pandemic is behind us?

A: Vågårøy: Now that it's already been developed and is such a flexible solution, we plan to start using it for flu shots. It can really be used for any vaccination program. We also vaccinate against meningitis in Norway, so we hope to use it to support that.

About Bærum Municipality

Bærum is a municipality in the Oslo region of Norway. Bærum is Norway's fifth largest municipality by population and is a suburban area west of Oslo where the densely populated parts of the municipality are part of the contiguous urban area of Oslo. The municipality has the country's highest average income and education level.

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