

A photograph of three business professionals (two men and one woman) in a modern office setting, sitting around a table and looking at a tablet. They are dressed in business attire. Large windows in the background offer a view of a city skyline and a body of water.

SNOK REPORT

Business Partner as a prerequisite for SAP S/4HANA

Master data in system conversion, new implementation and RISE with SAP

A report for boards and IT directors · SAP requirements, the governance model and the role of the SNOK MDM platform

Michał Korzeń, CTO, with the SNOK team · October 2026

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Executive summary

Moving to SAP S/4HANA requires master data to be assessed and prepared against agreed quality requirements before conversion or loading, and the customer and supplier master has to be brought into the Business Partner model. Under RISE with SAP this work stays with the customer. It calls for a separate workstream within the programme, a business owner and agreed quality rules that continue to apply after go-live.

Main findings

- 1. Converting customer and supplier master records to Business Partner is a precondition of system conversion.** SAP Learning material requires all customer and supplier records to be converted to Business Partner before conversion. The Simplification Item Check (SI-Check) stops the conversion tool (Software Update Manager) on errors with return code 12 at the start of the process, and on code 8 or above before downtime.
- 2. Under RISE with SAP, data preparation and clean-up remain with the customer.** SAP's roles and responsibilities document lists Customer Vendor Integration (CVI) among the tasks excluded from the service, excludes preparation and clean-up activities before the technical conversion, and assigns overall responsibility for the conversion project to the customer.
- 3. After 2030, systems running on a database other than SAP HANA can no longer be converted.** SAP announced on 7 October 2026 that after the end of 2030 such systems will have only the option of a new implementation, unless they have been moved onto SAP HANA beforehand.
- 4. SAP's migration tools apply rules that the organisation has to define in advance.** Without agreed rules for mapping, merging and exclusion, duplicates and inconsistencies either pass into the new system or cause errors in trial loads.
- 5. Maintaining quality after go-live requires a governance model and a tool that supports it.** Data owner roles, the change process and quality measures have to be settled before the first trial conversion, because the same decisions later govern day-to-day operations.

SNOK's answer. SNOK MDM is SNOK's own master data management platform. It creates a golden record from data held in SAP ERP 6.0, SAP S/4HANA and non-SAP systems, standardises the data with quality rules and reference lists, identifies duplicates, records data stewards' decisions in an audit trail and checks customers and suppliers against Polish public registers. Within an S/4HANA programme the same platform prepares the master data for conversion or loading and, after go-live, maintains its quality under the same rules. SNOK's expert model estimates a potential reduction of 28.5-46.5% in the effort of preparing customer and supplier data (chapter 9), subject to validation in a client pilot; the range is not derived from project measurements. A pilot targets initial results within four to eight weeks of starting, with deliverables and dependencies agreed beforehand.

Recommendation: run master data as a separate workstream of the S/4HANA programme, with a business owner, a baseline assessment of master data quality before the transition path is chosen, a split of responsibilities with the implementation partner written into the contract, and a platform that supports the governance model before and after migration. The first step is a diagnostic workshop that produces a data quality report.

Figure 1. The figures that frame the decision



Sources: SAP News, 7 October 2026; DSAG Investment Report 2026 (198 respondents, German-speaking countries); practitioner and service provider accounts; SNOK estimate, chapter 9.

Figure 2. SNOK MDM across the three phases of an SAP S/4HANA programme



SNOK analysis.



PART I

SAP requirements and the transition timetable

Maintenance dates, the Business Partner model, three transition paths and the split of responsibilities under RISE with SAP

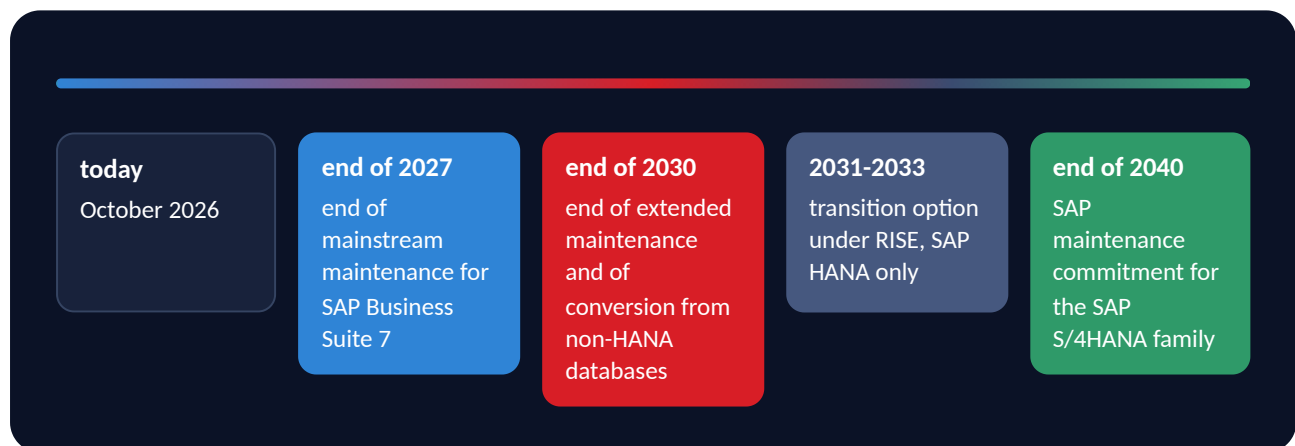
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SAP ERP 6.0 maintenance dates and conversion limits after 2030

Chapter highlights

- Mainstream maintenance for SAP Business Suite 7 ends at the end of 2027, extended maintenance at the end of 2030.
- After 2030 a system on a database other than SAP HANA can no longer be converted; a new implementation is the remaining option.
- Master data preparation can start before an implementation partner is selected.

Figure 3. SAP dates that set the window for choosing a transition path



Sources: SAP News, 4 February 2020, 4 August 2025, 7 October 2026; SAP Support, maintenance strategy. Transition option: commercial terms as announced by SAP.

1.1 Maintenance dates

Date	Scope	Source
end of 2027	end of mainstream maintenance for SAP Business Suite 7 core applications (SAP ERP 6.0 with enhancement packages 6-8)	SAP, 4 February 2020; SAP Support, maintenance strategy
2028-2030	extended maintenance at a premium of two percentage points on the maintenance base	as above
end of 2030	end of availability of conversion from a database other than SAP HANA	SAP News, 7 October 2026

Date	Scope	Source
2031-2033	SAP ERP, private edition, transition option - within RISE, with the max success plan, on SAP HANA only (minimum 2 TB), after the system has moved to SAP ERP, private edition before 31 December 2030; no Java-dependent functions	SAP News, 4 August 2025 and 7 October 2026 (commercial terms)
end of 2040	SAP's commitment to maintain the SAP S/4HANA product family (not every release)	SAP, 4 February 2020

Pricing for the transition option depends on when the contract is signed: SAP announced no increase in the subscription itself for qualifying sign-ups until the end of 2025 and a 20% increase for sign-ups in 2026; it has not published terms for sign-ups from 2027. The max success plan is charged separately. Since 10 July 2026, as a result of SAP's commitments to the European Commission, there is no administrative fee for returning on-premise systems to maintenance, and the charge for the period outside support is capped at the lower of two amounts: 50% of the fee for that period or six months' fees. The dates above remain unchanged.

1.2 Conversion limits for databases other than SAP HANA

SAP's announcement of 7 October 2026 states that conversion of SAP Business Suite 7 running on a database other than SAP HANA to SAP S/4HANA or SAP Cloud ERP will be available until the end of 2030. After that date, a new implementation is the remaining option. An organisation can avoid this restriction by moving the system onto SAP HANA before the end of 2030, although doing so does not extend maintenance periods.

For organisations on SAP ERP 6.0 with a database other than SAP HANA, the organisation therefore needs to choose its transition path well before 2030: a conversion needs data preparation, trial runs and a cutover window.

1.3 Transition status in published surveys

Survey	Finding	Sample and period
DSAG Investment Report 2026	SAP ERP 6.0 or an older Business Suite in use at 54% of respondents (2024: 68%)	198 respondents, German-speaking countries, 8 December 2025 - 21 January 2026
Horváth 2025	more than 60% of S/4HANA transformations exceed budget and schedule; causes include underestimated testing and data migration phases	200 companies (revenue from EUR 200m), Q1 2025
ISG 2026 (The State of SAP Migration)	almost 60% of SAP migration projects are delayed and over budget	200 decision makers in organisations with 1,000+ employees, February 2026
ASUG 2026	34% of organisations with delays cited data issues (figure from a press report)	194 ASUG members

Gartner puts the average annual cost of poor data quality at USD 12.9 million per organisation (2020 research, methodology not published). The figure covers data quality in general, not the cost of master data errors in S/4HANA projects.

We found no published survey with a stated methodology that measures the share of master data in S/4HANA migration budget overruns, nor any survey of S/4HANA transition status in Poland. Chapter 9 therefore relies on a model with explicit assumptions, which an organisation can test against its own master data.

■ SNOK MDM AT THIS STAGE

Profiling the master data in SNOK MDM does not depend on choosing a transition path or an implementation partner. The diagnostic workshop produces a data quality report for the companies within the agreed scope: completeness of critical fields, the scale of duplication and consistency with public registers. The board decides on the path and timing on the basis of measurement, well ahead of the end of 2030.

Chapters 2-14 in the full edition

- Business Partner and CVI in SAP ERP 6.0: sequence of work, SI-Check stops and categories of synchronisation errors
- RISE with SAP: who is responsible for data under SAP's July 2026 Roles and Responsibilities document
- materials, financial data and employees as Business Partners
- master data governance: roles, change control, quality measures and a maturity model
- SNOK MDM in the transition programme, Polish register checks and the use of AI
- the effort model with SNOK's estimate, a risk map, questions for the board, a 90-day plan and a checklist



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SNOK MDM – master data cleaned up before SAP S/4HANA and governed after go-live

SNOK Sp. z o.o. • Rondo ONZ 1, 00-124 Warszawa • office@snok.ai • snok.ai

KRS 0000896866 • NIP (tax ID) 7011032504 • REGON 388919917 • share capital PLN 10,000

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