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The 2027 SAP Deadline Meets a Resource Wall

A nearshore capacity path for German Mittelstand: how to close the SAP migration gap before mainstream support ends.



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June 2026 · v0.4

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The deadline is real; the resource wall is equally real

Mainstream support for SAP ECC 6.0 ends 31 December 2027. The DACH consulting market does not have enough experienced SAP professionals to run all outstanding migrations in parallel. Every year of delay tightens both the timeline and the cost.

According to Gartner modelling cited by Basis Technologies, at end-2024 only about 39% of ~35,000 global ECC customers had migrated to S/4HANA.³ Among German-speaking SAP users, the DSAG Investitionsreport 2025 found that 51% still run SAP ERP or Business Suite as their primary system.⁴ For German Mittelstand companies, the practical response is a blended delivery model: your chosen SAP partner or internal team holds programme governance; a dedicated nearshore team supplies additional senior capacity for Basis, ABAP remediation, functional configuration, test automation, and post-go-live AMS. Asteyo operates as that capacity layer – EU jurisdiction, GDPR-native, German-speaking, one direct flight from any major DACH city.

51%

of German-speaking SAP users still run ECC / Business Suite as their primary ERP (DSAG, 2025)⁴

Only 32%

of SAP community respondents have completed S/4HANA migration (SAPinsider, Feb 2025, n=170)⁶

≥30%

average overrun vs. planned timeline in completed S/4HANA transformations (Horváth, Q1 2025, n=200)⁷

109k

IT professional shortfall in Germany alone (Bitkom, 2025) – onshore-only staffing is not a viable planning assumption⁹

What this paper covers

- What the three-tier SAP support structure actually means for your compliance and security posture after 2027.
- Why the "deadline will move again" frame misidentifies what the deadline governs.
- Where the genuine skill bottlenecks are concentrated, and how a blended nearshore model addresses them.
- How Asteyo positions itself: as the capacity and skills layer alongside your lead SI – not as the lead programme partner.

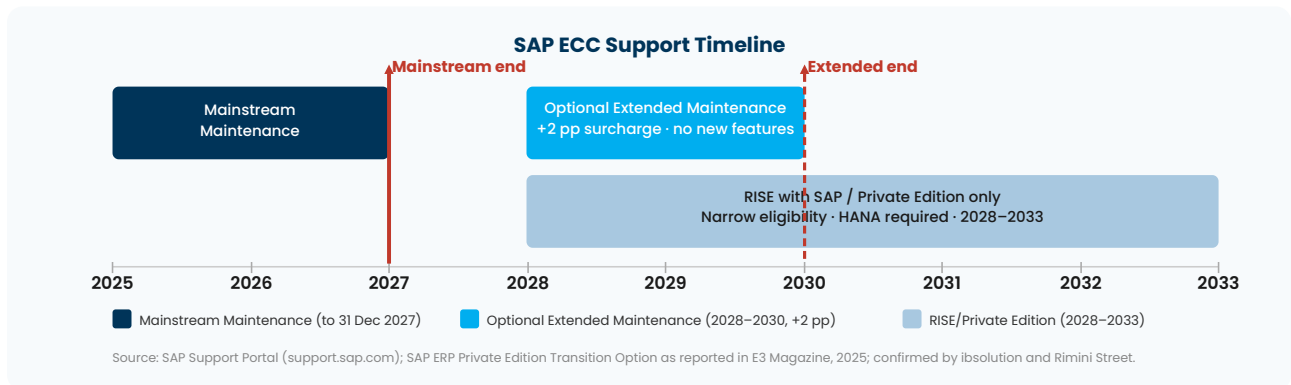
What the dates actually mean

SAP's maintenance roadmap for Business Suite 7 / ECC 6.0 has three tiers that are widely misread in the market.

Mainstream Maintenance covers security patches, legal-change corrections, quality packages, and regulatory updates (payroll, tax, jurisdiction-specific compliance). For ECC 6.0 Enhancement Packages 6, 7, and 8, mainstream maintenance ends 31 December 2027.¹ Customers on EHP 0–5 lost mainstream maintenance at the end of 2025. After this date SAP does not issue standard patches, security notes, or legal-change updates for ECC.

Optional Extended Maintenance runs 1 January 2028 to 31 December 2030 at a two-percentage-point surcharge on the maintenance basis – in practice raising Enterprise Support from 22% to 24% of net licence value per year.¹ Extended maintenance buys time; it does not buy an outcome. For a Mittelstand company with €5 million of SAP licence value, that is an additional €100,000 per year for three years, with no new features and no ecosystem commitments from third-party vendors.

SAP ERP Private Edition Transition Option extends maintenance to 2033 for customers who commit to the RISE with SAP subscription model and run HANA as their database.² SAP has characterised this as a strategic instrument for large, complex estates; eligibility is narrow and conditions are significant.



SAP ECC support tier overview 2025–2033. Source: SAP Support Portal; E3 Magazine, 2025; ibsolution; Rimini Street.¹²

Why "the deadline keeps moving" is the wrong frame

A common response from IT directors is: "SAP keeps extending the deadline – there will be another extension." This reasoning misidentifies what the deadline actually governs.

- **Legal-change gap.** Tax-code updates, payroll regulation changes, and social-security corrections are not delivered after the mainstream deadline. For multi-country HCM users this is a material compliance risk within months of going out of coverage.
- **Security exposure.** New SAP Security Notes for ECC stop after December 2027. Vulnerabilities found after that date are unpatched on the native platform.
- **Ecosystem decay.** Third-party vendors set their own ECC end-of-life dates independent of SAP. Middleware, analytics connectors, and cloud integration tools are being discontinued for ECC on their own timelines.
- **Capacity cost.** Every year of deferral is a year in which the pool of available SAP migration professionals shrinks further, rates rise, and your migration window compresses. The real question is whether you start building the programme now, with adequate time, or compress it into 2026/2027 at premium rates.

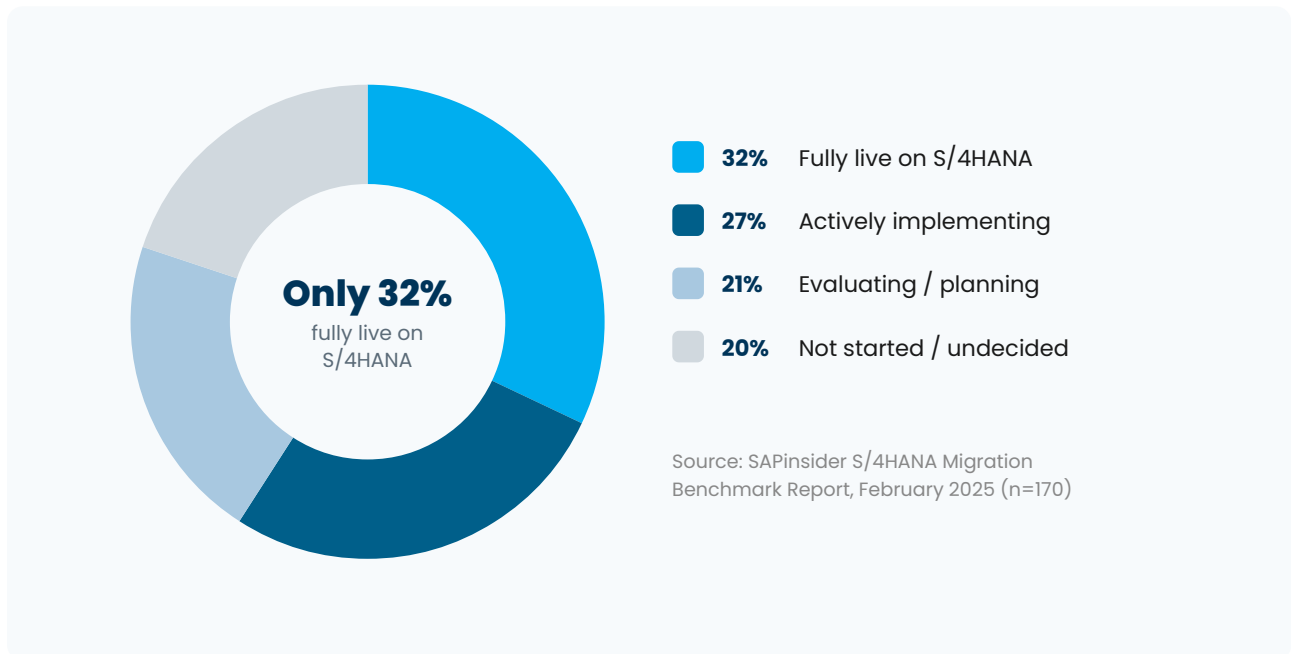


The capacity constraint is structural: DACH SAP migration pipelines are booked 12–18 months out for senior profiles.⁵

Most Mittelstand companies are still behind

The numbers are clear. The SAPinsider Migration Benchmark Report (February 2025, n=170) found only 32% of SAP community respondents have completed their S/4HANA migration.⁶

The Horváth consulting firm surveyed 200 top executives across six countries in Q1 2025 on completed S/4HANA transformations: only 8% completed on schedule; projects took an average of 30% longer than planned; 60% exceeded both budget and timeline; 65% reported significant quality deficits.⁷ The root cause is structural: the gap between what the programme plan assumes in skilled capacity and what the market can actually deliver. Germany faces a structural shortfall of 109,000 IT professionals.⁹ A mid-size DACH manufacturing or retail company with 500–1,500 SAP users should expect migration costs of roughly €2–5 million for a brownfield conversion and €4–8 million for a greenfield new implementation, with consulting and custom-code work typically 45–60% of total spend.⁸ Onshore-only sourcing is not a viable planning assumption for most programmes.



S/4HANA migration status across the SAP community. Source: SAPinsider Benchmark Report, February 2025 (n=170).⁶

Brownfield, Greenfield, Bluefield – honestly

The Mittelstand migration debate often gets tangled in terminology before the real question is answered.

Brownfield

System Conversion

Converts ECC in-place to S/4HANA. Fastest route (6–12 months for well-prepared landscapes), least operationally disruptive. Carries forward historical process debt and ABAP customisations. Usually the right starting conversation for Mittelstand needing deadline compliance rather than process transformation.

Greenfield

New Implementation

Starts from scratch on S/4HANA using best-practice process standards and clean data. Most future-ready outcome but 18–36 months and significantly higher resource intensity. Appropriate when fundamental business-process change is the primary objective.

Bluefield

Selective Data Migration

Clean-slate process design with curated historical data migration. Between brownfield and greenfield in cost and timeline. Demands rigorous data governance and experienced migration tooling.

The most important planning question is not which route – it is whether the execution capacity exists to deliver the chosen route within the available window. Nearshore capacity is relevant and useful along any of them.



German manufacturing and retail companies account for the majority of outstanding ECC migrations in the DACH installed base.

Five skill clusters in short supply

The resource crunch is concentrated in five specific areas. Understanding where scarcity is worst helps design the programme team.

SAP Basis

Landscape preparation, HANA database setup, transport management, performance tuning, security hardening. Basis expertise gates everything else and is among the hardest profiles to fill in Germany.⁵

ABAP & Custom Code

The average sizeable ECC estate runs hundreds to thousands of custom ABAP objects. Every one must be assessed for S/4HANA compatibility; a significant proportion must be remediated or rewritten.

Functional Specialists

Experienced FI, CO, MM, SD, HCM consultants who understand both ECC legacy configuration and S/4HANA process redesign. In shortest supply in the DACH market; senior contractor rates at the upper end.⁵

Test Automation

S/4HANA programmes generate very large testing scope. Test automation specialists familiar with CBTA, Tricentis/Tosca, Solution Manager suites are consistently under-represented in migration programme resource plans.

Post-Go-Live AMS

Many DACH companies discover post-cutover that their support team was dimensioned for ECC and is not structured for S/4HANA. A steady-state AMS capability must be designed before go-live, not after.

Data Migration

Curated data extraction, cleansing, mapping and load runs are a dedicated workstream that generalist project teams consistently undersize at the planning stage.

Scope — and what Asteyo is not

Asteyo is not a full-service SAP Systems Integrator and is not positioning itself as the lead programme partner for a complex, multi-year S/4HANA transformation. Large programmes typically have a lead SI — an SAP partner, a Big Four firm, or a Tier-2 consultancy — that holds programme methodology, stakeholder relationships, and transformation accountability. That arrangement does not change.

What Asteyo provides is the capacity and skills layer that many programmes are missing: a dedicated team of senior SAP practitioners who work within the client's programme structure, alongside the lead SI or internal team, to close the execution gap. Asteyo is not your single point of failure on a three-year programme — it is the nearshore execution resource that your lead SI or internal team does not have to find and retain in a scarce DACH market.

The blended model

Onshore: client + lead SI

- Programme director and functional process owners
- Change management and steering committee interface
- Cutover management
- Institutional knowledge and transformation accountability

Nearshore: Asteyo execution layer

- SAP Basis engineering and HANA administration
- ABAP custom-code assessment and remediation
- Functional configuration support across modules
- Test management, automation, and regression coverage
- Post-go-live AMS and steady-state support

Rate discipline: nearshore blended rates deliver a meaningful cost reduction versus the DACH contractor market without compromising skill level. **Availability:** while DACH SI pipelines are 12–18 months out for many specialisms, a dedicated nearshore team can typically be mobilised in 4–8 weeks. **Continuity:** a dedicated team stays with the programme from design through hypercare and into AMS; continuity reduces the knowledge-loss risk that has derailed more than one go-live when contractors rotate out at a critical point.

Practice scope and honest framing

Asteyo is a nearshore IT services firm founded in 2025, headquartered in Cluj-Napoca, Romania. The founding team brings 20+ years of enterprise IT delivery experience in the DACH and UK markets, including managed service engagements in the automotive and industrial sectors. Thomas Wolenski (CSO) holds IPMA Level B and ITIL Expert certifications. Current active client engagements include a subcontractor position on a major German automotive OEM programme. Asteyo is in its investment and build-up phase; we state this honestly. The value proposition rests on the depth and enterprise discipline of the founding team and the senior practitioners assembled for each engagement.

On RISE with SAP — RISE is a subscription and infrastructure model, not a migration service. It does not provide the functional configuration specialists, ABAP developers, test engineers, and data migration leads your programme needs. Those skilled people are required regardless of whether infrastructure runs under RISE, a hyperscaler, or on-premise. RISE may in some cases add capacity demand rather than reduce it.

On SAP bench in Romania — Romanian SAP talent is scarce in absolute terms, as it is everywhere. Asteyo does not maintain an idle bench. Each engagement is assembled through targeted recruiting led by Alexandru Bereczki (CEO), who brings a strong SAP network built over years of enterprise delivery, including hands-on SAP programme experience from a major European grocery-retail group's SAP operation in Romania. A smaller, senior, continuous team consistently outperforms a large rotating resource pool on complex migration programmes.

1

Stage 1 — Specialist(s)

One or more senior SAP specialists integrated into the client's existing programme team on a staff-augmentation basis. The fastest path to additional capacity; covers specific bottlenecks: Basis for landscape preparation, ABAP lead for custom-code assessment, or a functional consultant where the internal team is thin.

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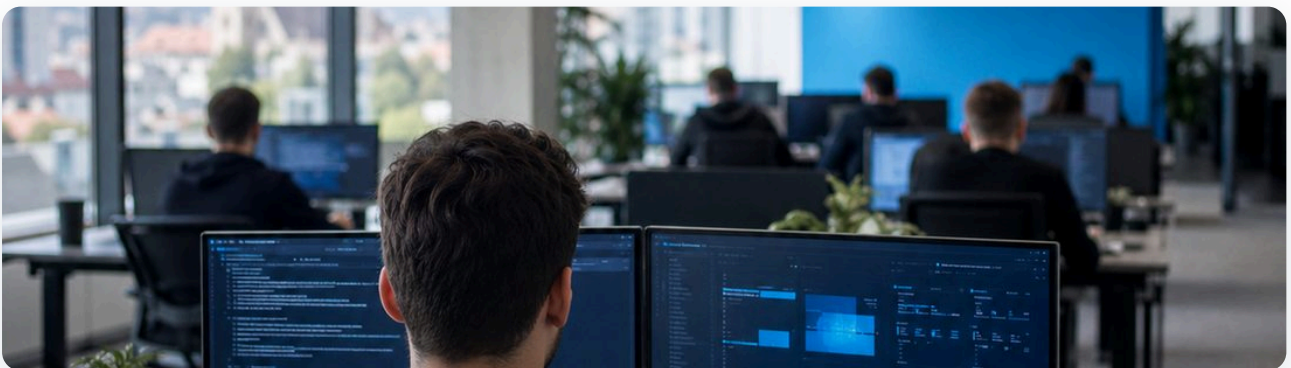
Stage 2 — Dedicated Team

A stable, multi-skilled nearshore team assigned exclusively to the client programme. Consistent people, aligned tooling, integrated communication cadences. The appropriate structure once the engagement has moved past initial scoping.

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Stage 3 — JV / BOT

For clients considering a permanent nearshore capability: Asteyo offers a Build-Operate-Transfer structure, creating a jointly-owned nearshore entity with full governance transparency and a defined exit path.



Cluj-Napoca: ~20,000–23,000 active IT professionals; EU jurisdiction, CET/CEST, German and English delivery.¹⁰



The challenge for German Mittelstand is not whether to migrate. It is whether the programme starts with adequate time, or compresses into 2026/2027 at premium rates with an under-resourced team. The gap between planned and actual capacity is where migrations fail.

A capacity & skills readiness check

The most useful first step Asteyo can offer is a structured readiness review: a focused four-week engagement that answers three questions before a full programme begins.

“What is your current migration readiness?”

Custom-code volume, Basis landscape complexity, data quality posture, and functional scope drive timeline and resource requirements more than any other factor. A quantified inventory before programme launch is the single best defence against cost and schedule overruns.⁷

“Where are the genuine gaps in your resource plan?”

Most Mittelstand programme plans assume more from internal teams than those teams can realistically absorb alongside day-to-day ECC operations. Identifying specific bottlenecks allows a nearshore augmentation plan to be right-sized from the start, rather than bolted on in crisis mode mid-programme.

“What is a credible timeline given your actual constraints?”

Given the 2027 mainstream deadline, the 6–12 month minimum for a brownfield conversion under good conditions, and current DACH SAP resource availability, a company that has not committed to a programme is already in risk territory for a 2027 go-live without additional capacity.

The output is a practical augmentation plan: a phased resource model showing where nearshore capacity slots in, at what programme stages, in what role mix. No programme commitment is required to begin.

ARRANGE A READINESS CHECK

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EU · GDPR

CET/CEST

Asteyo holds ISO/IEC 27001:2022 and ISO 9001:2015 certification (SYSTEMA, IAS/IAF-accredited, valid to December 2028); the certified scope is custom, client-oriented software development.

REFERENCES

Sources & notes

Figures are cited to primary or best-available public sources. Market-size and timeline figures are indicative industry estimates and vary by source and methodology.

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