

The SAP Ecosystem in a Nutshell

As part of its platform strategy, SAP has built and continues to grow an open ecosystem to drive adoption of enterprise service-oriented architecture; foster co-innovation between SAP, customers and partners; and deliver value for all participants. Leveraging deep industry knowledge, a diverse community of partners and SAP NetWeaver as a platform for product and service innovation, SAP and its ecosystem are driving new dimensions of collaboration – turning breakthrough ideas into innovative solutions for customers.

Members of the highly interactive ecosystem—customers, partners and system integrators, developers, industry experts, and SAP—collaborate through a variety of communities and programs, including the SAP [SAP Expert Collaboration](#) forums of the [SAP Developer Network](#) (SDN), [Enterprise Services Community](#), [Industry Value Networks](#) (IVN), and [partner solutions](#).

This document is a brief and comprehensive overview of the wide range of services offered either by SAP or by a partner, plus valuable information concerning SAP solutions. The document is divided in five sections: get in contact with SAP, important sources of information, detailed information on SAP solutions, running SAP solutions, and community forums and user groups.

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General Information – Get in contact with SAP

1. Get in contact with SAP

In case you just want to get in contact with SAP, simply use the form at the SAP public web site: [Contact SAP](#).

2. Your Account Executive

Your *Account Executive* is your specific contact at SAP, able to channel any inquiry you might have. In case you are not sure about the adequate contact, just call the corresponding [subsidiary](#), and ask for your account manager. In case you have a *Customer Engagement Manager (CEM)*, you might also contact him/her.

3. SAP Support Hotlines

SAP Active Global Support provides 24x7 Support Hotlines for any inquiry related to a customer message or a remote service provided by SAP Support. Please find the contact information at the [SAP Support Centers](#) info page or in [SAP Note 560499](#).

Important sources of information

4. SAP.com

The [SAP public web site](#) is the main entrance to the world of SAP. Here you will find general information about SAP products and services, including links to SAP Partners, SAP Communities, SAP Solutions & Industries, and individual SAP Country Sites.

5. SAP Service Marketplace

The [SAP Service Marketplace](#) contains a variety of internet portals that enable true collaboration among SAP, its customers and partners. These portals offer target group specific content. Many [Quick links](#) facilitate direct access to the most relevant topics.

For the sake of clarity the different portals are mentioned individually in this document.

6. SAP Support Portal

The [SAP Support Portal](#) provides quick-and-easy online access to the tools, information, and assistance you need to keep your SAP software running smoothly. Find details in the brochure "[Introducing SAP Support Portal](#)"

The area *Learn more* on the SAP Support Portal Homepage offers a quick overview about the most important support applications and tools in the SAP Support Portal. For new users a Guided Tour and Learning Maps are available to make the first steps in the SAP Support Portal as easy as possible. Also numerous personalization and notification features are available to support you in your daily work.

7. SAP Expert Forums

The [SAP Developer Network](#) (SDN) is an active online community where ABAP, Java, .NET, and other cutting-edge technologies converge to form a resource and collaboration channel for SAP developers, consultants, integrators, and business analysts. SDN hosts a technical library, expert blogs, exclusive downloads and code samples, an extensive e-Learning catalog, and active, moderated [collaboration forums](#).

The integrated [Business Process Expert Community](#) (BPX) provides resources to help business process experts drive real-time business process innovation. These include a rich combination of industry business process and services content and information on composition software tools from a proven business process platform, surrounded by a vibrant community of experts sharing knowledge and ideas.

For the sake of clarity some areas of SAP SDN are mentioned individually in this document.

8. SAP Help Portal

The [SAP Help Portal](#) provides web-based documentation for all SAP Solutions. This enables you to search the online library for the right information where and when you need it. In addition, you find release notes that inform about changes from one version to the other.

The [Help Portal Documentation Forum](#) gives you *the possibility to post your questions, solutions, ideas and share your knowledge* about all documentation related topics. From the SAP Help Portal, you can also have access to the [Best Practices](#) (see also item 18).

9. **SAP Education & Training**

Through our expertise in SAP-related knowledge transfer and learning, [SAP Education](#) can help your company create, protect, and reap significant value from your SAP investment. SAP Education's offerings enable you to benefit from lower total cost of ownership and an ongoing, optimal return on your investment throughout the software life cycle.

For details check the Education Area of the SAP Service Marketplace where you can find the [Online Training Catalog](#) and a list of all [SAP Training Centers](#). A number of training courses are delivered in [E-Learning](#) format.

10. **SAP Consulting**

With *SAP Consulting* as your valued business partner, you benefit from our SAP skills, experience and the close working relationship with SAP development, as well as our extensive partner network. Additionally, you can benefit from the Remote Consulting service, offered through the SAP Active Global Support organization. For more information on Remote Consulting, please contact the SAP Support Hotline (see item 3 of this document).

Contact the [Consulting department](#) of your SAP subsidiary for details. Also consider SAP Certified Partners (see next item), when thinking about consulting.

11. **SAP Partners**

SAP well-established network of *Certified Partners* provides worldwide support for every facet of an SAP implementation. This comprehensive coverage enables our customers to work with companies whose reach spans the globe, as well as companies that provide local or regional support and services. Find out how to get in contact with SAP certified partners in the [SAP Partner Directory](#) or in the [SAP Partners](#) info page of the SAP Service Marketplace.

You can either browse by category (Services, Software, Technology, Hosting, etc.), or use the Search functionality.

Many [SAP country web sites](#) also maintain lists of local partners that offer specific regional or market expertise.

12. **SAP Partner Competence Center**

The *SAP Partner Competence Center* helps with any issue related to the operation of SAP Software on a Partner Platform. Find out more about the existing Competence Center and how to contact them in the [Global Technology Partners Directory](#)

13. **SAP Newsletters**

SAP provides subscriptions for newsletters on several topics, where you will receive the latest news on the specific SAP Solution. Some of the most relevant newsletters are:

- [SAP NetWeaver Newsletter](#)
- [SAP Business Flash Newsletter](#)
- [SAP Security Newsletter](#)
- [SAP Upgrade Newsletter](#)
- [SAP Support Portal Newsletter](#)

14. Integration and Certification of Software Solutions

SAP provides a rich set of integration technologies that enable third-party vendors to integrate their software with SAP solutions seamlessly for more customer satisfaction. Through regional [SAP Integration and Certification](#) Centers (SAP ICCs), SAP offers integration and certification services, such as an interface certification program, consulting, and access to test systems.

For specific questions, use the following e-mail address: icc@sap.com.

Detailed Information on SAP Solutions

15. SAP Solutions

With its [Solutions](#), SAP provides a comprehensive range of enterprise software applications and business solutions to empower every aspect of your business.

For personalized attention, contact the Solution Management Organization of your [SAP Sales Office](#).

16. SAP Scenarios and Processes

The [Scenario & Process Component List](#) narrows the gap between the business view and the technical view of SAP products. It shows you which application components are needed to realize a business scenario or process and which business scenarios are possible with a given set of application components.

17. SAP Business Maps and Engagement Tools

[SAP Business Maps](#) such as *Solution Maps* and *Business Scenario Maps* provide an intuitive visualization of business processes and solutions. Solution Maps help you understand how SAP solutions support key business processes in more than 20 industries and cross-industry areas. Business Scenario Maps provide a graphical representation of industry-specific and cross-industry processes, focusing on the needs of key stakeholders.

Engagement Tools allow you to customize this visual content to support the design of your solutions and to calculate and analyze your potential return on investment in business processes and solutions. The Solution Composer allows you to create company-specific business maps to document, plan, and design a customized solution. While the Business Case Builder guides you through a step-by-step process to produce a customized, high-level value proposition tailored to your unique business drivers.

Check out the details in the [SAP Business Maps and Engagement Tools](#) information site.

18. SAP Best Practices

SAP Best Practices include a clear methodology based on a comprehensible step-by-step approach; extensive reusable documentation that you can use for self-study, evaluation, as well as for project team and end-user training.

Check the [SAP Best Practices](#) in the SAP Help Portal, or [SAP Best Practices](#) area of the SAP Service Marketplace.

19. SAP Product Availability Matrix

The [Product Availability Matrix](#) (PAM) is a quick reference that bundles technical and release planning information on SAP components. You will find information on the availability of SAP component releases (product versions), maintenance end dates and upgrade paths, as well as technical release information (DB-platforms, JSE-platforms, operating systems, languages, countries etc.). A SAP component release is structured into instances. An instance is a bundle of technically dependent software component versions to be installed on one single logical system. The technical release information is displayed per instance. For specific, platform related info go to [SAP Platforms](#) info page (see next item).

20. Platform and Technology Information Center

In the [Platform and Technology Center](#) you will find the answers you are looking for about platform and technology-related topics, including information on database and operating system release combinations for SAP components.

21. Globalization/Localization/Multinational Capabilities

SAP solutions are purpose-built for deployment anywhere in the world, as our unparalleled customer base in nearly 140 countries proves. Our solutions follow global best business practices, with specific functions and features to account for varying national tax laws, accounting laws, and manufacturing regulations in over 40 countries: our country versions.

Check out [SAP Globalization](#) info page, or in case you can not find the answer for your specific inquiry, please post your question in the [SDN Forum on Globalization](#).

The SAP User Groups also provide very useful information for localization inquiries. For more information, see the SAP User Groups item of this document.

22. Unicode

If your company employs truly global business processes, such as managing global master data, or if you open your system to the Web, by allowing your customers to enter contact data directly via the Internet, chances are that you will need to support multiple languages and character sets. Compliance is only possible through *Unicode* - an international standard that supports virtually all of the languages and scripts used in the world.

SAP commits itself fully to providing you with a Unicode-based e-business platform. Check out [SAP Unicode](#) info page, or in case you can not find the answer for your specific inquiry, please post your question in the [SDN Forum on Globalization](#).

23. Hardware Sizing

To do a sizing in order to determine your infrastructure requirements, start with the [SAP Quick Sizer](#). The Quick Sizer is a Web-based tool designed to make the sizing of the SAP Business Suite easier and faster. It has been developed by SAP in close cooperation with all platform partners and it is free of cost.

Sizing is a process that continuously brings together customers, hardware vendors and SAP, so that, for example, direct links to SAP hardware vendors and [the technology partners](#) facilitate the tendering procedure.

If convenient, SAP or *Partner Consulting* can help you with decision finding (see items 10 and 11 of this document).

More information is available at the [SAP Sizing](#) info page. Documentation about *benchmarks* with SAP software is published at [SAP Benchmark](#) place.

24. SAP & Security

When you think about your company's *security concept* it is important to follow a holistic approach. To give our customers an overview on all the aspects to consider when setting up a comprehensive security strategy, SAP composed the [SAP Security Solution Map](#). The map also shows in which areas SAP provides solutions and where partner products are available.

In the SAP Service Marketplace, you can also find the SAP Security Newsletter, which is updated every month with the latest information about this topic. To find it, use the SAP Security Map link above, and then click on the 'News Archive' link on the left side of your browser.

Inquiries can be directed to security@sap.com . Also, you can subscribe to a *Newsletter*, and discuss security issues with other developers or users check out SAP security forum at the [SDN Security Forum](#).

Running SAP Solutions

25. SAP Support Infrastructure

SAP is continuously investing in its Support Infrastructure to take advantage of new technologies, maintain security and improve services. The main parts of the SAP Support Infrastructure are the SAP Support Portal providing access to information and basis support application, and the SAP Solution Manager providing access to advanced support application as well as further scenarios. Details can be found at the [SAP Support Infrastructure](#) info page.

26. SAP Solution Manager

Managing your entire SAP solution landscape is a challenging task, but SAP has the answer: the *SAP Solution Manager*.

- The SAP Solution Manager is a platform that provides the integrated content, tools, and methodologies that you need to implement, support, operate and monitor your enterprise's solutions from SAP.
- With SAP Solution Manager, companies can minimize risk and increase the reliability of their IT solutions.
- SAP Solution Manager helps reduce TCO throughout the solution life cycle.
- SAP Solution Manager helps companies manage their core business processes and link business processes to the underlying IT infrastructure.
- SAP Solution Manager supports both SAP and non-SAP software and helps companies get more from their existing IT investments.

Find detailed information at the [SAP Solution Manager](#) info page, at the [SAP Note 607853](#), or at the [Solution Manager Forum](#) of the SDN.

27. SAP Service and Support Offerings

SAP Active Global Support is committed to ensuring that your core business processes are always available and running at peak efficiency.

For details about the benefits and capabilities of SAP Active Global Support, check out the [SAP Support Services](#) info page. The four offerings are:

- SAP MaxAttention
- SAP Safeguarding
- SAP Premium Support
- SAP Standard Support

In particular, find comprehensive information in the presentation on [SAP Standard Support and SAP Maintenance Strategy](#).

28. SAP Software Maintenance Scope and Duration

To understand SAP support offerings and the *maintenance strategy*, it is important to distinguish two dimensions: scope and time.

- In terms of the scope, SAP offers three levels of support offerings: SAP Standard Support, SAP Premium Support, and SAP MaxAttention.

- In terms of the timeline, SAP defines three maintenance phases: mainstream maintenance, extended maintenance, and customer-specific maintenance

In the [SAP Software Maintenance](#) info page, you can find all the necessary details about both scope and timeline, and also any news in this area.

29. SAP Remote Services

A series of *Remote Services* helps you to optimize performance and reliability of your SAP solution. The following services usually are delivered as part of Standard Support:

- [SAP EarlyWatch](#)
The SAP EarlyWatch analyzes the components of your SAP solution, your operating system and database to determine how to optimize performance and keep your total cost of ownership to a minimum.
- [SAP GoingLive Check](#)
The SAP GoingLive Check guides you to a smooth start of production and technically robust operations; it consists of three service sessions - Analysis, Optimization and Verification.
- [SAP Going Live Functional Upgrade Check](#)
A changing business environment requires constantly the adaptation of your business solutions and may lead to release upgrades of your SAP systems. To facilitate SAP release upgrades, SAP offers the SAP GoingLive Functional Upgrade Check that optimally prepares your system to operate efficiently in the upgraded environment.
- [SAP OS/DB Migration Check](#)
If at any stage of the SAP software life cycle you should need to change your operating system and/or database, the SAP OS/DB Migration Check optimally prepares you for a successful migration and supports smooth continued operations on the new platform. The OS/DB Migration Check is *mandatory* if you are planning to migrate a productive system.

They can be ordered online via the [SAP Service Catalog](#) or calling your SAP Support Hotline.

30. SAP EarlyWatch Alert

The SAP *EarlyWatch Alert* (EWA) helps you in a proactive way to ensure stability of your system and prevent performance problems. Find at the [SAP EarlyWatch Alert](#) info page the step-by-step description how to activate the EWA.

In case of Performance Issues, make sure you have applied all recommendations of the EWA. Also recheck the system usage against the sizing used to determine your hardware requirements.

31. SAP Remote Service Connection

An essential part of the Support Infrastructure is the remote connection between SAP and the customer. SAP offers its customers access to Remote Support and to a large number of Support Services delivered remotely in the customer system. Error analysis and services delivered remotely have one major advantage: they are available straight away
Go to the [SAP Remote Service Connection](#) info page to find out how to set up and operate a service connection.

32. SAP Notes Search

In the [SAP Notes](#) Search site, you have access to the complete solution data base of SAP Support. You can find information about known errors in software licensed by SAP, and how they can be solved. In addition, consulting notes and FAQ notes help with common issues that are not related to software errors.

33. SAP Message Solving

The mission of *SAP Message Solving* Organization is to help you with any error of standard software licensed from SAP. When malfunctions are reported, and clear evidence is given that they are caused by an error in software licensed from SAP, SAP provides support to the customer during normal business hours, by providing information on how to remedy, avoid and bypass errors. Only for reproducible errors a reasonable progress in analysis and resolution can be guaranteed.

In case reproducible error of software impacts your business, please open a message with the [SAP Message Wizard](#) of the SAP Service Marketplace. In exceptional cases, the customer can also contact SAP by telephone.

To speed up the processing of a message, you can contact the SAP Support Hotline. See the '[How to speed up a message](#)' document or the [SAP Note 984434](#).

34. SAP License Keys

In order to prevent unauthorized use of SAP software, all SAP systems can only be operated in conjunction with a *license key*, which is assigned by SAP.

Most SAP products can be used for a limited time without a permanent license key. Please refer to SAP for a *permanent* license key as soon as possible after installing the SAP System.

The license key procedure depends on the product you use. Most of the online requests entered at the [SAP License Keys](#) site for SAP Business Suite are processed automatically, so that you will receive the license key in a short time..

35. SAP Registration of Software Modification

The [SAP Software Change Registration](#) (SSCR) is a procedure which registers all manual changes to SAP sources and SAP Dictionary objects. With this procedure, the availability and reliability of productive R/3 installations is further improved.

36. SAP Contract Department

It is always recommended to keep your systems' data updated with SAP. To check and maintain SAP data about your existing systems, access the [System Data](#) site. For more complex issues related to your contract, your installations, end-user licenses, etc., you may contact the *SAP Contract Department*. Contact your [SAP Sales Office](#), and ask for the contract department.

37. Ordering and Downloading SAP Software

SAP offers to customers and partners the opportunity to *order SAP software* packages online, according to the software licenses they have purchased. Software requests that are not offered for selection *should be directed to the responsible SAP Contract Department*. To order your SAP software online, go to the [SAP Software Catalog](#).

In the *SAP Software Distribution Center*, you can obtain SAP software electronically by download and on tangible media (CD/DVD). You have access to the entire software portfolio of SAP based on your licenses. The authorizations for downloading software are generated automatically depending on your licenses.

38. SAP Support Packages, Stacks, and Schedules

SAP delivers various types of program corrections with *Support Packages* as part of the software maintenance. Support Packages automatically correct a whole range of errors by downloading corrections into the SAP System.

The *SP Stacks* are sets of Support Packages and Patches for the respective product version that must be used in the given combination. SAP recommends regular application of these SP Stacks. SP Stacks should be seen as an entity in themselves – customers must heed the minimum requirements and dependencies between individual components, and apply the Support Packages and patches specified in the SP Stack together. To find and download SP stacks go to the [SAP Support Package Stacks](#) site.

Please note that all corrective software packages, including SP stacks for SAP NetWeaver 2004s and subsequent versions, as well as all applications which are based on this software (including SAP Business Suite 2005), are available exclusively through the Maintenance Optimizer in SAP Solution Manager. For more information about this, please check the [Maintenance Optimizer](#) info page.

You can find the SP stacks release dates in the [Schedules of Support Package Stacks](#) document and of individual support packages at [SAP OCS Schedules](#) info page.

For database software from 3rd parties, licensed from SAP, you can find patches at the [Third-party Software Center](#) site.

39. SAP Installation and Upgrade Guides

The [SAP Installation and Upgrade Guides](#) site provides comprehensive technical documentation (e.g. Master Guides, installation and upgrade guides) for the following areas: Industry Solutions, SAP Business Suite Solutions, SAP NetWeaver, SAP Components Installation, SAP xApps Master, 3rd party products licensed by SAP.

40. SAP Ramp-Up Programs

SAP *Ramp-Up* is SAP standardized process for introducing solutions to the market. It helps customers achieve business value from SAP solutions sooner by increasing process control and communicating real-world experiences directly to SAP product development. A dedicated SAP Ramp-Up program is available for all SAP products.

SAP Ramp-Up enables your company to be a first mover in your industry and your IT department to be a strategic role model in your company. Find the detailed information at the [SAP Ramp-up Program](#) info page.

41. SAP Development Requests

Development requests for the continuous improvement of SAP solutions are offered to targeted customers as an additional service by SAP Development. The aim of and conditions

for participation in the development request process are detailed in the [Process Description and Conditions](#) document.

Before entering your request, you might wish to view the additional information sources on details of the [SAP Release Strategy](#) for SAP Solutions. The targeted customers include SAP User Groups, customers with certified Customer Competence Centers or with Global Alliance Account status as well as SAP Development and Consulting Partners. Development requests submitted by these customers will be handled with higher priority by SAP in appreciation of the efforts already invested into the consolidation of requirements. Check out the details at the [Rollin of Development Requests](#) info page.

42. [SAP Release Strategy](#)

SAP release strategy determines the availability of new SAP releases, the length and conditions of their maintenance, and the dependencies among individual releases. It provides planning reliability for your implementation and upgrade projects as well as for optimal use of SAP applications and the SAP NetWeaver platform. You can find more information for all major shipments from 2005 onward, as well as for all major shipments up to 2005, at the [SAP Release Strategy](#) info page.

For changes in functionality from one release to the next, refer to the [SAP Release Notes](#) (see also next item).

43. [SAP Release Notes](#)

A *release note* is a brief explanation of new features or changes to the system since the last software release. A release note typically describes a new function or an existing function that has been enhanced or changed. It may, however, also describe a function that has been deleted or describe user interface changes, terminology changes, or changes to the structure of the Implementation Guide (IMG). When planning an upgrade to a newer release of SAP software, it is very important to take into account the relevant release notes. Go to the [SAP Release Notes](#) info page for further details.

44. [SAP Upgrades](#)

Change and improvement are integral parts of today's business environment. SAP is committed to support you in continuously improving your existing SAP solution:

- To meet the latest market requirements and flexibly adapt your business
- To use the latest technologies available in the IT market
- To achieve company-specific targets to reduce total cost of ownership (TCO) for the existing IT infrastructure

SAP offers tailored [services](#), [tools](#) and [content](#) to analyze the [value proposition and challenges](#) of an upgrade project and to facilitate and safeguard the project execution. Planning is also a very important step before an upgrade. Please look at the document "[How to Plan for a SAP ERP 2005 Upgrade](#)" on this topic.

You can find this and more details at the [SAP Upgrades](#) info page and by subscribing to the [SAP Upgrade Newsletter](#).

45. SAP Custom Development

SAP Custom Development (see [SAP Custom Development](#) and [SAP Custom Development](#) in the SAP Service Marketplace) delivers high-quality solutions tailored to your individual requirements. Whether you need to extend and enhance an existing SAP solution, build an entirely new and innovative application, or adjust your SAP environment in response to events such as mergers, acquisitions, divestitures, and restructurings.

The SAP Custom Development services portfolio includes the following offerings:

- Custom solution development and maintenance services – Enable you to quickly and flexibly deploy custom solutions to achieve your business goals.
- Conversion and migration services – Help you quickly adapt to your changing business environment.

46. SAP Information Lifecycle Management and Data Archiving

Information has a lifecycle: It is created, it lives within databases and systems, it changes, and it is archived and eventually deleted. How we create, store, retrieve, and delete it is termed *Information Lifecycle Management* (ILM).

SAP Data Archiving is an integral part of ILM, and gives you everything you need to control data growth while ensuring that the data you archive is stored safely and remains readily accessible to you. With SAP Data Archiving you can safely and easily relocate data belonging to closed business processes from the database. The data is stored in archive files so that you can retrieve it at any time.

For more information, please check the [SAP ILM and Data Archiving](#) info page.

47. Performance and Tuning

In case of *performance* issues with business impact, check the [SAP Performance Improvement](#) info page for documentation that can help you to overcome problems. To discuss performance issues with Developers, Consultants, and other users check out the [SDN Performance Forum](#) and the [Monitoring & Troubleshooting Knowledge Center](#). Besides, of course, SAP or Partner Consulting can be addressed. Also make sure that the *SAP EarlyWatch Alert* is activated and recommendations are applied (See item 30 of this document).

48. Fiscal Year Change

Towards the end of every calendar year, SAP publishes the [Fiscal Year Change Letters](#). These documents inform you about any actions you must perform when taking your SAP System into the next fiscal year.

Community Forums and User Groups

49. Community Forums managed by SAP

Community Forums can help you to find quick answers for your questions, given by customers, consultants or SAP employees. Check out the SAP Developer Network, finding the forums at the [SDN Expert Collaboration](#) site, at the [Request Help](#) info page, or in the [SAP Note 987267](#): "SAP Expert Forums".

Forums are offered in the following categories:

- Business Process Expert
- SAP Solutions
- Database & OS Platforms
- Enterprise SOA
- Industry Solutions
- SAP NetWeaver Application Server
- SDN Discussions
- Portal Technologies
- Business Intelligence
- Scripting Languages
- Integration and Certification Center (ICC)

For 3rd-party products licensed by SAP, *similar forums* exist on the Internet.

50. SAP User Groups

User Groups provide a valuable channel through which SAP gathers feedback concerning the problems and requirements of its users in all technical and functional areas of interest, such as localization inquiries. User groups allow SAP and SAP users to exchange information of mutual interest and value. Additionally, SAP users have the opportunity to share their experiences, knowledge and ideas. For more details, please go to the [SAP User Groups](#) info page.