

swb

Success Story | SAP ILM Implementation

Take the SAP fast route to GDPR compliance

**swb successfully implements SAP ILM with
Natuvion expertise**

As the market leading energy supplier in the German state Bremen, swb serves 400,000 power and 145,000 natural gas customers. To ensure GDPR-compliant handling of data and to address data security risk, the energy supplier had to establish sustainable blocking and deletion routines in its SAP IS-U system. A task which Natuvion data management experts are very familiar with.



After GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) had been introduced, companies have been given a complete new legal framework for handling personal data. Life in IT before GDPR was relatively straight forward when collecting and keeping data in systems for decades was common routine. These days are over. As soon as the original purpose for storing person-related data is no longer valid, that data must be deleted from the IT systems.

At swb, the situation was no different, and to take action the energy supplier decided to implement SAP Information Lifecycle Management (ILM) in its impacted SAP systems. Without any meaningful touchpoints with the solution in the past and lacking internal resources to take on that task, swb reached out to Nativion. It clicked immediately, and swb was convinced that the experts in transformation and data protection are the right partner for this SAP ILM project.

Pre-project: thorough as-is analysis

Considering the defined scope, implementation typically begins with a thorough preparation to set the stage in terms of data analysis. That pre-project was kicked off in summer 2019 and helped to get an understanding of what data actually resides in the systems, what data relates to individual persons, and what retention period requirements need to be met.

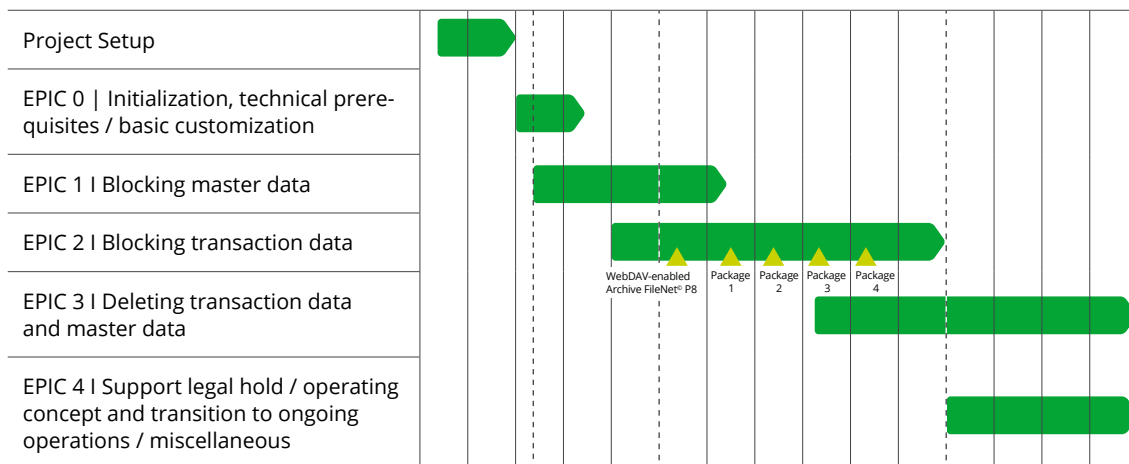
The data analysis was supported by the DCS Analyze tool, enabling the team to cluster the data. The software scanned the entire SAP IS-U system at swb and assigned data to defined categories. Blocking and deletion periods were then assigned to categories to define the Block & Delete Matrix which created the basis for the SAP ILM configuration.

In addition to the data analysis-related topics, swb used the pre-project phase to get all project members involved and aligned, address concerns, and confirm that business-relevant data is still not subject to deletion. In retrospect, Jens Schnakenberg, Project Manager, IT and Process Consultant at swb, confirms that “it is crucial to keep a wider circle of people informed from day one of the SAP ILM implementation project. Success depends on all being on the same page when it comes to data deletion, the what, when and how and the impact to processes.”



Implementation project: SAP ILM equals test, test, and test

With the data analysis completed and the Block & Delete Matrix defined, the technical implementation kicked off in July 2020 following the proven Nativion EPIC methodology. The team started with the design of the SAP ILM objects that are the technical components required for deleting relevant data in the systems. The situation at swb required 62 SAP ILM objects in total. Furthermore, the block and deletion periods as assumed for individual objects during the pre-project had to be revisited and partially adjusted.



Nativion EPIC: an agile methodology to implement SAP ILM.

After all data had been successfully mapped to ILM objects, the test phase could commence. Joint teams of swb and Nativion started with individual tests in three different test systems to verify the functionality of each individual ILM object. This was followed by interval tests in which the interdependencies between ILM objects were tested. This phase concluded with mass testing of all ILM objects and included the simulation of the ILM setup's overall performance under real life conditions. After each test run, the results were analyzed and, if necessary, adjustments made to the SAP ILM configuration.

Jens Schnakenberg emphasizes: "Testing is not just about checking whether the ILM processes work smoothly. It is equally important to ensure that the SAP IS-U processes continue to run accurately after data has been deleted. In our case we had to make adjustments again and again. So far, we had not maintained a document completion tag. However, without it, an ILM object cannot determine if a document is ready to be archived. This example shows the importance of detailed, elaborate testing to ensure 100% accuracy of the blocking and deletion runs. No data is to be lost."

Post-test phase: pre-go-live excitement!

With the completion of the test phase, the attention turned to archiving in the swb production system. Initially, swb had planned to own archiving with internal staff. Due to the resource situation, plans were changed and Natuvion took over. Post verification and release by swb, a look at the result revealed some impressive numbers: 3.7 billion table entries deleted from 260 main tables and numerous secondary tables reducing the SAP production database size by 20% or 2.5 TB.

The energy supplier's productive SAP IS-U system was declared GDPR compliant according to article 17 and 18 at significantly reduced data volume with the ILM setup ready for operational prime time.

Jens Schnakenberg is full of praise: "After more than four project years we crossed the finish line end of 2023 with flying colors. The collaboration with Natuvion was instrumental in reaching our goals. Our weekly jour fixe meetings offered a forum to exchange ideas openly on any current topic. Even differences in opinions led in the end to mutually agreed upon solutions for any challenges. What I found particularly very rewarding is that thanks to our intensive testing, Natuvion only had to press the button for the productive archiving run. No concerns or errors were raised in the business departments."

What's next: swb is currently awaiting the internal green light to be able to permanently delete the archived data which already had been removed from the productive system. After that milestone is reached, regular ILM operations can begin with Natuvion as swb's partner in case of any questions.

Hard Facts

Company

swb Vertrieb Bremen GmbH

Headquarters

Bremen, Germany

Industry

utility company

Products & Services

electricity, natural gas, drinking water, heat, and telecommunication solutions

Revenue

ca. EUR 1,501 Mio. (2022, swb AG)

Employees

ca. 2,170 (swb AG)

Website

www.swb.de

Natuvion Services:

SAP ILM implementation

About swb Vertrieb Bremen



swb Vertrieb Bremen GmbH is the sales arm of swb in the state of Bremen, Germany. This organization sells electricity, natural gas, drinking water, heat, and telecommunication solutions. Complementary product services include consulting and other professional services on site, by phone, or in two customer centers in the city of Bremen. swb Vertrieb Bremen GmbH is

the local market leader in electricity and natural gas.

About Nativion



Nativion is a digital moving company that moves business-critical data and processes from one technology platform to another. Nativion experts are called in when medium-sized and large enterprises want to modernize, optimize, separate, merge, or restructure their IT systems. With its exclusive expertise in technical transformation, Nativion enables its customers to run their data and

processes on the most modern and innovative technologies available. To support data transformations, Nativion leverages its proprietary software solution, Nativion DCS. Nativion is a founding member of the SAP S/4HANA Selective Data Transition Engagement Community and has been part of NTT DATA Business Solutions AG, a leading global SAP consultancy, since 2022.

Do you want to implement ILM in your SAP system? Contact us!

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