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SUCCESSstory

Replacing the BI-LOOPS system with SAP EWM at Boehringer Ingelheim

Centralized and harmonized processes for a
global player



„The project benefited from the many employees with extensive system experience. Implementing SAP EWM was a great success and a learning experience for the upcoming GBS introduction.“

Stefan Schmidt,
Head of SC Standards & Service, Boehringer Ingelheim

At a glance



Boehringer Ingelheim



Pharmaceutical Company



Ingelheim am Rhein



over 54.500
employees (2024)



turnover: 26,8 billion
(2024)

The company

Boehringer Ingelheim is one of the world's leading research-oriented pharmaceutical companies. Founded in 1885, it is still family-owned and employs over 54,500 people. In 2024, it generated sales of 26.8 billion euros. Its headquarters are in Ingelheim am Rhein.

The company invests around 20 percent of its sales in research and development. Thus, Boehringer Ingelheim is consistently pursuing its goal of developing innovative medicines for unmet medical needs –aiming to improve the health of humans and animals worldwide.

The challenge

As a global corporation, Boehringer Ingelheim relies on a uniform ERP solution to standardize processes, increase efficiency, and create transparency in all workflows. The solution is based on SAP S/4HANA as the central ERP system, as well as complementary satellite systems, such as Extended Warehouse Management (SAP EWM).

The implementation has already been successfully completed at most international locations. The complete ERP system is scheduled to go live in 2027 at the headquarters in Ingelheim. This location houses the central logistics areas, including a modern packaging building and an automated high-bay warehouse that supplies most customers.

To minimize risks and reduce the complexity of the full SAP rollout, SAP EWM was introduced in advance for the packaging building and high-bay warehouse. This will allow to gain experience and stabilize processes before rolling out the entire ERP solution.



The solution

abat collaborated with Boehringer Ingelheim to develop a strategy based on a global SAP EWM template. The goal was to achieve maximum standardization, minimal deviation from the SAP standard, and clear scalability for other locations. Only adjustments that were useful for multiple warehouses or relevant for future requirements were made to the template.

Special requirements in the project included:

- Integration of an application for temperature tracking of individual handling units
- Connection of the automated high-bay warehouse to EWM
- Interface development for an external MES system (non-SAP)

The result was a solution seamlessly embedded in the global ERP strategy that also took local specifics into account.

The project – from planning to go-live

The roots of the project lie in the ECLIPSE project, which defined the basic requirements. In June 2021, abat was selected as the implementation partner. The project officially began on July 13, 2021.

Solution design phase

The requirements and processes were worked out in detail during workshops. The team faced organizational challenges due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, but these were quickly overcome with pragmatic solutions, such as using larger rooms for workshops. During this phase, it became clear that the existing system landscape was more complex than initially assumed. Through „deep dives“ into individual processes, the team broke them down precisely and transferred them to the solution design. Initial tests in goods receiving confirmed the feasibility.

Implementation and data migration

Starting in January 2022, the project team focused on implementation. They developed solutions, migrated data, and tested processes.

Test phase and quality assurance

The Verify2 test was scheduled for the fourth quarter of 2022. Boehringer Ingelheim collaborated with abat to review all processes and ensure their quality. The transition to the PtQ („Promote to Quality“) phase marked a decisive milestone on the road to go-live.

Preparation for go-live

In 2023, the focus was on final preparations. Over the course of nine test weekends, the system, particularly the connection to the conveyor technology, was thoroughly tested. More than 100 key users were trained and the „gym concept“ was implemented to ensure application security until go-live.

Go-live and hypercare

The productive launch finally took place in September 2023. After final performance optimizations, the first pilot orders were processed without error. The business launch was successful – the systems ran largely without disruption, and the volume and process requirements were quickly met.



„Technical expertise, coupled with curiosity and openness to new ideas, gave the project wings.“

Dominik Grund,
IT Project Manager, Boehringer Ingelheim

Success factors

 **Experience:** Employees with extensive system experience ensured quality and shared their knowledge as mentors.

 **Partnership:** The close collaboration between Boehringer Ingelheim and abat was characterized by professionalism, openness, and mutual trust.

 **Quality:** Intensive testing, consistent use of SAP standards, and a practical training concept ensured a successful go-live.

The results

The implementation of SAP EWM in Ingelheim was a resounding success. Processes in the packaging building and high-bay warehouse were standardized and automated.

Results after 7 weeks of implementation:

- 7,091 pallets were processed in goods receiving
- 802 deliveries with 9,899 pallets processed
- 612 process orders for 7,584 pallets of finished products were completed
- 429 usage decisions were documented

The increased automation and transparency have led to significantly higher efficiency and improved control over the flow of goods. These improvements bring Boehringer Ingelheim an important step closer to achieving operational excellence and logistical performance.

Conclusion

With the successful implementation of SAP EWM at its Ingelheim site, Boehringer Ingelheim has laid the groundwork for its global ERP rollout, and abat has played a significant role in ensuring that the highly complex implementation in the packaging building and high-bay warehouse not only ran smoothly and resulted in positive adjustments to the approach for future EWM projects.

ABOUT US



Since 1998, the abat Group has been combining SAP expertise, innovative software development and intelligent solutions for digital business processes. Our focus is on automotive,

discrete manufacturing, life sciences, aerospace, defence & security, as well as on companies with complex logistics and manufacturing processes.

With seven service areas, we create room for efficient processes, new ideas and sustainable progress:

With **abat consult**, we advise and support you through all phases of an SAP project – from design and implementation to the operation of your SAP system.

abat manufacture provides you with high-availability digital solutions for production control in the complex manufacturing industry.

With **abat ai**, we bring artificial intelligence into concrete business processes and combine it with automation solutions such as RPA and agentic automation – from automated case handling through end-to-end automated workflows to AI agents in SAP development, consulting and projects.

With **abat transform**, we offer innovative and unique solutions, including modern cloud development and custom web and app development.

abat plm provides cross-functional process consulting with the goal of achieving a consistent data flow across PLM, ERP and MES.

Offerings from **abat protect** help customers protect information, processes and systems and maintain confidentiality, availability and integrity in business relationships.

Our **abat sustain** experts advise on how sustainability and sustainability reporting can be anchored strategically and structurally within a company.



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