

RISE WITH SAP SETS THE PACE. BUT WHO IS IN CONTROL?

How organizations can actively steer their RISE with SAP journey with AWS and T-Systems



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RISE WITH SAP ON AWS:

FROM OBLIGATION TO A MANAGED TRANSFORMATION

RISE with SAP is a polarizing topic. Some organizations see it as a mandatory migration, driven by the end of mainstream maintenance for SAP ECC 6.0, rising operating costs, and the gradual slowdown of innovation on legacy systems. Others see RISE with SAP as the catalyst they have been waiting for: an opportunity to reshape their IT architecture, transform their business models, and embrace technologies such as Agentic AI that extend far beyond SAP operations.

A key consideration is the choice of platform. Major public cloud providers such as AWS offer capabilities that traditional on-premises environments and private clouds often cannot match: highly scalable infrastructure, global availability, high-performance infrastructure for SAP HANA, and broad access to AI services that unlock the full value of SAP data.

Technology alone, however, does not transform a business. Organizations that want to steer their RISE with SAP journey successfully, from initial capacity planning and migration through to the ongoing operation of SAP S/4HANA, need a partner with expertise in both SAP's commercial model and cloud infrastructure.

T-Systems is one of the few providers in Germany that combines its role as a Premium Supplier for RISE with SAP with AWS Premier Tier Services Partner status. This unique position enables T-Systems to address the questions that are currently top of mind for organizations embarking on their RISE with SAP journey.

This ePaper shows how organizations can turn what appears to be a mandatory migration into a managed transformation, and how RISE with SAP on AWS lays the foundation for future-ready, AI-enabled business processes.

RISE WITH SAP: OBLIGATION OR OPPORTUNITY? IT DEPENDS ON YOUR PERSPECTIVE

At SAP Sapphire 2026, SAP unveiled a new strategic direction: the Autonomous Enterprise, where AI agents will increasingly manage business processes autonomously. At the heart of this vision are SAP Business AI, the SAP Joule AI assistant, and the SAP Autonomous Suite. The goal is an ERP landscape in which AI agents automate routine tasks and support decision-making.

To operate effectively in a business environment, AI agents require computing power, real-time data, and scalable infrastructure. This is where AWS comes in. As the platform for SAP HANA and more than 80 SAP Business Technology Platform (SAP BTP) services, AWS can provide a scalable platform for SAP AI-enabled business processes.

As part of this strategic shift, SAP is making selected AI capabilities available to on-premises customers, but only as an interim solution and only for organizations that have already committed contractually to cloud migration. Full access remains reserved for cloud customers. RISE with SAP customers receive three activated SAP Joule assistants as part of their subscription. For GROW with SAP customers, organizations that adopt SAP S/4HANA Cloud Public Edition without an existing SAP landscape receive full access to SAP's AI assistants.

For existing SAP customers, the message is clear: standing still is no longer an option, regardless of whether support for their SAP systems ends in 2027, 2030, or 2033.

The challenge: organizations that treat RISE with SAP purely as an IT project will migrate. Organizations that view RISE with SAP as an architectural decision and a business opportunity will transform.

The difference is strategic. Organizations that simply migrate move existing challenges into a new environment. Organizations that transform use this mandatory transition as an opportunity to modernize business processes, reduce technical debt, and build an infrastructure that enables innovation rather than holding it back.

OBLIGATION:

RISE WITH SAP AS
AN IT PROJECT

Focus on migration
and timelines

Lift-and-shift of
existing structures

Accepting costs

Delegating responsi-
bility to SAP

Expecting innovation

Meeting short-term
requirements

OPPORTUNITY:

RISE WITH SAP AS AN
ARCHITECTURAL DECISION

Focus on target architecture
and future readiness

Redesign architecture and
operating model

Actively managing costs

Consciously managing
responsibility

Deliberately enabling innovation

Creating long-term
transformation value

WHAT RISE WITH SAP REALLY CHANGES AND WHAT IT DOESN'T

RISE with SAP changes the contractual model. Licensing, operations, and management are combined into a single subscription, with SAP becoming the sole contractual partner. It sounds simpler and it is. But it also has long-term implications. Transparency around individual cost components and services decreases. Organizations that previously knew exactly how much they were spending on hosting or software licenses now see a single consolidated fee.

WHAT REMAINS:

Responsibility

RISE with SAP does not mean that SAP takes care of everything. The standard RISE with SAP offering covers the core services required to operate an SAP environment. However, as soon as requirements go beyond the standard offering, for example, customized storage solutions, specific performance requirements, or industry-specific compliance needs, a RISE with SAP Premium Supplier such as T-Systems becomes essential. T-Systems complements the standard RISE with SAP offering with tailored services to deliver solutions that meet each customer's individual requirements.

ONE OF THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES:

Downsizing

One aspect that is often underestimated is capacity planning. Scaling up resources under RISE with SAP is straightforward. Scaling down, however, is much more difficult. Organizations that commit to capacity, for example, through three-year AWS Reserved Instances remain committed for the duration of the agreement. "RISE with SAP rewards careful preparation and penalizes impatience," says Frank Scharpenberg, Head of SAP Global Business Practice at T-Systems. "Organizations that fail to size their environments accurately before signing the contract may end up paying for capacity they simply don't need for years."

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS **GAIN** WITH RISE WITH SAP

- Access to SAP S/4HANA Cloud, SAP BTP, and the SAP Joule AI assistants
- Regular updates and continuous innovation without the need to manage upgrade projects
- A clean core approach, enabling extensions through SAP BTP rather than custom development in the ERP core
- A single contractual partner instead of fragmented responsibilities across multiple vendors

WHAT ORGANIZATIONS SHOULD **CONSIDER**

- Cost transparency is reduced, making active governance and cost management essential
- Downsizing is complex, making accurate capacity planning a critical step before signing the contract
- Existing partner relationships do not automatically continue under RISE with SAP. Organizations must actively ensure that their preferred SAP partner remains involved
- The standard RISE with SAP offering is often not sufficient for complex enterprise environments. Tailored solutions require partners with proven implementation and operational expertise

3 AWS AS A TRANSFORMATION PLATFORM

AWS is more than a hosting platform for SAP systems. It offers scalability, global availability, and a breadth of innovation that traditional data center models simply cannot match. For SAP workloads, this creates new opportunities to modernize operations and support future business growth.

Performance and stability

AWS provides highly scalable SAP-certified infrastructure for SAP HANA, including instances with very large memory capacities. Combined with specialized storage solutions, organizations can implement recovery time and availability concepts that go well beyond standard deployments.

A launchpad for innovation

AWS provides access to a broad ecosystem of analytics, data, and AI services. This enables organizations to unlock the full value of their SAP data for new business models, real-time analytics, and AI-powered applications. Today, more than 80 SAP BTP services run on AWS. As of today, 22 BTP services are available exclusively on AWS. It is therefore no coincidence that T-Systems has been recognized as a Leader in the latest ISG Provider Lens™ report for SAP Business AI and SAP BTP. By combining SAP's AI capabilities with the scalability and innovation of AWS, T-Systems helps organizations turn technology into measurable business value.

Global availability

With data center regions around the world, AWS enables international SAP rollouts, faster market expansion, and the seamless integration of new locations, an important advantage for organizations operating on a global scale.

Data sovereignty: Choosing the right environment for every workload

For many organizations, data sovereignty is a key consideration, particularly when SAP systems contain business-critical information.

The answer is not an either-or decision. Instead, it is about selecting the right environment for each workload.

GDPR-sensitive SAP data can be operated in the RISE with SAP-certified T Cloud Private from T-Systems, hosted in German

data centers. Less sensitive SAP workloads that require high levels of scalability and innovation can run on AWS, also in Germany, while meeting stringent security and regulatory requirements.

The result is a hybrid approach that allows organizations to combine compliance with the advantages of the public cloud, without having to compromise on either

CASE STUDY: GLOBAL APPAREL COMPANY MIGRATES SAP SYSTEMS TO AWS

Challenge: To remain competitive, a global apparel company with a significant online retail business needed to future-proof its business-critical SAP landscape. The key requirements were maximum availability, minimal recovery times, and a platform capable of scaling with business growth.

Solution: With support from T-Systems, the company migrated its SAP landscape to AWS, including a customized storage solution based on Amazon FSx for NetApp ONTAP. This significantly reduced restore times for large SAP HANA databases and created the technical foundation for a seamless RISE with SAP migration, which was successfully completed.

Result: The company now benefits from a stable, highly available SAP environment on AWS, delivering greater future readiness, faster innovation, lower operational effort, and a more agile path to modernization.

4 HOW T-SYSTEMS SUPPORTS ORGANIZATIONS THROUGHOUT THEIR TRANSFORMATION

Even the best platform delivers value only when it is implemented and operated effectively. RISE with SAP on AWS gives organizations considerable flexibility but it also requires a partner capable of bringing together SAP's commercial model, AWS infrastructure, and each customer's individual business requirements. Without that coordination, transformation can quickly become fragmented.

Before the contract: Creating clarity

The most critical phase comes before the contract is signed. T-Systems assesses the existing SAP landscape, determines the optimal AWS sizing, and identifies where the standard RISE with SAP offering is sufficient and where additional services are required. This helps organizations avoid committing to capacities that prove to be either too large or too small over the lifetime of the contract.

Beyond the standard: Tailored operations

Where the standard RISE with SAP offering reaches its limits, for example, with customized backup and disaster recovery concepts, the integration of non-SAP systems, or industry-specific security requirements, T-Systems operates the SAP environment within its own AWS accounts. It complements the standard offering with tailored managed services to address these specific needs.

After go-live: Continuously optimizing the SAP landscape

Migration is not the end of the journey. On behalf of SAP, T-Systems provides ongoing SAP operations, integrates new AWS services where they add business value, and continuously evolves the SAP landscape. Organizations benefit from clearly defined responsibilities, consistent service levels, and an operating model designed to support long-term innovation.

Hybrid cloud as an option

Not every workload belongs in the public cloud. For highly sensitive SAP data or organizations operating in regulated industries, T-Systems offers the RISE with SAP-certified T Cloud Private, hosted in Germany. The result is a hybrid operating model that allows organizations to decide which workloads are best suited to AWS and which should remain in a private cloud environment under a single operating model and with one experienced partner.

“The challenge is identifying the handful of AWS services that truly make a difference for an SAP landscape from a portfolio of more than 200 services. That requires a partner who understands both worlds.”

Siegfried Höck, Solution Expert, T-Systems

Three questions that will shape your RISE with SAP future

A RISE with SAP transformation is not a project that will take care of itself over time. The longer organizations wait, the narrower their window becomes—commercially, operationally, and in terms of available resources. Organizations that act now can shape their transformation. Those that wait may find themselves reacting instead of leading. These are three questions every organization should ask today:

Do we have a clear target architecture?

Do we know where we want our SAP landscape to be in three years' time, or are we simply planning the next migration step? Without a clear target architecture, every optimization lacks direction.

Is our sizing based on facts—or assumptions?

Do we have a reliable assessment of the AWS capacity we actually need? Or do we risk committing to resources that are either underutilized or insufficient for future business requirements?

Are we working with the right partners?

Do we have a partner who brings together SAP's commercial model, AWS technology, and our organization's specific requirements? Or is responsibility spread across multiple providers without clear ownership?

If your organization cannot answer one or more of these questions with confidence, you are not alone, but now is the right time to take the first step.

Talk to us about your RISE with SAP strategy

Together with you, T-Systems assesses your current situation from a technical, commercial, and organizational perspective to determine:

- Where you are today
- Where you want to go
- Which path will get you there with the least complexity

Learn more:

The RISE with SAP journey to the Autonomous Enterprise

Discover how to combine sovereignty, AI, and cloud transformation with the right balance of control.

Contact us

Download the white paper



Further reading

- [AWS Managed Services by T-Systems](#)
- [RISE with SAP](#)
- [SAP on AWS](#)
- [T-Systems Achieves SAP Business AI Certification](#)

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