

The Zeiss SAP case, for a steering committee

What Bloomberg and The Register reported, what this issue cannot establish, and what to ask about your own programme.

The reported record

Bloomberg reported on 7 September 2026 that Zeiss had overhauled its move to SAP's cloud after costs passed €200 million. According to Bloomberg, the greenfield build, a new core system designed from a blank sheet, was more complicated than expected. SAP declined to comment on a customer project.

The Register reported on 10 September that Zeiss has dropped the greenfield approach and will move the systems it already runs onto the new platform. According to The Register, the project started around 2020. Bloomberg's figure of about €200 million covers the whole migration programme, not SAP software alone.

A Zeiss spokesperson told The Register: "This also applies to the ERP migration, which has now been realigned to achieve faster progress in the transformation and to better meet the diverse requirements of the ZEISS segments."

The timeline

1992	Zeiss introduces SAP R/3.	The Register
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2015	SAP releases S/4HANA.	SAP
Around 2020	The migration programme starts.	The Register
7 Sept 2026	Zeiss has overhauled its move to SAP's cloud after costs passed €200 million. The greenfield build was more complicated than expected.	Bloomberg
10 Sept 2026	Zeiss has dropped the greenfield approach and will move the systems it already runs onto the new platform.	The Register
End of 2027	SAP ends mainstream maintenance for ECC, the old on-premise suite.	SAP

Publication dates are not decision dates. The timeline does not show what a steering committee knew, or when.

What this issue cannot establish

This issue is built from two published reports and nothing else. We do not have the programme's approved baseline, its forecasts or its committee papers. So the issue does not say why the approach changed, and it does not say which check would have changed the outcome. The second half asks about your programme, not about Zeiss.

Sources

Bloomberg, 7 September 2026. [The report](#)

The Register, 10 September 2026. [The report](#)

Our story, 8 September. [Zeiss stopped a €200m SAP build after six years.](#)

Our story, 11 September. [Zeiss dropped the clean rebuild of its SAP after about €200 million.](#)

The discussion on [LinkedIn](#). Comments are reader views, not evidence about Zeiss.

The committee paper

Three numbers on one page

The number	At approval	Today
Approved baseline Ask for the approved budget and the current forecast on the same scope, side by side.		
Forecast at completion Ask which costs sit outside the programme budget today: internal staff, data migration, parallel running.		
Benefits at risk Ask which expected benefits change if the implementation approach changes.		

The table is empty on purpose. These are questions for your programme. They are not findings about Zeiss.

Six questions for the next steering committee

1 What is the approved baseline?	
2 What is the forecast at completion today?	
3 Which benefits are at risk, and who owns them?	

4 What evidence would make us change approach?	
5 Who takes that decision, and by when?	
6 What do we still not know?	

Greenfield or brownfield, as a decision

Greenfield means redesigning processes on an empty system. Brownfield carries the system you already have, and 30 years of what was done to it.

- 1** Ask which design decisions in your programme would be expensive to reverse, and when each was last reviewed.
- 2** Ask which expected benefits change if the implementation approach changes.
- 3** Ask who owns a decision to change course, and where it would be recorded.

Before the next funding decision

Six questions to take into your next review. They are prompts for your programme, not conclusions about any company.

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6 What do we still not know?	