

# Evaluation of planning tools

## How to evaluate and select the right planning tool for your organisation

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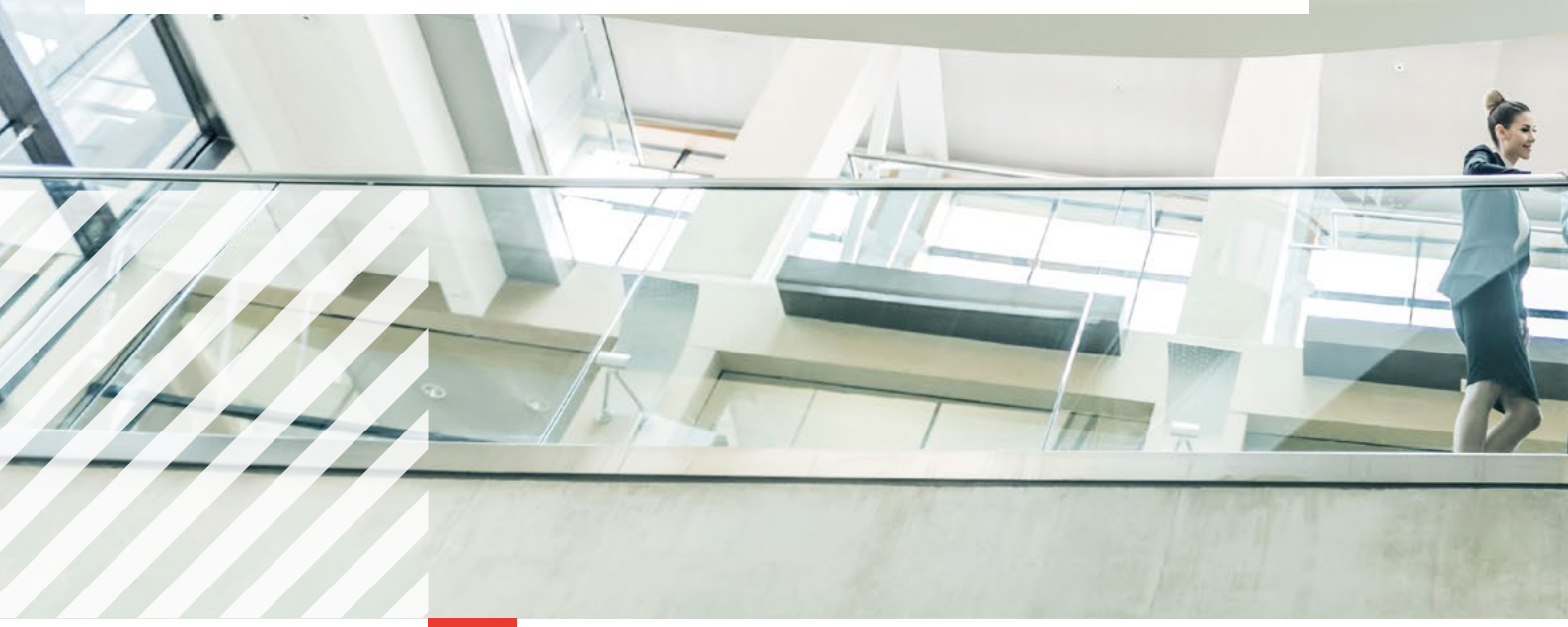
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# Executive summary

In today's fast-moving world, it's essential to have a state-of-the-art management cycle with streamlined planning processes aligning strategy with the mid-term plan, target setting (financial and ESG) and the budget. All this should be supported by a last-generation planning tool or enterprise performance management (EPM) system also able to generate forecast and management reporting. The fact is, however, that most companies still rely on Excel as their planning tool of choice. This makes planning and the associated process untransparent, unstable, insecure, error-prone and time-consuming when it comes to getting alignment within the organisation.

This white paper is designed to guide FP&A leaders across all industries looking for a sophisticated planning tool to enhance and streamline their planning process. It embarks on a comprehensive journey through the realm of planning tools, focusing on their pivotal role in organisational success. Even with a sound concept and function design in place, selecting a planning tool is a complex process that should not be taken lightly.

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### Planning is the linchpin when it comes to operationalising strategy into financial and non-financial KPIs and resource allocation

Things move quickly, so efficient and effective planning is paramount if you're to achieve business objectives, proactively adapt to market dynamics and continuously maintain a competitive edge to ensure the success and growth of your organisation. Without proper planning processes and a proper planning tool, this is impossible.

### Systematic approach facilitates the selection of the right tool

A structured tool evaluation process such as the one outlined in this white paper is key to selecting the right planning tool for your organisation. It's crucial to first define the overall objectives, business requirements and pain points of all the relevant functions and then elaborate a list of solutions, resulting in system requirements and evaluation criteria which are weighted according to the objectives of the business.

### Understanding the capabilities of tools

The most important and widely adopted solutions include (in alphabetical order) Anaplan, Board OneStream, Oracle, SAP Analytics Cloud (SAC), SAP Business Planning and Consolidation (BPC) and Wolters Kluwer CCH Tagetik. In this white paper we delve into the capabilities of these planning tools to give you an overview of the key players without getting lost in tool-specific details.

### Time-proven decision criteria for your process

Choosing the right planning tool hinges on a set of crucial decision criteria. In this paper we examine the functional and system capabilities necessary to meet business requirements. We also look at the integration and deployment options as well as the user experience and soft factors. The topics covered include on-premises versus cloud solutions, integrating source systems, system architecture, system performance, data entry capabilities, references from peers and research firms, change management capabilities, planning functionalities, security and data integrity.

### Professional support for a good decision

Of course, the relevant decision criteria are highly individual and vary from company to company. It's therefore important to embark on the journey with a dedicated team of experts who can evaluate your current system landscape and advise you on state-of-the-art processes and systems, and who are committed to ensuring the seamless adoption of your new planning tool. This way, you benefit from personalised guidance, training sessions and ongoing support tailored to your organisation's unique needs. With our professional assistance, you'll be able to unlock the full potential of your planning transformation and achieve sustained success.



**Things move quickly, so efficient and effective planning is paramount if you're to achieve business objectives and continuously maintain a competitive edge to ensure the success and growth of your organisation.**

# 1 Introduction and definition of planning

In today's dynamic world, planning is one of the cornerstones of any organisation's success. Planning operationalises the strategy by aligning and elaborating a mid-term plan, setting targets (financial and non-financial, ESG) and developing a budget and forecasts to achieve business objectives, ensuring optimal resource allocation and enabling informed decisions. Predictive and scenario planning can help a business anticipate market dynamics, identify growth opportunities and respond to challenges, all giving it a competitive edge.

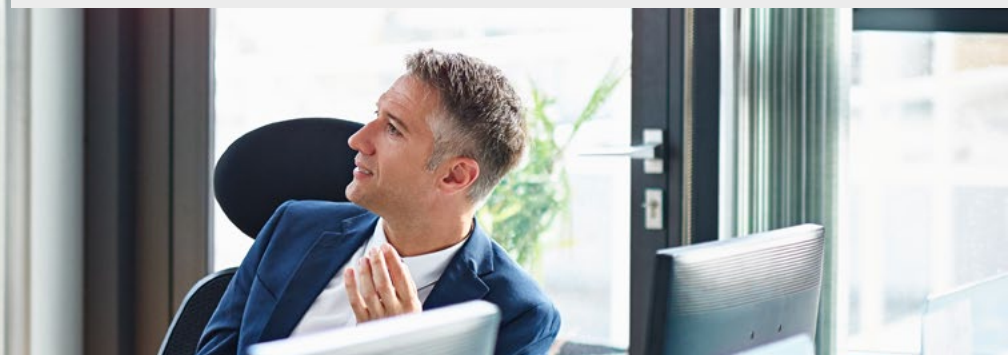
The goal of this white paper is to delve into the concept and significance of planning and examine and elaborate on available tools. The aim is to guide you through the evaluation process and enable you to select the right instrument for your needs.

Technology has evolved to produce a variety of planning tools and software solutions, equipping individuals and organisations with advanced capabilities such as data analytics, scenario modelling and real-time tracking. Besides traditional efficient and effective workflow management, it even provides features based on predictive analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning for all kinds of planning processes.

## What is planning?

Planning is a recurring, technology-supported process that involves financial and non-financial target setting, budgeting and forecasting as well as strategic, CAPEX and scenario planning. It encompasses analysing the present financial situation, utilising data and analytics, and creating an action plan/roadmap with initiatives to achieve the plan. Essential elements of effective planning include a value driver model and approach, resource allocation capabilities, timeline management and risk assessment, all designed and aligned with company objectives. Planning serves as the foundation for informed decision-making and provides a structured framework for defining tasks in an organised and technology-enhanced manner to achieve business goals.





# 2 The importance of planning

Planning aligns individuals and teams with company objectives, ensuring a common purpose and fostering cohesive efforts. By setting targets that are specific, measurable and realistic, planning defines what needs to be achieved in what timeframe, making it possible to measure variances from the plan once it is being delivered. Action plans or mitigation initiatives can be defined to close the gap as much as possible between planning and actuals. The resulting variance analysis enables you to make informed decisions by analysing the drivers behind the variances, allowing you to choose the best course of action. This provides a logical and structured approach and reduces reactive, impulsive and hasty choices, leading to better outcomes. Additionally, financial risks can be made transparent, assessed and managed, and contingency plans can be defined in response. Further, by conducting a sensitivity analysis, companies can assess the sensitivity of financial outcomes to numerous factors, helping them identify potential risks and opportunities.

Proactive scenario planning equips companies to deal with unforeseen events and minimise their negative impact. Operational planning enables **resource optimisation** by efficiently allocating time, money and workforce resources, identifying resource requirements and enhancing efficiency.

Planning tools also help organisations **adhere to regulatory requirements and financial standards and to generate reports (Financial, ESG, BEPS Pillar 2).** They provide audit trails, version control and security features, ensuring data integrity, accountability and compliance with internal and external regulations. In the next chapter, we will dive deeper into how to execute the evaluation process effectively. Planning is undeniably crucial, but understanding how to harness the right tools for planning is equally important. Let's now look at the key components of state-of-the-art planning tools that can make it all possible.



# 3 How to conduct the evaluation

When it comes to evaluating planning tools, it's important to follow a time-tested process to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the results. It's crucial to first identify the pain points and then elaborate a list of possible solutions, resulting in tool requirements and evaluation criteria.

### What are the typical pain points?

Typically, there are several pain points related the planning process. Examples of the most serious pain points are a lengthy and time-consuming process per se, insufficient data, lack of clarity and resource constraints.

To overcome these challenges, companies can improve their planning process by using more effective and efficient planning tools.

Insufficient data in the planning process also presents challenges for organisations. It leads to incomplete information (e.g. limited historical data) and potential issues with data quality and integrity. Addressing this challenge is key to having a robust, accurate and reliable data collection process, integration and analysis.

Lack of clarity is another pain point that organisations may face during the planning process. Without a clear understanding of company objectives and strategies, they may struggle to align their planning efforts and make informed decisions. Establishing clear communication channels, defining targets and providing guidance can help address this pain point. Obviously, resource constraints can also hinder the planning process. Limited availability of personnel, technology or financial resources can impact the organisation's ability to do comprehensive planning and effectively execute its strategies.

### Requirements to be considered in the evaluation

When developing an evaluation approach, business and functional requirements must be considered. This approach will yield a set of evaluation criteria and thus ensure that the evaluation is transparent, unbiased, effective, relevant and aligned with the organisation's objectives. During this process, the relevant stakeholders should give their input and perspectives on the matter, as they will be affected by the evaluation or will have a special interest in it.

Developing structured evaluation criteria ultimately enables organisations to select the best tool on the basis of an informed decision-making process.

### Designing a framework of evaluation criteria

Once the requirements and resulting evaluation criteria for a planning process have been defined, the next step is to define and design the overall framework, and outline how the evaluation will be conducted and organised.





**It's advisable to cluster the requirements by functionalities and level of importance in line with a solidly designed planning model that fully encompasses the existing cycle as part of the evaluation grid.**

It's advisable to cluster the requirements by functionalities and level of importance in line with a solidly designed planning model that fully encompasses the existing cycle as part of the evaluation grid. These requirements can then be further refined with weighted values to calibrate the evaluation process in more detail.

### Implementation and licensing costs

The adequate allocation of resources is crucial for a successful implementation. While it's common to include implementation and licensing costs when assessing desired features, it's advisable to conduct this assessment separately to prevent it from overshadowing the primary evaluation process, unless significant gaps have already been spotted.

### Request for proposal (RFP) documents and tool demos

Based on the defined evaluation criteria, you need to draw up a request for proposal (PFP) document and sent it to potential vendors. The request for proposal (RFP) asks the vendors to state how well they fulfil the relevant business and functional requirements.

Once the preferred vendors have been shortlisted, it makes sense to create a structured storyline around the key criteria, which will then be part of the demonstrations of the tool. Depending on individual vendors' approaches, this might lead to dedicated proof of concept (PoC) phases.

The demonstrations should then be evaluated in conjunction with the response to the request for proposal (RFP) document. Each item in the storyline should be rated and weighted based on its importance.

This evaluation process should involve all the relevant teams, typically including the FP&A and IT departments. Subsequently, a final, qualified ranking should be established, considering both quantitative and qualitative feedback from the RFP responses and the tool demo sessions conducted by the shortlisted vendors. While follow-up sessions may arise, it's crucial to emphasise that a well-planned functional design session for the subsequent implementation phase must be conducted separately. These follow-up sessions should therefore be strictly limited to the evaluation process.

So far we have described in detail how to evaluate planning tools. Now it's time to introduce some of the most capable tools available on the market.

# 4 What are the capabilities of the different tools?

Planning tools are instruments that help guide the actions an organisation takes to implement an initiative, programme or intervention. A variety of sophisticated planning tools are available to help businesses streamline and optimise their planning processes.

The most important and widely adopted solutions include (in alphabetical order) Anaplan, Board, OneStream, Oracle, SAP Analytics Cloud (SAC), SAP Business Planning and Consolidation (BPC) and Wolters Kluwer CCH Tagetik (named more simply ‘CCH Tagetik’ in this document). These tools play a determining role in providing valuable insights and data-driven analysis, enabling informed decision-making and quick responses to changing market conditions. With the complexity of modern business operations and the increasing scale and variety of data, these planning tools have the capacity to handle large datasets and perform complex calculations, ensuring accurate and reliable planning outcomes.



## Anaplan

### What is it?

Anaplan is one of the best-connected planning solutions, designed to maximise the value of integrated business planning for organisations. It facilitates seamless integration between financial, supply chain, workforce and commercial plans through dedicated functional planning models. By consolidating operational and financial plans on a single platform, Anaplan empowers organisations with a unified source of truth, breaking down organisational silos and fostering coherent decision-making.

Anaplan's highly modular approach gives you the freedom to choose the planning use case and level of integration that best suit your needs. Companies often start implementing the tool for one or two functions, for example finance and supply chain, and then extend to additional functions or add specific planning functionalities such as predictive. On top of this, the modular set-up allows companies to develop customised use cases tailored to their specialised planning requirements. One example here is the adoption of the zero-based budgeting methodology in the tool and process.

As a cloud-based solution, Anaplan provides an extensive array of standard connectors for seamless integration with your existing tools. Its user-friendly design eliminates the need for specialised IT knowledge or programming skills, positioning it as a tool directly managed by the business.




**Anaplan's highly modular approach gives you the freedom to choose the planning use case and level of integration that best suit your needs.**




Anaplan as the central planning platform, non-exhaustive selection of modules

## Capabilities

Looking a bit deeper into Anaplan's planning functionalities, we will focus primarily on the finance use case, where the finance function strives to maximise the time available for performance analysis and minimise the effort required for data collection and manipulation. In terms of planning, this means more time for impact and what-if analysis versus the time needed to create and consolidate budgets, forecasts and long-range plans. Anaplan frees up time in your finance organisation by allowing you to set driver- and trend-based planning calculations down to account-level detail. On top of this, the tool's high connectivity to outside applications enables the easy integration of advanced analytics and machine learning engines, for example Anaplan's directly integrated PlanIQ or PwC's Forecast Plus solution. Thanks to unlimited forecast versioning, your finance team will be fully equipped for relevant what-if discussions and ready to bring value to the table when it comes to steering the business and investing in the right assets.

Built-in management reporting dashboards with drill-down functionality along the reporting hierarchies will show your plans in real time, before and after the allocation logic as defined in the tool by you. To round off Anaplan's planning capabilities, workflow and collaboration features further reduce time spent and increase quality during planning cycles.

# Board

## What is it?

Board is an all-in-one enterprise performance management (EPM) solution that empowers finance professionals to effectively manage financial planning, budgeting, forecasting, consolidation and reporting processes. Its intelligent planning solution can integrate all planning processes such as strategic planning, budgeting as well as forecasting into one single platform. The solution not only provides business insights (on different aggregation levels) for better and faster decision-making within an organisation, but also seamlessly connects strategy, finance and operations by means of integrated planning functionalities. Board excels with its proprietary multidimensional in-memory database, which significantly speeds up data retrieval and calculation processes, enabling you to perform complex queries, simulations and scenario analyses in real time.




## Capabilities

Board's intelligent planning platform easily enables comprehensive and connected planning cycles such as strategic planning, budgeting and forecasting, leveraging various planning approaches such as top-down, bottom-up and a combination of both. In addition, the planning models can be customised to a considerable extent, incorporating account-based or driver-based planning logics. All planning cycles are supported with sophisticated workflow capabilities to guide users visually through the whole planning process and ensure seamless coordination and compliance with planning guidelines. One of the key differentiators of the tool is its intuitive user interface. As the solution does not require any coding, it can be directly managed by the business.

The solution also impresses with its flexibility and adaptability (scalability). It offers a highly flexible environment that allows finance professionals to tailor planning applications, planning processes and data models according to their specific needs and business models. With this degree of individuality, industry-specific planning applications can be configured. Users can create multiple scenarios and perform what-if analysis to assess the impact of different assumptions or market conditions. This functionality enables you to evaluate alternative strategies and understand their potential implications on financial outcomes.

Board seamlessly integrates with various external systems such as ERP systems, databases and other data sources, ensuring real-time data access and synchronisation. This integration boosts performance by enabling users to work with up-to-date data from multiple sources without the need for manual data transfers or re-entry. With Board, you can also leverage predictive analytics capabilities, as it offers its own built-in predictive analytics engine BEAM while also being able to integrate AI/ML algorithms from Azure Machine Learning. This way it empowers finance professionals to make data-driven decisions, forecast future performance more accurately and uncover hidden insights.

## OneStream

### What is it?

OneStream is a cutting-edge enterprise performance management (EPM) solution designed to streamline the complex processes of financial planning, consolidation, reporting and analytics for modern enterprises. Unlike traditional CPM systems that require multiple products for different financial tasks, OneStream provides you with a unified platform that brings together these various elements. This unique architecture not only reduces the integration challenges and simplifies maintenance, but also offers businesses an agile and scalable solution, ensuring they remain robust and adaptive in the face of ever-changing financial landscapes.

By providing a single platform, OneStream removes the need for numerous modules or applications, thus reducing the complexity and potential inconsistencies often encountered when managing vast volumes of financial data. Its design ensures data integrity, speed and a more streamlined user experience, making financial processes not just manageable, but more strategic and insightful.

**By providing a single platform, OneStream removes the need for numerous modules or applications, thus reducing the complexity and potential inconsistencies often encountered when managing vast volumes of financial data.**





## Capabilities

One of the standout features of OneStream is its Extensible Dimensionality. At the heart of this capability is the idea of striking a balance between corporate consistency and departmental flexibility, which is a common challenge for large corporations. OneStream addresses this by letting businesses operate on a unified, corporate standard for financial data. Simultaneously, individual units can introduce unique dimensions or attributes to the data relevant to their operations without disturbing the overarching corporate structure. This ability eradicates the common discrepancies that can arise when reconciling departmental data with corporate financial reports. By facilitating both high-level and granular data management on one platform, Extensible Dimensionality® promotes coherence, accuracy and adaptability across the financial spectrum of an organisation.

The OneStream Marketplace is another pivotal capability. This curated space hosts a multitude of pre-built solutions designed to amplify the platform's core functionalities. Instead of resorting to external applications or manual adjustments to cater to specific financial needs, you can dive into the Marketplace to find a compatible solution. Each solution is meticulously designed to integrate seamlessly with the platform, ensuring there's no compromise on data integrity or system performance.

The offerings within the Marketplace span a vast array of financial tasks. From solutions geared to intricate tasks like tax provisioning or lease accounting to those centred on capital planning, workforce planning or even predictive analytics, the variety ensures that businesses of all sizes and sectors can find a fit for their unique needs. The Marketplace's adaptive nature also means that as financial landscapes evolve and new challenges emerge, fresh solutions can be developed and integrated, keeping OneStream users at the forefront of financial technology and best practices.



## Oracle

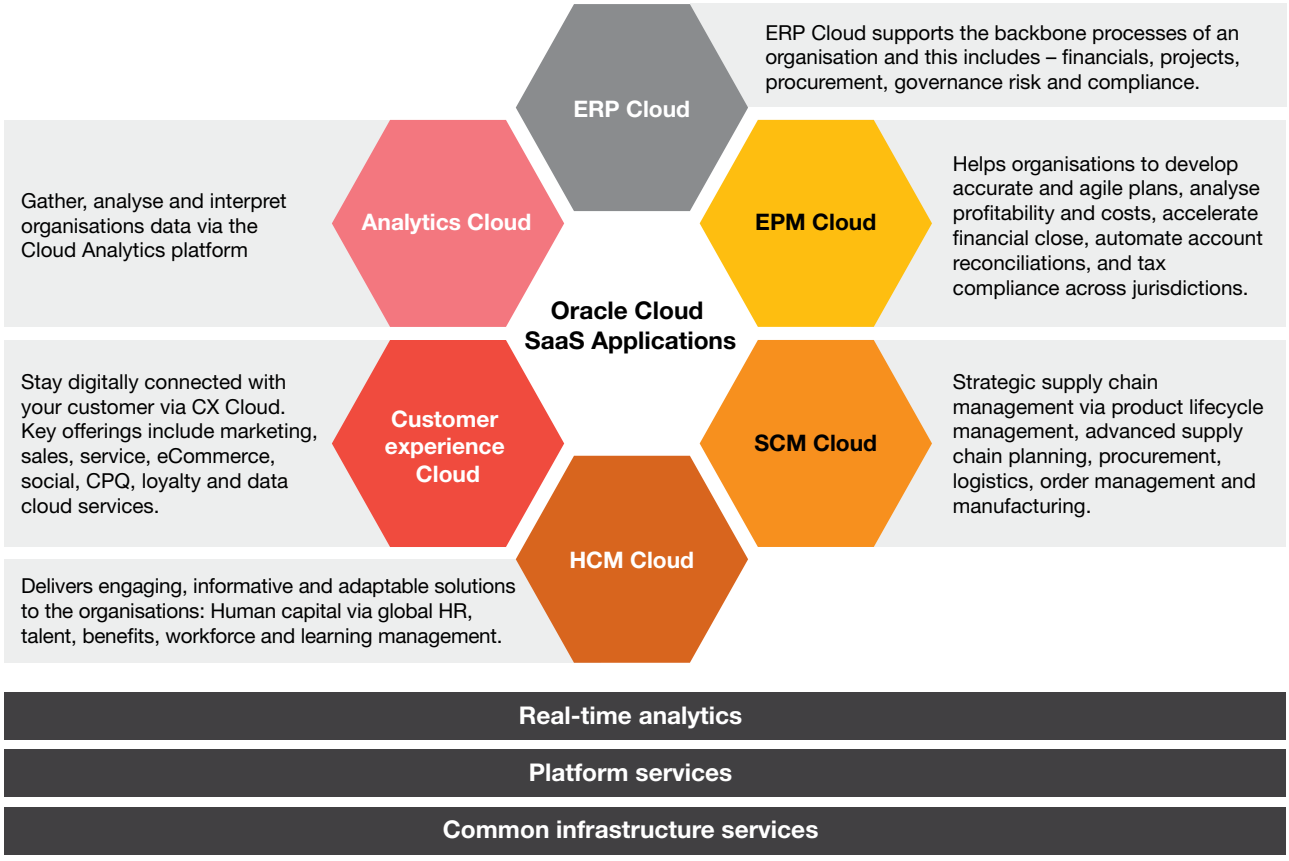
### What is it?

Oracle's planning tool, often referred to within the context of Oracle Enterprise Performance Management (EPM) Cloud, is a state-of-the-art solution designed to streamline and optimise enterprises' financial planning, forecasting and reporting processes. The tool is a refined platform that amalgamates the prowess of AI, machine learning and predictive analytics to deliver powerful planning insights. Its cloud-centric infrastructure ensures robust scalability, a high degree of security and seamless accessibility.

### Capabilities

One of the standout capabilities of Oracle's planning tool is its proficiency in forecasting and scenario modelling. With businesses operating in increasingly volatile and uncertain environments, the ability to predict future trends and model multiple potential outcomes becomes invaluable. Oracle's solution uses advanced algorithms and predictive analytics to generate accurate forecasts based on historical data, current trends and market insights. More than just predictive figures, the tool allows you to simulate various what-if scenarios, gauging the potential impact of different strategies or external changes on the company's financial health. This not only informs more strategic decision-making but also prepares you for unforeseen challenges, enabling them to have contingency plans in place for your organisation.

At the heart of Oracle's planning tool is its integrated approach to financial planning. Unlike siloed planning solutions that treat different financial functions such as balance sheets, profit and loss statements or cash flow projections as separate entities, Oracle's tool views them as interconnected facets of an organisation's financial landscape. This integrated perspective ensures consistency and coherence across different financial functions, making the planning process more holistic and strategic. Complementing this integrated approach is the tool's suite of advanced analytics. Planners have access to real-time data visualisations, detailed performance metrics and trend analyses, all of which provide actionable insights. By synthesising vast amounts of data and presenting it in intuitive, digestible formats, Oracle empowers financial planners to make informed decisions grounded in empirical evidence and sophisticated analysis.




**Oracle's solution uses advanced algorithms and predictive analytics to generate accurate forecasts based on historical data, current trends and market insights. This not only informs more strategic decision-making but also prepares you for unforeseen challenges, enabling them to have contingency plans in place for your organisation.**

# SAP Analytics Cloud (SAC)

### What is it?

SAP Analytics Cloud (SAC) is a cutting-edge cloud-based analytics solution designed to revolutionise planning processes for companies in today's competitive business landscape. By integrating data analytics, business intelligence and planning capabilities on a single platform, SAC empowers organisations with valuable insights for data-driven decision-making, enhancing their overall performance and efficiency.

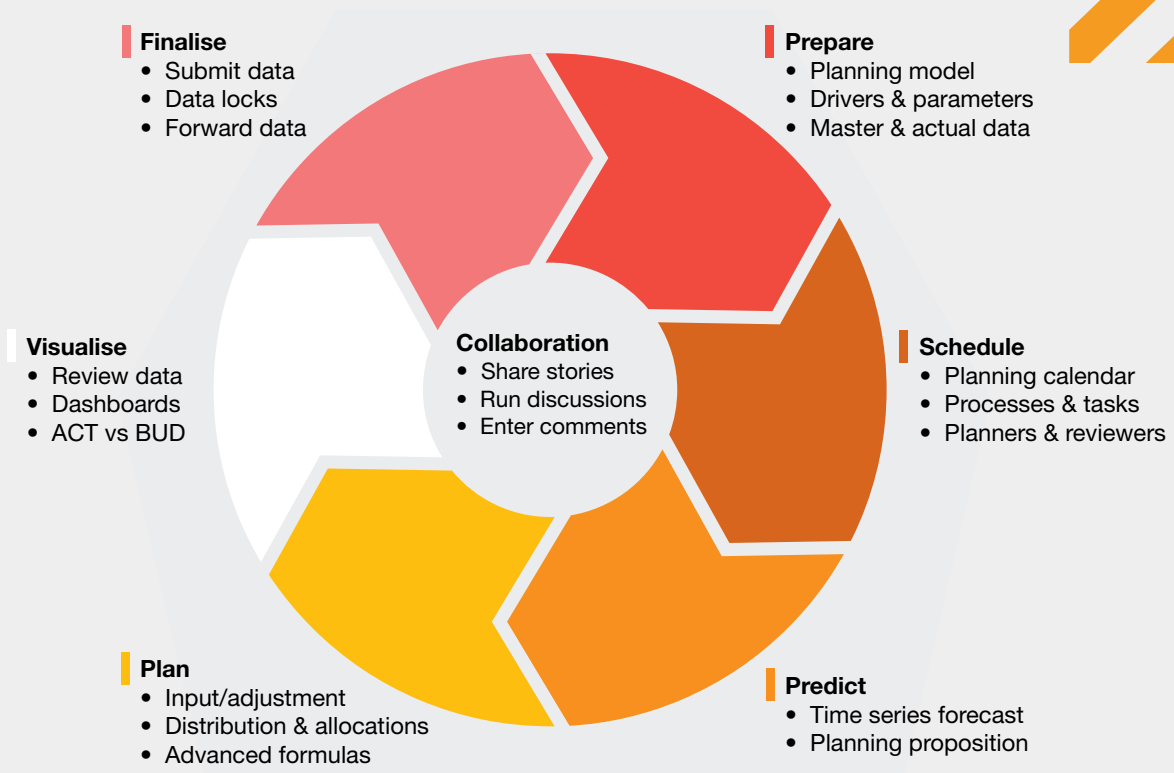
### Capabilities

SAC serves as an integrated planning platform, consolidating various planning functions such as budgeting, forecasting and scenario analysis. This seamless integration streamlines planning operations, ensures data consistency and encourages collaboration among teams across the organisation.

One of the most notable strengths of SAC is its ability to access real-time data from multiple sources. This feature provides you with up-to-date information, empowering you to make agile and well-informed decisions in response to rapidly changing market conditions and customer demands. SAC's advanced analytics and predictive modelling capabilities enable organisations to create data-driven forecasts and predictive models. By analysing historical data and identifying future trends, you can take proactive measures to capitalise on emerging opportunities and mitigate potential risks. SAC has a user-friendly interface that makes it easy for businesses to model their data without requiring deep IT knowledge. This accessibility allows ad-hoc planning scenarios, enabling companies to respond to unexpected challenges or opportunities. SAC's versatility and ease of use make it a valuable tool for both regular planning and those instances where quick decisions are necessary.

SAC excels when it comes to data visualisation, presenting complex planning data in visually appealing and easy-to-understand formats, including features such as value driver tree, predictive planning and what-if analysis. Intuitive data visualisation tools enable planners to identify patterns and correlations, providing deeper insights into business performance and driving better decision-making. SAC fosters a collaborative planning environment with a comment and discussion section, promoting effective communication and knowledge-sharing among stakeholders. It facilitates cross-functional teamwork with the help of calendar functionality allowing daily, weekly, monthly and yearly planning of the different tasks. SAC ensures that plans are well-informed, comprehensive and aligned with your organisation's overall strategic objectives. In addition, SAC offers augmented and predictive analytics features such as Just Ask, which applies generative AI to search-driven analytics; Smart Insight, which lets you dig deeper into your visualisation without manual effort; Smart Discovery, which can be used to automate machine learning models to reveal hidden patterns and relationships; and Smart Predict, which can predict outcomes and generate forecasts by using three types of machine learning algorithms: classification, regression and time-series analysis.









**Crowdsource plans and budgets** across the organisation to increase engagement and accuracy

**Link operational and finacial planning** to improve alignment and performance

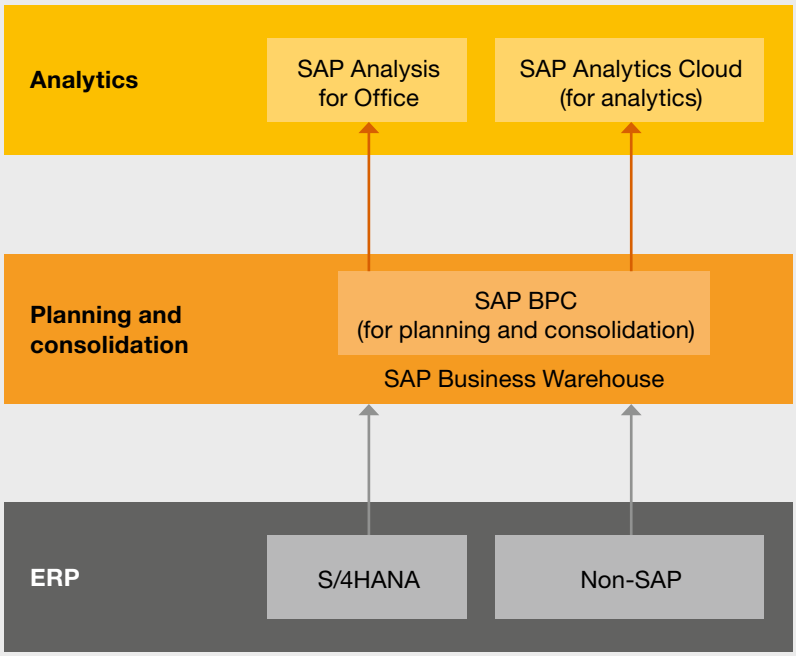
**Embed within enterprise applications** for one source truth

# SAP Business Planning and Consolidation (BPC) – BW4/HANA version

### What is it?

SAP Business Planning and Consolidation (BPC) version BW/4HANA is an SAP solution that offers financial planning, budgeting, forecasting and consolidation capabilities, enabling you to streamline the relevant processes across your organisation. What distinguishes SAP BPC Embedded is that it offers seamless integration with the SAP landscape. This deep integration facilitates a cohesive and unified approach to financial planning and consolidation. With SAP BPC Embedded, users primarily interact through a user-friendly MS Excel interface using the Analysis for Office plug-in, and can execute unified business process functions collaboratively, increasing the efficiency and accuracy of their financial forecasting. Being highly customisable, BPC is very flexible when it comes to handling specific business requirements and needs.

**Typical SAP BPC architecture**



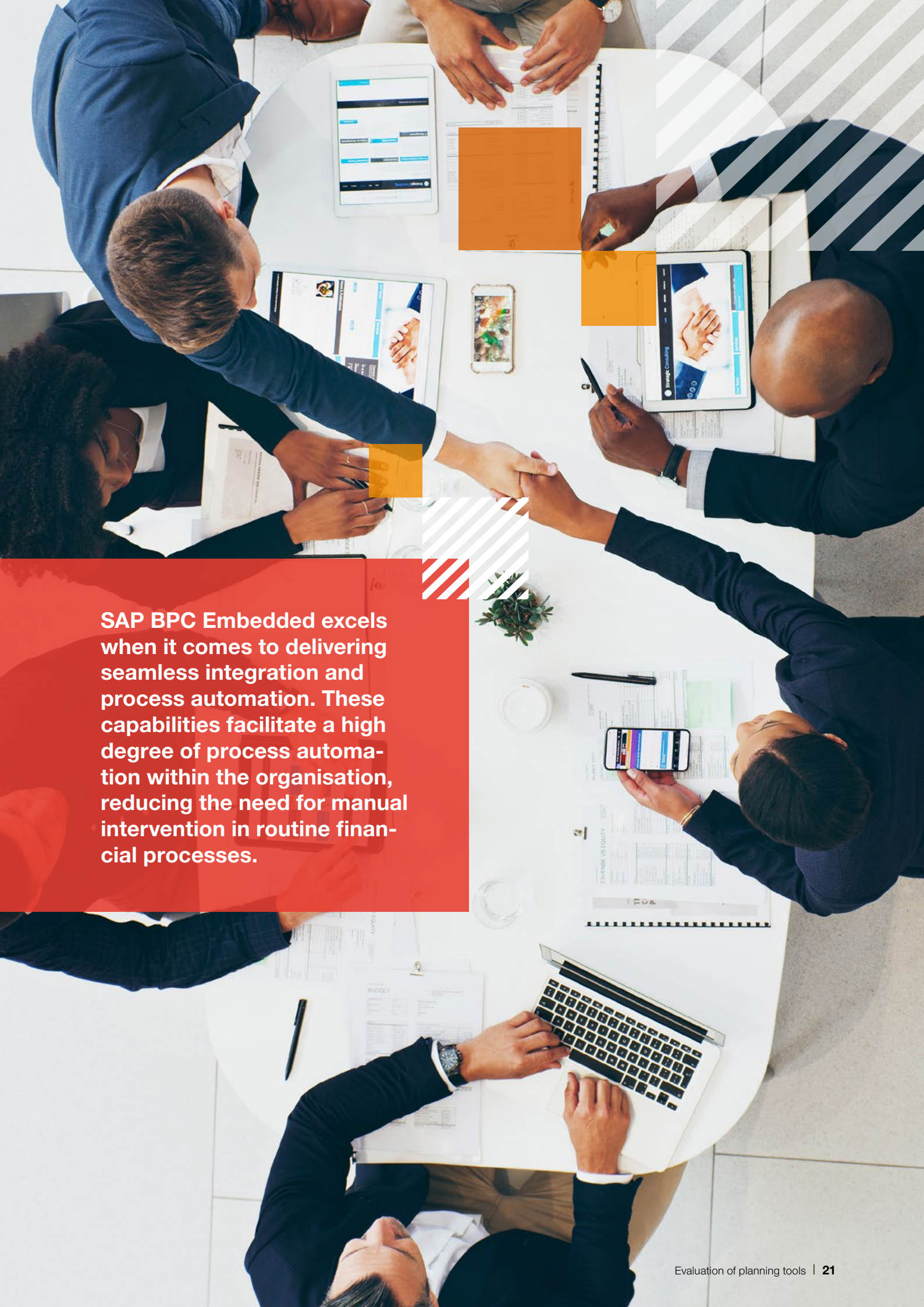

### Capabilities

SAP BPC offers a wide range of capabilities that position it as one of the most robust planning tools on the market. It achieves seamless integration by leveraging the capabilities of SAP BW (Business Warehouse), which acts as the integration hub. This integration extends to various data sources both within the SAP ecosystem and external to it, allowing a comprehensive view of the organisation's financial data.

Regarding planning functionalities, in addition to its integration capabilities, SAP BPC boasts a wide range of predefined planning functions that expedite the implementation process. BPC offers scenario planning, budgeting and forecasting functionalities, allowing you to generate, access and manage multiple scenarios. With these capabilities, users can evaluate the implications of various forecasting decisions, enabling them to set precise financial targets and make informed strategic choices.

In terms of consolidation and reporting capabilities, BPC supports financial consolidation, ensuring complete reporting on the consolidation aspects of the company as well as on all financial data available in the tool's database.

SAP BPC Embedded excels when it comes to delivering seamless integration and process automation. It offers advanced features such as process flows, business rules, currency conversion and distribution. These capabilities facilitate a high degree of process automation within the organisation, reducing the need for manual intervention in routine financial processes. This automation is further augmented by BPC's flexible modelling capabilities, which allow highly customisable planning models tailored to specific business requirements. Moreover, more complex business requirements can be handled using BPC's scripting language FOX or programming languages such as ABAP or SQL. Additionally, BPC can seamlessly connect and extend its capabilities with SAP Analytics Cloud (SAC) through live connection, enabling you to leverage powerful analytics and data visualisation tools for enhanced decision-making and reporting. SAP BPC will be supported until 2040 for the BW4 version; however, no major new functionalities will be delivered in the meantime. SAP is positioning SAP Analytics Cloud as the new strategic planning tool, which we described in the previous chapter.



**SAP BPC Embedded excels when it comes to delivering seamless integration and process automation. These capabilities facilitate a high degree of process automation within the organisation, reducing the need for manual intervention in routine financial processes.**

# Wolters Kluwer CCH Tagetik

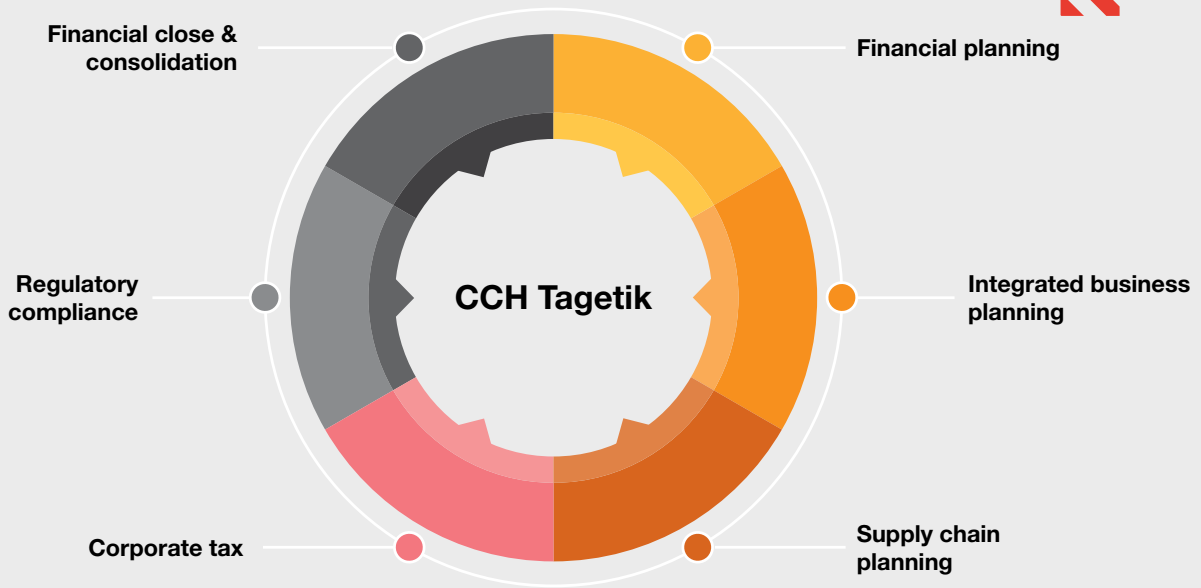
### What is it?

CCH Tagetik is a software solution primarily known for its all-round performance management capabilities across all industries and its ability to unify and streamline financial close and consolidation, integrated business planning, reporting and regulatory compliance processes.

CCH Tagetik provides an integrated platform tailored to the nuanced demands of sophisticated financial and operational planning environments in any industry. Designed with the precision required by CFOs and financial managers, CCH Tagetik streamlines a range of financial processes, from budgeting and forecasting to consolidation and in-depth analytics.

Its strong data management and governance capabilities are further enhanced by the integrated Analytic Information Hub, which allows you to aggregate and analyse granular data from different divisions for integrated business planning and reporting. In addition, the platform incorporates AI-based predictive intelligence and machine-learning-supported analytics to provide more sophisticated insights.

**Designed with the precision required by CFOs and financial managers, CCH Tagetik streamlines a range of financial processes, from budgeting and forecasting to consolidation and in-depth analytics.**




**Strategic and financial intelligent platform**

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cloud & on-premise | Open & extendable | Financial & operational insights | Agile & flexible processes | Central data hub | Data-driven | Data integration |




## Capabilities

CCH Tagetik provides comprehensive budget and forecasting functionalities, allowing you to create, manage and analyse budgets and forecasts for various time periods (for example annual, quarterly and monthly). Users can input and adjust data, perform what-if scenarios and collaborate on the budgeting process. The platform also supports fully-fledged driver-based planning, which means it can link your financial plans to key operational drivers and variables that impact your business, facilitating the creation of more accurate and dynamic forecasts, further supported by the recent acquisition and integration of a state-of-the-art supply chain planning solution.

One outstanding feature of CCH Tagetik is its ability to offer a consolidated viewpoint on financial operations. By merging critical processes such as budgeting, planning and forecasting (including rolling forecasting) into a single platform, it ensures seamless data integration, reducing manual reconciliations and enhancing accuracy. This holistic structure assures data coherence and shields organisations from potential inconsistencies that could arise from compartmentalised data frameworks.

Tailored to manage intricate consolidations, the platform capably addresses diverse financial standards, facilitates intercompany eliminations and proficiently manages currency translations. With an acute emphasis on regulatory compliance, CCH Tagetik ensures that financial outputs are not only accurate but also align seamlessly with relevant regulatory benchmarks, making it highly useful for entities navigating rigorous compliance terrains.

CCH Tagetik's analytical capabilities make it a powerful tool facilitating data-driven financial strategy. Harnessing the potential of in-memory processing combined with AI-driven analytics, the platform furnishes you with granular, real-time insights. Customisable dashboards and interactive visual analytics further accentuate its analytical offerings, enabling you to navigate complex financial data landscapes with precision and discernment.

Users can also take advantage of scenario analysis and create multiple planning scenarios to assess the impact of different assumptions and variables on the financial plan. This helps in risk assessment and decision-making.

Beyond analytics, CCH Tagetik has powerful performance reporting functions. With detailed performance metrics and indicators, the platform provides stakeholders with coherent and actionable financial intelligence. This synthesis of retrospective and predictive analytics ensures that organisations are equipped to make informed, data-centric decisions, reinforcing their overall financial strategy and institutional agility.

Finally, the platform offers native integration with multiple data sources, also strengthened by its native compatibility with the HANA database.

# 5 Decision criteria

When selecting a planning tool for your organisation, you need to carefully assess several critical factors to ensure that the chosen solutions align with your specific requirements and business goals. In addition to a thorough understanding of the organisation's requirements, you should also delve into the objectives that your company aims to achieve by implementing the tool. This entails a meticulous examination of which financial planning processes are set to undergo transformation, the nature of these changes and the anticipated advantages arising from this investment.

Beyond the realm of business-oriented requirements, the technical aspects intrinsic to each tool must also be considered. This encompasses an evaluation of the system architecture and how seamlessly it integrates with your organisation's overarching IT framework. Moreover, factors such as performance, user experience, data modelling capabilities, security features and measures, as well as other functional attributes, are pivotal aspects of this assessment.

To help you make the right choice on the basis of both the business and functional requirements that need to be assessed in each case, we have put together specific sections addressing integration and deployment, user experience and data entry, other 'soft factors' such as change management, functional capabilities as well as security and data integrity.



## Integration and deployment options

In this section we'll explore the different integration and deployment options offered by each planning tool. You must decide whether an on-premises or a cloud-based solution best suits the needs of your organisation. We'll also assess the system architecture of the different tools, the level of integration with existing systems, their performance capabilities as well as the availability of pre-packaged solutions and business content.

### a) On-premises vs cloud

Effective and efficient planning and proactive decision-making are crucial for organisations to stay competitive and achieve their goals. To support these endeavours, businesses have traditionally relied on planning tools that are deployed on-premises within their own infrastructure. However, with rapid advances in cloud computing, a new breed of planning tools has emerged, known as on-cloud or software-as-a-service (SaaS) planning tools.

This section explores and compares the key characteristics and benefits of both on-cloud/SaaS and on-premises planning tools and important considerations that have to be borne in mind. Understanding the unique features and trade-offs of each approach will help you make informed decisions on the most suitable planning tool for your specific needs.

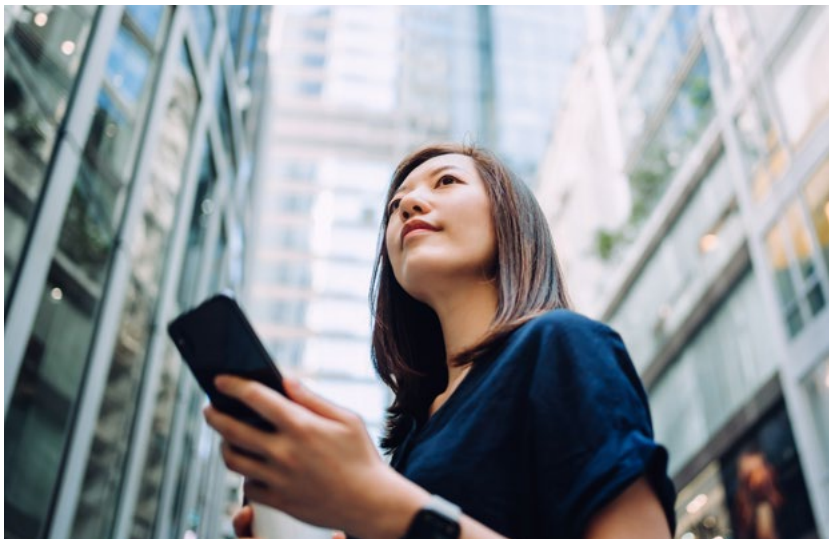
**On-premises** planning refers to planning software deployed within the organisation's own infrastructure. Under this approach, the organisation takes responsibility for setting up, managing and maintaining the planning tool and its associated hardware, servers and databases. The software is installed on local servers or in data centres, giving the organisation direct control and customisation capabilities. It offers high flexibility in customisations, allowing adaptation to individual requirements, which brings significant benefit by providing tailored software that integrates with existing systems for a personalised planning experience. With the correct set-up, performance will typically be higher than with an on-cloud solution.

However, there are also disadvantages to consider. Initial set-up may take time, potentially delaying desired outcomes. Additionally, acquisition and implementation costs are higher than for other options and customisations in this set-up can be costly (also in terms of the difficulty of scaling the product), impacting overall expense. Moreover, managing the software and hardware life cycle requires specific skills, not to mention the maintenance efforts required for their upkeep. When considering an on-premises planning solution,

**Cloud vs on-premises infrastructure**

The criteria for deciding between a cloud or on-premises infrastructure should focus on these key areas

| | Performance | Deploy and manage | Costs | Control | Security |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Cloud** | • Highest availability and scalability, performance dependent on web connection and external machines | • Scalability allows faster deployments and quick adjustments<br>• Low to no code developments, but less flexible for business requirements | • Software and licence costs<br>• Quickly adjustable to organisational needs (pay for what is used: upsize/downsize)<br>• Lower implementation costs overall | • Service provider controls the hardware and software for the system | • Real-time monitoring, security controls and recovery systems from the service provider<br>• Shared security responsibility model between provider and customer |
| **On-premises** | • Lower availability and scalability, overall performance can be better because no reliance on external machines | • Highly customisable but slower deployment of new developments and higher implementation costs | • Large upfront investment in hardware and software infrastructure<br>• Difficult to downsize if necessary<br>• Need for machine replacement might arise | • In-house control of hardware and software being used | • Security controls and recovery systems have to be set up in house<br>• Specialised teams have to be maintained with continuous surveillance and training<br>• Hardware must be updated |



organisations can expand their range of choices by selecting from established ERP providers. Additionally, the performance of an on-premises planning tool can vary depending on the organisation's IT set-up and infrastructure.

Given these implications, when deciding on an on-premises planning solution, organisations must balance the advantages of customisation and control with the potential limitations in terms of mobility, access to innovation and associated implementation and maintenance costs.

**SaaS/cloud-based** planning tools are software applications hosted and delivered remotely over the internet. They offer easy deployment and eliminate the need for infrastructure set-up and maintenance. These tools provide scalability, allowing organisations to adjust subscription or usage levels as needed. SaaS planning tools enable collaboration and accessibility from any location and are regularly updated by the service provider.

One advantage of this set-up is the initial investment, which is lower, as internal hardware costs and recurring hardware renewal costs are absent. Implementing and changing the initial set-up is faster than on-premises solutions.

There's no need to acquire technical know-how, and there are fewer dependencies on other IT tools and projects, reducing complications. Fewer internal resources are required. These solutions often provide quick access to innovation and new functionalities through frequent software updates, eliminating the need for manual updates or system maintenance.

However, there are also disadvantages to consider. This approach makes you highly dependent on the external vendor/provider. Release management and deployment times may be less flexible because the release cycles for all clients of a SaaS solution are predefined. Cloud/SaaS solutions are generally less customisable and configurable. Implementing a cloud-based planning solution typically involves lower upfront costs, with subscription-based pricing models that allow organisations to scale usage up or down as needed. However, recurring costs may be higher in the long run than for on-premises solutions.

### b) Integration

Integration is a vital aspect to consider when installing new planning tools in your organisation. Successful integration ensures the smooth flow of data between the planning tool and various other enterprise systems such as ERP (enterprise resource planning) systems, CRM (customer relationship management) platforms, HR software and other pertinent business applications. The primary objective here is to establish compatibility with the existing technology / IT ecosystem. A planning tool should seamlessly integrate with these systems to ensure that financial data is readily accessible and synchronised across all relevant platforms having one single source of truth.

One of the immediate benefits of robust integration is that it reduces manual data transfer efforts. Automating data transfer between systems minimises the risk of human error, resulting in more accurate and consistent data across the organisation. Additionally, by eliminating data discrepancies that may arise from

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data harmonisation, organisations can foster greater trust in their decision-making processes.

Moreover, a well-integrated planning tool promotes seamless collaboration across departments and benefits from harmonised master data. Teams can access 'real-time' data from a centralised source. These streamlined workflows accelerate response times and enhance overall operational efficiency.

### c) System architecture

The integration of planning tools into an organisation's existing architecture is crucial for a smooth transition. This section delves into the complex aspects of system architecture compatibility, specifically addressing key considerations that impact the decision-making process.

One central consideration is scalability. Planning tools must have the ability to scale seamlessly in line with the organisation's evolving needs. The ability to accommodate increasing data volumes, user requirements and changing business dynamics without causing disruptions is paramount. An architecture that allows effortless expansion and optimisation can enhance an organisation's agility in adapting to market shifts.

Another vital aspect of system architecture is support for robust application programming interfaces (APIs) and data connectivity. APIs act as conduits for the flow of data between the planning tool and other systems within the organisation's ecosystem. The capacity and flexibility of these APIs are critical because they determine the ease with which the planning tool can communicate with other software applications. Furthermore, evaluating data connectivity options ensures that the planning tool can seamlessly access, aggregate and share data from diverse sources, providing decision-makers with a comprehensive view of the information they need to make assumptions for planning.

System architecture compatibility also extends to considerations of security and data privacy. An architecture that aligns with an organisation's security policies and standards is essential to safeguard sensitive information. The ability to encrypt data, manage user access controls and maintain compliance with data regulations is a fundamental aspect of the planning tool's architecture.

### d) Performance

Performance is a critical aspect that organisations must carefully evaluate when considering planning tools. The responsiveness of the planning tools directly impacts the speed at which financial data is analysed, forecast and presented to stakeholders. Organisations seek planning tools that deliver 'real-time' results, enabling decision-makers to respond promptly to changing market conditions and make data-driven decisions with accuracy and confidence.

It's crucial for organisations to evaluate the performance capabilities of planning tools if they're to ensure that their chosen tool can efficiently handle their ever-growing data requirements. As the volume of data generated within an organisation increases, the planning tool should be able to process and analyse this data promptly to drive effective decision-making.

### e) Pre-packaged solutions/ business content

One of the key challenges for organisations implementing planning tools is the time and effort required to set up and configure the tools to meet their specific business needs. For this reason, many planning tools offer pre-packaged solutions and business content. These ready-made content packages come with pre-built templates, models and best practices that cater to different industries and business functions.

They give organisations a head start, enabling them to accelerate the deployment process and gain quick access to valuable insights for data-driven decision-making. Nonetheless, these solutions need to be adjusted to the specifics of the organisations to cater to their needs.

These pre-packaged solutions not only reduce the time and effort associated with configuring the tool, but also ensure that best practices specific to their industry or function are readily available. This expedites the realisation of benefits, allowing organisations to make informed decisions based on reliable data sooner, ultimately enhancing their competitive advantage.

## User experience and data entry

In this section we look at how to analyse the user experience aspects when choosing a planning tool. A smooth and intuitive experience for the people using planning tools is decisive. It's important to prioritise the tool's ability to facilitate easy data entry and manipulation by users, ensuring seamless navigation and efficient data input.

### a) Data entry

Efficient data entry is the foundation of effective planning, since it directly influences overall productivity. Tools should offer intuitive interfaces and functions for users to input data with speed and accuracy. Crucial functions include the ability to modify, update and adjust planning data to changing circumstances with agility.

### b) User experience

User experience extends beyond mere functionality. It encompasses the overall design and interactivity of the planning tool. A well-designed user interface (UI) isn't just about aesthetics – it translates into improved user engagement and facilitates collaboration among team members.

Intuitive navigation and interactive dashboards within the planning tool foster a positive user experience, allowing users to easily access information and interact with data intuitively. This, in turn, promotes engagement, as users are more likely to explore and utilise the tool extensively if it is user-friendly.

A well-designed user experience also aids data-driven decision-making. When users can quickly and comprehensively access relevant information, they're more likely to base their decisions on data-backed insights. This is a fundamental objective of any planning tool: to empower organisations with the ability to make informed and strategic decisions.

## Functional capabilities

In this section we will assess the functional capabilities and the flexibility of the dimensions and models that can be created. It's also important to evaluate whether the different tools can accommodate complex calculations and custom functionalities.

### a) Planning dimensions and models

Organisations often deal with complex planning needs that involve multiple dimensions and intricate interdependencies. The evaluation of dimensions and models plays a pivotal role in determining the effectiveness and adaptability of each solution. Dimensions serve as the foundational building blocks of planning applications, allowing businesses to categorise and analyse data across various attributes.

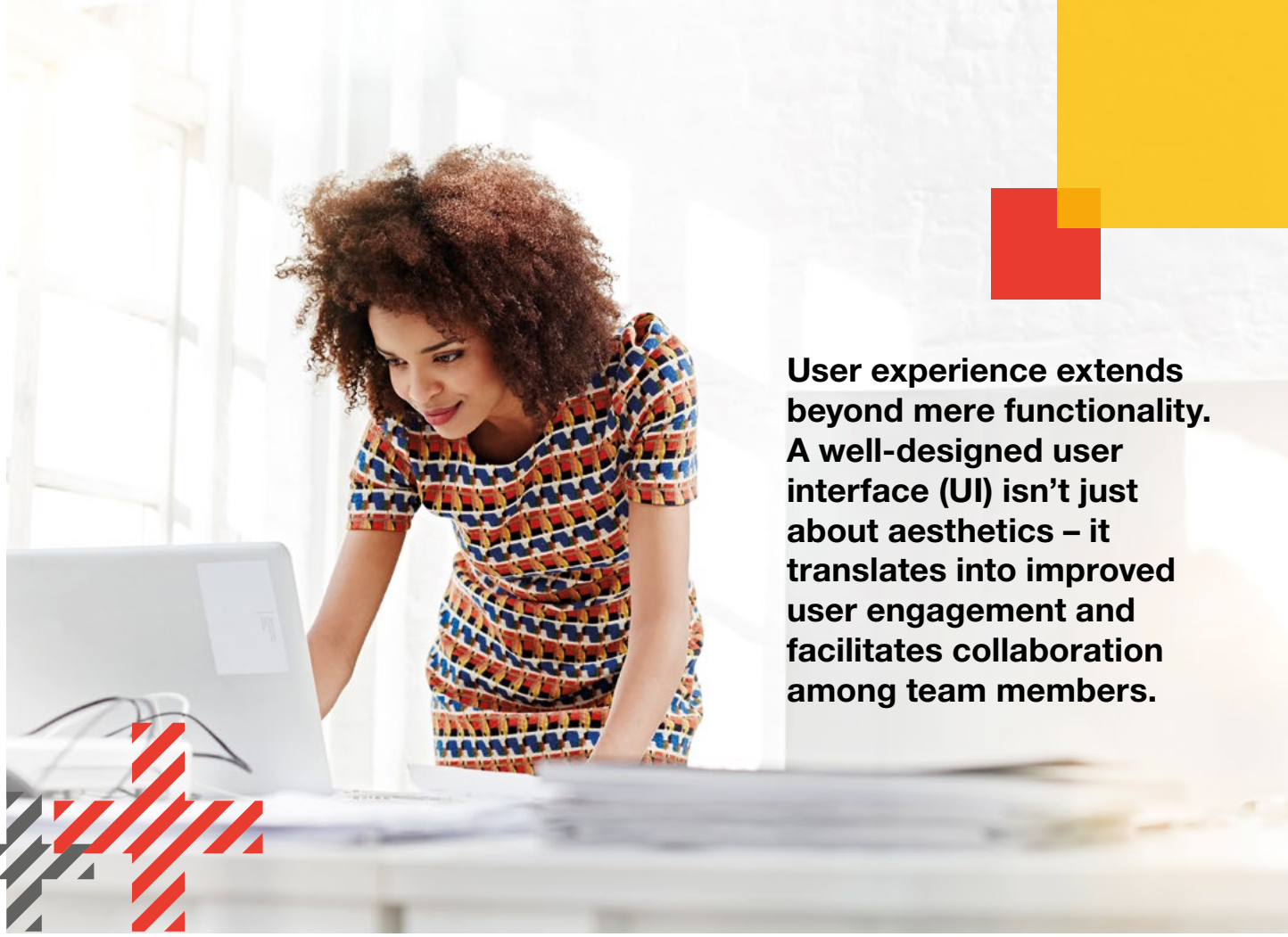
The respective tool should include a robust dimension management system that enables users to easily define hierarchies and create custom dimensions.

This enables organisations to model and analyse scenarios comprehensively, providing valuable insights for informed and proactive decision-making. This means that when evaluating planning tools, organisations should consider not only the extent of dimensions, but also the tool's ability to manage complex relationships between dimensions, for example with predefined planning functions or data actions allowing automatic copying, distribution, spreading and reposting of planning values.

### b) Planning functionalities

Another determining factor in the choice of tools for financial planning and analysis is the range of planning capabilities that each solution offers.

Collaborative planning fosters teamwork across departments, enabling real-time input from various stakeholders and facilitating holistic decision-making. Version management also empowers organisations to manage multiple plan versions, enhancing their ability to compare different scenarios and track performance against targets, while workflow and approval mechanisms streamline planning processes to enable proper review and governance. Tools should also offer predefined planning functions such as copy, distribute and repost to facilitate planning and collaboration.



**User experience extends beyond mere functionality. A well-designed user interface (UI) isn't just about aesthetics – it translates into improved user engagement and facilitates collaboration among team members.**

Furthermore, driver-based planning enables calculations to be automated on the basis of predefined formulas, optimising the use of key performance drivers. The ability to aggregate and disaggregate data on the fly also allows flexible planning strategies. Currency conversion and data integration functions enhance planning for global organisations, while scenario analysis provides insights into various what-if scenarios. Robust reporting and analysis capabilities empower organisations to gain actionable insights from planned data, aiding better decision-making. Organisations can harness this functionality for streamlined planning processes, better collaboration supported by workflow functionalities, increased accuracy and ultimately more informed decisions that drive success.

### c) Modern planning features

Another determining factor in the choice of tools for financial planning and analysis is the range of planning capabilities that each solution offers.

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Additionally, the ability to aggregate and disaggregate data on the fly is also a key functionality. Currency conversion and data integration functions enhance planning efficiency for global organisations, while scenario analysis provides insights into various what-if scenarios. Robust reporting and analysis capabilities empower organisations to gain actionable insights from planned data. Organisations can harness this functionality for streamlined planning processes, better collaboration supported by workflow functionalities, increased accuracy and ultimately more informed and proactive decisions.

The following features are essential for ensuring agility, efficiency and effectiveness in extended FP&A (xFPA) processes:

### Agility and flexibility

A modern planning solution must be agile and flexible, empowering finance teams to make rapid adjustments to plans and forecasts in response to new information or shifting priorities and thus ensuring the organisation remains responsive and competitive.

### Real-time collaboration

Seamless collaboration among teams and departments is critical for effective xFPA. The solution should provide features such as shared workflow and task assignment to facilitate collaboration and alignment across the organisation. This enables stakeholders to work together efficiently and contribute their insights and expertise to the planning process.

### Version control and scenario management

Robust version control capabilities are essential for managing multiple plan versions and scenarios effectively. The solution should support the creation, comparison and tracking of different scenarios, enabling finance teams to evaluate various outcomes and make informed decisions. This enables the organisation to plan for different possibilities and respond appropriately to changing circumstances.

### Streamlined workflow and approval processes

Automated workflow and approval mechanisms are key to streamlining planning processes. By automating routine tasks and approvals, the solution accelerates the review and approval of plans, budgets and forecasts. This reduces manual effort, minimises errors and enables finance teams to focus on strategic analysis and value-adding activities.

### Compatibility with integrated business planning

A modern planning solution should support integrated business planning (IBP), which involves aligning financial plans with operational plans, ensuring coherence across the organisation's strategic objectives. This involves the ability to create and analyse scenarios that consider both financial and operational variables simultaneously. For example, scenarios may include changes in sales forecasts, production capacities, supply chain disruptions and market trends. This capability enables organisations to assess the impact of scenarios on both financial performance and operational execution.

### Automation and data integration

Automation of calculations, data consolidation and reporting processes enhances efficiency and accuracy in xFPA. Seamless integration with other systems and data sources enables holistic planning and analysis, leveraging data from across the organisation. This ensures that finance teams have access to the most up-to-date information, enabling them to make data-driven decisions and recommendations.

### Scalability and performance

The solution must be scalable to accommodate growing data volumes and expanding business operations. High performance and responsiveness are essential for handling large datasets and complex analyses in a fast-paced environment. This ensures that finance teams can perform their analyses quickly and efficiently without being hindered by system limitations.

### Advanced analytics and predictive insights

Advanced analytics capabilities such as predictive modelling and scenario analysis provide valuable insights into future trends and potential outcomes. Finance teams can use predictive analytics to anticipate changes, identify opportunities and mitigate risks more effectively. This enables the organisation to make proactive decisions and stay ahead of the curve in today's rapidly changing business landscape.

### Modular extensivity with predefined starter kits or apps

The solution should offer modular extensibility with predefined starter kits or apps for specific functions such as HR and sales planning and other functional areas. These starter kits provide templates, workflows and best practices tailored to specific planning processes, enabling rapid deployment and customisation to meet the unique needs of each department or function. This modular approach allows organisations to extend the capabilities of the planning solution as needed, without the need for extensive customisation or development effort.

In conclusion, a modern planning solution for xFPA in a fast-paced environment must possess these key features to support agility, collaboration, efficiency and proactive decision-making. By leveraging these capabilities, organisations can enhance their FP&A processes, drive business performance and achieve sustainable growth in today's dynamic market.

## Security and data integrity

In this section, we dive into the pivotal aspects of security and data integrity within planning tools. Organisations handling sensitive financial and operational data need robust security measures. Here we explore how planning tools address these concerns, covering topics such as data encryption, user authorisation, role-based access control, process flows, data validation and locking mechanisms.



### a) Security

Security and data integration are crucial for organisations as they handle sensitive financial and operational data. Security includes various components such as data encryption, user authentication and role-based access. Robust security protocols ensure confidentiality, integrity and availability of data, safeguarding against unauthorised access and potential data breaches.

Data encryption is a fundamental pillar of data security. It ensures that sensitive information remains confidential and protected from unauthorised access, both when stored and during transmission. User authorisation is the process by which individuals are granted access to specific functionalities or areas within a planning tool based on their unique identities. Effective user authorisation mechanisms ensure that only authorised personnel can access and interact with critical planning data. The possibility of integrating external user management systems also plays an important role in the evaluation. Role-based access control is an extension of user authorisation, offering a more granular approach to data security. Users are assigned specific roles within the planning system and each role is associated with a set of permissions and privileges. For example, finance managers may have access to budgeting and financial consolidation modules, while sales representatives may only access relevant sales data; global sales managers may have access to all the information regarding countries, whereas a sales representative may only have access to a specific country or region within it. Role-based access control ensures that users can only access the data and functionalities essential to their roles, reducing the risk of unauthorised data exposure and manipulation.

### b) Process flows, data validation and locking

Process flows are the sequential steps and workflows involved in planning processes, spanning everything from data input to final reporting. An efficient and well-structured process flow ensures seamless collaboration among team members, minimising delays and enhancing planning efficiency. It promotes transparency in the planning process, enabling stakeholders to track progress and identify potential bottlenecks for timely intervention.

Effective data validation mechanisms represent a critical checkpoint in maintaining data integrity. These mechanisms rigorously verify the accuracy and consistency of input data, ensuring that only valid and reliable information enters the planning system. For example, only values consistent with the master data or certain allowed combinations may be entered. By preventing errors and inconsistencies at the source, data validation enhances the reliability of planning outcomes and reduces the need for post-processing corrections.

Locking mechanisms are yet another dimension of data integrity. They prevent simultaneous editing or modification of the same data by multiple users, reducing the likelihood of conflicting changes and data discrepancies. This feature ensures that data remains consistent and coherent throughout the planning and reporting processes. Additionally, central data locks can be used to lock the data for all users, preventing unwanted changes during a planning process and enabling a stable foundation for the next planning step.

**A culture that values data-driven decision-making and encourages open communication fosters an environment where these tools are more readily adopted and integrated in day-to-day operations.**

## Soft factors

By considering references, the experiences of other users and soft factors such as communication and adaptability you can gain additional insights that will make the job of finding the right planning tools to seamlessly integrate with your organisation's workflow easier.

### a) References and experiences

References are invaluable sources of insight and real-world validation of a planning tool's capabilities. By delving into the experiences of other organisations, you gain a deeper understanding of how the tool has been successfully implemented and used in diverse contexts.

These references provide a window into the challenges faced during the implementation journey, allowing you to anticipate potential obstacles and formulate effective strategies for overcoming them and mitigating risks. Additionally, references also serve as repositories of use cases and best practices. They offer knowledge that might not be apparent from the tool's documentation alone. It's essential to recognise the expertise of vendors and implementing partners in the context of references. References also offer a glimpse into user satisfaction and adoption rates. Positive feedback from other users indicates that the tool is user-friendly and meets user needs effectively, which is crucial for ensuring successful implementation. Lastly, it provides insights into the long-term support and reliability of the planning tool. Knowing that other organisations have maintained positive, ongoing relationships with the vendor or implementing partner can instil confidence in the tool's longevity and continued support.

### b) Change management

In addition to technical features and functionalities, the successful implementation and utilisation of planning tools depend heavily on soft factors. These soft factors encompass a spectrum of non-technical aspects, each playing a pivotal role in ensuring the efficacy of these tools within an organisation. Organisational culture sets the tone for how planning tools are embraced. Furthermore, a culture that values data-driven decision-making and encourages open communication fosters an environment where these tools are more readily adopted and integrated in day-to-day operations. User engagement is also paramount; the active participation and commitment of users in the planning process ensure that these tools will be used effectively to their full potential.

Change management strategies are also essential for a smooth transition to these tools, addressing resistance to change and guiding employees through the adoption process. Another crucial factor is robust data governance practices, ensuring data accuracy, reliability and consistency and forming the foundation upon which effective planning relies. Lastly, fostering a culture of collaboration is vital: when teams work together seamlessly within the planning tools, it enhances data quality, insights and overall decision-making capabilities. Understanding and addressing these soft factors is essential to maximise the benefits of planning tools, enabling organisations to make data-driven decisions with agility and precision.

# 6 Conclusion

This white paper highlights the critical role of planning tools in the modern organisational landscape and the importance of making informed decisions to select the right tool. Planning tools are not a one-size-fits-all solution. There are a variety of factors to consider. After reading this white paper, you should be familiar with the evaluation process and have a solid overview of the most common tools and their capabilities. You should also have a better understanding of the main criteria on which to base your choice.

It's important to remember that every organisation has its own set of objectives, requirements and constraints. What works for one may not work for another. That's where professional support and guidance come into play. A partner such as PwC with a deep understanding of planning processes across different industries and extensive experience in evaluating as well as implementing planning tools understands the nuances of this decision-making process and can help you make the right choices.

As an established partner for tools such as Anaplan, Board, OneStream, Oracle, SAP Analytics Cloud, SAP BPC and CCH Tagetik, PwC has a proven track record of developing custom planning use cases tailored to clients' specific needs. This differentiation is a testament to our commitment to providing clients with the most effective and efficient planning solutions that are aligned with their unique circumstances.

PwC can be your trusted partner on this journey, ready to support you through every step of the planning process to ensure that your unique needs and circumstances are met with custom tailored solutions. Please reach out to us to evaluate your situation and find the best solution for you.



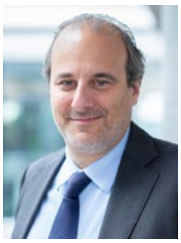
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