

From complex to clear: How Swissgrid is transforming its procurement with SAP Ariba

**Company:**

Swissgrid

Industry:

Transmission networks

Business areas:

Network infrastructure, electricity market, technology and business services

Number of employees:

Approximately 900

Turnover:

1.83 billion Swiss francs [2024]

Headquarters:

Aarau, Switzerland

Website:

www.swissgrid.ch

CHALLENGES

- Non-circular process design with complex processes that were not designed to meet the needs of users
- Technical weaknesses: unstable interfaces between SAP Ariba and SAP S/4HANA
- Insufficient ease of use

SOLUTIONS

- SAP Ariba Sourcing
- SAP Ariba Contracts
- SAP Ariba Supplier Lifecycle and Performance

BENEFITS

- More efficient processes & time savings thanks to streamlined processes, intuitive use through guided sourcing and less support effort
- Improved data quality & stability thanks to reliable reporting, more stable interfaces, fewer sources of error.
- More transparency & collaboration thanks to clearer supplier forms, end-to-end process integration

WHY APSOLUT?

- Reputation in the market
- Recommendations from SAP and partner companies
- Expertise in SAP Ariba und SAP S/4HANA integration
- Pragmatic consulting approach with practical solutions



"apsolut quickly understood and implemented our requirements."

(Etienne Auger, Team Leader Procurement Excellence at Swissgrid)



Small quick wins & major alterations: apsolut has put Swissgrid's Ariba Suite on the right track.

WITH APSOLUT TO CLEAR PROCESSES AND HIGHER DATA QUALITY

„From the coffee machine to the transformer – everything is put out to tender.“ With this sentence, Etienne Auger, Team Leader Procurement Excellence at Swissgrid, sums up the diversity of purchasing. Swissgrid operates the high-voltage grid in Switzerland, the backbone of Switzerland's electricity supply. Swissgrid is consistently tendering – and not just buying. The portfolio ranges from construction projects in the million-dollar range to heavy-duty transformers, complex IT services, specialised services – such as engineering or maintenance work – to office supplies. For this diversity, Swissgrid relies on the SAP Ariba Strategic Sourcing Suite. After the initial introduction of SAP Ariba in 2023, the time for optimisation came in the following years: The potential of the solution was not exhausted. Processes sometimes seemed bulky, interfaces to SAP S/4HANA were not robust, the user-friendliness did not impress. “We realised we weren't making the most of Ariba. Processes were not as we had imagined them,” says Elena Thulin, Application Manager SAP Ariba at Swissgrid.

The optimisation came via recommendations – directly from SAP and from partners in the industry. Swissgrid met apsolut. What stood out: Expertise, depth, a clear view of the essentials. Together they began a project that did not just involve fine adjustments, but significant restructuring. Little quick wins. Major alterations. And a step with a signalling effect: the introduction of Guided Sourcing – the new, much more user-friendly interface in SAP Ariba. Swissgrid was one of the first companies to use it productively. “We defined our pain points and requirements, took them on board and developed solutions together – from small adjustments to more complex optimisations,” Thulin describes the way.

The focus was on end-to-end integration. Tenders, contracts, orders – everything worked better together, everything became more transparent. Of course, there were stumbling blocks. Purchasing and legal had to coordinate their needs in contract management.

Diverse interests, intense discussions. Shortly before the go-live, another pinch point: an interface question that could shake the project. But then it became clear what partnership meant. “Fabiène Caminada, our central contact at apsolut, did everything she could – she showed exceptional commitment at this stage and ensured that we were able to keep to our deadline. An impressive final spurt, which shows how important her role was for the success of the project,” said Auger.

Today, the picture is different. Processes are leaner, more understandable, more logical. Better data quality, more reliable reporting. Guided Sourcing brings an interface that breaks down barriers. Suppliers benefit from a simplified quotation process with fewer queries and experience more transparent processes overall. Everyday life is easier for internal users. Above all, employees gain time because the processes interact better and they find their way around Guided Sourcing more intuitively. From an IT perspective, the solution impresses with more stable interfaces, fewer sources of error and a more efficient system landscape. In addition, Swissgrid now has a future-proof platform basis. “The process has become more straightforward and logical. Our users are now working much more autonomously – and we have more time for the content work,” Auger summarises.

Swissgrid has laid the foundations with apsolut. Not only for today, but also for tomorrow. The partnership pays off – and makes Swissgrid a pioneer in digital procurement.