
The utility of reinvention

Acea Energia's new digital core accelerates meter-to-cash processes



aceea

Atos

At a glance

Acea Energia upgrades SAP for Utilities from ECC to S/4HANA.

Outcomes:

- 40% faster time to invoice
- Rapid 8-month upgrade
- Increased invoice throughput capacity
- Zero disruption to users or processes

About Acea SpA

Italian multiutility company Acea SpA is the top national operator in the water sector, serving 9 million customers in the Lazio, Tuscany, Umbria, Campania and Molise regions. It is one of the main national operators in the energy market with about 7 TWh of electricity sold, and about 10 TWh distributed in the city of Rome. Acea is also one of the leading waste processing operators in Italy.

Deregulation of the Italian energy-and-utility sector forced Acea Group to modernize and adapt to a free market where digital-native entrants had the obvious advantage.

Innovation generates rapid value

In an organization that has evolved over 100 years, change can be complicated. When the organization has historically served at the heart of Italy's energy sector, and the change is a complete overhaul of digital infrastructure, it requires a measured approach.

As Acea Group's transformation path unfolded, it soon arrived at the need to upgrade the billing and credit management system of its highly visible energy subsidiary, Acea Energia.

The energy company's monthly billing-invoicing-printing (UBIP) process was taking five days total elapsed from measurements upload to printing of bills, which was becoming unmanageable. It was choking billing capacity, delaying cashflow and stunting growth.



Acea's history is documented in photographs like this one. See more at gruppo.acea.it/en/about-acea/our-history/historical-archive.

Powering up

The solution was to upgrade SAP Utilities (IS-U) from ECC (ERP Central Component) to S/4HANA. By all accounts, the new system is simply faster than traditional ERP systems like ECC.

"The newness of S/4HANA was actually a major challenge," said Roberto Ausiello, client delivery executive for Atos. "No one around had previous experience with it. In all three companies – Acea, SAP and Atos – we were innovating from beginning to end."

This project also needed to be managed separately from the larger, ongoing IT modernization. Thus, dual development lines with four cycles of non-regression testing.

Acea, understanding the complexities, brought in the A-team: key business and IT stakeholders from Acea Energia, and a partnership between SAP Digital Business Services on the Technical side and Atos as system integrator on the functional side.

October 2018

Project start

January 2019

Conversion of development system

February 2019

Conversion of test system (run 1)

March 2019

Conversion of test system (run 2)

Managed chaos

In preparation, they used proven approaches and tools to define the technical and functional changes to target. And they established agile methodologies to manage so many teams and streams:

- A team of technical architects responsible for testing and technical activities
- An ABAP development team to adjust and implement custom code
- A functional team for non-regression test activities and data preparation for the business tests
- One busy project manager to coordinate activities

"The coordination was particularly challenging in terms of timing. Each task was achieved in continuous alignment with Acea and SAP," said Atos project manager Massimo Di Filippo.

Together they worked diligently through each phase, converting systems for development, testing (in two runs) and preproduction. Then came user acceptance and performance testing, which were followed by conversion of the production system and go-live.

From test-driven planning to dual maintenance management, the participants gained valuable experience with various functional impacts of the S/4 HANA upgrade. They'll apply these lessons to upgrades in Acea's other subsidiaries, and indeed to other organizations.

In particular, the data migration executed for this upgrade will serve as a model for others. It was completed over one weekend (the minimum go-live window) with no changes to data structure, no discards on data transformation and no interruptions to system availability.

UBIP unleashed

The primary problem that triggered Acea Energia's billing upgrade is solved. UBIP is 40% faster. As anticipated, the shockwaves extend to:

- Meter-to-cash performance increasing throughput to issue invoices
- Cash-flow optimization reducing time from meter readings to invoice delivery

With a reliable digital platform to manage billing and credit processes, the energy company is delivering usage data to its customers much faster. There's no more delay to close the books.

All of this value was delivered in only eight months, compared to similar scopes of work taking 12 months.

Project-by-project, Acea is distributing efficient, customer-centric processes across the group. At the same time, the multiutility is empowering its future technology projects with the high standards set by this one.

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Why Atos for SAP S/4HANA and IS-U

No other digital services company can match Atos's experience with digital-first utility operations. Atos is an SAP Platinum Partner with:

- More than 25 years of experience implementing and managing SAP IS-U projects
- More than 13,000 SAP professionals, 3,000 utility industry specialists and 1,000 SAP utility specialists
- A portfolio of vertical solutions for energy and utilities under its Worldgrid practice

April 2019

Conversion of preproduction system

May 2019

User acceptance and performance testing

June 2019

- Conversion of production system
- Go-live

About Atos

Atos is a global leader in digital transformation with 105,000 employees and annual revenue of over € 11 billion. European number one in cybersecurity, cloud and high performance computing, the Group provides tailored end-to-end solutions for all industries in 71 countries. A pioneer in decarbonization services and products, Atos is committed to a secure and decarbonized digital for its clients. Atos operates under the brands Atos and AtosSyntel. Atos is a SE (Societas Europaea), listed on the CAC40 Paris stock index.

The purpose of Atos is to help design the future of the information space. Its expertise and services support the development of knowledge, education and research in a multicultural approach and contribute to the development of scientific and technological excellence. Across the world, the Group enables its customers and employees, and members of societies at large to live, work and develop sustainably, in a safe and secure information space.

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Let's start a discussion together



For more information: atos.net/s4hana-for-utilities

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