

Atel Success Story – “Design and Implementation of Parallel Accounting and Optimizations in Asset Management”

About Atel

Atel is an independent energy group operating throughout Europe and headquartered in Olten (Switzerland). Its core competences are electricity trading and energy services. With a total staff of some 8,000 employees, the Atel Group in 2003 generated a net turnover of CHF 5.3 billion.

Situation/Objective

The project's objective was the fully parallel mapping of legal (HB I) and group (HB II) valuation in the general ledger of SAP R/3 for all actively used company codes. Simultaneously, the leading valuation method was to be changed from the current HB I to HB II. In addition, the use of the functionalities in SAP R/3 asset accounting was to be optimized.

Replacement of Excel

In a first project stage, the project team formed by ATEL and ASC prepared a business and technical concept, defining both the current and the target situation. The main objective was to replace a complex Excel file in which the differences between the two valuation methods had been recorded until then. Not only did this manual “secondary accounting” bring about numerous problems, it also necessitated considerable entry and reconciliation efforts. Additionally, a detailed changeover schedule and activities plan were prepared.

Optimization of Asset Accounting

A fully parallel mapping of the two valuation methods concerns mainly asset accounting, but it presented an ideal opportunity to optimize other areas at the same time. Among other things, such areas as account finding, depreciation key, interest calculation, basic settings of depreciation areas, mapping of investment support measures, and investment class structure were improved significantly.

Implementation

According to the concept and depending on the balance sheet area, either double entries of the two valuation methods were kept, or the difference accounts were kept in the general ledger. Due to the special situation and the flexibility demanded, a version with four different types of income statement accounts was chosen: HB I Investments, HB II Investments, HB II Rest, and Valuation Differences HB I – HB II.

Going Live

The main tasks for going live were the transport of the new settings, the opening of the new accounts, the changeover and adjustment of the existing balances as well as the subsequent booking and rebooking of all the balances. The system was successfully released for current operation after a short interruption for adjustments.

Project Benefit

Atel's benefits from fully parallel accounting include:

- Keeping of integrated accounting for both valuation methods
- Both valuation methods can be analyzed and compared with each other at any given time; valuation differences can be understood at any time.
- No manual rework in Excel
- Shorter monthly closing
- More transparent and standardized processes
- Rectification of legacies

Key Success Factors

To the utter satisfaction of Atel, the project was implemented on schedule, within the budget allowance, and with utmost care for quality. The key success factors were not only the motivated and committed project team members and excellent knowledge of internal processes and SAP software, but also superior project management and short decision paths.