



9. Authorisation Challenge

Frequent Changes in Business Processes and Their Impact on the Authorisation Concept

The only constant in life is change.

In SAP, roles and authorisations are closely aligned with business processes. Since SAP S/4HANA projects often accompany broader business transformation initiatives, process changes are common throughout the project lifecycle.

Role design must be planned in your S/4HANA project, tightly linked to the business process (re)design. It should include a formal design sign-off point that enables the authorisation team to create the necessary roles in time for testing. Whether it's the reorganisation of business process activities across jobs, the addition of a new process step, the replacement of a transaction with a Fiori app, or the development of a new application, these changes must be reflected in the corresponding authorisation roles. If not planned correctly, role design updates and authorisation corrections will significantly slow down test cycles and/or cause a surge of authorisation issues after go-live.

Why and How Business Processes Change

1. **Business needs:** Organisations frequently need to adapt to changing market conditions, new regulations, or strategic decisions made by top management.
2. **Organisational changes:** Mergers, acquisitions, and internal restructuring can alter the process landscape and the structure of authorisation roles within SAP systems.
3. **S/4HANA Innovations:** Each SAP release introduces new functionality and additional Fiori applications. SAP S/4HANA delivers substantial simplification via optimised Fiori apps and cockpit interfaces. As a result, numerous "ECC" transactions will be removed in S/4HANA. Roles must be revised to ensure business processes can be executed in compliance with the new Fiori apps.
4. **Simplifications:** On their journey to SAP S/4HANA, organisations will often strive to stay as close as possible to the standard SAP solution. Legacy custom reports, cockpits, code, and transactions will be removed from the system, and roles must be updated accordingly.
5. **Project Constraints (Time and Budget):** When migrating business processes to SAP S/4HANA, organisations often work within tight timelines and budgets. As a result, many process optimisation requirements are excluded from the initial project scope and implemented later, leading to process changes after go-live.
6. **Project Management Approach:** Many organisations adopt agile project methodologies. In agile projects, requirements are collected, implemented, and tested in short sprints (typically 3-4 weeks), leading to frequent process updates.
7. **Personnel Changes:** Sometimes, new employees or external consultants bring fresh perspectives and propose optimisations to existing SAP processes.

How to Align Authorisations with Business Process Changes on Time

Authorisations must be regularly reviewed and adjusted to stay aligned with current process flows. Unfortunately, this is often overlooked. Functional and process experts frequently realise that roles need to be updated only during User Acceptance Testing (UAT) or – worse – after go-live, leading to unnecessary delays and user disruption.

Here are several measures to help avoid such issues:

- **Authorisation SPOC in the Project Team:** Experience from numerous SAP S/4HANA implementations has shown that authorisations require dedicated attention. This topic should be handled as a separate project stream or sub-project with a dedicated Authorisation Lead or Single Point of Contact (SPOC). This person should be accessible to other team members and receive information about process changes.
- **Change Request Form and Approval Process:** Even in agile environments, there should be minimum documentation standards for change requests. Each change should include a checklist with items such as “Is a regression test required?”, “Which organisational units are affected?”, and “What is the impact on authorisations?” Additionally, an approval step involving the Authorisation SPOC can be introduced.
- **Well-Maintained Process Documentation:** Every business process should be documented, including a section on authorisations. When the process changes, this documentation should be updated, prompting the Process Owner to inform the Authorisation SPOC and, if needed, revise the authorisation section.
- **Automatic Notifications from a Process Design Tool:** Many organisations use specialised tools for process design and modelling. It is possible to configure notifications for process changes, with the Authorisation SPOC included as a recipient.
- **Secure by Design:** Development teams must ensure that custom transactions, reports, programs, and applications are secure by design. Your development standards and guidelines should require that the appropriate authorisations are verified when users run newly delivered custom solutions.
- **Scalable Solutions:** When designing both business processes and the SAP authorisation concept, it is important to anticipate future changes and implement scalable solutions. For example, even if an organisation currently operates with a single company code, an authorisation concept based on master and derived roles allows for easier expansion in the future.

How Deloitte Can Help

The human factor in S/4HANA projects is just as important – if not more so – than the technical one. That’s why selecting the right implementation partner is crucial. An experienced and well-coordinated team of Deloitte SAP consultants can ensure not only a sound system setup that aligns with your current business processes but also scalable solutions that accommodate future changes – drawing on experience from numerous successful implementation projects.

Deloitte brings proven methodologies, accelerators, and tools to your SAP S/4HANA projects. Roles, authorisation concepts, identity management, segregation of duties, and many other SAP security topics are embedded in our

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