



SAP Cutover Management

*Matrix, Methods, and Best Practices,
Including for **Non-SAP** Projects*

Guido Nageldinger



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1st edition, 2026

Publisher: GESWO Editorial

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ISBN: 978-99989-989-4-0

Paraguayan Post, P.O. Box No. 50
Av. San Roque González de Santa Cruz
070137 Encarnación
Paraguay

www.geswo.com
publisher@geswo.com

Printing and Binding: Amazon Print-on-Demand Service

Bibliographic Information from the German National Library:

The German National Library lists this publication in the German National Bibliography; detailed bibliographic data is available online at <http://dnb.dnb.de>

This publication is also listed in international library catalogs.

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Foreword

Most IT projects—particularly implementations and software development projects—alter a production system environment during Go-Live. Organizations face a twofold dilemma: On the one hand, changes must be implemented efficiently in accordance with ITIL; on the other hand, they must maintain the integrity of existing systems to comply with service level agreements (SLAs).

Surprisingly, many companies still treat the Cutover as a one-time “finish line” event: “We’ll do it over the weekend.” But I know from experience that this doesn’t work. I’ve seen projects where the Go-Live date simply “fell out of the blue.” When I asked about it, I heard responses like:

- “It just fits best.”
- “This is a management mandate.”
- “That’s how it was sold—now it has to work.”

What is often overlooked are factors such as global holidays, legal restrictions, local marketing campaigns, or cultural sensitivities within distributed teams. Sometimes the opposite even happens: A project is underway, but a Go-Live date is never set—out of fear of failure. Here, too, a robust Go-Live strategy is lacking.

And the deadline is just the beginning. There is usually no systematic inventory of cutover-relevant changes—let alone a change requirement mapping. Regulatory requirements are ignored, and business continuity measures are not taken into account. Although SAP Activate offers a structured methodology with six phases (Discover, Prepare, Explore, Realize, Deploy, Run), there are serious gaps when it comes to the cutover:

- Cutover is only briefly addressed in the “Deploy” phase
- There is no dedicated methodology for complex scenarios
- The Cutover date is often misunderstood as a “flip of the switch.”
- Tool Integration is fragmented—many teams improvise using Excel and email

And if there happens to be a Cutover Manager—which is by no means a given—that person often ends up being the one responsible for handling all outstanding tasks leading up to the Go-Live. They’re essentially the project’s “garbage collector,” tasked with sorting out the chaos just a few months before the big day.

All of these examples show that in many projects, Cutover is underestimated, misunderstood, or simply improvised. The result is unnecessary risks, chaotic processes, and a Go-Live that is driven more by chance than by strategy.

This is exactly where this book comes in. It views Cutover not as the “final act” of a project, but as a discipline in its own right that requires planning, methodology, and Governance. Instead of fragmented Excel spreadsheets and ad-hoc decisions, it offers a structured approach: from scheduling and Change mapping to regulatory requirements and business continuity measures.

This book shows how Cutover can become a controllable, transparent, and repeatable process—and why it is just as critical to project success as architecture, test management, or change control.

The chapters provide a step-by-step guide to the fundamentals, compliance, change governance, communication, testing, planning, risk management, and Hypercare. Numerous models—such as the Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM), the Change Governance Matrix (ChGM), and the SAP Functional Assignment Matrix (SFAM)—form the methodological framework. Over 200 tables and templates make it easy to apply these concepts directly in day-to-day project work.

This book marks the beginning of a more comprehensive offering on Cutover management. In addition to free resources such as a blog and forum—which promote discussion and foster a sense of community—there will also be basic downloads, intentionally designed to be easily accessible at the price of a cup of coffee. For companies that want to delve deeper, we are developing advanced products and consulting solutions. You can find additional information and resources on our editorial page at geswo.com and in the products section at products.geswo.com.

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0 Cutover Governance Matrix

Structure and Strategy

Chapter 0 is not a counting error, but rather a pedagogical cue, as it describes not the first substantive planning step, but the methodological framework upon which all subsequent chapters are built. It contains the *Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM)*, the *5-Phase Model*, and the structure of the *ten planning levels*—that is, the elements that systematically frame and structure the process.

The designation “Chapter 0” indicates that this is a preliminary structural chapter that is not part of the chronological plan but rather serves as its methodological foundation. It serves as a semantic and conceptual anchor for all subsequent content and is regularly referenced in the following chapters.

This style of chapter labeling is not uncommon in technical and educational contexts—such as in framework documentation, software manuals, or methodological guides—and allows for a clear distinction between the introduction, structure, and in-depth discussion of the content.

The *Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM)* is more than just a methodological framework. It forms the backbone of the book’s structure, serves as an evaluation tool for project practice, and acts as a governance module for operational implementation. Auditors and training providers can also use it as a reference model.

The CoGM consists of a *5-Phase Model for Cutover management*, which is modeled after SAP Activate. It is self-contained and can be adapted to various project methodology models. The five phases of this timeline are: (1) Go-Live Strategy, (2) Cutover Plan, (3) Test Quadrant, (4) Cutover, and (5) Hypercare.

Throughout these five phases, numerous *Result Types and Deliverables* are described, which are assigned to the ten planning levels: (1) Go-Live Scenario & Timing, (2) Stakeholder Management, (3) Regulatory & Compliance Planning, (4) Change Management, (5) Governance & Escalation Logic, (6) Communication & Reporting, (7) Testing & Simulation, (8) Cutover Planning and Execution, (9) Risk & Fallback Strategy, and (10) Hypercare & Stabilization.

The Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM) assigns the Result Types and Deliverables to each field, which consists of a Cutover Phase and a planning level. These are detailed in the book for each planning level and described along with the associated methodology.

Unfortunately, you can't simply start planning right away, because certain planning foundations are required. The *Go-Live Strategy* is a collection of these planning foundations—either as a single document or as a collection of numerous Deliverables created during the “Go-Live Strategy” phase. The term “Go-Live Strategy” serves a dual purpose: as **a phase name**, it structures the timeline of the cutover preparation; as **a deliverable**, it describes the strategic outcome of this phase. This semantic overlap is intentional—it underscores the central importance of strategic alignment for the entire cutover process.

Regarding the choice of language—English as the semantic reference language: This book describes many terms and planning levels in English. This decision is not based on a linguistic preference, but rather on a methodological intent: The English terms are widely used in international SAP practice, in project management frameworks, and in Governance documentation, and are semantically compatible. They enable the precise identification of roles, Result Types, and Deliverables in a global context.

However, the use of English terms is not dogmatic. Where German terms are semantically clearer, culturally more appropriate, or more helpful from a didactic standpoint, they are deliber-

ately used. In some cases, both variants are used in parallel to bridge the semantic gap between international practice and local understanding.

This flexible choice of language is part of the book's pedagogical strategy: it is intended to promote comprehensibility, accessibility, and semantic precision in equal measure.

0.1 The 5-Phase Model of the Cutover

Figure 01 illustrates the 5-Phase Model of the Cutover, its key Milestones (MSn) and how they align with the SAP Activate phases (see also Definition 01).

Definition 01: Phase

A **phase** is a segment within a structured process model that is defined in terms of both time and content. It serves to focus on specific goals, activities, and outcomes that are to be addressed and achieved within that segment. Phases are typically separated by Milestones that mark the transition to the next phase.

SAP Activate Phases



Cutover Phases

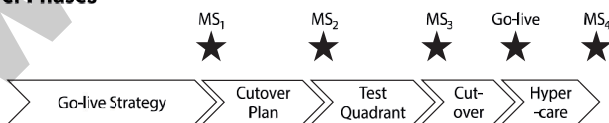


Figure 01: The 5-Phase Model for Cutover

... and its classification in SAP Activate; MS stands for Milestone

In methodological frameworks such as SAP Activate, PRINCE2, or PMI, phases are not only time-based containers but also didactic and organizational units that bring together specific roles,

workstreams, and quality checks. They enable structured planning, management, and communication throughout the course of the project.

A phase can be sequential, iterative, or overlapping—depending on the process model. Its definition is independent of the specific content and can be flexibly applied to different contexts, such as IT projects, training designs, or Governance structures.

Tip/Opinion: SAP Activate Phases

The 5-Phase Model described here is not identical to the official **SAP Activate phases**, but rather a methodological abstraction based on their logic as an example. The phases represent the temporal dimension of the Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM) and can be flexibly applied to different project process models or aligned with other project phases.

The phases are labeled using English terms, which are explained in detail later in the book.

- **Phase 1 - Go-Live Strategy:** As the name of the phase suggests, the Go-Live Strategy is developed during this phase. This strategy forms the basis for planning the Cutover Plan, which includes the Cutover schedule. The Cutover Strategy must be completed by the start of the implementation phase (MS1).
- **Phase 2 - Cutover Plan:** Cutover planning begins at the start of the implementation phase. Parts of the cutover plan, including the staffing plan and the cutover schedule, must be completed by the start of the Test Quadrant (MS2), as these constitute the entry criteria for the cutover-specific tests.
- **Phase 3 – Test Quadrant:** The Test Quadrant phase consists of four cutover-specific tests (Cutover Test, Go-Live Simulation, Fallback Evaluation, and BCM Test Formats), which are described in a later chapter. These tests could also be considered part of Phase 2, as they validate and iteratively refine the Cutover Plan and Hypercare Plan. Even if only a subset of the recommended tests is performed, the duration alone justifies a separate Phase. For a Cutover Test, at least 4 weeks should be scheduled for preparation and evaluation; that is, for 2 Cutover Tests, this would amount to approximately 2 months. The test cycles are classified as part of the Deployment Phase in SAP Ac-

tivate and can only be performed after the SIT (System Integration Tests) and UAT (User Acceptance Tests). In the SAP Activate methodology, SIT and UAT are part of the Realize phase. During this phase, the SAP solution is configured and customized, and tests are conducted to ensure that the systems work together correctly and that the users' business requirements are met. Phase 3 ends with the approval of the Cutover Plan and the Hypercare Plan (MS3).

- **Phase 4 - Cutover:** The cutover phase refers to the operational execution of the cutover and ends with the Go-Live and the handoff to the Go-Live team.

Phase 5 – Hypercare: For many IT projects, the hypercare phase is nothing new and is typically an integral part of a project. However, planning and preparation should be carried out by the cutover team or in close coordination with it; in other words, the Go-Live Strategy should already include some aspects of the hypercare phase as a basis for planning. The hypercare phase ends with the handoff to operations, MS4.

There are two perspectives for the Hypercare Phase. The Cutover perspective (technical-operational) focuses on handover, operational readiness, and troubleshooting, with the goal of ensuring a stable transition to production. Typical deliverables here include the Cutover Plan, Go-Live approval, and monitoring setup. The second perspective relates to the project management view (strategic and administrative). Here, the focus is on Stakeholder Management, performance measurement, and Lessons Learned, with the goal of ensuring the project's long-term integration and securing a return on investment (ROI). Typical deliverables here include KPIs, feedback analysis, and Lessons Learned.

Tip/Opinion: Hypercare Phase

The **hypercare phase** requires preparations similar to those for the cutover. When this book refers to a Go-Live Strategy and a Cutover Plan, this includes preparations for the hypercare phase. And yes, just as we speak of a Go-Live Scenario, we can also speak of a Hypercare Scenario. In practice, for the Hypercare Phase, I would cover the planning preparations in a chapter on the Go-Live Strategy and treat the Hypercare plan—which is created in parallel with the Cutover Plan—separately, that is, as a standalone deliverable. All of this will be covered in detail in a later chapter.

As part of the Cutover implementation, there are numerous go/No-Go decisions (see Definition 03). These are often equated with Milestones (see Definition 02). However, this is incorrect, as the definitions show. While Milestones are indicators, Go/No-Go decisions are gatekeepers.

Definition 02: Milestone

A ***milestone*** refers to a specific point in time during a project by which a defined level of progress must be achieved, such as the completion of a testing phase or the finalization of a document. Its primary purpose is to monitor time and progress.

Definition 03: Go/No-Go decision

A ***Go/No-Go decision***, on the other hand, is an evaluative decision-making process that typically begins at a Milestone but goes beyond its mere existence. It assesses whether the prerequisites for the next project phase have been met and whether that phase will be approved or halted.

Finally, here is the Definition 045 for the Phase Model:

Definition 04: 5-Phase Model

The ***5-Phase Model*** represents the temporal dimension within the Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM) and structures its operational implementation along clearly defined phases, milestones, and Deliverables.

This structure can be flexibly adapted to different project methodologies (e.g., waterfall, agile, hybrid) and serves as a methodological framework for the planning, execution, and stabilization of Cutover projects.

The structure is divided into five clearly distinct phases:

1. Go-Live Strategy
2. Cutover Plan
3. Test Quadrant
4. Cutover
5. Hypercare

Each phase is completed by a Milestone and produces defined results that are carried over to the next phase.

- **Milestone 1 (MS1):** At the end of the Go-Live Strategy phase, the Go-Live Strategy deliverable is produced, which serves as the basis for cutover planning and establishes a shared understanding of the Commissioning process.
- **Milestone 2 (MS2):** At the end of the Cutover Plan phase, the Go-Live Strategy is broken down into three deliverables: DRAFT Cutover Plan, DRAFT Hypercare Plan, and Test Plan for the subsequent testing phase.

The Test Quadrant phase includes four essential cutover-specific tests:

- **Cutover Tests:** Evaluate the technical and organizational feasibility of the Cutover Plan.
- **Go-Live Simulation:** Verifies the practical feasibility of the system migration.
- **Fallback Evaluation:** Tests selective fallback strategies.
- **BCM Test Formats:** Validate company-specific business continuity measures.

All tests are linked to mandatory "Lessons Learned," the findings of which are incorporated into the final deliverables—the Cutover Plan, Hypercare Plan, and BCM Plan—which constitute **Milestone 3 (MS3)**.

- **Go-Live Milestone:** The Go-Live marks the start of production use and the transition to the Hypercare Phase. During this phase, the planned Cutover activities are completed and handed over to the Hypercare team. (The term "Go-Live" is defined in more detail in the following chapter.)
- **Milestone 4 (MS4):** The Hypercare Phase stabilizes production operations through intensive monitoring, rapid troubleshooting, and targeted support for users and processes. It concludes with the handover to routine operations.

0.2 The Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM)

The Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM) is a strategic structuring tool for planning, managing, and evaluating complex SAP cutover projects. It links key planning areas—such as Stakeholder Management, compliance, Change Management, and BCM (see)—with the phases of the 5-Phase Model: (1) Go-Live Strategy, (2) Cutover Plan, (3) Test Quadrant, (4) Cutover Execution, and (5) Hypercare.

By assigning specific deliverables (see Definition 05) and Result Types (see Definition 06) to each Phase and planning level, a multidimensional matrix is created that can be used by project teams as well as auditors and training providers. The matrix serves as the methodological backbone for the book’s structure, as an assessment tool for project practice, and as a Governance module for operational implementation.

Definition 05: Deliverable

A **deliverable** is a tangible document or artifact (e.g., the complete Cutover Plan) that is ready for acceptance, versioned, and formally approved.

Table 001: Planning Levels (Recommended Order) of the Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM)

No.	Planning Level	Reasoning Behind the Position
1	Stakeholder Management	The starting point for any form of Governance: Who is involved, who is affected, and who has decision-making authority?
2	Regulatory and Compliance Planning	Framework conditions that affect all other levels—e.g., Auditability, data protection, approvals
3	Change Management	Preparing the organization for change—including role definitions, training, and acceptance
4	Go-Live Scenario & Timing	Strategic Target Architecture, Time Windows, PNR, POR – The Foundation for All Operational Planning
5	Governance & Escalation Logic	Decision-making processes, meeting logic, approval gates – structural controllability
6	Communication & Reporting	Communication matrix, escalation channels, reporting formats—supporting Governance and Change
7	Testing & Simulation	Validation of scenarios, roles, and interfaces—including BCM and Fallback Evaluation

8	Cutover Planning & Execution	Operational Implementation: Steps, Roles, Time-frames, Rollback Logic
9	Risk & Fallback Strategy	Strategic safeguards, decommissioning options, Risk Plan, Governance loop
10	Hypercare & Stabilization	Post-Go-Live Validation, Monitoring, Lessons Learned, Governance Optimization

Definition 06: Result Type

A **result type** is a Milestone or a partial result (e.g., stakeholder workshop, clarification of roles) that is generated, documented, and contextualized within the framework of a Deliverable.

Example: The definition of responsibilities is a “Result Type”—it is included in the “Roles and Responsibilities Matrix” deliverable.

The Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM), see Definition 07, not only provides a tabular overview of all relevant elements of an SAP cutover, but also serves as a methodological framework for mapping Result Types and Deliverables across the various planning levels. It is evident that individual elements appear multiple times intentionally—and this is not a redundancy error, but rather an expression of a multidimensional governance logic. The CoGM can be defined as follows:

Definition 07: Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM)

The **Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM)** is an assessment tool for project practice and a governance module for the operational implementation of cutover management. It comprises ten planning levels—(1) Go-Live Scenario & Timing, (2) Stakeholder Management, (3) Regulatory & Compliance Planning, (4) Change Management, (5) Governance & Escalation Logic, (6) Communication & Reporting, (7) Testing & Simulation, (8) Cutover Planning & Execution, (9) Risk & Fallback Strategy, and (10) Hypercare & Stabilization—aligned with the timeline of the 5-Phase Model. The CoGM not only provides a methodological framework but also identifies within it a wide range of specific Deliverables, Result Types, and methodological elements required for the planning, execution, and stabilization of Cutover projects. It thus serves as a semantic and didactic reference framework that ensures clarity, completeness, and traceability in Cutover management.

0.2.1 Multiple placement of elements at different planning levels

An element can be maintained at multiple planning levels if it serves different functions at each level. For example, an “Audit checklist” might be created as a Governance artifact in the Regulatory & Compliance planning level, but used as an operational element of process control in the Cutover Plan planning level. This multiple mapping enables a nuanced representation of an element’s content origin, temporal context, and functional use. It enhances traceability and illustrates how Governance elements interact across the project.

0.2.2 Duality of Result Type and Deliverable

An element can be treated as both a Result Type and a Deliverable if it is generated reflexively and integrated operationally. This duality is not a contradiction, but rather an expression of a level of Governance maturity that distinguishes between content creation and planning integration.

Example: The “planned regulatory elements” (**RC-CU04-E/L**) are derived from an analysis of regulatory requirements (Result Type), but are simultaneously documented as part of the Cutover Plan and made manageable (Deliverable).

0.2.3 Separation of perspectives for didactic clarity

- **Result Type:** Focus on gaining insights, validation, Lessons Learned, and review logic; e.g., “Validated BCM Test Requirements,” “Lessons Learned from the Go-Live Simulation”
- **Deliverable:** Focus on documentation, manageability, and integration into planning; e.g., “Cutover-Specific Test Plan,” “Hyper-care Audit checklist”

This distinction makes it possible to clearly communicate, from a didactic perspective, whether an element originates from a reflection phase or is integrated into project management as an operational artifact. In the matrix, this is indicated by the type designation (E = Result Type, L = Deliverable, W = workshop). Another type, V, for Inherited Result Types, is described in the next section.

0.2.4 Inheritance of Result Types

Within the CoGM, Result Types are either inherited from other planning levels or generated as independent content within the respective level; see also Table 002.

Inherited Result Types result from the systematic reuse of deliverables that have already been defined at other levels—for example, the Communication plan, which is listed as a deliverable at the “Communication & Reporting” level and is reused as a Result Type at the “Cutover Planning and Execution” level. Independent result types, on the other hand, are original content specific to the respective level, such as workshops, templates, or specific planning modules.

Table 002: Conceptual Distinction Between Inherited Result Types and Independent Result Types

Type	Description	Example
Inherited Result Types	Deliverables from other planning levels that are reused, refined, or referenced in a new Phase or level.	Communication plan (originally Communication & Reporting), as a Result Type in Cutover planning
Independent Result Types	Original content that is created within the respective planning level and is not derived from other levels.	Go-Live Strategy Workshop for Cutover Planning

Deliverables can be inherited across phases and levels within CoGM. In doing so, their substantive identity is preserved, even when they appear in other contexts as Result Types or reference objects. Result Types, on the other hand, are contextual roles that an element assumes within a specific planning level and Phase. They cannot be inherited but arise from the methodological function that a Deliverable fulfills in the respective section.

0.2.5 Methodology Level – Structural Framework, Conceptual Framework, and Didactic Backbone

The methodological level forms the conceptual foundation of Cutover management. It is not an operational level, but rather a structuring framework that methodically underpins the planning levels and systematically contextualizes the deliverables in terms of their creation, application, and impact. While the planning levels structure the process in phases (e.g., Go-Live Strategy, Cutover Planning, Hypercare), the Methodology Level ensures semantic clarity, didactic coherence, and depth of Governance.

Why a Methodology Level?

Complex SAP projects generate numerous artifacts—ranging from communication matrices to Risk Analyses and Change documentation. Without a methodological framework, fragmentation can set in: terms are used inconsistently, roles become blurred, and Governance loses its ability to maintain control. The Methodology Level addresses this by:

- Clarifies and distinguishes between terms (e.g., Stakeholder Analysis vs. Communication matrix)
- makes structures visible (e.g., taxonomies, topologies, RACI logic)
- Promotes reusability (e.g., templates, glossaries, spotlights)
- Ensures didactic consistency (e.g., through "Spotlight" features and glossary entries)

It is therefore not only a semantic classification system, but also a didactic framework for training, auditing, and project communication.

Relationship to Result Types and Deliverables

The methodology level does not exist in isolation but permeates the planning levels. Its concepts—such as the Escalation Matrix, the Change taxonomy, or the Governance loop—are highlighted in the respective chapters as “methodology spotlights.” They explain how a particular Result Type was developed, why it is relevant, and how it can be used. In this way, a deliverable becomes not just a document, but a methodologically grounded control element.

Example: The “Change Governance Matrix” (**CM-GS22-L**) is a deliverable of the Go-Live Strategy. However, its structure is based on methodological elements such as taxonomy, nomenclature, topology, and Metadimensions, all of which are anchored at the methodological level.

Presentation and Location

All relevant methods are listed in a systematic table in the appendix—including a brief description, the level at which they are effective, and their pedagogical value. In the chapters on the planning levels, the most important methods are each described in a “Spotlight” section: What is it? Why is it relevant? Where does it have an impact? Pedagogical value.

The Cutover Governance Matrix itself does not explicitly specify the methodologies. This is done for the sake of clarity and to avoid semantic overload. The matrix remains focused on phase-specific Deliverables—the methodologies serve as contextual frameworks in the background.

Table 003: Terminology for Designating Elements Within the Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM)
... with `<pp>-<hh>##</hh>-<hh><t></t></hh></pp>`, where `<pp></pp>` denotes the planning level, `<hh></hh>` the Phase (temporal dimension), and `<t></t>` the type of the located CoGM element.

<code><pp></code>	Planning Level	<code><hh></code>	Phase	<code><t></code>	Type
SM	Stakeholders Management	GS	Go-Live Strategy	E	Result Type
RC	Regulatory & Compliance Planning	CP	Cutover Plan	V	Result Type inherited
CM	Change Management	TS	Test Quadrant	L	Items Included in the Delivery - status
GS	Go-Live Scenario & Timing	CU	Cutover	W	Workshop (Result Type)
GE	Governance & Escalation Logic	HY	Hypercare		
KR	Communication & Reporting				
TS	Testing & Simulation				
CP	Cutover Planning & Execution				
RF	Risk & Fallback Strategy				
HP	Hypercare & Stabilization				

0.2.6 Naming of Elements Within the CoGM

Table 003 illustrates the elements within the CoGM framework consist of independent result types (**E**), inherited result types (**V**), deliverables (**L**), and workshops (**W**), and should be uniquely identified. The following nomenclature is used in this book; see also:

`<pp>-<hh>##<-t>`,
where

- `<pp></pp>`:= is a two-digit prefix that reflects the planning level;
- `<hh></hh>`:= is a two-digit code for the Cutover phase (time dimension);
- `##`:= is a sequential number within the Cutover phase and
- `<t></t>`:= is the type of the CoGM element.

Example: The deliverable "Go-Live Strategy" has the name

CP-GS41-L,

That is, if a deliverable (**L**) belongs to the "Cutover Planning and Execution" (**CP**) planning level and is created during the "Go-Live Strategy" (**GS**) phase.

The codes for items referenced in the text are enclosed in square brackets and printed in blue and bold, e.g., (**CP-GS41-L**).

Tip/Opinion: Workshops are Result Types

And since this often leads to discussions: A kickoff is not a workshop, but a deliverable, since communication here is essentially one-way. It marks the start of a Phase or significant project segment and often involves presenting the planning preparations or next steps. While there should be room for questions during a kickoff—and these can, of course, be recorded in the minutes—the kickoff itself must essentially have been agreed upon in advance. Depending on your perspective, the kickoff then takes on the character of either the conclusion of these planning preparations or their launch.

0.2.7 The Governance loop: From Insight to Manageability and Back Again

The governance loop describes the cyclical path of an element through the project logic—from its reflexive emergence as a Result Type, through its integration as a Deliverable, to feedback via Lessons Learned or audits. It illustrates how governance functions not in a linear manner, but rather iteratively and multidimensionally. The governance loop consists of the following phases:

1. **Reflection & Insight** -> This element is generated through workshops, reviews, or analyses -> Classification: Result Type -> Example: "Validated Regulatory Requirements" (**RC-CU04-E**)
2. **Planning & Controllability** -> The element is converted into a controllable artifact -> Classification: Deliverable -> Example: "Cutover Plan with Regulatory Elements" (**RC-CU04-L**)
3. **Operational Implementation** -> The element is executed, documented, and tested within the project -> e.g., through Cutover Test, Go-Live Simulation, and BCM Test Formats

- 4. Feedback & Lessons Learned** -> Insights gained from implementation are fed back into the matrix -> e.g., "Lessons Learned on Fallback Evaluation" **(TS-TS27-L)**
- 5. Review & Governance Optimization** -> The element is revised, categorized, or reclassified -> e. g., "Review of the Stakeholder Analysis" **(ST-CP02-L)**

The governance loop illustrates how an element moves dynamically—rather than statically—through the project—from insight through planning to operational implementation and feedback. This cyclical logic enhances the Auditability, didactic clarity, and strategic maturity of the Cutover Governance Matrix.

The Governance loop is a custom-developed structural model designed to describe the cyclical utilization of results in the context of an SAP Cutover. It arose from the practical need to make the multiple locations of matrix elements and the duality of Result Types and deliverables more accessible for educational purposes.

In contrast to linear project models or rigid phase-based approaches, the Governance loop illustrates how an element moves iteratively through different perspectives: It first emerges as a reflective Result Type, is then integrated into operational planning as a controllable deliverable, undergoes implementation, is refined based on Lessons Learned, and is finally revised during the review phase. This cycle enhances the auditability, Governance maturity, and didactic clarity of the matrix.

The Governance loop is not an external standard, but rather an original conceptual model derived from the matrix logic presented in this book. It complements existing frameworks such as SAP Activate or ITIL by providing an overarching structure that is particularly well-suited for complex projects involving a high density of regulations and interdisciplinary participation (see Table 004).

Table 004: Comparison of the Governance loop with Established Frameworks
... see also Deming Cycle, Wikipedia (2023); ITIL Framework, Atlassian (2023); and SAP Activate, SAP SE (2023)

Framework	Focus	Structure	Context of Use
Governance-Loop	Reflection, Manageability, and Operational Implementation in the Context of a Cutover	Cycle 01–05: Result Type & Deliverable	Originally from matrix logic, didactically positioning
PDCA-Cycle	Quality-safety in Processes	Cycle 01–04: Plan–Do–Check–Act	From the Quality—management (Deming), across industries established
ITIL-Framework	Operational Stability in Service Processes	The Lifecycle Between Service Design, Transition, and Operations	From Service Management, as an industry standard recognized
SAP Activate	End-to-End Projects in the SAP Context	Phases between Discover, Prepare, Explore, Realize, Deploy, Run	SAP's proprietary implementation methodology for S/4HANA and Cloud-Projects

The governance loop is an original structural model developed within the framework of this matrix logic. It complements existing frameworks such as the *PDCA cycle (Plan–Do–Check–Act)*, the *ITIL lifecycle*, and *SAP Activate* by providing a cross-functional perspective on the cyclical application of insights; see also the Deming Cycle, Wikipedia (2023), the ITIL framework, Atlassian (2023), and SAP Activate, SAP SE (2023). While PDCA primarily targets quality assurance, ITIL focuses on service processes, and Activate on project phases, the governance loop focuses on the didactic and auditable classification of Result Types and Deliverables across the planning levels. It thus serves as a methodological link between reflection, controllability, and operational implementation in the context of an SAP Cutover.

0.2.8 Acceptance of Deliverables and Result Types

Since the terms “Result Type” and “Deliverable” were introduced in this section, we will conclude by addressing the practical issues involved in obtaining approval for deliverables.

Tip/Opinion: Basic Rules for Approval of Documents

When performing approval tasks for documents, I follow these basic rules:

- **Assignment of Responsibilities:** Every document has a creator, a reviewer, and an approver. In well-organized projects, these roles are documented in the project structure plan or in a RACI matrix.
- **Approval Process:** Documents go through defined approval processes that include drafting, review, approval, and archiving. A change history documents the changes in versions.
- **Unique Identification:** Documents are uniquely identified by title, version, date, status (Draft, Approved, Archived), and document ID or project code.

Approval can be done the traditional way—by signing a PDF or a hard copy—but it is better to do so digitally, for example, using tools such as SharePoint, Confluence, DocuSign, or project management systems like Jira or SAP Solution Manager.

Regardless of the type of approval, the responsible person confirms that

- the content is accurate and complete,
- the document complies with the project standards and
- it can be used appropriately—for example, for implementation, Communication, or audits.

As the terms “Result Type” and “Deliverable” have been defined here, only **deliverables** are **subject to approval**. However, **Result Types should be documented**, for example, in the form of a concluding and summarizing email following a workshop.

There are some deliverables that are quite extensive and consist of numerous components. These include, for example, the Go-Live Strategy, which is described in the next section. For complex

projects, I recommend having the individual components signed off on separately, ideally supplemented by a final approval of the overall deliverable.

All deliverables subject to acceptance with defined quality criteria should be agreed upon promptly before a project begins, or at the latest during its initial phases. This also includes identifying the parties involved (creators, reviewers, and approvers). These parties often belong to a broad range of roles—from Project Management and sponsors to change managers, the PMO, and external partners. Shouldn't the deliverables already be known before the project starts? After all, they define the scope. Sure—they should. But in practice, they often aren't. And this illustrative case applies not only to Cutover management but also to numerous projects with an unclear starting point.

The PMBOK Guide distinguishes between project scope and product scope. This distinction is helpful, but in many Statements of Work (SOW), the project scope in particular is defined only vaguely—if at all. And what happens if the customer suddenly demands quality during the project without it having been specified beforehand—neither by the customer nor by the supplier? Oops. The SOW is silent on this point as well.

The result: For each individual Deliverable delivered, there is a new round of negotiations to determine whether it meets the customer's (implicit) quality expectations. This is not only inefficient but also prone to conflict.

What is the solution in this example? I recommend systematically documenting the negotiation efforts and initiating Escalation if the administrative budget is significantly exceeded. The goal is either to reach a pragmatic agreement or to define binding quality criteria retroactively that will serve as a reference for all future Deliverables.

The distinction between project scope and product scope is not only semantically relevant but also operationally critical. A clearly defined scope is a prerequisite for robust quality agreements.

0.3 The Go-Live Strategy

How do you actually get started with cutover management? When is the right time? Who is responsible? And what exactly is being managed? These questions are crucial—and yet, in many projects, they are answered too late or not at all. The consequences: Escalations, project delays, and cost overruns. The goal of the first phase, “Go-Live Strategy,” is to develop the Go-Live Strategy. This document is the first key to a successful Commissioning, as it describes the planning process for the Cutover and its specifics (when, how, with whom, for how long, etc.). Here, communication channels are outlined and escalation rules are defined. Furthermore, a standardized template for documenting Cutover activities should be provided, and the necessary Cutover-related testing phases should be defined.

The Go-Live Strategy is not only an operational milestone but also the conceptual foundation for numerous planning dimensions, which are described in the following chapters in accordance with the five Cutover phases. This allows the relevant Deliverables, Result Types, and methodologies to be structured and communicated in a targeted manner according to the planning dimensions and phases.

The Go-Live Strategy must be in place at the start of the implementation phase; that is, its components must be finalized and approved by that point. The specific planning activities then take place during the implementation phase. Why must a Go-Live Strategy be in place before the implementation phase? This is necessary to ensure that any handover processes, custom developments, or testing activities can be planned and approved in a timely manner. In practice, this means that a Cutover Strategy has the potential to alter an existing project schedule. Some cutovers require operational preparations in advance, such as storage space, additional staff, or communication campaigns. A cutover is never purely technical; it affects the entire company. Numerous planning workshops must be conducted during the implementation phase. The appropriate decision-makers must be invited to these workshops, and the necessary conditions must be established or preparations made by the relevant stakeholders. If the Cutover-specific stakeholder analysis is not initiated until the start

of the implementation phase—and if preparatory work is also lacking—there is usually not enough time for the necessary planning activities.

The purpose of this book is to make it clear that the activities involved in the “Cutover Planning and Execution” phase cannot simply be started on a whim and that these planning activities must be carefully prepared. The focus here is on the specific design of the Go-Live Strategy: What Result Types and Deliverables are included, how are they interrelated, and what quality criteria do we use as a guide?

It is important that there be a shared understanding of the Commissioning within the project, and the Go-Live Strategy is intended to ensure this. In this book, the Go-Live Strategy is viewed as an overarching methodology for creating the Cutover Plan. This perspective expands upon the traditional SAP definition, which describes the Go-Live primarily as the date the system goes live; see Definition 08.

Definition 08: Go-Live Strategy

The **Go-Live Strategy** defines the process model for creating the Cutover Plan and specifies which intermediate results (“Result Types”) and documents (“Deliverables”) are to be produced, in what order, and to what quality standards. This must be completed before the start of the implementation phase (SAP Activate) so that the development, testing, and preparatory activities relevant to the Cutover can be accepted in a timely manner.

0.3.1 Terms Related to Commissioning

There are numerous terms related to the topic of Commissioning, but unfortunately, they are not used consistently. In the next chapter on Go-Live Scenarios & Timing, I will explore this topic in greater detail and define the terms “Commissioning,” “Cutover Type,” and “Go-Live Scenario.”

Until then, the “Go-Live Scenario” can be thought of as a condensed overview or summary of the cutover schedule.

Within the Go-Live scenario, there may be various variations in the Cutover process, for example, with regard to the time windows of the systems involved, sequencing, and Fallback options.

These variations (Cutover Scenarios) serve as operational templates for simulations, dry runs, and the final implementation; see Definition 09.

Definition 09: Cutover Scenario

The **Cutover Scenario** describes a specific variation of a cutover process—for example, in terms of time windows, systems involved, sequencing, and fallback options—and serves as an operational template for simulations, dry runs, and the final implementation.

The term "Cutover Scenario" is not strictly necessary, but it can be helpful when classifying different process variants. Just as there is a "Go-Live Strategy," there is also a "Cutover Strategy"; see Definition 10.

Definition 10: Cutover Strategy

The **Cutover Strategy** specifies the general approach to the transition (e.g., Big Bang, iterative) and defines the methodological framework for planning, Communication, risk, and Governance. The Cutover Strategy is part of the Go-Live Strategy.

The terms relevant to Commissioning are summarized again in Table 005 and illustrated in Figure 02. To avoid misunderstandings, there is Definition 11.

Definition 11: Cutover Plan or Cutover Planning

In this book, the term "**Cutover Planning**" is used in different ways. **(i) Cutover Planning (General, Discipline Context):** This refers to the discipline—that is, the entirety of all preparatory activities for the transition. **(ii) The "Cutover Plan" phase (CoGM context, phase model)** refers to the time period during which the specific cutover plan is developed. **(iii) The "Cutover Planning and Execution" planning level (CoGM context and chapter 8)** refers to the governance level in the model, which encompasses planning and execution as a control level. **(iv) The Cutover Plan** is the key planning document for executing the cutover and includes the schedule, the Resource Planning, and much more; in other words, the Cutover schedule is only part of the Cutover Plan.

Table 005: Educational Summary of Terms Relevant to Commissioning

Term	Function	Position in the Model	Typical Contents
Go-Live Strategy	Parent Deliverable for Creating the Cutover Plan	Strategic Level	Stakeholder Analysis, Regulations, Governance, Communication, Risk, Cutover Type
Cutover Strategy	Methodological Framework for Shaping the Transition	Part of the Go-Live Strategy	Big Bang, iterative, at times; Governance, Communication, Rollback
Cutover Type	Classification of the transition based on scope and structure	Part of the Cutover Strategy	Modular, regional, function-based, staggered over time
Go-Live Scenario	Summary of the Cutover Schedule	Result of the Go-Live Strategy	Schedule, Milestones, Escalation logic, Affected systems
Cutover Scenario	Specific process variant within the Go-Live scenario	Part of the Go-Live Scenarios	Fallback Scenario, Dry Run, Parallel operation, Emergency Plan

Figure 02 shows the hierarchical structure of the Go-Live Strategy as a set of methods for planning and implementing a system migration. The diagram is divided into three levels:

- 1. Go-Live Strategy:** It sits at the top of the hierarchy and serves as the overarching entity that methodically integrates all subsequent components. It defines the strategic framework for the transition and establishes the Governance framework.
- 2. Cutover Strategy and Go-Live Scenario:** The second level consists of two key pillars:
 - » The Cutover Strategy describes the methodological approach, including a phased model, role definitions, Fallback mechanisms, and quality gates.
 - » The Go-Live Scenario consolidates the timing and organizational planning for the transition—for example, as a phased Rollout across multiple modules.

3. Cutover Type and Cutover Scenarios: At the third level, the two pillars are further specified:

- » The "Cutover Type" classifies the transition based on its structure and scope—for example, as "Big Bang," "Staggered," or "Hybrid."
- » The Cutover Scenarios describe the specific process variations within the Go-Live scenario, such as technical switchover, data migration, or interface activation.

The diagram illustrates that Cutover Scenarios are not an initial component of the Go-Live Strategy, but rather are iteratively refined and methodically differentiated within the framework of its logic during the planning phase, in the sense of progressive elaboration. There are also go-live scenarios—such as a simple "Big Bang"—where the design of Cutover Scenarios is either not required at all or is optional. The remaining components are conceptually part of the Go-Live Strategy and together form a consistent Governance model.

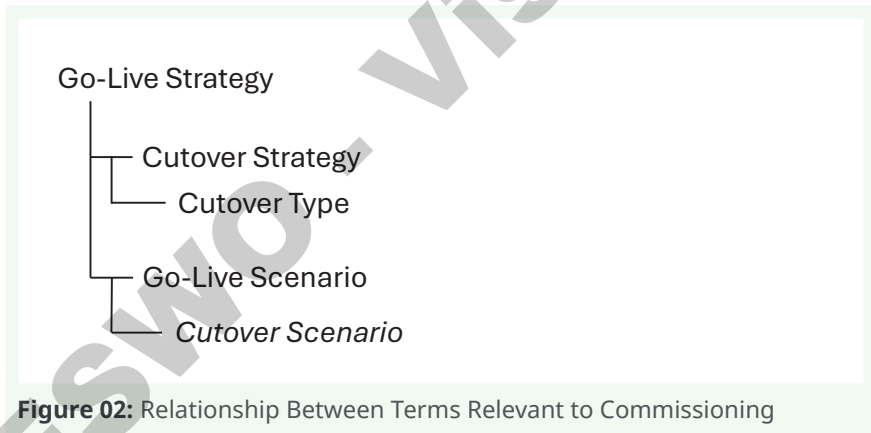


Figure 02: Relationship Between Terms Relevant to Commissioning

0.3.2 Example: Phased Rollout of an SAP S/4HANA System

Experience has shown that the terms "Cutover Type," "Go-Live Scenario," and "Cutover Strategy" can lead to misunderstandings. That is why an example is provided below.

Cutover Type: Classification of the Transition Based on Scope and Structure

In this case, the Rollout will be phased by business unit: first Finance & Controlling, then Sales & Distribution, and later Procurement. The Cutover Type would therefore be: “Staggered Functional Rollout”—a sequential transition by functional modules with defined transition windows and phased Go-Live dates.

Go-Live Scenario: A Condensed Overview of the Cutover Schedule

The Go-Live Scenario describes the timeline and organizational structure of the transition:

- Finance & Controlling: Go-Live on March 1
- Sales & Distribution: Go-Live on March 15.
- Procurement: Go-Live on April 1

It includes key dates, the systems involved, the relevant interfaces, as well as planned Downtime and communication windows. Format: a one-page overview, often presented as a schedule map or timeline chart.

Cutover Strategy: A Methodological Framework for Shaping the Transition

The Cutover Strategy defines the process model, the Governance framework, the Fallback mechanisms, and the role assignments for the entire transition. It answers questions such as:

- What is the phase structure underlying the Cutover? (e.g., 5-Phase Model)
- How are deliverables mapped across the planning levels?
- What is the escalation logic for deviations?
- How is quality ensured when the scope is not fully defined?

In our example, the Cutover Strategy would be, for example: “Governed Staggered Rollout with Phase-Gate Control and Fallback Matrix.” It includes:

- The Assignment of Planning Levels to Rollout Waves

- The Definition of Quality Gates by Phase
- The Escalation Logic in Scope or Quality Conflicts
- The Communication Matrix for Stakeholders and Suppliers

The Cutover Strategy remains unchanged even if the go-live dates change. It provides the methodological framework for operational implementation and defines the structure, roles, and quality logic of the transition. Schedule adjustments affect the Go-Live Scenario, not the strategy itself.

Cutover Scenario: Specific Details of the Transition in the Project Context

The Cutover Scenario describes the operational implementation of the Cutover Type in a specific project. Example:

- **Finance & Controlling:** Full transition with data migration and parallel operation for 3 days
- **Sales & Distribution:** Transition with Interface Activation and Phased User Authorization
- **Procurement:** Transition using a shadow system and final switchover after test approval

The Go-Live Scenario describes the timeline and organizational structure of the transition—for example, as a phased Rollout across three functional areas. Within this scenario, there are several Cutover Scenarios that define the specific implementation of individual transitions. A Cutover Scenario describes, for example, the technical switchover, data migration, user authorization, or interface activation for a specific area. The Cutover Strategy, in turn, provides the methodological framework within which these scenarios are planned, evaluated, and managed.

It integrates the Cutover Strategy, the Cutover Type, the Go-Live Scenario, and the Cutover Scenarios—which are developed later—into a consistent governance model. The Cutover Scenarios are not initial components; rather, they are defined in detail during the planning phase in accordance with their methodological logic. They represent the operational implementation of individual transitions and are closely intertwined with the Go-Live Scenario.

Table 006: Semantic Hierarchy (clarified)

Term	Function in the framework	Example in the Rollout
Cutover Type	Classifies the transition	Staggered Functional Rollout
Go-Live Scenario	Condenses the schedule	3 phased Go-Live dates
Cutover Strategy	Defines the methodological approach	Governance Model with Phase Gates and Fallbacks
Cutover Scenario	Specific process variant within the Go-Live scenario	Shadow system for MM, parallel operation for FI

A didactic classification is provided in Table 006 and Figure 03. This illustrates the semantic and methodological hierarchy of Cutover planning in the context of a system Rollout. It is divided into four coordinated levels:

- **Cutover Strategy**—The methodological framework, consisting of a phased model, Governance logic, and Fallback mechanisms. This strategy remains stable even when Go-Live dates change and provides structure for the entire transition.
- **Cutover Type** - The classification of the transition based on scope and structure—e. g., Big Bang, Staggered, or Hybrid. The type defines the strategic direction and establishes the Rollout logic.
- **Go-Live Scenario** - A condensed overview of the timeline and key events. It shows when specific modules or systems will go live and defines the timeframe for implementation.
- **Cutover Scenarios** - The specific process options within the Go-Live scenario—such as a phased system shutdown for MM or parallel operation for FI. They describe the technical and organizational implementation of individual transitions.

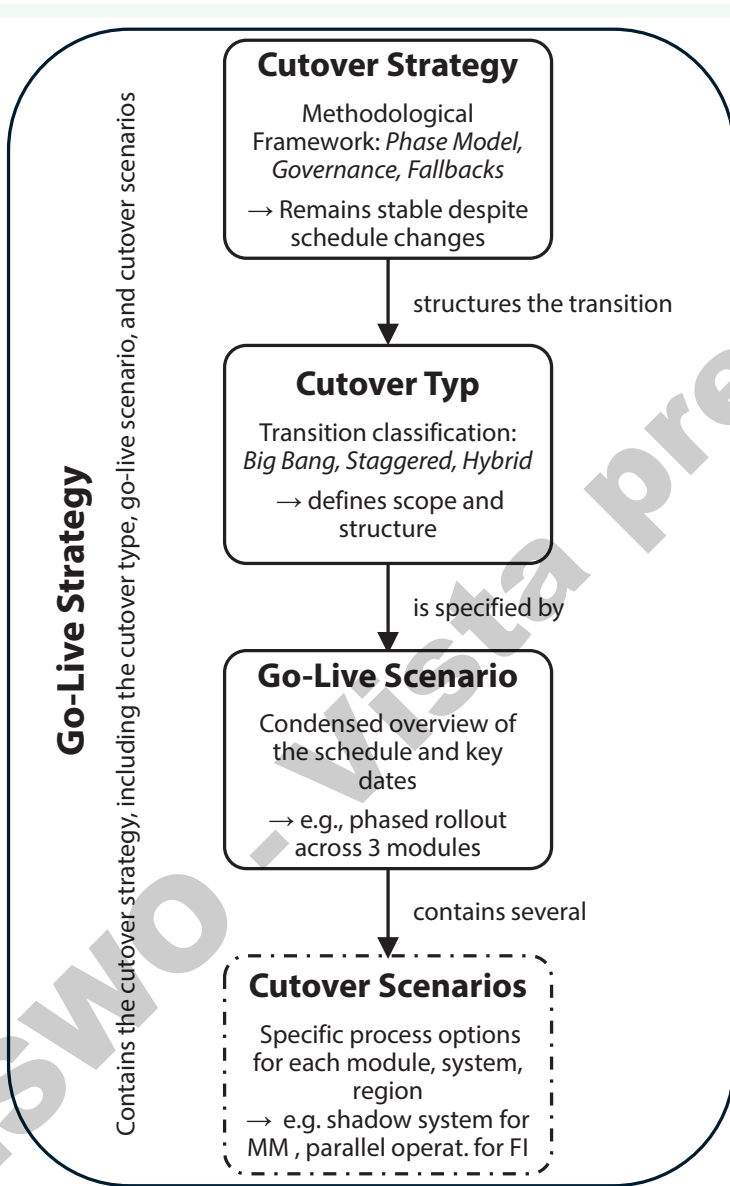


Figure 03: The semantic structure of the Go-Live Strategy as a unifying entity.

0.3.3 Components of the Go-Live Strategy

Table 007: Deliverables and Result Types for the “Cutover Planning and Execution” Planning Level for the “Go-Live Strategy” Phase

Original planning level	Number	Description	Type
Cutover Planning & Execution	CP-GS41-E	Go-Live Strategy	L
Cutover Planning & Execution	CP-GS42-W	Go-Live Strategy Workshop	E
Cutover Planning & Execution	CP-GS43-L	Cutover Kickoff for the Planning	L
Cutover Planning & Execution	CP-GS44-E	Cutover Template	L
Cutover Planning & Execution	CP-GS45-E	Template Workshop	W
Hypercare & Stabilization	CP-GS46-L	Hypercare Scenario, Chapter in the Go-Live Strategy (HP-GS03-L)	V
Communication & Reporting	CP-GS47-W	Communication plan for Phase 2: “Cutover Plan” (KR-GS09-L)	V
Regulatory & Compliance Planning	CP-GS48-E	List of Regulatory Requirements (RC-GS11-L)	V
Stakeholders Management	CP-GS49-E	Stakeholder Analysis, Part of the Go-Live Strategy (SM-GS14-L)	V
Testing & Simulation	CP-GS50-E	Cutover-specific test strategy (TS-GS15-L)	V
Risk & Fallback Strategy	CP-GS51-E	Fallback Scenario (RF-GS19-L)	V
Risk & Fallback Strategy	CP-GS52-E	Risk Entries in Go-Live Strategy (RF-GS21-L)	V
Change Management	CP-GS53-E	Change Governance Matrix (ChGM) (CM-GS22-L)	V
Change Management	CP-GS54-E	Requirement-to-Change Mapping (CM-GS23-L)	V
Change Management	CP-GS55-E	Change Management Templates (e.g., CM-GS26-L under CM-GS36-L)	V
Go-Live Scenario & Timing	CP-GS56-E	Go-Live Scenario; description includes Go-Live Strategy and Cutover Type (GS-GS37-L)	V

What should be included in a go-live strategy? The Cutover Governance Matrix makes it easy to answer this question. All deliverables from the “Cutover Planning and Execution” planning level within the “Go-Live Strategy” phase belong here.

Table 007 shows that numerous deliverables from other planning levels have been inherited as Result Types (V), since they belong to the Go-Live Strategy deliverable. All of these inherited deliverables are shown in italics, and the original planning level is included as a descriptive column. A detailed description of these inherited deliverables, along with their concepts, methodologies, and procedures, is provided in the book. The independent deliverables/result types of the planning phase are discussed in detail in the corresponding chapter.

In summary, the Go-Live Strategy brings together all the essential elements required for a structured and secure Commissioning. It establishes the strategic foundation for subsequent Cutover planning without specifying the details at this stage. This includes analyzing critical stakeholder roles for Go-Live and Hypercare, aligned with the project management register, as well as taking into account legal and company-specific regulations such as ISO, ITIL, or GxP. The documented changes to the system—including an AS-IS/TO-BE comparison, Change Owners, and impact analysis—form a central element. The specific Go-Live Scenario, including the schedule, defines the timeframe, supplemented by a Governance and Escalation model with clear decision-making paths and approval structures. A Communication plan specifies channels, frequencies, and templates for status updates and Escalations. Technical validation is ensured through test blueprints and Dress Rehearsals that simulate live operations. A consolidated Cutover Plan template structures the activities at the conceptual level, while risk and Rollback strategies document potential termination scenarios. Finally, the Hypercare Phase is prepared—with support structures, shift scheduling, and handover processes to ensure stable operations after Go-Live.

In the remainder of this book, we will explain the following planning dimensions and key components that are necessary for creating a comprehensive Cutover Plan.

0.4 The Role of the Cutover Manager: Between Operational Management and Strategic Responsibility

In many project descriptions, the role of the Cutover Manager is reduced to collecting and sorting tasks—as if the Cutover phase were a logistical puzzle that can be solved through lists and sequences. However, this view falls short. The Cutover Manager is not merely a task coordinator, but a strategic integrator: he or she brings together planning, risk, Communication, and Governance into a single, manageable process.

This role is embedded within the project organization and operates according to defined escalation paths. The subproject managers and subject matter experts provide their input through clearly defined interfaces; however, responsibility for methodological consolidation, phase-based structuring, and operational validation lies with the Cutover Manager. The Cutover Manager is responsible not only for creating the Cutover Plan but also for its validation, Communication, and audit compliance. Cutover management is often referred to as *a cross-functional role*.

0.4.1 Responsibilities at the Program Level

At the program level, the Cutover Manager is responsible for consolidating and integrating all project-related Cutover Plans, as well as activities related to decommissioning legacy systems. He defines the overarching process model, including the formal entry and completion criteria for the Cutover Window, and is responsible for overall logistics. He is responsible for creating, maintaining, and executing a coordinated, program-wide Cutover schedule. In addition, he is responsible for risk and issue management, as well as for communication via central Change and Communication channels.

0.4.2 Responsibilities at the Project Level

In the context of the project, the Cutover Manager coordinates project-specific activities in collaboration with the Business Cutover Manager. This includes creating and maintaining the cutover schedule, as well as defining and delivering the associated deliverables and Result Types—such as the Go-Live Strategy, formal acceptance criteria, Communication and Migration plans, and contingency plans. He serves as a bridge between business

and IT, integrates project-specific content into the overarching program plan, and ensures communication through internal project channels.

0.4.3 Didactic Classification

This two-tiered role description shows that Cutover management is not merely an operational task, but a function grounded in methodology and strategy, with clear Governance responsibilities. The distinction between the program and project levels enables scalability—both in global Rollouts and in localized implementations. The Cutover Manager serves as a methodological architect, communication hub, and risk controller all in one.

0.5 Structure of the Book

Chapter 0, “Cutover Governance Matrix—Structure and Strategy,” forms the methodological foundation of the book and defines the structural architecture of cutover management. It introduces the **Cutover Governance Matrix (CoGM)**—a multidimensional framework consisting of five phases and ten planning levels—and describes its function as a reference model for planning, managing, and auditing complex SAP projects; see Appendix B.

This chapter explains the *5-Phase Model (Go-Live Strategy, Cutover Plan, Test Quadrant, Cutover, Hypercare)* and links it to standardized *deliverables* and *Result Types*, which are mapped across the *planning levels*. It introduces key terms such as Inherited Result Types, Governance loop, Methodology Level, and Insight formats—and demonstrates how these concepts enhance the didactic clarity and operational manageability of the Cutover.

The *Go-Live Strategy* is described as a strategic starting point that establishes the planning foundation for the cutover without specifying its details at this stage. The semantic hierarchy of *Cutover Strategy, Go-Live Scenario, Cutover Type, and Cutover Scenario* is systematically developed and embedded in a consistent Governance model.

Chapter 0 is not a chronological introduction, but rather a structuring conceptual framework that provides a methodological foundation for the subsequent chapters. It ensures semantic coherence, didactic consistency, and strategic orientation—for readers, project teams, and auditors alike.

Chapter 1, “Go-Live Scenario & Timing,” clarifies the terminology related to Commissioning—from *Cutover* to *Deployment* to *DevOps*—and introduces a cross-context definition. It shows how Commissioning differs across projects, programs, product development, service operations, compliance, and Rollout, while remaining methodologically comparable.

The focus is on strategic planning for the Go-Live: Cutover types, scenarios, time windows, Fallback logic, and Governance structures are systematically described. The *Cutover Factors Compass* helps in selecting reliable dates. A sample project named “Sunshine” illustrates its practical application.

This chapter serves as the foundation for operational Cutover planning and combines semantic clarity with strategic manageability.

Chapter 2, “Stakeholder Management,” examines the role of *Stakeholder Analysis* in the context of Cutover management and positions it as a central element of the Go-Live Strategy. Unlike traditional project approaches, this analysis focuses not only on familiar standard roles such as Project Management, the IT department, or business units, but also includes operational stakeholders such as production managers, warehouse staff, and shift coordinators. The goal is to identify all relevant stakeholders, assess their interests and influence, and develop a Communication Strategy that can be adapted throughout the entire process.

The IT Leadership plays a particularly important role, serving as a strategic and operational hub. In addition, project-based Change Management and Architecture Management provide crucial perspectives: Change Management addresses acceptance, Communication, and Training, while Architecture Management uses the *TOGAF® domains*—Business, Data, Application, and Technology—to provide a structured view of stakeholders. *ITIL frameworks*—such as Service Owner, Process Owner, and Incident Management—are aligned with SAP-specific roles to ensure Governance consistency.

The analysis is not a static document, but a dynamic management tool. It is integrated into the Cutover Governance Matrix—both in the Go-Live Strategy and in the Cutover Plan—and is updated regularly. As such, it forms the foundation for risk mitigation, clear escalation paths, and successful project implementation. Its value lies not in methodological depth, but in operational relevance: it highlights who is truly critical when the Cutover begins and ensures that architectural, Change, and project logic are seamlessly integrated.

The Cutover phase of an SAP project is not only a technical transition from the old system to the new one, but also a particularly critical time for ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. **Chapter 3, “Regulatory & Compliance Planning,”** provides an overview of this topic. During this phase, large volumes of data are transferred, new processes are put into production, and access permissions are reassigned, which significantly increases the risks of data breaches, operational errors, and regulatory violations. To ensure that the Go-Live does not become a Compliance Risk, the relevant regulations must be taken into account and integrated into the strategy as early as the planning phase. These include, among other things, the *GDPR’s* requirements for *the protection of personal data* and for ensuring financial transparency; *industry-specific standards such as HIPAA or PCI DSS; GxP Guidelines* in the pharmaceutical industry; and *ITIL-compliant Change Management* for controlled changes. In addition, *accounting standards* such as IFRS and local regulations play a central role, as does the establishment of an *internal control system (ICS)* that ensures audit compliance and process integrity through approval processes, checklists, technical controls, and validations. A lack of focus on compliance can lead to fines, Audit findings, or reputational damage, which is why integrating regulatory requirements into the planning, execution, and documentation of the Cutover is essential. The goal is to ensure that the Go-Live is not only technically successful but also legally and organizationally sound.

Chapter 4, “Change Management,” addresses the role of changes in the context of the SAP Cutover and explains how technical, organizational, and process-related changes are systematically identified, evaluated, and managed. Unlike traditional change

processes, Cutover management focuses on time-sensitive and business-critical changes that must be implemented immediately before, during, or after Go-Live.

The document explains various aspects of changes—ranging from project-related change requests and technical migrations to organizational changes and ITIL-based service changes. Particular emphasis is placed on formal approval by the *Change Advisory Board (CAB)*, which is established as a Milestone in the Cutover Plan.

This chapter introduces a three-dimensional framework consisting of *taxonomy*, *nomenclature*, and *topology* to clearly structure changes, name them consistently, and make their dependencies visible. In addition, it describes Metadimensions such as criticality, version number, and Cutover relevance, which are crucial for planning, Risk Analysis, and Governance.

The **Change Governance Matrix (ChGM)** serves as the methodological culmination: It integrates all domains, categories, and types of changes into a scalable governance tool that maps out responsibilities (RACI), Approval Paths, and auditability. This ensures that Change Management during the Cutover is not only documented but also actively managed and positioned as a key success factor for the Go-Live.

Chapter 5, “Governance & Escalation Logic,” describes the decision-making and escalation mechanisms for the cutover -phase. It clearly distinguishes between project-wide escalation during the planning phase and the specific governance procedures during the -go-live. The focus is on defining roles, escalation levels, and communication channels: the -cutover lead, escalation manager, stream leads-, Communication Coordination, and Steering Committee form the backbone of a robust Governance structure.

The *Escalation Matrix* with levels 0–3, the *Escalation Guide*, communication channels, and workshops ensure rapid, consistent decision-making and transparent information flows. Methodological highlights—such as Level 0 for manageable deviations or the role of Communication Coordination—demonstrate how Governance remains structured and auditable even under pressure.

This chapter thus provides the foundation for operational management during the exceptional circumstances of the Cutover and integrates planning, execution, and Lessons Learned into a consistent governance framework.

Chapter 6, “Communication & Reporting,” addresses the role of transparent communication and structured reporting as the backbone of cutover -governance. It clearly distinguishes between *Communication Strategy* (framework, principles, target audiences, messages) and *Communication Plan* (operational implementation, including roles, channels, timing, and Escalation logic). The focus is on *the communication matrix*, the reporting- cascade, and the integration of tools such as MS Teams, SharePoint, or Jira. Workshops serve as methodological anchor points for aligning roles, content, and channels and translating them into a governance-ready structure.

This chapter shows how communication is managed in a differentiated manner throughout all phases—from planning through Cutover to Hypercare—ranging from weekly coordination meetings to hourly status updates and RAG indicators- for critical KPIs.

Methodological highlights such as the Multi-layer communication model or the Communication matrix illustrate how transparency, consistency, and auditability are achieved. This approach views communication not as a byproduct, but as an integral part of cutover -management.

Chapter 7, “Testing & Simulation,” describes how to validate the GoLive- through structured test runs and simulations. Four complementary formats make up the *Test Quadrant: Cutover -Test, GoLive-- Simulation, Fallback- Evaluation, and BCM- Test formats*.

The Cutover-Test validates the technical implementation and governance structure of the Cutover Plan, including time management, Escalation logic, and the Communication matrix. The Go-Live Simulation tests organizational readiness under production-like conditions—from end-to-end processes to infrastructure and user acceptance.

The FallbackEvaluation tests strategic resilience: decommissioning pathways, restart strategies, and emergency communication are assessed for their resilience. BCMTest formats supplement the

model by evaluating operational crisis resilience, simulating disruptions, activating escalation chains, and validating the ability to act under pressure.

This chapter clearly distinguishes between *resilience* (strategic adaptability) and *crisis resilience* (operational responsiveness) and shows how these two dimensions interact in a project context. Iterative testing cycles, checklists, and Lessons Learned ensure the continuous refinement of the cutover -plan and strengthen the governance structures- for the transition to production.

Chapter 8, “Cutover Planning and Execution,” describes the planning phase of the cutover as the core of Go-Live preparations. It explains how to structure the sequence of all activities, allocate resources, clarify responsibilities, and define Escalation logic. Execution is mentioned only in passing—its success depends entirely on the quality of the planning.

The focus is on the three-level logic:

- *Strategic Level* (Release strategy, Big Bang, phased approach, pilot),
- *Structural level* (Building Blocks such as business closure, data migration, Cutover),
- *Operational Level* (detailed activities, sequencing, staffing).

Methodologically, this logic is implemented through a *series of workshops*: Scenario & Window Workshop, Topology Workshop, Planning Workshop, Template Workshop, and Staffing Workshop. They guide the process from strategic decision-making to operational staffing planning.

A key tool is the *Cutover Template*, which differs significantly from a traditional project plan: 24/7 calendar, minute-level granularity, a focus on Governance, and Fallback logic. It forms the basis for the Cutover schedule and ensures consistency, transparency, and controllability.

This chapter makes it clear: To master the Cutover, one must above all master planning—execution is the logical result of thorough preparation.

Chapter 9, “Risk & Fallback Strategy,” shows how risks are systematically identified, categorized, and managed during an SAP -cutover and how the Fallback plan serves as a strategic resilience

tool. It distinguishes between *strategic*, *operational*, *communication*, and *governance -risks* and makes it clear that risks are not merely technical glitches but can also arise from unclear roles or communication gaps.

The *governance loop* integrates risk identification, fallback plan-, operational implementation, and Lessons Learned into a learning system. Workshops on Risk Analysis and fallback strategy- provide the methodological foundation for managing risks and preparing fallback scenarios- with audit compliance. The *Risk Plan* and the *Risk Register* are the key deliverables: They prioritize risks based on probability of occurrence and potential impact, define control measures, and document responsibilities. The *Fallback* is viewed as a governance tool—not a failure, but a planned safety mechanism with clear criteria, decision-making logic, and a Communication matrix. Checklists and decision trees ensure Auditability and strengthen the project's Resilience.

This chapter thus provides the foundation for a sound Go-Live decision and sustainable stabilization during the hypercare phase.

Chapter 10, “Hypercare & Stabilization,” describes the critical phase immediately following the go-live, during which the new system is under increased monitoring and receives intensive support. The goal is to achieve long-term stabilization, rapid troubleshooting, and ensure user acceptance. The chapter highlights typical risks associated with a poorly prepared hypercare phase, such as a lack of role clarification, insufficient resources, or poor Communication—and emphasizes the need for clear structures, dedicated teams, and coordinated Escalation logic.

The definition of the hypercare -phase includes system stabilization, data validation, user support, training, and reporting. Entry criteria such as successful UAT, business acceptance, and activated support structures form the foundation, while preparatory steps such as team setup, monitoring dashboards, and Communication Strategy ensure quality. A multidisciplinary hypercare team with clearly defined roles—ranging from the hypercare manager and Incident Coordinator to functional and technical experts—ensures rapid responsiveness. Complemented by end-user support, communication, and change management roles, this creates a dynamic network that fosters stability and trust.

The *Escalation Matrix* forms the operational backbone of the phase and governs response times, responsibilities, and communication channels. As a result, Hypercare is viewed not merely as a technical safeguard, but as an integral part of Change Management and a guarantee of sustainable project success.

0.6 Style Guidelines

To ensure that the book remains consistent and easy to read, mandatory style guidelines apply to formatting. Different text areas and boxes are used for emphasis, some of which are designed with custom fonts; see Table 009 and Table 010:

Example: Gray background for examples (example of style guidelines)

Definition 12: Yellow box for definitions (example of a style guide)

Tip/Opinion: Blue for opinions or tips (example of a style guide)

Table 008: Green for descriptions of tables and charts (example of style guidelines)

Tables, charts, and definitions are numbered and listed together in the appendix to make them easier to find. Four distinctive fonts form the typographic foundation and are used consistently in boxes, highlights, and running text:

- **Bold black text** for generic headings and box headings (Example, Figure, Table, Tip)
- **Blue blue text** for key content, formulas, codes, and core messages
- *Blue italics* for quotations, newly introduced terms, and semantic emphasis
- ***Bold, italic, black text*** to specifically highlight key terms within definitions, opinion boxes, and practical tips
- products.geswo.com Links are displayed with a green underline

The book uses a clearly defined hierarchy with a maximum of four levels:

- **Level 1:** Chapter heading (e. g., “1 Introduction”)
- **Level 2:** Section (e. g., “1.1 Basics”)
- **Level 3:** Subsection (e. g., “1.1.1 Definitions”)
- **Level 4:** Detailed level without numbering, typographically set apart (underlined in blue)

The fourth level is used to organize the content within a subsection without continuing the numbering structure. This improves readability and prevents excessive nesting.

Table 009: Font size and line spacing of the various text elements

Element	Font	Font size	Line spacing
Normal text	Noto Sans	10	12
Examples	Noto Sans	10	12
Table captions	Noto Sans	9	12
Table header	Myriad Pro	9	11
Table main	Myriad Pro	8	10
Figure captions	Noto Sans	9	12
Text in the yellow definition box	Georgia	10	12
Text in the turquoise opinion box	Segoe UI	10	12
Level 1: Chapter heading	Segoe UI	22	28
Level 2: Section	Segoe UI	12	16
Level 3: Subsection	Segoe UI	11	13
Level 4: Advanced Level	Noto Sans	10	12
Link	Noto Sans	10	12

Table 010: Style Guide for the Use of Fonts

Element	Highlight	Regular	Bold	Bold Blue	Italic	Italic Bold
Normal text	none	Noto Sans, Regular, Black 80%	Noto Sans, Bold, Black 90%	Noto Sans, Bold, Blue 80%	Noto Sans, Italic, Blue 90%	n/a
Examples	Gray background	Noto Sans, Regular, Black 80%	Noto Sans, Bold, Black 90%	Noto Sans, Bold, Blue 80%	Noto Sans, Italic, Blue 90%	n/a
Table captions	Green background	Noto Sans, Regular, Black 80%	Noto Sans, Bold, Black 90%	Noto Sans, Bold, Blue 80%	Noto Sans, Italic, Blue 90%	n/a
Figure captions	Green background	Noto Sans, Regular, Black 80%	Noto Sans, Bold, Black 90%	Noto Sans, Bold, Blue 80%	Noto Sans, Italic, Blue 90%	n/a
Text in yellow definition box	Yellow box	Georgia, Regular, Black 80%	Georgia, Bold, Black 90%	Georgia, Bold, Blue 80%	Georgia, Italic, Blue 90%	Georgia, Bold Italic, Black 90%
Text in turquoise opinion box	Turquoise box	Segoe-UI, Regular, Black 80%	Segoe-UI, Bold, Black 90%	Segoe-UI, Bold, Blue 80%	Segoe-UI, Italic, Blue 90%	Segoe-UI, Bold Italic, Black 90%