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THE NEW SAP GENERAL LEDGER (releases ECC 5.0 or 6.0)

INTRODUCTION

A highly competitive, increasingly global economy and a rapidly changing regulatory landscape have increased the demands on general-ledger accounting and related business software. Forward-looking solutions for general-ledger accounting must accommodate the increased standardization of international accounting principles and the need for faster period-end closings. They must support simultaneous implementation of new company-specific and industry-specific reporting requirements - while helping you reduce costs and increase data transparency. They must facilitate the increased convergence between financial and managerial accounting.

The new general-ledger accounting software in mySAP ERP can help companies like yours address these issues. mySAP ERP now provides a unified structure that combines individual ledgers - such as the cost-of-sales, profit-center-accounting, and consolidation-staging ledgers. With this structure you can:

- *Considerably accelerate your period-end closings*
- *Flexibly perform reporting tasks based on data reconciled in real time*
- Efficiently handle financial reporting, according to both local and international accounting principles

This document explains how the new general-ledger software in mySAP ERP incorporates the new features. It also describes how you can make the transition from the general-ledger accounting functionality in SAP® R/3® software to the new general ledger.

ARCHITECTURE OF THE NEW GENERAL LEDGER

With releases of SAP enterprise resource planning (ERP) software up to and including SAP R/3 and SAP R/3 Enterprise software, companies would handle general-ledger accounting by using different SAP applications. Depending on specific company or industry requirements, or local accounting principles, you had to implement application components or functions that sometimes had their own user interfaces. For example, you might use special-purpose ledger software to meet certain reporting requirements - such as having totals in additional table fields. In addition, SAP profit-center accounting software resided in a separate application. Software for both the special-purpose ledger and profit-center accounting offered certain functions that were not automatically reconciled with functions in the general-ledger accounting software. Consequently, closing activities involved additional reconciliation effort.

The new general ledger in mySAP ERP 2005 covers all these functions and requirements, but retains the familiar accounting interface - with its variety of services, such as currency translation - and continues to provide functions that support postings. Upstream software for sales and distribution and materials management works with the new general ledger in exactly the same way as before. Familiar and well-tested tables - BSEG, document table; BSIS, open items for new general-ledger accounts; and BSAS, cleared items for general-ledger accounts - are still part of the solution and form the database for many standard reports and customer-specific reports.

Users familiar with SAP R/3 will find a similar interface for the new general ledger. New general-ledger functions for financial allocation or statistical key figures, for example, share the same interface design as functions for controlling.

The new general ledger offers the following technical advantages:

- The introduction and portrayal of business models now occurs within a single solution. This design avoids any need for a separate cost-of-sales ledger, special-purpose ledger, reconciliation ledger, or profit-center ledger.
- Users need to become familiar only with the interface and functions of one application. Users already familiar with SAP R/3 require little, if any, training.
- Data is stored only once in the system (in a single totals table) - eliminating data redundancy.
- No need for additional reconciliation activities during closing.
- It is now easier to make adjustments to business-specific requirements (such as the inclusion of customer fields as part of flexible reporting).

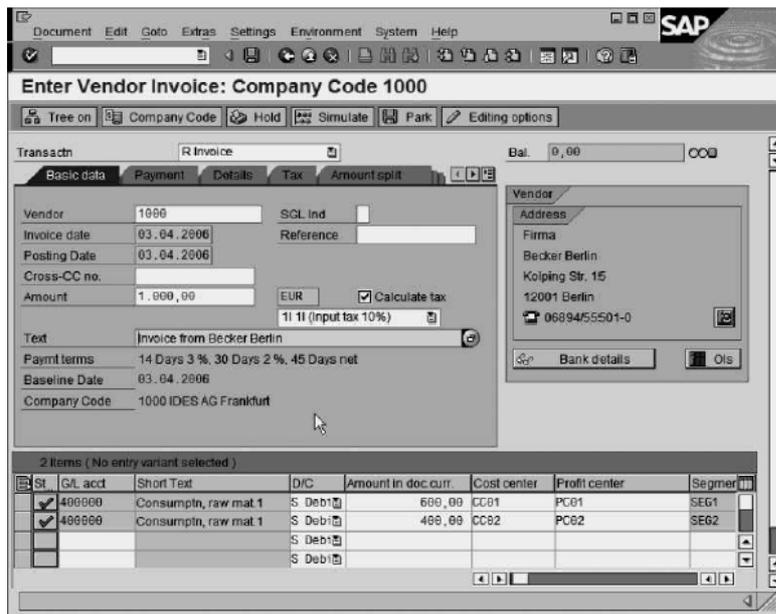
THE LEDGER CONCEPT

The new general ledger in mySAP ERP uses the special-purpose ledger technique to save total values. (The special-purpose ledger is now more like the toolbox that it was designed to be.) Many tables are preconfigured upon delivery. In the new general ledger, a ledger or ledger group can portray one or more valuation views. All company codes are assigned to a "leading ledger" for each client. This ledger contains the group-valuation view. You can add additional ledgers for each company code. By assigning different characteristic values and fiscal-year definitions, you can use the additional ledgers for different purposes - such as parallel accounting or management reporting.

Because innovations in the new general ledger mostly concern how data is updated rather than changes to the interface, you can now directly perform postings that previously required several different components. This ability also applies to transfer postings between profit centers or other characteristics (such as segments) that were previously stored in the special-purpose ledger. You can now use a general-ledger account posting that specifies the corresponding profit center. Since the data is stored in the same table, the system always reconciles the profit centers and general-ledger account instantaneously. The software still issues document numbers by document type based on the number range object from the general-ledger software in SAP R/3 (RF_BELEG). In cases involving a posting to a ledger with a fiscal year that differs from that of the leading ledger, the system issues document numbers from a different number range object (FAGL_DOCNR). Neighboring components are always updated using the leading ledger, which is part of the standard SAP solution.

You can handle parallel accounting using the ledger approach as an alternative to the account approach. To provide different valuation views for period-end closing, you can either perform automatic postings using the valuation programs (such as foreign-currency valuation) or use manual postings to a specific ledger. For postings related to daily operations, the software normally updates all ledgers assigned to the company code. To enable this feature, the leading ledger exists in all company codes (across all clients). You can define additional ledgers for each company code, possibly with different fiscal-year variants. An incoming invoice, such as a payment on account, always updates all ledgers related to the respective company code. The period check is always performed for the leading or representative ledger. If a ledger group does not contain the leading ledger, one of the ledgers in the group becomes the representative ledger. This approach means that postings are made only if the period of the leading or representative ledger allows. mySAP ERP does not validate any other fiscal-year definitions that exist in other ledgers of the ledger group. The software updates the other ledgers in every case, which does not prevent completion of the posting. (Note: You cannot make postings specific to ledgers or to ledger groups to accounts managed on an open-item basis.)

You enter, display, and change documents in exactly the same way as before. Although most users work with the (regular) entry view, you can easily switch to the general-ledger view. The general-ledger view is always specific to a ledger. Depending on the system setting, you can display one or more general-ledger views. In certain ledger views, it might be useful to derive specific characteristics or set a zero balance for all the segments involved in each document.



NEW TABLES

Three new tables in the new general ledger handle totals, store general-ledger and specific line items, and calculate valuations for year-end closings in parallel ledgers.

A New Totals Table

In addition to using the new totals table in the standard software, you can define your own table, using a new table (FAGLFLEXT) as a template. You might need to define your own table if you have a very large volume of data or very different characteristic values. (For more information, see SAP Note 820495.) Before creating new totals tables, we recommend that you check to see if using the standard table would be sufficient. This step is important because the report writer software or drill-down tools do not recognize new totals tables that you create.



The new totals table contains additional standard fields for storing totals. With the standard table, you can easily activate support for many scenarios by customizing the software.

The table thus supports such activities as:

- Segment reporting
- Profit-center updating Cost-of-sales
- Accounting Cost-center updating
- Preparation for consolidation Business-area updating

You can add other fields that are supported in the standard software, such as "plant" from SAP materials management software. You can include these fields in the totals table with minimum effort. You can also define your own fields.

Whether you add fields that are already supported or define your own fields, you must activate the fields as a customer enhancement for each ledger. The new totals table can contain several ledgers that store period totals to combine characteristics. You can now create totals for fields like profit center, segment, and partner - in addition to fields for general-ledger account, company code, and fiscal year.

Storing Ledger-Specific Line Items

Two new tables (FAGLFLEXA and FAGLFLEXP) store the ledger- specific line items (actual and planned) and contain additional information for use in the entry view. The tables let you update different characteristics and document-splitting information, different period shifts, and different currencies in specific ledgers for individual documents. These abilities let you perform reporting tasks for specific dimensions at the line-item level and select data from fields that are not found in the single-item indexes (BSIS and BSAS) from the general ledger in SAP R/3 (for example, segment-specific line-item reporting for general-ledger accounts).

Valuations for Year-End Closing in Selected Parallel Ledgers

A third table (BSEG_ADD) contains documents that are posted in connection with valuations for year-end closing in selected parallel ledgers. If you do not portray parallel accounting or you use the account approach to portray parallel accounting, these documents are inapplicable.

DOCUMENT SPLITTING

Document splitting is an appropriate tool for determining missing account assignments according to cause in common accounting processes in SAP software (invoices, payments, or clearing). For each financial-account document, document splitting applies account-assignment information to non-assigned accounts according to assignment rules set in the customizing area. Take the example of a vendor invoice. You can assign profit centers to expense accounts manually, derive the assignment automatically, or make the assignment using a substitute cost center. Document splitting places these profit centers in the payables accounts of the invoice document. This function can help you create balance sheets for entities that extend beyond the scope of the company code. Typical examples include balance sheets at the segment or profit-center level or balance sheets based on company-specific or industry-specific entities.

There are also mechanisms to determine all account assignments outside of document splitting - in the delivering component itself. This determination would include postings from SAP human capital management or materials management software. The document-splitting function is based on the following model. Accounting documents contain accounts with assignments, such as revenues or expenses. Such accounts provide dependent accounts (accounts payables, accounts receivables, and taxes, for example) with account assignments based on context (such as invoice or payment). The model is process-oriented: account assignments from original processes are projected into the subsequent processes, thereby enabling account assignments according to cause in the subsequent processes. Document-splitting information is built at two technical points: document creation and the accounting interface.



Display Document: General Ledger View

Data Entry View

Document Number	199900909	Company Code	1000	Fiscal Year	2006
Document Date	03.04.2006	Posting Date	03.04.2006	Period	4
Reference		Cross-CC no.			
Currency	EUR	Texts exist	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ledger Group	

Ledger DL

Doc.	199900909	Fiscal Year	2006	Period	4
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Co	Item	PK	Account	Description	Amount	Curr	Tx	Cost Center	Profit Center	Segment
1000	1	000001	31	150000	AP-domestic	600.00	EUR	11	PC01	SEG1
1000	2	000003	40	400000	Consumptn, raw mat.1	545.45	EUR	11	CC01	SEG1
1000	4	000005	40	154000	Input tax	54.55	EUR	11		SEG1
					0.00	EUR			PC01	
1000	1	000002	31	150000	AP-domestic	400.00	EUR	11	PC02	SEG2
1000	3	000004	40	400000	Consumptn, raw mat.1	363.64	EUR	11	CC02	SEG2
1000	4	000006	40	154000	Input tax	36.36	EUR	11		SEG2
					0.00	EUR			PC02	
					0.00	EUR				

Document Splitting at Document Creation A typical example of this instance is the clearing transaction - during which cash discount and realized exchange rate differences are split according to source. (That is, according to the proportions of the account assignments in the expense or revenue lines of the original document, such as an invoice.) What is special here is the specific reference to the original transaction or line item. Controlling functions in the software are updated accordingly and reconciled with the general-ledger accounting functions. Another example of item-related document splitting is foreign-currency valuation of open items. This function transfers exchange-rate differences to the controlling software.

It's important to note that the balance-valuation function has no reference to items or transactions. Here, the dimension-specific balance of the account (such as the balance for each segment) is used as the basic value

Document Splitting at the Accounting Interface

The software limits itself to splitting general-ledger assignments, which does not involve any transfer to controlling functions. From a technical standpoint, this process has two variants. The first variant is the account-assignment projection, which results from customized settings. Account assignments are projected from the base rows to the target rows. To minimize the effort required for implementation, mySAP ERP provides a number of preconfigured methods. You can activate only one method per client. With method 12, the solution delivers settings that support most standard processes (such as invoice, payment, or payment on account).

The second variant is inheritance by subsequent processes of business transactions, such as the clearing of vendor and customer invoices. With this variant, the solution transfers the original account assignments of the invoice to the clearing lines. This variant is a fixed feature in the program and cannot be altered. After the clearing transaction, the original item (such as the payables or receivables line) and the clearing item for the respective account assignment are balanced to zero.

IMPROVED INTEGRATION

The new general ledger offers far-reaching improvements concerning the integration of software for controlling and consolidation. The improvements can reduce reconciliation activities, improve transparency and auditability, and enable faster period-end closing.

Integration with Controlling

Integration with SAP controlling software enables the transfer of cross-entity controlling postings to the new general ledger in real time. Such transfers allow continuous reconciliation of cost elements and expense accounts and remove the need for subsequent reconciliation runs - which considerably accelerates period-end closings. The faster closings are particularly evident in profit-center accounting: cross-cost-center controlling transactions that involve different profit centers. The net result is a high level of transparency and quality for your data at all times. Although the new general ledger features an allocation function, the software does not update the controlling software. It allocates general-ledger accounts (such as bank accounts) that are not cost elements for profit centers or segments.

Integration with Asset Accounting

Integration with SAP asset-accounting software enables two types of postings: postings for asset acquisition (APC) values and for depreciation postings.



Asset transactions that update depreciation areas in real-time posting first update all ledgers in the general ledger. If required, you can make manual postings to individual depreciation areas in the asset accounting software. By customizing the software, you assign to each real parallel depreciation area (including parallel currency areas) a delta depreciation area that represents the difference between the leading valuation of fixed assets and parallel valuation. The parallel depreciation area and the relevant delta area must be assigned to the same ledger group, and the group must not contain the leading ledger. If differences between the leading and non-leading views arise during the posting of APC values, the system posts the values to the corresponding ledger group using the delta depreciation area. You can choose to post the valuation differences periodically or directly (which is comparable to postings in real time).

Depreciation postings are made to the corresponding ledger group as complete postings for specific depreciation areas.

Integration with Consolidation

You can transfer financial data in the new general ledger with integrated data transfer to SAP consolidation software together with all the additional account assignments necessary for consolidation tasks. The transfer is possible because the standard delivery of the new general ledger contains all the fields required for company consolidation or profit-center consolidation - including fields for partner company, partner profit center, and consolidation transaction type. Using integrated data transfer, you can extract the data from the general ledger to the SAP NetWeaver® Business Intelligence component (SAP NetWeaver BI). The data is then imported into the consolidation software.

Some customization settings for the preparation of company consolidation let you update all the relevant fields into the new general ledger. (For information on settings for preparing profit-center consolidation, see SAP Note 852971. For more detailed information on the derivation of the partner profit center, see SAP Note 826357.)

The integrated transfer of transaction data for consolidation continues to use an upstream "staging" information provider that is filled from the source system by extraction. You can use a remote cube as the staging information provider to have the consolidation software request a data transfer from the source system on demand.

To extract data from the general ledger to SAP NetWeaver BI, you can use a data source (OFI_GL_10) that is available in the component's business content. In building the downstream data flow in this business content, you can, however, update only some of the transferred fields. This limitation is due to technical restrictions related to performing updates to an operational data store (ODS) object. (For information on how you can set up a data transfer based on business content for the new general ledger and consolidation software, see SAP Note 852971.)

Integration with Enterprise Controlling-Consolidation (EC-CS)

Depending on the scenario in use, you can update enterprise controlling-consolidation (EC-CS) directly from the new general ledger. (For information on the special features, see SAP Note 826357.)

You cannot use the balance sheet/profit and loss report (RFBILA00) to set up periodic data extraction from the general ledger to the consolidation area. To convert processes step-by-step when introducing the new general ledger, you can update the consolidation-preparation ledger alongside the new general ledger during an interim phase and use report RFBILA00 to transfer the data to the consolidation area. Note, however, that this is an interim solution because the extract can be created only by using the format of the standard totals table (GLT3).

In principle, you can perform a rollup from the new totals table (FAGLFLEXT) to the receiver table (ECMCT) using transfer rules and exits. You can also perform a rollup from the new general ledger using standard exits for the conversion of data from profit-center accounting software to EC-CS - provided that you use the same data elements for the relevant fields in the general ledger that you did in the profit-center totals table (GLPCT).

FAST CLOSE

The new general ledger has significantly simplified and accelerated period-end closings. For document splitting, the data in the new software already meets the reporting requirements from the time of posting. With customizing, you can make a zero balance setting for the corresponding characteristics (segment, profit center, and customer fields) in each document. In this manner, you can create a (nonconsolidated) balance sheet at the level of these characteristics at any time. You no longer need additional program runs to split the characteristics.

Reconciliation between controlling functions and the new general ledger also do not require additional program runs. In the case of cross-entity controlling postings (such as transfer postings for costs from one cost center or profit center to another, either manually or with allocations), the values are updated to the general ledger in real time. In this manner, the controlling area and general ledger are synchronized for the transactions. You no longer need additional reconciliation activities or use of the reconciliation ledger. The system provides data on the origin of such documents. If you have to distribute values for specific general-ledger characteristics (such as a customer field) using a specific scheme, you can perform allocations in the general ledger. The allocations are always made for specific ledgers and operate in the same way as controlling allocations. (Note: You cannot



allocate reconciliation accounts and general-ledger accounts that are managed on an open-item basis because open items cannot be stored by ledger.)

In addition, you can use transaction FB50L to make ledger-specific general-ledger account postings. These postings are particularly relevant for closings or correction postings relating to particular accounting principles. The software does not support ledger-specific postings for parked documents because SAP assumes that such postings become real documents, such as invoices or payments. Instead, ledger-specific postings are general-ledger account postings or adjustment postings related to period-end closings when multiple ledgers are used to portray parallel accounting.

MIGRATION TO THE NEW GENERAL LEDGER

The migration path to the new general ledger varies from customer to customer. To ensure a successful migration and keep your historical data intact, SAP has designed migration services to help guide you safely through the process. These risk-minimizing services are a required part of every migration project.

By performing the migration in a test environment, you can identify any exceptional cases that might arise. The migration itself occurs at the end of a fiscal year on an appointed date. You transfer all documents with a posting date matching or following the migration date (in general, the first day of the new fiscal year) to the new tables at that time. Until then, the documents of the new fiscal year temporarily reside in the totals table of the general ledger in SAP R/3.

With the migration, you can complete financial statements until the end of the previous fiscal year based on tables in the SAP R/3 general ledger. This approach guarantees data continuity and lets you reconcile the values from the previous year with current values in the new tables.

The standard procedure for the migration occurs in three phases.

Phase 0

This is the phase before the fiscal-year change. Even though the general ledger in SAP R/3 is still active at this point, you can perform certain activities - such as creating a business blueprint for configuring the new general ledger. If you want to use document splitting in this phase, you can run an analysis of the business processes and customized settings for document splitting. The analysis is essential because the document splitting logic depends on the document type.

Phase 1

This phase runs between the migration date and activation of the new functions. One of the purposes of the migration date is to determine the open items from the past fiscal year for a specific key date. If the previous fiscal year is closed and document splitting is active, the software fills items that were open on the migration date (such as payables and receivables) with additional account assignments and then transfers the items by balance carry-forward for each dimension to the new totals table. The software updates period balances for the new fiscal year by clearing transactions from phase 1 forward. It carries forward balances for balance-sheet accounts that you do not manage on an open-item basis to the new tables in a separate run.

In general, you can choose any ledger as the origin ledger for the balances. It is possible, for instance, for some balances from the general-ledger accounts to be built from special-purpose ledgers, while other balances are taken from previous profit-center accounting software. Ensuring the correctness of the result for complete financial statements is part of the migration project.

If you want to create the target balances for new dimensions, you have two options. You can derive them from existing source balances (such as derivation of the segments from the source balance that contains profit centers). You can also use a business add-in (BAI). For balances without dimensions, you can manually transfer postings into the desired dimensions.

The software builds period balances in the current fiscal year for these accounts in the same way as the open-item managed accounts during the subsequent transfer of postings from phase 1. Ideally, the subsequent transfer of documents should occur at the end of phase 1 and before you activate the new general ledger. If the check routines still identify serious errors, you can reset the migration completely and perform a new migration.

Phase 2

This phase starts with activation of the new general ledger. The software updates data for tables in the new software. If you are certain that the settings lead to correct postings from phase 1, you can wait until phase 2 (instead of the end of phase 1) before transferring to the new tables any documents that post in the current fiscal year. In principle, the data from phase 1 is now available for comparison in both the previous and new general ledger.

Technical Steps for the Migration Plan

You must create a migration plan before you can start the migration. A migration plan contains the migration date (see above), the affected company codes, and the target ledger. In a migration plan, you specify whether a migration occurs with or without document splitting. You assign different migration plans to company codes with different fiscal-year definitions because the company codes have different migration dates. All migration steps are performed according to the relevant migration plan. Although you can create a migration plan to fit your unique needs, the migration generally entails the following steps:



- Creation of a work list (selection of all items that are open on the migration date and the documents from phase 1)
- Where required, enhancement of additional account assignments for open items - if financial statements are required for the dimensions in question - which can occur only in combination with the document-splitting function
- Balance carry-forward of accounts managed on an open-item basis and reconciliation accounts for customers, vendors, and others (possibly supplemented with additional dimensions)
- Transfer of balance carry-forward for balance-sheet accounts not managed on an open-item basis
- Subsequent transfer of documents from phase 1 into the new tables
- End of the migration
- Activation of the new general ledger

With mySAP ERP 2005, you can use the migration cockpit as an additional tool for performing the migration. The tool has an interface and functions resembling those in the closing cockpit. It contains two different task lists: one with and one without document splitting. The task list provides a transparent representation of the migration process. You can adapt the task list to the migration requirements of your company.

Validation of document splitting is another tool that you can use for the migration. The system can deliver documentation on postings that are incorrect with regard to the customizing settings for document splitting. You can make a setting that specifies whether the system creates only a background log or whether it also issues a system or error message. In some cases, you could use the analysis of the background log as basic information for a training course that lets users examine critical cases in terms of posting behavior.

SUMMARY

The new general-ledger accounting software in mySAP ERP combines functions that were previously covered by several different SAP applications, and thus required periodic reconciliation. With transparent data structures, flexible data design, a uniform user interface, the elimination of data redundancy, and real-time integration with SAP controlling software; the new general ledger meets the requirements of a modern, future-oriented general-ledger accounting solution for companies of all sizes and industries. To learn more about how mySAP ERP can improve general-ledger accounting for your company, please contact your SAP representative today, or visit us on the Web at www.sap.com/solutions/business-suite/erp.