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Topic: 1

Tarrawonga Transit Upgrade Planning Ahead of an SAP S/4HANA Move

Business Context

Transit Operating Context

Tarrawonga Transit is a state-owned passenger transport operator based in Launceston, Tasmania. It runs regional bus services and a short light-rail line from twelve depots across the north of the island, employs about 1,900 people, and reports to a public transport authority on punctuality and cost recovery. Ticketing revenue arrives daily from on-board devices and station gates and is reconciled against service kilometres at each month end. A basis team of four supports the operator's applications, drawing on an external partner engaged by the hour when a project needs more hands than that.

System Landscape

The operator has run the same on-premise SAP system for more than a decade, with development, quality, and production systems and a sandbox copy kept for rehearsals. Around 340 custom objects sit in the repository. A handful of them modify standard dictionary objects to produce the quarterly fleet-availability report the authority receives, and that report has been cited in the operator's last two funding submissions. A partner add-on, registered as a software component in the landscape, reconciles fare revenue from the ticketing devices into the accounting ledger.

Transit Programme Direction

The board approved a move to SAP S/4HANA for the next financial year. Because the conversion tooling expects the source system to sit on a supported start release, a release upgrade of the existing landscape was scheduled ahead of it, and the basis lead has begun assembling the target in the Maintenance Planner. The programme's stated intention is that the upgrade also settles the add-on position and the custom-code scope that the conversion will meet again later. Procurement for the conversion target has not started, and the state cycle it would run through takes months.

Sandbox Rehearsal Progress

A first rehearsal ran on the sandbox last month, using a stack definition generated from that system's own landscape entry. The run finished nine hours inside the planned window, and the team recorded phase timings from the update tool's monitor. The sandbox had been copied from production several months earlier, before the most recent maintenance import, and the copy procedure in use removes older document history to keep the system small. A second trial, taken on a production-like copy, has since overrun the same window by several hours with the same procedure and the same parallel settings.

Timetable Window Planning

Available downtime is bounded by the timetable calendar. The operator changes timetables twice a year, and the weekend either side of a change is the only period when a reduced service is already advertised to passengers. The next such weekend falls eleven weeks away; the one after it is in the following winter. An in-flight fare-change project has asked for the development system to stay on the current release for another six weeks so it can keep shipping transports, and its sponsor has pointed out that the fare change carries a council-agreed start date of its own.

Month-End Reporting

The monthly fare reconciliation depends on the partner add-on, and the revenue-assurance group closes the authority's subsidy claim from its output. The vendor has not yet confirmed a component for the target stack, and the planning tool will not complete a target definition while that component's position is open. The basis lead has asked for the target to be locked this week so the rehearsal can be repeated in time; the revenue-assurance group has asked to see what happens to the reconciliation before anything is locked.

Your Assignment

You are acting as the conversion and upgrade adviser engaged by Tarrawonga Transit. The operator has approved a move to SAP S/4HANA for the next financial year and has scheduled a release upgrade of its existing landscape ahead of it. Your counterparts are the basis lead, who owns the update runs and the maintenance planning; the operations director, who advertises the reduced service for a timetable-change weekend; the revenue-assurance group, which closes the authority's monthly subsidy claim; and the sponsor of an in-flight fare-change project with a council-agreed date. The constraints you work inside: a basis team of four with hourly external support, one advertised downtime weekend eleven weeks away and the next one a season later, an unresolved partner add-on component, and a state procurement cycle that has not started. Give recommendations the board can act on and state what each one rests on

1. CHALLENGE 1 — Defining the Upgrade Target Stack and Add-on Path

- Advise the basis lead on the state a system has to be in before a target stack definition taken from it can drive a rehearsal that represents the production upgrade.
- Take a position for the programme board on the registered partner add-on whose successor component the vendor has not confirmed, and say what has to be true before the target is locked.
- Advise the team on what the planning tool needs to hold about a system before it can produce a target definition at all, and where to look when that step stalls.

CHECKPOINTS

- The rehearsal is executed from the same starting state the production upgrade will begin in, so its timings describe the production move.
- The target is locked only once every component in it has a settled position, and any position that changes a business dependency is agreed with the group carrying it.
- A step that produces no result is traced to the input that step consumes.

2. CHALLENGE 2 — Reusing Adjustment Decisions Across the Three Landscape Systems

- Recommend an upgrade order across the development, quality, and production systems that keeps transports moving while the fare-change project continues to deliver.
- Advise how the dictionary and repository adjustment decisions taken during the first system's upgrade should reach the systems upgraded after it.
- Advise the basis lead on how the custom-code adaptation scope should be set, given the usage evidence attached to the analysis output.

CHECKPOINTS

- The order leaves every system able to receive what the system below it produces, and the in-flight project keeps delivering through the change route rather than around it.
- One adjustment outcome stands in all three systems, reached by decisions that are taken once and then carried forward.
- The adaptation scope reflects which objects the operator still depends on, and is settled before the window opens.

3. CHALLENGE 3 — Making the Rehearsal Represent the Production Run

- Account for the difference between the sandbox rehearsal result and the later production-like trial, given that the update procedure and the parallel settings were the same in both.
- Advise the operations director on the evidence that would support committing the advertised reduced-service weekend to the production upgrade.

CHECKPOINTS

- A difference between two runs is explained by something that genuinely differed between the systems, and the explanation accounts for both sides of the comparison.
- The window is committed on measurement taken from a run comparable to production, reported at a level of detail that lets the director judge the risk.

4. CHALLENGE 4 — Sequencing the Upgrade Against the Conversion Plan

- Give leadership a position on whether the release upgrade should run before the conversion, given that the conversion is already approved for the next financial year.
- Advise the programme board on how the deployment target for the later conversion should be settled, given the operator's team size, procurement cycle, and open add-on dependency.

CHECKPOINTS

- The position is grounded in what the later move requires of the source system, and accounts for the value of the intervening work beyond the release step itself.
- The deployment target is chosen on findings the system itself produces, at a point where those findings already exist.

Question: 1

CHALLENGE 1 — Defining the Upgrade Target Stack and Add-on Path

The basis lead generated the target stack definition from the landscape entry of the sandbox and wants the next rehearsal to start this week. The sandbox was copied from production several months ago, before the most recent maintenance import.

Which recommendation gives the rehearsal the best chance of representing the production upgrade?

- A. Start the rehearsal from the existing sandbox and correct the recorded runtimes afterwards by the size of the component gap, so the eleven-week schedule is protected.
- B. Keep the sandbox at its current levels and generate a second stack definition from the production system, so the rehearsal run uses production's component levels.
- C. Refresh the sandbox from the current production state and regenerate the target stack definition from it, so the rehearsal starts where production starts.
- D. Import the outstanding maintenance packages into the sandbox inside the rehearsal window itself, so one measured run covers the catch-up import and the upgrade together.

Answer: C

Explanation:

A stack definition describes a move from one specific set of component levels to the target, so it is only valid for a system that actually sits on those levels. Refreshing the sandbox to production's current state and regenerating the definition from it makes the rehearsal start where production will start, which is what makes the recorded phase timings usable for sizing the window.

Question: 2

CHALLENGE 1 — Defining the Upgrade Target Stack and Add-on Path

The planning tool will not complete a target definition while the registered partner add-on has no confirmed component for the target stack. The revenue-assurance group closes the authority's subsidy claim from that add-on's output, and the basis lead wants the target locked this week.

What is the strongest recommendation to the programme board?

- A. Close the open component either with the vendor's compatibility confirmation or with a removal plan agreed with the revenue-assurance group, before the target is locked.
- B. Lock the target definition without the add-on now and reinstall the component after the upgrade completes, so the planning date for the timetable-change weekend is met.
- C. Keep the add-on in scope and let the update tool resolve the component version during the run itself, so no planning decision has to be taken before the downtime window opens.
- D. Remove the add-on's component from the landscape registration so the target definition completes, and register it again once the vendor eventually replies to the request.

Answer: A

Explanation:

The open component is a hard blocker on the target definition, so it has to be closed one way or the other before the target is locked. Closing it as either a confirmed successor or a removal plan the revenue-assurance group has agreed keeps the monthly subsidy claim with the group that depends on it, instead of leaving that exposure to surface at month end.

Question: 3

CHALLENGE 1 — Defining the Upgrade Target Stack and Add-on Path

The target-definition procedure for the development system stalls. The team has registered the system for maintenance planning, selected the target product version, and downloaded the current package catalogue, but the planning tool will not offer a target for that system.

Which upstream prerequisite was skipped?

- A. The custom-code analysis for the development system has not been run, so the planning tool holds no scope information for sizing the target.
- B. The rehearsal phase timings from the sandbox have not been recorded, so the planning tool cannot confirm the maintenance window for the target.
- C. The dictionary adjustment decisions have not been transported yet, so the planning tool cannot confirm repository consistency for the target.
- D. The system's landscape data has not been reported to the planning tool, so it holds no current component levels for that system.

Answer: D

Explanation:

A target definition is calculated from the source system's current component levels, so the planning tool has to hold current landscape data for that system before anything can be selected. Registering the system and picking a target version are not enough on their own; without reported component levels there is no starting point to calculate from.

Question: 4

CHALLENGE 2 — Reusing Adjustment Decisions Across the Three Landscape Systems

The fare-change project has asked for the development system to stay on the current release for another six weeks so it can keep shipping transports, while the timetable-change weekend is the only advertised window for the production upgrade.

Which sequencing recommendation best protects both the upgrade and the change route?

- A. Upgrade the quality and production systems first and let the fare-change transports travel to production directly from the development system, so both programmes keep their committed dates.
- B. Upgrade the development system first and give the fare-change work a defined shared window in the upgraded development system, so transports keep moving in landscape order.
- C. Upgrade the development and quality systems together in one window and leave production until the fare change has shipped, so the release gap stays inside the project systems only.
- D. Deliver the fare change as a manual configuration made straight in production and upgrade the three systems in whichever order fits the weekend, so no transport dependency exists.

Answer: B

Explanation:

Transports move upward through the landscape, so the development system has to reach the target release first if later transports are to be importable into upgraded systems. Giving the fare-change team a defined window in the upgraded development system keeps their work inside the change route instead of stopping it or routing around it.

Question: 5

CHALLENGE 2 — Reusing Adjustment Decisions Across the Three Landscape Systems

During the development-system upgrade the team worked through the dictionary and repository adjustments for the modified standard objects behind the quarterly fleet-availability report. The quality system upgrade is scheduled next, with production on the timetable-change weekend. Which approach best keeps the three systems consistent?

- A. Record the adjustment decisions in a transport during the development upgrade and supply it to the quality and production update runs, so the same decisions apply in all three.
- B. Repeat the adjustment work independently in the quality system and compare the two outcomes afterwards, so any difference between the systems becomes visible before production is touched.
- C. Copy the modified objects from the development system to the quality system before its upgrade starts, so the objects already carry their adjusted version when the run begins.
- D. Skip the adjustment step in the quality and production runs because the objects were already adjusted once in development, so the two remaining windows stay as short as possible.

Answer: A

Explanation:

The adjustment decisions are the intellectual work of the upgrade, and they are captured so the same choices can be handed to the later runs instead of being made again. Supplying that transport to the quality and production runs is what keeps one set of decisions behind the fleet-availability report in all three systems.

Question: 6

CHALLENGE 2 — Reusing Adjustment Decisions Across the Three Landscape Systems

The custom-code analysis lists around 340 objects, and the usage evidence shows that a large share of the reports in that list have not been executed for years. The basis lead has proposed deferring all custom-code work until after the upgrade to keep the project short. What is the strongest recommendation?

- A. Defer all custom-code work until after the upgrade and remediate whatever breaks through production support afterwards, so the upgrade window and the project stay as short as possible.

- B. Adapt every object appearing in the analysis output before the upgrade regardless of what the usage evidence says, so no object in the repository is left unchecked before the window.
- C. Retire the objects the usage evidence shows are unused and adapt only the remainder before the upgrade, so the adapted scope matches the code the operator actually runs.
- D. Keep every object and record the whole list as an accepted exception in the change log, so the adaptation effort transfers to the conversion project in the next financial year.

Answer: C

Explanation:

Usage evidence turns a flat object list into a decision about what is worth carrying forward, and retiring unused objects removes adaptation work rather than postponing it. Adapting the remainder before the window means the code that actually runs the operator's business is proven on the target release, and the conversion later meets a smaller repository.

Question: 7

CHALLENGE 3 — Making the Rehearsal Represent the Production Run

The rehearsal on the sandbox finished nine hours inside the planned window, but a later trial on a production-like copy overran the same window by several hours. The update procedure and the parallel settings were identical in both runs.

What is the most likely cause of the difference?

- A. The production-like copy holds a large backlog of transports waiting to be imported, so the update run had to work through those queued changes before it could reach its own phases.
- B. The sandbox carried a reduced document history because its copy procedure removes older records, so its data-heavy phases had less to process than the production-like copy.
- C. The production-like copy contained additional custom objects that were absent from the sandbox, so the repository adjustment activities in that run took considerably longer.
- D. The target stack definition used for the production-like copy included the partner add-on component, so one additional software component extended the total runtime of the run.

Answer: B

Explanation:

The phases that convert and move data scale with the volume of records present, so a system carrying less history completes them faster with no change to the procedure. The sandbox's copy routine trimmed older documents, which makes its nine-hour margin a property of that copy rather than evidence about production.

Question: 8

CHALLENGE 3 — Making the Rehearsal Represent the Production Run

The operations director will not advertise the reduced service for the timetable-change weekend until the programme can show that the production upgrade fits inside it. The sandbox is being brought back into line with production, and there is time for one further run before the decision is due.

Which evidence should the window commitment rest on?

- A. A downtime estimate the external partner builds by averaging the totals of the two runs already completed, presented against the hours available in the advertised weekend.
- B. The vendor's published runtime guidance for the target release, set against the number of hours that are available inside the advertised timetable-change weekend.
- C. The single elapsed total recorded from that further run on the realigned system, set against the hours that are available in the advertised timetable-change weekend.
- D. The phase-by-phase runtimes recorded from that further run on the realigned system, mapped onto the hours that are available in the advertised weekend.

Answer: D

Explanation:

A commitment is only as good as the comparability of the run behind it, so the evidence has to come from a system matching production in data volume and component levels. Reading that run phase by phase also shows where the margin sits, which is what lets the director judge the risk instead of accepting one undifferentiated number.

Question: 9

CHALLENGE 4 — Sequencing the Upgrade Against the Conversion Plan

Leadership asks whether the release upgrade is worth running at all, given that the move to SAP S/4HANA is already approved for the next financial year and the upgrade consumes the only advertised weekend before it.

Which advisory position is strongest?

- A. Run the upgrade, because the conversion expects a supported start release, and use it to close the add-on and custom-code decisions the conversion will depend on as well.
- B. Cancel the upgrade and convert directly from the current release, because the conversion replaces the software stack anyway and the weekend is better spent on the larger move.
- C. Cancel the upgrade and convert onto a cloud deployment instead, because the target stack is provisioned fresh there and the source system's release stops being a constraint.
- D. Run the upgrade and postpone the conversion indefinitely, because a system on a current release removes most of the pressure that produced the conversion business case.

Answer: A

Explanation:

The conversion expects the source system to sit on a supported start release, so the upgrade is a prerequisite rather than an optional predecessor project. Running it also forces the add-on position and the custom-code scope to be settled once, on work the conversion would otherwise have to repeat under a tighter cutover.

Question: 10

CHALLENGE 4 — Sequencing the Upgrade Against the Conversion Plan

With a basis team of four, a state-owned procurement cycle, and an unresolved add-on dependency, the programme board asks how the deployment target for the later conversion should be settled. Which recommendation is strongest?

- A. Commit to a specific deployment target now so procurement can start inside the state cycle, and revisit that decision later if the readiness findings turn out to contradict it.
- B. Defer every deployment consideration until the upgrade has finished, because no useful input to that decision can exist while the landscape is still on the current release.
- C. Let the readiness and simplification-item checks run after the upgrade and set the deployment decision together with the add-on outcome, so the choice rests on measured evidence.
- D. Choose the deployment target that offers the shortest conversion downtime and carry the add-on position and the readiness findings forward as open items in the cutover plan.

Answer: C

Explanation:

Readiness and simplification-item findings, together with the settled position on the add-on, are the evidence that tells this operator which target its own system and team can actually support. Letting that evidence set the decision keeps a four-person team from committing to a target whose obligations only become visible later.

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