

FPSL-Release Upgrades

ADWEKO's guideline for a successful execution

Methodology and guidelines

FPSL release upgrades can be challenging, but they don't have to be. To avoid undesired challenges, customers must determine the adequate release upgrade methodology to follow. This methodology is required to include managerial, functional, and technical components. How to define an upgrade project plan, what resources and skill sets to consider for an upgrade and how to prepare the existing SAP infrastructure are just the beginning of a long list of key considerations. Typically, such upgrade considerations, guidelines or process documentations are not readily available. They require time and effort to be prepared. ADWEKO has a standardized methodology comprising all relevant components of an FPSL release upgrade including guidelines for project planning, functional and technical upgrades.

FPSL-Release Upgrade

Why, when & how? The need for an FPSL release upgrade depends on several factors. These include but are not limited to the desire for functional innovations, the necessity of bug fixes, or the focus on technological progress. Regardless of which reason is in the foreground, release upgrades must be taken care of by all organizations at some point in time.

Oftentimes, the underlying infrastructure of an application determines the timing of a release upgrade. On-premise and private cloud scenarios offer more flexibility in choosing when to execute a release upgrade. Public cloud scenarios are subject to a predefined framework and timeline.

Once the decision for a release upgrade has been made, the upgrade should be considered as an individual project on its own. As such, the upgrade project can then be divided into different phases and streams as per the respective requirements of an organization. ADWEKO's standard upgrade methodology distinguishes between the following phases: analysis & design, execution, testing, deployment and post-upgrade support.

Consistent use of language

Often confused, simply explained: in the "SAP/Fioneer world", a distinction is made between release (upgrade), feature pack (upgrade) and support pack (upgrade). This article specifically addresses **release upgrades**.

- **Release** describes the change from a lower (older) software version to a higher (newer) version. Example: FPSL upgrade from version 2107 to 2306. The numerical codes each stand for a release date (e.g., version 2306 is June 2023).
- **Feature Pack** entails new product features of an application that are published periodically in packages. Example: a new impairment functionality in FPSL.
- **Support Pack** contains SAP Notes to correct known errors and install updates. Example: Correction of an FPSL data load error to generate appropriate error messages in case of data blockage.



Alexander Werner

Senior Manager

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"An FPSL release upgrade is more than just the installation of a software update. It is essential to concentrate on the analysis of functional innovations or changes and their impact on technical procedures. In addition to that, it is important to focus on the preparation and execution of adequate test cases."

Our approach

Thanks to our extensive **FPSL implementation** experience in the financial services industry, we have a proven track record of successful projects at banks, insurers, and FinTechs. It is important to us to support our clients not only during but also after their FPSL implementations. In the context of release upgrades, we have observed that initial cost estimates are often too aggressive. In such cases, we help our clients (re-)plan or (re-)structure their upgrade project under consideration of individual requirements using our standard methodology.

Each step in our methodology is informed by our collective experience from a **functional, technical, and managerial perspective**. For successful release upgrade projects, it is essential to focus on all three disciplines without prioritizing one over the other.

General Areas

- **Project planning:** Release upgrades must be carried out step-by-step based on clear project plan. ADWEKO's upgrade methodology contains a standardized plan that considers all required upgrade aspects and their sequence. The number of existing SAP environments informs the length, sequence, and number of steps of such a plan. The core methodology described in more detail below has to be applied to all environments under consideration of the respective requirements.
- **Infrastructure:** FPSL release upgrades can be carried out with a single environment model (SEM) and a dual environment model (DEM). There are advantages and disadvantages to both approaches. If and where possible, we recommend a dual environment model for release upgrades. At the same time, our methodology is prepared for both approaches.



Core methodology

- **Analysis and Design:** Using a tested approach, we analyze the scope of the existing SAP platform and its environments, including FPSL. We document our findings in pre-defined upgrade design documents which we use as a blueprint for all subsequent phases of the upgrade project.
- **Execution:** Step by step, we carry out the technical installation of the upgrade and all associated functional activities. All relevant steps and their sequence are pre-documented as part of our methodology.
- **Testing:** Upgrade testing activities are performed on all available SAP environments, one after the other. We execute all relevant test phases including smoke test, unit test, system integration test, user acceptance test, regression test, and mock cutover test. Our methodology supports the release upgrade testing phase with pre-defined test documents and ADWEKO-developed testing tools.



Manuel Rauscher
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"My recommendation is to integrate FPSL release upgrades within an already established governance framework that utilizes existing processes to detect and address dependencies. Challenges often arise if different teams work on their respective projects in 'silos'. Such an environment nurtures risks and issues that impact all ongoing initiatives, including release upgrades."



- **Deployment:** Once all test phases of the release upgrade project have been completed successfully and all stakeholders have signed off, it is time to upgrade the productive FPSL environment. We carry out upgrade go-lives using pre-defined “runbooks”, enriched with customer-specific requirements.
- **Post-Upgrade Support:** After the release upgrade is live on production, we enter the last step of our methodology: a Hypercare phase as part of which we help analyze and rectify errors while facilitating the transition from project team to our customer’s operations team.

ADWEKO’s service offering does not end with a successful FPSL release upgrade. Often, we also help our clients avoid subsequent challenges by transitioning implementation or upgrade projects into a Managed Services Package. In such cases, our upgrade team hands over the implemented or upgraded environment to experienced AMS colleagues and Delivery Center experts from the X1F Group.

Holistic E2E FPSL expertise:

- ADWEKO’s FPSL Service Offering comprises the sub-ledger’s entire life-cycle, from implementation to managed services and upgrades to custom product developments.
- ADWEKO has successfully implemented FPSL end to end and supported organizations with managed services or design services across the globe: in North America, Latin America, APAC and Europe.

Proven Delivery Methodology:

- We have developed practice-oriented delivery methodologies for our entire service offering, from FPSL Implementations to FPSL Upgrades.
- Our client-tested upgrade delivery methodology facilitates the execution of an FPSL upgrade with a clear and standardized structure and within a reasonable time frame.
- All our delivery methodologies are supported by delivery accelerators, from workshop materials and design templates to software products.



Resource and Skill Mix:

- Our resource mix is tailored to your FPSL requirements and combines delivery managers with functional and technical subject matter resources.
- Our upgrade teams combine the required SAP Basis skills with the knowledge of functional (data/accounting) FPSL consultants and testers, coordinated by experienced technical delivery managers.
- We deliver projects either on-shore, near-shore, or in a hybrid fashion – depending on your needs.

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