



HOW FOCUSED EXPERTISE, GOVERNANCE
AND OWNERSHIP MADE AN SAP ENVIRONMENT
STABLE AND HIGH-PERFORMING

SEB Professional restores stability after a challenging ERP transition



How focused expertise, governance and ownership made an SAP environment stable and high-performing

Steve Suykerbuyk
CFO SEB Professional BeLux & NL
Cosie Goudesone
Senior Project Manager TriFinance

SEB Professional restores stability after a challenging ERP transition

The transition to a new ERP system in 2022 did not go as planned for SEB Professional. *“The move to SAP happened too fast,”* says Steve Suykerbuyk, CFO of SEB Professional BeLux and SEB Professional Netherlands. *“As a result, master data management and data migration were under pressure. This led to invoicing issues and a growing customer receivables balance.”*

To correct the situation, Suykerbuyk looked for a partner who could stabilize operations and deliver structural improvements. He found that partner in TriFinance. *“I was familiar with their expertise from a previous collaboration. I knew they could deploy the right people to tackle this together. For me, it was a logical decision to work with them again.”*

The first priority was reducing the outstanding customer balance. *“With annual revenue of five million euros, receivables had increased to two million euros. That is significant.”* At the same time, functional issues were identified and addressed where possible through quick wins. *“It was critical to get the backend master data right,”* Suykerbuyk explains.

In 2024, he engaged TriFinance to jointly address the challenge. Just over a year later, the results are clear. Through an intensive support program, with several TriFinance experts working closely with SEB Professional people, the organization now operates on a more stable and higher-performing SAP environment again. Customer receivables have normalized. Clear and comprehensive work instructions are in place. Today, the organization looks to the future with confidence

The idea was to integrate regions, harmonize processes, and move to a more modern ERP platform.

- Steve Suykerbuyk -

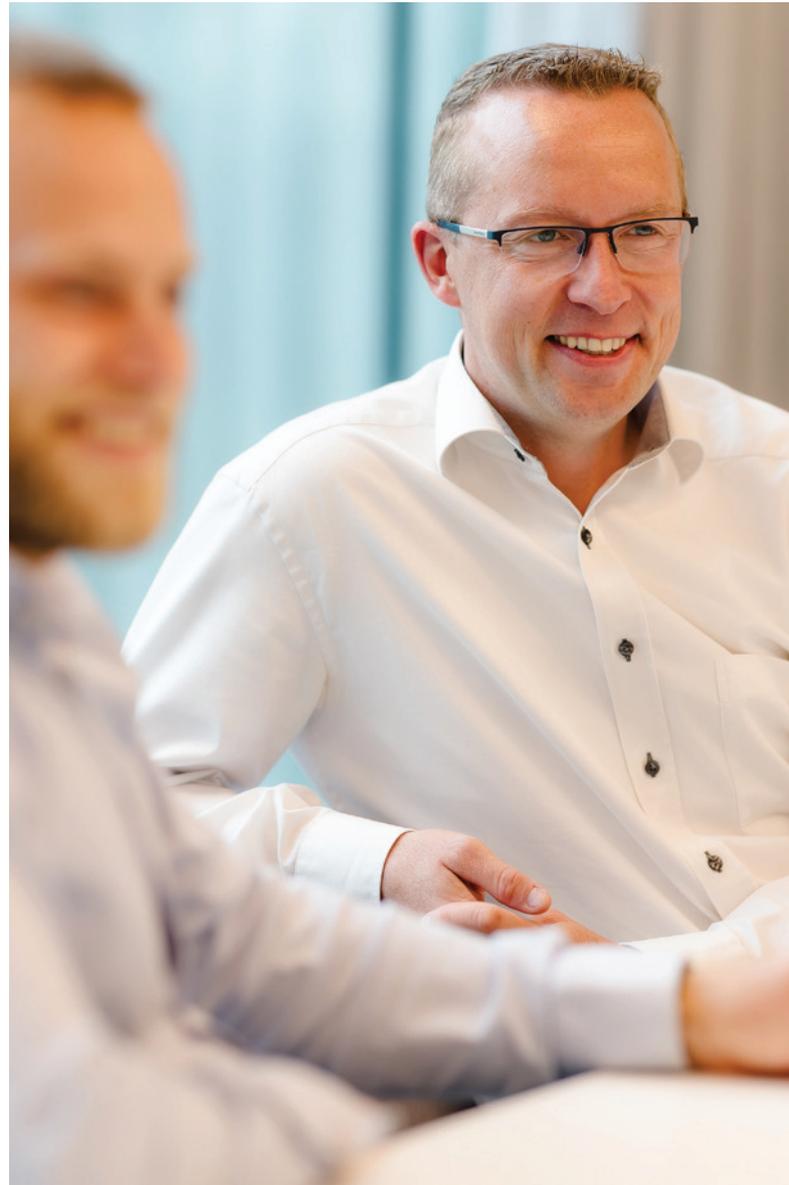
BACKGROUND

SEB Professional is part of Groupe SEB, a publicly listed French group best known for its consumer brands **Tefal**, **Krups**, and **Moulinex**. As part of its strategy to diversify into B2B, Groupe SEB acquired **WMF** and **Schaerer** in 2016. Both brands manufacture fully automatic coffee machines and provide related services. They were brought together under the **SEB Professional** umbrella. **Wilbur Curtis** and several players in the commercial foodservice equipment market joined later.

Steve Suykerbuyk joined the organization as Financial Director in November 2021. Asked about his main challenges, he points to the familiar reality of operating a small organization within a larger group.

“The key challenge was, and still is, to design efficient processes and introduce a strong control-driven mindset,” he says. “That is not straightforward. Despite being part of a group, we operate in what is essentially an SME environment. We cannot rely on shared services such as legal, compliance, or internal audit. Accountability sits with everyone, even when projects are initiated centrally.”

The group’s decision to move to SAP should be viewed in that context. *“The idea was to integrate regions, harmonize processes, and move to a more modern ERP platform,”* Suykerbuyk explains. The Benelux entities were selected as the starting point for the European rollout. However, a lack of internal expertise made the integration and go-live challenging.



Steve Suykerbuyk
CFO SEB Professional BeLux & NL



An ERP system can only function properly if the data are correct, the processes are logical and clear, proper governance is applied, and people are properly prepared for the ERP journey.

- Cosie Goudesone -

Cosie Goudesone
Senior Project Manager TriFinance

MASTER DATA NOT IN ORDER

Project manager Cosie Goudesone (TriFinance), who guided the recovery trajectory, calls the choice to harmonize as a group logical. But according to him, the unsuccessful outcome was also predictable. *"It is risky for a parent company to impose a strict implementation methodology without taking local differences into account and without providing sufficient support. Then it is inevitable that things go wrong."*

Invoices got stuck, contained incorrect prices or discounts, or were sent to the wrong address. The **master data** were not in order, with far-reaching consequences. The impact on staff was also real. *"It was a project spanning two countries,"* Suykerbuyk explains, *"in which a small group of people was given additional workload on top of their daily tasks. If things then go wrong and processes start to falter, it is only logical that people drop out."*

Moreover, many employees did not yet have the right competencies to work with SAP, let alone with a system that was not functioning properly. *"In Belgium, we saw an employee turnover of 70 to 75% at the time,"* says Suykerbuyk.

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY

Apart from the limited support, the **go-live** simply came too early. *"Based on my experience with rolling out new applications, the planned SAP implementation already came up during my job interview,"* says Steve Suykerbuyk. *"In January 2022, barely two months after I started, the project was launched, with the aim of completing it by 1 July."*

Although he knows the situation inside out, Cosie Goudesone remains surprised by that timeframe. *"Under normal circumstances, you should count on at least a year,"* he says. *"In larger organizations it often takes even longer. Even with a large team of consultants, six months is extremely tight."*

'Better safe than sorry' is the lesson Goudesone draws from this.

"Take the time for projects like these. Think carefully in advance about the needs of the organization and what that implies technically." He stresses that **no steps should be skipped**. *"An ERP system can only function properly if the data are correct, the processes are logical and clear, proper governance is applied, and people are properly prepared for the ERP journey. Only when these conditions are met will the go-live be successful."*

That is why TriFinance consultants prefer to start their support in the preparatory phase, as the cost for the client is then significantly lower. *"Fixing issues afterwards in a live system easily takes three times more time than addressing them during the implementation phase."*

By converting core business processes into clear procedures, scripts, and workflows, teams gained insight into how systems align.

- Robin De Coninck -



Robin De Coninck
Project Specialist, TriFinance

Relief through a focused dual-track approach

By the course of 2023, it became clear that intervention was required and that additional support from the group alone was no longer sufficient. In spring 2024, TriFinance was engaged at SEB Professional Belux, followed by the Netherlands organization in July. By year-end, the situation in Belgium had been stabilized and ownership was handed over to the local team. In the Netherlands, the majority of the work was completed ahead of the summer break.

FROM QUICK SCAN TO STRUCTURAL RECOVERY

"Why TriFinance? From experience, I knew they uniquely combine IT, finance, and business expertise. That is exactly what we needed," says Steve Suykerbuyk.

The recovery effort began with a targeted quick scan that clearly identified the core issues. Based on those insights, a dual-track plan was defined. One track focused on mitigating the immediate impact of incorrect master data. The other addressed the underlying processes and root causes behind the recurring billing issues.

Cosie Goudesone puts it succinctly: *"When the tap is running, you need to mop the floor. But you also want to shut off the tap as quickly as possible. That's why we reconfigured SAP in a different way."*

SYSTEM STABILIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

While Credit Management Project Consultant Lucas Janssens and his team addressed the acute master data issues, Project Specialist Robin De Coninck took ownership of the structural recovery. A key bottleneck proved to be the unstable interface between SAP and Salesforce, the field service management tool used by technicians to record work orders, which ultimately form the basis for billing.

Robin De Coninck conducted an in-depth analysis and tackled not only the technical root causes, but also the governance framework around them. For each identified issue, a detailed script was developed. This enabled recurring controls and equipped the internal team with the tools to independently identify and resolve future issues.

RELIEF THROUGH EXPERTISE AND PROACTIVE OWNERSHIP

For Steve Suykerbuyk, TriFinance's involvement primarily meant relief. *"I could share my insights, raise the issues I had already identified, and provide business context where needed—but most importantly, I could entrust the work to specialists. The fact that they were able to stabilize operations while also driving structural improvement was the biggest relief for me."*

The seasoned CFO also highlights the consultants' proactive mindset. *"Lucas and his colleagues see what needs to be done and take action immediately. With people like that, you move forward."*

Specialists in Action: From invoicing errors to process control

Credit Management Project Consultant **Lucas Janssens** joined SEB Professional in May 2024. **Robin De Coninck** followed one month later. Both look back on the engagement with satisfaction. It was intensive, but above all highly educational. For themselves and for the organization.

INVOICING CRISIS

When Lucas Janssens arrived, he encountered a complex situation. Customers received incorrect invoices, or none at all. Contracts were not properly registered. The scale of the issue left little room for doubt. *“That’s when you know there is real work to be done,”* he says. *“And that is exactly where we add value. We step in where processes break down and apply expertise to resolve the issue.”*

It quickly became clear that the problem went beyond master data alone. Janssens immediately escalated the situation. Additional TriFinance expertise was brought in. The objective was clear. No patchwork solutions. Fix the issues end to end. This approach was strongly valued by Steve and his team.

SAP EXPERTISE, GOVERNANCE, AND KNOWLEDGE RETENTION

For Lucas Janssens, the assignment was not limited to correcting invoicing errors. *“I deliberately looked beyond the symptoms and focused on root causes,”* he explains. *“Some issues kept recurring and required structural measures, such as better alignment between operations and the back office.”*

He particularly appreciated the way of collaborating. *“Steve provided clear direction, while giving us the space to act proactively and put forward our own proposals. Clients truly value initiative. I learned that here. And when needed, you can always rely on the support and domain experts at TriFinance.”*

The technical backbone of the recovery was delivered by Robin De Coninck. As an **SAP specialist**, he brought stability to a complex system landscape. Data did not flow correctly between Salesforce and SAP. Pricing errors occurred frequently. At the same time, a lack of knowledgeable key users, compounded by high staff turnover, weakened the organization. De Coninck rebuilt that expertise and translated the company’s key processes into clear procedures.

“My assignment had two dimensions,” says De Coninck. *“Resolving technical issues and re-embedding knowledge.”* He converted core business processes into clear procedures, scripts, and workflows. These now give teams insight into how systems interact.

“Even something as seemingly simple as creating a sales order requires strict sequencing,” he concludes. *“If steps are skipped, master data errors return. Understanding the full picture makes all the difference.”*



Lucas Janssens
Project Consultant, TriFinance

READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT

The role of Robin De Coninck should not be underestimated, emphasizes Steve Suykerbuyk. *"SEB operated largely as an SME, using off-the-shelf software. SAP is, and remains, a complex ERP platform. During the rapid implementation and go-live, knowledge transfer received too little attention. Internal teams were not sufficiently prepared to fully leverage the technology. By creating clarity and documenting procedures in a structured way, Robin addressed this at its core."*

That work positions the company for the future. *"Now that the fire has been put out, we want to make sure it doesn't flare up again,"* says Suykerbuyk. An ambition fully shared by Cosie Goudesone. *"That is always our objective. Which is why we place such strong emphasis on the underlying processes."*

With that future focus in mind, the **extended leadership team** recently participated in a two-day workshop facilitated by TriFinance. *"We challenged ourselves critically,"* says Suykerbuyk. *"Do we truly understand our processes? Do we grasp how they interact with our systems? And do we know where potential bottlenecks lie?"*

Despite the difficult period the organization went through, the exercise proved highly constructive. *"We now have a clearer view of where cross-functional collaboration is required. And we have the tools to develop a new, solid, and future-proof blueprint for the organization."*

**We have the tools to
develop a new, solid, and
future-proof blueprint for
the organization.**

- Steve Suykerbuyk -



Lucas Janssens, Project Consultant, TriFinance
Robin De Coninck, Project Specialist, TriFinance
Cosie Goudesone, Senior Project Manager TriFinance

IN THE TRENCHES

“What I particularly value is that Steve always took full ownership,” says Cosie Goudesone. “The fact that the team remains aligned today is largely due to him staying close to the frontline throughout.”

Steve Suykerbuyk agrees. “As the bridge between the implementation team and the local organization, I remained fully accessible to the issues my people were facing. At times, that came at the expense of my own work. I feel like I aged three years in the process. But it was also an exceptionally engaging and educational journey. Being in the trenches every day, and then climbing back out together with the support of a strong partner, is an experience you carry with you.”

By the end of 2025, not all issues had yet been resolved. Over the course of the year, TriFinance also deployed experienced project managers to further optimize and map processes and procedures. Working alongside the still-active Credit Management consultants in the Netherlands, they are expected to complete their assignment by the end of Q1 2026.

At that point, SEB Professional will need to be fully capable of managing operations independently. Steve Suykerbuyk acknowledges that this will remain a challenge, but one that is achievable thanks to the strong foundations now in place.



**Focus on the future
of your business,
leave your mark
with TriFinance.**

INSPIRED BY THE SEB PROFESSIONAL STORY?

Want to know more?
www.trifinance.be | info@trifinance.be

Copyright © TriFinance 2026. All rights reserved.

This article is part of a series of longread articles and solution papers that TriFinance has developed in co-creation with clients.

We want to thank all participants for their contributions.

Colofon:

Text and photography: Spyke
Layout: Jan Vertongen
Concept, coordination & editing: Dirk van Bastelaere

TriFinance Belgium NV/SA
Uitbreidingstraat 80, 2600 Antwerpen
—
www.trifinance.be | info@trifinance.be

TriFinance
BEYOND ADVISORY