

# AI and procurement:

Why intake management  
is a quick win







**Effective intake management is one of the fastest ways to unlock AI value for procurement. Yet the ability to optimize results depends on the right technology – and that’s what the SAP Ariba Intake Management solution delivers.**

Here at SAP, we expect that companies using SAP Ariba Intake Management will achieve:

- Productivity gains resulting in **€100k in cost savings** for every 1,000 employees<sup>1</sup>
- An additional **€0.5-2.5m in cost savings** for every €100m of spend brought under management of procurement
- Further savings with **2-3% reduction in procurement IT expenses**, due to receiving fewer support tickets
- **10-30% shorter procurement** cycle times

This paper outlines the challenges companies face with intake management, and how our solution enables you to overcome these challenges and gain exceptional benefits using AI capabilities.

## Key reasons

1

AI is a top priority for procurement



2

Intake management is a great use case for AI in procurement



3

SAP Ariba Intake Management delivers powerful AI capabilities



4

Intake management advances procurement’s AI agenda by delivering astounding results, fast



## Reason 1

# AI is a top priority for procurement

Procurement leaders are keen to adopt AI. For example, research studies by Deloitte have found that around 40% of procurement organizations are at least piloting AI deployment,<sup>2</sup> and 92% of CPOs are planning and assessing generative AI (GenAI) capabilities.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Economist Impact research shows that 44% of executives regard adoption of an AI strategy as the top priority for procurement.<sup>4</sup>

It's clear that more and more CPOs recognize AI's potential to improve the user experience, unlock efficiencies, ensure compliance, and drive strategic value. However, in many cases, procurement leaders aren't sure how best to use AI effectively. Many AI projects experience prolonged proof-of-concept exercises that never scale. This frequently delays value realization, wastes time and money, and erodes confidence in AI.

### To escape this trap, procurement leaders must start with an AI use case that:

- Is clearly aligned to a tangible business problem
- Is easy to deploy without major disruption or risk
- Delivers measurable outcomes such as higher user productivity, cycle time reduction, improved compliance, and greater spend under management
- Has executive sponsorship







## Reason 2

# Intake management is a great use case for AI in procurement

## What is intake management?

In procurement, intake management is the process of capturing, triaging, and orchestrating purchase requests submitted by employees across the organization. It serves as the entry point to procurement, guiding requests through appropriate workflows, stakeholders, and compliance checks before they proceed to sourcing or purchasing.

Intake management is a great AI use case, because it's tangible, it's low-risk, and it can show immediate value. Plus, it serves employees across the organization, and it includes a rules-based process that's easy to automate. And because intake management is one of the most significant pain points associated with procurement, transforming it through AI delivers highly visible benefits that dramatically improve productivity.

The chief technology trends that companies plan to evaluate or implement in the next 12-18 months are:

**#1**

Generative AI for procurement  
(cited by **54%** of executives)

**#2**

Intake management<sup>5</sup>  
(**33%**)

## What makes intake management so complex?

The complexity of intake management is often due to organizations using multiple procurement systems and processes to manage various tasks, such as onboarding suppliers, renting equipment, initiating contracts, buying software, booking venues, or purchasing new machinery. These workflows span multiple functional areas – including procurement, legal, IT, finance, engineering, supply chain, and more – with crucial reviews and approvals at various stages. They're also executed across a heterogeneous system landscape, involving tools like the ERP system, supplier management system, source-to-pay suite, vendor management system (VMS) for managing contingent and service labor, contract management applications, and more.

With a maze of systems and processes to navigate, it can be difficult for end users (especially those who don't make purchase requests regularly) to determine how to request the materials or services they need. They often don't know where to start. Usually, their first step is to call a colleague or the procurement team to ask how and where to make a request. Once the request is initiated, they face complex and tedious processes of chasing stakeholder reviews and approvals spread across disparate systems, resulting in frustration, low productivity, poor satisfaction, and delays.

Meanwhile, procurement teams spend disproportionate amounts of time fielding repetitive queries and manually coordinating intake steps, draining resources that could otherwise be allocated to strategic initiatives. This friction hinders process adoption, limits process visibility for end users, and makes it harder for procurement teams to align their activities to broader business goals.



# 37%

of CPOs have piloted or deployed GenAI solutions and are experiencing significant benefits.<sup>6</sup>

### Reason 3

## SAP Ariba Intake Management delivers powerful AI capabilities

**SAP Ariba Intake Management enables organizations to cut through process complexity. It gives end users across the business a single, AI-enabled front door to access the multiple procurement systems used for purchasing various products and services.**

# 18%

of CPOs have already piloted or deployed GenAI for intake management or guided buying.<sup>7</sup>

Employees no longer need to feel perplexed about where to start or second-guess what form to use. They simply type their requests into SAP's AI copilot, which orchestrates the entire process behind the scenes. It runs relevant checks – such as adhering to company policies, validating that the user is authorized to make the request, and determining whether the request can be fulfilled using the company's existing inventory. When a new purchase is needed, SAP Ariba Intake Management enables accurate, compliant requests that aren't missing any essential information. It then routes the request to the right systems, stakeholders, and approvals – eliminating low productivity, avoiding friction, and providing real-time visibility into status.

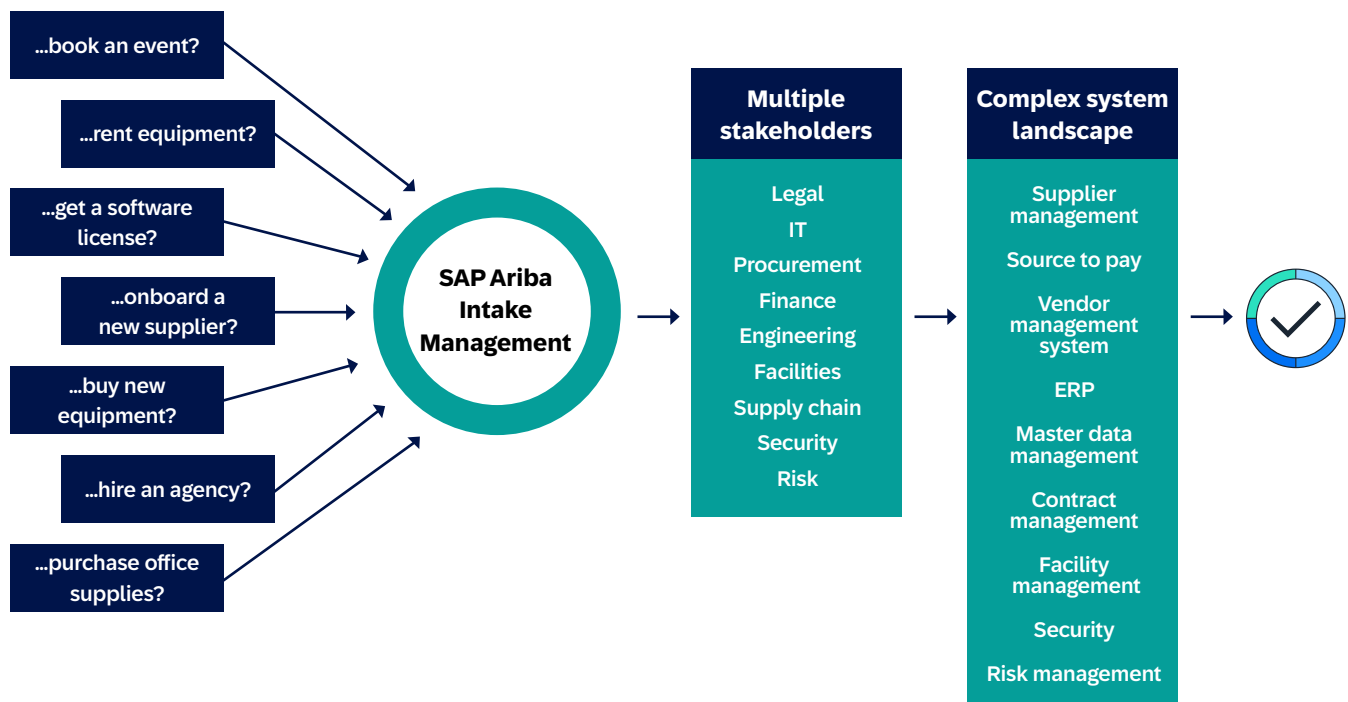
SAP Ariba Intake Management includes a comprehensive library of workflow templates, building blocks, connectors, and APIs, which simplify the process for organizations to get started. If workflows need to be added or adjusted, procurement teams and business process owners can make these changes using a simple drag-and-drop interface, thanks to SAP Build, SAP's low-code/no-code solution.





## SAP Ariba Intake Management capabilities

How can I...



## Example: How SAP Ariba Intake Management simplifies the end-user experience

**Imagine that you need to hire a specialized agency for a research project. You define your business requirements and identify the agency that best aligns with those needs. If you don't have an intake management solution, the next steps in the process might be similar to the following:**

1. You call the procurement team to understand the process to engage the agency. You realize that the agency isn't an approved supplier, so you need to complete a supplier onboarding request.
2. Once that's done, you need to secure budget from finance.
3. When your budget is in place, you need to submit your purchase request, but you end up calling the procurement team again because you can't figure out which buying system to use.
4. Procurement issues a single-source RFP to the agency.

At every stage, you waste time and effort navigating the process in different systems and chasing stakeholders.

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### **Now, imagine making that same request through SAP Ariba Intake Management.**

1. As a user, you just type in what you need – for example, “I need to hire a research agency.”
2. Your AI copilot guides you and automatically routes the request through the right workflows, approvals, and systems based on your company policy. You don't need to know which procurement system the request is going through – it's all taken care of.
3. Your AI copilot keeps you informed of progress until your request is complete.

It's a total transformation from friction and confusion to a guided, intelligent experience.



## Reason 4

# Intake management advances procurement's AI agenda by delivering astounding results, fast

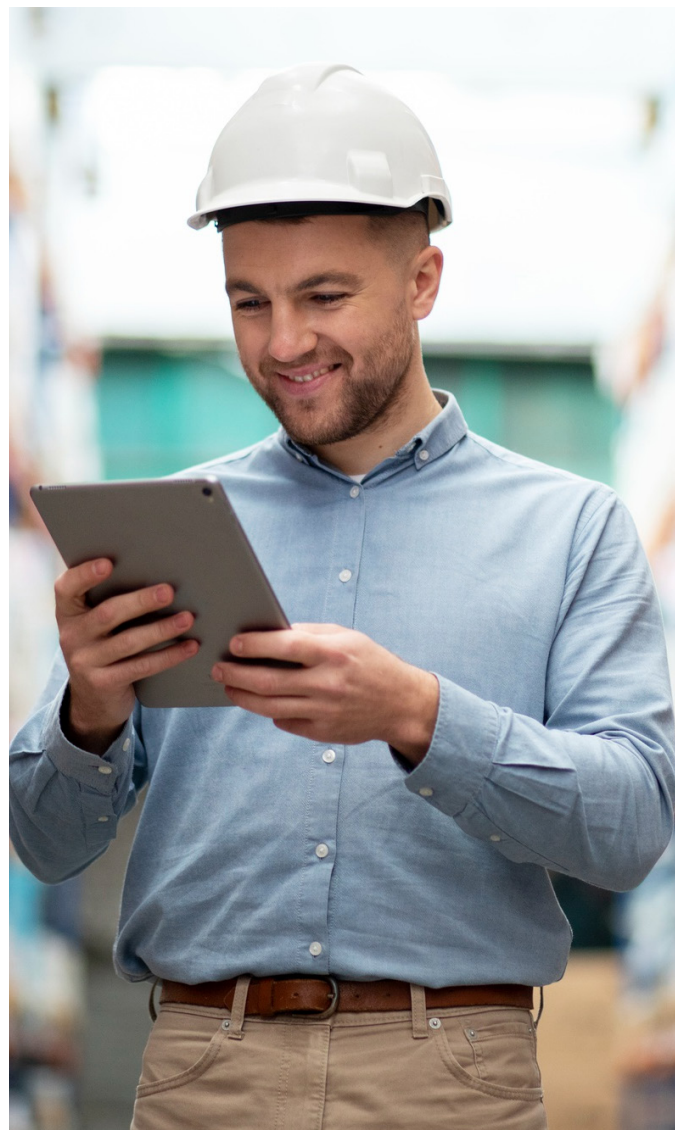
SAP Ariba Intake Management enables streamlined, simplified procurement workflows that enhance collaboration across systems and stakeholders and improve compliance and efficiency effortlessly. It removes complexity and obstacles for end users. What's more, it enables procurement to shift its focus from handling end-user queries to delivering tangible results.

We expect that organizations implementing SAP Ariba Intake Management will achieve:

- **Up to €100K in cost savings for every 1,000 employees** by boosting end-user productivity through a streamlined and user-friendly procurement experience
- **€0.5M–€2.5M in cost avoidance and/or savings for every €100M of unmanaged spend** brought under management of procurement
- **10-30% shorter procurement cycle times** thanks to quick, accurate requests
- **2-3% reduction in procurement IT expenses** due to receiving fewer support tickets
- **Time savings for procurement professionals**, who no longer need to help end users make purchase requests
- **Greater agility**, since procurement teams can continuously improve policies and processes without a lengthy IT effort

# 89%

of C-suite executives are confident that procurement can boost productivity using AI.<sup>8</sup>



**AI-infused intake management drives high-impact, low-risk performance. It demonstrates meaningful transformation and measurable ROI, quickly and at scale. Plus, it enables organizations to move swiftly from experimentation to results, building internal confidence and momentum for broader AI adoption. For many organizations, it's the first taste of an exciting, AI-powered future for procurement.**

To see SAP Ariba Intake Management in action, watch these two short videos showing employees using the solution to **purchase software** or **arrange events**.

Alternatively, please visit our **website** or **get in touch**.





1. Based on an estimated saving of 2 hours per user each year, with an average staff cost of €50/hour.
- 2, 6, 7. "[2025 Global Chief Procurement Officer Survey](#)," Deloitte, 2025.
3. "[2024 Global CPO GenAI survey](#)," Deloitte, 2024.
- 4, 5. "[Across the Procurement-verse: Changing Trends in the Procurement Function](#)," Economist Impact, June 2024.
8. "[The Resilient Edge: Procurement in an Era of Polycrisis](#)," Economist Impact, May 2025.

