



Stepping confidently into new markets

Gartrnova Group embraces group-wide process integration to boost efficiency, enhance resiliency and accelerate growth

8-minute read

In partnership with



Over more than seven decades, Gatronova Group has grown to become one of the leading providers of chemicals, textiles and packaging products in Pakistan – and the group now aims to move into new verticals in its domestic market and beyond.

To supercharge its business growth, the group is moving to integrated processes, powered by [SAP S/4HANA®](#) running on [SUSE Linux® Enterprise Server for SAP Applications](#), [IBM® Power®](#) servers and [IBM Storage](#). This new approach will unlock efficiencies across the entire group, empowering the organization to incorporate acquisitions rapidly and keep operations lean and competitive.



Gatronova Group serves a wide range of industries through 36 legal entities, including a leading supplier of textiles and other polyester-related products; a specialist producer of PET preforms, PET sheets and resin; and a leader in thermoforming products. Today, Gatronova Group is targeting rapid expansion: moving into new market

segments such as pharmaceuticals through a mixture of organic growth and acquisition.

In the past, each company in the group managed its own business processes and systems. In total, there were approximately 2,800 distinct workflows, all managed

separately using several legacy ERP systems. Gatronova Group realized that standardizing, consolidating and centralizing these processes would be a powerful tool to accelerate growth.

Atif Najam, CIO of Gatronova Group, explains: “By integrating our business processes, we gain a single source of truth across the entire enterprise: offering us the visibility to optimize business processes, reduce operational costs and remove bottlenecks.”

Najam continues: “We saw many other advantages in integrating our operations. By automating data-entry processes, we could reduce the time to close our books at the end of each month. For our manufacturing operations, a shared source of planning, warehouse and logistics data would empower us to dynamically balance inventory and production across all

“Access to real-time material requirements planning data will allow us to incorporate predictive analytics into our planning process to optimize our supply chain to ensure we have the right raw materials on hand to fulfil every order. None of these innovations would be possible without the new IBM, SAP and SUSE solutions.”

Atif Najam, CIO, Gatronova Group

group companies. This could involve producing an order in the factory geographically closest to a customer, reducing our transport costs and cutting our carbon footprint. Or, it could involve moving raw materials to manufacturing sites where supplies are running low, avoiding the need to scale back production.”

To realize its goals, Gatronova Group set out on a digital transformation and application modernization initiative. The aim was to replace siloed processes with a single, integrated set of workflows — allowing the business to enhance decision-making, increase operational efficiency and grow faster. Najam comments: “We decided to reimagine our processes from the ground up, backed by a technology foundation that would support us for the long term.”

Consolidates
2,800+ distinct
processes into

150

ultra-efficient SAP workflows

Predicted to
deliver up to

75%

faster month-end closing

Integrating the group from end-to-end

As the next step in its digital transformation, Gatronova Group selected the next-generation ERP SAP S/4HANA solution. The organization will replace multiple custom-built ERP systems with a single instance of the SAP solution, delivering real-time visibility of business data across all group companies. Using [SAP BW/4HANA®](#) and [SAP Analytics Cloud](#), Gatronova Group will be able to provide decision-makers with fine-grained insights to steer faster, better-informed decisions. And with [SAP SuccessFactors® Human Experience Management Suite](#), the company can shape seamless HR experiences across the entire employee lifecycle.



“One of our key reasons for choosing SAP S/4HANA is the global best practices it will bring to the group,” says Najam. “SAP offers us tried and tested ways to drive core process areas such as procure-to-pay, as well as industry solutions to handle specialized use

cases. Leading enterprises around the world already rely on SAP solutions, so we knew we were in safe hands. The platform also has widespread adoption in Pakistan, which gave us the assurance of a large pool of talent to manage and maintain the solution.”

Business units across Gatronova Group will depend on the new SAP solution to drive day-to-day operations — so unplanned downtime is not an option. To ensure always-on access to the new platform, the company selected [IBM Power E950](#) servers connected to [IBM FlashSystem® FS5015](#) and [IBM FlashSystem FS5100](#) storage arrays. Using automated data protection capabilities from the [IBM Spectrum® Protect](#) solution, Gatronova Group will perform regular backups to an [IBM TS4300 Tape Library](#), reducing the risk of data loss and enhancing business continuity in a recovery scenario.

“Many of the major banks in Pakistan rely on IBM Power servers to run their core banking systems, so we were certain that this highly resilient platform could meet our stringent requirements around reliability, availability and scalability,” recalls Najam. “The combination of IBM Power E950 servers

and IBM FlashSystem storage offers us high levels of performance in a very dense footprint: allowing us to use the same platform to support day-to-day transactions as well as real-time business insights without impacting the performance of ongoing business transactions.”

After comparing the IBM solution with an equivalent x86 platform, Gatronova Group determined that IBM Power servers would enable it to simplify and consolidate its IT architecture — delivering a significant improvement in cost-efficiency.

Najam elaborates: “Using logical partitions [LPARs], we can deliver the same compute resources for our SAP solution using just three physical IBM Power servers, compared to nine x86 servers. When it came to performance per rack, no other vendor came close to IBM. We are achieving around 40% in

operational cost-avoidance on space, power and cooling thanks to the IBM Power solution, which also makes it the more environmentally sustainable choice.”

Working with [IBM Systems Lab Services](#) and IBM Business Partner [Infotech Group](#), Gatronova Group deployed the new IBM Power platform with the [SUSE Linux Enterprise Server \(SLES\) for SAP Applications](#) operating system.

“We spoke to several enterprise companies in Pakistan running SAP S/4HANA, and the overwhelming majority were using the SUSE operating system,” says Najam. “All of the user feedback on SLES for SAP Applications was very positive, which convinced us the platform was the right choice for Gatronova Group. We were also very impressed by the support and guidance we received from the SUSE team: they went out their way to share best

practices for SAP deployments and provide thorough answers to our questions.”

To deliver maximum availability for its mission-critical SAP applications, Gatronova Group engaged IBM Systems Lab Services to enable SAP HANA System Replication to mirror its SAP HANA database to a secondary data center, and to provision a SUSE Linux Enterprise High Availability cluster to ensure seamless business continuity for its SAP S/4HANA applications.

“The deployment of our new infrastructure ran very smoothly, and we found the Infotech Group and IBM Systems Lab Services teams supportive and always ready to help,” adds Najam. “Even though the COVID-19 pandemic hit right as we started the deployment, we hardly felt any impact at all—both organizations helped us meet our original project milestones.”

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Building a solid foundation for fast-paced growth

Today, Gatronova Group has consolidated more than 2,800 distinct processes down to just 150 SAP workflows. In the coming months, the company will switch 26 of its legal entities over to the new SAP S/4HANA platform, followed by the remaining 10 entities in a second phase shortly after.

While its journey with integrated processes on SAP S/4HANA is just beginning, Gatronova Group is confident that the new way of working will deliver powerful benefits to bring forward its growth target. The company predicts that moving all group businesses to a single financial accounting system



will enable it to accelerate month-end closing from four days to less than 24 hours — a reduction of 75%.

The benefits won't be limited to financial processes. Najam explains:

“Access to real-time material requirements planning data will allow us to incorporate predictive analytics into our planning process. For example, by combining sales forecasts with data on current orders and inventory levels, we'll

be able to optimize our supply chain to ensure we have the right raw materials on hand to fulfil every order. Moreover, if we predict that prices are likely to rise, we can reduce our exposure by purchasing materials in advance. None of these innovations would be possible without the new IBM, SAP and SUSE solutions.”

Building on accurate, timely business data in the SAP solution, Gatronova Group intends to transform its operations from end-to-end. Robotic process automation (RPA) will enable the company to automate repetitive processes, such as matching vendor invoices with purchase orders; predictive plant maintenance will empower the organization to act

quickly to maximize the availability of its assets; and blockchain technology will make it possible to deliver even more responsive customer services.

“Some of our customers have consumption-based contracts, which means we commit to keeping stock in their warehouses at a predefined level,” says Najam. “By integrating SAP S/4HANA with blockchain technology, we can create a shared ledger of stock levels. Our customers can then scan a QR code every time they take stock out of their inventory and securely update the shared ledger — allowing us to automatically adjust the quantity on our next product delivery and keep inventory levels perfectly balanced at all times.”

As Gatronova Group continues to grow, the company is certain it has a long-term platform on which to build its business. By deploying SAP solutions on SLES on IBM Power, the group has the performance and scalability to add new workloads as it expands organically and brings onboard acquisitions.

“We have 33% scale-up headroom in our existing IBM infrastructure platform, which will give us plenty of capacity to grow in the coming years,” concludes Najam. “Thanks to our work with IBM, SAP and SUSE, our processes and our technology platform are rock-solid — allowing us to accelerate our growth and step confidently into new markets.”



About Gatronova Group

Headquartered in Pakistan and founded in 1948, [Gatronova Group](#) (external link) is a group of companies operating across a range of industries, including chemicals, textiles and packaging. Employing more than 6,000 people across locations in Pakistan, the USA and UAE, the group exports to more than 45 countries around the world and generates annual revenues of over USD 350 million.

About Infotech Group

With offices across the world from London to Accra, IBM Business Partner [Infotech](#) (external link) is a fast-growing IT company that specializes in solution integration. With more than two decades of experience in delivering multi-million-dollar projects for enterprises across many different verticals, Infotech has ISO 9001 and 27001 and CMMI Level 3 certifications.

Solution components

- IBM FlashSystem® FS5015
- IBM FlashSystem FS5100
- IBM® Power® E950
- IBM Spectrum® Protect
- IBM Systems Lab Services
- IBM TS4300 Tape Library
- SAP® Analytics Cloud
- SAP BW/4HANA®
- SAP S/4HANA®
- SAP SuccessFactors® Human Experience Management Suite
- SUSE Linux® Enterprise Server for SAP Applications

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