Are You Spending Too Much on Your SAP Maintenance?

An Executive Cost Optimization Checklist for CIOs, IT Directors & CFOs Running SAP ECC or SAP S/4HANA

Confidential Executive Brief

Prepared for enterprise leaders seeking clarity, cost control, and operational resilience in SAP environments.

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Executive Overview

For organizations running SAP ECC or SAP S/4HANA, SAP is not just an IT system — it is the operational backbone of finance, supply chain, procurement, manufacturing, and reporting.

Yet despite its strategic importance, SAP maintenance costs often grow quietly year after year — without a structured executive review of total support spend.

Beyond standard vendor maintenance fees, total SAP cost of ownership includes:

- Custom code support and regression testing
- Infrastructure and hosting overhead
- Compliance and license risk exposure
- Reactive ticket-based support models
- Escalating consulting engagements

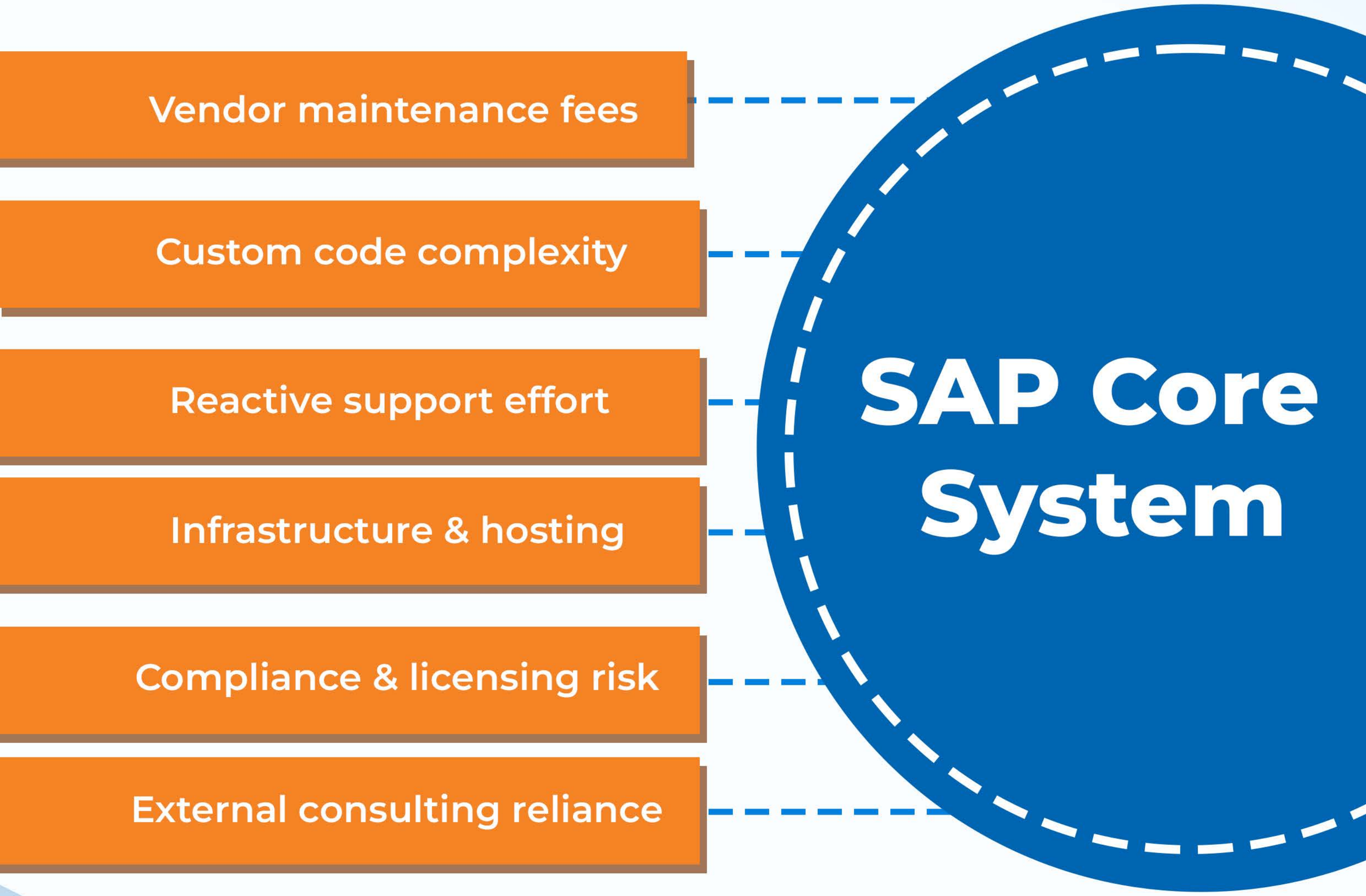
This executive checklist is designed to help CIOs and CFOs:

- Identify hidden SAP cost drivers
- Assess financial exposure areas
- Evaluate the efficiency of their current support model
- Determine whether a proactive or subscription-based approach could reduce cost and risk

In many cases, leadership visibility into these cost drivers is limited.

The Hidden Cost Layers

SAP maintenance costs typically fall into six major categories:



Individually, each category may appear manageable.

Collectively, they can inflate total cost of ownership by 15–40% beyond planned budgets.

The challenge is not visibility of individual expenses — but understanding how they compound over time.

Vendor Maintenance vs. Value Realization

Annual vendor maintenance typically ranges from 18–22% of license value. However, many organizations do not fully consume the strategic value associated with these fees.

Executive Checklist

- ☐ You are paying standard annual SAP maintenance with limited strategic support
- ☐ Most SAP tickets are routine fixes rather than innovation initiatives
- ☐ Vendor support is primarily reactive, not advisory
- ☐ Upgrade pressure feels commercially driven rather than business-driven

Financial Insight

When support consumption is largely corrective rather than strategic, organizations may effectively overpay 15–30% relative to realized value.

Custom Code & Modification Burden

Over time, SAP landscapes accumulate Z-programs, enhancements, and bespoke integrations. While often necessary, excessive customization increases long-term cost.

Executive Checklist

- ☐ Significant Z-programs or custom developments exist
- ☐ Regression testing effort increases with every enhancement
- ☐ Upgrade timelines are extended due to compatibility risks
- ☐ Documentation of legacy customizations is incomplete

Financial Insight

Custom-heavy environments typically increase support effort by 20–40% and significantly extend upgrade cycles, inflating both consulting and internal resource costs.

Reactive Support Model

Many SAP environments operate under a ticket-driven model focused on issue resolution rather than performance optimization.

Executive Checklist

- ☐ SAP teams spend the majority of time resolving incidents
- ☐ Recurring issues resurface quarterly
- ☐ Performance bottlenecks are addressed only after business complaints
- ☐ No structured continuous improvement roadmap exists

Financial Insight

Reactive support increases downtime, overtime costs, and cross-department productivity loss — particularly in Finance and Operations.

Infrastructure & Hosting Inefficiencies

Infrastructure decisions made years ago may no longer align with business demand.

Executive Checklist

- [ ] ECC runs on aging or oversized infrastructure
- [ ] HANA environments may be over-provisioned
- [ ] Limited cost transparency between infrastructure and application layers
- [ ] Disaster recovery systems are underutilized but fully funded

Financial Insight

Over-provisioned or poorly optimized environments can increase infrastructure costs by 10–35% annually.

Compliance & License Risk Exposure

License governance and audit exposure represent one of the most unpredictable SAP cost risks.

Executive Checklist

- ☐ License audits create financial uncertainty
- ☐ Indirect access exposure is unclear
- ☐ Role design and segregation-of-duties controls are outdated
- ☐ Finance lacks visibility into SAP cost allocation

Financial Insight

Audit findings and license adjustments can result in unexpected six- or seven-figure financial exposure.

Lack of Predictable Cost Model

Unpredictability is one of the most overlooked SAP cost risks.

Executive Checklist

- [ ] Support costs fluctuate unpredictably
- [ ] External consultants are engaged reactively
- [ ] Budget forecasting for SAP support is difficult
- [ ] No SLA-backed subscription model is in place

Financial Insight

Unstructured consulting engagements complicate CFO-level planning and often inflate total annual support spend.

How to Interpret Your Results

0-5 Checks

Your SAP maintenance appears generally stable. Selective optimization may still unlock measurable savings.

6-12 Checks

Multiple inefficiencies likely exist. A structured SAP cost review is recommended.

13+ Checks

High probability of significant hidden costs and operational risk. A proactive support transformation may generate substantial savings and improved governance.

Leading organizations are transitioning toward:

- Proactive monitoring and performance optimization
- Subscription-based SAP Application Management Services (AMS)
- Continuous improvement frameworks
- Custom code rationalization programs
- License governance and optimization controls
- Infrastructure right-sizing strategies

The Result

- ✔ Lower total cost of ownership
- ✔ Predictable budgeting
- ✔ Reduced compliance exposure
- ✔ Improved business alignment
- ✔ Greater capacity for innovation initiatives

Optimized SAP support is not about spending less — it is about spending strategically.

Executive Action Framework

1. Conduct a structured SAP cost baseline assessment .
2. Map support effort to measurable business value
3. Quantify custom code complexity and rationalization opportunities
4. Review infrastructure sizing and license exposure
5. Evaluate proactive or subscription-based support models

Confidential SAP Cost Assessment

If your organization identified multiple exposure areas in this checklist, it may be time for an executive-level review.

We offer a confidential SAP Maintenance Cost Assessment designed specifically for CIOs, IT Directors, and CFOs running ECC or S/4HANA environments.

This structured review provides clarity on:

- Where overspending may exist
- Where compliance risks are hidden
- Where optimization opportunities are measurable

Schedule a confidential consultation to benchmark your SAP maintenance model against industry best practices.