Reference Data Management integrated with SAP Solution Manager
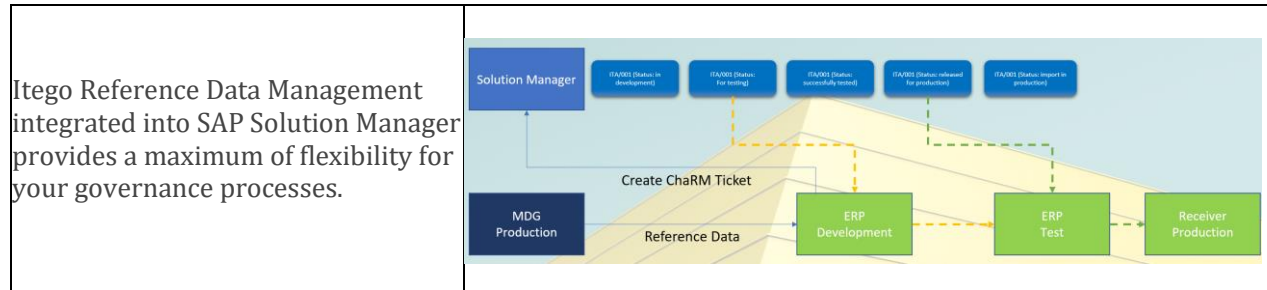
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Itego Reference Data Management integrated into SAP Solution Manager provides a maximum of flexibility for your governance processes.	

In our first blog I introduced Itego Reference Data Management ("1 Itego RDM Blog") which has been followed by added details about the basis for all of this, the Master Data Framework, described in ("2 Itego MDF Blog"). Today I would like to continue with probably one of the hottest discussion topics when you dare to think about a holistic approach to Reference Data: what about the SAP Solution Manager?

Almost every customer, after seeing the great potential using Itego RDM for SAP MDG, has this question. Luckily this has been answered a long time ago. Back in 2014, me still working for SAP, we (the Master Data Governance team) aligned this with the Solution Manager team. Answer: combining both makes a lot of sense and the need for integration is based on the customer processes and infrastructure.
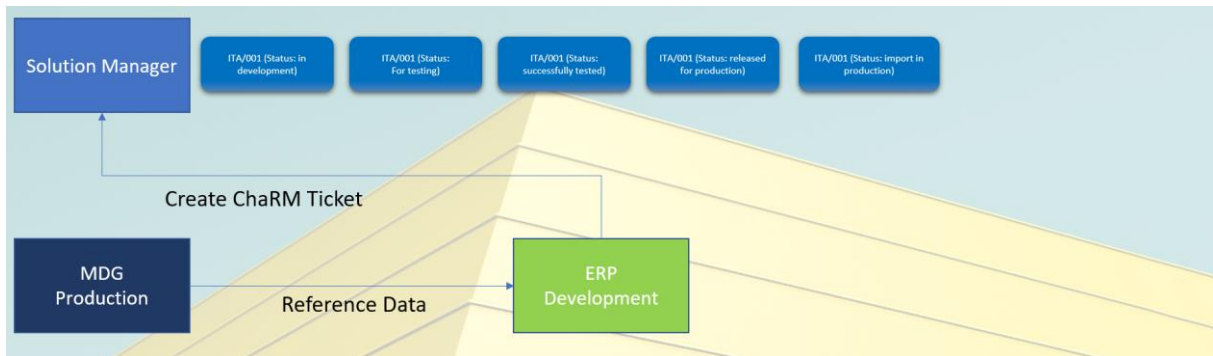
Ok – high level answers like this you heard before I guess. Let's investigate deeper how that has been solved in Itego RDM.

For beginners: SAP Solution Manager offers components for the management of configuration data (also called Customizing) and this also covers a lot what can be called reference data. Itego RDM offers a solution for the harmonization and governance of reference data. So where is the benefit of RDM? It is here:

- *Business driven governance of reference data*
- *Flexible User Interface, Workflow and Data Replication*
- *Treating Reference Data as Master Data*

Which means: the more you think about Reference Data as Master Data, the more benefit you will get from RDM. In fact, some reference data objects (like classification, exchange rates and others) are not even configuration data. If RDM customers treat Reference Data Objects as Master Data (using the "Business Controlled Governance Alternative" explained in my first blog ("1 Itego RDM Blog"), Solution Manager is "out" for these objects.

If (and in many cases this is the right approach) customers for some objects use the "Full IT Governance Alternative", Solution Manager is "in". Looking into the technical details for this:
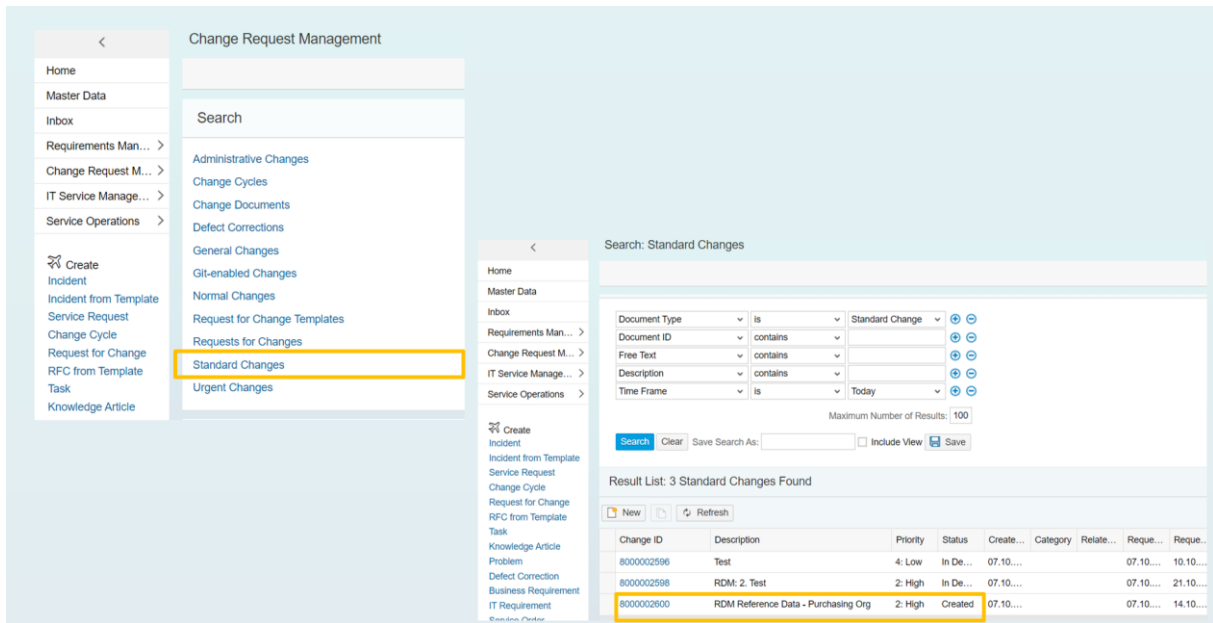
RDM (using the Local Staging also explained a in my first blog), creates a so called "ChaRM Ticket", providing the link between the communicated reference data and the Solution Manager driven process for releasing this data to production systems.

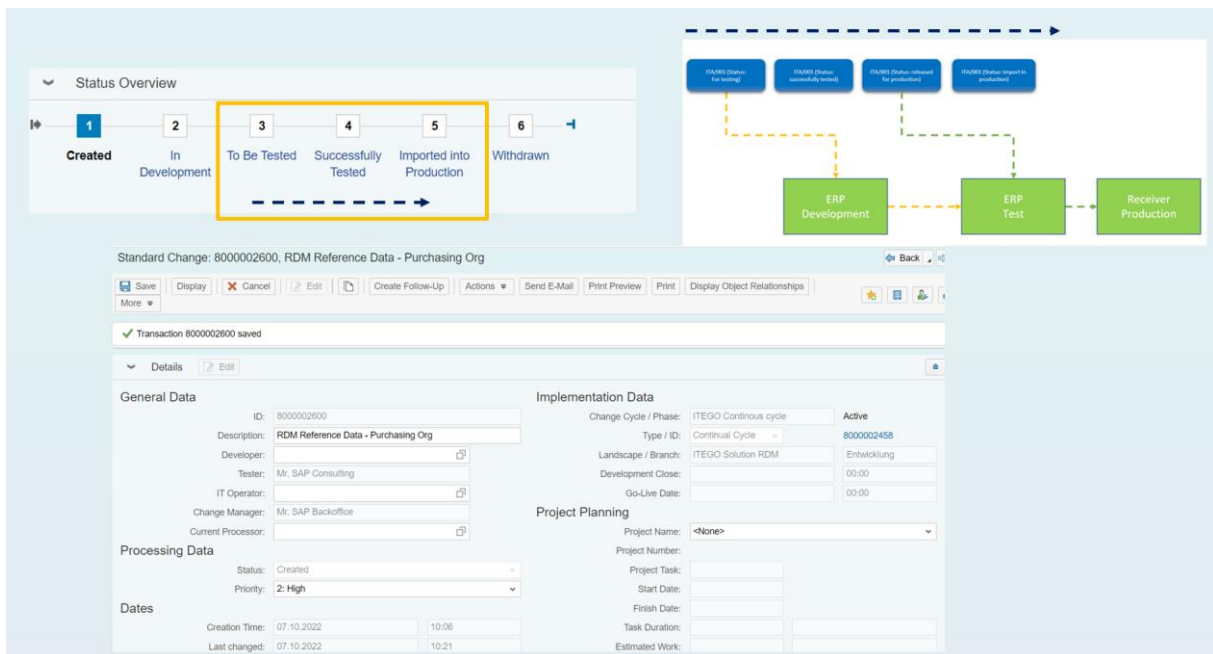*Technical details for experts:*

Screenshot: Using a configured connection to the Solution Manager in the Local Staging Area.

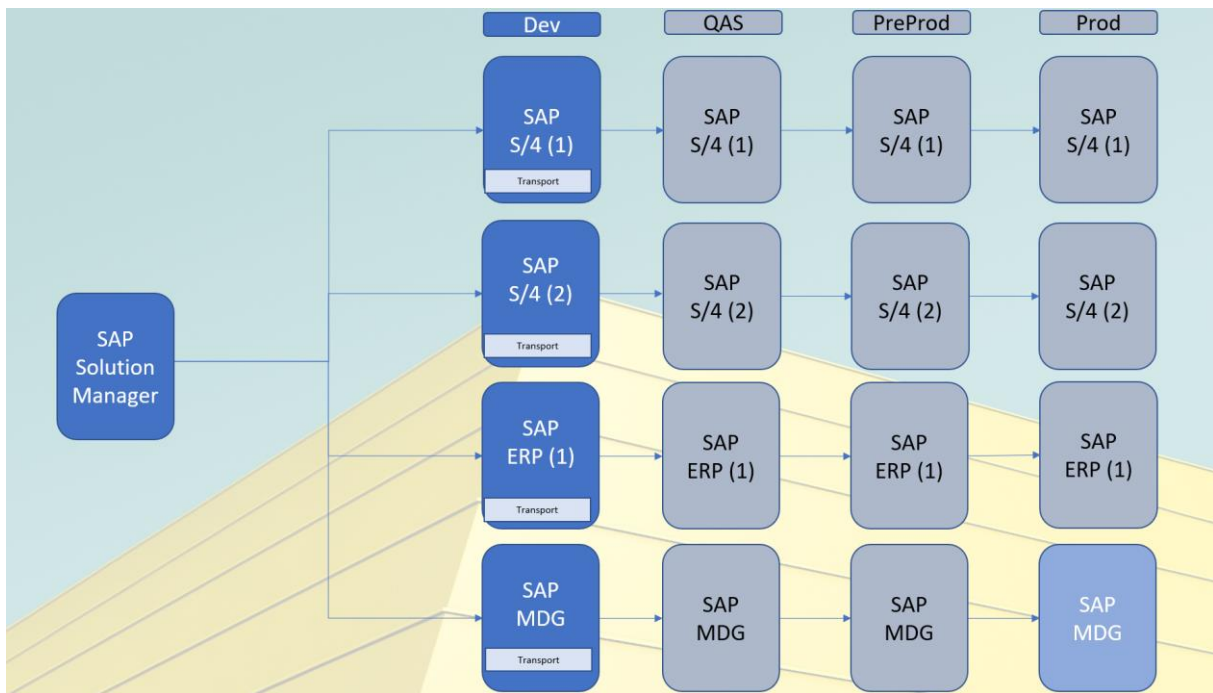*And here is how it looks in Solution Manager:*

The ChaRM ticket, which now can be processed, holds additional information about the objects in the associated transport request and allows a guided processing. Means: releasing for test, confirming the successful test and finally importing the change into production.

Needless to mention that this is only the simplest process that you can think of. Customers are free to adjust this process, RDM does not care, as there is a clear segregation of duties.

RDM takes care that the business driven process for the creation or change of reference data is as smooth, flexible and fast as possible. Solution Manager takes care that the technology driven process is just this as well if needed.
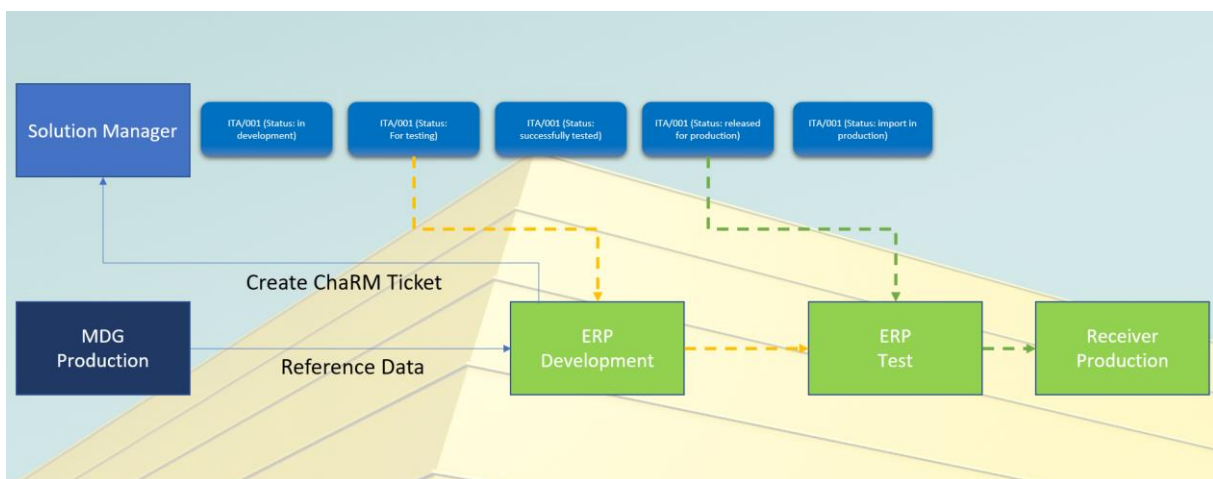
With this it is possible to create an integrated process leveraging the Solution Manager to "orchestrate" the "technical release" of the changes:

Probably interesting to see that it also brings the changes to the configuration layer in the SAP MDG production system. If you don't understand this, please visit again my first blog and consider that SAP MDG keeps the data in a Staging Area. Means: it is not released to the configuration layer before all other productive systems also do know this new data set.

Facts in a nutshell, summary and links to additional resources:

The Solution Manager Integration delivered by Itego RDM delivers the possibility to combine the best of both worlds, spanning the complete cycle from the reference data governance in RDM to the orchestration of the "release to production" in the SAP Solution Manager:

On top of this Itego RDM offers harmonization features that the Solution Manager does not offer (for example the possibility to create, compare and restore snapshots of the SAP configuration data). This will be explained in more detail in one of my next blogs providing more insights into the Reference Data Harmonization component of Itego RDM.