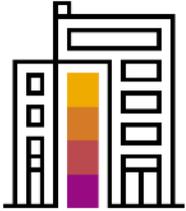


# SAP Innovation Awards 2021 Entry Pitch Deck

Harnessing AI Chatbot Technology to Increase Invoice Processing Efficiency and Improve Supplier Experiences

Uniper SE

PUBLIC



## Company Information

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**Headquarters** Dusseldorf, Germany

**Industry** Utilities

**Web site** [www.uniper.energy](http://www.uniper.energy)

Operating in more than 40 countries, Uniper SE generates, trades, and markets energy as well as procuring, storing, transporting, and supplying commodities such as natural gas, liquefied natural gas (LNG), and coal. Committed to helping fulfill our customers' complex energy needs, we are also working toward our vision of a carbon-free business by 2035.

As we strive toward ambitious targets, our extensive supply network plays a crucial role in our business success. From maintaining power stations and inspecting equipment to training our staff, we value our relationship with each of our suppliers, large or small.

We want to be a company that it's easy to do business with. We want our suppliers to rest easy that they'll be paid on time. And if there are any invoicing queries, we want to respond to them as quickly as possible to address them promptly. That's why we're harnessing AI chatbot technology to provide suppliers with a smooth invoicing and payment experience.

# Improving Efficiency in Supplier Payment Processing



## Uniper SE



**“We expect with this tool to be able to significantly reduce the peak workload of ad-hoc requests.”**

Ronny Mann, Vice President General Accounting, Uniper Financial Services

**“The invoice-checking chatbot that we created using SAP Conversational AI is helping Uniper to focus on processing invoices faster. In this way, we can provide suppliers with efficient, on-time payments.”**

Laszlo Gergely, Project Manager, Uniper IT

### Challenge

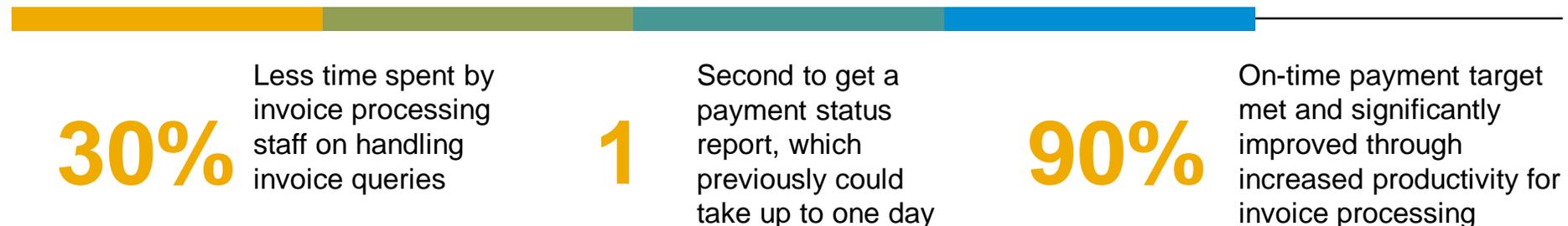
To help ensure a smooth invoicing process for our suppliers, we wanted to enable self-service reporting on payment dates. This would quickly provide vendors with status updates and reduce the number of inquiries handled by our staff so they have more time to spend on invoice processing, cutting payment time frames.

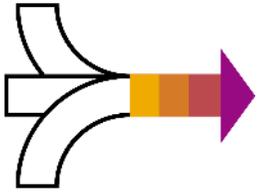
### Solution

With help from SAP® Services and Support, we built an invoice-check chatbot. Based on SAP Cloud Platform and developed using SAP Conversational AI services and SAP Integration Suite technology, the chatbot provides a straightforward way for vendors to get an update on payment status when entering details of a specific invoice.

### Outcome

With half as much time spent handling inquiries, accounts personnel can now process more invoices each day, speeding invoice settlement and helping ensure prompt payment. Meanwhile, quicker and simplified answers to status queries improve the vendor experience and help strengthen Uniper’s supplier relationships.





## Business Challenges and Objectives

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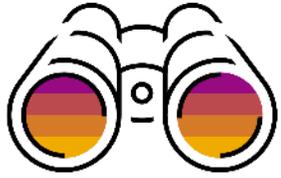
With approximately 30,000 suppliers worldwide sending us more than 250,000 invoices each year, the accounts staff involved in payment processing have their work cut out for them. However, the fact that they were spending too much time handling inquiries and manually checking invoice status in several systems meant that they could not focus on processing invoices, slowing down the whole payment process.

What we needed was a way of providing self-service access to payment information so that vendors, and staff in other departments following up on their behalf, could quickly find answers to questions about payment dates. With time freed up from inquiry handling, our accounts team could then process more invoices each day to provide a faster, more-efficient invoice settlement experience for our suppliers.

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We wanted to make accessing payment details as quick and easy as possible for our vendors and for Uniper staff helping them with their inquiry. For this reason, we decided to:

- Create an invoice-checking AI chatbot that would deliver the latest payment status for a particular invoice in seconds
- Make the chatbot available both internally to Uniper employees and externally to our suppliers
- Validate users by asking three questions about the specific invoice in question, eliminating the need for complex user authorization scenarios involving usernames and passwords



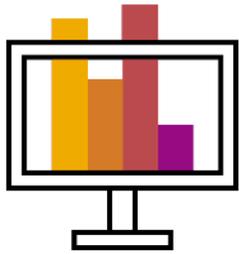
## Project or Use Case Details

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Our invoice-checking environment bot (ICEbot) project was part of a wider program encouraging employees to suggest ways that we can use our SAP solution environment to innovate processes and improve operational efficiency. Our accounts department wanted to provide a better experience for vendors by offering self-service reporting on payment status and worked closely with our IT department and SAP ActiveAttention™ services in their search for a way to turn the idea into reality.

The team decided to create an AI chatbot and developed this using SAP Conversational AI services and SAP Integration Suite technology on SAP Cloud Platform. Available both to external vendors and Uniper staff across the business, the chatbot provides an up-to-date payment status in seconds. To make the process as straightforward as possible, users are validated based on the answers to three questions about the invoice in question, without any need to enter a password.

With the solution in place, accounts staff now spend 30% less time on inquiry handling, enabling them to process more invoices each day. This speeds up invoice turnaround times, enabling us to meet and beat our targets for on-time payment. Staff in other areas of the business who previously spent considerable time pursuing inquiries on behalf of supplier contacts can either quickly check on payment status themselves or refer the supplier to the chatbot. Meanwhile, our highly valued vendors benefit from a smoother and more-efficient invoicing experience.



# Benefits and Outcomes

## Business or Social

30% less time spent by accounts staff on handling invoicing inquiries from suppliers or from employees from other departments

Increased productivity for accounts teams, as a result of having more time to focus on processing invoices

Faster invoice processing, resulting in improved on-time payment performance

Improved supplier relationships with increased vendor satisfaction due to an enhanced invoicing experience

## IT (optional)

Rapid chatbot development using comprehensive bot-building capabilities in SAP Conversational AI services

Straightforward user validation based on asking for details about specific invoices, rather than using more-complex access and authorization management technology

## Human Empowerment

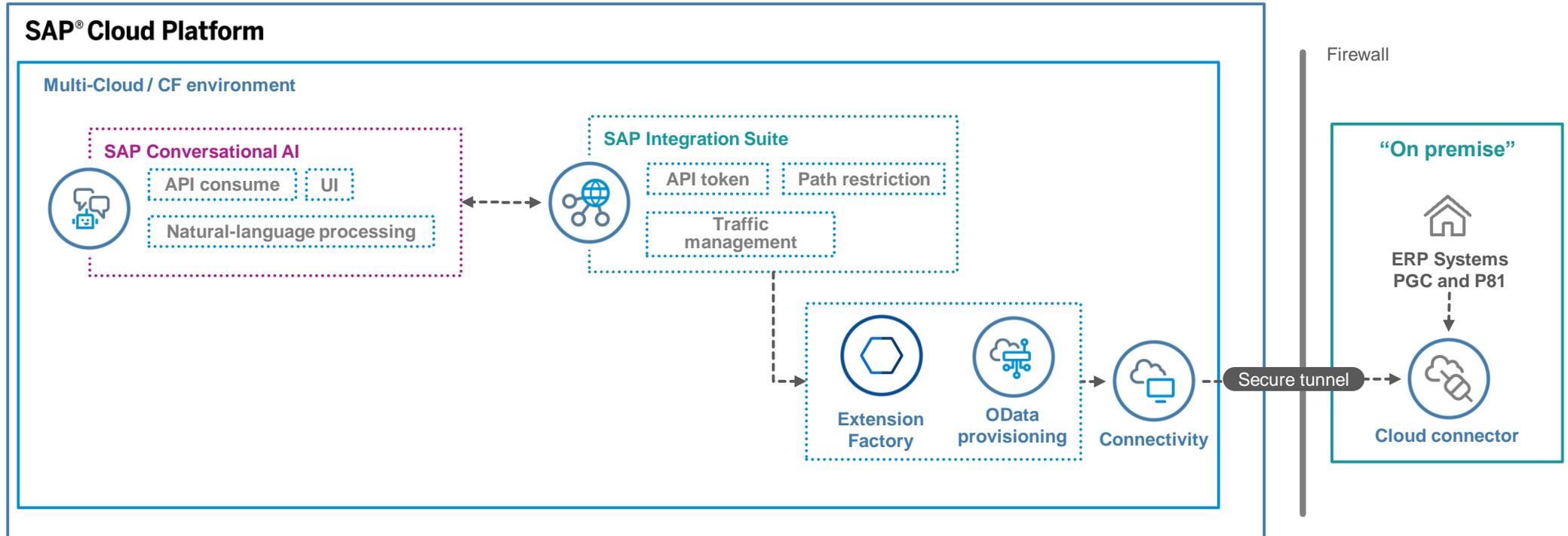
Ability for accounts employees to focus on core payment processing tasks, without interruptions due to invoicing inquiries

Empowerment of employees in business areas such as purchasing to resolve the inquiries of supplier contacts without having to reach out to accounts colleagues

Opportunity for suppliers to get an answer to their payment status questions in seconds rather than having to wait up to a day, as they did previously



# Architecture





# Deployment

**Deployment status** Live

**Date** January 2021

**Number of users** 50,000 (internal Users ~ 17.000  
Vendors ~ 30.000)

## SAP® technologies used:

	SAP product	Deployment status (live or proof of concept [POC])	Contribution to project
1	SAP Conversational AI	Live	Intelligent chatbot development
2	SAP Integration Suite	Live	Management of the extraction of data for use by the chatbot
3	SAP Extension Suite	Live	Usage of SAP Cloud Platform OData Provisioning
4	SAP ERP application	Live	Financial information (invoice data)

If you have used one or more of the services or support offerings from SAP Services and Support during the implementation or deployment phase, please indicate which one(s) below with an

SAP MaxAttention™

SAP ActiveAttention™

SAP Advanced Deployment

SAP Value Assurance

SAP Model Company

Others: SAP Services and Support

SAP Innovation Services

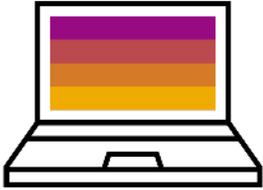
SAP Innovative Business Solutions



# Advanced Technologies (1 of 2)

The following **advanced technologies** were part of the project.

Technology or use case	Product used*	Contribution to project and how product used integrates with SAP products
<b>1 Machine learning or artificial intelligence</b> Robotic process automation, conversational AI, AI-based knowledge graph	SAP Conversational AI	Services enabling the rapid and efficient development of an intelligent chatbot
<b>2 Intelligent data management</b> Multi-cloud, data virtualization and governance, smart data tiering, persistent memory, data privacy		
<b>3 Advanced and augmented analytics</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Real-time and streaming analytics, spatial analytics</li><li>Natural-language query and generation</li><li>AutoML to identify trends, patterns, outliers</li><li>Predictive analytics (time-series analysis and forecasting, regression, classification)</li></ul>		
<b>4 Data and analytics solutions in the cloud</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Unified data and analytics cloud platforms by SAP</li><li>Modern/self-service data to analytics</li></ul>		



# Advanced Technologies (2 of 2)

The following **advanced technologies** were part of the project.

Technology or use case	Product used*	Contribution to project and how product used integrates with SAP products
<b>5 Advanced cloud integration</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• API economy (monetization and API marketplaces)</li><li>• AI-based or crowdsourced integration</li><li>• High throughput, low-latency digital integration hub</li></ul>	SAP API Management	Management of the extraction of data for use by the chatbot
<b>6 Industry cloud platform</b>		
<b>7 Blockchain</b>		
<b>8 Internet of Things</b>		
<b>9 3D printing</b>		