



SOLUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM

QUICK GUIDE

Brownfield or greenfield on S/4HANA

The decision criteria without dogma: six questions about YOUR environment are worth more than any consultancy's preference.

Three routes, none "right" by definition

Route	What it is	Strength	Price to pay
Brownfield (conversion)	Converts the current ECC, with history and customizations	Faster; preserves investment and knowledge	Brings the vices along: dirty data, dead custom code, crooked processes
Greenfield (reimplementation)	Implements from scratch on the S/4 standard, migrating only what is needed	Cleans decades of debt; adopts the standard	Longer and more expensive; demands real process redesign
Selective ("bluefield")	System shell with selective migration of data and configuration	A real middle path: cleans without losing everything	Specialized tooling and partner; a delicate technical window

The most common mistake is not choosing the wrong route — it is choosing by elimination ("greenfield is expensive, so brownfield") without measuring what the conversion will carry. Converted technical debt is still debt, now on a new platform.

Before any route: measure

The six questions on the next page can only be answered with data from your environment: real usage of customizations, volume per table, master data quality. Without measurement, the choice is a guess with a ceremony around it.

Six questions decide

1. **Do your current processes serve tomorrow's business?**

They do → brownfield scores. They need to change → greenfield/selective.

2. **How much of your custom code actually runs?**

Measured (not estimated). Below ~30% of real usage, converting the rest is moving junk to a new address.

3. **How large and how old is the database?**

A huge history makes both the conversion and HANA more expensive. Archiving before the project changes the whole math — it is the cheapest lever there is.

4. **How much interruption does the business tolerate?**

Short window and low appetite → brownfield. Transformation with sponsorship → greenfield survives.

5. **How is your master data quality?**

A dirty register converted is still dirty. If cleaning is inevitable, the selective route charges for that work once.

6. **Is there an event that forces redesign?**

Merger, carve-out, the Brazilian Tax Reform, a business model change — events like these pay for the greenfield cost that, without them, is hard to justify.

Reading the score: it is not simple majority. Questions 2 and 3 are about **cost** (they weigh on the bill), 1, 5 and 6 are about **value** (they weigh on the outcome), and 4 is a **constraint** — if the window does not exist, it vetoes alone.

What to do before choosing — on any route

- ✓ **Archiving and data volume management (DVM):** shrinking the database before the project makes the conversion, the HANA hardware and RISE cheaper. It pays for itself, and it is the only work that helps all three routes.
- ✓ **Custom code usage analysis:** measured real execution (not a static inventory) over 60–90 days
- ✓ **Simplification Item Check and readiness check** executed and READ — the list says what breaks in a conversion
- ✓ **Master data cleansing** with a business owner, not only IT
- ✓ **Interface map:** everything that enters and leaves ECC today, with owner and protocol
- ✓ **Infrastructure decision in parallel:** RISE, your own hyperscaler or on-premise change the cost and timeline of every route

Signal in your environment	Route favored
Fitting processes + lean custom code + short deadline	Brownfield
Processes to redesign + a business event forcing it	Greenfield
Huge history + dirty master data + fear of big bang	Selective

The next step

This guide gives you the criteria. Applying them to your environment — your systems, your contracts, your deadline — is a one-hour conversation with people who do this every week.

To go deeper, at the **Inove Academy** (inovesolutions.com/en/inove-academy-en): implementation and RISE infographics · S/4HANA articles on the blog

Talk to Inove about your S/4HANA journey: inovesolutions.com/en/contact · contato@inovesolutions.com