

Human First spirit: ICONS project

ICONS - International Consultants On SAP - is the name of a new initiative launched by PASàPAS to support its international growth. Its ambition is to federate all the Group's SAP consultants by setting up International Competency Networks operating across subsidiaries and countries. Philippe d'Amato, Deputy Managing Director, explains the goals and expected benefits of this project in terms of cohesion and resources sharing.

What led you to launch the ICONS project?

The ICONS project is a direct result of PASàPAS' international expansion. Since the merger with Projexia in 2019 and Createch at the end of 2021, our international presence has increased significantly. Previously, our consultants were located mainly in France and the UK. Today, we have approximately 120 SAP experts based in North America and around 40 in our service centres in Mauritius and Hungary.

This has generated the need to create spaces for international exchange around SAP knowledge and skills. Until then, each country tended to work on its own. In the context of our development, it is now essential to identify and draw on skills globally.

What are the goals of this initiative?

We have three objectives:

- identify SAP resources and expertise globally,
- support the sharing and exchanges between experts,
- encourage employees to think beyond their everyday scope.

We expect multiple tangible benefits from this initiative: when a team is working on an interesting project, everyone knows about it. If a consultant develops new expertise, he or she can share it with others more easily. If a project manager needs to build a team, he or she can call on skills outside their country. An employee who wants to gain experience abroad can find out about opportunities at group level...

As a result of our growth and our merger with Talan, which includes non-SAP businesses, it has become essential to create a cross-border organization dedicated to SAP so as to preserve our expertise and our unique positioning on SAP. Our SAP practice now brings together skills that are no longer attached to the same legal structure, hence the strong need for internal cohesion and coordination.

How does the ICONS initiative fit in with the Competency Centres approach that has been implemented at PASàPAS for several years?

The role of the Competency Centres is to manage consulting skills at country level beyond the short-term. For example, the Finance Competency Centre brings together consultants who share a common skillset

related to SAP finance but work on different types of assignments (projects, support, etc...). This organization has been operational in France for several years, and Canada had also implemented a similar type of structure.

The aim now is to extend their scope beyond one single country and give them an international dimension. Operation will be broadly the same, although we plan to implement new tools. We want to equip our International Competency Networks (ICNs) with a digital platform to manage the skills and know-how of all our SAP consultants. The idea is to map out our SAP skills and enable each employee to access and continuously update their data.

How is the project being implemented?

We started by identifying 8 ICNs: Project Management / Finance / Supply Chain -& Manufacturing / Development & Integration / Basis Component / BI & Analytics / Human Resources / CRM. For each of them, we defined a leader per country in France, the UK and Canada, with our service centre teams being attached to one of these countries for optimal integration.

Last June, we gathered the leaders for a kick-off meeting. There were 25 of us, with the aim of getting to know each other and defining our goals. This was an opportunity to take a major step: the choice of the name, which was made together.

In the months to come, we will continue to work with each leader individually to help them coordinate their ICN. Each consultant in the Group will be part of at least one ICN. Our aim is to finish assigning consultants to ICNs and organize a first meeting of each ICN by the end of 2022.

"Creating cohesion" is one of the cornerstones of your "Human First" charter. How does the ICONS initiative support this commitment?

Sharing is at the heart of both Human First and the ICONS initiative! Giving employees as much information as possible to enable them to develop their skills is the goal of the ICONS initiative. Two of our values are driving this new organization: sharing and personal development.

Indeed, the project is welcomed by managers. These are real opportunities for them to build their own skills, join international projects, broaden their network... It creates a very positive internal momentum. French managers have the satisfaction of bringing their experience in coordinating Competency Centres, whilst benefiting from the Canadian experience. The goal is to pool experiences in order to start writing a common narrative!