

Södra production sites and branches which use Ticom or are in the process of changing over to Ticom

SÖDRA

Corporate nervous system successfully standardized

Swedish leading company relies on multilingual industry solution from Germany

Up until recently, Swedish timber giant Södra worked with three different ERP systems in its sawmill division. For a long time, the company had been looking for a uniform, customized software solution in order to minimize interfaces between individual production sites, branch offices and countries and to optimize processes. Södra finally found what it was looking for at German industry specialist Timbertec.

✍ Günther Jauk 📷 Timbertec

With an output of 2 million m³ of softwood lumber, Swedish forest and timber group Södra is one of the biggest sawmill operators in Europe. In addition to six sawmills in Sweden and one in Finland, the company operates several processing plants as well as storage facilities and trading branches, for example in Great Britain, Ireland and the US. In the daily work, the company has to overcome language barriers and take several local currencies and time zones into consideration. Furthermore, different solutions, such as ERP systems, were used in the individual countries. "Up until recently, we worked with three different programs in Sweden, Finland and Great Britain, and some of them were more than 25 years old," tells us Pernilla Gustafsson, project manager at Södra.

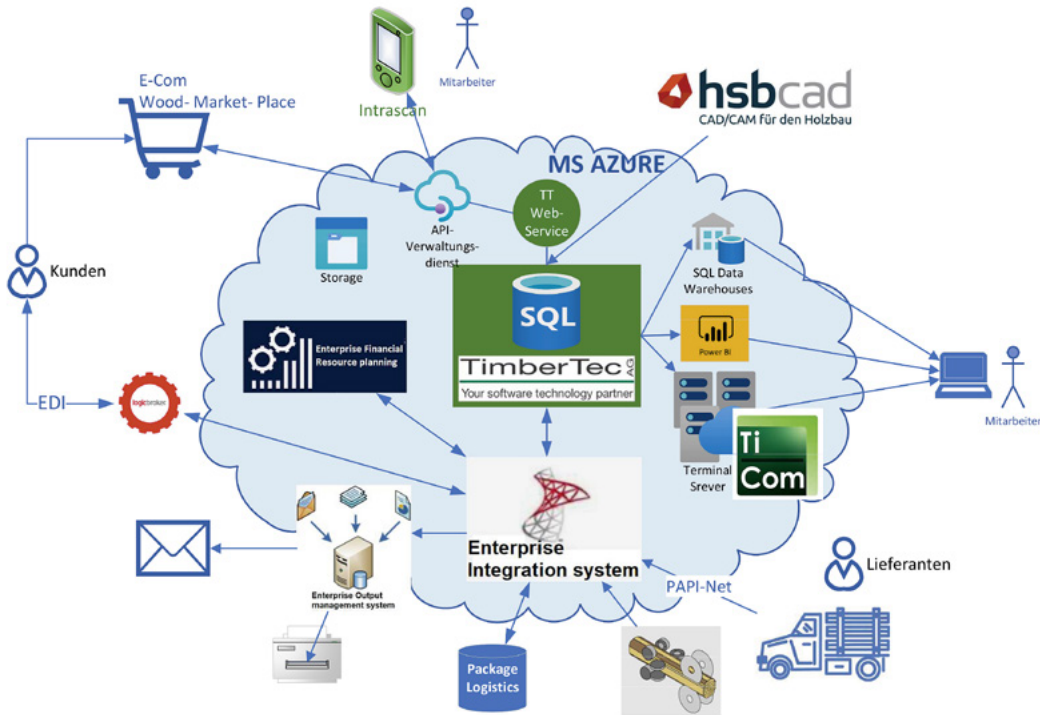
Already ten years ago, Södra started a project aimed at standardizing the ERP system

„In the end, Timbertec’s industry experience in the sawn timber sector and its comprehensive solution approach convinced us.“

*Pernilla Gustafsson,
Södra project manager*

for all production sites and branches. Since none of the existing programs met the necessary requirements, Södra met various market participants, including Timbertec of Eutin/DE. In the end, however, the group opted for a solution from a US software company.

Five years later, after it had failed, Södra put the project out for tender again and in 2018, Timbertec won the final bid. "In the end, it was Timbertec’s industry experience in the sawn timber sector and the comprehensive solution approach for future projects that convinced us," says Gustafsson, explaining the decision. In addition to the actual ERP, the software specialist also offers production planning systems for sawmills and laminated timber producers. Another decisive factor was the possibility to display the industry processes in the sawmill and the new CLT plant.



Integration of Timbertec's Ticom software into Södra's existing software architecture on the basis of the MS Azure cloud computing platform



The brilliant agile project management by Pernilla Gustafsson and business architect Luis Figueroa was greatly appreciated by the whole team

Scandinavia as new market

The order placed by Södra is not only Timbertec's first project in Scandinavia, but also the biggest project in the company's 20-year history. "In addition to 19 production sites and branches in Sweden, the changeover to our ERP also affects branches in Finland, Ireland, Great Britain and the US. That's not just four countries, but also four time zones, four local currencies and four languages," says Timbertec Managing Director Andreas Boll, outlining the scale of the project.

Timbertec's Ticom ERP system essentially includes purchasing and sales, master data and warehouse management, transport and loading as well as the web-based scanner solution Intrascan for identifying and assigning goods using a mobile data collection device (hand scanner). "The main goal was to work with the same software at all sites and branches and to make system errors largely a thing of the past," tells us Boll, adding that the entire ERP system for Södra was built in the Microsoft Azure cloud without local servers – which is also something that the company has never done before on such a scale.

Changeover according to plan

In November 2019, one year after the contract had been signed, Timbertec started implementing the system in Finland, and a smaller sawmill in Sweden followed in February 2020. Two months later, Södra completed the changeover in all other Swedish sawmills, planing mills and trading branches within just one week. "It was tough, but it

TIMBERTEC
 Headquarters: Eutin/DE
 Servicepoint: Vaxjö/SE
 Founded in: 1999
 Managing directors: Frank Ridder and Andreas Boll
 Employees: 110
 Products: ERP and software solutions for sawmills, laminated timber producers and merchants

was the right decision and, in the end, it worked well," says Gustafsson. All commercial processes are controlled by the central customer service. The planned changeover in Great Britain and Ireland was postponed to 2021 due to Covid-19.

In addition, Södra intends to use the Timbertec software for production planning during the 1st quarter this year. This will happen in their newly built cross-laminated timber plant to begin with. If the evaluation is positive, the TiCom module could then also be incorporated in all their sawmills in the future. Due to the corona pandemic, however, it is not yet possible to set a fixed schedule for this, says Gustafsson. The focus is currently on implementation in Ireland and Great Britain, she adds. Once this is done, around 300 Södra employees will work with Ticom, Timbertec's ERP system.

Always the right solution

Since the start of the project, Timbertec has been operating a branch in Sweden with three Swedish-speaking employees. "This puts us in the ideal position for serving Södra and other potential Swedish customers," emphasizes Boll. It is a development which Gustafsson greatly appreciates: "At the beginning of the project, there were frequent misunderstandings, not least because of the language barrier. Now, Timbertec understands our concerns very well and always has a suitable solution on hand. No matter what it is – Timbertec knows what to do. We didn't regret our decision for Timbertec for a minute." //