SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025



An international survey on priorities, challenges, and perceptions of enterprise architecture today.

SAP LeanIX

Introduction

Companies continue to invest in their enterprise architecture (EA) practice, according to our survey of 360 enterprise architects from around the world, with nearly two-thirds (64%) reporting that investment in EA has increased over the last two years.

64%

of companies increased EA investment

At the same time, respondents report that EA is primarily viewed as an administrative or governing function within the company. Indeed, only 14 percent reported that EA was perceived as a close partner of the business.

The present report, "SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025," provides some insight into the reasons behind these perceptions. For example, creating a reliable inventory of applications and IT resources was identified as the top EA priority by 66 percent of respondents, and, at first glance such an undertaking can seem administrative. However, context is crucial: without a reliable inventory, initiatives such as cost reduction through application rationalization or portfolio modernization, which are crucial to the business, are simply not possible.

Establishing a solid governance framework for EA was also identified as a top priority. However, while the majority of respondents consider effective architecture governance important, the two most common approaches to governance – namely, a dedicated Architecture Review Board and the documentation of architecture principles – have only been implemented in about half of the surveyed companies.

Due to this lagging implementation, 51 percent of respondents say it currently takes a month or more to reach an architecture decision. This, naturally, contributes to the potentially negative view of EA on the part of the broader business. EA can and should serve as a critical and strategic driver of innovation and performance. Unfortunately, prioritizing what appear to be administrative tasks and overseeing an inefficient governance process point to a disconnect between EA's potential and its reality.

Add to this a hesitancy on the part of EA teams when it comes to AI adoption – with 70% opposed to an "AI-first" approach to technology adoption – at a time when AI is becoming central to technology strategy, and the question arises: How can one bring the priorities of EA and the priorities of the business closer together?

The answer is: Communication, consistency, and collaboration. That is, EAs must demonstrate that their supposedly "administrative and governance" functions actually serve strategic goals.

Connecting the dots for the larger organization and demonstrating all the ways that **good data and clear guidelines drive company performance and resilience** is the best way for enterprise architects to deliver value and fulfill their strategic role within the company.



The accelerating pace of technological innovation creates pressure on organizations to constantly evolve, change, and adapt. At the same time, it also means companies have to manage an increasingly complex software landscape and do so in a way that enables ongoing business transformation. Because they are well positioned to address precisely these issues, enterprise architects (EAs) and enterprise architecture as a practice have recently begun to get a lot more attention.

Given that, how is EA currently perceived? What challenges do EAs face, and what priorities do they have for 2025? The "SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025" survey provides valuable and timely insight into these questions.

An international survey of enterprise architects

As a market-leading provider of enterprise architecture solutions, SAP LeanIX has been working with organizations around the world for over a decade.

For the "SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025" survey, the company conducted an online survey of enterprise architects, representing 360 companies from its extensive customer portfolio, in December 2024 and January 2025.

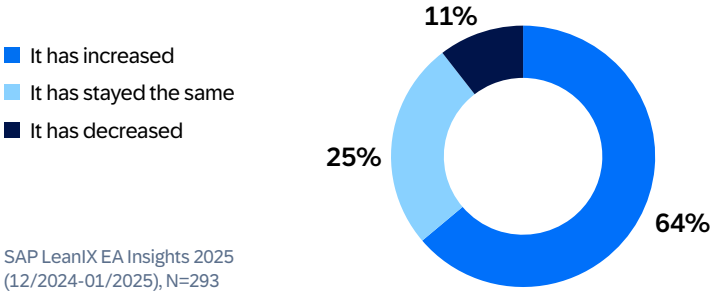
Two-thirds of the respondents come from companies based in Europe, and another 22 percent from US companies. Overall, 37 percent work in organizations with more than 10,000 employees.

Fifty-four percent of the companies surveyed have had an EA practice for three years or longer. Most EA teams—45 percent—consist of two to five members. In 37 percent of cases, five or more enterprise architects work together. The longer the EA practice has existed, the higher the likelihood of a large team.

Growing EA investment – but perception of EA as "administrative" persists

Investment in enterprise architecture over the past two years has increased at almost two-thirds of the companies surveyed, and in another 25 percent investment has remained at the same level. Only 11 percent report declining investment.

Figure 1: Has investment in your organization's EA practice increased or decreased during the last two years?



SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025), N=293

While growing investment points to the growing importance of EA as a business function, this importance does not yet seem to be fully recognized across the broader business.

When asked about the perception of enterprise architecture within the organization, respondents stated that it is most frequently seen as an administrative function, a view only 8 percent disagreed with. Enterprise architecture as a governing function was the second most common perception. Only 14 percent believe EA is perceived as a close partner with the business.

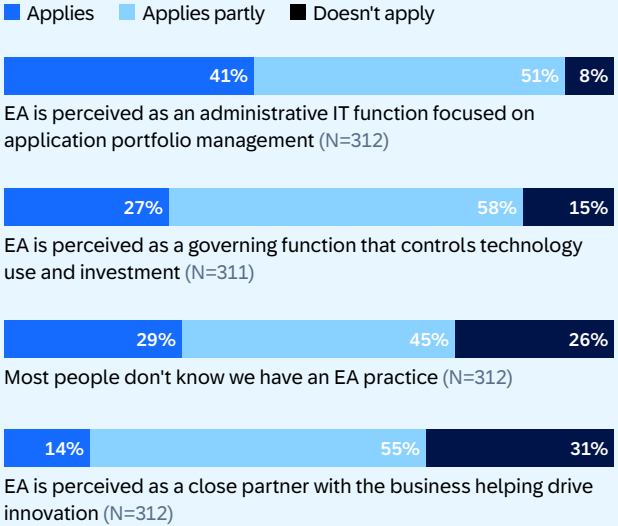
An alarming 29 percent believe that most people in the company aren't aware the EA practice exists. Even in companies where the EA practice has been in place for three years or more, 21 percent still report that much of the company remains oblivious to its existence.

29%

say no one in the company knows about the EA team

Figure 2: How is the EA practice perceived in your company?

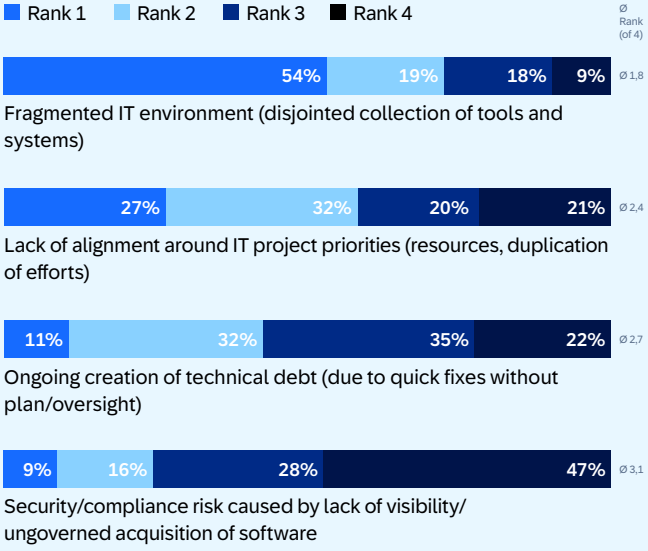
Only respondents with an existing EA practice



SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025)

Figure 3: How would you rank the following challenges for your organization's EA teams?

Only respondents with an existing or planned EA practice



SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025), N=358, Ø Rank (of 4)

IT landscape fragmentation: A major concern for EAs

What is currently the biggest challenge enterprise architects face? The results here are clear: 73 percent of respondents view a fragmented IT environment as their top challenge. This is followed by a lack of alignment on IT priorities. Technical debt along with security and compliance risks are ranked significantly lower.

Given the concerns about the IT environment, it's not surprising that 95 percent of respondents consider creating a reliable inventory of applications and IT resources a high or medium priority for 2025. This result holds regardless of how long the company has had an EA practice in place.

Establishing a solid EA governance framework is also seen as very important, followed closely by modeling business capabilities and mapping applications to them. Sixty-five percent of the architects surveyed consider saving costs through application rationalization a high or medium priority. A similar number emphasize the importance of enabling AI adoption through clear guidelines and modernizing the application portfolio.

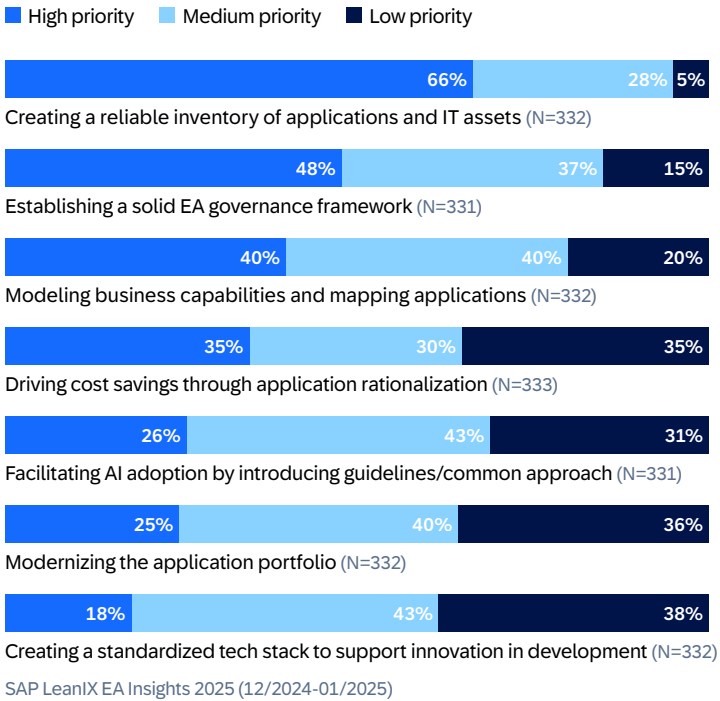
Very few respondents consider creating a standardized technology stack to support innovation a priority.

When asked to select the most important EA priority for 2025, rather than simply ranking priorities, creating an inventory remains on top, with 34 percent of responses. Even among companies with a well-established practice, 28 percent still see this as the top priority. At the same time, in response to this question, driving cost savings through application rationalization moves into second place.

No matter where a company is in its EA journey, creating an inventory of applications and IT resources, the fundamental prerequisite for any other EA initiative, remains job number one. This will most likely continue to be the case as IT landscapes become more complex and, potentially, fragmented.

Figure 4: How much will your EA practice focus on the following priorities in 2025?

Only respondents with an existing or planned EA practice



SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025)

Consensus around basic architecture governance practices

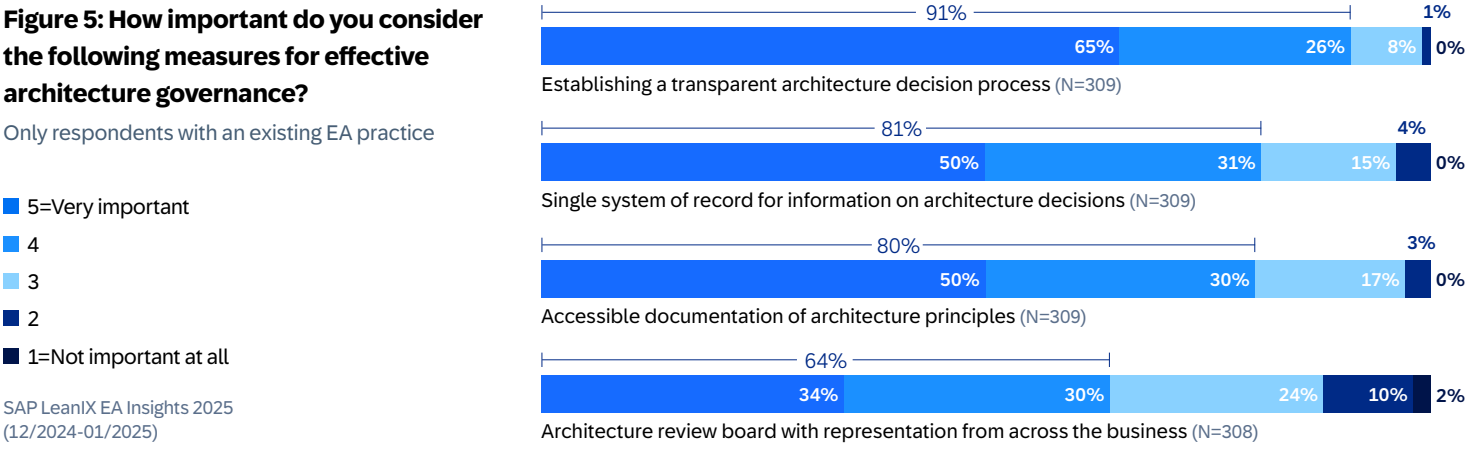
We already know that 85 percent of enterprise architects consider establishing a solid framework for architecture governance a high or medium priority. So, it's worth taking a closer look: Which specific measures do respondents consider particularly important for effective governance? The overwhelming majority (91 percent) emphasize the importance of establishing a transparent architecture decision process.

Eighty percent consider providing information on these decisions in a central location important, and just as many believe that documentation of architecture principles should be easily accessible.

Nearly two-thirds of respondents also believe it important to have an architecture review board with representation from across the business.

Figure 5: How important do you consider the following measures for effective architecture governance?

Only respondents with an existing EA practice



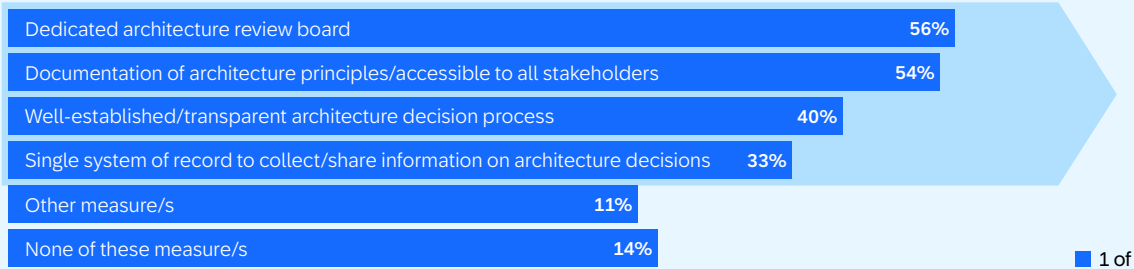
SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025
(12/2024-01/2025)

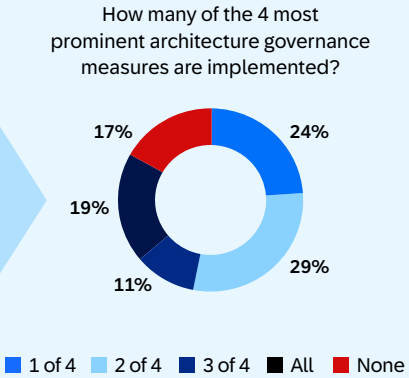
Implementation of EA governance measures lags behind their perceived importance

EA governance ranks high on the priority list – and the enterprise architects surveyed agree on what needs to be done. One might therefore assume that the most common architecture governance practices, the ones rated as important by the majority of respondents, are also in place in most companies. As it turns out, this is not the case. The two most widely implemented measures – a dedicated architecture review board and the documentation of architecture principles – are only found in around half of the companies surveyed. Even in companies with a well-established EA practice, this figure is only slightly above 60 percent. Overall, a mere 40 percent of respondents report having a well-established and transparent process for making architecture decisions. And once these decisions have been made, only one-third of the companies surveyed make the reasons behind these decisions available in a central location.

Figure 6: Which architecture governance measures have you already implemented in your company?

Only respondents with an existing EA practice / multiple answers possible





SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025), N=311

Of the four most popular architecture governance practices, fifty-three percent of companies surveyed report having implemented only one or two of them. In 17 percent of companies, none have been implemented at all.

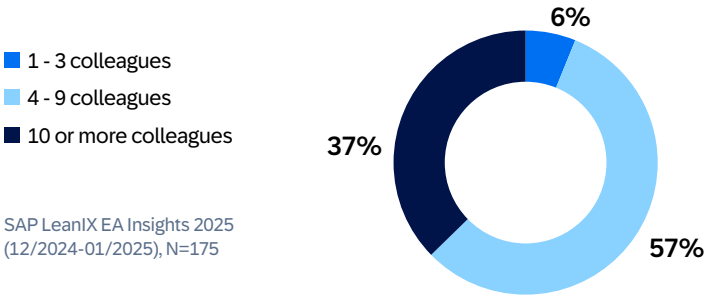
A look at existing architecture review boards also provides an indication of why enterprise architects are rarely perceived as close partners of the business. Regardless of the number of people on such a board, in 81 percent of companies that have one, the members mainly come from the IT department. Only 15 percent of established boards have representation from the business, even though almost two-thirds of architects consider such representation important.

In summary, there is a large gap between the measures considered important for architecture governance and their actual implementation. Two findings highlight this point:

- Ninety-one percent of those surveyed consider a transparent process for architecture decisions important, but only 40 percent of respondents report that their company has one.
- Eighty-one percent consider it important to make information concerning architecture decisions accessible in a central repository, but only one-third of organizations offer such a repository.

Figure 7: Size of architecture review board?

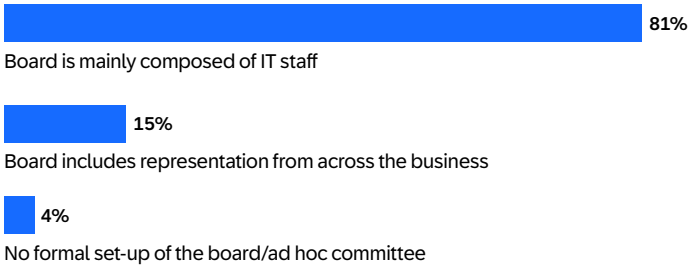
Only respondents with an ARB



SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025), N=175

Figure 8: Composition of architecture review board

Only respondents with an ARB



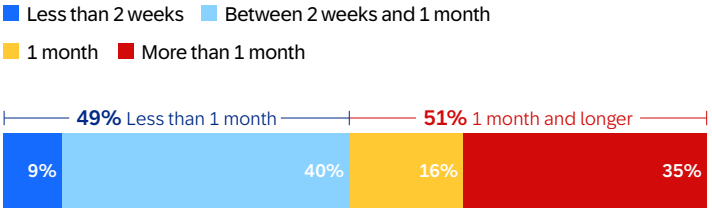
SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025), N=175

Lack of good EA governance practices slows down decision-making

Unfortunately, lack of architecture governance practices affects how long it takes companies to make architecture decisions. Overall, 51 percent of the enterprise architects surveyed report that it takes them a month or more to reach an architecture decision, a less than optimal outcome.

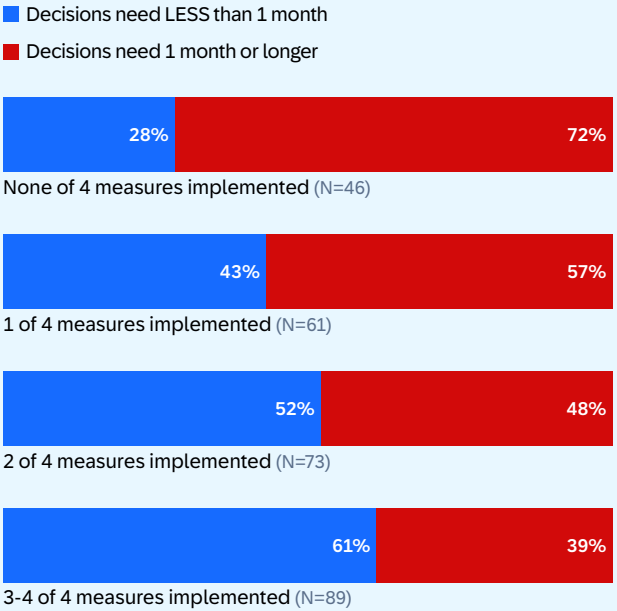
The good news is, the amount of time a decision takes appears to be correlated with number of EA governance measures in place. As companies implement more measures, the time to decision gets shorter.

Figure 9: How long does it take for an architecture decision to be made in your company?



SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025), N=269

Figure 10: Decision times when prominent EA governance measures have been implemented

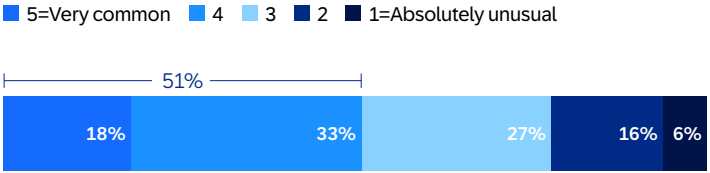


SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025)

It's not surprising that the business views a process that takes more than a month to reach an architecture decision negatively. Indeed, half of the enterprise architects surveyed admit that their organizations view the decision-making process as a nuisance that slows things down.

Figure 11: How common is the following business perception of the architecture decision process in your organization?

"Decisions take too long.
The process is a nuisance that slows everything down."



SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025), N=300

EA hesitancy around AI

There is generally a lot of enthusiasm about the possibilities of generative artificial intelligence. Companies have high hopes for the possibilities offered by this revolutionary technology.

Enterprise architects, however, do not seem to share this enthusiasm. Only 27 percent of respondents agree that companies should generally prioritize AI-based solutions to drive the technology's adoption, as many did with the widespread "cloud first" approach.

27%

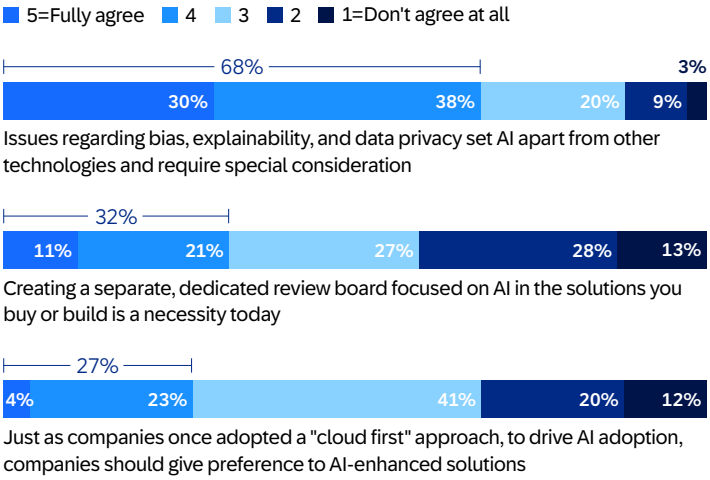
support an "AI-first" approachs

One explanation for this hesitancy may be that a solid majority (68 percent) say that AI differs from other technologies due to issues related to bias, explainability, and data protection and must therefore be treated differently. (That being said, only a third believe a special review board focused on AI is necessary.)

To be fair, these results reflect an awareness of the risks associated with AI on the part of enterprise architects. If they appear cautious, it's because they want to protect the company.

Figure 12: AI Adoption & Enterprise Architecture - How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Only respondents with an existing EA practice



SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025), N=301

The SAP LeanIX AI Survey 2024 already showed that the use of generative AI is limited, due to various regulations, in three-quarters of companies. Risk minimization in the interest of the organization is important, but there is a downside: The reluctance regarding AI-supported applications found in this study may contribute to the perception that EA is blocking or hindering AI adoption.

Conclusion:
Communication, consistency, and collaboration are key

The increasing investment in enterprise architecture underscores the importance and potential of this discipline. At the same time, only a few of the enterprise architects surveyed believe they are considered close partners with the business. Instead, they feel perceived as serving an administrative or governing function – or, worse, in those cases where the company is unaware of the EA practice, not perceived at all.

What can architects do elevate their influence and impact?

Become more visible by using EA to achieve business goals

Involving the business in the EA practice and focusing on collaboration not only increases awareness of the discipline but also improves the quality of IT landscape data. Of course, collecting data is just the first step. When EAs show the business how to use this data to reduce costs, increase efficiency, and unlock, innovation, EA becomes less of an administrative task and more of a critical capability driving the business forward.

Focus on measures you consider important for a successful EA practice

The survey results show that effective governance can optimize workflows and decision-making processes. EAs need to explain that governance is not about control and regulation. Instead, it's about speeding things up and mitigating risk. Guardrails, signs, and traffic lights, after all, don't get in the way of driving, they make it easier and safer.

Enterprise architects know exactly which measures make the most sense for their organization. It's time to put that insight into practice. Good governance has a direct, positive effect on the partnership with the business when decisions are made faster and are understandable to all stakeholders through transparent, easily accessible documentation.

Listen to the business and involve them in your EA practice

Those who keep business goals in mind and drive EA initiatives with measurable business value improve the partnership between the EA team and the business. Those who include the business in their architecture review board create a broader understanding of architecture decisions and strengthen the entire process. And those who help reduce uncertainty around AI while enabling faster, safer implementation of this new technology will play an essential role in the company's strategic decisions going forward.

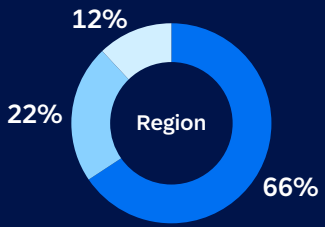
SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025: More information about the study

SAP LeanIX surveyed a total of 360 enterprise architects from international customers in an online survey conducted between December 2024 and January 2025, asking them to provide insights into their daily work. Most of the study participants come from Europe (66 percent) and the US (22 percent). The sample is balanced in terms of both company size and the distribution of younger and more established EA teams.

Differences in the number of respondents represented in the charts result from the exclusion of respondents who could not/would not provide information on individual topics. For better readability, the results in this report are presented as percentages without decimal places. If the addition of these values does not result in exactly 100%, then this can be attributed to rounding differences.

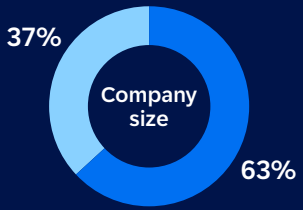
- Europe
- United States
- APAC & other regions

N=361



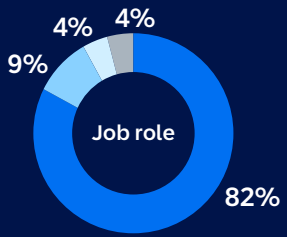
- Up to 1,999 employees
- More than 10.000 employees

N=361



- Enterprise architect
- IT
- CxO
- Other

N=348



- 3 years and longer
- Up to 3 years (incl. not established, but planned)

N=358



SAP LeanIX EA Insights 2025 (12/2024-01/2025)

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