

## Press Release: New Partner in South Africa

### The Project Group partners with Fulcrum Business Group in Microsoft Project - SAP Integration

Munich, Germany, 09 February 2005 - The Project Group (TPG), one of Germany's premier providers of add-in products and consulting services for Microsoft Enterprise Project Management (EPM), recently formed a partnership with Fulcrum Business Solutions, the leading solution provider for Microsoft EPM solutions in South Africa. TPG owns a product that enables the integration of Enterprise Project Management with SAP. The product, called PSLink, links EPM with the SAP PS module as well as other SAP modules, such as SAP HR.

"For many large organizations, especially those running multiple projects, the benefits of bringing SAP and EPM together in a solution are clear," explains Dries van der Colff, Technical Director at Fulcrum. "The ease of use of Microsoft EPM, its uncompromising focus on project management excellence, combined with the obvious financial capabilities of SAP, all add up to a powerful combination.

"A typical scenario is where the initial budgets for projects are registered in SAP. Project managers would then do the detailed planning using EPM, and control the execution of the project using EPM. Actual costs are tracked in SAP, and timesheet data may be collected using EPM, and entered into SAP. Human resources data can be extracted from the SAP HR module, and used in the EPM Enterprise Resource Pool. Project managers are able to better plan resource usage, as data such as skills, availability, leave, etc, can now be added to the project environment from SAP."

"For all of this to work together, and to avoid duplicated data entry, tight integration between EPM and SAP is essential," concludes Van der Colff.

"PSLink enables a bi-directional data exchange with SAP. A synchronization mechanism ensures SAP-specific rules and restrictions are considered and all differences are detected and transferred to the other system. The technology is based on direct function calls into the SAP System, and using XML to exchange data. PSLink allows the definition of the leading system on a data and process level. For example, you may define that schedule and work data are controlled in MSP and transferred to SAP while cost data are managed in SAP and synchronized back to Microsoft Project. This might change after tasks are completed, so actual schedule-data would be reflected back from SAP to MSP," explains Stavros Georgantzis, Managing Director and co-owner of TPG.

"Both data consistency and user interface are very important design goals in PSLink. Locking mechanism, rules check and field level data control as well as extensive logging ensure consistency of project information in both systems. On the other hand, the interface of PSLink is very user-friendly and on the client side well embedded in Microsoft Project GUI. The whole solution is easily adaptable to the needs of all customer processes.

"For us, Fulcrum was the best choice of partner based on their very high level of expert knowledge, vast experience in the field of EPM and a proven successful partnership with Microsoft. In order to

expand our worldwide partner strategy, the South African market is very important for our products," concludes Georgantzis.

EPM has established itself as an enterprise-ready tool, with the maturity to integrate with core financial systems. Customers who are realizing the value of EPM often run SAP as their financial system, and PSLink offers these customers the ability to see a real-time picture of all projects.

Both Fulcrum Business Solutions and TPG participated in the Microsoft Technical Project Briefing in Cannes in December 2004, where the partnership was formed. Since then, Fulcrum has already started the necessary training to ensure successful PSLink implementations in South Africa. The two organizations are currently working on their first joint engagement with a large bank in South Africa.

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**IMPORTANT NOTE TO EDITORS:**

The Project Group Informationstechnologie GmbH is a German-based company and is not related to the similarly-named The Project Group based in Houston, TX.

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