

**DIE ÖSTERREICHISCHE BIBLIOTHEKENVERBUND
UND SERVICE GMBH**

obv sg

FROM ALEPH TO ALMA IN THE AUSTRIAN LIBRARY NETWORK: A 10 YEAR PILGRIMAGE

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THE AUSTRIAN LIBRARY NETWORK (ALN): WHO ARE WE?



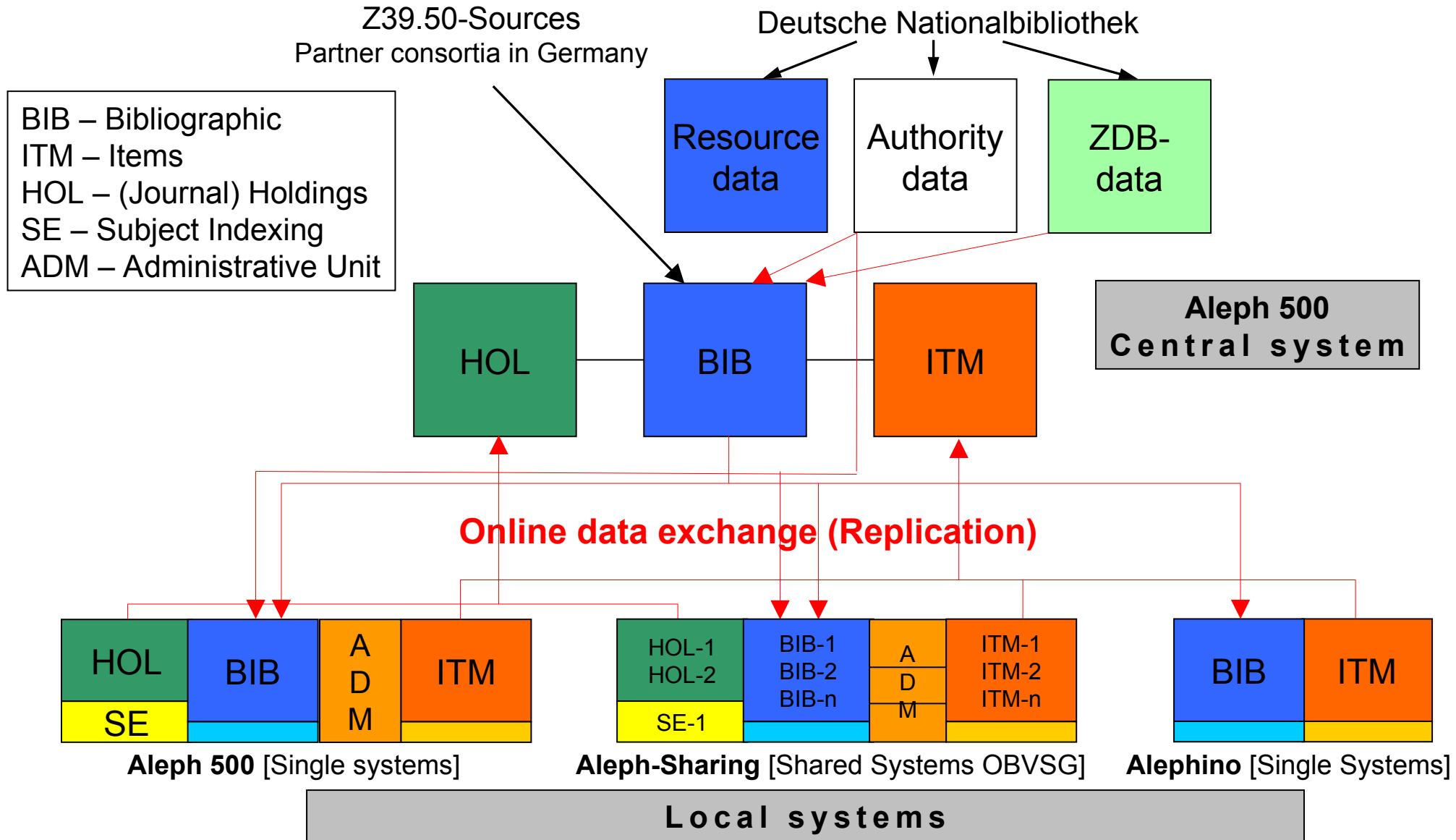
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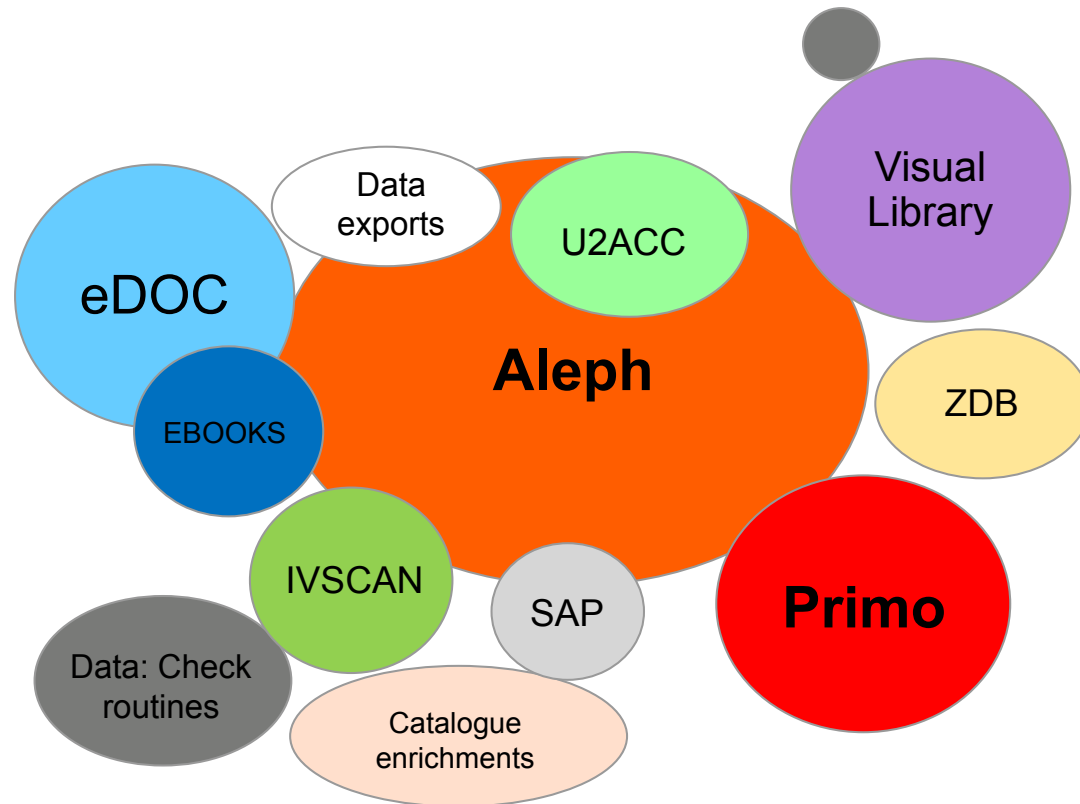
- Currently 70 voting members of the General Assembly
 - Austrian National Library
 - 21 Federal Universities
 - Austrian Academy of Sciences
 - Verbund für Bildung und Kultur (Education of teachers)
 - Universities of applied Sciences
 - Research institutions
 - Administrative and governmental bodies
 - Ecclesiastical libraries
- OBVSG: Central Office as legal basis
- Alma now as backbone for common services
 - 1 Network Zone
 - 70 Institution Zones
 - about 750 active libraries
 - nearly 300 libraries for external (holding) data

- Based on the law of 2002 about the Central Office:
 - “Die Österreichische Bibliothekenverbund und Service Gesellschaft m.b.H.” (OBVSG)
 - = The Austrian Library Network and Services Ltd.
- Defined services for named member institutions by law
- Membership is voluntary for over 18 years now (especially for the universities)
- OBVSG
 - Owned 100% by the Federal Republic of Austria
 - Neutral institution independent of ministries and all members
 - Represents the network
 - Provides and develops central and integrated services
 - Rather strong position as an executive body
- General assembly
 - Every member represented, voting weight according to its “size”
 - Defined working groups (especially for strategic discussions)
 - Strategic decisions
 - OBVSG does not vote, but is allowed to make proposals and can veto decisions under defined circumstances
- Intense cooperation of network members including the central office

- University libraries get their budget from the university
- Universities negotiate contracts with the ministry for periods of three years
- General infrastructure is not funded by research promotion agencies in Austria
- OBVSG
 - Gets a fixed amount of money per year for defined basic services
 - This basic amount stayed the same for 19 years and was never changed
 - Gets (as of 2021) additional funding for extended duties (for the next 19 years maybe?)
 - All additional services have to be paid by customers
- No additional central budgets for the whole network any more
 - Every project has to be discussed and economically evaluated before realisation
 - Possible participants have to be convinced
 - “The gods help them that help themselves”

- Almost homogeneous network structure since 1999
 - Started with pure Aleph systems
 - Later on Alephino systems were included
- Distribution of features over one central and many local systems brings
 - Flexibility
 - High degree of synergy
- Central database without duplicates as policy – not a union catalogue for lucky historical reasons
 - Important leverage effects
- Bidirectional data replication between central system and local system
 - Every user benefits from data improvement automatically
- Lots of services built around the main system





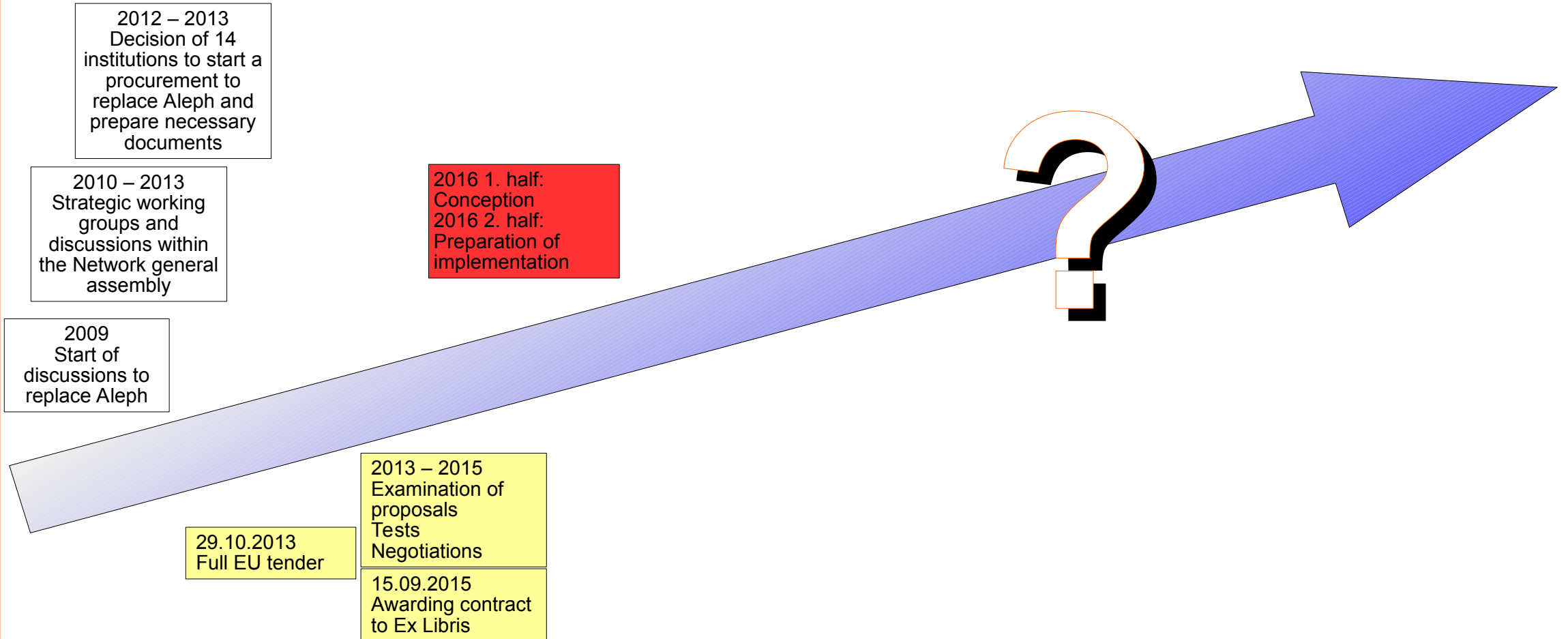
- Primo: Central discovery solution
- eDOC: Cache and “glue” application for integrating various informations from different locations, including upload of electronic documents and remote indexing
- IVSCAN: Enrichment service for discovery with tables of contents scanned by the Austrian National Library
- Visual Library: Central repository solution
- EBOOKS: Supply of bibliographic data for e-book packages for acquisition purposes
- SAP: Interface to the financial system SAP
- U2ACC (“upgrade2acc”): Tool to link a local record to a central record via its network ID to benefit from all future corrections and improvements
- ZDB: Use and synchronisation of journal bibliographic records and corresponding holdings with the “Zeitschriftendatenbank Berlin”, the largest database specialised on (printed) periodic publications

- Lack of functionalities
 - Electronic resource management
 - Statistics and reporting
- Old fashioned technology
 - Only text based configuration
 - rather complex text files
 - difficult dependencies
 - Programming techniques
 - COBOL modules
 - almost no modern Web technology used
 - Oracle treatment
 - strange handling of Oracle databases due to historical reasons
- Aleph was a mature product – but after so many years it started becoming a static system

CHALLENGES FOR CHANGING SYSTEMS

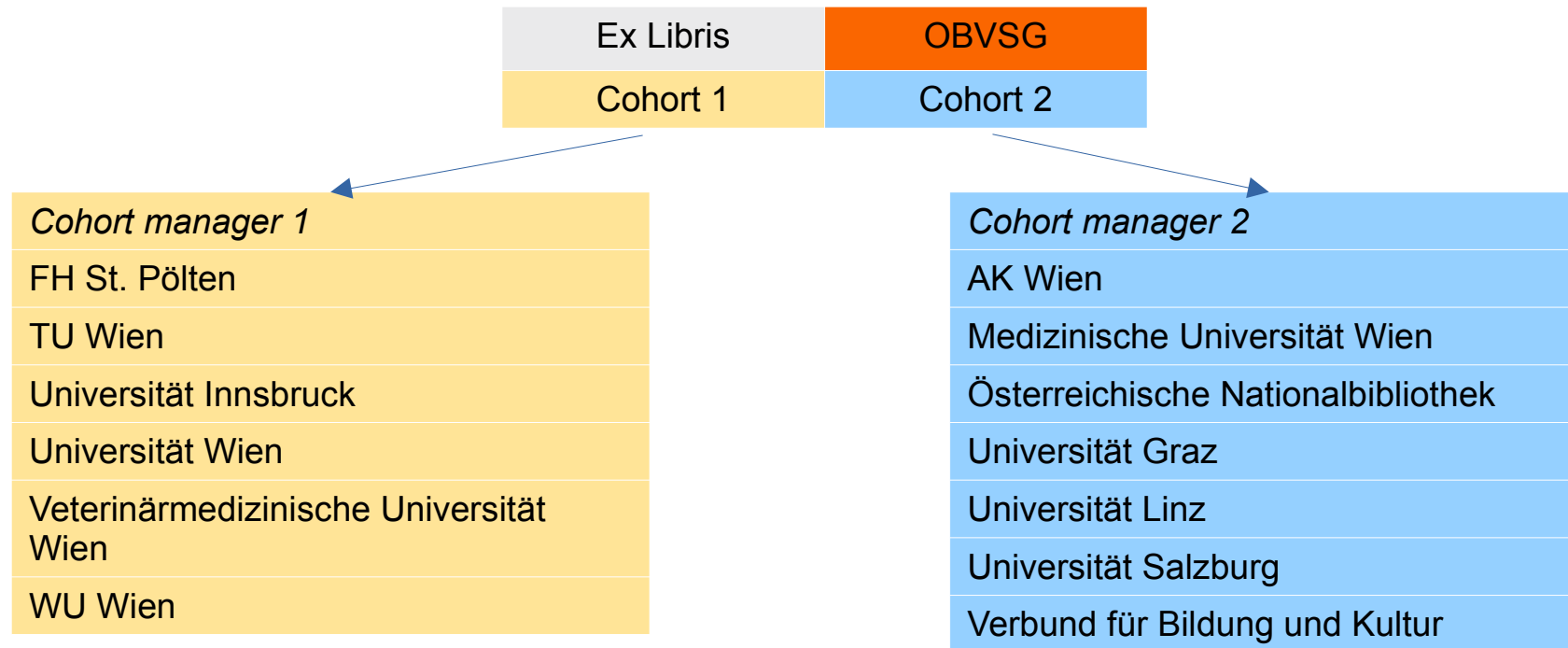
- Bringing together a “critical mass” of members (including resources and funding) to start a change project which can succeed
- Find ways to allow remaining members to join later
- Change of internal data format
 - MAB2 (old data exchange format between German speaking countries) vs. MARC21
- Solutions for crucial functionality
 - Primo (on premise!)
 - Use of “Gemeinsame Normdatei (GND)” (“Integrated Authority File” of German speaking countries)
 - Established services
- Data privacy
- Integrated parallel operation of old and new systems for the transition phase of the whole network
 - Transition to Alma lasts several years
 - No necessity to work with more than one client and to leave the own system
 - No double burden
 - *But:* Needs bidirectional data conversion
 - Otherwise no acceptance of switch to Alma
- **Elaborated concepts and suggestions by vendors needed!**

TAKING PILGRIM'S STAFF



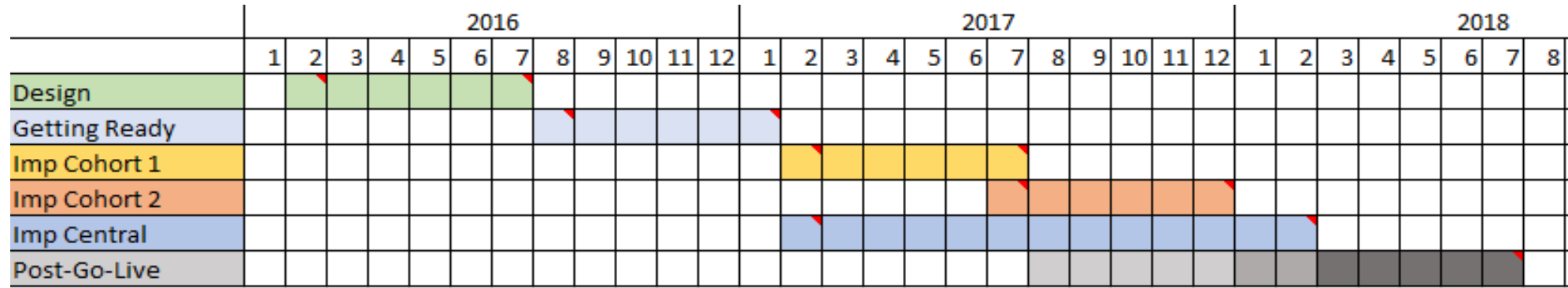
RESULTS: IMPLEMENTATION IN GROUPS (“COHORTS”)

- 3 groups
 - Cohort 1 (6 libraries)
 - Cohort 2 (7 libraries)
 - OBVSG (Central office; Implementation of central services and Network Zone)



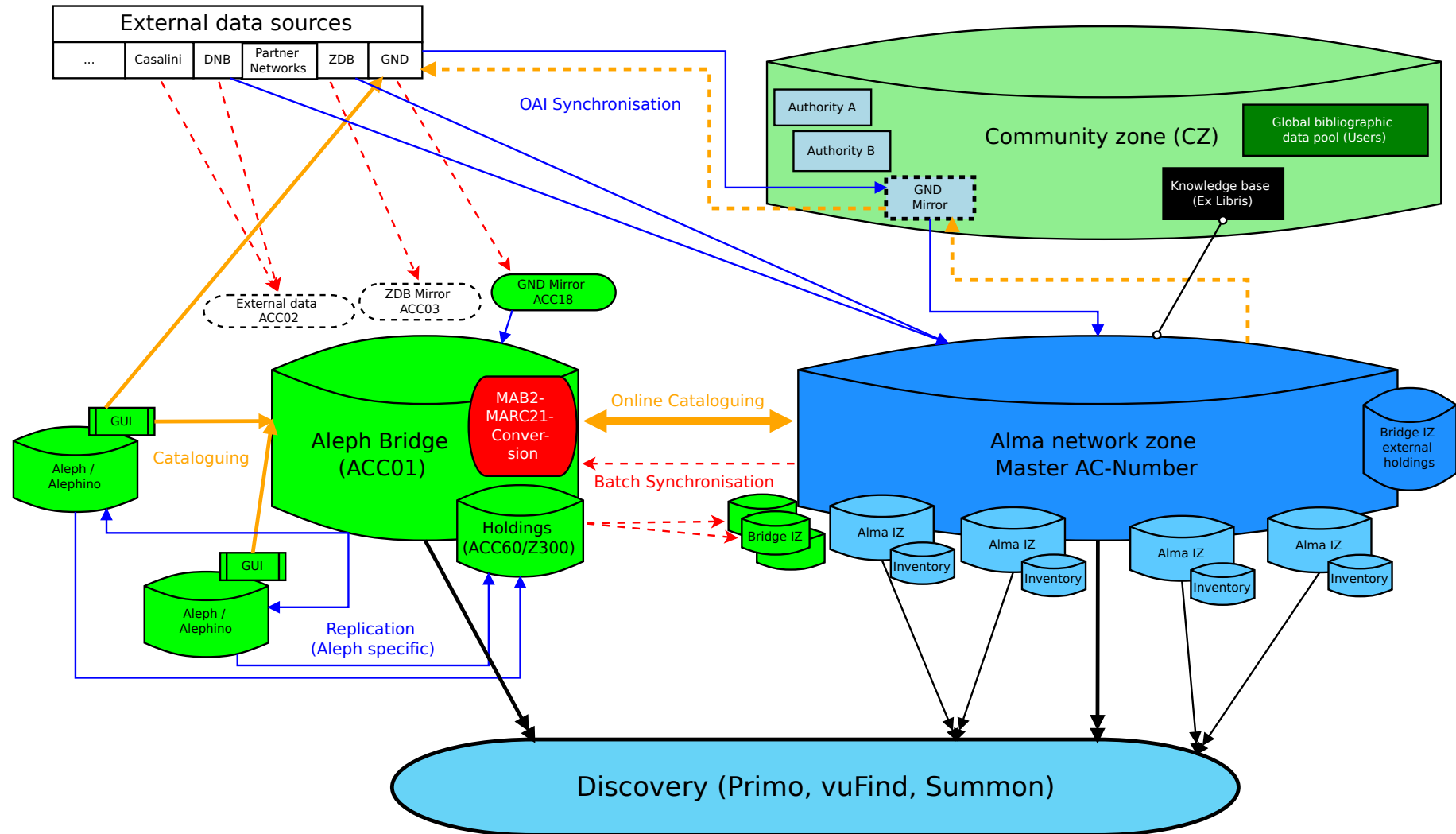
→ 16-18 members of project team

PROJECT PHASES AND TIMELINE



Phase	Start	End
Design Phase	26.01.2016	09.08.2016
Getting Ready	10.08.2016	31.01.2017
Implementation Cohort 1	10.01.2017	18.08.2017
Implementation Cohort 2	01.07.2017	22.01.2018
Implementation Central	10.01.2017	19.03.2018
Post-Go-Live	19.08.2017	31.07.2018

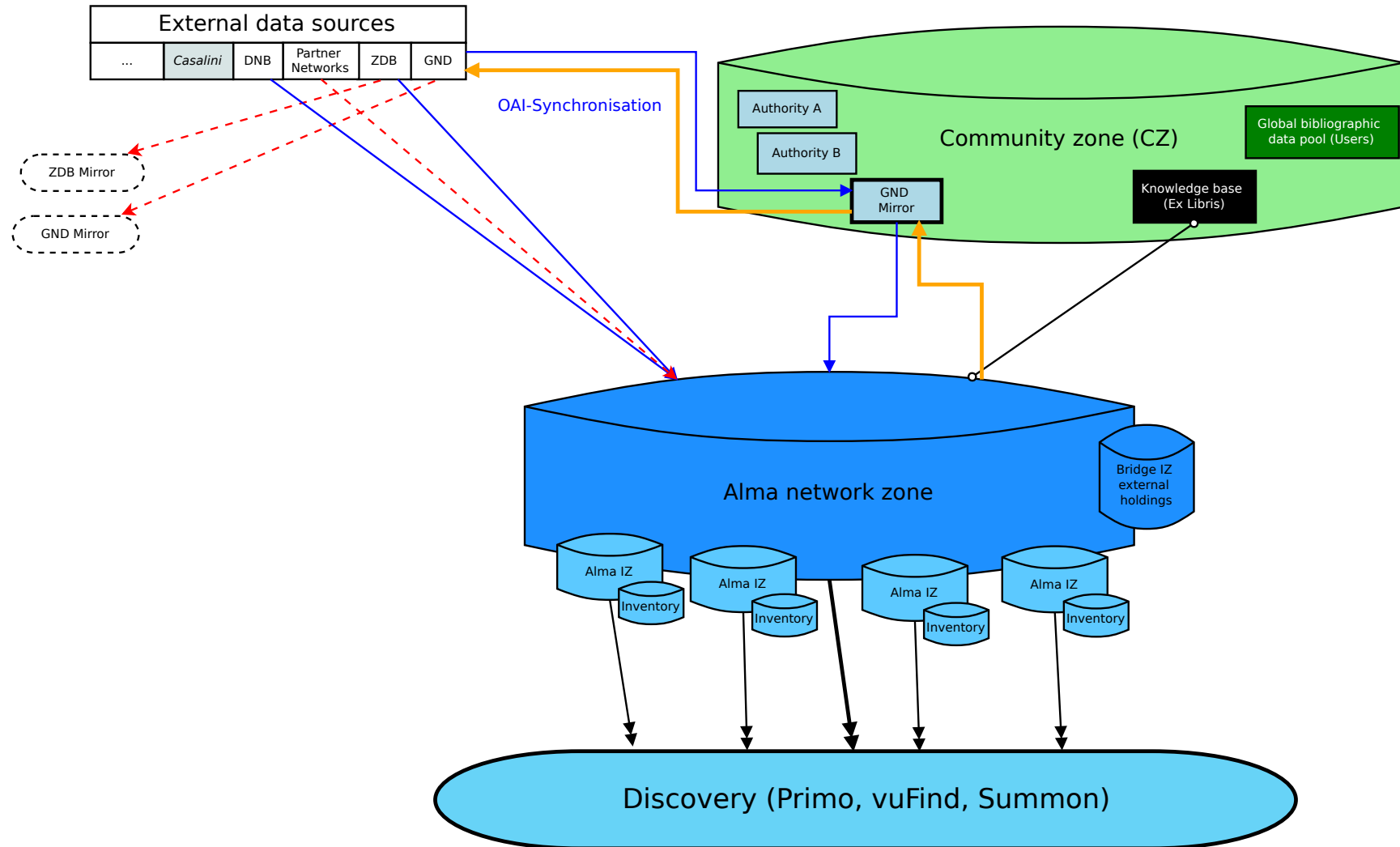
PARALLEL OPERATION (TRANSITION PHASE 2): (MARCH) 2018 – END OF 2021

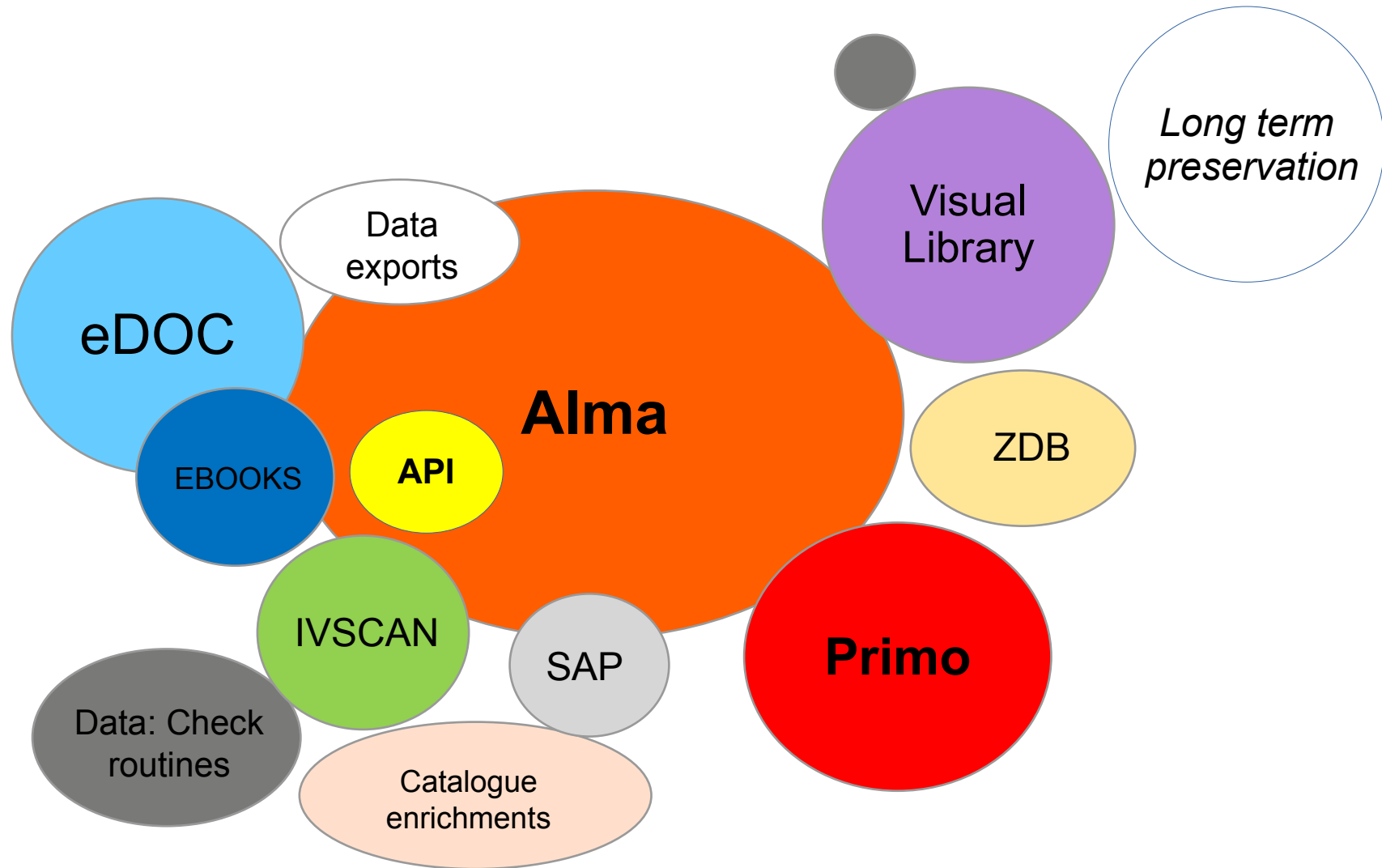


- Wave 3 [3]: Production September 2018
 - Wave 4 [8]: Production January 2019
 - Wave 5 [8]: Production September 2019
 - Wave 6 [9]: Production January 2020
 - Wave 7 [9]: Production September 2020
 - Wave 8 [11]: Production January 2021
 - Wave 9 [7]: Production September 2021
 - “Wave 9a” [1]: Production December 2021

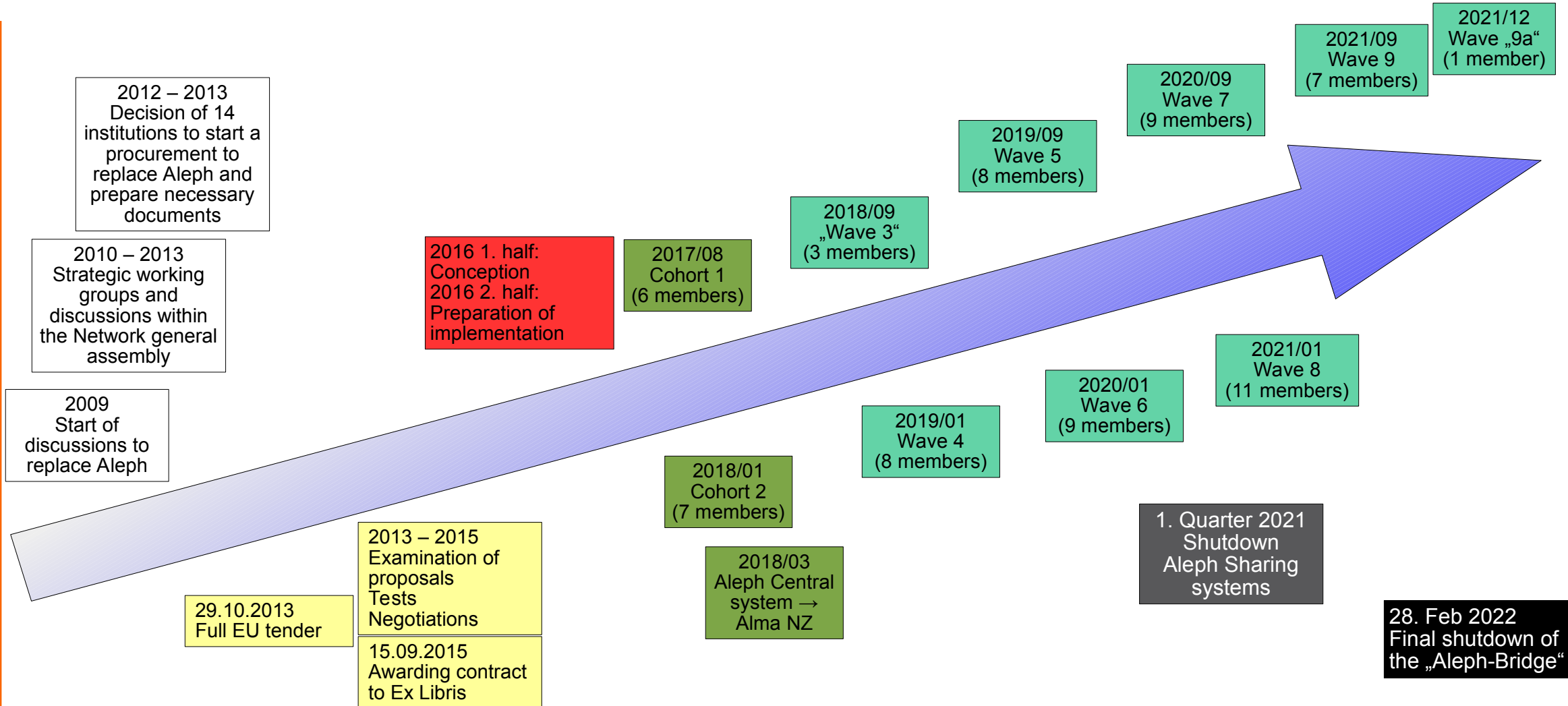
 - Final: Shutdown of “Aleph-Bridge”
28th February 2022
- Migration was collaborative work of
 - Ex Libris
 - OBVSG
 - Single Library
 - OBVSG was responsible for
 - General project coordination on the side of customers
 - Lead of migration for systems run by OBVSG
 - OBVSG did parametrisation, data preparation and data loading into Alma for
 - (New) participants without an Aleph or Alephino system
 - Smaller libraries using the Aleph sharing model with only cataloguing

ALMA: FINAL CONSORTIAL TOPOLOGY





PILGRIMAGE TO DESTINATION



- We overcame all challenges, despite of
 - Lots of necessary functional input and high workload on “Functional Experts”
 - Appropriate continuation of the old system
 - Too short time frames even with detailed planning
 - Higher efforts than expected
 - Limited resources of staff able to work on the necessary level
 - Surprises during the project
- Cooperation with Ex Libris
 - Committed developments were in time
 - Narrow time frames
 - Top developers at Ex Libris
 - Discussions to find good solutions worked
- Alma vs. Aleph
 - Alma did not start at the same level of sophistication as Aleph
 - Improvement could be seen within the last years
 - Seems to be a good base for new possibilities of collaboration
 - Hopefully Alma will be the main library administration system for at least the next decade
- Decision for Alma was still “in time”: Missing and special features for consortia and our libraries could be added as result of the whole process
- **So we seem to be well prepared for new adventures now**

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

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<https://www.obvsg.at>