SUCCESS STORY

GALIAN-SMABTP

The client

GALIAN-SMABTP operates in a niche insurance market serving real estate professionals. Its IT department comprises around 30 people and is structured into five divisions:

- Infrastructure & Production,
- Architecture,
- Back Office Development Team,
- Middle Development Team,
- Digital Development Team.

Zaïd ZARBOUT, Head of the Back Office Development Team, manages an IBM i / AS400-based application portfolio. One of the core applications is built with Adelia (Visual Adelia), based on a three-tier architecture: IBM i, Windows, and a web services layer (Tomcat).

Context and challenges

Before adopting DROPS, deployment processes within the Back Office were considered insufficiently industrialized. Practices were heterogeneous and operational pressure was high.

While the Digital and Middle teams already relied on their own deployment tools and more "standard" CI/CD pipelines (Git and associated toolchains), those solutions were not compatible with the Back Office application landscape. As a result, the Back Office team lagged behind in terms of CI/CD and deployment industrialization.

The primary objective was to secure and structure production releases in an environment where deployments are sensitive, stressful, and often require intervention outside business hours.

At the same time, GALIAN-SMABTP was evolving one of its core back-office applications toward a web-based version. This created a key technical requirement: ensuring the strictly consistent delivery of the exact same compiled version across IBM i, Windows, and Tomcat components.

Why DROPS?

The team was looking for a CI/CD solution capable of working seamlessly with their IBM i and Adelia application landscape. DROPS was selected for several key reasons:

- **Multi-layer coverage:** the ability to orchestrate IBM i, Windows, and Tomcat/web service layers simultaneously, maintaining consistency across all components during a single deployment.
- **Traceability and versioning:** full history, version management, and the ability to retrieve a precise application state at any time.
- **Simplified deployment:** the "one-click" approach was immediately seen as a strong lever for efficiency and reliability.
- **Controlled rollback:** the ability to quickly revert to a previous version became critical, particularly in a production environment explicitly requiring rollback capability.

- **Ecosystem trust:** the partnership between ARCAD Software and Hardis provided reassurance, as Hardis was already a trusted partner for GALIAN.

Before committing, GALIAN-SMABTP requested a customer reference to better understand real-world implementation conditions. This feedback confirmed that DROPS matched their functional expectations.

Project implementation

DROPS was introduced at the same time the organization was launching the web version of one of its back-office applications.

Initially, deployments were deliberately performed manually. The team wanted to validate and formalize each step of a "standard" deployment process before automating it.

At that stage, a single deployment required around three people and involved numerous manual tasks:

- Creating SAVF and backups on IBM i
- Managing Windows archives
- Performing manual copies and backups
- Coordinating potential rollback actions

Rollback management was also manual. Teams had to retrieve the correct versions of each artifact, verify consistency, and re-execute the required steps.

With DROPS, these manual steps were reproduced as scripts and automated workflows. The objective was to preserve full control and deployment logic while eliminating human-related risks.

The team opted for sequential execution within DROPS, even though some tasks could previously be performed in parallel. The primary goal was not only speed, but control and peace of mind.

Today, component deployment runs through a true "one-click" process. However, execution is still manually triggered. The team remains in an observation phase (approximately four deployments completed so far) and continues refining scripts.

The next step is to stabilize the process before considering scheduled nighttime deployments and potentially automated rollback.

In parallel, DROPS has played a key role in discussions with parent company SMABTP regarding process convergence. During cross-demonstrations, infrastructure, operations, and development teams were able to review the tool, its artifacts, and its deployment workflows.

The conclusion was clear: due to differences in frameworks and practices, SMABTP did not have a directly comparable alternative for this scope. Interest in DROPS was quickly confirmed.

Benefits achieved

The benefits are highly operational and tangible, particularly in deployment reliability and governance:

- **Enhanced production security:** tool-driven execution reduces manipulation errors and improves reproducibility.
- **Proven rollback capability:** a recent incident required a manual rollback trigger. DROPS enabled rapid redeployment of the previous version. The team also values the ability to revert several versions back — a process considered too risky to perform manually.
- **Traceability and monitoring:** access to logs, visibility into blocking points, and the ability to measure deployment duration and trends.
- **More structured processes:** a shift from a "component-by-component" logic to a "version-based deployment" model aligned with Digital and Middle team practices. Until validation is completed, versions remain frozen in testing. The result is a clearer, more controlled and more professional release process.
- **Ease of use:** DROPS is perceived as user-friendly and accessible, even for non-specialist deployment profiles. This facilitates adoption and reduces dependency on key individuals.

- **Internal credibility and alignment:** the Back Office team considers that it has narrowed the maturity gap with Digital and Middle teams, operating within a more robust and controlled CI/CD framework.

Next steps

The roadmap remains progressive and pragmatic:

- **Stabilize the deployment process:** continue refining scripts until reliability reaches a level compatible with scheduled, off-hours execution.
- **Extend DROPS to additional applications:** after stabilizing the first application, deployment is underway for a second, with a third planned.
- **Strengthen validation governance:** validation steps exist upstream but are not yet integrated into the tool. This represents a clear improvement axis, particularly in the context of role separation and compliance requirements.
- **Explore configuration data deployment:** integrating configuration-type components to ensure before/after traceability and deploy parameter changes alongside application code is being considered. This could prevent post-release incidents linked to configuration discrepancies.

"The real change is the peace of mind: today, we know that with one click, the version is deployed consistently across all environments."

Zaïd ZARBOUT - Back Office IT Manager
Information Systems Department - GALIAN-SMABTP