An onshore ERP implementation can cost more on the proposal and still cost less over the life of the project. The reverse is also true: paying an Australian-based partner does not automatically buy better delivery, local data storage or dependable support.

The useful question is not simply, “Is onshore more expensive?” It is, “What do we get for the premium, and does that reduce costs or risks that matter to our business?” For an Australian distributor or light manufacturer, the answer often comes down to the complexity of operations, the quality of the implementation team, support arrangements and where data is actually stored.

This guide sets out a practical way to compare ERP proposals, including projects built on Odoo. It focuses on **cost benefit**, **response time value** and **risk reduction**—not just the hourly rate on a quote.

What does “onshore ERP delivery” actually mean?

“Onshore” is often used as shorthand for an Australian partner, but it can describe several different things. The company may be based in Australia while some configuration, development, testing or support is performed offshore. The software may be hosted in Australia—or somewhere else entirely. Support may be available during Australian business hours, or it may rely on another time zone coming online.

Ask providers to spell out the delivery model, rather than accepting a label. In writing, confirm:

- Where the project manager, functional consultants, developers and support staff will be based.
- Which project tasks, if any, will be performed by subcontractors or offshore teams.
- Who is accountable for quality, deadlines, security and fixing defects.
- When support is available, and what response and resolution targets apply.
- Where production data, backups, replicas and disaster-recovery environments will be stored.

A provider can use a mixed delivery team effectively. The issue is not whether offshore work exists; it is whether you know about it, can assess its impact and have clear accountability. Hidden offshore subcontracting discovered after signing is a procurement failure, not a saving.

Why onshore delivery belongs in the selection process

ERP work involves much more than installing software. Consultants have to understand how orders, purchasing, stock, production, finance and reporting fit together in your business. When a process is unusual, the team needs to ask the right questions, test assumptions and help staff change how they work.

Local knowledge can make those conversations easier. An Australian team is more likely to be familiar with local working hours, common business practices and the practicalities of coordinating with Australian staff and advisers. That does not guarantee expertise in your industry, but it can reduce communication friction—particularly during discovery, training, go-live and the first weeks of support.



Onshore delivery may be especially valuable where:

- Operations are time-sensitive, such as dispatch, warehouse receiving or production scheduling.
- Your processes are complex, poorly documented or dependent on a few key people.
- Staff need hands-on training or decisions require regular workshops.
- A payroll, finance or inventory cutover has little tolerance for delay.
- You need a clear escalation path during Australian business hours.

Location is only one selection factor. A capable offshore specialist may outperform a local generalist. Compare the people who will actually do the work: their ERP experience, relevant industry projects, availability and authority to make decisions. Ask to meet the proposed lead consultant, not only the sales representative.

Open-source ERP makes the partner more important

With open-source ERP, access to source code and a broad ecosystem can offer flexibility. But flexibility does not mean the software will configure itself, nor does it make every partner equally capable. The implementation partner translates business requirements into workflows, settings, integrations, customisations, reports and a supportable operating model.

That makes partner selection particularly important for Odoo. A business may use standard apps, add itwire.com third-party modules, commission custom development or combine all three. Each choice has consequences for upgrades, testing, documentation and future support. A low initial estimate can become expensive if the solution is heavily customised without a clear reason, or if nobody owns the code after go-live.

Ask the partner to explain:

- Which requirements can be met through standard Odoo configuration, and which need custom development.
- How third-party modules will be assessed, maintained and tested against upgrades.
- Who owns custom code, technical documentation and deployment knowledge.

- How changes will be tested before they reach production.
- What the ongoing support and upgrade costs are likely to include.

WilldooIT is one example of a company Australian businesses may encounter when researching Odoo services. Treat any provider's proposal as a starting point for due diligence: validate the team, scope, hosting arrangement and support commitments that apply to your specific project. For broader context, technology coverage from outlets such as iTWire can help buyers follow market developments, but it cannot replace reference checks or contract review.

Measure the cost benefit, not just the day rate

A fair comparison includes the full cost of delivering and operating the system. One proposal may show a higher consulting rate but include local workshops, migration rehearsal and structured post-go-live support. Another may have a lower rate while leaving those activities vague or priced as extras.

Build a like-for-like estimate that includes:

- Discovery, process mapping and solution design.
- Configuration, custom development and integrations.
- Data cleansing, migration, validation and rehearsal.
- Testing, user training and change management.
- Hosting, backups, monitoring and security responsibilities.
- Go-live coverage, support, upgrades and ongoing maintenance.
- Your own staff's time, including backfill and overtime.

Then consider what a delay or disruption would cost your business. For a distributor, an incorrect stock balance might lead to missed shipments, emergency purchases or time spent reconciling transactions. For a manufacturer, a production-planning issue can affect labour, materials and customer commitments. Estimate these costs using your own figures rather than a generic claim about ERP savings.

Cost or value factor Question to ask Evidence to request Implementation price Are the proposals based on the same scope and assumptions? Task-level scope, exclusions, rates and change-control process. Internal effort How much time must our staff provide? Named roles, expected hours and workshop schedule. Disruption risk What could a delayed or failed cutover cost us? Migration plan, rehearsal steps and go-live support roster. Ongoing support Who responds when an operational issue occurs? Support hours, severity definitions, escalation and service targets. Data location Where are production data and backups held? Hosting regions, backup locations and relevant contract terms.

Put a number on response time value

"We offer responsive support" is not a service commitment. Work out what response time is worth to you by looking at the business hours when an issue would cause real damage.

Imagine the warehouse cannot process picking waves at 9:00am. If the issue is acknowledged quickly and a workaround is agreed, staff might keep orders moving. If no one responds until the next day, the delay may affect dispatch, customer service and cash flow. The value is not merely the difference between two clock times; it is the operational loss avoided during that period.

Ask the provider to define response and resolution separately. Response means someone has acknowledged the incident and begun triage; it does not necessarily mean the problem is fixed. Confirm the support hours, severity levels, escalation route and how coverage works on Australian public holidays. Also ask whether the people answering support know your configuration or will need to reconstruct the project history.

And ask the question that matters on go-live week: **Who answers the phone on Monday at 9:07am?** Get a name or role, a working contact method and an escalation path. If the answer is “submit a ticket and someone will respond”, ask what happens when the ticket is blocking orders, payroll or production.

Implementation risk: look beyond the launch date

ERP risk is often created well before go-live. Poor data, unclear process ownership, underestimated integrations and untested customisations can all turn a planned launch into an extended stabilisation period. A local team may be easier to reach, but the stronger protection is a sound delivery method with visible checks and accountable owners.

Look for a plan that includes:

1. **Discovery:** documented processes, exceptions, pain points and decision owners.
2. **Data preparation:** named owners for cleansing customers, suppliers, products, stock and opening balances.
3. **Rehearsal:** at least one meaningful migration test, with results reconciled and issues tracked.
4. **End-to-end testing:** real scenarios from order entry through delivery, invoicing and payment, plus relevant production or purchasing flows.
5. **Cutover planning:** a sequence of tasks, decision gates, rollback considerations and staff coverage.
6. **Hypercare:** defined post-launch coverage, issue prioritisation and a path to steady-state support.

Ask what happens when the plan slips. Who can approve a scope change? How are defects classified? What evidence is needed to accept a deliverable? A credible partner should be able to discuss risks openly without promising that every project will go perfectly.

Data sovereignty: verify the whole hosting arrangement

Australian ownership of a partner does not prove that your data is hosted in Australia. Likewise, selecting an Australian cloud region does not automatically mean every copy of your data stays there. Production systems, backups, logs, support exports and disaster-recovery environments may have different locations or arrangements.

If Australian-hosted data is a requirement, state it explicitly in the procurement documents and contract. Ask the hosting provider or implementation partner to identify the regions used for:

- Live ERP data and file attachments.
- Backups, snapshots and disaster recovery.
- Logs, monitoring and diagnostic data.
- Support access and any data exported for troubleshooting.

Also establish who can access the information, how access is controlled, how long backups are retained and how data is handled when the contract ends. Ask for specific contractual and technical evidence rather than

relying on phrases such as “secure cloud” or “Australian company”. Your legal, privacy and security advisers should review requirements that apply to your organisation and data.

When paying more is likely to be worth it

An onshore premium is easier to justify when it buys something concrete: experienced local consultants, faster access to decision-makers, support during operational hours, stronger migration governance, or a clearly documented hosting arrangement. It is harder to justify when “local” is the only distinction and the provider cannot explain who will deliver the work.

Onshore may be particularly compelling if a short outage has a high cost, your team needs frequent in-person collaboration, your cutover is operationally sensitive, or you have limited internal capacity to manage a distributed project. A mixed team may still be a sensible option if responsibilities are transparent, work is reviewed and support coverage meets your needs.

A practical decision method

Use the same scorecard for every shortlisted provider. Weight the factors according to what would hurt your business most, then score each proposal against evidence—not confidence or presentation quality.

- **Delivery capability:** relevant ERP and industry experience of the named team.
- **Transparency:** disclosed work locations, subcontractors and accountability.
- **Support:** Australian-hours coverage, escalation and response commitments.
- **Risk control:** migration rehearsal, testing, cutover and hypercare plans.
- **Data handling:** verified locations for production data and backups.
- **Total cost:** implementation, internal effort, hosting, support and upgrades.

Finally, speak to two or three customers with comparable operations. Ask what went wrong, how quickly the partner responded and whether the original budget and timeline were realistic. Request a reference from a project that has been live long enough to experience routine support and at least one meaningful change or upgrade.

Make the decision on evidence

Paying more for onshore ERP is worth it when the premium reduces a material cost or risk: delayed decisions, extended downtime, migration errors, poor support coverage or uncertainty about data location. It is not worth it simply because a proposal uses the word “local”.

Compare the people doing the work, the operating model after launch and the complete cost of ownership. Confirm where data and backups live, disclose every delivery location, and make support commitments measurable. Most importantly, test the proposal against your real Monday morning—not a polished sales presentation. If the provider can show exactly who will help, when they will respond and how the project will be controlled, you have a basis for deciding whether the onshore premium earns its keep.

