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From vision to momentum: How Shared Investigator Platform continues to unite global clinical research

A retrospective on the SIP's journey—and the road ahead

Dr. Lestter Cruz Serrano
MD, BCMAS, Global Head of Medical Affairs, Cognizant

Dr. Jon Pauls
PhD, BCMAS, Associate Director, Technology Solutions, Cognizant

Nathan Kalra
BCMAS, Manager Product Management, Americas LS P&P Practice, Cognizant

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United for change:

The unlikely birth of the Cognizant Shared Investigator Platform

In an industry traditionally defined by siloed operations and competitive boundaries, the development of the Cognizant's Shared Investigator Platform (SIP) marked a rare, yet defining moment of collaboration. Conceived under the leadership of TransCelerate BioPharma Inc., SIP was the result of an unprecedented alliance of top global pharmaceutical companies committed to transforming the operational foundation of clinical trials.

A shared vision realized

The founding vision was both clear and bold: Create a shared, standardized digital infrastructure that would eliminate duplicative administrative burdens, improve sponsor-site engagement and ensure faster, more consistent trial readiness. SIP brought this vision to life by offering a single, unified platform where investigators and sites could work with multiple sponsors in a consistent, sponsor-agnostic way. This unity transformed SIP from a collection of tools into a shared environment, built to scale with the industry and centered on the needs of sites.

2016

Launch of SIP

SIP introduced as a joint initiative between Cognizant and TransCelerate BioPharma, aiming to standardize and streamline clinical trial operations across sponsors and sites

2020

COVID-19 acceleration

The pandemic accelerates digital adoption

SIP sees a 55% increase in site users from April to November, surpassing 100,000 users globally

SIP 5.0 release

Major update includes:

- Country-specific global search
- Bulk site creation and invitations
- Enhanced delegation reporting

2022

Quarter-million milestone

SIP surpasses 250,000 users and operates at over 32,000 trial-ready sites

SCRS Site Advocacy Group (SAG)

First workshops held to gather site feedback and shape future platform features expanded to US and Asia-PAC

2023

Global medical affairs team (GMAT) formed

Dedicated team to support site engagement and training

Site-centric enhancements

- Simplified registration
- Biometric-enabled mobile app
- Bulk document actions

Site feedback

- Site satisfaction survey: 85% of sites report being “very satisfied” with SIP

2024

Further enhancements

- Developing integration with site systems
- Continued expansion of site-facing capabilities based on SAG feedback
- 17,500+ feasibility surveys distributed with sites
- 166M+ documents and safety notifications exchanged and distributed

2025 and onward

Scaling with technology

- AI-driven chatbots for system interaction
- 74+ single sign-on technology partners
- 352,000—and growing—site users across 73,000+ active study sites in 119 countries

Enabling the vision: Cognizant's role

Cognizant's Shared Investigator Platform streamlines clinical trials as the industry's first open, SaaS-based system. SIP connects sponsors, sites and technology providers from any location, all through a single sign-in. Its goal is to foster collaboration and support among stakeholders, making clinical trial management easier for investigative sites by enabling seamless communication and community engagement.

A shift in culture, not just technology

SIP's creation signaled more than a technological milestone. It demonstrated that the pharmaceutical industry could unite around shared infrastructure when the outcome benefits all stakeholders—most notably, patients. It embodied a collective shift toward harmonization and systemic innovation in support of faster, more transparent and patient-focused research. SIP's inception was not only improbable; it was a model of what can be achieved when collaboration is prioritized over competition.

Born from complexity

Clinical trials are among the most resource-intensive and operationally fragmented efforts in healthcare. By the early 2010s, investigative sites were overwhelmed by complexity. According to PharmaVoice,[1] it was not uncommon for a single-site coordinator to manage 10 to 15 sponsor-specific portals for documents, training and compliance, resulting in credential overload, disengagement and inconsistent data capture.

Sponsors faced inefficiencies too. A 2020 Clinical Research Informatics[2] (CRI)[2] workshop revealed trial startup variability of 30–45 days and administrative spending gaps of over $20,000 per site were due to fragmented onboarding. In surveys presented by the Association of American Cancer Institutes (AACI), more than 60% of academic sites found sponsor platforms overly complex and duplicative.[2] These disjointed workflows strained relationships and delayed trials.

SIP as a system-level solution

SIP was designed to solve this systemic problem—not as an incremental fix, but as a shared infrastructure for sites and sponsors alike. It unified document exchange, feasibility, credentialing, profile management and communication, reducing site burden while standardizing sponsor processes.

Cognizant's role extended beyond building software—it delivered infrastructure. SIP was architected to be cross-sponsored, regulatory-aligned and built for scale. Its foundation rested on simplicity, including core design choices like single sign-on (SSO) that offered users seamless access across sponsors.[5]

Adoption required more than functionality—it required trust. Cognizant's Global Medical Affairs team engaged sites directly, creating space for feedback that shaped SIP's roadmap.[4] The formation of the Society for Clinical Research Sites (SCRS) Site Advocacy Group (SAG)[4] ensured that site voices helped guide platform strategy from within. This collaborative design ethos mirrored trends in academic research. A 2023 Lancet Digital Health study by EU-PEARL[3] emphasized the value of shared platforms in reducing redundancy and enabling participant-centric trials. SIP embodied this vision—not just as a workflow optimizer, but as a foundational model for modern clinical research.

> **"What impressed me most about the Shared Investigator Platform was the extraordinary collaboration between sponsors, sites, and technology providers. It's rare to see so many stakeholders align around a shared vision, and the dedication of everyone involved led to meaningful progress in how studies are conducted—driving efficiencies and reducing burdens in ways that truly matter. It's a testament to what's possible when the industry comes together with a common purpose."**
>
> **Brian Egan**
> Owner, Brian Egan Communications (formerly with TransCelerate)

A global, evolving ecosystem

By 2025, SIP has grown into a global network of over 350,000 site users at 35,000+ sites in 100+ countries. The platform has processed 118 million documents, and 10.9 million training credit granted (covering nearly half of all site users no longer requiring to resubmit when working with another SIP sponsor). With usability enhancements driven by site feedback from AACI, Memorial Sloan Kettering, Huntsman Cancer Institute and others, SIP continues to evolve as both a digital utility and a strategic enabler of faster, more inclusive trials.

Overcoming the odds:

Early adoption and implementation hurdles

Fragmentation at the start

Clinical research sites operate in diverse, often under-resourced environments. Many lacked centralized support structures or clarity on how to manage SIP responsibilities. Early deployments showed that, without proper guidance, even well-intended platforms can become one more burden.[8]

Unlike sponsors, who had standardized IT and implementation playbooks, sites were left catching up release by release.

Fixing the foundation: A pilot that listened

To meet the moment, Cognizant launched a focused pilot with 100 high-volume US sites. The aim wasn't scale, but depth—understanding institutional workflows, adapting the setup process and providing proactive support that anticipated questions before they became barriers.[8]

This pilot quickly expanded into the SIP Task Force—a sponsor and site working group that brought transparency and shared accountability to implementation.[8] By learning together, stakeholders could iterate faster and avoid the common pitfall of disjointed rollouts.

Institutionalizing feedback: The rise of SAGs

Recognizing that scalable solutions require scalable feedback, Cognizant formalized the SAG model. What started with 12 engaged US sites has since expanded to include regional SAGs across Europe, LATAM and Asia.[8]

Through these sessions, SIP became a platform co-created by users—not just delivered to them. The resulting changes—streamlined setup, improved performance and better access controls—weren't incremental improvements. The unification of the end-user voice was instrumental in ensuring sponsors received holistic feedback that ensured SIP remained trusted and usable across a global, evolving network.

> **"In retrospect, the collaborative effort to deliver SIP was nothing short of a paradigm shift in clinical systems development! The "client" for the custom solution was not just one, but rather ten large pharma brought together by TransCelerate Biopharma. As a result, clinical ops and clinical systems SMEs such as myself found ourselves working side by side as peers rather than competitors, finding common ground in our mission to address the challenges facing our clinical trial sites not only with a new technical solution, but also with harmonized processes and reuse of study agnostic data across sponsors. Clinical trial investigators and site staff, the system end users, also had representation much earlier than was the norm at that time. By design, the SIP site advocacy group was comprised of diverse roles from sites with varied operating models. Their input to system requirements and SIP prototypes was invaluable. Today, as a member of the SIP team at Cognizant, it's great to see that this collaborative spirit lives on through ongoing sponsor and site user engagement with Cognizant as SIP continues to evolve!"**
>
> **Jeanette Teague**
> Director Product Mgmt, Americas LS P&P Practice, Cognizant (formerly with BMS)

Built for scale:

A platform for everyone

At its inception, SIP was envisioned as a response to very specific operational pain points. It was, in many ways, a point solution—addressing sponsor-site misalignment, site activation delays and communication silos. But over time, SIP's evolution has shifted from a transactional tool into something far more foundational: a digital backbone that supports clinical research across geographies, user roles and organizational maturity.

A common language for complex work

Clinical trials remain inherently complex, but SIP brings consistency to the processes that can and should be harmonized.

Whether a site is working with one sponsor or multiple, SIP offers a single access point, a common user experience and a shared understanding of how profiles, documents and studies are managed. This has reduced onboarding friction, improved compliance and restored valuable time to research teams, especially in environments where every minute matters.[8]

Designed for every role, not just one

As the platform matured, SIP extended its value across all stakeholder personas. For site coordinators, it streamlined task completion, study startup (SSU) and document exchange. For investigators, it enabled delegation, oversight and accountability. For sponsors, it offered a consistent mechanism to track engagement and study readiness.

This adaptability didn't happen by accident. It was the result of years of direct feedback from AACI, SCRS and global SAG participants, who continuously pushed SIP to account for real-world nuances—from regional regulatory variation to staff handovers to mobile-first workflows.[8]

Supporting both the individual and the institution

SIP was designed to work for solo research coordination in a private practice just as well as it does for the clinical trial unit inside a multicenter academic research institution, or the site management organization (SMO) or site network.

That range is a defining strength. With customizable workflows, scalable access permissions and centralized profile management, SIP allows both individuals and institutions to grow with the platform. This flexibility ensures it serves as a future-proof layer of infrastructure, not a tool that has to be replaced when research volume increases.

As Cognizant has noted across global engagements, many sites initially joined SIP to manage a single study. Today, those same users manage entire portfolios within the platform.

Simplifying study startup with real-world site insights

If clinical research is a relay, then study startup is the critical handoff. It's when protocols become action, systems are tested and partnerships are formed. Yet historically, this phase has been defined more by bottlenecks than breakthroughs. SIP emerged not only to simplify SSU, but to reframe it, as a space where collaboration, standardization and site empowerment could drive real-world results.

What sites were asking for

Before SIP, investigative sites faced a patchwork of portals, emails and redundant surveys. In one ASCO analysis, sites reported spending a median of 264 hours per year just completing feasibility questionnaires, contributing to over $1.6 billion in labor costs across the industry.10

SIP, scaled by Cognizant, addresses these challenges directly. Its design allows sites to store core credentials and documents in one profile, which could be reused across sponsors. Repetitive fields in surveys, delegation logs and regulatory forms were replaced with smart autofill features. For organizations managing dozens of studies at once, this shift meant the difference between running trials and running in circles.

Speed through centralization

SIP brought all SSU workflows—feasibility, centralized document exchange, staff credentialing and training—into a single interface. Specifically, with site information being auto-populated and usable across sponsor feasibility questionnaires, allowing them to focus on patients. The impact was measurable. Roche, for example, saw feasibility assessment timelines drop by 36%, from 11 days to seven on average, even as low as four days, after implementing SIP.10 The platform also supports central site networks, allowing them to manage multiple studies through shared profiles and administrative structures, a feature now considered essential for high-volume research institutions.

The human side of efficiency

Efficiency doesn't begin with automation. It begins with empathy—understanding what slows people down and what gives them momentum.

Throughout SIP's development, Cognizant engaged directly with site stakeholders—from principal investigators to startup specialists—to understand what good SSU looks like in practice. The result is a platform that mirrors their needs. Features like batch document downloads, profile-based study linking and biometric-enabled mobile access are not tech gimmicks—they are responses to real frustrations voiced by real site staff.8

More than startup

SSU will always be complex. But it doesn't have to be chaotic. SIP redefines this phase not as a scramble to begin, but as a shared commitment to getting it right.

By listening to sites, simplifying the process and aligning every feature to a real-world need, Cognizant has helped transform SSU from a pain point into a strategic advantage.

Collaboration as a catalyst:

Pharma's shift toward purpose

From silos to systems thinking

For decades, pharmaceutical collaboration was defined by tightly held data and proprietary platforms. But as clinical trials grew more complex, and as technologies matured, these traditional silos became unsustainable.

A 2025 PharmaLeaders analysis[12] describes this clearly: "Breaking down silos and fostering cross-functional collaboration has become a necessity for pharmaceutical companies to remain competitive, drive innovation and ultimately improve patient outcomes.

Enabling agile collaboration

Traditional clinical research models weren't designed for flexibility. SIP changed that. By consolidating workflows across feasibility, credentialing, training and document exchange, it enabled integrated project teams—comprising sponsors and investigative sites—to operate in parallel, not sequentially.

It also proved that when systems are designed for inclusion, participation increases. Sites that once hesitated to join yet another sponsor tool found themselves empowered by SIP's simplicity and equity. In turn, sponsors benefited from faster onboarding, more reliable data and a stronger connection to site networks.

A marker of purpose-driven innovation

The shift toward open innovation wasn't limited to platforms. It became a guiding principle for how pharma companies approached discovery, development and delivery.

As outlined in Pharma's Almanac, many biopharma leaders began pursuing open-innovation models that encouraged partnerships with academia, smaller biotech firms and non-traditional stakeholders.[13] SIP mirrored this movement by creating a space where operational innovation could happen across organizational boundaries—unified by the shared objective of improving research speed, quality and reach.

Delivering value

> “AMR Clinical is grateful for our partnership with the SIP/Cognizant team. The Cognizant staff has been incredibly helpful with setting up the system to reflect our organization structure and provided amazing support throughout the process. The team has actively sought our input on system improvements and prioritized our feedback to create an improved experience for each of our users. Our PI’s especially appreciate the ability to delegate non-medical system tasks to make their workflow more efficient. But most of all, because so many of our clients use SIP, we’ve actually won new opportunities simply because our organization, site, and staff have SIP profiles in place. AMR Clinical sincerely hopes collaboration like SIP increases with our pharma and CRO clients!”
>
> **Missy MacPhail**
> Vice President, Business Development, AMR Clinical

SIP was designed to solve real problems including complex onboarding, redundant documentation and fragmented sponsor-site relationships. But solving problems is only the beginning. The real test of any platform lies in the value it creates once it becomes part of the system.

Speed that builds trust

Clinical research is often delayed not by science, but by systems. For sponsors, SIP allows for quicker decisions and earlier site activation. For sites, it meant less time waiting and more time doing.

External data supports this impact. According to the Journal of Hospital Management and Health Policy, streamlining communication and digitizing workflows can significantly reduce delays and improve productivity across teams.[14]

Fewer errors, greater accuracy

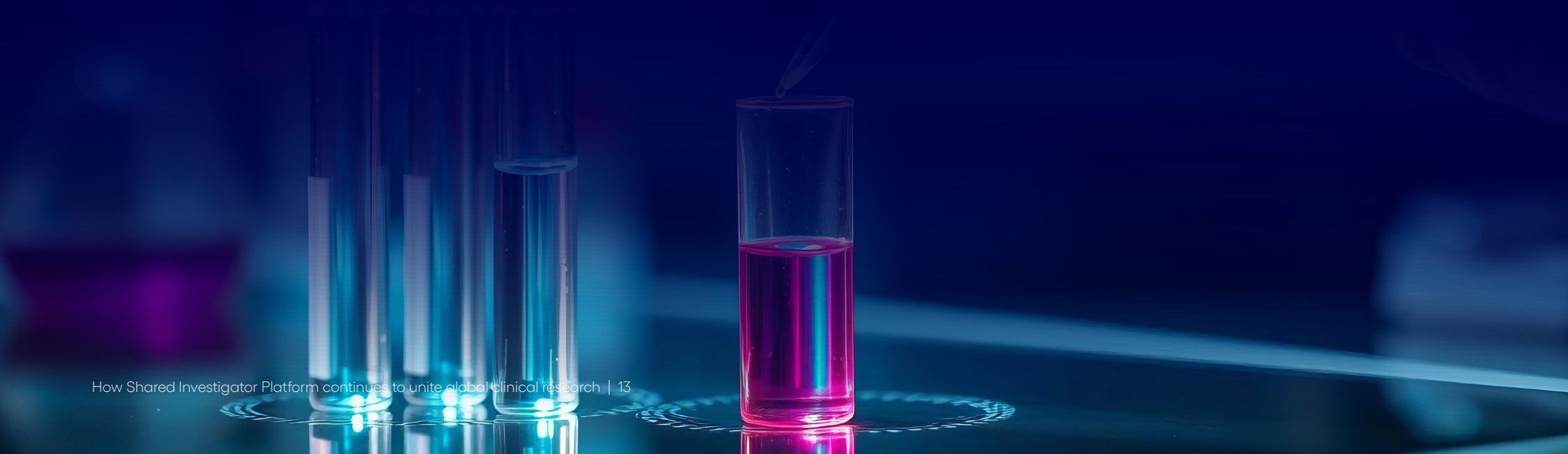
One of the most underestimated risks in clinical trials is manual error. Redundant data entry, misplacing delegation logs or losing track of protocol-specific training records can result in delays, rework and compliance issues.

SIP reduced these risks through automation and profile-based data reuse. Sites can now store investigator CVs, certifications and facility information in one place, updating it as required. Sponsors could access consistent, verified data across studies.

Collaboration that works both ways

Historically, sponsors controlled the flow of information and sites responded. SIP shifted that dynamic by offering shared visibility, two-way communication and consistent expectations.

Cognizant worked closely with both sponsors and sites to develop workflows that felt equitable, not top-down. Document templates, real-time study dashboards and shared access controls enabled both sides to stay informed and aligned.



Consensus and challenges:

The governance puzzle

A diverse industry around shared systems and processes presented governance challenges that became central to SIP's success.

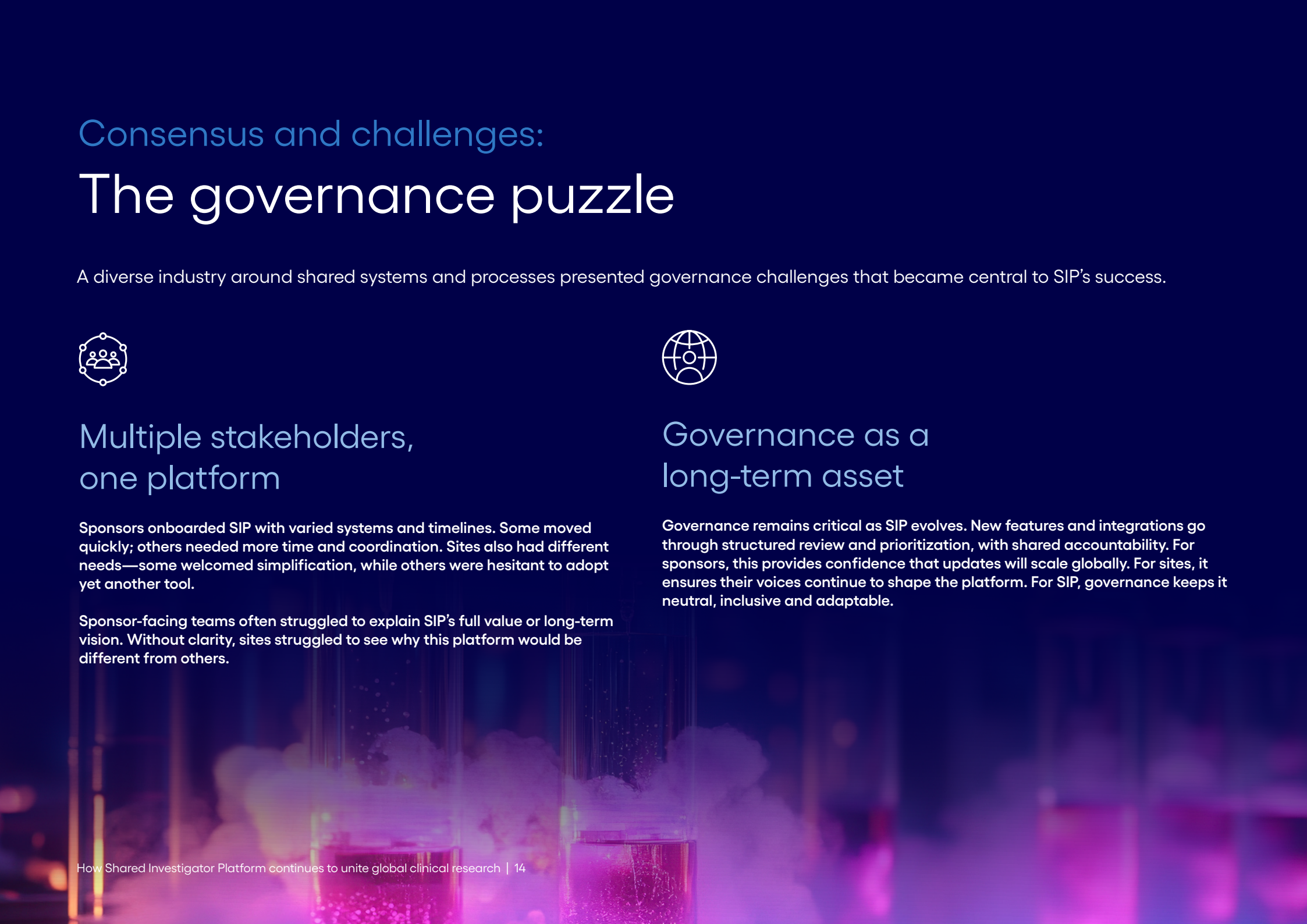
Multiple stakeholders, one platform

Sponsors onboarded SIP with varied systems and timelines. Some moved quickly; others needed more time and coordination. Sites also had different needs—some welcomed simplification, while others were hesitant to adopt yet another tool.

Sponsor-facing teams often struggled to explain SIP's full value or long-term vision. Without clarity, sites struggled to see why this platform would be different from others.

Governance as a long-term asset

Governance remains critical as SIP evolves. New features and integrations go through structured review and prioritization, with shared accountability. For sponsors, this provides confidence that updates will scale globally. For sites, it ensures their voices continue to shape the platform. For SIP, governance keeps it neutral, inclusive and adaptable.



The data dividend:

The future of SIP with AI and multi-agent collaboration

As clinical research grows more complex, SIP's next evolution lies in moving from workflow digitization to intelligent coordination. Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly agentic AI, represents a long-term opportunity to drive smarter trials, faster decisions and stronger outcomes, not as an add-on, but as an embedded enabler of transformation.

According to a 2024 report by ICA.ai, agentic AI supports seamless collaboration across distributed teams by integrating data and aligning decisions in real time.[16] This vision aligns with SIP's core mission: unifying sponsor-site interactions with greater transparency and responsiveness.

Through multi-agent orchestration, SIP could eventually surface bottlenecks, align modules and recommend proactive steps to streamline SSU and execution. Sponsors gain visibility, while sites manage resources more effectively.

A future guided by intelligence

While SIP currently centralizes documents, profiles and training records, its future could include AI-enabled insights to help stakeholders act faster. Potential use cases may involve intelligent trial matching based on site capabilities or algorithms that anticipate delays.

However, realizing this potential requires careful alignment with SIP's core principles of trust, transparency and utility. The priority remains to support stakeholders with intuitive, trustworthy capabilities that evolve alongside product maturity.

> "By bringing together sponsors, sites and CROs under a shared digital ecosystem, we transformed fragmented processes into a cohesive, efficient model. Some forward-looking sponsors took this even further—digitally connecting the flow of documents from their internal systems directly to site platforms through SIP, eliminating manual steps and accelerating timelines."
>
> **Kavitha Lokesh**
> Vice President, Head of LS R&D Delivery and Products and Platforms, Cognizant

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World Headquarters

300 Frank W. Burr Blvd.
Suite 36, 6th Floor
Teaneck, NJ 07666 USA
Phone: +1 201 801 0233
Fax: +1 201 801 0243
Toll Free: +1 888 937 3277

European Headquarters

280 Bishopsgate
London
EC2M 4RB
Phone: +44 207 297 7600

India Operations Headquarters

5/535, Okkiam Thoraipakkam,
Old Mahabalipuram Road,
Chennai 600 096
Tel: 1-800-208-6999
Fax: +91 (01) 44 4209 6060

APAC Headquarters

1 Fusionopolis Link, Level 5
NEXUS@One-North, North Tower
Singapore 138542
Phone: +65 6812 4000

WF 3705053