UNECE High-level Group for the Modernisation of Official Statistics

Business Case for Cloud for Official Statistics

This business case was prepared by **John Conway** (Central Statistics Office/Ireland), and is submitted to the HLG-MOS for their approval.

Type of Activity			
☒	New project	☐	Extension of existing project

Purpose

The UNECE HLG Executive Board encouraged a project be developed relating to Cloud for Official Statistics, following the suggestions by the Blue Skies Thinking Network. A business case is presented, with the purpose of establishing a set of common guidelines for Cloud Adoption in Statistical organisations.

Description of the project and the Work Packages/sub-activities

A Cloud for Official Statstics Sub Group met on the 23rd of September 2022, consisting of a broad participation of experts from many countries. This built upon discussions at two sessions in June (Belgrade) and July (Newport), which showed a clear interest and also provided ideas for the topics to cover and approach to take. The outcome of the September meeting led to the following structure being proposed for your review and approval.
The chair of the group is John Conway, with support from Chirstopher Jones.

It is proposed to establish 5 different themes relating to the most common considerations relating to the usage of Cloud Services. The themes are identified as

1. Common set of Considerations needed relating to the procurement of Cloud Services, assessing areas such as intellectual property, migration to another provider / vendor lock-in/ exit strategy / terms and conditions.
2. Understanding the behavioural nudges needed to adopt cloud. This theme will review indigenous/minority people's perspectives on Cloud, public perception, Data Sovereignty, challenges relating to convincing an organisation's executive board to approve the use of Cloud Services, the impact of cloud use on the official statistics brand.
3. The types of Cloud service models and services which exist, and which are suitable for organisations in which context. Topics for consideration include Infrastructure as a Service, Platform as a service, Software as a Service, Hybrid Cloud, Public Cloud, Private Cloud
4. Explore the security and privacy considerations relating to the use of Cloud which may enhance or inhibit its adoption across statistical organisations
5. The skillsets needed for the utilisation Cloud. Topics for review will include staff retraining efforts needed, the challenge for public sector organisations in a competitive marketplace for Cloud skills, and how could knowledge be shared between organisations.

Volunteers from the working group will be requested to form sub groups, focusing on a particular theme. Each sub-group will have a lead, who will coordinate the team meetings for that cohort. Every month one sub-group will present their theme to the wider working group, taking input from the group, in addition to their own research and contribution.

Meetings will predominately take place virtually, however one to two meetings may be scheduled physically, in conjunction with other UNECE meetings which may occur.

Deliverables and timeline

The proposal sets out developing a set of guidelines and recommendations, across multiple themes, to assist each statstical organisation on their cloud adoption journey.

It is envisaged that the process will take 9 months to complete, giving time for each sub-group to prepare a set of guidelines/recommendations for their theme. The themes will be incporated into one final document for distribution to all statistical peers at the end of the project.

Before the project, there is a lack of understanding on what stages of their Cloud journey other statistical organisations are on. It is also unclear what have been the lessons learned for those that have commenced their cloud journey. The first exercise under each theme sub-group will be to scope and define their outputs and deliverables, according to the specifics of each particular theme.

Offices/Countries committed

The following countries and organizations have already committed to actively contribute to this work:

Canada, Finland, France, Ireland, Italy, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Serbia, Sweden, United Kingdom, European Commission and OECD.

Alternatives considered

Not undertaking this project could result in statistical organisations taking uninformed approaches to their Cloud adoption journey. They would not benefit from the value of information and knowledge sharing across the respective organisations, potentially resulting in waste of budget or suboptimal approaches to risks.

How does it relate to the HLG-MOS vision and other activities under the HLG-MOS?

Adoption of Cloud can directly contribute to modernising statistical production, and complements themes explored previously/currently under the HLG, such as Big Data, privacy-preserving techniques and governance, and may have synergies with current work on Data Science, Machine Learning, etc.

Proposed start and end dates

Start: January 2023	**End:** December 2023

It is proposed to commence the work in January 2023 and complete by September 2023.