

# Seamlessly embracing a multi-cloud environment

Decisions about cloud services hinge on understanding agencies' needs and providers' capabilities



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**C**HOOSING THE RIGHT cloud solutions can be a daunting task, but knowing what steps to take can significantly streamline the process. Agencies should begin by clearly identifying their business and functional requirements and considering their security needs. Doing so will make it possible to evaluate which cloud service provider (CSP) is positioned to offer the best capabilities for the best cost.

Throughout the process, agencies should keep in mind that enterprise data is their single most important asset. Secure access to trustworthy data on demand is crucial to providing the best possible experience for users. That priority helps agencies determine where new systems should be built and, more importantly, how data will be stored, protected and accessed quickly and securely to ensure that business users are able to meet mission goals.

In addition, a layered approach to security based on zero trust principles reduces risk by protecting all computing assets, including devices, networks, applications and data. Agencies should carefully evaluate CSPs for their ability to provide services out of the box that provide appropriate isolation,

encryption, continuous monitoring and proactive alerts.

Furthermore, unknown or unexpected costs are one of the biggest financial risks associated with embracing a cloud strategy. A CSP's costs should be easy to understand and predictable so agencies can make smart financial decisions about cloud products and services. For example, not all CSPs provide transparency for elastic compute costs. Some CSPs also charge customers more to move data out of the cloud or between clouds, and some charge for traffic between regions or domains in the same cloud.

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## CREATING SUCCESSFUL INDUSTRY PARTNERSHIPS

Choosing the right industry partner can speed the deployment of a secure multi-cloud environment. Partners should have a detailed understanding of the steps required to gain an

authority to operate under FedRAMP. Additionally, partners that embrace standards-based, cloud-native approaches will be best positioned to help agencies deploy across CSP platforms. Agencies should be wary of partners that only deploy to one CSP or have limited their experience to a narrow toolset.

Furthermore, some vendors choose to focus on a single set of cloud tools or work with a single CSP. Although this may help agencies succeed on a specific platform, it can severely limit their ability to find the best capability for the best cost. Instead, working with partners that can evaluate solutions

across multiple platforms will help agencies realize more value, and partners that have experience with multiple CSPs will help agencies map each critical workload to the right CSP.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF INTEROPERABILITY

As agencies adopt multiple cloud solutions, it's important to maintain continuity and visibility

across all cloud-based activities. By following a standards-based approach and embracing automation, agencies can reduce the need for manual integration. Automation is a force multiplier for agencies that want to transform their ability to deliver new capability to mission owners. In

Source: Solarseven



In addition, continuous integration and continuous delivery will allow agencies to be more efficient and consistent while maintaining the flexibility to deploy to any platform.

Avoiding vendor lock-in is a strong motivation to embrace a multi-cloud

approach. However, agencies must continue to evaluate how each CSP facilitates interoperability between clouds and with systems that remain on premises. A CSP's built-in support for cross-cloud deployment, co-location facilities and network interconnects are just a few of the capabilities that will

enable agencies to seamlessly embrace a multi-cloud environment. ■

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