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CONTEXT

The I&T Governance Board has tasked the DIT and the I&T Partners group with drawing up a policy and introducing a proper strategy for Cloud Computing for the Organisation, which will form part of the I&T strategy and its governance and provide the operational directorates with effective support in this area.

Cloud Computing provides IT services or applications on-line, which are accessible anywhere, at any time and from any workstation.

The Cloud Computing approach has become a real alternative to certain traditional approaches to information technologies and is in keeping with the digital transformation required by the Organisation.

The Cloud focuses the user's energy on the choice of services rather than on measures to implement them. It is a major turning point for the IT industry, and one that needs to be negotiated by the Organisation.

The operational sectors could be tempted to deal directly with Cloud suppliers without taking into account all the aspects to be considered in a healthy digital transformation of the Organisation.

Cloud Computing provides opportunities in a context where information technologies are crucial to ensuring that the Council of Europe is able to effectively plan, carry out and manage its activities and also to supporting a more agile and more mobile Organisation.

At the Council of Europe a number of initiatives have already demonstrated the benefits of this approach in providing more relevant and immediate responses to certain operational needs, such as the on-line service used by the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities to handle distribution of meeting documents and the use of the Cloud service by the European Court of Human Rights to back up its critical data under its business continuity plan in the event of a major incident causing data loss.

VISION, CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIC GOAL

VISION AND POLITICAL CHALLENGES

The Council of Europe is an organisation whose main strength lies in its knowledge and expertise. It needs an information system (IS) which is solid and in step with market developments to guarantee the permanency of its assets. It has to sustain its capacity to effectively carry out its activities and retain its place as a top performer in its field, while streamlining its resources.

In addition, the choice of its tools must enable the Council to guarantee its visibility to the outside world and positively shape its image.

With this in mind, the policy adopted is to take account of Cloud Computing in the ecosystem of IT resources made available to the Council of Europe's operational entities.

STRATEGIC GOAL

The strategic goal is to create the right conditions for using Cloud Computing services for the Organisation's benefit, supporting its political aims and fostering a more agile and more mobile organisation with an appropriate level of security.

The strategy lines followed in this connection are:

SUPPORTING A MORE AGILE AND MORE MOBILE ORGANISATION

Developing I&T solutions through all available means, including Cloud Computing, which support the Organisation's activities, are accessible via the Internet in diverse work environments (desktop PC, laptop, tablet, mobile phone) and can be rapidly deployed.

MOVING TOWARDS A "CLOUD-FRIENDLY" ENVIRONMENT

Introducing the prerequisites – contractual and technical – for the adoption of Cloud Computing within the Organisation:

- Taking on board the necessary procurement means and methods (contracts, procurement procedures). Laying down contractual conditions for data security (data ownership, location of data, supplier legislation) and service quality and continuity (reversibility, business continuity plan)
- Developing the workstation so that it can interact effectively with the central systems and Cloud Computing solutions
- Developing the means of information exchange (data, authentication, access) between Cloud Computing, workstations and central systems ("Data Centres")

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

ALIGNMENT WITH THE ORGANISATION'S I&T strategy AND GOVERNANCE

Any Cloud solution must conform to the Organisation's I&T strategy and governance.

EFFICIENT SUPPORT FOR THE ORGANISATION IN ITS MISSIONS

Ensuring that the use of Cloud Computing solutions provides efficient support for the Organisation in its missions.

SECURITY AND RESILIENCE OF DATA AND SERVICE

Taking care to protect data and systems against attacks and being in a position to detect and respond to any attempts to compromise them.

Ensuring service availability and taking the necessary action in the event of interruption of service.

GREATER AGILITY

Increasing the ability to respond to new and changing needs and swiftly deploying I&T capabilities to support the Council's operations.

INFORMATION SYSTEM COHERENCE

Ensuring the overall coherence of the Council's information system architecture as well as the interoperability of applications and data.

OPTIMISATION OF IT COSTS

Ensuring coherent procurement to optimise overall costs.

Economies of scale should be encouraged, for example through a common infrastructure or grouped licence and service contracts, and also a shift towards a model in which we pay for what we need to use.

STRATEGIC IMPERATIVES

ADOPT CLOUD GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES

To benefit from what Cloud Computing has to offer, choices of solutions must be geared to the Council's aims and objectives. As with any I&T investment, Cloud Computing projects should be guided by the I&T Governance Board.

When assessing Cloud-based initiatives, project managers will refer to the "Cloud Computing Guidelines" and ensure that the conditions and criteria stipulating digital sovereignty, reversibility and data ownership and security are taken into account in the analysis of costs, benefits, risks and opportunities. The findings of that analysis will determine whether Cloud services can have a positive and lasting impact on attaining the Organisation's goals and if the risk remains acceptable.

CONSOLIDATE INFORMATION GOVERNANCE TO COVER CLOUD COMPUTING

The information deposited in the Cloud must be covered within the Organisation's information policy. If necessary, the Council will adapt the regulations governing the management of information and data to encompass Cloud Computing and provide guidelines, recommendations and tools for the management and control of information in the Cloud.

ADAPT EXISTING INFORMATION SYSTEMS

The adoption of Cloud Computing calls for investment and technical changes to the existing information system, making it necessary to adjust the investment programme but also to plan and carry out compliance works on the system.

Cloud Computing multiplies exchanges of data on the Council's computer network and continually introduces new changes at the level of the information system. Accordingly, Cloud Computing must be integrated in the ongoing process of information system development, making it possible to manage the modernisation, interoperability, security and migration of the applications, data and systems.

Accordingly, this is about identifying a more agile infrastructure making it possible to meet the demand and cater for needs to develop the functions involved (data processing, storage, backup), while taking account of the new security challenges and volumes of data exchanged.

SECURE AND MANAGE CLOUD OPERATIONS

- Lay down norms and standards specific to Cloud Computing and adapt the security model

- Manage operations from a risk reduction viewpoint
- Adapt the business recovery plan to include the use of Cloud services
- Build the capacity to audit, supervise and investigate Cloud services
- Establish and maintain service levels with providers

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The roles and responsibilities are defined in the existing legal framework, notably Instruction 47, the security policy and the data protection rules.

- I&T-GB:
 - ✓ This body is responsible for the Organisation's Cloud Computing policy and strategy
 - ✓ It is responsible for the political decisions relating to the implementation of Cloud Computing
- Major administrative entities:
 - ✓ They are responsible for the correct application of the texts, rules and Cloud Computing solution implementation processes in the departments
 - ✓ The heads of entities are responsible for access to and distribution of the information and data produced by their entity
 - ✓ Responsibility for the applications lies with the business-side departments
- IT Services:
 - ✓ The evaluation of requests from business-side departments remains the responsibility of the competent IT services in order to maintain and guarantee coherence and fluidity of deployment
 - ✓ They are responsible for validating the choices of I&T solutions, including Cloud solutions within the scope of their remit
- Computer correspondents and archive correspondents:
 - ✓ They act as a relay point between the IT services and the business-side departments in the implementation of Cloud solutions
- IT Partners:
 - ✓ Within their brief, they contribute to the global vision, particularly through the proposal of transversal solutions