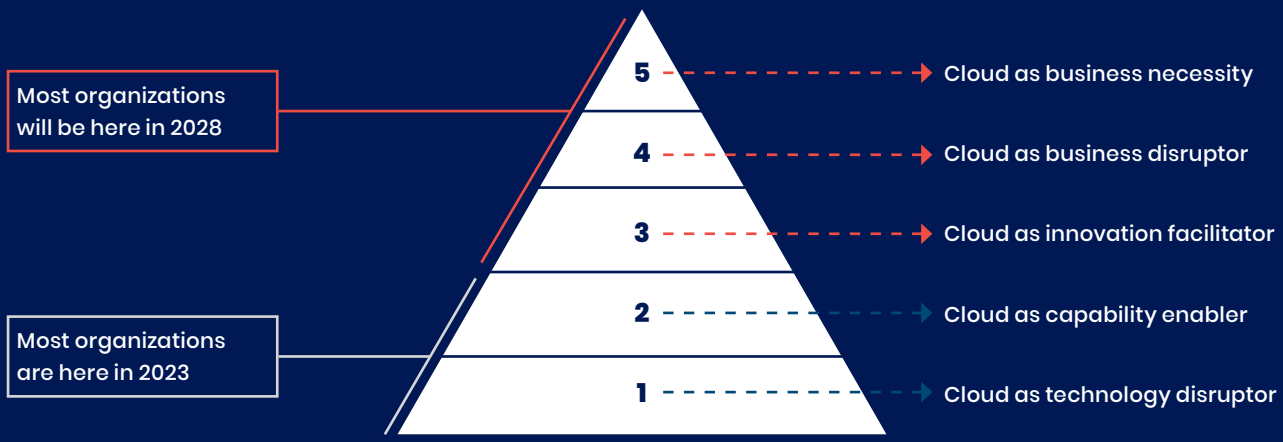
# Cloud: engine for growth through innovation

inetum

# Cloud as the foundation of digital success

In the early days of the cloud, many prejudices and myths circulated. The cloud was said to be insecure, and migration was expected to result in substantial cost savings. Another common belief was that migrating to the cloud was merely a matter of tactics and technology. According to this outdated view, a cloud migration was little more than a technological upgrade of the existing on-premises infrastructure. Nothing could be further from the truth: **choosing the cloud is a crucial strategic decision made in alignment with your business objectives.** Moreover, analysts argue that cloud adoption is a prerequisite for many digital business strategies.

## Cloud in 2028: from technology disruptor to business necessity




According to Gartner Inc., by 2028, cloud computing will no longer be a "technology disruptor" but a necessary component to maintain companies' competitive edge.

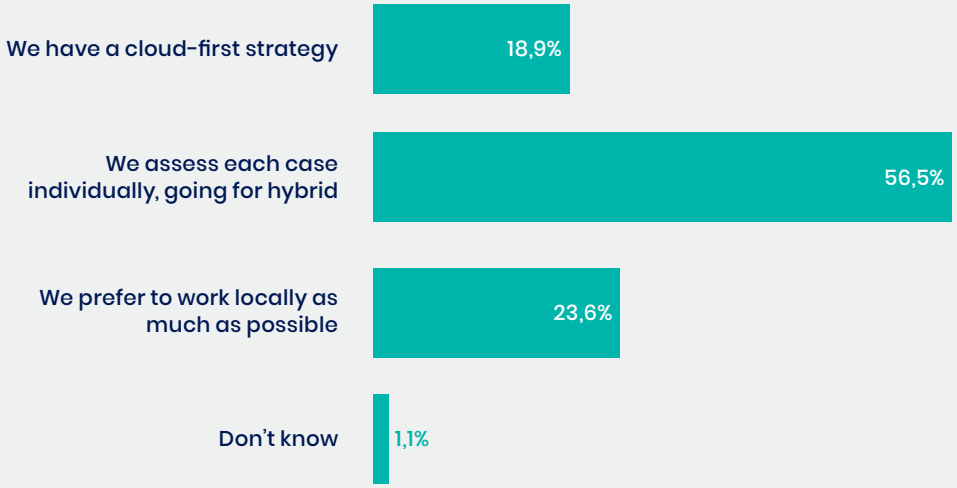
The cloud plays a fundamental role in the digital transformation of your business. It serves as a **driving force for digital innovation, unlocking potential business growth**. In other words, despite the challenges that come with a cloud migration, innovation today is no longer possible without the cloud. Consider, for instance, the domain of **data platforms and artificial intelligence** (AI)—the most obvious example, as it strongly captures the imagination in today's landscape.

> We are only at the beginning of the journey to the cloud.
>
> **IDC**

# Hybrid remains the reality.

Finally, there is the myth that the cloud—particularly the **public cloud—is a universal solution**. Reality has long since disproven this notion. Today, the standard is that companies opt for a hybrid cloud strategy. "Cloud only" remains the exception. However, multi-cloud is on the rise, especially when considering business platforms such as Salesforce.

## How would you evaluate your company's approach to the cloud? (n=197)




Cloud approach in Belgium (Beltug market study, 2023)

To support this statement, it is sufficient to refer to a market study (2023) by Beltug, the largest association of ICT decision-makers in Belgium. The study shows that the hybrid cloud remains the standard for most of the association's corporate members (57%). In this approach, companies decide on a case-by-case basis, for each workload individually, whether to keep it on-premises or move it to the cloud.

A quarter of the surveyed companies (24%) indicate that they prefer to work as much as possible on-premises, while one in five companies (19%) adopt a cloud-first approach. The main reasons for not choosing a cloud-first strategy are primarily data sovereignty, network dependencies, and the technical limitations of existing applications.

# The public cloud is on the rise.

That most organizations are now approaching the question of whether or not to migrate to the cloud in a more pragmatic way seems to us, as an ICT service provider, to be a positive development. If for no other reason, it significantly increases the chances of success for their cloud projects.

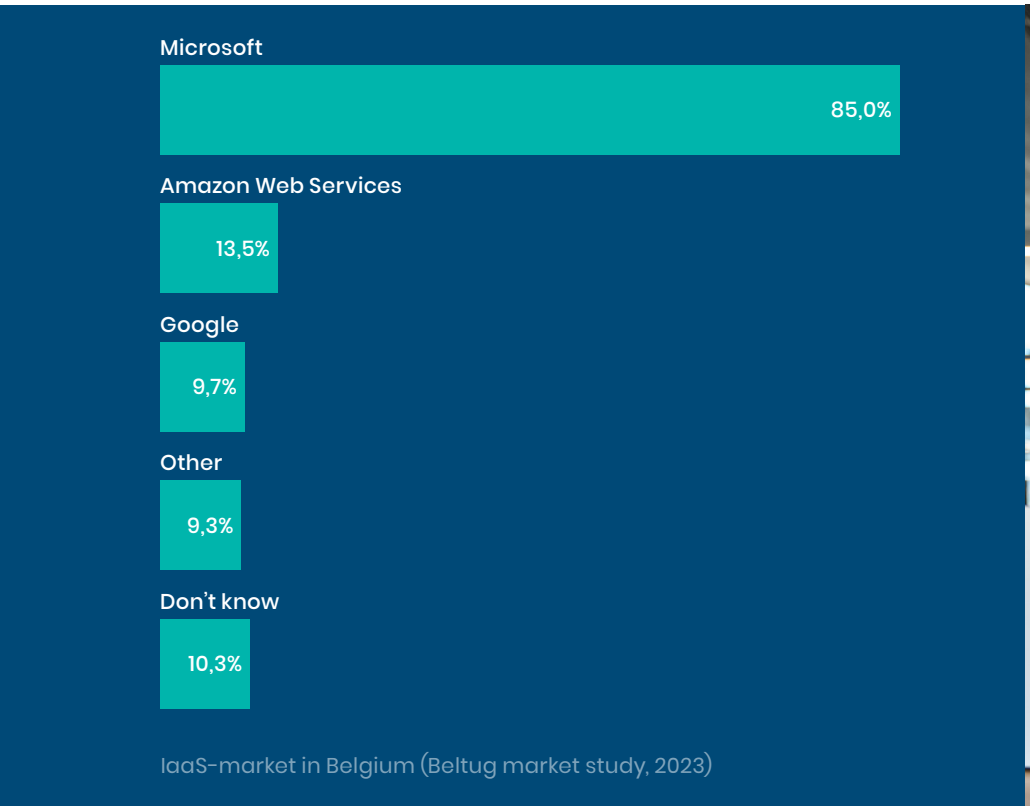
In a hybrid environment, the public cloud is now indispensable. This is due to several clear advantages, such as the increased **speed and agility** that characterize this cloud variant. But also because it serves as a **driving force for digital innovation and business growth**. The public cloud is much more than just an alternative infrastructure: it is an **accessible innovation platform** that supports companies in their digital transformation. While such a platform cannot take the place of a business strategy, it can be a powerful complement that helps develop new **disruptive business models**.

This allows the public cloud to directly contribute to better business outcomes. Additionally, the rise of generative AI (GenAI) has recently given a new boost to this innovation and transformation capability, driving even more momentum. As a result, the public cloud is increasingly evolving into a business cloud that offers companies new strategic opportunities.

> *The cloud is not an end in itself. It is the business objectives and IT & business outcomes that are decisive. Based on your business needs and ambitions, you must make the right choices for your data and applications, of course, within the reality of the current environment and your IT strategy.*
>
> **Stefan Smeets**
> Business Unit Lead Cloud at Inetum

# Microsoft Azure sets the tone

When talking about the public cloud, one inevitably mentions Microsoft. With its Azure cloud platform, Microsoft is a leader in this segment of the ICT market. Through Azure, Microsoft not only offers a wide range of its own **cloud services** and **SaaS applications** (Software as a Service), but also allows other companies to leverage its **cloud infrastructure (IaaS (Infrastructure as a Service)** and **PaaS (Platform as a Service)).**




IaaS-market in Belgium (Beltug market study, 2023)

A survey by Beltug (2023) reveals that approximately the same number of companies use IaaS as those that do not: 51% versus 45%. Among the larger, Belgium-based companies that do use IaaS services, Microsoft is by far the most popular provider (85%), followed at a distance by Amazon Web Services (14%) and Google (10%).

According to Beltug, this dominance in the public cloud market is closely tied to Microsoft's dominant position in the digital collaboration tools market, with Microsoft 365 as its flagship product. A more recent local study by the research and advisory firm Whitelane Research from 2024 confirms this position.

> *Of the 300 largest ICT consumers we surveyed, no fewer than 225 have a contract with Microsoft Azure, compared to only thirty with Google. This speaks volumes about Microsoft's dominance in the public cloud in our country.*
>
> **Jef Loos**
> Head of Research at Whitelane Research, in the ICT trade magazine Data News

# The power of an ecosystem

One of the many advantages enjoyed by Microsoft Azure customers is access to the entire Microsoft ecosystem. In addition to the complete portfolio of solutions offered by Microsoft itself, they can also leverage the numerous services and extensive expertise of **certified Microsoft partners such as Inetum**.

At Inetum Belgium, this expertise is reflected in over 428 certifications for the full set of Microsoft technologies. Of these certifications, more than 200 are directly related to Microsoft Azure. Additionally, thanks to the large Inetum Group, we can rely on an extensive pool of 829 certified Microsoft and cloud professionals. This collaboration enables us to quickly and flexibly scale our capacity both locally and internationally.

Thanks to our **high certification level**, as a Microsoft partner, we are also part of programs such as **Azure Migrate and Modernize (AMM) and Azure Innovate**. These programs can provide financial support for our clients' cloud projects, which in turn benefits their cloud adoption. Both programs cover the three phases of any cloud journey: the pre-migration, migration, and post-migration phases. As a **Microsoft AI Cloud Partner**, formerly a Gold Partner, we can also rely on direct assistance from Microsoft and register tickets through Premier Support in the case of major incidents.

> *The cloud is an extremely dynamic environment. Weekly, if not daily, Microsoft releases new updates and services that make your Azure environment more performant, scalable, reliable, or simply reduce its costs. On one hand, it's worthwhile to constantly and carefully follow all of these developments. On the other hand, keeping up with the evolution of the Azure platform has almost become a full-time job. By combining our years of expertise in cloud management with advanced automation of management tasks, we can relieve our clients of this responsibility.*
>
> **Rik Delva**
> Partner Alliance Manager Microsoft at Inetum

# City of Harelbeke pioneers in the cloud thanks to the ecosystem of Microsoft and partners

The City of Harelbeke decided early on to take the step toward the cloud. “In our region, we were the first public administration to migrate its office environment to **Office 365**,” says IT manager Frederik Hellyn. For this pioneering work, his IT team was able to rely on the support and input of technology partner Inetum.

Shortly after the Office migration to **Azure**, the City of Harelbeke also made the move to **Power BI** for the creation of various self-made dashboards and reports. “We clearly needed a good tool for reporting. Initially, it was only about financial reporting,” says Frederik. However, once the rest of Microsoft’s overarching **Power Platform** became accessible to them, things quickly gained momentum. Frederik and his colleagues started developing various **Power Apps** on their own.

Both telephony and backup are now in the cloud. “For the purchase of systems and applications that are essential to our operations and services, we rely on the advice of Inetum. For cloud telephony, Inetum’s experts recommended **Teams** combined with **TendFor** for the reception function. For cloud backup, they advised **AvePoint**.” Both TendFor and AvePoint are also technology partners of Microsoft.

In the meantime, with the introduction of Copilot, Microsoft’s AI assistant, a new challenge has emerged: artificial intelligence. “Who knows, perhaps Copilot can also bring added value to us,” concludes Frederik Hellyn.

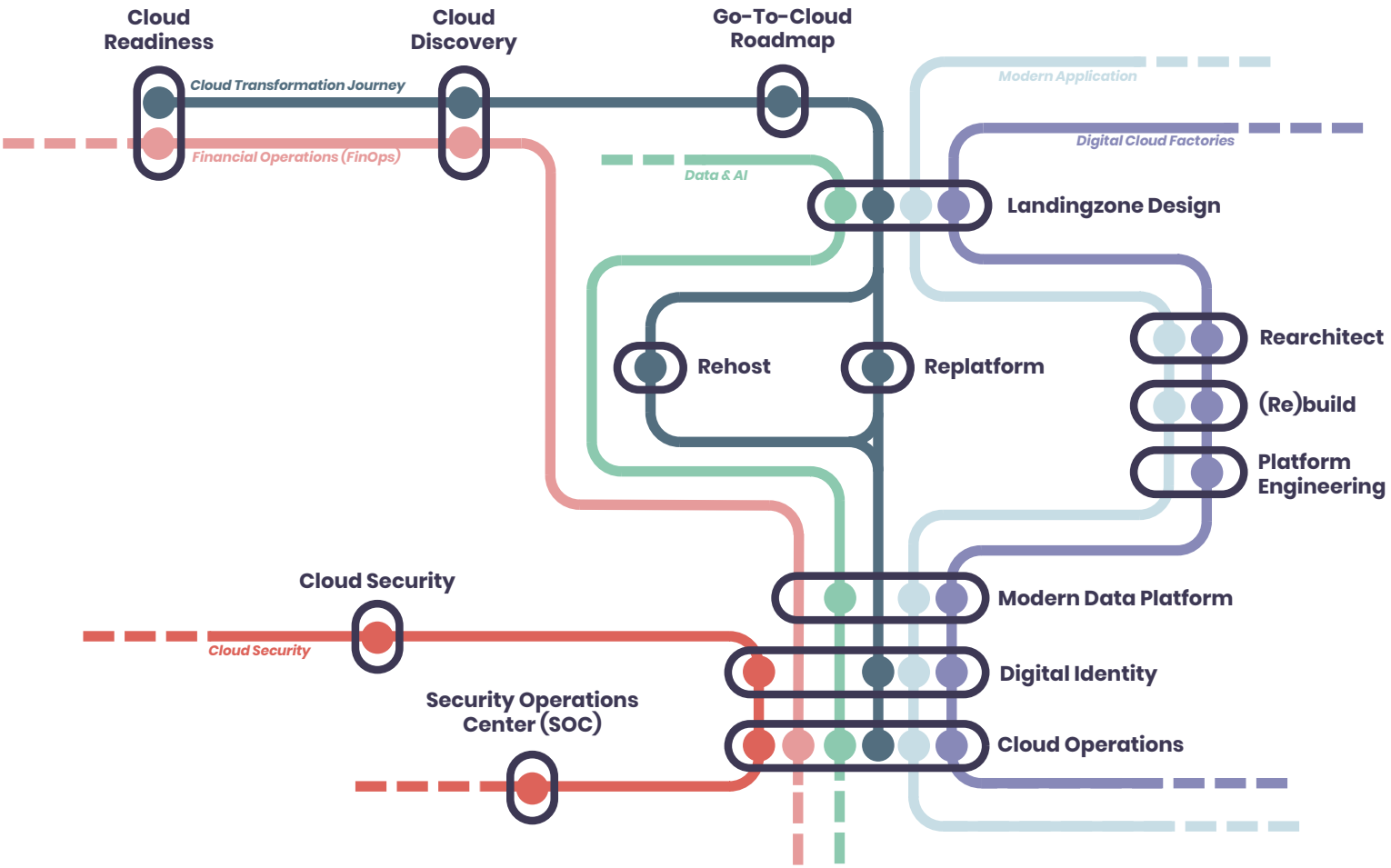
**Video (YouTube)**

## Inetum supports the City of Harelbeke in a technological leadership role

# What does your cloud journey look like?

Every journey to the cloud is different. The reason is simple: every organization is unique. For instance, one organization may be larger and more complex than another, which can impact the duration and complexity of the cloud journey. An organization that is more mature and further along in its cloud journey may not need to go through certain exploratory steps anymore.

We do not mean to suggest that there cannot or should not be a clear journey to the cloud. On the contrary, such a **journey with a number of defined steps** or milestones already exists. For the sake of convenience and clarity, we have laid it out here for you in the familiar form of a metro map.




What's most important is that you know where you want to go, which route will get you to your destination the fastest, and, not to be overlooked, where to start your journey. Our experts can advise you and provide useful tools to help you successfully complete your journey to the cloud. As a guide, we use the **Microsoft Cloud Adoption Framework for Azure**.

# 1. Well-prepared for the journey

Everything starts with defining a **strategy**. This means setting the objectives you want to achieve by moving to the cloud, ideally with corresponding KPIs. While there are also **technological** and **financial** considerations to be made, the most important aspect remains finding an answer to the question of how the cloud can support and strengthen your **business**.

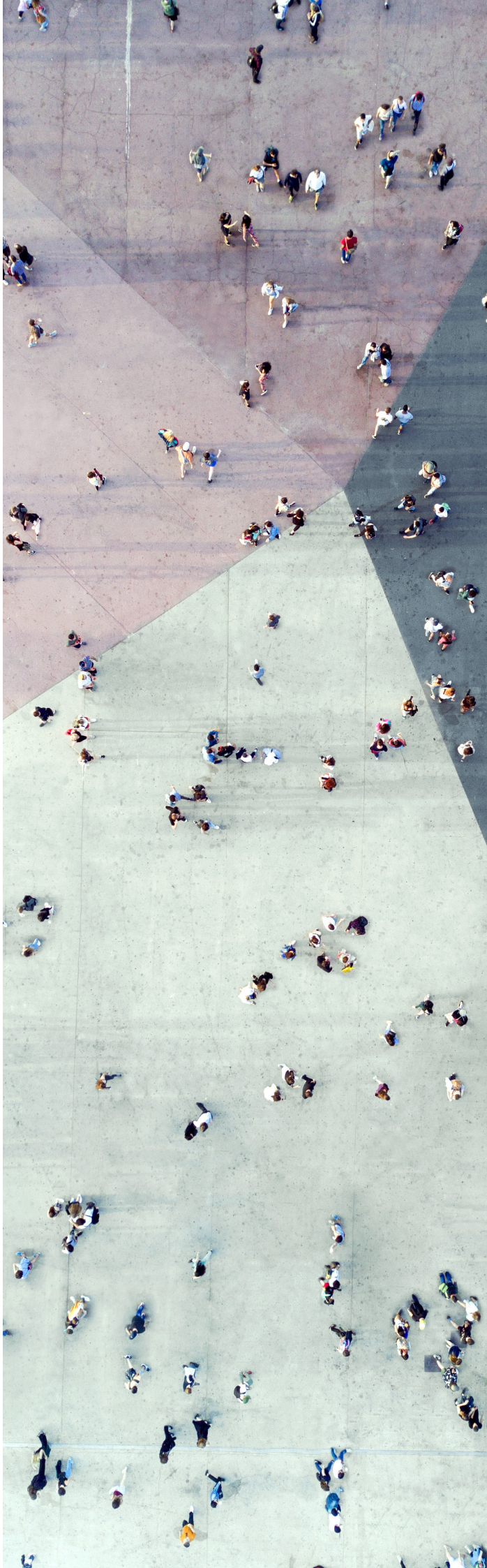
> *Thanks to the choice of the cloud, the business can now respond to opportunities much faster. Setting up new infrastructure to try something out can now be done quickly. You no longer need to be a specialist to do this.*
>
> **Guy Dedeurwaerder**
> IT Infrastructure and Operations Manager Europe at Samsonite

Once the question of the business case is clearly answered, you shift from the strategic research and exploration phase to the more practical **planning phase**. In this phase, you first map out exactly where you currently stand on the journey to the cloud and what is still needed to successfully embark on that journey.

It's not just about getting everything in order technologically and process-wise; your entire organization must be ready to adopt the cloud. In other words, your end-users must have the necessary **skills** and the right mindset to work optimally in a cloud environment. In addition to the cloud strategy, a cloud adoption plan is an absolute prerequisite to getting the most out of the cloud.

Now that you know where you want to go and where to start your journey to the cloud, you can map out your route very concretely. In addition to creating a customized **plan**, this phase is particularly suitable for conducting various **experiments**, tests, or setting up **proofs of concept** with cloud technology.

A cloud journey is iterative. The foundations (safe landing zones) must be critically reassessed with each new workload. Similarly, in terms of practices, you work in an evolving manner.



**These Inetum tools and services will help ensure you're well-prepared at the starting line:**

## Cloud Readiness Assessment

Immerse yourself in the public cloud through a series of practical, tailor-made workshops for your company. The focus is on assessing your organization's maturity and the impact of introducing the cloud into your daily operations.

## Cloud Discovery Consulting

Let one of our experienced advisors guide you in refining your cloud strategy. In a series of workshops, you will work with our public cloud expert to map out your current situation and application landscape. To further strengthen your business case, we will also develop a prototype that demonstrates the future potential of your cloud investment.

## Go-To-Cloud Roadmap

To maximize the benefits of your transition to the cloud, a cloud migration and adoption program must be created that addresses all of your current needs. Creating a roadmap or action plan helps you gain a better understanding of that program without losing sight of the bigger picture. While our **Cloud Business Roadmap** starts from business needs, our **Cloud Infrastructure Roadmap** specifically focuses on the technical aspects of cloud migration. Both roadmaps result from a series of workshops we go through together with you.

# 2. Mandatory stop: the landing zone

A mandatory stop on every cloud journey is the creation of a landing zone. This is the foundation on which you will build your new environment. You can compare it to the runway at an airport, which is necessary for planes to land smoothly and safely. In the case of an Azure Landing Zone, those planes are the applications. Using such a landing zone ensures that those applications can land on the Azure platform in a standardized way, making the process faster and more efficient. In this sense, the landing zone forms the basis for all future applications you will move to the cloud. So, it's essential to ensure that the core of your cloud environment is set up correctly.

In our **Landing Zone Design Workshops**, our cloud experts will guide you through this crucial process. During these workshops, all aspects involved in designing and customizing a landing zone are covered: costs, management, reliability, security, governance, identity, networking, automation, and more. This ensures that your landing zone is perfectly aligned with your growing needs.

Do you already have a landing zone but need to validate it? Or do you require improvements to your current design? Then our **Landing Zone Assessment** will surely be beneficial. In this process, an expert will dive into your existing design and validate the requirements of your landing zone through a series of workshops.

# 3. Different migration routes, different goals

Once the mandatory stop at the landing zone is behind you, you are ready to take the step towards the actual cloud migration and adoption. This can be done in several ways:

- With **rehosting**, you move existing applications to the public cloud **without substantial modifications** through a so-called **lift-and-shift migration**.
- With **replatforming**, you do make some adjustments to existing applications in order to take advantage (e.g., flexibility, performance) of using the public cloud. These applications are thus already somewhat modernized.
- With **rearchitecting**, you **extensively, though not fully**, modernize existing applications within a development environment in the public cloud.
- With **(re)building**, you **fully** adapt existing applications to the public cloud environment, either by consuming them as a service (**SaaS** applications) or by completely redeveloping them tailored to your organization (**cloud-native** applications).

The cloud can also be a valuable addition to your existing infrastructure. With hybrid solutions, for example, you can ensure IT service continuity today or manage data archiving in the cloud, while your core applications continue to run in your own private data center.

> *When a new application comes our way, we always first check if a SaaS solution is available. We consciously follow a 'cloud first' strategy today. If that SaaS solution is not available, we take the necessary steps to run the new application in our Azure data center.*
>
> **Guy Dedeurwaerder**
> IT Infrastructure and Operations Manager Europe at Samsonite

Of course, a mix of all these migration routes is possible, depending on your different workloads and applications. However, whichever route or combination of routes you choose, our experts are always ready with the necessary tools and services to support and guide you: from our **Cloud Migration Factory**, a standardized and automated migration platform that can significantly speed up your migration process, to our **DevOps Factory**, which gives you access to multidisciplinary teams specialized in building modern applications and rebuilding existing applications in an agile way.

# Platform Engineering: supporting agile at scale

Imagine that the cloud has become a strategic component of your business model. By now, you have multiple agile development teams working on a centralized cloud platform. However, such an extremely flexible environment, where teams organize themselves, becomes challenging to manage once an organization reaches a certain size or scale. Enforcing policies for security, reliability, governance, and other IT management practices requires a more structured and centralized approach.

To support agile development at scale within your organization, we offer a range of services under the umbrella of Platform Engineering that empower your developers to focus on being developers again.

In addition to a **Platform Engineering Maturity Assessment**, we provide services such as **Platform Engineering Consultancy**. In this case, our engineers extend your existing development teams to help scale your agile practices. The expertise we provide includes introducing automation and digital delivery, as well as balancing your security and cost management needs.

## 4. Easier Migration with a Modern Data Platform

A large application migration project can complicate and delay your journey to the cloud. Often, this results in a big bang approach with all its disadvantages, such as a higher risk of errors. Centralizing your data in a modern data platform can provide a solution by enabling a phased approach to migrations.

To build such a modern data platform, you can also make use of the public cloud. An additional advantage is that you not only centralize your data there, but also enrich and transform that centralized data to extract maximum value from it.

Our team of experts is happy to assist you in conducting a feasibility **study**. The concrete result of this, obtained through workshops, is a **project plan** that serves as the foundation for building a well-functioning modern data platform.

## 5. Digital Identity: The Key to Cloud Security and Your Data

A modern solution for **identity and access management** is essential to ensure the trust of both your customers and employees. Your critical data requires secure access and usage that is auditable. While all data must be protected, this becomes even more crucial when data is made accessible through public services to employees, partners, customers, and citizens. In such cases, it's essential that your data security is of the highest level to minimize risks.

That's why we use leading solutions in the industry to help you optimally manage and protect your digital identities. With our **Cloud Identity Roadmap**, we guide you on your journey towards modern identity and access management for the public cloud environment.

At the same time, identity and access management, essential as it is, is just one part of a much broader security architecture that must ensure robust cloud security. Security is, after all, the top priority when migrating to the cloud. However, in a continuously changing environment where every access request is treated as a potential threat, preventive security measures are no longer enough. Continuously **improving cloud security is therefore crucial** for protecting your sensitive data and, by extension, your entire business.

By having your security status and environment assessed by us, we will provide you with an initial list of prioritized risks, along with the actions you need to take to be better prepared against cyberattacks. In addition to such a **Cybersecurity Assessment**, we can also assist you in creating a comprehensive **Cybersecurity Roadmap**. In this roadmap, we formulate recommendations for improvements, which are then translated into an action plan with clear timelines, priorities, and the necessary resources.

## Security Operations Center (SOC)

Cyber threats can emerge at any moment, requiring constant vigilance and monitoring of your IT environment. Responding quickly and effectively to cyber incidents can also be a major challenge, especially if you do not have a centralized team specifically dedicated to this task.

By centralizing your security activities within a SOC (Security Operations Center), you can detect potential threats in a timely manner, respond more quickly, and stop their further spread. This also allows you to better protect your organization from potential damage.

If you lack the time or resources to build such a SOC yourself, you can rely on our SOC services, which operate 24/7, ensuring that the monitoring of your IT environment and the necessary incident response are not limited to office hours.

## Monitoring and securing the cloud

Are you looking for a solution to further enhance the security of your cloud environment? Our **Discovery Workshop with Microsoft Sentinel** might be just what you need. During this workshop, you'll be introduced to a standalone SaaS service that helps your organization prepare for detecting and defending against attacks. Additionally, you can tailor your security to address new threats and changes in your environment by streamlining security activities for your cloud from a single centralized platform. This enables you to better defend against advanced attacks, manage the large volume of alerts through automation, and reduce resolution times.

# 6. The phase that really matters: Cloud Operations (CloudOps)

Have you successfully migrated to the cloud? Has your way of working with the cloud been fully adopted within your organization? Then you may not have reached your final destination yet. You will now need to manage and evolve your cloud environment to meet your changing needs.

If you lack the engineers or capacity to do so properly, don't worry—our team of cloud experts can help you create a stable balance between speed, flexibility, and the right level of control for your operations. To relieve you of the burden of managing your cloud, our CloudOps offering includes a high degree of standardization and automation, an agile working approach, and proactive management practices. In addition to a **CloudOps Maturity Assessment**, this is concretely reflected in our **Azure Platform Solution** (APS), a shared CloudOps model that helps make your cloud management more efficient and innovative.

> *In addition to "classic" managed services such as backup and patching, we are particularly focused on proactive services in the cloud context, specifically in the areas of security, architecture, and cost management, to keep our cloud environment in optimal condition. As Inetum has already demonstrated, it has all the expertise needed to successfully deliver these managed services in the cloud.*
>
> **Guy Dedeurwaerder**
> IT Infrastructure and Operations Manager Europe at Samsonite

# The guide is experienced

We have now covered all the stops on our metro plan. It's now up to you to map out your own journey to the public cloud. If you need any help or support along the way, don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Even if you need (additional) guidance during the journey, we are here for you, ready to assist you every step of the way!

**CONTACT US**

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