

Steering Board of the European Cloud Partnership

Public Statement

The Steering Board of the European Cloud Partnership met today for the first time.

We welcome the European Commission's recently released strategy to boost adoption of cloud computing services throughout Europe. Cloud computing is a game changer the ICT sector, for consumers and users in organisations of all sizes, and will give a much needed boost to productivity, innovation and growth in Europe. In order to facilitate these positive changes, we need to focus on a set of ambitious, but concrete and achievable goals.

The Steering Board agreed the following objectives over two years, part of the term of its mandate:

1. Action a common framework for cloud computing across Europe. Cloud computing is global and Europe will only be able to promote greater use of these services and compete effectively at a global level if it can leverage the scale of the digital single market as regards to e-commerce, digital content licencing and data-protection. As the market is moving fast, we need to act fast, before legislative changes can be put in place. Our work has to build on what we can already do now. Priority actions for a common framework are:
 - a. In 2013 the Commission, working with the European Telecommunications Standards Institute (ETSI), will present a map of current and emerging, internationally and commercially accepted information security (including trusted identity and data protection) and interoperability standards for cloud computing.
 - b. In parallel we recommend voluntary certification schemes for cloud providers to further enhance trust for cloud computing users. These schemes, accredited by independent auditors where appropriate, should address user needs in areas such as data protection, data security and legal compliance. Certification should be voluntary and industry driven, building on current and emerging international standards to foster global compatibility of cloud computing offerings.
 - c. Public authorities can help drive the uptake of cloud computing services by recognising these certification schemes, to promote legal certainty for cloud computing adoption and ensure there is a European wide framework in place by 2014.
 - d. For our part, as a cross section of private and public stakeholders, users and providers committed to cloud computing, we will participate in this work in order to aid effective use of standards.
 - e. We will identify three cross-border and interoperable cloud pilot projects to be set in motion by 2014 that move cloud use into mission critical areas of business and public life, in areas such as eID, smart cities, eHealth, eEducation, research and digital content services, building on existing large scale pilots. A vehicle for this will be joint member state implementation initiatives for which a call for proposals has already been opened in the EU research programme.

2. A central aim of the ECP is to stimulate the migration of public IT use to the cloud (and as a result, further stimulate private procurement especially among SMEs). It is important to stimulate both infrastructure and service provision, in areas that can drive internal IT transformation and efficiency as well as benefits to citizens. We aim at an ambitious target by 2015, comparable to the US benchmark of 25 % of federal IT spending as potential migration to cloud computing. To do this we will have to engage in becoming cloud active now. Those that say that times of budget constraint are the wrong times to make innovative changes are mistaken. Given our current public budget problems it is essential we tackle this now. To help this the steering board will:
 - a. undertake public awareness actions to forge a link in the public mind between public service performance and cloud take-up and raising awareness of the different types of cloud services;
 - b. work to make cloud readiness and adoption a political priority;
 - c. promote the development of common user requirements in the public sector, and catalogue and promote use cases of cloud computing adoption in the public sector;
 - d. map out practical solutions to barriers to cloud computing adoption in the public sector whilst dispelling imaginary ones.

These initial priorities will be developed into a road map for moving Europe into the cloud quickly and safely. The main beneficiaries of our actions will be European citizens, small and medium sized enterprises and national, regional and local authorities. Other stakeholders (network operators, data centre / cloud infrastructure providers, service providers, small and large software companies) will also benefit from the creation of a vibrant and self-sustaining ecosystem.

The Steering Board will function as a platform for innovations based on cloud computing and for the resulting economic benefits that are being expected from this development.