Microsoft Azure

Start your move to the cloud:
Five pilot project ideas

At first, cloud migration can seem like a massive undertaking—but it doesn't need to be intimidating. By starting with a simple project, you can both streamline the process and solidify your strategy.
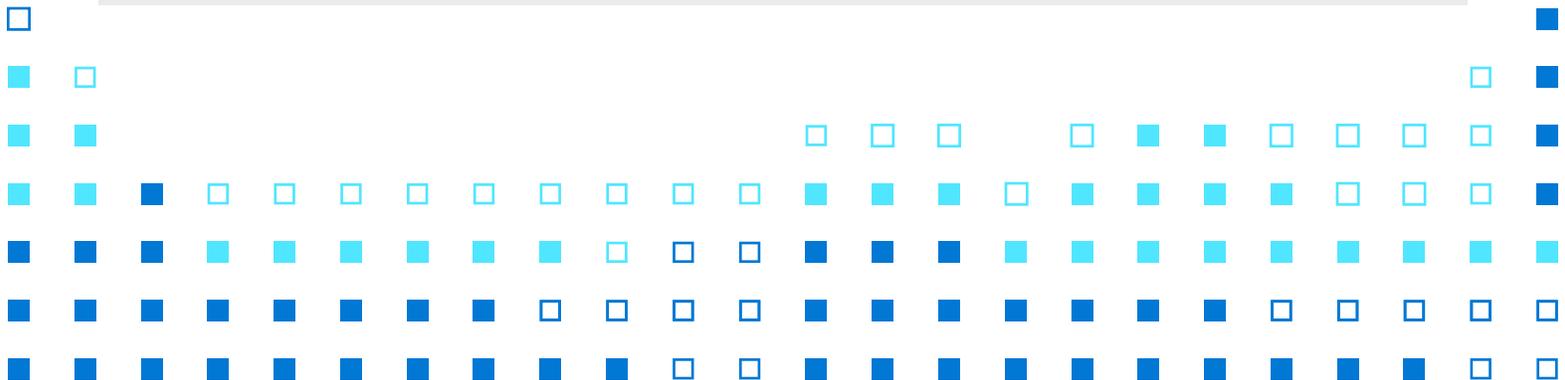
This guide provides examples of five ideal pilot projects, selected because they align with some common reasons for moving to the cloud.

Why start with a pilot project?

The first migration project will be a source of learning; as a pilot project, your output should include a set of clear requirements that support a longer-term production solution.

Having a pilot project:

- Identifies skills gaps and potential partnership needs.

- Provides valuable inputs to your larger cloud migration plan.

- Sets up a source of learning that helps you to iterate and improve.

- Instills confidence for your next wave of migration.

Ideal pilot projects

Consider starting with one of these five pilot projects, each of which aligns with common benefits of cloud migration.

End-of-support technologies: Moving to the cloud makes it easier for organizations to stay up to date, secure, and in compliance. If you have a workload that runs on a product nearing its end-of-support, as recently happened with [Windows Server 2008 and SQL Server 2008](), this can be an excellent place to start your cloud migration updates.

Datacenter exit: Datacenters are expensive. If you have a datacenter contract that's about to expire, it's worth identifying what applications you are running on those servers, and using those as a starting point for your cloud migration.

Simple apps with low complexity: Applications that are not mission critical and that have few dependencies are another smart place to start your migration. You can identify dependencies by using [dependency analysis in Azure Migrate]().

Enabling a remote workforce: Many companies have had to adopt cloud solutions so that teams can work securely, even when they're working offsite. Creating virtual desktops in the cloud for remote employees can provide a quick win; consider [Azure Virtual Desktop]() as a first project.

Development and testing: Run your dev/test environment on Azure Virtual Machines or Azure DevTest Labs to achieve efficiency and save costs.

Start your migration on the right path

By initiating a pilot program, you'll get a more thorough understanding of your migration, which will inform your strategy moving forward. The pilot projects presented here are just a few examples—you can explore more first workload ideas in the [Microsoft Cloud Adoption Framework for Azure]().

Explore these resources for hands-on experience and further learning:

Join the Azure Migration and Modernization Program: [Azure.com/AMMP]()
Microsoft Learn: [Introduction to Azure]()
Try Azure for free today: [Azure.com/free]()

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