

Epact eCloud: a unique managed private cloud

The perfect match for the needs
of Belgian organisations

YOU FOCUS, WE MANAGE.



Introduction

The question is no longer whether you move to the cloud. For ten years, “going to the cloud” was a direction. Today, it’s a look back. Most Belgian organisations have made that move in one form or another: Microsoft 365, a number of applications moved to SaaS, perhaps part of the servers moved to a hyperscaler.

And then comes the moment to take stock. Part of the public cloud promise has come true. But at the same time there are unpredictable costs, legacy that doesn’t run optimally, and support that doesn’t always deliver the solution you need.

Those who kept their infrastructure in their own datacenter, on the other hand, face higher costs, a shortage of infrastructure expertise, higher security expectations and growing regulation.

That’s why the most interesting question today isn’t “cloud or not”, but which workload belongs in which model, and who carries the operational burden?

This ebook explains the answer Epact eCloud offers to that challenge: what exactly it is, how it’s built, how it compares to the alternatives, who remains responsible for what, and how a migration works in practice.

WHO IS THIS EBOOK FOR?

We write for the people who actually have to weigh up hyperscaler cloud against on-premise: CIOs, IT managers, infrastructure leads and IT architects in mid-sized to large organisations.

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CHAPTER 1

What is eCloud? And what isn't it?

Few terms in IT have been stretched as far as “private cloud”. It’s used for a rack of servers in your own server room, for a handful of hosted virtual machines, and for fully fledged software-defined datacenters. Before you can compare anything, you need to know exactly what you’re talking about.

Epact eCloud is a fully managed private cloud, built on the open source virtualisation platform Proxmox, hosted in professional datacenters in Belgium.

You get a software-defined datacenter with dedicated resources: compute, storage, network and virtualisation allocated to your organisation. Epact takes care of managing the network, the storage, the servers and the hypervisor layer. You remain the owner and administrator of the virtual machines and containers running on top.

That definition contains three words that each deserve their own explanation, because each one is interpreted differently in the market.

Managed: you’re not just buying capacity

What sets it apart isn’t what you get, but when it starts. With many providers, the service begins the moment the environment goes into production. With eCloud, Epact can think along from the intake and project phase onwards: architecture, sizing, security, network, storage, backup and monitoring.

That’s no detail. Most operational problems are design decisions that only surface two years later: a storage layer that can’t keep up with I/O growth, network segmentation that turns every firewall change into a project, or a backup retention that doesn’t match what the business expects.

In concrete terms, managed at Epact eCloud means you get access to experienced engineers across the entire infrastructure stack, not just for virtualisation and servers:

compute and virtualisation

storage

network

security

backup and disaster recovery

monitoring

automation



You notice that difference when it matters. In a complex incident, you don't get someone looking at a single component, but someone who understands how the pieces fit together. After all, performance problems are rarely a single-layer problem.

Private: dedicated, and in a known location

The resources in an eCloud environment are allocated to your organisation. You don't share compute capacity with unknown neighbours, which means your environment's performance doesn't depend on what another customer decides to do tonight. Your network is segmented, your data traffic is separated, and you know which datacenter your data is in.

For a growing number of organisations, that last point isn't a technical matter but a legal one. Where your data resides, data processing agreements, sector-specific requirements in healthcare and government, and increasing attention to digital sovereignty make "where exactly is it, and under which jurisdiction does it fall" a question you need to be able to answer.



Cloud: as a service, and scalable per virtual machine

You don't buy hardware and you're not tied to a five-year investment cycle. You purchase capacity and service, and you can scale up and down when the business changes: with growth or contraction, new projects, an acquisition, an application migration.

An important detail: that scalability works per virtual machine, not per physical host. So you don't have to oversize because you need to predict today what you'll need in five years. Scaling typically happens on a yearly basis, depending on the chosen model and contractual agreements.



What eCloud isn't

An honest definition also sets boundaries. Five misconceptions we regularly come across in conversations:

It's not a mini hyperscaler

You don't get a catalogue of hundreds of managed services, no serverless functions, no per-second billing, no worldwide regions in a dropdown. eCloud is infrastructure: compute, storage, network and virtualisation, professionally managed. If you're building a cloud-native PaaS landscape, you're better off at a hyperscaler. Probably at both, really. And that's exactly why we talk about hybrid in chapter 4.

1

It's not server hosting from ten years ago

This isn't about "a few VMs in a rack at a provider". Underneath the virtual machines sits a clustered platform with high availability, redundant storage and network, live migration and proactive monitoring.

2

It's not outsourcing your application landscape

Epact manages the infrastructure up to and including the hypervisor layer. The virtual machines, guest operating systems and the applications inside them remain your responsibility by default. OS-level management can be agreed as an additional service. Chapter 5 lays out the full split.

3

It's not a backup strategy

Backup and disaster recovery are available as options within eCloud, and that's a deliberate choice of words. They're not included automatically. A high-availability platform protects you against hardware failure, not against ransomware, not against a badly executed script, and not against someone deleting the right VM at the wrong moment.

4

It's not an all-or-nothing choice

You don't have to choose between private and public cloud, and you don't have to move everything at once. Existing workloads can keep running, new workloads can go onto modern infrastructure, and the migration can be gradual. Where possible, existing investments can be brought along and integrated into the eCloud model.

5

eCloud versus Cloud-in-a-Box

Epact has two cloud hosting solutions that look alike but give a different answer. This is the difference:

OPLOSSING		
WAT HET IS	Managed private cloud on Proxmox, hosted in a Belgian data center of Epact.	When you want a modern, managed infrastructure without having to worry about your own hardware, licences and internal expertise.
WANNEER HET PAST	Complete solution with Proxmox on standardised hardware, also possible on-premise. Managed or not.	When you want to keep your infrastructure in your own data center, or you want to manage your infrastructure yourself.

IN ONE SENTENCE

eCloud gives you the capabilities of modern cloud infrastructure, combined with the knowledge, control and predictability of a specialised infrastructure partner. You don't have to be able to do everything yourself, and you don't have to change everything at once.



CHAPTER 2

Cloud promise versus cloud reality: why eCloud at Epact?

To understand the position eCloud takes, you first need to understand why there's room for that position. That room exists because both classic answers to the infrastructure question have come under pressure, each for its own reasons.

What was promised

The cloud promise of the past decade was clear and attractive: lower costs, more flexibility, no more hardware, no more maintenance worries, and an IT department that could finally work on innovation instead of keeping infrastructure running.

For a considerable share of workloads, that promise has been kept. SaaS for standard functionality, collaboration and email: that debate is over. For infrastructure workloads, the picture is more mixed. Four patterns keep coming back.

1

Costs didn't go down, they became less predictable

Public cloud is sold on the idea of flexibility and pay-as-you-go. Anyone managing a larger environment knows that this makes cloud costs less predictable. Compute, storage, data transfer, backup, snapshots, IOPS classes, support plans and additional services all affect the monthly bill. And not always in the direction you expect.

The best proof? An entire discipline has emerged to keep it under control. The fact that FinOps exists says a lot about how hard it is to keep a variable consumption bill in line with an annual budget that was approved the previous October.

2

Legacy didn't disappear

Many organisations today have ambitious plans around cloud, application modernisation and digital transformation. In practice, though, legacy doesn't vanish overnight. Existing applications, technical dependencies, compliance, budgets and operational risks often make a radical transformation unrealistic.

What happens then is a lift-and-shift: applications that weren't designed for the cloud move there anyway. They use no cloud-native features, they don't scale elastically, they run 24/7, and as a result they cost more than before. The complexity hasn't gone, it's moved.

3

Support changed character

You don't get the support you expect. Questions go unanswered for too long, or the proposed solution doesn't meet your expectations. For a standardised problem, ticket-based remote support is efficient. For a complex incident spanning multiple layers, it isn't, because then you need someone who knows your environment and can see the whole picture.

4

Lock-in shifted, but didn't disappear

One of the arguments for the cloud was less dependency. In practice, a different dependency emerges: data gravity, egress costs, proprietary services that shape your architecture, and a team that has become specialised in one specific platform. Going back is technically possible, and rarely cheap.



Why the other side is under pressure too

This isn't a plea to return to your own server room, because the picture there hasn't become any rosier.

Licensing costs. Licensing costs for commercial hypervisors like VMware can rise quickly, especially since the Broadcom acquisition. The switch to a per-CPU-core subscription model weighs heavily on the IT budget, and weighs more heavily the more your environment grows.

Hardware cycles. An investment round every four to five years, with the usual debate about oversizing: you buy capacity for the end of the cycle and pay for it from day one.

Scarce expertise. Experienced infrastructure profiles for storage, network and virtualisation are hard to find and hard to keep. And one person who knows everything is a risk in itself.

Rising requirements. Security, patch discipline, monitoring, demonstrable continuity and growing regulation such as NIS2 raise the floor of what "well managed" means. That floor is rising faster than most IT teams are growing.

Two extremes, then, both under pressure. And in between, a real need: modern, professionally managed infrastructure, with the control and predictability of a private environment, without your organisation having to carry all the technology, knowledge and operational complexity itself.

The position eCloud takes

eCloud combines the benefits of a modern cloud approach (flexibility, scalability, standardised infrastructure, predictable service, managed operations) with the control and predictability many organisations look for in a private cloud. Just as important is what that means for your transformation journey.

eCloud is a pragmatic stepping stone towards a more modern IT model. You don't have to change everything today to start with a modern infrastructure strategy today. In practice, you can

keep supporting existing workloads, place new workloads on modern infrastructure, migrate gradually, standardise your infrastructure, reduce operational complexity and introduce new technology when there's a business reason to do so.

The infrastructure then evolves with the business, instead of IT having to complete a major transformation before the business can move forward.

Why Epact?

Plenty of parties offer cloud solutions. This is what makes the difference:

1

Local support from people you know

You can count on local experts to manage and maintain your cloud solution. With a question or a problem, we're one phone call or one visit away. One point of contact, close by, and vendor-independent.

2

Knowledge across the full stack

We combine knowledge, hands-on expertise and concrete project experience with Proxmox, VMware and related technologies. Knowing both platforms in production makes the conversation more honest: we can tell you when Proxmox is the better choice, and when it isn't.

3

Vendor independence with a strong partner network

Including Proxmox, Veeam, Dell Technologies, HPE, NetApp, Wasabi, ExaGrid, Cato Networks and Digital Realty. The choice within that ecosystem is driven by your situation, not by sales quotas.

4

Demonstrable processes

Epact is ISO 27001:2022 certified. That's not a sticker, but an auditable framework for how information security is organised.

5

The scale of the Cronos Group

On top of our own expertise, this means access to a broad network of specialists in related fields, for projects that go beyond infrastructure alone.

Peace of mind starts with the design

We bring our experience from dozens of infrastructure projects into design and implementation. That way we don't just build an environment that works today, but infrastructure that stays manageable and expandable. So you don't just get infrastructure capacity, you also get access to experience.

CHAPTER 3

The technical architecture of eCloud

This chapter is about how eCloud is actually built. We work through the layers from the bottom up, and finish with an overview of what's standard and what you can have tailored.

The hypervisor layer: Proxmox VE

Proxmox Virtual Environment is a fully open source virtualisation platform that brings two technologies together in one console: KVM for virtual machines and LXC for containers. The system is built on Debian Linux and offers a web-based management interface, REST APIs, clustering and high availability.

What makes the platform attractive in practice is the integrated approach. Virtual machines, containers, storage, network management, replication, backup and clusters all sit in one open ecosystem, without expensive suites or add-ons.

There's also no separate management server required, as there is with a vCenter architecture: one less component to manage, license and keep available.



Functionality available as standard, with no additional licensing costs:

clustering and high availability, with automatic restart of VMs on node failure

live migration of running virtual machines between hosts

broad storage support: ZFS, Ceph, iSCSI, NFS, LVM, GlusterFS

flexible networking with Linux bridges, Open vSwitch and SDN modules

firewalling per virtual machine

role-based access control and audit logs

REST APIs for automation and integration

On cost, the difference with a per-CPU-core licensing model is structural: there are no licensing costs for the hypervisor or its functionality, with an optional support subscription per socket. That's the mechanism behind the lower TCO, and the reason your cost curve doesn't climb along with your cluster.



Compute

The compute layer consists of a redundant cluster of enterprise servers from leading brands in a professional datacenter. If a node fails, the HA manager restarts the affected virtual machines on the remaining nodes.

CPU, RAM and storage are allocated to your environment, and because that allocation happens per virtual machine rather than per physical host, you can scale in a targeted way: you don't buy an entire server because one application needs more memory.

Storage

The storage layer is redundant and offered in tiers, so you can choose what makes sense per workload. A database with heavy I/O needs different characteristics than a file server or an archive, and it's rarely efficient to put everything on the fastest, most expensive tier.

Because Proxmox supports a broad range of storage technologies, the architecture can be tailored to the environment rather than the other way around. Snapshots and thin provisioning are available at platform level.

Network & Firewalling

The network is set up redundantly and segmented per customer: dedicated VLANs and a dedicated address space, separated from other environments on the platform. Firewalling works in two layers. Epact manages the first layer, which separates customer environments on the platform.

You manage the second layer yourself, within your own environment and, if required, down to individual virtual machines. Epact can support you with this, but responsibility remains with you. Several options are available for connecting your own sites, from site-to-site VPN to dedicated connectivity. For organisations looking to modernise network and security at the same time, Epact works with Cato Networks, a pioneer in Secure Access Service Edge (SASE), which brings secure connectivity for sites, users and applications together in a single cloud platform.



Backup and data protection

Within eCloud, backup is a module, not an automatic given. When you opt for it, it's set up with Veeam, a global leader in backup, recovery and data protection for both on-premise and cloud environments.

The setup follows the logic that's now considered the minimum: multiple copies, on multiple media, with at least one off-site and at least one immutable, with restore verification. That immutability is what matters when ransomware strikes. For this, Epact works with immutable storage at Wasabi with Object Lock, so backups can't be changed or deleted within the retention period, not even by someone with administrator rights.

Want to dig deeper into this topic? Be sure to check out our [ebook on backup, business continuity and disaster recovery](#).

Monitoring and management

A stable IT environment starts with proactive management and monitoring. The underlying infrastructure is continuously monitored and maintained, so problems are detected as early as possible and addressed, where needed, before you notice anything.

You can also use our service desk for support, advice or specific operational tasks. By combining monitoring, maintenance and support, you get one integrated operational approach instead of three separate services pointing at each other. The goal is simple: IT should support the business, not be constantly busy keeping the infrastructure running.

What's standard, what's tailored?

We tailor eCloud as much as possible to your challenges and needs, but behind that sits a well-thought-out, proven approach. This is where the line is drawn:

Standard in every eCloud environment	Custom
Proxmox VE as hypervisor platform	Sizing of CPU, RAM and storage
Clustered setup with high availability and live migration	Storage tiers per workload
Redundant storage and network	Network topology and connectivity to your sites
Segmentation per customer	Scope and retention of backups
Proactive monitoring of the platform layers	DR-capacity, replication and fallback scenario
Patch- and lifecycle management of the platform	Service window, reaction times and SLA agreements
Access to service desk and an escalation path	Management on OS-level as an extra service
Hosting in a professional Belgian data center	Integration of existing investments
	Redundant within a single data centre by default (with geo-redundancy via a stretched cluster across two independent data centres if required).

HOW SECURE IS OPEN SOURCE REALLY?

Many organisations still associate open source with risk. In reality, Proxmox offers a platform that's just as reliable and secure as VMware.

Proxmox is also a European vendor, which is relevant for organisations looking at digital sovereignty. And with Epact's local support on top, you know exactly who you're dealing with.

CHAPTER 4

eCloud versus hyperscalers and on-premise: an honest comparison

The aim of this chapter isn't to prove that eCloud wins, but to put the parameters on the table that you should compare on. Most infrastructure decisions go wrong because they're compared on too few axes, usually price per gigabyte or per virtual machine. That rarely turns out to be the deciding factor.

We go through seven parameters.



1 Cost structure, predictability and TCO

This is where the three models differ most, and the difference isn't in the level but in the form. On-premise is mostly capex: a large upfront investment, followed by years of depreciation and maintenance contracts. A hyperscaler is variable opex: your bill follows your usage, in both directions.

eCloud is predictable opex: agreed capacity and service at a known price. Which form fits depends on how much variability you can tolerate: an environment with a stable base load mostly pays, in a variable model, for flexibility it doesn't use.

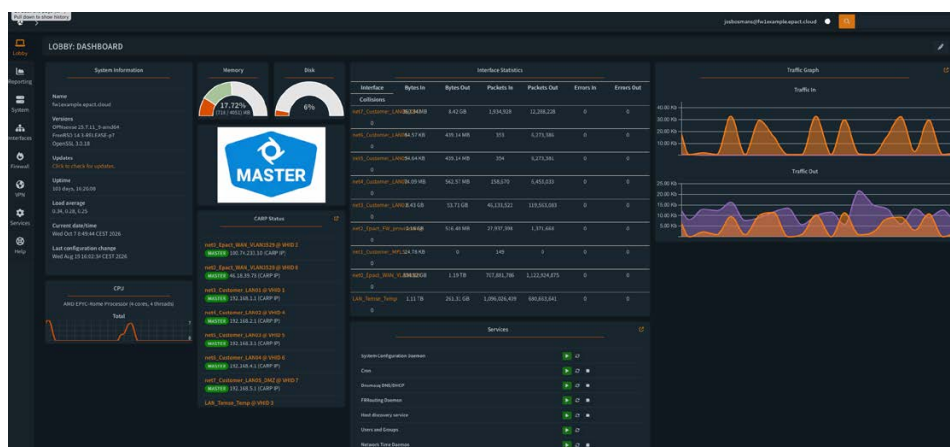
Compare over three to five years, because every model has costs that are systematically underestimated in a first calculation.

2

Scalability and elasticity

These two terms are often used interchangeably, and that's exactly where comparisons go off track. Scalability is growing along with the organisation. Elasticity is doubling within the hour and then dropping back again.

For true elasticity, a hyperscaler is unbeatable. On-premise, on the other hand, scales at the pace of investment rounds. eCloud scales flexibly, but at the pace of agreements, not API calls. So the relevant question is whether your workloads actually need elasticity. For the majority of business applications, ERP environments, databases and file services, the answer is no.



3

Ease of use and speed of execution

A hyperscaler offers the broadest self-service catalogue: you click on a service and it's there. That's a real advantage for teams that want to experiment quickly, but also a real source of unmanaged resources and unexpected bills.

Proxmox offers one integrated web console for everything: VMs, containers, storage, network, replication, backup and clusters. That appeals to teams that don't want to jump between separate tools. And with eCloud, you get something that isn't in the interface: for changes to the underlying layers, there's a team that does it for you. Slower than clicking yourself, but faster than figuring it out yourself.

4

Support and point of contact

With a hyperscaler, support is tiered and remote, with response times that depend on your support plan. With on-premise, you're the first line yourself, with vendor support behind you.

With eCloud, you have one point of contact with engineers who know your environment and can look across the full stack. That difference may be negligible for routine questions, but it makes a big difference in an incident that spans multiple layers.

5

Data location, compliance and sovereignty

With eCloud, your data sits in a professional datacenter in Belgium, in a location you know, backed by a data processing agreement and ISO 27001:2022 certified processes. Hyperscalers offer EU regions, but that doesn't settle the debate about jurisdiction and access by non-European governments. On-premise gives maximum control over location and puts full responsibility for security and demonstrability on you.

6

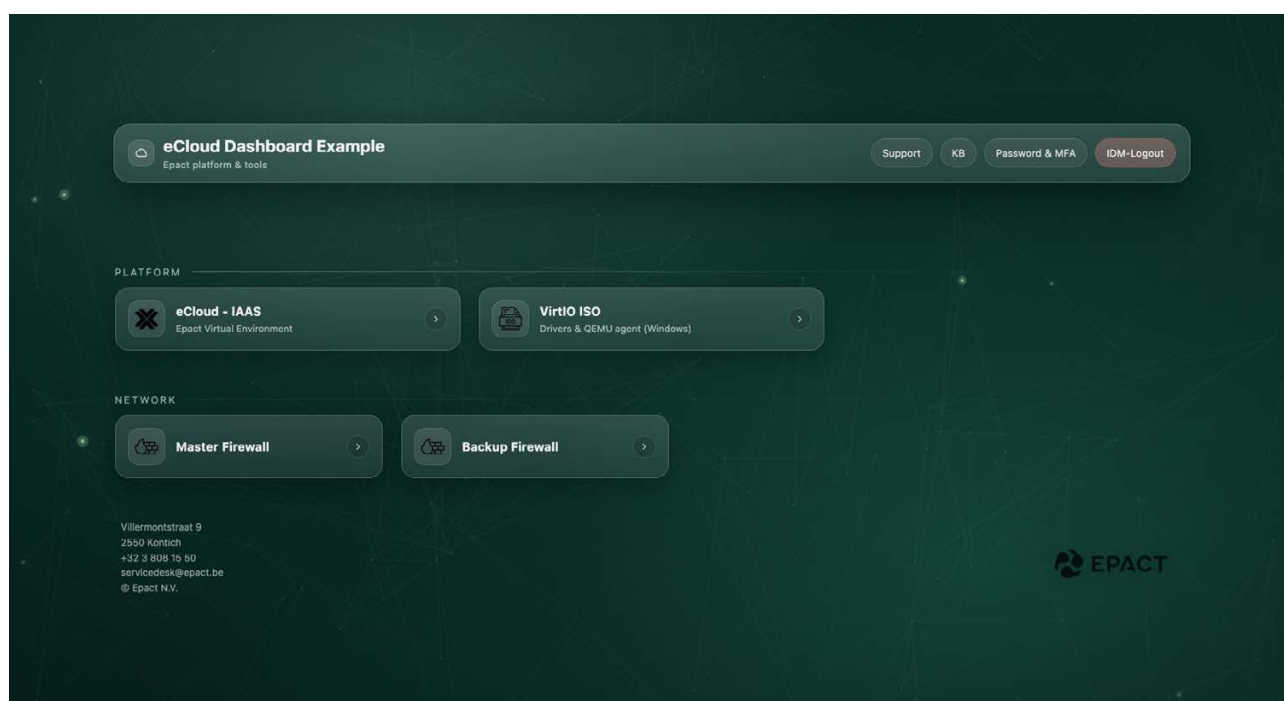
Lock-in

Lock-in exists in every model. With a hyperscaler, it's mainly in proprietary services and egress costs: the more managed services you use, the more expensive leaving becomes. With VMware, it's in the ecosystem and the licensing model. With eCloud, technical lock-in is limited, because Proxmox is open source and your virtual machines use standard formats that can run elsewhere. The contractual dependency remains, as with any service provider. So ask every party about the exit scenario, not just the onboarding process.

7

Complexity and where the knowledge sits

The question isn't how complex a platform is, but who carries that complexity. On-premise, your team carries it entirely, including the risk that knowledge sits with one person. With a hyperscaler, you carry a different type of complexity: cost management, identity and access management, network constructs, and a service catalogue that keeps growing. With eCloud, Epact carries the infrastructure complexity and you remain responsible for your application landscape.



In summary

	On-premise	Hyperscaler	eCloud
Cost model	Capex with investment peaks	Variable opex, follows usage	Predictable opex
Elasticity	Low, per investment round	Very high, within minutes	Good, at an agreed pace
Scalability	Per host or chassis	Virtually unlimited	Per virtual machine
Support	Own team plus vendor	Tiered and remote	Local, across the full stack
Data location	Entirely your choice	EU-region, jurisdiction questions remain	Known data center in België
Technical lock-in	Vendor ecosystem	Proprietary services and egress	Limited, open source basis
Who carries the complexity	Your team	Your team, different type	Epact for infrastructure
Strongest for	Very specific or sensitive workloads	Cloud-native, elastic, gloabel	Stable business-critical workloads

OUR RECOMMENDATION

The question isn't which model is best, but which model fits which workload. Public cloud can be excellent for certain workloads. For other applications, cost, performance, data residency, compliance or predictability make private cloud the better choice.

With eCloud, you can combine both models: use public cloud where it adds value, and private cloud where control, predictability and TCO matter more. For most organisations, hybrid isn't a compromise, it's the most realistic solution.

CHAPTER 5

What can you expect from **managed private cloud**? And what not?

“Managed” is a word that only gains meaning once you write it out. The difference between a good and a difficult partnership with an infrastructure partner almost always lies in expectations that were never made explicit. This chapter makes them explicit.

Who does what?

This is the standard split within eCloud. Shifts are possible and are agreed together, but this is the starting point:

Domain	 EPACT	Customer	Explanation
Datacenter, power, cooling, physical security	✓	—	Professional data center
Hardware: servers, storage, network components	✓	—	Including replacement and lifecycle
Network layer and segmentation	✓	—	Connectivity to sites by agreement
Storage layer	✓	—	Capacity follow-up included
Hypervisor layer: Proxmox, cluster, HA	✓	—	Patching and updates included
Monitoring of the platform layers	✓	—	Proactive, with intervention when needed
Virtual machines and containers	—	✓	Creating, configuring, managing
Guest OS and patching	—	✓	Available as an additional service
Applications and application security	—	✓	Stays with the application owner

Domain	 EPACT	Customer	Explanation
User and access management in the VM's	—	✓	Access to the platform via RBAC
Back-up of VM's	Optional	Optional	Module within eCloud
Disaster recovery and fallback	Optional	Optional	See chapter 6
Defining RTO en and PO	Advises	Decides	Remains a business decision
Firewall (perimeter)	✓	—	First layer of protection & segmentation
Firewall (own environment)	—	✓	Epact can advise

What you can expect

1 Availability and agreements on paper

A clustered platform with high availability and redundant storage and network, with agreed availability levels, response times and an escalation path.

2 Proactive management instead of reactive repair

The infrastructure is actively monitored and maintained according to the chosen service model. The principle is that problems are detected and dealt with before they impact your users, not that action is only taken after someone calls.

3 Patch and lifecycle management of the platform

Updates and security patches at hypervisor, storage and network level are tracked and carried out by Epact, within agreed maintenance windows. Hardware is replaced when needed, without you having to organise an investment round.

4 One operational point of contact

From infrastructure to service desk and escalation. You don't have to figure out whether a problem lies with the storage party, the network party or the virtualisation party.

5 Transparency and a security foundation with demonstrable processes

Insight into capacity usage, incidents and changes: operationally useful, and the material you need to back up capacity planning or an audit request internally. Plus segmentation per customer, role-based access control, firewalling, audit logs and ISO 27001:2022 certified processes, with your data in a known datacenter in Belgium.

6 Documentation and knowledge transfer

We set aside a dedicated moment for knowledge transfer and training, so your own team can build internal knowledge of the environment. Depending on a partner for operational matters is a choice; depending on one because nobody else knows how things fit together is a risk.

What you shouldn't expect

1 That your application responsibility disappears

Epact manages the infrastructure. The applications, their configuration, their updates and their own security surface remain with you or your application vendor. Perfectly managed infrastructure underneath an unpatched application is still a risk.

2 That backup is automatically included

Backup and DR are modules. A high-availability platform protects against hardware failure, not against ransomware, a faulty script or human error. If you haven't explicitly agreed on it, it isn't there.

3 Unlimited elasticity within the day

Scaling up happens by agreement and at the pace of agreements. If you want to double within the hour, look at a hybrid setup.

4 That your own governance is taken over

Which RTO and RPO are acceptable per application, how your data is classified, who gets which rights, what risk you're willing to take: those remain decisions for your organisation. Epact advises, designs and builds along with you. The risk assessment stays with the business, because that's where the consequences lie too.

5 That DR testing is no longer needed

A failover environment that has never been tested is an assumption. Even a well-designed environment has to prove periodically that it does what it promises.



Three questions to ask any managed cloud provider

1

Who does what when a virtual machine won't start at three in the morning? Who determines where the problem is, who's allowed to intervene, and who calls whom?

2

What exactly is the scope of your monitoring? Which components, which thresholds, and what happens when an alert fires outside office hours?

3

What does my exit look like? In what format do I get my virtual machines and data back, within what timeframe, and at what cost?

CHAPTER 6

eCloud as a recovery datacenter: from backup to real continuity

So far, we've looked at eCloud as the place where your production environment runs. There's a second use case that's at least as relevant for many organisations: eCloud as a secondary site for critical IT environments.

Not every organisation wants or is able to invest in a complete second datacenter. Yet business continuity is becoming ever more important. An outage, cyber incident, fire or other disaster mustn't mean your entire IT environment is unavailable for an extended period.

A backup is not a continuity strategy

This is the distinction where many plans run aground. A backup means your data still exists. It doesn't mean your organisation can work.

Between the two lies everything you still have to do after an incident: freeing up hardware, setting up a platform, restoring terabytes, reconfiguring networks, starting application dependencies in the right order, and testing whether it works. In an unplanned situation, with a team under pressure, that adds up to days or longer. So don't ask yourself whether you have backups, but how long it takes before your users can work again.

With eCloud, you can create an environment where workloads can actually be restored and made operational after an incident.

Depending on the chosen architecture, that can be done via Veeam Backup & Replication, via replication of virtual machines, via a pre-configured DR environment with periodic tests, or via a fully operational second platform. That's how you evolve from "we have a backup" to "we have a plan to get our IT operational again".





A second datacenter without building a second datacenter

A classic second datacenter means a considerable investment in servers, storage, networking, datacenter facilities, licences, monitoring, maintenance, security, and the knowledge and staff to keep it all up to date. And then there's an uncomfortable fact: a large part of that capacity sits unused most of the time, waiting for a disaster. You're financing an insurance policy with the cost structure of a production environment.

With eCloud, you can organise that investment more flexibly. You pay for the capacity and service you need, without having to build and run a complete second datacenter yourself.

The required compute, storage, networking and virtualisation are available within a professional datacenter and can be aligned with your desired RPO and RTO targets.

A growth path instead of a project

You don't have to build a fully developed disaster recovery environment from day one. eCloud can grow along with your continuity strategy, so the solution follows the criticality of your applications rather than the other way around:

Level	What you set up	What it gives you
1. Backup	Off-site backup in eCloud, with at least one immutable copy.	Your data is safe and recoverable, even after ransomware. Recovery takes time.
2. DR-capacity	Pre-provisioned compute, storage and network to restore to.	After an incident, you no longer have to find or build a platform.
3. Replicated workloads	Critical VMs are actively replicated to the eCloud environment.	Significantly shorter recovery time. Takeover becomes a cutover, not a restore.
4. Full second platform	An operational second environment, ready to take over.	The shortest recovery times, for workloads where downtime hurts immediately.

The most important exercise here isn't technical: determine per application how much downtime and how much data loss is acceptable, and hold that up against what it costs to guarantee it. That exercise almost always leads to a layered approach: not everything needs to be at level four, and not everything can stay at level one.

Geographic distribution & geo-redundancy

When eCloud is offered at a different physical location from your primary IT environment, you get geographic distribution. That makes eCloud interesting for organisations that want to spread their risks and not be entirely dependent on a single datacenter of their own.

Combined with a second eCloud location, you can even set up a geographically redundant infrastructure model, in which the loss of an entire location is absorbed. The model works in both directions: primary in eCloud with failover on-premise, primary on-premise with failover to eCloud, or two eCloud locations. Which variant makes sense depends on where you stand today and which investments you've already made.



Continuity has become a compliance question too

What was long a good practice has become an obligation for a growing group of organisations. Article 32 of the GDPR requires you to be able to guarantee the availability of personal data and the ability to restore it in a timely manner. NIS2 goes further and explicitly requires entities within its scope to take measures around business continuity, backup management and crisis management, with accountability at board level.

The practical consequence: you don't just have to organise continuity, you have to be able to demonstrate it. A tested failover procedure with a report is a different conversation than a backup schedule.

Four questions your continuity plan must be able to answer

1

How much downtime can each critical application tolerate before it really hurts the business, expressed in hours rather than gut feeling?

2

How much data loss is acceptable? A backup from last night means redoing a full working day.

3

Where do you restore to? On what hardware, in which datacenter, and is that capacity already there?

4

When was it last tested, and what came out of it? A plan without a test report is a hypothesis.

CHAPTER 7

Migrating to eCloud: how does it work in practice?

The decision to change platforms rarely fails on the technology. It fails on the question of how you get from here to there without affecting the business. This chapter describes the approach, and then what goes wrong in practice.

The approach in five steps

1

Sizing

Together, we map out the needs for servers, storage and network connectivity, and work out a tailored proposal. Important: we look at actual usage, not at the specs of your current machines. Those were often set years ago based on a peak that never happened.

What we need from you: an inventory of virtual machines, insight into actual CPU, memory and storage usage, the expected growth, and a picture of the business-critical level per application.

We discuss the proposal in detail and go through all comments and feedback. Based on that input, we arrive at a final solution that's ready for implementation.

This is the moment to challenge assumptions, because an assumption left standing here comes back later as a change during the migration.

2

Feedback

3

Implementation and migration

We take care of a seamless migration and implementation of your eCloud environment. We plan it together, then we handle the execution, without impact on your business.

In practice, this happens in waves rather than in one go: per application group, starting with low-impact workloads so the process can prove itself, with a fallback scenario per wave. It takes longer on paper and is considerably less nerve-racking in practice.

4

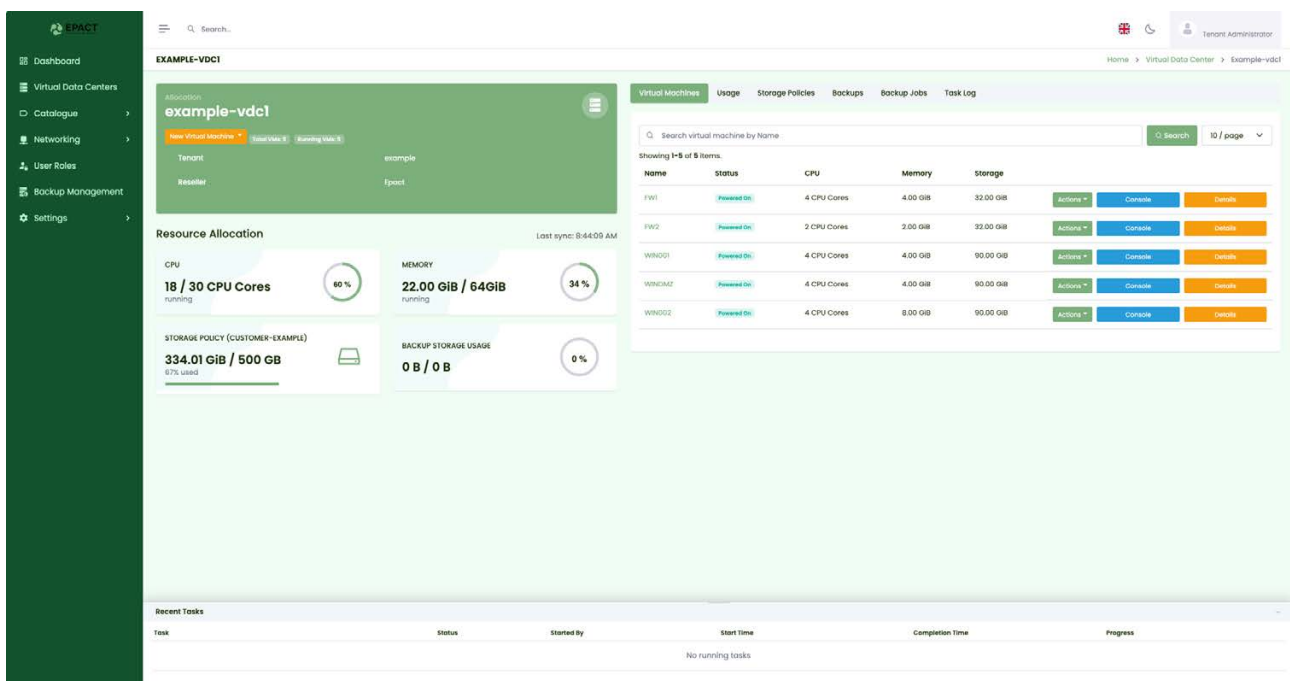
Documentation and training

We attach great importance to sharing information and transferring knowledge. That's why we set aside a dedicated moment for knowledge transfer and training, so your own team can also build internal knowledge of eCloud.

5

Roles and managed services

We define the various operational roles and responsibilities, and then take the final step: the start of our managed services.



How we tackle the most common migration challenges

These are the three challenges we come across most often in migration projects. They're manageable, provided you put them on the table before the migration.

Underestimated network dependencies

Applications talk to each other, and not always in a documented way. Hard-coded IP addresses, licence servers tied to a MAC address, latency between application tiers that suddenly runs over a WAN link, printers, AD and DNS dependencies. These are the things that make a migration run from Saturday evening to Monday morning.

Forgotten legacy

In almost every environment there's something nobody knows anymore: an old operating system, an application without an owner, a dongle or serial device, a server that does something nobody can explain but nobody dares to switch off. Better to find it now than halfway through the migration.

Through our colocation services, we offer a temporary solution to migrate those remaining legacy systems along with the rest. At a later stage, they can then be moved to eCloud. That way, legacy systems don't have to hold back your modernisation plans.

No acceptance criteria

"The VM is up" is not a success criterion. For each wave, we agree on what will be tested and by whom: not whether the machine responds, but whether the application owner has validated the functionality they rely on every day.



From Vmware Cloud Director to eCloud

If you're running a large environment on VMware Cloud Director today, migration comes with an extra layer of complexity. Each tenant is an isolated island with its own NSX Edge router, and VMs, firewalling, NAT and IP configuration are all managed from a single console. Moving everything at once means every VM has to succeed. If one doesn't, you have to roll back completely to where you started.

Epact has developed a pragmatic solution for this. We rebuild an identical environment in eCloud, with the same internal segments and a new router that isn't active yet.

We then extend each segment at layer 2 from vCloud to eCloud. This lets VMs move one by one and at your own pace, while the existing NSX Edge continues to handle routing and firewalling for both sides. Each VM has a brief interruption for the conversion, and DHCP reservations ensure every VM keeps its original IP address.

If a VM migration stalls, that's not a problem: the existing environment simply keeps running. This means we can work in phases. Only once all VMs have been migrated successfully do we remove the link. The eCloud firewall then takes over routing and firewalling, with a short, planned downtime. After that, little remains: reconfiguring static IPs inside the VMs if you want to, and moving your public addresses to the new IP space.

THE COMMON THREAD

A migration isn't a technical project, but a series of manageable decisions. If you work on data rather than guesswork, in waves rather than one big move, and define what success means for each wave, you've actually managed the risks that can be managed.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

The next step

eCloud isn't a goal in itself. It's a way to make your IT infrastructure simpler, more modern and more manageable.

What you actually get:

Modern infrastructure: enterprise compute, storage, networking and virtualisation in a professional Belgian datacenter.

Access to expertise: experienced engineers across the full infrastructure stack, not just for virtualisation.

Proactive monitoring and management: the infrastructure is actively monitored and maintained according to the chosen service model.

One operational point of contact: from infrastructure to service desk and escalation.

Flexibility: scale up and down when the business changes, per virtual machine.

Predictable costs: fewer surprises than with fully variable cloud consumption.

Hybrid-ready: private and public cloud side by side, wherever that makes the most technical and economic sense.

A pragmatic transformation strategy: modernise without turning everything upside down today.

Business continuity: a flexible alternative to building and maintaining a second datacenter yourself.

Up for a conversation?

The most useful follow-up to this ebook isn't a demo, but a sizing exercise. Based on your current environment, your actual usage and your expected growth, we'll put together a tailored proposal. That gives you a figure you can compare against, even if you end up choosing a different direction.

Have a chat with one of our experts, virtually or face-to-face, with no strings attached.



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Further reading

On epact.be you'll find a number of articles that go deeper into topics we could only touch on briefly here:

[Proxmox versus VMware: the complete comparison](#) →

[The biggest Proxmox myths debunked](#) →

[When should you choose Proxmox, and when not?](#) →

[What does downtime really cost your organisation?
A practical business continuity guide for CIOs & IT managers](#) →

[The CIO & IT manager guide to private & hybrid cloud](#) →

YOU FOCUS, WE MANAGE.