

Cloud services from within Africa

Microsoft's new investment in datacentres in Africa, will provide highly available, scalable, and secure cloud services across Africa with the option of data residency in South Africa.



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Microsoft has revealed plans to deliver the complete, intelligent Microsoft Cloud for the first time from datacentres located in Africa. This new investment is a major milestone in the company's mission to empower every person and every organisation on the planet to achieve more, and a recognition of the enormous opportunity for digital transformation in Africa.

Expanding on existing investments, Microsoft will deliver cloud services, including Microsoft Azure, Office 365, and Dynamics 365, from datacentres located in Johannesburg and Cape Town, South Africa, with initial availability anticipated in 2018. The new cloud regions will offer enterprise-grade reliability and performance combined with data residency to help enable the tremendous opportunity for economic growth, and increase access to cloud and internet services for organisations and people across the African continent.

"We're excited by the growing demand for cloud services in Africa and their ability to be a catalyst for new economic opportunities," said Scott Guthrie, executive vice president, Cloud and Enterprise Group, Microsoft Corp. "With cloud services ranging from intelligent collaboration to predictive analytics, the Microsoft Cloud delivered from Africa will enable developers to build new and innovative apps, customers to transform their businesses, and governments to better serve the needs of their citizens."

Currently many companies in Africa rely on cloud services delivered from outside of the continent. Microsoft's new investment will provide highly available, scalable, and secure cloud services across Africa with the option of data residency in South Africa. With the introduction of these new cloud regions, Microsoft has now announced 40 regions around the world – more than any major cloud provider.

The combination of Microsoft's global cloud infrastructure with the new regions in Africa will connect businesses with opportunity across the globe, help accelerate new investments, and improve access to cloud and internet services for people and organisations from Cairo to Cape Town.

Investing in African Innovation

This announcement expands on ongoing investments in Africa, where organisations are using currently available cloud and mobile services as a platform for innovation in health care, agriculture, education, and entrepreneurship. Microsoft has been working to support local start-ups and NGOs, unleashing innovation that has the potential to solve some of the biggest problems facing humanity, such as the scarcity of water and food, and economic and environmental sustainability.

One start-up, M-KOPA Solar, provides affordable pay-as-you-go solar energy to over 500,000 homes using mobile and cloud technology. AFIN has built an app connecting 140,000 smallholder farmers to key services, enabling them to share data and facilitating \$1.3 million per month in finance, insurance and other services.

Across Africa, Microsoft has brought 728,000 small and mid-size enterprises (SMEs) online to help them transform and modernise their businesses, and over 500,000 are now utilising Microsoft cloud services, with 17,000 using the 4Afrika hub to promote and grow their businesses.

The Microsoft Cloud is also helping Africans build job skills, with 775,000 trained on subjects ranging from digital literacy to software development.

"This development broadens the options available to us in our modernisation journey of Government ICT infrastructure and services. It allows us to take advantage of new opportunities to develop innovative government solutions at manageable costs, as well as drive overall improvements in operations management, while improving transparency and accountability," says Dr Setumo Mohapi, CEO at SITA.

"By establishing hyperscale cloud datacentre capacity in South Africa, Microsoft is directly addressing customers' concerns, and demonstrating commitment to the delivery of cloud services within the country and the region as a whole," says Jon Tullett, senior research manager, IDC MEA. "The presence of local facilities will be greatly encouraging to South African customers, particularly those in regulated industries such as financial services and the public sector where data sovereignty concerns are paramount. This is a strongly positive development for the cloud industry in Africa, and particularly Microsoft's ecosystem of partners, ISVs and customers."

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