UK Government and IBM sign public cloud agreement to accelerate innovation across public sector

Collaboration intended to enable government to design new cloud-based citizen services

London, 29th July 2020 - Crown Commercial Service (CCS), the UK Cabinet Office executive agency and trading fund, is taking another step towards breaking down the barriers to public sector cloud adoption, by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with IBM. The three year public cloud agreement will allow all eligible public sector organisations to embark on a secure public cloud journey and innovate with digital solutions and services to help evolve essential services for UK citizens.

For organisations in highly regulated industries such as government, the need to modernise their workloads while maintaining the highest levels of security and compliance is critical. By tapping into the industry-leading security, control and open innovation of the IBM public cloud, they have an opportunity to take advantage of the speed and flexibility of cloud, while keeping their data, applications and workloads secure and compliant.

Under the agreement all Central Government organisations including local authorities, education and the National Health Service can benefit from preferential commercial terms to help transform mission-critical workloads and develop new services. As the public sector embraces an increasingly digital future, it can capitalise on the speed and agility of the public cloud, while balancing the need for security and compliance through advanced security capabilities such as pervasive encryption of data at rest, in flight and in memory.

The IBM public cloud has been built on a foundation of open source software, security leadership, and enterprise-grade infrastructure, with more than 190 cloud-native APIs, such as AI, blockchain, IoT, serverless and DevOps. This will give organisations greater flexibility to access services without vendor lock in that will help the public sector manage higher value technology alongside key issues like data, security, services, and workflows across a hybrid, multi-cloud environment. They will have access to a suite of solutions including IBM Multicloud Manager, IBM Cloud Paks, Red Hat OpenShift, Cloud Garages, Power Virtual Servers on Cloud, VMware and Cloud Migration Services.

Simon Tse, Chief Executive of Crown Commercial Service (CCS), said: "CCS provides commercial agreements which help organisations across the entire public sector save time and money on buying everyday goods and services. This agreement with IBM provides great value for public sector organisations as they continue to innovate and improve essential services for citizens throughout the UK."

As one of the World's Most Ethical Companies that is grounded in commitments to Trust and Transparency that guide its handling of client data and insights, IBM is not only dedicated to advancing the standards of ethical business practices but works to stay aligned with the current policies and practices that govern the public sector. The agreement builds on the Government's Cloud First policy which requires public sector organisations to evaluate cloud solutions before considering any other option. It is also in line with the latest guidance issued by Government Digital Service on managing technical lock in for cloud. Organisations are encouraged to take steps to mitigate provider lock-in by choosing products that use open standards and formats, so they have control of their data.

To support clients in highly regulated industries, IBM provides a global network of more than 60 cloud data centers across 19 countries and 18 availability zones across six IBM Cloud regions, with more expected by the end of 2020, to help meet performance and deployment requirements. To meet the higher classification levels of the UK public sector, for many years IBM has run a secure local facility as part of Ark Data Centres, the Government's joint venture partner for delivering public sector data centre services across the Crown Hosting Framework. This trusted facility is based just outside London and is already being used by a number of public sector departments and agencies. In a service offered by IBM public cloud, clients can experience the highest level of security encryption for data stored in the IBM public cloud, including keep your own data encryption keys (KYOK).

"As the public sector continues its rapid digital transformation, government organisations crossing many industries need a reliable, resilient and secure technology environment to meet the needs of citizens and address complex security and regulatory requirements," said Janine Cook, Vice President for Public Sector, IBM UK and Ireland. "An open hybrid cloud platform, built and managed with IBM's deep industry expertise, can allow the public sector to accelerate its innovation and offer a more agile way to develop new digital services and take the next step along their cloud journeys."

 IBM and Crown Commercial Service *signed this agreement in IBM's second quarter of 2020.*

Join our webinar at 10am BST on 3 September to gain an insight into the benefits of IBM Cloud for Public Sector in the UK and the key offerings which can enable your journey to cloud. Click here to register.

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