



Evaluating migration readiness

AWS Prescriptive Guidance



AWS Prescriptive Guidance: Evaluating migration readiness

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Evaluating migration readiness

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A migration readiness assessment is a process of gaining insights into how far along an organization is in their cloud journey, understanding their current cloud-readiness strengths and weaknesses, and building an action plan to close identified gaps. You can use the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Cloud Adoption Framework (AWS CAF) and its six perspectives (business, people, governance, platform, security, and operations) as a framework to help ensure that you have a holistic view of the transformation initiative that is required for an effective move to the cloud.

The AWS Prescriptive Guidance migration strategy uses Migration Readiness Assessment (MRA) as the prescriptive model for the assessment phase. Although other methods are available, they might compromise the completeness or depth of the review.

Three outcomes are expected from a readiness review:

- An understanding of where an organization is in its cloud journey
- Identified areas of strength and weakness from a cloud-readiness perspective
- An action plan to resolve the identified gaps, so the organization can migrate at scale without having to pause to solve foundational issues

In addition, there are often these additional outcomes:

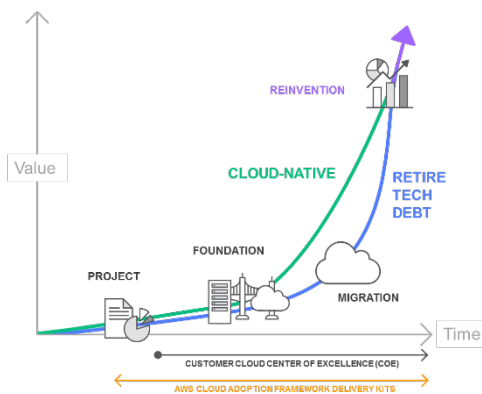
- Alignment and consensus building within the team
- Identification of best practices within the organization that can be leveraged and scaled
- A reduction in roadblocks that can disrupt progress

Targeted business outcomes

This section discusses the three expected outcomes from a cloud-readiness review: understanding the current state, identifying strengths and weaknesses, and creating an action plan.

Understanding the current state of the cloud journey

When organizations contemplate large-scale migration to AWS, they generally fall somewhere along the path of what is called the *stages of adoption*, as illustrated in the following diagram. The four stages—project, foundation, migration, and reinvention—are discussed in the blog post [The Journey Toward Cloud-First & the Stages of Adoption](#) on the AWS Cloud Enterprise Strategy blog. The purpose of a readiness assessment is to determine how far along in the stages of adoption the organization is currently at, and which parts of the organization's environment are sufficiently mature to move to the next stage.



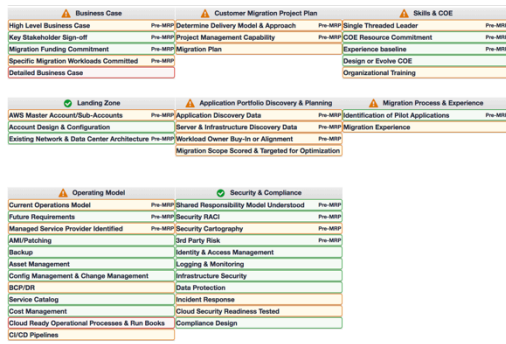
Example:

If an organization is planning their first workload to move to the cloud, they're considered to be in the project (or proof of concept) phase. This phase doesn't require a unified account structure or other foundational constructs. However, to prepare a larger migration initiative, foundational aspects such as proper tagging should be in place. Otherwise, there is a risk of having to delay migrations to solve foundational issues.

Identifying areas of strength and weakness

Identifying areas of strength and weakness is the second main outcome of a readiness assessment. Strengths determine the teams and practices that are ready for broad adoption across the

organization. These are areas that don't require further work to enable successful cloud migrations at scale. Weaknesses are areas where actions need to be taken to improve the practices or capabilities to enable cloud migrations. Solving gaps early ensures a smooth migration process and eliminates the risk of project delays in building out foundational capabilities. The heat map illustrated in the following figure shows areas of strength and weakness across an organization. Action plans will need to be put in place for areas highlighted in yellow or red.



Example:

An IT team might build an account structure that is well suited to cover the upcoming needs of the organization, but application developers and owners might not be aware that their application will be migrated to the AWS Cloud, and might not have the skill set to operate that application in the AWS Cloud. This example illustrates a gap in application owner buy-in and development team preparedness, and the organization should plan corrective actions during readiness assessment.

Creating an action plan to enable scale and speed

After you identify strengths and weaknesses, you will need to put an action plan in place to close the gaps and scale identified areas of strength within the organization. The plan should have assigned owners and due dates to ensure that the project drives forward. We recommend that you engage your internal process improvement and organizational change teams to help drive the cloud initiative forward. These teams usually have toolkits for baselining current capabilities, establishing communications, handling buy-in planning, and similar processes, which will be useful.

Note

The AWS Professional Services team provides a program called *Mobilize*. This prescriptive model guides your organization to develop foundational capabilities across all areas of AWS CAF to address the areas identified in the Migration Readiness Assessment (MRA).

The AWS Partner community also provides services that can help you in your migration readiness efforts.

Readiness assessment process

A readiness assessment consists of these four steps:

1. Schedule the readiness assessment meeting and require attendance.
2. Facilitate discussions by using an AWS CAF-aligned set of questions to guide the conversation.
3. Analyze the gathered information, document observations, and determine next steps.
4. Schedule and conduct a debrief.

The following sections discuss these steps in more detail.

Note

These steps are part of the AWS Migration Readiness Assessment (MRA) process; other approaches will vary.

Before you begin

- Understand your organization's strategy and scope for the assessment.
- Gain buy-in to support the assessment process.

Tasks

1. **Schedule the readiness assessment meeting with the required attendees.** See [Choosing Attendees](#) in the next section.
2. **Facilitate discussions by using an AWS CAF-aligned set of discussion starters (like the [AWS Assessment Tool](#)).** We recommend a 4-6 hour meeting with good cross-representation across your organization. This is a great opportunity to build consensus regarding the organization's current readiness state, identify and align around next actions, and determine any risks.
3. **Analyze the results, and build observations and next steps.** After the MRA meeting, the team facilitating the MRA should meet and compare notes, analyze the results, and build the out-brief pitch that contains the summary observations and next steps to fill the identified gaps. This is also a good time to build a statement of work (SoW) for closing the identified gaps and completing the suggested next steps.

4. **Schedule and conduct a debrief.** This can be done in as little as an hour, but be sure to bring any new attendees up-to-date on the process, share and review outputs, and agree on next steps.

Outputs

- An out-brief deck that summarizes observations, and next steps
- A scheduled meeting to review outputs and next steps
- (Optional but recommended) Estimates and a proposal (for example, a SoW) for the work that needs to be completed

Guidelines

The following sections discuss the tasks listed in the [readiness assessment process](#) in more detail, and provide guidelines, tactics, and recommendations for each step.

- [Conducting the assessment meeting](#)
- [Analyzing the results and identifying actions](#)
- [Presenting the results](#)

Conducting the assessment meeting

We recommend that you include all parties who will be involved in the migration effort in the assessment meeting. One of the primary outcomes of this activity is alignment on the current state of capabilities, and this consensus is best built through dialog with all interested parties.

Scheduling a meeting with a large number of attendees can take some coordination, so be sure to start planning and coordinating attendance two to three weeks before the meeting.

An experienced facilitator can conduct an MRA meeting in 4-6 hours. The ideal scenario is to have everyone in the same room to ensure maximum participation and to enable consensus building. Be sure to arrange comfortable seating with tables, and provide meals and breaks as needed.

Lastly, consider the timing of when particular individuals will be in the room. For example, if the CIO and head of IT Finance can't attend the entire meeting, plan topics accordingly. Strategy, business case, and budgeting are often the first topics to discuss, followed by account structure and tagging questions for bill-back or show-back considerations.

Choosing attendees

Keeping the intent of consensus in mind, we recommend that you invite people who can provide both horizontal and vertical representation across the organization. Suggested attendees:

- CEO
- CTO / chief architect
- CIO
- Managing director

- Business unit owners
- IT finance
- Security leader
- Network leader
- Application development leader
- Infrastructure leader
- Operations leader
- Application owners (first few)

Facilitating the meeting

The meeting should begin with general introductions, to make sure that everyone is aware of who is representing which part of the organization, and to confirm that the proper people are in the room. After introductions, the CIO or their delegate can provide an overview of the cloud strategy and motivation behind the planned migration. This will be followed by detailed MRA discussions for alignment and buy-in.

Example agenda:

MRA Agenda		
9:30	Introductions	
9:45	Review business and technology goals and objectives	Review goals for migrating applications to AWS. Discuss short-term and long-term objectives, risks, and issues related to IT and business application migrations.
10:00 (with breaks every hour)	Assess migration readiness	Review current AWS footprint , applications, operational processes, and integration. Focus your discussions on the following topics:

MRA Agenda

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total cost of ownership • Business • Governance • People • Platform • Operations • Security
15:00	Summarize feedback and actions	
15:30	Adjourn	

Note

AWS uses a list of around 70 questions that align to the AWS CAF and engage participants through the various areas under evaluation. These questions cover around 24 areas of readiness, and each area is assessed with 2-3 questions.

You can request an MRA facilitation or the list of questions from your AWS Account Manager. To see the questions or to do a self-assessment with a smaller subset of questions, see the [AWS Cloud Adoption Readiness Tool \(CART\)](#).

Analyzing the results and identifying actions

At the conclusion of the MRA session, you will have collected data across the dimensions of the AWS CAF and you can present observations as an executive summary of the general conversation. It isn't necessary at this stage to provide deep technical solutions for each area.

Identify actions for each area to help the organization get to a state where they are ready for migration. The key is to ensure a smooth migration experience for the first few applications they are planning to migrate. During this first pass, don't attempt to provide an action plan to solve every aspect of every application; an iterative approach will help maintain quality and security while providing agility and speed.

For each action, provide a due date and an owner at the minimum. Ideally, a project should be created and started to ensure the timely closing of actions.

Note

Use the [AWS Assessment Tool](#) to gain access to questions. This tool also provides a report generator that assists in analyzing results, summarizing observations and recommended actions, and building a presentation.

Presenting the results

Generally, presenting the observations, actions, and next steps takes about an hour. This session should include the attendees of the MRA discussion session and additional stakeholders if needed.

Start the discussion with a reminder of the business objectives and outcomes that are being pursued. This helps set the right tone as the observations and activities that follow help deliver those outcomes. Follow this up with a general summary and high-level summaries across the areas that were analyzed. Focus on highlighting the broad areas of strength and weakness, and then share the plan that addresses the weaknesses, to enable the organization to meet the level of readiness required for a successful migration. The objective of the session is alignment and agreement on next steps to dive deeper into certain areas and start implementing and building momentum.

Note

If you're following the AWS MRA methodology and tools, areas will be identified by green, red, or yellow (see the [heat map](#) earlier in this guide) to indicate their level of readiness. You can remedy red and yellow scores by completing the activities of the mobilize phase. These scores are not a reflection of the current on-premises status of the application.

Next steps

In this guide, we discussed Migration Readiness Assessment (MRA), which is a method for identifying where an enterprise is in their cloud journey. Using the AWS CAF ensures that you're looking at your enterprise's environment holistically and considering buy-in and business concerns instead of focusing solely on the technical aspects of migration. To learn more, contact an AWS Account Manager.

After a readiness assessment, you should complete the identified actions and implement the defined plan. If you're following AWS methodologies, this would include implementing the mobilize phase of the migration project.

Getting workloads migrated should be the objective of activities after the MRA. To help facilitate this, identify low-risk or easy-to-move workloads that can move in early stages while other actions are being completed. This enables the team to start building up success stories to help gain buy-in and excitement from other teams.

FAQ

This section provides answers to commonly raised questions about migration readiness assessment.

How can I accurately assess my environment?

Consider the volume of resources used by each application, and automate the assessment process to confirm that it is done rapidly and accurately. Assessing your environment manually is a time-consuming process. It exposes your organization to human error. Automating the process will give you insight into what you don't know, and will help you more clearly understand and define these uncertainties so they can be factored into your migration strategy.

How can I identify and evaluate the right partners to help me?

For details on offerings from APN Partners, see:

- [AWS Migration Partner Solutions](#)
- [Migration solutions in AWS Marketplace](#)

Document history

The following table describes significant changes to this guide. If you want to be notified about future updates, you can subscribe to an [RSS feed](#).

Change	Description	Date
Initial publication	—	August 5, 2019