SLA-Ready

Making Cloud SLAs readily usable in the EU private sector

Building the Digital Single Market means revitalising European industry with a strong focus on cloud computing and the data economy. The ongoing evolution of cloud computing will radically transform business processes and bring about the most sweeping changes to the structure of the global economy since the Industrial Revolution.

The most enthusiastic adopters of cloud computing should be small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), the life blood of the European economy. But Lack of knowledge about cloud services is the main reason why more SMEs are not using the cloud as much as expected.

SLA-Ready is a new European initiative that aims to change this through a service-driven approach specifically designed for SMEs. The SLA-Ready service approach will support SMEs with practical guides, and a social marketplace, which encourages them to carefully plan their journey and make it strategic through an informed, stepping-stone approach, so the cloud and applications grow with their business.

"From an SME perspective, easily understandable cloud service levels agreements, and a clear service offer with complete transparency is really important in our-day-to-day work. It's also a key enabler to staying competitive in today's digital marketplace. Being part of a team focused on making cloud SLAs usable by the European private sector means we can now start giving other SMEs a clearer path to the cloud", says Silvana Muscella, from Trust-IT Services Ltd the coordinating partner of the project.

"SLA-Ready is driving a common understanding of service level agreements with greater standardisation and transparency so firms can make an informed decision on what services to use, what to expect and what to trust", says Arthur van der Wees from Arthur's Legal.

Adoption stoppers include complex and misleading language, and typically "take-it-or-leave" contracts. SMEs find it particularly hard to understand the terminology of service level agreements (SLAs), which often shift significant risks on to the customer. Put simply, *"if a user cannot understand what the Cloud offers, it is hard to meaningfully utilise the benefits of the cloud. With SLAs offering this crucial user-Cloud interface, SLA-READY plays a very timely and critical usability role via its advocacy of reference SLA's*

and best practice repositories", explains Professor Neeraj Suri from TU Darmstadt.

SLA-Ready is ultimately about building confidence and trust in the European cloud market as the very foundation of business. *"Customers see the use of standardised Cloud SLAs as a critical step towards better understanding the level of security and data protection offered by the cloud service provider (CSP), and for monitoring the CSP's performance and security levels"*, explains Daniele Catteddu, Managing Director EMEA at the Cloud Security Alliance.

"Cloud computing should be the one answer to the rising complexity of software systems and therefore bring simplicity and transparency in all possible and innovative ways, especially in a data protection driven era", underlines Guillaume Jahan, General Counsel at Numergy. *"This is why Numergy believes feedback from its value chain of partners and customers is key to provide the right answers for a smooth and effective cloud adoption including security levels that only cloud can offer to SMEs in a cost effective way"* adds Thierry Floriani, Chief Security Officer at Numergy.

About SLA-Ready

SLA-Ready builds on expert work in Europe on service level agreements (SLAs) with the aim of improving the uptake of cloud by the European private sector, especially SMEs. Firms will benefit from a social market place, tutorials-as-a-service, decision-making services and practical guides supporting the entire SLA life cycle. The SLA-Ready Common Reference Model will benefit the industry by integrating a set of SLA components, e.g. common vocabularies, SLO service metrics and measurements, as well as best practices and relevant standards to fill identified gaps in the current SLA landscape.

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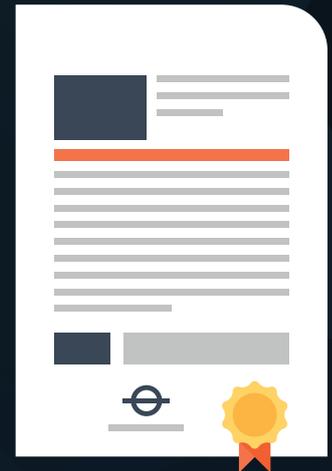
A lean but strong consortium is behind SLA-Ready:

Trust-IT Services Ltd (UK), TU Darmstadt (Germany), Arthur's Legal (Netherlands), Numergy (France) and the Cloud Security Alliance.

Trust-IT is a UK firm specialised in analysing and marketing Information and Communication Technologies across Europe and globally. Founded in 2002, Trust-IT's central asset is a highly-skilled, dynamic, international team that performs quality ICT market research. Trust-IT is backed by a network of international experts, partnering with some of the movers and shakers in key ICT areas, from cloud computing, future internet and standards, to big data.

Arthur's Legal combines relevant strategic, legal and cutting-edge knowledge and real-life experience with a structured and proactive hands-on global approach. As the potential of cloud computing in Europe increasingly shifts towards the Internet of Things (IoT) rather than in generic cloud services only, it is an added bonus that Arthur's Legal has extensive skills and know how related to high tech, M2M, IoT and other cloud computing related industries.

Cloud Security Alliance is led by a broad coalition of industry practitioners, corporations, associations and other key stakeholders. Its mission is to promote the use of best practices for providing security assurance within Cloud Computing, and to provide education on the uses of Cloud Computing to help secure all other forms of computing.

Numergy is a cloud provider with infrastructure as a service offering (IaaS), based in France and serving European SMEs and public organisations. Numergy commits to best practice to deliver highly secured, efficient and competitive computer resources, while complying with applicable regulations, including transparency on data localisation and SLA.

TU Darmstadt is Germany's premier Technical University, especially for Computer Science. It was selected as the Best-Practice University in Germany, and has become one of the leading research centres for IT security and dependability in Europe. The DEEDS Group within the Darmstadt Centre for IT Security is internationally renowned for its trust and security research and has garnered support from major corporations in Europe and globally.