

## **SLA-Ready: A lifecycle approach to Cloud Service Level Agreements so SMEs know what to expect, what to do and what to trust**

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### **Focus Area**

Tools and services to help European companies manage the cloud service lifecycle with a strong focus on service level agreements. A business hub with practical guides, user stories and expert opinion, and an SLA Aid with personalised report on choosing and using the right cloud service. A Common Reference Model to guide the industry on best practices for service level agreements based on industry best practices and international standards, drawing on an in-depth analysis of current practices from a technical, legal, economic and customer perspective.

### **Who stands to benefit and how?**

As most businesses increasingly become digital over the next few years, they will breathe life into our economies and help create new jobs. It is hardly surprising that they are expected to gain the most from using cloud services. So what is holding them back? Lack of trust in cloud services because of the lack of transparency in contract terms and pricing models. Customers also see the use of standardised cloud service level agreements (Cloud SLAs) as a critical step towards better understanding the levels of security and data protection offered and actually delivered through monitoring of cloud service provider performance.

To lower the entry barriers for small and large firms alike, SLA-Ready provides a suite of practical tools and services, so they know what to expect, what to do and what to trust. SLA-Ready goes beyond the contract signing to assist cloud customers in every phase of the service lifecycle, from assessment to operation and termination. Special attention is paid guiding customers on security and data protection levels so they do not need to be ICT-savvy.

## **Position Paper**

The standardisation and transparency of SLAs is paramount to provide customers with enough information about what services to use and how to use them – all the way through the lifecycle.

SLA-Ready has made a comprehensive analysis of current practices of Cloud SLAs, from a technical, legal, economic and sociological perspective, eliciting a set of requirements spanning general requirements, responsibility requirements, economic requirements and technical service level requirements.

This is the basis for a Common Reference Model that describes, promotes and supports the uptake of cloud service level agreements by providing a common understanding of SLAs for cloud services. The Common Reference Model integrates SLA components and terminology, standards, SLA attributes, service level objectives (SLOs), guidelines and best practices.

Most importantly from a business perspective, the Reference Model is the basis for a suite of practical tools and services tailored to different levels of knowledge: novice, basic knowledge, experienced user. The SLA Aid will walk current and prospective customers through the different stages of the cloud service management life-cycle based on a set of representative use cases: procurement of IaaS by a Fintech firm, operational phases by small IT teams in local government agencies, an SME using SaaS, and an SME migrating from one SaaS cloud service provider to another. The SLA-Aid will be launched in autumn 2016.

The SLA Aid is complemented by a Business Hub: a set of user-friendly guides on all the major aspects of cloud services with user tips and expert opinions, covering legal, operational and business aspects.

Together, the tools and services increase both understanding and acceptance of responsibilities and risks. They help businesses get to grips with complex legal and technical terms, and help them compare, define and monitor security levels.

Because businesses of all sizes only realise the benefits of the cloud when they truly understand and trust it, these online tools really are a “must use” for companies all over the globe, whether they are using cost-effective off-the-shelf

services with standard contract terms or have some power to negotiate SLAs.

For cloud service providers, SLA-Ready is an important opportunity to showcase best practices on Cloud SLAs. Our survey for cloud service providers helps them evaluate the extent to which they are meeting customer needs. SLA-ready will use the findings to develop an SLA-Readiness Index that customers can use to compare different practices – a great showcase for providers prioritising transparency and standardisation. Greater confidence in the market means companies can grow their business with new cloud-enabled products and services.

### **Help us validate our SLA Common Reference Model**

We are currently validating our Reference Model. Please answer this short survey and contribute to a more transparent and trusted cloud culture.

If you are a cloud customer: [www.sla-ready.eu/crm-validation-smes](http://www.sla-ready.eu/crm-validation-smes)

If you are a cloud service provider: [www.sla-ready.eu/sla-readiness-index](http://www.sla-ready.eu/sla-readiness-index)

### **Links**

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<http://www.sla-ready.eu/common-reference-model>

<http://www.sla-ready.eu/use-cases-0>

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