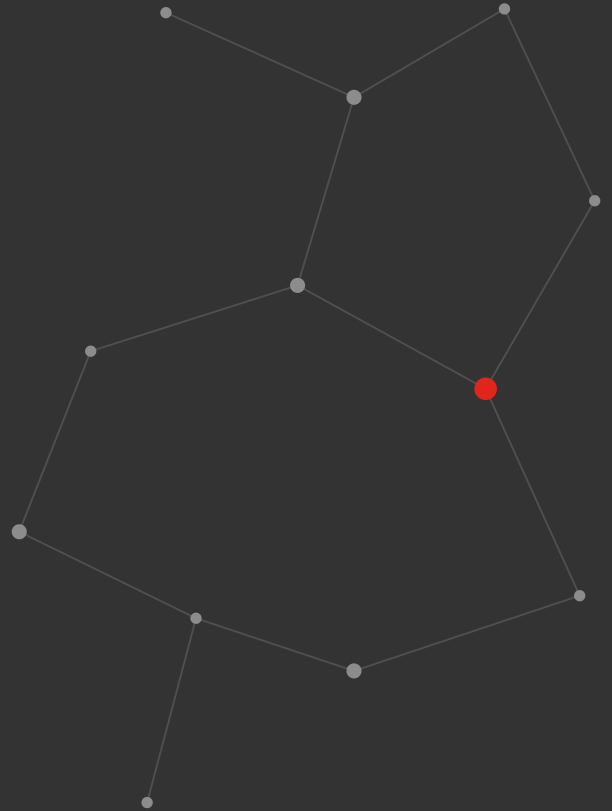




CHECKLIST • 2026

Cloud Migration Decision Framework

A structured path to Azure — decide workload by workload, spend nothing twice.

Most migrations do not fail technically. They fail in the decisions made before the first workload moves.

Whether to move is settled — Gartner puts global public cloud spending at \$723 billion in 2025, growing another 21% in 2026, with 75% of enterprise workloads expected to run in cloud or edge environments by 2028, up from 52% in 2024. How to move is the open question, and it is where the money is lost.

83%

of data migration projects either fail outright or exceed their budget or schedule.

75%

of cloud migrations run over budget; 37% miss their schedule, across a survey of some 450 CIOs.

+23%

average budget overrun where it happens — 38% of migrations overspend, 31% run late. Leading cause: legacy application complexity.

2.4x

Organizations that run a formal readiness assessment before migrating succeed at 2.4 times the rate of those that do not.

This document is that assessment, in a form you can print and work through. Nothing in it requires a vendor conversation.

18%

of migration projects have to roll at least some workloads back, for performance, cost or compliance reasons.

\$723B

public cloud spending in 2025, up 21.5% — the direction of travel is not in question.

Read this document in order. Pages 3 to 5 decide **what happens to each workload**; page 6 decides **what it will cost**; page 7 decides **in what order**; page 8 tells you whether you are ready to start at all.

The 6R decision tree

Run every workload down this tree in order. The first question that answers yes decides the outcome — do not skip ahead to the interesting options. Retire is the most cost-effective migration there is.

Should this workload exist at all?

No owner, no users, no dependency

YES

Retire

Decommission it. Nothing is cheaper to run than nothing.

NO ↓

Would a SaaS product do this job?

Commodity function, no differentiation

YES

Repurchase

Buy the capability; migrate the data, retire the code.

NO ↓

Must it stay where it is?

Regulation, latency or cost says so

YES

Retain

Leave on-premises deliberately, and write down why.

NO ↓

Is it strategic and growing?

Scale is rising, change is frequent

YES

Refactor

Re-architect for the platform. Highest cost, highest ceiling.

NO ↓

Quick win from a managed service?

Same app, managed database underneath

YES

Replatform

Minor changes, managed services underneath.

NO ↓

Everything else

Move as-is, improve later

NO TO ALL

Rehost

Lift and shift. A starting position, not a destination.

The highlighted path is the one most often chosen for the wrong reasons. Refactor pays only where scale and change frequency justify it — page 5 is the test.

The 6R matrix

Use this to sanity-check the tree's verdict against effort, time and the benefit you actually expect. If the benefit column does not describe something your business asked for, reconsider.

OPTION	EFFORT	TIME	BENEFIT	TYPICAL USE CASE	WATCH OUT FOR
Rehost	Low	Fast	Low	Datacentre exit under a deadline; stable applications	Cost rising after the move — nothing was right-sized
Replatform	Medium	Medium	Medium	Move a database to a managed service; containerise a web tier	Version gaps and feature parity in the managed service
Refactor	High	Slow	High	Strategic products where scale and release frequency both rise	Scope growth; needs engineering capacity you may not have
Repurchase	Low-Med	Medium	High	Commodity functions: HR, ITSM, CRM, expense handling	Data migration and integration are the real project
Retire	Lowest	Fast	Highest	Anything with no owner, no users and no dependency	Retention obligations — archive the data before you delete
Retain	None	—	None	Regulatory constraint, latency requirement or clear cost case	Becoming permanent by default — set a review date

Retire is a migration outcome

Count retirements in the programme's results. They are the only decisions that reduce both cost and risk at once.

Retain needs a written reason

Regulation, latency, cost — name which, note the data residency requirement, and set the date you will revisit it.

Lift-and-shift or refactor?

Score one workload per sheet. Tick the column each criterion points to. Whichever column reaches five ticks first is your answer — and if the two are close, rehost now and revisit after the platform is stable.

CRITERION	LIFT & SHIFT	REFACTOR
Remaining useful life Under three years, or well beyond it?	☐	☐
Strategic importance Supporting function, or part of what you sell?	☐	☐
Expected scale growth Flat demand, or rising and uneven?	☐	☐
Managed-service benefit Would native services remove real operational work?	☐	☐
Operating-cost target Is a lower run cost an explicit objective, or a hope?	☐	☐
Change frequency Released twice a year, or twice a month?	☐	☐
Technical debt Manageable as-is, or already blocking delivery?	☐	☐
Team capacity Do you have engineers free to re-architect this year?	☐	☐
TOTAL	☐	☐

The rule. Five or more ticks in one column decides the path. Refactoring a workload that scored four is how migration budgets double — and rehosting one that scored eight is how they get spent twice.

FinOps from day one

Cost discipline applied after go-live is remediation, and it is expensive. Applied from the first resource, it is free. Waste has just risen for the first time in five years — driven by the unpredictable cost pattern of AI workloads.

29%

of cloud spending is estimated to be wasted — the first increase after five years of decline. Software waste sits at 25%.

SAVINGS LEVERS, APPLIED IN THIS ORDER

Right-size first



Reserved Instances / Savings Plan



Azure Hybrid Benefit



AHB together with RI



Right-size against real CPU and memory use, never against what was allocated on-premises — Azure Migrate does the discovery at no cost. Commit only once the baseline is honest, and note that Hybrid Benefit grants 180 days of dual-use rights, which covers the migration window itself.

DAY-ONE CHECKLIST — BEFORE THE FIRST WORKLOAD LANDS

- ☐ **Tag every resource** — owner, environment, cost centre and application, enforced by policy rather than convention.
- ☐ **Set budget alerts** per subscription and per environment, with a named recipient who is expected to act.
- ☐ **Turn on anomaly detection** from the start — the point is to catch the first unexpected day, not the monthly invoice.
- ☐ **Agree chargeback** — how cost reaches the team that caused it. Unallocated spend is nobody's problem to reduce.
- ☐ **Fix a review cadence** and name the FinOps owner. Monthly is enough; nobody is enough to make it fail.

85%	73%	71%	63%
call managing cloud spend their biggest challenge	run a hybrid model	have a cloud centre of excellence	have a dedicated FinOps team
Source: Flexera 2026 State of the Cloud, n=753 • Microsoft Azure Hybrid Benefit and Reserved Instances documentation			

Phased rollout

Four waves, each with an entry gate and a rollback path. Do not skip Wave 0 — every hour spent on the landing zone is repaid in every wave that follows.

Wave 0 — Foundation

NO WORKLOADS

Build the landing zone before anything moves: management group hierarchy, network topology, identity in Entra ID, governance policy and centralised logging, following the Cloud Adoption Framework.

NETWORK

ENTRA ID

POLICY

CENTRAL LOGGING

GATE → Policy applies automatically to a new subscription, and logs arrive centrally without manual setup.

Wave 1 — Non-critical

LEARN HERE

Development and test environments, internal tools. The purpose is not the workload — it is proving your runbooks, monitoring and cost tagging on something that can break.

GATE → A migration runbook has been executed twice without improvisation. **Rollback:** redeploy on-premises; no data loss risk.

Wave 2 — Business applications

PRODUCTION

Production applications with real users, moved one at a time, each with a written rollback procedure agreed with its owner before the migration window opens.

GATE → Performance and cost measured against the pre-migration baseline. **Rollback:** tested, timed and signed off, not assumed.

Wave 3 — Core systems

LAST, NOT FIRST

ERP, primary databases and mission-critical systems — moved only once the platform, the team and the cost model have all been proven by the earlier waves.

GATE → Business sign-off on a rehearsed cutover, with the rollback window explicitly agreed.

Readiness scorecard

Ten questions. Tick only what is true today – not what is planned. Organizations that complete a formal readiness assessment before migrating succeed at 2.4 times the rate of those that do not, and the value comes from the honest answers.

IS THIS TRUE TODAY?	YES	NO
01 A complete inventory of applications and infrastructure exists.	☐	☐
02 Dependencies between systems are mapped, not assumed.	☐	☐
03 A total cost of ownership model compares current and target state.	☐	☐
04 The landing zone is designed, with policy and logging decided.	☐	☐
05 One named person owns cloud cost.	☐	☐
06 A rollback plan exists for every production workload in scope.	☐	☐
07 A first pilot workload has been chosen and agreed.	☐	☐
08 Security and compliance have reviewed and approved the target design.	☐	☐
09 The operations team has a training plan for the target platform.	☐	☐
10 An executive sponsor is accountable for the outcome.	☐	☐
YOUR SCORE – COUNT THE YES COLUMN	☐	

8–10

Ready to migrate

Start Wave 0 and set the first wave dates.

5–7

Pilot first

Close the gaps on one non-critical workload before committing further.

< 5

Assessment first

Moving now is how the 83% figure on page 2 stays where it is.

Five ways this goes wrong

Each of these is recoverable if caught early and expensive if not. Tick any that describe your current plan — then fix those before setting a migration date.

☐

Moving everything at once

A single cutover weekend leaves no way back and no learning between workloads. The first serious incident lands on production with the whole estate already moved.

☐

Starting without discovery

Legacy application complexity is the leading cause of overrun, and it is only discoverable in advance. An inventory without a dependency map is not discovery.

☐

Treating lift-and-shift as the destination

Rehosting is a valid first step and a poor resting place. Without a follow-up decision per workload, the estate keeps on-premises economics with cloud pricing.

☐

Leaving FinOps until after go-live

Untagged resources cannot be attributed, and unattributed spend does not get reduced. Retrofitting tags across a live estate costs more than applying them from the first resource.

☐

Skipping Wave 0

The most common and most expensive of the five. Workloads landing before the landing zone means identity, network and policy get retrofitted underneath running systems — and 18% of migrations already have to roll something back.

Ask any migration partner how they de-risk these — including us.

The answers tell you more than a capability presentation will. A partner who cannot describe their rollback procedure has not needed one recently, or has not admitted to it.

Know where every workload should land — before you move the first one.

Book a 30-minute migration readiness review — structured, specific, no sales pitch. We work through the scorecard on page 8 with you, name the wave you should start with, and tell you plainly what stands in the way.

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5×
Deloitte Fast 50

SOURCES

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- 5. Gartner, public cloud spend forecast 2025-2026; workload projection to 2028
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- 8. Deka Technology delivery experience — wave approach, readiness practice

All third-party findings are summarised in our own words; every diagram in this document was drawn from the cited figures.

