



Finland breaks through with multicloud

State Treasury responds to crises with refreshed digital core



Call for change

In an on-demand world, every second counts

Today, Finland is widely regarded as one of the [most innovative countries](#) in the world. Its reputation is well deserved—and one largely built on the use of technology to enable transformation during a period of unprecedented disruption. Perhaps most notably, over the past few years, Finland’s breakthrough impact has been realized by the public sector rather than its startup tech scene.

As early as 2016, when Finnish cloud-based startups began popping up all over the map, Finland’s State Treasury was already considering its own cloud transformation. The Treasury’s public sector vision for full cloud operations involved better managing cybersecurity threats and expediting digital development cycles.

During this period, its first dedicated cloud push centered around its public benefits system. Partnering with Accenture, the Treasury migrated its paper-based system for managing individual claims—including travel insurance, work accidents and compensations for disabled veterans—into Microsoft’s Azure cloud.

A meaningful shift in culture ensued. By the start of 2020, nearly 50% of the Treasury department’s operations were hosted in the cloud, up significantly from its mostly on-premise infrastructure a few years prior.

Then the pandemic hit. And Finland’s government [announced a new form of financial aid](#) for companies in distress. In its first iteration, up to €300 million was reserved to directly support thousands of businesses that were struggling to manage fixed costs, including rent and payroll. And government officials tasked the State Treasury with processing the applications, determining eligibility and issuing payments—a completely new endeavor for the agency.

Overseeing this new workflow wasn’t the only priority. The State Treasury needed to train personnel and launch a system to disburse the funds as soon as the law was approved. And it had just six weeks to do it.

The Treasury, backed by its improved digital core, was better prepared than ever to step up and tackle unprecedented challenges.



When tech meets human ingenuity

Two clouds are better than one

While the pandemic continued, the joint team seized the opportunity to develop and add a second cloud to its tech stack. The Treasury's existing Microsoft Azure cloud platform served as an effective self-service portal for citizens, but its claims handling and payment disbursement system was still running on-premises in a third-party data center.

To streamline operations and better protect sensitive business and personal data (including protected characteristics and bank account numbers), the State Treasury ported the system's backbone to Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI). Together, the two cloud platforms enabled the Treasury to establish a base for continuous innovation and helped the Treasury better link its robust suite of existing Microsoft and Oracle apps.

Throughout the journey of moving on-prem environments to the multicloud system, Treasury staff across IT and business teams alike earned certifications in both Azure and Oracle cloud fundamentals. A focus on fundamentals may sound simple—

but because cloud is an ongoing capability rather than a one-time project, training talent is critical to ensuring long-term adoption and success. Seeing the shared vision for the future, Oracle supplemented the team of developers with dedicated engineers to expedite the migration and eliminate any potential roadblocks.

With claims handling operational in the Treasury's cloud-native application, it became easier for developers to code, deploy and integrate new automations and features into the system. To save additional time, the joint team repurposed technology from suomi.fi, an existing e-identification service, to continue authenticating applications from businesses and business owners. And integration with Finland's tax administration meant verifying eligibility and grant totals—up to €500k per company—could be done faster and more accurately than ever before.

In addition, DevSecOps performed checks at every stage of the development process to reduce testing and repair time, as well as ensure data security.



A valuable difference

New capabilities for crisis management

For the Treasury, specifically, the move to a multicloud platform based on Microsoft Azure and Oracle Cloud Infrastructure was a first for Nordic public sector organizations.

And it reduced the cost of platform and infrastructure ownership by 50-70% (which translates to hundreds of thousands of Euros), compared to on-premise costs. And the backend migration to Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) offers the State Treasury one of the strongest security measures; all customer data is stored safely and securely, while all operations are securely logged, audited and analyzed.

The payment service remains to date one of the most advanced digital reforms in Finland—and, with systems in place for ongoing rounds of support, almost certainly [helped the country buoy its economy](#) better than the rest of the Euro region. It even won three awards, including the 2020 Most Valuable Act of the Year and the Finnish Customer Experience Award 2020.

After the initial service, State Treasury developed five other services to support different businesses during the crisis. So far, more than 40 000 companies have applied for support and State Treasury has granted more than one billion euros in cost support.

Recently, the State Treasury has prepared a new compensation service to respond to the European energy crisis. It grants subsidies to professional agricultural and aquaculture farmers for both electricity and increasingly expensive fertilizer costs. The service launched June 1, 2023 with very positive feedback from the customers. During the first week, 3,000 customers applied for support and got a decision within an average of 23 hours, thanks to advanced automation.

Public service is always a work in progress. And for Finland's fearless and innovative leaders, the reinvention never stops.

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