Cloud Direct®

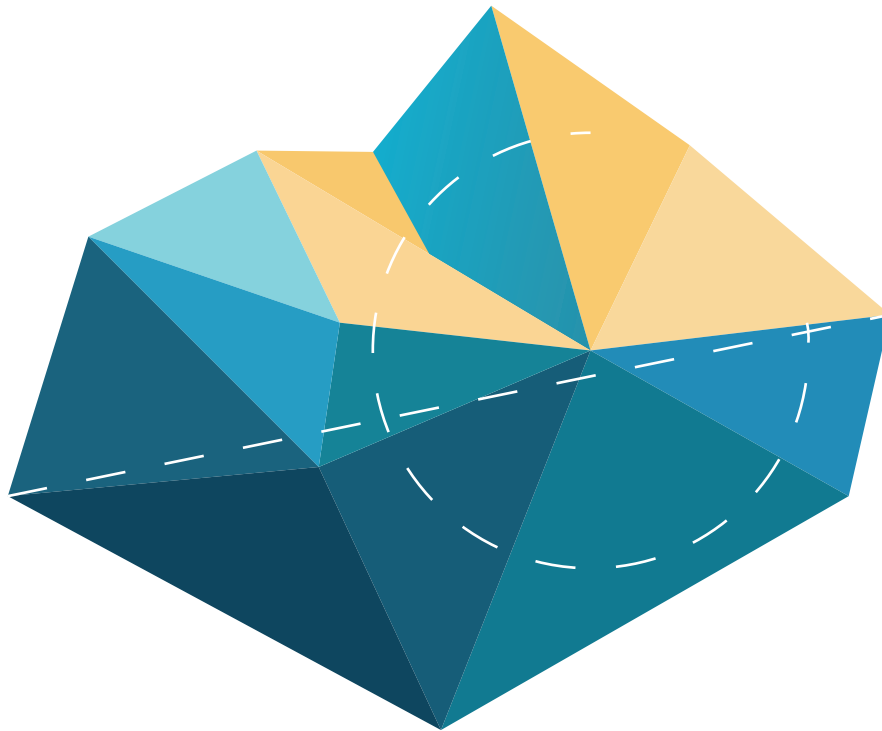# How to achieve your governance needs in Azure

Azure Scaffold: the framework your business needs to effectively implement Microsoft Azure.

Contents

It's not just about growth. It's about secure scalability.

Cloud adoption is a business-wide activity that requires leadership and planning. It's not a tech project for IT to deal with while the rest of the company gets on with running the business. So, calling all business leaders – you need to build your Azure environment from the ground, up. Create a framework that will continue to meet your governance needs whilst allowing for future growth. For Microsoft Azure, that framework is called Azure Scaffold.

Just like culture is the foundation for successful digital transformation, governance is the place to start when mapping cloud onto your business' administrative processes.

Governance is about creating an administrative framework around cloud-based projects, so resources are properly identified, secured and people are clear on who's responsible for ownership. Making governance part of your initial planning phase makes moving your business to the cloud both cost-effective and secure.

Why governance is important when starting your Azure journey

One of the main hurdles for cloud adoption within SMBs, and particularly for larger organisations, is governance. It's a fundamental part of the journey. And yes, we recognise this planning phase is not as interesting as the outcomes of using the Azure platform for development, but it's a necessary step to get an organisation to that point. Azure Scaffold is the 'guide rails' for your deployment.

Then, your business can use data and technology to build things like machine learning, AI (Artificial Intelligence) or IoT (Internet of Things) projects to boost profitability and bring your operations into the future. Security, access management and other foundational elements must come first.

So, what is Azure Scaffold?

Azure governance is your guide for implementing and organising Microsoft Azure subscriptions. You've been sold on the **agility** that cloud computing can provide your business, but this is the flip side of that coin. Clear **accountability** is what makes for secure, cost-effective cloud governance.
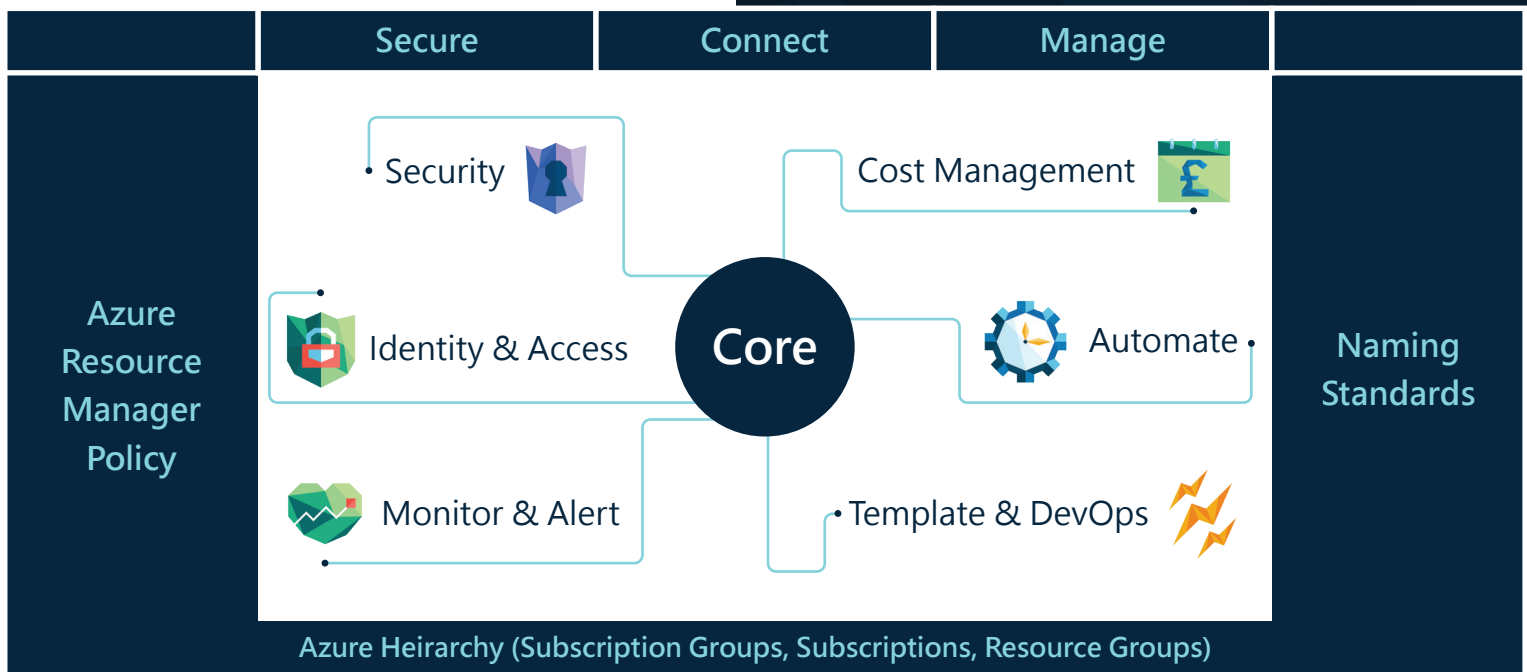
With Azure Scaffold, your company avoids the black hole of resource spending with easy-to-manage policies. Resources can be created, allocated and monitored in a way that suits your needs, and of course with Azure, everything is pay-for-what-you-use. In short, it's a clear administrative plan that accounts for all the moving parts of a business, even as it grows and changes.

With too much governance, bureaucratic processes get in the way of progress

With too much freedom, you gain agility but lose control.

As Microsoft puts it:

> The enterprise scaffold is intended to be the foundation of each new subscription within Azure. It enables administrators to ensure workloads meet the minimum governance requirements of an organisation without preventing business groups and developers from quickly meeting their own goals. Our experience shows that this greatly speeds, rather than impedes, public cloud growth.

	Secure	Connect	Manage	
Azure Resource Manager Policy	Security · Identity & Access · Monitor & Alert · Core	· Cost Management · Automate · Template & DevOps		Naming Standards

Azure Heirarchy (Subscription Groups, Subscriptions, Resource Groups)

The people that need to implement Azure Scaffold

Managing Azure subscriptions – that's IT's job, right? Or is it something the COO needs to head up? Maybe it's a business processes matter? So, is it all on the admin team, or the department heads? What about the product developers?

The answers will depend on your business model, but in reality everyone needs to be part of this process. Azure Scaffold is governance around an IT responsibility, yet implementing cloud infrastructure goes beyond IT. It's also absolutely something the C-suite needs to be aligning with business processes, culture and goals. **Business leaders must be heavily involved in the conversation to ensure a secure and optimised environment that supports the overall business strategy.**

The regulations and practices you put into effect within your organisation will also require contribution from external stakeholders such as third-party agencies (like Managed Service Providers) and policy-makers. This protects your business from risk by accounting for their needs, providing transparency and making ethical behaviour a primary concern.

How Azure Scaffold supports your need for governance

Azure Scaffold supports an organisation's need for governance in the cloud without hindering agility. But that's not all. Here are four more benefits:

Align with business goals

Cloud is a fundamental part of doing business in the twenty-first century. Whether that's IaaS, SaaS or you just use it for disaster recovery, you want your cloud strategy to dovetail with your wider business plan..

Cost management

Azure Scaffold allows you to manage your Azure subscriptions. An effective administrative framework makes sure projects aren't over or under-provisioned, and there are no hidden expenses. Azure Scaffold uses the Azure platform's in-built automation systems, putting provisions in place for billing and monitoring costs.

You can tag resources to assign cost to certain business activities, or even put quotas or limits on certain departments.

Security and monitoring

For subscription governance, Azure Scaffold has core resources for data sovereignty. These include virtual networks, for securely connecting applications to internal corporate resources, and Security Groups, which lets you allow or deny inbound and outbound traffic to/from Azure Resources. It's about putting preventative measures in place and knowing who has the keys to the kingdom if there is a breach or misdeed.

Automation means speedy development and time-to-market

When business processes are planned properly, bureaucracy makes way for smooth and agile project development. Automation capabilities can support this planning step, so you have consistent and efficient rolling out of resources. That means, for example, the app that DevOps want to build is in line with product development goals, is on time, in budget and is seamlessly integrated into the larger framework of the business.

According to a McKinsey report for 2014-16:

Most of the participants in our survey cited faster time to market as a core reason to adopt cloud-based infrastructure...

They took time to assess and then rebuild critical processes and governance models, they rebalanced and reorganized teams, and they invested in developing new skills and encouraging new mind-sets.

With this governance and planning piece in place, these organisations saw faster time to market. The good news is, with Azure and Azure Scaffold, the processes for getting started are remarkably straight-forward and user-friendly.

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Tips to start building sustainable governance with Azure Scaffold

You want to become digitally mature without disrupting day-to-day business, and while maintaining data security. These steps will help you do just that:

Best practice: naming and defining

The key is to create a defined hierarchy with a strong naming structure throughout. Consistency is the word of the day, so don't let account managers decide the naming structure: it must come from the top down and be strictly adhered to.

Then comes structure

The top-tier enrolment is then broken up into departments, account and, finally, individual subscriptions. Azure Resource Groups lets you refine this model on a flexible basis so there is a common-sense allocation of resources. Microsoft suggests three common patterns for Azure Enrolments:

- Functional: the hierarchy is based on subscription-level functions or projects.
- Business Unit: the hierarchy is based on different departments. This is the most popular as it allows businesses maximum flexibility and cross-departmental collaboration due to clear lines of accountability.
- Geographical: the hierarchy is based on department location – useful if you are a multi-national company.

With Azure Scaffold, you can also choose to separate management groups from billing groups to more efficiently manage roles and policies, without having administrators jump through hoops to reallocate the budget.

The three 'R's: resources, roles and regulations

Resources

Azure Resource Manager makes it easy to allocate resources, whatever the lifecycle required. Use consistent naming and tagging to associate a Resource Group with a project, maintaining clarity over what goes where. Create a Resource Group strategy and stick with it.

Roles

Identity and access management (IAM) is what makes enterprise use of public cloud work. For Azure, the Azure Active Directory is the ultimate tool for giving the right people the right controls, and it works across other Microsoft services like Dynamics 365.

Regulations

Azure Policy and Initiatives puts rules in place to make sure that nothing can go wrong, no matter who's at the helm.

It can be adjusted for 'Traditional IT' vs 'Agile IT' requirements, and it's extra effective when used with management groups.

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Set and reflect for optimisation

You don't normally associate the word 'governance' with 'flexibility', but any process needs adaptation and attention to maintain effectiveness. The shoe that fit last year pinches your toes this year. Monitoring your governance puts you on the path to your business being proactive, not reactive.

Azure services have diagnostic features and metrics that you can use to manage Azure subscriptions and report on activities. With the Azure Portal, administrators can see where the costs are coming from. Dive into this data, and you will know what is giving you a return on investment and what is not. Of course, other tools like templates, automated processes and spinning servers up and down to reflect usage can also help to keep costs under control. With the right Azure Scaffold processes in place, Microsoft Azure works with you, not against you

Partner with an Azure Expert MSP

It's no secret that cloud is the way forward for most businesses, from SMBs to large-scale enterprises. But, cloud adoption is taking place at a variety of different rates depending on industry, business size and requirements. It takes planning and expertise to make a successful transition. It also helps to work with a trust-worthy IT partner.

At Cloud Direct, we're a Microsoft Azure Expert MSP, one of under 40 companies worldwide to have that accreditation. You can benefit from our wealth of technical knowledge and experience in bringing Azure to businesses of all sizes. This history of success is a result of a careful process of workshopping and truly understanding our clients' needs. Then, we help you build **a bespoke framework for your business with Azure Scaffold.**

We help you deploy resources safely, in line with Microsoft data and compliance policies, and we give your employees the training they need to make the most of Azure.

See, good governance might not make front-page news, but it's a part of your strategy that you need to get right if you want to save a lot of time, money and effort fixing mistakes after-the-fact. We've actually gone through the exact same journey, having migrated many of our own data environments to Azure. We've made the mistakes, so you don't have to. That's why we're so evangelical about planning your governance.

With Azure Scaffold you make your own success, but there are people who can help you along the way. We're Cloud Direct. We're people. Contact us.

About Cloud Direct

We're for the disruptors. The movers and shakers. The change makers. The ones who understand that bravery doesn't mean recklessness. And that safe and affordable can ignite growth.

With over 4000 cloud migrations under our belt, it's safe to say that by now, we've really got this thing down. Equal parts passion and good old-fashioned elbow grease has allowed us to enjoy continuous, organic profits - year on year - since 2003.

As of 2018, we're also an Azure Expert MSP. One of only 32 globally. Reaching this level wasn't easy. We had to jump through a lot of hoops. But every one of them was worth it because now we're better equipped to help our customers achieve 'Fearless Growth'.

Contact Cloud Direct

To find out more about how we can help your business, contact us on:

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