

About Customer

The Agriculture and Rural Economy (ARE) Directorate operates within the Scottish Government and plays a key role in Scotland's rural economy. It is responsible for assessing and paying around £750 million in subsidies annually.

Geo

EMEA

Industry

Public Sector

Solution Area

Enable Multi-cloud

Pure Storage®

Products in Use

Portworx® Enterprise

Portworx Enables a True Multi-Cloud Strategy for Scottish Are Directorate

The ARE Directorate, one of the largest directorates within the Scottish Government, was created to safeguard local food supplies. To do this, it relies on a complex IT estate and a modestly sized multidisciplinary team of technology professionals that develop applications for farmers to claim subsidies, whilst also prioritising innovation.

The ARE Directorate adopted a multi-cloud strategy to support its core function of developing applications. Portworx has allowed it to adopt an agnostic approach to multi-cloud, avoiding hyperscale cloud provider lock-in.

“With Portworx, should we ever need to move quickly between hyperscale cloud providers, we can easily do that. It’s just a matter of putting the workload into a container and moving to another provider—or back to on premises.”

NEILL SMITH,
HEAD OF IT
INFRASTRUCTURE, ARE
DIRECTORATE

Staying Ahead of the Curve Through Innovation

The ARE Directorate faced a challenge: it wanted to utilise more cloud-based resources in line with the government's cloud-first policy, but didn't want to be confined to one cloud provider as it moved to microservices and cloud-based

Impact on the Scottish Directorate ARE



Enables a multi-cloud strategy with flexible movement between providers



Aligns with the cloud-first policy for the Scottish government



Facilitates a culture of innovation for the delivery of services to farmers

Challenges



Address the risks of lock-in with any single cloud provider



Increase usage of cloud-based resources cost-effectively



Support innovation with modest developer team resources

Results



Minutes to move workloads and applications between cloud providers



Portworx rollout completed within two weeks



Easier management of complex processes

operations. Neill Smith, Head of IT Infrastructure at the ARE Directorate, looked to containerisation of core applications as the solution. He wanted a completely agnostic approach to deliver his planned multi-cloud strategy.

Due to a successful and productive relationship with Pure Storage and using Pure Storage FlashArray since 2015, Smith took a closer look at Portworx. He quickly realised the potential of Portworx to help deliver a multi-cloud strategy while ensuring the protection of sensitive government data, which is a prerequisite when using containers in a public sector setting.

“Containers are generally more suited to stateless applications than stateful ones,” explains Smith. “As we work in a government environment, all our applications are stateful, which presents data management issues for us. Portworx was able to easily demonstrate its ability to ensure the security of sensitive data, which piqued our initial interest.”

Putting Portworx to the Test

Before committing to Portworx, Neill conducted a proof of value exercise consisting of a complex application migration process involving different development environments and cloud platforms. He took a core application running on premise, migrated it to AWS and then Azure before bringing it back on premises. The entire process was completed in less than a minute and a half.

For Neill, and the Directorate, this was a major breakthrough and a key factor in selecting Portworx to underpin the planned multi-cloud strategy. He can now take a workload and its data, and move it to any cloud. This gives him the flexibility to easily move workloads to another provider or return it on premises if a cloud provider encounters a security issue or if cloud pricing increases. “Portworx, should we ever need to move quickly between hyperscale cloud providers, we can easily do that. It’s just a matter of putting the workload into a container and moving to another provider—or back to on premises,” says Smith.

Simple Rollout and Immediate Returns

With a compelling case established, Neil selected Portworx as the cornerstone for the Directorate’s multi-cloud strategy. A successful rollout of Portworx was completed within two weeks and it has delivered clear benefits from day one, with improved efficiencies for developer teams.

“A happy team is a productive team,” says Neill. “Portworx empowers our developers to create the next generation of agricultural applications that will support sustainable economic growth in agriculture, the food industry, and in rural areas across Scotland.”

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