

Customer Case

Incofin transfers impact finance services to the cloud

Incofin Investment Management (Incofin), specialist in impact finance, must always be assured of an efficient and highly secured IT infrastructure. That's why Incofin moved the entire IT environment to the Cheops Cloud with a link to Office 365 and also opted for the highest service level. This means Incofin can work safely and flexibly without worrying about security and continuity.



“Now that our IT is centralised through the Cheops Cloud and is also managed by Cheops, everything is running more efficiently, more flexibly and more securely,” says Achim Deviaene, Financial Officer at Incofin. “IT security is the top priority for us because we are constantly dealing with financial transactions. We work in different time zones, so continuous support and uptime are extremely important for us.”

Investment with a social impact

Incofin Investment Management is not just a financial fund manager. The company focuses on impact finances like among others microfinance – financial services such as credit and insurance – for entrepreneurs who have no or very limited access to commercial banks due to poverty, lack of a regular income or because they live in very remote areas. Incofin has its headquarters in Antwerp, but there are also regional offices in Cambodia, India, Colombia and Kenya. Using this network, the 55 employees of Incofin support organisations in more than 65 countries while striving for an optimal return for investors.

IT is vitally important for a company like Incofin. Put simply, the failure of the IT would mean the failure of the activity itself, because Incofin stands at a crossroads of transactions and information between investors, projects and borrowers.

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Achim Deviaene,
Financial Officer Incofin



“We have a billion euros worth of assets under management but we are still a small company,” says COO Paul Buysens. “So we can’t invest time in IT ourselves, but we still want the peace of mind of knowing that everything is being perfectly monitored. That’s why we outsourced everything to Cheops.”

From on-premise to cloud

“Our internal IT infrastructure was written off and we were looking for how to organise everything in a more user-friendly and secure way, with a lower budget per user. Cheops came up with an offer that suited us perfectly”, explains Paul Buysens.

Cheops was responsible for the complete migration of all the data to the server infrastructure in the Cheops data centre, ensured internet connectivity and also took care of the integration of the IT environment in the Cheops Cloud with Office 365 in the public cloud. Moreover, Cheops now also provides Premium Managed Services, so that Incofin can rely on intensive support at the highest level.

Highest service level

“Our IT problems are always solved immediately by Cheops, even at night,” explains Achim Deviaene. “We are also assured of optimum security: the Cheops data centre has watertight security and is completely redundant – I was able to observe this for myself when I was invited by Cheops to visit the data centre. We could never guarantee the same high level of uptime in-house as in the Cheops data centre, which is equipped with emergency generators and an automated fire extinguishing system, among other things. Then there is the disaster recovery as-a-service (DRaaS): a fallback solution to continue working with the second data centre in the event of an emergency, again within the Cheops Cloud environment.”

Seamless migration

“Everything went very smoothly - the project was completed within the agreed time and the allocated budget,” says Paul Buysens. “And there was no downtime at all, partly thanks to Cheops working many weekends and evenings. The transition was invisible to end users, but now they do work with Office 365, Microsoft’s cloud software.”

Incofin employees derive a lot of benefits from Office 365. There is more storage space for data and the package also offers additional features as standard, such as Microsoft Teams, which is perfect for online collaboration and communication with colleagues, wherever they are. Cheops guided Incofin through the configuration of Teams.

International collaboration and communication

“With Microsoft Teams it is now sometimes easier to work with a colleague in India than with a Belgian colleague when you’re not using Teams,” confirms Achim Deviaene. “Previously we used to fly a lot to local foreign branches for consultations. Now we simply communicate with our international colleagues via video on a daily basis. As a result, our collaboration is better than ever. Which is important, because we believe that working in our project countries with local people who know the country’s language and culture, and have a local network there, is a strategic asset.”

Office 365 and Microsoft Teams now also make it easier for employees of Incofin’s head office to work at home or on the move. They appreciate this: the cloud approach has turned Incofin into a truly Modern Workplace. Paul Buysens: “We asked our employees and everyone is very satisfied with the great autonomy and flexibility that they now have. We would not be able to offer this way of working without the proper IT environment.

Central point of contact for IT

Incofin used to work with a number of separate cloud packages, but this led to things being much less well-organised, less secure and less efficient. With the centralised hybrid cloud environment, Incofin now has a single point of contact for all IT questions. Even ordering new PCs and creating accounts happens through Cheops.

“We are a good match for Cheops and we receive the service we expect from them,” adds Paul Buysens. “Cheops is a company on a human scale, with a personal approach. As a result, we have truly built up a relationship of trust.”



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COO Incofin

The Cheops solution

Advantages of the Cheops solution

- IT as a differentiator for Incofin
- independent and expert advice
- a thorough analysis of the business DNA and its problems
- pragmatic solutions and tailored approach
- continuity of services
- access to expertise
- smooth communication
- professional project management

About Incofin

Incofin Investment Management is a global independent impact investment firm, focused on rural and agricultural finance, driven by a desire to promote inclusive progress. Incofin has a license of Alternative Investment Fund Manager (AIFM) and has over 1 billion EUR in assets under management. The Incofin team consists of more than 50 professionals spread across the headquarters in Belgium and local investment teams in India, Colombia, Kenya and Cambodia. As a leading impact investment firm, Incofin has invested, via equity and debt financing, over 2.1 billion USD in over 320 financial institutions across 65 countries in Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and Eastern Europe.

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