

Data Center Readiness Checklist

30 questions to answer before you build, lease, or migrate

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General information for planning purposes. It is not engineering, legal, or financial advice; confirm final decisions with a licensed professional in your area.

How to use this checklist

Work through the six areas below with whoever owns the decision. Tick what you can prove today, circle what you assume, and leave blank what nobody can answer. Blank rows are your project plan.

- Do this before talking to a colocation provider, hyperscaler, or hardware vendor — they will answer these questions for you in their favour.
- Capacity numbers should come from measured utilisation, not from the size of the current rack.
- Bring the completed sheet to any advisory call; it cuts discovery time roughly in half.

1. Business drivers

Every data center decision is a business decision first. If the driver is unclear, the technical answer will be too.

☐	We can state, in one sentence, why the current environment no longer works
☐	We know which workloads are latency-sensitive and which are not
☐	We have a written list of regulatory or contractual data-residency requirements
☐	We know the planning horizon (3, 5, or 10 years) the decision must serve
☐	Finance has told us whether they prefer capital spend or operating spend

2. Workload inventory

You cannot size what you have not counted. Inventory by application, not by server.

☐	Every production application is listed with an owner and a criticality tier
☐	Peak and average CPU, memory, storage, and network usage are measured over at least 30 days
☐	Dependencies between applications are mapped (what breaks if X moves?)
☐	Licensing terms that restrict where software may run are identified
☐	Growth assumptions are written down and signed off by the business

Total measured compute (cores at peak)	
Total storage in use / provisioned	
Annual growth assumption	
Number of Tier-1 (cannot fail) applications	

3. Power and cooling

Power is the constraint that decides whether a site is viable. Cooling follows power.

☐	We know today's IT load in kW and have a forecast for the planning horizon
☐	Rack density (kW per rack) is known for current and planned hardware
☐	Redundancy target is defined (N, N+1, 2N) and matches the criticality tiers
☐	Utility capacity at the candidate site has been confirmed in writing
☐	Generator and UPS runtime requirements are defined
☐	Cooling approach (air, rear-door, liquid) matches planned densities

4. Connectivity

A site with cheap power and one carrier is a single point of failure with a good invoice.

☐	At least two diverse carriers can reach the site by physically separate paths
☐	Cloud on-ramps (direct connect / express route) are available if hybrid is planned
☐	Bandwidth requirements are sized from measured traffic, including backup windows
☐	Latency to primary user populations and partner systems has been tested
☐	IP addressing and DNS changes are planned before, not after, the move

5. Resilience and recovery

Recovery objectives should be set by the business owner of each application, then costed.

☐	Recovery time objective (RTO) and recovery point objective (RPO) are set per tier
☐	Backup location is geographically separate from the primary site
☐	A failover test has been run in the last 12 months, and the results are documented
☐	Physical security and access logging meet the strictest applicable standard we must follow
☐	Environmental risks (flood, seismic, wildfire, grid stability) for the site are assessed

6. Operations and exit

Plan the exit before the entry. Contracts and data gravity make leaving harder than arriving.

☐	Monitoring, alerting, and on-call coverage are defined for the new environment
☐	Remote-hands or on-site staffing responsibilities are agreed in writing

☐	Contract term, renewal terms, and early-exit costs are understood
☐	Data export and decommissioning process is documented
☐	Total cost of ownership over the planning horizon is compared across at least two options

Scoring: 25 or more ticked — you are ready to run a formal selection. 15 to 24 — fill the gaps before you sign anything. Under 15 — start with a scoped readiness assessment.

Next step

Data Infrastructure Consulting Engagement —
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