

Towards a Cloud Computing Strategy in the Public Administration

SARA as a service platform in the cloud

The economic downturn and the concomitant budget cuts lead the Public Administration to find new formulas to boost internal management effectiveness. New IT paradigms make it possible to provide more efficient services. The service provision model in the cloud, or cloud computing, is one of the formulas to reach this goal. The Spanish Public Administration is making every effort **to turn cloud computing into a reference model for the provision of TIC services.**

In fact, the Public Administration has taken the first steps in cloud computing, drawing on the infrastructure available: the SARA network. **On 15 January 2013, the High Council for E-Government**, presided over by the Ministry of Finance and Public Administration (MINHAP), **designated SARA as a priority project to start building the private cloud of the Public Administration in Spain.** SARA, which is connected to the European network sTESTA, connects and provides services to the General Administration as well as to Regional and Local Governments. Currently, it offers widespread shared services in the Spanish Public Administration, such as the @firma platform for e-certificate validation and the data mediation platform.

The designation of SARA as the starting point of the Public Administration cloud platform reveals the Government of Spain's strong bid on the cloud computing paradigm. The underlying technology, however, is already available, offering **services like the [Virtual Registry Office \(ORVE\)](#)**, leading toward a paperless administration at the local level. ORVE makes it possible to electronically integrate the applications and requests made by citizens in traditional offices, thus avoiding the transport of paper documents and saving costs. With ORVE, data transmission between different

administrative units is instantaneous; in the past it used to take 16 days. The system is already deployed for the town councils in the region of Madrid.ⁱⁱ

The initial move to build on existing technology infrastructure for the private cloud of the Public Administration is fully in line with the use of public cloud solutions. In fact, **the Spanish Public Administration via MINHAP is a member of the Steering Board of the European Cloud Partnership (ECP), an initiative by the European Commission for the development of the European Cloud Strategy,ⁱⁱⁱ one of whose goals is the definition of common procurement requirements for cloud computing in an open and fully transparent way. Aimed at stimulating the European cloud computing market from the public sector, Spain is part of a consortium that has submitted a proposal to the EU Framework Programme 7 (FP7) for the procurement of cloud computing services based on pre-commercial procurement models.^{iv}**

The next steps to be taken **for a successful implementation of cloud computing based on the SARA network include the adaptation of existing regulations to envisage the new paradigm.** For instance, the [National Interoperability Framework](#), regulated by Royal Decree 4/2010, shall be modified to include clauses aimed at encouraging the use of the cloud computing model by Public Administration agencies, extending the concept of reuse associated with in open-source applications.

Finally, the [Digital Agenda for Spain](#) contains the **development and use of cloud computing as a key mechanism to ensure business competitiveness.** With the public sector as the driving force of industry, channels will be established for advice and cooperation with the private sector.

ⁱ<http://www.minhap.gob.es/Documentacion/Publico/GabineteMinistro/Notas%20Prensa/2013/S.E.%20ADMINISTRACIONES%20PUBLICAS/15-01-13%20NP%20CS%20Administraci%c3%b3n%20Electr%c3%b3nica.pdf>

ⁱⁱ<http://www.seap.minhap.es/es/prensa/actualidad/noticias/2013/01/20130108.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2012:0529:FIN:EN:PDF>

^{iv}<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2007:0799:FIN:EN:PDF>