OCRE Cloud Framework
Frequently Asked Questions

Framework Background & Procurement

What is the OCRE Framework?
The OCRE Cloud Framework is an OJEU-compliant procurement framework for cloud infrastructure as a service (IaaS), platform as a service (PaaS) and associated software as a service (SaaS). The framework has been created by GÉANT and is designed for use across the EU. It forms part of the wider Open Clouds for Research Environments (OCRE) project, enabling access to commercial digital services for research activities. The framework has been set up so that there is only one supplier per cloud platform per country.

What is the purpose of the framework?
The core objective of the framework is to help accelerate cloud adoption across education and research. 473 framework agreements have been signed, across 40 countries and 27 cloud platforms, enabling over 10,000 research and education organisations to provision services, without the need for time-consuming and costly procurement processes.

What is GÉANT?
GÉANT is a membership organisation acting with and for its members (the European National Research and Education Network (NREN) organisations) to further research and education networking in Europe and globally. It provides a range of connectivity, collaboration and identity services; providing users with highly reliable, unconstrained access to computing, analysis, storage, applications and other resources, to ensure that Europe remains at the forefront of research.

When did the framework start?
The OCRE Cloud Framework started on 1st December 2020.

How long does the framework last?
The framework lasts for 4 years, until 30th November 2024.

Who can buy on this framework?
The framework is open to higher education institutions, further education colleges and research council establishments. It can also be used by other organisations, such as local authorities and other bodies that are members of higher and further education purchasing consortia. If you are unsure about your eligibility to use the framework, please contact the Jisc NREN team via cloudframework@jisc.ac.uk.

Do I need to tender to use OCRE?
No. OCRE is a pre-tendered framework.

Do I need to run a mini-competition to procure using OCRE?
There is only one supplier per platform per country. You don't have to run a mini-competition unless you feel your requirements cannot be fully met by the designated supplier.

What happens if I want to use OCRE but I am already in an agreement to buy services via another framework agreement?
You may move to OCRE, however you will need to review the terms to see if you can exit the existing agreement.
What discounts will I get under the OCRE Cloud Framework?
OCRE customers receive a variety of discounts on platform list prices for all eligible services. Please contact cloudframework@jisc.ac.uk for more information.

Is there a list of cloud services and associated pricing that is offered under the framework?
Yes. Jisc will provide details of the services and prices for the platform(s) you are interested in.

Can I aggregate purchases under one business account?
Yes. You can make multiple purchases under the same Call-off Contract.

How are payments for purchases made via a Supplier processed?
You will receive a monthly invoice from the Supplier for your consumption. The Supplier will also provide you with access to a cloud management portal for full visibility of consumption, costs, and reporting.

What is Jisc’s role?
As the UK’s national research and education network provider (NREN), Jisc acts as the facilitator of cloud services under the framework. We engage with our members and non-member customers to understand their requirements, providing documentation and guidance, as well as liaising with and supporting the platform providers and service suppliers. Jisc levies a cost recovery fee of 3.5% against the value of cloud services consumed.

Contracts

When can Call-off Contracts with the supplier be agreed?
Call-Off Contracts can be entered into at any time up to the final three months of the framework i.e. up until 31st August 2024.

What is the maximum term for a Call-off Contract?
Call-off Contracts can be for terms of up to four years from their start date, so may continue after the framework has expired.

What will my Call-off Contract with the supplier be comprised of?
Your Call-off Contract would consist of the following appendices:

1. Contract Details
2. Order
3. Services and Charges
4. Framework Agreement including its parts as indicated therein
5. Service Terms and, if any, OIP Enrolment

What is the order of precedence with regards to the contract documentation?
In the event of and only to the extent of any conflict or ambiguity involving the clauses of the Call-off Contract, including any document forming part of the Contract, the conflict shall be resolved in accordance with the following order of precedence:

a) the Order
b) the clauses of this Contract (excluding any Appendix)
c) all other Appendices to this Contract in their original sequence excluding the Order, including any updates thereof
d) any other document referred to in this Contract

Azure migration and discounts

I purchased Azure services under the previous GÉANT IaaS Framework. Can I terminate my Call-off Contract and take advantage of the OCRE Cloud Framework instead?
Yes. The process is as follows and your new supplier should be able to guide you further:
1. Customer signs new Call-off Contract with the supplier under the OCRE framework
2. Supplier engages with Microsoft to get amendment to initiate the new enrolment
3. Customer receives new enrolment number and uses Volume Licensing portal to activate Azure enrolment
4. Customer raises new billing request via Azure Portal to indicate they want to use new enrolment for Azure billing, and includes date for transition
5. MS Azure Ops team will transition accordingly
6. Customer then begins billing under new enrolment and receives OCRE concessions

Microsoft does not currently levy a termination fee.

Can any Azure discounts I enjoyed be backdated to the start of the OCRE Cloud Framework?
No. Due to the way Microsoft Operations activate the enrolment there may be a delay in applying all discounts. If there are delays in applying all the discounts due, they are rebated back to the move-over date from the old enrolment to the new enrolment, not back to the commencement of the new framework.

To avoid periods without concession, the customer should ensure there is no gap between enrolments. If the customer has existing credit on the previous GÉANT enrolment, they can either invest it to prepay for Azure reservations, and/or maintain the current enrolment until expiration and use the credit for test purposes.

Can we remain with the existing supplier under the GÉANT IaaS Framework and contract with a new supplier under OCRE?
Yes. Where an institution decides to continue with their supplier and continue with their existing associated Azure Reserved Instances, they can separately purchase new Azure instances via the new supplier under OCRE. In other words, have two sets of Reserved Instances via two different suppliers simultaneously.

Research Adoption Funding

Is there funding available under OCRE for research projects?
Yes. OCRE has made available €3.7million to fund the consumption of infrastructure-cloud services (IaaS, PaaS, SaaS) by projects which can become clear showcases for the benefits of using cloud services to positively impact research outcomes. Service credits are available to organisations via adoption funding from the European Commission.

What value of funding has been awarded so far?
The first ‘Cloud Funding for Research Open Call’ was oversubscribed, with 31 responses from 12 countries. €1.175 million is being distributed to the 15 successful applicants, including three from the UK. Further funding calls are set for 2021. To be informed when further calls are launched, join the OCRE community network at www.ocre-project.eu/join.

Useful websites
NREN OCRE Framework webpage https://www.jisc.ac.uk/ocre-cloud-framework
OCRE https://www.ocre-project.eu/
OCRE UK Cloud Catalogue https://www.ocre-project.eu/services/cloud-suppliers/country/united_kingdom