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# The state of data sovereignty in the Netherlands

A CTO Pulse Report from OVHcloud

Difference that scales

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# Executive summary

## How do decision-makers in the Netherlands see data sovereignty?

That was the question we set out to explore with this research project – and the overriding sentiment that came back was concern.

Organisations understand that sovereignty is about trust and control, and decision-makers are increasingly facing questions over who has their data, where it is stored, which laws it is subject to and who controls it.

At OVHcloud, we tend to split sovereignty into three aspects. Data sovereignty includes how the data is handled and the laws which apply to it. Technical sovereignty relates to the freedom to choose and move where data is hosted, the choice of telecommunications suppliers and even the technical 'supply chain' which can include the components used in the servers that host the data. Finally, operational sovereignty includes more human considerations such as how data is handled and where it physically resides: in an organisation's datacentre or in the cloud.

We are seeing increasing numbers of organisations also adopting this multi-layer view as they take a methodical, rigorous approach to control, resilience and technological independence.

All of these considerations are also important for maintaining customer trust, data security and ensuring that businesses can scale effectively.

> Having too much data stored with non-European firms is a risk for many firms, something that Dutch firms understand clearly.

However, non-European businesses have very compelling offerings. The average amount of data stored with a non-European firm is around 35%, a figure which is projected to grow by 2.5% in the next five years.

There is also - quite rightly - confusion about whether the 'sovereign' cloud offerings run by non-European companies genuinely offer sovereign environments or not. What is clear is that more customers are asking about sovereignty, and Dutch businesses are looking more at European technology providers.

This isn't just a concern for growing businesses. The European Commission recently released the Cloud Sovereignty Framework guidelines, helping organisations to assess when data needs to be in a sovereign European environment.

In short: the battle lines are still being drawn. But it's clear that Dutch organisations are taking the issue of sovereignty very seriously and taking the time to build the right knowledge and skills in an area of great urgency and importance.

"We're pleased to bring you this overview of how the industry regards the issue, what decision makers are thinking and where the industry is going."
- Guido Laout, Head of the Netherlands, OVHcloud

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# Chapter 1

## What are Dutch companies worried about?

There's no doubt that digital sovereignty is a complex issue, and a battleground that is still being constructed, let alone contested.

We carried out a study with independent research agency Censuswide, polling two hundred IT decision makers from organisations in the Netherlands with between one employee and two hundred and fifty employees.

68% of them told us that they have either some or many concerns about the control that non-European companies have over cloud infrastructure – and this percentage rose to 85% in organisations with between a hundred and two hundred and fifty staff.

It's clear that organisations are starting to profile the concrete risks that non-sovereign data storage and processing pose to their business.

### 3 Pillars of Sovereignty

**Data Sovereignty:**

- Compliance with local regulation and immunity against extra-territorial laws
- Freedom of choice for users
- Data ethics: How is data used – for example, is it used to train AI?
- Cybersecurity and data protection

**Technical Sovereignty**

- Freedom of choice, movement and reversibility
- Including physical security

**Operational Sovereignty**

- Freedom of choice regarding how data is handled

## And what are these issues?

Overwhelmingly, Dutch businesses are concerned by issues around privacy and data access. 69% of organisations told us that they have worries in this area, and perhaps rightly so: the US CLOUD Act, for example, allows the US government to access data stored by American firms, even when it is outside of the US.

On top of this, 58% of businesses have concerns around control of technology and the risk of lock-in. Large technology providers often use proprietary standards, bundled discounts or software licensing practices that make it difficult or expensive to change providers. In fact, the British, French, Dutch, Japanese and Korean governments all have individual investigations into unfair competition in the cloud computing space specifically; this is a global issue.

The last major concern was the risk of 'shutdown', with 55% of Dutch organisations worried that changes to the policies of cloud computing providers could result in the shutdown of critical services, particularly those in the public sector. An over-concentration of data in the hands of a few providers means that applications are particularly vulnerable to sweeping changes by hosting providers.

This risk may explain why so many firms today are looking at hybrid- and multi-cloud approaches, giving organisations greater ability to scale and move workloads effectively – particularly when such policy issues emerge.

It's not just our research that confirms this sentiment: a recent report commissioned by the Netherlands Court of Audit, 'Dark Clouds Looming' found that the risks associated with not having a firm sovereignty strategy were 'real and significant'.

Of course, all of this this is intersected by practicality: although 60% of IT decision makers would prefer to use a Dutch cloud provider, most firms realise that in many cases this would significantly limit their scale and could potentially come at an unacceptable cost premium.

However, the overwhelming preference was for a European cloud provider, with 83% of Dutch organisations (in a separate question) stating that they would rather host their data in the EU region, compared to just 10% with a US provider and 7% having no preference.

But how widespread and significant is this issue in reality?

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# Chapter 2
## Where's your data?

American cloud providers have been incredibly successful in Europe, and the Netherlands is no exception. Our survey told us that only 38% of organisations in the Netherlands have less than a quarter of their data stored with a non-European provider. Over a third (36%) have between a quarter and half their data with a non-European provider, and almost a quarter (23%) have half to three quarters.

**23%**

*Of Dutch organisations have **50-75%** of their data with non-European providers*

However, very few organisations have everything outside the country: only 2.5% of Dutch firms have over three quarters of their data with non-European firms. On the other hand, this does mean that the average amount of organisational data stored with such firms is approximately 35%. In fact, the report commissioned by the Dutch Court of Audit also found that many public ministries in the Netherlands did not know where over a quarter (26%) of their data was hosted.

We should be clear: it is perfectly acceptable to host data outside of the Netherlands, as long as that's right for the data in question. However, in many cases, capacity is purchased because it's easy, or cheap, or because a non-European provider is already on a purchasing framework.

We also asked decision-makers to predict what their consumption of non-European cloud would look like in future. At the lower level, it remained unchanged: 38% still expected to have less than a quarter stored with non-European cloud providers.

But then things did change. Fewer companies expect to store a quarter to a half of their data outside of Europe, down from 36% to 33% percent. The same was true at the next bracket: previously, 23% of businesses said they'd store between half and a quarter of their data with non-European firms. This dropped to just 18%.

However, this meant a big change at the top end of the scale. Just over 10% (10.5%) of respondents told us that they'd be storing three-quarters to all of their data with non-European providers in the next five years.

The bottom line: Decision makers expect data stored with non-European providers to grow by 2.5% by 2030. And in addition, and more worryingly, the number of businesses storing over three-quarters of their data with non-European providers could quadruple in the next five years.

The overall picture we see is that the battle lines are still being drawn, opinions are being revised, and knowledge is being gained. We saw a lot of evidence for this in the next set of questions.

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# Chapter 3
## Sovereign or Not?

One development we've seen in the last year – in response to sovereignty concerns – is non-European cloud providers opening subsidiary 'sovereign' facilities in local regions. AWS, for example, formed a new company with a German managing director, with all facilities in the EU. It is staffed by AWS employees who are residents in the EU. However, some parties believe that this organisation is still subject to the US CLOUD Act.

This is further undermined by Microsoft's admission in the summer of 2025 when one official said that it 'cannot guarantee' data sovereignty in France.

From our perspective, it seems that the battle lines are still being drawn, and Dutch decision-makers have understandably mixed feelings.

Our data reinforces this theory: when our survey was asked what they thought about the sovereignty of US providers alone, 43% said that data held with a US provider was not sovereign. 16% said that they didn't know, and 40% said that they thought it was.

We also queried our respondents about non-European 'sovereign' offerings, and this picture was even more unclear. Over a third (38.5%) said that they didn't trust them. Just under a third (31%) said they did. And about the same (30.5%) didn't know.

This lack of clarity is understandable. There's no dictionary definition or legally agreed formulation of sovereignty. And our sample was well-informed: almost three quarters said that sovereignty was understood in their organisation as a whole – 21% said 'very well' and 48% said 'somewhat well'. This is unsurprising, especially since interest in digital sovereignty increased sevenfold between April and November 2025, according to Google Trends.

What is clear is that organisations in the Netherlands are considering their options.

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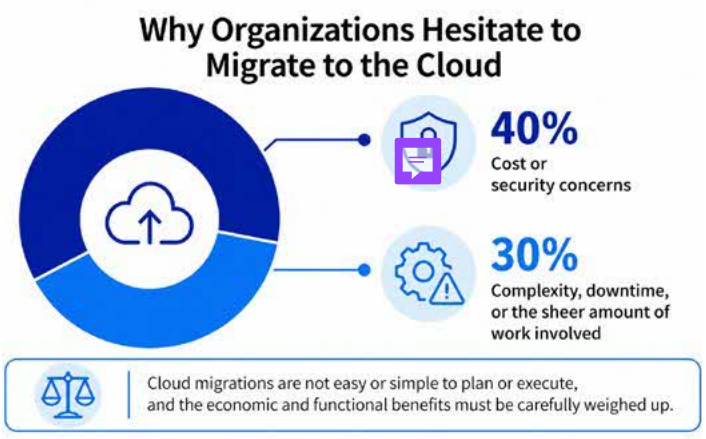
# Chapter 4
## Staying Agile in the Cloud

According to our research, four out of five (80%) of Dutch organisations are looking more at European technology providers than they were last year. This isn't just idle research: just under half of our survey (46%) said that their customers had been asking them more about sovereignty in the same time period. This is reinforced by independent research groups, with the likes of ISG finding that demand for sovereign cloud products in the Netherlands is rising steadily. Although there is no Dutch data available, a survey in the United Kingdom found that businesses would be prepared to pay an average of 13.7% extra for a sovereign cloud that met all of their needs. If anything, we would estimate that demand in the Netherlands would be higher, because of its place in Europe.




In many cases, this means changing cloud provider – and this isn't easy. We asked IT decision makers for their biggest concerns for cloud migration projects, and there weren't any surprises.

In many cases, it's difficult to find a provider that can do everything. The Draghi Report recently highlighted that the European technology ecosystem has been under-funded and consequently, under-performing for some time. We have just started to see green shoots of recovery and investment – particularly fuelled by the AI industry, with more European-based technology foundations being laid – but more needs to be done to make sure we can offer a full spectrum of choices including physical hardware, services and different locations.

Ultimately, every data and infrastructure decision is different, but to us, it's the availability of choice that's important. Our strapline is 'innovation for freedom' and a choice between two or three companies isn't truly a free choice in an area as broad and diverse as cloud.

We need a strong European technology ecosystem so that when the need arises, the supply is there, offering technology with its own individual governance under European laws and conventions. And although the last year has highlighted some important problems with how data is hosted across the globe, very little is ever perfect in IT – and what's clear is that IT decision makers are learning, planning and evolving how they think. This means that a change is coming to how we think about cloud and data, and more importantly, it's a change for the better.

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# Chapter 5
## OVHcloud: A cloud provider built on sovereignty

OVHcloud is a different kind of cloud provider, built on the principles of sovereignty, sustainability, openness and innovation. We offer secure, sovereign, transparent infrastructure which is already being used by leading organisations around the world. We support all sizes of companies, from small, founder-led businesses to mid-size consultancies and builders, as well as enterprise deployments.

OVHcloud has over 500,000 servers in 46 datacentres on 4 continents. We are committed to open-source technologies, championing initiatives like OpenStack. We offer a wide range of cloud infrastructure options across different territories, including a separate business in the US, giving us the ability to ensure true data sovereignty for the companies we work with.

We're also able to provide a sovereign cloud without compromise. Although many businesses believe that they'll have to pay more for a sovereign service, we've saved companies up to 60% on their cloud costs previously without compromising on scale or agility. We offer a wide range of services and locations, including highly specific and secure environments like SecNumCloud, for sensitive data.

Our billing is transparent and easy to understand, and we're also committed to sustainability. We use water-cooled servers in every datacentre we own, making us more efficient than most other companies.

We have a unique industrial model, where all of our servers are assembled and disassembled in two factories in France and Canada. This gives us the power to re-use and recycle components into our affordable, lower spec server ranges including KimSufi and SoYouStart.

We make sustainability easy for you too. For most of our offerings, you can download a carbon calculator at the end of the month or year, which tells you the exact impact of your cloud usage, including the 'share' of its operational impact, like running our office locations. This transparency and fairness is an integral part of our business.

We're committed to innovation. In addition to our commitment to blockchain, we offer a number of AI-specific IaaS and PaaS solutions, as well as offering quantum solutions so that whatever your future plans, we can support you.

## The OVHcloud Partner Program

The OVHcloud Partner Program is an ecosystem of over 1900 partners worldwide. It was created to empower organisations to leverage OVHcloud infrastructure to build solutions and services for their customers. It gives you the opportunity to expand your cloud offering, providing choice for your customers, and differentiating you from competitive alternatives.

We take a personalised approach to communicating with our Partners. Partners get direct access to our sales and technical teams to support them in any way that they need.

We promote our partners in our Partner Directory, provide training, dedicated Partner Account Managers, access to OVHcloud's R&D and Partner Advisory Boards, as well as market development funds. Being an OVHcloud partner is a two-way street, and we hold regular events to learn more about your experiences and how we can support you better.

Partner program

## The OVHcloud Marketplace

The OVHcloud Marketplace is a one-stop shop for our community's SaaS and PaaS businesses. Built on our ethical and transparent cloud, it helps organizations find ways to digitize their entire business or subscribe to solutions for personal use. It allows builders to find solutions across collaboration, cybersecurity, business administration as well as specialised vertical software, while simultaneously promoting our SaaS and PaaS partners.

Marketplace

## The OVHcloud Startup Program

The OVHcloud startup program is focused on giving startups and scale-ups the boost they need to thrive.

Free cloud credits and hands-on technical support help our program participants to accelerate what they do by using our secure, reliable, and cost-efficient cloud, whether they're in the early stages of building an MVP or scaling up to sell more products later down the line. Think of the program as a supportive path from ideation to growth. We want to make sure startups and scale-ups have everything they need at every step. On joining the OVHcloud Startup Program, businesses choose between two tiers based on their growth stage: Start and Scale.

Start: Ideal for early-stage startups developing a proof of concept and beginning their journey. Support includes €10,000 worth of free cloud credits and 6 hours of one-on-one consultations with an engineer to build on our cloud.

Scale: Designed for scale-ups looking to refine their offering, grow their user base, and expand. Support includes up to €100,000 worth of additional cloud credits and up to 20 hours of strategic support.

Startup program