



## Success Story

# Electricity Authority of Cyprus Is Powered by FlexPod: High Performance, 40% Less TCO, and Future-Readiness



Another NetApp solution provided by:



### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

#### Industry Utilities

#### The Challenge

Do more with less through data center transformation and meet business, cost, and operational objectives.

#### The Solution

Eliminate legacy systems with a fully virtualized data center platform based on the FlexPod® solution from NetApp® and Cisco®, combined with VMware® virtualization.

#### Benefits

- Minimized backup time, from 40 hours to 45 minutes
- Shortened SAP® reporting time, from 24 to much less hours
- Lowered TCO with a 40% decrease in operating expenses
- Consolidated more than 200 file servers
- Simplified the data center infrastructure and reduced LAN equipment
- Improved disaster recovery and business continuity
- Gained ability to easily accommodate the storage-hungry GIS application
- Became prepared for a business future in a deregulated market

#### Customer Profile

The Electricity Authority of Cyprus (EAC, [www.eac.com.cy](http://www.eac.com.cy)) is an independent, semi-governmental corporation. Established in 1952, the EAC has a mission to perform functions related to the generation and supply of electricity in Cyprus. Headquartered in the country's capital, Nicosia, EAC has about 2,000 employees. It operates four regional offices in the main towns and seven customer service centers across the country. EAC serves over half a million customers.

#### The Challenge

##### Doing more with less

EAC is a great example of how an IT organization can manage to do more with less. Challenges were tough: The team had to improve IT agility to support business transformation in a more competitive market, while coping with IT budget cuts of 30%.

“We faced quite some pressure from the management to lower the operating expenses of IT and raise service levels,” says Yiannos Fouskotos, project lead at EAC. “Core applications such as SAP and Oracle® Database needed to run faster. And there was our explosively growing geodata, which required more cost-efficient storage.”

For almost 15 years, EAC had been using IBM DS systems and a range of file servers. During that time, the typical shortcomings of a growing environment arose: Increasing amounts of data and applications needed more systems and made the administration cumbersome. Although a few possibilities existed to raise the efficiency of the infrastructure, it was impossible to reduce maintenance costs. “The best thing was to make a clear break, change our data center strategy, and go for consolidation,” says Fouskotos.

#### The Solution

##### FlexPod for data center consolidation

EAC moved away from legacy systems and consolidated its data center infrastructure on a single, fully virtualized platform: FlexPod. This platform combines Cisco UCS® and Cisco Nexus® solutions with NetApp systems and data management.

As usual, EAC teamed with its partner Logicom Solutions, the leading provider in Cyprus for comprehensive IT solutions. Together, EAC and Logicom Solutions drilled down the requirements from a bird's-eye view to a detailed choreography of change. Logicom Solutions was in charge of the project management and coordinated several third-party

teams from different countries, including specialists for SAP system migration. Everything was on schedule before day zero. When the SAP system went live in the morning, its users logged in flawlessly. They had no clue that an error with backing up a virtual server had been solved at the very last minute. "It was good to see that the vendors' joint support worked so well," says Fouskotos.

To provide its users with high availability and disaster recovery, EAC operates two FlexPod platforms with data replication across two sites. Both sites are almost identically equipped with the same hardware stack and backup devices, 10GbE in the backbone, MPLS, and full virtualization. The broad connectivity of FlexPod has reduced network complexity, because file and block data traffic now share one infrastructure.

### Unbound scalability with NetApp clustered Data ONTAP

"FlexPod is state-of-the-art and won the public tender," says Fouskotos. "Regarding the storage, I was sure right away that clustered Data ONTAP is the future. NetApp has a clear vision for nonstop operation and scalability without limits, and this is what we need more than ever in the future."

### Business Benefits

#### Reduced TCO by 40%

By changing its data center strategy and deploying FlexPod, EAC successfully reduced costs. The FlexPod configuration fit the existing number of Oracle licenses and therefore met the license fee limit. The move to an opex model over six years with fixed rates—including a five-year warranty, software updates, and implementation—will lower operational costs by 40%. "We save a lot by using systems from NetApp. For example, the purchasing costs for the new storage correspond to approximately 90% of the annual maintenance fees for the old storage," says Fouskotos.

A flexible configuration with SAS, SATA, and SSD media adds to the cost advantage. The team can adapt performance, cost, and capacity easily to serve different needs, from high speed for SAP access to simple scalability for storage-hungry geodata. Performance, especially for databases, benefits from virtual tiering: "Hot" data is automatically cached and served from SSDs, and other data is served from SAS disks. Thin provisioning leverages storage virtualization and improves storage utilization. Consolidation has also helped minimize the backup time; it went from as much as 40 hours to 45 minutes.

Secure multi-tenancy complements the efficiencies of consolidation with secure separation of data. This capability can be useful for future requirements. For example, if EAC decides to provide data access to customers one day, the company can do it easily and securely within the same IT infrastructure. Today almost all data, including data from about 200 file servers, has been transferred to FlexPod. The last step of the journey is the migration of the Oracle based billing system.

### Improved performance and the user experience

Faster access to SAP data is important to boost productivity and smooth out processes across the organization. EAC uses SAP applications for almost every part of its business, from materials and warehouse management to enterprise resource planning, finances, and human resources.

Fouskotos is very pleased with the performance: "Overall, FlexPod delivers a much better user experience. One outstanding example is SAP batch reporting times. We cut it from 24 to much less hours. This greatly proves the impact that our IT has on our business today."

### Prepared to stay the #1 player in the market

With the new infrastructure, EAC is well equipped to adapt to new challenges such as the changing business climate. Although the electricity market in Cyprus was opened in 2004, so far, EAC hasn't faced competition from newcomers. That situation will change with a government initiative to facilitate the market entry of renewable energy sources. To keep its position as the market leader, EAC has to drive speed and efficiency to higher levels to stay competitive in pricing and service quality. That is no problem at all for the IT organization, according to Fouskotos: "With FlexPod, we can manage change flexibly and open the doors to new services and applications. Wherever our business journey will take us, we are prepared."

### SOLUTION COMPONENTS

#### FlexPod Components

2 NetApp FAS3250 systems

Cisco UCS B200 blade servers

Cisco Nexus switches and fabric extenders

#### Virtualization

VMware vSphere®

#### NetApp Products

Clustered Data ONTAP® 8.2

Complete bundle

Flash Pool™ caching

Secure multi-tenancy

SnapMirror® data replication

#### Protocols

CIFS, NFS, FCoE

#### Third-Party Products

Esri GIS

Microsoft® Windows Server® 2008

Oracle Customer Care and Billing

Oracle Database 11g

SAP ECC 6

#### Partner

Logicom Solutions Ltd.

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