

Life in Codes

TURNING THE 2029 CLOUD DEADLINE INTO A STRATEGIC RESET

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A cloud migration guide for regulated and enterprise organizations still running Atlassian Data Center

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 28 March 2029, Atlassian Data Center reaches end of life. After that date, Data Center licenses and most associated Marketplace apps go read-only. The milestone that will actually force most organizations' hands arrives earlier: renewals for existing Data Center customers close in March 2028, and no new Data Center licenses have been sold since March 2026.

For most companies, that is a licensing story. For regulated and enterprise organizations - financial institutions, public bodies, logistics and infrastructure operators - it is something bigger. It lands squarely inside two live EU regulatory obligations, the Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA) and the NIS2 Directive, both of which hold organizations accountable for how they manage ICT risk, report incidents, and oversee critical technology suppliers. A self-managed, ageing Data Center estate is exactly the kind of exposure regulators are now asking boards to account for.

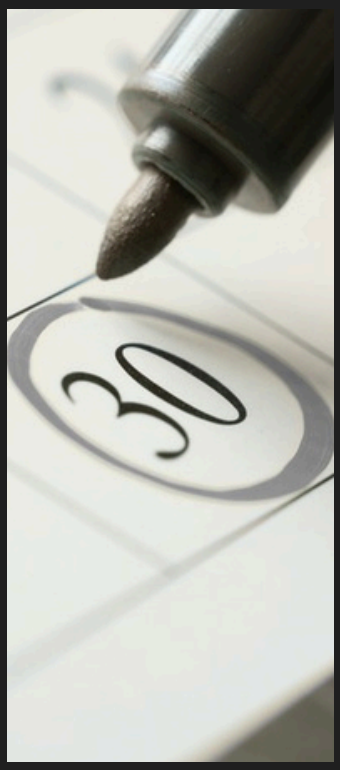
This paper argues that the most effective response for organizations with over 100 users is to view the migration window as a strategic reset. Rather than executing a rushed lift and shift, companies can utilize this funded opportunity to systematically address years of accumulated governance, security, and operational debt. This approach results in a modernized platform that fundamentally strengthens compliance and long term operational resilience. However, it is essential to recognize that moving to the cloud does not permit the outsourcing of accountability. Under DORA, the migration process relocates a significant portion of the operational burden while simultaneously establishing new and rigorous third party obligations that the organization must oversee.

It also introduces Life in Codes, an Atlassian Platinum Solution Partner and, as of June 2026, an official Atlassian Specialized Partner in Cloud for EMEA - a designation Atlassian awards only to partners with a demonstrated record of successful cloud migrations. Life in Codes works with enterprises, European institutions, SMEs and start-ups, and has led migrations under real operational pressure, including an emergency recovery after an on-premise data center failure mid-project.

"Every organization still on Data Center will make this move eventually. The only real question the deadline settles is whether they make it deliberately or under pressure. Our commitment is to the first path. Working across the ecosystem has convinced me that what separates the companies pulling ahead from the ones merely staying busy is almost never the tooling. It is how quickly a decision travels from an idea into something a customer can feel. Cloud is what shortens that distance. The companies that move early will hold important business outcomes, such as faster delivery, a lower cost of operation, and a smoother transition, over those still deliberating."

Alexandru Constantinescu
CEO, Life in Codes & Atlassian Community Champion for Bucharest

A DEADLINE HIDING A BIGGER OPPORTUNITY



Every enterprise still running Atlassian Data Center now has a fixed point on the calendar. That kind of clarity is unusual in IT planning, and it's tempting to treat it purely as a compliance exercise: pick a cutover date, move the data, close the ticket.

That framing undersells what's actually on the table. Most Data Center estates carry years of accumulated **configuration debt**, such as permission schemes nobody fully documented, workflows built for teams that have since reorganized, plugins nobody remembers installing, and infrastructure maintenance that quietly consumes IT capacity every quarter. None of that debt survives a good migration untouched. It has to be looked at, decided on, and either carried forward deliberately or retired.

That makes the 2029 deadline a forcing function with a budget attached. Migrations of this scale rarely get approved as pure modernization projects - but when the alternative is a licensing cliff, the business case writes itself. organizations that treat this as strategy rather than logistics tend to come out the other side with materially better governance, security posture, and operational visibility than they had going in. organizations that wait for the deadline to force the decision tend to get a rushed version of the same project, with far less room to get it right.

WHY THIS ISN'T JUST AN IT TICKET

For organizations operating under EU regulatory regimes, cloud migration timing intersects directly with two obligations that are already in force.

DORA - the Digital Operational Resilience Act

In force since January 2025, DORA applies to banks, insurers, investment firms, payment institutions, and other financial entities operating in the EU, along with the critical ICT third parties that serve them. It requires demonstrable ICT risk management frameworks, strict incident classification and reporting windows, regular resilience testing, and formal oversight of third-party technology providers. A self-managed Data Center deployment puts the full weight of that resilience obligation - patching, uptime, incident response, disaster recovery - on the customer's own infrastructure team, with no vendor-managed redundancy to lean on.



NIS2 - the Network and Information Security Directive



NIS2 broadened EU cybersecurity obligations well beyond the original NIS Directive, pulling in a much wider set of "essential" and "important" entities across energy, transport, health, digital infrastructure, public administration, logistics, and more. It emphasizes documented risk management, rapid incident reporting, and - notably - supply-chain security, meaning organizations are expected to be able to account for the resilience of the technology vendors and platforms they depend on.

Where Atlassian Cloud changes the equation

Cloud-native Atlassian shifts a meaningful share of the resilience burden - patching cadence, infrastructure redundancy, independently audited security certifications - onto Atlassian itself, while giving the organization centralized, org-wide visibility into access, configuration, and incident history. Data Center puts all of that on the customer, instance by instance. For a regulated organization, staying on Data Center longer than necessary isn't just a licensing risk - it's a widening gap against the operational resilience standard regulators already expect.

THE DEADLINE, IN BRIEF

A quick reference for planning conversations:

Milestone	Date	What it means
New Data Center licenses	Closed March 2026	Atlassian no longer sells Data Center licenses to new customers.
Renewals for existing customers	Closed March 2028	Existing Data Center customers can no longer renew their licenses after this date. For most organizations, this is the real planning deadline.
Data Center end of life	28 March 2029	Data Center licenses and most associated Marketplace app licenses expire and become read-only. Extended maintenance is available only by exception, negotiated directly with Atlassian.
Exception	N/A	Bitbucket Data Center is not part of this sunset - it continues under a separate Hybrid License offering.

Source: Atlassian, "Data Center End of Life" (atlassian.com/licensing/data-center-end-of-life).:

The practical planning horizon is shorter than 2029 suggests. Waiting until the final cutoff leaves no room for a phased, tested migration - and no fallback if something goes wrong mid-project.

WHO CARRIES WHAT: DATA CENTER VS CLOUD

A quick reference for planning conversations:

Responsibility	Data Center (today)	Atlassian Cloud
Patching, upgrades, capacity	You	Atlassian
Availability, redundancy, disaster recovery	You	Atlassian
Independently audited security certifications	You, per instance	Atlassian
Access control, audit logging, configuration visibility	You, instance by instance	Shared — one control plane, your policies
Data residency and encryption key management	You	Shared — you choose region and key model
Incident classification and regulatory reporting	You	You
Third-party risk register, contractual terms, exit strategy	You	You — and newly in scope
Regulatory accountability	You	You — always

WHAT TRANSFORMATION LOOKS LIKE BEYOND LIFT-AND-SHIFT

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The question worth putting to an executive committee is not what Cloud does. It is what changes about how the business runs, and what stops costing money once it does. A migration planned around compliance and resilience objectives - rather than data portability alone - should be defensible on five grounds:

Compliance stops being a mobilisation and becomes a byproduct

In most regulated organizations, each audit cycle pulls people off delivery work for weeks to assemble evidence that existed all along but was never captured in reportable form. When classification, approvals, and SLAs are enforced by the workflow itself, that evidence accumulates as work happens. The objective is not better service management - it is removing a recurring internal cost and shortening the gap between a regulator's request and a defensible answer.

Scarce technical people go back to work the business can see

Every Data Center estate carries a standing tax: patching, upgrade planning, capacity management, disaster-recovery testing, and specialist knowledge that leaves when one person does. None of it differentiates you from a competitor. Moving that burden to Atlassian is a headcount reallocation decision as much as a technical one; and for most organizations it is the clearest line in the business case.

AI adoption becomes a governed choice rather than an unmonitored one

Your teams are already using AI. The only open question is whether it happens inside your access controls or outside them, and every month on Data Center is a month of the second option. Rovo is included at no additional cost with Premium and Enterprise Cloud subscriptions and operates within the same permissions and audit trail as the rest of the platform. The objective is capturing the productivity without opening an uncontrolled path for company data to leave.

Security posture becomes something you can state at board level

Instance-by-instance hardening produces an estate that nobody can describe in a single sentence - which is a problem when a board or a regulator asks who has access to what, and what changed last quarter. A single control plane across the whole Atlassian footprint turns that from an investigation into a report.

Tool sprawl and its licence bill get consolidated

Tool sprawl and its licence bill get consolidated. Point solutions accumulate around the gaps of an ageing platform, each with its own contract, admin overhead, and integration to maintain. Migration is the natural moment to retire them - and the accompanying asset and configuration inventory does double duty, supporting both the cost case and the supply-chain visibility NIS2 expects.

Framed this way, the deadline is not the reason to move. It is simply the date by which the decision stops being yours to time.

WHAT CLOUD DOES NOT SOLVE

Three things deserve stating plainly, regarding cloud migration:

1. **Accountability does not transfer:** Under DORA, moving a workload to a third party relocates operational effort — it does not relocate responsibility. Your institution remains accountable to its regulator for the resilience of the function, whoever operates the infrastructure underneath it. In practice, migrating to Atlassian Cloud creates obligations that a self-hosted deployment does not:
    a. Atlassian enters your register of information as an ICT third-party service provider, with the supported functions, their criticality, data locations, and any subcontracting recorded and maintained for supervisory inspection.
    b. Your contractual arrangements need to carry the provisions DORA expects — service descriptions and performance levels, data location and change notification, audit and access rights, incident notification obligations, business continuity commitments, and termination rights. Arrangements supporting critical or important functions additionally require exit assistance and subcontractor disclosure.
    c. You need a documented, tested exit strategy for any critical or important function running on the platform — including a credible answer to how you would migrate away without unacceptable disruption. Where substitution is not immediately practicable, the strategy has to say so honestly and set out the controls that apply while the dependency persists.

None of this is an argument against migrating, but an argument for scoping the work correctly, in the sense that the register entry, the contractual review, and the exit plan belong in the migration project, not in a follow-up nobody funds.

2. **Data residency is not the same as data sovereignty:** For EU regulated buyers this is usually the first objection rather than the fifth, and it deserves a precise answer. Atlassian Cloud supports pinning in-scope product data to specific regions, with the supported location list expanding — and encryption at rest as standard, with customer-managed keys available as an add-on for organizations that require direct control over key material. Comprehensive audit logging is available at the organization level.
    - What these controls do not do is change the legal jurisdiction of the provider, and it is worth being clear-eyed that residency and sovereignty are different claims. Where a genuine sovereignty requirement, an air-gap mandate, or a classified-workload constraint applies, the honest answer may be that Cloud is not the right destination for that particular workload — at least not on the same timeline as everything else.

3. **There are paths for the cases that don't fit:** Not every estate resolves into a single cutover, and a partner who tells you otherwise is selling rather than assessing. Where constraints are real, the options worth examining are a phased migration that moves the unconstrained majority first, a hybrid arrangement (Bitbucket Data Center, for instance, continues under a separate Hybrid License offering and is outside this sunset), or extended maintenance by exception negotiated directly with Atlassian for the workloads that genuinely cannot move. Each carries trade-offs in cost and capability, and each is better decided early than discovered late.

THE COST OF TREATING THIS AS JUST A DEADLINE

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Organizations that leave migration until the deadline are forced to run the project reactively - and reactive migrations carry real operational risk.

On-premise infrastructure fails on its own schedule and an estate running past its supported life is more likely to fail than one that is not. An organization that has already planned its migration treats that as an inconvenience. An organization that has not treats it as a crisis — and does so, if the timing is unkind, with compliance reporting obligations, auditors, and board oversight watching.

Planned migrations get phased testing, staged cutovers, and rollback options. Forced ones get whatever time is left.

At Life in Codes we saw this firsthand: during one Jira DC-to-Cloud migration, an on-premise data center failure took down the client's production instance mid-project. What had been a planned, phased migration became an emergency recovery, which meant rebuilding from CSV exports into a fresh Cloud instance under time pressure, then reconciling attachments and comments after the fact.

The recovery succeeded, and the client's team was back to full productivity within days. But it is a useful illustration of the difference between a migration run on the organization's own timeline and one run under duress.

A regulated enterprise forced into that same scramble in the final months before March 2029 would be doing it with compliance reporting obligations, auditors, and board oversight watching.

A PARTNER BUILT FOR REGULATED ENTERPRISES

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Life in Codes is an Atlassian Platinum Solution Partner, and since 10 June 2026, an official Atlassian Specialized Partner in Cloud for EMEA - a specialization Atlassian grants specifically to partners with a proven record of successful customer migrations to Cloud.

The team works across Romania, Estonia, Belgium, the UK, and the UAE, with a client roster that includes enterprise companies, European Institutions, DHL, alongside SMEs, and start-ups.



CASE IN POINT: ADORE ME

When Adore Me decided to migrate from Jira Server to Atlassian Cloud, they brought in Life in Codes to guide the process. The Life in Codes team embedded directly with Adore Me's engineering group - joining their Slack, working in their cadence - rather than running the migration at arm's length. When the data center failure described above hit mid-project, that embedded relationship is what made a same-week emergency recovery possible.

Beyond recovery, Life in Codes went on to configure Advanced Roadmaps, map OKRs to strategy, and introduce Confluence as the team's knowledge-sharing platform - turning a migration into a broader operating-model upgrade.

'The main benefit is having someone knowing more than one recipe for doing something specific. Of course, for me and my team it saves a lot of time having this team of experts that could bring solutions for our challenges'.

Silvia Tarziu
Technical Innovation Coach, Adore me

OUR SERVICES: THE FULL MIGRATION PATH

Life in Codes

Life in Codes offers a breadth of professional services, from initial process and technology audit through to continuous support, designed to ensure that delivered solutions are successfully implemented and genuinely adopted by every team that depends on them. As an Atlassian migration partner, our role is to make sure you avoid data loss, interruptions, and downtime, and that the new environment integrates cleanly with the internal applications you already depend on.

Our migration practice covers three distinct scenarios

From on-premise to Atlassian Cloud	Transferring all data and functionality with zero impact on daily operations, working closely with your teams to concentrate effort where it matters most.
Evaluating the decision to move	Assessing ROI, risks, and bottlenecks, factoring in data compliance, plugins, and integration with your existing systems, and producing an objective roadmap rather than a foregone conclusion.
From other solutions into Atlassian	From ServiceNow, Zendesk, monday.com and others, adapting across environments, architectures, and toolsets.

On the Cloud side we cover the full product set - Jira, Jira Service Management, Confluence, Bitbucket, and the transition from Crowd and other user management products to Guard.

Our migration process consists in **five** steps, applied consistently across engagements of every size:

Assess	We assess your objectives, the current status of your apps - which get migrated, which do not, alternatives,, and the migration strategy and method best suited to your environment.
Plan	We map the actions, review configurations, assess the volume and complexity of your data, and define the migration plan.
Prepare	We build the migration checklist, verify server versions, and confirm every application has been accounted for in the plan.
Test & execute	We copy your data, run a full migration test, and validate the results before executing the live migration and redirecting users to the new destination.
Support & adopt	We stay engaged after cutover with full support and team training, so the new platform is genuinely adopted rather than merely switched on.

THE SERVICES THAT SURROUND A MIGRATION

A migration touches far more than data. These services are what turn a technically successful cutover into an operationally successful one:

- **Business process analysis:** identifying which business processes can be optimised with Atlassian tools, turning requirements into objectives and KPIs, and producing a personalised implementation plan. Done before migration, this is what prevents you from carrying inefficient processes into a new platform.
- **Configuration audit:** reviewing existing configurations and functional aspects, with comprehensive reporting and detailed recommendations you can act on quickly. This is the natural first step for any Data Center estate that has accumulated years of undocumented change.
- **Implementation:** installing Atlassian products to specification, configuring the necessary add-ons and workflows, and delivering a complete, ready-to-use solution in the shortest possible time.
- **Licensing and counselling:** making sure you land on the right mix of products, add-ons, and packages. With Data Center renewals closing in March 2028, licensing decisions made now have a direct bearing on cost and flexibility later.
- **Training:** giving teams the knowledge they need to build the skills they want and greater autonomy in using Atlassian products. Cloud introduces genuinely new capabilities; adoption is where migration value is realised or lost.
- **Managed services**: becoming part of the team, supporting work processes through upgrades, technical support, and infrastructure maintenance well beyond the cutover date.

Life in Codes

Our migration work spans financial institutions, public & European bodies and agencies, and companies from logistics, telecom, energy, and cybersecurity.

These are organizations where downtime, data integrity and audit trails are not negotiable, which is precisely the standard a Data Center migration under regulatory scrutiny has to meet.

SERVICE MANAGEMENT: WHERE MIGRATION VALUE IS WON OR LOST

Life in Codes

For regulated organizations, service management is the part of the Atlassian platform that regulators actually look at. Incident classification and reporting windows, change approvals, access requests, audit trails (under DORA and NIS2), these stop being internal process hygiene and become evidence.

A migration is the single best opportunity to get them right, because it is the one moment when every workflow is already on the table. It is also where migrations most often disappoint. The platform moves successfully, but the service desk on the other side is the same one the organization had before, carrying the same undocumented workflows, the same approval chains built for a reorganized team, the same queues nobody has audited in years. The tooling is new; the operating model is not.

THE EXPERTISE GAP NOBODY EXPECTS

The reason is rarely a lack of effort. It is a specific, and surprisingly common, misjudgement about what kind of expertise a reconfiguration requires.

Exclusive Networks, a global leader in cybersecurity and cloud solutions, encountered this directly. The company set out to optimise its Jira platform to better align with its own workflows, drawing on several team members who had used Jira for years and were regarded internally as the organization's Jira experts. The difficulty surfaced when they began adapting the platform to new workflows.

"A lot of people internally claim expertise because they've used Jira before. The reality is they've worked within pre-existing structures and don't know how to configure it from the ground up to meet our needs."

Amelie Donnally
Global Program Delivery & Business Governance Director, Exclusive Networks

EXCLUSIVE NETWORKS

That distinction, between navigating a system and configuring one from first principles, is precisely the gap a Data Center-to-Cloud migration exposes. Everything that was inherited must now be rebuilt deliberately. Experienced users are invaluable at describing how the organization works; they are not, by default, the people who should be designing the permission schemes, workflows, and service request types that an auditor will later examine.

The limits of a generic approach

Exclusive Networks then did what most organizations do, and what is usually the right instinct: they brought in external help. The early engagements, however, did not land the way anyone had hoped.

"Many consultants claimed they had done it before. But what they delivered was generic and didn't address our specific challenges. It became clear that they weren't fully understanding how our company operates.", added **Amelie Donnally,** Exclusive Networks.

This says less about the capability of the people involved than about a mismatch that is easy to create and difficult to spot in advance - a standard approach applied to a distinctly non-standard organization. Exclusive Networks paused, reassessed, and concluded that what they needed was not additional capacity but expertise aligned to how their business actually works.

It is a distinction worth holding onto ahead of a migration deadline. Under time pressure the natural response is to add hands quickly, and configuration decisions then get made faster than they get understood. A service desk built that way usually needs revisiting later - and it is far better for that to happen on your own schedule than in response to an audit finding.

What tailored service management looks like

Working with Life in Codes, Exclusive Networks was matched with a consultant whose approach started with understanding the company's structure and needs before proposing solutions.

"He understood how to configure Jira in a way that aligned with our workflows. Instead of applying a one-size-fits-all solution, he really took the time to design a system that worked for us.", said **Andy De Peter**, Chief Information Security & Technology Officer, Exclusive Networks.

The pilot project became a breakthrough: a Jira setup that was flexible, scalable, and integrated with day-to-day operations, built around how the teams actually worked rather than forcing those teams into an existing template. Just as importantly, it was designed to evolve as the company grows - which, for an organization facing a platform transition, is the difference between a configuration that survives the migration and one that has to be redone after it.

"We no longer had to force our workflows to fit into an existing Jira template. Instead, the system was built around how we actually work.", explained **Andy De Peter**, Exclusive Networks

HOW THIS CONNECTS TO OUR ITSM PRACTICE

Life in Codes

Life in Codes holds an Atlassian Service Management Specialization in EMEA alongside the Cloud Migration Specialization; the two capabilities a Data Center migration needs in the same team.

Our service management work is aimed at eliminating inefficiencies between IT Ops, Dev, and the rest of the business to deliver better employee and customer experiences, and in a migration context it typically covers:

- Incident and change workflows designed against DORA and NIS2 reporting obligations, so classification, escalation, and audit trails are captured by the system rather than reconstructed afterwards.
- Asset and configuration management (CMDB) mapping the relationships between hardware, software, networks and vendors - the inventory regulators expect on request.
- Knowledge management in Confluence, so resolution knowledge lives in the platform instead of in personal files and inboxes.
- Risk tracking and audit-ready documentation via custom workflows and automation, our standing approach to DORA and NIS2 compliance work.
- The lesson Exclusive Networks draws from their own experience translates directly to the 2029 deadline: when it comes to critical systems, the right partner ensures the platform works for you rather than the other way around. A migration is a rare chance to make that true - and a rushed one is the surest way to carry the old problems across.

GET AHEAD OF THE DEADLINE

March 2028, when renewals for existing Data Center customers close, arrives sooner than it appears once a realistic migration timeline is mapped backwards from it. Organizations that begin now get to run this on their own terms: phased, tested, and designed around compliance and resilience objectives rather than a licensing cutoff.

The most useful first step is small. A Migration Readiness Assessment gives you a clear-eyed picture of what you are actually working with before any commitment is made - and, just as often, a realistic sense of how much time you have.

What a readiness assessment gives you

- A full inventory of your current Data Center estate - configurations, workflows, integrations, and Marketplace apps, including which have no direct Cloud equivalent.
- A gap view against the DORA and NIS2 considerations set out in this paper, so compliance requirements shape the migration rather than follow it.
- An objective read on ROI, risks, and bottlenecks - including an honest answer where a phased or hybrid path serves you better than a single cutover.
- A phased roadmap with dates, mapped backwards from the March 2028 renewal deadline rather than forwards from today.

Most assessments take two to three weeks from kick-off to findings, and ask for a few hours of your team's time (typically an administrator, a service owner, and whoever holds the compliance relationship), as a deliberately small commitment.

There is no obligation attached, and no expectation that you migrate with us. If the assessment tells you that your estate is in better shape than you feared, that is a useful result too.

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THANK YOU!

Book a 20-minute readiness conversation

Pick a slot directly in our calendar:
lifeincodes.com/meetus

Or find our team in person at Atlassian Team '26 Europe
RAI Amsterdam, 6–8 October 2026.



CONTACT

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