## Public Sector Cloud Requirements Initiatives

All around the world, governments at national, state, and local levels are facing huge pressures to do “more with less. As cloud computing gains traction and momentum, many public sector organizations are exploring its usage to achieve large-scale efficiency savings while simultaneously improving organizational agility. However the nature of these relatively novel systems requires some re-examination of the public policy and government responsibility requirements generally applied to ICT functions on which public administrations rely.

The increased speed, functionality, reach and efficiencies sought and availability from cloud computing methods in some cases put unique stresses on conventional ICT requirements, and may also give rise to special needs not encountered or well defined in segregated, stand-alone computing installations.

Some work has been done in creating typologies of cloud computing service function levels, and towards models of services; and several recently-formed coalitions have proposed requirements lists at one or another level of cloud activity. However, there is little help available to governments to integrate those lists into common, readily-understood rules and requirements that inform auditable assurance, conformance testing and procurement; and little or no openly available, vendor-neutral information mapping such requirements to the rather large but loosely-organized body of existing ICT standards.

The foregoing state of affairs can lead to haphazard, constantly-changing criteria; serious difficulties in comparing or evaluating possible cloud services; accidental data architectures (or none at all); and a failure to take advantage of easily-used but hard-to-fine bodies of existing openly-available work.

OASIS, the international e-business standards consortium, is playing a leading role in filling this gap in the standards landscape through two initiatives. First, it is using its annual International Could Symposium (ICS) events to drive out the requirements and issues that need to be addressed. ICS2012, this year’s event, will be held in Washington DC on 10-12 October and will continue and expand on the discussions started at ICS 2011 in the UK last year. And secondly, it is about to launch a new Technical Committee to formalize the list of requirements that can be used in the three processes mentioned above; procurement, conformance testing, and auditing.

Further information on both strands of activity is available as follows:

ICS2012 - <https://www.oasis-open.org/events/cloud/2012>

New TC - <http://lists.oasis-open.org/archives/public-sector-cloud-discuss/>

If you have an interest in contributing to either or both of these activities please contact [member-services@oasis-open.org]