

CASE STUDY: PROVISION OF CLOUD PRODUCTIVITY SOLUTIONS TO NHFC

The National Housing Finance Corporation (NHFC) procured the Microsoft Office 365 Business Premium licensing and appointed Purple-Blue Technologies to assist with deployment of the cloud platform and all related workloads and services.



CLIENT BACKGROUND

The NHFC, a Schedule 3A Development Finance Institution (DFI) of the National Department of Human Settlements, was established in 1996 with the principal mandate of broadening and deepening access to finance for the low to middle income South African households.

The target market of the NHFC is the low-to-middle income housing market which typically includes households who earn between R3 500 and R15 000 per month. The NHFC mandate requires the company to make housing and housing finance accessible and affordable to facilitate this objective.

This is done through:

- Providing wholesale funding to housing development projects for ownership, social housing and private rental, including inner cities, and for incremental housing purposes;
- Partnering with banks and other non-banking retail financial intermediaries to increase their sustained lending and innovation in the target market served; and
- Leveraging private sector funding for the sustainable development of human settlements.

SCOPE OF WORK

The project scope involved the implementation of Office 365 Cloud solution (Exchange Online, One Drive for Business, SharePoint, Microsoft Teams) including the migration of NHFC's existing mail users and associated data and functionality from On-Premise Exchange to the Microsoft Office 365 online service using best practice principles as defined by Microsoft.

Specific objectives include:

- Creation of the overall solution architecture and design.
- Setup and Configure the Cloud Infrastructure
- Hardware resizing, design, installation and configuration of Active Directory for Office 365.
- DirSync Installation and configuration of Directory Synchronisation between the Active Directory and Office 365.
- Provisioning of all NHFC user's mailboxes on Office 365 Exchange Online with appropriate quota.
- Migrate all active mailboxes and email users including archive files and calendars to Office 365 Exchange Online.

WORK DELIVERED

Due to the nature of NHFC's requirements we were required to provide all the solutions because of their co-dependence within the cloud productivity platform.

We deployed the solutions as depicted below in order to ensure business continuity via remote work and collaboration that was rendered critical due to the Covid-19 Pandemic which forced the clients to change its work model.

**M365
Deployment
& Migration**



**Cloud
Identity
Foundation**



**Desktop
Development
Foundation**



**MDM
Foundation**



The deployment was successfully deployed within 8 weeks and as per recommendation by Microsoft we provided 3 months stabilization and support of the migrated workload while providing user training.

HIGHLIGHTS & CHALLENGES

The following challenges were experienced:

- Due to the Covid-19 lockdown, completion of tasks was delayed, namely MS Exchange CU upgrade and mailbox migration which resulted in extended timelines.
- Desktop Deployments for desktops machines had to stopped as technicians could not go on-site and their SCCM was not fully configured for this process

The following highlights were experienced:

- The entire deployment was successfully completed remotely, within budget and with minimal disturbances to business operations.
- Assisted the client in fulfilling their mandate and ICT strategy while increasing collaboration via digital transformation which is aligned to our delivery model that is to **TRANSFORM – INTEGRATE** and **MANAGE**.

LESSON LEARNED

The greatest lesson learnt is that times change and the industry evolves constantly as the world of technology transforms to meet business and global needs which means that Purple-Blue Technologies must also grow and change in order to continue to deliver the our services and solutions to our clients.

We must be flexible and update with industry trends and client needs in order to have forward planning and thinking.

During this time, the way companies and employees work has changed from office based to more remote and collaborative without impacting productivity and We as PBT must be ready and fully capable to service our clients.



CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

We have a build a solid relationship with the client and we were instrumental in their meeting their strategy and mandate through the deployment of our solutions.

ICT has been able to quantify the need for the deployment of O365/M365 within the business as well as show business value and high impact in equipping NHFC workforce to remain productive during such unprecedented times.

Below is the statement by the CIO in response to 3 key questions:

“Why did NHFC want to move to O365 and all related services – Problem Statement?”

To enable achievement of the mandate of the NHFC which is to supporting housing delivery through the provision of affordable housing finance and the aims of the HSDB of deliver the sustained, equitable and accessible value creation by effectively and efficiently providing quality funding and financial support for the development of integrated human settlements in South Africa. Also, enable achievement of the NHFC ICT Strategy (NHFC Business Modernisation Strategy) of creating a client experience that is fair, simple engaging and empowering through technology. To fully enable the remote working strategy and effective collaboration. Lastly to introduce operational efficiencies and cost reduction in running the business of NHFC.

Did the deployment address these issues and what was the business value?

Yes, in terms of operational efficiencies, cost reduction, remote working, enablement of the mandate and ICT Strategy.

Did this deployment impact your ICT Strategy and how?

Yes, organisation is fully enabled and empowered through ICT and O365 deployment contributed largely in the achievement of the ICT strategy initiatives that are customer facing.”

Vuyokazi Menye – Chief Information Officer, NHFC