

Government

Delivering vital financial support to **farming communities**

Directorate for Agrarian Payments Serbia

Government organization moves to a hyperconverged infrastructure platform from Lenovo and VMware, helping to ensure that the IT systems underpinning agricultural subsidies are available 24/7.

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vmware[®]



Lenovo

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Who is the Directorate for Agrarian Payments?

Part of Serbia's Ministry of Agriculture and Environmental Protection, the Directorate for Agrarian Payments is responsible for the implementation of the country's agricultural subsidies program. The organization is involved in every aspect of the dispersal of European Union (EU) funds, including assessing applications for financial support, performing on-the-spot checks, and making payments to beneficiaries.



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The Challenge

To deliver effective financial support to agricultural producers across Serbia, the Directorate depends on its IT systems. The organization's 350 staff rely on laptops and desktops to access data on in-process funding applications and maintain thorough records for existing funding recipients.

Miloš Jelić, Head of Technical and System Support at the Directorate for Agrarian Payments Serbia, confirms: "Employees in the Directorate use a set of core applications, which are underpinned by a central database hosted on our on-premises server platform. If employees can't access these systems, then they can't do their work—so it's very important to ensure always-on access."

In the past, the Directorate ran its applications on a traditional three-tier environment, comprising servers, storage, and networking equipment from multiple vendors. As the infrastructure aged, reliability issues were becoming increasingly common. In addition, the organization recognized that the environment would be unable to scale efficiently to address new use cases such as analytics.

“We were burning significant resources chasing up each individual infrastructure vendor to get technical support,” recalls Jelić. “The problems weren’t confined to our server landscape, either. After procuring new laptops from one of the previous vendors, we found 30% had stopped working after less than a year because of faulty motherboards. We decided to look for a vendor for data center and PC solutions that offered reliability we could count on.”

“We have been working with our trusted technology partner Fractal Dimension for more than seven years now, so we turned to them for advice on a new platform. When the team showed us the advantages of a hyperconverged infrastructure [HCI], we were convinced it was the right choice.”

Miloš Jelić

Head of Technical and System Support, Directorate for Agrarian Payments Serbia

Trusted partner, comprehensive solution

Following an in-depth consultation with technology partner Fractal Dimension, the Directorate for Agrarian Payments selected an HCI solution from Lenovo and VMware to support its mission-critical business systems.

Based on five Lenovo ThinkAgile VX 5000 Series Certified Nodes, the new solution is powered by VMware vSAN™ virtualization software and integrated with 16Gb fibre channel and 10GbE switches. Combined with VMware vSphere®, the ThinkAgile VX platform offers a software-defined approach to hyperconvergence.

Hardware

Lenovo ThinkAgile VX 5000 Series Certified Nodes
Lenovo ThinkCentre M90t Gen 10
Lenovo ThinkPad P15 Gen 2 laptop

Software

Lenovo XClarity Administrator
Lenovo XClarity Integrator for VMware vCenter
VMware vCenter®
VMware vSphere®
VMware vSAN™

Services

Lenovo Keep Your Drive Service

“The Lenovo and VMware HCI solution gives us a one-stop shop for compute, storage, and management,” explains Jelić. “We are long-term users of VMware solutions, so the fact that Lenovo ThinkAgile VX Certified Nodes are preconfigured for VMware vSAN and include all the licenses we need made the HCI offering even more compelling. We were also very impressed by the all-flash Lenovo ThinkAgile VX 5000 Series solution, which offers a huge I/O performance improvement on our disk storage systems.”

With VMware vCenter® and Lenovo XClarity Integrator for VMware vCenter, the Directorate can manage its entire infrastructure via a single pane of glass. “Instead of separate panels for servers, storage, fibre channel switches, and virtualization, we can view everything in VMware vCenter,” confirms Jelić. “This has dramatically increased visibility and made infrastructure management much easier.”

The Directorate has also selected Lenovo as its preferred provider of workstations and laptops. Today, the company uses 170 Lenovo ThinkCentre M90t Gen 10 workstations and 50 Lenovo ThinkPad P15 Gen 2 laptops to support its end users in the business. “We’ve now been using the Lenovo ThinkCentre and ThinkPad solutions for over four years, and we’ve had zero issues with the systems,” adds Jelić.



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“Our experience working with Lenovo and Fractal Dimension on the HCI solution deployment was excellent. The equipment was delivered and installed on time, and the Fractal Dimension team even helped us perform a live migration with no downtime and no data loss—ensuring no disruption for our users.”

Miloš Jelić

Head of Technical and System Support,
Directorate for Agrarian Payments Serbia

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Results

Since making the transition to the HCI platform built on Lenovo ThinkAgile VX appliances and VMware vSAN, the Directorate has eliminated the reliability and scalability challenges of its previous architecture.

“Thanks to Lenovo and VMware, we’ve dramatically boosted the performance of our business applications, and key tasks such as generating reports now complete twice as fast,” says Jelić. “Our users definitely notice the difference, and the HCI solution is empowering them to work more efficiently.”

By boosting its data transfer speed from 100 Gbps before to 750 Gbps with VMware vSAN, the Directorate has also enhanced the efficiency of its data backups—helping to ensure that vital data is always protected.

- ✓ 2x boost in application performance
- ✓ 7x faster backups
- ✓ Zero downtime and zero data loss during live migration
- ✓ Zero technical issues in 4+ years
- ✓ Single pane of glass for infrastructure management

“We can now create copies of production data in our disaster recovery environment seven-times faster, which helps ensure that we can fully back up our systems within scheduled downtime windows,” explains Jelić. “We’re currently exploring the possibility of deploying another identical Lenovo ThinkAgile VX 5000 Series solution at our disaster recovery site, which will allow us to fail over seamlessly in the unlikely event of an outage in our production environment.”



“Our Lenovo and VMware HCI solutions are easy to maintain and simple to scale. As our IT workloads evolve and grow, we can simply connect additional all-flash nodes to boost our storage capacity.”

Miloš Jelić

Head of Technical and System Support, Directorate for Agrarian Payments Serbia

Why **Lenovo**?

The Directorate for Agrarian Payments had already experienced the advantages of Lenovo solutions several years before deploying the HCI solution.

“Our introduction to Lenovo came when we selected an IBM Storwize V3700 for Lenovo storage array as part of the previous heterogenous environment,” says Jelić. “Based on our positive experience with the Lenovo storage solution, we went on to procure Lenovo System x3550 M5 servers—and we were very impressed with how easy it was to deploy, configure, and maintain them.”

Today, the Directorate runs all its core business systems on Lenovo solutions. Jelić comments: “Our past experience with the reliability and performance of Lenovo solutions played a key role in choosing Lenovo and VMware to deliver a new HCI platform to support our operations.”





Partner perspective: Fractal Dimension

“We are delighted to have helped the Directorate find an innovative HCI platform that meets all their targets around flexibility, scalability, and manageability.”

Nenad Nikolin

Co-founder and CEO, Fractal Dimension



How do you keep agricultural subsidiaries on track?

Ensuring that critical IT systems are available 24/7
with Lenovo and VMware.

Explore Software-Defined Infrastructure Solutions

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