MatrixGard

CLOUD COST, 2026 EDITION

Cloud Cost Optimization Checklist

35 checks to find waste in your AWS or GCP bill. Hand it to whoever runs your cloud and score each line Done, Planned or Missed. The low-scoring sections are where to look first.

35 checks | 7 sections of 5 | Max score 70 | AWS and GCP | Last reviewed: November 2026

How to score

Done = 2 | Planned = 1 | Missed = 0

"Planned" means it has an owner and a date. An idea with neither is Missed.

Does a line not apply (for example, you run no Kubernetes)? Score it 2.

The arithmetic

35 checks x 2 points = **70 points**.

7 sections x 10 points = **70 points**.

Score bands are on the last page.

SECTION 1

Compute and instances

Are we paying for servers we do not use?

Score ____ / 10

	CHECK	DONE	PLANNED	MISSED
1.1	CPU and memory use of every large instance is reviewed at least monthly, and mostly-idle ones are downsized.	2	1	0
1.2	Instances run on current generations; older families (for example m4, m5) are on a migration list. Current example: AWS M8g, on Graviton4, which AWS rates at up to 30% better performance than Graviton3-based M7g.[1]	2	1	0
1.3	Arm-based instances (AWS Graviton) have been tested for workloads whose software supports Arm.	2	1	0
1.4	Spot capacity (AWS Spot, GCP Spot VMs) runs stateless, batch and fault-tolerant work.	2	1	0
1.5	Savings Plans, reservations or GCP committed-use discounts are reviewed monthly against steady usage.	2	1	0

SECTION 2

Kubernetes and containers

Is the cluster sized for real usage or for guesses?

Score ____ / 10

	CHECK	DONE	PLANNED	MISSED
2.1	Pod resource requests are compared with actual usage, and over-requests are cut.	2	1	0
2.2	Every pod sets resource requests; a policy flags pods that do not.	2	1	0
2.3	Node autoscaling (Cluster Autoscaler or Karpenter on AWS, GKE autoscaling on GCP) runs with scale-down on.	2	1	0
2.4	Vertical Pod Autoscaler, at least in recommendation mode, informs request sizes.	2	1	0
2.5	Non-production and fault-tolerant node pools run on Spot capacity.	2	1	0

SECTION 3

Storage

What is quietly growing every month?

Score _____ / 10

	CHECK	DONE	PLANNED	MISSED
3.1	Lifecycle rules (S3, Cloud Storage) move old data to colder classes or delete it.	2	1	0
3.2	Unattached EBS volumes and persistent disks are found and deleted.	2	1	0
3.3	gp2 volumes are moved to gp3. AWS: gp3 is 20% lower per GiB than gp2, includes 3,000 IOPS and 125 MiB/s, and the switch is an in-place Elastic Volumes change.[2]	2	1	0
3.4	Snapshots follow a written retention policy; older ones are deleted.	2	1	0
3.5	Every large bucket has a named owner who can say why it exists.	2	1	0

SECTION 4

Network and data transfer

Are we paying to move data we do not need to move?

Score _____ / 10

	CHECK	DONE	PLANNED	MISSED
4.1	Cross-region and cross-zone traffic is identified, and the unintended part is removed.	2	1	0
4.2	NAT gateway data processing charges are reviewed each month.	2	1	0
4.3	VPC endpoints carry S3 and DynamoDB traffic instead of the NAT gateway.	2	1	0
4.4	A CDN sits in front of the origin to cut egress.	2	1	0
4.5	Public IPv4 addresses are counted, and unused ones (including idle Elastic IPs) are released. Since 1 Feb 2024 AWS charges $0.005 per hour for every public IPv4 address, in use or idle.[3]	2	1	0

SECTION 5

Logging and monitoring

Are we paying to store logs nobody reads?

Score _____ / 10

	CHECK	DONE	PLANNED	MISSED
5.1	Production log level is INFO or WARN; debug logging is off unless someone is investigating.	2	1	0
5.2	Every log group has a retention period set; none is left on "never expire" by default. Keep what your obligations need: in India, CERT-In requires 180 days of ICT logs.[4]	2	1	0
5.3	The highest-volume log groups are reviewed monthly.	2	1	0
5.4	High-frequency traces are sampled rather than all kept.	2	1	0
5.5	Metrics, dashboards and alarms for deleted hosts and services are removed.	2	1	0

SECTION 6

Zombie resources

What is still running that nobody remembers starting?

Score _____ / 10

	CHECK	DONE	PLANNED	MISSED
6.1	Instances idle for a week are stopped once the owner confirms.	2	1	0
6.2	Unused databases (RDS, Cloud SQL) are deleted after a final snapshot.	2	1	0
6.3	Load balancers with no traffic are removed.	2	1	0
6.4	Old machine images and container images are cleaned up by registry lifecycle rules.	2	1	0
6.5	Orphaned functions (Lambda, Cloud Run functions) and their log groups are removed.	2	1	0

SECTION 7

Governance and non-production

Who can spend money, and who notices when they do?

Score _____ / 10

	CHECK	DONE	PLANNED	MISSED
7.1	Dev and staging run on start and stop schedules.	2	1	0
7.2	Tags for team, environment and cost centre are mandatory and enforced by policy.	2	1	0
7.3	Budgets alert at several thresholds you choose (for example 50%, 80% and 100% of plan).	2	1	0
7.4	Rights to create expensive resources are limited (IAM, organisation policies).	2	1	0
7.5	Sandbox environments expire automatically.	2	1	0

YOUR RESULT

Add it up

1. Compute and instances	_____ / 10	2. Kubernetes and containers	_____ / 10
3. Storage	_____ / 10	4. Network and data transfer	_____ / 10
5. Logging and monitoring	_____ / 10	6. Zombie resources	_____ / 10
7. Governance and non-production	_____ / 10		

Total _____ / 70

0 to 34

Most room to save

Start with sections 1, 3 and 6: right-sizing, storage and zombie resources usually need no code changes.

35 to 55

Optimising

A good start. Tighten governance (section 7) so the savings stay saved.

56 to 70

Efficient

Automate the checks and review commitments as usage changes.

The bands are our rule of thumb for where to look first, not a savings estimate. Your actual savings depend on your bill.

Want us to go through it with you?
Free 20-minute review of your bill and your answers.

matrixgard.com/review/

SOURCES (CHECKED NOVEMBER 2026)

1. AWS, Amazon EC2 M8g instances (Graviton4). aws.amazon.com/ec2/instance-types/m8g/
2. AWS, Amazon EBS General Purpose SSD volumes (gp3 and gp2). docs.aws.amazon.com/ebs/latest/userguide/general-purpose.html
3. AWS, Public IPv4 address charge (from 1 February 2024). aws.amazon.com/blogs/aws/new-aws-public-ipv4-address-charge-public-ip-insights/
4. CERT-In Directions under section 70B(6) of the IT Act, 28 April 2022. cert-in.org.in/PDF/CERT-In_Directions_70B_28.04.2022.pdf