

Choosing the right cloud platform is one of the most consequential IT decisions a growing business can make. Get it right and you'll enjoy lower costs, better uptime, and the ability to scale rapidly. Get it wrong and you'll spend years migrating away from a platform that doesn't fit.

In this guide, we cut through the marketing noise and give you an honest assessment of AWS, Azure, and Google Cloud Platform (GCP) - specifically for businesses operating in Kenya and East Africa.

The Short Answer

All three platforms are excellent. The right choice depends on what you already use, what your team knows, and where your workloads live. Here's our summary:

- **AWS** - Best all-round choice, most mature ecosystem, widest service catalogue
- **Azure** - Best if you're deep in Microsoft 365, Active Directory or Windows workloads
- **GCP** - Best for data-heavy workloads, AI/ML and businesses already using Google Workspace

Now let's go deeper.

Infrastructure Proximity: Where Are the Data Centres?

This matters enormously in East Africa. Latency affects your application performance and your users' experience.

AWS has a South Africa (Cape Town) region, which is the closest to East Africa with sub-100ms latency for most Kenyan applications. AWS also has edge locations in Nairobi via Amazon CloudFront.

Azure has a South Africa North (Johannesburg) and South Africa West (Cape Town) region. Microsoft has been investing heavily in African infrastructure and announced plans for additional East Africa regions.

GCP has a Johannesburg region (africa-south1) plus edge caching nodes in Nairobi and Mombasa.

Our verdict on proximity: AWS and GCP are neck-and-neck, with Azure slightly behind but catching up fast. For most Kenyan businesses, any of the three will deliver acceptable performance.

Pricing in KES: What Does It Actually Cost?

All three providers price in USD, which creates forex risk for Kenyan businesses. However, the actual compute costs are remarkably similar at the entry level.

A typical small business setup (web server, database, backups) on a 1-year reserved instance:

PROVIDER	APPROX MONTHLY (USD)	APPROX KES
AWS	\$80–\$120	KES 10,400–15,600
Azure	\$75–\$115	KES 9,750–14,950
GCP	\$70–\$110	KES 9,100–14,300

Exchange rate approximate at time of writing.

GCP tends to be marginally cheaper for compute, but AWS often wins on total cost of ownership because of its broader free tier and the efficiency gains from its mature tooling.

Support Quality for East African Businesses

This is where the differences really show.

AWS has the most active local partner network in Kenya. CloudSpinX is an AWS partner, and we see firsthand that AWS support is responsive and technically strong. Nairobi AWS user groups are active.

Azure has strong Microsoft partner presence in Kenya through companies like Microsoft East Africa. If your business uses Office 365, the integration is seamless and local support is good.

GCP is improving but has the weakest local partner ecosystem in Kenya as of 2026. For most SMEs, you'll be relying on documentation and online support rather than local expertise.

Our verdict on support: AWS > Azure > GCP for East Africa, though the gap is closing.

When to Choose Each Platform

Choose AWS if:

- You want the most mature ecosystem with the widest service selection
- Your team is cloud-agnostic or new to cloud
- You need robust serverless, container, or AI/ML services
- You want the most flexibility in how you manage costs

Choose Azure if:

- Your business is heavily Microsoft-dependent (Windows Server, Active Directory, Office 365)
- You're in a regulated industry and need Azure Government or compliance certifications
- You want tight integration between on-premise Windows infrastructure and cloud

Choose GCP if:

- You run data warehousing or analytics workloads (BigQuery is exceptional)
- Your developers are Kubernetes-native (GKE is the gold standard)

- You're already deep in Google Workspace and want a unified ecosystem

The CloudSpinx Recommendation

For most Kenyan SMEs starting their cloud journey in 2026, **we recommend AWS as the default choice**. The combination of local edge infrastructure, a mature Kenyan partner ecosystem, and the broadest service catalogue makes it the safest bet for businesses that want reliability and long-term support.

That said, if you're a Microsoft shop, Azure deserves serious consideration. And if your primary use case is data analytics, GCP's BigQuery alone might justify the choice.

Not sure which is right for you? CloudSpinx offers free cloud readiness assessments for East African businesses. We'll audit your current workloads and recommend the best platform - with no vendor bias.

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