

Turkey's Isbank

Elevated data center performance—building a bridge to a resilient future

Turkey's Isbank was the first public bank established by the Turkish Republic in 1924. Headquartered in Istanbul, the bank has 25,000 employees and operates over 1,300 branches and a network of over 6,500 ATMs in Turkey and 23 branches in other countries. The bank offers corporate, commercial, retail and private banking services, financial and cash management services, mortgage loans and internet and mobile banking services. Turkey's Isbank serves over 20 million customers and manages over USD 72 billion in assets. Its stock is traded on the Istanbul and London stock exchanges.

Business challenge

After experiencing a severe network outage, Turkey's Isbank needed to migrate its servers, apps and data to a new data center to ensure resiliency, without disrupting network operations during the transition.

Transformation

Working with Kyndryl™, formerly IBM Infrastructure Services, Turkey's Isbank migrated its servers, applications and operational data to a Tier 4 data center in nine months without disrupting banking services. The new data center helps ensure banking services are available to customers 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and prepares Turkey's Isbank for migration to cloud computing.

Results

6,000 servers, 750 applications and 4 PB of data migrated to new data center in nine months

Uptime Institute Tier 4 certified the first data center in Turkey to meet these standards

Infrastructure Scale-Out Award winner DCD Magazine's choice for 2017 in its global category

“The enduring excellence in our partnership with [Kyndryl, formerly IBM Infrastructure Services] has helped us to deliver and ensure maximum uptime with our new Tier 4 data center.”

Sabri Gökmenler
Chief Technology Officer, Turkey's Isbank



Turkey's indispensable bank

The first checking accounts in Turkey. The nation's first ATMs. The first banking applications for mobile phones. Since it was founded 95 years ago as the country's first publicly owned bank, Turkey's Isbank has built a reputation for innovation in financial services. Today, "Turkey's Bank" is tightly interwoven into the country's economy, and 20 million customers depend on it every day for their banking needs.

As it expanded along with the Turkish economy, Turkey's Isbank also experienced growing pains. In 2013, a system-wide computer network outage shut down banking services for 16 hours. After determining and fixing the cause of the outage, the IT department realized that a more agile IT infrastructure was a top priority.

The ambitious growth targets set by the bank's management meant that it was critical to build a more highly resilient data center to meet growing competition, operate in a more highly regulated business environment, and incorporate new applications and technologies.

In addition to supporting a more seamless customer experience, the new data center needed to support business continuity in the event of unpredictable occurrences such as power outages, cyberattacks, and manmade or natural disasters.

"We needed a partner with the capability to migrate to a data center with minimal downtime and no data loss," says Sabri Gökmenler, Chief Technology Officer of Turkey's Isbank. "[Kyndryl] was one of the very few vendors with this capability. The main differentiator was their experience to be more resilient for future technology."

Strengthening IT infrastructure

Before embarking on "Project Atlas," its comprehensive data center migration initiative, Turkey's Isbank set forth three main objectives:

- Build a resilient IT infrastructure and data center to minimize risks to business continuity
- Transform IT architecture to accelerate time to market and reduce complexity
- Establish a data foundation for a single source of truth

To help the bank's IT management orchestrate such a complex, business-critical project, Kyndryl Business Resiliency Services assembled a team of over 100 experts from 15 countries. In accordance with Kyndryl methodology, the bank's business units were involved in the process as active stakeholders instead of passive customers. IT management and the Kyndryl team also minimized migration risks by identifying critical points and taking preventive actions in advance.

During the planning phase, Turkey's Isbank used Kyndryl's Analytics for Logical Dependency Mapping (ALDM) service to provide a visually-rich picture of its IT environment. The ALDM service automates discovery, identifies multilevel server dependencies and uncovers platform anomalies to improve total understanding of the infrastructure.

After high-level migration planning was completed, an overall migration command center managed each step of the process. Every two to three weeks, another move group completed its phase of Project Atlas. Teams executed during evenings and weekends to avoid impacting business activities. The entire migration concluded successfully in nine months on a parallel track with construction of the new data center, without any significant interruptions to banking services.

An award-winning achievement

Upon completion of Project Atlas, Turkey's Isbank moved over 6,000 servers, 750 applications and 4 PB of data to its new data center in Gebze, a city about 65 kilometers from Istanbul. Over 800,000 hours of staff time was dedicated to ensuring a successful migration and keeping it on schedule.

As an enterprise-class data center, the 38,500 square-meter facility was equipped with redundant and dual-powered servers, storage, network links and cooling equipment and was the first Tier 4 data center to be built in Turkey. Further accolades came in December 2017, when the new data center won the global Infrastructure Scale-Out Award from DCD Magazine.

Meticulous planning and execution during migration ensured minimal downtime and no loss of data. As a result of the migration, end-to-end availability of the systems increased from 99.93 to 99.97 percent, a further indication of the robustness of the new data center's design and construction.

Currently supporting banking operations with an infrastructure designed for enhanced security, resiliency and reliability, the new data center will provide a platform to accelerate the journey to cloud computing, which will be the bank's next major IT initiative.

"The enduring excellence in our partnership with [Kyndryl] has helped us deliver and ensure maximum uptime in our new data center," says Gökmenler. "It is expected to support Turkey's Isbank for the next 20 years, and it was a very important transformation to make us ready for a fully-digitized future."



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