



# MAS SaaS vs managed OpenShift

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When you adopt IBM Maximo Application Suite, you are also choosing how it is deployed. The two dominant patterns are IBM-managed SaaS and partner-managed Red Hat OpenShift on a hyperscaler (AWS, Azure, IBM Cloud). Both are valid. They are not equivalent.

This guide is the version of the conversation we have with clients before they sign anything.

## 1. What you give up and what you get with SaaS

IBM-managed MAS SaaS removes the platform-operations burden. IBM patches, scales and operates the underlying stack. You log in and use the application.

What you get:

- Fastest time-to-value for greenfield deployments
- No platform team or partner-managed ops
- Predictable subscription cost

What you give up:

- Some configuration freedom — SaaS has guard-rails that on-premises and partner-managed deployments do not
- Some integration patterns that depend on direct platform access
- Control over upgrade timing — IBM decides when your environment moves to a new MAS version
- Some data residency control, depending on region

For organisations with light integration requirements, no significant customisation needs and tolerance for IBM-controlled upgrade windows, SaaS is often the right answer.

## 2. What you get with partner-managed OpenShift

Partner-managed MAS on Red Hat OpenShift gives you a deployment that you (and your partner) control end-to-end.

What you get:

- Full configuration and integration freedom
- Control over upgrade timing aligned to your release calendar
- Data residency choice down to the cloud region
- The ability to deploy on private OpenShift clusters where security or sovereignty demands it
- Native support for complex integration patterns: SAP, GIS, SCADA, OT, message brokers

What you give up:

- Higher operations overhead, which a partner like us absorbs in managed-hosting pricing
- More configuration choices, which is freedom but also responsibility
- Slightly higher initial cost in some cases (offset by lower long-term cost when integration complexity is high)

For asset-intensive organisations with significant integration estates, regulatory specifics, or customisation needs, partner-managed OpenShift is usually the right answer.

## 3. Decision criteria that actually matter

Skip the marketing comparison. The criteria that actually decide are:

### 3.1 Integration complexity

If you have three or more substantial integrations, including any with SCADA, OT or proprietary systems, partner-managed OpenShift is almost always the right call.

### 3.2 Customisation appetite

If your business processes need configuration that goes beyond MAS-standard SaaS guard-rails, partner-managed OpenShift gives you the room. If you are happy to align processes to MAS-standard, SaaS is fine.

### 3.3 Upgrade-cycle control

Some industries cannot tolerate IBM-controlled upgrade windows because of certification, regulatory cycles or operational risk windows. They need partner-managed.

### 3.4 Data residency and sovereignty

Where data must remain in a specific region, on a specific cloud, or on private infrastructure, partner-managed is the only viable answer.

### 3.5 Existing platform skills

If you already run OpenShift for other workloads, partner-managed MAS sits naturally alongside. If you have no platform team, SaaS or partner-managed (with the partner providing the platform team) are both candidates.

## 4. The third option: bring-your-own-OpenShift

Some organisations run their own OpenShift platform. MAS deploys natively onto it. This is the right answer for organisations with strong platform engineering teams and a strategic commitment to OpenShift across the estate. The partner contribution shifts from platform to application: implementation, upgrade, and application support.

## 5. Cost: the comparison that takes longer than you think

Headline subscription cost is not total cost of ownership. A fair comparison includes:

- Subscription / licence cost (different shape across the two models)
- Platform operations cost (zero in SaaS, partner-priced in managed OpenShift)
- Integration build-and-maintain cost
- Customisation build-and-maintain cost
- Upgrade-cycle cost (less obvious in SaaS but real)

Over a five-year window, the total-cost answer is rarely the headline subscription answer. It is worth modelling properly.

## 6. How Maxiron fits

We deliver both patterns. Our managed-hosting practice runs partner-managed MAS on OpenShift across UK, EU and US regions, with SLA-backed operations and the same engineers who designed the deployment available for application support. Where SaaS is the right answer for a client, we say so and structure delivery around it.

If you would like a direct conversation about which model fits your estate, get in touch.