



G-Cloud 15 Service Definition

Accenture RPA Virtual Workforce

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 **accenture**

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1.0 Scope of our services

This service encompasses all aspects of the design, build and run of a virtual workforce capability in a cloud (public or private) environment. The virtual workforce capability consists of a combination of:

- Robotic Process Automation (RPA) capability
- Custom code and open-source libraries to extend the RPA capability
- Artificial Intelligence, typically implemented via Open-Source libraries such as Scikit-Learn and TensorFlow, to further extend RPA capability.

Using a combination of the above technologies' organisations can automate a far higher proportion of currently human tasks than is possible with RPA alone.

The automation services are provided via highly scalable infrastructure as code hosted on a virtual environment (public or private cloud) that allows for automations to be started, stopped, repurposed between jobs and scaled automatically. The outcome is a flexible on-demand workforce that can be directed to whatever task is the business priority.

Automations are built in a modular fashion, with every element sat behind Application Program Interfaces (APIs) for reuse, extendibility and ease of maintenance. This means that automation components built once can be re-consumed across multiple different automated processes. Velocity of development increases and cost decreases as a library of such functions are developed.

The service includes:

- Process review and identification of automation opportunities. 'Front-door' process for identification and qualification of automation opportunities and backlog management.
- Business case development and benefits realisation tracking (via automated dashboards)
- RPA and AI product selection
- Automation design, build and implementation, including application architecture and consistent state model
- Development environment set-up including code library repositories and DevOps for Continuous Integration and Continuous Deployment capabilities
- Capability development for client personnel to transition skills in house
- Production environment design build and implementation. Fully templated environments.
- Test environment creation (test environment availability is usually a main source of delay in automation projects). The Accenture method and tools recreate current applications (user interface and basic navigational flow) to a level that supports RPA development and testing, without the need for full-stack test environments. This greatly improves velocity and reduces cost and complexity of development.
- Design, build and implementation of common services such as error handling, logging, reporting and automated credential management
- Liquid infrastructure services – automated creation, deletion and management of virtual machines encompassing all necessary client services for each automation (e.g., target applications on the relevant operating system plus RPA software)
- Robotics Operation Centre (ROC) set up and operation
- Service continuous improvement

A typical implementation includes the following:

- RPA Build framework:
 - Standards
 - State machine, error handling and logging
- Front door process
- Analytics data store and dashboard
- Application library (e.g. custom PDF editor)

- Secure connection from Department to public cloud (fully encrypted transport)
- Fully templated Production cloud environment
- Fully templated development and test environments
- Source application test environment emulation
- Credential management service
- Liquid infrastructure scripting (bots on demand)
- Intelligent Automation Academy (training course)
- Robot Operations Centre, including:
 - Patching
 - Imaging and snapshots
 - Backup
 - Purging
 - Software upgrades and licencing
 - OS updates
 - Code deployment
 - Reporting
 - Continuous improvement/innovation
 - IT Health Check support and remediation
 - Virtual Machine Template creation for new automations
 - Per automation live running, fix, incident management, continuous improvement
- One-off infrastructure elements, including:
 - Segregated Secure Subnets
 - Security Groups
 - Active Directory
 - Automated anti-virus install on all templates
 - Domain name and DNS hosted zones
 - SSL certificates for encryption
 - VPC NAT gateway for private subnet
 - Secure connectivity to on premise systems (Virtual private gateway)
 - Managed connectivity to external internet-based applications (proxy)
 - Internet gateway
 - UiPath Orchestrator with High Availability (where UiPath product chosen)
 - SQL Server – Clustered as shared RPA-product-agnostic data store for service metadata and logging.
 - Elastic Search, Logstash, Filebeat and Kibana all with high availability
 - Templated VM creation with UiPath Studio (where UiPath product chosen)
 - Templated VM UiPath unattended bot - with autoscaling and auto allocation of credentials (where UiPath product chosen)
 - Automated standby scheduling of VMs / bots to reduce cost when not in use
 - Proxy server Orchestrator with autoscaling
 - Monitoring and Alerting Services (Prometheus/Grafana recommended)
 - Virtual Private Network
 - Deployment across multiple availability zones
 - Proxy for port redirecting or encryption for application access with autoscaling
 - Templated Virtual Machines
 - Qlik Sense Enterprise (or alternate analytics product) templated and automated install for reporting

- PostgreSQL database for Qlik (or alternate product) and automated install
- Webserver for mocked up applications
- NICE RT Server with high availability (if NICE product selected)
- Gitlab - code repository
- Highly Available open-source machine learning server – TensorFlow and / or Scikit recommended

1.1 Accenture capabilities in Intelligent Automation

Accenture has been recognised by Gartner as having the “largest automation capability of any IT service provider”. Accenture delivers RPA services to 400+ clients globally. Over a timescale of four years Accenture has delivered over 4,900 automations for our clients within our Operations practice.

These automations perform workload equivalent to 22,000 FTEs. For the UK Government, we have the largest implementation of UiPath on Amazon Web Services, with 230 bots. We also manage 800 NICE bots via cloud orchestration. This has enabled us to implement an industry first in accessing and automating UK Government legacy mainframes with RPA from the cloud.

Accenture are global partners with UiPath, Blue Prism, Pega, Nice and Automation Anywhere, with over 2,000 RPA practitioners worldwide across all the main vendors, as well as 500+ automation and technical architects.

Accenture has a proven methodology for selecting toolsets with a thorough assessment of client needs and software offerings.

This RPA expertise combines with our data and AI expertise. Accenture has an extensive network of over 3,000 data scientists within our Applied Intelligence practice and we are ranked by all major industry analysts as being leaders in the AI industry

2.0 Approach

Accenture has a highly differentiated approach to Intelligent Automation and creation of a virtual workforce. Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is at risk of getting a bad reputation for over-promising and under-delivering. The gap between the ease of starting and the difficulty of scaling is a serious problem. Accenture's view is that RPA alone is not going to materially change the public sector. But RPA in conjunction with custom development and AI - delivered as a fully scalable virtual workforce - is the most significant practical lever currently available for driving near and mid-term efficiencies and effectiveness of outcomes across government.

To understand our approach, it is important to know exactly what RPA is and is not. A software robot is a convenient bundling of related services to mimic the physical actions on a computer of a human user. You pay a license fee for the convenience of the bundled package and the user-friendly development environment in which to configure it. Up to a relatively high scale, the avoidance of time and cost development effort makes paying the license fee a sensible economic decision.

The number of normal business processes you can automate just by mimicking the physical actions of a human user is surprisingly small. You can rekey data from system A to system B, but for anything other than mindless repetitive work you need to add a bit of decision making. For basic processes this is still within the bounds of most RPA tooling, so you can do things like check that invoice amounts match purchase orders before issuing payments. But as you start to build logic into RPA, architects will rightly get concerned about technical debt, "spaghetti systems" and the governance and maintenance of such logic.

Many organisations - and many consultancies and IT companies pushing RPA - go in with the tooling as the proverbial hammer and look for the process 'nails' they can attack. This gives only minor improvements.

Accenture approach Intelligent Automation completely differently. The four key principles we apply are as follows:

1. **Solve business problems**

The answer has never been just RPA; sometimes it is RPA plus other technologies; sometimes it is not RPA at all.

2. **Scale needs a platform**

Local deployments of individual software robots will never enable organisational improvement or business value at scale. To scale, you need a platform fit for the purpose.

3. **Code is code**

Intelligent Automation needs to be approached with the same disciplines and principles as any large-scale software development. Design for scale, maintainability, resilience, security and replacement of the robots from day 1. Create modular 'Lego' bricks of automation that can be reused across many different solutions. This speeds delivery and builds efficiency as the store of 'Lego' bricks grows.

4. **Think 10x not 10%**

The business cases for individual automations rarely come out positive and shaving percentages off unit costs will not get you far. You need ambitious targets and you need to consider the business case across multiple projects. You also need business change to drive out savings and efficiencies.

Each element is explained further below.

1. **Solve business problems**

Whether looking internally or at clients, Accenture have learnt not to ask, "what can we automate?". Instead we look for business problems. With many teams, the best approach is to ask, "what is the most boring part of your job?". By combining code, RPA and AI we can address many more problems than if we started with a fixed technology solution.

2. **Scale needs a platform**

To deliver and manage solutions at scale with predictable high quality, you need a factory equipped with suitable tooling. This service establishes a centre of excellence that can support more disaggregated development in a hub and spoke model. All operational activities for management of automations in Live remain with a centralised Robotics Operation Centre or ROC.

The ROC manages cloud environment availability and RPA licenses to drive efficiency across the organisation. Infrastructure is ideally on a pay-per-use model; fully templated virtual machines are spun up and shut down automatically in response to the size of work queues. This means you only pay for the processing time you need.

The platform starts with the application architecture for automation. This includes a consistent state machine for all RPA processes, meaning processing can error and fail-over without impacting transaction or data integrity. The application architecture also lays the foundations for a product agnostic approach – for example, mitigating against RPA product lock-in by having a stand-alone data repository for all robot metadata with a separate analytics dashboard.

Next is DevOps automation. Rapid, efficient and effective automation needs fast, repeatable and high-quality build, test and deployment capabilities. Fully templated environments are created. In the event of a disaster, the full production capability can be re-established from scratch in a few hours or less; the virtual environments for the robots themselves can be spun up in 4 minutes or less. And because the virtual machines are spun up in parallel, it is 4 minutes total for 1 robot or 100 robots, depending on the business need. When the robots are their own business contingency, such resilience is essential.

The third stage of the platform is the 'liquid infrastructure'. This is the automation to scale and re-purpose bots and infrastructure on demand, plus handle automated user credential assignment (each bot runs with its own unique user ID and access credentials).

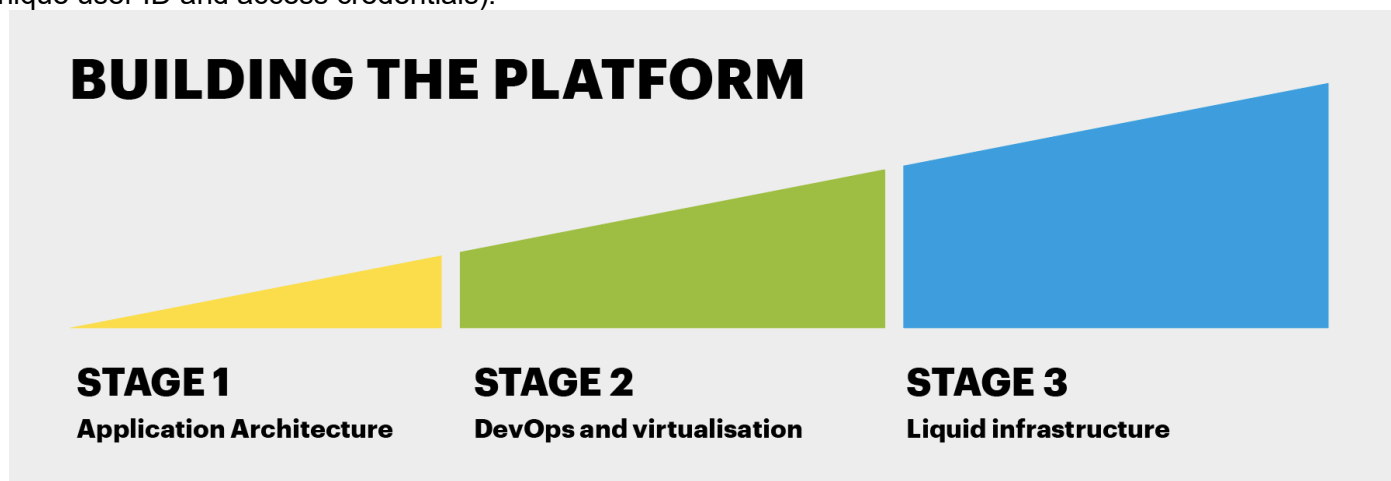


Figure 1: Building the platform

The platform allows clients to build new automations rapidly (combining many pre-existing 'Lego' bricks), deploy them repeatedly, manage them consistently and operate them securely and effectively.

3. Code is code

The fact you can 'drag and drop' to automate a process for RPA and run it on a single laptop does not mean that robotics at scale is immune from all the complexities of any other enterprise-scale IT solution. The first step towards scaling automation is the documentation of a clear set of build standards. These are provided as part of this service and implement the state architecture, error-handling, logging and other such principles. Every discrete step of the process automation (e.g., moving to a new application) starts with pre-conditions and ends with post conditions. Where these conditions are not met, the robot fails back to a known point of state. Each of these steps is also technically separated from the rest by an API. Each automated process is a series of discrete code modules – the 'Lego' bricks. This improves maintenance, resilience, solution flexibility and reuse.

The service supports clients to build a library of code services / different 'Lego' bricks. For example, the steps to log in to an application are written once and then used by every automated process accessing that same application. Likewise, the process to send an SMS or an email is written once and reused multiple times. If the SMS process is updated to replace driving a web screen with an API call, all processes using SMS immediately benefit. This supports the right balance between speed / low cost of delivery and addressing technical debt over time.

4. Think 10x not 10%

Intelligent automation has huge potential to drive efficiencies and better outcomes across the public sector. As a rule of thumb, an RPA solution will process a given task at least 5 times faster than a human could; the robot license will cost a fifth of an average Administrative Officer (AO) grade salary per year and can run at least 3 times longer per day (24 hours rather than 8). That gives a 75-fold (5x5x3) efficiency improvement **for programmable activities** before any consideration of breaks, human errors and so forth. Adding in custom code and AI massively extends what is possible with intelligent automation and the 75x guideline will look trivial in comparison.

But what humans are good at and what RPA is good at are diametrically opposed. Intelligent automation is not about reducing employee headcount per se. Rather, it is about **improving outcomes by allowing humans and machines to focus on what each does best**. This in turn will allow organisations to do more with less and create resilience to cope with demand surges and changes without significant headcount fluctuation. This flexibility is invaluable for scenario planning around EU exit and other significant drivers of change.

Trying to create individual business cases for each process to be automated, or part automated, is hard work and often proves futile. Even with an extensive chart of accounts and unit costings, the savings that can be committed per automation are elusive. This is particularly true when improving only parts of a process. We know that 10% can be shaved off every process timing without material benefits accruing at the top-line for the organisation. Work expands to fill available capacity and only with disciplined change management are partial savings driven through to material / cashable impacts.

The answer is to think in terms of multiples, not percentages. How can intelligent automation make parts of the organisation 10x better, faster, cheaper?

High volume transaction throughput by the Virtual Workforce is easily quantifiable. The financial and non-financial benefits of having a flexible virtual workforce to complement the human workforce are considerable and will improve with scale.

The above approach addresses key challenges we have seen our clients struggle with. These are:

- i. **Demonstrating value from automation.** Individual RPA solutions rarely have a clear business case. Organisations typically do not remove or redeploy small numbers of staff based on one-off automations. Rather, creation of a virtual workforce needs to be addressed as a strategic measure with planned headcount reduction in line with attrition or managed redeployment of staff to higher-value activities. Business value needs to be tracked in detail but also be provided in aggregate. The most significant savings for an organisation come when a broad-ranging automation capability can take on a large volume of the most repetitive, least fulfilling (to humans) aspects of work. A spaghetti-implementation of multiple local deployed robots to shave percentages off current tasks does not have meaningful impact. Conversely, platforms that can automate millions or tens of millions of transactions per year on low capital investment drive significant savings and organisational improvement.
- ii. **Creating a secure, resilient, and automated infrastructure.** Specific technical challenges include:
 - a. Secure connectivity from the robots hosted on public cloud to Departmental data centres.
 - b. Application authentication from the cloud environment. This includes management of credentials and being able to assign robots the correct credentials as they are created.
 - c. Ensuring all data was encrypted from cloud to the data centres.

Accenture has addressed and overcome each of these challenges for a large UK central government Department.

- iii. **Availability of test environments.** RPA solutions need to be developed against the target applications (i.e., the applications the robots will work on). It is necessary to have copies of the relevant screens so that the automation can identify and map the relevant screen objects such as input fields, buttons, and other controls. Getting access to test environments can take far longer than the standard 6-8 weeks it commonly takes to do an automation from inception to Live running. However, robots only care about the visual layer of the applications. By capturing the source code for each screen, Accenture can recreate the target applications in a test environment. For legacy applications with no accessible UI source code (e.g., no HTML), the team instead capture images of the screens and string these together with JavaScript. Developing the tools and techniques to do this remove the main dependency and obstacle to creating automations at speed.
- iv. **Developing applications that scale and run as a business-critical industrialised service.** The same level of rigour and thought needs to be applied to Robotic Process Automation (RPA) development as to other IT solutions. This includes code control and versioning, quality assurance and performance and operability testing, error handling, ease of maintenance etc. For example, the number and volume of logs that gets generated by robots running at scale is considerable (Gigabytes of log data per day when the number of robots is in the low hundreds) and optimising the reporting and the performance of the code has a significant impact at this level. This experience has been captured in the application and environment templates, build standards, test and deployment approaches, DevOps capability and state model for this service.

3.0 Assets and Tools

This service encompasses the following tools:

- **Automation Diagnostic:** templates and approach to assess current processes for automation and give indicative costs and benefits.
- **Benefits dashboard** (Qlik-based): templates for Qlik dashboard to track benefit realisation over time (driven by logging from the automated services).
- **Product selection** matrix for RPA products
- **State model** (currently for UiPath but customisable to other RPA products) to ensure consistent processing, error-handling and business continuity for automated processes
- **Application architecture** design for highly resilient, scalable and secure automations
- Build standards for RPA
- Infrastructure as code template (currently for AWS)
- **Test Environment** development approach and tooling to capture and recreate application user interfaces in a self-contained application
- **Automated credential management solution** (for dynamic allocation of user credentials to robots as the are created / repurposed)
- **Robotic Operations Centre capability** – currently provided out of Accenture Newcastle in the UK and already supporting multiple clients
- **Liquid Infrastructure approach and tooling** – scripting for starting, stopping and repurposing RPA (currently UiPath) instances and the full virtual machine environments they need to operate.
- **Training academies to build in-house capability.** RPA (UiPath) academy currently available. AI, DevOps, Business Analysis and Analytics academies due in 2019.

4.0 Expected Outcomes

Single process RPA implementations typically look to shave a percentage of time or cost off the automated process. The virtual workforce capability, however, drives broader outcomes:

- **Efficiency** gains including reduction / removal of operational processing backlogs
 - As additional efficiency gains over standard RPA implementation, the virtual workforce allows for improved return on RPA license investment. Automatically repurposing RPA licenses between tasks means that these assets can be used more efficiently – e.g. 24/7 operation across multiple different tasks.
 - Typically, return on investment in less than 12 months
 - Robots as a guideline 75 times more efficient than a human at automatable tasks (5 times faster, one fifth of the cost and available to work 3 times longer at 24 hours rather than 8)
 - Increased developed velocity and reduced development cost as the library of reusable automation services grows
 - Extended life of legacy IT services – robots do not care about poor user interfaces and can act as mediators between staff or customers and legacy IT. You can also use a virtual workforce to smooth demand on legacy services, thereby reducing infrastructure footprint.
- **Reduced / no error.** Transcription errors are eliminated.
- **Improved business continuity** - the virtual workforce provides the capability to spin up a substantial workforce at minimal notice to process 'manual' payments or other such business continuity measures
- **Improved compliance and audit** - robots can record everything they do.
- **Improved customer service** from faster response and reduced error
- **Improved fraud detection** – automating previously manual processes allows for additional checks or those not previously possible – e.g., detecting duplicates at source.
- **Improved ability to understand and improve business process.** Because automated services track everything they do, volumes of business exceptions, errors and so-forth can be tracked precisely. This provides key data for analysis of ways to improve the business.
- **Improved in-house capability.** The service supports development of in-house skills in RPA, AI and intelligent automation. This creates sustainable in-house capability for extending and running automated services.

5.0 Pricing

Please refer to the associated pricing document/ rate card relevant for this service.

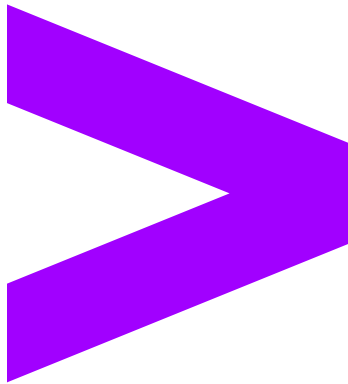
6.0 **Contacts**

Email: UK.TenderMonitoring@accenture.com

Telephone: +44 (0) 20 7844 4444

7.0 About Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company that helps the world's leading businesses, governments and other organisations build their digital core, optimise their operations, accelerate revenue growth and enhance citizen services—creating tangible value at speed and scale. We are a talent- and innovation-led company with approximately 799,420 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Technology is at the core of change today, and we are one of the world's leaders in helping drive that change, with strong ecosystem relationships. We combine our strength in technology and leadership in cloud, data and AI with unmatched industry experience, functional expertise and global delivery capability. We are uniquely able to deliver tangible outcomes because of our broad range of services, solutions and assets across Strategy & Consulting, Technology, Operations, Industry X and Song. These capabilities, together with our culture of shared success and commitment to creating 360° value, enable us to help our clients reinvent and build trusted, lasting relationships. We measure our success by the 360° value we create for our clients, each other, our shareholders, partners and communities



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