FEATURED RESOURCE 01

FinOps Assessment Checklist

10 questions cloud-heavy teams should answer before they start optimization.

Visibility | Allocation | Governance | Optimization

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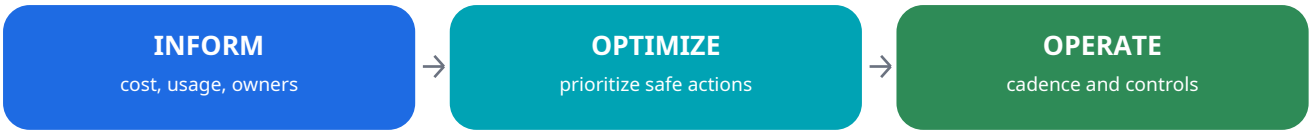
Why assessment comes before optimization

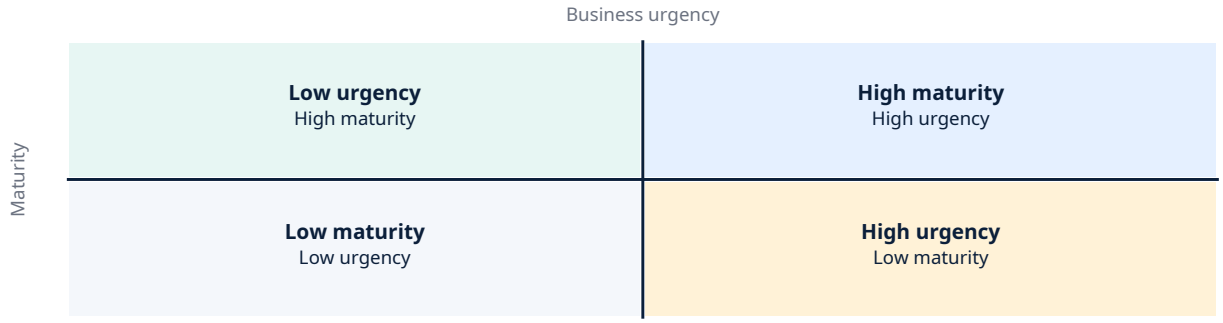
Many cloud cost conversations jump straight into savings. That often creates short-term cuts without fixing ownership, visibility, or operating cadence.

The assessment goal: separate a true optimization problem from a visibility, allocation, governance, or forecasting problem.



Iterate quickly. Start small. Turn findings into ownership and operating cadence.

Use this checklist to decide what needs to happen first. For many teams, the first answer is not "buy a tool" or "delete resources." It is building a practical view of who owns spend and what action is expected.



Use this to decide whether to assess, stabilize, optimize, or operationalize.

Grounding: FinOps Foundation Framework and phases; FinOps for AI guidance; FOCUS billing specification concepts; AWS Well-Architected, Azure Well-Architected, and Google Cloud Well-Architected cost guidance. Use this as a discussion tool, not as a substitute for environment-specific analysis.

The 10 assessment questions

Score each question from 0 to 3. Do not overthink it. Use evidence, not confidence.

Score	Meaning
0	No reliable answer, no owner, no regular review.
1	Some data exists, but it is incomplete or not trusted.
2	Mostly available, but process depends on a few people or manual effort.
3	Reliable, repeatable, owned, and used in decision-making.

Area	What to check	Decision to make
Visibility	Can you explain what changed in cloud spend this month within 30 minutes?	Build baseline views by service, account/subscription, product, and environment.
Ownership	Can every meaningful cost line be mapped to a team, product, or business owner?	Define owner rules before pushing optimization actions.
Allocation	Are shared costs allocated with agreed rules, not left as a finance mystery?	Create shared-cost logic for network, support, security, data, and platform services.
Forecasting	Do engineering and finance agree on expected spend for the next 30-90 days?	Connect roadmap, growth, releases, and commitments to forecast inputs.
Controls	Are budgets, alerts, and anomaly workflows routed to accountable owners?	Alerts need an owner and action path, not just notifications.

The 10 assessment questions - continued

Area	What to check	Decision to make
Optimization	Is there a ranked backlog of safe optimization actions with risk notes?	Prioritize by savings, risk, effort, and owner readiness.
Commitments	Are discounts and commitments based on stable usage, not pressure to show savings?	Review RIs, Savings Plans, CUDs, and reservations after usage patterns are understood.
Engineering	Do engineers see cost impact before architecture decisions are locked in?	Add cost review to design, release, and platform review rituals.
AI spend	Are AI/LLM/GPU costs visible by product, feature, customer, or experiment?	Separate experimentation, production, token/API, GPU, data, and storage costs.
Cadence	Is there a recurring FinOps review where decisions and owners are tracked?	Create the operating cadence before expecting sustained optimization.

A practical assessment does not need months. It needs the right questions, basic access to cost and usage data, and cross-functional participation from finance, engineering, platform, and product.

0-8 Reactive **9-15 Emerging** **16-23 Managed** **24-30 Mature**

Use the score to decide the next action: visibility, allocation, governance, or optimization.

Maturity interpretation

Use the score to avoid starting in the wrong place.

Score	What it means	Best next step
0-8 Reactive	Spend is visible only after the bill arrives. No reliable owner map. Optimization is mostly ad hoc.	Start with visibility, basic allocation, and budget/anomaly controls.
9-15 Emerging	Some dashboards or tags exist, but owners and actions are inconsistent.	Standardize allocation rules, top service views, and review cadence.
16-23 Managed	Teams can explain most spend and have regular review. Optimization backlog exists.	Improve forecasting, commitment planning, and engineering guardrails.
24-30 Mature	Spend is owned, forecasted, reviewed, and linked to business value.	Focus on unit economics, automation, AI governance, and continuous improvement.

A useful assessment creates a practical action path. It should not become a long report that nobody operates.

30 DAYS

Baseline

Visibility, top drivers, owner map, quick controls.

60 DAYS

Operate

Review cadence, action backlog, forecast rhythm.

90 DAYS

Scale

Unit economics, commitments, AI spend controls.

What a 10-day FinOps Assessment should include

This is the paid entry offer. It is small enough to approve and concrete enough to create a decision.

Component	Details
Inputs	Billing exports, service views, account/subscription/project structure, tags/labels, budgets, alerts, roadmap context.
Interviews	Engineering/platform, finance, product/business owner, security/compliance if AI or regulated data is involved.
Analysis	Top spend drivers, recent changes, allocation gaps, optimization opportunities, commitment risk, operating-model gaps.
Output	Executive summary, maturity score, top risks, savings backlog, decision map, 30/60/90-day roadmap.
Follow-on	Operating model sprint, cost visibility buildout, AI spend governance review, or fractional FinOps advisory.

Use on LinkedIn: Feature this PDF, then use this CTA in posts and DMs: "Message me FinOps assessment and I will send the checklist."

For a practical FinOps assessment: vikasshdalal.com | vikassh.dalal@gmail.com