

In today's fast-paced cloud environments, businesses leveraging AWS often face a common challenge: controlling spiraling cloud costs without hampering agility or performance. As companies increasingly adopt cloud-native technologies, the need for an effective **FinOps** operating model becomes critical to unlock value and maintain financial accountability.



This post explores the foundational steps to kickstart cloud cost optimization specifically on AWS. We'll dive into three early, measurable wins around **aws rightsizing**, **savings plans**, and **unused resources cleanup**. [finops services](#) Along the way, we'll spotlight companies from across the globe—like *Future Processing* in Gliwice, Poland; *Ternary* in San Francisco, USA; and *Finout* in Tel Aviv, Israel—who exemplify best practices in FinOps maturity.

FinOps Basics and Why It Matters

Before digging into the first wins, it's important to understand what FinOps really is, and why it matters to AWS users.

FinOps—short for Cloud Financial Operations—is the discipline that brings finance, product, and engineering teams together to manage cloud costs in a collaborative, transparent, and continuous fashion. It fills a huge gap between raw cloud consumption (which is variable and complex) and predictable budgeting and accountability.

- **Cost Visibility:** Establishing a clear and shared understanding of where money is spent.
- **Cost Allocation:** Assigning cloud expenses back to teams, products, or cost centers for accountability.
- **Forecasting & Budgeting:** Creating realistic projections to avoid financial surprises.
- **Continuous Optimization:** Ongoing evaluation of resource usage patterns to spot savings opportunities.

Without these fundamentals, organizations risk overspending, misallocation, and tension between teams over costs. AWS users can feel this pain acutely due to the breadth and complexity of services.

Starting Point: What Will We Measure in 30 Days?

One of my favorite questions when starting FinOps engagements is, "*What will we measure in 30 days?*" Vague promises like "instant savings" annoy me, because cloud cost optimization is a process—not a magic switch. The

goal is to get early wins that prove FinOps value, measurable through real metrics.

Here are the first three measurable wins you can expect with AWS cost optimization:

1. Rightsizing compute resources (instances, containers)
2. Implementing AWS Savings Plans based on usage patterns
3. Cleaning up unused and orphaned resources

Win #1: AWS Rightsizing—Stop Paying for What You Don't Need

One of the most straightforward but impactful wins is **aws rightsizing**. This means adjusting instance types, database sizes, or containers to better align with actual workload needs. Oversized or underutilized infrastructure is often the biggest culprit behind inflated bills.



How to Start Rightsizing

- **Leverage AWS Cost Explorer Rightsizing Recommendations:** AWS provides built-in tools to analyze historical usage and identify over-provisioned EC2 instances or RDS databases.
- **Set Utilization Thresholds:** For example, consider rightsizing if CPU utilization is consistently below 30% over a two-week period.
- **Engage Engineering Teams:** Discuss workload requirements and validate whether rightsizing impacts performance or SLA.

Companies like *Future Processing* from Gliwice, Poland, adopt a success-based pricing model for their cloud optimization consulting, demonstrating confidence in rightsizing outcomes. Instead of quoting fixed fees, they focus on measurable results after implementing rightsizing measures, aligning interests with their clients.

Benefits of Rightsizing

- Immediate reduction in the hourly cost of compute resources
- Better alignment of infrastructure to actual demand, lowering waste
- Provides a basis for forecasting and budget accuracy

Win #2: Invest in Savings Plans for Committed Use Discounts

The second major win is capitalizing on AWS **savings plans**—a pricing model that offers significant discounts (up to 72%) in exchange for a commitment to consistent usage over a 1- or 3-year term.

Why Savings Plans Matter

Many teams are wary of commitment-based pricing due to lack of cost visibility or confidence in forecasts. This is where proper FinOps practices shine. Once you have solid data on historical and forecasted usage (thanks to rightsizing and disciplined tagging), you can confidently purchase Savings Plans with minimal risk of overcommitment.

Types of Savings Plans

Plan Type	Scope	Flexibility	Typical Use Cases
Compute Savings Plans	Applies across instance families, sizes, AZs, even regions	High flexibility	Teams with variable usage patterns or that expect growth
EC2 Instance Savings Plans	Applies to specific instance family and region	Lower flexibility	Stable workloads with predictable instance requirements

Implementation Tips

- Use historical billing data combined with forecasting tools—like those offered by *Finout* from Tel Aviv, Israel—to understand baseline usage trends.
- Start with conservative commitments and adjust over time.
- Integrate AWS Savings Plans purchase decisions into your FinOps workflow with well-defined approval gates.

Note: *Ternary* (San Francisco, USA) specializes in guiding SaaS companies through complex cloud vendor landscapes including AWS and Azure, helping their clients choose the right pricing models—be it Savings Plans or Azure Reserved Instances—to drive better ROI.

Win #3: Unused Resources Cleanup—Eliminate Waste at Source

A surprisingly common source of cloud waste is **unused resources** left running after projects end, or orphaned disks and IP addresses lingering without purpose. In my experience, every large org I've helped had "cost surprises" from forgotten resources somewhere.

Key Cleanup Areas

- **Stopped but billable EC2 instances:** Simply being stopped doesn't always mean zero cost.
- **Unattached EBS volumes:** Can incur storage charges despite not being in use.
- **Elastic IP addresses:** Are billed when not associated with a running instance.
- **Old snapshots and AMIs:** Often forgotten after migration or backups.
- **Idle load balancers or databases:** Resources that remain provisioned but serve no traffic.

Establish a Continuous Cleanup Process

Manual cleanups help initially, but scale requires automation. AWS provides tools like Config Rules and Trusted Advisor; however, incorporating custom tagging standards and integrating cost anomaly alerts can enhance detection.

For more sophisticated cost visibility and anomaly detection across multi-cloud environments including Azure, *Finout* offers dashboards that surface unused assets, improving remediation velocity.

Benefits of Resource Cleanup

- Direct reduction in wastage; these are pure savings.
- Improves accuracy of budgeting as phantom costs disappear.
- Raises organizational awareness about cloud hygiene and cost responsibility.

Bringing It All Together: The FinOps Operating Model

These three wins barely scratch the surface but form a powerful early foundation for FinOps maturity:

1. **Cost Visibility & Allocation:** Use tagging and reporting tools (AWS Cost Explorer, Finout dashboards) to assign costs to teams and projects.
2. **Forecasting & Budgeting:** Apply data-driven forecasts to guide purchasing commitments like Savings Plans.
3. **Continuous Optimization:** Automate rightsizing and cleanup workflows, review savings metrics monthly.

Engaging all stakeholders—from developers to finance—improves transparency and aligns incentives to share accountability for cloud spend.

Multi-Cloud Considerations: Beyond AWS

Many SaaS companies and enterprises I work with operate hybrid or multi-cloud environments combining AWS, Azure, and even GCP. This complexity makes consistent FinOps practices essential to avoid budget fragmentation or duplicated efforts.

Ternary helps San Francisco-based companies navigate vendor nuances to create unified visibility and policies spanning AWS and Azure, avoiding “blind spots” in budgets.

Similarly, tools and frameworks that support multi-cloud tagging standards and anomaly detection across clouds—like those championed by *Finout*—bring order to sprawling cloud landscapes, accelerating cost optimization.

Conclusion: Quick Wins Set the Stage for Long-Term Success

Cloud cost optimization, especially on AWS, is a marathon, not a sprint. However, the first three wins—AWS rightsizing, buying Savings Plans based on solid forecasting, and ongoing cleanup of unused resources—are repeatable, measurable, and impactful steps that lay the groundwork for mature FinOps.

Companies like Future Processing, Ternary, and Finout illustrate how geographic diversity and specialized expertise come together to help organizations manage cloud spend effectively without compromising innovation.

Remember: always ask “*What will we measure in 30 days?*” and build your optimization roadmap grounded in concrete outcomes rather than buzzwords or vague promises of instant savings.

With patience, discipline, and collaboration, teams can transform cloud cost optimization from a dreaded burden into a strategic business advantage.