



# ExaGrid Provides a Long-Term Backup Solution with 'Phenomenal' Backup Performance for IDC

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



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**Gert Prinsloo,  
Infrastructure Manager**



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## Key Benefits:

- IDC chooses ExaGrid due to its scale-out architecture
- ExaGrid provides 'phenomenal' improvement to backup performance
- ExaGrid-Veeam deduplication provides significant savings on backup storage
- ExaGrid's Retention Time-Lock give IDC's IT team peace of mind

## Customer Overview

The Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) of South Africa Limited was established in 1940 through an Act of Parliament (Industrial Development Corporation Act, 22 of 1940) and is fully owned by the South African Government. IDC priorities are aligned with the national policy direction as set out in the National Development Plan (NDP), Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP) and industry Master Plans. Its mandate is to maximize its development impact through job-rich industrialization, while contributing to an inclusive economy by, among others, funding black-owned and empowered companies, black industrialists, women, and youth-owned and empowered enterprises.

## Switching to ExaGrid From Tape Eases Long-Term Retention Concerns

The IT team at Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) had been archiving the company's data to a tape solution using Veeam. Gert Prinsloo, IDC's infrastructure manager had concerns about the operational challenges associated with long-term retention to tape and it was decided to look into other solutions. "As a financial institute, we need to store data for up to fifteen years, and sometimes longer, for long-term retention. Writing and reading to tape, which is a mechanical device, proved to be a problem, so we opted for the ExaGrid solution," he said.

Gert Prinsloo has been managing IDC's infrastructure since 1997 and as technology changes and advances, it can present challenges in terms of how to maintain data stored on legacy systems, but he feels confident that ExaGrid's scale-out architecture makes it a good long-term solution. "ExaGrid has taken away one of those challenges that organizations with older data are faced with: how do you recover from a tape that's ten years old? Technology changes, and at the rate of technology changing right now, it refreshes every 18 months. We can't look back," he said. "You may think you're fine when you have 2,000 tapes in storage, but many organizations don't think ahead and to consider how they are going to read those tapes years later. They don't realize the challenge they have."



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ExaGrid's unique scale-out architecture was important to IDC's decision to switch to ExaGrid. "One of the reasons why we chose ExaGrid is because it's so modular. If our current ExaGrid system becomes full, I just can add another appliance and keep adding appliances, which gives us unlimited capacity for all of our long-term retention. I feel confident that this current solution will accommodate for the next ten years, at least," said Gert.

The ExaGrid system can easily scale to accommodate data growth. ExaGrid's computing software makes the system highly scalable, and when plugged into a switch, appliances of any size or age can be mixed and matched in a single system with capacities of up to a 2.7PB full backup plus retention and an ingest rate of up to 488TB per hour. Once virtualized, they appear as a single system to the backup server, and load balancing of all data across servers is automatic.



## Easy Installation and Configuration with Veeam

"We looked at quite a few backup storage options and ExaGrid also stood out due its integration with Veeam. Installing our ExaGrid system and configuring it with Veeam was very simple. As someone with experience in IT and infrastructure, I often find the installation process with other products we have used very difficult, but ExaGrid surprised me because it was very straightforward, especially with the help of our ExaGrid support engineer," said Gert. IDC installed ExaGrid systems at two locations, including its backup site, and DR site. "Replication between the sites is so easy, ExaGrid manages that, we don't even have to check, it just happens."

## ExaGrid Provides 'Phenomenal' Improvement in Backup Performance

Gert backs up IDC's data with daily incrementals and weekly fulls, which consists of 250TB worth of structured and unstructured data, such as databases, SAP, Microsoft Exchange and SharePoint applications, and more. "We back up our business-critical applications to ExaGrid and the backup performance has improved so much, I ended up showing a screenshot to a colleague because the backup window is so much shorter now," he said. "Our backup jobs are staggered but are still finished within about four hours; it's phenomenal!"

The backup performance with the ExaGrid is a huge improvement over backing up to tape. "I used to back up to disk, and then stage it to tape over the weekend, starting on a Friday but sometimes by the next Wednesday, I had to stop the tape backups because the job would get locked. It worked for us for many years, but the with the volume of data we have to process daily, we needed something more reliable and it's so much better to back up to ExaGrid instead of a mechanical device. Tape has become such a last-century solution," said Gert. "In addition, it is incredibly tedious to manage tapes due to the amount of time we had to spend changing, formatting, and fixing the tapes. ExaGrid is so simple to install and run, so we don't need to spend time managing it."

ExaGrid writes backups directly to a disk-cache Landing Zone, avoiding inline processing and ensuring the highest possible backup performance, which results in the shortest backup window. Adaptive Deduplication performs deduplication and replication in parallel with backups so that an RTO and RPO can be easily met. Available system cycles are utilized to perform deduplication and offsite replication for an optimal recovery point at the disaster recovery site. Once complete, the

## About ExaGrid

ExaGrid provides Tiered Backup Storage with a unique disk-cache Landing Zone that enables fastest backups and restores, a repository tier that offers the lowest cost for long-term retention and enables ransomware recovery, and a scale-out architecture which includes full appliances with up to 2.7PB full backup in a single system.

Learn more at [www.exagrid.com](http://www.exagrid.com).

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onsite data is protected and immediately available in its full unduplicated form for fast restores, VM Instant Recoveries, and tape copies while the offsite data is ready for disaster recovery.

## ExaGrid-Veeam Deduplication Leads to Savings on Storage

As a financial institute, IDC must keep fifteen years' worth of retention data, and Prinsloo appreciates the level of deduplication that the combined solution of ExaGrid and Veeam provides, allowing for significant savings on backup storage.

"With ExaGrid's technology, the longer you run the backups, the better compression and deduplication tends to become. It's already making a big difference for us, as it has allowed us to free up other disk storage we had previously used for long-term retention and now I can re-allocate my disk storage for testing and other uses, so it saves money in ways we didn't expect or acknowledge at first," said Gert.

## ExaGrid's Retention Time-Lock Feature Gives Peace of Mind

"The ExaGrid solution has brought me peace of mind. It sounds like a bit of a cliché, but it really is because I used to be nervous my backups weren't going to work or that I couldn't restore data from a tape. In one instance, I had been asked to restore an important file for our legal team and wasn't able to restore it from tape and that left me upset for months. Now that we have installed ExaGrid, all of that stress just went away, and I sleep much more peacefully," he said.

"Hackers can get in and wipe backups, these criminals find a way, but because of ExaGrid's tiered architecture and RTL, I am confident our backups will not be wiped out. It is wonderful to tell management that our backups are solid and working and that no one has to worry since our data is protected and available to restore from," said Gert.

ExaGrid appliances have a network-facing disk-cache Landing Zone Tier where the most recent backups are stored in an unduplicated format for fast backup and restore performance. Data is deduplicated into a non-network-facing tier called the repository where deduplicated data is stored for longer-term retention. The combination of a non-network facing tier (virtual air gap) plus delayed deletes with ExaGrid's Retention Time-Lock feature, and immutable data objects, guards against the backup data being deleted or encrypted.



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