VATES

Open Infrastructure made simple

How Vates VMS can replace VMware in your organization

A practical guide to migration, services and subscriptions



Vates | October 2026

Table of Contents

Executive summary 4

Why this question is on the table 5

- What changed, in order 5
- What it means in practice 5

Vates VMS at a glance 7

- The stack 7
- Recognition and references 8

Under the hood: how the platform is built 9

- A type-1 hypervisor with two decades of hardening 9
- An agentless control plane 9
- LTS discipline 9
- Scale boundaries, stated plainly 9

Translating your VMware concepts 10

- Two differences that work in your favor 10
- The daily experience 10

The migration, in practice 12

- The tooling: V2V built into Xen Orchestra 12
- The method: waves, with rollback always available 12
- How long it takes 13

Storage strategy: keep it, or converge it 14

- Option 1: keep your existing storage 14
- Option 2: converge with XOSTOR 14
- Choosing between them 15

Backup and disaster recovery 16

- What Xen Orchestra provides out of the box 16
- Distributed architectures with XO Proxy 16
- If your organization is standardized on Veeam 17

Security, compliance and sovereignty 18

- Platform security 18
- Access control and traceability 18

Sovereignty and reversibility 18
Automation, DevOps and Kubernetes 20
Kubernetes without a separate platform 20
Observability and capacity management 21
Built into Xen Orchestra 21
DC Scope and DC NetScope for capacity and flows 21
The subscription model, finally legible 22
Priced per host, not per core 22
Support tiers, not feature tiers 22
What open source guarantees structurally 22
How to run your own numbers 23
Step 1: establish your current annual cost 23
Step 2: build the alternative column 23
Step 3: compare trajectories, not snapshots 24
A worked example 24
Services, support and training 26
The engineers who build the product support it 26
The service catalog 26
Honest limits, and how to de-risk them 27
A decision framework and next steps 28
Three concrete first steps 28
Appendix: evaluation checklist 29
Phase 1: audit (chapters 2, 6, 10) 29
Phase 2: lab and pilot (chapters 4 to 9) 29
Phase 3: decision (chapters 11 to 15) 30
Notes and sources 31

Executive summary

Since Broadcom completed its acquisition of VMware in late 2023, virtualization has stopped being a solved problem. Perpetual licenses are gone, the product catalog has been collapsed into a handful of subscription bundles, pricing has shifted to a per-core model, and first renewal quotes several times higher than previous costs have been widely documented. The support clock adds its own pressure: vSphere 7 reached end of support in October 2025, and vSphere 8 follows in October 2027.

This white paper answers one question: can Vates VMS replace VMware in your organization, and what does that actually involve?

In short:

- **The platform is production-proven.** Vates VMS is built on XCP-ng, a type-1 hypervisor derived from the Xen Project, and Xen Orchestra, a unified web-based control plane. The stack runs in production at organizations including KDDI France, Biocoop, Exodata and the Festival de Cannes, and Vates has been listed in the Gartner Market Guide for Server Virtualization since 2022.
- **The migration is a managed process rather than a leap of faith.** Xen Orchestra ships a built-in V2V migration wizard that imports workloads directly from vSphere, including vSAN environments, and migrations run in waves so that both platforms coexist during the transition, with a defined rollback path at every stage. Vates engineers can handle the project end to end if you would rather not run it yourself.
- **The subscription model is the opposite of what you are leaving.** Vates VMS is priced per host, not per core, and plans differ by support level: the software is the same at every tier. On a 20-host estate with 24-core CPUs, that difference comes to roughly 501 120€ / $579,312 over three years at resellers' public list prices, as set out in chapter 13. And because the entire stack is open source, an expired subscription never stops your VMs.
- **The gaps are known and manageable.** This document names them explicitly, from ecosystem density to specific technical caveats, and shows how to de-risk each one during the pilot phase.

Why this question is on the table

VMware is now a decision that has to be re-justified at every renewal, and the facts driving that reassessment are public.

What changed, in order

When	What happened
Nov. 2023	Broadcom completes the VMware acquisition
Early 2024	End of perpetual license sales; subscription becomes the only model
2024	Catalog collapsed from thousands of SKUs into a few bundles built around VCF and VVF; pricing moves to per-core with a 16-core minimum per CPU
2024-2025	Authorized partner and cloud provider ecosystem cut from thousands of companies to a few hundred
Spring 2025	A 72-core minimum order requirement is announced, then withdrawn days before taking effect after customer backlash
Oct. 2025	vSphere 7 reaches end of general support
2025	A 20% late-renewal penalty on first-year subscription price is introduced; vSphere 9 ships only inside VVF and VCF, with no standalone edition
Late 2025	The VVF bundle is withdrawn from sale in several European countries
Oct. 2027	vSphere 8 reaches end of general support

What it means in practice

Three consequences matter more than any single line above.

Costs are up, sharply. First subscription quotes documented publicly after the acquisition commonly landed between 2 and 5 times the previous perpetual-plus-support cost, with some organizations reporting far more. Bundling forces many customers to pay for components (vSAN, NSX, Aria) they never deploy. The per-core metric with a 16-core floor per CPU penalizes anyone running smaller processors.

Predictability is gone. The 72-core episode is instructive precisely because it was withdrawn: a fundamental commercial term was announced, contested and reversed

within weeks. The regional withdrawal of VVF followed a few months later. Budgeting three to five years ahead on this foundation is guesswork.

The clock is running. Every organization on vSphere 7 is already unsupported. Every organization on vSphere 8 has a hard date, October 2027, by which it must either accept the new terms to reach vSphere 9, or have an alternative in production.

> **WHY NOW**
>
> This document does not argue that VMware is a bad product. It argues something simpler: if you must renegotiate, re-version and re-budget anyway, the cost of seriously evaluating an alternative has never been lower, and the cost of not doing so has never been higher.

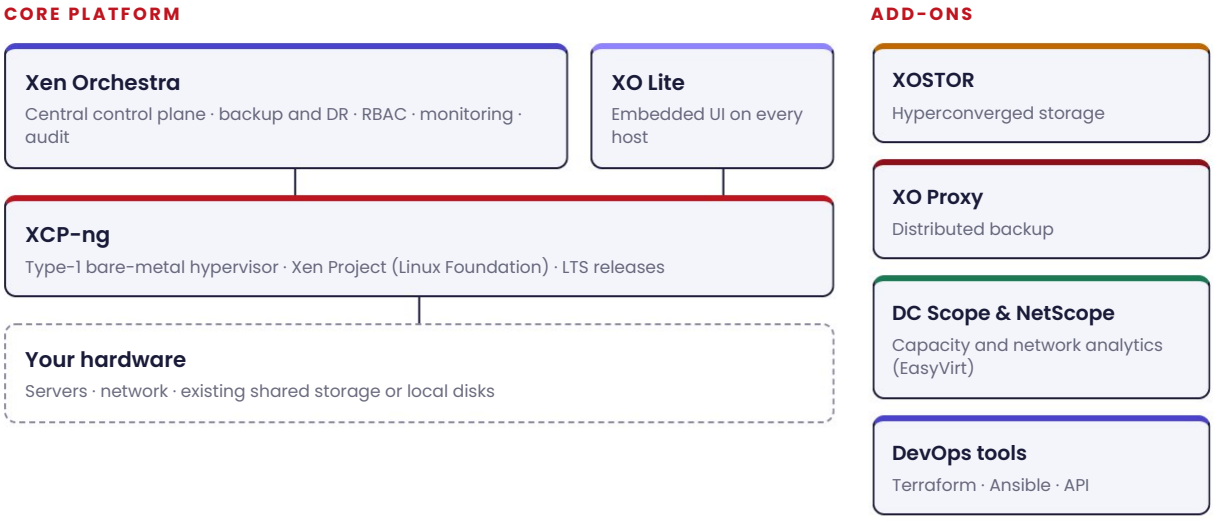
Vates VMS at a glance

Vates VMS (Virtualization Management Stack) is a complete, 100% open source virtualization platform developed and supported by Vates, a French software vendor founded in 2012. The company employs the engineers who write the hypervisor, the management layer and the storage stack, and the same engineers staff the support organization.

The stack

- **XCP-ng** is the hypervisor: a type-1, bare-metal platform built on the Xen Project, hosted by the Linux Foundation. Launched in 2018 after Citrix restricted XenServer's free edition, XCP-ng today powers thousands of production environments, from small businesses to Fortune 500 companies. The current 8.3 branch is an LTS (long-term support) release with monthly security updates.
- **Xen Orchestra (XO)** is the control plane: a central, agentless, web-based console covering VM lifecycle management, automated backups, disaster recovery, monitoring, role-based access control and audit. It runs from any browser, on any device. The next-generation XO 6 interface is rolling out with a redesigned UI and deeper Kubernetes integration.
- **XO Lite** is the embedded interface: a management UI shipped inside every XCP-ng host, with no deployment and no external server to maintain. Point a browser at the host's IP and you are managing VMs immediately. It covers emergency operations, small single-host or branch-office setups, and initial bootstrap before a full XO deployment.

Around this core, optional components extend the platform: **XOSTOR** for hyperconverged storage, **XO Proxy** for distributed backup architectures, **DC Scope and DC NetScope** (developed by EasyVirt) for capacity analytics and network observability, and a full **DevOps toolchain** (Terraform, Pulumi, Ansible, Packer, PowerShell, REST API, Go SDK).



The Vates VMS stack: one vendor from the hypervisor to the control plane, with optional add-ons.

Recognition and references

- Listed in the **Gartner Market Guide for Server Virtualization** since 2022, alongside the largest vendors in the market.
- Published user stories cover organizations such as **KDDI France**, **Biocoop**, **Fujifilm MicroChannel**, **Exodata**, the **Festival de Cannes**, **BedRock Streaming** and the **Collaborative Health Studies Coordinating Center** of the University of Washington. All of them are on vates.tech.

In 2025, the XCP-ng Windows PV drivers became officially signed through Microsoft's process, with Vates as the upstream maintainer of the open source Windows drivers for the entire Xen ecosystem. This matters for enterprise Windows fleets: driver installation follows the standard, signed path your security policies expect.

> **OPEN SOURCE DOES NOT MEAN UNSUPPORTED**
>
> All code is public and auditable, and Vates sells commercial support with SLAs up to 24/7 and a one-hour response commitment on critical incidents. You get the transparency of open source and the contractual accountability of a software vendor.

Under the hood: how the platform is built

Three architectural choices define how Vates VMS behaves in production.

A type-1 hypervisor with two decades of hardening

XCP-ng runs the Xen hypervisor directly on hardware. Xen is one of the most battle-tested hypervisors in existence: it has run millions of servers at the largest public cloud providers for over twenty years. Its architecture isolates the control domain (dom0) from guest VMs, a separation model with a long security track record.

XCP-ng packages Xen with the XAPI toolstack, the same management API family that powered XenServer, which means the platform speaks a mature, stable, fully documented API. Everything Xen Orchestra does, your scripts can do too.

An agentless control plane

Xen Orchestra manages hosts and VMs through the XAPI, without installing agents inside guest operating systems. Guest tools (the equivalent of VMware Tools) provide metrics and graceful shutdown, but backup, migration and lifecycle operations do not depend on in-guest software. Fewer moving parts inside the VMs means fewer things to patch, fewer compatibility matrices to track, and one less attack surface.

LTS discipline

The 8.3 branch receives security and maintenance updates monthly, CVEs are tracked and patched by a dedicated security team, and new capabilities land without forcing disruptive version jumps. Organizations that need to stay fully offline are covered: the platform installs and updates in air-gapped environments with no internet connectivity.

Scale boundaries, stated plainly

An XCP-ng resource pool spans up to 64 hosts sharing live migration, HA and scheduling; larger estates run as multiple pools under one Xen Orchestra, which is the same operational pattern as running multiple vCenter clusters. Since the QCOW2 storage format reached general availability in XCP-ng 8.3 (2026), virtual disks scale to 16 TiB, replacing the historical 2 TiB per-disk limit of the VHD format. Chapter 7 covers what that changes for migrations.

Translating your VMware concepts

The first legitimate worry of a VMware team is retraining. In practice, the concepts map almost one to one.

VMware world	Vates VMS
ESXi	XCP-ng
vCenter Server	Xen Orchestra
vSphere Host Client	XO Lite
VMware Tools	XCP-ng guest tools (Microsoft-signed Windows PV drivers)
vMotion / Storage vMotion	Live migration of VMs and storage
HA / DRS	XCP-ng high availability + XO load balancing
vSAN	XOSTOR
Veeam or built-in backup	Backup integrated in Xen Orchestra (or Veeam, see chapter 8)
SRM / replication	Continuous replication + DR plans in XO
Aria Operations	DC Scope
Aria Operations for Networks	DC NetScope
Tanzu / Kubernetes	Vates Kubernetes Service
PowerCLI	PowerShell module, REST API, Terraform, Pulumi
Resource pools, folders, tags	Pools, groups, tags in XO

Two differences that work in your favor

Management and backup are one product. Xen Orchestra replaces both the management layer (vCenter) and the backup layer (typically Veeam) in a single integrated solution. No extra agents, no separate backup subscriptions, no vendor sprawl.

No crippled editions at the hypervisor level. XCP-ng is the same software for everyone. Live migration, high availability and the security feature set are not gated behind a higher tier. Vates' commercial model sells support and services, not feature unlock keys.

The daily experience

Creating a VM, taking a snapshot, live-migrating a workload, restoring a single file from last night's backup: each is a few clicks in one web interface. VMware administrators

typically find their bearings within days, and official Vates training (chapter 12) compresses that further.

The migration, in practice

Vates has run this process across hundreds of VMware exits, and the tooling is built into the platform rather than sold as an add-on.

The tooling: V2V built into Xen Orchestra

Xen Orchestra ships a guided V2V (VMware to XCP-ng) migration wizard. It connects to your existing vSphere environment, imports VMs directly, converts disks and reconfigures the results as XCP-ng guests. On NFS datastores, and in most cases on VMFS 5, the wizard uses a warm migration mechanism: an initial snapshot of the running VM is replicated while the VM keeps serving users, then the VM is shut down and only the blocks modified since the snapshot are transferred before it boots on XCP-ng. Downtime shrinks to that final delta, which matters most on large VMs. On VMFS 6, the default datastore format since vSphere 6.5, and on vSAN, the VM has to be powered off for the import, so its downtime follows its disk size and the network throughput. The datastore inventory in the audit tells you which VMs take which path. Two further details are worth knowing for real-world estates:

- **vSAN environments are supported.** The wizard imports workloads running on vSAN datastores (with the VM powered off), which removes one of the most common blockers for organizations deep into VMware's HCI stack.
- **Large disks migrate directly.** With QCOW2 generally available, virtual disks up to 16 TiB are supported. File servers, database VMs and backup repositories that exceeded the old 2 TiB VHD ceiling no longer need to be split or reshaped before migration. This preparation step, long a real cost in Xen migrations, is gone for most workloads.

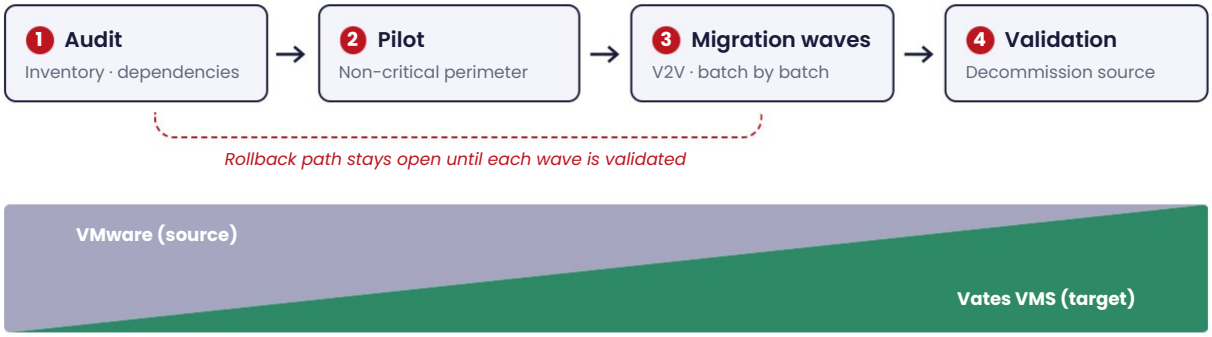
The per-VM routine is short and scriptable: uninstall VMware Tools, import through the wizard, install XCP-ng guest tools, validate the application, cut over DNS or load balancer entries where relevant. For Windows fleets, the signed PV drivers install through the standard driver path.

The method: waves, with rollback always available

1. **Audit and qualification.** Inventory VMs, application dependencies, storage and network requirements, backup policies and compliance constraints, and identify your pilot candidates. DC Scope, which also works on VMware, profiles your current estate before you move anything, so sizing decisions rest on measured data rather than estimates.
2. **Pilot.** Migrate a small, non-critical perimeter and validate performance, backups, monitoring and operational runbooks against it. This is where the team builds confidence, and where any environment-specific surprises surface while the stakes are still low.

3. **Migration waves.** Move VMs in coherent batches: per application, per department, per site. The two infrastructures coexist throughout; there is no big-bang cutover. Network design (VLANs, MTU, bonds) is replicated on the XCP-ng side beforehand so migrated VMs land in familiar segments.
4. **Validation and decommissioning.** Compliance checks, backup chain handover, progressive shutdown of the source platform, closure of the VMware subscription.

Before each wave, the rollback plan is explicit: until a wave is validated, the source environment stays intact and reachable. A migrated VM that misbehaves can be re-pointed to its source copy.



The wave model: the source estate shrinks as the target grows, with rollback available at every step.

How long it takes

Duration depends far more on VM count and available maintenance windows than on tooling. Perimeters of a few dozen VMs commonly complete in weeks; multi-site estates run over a few months precisely because the wave model lets you move without service interruption. Plan the calendar against your renewal dates: finishing a wave before a renewal falls due converts directly into negotiating leverage or avoided spend.

IN THE FIELD: FUJIFILM MICROCHANNEL

This business technology provider runs both its internal systems and its customers' hosted workloads on its infrastructure. Before moving off VMware, the team validated its backups, confirmed workload compatibility and designed its high-availability clusters; the VMs then moved with minimal disruption and no application-level changes. The full story is available on vates.tech.

END-TO-END MIGRATION PACKAGES

For organizations that want the vendor in the room, Vates offers structured migration packages: risk assessment, V2V tooling, rollback planning and go-live support, handled end to end by Vates engineers. Your team stays in command, with the people who wrote the code alongside.

Storage strategy: keep it, or converge it

Storage is where VMware exits most often stall, and Vates VMS supports both of the realistic answers to it.

Option 1: keep your existing storage

XCP-ng consumes standard shared storage: NFS, iSCSI, Fibre Channel, SMB and local disks (ext4). If you run a SAN or NAS today, it plugs into XCP-ng as a storage repository and your investment survives the migration. The VMs themselves do not stay in place: the import converts each VMware disk and writes it into an XCP-ng repository, typically a new LUN or share on the same array, so the array needs room for both copies until the sources are deleted. This is still the shortest path for most organizations: the hypervisor changes, the arrays do not.

Practical notes for the audit phase:

- Thin provisioning behavior depends on the repository type, since file-based repositories are thin while block-based LVM repositories are thick by default, so map your capacity plans accordingly.
- QCOW2 disks above 2 TiB are supported on almost all repository types, with two exceptions at GA: XOSTOR (LINSTOR) and SMB repositories. If you have very large disks destined for those targets, flag them in the audit and validate the design during the pilot.

Option 2: converge with XOSTOR

XOSTOR is Vates' software-defined, hyperconverged storage layer: it pools the local disks of your XCP-ng hosts into a replicated virtual SAN. It is built on DRBD replication, co-developed with LINBIT, and it deploys and operates entirely from Xen Orchestra.

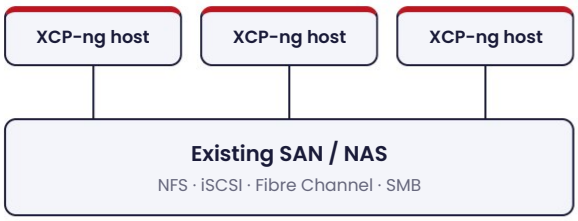
Key characteristics:

- Clusters of 3 to 7 hosts, with nodes added as capacity needs grow.
- Configurable replication factor (1 to 3) to balance performance against redundancy.
- Automatic failover: storage stays available when a node fails, with no manual intervention.
- NVMe, SSD and HDD supported, mixed as needed per node.
- No external appliance, no separate management tool: compute and storage share the same servers and the same console.

For organizations leaving vSAN, this is the architectural equivalent: eliminate dedicated storage hardware, run storage where compute runs, manage both in one place. For

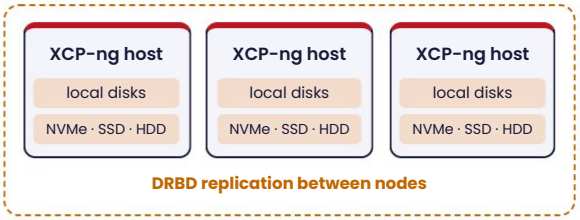
organizations leaving a SAN they no longer want to renew, it is a way to reclaim that budget line entirely.

Option 1 · Keep your shared storage



The hypervisor changes,
your storage investment survives.

Option 2 · Converge with XOSTOR



A replicated virtual SAN pooled from local disks,
3 to 7 hosts, deployed and managed from Xen Orchestra.
No storage appliance to buy or renew.

Keep, converge, or mix: the platform treats both designs as first-class.

Choosing between them

The decision is rarely ideological: keep the SAN if it is recent, performant and paid for. Converge with XOSTOR when hardware refresh is due, when edge and branch sites cannot justify an array, or when the goal is to consolidate footprint and energy consumption. Mixed designs are common: XOSTOR at the edge, existing shared storage in the core datacenter.

Backup and disaster recovery

Backup is usually the second-largest budget line in a virtualization stack after the platform subscription. In Vates VMS it is native, and since 2026 you also have the option of keeping Veeam.

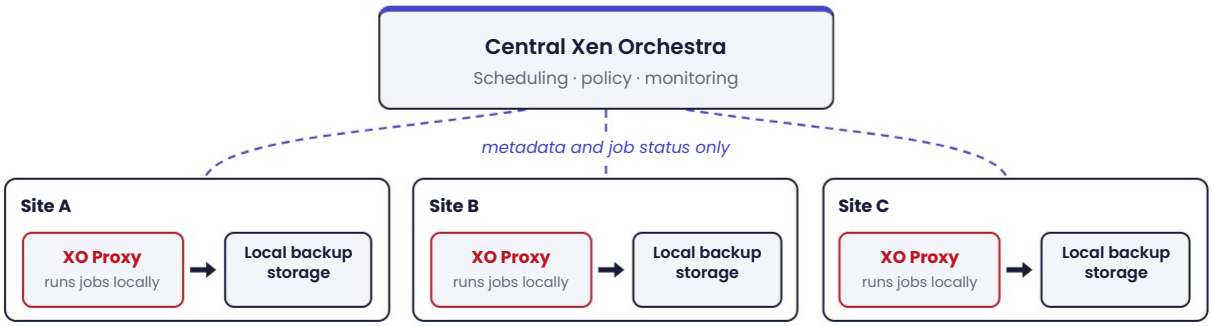
What Xen Orchestra provides out of the box

- **Incremental backups** with changed block tracking (CBT): after the initial full, only modified blocks are read and transferred, which keeps backup windows short even on large VMs.
- **Continuous replication** of critical VMs to a secondary site, ready to power on.
- **Disaster recovery plans** that can be tested without disrupting production.
- **Granular restore**: full VM, individual disk, or single file through File Level Restore.
- **Flexible targets**: NFS and SMB shares, and S3-compatible object storage, which opens the door to offsite and cloud-tier retention strategies.
- **Health checks**: backups can be automatically restored and boot-tested in an isolated environment, so you find out that a backup is unusable before the day you need it.

All of it is scheduled, monitored and reported from the same console that manages the VMs.

Distributed architectures with XO Proxy

In multi-site estates, routing backup traffic across WAN links to a central appliance is slow, fragile and expensive. XO Proxy decentralizes execution: a lightweight proxy at each site processes backup and restore jobs locally, while the central Xen Orchestra keeps scheduling, policy and monitoring. Only metadata and job status cross the WAN. Less bandwidth consumed, a smaller exposed attack surface (only the proxy faces external networks, never the central appliance), uniform policy across sites, and local restores that run at local speed.



Backup data never crosses the WAN: thick arrows stay inside each site.

Local backup, central control: one policy, executed independently at each site.

If your organization is standardized on Veeam

Some organizations have years of process, compliance evidence and muscle memory built on Veeam. That path stays open: Veeam Data Platform 13 (released late 2025) lists XCP-ng as a supported hypervisor, with an agentless integration using CBT through the XCP-ng API. A public beta of the plugin has been available since 2025, with official support announced for 2026. If Veeam is a hard requirement, verify its GA status and feature coverage (notably application-aware processing) at decision time, and include it in your pilot. Either way, the strategic point stands: your backup strategy no longer locks your hypervisor choice.

> **PLAN THE BACKUP MIGRATION LIKE THE VM MIGRATION**
>
> Retention obligations, offsite copies and restore-test evidence must survive the transition. Run both backup chains in parallel during the coexistence phase, and only retire the old chain once its retention window has fully aged out or been transferred.

Security, compliance and sovereignty

Regulated environments in the public sector, healthcare, finance and defense evaluate a platform on specifics rather than adjectives, so the specifics are set out below.

Platform security

- **vTPM 2.0 and UEFI Secure Boot** for guests, required by Windows 11 and by measured-boot policies.
- **TLS 1.3+** on management communications.
- **CVE-tracked patching** with monthly security updates on the LTS branch, handled by a dedicated security team; the codebase is public and independently auditable.
- **Microsoft-signed Windows PV drivers**, distributed through the standard signed-driver path your endpoint policies expect.
- **Air-gap support**: installation and updates function in fully isolated environments with no internet connectivity, a hard requirement in defense and industrial contexts that many platforms only approximate.

Access control and traceability

Xen Orchestra provides SSO through LDAP, OpenID Connect and SAML, granular role-based access control per VM, host or pool, a multi-tenant self-service portal, and a full audit trail of every action. For backup architectures, the XO Proxy model additionally limits what is ever exposed to external networks.

Sovereignty and reversibility

For many European organizations the question extends beyond features. Vates is a French vendor, the entire stack is open source, and the platform runs on your hardware, in your datacenter, with no dependency on a third-party cloud, no telemetry requirement, and no activation server that must phone home.

Reversibility is structural rather than contractual: standard disk formats, open and documented APIs, public code. Leaving Vates VMS one day would be a project, not a negotiation. That is exactly the property you wish your current platform had, and it belongs in your next procurement criteria regardless of the vendor you choose.

IN THE FIELD: KDDI FRANCE

The French subsidiary of the Japanese telecom group adopted Vates VMS to reduce infrastructure costs and expand its cloud offering, explicitly without adding a new vendor dependency in the process. For a service provider whose margins live and die on infrastructure economics, the choice of an open platform is not ideology: it is risk management applied to the supply chain.

Automation, DevOps and Kubernetes

A modern platform is operated as much through code as through a console. Vates VMS integrates with the tooling your teams already run:

Tool	Use
Terraform	Declarative VM provisioning; state-managed infrastructure
Pulumi	Infrastructure as Code in TypeScript, Python, Go or C#
Ansible	Integration into existing configuration playbooks
Packer	Automated, versioned golden image pipelines
PowerShell	Official module for Windows-centric teams (the PowerCLI succession path)
REST API	Full API for CI/CD pipelines and custom tooling
Cloud-init	First-boot configuration: users, SSH keys, scripts
Go SDK	Purpose-built integrations and internal tooling

VM provisioning stops being a sequence of console clicks and becomes a reviewed, version-controlled definition: reproducible environments, faster deployments, safe rollbacks. Teams already running GitOps workflows against cloud providers apply the same patterns on-premises.

Kubernetes without a separate platform

Vates Kubernetes Service provisions and manages Kubernetes clusters directly on XCP-ng from the Xen Orchestra interface. Teams that used Tanzu, or that run K8s beside their VMs on separate tooling, get a native path: cluster lifecycle handled by the same control plane, on the same hosts, with no additional platform subscription. Combined with the Terraform and Packer integrations, the full path from bare metal to running containers is automatable.

Observability and capacity management

Losing Aria Operations is one of the most commonly overlooked costs of a VMware exit, and Vates VMS covers the gap at two levels.

Built into Xen Orchestra

Real-time dashboards for CPU, RAM, disk and network per VM and per host, custom alerts, and usage reports come with the control plane. For day-to-day operations and first-line troubleshooting, no additional product is needed.

DC Scope and DC NetScope for capacity and flows

For capacity planning and deeper analytics, **DC Scope** and **DC NetScope**, developed by EasyVirt and integrated into Xen Orchestra, provide the equivalent of Aria Operations and Aria Operations for Networks:

- **Capacity forecasting**: predict CPU, RAM and storage saturation from real usage trends, and plan growth before it becomes an incident.
- **VM rightsizing**: identify oversized VMs, reclaim resources safely, and reduce hardware and subscription spend.
- **What-if scenarios**: simulate infrastructure changes before committing to them.
- **Energy and carbon monitoring**: track power per host and VM, estimate CO2 emissions, and feed Green IT and CSRD-style reporting with real numbers.
- **Network flow mapping and anomaly detection**: end-to-end visibility of traffic between VMs, hosts and services, with congestion and unusual patterns surfaced before users notice.

One transition detail matters: **DC Scope also works on VMware**. During coexistence you monitor both estates with one tool, and your capacity baseline carries over instead of resetting on migration day.

The subscription model, finally legible

This is probably the sharpest contrast with the situation you are leaving.

Priced per host, not per core

Vates VMS is sold on subscription, **per physical host**, regardless of core count, socket count or VM count, and the consequences of that compound:

- **Hardware choices become technical again.** Densifying a server, choosing high-core-count CPUs, consolidating workloads: none of it raises your software bill. Under a per-core model, every one of those decisions raises the bill.
- **Budgets project cleanly.** Host count is the one number in your infrastructure that moves slowly and predictably. Multi-year commitments carry discounts (3-year and 5-year terms), and education and non-profit organizations get dedicated conditions.
- **No minimums working against you.** There is no per-CPU core floor and no minimum order size punishing small sites and edge deployments.

Support tiers, not feature tiers

Plans range from an entry tier for small 3-host estates up to Enterprise support with 24/7 coverage and a one-hour response commitment on severity-1 incidents. What varies between tiers is the level of accompaniment: ticket volume, coverage hours, direct SSH assistance, setup and upgrade services. The hypervisor itself is the same software at every tier, and the open source editions remain fully functional for labs, testing and non-supported use.

What open source guarantees structurally

> **THE MOST IMPORTANT POINT IN THIS CHAPTER**
>
> If your Vates subscription expires, your VMs keep running, keep starting, and keep being manageable. You lose commercial support, not your infrastructure. This is a difference in kind from proprietary subscription software, where an expired subscription can block operations. No contract clause can take away what the open source model guarantees structurally, because the guarantee does not come from the contract.

For a precise quote matched to your estate, the Vates sales team works from two inputs, your host count and the support level you want, which is why the calculation generally fits on a single page.

How to run your own numbers

This document contains no price list: a comparison only becomes real when it is built on your own estate. The method below takes an afternoon with a spreadsheet.

Step 1: establish your current annual cost

Gather these figures for your existing platform, most of which live in last year's invoices:

Cost line	Where to find it	Notes
Hypervisor subscription	Your VMware renewal quote	Per core; remember the 16-core minimum per CPU
Backup subscription	Backup vendor invoice	Per socket, per VM or per workload depending on vendor
Monitoring and capacity tools	Aria or third-party invoices	Often forgotten, rarely small
Storage maintenance	SAN/NAS support renewal	Include the projected refresh cost if the array is aging
Support overage	Incident history	Time spent escalating between separate vendors

Then project it forward: apply the terms of your actual renewal quote rather than last year's price, and multiply over a 3-to-5-year horizon. Per-core subscription models mean every future hardware refresh with higher core counts raises this number again; model your next refresh explicitly.

Step 2: build the alternative column

- **Count your hosts.** Vates VMS is priced per host, so this single number, plus your chosen support tier, defines the subscription line. Request the quote from Vates sales; it is the one number this document cannot give you.
- **Zero out what becomes native.** Backup, DR orchestration, and monitoring are included in the platform. If you keep Veeam by choice, keep its line; if you adopt XO's native backup, that budget line disappears.
- **Decide the storage line.** Keeping your SAN keeps its maintenance cost. Converging with XOSTOR replaces the next array refresh with an add-on subscription plus local disks, which is usually the largest single swing in the whole model.
- **Add the transition cost, honestly.** Migration effort (internal days or a Vates migration package), training for the team, and a few months of parallel running during

coexistence. These are one-time costs; weigh them against recurring savings rather than a single year.

Step 3: compare trajectories, not snapshots

The year-one comparison understates the case either way. Put both columns on a 5-year timeline: the per-core model compounds with every hardware refresh and every unilateral term change, while the per-host model moves only when your host count does. Then add the two numbers that never appear on invoices: the cost of an unplanned forced migration if terms change again, and the negotiating leverage that a credible, tested alternative gives you even if you stay. Organizations that modeled a partial exit have publicly reported material reductions on their renewal quotes, which means the audit pays for itself before any migration begins.

A worked example

To make the mechanics concrete, take an estate of **20 hosts with 2 CPUs each and 24 cores per CPU**. VMware bills per physical core, so the estate is 20 × 2 × 24 = **960 billable cores**. Vates VMS bills per host, so the same estate is **20 units**. On a three-year term, with no negotiated discount applied on either side:

Over 3 years	VMware VVF	Vates VMS (Pro)
Billing units	960 cores	20 hosts
Annual	185 040€ / $211,104	18 000€ / $18,000
3-year total	555 120€ / $633,312	54 000€ / $54,000

A WORD OF CAUTION

Broadcom does not publish a price list for vSphere Foundation, so the VMware figures above are the lowest public list prices we could find at authorized resellers, checked on 5 August 2026, for a one-year subscription per core, excluding tax. They are neither a Broadcom quotation nor a price Vates can offer or guarantee, and what organizations actually pay is generally lower once volume, term and negotiation come into play. The only multi-year VMware prices publicly advertised are strictly linear, so the three-year figure is the annual rate multiplied by three, whereas the Vates column applies our published 10% three-year discount. Every source, reseller SKU and assumption is listed on the calculator page, and any error reported to us is checked and corrected.

The three-year difference is **501 120€ (or $579,312)**, with vendor support included on both sides and hardware, power, migration effort and staff time excluded on both.

The instructive part is not the headline figure but how it behaves. On a smaller estate of 5 hosts with 16-core CPUs, the same comparison gives a ratio of roughly 6.9x. Here, with denser CPUs, it reaches 10.3x. Nothing changed in either vendor's pricing between those

two scenarios: the per-core model grows with the silicon while the per-host model tracks the number of servers you actually operate, and every future hardware refresh moves that ratio further in the same direction.

Even at half the list price, the gap on this estate stays above 5x, which is why the exercise is worth redoing with the discount your own renewal quote actually shows.

> **GETTING THE MISSING NUMBER**
>
> The Vates column of your comparison is straightforward to obtain. The Vates VMS vs VMware cost calculator lets you model your own configuration, including host count, CPUs per host, cores per CPU, VMware edition and your negotiated discount. For a firm quote and support-tier advice matched to your estate, contact the team at **vates.tech**.

Services, support and training

A hypervisor migration commits an organization for years. Support is part of the product, not an aftermarket.

The engineers who build the product support it

Vates support is staffed by the team that develops XCP-ng and Xen Orchestra. A bug identified in your production is fixed at the source, in the code, and the fix then benefits every user of the platform. There is no escalation wall between support and engineering, because they are the same organization. Enterprise support runs 24/7 with a one-hour severity-1 response commitment and includes secure direct SSH assistance for fast, hands-on diagnosis.

The service catalog

- **VMware-to-Vates migration packages**: structured projects covering risk assessment, V2V tooling, rollback planning and go-live support.
- **Greenfield deployment**: architecture design, hardware recommendations and initial configuration, from rack to production.
- **Training and certification**: official XCP-ng and Xen Orchestra workshops, in person or remote, with hands-on labs and certification paths for administration teams. Budget this early, because it is the cheapest accelerator available to the project.
- **Technical Account Manager**: for strategic accounts, a named Vates engineer as single point of contact who knows your environment and history.
- **Infrastructure audits**: health checks and optimization reviews of existing deployments.
- **Custom development**: features, integrations and plugins developed on request, which is only possible because the vendor controls the entire codebase.

Honest limits, and how to de-risk them

None of the points below is disqualifying, but all of them are worth handling deliberately.

Ecosystem density. VMware's third-party ecosystem (integrators, monitoring vendors, ISV certification matrices) is the accumulation of twenty years of market dominance. The Vates ecosystem is growing fast, structured through the Vates Alliance Network with partners such as Veeam, DataCore, Commvault, Stormshield and EasyVirt, but it is not yet as dense. **De-risk it**: list the third-party software you depend on, check each vendor's support position for XCP-ng during the audit, and test the critical ones in the pilot. Where an ISV certifies "VMware only", the application almost always still runs; what you are validating is the vendor's support stance.

Veeam integration timing. XCP-ng is listed as a supported hypervisor in Veeam Data Platform 13, with official plugin support announced for 2026 and a public beta available before that. Feature coverage at GA (application-aware processing in particular) should be verified against your requirements at decision time. **De-risk it**: if Veeam is mandatory, make it a pilot criterion; if it is not, XO's native backup covers the standard enterprise feature set today.

Large disks on specific storage types. QCOW2 removes the 2 TiB per-disk limit up to 16 TiB, but at general availability it does not apply to XOSTOR (LINSTOR) or SMB repositories. **De-risk it**: map your largest disks against their target repositories in the audit phase.

Network virtualization scope. XCP-ng and XO cover VLANs, bonds and SDN private networks spanning pools. If your architecture makes heavy use of NSX's advanced constructs (distributed firewalling, micro-segmentation at scale), plan the target design explicitly, typically combining the platform's network capabilities with your existing firewall layer. **De-risk it**: bring your network and security architecture into the audit phase rather than treating it as an implementation detail.

Team familiarity. The concepts map one to one, but muscle memory takes a few weeks. **De-risk it**: train the team during the pilot phase, not after cutover, and keep the pilot perimeter running long enough for on-call rotations to touch it.

> **WHY THIS CHAPTER EXISTS**
>
> Every platform has limits. The relevant question is whether the vendor states them plainly and whether they are discoverable early, at pilot cost, rather than late, at production cost. The methodology in chapter 6 is designed to surface every item above before anything critical depends on it.

A decision framework and next steps

Once the noise is stripped away, the evaluation reduces to four questions:

1. **Coverage**: does the platform run your workloads? For the overwhelming majority of vSphere estates (Windows and Linux servers, databases, file services, VDI back-ends, K8s clusters) the answer is yes, and the pilot proves it on your workloads rather than on a datasheet.
2. **Migration risk**: can you get there without betting the company? The wave model with rollback, built-in V2V including vSAN, and vendor-run migration packages exist precisely to make the answer yes.
3. **Economics**: does per-host pricing with support-based tiers beat your renewal quote? Run the numbers on your real estate; the comparison typically is not close, and it widens every renewal cycle.
4. **Strategic position**: in five years, do you want to be negotiating with a vendor who can change terms unilaterally, or operating a platform you could leave, and therefore never need to?

Three concrete first steps

1. **Stand up a lab this month.** XCP-ng and Xen Orchestra are open source: download them and build a test environment on spare hardware. Most teams validate the fundamentals in days, at no cost.
2. **Run the audit.** Inventory VMs, dependencies, storage layout, backup obligations and renewal dates. Even if you ultimately stay, this audit strengthens your negotiating position; if you move, it becomes the migration plan's first deliverable.
3. **Talk to Vates.** A scoping conversation qualifies your context, prices the project precisely, and, if you want it, frames a supported pilot with success criteria defined up front.

The decision window is not abstract, since every VMware renewal date and the October 2027 end of support for vSphere 8 are fixed milestones. Organizations that prepare an alternative in advance reach those dates with a choice in hand, while those that do not reach them holding only a renewal quote.

> **CONTACT**
>
> For a quote, a demonstration or a migration scoping session: **vates.tech**. Documentation, source code and community: **xcp-ng.org** and **xen-orchestra.com**.

Appendix: evaluation checklist

This page is meant to be printed. Work through it in order, since each item maps to a chapter of this document.

Phase 1: audit (chapters 2, 6, 10)

Done	Item
	VM inventory complete: count, OS breakdown, sizes, application owners
	Application dependency map drawn (what talks to what)
	VMware renewal dates and current quote on the table
	Disks larger than 2 TiB identified and mapped to target storage types
	Datastore type recorded for every VM (NFS, VMFS 5, VMFS 6, vSAN), to separate warm from cold migrations
	Free space on the existing arrays checked for the imported copies
	Third-party software inventoried, ISV support position for XCP-ng checked for each
	Backup obligations documented: retention, offsite copies, compliance evidence
	Network design captured: VLANs, bonds, MTU, firewall zones, any NSX constructs in use
	Current capacity baseline measured (DC Scope can profile the VMware estate directly)

Phase 2: lab and pilot (chapters 4 to 9)

Done	Item
	XCP-ng and Xen Orchestra lab running on spare hardware
	One representative Windows VM and one Linux VM migrated through V2V
	Guest tools installed, performance validated against the source platform
	Backup job configured, and a restore actually tested (full VM and single file)
	Live migration and HA behavior exercised
	Storage decision drafted: keep existing shared storage, converge with XOSTOR, or mix
	If Veeam is required: plugin GA status and feature coverage verified
	Team trained, or training scheduled during the pilot rather than after cutover

Phase 3: decision (chapters 11 to 15)

Done	Item
	5-year cost model built with both columns filled (see chapter 13)
	Vates quote requested: host count and support tier
	Migration calendar drafted against renewal dates and the October 2027 vSphere 8 deadline
	Rollback criteria defined per wave, in writing
	Decision documented, including what would make you revisit it

Notes and sources

Information on VMware licensing changes cited in chapter 2 comes from public sources: official Broadcom announcements relayed through its distribution network, specialized press coverage (The Register, CRN, Techzine) and public analyses by licensing advisory firms, published between 2024 and 2026. Documented facts include: the end of perpetual license sales in early 2024; catalog consolidation around the VCF and VVF bundles; per-core pricing with a 16-core minimum per CPU; the announcement and subsequent withdrawal of a 72-core minimum order requirement in spring 2025; the 20% late-renewal penalty; the withdrawal of VVF from sale in several European countries in late 2025; the availability of vSphere 9 only through VVF or VCF; and the end-of-support dates for vSphere 7 (October 2025) and vSphere 8 (October 2027).

Information on Vates VMS comes from official Vates documentation and announcements (vates.tech, xcp-ng.org, xen-orchestra.com, docs.xcp-ng.org), including: recognition in the Gartner Market Guide for Server Virtualization since 2022; Microsoft-signed Windows PV drivers with Vates as upstream maintainer (2025); QCOW2 general availability in XCP-ng 8.3 with virtual disks up to 16 TiB (2026); and XCP-ng listed as a supported hypervisor in Veeam Data Platform 13, with official plugin support announced for 2026. Customer references cited are public.

The worked example in chapter 13 rests on the assumptions of the Vates VMS vs VMware cost calculator (vates.tech/en/pricing-and-support/vmware-cost-calculator). VMware is billed per physical core at a minimum of 16 cores per CPU. Because Broadcom does not publish a price list, the VMware vSphere Foundation rate is the lowest public list price found at authorized resellers on 5 August 2026 (192.75€ per core per year at Software-Express for the euro figures, $219.90 at Wiresoft for the dollar figures), for a one-year subscription, excluding tax; these are advertised reseller prices rather than a Broadcom quotation, and no negotiated discount is applied. The only publicly advertised multi-year VMware SKUs are priced linearly, so multi-year VMware figures are the annual rate multiplied by the term. Vates VMS is billed per host on the Pro plan at published list prices, excluding tax, including the 10% three-year commitment discount. Vendor support is included on both sides. Hardware, power, cooling, network, third-party backup targets, migration effort and internal staff time are excluded on both sides. Vates list prices are published at vates.tech.

This document is provided for information purposes. Third-party vendors' commercial terms change regularly: verify the terms in force with your suppliers at the time of your decision. Facts and product statuses cited in this document were verified as of August 2026; fast-moving items (Veeam plugin availability, regional bundle availability, end-of-support dates) should be re-checked against current vendor communications.