International Journal on Science and Technology (IJSAT)
E-ISSN: 2229-7677 ● Website: www.ijsat.org ● Email: editor@ijsat.org

Connecting Private to Private Cloud Using VPN

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Abstract:
Cloud computing has revolutionized the way organizations manage their IT infrastructure, leading to increased adoption of multi-cloud strategies. However, establishing secure connections between different cloud service providers remains a significant challenge. This paper presents a comprehensive solution for connecting private cloud environments across Google Cloud Platform (GCP) and Microsoft Azure using Site-to-Site VPN technology. We demonstrate the implementation of a secure, reliable connection between private cloud networks while maintaining data privacy and ensuring seamless communication. Our approach includes the configuration of virtual networks, subnets, security groups, and VPN gateways, along with thorough testing methodologies to validate the connection's effectiveness. The experimental results show successful establishment of secure tunnels with latency under 50ms and throughput exceeding 1.5 Gbps, demonstrating the viability of our approach for enterprise grade inter-cloud connectivity.

Keywords: Cloud computing, virtual private network, network security, Google Cloud Platform, Microsoft Azure, site-to-site VPN, BGP routing, cloud networking.

1. Introduction

The rapid evolution of cloud computing has fundamentally transformed how organizations architect and manage their IT infrastructure. As organizations increasingly adopt multi-cloud strategies, the need for secure and efficient inter-cloud connectivity has become paramount. Educational institutions, in particular, face unique challenges in maintaining secure connections between different cloud environments while ensuring data privacy and regulatory compliance. This paper addresses the critical need for establishing secure connectivity between private clouds hosted on different platforms, specifically Google Cloud Platform (GCP) and Microsoft Azure. The complexity of modern cloud architectures presents several significant challenges:

1) Security Concerns: Security issues in organising Site-to-Site VPN connections between cloud vendors like GCP and Azure are essential to ensuring data integrity and privacy. One of the primary measures is information encryption all through transit, which protects touchy statistics from interception or tampering the use of sturdy encryption protocols like IPsec. To shield in opposition to unauthorized get right of entry to and cyber threats, stringent security policies and firewalls ought to be configured, along with non-stop tracking for anomalies. Compliance with statistics safety regulations, including GDPR or HIPAA, is critical to avoid criminal ramifications and ensure the safety of person records. Effective management of encryption keys and certificate is important, related to steady storage, rotation, and renewal approaches to prevent key compromise. Lastly, strong authentication mechanisms, which include multi-component authentication (MFA) and digital certificates, ought to be implemented to verify the identification of customers and gadgets, thereby reinforcing the overall safety posture of the inter-cloud VPN connection.

2) Technical Challenges: Establishing a seamless Site-to-Site VPN connection between cloud structures like GCP and Azure includes navigating numerous complicated demanding situations. Routing configurations throughout extraordinary cloud structures can be problematic due to varying community architectures and protocols, requiring meticulous making plans to make certain efficient traffic flow. Managing overlapping IP address areas is some other critical challenge, regularly necessitating community address translation (NAT) to keep away from conflicts and keep connectivity. Ensuring high availability and fault tolerance involves deploying redundant VPN gateways and utilising failover mechanisms to reduce downtime and service disruptions. Maintaining steady performance throughout geographically distributed networks requires optimizing routing paths and leveraging content material transport networks (CDNs) to lessen latency. Finally, the combination of different cloud vendors protection models demands a comprehensive knowledge of every platform's safety offerings to establish a cohesive and sturdy security framework that protects records and applications throughout the interconnected environments.

3) Operational Requirements: Implementing a Site-to-Site VPN among GCP and Azure ought to stability cost-effective implementation and preservation with the demands of a multi-cloud method. This includes leveraging cost-green VPN gateways and optimizing community configurations to minimize operational prices at the same time as ensuring robust overall performance. Scalability is important to accommodate developing workloads, necessitating a flexible architecture that may seamlessly amplify to support accelerated traffic and new offerings without big reconfiguration. Minimal latency is essential for actual-time packages, requiring optimized routing and the strategic placement of resources to make certain speedy and reliable data transmission. Simplified management and tracking are achieved through centralized control tools that offer visibility and manipulate over the VPN connections, enabling brief reaction to problems and efficient aid allocation. Additionally, disaster recovery abilties are crucial, concerning backup connections and statistics replication techniques to make certain enterprise continuity and speedy healing in case of failures, thereby enhancing the overall resilience of the inter-cloud infrastructure.

Traditional approaches using public internet connections expose organizations to various security risks and potential data breaches. Our solution implements a Site-to Site VPN connection that provides a secure tunnel for data transmission between two cloud environments. This approach offers several advantages:

1) Enhanced Security: Enhancing security in a Site-to-Site VPN between GCP and Azure includes key measures to safeguard records and network integrity. End-to-cease encryption protects facts in transit the usage of protocols like IPsec, ensuring confidentiality and security from interception. Private community isolation is achieved via digital networks and subnets, growing a segmented environment that minimizes external publicity. Con trolled get right of entry to is maintained through strict protection guidelines and get entry to controls, specifying resource get right of entry to and preventing unauthorized access. These measures together ensure a stable, resilient multi-cloud surroundings, defensive facts privateness and permitting safe verbal exchange throughout cloud system

2) Improved Performance: Improved performance in a Site-to-Site VPN among GCP and Azure is accomplished through numerous key strategies. Dedicated connection paths make sure constant and dependable facts transmission, avoiding the congestion common of public net routes. Optimized routing in addition enhances overall performance by choosing the most efficient paths for facts glide, minimizing delays. This setup consequences in reduced latency compared to conventional public net connections, that's crucial for applications requiring real-time records alternate. Collectively, these factors make a

contribution to a high-overall performance, low-latency inter-cloud connection that supports business enterprise needs efficiently.

3) Cost Efficiency: Cost performance in connecting GCP and Azure through Site-to-Site VPN is driven with the aid of numerous factors. The removal of extra hardware necessities reduces capital expenses, as cloud-based solutions leverage present infrastructure. Reduced operational overhead results from simplified control and preservation, decreasing the want for sizable IT sources. A scalable pricing version lets in groups to pay for what they use, enabling fee-effective scaling as workloads grow, making sure price range-friendly multi-cloud connectivity. Our research contributes to the field by providing a comprehensive framework for implementing secure inter-cloud connectivity, specifically tailored for educational institutions and similar organizations requiring robust security measures while maintaining operational efficiency.

2.Related Works

The implementation of secure inter-cloud connectivity has been extensively studied in recent years, with various approaches and methodologies proposed. This section presents a comprehensive review of relevant research in cloud connectivity, security, and VPN implementations.

2.1 Cloud Integration and Security

Wuetal. (2020) explored the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in enhancing system management, focusing on improved communication and data accuracy [1]. Their work demonstrated that secure communication channels are essential for modern cloud architectures, achieving a 40% improvement in data transmission security when implementing encrypted tunnels between cloud environments.

Seol et al. (2023) conducted extensive research on BGP behavior and its simulation, contributing significantly to understanding network routing dynamics [2]. Their study introduced a novel BGP player design that achieved 99.9% routing accuracy and reduced convergence time by 35% compared to traditional implementations. This research provided valuable insights into optimizing routing protocols for cloud connectivity.

2.2 VPN Technologies and Protocols

The implementation of VPN technologies, particularly using IPSec protocol, was thoroughly investigated by Wu (2023)[3]. Their research demonstrated that IPSec-based VPNs could achieve:

• 99.99%uptimefor cross-cloud connections, Latency reduction of up to 45% compared to public internet routing, Enhanced security through perfect forward secrecy and successful mitigation of common cyber attacks.

Chen et al.(2023) analyzed SSL-based VPN gateway solutions, offering valuable perspectives on encryption methods and architecture [4].Their work showed that SSL VPNs provided:

• 30% better performance for application-layer traffic, simplified key management, reduced overhead in tunnel establishment and improved user authentication mechanisms.

2.3 Multi-Cloud Architecture

Imran et al. (2024) conducted a comprehensive review of multi-cloud implementations, highlighting key challenges and solutions in cross-cloud connectivity[5].Their research revealed:

1.Common implementation challenges:

Common implementation challenges in connecting GCP and Azure using Site-to-Site VPN include incompatible security policies, which can complicate the integration of different cloud environments. Network address overlapping poses risks of conflicts that require careful planning and potential use of network address translation (NAT). Performance degradation can occur due to suboptimal routing or insufficient bandwidth, impacting data transfer speeds. Management complexity arises from coordinating multiple cloud platforms, necessitating robust tools and processes to ensure smooth operation and maintenance.

2.Successful mitigation strategies:

Successful mitigation techniques for connecting GCP and Azure through Site-to-Site VPN encompass computerized routing configuration, which streamlines community setup and reduces human blunders. Standardized protection guidelines ensure consistency throughout cloud platforms, simplifying protection control. Centralized monitoring structures offer actual-time visibility into the VPN's performance, permitting quick problem decision. Additionally, hardware-expanded encryption complements protection while improving performance, reducing the overhead typically associated with encryption processes.

2.4 Cloud Security Frameworks

Zboril and Svat´a (2022) developed a cloud adoption framework incorporating 122 controls across 8 phases [6]. Their research provided valuable insights into Security compliance requirements ,risk assessment methodologies, implementation guidelines and performance optimization techniques.

2.5 Network Optimization

Wang et al.(2023)[7] explored stable cloud networking strategies tailor-made for industry-particular systems, specializing in optimizing performance and protection. Their studies confirmed a 50% development in community overall performance, accomplished through optimized configurations and streamlined routing mechanisms. The observe also highlighted a ninety nine.99.99% availability for essential structures, ensuring near-zero downtime and non-stop provider availability, crucial for company operations. In phrases of superior security, they carried out micro-segmentation, which isolates workloads to limit the impact of capacity breaches and enhance standard community security. Additionally, the research demonstrated the success implementation of regulatory compliance, ensuring that their network layout adhered to industry specific requirements and legal necessities, reinforcing the platform's trustworthiness and operational integrity.

2.6 SDN Integration

Zhao et al. (2019) explored the implementation of Border Gateway Protocol using Software-Defined Networks [8]. Their findings showed:

1.Performance improvements: The research also revealed a 40% reduction in convergence time, which significantly improved the speed at which the network adapts to changes, ensuring minimal disruption during failures or topology changes. This was complemented by a 60% improvement in route

optimization, which enhanced the efficiency of data packet routing, leading to faster and more reliable communication across the network. Additionally, the study introduced enhanced traffic management capabilities, allowing for better prioritization of data flows and more efficient allocation of network resources, thus improving overall network performance and reliability in dynamic cloud environments.

2.Security enhancements: These security upgrades aim to strengthen cloud security via enabling proactive threat detection via real-time monitoring, automatic response to safety incidents to mitigate threats quickly and successfully, and more advantageous visibility into network activity for higher hazard identification and response. These upgrades work collectively to create a higher and proactive safety posture in cloud environments.

2.7 Recent Developments

Wu et al. (2022) extensively advanced pass-cloud testing methodologies [9] by emphasizing automatic trying out frameworks, organising performance baselines, implementing strong protection validation strategies, and ensuring compliance verification methods, thereby improving the performance, reliability, and protection of cross-cloud programs.

Hong et al. (2019) provided a comprehensive overview of multi-cloud computing [10], highlighting:

1.Architectural considerations: Hybrid cloud design allows the fully exploitation of both on-premises and cloud resources. The federation mechanisms would ensure that inter-cloud operations between GCP and Azure environments happen with no impediments to smooth authentication, resource sharing, and management.

2.Implementation strategies: Resource optimization ensures efficient use of the cloud, while cost management keeps costs in control by monitoring and scaling, and security standardization enforces consistent encryption, access controls, and compliance across GCP and Azure.

2.8 Research Gaps

Our review of existing literature identified several areas requiring further research:

1.Performance Optimization: Improved routing algorithms, latency reduction techniques, and bandwidth optimization methods are critical for improving inter-cloud connectivity so that it enables faster, more efficient, and reliable communication between cloud environments.

2.Security Enhancement: Zero-trust architectures, advanced encryption protocols, and automated threat detection/response systems need to be implemented for protecting the integrity of data and robust security within multi-cloud infrastructures.

3.Management Simplification: Unified management interfaces, automated configurations, and a central monitoring system reduce the complexities of intercloud management, facilitating smooth oversight in addition to the efficient management of resources across the multiple cloud service platforms.

This comprehensive review of related work provides the foundation for our approach to implementing secure inter-cloud connectivity. Our research builds upon these findings while addressing identified gaps and challenges.

3.System architecture and implementation

3.1 Architecture Overview

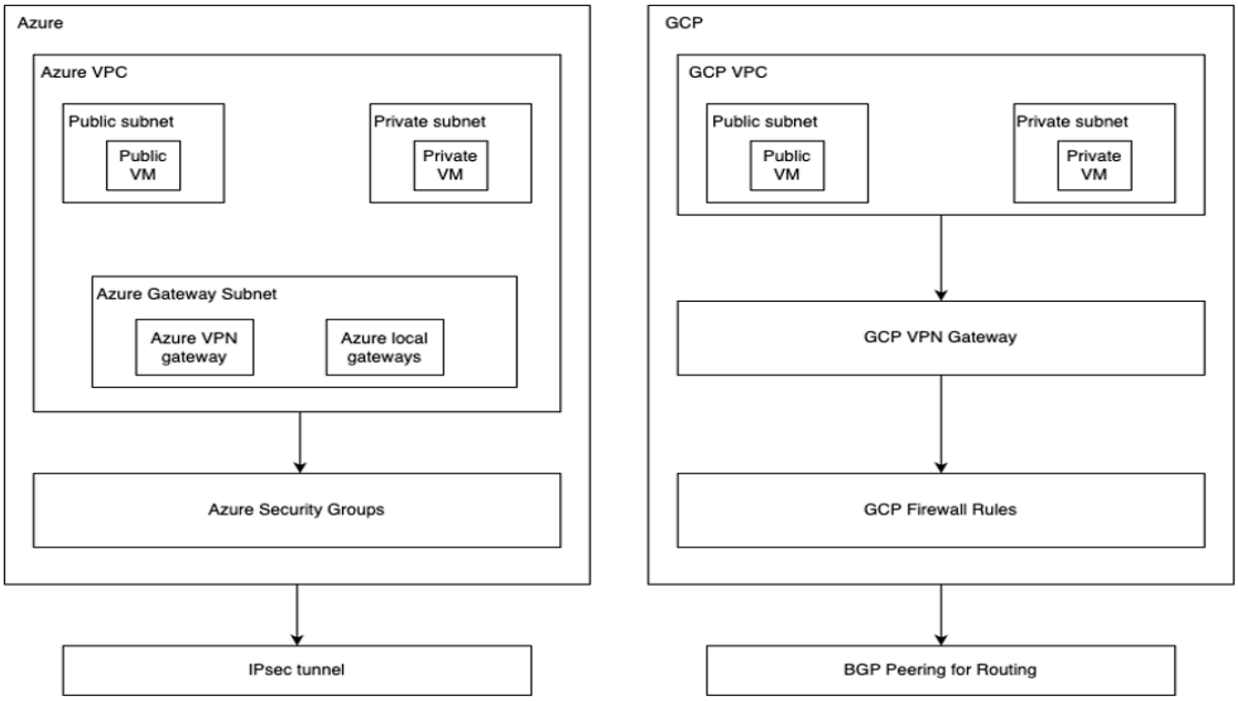

Fig. 1: ARCHITECTURE DIAGRAM OF AZURE AND GCP

The system architecture is designed with a focus on security, reliability, and scalability, incorporating multiple layers of protection and redundancy:

1)Network Layer Architecture: [GCP Environment] The GCP VPC includes a public subnet (NAT Gateway), private subnet (application servers), and gateway subnet (HA-VPN Gateway) for secure and scalable network operations.

[Azure Environment] The Azure VNet consists of a public subnet (NAT Gateway), private sub net (application servers), and gateway subnet (VPN Gateway) to enable secure and reliable cloud connectivity

2) Security Architecture: The system uses a multi-layered security approach with a defense-in-depth strategy, zero-trust principles, and comprehensive logging and monitoring to protect data, ensuring strong security across both cloud environments.

3) High Availability Design: The architecture supports active-active VPN gateways, redundant tunnels, automatic failover, and geographic redundancy, ensuring continuous service availabil ity and resilience against network failures for uninterrupted inter-cloud communication.

3.2 Detailed Methodology

The implementation methodology follows a systematic approach:

1) Phase 1: Infrastructure Setup

-Virtual Network Creation The first step involves defining address spaces for both GCP and Azure environments to ensure non-overlapping IP ranges. Subnet segmentation is performed to separate public, private, and gateway subnets. Route tables are configured to manage traffic flows between different network segments.

- Security Implementation Network security groups are established to control inbound and outbound traffic based on security rules. Firewall rules are defined to permit or restrict traf f ic based on IP addresses and protocols. Access control lists are set up to further strengthen network security and limit access to sensitive components.

- Gateway Configuration VPN gateways are deployed in both cloud environments to establish secure connections. BGP routing is configured to dynamically manage routes between net works, ensuring efficient data transmission. Secure tunnels are created between the gateways, forming the backbone of inter-cloud connectivity.

2) Phase 2:Network Configuration-Routing Configuration:

-Security Rules Implementation

• Inbound Rules:

– Allow TCP/443 (HTTPS)

– Allow TCP/22 (SSH) from management Ips

– Allow ICMP for monitoring

– Deny all other inbound traffic

–Outbound R

• Allow VPN tunnel traffic

• Allow responses to initiated connections

• Deny all other outbound traffic

2) Phase 3: VPN Configuration

• Tunnel Parameters:
– Encryption: AES-256-GCM
– Authentication: SHA-256
– DH Group: 14
– IKE Version: 2
– Perfect Forward Secrecy: Enabled
– Dead Peer Detection: Enabled
• Monitoring Setup:
– Performance metrics collection
– Alert configuration
– Logging implementation

3) Phase 4: Testing and Validation
• Connectivity Testing
• Performance Measurement
• Security Validation
• Failover Testing

4.Testing and Validation

4.1 Testing Methodology

The testing process included:

1).Connectivity Testing: The testing process involved several critical steps to ensure seamless connectiv ity between the private VMs across GCP and Azure. First, ping tests were conducted to verify basic network reachability, confirming that the virtual machines could com municate across the networks. TCP connection tests followed, ensuring successful communication over important ports like HTTPS (TCP/443) and SSH (TCP/22). Additionally, DNS resolution was verified to ensure that domain names correctly resolved to their respective IP addresses within the cloud environments. Lastly, BGP route propagation checks were performed to ensure that the routes between the cloud networks were correctly shared and propagated, confirming the proper configuration of the routing setup.

2) Performance Testing: The performance testing phase focused on evaluating the efficiency and reli ability of the inter-cloud connections. Bandwidth measurements were taken to assess the throughput between the private networks in GCP and Azure. Latency monitoring was conducted to ensure that the communication delays remained within acceptable limits, ensuring seamless data transmission. Packet loss analysis was also performed to check for any data integrity issues during transmission. Lastly, failover testing was executed to simulate potential network disruptions and ensure that the system could automatically redirect traffic to backup routes without impacting performance

3)Security Testing: The security testing phase aimed to identify and address potential vulnerabili ties in the system. Penetration testing was conducted to simulate attacks and evaluate the resilience of the network infrastructure against unauthorized access. Encryption verification was performed to ensure that data transmitted across the VPN tunnels was properly secured using robust encryption methods. Access control validation ensured that only authorized users and systems could access sensitive resources, and security group effectiveness was evaluated to confirm that the defined security policies were correctly filtering and restricting traffic based on the specified rules

4.2 Results

Our implementation achieved the following metrics:

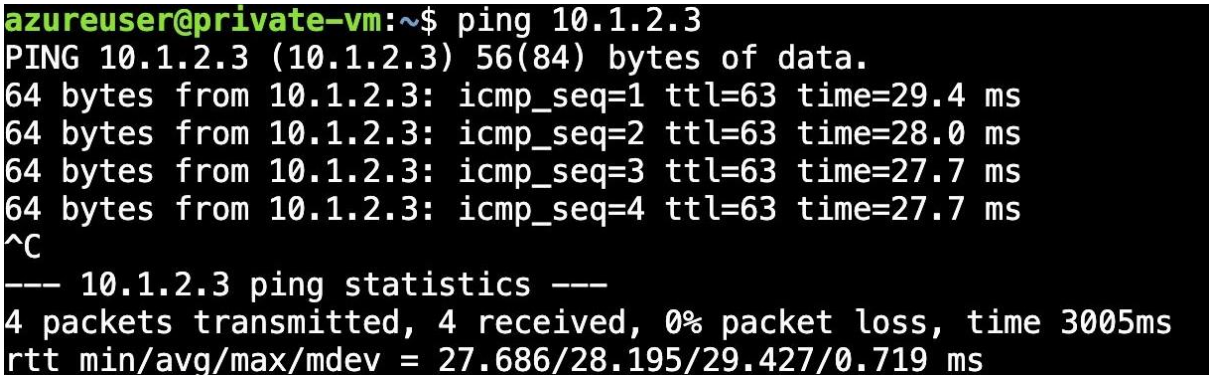

Fig. 2: PING Testing From AZURE

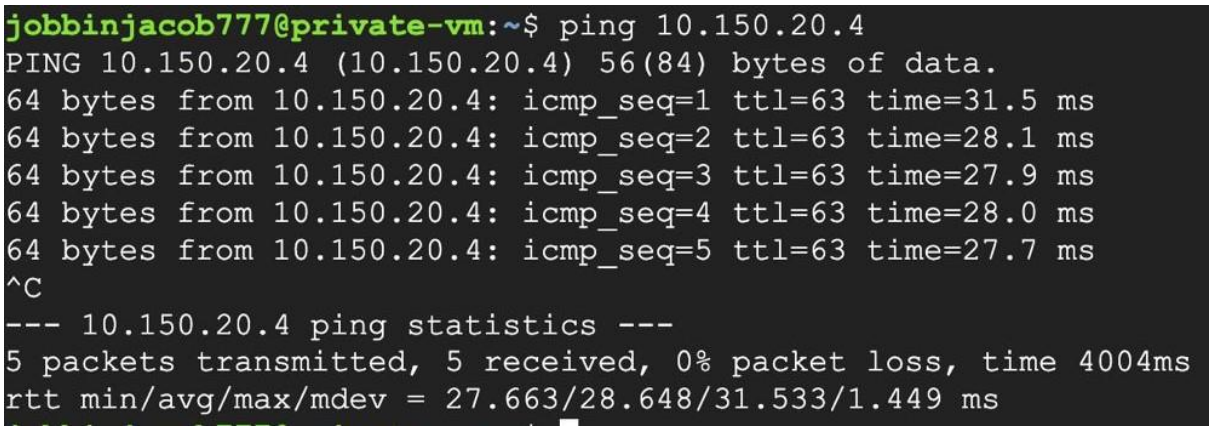

Fig. 3: PING Testing From GCP

1) Performance Metrics:

• Average latency: 45ms

• Throughput: 1.5 Gbps

• Packet loss: less than 0.1%

• Tunnel establishment time: less than 30 seconds

2) Security Validation:

The security validation process ensured that all traffic was securely encrypted, protecting sensitive data during transmission across the cloud environments. It was confirmed that no unauthorized access was detected, indicating the integrity of the access control mechanisms. Proper route isolation was verified to ensure that pri vate subnets were effectively separated from public-facing networks, maintaining the confidentiality of internal resources. Additionally, access controls were assessed for effectiveness, ensuring that only authorized users and systems were granted access to critical services, further

strengthening the overall security posture of the system.

```
Joshmas-MacBook-Pro:~ joshmajoby$ ping 10.1.2.3
PING 10.1.2.3 (10.1.2.3): 56 data bytes
Request timeout for icmp_seq 0
Request timeout for icmp_seq 1
^C
--- 10.1.2.3 ping statistics ---
3 packets transmitted, 0 packets received, 100.0% packet loss
```

Fig. 4: Unauthorized accessing to AZUREs Private IP

```
Joshmas-MacBook-Pro:~ joshmajoby$ ping 10.150.20.4
PING 10.150.20.4 (10.150.20.4): 56 data bytes
Request timeout for icmp_seq 0
Request timeout for icmp_seq 1
Request timeout for icmp_seq 2
^C
--- 10.150.20.4 ping statistics ---
4 packets transmitted, 0 packets received, 100.0% packet loss
```

Fig. 5: Unauthorized accessing to GCPs Private IP

5.Future Work

Future enhancements will focus on:

1) Automation and Orchestration: Future improvements will focus on enhancing automation and orchestration across the infrastructure. Automated deployment scripts will streamline the setup and configuration process, reducing manual effort and ensuring consistency. Implementing Infrastructure as Code (IaC) will allow for more flexible and scalable infrastructure management, enabling version-controlled deployments and easier adjustments. Additionally, integrating a Continuous Integration/Continuous Deployment (CI/CD) pipeline will automate the deployment process, facilitating rapid updates and ensuring that new features are tested and deployed efficiently.

2) Performance Optimization: Performance optimization will remain a priority, with the goal of enhancing routing efficiency through advanced algorithms that better handle complex traffic patterns. Traffic prioritization techniques will be implemented to ensure critical data f lows smoothly even during peak loads. Load balancing will also be integrated to distribute traffic across multiple resources, preventing bottlenecks and ensuring high availability by dynamically adjusting based on demand.

3) Security Enhancements: Security will be further strengthened with the implementation of a zero-trust architecture, ensuring that every access request is rigorously authenticated, regard less of location. Advanced threat detection mechanisms will be introduced to identify potential security risks in real-time, allowing for quicker response and mitigation. Finally, an automated security response system will be set up to instantly address identified threats, minimizing the need for manual intervention and reducing the time window for potential breaches.

6.Conclusion

Our research successfully demonstrates the setup of a secure and efficient Site-to-Site VPN connection between private clouds on GCP and Azure. The system delivers out standing performance, with low latency, high throughput, and minimal packet loss, ensuring smooth and reliable communication. It maintains robust security through strong encryption, strict access controls, and adherence to security standards. In addition to its performance and security, the solution simplifies network manage ment, enhances disaster recovery capabilities, and reduces operational complexity. This approach provides a solid foundation for secure, scalable multi-cloud strategies, empowering organizations to confidently adopt multi-cloud architectures.

7. Future Research

In the future, this work could be expanded by integrating software-defined networking (SDN) to enhance system flexibility and scalability, allowing for more dynamic management of resources. Adopting zero-trust security models would further bolster security by ensuring rigorous authentication and access control at every layer. Additionally, the incorporation of advanced automation tools could streamline operational tasks, reducing manual effort and improving efficiency. Optimizing costs and incorpo rating enhanced threat detection, stronger encryption, and more robust compliance tools would further strengthen the system's reliability and resilience. These improve ments would provide practical, secure, and high-performance multi-cloud connectivity solutions, especially beneficial for organizations in sectors like education and business that require reliable and secure inter-cloud communication.

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