

# CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network Dramatically Reduces Backup Times with ExaGrid and Veeam

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY



the CTN  
CIHR Canadian  
HIV Trials Network

"The ExaGrid gives me peace of mind. I know I have a solution that I can rely on. I set it and forget it and I don't have to worry about it."

Joey Castro  
Systems Administrator  
Canadian HIV Trials Network

## Key Benefits:

- The ExaGrid system is budget friendly
- Seamless integration with Veeam to support 100% virtualized environment
- Fast, easy setup
- Backups that used to run continuously are now completed overnight

## Customer Overview

The CIHR Canadian HIV Trials Network (CTN) is an innovative partnership of clinical investigators, physicians, nurses, people living with HIV/AIDS, pharmaceutical manufacturers, and others that facilitate HIV clinical trials of the highest scientific and ethical standards. Established in 1990 as a cornerstone of the federal AIDS Strategy, the CTN is funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR). It is jointly sponsored by the University of British Columbia and St. Paul's Hospital (Providence Health Care) in Vancouver.

## CTN's Backup Window Was Always Open

CTN was backing up its Linux, Oracle, Windows, and Exchange servers to tape and backups were running continually; there simply was not enough time in a day to complete their backups. CTN needed a solution that would address their backup window issues and meet the fiscal limitations of their publically funded budget.

## CTN Evaluates Alternatives to Tape

CTN's search for a solution included the evaluation of EMC Data Domain, Quantum, Nimble Technology, and ExaGrid. CTN decided on ExaGrid after evaluating each solution specifically for performance, capacity, and price.

"ExaGrid's post-process deduplication made the most sense," said Joey Castro, assistant administrator at CTN. "We found all of the others, especially Data Domain, to be much more expensive than ExaGrid – and not just in terms of the initial costs. We realized that any future expansion of our ExaGrid will be much less expensive as well compared to the other solutions." he said.

## CTN Chooses Veeam with ExaGrid

Since CTN's environment is 100% virtualized, Castro knew that with the ExaGrid system, he could take full

advantage of Veeam's industry-leading data protection.

"We switched to both the ExaGrid hardware and the Veeam software solution at the same time," said Joey Castro.

The ExaGrid and Veeam combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery.

In addition, CTN uses Veeam's built-in source-side deduplication to minimize the amount of backup data sent over their network. Once the data lands on the ExaGrid, the ExaGrid further deduplicates the backup data to minimize space consumption. ExaGrid combines standard compression along with zone-level data deduplication, which stores changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies. This unique approach reduces the disk space required by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, delivering unparalleled cost savings and performance.

ExaGrid delivers extremely fast backup performance because data is written directly to disk, and data deduplication is performed post process after the data is stored to reduce data. When a second site is used, the cost savings are even greater because ExaGrid's zone-level data deduplication technology moves only the changes from backup to backup, requiring minimal WAN bandwidth.

**EXAGRID™**

## Installation was Fast and Simple

InstallatOnce CTN purchased their ExaGrid, installation was fast and simple. Their dedicated support engineer performed the setup, requiring CTN to only supply a name for the ExaGrid and a set of IP addresses for it to join their network.

“Our ExaGrid support engineer walked us through the setup over the phone. There was no need for him to come onsite, and it was done at our convenience. Once our ExaGrid was up and running, he then helped us configure our first Veeam backups to the ExaGrid,” said Castro.

The ExaGrid system was designed to be easy to set up and maintain, and ExaGrid’s industry-leading customer support team is staffed by trained, in-house engineers who are dedicated to individual accounts. The system is fully supported and was designed and manufactured for maximum uptime with redundant, hot-swappable components.

## Continuously-Running Backups Now Done in Hours

Prior to installing their ExaGrid and Veeam backup solution, CTN’s backups would run continually. There was never enough time in a single day to finish. Now, thanks to ExaGrid and Veeam, their backups run and complete in just a few hours.

According to Castro, “With the ExaGrid, my backups complete every night. When I come in the morning, they’re done. The ExaGrid gives me peace of mind. I know I have a solution that I can rely on. It will always be there, and it requires no maintenance. Its automated alerts give me daily updates so I can set it and forget it, and I don’t have to worry about it,” said Joey Castro.

## ExaGrid and Veeam

The combination of ExaGrid’s and Veeam’s industry-leading virtual server data protection solutions allows customers to utilize Veeam Backup & Replication in VMware, vSphere, and Microsoft Hyper-V virtual environments on ExaGrid’s disk-based backup system. This combination provides fast backups and efficient data storage as well as replication to an offsite location for disaster recovery.

The ExaGrid system fully leverages Veeam Backup & Replication’s built-in backup to disk capabilities and ExaGrid’s zone-level data deduplication for additional data reduction (and cost reduction) over standard disk solutions. Customers can use Veeam Backup & Replication’s built-in source-side deduplication in concert with ExaGrid’s disk-based backup system with zone-level deduplication to further shrink backups.

## GRID Architecture Ensures Flexible Upgrade Path

ExaGrid uses a GRID-based configuration, where each appliance contains processing power, memory, bandwidth, and disk. When the system needs to expand, additional appliance nodes are attached to the GRID, bringing with them additional processing power, memory, bandwidth, and disk. This type of configuration allows the system to maintain all the aspects of performance as the amount of data grows, and you are only paying for the amount of processing power, memory, and bandwidth as you need it. In addition, as new ExaGrid appliance nodes are added to the GRID, the ExaGrid automatically load balances available capacity, maintaining a virtual pool of storage that is shared across the GRID.

## Intelligent Data Protection

ExaGrid’s turnkey disk-based backup system combines high quality disk drives with zone-level data deduplication, delivering a disk-based solution that is far more cost effective than simply backing up to straight disk. ExaGrid’s zone-level data deduplication technology stores only the changes from backup to backup instead of storing full file copies, reducing the amount of disk needed by a range of 10:1 to 50:1 or more, resulting in a solution that is 25 to 30% the cost of backing up to straight disk. The ExaGrid system is easy to install and use and works seamlessly with popular backup applications, so organizations can retain their investment in existing applications and processes. ExaGrid servers can be used at primary and secondary sites to supplement or eliminate offsite tapes with live data repositories for disaster recovery.

**For more information about ExaGrid, please visit us at [www.exagrid.com](http://www.exagrid.com) or call us at 1-800-868-6985.**