

Open Trusted Technology Provider™ Standard (O-TTPS) Certification Program Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

April 2021

NOTE: This is an informal document; it is not a normative document. In the case of any conflict between this FAQ and any of the published O-TTPS Certification Program documentation, the latter takes precedence.

NOTE: All of the documents referenced in this FAQ may be accessed from the [O-TTPS Certification website](#).

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Basics

Q1. Does the information in this FAQ take precedence over other sources?

Answer: No. This is an informal document; it is not a normative document. In the case of any conflict between this FAQ and any of the published O-TTPS Certification Program documentation, the latter takes precedence.

Q2. Where can the documents referenced in this FAQ be found?

Answer: All of the documents that are referenced in this FAQ can be accessed from the left-hand navigation bar on the [O-TTPS Certification website](#), including a getting started page for those who are ready for certification.

Q3. What is the O-TTPS?

Answer: The O-TTPS stands for “Open Trusted Technology Provider™ Standard”. It is an open standard containing a set of organizational guidelines, requirements, and recommendations for component suppliers, providers, and integrators to enhance the integrity of commercial off the shelf (COTS) information and communication technology (ICT) products and the security of the global supply chain. O-TTPS Version 1.1.1 – Mitigating Maliciously Tainted and Counterfeit Products, if properly adhered to, will help assure against the threat of tainted and counterfeit products throughout the COTS ICT product lifecycle encompassing the following phases: design, sourcing, build, fulfillment, distribution, sustainment, and disposal.

Q4. What is the OTTF?

Answer: The Open Group Trusted Technology Forum (OTTF) is an international forum of industry and government working together to increase trust in the global technology supply chain. To achieve this, the OTTF is driving the development and adoption of a global standard (the O-TTPS) of best practices for technology providers to follow in their engineering development, secure engineering and manufacturing methods, and throughout their supply chain security operations.

The OTTF is taking a phased approach and plans to stage releases of the O-TTPS over time. This staging will consist of standards that focus on mitigating specific COTS ICT risks from emerging threats. As threats change or market needs evolve, the OTTF intends to update the O-TTPS by releasing addenda to address specific threats or market needs. The first versions of the O-TTPS address taint and counterfeit.

A current list of all OTTF member organizations is available [here](#).

Q5. Who should I talk to about becoming a member of the OTTF?

Answer: Contact Brent Muth (b.muth@opengroup.org) or Jim Hietala (j.hietala@opengroup.org).

Q6. Where can I get the O-TTPS?

Answer: Version 1.1.1 of the O-TTPS is available free-of-charge from [The Open Group Library](#). To obtain the O-TTPS, you will need an account on the website and must accept the download license.

Q7. Is there an online educational introduction for the O-TTPS and the Certification Program?

Answer: We have a series of free webinars, along with OTTF information sheets, white papers, etc., freely available from the [Trusted Technology section of The Open Group Library](#).

Q8. What types of products does the O-TTPS Certification Program cover?

Answer: The O-TTPS Certification Program certifies Organizations (not products). The program covers Organizations that design, develop, manufacture, produce, or integrate COTS ICT products. Nevertheless, because Organizations are certified for conforming to the best practices within a declared Scope of Certification, products that fall within that scope are described in the Conformance Statement, which will appear on the public registry.

Q9. Do I need to be a member of The Open Group or the OTTF in order to become certified?

Answer: No. As stated in the Certification Policy, it is not a requirement that an Organization be a member of The Open Group in order to become certified.

Q10. I am an acquirer; how do I find out if a product is within the Scope of Certification?

Answer: The Certification Register, maintained by the Certification Authority (The Open Group) is a web-based record of all certified Organizations. The Certification Register includes the Organization's Conformance Statement, which states the declared Scope of Certification. For further details you should talk directly with the certified Organization.

Q11. How do I report problems with the O-TTPS and the supporting documents?

Answer: Please submit a problem report. The process is described in the problem reporting mechanism defined in the Certification Policy. There is a link to invoke the problem reporting mechanism on the [O-TTPS Certification website](#).

Q12. How do I find more information and get help?

Answer: Program participants are strongly encouraged to use the supporting documentation and this FAQ to find answers to questions in the first instance. The Open Group does not offer telephone support service; however, email support is available from the Certification Authority.

About the O-TTPS Certification Program

Q13. What is the O-TTPS Certification Program?

Answer: The O-TTPS Certification Program provides formal recognition of an Organization's conformance to the O-TTPS Conformance Requirements.

The objective of the O-TTPS Certification Program is to encourage and facilitate the adoption and implementation of the O-TTPS by vendors (providers and component suppliers), integrators, and other organizations that provide software, hardware, or services to acquirers.

Q14. How is the O-TTPS Certification Program different from other certifications?

Answer: Other certifications may be more general in nature or designed to address other specific topics or technologies and do not cover the breadth of the supply chain security-related practices, end-to-end, across an Organization's entire Scope of Certification.

O-TTPS Certification focuses on providing assurance that the required best practices, which mitigate the key supply chain threats of counterfeit and maliciously tainted products, are implemented by an Organization.

Q15. Who will benefit from the O-TTPS Certification Program and how?

Answer: The O-TTPS Certification Program benefits several stakeholder categories:

Providers: Providers who adopt these practices will be better able to identify and mitigate security risks throughout the development, sourcing, and maintenance of COTS ICT products. They will be able to take advantage of a market differentiator associated with Open Trusted Technology Provider status, and to more readily identify Open Trusted Technology Providers for their own supplier and business partner relationships.

Suppliers: Suppliers who follow the O-TTPS best practice requirements and recommendations can also achieve Open Trusted Technology Provider status and will be able to take advantage of a market differentiator associated with having that status, which could result in better and more frequent business partnerships among certified Open Trusted Technology Providers.

Integrators: Integrators will be able to buy products and components (hardware and software) from Open Trusted Technology Providers, giving confidence that those parts of their integration work that are based on out-sourcing and partnerships are both secure and trustworthy. In addition, integrators who themselves follow the O-TTPS and are certified as Open Trusted Technology Providers will realize the same benefits as the providers (above).

Acquirers: Acquirers will be able to consider a provider's O-TTPS Certification and status as an Open Trusted Technology Provider as one element of their own comprehensive commercial technology procurement and risk management strategy.

Marketplace at Large: Over time, widespread use of and/or reference to the OTTF's work products will help realize security enhancements throughout the global information infrastructure in a manner that promotes trust, accountability, and global innovation.

All parties: The O-TTPS is built on third-party assessment. Expert assessors who have met stringent recognition criteria to become O-TTPS Recognized Assessors undertake this assessment. This external unbiased overview of an Organization's compliance with the O-TTPS delivers confidence and integrity to the program as a whole.

Q16. What is the Scope of Certification?

Answer: Within the context of the O-TTPS Certification Program, an Organization may apply for and achieve certification for the specific Scope of Certification that it chooses. The declared Scope of Certification is made in the Conformance Statement.

The scope is at the discretion of the Organization and they have complete latitude in this declaration; it could declare, for example: a product, a business unit, or the entire Organization.

Q17. What is the difference between Self-Assessed and Third-Party Assessed certification?

Answer: Both tiers of O-TTPS Certification require Organizations to meet the same set of Conformance Requirements. The difference is in the process used to demonstrate conformance to the Conformance Requirements.

Third-Party Assessed certification requires the Organization to utilize an O-TTPS Recognized Assessor company to perform a formal assessment in accordance with the defined O-TTPS Assessment Procedures.

For Self-Assessed, an Organization performs whatever assessment they feel is necessary to confirm that they are operating in accordance with the O-TTPS Conformance Requirements. An Organization going for Self-Assessed certification does not need to go through a formal assessment with a Recognized Assessor, though may utilize a Recognized Assessor or others to assist with their assessment.

Q18. What size must an Organization be in order to be certified?

Answer: An Organization of any size can be certified.

Q19. What is the “warranty” concept?

Answer: Because the assurance provided by O-TTPS Certification is necessarily based on sampling, and assessments are not continuously performed, an Organization commits to a warranty of conformance to the O-TTPS Conformance Requirements for its Scope of Certification and for the duration of the certification period.

Further details on these terms can be found in the Certification Policy and the Certification Agreement.

Q20. What is the Certification Authority?

Answer: The Certification Authority is a vendor-neutral authority that manages the day-to-day operations of the O-TTPS Certification Program in accordance with the policies and procedures defined in the Certification Policy.

Q21. Who is the Certification Authority?

Answer: The Open Group is the Certification Authority for the O-TTPS Certification Program.

The Open Group Certification Authority operations are separate from The Open Group Membership operations; a confidentiality and operational firewall between them enables the Certification Authority to act independently of membership and consortia activities.

Q22. How do I become an O-TTPS Recognized Assessor?

Answer: Organizations that wish to be qualified as an O-TTPS Recognized Assessor need to apply to the Certification Authority. To become a Recognized Assessor company, you will be required to meet qualifying criteria and sign an O-TTPS Recognized Assessor Agreement with The Open Group attesting to that fact. For a full set of criteria, refer to the Recognized Assessor Agreement on the [O-TTPS Certification website](#). Individual assessors employed or contracted

by an O-TTIPS Recognized Assessor company, who are assigned to an O-TTIPS Assessment, must meet additional criteria (defined in the same agreement) including that they must pass the O-TTIPS Assessor examination.

Q23. How do I communicate my Organization's certification to the community?

Answer: Once an Organization is certified, then it may communicate that fact to the community, including their customers and other third parties. The Open Group facilitates this through the provision of a centralized public list of successful certifications. In addition, the Organization may use the O-TTIPS assurance mark (certification logo) in association with its Scope of Certification according to the terms of the Trademark License Agreement.

Q24. Can an Organization make claims of certification if they are not certified?

Answer: No. An Organization may not make claims of certification unless they are in fact certified.

The O-TTIPS assurance mark (certification logo) shall not be used unless an Organization has completed certification through The Open Group O-TTIPS Certification Program. Use of the certification logo demonstrates that The Open Group has validated the claim of conformance.

Additionally, certified claims of conformance with the O-TTIPS may be made only in relation to the Scope of Certification for which the Certification Authority has issued a certificate of certification.

Q25. What is the estimated cost of O-TTIPS Certification?

Answer: The cost of an O-TTIPS Certification will vary based on the following factors:

- The Organization's internal costs – including resource working on the certification, the cost of bringing processes into compliance with the O-TTIPS, and for the Third-Party Assessed certification tier, preparing or updating the ISCA Document and the Certification Package Document.
- The fees imposed by the Certification Authority – the current fee schedule is available on the [O-TTIPS Certification website](#).
- For Third-Party Assessed, the fees charged by the O-TTIPS Recognized Assessor – these are negotiated by the Organization directly with the O-TTIPS Recognized Assessor. Various cost structures may be used including fixed price, time and materials, or another basis.

Q26. What do the fees to The Open Group cover?

Answer: The service offered to O-TTIPS Certification customers includes:

- Provision of information and documents to prospective applicants through the web-based certification system
- Responsive email support to prospective applicants and assessors
- Execution of the legal agreements (Certification Agreement, Trademark License Agreement, Recognized Assessor Agreement), which underpin the program
- Technical checking of the registration and Conformance Statement for correctness
- For Third-Party Assessed certification:

- Technical checking of the completed ISCA Document and Certification Package Document
- Approval of the set of Selected Representative Products as representative of the Scope of Certification
- If the certification is successful:
 - Entering product details into a public certification register
 - Issuing certificates
- Sending reminders when certifications are to expire and processing certification renewals
- Processing amendments or updates to existing certifications
- Problem report processing
- Monitoring of the problem reports process to ensure responsiveness to applicants
- Managing the appeals process for disputes with the outcome of an certification, problem report resolutions, etc. – as defined in the Certification Policy
- If there are registered complaints that a Certified Organization is non-conformant, working with the Organization to determine whether the complaint is valid and manage steps and timeframes for the organization to rectify the non-conformance or lose certification
- Policing the use of the Open Trusted Technology Provider™ Certification Trademark
- Managing the O-TTPS Recognized Assessor Program; training, examinations, issuing certificates, maintaining the Registry of Recognized Assessors, renewals, and audits
- Policing the use of the O-TTPS Recognized Assessor Trademark

Q27. What do the O-TTPS Recognized Assessor fees cover?

Answer: Assessment fees are variable and outside of the Certification Authority’s control.

O-TTPS Recognized Assessor fees should be discussed directly with O-TTPS Recognized Assessors. Fees and payment terms will become a contractual matter between an Organization and their chosen O-TTPS Recognized Assessor, and the Certification Authority will not be party to that contract.

Q28. What fees are associated with re-certification?

Answer: The Certification Authority fees are listed on the [O-TTPS Certification website](#).

Becoming a Trusted Technology Provider

Q29. How do I get started with certification?

Answer: On the [O-TTPS Certification website](#) click on the getting started link in the left-hand navigation bar.

Q30. What is the process for becoming certified?

Answer: The process for becoming certified is contained in the O-TTPS Certification Policy, which also contains a full work flow diagram.

Q31. If I am considering getting my Organization certified, what are the key documents?

Answer: The following documents are indispensable when deciding whether to become certified:

- The O-TTPS (the Standard)
- The O-TTPS Certification Policy
- The O-TTPS Conformance Requirements
- The O-TTPS Assessment Procedures
- The O-TTPS Trademark License Agreement

Q32. What other documents will I need?

Answer: Other documents and templates are needed if you decide to go ahead with certification. These include:

- Certification Agreement
- Certification Package Document
- Conformance Statement Questionnaire
- The Implementation Selection Criteria Application (ISCA) Document

These documents must be completed in English in order to be considered.

Q33. Do all documents submitted for certification need to be in English?

Answer: No. All documents submitted directly to the Certification Authority must be in English, but documents submitted only to the Recognized Assessor may be in whatever language the Recognized Assessor finds acceptable.

The Conformance Statement, ISCA Document, and Certification Package Document are all submitted to the Certification Authority and must be in English. The Certification Package Document provides a mapping between the requirements and the various documents that compose the Evidence of Conformance. The Certification Authority needs to be able to see in English which documents in the Evidence of Conformance are used to demonstrate conformance to specific requirements. However, the documents themselves that make up the Evidence of Conformance do not need to be in English. These are used by the Recognized Assessor for the assessment and therefore may be in whatever language the Recognized Assessor agrees is acceptable.

Q34. How long does certification take?

Answer: The length of time that an O-TTPS Certification takes depends on multiple variables such as: how well prepared the Organization is, the scope of what is being certified, the number of Selected Representative Products to be assessed, and the number of different processes an Organization has identified per requirement and per Selected Representative Product.

We will be able to more accurately estimate this after several certifications, but based on the pilot program an estimated range might be 6 – 12 months depending on the scope.

Q35. How long does certification last?

Answer: The certification period is three (3) years. See the Certification Policy for further details.

Q36. Can I hire someone to help me get certified?

Answer: Yes. Consultants offering services in relation to the O-TTPS are not regulated by The Open Group. According to the criteria for O-TTPS Recognized Assessors, Recognized Assessor companies may perform consultancy, although the assessor personnel MAY NOT operate under a conflict of interest.

Q37. Do assessors need to be external to our Organization?

Answer: Yes. Both the O-TTPS Recognized Assessor [company] and the individual assessors employed or contracted by the company must be independent and have no conflict of interest with the Organization being assessed.

Q38. What if your certification is not successful, are the results published?

Answer: No. Unsuccessful attempts at certification are not published by The Open Group. Please see the Confidentiality section in the Certification Policy.

In addition, the Certification Authority and assessor will always hold confidential any information regarding unsuccessful requests for certification.

Q39. When I am certified, can I add additional products to my Scope of Certification?

Answer: Yes. This is explained in the Certification Policy.

Q40. How do the Conformance Requirements relate to the O-TTPS?

Answer: The O-TTPS Conformance Requirements are those requirements that an Organization must meet in order to demonstrate conformance to the O-TTPS. Those requirements are declared in the Conformance Requirements document. In the case of Version 1, the Conformance Requirements are that the Organization must meet all of the mandatory requirements in the O-TTPS.

Q41. Do all my component suppliers also need to be certified?

Answer: No. There is no requirement that all of your suppliers need to be certified as Open Trusted Technology Providers. However, the O-TTPS does require Organizations to encourage their component suppliers to implement best practices such as those described in the O-TTPS.

If a component supplier does achieve certification, they will be able to demonstrate to their customers/providers that they too are Open Trusted Technology Providers. This status could represent a major differentiator for selection as a business partner by certified Open Trusted Technology Providers.

Q42. Are there any requirements in the O-TTPS that will accelerate the readiness of component suppliers to be certified?

Answer: Yes. For Versions 1.0, 1.1, and 1.1.1 of the O-TTPS it is mandatory that Organizations recommend best practices such as the O-TTPS to their suppliers and it is recommended that legal agreements with business partners reference applicable requirements for supply chain security practices (e.g., O-TTPS). Additionally, it is recommended that Organizations periodically request confirmation that their business partners are following the supply chain security best practice requirements specified by the O-TTPS.

Q43. What if an Organization developed products BEFORE implementing O-TTPS-conformant processes?

Answer: All processes need to be compliant to the required O-TTPS best practices at the point of assessment. For Third-Party Assessed, this will be looked at when Selected Representative Products are assessed throughout their lifecycle. Additionally, in the case where a process has recently been brought into conformance or has been newly applied to a particular product or part of an Organization, this should be discussed with the Recognized Assessor.

O-TTPS Implementation Selection Criteria (ISC)

This section formally applies for Third-Party Assessed certification but may also be useful for Organizations that are applying for the Self-Assessed certification tier as they perform their own assessment to determine whether they are conformant with the O-TTPS Conformance Requirements.

Q44. What are the Implementation Selection Criteria (ISC)?

Answer: Implementation Selection Criteria (ISC) are the documented set of criteria that an Organization applies to its declared Scope of Certification to determine a set of Selected Representative Products from which O-TTPS Evidence of Conformance is drawn. The ISC are identified by the Organization in the Implementation Selection Criteria Application (ISCA) Document.

NOTE: The O-TTPS Certification Program ISC are based on the Sampling Factors defined in Section 1.1.4 of Standard CMMI® Appraisal Method for Process Improvement (SCAMPISM) A, Version 1.3: Method Definition Document CMU/SEI-2011-HB-0.

Q45. How does the ISCA Document help determine which products are representative of the Scope of Certification?

Answer: The objective is to identify, within the ISCA Document, a set of products from within the Scope of Certification that is representative of all processes that are used in the certification scope. This will be achieved through two steps:

- Identifying all of the O-TTPS processes that are employed within the Scope of Certification, and for which the Organization will be required to submit Evidence of Conformance, and then map those O-TTPS processes used by the Organization to the set of Selected Representative Products and to each of the O-TTPS attributes or process-related requirements (e.g., Configuration Management Processes).
- Applying a defined set of Selection Criteria (i.e., location, supplier bases, types and complexity of technologies, governance structure, and customer base) to the Scope

of Certification and identifying a set of products that is a representative sample of all of the products from within that Scope of Certification.

The result is an identified set of Selected Representative Products, approved by the Certification Authority, which will be assessed end-to-end in the assessment phase of the process. The mapping tables created during this phase help the Organization to prepare their Certification Package for the assessor.

This ISCA Document must be submitted to the Certification Authority in English in order to be considered.

Q46. Who approves the ISCA Document?

Answer: The Certification Authority approves the Organization's completed ISCA Document before the assessment begins. This includes approving the set of Selected Representative Products as being reasonable in its representation of the Scope of Certification.

O-TTPS Conformance Assessment

This section formally applies for Third-Party Assessed certification but may also be useful for Organizations that are applying for the Self-Assessed certification tier as they perform their own assessment to determine whether they are conformant with the O-TTPS Conformance Requirements.

Q47. Where do I find an O-TTPS Recognized Assessor?

Answer: A register of O-TTPS Recognized Assessor companies and contact information is maintained on the [O-TTPS Certification website](#).

Q48. How does the assessor determine whether I pass the assessment?

Answer: The assessor assesses the Evidence of Conformance provided by the Organization for each of the Selected Representative Products and for each of the O-TTPS requirements according to the O-TTPS Assessment Procedures. Because the individual assessors must work for an O-TTPS Recognized Assessor company, they are bound by legal agreement to follow the O-TTPS Assessment Procedures. The Assessment Procedures can be found on the [O-TTPS Certification website](#).

Q49. Can I re-use any of the work I have done before; for example, a Common Criteria evaluation?

Answer: An assessor may be able to give credit for work already performed in other audit and assessment programs, if it is directly relevant to this assessment. It will be necessary to show how such work relates to the Selected Representative Products and it will be necessary to provide the supporting evidence to the assessor.

Q50. What types of evidence will I be required to present?

Answer: In general, there are two types of evidence the assessor will be looking for depending on the requirement:

1. Process Evidence: Evidence that you have an established/documented process that meets the requirement.

2. Implementation Evidence: Evidence that you have implemented that established/documented process in every Selected Representative Product.

(The Assessment Procedures identify which type of evidence is needed for each requirement.)

Documentation of this evidence does not need to be in English. This evidence will be submitted to the Recognized Assessor for review, so it is up to the Recognized Assessor to determine in which language the documentation must be submitted.

Q51. Will the assessor need to go on-site?

Answer: The assessment may take place on-site, off-site, or using virtual telecommunications media as agreed between the Recognized Assessor and the Organization.

Q52. What if I don't have the required evidence?

Answer: Your contracted Recognized Assessor will guide you. Strategies include using acceptable alternative evidence or other mitigation steps such as reducing the Scope of Certification. If necessary, the Organization may invoke the problem reporting mechanism defined in the Certification Policy in order to formally engage the Certification Authority in the resolution.

Q53. What if I don't agree with the assessment results?

Answer: In this case the Organization should discuss concerns with the contracted Recognized Assessor; however, in the case of impasse, the Certification Policy has a defined appeals procedure that may be invoked.

Q54. What happens if after my Organization is certified, a customer, business partner, or other entity believes my Organization is not conformant to the O-TTPS Conformance Requirements within my declared Scope of Certification?

Answer: The Certification Policy defines a set of procedures and an appeals process that may be invoked.