

Choose the Right Common Criteria Laboratory

Deciding to work towards gaining a Common Criteria certificate for your product represents a huge commitment, and no part of that decision is more important than choosing the right laboratory to evaluate your product for validation and certification. What questions do you need to ask to ensure that you choose the best partner to help you achieve your goals?

Does the laboratory have a proven record of successful, on-time evaluations?

atsec has performed approaching 150 Common Criteria evaluations since 2002, and we leverage our experienced staff to produce quality results, on-time and on budget. To further enable sponsors to reap the maximum benefit from Common Criteria certification, we often perform evaluations of products in parallel with their development so that those products achieved Common Criteria certification almost at the same time that the products hit the market.

Is the laboratory able to pursue certifications through multiple CC Schemes at all assurance levels?

atsec is fully qualified according to rigorous accreditation requirements to conduct evaluations for Common Criteria certification through the German BSI, the U.S. NIAP CCEVS, the Swedish CSEC and the Italian OCSI schemes.

This means that we can meet a wide range of customer evaluation requirements, as well as allowing our customers a choice of scheme.

Does the laboratory go beyond evaluation; does it also add value by improving the customer's product and processes?

atsec's evaluation reports reveal thoughtful analysis of the content of document evidence presented (not just a cursory look at the titles of documentation evidence). The reports provide real value to sponsors, going well beyond simply filling out a checklist of requirements to achieve certification. The depth and scope of our examination can result in a better product and more robust processes. As an added value, we share copyright of these valuable reports with the evaluation sponsor.

Is the laboratory able to offer expertise and evaluation experience in many different technologies?

atsec's experience in evaluation ranges from limited-purpose software applications to large, complex applications and operating systems. We don't have to limit the scope of projects we are willing to take on, because our staff's collective experience lets us bring the appropriate level of expertise to any project. What's more, because our experts are experienced in many types of IT security-related projects (not only Common Criteria evaluation), they frequently catch vulnerabilities and issues that other evaluators might miss.

☑ Does the laboratory bring significant experience with complex technologies?

Operating system evaluation is the greatest test of competence in the evaluation field, and atsec is the world leader in Common Criteria evaluation of operating systems. We have evaluated IBM z/OS, IBM AIX, and many Linux versions on many different platforms. In addition, we have performed several evaluations of IBM PR/SM at EAL5+, working with BSI to develop an enhanced methodology including methods to analyze covert channels and assess modularity in design.

☑ Does the laboratory have the experience to cope with changing policies and product changes during an evaluation project?

atsec have the maturity to know that the real world means that scheme policies change frequently, PPs and cPPs evolve, product vulnerabilities are discovered and products change frequently. All of these unknowns have to be factored into an evaluation project from the start. atsec already factors these unknowns into their projects.

☑ Is the laboratory financially independent?

atsec is financially independent, with no debt or dependence on external partners for financial support. Our business model is to self-finance company growth. In addition, we neither develop nor resell any hardware or software from any vendor.

☑ Is the laboratory a leader, helping to promote and shape the Common Criteria standards, PPs, and industry fora?

atsec's leadership in the Common Criteria industry is demonstrated by our commitment to helping shape the standard itself. Our senior management and consultants take leadership roles in the organizations that create and promote IT security standards, including the Common Criteria. Our employees are editors of ISO/IEC 15408 (Common Criteria), ISO/IEC 15446 (Guide for the production of protection profiles and security targets), the ISO/IEC 27000 series of standards for information security management and many more. Our leadership and commitment to the standards include helping to test new versions of the standard, contributing to Scheme publications, and pushing the boundaries of the standard by applying it to new technologies and systems.

☑ Who is the laboratory's other customers?

atsec is the chosen laboratory for leading global customers, including Apple, Dell, HP, IBM, Qualcomm, Red Hat, and SUSE. atsec also provides consultancy services for information security to companies like BMW, Vodafone, RWE, and Wincor-Nixdorf. These customers have the industry leadership position to engage any vendor they want for IT security testing and consulting services . . . and they selected atsec.

So . . . challenge candidate laboratories to answer each of these questions. We're confident that no other can match atsec's proven record of successful, quality Common Criteria evaluations. Contact us today!