



## Digital Identity Assurance Trust Framework Overview

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### The Kantara Identity Assurance Trust Framework background & context

The Kantara Initiative is an international US incorporated 501 (c)(6) industry association formed in 2009 to advance digital identity in support of a trusted, secure and privacy-respecting digital economy. From the outset, conformity assessment and assurance against prevailing standards was seen as a critical missing component of the emerging ecosystem and with the support from both public and private sectors in the US and beyond, Kantara set about developing an Identity Assurance Framework.

In 2011 Kantara became an authorized Trust Framework Provider to the GSA’s FICAM program, assessing and assuring identity service providers delivering identity verified and authenticated end users to US Federal agency online service websites. It is acknowledged internationally, operating a standards-agnostic certification scheme and the Identity Assurance Framework (IAF), which consists of policies, processes, reference materials and criteria which together define an Approval scheme for organizations operating services which provide Identity and Credential Management functions.

In 2013 in response to the National Strategy for Trusted Identities in Cyberspace (NSTIC), a public-private national industry association, the Identity Ecosystem Steering Group (IDESG), was formed.

When funding finally ran out in 2018, IDESG's assets and members transitioned to Kantara, cementing Kantara's position as both a national industry association to serve the needs of the US as well as an international one to advance the state of the art globally.

In the US, Kantara is the only organization that provides Third Party Assessment against the primary NIST standard for digital identity. The growing trend towards requiring conformity assessment is a consequence of the growth of the digital economy and the security and privacy issues it faces. Kantara plays an essential role in providing business customers with the confidence that the identity solutions they are considering, have been subjected to rigorous assessment by independent third parties - Kantara's Accredited Assessors and the Assurance Review Board - following the Kantara Identity Framework's defined processes. The Trust Mark - the process and its reputation - becomes part of the fabric of the stakeholders.

More Information: [KIAF Glossary & Overview](#)

## Assurance Program and Kantara Approval

The Kantara Trust Framework Operations Program aligns closely with ISO 17000 series certification processes and comprises requirements/criteria, assessment methods and Third-Party Assessors. Kantara Approval is based on independent third-party assessments of the subject services, performed by Kantara Accredited Assessors, to determine those services' conformity to the applicable criteria – be they based on de jure standards, profiles of them, or proprietary standards.

The IAF supports multiple Classes of Approval. Each Class of Approval is distinguished by a principal reference document, such as a specific piece of legislation or standard (e.g., [NIST 800-63 Rev3](#)). These may be generally applicable or could respond to the needs of a specific sector or domain. Each Class of Approval and its applicable criteria are described [here](#) and separately recognized in the IAF's [Trust Status List](#).

Service Approvals operate on a three-year cycle. At the start of each cycle a full Assessment is required, Triennial assessment. The scope of this Assessment will be all of the functionality described for the service, be it a Full Service or a Component Service. In each of the following two years a lesser scope of surveillance assessment may be required. In these Assessments, known as an Annual Conformity Review, a subset of the applicable criteria is Assessed.

For full details see: [Service Approval Handbook](#)

## What does Kantara Approved Credential Service Provider (CSP) mean?

This is an entity which, organizationally and in terms of service operation and provision, has demonstrated to the Kantara Assurance Review Board that its service meets the applicable criteria set by the IAF (as described in the IAF's applicable documented procedures, Service Assessment Criteria, etc.). Upon such demonstration the ARB recommends its Approval by the Kantara Initiative Board of Directors for the given service. CSPs must establish a formal contractual arrangement with Kantara Initiative through the [TMLA](#) but the legal/contractual basis on which the CSP contracts with its Accredited Assessor and with its RPs is outside the scope of the IAF.

### *Full Service vs Component Service*

A CSP is not obliged to provide a service which covers all the Identity Proofing and Credential Management functions (which would be a Full Service). A CSP may elect to offer a sub-set of Identity Proofing and/or Credential Management functions, which will be referred-to as a Component Service and indicated as such in the IAF's Trust Status List.

## Kantara Membership is the first step to Trust Services eligibility

In order to become a Kantara Approved Trust Marked Service Provider, the applicant first becomes a Kantara member at Organization or Director member level, and Trust Framework operators and scheme owners are strongly encouraged to also. This commitment serves to cement the collaboration crucial to provide continuous feedback and improvement of the overarching Trust Framework and the Schemes & Classes of Approval operating within it.

High level view of Organization member benefits:

- Technical Community Open Discussion and Work Groups developing best practice.
- Kantara Member only Discussion and Work Groups e.g. international standards & policy drafts for ISO SC27, OECD etc.
- All Member Vote on specifications, bylaws, etc.
- Conference speaking, Member Spotlight and other brand awareness & sponsorship opportunities, and of course.
- Access to the Trust Framework operations program for Assurance and Interoperability Trust Marks (incl. Assurance Review Board) and the KIPI R&D program.

The Director level includes the above plus the obvious early access to and creating strategic opportunities & partnerships; sustaining leadership, brand association, corporate social responsibility discharges etc.

## Kantara Fees for Organization member level

The fees are applicable according to the organization's personnel number and must be received at the time the applicant submits the application forms to the Assurance Review Board for consideration as future Trust Marked accreditation or approval.

For instance, over 1000 personnel, the following fees would apply for Service Provider (Membership fee + Trust Services fee):

- Membership fee to be paid yearly: \$ 19,000
- Trust Services fee to be paid yearly - cost of Assurance Program Processing, Registry and holding the Trust Mark: \$6,000
- The total amount to be paid yearly as Organization member level to Kantara is \$ 25,000.

More about Membership fee structure: [Join Kantara](#).

**IMPORTANT:** Please bear in mind that **the fee paid to the Assessor is a separate contract and in addition to the above** and accordingly you should negotiate the assessment terms and costs with a Kantara Accredited Assessor. Please see the list of Kantara Accredited Assessors below.

## Kantara Accredited Assessors

### *US based*

Web: [www.zygma.biz/](http://www.zygma.biz/) Contact: [Richard Wilsher](#) Phone: +1 (714) 797-9942

Web: [www.kuma.pro](http://www.kuma.pro) Contact: [Ray Kimble](#) Phone: +1 (800) 993-7027 x701

Web: [www.slandala.com](http://www.slandala.com) Contact: [James Jung](#) Phone: + 1 703 851 6813

### *Europe based*

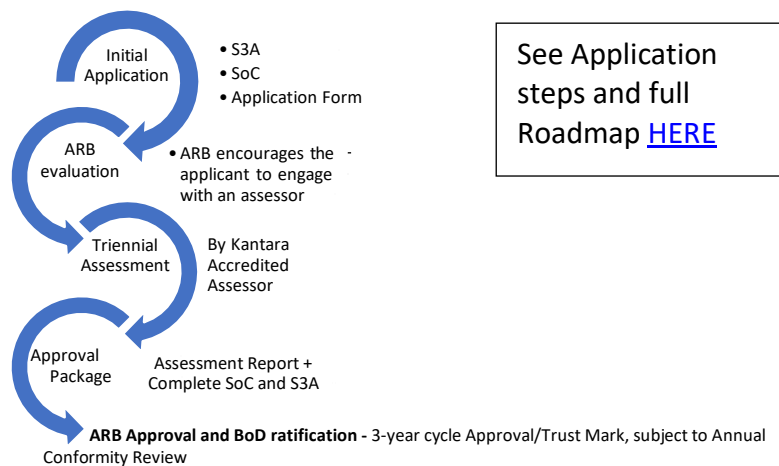
Web: [www.seadot.se](http://www.seadot.se) Contact: [Björn Sjöholm](#) Phone: +46705 220110

## Initial Application Package

1. Application form – [Application for Service Approval \(ASA\)](#)
2. Service Description – [Specification of a Service Subject to Assessment \(S3A\)](#)
3. Statement of Conformity (SoC). You should refer to [Classes of Approval](#) to indicate which SAC is applicable. See instructions [HERE](#)
4. Accept the terms and conditions of the TMLA – [Kantara-Initiative-IAF-Trademark License Agreement](#)

See Application phases [HERE](#)

## Approval Roadmap



## Useful Links

- High Level View of the Kantara Service Provider Approval Process:  
<https://kantarainitiative.org/trustoperations/service-provider-approval/>
- IAF Controlling Documents and Supporting Templates: <https://kantarainitiative.org/identity-assurance-framework/>
- Assurance Program members Spotlights:  
<https://kantarainitiative.org/category/spotlight/assurance-program-spotlights/>
- Kantara Overview – Orientation Slide deck available at <https://kantarainitiative.org/about/>