

HTNG Certification Policy

Prepared by

The Open Group

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1. Overview

1.1 Introduction

This document defines the policies that govern the operation of the Hotel Technology Next Generation (HTNG) certification program. These policies define what can be certified, what it means to be certified, and the process for achieving and maintaining certification. These policies also define the obligations on Suppliers of Products, including a requirement for the Supplier to warrant and represent that the Product meets the applicable Conformance Requirements, which include conformance to the applicable HTNG specification(s) as interpreted by HTNG from time to time, and a passing result from the authorized Indicators of Compliance.

Initially, the HTNG certification program is based on self-validation. The Certification Policy contains the necessary provision for the use of test suites to measure conformance. Any future requirement for the use of test suites will be documented by including them in the relevant Product Specification as one of the Indicators of Compliance.

This document is intended primarily for Suppliers who would like to certify a Product. This policy and the components it references, in conjunction with the HTNG Conformance Requirements, the appropriate Certification Agreement and the Trademark License Agreement, constitute the requirements and obligations for achieving certification. Buyers intending to procure Certified Products will also find this document useful for understanding what they can expect from a Certified Product.

HTNG certification is currently available for those Products which are described in approved Product Specifications.

The HTNG certification program is a voluntary program; participation is at the Supplier's option.

1.2 Terminology and Definitions

This table defines terms or clarifies the meaning of words used within this document. Where an acronym is also used, it is provided in parentheses.

Applicant	The Supplier who is in the process of having a Product certified.
Certificate	A formal declaration of fact confirming that a Product has successfully completed the certification process. Certificates are made available electronically in PDF format.
Certification Agreement	The agreement between the Applicant and the Certification Authority that defines the certification service to be provided and contains the legal commitment by the Applicant to the conditions of the certification program.

Certification Authority (CA)	The organization officially sanctioned to manage the day-to-day operations of the certification program. Initially this function will be performed by The Open Group.
Certification Program Guide	The document that describes the processes for how a Supplier achieves certification for a Product. The guide is used in conjunction with this policy document. This policy document defines what a Supplier must do, whereas the guide provides detailed instructions on how a Supplier gets a Product certified and where to obtain relevant information and documents.
Certification Register	The official list of all Certified Products, which is maintained by the Certification Authority and made available via the internet.
Certification System	The set of procedures, both manual and automated, which describe and implement the HTNG certification program.
Certification System Deficiency (CSD)	An agreed error in the Certification System, which is inhibiting the certification process. A Certification System Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Certified Product	A Product that has successfully completed the certification process and for which the Supplier of such Product has been notified in writing by the Certification Authority that certification has been achieved and such certification has not been revoked.
Conformance Requirements	A definition of the mandatory and optional behavior a Product must implement in order to be considered conformant.
Conformance Statement	The Supplier's documented set of claims describing precisely the way in which the Product meets the Conformance Requirements, including which optional features are supported. It provides a precise identification of the Certified Product and the environment in which conformance is guaranteed.
Conformance Statement Questionnaire (CSQ)	A questionnaire filled out by the Applicant that, when completed, becomes the Conformance Statement
Distributor	A Supplier who supplies a Certified Product without any material change, including no change of Product name.
"HTNG Certified" trademark	HTNG's certification logo or other marks as designated from time to time by HTNG.
Interpretation (INT)	Decision made by the Specification Authority that elaborates or refines the meaning of a HTNG specification, or a standard or specification

	referenced by a HTNG specification. An Interpretation is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Indicators of Compliance	Defined in the Product Specification, these are the outputs from one or more designated Validation Procedures that are used to demonstrate conformance to the Product Specification. Indicators of Compliance are typically a report from the execution of a test suite or a completed self-validation questionnaire with supporting documentation (e.g. test results) as specified by that questionnaire.
Problem Report (PR)	A question of clarification, intent, or correctness of a specification, a Validation Procedure, or the Certification System, which, if accepted by the Specification Authority, will be resolved into an Interpretation, Validation Procedure Deficiency, or Certification System Deficiency respectively.
Product	A procurable entity that consists of software, hardware, or services which are implemented to meet the Conformance Requirements documented in one or more HTNG Product Specifications. Examples of Products include (but are not limited to): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Software components • Hardware components • Integrated software/hardware systems • Network infrastructure or services • Integration services
Product Specification	The document in which Conformance Requirements are specified for a particular type of Product, and against which Products may be certified in the program. There will be one Product Specification for each type of Product to be certified. Product Specifications normally only define externally observable behavior.
Registration Form	A form completed by the Applicant to Register a particular Product for certification. The form contains information on the Applicant and the Product to be certified.
Specification Authority (SA)	HTNG, which is responsible for developing, maintaining and interpreting the specification(s).
Supplier	A Product vendor who is interested in applying for certification in, or has certified a Product in the HTNG certification program. During the period in which a Supplier is going through the certification process to get a Product certified, the Supplier is referred to as an Applicant.

Trademark License Agreement	The agreement between the Supplier and Trademark Owner which contains the legal commitment by the Supplier to the conditions for use of the "HTNG Certified" trademark.
Trademark Owner	The owner of the "HTNG Certified" trademark. Initially this will be The Open Group.
Validation Procedure	A defined set of procedures that must be followed by the Supplier in order to demonstrate conformance to a Product Specification. This may include the execution of an approved test suite or the self-validation procedures necessary to complete a questionnaire.
Validation Procedure Deficiency (VPD)	An agreed error in a Validation Procedure, such as an error in a test suite causing it to produce an incorrect result code that impacts certification. A Validation Procedure Deficiency is one possible outcome of a Problem Report.
Validation Procedure Maintenance Authority (VPMA)	The organization(s) responsible for maintaining the Validation Procedures.

2. Certification Process

This section defines the process a Supplier must follow to achieve certification for a Product.

The parties involved in the certification process are:

- Applicant
- Certification Authority
- Specification Authority
- Validation Procedure Maintenance Authority
- Trademark Owner

1. Preparation for certification - Development & quality assurance testing and introduction to the certification program

The objective of the HTNG certification program is to encourage and facilitate the development and market availability of Products that meet the specification(s). HTNG defines Validation Procedures that are used to ensure that only eligible Products are marketed as compliant.

Prior to applying for certification, the Supplier should perform internal development and quality assurance testing, using the Validation Procedures defined in the Product Specification, together with any additional verification methods the Supplier deems appropriate, to ensure the Product meets the applicable Conformance Requirements and is ready for entry into the certification program.

In addition, the Supplier must become familiar with the certification program and the requirements for certification. The Supplier should review this policy document, the applicable Product Specifications, any agreements that are part of the program, and other related information such as the Certification Program Guide. All information and documents related to the HTNG certification program are available on the CA's web site.

2. Conformance Statement

The Applicant must produce a Conformance Statement to describe the Product and the way in which it meets the Conformance Requirements. The Conformance Statement is produced when the Applicant completes a Conformance Statement Questionnaire. The Conformance Statement contains information about the Product (e.g. version, operating environment), which options of the Product Specification the Applicant claims the Product supports, and any other related information. It will also contain any information necessary to set up and configure any test suites.

3. Applying for Certification

In order to apply for certification, the Applicant is required to warrant and represent that the Product to be certified meets the applicable Conformance Requirements. The Applicant will submit the completed Registration Form, Certification Agreement, and Conformance Statement to the CA.

The CA will review the submission to ensure that it is complete and consistent. If an omission or inconsistency is found, the Applicant will be required to correct any problems before the certification process can continue.

4. Indicators of Compliance

The Applicant must perform Validation Procedures as defined in the Product Specification, and documented in the Conformance Statement in order to produce the required Indicators of Compliance.

5. Audit

The CA will check the submitted certification information, including the Registration Form and the Conformance Statement, to ensure that they demonstrate that the Product meets the applicable Conformance Requirements and that the necessary Validation Procedures have been completed successfully. The CA will perform the audit of all certification-related information within 6 business days of receiving a complete submission.

6. "HTNG Certified" trademark

If the Applicant has not previously completed a Trademark License Agreement for use of the "HTNG Certified" trademark, it must be completed at this point in time. The CA's web site will contain information on how to obtain and complete the Trademark License Agreement.

7. Notification and publication of certification

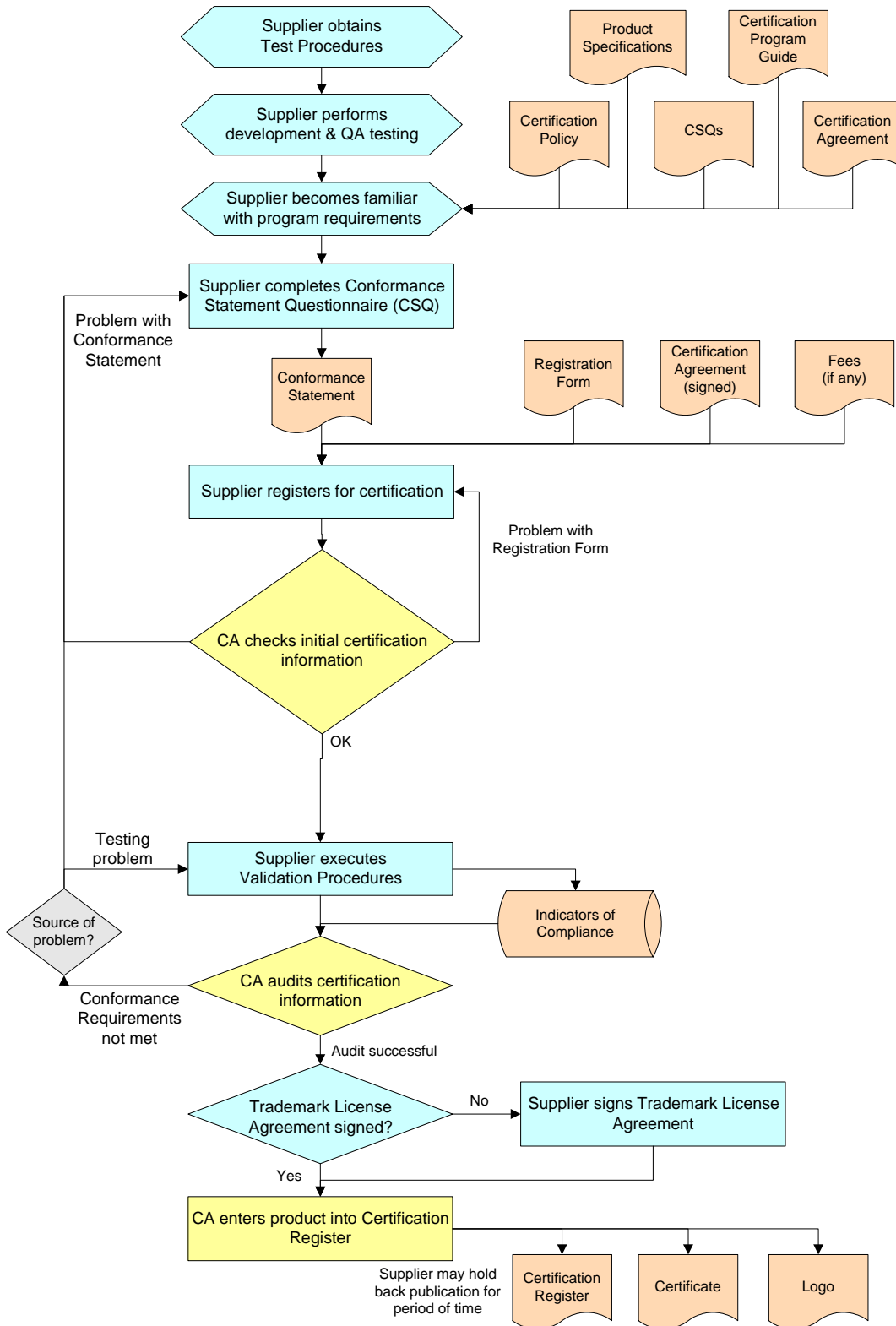
The CA will notify the Applicant in writing of the audit result.

If the result is success, and there is a Trademark License Agreement in place, the CA will issue a Certificate to the Applicant and enter the Product into the Certification Register. The Applicant will also be notified that the "HTNG Certified" trademark may now be used in connection with the Certified Product, according to the terms defined in the license agreement.

Applicants have the option to keep certification confidential for a defined period of time, as described in Section 12.3. During this period, the Certificate will not be issued, the Product will not be included in the Certification Register and the Supplier may not use the "HTNG Certified" trademark with the Certified Product.

If the audit indicates that the Conformance Requirements have not been met, the CA will reject the application for certification and report the discrepancies with the Conformance Requirements. The Applicant may undertake corrective action and re-submit their application. One resubmission is permitted within a single certification application. Any resubmission must be within 60 calendar days unless the CA grants an extension.

The certification process is outlined in the following diagram:



3. Conformance

3.1 Conformance Requirements

It is an explicit condition of HTNG certification that the Supplier of a Certified Product warrants and represents that the Certified Product meets the applicable Conformance Requirements.

The Conformance Requirements for HTNG certification are specified in a Product Specification document. A Product Specification is a precisely defined and documented set of functionality against which Products may be certified. There will be one Product Specification for each category of Product to be certified.

Each Product Specification document includes a description of the nature and purpose of the Product Specification, the label to be used in connection with the "HTNG Certified" trademark logo, detailed technical Conformance Requirements, specific testing requirements that must be satisfactorily completed, and, if applicable, a summary of the migration issues to the current Product Specification from previous versions of the Product Specification.

The Conformance Requirements include conformance to the applicable HTNG specification(s) as interpreted by HTNG from time to time, and a passing result from a currently authorized Indicator of Compliance.

Products may be available with interfaces implementing multiple specifications. The scope of certification only extends to interfaces which implement HTNG specifications and meet the Conformance Requirements documented in the Product Specification.

3.2 Conformance Statement

A Conformance Statement is the Supplier's documented set of claims describing precisely the way in which the Product meets the Conformance Requirements, including which optional features are supported. It provides a precise identification of the Certified Product and the environment in which conformance is guaranteed. It also includes details on the specific configuration used to validate conformance, in sufficient detail to enable the results of any applicable tests to be reproduced. A Conformance Statement is produced by completing the relevant Conformance Statement Questionnaire.

Conformance Statements are submitted to the CA as part of the application process for certification. It is the responsibility of the Supplier to ensure that the information supplied in the Conformance Statement is correct and complete. The Conformance Statement will be included in the Certification Register entry for the Product once it is certified.

Suppliers must ensure that the Conformance Statement of a Certified Product is kept accurate and up-to-date. Changes to the Conformance Statement of a Certified Product may only be made by the CA. If the Supplier wishes to change administrative details such as contact names, addresses, etc., the CA will make these changes upon request. Any other change, such as to a Product name or one affecting the conformance of the Certified Product, is subject to the requirements set forth in Section 7.

4. Licensing the “HTNG Certified” trademark for Certified Products

4.1 Award of the “HTNG Certified” trademark

The “HTNG Certified” trademark may be applied to Products that meet the HTNG Conformance Requirements once a Trademark License Agreement has been signed and the Certification Authority has provided written notice that certification has been achieved.

The “HTNG Certified” trademark may only be used on or in relation to Certified Products.

Award of the “HTNG Certified” trademark is not an endorsement of any Product.

4.2 Licensing the “HTNG Certified” trademark

In order to use the “HTNG Certified” trademark, the Supplier will be required to sign a Trademark License Agreement. This license agreement is the legal contract governing how the “HTNG Certified” trademark may be used and defines the rights and obligations of the Supplier.

The Trademark License Agreement requires the Supplier to publicly “warrant and represent” that each Certified Product meets the applicable Conformance Requirements as well as agree to the policies expressed in this document.

4.3 Use of the “HTNG Certified” trademark

The Supplier of a Certified Product is required to ensure that the Product continues to conform to the applicable HTNG specification(s), including all Interpretations that have been granted by HTNG.

The CA has the right to audit the Supplier’s claims of conformance and adherence to the requirements of this policy and the Trademark License Agreement. Third parties, including buyers and prospective buyers of a Certified Product, who discover a non-conformance in the Certified Product may report such non-conformance to the CA via the CA’s web site. Such reports are processed according to the Reported Non-Conformance process (see Section 9).

As part of the audit process, the CA may at any time request Suppliers of Certified Products to provide the CA with any information reasonably related to their Certified Products’ conformance with the applicable HTNG specification(s). If the Supplier fails to provide such information within 45 days of the request, then the CA may remove the Product from the Certification Register, in which case the Product ceases to be a Certified Product and the Supplier may no longer use the “HTNG Certified” trademark in relation to the Product.

If a Certified Product is found by any means to no longer meet the Conformance Requirements the process outlined in Section 9 shall apply.

If the Supplier fails to take actions described in Section 9 within the timeframes described therein, the Product shall cease to be a Certified Product.

4.4 Removal of the “HTNG Certified” trademark

If a Product ceases to be a Certified Product, any and all rights the Supplier has to use the “HTNG Certified” trademark on or in relation to that Product cease

immediately. The Supplier at its expense shall immediately cease the use of the "HTNG Certified" trademark on all subsequent production of that Certified Product and related sales literature and other materials. The Supplier at its expense shall also remove the "HTNG Certified" trademark from all existing Product, sales literature and other materials as soon as possible, but in any event not later than 3 months after the Product ceases to be a Certified Product. The CA may inspect any such Certified Product, sales literature, or other materials to ensure adequate removal of the "HTNG Certified" trademark.

Once the rights to the "HTNG Certified" trademark have been revoked, any future use of the "HTNG Certified" trademark in relation to that Product will require re-certification.

Failure to adhere to these provisions will be a breach of the Trademark License Agreement and shall result in its termination.

5. Certification Register

5.1 Inclusion in Certification Register

The Certification Register is a web-accessible record of all Certified Products and is maintained by the CA. The Certification Register contains the name of the Supplier, name of the Product, the Conformance Statement for the Product, and a copy of the Certificate.

Once the CA is satisfied that the Applicant's Product meets the applicable Conformance Requirements and all other requirements for certification have been met, the CA will issue written notice to the Applicant that the Product is a Certified Product and enter the Product in the Certification Register. Entry in the Certification Register will not be performed while the Product is being held confidential as provided for in Section 12.3.

5.2 Removal from Certification Register

Only Certified Products are included in the Certification Register, thus if a Product ceases to be a Certified Product, the CA will remove it from the Certification Register.

A Product shall cease to be a Certified Product if:

- The Supplier requests that CA withdraw the Supplier's Product from the Certification Register.
- The Product ceases to meet the Conformance Requirements.
- The Supplier fails to meet the renewal requirements or declines to renew certification.
- The Trademark License Agreement is terminated.

6. Validation Procedures

In the HTNG certification program, the Indicators of Compliance are defined in the Product Specification and may include the results from the execution of test suites or

self-validation procedures necessary to complete a questionnaire. Test suites may not be a requirement for some or all certifiable Products.

6.1 Self-Validation Questionnaires

Validation Procedures based on self-validation questionnaires may be updated to reflect changes in the HTNG specifications arising from revisions or Interpretations. When Validation Procedures are updated, there is a 3-month period overlap during which an Applicant may certify according to any current approved Validation Procedure.

6.2 Test Suites

This section defines the types of test suite releases available and documents the process for reviewing and formally accepting new test suites for use in the program.

6.2.1 Development Releases

Development releases are used for pre-certification testing by the Supplier to ensure the Product meets the Conformance Requirements and is ready to enter the certification process. Access to development releases is via a downloadable test suite that may be used in-house by the Supplier. Development releases are designed to enable developers to perform development and quality assurance testing of their Product, both prior to certification and on an ongoing basis to ensure continued conformance. They are derived from the formal certification releases, though they may not be identical in coverage and functionality. Development releases may not be used for formal testing for certification.

6.2.2 Certification Releases

Certification releases are those test suite releases that have been approved by HTNG as suitable for formal testing. The CA will maintain a list on its web site of the current version(s) of each test suite valid for use in formal testing. Formal testing is available as a hosted service, that is, it will be performed over the Internet using a formal release hosted by the CA.

From time to time, HTNG will approve new certification releases for use in the program. HTNG may introduce new test suites as replacements for existing test suites or as part of a continuing policy of extending test suite coverage. Certification releases are categorized as either a maintenance release or enhancement release, depending on the nature of the changes in the test suite. All new releases of a test suite will undergo a beta testing process. Any faults identified during the beta test will be rectified prior to submitting the new release to HTNG's test suite approval process. All new releases must be approved by HTNG for use in the program.

6.2.2.1 Maintenance Releases

Test suite maintenance releases are updates to approved certification test suites, and are created to address Interpretations or Validation Procedure Deficiencies that have arisen. Maintenance releases will have a 1 month beta testing period open to all HTNG members. Upon acceptance by HTNG, maintenance releases may be used for formal testing and will replace existing certification releases after a 3-month overlap period.

6.2.2.2 Enhancement Releases

Test suite enhancement releases consist of enhancements to existing certification test suites (e.g. to include new coverage) or entirely new test suites. Enhancement releases will have a 3-month beta testing period open to all HTNG members. Upon acceptance by HTNG, enhancement releases may be used for formal testing and will replace existing certification releases after a 6-month overlap period.

6.3 Archiving of Indicators of Compliance

The CA will archive all Indicators of Compliance provided to the CA for audit in conjunction with an application for a new certification or an update to an existing certification. The archives will be kept for 6 years to provide an auditable trail.

7. Certification Requirements for modifications of a Certified Product

Certification applies not just to a single instance of a Product, but also extends to some family of related Products, as described below.

This section defines the requirements for maintaining certification when modifying a Certified Product and for achieving certification for a new Product that is based on or derived from a Certified Product. The subsections detail the types of modifications that may be made to Certified Products, and any corresponding requirements for re-testing and/or re-certification. The Supplier is responsible for determining whether a new release of an HTNG Certified Product is a maintenance release or a new version. In either case the obligation to maintain conformance is unchanged. Information in the Certification Register should be correct at all times.

In each case where a "New Certification" is required in any of the subsections below, the Supplier must submit a new application for certification along with a new Conformance Statement and applicable Indicators of Compliance. Upon successful completion of the certification process, the CA will create a new entry in the Certification Register for the new version of the Product, and issue a new Certificate. The Certification Register entry for the original Certified Product will remain in the Register unchanged, unless the Supplier explicitly requests to have it deleted.

7.1 Maintenance Releases

Maintenance releases and field upgrades to HTNG Certified Products may take place throughout the life of the Product.

Maintenance releases which consist entirely of changes to the Product representing functionality outside the scope of the current HTNG specification(s), do not require re-testing and re-certification. Certification requirements for such maintenance releases are provided in Section 7.7.

In order to update the Certification Register entry to reflect the maintenance release of the Certified Product, the Supplier must submit a new application for certification indicating that it is for a maintenance release, and provide a report from the Validation Procedure.

If the audit result is a success, the CA will update the original Conformance Statement and Certification Register entry for the Certified Product to reflect the maintenance release version, and issue a new Certificate.

7.2 New Versions of HTNG Certified Products

A new version of a Certified Product that contains a material change in the HTNG-related hardware, software, or service constitutes a new Product with respect to testing and certification. A material change is one that may affect the Product's conformance to the applicable HTNG specification(s), or which may affect the results of testing with any HTNG-approved validation procedures.

It is the responsibility of the Supplier to ensure that the Certified Product remains compliant and thus to determine whether a modification constitutes a material change. For clarification, a material change includes, but is not limited to:

- Changes that may impact the behavior of currently supported mandatory and optional features of the HTNG specification(s)
- Additions to or removal of support for optional features
- Changes that may have a direct or indirect impact on the behavior of a test
- Changes in the underlying hardware or components that may affect the behavior of the HTNG related hardware or software

Changes to the Product representing functionality entirely outside the scope of the current HTNG specification(s), AND which are entirely decoupled from HTNG-related hardware or software, do not constitute a material change under this definition and are covered in Section 7.7.

Because a material change constitutes a new Product, the Supplier must submit a new application for certification for the new version.

7.3 Reduced Feature Versions

A Product is certified with a defined set of features that the Supplier claims the Product supports. A reduced feature version occurs when a Certified Product is "re-packaged" and shipped as a new Product with a reduced set of features supported. The resultant Product is a reduced feature version of the Certified Product and constitutes a new Product with respect to testing and certification.

Because a reduced feature version constitutes a new Product, the Supplier must submit a new application for certification.

7.4 Different Environment Version

A Product is certified for a defined environment which may include operating system, hardware platform, RDBMS, network, and external utilities on which depends. If any aspect of the environment changes such that the description of the environment in the Conformance Statement is no longer true, the Supplier must submit a new application for certification.

7.5 Renamed Products

If a Certified Product is to be renamed, with no change to the Certified Product's hardware or software operating environment, the certification may be amended upon request to the CA. The CA will change the Product name on the Conformance Statement and in the Certification Register and issue a new Certificate.

The Supplier will be required to provide a written statement to the CA indicating that there have been no material changes to the Certified Product.

7.6 Re-badged, OEMed, or Distributed Products

If technically identical Certified Products are to be shipped by more than one Supplier, there are circumstances in which each Supplier will have to apply for certification, in order to have their Product listed in the Certification Register.

Re-badged Products:

A Supplier who ships a technically identical Certified Product from an existing Supplier, possibly under a new Product name, creates a new Product with respect to certification, since the new Supplier assumes the warranty of conformance for the new Product. Such Product will not require re-testing, but reference must be provided to the Indicators of Compliance of the previously Certified Product to which it is technically identical, with the agreement of the Supplier of the referenced Certified Product.

OEM-ed Products

A Supplier who ships a Certified Product from an existing Supplier and who makes material changes to the Product creates a new Product with respect to certification. The new Supplier assumes the warranty of conformance for the new Product and must apply for it to be certified, including supplying Indicators of Compliance.

Distributed Products:

A Supplier who ships a technically identical Product without any change to Product name is acting as a Distributor and is not required to apply for certification.

The Distributor may choose to assume the warranty of conformance for the new Product. Such Product will not require re-testing, but reference must be provided to the Indicators of Compliance of the previously Certified Product to which it is technically identical, with the agreement of the Supplier of the referenced Certified Product.

To add a new entry to the Certification Register for a re-badged, OEM-ed, or distributed Product, the new Supplier must submit a new application for certification, indicating that the Product is identical to an already Certified Product. The Supplier must submit a Conformance Statement that is technically identical to that on file for the Certified Product apart from the Product name and vendor information, and reference the Indicators of Compliance of the previously Certified Product. The Supplier must also submit a written statement indicating that the re-badged, OEM-ed, or distributed Product is indeed technically identical to the referenced Certified Product, and written notification from the Supplier of the original Product authorizing the Indicators of Compliance from original Product to be referenced for the new listing.

If the audit (see Section 2) result is a success, the CA will update the Certification Register to include the re-badged, OEM-ed, or distributed Product and issue a new Certificate.

If the Supplier makes material changes to an existing Certified Product, it becomes a new Product for the purposes of certification and a full certification application is required.

The following table illustrates the possible situations and the action required.

	Product Status	Product Name	Shipped By	Warranty of Conformance	Warranty of Conformance Given By	Action Required
Re-badged	Technically identical	New	New Supplier	Original or New	New Supplier	Certification + new Conformance Statement referencing original Product Indicators of Compliance + Statement from original Supplier
OEM-ed	Technically different	New	New Supplier	Original or New	New	Full Certification
Distributed	Technically identical	Original	New Supplier	Original	Original Supplier	No Action
				New	New Supplier	Certification + new Conformance Statement referencing original Product Indicators of Compliance + Statement from original Supplier

7.7 Maintenance Releases & New Versions of Non-HTNG Certified Products

If the modifications in a maintenance release or new version of a Certified Product consist entirely of changes representing functionality outside the scope of the current HTNG specification(s), the new release may be certified per the requirements in this Section. These releases do not require re-testing and re-certification.

To add a new entry to the Certification Register for the new Product, the Supplier must submit a new application for certification, indicating that the Product is functionally identical to an already Certified Product. The Supplier will be required to provide a written statement to the CA indicating that there have been no material changes to the Certified Product. The Supplier will not be required to provide a Conformance Statement or Indicators of Compliance. The CA will update the Product details of the Conformance Statement and the Certification Register to reflect the new release.

7.8 Other Variants

Except where specifically stated in this document, any other variant of a Certified Product which may have a material affect on the conformance of the Product to the HTNG specification(s) constitutes a new Product, which will be subject to full testing and certification.

8. Renewal Process

8.1 Duration of Certification

Certification is valid for 12 months from the date at which the CA provides written notice to the Supplier that certification has been achieved.

8.2 Renewal

The Supplier of a Certified Product is required to renew certification annually. At least sixty calendar days prior to the renewal date, the CA will notify the Supplier that renewal is due.

If the Supplier does not renew by the renewal date, the CA will remove the Certified Product from the Certification Register. Such Product will then no longer be considered a Certified Product.

The Supplier is required to ensure that the Certified Product continues to meet all applicable Conformance Requirements. This includes the requirements to conform to the applicable HTNG specification(s), including all Interpretations that have been granted by HTNG, and, where applicable, a passing result from the authorized Indicators of Compliance.

The CA will define the renewal requirements. The need for re-testing will typically be determined by any changes in test coverage between the previous certification and the renewal, and the Interpretations that have been granted since the previous certification. If re-testing is required, the CA will notify the Supplier of the requirements for re-testing. If a re-test is not required, the only requirement on the Supplier is to pay the certification renewal fee.

Once all requirements are met, the CA will renew the certification and inform the Supplier. The CA will update the Certification Register and issue an updated Certificate to reflect that certification has been renewed.

9. Non-Conformance Process

In the event of a third-party reporting a non-conformance in a Certified Product, or a Certified Product being found by any means to no longer meet the Conformance Requirements, the CA will notify the Supplier of such Certified Product who shall:

- a) Within 90 days rectify the non-conformity and satisfy the CA of the efficacy of the rectification; or
- b) Within 90 days satisfy the CA that the Certified Product is conformant; or
- c) Within 90 days cease use of the "HTNG Certified" trademark in relation to the Certified Product, in which case the Product ceases to be a Certified Product; or
- d) Within 45 days invoke the appeals process as described elsewhere in this document.

If option d) is selected, the Supplier will have 45 days from the completion of the appeals process to implement the decision or cease use of the "HTNG Certified" trademark in relation to the Certified Product.

If the Supplier fails to take one of the above actions within the timescales described above, the Product will cease to be a Certified Product and Section 4.3 above shall apply.

10. Problem Reporting and Interpretations Process

10.1 Overview

During the certification process or during the preparation phase, a Supplier may encounter a problem that inhibits or will inhibit the certification effort. The Supplier may file a Problem Report via the CA's web site to obtain resolution to the issue. The CA is the sole interface with the Supplier for problem reporting, though others will be involved in determining the resolution.

The types of problems that may be found include:

- Errors or ambiguities in the specification(s) against which conformance is based, specifically, in the HTNG specification(s), or the underlying standards or specifications referenced by the HTNG specification(s)
- Errors in the Validation Procedures used to assess conformance with the specifications, including, in the HTNG test suite(s), or other test suites referenced by the HTNG Certification Program (if any)
- Errors in the Certification System, specifically related to the registration process, agreements and completion of Conformance Statements

The Problem Report is used specifically for the types of errors listed above which are inhibiting the certification effort. For general questions on the certification process, executing the Validation Procedures, or other problems not covered above, the Certification Authority's Help Desk will provide assistance on obtaining further information.

10.2 Problem Report Resolution Process

The Specification Authority is responsible for reviewing and providing a resolution to all Problem Reports. The key element of the review process is a deterministic timeline for a formal resolution to the Problem Report.

A preliminary review will be performed by the SA and an initial response provided via the CA to the Supplier within 20 business days of the Problem Report submission. This stage allows simple problems to be dealt with expeditiously. A detailed review will be undertaken for issues that are more complicated, or when the preliminary review does not resolve the issue. Final resolution will be provided within an additional 30 business days.

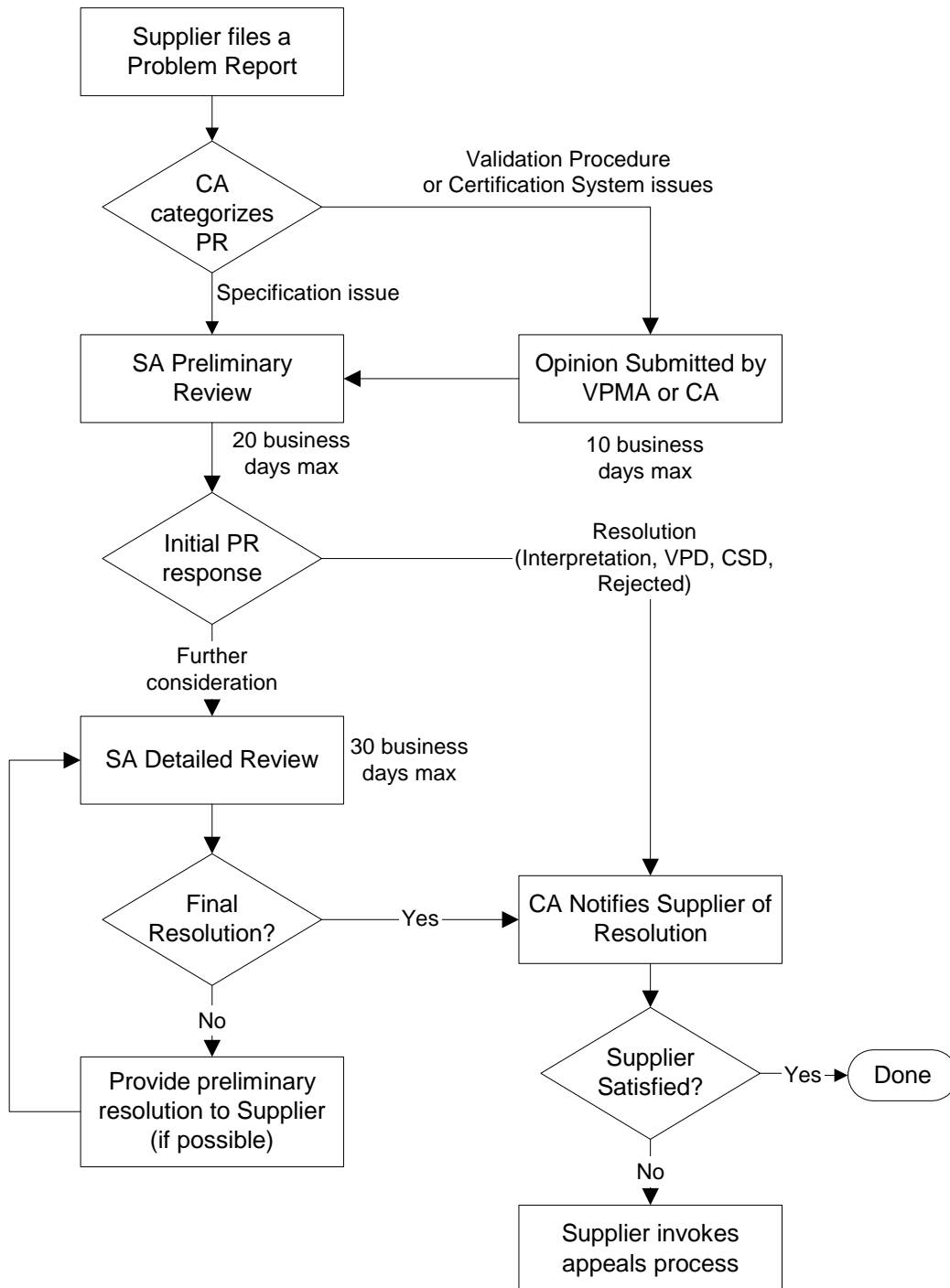
In most cases, 50 business days is sufficient to provide a final Problem Report resolution. However, in exceptional circumstances, final resolution may take longer. If possible, the Problem Report will be addressed sufficiently within the 50 business days to allow the certification process to proceed pending final resolution. The CA will notify the Supplier by the 50th day of the delay and preliminary resolution, if available.

If the Supplier is not satisfied with the final resolution, the Supplier may invoke the appeals process.

The Problem Report resolution process is intended to allow the Supplier to remain anonymous, so pre-certification activity is kept confidential. The review process requires that requests be filtered automatically prior to distribution to the review group. Filtering will remove the Product and Supplier sections of the PR, so these are the only sections that should contain company names, Product names, or other confidential information. Please note that if Supplier-specific information is included in the sections reserved for the technical descriptions, the automatic filtering will not remove it and the request will not be anonymous.

The SA is responsible for resolving all Problem Reports. In the case of Problem Reports related to Validation Procedures or the Certification System, it will seek input from the appropriate source. In order for the SA to resolve Problem Reports for issues related to Validation Procedures, an opinion from the Validation Procedure Maintenance Authority is required. Likewise, for Problem Reports related to the Certification System, the SA will require an opinion from the Certification Authority. These opinions must be provided within 10 business days, in order for the SA to provide its preliminary response on time.

The process is outlined in the following diagram:



10.3 Resolution of Problem Reports

The possible outcomes for Problem Report resolution are:

- accepted as an error or ambiguity in the specifications (an Interpretation),
- accepted as an error in a Validation Procedure (a Validation Procedure Deficiency)
- accepted as an error in the Certification System (Certification System Deficiency), or
- rejected.

Interpretations, Validation Procedure Deficiencies and Certification System Deficiencies will never cause previously Certified Products to be “un-certified”, but can affect a Certified Product’s continued conformance at the time of recertification.

Interpretations, Validation Procedure Deficiencies and Certification System Deficiencies evolve the definition of conformance over time and Certified Products are always required to conform to the current definition of conformance. At the time of certification renewal, the Supplier will be required to demonstrate that the Certified Product conforms to the applicable HTNG specification(s), including all Interpretations that have been granted since the previous certification. For details of overlap periods covering updates to Validation Procedures see Section 6.

10.3.1 Interpretations

An Interpretation elaborates or refines the meaning of a specification, therefore clarifying an error or ambiguity in the specification. Interpretations apply to a specific version of a specification and are permanent against that version. They remain in force until the specification is updated, at which time, the elaboration or refined meaning should be incorporated into the updated version of the specification.

Interpretations always apply to a particular version of a HTNG specification. If a Problem Report submitted against a specification includes rationale that cites conflict with a previous or subsequent version of the specification, the PR will be assessed without reference to such rationale. In particular, conflict with another version of the same HTNG specification does not in itself form grounds for granting an Interpretation.

Interpretations of HTNG specifications will never result in Product behavior that was previously considered to be conformant being declared non-conformant, at a given revision level of the HTNG specifications. However, as a result of an Interpretation, the SA may make a change in a future release of the specification that will prohibit behavior previously considered acceptable. Interpretations can only result in Product behavior that was previously considered to be non-conformant being declared to be conformant.

The Specification Authority is responsible for deciding the meaning of conformance to normative referenced specifications in the HTNG context, such as the use of XML within HTNG specifications. Problem reports regarding such underlying or referenced specifications in the context of HTNG will be processed as normal. Problem reports regarding underlying or referenced specifications in any other context will be rejected.

Interpretations are posted on the CA website.

10.3.2 Validation Procedure Deficiency

A Validation Procedure Deficiency is an agreed error in a Validation Procedure. Validation Procedure Deficiencies apply to a specific version of a Validation Procedure and are permanent against that version. They remain in force until the Validation Procedure is updated, at which time, the error should be fixed in the Validation Procedure update. In the case of an error in a Validation Procedure, if the Validation Procedure Maintenance Authority should decide not to fix a VPD in the updated Validation Procedure, the VPMA will submit a new Problem Report and assign it as a VPD against the new Validation Procedure version, flagging the VPD as a re-issue.

In all circumstances, the complete set of Validation Procedures must be performed during formal testing. The existence of any Validation Procedure Deficiency with respect to a Validation Procedure does not absolve an Applicant from running the Validation Procedure in question, or any part thereof.

10.3.3 Certification System Deficiency

A Certification System Deficiency is an agreed error in the Certification System. The Certification System includes the workflow and information systems provided to implement the certification process. Certification System Deficiencies apply to the version of the Certification System in which they are found. If the problem is blocking the certification effort, a patch will be made to the Certification System to enable certification to proceed. Otherwise, the problem will be fixed in a future update of the Certification System and the Certification System Deficiency will remain in force until such update.

10.4 Problem Report Repository

The CA will maintain a web-accessible repository of all submitted Problem Reports. This repository will be publicly accessible. The publicly accessible information will contain the technical details such as the nature of the problem and its current status of resolution, but will not contain sections reserved for Supplier and Product details, thus maintaining the confidentiality of the Supplier.

An Applicant may cite an Interpretation, Validation Procedure Deficiency, or Certification System Deficiency to resolve discrepancies in test reports or to support their application for certification in any other way, irrespective of the origin of the Problem Report.

11. Appeals Process

Suppliers may appeal decisions made by the SA or the CA. The occasions that may give rise to an appeal include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) The Supplier disagrees with the resolution of a Problem Report
- b) The Supplier disagrees with the CA's grounds for denying the award of certification
- c) The Supplier of a Certified Product disagrees with a formal notification of the need to rectify a non-conformance

Appeal requests should be made to the CA. The Certification Program Guide describes the process for raising an appeal.

There are two levels of appeal: a Technical Review and a Board Review. Review decisions will be made in accordance with HTNG policies.

At each level of appeal, the Supplier has the right to representation at the review meeting to make the technical case, though is not required to do so. The appeals process may be anonymous if the Supplier does not wish to be represented at the review meetings, or wishes to be represented by an unaffiliated third party. In such case, the CA will remove the Supplier name and Product name from all information provided for the Technical and Board reviews. The CA will make best efforts to maintain the anonymity of the Supplier, but it is possible that technical details or other parts of the information may still serve to identify the Supplier.

A Supplier wishing to dispute a HTNG or CA decision may request a Technical Review. Technical Review requires the HTNG Technical Review Committee to consider the matter and produce a response with a recorded vote according to HTNG voting rules, within 45 calendar days of the request. HTNG Technical Review Committee may commission reports from independent experts, and may seek input from other committees within HTNG as it sees fit.

If the Supplier is not satisfied with the outcome of the Technical Review, the Supplier may request an appeal to the HTNG Board of Directors within 14 calendar days of being notified in writing by the CA of the results of the Technical Review. HTNG's Board of Directors may ask for technical reports from the relevant working groups and may also ask for reports from independent experts. The Board Review will be completed within 90 calendar days of the Supplier's written request for a Board Review. The results of a Board Review are final and cannot be further appealed.

12. Confidentiality

12.1 Confidentiality

All information relating to the identity of an Applicant and the Product to be certified will be held confidential by the CA during the certification process, that is, prior to the award of certification. This includes information related to the Registration Form, Conformance Statements, and Problem Reports.

Validation Procedure results will always be confidential. Information regarding the results of using the Validation Procedures shall not be disclosed in any publicly available document or to any third party by the CA, the Applicant, or any test house acting on the Applicant's behalf.

In addition, the CA will always hold confidential any information regarding unsuccessful applications for certification.

12.2 Disclosure of Certification Information

Certification information consists of the fact that certification was achieved, the description of the Certified Product and the Conformance Statement for the Certified Product. Any claims of conformance or information related to the certification process may only be made public after the CA has notified the Applicant in writing that the Product has passed the certification process.

The Certification Authority will make certification information publicly available by including it in the Certification Register available on the CA's web site.

12.3 Optional Confidential Treatment of Certification Information Prior to Product Launch

On occasions, a Supplier will apply for and achieve certification prior to the Product's launch in the marketplace. To enable a Supplier to keep such information confidential prior to Product launch, the Supplier may request that the certification information be kept confidential for a maximum period of six months from the date of written notification by the CA that the Product has achieved certification.

During this period, the Supplier may not publicly use the "HTNG Certified" trademark or make any representation of conformance with the HTNG specification(s) without first informing the CA that the confidential period has expired. In the event the Supplier wishes to keep the certification information for a Product confidential permanently, the Supplier may request withdrawal and deletion of such information. Such Product will then no longer be considered a Certified Product.

The certification information will cease to be held confidential upon the earlier of notice by the Supplier that the confidential period has expired, or at the end of the six-month period, provided that the Supplier has not requested withdrawal and deletion of such information.