



FedRAMP

# Agency Authorization Kickoff Briefing Guidance

**For Agency Authorizations**

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FedRAMP provides this guidance to inform a CSP's creation of briefing materials for an Agency Authorization kickoff

## How to Use

CSPs should use this guidance to inform their development of a slide briefing for a kickoff meeting

A prepared briefing should follow the general flow and topic progression of this guidance document

## What to Prepare

CSPs should prepare a slide briefing using their own company branded template that addresses the content described in this guidance. The briefing should be appropriate for a 60 minute discussion focused on the cloud service offering (CSP content), followed by a 30 minute discussion focused on the PMO's review process, tips for success, and Q&A (PMO content).

Kickoff meetings are considered a best practice for successful Agency Authorizations

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Kickoffs are not a sales meeting. CSPs should be prepared to deep dive into the system security and ensure that the appropriate CSP personnel are on hand to answer any technical questions that arise during the briefing.

## CSP Content (60 minutes)

- Audience and Introductions
- Overview of the Cloud Service Offering
- Authorization Boundary
- Services without FedRAMP Authorization
- Data Flows
- Security Controls: Gaps and Customer Responsibilities
- Agency Review Process
- Work Breakdown Structure Overview

## PMO Content (30 minutes)

- PMO Review Process
- Tips for Success



CSP Content

Kickoffs will begin with a review of the meeting's purpose and outcomes, followed by a round of introductions. Kickoffs include stakeholders from the Agency, CSP, 3PAO, and FedRAMP PMO

CSP	3PAO	Agency	FedRAMP PMO
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Program Manager / Authorization Lead</li><li>• Security/Compliance Lead</li><li>• Technical SMEs</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 3PAO Advisor / Consultant</li><li>• 3PAO Assessors and Pen Tester*</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agency Authorization Lead</li><li>• Agency Liaison</li><li>• Authorizing Official</li><li>• ISSO / ISSMs</li><li>• Technical Reviewers</li><li>• Agency Business Owner**</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Customer Success Team</li></ul>

**Identify the CSP, 3PAO and Agency team members supporting this authorization effort. Communicate the contact information to the PMO so the right team members are invited to the kickoff.**

\*FedRAMP encourages assessor participation if a 3PAO has been engaged

\*\*While the Agency business owner(s) is welcome to attend, it is important to include the Agency team members that will be responsible for reviewing the authorization package and making authorization decisions

## Provide the following information for the Cloud Service Offering:

- CSP Name
- Cloud Service Offering Name (as it will appear on the FedRAMP Marketplace)
- Service Offering Description
  - What are the core capabilities and functions provided by the service?
  - How does an Agency use and experience your offering?
  - Describe the federal data that will be stored / processed / transmitted by the service offering.
- FIPS 199 System Categorization - Low / Moderate / High
- Service Model - SaaS / PaaS / IaaS
- Deployment Model - Public / Community / Hybrid (**see note**)
- Cloud Stack / Leveraged Systems
  - If applicable, what underlying PaaS / IaaS are leveraged?

### Selecting the Right Deployment Model

CSPs should ensure they have identified the correct deployment model for a service offering.

- **Public** clouds include private sector and public sector tenants
- **Community** clouds are limited to tenants from a specific industry (e.g., Government-only Cloud)
- **Hybrid** clouds may include elements of private, public, and/or community deployments

To provide agencies with a clear picture of the system architecture and components that make up the authorization boundary for the cloud service offering, **the majority of the Kickoff is spent walking through the Authorization Boundary and Network Diagrams.** In addition, to inform the agency's understanding of how federal data/metadata flows into, across, out of the cloud offering (and how that data is protected through encryption) the CSP will also walk through a series of Data Flow Diagrams.

- CSPs are *required* to follow the [FedRAMP Diagram Guidance](#) when creating boundary, network and data flow diagrams.
- CSPs are *encouraged* to use a diagram [Job Aid](#), which was developed by one of our agency partners. While this is not a FedRAMP product, the agency did an excellent job of visually representing the guidance that FedRAMP provides for these diagrams. We recognize there may be aspects that do not apply to your environment, which is why this is intended to be a Job Aid versus a template.
  - The Job Aid uses generic names for system components (e.g., SIEM, Ticketing, Anti-virus), but we ask that you use the actual name of the service/product on the diagram.
  - The Job Aid provides an example of the elements that should be included on a boundary diagram. It then starts with the boundary diagram "shell" and breaks out the level of detail that is expected on network diagrams and data flow diagrams. Some CSPs, especially those with complex systems, require multiple diagrams to depict the information in an easily digestible format. Others are able to present the information using only a couple diagrams - for example, some show the network elements on the boundary diagram and some show multiple data flows in one diagram. We leave this up to your creative license as long as all of the required elements are captured in the diagrams.

**NOTE:** The Cloud Offering should be substantially complete with a well-defined authorization boundary at the time of the Kickoff. If the CSP is still in the early build phase with only a notional boundary, it is too soon to hold the Kickoff.

# Authorization Boundary Diagram





# Network Diagram



# Data Flow Diagram(s)



Provide a summary of ALL external services that are **not** FedRAMP Authorized at the same impact level. For each service, answer the following questions:

- What data types are being transmitted to, processed or stored by the service?
- What is the sensitivity of data?
- How would your cloud service offering and / or the federal data that resides in it be impacted if the CIA of the service was compromised?
- What mitigations or compensating controls are in place to minimize risk associated with unauthorized services?
- Is the service FedRAMP Ready or FedRAMP In Process? If not, are there future plans to bring the service in boundary or migrate to a FedRAMP-authorized service?

In addition to system interconnections, APIs, external cloud services, and Corporate Shared Services, this summary should include any services provided by the underlying IaaS / PaaS, but not included in the IaaS / PaaS FedRAMP-authorized boundary.

## Resources

- Sample Template: [FedRAMP Readiness Assessment Report Table 3.3 - External Systems and Services](#)
- [FedRAMP Authorization Boundary Guidance](#)

## Describe known security gaps

- Include remediation plan and timeline
- Discuss gaps that will/may require agency risk acceptance

## Describe Customer Responsibilities

- List controls that the Agency will be fully or partially responsible for implementing in the customer's boundary. Controls that cannot be fully inherited by the customer must be documented in the Customer Responsibility Matrix (CRM).
- If the Customer Responsibility Matrix (CRM) has been completed, walk through it during the kickoff
  - The CRM is included as a separate tab in the Control Implementation Summary (CIS) workbook

## Resources

- For additional information regarding the CIS/CRM see [this blog](#)

## Prior to the Kickoff, the CSP and Agency must be aligned on the on the Agency's review and authorization process, including:

- Agency-specific requirements
- Key roles
  - CSP Primary POC, Agency Primary POC, Agency AO, Agency Reviewers, Agency Liaison
- Review approach
  - Just-in-Time or All Deliverables at Once
  - WBS should reflect the review approach
- Review methodology
  - Process for performing a quality and risk review of the package. The PMO recommends following the guidance in the [FedRAMP ISSO training](#).
  - Method for capturing and tracking reviewer comments/questions
  - Communication cadence and channels (e.g., recurring weekly meetings)
- Agency ATO decision
  - Agency internal process for authorization recommendation and ATO issuance

Come to the Kickoff prepared to describe the agreed upon process for the Agency's review of the security package.



Include the WBS to guide a discussion about the next steps to a FedRAMP Authorization

FedRAMP requires CSPs to complete our [CSP Training](#). Please use this slide to provide a list of names of personnel who have completed the training. This slide will be used as a form of attestation to confirm we can move forward with scheduling the Kickoff Meeting.

**All personnel responsible for building the system, implementing security controls, and documenting the SSP are required to take the training before scheduling the Kickoff.**

The following members of the [INSERT CSP NAME] team has completed the CSP Training:

- [Insert Name]
- [Insert Name]
- [Insert Name]



REMINDER:  
Upload This Deck to Your CSO's  
Secure Repository (e.g. Max.gov)  
Once Complete

**The PMO will not accept any deliverables shared over email.**

**Please contact the PMO if you need assistance in setting up a repository on OMB MAX for your CSO. If you are a High system, please use your selected secure repository. Finally, please inform the PMO via email once your deck has been uploaded.**





# PMO Content

**\*\*CSP please copy and paste this section of the deck into your presentation\*\***

- Agency sends ATO letter to CSP and [info@fedramp.gov](mailto:info@fedramp.gov)
- CSP and 3PAO upload current versions of package deliverables to secure repository
  - OMB MAX for Low and Moderate packages
  - CSP's repository for High packages
- CSP completes and submits [FedRAMP Initial Authorization Package Checklist](#) to [info@fedramp.gov](mailto:info@fedramp.gov)
- PMO verifies that all package deliverables are uploaded
- Package is placed in PMO Review Team's queue. Packages are reviewed in the order they are received.
- Package reviews typically take 10 business days (from start of review). This assumes there are no significant quality issues.
- The scope of the PMO's review includes:
  - A quality review to ensure the authorization package clearly and accurately represents the security and risk posture of the Cloud Service Offering
  - A risk review to identify weaknesses or deficiencies that must be addressed before the Marketplace status is changed to 'FedRAMP Authorized'

- Review team sends draft [Review Report](#) to all stakeholders (CSP, 3PAO, Agency)
  - Draft report documents findings identified during PMO's review, and any areas that require clarification
  - PMO coordinates review meeting to walk through findings and clarification requests, as well as plans for remediation by CSP/3PAO
  - Draft report is sent at least one week prior to the meeting
- CSP/3PAO address findings and resubmits package; notifies info@fedramp
- PMO performs gap review
  - Communicates remaining gaps or recommends authorization to FedRAMP leadership
  - Once approved, Marketplace designation is changed to [FedRAMP Authorized](#)

## SSP Tips for Success:

- Dedicate a strong technical writer(s) to develop the security package
- Complete [CSP training modules](#):
  - 200-A: FedRAMP System Security Plan (SSP) Required Documents
  - 201-B: How to Write a Control
- Make sure SSP control narratives address the actual control requirement and describe how the requirement is met
- Make sure the SSP implementation status & control origination align with the CIS/CRM
  - Be sure to use the current CIS/CRM workbook template
  - Clearly describe customer responsibilities
- Perform a final quality review of the package and correct:
  - Inconsistencies across SSP control narratives
  - Inconsistencies between the boundary diagram, data flow diagrams and SSP narrative
  - Inconsistencies between control narratives and what is validated by the 3PAO and described in the Test Case Workbook
  - Inconsistencies between the SAR and POA&M

To expedite the Agency and PMO reviews, deliver a high quality package that clearly and accurately describes the security and risk posture of the CSO.

## SAR Tips for Success (3PAO):

- Complete [3PAO Series 300 training modules](#)
- Verify that all findings in the Security Test Case Procedures Workbook (“Test Case Workbook”) are documented in the SAR. All instances of controls with an assessment result of “Other than Satisfied” should be documented as an open risk in the RET, unless the finding was corrected during testing. If the finding was corrected during testing, it should be documented in Table 5-1 of the SAR, Risks Corrected During Testing.
- Be sure to clearly describe steps taken to independently evaluate and validate the control implementation. Echoing back the SSP implementation statement is not sufficient.
- Verify that the detailed breakdown of risks in Appendix F, Assessment Results, is consistent with the RET.

## POA&M Tips for Success:

Review your POA&M against the [FedRAMP POA&M Template Completion Guide](#) to make sure you are documenting POA&M entries correctly. Here are some specific tips that will help prevent delays during the review process:

- For each POA&M item, be sure to include the Identifier listed in Column A of the RET for traceability. This can be done by using the RET Identifier as the POA&M Unique Identifier. Alternatively, you can add the corresponding RET Identifier to Column Z (Comments) of the POA&M.
- For Risk Adjustments (RAs), False Positives (FPs) and Operational Risks (ORs) validated by the 3PAO during the assessment, be sure to include the deviation rationale provided by the 3PAO in Column X

## POA&M Tips for Success, cont:

- For RAs, FPs and ORs approved by the Agency, provide the deviation rationale in Column X and add a statement in the Comments column indicating Agency approval
  - Validated/approved FPs are not considered open risks and can be moved to the Closed Items tab
  - Approved ORs are still considered open risks and must be captured on the Open Items tab and periodically reassessed
- A Vendor Dependency (VD) exists when the CSP must rely on a downstream vendor to resolve a vulnerability, such as a patch for a commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) product, but the vendor has not yet made the fix available. VDs are not considered deviation requests and do not require approval. VDs are tracked as open risks and CSPs are required to check in with the vendor at least once a month to determine the status of the patch/fix. When capturing risks as VDs in the POA&M, select “Yes” in Column P (Vendor Dependency), enter the last check-in date in Column Q (Last Vendor Check-in Date), and enter the product name in Column R (Vendor Dependent Product Name).
- For all remaining open POA&Ms, be sure to complete all required fields and clearly describe the remediation plan

**CSPs must upload a draft Kickoff deck to the secure repository prior to the PMO scheduling a meeting.**

Learn more at [fedramp.gov](https://fedramp.gov)

Contact us at [info@fedramp.gov](mailto:info@fedramp.gov)



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