



Networking Services in Microsoft Azure Specialization

Program guide, audit checklist, and FAQ

V1.4 Checklist

Valid July 5, 2023 - June 30, 2024

Program updates and announcements

Module B – Dec 1, 2023

No changes to the V1.4 checklist have been made. This checklist is active until June 30, 2024

Module A - October 1, 2023

Azure Active Directory has been renamed Microsoft Entra ID

August 28, 2023

The Microsoft Cloud Partner Program has changed its name to the Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program effective immediately

Module B - July 5, 2023

V1.4 Networking Services in Microsoft Azure Specialization checklist is published. This checklist version is required for audits during July 5, 2023- Jan 2, 2024. No control changes have been made in V1.4 from the V1.3 checklist

Module B - Jan 2, 2023

V1.3 Networking Services in Microsoft Azure Specialization audit checklist is published. This checklist version is required Jan 2, 2023- July 5, 2023

Module B - Dec 5, 2022

The PREVIEW for V1.3 Networking Services in Microsoft Azure Specialization was made available for partners. This checklist version will be required Jan 2, 2023

- There are no new Module A or B Control updates
- FAQ updates include the clarification that a “No Pass” results when a partner fails or withdraws from the audit. This status resets from “Audit Failed” within one week to “Not Enrolled,” allowing partners to reapply

Oct 3, 2022

Microsoft retired Gold Cloud partner competency, Solutions partner designation required

Gold & Silver competencies were replaced with [Solutions Partner](#) designations. Azure Specialization requirements are now associated with achievement of a required Solutions Partner designation. Your organization must have an active Solutions Partner for Infrastructure (Azure) designation for this specialization.

Module A - July 1, 2022

Checklist updates published May 2, 2022 in preview for the Module A checklist are now required. In Control 2.2, a new required Skilling Plan has been added to the checklist

Module B – July 1, 2022

V1.1 Networking Services in Microsoft Azure specialization audit checklist has a new Design Control 3.2 required July 1, 2022

Control 3. 2 the Azure Well-Architected Review Assessment has been added to the Networking Services Advanced Specialization, this control is required July 1, 2022

Module B - May 2, 2022

- Guidance for the definition of Proof of Concept and Pilots added to the FAQ
- Preview updates to Module A were made available, these are required July 1, 2022

Module B- Jan 1, 2022

Guidance and FAQ Updates

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Networking Services in Microsoft Azure specialization Program Overview

This document defines the requirements to earn the Networking Services in Microsoft Azure specialization. It also provides further requirements, guidelines, and an audit checklist for the associated audit that is required to earn this Azure specialization.

The Networking Services in Microsoft Azure specialization is designed for partners to demonstrate their deep knowledge, extensive experience, and proven success in planning and deploying Azure cloud networking for their customers. Such partners empower their customers to use Azure networking to realize the full breadth of Microsoft Azure to build transformative, secure networking solutions at enterprise scale.

The Networking Services in Microsoft Azure specialization allows partners with an active [Solution Partner](#) designation to further differentiate their organizations, demonstrate their capabilities, and build stronger connections with customers. For this specialization, partners must have an active Solutions Partner for Infrastructure (Azure) designation.

Partners will receive a Pass or No Pass result upon completion of the audit process. A Pass result satisfies the audit requirement for this Azure specialization for two (2) years. See the [Partner FAQ](#) for renewal information.

Partners who meet the comprehensive requirements to earn an Azure specialization, receive a customer-facing label they can display and a prioritized business profile in [Microsoft AppSource partner gallery](#). See the FAQ for more benefit information.

Please note: This specialization also requires 3rd party certifications to proceed to audit. These are found in Module B Control 1.1.

How to apply

Partners with the appropriate role and access permissions can apply. Only a Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program Account Administrator or a Global Administrator of an organization's Microsoft partner account can submit an application for the Azure specialization on behalf of the organization.

To do so, they sign into their [Partner Center Account](#). On the left pane, select Azure under the **Specialization section**. Toggle to the specialization that you wish to apply for by using the drop-down menu at the top of the page.

NDA for the audit

Auditors comply with requests from partners to sign a direct NDA. All ISSI auditors are under a nondisclosure agreement (NDA) with Microsoft. If a partner would like an NDA to be signed directly between ISSI and the partner organization for purposes of the audit, one can be provided by the partner during the audit scheduling process to ISSI. ISSI will sign and return it.

Payment terms and conditions

Pricing schedule

Module B Audit: \$2,000 USD

Module A+B Audits: \$3,000 USD

A Gap Review Meeting is included with each Module audit.

Payment terms

The cost of the audit is payable in full to the audit company and must be settled before the audit begins. Failure to pay will result in cancellation of the audit.

Program status term

When a partner meets all prerequisite requirements shown in Partner Center and Microsoft receives a valid Pass Report from the third-party audit company, the partner will be awarded the Networking Services in Microsoft Azure specialization for one (1) calendar year.

The status and the Networking Services in Microsoft Azure specialization label can be used only by the organization (determined by Partner Center MPN PGA ID account) and any associated locations (determined by MPN PLA ID) that met all requirements and passed the audit. Any subsidiary or affiliated organizations represented by separate Partner Center accounts (MPN PGA ID) may not advertise the status or display the associated label.

Audit blueprint

Audits are evidence-based. During the audit, partners will be expected to present evidence they have met the specific requirements on the checklist. This involves providing the auditor with access to live demonstrations, documents, and SME personnel to demonstrate compliance with checklist requirements.

The audit checklist will be updated to stay current with technology and market changes, and the audit is conducted by an independent, third-party auditor. The following is included in the audit blueprint:

1. Roles
2. Audit Process: High level overview
3. Audit Process: Details
4. Audit Best Practices

Audit roles

Role of the auditor

The auditor reviews submitted evidence and objectively assesses whether the evidence provided by the partner satisfies the audit checklist requirements.

The auditor selects and evaluates evidence, based on samples of the information available from live systems. The appropriate use of such sampling is closely related to the confidence that can be placed in the audit conclusions. All ISSI auditors are under a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) with Microsoft. Auditors will also comply with requests from partners to sign a direct NDA.

Role of the partner

The partner must provide objective evidence that satisfies the auditor for all checklist items. It is the responsibility of the partner to have reviewed all check-list items prior to the audit, to have collated all necessary documentation and evidence, and to have ensured that the right subject matter experts are available to discuss and show systems, as appropriate. All audit evidence must be reproducible and verifiable.

Role of the Microsoft Partner Development Manager

For partners that have an assigned Microsoft Partner Development Manager (PDM), the PDM is responsible for ensuring that the partner fully understands the requirements prior to applying for the audit. The PDM may attend the optional consulting engagements that ISSI offers, but the PDM and other Microsoft FTEs may not attend the audit.

Audit Process: High-level overview

Step	Action	Responsibility
1	<p>Review: specialization requirements in Partner Center. Review audit checklists in the specialization and begin to prepare needed evidence with personnel for an evidence-based audit.</p> <p><u>Recommended:</u> Before you apply, review the specific audit checklist thoroughly and confirm SME personnel.</p>	Partner
2	<p>Meet the prerequisites and apply for the audit: In the initial application phase, applications are submitted in two (2) stages:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Prerequisite requirements(see Partner Center for details) 2. Audit <p><u>Do not start the application process unless you are ready to undertake the audit.</u> Assess your firm's ability to complete the audit, including considerations for readiness, employee availability, and holidays.</p>	Partner
3	<p>Validate: The partner meets all requirements prior to audit.</p>	Microsoft
4	<p>Confirmed by Microsoft: Microsoft confirms to the third-party audit company that the partner is eligible for audit.</p>	Microsoft
5	<p>Schedule with partner: The auditor will schedule within two(2) business days.</p>	Auditor(with partner)
6	<p>Conduct the audit: Within thirty(30) calendar days of the approval for audit.</p>	Auditor
7	<p>Provide a Gap Report: If applicable, to the partner within two (2) business days of the completed audit, listing any Open Action Items. *</p>	Auditor
8	<p>acknowledge Gap Report receipt and schedule meeting: Within two (2) business days of receiving the Gap Report, the partner acknowledges receipt of the report and schedules a Gap Review Meeting. Partners can begin immediate remediation of open items.</p>	Partner
9	<p>Complete the meeting: Within fifteen (15) calendar days of receiving the Gap Report, the partner schedules and completes the Gap Review Meeting with the auditor to provide evidence and address any Open Action Items. *</p>	Auditor (with partner)
10	<p>Issue Final Report: To the partner within five (5) business days. Notify Microsoft of audit Pass or No Pass result.</p>	Auditor
11	<p>Notify partner: About program status within two (2) business days.</p>	Microsoft

**These steps will be considered if the partner has no Open Action Items after the audit.*

Audit Process: Details

Microsoft uses an independent, third-party audit company, Information Security Systems International, LLC (ISSI), to schedule and conduct Azure specialization audits. After the audit date has been confirmed, ISSI will provide an agenda to the partner. The duration of an audit is four (4) hours for Module B workloads and eight (8) hours for Module A+B audits combined, depending upon the scope of the audit.

During the audit, the partner must provide access to the appropriate personnel who can discuss and disclose evidence that demonstrates compliance with program requirements. We highly recommend that subject matter experts for each section attend as well as a person who is familiar with the entire audit.

On the day of the audit, the partner must be prepared to provide the auditor with access to live demonstrations, documents, and personnel, as necessary to demonstrate compliance with the requirements. During the audit, the auditor will seek to verify that the partner's evidence has addressed all required audit checklist items satisfactorily.

A note on audit checklist effective dates: Partners are audited against the checklist items that are active on the date of their remote audit, not the date they apply. Audits are updated twice annually. The partner application or renewal date has no bearing on the version of the checklist that is used for the audit.

The audit can produce either of two (2) outcomes:

1. The partner passes the audit.
 - The auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit. This will include identifying observed strengths and opportunities for improvement.
 - The auditor will provide a Final Report to the partner.
 - The auditor will notify Microsoft.

2. The partner does not satisfy all checklist items during the audit.
 - The auditor will present a brief synopsis of the audit at the end of the day, including observed strengths and Open Action Items, as outlined in the Gap Report, within two (2) business days.
 - The partner will acknowledge receipt of the Gap Report within two (2) business days.
 - The partner will move into the Gap Review phase and schedule their Gap Review Meeting within fifteen (15) calendar days.

The Gap Review

If the partner does not, to the auditor's satisfaction, provide evidence that meets the required scores across all audit categories during the audit, the partner will move into a Gap Review. A Gap Review is part of the audit and completes the process.

Within two (2) business days after the audit, the partner will receive a Gap Report, which details any Open Action Items and the outstanding required evidence. It is suggested to begin remediation on any open action items as soon as possible following the audit.

The partner then has two (2) business days to acknowledge receipt of the Gap Report and schedule a Gap Review Meeting. The Gap Review Meeting is conducted with the auditor over the partner's virtual conference platform of choice. The meeting must take place within fifteen (15) calendar days of when the Gap Report was sent, and it may last no longer than one (1) hour. During the Gap Review Meeting the partner must present evidence that addresses any and all Open Action Items.

The Gap Review Meeting can produce either of two (2) outcomes:

1. The partner resolves all Open Action Items.
 - The auditor confirms that the partner has provided the required evidence.
 - The auditor provides a Final Report to the partner.
 - The auditor notifies Microsoft about the outcome (subject to Auditor Terms and Conditions).
2. The partner does not resolve all Open Action Items.
 - The auditor presents a brief synopsis of the audit, including missed items.
 - The partner receives a Final Report that details the missed items.
 - The auditor notifies Microsoft about the outcome (subject to Auditor Terms and Conditions).

If the partner is still unable to provide satisfactory evidence to the auditor during their Gap Review Meeting, the partner will be deemed to have failed the audit. Partners that still want to earn this Azure specialization will need to begin the application process again.

Completion of the audit

The audit process concludes when ISSI issues the Final Report after the audit or after the Gap Review. Partners will be awarded a Pass or No Pass result upon completion of the audit process, including if they withdraw from the audit process. At the conclusion of the audit process, the auditor will issue a Final Report to the partner and notify Microsoft of the pass or no pass result.

A Pass result satisfies the audit requirement for this Azure specialization for two (2) years. A "No Pass" result is generated when a partner fails or withdraws from the audit. When a No Pass result is entered into Partner Center, you will see your status as "Audit Failed" in your dashboard. This status will reset within one week to "Not Enrolled," allowing you to reapply. Contact Partner Center Support if needed.

Audit preparation best practices and resources

Partners should ensure that the audit checklist has been thoroughly read in advance of the audit

- Partners should ensure that all partner stakeholders involved have a copy of the audit checklist and that a stakeholder who knows the entire process is available for the duration of the audit
- Partners should confirm that they have live access granted, and files and tools are readily available during the audit exhibits

Stakeholder SME attendance in the audit

Stakeholders who can best address the relevant section should be available for the audit. However, please make sure that a stakeholder who knows the entire process is also available for the duration of the audit.

Auditors often probe for more information

The auditor probes for more information to ensure that mature and repeatable processes are in place with the partner and that they are established, effective, and efficient. The auditor is looking to see how a document was created, where it is located, and what source materials were used to create the document. By probing for more information, the auditor evaluates and validates that the partner is operating at an advanced level. This can only be done by questioning during the audit. This approach is explained to the partner during the opening meeting.

Acceptable evidence: Excerpts, exhibit file formats and use of PowerPoints

PowerPoints are a common and accepted format for presenting a high-level overview of a partner's systems. However, please also be prepared to present live demonstrations from source files so that the auditor may confirm that the systems in place are mature and effective. Excerpts can be used to communicate the high-level overview but are not acceptable evidence, source documents must be presented.

Additional resources: Two optional audit preparation offers from the auditing firm *

To ensure objectivity, consulting auditors and auditors conducting the actual audits are different ISSI auditors.

1. Partners can participate in an optional, one (1)-hour, live Audit Process & Controls Overview session provided by ISSI. This session provides a high-level overview of key aspects of the Azure Specialization audit process. The session includes a discussion of the checklist requirements along with best practices to help partners prepare for the audit. Partners work directly with ISSI to schedule this remote session (via online web conference). For more information about this session, see [Azure Specialization - Audit Process and Controls Overview](#)
2. ISSI also provides optional extensive, in-depth consulting engagements to help partners prepare for their Azure specialization audit. Partners work directly with ISSI to schedule this remote session (via online web conference). For more information about this type of in-depth engagement, see Azure Specialization Consulting Offer <https://issi-inc.com/az-advspeconsulting/>

** Please note that there is a cost associated with the consulting and audit preparations services. See Payment Terms and Conditions.*

Audit checklists

The Networking Services in Microsoft Azure specialization audit checklist contains two (2) modules outlined below, **Module A:** Cloud Foundation and **Module B:** Networking Services in Microsoft Azure workload.

Module A, The Cloud Foundation module evaluates the use of a consistent methodology and process for Azure adoption that is aligned with customers' expected outcomes, spanning the entire cloud adoption lifecycle. Module B, The Networking Services in Microsoft Azure workload module validates that the partner has adopted robust processes to ensure customer success across all phases of deploying networking solutions, from the assessment phase to design, pilot, implementation, and post-implementation phases.

Review the following audit checklist tables for more details about each control phase and to learn how the partner will be evaluated for an audit. The same customers may be used for Module A & B. The estimated length of both modules together is eight (8) hours.

Module A: Cloud Foundation

- 1 Strategy
- 2 Plan
- 3 Environment readiness and Azure landing zone
- 4 Governance
- 5 Manage

Module B: Networking Services in Microsoft Azure workload

- 1 Assess
- 2 Design and proof of concept (POC) or pilot
- 3 Deployment
- 4 Review and release for operations

To pass the audit, the partner must complete all audit checklist items.

Module A: Cloud Foundation is required for multiple Azure specializations. To complete Module A, Cloud Foundation, the partner needs to pass all controls in Module A by providing the specified evidence. Partners who have passed Azure Expert MSP V1.9 (Full and Progress) and later have satisfied the requirements for Module A in all audit versions unless otherwise noted. When applying to subsequent Azure specializations, a previous audit Pass result will satisfy the requirements for Module A if the Pass result has been within two (2) years. It can only be applied to the same version of Module A. Alternatively, the partner may present evidence of a previous pass result from another Azure specialization audit conducted on V2.0 or later. Partners who have passed an Azure specialization audit before July 1, 2021 and for the Analytics on Microsoft Azure specialization audit before Oct 1, 2021, have likely not passed the Module A audit and will need to do so to qualify for the Module B workload audits.

Module B: Networking Services in Microsoft Azure. Each control has **one (1)** or more requirements and required evidence the partner must provide for the auditor. Both the requirements and the required evidence are defined in the following tables. For some controls, a reference customer or customer evidence is the documentation requested. Unless otherwise stated, the partner must show at least **three (3)** unique customers with deployments completed within the last **eighteen (18)** months. Please note some checklists call for four (4) customer examples.

The partner can use the same customer across audit checklist controls, or they can use a different customer. For audit evidence relating to customer engagements, the partner can use a customer case study and reference it multiple times. The same or different customers can be used for Modules A & B if they demonstrate requirements.

Module A: Cloud Foundation

1.0 Strategy and Economics

The partner must have a defined approach for helping their customer evaluate and define a cloud adoption strategy beyond an individual asset (app, VM, or data).

Requirement

1.1	<p>Cloud Adoption Business Strategy</p> <p>The partner must have a process that captures the data-driven business strategies being used to guide customer decisions. The process should include, at minimum, the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A strategy review that captures the customer’s business needs and the problems the customer is trying to solve • Personalized recommendations from the partner for the customers’ business strategies <p>Required evidence:</p> <p>A Report, Presentation, or Document that captures strategic inputs and decisions for two (2) unique customers, that demonstrates Cloud Adoption Strategy Evaluator assessment output, with projects completed in the past twelve (12) months. These projects must be aligned with the above-described process and highlight both customer Business and Financial outcomes.</p> <p>For an example, see the Strategy and plan template in the Cloud Adoption Framework for Azure, or the Cloud Adoption Strategy Evaluator.</p>	
2.0 Plan		
The partner must have a consistent approach to planning for cloud adoption that is based on the strategy outlined in the preceding section.		
Requirement		
2.1	<p>Cloud Adoption Plan</p> <p>The partner must have a process and approach for planning and tracking the completion of cloud adoption projects. For an example of a cloud adoption plan, see the Azure DevOps Demo Generator for the Cloud Adoption Framework.</p> <p>Required evidence:</p> <p>The partner must provide evidence of their capability with examples of two (2) unique customers, with projects that were completed in the past twelve (12) months. Acceptable evidence must include at least one (1) of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cloud Adoption Plan Generator output or • Azure DevOps backlog or • Any other tools for project planning and tracking 	

2.2	<p>Plan for Skilling</p> <p>When customers adopt the cloud, their existing technical staff will need a variety of new skills to aid in making technical decisions and to support the new cloud implementations. To ensure the long-term success of the customer, the partner must document a skilling plan to prepare the customer's technical staff.</p> <p>The Partner must document a list of key customer technical roles expected to require new skills such as, but not limited to, IT Admins, IT Governance, IT Operations, and IT Security.</p> <p>The documentation must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A description of the new skills the technical roles will need to achieve to successfully manage the new environment.• Resources the customer can leverage when training their technical employees such as Microsoft learning paths, technical certifications, or other comparable resources. <p>For guidance, review Microsoft docs Azure Cloud Adoption Framework How to build a skilling readiness plan.</p> <p>Required evidence:</p> <p>The partner must provide a skilling plan for at least two (2) unique customer engagements completed within the last 12 months. The two (2) skilling plans documentation can include a customer facing presentation, planning documents, post deployment documentation or similar plan documentation.</p>	
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3.0 Environment readiness and Azure landing zone

The partner must be able to demonstrate that the following design areas are addressed through their approach to landing zone implementation.

Requirement

3.1

Repeatable Deployment

The partner must demonstrate adherence to Azure landing zone design areas through a repeatable deployment. The deployment should configure, at minimum, the following identity, network, and resource organization attributes:

- Identity
 - Adoption of identity management solutions, such as Azure Active Directory or equivalent
- Networking architecture design (topology)
 - [Define an Azure network topology - Cloud Adoption Framework | Microsoft Docs](#)
 - Application of hybrid architectures that use Azure ExpressRoute, VPN Gateway, or equivalent services for connecting local datacenters to Azure
- Resource organization
 - Implementation of tagging and naming standards during the project

The partner must demonstrate which of the following deployment approaches they used when they deployed Azure landing zones:

1. Start small and expand: Azure landing zone does not deploy governance or operations configurations, which are addressed later in the implementation.
2. Full Azure landing zone conceptual architecture: Azure landing zones implement a standard approach to the configuration of governance and operations tools prior to implementation.
3. Alternative approach: If the partner follows a proprietary approach or a mixture of the **two (2)** approaches above, the partner must clearly articulate their approach to environment configuration.

Required evidence:

The partner must provide evidence of a repeatable deployment they used to create landing zones aligned to the Azure landing zone conceptual architecture or equivalent complete architecture deployed to **two (2)** unique customer environments using [Bicep](#), ARM (AZURE Resource Manager) templates, Terraform modules, or equivalent tools to automatically deploy the environment configuration.

If a customer deviates from specified architecture, the partner must demonstrate the customer requirements to justify the deviation.

The provided template can be pulled directly from the [implementation options](#), or it can be based on the partner's own IP (Intellectual Property). In either case, the script as evidence must demonstrate the configuration of the identity, network, and resource organization, as described earlier.

4.0 Governance

The partner must demonstrate their customer's role in governing cloud-based solutions and the Azure tools they use to facilitate any governance requirements their customer might have today or in the future.

Requirement

4.1

Governance Tooling

The partner must demonstrate the ability to deploy the required governance tools for **two (2)** unique customer projects.

Required evidence:

The partner must demonstrate the use of Azure Policy or equivalent tool to provide controls to govern the environment for **two (2)** unique customers with projects that were completed in the past **twelve (12)** months.

5.0 Manage

The partner must demonstrate that they have set up their customer for operational success after the deployment is completed. All partners have a role in setting up operations management, even if they do not provide long-term managed services.

Requirement

5.1

Operations Management Tooling

The partner must demonstrate the use of Azure products or equivalent to help their customer and/or managed service provider operate the environment after deployment.

Required evidence:

The partner must demonstrate the deployment of at least **one (1)** of the following Azure products or third-party equivalents: Azure Monitor, Azure Automation, or Azure Backup/Site Recovery, for **two (2)** unique customers with projects that were completed in the past **twelve (12)** months.

Module B: Networking Services in Microsoft Azure workload specialization

1.0 Third-party certifications	
The partner's resources are highly knowledgeable in enterprise networking technologies.	
Requirement	
1.1	<p>Certification</p> <p>The partner must be a member of either Azure Express Route Provider Partner Program, or they must have three (3) full-time employees who have at least one (1) of the following certifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cisco CCIE or CCNP• Juniper JNCIE• VMWare Certified Professional Network Virtualization• Citrix CC-SDWAN• F5Certified Technical Specialist Certification – 301 or higher• Arista Cloud Engineer (ACE) – Level 4 or higher• Aviatrix Certified Engineer (ACE)• CompTIA Network+ <p>Required evidence:</p> <p>Show that the partner is listed as a partner in the Azure ExpressRoute Partner Directory found here: Connectivity providers and locations: Azure ExpressRoute Microsoft Docs.</p> <p>Individual certifications must be verified through printed certificates or digital badges.</p>
2.0 Assess	
The partner must have a consistent approach to assessing customer requirements for the workload.	
Requirement	
2.1	<p>Cloud Networking Requirements Assessment</p> <p>The partner must demonstrate how they collect and assess customer cloud network connectivity and security requirements to ensure that adequate network planning and sizing are performed.</p> <p>The assessment must include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Customer's Azure workloads (IaaS, PaaS, SaaS applications)• Customer's cloud footprint in terms of regions where the customer's workloads are deployed and accessed• Customer's terrestrial footprint-locations, number of branches, HQ/DC sites and remote access needs• Cloud connectivity bandwidth and latency needs• Cloud connectivity high availability, backup, and disaster recovery needs• Cloud network segmentation and security requirements• Private and internet connectivity needs• Documentation of the customer's existing network architecture, gaps identification, and best practices recommendations <p>Required evidence:</p> <p>The partner must provide relevant assessment documents showing that the preceding items were reviewed for at least three (3) unique customer cloud connectivity projects completed within the last eighteen (18)</p>

	<p>months. The assessment <u>documentation</u> for each of the customers should address <u>all the bullet points</u> from above. Assessments may be done manually or through an industry-accepted assessment tool.</p> <p>Accepted Documentation</p> <p>Outputs from Assessment Tools, Filled-in Questionnaires, Assessment Checklists, and Third- party Tooling Reports are acceptable. Signed SOWs for all Projects with detail is acceptable. Templates and Discovery workshop outcomes output are also accepted if they address the above requirements.</p> <p>If all requirements above are addressed in the document, a single type of document could be sufficient by itself; a combination of multiple document types is also accepted as acceptable.</p>
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3.0 Design

The partner has robust methodologies for designing the workload.

Requirement

3.1	<p>Solution Design</p> <p>The partner must provide solution designs that show a consistent approach to addressing customer requirements that were captured from the assessment phase.</p> <p>Completed networking projects must meet at least one(1) of the following scenarios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Secure network infrastructure- Build, protect, and monitor customers network infrastructure ○ On-prem and branch connectivity– Connection for premises data center and branches to the Azure Network ○ Remote work at scale- Enable remote users to access private and public cloud resources ○ Secure global App delivery- Build, secure, and deliver applications to serve the global user base ○ 5G and edge computing - Enable edge computing platforms and apps <p>The solution design must show <u>all</u> of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adherence to the initially assessed customer requirements. ○ Alignment with Network Topology and Connectivity architectures as described in Azure Cloud Adoption Framework or other widely used reference architecture and connectivity models, for instance, hub and spoke transit, full mesh, partial mesh, high-speed, low latency private connectivity, SD-WAN. ○ Adherence to the high availability and reliability requirements for connectivity. ○ A high-level network implementation plan with an estimated time to finish the network implementation. ○ Approach to validation that the cloud connectivity requirements were met. ○ <u>Azure landing zone</u>: The environment that supports the reference deployments must address each of the following required design areas. If an item is not relevant, the partner must document the customer's decision to deviate from applying best practices. ○ Establish a hub and spoke architecture or retrofit the existing deployment to separate the hub components for optimal performance and security. ○ Show resource and perimeter security, such as bastion hosts, network security groups, Azure Firewall or third-party virtual network security appliances, routing appliances. ○ Show the use of relevant security products, such as Azure security services or other solutions, to secure access to the data. ○ Show the use of governance tooling to support cost optimization across the environment beyond the initial cost estimation. For instance, if Azure Cost Management is in use, then budgets & alerts
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	<p>should be setup at different scopes to monitor the cost proactively.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Show that a network monitoring solution such as Azure Monitor Network Insights to provide proactive network state and status for the Azure environment is integrated into the customer's existing monitoring tooling. ○ Show the use of network topology visualization tooling. <p>Required evidence: The partner should provide relevant Solution Design documents that address the preceding Design point requirements for at least three (3) unique customers' network connectivity projects completed within the past eighteen (18) months.</p> <p>Acceptable documentation Networking Services Design Documents, functional specifications, the architectural diagram, an automated tooling report, or physical and logical diagrams are accepted. Also accepted are outputs from Assessment Tools, filled-in Questionnaires, Network Design Assessment Checklists, and Third- party Tooling Reports, signed SOWs, Templates, and Discovery workshop outcomes documentation. A single type of document could be sufficient by itself; a combination of multiple document types is also accepted.</p>
3.2	<p>Azure Well-Architected Review The partner must demonstrate usage of the Azure Well-Architected Review for Networking Services workloads. The Azure Well-Architected Review is designed to help partners evaluate your customers' workloads against the latest set of industry best practices. It provides actionable guidance to design and improve your customers' workloads.</p> <p>The Review can be used to evaluate each workload against the pillars of the Azure Well-Architected Framework that matter to that workload.</p> <p>Required evidence: Reviews may be conducted before, during, or after deployment. The partner must provide exported results from the completed Microsoft Well Architected Review using the assessments in the Well Architected Reviews for at least one (1) Networking workload completed within the last twelve (12) months, indicating the customer's name.</p>
4.0 Deployment	
The partner has robust methodologies for deploying the workload.	
Requirement	

4.1

Cloud Networking Scenarios

The partner must provide evidence of their ability to implement cloud connectivity for **one (1)** of the following scenarios:

1. Secure network infrastructure
2. On-prem and branch connectivity
3. Remote work at scale
4. Secure global app delivery
5. 5G and edge computing

Required evidence:

The partner must provide documentation for **one (1)** customer for whom **one (1)** of the above cloud networking scenarios was implemented in a production environment within the last **eighteen (18)** months.

To cover the entire sequence of the project, including design and production deployment, the **documentation** must include at least **two (2)** of the following:

- Signed statements of work (SOWs) for all projects
- Solution design documents for all projects
- A project plan and migration and deployment sequence
- Architecture diagrams
- High-level designs (HLDs) and low-level designs (LLDs)
- As-built documentation

4.2

Azure Networking Services

The partner must provide evidence of their ability to implement at least **five (5)** native Azure Networking services from the following list:

- Virtual Network and VNet Peering
- ExpressRoute
- VPN
- Virtual WAN
- CDN
- Front Door
- Load Balancer
- Private Link
- Traffic Manager
- Application Gateway
- Azure Firewall

Required evidence:

The partner must provide documentation of **one (1)** or more customer connectivity projects where the above Azure networking services were implemented within the last **eighteen (18)** months. The documentation must include at least **two (2)** of the following:

- Signed statements of work (SOWs) for all projects
- Solution design documents for all projects
- A project plan and migration and deployment sequence
- Architecture diagrams
- High-level designs (HLDs) and low-level designs (LLDs)
- As-built documentation

5.0 Review and Release for Operations

The partner has robust methodologies for transitioning the workload.

Requirement	
5.1	<p>Service Validation and Testing</p> <p>The partner must validate the deployment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A documented process and approach to testing and evaluating the performance of network services deployment • Assurance that the customer’s requirements for the deployed network performance and security are met • Assurance that the deployment adheres to Azure best practices • Remediation for revealed issues during testing <p>Required evidence: Documentation of testing, validation, and performance evaluations that address the preceding points for one (1) customer with a project completed in the last eighteen (18) months. The documentation must indicate that the implemented solution meets customer expectations, and it must include a sign-off from the customer.</p>
5.2	<p>Post-deployment Documentation</p> <p>The partner must provide post-deployment operational <u>documentation</u> to show that customers are successfully using the new service on Azure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate how the partner’s documents, decisions, architectural designs, and procedures were implemented, highlighting any differences from the initial design decisions • Demonstrate standard operating procedures for the business-as-usual operations team that describe “how-to” scenarios. <p>Required evidence: Documentation showing the preceding points for one (1) customer with a completed network implementation project from the last eighteen (18) months.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the partner is managing the service on behalf of the customer, they must present their operation runbooks as alternative evidence to the above.

[Azure Specializations Partner FAQ](#)

Questions regarding the Azure Partner program specializations, the current checklists and pre-qualifications for partners can usually be answered by visiting [Microsoft Azure Partner Specializations](#)

Questions on the audit checklists and program can be sent to the Azure Partner Specializations help alias <<mailto:AzureAS@microsoft.com>>

If you have questions that have not been answered, please go to [Partner Center support](#) to create a ticket with our Frontline team.