

National Information Assurance Partnership Common Criteria Evaluation and Validation Scheme



Check-In/Check-Out Guidance

August 2018

Amendment record

Date	Description
June 2014	Initial release
February 2016	Updates
August 2017	Updates to clarify the check-in process and pre-evaluation stages
August 2018	Updates to check-in process, allowing e-check-in as default.

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1. Introduction

The primary goal of the Check-In/Check-Out (CICO) is for NIAP/CCEVS, henceforth called 'NIAP', to ensure the technical quality and consistency of the evaluation submission, to confirm the Common Criteria Testing Lab (CCTL) correctly applied all NIAP policies, and to verify the CCTL accomplished all required tasks (including analysis, testing, auditing, etc.).

The CICO process is applicable to all evaluations being conducted within NIAP. As part of this process, the CCTL must ensure the product is ready for evaluation when it is submitted to NIAP.

2. General Guidelines for all CICOs

CICOs are intended to promote valuable interaction between the CCTL (evaluator) and NIAP (validator) to ensure the product submitted has been properly prepared, reviewed and tested for a successful evaluation. Interaction between the evaluator and validator at the time of submission ensures the evaluation can proceed quickly and efficiently to completion.

CICOs shall be conducted in the spirit of mutual cooperation and trust, with evaluation and validation personnel treating each other with respect and courtesy at all times.

The CICO process consists of three distinct actions: Check-In, Evaluation and Check-Out.

The **Check-in** process consists of a formal notification to NIAP from the CCTL regarding the initiation of a product evaluation. NIAP reviews the deliverables, analyzes PP conformance claims, and conducts an optional **Check-in Meeting**. In order to make the most productive use of time during the check-in meeting, it is critical the information provided is complete and accurate. From receipt of the Check-in package, the Check-in approval process is expected to take no more than three (3) weeks; provided there are no issues with the check-in package delivered by the CCTL.

The actual **Evaluation** of the product provides the option for one or more **Sync Sessions** held between the validators and evaluators during the course of the evaluation to resolve any questions or issues that may arise. Evaluation duration must comply with [NIAP Policy #18](#) and it is anticipated as understanding of the PPs increase, evaluations will complete more efficiently.

At the end of the evaluation, a project **Check-Out** is conducted by NIAP to review the deliverables, prepare a final decision, and complete the Validation Report and the Product Compliant List (PCL) entry. From the time the CCTL notifies NIAP of evaluation completion and delivers a complete check-out package, the check-out should take no longer than three weeks, provided there are no issues with the check-out package delivered by the CCTL.

3. Check-In

- a. The CCTL notifies NIAP regarding the initiation of an evaluation claiming exact compliance to a NIAP approved PP. CCTL changes status of the evaluation from “In Draft” to “Proposed” status.
 - i. This notification should not be submitted to NIAP prior to submission of a complete check-in package.
 - ii. If no check-in package has been received, NIAP will move the project back to “In Draft” status.
- b. A “Complete Check-in Package” is defined as containing the following:
 - i. Form [F8002a](#);
 - ii. Security Target;
 - iii. Entropy Assessment Report (EAR);
 1. The EAR as written by the vendor/CCTL should be clear, per the [entropy guidance](#) within the PP and published on the NIAP website.
- c. Once the check-in package is received and NIAP has been notified, NIAP performs the check-in process to include a review of the information provided to ensure correctness, completeness, and readiness for validation team staffing.
 - i. NIAP checks the package to ensure all deliverables are present and complete then assigns a validation team for initial package review.
 - ii. The assigned validators review the package for completeness, including EAR Review:
 1. The validators review the EAR for correctness and completeness and will return feedback to the CCTL within 5 business days of EAR receipt.
 2. Upon receipt of a complete (validator approved) EAR, per NIAP’s entropy guidance, NIAP delivers it to the entropy Subject Matter Expert (SME) for final review and approval.
 3. The entropy SME then reviews the EAR per the entropy review process and provides feedback whether the evaluation may proceed to the check-in meeting or whether additional/corrected entropy information is needed. It is expected that the entropy SME will provide feedback to NIAP within five (5) business days of EAR receipt. NIAP will return feedback to the validation team and CCTL within one (1) business day.
 - If multiple iterations of the EAR are required (such as changes required by entropy SME prior to authorization to proceed),

the entropy SME will provide feedback on each additional iteration within five (5) business days.

- d. Following final approval of check-in package by the validation team, the validation will be checked-in.
 - i. **Electronic Check-in** via email will occur within three (3) business days.
 1. NIAP sends check-in email detailing evaluation to CCTL/Vendor/Validation Team.
 2. NIAP changes project status to “In Progress”.
 3. If approved on the F8002a form (vendor concurrence), NIAP will include the product on the “In Evaluation” List.
 - ii. A **formal check-in meeting** with representatives from NIAP, the CCTL, and the vendor will occur within ten (10) business days, if requested by vendor, CCTL, or Validation Team.
 1. During the check-in meeting, the evaluator will take the meeting minutes, submitting the final version to the validator within three (3) business days of the meeting. The validator will upload the minutes to the project file area.
 2. If the formal check-in meeting does not occur within ten (10) business days, NIAP will electronically check-in the project.

4. Evaluation

- a. One or more **Sync Sessions** may be held (at NIAP’s discretion) with representatives from NIAP and the CCTL during the course of the evaluation. The session(s) will be held to resolve questions or issues.
 - i. The first evaluation(s) by a CCTL against a PP requires sync sessions.
 - ii. The sync session(s) will be tentatively scheduled during the check-in meeting.
 - iii. Sync session(s) may be virtual or face to face and will be a round table discussion to answer evaluator questions and allow the validator to provide feedback as needed.
 - iv. Written minutes and actions will be recorded by the evaluator as output from the sync session(s) and delivered to the validators as part of the project records within three (3) business days.
 - v. Sync session(s) may be waived at NIAP’s discretion.

5. Check-Out

- a. A NIAP validator will perform **project check-out**. After reviewing all information, the validator completes the Validation Report (VR). The VR and Product Compliant List (PCL) entry are concurrently submitted to the vendor and CCTL for accuracy and release approval. The validator submits the final package to NIAP within ten (10) business days of receipt.
- b. Upon completion of the evaluation, the CCTL or Validator will upload a “Final Complete Checkout Package” to the project file area. The Final Package must include:
 - i. Form [F8002b](#);
 - ii. The final ST;
 - iii. Evaluation Technical Report (ETR)
 - The ETR should be complete, including proprietary and/or sensitive information. The format and content requirements for the ETR are provided on the NIAP website;
 - iv. Publicly releasable Assurance Activities Report;
 - v. Detailed Test Report;
 - vi. Administrator Guide;
 - vii. Validation Report (VR);
 - The completion date on the final approved VR is used as the Product Certified Date posted to the PCL & Common Criteria Portal
 - viii. Product Compliant List (PCL) entry;
 - ix. Form [F8003](#);
 - x. Form [F8004](#); and
 - xi. Any public guidance documents pertaining to the product.
- c. NIAP reviews the final package and provides a response to the CCTL. The response will be “yes” or “no” for successful completion of the evaluation. If the response is “no”, the evaluation is not considered successfully completed (i.e., missing or incomplete information) and the response will indicate the reason for an unsuccessful completion and whether the evaluation will be terminated. If the evaluation is not terminated, the response will include what must be done for the evaluation to complete. Once an evaluation has been deemed successful, NIAP will publish the evaluation to the PCL within three (3) business days.

6. Approval Package

- a. Once the package is approved, NIAP:
 - i. Prepares a Common Criteria Certificate;
 - ii. Issues a Product Compliant List entry;
 - iii. Posts the appropriate data to the NIAP website; and
 - iv. Notifies Common Criteria Recognition Arrangement members for mutual recognition.

7. Timeline

- a. Please reference [NIAP Policy #18](#), 'Time Limits on NIAP Evaluations' for additional details.
- b. Please reference [NIAP Policy #25](#), 'Terminated Evaluations: Limitations and Restrictions' for additional details

8. Acronyms and Abbreviations Used in this Document

NIAP	National Information Assurance Partnership
PP	Protection Profile
CCTL	Common Criteria Testing Lab
CICO	Check-In/Check-Out
ST	Security Target
EAR	Entropy Assessment Report
VID	Validation Identification Designator
EP	Extended Package
ETR	Evaluation Technical Report
VR	Validation Report
PCL	Product Compliant List
SME	Subject Matter Expert
CCEVS	Common Criteria Evaluation and Validation Scheme