



**Australian Government**

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**Security Construction and  
Equipment Committee**

# **Security Construction and Equipment Committee**

## **Product Evaluation Program**

### **Policy and Process**

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# 1. Introduction

The Security Construction and Equipment Committee (SCEC) is a standing interdepartmental committee responsible for the evaluation of security equipment for use by Australian Government departments and agencies. The SCEC reports directly to the Protective Security Policy Committee (PSPC) which was established by the Australian Government to develop and publish guidelines for the protection of Australian Government resources. The SCEC meets on a quarterly basis to consider, among other items, the outcomes of product evaluations conducted during the period.

The SCEC Product Evaluation Program has been restructured to prioritise the evaluation of high security products and some specific administrative security products. The SCEC, in conjunction with other government stakeholders, determines the current priorities for product evaluation to ensure Australian Government requirements are met.

The principle output of the SCEC Product Evaluation Program has been the Security Equipment Catalogue (SEC). As part of the program restructure, the SEC will be phased out and replaced with the Security Equipment Evaluated Product List (SEEPL). Similar to the SEC, the SEEPL will be a register of security products that have been evaluated as meeting relevant criteria. The PSPF encourages Australian Government agencies to use the SEEPL as a guide to security items that have been evaluated by the SCEC as meeting the appropriate security requirements. The SEEPL is designed to provide Australian Government security managers and staff with a listing of evaluated security equipment for use in protecting their people, information and assets.

**NOTE:** Products submitted to the SCEC for evaluation will be evaluated as being fit for use by the Australian Government for a security purpose only. The SCEC does not evaluate other aspects of a product such as safety, durability or efficiency.

SCEC evaluation should in no way be taken as a general endorsement of the product outside of its security function.

Manufacturers and suppliers seeking endorsement of a product are responsible for ensuring that the product meets all relevant Australian standards prior to submitting an application for acceptance into the SCEC Product Evaluation Program.

## 2. Fees and Charges

All testing and evaluation of products submitted to the SCEC is undertaken on a cost recovery basis, hence fees and charges will apply for testing. These costs will be invoiced to the applicant regardless of the application's outcome. Applicants for product evaluation will be required to sign an agreement accepting responsibility to cover costs prior to the commencement of any assessment or evaluation.

### 3. Pre-Acceptance Requirements

An application for the evaluation of an item, product, system, or sub-system (referred to hereafter as product), *may* be required to meet pre-acceptance criteria that are specific to a particular product category or technology.

If specified, these criteria **must** be fulfilled prior to the SCEC considering an application for the product to be evaluated.

Suppliers and manufacturers are to use the pre-acceptance criteria to assist them in determining whether their product will meet the identified minimum government requirements for a particular product category prior to submitting an application.

If the pre-acceptance criteria are not met then the application may be rejected at the discretion of the Chair of SCEC.

## 4. Products Submitted for Evaluation

The SCEC will determine at its sole and absolute discretion whether a product is to be evaluated based on the current priorities for equipment to meet Australian Government requirements. For further information on product categories identified by the SCEC as current priority, please refer to the SCEC website at [www.scec.gov.au](http://www.scec.gov.au).

Acceptance to the Product Evaluation Program will generally require the product to be delivered to a test facility as nominated by SCEC, at the applicant's expense. Where necessary, the applicant will be required to install and commission the product to ensure it is set up and functioning correctly prior to any evaluation commencing.

Applicants should be aware that the evaluation of a product may involve a range of rigorous examination processes resulting in damage to or destruction of the submitted product. If warranted, on completion of testing against a set criterion, the SCEC reserves the right to continue testing a product to the point of failure.

If a product is destroyed prior to the completion of the evaluation process, the applicant may be required to provide a new sample in order to complete the evaluation of the product.

A product submitted to the Product Evaluation Program may, or may not be returned. The SCEC reserves the right to retain or dispose of products submitted as it sees fit. In some instances the applicant may be required to recover products submitted for testing from the nominated test facility, or reimburse any costs incurred in the product's removal. If the product is not recovered within a notified period then SCEC reserves the right to dispose of or remove the product at the applicant's expense.

## 5. Test Standards

While some products, such as security containers, may be required to be constructed to specific technical specifications, the majority of products submitted to the SCEC Product Evaluation Program are evaluated against SCEC criteria. This may also include relevant Australian and/or International Standards.

Based on a vulnerability assessment, the product's evaluation may be supplemented by additional measures to determine its suitability for use in government high security environments.

**Note:** For reasons of national security, as they relate to Government security conditions, details of these standards, criteria and additional measures will not be made available.

It is expected that products submitted to the Product Evaluation Program will generally have been tested against relevant national or international standard(s) prior to submission. Test report(s) should be provided to the SCEC as part of the application process (see Section 12). If reports are not provided, the requirements for the products' evaluation and associated costs may be substantially increased, or the SCEC may decide to remove the product from the Product Evaluation Program.

## 6. Product Resubmit policy

If a product fails to meet the SCEC's requirements during the evaluation process, the SCEC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to work with the applicant to achieve an acceptable outcome and continue with the evaluation, or to terminate the process.

If terminated, the SCEC may offer to place the product back into the Product Evaluation Program at a later point subject to the product meeting the Australian Governments' priority categories at the time. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but may be influenced by things such as the degree of modification required for the product to meet standards and the turnaround time for a replacement product to be provided for testing. Any additional evaluation will be on a cost recovery basis. The applicant will be notified of the additional cost and an agreed turnaround time for delivery of the modified product. Costs incurred through additional evaluations will be included on the final invoice in accordance with the Fees and Charges section of this document (Section 2).



## 7. SEEPL Entry Details

Products that have been evaluated and found suitable will be entered into the SEEPL.

The SEEPL entry details for an evaluated product will be based on the information provided in the application. The applicant is responsible for notifying the SCEC of any changes in the SEEPL entry details.

The SCEC will not alter SEEPL entry details unless written advice is received from the applicant confirming such changes.

Where an applicant has transferred the relevant rights in the evaluated product to another person or organisation, the Chair of SCEC may at their discretion require satisfactory evidence of such a transfer prior to changing the SEEPL entry. This evidence may be for example, a statutory declaration attesting to the transfer or a statement from an appropriate authority confirming the transfer.

Multiple entries for identical products will not be made in the SEEPL unless that product has been evaluated for different purposes (e.g. glazing that is both resistant to a forcible attack and ballistic resistant).

## 8. Product Evaluation Period

Products that have been evaluated and approved by the SCEC for entry into the SEEPL will have a defined approval period. The period a product's evaluation is valid for is dependent on its type. This will generally be:

- Two years for software (generally programming, operating systems and data held in volatile memory and easily/readily upgraded);
- Three years for firmware (generally embedded control programming, operating commands and data held in non volatile memory and less likely to be updated); and
- Five years for hardware of products and/or services (generally the mechanics and physical attributes of the product).

Applicants are responsible for ensuring products listed in the SEEPL are re-evaluated prior to the expiry of their approval. The re-evaluation process will initially consist of a review by the SCEC to identify changes in the product since its previous evaluation. The SCEC reserves the right at its sole discretion to request the product undergo partial or full evaluation or grant a new evaluation period based on the outcomes of the review. Re-evaluations will be conducted on a cost recovery basis.

Products that have a combination of software, firmware and/or mechanical components will be subjected to an interim review at the shortest period with a full review undertaken at the final expiry date. For example, an electronic locking device may be approved by the SCEC with an expiry period of two years for the embedded firmware and five years for the mechanical components.

Where a product's evaluation period has expired and the applicant has not initiated the review process, the SCEC at its sole discretion, reserves the right to remove the product from the SEEPL.

## 9. Product Evaluation Program Process

Typically the process for evaluation of a product is as follows: (*Refer to Annex 1 - Product Evaluation Program Flowchart*)

1. The applicant must ensure their product is currently listed as a priority for the Australian Government prior to making an application. Information regarding the current priorities is listed on the SCEC website. Applications that fall outside these priorities will not progress.
2. If a product is listed as a current priority by the Australian Government, the applicant needs to make initial contact by mail, email or facsimile with the Chair of SCEC. Should the product be deemed suitable for evaluation, a list of requirements will be forwarded to the applicant. This may include pre-acceptance criteria that are specific to a particular product category or technology. If specified, these criteria must be met prior to being accepted on the SCEC Product Evaluation Program.
3. The applicant must submit a completed *Product Evaluation Program Application Form* (available on the SCEC website [www.scec.gov.au](http://www.scec.gov.au)) to the Chair of SCEC and include all relevant reference material.
4. **NOTE: Consideration of an application will not commence until such time as all the required information is received and all pre-acceptance criteria have been met.**
5. The SCEC will review the application, assess it against the government's current requirements, and decide if the product will be accepted on the Product Evaluation Program. Applicants will be advised in writing of the SCEC's decision to accept or decline an application.
6. Products accepted to the Product Evaluation Program will be assigned to the SCEC's nominated test facility to conduct the required testing on their behalf.
7. A testing officer will make contact with the applicant to discuss the testing process. A cost estimate for the evaluation of the product will be supplied to the applicant for consideration and acceptance. The cost estimate is valid for 30 days. If written acceptance (letter or fax) is not received within 30 days the product *may* be removed from the program.
8. On receiving written and signed acceptance of the cost estimate, the testing officer will contact the applicant to arrange any additional information and sample(s) of the product to be provided. The evaluation of the product will then commence, within the bounds of operational and resource availability.
9. The applicant, at their expense, may be required to install setup and commission the product to ensure it is functioning correctly prior to any testing being undertaken.
10. If during the evaluation process the product is found not to satisfy a test criterion, the SCEC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to work with the applicant to achieve an acceptable outcome and continue with the evaluation or to terminate the evaluation process (also refer to Section 6). A cost estimate for the re-evaluation of the product, as well as an agreed timeframe for providing the product, will be supplied to the applicant for consideration and acceptance.

11. Once the evaluation of the product is complete, the applicant will be invoiced for testing undertaken.
12. At the next scheduled SCEC meeting, the testing officer will present the findings and recommendations to the committee. The SCEC will then consider and determine the product's suitability for security use by the Australian Government.
13. On receipt of payment in full, the applicant will be sent written advice on the SCEC's decision regarding their products suitability for Australian Government security use.
14. Applicants of products that have been successfully evaluated by the SCEC will be sent a certificate outlining the products details, appropriate security category listing, the Security Level (SL) obtained, conditions of approval and an expiry date of the products' evaluation.
15. The final step in the process will be to list approved products in the SEEPL at the next update, using photographs supplied by the applicant.

## 10. Conditions of Approval

1. A product's evaluation may include conditions of approval and a specified review/resubmit period, as detailed in Section 8.
2. Products incorporating encrypted data capability and used to protect security-classified Australian Government material must meet the intent and direction of the Australian Government's ICT Security Manual (ISM). (Further information is available at [www.dsd.gov.au](http://www.dsd.gov.au) ).
3. If an evaluated product is a modified version of a commercially available product then a unique identifier **must** be used to delineate this product from the commercial variant.
4. The SCEC reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to suspend or withdraw a SEEPL entry and any evaluation given to a product. The SCEC also reserves the right to review and/or request a re-test of an evaluated product on a cost-recovery basis. If the applicant decides not to proceed with a re-test, the products' approval and SEEPL entry will be withdrawn.
5. Conditions of approval may include, but are not limited to, requirements to install the product in accordance with specific guidelines, to use the product in specific situations, or to use them in conjunction with other products.

## 11. Changes to Products

1. The SCEC approval of a product is only for the product identical to that supplied to SCEC for evaluation. To retain SCEC approval, no changes to the product are permitted without review.
2. Where suppliers of SCEC approved products make any changes to the design or construction, or alter the approved product in any way, the supplier must contact the Chair of SCEC prior to the changes to arrange for the product to be reviewed and possibly re-evaluated. Failure to do so may result in the product's approval being suspended, and/or withdrawal of the product's SEEPL entry.
3. A re-evaluation of a SCEC approved product will be required following a major modification, or where the SCEC becomes aware of or suspects that the product is no longer fit-for-purpose. A major modification is defined as those items that substantially change the product or its characteristics, and include modifications and alterations to (where applicable):
  - The cryptographic or encryption capability in hardware, software or both;
  - Database security;
  - Audit and history functions;
  - User authorisation or management functions;
  - Network and communication systems;
  - Operating systems and other software,
  - Proprietary hardware, including associated electronic design(s);
  - The physical, mechanical, or other engineering aspects of the item;
  - Product security integrity or performance; and/or
  - The product has been identified as likely to cause injury or damage to the Australian Government's assets.
4. The Chair of SCEC is to be advised, as soon as possible, if any of the following occurs:
  - Patent on the product expires (if applicable);
  - The product ceases production or is no longer available;
  - There are changes to countries of manufacture or assembly; and
  - The product changes name or model number.
5. Suppliers must also contact the Chair of SCEC in writing to seek prior approval for minor updates or variations to SCEC approved products. When advised of a proposed update, SCEC will review, on a case-by-case basis, the changes to the product since its previous evaluation and determine what is required. Potential review outcomes include:
  - If the requirement for a product re-evaluation is identified, the supplier will be required to submit a new application to the Product Evaluation Program.
  - If SCEC decided that is a minor update, then the update/variation of the product may be recommended to SCEC for approval, pending the supply of any additional information required.

6. If at any point in the above processes, or by other means, it is determined that the original approved product has been replaced or superseded by another product, (i.e. the product has been replaced, not updated), the supplier will be required to submit a new application to the Product Evaluation Program.
7. Where a requirement for the re-evaluation of a product is identified, the supplier will be required to submit a new application to the Product Evaluation Program. The new application will be considered in accordance with the Australian Governments' priority categories at that time, and the existing commitments of the testing program. The re-evaluation process will be carried out on a cost recovery basis. No costs will be incurred if the applicant decides not to commence with re-evaluation, and hence withdraws their product from the SEEPL.
8. Where changes to an evaluated product are purely cosmetic and do not fall under the definition of a major modification, the supplier is required to keep a record of the changes. The record must be provided to the SCEC upon written request.

## 12. Information Required at Application

The SCEC evaluates production samples of products. The evaluation process does not normally consider prototypes or products not currently being sold into Australia. This does not include products such as containers for the protection of classified material where approval is required prior to manufacture.

The application must include the following documentation and information on the product where available:

1. Product information including, model, version and a short description.
2. List of the product's suppliers and agents, and their contact details.
3. List of the product's service and spare parts providers, and their contact details. Where applicable applicants should include procedures for support of the product in remote areas.
4. Product servicing requirements and support within Australia.
5. Typical applications and users of the product.
6. Country or countries where the product is manufactured and assembled.
7. Product documentation:
  - Brochures, user guides, installation and maintenance manuals.
  - Technical drawings, exploded views, etc.
  - other relevant technical, engineering and user documentation, block diagrams, circuit diagrams, schematics and printed circuit board overlays; component lists; program overviews, footing and fixing design details, etc.
  - Intellectual property documentation.
  - Copies of patents. Products should have had any patent applications evaluated prior to applying to the SCEC for acceptance on the Product Evaluation Program.
  - Copies of registered designs.
8. Documentation of any product certifications:
  - Independent test certificates.
  - Written confirmation where the product meets an existing standard, for instance Australian Standard (preferred), and International Organisation for Standardisation / British Standards / European Norm (ISO/BS/EN), or North American Underwriters Laboratories (UL) standards.
  - Independent test reports, preferably from National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) Accredited Laboratories, certified to undertake the necessary test for the product as submitted.
  - Fire test certificates.
  - Certification by supplier/manufacturer that the product meets all applicable Australian safety standards, electrical and otherwise.
9. Details or advice of any known Occupational Health and Safety risks in testing the product, as well as typical risk mitigations



10. Photographs of the product in jpg format.
11. Where appropriate, the SCEC's nominated testing organisation may require a demonstration sample of the product, any special usage or installation instructions, or photographs/videos of the product in use as part of the application.

## 13. Contact Details

All correspondence should be forwarded to the Chair of the Security Construction and Equipment Committee:

**Mail:** Chair Security Construction & Equipment Committee  
PO Box 1508  
Canberra ACT 2601

**Email:** [scec@scec.gov.au](mailto:scec@scec.gov.au)

**Fax:** (02) 6234 1218



# Annex 1. Product Evaluation Program Flowchart



