ATARC

Advanced Technology Academic Research Center
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CONTINUAL ATO WORKING GROUP
CHARTER

Mission Statement

The mission of the Continual ATO (cATO) Working Group is to improve and reimagine the ATO process through sharing best practices amongst government, industry, and academia.

Context

In a rapidly changing technical environment, cybersecurity is more important than ever. External security requirements, tech refresh and tech insertions, and bad actors and threats are increasing every day, putting pressure on the traditional ATO processes and the tempo in which they are done. The RMF/ATO process simply takes too long. Prudent agility is critical to implementing security measures and IT modernization, but the timeline for modernization and security upgrades continues to increase, and additional labor is not the answer. The Continual ATO process is critical in compressing timelines and decreasing the effort brought on by thwarting cybersecurity threats, allowing for more frequent application and security updates and upgrades benefitting overall program modernization and security.

Scope

The scope of the cATO working group will include the following:
- Processes of initiating an ATO and of an existing ATO
- Sharing best practices of ATOs such as:
  - Defining elements of a successful ATO
  - Addressing timelines and cost
  - Increasing data in the ATO decision making processes
- Discovery of 'pain points' and blockers
  - Addressing ways to eliminate waste and redundancy
- Empowering Product Teams (Cyber, Dev, Business) to validate their ATO requirements.

Objective

The objective of the cATO Working Group is to improve the Continual ATO process by:
- Exchanging best practices to meet mission goals
- Identifying gaps in the process
- Envisioning reasonable and budget conscious solutions
- Streamlining and speeding up cycle time
- Identifying potential technology-based improvements that can help the process

The group will seek to insight to the following questions:
- How is the government organizing their ATO, and what changes can be implemented to cut time and effort?
- How can we make this process less burdensome from both a technology and process standpoint?
- What challenges are standing in the way of a compressed timeline and decreased labor to authorize and reauthorize programs, systems, and applications?
- What are the highest priority items that will affect an improved RMF/ATO process?

Deliverables

The cATO Working Group will create and deliver products that educate the community on the issues and provide practical solutions to advance and implement improved ATOs. Deliverable formats include but are not limited to white papers, webinars, discussion panels, guest speakers and reference documents.

Working Group Membership

Working Group Chairs
> *Gordon Deng, USSF Gravity Platform, Government Co-Chair*
> *Dave Raley, CX Digital Program Manager, Government Co-Chair*

Working Group Chairs will:
- Attend and contribute to each Working Group meeting
- Prepare the meeting agenda, solicit topics for discussion, assign members to address discussion topics, and distribute meeting materials
- Share information of relevance; provide an update/introduction at the beginning of each meeting to encourage member engagement
- Define and oversee Working Group initiatives and activities
- Assist in all stages of the deliverable production process
- Advocate for government, academic, and industry involvement in the working group
- Referee requests and suggestions for working group membership regarding agenda, deliverables, and representation

Working Group Members
Group members are strictly voluntary, and we strive for a broad representation across government, private sector, and academia.

Working Group Members will:
- Participate in meetings, including exchanging technical information, experiences, and best practices to develop a shared understanding of the topic(s) discussed
- Gather information and work on group deliverables outside of meetings as needed
- Provide feedback on draft deliverables as requested
- Co-lead or participate in Sub-Working Groups (breakout teams/project teams) as needed
- Provide input on meeting agendas as requested

ATARC Support

Elizabeth Wyckoff, Associate Director, Working Groups
Amy Karpowicz, Working Groups Associate
Taylor Gibbs, Working Groups Associate
Tim Harvey, Director of Government Engagement

ATARC support will:
- Serve as program management for the Working Group
- Coordinate and drive group projects and deliverables forward
- Schedule Working Group meetings
- Develop Working Group meeting agendas along with the chairs
- Facilitate Working Group meetings along with the chairs
- Assist in distributing relevant documents and materials to Working Group members
- Record meeting minutes, post-meeting decisions, and action items, and distribute them to Working Group members after each meeting
- Assist in preparing final proposals/recommendations
- Provide marketing services for the Working Group (promoting completed deliverables, etc.)
- Develop strategies to improve Working Group engagement, including applicable cross-overs with other Working Groups and relevant events
- Coordinate Working Group Labs as applicable

Rules of Engagement

The Working Group rules of engagement are described as below:
- Meet bi-weekly from 2025 to 2026, or until amended by ATARC Support
- Join Working Group meetings prepared and with requested action items completed
- Provide respectful and constructive feedback to yield the best decisions for the Working Group's objectives
- Endeavour to balance time among members so that all may contribute. All members of the Working Group have a voice and will be listened to.
- Final decisions are made by the Working Group Co-Chairs and ATARC Support
- If a Working Group member misses a meeting, decisions will be made in their absence. The Working Group will consider on a case-by-case basis at the request of the absentee if a decision made in the absence of a member shall be revisited.

The Working Group will:
- Meet every other Thursday from 12:00 - 1:00 PM EST.
- Form Sub-Working Groups (breakout teams/project teams) as needed
- Follow the group's ground rules ad developed in the charter
- Meet critical deadlines in the creation of deliverables by mutual and balanced effort
- Keep in confidence draft versions of deliverable, off-the-record conversations, and non-public Working Group or ATARC plans to the extent disclosure is not required by law, regulation, or valid court order

File Sharing and Collaboration Tools

Access to the ATARC Box Account is managed by ATARC Support.

Disclaimer: Products and communications by ATARC's Continual ATO Working Group do not necessarily represent the plans or preferences of any company or government agency.