

How to Ace the Amazon Web Services MSP Partner Validation

“In addition to empowering multi-cloud customers with a consolidated view into their cloud spend in near-real time, customers are also able to benefit from actionable insight into how they can optimize their costs.”

Eric Jerasa
Manager of Business Operations
SMX

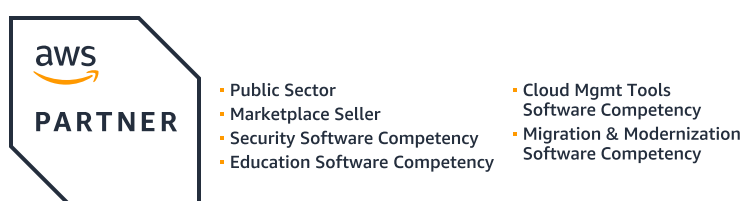


Figure 1: We are an AWS partner.

The next generation of cloud MSPs

The cloud market is rapidly evolving, and managed service providers (MSPs) must quickly move beyond reselling to provide the next generation of cloud managed services. Customers no longer want individual tools for each cloud provider. Instead, they expect MSPs to build and deliver cloud-agnostic offerings for each step of their cloud journey: plan and design, build and migrate, run and operate, and optimize.

The AWS MSP Program

The goal of the Amazon Web Services (AWS) MSP Program is to recognize and reward partners who provide the best AWS Cloud managed service to the marketplace. Customers can feel assured they are working with technically capable partners who must pass a third-party audit to ensure they meet program requirements. A core component of this audit is a combination of mandatory and recommended capabilities and business characteristics that partners must satisfy to earn validation. Thanks to these stringent program requirements, customers can be confident that an AWS MSP designation signifies an elite partner with a proven track record in delivering all aspects of the AWS Cloud.

We help you meet AWS MSP Program requirements

VMware Tanzu CloudHealth® helps you demonstrate your capabilities across multiple mandatory requirements in the AWS MSP Program validation checklist. As a partner, you can also meet many of the program's recommended criteria.

“We are leveraging [Tanzu CloudHealth] functionalities in a way that enables us to manage our customers at scale. Without automation, it becomes impossible to do that.”

Michel Zitman
Cloud Financial Management Practice Lead
Oblivion Cloud Control

Web-accessible performance analysis and end-user reports

Tanzu CloudHealth enables you to create, customize and share a host of usage, cost and performance reports. One best practice is to provide a few introductory reports as part of a “freemium” service that all your clients receive. You can then offer more detailed, higher-value reports in a premium tier. For example, you can package a series of customized reports with a breakdown of cost and usage by functional business group, department or user. This helps you meet several mandatory reporting requirements and earn additional recognition for reporting, performance analysis, and asset management capabilities.

AWS security best practices

Tanzu CloudHealth delivers security recommendations that will compare your customer’s AWS infrastructure against AWS and Center for Internet Security (CIS) best practices. The platform identifies and reports on gaps, alerts stakeholders, and provides remediation recommendations. Cloud security is paramount for end users, and best-in-class MSPs offer continuous and invaluable security services. By leveraging these security policies, partners meet multiple mandatory and recommended requirements under the AWS MSP Program.

Partner billing and cost management in AWS

Tanzu CloudHealth includes bill generation tools across each customer tenant. You can generate a statement or extract the data to use in your accounting system. Tanzu CloudHealth provides capabilities for customized billing rules, and it enables you to retain and manage credits in the way that makes the most sense for your business. Demonstrating this functionality during your audit further establishes your credibility as an MSP.

Become a next-generation cloud MSP

Dozens of leading cloud MSPs—such as SMX and Oblivion Cloud Control— have already partnered with us to bring their service offerings to market. Tanzu CloudHealth allows MSPs to easily gain visibility, optimize resources, and implement business policies that govern their customers’ environments.

How Tanzu CloudHealth maps to the AWS MSP validation checklist

The AWS MSP validation checklist consists of 13 sections, each made up of mandatory and/or recommended requirements.

The 13 checklist sections are:

- 1.0 – Sales and marketing
- 2.0 – Customer success
- 3.0 – Business health
- 4.0 – Partner internal systems security
- 5.0 – Customer obsession
- 6.0 – AWS skills management
- 7.0 – Operational excellence
- 8.0 – Security
- 9.0 – Reliability
- 10.0 – Performance efficiency
- 11.0 – Cost optimization
- 12.0 – Sustainability
- 13.0 – Advanced capabilities

Tanzu CloudHealth helps MSPs demonstrate capabilities across many of these requirements as indicated in the following tables. This mapping is based on validation checklist version 5.0.1.

The inclusion of an asterisk (*) signifies a recommended audit requirement.

Table 1: Requirements for Section 5.0 – Customer obsession

Requirement	How we help
<p>5.11 – Customer reports*</p> <p>The AWS partner provides web-accessible customer reports that allow customers to self-select parameters, such as devices and thresholds.</p>	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth keeps 13 months of historical data across all tracked assets and can provide performance and usage-related information over the historical time period. Tanzu CloudHealth is a web-based platform, and MSPs can provide controlled access to their customers, or provide end-user reporting as part of their packaged service offering.</p>

Table 2: Requirements for Section 6.0 – AWS skills management

Requirement	How we help
<p>6.1 – Cloud center of excellence</p> <p>The AWS partner maintains a cloud center of excellence (CCoE).</p>	<p>The Tanzu CloudHealth team has published a comprehensive set of materials based on the CCoE and helping customers mature in their cloud journey. We strongly support the CCoE model, and our Customer Success Service teams for partners train all our MSPs on how to build and operate a CCoE team.</p> <p>Visit our website to read our white paper, “The Next Generation of Cloud Management Starts with a Cloud Center of Excellence.”</p>
<p>6.3.3 – Solution capabilities</p> <p>The AWS partner delivers an approach to fulfill the nonfunctional requirements of the system, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of system requirements or goals for performance, capacity and availability • Tools and approaches used to monitor these aspects of the system in production, including specific metrics. 	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth provides detailed performance and capacity reports that can be used in a design document to illustrate the measured success of the proposed design.</p>

Table 3: Requirements for Section 7.0 – Operational excellence

Requirement	How we help
<p>7.3 – Configuration management</p> <p>The AWS partner maintains records of environment configuration changes. There must be a system that enables operators to list all changes made to the environment by the partner and track details about each change, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources that were added/removed/updated • Date and time of the change • Current status • The individual who executed the change • The approval workflow or alert of the change 	<p>The activity feed of Tanzu CloudHealth:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tracks all events in real time • Categorizes them by added, deleted or changed resources • Provides details of each change so action can be taken, if necessary
<p>7.10 – Resource management</p> <p>The AWS partner has a strategy for tracking and managing AWS resources across customer workloads and environments. They have capabilities to logically group resources using resource tags and report on those resource groups.</p>	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth pulls and reports on all AWS assets within an account, including tagging information and the ability to group assets in reports. Policies enforce tagging requirements and notify the MSP when an asset is out of compliance. Corrective actions can be automated under governance.</p> <p>Tanzu CloudHealth gathers information on all AWS assets and enables users to allocate those assets to dynamic groupings based on your business needs, called Perspectives.</p>

Table 4: Requirements for Section 8.0 – Security

Requirement	How we help
<p>8.1 – AWS account configuration</p> <p>The AWS partner defines a standard set of security controls implemented for all managed customer environments.</p>	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth compares customer infrastructure compliance with AWS and CIS best practices, and can enable automated actions that will notify and take action when a resource falls out of compliance.</p>
<p>8.2.7 – Identity and access management – Multifactor authentication</p> <p>All access to accounts by human identities from the AWS partner requires multifactor authentication (MFA).</p>	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth looks for root accounts that do not have MFA enabled and sends a notification when out of compliance.</p>
<p>8.2.9 – Identity and access management – Limited permissions</p> <p>Day-to-day operations are executed using limited permissions. Operators assume more privileged access only when necessary. Root account credentials are never used unless absolutely necessary.</p>	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth looks for accounts that use root account credentials and sends a notification when out of compliance.</p>
<p>8.7 – Security event logging</p> <p>The AWS partner defines security event logging requirements, including retention periods with customers.</p> <p>The AWS partner captures required security events and implements controls to ensure retention periods are honored.</p>	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth stores and reports on all security events in a security risk exposure summary and in a detailed incident log. Tanzu CloudHealth policies identify AWS accounts that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not have CloudTrail or Amazon CloudWatch logs enabled for all regions • Do not have CloudTrail logging data in an Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3) bucket • Do not have CloudTrail log encryption <p>Policies also identify CloudTrail logs that do not have file validation enabled.</p>
<p>8.10 – SaaS tooling account access</p> <p>Any tools administered by the AWS partner that require access to customer AWS accounts must use identity and access management (IAM) roles with external IDs to provide cross-account access.</p>	<p>AWS account configuration in Tanzu CloudHealth requires the creation of an AWS IAM role in the AWS console and an external ID.</p>

Table 5: Requirements for Section 11.0 – Cost optimization

Requirement	How we help
<p>11.1 – AWS cost reporting</p> <p>The AWS partner provides customers with tooling to understand their AWS costs.</p>	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth enables you to fully understand your AWS costs by directly ingesting cost and usage data, and applying additional analysis with tools, such as cost history reporting, budget vs. actual spend tracking, and Anomaly Detection.</p>
<p>11.2 – Cost attribution*</p> <p>The AWS partner assists customers in defining cost attribution categories and implementing appropriate tagging schemas.</p>	<p>As mentioned in Table 3 for the section 7.10 requirement, Perspectives enable cost organization by logical groupings that are customized and relevant to your customer's business. After getting complete visibility into all your cloud costs, you can use the Tanzu CloudHealth billing rules and custom line items to perform showback or chargeback, accurately reallocating costs to the business groups that incurred them. These cloud management capabilities are critical for driving accountability with software developers and establishing a FinOps culture in your organization.</p> <p>Tanzu CloudHealth pulls and reports on all AWS assets within an account, including tagging information and the ability to group assets in reports. In addition to enforcing tagging requirements with policies, Tanzu CloudHealth can help find untagged resources that require attention.</p>
<p>11.3 – Cost optimization</p> <p>The AWS partner regularly assesses customers' AWS costs and provides recommendations for optimization.</p> <p>Recommended: The AWS partner has implemented multiple cost optimization strategies for customers, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment discounts • Resource rightsizing and storage tier/type optimization • Amazon Elastic Compute Cloud (EC2) spot instances • Regional migration • Data transfer optimization • System re-architecture or migration to lower cost services 	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth rightsizing recommendations for resources and storage are built transparently on user-defined business goals. Users can create custom efficiency targets, so the recommendations align with key performance indicators. Performance thresholds that make sense for your business can be set, and you can take advantage of advanced filtering capabilities and region visibility.</p> <p>Tanzu CloudHealth removes the complexity around purchasing commitment-based discounts by providing the modeling, optimization and amortization capabilities needed to give confidence in purchasing decisions, maximize usage of discounts, and determine the right mix of Reserved Instances and Savings Plans.</p>

Table 6: Requirements for Section 12.0 – Sustainability

Requirement	How we help
<p>12.4 – Sustainability best practices*</p> <p>The AWS partner takes steps toward optimizing workload placement, architecture for user, software, data, hardware, and deployment patterns to increase energy efficiency.</p>	<p>At its core as a cloud financial management tool, one of the primary purposes of Tanzu CloudHealth is to help eliminate waste in the cloud. Reporting and governance capabilities allow you to keep your environment under control to prevent runaway cloud spend and eliminate wasted resources.</p> <p>With Tanzu CloudHealth policies, you can set lights-on, lights-off policies that drive more efficient energy usage as well as cost savings.</p>

Table 7: Requirements for Section 13.0 – Advanced capabilities

Requirement	How we help
<p>13.1 – Migrations</p> <p>The AWS partner has capabilities for migrating customer workloads from on-premises or other cloud environments to AWS using a standard methodology.</p>	<p>Tanzu CloudHealth has an active AWS Migration Competency and can assist MSPs with gaining their own certification as a Migration Consulting Partner or a Migration Delivery Partner. Our migration assessment makes recommendations for moving workloads from a data center to AWS based on EC2 types, reservations, region, and associated projected costs. This allows organizations to compare the TCO of running workloads on premises with the public cloud, and make intelligent migration decisions.</p>

Additional benefits of Tanzu CloudHealth

Tanzu CloudHealth has features that were specifically designed for use by MSPs. Within the platform, MSPs can view all of their customers in a single view and easily (and securely) switch between customer tenants. These capabilities put instant visibility, optimized cloud resources, and policies to facilitate governance of customers' clouds at your fingertips to provide added value in your service offering. It provides actionable insights to improve cost, usage, performance and security across the cloud.

Learn more

For more information about how you can become a best-in-class MSP, please visit tanzu.vmware.com/cloudhealth.