



CoreTrustSeal Foundation Rules of Procedure

As approved by the CoreTrustSeal Board

The Hague, 10 October 2023

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RULES OF PROCEDURE

1. QUORUM

- 1.1. In Meetings a quorum consists of a minimum of 50 per cent of the voting members.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF ADVISORY BODIES

- 2.1. The Advisory Committee provides a link with CoreTrustSeal stakeholders and the wider data community, including other certification standards. The Advisory Committee provides guidance and advice to the CoreTrustSeal Board as required.
- 2.2. The **Nominations Committee** is responsible for selecting nominated candidates from the Assembly of Reviewers to be elected to the Standards and Certification Board every three years. The Nominations Committee is composed of six members: three members selected from the CoreTrustSeal Board, including the Chair, and three selected from the Assembly of Reviewers.



3. ELECTION OF BOARD MEMBERS

- 3.1. Twelve Board Members are elected from the Assembly of Reviewers.
- 3.2. The Nominations Committee proposes twelve candidates from the Assembly of Reviewers for election. Candidates for election must be endorsed by at least two other members of the Assembly of Reviewers. The proposed slate of nominees must be gender and geographically balanced insofar as possible and must not include more than one candidate from the same repository.
- 3.3. Voting for CoreTrustSeal Board elections may be organized electronically.
- 3.4. Board Members are elected in their personal capacity and Board membership cannot be delegated.
- 3.5. Elected Members of the CoreTrustSeal Board can only serve as long as they are part of the Assembly of Reviewers.
- 3.6. Board Members may resign from office with at least three months' notice.
- 3.7. The new Board takes effect immediately after completion of the CoreTrustSeal Board elections.
- 3.8. If the number of CoreTrustSeal Board members drops below nine and there are more than nine months before a Board election is due, the Board will co-opt an Interim Board member. The co-opted Board member has the same voting rights as elected Board members.
- 3.9. A co-opted Interim Board Member's term is completed in line with the full Board. An interim Board Member can then complete up to two consecutive terms as an elected Board member in line with Statute III.4.

4. REVIEW AND CERTIFICATION PROCEDURE FOR REPOSITORIES

- 4.1. The CoreTrustSeal Board defines the *CoreTrustSeal Trustworthy Data Repositories Requirements and associated guidance (ANNEX 1)*, and defines and implements the *Review and Certification Procedure for Repositories* (this Article 4).
- 4.2. The CoreTrustSeal Board may revise ANNEX 1 or this article 4. A final decision on the revision can be made once a year during the CoreTrustSeal Board Statutory Meeting.
- 4.3. Revisions to any of the documentation referenced in 4.2 will be brought into force for all CoreTrustSeal certifications (whether initial applications or renewals) on a date defined by the CoreTrustSeal Board.



- 4.4. ANNEX 1 is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>
- 4.5. The CoreTrustSeal systems and documentation will be updated using the latest approved version of the CoreTrustSeal Trustworthy Data Repositories Requirements (ANNEX 1) and Review and Certification Procedure (Article 4 of in CoreTrustSeal RULES OF PROCEDURE).
- 4.6. CoreTrustSeal reviews are undertaken by members of the Assembly of Reviewers.
- 4.7. CoreTrustSeal Reviewers sign a Conduct Agreement (ANNEX 2) before undertaking their first review. Reviewers are expected to declare any conflicts of interest, and to review and assess evidence in a timely, complete, and impartial manner while ensuring that applications stay confidential until the CoreTrustSeal certification is awarded and any confidential information shared during the review process remains confidential.
- 4.8. The CoreTrustSeal Review Process includes the below steps:
 - a) A repository seeking certification (Applicant) applies online for the CoreTrustSeal Repository certification.
 - b) CoreTrustSeal Administrators open a self-assessment for the applicant.
 - c) Applicant completes the self-assessment.
 - d) Applicant may submit a request for feedback or clarifications to the CoreTrustSeal Secretariat.
 - e) Applicant submits the self-assessment for formal review.
 - f) CoreTrustSeal Administrators invoice the Applicant for the administrative fee.
 - g) Applicant pays the administrative fee.
 - h) CoreTrustSeal Administrators assign two Reviewers from the Assembly of Reviewers in consultation with the CoreTrustSeal Board.
 - i) The two assigned Reviewers perform the reviews in parallel to the agreed timeframe.
 - j) The CoreTrustSeal Board manages any reconciliation between the reviewer opinions and provides a final decision. A third reviewer may be asked for input in cases where reconciliation is required.
 - k) In the case that there is a need for additional evidence for one or more Requirements, the assessment will be sent back to the Applicant.
 - l) Applicant updates and resubmits the self-assessment.
 - m) Steps h through k can be repeated up to a maximum of five times.



- n) Successful Applicants receive a notification of successful CoreTrustSeal Trustworthy Data Repository certification, valid for three years starting from the award date.
- o) The certified repository is required to display the CoreTrustSeal logo and a link to the assessment at an agreed location on the organization's website such that the assessment is publicly visible and accessible.
- p) The certified repository can, but has no obligation to, nominate representatives to the Assembly of Reviewers.
- q) CoreTrustSeal-certified repositories are invited to become a WDS Regular Member on a voluntary basis, provided they meet additional requirements.
- r) An Applicant not awarded the CoreTrustSeal Trustworthy Data Repository certification after review may appeal to the Board in writing, clearly stating their rationale.
- s) The Board will review the appeal and take a decision. The outcomes may include:
 - (a) affirming the earlier decision; or
 - (b) restarting the application process, with new peer reviewers assigned.
- t) The CoreTrustSeal Board will inform the Applicant of its decision.
- u) A completed assessment document is assigned a Digital Object Identifier, and linked to the CoreTrustSeal Trustworthy Data Repository seal when awarded.
- v) Certified repositories will be invited to renew their certification.
- w) In steps h, j and s above, CoreTrustSeal Board members must disclose any conflict of interest regarding a specific application and recuse themselves from the discussion and abstain from voting.

4.9. The CoreTrustSeal is awarded against the requirements in force at the time of review. The repository has the right to claim CoreTrustSeal certification for the specific entity certified for a period of 3 years, even if a new version of the Requirements are published, unless there is a major relevant change in repository circumstances which invalidates the original assessment (this should be communicated to the Board and rectified) or, once one of the conditions for withdrawal of the CoreTrustSeal is met (4.10 below).

4.10. Withdrawal of CoreTrustSeal certification can be decided if it becomes apparent that in achieving CoreTrustSeal certification, an organization wilfully withheld information or supplied incorrect information about their repository, or if the repository claims coverage of



other organizational entities or data collections not covered by the original certification. The CoreTrustSeal Board will manage the process as follows:

- a) The organization will be informed and asked to amend the relevant information within one month.
- b) The CoreTrustSeal Board will review the amendments.
- c) The decision to revoke the CoreTrustSeal requires a three-quarters majority vote of the entire CoreTrustSeal Board.
- d) The CoreTrustSeal Board will inform the organization of its decision.
- e) The organization has the right to appeal the Board's decision within one month and provide additional evidence.
- f) The CoreTrustSeal Board will review the appeal and make a final decision and inform the organization.

5. MODIFICATION OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

- 5.1. Changes to the Rules of Procedure require the approval of a majority of the CoreTrustSeal Board Members present. Proposed changes in the Rules of Procedure must be sent in writing to the Chair of the CoreTrustSeal Board at least two months before the yearly Statutory Meeting of the CoreTrustSeal Board.



ANNEX 1: CORE TRUSTWORTHY DATA REPOSITORIES REQUIREMENTS

The 2023-2025 requirements are available here: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7051012>.



ANNEX 2: CONDUCT AGREEMENT BETWEEN CORETRUSTSEAL BOARD AND ASSEMBLY OF REVIEWERS MEMBER

This Conduct Agreement is between the CoreTrustSeal Standards and Certification Board and [Representative Name], a member of the Assembly of Reviewers (hereinafter 'member'). It states the conduct expected of the CoreTrustSeal Board—and by extension the CoreTrustSeal Secretariat—and the member during the review of a repository's application for certification under the CoreTrustSeal Trustworthy Data Repositories Requirements. This document is not legally binding.

By undertaking CoreTrustSeal application reviews,

1. The member confirms that they will give the CoreTrustSealBoard full disclosure of any potential or known conflicts of interest before commencing each review they conduct. Furthermore, if it becomes apparent to the member during the review process that such a conflict exists, they will reveal this to the CoreTrustSealSecretariat immediately.
2. The member agrees that all information contained in a repository's CoreTrustSealapplication will be kept confidential until a public version is made available and will not be discussed with a third party—including with other colleagues in the member's organization—without the permission of the CoreTrustSealBoard.
3. The member's identity will not be disclosed by the CoreTrustSealBoard or Secretariat at any point before, during, or after their review of a repository's application to either representatives of the repository or any party deemed to be a stakeholder in the application. The integrity of the CoreTrustSeal Trustworthy Data Repository Certification is thus ensured, since the member is free to be entirely honest when conducting their review.
4. The member will not communicate with the applicant repository directly during the review process. If the reviewer needs to contact the repository (e.g., to clarify a response), they will do this via the CoreTrustSealSecretariat.
5. The member will express any wish to collaborate with a repository whose application is under their review to the CoreTrustSealSecretariat, who will initiate an introduction once the review process is completed.
6. The member will inform the CoreTrustSealSecretariat in advance if it knows of any circumstances that could delay delivery of a review by a designated due date. The member also agrees to contact the CoreTrustSealSecretariat as soon as they realize during the review process that other engagements might postpone delivery or prevent completion of a review entirely.
7. The member will notify the CoreTrustSealSecretariat at once if they become aware of a reason, outside of articles 1–6, as to why they might be unable to perform a review with the necessary impartiality, confidentiality, and timeliness required.

SIGNED (On behalf of the CTS Board)

SIGNED (The member)

Date: [dd/mm/yyyy]

Date: [dd/mm/yyyy]

Name: NN

Name: NN

Position: Chair, CoreTrustSeal Standards
and Certification Board

Position:



ANNEX 3: GLOSSARY

CoreTrustSeal: By obtaining the CoreTrustSeal Trustworthy Data Repository certification, a repository becomes a Trustworthy Data Repository according to the CoreTrustSeal requirements.

CoreTrustSeal Requirements: The primary reference document describing the 16 CoreTrustSeal Trustworthy Data Repository requirements (ANNEX 1) .

CoreTrustSeal Assessment Guidance: The supporting documents that provide information on the CoreTrustSeal assessment and how to complete it, including the peer-review process.

CoreTrustSeal Website: The website is available publicly at this URL:
<https://www.coretrustseal.org/>

CoreTrustSeal Logo: The standard logo representing the CoreTrustSeal brand that repositories are permitted to display using a widget code provided by CoreTrustSeal on a single website (one URL) corresponding to the certified entity stated in the original application.

CoreTrustSeal Certification Period: Three-year period during which a CoreTrustSeal certification is valid.