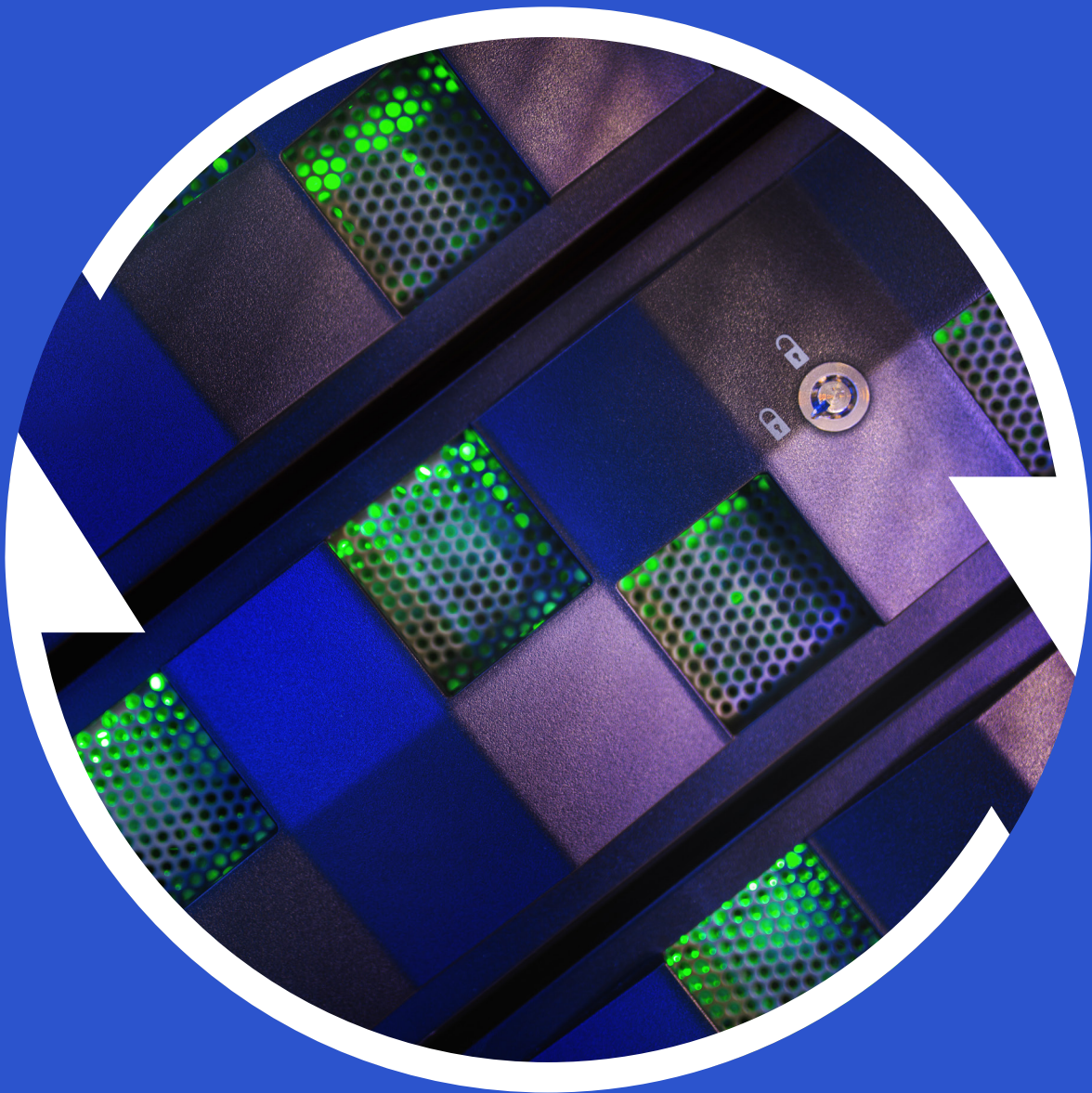


CASE STUDY

# Advancements in MEF's SD-WAN Certification Program

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# The Urgency for SD-WAN Standards

MEF responded to the industry-wide concern over a lack of standards in SD-WAN by leveraging its global base of operators to collaborate on a common definition and comprehensive SD-WAN technology program focused on adoption. Another objective enables service providers and technology providers to focus on differentiated enhancements. This effort introduced the ratified SD-WAN Service Standard – MEF 70 – the first, and currently only, SD-WAN standard. It is part of the broader MEF 3.0 Global Services Framework for orchestrated and assured services which includes dynamic Carrier Ethernet, Optical Transport, IP, Security-as-a-Service, and other virtualized services that are orchestrated over programmable networks.

**MEF SD-WAN Certifications.** Two categories exist within MEF's SD-WAN certification program:

- MEF 3.0 SD-WAN Certified Technology Suppliers
- MEF 3.0 SD-WAN Certified Service Providers



## Challenge

### **SD-WAN's pervasive challenge.**

Fueled by its popularity as the on-ramp to the cloud, SD-WAN experienced rapid growth – and hype. In the first wave of SD-WAN adoption, Enterprises took responsibility for designing, deploying, and operating their SD-WAN networks. Since 2019, SD-WAN managed services have emerged as the predominant deployment model, superseding the Do It Yourself (DIY) approach, while Enterprises continue to migrate their applications and data from the data center to the cloud.

Along the way, the market fragmented, with service providers and vendors offering a plethora of unvetted products and services in the SD-WAN space. Some added clear value for their customers. Others, however, have not delivered on their promise. Numerous SD-WAN solutions support only limited use cases, limited numbers of users, and/or specific environments. With each new SD-WAN solution released in the market, concerns over interoperability continue to grow at an accelerating pace.

### MEF 3.0 SD-WAN Certified Technology Suppliers.

A selection of MEF's certified vendors in this category includes:



### MEF 3.0 SD-WAN Certified Service Providers.

Representing a worldwide community of well over 750 million subscribers, MEF's certified managed service providers (MSPs) include:





## Benefits of MEF's SD-WAN Certification Program

- **Ensures conformant managed services and products** that end-users can be confident provide a standard set of SD-WAN core capabilities
- **Enables MSPs and vendors to differentiate** their offerings in an increasingly competitive landscape
- **Provides confidence to launch** based on a neutral, unbiased test expert, and published testing standards
- **Reduces market confusion** to streamline training and staffing costs; MEF also offers an SD-WAN professional certification program for a more rigorous training
- **Reduces opportunity costs** to instead of re-inventing the wheel, MSPs and vendors can innovate on top of the standardized core capabilities to enhance their value delivery

## Spirent SD-WAN MEF Certification Workflow



**Spirent's role in the MEF SD-WAN certification community.**

After years of standards contributions in the area of testing, and extensive associated knowledge and experience validating a range of diverse network technologies, Spirent earned the credibility to become MEF's exclusive SD-WAN certification authority. Many of the vendors and managed services providers seeking SD-WAN certification have long turned to Spirent for advanced testing solutions.

**SD-WAN technology's future with MEF certifications.** Over time, standardization and certification have the potential to transform SD-WAN while keeping pace with constant innovation. Standardization instills order, normalizes compatibility across vendors and operators, and helps the industry make much-needed strides towards universal multi-vendor interoperability and long-term scalability. A MEF certification is the industry's seal of confidence that enterprise customers, and the industry at large, are relying on in growing numbers. Recently, MEF undertook an investigation in the area of security testing. Spirent is leading the Security Test & Certification Incubation Group to assess how the emerging MEF security standards may be verified with a distinct outcome: a new security certification program and another industry first.

**Spirent's expanding presence in the SD-WAN landscape.**

Spirent is emerging as the neutral, third-party SD-WAN testing authority, providing normalized testing and validation that is independent of any vendor. Spirent's advanced portfolio of network testing platforms optimize SD-WAN configurations and qualify changes prior to deployment. Complementing the well-established service activation testing, which Spirent has delivered for years, Spirent's Service Readiness Testing verifies new site and connection turn up, before impacting the customer experience. In addition, Spirent provides advanced SD-WAN service level management to enforce service-layer SLAs, from the infrastructure to service layers. Spirent also provides SD-WAN policy and application-layer testing, along with security efficacy validation, to ensure applications and SD-WAN security functions are behaving as expected.

## Why Spirent.

As a pioneer in network testing, along with our unique vendor-neutral perspective, we incorporate what we learn back into the certification standards, to continually improve the quality of SD-WAN certification, which includes new emerging security standards for SD-WAN. Spirent is a trusted, neutral SD-WAN testing/validation authority offering normalized, multi-vendor solutions. Our leadership in communications testing, validation and assurance is recognized globally. Our commitment to openness empowers our role as a major contributor to MEF SD-WAN's vision and continuous innovation.

Beyond SD-WAN certification requirements, when our customers don't have the expertise, time or resources to perform testing and assurance functions internally, Spirent offers a suite of managed solutions to perform these functions as a service. Spirent Test as a Service (TaaS) combines our test agility and mature DevOps efficiencies. Spirent's MEF Certification as a Service (CaaS) for SD-WAN is a subset of their TaaS solution offerings.

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