



I/O Vendor Partner (IOVP)

Program Guide v3.15

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1 Introduction

Welcome to the VMware I/O Vendor Partner Program (“IOVP”, or the “Program”).

- Starting on August 31, 2015, the Partner’s participation in the Software-Defined Data Center (“SDDC”) Foundation and Integration Program, depending on the Program Category Option that Partner selects (either “SDDC Foundation” or “SDDC Integration”), may include participation in the Program. Please refer to the SDDC Foundation and Integration Program Guide to determine if this Program is included in the SDDC Foundation or SDDC Integration Program Category Option, or in both. Partners interested in this Program must also submit a completed questionnaire to VMware to be considered for this Program.

IOVP offers members a comprehensive set of APIs, tools, resources and processes needed to develop, certify, and release ESXi I/O drivers in the following categories:

- Network (NIC) device drivers
- Storage (HBA) device drivers
- RDMA device drivers

Partners initiating device driver development should use the NDDK (Native Device Driver Kit) to develop native I/O drivers, which is the preferred driver model in terms of performance and support in future releases of ESXi. VMKernel drivers, although currently supported at the time of this writing, are in the process of being deprecated.

Important Note: The tools, public APIs, and resources available to Partners under this Program are authorized for use only under this Program. **Any other usage will not qualify for VMware certification or support.** If your intention is to develop any other type of driver or module, please review the other Packages included in the SDDC Foundation and Integration Program to find the one that best fits your requirements. In the event that none of the Packages included in the SDDC Foundation and Integration Program qualify, please provide a description and block diagram of your solution to VMware. After evaluating your solution, VMware will contact you to provide further guidance.

1.1 Overview of This Guide

This document explains the Program requirements, as well as the engagement, support, maintenance models and lifecycle of the Program. For more detailed certification requirements, refer to the relevant certification guides available on the Program website. Capitalized terms used in this Program Guide have the same meaning as defined in the Platform Extensibility Program Agreement (the “PEPA”) unless otherwise defined herein. To the extent there is any inconsistency between the PEPA, the Program Addendum, and this Program Guide, the documents will govern in the following order of precedent: the Program Addendum, the PEPA, and then this Program Guide.

1.2 General Participation Requirements

Partner must meet the following requirements to engage in the Program:

- This package falls under the SDDC Integration umbrella. Membership in SDDC Integration is a prerequisite to gain access to IOVP materials.
- Sign the appropriate Program agreements as referenced below (“Agreement”) as determined by VMware.
 - If the Partner joined prior to August 31, 2015 – the PEPA and I/O Vendor Partner Program Addendum entered into by VMware and Partner will govern Partner’s participation in the Program.

- If the Partner joins after August 31, 2015 – the PEPA and SDDC Foundation and Integration Program Addendum entered into by VMware and Partner will govern Partner's participation in the Program.

Partner is required to submit a completed questionnaire to VMware for approval prior to receiving access to IOVP. VMware will select from among eligible applicants based on the best opportunities for deploying successful solutions that are aligned with VMware's business and strategic goals for usage of this Package.

- The questionnaire will require Partner to identify Partner's planned use case. If Partner expands or changes their development efforts beyond the VMware approved use case or VMware later learns of new previously undisclosed technical information, then VMware may require Partner to resubmit a new questionnaire detailing the new use case for VMware's review. If such new use case is not approved, VMware may immediately terminate Partner's Program Addendum for this Program.
- Meet and follow Partner Software support requirements (outlined in Section 3.4 "Post-Release Activities").
- Provide VMware with details about timeframes for submitting certification logs for certification tests.
- Provide VMware details about development and support timeframes with respect to new Partner Software.
- Follow Program instructions for all pre-requisites to be met for the [VMware Compatibility Guide](#) (VCG) listing.

This Program may be amended periodically at the sole discretion of VMware, including but not limited to changes regarding the following:

- Requirements for TAP program enrollment
- Business and engineering processes to certify providers
- Certification tools, documentation, or other related materials
- Policies to list Partner Software on the VCG website or VMware.com, where applicable

When there is a change to this Program Guide, VMware will notify Partner through appropriate communication channels. Partner is responsible for ensuring that the communication channel with VMware is open and effective for compliance with VMware changes promptly.

Membership in the Program is effective on the effective date of the applicable Program Addendum.

2 Membership Signup, Renewal, and Termination

2.1 Joining or Renewing Program Membership

Program membership is effective and valid for the duration specified in the Agreement. Each Program will be updated for each release of the corresponding VMware product that introduces significant new functionality and during this process VMware may change the Program enrollment requirements. Existing Partners will be allowed to continue to participate in the updated Program only if they meet the updated Program enrollment requirements.

2.2 Termination of Program Membership

Upon termination of the Program Agreement, Partner's Program membership is terminated; the Program collateral and Program website will no longer be accessible to the Partner. For details on termination, please review the "Term and Termination" Section of the Program Agreement.

2.3 Removal of Program from SDDC Foundation and Integration Program

VMware may, at its sole discretion, remove the Program from the SDDC Foundation and Integration Program. In such event, Partner will no longer have access to the Program's collateral or access to the Program website. However, the Partner's access to the collateral and websites of other programs that remain as part of the SDDC Foundation and Integration Program will not change.

3 Program Components and Process Flow

The Program provides a full spectrum of resources to guide Partners in developing, releasing, and supporting their Partner Software.

There are four Program components:

- Program Guidelines and Agreements
- Pre-Release Development and Certification Engagement
- Release Logistics
- Post-Release Activities

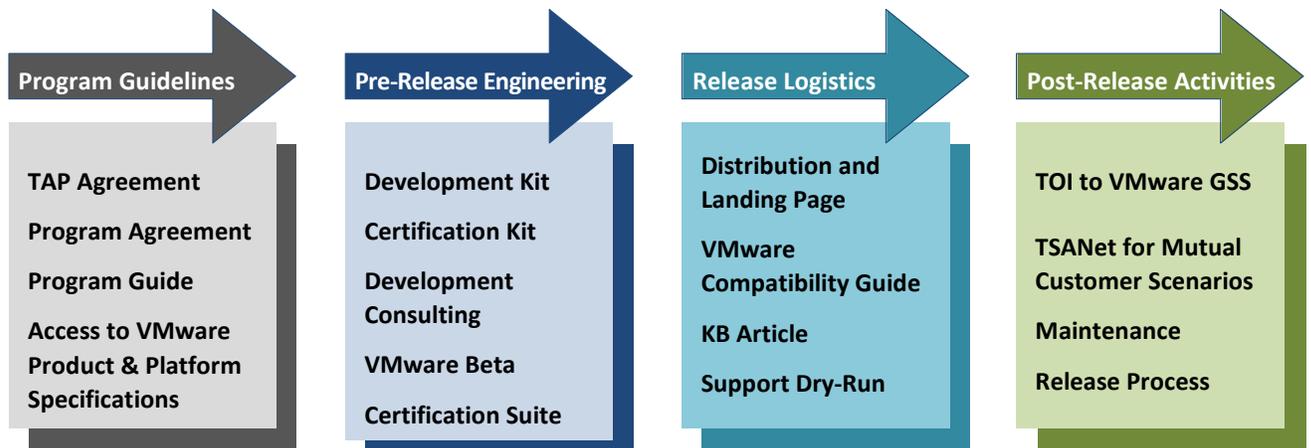


Figure 1: Program Components.

The remainder of this section elaborates on the components of this Program.

3.1 Program Guidelines

This Program component includes the non-technical elements of the Program.

3.1.1 Program Guidelines and Agreements

This Program Guide and the Agreement provide the terms and conditions of this Program. Partners must agree to the terms of these documents to participate in this Program. This Program Guide is subject to change. Qualification Requirements are specified in the product Certification Guide, which is posted on the Program website.

3.1.2 Program Fees

VMware may, in its sole discretion, waive any or all of the fees associated with this Program. For exact fee amounts, please contact your VMware representative directly. Below is a description of various fees that may be applicable to the Program.

3.1.2.1 Program Entrance Fee

For Partners who joined the Program prior to August 31, 2015, the Program Entrance Fee previously paid by Partner is applicable to the specific version of the Program for which it was purchased and is a one-time, non-refundable, and non-transferable fee.

For Partners who join after August 31, 2015, the Program Entrance Fee is stated in the Program Guide applicable to the SDDC Foundation and Integration Program.

3.1.2.2 *Optional Developer Consulting*

Development Consulting can be separately purchased. Please inquire with the Program Manager for details on associated Development Consulting fees.

Please note: Partners are highly encouraged to avail themselves of this service. The Development Consulting fee enables Partners who opt for this service to post questions and gain access to VMware engineers. Engineers can answer questions regarding Partner Software development per the published specification.

3.1.2.3 *Certification Log Submission, Support, and Equivalency Fee*

Service Requests (SRs) are used to submit logs for review or for certification questions. Prior to submitting a SR, each Partner shall purchase from the [VMware Store](#) a certification log submission for log review per SR. A service description can be found in the datasheet for your Program on the VMware Store website: <http://www.vmware.com/go/enablement>

All Partners are required to pay the Log submission, support, and equivalency fees as applicable. This improves the certification review process and provides timely VCG listings. Details on how to purchase entitlements for the certification submission are provided as part of the Program collateral on the Program website.

3.2 Certification Engagement

This Program component includes the tools and resources available for the development and certification of Partner Software. All of the tools are available via the Program website.

3.2.1 Engineering Support

IOVP membership includes access to the IOVP development kits and certification tests, but does not include development support or certification test support. Development Consulting is available at an optional fee (see previous section “Optional Developer Support”). Certification Test support can be purchased as a Support Request (see previous section “Certification Log Submission, Support, and Equivalency Fee”).

3.2.1.1 *Partner Internal Triaging Process for Suspected VMware Software Issues*

The following only applies to Partners with Developer Consulting agreements. The Partner’s Engineering Manager and/or Technical Lead shall review all suspected VMware software issues prior to the team engaging the VMware co-development engineers. Partner technical contacts shall include the internal assessment (including logs etc.) when filing a question for the VMware Engineering Team.

3.2.2 VMware Products and Development Kit

Partners will receive access to certain Pre-Release Materials and/or Development Kits, as determined by VMware. The current listing is set forth in *Appendix G: VMware Pre-Release Material(s) and Development Kit(s)*. The Pre-Release Materials and/or Development Kits may be used only in compliance with the Agreement.

VMware provides access to the applicable Pre-Release Materials and/or Development via:

- Official milestones, such as the official beta program for beta, RC, and GA milestones.
- Unofficial milestones, which refers to any point in time other than beta, RC, and RTM. To request access to such bits, please contact the IOVP program manager and provide a short justification.

As part of unofficial milestone build deliveries, VMware provides beta-type builds. When choosing to use such builds, please note the following:

- Only the ESXi installer bits are provided as beta-type builds.
- Beta-type and release-type builds are built from the same VMware change-list, but they do not have the same checksum.

- Beta-type and release-type builds are functionally the same for development kit files; checksum differences do not indicate a real difference.
- Mixing different build types might lead to PSODs and unpredictable behavior.

Scalability and timing-sensitive functionality should be qualified only on release-type builds. Beta-type builds include debugging code.

3.2.3 Driver Development Kits

IOVP drivers are created using the following driver development kits

- Native Device Driver Development Kit (NDDK)

The Native DDK (previously referred to as VMKAPI DDK) is the preferred development kit used to develop IO device drivers. These drivers are known as Native drivers. New features in ESXi are only supported with Native drivers. Please note that Native drivers are prohibited from containing GPL code, and any Native driver containing GPL code will not be accepted for certification.

- VMKlinux Driver Development Kit (DDK)

The VMKlinux DDK was deprecated in ESXi 6.0. Drivers developed with the VMKlinux DDK do not support ESXi features added in post-ESXi 6.0 releases. Partners are strongly discouraged from using this DDK. Additionally, these drivers will not work in upcoming releases.

3.2.4 Driver Certification

IOVP drivers must be certified by VMware in order to be listed on the VMware Compatibility Guide, be supported by VMware, and be distributed by VMware. The IOVP certification guides set forth the qualification requirements for certification. These are made available to IOVP partners on the Developer Center website.

The following links detail the certification levels and the support structure:

- http://pubs.vmware.com/vsphere-50/index.jsp?topic=%2Fcom.vmware.vsphere.upgrade.doc_50%2FGUID-27BBB8-01EA-4238-8140-1C3C3EFC0AA6.html
- <https://www.vmware.com/support/policies/thirdparty>

This Program falls under the “VMware Certified” level of certification for Partner Software testing. This level carries the guidelines and benefits shown in Table 1:

Table 1: VMware Acceptance Levels.

Acceptance Level	Customer Support Provider	Testing Program	Process Flow
VMware Certified	VMware	Certification (Functional Verification)	Appendix B
VMware Accepted	Partner	Acceptance (Provider doesn't misbehave)	Appendix C
Partner Supported	Partner	Partner-defined	VMware directs support calls to the partner's support organization
Community Supported	None	None	No Support Flow

The certification process begins after a Partner develops a driver and has completed internal QA tests and is confident the driver can pass the certification suite. Once testing is complete, the Partner purchases the VMware Certification Service – Group 2 SR and uploads the test results to VMware using the Workbench plugin. VMware verifies the results and either certifies the Partner Software or denies certification with due justification.

Upon successful certification, before Partner or VMware can distribute the certified driver, VMware applies a digital signature to the driver (which identifies it at the VMware Certified level of acceptance). VMware then updates the [VMware Compatibility Guide](#) (VCG) website to include the applicable version of the Partner Software and its associated devices that are supported, and, on a case by case basis, may make the certified driver available on the vmware.com website.

3.2.4.1 *Devices supported with Certified Drivers*

Driver certification is accomplished by the Partner running the IOVP certification tests on a representative hardware device supported by the driver (also known as the Device Under Test (DUT)). Most IOVP hardware vendors create a “device family” of adapters that are based on the same design and ASIC but may differ in minor ways such as number of internal or external ports but are supported by the same driver. These devices are known as “equivalent” devices. VMware establishes an “equivalency group” in its database of these equivalent devices. All of the devices in an equivalency group are certified by proxy when a member of the group is used in an IOVP certification. Equivalency groups can contain both partner-branded and OEM-branded devices. At the time a driver is certified by VMware as a result of Partner opening a Request for Certification, VMware will provide Partner the list of equivalent devices for Partner to indicate which devices should be listed on the VMware Compatibility Guide. Listing of these devices is at the discretion of Partner. In the case where Partner wants to list an OEM device(s), Partner must furnish VMware with an email from the OEM authorizing Partner to manage their device listings (aka Blanket Approval Letter).

Note that a single driver may support devices in multiple equivalency groups. Full IOVP driver certification testing is required to be run on a representative device from each equivalency group, which may result in multiple driver certifications for the same driver version.

3.2.4.2 *Certified driver firmware listings on the VMware Compatibility Guide*

VMware publishes the firmware version that was used on the device under test at the time of certification in the “Firmware” column next to the driver version. Partner-branded equivalent devices will also show this firmware version. OEM-branded devices may use different firmware versions, and these versions may differ from OEM to another. As part of the listing of equivalent devices, partners can instruct VMware on what version of firmware to list with their OEM listings.

The version listed in the Firmware column on the VMware Compatibility Guide will always be the version provided by the above process. Over time, newer versions of firmware may become available from Partner that have been fully tested and supported by Partner with the certified driver version. Partners are encouraged to list additional supported firmware versions as they become available in the “Additional Firmware Version” column on the VMware Compatibility Guide.

3.2.4.3 *Certification Support*

Partners are provided with the supporting documentation required to run the IOVP certification tests without additional assistance. In the case where Partner runs into an issue requiring VMware help, Partner may request assistance by purchasing a VMware Certification Service – Group 2 SR. If it is determined that the issue is the result of a VMware deficiency, Partner will be credited back the SR.

3.3 *Device certification with VMware-developed drivers*

ESXi includes several VMware-developed drivers. As of May 30, 2018, with the exception of the nvme driver, these drivers are not listed with on the VMware Compatibility Guide with Partner hardware.

For IOVP partners that develop NVMe hardware and wish to certify it with VMware's nvme driver and get their hardware listed, the Partner must run full certification using VMware's nvme driver.

3.4 Device certification with Intel NIC drivers on non-Intel branded NICs

Requests from partners that have designed and built their own network adapters using Intel network ASICs to have these adapters listed as supported with Intel drivers (note – this subject is confined to adapters that fit into PCIe slots, not Lan On Motherboard (LOM) implementations using Intel network ASICs) will not be approved. Partners who design and market their own adapters using Intel network ASICs can certify their adapters using either of the following approaches:

1. Write their own driver and certify the driver and hardware as per the usual process
2. Use an Intel developed and certified driver under the following conditions:
 - a. Run the IOVP certifications tests using the Intel driver and Partner hardware and submitting the results with a Request for Certification SR
 - i. If using an Intel driver, the Partner agrees that if a customer support issue is found, the Partner will reproduce the issue on Intel-branded hardware and provide evidence of the issue on Intel-branded hardware before contacting Intel for support. Issues found that are unable to be reproduced on Intel-branded hardware will not be supported by Intel.

3.5 Release Logistics

This Program component covers activities related to the release and availability of Partner Software developed and certified under this Program.

3.5.1 Packaging and Installation

This Section discusses some of the best practices and logistics of Partner Software packaging and installation.

3.5.1.1 Packaging

Partner Software should be packaged as a .zip file containing the following items:

1. Driver executable (VIB)
2. Open Source License (if applicable)
3. Source code (if driver is open source)
4. End User License Agreement (if applicable)
5. README.txt with installation instructions
6. Release notes with title in format of: Release_Notes_<driver name> <driver version>.txt
 - Release notes to include:

Keeping the documentation zipped separately makes doc updates possible without going through the re-test waiver process.

Ship Partner Software with the following documentation in a single compressed archive (.zip) file:

- a. Release Notes with version-specific information for the following:
 - What was fixed
 - What was added

- Known bugs
 - Link to partner website
 - Release Note organization to stay consistent over time and versions, with history included. Use the following format for the naming of the Release Notes file:
 - Release_Notes_<driver name> <driver version>.txt
- b. Installation Guide and Configuration Guide, to include the following where applicable
- Prerequisites. For example: Java run-time environment, .NET, etc.
 - Supported configurations with at least one simple, hardened test configuration, which should allow the Partner Software to perform all functions (the “proof case”).
 - VMware can use this example to confirm that there are no configuration issues in the customer environment and triage the issues appropriately.
 - Any licensing assumptions spelled out explicitly; details of any encryption being used.
 - Troubleshooting guide spelling out common error messages and typical configuration misunderstandings.
- c. Process explaining how to engage your support for the Partner Software, as follows:
- Which logs to have handy and how to collect them
 - What Partner Software information to gather for each type of problem (screenshots, array managers, replicated volumes, and so forth)
 - Contact protocol with URLs and toll-free telephone numbers
 - Any entitlement identity that might be required for support

Each and every version, release, patch, and hot fix of the Partner Software should clearly identify itself with a fully qualified and dated release signature, at least once for every request that it handles. Make the release signatures clearly visible in the logs whenever the Partner Software is working and include a unique release signature, inasmuch as the date and at least one node of the version should be different from all other released Partner Software.

Partner Software must have version number designations. This helps users quickly discern the version without having to examine logs or open other windows or facilities.

Note: *Be sure to remove all references to VMware trademarks or product names as part of Partner Software name during installation and post-installation for Partner Software listings.*

3.5.1.2 *Delivery to Customers*

Once Partner Software has been packaged accordingly, Partners can then distribute their Partner Software to end customers from a page on their own website. The download bundle should contain all documentation that is listed as required under the Supporting Documentation Requirements Section.

VMware will also host the download bundle and provide a download link to it from the VMware Compatibility Guide.

In some cases, VMware might have programs that distribute certified Partner Software from VMware.com. In this case, we recommend Partners package their Partner Software per the program specification.

3.5.1.3 *Open Source and Encryption*

Partners are expected to comply with all applicable third-party and free / open-source licenses and meet all applicable import, export, and re-export control obligations.

If the driver is licensed under the GPL, a source tarball and license file must be packaged with the driver.

In the cases where VMware distributes certified Partner Software from VMware.com, Partners must follow the Program requirements for distributing certified drivers.

3.5.2 End User License Agreement

If VMware is to distribute the certified driver (separate from and not as an integrated part of VMware ESXi) on VMware's www.vmware.com website, and the driver is not licensed to VMware under an open source license, the following requirement applies. During download, extraction or installation, Partner must present their End User License Agreement (EULA) to customers in a way that requires the customer to accept the Partner EULA prior to use of the product. If a user does not accept the EULA, the product must not install.

3.5.3 VMware Signed Software

If Partner wishes to distribute Partner Software that meets Qualification Requirements, under this Program, VMware must digitally sign the Partner Software prior to general distribution by Partner or VMware. **VMware will implement its digital signature onto properly certified modules at the end of the certification process and will deliver digitally-signed VMware Signed Software back to the Partner for general distribution. VMware will update the VCG to reflect any VMware Signed Software. "VMware Signed Software" means Partner Software that meets the Qualification Requirements and has been digitally signed by VMware.**

3.5.4 Hosting

3.5.4.1 VMware Hosting

VMware will host certified Partner Software on vmware.com, until the associated version of the VMware product has reached the end-of-life (EOL) phase. For more detail about product life cycle policies, including EOL dates, please visit:

<http://www.vmware.com/support/policies/lifecycle/general/index.html>

Please refer to the Program requirements for packaging as specified in "Delivery to Customer" section.

3.5.4.2 Partner Hosting

Partners who choose to host Partner Software on their website are encouraged to consider the following recommendations for the Partner Software landing page.

Landing Page Recommendations:

- Publicly available landing page (The link must be a live link and not result in a 404 unknown error or send users to a generic, "we can't find the page you are looking for" site.) It is OK for the landing page to require credentials to log in.
- Viewable with standard browsers
- Public statement of the Partner's support policy for their certified Partner Software. (Include a link to the support policy or information on how to get support.)
- Stated support is not beyond VMware stated support (features, versions, array models, etc.).
- Link to VMware Compatibility Guide listings.

Static Information:

- About VMware product text from VMware.com or VMware approved collateral.

- A public statement of the Partner’s support policy for their Partner Software. (Include a link to the support policy or information on how to get support for released Partner Software). This information should be provided to VMware support for review prior to GA of the Partner Software.
- Link to VCG website.

Partner Software Information:

- Text that describes features/bug fixes included in that Partner Software version
- Product documentation and installation information (include any software and/or hardware prerequisite; best practices/user guide, among others)
- Product download details (download bundle should include all relevant documentation listed on the landing page)
- Product version
- Date certified/released
- MD5 SUM and SHA1 SUM
- File size

3.5.5 VMware Compatibility Guide (VCG) Posting

Partners must officially state the combinations of versions of the VMware product that is supported with their Partner Software. VMware reserves the right to conduct its own compatibility testing to validate Partner’s compatibility claims.

The compatibility for Partner Software that is “certified” is posted on the [VMware Compatibility Guide](#) website. VMware technical support is obligated to support Partner Software only with the equipment and management interfaces agreed between the Partner and VMware, contained in the VCG.

Other clarifications for VCG posting:

- VMware uses footnotes and Knowledge Base (KB) articles to document known Partner Software incompatibilities. If an incompatibility is severe enough such that the Partner Software is not supportable, the Partner Software is not posted on the VCG website until a technical fix is provided.
- VMware determines whether an incompatibility is sufficient to footnote or to deny a certain posting, or to remove any listing at any time. Customer or field complaints that reveal non-compliance will result in delisting the Partner Software from the [VMware Compatibility Guide](#) (VCG).
- VMware removes Partner Software from the VCG listing upon Partner request or at its own discretion.
- In the spirit of joint support, VMware does not claim support for Partner Software beyond those that are certified.

3.5.6 Supporting Documentation Requirements

VMware Support requests that Partners provide links to all relevant TOI material described in *Appendix E: Transfer of Information (TOI)*.

3.5.7 VMware Ready Logos

For eligible programs, once Partner has certified the Partner Software under the terms of the Program, the Partner may use the VMware Ready™ logo in their Partner Software collateral, as set forth in the Agreement. For details please refer to the [VMware Ready program](#) link.

3.6 Post-Release Activities

This Program component includes support and sustaining policies for Partner Software.

3.6.1 Partner Software Support Policy

Unless otherwise approved in writing by VMware, Partners must provide a public statement of their support policy for Partner Software that can be linked from the Partner-landing page. This public-facing statement should be ready and released prior to GA of the Partner Software, or, if not applicable, prior to posting of the certified Partner Software on the VCG.

Support and troubleshooting of all Partner Software is the responsibility of Partner as per Partner's documented support policy.

For entitled support issues reported to VMware, VMware Global Support Services (GSS) assists customers in problem analysis and resolution. In the event the issue is diagnosed to be directly related to Partner hardware or software, GSS works with the customer to open a collaborative support request (SR) with the Partner. The support flow for the SR follows the VMware support process, as outlined in *Appendix C: VMware Customer Contacts Support Flow*.

3.6.1.1 Support Readiness

The goal for the Partner Software support policy is to ensure an excellent post-sale support experience for the mutual customer, and to drive best of breed customer satisfaction for Partner and VMware. In order for Partner and VMware to be successful with this goal and Program, VMware expects the Partner to provide the following:

- A clearly defined process and escalation contacts between VMware Technical Support and Partner's technical support organizations, to engage each other for smooth handoffs and collaboration for all SRs related to Partner's Partner Software. This process should establish a Senior Support Engineer-to-Senior Support Engineer relationship. For critical escalation, this process should also provide an Escalation Manager-to-Escalation Manager relationship.
- Partner shall provide ability for VMware GSS to be able to open tickets directly with Partner for the sole purpose of troubleshooting mutual customer SRs.
- Partners shall ensure adequate support readiness and training of their support organization to support the Partner Software. Partners must have a support infrastructure in place to appropriately route and track all SRs related to their Partner Software. Additionally, Partner technical support engineers must be trained to have a reasonable understanding of the applicable VMware Partner Software, in order to assist during troubleshooting during any collaborative support effort between VMware and the Partner's support team for a mutual customer situation. To provide the best possible customer support, Partners must have one VMware Certified Professional (VCP) support staff onboard. Partner support teams must be ready to support the Partner Software at or before the general availability date of the Partner Software.
- Partners should appoint a designated technical support contact who is primarily responsible for the support relationship with VMware support organization. This person shall be responsible and shall act as a single point of contact for all support-related activities, including escalations and management of the cooperative support process relationship. This person shall ensure the overall support readiness and training of their support organization to support Partner Software.
- Communications of any changes, updates, patches, etc. to the Partner Software, are to be communicated back to VMware at least 14 days before release to the general public.

3.6.1.2 Hosting of Collaborative Technical Support Process for Mutual Customers

Partner agrees to post current valid support and escalation processes related to Partner Software as part of the VMware dedicated or custom Technical Support Alliance Network ("TSANet").

For the duration of a Partner's participation in this Program, and to retain certification status, the Partner must maintain membership in the Technical Support Alliance Network ("TSANet", www.tsanet.org), and as such join the VMware Private TSANet Community. Any issues found with Partner Software are handled by the corresponding Partner, as described in the Third-Party Hardware and Software Support Policy documentation at <http://www.vmware.com/support/policies/ThirdParty.html>.

Partner shall comply with specific terms and recommendations regarding validation, support, and associated customer communication, as outlined in TSANet guidelines and in this Program Guide.

3.6.1.3 Partner Support Experience

Partner shall open a Support Request with VMware on behalf of an end user via the TSANet channel, when the customer support issue is specifically isolated to a VMware product, or only reproducible on a VMware platform. Partner must resolve the support ticket in accordance with the applicable support agreement between the customer and the Partner.

VMware GSS **Product Support** Teams do not support SDK APIs. During customer situations, if the issue requires troubleshooting of SDK API calls, then Partner should take the lead and work with VMware **Developer Support** in the background.

The Support Call flow for SDK API related issues is shown in Figure 2:

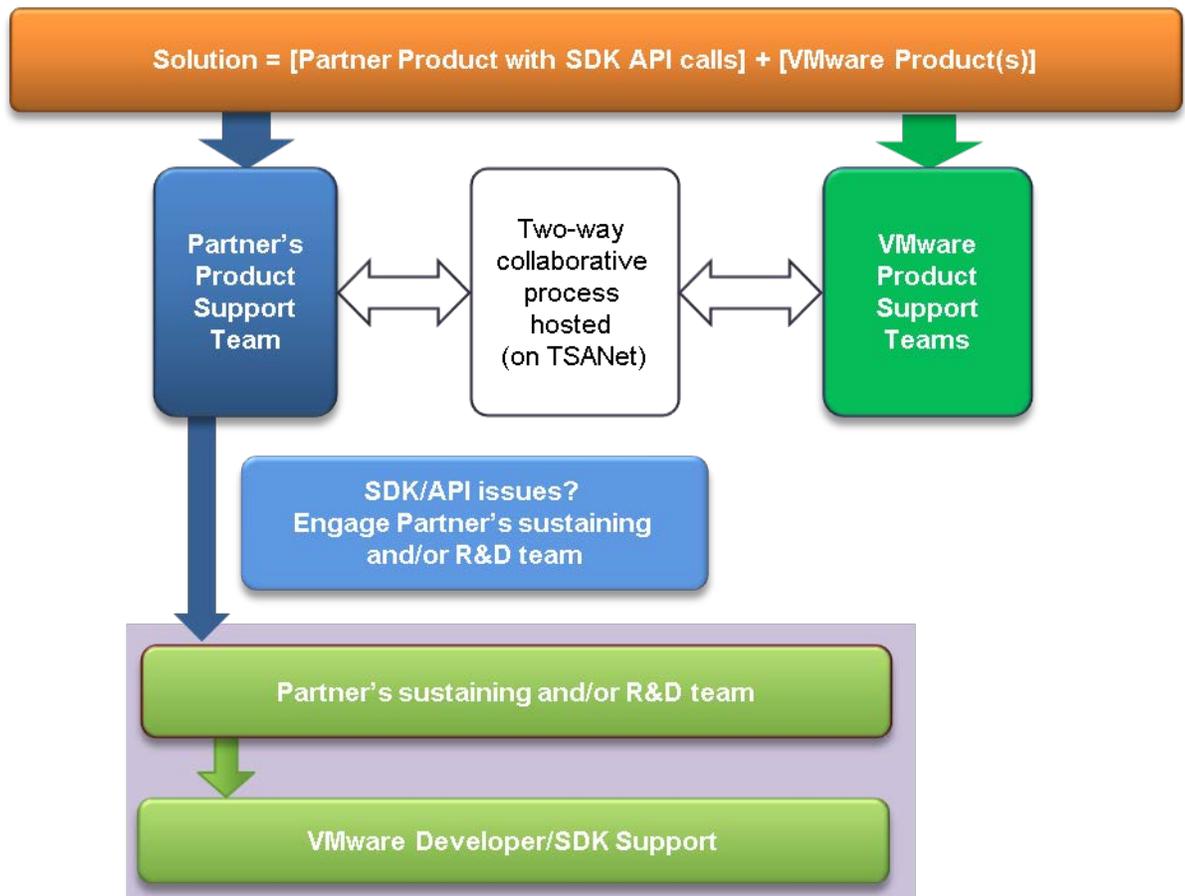


Figure 2: SDK API Support Call Flow.

3.6.1.4 Support Requirements and Process

General Support Terms:

- Partners are requested to provide the “volume” information of customer support issues reported against their Partner Software (open/resolved.)
- Failure to fulfill and/or keep current with support requirements will result in non-compliance from certification perspective.

Support Request Process:

- End users can report software stability and performance issues to VMware if they have reason to believe this is a VMware issue and, provided that the Partner’s software is listed on the VCG website.
- For any issues related to the Partner’s Software, VMware shall initiate a request for technical assistance from the Partner by following the Partner’s support process and procedures posted on TSANet.
- KBs (Knowledge Base articles) are recommended for all Partner Software issues or knowledge that will help end users. VMware provides a link to KBs from the product VCG. <http://blogs.vmware.com/vsphere/2012/05/oldies-but-goodies-site-recovery-manager-setup-videos.html>
http://kb.vmware.com/selfservice/microsites/search.do?language=en_US&cmd=displayKC&externalId=1014610
- VMware and Partners shall work cooperatively to troubleshoot issues to resolution (see also the flowcharts in *Appendix C: VMware Customer Contacts Support Flow* and *Appendix D: Partner Customer Contacts Support Flow*).

3.6.1.5 Transfer of Information (TOI)

Partners are required to provide a training session with select VMware groups on the specifics of the Partner Software. For details regarding the content of the training, refer to *Appendix E: Transfer of Information (TOI)*. Please note that the TOI and support readiness requirements must be met prior to VMware authorizing posting Partner Software on the VCG website.

3.6.1.6 Recommended Partner Training

To provide the best possible customer support, VMware recommends that Partners have one VMware Certified Professional (VCP) support staff on board. To become a VMware Certified Professional, please visit www.vmware.com/services/certification.html to learn about the required instructor-led courses.

3.6.2 Sustaining Policy

Partners are responsible for maintaining their Partner Software by fixing any bugs or security issues and by updating and/or upgrading the software to support new or existing applicable VMware product(s) in a timely manner, as long as the VMware support policy is applicable for that release.

Note that any major change to the Partner Software might affect the certification status. It is highly recommended that the Partner Engineering team work closely with the VMware Program Manager during the Partner Software sustaining process. See Section 3.4.2.1 “Hot Fix Process” for details on how to provide customers with a Hot Fix, as well as on how to re-certify a modified Partner Software.

Should the need arise to provide a customer an immediate fix to address an urgent issue (a “Hot Fix”), Partners must follow the process defined below. To make the Hot Fix available to all customers, Partners must either submit a full re-certification of the modified Partner Software or follow the process outlined in Section 3.4.2.1.

3.6.2.1 Hot Fix Process

VMware considers a Hot Fix to be a fix addressing a specific critical issue found by one or more customers. A Hot Fix is not a mechanism to add features or functionality to existing Partner Software. When a Hot Fix is

necessary, the Partner generates the Hot Fix and notifies VMware that the fix was created, tested, and distributed to those experiencing the problem addressed by the Hot Fix. Partners are strongly urged to run at least a subset of the certification tests against a Hot Fix before releasing it.

Partners must provide a detailed description of the bug and its symptoms to VMware, so that VMware support can direct customers who file new reports of the bug to Partner. This information must be communicated to VMware by completing the Partner Software Hot Fix Notification Form, available on the developer collaboration site. Partner's support organization shall distribute the Hot Fix on a customer-by-customer basis, via a non-public distribution mechanism. Partner shall also provide an estimate as to when the fix can be rolled into an update to the Partner Software, and shall request a review slot with VMware.

In cases where a Hot Fix is not widely distributed (posted version of Partner Software), Partners are advised to track these customer distributions for support calls. Partner shall also provide the Hot Fix itself to VMware, with instructions on how to install the Hot Fix. Any changes to the Partner Software must be re-certified, as described in Section 3.4.2.2 "Re-Certification of Modified Partner Software."

3.6.2.2 Re-Certification of Modified Partner Software

If a Partner modifies certified Partner Software, the partner must certify the new version and submit it to VMware. Internal QA tests should run successfully before requesting the revised Partner Software to be considered by VMware for re-certification. Running all certification tests is recommended, but running a subset of the certification for approval and digital signing tests might be sufficient, if the following conditions are met:

- Partner helps VMware understand the nature, scope, and impact of the changes;
- Partner provides pointers to the user and reference documentation for relevant versions used to build the Partner Software
- Partner provides a list of changes and detailed explanations thereof.

Partners must complete a Re-Test Waiver form and submit this form along with any other applicable information (e.g., test results, source code, diffs, etc.) in the same folder where the Hot Fix notification form was submitted.

3.6.3 VMware Workbench, Dev Kits, and Cert Kits Support Lifecycle Policy

Details of this policy are available online at: <https://developercenter.vmware.com/kits-lifecycle-policy>.

Development Kits and Certification Kits support is dependent on the underlying vSphere product support. The VMware product support policy can be found at: <https://www.vmware.com/support/policies/lifecycle.html>.

4 Re-Validation

This component covers the re-validation of Partner Software when either VMware or Partner software is updated or otherwise modified. This involves doing a re-test waiver submission to check that the Partner Software is modified (check MD5 SUM match).

4.1 VMware Platform Triggers

A new major release of a VMware product requires a full re-certification of any platform-dependent Partner Software. VMware will attempt to notify Partners no later than the VMware product beta timeframe of the upcoming release dates for the major release.

4.2 VMware Product Backward Compatibility

VMware makes efforts to maintain backward compatibility between product update releases and Partner Software. Even with these efforts, VMware cannot guarantee that compatibility will not be broken. In the event that backward compatibility is not maintained and re-certification is required, VMware notifies the Partner and works to re-certify the Partner Software in a timely fashion.

4.3 Partner Software Qualification Triggers

Any bug fix or minor change to Partner Software might require a re-validation of all or a subset of these requirements. Refer to Section 3.4.2.2 “Re-Certification of Modified Partner Software” for further details regarding modified Partner Software.

4.4 Compatibility/Equivalency Claim Process

When Partner releases new versions of the Partner Software re-certification might be required, based on the impact of the changes in the new release(s) from the Partner. Partners are encouraged to run the Certification Tests in addition to their own QA tests, when making any changes, to expose potential issues related to the changes, even when full certification is not required, based upon the descriptions below: All Partner Software certification should follow the guidelines in the Certification guide. Many programs will have dependencies and pre-requisites listed. Some questions/examples that may help determine the re-certification criteria are listed in *Appendix A: Questions to Determine Re-Certification*.

http://www.vmware.com/files/pdf/support/VMware-GSS-Equivalency_and_Compatibility_Request-TP-EN.pdf?cc=www&client=VMware_Site&entqr=0&ud=1&output=xml_no_dtd&proxystylesheet=VMware_gsa_Site&site=VMware_Site&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8&q=equivalency%20claim

Generally, examples of where VMware does or does not take an interest in re-certification of the Partner Software include:

- New H/W versions
- New S/W version
- New Firmware or Updates to existing Firmware
- New Version Numbers
- Product Documentation-Only Updates

New Version Numbers:

Although there is no science to version numbers, major version numbers draw more scrutiny than minor or maintenance versions. Equivalency and Compatibility status might be granted to a new Partner hardware platform that interoperates with the Partner Software. In this case, VMware might require a re-validation of all or a subset of the Partner Software certification tests. Please refer to the certification policy listed for your specific Program.

5 Contact Information

Partners are required to provide contact information for the person who is the primary manager of the Partner relationship with VMware, as well as contact information for the technical manager of the associated engineering projects and for the Customer Support Manager. All contact information is kept strictly confidential. For a sample contact information form that includes all required information elements, see *Appendix F: Sample Partner Contact Information Form*.

6 VMware Release Milestones

Membership in this Program is ongoing, and Partners are entitled to vSphere, vCenter, and vShield Manager update releases, as well as development and certification kit refreshes for the duration of their participation in the Program. Partners shall follow the VMware Ecosystem Engineering Maintenance Release Process.

Table 2 details VMware release life cycle naming conventions. It also lists activities Partners can perform with intermediate releases. When a release becomes available, communications are sent to all Partners via email with information on how to download the release.

Table 2: VMware Release Milestones.

VMware Release Name	Definition	Partner Activities	Release Goals
Early Access	Early access code for early deployment.	Early development and compatibility testing but not certification.	Get feedback and fix problems found by Partners.
Beta	Beta release (for major and minor releases).	Perform development and compatibility testing but not certification, early certification kit available.	Get feedback and fix problems found by Partners and customers.
RC	Release Candidate (for major, minor, update releases).	Perform official certification and make submissions. General release testing has ended. Only release-blocking defects will be considered. If RC software is installed, feedback is expected and should be returned within 21 days of build availability. Reported catastrophic or certification blocking issues including business justification will be considered for delivery in the product release.	Enable certification testing so that Partner Software can be listed on VMware Compatibility Guide at GA.
RTM	Release to Manufacturing (Restricted availability to OEM media kits and product release files provided per prior approval).	NA	NA
GA	General Availability (for major, minor, update patch releases).	Perform official certification and make submissions.	General Availability of production-level product to all Partners and customers.

Partners are encouraged to engage in compatibility testing during beta or early access milestones to identify bugs that might block certification after RC.

Appendix A: Key Web Links

Product-Specific Information

Program website – Login required

VMWARE {code}: <http://code.vmware.com/>

VMware Developer Center Partner Network (DCPN)

Log in access for Developer Center Partner Network is via VMWARE {code}. Click “DC Partner Network” in the top tab.

VMware Solutions Exchange (VSX): <https://www.vmware.com/partners/tech-alliance/vmware-solution-exchange.html>

VMware Ready: <https://www.vmware.com/partners/tech-alliance/vmware-ready.html>

VMware Category: Platform and Compute

VMware Product Download

VMware vSphere (ESX Server & VirtualCenter)

Main Download Page: <http://www.vmware.com/products/vsphere/>

General Support Resources

TAP Alliances: <http://www.vmware.com/partners/tech-alliance.html>

My VMware: <https://my.vmware.com/web/vmware/login>

Technology-related information — such as knowledge base articles, documentation, and user groups — can be found at <http://communities.vmware.com/>

VMware Branding Guidelines: <https://www.vmware.com/brand.html?ref=/brand/portal/guidelines.html>

Partner Central: <http://www.vmware.com/partners/partners.html>

VMware Flings: <http://labs.vmware.com/flings>

VI SDK support: www.vmware.com/go/sdksupport

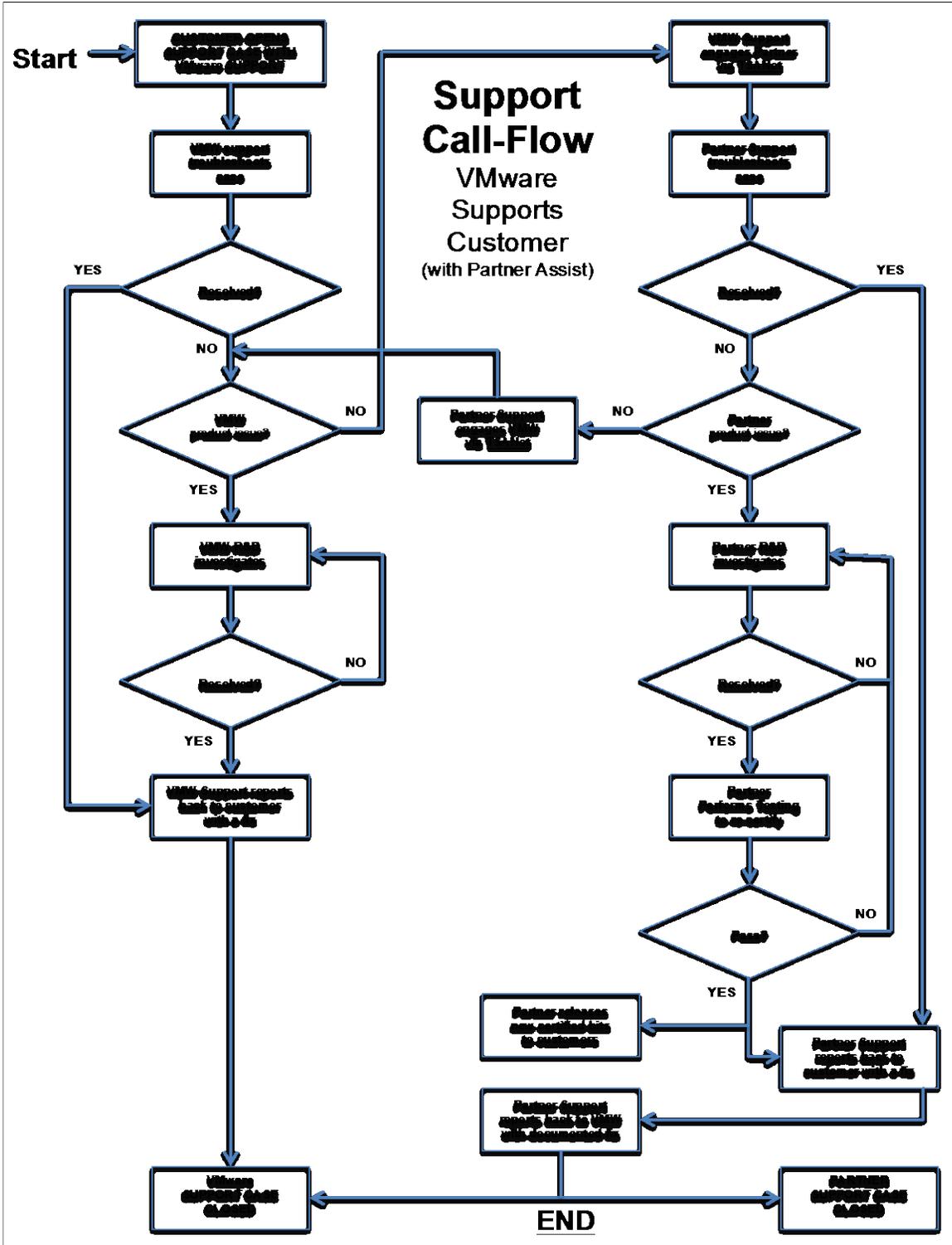
VCP training and resources: <http://mylearn.vmware.com/portals/certification/?ui=www>

General VMware Documentation: <https://www.vmware.com/support/pubs>

VMware Compatibility Guide:

<http://www.vmware.com/resources/compatibility/search.php?action=base&deviceCategory=io>

Appendix B: VMware Customer Contacts Support Call Flow (VMware supports customer with Partner assist)



Appendix D: Transfer of Information (TOI)

Partner shall provide TOI training for VMware (e.g., support, sales, sustaining engineering, QA, Alliances). Partner shall provide a short training to VMware personnel on the specifics of troubleshooting the Partner Software to help isolate the issue.

Note: Partner shall be responsible for supporting the Partner Software. This TOI is intended to ensure that VMware support engineers can easily isolate issues and smoothly engage Partner's support team for further troubleshooting.

Partner shall provide access to additional TOI materials at no charge upon the availability of any updates, upgrades or new versions of Partner Software. Partner's TOI material should cover troubleshooting, internally developed tools, and access to Partner's knowledge database, as necessary to get knowledge of their Partner Software when isolating reported issues.

A significant amount of content can be handled through documentation, which can keep an interactive information transfer to a very short duration. During the interactive session, Partner should, at a minimum, show VMware personnel the error logs from both good states and failed states, and explain the errors codes (or refer to documentation), so that VMware personnel have a basic understanding of what can be expected when fielding customer calls.

The session should be done via WebEx or some other method that enables recording of the training session.

Information to be documented for mutual customers of selected parts being presented at the TOI includes:

1. Prerequisites for Partner Software.
 - a. SW pre-requisites (perl, java, array management software, etc.)
 - b. HW prerequisites (array HW and firmware versions, visibility, credentials, etc.)
 - c. Licensing requirements (yes/no). If yes, please provide details.
2. Partner Software installation (if applicable): step-by-step installation guide.
3. Partner Software initial configuration (config files, UI parameters, special options, etc.), documented list of pre and post installation configuration and optional parameters.
4. Release notes and version information (to include information on known and fixed issues).
5. Product behavior, information on failback process.
6. Array capabilities and basic administration.
7. Troubleshooting:
 - a. List of all error messages, what they mean, appropriate remedies.
 - b. Log files with known results (to include what the Partner Software injects into the Partner Software logs). This should be further broken down to clearly identify:
 - i. Expected good output and what it means (i.e. what is expected when everything is running correctly).
 - ii. Expected bad output and what it means, such as:
 1. This XML block means the arrays can't see each other.
 2. This XML block means that the LUN is not replicated.
 3. This XML block means that something else is broken.
 - c. Log files with error messages with a "verbose mode" option. (Verbose option should be available, but turned off by default; it could be invoked when it is not possible to make a good determination from the default logs.)
8. URL location where customers download the Partner Software.
9. URL location where customers can see their support policy for Partner Software.

Appendix E: Sample Partner Contact Information Form

Partner Alliance/Business Contact

Employee Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Role and Responsibility of Contact: Help with strategic Partner alignment and getting legal agreements signed.

Partner Engineering Manager Contact

Employee Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Partner Technical Support Manager Contact

Employee Name: _____

Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Role and Responsibility of Contact: Manage the support relationship with VMware. He/she will be responsible and will act as a single point of contact for all support related activities including escalations and the management of the TSANet infrastructure. He/she should ensure the overall support readiness and training of their support organization to support their Partner Software.

Appendix F: Glossary of Terms and Acronyms

This Appendix defines acronyms and terms used in this guide.

API	Application Programming Interface
CLI	Command Line Interface
EULA	End User License Agreement
GA	General Availability
GSS	Global Support Services
HCL	Hardware Compatibility List
KB	Knowledge Base
PRD	Product Requirements Document
QA	Quality Assurance
RC	Release Candidate
SAN	Storage Array Network
SDK	Software Development Kit
SR	Support Request
TAP	Technology Alliance Partner
TOI	Transfer of Information
TSANet	Technical Support Alliance Network
vCops	vCenter Operations Manager
VCG	VMware Compatibility Guide
VCP	VMware Certified Professional

Appendix G: VMware Pre-Release Material(s) and Development Kit(s)

Under this Program, VMware may provide to Partner the VMware Pre-Release Material(s) or VMware Development Kit(s) listed below. Partner's use of the VMware Pre-Release Material(s) or VMware Development Kit(s) is subject to the terms and conditions of the Program Agreement.

1. VMware Pre-Release Material(s). Upon general availability release of items a) to n), these items will become VMware Products. Upon general availability release of items o) to p), these items will become VMware Development Kits.
 - a) VMware vSphere 5.x, 6.x
 - b) VMware WorkBench 3.x
 - c) VMware vCenter Server 5.x, 6.x
 - d) Fiber Channel Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - e) FCoE Driver Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - f) SW FCoE Driver Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - g) iBFT Driver Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - h) iSCSI Driver Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - i) Local Storage Driver Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - j) NIC Driver Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - k) SAS Driver Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - l) SRIOV Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - m) Versatile I/O Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - n) VXLAN Offload Certification 5.x, 6.x
 - o) GENEVE Offload Certification 6.x
 - p) VMware Native Device Driver Development Kit 6.x
 - a. Please note the following items concerning the VMware Native Device Driver Development Kit:
 - b. The VMware Native Device Driver Development Kit includes the APIs to build CIM providers. However, if partners are building a CIM provider, they are required to join the CIM program in order to obtain Development Consulting for their CIM provider development and to certify their CIM provider
 - c. The VMware Native Device Driver Development Kit also includes the APIs to build Host Extensions. However, if partners are building Host Extensions, they are required to join the Host Extensions program in order to obtain Development Consulting for their Host

Extension development, and to obtain the “Partner Supported” key. There is no certification program for Host Extensions.

- d. Development Consulting hours purchased for the IOVP program can be used with both the CIM and Host Extensions programs.

- q) VMware VMKLinux Driver Development Kit (DDK) 6.x