

Datassur talk about their ISO 27001 certification success

Thank you to Gilles van Raemdonck, Director of Datassur and Xavier Patris, CISO, for sharing their experience!



What were the reasons for getting certified?

Datassur is a Belgian cooperative company created by insurance companies to facilitate a number of services, mainly concerning data management and application development. By managing these services at a sectorial level, customers are ensured a better service.

As we handle a lot of data for insurance companies, we need to provide the necessary assurance that their data is treated with the necessary rigour and seriousness. Not only do they want to protect their data from their competitors, but it is also a necessity to ensure their customers' personal data is protected, in compliance with European laws and regulations. The ISO 27001 certification provides external confirmation that we are committed to data protection, security and privacy.

"As well as demand from our current customers, the certification demonstrates our commitment to safeguarding data and information management to potential new customers."

Gilles Van Raemdonck, Director of Datassur

Additionally, we often receive security related due diligence questionnaires from customers that entrust us with their data. Being ISO certified makes it easier to answer these questions and prove we take data processing seriously. The process is therefore accelerated with the certification.

What was the scope of the project?

We didn't exclude anything from the scope of our certification and even included Assuralia's IT as we have people who work across both companies. Although these are two separate entities, we wanted to include everything and everyone in the process.

Due to the complex nature of the work repartition for people working both for Datassur and Assuralia, Approach advised us to include them into the scope of the certification to ensure we covered everything.

Based on the same logic, we decided to include our other services too. By doing so, we provide all of our customers with the same assurances when it comes to data protection and so we have implemented important processes across the entire company.

The scope was decided during a pre-project together with Approach.

What was the necessary investment in terms of resources and time to complete the project?

In terms of time, we began the project in March 2019 and we were certified in December 2021. The process would have been quicker had there not been a pandemic in 2020 which slowed everything down.

When it comes to people, our CISO spearheaded the project alongside the IT team and our developers. Our businesspeople were also involved to a lesser extent, only when it made sense in the process.

There was also clear support from the board which helped keep the project on track.

Why use an external partner to support your certification process?

Mainly because we didn't have the expertise in-house to run this project smoothly. Furthermore, because of the number of controls included in the ISO certification, it was important for us to have expert advice to determine how far we needed to go with each point in order to meet the requirements.

Additionally, by having an external expert run the project and set the pace, we could ensure the project did not get postponed or delayed due to other priorities.

What are your recommendations for organisations interested in an ISO 27001 certification?

From the beginning you need to keep in mind that the workload doesn't decrease after the certification process is finalised. Once you get certified, you need to maintain your certificate by continuously maintaining and improving your Information Security Management System (ISMS). It's a long-term project that requires resources, funding, a clear idea of the project but also the support of your shareholders in order to succeed.

Being a small company, we decided to involve the whole team to include everyone from the beginning and not make it a top-down project. Although it may make the process a bit slower, it increases the willingness of the teams further down the line.

Why did you choose Approach?

After comparing several offers, Approach were the only ones who took our structure into account during the pre-project, which allowed us to better define the scope of the project.

Xavier Patris, CISO Datassur

The personalized offer meant a service more suited to our company culture and objectives.

Another key factor in our decision was the desire to have experienced consultants with a certain level of seniority to lead the project and guide us along the way.

About Datassur:

Datassur strengthens the efficiency and societal role of the insurance industry with a range of data driven services.

Founded and owned by insurance companies, Datassur has been the data hub of the sector for more than 25 years. It offers services, mainly concerning application development and data management and processing. By managing these services at a sectorial level, customers are ensured of efficiency gains, improved risk evaluation and a better service to the end-customer.

Special consideration is given to ensuring that Datassur's services do not distort the competition between insurance companies, are distribution channel-neutral and respect the privacy of the insured.

www.datassur.be

About Approach:

Approach is a pure-play cyber security and privacy firm.

For more than 20 years, we have been building trust in the cyberspace and helping our clients deal with cyber-attacks, incidents, and breaches.

We offer 360-degree solutions to improve your cyber resilience: anticipate, prevent, protect, detect, respond, and recover.

We provide tailored and local services matching your needs: consulting and audit services, training and awareness, security technology implementation and development services, and outsourced Managed Security Services thanks to our own Security Operations Centre (SOC).

Approach is a scaleup company with a team of a hundred people spread across several sites in Belgium and Switzerland. Our company is ISO 27001 certified and ISO27701 verified. Approach has received the label: Cybersecurity Made in Europe™.

www.approach.be