# Switzerland's Digital Trust Label: Building Trust Infrastructure for the Swiss and Global AI Economy

How CertX and SGS are operationalizing digital trust certification

CERTX

SGS

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## Executive Summary

Switzerland is emerging as one of the most credible global ecosystems for digital trust governance and AI assurance. As artificial intelligence, digital platforms and automated decision-making systems become increasingly embedded into critical sectors, organizations face growing pressure to demonstrate that their digital services are secure, transparent, accountable, resilient and trustworthy.

The Digital Trust Label was developed in Switzerland by the Swiss Digital Initiative as one of the world's first operational trust labels specifically designed for digital services and AI-enabled systems. Unlike many high-level AI ethics initiatives, the Digital Trust Label operationalizes trust through measurable controls, independent auditing and certification.

The framework evaluates digital services through 35 criteria organized across four dimensions: Security, Data Protection, Reliability and Fair User Interaction. In January 2025, the Swiss Digital Initiative transferred the Digital Trust Label to SGS. Within this ecosystem, CertX now takes the operational lead in delivering and scaling Digital Trust Label certification.

As part of SGS, CertX is positioned as a specialized Swiss trust assurance and AI certification actor supporting organizations seeking to demonstrate trustworthy digital practices and operational AI governance.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 35<br><br>measurable criteria | 4<br><br>trust dimensions | 3 years<br><br>certification validity | AI-ready<br><br>governance and assurance scope |

Digital trust is no longer only a communication promise. It is becoming a certifiable operational capability and a market differentiator for organizations deploying digital and AI-enabled services.

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## 1. Switzerland and the Emergence of Digital Trust

Switzerland has historically built its international reputation around trust, neutrality, governance quality and institutional credibility. These characteristics are now becoming increasingly relevant in the digital economy.

As digital services and AI systems become embedded into healthcare, finance, mobility, public services and critical infrastructure, the question of trust has become central. Organizations are no longer evaluated only on innovation or technical capability. They are increasingly evaluated on their ability to demonstrate accountability, transparency, resilience and responsible digital practices.

This evolution creates a strategic opportunity for Switzerland. The Digital Trust Label reflects a Swiss approach to digital governance: pragmatic, measurable, multi-stakeholder and operational. Developed by the Swiss Digital Initiative with support from experts across academia, industry, legal governance and technology, the Label was designed to transform abstract discussions around trustworthy AI into a real-world certification framework.

## 2. Why Digital Trust Has Become a Strategic Business Issue

The digital economy is experiencing a structural trust challenge. Consumers, enterprises and regulators increasingly question how AI systems make decisions, how personal data is processed, whether digital services are secure, and whether automated systems can be trusted.

Repeated cybersecurity incidents, data breaches, algorithmic opacity and growing concerns around AI bias have accelerated mistrust. At the same time, regulatory pressure is increasing rapidly through frameworks such as the EU AI Act, GDPR, NIS2 and the Cyber Resilience Act.

Organizations now face a new reality: trust must be operationalized and independently demonstrated. This is precisely where the Digital Trust Label becomes strategically important.

## 3. From Digital Ethics to Operational Trust

Over the past decade, hundreds of AI ethics principles and digital responsibility frameworks have emerged globally. However, many remain theoretical and difficult to operationalize.

The Digital Trust Label was created to bridge the gap between ethical intention and measurable implementation. The Swiss Digital Initiative described the framework as “a combination of an organic label and a nutrition fact table for the digital world.”

The ambition is simple but powerful: make digital trust understandable, make trust measurable, and create independent verification mechanisms. The result is a framework capable of translating governance principles into auditable operational criteria.

## 4. The Architecture of the Digital Trust Label

The Digital Trust Label evaluates digital services through 35 measurable criteria organized across four dimensions. This multidimensional structure is one of the strongest differentiators of the Label: it does not only evaluate technical compliance; it evaluates whether a digital service behaves in a trustworthy and responsible manner.

| Dimension | Assessment focus | Typical evidence areas |
|---|---|---|
| Security | Protection of the digital service against unauthorized access, misuse and cyber threats. | Encryption, authentication, secure updates, vulnerability management, incident reporting. |
| Data Protection | Transparent, lawful and user-centric handling of personal and sensitive data. | Data processing transparency, consent, retention policies, anonymization, access rights. |
| Reliability | Operational resilience, continuity and accountability of the digital service. | Resilience, disaster recovery, operational continuity, accountability, legal transparency. |
| Fair User Interaction | Non-manipulative, explainable and inclusive interaction between users and the digital service. | Non-discriminatory access, dark patterns, manipulative interfaces, AI transparency, human oversight. |

Table 1 — Four trust dimensions of the Digital Trust Label.

## 5. The AI Assurance Dimension

One of the most forward-looking aspects of the Digital Trust Label is its approach to AI governance and AI assurance. The framework explicitly requires organizations to disclose when AI systems are used, explain automated decision-making mechanisms, communicate algorithmic risks, assess robustness and resilience, and provide mechanisms for human review.

This positions the Label beyond traditional cybersecurity certification. It increasingly functions as an operational AI assurance framework aligned with the future direction of trustworthy AI regulation and governance.

## 6. CertX and SGS: Scaling Trust Infrastructure

A major evolution occurred in January 2025 when the Swiss Digital Initiative transferred the Digital Trust Label to SGS. This transition marked the evolution of the Label from an innovation initiative into scalable certification infrastructure.

Within this ecosystem, CertX now takes the operational lead in delivering and scaling Digital Trust Label certification. As part of SGS, CertX combines AI assurance expertise, cybersecurity knowledge, conformity assessment capabilities, governance evaluation and certification operations.

This positioning makes CertX one of the strategically relevant Swiss actors in the emerging market for digital trust assurance and trustworthy AI certification.

CertX positioning

CertX brings together functional safety, cybersecurity and AI assurance capabilities to help organizations demonstrate safe, secure and trustworthy products, processes and digital services.

## 7. Certification Journey

Organizations obtain the Digital Trust Label through a structured independent certification process. The journey transforms trust from a communication concept into a measurable operational capability.

| Step | Certification stage | Purpose | Output |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Scope definition | Identify the digital service, platform or AI-enabled application to be certified. | Confirmed certification scope. |
| 2 | Stage 1 audit | Prepare a tailored assessment approach based on complexity, technologies and governance context. | Audit report including a potential first list of findings |
| 3 | Stage 2 audit | Evaluate the service against the 35 Digital Trust criteria across the four dimensions. | Assessment findings and evidence trail. |
| 4 | Expert review | Independently review audit findings to validate conformity with Label requirements. | Validated certification recommendation. |
| 5 | Certification | Issue certification once requirements are met. | Digital Trust Label certification, valid for three years. |
| 6 | Surveillance audit | They take place after one and two years to ensure the maintenance of the relevant procedures and associated documents to comply with the label. | Audit report |

Table 2 — Typical Digital Trust Label certification journey.

## 8. Why This Matters for Organizations

The Digital Trust Label creates value well beyond compliance. For organizations, certification can:

- Strengthen enterprise credibility.
- Improve procurement positioning.
- Increase customer confidence.
- Demonstrate governance maturity.
- Reduce reputational risk.

As AI adoption accelerates, independently validated trust practices will increasingly become a competitive differentiator. Organizations that can demonstrate trustworthy digital practices early will gain strategic advantages in the next phase of the digital economy.

## 9. Conclusion

The Digital Trust Label represents one of the most advanced attempts globally to operationalize digital trust. It transforms abstract conversations around AI ethics, cybersecurity, transparency and accountability into a measurable certification framework.

The involvement of SGS and the operational leadership of CertX mark an important evolution in the market. Digital trust is no longer simply a policy discussion. It is becoming infrastructure for the AI economy.

By leading Digital Trust Label certification, CertX contributes to building the trust layer required for the next generation of trustworthy AI systems, responsible digital services and accountable digital ecosystems. In the future digital economy, organizations will increasingly compete not only on innovation, but on trust.

CertX AG

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