



Discover why Accelleo selected Cyberfort to help them achieve their ISO 27001 certification in record time

Industry:
Defence &
Security

Location:
United Kingdom

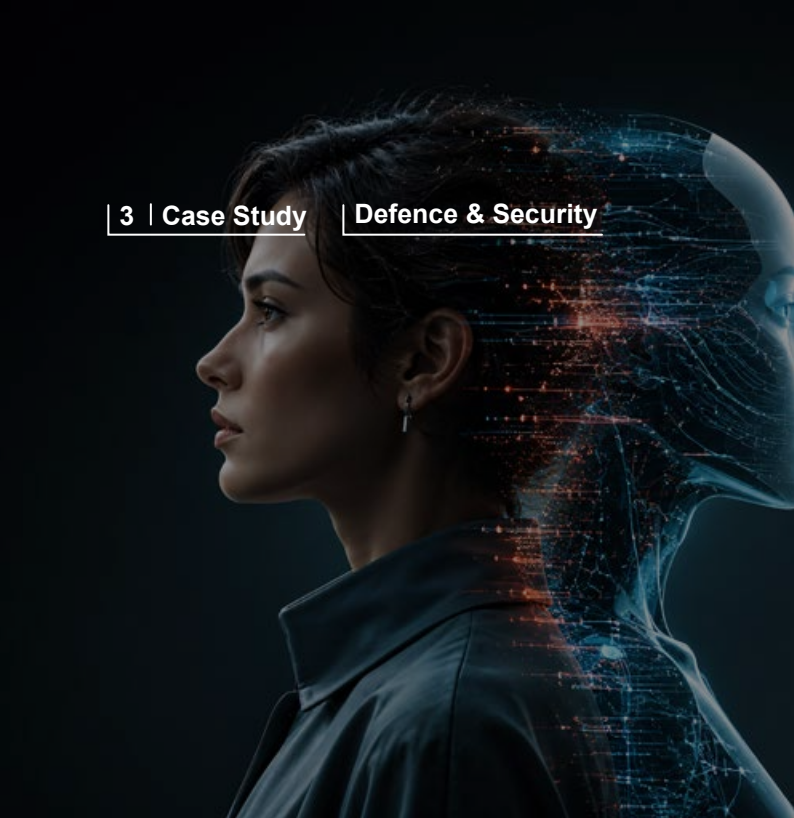


Introduction

Accelleo is a UK sovereign, defence focused AI company working with major defence clients to deliver secure, data driven AI solutions. Founded by former defence and security leaders, the company operates in high risk environments where trust, assurance and governance are non negotiable. The company drives an outcomes-first approach that enables organisations to adopt AI at scale, improving operational effectiveness and automation. In 2025 the leadership team made ISO 27001 certification a strategic priority, not as an end in itself, but as the foundation of an integrated approach to assurance that strengthens Accelleo's internal controls and gives clients the confidence to adopt AI at scale.

To achieve this at pace and to the highest standard, Accelleo engaged Cyberfort to work alongside its teams, a deliberate choice to bring in dedicated expertise while keeping its own people focused on client delivery and innovation. The result was full ISO 27001 UKAS certification in under 3 months.

This case study explores why Accelleo decided to use a specialist ISO 27001 consultancy partner for this work, the challenges they faced, and the key outcomes of the decision.



Understanding the situation

In early 2025 Accelleo had started to grow rapidly with plans to grow from 15 to 30 employees in the next 12 months. This growth had come about as client demand increased for their services fuelled by the boom in defence organisations reviewing, assessing and implementing AI solutions across their organisations. As a supplier into the UK Defence market credibility and trust is a crucial pillar for business success.

Operating at the forefront of applied AI in defence, Accelleo needed to give its clients confidence quickly, not just through innovation, but through demonstrable, globally recognized assurance certifications like ISO 27001.

Key Challenges

The experienced leadership team at Accelleo realised ISO 27001 certification was a 'must have' to secure client confidence and position the organisation as a market leader in AI assurance. They knew based on past experiences that the ISO 27001 process can be 'painful' due to the amount of effort required and the changing landscape of technology, data and security regulations. With a lean team and a tight timeframe, partnering with specialists was the fastest, most efficient route to certification.

Based on these challenges, it was decided to go to market and review suppliers who had the right credentials, capabilities and customer understanding of the UK Defence sector to help them obtain ISO 27001 certification.

The business needed a credible ISO 27001 consultancy partner who could:

- Move fast in line with their technology innovation roadmaps
- Provide strategic planning, stakeholder education and hands on implementation
- Be flexible, collaborative and cost certain for a growing organisation
- Give insight and feedback on how to build a 'risk aware' culture
- Put in place the right monitoring and measurement of the ISMS for continual improvement
- Give guidance on changing data and security regulations which affect the UK Defence sector

The customer interviewed several organisations specialising in ISO 27001 implementation for technology companies. Many organisations interviewed for the opportunity unfortunately did not have a deep understanding of the UK Defence sector, technical capabilities to manage an end-to-end ISO 27001 process in a timely manner, or experience of dealing with stakeholders in a fast-growing business. After a thorough selection process, Accelleo partnered with Cyberfort who have a track record of helping fast-growing organisations secure ISO 27001 certification.

The Solution

Once selected for the work it became clear that Cyberfort had the right credentials, capabilities and experience for ISO 27001 certification. Cyberfort's senior consultants had hands on experience of working with other defence contractors for ISO 27001 and understood the potential knowledge gaps, pitfalls and nuanced policy, process and system changes Accelleo needed to make to be successful in attaining ISO 27001 certification.

The consultancy engagement comprised five stages:

1 Initial Gap Assessment

Cyberfort started the engagement with a rapid gap assessment comprising of interviews, document reviews, and a maturity scoring exercise. This assessment would be crucial for the rest of the programme and covered:

- Reviewing all policies and identifying which ones were outdated or missing
- Risk assessment methods the company were using and where improvements needed to be made
- The internal auditing frameworks and what they were based on vs industry best practice
- Access controls between teams, systems and processes
- Analysing backup and recovery plans, testing them against key performance indicators such as RTO, storage efficiency and RPO

Following this gap assessment the ISMS design could take place.

2 ISMS Design

Cyberfort led the development of a lean, effective Information Security Management System tailored to the Customers real risks. This included:

- Policy Suite - Information Security, Acceptable Use, Access Control, Data Classification, Incident Response, and more.
- Risk Register - A centralised, reviewed monthly, risk register aligned to specific mitigation actions.
- Asset Inventory - Defined all assets (digital, physical, personnel) with ownership and classification.
- Roles & Responsibilities - Mapped out security roles across all departments in the company.

Crucially, Cyberfort didn't impose an 'administrative headache' for Accelleo. Every document and control was designed in an efficient and effective manner tailored to the customers growth plans.

3 Implementation Support

Cyberfort ensured they were in step with Accelleo's teams for 3 months, coaching and enabling each department to put the ISMS into practice. Examples of this approach included:

- HR implemented onboarding/offboarding checklists.
- Technology Development teams embedded access reviews into sprint retrospectives.
- Client facing teams updated playbooks to reflect incident escalation steps.
- A Governance, Risk and Compliance platform for audit trails.
- Endpoint protection with automated compliance reporting.

4 Internal Audit and Pre-Certification Review

Before facing the real audit, Cyberfort conducted a full internal audit, simulating the certification process so there were no surprises and any potential risk to certification were mitigated. The issues from the simulation were all highlighted and rectified within a week.

5 External Audit and Certification

Cyberfort coordinated with BSI auditors throughout the whole process to ensure a validated path to success was followed and stayed on through the audit process. The outcome was Accelleo passed ISO 27001 certification on first attempt, with no nonconformities.

Business and Technology Outcomes

Accelleo, by using Cyberfort saw several measurable benefits by undertaking the ISO 27001 certification. These included:



Speed to Certification

ISO 27001 was achieved within 3 months compared to industry norms of 5 – 6 months. Cyberfort's experience, systems and processes for ISO 27001 enabled improvements to be made as the organisation went through the accreditation process. It also enabled the customer to quickly satisfy MOD due diligence hurdles and win further work in record time.



Cost efficiency

By using the Cyberfort team it was estimated that ISO 27001 certification was achieved using less than a third of the resource/time it would have taken Accelleo's internal team to undertake the same process. Partnering with Cyberfort enabled Accelleo to focus its internal teams on product innovation and client work rather than compliance tasks. Additionally, Cyberfort's flexible cost certainty model enabled payments to be made over time and were not 'front end' loaded.



Enhanced Credibility

Accelleo was able to use Cyberfort's reputation and domain experience to gain trust with BSI and its clients throughout the process. The certification will help legitimise the company in conversations with senior leaders in high level government departments and suppliers in the UK Defence ecosystem. The certification proves maturity, responsibility and awareness of security risks and will demonstrate its ability to deal with any upcoming security and data protection challenges it may face.



Strategic Insight beyond ISO 27001

Cyberfort's security, compliance and resilience experience meant that it wasn't just ISO 27001 certification skills Accelleo had access to. They were able to draw on Cyberfort's experience to overcome other operational challenges outside of ISO 27001 and use Cyberfort's UK Defence sector knowledge in the testing of new solutions for their clients.



Flexibility and Agility

The Cyberfort team through mature project planning processes were able to identify newly emerging issues and challenges as Accelleo went through the ISO 27001 certification process. In many cases issues which were identified were resolved and solutions deployed in under a week.



Foundation for integrated assurance

ISO 27001 is now a core part of Accelleo's integrated approach to assurance, sitting alongside ISO/IEC 42001. Internally, it embeds risk management and security controls into everyday operations; for clients, it provides the confidence to adopt Accelleo's AI at scale, in complex, no-fail environments.

Final Thoughts

Accelleo's path to ISO 27001 accreditation was a turning point in its growth story. By bringing in a specialised consultancy partner, they avoided common pitfalls, built a right-sized ISMS, and achieved certification in record time. More importantly, they gained customer trust and credibility that positioned them for further opportunities, and laid the assurance foundation that now underpins how clients trust and adopt Accelleo's AI at scale.

For fast-growing, tech-driven companies, the decision to use Cyberfort isn't about taking a shortcut, it's about taking the right path to security, resilience and compliance.

When we undertook our ISO 27001 certification process, having the right consultancy partner was crucial for us, as a highly agile defence facing business we needed a partner that could work with our delivery teams, and across the business. Cyberfort demonstrated throughout the certification process that they had the skills, capabilities and credibility to help us achieve ISO 27001 in record time. They took the time to understand our challenges, had knowledge of our sector and delivered on all their promises in a timely, cost-effective way.

What set Cyberfort apart was how they supported not just the technical process, but the people behind it - helping align the whole company and get everyone facing in the same direction. Certification of this kind requires organisational buy-in at every level, and Cyberfort were instrumental in making that happen, as well as supporting the longer-term aims of the business.

Their recommendation to use BSI as our certification body proved to be the right call. As a UK government-approved accreditation body with unmatched credibility in the market, BSI stood above the rest - and Cyberfort's existing relationship and experience working with them gave us confidence from day one that we were in safe hands throughout the assessment process.

Most importantly for me, they became part of our team, working alongside us at all times rather than parachuting in as an external resource. That relationship has only strengthened since certification; the trust built during the process means Cyberfort remain a valued, long-term partner - embedded alongside our teams as we continue to mature our security posture.

By working with Cyberfort we have achieved ISO 27001 certification in 3 months and enabled us to embed assurance and risk management at the core of the business.

Chief Information Security Officer – Accelleo



Working with fast-growing innovators means balancing precision with pace. This team had the vision and capability, they just needed a partner who could translate ISO 27001 into something achievable and meaningful for their business.

We tailored every step to fit how they actually work; not just how the standard is written.

They weren't just checking a compliance box; they were building trust with the UK Defence community and needed that accreditation to open doors and validate their credibility.

We understood the pressures they were under, tight timelines, evolving client expectations, and the need to maintain momentum while strengthening security foundations.

That's where our experience really made the difference. We brought structure without slowing them down, clarity without bureaucracy, and gave them the tools to own their compliance going forward. It wasn't about forcing them to adapt to a rigid framework; it was about adapting the framework to fit their mission.

**Nige Wilkinson,
Chief Operating Officer -
Cyberfort**

