Both AWS Control Tower and AWS Landing Zone help enterprises to set up and manage secure multi-account AWS environments. If you are a novice to AWS, it is better to use AWS Control Tower or if you need a configurable landing zone with full customization options and control, use AWS Landing Zone.

**References:**

<https://aws.amazon.com/controltower/>

<https://aws.amazon.com/solutions/implementations/aws-landing-zone/>

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **AWS LANDING ZONE** | **AWS CONTROL TOWER** |
| **AWS Landing Zone** is another solution by AWS, which is a well-architected, multi-account baseline that follows AWS best practices and provides guardrails for governance, security, compliance, and operations. | based on best-practices and enables governance using guardrails from a pre-packaged list. With AWS Control Tower, new AWS accounts can be provisioned in few clicks, while your AWS accounts will still conform to your company-wide policies |
| provides a baseline to get started with governance, data security, multi-account architecture, identity and access management, network design, and logging. | AWS Control Tower can automate the setup of a new landing zone using best-practices blueprints for federated access, identity, and account structure |
| saves time by automating an environment’s setup for running secure and scalable workloads | AWS Control Tower can automate the setup of a new landing zone using best-practices blueprints for federated access, identity, and account structure |
| Landing Zone comes with rich customization options. Some of the customer add-ons include Active Directory, Okta Directory, etc. Ongoing changes and modifications can be done through code deployments using configuration pipelines. | Preventive & Detective Guardrails. Control Tower automatically translates guardrails into suitable AWS policies. Supports for mandatory and optional guardrails  AWS Control Tower is free, but the configured services and policies are not free. |
| Features: 1. Automated landing zone2. Controls for governance3. Best practice blueprints4. Comprehensive insights |  |
| Use cases: 1. Set up and manage a multi-account environment2. Govern at scale with preconfigured controls | Use cases: 1. Set up and manage a multi-account environment2. Govern at scale with preconfigured controls |
| * Key Benefits: Allows implementing multiple core accounts in an organization. * Automates setup of an AWS environment (IaC) * Automates provisioning of accounts. * Builds a baseline for security. | **KEY BENEFITS**   * Helps to set up and configure a new AWS Environment quickly. * Multiple teams can provision new AWS accounts quickly. * All the accounts will get aligned with centrally established, company-wide policies. * Automate ongoing policy management * View policy level summaries of your AWS Environment * AWS workloads can be managed using rules for security, operations, and internal compliance |

**KEY DIFFERENCES**

Though both look similar and are created for similar purposes by AWS, there are some differences too. The following section gives a brief comparison of key differences between the two AWS technologies for managing multi-account environments.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **FEATURE/FUNCTION** | **AWS Landing Zone** | **AWS Control Tower** |
| Launched in | June 2018 | June 2019 |
| Delivery mechanism | CloudFormation and Terraform | AWS Managed Service |
| Architectural Support | Fully customizable and owned by the customer | Customizable via solution + AWS recommends best practices with managed blueprints and guardrails. |
| Account Structure | Complete flexibility for customer-defined account structure | Non-configurable core accounts with no SS and no Amazon VPC in core |
| Federated Access | Supports AWS SSO, Microsoft AD or Active Directory Connectors | It comes preconfigured with AWS SSO (Active Directory or Single Sign-On) and integrated with third-party SSO providers |
| Operations | Capabilities of Landing Zone are extensible to manage the most complex and advanced environments. | Simple setup and management for reduced operational overhead |
| Use existing AWS Organization. | Yes | No |
| Use existing SSO environment. | Yes | No |
| Use existing AWS Service Catalog environment. | Yes | No |
| When to use? | You are building a new offering or having teams starting on their AWS journey or are entirely new to AWS. Use when you want a self-service experience to set up a new AWS environment based on a landing zone with preconfigured blueprints. And then you want to govern your accounts with preconfigured guardrails interactively. | You are looking for rich customizations and configurations. AWS Landing Zone comes with such options and add-ons. Example: Active Directory, Okta Directory, etc. Ongoing changes and modifications can also be done through code deployments using configuration pipelines. |