



**NIST Special Publication  
NIST SP 800-92r1 ipd**

# **Cybersecurity Log Management Planning Guide**

Initial Public Draft

Karen Scarfone  
Murugiah Souppaya

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Initial Public Draft

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10 these new publications by NIST.

11 Organizations are encouraged to review all draft publications during public comment periods and provide feedback  
12 to NIST. Many NIST cybersecurity publications, other than the ones noted above, are available at  
13 <https://csrc.nist.gov/publications>.

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39 **Submit Comments**  
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44 100 Bureau Drive (Mail Stop 2000) Gaithersburg, MD 20899-2000

45 **All comments are subject to release under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).**  
46

47 **Abstract**

48 A log is a record of events that occur within an organization’s computing assets, including  
49 physical and virtual platforms, networks, services, and cloud environments. Log management is  
50 the process for generating, transmitting, storing, accessing, and disposing of log data. It  
51 facilitates log usage and analysis for many purposes, including identifying and investigating  
52 cybersecurity incidents, finding operational issues, and ensuring that records are stored for the  
53 required period of time. This document defines a playbook intended to help any organization  
54 plan improvements to its cybersecurity log management.

55 **Keywords**

56 auditing; cybersecurity artifacts; incident response; log management; logging; threat detection.

57 **Reports on Computer Systems Technology**

58 The Information Technology Laboratory (ITL) at the National Institute of Standards and  
59 Technology (NIST) promotes the U.S. economy and public welfare by providing technical  
60 leadership for the Nation’s measurement and standards infrastructure. ITL develops tests, test  
61 methods, reference data, proof of concept implementations, and technical analyses to advance  
62 the development and productive use of information technology. ITL’s responsibilities include the  
63 development of management, administrative, technical, and physical standards and guidelines for  
64 the cost-effective security and privacy of other than national security-related information in  
65 federal information systems. The Special Publication 800-series reports on ITL’s research,  
66 guidelines, and outreach efforts in information system security, and its collaborative activities  
67 with industry, government, and academic organizations.

## 68 **Audience**

69 This publication has been created for cybersecurity staff and program managers; system,  
70 network, and application administrators; incident response teams; and others who perform duties  
71 related to cybersecurity log management. Its content is intended to be relevant to any  
72 organization. Certain portions of the document are specific to federal agencies.

## 73 **Acknowledgments**

74 The authors thank everyone who has contributed to this publication or the original NIST SP 800-  
75 92.

## 76 **Note to Reviewers**

77 NIST welcomes public comments on any aspect of this publication, including the following  
78 questions asked on behalf of the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the  
79 Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA):

- 80 1. This revision is informed by NIST SP 800-207 and the NCCoE's Zero Trust Architecture  
81 project calling out data analytics for zero trust purposes. Should the scope of this  
82 publication be expanded to directly support and map to zero trust?
- 83 2. Should this publication be expanded to include log management implementation  
84 guidance?
- 85 3. Are there additional considerations for different types of log sources that should be  
86 included in this publication (e.g., on-premises, cloud, managed services, or hybrid)?
- 87 4. Should the standardization of log management planning to facilitate the sharing of cyber  
88 threats or incidents be included?
- 89 5. Should guidance on how to determine the purposefulness of logging categories and types  
90 be included?
- 91 6. Should guidance for determining storage retention periods be included?
- 92 7. Should this publication address how new technologies may change log management  
93 planning (e.g., blockchains, zero trust, generative AI, quantum computing)?
- 94 8. Should this publication address how and which major triggers may necessitate reviewing  
95 or changing log management plans?
- 96 9. Should this publication address storage costs and offer guidance on prioritizations and  
97 trade-offs for cost-effective log management planning?

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102 would be required for compliance with the guidance or requirements in this Information  
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104 directly stated in this ITL Publication or by reference to another publication. This call also  
105 includes disclosure, where known, of the existence of pending U.S. or foreign patent applications  
106 relating to this ITL draft publication and of any relevant unexpired U.S. or foreign patents.

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120 assurance, provisions sufficient to ensure that the commitments in the assurance are binding on  
121 the transferee, and that the transferee will similarly include appropriate provisions in the event of  
122 future transfers with the goal of binding each successor-in-interest.

123 The assurance shall also indicate that it is intended to be binding on successors-in-interest  
124 regardless of whether such provisions are included in the relevant transfer documents.

125 Such statements should be addressed to: [log-mgmt@nist.gov](mailto:log-mgmt@nist.gov)

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156

## 157 **Executive Summary**

158 A *log* is a record of the events that occur within an organization’s computing assets, including  
159 physical and virtual platforms, networks, services, and cloud environments. *Log management* is  
160 the process for generating, transmitting, storing, accessing, and disposing of log data. It  
161 facilitates log usage and analysis for many purposes, including identifying and investigating  
162 cybersecurity incidents, finding operational issues, and ensuring that records are stored for the  
163 required period of time. Logging and log management practices are part of many cybersecurity  
164 and privacy-related laws and regulations. They are also an important part of numerous standards,  
165 guidance, and other sets of recommendations for every sector.

166 The purpose of this document is to help all organizations improve their log management so that  
167 they have the log data they need. This document’s scope is organization-wide cybersecurity log  
168 management planning; all other aspects of logging and log management are out of scope. The  
169 document defines a playbook for cybersecurity log management planning with actionable steps  
170 that organizations can take for planning improvements to their log management practices. While  
171 the plays in the playbook are not comprehensive, they are noteworthy and generally beneficial to  
172 organizations. The plays intentionally avoid any recommendations on the details of log  
173 management. Log management needs are incredibly variable from one organization to another  
174 and frequently change.

175 This playbook can help organizations identify and prioritize their needs and determine how to  
176 best meet those needs. There is no “correct” way for an organization to use the playbook. An  
177 organization may choose to use it as the start of its own new playbook for log management  
178 planning, integrate it with an existing log management playbook, or use its information as  
179 reference material when considering its plans, policies, and processes.

## 180 1. Introduction

181 A *log* is a record of the events that occur within an organization’s computing assets, including  
182 physical and virtual platforms, networks, services, and cloud environments. Logs are composed  
183 of log entries, and each *entry* contains information related to a specific *event*, which is an  
184 observable occurrence in a computing asset. Logs serve many functions within most  
185 organizations, such as optimizing system and network performance, recording the actions of  
186 users, and providing useful data for investigating malicious activity. Many logs contain records  
187 that are relevant for cybersecurity, such as operating system logs that capture system events and  
188 audit records, application logs that capture application operational and security events, and  
189 cybersecurity software logs that record routine events, adverse events, and possible malicious  
190 activity.

191 *Log management* is the process for generating, transmitting, storing, accessing, and disposing of  
192 log data. It facilitates an organization’s log usage and analysis. Log management can benefit an  
193 organization in many ways. For example, it helps ensure that records are stored in sufficient  
194 detail for an appropriate period of time. The continuous monitoring and analysis of logs are  
195 beneficial for identifying security incidents, policy violations, fraudulent activity, and  
196 operational problems shortly after they have occurred, and for providing useful information for  
197 resolving such problems. Logs can also be useful for performing auditing and forensic analysis,  
198 supporting the organization’s internal investigations, establishing baselines, verifying that assets  
199 operate as intended, and identifying operational trends and long-term problems.

200 Logging and log management practices are part of many cybersecurity and privacy-related laws,  
201 regulations, standards, guidance, and recommendations for every sector.

### 202 1.1. Purpose and Scope

203 The purpose of this document is to help all organizations improve their log management so that  
204 they have the log data they need. The document’s scope is cybersecurity log management  
205 **planning**. All other aspects of logging and log management, including implementing log  
206 management technology and making use of log data, are out of scope. The log plan is informed  
207 by the activities that will leverage the logs to inform security and operational decisions.

208 This document replaces the original NIST Special Publication (SP) 800-92 [SP800-92], which  
209 was released in 2006. That material was developed at a time when many organizations were just  
210 starting to think about log management. With the wealth of information now available on log  
211 management, this revision of NIST SP 800-92 focuses on high-level guidance for organization-  
212 wide improvement, not the details of implementation nor the capabilities of particular  
213 technologies.

214 The main content of this publication is a playbook for cybersecurity log management planning.  
215 The playbook provides actionable steps that organizations can take to plan improvements to their  
216 log management practices in support of recommended practices and regulatory requirements.  
217 The playbook contains four high-level plays, each of which is a practice that involves two or  
218 more tasks (or other lower-level plays). The playbook and the plays are not comprehensive, but  
219 the listed plays are noteworthy and generally beneficial to organizations. Section 2 provides  
220 additional information on how to make use of the playbook and plays.

## 221 1.2. Note for Federal Agencies

222 This document does not introduce any new requirements for federal agencies. Federal agencies  
223 seeking the latest requirements should consult [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\)](#)  
224 [Memoranda](#), including M-21-31, *Improving the Federal Government's Investigative and*  
225 *Remediation Capabilities Related to Cybersecurity Incidents* [OMB21-31], and M-22-09,  
226 *Moving the U.S. Government Toward Zero Trust Cybersecurity Principles* [OMB22-09].

227 The guidance in this document helps inform and is informed by several other NIST publications  
228 and projects, including:

- 229 • NIST SP 800-53, Rev. 5, *Security and Privacy Controls for Information Systems and*  
230 *Organizations* [SP800-53r5], particularly the Audit and Accountability (AU) family of  
231 security controls
- 232 • NIST SP 800-61, Rev. 2, *Computer Security Incident Handling Guide* [SP800-61r2], in  
233 terms of generating logs that are subsequently used to find and investigate cybersecurity  
234 incidents
- 235 • NIST SP 800-207, *Zero Trust Architecture* [SP800-207] and the [NCCoE's Zero Trust](#)  
236 [Architecture project](#), from the perspective of supporting data analytics for zero trust  
237 purposes
- 238 • NIST SP 800-218, *Secure Software Development Framework (SSDF) Version 1.1:*  
239 *Recommendations for Mitigating the Risk of Software Vulnerabilities* [SP800-218] and  
240 the [NCCoE's Software Supply Chain and DevOps Security Practices project](#), especially  
241 in terms of generating and storing artifacts from secure software development practices
- 242 • [Cybersecurity Framework](#), particularly within the Protect and Detect Functions

## 243 1.3. Publication Structure

244 The remainder of this document is organized into the following sections and appendices:

- 245 • Section 2 discusses how this publication could be used.
- 246 • Section 3 specifies plays for characterizing the current state of cybersecurity logging by  
247 updating several logging-related inventories.
- 248 • Section 4 contains plays for defining the target state for an organization's cybersecurity  
249 logging.
- 250 • Section 5 defines plays for assessing and documenting gaps between the current state and  
251 target state, as well as the root causes of those gaps.
- 252 • Section 6 provides plays for developing a plan to fill the gaps.
- 253 • The References section lists all references used throughout the document.
- 254 • Appendix A contains a glossary of key terms.
- 255 • Appendix B provides a crosswalk between the log management planning plays and  
256 selected NIST guidance documents and frameworks.

- 257
- Appendix C provides the change log for this document.

## 258 2. How to Use This Publication

259 Sections 3 through 6 of this publication define the following high-level plays, as well as their  
260 component tasks and plays:

- 261 • **INV, Update Logging-Related Inventories** (Section 3): Characterize the current state of  
262 your organization’s cybersecurity logging.
- 263 • **TS, Define Target State** (Section 4): Define the target state for your organization’s  
264 cybersecurity logging.
- 265 • **GRC, Document Gaps and Their Root Causes** (Section 5): Document the gaps  
266 between the current cybersecurity logging state and the target state, and identify the root  
267 causes of each gap.
- 268 • **PMG, Develop a Plan to Mitigate the Gaps** (Section 6): Develop a plan for addressing  
269 the root causes of the identified gaps in order to reach the target state.

270 There is no “correct” way to use the playbook. An organization may choose to use it as the start  
271 of its own new playbook for log management planning, integrate it with an existing log  
272 management playbook, or use its information as reference material when considering its own  
273 plans, policies, and processes.

274 Each play includes the following components:

- 275 • **Unique ID number** (for example, INV-5)
- 276 • **Title** (for example, Update the Work Role Inventory)
- 277 • **Summary**, to include the play’s desired outcome
- 278 • **Tasks to perform**. Each task is briefly stated and has a unique identifier based on its  
279 play’s ID. Tasks that need a more detailed explanation are either defined as separate  
280 plays or have additional explanatory text following them under the label **supporting**  
281 **information for tasks**. Each list of tasks is assumed to typically be performed  
282 sequentially unless otherwise noted by the phrase “not necessarily in order.”

283 Some plays also include **examples related to the play**, such as possible roles and  
284 responsibilities, use cases, or sources of requirements.

285 In addition to the plays themselves, Appendix B contains **crosswalks** that indicate how  
286 performing each play and its tasks can most significantly help an organization achieve  
287 recommended outcomes, controls, and other concepts from a variety of NIST resources.

288 The plays and tasks are intentionally focused on important actions to perform for planning and,  
289 thus, avoid any recommendations on the details of log management. Log management needs are  
290 incredibly variable from one organization to another and frequently change, so this playbook  
291 avoids specifying who is responsible for planning or performing any of the plays or tasks.  
292 Rather, this playbook helps organizations identify and prioritize their needs and determine how  
293 to best meet those needs.

### 294 3. INV, Update Logging-Related Inventories

295 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Next Play\]](#)

296 **Summary:** Characterize the current state of your organization’s cybersecurity logging through a  
297 set of inventories. This is not an assessment, only information gathering. The desired outcome is  
298 a reasonably comprehensive, up-to-date snapshot of the people, processes, and technologies that  
299 are involved with cybersecurity logging.

300 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 301 1. INV-1, Update the Inventory of Log Source Types
- 302 2. INV-2, Update the Logging Infrastructure Inventory
- 303 3. INV-3, Update the Logging Use Case Inventory
- 304 4. INV-4, Update the Requirements Inventory
- 305 5. INV-5, Update the Work Role Inventory

306 **Supporting information for tasks:** There are interdependencies between these tasks, so changes  
307 to one inventory may necessitate changes to other inventories.

#### 308 3.1. INV-1, Update the Inventory of Log Source Types

309 [\[Tasks\]](#) [\[Examples\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

310 **Summary:** Update the inventory of your organization’s types of log sources. A *log source* is a  
311 computing asset (e.g., operating system, application, cloud-based service, container) that is  
312 capable of generating cybersecurity log entries. The desired outcome is a reasonably  
313 comprehensive, up-to-date picture of all of the types of cybersecurity log data currently available  
314 to your organization.

315 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 316 1. **INV-1.1:** Determine which characteristics to record in the inventory for each log source  
317 type. Basic configuration information is generally the minimum to collect. Examples of  
318 additional details include copies of logging procedures and other documentation and the  
319 identities of each log source within each log source type (essentially, a log source  
320 inventory).
- 321 2. **INV-1.2:** Update the inventory to reflect standard configurations for logging and which  
322 types of assets use each standard configuration.
- 323 3. **INV-1.3:** Update the inventory to reflect exceptions to standard configurations for  
324 logging, the nature of each exception, and which types of assets employ each exception.
- 325 4. **INV-1.4:** Update the inventory to reflect all other types of assets not included in #2 or #3  
326 with representative samples of their logging configurations.

327 **Examples** of log source types include:

- 328 • Networks, including network infrastructure devices and the traffic they carry
- 329 • Software (e.g., firmware, operating systems, and applications)

- 330 • Cloud environments, including virtualization and container technologies
- 331 • Technology management solutions (e.g., asset management, configuration management,  
332 mobile device management, patch management, vulnerability management)
- 333 • Identity, authentication, and authorization technologies
- 334 • Threat detection/prevention technologies (e.g., anti-malware, data loss prevention, email  
335 filtering)

### 336 **3.2. INV-2, Update the Logging Infrastructure Inventory**

337 [\[Tasks\]](#) [\[Examples\]](#) [\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

338 **Summary:** Update the inventory of your organization’s cybersecurity logging infrastructure  
339 components. The *logging infrastructure* encompasses the hardware, software, systems, services,  
340 and networks used to transmit, store, analyze, and dispose of log data generated by the log  
341 sources. The desired outcome is a comprehensive, up-to-date picture of all of the logging  
342 infrastructure components that are currently part of your organization.

343 **Tasks to perform** include the following:

- 344 1. **INV-2.1:** Update the inventory so that it reflects the current set of logging infrastructure  
345 components.
- 346 2. **INV-2.2:** Update the characteristics recorded for each component in the inventory.
- 347 3. **INV-2.3:** Update the logging infrastructure architecture diagrams and other  
348 documentation to reflect the updates from INV-2.1 and INV-2.2.

349 **Examples** of logging infrastructure components include:

- 350 • Centralized systems that perform security information and event monitoring (SIEM) and  
351 provide bulk storage and other analytical workflows or services
- 352 • Cold data storage
- 353 • Cyber threat intelligence feeds from third-party services
- 354 • Data lakes that act as centrally accessible log storage with log sources that provide data to  
355 the data lake and log analysis technologies that receive log data from the data lake instead  
356 of or in addition to the log sources that directly provide data to each log analysis  
357 technology
- 358 • Domain Name System (DNS) logging system
- 359 • Managed services for log monitoring and analysis
- 360 • Security orchestration, automation, and response (SOAR) implementation
- 361 • User behavior monitoring and analytics

### 362 **3.3. INV-3, Update the Logging Use Case Inventory**

363 [\[Tasks\]](#) [\[Examples\]](#) [\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

364 **Summary:** Update the organization’s inventory of logging use cases and the desired outcomes  
365 of each use case. This information is valuable when developing or updating logging policies.  
366 One desired outcome is that all logging is done for a purpose and not just for the sake of  
367 collecting log data. Another desired outcome is that all logging use cases are taken into  
368 consideration when defining the target state for cybersecurity log management.

369 **Tasks to perform** include the following:

- 370 1. **INV-3.1:** Document summaries of the known logging use cases and the desired outcome  
371 of each.
- 372 2. **INV-3.2:** Share the use cases with stakeholders, solicit their feedback, and make  
373 revisions if needed.

374 **Examples** of possible use cases include:

- 375 • Continuous monitoring
- 376 • Early detection of malicious behavior, potentially malicious behavior, and advanced  
377 threats that involve all user and non-user accounts
- 378 • Evidence of compliance with a standard/compliance reporting
- 379 • Evidence of verification of the functional and security operations of the components
- 380 • Incident response
- 381 • Passive DNS request analysis
- 382 • Security operations
- 383 • SIEM tools
- 384 • Software development artifact capture, for continuous integration/continuous delivery  
385 (CI/CD)
- 386 • Threat detection and investigation, including threat hunting
- 387 • Zero trust implementation

### 388 **3.4. INV-4, Update the Requirements Inventory**

389 [\[Tasks\]](#) [\[Examples\]](#) [\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

390 **Summary:** Update the inventory of existing requirements that are applicable to your  
391 organization’s cybersecurity logging. Requirements may come from applicable laws, regulations,  
392 standards, and internal policies. The desired outcome is a reasonably comprehensive set of  
393 current requirements for your organization’s cybersecurity logging.

394 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 395 1. **INV-4.1:** Confirm that all requirements already in the inventory are still applicable, and  
396 remove outdated requirements.
- 397 2. **INV-4.2:** Identify all new requirements applicable to existing log source types or logging  
398 use cases.

399 3. **INV-4.3:** Identify all requirements applicable to new log source types or new logging use  
400 cases.

401 **Examples** of sources of requirements include:

- 402 • General laws and regulations (e.g., GDPR)
- 403 • Sector-specific laws and regulations (e.g., HIPAA, NERC)
- 404 • Federal agency-specific requirements (e.g., OMB memoranda; FISMA/[NIST Risk](#)  
405 [Management Framework](#); EO 14028, Section 8 [EO14028])
- 406 • Standards that the organization chooses to follow (e.g., ISO 27001)
- 407 • The organization’s cybersecurity, privacy, and data retention policies
- 408 • Requirements and policies of a parent organization/enterprise

### 409 **3.5. INV-5, Update the Work Role Inventory**

410 [[Tasks](#)] [[Examples](#)]

[[Previous Play](#)] [[Next Play](#)]

411 **Summary:** Update the inventory of cybersecurity logging-related work roles that your personnel  
412 or third parties perform. Each work role includes one or more tasks, and each task is associated  
413 with one or more knowledge and skill statements, as defined in NIST SP 800-181 [SP800-  
414 181r1]. There are two desired outcomes: to confirm that all necessary work roles and tasks are  
415 assigned and to inform the organization’s training and process documentation planning.

416 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 417 1. **INV-5.1:** Confirm that all roles already in the inventory are still applicable.
- 418 2. **INV-5.2:** Identify any new roles, and add them to the inventory.
- 419 3. **INV-5.3:** Update which tasks are associated with each role.
- 420 4. **INV-5.4:** Update which knowledge and skill statements are associated with each task.
- 421 5. **INV-5.5:** Share the updated work role inventory with stakeholders, solicit their feedback,  
422 and make revisions if needed.
- 423 6. **INV-5.6:** Disseminate the updated work role inventory information to affected parties.

424 **Examples** of parties within an organization who may have log management responsibilities  
425 include the following. Note that many of these responsibilities may also be performed by third  
426 parties, such as managed security service providers and cloud service providers, for some of the  
427 organization’s assets.

- 428 • **System and network administrators** who
  - 429 ○ Configure logging and synchronize timestamps on individual systems and  
430 network devices
  - 431 ○ Configure systems and devices to forward log data to the appropriate logging  
432 infrastructure systems for analysis, storage, or other processing
  - 433 ○ Report on the results of log management activities

- 434 ○ Perform regular maintenance of the logs and logging software
- 435 ○ Handle authorized requests from security administrators, auditors, compliance
- 436 officers, legal counsel, and others who need copies of log data
- 437 ● **Security administrators** who
- 438 ○ Manage, secure, and monitor log management infrastructures
- 439 ○ Implement, secure, manage, and maintain a passive DNS logging system
- 440 ○ Configure logging and synchronize timestamps on security devices and services
- 441 (e.g., firewalls, antivirus servers, VPNs, SASE)
- 442 ○ Configure security devices and services to forward log data to the appropriate
- 443 logging infrastructure systems for analysis, storage, or other processing
- 444 ○ Identify the changes needed to system logging configurations (e.g., which entries
- 445 and data fields must be sent to the centralized log servers) and inform system-
- 446 level administrators of the necessary changes
- 447 ○ Report on the results of log management activities
- 448 ○ Assist others with configuring logging and performing log analysis
- 449 ○ Test and implement upgrades and updates to the log management infrastructure's
- 450 components
- 451 ● **Operations personnel** who
- 452 ○ Archive log data to removable media and dispose of that log data properly once it
- 453 is no longer needed
- 454 ○ Monitor logging configurations and operational statuses for individual systems,
- 455 networks, and the log management infrastructure to identify logging failures (e.g.,
- 456 a failure of a log management infrastructure component) and potentially
- 457 unauthorized changes
- 458 ○ Initiate appropriate responses to events, including incident handling and
- 459 operational problems
- 460 ● **Computer security incident response teams** who use log data when investigating and
- 461 handling incidents
- 462 ● **Application developers** whose applications perform logging
- 463 ● **Information security officers** who oversee the log management infrastructures
- 464 ● **Chief information officers (CIOs)** who oversee the technology resources that generate,
- 465 transmit, and store the logs
- 466 ● **Auditors** who use log data when performing audits
- 467 ● **Compliance officers** who use log data when verifying compliance or documenting
- 468 evidence of compliance
- 469 ● Individuals involved in the **procurement of software or software services** that can or
- 470 should generate cybersecurity log data

## 471 **4. TS, Define Target State**

472 [[Tasks](#)]

[[Previous Play](#)] [[Next Play](#)]

473 **Summary:** Define the target state for your organization’s cybersecurity logging. The *target state*  
474 is a combination of (mandatory) requirements from all applicable laws, regulations, standards,  
475 and internal policies and (desired) goals and objectives for log management based on balancing  
476 the organization’s reduction of risk and the need for logging resilience with the time and  
477 resources needed to perform log management functions. The desired outcome is an integrated set  
478 of prioritized requirements, goals, and objectives for your organization’s cybersecurity logging.  
479 This set should be updated periodically and as major changes occur, like the impending  
480 implementation of a new law or regulation, the introduction of new technology, or the  
481 observation of new threats.

482 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 483 1. TS-1, Forecast Future Changes to Logging Inventories
- 484 2. TS-2, Define Target State for Log Generation
- 485 3. TS-3, Define Target State for Log Storage and Transfer
- 486 4. TS-4, Define Target State for Log Access
- 487 5. TS-5, Define Target State for Log Disposal

488 **Supporting information for tasks:** There are interdependencies between these tasks. For  
489 example, generating a higher volume of logs may necessitate increasing resources for log  
490 storage. Conversely, a firm limit on log storage resources may necessitate generating less log  
491 data, being more selective about which generated log data is stored, or reducing how long some  
492 log data is stored.

### 493 **4.1. TS-1, Forecast Future Changes to Logging Inventories**

494 [[Tasks](#)] [[Examples](#)]

[[Previous Play](#)] [[Next Play](#)]

495 **Summary:** Forecast future changes to the organization’s logging inventories (e.g., log source  
496 types, infrastructure, use cases, requirements, and work roles), and consider their potential  
497 effects on each other and the organization’s logging practices. This includes known changes and  
498 educated guesses about future changes. The desired outcome is a set of prioritized future changes  
499 that inform the target states for the organization’s logging.

500 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 501 1. **TS-1.1:** Forecast future changes to log source types.
- 502 2. **TS-1.2:** Forecast future changes to the logging infrastructure.
- 503 3. **TS-1.3:** Forecast future changes to logging use cases.
- 504 4. **TS-1.4:** Forecast future changes to requirements.
- 505 5. **TS-1.5:** Forecast future changes to work roles.

506 **Supporting information for the tasks:** There are interdependencies between these tasks. Future  
507 changes identified by one task may necessitate other types of changes.

508 **Examples** of possible changes include:

- 509 1. **TS-1.1 examples:** Adding a new type of computing device or application to the  
510 organization; upgrading an application to a version with much more detailed log  
511 generation capabilities
- 512 2. **TS-1.2 examples:** Migrating log storage from on-premises to cloud-based; adding a new  
513 log analysis technology; improving logging infrastructure resilience
- 514 3. **TS-1.3 example:** Identifying and implementing a new use case; a passive DNS logging  
515 system
- 516 4. **TS-1.4 example:** Complying with a new law going into effect next year that requires a  
517 longer data retention period
- 518 5. **TS-1.5 example:** Transitioning some logging responsibilities to a parent organization or  
519 a managed security service provider (MSSP)

#### 520 **4.2. TS-2, Define Target State for Log Generation**

521 [\[Tasks\]](#) [\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

522 **Summary:** Define the log generation-related requirements and goals for each of your  
523 organization's cybersecurity log source types. The desired outcome is a comprehensive set of  
524 prioritized requirements and goals for cybersecurity log generation that help define your  
525 organization's target state.

526 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 527 1. **TS-2.1:** For each type of log source, determine whether it should be required,  
528 recommended, not recommended, or prohibited.
- 529 2. **TS-2.2:** Determine which types of events each log source should or must log and which  
530 types of events each log source should not or must not log.
- 531 3. **TS-2.3:** Determine which data characteristics should or must be logged for each type of  
532 event, including the log source identity and other metadata, and which types of data  
533 characteristics should not or must not be logged.
- 534 4. **TS-2.4:** Determine whether the log source might intentionally or inadvertently capture  
535 sensitive data, including personal information, passwords, private keys, and access  
536 tokens.
- 537 5. **TS-2.5:** Determine how frequently each type of event should or must be logged.
- 538 6. **TS-2.6:** Determine how to handle log generation errors.
- 539 7. **TS-2.7:** Determine when logs should or must record cleartext data instead of or in  
540 addition to encrypted data.
- 541 8. **TS-2.8:** Determine how clock synchronization should or must be performed for all log  
542 sources.
- 543 9. **TS-2.9:** Determine what timestamp formats should or must be used for all log sources, as  
544 well as supporting information to be captured (e.g., time zones).

545 10. **TS-2.10:** Determine how log generation should or must be protected.

546 11. **TS-2.11:** Define how the protection of log generation should or must be monitored and  
547 validated to ensure that logging is enabled and functioning normally.

548 **Supporting information for tasks:** Recording more log data is not necessarily better. Generally,  
549 organizations should only require logging the necessary data and also have recommendations for  
550 which other types and sources of data should be logged if resources permit. Some organizations  
551 choose to have all or nearly all log data generated and stored for at least a short period of time in  
552 case it is needed; this approach favors security considerations over usability and resource usage.

553 When establishing requirements and recommendations, organizations should be flexible since  
554 each host is different and will log different amounts of data than other hosts. The logging  
555 behavior of a host may also change rapidly due to an upgrade, patch, or configuration change.

556 Organizations may permit administrators to temporarily reconfigure log sources during adverse  
557 conditions, such as unsuccessful malware attacks that cause the same type of log entry to be  
558 generated many times. These configuration changes should be performed as a last resort and be  
559 as precise as possible. Log source administrators should inform logging infrastructure  
560 administrators of such configuration changes to ensure that log management processes are  
561 modified if needed.

562 In some cases, software licenses may need to be upgraded in order to generate the required or  
563 desired information for logs.

564 For more information on log generation in the context of incident response, see NIST SP 800-61,  
565 Rev. 2, [Computer Security Incident Handling Guide](#) [SP800-61r2].

### 566 4.3. **TS-3, Define Target State for Log Storage and Transfer**

567 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

568 **Summary:** Define your organization's log storage and transfer-related requirements and goals.  
569 This should take log source types, log event types, system locations, and any other pertinent  
570 attributes into account. The desired outcome is a comprehensive set of prioritized requirements  
571 and goals for cybersecurity log storage and transfer that help define your organization's target  
572 state.

573 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

574 1. **TS-3.1:** Determine how long each log event should or must be preserved at the log  
575 source.

576 2. **TS-3.2:** Determine which events, if any, should or must be transferred to a log  
577 infrastructure from log sources, which log infrastructure systems should receive the  
578 transferred event data, and which data characteristics should or must be transferred for  
579 each event. This may necessitate estimating network bandwidth needs for log transfers.

580 3. **TS-3.3:** Determine how event correlation across log sources should or must be performed  
581 within the log infrastructure.

- 582 4. **TS-3.4:** Determine how log data should or must be transferred to the log infrastructure,  
583 including out-of-band methods where appropriate, and how frequently log data should or  
584 must be transferred.
- 585 5. **TS-3.5:** Determine how the confidentiality, integrity, and availability of each log event  
586 should or must be protected while in storage at the log source, while in the log  
587 infrastructure, while being transferred from the log source to the log infrastructure, and  
588 while being transferred from one log infrastructure component to another.
- 589 6. **TS-3.6:** Determine how much log storage space should or must be available at the log  
590 sources and the log infrastructure.
- 591 7. **TS-3.7:** Determine how to handle log storage and log transfer errors at the log sources  
592 and the log infrastructure.
- 593 8. **TS-3.8:** Determine if and when each type of log event should or must be transferred from  
594 active storage to cold data storage for data retention purposes.
- 595 9. **TS-3.9:** Determine which log format/type to use (if this is an option).
- 596 10. **TS-3.10:** Determine how the protection of log storage and transfers should or must be  
597 monitored and validated to ensure their confidentiality, integrity, and availability.

598 **Supporting information for tasks:** Completing these tasks effectively designs the high-level  
599 architecture of the log infrastructure, such as the logical and physical locations of centralized log  
600 data storage and various log analysis services. When most organizations only had one or a few  
601 closely related logging use cases, a centralized logging server or group of servers could often  
602 handle all of an organization's logging infrastructure needs. Now, organizations often have  
603 several diverse logging use cases and magnitudes more data to process and store, so more  
604 complex logging architectures have become commonplace. For example, some organizations use  
605 a massive data lake to hold all of their security log data instead of a centralized log management  
606 and analysis service. Each logging use case probably has one or more different tools that  
607 consume log data, and these tools can retrieve data from the data lake instead of having to  
608 interact with all of the log sources. This can be much more efficient in terms of time, network  
609 bandwidth, and especially storage.

610 Another consideration when performing these tasks is the possibility of another entity, such as a  
611 parent organization or an outsourcer, taking care of some or all of your centralized log storage  
612 needs in the future. Log storage needs are highly variable over time, although they generally  
613 continue to increase. Cloud-based log storage can provide rapid scalability that on-premises log  
614 storage often cannot.

615 Organizations will also need to determine whether their original logs need to be preserved for a  
616 certain period of time or if preserving log data copied to a centralized log server or storage is  
617 acceptable. In many environments, original logs only need to be preserved if they may be needed  
618 as evidence.

#### 619 **4.4. TS-4, Define Target State for Log Access**

620 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

621 **Summary:** Define your organization's log access-related requirements and goals. This should  
622 take the access needs of auditors, law enforcement, courts, and other government agencies into  
623 account. The desired outcome is a comprehensive set of prioritized requirements and goals for  
624 cybersecurity log access that help define your organization's target state.

625 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 626 1. **TS-4.1:** Identify the access-related policy requirements for log sources and transferred  
627 logs for each type of log event.
  - 628 a. **TS-4.1a:** Determine who/what should or must be able to locally and remotely  
629 access log data.
  - 630 b. **TS-4.1b:** Determine who/what should or must be able to directly access logs  
631 versus indirectly access logs (e.g., through a SIEM, through a read-only  
632 interface).
  - 633 c. **TS-4.1c:** Determine how local and remote access to log data itself should or must  
634 be logged.
  - 635 d. **TS-4.1d:** Determine how local and remote access to log data should or must be  
636 protected (e.g., encryption).
- 637 2. **TS-4.2:** Determine how log preservation orders, such as a legal requirement to protect  
638 and prevent the alteration and destruction of particular log records, must be handled from  
639 a technical standpoint.
- 640 3. **TS-4.3:** Determine how inadvertent and intentional disclosures of sensitive information  
641 recorded in logs must be handled.
- 642 4. **TS-4.4:** Determine how the protection of log access should or must be monitored and  
643 validated to ensure that only authorized parties can access the appropriate logs.

#### 644 **4.5. TS-5, Define Target State for Log Disposal**

645 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

646 **Summary:** Define your organization's log disposal-related requirements and goals. The desired  
647 outcome is a comprehensive set of prioritized requirements and goals for cybersecurity log  
648 disposal that help define your organization's target state.

649 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 650 1. **TS-5.1:** Identify the disposal-related policy requirements for each type of log event at the  
651 log source level. Determine how and when each type of log event should or must be  
652 disposed of.
- 653 2. **TS-5.2:** Identify the disposal-related policy requirements for each type of log event at the  
654 log infrastructure level. Determine how and when each type of log event should or must  
655 be disposed of.

- 656           3. **TS-5.3:** Define requirements for monitoring, validating, and testing the safeguarding of  
657           log disposal (to avoid unauthorized destruction of logs).  
658

## 659 **5. GRC, Document Gaps and Their Root Causes**

660 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

661 **Summary:** Document the implementation gaps between the current cybersecurity logging state  
662 and the target state, and identify the root causes of each gap. The desired outcome is a list of  
663 implementation gaps with an assessment of the relative risk posed by each gap and the root  
664 causes of each gap.

665 **Tasks to perform** include the following:

- 666 1. GRC-1, Scope and Plan the Assessment
- 667 2. GRC-2, Conduct the Assessment and Document Findings

668 **Supporting information for tasks:** Root cause analysis should go beyond superficial  
669 observations and determine the underlying factors. For example, suppose that one log source is  
670 generating a much lower volume of log data than other similar log sources. Assessment indicates  
671 that this is primarily due to logging configuration errors. Root cause analysis should not stop  
672 there; it should determine why this log source is misconfigured (e.g., poor enforcement of  
673 requirements, an approved exception to policy that needs to be reassessed, human error, possible  
674 compromise of the log source, lack of log storage space).

### 675 **5.1. GRC-1, Scope and Plan the Assessment**

676 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

677 **Summary:** Scope the gap analysis, and determine how the gap analysis will be performed. The  
678 desired outcome is an assessment plan.

679 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 680 1. **GRC-1.1:** Determine how comprehensive the gap analysis should be. For example, the  
681 gap analysis could include all of the most critical systems, all security configuration  
682 baselines, and a sampling of non-baselined logging sources that includes representatives  
683 of all identified logging use cases.
- 684 2. **GRC-1.2:** Plan the assessment (e.g., utilizing automation, conducting interviews,  
685 performing manual reviews of certain components).

### 686 **5.2. GRC-2, Conduct the Assessment and Document Findings**

687 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

688 **Summary:** Execute the assessment plan for identifying gaps and their root causes. The desired  
689 outcome is a stakeholder-reviewed list of findings.

690 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 691 1. **GRC-2.1:** Conduct the assessment: document all gaps from the target state, characterize  
692 each gap and assess its risk, identify the root causes of each gap, and estimate the relative  
693 importance of each root cause in regards to all the gaps and the magnitude of the cost of  
694 addressing it.

- 695        2. **GRC-2.2:** Summarize the findings, get stakeholder feedback, and make revisions as  
696            needed.

## 697 **6. PMG, Develop a Plan to Mitigate the Gaps**

698 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

699 **Summary:** Develop a plan for addressing the root causes of the identified gaps in order to reach  
700 the target state. The project plan takes the relative importance of each gap, the resources needed  
701 to address each root cause, and the dependencies among items (e.g., expanding centralized log  
702 storage capacity before significantly increasing the volume of logs being sent to that storage) into  
703 account. The desired outcome is a project plan that, when executed, has addressed the root  
704 causes and filled the identified gaps.

705 **Tasks to perform** include the following (with the first two not necessarily in order):

- 706 1. PMG-1, Draft the Plan
- 707 2. PMG-2, Revise Affected Policies
- 708 3. PMG-3, Address Feedback on Draft Plan and Policies

### 709 **6.1. PMG-1, Draft the Plan**

710 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

711 **Summary:** Draft the plan for addressing the root causes of identified gaps. The desired outcome  
712 is a project plan draft that is ready for stakeholder review and feedback.

713 **Tasks to perform** include the following (not necessarily in order):

- 714 1. **PMG-1.1:** Identify any changes to logging-related inventories (e.g., log source types,  
715 infrastructure, use cases, requirements, and work roles).
- 716 2. **PMG-1.2:** Develop cost estimates for the resources needed to address the gaps for  
717 people, processes, and technology, including both one-time and ongoing costs. This may  
718 include adding tools and technologies to automate aspects of log management, adjusting  
719 technical configuration baselines and guidance, updating affected procedures and  
720 processes, retraining staff with log management-related responsibilities, and establishing  
721 a logging test environment.
- 722 3. **PMG-1.3:** Include provisions in the plan for creating a plan of action and milestones and  
723 using compensating controls until gaps are remediated.
- 724 4. **PMG-1.4:** Incorporate the timing of other projects that may affect logging (e.g., the  
725 pending replacement of a major enterprise application).
- 726 5. **PMG-1.5:** Include information on how often the plan itself will be reviewed and updated,  
727 such as a scheduled annual review, audit results that indicate a significant problem, the  
728 announcement of new legal or regulatory requirements, and feedback from logging  
729 infrastructure and system administrators on logging requirements.
- 730 6. **PMG-1.6:** Ensure that all elements of the plan are harmonized.

## 731 **6.2. PMG-2, Revise Affected Policies**

732 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#) [\[Next Play\]](#)

733 **Summary:** Revise the organization’s policies to support the draft project plan. The desired  
734 outcome is a set of draft revised policies that are ready for stakeholder review and feedback.

735 **Tasks to perform** include the following:

- 736 1. **PMG-2.1:** Identify which policies may be affected by the draft project plan. This may  
737 include policies for software procurement, custom software development, and other  
738 topics where cybersecurity logging capabilities are a vital part but not the focus.
- 739 2. **PMG-2.2:** Revise the affected policies so that they incorporate the organization’s  
740 updated set of requirements, goals, and objectives.
- 741 3. **PMG-2.3:** Ensure that changes to all affected policies are harmonized.

742 **Supporting information for tasks:** It may be appropriate to specify future effective dates for  
743 certain policy changes, depending on the timeframes for the corresponding items in the draft  
744 project plan.

## 745 **6.3. PMG-3, Address Feedback on Draft Plan and Policies**

746 [\[Tasks\]](#)

[\[Previous Play\]](#)

747 **Summary:** Address stakeholder feedback on the draft plan and policies. The desired outcome is  
748 a final project plan and policy set.

749 **Tasks to perform** include the following:

- 750 1. **PMG-3.1:** Identify all stakeholders who should be invited to provide feedback on the  
751 draft plan and/or policies. It may be particularly important to get feedback from the  
752 following:
  - 753 ○ Legal counsel to ensure that the plan will adequately address all legal, regulatory,  
754 compliance, and other requirements and that the logging itself is performed in  
755 compliance with privacy laws
  - 756 ○ System administrators and others who will be altering log generation, storage,  
757 transfer, access, and disposal practices to ensure that the changes are feasible and  
758 will not cause unexpected problems (e.g., a legacy system being configured to log  
759 every auditable event could generate an enormous number of log entries, impact  
760 the host’s performance, and cause log entries to be overwritten too quickly)
  - 761 ○ Any parent or child organizations (subsidiaries, etc.)
- 762 2. **PMG-3.2:** Share the draft plan and policies with stakeholders, and encourage them to  
763 provide feedback within a particular timeframe.
- 764 3. **PMG-3.3:** Review and adjudicate the feedback. Consider the point of view of each  
765 stakeholder and the effect that addressing each comment may have on other parts of the  
766 draft plan and policies.

- 767 4. **PMG-3.4:** Revise the draft plan and policies to address the feedback based on the  
768 adjudications. This includes harmonizing changes throughout the documents.
- 769 ○ If stakeholder feedback results in significant changes to the draft plan or policies,  
770 this play may need to be repeated so that affected stakeholders can provide  
771 feedback on the changes.
  - 772 ○ If stakeholder feedback is not needed, the revised plan and policies should be  
773 finalized and communicated to all affected parties.
- 774 **Supporting information for tasks:** It may be appropriate to specify future effective dates for  
775 certain policy changes, depending on the timeframes for the corresponding items in the draft  
776 project plan.

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## 830 **Appendix A. Glossary**

### 831 **active storage**

832 Data that is stored in a manner that facilitates frequent use and ease of access. ([OMB21-31], adapted)

### 833 **cold data storage**

834 Data that is stored in a manner that minimizes costs while still allowing some level of access and use. ([OMB21-31],  
835 adapted)

836 *Note:* The original NIST SP 800-92 [SP800-92] used the term “log archival” instead of “cold data storage.”

### 837 **event aggregation**

838 The consolidation of similar log entries into a single entry containing a count of the number of occurrences of the  
839 event. [SP800-92]

### 840 **event correlation**

841 Finding relationships between two or more log entries. [SP800-92]

### 842 **event forwarding**

843 Obtaining events from logging sources in near real-time on an automated basis, and storing them centrally.  
844 ([OMB21-31], adapted)

### 845 **log**

846 A record of events occurring within an organization’s computing assets, including physical and virtual platforms,  
847 networks, services, and cloud environments. ([SP800-92], adapted)

### 848 **log access**

849 Reading log entries.

### 850 **log analysis**

851 Studying log entries to identify events of interest or suppress log entries for insignificant events. [SP800-92]

### 852 **log clearing**

853 Removing all entries from a log that precede a certain date and time. [SP800-92]

### 854 **log destruction**

855 Deleting a log or a log’s entries in such a way that the deleted log data cannot be recovered.

### 856 **log entry**

857 An individual record within a log of an event that has occurred within a system or network. ([EO14028], adapted)

### 858 **log generation**

859 Creating new log entries.

### 860 **log management**

861 The process for generating, transmitting, storing, accessing, and disposing of log data. ([SP800-92], adapted)

### 862 **log management infrastructure**

863 The hardware, software, networks, and media used to generate, transmit, store, analyze, and dispose of log data.  
864 [SP800-92]

### 865 **log normalization**

866 Converting each log data field to a particular data representation and categorizing it consistently. [SP800-92]

### 867 **log preservation**

868 Keeping logs that normally would be discarded because they contain records of activity of particular interest.  
869 [SP800-92]

### 870 **log reduction**

871 Removing unneeded entries from a log to create a new log that is smaller. [SP800-92]

872 **log retention**

873 Archiving logs on a regular basis as part of standard operational activities. [SP800-92]

874 **log rotation**

875 Closing a log file and opening a new log file when the first log file is considered to be complete. [SP800-92]

876 **log storage**

877 Retaining log entries for a period of time.

878 **log transfer**

879 Copying log entries from one logical asset to another.

880 **Appendix B. Crosswalk to NIST Guidance and Frameworks**

881 This appendix provides a crosswalk between each log management planning play and selected  
882 NIST guidance documents and frameworks.

Play	NIST SP 800-53, Rev. 5 [SP800-53r5]	CSF 1.1 [CSF11]	EO 14028 Security Measures [NIST-CRSW]
INV-1, Update the Inventory of Log Source Types	AU-2, AU-12, CM-2, CM-6, CM-8	ID.AM-2, ID.AM-4	SM 1.3, SM 2.1, SM 3.1, SM 3.3
INV-2, Update the Logging Infrastructure Inventory	CM-8	ID.AM-1, ID.AM-2, ID.AM-4	SM 2.1, SM 3.1
INV-3, Update the Logging Use Case Inventory	AU-1	ID.GV-1	SM 1.3
INV-4, Update the Requirements Inventory	AU-1, AU-2	ID.GV-3	N/A
INV-5, Update the Work Role Inventory	AU-1	ID.AM-6	SM 5.1, SM 5.2
TS-1, Forecast Future Changes to Logging Inventories	AU-1	ID.GV-1, ID.GV-2, ID.GV-3, ID.GV-4	SM 4.1
TS-2, Define Target State for Log Generation	AU-1	ID.GV-1, ID.GV-2, ID.GV-3, ID.GV-4	SM 4.1
TS-3, Define Target State for Log Storage and Transfer	AU-1	ID.GV-1, ID.GV-2, ID.GV-3, ID.GV-4	SM 4.1
TS-4, Define Target State for Log Access	AU-1	ID.GV-1, ID.GV-2, ID.GV-3, ID.GV-4	SM 4.1
TS-5, Define Target State for Log Disposal	AU-1	ID.GV-1, ID.GV-2, ID.GV-3, ID.GV-4	SM 4.1
GRC-1, Scope and Plan the Assessment	RA-1	ID.RM-1	SM 4.1
GRC-2, Conduct the Assessment and Document Findings	RA-3	ID.RA-1, ID.RA-2, ID.RA-3, ID.RA-4, ID.RA-5	SM 4.1
PMG-1, Draft the Plan	AU-1, RA-7	ID.RA-6	SM 4.1
PMG-2, Revise Affected Policies	AU-1	ID.GV-1, ID.GV-4	SM 4.1
PMG-3, Address Feedback on Draft Plan and Policies	AU-1, RA-7	ID.GV-1, ID.GV-4, ID.RA-6	SM 4.1

883 **Appendix C. Change Log**

884 In October 2023, the following changes were made to this report:

- 885       • Performed a full rewrite and reorganization of the previous content to improve clarity and  
886       usability and to remove outdated content
- 887       • Reformatted all content to follow the latest NIST technical publication template