

# Security Automation with Open Security Controls Assessment Language (OSCAL)

May 26, 2021

# Why we care?

## Today's challenges:

Information  
technology is  
complex

Security  
vulnerabilities  
are everywhere

Regulatory  
frameworks are  
burdensome

Risk  
management  
is hard

Documentatio  
n becomes  
outdated fast

# What was needed?

OSCAL is like a Rosetta Stone that enables tools and organizations to exchange information via automation

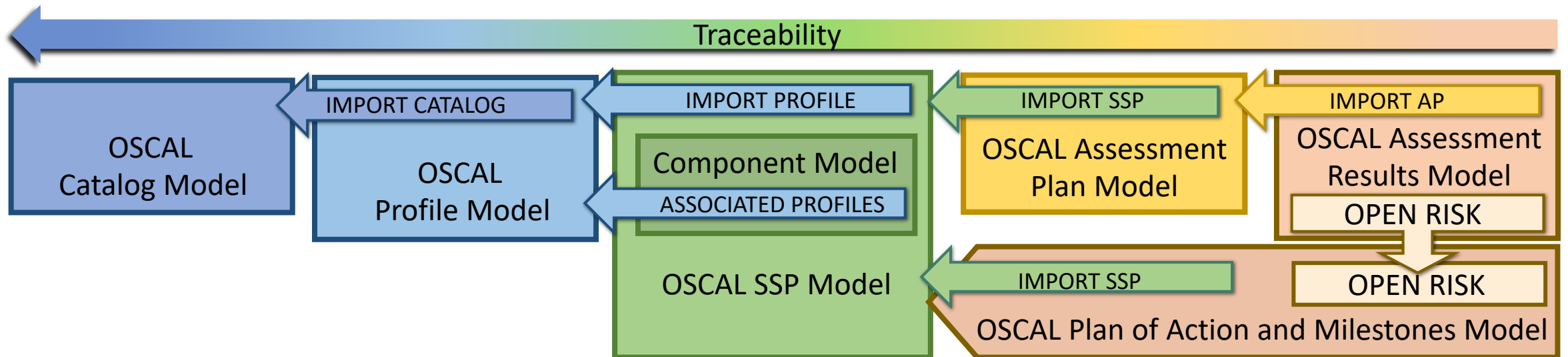


OSCAL sets the foundation for automation and interoperability

# What is OSCAL?

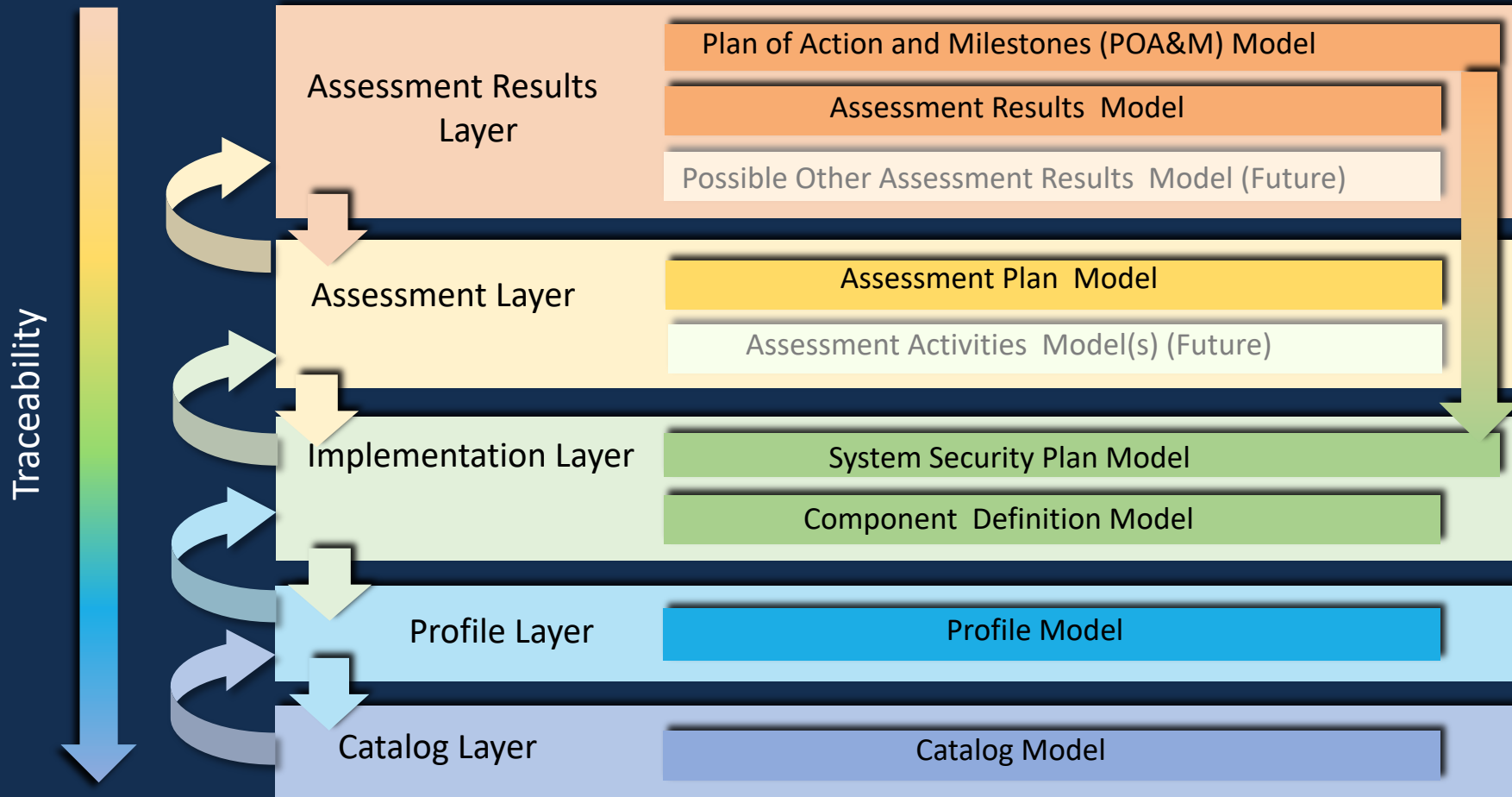
## OSCAL is the result of NIST and FedRAMP collaboration

- **OSCAL provides** a **common/single machine-readable language**, expressed in XML, JSON and YAML for:
  - ❑ multiple compliance and risk management frameworks (e.g. SP 800-53, ISO/IEC 27001&2, COBIT 5)
  - ❑ software and service providers to express implementation guidance against security controls (Component definition)
  - ❑ sharing how security controls are implemented (System Security Plans [SSPs])
  - ❑ sharing security assessment plans (System Assessment Plans [SAPs] )
  - ❑ sharing security assessment results/reports (System Assessment Results [SARs])
- **OSCAL enables** **automated traceability** from selection of security controls through implementation and assessment

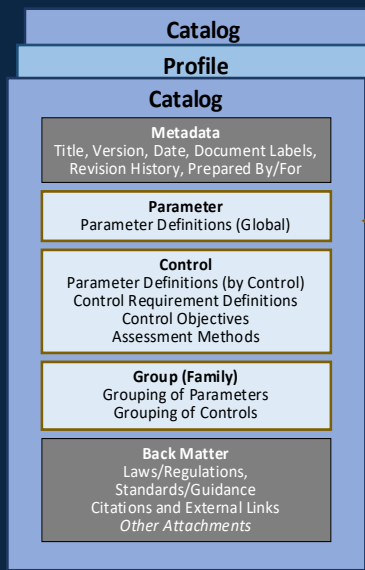


# OSCAL 1.0.0 Architecture

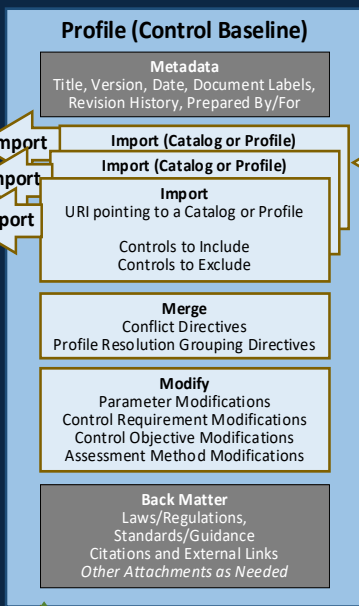
## Layers & Models



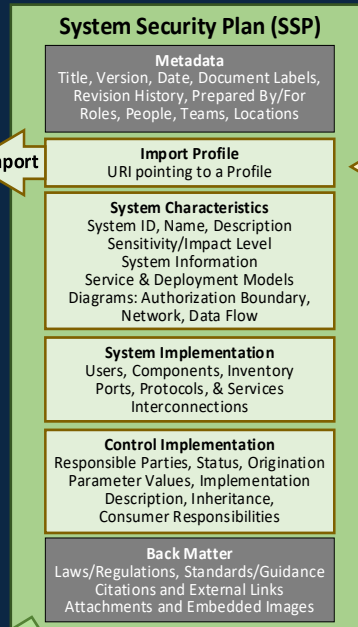
# CATALOG MODEL



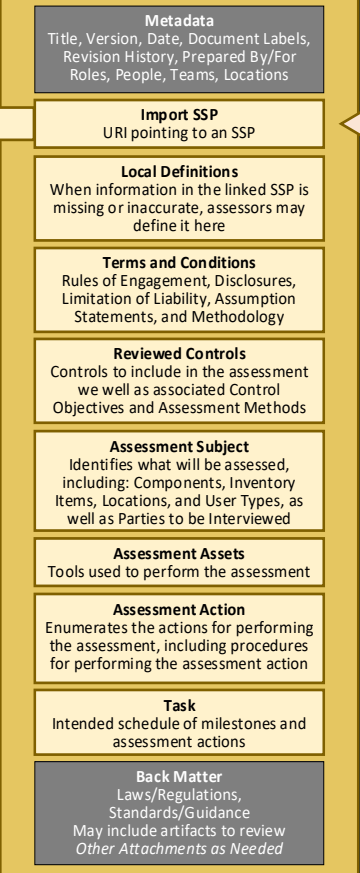
# PROFILE MODEL



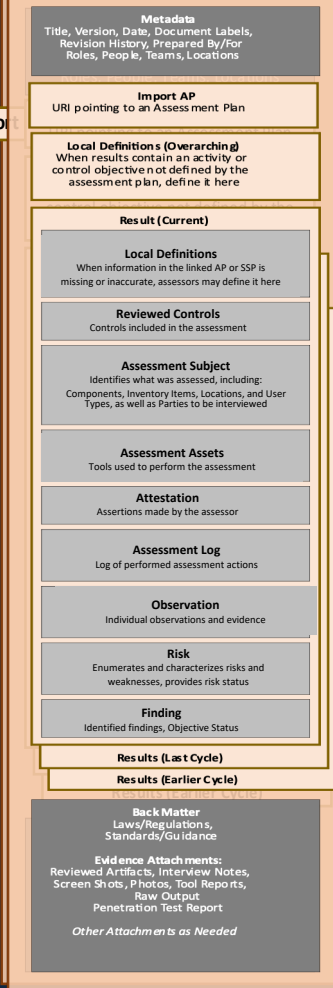
# SSP MODEL



# Assessment Plan (AP)



# Assessment Results (AR)



The **import** arrow identifies what OSCAL content is linked as a result of the import statement. Imported content referenced, not copied.

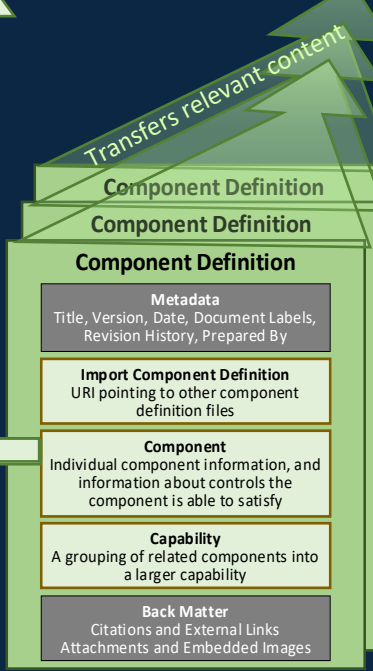
Associates configuration settings with baselines

Associates configuration settings with baselines

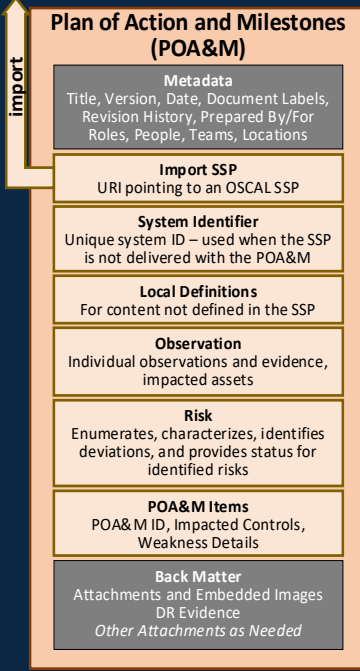
Transfers relevant content

# A Closer Look at OSCAL Models

## COMPONENT MODEL



## POA&M MODEL



## ASSESSMENT PLAN MODEL

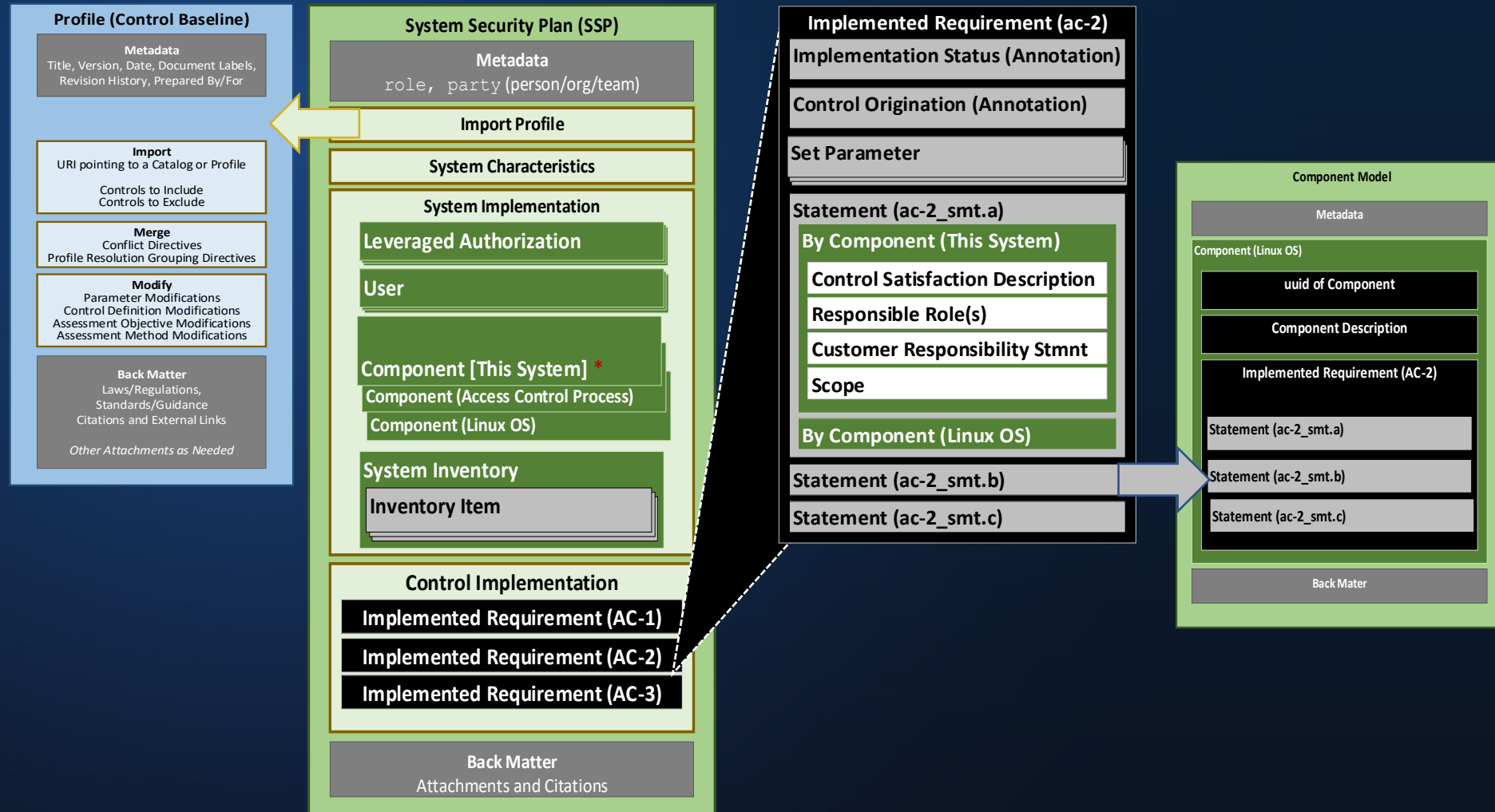
## ASSESSMENT RESULTS MODEL

# Where the Innovation Truly Starts: The OSCAL Implementation Layer

## OSCAL SSP:

- Imports a Profile identifying the controls
- Each control response is broken down to the individual components involved.
- Enables a more robust response to controls
- Example: The access control implementation that satisfies AC-2, part a is described separately for:

- This System
- The Access Control Procedure
- A shared Application



\* Every SSP, must have a component representing the whole system.

# Assessment Plan (SAP) & Assessment Results (AR)

- OVERLAPING SYNTAX
- SIMILAR BUT DISTINCT PURPOSE
- UNIQUE to AR: **Results** and **Evidence**

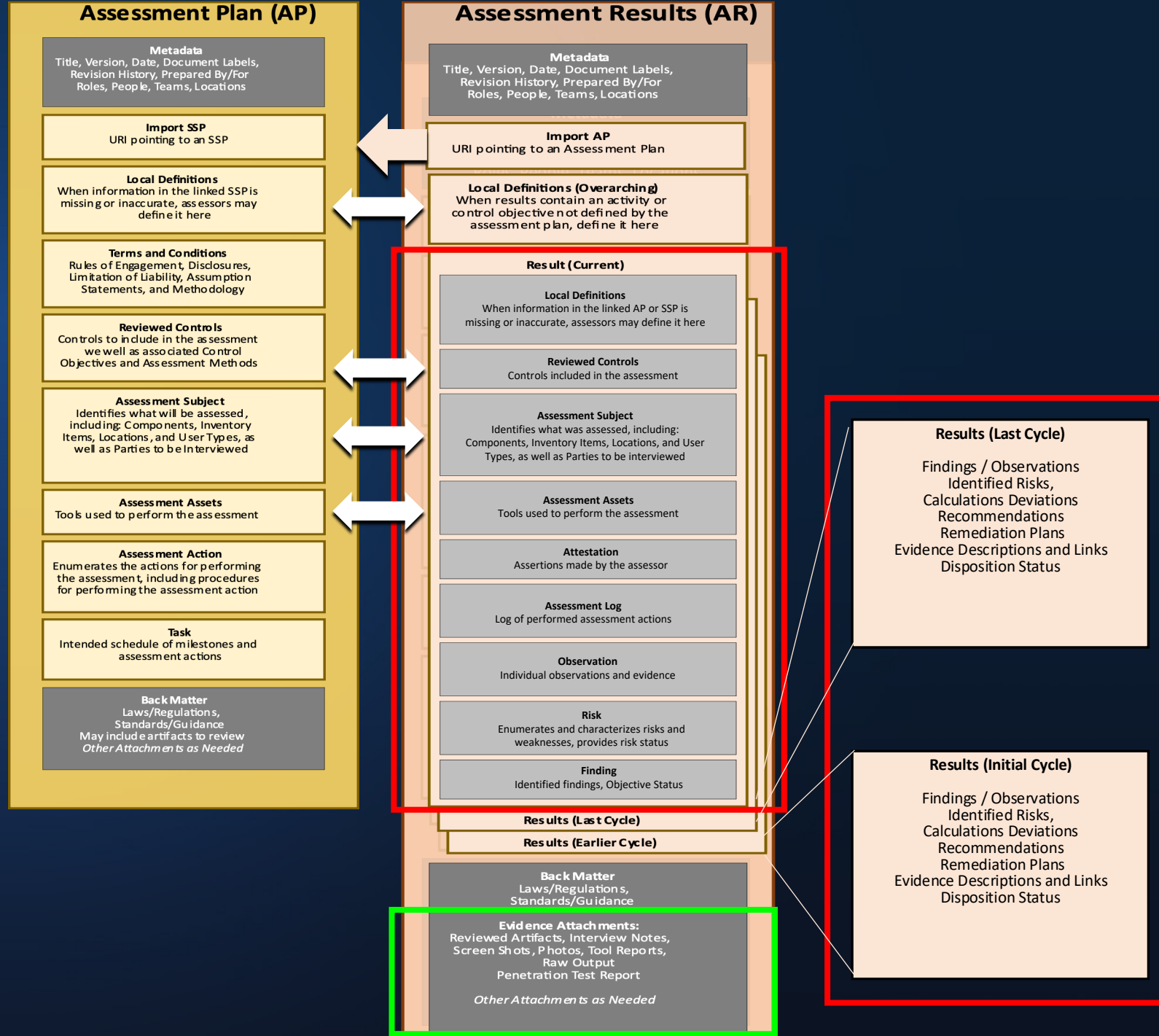
## Continuous Assessment Approach

- **Assessment Plan:** What should be tested/inspected, how, and with which frequency
- **Assessment Results:** Time-slice of results

Planned activities



Actual activities





# OSCAL POA&M Model

**System Security Plan (SSP)**

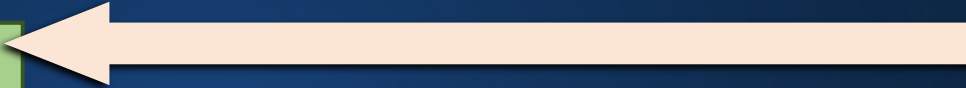
- Metadata  
role, party (person/org/team)
- Import Profile
- System Characteristics
- System Implementation
  - Leveraged Authorization
  - User
  - Component [This System] \*
    - Component (Access Control Process)
    - Component (Linux OS)
  - System Inventory
    - Inventory Item
- Control Implementation
  - Implemented Requirement (AC-1)
  - Implemented Requirement (AC-2)
  - Implemented Requirement (AC-3)
- Back Matter  
Attachments and Citations

**Assessment Results (AR)**

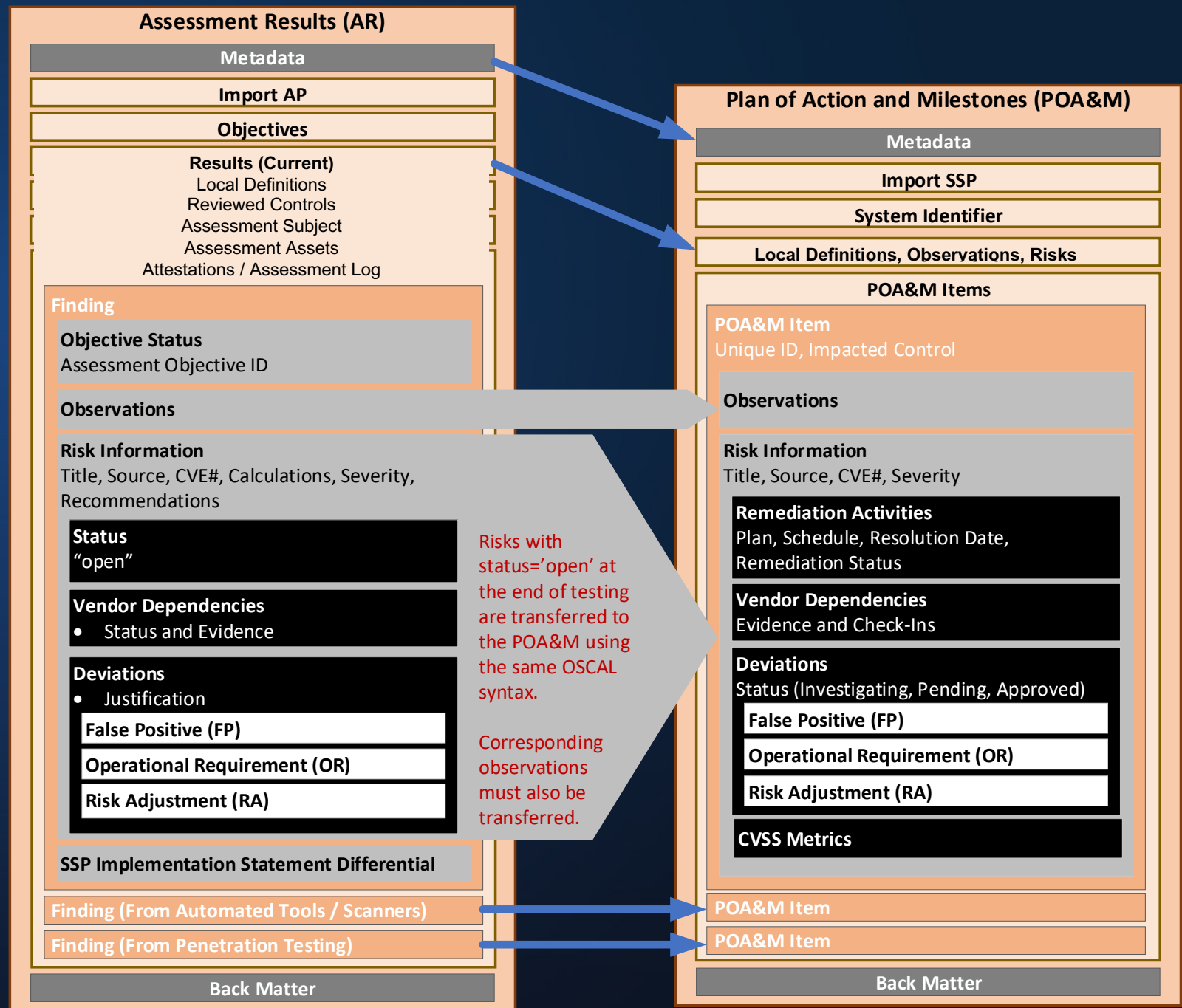
- Import Assessment Plan
- Local Definitions
- Results (Current)
  - Local Definitions
  - Reviewed Controls
  - Assessment Subject
  - Assessment Assets
  - Attestations / Assessment Log
  - Findings / Observations
  - Identified Risks, Calculations Deviations
  - Recommendations and Remediation Plans
  - Evidence Descriptions and Links
  - Disposition Status
- Results (Last Cycle)
- Results (Earlier Cycle)

**Plan of Action and Milestones (POA&M)**

- Metadata  
Title, Version, Date  
Roles, People, Organizations
- Import SSP  
Pointer to FedRAMP System Security Plan
- System Identifier  
Unique system ID
- Local Definitions  
Observations, Risks
- POA&M Items
  - POA&M Item  
Unique ID, Impacted Control
  - Observations
  - Risk Information  
Title, Source, CVE#, Severity
  - Remediation Activities  
Plan, Schedule, Resolution Date, Remediation Status
  - Vendor Dependencies  
Evidence and Check-Ins
  - Deviations  
Status (Investigating, Pending, Approved)
  - False Positive (FP)
  - Operational Requirement (OR)
  - Risk Adjustment (RA)
  - CVSS Metrics
- POA&M Item
- POA&M Item
- Back Matter  
Citations and External Links  
Attachments and Embedded Images  
Evidence (Vendor Check-Ins, DR Evidence)



# Assessment Results & POA&Ms Overlapping Syntax



## OSCAL: the Open Security Controls Assessment Language

[Get involved](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Github](#)

[Learn More](#) [Tutorials](#) [Tools](#) [Documentation](#) [Downloads](#) [Contribute](#) [Contact Us](#)

### Automated Control-Based Assessment

Supporting Control-Based Risk Management with Standardized Formats

[Learn More](#)

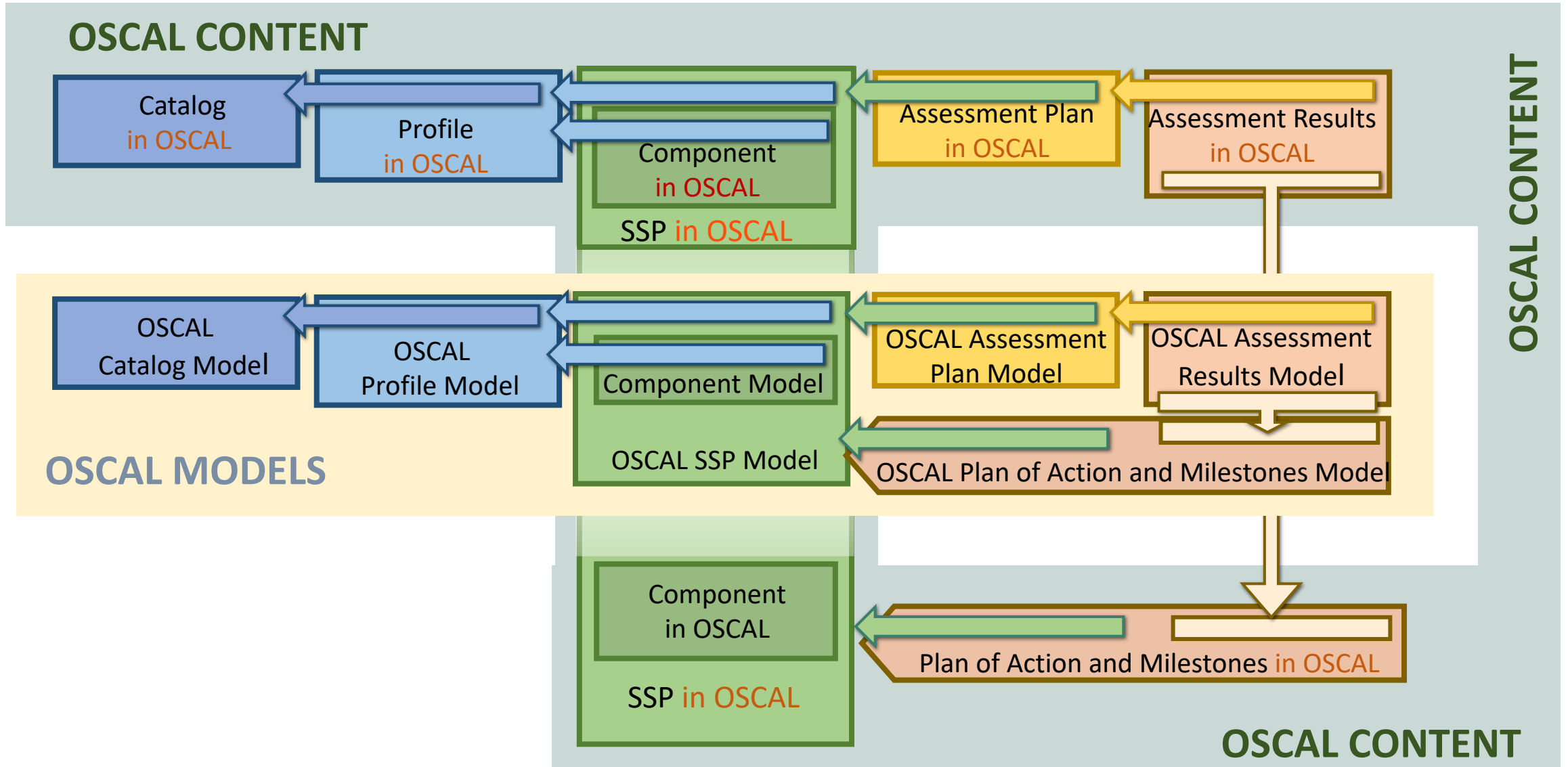


# AUTOMATION

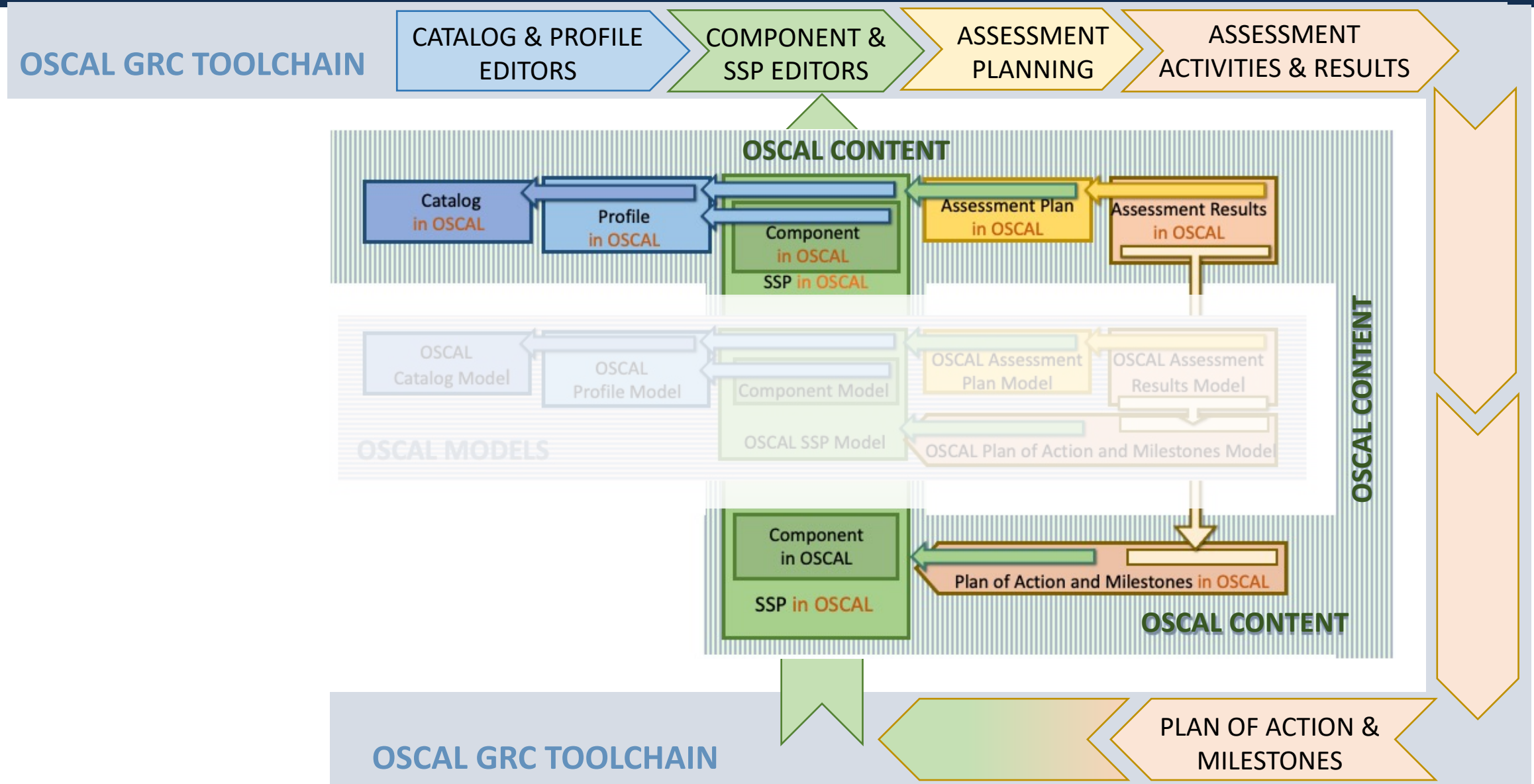
### Providing control-related information in machine-readable formats.

NIST, in collaboration with industry, is developing the Open Security Controls Assessment Language (OSCAL). OSCAL is a set of formats expressed in XML, JSON, and YAML. These formats provide machine-readable representations of control catalogs, control baselines, system security plans, and assessment plans and results.

# OSCAL Models vs. OSCAL Content



# OSCAL Content vs OSCAL Tools



# OSCAL CONTENT (XML, JSON, YAML) Catalogs and Profiles

<https://github.com/usnistgov/oscal-content>

Maintainer	OSCAL Information		Source Documents
NIST	SP 800-53 Catalog	Rev 4	NIST SP 800-53 Rev4 + NIST SP 800-53A Rev4
	SP 800-53 NIST Low Baseline	Rev 4	NIST SP 800-53 Rev4
	SP 800-53 NIST Moderate Baseline	Rev 4	NIST SP 800-53 Rev4
	SP 800-53 NIST High Baseline	Rev 4	NIST SP 800-53 Rev4
	SP 800-53 NIST Resolved Low Baseline	Rev 4	NIST SP 800-53 Rev4 + NIST SP 800-53A Rev4
	SP 800-53 NIST Resolved Moderate Baseline	Rev 4	NIST SP 800-53 Rev4 + NIST SP 800-53A Rev4
	SP 800-53 NIST Resolved High Baseline	Rev 4	NIST SP 800-53 Rev4 + NIST SP 800-53A Rev4
	SP 800-53 Catalog	Rev 5	NIST SP 800-53 Rev5
	SP 800-53 NIST Low Baseline	Rev 5	NIST SP 800-53 Rev5B
	SP 800-53 NIST Moderate Baseline	Rev 5	NIST SP 800-53 Rev5B
	SP 800-53 NIST High Baseline	Rev 5	NIST SP 800-53 Rev5B
	SP 800-53 NIST Privacy Baseline	Rev 5	NIST SP 800-53 Rev5B

➤ [examples](#)

➤ [fedramp.gov](https://www.fedramp.gov)

➤ [nist.gov/SP800-53](https://www.nist.gov/SP800-53)

➤ [oscal @ d26e3b3](#)

➤ [src](#)

# OSCAL (XML, JSON, YAML) Examples

<https://github.com/usnistgov/oscal-content>

- [examples](#)
- [fedramp.gov](#)
- [nist.gov/SP800-53](#)
- [oscal @ d26e3b3](#)
- [src](#)

- ❑ The content of the 'examples' directory is as follows:
  - [catalog](#): This directory contains sample content for the OSCAL catalog model.
  - [component-definition](#): This directory contains sample content for the OSCAL component definition model.
  - [ssp](#): This directory contains sample content for the OSCAL system security plan (SSP) model.
- ❑ Examples do not represent real data

# FedRAMP OSCAL (XML, JSON and YAML) Profiles

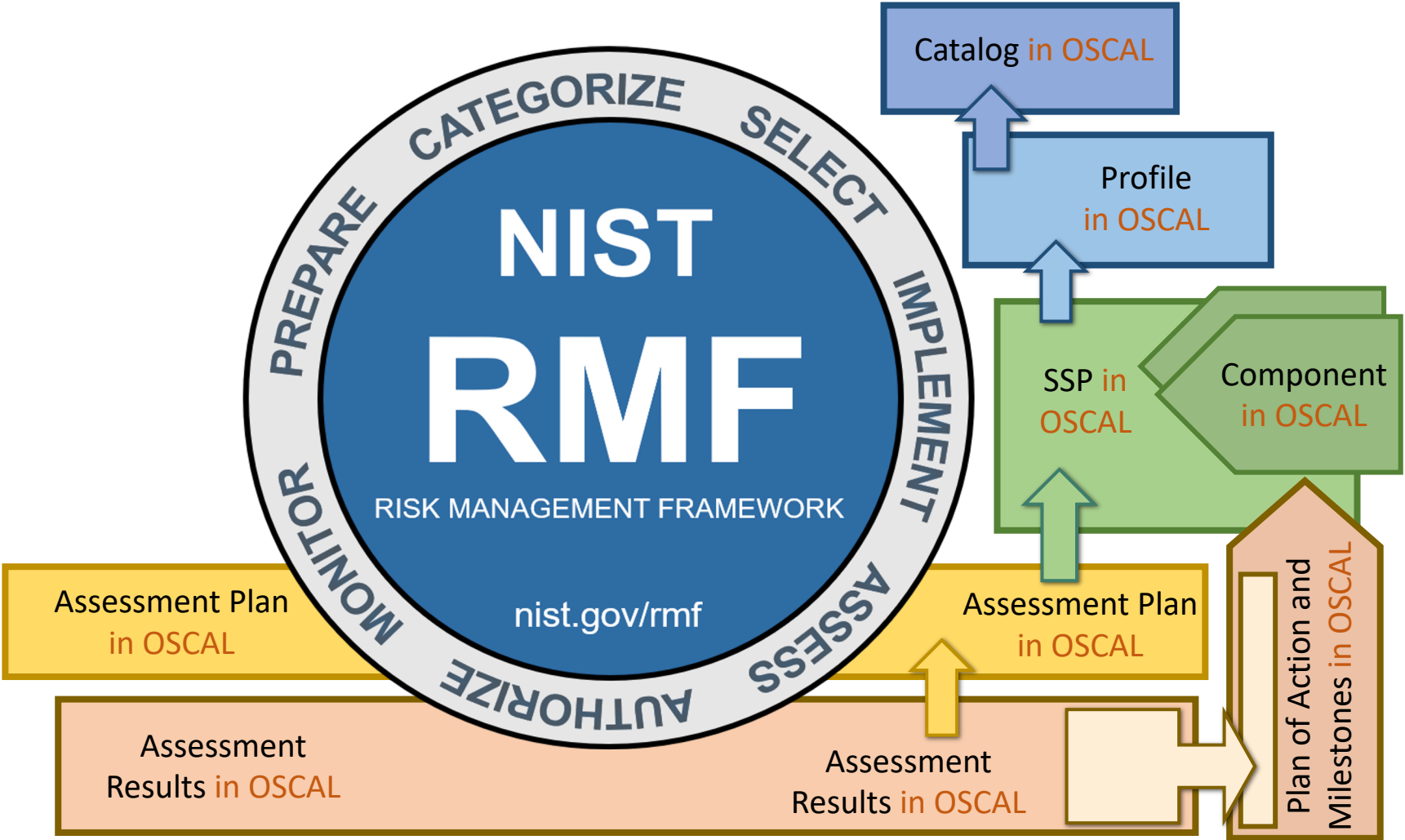
[https://github.com/GSA/fedramp-automation:](https://github.com/GSA/fedramp-automation)

- [assets](#)
- [baselines](#)
- [documents](#)
- [oscal @ 5581a8e](#)
- [resources](#)
- [src](#)
- [templates](#)

Maintainer	OSCAL Information		Source Documents
FedRAMP	SP 800-53 FedRAMP Low Baseline	Rev 4	FedRAMP Security Controls Baselines
	SP 800-53 FedRAMP Moderate Baseline	Rev 4	FedRAMP Security Controls Baselines
	SP 800-53 FedRAMP High Baseline	Rev 4	FedRAMP Security Controls Baselines
	SP 800-53 FedRAMP Tailored Baseline	Rev 4	FedRAMP Security Controls Baselines
	SP 800-53 FedRAMP Resolved Low Baseline	Rev 4	FedRAMP Security Controls Baselines
	SP 800-53 FedRAMP Resolved Moderate Baseline	Rev 4	FedRAMP Security Controls Baselines
	SP 800-53 FedRAMP Resolved High Baseline	Rev 4	FedRAMP Security Controls Baselines
	SP 800-53 FedRAMP Resolved Tailored Baseline	Rev 4	FedRAMP Security Controls Baselines



# OSCAL Content & Risk Management Framework





# Brief Demo



**National Institute of  
Standards and Technology**  
U.S. Department of Commerce

# Show and Tell

- Upload an OSCAL File
- Future Use
- Future Use

The screenshot shows a Mac desktop environment. At the top, there's a search bar and a menu bar. Below that, a file browser window displays a directory of files:

Name	Date Modified	Size	Kind
_Sample (Good).xml	Feb 26, 2019 at 3:47 PM	1.5 MB	XML Document
_Sample (Missing Data).xml	Feb 26, 2019 at 4:59 PM	1.5 MB	XML Document
FedRAMP-compliance-worksheet-old.xsl	Feb 15, 2019 at 11:28 AM	58 KB	XSL St...cument
FedRAMP-compliance-worksheet.xsl	Feb 15, 2019 at 1:26 PM	86 KB	XSL St...cument
FedRAMP-HIGH-compliance-worksheet.xsl	Feb 14, 2019 at 3:08 PM	54 KB	XSL St...cument
SSP-schema.xsd	Feb 15, 2019 at 9:26 AM	96 KB	XML S...cument

Below the file browser, a code editor window is open, showing XML code for two controls. The code is as follows:

```
2212 <control class="SP800-53" control-id="au-3">
2213   <responsible-role role-id="not-found">System Administrators</responsible-role>
2214   <responsible-role role-id="not-found">Network Engineers</responsible-role>
2215   <prop class="implementation-status">implemented</prop>
2216   <prop class="control-origination">service-provider-system-specific</prop>
2217   <control-response stmt-id="au-3_stmt.a">
2218     <h1>Quoniam, si dis placet, ab Epicuro loqui discimus.</h1>
2219     <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cum id quoque, ut cupie
2220     <p>
2221       <i>Quo modo autem philosophus loquitur?</i> Beatus sibi videtur esse moriens. I
2222     </p>
2223     <h2>Hoc etsi multimodis reprehendi potest, tamen accipio, quod dant.</h2>
2224     <p>Non quam nostram quidem, inquit Pomponius iocans; Scientiam pollicentur, quam n
2225     <ul>
2226       <li>Virtutibus igitur rectissime mihi videris et ad consuetudinem nostrae oratic
2227       <li>Est igitur officium eius generis, quod nec in bonis ponatur nec in contrariis
2228     </ul>
2229   </control-response>
2230 </control>
2231 <control class="SP800-53" control-id="au-3.1">
2232   <responsible-role role-id="not-found">System Administrators</responsible-role>
2233   <responsible-role role-id="not-found">Network Engineers</responsible-role>
2234   <set-param param-id="au-3_prm_1">
2235     <value>session, connection, transaction, or activity duration.</value>
2236   </set-param>
2237   <prop class="implementation-status">implemented</prop>
2238   <prop class="control-origination">service-provider-system-specific</prop>
2239   <control-response stmt-id="au-3.1_stmt.a">
2240     <h1>Quoniam, si dis placet, ab Epicuro loqui discimus.</h1>
2241     <p>Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Cum id quoque, ut cupie
2242     <p>
2243       <i>Quo modo autem philosophus loquitur?</i> Beatus sibi videtur esse moriens. I
2244     </p>
2245     <h2>Hoc etsi multimodis reprehendi potest, tamen accipio, quod dant.</h2>
2246     <p>Non quam nostram quidem, inquit Pomponius iocans; Scientiam pollicentur, quam n
2247     <ul>
2248       <li>Virtutibus igitur rectissime mihi videris et ad consuetudinem nostrae oratic
2249       <li>Est igitur officium eius generis, quod nec in bonis ponatur nec in contrariis
```



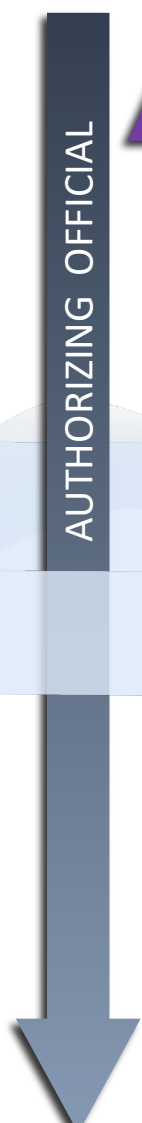
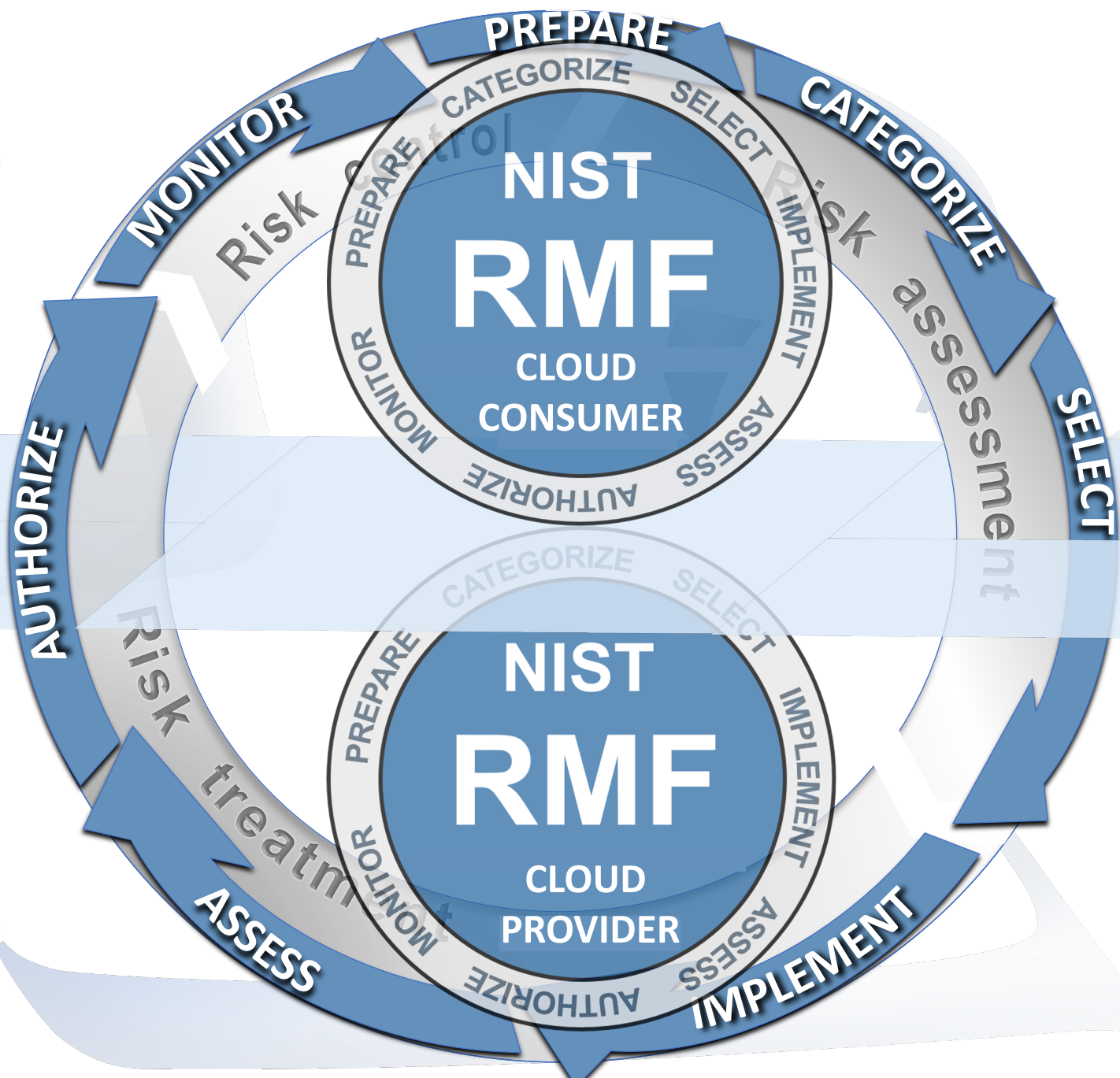
# Authorization to Use & Common Control Authorization



**National Institute of  
Standards and Technology**  
U.S. Department of Commerce

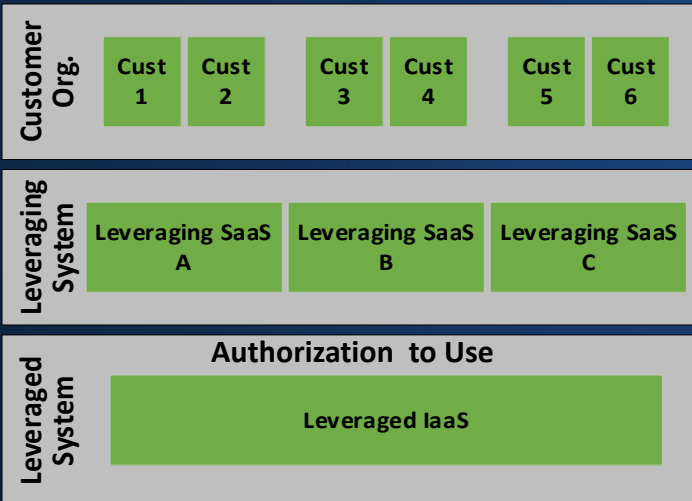
Layers Managed  
by Consumer

Layers Managed  
by Provider



# Common Control Authorization & Authorization to Use

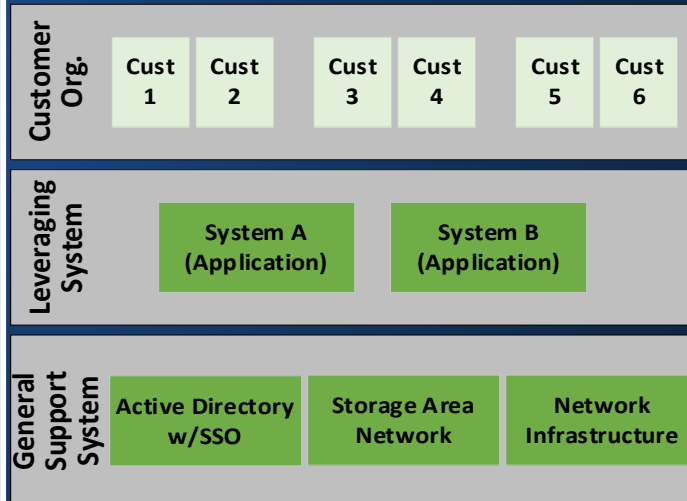
Yes



Cloud (SaaS on IaaS)

**Cloud:** Several SaaS systems running on a separately authorized IaaS.

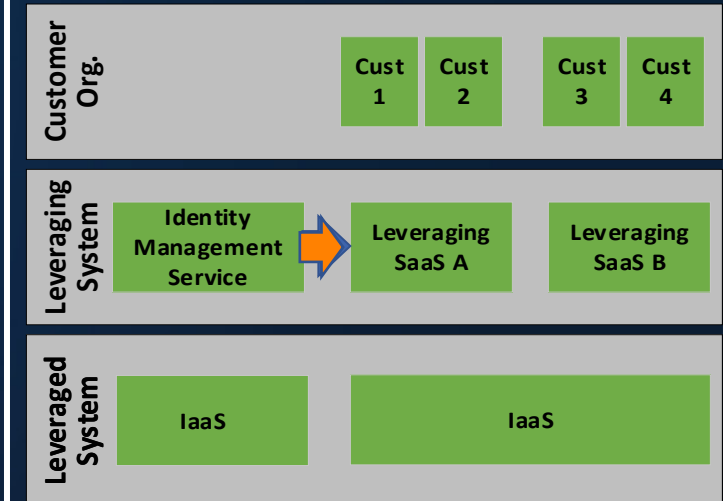
Yes



Data Center (System on GSS)

**Data Center:** Several systems relying on a separately authorized storage array or other general support system (GSS)

No



External Service or Interconnection

Interconnections or External Services are not leveraged authorizations

- Even if they have an authorization
- SaaS A handles the Identity Management Service as a system component

OSCAL supports this, just not as a L.A.

# Authorization-to-Use: OSCAL Support

## Scenario 1: OSCAL SSP / With Access

The leveraged system is using an OSCAL SSP; and the leveraging system is permitted to access it.

No CRM/SSRM is needed.

**Preferred approach!**

Completed

## Scenario 2: OSCAL SSP / No Access

The leveraged system is using an OSCAL SSP; however, the leveraging system is not permitted to access it.

An OSCAL CRM/SSRM is used.

**Typical FedRAMP Scenario**

Post OSCAL 1.0.0

## Scenario 3: Legacy SSP

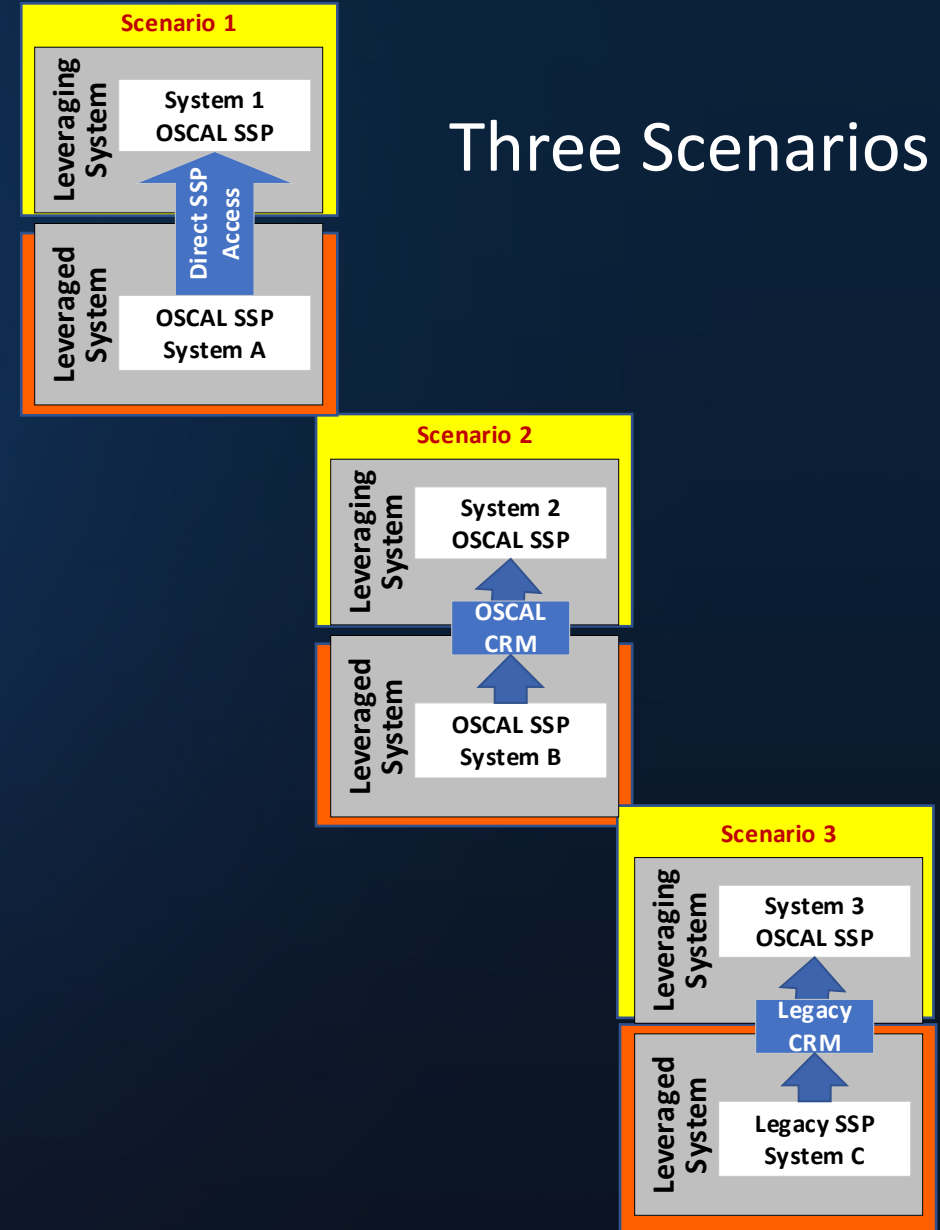
A leveraged system is still using a legacy SSP.

A legacy Customer Responsibility Matrix (CRM) or System Security Responsibility Matrix (SSRM) are used/available.

**Transition scenario for an imperfect world**

Post OSCAL 1.0.0

## Three Scenarios



# OSCAL content is for tools to consume!

Humans can see the information in nice html or pdf format using simple transformations over OSCAL content.

**Example OSCAL Catalog transformed to HTML:**

[https://github.com/usnistgov/oscal-tools/blob/master/xslt/publish/generic-preview/oscal\\_catalog\\_html.xsl](https://github.com/usnistgov/oscal-tools/blob/master/xslt/publish/generic-preview/oscal_catalog_html.xsl)



# Publicly Available Resources



## Documentation:

Catalog, Profile, Component, SSP, SAP, SAR, POA&M:  
<https://pages.nist.gov/OSCAL/documentation/>



## Example:

Generic examples:  
<https://github.com/usnistgov/oscal-content/tree/master/examples>  
NIST SP 800-53 R4 and Rev5 catalog and baselines (XML & JSON):  
<https://github.com/usnistgov/oscal-content/tree/master/nist.gov/SP800-53>



FedRAMP

## FedRAMP Automation:

Repository (FedRAMP catalog and baselines (XML & JSON) included) :  
<https://github.com/GSA/fedramp-automation>  
<https://www.fedramp.gov/using-the-fedramp-oscal-resources-and-templates/>



## Tools

**OSCAL Java Library:** <https://github.com/usnistgov/liboscal-java>  
**XSLT Tooling:** <https://github.com/usnistgov/oscal-tools/tree/master/xslt>  
**OSCAL Kit:** <https://github.com/docker/oscalkit>  
**OSCAL GUI:** <https://github.com/brianrufgsa/OSCAL-GUI>  
**OMB'S OPAL:** OSCAL Policy Administration Library (OPAL): <https://github.com/EOP-OMB/opal>

Please visit: OSCAL Club: [oscal-club/awesome-oscal](https://github.com/oscal-club/awesome-oscal)  
<https://github.com/oscal-club/awesome-oscal>

# OSCAL Adopters



FedRAMP

noblis



MEDINA



- FedRAMP
- Noblis
- HHS CMS
- National Renewable Energy Lab
- GovReady
- C2 Labs
- cFocus Software
- Shujinko
- Robers Bosch (EU | Germany)
- Telos

- Booz Allen Hamilton
- AWS
- Microsoft
- Coalfire
- Kratos
- eMASS
- CSAM
- Volant Associates, LLC
- Salesforce
- Oracle

Booz | Allen | Hamilton®



ORACLE

# Questions?

Contact us at: [oscal@nist.gov](mailto:oscal@nist.gov)

Chat with us on Gitter: <https://gitter.im/usnistgov-OSCAL/Lobby>

Collaborate with us on GitHub: <https://github.com/usnistgov/OSCAL>

Join our COI meetings:

<https://pages.nist.gov/OSCAL/contribute/#community-meetings>