Zero Trust Readiness Assessment: On-Site Process Guide

This guide details the steps and best practices for conducting a focused, on-site, assisted Zero Trust (ZT) readiness assessment, typically designed for completion within one week. This process focuses on working collaboratively with Component team members to validate and mature their ZT implementation.

Phase I: Pre-Assessment & Setup

This phase ensures all logistical and data collection groundwork is completed before the on-site engagement begins.

Step 1: Define Scope and Initiate Data Collection

Before arriving on-site, clearly define the subject of the assessment and immediately initiate the data collection process to save time.

1. **Identify Component & Environment:** Determine precisely **What Component/organization** is being assessed and **What environment** (e.g., development, production, specific cloud/hybrid instance) is in scope.
2. **Initial Survey/Self-Assessment:** Create a survey instance in your **ZT Readiness Assessment** tool (or equivalent system) for the Component to begin their initial self-assessment.
3. **RFI Deployment:** Send a Request for Information (RFI) to the Component's project management/leadership team. This RFI should be an export from or guided by your ZT Readiness Assessment tool to ensure all required data points are requested.

Phase II: On-Site Engagement

This is the core phase, focused on collaborative information gathering, validation, and in-depth interviews.

Step 2: Kickoff and Tool Inventory

The on-site assessment begins with a kickoff meeting with the Project Manager to structure the engagement and capture the technical landscape.

1. **Meet with Project Manager:** Conduct a meeting with the Project Manager overseeing the Component environment being assessed.
2. **Capture Tool Inventory:** Systematically document the defensive cyber **Tools used** within the environment. For each tool, capture the following:

- **Mapping:** How the tool maps to specific **ZT Capabilities** in your framework.
- **Maturity Status:** The current lifecycle status of the tool (e.g., procured, configured, fully integrated).
- **Brief Description:** A concise summary of the tool's function in the assessed environment.

3. **Identify Subject Matter Experts (SMEs):** Capture the names of the **SMEs** responsible for the implementation, operation, and maintenance of **each specific tool**.

Step 3: Conduct Structured Interviews and Data Capture

This is the most time-intensive step, involving detailed, focused interviews with the identified SMEs.

1. **Schedule Interviews:** Schedule interviews with each SME. Prepare an interview agenda and questions that are **specifically based on the tools mapped to ZT Capabilities** in the previous step.
2. **Capability Review & Validation:** Review the ZT Capabilities that have been mapped to their tool:
    - Confirm the mapping is accurate. Ask the SME: **"Does this tool truly address these capabilities? Should we add or remove any?"**
3. **Capture Activity Responses:** For the Activities related to the SME's tool and capabilities, capture the required data points directly from the SME:
    - **Maturity Status:** The current status of the Activity's implementation.
    - **Outcomes Status:** Status of the verifiable functions (Completed, Partial, or Not Completed).
    - **Written Response:** A detailed explanation of how the Activity is implemented.
    - **Artifacts:** Collect or confirm access to **Artifacts** (screenshots, configuration files, etc.) that provide documented proof of implementation.

Phase III: Finalization & Reporting

The final phase involves closing out any remaining questions and providing formal assessment results.

Step 4: Final Gaps and Exit Strategy

Ensure all remaining knowledge gaps are closed and the Component team is debriefed before concluding the on-site visit.

1. **Capture Follow-up:** Document any **follow-up questions** or **gaps in your knowledge** that could not be resolved during the interviews. These form the basis of the final action items.
2. **Schedule Exit Interview:** Schedule a formal **Exit Interview** with the Project Manager and Component leadership. Use this meeting to:
    - Review the preliminary findings.
    - Address the documented gaps and follow-up questions.
    - Provide context on the final assessment score and next steps for remediation/maturity.