SAMA spotlight | **ITGF | System change management**

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In November 2021, the Saudi Central Bank (SAMA) issued a circular on IT governance frameworks as part of its cybersecurity rules and instructions - with four intertwined domains: IT governance and leadership; IT risk management; IT operations management; and system change management.

SAMA's risk-based IT risk management framework prescribes IT principles - a main set of IT controls - and control requirements - mandated IT controls which provide additional direction. Where control requirements cannot be implemented, SAMA licensees are expected to apply compensating controls, formally accept any ensuing risk and request a formal waiver from that control from SAMA. The System change management domain includes 11 focus areas:

- Systems change governance
- Change requirement definition and approval
- Systems acquistion
- Systems development
- Testing
- Change security requirements
- Change release management
- System configuration management
- Patch management
- IT project management
- Quality assurance

Principles/expectations

- Asset changes classified, tested and approved before deployment
- Changes to information assets defined, documented and approved by owner before implementation
- System acquisition/vendor service risks adequately assessed/mitigated
- Systems developed in a strictly controlled manner
- Information system changes tested in test environment to ensure business requirements are met – and defects/vulnerabilities identified before release to production environment
- Cyber security requirements defined and tested in test environment to identify/mitigate security vulnerabilities before release to production environment
- System changes strictly controlled
- Reliable/accurate information about configuration items maintained
- Patch management process up-to-date - latest applicable/relevant patches installed
- IT project/related risks managed throughout project lifecycle
- Changes/developments aligned with business/user requirements before release to production environment

Work products and other outcomes:

Change management process

System acquisition process

System development methodology

Change release management process

System configuration management process

Patch management process

Quality assurance process

IT management formal process

Testing process

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