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Zero to hero: bootstrapping control system development at a new facility

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While Cosylab typically adapts to the specific EPICS environment of the facility we provide services to, we are sometimes charged with setting up a new facility where there is no preexisting environment. In fact, there may be little in the way of IT infrastructure, e.g., no control system network and no place to put git repositories. Moreover, the staff may have little familiarity with EPICS and no preferences with regard to deployment tools. While all these things do get set up in due time, development of the control system needs to start before any of it is in place. To enable development and deployment of EPICS IOCs in such a situation, we have come up a set of tools and practices based on containers that allow us to be productive early. We stay close to the vanilla EPICS build system. This allows us to quickly onboard developers, train the facility staff, and to later transition to a different deployment system if the complexity of the facility requires it.

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