2018 INSSA Member Engagement & Security Benchmarking Survey

Systems to manage risk and respond to critical incidents within the NGO and international development community have evolved steadily in recent years. Driven in part by the increasing awareness of the need to meet Duty of Care obligations – to provide reasonable measures to address foreseeable risks – these systems have grown into a strong body of best practice.

Despite the evolution in this area, information on the extent to which these best practices have been adopted and their effectiveness has been largely anecdotal. The 2018 INSSA Membership Survey is an effort to capture both quantitative information on the adoption of these best practices as well as how well they are at managing risk. The results of the survey offer a snapshot of the best practices in place, providing the community with peer benchmarking data in this essential area of operational management.

The survey also provided INSSA members with an opportunity to reflect on their engagement with INSSA and how the organization can better support members.

This report summarizes key takeaways from the survey, with commentary from the authors. The benchmarking survey results can be viewed here and answers to open-ended questions can be found here.

INSSA Board Chair, Michael O’Neill along with Board members Amaury Cooper and Joe Gleason led the development of the survey. Agenda Consulting – a UK based firm specializing in organizational engagement surveys – provided technical expertise and guidance as well as a platform for the survey itself.

Purpose – What were we trying to achieve? And how?

The first part of the 2018 INSSA Membership Survey focused on strengthening understanding of best practices in place within the community. Core questions the survey sought to address:

- What measures are well established?
- Are there gaps between best practice concept and adoption?
- What are some successes in establishing best practice-based systems? Challenges?

In the second part, INSSA sought feedback from members on the role and direction of the organization. We also wanted to gauge members awareness of INSSA’s Security Risk Management Professional (SRMP) certification program.
The survey included both question multiple choice as well as open ended questions that allowed participants to draft narrative answers. INSSA members were notified by email when the survey launched on May 17, 2018, and periodic reminders were sent before the survey closed on June 6, 2018.

**RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS: WHO TOOK PART IN THE SURVEY?**

Those responding came from over 100 NGOs and International Development organizations that spanned the globe and a range of sectors. All were INSSA members and most reported have some security responsibilities. Some additional details:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Range of sizes &amp; sectors</th>
<th>Global reach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>122 from NGOs &amp; for profit int’l development orgs</td>
<td>42% &lt; $50m</td>
<td>82% NGOs Headquartered in US &amp; Europe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INSSA members</td>
<td>25% $50m - $250m</td>
<td>Respondents spread evenly around the globe:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93% have security responsibilities</td>
<td>33% &gt; $250m</td>
<td>58% HQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Health, education, humanitarian, governance, civil society, environmental</td>
<td>20% Regional</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>21% Field</td>
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**SECTION 1 – SAFETY AND SECURITY BENCHMARKING**

**RISK ASSESSMENTS**

85% of respondents indicated that their organizations conducted formal program and country risk assessments and, of these, 91.3% affirmed that the risk assessments and mitigation measures were integrated into program design and delivery. 79% of these respondents further indicated that the risk assessments/mitigation procedures in place in my organization are effective. These impressive numbers mark a significant amount of progress (from an historical perspective) in formally assessing security risks and a positive trend in integrating mitigation measures with program development.

**TRAVEL RISK MANAGEMENT**

One of the areas explored through the survey was travel risk management – the policies, plans, procedures and resources organizations have in place to assess and manage risk for personnel traveling the globe. The chart below reflects reported adoption of key travel risk management best practices:
SAFETY AND SECURITY RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Development and implementation of policies related to safety and security are an essential element of managing risk. The survey found that not only are core safety and security policies in place across virtually all respondent organizations, but that 75% found these policies effective. Given both the traditional reluctance of some organizations to develop clear policies of any kind as well as the inherent challenge of developing and implementing security related policies, these results are noteworthy.

Policies related to other areas of operational risk – Cybersecurity and Enterprise Risk Management specifically – don’t appear to have the same level of adoption as those more directly related to safety and security and reflect an opportunity for future focus and improvement.

TRAINING

Effective training prepares personnel to understand and manage risks as well as respond to incidents. Training on a wide range of topics is available to NGO and development workers, with some provided internally and others by external resources. While few would dispute the importance of training around safety, survey results illustrate that there is still work to be done within the community to adopt and implement security-related training programs. Emerging areas of focus such as cybersecurity and gender-based training require particular attention.
When asked about the type of training in place and its effectiveness, the survey found:

- **Personal Security: 63.1%**
- **Traveler Safety: 60.7%**
- **Critical Incident/Crisis Management: 56.6%**
- **Competency-based training: 47.5%**
- **HEAT (Hostile Environment Awareness Training): 43.4%**
- **Cybersecurity: 36.9%**
- **Gender based training: 33.6%**

57% reported that provided training was effective.

**C R I T I C A L  I N C I D E N T  M A N A G E M E N T**

Almost 75% of survey respondents reported that their organizations had experienced a critical incident in the past 24 months. While risk awareness and mitigation are crucial, this data reinforces the notion that critical incidents are almost certain to occur. The survey explored how well established key critical incident management best practices are within the community, with respondents reporting:

- Critical incident management training for senior employees: 56%
- Support to families during/after critical incidents: 63%
- Psycho-social support to staff during/after critical incidents: 68%
- After action reviews of critical incidents: 72%
- Critical incident management plan: 79%
- Incident reporting procedures: 93%

These topics reflect just a snapshot of the data collected in the survey. See the full survey to explore benchmarking data on Key External Resources, Safety and Security Management Capacity, Risk Assessment and other areas.
Section 2 – Open Questions on Security Management

Beyond the objective benchmarking data collected, the survey sought to capture subjective information questions offered respondents an opportunity to reflect on their experiences and challenges in managing operational risk in an effort to understand common challenges and solutions. Many of the answers and comments in this section will sound familiar to those in the NGO security management community.

The survey asked respondents to reflect on two broad questions:

- The main challenge I face in improving safety and security risk management in my organization is...
- The most important thing I’ve learned in managing safety and security risk at my organization is...

Challenges varied, but – perhaps not surprisingly – culture and cost were often cited. Sample responses:

- Getting senior level staff to see that staff security is indeed an important aspect of our business. We need to get out of the "It's never happened to us" mentality
- "Integrating safety and security risk management with program delivery and implementation at the operational level."
- “Security culture and awareness (or weakness thereof), especially in lower-risk environments where the organizations doesn't allocate as much resources to security as in high-risk contexts”
- “Dealing with HQ and lack of strategic plan of security”
- “Incorporating managers and supervisors into the overall duty of care responsibilities to subordinates.

Respondents offered a range of important things learned, many of which may be familiar to INSSA members and others managing operational risk globally:

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- “Integrating safety and security risk management with program delivery and implementation at the operational level.”
- “Security culture and awareness (or weakness thereof), especially in lower-risk environments where the organizations doesn't allocate as much resources to security as in high-risk contexts”
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More answers to these open-ended questions can be found [here](#).

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**Section 3 – INSSA Member Engagement**

The section of the survey focuses on questions about INSSA programs, goals and member engagement. Members are at the heart of INSSA’s mission and the survey offered an opportunity for members to provide input on the value and role of the organization. The information gathered will help the INSSA Board better address the needs of its members and more effectively meet their expectations with respect to member priorities. Member engagement survey results are included in the [main survey](#).

Respondents rated the following INSSA roles quite highly though they were less favorable toward INSSA in effectively filling these roles.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>High Priority/Important</th>
<th>INSSA Effectiveness</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Professional Development</strong></td>
<td>88%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Collaboration</strong></td>
<td>89%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Standardization</strong></td>
<td>85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Advocacy</strong></td>
<td>81%</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Mentoring</strong></td>
<td>81%</td>
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Feel INSSA’s role in supporting standardization, collaboration, advocacy and professional development is important

Would like to play an additional role with INSSA including serving on a working group, being a mentor or contributing to professional development

Applied for INSSA’s Security Risk Management Professional certification program. It is worth noting that respondents commented that they were not aware of the certification program.
Section 4 – Open Questions on INSSA Membership

In addition to reflections on INSSA’s role and effectiveness in fulfilling those roles and opportunities for greater engagement with INSSA, the survey offered respondents an opportunity to reflect on the qualitative value of INSSA membership and recommended actions for INSSA in the next year.

The survey asked respondents to reflect on two broad questions:

- What is it that you most value about INSSA membership?
- If there is one thing you would like INSSA to do in the next 12 months what would it be?

A preponderance of respondents valued INSSA membership for networking, collaboration, and resource sharing. Sample responses:

- “Keeping up with developments in this emerging professional specialty; development of best/good/advisable practices.”
- “Being informed and updated of the best practices in security management.”
- “Contribute to enhancing safety and security of aid staff, target communities and strongly advocate for leadership engagement in the area.”
- “Creating an active dialogue amongst NGO community”
- “Sharing of information on a secure platform reaching all role players - inform and adapt, standardization of policies and SOP's for all.”

Among the activities that respondents identified for INSSA to prioritize in the coming year were improved networking opportunities, membership engagement, and ultimately becoming a more effective organization and forceful advocate overall. Sample responses:

- “Improve ways Members communicate with each other. This includes online platforms as well as getting to Regional Hubs, to hold events there.”
- “Engage INSSA members more regularly and leverage the membership’s collective experiences and expertise.”
- “Until INSSA has a higher profile it will be difficult for it to gain traction in the wider NGO community.”
- “Tackle sexual assault and harassment in the aid sector and lead efforts to improve diversity in the NGO Security sector.”
- “I'd like to see a more active role in mentoring as well as offering ways to get into the field for those who are qualified.”

Additional details as well as answers to several open-ended questions related to INSSA membership can be found at this link.