OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE NOTE:
PLANNING A SECURITY & JUSTICE ASSESSMENT

This is the second OGN in the assessment series. It covers issues to be taken into account when planning a security and justice assessment once a decision has been made to initiate it. It provides an overview of the planning process and the main operational steps. Because you need to know how you are going to conduct your assessment in order to be able to plan for it, this OGN needs to be read in conjunction with the third OGN in this series: Conducting an Assessment.

What was covered in the previous OGN on Processing the Assessment Request

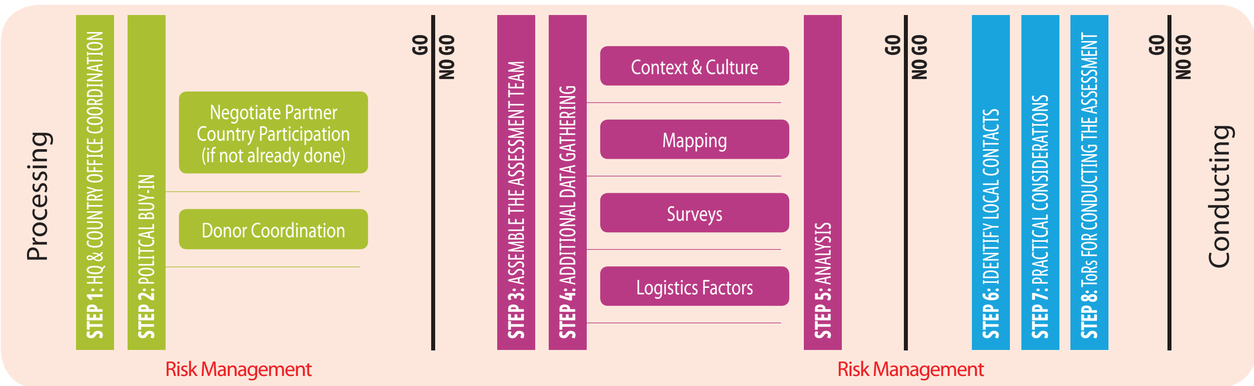
- Clarifying the purpose for the assessment
- Identifying other relevant initiatives
- Undertaking an initial analysis of the context
- Alignment, harmonisation and ownership
- Making a Go / No Go decision
- Identifying available resources
- Writing basic terms of reference (ToRs)
- Creating an initial risk management matrix

SUMMARY OF STEPS

STEP 1. HQ AND COUNTRY OFFICE COORDINATION
STEP 2. ENSURE POLITICAL BUY-IN
STEP 3. ASSEMBLE THE ASSESSMENT TEAM
STEP 4. ADDITIONAL DATA GATHERING
STEP 5. ANALYSIS & PLANNING THE METHODOLOGY (SEE OGN ON CONDUCTING THE ASSESSMENT)
STEP 6. IDENTIFY LOCAL CONTACTS
STEP 7. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS
STEP 8. ToRs FOR CONDUCTING THE ASSESSMENT

Note – the steps will not always follow in sequence and there will be a degree of moving backwards and forwards between steps as new information or events unfold.

MAP OF PLANNING THE ASSESSMENT



The practice note "SSR Assessment, M&E and Gender" in the Gender & SSR toolkit provides a useful checklist to ensure a gender perspective is fully adopted (www.dcaf.ch/gssrtoolkit)

In the steps below, examples are shown in yellow boxes and potential risks are shown in red boxes. Definitions and additional explanations are in grey boxes.

STEP 1. HQ / DONOR COUNTRY OFFICE COORDINATION

A Whole of Government Approach (WGA) was encouraged in the first OGN on Processing an Assessment Proposal, and this remains a key factor in successfully supporting security and justice development. In addition to looking for WGA within the mandator's home country, there should also be coordination between the capital/HQ and the field. At this stage, you should review the extent to which a WGA is being adopted and, if relevant, clarify the division of decision-making roles between the field and the capital/HQ. Discuss with the mandator whether there are other departments / offices that should be involved and the applicable mechanisms. You should also map out national and international coordination structures in the host country (for example, a national SSR steering committee), including points of contact. This will be vital for the assessment as well as future interventions.

Either the mandator or the team leader should liaise with other donors in the country to discern the possibilities for a joint assessment. You should try to get donors to see the advantages of harmonisation in the SSR process. If you will be conducting a joint assessment, you should establish or adopt a coordination mechanism, such as a working group. If you cannot set up a joint assessment, you should at least ensure that you engage other donors and aim at involving more stakeholders when following up the results of the assessment.

Seek synergies within Government and a coherent, coordinated, complementary approach (3C) to the way the donor country pursues or participates in, and responds to, the assessment.

Coordination could be through a joint mechanism to oversee the assessment process, such as a Government-led Security Sector Steering Committee that is nationally owned and continuously reporting to stakeholders. Ideally, such a mechanism would have clear operating procedures and budget mechanisms etc. to decrease transaction costs while harmonising objectives and activities. If such a structure does not exist, or national ownership is weak, the team should, as a minimum, try to be transparent about the assessment and involve as many stakeholders as possible.

The need for 3C (Coordination, Coherence and Complementarity) within the individual donor country must be balanced with the need for national ownership. There is a risk that a single donor focusing on securing "coordination, coherence and complementarity" with its own departments (e.g. security, diplomacy, finance, etc) may actually decrease harmonisation of donors on the ground and hinder national ownership. This can be mitigated against by remembering that not all aspects of the 3Cs need to come from just one country.

STEP 2. POLITICAL BUY-IN

Negotiate Partner Country Participation

This step may have been initiated in the first stage (see the OGN on Processing an Assessment Proposal), depending on the context and purpose of the assessment. At a minimum, you should have worked through questions to determine the role and scope of partner country involvement. In conjunction with the mandator, you should develop the political dialogue with government representatives, civil society and other donors regarding your potential assessment. External participation in the team should be confirmed, potentially accompanied by a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the partner government.

There are several different potential risks to consider at this stage, including:

- Getting the 'right' national counterparts on the assessment team;
- Ensuring that national representation is not just superficial, but that the process provides genuine channels to incorporate host country views.

A Do No Harm analysis will provide a good basis for a political risk analysis (see box on Do No Harm under Step 5)

Remember that an assessment may also be a capacity building opportunity for national counterparts. Is the mandator prepared to support this? What resources and time are available to support this?

STEP 3. ASSEMBLE THE ASSESSMENT TEAM

The ToRs produced during the 'Processing the Assessment Proposal' phase highlighted the cumulative skill-set required in the team and potentially initiated recruitment. Although the composition of the team may evolve during the planning phase (due to difficulties in sourcing the right people, attaining an adequate gender representation on the team, or limited knowledge of what will be required), you should meet physically as early on as possible in the planning process to develop an integrated team approach in designing the methodology for the assessment. You will also benefit from everyone's different perspectives when assessing the risks involved in different activities and identifying ways in which these risks can be mitigated against. Even if all team members cannot be brought in physically, you should consider using video, telephone or Internet conferencing to involve everyone in preparation meetings.

STEP 4. IN-DEPTH DATA GATHERING

This builds on the initial analysis of the context that you carried out in the first phase (Processing the Assessment Proposal).

Context and Culture

In order to develop an analysis that is as accurate as possible, you need to take into account the unique geographical and historical context of the country in question. You need to consider global or regional dynamics that affect the particular locality you are assessing as well as internal dynamics.

Further to contextual specificity, you should consider the culture(s) that influence the state and its population.

A true understanding of local cultures can take years of embedded research, which external assessment teams will rarely have the opportunity to conduct. Ideally you will have national members on your team who will bring crucial insight, although they may not automatically have a full understanding of tribes or ethnicities beyond their own.

To compensate for any shortfalls, you could look to anthropologists, historians, political scientists and sociologists for in-depth knowledge. If such a country specialist cannot be added to the team, you should, as a minimum, involve them in pre-deployment planning meetings

> Culture can be understood as systems of belief, values, norms and world views of a given social group, and the behaviour, symbolic, ritual and material expressions that these characteristics underpin Despite being transmitted across generations, culture is learned (in contrast to being inherited). It is often taken-for-granted. It may be possible to identify patterns in culture at specific times or in specific locations, but culture can change (sometimes rapidly) in line with context, human agency and innovation.

When considering security and justice support, you should have an understanding of the local legal systems. It is important that you do not just focus on the state sanctioned legal system, but also consider non-state/informal traditional systems, many of which may not be written. Once again, expertise in this area could be provided by national team members, although you may wish to consider academic country expertise as well.

Mapping

You should continue the process started in the previous phase of collating information from previous reports and other secondary source material. In addition to continuing your PESTLES analysis, you should map out details on the different actors and previous support interventions. Each team member will be able to add value through their own knowledge and experience of prior assessments, as well as access to different networks within the country in question. This is particularly the case for national team members.

> The PESTLES framework is a useful method for classifying the information gathered.
>
> The categories are: Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal (and National Strategy), Environmental and Security factors. Examples are available on the ISSAT website http://issat.dcaf.ch/ISSAT-Public-Home/Tools-and-Resources.

Surveys

Perception surveys add particular depth to background research before a field mission. Whilst they are lengthy to carry out – and invariably politically sensitive if evaluating the state of the provision of security and justice in a country – there are an increasing number carried out by national actors and available through other organisations (links to existing surveys are available on the ISSAT website). You could consider commissioning a survey depending on the context and the state of relations between mandator, the host government, security and justice providers, and the population; however, this is a lengthy, costly and sensitive endeavour that should be considered as a project in its own right.

Logistical Preparation

This includes country specific aspects that can help determine your team composition, scheduling, safety and travel arrangements such as geography, climate, national and religious holidays, languages, rights of women, and local levels of violence.

Following the "In-depth Data Gathering", a GO/NO GO decision should be made in consultation with the mandator.

STEP 5. ANALYSIS AND PLANNING THE METHODOLOGY

Validation of the Purpose

Having gathered as much information as possible, you should review and validate the purpose of the assessment in terms of achievability and continuing relevance.

Developing a Snapshot of the Situation

You need to undertake an in-depth analysis in order to complete as clear a picture as possible. As analysis is inherently subjective, you should ensure that as many of the team as possible are involved in this step – especially national team members – in order to minimise bias. Although the focus of the analysis will depend on the particular purpose of the assessment, two key aspects that should always be considered are a Political Economy Analysis and a Conflict Analysis / Do No Harm Analysis.

Do No Harm Analysis

The Do No Harm analysis is designed to help understand what impact an assistance programme can have on relationships in a fragile state environment. If the analysis shows that assistance will actually make tensions in relationships worse, it then prompts those conducting a Do No Harm analysis to think through alternative assistance programming in order to eliminate these negative influences. A Do No Harm analysis can be conducted in seven steps:

Step 1: Understanding the context

Step 2: Analyse dividers and sources of tension

Step 3: Analyse connectors and local capacities for peace

Step 4: Analysing the assistance programme

Step 5: Analysing the assistance programme's impact on dividers and connectors through resource transfers and implicit ethical messages

Step 6: Generate programming options

Step 7: Test options and redesign programme

Visit www.cdainc.com for more details, or the ISSAT website for related resources at www.issat.dcaf.ch.

Example: In preparing to support a reform of the justice and security sector in Zimbabwe, a group of national and international experts, with the support of a donor group, decided to undertake a thorough Do No Harm analysis. Zimbabwe had experienced severe and recurrent political crises and the justice and security sector had played a central role. However, the newly created coalition Government had been identified as a window of opportunity for sector transformation. Little was known about the current state of affairs and an assessment seemed as a natural first step.

A Do No Harm analysis revealed several political risks associated with an overarching justice and security assessment, highlighting the important of getting initial buy-in from key stakeholders. As a result it was decided to initiate a series of studies on sub-sectors in a sequence that the national parties could agree to, with the aim of identifying policy options. This in turn exposed the need for a participatory and consensus-based mechanism where the national parties could directly influence the justice and security programme.

Decide on the Methodology

The methodology for the assessment should allow you – as much as possible – to make relevant and pragmatic recommendations in an environment where there is, at best, only partial or incomplete knowledge of the issues and the power relationships. Details on ways to undertake this are covered in the third OGN in the Assessment Series: Conducting the Assessment. When forming the plan for the field phase, it is important to explore the use of quantitative and qualitative data and consider triangulation.

> If time is too short to conduct a comprehensive assessment at the outset of a programme, then plans for more detailed assessments should be built into its design.

Consider Aspects for M&E of Any Eventual Programme

Although the decision to implement a programme will not take place until after the assessment, it is important to already be thinking of issues relating to Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). Relevant tasks that need to be incorporated into the plan for when you are in the field include:

- Collecting as much as relevant information as possible that will be useful to identify or generate information that can be used to set baselines for any eventual programme.
- Reviewing the M&E capacities and needs of relevant international actors at HQ and field level.
- Assessing the capacities and needs in the partner country to introduce, manage and sustain a results-based M&E system. This can be achieved by looking at the incentives and demands for designing and building a results-based M&E system; current roles, responsibilities and structures for assessing performance, and capacity building requirements to set up an M&E system.

More information can be found in the OECD Justice and Security Monitoring and Evaluation Toolkit, www.oecd.org.

Update the Risk Matrix

You need to consider the risks of positive and negative outcomes to undertaking an assessment (the fact of just doing one and the way in which it will be carried out). For example, how is the assessment likely to affect the power relationships within the country? To mitigate against potential negative interference and to capitalise positive influences, who can assist in identifying / recognising champions and spoilers during the assessment?

> Following the update of the risk matrix, a GO/NO GO decision should be made in consultation with the mandator.

STEP 6. IDENTIFY CONTACTS IN COUNTRY

You will need to identify the actors with whom your team will interact as key focal points in the country. Questions to ask to determine this include:

- Is there a donor coordination mechanism?
- Are there national coordination bodies?
- What role will the local embassy play in the country during the assessment (e.g. diplomatic/ political role, administrative and logistical support, security, etc)?
- What is the local protocol for arranging meetings?

- Will the Assessment team primarily report to the sector or donor coordination mechanism, or Government in the host country, or to the Capital/HQ in the donor country(ies)?

STEP 7. PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

You need to analyse the local conditions in order to minimise risk for the team members, identify communication needs, transportation, translation/interpretation and other requirements. This can be done using information gathered under step 4, as well as any additional information gathered from in-country offices. Your itinerary in country must take into consideration geography, weather and holidays. You must pay particular attention to the security of the team and any additional people involved in the assessment. In addition to obtaining, where possible, local security SITREPS from embassies, agencies and national police structures, you should undertake a specific security risk analysis.

Local fixers provide an excellent means of arranging meetings, but you need to ensure they are briefed on any additional protocol aspects that they may not be aware of (for example relating to the mandator). When considering interpreters, you need to remember that the quality available may vary quite significantly depending on the country. Security and Justice assessments are likely to use technical language that a local interpreter may not be aware of, so it is useful to prepare a list of additional vocabulary that you are likely to employ (for example, terms for "Community Policing" or "Governance and Oversight").

STEP 8. TERMS OF REFERENCE ON THE ASSESSMENT STRATEGY

Once you have carried out the various aspects of planning, the process for the next steps should be captured in ToRs in partnership with the mandator(s), building on the initial ToRs written at the end of the first phase (Processing the Assessment). You should ensure that you have allocated sufficient time for the assessment process, as they are often too short and superficial due to pressure to quickly design and implement programmes and projects. This is particularly the case in post-conflict settings, where political and security priorities mean that time to plan and prepare may seem a luxury. This may result in insufficient attention being paid to wider security and justice issues, consultation with partners, or building national ownership. This often means that the quality of any subsequent assistance programmes ultimately suffers.

When finalising the ToRs, make sure you have considered the following:

- ☑ Confirmation of the purpose
- ☑ Scope and focus areas
- ☑ Constraints on recommendations
- ☑ Methodology
- ☑ Team and participation
- ☑ Time lines
- ☑ Resources and budget
- ☑ Outputs requirements:
  - During the mission
  - After the mission

Final checklist: useful questions when planning an SSR assessment

- Have you explored opportunities for joint assessments with the national government or with other international actors?
- Have you involved the partner government in the design and conduct of the assessment?
- Do the agreed terms of reference for the assessment acknowledge the holistic nature of the security and justice sector, and do they allow the team to look for linkages between institutions?
- Will the assessment give you information about the political economy and conflict issues, the governance and capacity of the security system, and the needs of local people?
- If the assessment is very quick, can you ensure that provision for more detailed subsequent assessments is included in the programme design (e.g. in an inception phase) during which longer-term decisions can be made?
- Are you combining different research methods to ensure that your findings are robust?
- Have you deployed a multidisciplinary team for the assessment(s)?

ISSAT OPERATIONAL GUIDANCE NOTES (OGNs) ONLINE

ISSAT Operational Guidance Notes (OGNs) are operational tools designed to assist security and justice reform practitioners. The OGNs are designed to be living documents and therefore your input on the use of OGNs is greatly encouraged. To provide feedback please register on the ISSAT website at **http://issat.dcaf.ch**

The point of contact for the ISSAT OGNs on programme implemmentation is Victoria Walker. To contact ISSAT please e-mail **issat@dcaf.ch.** Other OGNs are available at **www.issat.dcaf.ch/toolsandresources**

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The Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF)

The International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT)

SUPPORTING THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY'S SSR CAPACITY

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