



Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Centre de Politique de Sécurité, Genève
Genfer Zentrum für Sicherheitspolitik

Impartial, Inclusive, Influential



Security Management Initiative (SMI)

Reducing risks for humanitarian staff
in hostile environments

The Security Management Initiative (SMI) is a focused human resource centre for risk and security management of NGOs and international agencies working in hostile environments

SMI provides authoritative research, training and advisory services in risk and security management for national and international aid agencies and their staff



Security Management Initiative (SMI)
www.securitymanagementinitiative.org

The Security Management Initiative (SMI)

SMI functions as a focused human resource centre for risk and security management of NGOs and international agencies working in hostile environments. It provides authoritative research, training and advisory services in risk and security management for national and international NGOs and aid agencies. It works in close cooperation with aid agencies, donors and academia, as well as other key stakeholders such as the military and the private sector.

SMI was launched in November 2004 as a follow-up to enquiries that highlighted serious security challenges facing humanitarian, development and peace-building organisations in dangerous conflict and post-conflict environments. SMI is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and is part of the New Issues in Security Programme at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP).

Relevance

There is a policy shift among policymakers in the international security environment recognizing that diplomacy, defence and development are increasingly explicitly linked. The traditional approaches and management of aid agencies requires adaptation in response to this policy shift and emerging paradigm. Aid agency access to beneficiary populations (essential for delivery of assistance and services) and security are two sides of the same coin. Without safe and secure access, assistance and protection to beneficiary populations are hampered, and organisations' staff, assets and reputations, as well as donor investments, are put at risk. Thus, risk and security management are an essential and critical component of project and programme implementation of any organisation in any operational area.



Photo: Pascal Dauvin

Mission

SMI aims to serve the international aid community and its national and international staff to operate safely and securely across the insecure environments in which they work. SMI strives to contribute to reducing the human and programme costs of agencies operating in these environments, thereby enabling agencies to better fulfill their mission.

Challenge

Threats and incidents affecting aid workers are increasing. Without safe and secure access, assistance and protection to beneficiary populations are hampered, and organisations' staff, assets and reputations, as well as donor investments, are at risk.

Thus, access to beneficiary populations - essential for delivery of assistance and services - and due safety and security, are two sides of the same coin. Both are essential to assisting beneficiary populations.

SMI seeks to transform the professional culture of national and international NGOs and aid agencies to enable properly integrated risk and security management strategies. SMI seeks to develop a widely accepted and applied standard for the risk and security management of national and international NGOs and aid agencies, and to develop and promote robust risk and security management cultures within these agencies.

SMI Environment

- Security challenges are systemic and affect all aid agencies and organisations
- No individual aid agency has the means and methods to address these challenges on its own
- The gaps in security management are not only technical in nature, but are strategic in their implications in terms of the modus operandi of aid agencies and their professional culture
- The basic, authoritative knowledge of security management is often not available yet, and has to be generated
- Developing this knowledge requires comparative studies of practice within the aid community and across other industries
- Identifying and bridging gaps in security management requires collaboration with the entire range of stakeholders, including intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and NGO consortia, the military, academia, donor governments and development agencies, as well as the private sector
- Requires that increased and substantive dialogue between aid agencies from the 'north' and 'south' is actively pursued.



Activities

SMI undertakes the following activities in order to develop and foster strong risk and security management practices and professional development:

- Build a network of risk and security management professionals across industries, countries and regions around the world
- Organise an annual senior security management seminar
- Provide courses, training and workshops to share best practices in risk and security management
- Produce or commission relevant and authoritative research and policy on current and emerging key issues
- Offer advisory and consulting services related to operational and institutional aid agency risk and security concerns
- Maintain a website to share current SMI activities and provide a document library of key texts related to international aid agency risk and security issues.

Accountability and Funding

SMI is a donor-funded, not-for-profit project administered by the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) is SMI's principal contributor.

SMI needs further financial resources and welcomes contributions from interested donors such as governments, funding agencies, foundations, and the private sector.

For information about donations and to learn more on how to contribute to reducing risks for humanitarian staff in hostile environments, contact:

Mr Maarten Merkelbach, SMI Project Director
merkelbach.smi@gcsp.ch
Office: +41 22 906 83 08
Mobile: +41 79 416 85 81



Geneva Centre for Security Policy
Centre de Politique de Sécurité, Genève
Genfer Zentrum für Sicherheitspolitik

Impartial, Inclusive, Influential



The **Geneva Centre for Security Policy** (GCSP) is an international training centre for security policy based in Geneva. An international foundation with over 40 member states, it offers courses for civil servants, diplomats and military officers from all over the world. Through research, workshops and conferences it provides an internationally recognised forum for dialogue on issues of topical interest relating to security and peace policy.

The Security Management Initiative (SMI) is a project of the **New Issues in Security Programme** at the GCSP. The Programme is concerned with new approaches to security, their interaction with more traditional approaches, and their consequences for states, organisations, and individuals. Through providing professional training, undertaking policy-related research, and convening stakeholders on a regular basis, the Programme aims to promote more effective responses to new issues in security.

GCSP

Avenue de la Paix 7bis
P.O.Box 1295
CH-1211 Geneva 1
T + 41 22 906 16 00
F + 41 22 906 16 49
info@gcsp.ch
www.gcsp.ch