

Tool: Risk Matrix - mapping external risks in international projects

WHY

This tool can help you identify and talk about possible safety and security risk factors before your project stay or visit. It is important to have a conversation about security and safety with your organisation before travelling to ensure that everyone is well prepared for travelling abroad or sending out volunteers internationally.

WHEN

The matrix is intended to help create an overview and to help you and your organisation to consider different security aspects **before** travelling. The tool is best used in a conversation with your partner organisation, for example at a preparation meeting. Beside this tool, you are advised to consult the travel guides by the Danish Foreign Ministry or guides on apps, such as “MySafeTravel”.

HOW

Go through and **discuss each risk factor** in the Risk Matrix and tick off the categories 'low-middle-high' for both probability and consequence. Analysing the **probability**, you can look into: *how likely is it that the risk in question will happen in this context?* Examining the **consequence**, a helping question is: *How serious are the consequences of the risk in question if it happens?* Remember that there can be a different probability or different consequence of the risk factor, if you are analysing it from e.g. a male/female/minority/non-national perspective.

After going through all the possible risk factors, it is time to get a better understanding of the **risk level** by analysing the nexus between the probability of the risk happening and the consequences of it, **if** it happens. A risk factor with a high consequence can have a low risk level if the probability of it happening is very unlikely. On the other side, a risk factor with low consequences can have a high risk level if it has a high probability and thereby happens often.

Therefore, when you have filled out the matrix it is important to analyse which risk factors scored **high or middle on probability**, as these will then be the risks most likely to happen during your stay. It is therefore important to talk about the respective consequences and **how you can reduce the likelihood** of some of the potential risks from occurring.

For example:

- a) In Tanzania, the risk factor ‘traffic accidents’ has a high probability and can have a low, middle, and high consequences. To minimise the probability and the consequences of it happening you can agree on rules, such as no driving without seatbelts or after dark.
- b) In Egypt, risk factors relating to ‘unreliable authorities or police’ can have high and uncertain consequences and both low, middle, and high probability. E.g. Taking a picture in public can lead to fees if national military personnel is in the picture. The probability of it happening will for example depend on your knowledge of local rules and regulations.

Risk Matrix

Possible risk factors	Risk level					
	Probability			Consequence		
	Low	Middle	High	Low	Middle	High
<i>Political unrest / demonstrations / riots</i>						
<i>Diseases / illnesses</i>						
<i>Theft / assaults</i>						
<i>Unreliable authorities or police / corruption</i>						
<i>Violence / shootings / attacks</i>						
<i>Terror attacks / kidnapping</i>						
<i>Traffic accidents</i>						
<i>Natural disasters / unreliable seasons</i>						
<i>Spying / surveillance / hacking / ID theft</i>						

Continue the conversation

Remember that your organisation has the responsibility for security and safety when sending volunteers abroad and it is therefore a good idea to talk about safety and risk prevention with them before your departure. Examples of questions you can ask your organisation:

- *Who in the project group and/or secretariat is responsible for the security during travel?*
- *What do you do in case of an emergency? Who do you contact?*
- *What is the contact number of your insurance company? What does your travel insurance cover?*
- *Have you informed your organization about your travel destination, dates and provided information about next of kin in case of an emergency?*
- *Have you and your organisation talked about any areas of the city/country or any situations to be especially aware of or avoid?*