

BEST PRACTICES

Governance

Governance Document

The organization's position on many aspects of travel risk management should be clearly defined through a document. All of these decisions determine the organization's risk appetite and the various preventive measures, risk management procedures and protocols to be implemented to meet the due diligence requirements imposed by legislation and implement best practices put forward by ISO31030.

Here are some elements that should be addressed:

- Reasonable due diligence, individual responsibility, and risk appetite.
- Safety management approaches and application circumstances.
- Communications including the use of social media.
- Positioning on harassment and discrimination adapted to the travel context.
- The stakeholders' selection process.

Prevention

Activity Development Process

The organization should have a clear process for developing international projects and approving travels that includes, among other things, an examination of their health, safety, and security contexts.

The process should include a risk assessment, i.e., a census of the information allowing the activity to be approved, while considering risk appetite of the organization. It is from this information that it is possible to objectively evaluate safety and security and therefore the possibility of holding a travel or not in any given country or region. To be complete, the evaluation must include an understanding of the general context and then an analysis of the risks related to the activities pursued at destination and consider the vulnerabilities of the travellers. For this analysis to meet best practices in risk management, it should include a field visit.

Partner Selection Process

A defined process should be established in which specific criteria, required by the organization, are indicated. The responsibility for selecting partners should rest with a competent and designated person or group. Establishing an approval mechanism with comprehensive criteria involving the health and safety of the traveller is a practice to be encouraged.

The selection process must consider the partner's competences to contribute to the safety and security of the organization's travellers and their ability to respond appropriately to a crisis and therefore its ability to contribute to its resolution. Although the organization is confident that its partners can prevent and manage a crisis, evidence about specific elements must demonstrate this (selection and evaluation process).

Human Resources Selection Process

A selection process should identify vulnerabilities beforehand, pre-existing conditions, potentially harmful or travellers' dangerous intentions or behaviours that could negatively influence the travel's progress. The organization should select its human resources based on criteria related to their roles and responsibilities as well as to the activity's specific framework.

The organization should reserve the right to refuse an individual's participation or to withdraw them from an ongoing activity for legitimate reasons such as health status, behavioural problems, criminal record, or other vulnerabilities that may jeopardize their health, safety and security or of those that travel with them.

Medical Process

A medical procedure should be defined to ensure that travellers are healthy enough to take part in a trip where health conditions differ from those in Canada.

The organization should also position itself on traveller vaccination especially regarding highly recommended but not compulsory vaccines.

Awareness and Training

Travellers should follow one or more pre-departure training to cover all topics necessary for preparation. The training should address the destination, the preventive behaviours, safety guidelines, individual vulnerabilities, intercultural and group life. It should provide information on the risks associated with staying abroad, raise awareness and make participants accountable for their health and safety.

Additional safety training should be provided by the partner upon travellers’ arrival at destination. The partner is best suited to showcase the realities in the field and present the safety issues.

Training should be provided to maintain or increase the capacity of personnel who oversee travels in Canada.

Recognition of Roles and Responsibilities

Partner Agreement Protocol

The organization should sign agreement protocols with each of its partners (in Canada and abroad) in which the roles and responsibilities for the health, safety and security of travellers are stipulated.

Traveller Agreement Protocol

All travellers (employees, group guides, students, interns, volunteers, aid workers) should be required to sign a contract that outlines the roles and responsibilities of each of them.

Administrative Procedures

Informed Consent

The organization should have a clear and complete, informed consent to risk form that any traveller would have to sign following pre-departure training.

Registration on the Global Affairs Canada Site

Registration to the GAC site should be done prior to each departure either by the participants or by the organization itself.

Trip Extension for Personal Purposes

The organization should have a document allowing travellers to extend their stay beyond activity dates without the organization being responsible.

Single Accompaniment Procedure

In the case of a group travel where there is only one group guide, one or more group members should be identified as resources in the event of a crisis to support the group guide or act as spokesperson or group leader in case the group guide is unable to do so.

Country Safety Guide

For each of the countries in which travels are taking place, the organization should develop a Country Safety and Security Guide to identify risks present at destination and introduce specific measures and procedures prior to departure. The document makes it possible, among other things, to implement the necessary mitigation strategies in order to respect the organization’s risk appetite.

<p>The document also centralizes communication procedures and emergency contact information (police, embassy, firefighters, etc.) specific to a destination and an activity.</p>
<p>First Aid</p> <p>In the case of a group activity, the group guide and/or partner should be trained in first aid (depending on the activity's context) and the organization should provide a first-aid kit.</p> <p>In the case of individual activity, travellers should be trained in first aid and the organization should provide them with a list of items to include in their first-aid kit.</p>
<p>Information Monitoring</p> <p>When travellers are present in a given country and region, the organization should monitor information to identify elements/events that may impact the safety and security of its travellers throughout their stay, depending on the country's sanitary, safety, and security contexts.</p>

Crisis Management
<p>Communication</p> <p>The organization should have a communication process that allows bidirectional exchange. Means of communication adapted to the type of activities conducted and their location should be accessible.</p> <p><i>Emergency Contact Management</i></p> <p>The organization should provide all travellers with emergency contact information and communication procedures.</p>
<p>Access to Resources</p> <p>The organization should have a simple procedure to free human, financial and material resources if necessary.</p>
<p>Secure Information Management System</p> <p>It is recommended that the organization have a central and secure data storage system, as quick and convenient access to travellers' personal information makes it easy to manage undesired situations efficiently.</p>
<p>Crisis Cell</p> <p>Crisis management should be structured. Human resources should be dedicated to crisis management to form a crisis cell adapted to travels abroad.</p> <p><i>Crisis Management Protocol</i></p> <p>Crisis management should be carried out according to predetermined procedures. The protocol should therefore be the crisis cell's main tool. The roles and responsibilities of the crisis cell members, the classification of emergency levels and the communication procedures should be reflected.</p> <p><i>Standard Operating Procedures</i></p> <p>Any organization should have standard operating procedures (SOP) for the situations most likely to arise during a stay abroad as well as for all other situations that the organization deems necessary. These SOP should be known by all stakeholders (crisis cell, travellers, partners, managers, etc.).</p>
<p>Insurance</p> <p>The organization must make sure that its travellers are covered by its liability insurance and health/repatriation insurance.</p>

Monitoring and Evaluation

Event Reporting Process

The organization should have an event reporting process in place to identify any incidents or accidents and their causes. This should enable the required improvements to be implemented to reduce the likelihood of other incidents occurring or to better manage the crisis.

Activity Evaluation Process

The organization should have a process in place to evaluate international activities in which attention is given to safety.

Document Review Mechanism

Safety and security-related procedures and documents should be reviewed periodically.

Debriefing Activity

The organization should hold a feedback activity following each crisis.