



Security policy of the Organization of Amis de l'Afrique Francophone-Benin (AMAF-BENIN)

Introduction

Amis de l'Afrique Francophone-Benin (AMAF-BENIN) is a solidarity and development organization whose mission is to help remedy the socio-economic and environmental problems faced by the Beninese populations in general and the most vulnerable in particular. Its objective is to defend and promote appropriate forms of recognition of the rights of disadvantaged and vulnerable communities and the construction of a future free from the injustice of poverty. To achieve this objective, AMAF-BENIN combines different sustainable development activities, projects and programs based on human rights, through awareness and mobilization campaigns, training, advocacy and direct actions on the ground.

The AMAF-BENIN Organization is managed by organs which employ people throughout Benin and particularly in rural areas. Many AMAF-BENIN staff members live and work in an unstable and dangerous environment. As responsible employers, members of the AMAF-BENIN Bodies recognize their obligation to provide safe and secure conditions in the workplace and to apply fair, just and pragmatic practices for all staff. In certain circumstances and depending on the nature of the relationship, they may also have obligations towards non-salaried contracted staff¹. To fulfill these obligations, AMAF-BENIN must manage risks without hesitation.

This document uses terms and definitions taken from the international ISO standard 31000:2009, Risk Management – Principles and guidelines, as well as industry best practices. Definitions are footnoted throughout this document.

Object

The purpose of the security policy is to set out the guiding principles and main responsibilities that constitute the security risk management framework.

It provides managers and staff members with indications and guidance that will enable them to implement the objectives of AMAF-BENIN projects/programs, while protecting, to the extent possible, staff, reputation and the Organization's equipment.

Complementarity with the code of conduct

Several guiding frameworks guide the management of projects/programs and operations, and determine the behavior of AMAF-BENIN and its work approach. This security policy is part of the code of conduct to which AMAF-BENIN voluntarily subscribes.

This security policy is complementary to the AMAF-BENIN code of conduct.

Applicability and implementation of the security policy

This security policy applies to members of the AMAF-BENIN Organization regardless of their status (employers or employees). In certain circumstances and depending on the nature of the relationship, this policy may also apply to non-employee staff. It must be systematically implemented within the framework of operations or programs.

A security protocol is developed to facilitate the implementation of this security policy. It describes the security management architecture. It is recognized that the local operational context will influence how the security policy is put into practice. Security or crisis
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management plans will nevertheless take into account the principles set out in this policy, which will be reflected in local procedures.

Security management approaches

Security must be actively managed; planning alone is not enough. Security management will also be more effective if it is fully integrated into that of projects/programs. Managers must ensure that a high level of priority is given to the safety of people and projects/programs in the setting of objectives, the performance management cycle and work planning, as well as any other management tool. The choice of a security management approach is based on a good knowledge of the local context and on the results of the risk assessment. The different approaches are generally not mutually exclusive; the key is to combine them depending on the context.

Acceptance-based approaches reduce or eliminate threats by widely accepting the presence and activities of AMAF-BENIN within the community (political and social consent). To do this, it is necessary to develop positive relations and raise awareness AMAF-BENIN, establishing its legitimacy as an independent and solidarity actor.. This characteristic must be clearly communicated to all stakeholders present. The success of such an approach relies on many factors, including: the behavior and diversity of staff, the type, design and implementation of projects/programs, the participation of community members, the choice of partners , as well as the dynamics of establishing and maintaining relationships.

Protection-based approaches aim to reduce risk by limiting vulnerability using safeguards and operational procedures. Protection devices can be communication equipment, reliable vehicles, the decision whether or not to use the AMAF brand (the logo, for example) or even the establishment of a security perimeter around the premises. Operating procedures include local safety management plans and standard operating procedures (*SOP- Standard Operating Procedures*), including evacuation plans, equitable personnel management policies and other project and program management policies and procedures applicable to the local context.

Approaches based on deterrence aim to contain or prevent the threat to reduce the risk, and this through the application of a credible counter-threat: suspension or withdrawal of activities, use of armed guards (only in exceptional circumstances and authorized) or call for police or military intervention, for example. This approach should generally be considered a last resort and its adoption is subject to specific procedures and authorizations.

Risk attitude and risk tolerance

Virtually any operational activity presents risks to personnel and equipment. Dictated by the imperative of solidarity, AMAF-BENIN's attitude towards the risk that falls to its mission. AMAF-BENIN always assesses and communicates the level of risk in a given context and makes an informed decision to accept or avoid risks.

The security policy reiterates the imperative of solidarity in order to remind AMAF-BENIN staff that taking security precautions allows AMAF-BENIN to uphold the rights of this fundamental principle.

Risk assessment aims to provide information in sufficient detail to enable management and others to make informed decisions. At AMAF-BENIN, any risk assessment must at least take into account the following considerations :

- The specificities of the operational context and local and regional influences ;

- Foreseeable threats to personnel and programs ;
- The impact that foreseeable threats can have on AMAF-BENIN staff and programs ;
- Factors of exposure or vulnerability of AMAF-BENIN to these threats ;
- Possible means for dealing with the risks posed.

AMAF-BENIN's tolerance for risk-taking will always take into account the objectives of the projects/programs and the importance of the targeted achievements, as well as the impact of other strategic factors (impact of key relationships and donor interests, For example). Risk owners will decide on a case-by-case basis whether the project/program objectives and intended effects justify accepting the assessed level of risk. It is important to note that the AMAF-BENIN Organization works in particularly difficult and sometimes risky environments. In the event of significant assistance needs, AMAF-BENIN may accept a higher level of risk. Where appropriate, it is essential to place even greater emphasis on security management.

Principles

As part of AMAF-BENIN's risk and security policy, the principles include fundamental rules and beliefs that dictate AMAF-BENIN's approach to risk and security management. These principles aim to clarify general positions and guide risk management decisions and the application of measures.

Duty of protection and staff safety

The safety of staff (whether employed or not) must always take precedence over the protection of material equipment, the preservation of activities, projects and programs, the expression of advocacy objectives or even the protection of AMAF-BENIN's reputation.

To exercise its duty of protection, AMAF-BENIN applies the risk and security policy, as well as other internal management policies and procedures. Mechanisms developed to manage the duty of care include, but are not limited to, the following measures : inform staff of work-related risks, prepare staff to manage and deal with risks, and do everything possible to ensure access to support after an incident (psychological support for victims, their families and/or colleagues, for example example).

risk appropriation and delegation

At AMAF-BENIN, risk and safety management is a responsibility of the hierarchy. All AMAF-BENIN staff, the various governing bodies and members of management own the risk. By risk owners, we mean "the people having responsibility for the risk and having authority to manage it".

The exact level of risk appropriation, responsibility and obligation of individuals or collective structures will vary according to their responsibilities and may be influenced by national legislation or regulations taking into account legal obligations.

Risk appropriation and resulting responsibilities for safety management will be officially communicated in AMAF-BENIN documents, including but not limited to employment contracts, job descriptions, terms of reference, meeting minutes of management bodies, explicit instructions and delegations from the hierarchy, or official policies and conventions.

Informed consent and right to withdraw

Line managers inform staff members under their direction of foreseeable risks linked to their role and workplace. As a general rule, it is considered that by accepting their responsibilities after having received the necessary information, the staff member gives their informed consent and accepts these risks, as well as the means and processes for dealing with the risk put in place. placed by the employer.

Staff members may refuse to carry out an assigned task if their own risk tolerance is lower than that of their employer. They can also opt out for the same reason. In the event of withdrawal from their duty station for security reasons, staff members must inform their line manager immediately and document the reasons for withdrawal as soon as possible. These cases will give rise to a review of the contract signed between the employer (AMAF-BENIN) and the employee.

Individual obligations and self-generated risks

AMAF-BENIN staff members have an obligation to collaborate with their employer in risk management and are responsible for taking necessary and reasonable measures to manage their own safety and security. A staff member's behavior is critical to their safety and security, that of the Organization and their colleagues, and impacts project/program objectives. It is very important that each member of staff accepts this responsibility and understands that failure to comply with safety plans and other codes of conduct may put others at risk. Negligent acts causing self-generated risks will likely result in termination or other disciplinary action.

Gender and security

Men and women can and often will be affected differently by a given threat. Likewise, men and women may not perceive or conceive of risk in the same way, given that gender influences a person's vulnerability to certain threats. AMAF-BENIN's risk and security policy poses gender as a potential factor of vulnerability in the context of risk assessment. Likewise, gender can influence certain ways of coping with risk and serve to reduce the risk of harm (decision whether or not to deploy only men or women in a particular situation and for a specific project or program objective, e.g. example). Risk assessments, safety management plans and the resulting risk treatment means will explicitly establish how gender is considered in the local context.

Non-discrimination and equal treatment of risk

A given threat may not produce the same predictable level of risk for different groups working in the same operational context. AMAF-BENIN's attitude towards risk and its approach to safety management are non-discriminatory and must guarantee that the means of dealing with risk offer, as far as possible, the same protection to salaried and non-salaried staff. This may require different approaches, strategies, procedures and resources for addressing risk for particular individuals or groups, even if those individuals or groups are working in the same operational context and within the same project/program.

While the treatment of risk may sometimes appear unequal (application of different rules for staff members, for example), the resulting acceptable level of risk is the expected effect of a non-discriminatory approach to safety management aimed at to apply without distinction or discrimination.

Confidentiality and archiving of information

To ensure that personal information and other information is used, stored or disposed of appropriately, AMAF-BENIN must act responsibly and take into account applicable regulatory requirements. Local security management plans should also address data protection or privacy on computer networks and in paper records.

Responsibilities

Staff

The following responsibilities fall to each member of the staff of the AMAF-BENIN Organization :

- Comply with policies, procedures, instructions, regulations and safety plans ;
- Ensure his or her own safety and security and that of the staff he or she manages ;
- Actively contribute to the development and updating of the risk management and security policy and procedures ;
- Ensure that you behave in accordance with AMAF-BENIN's guiding frameworks ;
- Report any security incident upstream and downstream in the hierarchy.

Line managers

The following responsibilities fall to line managers :

- Ensure that salaried and non-salaried staff have access to risk management and security policies, plans and procedures ;
- Monitor compliance with security policies, plans and procedures by staff ;
- Report any security incident upstream and downstream in the hierarchy ;
- Identify security training, learning and professional development needs of staff and ensure access to training (including necessary planning and funding) ;
- Report regularly to management bodies on organizational performance in terms of risk management and security.

Executive Director

In accordance with the AMAF-BENIN Security Protocol, it is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure the proper implementation of a risk and security management system for his office and respective projects/programs. This obligation entails a series of responsibilities for staff members, line managers and the Executive Director, as set out in this policy and other framework documents. The Executive Director must also collaborate with all staff, where applicable, to ensure compliance with minimum standards in the management of activities, projects and programs, human resources, finance, health and safety.

In addition to the above, the following responsibilities fall to the Executive Director :

- Effectively delegate roles, tasks and functional responsibilities relating to risk and security management (to staff or others) ;
- Lead and manage the review and updating of local safety management plans ;
- Contribute to the establishment of local security information networks.

Other members of management (accountant, sector managers, etc.)

The following responsibilities fall to members of management :

- Ensure the full implementation of AMAF-BENIN's security policy ;
- Ensure security management needs are identified and communicated effectively in program proposals and reports ;
- Ensure the availability of sufficient resources to meet risk management and security needs.
- Ensure the definition, implementation and regular testing of a crisis management protocol ;

- Hold line managers and staff accountable for their own behavior and attitude towards security risk management ;
- Submit an annual report on the performance of the AMAF-BENIN Organization in terms of risk management and security to the governing bodies (boards of directors, for example), donors, etc.

Security discussion group

The Security Expertise Group (SWG, Security Working Group) is a forum in which AMAF-BENIN members can exchange information and ideas on security and discuss new proposals for better management coordination risks and safety.

The following responsibilities fall to this group :

- Exchange safety information to drive improvement in risk management and safety practices ;
- Support and advise line managers in defining security procedures and plans ;
- Coordinate and monitor AMAF-BENIN's participation in external security networks ;
- Promote learning and exchanges of experiences ;
- Formulate proposals and recommendations regarding the coordination of risk and security management throughout the AMAF-BENIN Organization.

Governing bodies (boards of directors, etc.)

The following responsibilities fall to the governing bodies :

- Ensure explicit governance of risk and security management and the supervision of performance in this area ;
- Ask members of management to report on performance in terms of risk management and safety.

Security Levels

The assessment of foreseeable risks in a given operational context will make it possible to determine the risk management and security measures that AMAF-BENIN must take. A measurable level of security will be assigned to the risk as a whole. This level of security will be included in the risk management and security plans and will be subject to regular review.

Risk management and security plans

The Executive Directorate as well as all departmental (regional) offices of AMAF-BENIN must have risk management and security plans, which will be subject to regular review so that the information they contain remains up to date. Risk management and safety plans must remain accessible to all salaried and non-salaried personnel who work in the operational context in question. These plans, and any supporting documents, can be translated into local languages if necessary.

Security Incident Report

All security incidents, including minor incidents or near misses, must be immediately reported to management or by other means of transmitting information (written or verbal messaging, telephone, email, etc.). Security incident reports will be disseminated as widely as possible within AMAF-BENIN, to its partners and, where appropriate, to other organizations (national and local government, United Nations organizations, other NGOs, etc.).

Evacuation, relocation and hibernation

As part of AMAF-BENIN's risk and security policy, evacuation, relocation and hibernation procedures aim to shelter staff or ensure that they remain in a more stable location. Risk management and security plans will explicitly address issues of evacuation, relocation and hibernation depending on the local context. They will indicate the level of authority and decision-making of each staff member (in accordance with other AMAF-BENIN framework documents), delegations of responsibilities, criteria and appropriate times for staff travel, as well as processes proper evacuation, relocation and hibernation. In accordance with the Security Protocol of the AMAF-BENIN Organization, it is the responsibility of the Executive Director to direct and manage evacuation, relocation and hibernation activities, in coordination with other members of management.

Partners

Local partners are responsible for managing their own security. If necessary, AMAF-BENIN can help its partners to strengthen their local capacities in this area. This help can take several forms: training, information sharing, coaching, provision of risk management and security resources or a combination of the four. The Executive Director will decide on the need for such assistance to partners and, if so, on its extent.

AMAF-BENIN will consult its partners for context and risk analysis and will exchange security management information with them, depending on the local context. Partners are invited to report any incident to AMAF-BENIN. AMAF-BENIN does not expect its partners to work in locations that we consider too unsafe or too dangerous, unless it is clearly established that the transfer of risk is acceptable to both parties.

Use of armed protection

Armed protection is only compatible with the principles and programs of AMAF-BENIN in exceptional circumstances. Generally, the use of police or armed protection is a solution of last resort to reduce the risk.

Crisis management

The security policy aims to reduce the likelihood of a crisis affecting AMAF-BENIN staff or projects/programs. Crisis management systems are an integral part of AMAF-BENIN's approach to security management. They are designed to deal with predictable events, such as kidnapping.

Depending on the needs, AMAF-BENIN designs and implements systems to deal with problems specific to the context, which could generate a crisis. Whatever the context, these crisis management systems, which include crisis management plans, aim for the following priorities and objectives :

Crisis management priorities :

1. Safety of salaried and non-salaried staff ;
2. Reduced disruption to operations and projects/programs ;
3. Protection of the reputation of the AMAF-BENIN Organization.

Crisis management objectives :

1. Resumption of activities and projects/programs as soon as possible ;
2. Or transition to another means of carrying out activities and projects/programs ;
3. Or closure of activities and projects/programs in a given context.

No ransom or other concessions

AMAF-BENIN does not pay ransoms or give in to any other demands from warring parties threatening AMAF-BENIN staff, whether employees or non-employees. Where appropriate, in serious cases where staff members are victims of kidnapping (or in similar circumstances), AMAF-BENIN will support the work of the police forces or other competent authorities.

Training, learning and professional development

The AMAF-BENIN Organization will continue its measures aimed at developing the skills of its staff in terms of risk management and security. Staff members (including non-salaried staff, where deemed relevant and appropriate), will have access to security-related training and professional development opportunities during the duration of their employment, as appropriate. Training strategies for risk management and security will be defined and communicated to all parties concerned. These strategies should include an assessment of current safety skills, specifying the gaps between these and the skills needed in light of the risk assessment, and indicate resources and a precise budget that covers training needs.

Annex A: Security protocol of the AMAF-BENIN Organization

Our vision

AMAF-BENIN recognizes that operating in complex environments can lead to the presence of personnel in situations of violence and insecurity. Members undertake to reduce the risks linked to such working conditions through effective safety management.

The close collaboration of members in risk management and security will promote effective and efficient execution of projects/programs, ensuring the safety and security of human and material resources. This protocol provides an overview of the architecture that will enable this vision to be achieved by defining principles, standards and recommendations.

All country teams and members are required to comply with the AMAF-BENIN Security Protocol.

Agreements :

1. The safety and security of staff members takes priority over the protection of physical assets, the preservation of programs or the expression of advocacy objectives.
2. The executive management recognizes the impact that the behavior of its staff, their actions and their projects/programs can have on the overall reputation and brand image of AMAF-BENIN; they are accountable to each other.
3. Security management is an integral part of project/program management and, as such, is the subject of systematic and methodical discussions at all levels.
4. All members endorse the right of each staff member to withdraw from an unsafe situation.
5. As part of our work or mission, staff members operate in accordance with the principles of the code of conduct ;
6. Staff members agree not to use armed guards or allow their beneficiaries to arm themselves and take up arms. The exceptional use of armed guards may however be authorized by the Executive Director, following a joint risk analysis and the concerted decision of the Board of Directors. The Executive Director then informs the Board of Directors of the specific circumstances of this authorization.
7. Members agree not to make statements or undertake activities that could compromise the independent position of AMAF-BENIN, according to the policies and principles of AMAF-BENIN and its approval mechanisms and procedures.
8. Members respect the confidentiality of what is communicated to them.
9. It is the responsibility of the Executive Director to ensure that an appropriate risk management and security system is in place, in consultation with the Board of Directors.
10. This system includes a national security and risk management plan (SMP, Security Management Plan) which applies to all staff at the national level. The creation and execution of this plan represents a collaborative, participatory effort aimed at ensuring ownership and compliance. The safety management plan should be reviewed annually or more often in the event of a significant change in safety conditions.

11. The procedure for creating and revising the security management plan includes at least the following steps: consultation, drafting, official comments, approval, dissemination and communication. After presentation of the final draft text, implementing members have a reasonable period of time to provide their comments. The absence of comments within the deadline constitutes approval. Approval is given by the Board of Directors. The latest approved version must be made available to all staff members. The progress of the above procedure must be clearly recorded in the minutes of the executive management.
12. As part of the security management plan, the Executive Director is also responsible for ensuring that security levels are defined. Although the titles of the security levels are predetermined, the indicators and measures to be taken must be adapted to the context and the risk. In addition, a document presenting the security levels should be developed for the regional offices, which will be specific to the particular context and approved by the Board of Directors.
13. Where possible, the executive management sets the appropriate level of security after consultation. However, the executive management expressly reserves the right to set the level of security, including ordering the evacuation of staff from all offices. This decision is binding on all members and they must comply with it.
14. Lowering the security level falls under the mechanism of the managing members described in its security policy.
15. The right of members to withdraw from a site for security reasons, before the executive management decides, is ratified by all members.
16. For practical reasons, certain tasks may be delegated to a member of staff.
17. If there are local offices, a specific plan should be developed and updated by the appropriate team. Executive management ensures quality and consistency with the overall national security management plan.
18. Each team is responsible for the staff they manage and is responsible for ensuring that staff members and visitors comply with the safety management system.
19. Teams and members share responsibility for contributing to the safety management system, including shared context analysis, risk management and risk mitigation measures.
20. Members must meet the minimum standards set out in this document.
21. If the general security policy imposes other standards on specific issues, these should be respected in addition to the minimum standards.
22. The executive management reports to the Board of Directors to which it has the right and the duty to report any concerns regarding the proper functioning of security management.
23. Members who disagree on issues relating to security management share their concerns with their superiors who will deal with them bilaterally or transmit them to the Board of Directors.
24. Any issue unresolved by executive management must be referred to the Board of Directors.
25. Despite the above procedure, the executive management may take urgent decisions, as described in point 13; these will then be binding. The escalation to the Board of Directors and bilateral management by the hierarchy can take place in parallel, but the decision taken urgently has binding value and is applied without delay.

Application of conventions

1. A context analysis and a risk assessment must be carried out jointly, with a view to collaboration and consultation.
2. The choice of security approaches (e.g. acceptance, deterrence and protection) is based on context analysis and joint risk assessment.
3. Roles and responsibilities for security management should be defined and assigned to designated individuals. A clear explanation of the relationship between the Board of Directors and Executive Management must be included in the security management plan.
4. Information is shared among members according to institutionalized mechanisms. Executive management ensures the collection and dissemination of information from other actors (international NGOs, partners, local authorities and other stakeholders), its cross-checking and analysis..
5. The chapter of the security management plan relating to security levels is detailed and specifies in particular the indicators specific to the region or locality concerned and the measures to be taken at each level. In particular, it includes a definition of essential and non-essential personnel.
6. Executive management oversees security training and development needs and coordinates efforts to provide joint training.
7. Safety management resources should be budgeted, including for safety learning and development.
8. The executive management is responsible for ensuring the development of an up-to-date reception guide adopted by mutual agreement.
9. Incident reporting and analysis – In addition to reporting to superiors, all security incidents must be reported to all members.
10. It is the responsibility of each individual or team to ensure that safety briefings take place and that the safety of all its staff and visitors is monitored. General Management must be informed of any new operation or action.
11. It is up to partners to manage their own security. Teams must ensure that their staff and partners understand their roles and responsibilities regarding security management.

Annex B : Safety Management Plan Template

First page : title, date, author and revision date

Chapter :

1. Introduction: purpose and scope of the document, relationship with other documents, basic principles, such as the right to withdraw, the obligation to contribute to security, etc.
2. Context analysis (summary).
3. Internal analysis: general presentation of the program of the AMAF-BENIN Organization, including partner activities.
4. External analysis: general analysis (historical, gender issues, religion, culture, infrastructure, demographics, etc.), conflict analysis, crime analysis, inventory of actors, inventory of incidents.
5. Risk assessment: identification and analysis of threats, vulnerability analysis, acceptable risk threshold.
6. Approach to security issues: balance between acceptance, protection and deterrence and explanation of the method of implementation.
7. Roles and responsibilities.
8. Standard operating procedures (may cover vehicles and movements, means of communication, personal behavior, conflict survival, site protection, etc.).
9. Contingency plans (e.g. in case of hostage taking, sexual assault, shooting, vehicle hijacking, etc.).
10. Evacuation plan.
11. Incident notification and analysis (definition of a security incident, notification structure, method for integrating lessons learned).
12. Security levels: based on the generic classification, description of security levels taking into account the particularities of the context, with indicators and measures.
13. Appendices (telephone contact details, maps, medical evacuation procedures, etc.)

Annex C : Crisis management plan template

First page : title, date, author and revision date

1. Introduction
2. What constitutes a crisis ?
3. Management and decision making
4. Crisis management team (CMT)
 - a. Immediate actions of the crisis director
 - b. Immediate actions of the CMT
 - c. In case of kidnapping
 - d. Actions of the different members of the CMT
5. Incidents involving staff members of AMAF-BENIN or other organizations
 - a. AMAF-BENIN teams and members.
 - b. Other organizations
 - c. Community partners or volunteers
6. Human resources
7. Bonding with family
 - a. Announcing bad news
 - b. Family Liaison Officer
8. Communication
 - a. Communication with the media
 - b. Internal communication
9. Information management
10. Crisis unit
11. The post-crisis
12. Analysis and lessons learned