Societal security through partnership

Pierre Wettergren applies BCM principles on the public sector and gives some insights to the methods and the process that can be used to enhance community resilience

When I was asked to provide some insights into the ISO's efforts in relation to societal security and in particular community resilience, my thoughts instantly turned to the work which we are currently carrying out on the new Private - Public Partnership (PPP) standard. The standard was originally proposed by the Italian standardisation organisation UNI, and a project team has now been set up to develop the proposal further.

ISO Societal Security
However, before examining the PPP standard, I will provide an overview of the ISO Societal Security. Diagram 1 outlines the scope of the ISO Societal Security, illustrating the three stakeholders groups that must become more resilient; the three phases to consider for actions/ capabilities/procedures; and the endless resource dimensions, critical functions and infrastructure that must be made more robust. The ability of societies to survive is dependent upon the security of the critical functions which underpin it, and not just on ensuring territorial security. It is essential to enabling governments and civil societies to function, critical infrastructures to be maintained, democratic processes to govern, and certain basic values to be upheld. In principle, this is the aim of the ISO Societal Security.

The ISO Technical Committee (TC) is charged with managing this process and is divided into a series of working groups (WGs) each with a particular area of focus (see diagram 2).
WG1 – Framework & Roadmap, but also developing the PPP and Exercise standards
WG2 – Terminology
WG3 – Command, Control, Coordination, and Cooperation
WG4 – Organisational Resilience

It is expected that next year this group will publish the Preparedness & Continuity Management standard, which will be available for use in conjunction with other national standards such as BS25999. ISO Societal Security therefore frames a very interesting and important set of standards and will in the next few years bring these standards to the market.

Diagram 1

Private – Public Partnership
The standard I find most interesting is the Private – Public Partnership (PPP). It is expected that the title of the standard will change as the meaning of PPP can vary from country to country and it may become Private – Public Cooperation (PPC). For the purposes of this article, however, we will refer to it as PPP.

In this article I will provide my views on what I hope the final standard will contain. My comments are based on experiences of PPP projects, my time as head of BCM at AstraZeneca, and my work with other inter-organisational networks. An example of one such network, was a Swedish project which I facilitated involved six municipalities and 14 private companies that provided critical services. The aim of the project was to understand and define criticalities and vulnerabilities in order to strengthen energy supply in the region, and to form an inter-organisational team to manage disruptive events. This project and other experiences from other TC members will shape the PPP standard.

The PPP standard will be applicable to all organisations seeking to enhance the operability and resiliency of the core functions of society's public and private sectors. Important elements in the standard include: how to establish relationships, planning activities, mitigation, emergency and recovery management, lessons learned, and plan and pursue exercises.

Inter-organisational networks are a central component of this and can be implemented at various levels, such as on a global, national, local or operational level. In the context of the PPP standard we address operational PPPs, i.e. a cooperative network with a common modus operandi. Let me explore further what I mean by an operational PPP with common modus operandi.

Operational PPPs

A PPP is an organised relationship between private and public organisations which establishes common scope and objectives, defined roles and procedures, and tools to mitigate / manage any incident impacting on societal security under applicable regulations and laws.

Relationships are generally long term and can develop before any interaction is initiated through particular processes. These processes involve the influence of cooperative motives to enter inter-organisational networks and the preferences upon which potential partners are selected. This is a very basic summary of the mechanics of network theories.

The objectives upon which inter-organisational networks are based motivate the network actors to develop relationships founded on cooperation so that shared goals and decisions can be effectively pursued.

We must understand and master this engagement process in order to implement the PPP standard. We need to use group engagement techniques and tools, as creating pull is far more effective than leveraging from push. It is imperative we establish relationships between actors, who all have their own agenda within their organisations, and engage and jointly shape common objectives and common capabilities. This engagement process has to be led and owned by the public sector and should be supported by domain and facilitator experts.
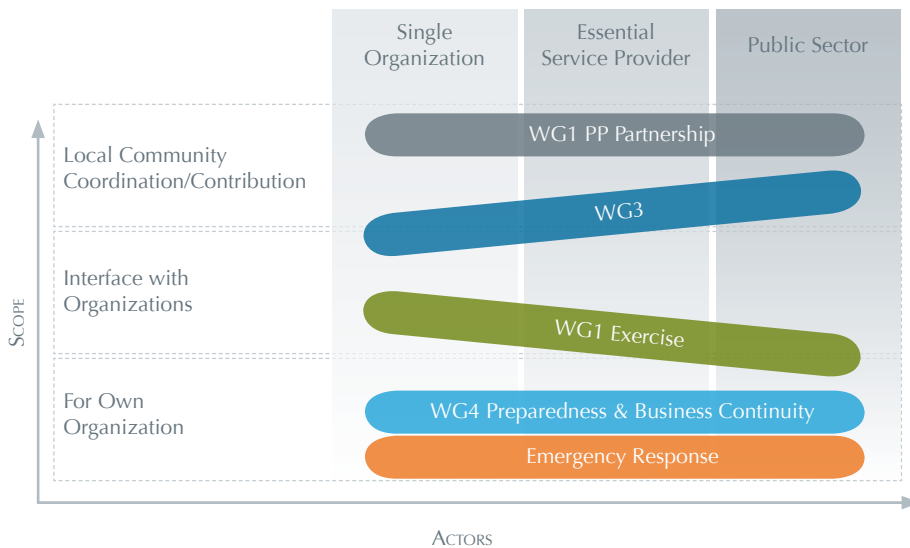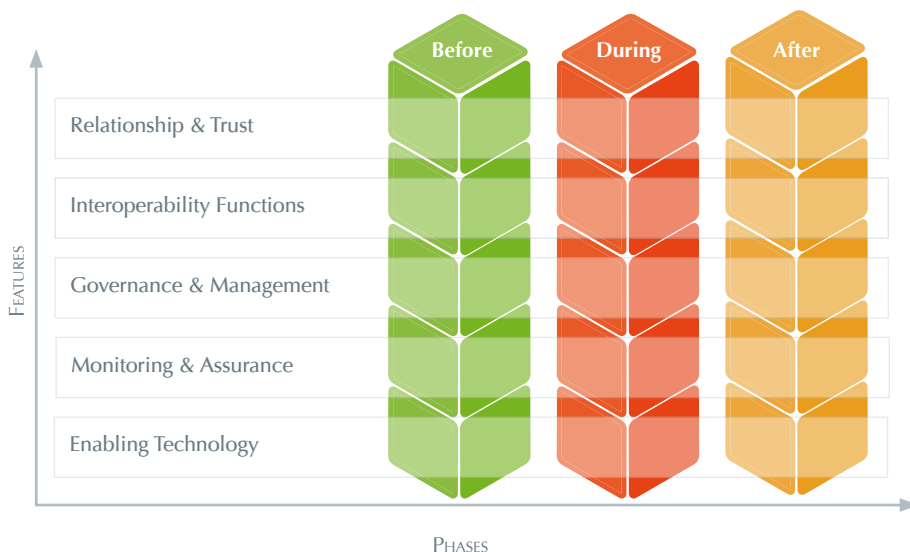

Diagram 2

Diagram 3

Starting the journey

The journey from idea to establishing operational PPPs involves four key stages: ideas and motives; engage and explore; expand and commit; and stabilise and mature.

Ideas & Motives: When a public actor or organisation has an idea that could enhance community resilience, they can either develop it themselves or form a PPP as a collective mechanism for sharing risk, resources, and investments. It's a win-win, but there are obstacles that need to be resolved in order to establish open and constructive cooperation between private and public actors. Firstly, getting information can be an issue as private companies are often not keen to air their weaknesses. Secondly, composing the team members can be a challenge. It is therefore important to research which actors may be interested in participating and then build your case before contacting them preferably using a SIPOC analysis and/or a BIA so that you know which societal service/function that needs to be secured/improved.

Engage & Explore: Invite individuals or organisations to an open, facilitated discussion where this idea is translated into a defined common objective. Use experienced group engagement facilitators to lead the process. This starts to shape the relationship model that eventually will define the roles, procedures, the interoperability functions, and enabling technology that constitutes the *modus operandi* for the operational PPP team. The output is a defined common objective to move forward with.

Expand & Commit: After selecting who to engage with, the PPP process moves into a stage where the relationships are expanded into friendships based on interpersonal commitment, trust and reciprocity. It is about getting to know each other and understanding respective organisations' capabilities and objectives. It is important to ensure that participation in decision making is democratic and inclusive, enabling people to contribute as equal members of this PPP.

During this stage, a Societal Impact Analysis (SIA) should be undertaken which uses the same principles as a BIA and applies them to the region and societal services in question. This gives the group a joint understanding of current capabilities and what values are at stake.

This stage will also formalise the PPP, committing the organisations through written contracts to become active members. Even if there are no jurisdictional bindings and the relationship is on a voluntary basis, the contract is important as it is public commitment indicating that this organisation is investing in the community in which it operates and whose services it depends on, thereby showing its corporate social responsibility colours.

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Once the commitments are made the hard work begins as you are now in a position to shape the strategies which will be the basis for building your community resilience capabilities. To establish an operational capability within this PPP you need to sort out roles, responsibilities and procedures, as well as the activities required to ensure this capability going forward. Therefore the PPP governance model is crucial, as it must allow the group to overcome the hurdles of traditional management systems.

As diagram 3 indicates, interoperability, governance, management, monitoring, and assurance features must all be considered. Since we are also dealing with many actors and organisations at various locations we must consider using enabling technologies in all three phases.

Group engagement techniques and tools are key during this process to maintaining objectivity, increasing efficiency, and also keeping the need for members to travel to a minimum. Such tools can ensure that all members participate actively in the PPP, help reach consensus in far reaching debates, cut across traditional verticals and build commitment to new actions and behaviour change, all of which are extremely important components of the PPP.

Stabilise & Mature: Finally, in order to strengthen the relationships, validation and verification exercises can prove extremely useful. These will engage the PPP actors and over time the operational PPP capabilities will become a natural component of community resilience. But, remember that relationships and trust are long term investments. By becoming a member of a PPP, you are making a commitment to making your community more resilient.

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