

Cultural Institutions Security Risk Management Framework

The Situation

The Abu Dhabi Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC) is the government-owned developer responsible for the emirate's USD 27 billion Saadiyat Island project. One of the development's three major districts is the Cultural District which will contain a diverse range of cultural and arts facilities including:

- Louvre Abu Dhabi, involving a 30 year agreement with the French Government for the exchange of exhibits and technical support from the Louvre Museum, Paris;
- Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, which will be the largest of the Guggenheim museums globally;
- The Sheikh Zayed National Museum, supported by the British Museum; and
- Al Manara intermediate display facility displaying some of the works from the above collections while those facilities are under construction; and
- A range of other art pavilions and performing arts complexes.

A range of considerations drove the design of the security management framework:

- The absolute primacy of the visitor experience vis-à-vis security and operational issues, it being the most important factor for consideration in design and operations of the facilities;
- The very high security risk given the value of collections, the profile of the institutions in the Middle East and the potential damage to the reputation of the UAE from security incidents at the sites;
- Dominance of the security planning field by military and police organisations, with limited experience in security at cultural institutions;
- The perception of security always as a cost (never a profit enabler), resulting in constant downward pressure on security budget; and
- A range of cultural factors surrounding privacy and appropriate security posture in society generally.

Our Solution

Taking these factors into account we developed a security management framework founded on six principles:

- Design options to take priority, followed by technology solutions wherever necessary and only where it can be achieved discreetly;



- Cooperation and collaboration with all stakeholders to ensure that they understood the Museums' requirements and that TDIC would be allowed to manage security in collaboration with Museum owners, police and related agencies
- Centralised security coordination to reduce duplication (e.g. control centres) and ensure consistency across the District
- Behavioural approach to security, focusing on managing the behaviours of visitors and integrating security personnel with visitor experience; and
- Scalable, risk-based planning to ensure that security posture could be increased and lowered with minimal disruption based on thorough assessment of the risks; and
- Broad spectrum risk mitigation focusing not only on security but awareness programs, incident response, crisis management and business continuity planning.

Implementing these five principles involved significant work across a range of initiatives:

- Engagement of museum security teams at the Louvre, Guggenheim and British Museums to provide assurance that collections would be appropriately protected;
- Development of new technological systems for the protection of people and artwork at the facilities with minimal disruption to the visitor experience and museum operations;
- Extensive work with architectural and design teams to mitigate security risks through design measures, rather than obtrusive retro-fitted measures that interfered with visitor experience;
- Development of customised risk assessment methodology in line with the unique nature of the projects, environment and stakeholders; and
- Development of a document hierarchy for security policies, plans and procedures; and
- Development of a governance structure to include robust practices surrounding procurement and management of contracted services across all of the operational elements of the Cultural District.

Outcomes

Our work with TDIC delivered a range of outcomes critical to the effectiveness of security planning for the client and for the country's nascent tourism industry:

- Thoroughly integrated security planning with urban design and planning processes delivering aesthetic, pragmatic security solutions without creating an environment of fear or paranoia;
- Security solutions that supported the visitor experience objectives of the developments even contributing to it through improved interaction with security staff and visitors;



- Greatly improved engagement between private sector developers, emergency services and law enforcement agencies;
- Reduced development costs associated with built in security measures rather than expensive, retro-fitted solutions; and
- A greater degree of security, providing reassurance to the nation's leadership that these high-profile, western institutions could be managed securely and effectively to the benefit of the UAE's tourism industry.

