

Safety Impact Report (SIR)

VeiligheidsEffectRapportage (VER)



Photo: Inge van Mill

Safety Impact Report (SIR)

A Safety Impact Report (SIR) (*Veiligheidseffectrapportage, VER*) is a flexible and successful tool for every construction or reconstruction project. If you decide to follow an SIR process, the first step is to appoint an SIR Director. The SIR Director monitors the progress of the process, takes decisions about the further course of the project and solves complex problems. Practical experience shows that the earlier the SIR is introduced in the planning process, the more effective it is. It could be introduced even before selecting the site.

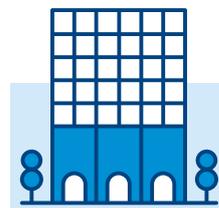
An SIR is not just about addressing crime and public nuisance (objective). It is also about creating a feeling of safety (subjective) and steering undesirable forms of behaviour. At the same time, the waterbed effect is avoided as far as possible.

An SIR focuses on large projects with a certain degree of complexity or projects that have proved to be sensitive in practice for local residents. In addition, it may also be used for projects such as a shopping centre, cinema, sports complex, soccer stadium, restructuring of a neighbourhood of flats, transformation of business parks into residential areas or conversion of offices into student and starter homes. Developing a building site in conjunction with its surroundings (urban infill sites) may also require an SIR.



Photo: Kyra Kuitert

SIR IN PRACTICE: SHOPPING CENTRE



Soon after opening, a new shopping centre gave rise to various public nuisance issues and complaints. This created the need for additional surveillance and therefore a higher budget. In this way, the consequences of certain avoidable design errors were passed on to the public sector. For example, it appeared that the location of ATMs, hangouts for young people and escape routes for thieves had not been well thought out in advance. It is usually recommended that ATMs are placed within sight of homes or slow-moving traffic. This had not been done. No hangouts had been created for young people, as a result of which they had to find such places for themselves and ended up blocking access to the shops.

Objective

- Identify the risks of usage and management problems inherent in the spatial plans before construction begins
- Develop alternatives to address these risks
- Agree on the measures needed to implement the chosen alternative
- Monitor the implementation of these agreements

Areas of concern in terms of safety/lack of safety

- **Serious crime**, such as burglary, theft, violent offences, vandalism, robbery and arson
- **Public nuisance**, such as noise pollution, physically obstructing others or using the public space for purposes other than what it is intended for
- **Liveability**, such as the extent of dilapidation, deterioration, pollution and anonymity
- **Perceived lack of safety, intimidation on the streets and other forms of intimidation** among users of public spaces, such as residents, visitors and employees.
- **Accessibility of emergency services**, such as ambulance services and the fire brigade



Photo: Kyra Kuitert

Benefits of SIR

- Incorporates social safety in the final design, making it more aesthetically pleasing
- Creates a common language
- Prevents unnecessary delays
- Cheaper and more efficient to identify risks early and devise the necessary safety measures
- Helps establish better agreements for cooperation and helps in assigning responsibilities
- Provides clarity regarding the responsibilities of different parties in relation to the various risks
- Allows for the provision of accountability afterwards
- Improves the positive image of the implementing parties because they take responsibility for the construction project or other types of projects and the surroundings, even after the project is completed

Who are the members of the SIR working group?

To ensure that the process is feasible and affordable, an SIR working group consists of no more than 10 members. Other interested parties, who are not members of the working group, may be involved in the process in other ways. Depending on the type of project, the interested parties may include:

- Urban planners
- Architects or landscape architects/public space designers
- Project developers
- Departments responsible for spatial planning, lighting, safety, traffic, green spaces, sports, general management, the economy, real estate and welfare (or similar terms)
- Housing associations
- Transportation companies
- Representative(s) of current and future residents and persons living nearby
- Representative(s) of companies and their employees
- Interest groups, such as for the disabled

The added value of the SIR is that the parties jointly determine their level of ambition and translate this into actual measures. Of course, they take all the legal requirements into account in the improvement proposals.

SIR IN PRACTICE: SPORTS COMPLEX



At the edge of an existing sports complex, there was a great deal of nuisance due to drug dealing activities. Possible solutions in terms of design and management were sought together with the users of the sports complex, local residents and municipal representatives. Organisational and communication-related aspects were also examined. The arrival of a new facility - in this case, an additional gymnastics hall - provided a solution to this problem. This created a greater sense of vibrancy and activity in the area during the evenings. Children are picked up and dropped off by parents, parents stay on and wait for their children and young people stay back to chat afterwards near the hall. All this hustle-and-bustle discourages criminal activities. The hall design, with windows on three sides, also ensures a more informal control of the surroundings.

SIR approach

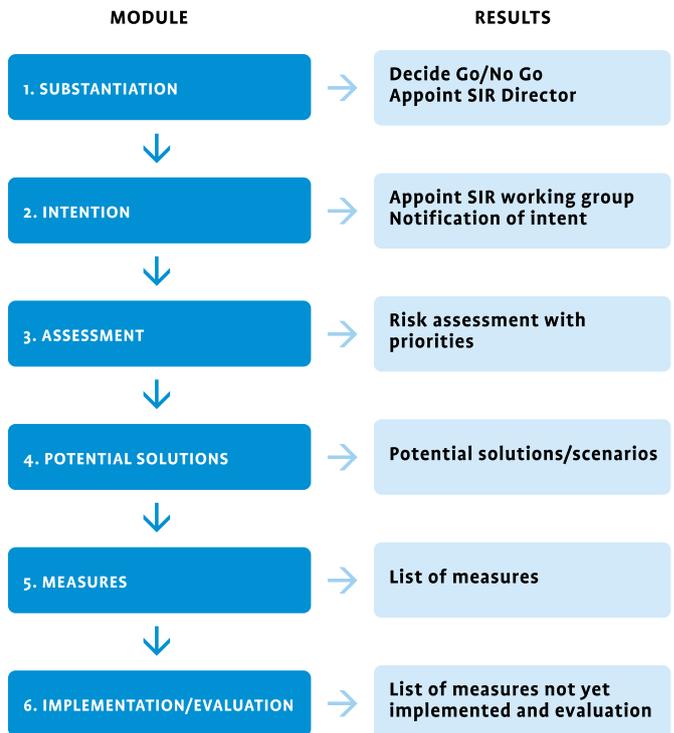




Photo: Kyra Kuitert

Explanation of the modules

Substantiation

The purpose of this module is to determine the usefulness and necessity of an SIR for a particular project. To what extent is this approach aligned with the vision of safety of the various parties? What about other spatial developments in the area? In this module, we jointly examine whether and how safety can be introduced in the planning process. Preferably as early as possible, which means during the schematic design phase or preliminary design phase.

Intention

The purpose of this module is to assemble a working group that works with a clear mission and vision. These are recorded in a Notice of Intent. This Notice of Intent includes a summary of the applicability study, an actor analysis, a schedule, how the parties will communicate with each other, and which modules and activities of the SIR will be implemented. In addition, this module includes the signing of the Notice of Intent by the portfolio holder(s), administrator(s) or responsible officials.

Assessment

The purpose of this module is to describe the safety risks and potential severity of the consequences. A risk assessment helps in understanding the risks for individuals, groups, properties and the environment. The report also includes a list of the parties involved and indicates the level of agreement with the mentioned safety risks and their order of priority.

Potential solutions

The purpose of this module is to find solutions for the risks that have been assigned a high priority in the Assessment module. In practice, you can draw on a wide range of solutions related to planning, urban design, construction, civil engineering, management or organisational aspects in order to mitigate the risks. In addition, it is advisable to also consider

the lower-priority risks. Often the SIR working group arrives at solutions that address multiple risks at the same time. For each potential solution, you indicate the extent to which the existing and/or new safety risks from the Assessment module can be prevented or mitigated. Also, you determine whether there has been an overall improvement in the safety situation.

Measures

The purpose of this module is to come up with measures jointly and to allow each party to develop measures for the chosen scenario tailored to its specific needs. For this, agreements are made with and between the parties involved. The result is a package of measures endorsed by all interested parties.

Implementation/evaluation

During this module, the members of the SIR working group make sure that the proposed safety measures are actually complied with. They also ensure that the agreements made are embedded within their own organisations and are periodically monitored. This is especially important if the complete implementation of the project involves a long lead time. Multi-year projects are quite common. For this reason, the SIR working group must reach proper agreements about:

- When the working group can be considered to have completed its task
- Monitoring the time of handover and changes in personnel
- A broad endorsement of the measures and agreements by the local government and any other competent authority
- How to ensure that documents and progress reports are easily retrievable

SIR IN PRACTICE: NUISANCE CAUSED BY YOUNG PEOPLE



Young people were causing significant nuisance in a so-called development neighbourhood (*ontwikkelbuurt*) on the outskirts of a large city. This ranged from intimidating gatherings of sometimes as many as 50 youths to racing on the pavement with scooters. Older residents were often afraid to walk past them. During the site visit, it was apparent that there were large, and therefore anonymous, and mostly stony areas of public space between the high-rise flats. By greening these areas with trees and planters and by setting up access barriers, these spaces became less accessible to scooters. Together with youth workers, alternative places were then sought to offer youth a safe space to enjoy themselves, such as a new sports facility in a more suitable part of the neighbourhood.