



What is the role of local and regional authorities in the protection of public spaces and what tools can they use to better respond to terrorist threats?

A series of web conferences

Public spaces are places of exchange, culture, commerce, leisure and political expression. Because of their open nature, their high level of frequentation and their symbolic dimension, they can be subjected to several threats, terrorism being one of them. The protection of public spaces is a complex challenge for local and regional authorities. As stated by the European Commission in the Action Plan to support the protection of public spaces, besides Member States, "local and regional authorities are also important stakeholders in the protection of public space".

A project to strengthen local and regional authorities' capabilities in the protection of areas in public space

In this context, PRoTECT – a project co-funded by the European Union's ISFP programme – aims to strengthen local authorities' capabilities in the protection of areas in public space that could potentially be soft targets for terrorism. Soft Targets are locations that are easily accessible to large numbers of people and have limited security or protective measures in place, making them vulnerable to an attack, for instance: sports venues, shopping venues, schools, and transportation systems. By applying an overarching concept where tools, technology, training and field demonstrations will lead to enhanced situational awareness and improvement of a direct response before, during and after a terrorist attack, the PRoTECT project seeks to ultimately strengthen security in public spaces.

In order to promote the exchange of experiences, Efus, in the framework of PRoTECT, is launching a series of web conferences on the protection of public spaces and soft targets. The aim of these online sessions is to discuss and raise awareness of the role of local and regional authorities in the protection of public spaces, as well as to propose tools to prevent these types of risks.

PRoTECT Web Conference 2

What considerations should cities take into account when considering the adoption of technologies to protect public spaces?

> 17th March 2021-2:00 pm CET

Given the current context of the terrorist threat, cities are seeking to protect their public spaces by acquiring technological solutions, however, oftentimes they are confronted with an overwhelming market of technologies that proposes a significant number of solutions.

This session discussed the challenges local authorities face when they acquire new technologies. How to evaluate technologies for the protection of public spaces? What are the needs of cities when choosing



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a technology? What information needs to be gathered about existing solutions in the market? What criteria for the evaluation need to be defined?

Speakers:

- Graeme van Voorthuijsen, Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO)**

PRoTECT's Technology Evaluation Framework (TEF).

- Peter Van de Crommert, Manager EU Projects, Dutch Institute for Technology, Safety & Security (DITSS)**

TEF application: Eindhoven case study.

Main insights from the session:

The PRoTECT project has developed a Technology Evaluation Framework (TEF), an eight-step framework which aims to support local authorities in finding and determining the best technology-based solutions to local problems and vulnerabilities.

As exemplified in Eindhoven, one of the cities which has trialled the TEF framework, vulnerabilities must be outlined and understood in detail prior to seeking solutions. As digital technologies become increasingly prevalent, it is crucial both that cities and local authorities understand and make use of these technologies, but also that they do not rely exclusively on new technologies and forsake reliable non-technological security measures, which remain valuable tools.

PRoTECT's Technology Evaluation Framework (TEF)

Graeme van Voorthuijsen, from the Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO), outlined the methodology of PRoTECT's Technology Evaluation Framework (TEF).

The TEF was developed as part of the PRoTECT project in order to evaluate potential technological solutions aiming to enhance the security of public spaces, particularly with regard to terrorist threats. It is intended to be used by the municipal staff responsible for securing public spaces and by their stakeholders, such as municipal police officers, urban planners, and event organisers.

The TEF addresses one vulnerability at a time, requiring a vulnerability study to have been carried out beforehand for a specific Public Space of Interest (PSOI). This can be achieved, for example, by using the EU VAT (Vulnerability Assessment Tool), which was outlined in detail in the previous PRoTECT web conference. The TEF will then build on this analysis, adding greater detail, analysing vulnerabilities one-by-one to determine solution characteristics and then explore available technologies.

PRoTECT's TEF requires the formation of a Team of Experts, including municipality staff, representatives from the police and, if applicable, the relevant event organiser. In various compositions, this team will execute the steps outlined by PRoTECT's TEF.

The TEF consists of 8 steps but it is not necessary to execute all steps in order to carry out a successful evaluation. The framework is a "toolbox" which may be adapted to various needs/contexts.



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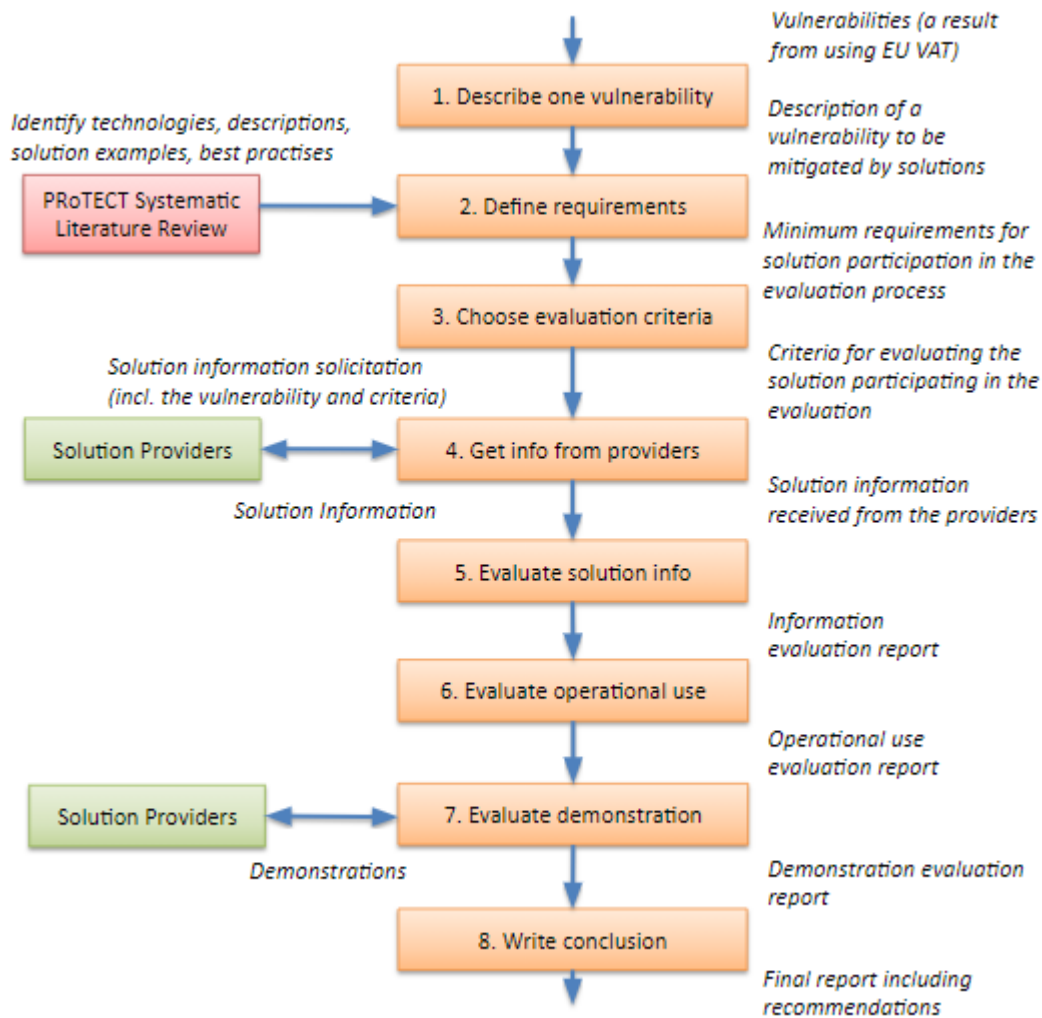


Figure 1. TEF steps

Evaluation criteria for the TEF must be carefully and specifically selected for the project and PSOI in question. Generally, 5 to 10 criteria suffice. These may concern costs, compliance with existing regulations, physical characteristics, performance, etc.

Ultimately, having completed the entire TEF process, regional authorities and teams should be prepared for a Procurement Phase. Final reports will detail the extent to which the previously defined goals and objectives have been achieved.

PRoTECT RFI Evaluation Workshop, City of Eindhoven:

Peter van de Crommert, PRoTECT Project Coordinator and Manager of EU Projects at the Dutch Institute for Technology, Safety & Security (DITSS), presented a case study demonstrating the application of the TEF in the city of Eindhoven in the Netherlands.

Eindhoven was one of 5 cities testing the TEF, alongside Larissa (Greece), Malaga (Spain), Vilnius (Lithuania) and Brasov (Romania). In Eindhoven, the chosen PSOI was a square in the city centre.

After vulnerabilities were clearly outlined and shared with solution providers, proposed ideas/tools were evaluated on the basis of the TEF (Steps 5 & 6) and ranked individually by each city involved in



the trial. Each city was able to select 5 preferred solutions to be demonstrated in greater detail at a later date.

Eindhoven's Evaluation Committee included elected officials, emergency services representatives, and retail businesses, whose input was significant given the location of Eindhoven's focus area: a city center square containing many retail and restaurant spaces.

Of the 35 solutions proposed by solution providers from 9 different countries, including Canada, 23 unique solutions were aimed at tackling Eindhoven's specific vulnerabilities.

The city carried out two evaluation workshops. The first evaluation workshop was carried out by the core evaluation group of the Evaluation Committee and checked for **completeness** and **relevance**. The second workshop, carried out by the entire Evaluation Committee, involved analysis of a detailed list of criteria. These criteria were: accuracy, compliancy, reliability, security, ease of use, maturity, portability and maintainability, as well as any additional benefits implicated by the solution tool. Solutions were given a score for each criterion, and these scores were weighted. On the basis of this analysis, five solution providers were selected to demonstrate their solutions in greater detail on May 27, 2021.

The TEF enables practitioners to:

- Discover a wide range of available technology-based solutions, through a comprehensive literature review and detailed collaboration with expert service providers.
- Analyse vulnerabilities in a detailed, holistic manner.
- Select the most suitable tools to respond to local vulnerabilities.
- Gain a comprehensive overview of the different aspects of each solution under consideration.

Main challenges:

- The abundance of available technologies can be overwhelming, especially for local actors unaccustomed to such tools.
- Some technological solutions may simply be unknown to those involved in the project, hence the need for a comprehensive literature review.
- Some solutions may create further problems, potentially infringing on freedom of movement, the beauty of public spaces, the right to privacy etc.
- Different stakeholders may have very different priorities.

Lessons learned:

- It is crucial to engage with the local community and remain transparent regarding any new measures taken to ensure public security. This increases both trust and compliance, and also offers new insights through creating a broader network of active stakeholders to identify vulnerabilities in public spaces.
- No single solution will cater to everyone or tackle all issues, hence the importance of careful analysis of the various advantages and disadvantages of each proposed approach.
- New approaches may create new vulnerabilities: this possibility should be carefully analysed by a diverse Evaluation Committee, who each bring varying perspectives.
- Gaining varied insights, from local actors, experts and stakeholders with varied experiences, is essential for finding effective solutions.
- It is necessary to clearly describe and analyse both the vulnerabilities targeted and the ultimate goals of any solution project. For example, must a given vulnerability be removed entirely, or is there a certain level of risk that is acceptable?
- In analysing vulnerabilities, local teams should aim to be as precise and specific as possible in order to ensure that solution providers may provide innovative and targeted solutions.



Main Conclusions:

- It is crucial to clearly define both perceived vulnerabilities and desired outcomes **prior to** seeking solutions, in order to best match the final plans to the local necessities.
- Technologies are key to tackling existing vulnerabilities, but they must be carefully targeted and **comprehensively understood** by local actors.
- Furthermore, as new technologies become increasingly prevalent in our cities, local actors must be well informed about their impacts, their aims, their costs, their consequences, and their compliance with existing regulations. Drones, in particular, can raise complex questions, potentially violating rules on privacy even as they offer valuable solutions to certain prevalent issues.
- Proposed solutions must be analysed by a diverse Evaluation Committee, with each member bringing unique experiences and perspectives, in order to develop a comprehensive understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of each proposal, and the various, perhaps unintended, outcomes they may generate.
- It is essential to consider the principle of **proportionality**: the deployment of any new technology must be appropriate and proportionate to the problem it is intended to address.
- It is equally essential to consider the principle of **necessity**: technology solutions are just one option among many others. Technology solutions should be analysed as part of a security strategy combined with other actions, and may not be necessary at all.
- **Transparency** is crucially important: citizens must be informed and consulted about any new technologies the city/region plans to employ. This increases both trust and perceptions of security: citizens feel safer when they are well-informed about how the city's infrastructure protects both themselves and their fundamental rights, including the right to privacy.

