

Global Interagency Security Forum

Strategy 2025-2030

Introduction

The Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF) is a global, member-led network of around 130 organisations dedicated to supporting security risk management (SRM) practices that enable NGOs to more safely and securely reach the communities they serve.

NGOs become GISF members to participate in collective action that strengthens their own SRM capacity, and SRM practice across the sector. This collective approach is key to addressing the challenges of a rapidly changing world, with escalating conflicts, climate crises, emerging technological threats, social tensions, and a wavering commitment to the international rules-based order.

Whether at a strategic or operational level, SRM outcomes inherently benefit from collective endeavours, with each NGO benefiting from the good practices of the NGOs it works alongside. GISF refers to this as the interdependence of security. To repurpose an old saying, 'a rising tide lifts all boats.' GISF believes that strong, coordinated SRM practices amongst all actors in an operating environment enables sustainable access to those in need.

The strategic plan outlines GISF's 2025-2030 approach to supporting its members in strengthening and facilitating their SRM practices. The plan reflects insights gathered through consultations with GISF's leadership, partners, and members.

The Strategy

This strategy was drafted during 2024 in response to growing resource constraints on the NGO sector. The final draft was presented to GISF's membership in February 2025, in the shadow of multiple announced cuts to aid budgets by traditionally strong government donors.

This strategy acknowledges that over the coming five years, NGO operations could change significantly. As an enabling function, security practices will need to remain agile and support whatever changes emerge.

Key Principles of the Strategy

- Maintain GISF as a trusted platform for NGO engagement on security
- Membership of GISF should offer a tangible impact on an organisations SRM capability
- Stay ahead of future risks
- Never create long-term dependencies on GISF

Key Priorities

- Drive down SRM costs using collective approaches
- Democratise access for all NGOs to the services and supporting infrastructure that SRM requires
- Broker and facilitate collaborations and coordination, to improve efficiencies and make the best expertise available to all NGOs
- Advance SRM practice by growing and diversifying GISF membership
- Accelerate the levelling-up of NNGOs' role managing security risks
- Have SRM acknowledged as a key enabler of NGO operations, with a commensurate role in strategic decision-making

From EISF to GISF: A story of SRM's evolution

SRM in the aid sector has evolved significantly over the past three decades. In the 1990s, rising security incidents involving aid workers made it clear that impartiality and good programming alone were no longer enough to protect staff in increasingly complex crises. By the early 2000s, many NGOs recognised the need for dedicated SRM professionals, but these new roles often worked in isolation, lacking opportunities to share ideas and effective practices.

In 2006, a group of security managers first came together to fill this gap – forming the informal alliance that evolved into the European Interagency Security Forum (EISF). From its inception, EISF was unique in its peer-to-peer ethos, building trust and collaboration to drive practical, experience-based solutions that gave rise to policies and practices to enhance staff security. Over the next two decades, SRM became increasingly institutionalised and professionalised across the sector, giving rise to new policies, tools, and approaches. Many now credit developments in SRM with enabling the extensive aid activities operations in conflict zones that would not have been possible in the past.

As EISF's membership expanded beyond Europe, development and human rights organisations joined the network, reflecting a growing recognition that effective SRM underpins safe, sustainable programming regardless of an NGO's mandate. In 2019, EISF rebranded as the Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF) to reflect its growing reach, and in 2023, GISF became an independent legal entity after 17 years as a hosted programme. GISF's new legal status enhances its independence, stability and responsiveness to member needs. The next stage of GISF's evolution will see an increased focus on working with local and national NGOs throughout the world.

GISF will continue to invest in its organisational infrastructure, governance, and sustainability – ensuring that it remains a sustainable, effective, and trusted partner for its members and the broader NGO sector.

GISF's Vision

GISF's vision is a world where NGOs have safe and sustainable access to people in need, enabled by robust and relevant security risk management practices.

GISF is determined to reduce security and safety risks as a barrier to providing assistance, ensuring that the lives of those helping others are protected.

By fostering a culture at all levels of the NGO sector that prioritises and invests in strong SRM practices, GISF empowers and supports NGOs to work safely and sustainably with the world's most vulnerable populations, even in the most challenging contexts.

GISF's Unique Position

GISF is the only independent network dedicated to strengthening NGO security and duty of care worldwide. Governed by its NGO members, GISF ensures that security risk management (SRM) remains at the heart of safe and effective NGO operations. Security is a sensitive subject, and GISF's role as a neutral convener provides a trusted platform where NGOs can collectively address systemic SRM challenges, share knowledge, and develop practical, experience-based solutions. GISF's unique position makes it a vital resource for NGOs and external stakeholders looking to engage with a critical mass of INGOs to improve security risk management across the sector.

For NGOs

NGOs operate in increasingly complex and high-risk environments, where security is essential for sustainable access to communities in need. GISF enables NGOs to enhance their SRM capabilities through peer-to-peer learning, practical guidance, and access to cutting-edge research. Unlike standalone security initiatives, GISF fosters a collective approach to SRM, where members benefit from shared insights and resources. Membership provides NGOs with access to:

- A highly-engaged community of security professionals across 130+ NGOs, fostering collaboration and shared learning.
- Tailored resources and best practices designed to meet the unique security needs of NGOs operating in diverse contexts.
- Cross-pollination of ideas and approaches between NGOs of different mandates and expertise
- Collective engagement on donor policies and funding structures that directly impact NGO security and operational sustainability.
- Practical solutions to address emerging trends, from digital security to resource limitations, developed through GISF's research and engagement with experts.

For Partners

External stakeholders—including donors, not-for-profit service providers, private sector companies, and multilateral institutions—play a crucial role in shaping the security landscape for NGOs. Engaging with GISF provides them with an opportunity to:

- Work with a critical mass of INGOs, gaining insights into real-world SRM needs and challenges.

- Develop an in-depth understanding of NGO security risk management and duty of care requirements.
- Scale, pilot, and deliver new initiatives that make NGO SRM more effective and efficient.
- Support innovative, evidence-based solutions that enhance NGO security and operational continuity.

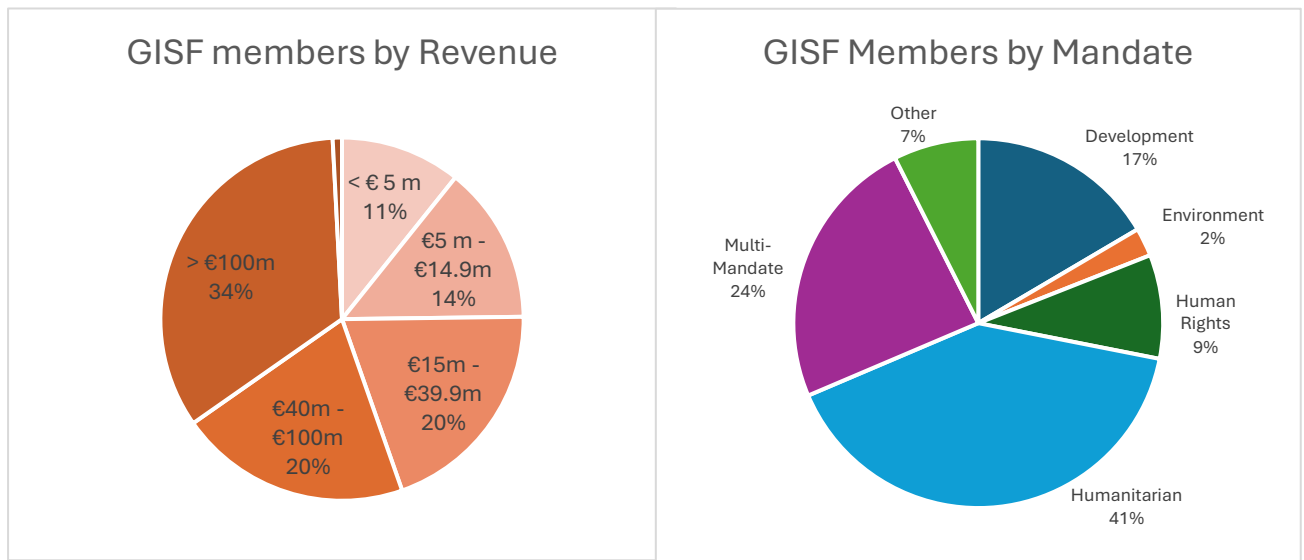
GISF acts as a trusted bridge between NGOs and third parties, ensuring that security risk management is recognized as a fundamental enabler of effective and sustainable NGO operations worldwide.

Membership: The Foundation of GISF’s Impact

NGOs become members of GISF to participate in a collective effort to improve their own SRM capabilities, to advance good NGO SRM practice, and to jointly influence the external systems, organisations, and policies that affect SRM practice. In addition to individual NGOs, the wider NGO community also benefits from these advances, and so, in turn, GISF’s members benefit from sector-wide improvements in SRM practice.

Retaining and attracting members is key to strengthening the outputs of GISF’s convening function. To that end, GISF members receive exclusive benefits, as well as those that are made publicly available. These benefits will be strengthened to better demonstrate the value of a GISF membership.

GISF is formed of around 130 INGO members and associates. GISF’s board is legally accountable to its members, further ensuring that GISF is solely focused on improving their safety and security.



GISF’s members illustrate the breadth and complexity of the NGO sector. This diversity—in contrasting risk profiles and approaches to risk management—offers both challenges to GISF—with regards to producing services relevant to all—as well as unique opportunities, such as the cross-pollination of experiences and approaches.

Global Trends

Increasing Need. According to OCHA’s *Global Humanitarian Overview 2025*, 305.1 million people need urgent humanitarian assistance, indicating that approximately one in every 27 individuals worldwide needs emergency aid to survive. Growing needs stem from escalating conflicts (e.g., Sudan and Gaza) with increasing use of heavy weaponry and large-scale military operations, intensifying climate-related crises and economic instability. ALNAP reports a 70% increase in people needing assistance, from 122 million in 2018 to 218 million in 2021. The World Bank projects that by 2030, more than half of the world’s extreme poor will reside in countries characterised by fragility, conflict, and violence.¹

Humanitarian needs remain at extreme levels: of the 140 Sustainable Development Goal targets with available data, only about 12% are on track. Over 100 million people require life-saving aid in areas where sanctioned armed groups are active,² illustrating the potential difficulties posed to operations.

Globally, increasing repression of dissent through crackdowns on freedoms of expression, association, and peaceful assembly affects all NGOs, regardless of mandate. Activists, human rights defenders, and political opponents face unlawful force, arbitrary arrest, and detention.³ This trend is compounded by a growing disparity between resources and needs.

Resource Constraints. The humanitarian funding shortfall reached historic levels in 2023, with appeals reaching only 38% (\$21.8 billion) of the \$56.7 billion requested. This resource gap directly impacts SRM capacity—with NGOs feeling obliged or encouraged to do more with less. Declines in private donations to NGOs have reduced unrestricted funding, which has limited their independence and ability to invest in SRM. While some organisations maintain robust SRM systems through indirect cost recovery, smaller INGOs and national NGOs (NNGOs) face persistent resource constraints.

Mounting Pressure on NGOs. NGOs across sectors face increasing demands to respond in high-risk environments shaped by conflict, geography, or climate factors. Limited resources, donor expectations, bureaucracy, and operational demands often force NGOs to prioritise accessible areas, leaving highly insecure regions underserved. NNGOs face disproportionate pressures due to insufficient resources and limited institutional support.

Rising Security Threats. 2024 marked the deadliest year for humanitarian workers, with at least 336 killed across 25 countries.⁴ This number is expected to rise in 2025. NNGOs face disproportionate risks: in 2023, 96% of NGO staff casualties were national staff, more than half of whom worked for national NGOs.⁵

While the situation is bleak, there has been renewed interest from the donor and member-state community in strengthening protections for NGO workers. UN Security Council Resolution 2730 highlights the need for enhanced SRM and increased accountability. Similarly, the Ministerial Group on Humanitarian Access and Safety signals a growing commitment to addressing these challenges through collective action and improved funding mechanisms.

Shrinking Civic Space. The shrinking of civic space globally poses heightened security risks for all NGOs, particularly those engaged in policy, human rights, and social justice. Only 3.2% of the world’s population lives in countries with “open” civic space, while 28% live in “closed” or “repressed” environments.⁶ Authoritarian states increasingly employ legal restrictions, surveillance, and violence

¹ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/844591582815510521/pdf/World-Bank-Group-Strategy-for-Fragility-Conflict-and-Violence-2020-2025.pdf>

² <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/sb12-ten-challenges-un-2024-2025>

³ From Amnesty International’s 2024 ‘State of the World’s Human Rights’ report

⁴ [Aid Worker Security Database, 2024.](https://aidworkersecurity.org/)

⁵ <https://www.aidworkersecurity.org/incidents/report>

⁶ <https://monitor.civicus.org/facts/>, https://monitor.civicus.org/globalfindings_2024/

targeting civil society. These risks require tailored SRM strategies, including digital security, legal preparedness, and protective measures for at-risk staff.

Systemic Limitations on NNGO SRM Activities. Only 50% of NNGOs workers have access to essential protections such as evacuation plans, accident insurance, and risk monitoring resources.⁷ Project-based funding models exacerbate these challenges by failing to allocate sufficient funds for staff welfare. This systemic inequity undermines both operational safety and effective partnerships. They face three key barriers: uneven risk distribution when working with international partners, limited representation in decision-making, and limited access to tailored SRM resources.

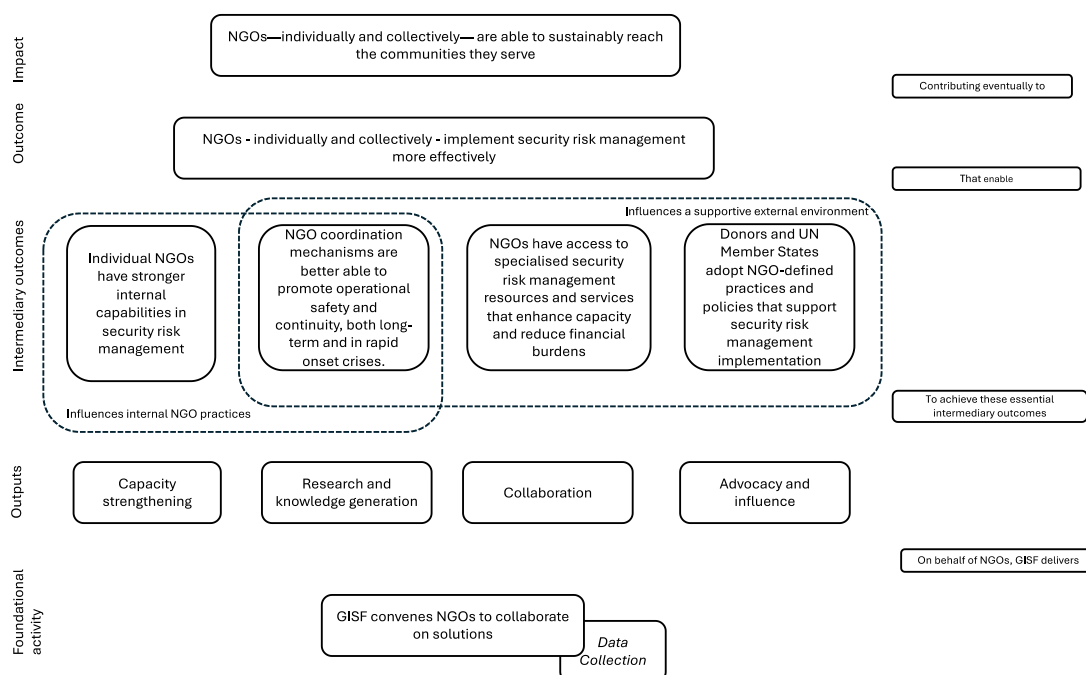
An Aging Global Coordination System (IASC). Operational peer reviews, agency evaluations, and interagency assessments consistently reveal recurring challenges across the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) system.⁸ The existing humanitarian coordination architecture is criticised for its lack of agility, its failure to adequately empower local first responders, and its inability to adapt to nuanced access constraints and opportunities.

Many established SRM coordination mechanisms and initiatives are similarly outdated, designed for a time when NGOs lacked internal SRM resources and expertise, and needed dedicated third-party support.

⁷ <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/status-frontline-humanitarian-workers>

⁸ **Independent review of the humanitarian response to internal displacement. (2024).** Inter-Agency Standing Committee: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/independent-review-humanitarian-response-internal-displacement>

GISF's Theory of Change



Goal

This goal recognises that safe and secure access is a shared responsibility and shared benefit among NGOs, and that robust, relevant, and coordinated SRM practices play a core role in making this possible.

Though the word ‘access’ is commonly used by humanitarian NGOs, GISF uses it in reference to any NGO’s ability to ‘get where it needs to be’ to carry out its work, regardless of mandate. Similarly, ‘communities’ is a catch-all term which can apply to the targeted support recipients—whether physical communities, digital communities, individuals, wildlife or the physical environment.

Outcome and Intermediate Outcomes

GISF believe that there are factors both internal and external to NGOs that will enable this goal to be achieved. Firstly, GISF focuses on building the internal SRM capacity of individual NGOs. Then GISF looks to the wider NGO system, and aims to strengthen NGO coordination mechanisms, which will have an enabling effect in both the wider environment and for individual NGOs who take part in them. Looking to external factors, GISF also believe it is important to improve the access of NGOs to specialised security services, both in terms of the cost to access them and the availability of services that meet their needs. Finally, GISF will seek to improve the policy-environment of security to be more enabling for NGOs.

Outputs

GISF’s outputs to achieve these outcomes can be grouped into four broad categories. How each of these specifically contributes to the intermediary outcomes is explained in the relevant outcome’s section below.

Capacity Strengthening

Activities that are aimed at improving the capabilities of individual NGOs , ranging from direct training to technical assistance, and the production of technical guides to enable self-led development

Research and Knowledge Generation

Data collection, analysis and documentation, of lessons learned and new data, to generate insights foresight on issues relevant to SRM.

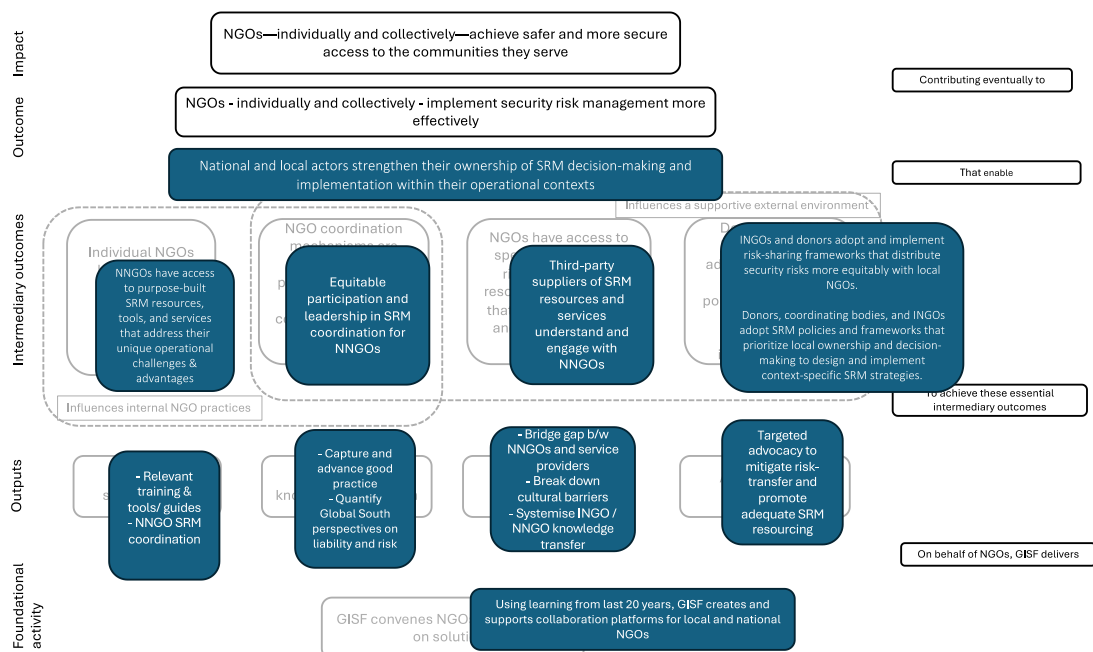
Collaboration

Events, communications, and facilitation that bridges the gap between NGOs and other key stakeholders/stakeholder groups, with regards to strengthening NGO SRM practice.

Policy and Influence

Actions to influence the agenda and decision makers within the systems that shape the implementation of NGO SRM.

Strengthening Security Risk Management for Local and National NGOs in the Global South



Local and national NGOs (NNGOs) in the Global South face multiple challenges in Security Risk Management (SRM). Research by GISF highlights that the absence of inter-NNGO networks significantly restricts their ability to advance SRM practices. This limitation reduces access to pre-existing tools and hinders the development of new ones. Additionally, persistent financial and resource constraints further exacerbate these challenges.

Another key barrier is the lack of a widely recognized ‘culture’ of safety and security within some NNGOs. However, this perception is often shaped by Global North frameworks, rather than an appreciation of how security is understood and managed in different contexts.

GISF’s Role

GISF is uniquely positioned to help overcome these obstacles, contributing to the broader localisation agenda within both security and the humanitarian sector as a whole.

NNGOs already possess inherent strengths in managing security risks. Their deep understanding of local contexts, proximity to affected communities, and ability to adapt responses to specific needs provide them with distinct advantages. By strengthening their capacity to manage security risks, GISF aims to eliminate a significant barrier to localisation. This will not only enhance NNGOs' ability to deliver complex programming but also improve external perceptions of their risk management capabilities. By codifying and demonstrating the unique approaches they employ—often distinct from those of INGOs—NNGOs can gain greater recognition and support. Their approach to SRM also plays into the principle of the 'interdependence of security' among NGOs operating in shared environments—enhancing not just their own security but also that of GISF members working alongside them.

Expanding GISF's Engagement with NNGOs

NNGOs operate within diverse professional, legal, and cultural frameworks, which shape their approach to SRM in ways that differ from the dominant INGO-led models. Simply integrating them into the GISF community, or engaging in capacity strengthening that is primarily based on INGO approaches, is not sustainable.

In recent years, GISF has sought to strengthen NNGOs' SRM capacities, primarily through their role as implementing partners of INGOs. The focus now shifts to GISF supporting NNGOs directly or through local and national NGO coordination mechanisms. This shift allows GISF to better align with NNGOs' specific needs, ensuring they have the resources, knowledge, and networks necessary to drive their own security risk management agendas. Rather than taking a paternalistic 'capacity-strengthening' approach, GISF will provide NNGOs with the same pathway INGOs have had since GISF was first established nearly two decades ago.

Long-term Integration of NNGO and INGO SRM

As GISF deepens its engagement with NNGOs, insights from these interactions will shape GISF's INGO-focused activities. This includes:

- **Influencing policy and funding frameworks** to better align with NNGOs' security risk management realities.
- **Improving INGO-NNGO partnerships** by refining ways of working together on security.
- **Defining the evolving role of INGOs in a more localised humanitarian sector**, ensuring they continue to support, rather than dictate, security coordination.

By addressing these key areas, GISF aims to drive meaningful progress in SRM for NNGOs, helping to create a more equitable and resilient humanitarian ecosystem.

The Next Five Years

Convening: GISF's Foundational Activity

Always NGO-Led

Effective SRM depends on coordination and collective action, and this is the starting point for everything GISF does. GISF convenes a global community of practice where NGOs across humanitarian, development and rights-based sectors collaborate to strengthen their individual and shared approaches to SRM.

GISF's current and future success is entirely grounded in its **convening function**. All its initiatives are enabled by NGO SRM professionals being willing to share knowledge and lend support to collective endeavours. By creating opportunities for peer-to-peer learning and shared problem-solving, GISF fosters collaboration, coordination, and trust. These efforts include in-person and virtual convenings, catalysing formal and informal networking, and building trust to improve security practices and coordination.

Many members identify the convening function of GISF as a valuable end in itself, and so continued investment will be made to maintain and strengthen existing convening platforms. The health of the network is an essential prerequisite for the rest of the Theory of Change to be achieved. This requires a strengthening of member services to attract and retain membership.

Data

In the past, GISF has used basic methods to capture the outputs of convening, typically focused on anecdotal feedback from in-person events. Going forward, GISF will better utilise data collected from members and the wider NGO sector, to increase the relevance, evidence and impact of GISF's activities.

The Global South

GISF's support to NGOs in the Global South will begin with the establishment of trusted communities of practice for those responsible for safety, security and access. These will be supported and facilitated by GISF. Where possible, GISF will work through existing NNGO platforms, but is prepared to establish platforms where there are no suitable existing mechanisms. GISF will explore opportunities to partner with existing NNGO networks on the overall principles of the initiative.

Priorities

- More contact points within member organisations to improve membership value and mainstream SRM
- Encourage and enable focused communities of practice on specific themes, to grow and diversify the GISF membership
- Increase digital convening and networking opportunities
- Develop a model for NNGOs to convene and lead on their own SRM development
- GISF's member-only services should represent a tangible, positive net-investment for members

Example Outputs	For who?
<p>Communities of Practice GISF will facilitate an expanded offer of sector-specific communities of practice, to increase opportunities for collaboration and maintain relevance as we grow and diversify in membership. These will range from online groups exchanging knowledge informally, to funded initiatives.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p>Digital collaboration platform GISF will improve its digital platform for member collaboration, communication and knowledge sharing. This will help navigate the identified 'bottleneck' of pushing resources through a single contact point; accelerate member-to-member engagement and facilitate thematic communities of practice.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p>Pilot the establishment of an NNGO SRM Platform GISF will seek partners to develop and implement a pilot 'convening platform' based around facilitated peer-to-peer learning and networking to advance SRM practice, with associated capacity strengthening elements. Led by participants, it will identify areas for targeted investment and support via GISF.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>

Individual NGOs have stronger internal capabilities in security risk management

SRM is a complex, context-specific and ever-evolving challenge, and one element that influences if NGOs implement SRM more effectively, is their internal capacities and capabilities to deal with these challenges. GISF provides a wide range of active and passive capacity building activities that support NGOs in the most relevant format for every organisation. The ambition is that by providing these services, NGOs improve their ability to assess, manage, and mitigate security risks in their operational contexts.

Active capacity building ranges from webinars to workshops and in-depth consultancy. Passive efforts refer to GISF's ability to make the necessary resources available for NGOs to undertake self-led capacity development.

Importantly, since GISF's transition to independence and review of membership, GISF increasingly views the entire NGO as the 'member', rather than a specific security focal point. This acknowledgement is in line with GISF's approach of mainstreaming security risk management—colleagues in HR, legal and the executive, to name a few, all play key roles in security. GISF will seek to directly engage with them more often, with the permission of security teams.

Global South

Comparatively few training and written resources have been developed with a focus on NNGO SRM practices. As the move towards localisation grows, NNGOs are being asked to take on more risk and more responsibility, often without the additional resources and expertise of INGOs. GISF will develop and deliver targeted capacity building support for NNGOs.

Priorities

- mainstreaming of SRM practices within organisations, such as legal, HR and executive teams.
- SRM practices are more efficient
- Members can make better informed internal investments into their SRM capacity
- Accessible and relevant SRM resources are developed for NNGOs

- increase the availability of technical support to NNGOs on SRM.

Example Outputs	For who?
<p><u>Purpose-Built SRM Resources</u></p> <p>GISF will support the development of tailored SRM resources of NNGOs, and adapt distribution methods including working through a strengthened network of NNGO SRM practitioners. NNGOs can maximise their existing limited resources by building off the work of each other and GISP.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p><u>Training of trainers</u></p> <p>GISF will develop and implement a “training of trainers” programme to establish regional SRM trainers and coordinators who can provide localised technical support and capacity strengthening across regions. This will increase the availability of technical support to NNGOs on SRM.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p><u>Self-assessment tool</u></p> <p>GISF will create an SRM self-assessment tool for members, which will produce a benchmarked report against which members can assess their SRM approach and performance, and inform internal investment.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p><u>ROI Tool</u></p> <p>GISF will produce a return on investment tool (and wider econometric study about the cost of SRM), to support NGOs to make quantifiable justifications for SRM resources.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p><u>INGO– NNGO capacity exchange</u></p> <p>GISF will facilitate and support long-term capacity exchange initiatives between international and local NGOs, so both can benefit from peer-to-peer learning.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>

NGO Coordination Mechanisms are better able to promote operational safety and continuity, both long-term and in rapid onset crises

At regional and local level, coordination mechanisms play a vital role in if and how NGOs can effectively deliver programmes—and this includes SRM. Effective SRM requires good coordination because of the complexity and risk involved in some NGO operations. In addition, an NGO’s SRM is bigger and more important than the sum of its parts—working collaboratively increases everyone’s security.

The existing humanitarian coordination architecture is criticised for its lack of agility, its failure to adequately empower local first responders, and its inability to adapt to nuanced access constraints and opportunities.

To strengthen the way NGOs collectively respond to major emergencies in the immediate aftermath, and to encourage the broader international humanitarian system to adopt improved crisis response approaches, alternative models of security coordination must be explored.

Effective security coordination requires an understanding of the broader operational and strategic context. Security practices cannot function in isolation; they must be woven into all aspects of operations and decision-making. By integrating security into the fabric of humanitarian action, organisations can ensure that protective measures are responsive, relevant, and aligned with overall response goals. Without this integration, security risks becoming siloed and ineffective, undermining both safety and the broader humanitarian mission.

At a global level, frameworks such as **Saving Lives Together (SLT)**, established over 20 years ago, provide a foundation for security coordination. However, SLT remains rooted in an outdated context, designed for a world where the UN’s resources and expertise far outweighed those of NGOs.

At the operational level, the principal function of security coordination is to share information and provide a common understanding of present and changing security conditions and risks. In an acute crisis, responses and contingencies are coordinated. Information sharing occurs through both formal and informal channels, with most SRM staff relying on a combination of the two to fulfil their responsibilities.

GISF’s Theory of Change is that future mechanisms must move beyond a one-size-fits-all approach, providing support tailored to the specific nuances, existing capacities, and access challenges of each response. This model would draw on a multi-disciplinary network of capabilities, flexibly deployed to meet the unique demands of different emergencies.

Global South Outcome

Recent assessments have demonstrated that there is insufficient participation by NNGOs in SRM coordination mechanisms. In addition, existing formal mechanisms are based on the INGO approach to SRM, which does not necessarily align with the NNGO approach, and so may not be fully catering to their unique needs. GISF will pursue ensuring the equitable participation of NNGOs in security coordination mechanisms, as well as assessing the requirement for new models of SRM coordination.

Priorities

- All NGO platforms possess a minimum capacity for SRM coordination
- Affordable models for NGO SRM Coordination are available to a range of contexts
- NNGO SRM Practices are supported with relevant and inclusive coordination models
- UN and NGO coordination practices reflect and support modern practices
- NGO SRM Coordination makes better use of the wide range of specialist service providers available

Example Outputs	For who?
<p>NGO SRM Coordination Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Development of a concept note for consultation with members, building off pilots already undertaken (Lebanon) and planned for 2025, for sustainable, NGO-led SRM coordination. - Focal Points: GISF will create and deliver training modules for security coordination focal points within NGO platforms. GISF will create a community of practice for focal points to better capture learnings and approaches. - Coordination Capacity Strengthening: GISF will also create and deliver training modules for NGO coordination platforms. - Tools: GISF will work with third parties to explore common tools that can be made available to NGO platforms. 	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p>Data Exchange</p> <p>GISF will look to create secure systems for the sharing of operational data between NGOs, over and above the current focus on ‘incident tracking’. This would include existing SRM capacity in specific contexts, risk assessments, and other areas of duplication with the intent of increasing operational efficiencies while supporting organisations’ individual approach to risk mitigation.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p>NNGO SRM Coordination</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>

GISF will be led by NNGOs to research and understand their specific needs around coordination that facilitate their specific ways-of-working.	
<p>UN / NGO Coordination</p> <p>GISF will strengthen the mechanisms by which members are linked to decision-making on the Saving Lives Together platform. GISF's primary objective will be to improve productive coordination between UN agencies and NGOs, and evolve mechanisms to suit the needs of its membership. GISF will argue in favour of pragmatic inclusion of NNGOs into these relationships.</p>	Member Service Globally Available

NGOs have access to specialised SRM resources and services that enhance capacity and reduce financial burden

As part of effective SRM, NGOs often have to procure expensive but essential services, such as legal advice, medical evacuation, and insurance. These services providers may not be accustomed to working with NGOs, particularly those offering new innovations. Additionally, a number of not-for-profit service providers exist that offer direct or ancillary benefit to NGO SRM.

GISF has the ability to negotiate discounts, create mechanisms to share and pool resources and incentivise the private sector to improve its products and enter new markets, thereby enhancing NGO access to the products and services that they need to meet their duty of care.

- **Service Providers:** These entities offer specialised expertise in cybersecurity, data protection, risk analysis, and training. They also offer temporary increases in capacity that NGOs may be unable or unwilling to maintain internally. Commercial providers (e.g., Dragonfly Intelligence and Control Risks) and non-profit organisations (e.g., International NGO Safety Organisation (INSO), ACAPS, and iMMAP) provide tools and advisory services for situational awareness and risk assessment. Cost barriers can prevent smaller NGOs from accessing some of these services. Bridging this gap requires collaborative efforts to adapt private-sector innovations for resource-constrained contexts and ensure providers align their offerings with the NGO sector priorities and resources.
- **Insurance Providers:** Nearly all INGOs rely on their services to protect their organisations and help meet their duty of care requirements toward staff. Several brokers specialise in and have a greater understanding of the NGO sector. Insurance policies can often be the link between NGOs and specialist risk management companies in helping to manage critical incidents. Economical and accessible coverage can vary widely between contexts. National NGO staff are generally offered significantly less coverage than 'international' staff.

Global South

A number of barriers exist to NNGO access to specialised services, which limit their ability to manage risk to the same degree. Given their unique approaches, not all services will have equal relevance to NNGOs and INGOs. The focus is on ensuring that suppliers and service providers understand the needs and priorities of NNGOs, and that artificial barriers are broken down.

Priorities

- ensure the availability of effective SRM services that meet NGO needs, increasing the relevance and utility of these to NGOs
- expand insurance options to improve coverage for national staff
- incentivise improvements in the training market
- leverage collective buying power to drive down prices of essential services
- increase access of NNGOs to the market for SRM support services

Example Outputs	For who?
<p><u>Facilitate feedback to providers</u> GISF will create avenues for collective feedback from NGOs to service providers, to ensure the availability of appropriate SRM services that meet NGO needs.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p><u>Certification of Services</u> Explore options and feasibility of certifying or creating an endorsement for HEAT courses, to incentivise improvements in the market and streamline members' procurement processes.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p><u>Cost-Sharing</u> To facilitate access to shared quality services that complement or reinforce organisations' SRM capacity, GISF will work with members to identify opportunities to use collective buying power to drive down prices of services, such as specialised legal, external audits and subscription-based services.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p><u>At-Cost Consultancies</u> GISF will look at offering at-cost consultancy support to help NGOs meet their duty of care requirements in a difficult funding environment. These will focus on internal capacity strengthening using the results of the new Self-Assessment tool. A technical expert will work with the organisation to develop a strengthening plan, and oversee its implementation. This service would be expected to be of most use to smaller NGOs looking to increase their ability to manage duty of care, but are underserved by the private sector.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p><u>Expand insurance options</u> Work with providers to expand insurance options to improve coverage for national staff.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>

Donors and the international system adopt NGO-defined practices and policies that support progressive SRM implementation

Donors and other actors in the international system play a crucial role in creating and maintaining the systems, structures, and frameworks in which NGOs operate—including SRM.

These actors often shape the financial and regulatory frameworks through compliance requirements and funding models. Major institutional donors, such as **USAID/BHA**, **ECHO**, and **FCDO**, influence how organisations prioritise and implement SRM. The legislatures of donor countries also play a key role by setting legal parameters around liability, duty of care, and the broader regulatory environment that governs NGO operations and staff safety. Donor funding often shifts risks to implementing partners; however, some are beginning to integrate SRM into broader funding models.

Current practices and policies are not optimised to address systemic security challenges. GISF will represent the priorities of members to these stakeholders, particularly on the systematic integration of security, predictable and flexible funding for SRM, and global cooperation on security. GISF also offers donors a single point of contact to reach a large, engaged body of NGO security professionals.

Providing evidence-based information and messaging to inform policy developments will be key.

Global South

GISF has identified two specific policy areas that are preventing progress towards localisation of SRM. Firstly, local ownership and decision-making is not prioritised, with flow-on effects in terms of allocation of resources. Moreover, INGOs and donors do not currently adopt equitable-risk sharing with their local/national partners, and within current frameworks are not able to, or not incentivised to, share that risk.

Priorities

- maximise the voice of GISF’s members in policymaking
- position effective SRM as a key enabler of programmes
- facilitate risk-sharing in INGO/NNGO partnerships
- increase decision-makers’ understanding of NGO SRM practice
- evolve donor bureaucracy to reduce inefficiencies and facilitate responsive SRM

Example Outputs	For who?
<p>NGO Network Coordination Continue strengthening relationships with major NGO networks, such as ICVA, InterAction and NEAR, to ensure safety and security are present and well-informed considerations in their policy development.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p>Donor Working Group GISF sees it as vital that government donors increase their interactions, to share their own best-practices on supporting implementing partners with safety and security. Cohesive approaches to SRM arrangements will reduce NGOs’ administrative burden and increase efficiencies. GISF will work with donors to encourage and facilitate this, whether through existing mechanisms or new.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>

<p><u>Certification of Security Standards</u> GISF will explore whether there are benefits to introducing a common certification of SRM competency for NGOs, to avoid the requirement to undergo due diligence reviews from multiple donors. The goal is to reduce administrative burden, increase efficiencies and increase NGO's flexibility in approaching risk mitigation.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>
<p><u>GISF Policy Working Group</u> Launched shortly prior to the strategy, this group functions as a central mechanism for shaping and delivering policy priorities, with consistent member engagement and demonstrable outcomes.</p>	<p>Member Service Globally Available</p>

Delivery

This approach offers a flexible, scalable, responsive framework that aligns with funding realities and member engagement.

Documents to be produced within the first six months of this strategy include:

- *Membership Strategy*
 - o Providing detail on member services, targets for membership growth, and recommendations for incorporating NNGOs into GISF's structure.
- *Business Development Strategy*
 - o Describing GISF's plans to diversify income and resource the initiatives within this strategy.
- *External Engagement strategy*
 - o As a stakeholder-facing organisation, GISF will ensure that a cohesive external engagement strategy is in place to support the implementation of this strategy.
- *Communities of Practice Policy*
 - o GISF will provide a detailed explanation of the 'Communities of Practice' concept that allows members to focus on specific thematic areas, including the range of support options available and opportunities to seek specific funding.
- *Global South Concept Note*
 - o This document will expand on the initiatives described in this strategy, to be engaged with by relevant stakeholders. It will include a fully-costed pilot to focus on the creation of convening platforms.
- *NGO-Led Coordination Concept Note*
 - o A fully-costed proposal to develop and pilot new models for sustainable, NGO-led security coordination mechanisms at the operational level, targeting medium-risk contexts.

Resourcing

1. **Increasing Funding Horizon.** GISF will work to increase its funding horizon based on a three-year funding cycle, setting annual targets based on secured funding over the following three years to enable sustained strategic planning and implementation. By securing multi-year commitments from donors and partners, GISF will be positioned to invest in long-term projects and maintain continuity in its core services to members.
2. **Diversifying Funding Sources.** To reduce dependency on a limited number of institutional donors and increase resilience to financial fluctuations, GISF will actively work to diversify its funding sources. Over the next five years, business development efforts will aim to achieve a balanced portfolio where no single revenue stream accounts for more than approximately a third of overall revenue. First, GISF will focus on deepening and broadening its relationships with key institutional donors, including current donors, to achieve a more diverse, healthier balance of funding within its institutional funding portfolio. Second, it will expand beyond institutional funding to include corporations and philanthropic foundations and explore innovative revenue-generating mechanisms such as social entrepreneurship (e.g., consulting services, training, and fee for service). A broader, more stable funding base enables GISF to sustain its growth, impact, and mission fidelity.
3. **Securing Funding for Core Activities.** GISF must move to a model where its core membership services can be covered by unrestricted funds (such as membership fees and commercial income), reducing members' exposure to unpredictable donor activity.

Throughout this process, GISF will carefully balance its growth/stability objectives with a commitment to maintaining fidelity to its core values.

Strategies

To achieve these objectives, GISF will implement the following strategies:

- **Institutional Donor Funding.** USAID/BHA has historically been a cornerstone of GISF's funding. GISF remains open to working with the US Government, but will seek to rapidly diversify. GISF will look to secure direct funding from these traditional Western donors, which will require having the systems and track record in place to meet due diligence requirements. In parallel, GISF will continue to build partnerships with NGOs across different countries to access EU funding opportunities. GISF will also look to engage with non-traditional donors, in line with member expectations. Initiatives that showcase innovative methodologies, new initiatives, and pilot programmes will be prioritised to attract donor support.
- **Member Fee Optimisation.** Membership fees are a critical and reliable revenue stream. This funding provides stability and flexibility that underpins core activities. GISF will expand membership across diverse sectors and NNGOs and ensure an equitable and accessible fee structure. This includes refining membership tiers and benefits, with the potential to introduce new tiers offering differentiated benefits (in consultation with the existing membership).
- **Foundations and Individual Philanthropy.** GISF will identify mission-aligned foundations and develop targeted proposals to secure foundation grants. It will also cultivate relationships with high-net-worth individuals who align with its mission to advance NGO security.
- **Innovative Funding Mechanisms.** As a Community Interest Company (CIC), GISF is authorised to generate revenue through mission-aligned activities, provided that all profits are reinvested into its social purpose of strengthening NGO SRM. This structure enables GISF to explore innovative funding mechanisms, such as social enterprise models and fee-for-service offerings for non-members, while maintaining fidelity to its mission and compliance with CIC regulations.

- **Corporate and Private Sector Engagement.** GISF will actively develop partnerships with commercial service providers and corporations to pursue income, in-kind donations, or pro bono services that align with its mission and benefit members directly.
- **Organisational Architecture.** To expand funding availability and partnerships, GISF will assess the feasibility of establishing affiliates and obtaining charitable status in different jurisdictions, such as the EU and the US. This evaluation will include legal requirements, compliance costs, operational impacts, and potential benefits for strategic partnerships and funding access.

Scenario Planning

GISF employs an implementation framework that integrates scenario planning, trigger mechanisms, and communications strategies to operationalise its strategy effectively. Scenario planning informs macro-level decisions at the organisational level, complementing the fine-tuning of programme design and delivery through adaptive management.

To navigate the dynamic landscape of funding realities and global security conditions over the next five years, GISF has identified potential scenarios in its Scenario Planning Framework defined by the interplay of funding availability and operating environment stability:

- **Strategic Growth and Partnership Expansion:** In stable conditions with strong donor support, GISF focuses on scaling transformative SRM initiatives, strengthening NGO SRM coordination, expanding regional convening hubs, and investing in innovative technologies.
- **Efficiency Under Financial Constraint:** With constrained funding but a stable operating environment, GISF emphasises the fundamentals of convening NGOs on SRM matters, producing cost-effective, scalable SRM solutions, and leveraging digital platforms and strategic partnerships.
- **Crisis-Driven Adaptation and Resilience:** In volatile environments with high donor support, GISF prioritises increasing the accessibility of SRM tools and training to mitigate escalating risks and supporting operational coordination where requested.
- **Resource Scarcity and Adaptive Support:** Under volatile conditions with restricted funding, GISF adapts by delivering high-impact, low-cost SRM solutions through digital platforms and partnerships.

To support adaptive implementation, GISF **monitors key drivers** such as funding levels, global security risks, and member priorities. Biannual scenario reviews and **trigger mechanisms** enable GISF to adjust strategic actions.