

Security – more than technologies!

not always achieved through the use of technologies alone. Legal framework conditions and organisational measures also have very good chances of success.

The DESSI-process starts with the security problem in itself. A detailed description helps to detect the people or groups concerned and clarifies the probability and the consequences of a possible threat. In the next phase various measures are considered and consequently, different types of alternatives are chosen for further assessment. Hereby, seven impact dimensions are taken into consideration: Does the investment lead to a security gain or a security loss? What is the impact on fundamental rights and on ethical aspects? What legal framework is needed and what are the social consequences? Furthermore, acceptability, political significance and the economic impact are analysed.

In brief

- Increased investment in measures for security improvements often has far-reaching societal impacts.
- The DESSI-system offers support in the decision making process concerning security investments.
- A web-tool guides you through the process and visualizes the results.
- The participation of as many diverse stakeholders as possible supports the multi-dimensional analyses of different technical and organisational alternatives of security investments.
- Through its seven impact dimensions DESSI offers a holistic overview of the consequences of investment alternatives.



Demonstration of a security alternative (Picture: DBT)

Participative decision-making is the centrepiece of the DESSI-process. Workshops in all of the three outlined phases are held with as many of the stakeholders as possible involved (e.g. experts, clients, decision-makers, citizens), who are requested to participate in discussions about a suitable security investment. Additionally, the process of decision-making is supported by a web-tool, which ensures better transparency.

What is it about?

It is usually technical solutions that are the preferred option in handling security problems, as is evident from the figures relating to security investments in Europe. As far back as 2007, public expenses for security technologies reached nearly one billion Euro in Austria, while the European Union invested 66 billion Euro in the same year.

The increasing diffusion of security technologies has far-reaching impacts on many parts of society. While providing the expected security gain, every investment could have massive consequences in other areas. DESSI was set up to emphasise this point. DESSI enables a comparison between individual security investments by assessing them through different societal-relevant dimensions. Increased security is

Basic data


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Test case: Security in Austrian Courthouses

The fusion of two courthouse locations in Lower Austria offered an opportunity to test the implementation of a comprehensive new security strategy in the newly renovated courthouse.

To test the DESSI-process in practice, employees of both courthouses (judges, administrative staff, etc.) as well as experts (such as the person within the Ministry of Justice in charge of the renovation, security officers from other courts, one person representing the Regional Police Department of Upper Austria, the Austrian Federal Society for Real Estate, and experts from the field of architecture) were invited to participate in the evaluation of the planned security investments.

The result of the collective brainstorming session was that most security problems relate to abuse and harassment of the courthouse staff. A search for alternative solutions followed. To increase the security at the workplace, the following suggestions were raised: a) increased security by open design such as open plan offices, b) increased security checks at the entrance, and c) the rearrangement of the entrance as a service centre. These three alternatives were discussed and evaluated in three mixed groups using the DESSI-dimensions.

DESSI		
 Project home DESSI steps Phase 1 Phase 2 Phase 3 Back	Security Problem Description Desktop Research Interview Review of Research Summary	Multi-Criteria Assessment Preparation for the work Dimensions and Criteria selection Group composition What-if scenario module Workshop program Introduction Assessment round 1 Overview of results from round 1 Presentation of What-if scenario Assessment round 2 Overview of results from round 2 Workshop summary Final quality assurance Final reporting
	Security investments and alternatives Description of investments Workshop Introduction Brainstorm and Clustering Alternatives Ranking Workshop results Summary	

Three steps of the DESSI-webtool

The result: It was found that the two architectural solutions would specifically contribute to an increase in the subjective sense of security, as an open plan construction makes you feel more secure. The participants of the workshop emphasized the additional benefit deriving from the detailed analysis of the different options and the comprehensive view on the consequences of the investment. The interaction of those concerned and the experts led to a variety of appraisals and new insights.

What to do?

As the topic of security and the more and more extensive application of security technologies play a vital role in many societal aspects, the detection of societal impacts should be of increasing importance.

- Especially when it comes to big security investments of public authorities, it is advisable to assess the societal impacts. The application of the DESSI-process supports the analysis of the consequences of the available security alternatives. Therefore, the use of the DESSI-process should be established as a standard for all security investments of the public sector.
- The DESSI-process should also be adopted for all private security investments which have impacts on the public space. In order to achieve this, new regulations are necessary.
- International infrastructures and networks for the further development of the DESSI-process should be given the utmost support.
- Use the DESSI-webtool! Access to the web-tool is free and it can be used by everyone to analyse security problems and to evaluate the planned security investment.

Further reading

DESSI Manual Version 2, *Deliverable 4.4*

<http://securitydecisions.org/>

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