Saving Lives Together (SLT): FAQs
March 2018

Introduction

Saving Lives Together (SLT) is a framework to enhance security collaboration between the UN, International Non-governmental Organisations (INGOs) and International Organisations (IOs). It recognises the existence of collectively experienced security threats and the importance of collaboration to support the safer delivery of humanitarian and development assistance. The elements of information sharing and establishing coordination mechanisms are central to SLT.

The primary objective of SLT is to enhance the ability of partner organisations to make informed decisions based on shared information and knowledge. This is intended to:

- help partner organisations to better manage risks;
- implement effective security arrangements to support the safe delivery of assistance;
- improve the security of humanitarian personnel;
- and support the continuity of programmes.

SLT should be viewed as a tool to support the existing security risk management practices of individual NGOs. NGOs and UN agencies often have different exposures to risk, and may seek to mitigate these risks in different ways as they seek to implement their programme activities. Every organisation must have its own security policies, plans and the capacity in place to be able to function effectively within the SLT Framework. UN agencies are responsible only for their own staff. NGOs must recognise and meet their own security risk management obligations.

To engage with SLT, organisations must commit to the adoption and implementation of the principles, objectives and arrangements in the **SLT Framework**.

The SLT Framework is a framework for collaboration. It is not a service provided by UNDSS. As such, all SLT partner organisations must commit to:

- establishing security collaboration arrangements;
- sharing relevant security information with other SLT members;
- cooperating on security training where feasible;
- cooperating on security operations and logistics arrangements, where feasible;
- identifying resource requirements for enhancing security coordination between the UN, INGOS, and IOs;
- consulting on common ground rules for humanitarian action.
Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are the advantages of engaging with SLT?

At a **local** level, the primary benefit of SLT engagement is greater information sharing on security issues between INGOs, IOs and UN agencies. However, other advantages - such as operational cooperation, training, etc. – may also be agreed at the local level. Any additional cooperation at field level is dependent on resources locally.

At a **global** level, the NGO/IO HQ SLT Focal Points of agencies that are part of the SLT process receive daily updates, can access a common online platform, and have the possibility of accessing specific UNDSS security training for the security staff of their organisations.

The SLT Framework does **not** include the provision of any guarantees from the UN, and the UN does not take any responsibility for the evacuation or relocation of INGO or IO personnel.

Any evacuation or relocation support that **might** occur under SLT is dependent on NGOs sharing information on their programming and staff levels and locations with the UN under the SLT Framework. While they can **never guarantee** the evacuation of NGO/IO staff, the UN will always make efforts to include NGOs/IOs in such planning when feasible.

2. What does my organisation have to do to become a member of SLT at a global level?

You must be an **international** NGO or IO and an **implementing** or **operational partner** of a UN agency.

A **global SLT partnership** can be established by an exchange of a Letter of Understanding (LoU) between UNDSS HQ and the HQ of the respective INGO/IO.

The LoU is **not** a prerequisite for participation in SLT at the local level. Nor is it currently a requirement of HQ engagement. Should INGOs/IOs wish to express their commitment to SLT through an exchange an LoU at the HQ level, they may contact the DSS/OCHA SLT focal points to initiate that process.

3. Does my organisation have to sign an LoU to participate in SLT at local level?

No. Participation in SLT at the local level is determined at that level (details of this are included in the **SLT implementation guidelines**).
4. What does my organisation have to do to become a member of SLT at the local level?

Who can be part of SLT at the local level is determined at that level. If your NGO is a UN implementing or operational partner, it is eligible to become a member of SLT. To participate at the local level, you should contact UNDSS in country and ask for details as to how to engage.

5. How does SLT function at the local level?

Ideally, INGO engagement with SLT is through an in-country NGO coordination mechanism, whether formal or informal, security specific or more general. The specific implementation of SLT may differ from country to country, but UNDSS and INGOs/IOs will normally agree on the depth of their engagement and country specific arrangements. These should generally be applicable for all participating INGOs and IOs.

If there are any issues in relation to how well SLT is functioning at the country level, please contact a member of the **SLT Working Group**.

6. If my organisation is a member of SLT, will the UN guarantee safe haven and/or evacuation in case of an emergency?

No. The UN does not provide any such guarantees and takes no responsibility for the evacuation or relocation of INGO or IO personnel. Each organisation must maintain its own duty of care for its staff and have adequate security risk management practices in place to enhance their safety and well-being.

However, if you are a member of SLT at the local level, there are greater opportunities for you to discuss shared concerns and you may be asked to provide staff and location details for the UN to consider in their contingency planning.

**In the past, the UN has evacuated INGO personnel. UN vehicles, UN peacekeeping and WFP aircraft have been made available for the transport of INGO and IO personnel, including for medical evacuations, but there is no guarantee of this, and all partner organisations must have their own evacuation plans and capacity in place.**

In the event that INGO or IO personnel are evacuated by the UN, these personnel will be required to sign a liability waiver. Cost recovery mechanisms for medical evacuations may be in place in some countries, but this is determined at the local level.
7. If my organisation becomes an SLT partner organisation, does that mean that we have to follow UNDSS’s advice on matters of acceptable risk, assessments of threat and vulnerability, etc.?

No. SLT is designed to enhance and complement the security risk management systems of SLT partner organisations, not substitute them. Each organisation must maintain its own security risk management capacity and function and meet the duty of care obligations that it has towards its staff.

8. As an SLT partner, will the UN be responsible for INGO or IO personnel and security risk management measures?

No. The UN, INGOs and IOs maintain full responsibility for their own organisation’s personnel and security arrangements.

9. Does UNDSS conduct security risk assessments for INGO and IOs?

UNDSS may share information from existing assessments with INGOs/IOs, but UNDSS security professionals will not conduct assessments specifically for INGOs/IOs.

10. My organisation is a member of ICVA, but I have questions or find it difficult to engage with UNDSS in the field, what should I do?

If there are any issues in relation to how well SLT is functioning at the local level, please contact a member of the SLT Working Group.

11. Are there any financial obligations related to security collaboration under the SLT framework?

No. Neither the UN nor INGO/IOs are expected to pay for SLT related resources.

The only exceptions to this may be at the local level where funding may be necessary for INGOs to establish security co-ordination platform, etc. Or, if INGOs take advantage of specific DSS training opportunities, transport/accommodation costs must be borne by the INGO.

12. What is the SLT Oversight Committee (SLT OC) and who are the members?

The SLT OC is responsible for supporting the effective implementation of the SLT Framework through leadership and guidance.
The SLT OC is currently comprised of representatives from: UNDSS, OCHA, WFP, UNDP, UNHCR, UNICEF, EISF, ICVA, InterAction, and SCHR. It is currently co-chaired by an INGO representative from ICVA and UNDSS.

The SLT OC is supported by an SLT Working Group which meets regularly to discuss the operational aspects of the implementation of the SLT Framework. The Working Group is currently comprised of representatives from: UNDSS, OCHA, UNICEF, InterAction, EISF and ICVA.