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# International Occupational and Quality Standards for Private Security:

## The Way Forward for India?

### Introduction

This article is the second in a series by me, discussing international developments in private security post 9/11, and what lessons India can learn (the good and the not so good) from these emerging models of 'international best practice.'

The aim of this series is to stimulate a debate within the private security industry of India, which could act as a catalyst for reform and the professionalisation of the industry, providing a framework of world class regulation and standards over the next five years, which would be compatible with emerging international models.

### Emergence of International Regulatory Frameworks

The first article in the series, entitled: *'Delhi Police: Partnership with the Private Security Industry'* (India Safe, January, 2008) explored the possibility of the police services of India sharing some of their responsibilities with private security companies, as happens elsewhere in the world.

Some may have thought this suggestion was too radical and

controversial to be taken seriously, and so in the current article we return to the subject by exploring developments in other parts of the world which have led to strong Public Private Partnerships (PPP) between mainstream policing and the private security industry. These partnerships are based upon regulatory frameworks of legislation, and occupational and quality standards being introduced for the private security industry (and in some countries, also for policing, prosecutors, court officials, prison personnel and so on) which effectively provide strong and transparent governance of the private security industry.

They also provide government and the police with the confidence and democratic legitimacy to make judgments about the competency, quality, reliability and effectiveness offered by participating private security companies and to enter into such partnerships on the basis of strong public accountability vis-à-vis parliamentary scrutiny and oversight.

These frameworks provide for minimum standards of knowledge and competency, good character checks, and the

fitness of companies to be allowed into the industry. The frameworks are based upon law and the enforcement of minimum standards, usually by government or quasi-government organizations, or even private organizations that report to the Home Ministry as in the UK model (explored further below).

India has started to follow this 'road-map' towards improvement of its massive private security industry and has passed the Private Security Agencies Regulation Act, 2005, otherwise known as PSAR Act. Enforcement of PSAR Act starts this year and further legislation is to follow focusing upon the intelligence sector and the conduct and performance of private detective agencies.

### The Emergence of Occupational Quality Standards

International experience shows, however, that recent Indian legislation is only the first step on the road to professionalism of our industry – the rest of the advanced world are now progressively regulating all sectors of the Private Security industry such as 'Cash-in-Transit', and 'In-house' security e.g.,

security provided internally by hotels or companies, and security staff employed in banks, malls and other retail places visited by the public. They are also insisting upon international quality standards such as ISO 9001-2002 and, that security managers must have suitable educational qualifications and experience.

Experience from abroad also shows, that in order to be effective in achieving their strategic purpose i.e., the professionalism of the private security industry, most regulatory frameworks need to be strengthened and underpinned by what are known as **occupational quality standards**. Effectively, therefore, regulatory frameworks have what is known as symbiotic relationship with standards: or, in other words, regulation and standards go together like twins, they are from the same family of governance tools and one cannot work effectively without the other.

The emergence and role of such occupational standards and how they work, are now the main focus of the rest of this article. Whilst they must be discussed in the context of regulatory frameworks, (because of the nature of the relationship discussed), the subject of comparative regulatory frameworks is a large and interesting one that will be explored in more depth in future articles.

### International Developments in Occupational Quality Standards

In parallel with advances in industrial and corporate governance structures, e.g., regulatory frameworks, for some years the advanced world has been moving towards the identification and implementation of occupational competency and quality standards for

both public and private sectors of the economy. This helps raise and guarantee quality, and underpin such regulatory frameworks. This movement is led by such international standards bodies as:

- ISO (The International Organization for Standardization);
- BSI (British Standards Institute);
- ESO (European Standards Organization);
- Australian Standards Body (Government Skills Australia).

In the international security industry, such bodies as ASIS (American Society for Industrial Security) and SIA (Security Industry Authority, UK) are responsible for studying the subject and assisting in the development of such standards for their respective memberships.

Moreover, some countries like the UK, are moving towards the concept of 'National Occupational Standards' (NOS), and other countries based upon a Federal system of government, e.g., Australia, have introduced State Occupational Standards, albeit, they have to meet national standards set by the Federal government. These national or federal standards apply to most occupational groups across the whole economy.

### What are occupational competency and quality standards?

In brief, the concept of occupational competency and quality standards operates by examining jobs (job analysis) of public and private sectors in minute detail in separate organisational verticals. The jobs are analysed by industry and human resource experts and broken down into 'key aspects' by what is called a Lead-Body (also known as Skills Councils) for the industry, which comprises employers,

clients, government officials and key stakeholders. Effectively, the professionals involved in the future of the industry analyse and identify 'the training needs' (TNA) of the industry. Thus the whole process has credibility as it is done by professionals involved in delivering quality services.

In the UK model, each unit of a National Occupational Standard usually carries a **statement of evidence requirements**. This is the evidence that candidates need to submit to be assessed as competent for National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). NVQs show the holder can carry out the job to the required standard.

A similar approach is taken in Australia where a range of vocational qualifications are available, known as the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) which is a unified system of 12 national qualifications that allows a person to gain a qualification to certify the knowledge and skills a person has achieved through study, training, work and life experience.

### The UK police and law enforcement model of competency/standards

So, for example, policing and law enforcement in the UK are broken down in the UK NOS model, by the Lead Body called Skills for Justice, into 70 different 'key aspects' which cover such varied tasks as:

- Identify and manage operational threats and risks (2B5);
- Plan policing operation (2B6);
- Plan and deploy resources for policing operation (2B3);
- Formulate, monitor and review strategies for policing (2B2);
- Conduct intelligence driven briefing, tasking and deployment (2A3);

- Arrest, detain or report individuals (2C3);
- Minimise and deal with aggressive or abusive behaviour (2C4);
- Contribute to the conduct of police operations by providing a firearms capability (2D1);
- Conduct mobile surveillance operations (2F1);
- Manage major investigations (2G1).

(Source: *Skills for Justice* - [www.skillsforjustice.com](http://www.skillsforjustice.com))

As stated, there are over 70 of these key tasks identified for policing and law enforcement and classified as individual units with a code number. By grouping together units of National Occupational Standards the full range of **knowledge, skills and performance** criteria can be identified and specified for a particular job. Units are usually divided into two or more **elements** which describe the **activities** the individual has to carry out.

Each element carries a number of performance criteria which describe what effective workers do and the standards of quality they have to achieve. Candidates need to provide evidence that they:

- Consistently meet the performance criteria, and
- Have the necessary knowledge, understanding and skills to work competently

Candidates usually have to provide evidence from their work that they have covered specific aspects of the range - the different circumstances or situations in which the task might be carried out.

### Standards for the British Security Industry

This concept is now being extended in the UK from the Justice sector to the private security industry and a great deal of work is currently taking place.

The Lead Body (Skills Council) is Skills for Security which is working closely with the industry watchdog, the SIA, (the SIA is discussed later in this article), and the employers associations for the UK private security industry are taking place in what are called 'user-groups'.

Some British standards already exist, however, having been previously developed by the British Standards Institute (BSI). Some examples are given below to illustrate the concept further:

#### BS B57: Manned Security Services

Lays down requirement for security companies i.e.,

- Proper management structure, insurance, procedures for employees (written contracts, terms and conditions, shift patterns etc);
- Expected standards of conduct for employees;
- Requires employees to carry ID;
- Minimum induction training, plus other training requirements;
- Detailed procedures for Control Rooms, checking, issuing of keys, etc.

#### BS 4737: Intruder Alarm Systems (IAS)

Requirements for construction companies, i.e.,

- Installation and operation of intruder alarm systems (IAS);
- Requirements for tamper detection;
- Cable security;
- Operating requirements;
- Power supply and backup;
- Performance standards for alarms.

#### BS 5947 Remote Centres for Alarm Systems

Specification for planning, const-

truction and facilities of unmanned remote centres:

- Detailed procedures for operations;
- Access procedures;
- Time limits for contacting emergency services;
- Handling of alarms;
- Equipments checks;
- Records to be kept.

### Private Security Industry - The Australian Model

As mentioned earlier, some countries like Australia are already well advanced down this path, and various bodies exist in different Australian states that specialise in setting standards for private security. For example, Government Skills Australia assists the Public Safety sector to identify the skills and competences it needs.

**Competency based training** is a key feature of the Australian Vocational Educational and Training (VET) system. The major emphasis is on competency standards and on what a person is expected to do in the workplace. It focuses on the ability to transfer and apply skills, knowledge and attitudes to new situations and environments.

Much of Australia's private security training is based on an industry driven and work based approach. It places the person seeking recognition for competence as the driver of the process.

#### Competence based training:

- Is based on effective performance of the functions required in employment.
- Incorporates units of competency rather than subjects and training modules.
- Is designed to be flexible and to allow for the different ways people learn.
- Focuses on the performance of real job skills in real work situations or

simulated work environments.

- Emphasizes what a person is able to do as a result of learning, rather than the time that was spent on training.
- Is aimed at preparing an employee for successful competency based assessment against nationally endorsed competency standards.

### Occupational Quality Standards - Meeting Human Resource Requirements

This methodology assists in identifying the skill, knowledge and performance criteria which meets the training needs of employers in the industry, and assists in driving skills development in particular sectors of the economy where there is a 'skills gap'. It also assists in identifying job descriptions, job specifications, appraisal and development needs for individuals and is thus, critical to the effective operation of the Human Resource function. Finally, it provides an evidence base which can be used for accreditation purposes to allow individuals to receive qualifications, proper rewards for their competency, and provide a career path to follow which is transparent.

It also allows for different occupational groups within the same sector of the economy to work together and to identify 'common standards' which all parties adhere to and train their staff to attain, for example, the police work with other groups from the courts, prosecutors, prisons, community groups, and so on. It is now 'best practice' for these groups to identify common standards that allow them to specify and train their staff to work more effectively together in the wider criminal justice system.

This 'inter-agency' approach is

critical to more effective performance in government agencies such as the wider security and justice system, of which the private security industry is now widely acknowledged throughout the world as being a critical part. If this approach were adopted in India, then the proposal for joint-working between the Delhi Police and the private security industry suggested in the author's previous article could be implemented. Its time for the industry to stand ready to advise National and State governments on these important developments about what best practices and quality standards we should develop for India. IT security standards in India are leading the way, reaching world-class standards. The rest of the security industry must follow. Our nation's enhanced security depends upon this course.

### Private Security Industry Developments in the UK

The UK model is interesting in the Indian context for many reasons; not least that it is still being criticized by the industry within the UK for being voluntary in certain aspects and, therefore, allowing 'fliers-by-night' to undermine the good companies committed to professionalism, high quality service delivery and accountability. Many senior and well-respected members of the UK private security industry, who campaigned for higher standards of professionalism, and finally persuaded the British government to regulate the industry are now complaining that the regulatory framework is 'not tough enough', and does not go far enough.

The fragmented nature of the system has also given rise to weaknesses in operation as illustrated by the recent embarrassing discovery that thousands of illegal immigrants had obtained jobs

in the private security industry because the checks had not been carried out by the Security Industry Authority (SIA), set up by the government to regulate the private security industry in the UK. Apparently, checking the immigration status of applicants to join the private security industry is not within the responsibility of the SIA; this was the job of the immigration service, who slipped up!

Notwithstanding these structural deficiencies, there is a lot of interest in the Indian security industry in the overriding philosophy of the British model. For example, its Mission Statement and role, as published on its website is as follows:

'To help protect society by collaboratively developing and achieving high standards within the private security industry'

*Its two main duties are:*

1. The compulsory licensing of individuals working in specific sectors of the private security industry;
2. To manage the Approved Contractor Scheme which measures private security companies against a set of independently assessed criteria (standards).

SIA licensing currently covers manned guarding (which includes security guarding, door supervision, close protection, cash and valuables in transit as well as key-holding and vehicle immobilizing). Licensing ensures that private security operatives are 'fit and proper' persons who are properly trained and qualified to do their job.

The SIA Approved Contractor Scheme introduced a set of operational and performance standards for companies providing private security services. Application is not compulsory, but for those companies that apply for member-

ship and meet these standards they are awarded 'Approved Contractor' status.

This accreditation by the SIA provides purchasers of private security services with independent proof of a contractor's commitment to quality and allows entry by the 'approved' companies to sensitive contracts in partnership with police and other government agencies such as the courts.

For example, many UK companies have now taken over a number of traditional tasks and jobs previously performed only by the police, e.g., the running of the court systems, keeping prisoners in custody, escorting prisoners between police stations, the courts and prisons, etc. Prisons are now being privatized and run by private security companies as part of Public Private Partnerships (PPP). These trends towards the 'extended family of security' (see figure below) are only possible because of the implementation of regulatory frameworks (however imperfect), but more importantly because of the approach to professionalism brought

about by the move towards occupational quality standards.

### Developments towards Global Standards – ASIS and ISO

This trend in the UK is part of a wider international trend searching for the introduction of occupational quality standards for private security that will apply across State boundaries such as in the USA, Canada, or European Union (EU), and, will eventually apply across the globe. ASIS, for example has set up working groups across the USA, and invited international participation to its members worldwide to become involved in identifying international best practice and working closely with ISO to find voluntary standards for security that will apply globally. India can benefit from these developments and should be joining this international debate immediately.

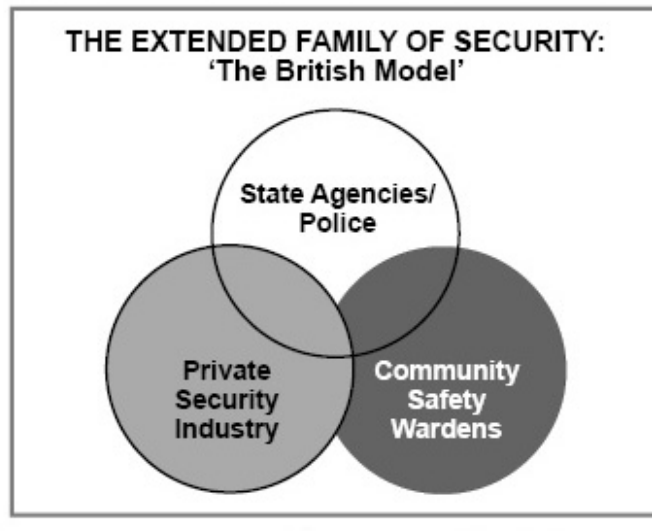
This search for global quality and standardization is becoming critical as

security is now under the spotlight in every country in the world, post 9/11, because of the increasing political and religious extremism and terrorist threat. Standardized procedures, internationally accredited, must be found that can apply to all countries, across international borders, in the quest for security, quality and customer satisfaction. Governments are responding by modifying the traditional role of government in monopolizing the control of all aspects of security by State controlled agencies such as the police, by 'extending the family' of security partners to include the private security sector, but can only do this on the basis of confidence in the framework of regulation, standards, enforcement, education and training they employ.

### Conclusion

The Private Security industry in India, supported by the national and state governments, is booming vis-à-vis the new legislative regulatory framework of the man-guarding and investigations sectors. This will improve the quality and reputation of these sectors when enforcement starts later this year and the industry responds by delivering more reliable security services which benefits the national interest.

It has been contended in this article that this emerging framework of good governance is a necessary first step to give confidence to the Indian National and State Governments to adopt the private security industry as a full partner in developing a resilient internal security policy for India. Such a resilient security strategy is critical in the post 9/11 world, both for the security of the citizens of India, who crave a stable and safe environment for their families and businesses, and for



the international community wishing to invest, work, and live in India in the years to come.

To help achieve such a strategy, this article focused upon the international emergence of occupational quality standards and qualifications, as the main tool of professionalism of the global security and law enforcement sectors. Many of these are beginning to integrate more closely in search of increased effectiveness into what is being called, internationally, the 'extended family' of policing and security.

In future articles these arguments will be further developed, suggesting that a strategy needs to be evolved by government and industry to develop such frameworks of standards for India, perhaps using such august bodies as the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) in conjunction with the private security industry and government.

Finally, it's time for the industry to stand ready to advise the national and state governments on these important developments about what best practices and quality standards we should develop for India. In pursuit of this national goal, the author will continue to research these subjects on behalf of the Indian private security industry from his company, OSSIM ([www.ossim.in](http://www.ossim.in)), the first Indian security and intelligence education and training company in India to offer a holistic range of courses based upon best international practice and which is now acting as a 'Think-Tank' for such research.

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