

## Summary

### Motivation and research questions

ICT and electricity play an increasingly big role in the everyday functioning of society. The Ministry of Security and Justice (hereafter: Ministry of VenJ) realises that a scenario, in which the Netherlands is confronted with the fall-out of ICT and/or electricity is realistic. This matter has been given attention in the project Digital Security<sup>1</sup>. Within this project the set goal was for 80% of the organisations in the sectors Public Policy (OB) and Public Order and Security (OOV) to have incorporated the fall-out of ICT and/or electricity into the continuity plans by December 2011. Concerning these sectors this means the provinces, the police regions, the security regions, the water authorities and municipalities. In order to find out whether or not this objective has been reached, the Scientific Research- and Documentation Centre (hereafter: WODC) has contracted Berenschot and I&O Research to execute a research, based on the following research questions:

1. What percentage of the organisations within the sectors OB and OOV possess a(n) (approved) continuity plan for the fall-out of ICT or electricity?
2. What are, per sector/target group, the general insights with respect to the content of the continuity plans?

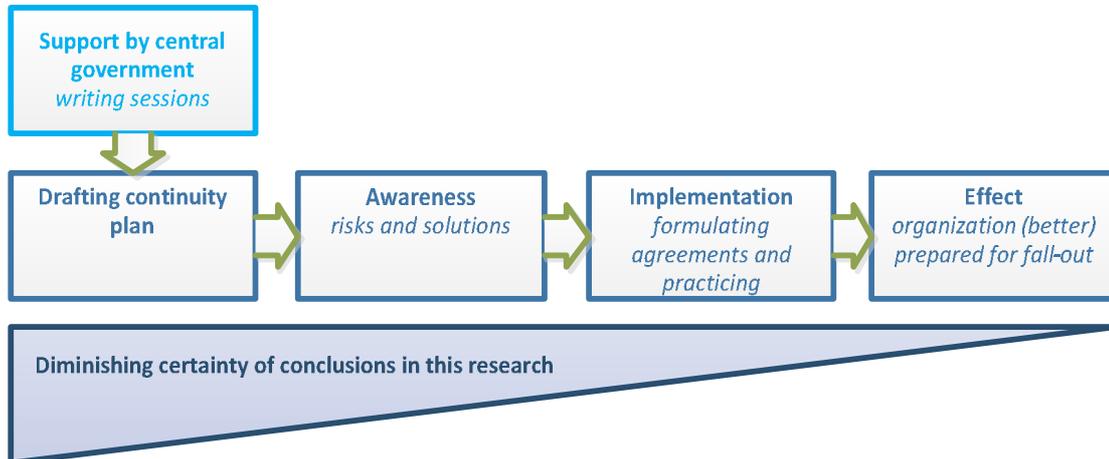
### Focus of the research

The government wants to promote the drafting of continuity plans by lower government authorities from the preposition that the continuity plan is an effective instrument to control future situations concerning large fall-outs of ICT and/or electricity and to secure the continuity of the provision of primary services by the organisations involved. The assumption is that a continuity plan has added value because the drafter becomes (more) aware of the problems and gains insight into the risks and consequences. Subsequently, this offers the opportunity to make agreements with partners and to test it in reality or to practice how it works. From this perspective, in 2011 the Ministry of VenJ decided to the development of a model plan per organisation type and to the organisation of writing sessions in which municipalities, security regions, police regions, provinces and water authorities could participate. During the writing sessions the participants were introduced to parts of and concepts in the model continuity plan and to the way in which the model could be used for the drafting of a continuity plan. The focus of the research is shown in the following image.

---

<sup>1</sup> Parliamentary paper II, 2009-2010, 30821, 10

*Focus of the research*



Central in the research is the extent to which and the reasons why organisations in the sectors OOV and OB have drawn up and implemented a continuity plan. It has also been determined whether or not the organisations did this with or without assistance in the form of writing sessions. Also, indicators have been collected about the extent to which one can speak of (increased) awareness about the risks of fall-out and solutions for it. Finally, some of the plans have been analysed globally on their content and questions have been asked about the implementation and organisations' own judgement on the extent to which they were prepared for a long term fall-out of electricity and ICT.

**Execution of the research**

- Phase A: Inventory. This phase was conducted in the months March and April 2011 by means of a telephone survey in all the provinces, municipalities, police regions and security regions. The goal of this inventory phase is to give a first impression of the extent to which the sectors OB and OOV are focussed on the subject of fall-out of ICT or electricity and/or already have an approved plan. Second, through this inventory round a document containing the names and contact details of people that can act as contact person for their organisations were composed. The total response encompassed 77%.
- Phase B: Final measurement. The final measurement consisted of two sections: an online-survey amongst organisations in the sectors OOV and OB and a qualitative analysis of a number of continuity plans.
  - The objective of the online-survey was to gather insight into the number of organisations (municipalities, police regions, security regions and water authorities) that have already drafted a continuity plan. In total, 344 contact persons participated in the survey, a response of 72%.

- The content-analysis of some of the plans was conducted in addition to the online-survey. In total 14 plans were analysed.<sup>2</sup> The analysis was done by means of ten quality criteria. These criteria were based on the model continuity plans that were central in the writing sessions.

## Results

The most important result of the inventory (Phase A, conducted in April 2011) is that almost half of the organisations indicate to possess a (nearly) approved continuity plan, that organisations estimate the chance of fall-out of ICT and/or electricity as (very) small and that half of the organisations require assistance.

The most important results of the final measurement (Phase B, conducted in January 2012) are:

- Status of the plan and participation writing sessions: Two out of ten organisations disposed of a continuity plan in January 2012; more than half was working on it. Approximately half of the organisations visited the writing sessions. Half of the organisations saw added value of writing sessions.
- Reasons why organisations do not (already) have a continuity plan: A lack of time and capacity were the most frequently given reasons why organisations did not (already) have a continuity plan. Over half of the organisations were busy drafting a continuity plan and expected to approve the plan in 2012.
- Implementation of continuity plans: Half of the completed plans had been governmentally approved. Around three quarters of the continuity plans had been discussed with the management team. A third of the organisations with a (nearly) finalized continuity plan had practiced with it. In most organisations somebody was responsible for the continuity plan.
- Perception of risks and extent of own preparation for fall-out: The perceived risk of large fall-outs of ICT and/or electricity was generally low, the estimation of its impact on the provision of primary services was divided. Two thirds of the organisations had assessed risks (concerning ICT, electricity or both), but also without risk-assessment organisations indicated to have insight in critical processes. The majority saw the drafting of the continuity plan as useful.
- Content of continuity plans: For most of the plans the starting point was large fall-out of ICT and electricity. Most continuity plans pointed to other plans or procedures, contained a description of the critical processes/activities and described the role of external parties. The plans especially had eye for the necessary means for the location, emergency electricity and ICT; most frequently mentioned measure was a refuge location.

---

<sup>2</sup> During the research the organisations were asked twice to grant assistance in the form of providing a continuity plan. In the end, 14 organisations gave hearing to this.

Besides the online-survey an analysis on the content was conducted. The most important results are: Other than three plans, a limited explanation was given in the plans about the three most important aspects of the plan (which are continuity management, crisis management and recovery). Other than two plans, no description was given in the plans of the target groups that should be informed. Other than two plans, the plans gave limited or no insight in what the critical processes are, what the consequences of fall-out are and which measures the organisation takes.

### **Conclusion and observation**

The results of Phase A and Phase B lead to the following conclusions and observation:

- *Number of organisations with completed plan falls behind the objective.* In January 2012 20% of the organisations within the sectors OB and OOV possessed a (nearly) completed continuity plan for the fall-out of ICT or electricity. This percentage is substantially lower than the objective of 80% *proposed* by the Ministry of VenJ. However, more than half of the organisations was drafting a plan or preparing for drafting of a plan during the research. Most of the organisations expected to finish the plan in 2012.
- *There is some improvement in the awareness concerning the content of the continuity plan.* Despite the fact that the objective of 80% was not met, in the past year improvement has been made in the sectors in the thinking surrounding the possible risks of the fall-out of ICT and/or electricity. In April 2011 approximately half of the organisations in the sectors OOV and OB said to dispose of a plan, but by now most organisations had realised that there was still a way to go now that they – partly due to the writing sessions organised by the Ministry of VenJ – had better insight in the content of the plan. This can be seen as a step from ‘unintentionally incompetent’ to ‘(more) intentionally incompetent’.
- *The estimation of the chance of fall-out is very low in most of the organisations.* Both during the first inventory in April 2011 as well as during the survey in January 2012 it appeared that by far most of the organisations thought the risk of a large fall-out of ICT and/or electricity to be (very) small. Around half of the organisations think that they can still provide primary services in case of a fall-out.
- *The organizational embedding of approved plans is largely in order.* In most of the organisations the plans had been approved at the level of the chair and/or the management team and somebody had been appointed responsible for the control of the plan (implementation, updating, etc.). Only in a couple of cases it was unclear who was responsible for the control. Positive is that a third of the organisations with a continuity plan had practiced the plan in reality. No research has been performed into how this happened.

- *The sense of urgency in organisations without continuity plan is low.* For a quarter of the organisations the drafting of a continuity plan electricity and ICT was not yet a fact in January 2012: drafting had not been started nor was the formation of plans on the agenda. The lack of time and capacity were mentioned as primary reasons. The sense of urgency of these organisations with respect to continuity during ICT and/or electricity fall-out was low. The expectation presented by the organisations, to approve a plan in 2012, is probably (too) optimistic.
- *Of the organisations that do possess a continuity plan, the majority is positive about their own plan.* Nearly all contact persons saw a relation between their own plan and operational plans or more detailed procedures. Half of the plans was focussed on both a large fall-out of ICT and electricity. According to the organisations most plans described: the critical processes of activities in the event of a large fall-out, external parties on which the critical processes and activities depend, the readiness of emergency electricity and ICT.
- *Content-analysis of some continuity plans give a lot less positive image.* An analysis of the content of fourteen individual plans showed a significantly less positive image. Only some of the plans contained the necessary information to be labelled as a comprehensive continuity plan ICT and/or electricity. In most of the plans limited or no insight was given into what the critical processes were, what the consequences of fall-out were and which measures the organisation should take. Especially the lack of a good description of the critical processes was crucial. Without insight into this, it is hard to form a realistic image of the effects of large ICT and/or electricity fall-outs on the provision of primary services by an organisation. Any preparatory activities for large fall-outs of ICT and/or electricity without insight into the critical processes is random and ineffective.

The discrepancy between the self-image of the organisations about their plans and the external analysis of the content can mean two things: the selection of fourteen plans that were analysed on the content are not representative for the other plans or the own judgement of the plan by the organisations is too positive. Signals of a (too) positive estimation by organisations is something we found earlier: for example regarding the risks of long term fall-out of ICT and/or electricity that organisations usually underestimate. We also saw that initially in April 2011 a lot of organisations said to possess a continuity plan, but that they had to adjust this positive image as one gained more insight into the concept 'continuity plan for fall-out of ICT and/or electricity'.

Considering the large discrepancy between the self-image of organisations and the factual content of the plans, no definite conclusion can be drawn about the amount to which organisations had insight into the extent that critical processes were vulnerable for fall-out risks.

**Finally**

The focus of this research was clear: find out how many organisations in the sectors OOV and OB possess a continuity plan and portray the content of these plans. A short answer to this is: there are few organisations with an approved continuity plan and the content falls short qualitatively speaking.

The results of this research show a low amount of preparation by organisations regarding large fall-out of ICT and/or electricity and create low expectations concerning the continuity of the provision of primary services by the organisations.

Regarding the process of plan formation the research results show clearly that some steps have been taken in 2011. There was an increased awareness and realisation of continuity management in the event of large fall-out of ICT and/or electricity. In general in January 2012 the organisations are better informed about the content of a good continuity plan compared to April 2011 and a large number is busy drafting a plan. The writing sessions of the Ministry of VenJ have contributed to this positive development.

This is important because we know that there is no *tight coupling* between plans on paper and reality: they can be two different worlds<sup>3</sup>. A plan is not a goal in itself, but the result of a number of related activities with which organisations prepare themselves for fall-out of ICT and/or electricity. When a plan has been created, this asks continued involvement of organisations, for example to keep the plan up to date and 'alive'.

---

<sup>3</sup> See for example *Plannen in de praktijk, praktijk in de plannen, drie benaderingen van de kloof tussen plan en praktijk in de crisisbeheersing*, a publication of Berenschot and Nicis institute, 2010