



OT security at Enexis

Using bowties for the management of digital risks

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23 April 2024



risk management | BUSINESS ENGLISH

risk management

noun [U]

UK  US 

Add to word list 

MANAGEMENT, INSURANCE

the activity of calculating and reducing risk, so that an organization does not fail or lose money:

- *Companies often overlook fraud in their risk management.*

'Wet beveiliging netwerk- en informatiesystemen' - Wbni

Dutch implementation of the EU NIS directive



Dutch Authority for Digital
Infrastructure
Ministry of Economic Affairs and
Climate Policy

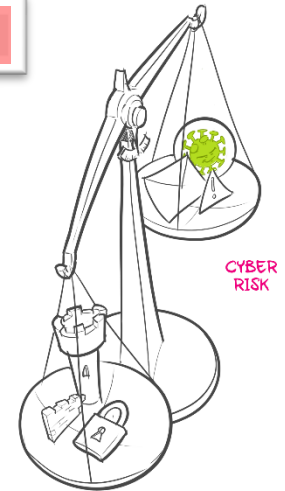
Duty of care

Aanbieders van essentiële diensten en digitaalendienstverleners moeten passende en evenredige technische en organisatorische maatregelen nemen om hun ICT te beveiligen. Verder nemen zij passende maatregelen om incidenten te voorkomen en, als zich toch incidenten voordoen, de gevolgen daarvan zo

...appropriate and proportionate technical and organisational measures to secure ICT systems.

Duty to report

Verder melden aanbieders van essentiële diensten en digitaalendienstverleners incidenten met aanzienlijke gevolgen bij Agentschap Telecom en het CSIRT. Voor essentiële diensten is het [NCSC](#) het [CSIRT](#). Digitaalendienstverleners schakelen het CSIRT-DSP in. De meldplicht geldt voor digitaalendienstverleners vanaf 9 november 2018. Voor aanbieders van essentiële diensten vormt de aanwijzing het startmoment.



SECURITY
MEASURES



How do I know what is appropriate and proportionate ?

This is what risk management is all about

◆ The answer to that question depends on a number of factors, e.g.:

- ◆ Which industry you are active in;
- ◆ What is your own risk appetite;
- ◆ Commercial vs. regulated industry;
- ◆ With digital risks: are you evaluating IT or OT systems;
- ◆ What is your resilience against attacks;
- ◆ What is the importance of the processes, systems etc. you are investigating during your risk assessment.



vs.



◆ The costs of mitigating controls should not outweigh the potential impact of a risk:

- ◆ This doesn't just apply to financial costs;
- ◆ Find the balance between digital security, physical security, costs, user friendliness etc.





Risk appetite formalised by the board of directors

A company's risk appetite is typically documented in a risk matrix

◆ Risk needs to be quantified where possible:

◆ Risk = Threat * Vulnerability * Impact



*



*



- ◆ The number of threats and vulnerabilities defines the likelihood that something goes wrong;
- ◆ Most companies use the following risk equation: Risk = **Likelihood** * **Impact**;
- ◆ In this example, the values could vary from 1 (low) to 3 (high), thus resulting in a risk level of 1 to 9;
- ◆ Risks can have a financial impact, but might also affect company values like safety or reliability;
- ◆ Most important is to have a consistent, repeatable approach to quantifying risk;
- ◆ The exact value of individual risks is less important, as long as they can be compared to each-other.

		Likelihood		
		Low (1)	Medium (2)	High (3)
Impact	High (3)	Low (3)	Medium (6)	High (9)
	Medium (2)	Low (2)	Medium (4)	Medium (6)
	Low (1)	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)

◆ A risk matrix defines the framework for risk mitigation decisions:

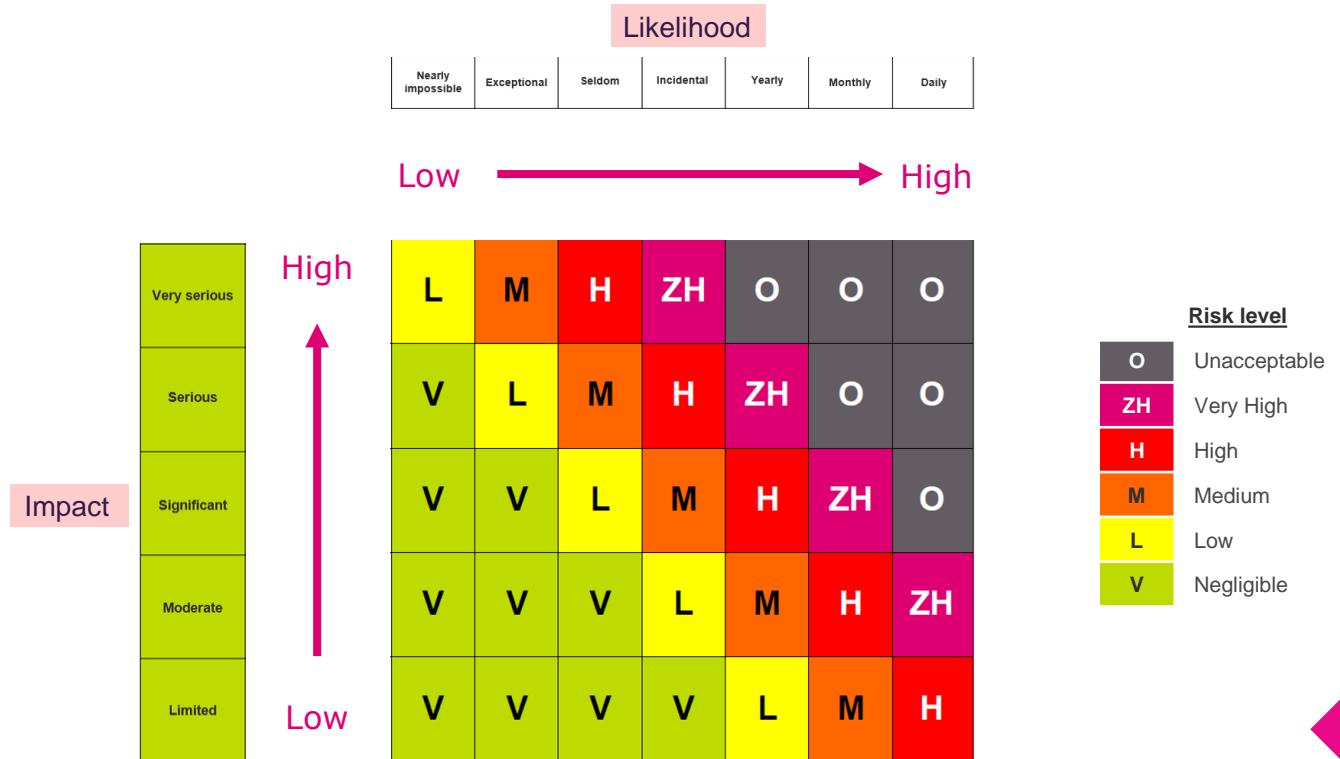
- ◆ When to accept, reduce, transfer or avoid the risk;
- ◆ A company's risk appetite is documented in the risk matrix; e.g. which risk levels can be accepted.





Risk appetite formalised by the board of directors

The Enexis Netbeheer risk matrix





Risk appetite formalised by the board of directors

The Enexis Netbeheer risk matrix

One example of a company value that might be affected by a risk.



Very serious
Serious
Significant
Moderate
Limited

Affordability
Schade groter dan 10M euro
Schade van 1M tot 10M euro
Schade van 100k tot 1M euro
Schade van 10k tot 100k euro
Schade van 1.000 tot 10.000 euro

Nearly impossible	Seeldom	Incidental	Daily
Never heard of the industry	Happened at Enexis or in the industry	Happened more than once at Enexis	Once or several times a day
<0,01/jr	$\geq 0,01/jr$ 1-10%	$\geq 0,1/jr$ 10-50%	0
	V	V	O
	V	V	O
	V	V	O
	V	V	O
	V	V	O



Risk appetite formalised by the board of directors

The Enexis Netbeheer risk matrix

Risk matrix Enexis Netbeheer 2024												
Potential consequences						Frequency or likelihood						
						Nearly impossible	Exceptional	Seldom	Incidental	Yearly	Monthly	Daily
Category	Reliability	Safety	Net accessibility	Affordability	Image	Never heard of in the industry	Happened in the industry	Happened at Enexis or in the industry	Happened more than once at Enexis	Once or several times a year at Enexis	Once or several times a month at Enexis	Once or several times a day at Enexis
						<0,001/jr	≥0,001/jr <1%	≥0,01/jr 1-10%	≥0,1/jr 10-50%	≥1/jr 50-90%	≥10/jr 90-99%	≥100/jr >99%
Very serious	>20.000.000 vbm (HS/MS station >16 uur uitval)	Ongeval met een of meerdere doden tot gevolg	>10 GWh niet geleverde energie; >100 GWh niet teruggeleverde energie	Schade groter dan 10M euro	Internationale commotie; >20.000 klachten	L	M	H	ZH	O	O	O
Serious	2.000.000 tot 20.000.000 vbm (HS/MS station 4 uur uitval)	Ongeval met ernstig, blijvend letsel (langdurig verzuim)	1 GWh tot 10 GWh niet geleverde energie; 10 GWh tot 100 GWh niet teruggeleverde energie	Schade van 1M tot 10M euro	Nationale commotie; 2.000 - 20.000 klachten	V	L	M	H	ZH	O	O
Significant	200.000 tot 2.000.000 vbm (MS-T station 4 uur uitval)	Ongeval met letsel met verzuim	100 MWh tot 1 GWh niet geleverde energie; 1 GWh tot 10 GWh niet teruggeleverde energie	Schade van 100k tot 1M euro	Regionale commotie; 200 - 2.000 klachten	V	V	L	M	H	ZH	O
Moderate	20.000 tot 200.000 vbm (MS-D streng 4 uur uitval)	Ongeval met EHBO (geen verzuim) of Ernstig incident (HSE)	10 MWh tot 100 MWh niet geleverde energie; 100 MWh tot 1 GWh niet teruggeleverde energie	Schade van 10k tot 100k euro	Lokale commotie; Interne commotie; 20 - 200 klachten	V	V	V	L	M	H	ZH
Limited	2.000 tot 20.000 vbm (netstation 2 uur uitval)	Incident (HSE)	1 MWh tot 10 MWh niet geleverde energie; 10 MWh tot 100 MWh niet teruggeleverde energie	Schade van 1.000 tot 10.000 euro	2 - 20 klachten	V	V	V	V	L	M	H





Risk appetite formalised by the board of directors

Easy to compare risks that affect different company values

Risk matrix Enexis Netbeheer 2024												
Potential consequences						Frequency or likelihood						
						Nearly impossible	Exceptional	Seldom	Incidental	Yearly	Monthly	Daily
Category	Reliability	Safety	Net accessibility	Affordability	Image	Never heard of in the industry	Happened in the industry	Happened at Enexis or in the industry	Happened more than once at Enexis	Once or several times a year at Enexis	Once or several times a month at Enexis	Once or several times a day at Enexis
			>10 GWh niet geleverde energie; >100 GWh niet teruggeleverde energie			≥0,001/jr	≥0,001/jr <1%	≥0,01/jr 1-10%	≥0,1/jr 10-50%	≥1/jr 50-90%	≥10/jr 90-99%	≥100/jr >99%
			5Wh tot 10 Wh niet geleverde energie; 5Wh tot 10 Wh niet teruggeleverde energie			V	M	H	ZH	O	O	O
			100 MWh tot 1 GWh niet geleverde energie; 1 GWh tot 10 GWh niet teruggeleverde energie			V	V	L	M	H	ZH	O
Moderate	200.000 vbm (MS-D streng 4 uur uitval)	Ongeval met EHBO (geen verzuim) of Ernstig incident (HSE)	10 MWh tot 100 MWh niet geleverde energie; 100 MWh tot 1 GWh niet teruggeleverde energie	Schade van 100k euro	2 - 20 klachten	V	V	V	L	M	H	ZH
Limited	2.000 tot 20.000 vbm (netstation 2 uur uitval)	Incident (HSE)	1 MWh tot 10 MWh niet geleverde energie; 10 MWh tot 100 MWh niet teruggeleverde energie	Schade van 1.000 tot 10.000 euro	2 - 20 klachten	V	V	V	L	M	H	H

All items on the same row are valued equally



Using the risk matrix

A risk matrix defines the framework for risk mitigation decisions

- ◆ The risk matrix is used during risk assessments to determine the risk level
- ◆ After identifying and quantifying risks, companies should:
 - ◆ have a an overview of all (or at least the most important) risks;
 - ◆ be able to prioritise these risks;
 - ◆ be able to decide on budget assignment for risk mitigation.
- ◆ Important to periodically update risk assessments and report on risk mitigation progress:

Risk	Level 2019	Level 2020	Level 2021	Level 2022	Level 2023
Risk 1	Very High	Very High	High	Medium	Medium
Risk 2	Very High	Very High	High	High	Medium
Risk 3	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Risk 4	High	High	High	High	High
Risk 5	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
...	High	High	High	High	High
Risk x	High	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium





Digital risk management challenges

- ◆ Some typical challenges during risk assessments and risk management in general:
 - ◆ Deciding who to involve in risk assessments;
 - ◆ How to objectively quantify risks;
 - ◆ Explaining digital security risks to other people than security nerds, especially budget owners;
 - ◆ Trying to be perfect and 100% complete too quickly;
 - ◆ Identifying threats, threat actors and vulnerabilities;
 - ◆ Deciding which threat scenarios are realistic and which are not (avoid FUD and 'James Bond scenarios');
 - ◆ The potential impact of digital (mainly OT security) risks can be much higher than conventional risks;
 - ◆ Determining the likelihood part of the risk equation;
 - ◆ Assigning responsibility of the identified risks;
 - ◆ Finding the right balance between **A)** digital security and **B)** physical security, user friendliness, costs etc;
 - ◆ Deciding which risk mitigating controls to implement and who is responsible for this;
 - ◆ Monitoring the effectiveness of controls (intrinsic and actual).



Digital risk management challenges

Our best decision so far: using the existing Enexis risk management approach

- ◆ Many different risk management frameworks, for example:
 - ◆ ISO 31000 and 27005;
 - ◆ COSO Enterprise Risk Management;
 - ◆ NIST Risk Management Framework (RMF) and SP 800-30;
 - ◆ Information Security Forum (ISF)'s Information Risk Assessment Methodology (IRAM) model.
- ◆ In our experience, it is important to align digital and 'conventional' risk management:
 - ◆ This helps explaining the result of risk assessments to your colleagues;
 - ◆ Easier to compare the outcome of risk assessments for different topics;
 - ◆ Easier to assign budget for risk mitigation based on the amount of risk reduction per invested Euro.
- ◆ At Enexis, we use the 'bowtie method' to document risks



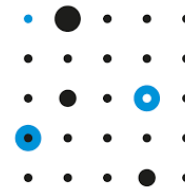
Source: <https://www.risklens.com/infographics/what-is-a-bow-tie>





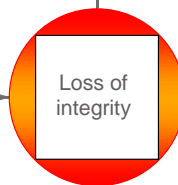
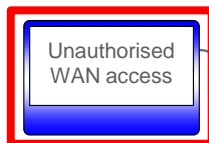
The Enexis risk management process

Use of bowties - introduction



ENCS

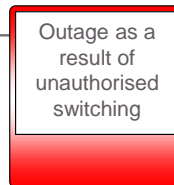
Threats: events that can lead to the top event, in case of digital risks these are typically actions by attackers.



Top event: an event during which control is lost: loss of confidentiality, integrity or availability in case of digital security risks.



Hazard: an activity that an organisation executes, but that could cause damage if control is lost.



Consequences: the negative effects of the top event (related to our company's core values).

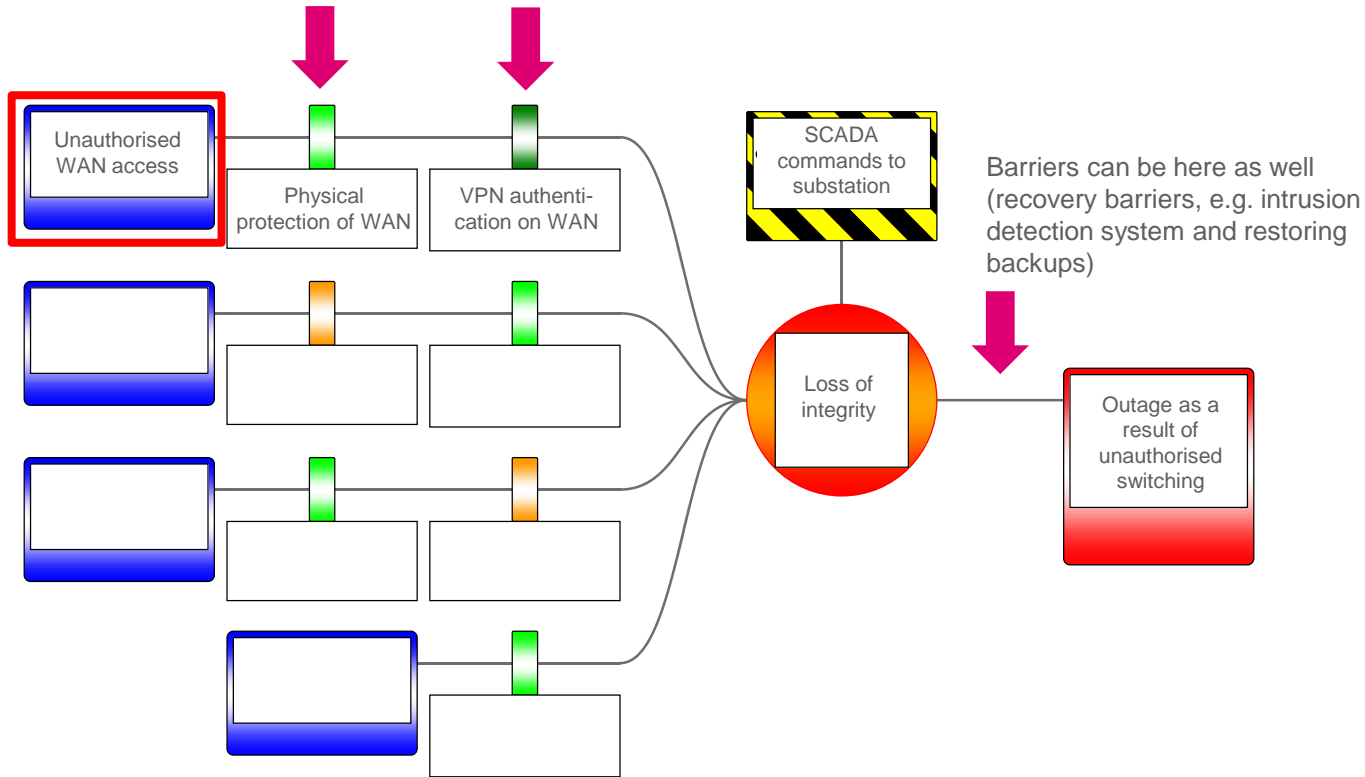




The Enexis risk management process

Use of bowties - barriers

Control barriers are measures that are taken to minimise the likelihood of a top event occurring. The colour is an indication of the quality of the measure (intrinsic quality and/or current condition).

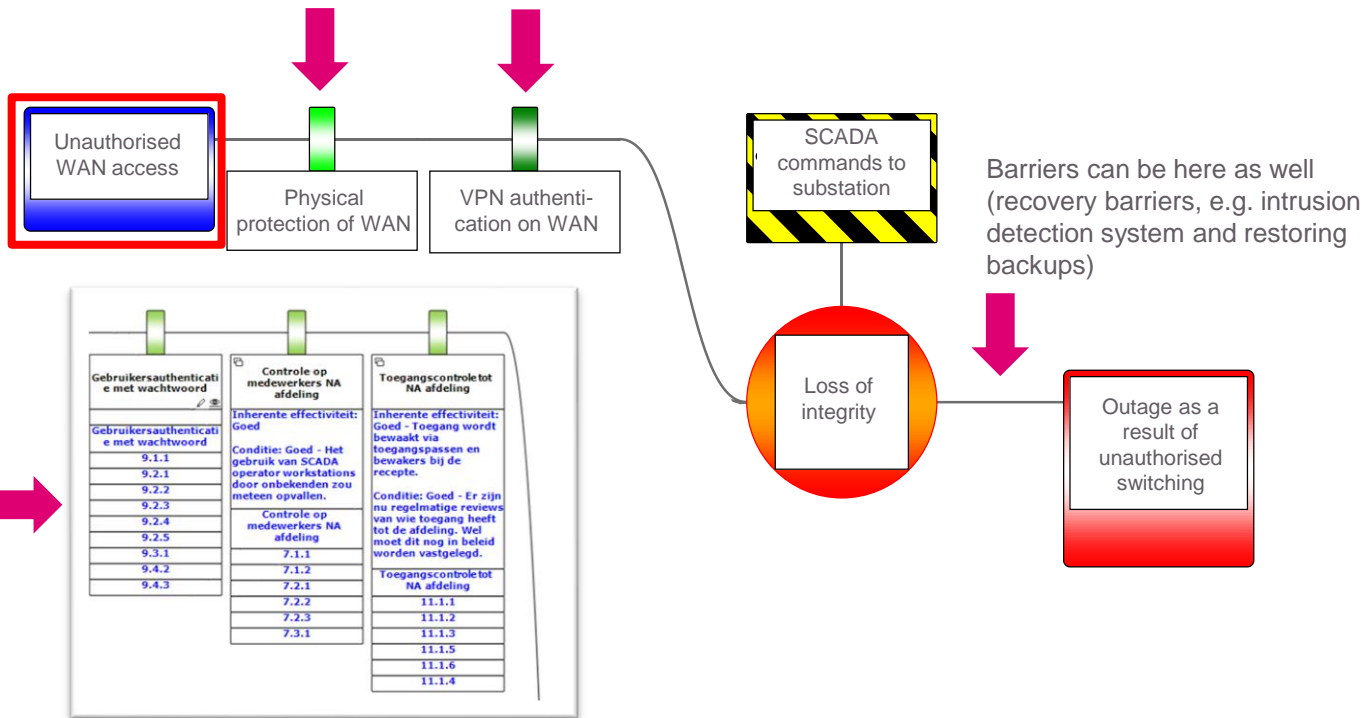




The Enexis risk management process

Use of bowties - barriers

Control barriers are measures that are taken to minimise the likelihood of a top event occurring. The colour is an indication of the quality of the measure (intrinsic quality and/or current condition).



Annex A references.





The Enexis risk management process

Selecting barriers to implement

- ◆ Based on IEC 62443-3-3 and ISO 27001
- ◆ Control barriers (left in bowtie):
 - ◆ Between threat and top event.
- ◆ Recovery barriers (right in bowtie):
 - ◆ Between top event and consequence.



Control barriers:

Threat	Security measure examples
Social engineering	Awareness trainings
Manipulation of intercepted software before installation	Software and information integrity (SR 3.4) Digitally signing of software or firmware.
Introduction of backdoor by software vendor employees.	SR 5.1 – Network segmentation and SR 5.2 – Zone boundary protection Firewall or DMZ on an interface; blocks outbound connections. Contractual agreements with vendor, e.g. inclusion of security requirements in tenders, asking for ISMS for vendor's internal security organisation and including the right to audit the vendor's software.

Recovery barriers:

Measure	ISA 99-3-3 clause	Description
Host intrusion detection system	SR 3.2 RE (2) SR 3.4 RE (1)	The installation of a host-based intrusion detection system on computers within the domain. With this, attacker's actions can be detected.
Network intrusion detection system	-	The installation of a network-based intrusion detection system. With this, attacks can be detected.



The Enexis risk management process

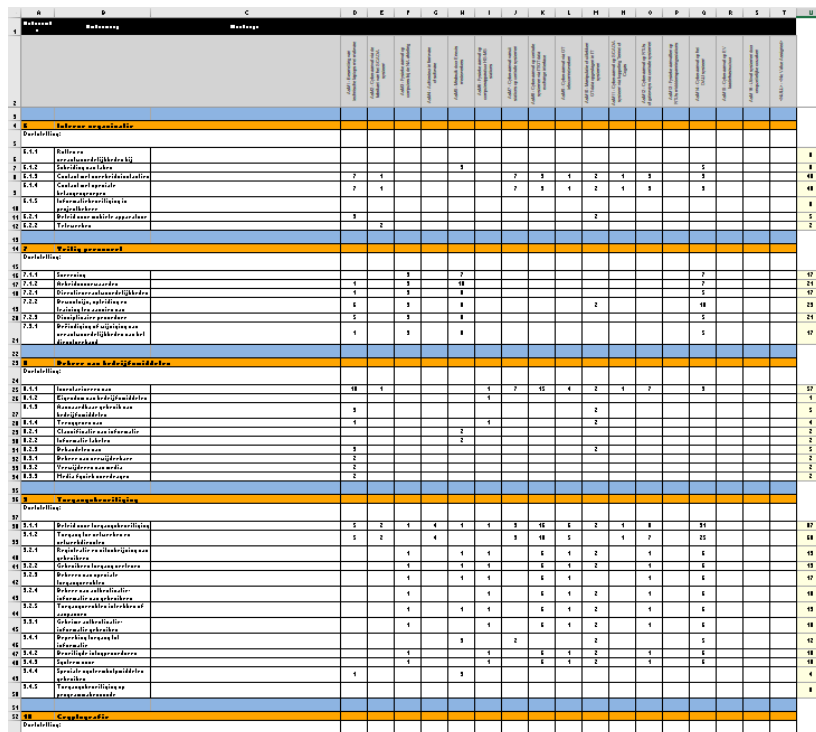
Mapping of our barriers to the ISO 27001:2017 Annex A controls (see clause 6.1.3c)

The 114 controls of the ISO 27001 Annex A



The number of times that a control is used in our bowties, easy to identify key controls

All our OT security risk categories (detailed in bowties)



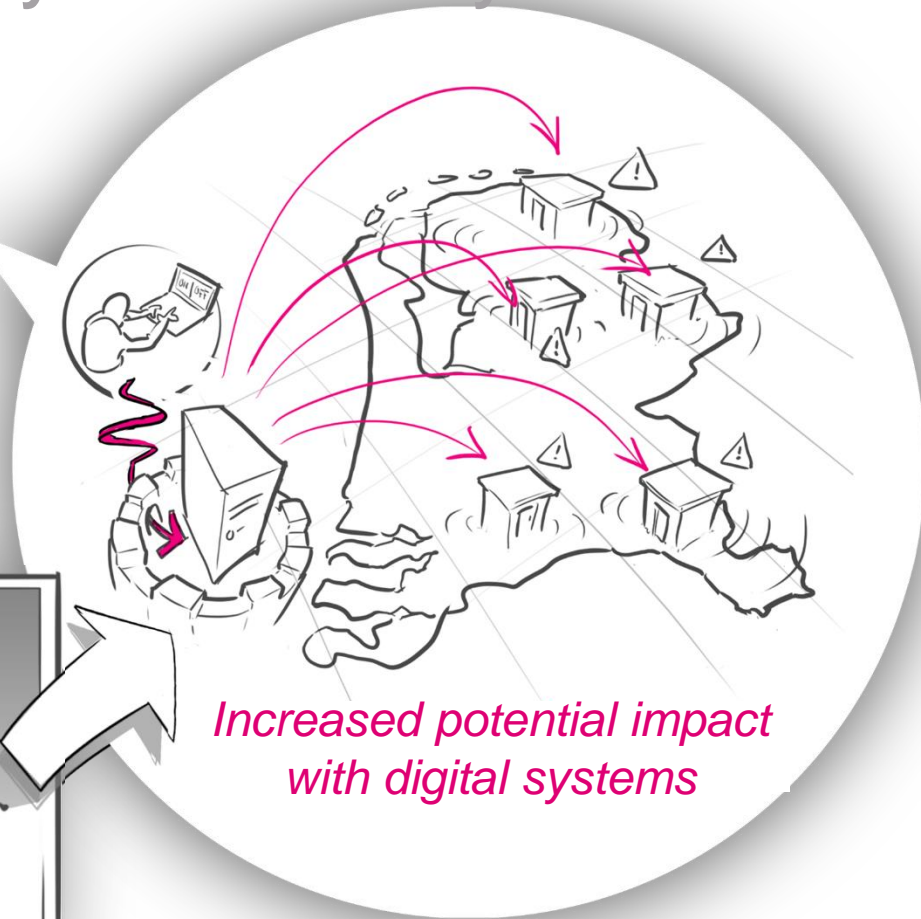
1-click xls report from our bowtie development application BowtieXP





Higher impact category for OT security risks

Conventional vs. digital risks





Higher impact category for OT security risks

Conventional vs. digital risks

Category		Net accessibility	Affordability	Image
Very serious				
Serious				
Significant	200.000 tot 2.000.000 vbm (MS-T station 4 uur uitval)			
Moderate	20.000 tot 200.000 vbm (MS-D streng 4 uur uitval)			
Limited	2.000 tot 20.000 vbm (netstation 2 uur uitval)			

A hand holding a magnifying glass is positioned over the 'Very serious' row of the table. The magnifying glass is focused on the text 'Outage of high voltage station >16 hours' which is centered within the 'Very serious' row's cell.

- ◆ Highest reliability impact category is 'very serious':
 - ◆ Outage of high voltage station >16 hours;
 - ◆ This is ok for conventional risks like physical break-in in substation.
- ◆ Introduced impact category 'disastrous' for digital risks:
 - ◆ Outage 10 HV stations >16 hours;
 - ◆ Digital attack could lead to outage of multiple HV stations;
 - ◆ Often same equipment and vulnerabilities on multiple locations;
 - ◆ Much higher impact with similar effort by attacker.



Determining the likelihood of OT security risks

Nearly impossible	Exceptional	Seldom	Incidental	Yearly	Monthly	Daily
Never heard of in the industry	Occasionally heard of in the industry	Happened within Enexis or in the industry	Regularly happened within Enexis	Once or a few times per year within Enexis	Once or a few times per month within Enexis	Once or a few times per day within Enexis
<0,001/yr	≥0,001/yr <1%	≥0,01/yr 1-10%	≥0,1/yr 10-50%	≥1/yr 50-90%	≥10/yr 90-99%	≥100/yr >99%



Determining the likelihood of OT security risks

- ◆ Little historical data about digital incidents
- ◆ Our approach:
 - ◆ Use control effectiveness as a starting point;
 - ◆ Convert effectiveness to a numerical score;
 - ◆ Indication of the number of days a professional hacker will need to circumvent a control;
 - ◆ Plot the effectiveness score on the ROBAM risk matrix.
- ◆ Justification for the effectiveness table:
 - ◆ Based on an analysis of the threat landscape and (the limited amount of) previous incidents;
 - ◆ Likelihood high: small incidents (viruses, ransomware): couple of hours work for attacker;
 - ◆ Likelihood low: Ukraine in December 2015 and 2015: probably took several weeks of preparation.
- ◆ Currently working on the introduction of LOPA*

Effectiveness	Description
Unknown	The effectiveness can not be determined.
Very poor	The control delays professional hackers for a couple of hours at most during the execution of a threat.
Poor	The control delays professional hackers for several days during the execution of a threat.
Good	The control delays professional hackers for several weeks during the execution of a threat.
Very good	The control delays professional hackers for several months or more during the execution of a threat.

Total effectiveness score of barriers for the threat	Likelihood category	Description in the Enexis risk matrix
0 through 3	High	Incidental (between 0,1 and 1 times/year) <i>Happened regularly within Enexis</i>
4 through 10	Medium	Seldom (between 0,01 and 0,1 / year) <i>Wel eens gebeurd binnen Enexis of sector</i>
11 through 50	Low	Exceptional (between 0,001 and 0,01 / year) <i>Happened occasionally in the industry</i>
Higher than 50	Very low	Nearly impossible (<0,001 / year) <i>Never happened in the industry</i>

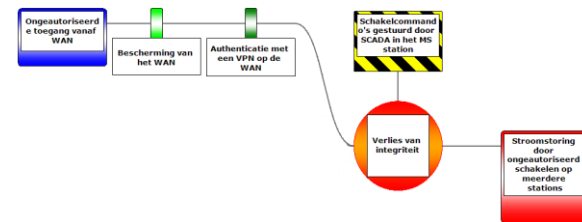


Advantages of our approach:

- ◆ Easy to discuss results with colleagues not directly involved in OT security;
- ◆ Clear conceptual model for risks;
- ◆ Easy to relate controls to threats;
- ◆ Good insight in the effectiveness of controls, easy to assign actions;
- ◆ Easy to map risks to Annex A controls;
- ◆ Clear link between loss of C/I/A and impact on Enexis company values.

Disadvantages:

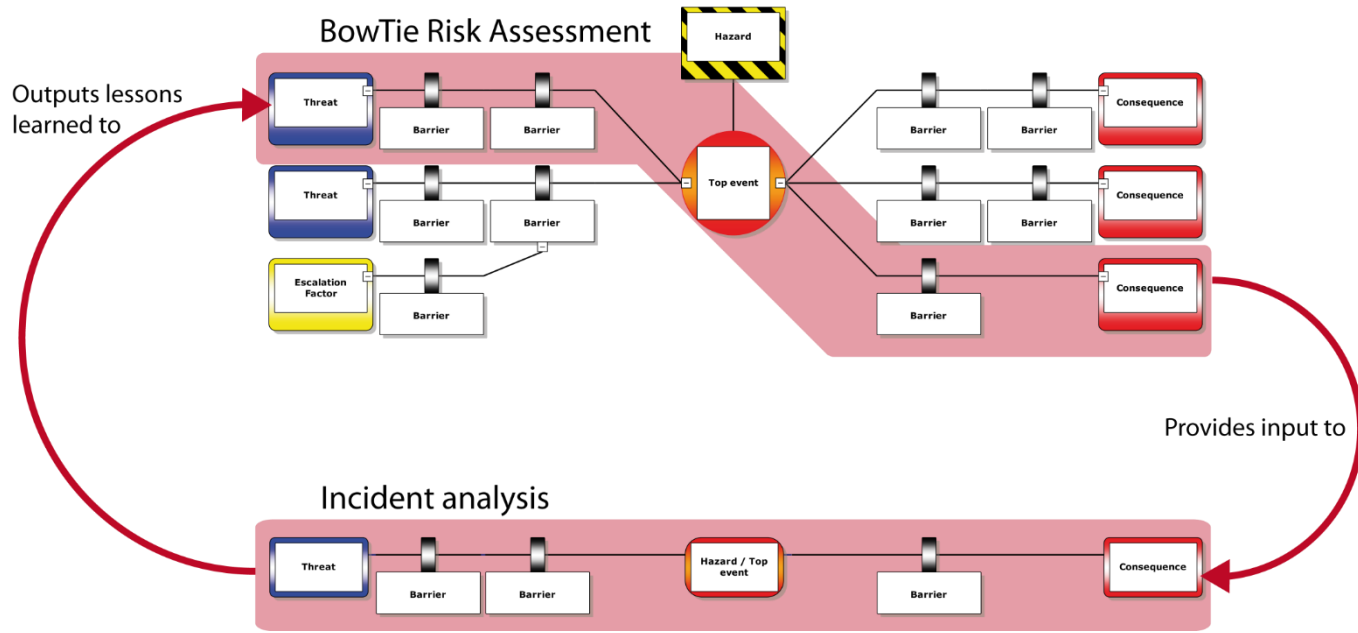
- ◆ Maintaining all bowties is labour intensive;
- ◆ Many different hazards and top events, easy to lose overview;
- ◆ Creating and updating bowties consistently requires discipline and experience;
- ◆ Determination of likelihood too subjective;
- ◆ Contribution of individual controls (in 'threat string') to risk reduction not always clear.

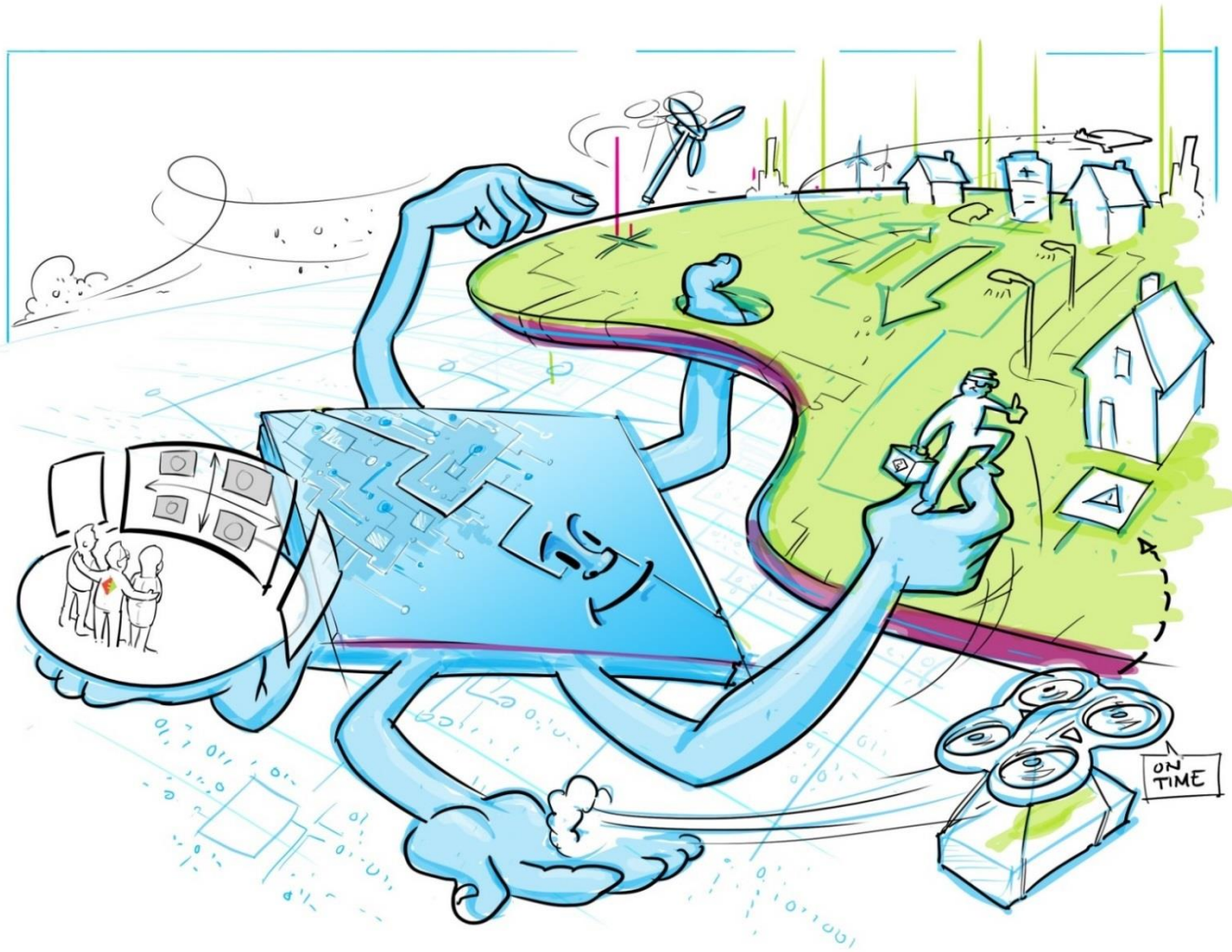




Future plans

Performing incident investigation based on our bowties





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