

Terms of Reference

IN-COUNTRY PSEA NETWORK FOR [CONTEXT]

IOM and IASC Results Group 2 on
Accountability and Inclusion

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Endorsed by IASC Operational Policy and Advocacy Group
(OPAG)

In-country PSEA Network for [Context]

Generic Terms of Reference¹

To be contextualized based on practical needs and realities on the ground, in-country PSEA developments, and internal policy and practice of Network members

Background

[Insert background information about Context and Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) developments to date (global and in-country). PSEA is a core commitment of the UN Secretary-General and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). To deliver on this commitment, the IASC has prioritized the acceleration of PSEA from the outset of humanitarian response, with a focus on key priority areas including safe and accessible reporting, victims/survivor-centered response, and enhanced accountability.² The (D)SRSG/HC/RC and HCT/UNCT is accountable for the implementation of collective PSEA.]

Network Responsibilities

Under the auspices of the [Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) / Resident Coordinator (RC)] and overseen by the [HC/RC] and the [HCT/UNCT], the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Network (hereafter: PSEA Network or network) is the primary body for technical-level coordination and oversight of PSEA activities in line with the PSEA Action Plan and high-level Strategy in [Context]. The PSEA Network covers *[insert geographic scope; if there is a separate national or sub-national network in the same context, reference here its scope and relationship to the PSEA Network]*.

The presence of the PSEA Network does **not** lessen the responsibility of individual network members to develop, implement, and strengthen internal PSEA programs at the country level. Senior management within each member organization is accountable for PSEA within their organizations.³

The network is responsible for implementing coordinated activities between members to minimize the risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by aid workers, ensure effective response when incidents do arise, and raise awareness of PSEA in [Context]. The PSEA Network activities follow a victim-centered approach and will respect the principles of safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination.

The PSEA Network is **not** responsible for investigating or adjudicating complaints. These functions rest exclusively with the entity that employs the individual against whom a complaint has been alleged, in line with internal policy and procedure.

Network Roles

The PSEA Coordinator⁴ supports and represents the PSEA Network in coordination with the network co-chairs in the fulfillment of its responsibilities under these TORs and the network Action Plan. The PSEA Coordinator is responsible for reporting *[at agreed interval]* on network activities, progress against PSEA Network Action Plan indicators, and anonymized SEA trends to the [HC/RC] and [HCT/UNCT]. The PSEA

¹ The generic TORs update the TORs produced by the ECHA/ECPS UN and NGO Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (November 2008) based on good practice, agreements in the IASC, existing Network TORs, and have been developed with the contributions of in-country and global practitioners.

² IASC Strategy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (2021), available [here](#); IASC Plan for Accelerating PSEA in Humanitarian Response at Country-Level (2018), available [here](#); UN Secretary-General's Strategy on PSEA (2017), available [here](#).

³ Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13), available [here](#).

⁴ See the [Generic PSEA Coordinator Terms of Reference \(2021\)](#).

Coordinator represents the network in relevant coordination bodies and advises actors in country on good practice to support effective PSEA implementation.

Co-chair organizations for [Context] are [insert co-chair organizations]. While the organizations seated as co-chairs may change,⁵ the co-chairs role remains permanent to provide sustainable leadership to the network. The co-chair representatives will take an active role at the network level in convening and managing network meetings and events, and help coordinate and oversee the PSEA Network Action Plan. At the senior level, the co-chair representatives will ensure that PSEA is addressed as needed at [HCT/UNCT] meetings. [Insert here any additional division of responsibilities as agreed between the PSEA Coordinator and co-chair organizations].

[If the PSEA Coordinator position is not filled, or] when the PSEA Coordinator is temporarily unavailable, the Coordinator role will be divided between the technical and senior level co-chair representatives as appropriate.

Each member organization will be represented in the network by one PSEA Focal Point.⁶ All Focal Points will actively participate in information sharing on internal PSEA initiatives and coordination of activities under the Action Plan, and are responsible for technical support and coordination on PSEA within their organization under the leadership of their senior management.

The network may form smaller, time-bound task teams of regular members to carry out specific deliverables as needed.

Membership

Network membership is open to all UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs operating in [Context]. Membership to the network is also open to [Cluster/Sector] Coordinators, who are strongly encouraged to attend PSEA Network meetings in order to improve two-way coordination between clusters/sectors and the network. The PSEA Coordinator/co-chairs and the GBV sub-cluster Coordinator should participate in each other's meetings and events, and actively engage to ensure close linkages between PSEA and GBV interventions in [Context].⁷ [add additional entities as appropriate: SVRO/FVRA/FPVR⁸ (if in place); Protection and Child Protection (sub) Cluster Coordinator; Government representatives; donors; a Focal Point from the UN Conduct and Discipline Team to make linkages with the UN Mission; etc.]

The network will engage in outreach with non-member organizations as part of ongoing activities. At a minimum, all organizations in [Context] should be aware of the inter-agency SEA complaint referral system (see below) and be able to receive complaints against their own staff, regardless of their relationship to the network.

Meetings

The PSEA Network will convene [at agreed interval] and additional ad-hoc meetings may be requested by any member. The notes of each meeting will be distributed among all members and filed in the records of the network. As network meetings should provide a supporting environment to discuss potentially

⁵ Selection of co-chair organizations should be based upon whichever organizations in the context will commit efforts to supporting PSEA at the technical and senior level. It is strongly recommended that the co-chair responsibilities are shared between one UN and one non-UN organization.

⁶ See the [Generic Terms of Reference for in-country PSEA Focal Points \(2021\)](#).

⁷ See the GBV AOR's *Handbook for Coordinating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Emergencies*, Chapter 1.8, available [here](#).

⁸ The role of the SVRO/FVRA is to ensure that a victim-centered, gender- and child-sensitive and non-discriminatory approach is integrated into all activities to support and assist victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. More information on the SVRO/FVRA/FPVR is available [here](#).

sensitive challenges in PSEA, any information shared during meetings will be kept confidential on request following a victim-centered approach. As a general matter, Network meetings should refrain from discussing individual cases; any reference to SEA allegations or cases during meetings will be anonymized.

In case a Focal Point cannot attend a regularly scheduled network meeting, the member organization will be represented by a dedicated and sufficiently briefed alternate.

Tasks

Under the 4 pillars of the IASC Minimum Operating Standards on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse,⁹ the PSEA Network will undertake the following:

Management and Coordination

- Carry out joint SEA risk assessments in [Context] as appropriate and as needed, identifying potential risk factors and areas of concern. The risk assessment outcomes will inform strategic decision-making of senior leadership and the PSEA Network Action Plan.
- Establish and implement a measurable PSEA Network Action Plan with defined time frames and responsibilities of Network members based on specialty and capacity. Design and implementation of the Action Plan will be informed by community input, contextually appropriate, and respond to the risk factors identified by joint assessment. The [HCT/UNCT] will monitor Action Plan deliverables and will provide additional support (including human and financial resources) when warranted.
- Monitor the PSEA activities of Network members to avoid duplication and fill gaps.
- Work closely with other coordination bodies in [Context] including the [Protection Cluster, GBV sub-cluster, Child Protection sub-cluster] to support prevention and response to SEA.
- Identify training needs and resources to coordinate trainings for all PSEA Focal Points and senior management on their specific PSEA roles and responsibilities.
- Advocate for the strengthening and/or establishment of internal PSEA policies and practices for all organizations operating in [Context] and offer support to organizations as needed where such systems are not in place, whether or not an organization is a network member.
- [Where the situation demands] Advocate for the creation of a Senior Victims' Rights Officer / Field Victims' Rights Advocate (SVRO/FVRA) position, or designation of a Focal Point for Victims' Rights.

Engagement with and support of the affected population

All engagements with populations should be done in coordination with actors working with affected populations [including the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and/or communication with Communities (CwC) Working Group] and the Protection Cluster/Sector, including the GBV and Child Protection sub-[cluster/sector] to avoid duplication of efforts and to inform community engagement.

- Raise awareness about the rights of affected populations, what SEA is, what constitutes appropriate behavior of personnel, the fact that aid workers are obliged to report SEA incidents that they are aware of, and the various methods to submit complaints and how to access victim assistance services in [Context].
- Support members to assess and improve the effectiveness and appropriateness of PSEA activities within the targeted communities.
- With the particular engagement of [at risk populations as identified in Context] in the community, support members to create and/or adapt their aid delivery models to address power disparities and actively give those in more vulnerable positions a sustained voice in how aid is delivered.

⁹ Four Pillars of Management and Coordination, Community Engagement, Prevention, and Response are outlined in the [Minimum Operating Standards](#) for PSEA

Prevention

- Advocate for PSEA to be a priority throughout programming and support actors working in operational areas to embed SEA risk mitigation in needs assessment, project design, implementation, and monitoring based on identified SEA trends. [*In humanitarian settings*] include PSEA in the [*Context*] Humanitarian Needs Overview and Humanitarian Response Plan to fully integrate PSEA in the response.
- Supplement network members' internal initiatives to strengthen SEA prevention through joint activities and sharing good practice.
- Encourage network members to carry out induction and refresher trainings on SEA for all personnel and support such trainings with jointly developed contextualized materials.

Response

- Jointly map trusted and functional complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) in [*Context*] to identify where there are gaps in the affected population's safe access to report SEA.
- Support members to establish new complaint channels to fill the gaps in access to reporting based on the mapping and informed by community preferences, so that there are safe, accessible, and contextually appropriate channels for any member of the community to report sensitive allegations.
- Establish an inter-agency community-based complaint mechanism (CBCM) by linking the network members' complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) through agreed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on inter-agency complaint and assistance referral, in line with the Global SOPs.¹⁰
- [*Where assistance referral pathways do not exist or are not comprehensive:*] Support the Protection [*Cluster/Sector*], including the GBV and Child Protection sub-*[cluster/sector]*, to conduct a mapping exercise of available services and gaps for health, safety and security, legal, psychosocial, and material support in [*Context*], toward developing and/or strengthening assistance referral pathways.¹¹
- Work with the Protection [*Cluster/Sector*], including the GBV and Child Protection sub-*[clusters/sectors]*, to incorporate assistance referral pathways into the CBCM SOPs to provide immediate support for complainants and survivors of SEA. The PSEA Network does **not** create parallel assistance referral pathways for survivors of SEA.
- [*Where victim assistance services do not exist*] Collectively advocate and work with the relevant sub-*[clusters/sectors]* and implementing partners (including on resource mobilization) to address existing gaps so that the needs of all survivors are met.¹²
- Raise the awareness of Protection actors, GBV actors, Child Protection actors, and all actors staffing complaint channels, so that all personnel who may work with SEA survivors or receive an SEA report know how to recognize SEA and where to safely send allegations.
- Raise awareness on the inter-agency reporting and referral mechanism among all actors in [*Context*].
- Receive aggregate, anonymized updates of complaints in country shared by network members. Information sharing on anonymized SEA complaints with the network will be done in line with internal reporting and data protection policies of members, and in accordance with the principle of confidentiality, sharing only information needed to capture baseline trends for aggregate updating

¹⁰ IASC *Global Standard Operating Procedures on Inter-Agency Cooperation in Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms* (2016), available [here](#). For practical guidance to set up an inter-agency CBCM, see the *Best Practice Guide on Inter-agency CBCMs*, available [here](#).

¹¹ For more on victim assistance and support, including roles and responsibilities, see the *UN Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, available [here](#).

¹² For more on supporting survivors when GBV actors are not available, see The Pocket Guide, available [here](#).

of the [RC/HC] [reference here the HCT/UNCT-endorsed SOPs and/or Information Sharing Protocol if in place].

- To maintain accountability for complaint handling processes at country-level, and to inform trends analysis and reporting, keep a confidential record of aggregate, anonymized SEA allegations in [Context], in a secure database. Secure data storage requires the adoption of clear guidelines and SOPs on where and how the information is kept and by whom it will be accessible

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed on an annual basis and revised as appropriate.

Endorsed by [senior leadership body overseeing the PSEA Network] on [date]