Interim Guidance

Operationalization of the UN Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving Implementing Partners

Working with the United Nations system: Key information for UN Implementing Partners on completing the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Capacity Assessment

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I. Introduction

Several United Nations entities are working together with their partners to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and reduce the risks of SEA in programme implementation.

One way to do this is to assess the capacity of our partners to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse and strengthen the joint capacity of United Nations entities and implementing partners to realize commitments to PSEA. Participating UN entities, including UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR are thus assessing our implementing partners using a common assessment form developed in a consultative process between United Nations entities and our partners. It consists of a set of eight core standards assessing organizational policies and procedures to prevent and respond to SEA.

The assessment is intended to give UN entities and their partners a baseline for tracking progress of partners’ organizational capacities on PSEA. The standards are aligned with the United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving Implementing Partners.

Participating UN entities and their implementing partners will use the findings of the assessment to a) inform selection of and continued working arrangements with their partners; b) for selected or existing partners, to develop a capacity strengthening implementation plan that reflects identified areas for improvement on PSEA; c) provide better targeted and coordinated support to PSEA capacity strengthening; and d) inform monitoring and measures to strengthen the integrity of programme delivery activities.
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This document provides guidance to our implementing partners about the assessment process and its implications.

II. Key information about the PSEA Assessment:

General information:

- Participating UN entities require all of their implementing partners to eventually be assessed. The results of previously assessed partners are accepted by participating UN entities as long as the assessment covered the following standards: mandatory screening of personnel; mandatory training; adequate reporting procedures; appropriate action in past cases; adequate investigative and assistance capacities. However, UN agencies may have to do due diligence to ensure that the assessment covers locations, sectors or activities covered by the co-operative agreement and add additional elements to a joint implementation plan.
- Some international NGO partners have already been assessed at their headquarter-level. Other UN organizations may request documentation verifying the assessment, or additional supporting documentation of the implementation of some of the core standards at country-level in regard to specific high risk locations or activities implemented.
- In order to coordinate assessments at the country level, a UN entity will be assigned to conduct the assessment and lead on the verification and follow up activities. The UN entity may be selected based on its mandate, the financial or geographical scope of the project/programme, the types of activities implemented within the scope of the project/programme, or higher risk locations. In most cases, a PSEA assessment will need to be completed before entering into a new partnership with a UN entity, as part of the selection process or, for existing partners, prior to continuation of the partnership.
- A ‘full capacity’ assessment is valid for a period of 5 years, unless there are significant changes to the operational context affecting the partner’s PSEA-related capacities, or any SEA related incidents which would require an earlier re-assessment.
- The number of core standards met provides the basis for the partner’s “SEA Risk Rating” and reflects the partner’s current PSEA capacities, as follows:
  - Full capacity: Partner meets all 8 core standards;
  - Medium capacity: Partner meets most core standards (6-7), support required to address remaining gaps;
  - Low capacity: Partner meets few core standards (5 or fewer), urgent action needed to strengthen PSEA capacity.

The process:

This section outlines the main steps required to undertake the assessment bearing in mind that each agency may require additional actions as part of their internal process. The self-assessment should take approximately 1-2 hours.

Step 1: Partner self-assesses:

- The partner conducts a self-assessment, either as part of an invitation for proposal response or, via a self-assessment template provided by the lead UN entity/office working with the partner, using the technical guidance available in Annex I of this document.
Upon receipt of the self-assessment form, the partner, either on its own or with assistance from the lead UN entity, completes the self-assessment for compliance with each core standard individually and rates with a “yes” or “no” (or “n/a” for core standards 2 and/or 8).

There are two preliminary questions in the self-assessment:
- If the partner has previously been assessed by another United Nations entity, the partner provides the date and the SEA capacity rating, along with all supporting documentation and evidence, and returns the form to the requesting UN entity, without completing the rest of the self-assessment.
- If the partner does not have any direct contact with beneficiaries of assistance or populations of concern\(^1\) (e.g. desk based research) as part of any of its operations, the partner may not be required to complete the assessment. If so directed by the lead UN entity undertaking the assessment, the partner may be able to make note of this in the form and return it to the lead UN entity without completing the rest of the self-assessment. In this case, the partner may have to undergo a PSEA assessment at a later time or with another UN entity if the nature of programmatic activities changes and there is direct contact with beneficiaries.

The partner submits the completed self-assessment to the lead UN entity, together with relevant supporting documents, as proof of evidence of meeting the required 8 core standards. A list of suggested supporting documents which should be gathered for the assessment are included in the self-assessment form. Partners can add different and/or additional documentation to support its self-rating.

**Step 2:** The lead UN entity assesses and rates the partner’s PSEA capacity and makes a preliminary determination of the partner’s capacity:
- Upon receipt of the completed self-assessment, the lead UN entity will review the self-assessment and supporting document and verify the rating. During this time, the lead UN entity may request clarification from the partner and/or additional supporting documentation.
- Upon completion of its review, the lead UN entity will share the outcome (including the overall SEA risk rating) with the implementing partner and discuss areas of improvement.
- Participating UN entities require partners who receive a medium or low capacity SEA risk rating to address any gaps in its PSEA policies, procedures and systems within a certain timeframe (see Step 3 on how to address those gaps).
- Participating UN entities may decide not to retain, renew, suspend or terminate the partnership with any implementing partner who does not achieve full capacity within an agreed upon timeframe.

**Step 3:** Capacity strengthening implementation plan
- To address any identified gaps, UN entities will work jointly with implementing partners who receive a medium or low capacity SEA risk rating to develop a comprehensive capacity-strengthening implementation plan. The purpose of the plan is to bring the implementing partner to full capacity.
- Implementing partners are encouraged to use the resources provided in the technical guidance as tools to develop or strengthen PSEA policies, procedures and systems.

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\(^1\) Beneficiaries of assistance are individuals who are direct or indirect recipients of a partner’s or the UN’s action. In other words, this refers to people who a partner or a UN entity either works with and/or serves or seeks to assist and are typically in situations of vulnerability and dependence vis à vis the partner’s or the UN entity’s personnel. This includes any activities the partner undertakes under a contractual agreement with entities other than the UN entity. Therefore, the ‘no contact with beneficiaries’ rating applies only when the partner does not conduct any activity which involves contact with beneficiaries of assistance or other members of vulnerable communities, for example, desk-based research. However, if the same partner subsequently undertakes activities that involve contact with beneficiaries, the partner must undergo the assessment.
Step 4: Monitoring:

- As part of its regular programme monitoring, participating UN entities will monitor implementation of the capacity-strengthening implementation plan or, for partners who scored at full capacity, UN entities will monitor to ensure they maintain compliance with the 8 core standards.

Step 5: Reassessment:

- If a partner does not have full capacity, within 6 months of its initial assessment (9 months if an exceptional 3 month extension is given after the first reassessment) the lead UN entity and the implementing partner will jointly reassess the implementing partner’s PSEA capacity.
- Participating UN entities may decide not to retain, renew, suspend or terminate partnership with implementing partners who fail to reach full capacity after the reassessment.
- A reassessment may be required in case of a change of circumstances within the five year period in case of allegations of SEA or event affecting the partner’s capacity.

International non-governmental organizations:

- To the extent possible, participating UN entities will coordinate the assessment of international NGOs. If more than one UN entity or office requests an assessment, the international NGO should alert them of another pending assessment.
- Assessment of highly centralized international NGOs may take place primarily at the headquarter level with some questions, or parts thereof, assessed at the country level. However, for decentralized international NGOs, the assessment will be conducted at the country level. Additional complementary information for INGOs assessed at HQ-level may be required by other agencies for certain sectors or field locations or additional capacity building or monitoring activities added to the implementation plan. Additionally, certain high risk contexts or INGO partners with SEA allegations may require additional assessment at country level, even if the INGO partner has been assessed at the HQ-level.
Annex I: Technical guidance

The self-assessment may be integrated in the selection templates itself, or it may be a separate document given to a partner by the lead UN entity. Regardless, the self-assessment consists of 8 core standards the partner is expected to review and report on.

To complete the self-assessment, the partner gives itself a “yes”, “no” or “n/a” (n/a is only applicable for core standards 2 and 8) self-rating for each core standard. A partner gives itself a “yes” self-rating if it meets the minimum requirements outlined below. If a partner is unsure whether or not it meets the standard, the partner can add comments on the tool and request support from the UN entity undertaking the assessment. When the partner submits its self-assessment to the lead UN entity, it must also submit supporting documentation for each core standard to assist in the review and assignment of SEA Risk Rating.

Please note there are two preliminary questions in the self-assessment form:

- If the partner has previously been assessed by another United Nations entity, the partner provides the date and the SEA capacity rating, along with all supporting documentation and evidence, and returns the form to the requesting UN entity, without completing the rest of the self-assessment.
- If the partner does not have direct contact with beneficiaries of assistance (e.g. desk-based research), the partner makes note of this in the form and returns it to the lead UN entity, without completing the rest of the self-assessment. In this case, the partner may have to undergo PSEA assessment at a later time or with another UN entity if the nature of programmatic activities changes and there is direct contact with beneficiaries.

General guidance on submitting documentation/evidence

1. Partners submitting third-party documentation as evidence will need to show that they have incorporated or adopted any external policy, guideline or procedure into their internal organizational processes. For example, an external or interagency training, Code of Conduct, or Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for referral to victim services should be signed by the organization or accompanied by a memo or other supporting documentation showing that the organization has adopted the third-party policy as their own internal policy.
2. For every core standard, PSEA policies and procedures should be applicable to all personnel, including staff, interns, volunteers, consultants and any other related personnel. Evidence of this language should be clear.
3. All evidence submitted should be written and approved policy of the organization. Drafts in progress or written explanations via email will not be accepted.
1. Core standard: Organizational policy

a) Assessment criterion:
“The partner has a policy document on PSEA. At a minimum, this document should include a written undertaking that the partner accepts the standards of conduct listed in section 3 of the ST/SGB/2003/13.”

b) Minimum requirements:
Ideally, the implementing partner has a policy document policy statement on PSEA and/or a safeguarding policy, which meets the standards of conduct listed in section 3 of ST/SGB/2003/13.

As such, the minimum requirement is met and the partner can self-rate “yes”, if the partner has a policy document on PSEA with specific reference to PSEA. If not, the partner self-rates as “no” and this standard will be added to the capacity strengthening implementation plan.

Although not mandatory, partners are strongly encouraged to develop a PSEA policy demonstrating a clear commitment to prevent and respond to SEA. Partners should include the following core aspects when creating or strengthening their policy documents:
- A clear definition of SEA (same as or substantively similar to the United Nations definition);
- An explicit prohibition of SEA;
- Reporting obligations: the requirement that all allegations of SEA must be promptly reported;
- Whistleblower protection: individuals who report SEA must be protected from any form of retaliation;
- Clear roles and responsibilities: this may include designating PSEA focal point(s) to assume key responsibilities, such as the development of internal systems, training and awareness-raising of personnel, and coordination with other relevant actors (see Generic Terms of Reference for PSEA Focal Points);
- Transparent and clear language, adapted to local context to ensure it is understood by all targeted audiences.

The partner can either revise its own existing documents, adopt the templates provided under resources to articulate its policy or create a stand-alone SEA policy, depending on its capacities and needs.

c) Supporting documents:
The following is a list of suggested documentation which can be used to support the self-assessment rating:
- Code of Conduct (internal or interagency/third party if adopted by the partner organization- see above note about third-party documentation);
- PSEA policy;
- Documentation of standard procedures for all personnel to receive/sign PSEA policy and/or personnel contracts that include a prohibition on PSEA and mandatory adherence to the code of conduct or PSEA policy.

d) Resources:
The following resources are available as references or capacity building material to help develop the implementing plan and meet the core standard.
- **PSEA Policy Template**: encompasses all core elements listed above. Partners can adapt this PSEA policy in their internal framework;

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2 For other sample PSEA policies, see CESVI PSEA Policy, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) Secretariat PSEA Policy.
Code of Conduct Template: partners can adapt this code of conduct in their internal framework. Other useful resources:

- Minimum Operating Standards (MOS)-PSEA and Guidelines to implement MOS-PSEA, 2013 (p. 11);
- CHS Alliance, PSEA Implementation Quick Reference Handbook, 2017. (p.12);

2. Core standard: Organizational Management – Subcontracting

a) Assessment criterion:
“Partner’s contracts and partnership agreements include a standard clause requiring sub-contractors (excludes individuals as they fall under personnel) to adopt policies that prohibit SEA and to take measures to prevent and respond to SEA.”

b) Minimum requirements:
Partners are responsible for the technical and professional competence of their subcontractors. The use of a subcontractor does not relieve the partner of its obligations under the agreement vis a vis the UN entity. This means that subcontractors, too, must take all appropriate measures to prevent SEA of anyone by its employees. The clause should include at minimum:
- A clear prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse;
- The obligation to take appropriate measures to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and to take appropriate corrective measures when SEA occurs.

If the implementing partner has subcontractors and can demonstrate that it has included a standard clause requiring sub-contractors to adopt policies that prohibit SEA and to take measures to prevent and respond to SEA, in line with the above noted minimum requirements, the partner can self-rate with “yes”. If not, the implementing partner self-rates with “no” and this standard is added to the capacity strengthening implementation plan. If the partner does not have subcontractors, the partner can self-rate with “n/a”. However, if this situation changes and the same partner subsequently subcontracts activities to another entity, this would warrant a re-assessment.

Ideally, appropriate measures by subcontractors to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse by its employees should include, as relevant: (1) A clear prohibition of sexual exploitation and abuse; (2) Mandatory screening of personnel; (3) Mandatory SEA training for its personnel; (4) Mandatory reporting of all SEA allegations; (5) Referring victims of SEA for immediate professional assistance; (6) Investigating any allegation of SEA. Such expectations from subcontractors could also be included in the partner’s own PSEA policy (see Core Standard 1).

If the partner plans to sub-contract activities to another entity, the partner must have the necessary reporting mechanisms in place to prevent and respond to incidents of SEA.

c) Supporting documentation:
The following is a list of suggested documentation which can be used to support the self-assessment rating:
- Contracts/partnership agreements for sub-contractors
- Evidence that subcontractors/partners are required to follow the organization’s PSEA policy which includes above mentioned elements

3 For other sample codes of conduct see: International Rescue Committee (IRC), the IRC Way, Our Standards for Professional Conduct the Code of Conduct for Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) Staff, which includes references to PSEA.
d) **Resources:**
Partners can refer to the resources provided in this guidance to strengthen different aspects of its subcontractors PSEA capacities. Article 11 of the UN Supplier’s Code of Conduct provides useful elements when designing a standard clause.

### 3. Core standard Human Resources Systems

**a) Assessment criterion:**
“There is a systematic vetting procedure in place for job candidates through proper screening. This must include, at minimum, reference checks for sexual misconduct and a self-declaration by the job candidate, confirming that they have never been subject to sanctions (disciplinary, administrative or criminal) arising from an investigation in relation to SEA, or left employment pending investigation and refused to cooperate in such an investigation.”

**b) Minimum requirements:**
Partners must implement adequate safeguards to avoid hiring individuals with a past record of sexual misconduct. Screening of personnel for past SEA violations must be a mandatory component of the recruitment process. At minimum, screening must include all of the following:
- Job candidates should be required to self-declare prior involvement in sexual misconduct and consent to the disclosure of any such information by former employers during the verification of references;
- Reference checks with former employers should form a mandatory part of the recruitment process;
- All personnel should be requested to sign an organizational code of conduct or equivalent;
- PSEA clauses should be integrated in contract agreements

All PSEA-related documents should be kept on personnel file/record to ensure individual will not be re-hired if allegations are substantiated based on a robust investigation or if individual left the organization while an investigation was taking place.

In general, self-disclosure of prior involvement in SEA on its own is not sufficient to fully achieve the minimum requirements for this standard. To the extent legally possible, this should be accompanied by a requirement for PSEA-sensitive reference checks and/or official background checks. For example, the inter-agency [misconduct disclosure scheme](#) adopted by the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR) establishes a minimum standard for organizations to share information as part of their recruitment process about people who have been found to have committed sexual abuse, sexual exploitation or sexual harassment “misconduct” during employment.

The minimum requirement is met and the partner can self-rate “yes”, if the partner can demonstrate it has adequate screening measures in place. If not, the partner self-rates with “no” and this standard will be added to the capacity strengthening implementation plan.

**c) Supporting documentation:**
The following is a list of suggested documentation which can be used to support the self-assessment rating:
- Reference check template including check for sexual misconduct (including reference from previous employers and self-declaration);
- Recruitment procedures.

**d) Resources:**
Resources are location specific and can be obtained from the UNCT and/or the relevant UN PSEA focal point.


4. Core standard: Mandatory Training

a) Assessment criterion:
“The partner holds mandatory trainings (online or in-person) for all personnel on PSEA and relevant procedures. The training should, at a minimum include: 1) a definition of SEA (that is aligned with the UN's definition); 2) an explanation on prohibition of SEA; and 3) actions that personnel are required to take (i.e. prompt reporting of allegations and referral of victims).”

b) Minimum requirements:
Partners should organize mandatory induction and refresher trainings on PSEA for all personnel on a regular basis. Such training should include, at minimum:

- A clear definition of SEA (same as or substantively similar to the UN’s definition);
- An explicit prohibition of SEA;
- The requirement that any allegations of SEA must be promptly reported;
- The requirement that alleged victims of SEA shall be referred for immediate, professional assistance.

The minimum requirements are met and the partner can self-rate “yes”, if the partner can demonstrate it has adequate PSEA training in place. If not, the partner self-rates with “no” and this standard will be added to the capacity strengthening implementation plan.

c) Supporting documentation:
The following is a list of suggested documentation which can be used to support the self-assessment rating:
- Annual training plan;
- Training agenda;
- Training package (see above note about third-party documentation if relevant);
- Policy requirement to take attendance and sample attendance sheet or template;
- Sample training certificates;
- Training report.

d) Resources:
Where a partner has not put in place its own training, it may use any of the training material available at the following URL to fulfill its training-related obligations hereunder:

- IASC, ‘Saying No to Sexual Misconduct’ – an Interagency Training on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) and Sexual Harassment (SH) for partners, May 2020;
- UN Online Training on PSEA;

5. Core Standard: Reporting

a) Assessment criterion:
“The partner has mechanisms and procedures for personnel, beneficiaries and communities, including children, to report SEA allegations that comply with core standards for reporting (i.e. safety, confidentiality, transparency, accessibility).”

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b) Minimum requirements:
Partners must have adequate mechanisms to internally 1) receive allegations and 2) report SEA allegations:

1) Reporting mechanisms to receive SEA allegations should, at a minimum, incorporate the following core elements:
- **Accessibility**: Reporting mechanisms should be easy to use, widely publicized and promoted to personnel, recipients of assistance and local communities. Potential barriers for usage should be removed (e.g., difficult or foreign language, costs and time needed for using them), keeping in mind the target audiences, including people of different ages, genders, educational backgrounds and abilities.
- **Responsiveness**: A properly functioning complaint mechanism needs to provide a timely response, be adequately resourced and operated by appropriately trained individuals.
- **Safety**: Partners have to ensure safety for those reporting allegations and concerns. This includes whistleblower protection, personal safety and data protection. Protection measures must be set up before promoting the use of a reporting mechanism.
- **Confidentiality and anonymity**: Complaints have to be handled strictly confidentially and appropriate safeguards should be put in place to prevent disclosure of information. Complainants should also be advised of the possibility of lodging a complaint anonymously, and of the implications of such a procedure, including the consequences for follow up of the complaint.
- **Transparency**: Partners should explain procedures to all complainants, including how information will be shared, with whom and for what purpose, for investigations and assistance to survivors. This also includes notice of the organization’s obligations for mandatory reporting.

2) Implementing partners have a duty to report to the UN entity they have an agreement with. If they conceal information, do not report, or intentionally give incorrect information, it may result in sanctions according to the cooperative agreement. Reporting mechanisms should have the ability to refer SEA allegations to the UN.

Additionally, partners can build the capacity of reporting mechanisms for SEA allegations, by using both internal and external reporting mechanisms to facilitate reporting of SEA allegations or concerns by personnel and recipients of assistance. Where possible, they should seek to incorporate PSEA reporting mechanisms into broader feedback or complaints mechanisms in order to benefit from these channels’ levels of trust, discreteness, and resources.

The minimum requirement is therefore met and the partner can self-rate “yes”, if the partner can demonstrate it has adequate reporting mechanisms in place. Adequate reporting mechanisms should demonstrate the following elements: (1) existence of reporting channels for personnel of the organization, (2) for beneficiaries of the organization’s programmes, and (3) that the organization is actively raising awareness among its beneficiaries on how to access reporting channels. For centralized INGO assessments, it is important that evidence of reporting channels are from the country-level and available in local language. If not, the partner self-rates with “no” and this standard will be added to the capacity strengthening implementation plan.

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4 The [Protocol](#) requires both reporting of allegations from beneficiaries and from IP to the UN (See paragraph 19 of the protocol: “The UN is required to report allegations of SEA to the Secretary-General. It is the responsibility of implementing partners to promptly report allegations of SEA to the UN partner entity, as part of this reporting obligation. It is the shared responsibility of both the UN partner entity, and the respective implementing partner, to communicate the UN mandatory reporting of SEA allegations to all related personnel, and to ensure the establishment of reporting mechanisms at field level.”)
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c) Supporting documentation:
The following is a list of suggested documentation which can be used to support the self-assessment rating:
- Internal Complaint and Feedback Mechanism;
- Participation in joint reporting mechanisms or interagency community-based complaint mechanisms (CBCMs) (see above note about third-party documentation);
- Communication materials;
- PSEA awareness-raising plan;
- Description of reporting mechanism;
- Whistle-blower policy.

d) Resources:
The following resources are made available to the partners as references or capacity building material to help the partner develop the implementing plan and meet the core standard.

- IASC Best Practice Guide Inter-Agency Community-Based Complaints Mechanisms, September 2016;
- IASC Global Standard Operating Procedures on Inter-Agency Cooperation in Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms, 2016;
- Save the Children, Programme Accountability Guidance Pack, A Save the Children Resource, 2013 (particularly chapter 4 “Handling feedback and complaints”, p. 25-42)
- UNHCR, Operational Guidance on Accountability to Affected People, September 2020.
- Global Dashboard of PSEA in Humanitarian Response
- InterAction Community Based Safeguarding Visual Toolkit

6. Core Standard: Assistance and referrals

a) Assessment criterion:
“To be consistent with the IP Protocol and other UN SEA instruments, the partner has a system to refer SEA victims to locally available support services, based on their needs and consent. This can include actively contributing to in-country PSEA networks and/or Gender based violence (GBV) systems (where applicable) and/or referral pathways at an inter-agency level.”

b) Minimum requirements:
It is the responsibility of the partner to ensure that victims of SEA allegedly perpetrated by their personnel receive immediate professional assistance, either by providing them with direct services or referring them to relevant service providers where consent is given.

Partners must adhere to the following principles (Victim Assistance protocol) when facilitating assistance:
- Assistance and support will be made available to all victims of SEA irrespective of whether the victim initiates or cooperates with an investigation or any other accountability procedure.
- Assistance and support shall be provided in a manner that is victim-centred, rights-based, age, disability and gender sensitive, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate. The rights and best interests of victims shall guide how assistance and support are designed and provided. Assistance and support to child victims (under age 18) shall be provided in a manner consistent with the rights enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, in particular the “best interests of the child”.
- Assistance provided to victims shall adhere to the principle of “do no harm” and be provided in a manner which seeks to uphold their rights, dignity and well-being. This may entail provision of safety measures to protect against retaliation, re-victimization and re-traumatization.
- The rights of victims to privacy, confidentiality and informed consent in respect of assistance shall be respected. Victims (or their parents/caregivers where appropriate) have the right to decide on the assistance they need, and information should be provided on the full range of options available. Victims should be informed of the progress and outcomes of actions or processes that concern them.
Victims are entitled to pursue applicable accountability measures, including legal redress where desired.

Common services for victims/survivors of SEA include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of service</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Safety and Protection</td>
<td>● Immediate safety or protection measures for survivors and witnesses to address the risk of retaliation or further violence, such as survivor safety planning, safe shelter (i.e. space that offers temporary safety to individuals fleeing harm), relocation support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical care</td>
<td>● Medical care, including post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) to prevent HIV (within 72 hours of possible exposure); treatment for Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), pregnancy care, emergency contraception</td>
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<tr>
<td>Psychosocial support</td>
<td>● Mental health care, emotional and practical support, either individually or community-based</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal services</td>
<td>● Legal assistance services, including free legal counselling, legal representation and other.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Basic material assistance</td>
<td>● Provision of food, clothing, shelter, school re-integration and livelihood support to the survivor</td>
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<tr>
<td>Support for children born as a result of SEA</td>
<td>● Medical and psychosocial care and pursuit of paternity and child support claims, in conjunction with relevant national governments</td>
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- Partners should have an updated list of local service providers, which should include options for both children and adult survivors where relevant (e.g. names of a pediatric and adult medical care provider). In many cases, partners can use or adapt the mapping of existing GBV and child protection services and referral pathways of relevant inter-agency bodies, such as the in-country PSEA Network and in-country GBV and child protection coordination groups. Especially in cases involving children, partners should also consult with UNICEF country offices.\(^5\)

- Where there are gaps in service coverage and needed services are unavailable, assistance and support should be provided to victims using partner’s internal resources. Additional resources to address gaps in service coverage may be provided through, for example, the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.

- A set procedure should guide the referral process that is aligned with existing inter-agency or multi-agency procedures and protocols. The process should outline the steps that adequately trained personnel need to take.

The minimum requirement is therefore met and the partner can self-rate “yes”, if the partner can demonstrate it has a system to refer SEA victims to locally available support services in place. For centralized INGO assessments, it is important that evidence of reporting channels are from the country-level and available in local language. If not, the partner self-rates with “no” and this standard will be added to the capacity strengthening implementation plan.

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\(^5\) In some cases, organizations may also be able to access additional funding to provide specialized services through the Trust Fund in Support of Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (the “Trust Fund”) established by the Secretary-General. For more information on the Trust Fund, see: [https://conduct.unmissions.org/remedial-trust-fund](https://conduct.unmissions.org/remedial-trust-fund).
c) **Supporting documentation:**
The following is a list of suggested documentation which can be used to support the self-assessment rating:
- Internal or Interagency referral pathway (see above note about third-party documentation);
- List of available service providers in the relevant locations;
- Description of referral pathways or Standard Operating Procedures (SOP);
- Referral form for survivors of GBV/SEA;
- Applicable guidelines on victim assistance and/or training on GBV and GBV case management principles.

d) **Resources:**
The following resources are made available to the partners as references or capacity building material to help the partner develop the implementing plan and meet the core standard.
Assistance for all survivors:
- **UN Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse** (Victim Assistance Protocol);
- Technical note on the implementation of the Victim Assistance Protocol (forthcoming);
- **Guidelines for Integrating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Humanitarian Action Reducing risk, promoting resilience and aiding recovery**, IASC, 2015;
- **Global Dashboard of PSEA in Humanitarian Response**

Assistance for child survivors:
- **Caring for Child Survivors of Sexual Abuse: Guidelines for health and psychosocial service providers in humanitarian settings**, International Rescue Committee/UNICEF, 2012;

7. Core Standard: Investigations

a) **Assessment criterion:**
“The partner has a process for investigation of allegations of SEA and can provide evidence. This may include a referral system for investigations where in-house capacity does not exist.”

b) **Minimum requirements:**
Partners are required to ensure that professional investigations of allegations of SEA involving their personnel take place without delay and with due attention to the safety and wellbeing of all persons involved. Timely and professional investigations are essential to ensure accountability of perpetrators, justice for victims and to enforce the zero-tolerance policy of the UN and its partners. Investigations should...
be conducted with due regard to a number of key principles including, at a minimum, but not limited to:

- Confidentiality, safety, impartiality, objectivity, thoroughness, timeliness and respect for the due process rights of all involved;
- Adequate protection and referral to support services for victims and witnesses throughout the investigation process, as needed;
- Regular communication and follow-up with witnesses and victims of investigative process and outcomes, as appropriate;
- Appropriate follow-up, including disciplinary/contractual action when allegations are substantiated;
- Referral of cases to competent national authorities for criminal investigation and prosecution, as appropriate;
- A set of standard procedures detailing the investigative process, including roles and responsibilities of investigation participants to ensure due process for all involved.

If the implementing partner can demonstrate it has in place a process for investigation of allegations of SEA and can provide evidence the partner can self-rate with “yes”. If not, the partner self-rates with “no” and this standard is added to the capacity strengthening implementation plan, upon the entity’s review.

Conducting investigations requires trained professional investigators and can be a complex and oftentimes costly undertaking. It is therefore essential for partners to assess their investigation capacities early on. Where in-house capacity is lacking (i.e. established internal investigative procedures and dedicated investigations or employees officially charged with carrying out internal investigations), partners have to ensure rapid access to a professional investigation service or consultant investigators familiar with conducting investigations in development or humanitarian settings. This may involve contracting a professional service provider on a retainer basis to ensure prompt deployment if and when needed. The cooperative agreement gives the UN entity the right to conduct investigations and the partner to consult with or request the UN entity to conduct investigations.

Eligible partners may also qualify for funding through the OCHA fund for investigations into sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment, which can be used by IASC organisations and affiliated partners that do not have dedicated investigations capacity, or have limited investigations capacity.

Partners may also identify other options to meet their needs and capacities (e.g. using pro-bono legal services, requesting a partner to sponsor/deploy investigator or use pools of investigators).

Partners are required to keep the UN entity they work with informed during the conduct of the investigations and, at the conclusion of the investigation, provide a complete and unredacted copy of the investigation report to the UN entity that they work with.6

c) Supporting documentation:
The following is a list of suggested documentation which can be used to support the self-assessment rating:
- Written process for review of SEA allegations;
- Dedicated resources for investigation(s) and/or commitment of partner for support;
- Misconduct investigation procedures that include SEA or SEA investigation policy/procedures;
- Contract with professional investigative service.

d) Resources:

6 For additional information on partners’ obligations regarding investigations based on which UN entity the partner is working with, please see the following documents: UNICEF’s General Terms and Conditions, UNFPA’s General Terms and Conditions, UNHCR Partnership Agreements and WFP’s General Conditions of the Field Level.
The following resources are made available to the partners as references or capacity building material to help the partner develop the implementing plan and meet the core standard.

Complaints and investigation processes:
- IASC, *Fund for Investigations into Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Sexual Harassment*, April 2019

Investigations involving child survivors and witnesses:

8. Core Standard: Corrective measures

**a) Assessment criterion:**
“The partner has taken appropriate corrective action in response to SEA allegations, if any.”

**b) Minimum requirements:**
Partners are required to disclose any past SEA allegations involving its personnel and evidence of corrective measures and actions taken in response thereto.

Partners with a past record of SEA are considered high-risk. A number of corrective actions need to be taken before the risk rating can be reduced.

Information related to past allegations and corrective action taken accordingly will be accepted anonymously/without personal data and compliant with national labour regulations in the country.

Below is a non-exhaustive list of factors that may be considered in making this determination:
- The partner has promptly informed UN of the SEA allegation⁷;
- A thorough and transparent investigation of the SEA allegation involving the partner has been undertaken;
- The outcome of the investigation/s on the SEA allegation have been shared with the UN.
- Appropriate action has been taken towards the perpetrator, if the allegation was found to be substantiated;
- Adequate assistance and protection have been provided to the (alleged) victim/s of SEA;

⁷ *Existing partners* with past allegations of SEA must be reported to the respective investigative services offices of each UN entity.
Interim Guidance

- A time-bound action plan has been implemented to address systemic issues and key gaps.

If the implementing partner had past cases of SEA and it can prove it has undertaken adequate corrective measures the partner can self-rate with “yes” and provide relevant supporting documentation. If not, the implementing partner self-rates with “no”. Following the UN entity’s review of the adequacy of partner’s response, if it is determined the corrective measures undertaken by a partner were inadequate, an existing partnership must be suspended, whereas a new partner cannot be engaged, until it can satisfactorily show it has taken adequate corrective measures. If the partner has not had any past SEA allegations the partner can self-rate with “n/a”. The partner will get ‘1’ point for this core standard if they self-rate “n/a”.

c) Supporting documentation:
The following is a list of suggested documentation which can be used to support the self-assessment rating:
  - Evidence of implementation of corrective measures such as a completed PSEA Action Plan;
  - Specific measures to identify and reduce risks of SEA in programme delivery.

d) Resources:
There are no resources available for this assessment criterion as it concerns the partner’s past allegations of SEA and corrective action taken in response. If you have a question about how to answer this core standard, please reach out to your UN entity focal point.

CONTRIBUTORS