

Increasing Transparency on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse in the Aid Sector

The Importance of a Harmonized Approach to SEA Data Collection and Reporting

**Final Research Report on Harmonised
Approaches to SEA reporting**

Table of Contents

1. Executive Summary.....	3
2. Introduction and background.....	5
3. Scope and methodology.....	6
4. Main findings about current systems in place.....	6
4.1. The UN reporting system – UN iReport.....	7
4.2. INGO and NGO systems.....	10
4.2.1. Other major data collection and reporting systems.....	10
4.2.2. Information collected by NGOs when an incident is reported.....	11
4.2.3. Systems in place to manage the information.....	12
4.3 Synergies and gaps between the iReport and INGO systems.....	13
5. External reporting requirements of donors and regulators.....	15
5.1 Governmental donors.....	15
5.1.1. FCDO.....	15
5.1.2. ECHO.....	16
5.1.3. DFAT - Australia.....	16
5.1.4. USAID.....	16
5.1.5. Global Affairs Canada.....	16
5.1.6. SIDA.....	16
5.2. Foundations and corporate donors.....	16
5.3. Requirements of regulators.....	18
5.4. Challenges.....	20
5.4.1. Level of detail requested versus confidentiality.....	20
5.4.2. Lack of consistency in donor expectations.....	20
5.4.3. Educating donors on partnership and support.....	21
5.4.4. Capacity of organisations.....	21
5.5. Response from NGOs to donor and regulatory requirements.....	22
5.6. Sector guidance on what to report internally and externally.....	23
6. Internal reporting to Boards.....	25
7. Public accountability and transparency.....	27
8. Setting up a harmonised approach to SEA reporting.....	30
8.1. Is a harmonised approach needed?.....	30
8.2. Issues to take into account.....	32
8.3. Key principles to guide a harmonised approach.....	34
8.4. Information to include or not include.....	35
8.5. Ensuring a survivor-centred approach.....	36
8.6. Promoting accountability and more equal partnerships between agencies.....	36

9. Conclusions and recommendations	37
9.1. Conclusions.....	37
9.2. Recommendations	38
9.3. Provisional proposal for a harmonised approach.....	39
9.4. Next steps.....	41
Annexes.....	41
Annex A: Table of information collected by different agencies anonymised.....	42
Annex B: Acronyms and abbreviations.....	48
Annex C: PSEA Network reporting guidance from Bangladesh	49
Annex D: UK regulatory obligations for reporting and escalating	51
Annex E: Table of publicly reported information	53
Annex F: Sample incident management form from national NGO	56
Annex G: Table of organisations which contributed to the study	57
Annex H: Review framework.....	57

1. Executive Summary

The lack of a standardised approach to the data collection, reporting and management of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) remains a major challenge in the aid sector. In mid-2021 the CHS Alliance and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, in consultation with FCDO, drew up terms of reference for a consultancy project to explore options for a standardised SEA data collection and reporting mechanism for aid organisations. The overall purposes were:

- To support trend analyses and effective learning from aggregated data;
- contribute to addressing under-reporting of SEA and improving overall understanding, prevention and response;
- To inform policies and strategies aimed at improving victim outcomes and prevention interventions;
- To enhance internal and external transparency and accountability.

The review was carried out by GCPS Consulting during June-August 2021. The methodology included an initial mapping of publicly available information and confidential interviews with representatives of a range of different organisations, including the UN, International NGOs, national and local NGOs, government donors, representatives of foundations, private sector actors in the humanitarian field and associated umbrella organisations and networks.

In terms of existing SEA reporting systems, the UN iReport is a publicly available database that records SEA incidents that involved UN personnel and also the personnel of their “implementing partners”. As at early 2021, there were 25 UN agencies committed to sharing SEA incidents using a common reporting system. Other agencies across the humanitarian and development sector are collecting detailed information on SEA and safeguarding incidents reported to them, to enable proper investigation and case management (and/or assurance that this is being done by others) and appropriate internal and external reporting. A small number of INGOs have set up internal online data reporting systems, enabling them to have a clear overview on the number of SEA incidents across their countries of operation. Most other INGOs and private sector agencies use less automated methods, usually involving an internal database, spreadsheet or filing system. National organisations tend to have resource limitations in relation to using digital methods of handling safeguarding cases. Organisations contacted for this study were found to have various different systems that they have developed to suit their contexts.

There was found to be a diversity of requests from donors to NGOs reporting SEA. NGOs identified a number of challenges in responding to donor requirements and expectations, referring to the pressures they experienced and the considerable time and effort involved, which sometimes detracted from the resources available for effective case management and survivor support.

Notwithstanding the fact that some agencies have developed guidance materials, there is lack of common agreement on exactly what should be reported in relation to incidents of harm and abuse. Some agencies report only on SEA, while others have a wider interpretation of safeguarding, to include harassment and other types of harm. Much of the guidance is fairly general and does not specify exactly what incidents and what detail should be reported. As a result, many agencies have developed their own interpretation and procedures and there is currently no consistent approach.

Reporting to the boards on a regular basis was recognised as good practice in most of the organisations interviewed. It allows the leadership and board to be briefed on the number of cases received, understand the actions taken, review organisational trends on SEA and make informed

decisions. In relation to greater transparency and public accountability, major agencies have started to include information about SEA and safeguarding on their websites. Some NGOs publish specific safeguarding reports; some include SEA cases in their annual reports and others include this information in annual accountability reports.

There was general agreement among the participants in this study that a more harmonised approach to data collection and reporting on SEA incidents could bring many advantages, if set up in the right way with clear purposes and scope, together with an inclusive approach. There are already a few examples of systems in place (UN, major INGOs, GBVIMS) which could provide a starting point for discussion about the benefits and realities of embarking on what would be a major project, notwithstanding the possible reluctance of some INGOs to be involved when they have already invested in their own systems. There was also interest in improving harmonisation from umbrella groups and networks, which have been undertaking various other relevant initiatives. However it should be noted that the study revealed a level of distrust of donors and nervousness about how any shared data might be used in the future. There was a sense that it is still not accepted that increased reporting of incidents should be seen as a positive indicator of systems working, rather than something that should lead to punitive measures.

The study sets out the potential advantages and disadvantages of a harmonised approach, as identified by interviewees, and highlights the issues to be taken into account. Key principles are proposed for guiding any future harmonisation scheme: protection of victims/survivors; confidentiality and data protection; inclusivity; common definitions; simplicity; transparency; and accountability.

A number of recommendations are made for taking the project forward:

- i. Develop a common understanding and purpose which will be a pre-condition for the success of any harmonised approach
- ii. Encourage the involvement of NGOs and CSOs at national level
- iii. Engender buy-in by CEOs and Boards
- iv. Prioritise protection and confidentiality, with a particular focus on the safety and protection of survivors
- v. Start small - define the nature of the data to be included and keep it simple
- vi. Promote a culture of ongoing questioning and active learning
- vii. Make links with key sector networks, to engage with donor and other stakeholder groups on PSEA

Based on the consultations undertaken during the study, an outline of what an initial harmonised scheme could look like is presented as a draft for discussion. The next steps proposed include setting up a steering committee to take the project forward.

2. Introduction and background

The lack of a standardised approach to the data collection, reporting and management of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) remains a major challenge in the aid sector. This relates to reporting of allegations and cases of SEA by organisations, which can be internal (to their Board, other internal reports) or external (accountability reports, specific reports to donors).

This under-reporting, or reporting in incompatible formats, by organisations is partly due to the lack of standardised approach to reporting across the aid sector and the different reporting requirements from various stakeholders. At the same time, improving collective reporting of SEA could be useful for better overall understanding, prevention and response, as long as it is not detrimental to survivor protection and appropriate and confidential incident management.

In mid-2021 the CHS Alliance and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response, in consultation with FCDO, drew up terms of reference for a consultancy project to explore options for a standardised SEA data collection and reporting mechanism for aid organisations. The overall purposes were:

- To support trend analyses and effective learning from aggregated data;
- contribute to addressing under-reporting of SEA and improving overall understanding, prevention and response;
- To inform policies and strategies aimed at improving victim outcomes and prevention interventions;
- To enhance internal and external transparency and accountability.

The resulting protocol or framework would be primarily aimed at non-UN organisations in the aid sector, including private sector organisations, with the potential for wider application. It should complement the existing UNSG reporting system (i-Report)¹, rather than duplicating it.

The specific objectives of the study were defined as follows:

- To develop or identify a standardised SEA data collection and reporting mechanism for aid organisations to guide internal and external reporting
- To consult with key stakeholders about the proposed harmonised reporting mechanism to get agreement on the main components
- To propose arrangements for a Steering Committee to oversee an SEA data project and make proposals for the next phase of the project

¹ <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/data-allegations-un-system-wide>

3. Scope and methodology

The review was carried out by GCPS Consulting during June-August 2021. The scope of the project was further refined in an initial meeting between the CHS Alliance, SCHR and GCPS Consulting, as well as meetings with FCDO. A framework was drawn up as a working document, with key questions to guide the document review and interviews (*available on request as Annex H*).

It was agreed that the focus would be on reviewing reporting practices and existing systems across the humanitarian sector. This would involve looking at what NGOs were reporting internally (including to their Board) and what they were reporting to donors, regulators and the public (external). The methodology involved an initial mapping of publicly available information, such as organisational annual reports, including “accountability” reports and other materials found on relevant websites.

Budget and time limitations required prioritisation and selection of key agencies to include in the more detailed mapping of reporting systems and interview process. However, after consultation with FCDO, it was decided to interview a wider range of agencies than originally envisaged. Over thirty confidential interviews were conducted with representatives of a range of different organisations, including the UN, International NGOs, national and local NGOs, government donors, representatives of foundations, private sector actors in the humanitarian field, as well as associated umbrella organisations and networks. Further documentation was made available to the team by organisations which agreed to contribute to the study. This included some internal templates and reporting formats provided on a confidential basis. *A list of organisations which contributed to the study is provided at Annex G, but please note this is incomplete as some organisations asked not to be listed.*

Regular meetings were held with the CHS Alliance and SCHR to review progress and priorities. All meetings and interviews were conducted remotely via Zoom, Teams or other online platforms.

All information was then collated and analysed to produce this report, ready for consultation with a wider group of stakeholders. It was proposed to do this through sharing the report and holding online webinars to present proposals and receive feedback from participants.

GCPS Consulting is very grateful to all those who participated in this study and gave up their valuable time for interviews and discussions. Confidentiality guided the work throughout. It should be noted that there were some reservations expressed about participating in the study and questions about its purpose and value. Some interviewees were unable to share certain types of information such as examples of internal reporting documentation and procedures, stating that they were confidential. Others were willing to contribute but did not wish their organisation to be identified, due to the sensitivity of the subject, fear of being penalised by donors or fear of exposing their processes to criticism. Some interviewees were not sure that their Boards would support information sharing schemes and would be concerned about data protection. The project team has tried to take these limitations into account when analysing the information and making recommendations for the future.

4. Main findings about current systems in place

4.1. The UN reporting system – UN iReport

Record keeping and data tracking of allegations of misconduct started in 2006. In July 2008, the UN Department of Field Support (DFS) launched the Misconduct Tracking System (MTS), a global, restricted-access database and confidential tracking system for all allegations of misconduct. MTS is now managed by a small team in the Conduct and Discipline Service (CDS) in the Department for Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance (DMSPC). It facilitates case management and information sharing between field missions and CDS. When information about possible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse is received, it is assessed by the Heads of Missions, by DMSPC and/or by the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS). Reconciliation of information received by the various entities takes place. This is a continuous process that aims to confirm whether information received refers to new allegations.

The system records SEA incidents that involved UN personnel and also the personnel of their “implementing partners”. The reporting system has functionalities that show “real time” information that goes public within 24 hours after the reported incident is recorded in the system. The reporting is a contractual obligation for UN and its partners²; they are required to report immediately they are aware of any incident (without waiting for an investigation) and the team in New York does an Excel report a week later, which is updated on a monthly basis. In February 2021, there were 25 UN agencies committed to sharing SEA incidents using a common reporting system and donor agencies have put pressure on some UN agencies to use it more systematically. Data reported under UN system remain the property of reporting agencies and they take responsibility for the accuracy of information. They are responsible for updating the data until reported cases are closed after full investigation and disciplinary measures. The specific data included in the UN system have been discussed within the UN agencies and with donors, who are supportive of the portal.

Having a common system for reporting all incidents in UN-related projects aims to provide a streamlined approach to addressing donor requirements, although it was reported that it can also create additional expectations. Some donors tend to ask for more detail as part of their follow-up and accountability procedures; this needs to be managed to ensure that there is no risk of breach of confidentiality or risk to the safety and security of the stakeholders involved, starting with the victim/survivor. It was stated that sometimes donors cross-check the consistency between the data that they receive directly from UN agencies on a case-by-case basis (in line with contractual obligations) with the data they access on the website. This often creates extra work on data management to resolve inconsistencies as necessary.

The reporting system is divided between the allegations reported for entities other than peacekeeping operations and special political missions (“implementing partners”), the allegations reported for non- UN forces and the allegations reported for entities other than peacekeeping operations and special political missions (UN staff members or UN related personnel). The data reported online (and publicly available) for these different categories are almost the same. There are few differences, as highlighted in yellow in the table below.

² <https://conduct.unmissions.org/table-of-allegations>

Table 1 Categories of data reported in the UN SEA database system

Allegations reported for Implementing Partners	Allegations reported for UN or related personnel	Allegations reported for non-UN forces
Year	Year	Year
Reported by	Reported by	Reported by
Date of Reporting	Date of Reporting	Date of Reporting
Date of Incident	Date of Incident	Date of Incident
Nationality of Personnel	Nationality of Personnel	Category of Personnel
Gender of Victim	Gender of Victim	Gender of Victim
Age of Victim	Age of Victim	Age of Victim
Type of Allegation	Type of Allegation	Type of Allegation
Nature of Allegation (sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, other)	Nature of Allegation (sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, other)	Nature of Allegation (sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, other)
Paternity claimed	Paternity claimed	Paternity claimed
Paternity Established	Paternity Established	Paternity Established
Assistance Rendered	Assistance Rendered	Assistance Rendered
Status of Investigation (<i>investigation closed, investigation ongoing, preliminary assessment, decision made not to investigate, to be determined</i>)	Status of Investigation (<i>investigation closed, investigation ongoing, preliminary assessment, decision made not to investigate, to be determined</i>)	Status of Investigation (<i>ongoing, closed</i>)
Status of Allegation	Status of Allegation	Status of Allegation

The UN reporting system is able to generate tables and graphs³. There are five ways of looking at the data: by allegations received, by alleged perpetrators, by victims, by investigations, and by action taken. Guidance is provided on terminology and filters can be applied to view the data for a specific year, mission, category of personnel, or nationality of uniformed personnel (from 2015 onwards)⁴.

Summary of overall observations from the review of the UN public reporting system:

- i. The reporting system is a data reporting system and not a case management system. The relevant UN agency is responsible for the information it shares and deals separately with specific donor requirements or requests.
- ii. The UN reporting system reports on cases that have been opened and are not yet closed. Some interviewees felt it was not wise to provide public access to information on “opened” cases that have not yet been confirmed: this might not help in case resolution, survivor protection or protection of the alleged perpetrator and agency (although in some cases it is possible it might encourage other victims/survivors to come forward).

³ For example “*Allegations reported for entities other than peacekeeping operations and special political missions*”, extracted from the system <https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/IP%2002-07-2020.pdf>

⁴

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrIjoiMTZiYTY3MmItMDQ0Zi00ZWVhLWE5MmUtYjIwODQ3NzMyYzU2IiwidCI6IjBmOWUzNWRiLTU0NGYtNGY2MC1iZGNIJTViYTRxNmU2ZGM3MCIsImMiOiJh9>

- iii. The victim section provides information on numbers of victims and whether any allegations reported involve victims who are children (under the age of 18). It also states the number of allegations involving child victims by the nationality of the alleged perpetrator and whether paternity claims are involved.
- iv. To ensure victim security, only the gender and age category of the victim is made public. However, the information provided does include the country, the agency and the date of incident. Some interviewees stated that this presented a level of risk, in terms of enabling identification of the incident, its location and potentially the victim, as well as risks to the organization in the context of high insecurity.
- v. Very few people are permitted administration rights on the data registered in the online system, in order to ensure data protection.
- vi. Only a third of the information received is reported publicly, even though reportedly some donors have pressed for more detailed information to be included
- vii. The visitor can access information on the actions taken as a result of a confirmed incident, such as disciplinary measures (dismissal, resignation etc...) or referral to the justice system). However, the system does not provide information on the actions that the UN or its partner have adopted to ensure learning and address any recommendations from the incident.
- viii. The UN Secretary General produces an annual report *Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, which is publicly available⁴ and includes information on what has been done to prevent SEA and statistics of incidents reported by UN agencies. The report for 2020 was published in February 2021.

⁴ <https://conduct.unmissions.org/reports-secretary-general-special-measures-protection-sexual-exploitation-and-sexual-abuse>

4.2. INGO and NGO systems

4.2.1. Other major data collection and reporting systems

Other than the UN, no other agencies in the humanitarian and development field were found to have SEA or safeguarding incident systems that are available online for public view.

A small number of INGOs appear to be pioneer organisations with internal online data reporting systems in place, enabling them to have a clear overview on the number of SEA incidents across their countries of operation. More detail of what is included in these various systems is explored below and in Annex A. It should be noted that the systems run by INGOs tend to cover not only SEA (as per the UN system), but also other aspects of safeguarding, such as physical abuse, bullying etc.

The *Gender-Based Violence Information Management System* (GBVIMS)⁶ is an inter-agency initiative overseen by a Steering Committee made up of representatives from the IRC, UNHCR, UNFPA, UNICEF, and IMC. It is currently being used by UN agencies, NGOs, CSOs and government agencies in 20 countries worldwide. It promotes standardised data collection on GBV and was established in 2007 in response to the need for a standardized information management system to manage GBV incident data in humanitarian contexts. It began as a manual tool, but has since been launched online in a number of countries. The online system uses Primero, an open-source software system designed to help GBV and child protection service providers securely and safely collect, store, manage, and share data on case management and incident monitoring. It includes a tool to enable standardised terminology and classification of incidents; standard forms that can be customised; an incident recording database; and an information sharing protocol. User guides and toolkits are provided. The system is not publicly accessible, but it can generate anonymised, aggregate statistics on reported cases, where the consent of the survivor has been provided for inclusion of their data. In countries where multiple organisations come together to use the GBVIMS to consolidate their statistics, an Information Sharing Protocol (ISP) governs the way in which data can be shared. In some countries, thematic analytical reports are developed for public sharing, with the purpose of advocacy and awareness-raising. Examples include an annual report from the in Jordan GBVIMS Task Force⁵ and a report from the GBV Sub-Cluster in Iraq.⁶ The information provided by the system has also been used as the basis for capacity-building initiatives, for example in The Gambia.⁷ An evaluation of the successes and challenges of the system was conducted in 2020.⁸ Please see Annex A for more details of incident data included in the system.

Another publicly available database is the “*Aid Worker Security Database*” (AWSD)⁹. This was set up by Humanitarian Outcomes in 2010 and includes data going back to 1997. The AWSD is a global compilation of reports on major security incidents involving deliberate acts of violence affecting aid workers. One of the “*means of attack*” (i.e. type of incident) included is “*rape or serious sexual assault*”. Incident data is collected both from public sources, and from information provided directly to the project by aid organisations and security entities. AWSD data is intended for research purposes and non-commercial use only. It is provided free of charge and in the spirit of open data.

⁵ <https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/node/17623/pdf/75705.pdf>

⁶ https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/q2_2020_gbvims_narrative_report.pdf

⁷ https://www.gbvims.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/GBV-CM-CBI-The-Gambia_Final.pdf

⁸ <https://www.gbvims.com/wp/wp-content/uploads/GBVIMS-LM-Periodic-Review-Oct-2020-1.pdf>

*Exploitation and Abuse: practical actions to guide leadership, headquarters and field teams*⁸, which includes an incident recording form for use by PSEA focal points and supervisors (*Tool 8*).

⁹ <https://aidworkersecurity.org/about>

Anyone can access it and easily carry out a search by country, means of attack, type of agency, date etc. *Please see Annex A for more details.*

Security companies working with humanitarian organisations and members of ICoCA (International Code of Conduct Association) are requested to conduct a Company Self-Assessment (CSA) on an annual basis. They are also required to have complaints mechanisms in place and published online or disseminated using various means, including leaflets. While the CSA focuses mainly on human rights, it includes practice on safeguarding and SEA in particular. These companies also report to ICoCA on aggregated figures of incidents that happened in their organisations without providing information that would compromise confidentiality.

4.2.2. Information collected by NGOs when an incident is reported

Please see Annex A for a detailed table giving anonymised examples of the information gathered by various major agencies when incidents are reported.

It can be seen that agencies are collecting detailed information on SEA and safeguarding incidents reported to them, to enable proper investigation and case management (and/or assurance that this is being done by others) and appropriate internal and external reporting. The exact detail of the information collected varies from agency to agency, but will broadly include the following types of information:

- Details of the person reporting
- Date(s) of incident and date reported
- Location of incident - country/region
- Details of victim/survivor, including age (to determine if she/is a child or adult)
- Details of alleged perpetrator, including role/seniority in the organisation
- Details of incident
- Assistance needed/provided
- Status and outcome of investigation
- Referrals (to local authorities, to health providers, etc)
- Follow-up actions
- Donor affected (funding the project in the area)

As already noted previously, most agencies contacted for this review collect information on a wider range of incidents of harm, not only SEA.

Internal safeguarding and SEA policies, together with the associated training provided to staff, usually include information about how to report incidents, as well setting out the standards the organisation is required to meet. In addition, many organisations have developed internal reporting guidance, procedures and templates, to assist staff and partners in knowing what to report. Most of these are internal documents and include materials such as guidance for focal points. One example of guidance that is publicly available is the *IFRC Manual on Prevention and Response to Sexual*.

4.2.3. Systems in place to manage the information

NGOs have different system to manage the information. Some of them have invested in integrated systems to manage risks and their systems are recognised as good models in the sector. Based on the information collected, several large INGOs have digital safeguarding tracking systems, using various types of software such as CLUE¹⁰ and DATIX (the latter is also used by health and social care organisations for incident reporting).

For several of these, their online system is used for both data collection and case management, providing online access to all key documentation for designated personnel. Others have case management systems which are used for ongoing documentation of incident management. Usually, the safeguarding unit of these INGOs extract their data manually from the case management information. Most of the online systems record incidents when they are reported and opened, while one system reviewed records only closed cases. Some INGOs use their data reporting system for all types of incidents and risks (including fraud, security, etc). Staff select the category of incident when a report or case is entered on the system.

Some INGOs have set up a public online complaint reporting system with external access (such as Terre des Hommes¹¹ and World Vision¹²).

Most other INGOs and private sector agencies use less automated methods: the country office shares the incident report with the global safeguarding team via secure email or file transfer. The central team maintains an internal database, spreadsheet or file system and collects all data and documents from each case.

In terms of the case management systems, a number of observations can be highlighted:

- The process of setting up the system was reported to help build a better understanding and capacities in SEA incident management and to ensure global consistency across member organisations. It required safeguarding leads to sit and agree on key definitions such as sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment etc, and a common understanding of how to handle an SEA incident. It helped to improve the safeguarding culture of the organisation.
- Most of the online case management systems currently in place offer the ability to generate trend and capacity analysis for management purposes. However the systems do not include information about the learning or recommendations from the incident in a consistent way (one INGO using the DATIX system has an option for this) or highlight the corrective measures resulting from an incident.
- The online systems have different levels of sophistication which demonstrate the different level of resources that organisations can mobilise. Systems such as like DATIX or CLUE or have required at least a year of design and piloting.
- One system reviewed includes a question on the consent of the complainant to sharing his/her identity to relevant persons. It allows for consent documentation at all stages of the incident management (for example, for an investigation, for a referral to support services etc)
- Some organisations have prioritised building up their safeguarding team to ensure effective case management, rather than relying on a digital system to monitor incident management.

¹⁰ <https://clue.co.uk/>

¹¹ <https://concern.tdh.ch/>

¹² https://worldvision.ethicspointvp.com/custom/worldvision/irf/en/form_data.asp

Some agencies have adopted, or are considering adopting, integrated risk and compliance management software, including whistleblowing helpline services, based on those used in the private sector. One example is the Expolink/Navex Global system¹³ which is used by a media charity as a safeguarding reporting system. This system was also found to be in use in some small to medium sized INGOs.

National organisations tend to have resource limitations in relation to using digital systems in handling safeguarding cases. Organisations contacted for this study have different systems that they have developed to suit their contexts. The safeguarding function is normally combined with other responsibilities in the organisation. In one African national NGO contacted, the safeguarding focal point is the program manager. They use an excel spreadsheet to capture incidents reported from field operations and aggregate these at the national office level for reporting to leadership and their Board. Another national NGO in East Africa designed a simple SEA reporting template for use by field offices collecting SEA incidents. This form is submitted to the safeguarding focal point and M&E (Monitoring and Evaluation) Manager for compilation of national data and reporting to the leadership and donors. *Please see Annex F.*

4.3 Synergies and gaps between the iReport and INGO systems

As already noted, UN agencies and NGOs collect detailed information on each SEA case reported to them. The main differences between systems are summarised in the table below. Information about the GBVIMS taken from public sources has been included as a comparator.

UN iReport	INGO systems	GBVIMS
Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) cases only; not harassment or other safeguarding issues ; common agreement on what is included	Wider variety of information relating to safeguarding , including SEA; lack of complete consistency as to what is defined as safeguarding	Gender-based violence cases – includes SEA, physical assault, forced marriage, neglect, emotional abuse
Standalone SEA incident system	Some INGO systems are part of a wider incident management system including fraud, security etc.	Standalone GBV system
Real-time information	Regularly updated but do not provide real-time information	Regularly updated
All opened cases included	Most systems include all opened cases	Incidents added as notified
Data on nationality of alleged perpetrator included	Most systems provide data on country of incident	Data collected in country
Data only (not case management)	Most systems are used for data and case management	Case management system
Age of victim /survivor recorded	Distinction made on age of victims (e.g. below or over 18; below 16; between 16-60 or over 60)	Age of survivor recorded
Category of personnel included	Some INGOs separate volunteers, staff, partner staff and level of seniority when appropriate	Includes data on alleged perpetrator-survivor relationship
Paternity data – claimed/established	No paternity data	No paternity data

¹³ www.navexglobal.com

Designated persons only at central level allowed to amend or delete information	Designated persons only allowed to amend or delete information	Data added by GBV actors/ service providers
Allows aggregation/ disaggregation of data for trend analysis and for internal/external reporting across UN agencies	Allows aggregation/disaggregation of data for trend analysis across the INGO area of operations and for internal/external reporting	Allows aggregation of data which is used to inform capacity building and advocacy

UN iReport	INGO systems	GBVIMS
Data submitted to central system owned by UN agency reporting the incident	Data submitted to central system (where this exists) owned by INGO member/affiliate reporting the incident	Survivor has right to control their incident data – consent required for sharing
Does not substitute for the data that these agencies share directly with donors in parallel	Does not substitute for the data that these agencies share directly with donors in parallel.	Does not substitute for the data that may be shared with donors.
Donors have access to system as it is public	No direct donor access to system	No direct donor access
Level of detail publicly accessible online limited for purposes of confidentiality	No online public/external access – access only within the organisation	No online public access

5. External reporting requirements of donors and regulators

At the Global Safeguarding Summit in October 2018 donors produced a statement on their commitments to tackle sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment in the international aid sector¹⁴ including the wording “*Ensure that relevant information about allegations, confirmed cases, prevention measures and response activities, are an integral part of reporting mechanisms, which for some donors will include annual public statements. The confidentiality of information and the safety of individuals will be paramount*”.

There is a diversity of requests from donors to NGOs reporting SEA. Partnership agreements between donors and NGOs generally underline the obligation for the partner to inform “promptly” the UN or other donor agency of any SEA incident involving its personnel (to follow the terminology of the *UN protocol 2018 on SEA allegations involving Implementing Partners*), usually within 24 or 48 hours. Partners are required to conduct the investigation and either to share the investigation report (UN agency requirement) or a redacted version/ high-level information detailing actions and outcomes (most other agencies). In relation to exactly what information needs to be reported, this may be included in the contracting agreements; however, these are usually flexible or broad enough to allow some differences in practice. This is linked to the nature of relations, level of trust and power imbalances between donors and NGOs. The extent of donor requirements may also depend on the donor perception of the PSEA capacity of the partner organisation; their own role in the management of incidents; the technical background of their staff; and the context of operations. If there have been previous SEA incidents this is likely to have influenced the level of the donor’s attention and expectations, especially if there has been a lack of action or support/accountability to survivors.

5.1 Governmental donors

5.1.1. FCDO

The UK FCDO (Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office) provides guidance notes on SEA and safeguarding¹⁵ and has developed reporting form which is designed to capture the information needed for the FCDO’s fraud and safeguarding (sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment) case management system, for submission by email. This asks for high-level information on the type of incident, the organisation involved, the type of role of the subject of complaint and the type of survivor (beneficiary, staff member etc), mainly using drop-down menus. The form states that “*Each referral is reviewed by the Investigations Department. In some cases, we may ask you for additional information*”. NGOs can also submit information by email instead of using this form. Some interviewees stated that they were not aware of a form, but used the designated email address. FCDO has been working with government agencies from other countries to develop *Aligned donor language on SEAH for multilateral organisations*, which includes reporting obligations and the result of this should be available shortly.

¹⁴ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/902420/donor-commitments2.pdf

¹⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-against-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-and-sexual-harassmentseah-in-the-aid-sector#how-to-report-a-safeguarding-concern-to-fcdo>

5.1.2. ECHO

The EU /ECHO ((European Civil Aid and Humanitarian Protection Operations) provides a “*SEAH Case level Reporting Form*”, to be used for informing ECHO of new cases of misconduct and for providing updates. Detailed information is requested about the incident, the investigation and actions taken, but it is stated that only non-identifiable information is to be provided and “*all confidential information are blacked out*”. ECHO also requires information about cases in projects they do not fund, where they are in the same location as ECHO-funded projects.

5.1.3. DFAT - Australia

DFAT (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade - Australian Government) has developed a PSEA policy defining different types of incident reporting and including the provision of a standard notification template with detailed guidance.¹⁶ It is specified that “*Incidents should only be reported where it is safe to do so and where it is in line with the victim/survivor’s wishes. Information that identifies individuals does not need to be reported*”.

5.1.4. USAID

USAID issued a policy on PSEA in 2020 and stated that it would make reporting of safeguarding incidents mandatory. The requirement to report has not yet been codified into USAID rules in the same way as fraud, bribery, corruption and USAID still uses language 'encouraging' partners to report. However, in practice, if there a “*credible allegation*” of sexual exploitation and abuse on a USAID-funded project, it should be reported in a timely manner.

5.1.5. Global Affairs Canada

Global Affairs Canada has a section on its website setting out expectations for reporting SEA incidents¹⁷. A reporting form is provided and it is stipulated that no identifying information should be included. GAC focusses on due diligence, assessing their partners in advance and providing opportunities for capacity building to enable them to meet GAC expectations before funding is agreed. Support and technical advice is provided through their Digna PSEA support hub¹⁸.

5.1.6. SIDA

Some other government/bilateral agencies appear to provide more limited information about their requirements. For instance, the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has a section on its website about reporting suspicions of irregularities or wrongdoings. This specifies: “*Send an e-mail to investigation@sida.se. Describe the incidents that you wish to report and state the person/s or organisation/s that are subject to the allegations*”. It states that all reports will be received by the SIDA investigations department and investigated.

5.2. Foundations and corporate donors

NGOs working with corporate organisations (including Foundations) noted that these do not always request detailed information on SEA incidents. In some cases, they may not be interested (possibly due to ignorance of its importance), but in others they have taken a specific decision to focus instead on due diligence, assessing their partners in advance and offering them funding for training and support as necessary. They then trust them to be able to respond effectively to SEA incidents and ask for assistance as needed.

¹⁶ <https://www.dfat.gov.au/sites/default/files/seah-incident-notification-form.pdf>

¹⁷ https://www.international.gc.ca/world-monde/issues_development-enjeux_developpement/sexual_exploitation-exploitation_sexuels/expectations-attentes.aspx?lang=eng

¹⁸ www.digna.ca

The Association of Charitable Foundations (ACF) and the Funders Safeguarding Collaborative¹⁹ have developed a safeguarding framework for foundations to support safeguarding practices in member organisations, as well as with their grantees. The framework is built on the four principles to guide foundations in their practice: Clear Communications, Organisational Ownership, Realistic Expectations, Educated and Informed. In a section on “*Responding and Escalating*”, the framework poses a number of key questions for donors to consider when requesting information about SEA/safeguarding incidents.

Key questions for donors to consider *(taken from FCS/ACF framework)*

- Are you clear about the information you require, why you are asking for it, and what you will do with it? Does this respect the confidentiality of survivors and data protection rules?
- How is your approach communicated to grantees? How can your communication reassure grantees and encourage reporting?
- What is your role in responding to concerns within grantee organisations? Does this respect the procedures and expertise of the grantee?
- Are the timescales for reporting realistic? Is the amount of information you require reasonable and justifiable?
- Have you considered providing additional resources to help grantees conduct a robust investigation or secure additional support services for survivors (e.g. counselling, legal advice)?
- How will you ensure decisions are fair, survivor-centred and do no harm?
- Are your staff confident in responding to concerns and assessing risks? How can they access additional advice and support?

This would seem to be an example of best practice which should be taken into account as part of future initiatives on harmonised approaches to reporting.

Members of the Funders Safeguarding Collaborative include Comic Relief and the Oak Foundation. Comic Relief has clear guidance for NGOs on what should be reported²⁰ – see adjacent box. The Oak Foundation has recently undertaken a safeguarding learning review to inform its future practice, which is available on its website²⁴. It aims to be a catalyst for grantees developing ownership of safeguarding, through timely support such as financial and technical assistance. It has a policy of ensuring through its due diligence and support that grantees can manage incidents themselves and request support when needed.

Comic Relief requirements for SEA reporting

- A brief summary of the nature of the concern
- When and where the incident took place
- The category of employment of the individual who has been accused (e.g. senior manager, care staff, ancillary staff, volunteer etc.)
- Your organisation’s relationship with the alleged victim (e.g. beneficiary, staff member, community member). Where the victim is a child, this must be clearly stated
- What action has been taken to ensure the safety of the victim and others who may be at risk
- Any further action that are planned with estimated timelines for action

¹⁹ www.acf.org.uk; <https://globalfundforchildren.org/funder-safeguarding-collaborative/>

²⁰ https://www.comicrelief.com/sites/default/files/downloads/cr_grants_managing_Example-conditions-of-grant.pdf

²⁴ <https://oakfnd.org/history-of-child-safeguarding-at-oak/>

5.3. Requirements of regulators

A large proportion of organisations in the humanitarian sector are charities and the charity sector is regulated at national level in a number of countries. The extent of this regulation varies, but the Charity Commission for England and Wales has a particularly wide reach: over 5000 UK charities registered with the Charity Commission describe themselves as being involved in “overseas aid” in countries around the world, with over 18,000 operating outside England and Wales. The role of the Charity Commission is to ensure that charities are accountable, well run and meet their legal obligations. This can include the provision of regulatory advice and guidance, including where charities operate overseas, where the risk to vulnerable beneficiaries may be greater. It is clear in its guidance that protecting people and safeguarding responsibilities should be a governance priority for all charities and, as part of fulfilling their legal duties, charities must take reasonable steps to protect people who come into contact with their organisation from harm. The Charity Commission requires charities to report serious incidents, as it needs to ensure that trustees comply with these legal duties and that the charity manages the incident responsibly. This means the Commission looks for assurance that the charity has taken steps to limit the immediate impact of the incident, investigate and resolve the case in a timely manner, ensure survivor protection/assistance when appropriate and, where possible, prevent it from happening again by implementing learning and recommendations, as appropriate. These requirements are very similar to those of donors, but focussed particularly on the obligations of the trustees of the charity.

In June 2019 the Charity Commission updated its guidance on serious incident reporting²¹, signalling safeguarding as a high priority regulatory issue. The requirement to report safeguarding incidents was largely unchanged from the previous guidance, but the wider context of the guidance stressed the importance of reporting promptly and the need to report not just actual incidents and harm, but allegations and risks of harm. Safeguarding includes not only SEA, but also other types of harm, such as bullying, harassment, physical harm etc. Please see a summary of UK regulatory obligations on reporting incidents at Annex E.

Key elements to include in serious incident reports to the Charity Commission (UK)

- Who you are and your connection to the charity
 - The authority you have to report on behalf of the charity's trustees (if applicable)
 - Who in the trustee body is aware of the incident
 - What happened and when the charity first became aware of it
 - Country where incident took place
 - Whether or not a crime was committed
 - Summary of incident
 - Whether the incident has been reported to other regulators, statutory agencies or donors
- Action being taken to deal with the incident and prevent future problems

When serious incidents are reported, the Charity Commission can also use the information to assess the risks to other charities. It provides guidance on its website²² as to what should be reported and an electronic portal and form are available to facilitate this. There is no checklist as such, but some interviewees stated that they had used the

Charity Commission guidance when developing their own organisational reporting systems.

²¹ <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

²² https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/752170/RSI_guidance_what_to_do_if_something_goes_wrong_Examples_table_deciding_what_to_report.pdf

5.4. Challenges

5.4.1. Level of detail requested versus confidentiality

Most of the organisations said that they had to “push back” on the demand from donors and some gave examples of refusing to provide information that could lead to identifying the victims (while explaining their reasons to the donor in question). Others admitted that they do provide this identifying information when there is pressure from donors.

Generally, it is more difficult for small/local NGOs to negotiate with the donors or INGOs or UN entities when these ask for additional information. They may also be in a difficult situation if they need assistance in conducting the investigation and managing the case properly and ask for support from the donors or UN entities who provide them with funding (they often consider INGOs and UN entities giving them sub-grants as their donors). They may end up sharing details of the incidents including the name of the alleged perpetrator, the victims and locations.

“We get more pressure from donors like xxx which is asking more information, then push back from affiliates which protect confidentiality and the need-to-know basis.”

“One issue I know, is that members have sometimes to put barriers on some donors’ request and pushed back (ex: name of the victim etc...).”

5.4.2. Lack of consistency in donor expectations

Requirements are not consistent across the donors and therefore organisations have to generate specific reports on a case-by-case basis. Many programmes are funded by several different donors, which may have different requirements and questions. There are extra complications when NGOs are part of a consortium, or part of a large agency or federation with several layers of organisation (national, regional, federation member supporting a particular country, global, etc) involved in a project, potentially reporting to different donors.

NGOs reported that some donors have started asking for information about incidents in projects they do not fund. This is done as part of assessing risk, with the aim of having a better overall picture of the NGO performance on PSEA. This was perceived by many NGOs as a burden and huge pressure and the necessity of it was questioned.

Donors were generally perceived by interviewees as wanting to know more and more detail, sometimes potentially jeopardizing the safety of the victim/survivor and possibly other stakeholders (witnesses, alleged perpetrator, other community members at risk etc). Sometimes donors request information from a country office directly, by-passing the HQ/global level, which makes it more difficult to control the type of information shared. It was also suggested that some donors were not really interested in sexual misconduct or the programmatic impact of incidents, but only in collecting data and following contractual requirements.

“I never been contacted by the donors, even when I reported an incident.”

“XXX told us are they are not interested in knowing about sexual harassment cases, unless it threatens their reputation.”

“For XXX, there is no clear guidance on what they want to know. They are moving to wanting to know more. Their main concern is to know if the investigation has been done properly and what are the results. It is more bureaucracy/administration, less interested in programmatic impact.”

5.4.3. Educating donors on partnership and support

A few interviewees commented that some donors needed to be educated and to shift culturally and in practice towards perceiving reported incidents as a positive signal that the PSEA reporting system works, rather than a signal that the partnership is risky and should be terminated. This would help ensure that reporting an incident will not result in punitive approaches, which might be a disincentive to reporting.

It was noted that reporting to donors tends to attract negative attention to a certain organisation or country because of the existence of PSEA incidents, while logically the concerns should be greater in a location/country or organisations that do not have effective reporting systems in place and do not report any cases.

“There are SEA incidents in humanitarian sector like there are in society. Donors should not suspend the partnership because of reported incident because it happens in humanitarian sector, like it happens in the society.”

“They should be worried when there is no incident. Donors need to be educated on this.”

5.4.4. Capacity of organisations

Several of those consulted described reporting to donors and answering follow-up questions as ‘a full-time job’. In addition, some organisations struggle to report to donors in a timely manner because of their low capacity to respond properly to a SEA incident. The donor’s requirements are perceived as an additional pressure and an expression of the power imbalance between donors and partners.

Sometimes, excessive reporting to donors means that organisations face additional work, which may detract from incident management or the protection/assistance of the victim. Few donors provide specific funding for investigations or implementation of policy and procedures, as they consider these expenses should be funded through the core funds of the organisation. Sometimes donors (including UN agencies and INGOs in their donor roles) do not see themselves as partners and do not see providing technical support to help with PSEA capacity building as part of their responsibilities. This is often not reflected in the partnership agreement, for example. There are of course exceptions to this and donors who are keen to support capacity building on safeguarding/PSEA.

It was also noted that some INGOs do not request incident details from their partners in the spirit of confidentiality and to avoid being seen as micromanaging local organisations or pushing their own agenda. While this is laudable, in some cases this can lead to partners struggling to do an investigation which is safe for the victim/survivor and at the appropriate standard.

“We are doing more for donors than victims”

“Some donors don’t trust small NGOs”

5.5. Response from NGOs to donor and regulatory requirements

In recent years, most humanitarian and development organisations have developed PSEA and safeguarding policies and guidelines, as well as ensuring proper reporting of allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment. When SEA incidents happen in organisations, there are various mechanisms to report them, but practices of reporting vary depending on level of maturity in safeguarding and available resources. NGOs tend to respond to donors' requirements on a case-by-case basis. As already noted, they are often concerned about sharing too much data and want to keep the level of detail to top line information, so as not to breach confidentiality and increase risks for the victim/survivor.

In most situations the donor is informed systematically, as it is usually a contractual obligation. While several interviewees said that they share top-line information and that is sufficient, most reported that donors tend to request too many details, as already noted. Some agencies with sophisticated PSEA systems and/or an online data and case management reporting system in place stated that they share about a third of the reported data, but may still receive further questions. In relation to the UN system, it was noted that donors would raise questions when they saw discrepancies between the online data and data received directly from an agency on a case-by-case basis.

WHAT TO REPORT TO DONORS

(excerpt from an INGO guidance document)

- We must balance our obligation to report complaints to donors with our duty to survivors/complainants and our obligations under data protection laws
- No personal information must be shared with donors
- Case details should be limited to incident type, relationship of those involved to our organisation, actions planned or undertaken, whether a child is involved...

The focus should be towards learning and outcomes and the outcomes template to share with donors can be found.....

Some larger agencies have developed specific guidance for their staff and partners about how to report to donors. One INGO has, for example, an internal document which sets out all stages of the donor reporting process and includes a donor reporting template and sample case studies. Different types of donors are defined (public, private etc) and in some cases reporting is only done if there is a contractual requirement. The information provided to "relevant" donors is fairly high level and includes a brief summary of the nature of the concern, when/where the incident took place, status of the survivor, whether the survivor is a child, employment status of the SOC, assistance provided, further actions to be taken, details of referral to relevant agencies; later on a summary outcome with learning information is provided.

These internal guidelines are shared with donors to help them understand the organisation's approach. Readers are advised "It's also important to minimize the time spent on reporting to reduce the burden on those involved and maintain survivor focus".

Examples given show that smaller organisations struggle to ensure that they provide all required data, as they do not necessarily have the capacity. It is extremely complicated for a small CSO organisation, for example, to hire independent investigators and conduct a professional SEA investigation. Therefore, to a certain extent, the performance of the organisation in complying with donor requirements depends on the support they have received to meet the standards required.

Reporting to regulators was also highlighted as a sometimes-time-consuming exercise. As already noted above, many INGOs have the obligation to report serious incidents to the Charity Commission. The Charity Commission may ask for additional evidence that the incident has been appropriately investigated and managed, so as to assist it in determining whether regulatory intervention is required. This may include requesting documentary evidence. NGO staff referred to working with

Board members (trustees) to put together the required information. Examples were provided of organisations that have developed internal reporting formats based on Charity Commission requirements to save time and effort. Some interviewees speculated that smaller organisations with limited capacity might be reluctant to inform the Charity Commission about an incident due to the onerous reporting requirements and potential ongoing questions.

Most NGOs report aggregated numbers of cases and information on case management (actions taken to address the issue) to donors, as part of regular reporting. Some NGOs report only on closed cases while others share detailed information on cases received, investigated, closed and pending.

- *“We have to draft a separate report for donors. We can’t share personal data with donors. It is done manually to ensure confidentiality”.*
- *“It is in our processes to report systematically to the donors. We extract key information from the system such as project, location, if the victim is a child, if this is a fraud or a PSEA incident, the result of the investigation and the disciplinary measures.*
- *“We report annually to USAID on number of cases and different types.”*

5.6. Sector guidance on what to report internally and externally

The *Inter-Agency Standing Committee Minimum Operating Standards on PSEA*, and *The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability* set international minimum standards related to preventing and responding to SEA. For NGOs working with the UN, the *UN Protocol 2018 on SEA allegations involving implementing partners* is the basis for individual partnership contracting agreements (PCA) which provide some guidance on what and when partners need to report. The UN Protocol also stipulates that UN entities must, as a result of a joint responsibility, support the partners in taking corrective measures to address the gaps in PSEA capacities that would enable the partners to detect, report and manage PSEA incidents and allow them to provide the necessary data and documentation.

Flowing from these international standards, there is a range of guidance on PSEA and safeguarding practice within the humanitarian and development sector from agencies including Keeping Children Safe, CHS Alliance, the PSEA IASC network²³ and BOND. The UK safeguarding Resource and Support Hub²⁴ is a good source of relevant materials. Guidance on internal and external reporting tends to make reference to ensuring appropriate confidentiality and a survivor-centred approach, the need for the leadership oversight internally (with a safeguarding committee as appropriate) and reporting to donors.

A number of institutions and networks were cited by interviewees as being the major players and influencers in relation to improving reporting standards on SEA:

- **FCDO** – stringent reporting and accountability requirements from grantees; coordinating initiatives between bilateral funders to improve consistency in expectations and approach, for example aligning SEA language; supporting PSEA capacity building initiatives (e.g. the Safeguarding and Resource Hub); funding studies on reporting. In recent years FCDO has taken a strong lead on the PSEA agenda, especially after the Safeguarding Summit in London in October 2018.

²³ <https://www.chsalliance.org>; <https://psea.interagencystandingcommittee.org>; <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global>

²⁴ <https://safeguardingsupporthub.org>

- **USAID** – stringent reporting and accountability requirements from grantees; funding initiatives such as the Aid Worker Security Database (although this only contains limited information related to SEA).
- **CHS Alliance**: setting standards for response to SEA incidents and investigations; working with Alliance members on best practice and common approaches; delivering training
- **BOND**: set up working groups after the Safeguarding Summit in 2018, including one on reporting; producing guidelines and templates for members
- **UK Charity Commission**: setting regulatory requirements for trustee compliance on good practice in dealing with vulnerable populations; stringent reporting requirements and follow-up of any incidents in organisations with UK charity funding
- **Accountable Now**: formerly known as International NGO Charter, requires members to be accountable in key areas and report publicly through accountability reports

BOND has produced a *Safeguarding report-handling toolkit: 20 core elements: a toolkit to strengthen safeguarding*²⁵. In terms of external reporting to donors, it offers the following guidance: ‘Organisations should review the contract they have with donors to identify any clauses that relate to reporting maltreatment or harm by staff, associates, operations, or programmes. There may be country level and/or head office reporting requirements. Information to prepare and include in reporting to donors should be defined in guidance supporting the safeguarding report-handling mechanism. Only non-identifying information should be given to those who are not directly providing support to the survivor or addressing the case’.

PSEA networks in various countries have been developing guidance on reporting procedures and requirements, which their members commit to. The PSEA Network in Cox’s Bazaar *Standard Operating Procedure on SEA Complaint Referral in Cox’s Bazaar*²⁶ provides a list of data that PSEA Focal Points are required to share with the Network in relation to all SEA cases reported to them. Please see Annex D for more details.

Notwithstanding the materials and guidance referred to above, **there is lack of common agreement on exactly WHAT should be reported in relation to incidents of abuse and maltreatment**. Some agencies report only on SEA, while others have a wider interpretation of safeguarding, to include harassment and other types of harm. Much of the guidance is fairly general and does not specify exactly what incidents and what detail should be reported. As a result, many agencies have developed their own interpretation and procedures and there is currently no consistent approach.

²⁵ <https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/safeguarding-report-handling-toolkit>

²⁶ <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/bangladesh/document/standard-operating-procedure-sea-complaint-referral-cox's-bazaar>

6. Internal reporting to Boards

In terms of internal reporting, there is a common practice in NGOs to report safeguarding cases (including SEA) to senior leadership and to boards. Some NGOs report to a safeguarding committee on regular basis (this was described as quarterly in most cases), others report to different leadership meetings (for example, regional directors' meetings), while others report to the entire board. Many agencies have a Board Safeguarding Focal point (a board member) following up on safeguarding issues on behalf of the board.

Reporting to the boards on a quarterly basis has been recognised as a good practice in most organisations. It allows the leadership and board to be briefed on the number of cases received, understand the actions taken and review organisational trends on SEA. This helps board members make informed decisions and, in some cases, agree to increased resources for safeguarding. Information shared with the Board (and safeguarding committee) usually includes cases reported from partners as well as in the organisation itself. There are NGOs that have a "threshold" for information that is required to be shared with the board immediately, such as cases involving senior management.

Examples of internal reporting to Boards

- **Large INGO:** the Safeguarding Global Lead produces internal and external reports with overview, trend analysis and recommendations to management at global level (6-month report) and at regional and country level (quarterly report). The public report provides top line data.
- **Large INGO:** the Safeguarding Operations Global Head at the confederation level aggregates information received from affiliates and produces an overview for the external report (public) and the internal "case data report" which is shared with relevant persons via a link on the intra-net.
- **Private sector organisation:** the Head of Safeguarding and the Chief of Compliance and Ethics would tell the head of business (in charge of links with FCDO, EC, USAID) and the General Council on a case-by-case as needs and produces a report for the board meeting every 3 months.
- **Large INGO:** Key Performance Indicators include data generated by the DATIX system, such as the duration of incident management and the number of incidents; these are used to produce a quarterly report to the Board, with analysis of risk and trends, an annual report to the Board and Trustees and an accountability report accessible online.
- **Large INGO:** the Safeguarding lead reports internally to the Board which produces a management response to the report recommendations. The information to the Board is the same information as for the public report. The data are extracted from the online system which permits trend analysis and data aggregation.

A number of interviewees reported positive outcomes from having a safeguarding/SEA reporting system allowing the provision of management information to senior management and the Board:

- **It can help address staff breaches of safeguarding policy** relating to sensitive cultural practices such as early marriage. (*“We saw a trend on early marriage in some countries, then we focused discussion on how to reduce the number of staff involved in early marriage.”*)
- **It helps resource allocation** (*“as a result of reporting to the management and analysis etc..., the global safeguarding team moved from 1 to 9 persons in 5 years.”* - *“The Head of Safeguarding position turned permanent.”*)
- **It allows for education of managers** and shifting the culture of the organisation from the assumption that no reported case means there is no problem, to an understanding that this means that the safeguarding/PSEA system is not effective enough (*“the number of safeguarding reports has increased. The culture of organisation is changing as a result of the ongoing reporting.”*)
- **It helps to hold management accountable and committed:** the Safeguarding teams are able to present overviews, trends, risks and advocate not only for increased resources, but also for specific corrective measures to address particular challenges.
- **Examples were provided of boards producing a management response** to recommendations in the reports provided by the safeguarding lead.

7. Public accountability and transparency

A vital element of accountability to the public is demonstrating compliance with key humanitarian principles. This includes transparency of operations and providing information on achievements and challenges which is publicly available. In relation to PSEA, public accountability first and foremost means accountability to victims/ survivors – including both those who have and have not reported their cases. The next level of accountability is to the families of victims/survivors and affected populations.

The sections above have dealt with accountability to donors, who are often using public money to fund NGO projects and share in the accountability to survivors. This section looks at initiatives undertaken more widely to be accountable on PSEA.

In recent years, much has been done by organisations to increase their capacities on PSEA/safeguarding and comply with IASC PSEA standards. Donors agencies have also been pushing for this and the *UN Protocol 2018 on SEA allegations involving implementing partners* highlights the joint responsibility of UN entities and their partners to take corrective measures in addressing gaps in their PSEA systems. Many agencies, especially UN entities, have developed solid due diligence frameworks to assess the capacities of their partners on PSEA/safeguarding and to ensure the setting up of community-based complaint mechanisms. In major crisis situations, PSEA networks are established to support and coordinate efforts of UN agencies and INGOs/NGOs to build up PSEA systems and develop joint mechanisms and procedures for reporting and handling incidents. Despite all these initiatives and the information accessible online, the level of knowledge, awareness and understanding of the public remains limited. There is more to be done to communicate on the actions taken to prevent and respond to SEA, but also on the specific challenges it presents.

In relation to greater transparency, major agencies have started to include information about their safeguarding policies and procedures on their websites. There is common agreement on the value of making this information available publicly, as part of being accountable as an organisation. At the same time, the level of information shared on actual safeguarding and SEA incidents tends to be limited and varies between NGOs. Some NGOs publish safeguarding reports on their websites – (e.g. Transparency International); some include SEA cases in their annual reports (e.g. Action Aid, MAG, SCI, Oxfam, Plan International, Tearfund, Trócaire); others include this information in annual accountability reports (e.g. Mercy Corps, World Vision, Plan, SCI, Oxfam, Caritas).

The table below provides a high-level summary of information available from recent public reports of a sample of INGOs, compared with data provided on the UN iReport system. Please note that, in the case of “type of allegation”, for INGOs this is likely to include a wider range of safeguarding incidents, not just SEA (as per the UN system). *Please see Annex E for a more detailed table with examples of information reported by a range of INGOs.*

Table 2 Comparison of UN system data with publicly reported safeguarding data from a sample of INGOs

Information provided on UN database	SCI	Oxfam	Plan	World Vision	DRC	Action Aid UK	Trócaire	MAG	Tearfund	Mercy Corps
Dates	Year	Six months	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year
Nationality	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Category of personnel	Staff or vol	√	√	√	x	x	Staff or partner	x	x	Staff or partner
Gender of victims	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Ages of victims	< >18	< >18	x	< >18	x	< >18	x	x	< >18	x
Type of allegation	√	√	√	√	x	x	x	x	√	x
Detail of allegation	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Paternity claimed	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Victim assistance	√	√	x	√	x	x	x	√	x	x
Status of investigation	√	√	√	√	x	√	x	√	√	√
Decision/ results	√	√	√	√	x	√	√	√	√	√
Action/status	√	√	√	√	x	√	x	√	x	√
Includes partner info	√	√	√	√	x	√	√	n/a	√	√

A study conducted by K4D in early 2020 on NGO collection and reporting of data on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment²⁷ found a lack of consistency across different organisations. It was noted that agencies tend to use different definitions and types of data: some organisations report only on ‘safeguarding incidents’, while others split this into different categories, such as sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, sexual harassment, bullying, physical abuse etc. Some may also include child protection incidents in the community in their reported data.

When sharing information publicly, agencies prefer limiting this to high-level data, with a focus on avoiding sharing information that would lead to identification of individual cases (for confidentiality reasons). It would appear that, in general, NGOs:

- Report annual figures
- Report on SEA incidents as a minimum, with some are also reporting on other types of safeguarding incidents, i.e. other forms of abuse) • Share aggregated data and “top line” information
- Don’t provide details on individual cases.
- Don’t give names, address or contact, nationality of survivors/perpetrators
- Don’t disaggregate figures by geographical location, gender of perpetrator or gender/age of victims
- Communicate on closed cases, status/result of the investigation and disciplinary measures

²⁷ <https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/15287>

There are still many NGOs that have not started publishing this information to the public, especially small/local NGOs. There may be a need to strengthen their PSEA/safeguarding reporting systems to enable this. There are potential implications from communicating information on SEA incidents to the public: the ability to handle follow-up questions or interest (from journalists, social media, donors, Charity Commission etc) and capacity to mitigate potential programme or donor risks. There could be associated risks to communities, especially if donors suspend partnership or funding, or risks to survivors/victims.

Accountable Now²⁸ is a cross--sector platform of development, humanitarian, environmental, rights based and advocacy organisations. Its 27 members are required to publicly report annually against a set of accountability commitments. Principles include ‘strong leadership’ (referring to taking internal and external complaints seriously and creating safe spaces and appropriate mechanisms to address them) and ‘justice & inequality’ (referring to promoting human rights and not doing harm; supporting people to know their rights and accountability for respecting, protecting and fulfilling them) (Accountable Now, 2017). Safeguarding/PSEA is not listed as a specific topic for the reports, but some agencies are including relevant information as part of reporting against the various accountability commitments.

Another source of publicly available information about SEA and safeguarding incidents is the media, especially after the “MeToo Movement” and the events leading to the Safeguarding Summit in London in 2018. *The New Humanitarian*²⁹ publishes reports gathered through investigative journalism, which are picked up by other media. In some cases, media organisations have been the first to highlight incidents and the agencies involved. While this can make an important contribution to accountability in the sector, it has also sometimes exposed the survivor, the alleged perpetrator and other stakeholders, thereby compromising the confidential management of an incident, in breach of guiding principles, including the important principle of do no harm.

It was noted by interviewees that much remains to be done to have a “reasonable” approach to public information on SEA incidents, to avoid sensational stories and exacerbating the lack of trust in INGOs to handle incidents properly. The humanitarian sector has been much in the spotlight recently and expectations of accountability are potentially higher than for some other sectors, for a multitude of reasons. **One factor is that it is still not accepted that increased reporting of incidents should be seen as a positive indicator of systems working, rather than something that should lead to punitive measures.** This is not fully understood by the public nor by elements of the media. In turn this translates into political and organisational pressures which have a negative effect on funding decisions, NGO operations and ultimately action on PSEA.

More harmonised approaches to reporting could contribute to the provision of clearer public information and ultimately greater confidence in humanitarian work and increased support for PSEA initiatives, to the benefit of survivors and affected populations.

²⁸ <https://accountablenow.org/about-us/our-members/>

²⁹ <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/>

8. Setting up a harmonised approach to SEA reporting

8.1. Is a harmonised approach needed?

The agencies interviewed were generally supportive of harmonisation, but some reservations were expressed about whether this was really needed or a priority at this time. Key questions asked included:

- Why do donors want a harmonised mechanism for data provision, when they already receive reports on a case-by-case basis from individual organisations?
- How will the information be used? How will this help donors to strengthen their partnership with NGOs, including improved management of SEA risks and joint capacity building?
- Will sharing data provided in a harmonised format usually be enough for donors to avoid them going back to organisation and requesting more information?
- How will this harmonised approach contribute to better incident management, including conducting investigations in a confidential way and assisting/protecting the victim/survivor?
- Could a harmonised approach make a contribution to reversing the current under-reporting?

There have been initiatives underway elsewhere looking at a harmonised approach:

- **Interaction** (US umbrella organisation) has been surveying its members to understand more about reported incidences of SEAH from 2018 to 2020. Participation is voluntary and anonymous. The survey asks for various types of information, including SEAH reporting mechanisms, geographic trends, trends of programmes associated with reported incidents, scope of reported forms of SEAH, trends related to reported perpetrators and to victims. The information is currently being collected (September 2021) and will then be analysed.
- **The Funders Safeguarding Collaborative** recently undertook a study *Funder Approaches to Safeguarding: challenges, positive practices and opportunities for collaboration*.³⁰ As part of this study, one option explored was the possibility of establishing a central reporting system for safeguarding incidents, recognising the current duplication in donor demands of NGOs. There was support for this idea, but challenges were also identified. Funders have different systems and processes in place which would make a centralised system more complex; it would require a significant investment of time and resources, to be balanced against other priorities; in addition, in some contexts, the charity regulator (e.g. the Charity Commission) requires funders to carry out their own due diligence assessments and holds them individually accountable for following up on safeguarding concerns.
- **The International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), SHCR and UNHCR** recently commissioned a study on partnership approaches to PSEA. This focussed on the important role played by partnerships between different agencies (UN/funders/INGOs/NGOs etc) in addressing allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) against aid workers. The report is due to be published in late 2020.

The table below summarises some of the pros and cons of a harmonised approach highlighted by interviewees, who considered the question from a variety of perspectives, based on the type of organisation they represented and the reporting challenges they faced.

³⁰ <https://globalfundforchildren.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/FSC-Funder-Approaches-to-Safeguarding-Full-July-2021.pdf>

Why a harmonised approach is a good idea	Why it is not a good idea
To facilitate reporting by NGOs which often have to deal with multiple different systems	This could become another way of donors exerting power and control over partner agencies
To standardise reporting requirements and have mutual agreement about what to collect/report	The idea is overambitious and similar projects have not succeeded
Some NGOs like the idea of one portal for reporting to multiple donors, which would save time and effort	Too difficult to get agencies to agree on what to include – the lowest common denominator is unlikely to be useful
A harmonised approach would enable trend analyses and aggregation of data which could inform future policy and strategy on PSEA	This is not a priority when the main issue currently is under-reporting – this should be the focus of resources
To enhance transparency, which could in turn promote more public confidence and trust in the international development sector	It's a wider issue about how agencies and donors work together – you can't deal with harmonising SEA reporting without addressing wider issues of cooperation in the sector

Why a harmonised approach is a good idea	Why it is not a good idea
To enhance accountability to donors, the public, affected populations and survivors	Large agencies have already invested in their own systems and won't want to change them
To support better collective understanding and learning of the problem of SEA, which in turn could lead in the longer term to improved response and better outcomes for victims	Suggesting this project would help survivors would be tokenism only – the priority should be focussing resources directly on victims/survivors instead
If it becomes easier to report using a standard format, this could encourage agencies to report and address the current under-reporting	Agencies are still fearful about the reputational consequences of being more open about SEA incidents and also fear having their funding cut by donors
Overall it could save resources (time and effort responding to different requirements, reinventing the wheel in agencies) once a scheme was in place	Likely to fail if resources to put it in place and ensure ongoing support for its use are not provided
Opportunity to clarify and agree the purposes of reporting and collecting information, and educate donors to have a consistent approach	Donors already ask for too much information – they need to reduce their requests rather than setting up an extra way of facilitating them
Survivors /victims might be more likely to report incidents if a harmonised approach leads to more transparency about cases and they can see evidence of them being taken seriously	The data protection implications make the whole project very complex and unrealistic

8.2. Issues to take into account

There are a number of key issues that would need to be discussed and further agreement reached in order to proceed with a harmonised approach and get acceptance by all. This section summarises the main issues highlighted by interviewees.

Nature of the SEA reporting framework:

- Define the purpose of the project and the rationale for organisations to join and participate.
- Define the nature of what is being proposed – initially at least it would probably be only an agreed data reporting format, which would not include sharing documents related to the incidents, for confidentiality reasons.
- A common understanding on the key definitions of SEA is a prerequisite, as the study revealed that organisations do not use the same definitions, even sometimes across their own members
- A common understanding of the steps needed to handle an SEA incident through to closure, and how to conduct and complete an investigation.

Nature and protection of the data:

- Agree whether to report data relating only to closed cases or on all opened cases and on the rationale for deciding this. There were suggestions to include only closed cases.
- Find a balance between sharing only top line data and having enough data to meet the purposes of the scheme in a meaningful way. Most interviewees suggested reporting the same data that they share in their public report, while others felt that this information is currently so minimal that it would not be adequate.
- Identify the necessary measures to ensure the protection of data: password protected access, limited number of people able to change or delete information. Data protection will need to be considered at all stages - how will data be used? How will it be stored? It is also critical to risks of data leakage to the media. Organisations need to retain control of their own data.
- Be clear on how organisations can engage with the scheme and contribute to its adaptations. Have a channel for feedback from organisations if they want to raise issues or suggest changes: any proposal of change would come back to an agreed decision-making body. Have a protocol that describes how/who is allowed to make changes when needed (a third party? committee of experts from different organisations?).

Communications and ownership:

- A strong communication strategy would be needed to get buy-in and commitment from the organisations' senior management, to ensure they champion the scheme in their own organisations.
- Organisations would need to understand the added-value of sharing data through the harmonised schemes when they have their own internal reporting systems and their members have bilateral communication on specific cases with relevant donors (focus needed on, for example, trend analysis or capacity building or public/donor education, while emphasising that organisations will retain control their own data)
- Take account of the comprehensive systems that organisations have created recently and learn from this experience: a few organisations have invested a lot of resources (e.g. staff and management time, recruiting external consultants, designing, piloting, training staff, communicating etc).

- Factor in enough time for discussion, negotiation and consensus that takes all views into account to create a feeling of inclusion and ownership: *“My personal experience is that there was nothing that we agreed on. We were having different views on anything.”*
- The internal procedures for the organisations joining the scheme will need to “allow” for sharing of data on SEA incidents – consider working with the management of the organisations which need to amend or develop procedures to take this into account.
- Consider how to create a momentum for wide participation in the scheme. This could mean involving key donors, avoiding naming organisations, at least in the pilot stage, so as not to create competition or expose any organisations (especially those reporting).
- Ensure all voices are listened to and understood: *“the largest organisations sometimes crush the smaller voices and tend to repeat what they have done/designed. They don’t learn.”*

Wider considerations for the project to meet its purpose:

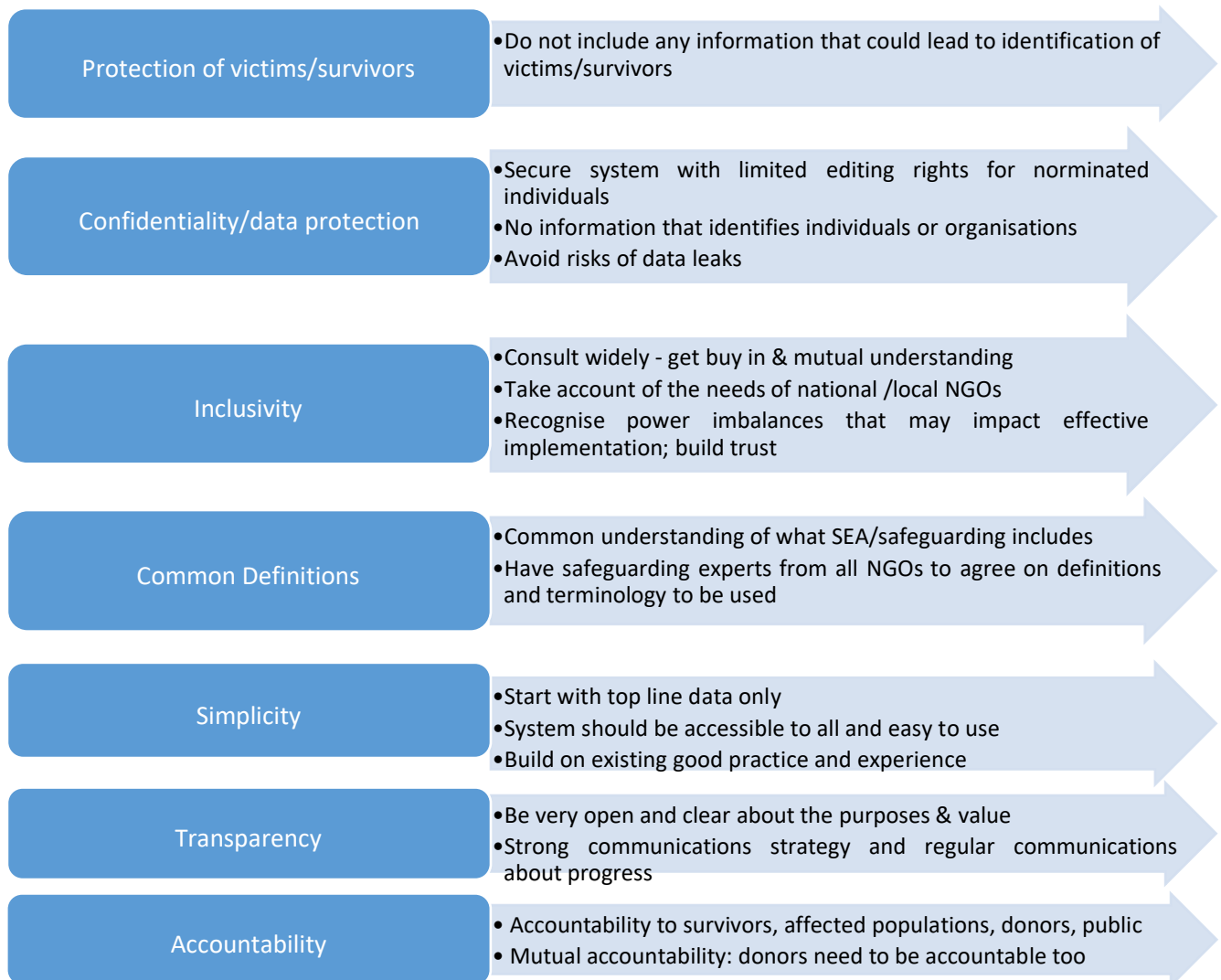
- Consider how the scheme could generate information on what actions and preventive measures organisations have taken as a result of learning and recommendations from SEA incidents. This would help to counteract negative views about the sector.
- Consider how to promote investment in effective complaints and community reporting mechanisms so that the overall picture that a data reporting scheme produces reflects reality and can help bring about improvements needed in the sector.
- Address capacity gaps and needs, especially for the organisations that have not yet put procedures in place or set-up community reporting mechanisms or with low expertise to conduct SEA investigations. Organisations need reassurance that they are managing incidents well.
- Including reporting of partner incidents: organisations would need to agree to report on incidents involving the staff of their partners (e.g. CSO partners). They would have to make sure that the contractual agreement between INGOs and their partners includes reporting obligations and expectations in terms of incident management, as well as a plan to support capacity building of partners where necessary.
- Consider how the scheme could work for private sector organisations with wider remits. Would it include SEA incidents only in their humanitarian/development programmes or also incidents arising in their work in other sectors?

Governance and operational considerations:

- Establish a steering committee or equivalent to manage the process (which could include safeguarding experts from the organisations); consider having a rotating system for the governance: one year with one organisation, one year with another etc
- Have clarity on roles and responsibilities and who is going to set up the scheme, to report, to follow-up, to do the quality control of the information, validate and update.
- Administration and management: a secretariat or equivalent may be needed to administer the scheme.
- Start with a pilot /test phase which can be evaluated and adjustments made as necessary
- If a centralised online approach is planned in future, getting the right, cost-effective system will involve detailed specification, engaging with different companies that offer systems and being creative in the design, so that it is user-friendly.
- Consider training implications

8.3. Key principles to guide a harmonised approach

Based on discussions with the organisations consulted, the following principles are proposed for consideration for any future initiative on harmonisation of SEA reporting.



8.4. Information to include or not include

There was common agreement amongst those interviewed that the details included in any harmonisation scheme should not help identify the survivor and any other individuals (perpetrator, witnesses, investigators etc...) or particular organisations.

Some organisations do not include information about the country or region within a country when reporting to donors, as this could lead to identifying the location and potentially individuals. Others felt that including the country was essential if one of the purposes was to analyse trends and develop more effective prevention strategies.

Some organisations were reluctant to share data other than that on cases that are already closed. The relevance of sharing or reporting incident when the result of the investigation is not known or when the investigation has not confirmed the incident was questioned. One organisation stated that only 55% of their cases were confirmed after investigation and recommended being very cautious about the information shared. It was noted that any scheme should include the protection of perpetrator rights.

Several interviewees suggested including only “top line” data that organisations are already reporting - the number of cases, type of cases, if investigation is done, and the results. *“I would share only data that we are reporting currently”*

There were also questions about the usefulness of real-time reporting, given that an increased expectation from donor or public for details on a case is more likely to disrupt effective case management and resolution than assist and could expose the survivor. *“It is tricky to have real-time reporting, because it touches about confidentiality, victim assistance etc.... What would be the added-value for the organisations? Is the final picture the most reliable? It does not help to have data that keeps changing. What helps me is to have the real figures.”*

In summary, there was a general agreement amongst interviewees about the following points:

- Start with simple data to get the scheme going and engage people; then year by year more detail can be included if needed.
- No data that could lead to identification of individuals (victim, perpetrator, witnesses and even investigators etc).
- Do not mention the name of the organisation, otherwise it could create possible security issues, potential tensions, stigmatisation and comparisons or competition among organisations and lead to lack of engagement
- No need to have real-time data – not appropriate for effective case management and protection/assistance of the victim
- Do not include information on the country or area where the incidents take place, otherwise it could create risks and compromise confidentiality, but instead mention the region of the world.

8.5. Ensuring a survivor-centred approach

It appears unlikely that a harmonised reporting scheme in itself could be survivor-centred, other than by not providing information that could lead to identification of the survivor. There could however be positive indirect benefits from harmonisation, through increased understanding of the problem and through donors and NGOs working more effectively together to improve the response to SEA and safeguarding incidents. There would also be a potential added advantage for victims/survivors if they could see that cases were being addressed and concluded. This might also encourage other victims/survivors to come forward and report what has happened to them.

The current arrangements of reporting different information to different donors can lead to challenges in maintaining confidentiality. In addition, some donor requirements lead to pressure on NGOs to provide information which should not be shared if a “need to know” policy was being properly adhered to. The current disparity of reporting requirements and methods is not necessarily conducive to protecting survivors. A more harmonised approach could help address this.

Several interviewees from organisations that have set up an internal system said that the process allowed organisations and staff to improve their understanding and awareness on sexual exploitation and abuse and how to manage incidents effectively. This included improving practices in terms of a survivor-centred approach.

8.6. Promoting accountability and more equal partnerships between agencies

The examples given about existing systems show that they promote accountability through generating information and analysis that can be used in public reports and in internal reports to Boards. A harmonised reporting scheme could generate information and trend analyses which could be used for a variety of purposes. It could, for example, help inter-agency networks such as BOND, SCHR or CHS Alliance in monitoring how donor-NGO partnerships are working and potentially how the continuity of programmes has been secured despite reported SEA incidents.

Several organisations include the learning and recommendations from the case in their systems. This approach could be replicated to promote joint action between the various partner agencies on training and technical support.

A number of further ideas came forward in relation to how a harmonised scheme could promote accountability and more equal partnerships through the following:

- enabling trend analysis and advocacy for increased PSEA resources, for example for supporting prevention activities or for technical support on investigations.
- enabling feedback on how to improve SEA partnerships. This could include a channel for participating organisations to report on the challenges of managing SEA incidents, including examples of good practice in partnership and donor support.
- promoting online discussions or webinars for sharing experience and learning in relation to data reporting and incident management. It would become not just an incident reporting scheme but an opportunity to create a dialogue between organisations in order to better prevent abuses.

One important aspect would be to monitor the level of participation of small organisations in the scheme and analyse the reasons for their participation or non-participation. Those involved in the scheme would need to constantly question the reliability of the analysis and overviews that it produces and how much these reflect (or not) the reality on the ground.

Any harmonised approach to SEA reporting should not just focus on figures and data, but contribute to ensuring an ongoing dialogue with front-line organisations and mechanisms that capture learning, challenges and good practices.

9. Conclusions and recommendations

9.1. Conclusions

There was general agreement among the participants in this study that a more harmonised approach to data collection and reporting on SEA incidents could bring many advantages, if set up in the right way with clear purposes and scope, together with an inclusive approach. There are already a few examples of systems in place (UN, major INGOs, GBVIMS) which could provide a starting point for discussion about the benefits and realities of embarking on what would be a major project, notwithstanding the possible reluctance of INGOs to be involved when they already have their own systems. The existing systems are all run by large organisations with considerable resources at their disposal and any future project on harmonisation would need to dedicate time to bringing on board a much wider group of agencies working at country level.

It was clear from the interviews conducted that the different stakeholders (donors and foundations, INGOs, UN entities, government agencies, private sector etc) still have different perspectives on what harmonisation might mean and what the purposes would be. It appeared that there is widespread distrust of donors, what their motives might be in different situations and how any shared data might be used. This points towards the need for an inclusive process involving different types of stakeholders to come to a common understanding and agreement on the way forward. Many interviewees stressed the importance of allowing time for this process, especially if participation in a future harmonised approach would be voluntary.

There was interest in improving harmonisation from umbrella groups and networks which have been undertaking other relevant initiatives. Examples include the Funders Safeguarding Collaborative which has been looking at good practice for donors in relation to safeguarding and PSEA; Interaction, which has been surveying its membership on SEAH incidents; and BOND which has produced and toolkits and guidance on reporting. The Donor Technical Working Group of government agencies has been working on a project on aligned language, led by FCDO. It could also be relevant to learn from the experiences of other sector initiatives arising from the 2018 Safeguarding Summit, such as the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.

Notwithstanding the positive comments expressed on having a harmonised approach, many interviewees reflected more widely on all the efforts made in the sector in recent years in relation to addressing SEA and to what extent they had been successful. There was a sense that a great deal of attention had been given to developing safeguarding/SEA policies and reporting procedures, building systems and supplying data to please donors and the media, but less effort on engaging with communities and building protective mechanisms. It was suggested that there had been even less action on detection of concerns and building staff capacity on this. Communications material is still often not in a language that people/ refugees/ migrants understand, nor is it accessible to the most vulnerable (e.g. children). Some managers and staff in charge of PSEA still do not receive adequate training; some organisations still have investigations conducted by staff without the adequate expertise or experience. Many interviewees referred to these issues and suggested that they should be constantly borne in mind when working on a harmonised approach to SEA reporting.

Due to the limitations of this study, consultation with NGOs at national/local level was limited and would need to be prioritised in any future phase of the project. In addition, it did not prove possible to gather input from some sectors which could potentially be involved, for example, sports foundations and research funders.

The remaining sections of the report set out recommendations from the study, a preliminary proposal for a harmonised approach and suggestions for next steps.

9.2. Recommendations

- i. **Develop a common understanding and purpose** which will be a pre-condition for the success of any harmonised approach.
 - reassurance about agencies retaining ownership/ responsibility for their own data
 - a common understanding on SEA and case management,
 - common agreement on the purposes, scope and management of the scheme,
 - participation of all and clarity about how organisations can get involved.
- ii. **Encourage the involvement of NGOs and CSOs at national level.** This includes
 - understand and incorporate their perspectives and engage them in the development of the harmonised framework.
 - consider how the data generated by the scheme can provide trend analysis to inform capacity building and education of donors on the contexts in which NGOs are working and responding to SEA incidents
- iii. **Engender buy-in by CEOs and Boards.**
 - clarify the added-value of a harmonised approach and convince organisations to participate
 - focus on key benefits such as building PSEA capacities, trend analysis, data to support the sector in applying learning and preventive measures
- iv. **Prioritise protection and confidentiality:** data protection is central to the safety/protection of victims/survivors (as well as legal compliance) and to not exposing organisations that report
- v. **Start small:**
 - define the nature of the data to be included and keep it simple.
 - undertake a pilot phase, focussing on top-line information that many organisations report publicly. Given the current gaps in reporting, make it easy for agencies to participate, especially small organisations
- vi. **Promote a culture of ongoing questioning and active learning.**
 - is the purpose of harmonisation clear?
 - How is the input and output from the system being monitored?
 - How reliable is the overview provided by the reporting system in terms of reflecting the reality on the ground?
 - What about partners that have no capacity to detect and report?
 - Are adjustments needed?
 - Ensure data is not misquoted and be honest about its limitations. A constant preoccupation with questioning and learning will make the scheme more credible and reliable.
- vii. **Make links with key sector networks,** to engage with donor and other stakeholder groups on PSEA.
 - use their expertise and experience to inform the development of the harmonised approach and the involvement of their members.
 - contribute to improving PSEA through sharing information and ongoing engagement in sector debates, joint reflection, training and learning.

9.3. Provisional proposal for a harmonised approach

The outline below provides a summary of what an initial harmonised scheme could look like, based on the consultations undertaken during this study. This is presented as a preliminary draft for further discussion (potentially in a future phase II of this project) and subsequent refinement.

Data to be collected and recorded as part of the scheme

- Set up a simple scheme with a common reporting format that protects victims' data (survivor centred) and that will be easy to use by small and large NGOs.
- The scheme should report on "closed" incidents that have already been investigated, so as not to create unnecessary pressure from the public or donors
- To maximise engagement, the common format should not include, at the initial stage at least, the name of the organisation that is involved in the incident (not to expose potentially the organisation nor create competition between organisations).
- Report the data that organisations already report publicly, for example in annual reports. Therefore, the data reporting scheme should initially to be set up on the basis of limited data.
- All organisations should report the data for incidents involving their staff, but also their partners. This potentially means that some organisations will have to make sure their partnership agreements fit with this objective.
- There should be a section for data on the learning and recommendations for corrective measures to prevent SEA incidents.
- Focus on what is realistic for NGOs to provide and for donors to expect

Information to be included for initial pilot phase	Categories within this information
Date of incident	Suggest month (not specific date)
Location – region of the world	Suggest using the standard list of UN regions or subregions (as per UN Geoscheme) ³¹
Gender of victim	Male/Female/Other/Unknown
Age of victim	To determine whether adult or child
Details of alleged perpetrator	Staff member, partner staff, volunteer Role - seniority in organisation
Type of incident	Sexual exploitation; sexual abuse; sexual harassment
Result of investigation	Allegation confirmed/ not confirmed
Disciplinary measures taken	Warning, termination, dismissal
Corrective measures taken	Disciplinary action; termination of contract; training;
Learning from incident	Include action being taken to prevent future problems; gaps identified where support may be needed

³¹ <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>

Data to be considered for inclusion in future (once scheme established)

- Information about whether the initial report came from communities or from staff and via which reporting channels. The scheme would thereby publicise the existence of reporting mechanisms and potentially provide evidence that incidents reported are followed up and addressed by each organisation
- Details of assistance to victim
- Referrals to external services (health services, psychological support, legal advice etc) ⇨ Referral to authorities (in the case of a crime)

Strategy to ensure sign-up to the scheme

- Proceed step-by-step: engage with a wide range and number of organisations, develop a platform for sharing views and be inclusive to all, have specialists from various organisations to ensure a common understanding of SEA and the steps in case management; have a pilot phase of testing the scheme.
- The data that are reported through the scheme will be owned by the organisations reporting the data for the cases that involve their staff or partners; any request from donors for clarification or more information should be passed to the organisation for them to respond
- Data protection will be central; explain to CEOs and Boards how this will be ensured, who will have access to the data, who will be managing it, who will be able to make changes.
- Work with donor networks to get donors on board, aiming to increase their trust in the capacities of organisations to respond to incidents and use the ensuing learning to enhance prevention.
- Encourage all parties to perceive reporting as a positive signal that the reporting system works, rather than a signal of poor PSEA practices (which can also be the case) and that reporting incidents would not expose organisations to a reduction in funds or partnership/project discontinuation.
- The data reporting scheme should be linked with the issue of building PSEA capacities (that donors need to contribute to). Only organisations that have already systems in place or sufficient capacities will be able to detect, report and manage incidents and provide reliable information. Therefore capacity building will be needed to enable the scheme to provide a realistic overview of the PSEA issue in the humanitarian aid sector. **Leadership and governance**
- Put in place a steering committee to take the harmonisation project forward, with representatives from INGOs, NGOs, donors, sector networks and other relevant stakeholders
- One of the organisations involved should provide staffing /resources (with funding identified) to enable the work of the steering committee and implementation of the scheme. Even if the initial stages of the scheme involve only agreement on a harmonised format which can be used for sharing information, coordination will still be needed
- Organisations should be able to launch any request to the committee who will have duty to respond and meet regularly to enable this.
- The committee would need to be allowed and enabled to request updates on incident management to participating organisations to make sure that data are correct and reliable.

Use of the data:

- Encourage agencies to share their data in the agreed harmonised format; this could start by data collection and aggregation within existing sector networks
- Generate reports showing analysis of trends, which can be used to inform advocacy and initiatives to build the PSEA capacities of all parties involved, particularly NGOs which require technical support to respond effectively to SEA incidents and improve prevention

9.4. Next steps

The following next steps are proposed for the next phase of this project.

- a. Organise further consultations about the proposed scheme through networks such as CHS Alliance, SCHR, ICVA, BOND, Interaction, Funders Safeguarding Collaborative and other relevant groups; as part of this, prioritise consultations with NGOs at national level
- b. Invite stakeholders who have showed interest in the initiative to be part of a steering committee to take the harmonisation project forward, including representatives from INGOs, NGOs, donors, sector networks and other relevant stakeholders (*advice to be provided separately on suggested organisations*)
- c. Identify an organisation to coordinate the work of the steering committee and secure funding for the different aspects of taking the harmonisation project forward
- d. Reach out to the leading organisations in the sector which have already developed comprehensive reporting systems to ensure their buy-in and learn from their experience
- e. Hold initial meetings of the steering committee to define the purposes and scope of the scheme and establish a work plan, taking account of the findings and recommendations from phase 1
- f. Develop a communications strategy for the project, in order to engage a wide range of organisations and be able to explain the added-value of the scheme and take account of key concerns such as data protection
- g. Based on the outcome of the further consultations, refine the proposed harmonised format for reporting
- h. Plan a pilot phase for testing the harmonised format, ensuring that a range of different types of organisations take part
 - i. Evaluate the pilot phase and plan the next stage

Annexes

- A. Table of information collected on SEA incidents
- B. Acronyms and abbreviations
- C. PSEA Network reporting guidance
- D. Regulatory obligations
- E. Table of publicly reported information
- F. Sample incident management form from national NGO
- G. List of organisations which contributed to the study
- H. Review framework (*available on request*)

ANNEXES TO REPORT ON HARMONISED APPROACHES TO SEA DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING SEPTEMBER 2021

Annex A: Table of information collected by different agencies anonymised

Agency	Information collected when an SEA incident is reported	Notes
International NGO systems		
XXX large INGO Use an Excel spreadsheet at present	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Incident (date the incident is reported to XX), notifications to be made: Country Director, Stakeholder Panel, Country Board, etc) ⇒ Survivor (all details on the survivor: name, age, gender, religion, status (married, LGTB, ethnicity, migration status), relationship with XX (staff, partners), if survivor is in contact with XX, assistance needed/provided, etc) ⇒ Subject of Concern/Alleged Perpetrator (name, age, gender, status, relationship with XX, risk for the SoC, is the SoC aware of the allegation, support offered) ⇒ Witness/3rd Party Complainant: name, contact, relationship with XX, risk, support, communications with witnesses, etc ⇒ Actions taken ⇒ Remit: policies relevant to the incident, need for referral to HR or Protection ⇒ Referrals (support referrals for the survivor and others involved) ⇒ Affected donors (funding operations in the area) and need for information – using the SOP. ⇒ Decisions: record decisions on type of internal response undertaken 	The Excel sheet is filled at country level and shared with the Global Safeguarding team.
XXX large INGO Uses Ethicspoint to collect incidents from the field.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Country the incident is reported from ⇒ Type of incident – the system captures more than SEA ⇒ Reporting person wants to remain anonymous or provides identification ⇒ Relationship of reporter to the organisation ⇒ Identification of person engaged in the behaviour (as possible) ⇒ Suspicion or fact on management involvement ⇒ Is management aware of the problem? ⇒ Description of the incident ⇒ Location of the incident ⇒ Date and time of the incident ⇒ How long the incident has been going on? ⇒ How the reporter has been informed of the incident? ⇒ Names of people who may have concealed the incident and steps taken to conceal it. ⇒ Details of witnesses and any relevant documents for the incident 	Everybody can report an incident using the hotline. XX requests to have details on the country office for follow up and investigation.
XXX large INGO Uses google forms; complaint reporting system accessible to anyone who knows the link and wants to report an incident	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Location of the incident ⇒ Type of case (sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual activity with a child) ⇒ Role of the victim/survivor (beneficiary, community member) ⇒ Gender of the victim/survivor ⇒ Age of the victim/survivor when the incident occurred ⇒ Role of the subject of complaint/perpetrator ⇒ Result of the case (substantiated, unsubstantiated, inconclusive) ⇒ Status of opened cases (no opened case, yes opened case) <i>XXX decided keep the system simple so it is used effectively and encourages people to report. The purpose is to get overview of number of PSEA cases and the need to ensure confidentiality and protection of the victim. XXX did not assess that there was a need for additional data (as this would not help case resolution anyway).</i> 	The XXX member organisations are independent, responsible for the incident management (investigation, documentation, risk mitigation etc...) and communicate internally for review of the incident management and externally with the donor or the media.

Agency	Information collected when an SEA incident is reported	Notes
XXX large INGO Internal case management system, not for complaint reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Country, ⇒ Date incident when it came in, ⇒ Administrative and registration level (internal category) ⇒ specific location of the incident, ⇒ who complained or who reported, ⇒ background of complainant, ⇒ details about the victim (including age) ⇒ who is the SOC and his/her background, ⇒ nature of the suspected misconduct, ⇒ valid applying laws for SEA, ⇒ status of investigation, ⇒ details on the investigators, ⇒ outcome of the investigation, ⇒ management response, ⇒ all records and documents (interviews, complaints, investigation report, closure report, advisory report, donor report). 	XXX country offices are expected to report online the required information to the Safeguarding Global Team. ID and password required. Limited to designated persons, including the safeguarding global head. No-one can delete information in the system except an external consultant contracted by the organisation who can remove files and documents
XXX large NGO Data and case management system using XX ; anyone can access to make a complaint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Description of the incident with option to upload document ⇒ Name of the complainant, location, how he/she found about the incident, way to contact the complainant ⇒ who is involved in the incident ⇒ information on the incident, ⇒ Info on the security/protection of the victim ⇒ Details on the alleged SOC, ⇒ Details on the victim ⇒ The location of the incident ⇒ Status of the investigation and investigation notes, ⇒ Outcome of the investigation and outcome notes ⇒ The disciplinary committee outcomes ⇒ Follow-up actions to be done later 	Each report takes a serial or ticket number and the safeguarding lead would log in, contact the complainant, then build the case. They will decide if the incident needs to be investigated and if this should be internal or external. They will then take follow-up action.
XXXX large INGO Data and case management system using XX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Basic identifiers ⇒ country project, ⇒ donors linked, ⇒ alleged survivor, ⇒ type, level safeguarding (type of abuse with 36 sub-categories. ⇒ Location of the incident ⇒ date ⇒ time ⇒ Ten denominators for the triage (does it involved senior staff, is there physical harm etc...), ⇒ info on the investigation, ⇒ investigation results ⇒ Disciplinary measures ⇒ Following action points and recommendations <p><i>Captures data about the initial reporting, triage and investigation. Also case management documents such as the incident reporting form, the ToR of the investigation, report of the investigation, disciplinary decisions, dates and times when information is logged, the notes collected via emails.</i></p>	Access limited to a few trained persons, mainly safeguarding expert/functions (3 persons at global level, director of safeguarding investigation, regional directors, safeguarding leads in country offices). Allows overview of incidents across XXX; can generate reports for trend and capacity analysis to inform strategic decisions by senior management.

Agency	Information collected when an SEA incident is reported	Notes
XXX large INGO Internal data and case management system. Held on Excel.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ XXX Global Hub Case reference ⇒ Reporting Office ⇒ Reporting Region ⇒ Reporting Country Case Ref ⇒ Date issue occurred ⇒ Date issue reported/escalated to Global Hub ⇒ Financial Year ⇒ Location of incident (e.g. staff guest house/ accommodation, learning centre, CBO etc.) ⇒ Reported by ⇒ Reporters affiliation to XXX ⇒ Gender of reporter - if available/known ⇒ Does issue originate in a grant funded project? ⇒ NO/Donor impacted; if issue reported to them. ⇒ Alleged Issue/Abuse type ⇒ Alleged Issue/Abuse details ⇒ Alleged Perpetrator ⇒ Alleged Perpetrator Classification - Summary ⇒ Alleged Perpetrator Classification - Detailed ⇒ Alleged Perpetrator gender ⇒ Alleged Perpetrator location/residency ⇒ Alleged Victim ⇒ Alleged Victim Classification/ Affiliation to Plan ⇒ Victim age if known ⇒ Victim Gender ⇒ Victim location/residency ⇒ Victim Region ⇒ Is issue a crime in country? ⇒ If a crime was it reported to authorities? ⇒ Any Comments on reporting to the authorities ⇒ If a crime & not reported to authorities give reason (business case) ⇒ Has business case submitted to and signed off by deputy CEO? ⇒ If crime/breach who investigated? (Plan, external etc) ⇒ Founded/Unfounded/other ⇒ Action taken ⇒ Result/Outcome ⇒ Contract or engagement termination /resignation of alleged perpetrator information (Y/N) ⇒ If staff and contract terminated, were references given by PII (Y/N) ⇒ HR related Comment ⇒ If crime: was there a conviction - if known ⇒ Case Status Open/Close ⇒ Reported in Executive Six-monthly report? ⇒ Reported in Board annual report? 	XXX does not yet have an online reporting system but plans to have one soon. The Safeguarding team at global level is responsible for collecting and aggregating all data and documents relating to the incident management.

<p>XXX large INGO Uses the online platform XX which is a data and case management reporting system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Dates of report, dates of incident ⇒ Contact, address and other information on the complainant (including is he/she a witness, the victim or a whistle-blower) ⇒ Consent of the complainant for his/her identity to be shared ⇒ Description of the incident (who, what, where, when, how) ⇒ How and when the complainant was made aware ⇒ Information on the alleged victim (is the victim from the organisation, external to the organisation, beneficiary, children, a staff of a partner, aged below 18, from 18-60 or over 60 years old) ⇒ Information on the alleged perpetrator (name, contact, position etc...) ⇒ Information on the country, delegation ⇒ Information on witnesses (name, relation with the organisation) ⇒ Section of the policies and procedures that have been breached ⇒ Information on possible conflict of interest ⇒ Information on the status of the case management (incident report, investigation, closure of the case) 	<p>Accessible by 4person team at global level who can modify and delete information. The system helps to generate data and to archive documents on incidents across the organisation and is protected. Users can download reports, select the data they want to extract and analyse (ex: number of</p>
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Agency	Information collected when an SEA incident is reported	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Complainant can upload documents <p><i>The system asks for the consent of the complainant for the information to be shared to the relevant person at very initial stage (reception of the complaint and throughout the incident management).</i></p>	<p>incidents involving a child). The system archives all documents related to the incident management.</p>
<p>XXX INGO Uses Integrated incidents Management system (online) to collect various types of incidents.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Name and contact information ⇒ Category of incident (child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, etc) ⇒ Type of incident (allegation, actual event) ⇒ Incident Level (code red/Level 3, yellow/Level 2, green/Level 1) ⇒ Incident date and time ⇒ Incident location (address, GPS coordinate, country, etc) ⇒ Description of the incident ⇒ Action taken (initial and type of intervention); ⇒ Was the incident in humanitarian response? ⇒ Any child involved in the incident? ⇒ Other people involved in the incident ⇒ Roles (relationships to victim, relationship with XX, etc) ⇒ Outside involvement (report to authorities) ⇒ Assets affected (in case of security/accident) 	<p>The incident form is completed at country office by safeguarding focal point. Once the incident is reported, the Global Safeguarding team reviews and works with the relevant offices on actions needed, including investigations and reporting to donors.</p>
<p>XXX INGO Medium-sized INGO providing direct specialised services in emergency locations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Name and contact information of person reporting ⇒ Date of incident ⇒ Whether incident took place on single day or over period of time ⇒ When the organisation became aware of incident ⇒ Country and region ⇒ How incident reported (face to face, hotline, CBCM, email, etc) ⇒ Who incident reported to ⇒ Level of incident (minor, severe etc) ⇒ When incident occurred (during/outside work) ⇒ Type of incident (safeguarding, financial, health & safety etc) ⇒ Type of safeguarding incident (abuse, exploitation, harassment, bullying etc), plus more specificity on type of incident ⇒ Action taken ⇒ Support provided ⇒ Whether organisational assets involved (vehicles, property etc) ⇒ Estimated financial loss (where appropriate) ⇒ Incident summary ⇒ Whether XXX SOPs were breached, if so, which ones ⇒ Upload any supporting documents 	<p>Manual system currently in place. An online incident reporting tool is currently being developed</p>

XXX INGO Medium-sized INGO working with partners in humanitarian settings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Date allegation received ⇒ Details of allegation (no names) ⇒ Grade of subject of complaint ⇒ Whether staff members suspended pending follow-up ⇒ Whether there was an investigation – why/why not/action taken ⇒ Investigation team (internal/external) ⇒ Outline the process of investigation – documents seen, interviews ⇒ Findings of the investigation; whether allegation upheld ⇒ Main recommendations ⇒ Action taken with SOC if complaint upheld (report to authorities, dismissed, etc) ⇒ Support provided to survivor ⇒ Other actions taken ⇒ Further actions based on recommendations 	Template used for partners to report safeguarding concerns, usually by email. Documents held centrally in folders on HQ computer, managed by Head of Safeguarding The information is used for internal reporting and edited for report to donors
Corporate/private organisation systems		
XX FOUNDATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ Date of incident ⇒ Date concern was raised ⇒ Date reported to XXX ⇒ Contacts to whom reported in XX 	

Agency	Information collected when an SEA incident is reported	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇒ XXX unit in which case took place ⇒ Region in which case took place ⇒ Location in which case took place ⇒ Category of source of concern ⇒ Unit/location managing the case ⇒ Case management members ⇒ Primary type of case (nature of complaint) ⇒ Number of incidents within case ⇒ Number of allegations linked to case ⇒ By whom - Subject of Concern (SoC) ⇒ Number of SoCs linked to case: ⇒ To whom (victim/survivor) ⇒ Number of victims/survivors linked to case ⇒ Incident summary ⇒ Investigation conducted? ⇒ Investigation Team members: ⇒ Allegation(s) upheld/substantiated? ⇒ Outcome/actions taken ⇒ Comments on case ⇒ Victim/survivor support provided? If so describe what ⇒ List relevant donors/ List donors to whom reported: ⇒ Indicate date when reported to donor(s) ⇒ Reported to relevant authorities? List authorities to whom reported: ⇒ Indicate date when reported to authorities ⇒ Case status/ Case closure date ⇒ Financial year 	

<p>XXX private sector</p> <p>Internal SEA record system using a database on corporate intranet. Reporting is done directly to global Safeguarding lead.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇨ the dates of report, ⇨ the date of incident, ⇨ the nature of the incident, ⇨ country where it happens, ⇨ a brief on what happened, ⇨ result of investigation, ⇨ disciplinary action or measure. <p><i>(Does not include the name of the complainant or perpetrator nor the age of the victim)</i></p>	<p>Since global SG lead post has been in place, reporting of incidents has been systematised, and each case recorded. System accessible using a password only by Head of internal audit, Head of safeguarding, Head of HR globally and General Council . Ability to generate information on a need-to-know basis.</p>
Multi-organisation information systems		
<p>GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (GBVIMS)</p> <p>Use Primero software</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇨ Month of incident ⇨ Sex of survivor ⇨ Age of survivor ⇨ Marital status of survivor ⇨ Displacement status at time of report ⇨ Vulnerable population information – disabled; unaccompanied or separated child ⇨ Whether there has been prior GBV incident reported by same survivor ⇨ Type of GBV – rape, sexual assault, physical assault, forced marriage, denial of resources, psychological/emotional abuse ⇨ Incident time of day ⇨ Case context – intimate partner violence, possible sexual exploitation, harmful traditional practice ⇨ Time between incident and date of interview 	<p>Service providers input the data into the <i>Incident Recorder (IR)</i>, an Excel spreadsheet that acts as a database for compiling and storing collected GBV data. It contains customizable dropdown lists to decrease input</p>
Agency	Information collected when an SEA incident is reported	Notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇨ Alleged perpetrator – survivor relationship ⇨ Alleged perpetrator age group ⇨ Referral pathway information (referred from other services, which services referred on to) ⇨ Services provided (eg safe house, health, psychological, legal etc) 	<p>error and the time to input the data</p>
<p>HUMANITARIAN OUTCOMES (consultancy based in US)</p> <p>Aid Worker Security Database funded by USAID; open access online database</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⇨ Date ⇨ Country and specific location, including geocodes ⇨ Number of aid workers affected (victims) ⇨ Sex of victims ⇨ Institutional affiliation of victims (UN/Red Cross/NGO/other) ⇨ Type of staff (national or international)* ⇨ Outcome of the incident (victims killed/wounded/kidnapped) ⇨ Means of violence (e.g. shooting, IED, aerial bombardment) ⇨ Context of attack (ambush, armed incursion, etc.) ⇨ Summary of incident (public details) 	<p>Includes different types of major incidents involving deliberate acts of violence affecting aid workers (killings, kidnap, rape/serious sexual assault and attacks resulting in serious injury).</p>

Annex B: Acronyms and abbreviations

ACF	Association of Charitable Foundations
AWSD	Aid Worker Security Database
CBCM	Community Based Complaints Mechanism
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DFAT	Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia)
ECHO	European Civil Aid and Humanitarian Protection Operations
EU	European Union
FCDO	Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (UK)
FSC	Funders Safeguarding Collaborative
GAC	Global Affairs Canada
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
IASC	Inter-Agency Standing Committee
ICoCA	International Code of Conduct Association
ICVA	International Council for Voluntary Agencies
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IP	Implementing Partner
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PCA	Partnership Contracting Agreement
PSEA	Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SCHR	Standing Committee for Humanitarian Response
SEA	Sexual Abuse and Exploitation
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SOC	Subject of Concern
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
UN	United Nations
UN SG	United Nations Secretary General
USAID	US Agency for International Development

Annex C: PSEA Network reporting guidance from Bangladesh

Excerpt on reporting from *Standard Operating Procedure on SEA Complaint Referral in Cox's Bazar*³²

Developed by the PSEA Network in Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh, March 2020

5. Monitoring and reporting on case handling

Systematic monitoring and evaluation of complaint procedures and practices is key to assessing whether the referral pathways are working and properly adapted to the local context, to gather lessons learned, and to make improvements to the complaint channels and pathways. Monitoring and evaluation data shall come from both consultations with communities (i.e. satisfaction surveys, KAP surveys, FGDs etc.) and statistical analysis of complaints referred. Monitored data shall include information that can be used to measure the effectiveness of the practices, including but not limited to the frequency of reporting over time and in relation to awareness raising activities and the assistance being provided to survivors. All data on complaints received shall be desegregated by sex, age group, type of complaint, and other relevant factors for useful analysis and targeted response, however not to the point that such disaggregation would allow identification of a particular complainant/survivor.

The CBX PSEA Network members are responsible for ensuring that there is regular compilation and reporting of non-identifying SEA incident data to interested parties. Given the multi-agency coordination of the Network and intake occurring across various sites/zones, efforts shall be in place to standardize data reports to enable regional – and eventually national and global – data comparisons. The Network recognizes that without consistent and comprehensive data it is simply not possible to get a full picture of the problem, establish a baseline from which to measure impact of different types of interventions, nor effectively spot alarming trends. Anonymized incident data shall be shared with the Resident Coordinator, the Senior Executive Group, and relevant IASC and UN bodies focused on PSEA, so that they are apprised of current SEA trends.

PSEA Referral SOP - Endorsed by Signatories on 04.03.2020

In order to enable the Network to have a comprehensive understanding of SEA in Cox's Bazar to improve its prevention and response activities, PSEA Focal Points are required to share with the Network the following data on all SEA cases reported to them from CXB: a) Contractual type of alleged perpetrator;

b) Sex, age range and origin of the victim/survivor;

c) Type of incident.

To the extent possible and in coordination with internal investigative policies and procedures, agencies are encouraged to provide the following information to the Network:

- Source of the report (UN, INGO, nNGO);
- Organization of alleged perpetrator; ● Date of occurrence;

³² <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/bangladesh/document/standard-operating-procedure-sea-complaint-referral-cox's-bazar>

- Date of referral (to the PSEA FP/Coordinator);
- Sex of the victim/survivor;
- Age range of the victim/survivor;
- Origin of the victim/survivor (Rohingya community, Bangladesh, etc);
- Type of incident;
- Location;
- Profession and origin of the alleged perpetrator;
- Sex and age range of alleged perpetrator;
- Number of alleged perpetrators;
- Assistance provided and date of provision (MHPSS, medical care including CMR, livelihood support, legal assistance, Safe shelter, Security/Police);
- Preliminary measures taken against the alleged perpetrator.

Annex D: UK regulatory obligations for reporting and escalating

Charity Commission for England and Wales, How to Report a Serious Incident in your Charity, 2019

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/how-to-report-a-serious-incident-in-your-charity>

Types of safeguarding incident to report

You need to make a report to the Commission if a serious safeguarding risk materialises. This will usually be if any of the following occur:

- incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of beneficiaries of the charity (adults or children) which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and:
 - this happened while they were under the care of the charity
 - someone connected with the charity, for example a trustee, staff member or volunteer, was responsible for the abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual)
- other incidents of abuse or mistreatment (alleged or actual) of people who come into contact with the charity through its work, which have resulted in or risk significant harm to them and are connected to the charity's activities.
- including failure to carry out relevant vetting checks which would have identified that a person is disqualified in law from holding their position within the charity. This might be, for example, because they are disqualified under safeguarding legislation from working with children and/or adults at risk

The above may include incidents in the workplace that have resulted in or risk significant harm to trustees, staff or volunteers. This does not mean that the Commission expects charities to report every internal staffing incident - charities need to make a judgement call about which incidents either individually, or as a collection, are serious in the context of the charity.

However, a report should always be made where the level of harm to the victims and/or the likely damage to the reputation of or public trust in the charity is particularly high (for example, sexual misconduct by the charity's Chief Executive or another person in a senior position or position of specific responsibility, such as the head of safeguarding). The Commission would also expect to receive a report if the number and nature of staffing incidents indicate there are widespread or systematic issues connected to sexual harassment, abuse and/or other misconduct in a charity. The Examples Table contains some examples of the types of workplace incidents that should be reported. [Examples table: deciding what to report](#) (PDF, 382KB, 6 pages).

If you have grounds to suspect that one of the types of incident listed above has occurred, it's important to act responsibly and take action promptly: As well as reporting to the Commission, depending on the nature of the incident, you should also notify the police (see earlier in this section), the local authority and/or the relevant regulator or statutory agency.

The Commission's role in relation to safeguarding incidents

The Commission's role is to ensure the charity's trustees are handling the incident appropriately and, where necessary, putting in place improved governance and internal controls, in order to prevent further harm.

The Commission is not responsible for dealing with incidents of actual abuse or mistreatment and it does not administer safeguarding legislation. It cannot prosecute or bring criminal proceedings, although it may refer concerns on to 'lead agencies', such as the police, local authorities and the

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), as well as to specialist bodies responsible for designated areas, such as education or health and social care.

Safeguarding incidents that occur outside of the charity

Sometimes charities will become aware of safeguarding incidents that have occurred outside of the charity. This might be, for example, where:

- the charity undertakes specialist work (in line with its charitable purposes) in providing safeguarding services and, as a result, deals routinely with safeguarding incidents that occur outside of the charity
- the charity is alerted to alleged abuse of a beneficiary, staff member, volunteer or someone else who it comes into contact with through its work, which has occurred outside of the charity and:
- the abuse was not connected to its activities in any way
- the person responsible for the abuse was not a trustee, staff member or volunteer

If your charity becomes aware of such incidents, you would not normally be expected to report them to the Commission. However, you would be expected to do so if it's found (or alleged) that the incident wasn't handled appropriately by your charity and this resulted in harm to the person or persons concerned. In such circumstances, a report should also be made to the police and local authority.

- breaches of procedures or policies at the charity which have put people who come into contact with it through its work at significant risk of harm...

The above may include incidents in the workplace that have resulted in or risk significant harm to trustees, staff or volunteers.....Sometimes charities will become aware of safeguarding incidents that have occurred outside of the charity....If your charity becomes aware of such incidents, you would not normally be expected to report them to the Commission. However, you would be expected to do so if it's found (or alleged) that the incident wasn't handled appropriately by your charity and this resulted in harm to the person or persons concerned.

Other regulatory guidance

OSCR Scottish Charity Regulator, Guidance for Notifiable Events, 2020

https://www.oscr.org.uk/media/2155/2016-03-15_guidance-for-notifiable-events_web-version.pdf

Charity Commission for Northern Ireland, Serious Incident Reporting: A Guide for Trustee, 2019

<https://www.charitycommissionni.org.uk/concerns-and-decisions/serious-incident-reporting-aguide-for-charity-trustees/>

Annex E: Table of publicly reported information

Summary of key information provided in annual reports, accountability reports and on websites

	Source of info	Comments	Staff local or intl	Partners/contactors/suppliers	Location / country	Date incident	Victim age	Victim gender	Victim assistance	Type of allegation	Detail allegation	Investigation level?	Disciplinary measures	Other measures	Referral to authorities	SMT informed?	Board informed?
INGO 1	Public report (virtual)	Summary of top line	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info		no info	Yes	Yes
INGO 2	Global accountability report 2019	Top line information on Child Safeguarding cases	Staff or volunteers (no distinction local and international)	Show number of cases involving partners, contractors/suppliers, community members or other organisations	No info	no info	<18	no info	Top line on standard support provided to victim (medical, psychological, legal)	All forms of abuses against a child	Show number of opened cases, closed cases, substantiated or not substantiated	It gives numbers of cases still opened and under investigation	Number of dismissal, disciplinary warnings, contract termination, resignations		Gives number of cases reported to authorities	Yes there is a Trustee report as well	Yes there is a Trustee report as well
		Top line information on Safeguarding adults	No	N/A	No info	no info	>18	no info	Top line on what INGO 2 provides to victims	Harassment, bullying, SEA at the work place	Show number of opened cases, closed cases, substantiated or not substantiated	It gives numbers of cases still opened and under investigation	Number of dismissal, disciplinary warnings, contract termination, resignations and other actions		Gives number of cases reported to authorities	Yes there is a Trustee report as well	Yes there is a Trustee report as well
INGO 3	Global Handling Framework For Preventing and Responding to Safeguarding Violations Experienced by INGO 3 Clients	NO INFO AT ALL - ONLY INFORMATION ON THEIR SEA INCIDENT MANAGMENT APPROACH BUT NO DATA ARE PROVIDED	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	no info		no info	Yes	Yes
INGO 4	Public report - Improving Safeguarding and Culture at INGO 4	Summary of top line	It gives numbers of cases involving community members, volunteers, non staff (consultant, contractor etc...), partner staff, non managerial staff or managerial	Yes gives numbers	no info	Report reported every 6 months	Gives number of cases involving children and the cases involving staff, community members, volunteers and other	no info	It says that INGO 4 gives counselling, health care and legal support as required - on a case by case.	Gives the number of cases of sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, sexual harassment, cases of internal reportable issues (bullying etc...)	Gives number of cases upheld and not upheld, number of cases closed	It gives numbers of cases still opened and under investigation	Gives number of dismissal, disciplinary actions, non disciplinary actions		Gives number of cases reported to authorities	Presumably	Presumably

Final report on harmonised SEA reporting/GCPS/30 September 2021

			staff involved as a SOC														
INGO 5	Safeguarding Children and Young People Report 2019	Top line data aggregated by the Safeguarding global team (9 persons) - Country offices report each incident and global team collect data on excel doc. Soon an online system to come	It refers to persons associated with INGO 5 (staff, representatives of partner organisations, community volunteers, consultants, sponsors) - No desaggregated figures but gives no. of SEA cases and inappropriate conduct involving international staff		no info	no info	no info	no info	no info	Gives numbers of cases of sexual abuse and exploitation, sexual harassment, breach of safeguarding policy, inappropriate conduct (neglect etc...)	It gives numbers of confirmed cases	It gives numbers of cases still opened and under investigation	Yes it gives information on contract termination, dismissal, warning and implementing partner termination		Gives number of cases of SEA and inappropriate behaviors reported to authorities	Yes by the safeguarding leads every 6 months	Yes as it goes public
INGO 6	Accountability Report 2020	Top line information on Child Safeguarding cases	Gives number of cases perpetrated by employees, volunteers, consultant, sponsor and former staff of INGO 6	Gives number of cases involving organisations, contractor	No info	no info	<18 and it gives number of victim beneficiaries	no info	Says INGO 6 enables access to medical care, psychosocial support and counselling, legal aid and other interventions as required.	Gives number of cases of abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation of children; also number of children injured as a result of INGO 6 project	Gives number of cases substantiated after investigation	Gives number of cases still opened and under investigation	Gives no. of termination of employment, sponsorship, warnings, notation in personnel file, termination of contract, sanction by public partner	Says one partner has strengthened its internal controls on Safeguarding	It gives number of cases reported to authorities	Report is public	Report is public
		Top line information on Safeguarding adults and staff harassment incidents	No but gives number of cases involving employees, volunteers	gives number of cases involving contractors, other agency, partners	No info	no info	>18	no info	No info	Gives number of cases of abuse and exploitation of adults and cases of sexual abuse and exploitation	Gives number of cases substantiated, unsubstantiated and unable to investigate		Gives number of employment terminated, contracts not renewed.	Says 1 SOC removed from position by local partner; 1 case received corrective action by external agency	Says Number of cases reported to authorities	Report is public	Report is public
INGO 7	Annual Report 2019-20	Section on safeguarding as part of section on "An accountable and effective organisation" - gives summary data on safeguarding cases	No but gives number of cases involving INGO 7 staff	Gives number of cases involving partners	No	No info	No info	No info	No info	No info in 2019 report, but from 2020 will contain "category of breach"	No info	States number of cases confirmed/unconfirmed and number still open	Yes states number of cases and outcome - eg two partner staff dismissed	States that cases are referred to relevant bodies in keeping with national legislation	Explains internal accountability arrangements at Director level	States risks are monitored by Board through Organisation and Human Resources Committee	
INGO 8	Annual report 2018-19	Detailed information about INGO 8's safeguarding policies and processes, including a section on "Commitment to Safeguarding"	Gives number of reports received cases but does not specify type of staff; 34 in 2018-19 and 12 in 2017-18	No - but INGO 8 does mainly direct delivery	No	No	No	No	States that support is provided to victims and all those involved in investigation	No	No	States number of reports not investigated and closed, number still open	States number of dismissals and number of instances of disciplinary action	States number of reports where there was other remedial action - briefings, discussions, training; also reference to lessons learned exercises	Not mentioned (except UK Charity Commission)	Yes through organisational Safeguarding Lead	Regular updates to Safeguarding Trustee and Chair of committee; quarterly report to Board on SG action plan

INGO 9	Annual Report 2020		Not specified	Cases in partners included; also safeguarding incidents by community members (not clear what this is)	No info	No info	Give numbers of cases for children and adults			Give number of sexual exploitation, abuse- with details on Tearfund staff and partners involved	Cases of substantiated and unsubstantiated cases given in the report.	Give number of concluded cases and pending					Data reported quarterly to Board
INGO 10	2019 Annual report	7% of 30 incidents reported are sexual harassment - no SEA cases against beneficiaries reported															
INGO 11	2020 annual report	Statement re special attention/ resources to addressing misconduct through complaints mechanism & Code of Conduct	No	No	No	No	No	No	no info	No	No	no info	no info	No	No	No	No
INGO 12	AAI Annual report 2019	INGO 12 has a complaint system published on their website. AAI reports safeguarding incidents in programs (adults and children) and incidents by staff	No info	No info	No info	Yes - (tracking incidents per year)	Age	No info	No info	No info	No info	Yes	Yes		No info	Yes	Yes - Board Safeguarding Focal Person

Annex F: Sample incident management form from national NGO

General Information

All personal details will only be collected when complainant agrees to share these. The complainant can remain anonymous. In case no contact details will be provided, a response can also be delivered to a proxy.

Region:		Site/Location:	
Date:		Project:	
Name of staff recording feedback:		Organisation:	
Name of community (member):		Gender of complainant:	
Feedback channel: <i>(phone, community meeting, etc)</i>		Means of contact to provide response to complainant:	

Feedback

Short description of the feedback/complaint:			
Please tick the relevant category		Response:	
1. Request for Information		Apologize	
2. Request for Assistance		Corrective decision/action	
3. Minor Programmatic Complaint		Provide an explanation	
4. Major Programmatic Complaint		External referral*	
5. Breach of HaC Integrity Policy		Provide goods/services	
6. General feedback/other		Provide information	
		Change policy	
		Drop the request/complaint	

Follow up

Action undertaken?			
Please specify:			
Response provided to complainant?			
Is the complainant satisfied?			
Is the issue resolved?			
Date when the issue was closed:			

Annex G: Table of organisations which contributed to the study

Action Aid International
 African Evangelistic Enterprise (Rwanda)
 Aga Khan Foundation
 BOND
 CARE International
 Caritas
 Centre for Sport and Human Rights
 Charity Commission of England and Wales
 Coast Bangladesh
 DAI
 Danish Refugee Council
 Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Foreign and Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO)
 Funders Safeguarding Collaborative
 International Code of Conduct Association (ICoCA)
 Interaction
 International Council for Voluntary Agencies (ICVA)
 Livingstonia Synod Aids Programme (LISAP, Malawi)
 Mercy Corps
 Mines Advisory Group
 OAK Foundation
 Oxfam International
 Plan International
 Save the Children International
 Tearfund
 Terre des Hommes
 United Nations Office of the Special Coordinator on improving UN response to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (UN OSCSEA)
 World Vision

Please note: a number of other organisations contributed which did not wish to be named

Annex H: Review framework - working document available on request



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