

Entity Level Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (2023)

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Note: Outcomes, Outputs and Indictors as per template provided by UN Special Coordinator office for Agency level Action plans.

Desired outcomes	Indicators	Targets/ Benchmarks for 2023	Key actions planned for 2023
		ed policy statement(s) and/or code of conduct the licated resources and structures are in place to s	
Output 1.1. Effective protection from sexual exploitation and abuse policy development and implementation. Foundational documents in place to set out standards of conduct related to PSEA both at the entity level and in all duty stations.	a. PSEA policies, including standards of conduct b. PSEA work plan	 New Safeguarding Policy applies to all personnel and will express expected standards of conduct Finalization of PSEA Entity level Action Plan (this document) 	Issue a revised Safeguarding Policy, inclusive of SEA; PSEA Entity-Level Action Plan (this document) to support Policy operationalization.
	c. Review of Policies d. Senior management communication of PSEA conduct expectations, regularly	 Completed regulatory review for Safeguarding Policy and all other related policies and standards within the safeguarding regulatory framework Scheduled leadership communications in accordance with Safeguarding Internal Communications Strategy 	New Safeguarding Policy issued; all related regulations amended Safeguarding Policy 2023 communications planned, implemented
	e. Entity, country, field-level monitoring mechanisms	UNICEF already has mechanisms in place to track status of SEA implementation as outlined below.	Regularly monitoring progress against indicators
		Global Monitoring Indicators: • Strategic Plan 2018-2021: Goal Area 3 reflects overall PSEA programming (E/ICEF/2017/17/Rev.1); Strategic Plan 2022-2025 Goal Area 3, Result Area 1 indicator 8 (# with access to safe/accessible reporting channel), Enabler 3, indicator 4 (% of offices meeting safeguarding risk benchmarks), 5 (% of country offices with PSEA systems).	



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		 Country-level monitoring: Inter-agency level PSEA Results Monitoring and global dashboard Partner and field monitoring: Performance Benchmarks and PSEA Assessment included in UNICEF Programme implementation Handbook of March 2023 (page 123). Guidance for conducting monitoring visits of implementing partners for PSEA. 	
	f. Mechanisms to enforce the protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct – to empower, encourage and protect staff who report cases of sexual exploitation and abuse – are being developed and safeguarded (ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1).	 UNICEF already has a Whistle-blower Protection Policy DHR/POLICY/2018-001); Target for 2023 is that the new Safeguarding Policy will reiterate duty of staff to report and the protection of those who do. 	Reiterate knowledge of Whistle-blower Protection as part of roll-out of (forthcoming) Safeguarding Policy
	g. The entity ensures that Staff members are aware of their obligation to report SEA/misconduct.	Target for 2023 is that 100% of personnel have completed Mandatory training noting that Lesson 4 describes reporting requirements	Promote and monitor completion of PSEA mandatory training
	h. The entity ensures that Staff members are aware of the policy for protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct (ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1).	 Target for 2023 is that 100% of personnel have completed Mandatory training noting that Lesson 4 describes whistle-blower protection within UNICEF. Target is also to effectively monitor emerging issues in Pulse check survey concerning this topic 	Promote and monitor completion of PSEA mandatory training Monitoring issues of concern as flagged in Pulse check survey



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	The entity includes PSEA clauses in all contractual arrangements/agreements between it and third parties.	 UNICEF already have PSEA clauses in partnership agreements requiring partners to agree to take actions to prevent, report and investigate SEA Programme Cooperation Agreement(PCA) and Small Scale Funding Agreement (SSFA) Contracts with institutional contractors include reference to the prohibitions of the SGB 	 Review/revision of legal agreements for concordance with new Safeguarding Policy. Revision of programme implementation Procedure and Handbook as well as the PCA, adequately considering PSEA during programme implementation, and reflecting the transition from UNICEF specific to UN harmonized assessment and tools (including the shift for assessment documentation and sharing using UNPP). The revision of procedure and tools also include consolidation of the various templates – as of Oct 2022 SSFAs are replaced by simplified Programme Documents. The revised procedure/handbook and PCA will continue to rollout throughout 2023.
Output 1.2. A department/focal point is committed to addressing SEA.	 a. A department/focal point has the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of the PSEA policy and activities. b. Please advise if this focal point is "dedicated" or performs the PSEA function in addition to their normal functions. 	 HQ focal point role exists: Dedicated 'safeguarding' coordination function (Safeguarding including PSEA). Dedicated risk related and safeguarding staff in partnerships HQ functions. Dedicated staff for PSEA in programming in Child Protection HQ Dedicated Safeguarding expertise staff in PFP to support implementation of Safeguarding Policy and Framework across PFP, PSFR and NatComs. 	Review/identify further resource needs based on risk assessment.
	c. The responsible department/focal point or other personnel handling protection from SEA have formalized responsibility in their job description, performance appraisal.	 Job description and workplan for HQ dedicated focal points prescribes safeguarding functions. Measures have been introduced to evaluate safeguarding in performance management frameworks. 	Regular review of performance management systems to assess extent to which safeguarding obligations, including SEA, are fulfilled as part of performance management.



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	d. The responsible department/focal point is required to report regularly to senior management on its progress on PSEA in accordance with the internal procedures.	 Target for 2023 is to advance the monitoring of uptake of safeguarding obligations as part of performance management. Target for 2023 is to maintain the regular updates and briefings to senior management on progress and challenges related to PSEA. 	Conduct regular briefings and updates to senior management.
Outcome 2. Victims' right to existing structures).	assistance. The entity adopts a vic	tims' rights approach to SEA and has a victim su	upport function in place (stand-alone or part of
Output 2.1 Policies and guidance regarding the victims' assistance and support are developed.	a. Receipt and review of the 2019 Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of sexual exploitation and abuse is integrated and effectively rolled out in entity's PSEA work.	Standards/Guidance produced Technical note developed & IASC endorsement of technical note Training administered: Trainings and technical support provided to support the implementation of the VA Protocol Systems rolled out: Monitoring: UN victims' assistance Protocol roll-out progress measured through organizational indicators and reporting on PSEA /Strategic Monitoring Questions (SMQs Global indicators to track VAP rollout progress integrated into IASC Mapping Exercise (UNICEF leading on behalf of the IASC)	 Training sessions on the VA Protocol technical note for the global PSEA Coordinator Online Learning Course delivered. Technical support (remote and deployable) and Trainings to roll-out the VA Protocol and technical note to support country teams on implementation (including for interagency) Adaptation of the technical note for the whole of IASC, together with NGOs Track progress of the VAP rollout through IASC global indicators and the global dashboard



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	b. Establishment of mechanism to promptly refer victims for medical care, psychosocial support, material assistance, legal and other services.	 Referral mechanisms Integration of CP/GBV referral mechanisms in PSEA network SOPs is ongoing, as part of UNICEF-led rollout of the VA Protocol and engagement in IASC PSEA TEG. Child and adult victims are offered immediate, quality assistance' is a priority outcome that is being tracked in UNICEF's PSEA Results Monitoring Framework and in the IASC PSEA Country-Level Framework UNICEF acts as a provider of last resort vis-à-vis UN system with regard to the provision of assistance to child victims of SEA Partner referral mechanism in place: PSEA risk assessment evaluates if partners have a system to refer victims to qualified service providers PSEA/Safeguarding Information Management Solution Secure, access-controlled information management solution for incident data identified and deployed/piloted 	 Country Offices support CSO partners to undertake SEA risk assessments that include review of standards on assistance and referral, and to develop action plans to address gaps. Training and capacity building of partners on victim assistance technical note Programmatic field monitoring visits of implementing partners assess status of referral systems for victim assistance and include feedback from affected communities on the same. Status of integration of referral pathways in PSEA network SOPs is tracked through the IASC global dashboard (led by UNICEF) Secure, access-controlled information management solution for incident prototyped and piloted/deployed
	c. The role, if any, the entity plays to facilitate the resolution of paternity and child support claims of children born from sexual exploitation and abuse.	Policy exists for general family support claims against staff: UNICEF staff members have an obligation to comply with their private/civil legal obligations, including with regard to child support claims, in SEA cases (PROCEDURE/DHR/2020/006). Court	



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Output 2.2 Policies and guidance to establish safe and accessible reporting channels for SEA at the community-level are provided. Effective complaint mechanisms (e.g., CBCM/CBCN) guidance are issued.	d. The entity urges its field offices to participate in country level complaint mechanisms that are jointly developed and implemented by the aid community adapted to the specific locations.	ordered claims can result in salary/payment garnishment. Standard on legal assistance in pursuit of SEA-related claims: • UNICEF applies the victim assistance protocol, facilitating claims. Strategic emphasis on community mechanisms: • UNICEF's PSEAH Strategy (s. 3.2) prioritizes complaint mechanisms that are safe, gendersensitive, context-sensitive, developed in consultation with affected communities, and linked to services for survivors. Monitoring: • The number of people with access to safe, accessible, community-based reporting channels is a priority outcome in UNICEF's PSEA Results Monitoring Framework. • UNICEF AAP Guidance contemplates embedding of monitoring and evaluation in CBCM mechanisms. UNICEF support and contribution to the IA CBCM revision process provided	1. Technical support and in-person technical support missions, when appropriate. 2. Integration of PSEA indicator on safe and accessible reporting in new SP; HAC; PSEA integration in SitRep template. 3. UNICEF is a member of the IA steering group to support the CBCM revision process 4. PSEA-related field monitoring of implementing partners to assess and verify status implementation of PSEA capacity strengthening measures including access to reporting channels.
	e. Guidance provided to country offices on how to establish a confidential complaint mechanism for the affected population, particularly women, that is adapted to the cultural	UNICEF endorses already the Inter-Agency Standing Committee Standard Operating Procedures for Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms (CBCMs) and supports COs on this basis.	Provide technical support (remote & deployable) to COs on implementing PSEA from the outset of emergency responses, this includes setting up reporting channels Develop handbook on PSEA for humanitarian action that provides programmatic guidance



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	context with focus on community participation.	 New Emergency Procedures includes requirements to establish safe and accessible reporting channels UNICEF developed a PSEA digital innovations technical package for CO support to scale up access to safe and accessible SEA reporting channels and community engagement on PSEA, and will continue to roll it out 	on prevention and response, including how to establish safe reporting channels
	f. Percentage of complaints received in the last 12 months that have been closed or pending administrative measures.	Disposition time targets set: 100% of SEA cases involving UNICEF personnel that are received by OIAI receive the highest priority for case assignment and completion, with a view towards completing assessments within 90 days and investigations within nine months Implementation and monitoring: Target: 100%	 UNICEF Personnel: Conduct assessments and, where warranted, investigations; issue investigation reports and/or other relevant closure documentation. Partners: Partners conduct investigations; where appropriate, finalize assessments of implementing partner investigations with closure notifications and observations shared with relevant office. Issuance of investigation reports and/or other relevant closure documentation.
Output 2.3. Effective and comprehensive communication between the entity and country offices on expectations regarding victims and affected population awareness on PSEA.	a. Guidance issued on the need to establish and implement awareness-raising materials on SEA for affected populations, including information on their rights, how to report SEA and receive assistance (including information on the entity's standards of conduct and reporting mechanism).	Implement a series of training sessions on PSEA to personnel; regular communication of PSEA to all offices and partners.	PSEA in programming Community of Practice webinars through which guidance, tools and best practices are regularly shared with COs



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	b. Availability of a repository of examples of awareness raising tools and materials and good practices to be used for community awareness activities; including support to implementing partners to ensure awareness raising on PSEA in the communities they serve.	 Awareness raising materials are regularly shared with country offices and are available on UNICEF's internal PSEA SharePoint site. PSEA capacity assessment evaluates if partners have systems in place to ensure awareness raising on PSEA to beneficiaries 	Ensure availability of online library of tools, guidance and materials.
		procedures in place to ensure actions taken on see senior most UN Official in-country, as necessar	
Output 3.1 Written procedures on complaints/reports handling from staff members or complainants and victims are in place.	 Formalization of Standard Operating Procedures on how to file a complaint/ report and the procedures for handling these. 	 There are already guidelines and instructions for reporting SEA and Significant Child Harm (May 2021). DHR Policy on Disciplinary Process and Measures (POLICY/DHR/2020/001). 	Updated Reporting and incident management guidelines to be developed based on the emerging Safeguarding Policy.
	b. The entity is aware of the HLSG decision to adopt the Incident Reporting Form (IRF), as the intake form to receive all complaints of SEA and it is used where it is deployed (CAR, DRC, Jordan, South Sudan).	Target for 2023 in relation to IRF is for UNICEF to support the advancements of IRF where it is used.	Pursuit of inter-agency agreement of SEA data- sharing. Alignment of eIRF/IRF fields with UNICEF reporting. Further review of eIRF deployment feasibility.
	c. The entity plans to participate/implement the electronic IRF (eIRF)/IRF in its country offices as an integrated tool into complaints mechanisms (SG Report).		



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Output 3.2 Standard investigation operating procedures or equivalent are used to guide the investigation practice.	Investigations are undertaken by experienced and qualified professionals.	UNICEF SEA investigations of UNICEF personnel are undertaken by professional investigators from its independent Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) who have training and/or experience in forensic interviewing of minors/children and experience involving sexual misconduct investigations.	Continue to offer training opportunities to OIAI personnel to build on existing competencies and strengthen specialized skillsets when conducting SEA investigations.
	b. The standard investigation guidelines and procedure are known and applied and are periodically reviewed by the Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI), as appropriate.	 Investigations are conducted by its independent Office of Internal Audit and Investigations. An external assessment of UNICEF's investigations function that was conducted in late 2021 concluded that the investigation function is in conformity with generally accepted standards for investigations and that OIAI's overall approach to sexual misconduct investigations is consistent with applicable standards. 	Ensure that investigators are aware of the investigations manual and best practice and incorporate them into how investigations are conducted.
	c. Substantiated complaints have resulted in either disciplinary action or contractual consequences and, if not, why not.	Target: 100% of substantiated complaints result in a reasoned disposition for staff or complementary personnel.	Follow-up as required.
Output 3.3 The entity commits to improving its system of reference checking and vetting for former misconduct and ensures that adequate safeguards are in place and appropriate action is taken related to sexual exploitation and abuse – e.g., screening,	a. The entity has implemented "Clear-Check" and uses it to reference check and vet all potential candidates.	UNICEF already applies ClearCheck and is examining possible implementation of Misconduct Disclosure Scheme.	Continued use of ClearCheck for candidates. Advance considerations for MDS



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monitoring, and termination of arrangements.			
Output 3.4 Mechanisms are in place to regularly track the status of investigations and actions taken to report publicly and to inform the senior most UN Official in-	The entity uses the iReport SEA Tracker to report all allegations publicly.	SOP established to publicly report SEA allegations in iReport tracker involving perpetrators who are personnel of UNICEF or partners implementing its programmes (UNICEF cases).	Timely entry of new cases and make updates into the iReport SEA Tracker.
country.	b. Guidance issued to country Directors/ Representatives on the obligation to share appropriate information with the senior most UN Official in-country immediately when they become aware of an SEA allegation involving UN staff and related personnel where there is sufficient information to identify an act of SEA against an identifiable perpetrator or identifiable victim.	All country Directors/ Representatives share the information in line with the annex found in the Guidance Note to UN Entity Field Operations on Sharing Incident Information on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse with the Senior Most UN Official in-Country.	Follow-up with Country offices to monitor compliance.
	c. Donors and Executive Board are informed of the reporting of allegations by means of defined agreements.	 Target for 2023 is to continue communicate about UNICEF's participation in the iReport SEA Tracker to the Executive Board. Target is also to finalize new SOPs for how/when/who to inform donors of SEA allegations in line with defined agreements. 	Development of SOP for how/when/who to inform donors of SEA allegations in line with defined agreements.



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Outcome 4. Accountability a policies is conducted with a	Outcome 4. Accountability and training. Human resources mechanisms and quality training of personnel/awareness-raising on sexual exploitation and abuse policies is conducted with adequate frequency.					
Output 4.1 Performance appraisals for Senior Management include the adherence to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of the ST/SGB/2003/13 or Code of Conduct.	d. In addition to annual certification, there is a mechanism to ascertain that all supervisors adhere to the maintenance of an environment safe from sexual exploitation and abuse.	Promoting a zero-tolerance culture is included as specific accountability of all managers within UNICEF's competency framework.	Review of competency relevant work, post Pulse Check review and follow-up			
	e. Leaders at every level have certified by management letters that instances involving credible allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse from the areas of their responsibility have been accurately and fully reported.	Target for 2023 is that the UNICEF Executive Director certifies to the UN Secretary-General that all SEA allegations involving UNICEF or UNICEF implementing partner have been reported. This is based on the annual certification by 100% of Representatives.	UNICEF Heads of Office to certify annually that they have reported all SEA allegations involving UNICEF or UNICEF implementing partners.			
	f. Personal appraisal of all senior managers' performance including assessment of PSEA responsibilities.	See benchmark related to indicator 4.1.a. Managers of managers are subject to heightened safeguarding performance expectations.				
Output 4.2 The entity issued guidance to its field offices so all candidates are required to sign the Code of Conduct prior being offered a contract.	a. Ensured that the policies and guidance underline that all new staff and personnel (including volunteers and interns) complete the mandatory PSEA online course and common Code of Conduct training.	Target for 2023 is that 100% of UNICEF personnel have completed the online PSEA course	Monitoring mandatory training levels.			



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	b. Integration of Code of Conduct according to contracts.	 Oath of office is signed upon entry into service by all staff (Staff Regulation 1.1(b)). Letter of appointment embodies PSEA obligations under ST/SGB/2003/13 (see also CF/EXD/2003-029; CF/EXD/2004-002; CF/EXD/2004-009; Staff Rule 1.2(e), 9.9(b), 10.4(c); Staff Regulation 10.1(b)). UNICEF values and expectations of conduct are clearly specified in all vacancy announcements. 	 Continue to ensure standard onboarding practices, including standard announcement of vacancies. Work with DHR to support roll-out of new Code of Conduct on Safeguarding for staff. New briefing document by HR on safeguarding is expected to be developed.
Output 4.3 All entity Staff receive annual refresher training on the standards of conduct, mechanisms to report complaints of misconduct.	 Clear policies and guidance to ensure that mandatory, continuing training on the prohibition against sexual exploitation and abuse is followed. 	 Continued training/refresher on PSEA conducted at regional and country level with HQs support as required. Shortcomings or issues emerging from the 2022 UN PSEA staff perception survey is effectively followed up. 	Development and use of interactive safeguarding learning package; Use PSEA survey data to inform specific webinars/engagements as needed Staff Perception Survey follow-up.
	b. The entity has a mechanism to monitor the number of personnel who complete their annual training on the standards of conduct, rolled in reporting misconduct and the implications of breaching these standards.	Mandatory training can be monitored through PowerBl dashboards.	Revamping dashboard for monitoring of learning/ completion of on-line training
Output 4.4 Training (including e-learning) on misconduct (specifically mentioning SEA) forms part of the induction process both at the entity level and at country duty stations.	a. The entity developed policies and guidance to support all staff and service contract holders to enrol in and complete mandatory e-learning on	See benchmark related to indicator 4.2.a.	



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	Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.				
Outcome 5. Risk management and partners assessment. Intervention design is based on contextual analysis including of potential risks of sexual exploitation and abuse and measures are in place when working with implementing partners.					
Output 5.1 The entity conducts risk assessments in respect of sexual exploitation and abuse, making full use of existing risk management tools and information or collaboration with the UN entities in similar locations.	a. Risk assessments are undertaken, mitigation measures are developed, and challenges and positive changes are communicated to the Secretary-General (SG Report).	 UNICEF includes SEA as a distinct and mandatory risk to be assessed as part of the organizational risk management. UNICEF reports significant developments in its risk management to the UN Secretary-General in its annual certification and in the context of the annual Special Measures report. UNICEF regularly contributes to interagency risk assessments at the country level and flags up risks to the HCT/UNCT for interagency response 	 Development and piloting of the SEA Risk Overview Index that brings together indicators on a range of different factors to analyse the risk of SEA (led by UNICEF with OCHA, on behalf of the IASC). Continue to provide technical support to COs for SEA and safeguarding risk assessments; use of digital innovations and support to inter- agency common SEA risk assessment. 		
Output 5.2 The entity has clear standards and due diligence processes in place to ensure that implementing partners prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse – e.g., screening, cooperative arrangements, monitoring, and termination of arrangements (United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Involving Implementing Partners; ST/SGB/2003/13).	b. The entity has policies on using a system of reference checking and vetting for former misconduct or supervision and performance appraisals related to UN Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment.	 Guidelines of the UN Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment are respected. All active partners with capacity gaps are reassessed under the UN Common Tool. The PSEA assessment and capacity strengthening plans are registered in the PSEA module of the UN Partner Portal 	 Provide technical support to ensure compliance with the guidelines. Launch and roll out of the PSEA module in the UN Partner Portal Coordinate with the Implementing Partner Protocol Task Force to strengthen the harmonised approach to SEA risk management, including capacity building Technical support to country and regional offices for SEA risk management of partners to build UNICEF staff capacity Development of an approach on risk assessing and managing PSEA with government programme implementing entities. 		



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Output 5.3 Cooperative Arrangements (the prohibitions contained in the SG's Bulletin (ST/SGB/ 2003/13) are included in general contract conditions).	a. Procedures are in place to receive written agreements from donors, entities or individuals entering cooperative arrangements with the agency that they are aware of and will abide by the standards of the PSEA policy.	 Target is to advance SEA considerations as part of cooperative arrangements. UNICEF leads on behalf of the UN system and the IASC development of a Global Cooperation Framework with Governments on PSEA 	 Revise Supply Procedures and Guidance Notes to include fortified safeguarding terms in higher-risk engagements. Development of PSEA clause in UNSDCF Leading IA working group to establish global government cooperation framework. Development of PSEA clause in partnership documents with governments.
Output 5.4 Best practices and lessons learned are shared with others.	a. Best practices and lessons learned were shared with other UN entities and/or taken on by the entity.	 UNICEF shares its internal experiences and seeks coordination in the UN SEA Working Group and the IASC Results Group 2. As part of UNICEF's overall technical support and capacity development initiatives on PSEA, UNICEF provided support for the inter-agency system to generate data and evidence in order to track and monitor results and inform PSEA interventions over time. PSEA Programming Community of Practice meets regularly (i.e., monthly) to share good practices and lessons learned 	 UNICEF continues to support the global IASC PSEA website and global dashboard it developed in 2020, to share best practices and lessons learned across the humanitarian community. UNICEF co-chairs IASC Results Group 2 on Accountability and Inclusion, which includes the PSEA Technical Expert Group. UNICEF is an active member of the UKhosted cross-sectoral safeguarding group and the OECD DAC PSEAH technical working group. Systematically pursue safeguarding agreements in the context of inter-agency agreements