



How-To Note

How to Incorporate Safeguarding into Project Proposals, Work Plans, and Budgets

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Section 1: Background

- **Safeguarding at FHI 360:** Safeguarding means preventing harm to people—especially children, youth, and vulnerable adults—during the delivery of development and humanitarian programs. At FHI 360, safeguarding includes protecting program participants from all types of harm, including sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), child abuse, and human trafficking-related activities committed by FHI 360 staff, volunteers, or partner staff.

To increase protections for program participants, FHI 360 created a set of stand-alone safeguarding policies, minimum standards (required actions), tools, and guidelines that align with international standards and the requirements of the United States Government, the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), the United Nations, and other major funders. FHI 360 broadly defines a program participant as anyone who is receiving support or services through our projects, including but not limited to community members, NGO staff, health care workers, and government staff. Note: Some program participants are more vulnerable to harm (e.g., people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people, children), and projects should tailor their safeguarding efforts according to level of risk for a population and/or setting.

- **Including safeguarding in proposals, work plans, and budgets:** All FHI 360 humanitarian and development projects that involve interaction with program participants, regardless of the award amount or length of the project need to describe how FHI 360 addresses safeguarding at the organizational and project level in proposal narratives, work plans, and budgets, regardless of whether it is explicitly requested in the Notice of Funding Opportunity or other solicitation

opportunity. Staff are encouraged to submit questions to requests for information and other pre-solicitation announcements to inquire about safeguarding requirements if this information is not included in initial “sources sought” or other comparable documents.

During calls with U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) staff regarding the agency’s protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) policy, USAID shared that they expect partners to include 1) safeguarding content in all proposals, including how applicants address safeguarding at the organizational and the proposed project levels; and 2) direct costs related to safeguarding in project budgets. Other major funders have similar expectations, including FCDO and the United Nations.

- **Identifying Project-Level Safeguarding Focal Points:** Projects that involve interaction with program participants are required to identify a project-level Safeguarding Focal Point (SFP). Project-level SFPs are selected by Project Directors/COPs and are typically people in technical/program roles (e.g., gender or other technical specialists, technical officers, technical advisors, capacity-building officers/specialists) who have interest, skills and experience related to safeguarding, gender equality and social inclusion, violence prevention, protection, or other related technical area; and have experience facilitating training. SFPs should be knowledgeable of project activities and be in positions to ensure safeguarding integration at the project level.

Country Directors/Reps may also choose to select a country-office SFP to coordinate and support project-level SFPs, which is an approach sometimes used for large country offices with a large project portfolio. Country Directors/Reps should consider the size, nature, and scope of the country office and project portfolio to determine if a country-office SFP is needed. HR representatives are sometimes selected as country-office SFPs to support project-level SFPs. Please note that HR representatives and other country-office staff are not always closely connected to the needs of program participants or specific risks at the project-level, so for this reason, if Country Directors/Reps decide to identify the HR representative or other country-office staff as the country-office SFP, additional project-level SFPs need to be identified. Typically, when an HR representative or other country-office staff are selected as the country-office SFP, this person coordinates efforts among project-level SFPs, which can be helpful for large country offices with a large project portfolio.

Refer to the [how-to note](#) on Connect for additional information on identifying safeguarding focal points.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Proposals

- **Bid justification memo (BJM):** The staff person who submits the BJM to the Bid Board should tick the box labeled “Safeguarding” (listed under “Details”) in Sales Force if the project involves interaction with program participants.
- ☑ **Safeguarding Checkbox in Salesforce:** The information "i" icon for this checkbox (when you hover over it) in Salesforce states: "Check the box if this project interacts directly with program participants. If yes, safeguarding must be included in the proposal narrative and budget."

- **Proposal Design Leads (PDLs)** ensure (1) the *Vulnerability Profile Tool* is completed, which could include assigning this task to a person on the proposal team that is familiar with the target population(s) and context where activities will be implemented, and (2) safeguarding is included in either the staffing and management section when the solicitation does not include safeguarding or the technical narrative when the solicitation does include safeguarding.
- **Technical Budget Leads (TBLs)** ensure that safeguarding direct costs are included in the proposal budget.

Awarded projects

- **Project directors/chiefs of party (COPs)** are accountable and have ultimate oversight for ensuring FHI 360's *minimum standards* are implemented and tools completed for their respective projects, including monitoring adherence to the minimum standards by various staff and escalating issues when actions are not implemented.
- **Human resources representatives** ensure that interviews with all candidates include FHI 360's standard safeguarding-related questions, conduct and document reference and background checks for staff, and ensure new staff complete the required e-module *Safeguarding Program Participants* within 30 days of hire.
- **Country directors/country representatives** provide oversight to support project directors/COPs to ensure the minimum standards are met for projects operating within their respective countries.
- **Regional offices and business units** provide administrative, operational, and technical support and oversight to country offices and projects. Regional office project backstops within these offices can also help ensure that projects follow these guidelines.
- **Project-level Safeguarding Focal Points:** In general, SFPs coordinate with project directors/COPs and other project staff to implement FHI 360's *minimum standards for safeguarding program participants*.

Section 3: FHI 360's Safeguarding Vulnerability Profile Tool

Proposal teams: The proposal design lead (PDL) ensures FHI 360's *Safeguarding Vulnerability Profile Tool* is completed. This tool provides a snapshot of a project's vulnerability to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) based on populations served and context where activities are implemented. Describing a project's vulnerabilities related to SEA and planned risk mitigation strategies (as described in the stock language in Section 4) in a proposal is a potential differentiator, demonstrates that FHI 360 is doing our due diligence in safeguarding program participants, and strengthens proposals. The completed tool must be uploaded to the proposal folder on SharePoint.

Awarded projects: Additionally, since vulnerabilities can change between proposal and project start, project directors/COPs (or an assigned staff member) complete the tool within 90 days of project implementation. The results of this tool can be used during initial work plan development to

understand a project's vulnerability to SEA and inform risk mitigation strategies. Completion of this tool for awarded projects also allows the organization to flag high-risk projects for additional technical assistance and surge support when needed. The completed tool must be uploaded under the "Safeguarding" tab to [Vine](#). (See the FHI 360 Toolkit: How to implement FHI 360's minimum standards for safeguarding program participants for instructions on how to upload completed tools to Vine.)

Section 4: Stock Language for Proposals (*removed for external sharing*)

This stock language can be reduced, if needed. However, be mindful that this language captures the minimum safeguarding efforts that meet major funder requirements and industry standards related to safeguarding. This content can be further modified to address project context (e.g., high-risk or crisis settings) and populations that are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse (e.g., children, refugees, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ people).

A. When solicitations DO NOT include safeguarding: (Staffing and Management section)

- High-level overview of commitments and priorities, safeguarding-related policies, standards, and procedures to prevent, mitigate, and respond to harm toward program participants committed by personnel/partner personnel. (One paragraph)

B. When solicitations DO include safeguarding: (Technical Narrative section)

- Detailed overview of commitments and priorities, including safeguarding-related policies, standards, and procedures to prevent, mitigate, and respond to harm toward program participants committed by personnel/partner personnel. (One page. Use annex if allowed.)
- If the project involves interaction with children, refer to FHI 360's Child Safeguarding Guidelines and provide details about how the project will identify child-specific risks and implement mitigation strategies to address risks.

Section 5: Budget Considerations (direct costs)

The technical budget lead (TBL) ensures that direct costs related to safeguarding are included in the proposal budget.

Level of Effort (LOE) of [Position] to serve as the project's Safeguarding Focal Point

- Use the guidance in Section 1 above to identify a project-level SFP.
- Project-level SFPs typically dedicate 5-15% LOE to this role, depending on the nature, size, and scope of the project.
- For small projects (e.g., few staff and few partners), 5% LOE is likely adequate. For a large project that is serving vulnerable populations and/or is being implemented in a high-risk setting (e.g., an education program for youth in a disaster, conflict, post-conflict, or development setting), with a large staff and multiple partners, safeguarding efforts should be more robust, and therefore, the LOE could be higher.

Printing costs for awareness-raising materials (e.g., PSEA posters, pocket cards) to ensure that program participants are aware of their rights, mechanisms for reporting, and support services.

Costs related to training for personnel and partner personnel. At a minimum, the SFP needs to deliver FHI 360's in-depth safeguarding training, which can be held in person or virtually, toward the beginning of the project once staff and partners are on board and again mid-way through the first fiscal year, if needed, as new staff and partners are onboarded. Refresher training should be held at least annually or as needed. FHI 360 has developed training modules that SFPs use to deliver these trainings.

Costs of establishing community-based complaint mechanism (CBCMs). Per FHI 360's PSEA policy, where CBCMs are required or needed, any costs related to the type of CBCM that will be used needs to be included in the budget. For example, the project should consider procuring lock boxes, when safe and determined to be an appropriate reporting mechanism and placing them in locations determined by community members/program participants that allow for confidential reporting/submission of complaints. If a project-level helpline is planned as a CBCM, costs related to cell phones and airtime need to be included in the budget. Refer to FHI 360's PSEA Policy for requirements related to CBCMs.

Costs related to training volunteers, incentivized workers, and other non-staff to sensitize them to the Code of Conduct for Volunteers, Incentivized Workers, and other Non-Staff.

For projects that interact with vulnerable populations in high-risk settings (refer to your completed Vulnerability Profile Tool), in-person short-term technical assistance (STTA) from FHI 360's Senior Technical Advisor (STA) for Safeguarding is recommended to strengthen the capacity of the project's SFP and to help establish systems to meet FHI 360's minimum standards. (Five days LOE and seven days for travel for in-person STTA should be included in the project budget.

Additional Resources

Refer to the [how-to note](#) Connect for information about how to identify safeguarding focal points.

View a [PPT slide deck](#) and [presentation](#) (recording) delivered during a BDD Forum that provides an overview of *Integrating Safeguarding into Proposals*.

For help tailoring safeguarding content or activities for a proposal or existing project, contact Kim Dixon, Senior Technical Advisor for Safeguarding, kdixon@fhi360.org.

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