

Briefing Note:
National-level Coordination of PSEA Activities
CCIC, May 2018

1) What existing practices exist in national-level coordination of PSEA (i.e. by other national platforms and/or interagency networks)?

At the national-level a number of PSEA-related mechanisms can exist. Specifically, a) PSEA may be integrated into clusters like Protection/Child Protection/SGBV/PSS, b) it may be a stand-alone group, or c) there may be a combination of a+b.

The IASC PSEA Taskforce, the global inter-agency coordination platform, has supported the establishment of national-level PSEA coordination mechanisms. For example, 17 country-level mechanisms were mapped in 2017.¹

A series of tools have been developed by the PSEA Taskforce to support country-level coordination.² Tools range from standards, training, assessments, community-based feedback mechanisms, and reporting, etc.

Practices by national-level coordination groups include supporting humanitarian agencies and government bodies to implement holistic PSEA approaches (see point 3 below).

2) What potential legal and other caveats need to be understood as we move forward with identifying and developing options for action?

A key consideration in developing action on PSEA is the applicability of victim’s rights standards to international organizations. The Redress Project summarizes the key factors.³ This includes:

“When an international organization engages with victims of sexual exploitation and abuse, undertakes administrative investigations and affords assistance or other forms of service, those engagements should be carried out in accordance with applicable human rights standards relevant to the forms of victimization”

Although victims need to have their rights met and basic essential services need to be provided, such as access to healthcare, psychosocial support, legal aid, etc., in reality there can be many barriers to meeting these rights. The Redress report highlights a number of these. For instance:

i) Lack of effectiveness of how procedures are implemented ii) Lack of independence and impartiality	vii) Victims’ assistance strategies, protocols and guides viii) Cooperation and service delivery on the
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¹ https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/mapping_of_key_aap-psea_initiatives_2017.pdf.

² <http://www.pseataaskforce.org/en/tools/search/country----->.

³ <http://www.pseataaskforce.org/uploads/tools/1505891747.pdf>

ii) Evidentiary barriers iv) Victim-sensitive procedures v) Failure to instill confidence in victims to report abuses vi) Victims' access to support and assistance should not necessarily be linked to lodging a formal complaint	ground ix) Funding for support and assistance x) Institutional liability xi) The viability of pursuing extraterritorial claims xii) Paternity claims xii) Victim/survivor centered approach
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Children, as particularly at risk of SEA, and inherently requiring special protections, must have access to child-friendly procedures and support. Handling allegations of SEA against children needs a different approach than for adults, for some countries and most humanitarian agencies this involves mandatory reporting.

3) What are an initial set of pragmatic options to consider/discuss?

The PSEA Taskforce recommends that each agency take the following 8 steps at the country level.⁴ These are actions that a national-level PSEA coordination group can consider focusing on.

ACTION	
1	<u>Senior managers raise SEA with personnel and issue code of conduct</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The agency's senior managers express, at least annually, to their personnel the importance of complying with SEA prohibitions and reporting incidents ○ A code of conduct is signed by all personnel and posted in prominent places
2	<u>Designate and support PSEA focal point(s)</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Give them direct line to the head of office concerning their focal point role ○ Ensure both human resources and operational sides of the agency are engaged in PSEA ○ Ensure designated focal point actively engages in the inter-agency PSEA Network ○ Incorporate PSEA responsibilities into their performance appraisals
3	<u>Require adherence to the standards in the PSEA policy in all cooperative arrangements</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure all contracts issued to implementing partners include clauses on SEA
4	<u>Conduct awareness raising</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide awareness training to agency personnel ○ Raise awareness among beneficiaries / local populations. They need to know that they don't need to exchange sexual favours for humanitarian or

⁴ <http://www.pseataaskforce.org/>.

	development assistance as it is free, how to protect themselves, and how to complain if SEA occurs
5	<u>Establish complaints mechanisms</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Establish and publicize how agency personnel can report concerns or suspicions of SEA ○ Together with the PSEA network and local populations, establish how beneficiaries / local populations can report SEA. Important: these complaints mechanisms should be joint for all agencies in a given location, rather than have different means of reporting depending on the agency; they should allow for complaints on a variety of issues, rather than only SEA, so as to promote use and avoid stigmatization ○ Establish clear procedures for how to handle and direct complaints
6	<u>Ensure investigation procedures and capacity in place</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ensure there is clarity on the role of the office in investigating allegations and directing them to headquarters
7	<u>Ensure recruitment procedures check background of prospective employees</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Check references and files of possible new hires to ensure no background of SEA
8	<u>Provide assistance to victims</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Together with the country-level PSEA network, develop a victim assistance mechanism

To be effective, barriers and good practice for each of the actions should be analyzed before implementation.

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Country-level coordination mechanisms – specific aspects of the prevention-reporting-remedy?

- IFRC sits on IASC PSEA group
- focus on community-based feedback mechanisms, effort at local level but still limited outcomes beyond basics of briefing community and creating openings for input
- some success in getting PSEA focal points assigned for interagency coordination
- challenges in ensuring that all vulnerable populations are being reached
- Eastern Africa experience with collective complaints mechanism – unclear outcome
- under-resourced agencies often lack process to move action forward – need support from big organizations; some forthcoming from UN agencies e.g. UNICEF, UNHCR
- assistance to survivors (including access to social services) still seriously lacking across system

Actions at organizational level – what about sectoral (are these scalable)?

- aspiration to do broader agenda-changing, but most coordination about basic internal systems

Coordination groups typically limited to humanitarian organizations

- governments may be useful for advice on legal/political context, but not full-fledged partners
- usually humanitarian crisis-specific, unfortunately limited access for development organizations

Restricting mobility for offenders poses some significant challenges

- transnational element key – some discussions about INTERPOL but some process barriers
- who pays for the resources required to maintain a genuine tracking system
- mobility in the sector means that people move on at the allegation phase before investigation, or after an investigation