
Cox's Bazar Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Network Terms of Reference

Dates of Versions

Version 1:	November 2017 (<i>Endorsed by the CXB Heads of sub-Office and the ISCG Senior Coordinator</i>)
Version 2:	March 2024 (<i>Endorsed by the ISCG Senior Coordinator</i>)

Background

At Cox's Bazar level, the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) network was established in October 2017 following the largest scale influx of Rohingya refugees in August 2017. The UN Resident Coordinator's responsibility on PSEA in Cox's Bazar is operationalized daily through the ISCG Principal Coordinator and the PSEA Network Coordinator who is leading the efforts to eradicate SEA in the Rohingya Refugee Response in Cox's Bazar.

PSEA is a core commitment of the UN Secretary-General and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). To deliver on this commitment, the IASC has prioritized the acceleration of PSEA from the outset of humanitarian response, with a focus on key priority areas including safe and accessible reporting, victims/survivor-centered response, and enhanced accountability.¹

Network Responsibilities

Under the auspices of the Resident Coordinator and overseen by the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) Principal Coordinator, the Cox's Bazar PSEA Network is the primary body for technical-level coordination and oversight of PSEA activities in line with the PSEA Action Plan² and high-level Strategy in Cox's Bazar for the Rohingya Refugee Response. The CXB PSEA Network will give regular reports to the RC, to Heads of Office in Dhaka and to Heads of Sub-Offices in Cox's Bazar.

The presence of the CXB PSEA Network does **not** lessen the responsibility of individual network members to develop, implement, and strengthen internal PSEA programs at the country level. Senior management within each member organization is primarily accountable for PSEA within their organizations.³

The network is responsible for implementing coordinated activities between members to minimize the risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by aid workers, ensure effective response when incidents do arise, and raise awareness of PSEA in Cox's Bazar. The PSEA Network activities follow a victim-centered approach and will respect the principles of safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination.

The CXB PSEA Network is **not** responsible for investigating or adjudicating complaints. These functions rest exclusively with the entity that employs the individual against whom a complaint has been alleged, in line with internal policy and procedure.

¹ IASC Strategy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (2021), available [here](#); IASC Plan for Accelerating PSEA in Humanitarian Response at Country-Level (2018), available [here](#); UN Secretary-General's Strategy on PSEA (2017), available [here](#).

² [Bangladesh 2024 Action Plan to Prevent and Respond to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)

³ Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13), available [here](#).

Network Roles

The CXB PSEA Coordinator leads, chairs, supports and represents the CXB PSEA Network in coordination with the network co-chairs in the fulfillment of its responsibilities under these TORs and the Action Plan. The PSEA Coordinator is responsible for reporting quarterly on network activities, progress against PSEA Network Action Plan indicators, and anonymized SEA trends to the ISCG Principal Coordinator and to the RC. The PSEA Coordinator represents the network in relevant coordination bodies and advises actors in Bangladesh on good practice to support effective PSEA implementation.

Co-chair organizations for CXB PSEA Network are UNICEF as the standing co-chair and one non-UN organization which will be selected for a six-month period by the Network Members. While the organizations seated as co-chairs change, the co-chairs' role remains permanent to provide sustainable leadership to the network. The co-chair representatives will take an active role at the network level in convening and managing network meetings and events and help coordinate and oversee the PSEA Network Action Plan.

Each member organization will be represented in the network by one PSEA Focal Point, and preferably an alternate.⁴ All Focal Points will actively participate in information sharing on internal PSEA initiatives and coordination of activities under the Action Plan and are responsible for technical support and coordination on PSEA within their organization under the leadership of their senior management.

The network may form smaller, time-bound task teams of regular members to carry out specific deliverables as needed.

Membership

Network membership is open to all UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs operating in Cox's Bazar. It is mandatory for all Joint Response Plan (JRP) partners – both appealing, implementing, and strategic partners – to be a member of the PSEA Network from 2022 onwards. Members of the PSEA Network must have a PSEA policy in place or commit to developing an internal PSEA policy within three months after joining the Network. They must be represented in the PSEA Network by one PSEA Focal Point, and preferably an alternate.

Membership of the network is also open to Sector Coordinators, who are strongly encouraged to attend PSEA Network meetings in order to improve two-way coordination between sectors and the network. The PSEA Coordinator/co-chairs and the GBV sub-cluster Coordinator should participate in each other's meetings and events, and actively engage to ensure close linkages between PSEA and GBV interventions in Cox's Bazar.

The network will engage in outreach with non-member organizations as part of ongoing activities. At a minimum, as per the SOP for SEA Compliant Referral in the Rohingya Refugee Response⁵, all organizations in Cox's Bazar should be aware of the inter-agency SEA complaint referral system and be able to receive complaints against their own staff, regardless of their relationship to the network.

Meetings

The PSEA Network will convene monthly (every first Wednesday of the month) and additional ad-hoc meetings may be requested by any member. The notes of each meeting will be distributed among all members and filed in the records of the network. As network meetings should provide a supporting environment to discuss potentially sensitive challenges in PSEA, any information shared during meetings will be kept confidential on request following a victim-centered approach. As a general matter, CXB PSEA

⁴ [See the Terms of Reference for Cox's Bazar PSEA Focal Points \(2024\).](#)

⁵ [SOP for SEA Compliant Referral in the Rohingya Refugee Response in Bangladesh.](#)

Network meetings will refrain from discussing individual cases; any reference to SEA allegations or cases during meetings will be anonymized.

In case a Focal Point cannot attend a regularly scheduled network meeting, the member organization will be represented by a dedicated and sufficiently briefed alternate FP.

Tasks

Under the 4 pillars of the IASC Minimum Operating Standards on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse,⁶ the CXB PSEA Network will undertake the following:

Management and Coordination

- Carry out joint SEA risk assessments in Cox's Bazar as appropriate and as needed, identifying potential risk factors and areas of concern. The risk assessment outcomes will inform strategic decision-making of senior leadership and the PSEA Network Action Plan.
- Establish and implement a measurable PSEA Network Annual Action Plan with defined time frames and responsibilities of Network members based on specialty and capacity. Design and implementation of the Action Plan will be informed by community input, contextually appropriate, and respond to the risk factors identified by joint assessment. The UNCT will monitor Action Plan deliverables and will provide additional support when warranted.
- Monitor the PSEA activities of Network members to avoid duplication and fill gaps.
- Work closely with other coordination bodies in Cox's Bazar including the Protection Sector and GBV and CP Sub-Sectors, and the AAP and GIHA Working Group to support prevention and response to SEA.
- Identify training needs and resources to coordinate training for all PSEA Focal Points and senior management on their specific PSEA roles and responsibilities.
- Advocate for the strengthening and/or establishment of internal PSEA policies and practices for all organizations operating in Cox's Bazar and offer support to organizations as needed where such systems are not in place, whether or not an organization is a network member.
- Hold regular meetings of the CXB PSEA Network on the first Wednesday of every month, with ad hoc meetings as necessary.

Engagement with and support of the affected population

- Raise awareness about the rights of affected populations, what SEA is, what constitutes appropriate behavior of personnel, the fact that aid workers are obliged to report SEA incidents that they are aware of, and the various methods to submit complaints and how to access victim assistance services in Cox's Bazar.
- Support members to assess and improve the effectiveness and appropriateness of PSEA activities within the targeted communities.
- With the particular engagement of women, children, persons with disabilities and gender diverse population in the community, support members to create and/or adapt their aid delivery models to address power disparities and actively give those in more vulnerable positions a sustained voice in how aid is delivered.

⁶ Four Pillars of Management and Coordination, Community Engagement, Prevention, and Response are outlined in the [Minimum Operating Standards](#) for PSEA

Prevention

- Advocate for PSEA to be a priority throughout programming and support actors working in operational areas to embed SEA risk mitigation in needs assessment, project design, implementation, and monitoring based on identified SEA trends.
- Supplement network members' internal initiatives to strengthen SEA prevention through joint activities and sharing good practice.
- Encourage network members to carry out induction and refresher training on SEA for all personnel and support such trainings with jointly developed contextualized materials.
- Share resources created by the Network members including training modules, and IEC materials.
- Present best practices in relation to the vetting/screening systems for safe recruitment in Cox's Bazar.

Response

- Jointly map trusted and functional complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) in Cox's Bazar to identify where there are gaps in the affected population's safe access to report SEA.
- Support members to establish new complaint channels to fill the gaps in access to reporting based on the mapping and informed by community preferences, so that there are safe, accessible, and contextually appropriate channels for any member of the community to report sensitive allegations.
- Establish an inter-agency community-based complaint mechanism (CBCM) by linking the network members' complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) through agreed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on inter-agency complaint and assistance referral, in line with the Global SOPs.⁷
- Work with the Protection sector, including the GBV and Child Protection sub-sectors, to incorporate assistance referral pathways into the CBCM SOPs to provide immediate support for complainants and survivors of SEA. The PSEA Network does **not** create parallel assistance referral pathways for survivors of SEA.
- Raise the awareness of Protection actors, GBV actors, Child Protection actors, and all actors staffing complaint channels, so that all personnel who may work with SEA survivors or receive an SEA report know how to recognize SEA and where to safely send allegations.
- Raise awareness on the inter-agency reporting and referral mechanism among all actors in Cox's Bazar.
- Receive aggregate, anonymized updates of complaints in country shared by network members. Information sharing on anonymized SEA complaints with the network will be done in line with internal reporting and data protection policies of members, and in accordance with the principle of confidentiality, sharing only information needed to capture baseline trends for aggregate updating of the RC.
- To maintain accountability for complaint handling processes at country-level, and to inform trends analysis and reporting, keep a confidential record of aggregate, anonymized SEA allegations in Cox's Bazar, in a secure database. Secure data storage requires the adoption of clear guidelines and SOPs on where and how the information is kept and by whom it will be accessible.

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed and revised as appropriate.

⁷ IASC *Global Standard Operating Procedures on Inter-Agency Cooperation in Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms* (2016), available [here](#). For practical guidance to set up an inter-agency CBCM, see the *Best Practice Guide on Inter-agency CBCMs*, available [here](#).