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## Bangladesh Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Network Terms of Reference for the PSEAH Focal Points

December 2025

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### Background

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is a core commitment of the UN Secretary-General and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)<sup>1</sup>. To deliver on this commitment, the IASC has prioritized the acceleration of PSEA from the outset of humanitarian and development response, with a focus on key priority areas including safe and accessible reporting, victims/survivor-centered response, and enhanced accountability.<sup>1</sup> Under the auspices of the Resident Coordinator, Bangladesh PSEAH Network<sup>2</sup> is the primary body for technical-level coordination and oversight of PSEAH activities in line with its PSEAH Action Plan. The network is responsible for implementing coordinated activities between PSEAH Networks' members through PSEAH Focal Points to prevent Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) by UN and non-UN personnel<sup>3</sup>, reduce the risk of SEAH and ensure effective response when incidents do arise in Bangladesh.

### Role Description

The PSEAH Focal Point is a staff member from UN and non-UN Entities tasked with implementing PSEAH in direct coordination with their Senior Leadership (either Country Representative, Deputy Country representative or Programme manager) both internally and as an active member of the PSEAH Network in Bangladesh. The nomination of a PSEAH Focal Point does not relieve the Senior Leadership of their ultimate responsibility for PSEAH in the office but supports the Senior Leadership in that role. It is the role of the PSEA Network Coordinator and the Co-Chairs to provide functional guidance to the Network Focal Points.

In most cases, the Focal Point designation is a role or “hat” assigned to existing personnel and not a full-time position. To respect the need to balance Focal Point’s regular job with engagement on PSEAH, the below responsibilities will be reflected in Focal Point’s job description and job evaluation. To avoid the loss of institutional memory due to personnel change, the PSEAH Focal Point should be able to commit to the role for minimum one year and prepare a briefing for their replacement when exiting.

To ensure Focal Point is allowed enough time to devote to PSEAH responsibilities and that the activities are covered during Leave/R&R, Agencies aim to have at least one alternate PSEAH Focal Point, while taking gender balance into consideration.

The role of the Focal Point is limited to PSEAH related activities. Although the PSEAH Focal Points need to be able to identify links between SEAH and other forms of staff misconduct, they are not responsible for implementing activities beyond PSEAH.

The PSEAH Focal Point does not have an investigative role *as such*. However, the PSEAH Focal Point of an organization without a separate HQ investigation unit *may also* have an internal investigation role, if trained and qualified as an SEAH investigator. In such a scenario, the Focal Point must recuse themselves from an investigation if he/she begins providing victim support and/or otherwise compromises their impartiality or fosters an impression of conflict of interest.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](#).

<sup>2</sup> The Bangladesh PSEAH Network consists of sub-national structures, including the Networks in Rohingya Refugee Response, which report to the national level to ensure alignment and coherence across the response. (Cox’s Bazar [PSEA Network Webpage](#))

<sup>3</sup> Secretary General’s Bulletin on SEA ST/ SGB/2003/13 (2003), available [here](#) which is binding for all UN personnel, and the Statement of Commitment on Eliminating Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN and Non-UN Personnel (2006), available [here](#) which expanded the PSEA framework outside the UN and to cover all personnel.

## Responsibilities

Under the 4 pillars of IASC Minimum Operating Standards on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and in line with global standards on PSEAH<sup>4</sup> the PSEAH Focal Point(s), in coordination with the PSEAH Network will undertake the following:

### Engagement with and support of the affected population<sup>5</sup>

- Co-design and disseminate awareness-raising tools and facilitate events for community members with emphasis on their rights, what SEAH and staff reporting obligations are, and options for reporting sensitive complaints and victim assistance services.
- Ensure an ongoing community consultation to ensure all PSEAH activities are tailored on beneficiaries' needs and preferences.
- Establish an inter-agency Community-Based Complaint Mechanism, incorporating existing complaint and feedback mechanism (CFM) and in line with PSEAH and GBV good practice.<sup>6</sup>
- Map existing community engagement projects in their agency and work with project leads to include PSEAH messages and/or gather community input where appropriate.
- In coordination with trained GBV colleagues, learn community preferences in reporting sensitive information, their perspectives on aid workers' attitudes and behavior, their feedback on the effectiveness of SEAH reporting channels and processes and accessibility of assistance services, and their input on how to speak about sexual issues in a culturally appropriate manner.
- Where relevant, plan and organize agency-specific and/or joint awareness campaigns for local communities on PSEAH, which emphasize beneficiary rights and how to report SEAH.

## Prevention

### Support the Senior Leadership to:

- Establish and ensure staff sign a Code of Conduct that clearly prohibits SEAH, obliges reporting of such acts, and enforces these clauses when breached.
- Develop, assist the implementation and monitor an annual Action Plan to mainstream PSEAH throughout Organization's departments and programming, informed by community engagement and SEAH trends in Bangladesh and in accordance with global and/or regional PSEAH Action Plans.
- Support program managers to budget for and implement their agency's PSEAH activities under the Action Plan.
- Assist human resource departments upon request to put in place and apply practices that prevent the hiring of individuals who have a record of misconduct,<sup>7</sup> and to integrate PSEAH requirements into codes of conduct, organizational policies, staff contracts, subcontracting agreements, and job evaluation criteria.

### Take the lead on:

- Collaborating with Human Resources to ensure all new hires receive induction on PSEAH.
- Regularly train and support training for staff and field personnel on PSEAH, Code of Conduct and mechanisms for reporting SEAH.
- Collect and analyze information on SEAH risk factors (via internal programming) and country-wide trends (via the Network) and make recommendations to senior management on how to enhance

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. the [Minimum Operating Standards on PSEA](#), and the [Core Humanitarian Standard](#).

<sup>5</sup> All PSEA engagements with the local population should be done in coordination with actors working with affected populations to avoid duplication of efforts and to inform said engagements.

<sup>6</sup> Good practices in setting up systems for inter-agency referrals of SEA complaints and victim assistance, are found in the IASC [Best Practice Guide](#) and the GBV AoR's [Handbook for Coordinating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Emergencies](#) Chapter 1.8

<sup>7</sup> Initiatives to promote sharing information on re-hiring of perpetrators are the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response's [Misconduct Disclosure Scheme](#) (open to I/NGOs), [Clear Check](#) (open to UN), National Criminal records, INTERPOL Soteria.

- prevention strategies.
- Raise awareness of partners on the UN Code of Conduct and mechanisms for reporting allegations of SEAH. Ensure management are aware of the [UN Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving implementing partners](#) and accompanying partner assessment<sup>8</sup>, and support as needed.
- In coordination with relevant fellow PSEAH Network members provide PSEAH training for partners.

## Response

- Act as a channel to receive allegations of SEAH. Report and where relevant allegations refer to the organization whose personnel are implicated. Ensure the survivors are receiving appropriate assistance in line with the country SOP, internal procedure and available pathways.
- Ensure the UN Resident Coordinator is timely informed and updated about all SEAH allegations received in the organization.
- Limit sharing of sensitive complaint information to a “need to know” basis, in line with data protection principles and a victim-centered approach.
- In coordination with the Accountability to Affected Population (AAP) Focal Points, support program managers to strengthen and/or establish safe, accessible, and contextually appropriate channels to receive sensitive allegations, informed by good practice and community consultations.
- Support the Senior Leadership to establish and/or strengthen complaint handling and investigation protocols, including clear case handling responsibilities, capacitated investigators, and the ability to enact disciplinary measures where an allegation of SEAH is substantiated and incorporating the relevant Bangladeshi national legal context.
- Ensure essential services are available either internally or through other service providers to support victims of SEAH, including but not limited to-safety, immediate medical care, mental health and psychosocial support, legal services, dignity kits, basic materials assistance & socio-economic empowerment and support for children born because of SEAH where necessary.
- Ensure assistance provided to victims shall adhere to the principle of “do no harm” and be provided in a manner which seeks to uphold their rights, dignity, and well-being. This may entail provision of safety measures to protect against retaliation, re-victimization, and re-traumatization.
- Ensure assistance and support are made available to all victims of SEAH irrespective of whether the victim initiates or cooperates with an investigation or any other accountability procedure.
- Identify whether the complainant (and, if separate, the victim) has received victim assistance and support, via pre-established Gender Based Violence (GBV) and Child Protection referral pathways, within 24 hours.
- In coordination with GBV specialists, support the Head of Office to establish and/or strengthen internal referral pathways to victim assistance services in line with the [UN Victim Assistance Protocol](#).
- Support the Head of Office to monitor the progress of complaints according to internal procedures.

## Management and Coordination

- Attend monthly PSEAH Networks meetings (as well as ad-hoc meetings, as needed).
- Share information and coordinate on internal and external PSEA initiatives with the PSEA Network.
- Provide updates on PSEA-related activities (Monthly/quarterly/bi-annually/annually reporting on PSEA-related updated information and figures) to the PSEAH Networks and occasionally present on achievements, lessons learned, best practices and highlight activities on a voluntary basis.
- Raise awareness on the Focal Points’ identity and contact details throughout their agency, the PSEAH Networks, and where appropriate the affected community.

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<sup>8</sup> [UN Implementing Partner PSEA Capacity Assessment Tool, 2020](#)

- Represent their agency at PSEAH Networks' meetings, actively participate in fulfilling the Networks' Action Plan, and report back to the Senior Leadership on Network progress and lessons learned.
- Assist the Senior Leadership to meet their senior leadership PSEAH responsibilities
- Support and promote their agency's adherence to relevant accountability and compliance mechanisms, and reporting requirements on PSEAH.
- Compile available anonymized, aggregate data on SEAH allegations within at country level to inform relevant UN agencies, Donors, and the PSEAH Networks in line with internal policies and practices and for program adjustment and strengthen efforts to address SEAH.
- Share regular updates of anonymized, aggregate SEAH allegations with the PSEAH Networks to support trends analysis, unless this would jeopardize the rights of the victim or the investigation process.
- Coordinate with field offices to share lessons learned, mutually benefit from training opportunities, and harmonize PSEAH implementation throughout Organization.

### **Required Qualifications and Experience:**

The PSEAH Focal Point should be a mid/senior level staff member of an organization with easy access to senior management and sufficient time to fulfill the requirements. It is senior management responsibility to ensure the PSEAH Focal Points have sufficient capacity in place and support eventually training needs for the Focal Point. Additional training might be provided by the PSEAH Network. Senior Leadership must ensure the PSEAH Focal Points responsibilities are reflected in their job description and in the performance evaluation. The PSEAH Focal Point must report directly to Senior Leadership, either the Country Representative, the Deputy Country Representative or Programme Manager. In selecting focal points, the following should be given due attention:

### **Professional experience and background**

- Can speak on behalf of the organization in the PSEAH Networks and has sufficient decision-making authority to initiate institutional change. Have direct access to Senior Leadership in PSEAH-related matters.
- Strong knowledge of the local context and norms related to sex and gender.
- Strong knowledge and understanding of their agency's institutional approach on PSEAH and related strategies, policies, rules and regulations.
- Compatibility of the PSEAH Focal Point function with assigned position and workload.
- Demonstrated experience working directly with local communities.
- Experience in protection-centered work is an advantage.
- Familiarity with data protection and confidentiality measures and protocols

### **Skills**

- Professionalism (proven integrity, objectivity, and professional competence).
- Clear and effective communication, facilitation, and interpersonal skills.
- Effective Time management.

### **Behavioral requirements**

- Embracing cultural diversity.
- Sensitivity to gender issues.
- Ability to interact in a sensitive manner with victims.
- Ability to work in a stressful environment.

### Languages

- English required.
- Knowledge of Bangla/ local dialects is a strong benefit<sup>9</sup>

### Training:

The Senior Leadership will support the Focal Points to be trained on:

- The definition of SEA, including the [Six Principles](#) and how they are captured in the UN Code of Conduct / PSEA Policy.
- SOPs in SEA Complaints referrals.
- Training of Trainers (TOT) on Saying no to Sexual Misconduct.
- Other forms of misconduct, to enhance the ability to recognize SEA when mixed with other issues.
- Gender-Based Violence (GBV), Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), and (Child) Protection Guiding Principles to promote victim-centered and accountable approach to PSEA.
- Their agency's internal complaints procedures and victim assistance mechanisms.
- Investigation standards, so that the intake and reporting process does not jeopardize a subsequent SEA investigation.

*These Terms of Reference were endorsed in December 2025 and shall be reviewed and revised as appropriate*

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<sup>9</sup> Where necessary and as possible, the Focal Point will receive training on relevant words/phrases in the local language to ensure PSEA program is contextualized and appropriate, and to minimize communication barriers.