

PSEA Key Humanitarian Indicators: Methodology and Definitions

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

This document outlines the methodology and definitions used to track and report on key humanitarian indicators related to the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) within the Refugee Response Plan (RRP). Standardizing these indicators across all agencies and organizations involved ensures consistency in data interpretation, collection, and reporting at the country, regional, and global levels. This standardization is crucial for harmonizing external reporting and providing a clear picture of the strength and reach of PSEA activities within the RRP.

The methodology provides guidance on tracking and aggregating data related to the number of PSEA network members and partner personnel trained on SEA risk mitigation, prevention, and response through RRP-supported programs. Such training is vital in preventing and addressing SEA, which poses severe threats to the safety, security, and dignity of persons of concern and undermines the trust essential for effective humanitarian work.

Additionally, this methodology aligns key humanitarian indicators across corporate planning and reporting processes at all levels. The consistent interpretation, recording, and reporting of results are essential to:

Establish standard and comparable definitions of key humanitarian indicators at the country, regional, and global levels.

Harmonize external reporting of results across different levels of operation.

Sexual exploitation and abuse represent grave violations of the right to safety, security, and dignity of persons of concern. These acts not only harm individuals but also erode the trust of the community and undermine the ability of UN agencies and humanitarian workers to carry out their work effectively.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

These guiding principles form the ethical and operational foundation of this methodology. Derived from international standards and best practices, they ensure that all actions related to the Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) are conducted with integrity, respect for individuals, and accountability. These principles are essential for the consistent application of the methodology across all agencies and organizations involved in the Refugee Response Plan (RRP), guiding all aspects of data collection, reporting, and implementation of PSEA initiatives.

In alignment with Section 5 of the UNHCR Policy on Addressing Sexual Misconduct, [UNHCR Policy on Addressing Sexual Misconduct](#)¹, the following principles guide all actions to address sexual misconduct:

- [Victim-Centred Approach – putting the victim first](#)^{1 2}
- [Age, gender and diversity](#)
- [Prevention of, risk mitigation, and response to gender-based violence](#)
- [Do-no-harm](#)
- [Duty of Care](#)

For detailed explanations of these principles, please refer to Section 5 of the Policy³.

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2024-05/UNHCR%20Policy%20on%20Addressing%20Sexual%20Misconduct%202024.pdf>

² The key principles set forth in the VCA Policy are: (a) well-being, protection and security first; (b) assistance and support; (c) non-discrimination; (d) end-to-end, holistic approach; (e) give (back) a measure of control, to the extent feasible; (f) confidentiality and informed consent; (g) ask and listen; (h) information; (i) child victims; and (j) due process.

³ The Guiding principles in more detail:

The Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) and the [2019 IASC Six Core Principles relating to PSEA](#) also underpin all actions to address SEA.

Effective PSEA efforts require close coordination among organizations. Inter-agency coordination fosters a unified situation analysis, strategy, and approach, ensuring consistent messaging on PSEA to communities and stakeholders. It also builds on partners' expertise, streamlines reporting and referral mechanisms, and ensures complementarity of interventions. Training interventions for staff and PSEA network members are vital components of this coordinated effort.

SEA DEFINITIONS

Clear and consistent definitions of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) are crucial for accurately reporting and addressing incidents across all agencies involved in the RRP. The following standardized definitions ensure a unified understanding and approach throughout this document:

- **Sexual Abuse:** The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions. Any sexual activity involving children (individuals under the age of 18 years) constitutes sexual abuse.
- **Sexual Exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another. It encompasses exchanging money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including transactional sex regardless of the legal status of sex work in the country. It also includes any situation where sex is coerced or demanded by withholding or threatening to withhold goods or services, or by blackmail.

-Victim-centered approach: prioritize the safety, dignity, and rights of the victim. Ensure that the victim's needs and wishes are central to the response process.

-Age, gender, and diversity (AGD): recognize and address the different impacts of SEA on diverse groups, ensuring that responses are tailored to the specific needs of individuals based on their age, gender, and other factors of diversity.

-Prevention, risk mitigation, and response to gender-based violence: implement proactive measures to prevent SEA, mitigate risks, and ensure a prompt and effective response when incidents occur, with a focus on gender-based violence.

-Do-No-Harm: ensure that all interventions aimed at preventing and responding to SEA do not inadvertently cause further harm to the victims or communities.

-Duty of care: uphold the highest standards of professional conduct, ensuring that all staff and associated personnel understand their responsibilities in preventing and addressing SEA.

What the Indicator Tracks

Indicator Definition: Number of PSEA network members, partner personnel and staff members of stakeholders involved in the refugee response trained on SEA risk mitigation, prevention and response

NB: The unit of measurement of the RRP indicator is a *number*. The indicator is *quantitative*.

OVERVIEW OF THE INDICATOR

This indicator tracks the total number of all individuals trained on SEA risk mitigation, prevention and response through activities and programmes under the Refugee Response Plan (RRP) during the reporting period. This indicator is intended to provide the agencies and organizations implementing the RRP with insight into the strength and reach of PSEA capacity building measures. **These measures include introductory and refresher sessions⁴, but also trainings where PSEA is integrated into a wider range of training subjects.**

DATA DISAGGREGATION

For clarity and a more comprehensive **analysis, the data** collected should be **disaggregated** by gender, specific roles (such as staff or volunteers), and by organization. This will enhance the understanding of training reach and its overall effectiveness.

IMPACT EVALUATION

Evaluating the impact of PSEA training involves tracking not only the number of participants but also the outcomes of the training. Key metrics for impact evaluation include:

- **Changes in reporting rates:** monitoring increases or decreases in SEA incident reports.
- **Response times:** assessing improvements in response times to SEA allegations.
- **Community feedback:** gathering feedback from affected communities on the perceived effectiveness of PSEA measures.

MANDATORY TRAINING, CONTENT REQUIREMENTS AND PARTICIPANTS

Participants: training on PSEA is mandatory for:

- UN Staff and Related Personnel⁵
- Partner Organization Staff and Associates: including international, national, and local NGOs, UN agencies, community-based, and refugee-led organizations.

Scope: PSEA training is an integral component of all RRP-supported programming, irrespective of the sector (e.g., child protection, health, education, WASH, justice).

⁴ At minimum it is recommended one or twice a year.

⁵ "United Nations staff and related personnel include United Nations staff members, consultants, individual consultants/contractors, interns, national officers, United Nations volunteers, experts on mission and contingent members". ([2022 IASC PSEA Core Indicators – Guidance Note](#)).

Types of Mandatory Training⁶:

1. Induction Briefing: Covers conduct and discipline issues, provided as a stand-alone session or part of the induction security briefing.
2. Initial PSEA Training: Online or in-person training on SEA definitions, forms, and organizational policies and regulations⁷.
3. Refresher Training: Updates on misconduct, SEA policies, and reporting mechanisms.

Inter-Agency Training:

- Purpose: facilitates learning from different agencies' experiences, updates on best practices, and development of a collective PSEA approach.
- Implementation: national PSEA Networks/Task Forces promote, organize, and facilitate inter-agency trainings using resources like the [IASC Learning Package on Protection from Sexual Misconduct for UN Partner Organizations](#).
- Flexibility: can be utilized for internal trainings in organizations lacking their own training materials.

Consequently, participants trained on PSEA *in all sectors* should be counted under this indicator.

It's important that the training includes clear Guidance on where and how to report allegations of misconduct: all personnel should further be aware of the policy for protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct⁸ – to empower, encourage and protect staff and associates who report cases of sexual exploitation and abuse while performing their duties in the operating country. Guidance on where and how to report should always be included in one of the three types of trainings described above (or alternatively presented separately to the personnel).⁹

⁶ According to the **2022 IASC PSEA Core Indicators Guidance Note**. Kindly remember that It is not the responsibility of the in-country PSEA Network to ensure the PSEA training of the staff since it is an individual organizational responsibility. According to [the in-country PSEA Network Terms of Reference \(2021\)](#), the PSEA network shall "Encourage network members to carry out induction and refresher trainings on SEA for all personnel and support such trainings with jointly developed contextualized materials." and "Supplement network members' internal initiatives to strengthen SEA prevention through joint activities and sharing good practice".

⁷ *The one-day Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) 'Saying No to Sexual Misconduct' course is recommended.*

⁸ See Secretary General's Bulletin ([ST/SGB/2017/2/Rev.1](#)) on Protection against retaliation for reporting misconduct and for cooperating with duly authorized audits or investigations.

⁹ For more details on the SOPs for Providing Assistance to Survivors please visit: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RrImPGQkZx5Oq99Ggk_jKm_aJmNbVkJTV/view. Here also a best practice from the region: <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/99822>.

TRAINING CONTENTS AND QUALITY STANDARDS

Content Requirements:

- Definitions and forms of SEA
- Organizational policies and regulations
- Local mechanisms for community reporting
- Victim assistance and support
- Prevention and response roles and responsibilities

Quality Elements:

- Practical guidance: clear instructions on accessing designated complaint mechanisms for reports and referrals.
- Expert trainers: delivered by PSEA/GBV specialists to ensure comprehensive information.
- Cultural adaptation: training language, materials, and methods tailored to the specific needs and cultural contexts of each agency/organization and participant.
- Continuous improvement: implementation of post-training assessments and follow-up surveys to measure knowledge retention, attitude changes, and practical application. Regular feedback mechanisms should refine training materials and methods based on participant input and emerging best practices.

Training Standards:

- Duration: sessions must have a structured curriculum and last a minimum of 2.5 hours.
- Exclusions: does not include awareness-raising activities, information campaigns for communities, or PSEA policy briefings and staff updates.

Method of Calculation

Data disaggregation/number: sum the total count of personnel, staff, and associates trained in RRP-supported PSEA training and refresher courses during the reporting period¹⁰. This allows for a more nuanced analysis of training reach and effectiveness.

Data sources: at country level utilize reports from PSEA Network members, agencies' humanitarian performance monitoring, and training partners' records and should be integrated with broader monitoring systems used in the RRP. This ensures that PSEA efforts are not viewed in isolation but as part of a holistic approach to improving overall humanitarian response effectiveness.

Note: Operations should not collect data on training for short-term staff and/or visitors. Instead, include qualitative information on the estimated number of visitors/short-term staff and their participation in any training.

COMMONLY REPORTED ACTIVITIES

- **Training coverage:**
 - # Number and % of staff and associated personnel provided with in-country PSEA training (including UN agencies, international NGOs, local organizations, and volunteers).

¹⁰ Example of calculation: for instance, if 50 staff members and 30 volunteers were trained across three different agencies, the total count for this indicator would be 80. This total should then be disaggregated by gender, role, and organization.

- # Number and % of UN personnel who have completed the mandatory UN PSEA e-learning.
- # Number of government representatives trained on PSEA.
- **Additional metrics:**
 - # Number of Refugee Coordination Forum members with a dedicated PSEA focal point (captured at the country level if required).

COMPLEMENTARY DATA

- **Qualitative Information:** type of training, frequency, and profile of staff attending training courses to complement the quantitative data provided by this indicator.

NB: “Members may not collect data on training for short-term staff and/or visitors. Include qualitative information on reports about the estimated number of visitors/short-term staff and their participation in any kind of training”¹¹

PSEA MATERIAL AND RESOURCES:

- PSEA Inter-Agency Standing Committee: [Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse | IASC / PSEA \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](https://www.interagencystandingcommittee.org/).
- Training materials and reports as well as staff survey tools and examples can be found on the IASC-PSEA resources portal: [Resources | IASC / PSEA \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](https://www.interagencystandingcommittee.org/)
- Minimum Operating Standards: [Microsoft Word -](#)

[181101_iasc_champions_sea_sh_strategy_final-converted \(interagencystandingcommittee.org\)](#)

- PSEA evidence review: [Action to End Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: A Review of the Evidence 2020 | UNICEF](#).
- [Inter-Agency GBV Case Management Guidelines Training Materials - GBVIMS: Gender-Based Violence Information Management System, 2024, with module 21 on GBV Case Management Responses to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#)
- [Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse; Secretary-General’s Bulletin](#)
- [United Nations protocol on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving implementing partners.](#)
- [United Nations protocol on the provision of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse](#)

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMINOLOGY USED IN THIS DOCUMENT

- **‘PSEA Network members’:** members of a technical-level inter-agency PSEA network (or task force) created by in-country senior leadership. (2021 In-country PSEA Network, Generic Terms of Reference)
- **‘Personnel’:** the organization’s personnel, regardless of their deployment time or type of contract (full-time, part-time, consultants, volunteers), will receive induction briefings, PSEA specific training and refresher. (2022 IASC PSEA Core Indicators Guidance Note)
- **‘Associates’:** include volunteers, cultural mediators, incentive workers, contractors, consultants, partners and anyone else associated with or representing an organization.
- **‘Capacity strengthening’:** The strengthening of knowledge, ability, skills and resources to help individuals, communities or organizations to achieve agreed goals.

¹¹ 2022 IASC PSEA Core Indicators Guidance Note

- **'Prevention'**: Effective and comprehensive mechanisms to ensure awareness-raising on SEA amongst personnel; effective recruitment and performance management. (2012 PSEA Minimum Operating Standards)
- **'Response'**: Internal complaints and investigation procedures are in place. (2012 PSEA Minimum Operating Standards).

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