

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance to Sida's partner organisations on how Sida assesses their capacity to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH).

## WHAT IS SEAH?

SEAH can be summarised by the overall term sexual violence. **Sexual exploitation** involves an actual or attempted abuse of a person in a vulnerable position for sexual purposes, such as transactional sex or exchanges of necessity goods and services or the like for sexual services. **Sexual abuse** includes actual or threatened physical intrusion by force or unequal position of power. **Sexual harassment** is verbal, non-verbal or physical behaviour of a sexual nature that violates a person's dignity.

Unfortunately, SEAH is and has been present in international development cooperation for a long time, both internally within aid organisations and vis-à-vis the local population. SEAH usually arises because of unequal power relations linked to gender inequalities and socio-economic status. These acts constitute violations or abuse of human rights.

The victims are often the most vulnerable members of society. The risks are heightened in humanitarian or fragile and conflict-affected contexts, where power imbalances can be particularly acute and the displaced have little recourse. Women, children, people with disabilities, and LGBTQI populations are likely to be among the most vulnerable in such contexts. However, boys and men can also be victims.

Most cases are never brought to anyone's attention, as the victims are too scared or ashamed to report.

All forms of SEAH are interrelated, have the same root causes and should therefore be addressed holistically. SEAH can lead to life-long suffering of victims and it also undermines the aid sector as a whole and limits our ability to achieve development results.

In SEAH prevention and response work, it is central to adopt a victim and survivor-centred approach, which is based on the needs, wishes and priorities of victims or potential victims of SEAH.

## ASSESSMENT OF PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Sida assesses partners' capacity to prevent and respond to SEAH as part of the assessment of the programme and the organisation's capacity to implement it.

Sida's assessment of partners' capacity to prevent and manage SEAH seeks to understand the extent to which SEAH prevention and response is:

- integrated in the organisation's management and steering, at all levels of the organisation. This includes policies, strategies, code of conduct, and resources and processes for implementing and monitoring those commitments, as well as SEAH related roles and responsibilities within the organisation. Sida will also assess the organisational culture, e.g. how gender equality and diversity is promoted within the organisation.
- integrated in how the organisation manages its human resources and competencies. This includes how it is applied in recruitment, staffing structures (such as SEAH focal points), or staff development and performance.
- integrated in the communication and reporting mechanisms of the organisation, as well how the victim and survivor-centred approach to the management of SEAH cases works within the organisation. This includes internal communication, communication with communities, whistle-blower functions and non-retaliation when reporting.
- integrated in how the organisation assesses, enters into agreements with, and supports partner organisations, contractors and suppliers (third parties).
- integrated in programme design on the basis of the existing risks of negative effects related to SEAH.

Sida needs information from the organisation to perform the assessment and will when necessary pursue a dialogue to expand and clarify how the organisation works to prevent and respond to SEAH.

As a partner you might want to use the following questions to see if all relevant areas have been covered<sup>1</sup>:

- What policies, strategies or other relevant document in relation to SEAH does your organisation have? How are these policies and strategies designed to prevent operations from having any negative effects such as exploitation, abuse and harassment within your organisation, or by staff or partner organisations against women and men, girls and boys in the communities where you work?
- Does your organisation's recruitment process include risk based screenings to prevent SEAH?
- Does your organisation have SEAH specialist resources or access to those?
- Does your organisation have capacity building and internal learning and development processes in regards to SEAH ?
- Does your organisation regularly discuss issues of power relations, gender and inclusion within your organisation. Does staff feel confident to speak out, report and address those issues?
- Are communities where your work routinely informed about the organisation's SEAH position, how SEAH can be reported and how SEAH cases are managed?
- How does your organisation manage complaints and reports of SEAH? How are victims and survivors protected and supported by your organisation?
- How does your organisation assess the capacity of partner organisations, contractors and suppliers? How are risks managed? Does your organisation have SEAH specific clauses in the agreements with partner organisations, contractors and suppliers?
- Does your organisation perform SEAH related risks analysis as a part of its operations?
- How has the programme design been developed to prevent and respond to SEAH?

## WHY DO WE ASSESS SEAH?

Development cooperation often acts in contexts with unequal power relations, and must work actively to prevent and respond to the occurrence of SEAH. Sweden, together with other donor countries, has been actively involved in raising awareness on the necessity to tackle SEAH within international development and the humanitarian community. Sweden has endorsed the Commitments by donors to tackle SEAH<sup>2</sup> as well as the OECD-DAC Recommendation on ending SEAH<sup>3</sup>.

These commitments and recommendations together with the Inter Agency Standing Committee Minimum Operating Standards – Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (IASC MOS-PSEA) form the framework guiding how Sida assesses partners' capacity to prevent and respond to SEAH. Based on those commitments, Sida has adopted an approach to preventing and responding to SEAH, which includes other tools and resources (see links below). Sida has also incorporated paragraphs on SEAH in partner agreements.

### Links to relevant information sources:

- [OECD-DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance. OECD \[2019\]](#)
- [Donor commitments \[London, 2018\]](#)
- [Sida's position on preventing and managing SEAH in development cooperation and humanitarian action \(in Swedish\)](#)
- [Sida e-learning module: SEAH](#)
- [Sida: reporting SEAH](#)
- [CHS Alliance: Protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment](#)
- [Inter-Agency Standing Committee: Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse](#)
- [Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(un.org\); Fact sheet on the Secretary-General's initiatives to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse | Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse \(un.org\)](#)

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1 The list of questions is not an exhaustive list and is only meant to provide guidance on which kind of information shall be provided as a minimum. You may also want to share them with your partner organisations, contractors and suppliers to guide their own assessment of their organisations.

2 Commitments by donors to tackle sexual exploitation abuse and sexual harassment, London, July 2018.

3 DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual OECD Legal Instruments Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response, 2019.