

Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

Refresher on Partner Capacity Assessments

DEPS/PTSS, March 2026

Agenda

- UN Protocol
- UN Common Tool
- The Eight Core Standards
- UNHCR Procedures on Partnership Management – PSEA Component
- End-to-End Process of Partners' PSEA Capacity Assessment
- Challenges and Recommendations
- Brief System Demo
- Resources
- Q & A

What is the UN IP Protocol?

The United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Involving Implementing Partners (IPs):

Outlines requirements to ensure adequate safeguards and appropriate action in place when working with our partners

Aims to ensure the UN does not partner with entities who fail to address or respond to instances of SEA



UNITED NATIONS PROTOCOL ON ALLEGATIONS OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE INVOLVING IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

21 March 2018

RATIONALE

1. This protocol outlines obligations of the United Nations, including its funds and programmes (collectively, the "UN"), when working with implementing partners, to ensure adequate safeguards and appropriate action related to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).
2. This protocol is aligned with the [Secretary General's Bulletin, 9 October 2003 on "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse"](#) (ST/SGB/2003/13).

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

3. The UN does not partner with entities that fail to address sexual exploitation and abuse through appropriate preventive measures, investigation and corrective action.¹ Such failures shall constitute grounds for the termination of any cooperative arrangement with the UN.²
4. The UN shall place the human rights, interests and needs of all victim at the center of our efforts, and adhere to the principles of 'do no harm,' confidentiality, safety and non-discrimination when responding to allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.
5. A victim-centered approach guides UN SEA prevention and response whereby the victim is informed, participates in the decision-making process and provides consent on the possible use and disclosure of their information.
6. In cases involving children, all decisions made regarding the prevention and response to SEA allegations involving implementing partners of the UN are guided by the best interests of the child and the right of the child to participate and to be heard.

How is the IP Protocol Operationalized?

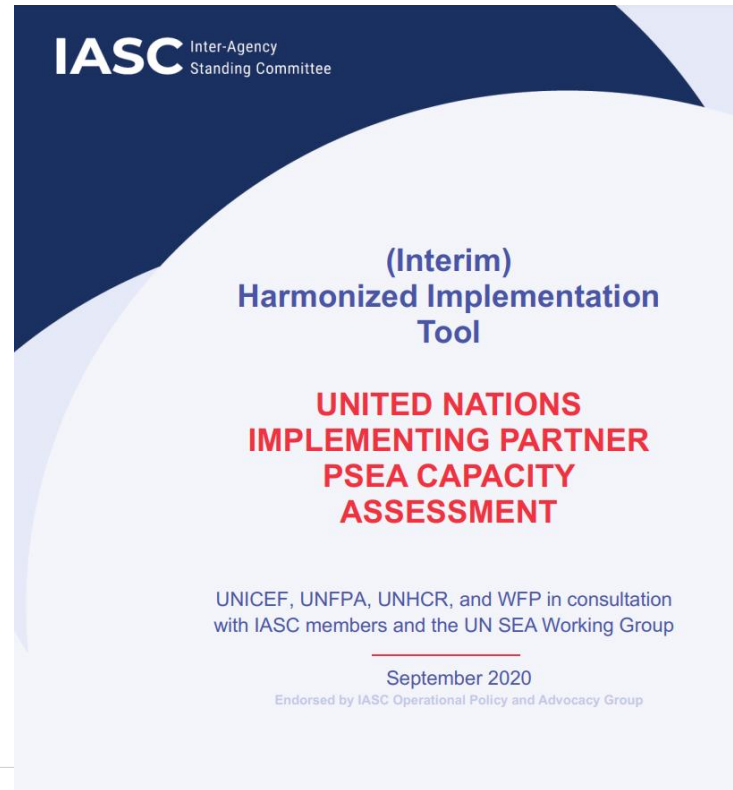
Through the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Harmonized Implementation Tool

Lays out the methodology for operationalizing the protocol

Includes a harmonized capacity assessment

Defines process to strengthen and monitor partner capacity

Allows **mutual recognition** and joint sharing of assessments and capacity plans



Eight Core Standards of the UN Harmonized Tool

The 8 core standards (1)

Core Standards	Assessment criteria
Core Standard 1 Organizational Policy	The partner has a policy document on PSEA (Code of conduct or similar)
Core Standard 2 Organizational Management: Sub-contractors	The partner's contracts and partnership agreements include a standard SEA clause requiring sub-contractors to adopt policies that prohibit SEA and to take measures to prevent and respond to SEA.
Core Standard 3 Human resources system	There should be a systematic vetting procedure in place for job candidates through screening. This must include, at minimum, reference checks for sexual misconduct and a self-declaration by the job candidate, confirming that they have never been subject to sanctions (disciplinary, administrative or criminal) arising from an investigation in relation to SEA, or left employment pending investigation and refused to cooperate in such an investigation.
Core standard 4 Mandatory trainings	The partner holds or participates in mandatory trainings (online or in-person) for all personnel on PSEA and relevant procedures.

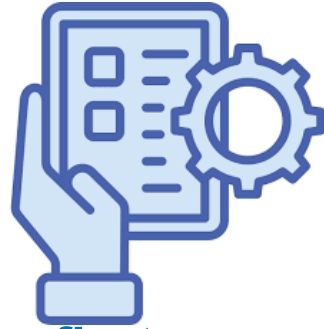
The 8 core standards (2)

Core Standards	Assessment criteria
Core standard 5 Reporting	The partner has mechanisms and procedures for personnel, beneficiaries and communities, including children, to report SEA allegations that comply with core standards for reporting.
Core standard 6 Assistance and referrals	To be consistent with the UN IP Protocol and the UN Victim Assistance Protocol, the partner has a system to refer SEA victims to locally available support services, based on their needs and consent. This can include actively contributing to in-country PSEA networks and/or referral pathways for gender-based violence led by UNHCR, other entities, or the host country.
Core standard 7 Investigation	The partner has a process for investigation of allegations of SEA and can provide evidence . This may include a referral system for investigations where in-house capacity does not exist.
Core standard 8 Corrective measures	The partner has taken appropriate corrective action in response to past SEA allegations, if any.

UNHCR AI on Procedures on Partnership Management

Procedures on Partnership Management

- NGOs with direct contact with beneficiaries must have a valid PSEA assessment **before signing an agreement.**
- Capacity Strengthening Implementation Plan (CSIP) for partners with Low/Medium capacity is developed **before signing an agreement.**
- Partners **with no contract with beneficiaries** must answer the **first two questions** in the PSEA Module, including **confirming no contact** with beneficiaries, and verified by UNHCR. Completing the full assessment at this point is **optional.**
- Follow-up on CSIP activities, review after **6 months**, and possible extension of the CSIP duration to **3 more months** (9 months in total).
- The assessment is **valid for 5 years.**



Currently, the process only applies to our NGO partners.

Procedures on Partnership Management

- UNHCR uses the harmonized UN assessment tool, with its **eight core standards**.
- UNHCR cannot partner with an organization that **does not meet core standard 8**.
- In emergencies, PSEA assessment and development of CSIP (if required) are completed as soon as possible and **no later than 3 months** after signing an agreement.
- UN partner organizations, government partners and grant agreement partners **are exempted** from PSEA capacity assessments.



PSEA capacity assessment process is conducted online through the PSEA module on the UNPP – no offline forms are to be used.

End-to-End Process of Partners' PSEA Capacity Assessment

UNHCR End-to-End Process of Partners' PSEA Capacity Assessment

1. Partners' PSEA capacity self-assessment.

2. Verification of partners' PSEA capacity self-assessment.

3. Coordination of partners' PSEA assessment with other UN organizations.

4. Assessment and scoring of partners' PSEA capacity.

5. Development of partners' PSEA CSIP.

6. Monitoring and review of partners' PSEA CSIP.

7. Final determination of partners' PSEA capacity.

8. Continuous monitoring of partners' PSEA capacity.



Challenges Faced by Operations and Partners During PSEA Assessment Process and Recommendations

Challenges and Recommendations

No.	Challenges	Recommendations
1	Partner has more than one profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partner should maintain only one profile per country.• Partner should decide which profile to retain and which one to deactivate.• The retained profile must have a valid PSEA assessment and complete supporting documents.
2	PSEA assessment completed under the partner's HQ profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Partners cannot currently apply to Calls for Expression of Interest using their HQ profiles.• The partner should ensure that the country profile they intend to use for applications has a valid PSEA assessment, as this is the profile from which they should apply.

Challenges and Recommendations

No.	Challenge	Recommendation
3	Partner's HQ profile assessment versus country profiles in the field	<ul style="list-style-type: none">International NGOs may be assessed at HQ level using the INGO template, which can then support assessments for their country operations.
4	Confusion between unlocking the partner's self-assessment and unlocking the UN rating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Unlocking partners' self-assessment: When the partner requests a re-assessment due to expiry or previous assessment, errors, changes in operational context, or changes in their internal capacities.Unlocking UN rating: Initiated by a UN agency when monitoring identifies non-compliance with a core standard, an allegation arises, or an error is found in previous UN scoring.

PSEA Module – Brief System Walkthrough

Where to Find Resources?

Resources for UNHCR

- [UNHCR/AI/2023/05 Administrative Instruction on Procedures on Partnership Management](#)
- The Programme Handbook: [Programme Cycle \(unhcr.org\)](#) (PLAN 8, GET 2, and GET 4).
- Repository items:
 - [Roles and Deliverables for Partners' PSEA Capacity Assessment](#)
 - [UNPP Roles Catalogue](#)
 - Inter-agency IP Protocol for PSEA Resource Library on the UNPP: [Inter-agency IP Protocol for PSEA Resource Library – United Nations Partner Portal \(unpartnerportal.org\)](#)

Resources for Partners

- [External Guidance Note on UNHCR Funded Partnership Management on the UNPP](#)
- [UNHCR programme handbook for partners | UNHCR: PSEA related information in PLAN 8, GET 2 and GET 4](#)
- [IP Protocol for PSEA](#) on the UNPP
- Investigating SEA Allegations for Partners (EN, ES, FR, AR):
 - [UNPP](#)
 - [Disasterready](#) (with certificates)



Resources on the UNPP



Resources

Quick Links



Account Management



Apply for Calls



Create an organization profile



News Centre



Register and Log In



User support

IP Protocol for PSEA Resources

Interagency PSEA Implementing Partner Protocol Resource Package

Resources to support PSEA capacity strengthening

PSEA Module User Guides and Resource Materials

Individual Agency Resources

UNICEF



UN Secretariat



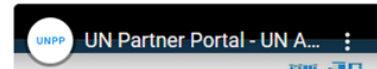
UNFPA



UNHCR



WFP



UN Partner Portal Resources

UN Partner Portal News Digest

