Credit: C. Bradley

# Applying CAPSEAH to strengthen safeguarding

## CAPSEAH

**Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment**

## Introduction

All projects within the Biodiversity Challenge Funds (BCFs) are required to demonstrate a commitment to the prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH). Projects are assessed on their capability to prevent and respond to allegations of SEAH through key check points, including prior to funding and through monitoring reports. All assessments are based upon the Common Approach to Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (**CAPSEAH**).

### CAPSEAH has four parts:

For the purpose of this guide, we will discuss how to use Parts 2 and 3 to improve your safeguarding and protection from SEAH policies and procedures. We will also explore Part 4 'Practical Guidance' section of the CAPSEAH website where specific examples can be found to action[1].


Credit: C3 Philippines

### Part 1: Background on SEAH and a collective vision for action

**CAPSEAH is a guide** to help people and organisations working in Humanitarian, Development and Peacekeeping (HDP) settings. Its aim is to improve accountability, amplify existing standards such as the **IASC Principles** and **CHS Standard** on preventing SEAH, as well as set expectations about behaviours and minimum actions to implement to protect people from SEAH. A glossary of common terms used is available in the section '**Further Information and Resources**'.

[1] Please note that the title / heading for each part is linked to the relevant section of the CAPSEAH website.

BIODIVERSITY CHALLENGE FUNDS | Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs | UK International Development | biodiversitychallengefunds.org.uk

Credit: Gilang Ihsan Pratama

## Part 2: Common PSEAH principles to guide all work

Organisational principles guide the behaviour and conduct of people working within organisations. Principles around protections from SEAH can support staff to understand appropriate behaviour within their work.

The following six protection from SEAH principles are designed to underpin and guide the SEAH related conduct of all people working on BCFs projects:

1. SEAH is prohibited.

2. Zero tolerance for inaction.

3. Tailor protection from SEAH approaches to the context and ensure the approaches are inclusive and victim-survivor centred.

4. Embed SEAH prevention as part of working culture.

5. Respond appropriately to suspicions, reports and incidents of SEAH.

6. Respect confidentiality and protect against retaliation.

Protection from SEAH principles can be incorporated into staff Codes of Conduct. These principles can also support leadership to create a safe and supportive working environment where reporting of wrongdoing is encouraged and systems are in place to respond to allegations of SEAH in a survivor-centred manner.

## Part 3: Minimum recommended actions to protect against SEAH

All assessments of BCFs projects, either at application stage or through monitoring reports, follows the six minimum actions as set out in the CAPSEAH. The BCFs Safeguarding Manager assesses how evidence presented by projects meets each of the following criteria:

**1** Policies:

- Does your project or organisation have appropriate policies in place that are aligned with the common approach to protection from SEAH principles?

- How does the project ensure all personnel, stakeholders, volunteers, and delivery partners adhere to minimum standards?

- How are stakeholders made aware of policies and safeguarding approaches on your project?

**2** Leadership:

Leadership should set a culture of openness and accountability in regard to safeguarding.

- How does your project or organisation's leadership demonstrate a zero tolerance to inaction on SEAH?

- Do your leaders regularly highlight and address safeguarding and the need to protect stakeholders from SEAH?

**3** Communication:

BCFs projects should have a system in place where projects consult, inform, and coordinate with communities, staff, and partners. This ensures the following:

- Projects' commitment to preventing SEAH.

- Information on the Complaints and Feedback Response Mechanism (CFRM) is shared.

- Where possible, stakeholders are part of the design and implementation of safeguarding approaches within a project.

**4** Preventions:

The risk of SEAH within projects is continually assessed and preventative mitigations are in place across all activities within a project.

The risk of SEAH is constant across the lifecycle of the project and should be actively monitored and appropriate mitigations put into place to prevent and respond to allegations of SEAH.

Projects should include relevant recruitment processes and procedures to avoid hiring known perpetrators of abuse, where possible. This may include background checks and participation in vetting schemes such as the Misconduct Disclosure Scheme (MDS).

**5** Response:

A key component of any safeguarding strategy is to encourage reporting of wrongdoing, ensuring accountability, and ensuring a victim-survivor centred approach is at the heart of any response. This is often a challenging aspect for projects and organisations who have not had a lot of experience in SEAH case management. Projects should ensure staff are aware of what to do if they experience, witness, or suspect that SEAH is happening within a project.

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*All BCFs projects are required to immediately report all allegations of SEAH to ODA.Safeguarding@defra.gov.uk*

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It is expected that projects will ensure they are ready to conduct investigations through a victim-survivor centred approach, and that appropriate referral mechanisms are in place to provide support for any victim-survivor who comes forward with allegations of harm.

**6** Monitoring:

As part of ongoing improvement efforts, projects and organisations should check if their safeguarding approach is effective. This can be through your Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) processes, staff and stakeholder surveys to monitor knowledge and confidence of the CFRM, and consultations with stakeholders.
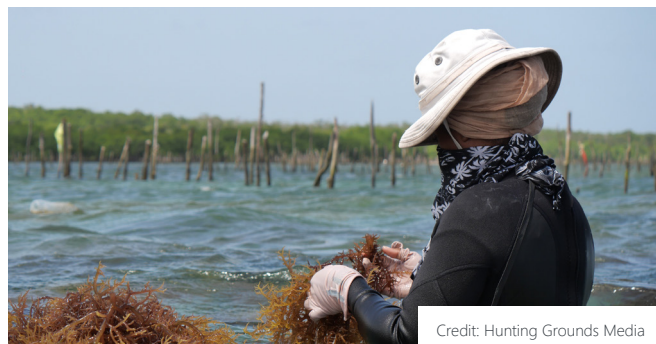


Credit: Hunting Grounds Media

## Part 4: Online practical guidance and information on how different actors can implement the minimum recommended actions

Organisations can often feel overwhelmed when reviewing SEAH prevention principles and minimum recommended actions to take. The good news is that often projects and organisations already have systems in place that can support these efforts. For example, projects regularly monitor and evaluate their projects. Simple tweaks to existing systems and processes can ensure that accountability is in place. MEL systems can include questions on staff behaviour and conduct, for example, thus fulfilling a key aspect of accountability.

The practical guidance section of the CAPSEAH website provides valuable, concrete examples of what organisations, projects and individuals can do to prevent SEAH. A safeguarding plan can be developed to map what projects already have in place and what measures can be taken to implement further preventative measures.

As all BCFs projects are assessed on the CAPSEAH recommended 6 Minimum Actions (Part 3), the practical guidance section can provide a valuable guide on how projects can demonstrate capability in all 6 requirements.



Credit: James Slade