



GREEN PARTNERS ASSOCIATION

Engaging-Empowering-Equipping for; a resilient People, resilient Planet & resilient Profit

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Green Partners Association (GPA) PSEA Policy

Policy title: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

Policy objective:

1. To establish a policy of zero tolerance for sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) for all Green Partners Association (GPA) employees and related/associated personnel and ensure that roles, responsibilities and expected standards of conduct in relation to SEA are known within GPA.
2. To create and maintain a safe environment, free from SEA, by taking appropriate measures for this purpose, internally and in the communities where GPA operates, through robust prevention and response work.
3. To establish the foundational framework of [Organization] to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse and take corrective action when an sexual exploitation and abuse incident occurs.

Targeted Audience: All GPA employees and related personnel.

Effective Date: 1/01/2024

Mandatory Revision Date: 2/02/2030

1. Policy statement

1.1 SEA violates universally recognized international legal norms and standards and are unacceptable behaviors and prohibited conduct for all aid workers, including GPA employees and related personnel.

1.2 GPA has a policy of zero tolerance towards SEA. All GPA employees and related personnel are expected to uphold the highest standards of personal and professional conduct at all times, and to provide assistance and services in a manner that respects and fosters the rights of beneficiaries and other vulnerable members of the local communities.

1.3 GPA is fully committed to have an approach to prevent and respond to SEA that is rights-based, age, disability-and gender sensitive, non-discriminatory and culturally appropriate, and victim-centred should an SEA allegation occur.

2. Scope of application

2.1 This policy sets out GPA approach to prevent and respond to SEA. Employees and



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related personnel of GPA] include, without being limited to: international and locally recruited staff members, daily labourers, consultants, interns, volunteers /incentive workers, and contractors.

2.2. The policy also applies to all activities and operations of [Organization], including any project funded by GPA, any project implemented by [Organization], and any cooperating partner."

2.3 The policy extends to situations of SEA which occur at or away from the workplace, during or outside working hours.

3. Definitions:

For the purposes of the present policy:

3.1 The term '**sexual exploitation**' means any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

3.2 The term '**sexual abuse**' means the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

(Both definitions are adopted from the Secretary General's Bulletin ST/SGB/2003/13, 2003.<https://undocs.org/en/ST/SGB/2003/13>)

3.3 'Sexual Exploitation and Abuse' (SEA) is the abuse or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes or the actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature by UN personnel, their implementing partners or other aid workers, against the people they serve

4. Commitment to PSEA:

4.1 GPA will make every effort to create and maintain a safe environment, free from SEA, and shall take appropriate measures for this purpose in the communities where it operates, through a robust PSEA framework, including prevention and response measures.

4.2 This PSEA framework, affirms GPA commitment to the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) and to achieving full, ongoing implementation of the IASC Six Core Principles relating to SEA (52 IASC Six Core Principles; available at: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/inter-agency-standing-committee/iascsix-core-principles-relating-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>).

5. Six core principles: - Modified for the purposes of this PSEA policy. *These acts are not intended to be an exhaustive list.*

5.1 SEA by GPA employees and related personnel constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment. (Including all other forms of contractual agreements, such as for example volunteer assignment)

5.2 Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief regarding the age of a child is not a defense.

5.3 Exchange of money, employment, goods, or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behavior is prohibited. This includes exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.

5.4 Any sexual relationship between GPA employees or related personnel and beneficiaries of assistance or other vulnerable members of the local community that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.

5.5 Where a GPA employee or related personnel develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same Organization or not, he or she must report such concerns via established reporting mechanisms.

5.6 All GPA employees and related personnel are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents SEA and promotes the implementation of this policy. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

6. PSEA framework

- The below PSEA framework shall be operationalized in a way that is adapted to the context, dynamics and organizational structure of GPA. The relevant measures shall be reflected, as necessary, in the relevant Organizational policies and procedures.
- As appropriate, GPA will consult with affected population/recipients of aid and local communities, including at-risk groups as identified by GPA, to ensure that the systems put in place and measures taken for the prevention and response to SEA are sensitive to the vulnerabilities and needs of beneficiaries and culturally appropriate.

6.1 Integration of PSEA into planning, programming and operational processes

- GPA ensures that risks of sexual exploitation and abuse are properly assessed, addressed and monitored through integrating PSEA into its planning, programming and operational processes (e.g. strategic planning, budgeting, programme cycle management) and allocates sufficient human and financial resources.
- GPA conducts thorough and inclusive risk analysis and assessments on SEA while designing projects and programme activities with mitigation measures, and identifies the groups that are the most marginalised and at heightened risk of SEA. This may include site safety mapping, focus group discussions with intended beneficiaries and other stakeholders (including women, children, local authorities/communities, etc.) and other relevant research methods.

6.2 Recruitments

- GPA has safe and PSEA-sensitive human resources practices and processes in place during recruitment, contracting and performance management.
- Job announcements: GPA explicitly states in a standard paragraph in its job announcements its zero-tolerance policy regarding SEA.

- Interviews: As part of the recruitment interviews, GPA asks questions related to ethics and PSEA
- Vetting: GPA systematically vets all prospective job candidates in accordance with established screening procedures, to ensure GPA does not hire potential employees that would pose a risk to staff and our beneficiaries.
- Self-declaration: GPA asks selected applicants to sign self -declarations committing not to have committed SEA in the past and not to commit SEA in their new role within the Organization.
- Employment contracts: GPA includes a PSEA clause in its employment contracts, clearly establishing the definitions and roles & responsibilities of staff regarding PSEA. These include, but are not limited to, the duty to not commit SEA, to report SEA, and to cooperate in good faith with any investigation or audit related to a SEA case conducted by GPA.

- PSEA Focal Points: GPA provides designated PSEA focal points with specific terms of reference related to their PSEA roles and responsibilities.
- HR processes: GPA aligns its HR processes with its SEA policy to describe the reporting and response mechanism for SEA allegations (disciplinary measures for proven allegations).

6.3 Organizational management - Cooperation agreements:

- GPA includes a standard clause in all its contracts and partnership agreements with its suppliers, contractors, subcontractors and sub-partners requiring them to commit to a zero-tolerance policy on SEA and to take measures to prevent and address SEA.
- Where suppliers, partners and contractors do not have appropriate policies and measures in place, GPA will support them in developing such policies and take such measures, as deemed relevant.
- The failure of those entities or individuals to take preventive measures against SEA, to investigate allegations thereof, or to take corrective action when SEA has occurred, shall constitute grounds for termination of any cooperative arrangement.

6.4 Awareness of personnel, including mandatory trainings

- GPA is committed to ensure that its personnel understand PSEA, are aware of the PSEA systems of the Organization, and are informed of their obligations as well as what actions to take in case of an allegation. In particular, personnel shall be informed of the following:
 - o A clear prohibition of SEA;
 - o Definitions of SEA and a clear understanding of behaviors that constitute SEA;
 - o The obligation of all personnel to report any suspicions or concerns and consequences for failing to report (e.g. disciplinary measures);
 - o The option of reporting information anonymously;
 - o The Organization's protection for those who makes an allegation in good faith (e.g. whistleblower policy, protection from retaliation policy, protection plans for complainants);
 - o Details regarding who to report to and what information to share to allow for proper response and follow-up;

- o Actions that personnel are required to take (i.e. prompt reporting of allegations and referral of survivors).

- o Explanation of how the Organization will use the information (e.g. who will receive the reports and the internal procedure for response and follow-up).

- GPA holds mandatory induction for new employees within the first month, *i.e. within a month*] and *face-to-face* refresher trainings *at least once a year* for all employees and related personnel on the Organization's SEA policy and procedures. To do this:

- GPA develops an annual training plan for all staff, targeting different levels of audiences and participants.

- GPA keeps record of the attendance of all its personnel to induction and refresher trainings and the updating of the lists of participants.

- GPA has training materials on PSEA, that are adapted to the type of training provided (induction or refresher) as well as the audience of the training, and ensure opportunities to exchange and discussions among personnel.

- In addition to trainings, GPA takes measures (both in writing and verbally) to ensure that its employees and associated personnel are informed of their PSEA related obligations as well as what actions to take in case of an allegation. This may include, without being limited to, posters, memo, reminder emails, quarterly integration in agenda meetings, etc.

6.5 Reporting:

- GPA has set up safe, confidential and accessible mechanisms and procedures for personnel, affected populations/aid recipients and communities, including children, to report SEA allegations that comply with core standards for reporting. GPA ensures that beneficiaries are aware of this reporting mechanism. GPA has mechanisms in place to restrict access to information and keep written reports safely for the security of the survivor and the complainant. Information about an allegation will be shared only on a 'need to know' basis for the purpose of investigations or providing assistance to the survivor.

- GPA ensures that its reporting mechanisms meet the basic principles of effective reporting:

- o Safety

- o Confidentiality

- o Transparency

- o Accessibility

- Notification: GPA provides training to staff likely to receive complaints on the relevant procedures and the alleged incident report.

- Protection from retaliation: GPA is committed to uphold a culture of transparency and a safe environment where personnel and beneficiaries can report SEA allegations as soon as possible without any adverse or punitive action being taken against them. The Organization does not tolerate any kind of retaliation, or threat thereof, against anyone who reports a situation of SEA or cooperates in any investigation process related to a SEA allegation. GPA Organization has safe, confidential and accessible mechanisms and procedures for personnel, beneficiaries and communities, including children, to report any consideration of retaliation against them.

- The description of the available reporting mechanisms, mechanisms/procedures to review SEA allegations and associated information sharing protocol are outlined in [annex or separate document].

6.6 Awareness-raising to beneficiaries and local communities

- GPA is committed to ensure the awareness by its beneficiaries and local communities on PSEA and its Organizational PSEA systems. For this purpose, GPA has visual communication materials for communities and “ready -to-use” awareness raising messages. These materials are:
 - o Adapted to local context;
 - o Drafted in the relevant local languages;
 - o Designed to be easily understood by and accessible to beneficiaries of GPA, especially those groups considered at higher risk of abuse.
- GPA organizes regular awareness-raising sessions in the communities in which activities are implemented, to provide information on:
 - o What PSEA is
 - o The standards of conduct that apply to the organization’s personnel
 - o How to make a report
 - o The commitments from the organization to response to SEA incidents.

6.7 Assistance to SEA victims/survivors

- GPA is committed to ensure that any victims of SEA have access to assistance and support as soon as information about an allegation is received, regardless of (i) the decision to investigate the case by the GPA, (ii) the outcome of the investigation and (iii) irrespective of whether the victim cooperates with an investigation or any other accountability procedure.
- Assistance and support shall be provided by skilled and competent service providers in line with the “do no harm” and victim-centered approach, in full respect of the rights and best interests of victims and with respect to Gender-Based Violence key principles, especially informed consent. Services shall be rights-based, age, disability-and gender sensitive, nondiscriminatory and culturally appropriate and ensure the best interest of the child. Support and assistance shall entail
 - o Provision of safety measures to protect against retaliation
 - o Services including, without being limited to, immediate medical and health care, dignity kits, mental health and psychosocial support, legal services, basic material assistance and support to children born as a result of SEA.
- To do this, GPA has:
 - o An up-to-date list of local service providers with options for child and adult survivors where appropriate, along with the types of services offered. Such list is built and/or adapted on the service mapping carried out by the inter-agency coordination group (GBV/Child Protection), present in the country.

- o A defined and articulated system and process described in its standard operating procedures (SOPs) on referrals and victim support. The SOP includes information-sharing protocols to respect the complainant privacy, confidentiality, safety and security.

- o Referral forms

10. Investigations

- Investigations: GPA has a process for investigating SEA allegations in place and shall properly and promptly conduct the investigation of any SEA allegation committed by its employees or associated personnel or refer to the appropriate investigative body if the perpetrator is affiliated with another entity. The procedures for investigations management and process will be detailed in a separate document.
- Referral to national authorities: If, after proper investigation, there is evidence to substantiate the allegations of SEA, these cases may be referred to national authorities for any appropriate action, including criminal prosecution. Informed and voluntary consent of the victim shall be sought prior to any referral to national authorities.
- Corrective action: The person or team responsible for investigating SEA allegations will make recommendations for improvement so that GPA can reduce the recurring risk of any misconduct. The management of the Organization is in charge of reviewing and implementing these recommendations; such changes brought to the Organization's PSEA systems will be communicated to the personnel as relevant.