

PREPARING A JOINT SEA RISK ASSESSMENT

TECHNICAL NOTE

Sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) are acts perpetrated by aid workers or people associated with aid organisations against the people that they are supposed to protect or provide aid to. SEA is a form of gender-based violence and as such represents a violation of fundamental human rights. Ensuring protection from SEA is an indispensable element for the aid community to address to secure participation by and accountability to affected people. Gender-responsive humanitarian action must incorporate effective measures for the Protection from SEA (PSEA), as SEA undermines the right of women and girls to receive humanitarian protection and assistance in equality and dignity, while also undermining their rights to full and equal participation in humanitarian, development, conflict, and post-conflict settings.

Despite best efforts, SEA is a risk in any context where aid organizations are present.

What are joint SEA risk assessments and why implement them?

Joint SEA risk assessments are a collective exercise to form a comprehensive picture of SEA risks and response capacities in the context of a humanitarian and/or development response. They are called “joint” because they involve the collaboration of many actors, including but not limited to members of the PSEA Network, the protection-mandated sectors that are also gathering data for safeguarding, the working groups/clusters performing risk assessments within their sectors, as well as individual organizations. As an integral part of Protection from SEA, they should be reflected in the response’s PSEA strategy and as a deliverable of the PSEA Action Plan. The joint assessment does not replace or duplicate existing organizational or sectoral assessments, but rather builds and expands on the existing evidence-base. Risk assessments can and should **aggregate and analyze information** from existing sources, and potentially (only if necessary) **generate additional data to fill gaps and expand the analysis**.

The main purpose of a joint SEA risk assessment is:

1. To understand the risk of SEA happening and how the humanitarian and development response, as a whole, is addressing SEA risks
2. To provide findings and recommendations to promote safer programs and to inform capacity development to enhance response to and prevention of SEA.

SEA risk assessments are only useful if they serve to inform action!

I. Purpose of THIS TECHNICAL NOTE

As organizational-level SEA risk assessments begin to happen more regularly, there is high demand for guidance on how joint risk assessments should be implemented to avoid duplication and enhance synergies with ongoing internal assessments. This Technical Note (here after “Note”) aims to fill gaps by sharing and promoting good practices to perform SEA risk assessments as a collective, joint activity. It is informed by lessons-learned, challenges, and experiences raised by practitioners, and consulted within the IASC, the UN Working Group on SEA, and select technical sectors.

This Note aims to facilitate implementing a joint risk assessment by providing step by step guidance on key issues to consider at the preparation and planning stages.¹ The Note is not a template, nor is it a prescriptive methodology for conducting the risk assessment itself. SEA risks and capacities are

¹ A checklist summarizing the content of this document is included in Annex A and can be used to support those coordinating and leading SEA risk assessments in-country in preparation and planning.

highly contextual; as such, risk assessment approaches, methodologies, and tools should be tailored to the unique realities, resources, and sensitivities of each response. Bearing this contextualization in mind, a selection of example risk matrixes and guides can be found in the Annex to the Note.

Where a **PSEA Coordinator** and/or **PSEA Network** are in place, these are the primary audience of this Note, as joint SEA risk assessments should be included under their TORs and the collective PSEA Action Plan in-country. Other target audience groups include individuals within organizations engaged in strategizing, planning, and implementing a collaborative, context-/response-wide risk assessment exercise, whether in a humanitarian or development setting

II. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Given the highly sensitive and potentially life-threatening nature of SEA, any type of qualitative or quantitative assessment or survey must follow robust ethical and safety considerations, accepted international standards and “do no harm” principles.² A failure to do so places women and girls, GBV survivors, and staff at risk.

What do we assess when conducting a joint SEA risk assessment?

“SEA risk” encompasses:

1. The risk of SEA happening:

The risk of SEA occurring is closely linked to the operational context. Risk often increases when, for example: an emergency has exacerbated vulnerabilities of the population; aid workers interacting with community members are not informed of cultural and social norms; distributions are conducted unsupervised; local laws do not protect the rights of women, children, persons with disabilities, ethnic and sexual minority groups, etc. The realities of the context must be reflected and addressed in a joint SEA risk assessment.

2. The risk that organizations (UN agencies, (I)NGOs, and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)) operating in-country cannot respond effectively when incidents occur:

For purposes of joint SEA risk assessments, capacity to respond to SEA includes organizations’ PSEA Capacity, as well as the presence of existing in-country structures and resources that support an effective response to SEA – e.g. Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP), Gender Based Violence (GBV), Child Protection (CP), Gender in Humanitarian Action (GIHA). For example, the presence of safe and accessible channels to receive community feedback within organizations and/or a common AAP Hotline); the availability and quality of GBV/CP services; Human Resources policies in place and implemented to avoid the re-recruitment of offenders, etc. Capacity of organizations can be assessed under a wide variety of existing assessments to meet PSEA standards.³

SEA risk assessments of the response should consider both risks. The risk of incidence of SEA combined with an analysis of gaps in PSEA capacities together inform on baseline risk for the country’s humanitarian response and development work.

Who is responsible for joint SEA risk assessments?

Leadership

² For guidance, see the GBV AoR’s [Interagency Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergency Programming](#)

³ Annex B provides a list of tools developed by agencies that include organizational capacity assessments, and that can be used as reference further customized.

The UNCT or HCT, under the leadership of the RC/HC, should ensure such assessments are conducted as part of their UNCT PSEA Action Plan and/or PSEA Strategy. Even when there is no formal PSEA coordination structure in place, Resident and Humanitarian Coordinators have the coherent “system-wide responsibility for developing collective PSEA strategies and ensuring that PSEA action plans are implemented and assist victims of SEA.”⁴

When an inter-agency PSEA Network exists in-country, this exercise should be explicit in the Network’s Terms of Reference (TORs) and/or in the Network’s technical Action Plan overseen by UN leadership. The PSEA Coordinator – if in place – should support the Network to coordinate the assessment.⁵ This is the best-case scenario, as the presence of a PSEA Coordinator and/or Network facilitates clarity on roles and responsibilities, oversight, effective use of available resources, and reinforces leadership accountability for delivering the assessment. In countries where there is a Senior Victims Rights Advocate / Field Victims Rights Advocate, he/she may also join in coordinating the assessment.

Strategizing, planning & leading implementation

Roles and responsibilities for coordinating, leading, and supporting the joint risk assessment may be assigned differently in each setting, depending on the PSEA Networks’ existing resources and capacities and, ultimately, organizations’ level of interest. If these are not already outlined in the PSEA Network’s TORs, they should be detailed in the country-level Action Plan under “lead organization” for each portion of the assessment.

While the presence of a PSEA Network provides a helpful forum to collaborate on joint risk assessments in a way that enables more effective use of time and resources, it is possible to conduct a joint SEA risk assessment in contexts where there is no PSEA Network, if there are other platforms to coordinate on PSEA. In such case, alternative coordination platforms can be leveraged to identify which actors will support strategy design, lead the assessment’s implementation and be responsible for its completion. In the absence of a formal platform to coordinate on PSEA issues, actors leading the joint risk assessment may be required to devote more time to agreeing on logistics, such as roles and responsibilities, use of available human and financial resources, etc.

Engaging local organizations as leads in joint risk assessment is important for a comprehensive view of the context and possible even in contexts where actors are only coordinating on PSEA within the UN system. For example, if PSEA coordination involves only UN actors, explore whether NGOs be engaged through the NGO Forum.

NOTE: In contexts where organizations are not already working together on PSEA, consider establishing an inter-agency PSEA Program⁶ first before attempting to implement a joint SEA risk assessment.

Who does what work in joint SEA risk assessments?

While a core group of (PSEA Network member) organizations are responsible for strategizing and planning, and then leading the joint SEA risk assessment, these efforts should be undertaken with the full participation of all relevant organizations, sectors, and coordination structures in-country (*see Part III, Section 1 below for more details*). An inter-agency PSEA Coordinator can support and monitor that the assessment is completed, but **execution of the assessment** is the role of organizations and their

⁴ UNSDG [Management and Accountability Framework](#) (2021)

⁵ From the [Generic PSEA Coordinator Terms of Reference](#) (2021): *The PSEA Coordinator will “Support the Network to carry out a joint PSEA risk assessment in [Context] to inform senior leadership on strategic decision-making.”*

⁶ For further information on establishing an Inter-agency PSEA Program, refer to [Deployment Package for PSEA Coordinators](#) and [FAQs on Inter-agency PSEA](#)

respective PSEA Focal Points, just as it would be in the absence of a PSEA Coordinator. In the absence of a Coordinator, overall **coordination** of the assessment should be tasked in the PSEA Network Action Plan to an active PSEA Network member with strong GBV/PSEA/community engagement/Gender experience, supported by members with M&E technical capacity or by an Information Management officer.

While monitoring and evaluation (M&E) technical support may be necessary, especially when the assessment requires first-hand data to be generated, **analysis** of SEA risk-related data should be performed by individuals with a background in GBV/PSEA/community engagement, rather than generalists, as this will lead to stronger, PSEA-focused deliverables.

When should a joint SEA risk assessment be carried out?

A comprehensive SEA risk assessment should be conducted once agencies in-country are committed to coordinate on PSEA initiatives, ideally at the start of the PSEA Program. The onset of an emergency, the establishment of a PSEA coordination system, the HNO/HRP cycle or CCA/SCDF cycles should all be triggers for potential joint risk assessments (if warranted).

The joint assessment should be progressively completed and updated through regular monitoring, as more data becomes available through subsequent sector and multi-sector assessments in the given context (e.g.: a recent gender analysis). While there is no prescriptive timetable on how frequently joint risk assessments should be performed, a general or partial update may be necessary when significant changes occur in the operational context that impact risks – for example when: UN agencies have conducted a thorough capacity assessment of partners;⁷ organizations working in the target area are replaced by new ones; operational modalities change from direct to indirect implementation or vice-versa; shifts occur in lines of political control and there is an influx of new actors coming to the area; an extraordinary event such as COVID-19; etc. But this requirement will likely need to be balanced against the amount of time and resources organizations leading and supporting the joint risk assessment have available to commit to this exercise.

A good practice is to conduct and/or update joint risk assessments early and often – informed by changes to the context – and use best judgment on the extent of risks to be assessed each time.

III. PREPARATION

Preparing the Joint SEA Risk Assessment entails thinking about and making decisions on who you will **engage** with, and how you will the **focus of your methodology and analysis** so the outputs are relevant to your context.

1. Identify relevant stakeholders, understand their needs, and foster acceptance

A **stakeholder mapping**⁸ can help identify the various actors at international, national, and local level present in the response that you may want to engage with before you begin the assessment. These should include all stakeholders that, in this context, can share relevant information about SEA risks, resources, and could also be key audiences for learning from the assessment's results. For instance:

- a) All in-country organizations, members of the PSEA network or not, that are in position to provide relevant data to the assessment (and, ultimately, as recipients of assessment results)

⁷ In line with the [UN Implementing Partner Protocol](#).

⁸ Tools such as the Power Interest Grid can be helpful in identifying relevant SEA stakeholders and determining their degree of interest in engaging in the risk assessment. For further information see: [Mindtools Webpage](#)

- b) In humanitarian contexts, OCHA may be able to facilitate access to information, as it can offer a space in the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) and High-Level Group (HLG) coordination meetings for the PSEA Network to talk to organizations and sectors about the assessment, discuss entry points for collaboration in implementation and use of results, etc. In development contexts, a similar liaising role may be played by the Development Coordination Office.
- c) Cluster, Working Group and their corresponding Sub-Groups and Sub-Cluster (such as the GBV and Child Protection Sub-Cluster), or GIHA Working Group leads may be able to: facilitate access to information and resources by sharing existing reports or data; support opportunities for synergies between the SEA risk assessment and ongoing sector assessments; collaborate in the dissemination and adoption of recommendations in their respective sector, etc.
- d) Community-based actors, including women's groups, local leadership, organizations of persons with disabilities (OPDs), etc. may be able to provide key information on SEA risks at site level

Once stakeholders are mapped, you can use this information to:

- a) Develop **advocacy messages** on why the PSEA Network is undertaking a joint SEA risk assessment, tailored to the specific interests/needs of each stakeholder group, in order to foster their buy-in. Start considering early on what may be the key products that will be generated from the assessment and how these can be useful to the various humanitarian actors present in the response; this will help encourage take-up of resulting recommendations at the end.
- b) Determine if the **timing** is right, especially if evidence suggests that there is currently low buy in for the assessment among certain stakeholder groups and that this may hinder its execution. In such case, the PSEA Network may consider delaying the exercise or implementing it in a phased approach until collaboration of all key actors can be secured (e.g. through leadership prioritization of the initiative).

2. Understand your context

A joint SEA risk assessment should begin with an understanding of the response's operating environment. Understanding the context will help you **identify and prioritize the SEA risks** relevant to your setting that the assessment should **explore and analyze**. All SEA risks are important, but prioritization may involve consideration of what data is already available and/or, otherwise, possible to collect in this context, resources available (human, technical, financial) necessary to obtain the required information, etc.

Environmental aspects that make up the operational response and that may impact **SEA incident risks** can be, for example:

- Programme/project implementation modalities. Risk may be a concern when relying on implementing partners, service providers, etc. as intermediaries to deliver assistance directly to affected populations if hiring organizations are not assessing, monitoring, and building their partners' PSEA capacity;
- Involvement of armed groups and host governments in the aid chain and whether there is a good working relationship between these groups and humanitarian actors;
- Historical prevalence of SEA cases as this could impact current programming due to (perceived) impunity and lack of trust in aid workers / INGOs / UN by aid recipients;
- Gender, cultural and social norms, disability stigma, etc.

Environmental factors that may **impact SEA response capacity** can be, for example:

- Profile of humanitarian and development actors present in the response – UN agencies, large INGOs, local/small NGOs, grassroots organizations, etc. – and how well-developed their internal PSEA systems are;
- Existence, comprehensiveness and quality of SEA-relevant legal frameworks in-country including on issues related to women’s rights and women’s access to justice;
- Coverage and quality of GBV/Child Protection response services,⁹ presence of functional assistance referral pathways, etc.;
- Restrictions in mobility of women and girls that impact their access to relevant information, services and reporting mechanisms;
- Lack of awareness on community-based reporting mechanisms, or absence of reporting mechanisms.

The above examples are non-exhaustive and merely illustrative of some of the aspects that you may consider to properly frame your assessment’s **approach** and the **focus of your analysis**. For example, if the response takes place in a conservative environment where women’s participation and physical mobility is restricted, your assessment may want to look more closely at whether/how SEA risks are addressed by organizations/sectors delivering humanitarian aid at household level, whether there are safe and context-appropriate platforms for women to voice SEA concerns, etc. Moreover, acknowledging the limitations of the context, you should also ponder whether it would be at all possible to directly engage women in discussions about SEA.

Based on your mapping of stakeholders and understanding of the context, you can develop a **joint risk assessment strategy** detailing the approach that will be taken. The strategy may capture aspects, such as, for example: a) roles and responsibilities, b) scope, c) methodology, d) data sources and/or e) data collection tools, and f) timeline, etc. This will ensure that the joint risk assessment process is properly documented and clear to all stakeholders involved, especially Network members who will be contributing to its execution.

IV. PLANNING FOR DATA COLLECTION

Planning involves accessing existing sources of information and, if necessary, developing a strategy to generate additional data when the information you need cannot be obtained from existing sources.

3. Map existing sources of information

The first step of planning entails collaborating with the relevant stakeholders identified in your original mapping to access their available information. This may require you to, for example:

- Raise a call for data in the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG) in a humanitarian response; engage with cluster leads to identify relevant reports and/or datasets produced by agencies and sectors; search the OCHA website for reports available for your response;), etc.
- In a development context you might request data from the Gender Theme Groups (GTG); engage with in-country GBV specialists from various entities to identify relevant reports and/or datasets; search the DCO website for reports available for your response; etc.
- In either context, you can engage with Information Management (IM) and M&E teams from the various UN entities (including those with expertise in gender statistics, analysis and indicators), as well as representatives of specific data/research programmes present in your response (e.g.: Humanitarian Needs Assessment Programme – HNAP, or UN-SWAP).

⁹ As per [UN Protocol on the Provision of assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse](#) the PSEA Network should monitor any gaps in assistance coverage and work with relevant gender-based violence and child protection actors to address them. See also the 2021 [Technical Note](#) implementing the Protocol.

Much information may already have been generated. For instance, it is likely that the GBV sector may have already completed a GBV risk assessment and a mapping of functional GBV/Child Protection services;¹⁰ UN agencies may have already undertaken PSEA capacity assessments of their implementing partners in fulfilling their obligations under the UN Implementing Partners Protocol;¹¹ sectors may have performed technical assessments that touch upon discrete SEA risks; organizations may have undergone voluntary audits against the Core Humanitarian Standards.¹² As SEA is linked to other types of risks, these assessments may contain useful information that can be built upon and expanded during your analysis.

4. Desk-based research

Once you have compiled the data generated by your existing information sources, pull out the SEA-relevant information, review, and analyze it. Ask yourself:

- a) What is all this information saying about SEA risks and response capacities in this context?
- b) Is this information sufficient to understand the wide range of SEA risks in this response and actors' capacity to respond to SEA?
- c) Is it possible to draw conclusions and generate actionable recommendations using only the information that is immediately available?
- d) Do I need more information to be able to take action to improve the PSEA response?

One way to know if you have “enough” data from existing sources is whether you have information on risks that can be broken down to understand SEA impacts on different population groups, according to types of marginalization and diversity as relevant in the context – *i.e.* gender, age, disability, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation, etc. Joint risk assessment results should always address and present SEA impacts in diverse groups as these are likely to be very different and thus require specific programmatic responses accordingly.

If no additional information is necessary, this means the SEA risk assessment will involve solely analysis of secondary sources, at no additional cost, and no additional data needs to be generated.

While the joint risk assessment may be entirely built on data from existing sources, a key difference here is that **all information should be approached and analyzed through a PSEA lens, and this is what the final product will present.** When existing reports already contain explicit SEA-related analyses and findings, these pieces may be used as is; however, in other cases, additional analysis may be needed to make sense of the information from a PSEA standpoint.

- *E.g.* a shelter sector report reveals that 80% of all S-NFI distributions in IDP Camp A are conducted door-to-door; another report containing demographic data shows a high concentration of widowed- and single women-headed households in IDP Camp A. The joint SEA risk assessment analysis should explore what this means for SEA risks.

As you complete your analysis and finalize the assessment, refer to Section V below, which explores considerations for packaging your assessment's deliverables to different audiences.

If existing sources are insufficient to draw a comprehensive picture of, and adequately understand, SEA incident risks and response capacities in your context, this means first-hand (primary) data will be necessary to complement, validate and/or contrast existing information (“triangulate”). Expect that

¹⁰ See, e.g., the Office of the Victims Rights Advocate's [Mapping of Assistance Services](#) in 13 countries.

¹¹ For more on the role of UN agencies assessing the PSEA capacity of their Implementing Partners, see the [UN IP PSEA Common Assessment](#).

¹² For further reference on audits against the CHS, see: <https://www.chsalliance.org/verify/certification/>

additional first-hand data will probably be needed, especially in new humanitarian responses or in contexts where PSEA has not yet been taken on as a system-wide, collective priority.

5. Planning for Direct Data Collection

Based on gaps identified during the desk-based review, you should next determine the approach that will be used to gather first-hand data. ***Be strategic: you should only generate information that you think is key but that you could not find in the secondary sources, and/or that you think will help you complement and better unpack some of the issues which you have identified during the desk-based research.***

The following considerations can guide you through the process of planning for direct data collection:

- a) **What type of information is missing:** Is it community-level information? Sector-level? Organization-level? Response-wide information? Note that there can be overlaps. For instance, you may determine that you want to look more closely at organizational PSEA capacities, but only for organizations delivering Shelter/NFI programmes because you know this is a priority sector in your response and that most of them have not yet completed PSEA organizational capacity assessments. Or, for example, you may want to look at community-level SEA risks prioritizing specific locations where you know there are no Protection/GBV/CP services available in order to better understand how referral capacities will be impacted, etc. Or, perhaps you have a wide range of data but it is not disaggregated over the needs of women and girls, men and boys.

DO NO HARM: Assessments do not aim to identify individuals or groups of survivors or whether SEA is happening.

Data collection should not seek to gather any information about specific incidents of SEA. Data on SEA prevalence is understood to be an underestimation of actual incident numbers due to underreporting. Data on SEA reports may help identify “problem areas” to inform the assessment strategy, but it should not be used identify “how much SEA is happening” or to justify conducting the Risk Assessment.

- b) **Who will collect the data:** Data collectors should be vetted, receive appropriate guidance/training, be briefed on available referral and/or support systems, and debrief the Assessment leads on a regular basis. Ensuring equal participation of women and men on assessment teams is paramount. Anyone doing data collection should be sensitized to the power differentials between themselves and the community, and work towards minimizing such power differential.¹³ Members of the PSEA Network with M&E experience should be solicited to inform / develop the data collection plan. Protection-mandated sectors (GBV, Protection, Child Protection) should be coordinated with when designing direct data collection with communities to ensure a survivor-centered approach.
- c) **Who will you speak with to collect the missing data?** These can be any of the stakeholder groups identified in your mapping and depends on the type of information required. For instance, if you realize that your analysis is missing community-level information on SEA risks, you may want to speak with community leaders, local authorities (especially those competent

¹³ For more information on principled data collection, see [Data Collection in Humanitarian Response: A Guide for Incorporating Protection](#)

on GBV prevention and response), members of the affected population¹⁴ in coordination with your AAP Working Group (or other), etc. If you realize that you are missing data on SEA risks for specific sectors, you may want to engage with the lead organizations in these clusters to discuss options for collecting the data sector-wide.

As with any community engagement initiative, an SEA risk assessment should be designed and undertaken according to a participatory process that engages most particularly any at-risk groups, including women-led organizations.

Direct data collection should be carried out with the utmost caution not to cause harm. Data collection that is not well planned, thought through and in-line with ethical data collection guidance has the potential to cause severe repercussions for community members who have experienced SEA. In particular, using interviews or focus groups to speak about any form of GBV – including SEA - must be in line with the WHO GBV research standards.¹⁵

GBV - including SEA - survivors should not be targeted as a specific group during SEA risk assessment.

- d) If you determine that you need information about **activity/site-level or community-level** SEA risks, you will have to **make decisions on geographical locations to target**. As much as realistically possible, it is important to include the representation of diverse geographical areas, as well as activity types and sites, as risks may differ significantly between these. If you intend to look at SEA risks associated with specific activities, you may want to target activities of different sectors and visit a range of sites targeted by the same type of activity also (e.g.: different IDP/refugee camps receiving WASH services; urban vs. rural sites benefiting from FSL interventions; Health activities delivered in IDP camps vs in host communities, etc.).
- e) **How will you collect the data that you need?** Different methods can and should be used. Preferably, a mix of methods should be used whenever possible to allow for information to be approached from different angles and triangulated. For instance, observational assessments can be conducted at field-level to determine SEA risks linked to the activities of sectors; surveys can be administered with organizations to learn whether they have specific SEA prevention efforts in place; key informant interviews with sector representatives can be undertaken to understand SEA risks linked to specific sector activities and the way assistance is delivered; key informant interviews, surveys or focus groups discussions with affected populations can be done to gauge knowledge, attitude and perceptions around SEA/acceptable staff conduct, etc.

Troubles accessing data? Limits to access - whether due to humanitarian emergency or COVID-19 related restrictions - can impact the ability to gather data at all and to independently verify the data that comes in. Any risk assessment will face such challenges; what is important is to use what data is available and be cognizant of reliability factors in how the data is analyzed and presented.¹⁶

¹⁴ If the risk assessment plans to engage with affected populations, it is important to consider representativeness of diverse groups, as SEA risks may differ significantly depending on gender, age, ethnicity, disability status, socio-economic profile, etc. For more on engaging the community, see the [CDAC How to Guide on Collective Communication and Community Engagement](#).

¹⁵ WHO Ethical and safety recommendations for researching, documenting and monitoring sexual violence in emergencies: https://www.who.int/gender/documents/OMS_Ethics&Safety10Aug07.pdf

¹⁶ Information Management NGO CartONG has released a guidance note on [How to Adapt your Data Collection for Monitoring and Accountability during the COVID-19 pandemic](#).

- f) **Identify where you can embed SEA risk indicators into ongoing assessments and organizations project monitoring activities.** For instance, if there is an upcoming WASH, GBV, Shelter/NFI or HNO assessment planned, you may want to consider negotiating with the respective cluster/sector or with OCHA for the inclusion of some PSEA-related questions/indicators in these activities. Alternatively, PSEA-related questions can be included in forms/checklists used by organizations to conduct field monitoring visits to project activities/sites; etc.

Having risk assessments embedded into planned ongoing sector, operational, or other country-specific assessments' data collection activities can be a viable approach to streamline the use of resources and, more widely, advocate for more sustainable PSEA mainstreaming and resource mobilization on multiple safeguarding issues.¹⁷

*This is a recommended **best practice**, but may not always be viable due to timing, low buy-in from those leading the assessments, operational constraints, etc. **When relying on existing structures, resources and ongoing assessments, advocacy messages will need to be strengthened to secure buy-in from those volunteering resources in support of the joint risk assessment.***

- g) **What tools will be used to support data collection?** For instance, if you plan to implement a self-assessment survey with (a selected number of) organizations, a questionnaire will need to be developed to capture the specific data that is missing from your desk review. If semi-structured interviews and focus groups are planned with key informants, questionnaires and facilitation guides will need to be developed.¹⁸ Existing risk management tools from organizational / other risk assessments can serve as a reference to be customized for your context.¹⁹

Resource Considerations

Time, financial, human, and technical limitations should be considered from the outset, as your risk assessment strategy must fit within existing constraints to be realistic. Here, you may consider, for example:

- How many Network members are committed to devote time and resources to support the assessment? Can it be implemented using only the PSEA Network's human/technical resources?
- Is there a deadline to meet? E.g.: the risk assessment must be completed before the HRP is published.
- Are there dedicated funds available if additional/external resources need to be brought in for support? E.g.: enumerators, facilitators, IM/statistical data analysis, etc.

If it is not possible to synergize with the work of other actors (*see above on embedding SEA risk indicators in assessments/monitoring*), it will be necessary to rely primarily on the PSEA Network's pooled human and/or financial resources. The most likely scenario is for funds to be available through Network members' contributions to the PSEA Workplan; however, there may be instances when the PSEA Network has dedicated funds that it can mobilize for the assessment, which will help minimize burden on member organizations' staff's time.

¹⁷ See, for example, the 2017 [Cox's Bazar Inter-Sector Coordination Group's Gender Analysis](#), an operational assessment outlining observed GBV, CP, and SEA risks in each sector and offering guidance to address each.

¹⁸ For reference, see: [CDAC Tools and Guidance](#)

¹⁹ Annex B provides examples of tools for risk and capacity assessments that can be used as resources.

While costs for a joint risk assessment are largely determined by the methodology chosen, these types of assessments are generally more human resource- than finance-intensive. If the joint risk assessment relies on secondary data or on self-assessments, then financial requirements will be zero or minimal. When additional data needs to be generated at site or community level, M&E enumerators/translators may be necessary and could be provided by organizations as a contribution. If this is not feasible, then funds should be allocated to support the hiring of external field data collectors. Assuming that the PSEA Network has the capacity to analyze the data, this is potentially the main cost involved in a joint risk assessment.

V. JOINT RISK ASSESSMENT RESULTS

Joint SEA risk assessments are only useful if they serve to inform programming, thus, knowing from the beginning what will be done with the results of the assessment is key. Results should be used, for example, to inform the PSEA Network's Work Plan and the UNCT/HCT country-level Action Plan, leadership's PSEA Strategy and the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) or the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF), to adjust sector and organizations' programs to make them safer, to better engage with communities to raise awareness on SEA, etc. Risk assessment results can also contribute to advocacy with donors on funding to improve services, and as an impetus to strengthen internal capacities of organizations.

The main deliverable of the joint SEA risk assessment should be a full report.²⁰ In addition to an analysis of SEA risks, results and findings and detailed and actionable recommendations, it may also include an overview of preparation/planning decisions made, such as, for example, how first-hand data priorities were selected; how understanding the context impacted the assessment, etc. This will enable a better understanding of the SEA risks in the response in relation to the work of other sectors/actors, and help to contextualize the results, facilitating learning if the report is shared with other countries. Any report or analysis of SEA Risk should be drafted in line with data protection and confidentiality principles.²¹

Not all actors need to be presented with the full report. You should consider how the risk assessments' findings and recommendations can be best communicated to encourage take-up by those concerned. **Results should be tailored and packaged to meet the requirements of each audience, while considering the most effective and preferred communication channels and methods to engage each group.** For instance, the UNCT/HCT will likely require a concise (oral or written) briefing; sectors may need a synthesis report/presentation outlining only key findings and recommendations pertinent to their activities; communities may need materials in local languages or only visual materials, etc.

Support from specialized communications teams to package the findings in accessible formats can be solicited if needed and available in your context. For instance, when reporting assessment findings at global level, you may want to consult with communications teams/offices responsible for the response's communication strategy – e.g., sharing results with members of the UN Communications Group in country, who can update the country messaging and communication strategy.²² Or, when feeding results back to communities, you may consider engaging language and accessibility specialists (e.g. Translators Without Borders) to ensure products are sensitive to local realities.

Prior to drafting and releasing the assessment's products, always consider sensitivities of sharing SEA information, and how rolling out the results of the assessment to offer constructive propositions for safer programming needs to be balanced with the priorities of the PSEA Network and the various stakeholders present in the response.

²⁰ See, as an example, the Myanmar [SEA Risk Analysis \(June 2021 update\)](#).

²¹ See WHO recommendations, footnote 15; also the GBV AOR's [Minimum Standards for GBV in Emergency Programming \(Standard 14: Collection and Use of Survivor Data, and Standard 16: Assessment, Monitoring and Evaluation\)](#).

²² For further information on UN DGC, see <https://www.un.org/en/department-global-communications>

ANNEX A

PREPARATION & PLANNING CHECKLIST

PREPARE:

1. Identify relevant stakeholders, understand their needs, and foster acceptance

- Map out key stakeholders and determine their level of buy-in.
- Develop tailored advocacy messages, consider how assessment products can be adapted to meet the needs of different stakeholders.
- Think if the timing is right – consider delaying or adopting phased implementation approach until buy in can be secured.

2. Understand your context

- Identify the environmental factors impacting SEA incident risks in your operational context.
- Identify the environmental factors impacting SEA response capacity in your context.
- Based on these factors, frame your assessment's focus and approach

PLAN:

3. Map existing sources of information

- Identify who has done what and where.
- Work with relevant stakeholder to access secondary sources of information.
- Draft the joint risk assessment strategy.

4. Desk-based research

- Compile the existing sources and pull out the SEA-relevant information.
- Analyze the data.
- Ask yourself:
 - What is all this information saying about SEA risks and response capacities in this context?
 - Is this information sufficient to understand the wide range of SEA risks present in this response and actors' capacity to respond to SEA?
 - Is it possible to draw conclusions and generate actionable recommendations using only the information that is immediately available?
 - Do I need more data?
- Complete the assessment through desk-based research or proceed to collect primary data.

5. Planning for Direct Data Collection (Optional, only if step 4 did not yield the needed results)

- Identify what is missing and ask yourself:
 - What risks/capacities do I need to know (more) about?
 - Who do I need to engage with to obtain the missing data?
 - If done at field level, what areas/activities/sites do I want to cover?
 - Which methods will I use to collect the data?
 - What tools will I use to collect the data?

Resource Considerations

- Consider:
 - Time; Financial; Human; and Technical requirements and constraints.
- Explore:
 - Opportunities for leveraging on pooled resources from the PSEA Network, sectors or other humanitarian actors.
 - Determine if funding will need to be mobilized.

Joint Risk Assessment Results:

- Package findings and recommendations into products suitable to the needs of different stakeholders.
- Identify most effective channels/methods for disseminating the information so it reaches the intended audience – oral presentations, translation into local languages, etc.
- Consider sensitivities around SEA in your context.
- Incorporate results into monitoring results.

Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Risk Management Toolkit (DMSPC – was DPKO)

To support UN Missions in identifying risks and mitigating measures, the Department of Management Strategy, Policy and Compliance has shared with Secretariat entities, including peace operations, a [Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Risk Management Toolkit](#). The toolkit, developed in 2018, corresponds to an integrated approach to risk management based on a methodology that identifies and assesses risks, develops treatment strategies for risks and reviews the management approach as needed. Communication and coordination are also core elements of the SEA risk management toolkit, which is designed to be adaptable to the specific prevailing conditions in different types of peace operations or other Secretariat entities.

UNDP SEA Risk Management Tool

The [UNDP SEA Risk Management Tool](#) provides step-by-step guidance on how to identify and prevent SEA risks in the Country Office (CO). Among other things, it looks at the likelihood of UNDP personnel committing SEA in the CO environment, the impact it has on the CO's objectives, the effectiveness of internal controls to prevent SEA, further measures to take, and specific risks related to the CO's ability to receive allegations of SEA and provide victim assistance.

UNICEF Safety Audits: How-To Guide

This [GBV Safety Audit Tool](#) is often used by the GBV sub-Cluster to assess GBV-related risks in a certain area/camp. It is similar to the [GBV community mapping and safety audit](#) done within the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Cluster. The tool is focused on assessing GBV risk factors and is a useful look at methodologies that can be applied to assessing SEA risk.

Empowered Aid M&E Toolkit

This toolkit applies findings and recommendations shared by women and girls from participatory research on how to reduce sexual exploitation and abuse in aid distribution. The Toolkit (found [here](#) under the Manuals and Toolkits tab) includes four adapted distribution monitoring tools: a (1) a safety audit or observational monitoring tool, (2) a point of distribution questionnaire, (3) household survey, and (4) a focus group discussion tool with guidance on how to plan, train, collect data, and conduct analysis using the adapted tools. These tools can be used to proactively identify and address known barriers and risks for SEA that inhibit aid distributions from being safe for women and girls.