
Regional R4V PSEA Community of Practice (PSEA COP)

Terms of Reference¹

2023

Background

In April 2018 the UN Secretary-General provided direction for IOM and UNHCR to lead and coordinate the regional response to the situation of refugees and migrants from Venezuela seeking access to basic rights and services, protection, as well as self-reliance and socio-economic integration. Further to this direction, the Regional Inter-Agency Coordination Platform (R4V) was established as a forum to coordinate the response efforts across 17 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, with a particular focus on achieving coherency and consistency throughout the response. The Regional Platform is complemented by local coordination mechanisms at national and sub-regional levels. Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) is an integral, cross-cutting component of the R4V response.

SEA is recognized as a form of GBV and an egregious breach of accountability to affected people (AAP), requiring robust and coordinated organizational and collective prevention and response measures. PSEA is also a priority of the UN Secretary-General and the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC). To deliver on this commitment, the IASC has prioritized the acceleration of PSEA from the outset of a response, with a focus on key priority areas including safe and accessible reporting, victims/survivor-centered response, and enhanced accountability.² Building on recommendations of the regional PSEA mapping (2020-2021)³, the R4V Regional Platform has further identified key areas of work for the prevention and mitigation of, and response to SEA in the 17 countries of the RMRP.⁴

PSEA COP Responsibilities

Under the auspices of the UNHCR's Regional Director and IOM's Special Envoy for the Situation of Venezuela and overseen by the IOM and UNHCR R4V Coordinators, the R4V Regional Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Community of Practice (hereafter: PSEA COP) is the R4V's primary body for technical-level cooperation on PSEA activities in line with the RMRP, R4V Regional PSEA COP Workplan and the R4V PSEA Strategy, in the 17 countries of the RMRP. The PSEA COP supports national and sub-regional platforms and is a space for knowledge sharing, promoting collective PSEA results, and strengthening collaboration between agencies to build capacity on PSEA within R4V partners.

The presence of the PSEA COP does **not** lessen the responsibility of individual COP/R4V partners to develop, implement, and strengthen internal PSEA programs at the country level. Senior management within each partner organization is accountable for PSEA within their organizations.⁵

The Regional Community of Practice (COP) on PSEA promotes collective, regional, and in-country prevention and response approaches to SEA at both the technical and strategic levels while strengthening partners' PSEA capacity more broadly. Country-level fora/networks in the 17 countries remain responsible for implementing coordinated activities between partners to minimize the risk of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) by R4V partner organizations' personnel, ensure effective response when incidents do arise, and raise awareness of

¹ These TORs are based on and adapted from the generic TORs update the TORs produced by the ECHA/ECPS UN and NGO Task Force on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (November 2008) based on good practice, agreements in the IASC, existing Network TORs, and have been developed with the contributions of in-country and global practitioners.

² IASC Strategy on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (2021), available [here](#); IASC Plan for Accelerating PSEA in Humanitarian Response at Country-Level (2018), available [here](#); UN Secretary-General's Strategy on PSEA (2017), available [here](#).

³ <https://www.r4v.info/es/document/r4v-protection-against-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-psea>

⁴ RMRP 2021, RMRP 2022

⁵ Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13), available [here](#).

PSEA in each country. The COP does not replace country-level mechanisms to address PSEA and shall collaborate with established country-level PSEA Networks under the UNCT, and other regional PSEA initiatives.

The PSEA COP activities follow a survivor-centered approach and will respect the principles of safety, confidentiality, respect, and non-discrimination.

The PSEA COP is **not** responsible for investigating or adjudicating complaints. These functions rest exclusively with the entity that employs the individual against whom a complaint has been alleged, in line with internal policy and procedure.

COP Roles

The Co-Leads⁶ support and represent the PSEA COP in the fulfillment of its responsibilities under these TORs and the PSEA COP Regional Workplan.⁷ The PSEA Co-Leads are responsible for reporting *quarterly* on COP activities, progress against the RMRP and PSEA COP Regional Workplan, SEA risks, needs and where possible trends to the *R4V Coordinators*. The Co-leads represent the COP in relevant coordination bodies and advise actors in the regional/national/subregional platforms on good practice to support effective PSEA implementation.

Each national/sub-regional platform will be represented in the COP by one PSEA Focal Point.⁸ All Focal Points will actively participate in information sharing on national/subregional PSEA initiatives and coordination of activities under the R4V Regional COP Workplan, and are responsible for technical support and cooperation on PSEA within their platform under the leadership of their senior management (for regional organizations) or National/Subregional Platform Coordinator(s) (for National/Subregional Platform PSEA Focal Points).

The COP may form smaller, time-bound task teams of regular members to carry out specific deliverables as needed.

Membership

COP membership is open to all UN agencies, INGOs, and NGOs operating regionally within the R4V Platform. Membership to the COP is also open to *Sector Coordinators*, who are strongly encouraged to attend PSEA COP meetings in order to improve two-way collaboration between sectors and the COP. The PSEA Co-Leads/co-chairs and the GBV sub-cluster and Child Protection Co-Leads should participate in each other's meetings and events, and actively engage to ensure close linkages between PSEA, GBV and CP interventions at the Regional Level⁹.

The COP will engage in outreach with non-member organizations as part of ongoing activities. At a minimum, all R4V partner organizations should be aware of the inter-agency SEA complaint referral system (see below) and be able to receive complaints against their own staff, regardless of their relationship to the COP or national PSEA networks/fora.

Meetings

The PSEA COP will convene *monthly* and additional ad-hoc meetings may be requested by any member. The notes of each meeting will be distributed among all members and filed in the records of the COP. As COP

⁷ Forthcoming

⁸ See the Generic Terms of Reference for R4V PSEA Focal Points (2022).

⁹ See the GBV AoR's *Handbook for Coordinating Gender-Based Violence Interventions in Emergencies*, Chapter 1.8, available [here](#).

meetings should provide a supporting environment to discuss potentially sensitive challenges in PSEA, any information shared during meetings will be kept confidential on request following a survivor-centered approach. As a general matter, COP meetings should refrain from discussing individual cases; any reference to SEA allegations or cases during meetings will be anonymized.

In case a Focal Point cannot attend a regularly scheduled COP meeting, the member organization or national/subregional platform will be represented by a dedicated and sufficiently briefed alternate.

Tasks

Under the 4 pillars of the IASC Minimum Operating Standards on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse,¹⁰ the PSEA COP will undertake the following:

Management and Coordination

- Technically support SEA risk assessments in *the 17 countries of the RMRP* as appropriate and as needed, identifying potential risk factors and areas of concern. The risk assessment outcomes will inform strategic decision-making of senior leadership and the PSEA Workplan.
- Establish and implement a measurable R4V Regional PSEA COP Workplan with defined time frames and responsibilities of COP members based on expertise and capacity. Design and implementation of the Workplan will be informed by the risk factors identified by risk assessments. The R4V Coordinators will monitor Workplan deliverables and will provide additional support (including human and financial resources) when warranted.
- Support the PSEA activities of COP members to avoid duplication and fill gaps.
- Work closely with other coordination bodies including the [*Protection Sector, GBV sub-sector, Child Protection sub-sector*] to support prevention and response to SEA.
- Identify training needs and resources to coordinate trainings for PSEA Focal Points and national platforms.
- Identify training/advocacy needs to support senior management on their specific PSEA roles and responsibilities.
- Advocate for the strengthening and/or establishment of internal PSEA policies and practices for all R4V partner organizations operating in the 17 RMRP countries and offer support to organizations as needed where such systems are not in place.
- Develop tools and guidelines to advance PSEA technical work at the field level.
- Convene webinars, workshops and other capacity building opportunities for members and R4V partners.

Engagement with and support of the affected population

All engagements with populations should be done in coordination with actors working with affected populations *including the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) and/or communication with Communities (CwC) Working Group at the regional level* and the Protection Sector, including the GBV and Child Protection sub-subsectors at the regional, national and sub-regional levels, to avoid duplication of efforts and to inform community engagement.

- Promote awareness about the rights of affected populations, what SEA is, what constitutes appropriate behavior of personnel, the fact that aid workers are obliged to report SEA incidents that they are aware of, and support countries in developing and sharing messages about the various methods to submit complaints and how to access victim assistance services in different RMRP countries.

¹⁰ Four Pillars of Management and Coordination, Community Engagement, Prevention, and Response are outlined in the [Minimum Operating Standards](#) for PSEA

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Prevention

- Advocate for PSEA to be a priority throughout planning and programming and support R4V partners to embed SEA risk mitigation in needs assessment, project design, implementation, and monitoring based on identified SEA trends. Include PSEA in the RMRP to fully integrate PSEA in the response.
- Supplement R4V partners internal initiatives to strengthen SEA prevention through joint activities and sharing good practice.
- Encourage COP members to carry out induction and refresher trainings on SEA for all R4V partner organizations’ personnel and support such trainings with the R4V PSEA Training Module¹¹.

Response

- Support countries in jointly mapping trusted and functional complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) to identify where there are gaps in the affected population’s safe access to report SEA.
- Support R4V partners to establish new complaint channels to fill the gaps in access to reporting based on the mapping and informed by community preferences, so that there are safe, accessible, and contextually appropriate channels for any member of the community to report sensitive allegations.
- Support countries in establishing an inter-agency community-based complaint mechanism (CBCM) by linking the R4V members’ complaint and feedback mechanisms (CFMs) through agreed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on inter-agency complaint and assistance referral, in line with the Global SOPs.¹²
- Support the GBV and Child Protection sub-sectors, in their promotion of mapping exercises of available services and gaps for health, safety and security, legal, psychosocial, and material support at the country level, toward developing and/or strengthening assistance referral pathways.¹³
- Collectively advocate with the GBV and CP Regional sub-sectors to address existing specialized services gaps so that the needs of all survivors are met.¹⁴

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed on an annual basis and revised as appropriate.

2023-2024 Co-leadership

Organization	Representative
IOM	Mónica Noriega-Ardila
UNHCR	Valentina Duque
UNICEF	Catalina Fernández

¹¹ Available [here](#)

¹² IASC *Global Standard Operating Procedures on Inter-Agency Cooperation in Community-Based Complaint Mechanisms* (2016), available [here](#). For practical guidance to set up an inter-agency CBCM, see the *Best Practice Guide on Inter-agency CBCMs*, available [here](#).

¹³ For more on victim assistance and support, including roles and responsibilities, see the *UN Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse*, available [here](#).

¹⁴ For more on supporting survivors when GBV actors are not available, see *The Pocket Guide*, available [here](#).