

# IASC PSEAH External Review Terms of Reference 2021

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Endorsed by Inter-Agency Standing Committee April 2021  
Approved by the PSEAH External Review Advisory Group April 2021

## Introduction

An external review of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee's (IASC) approach to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (PSEAH) will be conducted in 2021. The objective of the review is to provide an independent assessment of progress made, and the overall impact and effectiveness of IASC's PSEAH approach, building from the previous IASC inter-agency "Review of Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse by UN, NGO, IOM and IFRC Personnel," conducted in 2010. Given the range of actions implemented system-wide over the past years, a follow-up review is timely and necessary.

## Background

In 2010, IASC commissioned a review to assess the extent to which organizations and country teams had implemented their obligations to address PSEA.<sup>1</sup> The review focused on PSEA implementation and coordination mechanisms from 14 agencies' HQ level to the national level and made a number of recommendations. The findings of the report established a baseline for informing subsequent inter-agency PSEA responses, across humanitarian, development, and peacekeeping work.

The 2010 approach was largely individual agency-focused, but as the PSEAH community has since placed greater emphasis on inter-agency approaches, the findings from 2010 will be applied more broadly toward the current status of inter-agency PSEAH initiatives.

## Objectives

Main objectives of the external review:

- Assess the status of the findings of 2010 key/ challenges/ gaps/ needs across agencies in the IASC and identify new findings to promote learning.
- Assess accountability using the 2010 review as a baseline, and the extent to which PSEA obligations have been implemented and the IASC has taken on the 2010 recommendations.
- Assess how well the system as a whole (including the UN, I/NGOs, Red Cross/ Red Crescent Movement) is addressing PSEAH and provide recommendations for improvement that are applicable across agencies.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/protection-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/documents-public/iasc-global-review-protection-sexual>

The primary users of the review will be the UN and I/NGOs and those agencies operating under the IASC umbrella.

## Scope

While there is currently a strong PSEAH policy foundation, the findings in 2010 suggest that there are gaps in the implementation of PSEAH policies. This review will focus on examining the recommendations set forth in 2010, and progress made, as well as existing coordination strategies and mechanisms used to engage with local populations, prevent and respond to SEAH and ensure management accountability and compliance.

The landscape of PSEAH in the humanitarian sector has changed vastly since 2010, including the addition of sexual harassment (SH), PSEA networks, and other various coordination mechanisms, policies and procedures, and the UN Protocol on the Provision of Assistance to Victims of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which all serve to strengthen the PSEAH response, and will be considered in the methodological approach of this review.<sup>2</sup>

## Geographic Coverage

Where possible, field visits will take place to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and two other priority countries identified by the IASC. Country selection will be performed by the Advisory Group on the basis of country situation analysis conducted by the Special Advisor.

## Timeframe

Given timely contribution of the needed financial and in-kind resources and recruitment of consultants as well as adherence to deadlines by participating organizations, the review is expected to be completed in six months, starting in March 2021.

## Methodology

The methodology will be developed by the Advisory Group in consultation with the Special Advisor. This will likely include data collection consisting of a desk review; case studies; and high-level consultations, culminating in a final output such as a workshop of key stakeholders. The desk review will address current and past IASC structure, outputs, architecture and resources, reporting lines, resourcing, and high-level representation.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/UN%20Victim%20Assistance%20Protocol\\_English\\_Final.pdf](https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/UN%20Victim%20Assistance%20Protocol_English_Final.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> This may include a review of IASC Minimum Operating Standards for PSEA from 2012: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/system/files/2020-03/Minimum%20operating%20standards-psea%20by%20own%20personnel%202012.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> Further topics that may be explored during the review as they pertain to PSEAH include: LGBTI; men and boys and other marginalized populations. This may also include an analysis of the current status of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and race and power dynamics.

This will also consist of a review of the status of some of the findings from 2010, including but not limited to:

- Established PSEA policies have not translated into managerial and staff understanding and acceptance of policies.
- Policies and technical guidance have not been communicated to the field with sufficient authority or clear direction and are not accessible.
- Implementation of PSEA policies is patchy, poor, or non-existent.
- The most critical gap in organizational support to PSEA is that of visible senior management leadership actively promoting PSEA policies and proactively supporting activities, while holding field managers accountable for implementation.

At the discretion of the Advisory Group, case studies of practice, demonstrating challenges and innovation, should be collected from a set number of countries through document review and virtual interviews. These methods will be used to produce detailed case studies that represent examples of good practice and innovation, as well as challenges that remain unaddressed, based on the information provided through interviews.

A post-review learning workshop will be held once the process is complete and all outputs delivered. A joint time-bound action plan will be developed in this forum as it is an opportunity for organizations to feed into findings, conclusions, lessons and recommendations. The Advisory Group will recommend to the IASC Champion on the proposed use of the review results and the IASC Champion will bring relevant findings and recommendations to the IASC Principals for endorsement and follow-up.

## **Management structure**

### **a) Special Advisor**

The review will be carried out by a high-level expert with sufficient seniority with the users of the review to ensure system-wide consideration of the review recommendations.

The Special Advisor will be under the administrative supervision of the IASC Champion (UNFPA) and work under the technical guidance of the IASC Senior PSEA Coordinator and Advisory Group.

### **b) Advisory Group**

An Advisory Group composed of representative UN agencies, I/NGO(s), and the Red Cross movement will be selected through a process of nominations from IASC members. The IASC Secretariat and the managing agency will select members to reflect inclusive representation of IASC PSEA stakeholders. Members of the Advisory Group must be

senior enough to represent their organization and have authority to make decisions. The Advisory Group will be constituted from the former and current IASC Champions on PSEA and Sexual Harassment, as well as well as nominated representatives from NGO consortia. The Group will be co-chaired by a representative of the managing agency and the IASC Secretariat.

The Advisory Group will provide guidance and strategic direction to the review process on behalf of the IASC. The duties of the Advisory Group will include:

1. Ensuring an inclusive process for finalization of the External Review ToR.
2. Provide necessary feedback on tools developed for the review.
3. Selecting the locations for field visits (where feasible) and case studies.
4. Coordinating feedback to their own agencies and staff of the review process; solidifying support and participation across all relevant departments (strategic, operational and programs).
5. Examining and commenting on interim findings and the various draft reports produced.
6. Deciding on follow-up measures for the external review.

### **c) Managing Agency**

In order to ensure coherence and coordination in the overall management of the review, UNFPA will act as line manager for the overall review process. This organization will:

1. Provide secretariat support to the Advisory Group.
2. Receive and distribute funds as necessary for the smooth functioning of the review.
3. Facilitate communication between the Advisory Group and the Special Advisor.

### **d) Agency Review Task Manager**

A dedicated individual within the managing agency will be responsible for the day-to-day management of the review and assist in the process of data collection. This person will also be responsible for facilitating communication between the Managing Agency and Special Advisor, and the IASC/ Secretariat.

## **Deliverables**

The Special Adviser will, in consultation with the advisory group provide:

- An inception report including final methodology, tools, and actions for carrying out the review.
- A desk review of the 2010 findings and recommendations and the current status of PSEAH within the context of the global review.
- A global review report that brings together findings and provides recommendations, building from those set forth in 2010.
- Presentation of initial findings at workshop (September).

## **Framework for feedback and follow-up**

The IASC Champion will present Review recommendations to the IASC Principals who will consider which recommendations to endorse and take forward.

A management response mechanism will be established for implementation of recommendations. A time bound action plan for implementation of the recommendations will be established, monitored and reported on at an agreed upon time in the future.

At the onset of the review, the Advisory Group will develop a feedback and follow up framework, identifying roles and responsibilities.