# Responses to questions raised during webinars on PSEA module in the United Nations Partner Portal (UNPP)

## For United Nations Personnel

### 1. The UNPP PSEA module

## What is the PSEA module of the UNPP?

The PSEA module is an integrated online tool that supports the joint efforts of UN and its CSOs partners to prevent and respond to sexual exploitation and abuse by digitizing the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) Harmonised Implementation Tool on PSEA capacity.

The harmonised implementation tool was developed based on extensive consultation between United Nations and CSO partners to operationalize the United Nations IP Protocol and has been agreed to be used by all United Nations agencies. The tool: a) outlines requirements to ensure adequate safeguards and appropriate action are in place when working with partners; b) gives United Nations entities the necessary assurance of partner's organisational capacities on PSEA; c) aims to ensure the United Nations does not partner with organisations who fail to address or respond to instances of SEA.

In sum, the module will facilitate the assessment and determination of the organisational capacity of United Nations partners to prevent and respond to with SEA. It will also facilitate working together to strengthen partner capacities on PSEA.

## Who has access to the PSEA module in the UNPP?

The module is available for use by the following UNPP participating agencies: UN Secretariat, UN Women, FAO, IOM, UNDP Crisis Bureau, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, WHO and WFP.

## How should UN agencies who are yet onboarding the UNPP but wish to move forward with assessing their partners proceed?

UN agencies that are in the process of onboarding the UNPP but wish to start the process with their CSO partners can do so using the available offline forms developed in support of the PSEA module. These forms are available here. Once onboarded, completed verified assessments and PSEA Capacity Strengthening Implementation Plans (CSIPs) – where applicable – can then be uploaded in the UNPP.

### 2. Roles and responsibilities

## Who is responsible and accountable to undertake this capacity assessment and capacity strengthening?

The roles and responsibilities differ among different UN agencies. In case of doubt, we invite you to contact your organisational PSEA focal point.

## Can several individuals of an organisation do the assessment?

Only those with an "advanced editor" role can submit the assessment from the UN. Multiple staff from the agency can coordinate using the "Save for Later" feature at the bottom of the page.

## 3. Scope of the assessment

### Can sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH) be incorporated together?

Yes, as long as sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment are clearly defined, covered and differentiated. As some aspects of prevention and response may differ between SEA and SH, this must be done adequately.

### Can SEA be incorporated as part of safeguarding or sexual misconduct?

PSEA systems might be integrated as part of a broader umbrella terminologies of policies on 'sexual misconduct', 'safeguarding' or 'undesirable behaviours'. In such cases, SEA must be explicitly and clearly listed as part of the broader umbrella term or policy, and prevention and response mechanisms specific to SEA should be present.

### How are beneficiaries defined for the purposes of this module and the PSEA capacity process?

Beneficiaries of assistance, as defined under the UN IP Protocol, are individuals who are direct or indirect recipients of a partner's or the UN's action. In other words, this refers to people who a partner or a UN agency works with and/or serves or seeks to assist and are typically in situations of vulnerability and dependence vis à vis the partner's or UN agency's personnel.

### Why use the term "beneficiary" and not "affected community" or "person of concern"?

SEA may happen in both humanitarian and development contexts. The terms 'affected community' or 'person of concern' are used in humanitarian situations only, while 'beneficiary' more generally refers to individuals who are recipients of service or assistance by a CSO or the UN.

### If an organisation subgrants to other CSOs, can we consider this as a case of "no contact with beneficiaries"?

No. As the main partner implementing with the UN having to implement activities that entail contact with beneficiaries, a subgranting organisation will still be deemed as having contact with beneficiaries. This also implies that they need to fulfill core standard 2 of the capacity assessment, i.e., the organisation's contracts and partnership agreements include a standard clause requiring subcontractors to adopt policies that prohibit SEA and to take measures to prevent and respond to SEA.

### For international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), are the assessments done at the level of its headquarters (HQ) and/or country operations?

No, INGOs working with a UN office in a country are to be assessed at the level of their country operations. The rationale behind this is really to ensure the PSEA capacity assessment is conducted based on the local realities that heavily determine the risks of SEA. When an INGO has been assessed at its HQ level, the global assessment would still be taken into consideration. This is because some PSEA policies and systems assessed as part of the PSEA assessment of INGO parents may apply to

country or regional level operations. However, the self-assessment must reflect whether these policies and systems are applied at the national or local level. For example, the organisation may have a policy on mandatory training but the policy might not be enforced at the national level. (*a template will be made available in upcoming weeks to support INGOs assessments*).

## What types of cooperating partners are covered by this process?

At this time, the UNPP PSEA module is available to registered civil society organisations (CSOs), Community Based Organisations, International CSOs, National NGOs, Academic institutions, Red Cross/Red Crescent national societies. It is not available to governmental cooperating partners.

## What can be done in case of shared partners?

In case of shared partners, it is recommended that UN agencies collaborate and coordinate to jointly conduct the assessment and build and monitor the CSIP.

## What is the validity of the capacity assessment?

The PSEA capacity assessment is valid for five years, and a reassessment must be undertaken upon the completion of this period.

### 4. Section 1: Introductory PSEA questions

## What steps are to be taken in case of partners which have already undergone a PSEA capacity assessment offline by a UN agency?

If an organisation has a past assessment that is not older than five years, there are two options:

- First, UNICC may have already migrated partner organisations' past assessments into the module. The only data that will be migrated is the date of the past assessment, agency who scored the assessment and the rating.
- Second, you or the partner organisation can upload the assessment on the organisation's UNPP profile under Section 1 (Introductory Questions) of the module, by responding "yes" to the question "Have you been assessed on PSEA by another UN agency in the past five years?" (see pages 10-11 of the user manual).

If there have been organisational changes since the previous assessment, you can unlock the self-assessment of the partner organisation so that they can submit a reassessment through the UNPP PSEA module.

## How can I know if a partner has already been assessed by another UN agency?

The PSEA Module will allow UN agencies to check which Partners have already been assessed and will show the status of the assessment through the PSEA observation tab (see pages 35-37 of the user manual) and through the various completed sections in the module. The Introductory Questions section will require partners to report whether they have been previously assessed by a UN agency and will also require the provision of the previous verified assessment and CSIP where relevant.

## For partners that have previously been assessed by UNICEF, would the PSEA risk ratings be translated?

Yes. The PSEA assessment conducted by UNICEF until November 2022 was using 6 core standards. The assessment under the UNPP is essentially the same and looks at the same key PSEA pillars, but the way the rating is calculated is a bit different.

When uploading a past assessment with an SEA risk rating, make sure to translate the SEA risk rating into a PSEA capacity one using the table here.

## 5. Section 2: Preliminary Self-assessment and rating

### What supporting documentation should be uploaded?

While the supporting documents for each core standard differ, a suggested list of documentation can be found here. It is important to note that only formally approved or official documents will be accepted; drafts are not considered eligible. You also have the option to, as the UN, upload documents on behalf of the partner when completing the verification of their self-assessment. For more details, please refer to page 10 of the user manual.

### Does the module have the possibility to update the ratings to reflect PSEA monitoring reports or other findings and changes?

Yes, the rating can be changed at any point by a UN agency in light of monitoring findings or other organisational changes. to do so, please use the "Unlock Rating" option under Section 2 (Preliminary self-assessment and rating). Once unlocked, you can review the rating and provide comments for the CSO partner. For more details, please refer to pages 19-22 of the user manual

### Can a partner organisation change or update its self-assessment once submitted?

Yes, the partner organisation has the option to do so by requesting the UN to unlock their self-assessment. You can do so by simply clicking on the option "Unlock self-assessment" at the bottom of Section 2 (Preliminary self-assessment and rating). Once unlocked, they will be able to retake the self-assessment. For more details, please refer to pages 19-22 of the user manual.

### Can the UN complete the assessment on behalf of the partner organisation?

Yes, as the UN you have the option of completing the assessment on behalf of the partner. The UN can provide answers on behalf of the partner in both Section 1 (Introductory PSEA Questions) and Section 2 (Preliminary Self-assessment and Rating). This function is useful for those partners who may not be able to answer the questions themselves due to connectivity issues, limited resources and capacity, etc. For more details, please refer to page 10 of the user manual.

### What happens if an organisation is assessed as low or medium capacity for PSEA? What is the capacity level at which the UN cannot enter into a partnership?

The aim of the PSEA capacity assessment process is not to disqualify organisations from entering into a partnership. The aim of the assessment is to determine the systems an organisation must have to prevent and respond to SEA. If a partner organisation is assessed as low or medium capacity, this means you will need to work with them to develop and implement a PSEA capacity strengthening

implementation plan (CSIP) to address any gaps identified in the assessment. Having low capacity for PSEA means additional risk mitigation measures may be required. The only situation where the organisation will be ineligible for partnership is when an organisation has been assessed with "no" for core standard 8, i.e., the partner organisation did not take adequate corrective measures to a past allegation nor did it provide indications that this will be addressed. In this particular case, the partner organisation is required to undertake immediate corrective actions to be eligible for partnership with the UN again.

## 6. Section 3: Capacity Strengthening Implementation Plan (CSIP)

### What is a CSIP and in what cases is it needed?

When a partner has contact with beneficiaries and scored less than full PSEA capacity, the UN partner may work with the partner to develop a PSEA capacity strengthening implementation plan (CSIP) covering relevant core standards.

### What is the duration of the CSIP and when should it be initiated?

A CSIP should be submitted within one month after the UN scores the self-assessment rating. The harmonized guidance requires partners with "low capacity" or "medium capacity" to be reassessed six months after starting their CSIP. The module has been built so it automatically captures the six-month reassessment. This is done based on the status of the required activities in the CSIP. There is a clock on the portal and at the end of the six months, it counts how many core standards are now met. This is the reassessment score.

### What about partners who work in specific contexts or have smaller organisational size which may limit their capacities on PSEA?

We encourage you to take a pragmatic approach as the UN works with a range of implementing or cooperating partners. It is important to bear in mind that no one size fits all, and capacities and systems may change over time and based on the operational context. It is possible to find feasible solutions to strengthen capacities that may work in specific contexts, for instance smaller partners can have joint investigation systems, or collaborations can be identified at the interagency levels.

Additionally, we highly encourage you to discuss with your partner the specific activities of the plan where they may need additional support or any challenge they may have in implementing activities outlined in the plan. There are also numerous resources in the UNPP PSEA Resource Library (IP Protocol for PSEA resources) to support partners with the implementation of activities identified under the CSIP, we invite you to share these when relevant.

### When is the CSIP  deemed as implemented? Can it be implemented as soon as all the activities for a core standard have been completed?

The CSIP is a living document and is expected to be updated regularly by one or more UN agencies working with the  partner organisations  as part of regular programme monitoring.  Once the status of all the required activities changes to "completed", the rating of the core standard will change to "Yes". Once all activities are completed and the CSIP is concluded, the partner's  capacity rating will automatically change to "full capacity". The partner will then be required to maintain compliance to

the core standards. Once all the mandatory activities under the core standards are completed, the CSIP is deemed as implemented and the system automatically generates the final determination.

## What happens if at the end of the six-month period, the partner has not managed to strengthen capacities?

We recognise that some partners may need some time to implement the actions required under the CSIP. This is understandable as long as the partner is taking action. We can always extend the CSIP and continue to work with the partner until the activities are completed. For more details, see page 31 of the user manual.

## 7. Technical aspects and support

## How can I access the PSEA module on UNPP?

To access the PSEA module in the UNPP, login to the UNPP (https://www.unpartnerportal.org/login), search for your partner from the left navigation bar and then click on the PSEA tab in your partner's profile. Access to the UNPP is available to those UN personnel with a valid email address from the participating agencies. If you are unable to access the UNPP, please reach out to your agency administrators.

## Does the system have in-built notifications?

At this stage, there is no email notification through the module. The module is updated automatically every time an action is undertaken by the partner organisation  or the UN agency. For some actions, a visual alert button appears. For this reason, it is important to maintain communication between  UN and partner organisations throughout the whole process.

## Who can I contact for help with the module?

We invite you to contact your agency PSEA focal point or use the "Ask Rafiki" feature to get IT-related support from UNICC. You can also refer to the organisation's UNPP focal point within your UN agency for more information. The UNPP resource library and the technical guidance document provided in Section 1 (Introductory Questions) are also references for materials when needed.

## Can the module and the user resources be accessed in any other languages?

Currently, the module is only available in English but we are working on translating it into French and Spanish as well. The various resources in the UNPP resource library are available in different languages as listed on the library.