



New Consultancy and Relief Organization

7/1/2021

# Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy

NCRO



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## 1. FOREWORD

This Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Policy is developed with a view to bring harmonization in the NCRO activities.

The manual is aimed at regulating internal day to day affairs of NCRO and is not purported to address legal or other issues outside organization. For issues outside organization, reference to laws and regulations issued by government authorities should be made.

Besides implementation of this manual, any law and regulation applicable to NCRO must be properly complied with and this is the responsibility of top management to ensure that nothing is being done in violation of government laws and regulations applicable to NCRO.

This manual shall come into force w.e.f the date (1 July 2021) when Board of Directors NCRO approved the updates of this manual. Scope of this manual extends to all finance and admin activities. It includes all financial as well as administrative aspects of activities of NCRO. All the staff members are responsible to make themselves familiar with its contents and for proper implementation of the same. Failure to comply with these regulations will be met with appropriate actions

The manual includes policies and procedures, while different standard formats are put as appendixes.

As the Board of Directors approves this manual, any future changes should also be approved by Board of Directors before incorporating in this manual.

This manual should be reviewed regularly to see if any updates are lagging or if any procedures should be changed.

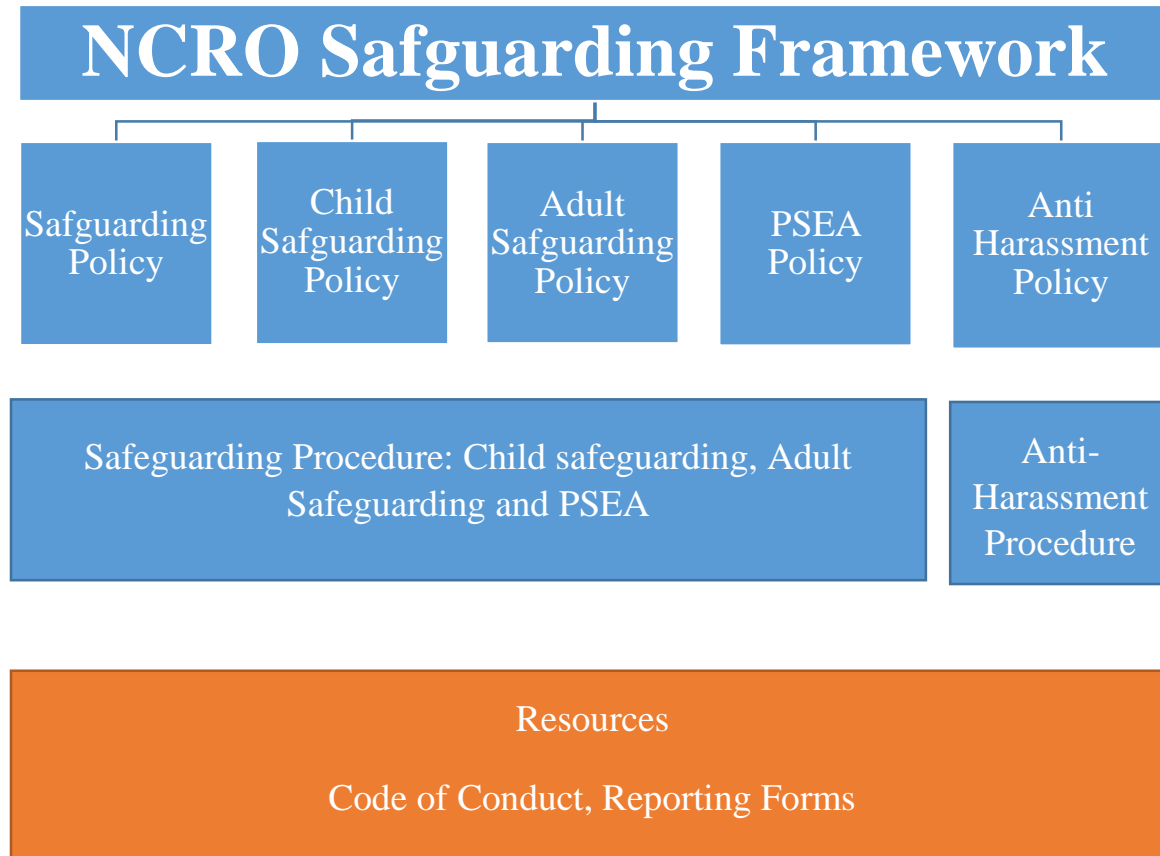
NCRO Director





## 2. Safeguarding Framework

This document is part of NCRO’s Safeguarding Framework that consists of this policy, procedures and resources.



## 3. Policy Introduction

NCRO will not tolerate any form of sexual abuse or exploitation.

NCRO will not accept any kind of sexual exploitation or abuse by its employees, partners, associates, or other persons who are involved in the organization's activities. Adults who are vulnerable, women, and kids are particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. NCRO is committed to preventing sexual abuse and exploitation of any kind at all times for all the communities it serves.



Establishing an outline of the significance of the framework and explicit procedures is the aim of the PSEA Framework, which includes the policy, procedures, and resources.

The UN Secretary General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13) is another document that the PSEA Framework reaffirms NCRO's adherence to.

This policy makes sure that all NCRO employees, partners, and associates understand their roles and responsibilities in protecting stakeholders and communities from sexual abuse and exploitation.

The related PSEA procedures describe the reporting and investigation procedures, and the policy makes definitions and obligations for prohibited activity clear.

#### 4. Six Core Principles Relating to SEA

NCRO is committed to IASC Six Core Principles Relating to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse SEA.

1. "Sexual exploitation and abuse by humanitarian workers constitute acts of gross misconduct and are therefore grounds for termination of employment.
2. Regardless of the local definition of consent age or the age of majority, it is forbidden to engage in sexual behavior with minors (those under the age of 18). False assumptions about a child's age are not grounds for justification.
3. The 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 the exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries.
4. Any sexual relationship between those providing humanitarian assistance and protection and a person benefitting from such humanitarian assistance and protection that involves improper use of rank or position is prohibited. Such relationships undermine the credibility and integrity of humanitarian aid work.
5. Where a humanitarian worker develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same agency or not, he or she must report such concerns via established agency reporting mechanisms.
6. Humanitarian workers are obliged to create and maintain an environment which prevents sexual exploitation and abuse and promotes the implementation of their code of conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment."



## 5. Accountability Statement

The Executive Team (ET) and Board of Directors of NCRO have mandated that no sexual exploitation or abuse of any kind be allowed. NCRO takes this policy extremely seriously.

All NCRO employees, associates, and partners are bound to the PSEA policy; they must comply with its rules and understand the potential consequences for doing otherwise. If necessary, NCRO or national offices may enhance the standards set out in this policy in order to comply with local regulations or traditions. Attesting to this commitment shall be done by signing the policy and the Code of Conduct. This policy must be communicated to all NCRO partners, associates, and employees.

This policy ultimately falls within the responsibility of the NCRO Board. Its execution is under the responsibility of the NCRO directors, ET and PSEAFP. All NCRO representatives have an obligation to voice any concerns they may have about sexual abuse and exploitation. When a complaint violates our policy, NCRO will look into it thoroughly, take appropriate disciplinary action, and may even file a lawsuit. We take all complaints and concerns seriously.

## 6. Policy Approach

This policy, which is applicable to all employees, associates, and partners regardless of location, outlines how NCRO accomplishes its obligations.

## 7. Framework Principles

This policy and the entire Safeguarding Framework are guided by the following principles:

### 7.1 Safeguarding

NCRO is committed to all community members as outlined in the definitions as having the right to safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse irrespective of ability, ethnicity, faith, gender, sexuality, and culture. A key principle within this is that all processes are survivor-led. NCRO commits to survivors leading the complaint process where it is possible and appropriate to do so.

### 7.2 Effective Communication

NCRO effectively communicates with all staff, associates, and partners in simple and accessible language to create a positive and accessible culture where responsibilities for PSEA are clear.

### 7.3 Continuous Improvement

NCRO provides assessment, reflection, and feedback mechanisms to inform the organization of any improvements that can be made to policies and practices.





These mechanisms include quarterly incident reviews, regular safeguarding audits, as well as regular policy reviews and refresher training.

#### 7.4 Dignity and Respect

NCRO creates a work environment where the principles of dignity and respect for all staff, associates, and partners, in all locations are at the heart of what the organization does. Included in this are the principles of being non-judgmental when hearing the concerns and complaints of survivors of sexual exploitation and abuse.

#### 7.5 Zero Tolerance

NCRO has zero tolerance for any form of sexual exploitation and abuse.

#### 7.6 Confidential

NCRO Is committed to confidentiality and information will not be shared outside of the Safeguarding Committee unless it is absolutely necessary, and the safety of the person involved is a concern.

### 8. Policy Implementation

#### 8.1 Policy Map

This policy will guide NCRO staff through the definitions of sexual exploitation and abuse as well as governance and responsibilities. The associated procedures and resources will provide information on how to report any complaints, the format of the reporting, and how these complaints will be managed.

#### 8.2 Governance

The PSEA Focal Point (PSEAFP), together with the Board of Directors, has ultimate responsibility for this policy and the PSEA Framework and its proper management, using a systematic approach. As such, the Director and the Board of Directors will receive a summary of any reported sexual exploitation and abuse incidents and follow-up measures taken at each Executive Team meeting and Board meeting, respectively.

#### 8.3 Responsibilities

NCRO is committed to following through on the following measures in order to ensure that the organization is observing its PSEA commitments:



These commitments are fully outlined in the Safeguarding Policy.

### 8.4 NCRO's Obligations

NCRO believes that all people have a right to live their lives free from sexual exploitation and abuse and will not tolerate its staff, associates, or partners engaging in any sort of behavior that puts beneficiaries or communities at risk. To that end, NCRO commits to:

1. Creating a safe culture for both those it serves and those who work for and represent the organization.
2. Following through on any complaints and concerns in a timely manner through its Safeguarding Committee and taking each complaint seriously.
3. Sensitizing staff, associates, and partners, around how to make a complaint.
4. Ensuring zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse.
5. Building a culture of dignity, honor and respect where all those who work with and are served by NCRO feel empowered to report complaints.
6. Educating staff, associates, and partners that sexual exploitation and abuse constitute gross misconduct and are grounds for termination of employment and possibly legal action.
7. Providing information on how to report complaints and the investigation procedure.
8. Ensuring that all staff, associates, and partners have access to the PSEA policy and procedures as well as all other related safeguarding policies.
9. Providing training to all staff, associates, and partners on PSEA.

### 8.5 Staff Responsibility

All staff, associates, and partners are required to adhere to this policy at all times and are obliged to report any suspicions of sexual exploitation and abuse of others. All staff, associates, and



partners are required to sign the associated Code of Conduct and an acknowledgment of having read and understood the policy.

#### 8.6 Manager Responsibility

All Managers and Directors hold overall accountability for this Policy and its Implementation. Managers also have a responsibility to support and develop systems that maintain an environment where all parties involved with NCRO understand how to behave, how to raise complaints and concerns, and what action will be taken.

#### 8.7 Safeguarding Committee

A Safeguarding Committee has been established at the HQ level as well as in each field location. The Safeguarding Committee is comprised of 5 members:

1. One woman in a Senior Management Role (PSEAFP).
2. Three members will be from across different departments in the country program.
3. A fifth member who is an external expert in harassment, sexual exploitation, or abuse.

All Safeguarding Committees will ensure that there is diversity and equal gender representation on the committee.

The Safeguarding Committee will be responsible for informing and training all staff in safeguarding, PSEA, and harassment policies and procedures. They will also be responsible for receiving and investigating any safeguarding complaints, including PSEA.

The Safeguarding Committees will be trained in all of the Safeguarding policies as well as reporting and investigations. The Safeguarding Committee will also be provided with specialized psychological first-aid training so that they are able to offer appropriate support as required.

#### 8.8 Confidentiality of Complaint

NCRO will protect the confidentiality of sexual exploitation and abuse allegations to the greatest extent possible in order to protect the integrity of the investigation and prevent embarrassment, further discrimination or harassment, or retaliation.

Confidential or sensitive information obtained by any staff member during the course of an investigation shall not be disclosed to others unless required by law.

Concerns of individuals regarding confidentiality of information provided by them will be handled as sensitively as possible, and information shall not unnecessarily be disclosed to others.

NCRO cannot guarantee, however, complete confidentiality, because the organization cannot conduct an effective investigation without revealing certain information to the alleged perpetrator and potential witnesses.

NCRO will share information about allegations of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment only with those who need to know about it. Records relating to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment complaints will also be kept confidential on the same basis.



#### 8.9 Whistle-Blowing

As referred to in NCRO's whistle-blowing policy, all disclosures will be treated in confidence.

NCRO maintains a secure reporting system through Ethics Point to ensure that all staff, partners, and vendors have recourse in the event of possible misconduct.

Any type of misconduct should be reported to the PSEAFP through the following email: [complaint@ncro-afg.org](mailto:complaint@ncro-afg.org) or his/her contact number.

#### 8.10 Prohibited Retaliation

NCRO maintains a zero-tolerance policy for retaliation against anyone for reporting sexual exploitation or abuse, assisting in making a complaint or participating in an investigation.

Any staff, associate, or partner who makes a good-faith complaint of sexual exploitation or abuse, assists, testifies, or participates in any investigation or proceeding, or who reasonably opposes such conduct in the workplace will not be adversely affected in the terms and conditions of his or her employment and will not be discriminated against or discharged for engaging in such activity.

Retaliation not only affects the recipient but also can spread rapidly throughout NCRO. It destroys faith in NCRO's leadership and can damage employee morale.

Complaints of retaliation will be promptly investigated. If retaliation is substantiated, appropriate disciplinary action, including possible dismissal, will be taken.

##### 8.10.1 Examples of Consequences:

Some examples of Consequences include but are not limited to the following:

- Termination, demotion, disadvantageous transfers or assignments, refusals to promote, threats, reprimands, or negative evaluations.
- Co-worker hostility or retaliatory harassment, which includes intimidation, gossip, rumors, insults, or otherwise offensive conduct that would subject a person to ridicule or humiliation.
- Any action or combination of actions that is reasonably likely to materially and adversely affect an employee's job performance or opportunity for advancement.

#### 8.11 PSEA Commitments

All NCRO staff, associates, and partners are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the PSEA policy. Following are the core commitments relating to sexual exploitation and abuse



that all staff, associates, and partners are expected to follow. The following behaviors are prohibited:

#### 8.11.1 Sexual Activity with Children and Vulnerable Adults

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 in the age of the child is not a defense. Sexual activity with vulnerable adults, as outlined in the definitions, is also prohibited.

#### 8.11.2 Child Marriage

Any staff, associates, or partners who engage in child marriage (marriage to anyone under the age of 18) will be in violation of the PSEA policy. As per the definition of child marriage, anyone under the age of 18 is not able to give or withhold consent, and is considered a form of sexual violence. Any staff married to a child under the age of 18 as per the custom or law of their country, before the NCRO PSEA policy came into force will not be subject to disciplinary action. NCRO, however, prohibits any such relationship from occurring once the PSEA policy comes into effect.

#### 8.11.3 Sexual Activity with NCRO Beneficiaries

Sexual activity with any beneficiary is prohibited due to inherently unequal power imbalances. An NCRO beneficiary is defined as anyone who receives services or support from NCRO or an NCRO partner.

#### 8.11.4 Grooming and/or Coercion

Any grooming and/or coercion of a child or vulnerable adult for the purposes of obtaining sex is prohibited.

#### 8.11.5 Sexual Exploitation

Any form of sexual exploitation is prohibited including:

##### 8.11.5.1 Buying Sex

Exchange of money, material assistance, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favors or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behavior is prohibited.

##### 8.11.5.2 Profiting from Sexual Exploitation

Any monetary, social, or political gain from sexual exploitation is prohibited.

#### 8.11.6 Sexual Harassment

Any act of sexual harassment including unwelcome sexual advances or requests for sexual favors is prohibited both under the PSEA policy and the Anti-Harassment policy.



#### 8.11.7 Sexual Violence

Any acts of sexual violence as outlined in the definitions in prohibited. This includes, but is not limited to, sexual violence including intercourse, sexual touching, and threats of sexual violence.

#### 8.11.8 Physical/Emotional Abuse

As outlined in both the Child Safeguarding and the Adult Safeguarding policies, any physical or emotional abuse is prohibited.

This list may be expanded at any time and details will be communicated with staff, associates, and partners through the Safeguarding Committee. Additional prohibited behaviors related to abuse can be found in the Child Safeguarding and Adult Safeguarding policies.

#### 8.12 Consequences

Any staff, associate, or partner who is in violation of the PSEA policy will face disciplinary procedures, which may result in disciplinary action, termination of employment or contract and/or referral to the appropriate law enforcement agency or legal authority.

#### 8.13 Communication and Training

It is NCRO's responsibility to ensure that all staff, associates and partners are aware and fully compliant with the PSEA policy. In order to take the steps to prevent any forms of sexual exploitation or abuse, NCRO will ensure that:

1. Training is provided for all staff who has a specific responsibility for implementing this Policy and associated Procedure or who may be involved in dealing with complaints, which arise.
2. Awareness-raising training is provided to all staff, associates, and partners on PSEA. The training will equip staff, associates, and partners to develop awareness as well as an understanding of when and how to report any concerns.
3. Proactive steps are taken to communicate the zero-tolerance message.
4. All staff is informed of and trained in the policy and procedure.
5. All staff is aware of the definitions under this policy.
6. All staff is aware of reporting procedures.
7. All staff has signed and acknowledged that they have read and understood the policy.

#### 8.14 PSEA Reporting Procedures

The associated procedures document outlines how to report any incidents of sexual exploitation or abuse.

#### 8.15 Failure to Report

The Code of Conduct as well as the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) (<https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/>) Core Principles on PSEA state that it is the duty and the responsibility of all staff, associates, and partners to report any PSEA concerns. Failure to report may lead to disciplinary action.



## 8.16 Support for Survivors

Support will be offered to survivors regardless of the outcome of any investigations. This support can include specialist psychosocial counseling and/or access to other specialist support as needed.

## 8.17 Definitions

### 8.17.1 Child and vulnerable adults

#### 8.17.1.1 Child

A child is any individual under the age of 18, irrespective of local country definitions of when a child reaches adulthood.

#### 8.17.1.2 Vulnerable adults

Vulnerable adults are defined as:

- Those aged over 18 years and who identify themselves as unable to take care of themselves/protect themselves from harm or exploitation; or
- Who, due to their gender, mental or physical health, disability, ethnicity, religious identity, sexual orientation, economic or social status, or as a result of disasters and conflicts, are deemed to be at risk.

#### 8.17.2 Physical Abuse

Physical abuse occurs when a person purposefully injures or threatens to injure a child or vulnerable adult. This may take the form of slapping, punching, shaking, kicking, burning, shoving or grabbing. The injury may take the form of bruises, cuts, burns or fractures.

#### 8.17.3 Child Emotional Abuse

Emotional abuse is inappropriate verbal or symbolic acts toward a child or a pattern of failure over time to provide a child with adequate non-physical nurture and emotional availability. Such acts have a high probability of damaging a child's self-esteem or social competence.<sup>3</sup>

#### 8.17.4 Neglect

Neglect is the failure to provide a child or vulnerable adult with the conditions that are culturally accepted as being essential for their physical and emotional development and well-being.

#### 8.17.5 Vulnerable Adult Abuse

A Vulnerable Adult is defined as someone “who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation”.



Vulnerable Adult Abuse can take many forms including physical, sexual, psychological, financial/material, discriminatory, domestic abuse, and self-neglect.

#### 8.17.6 Sexual Abuse

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

#### 8.17.7 Child Sexual Abuse

Child sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activity that s/he does not fully comprehend, or give informed consent to, or for which s/he is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society.

It is evidenced by an activity between a child and an adult or another child who by age or development is in a relationship of responsibility, trust or power, the activity being intended to gratify or satisfy the needs of the other person. It may include, but is not limited to, the inducement or coercion of a child to engage in any unlawful sexual activity, the exploitative use of a child in prostitution or other lawful sexual practices or the exploitative use of pornographic performances and materials.<sup>6</sup>

#### 8.17.8 Grooming

Grooming is behavior that an offender uses to procure sexual activity from a child. It can include building trust with children and/or their caregivers to gain access to children to sexually abuse them.

#### 8.17.9 Online Grooming

Grooming may be in person as above, or online where the groomer sends electronic messages with the goal of engaging the child in sexual activity.

#### 8.17.10 Coercion

Coercion covers a whole spectrum of degrees of force. Apart from physical force, it may involve psychological intimidation, blackmail or other threats. For instance, threats of being dismissed from a job or of not obtaining a job that is sought. It may also occur when a person is unable to give consent. For example, while drunk, drugged, asleep or mentally incapable of understanding the situation.<sup>7</sup>

#### 8.17.11 Sexual Exploitation

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.<sup>8</sup>





### 8.17.12 Modern Slavery

Slavery is a situation where a person exercises (perceived) power of ownership over another person. Related terms include forced labor, which covers work or services that people are not doing voluntarily but under threat of punishment; human trafficking, which involves deceptive recruitment and coercion; and bonded labor, which is demanded in repayment of a debt or loan. Modern slavery encompasses a spectrum of labor exploitation, ranging from the mistreatment of vulnerable workers to human trafficking to child labor and forced sexual exploitation.<sup>9</sup>

### 8.17.13 Sexual Violence

Sexual violence is:

- Any sexual act or attempt to obtain a sexual act
- Unwanted sexual comments or advances or acts to traffic that are directed against a person's sexuality using coercion by anyone, regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including at home and at work.

Three types of sexual violence are commonly distinguished: sexual violence involving intercourse (i.e. rape), contact sexual violence (i.e. unwanted touching, but excluding intercourse) and noncontact sexual violence (i.e. threatened sexual violence, exhibitionism and verbal sexual harassment). While coerced sex may result in sexual gratification for the perpetrator, its underlying purpose is to express power and dominance over the other person.

### 8.17.14 Child Marriage

The custom of marrying young children, particularly girls, is a form of sexual violence as children are unable to give or withhold consent.

### 8.17.15 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes 'unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other conduct that creates a coercive, hostile, intimidating, or offensive work environment'. The harassment of a sexual nature may be directed to a person of the same or opposite sex.

The key elements are that the behavior is uninvited, unreciprocated, and unwelcome and causes the person involved to feel threatened, humiliated, or embarrassed. The behavior may also be determined to be sexual violence and harassment if:

- Submission to such conduct is explicitly or implicitly made a term or condition of employment.
- Submission to or rejection of this conduct is used as a basis for an employment decision affecting the staff.



- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of substantially interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.

#### 8.17.16 Communities

The communities that NCRO works with include, but isn't limited to, health service providers at facilities, outreach facilities, frontline health workers, any other service providers, women, men, girls, boys, people with special needs, vulnerable adults and marginalized groups.

#### 8.17.17 NCRO Staff

Refers to individuals who receive a regular salary for work in any part of NCRO Inc., including all Country Offices, Field Offices, Headquarters and any other location where NCRO operates.

#### 8.17.18 NCRO Associates

Refers to a range of paid and non-paid individuals who have committed to work with or support NCRO. It includes volunteers, interns, and consultants and contractors.

#### 8.17.19 NCRO Managers

Refers to NCRO staff who have responsibility for line managing or supervising the work of NCRO staff or NCRO associates.

#### 8.17.20 NCRO partners

Refers to staff and/or representatives of partner organizations and local governments when operating in partnership agreement with NCRO.

## 9. Policy Review

To meet with sector best practices, NCRO agrees to review this policy and the entire PSEA Framework every two years, as a minimum. It is the responsibility of the Chief of Governance and Operations to complete this review, in collaboration with any key internal stakeholders or external third-party providers.



## 10. Abbreviation

PSEA: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse

PSEAFP: Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Focal Point

NCRO: New Consultancy and Relief Organization

HQ: Head Quarter

IASC: Agency Standing Committee

ET: Executive Team