

How-to note

Measuring improvements in the way organisations prevent and respond to SEAH

Using indicators to track progress at an organisational and programme level

Purpose

Across the international aid sector, organisations are investing resources in preventing and responding to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH). However, there are large evidence gaps in relation to what works to ensure effective safeguarding and manage SEAH risk. The lack of a consistent approach to monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of prevention and response efforts is a key barrier to filling this evidence gap. For example, organisations are using different indicators¹ to track change and measure effectiveness.

This how-to note provides guidance to support civil society organisations (CSOs) and others working in the development and humanitarian sectors to monitor progress in relation to their safeguarding work. It is designed to help organisations track how effective their prevention and response mechanisms are;² prevent, mitigate and respond to risks; and strengthen their organisational approach to safeguard against SEAH, including building a

safeguarding culture.³ Monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) helps organisations assess how well they are doing in relation to the change they are seeking to affect, and to identify where future efforts are needed to improve safeguarding practice.

An indicator bank accompanies this how-to note, which includes a menu of indicators in an Excel spreadsheet. These are not exhaustive. Organisations can select relevant indicators from the bank to gather feedback on their internal safeguarding measures and those of their projects and programmes.

How this tool interacts with and complements international standards

A comprehensive mapping was conducted to inform the indicator bank and guidance note, which mapped existing Protection from SEAH (PSEAH) indices and checklists.

There are some distinct overlaps and differences between this indicator bank and the tools designed to support the

¹ An indicator is a piece of information that provides evidence of change (**INTRAC**).

² Please see the **RSH Safeguarding Essentials** pack for guidance on essential safeguarding measures.

³ This note is specifically tailored towards monitoring safeguarding against SEAH; however, the broad principles discussed in the document can also be applied to wider safeguarding (protection) issues.

implementation of international standards such as the **CHS alliance PSEAH index** and the **IASC Minimum Operating Standards PSEA**. These products focus on what organisations should have in place and what to monitor to ensure compliance with these international standards.

This tool, however, outlines a conceptual framework for how RSH believes organisational safeguarding culture change takes place⁴ and how to monitor progress towards achieving this. There are some indicators included that overlap with the international standards outlined above. While these track whether the policies, processes and procedures are in place, the focus is placed more so on presenting indicator options for tracking change in knowledge, attitudes/perceptions and behaviour related to safeguarding (of staff, volunteers, programme participants and community members).

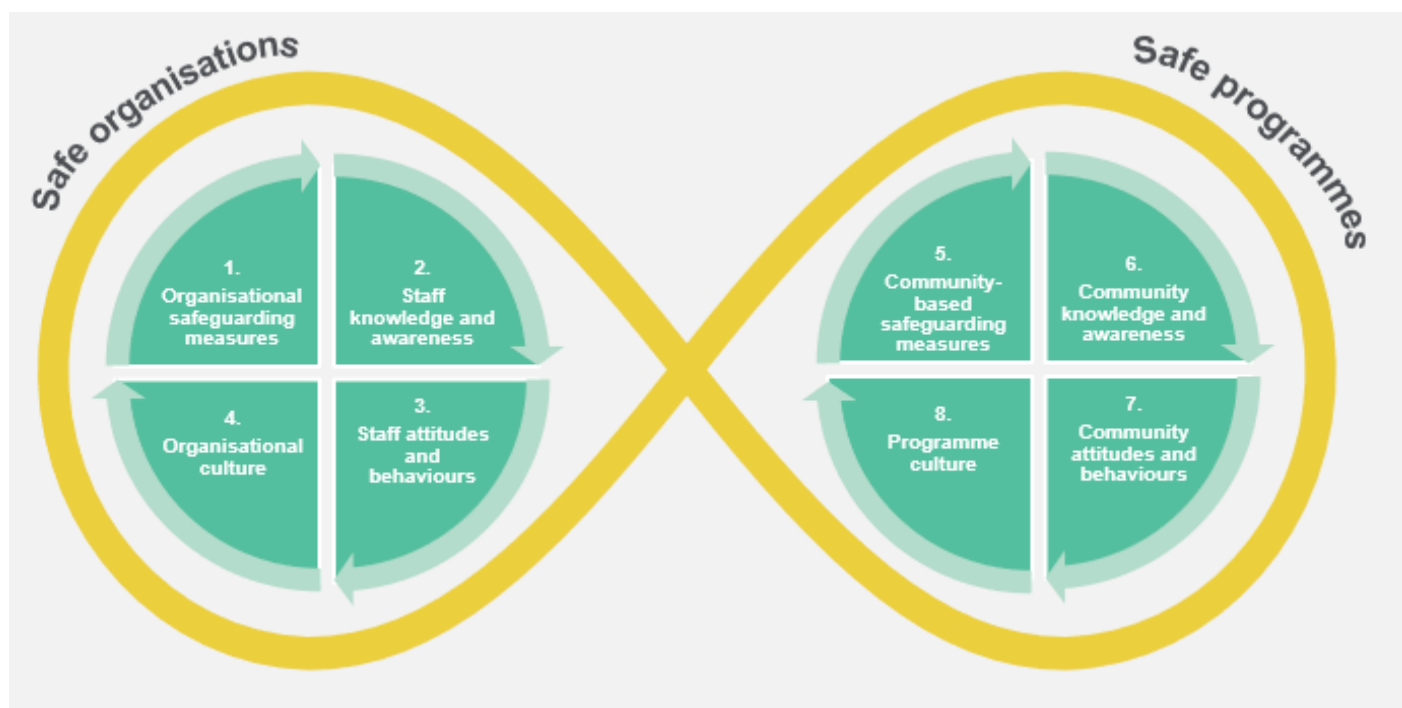
The intention of this tool is to support progress towards organisational safeguarding culture change for all impacted by SEAH (this could include staff, volunteers, programme participants and community members).

Prioritising safety

It is important to ensure that all MEL activities are safe, meaning that everyone involved is protected from harm either as a direct or indirect result of the activity. For information on how to ensure MEL is done safely, please refer to the following resources:

- [How to deliver safe MEL](#)
- [How to research SEAH safely](#)
- [How to consider language in SEAH-related research](#)

Figure 1. Domains of change for improving prevention and response to SEAH



⁴ Informed by the organisational culture change pilot that was carried out by the RSH Nigeria Hub. See Further resources at the end of the note.

A framework for change

The diagram above sets out the various domains in which change should take place as a result of safeguarding measures being introduced by an organisation.⁵ The diagram shows different domains for change, grouped in 2 circles which represent distinct journeys of change: those which relate to change at an organisational level, and those which relate to change at the community level as a result of safer programming. The 2 circles are interlinked and act to mutually reinforce each other.

The 2 circles of organisational change and community-level change sit side by side in the diagram, emphasising that internal change at the organisational level, and external change, with those an organisation engages with, are interlinked. Monitoring change in internal and external spheres can inform what works in what circumstance to effect change.

Safe organisations

Four domains are included in the organisational level change circle.

Domain 1: Organisational safeguarding measures

This domain focuses on whether safeguarding measures are in place and are effective, whether they have been informed by an understanding of SEAH risks and the local context, and whether clear roles and responsibilities for safeguarding have been established within the organisation. Please see the [**RSH Safeguarding Journey**](#) and

various international standards⁶ for a comprehensive outline of the measures that should be in place.

Domain 2: Staff knowledge and awareness

This domain focuses on staff awareness and understanding of the organisation's SEAH safeguarding values, accountability structure, prevention and response measures, definitions and any related topics covered in SEAH training, for example, gender norms, power dynamics, values, unacceptable behaviour. For staff in roles with safeguarding responsibilities, this would assess whether they feel they have the knowledge and skills they need in relation to the organisation's SEAH framework.

Domain 3: Staff attitudes and behaviours

This domain focuses on the attitudes, perceptions and behaviour of individual staff and volunteers as it relates to safeguarding. This might include, for example, individuals' perception of safety, attitudes towards reporting, perceptions of investigation mechanisms, likelihood to report, whether staff have adapted existing work processes and practices to integrate safeguarding measures etc.

Domain 4: Organisational culture

This domain focuses on collective behaviour and culture within an organisation, paying particular attention to whether leadership behaviours and

⁵ The framework was inspired by the [**Gender at Work framework**](#).

⁶ These are linked in the Further resources at the end of the note.

organisational structures have contributed to a culture of safety, transparency and trust that addresses the root causes of SEAH. This might focus on change in relation to the culture of trust across the organisation, the likelihood of staff to “speak up”, the level of support received by survivors and the level of diversity within leadership.

Safe programmes

A further 4 domains are included under the safe programmes circle for community-level change.

Domain 5: Community-based measures

This domain considers whether safeguarding measures at programmatic level are in place, whether they have been adapted to suit the programme and context, and whether relevant community members have participated in their development and delivery. This includes community-based reporting mechanisms, service mappings, referral pathways and programme design. For the purposes of measuring this change, indicators that are focused on those who are participating in a programme make reference to programme participants. Where the indicators focus on the wider community, reference is made to community members.

Domain 6: Community knowledge and awareness

This domain looks at whether community members have received and understood information on safeguarding, if they have increased knowledge and awareness of what constitutes SEAH and know their

rights, how to use reporting mechanisms and where to go to access support services.

Domain 7: Community attitudes and perceptions

This domain monitors change in attitudes, perceptions of community members and programme participants as it relates to safeguarding. This might include their perceptions of safety, their attitudes towards SEAH, their perceptions of reporting mechanisms, their likelihood to report, perceptions towards staff behaviour and perceptions that the systems in place reflect their needs and local context.

Domain 8: Safe programme culture

This domain focuses on understanding whether staff behaviour and programme leadership have established a culture of trust which fosters inclusion, embrace diversity and dismantle negative power relations between the organisation and the community. This might include monitoring change in community trust in safeguarding mechanisms and programme staff, and community engagement in programme design.

How to use the indicator bank

The indicator bank, which accompanies this note, has been developed in line with the framework outlined above. The bank provides a range of indicators for each of the **8 domains of change** in the framework.

It suggests indicators that will capture key changes within an organisation, project or

programme, focusing on the following areas of work:

- Policies, procedure and codes of conduct
- Training and awareness raising
- Reporting mechanisms
- Investigations and response
- Governance and accountability

For each of these areas of work, the bank provides example indicators in relation to each domain of change included in the framework.

In order to help you select indicators, the bank has been designed so you can cluster the indicators in different ways. For example, you could sort the indicator bank to look at:

- All indicators related to a particular **area of work**, for example, “policies and codes of conduct” (sorting by “column A”). This would show you all of the indicators that relate to this area of work, across all of the domains of change included in the framework. You would do this if you wanted to look at how your organisation’s efforts in relation to a particular aspect of safeguarding were influencing change.
- All indicators related to a certain **domain of change**, for example, “organisational culture” (sorting by “column B”). This would show you all the indicators that relate to this domain of change, across all of the areas of work listed above. You would do this if you wanted to look at how a range of safeguarding measures being implemented by your organisation were influencing a particular type of change.

Selecting and tailoring indicators

The indicator bank does not provide an exhaustive list of everything you could measure in relation to prevention of and response to SEAH. The bank is intended to be used like a “menu” where you can select the most relevant indicators that will allow your organisation to track progress or effectiveness of your safeguarding systems. You can choose indicators to include in project or programme logframes, as well as for your organisation’s internal monitoring frameworks.

Although the indicators have been listed against certain areas of work and domains of change, the indicators can be used in a way that suits your organisation’s approach to safeguarding. In reality, most change will happen because of a combination of efforts across a number of areas of work. For example, although the indicator on “staff commitment to play a role in safeguarding” is placed in the bank under “training and awareness raising”, your organisation may have placed an emphasis on senior leadership encouraging staff to play an active role. You may therefore want to use that indicator to track the effectiveness of messaging by senior managers, rather than tracking the effectiveness of training.

Once you have selected the indicators you want to use, you may need to tailor them, so they are relevant to the context in which you are working, the specific ambitions of a particular project or programme, or your organisation’s approach to safeguarding. For example, you might want to adapt an indicator on staff knowledge so that it

focuses on specific types of knowledge you want staff to have.

Here are some questions to ask yourself when considering which indicators to use

- What type of change can you realistically expect to see as a result of the safeguarding measures your organisation has introduced? Will the indicator help you capture this change?
- What evidence will you need to collect in order to measure progress against the indicator? What resources are needed and is it feasible to collect the data needed?
- Which data should be collected for the indicators selected, qualitative or quantitative or a mix?⁷
- Could we use participatory action research tools to collect this data?
- By using the indicator, will you get the information you need to identify where improvements are needed? Will it help others hold the organisation to account for commitments made?
- Who does and does not need to have access to the results? And how will you ensure privacy?
- What factors for disaggregation are needed? Is it safe to disaggregate data?⁸
- What are the risks of collecting data against this indicator and can they be mitigated to ensure safety? What are the possible sensitivities of collecting certain data and can you mitigate risk?

- How frequently will these indicators be monitored and what targets will be set? Is it possible to collect baseline data?

It is important to keep in mind that evidence of positive change in relation to the indicators does not mean that everyone in the organisation and/or those who the organisation works with (programme participants or community) are safe from SEAH.

Knowing when specialist expertise is needed

The indicator bank does not include any indicators which seek to track change in terms of actual prevalence or experiences of SEAH. Collecting this data is resource-intensive, time-consuming, but more than anything else, requires a specialist skill set to do safely and ethically. Without the right expertise, collecting data on experiences of violence and harassment may cause further harm to survivors. None of the example indicators in the bank require you to collect this type of data. For guidance on this, please refer to the [**CHS Alliance Harmonised Reporting**](#).

Understanding timeframes for change

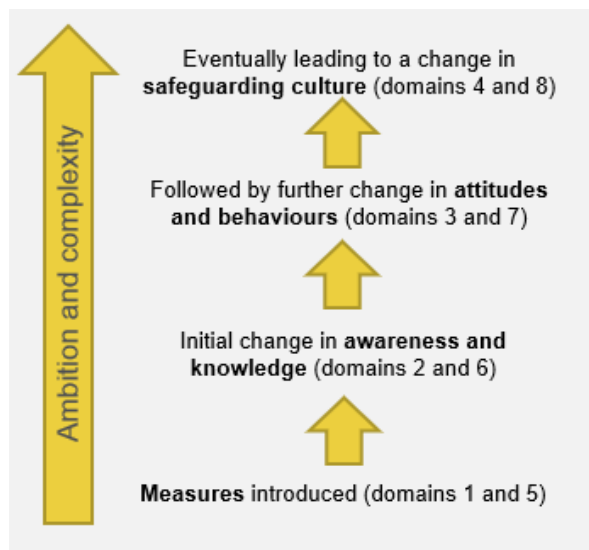
Safeguarding against SEAH is an ongoing journey rather than a one-off set of activities, and as a result different types of change will happen at different stages.

⁷ Quantitative indicators are reported as numbers, such as units, prices, proportions, rates of change and ratios. Qualitative indicators are reported as words, in statements, paragraphs, case studies and reports.

⁸ See page 8 for more information on what safe disaggregation means.

There are different levels of change, which include the things we do (for example, developing safeguarding policies, setting up a reporting mechanisms) to the ultimate change we want to achieve (for example, staff behaviour, organisational culture). This is shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Change diagram



When selecting indicators to monitor, you need to be mindful of where your organisation is on its journey and what change you might expect to see by when.

You will then want to reflect these timescales in the targets you develop against your selected indicators.

Example

If safeguarding measures have only recently been introduced by your organisation, you may want to know quite soon whether staff and programme participants are aware of these measures, and to track this at regular intervals. In contrast it may be quite some time before the combined effects of these measures lead to any detectable change in organisational or programme culture. In this case, it is best to hold off on collecting data until you think it is realistic to expect that this type of change could have happened.

Selecting quantitative or qualitative data

The example indicators can be reported on using either quantitative or qualitative data or a mixture of both. To determine whether quantitative or qualitative measurement is more appropriate, you will need to consider:

- the resources and skills you have available,
- the size of your organisation,
- the nature of your projects or programmes and
- the types of communities you work with.

The indicator "staff knowledge of reporting mechanisms" could be measured either quantitatively (through an annual staff survey) and/or qualitatively (through semi-structured interviews with staff). In a larger organisation where an annual staff survey is already used, quantitative measurement may be more appropriate. However, in a small organisation, quantitative data collection may not be appropriate, and the indicator may be better measured using qualitative data from individual interviews or focus group discussions with staff.

Certain types of data collection and analytical methods may be too difficult or too expensive for your organisation to use. Wherever possible, it is important to identify opportunities to expand or build on existing data-collection tools your organisation is already using. For example, you may be able to add additional questions to an existing survey you plan to conduct to give you the extra information you need.

Considerations for disaggregation

The example indicators presented in the bank tend to refer generally to “staff”, “programme participants” or “communities”. These generic terms represent a range of different people. When you select the indicators, you may want to add more specific information. For example:

- **Where** change will take place – rather than referring to “programme participants” you may want to refer to “members of X community”. This will need to be informed by who your project or programme works with or impacts on.
- **Who** you expect will demonstrate a particular change or **who** a change affects. Instead of “staff”, you may want to say “staff across grades and departments” or “staff, volunteers and trustees”. Similarly, instead of “programme participants” you may want to say “adults and children in the community” or “women, men, boys, girls”.

The exact wording you choose will depend on the types of change you expect to see, and the diversity of people your organisation works or comes into contact with.

Adding these details to the indicators will help you disaggregate the data. Disaggregating shows change across different groups and provides more nuance on how future safeguarding measures can be adapted or targeted. It may be the case that across the organisation most staff are knowledgeable about reporting mechanisms, but there remains a certain

confusion on how to report particular concerns in certain departments or in certain job roles. Similarly, you may find that some community members who are programme participants feel safe engaging with, or reporting concerns to, your organisation, but other community members who do not participate in your programmes do not.

Disaggregating data can present a challenge around being able to identify individuals and individual characteristics, opinions and perceptions. This is particularly true for small CSOs. The possibility of collecting identifiable data could place some individuals at particular risk, if, for example:

- An individual shares sensitive information about an incident and that information gets to the wrong people.
- An individual shares information about, for example, their sexual identity in countries where there are criminal or legal implications.

Therefore, it is important to follow guidance on how to do this safely and ensure that a thorough risk assessment is conducted, please see the [**RSH how-to note on intersectionality and safeguarding**](#).

Disaggregation criteria

Below we have listed some basic characteristics of disaggregation, however, there are several more identity characteristics that could be used for disaggregation. Selection of these should be informed by context and risk assessment and could draw from the root causes and risks of SEAH – see the [**RSH infographic on root causes**](#).

- **Sex** – Women and girls are often at greater risk of SEAH than are men and

boys. Disaggregating by sex (woman, man, other) will demonstrate differences in perceived safety, attitudes towards SEAH and behaviour.

- **Age** – Children and the elderly tend to be at greater risk of SEAH, so when interacting with children and adults in the community, it is particularly important to understand experience by age.
- **Disability status** – Persons with disabilities are often at greater risk of experiencing SEAH or have less access to certain reporting mechanisms.
- **Other identities** – People with different, intersecting, identities can both experience SEAH differently and will feel differently about reporting concerns. For example, staff identifying as a minority ethnicity in an organisation may be at greater risk of SEAH and less confident to report it.⁹
- **Grade/role** – understanding of SEAH and safeguarding may vary across junior and senior staff and often confidence to report does too.
- **Geography/location** – help organisations to identify offices where greater safeguarding support may be needed or to help programmes to determine locations where SEAH may be a particular risk.

This is not an exhaustive list, and dependent on the way your organisation works or whom your programmes impact on you will need to select other relevant criteria.

How the data will be used

When collecting data, you need to be clear on:

- The purpose of collecting this data – how will the data be used?
- Who the data is for, who is your intended audience?

This will inform your selection of indicators and who your audience is. It will also help you determine whether or not to collect specific data. If there is no clear purpose for collecting that data, it is best not to do it.

When selecting who should have access to the results of the analysis, you should consider:

- **Whose work will this impact?** For example, results about the effectiveness of training will be particularly useful to those developing or designing training.
- **Who are the decision makers?** For example, senior leadership teams will likely want to see all analysis.
- **Who needs to be included in feedback loops for accountability?** It is good practice to share results and actions with the staff and community members who participated in the data collection, where safe.

Remember, any results that you share should not include any information that would identify a staff, programme participant or community member. It should be anonymous, please see the below box on data privacy.

⁹ When selecting identity characteristics for data collection, it is important that a risk assessment be conducted to ensure no harm comes to participants as a result of the data collection. Please consult the [RSH note on intersectionality](#).

Data privacy and security

You must consider data privacy and confidentiality when collecting data even more so when the data is sensitive. For any data collection, there are data privacy considerations in line with national and international laws and regulations. For data collection of personal or sensitive data, there are additional considerations. Please consult the links below to ensure that you are complying with national and international data protection laws and regulations:

[How to deliver safe MEL for](#)

[**The Data Protection Act 2018**](#)

Ready, set, go

We hope this guidance note has provided you with the information you need to get started on your journey to measure improvements in how your organisation prevents and responds to SEAH, in order to ensure everyone coming into contact with your organisation and programmes is safe from harm.

The process of monitoring your safeguarding efforts will:

- Support efforts to keep staff and communities safe from SEAH
- Contribute to global evidence of what works to prevent SEAH

Thank you for starting this journey with us if you want to share:

- How you are using this tool
- Feedback on the tool
- Any questions you might have

Please get in touch with RSH through [**info@rshub.org.uk**](mailto:info@rshub.org.uk)

Further resources

Resource	Type	Description
<u>RSH Safe MEL Toolkit</u>	Resource pack	These resources are designed to support MEL practitioners and staff conducting MEL activities to do so safely.
<u>RSH Safeguarding Matters Module 5</u>	E-learning	The module covers how: • Safeguarding should be considered and built into MEL activities throughout the programme cycle • MEL can support the safeguarding journey of an organisation or programme
<u>RSH How to integrate safeguarding into proposal development</u>	Guidance	This how-to note, developed by the RSH Nigeria Hub, explains how safeguarding can be included in proposal development process. In some cases, you might need to select indicators at proposal stage, take a look at this note to understand how.
<u>CHS Alliance PSEAH Index</u>	Index/ checklist	The CHS Alliance published an updated PSEAH Index as part of its verification tools, to give organisations verifying their performance against the CHS the ability to determine whether they have the policies and practices in place to protect people in vulnerable situations. The index clearly states the safeguarding requirements for the relevant indicators of the CHS Verification Framework.
<u>CHS Alliance PSEAH Handbook</u>	Guidance	The purpose of this handbook is to demonstrate how aid workers and organisations can implement practical measures to prevent SEAH, in line with the Core Humanitarian Standard PSEAH Index. The handbook takes the key areas from the PSEAH Index and provides examples of how this can look in practice. It also provides a real-life case study for each of the areas covered, so you can learn from the work of other non-governmental organisations.
<u>RSH Nigeria: Risk Assessment Tool</u>	Tool	Risk assessment and management is not captured in this note, risks can be assessment monitored using a risk assessment such as this tool.

<u>Creating a survey on internal staff reporting mechanisms</u>	Tool and guidance	This tool, created by CSOs in Nigeria in collaboration with RSH, provides guidance and survey questions that will help organisations to monitor internal reporting mechanisms.
<u>Empowered Aid Resources</u>	Tool	Empowered Aid supported the creation or adaptation of aid delivery models that actively work to reduce power disparities and give women and girls a sustained voice in how aid is delivered. It utilised participatory action research, a method that proactively acknowledges and addresses power imbalances between the affected population & researchers/ humanitarians. The resources produced by empowered aid demonstrate useful examples of field-tested participatory tools for researching SEAH and risks.
<u>IASC PSEA Minimum Operating Standards</u>	International standards	This document sets out the Minimum Operating Standards for PSEA developed by the IASC. The document contains the standards and indicators for each standard, which help organisations determine whether their policies, procedures and practices are reaching minimum standards.
<u>UN Implementing Partner PSEA Common Assessment</u>	Assessment	The UN IP Protocol outlines requirements for the UN and its implementing partners to ensure adequate safeguards and appropriate actions related to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA). This assessment is intended to give UN entities the necessary assurance of partners' organisational capacities on Protection from SEA (PSEA), determine monitoring and support activities, and serve as a baseline for tracking progress, in line with the minimum standards of the UN IP Protocol.
<u>IASC PSEA Core Indicators</u>	Guidance and indicators	The IASC PSEA Core Indicators assist countries to track and measure progress against the required minimum PSEA actions, as reflected in the UNCT/HCT PSEA Action Plan Template. The Guidance Note supports Resident Coordinators/Humanitarian Coordinators (RC/HCs), United Nations Country Teams (UNCTs), and Humanitarian Country Teams (HCTs), inter-agency PSEA Coordinators and networks to plan, monitor and report on progress using a standard set of core indicators.
<u>KoGe Community of Cooperation</u>	Checklist/ index	This checklist allows you to see which measures are important to prevent and fight SEAH. By filling in the list, you can check how far advanced you are in your prevention of SEAH. By filling in the questionnaire on a regular basis, it also helps you to measure your progress over time.

<u>PSEAH Checklist</u>		
<u>FCDO Due Diligence: Safeguarding</u>	Guidance	The Enhanced Due Diligence provides FCDO partners with details of the new safeguarding standards the Secretary of State for International Development. The standards aim to assess an organisation's ability to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults they work with, as well as their own staff and volunteers, from SEAH.
<u>RSH How-to note: Measuring a culture of safeguarding within organisations</u>	Guidance	The tool is to be used by organisations to measure and monitor the changes that take place within them. The tool is designed to help organisations understand what needs to be measured, what they might want to achieve, and how to assess whether it is being achieved.
<u>Bitesize: Supporting organisational culture change</u>	Guidance	This how-to note showcases the methodology and approach RSH applied to CSOs through its mentorship project for organisations and their leaders to understand what sort of organisational culture they have, what role their organisational values play in determining that culture, what types of leadership behaviours they demonstrate, and what organisational behaviours exist which may help or hinder the development of a safeguarding culture.
<u>CHS Alliance SEAH Harmonised Reporting</u>	Guidance	The CHS Alliance and the Steering Committee for Humanitarian Response (SCHR), with funding from the Foreign Commonwealth Development Office (FCDO), have joined forces to increase transparency and reduce under-reporting on SEAH in the aid sector through the development of a harmonised framework for SEAH data collection and reporting. This system will support trend analyses and effective learning from aggregated data, which will inform policies and strategies aimed at improving survivor's outcomes and prevention interventions.
<u>Bond Safeguarding Tool</u>	Tool	This is a discussion-based tool to support leaders of organisations to understand what a positive safeguarding culture looks like. It will help leaders to assess their organisational culture in relation to safeguarding and develop clear actions to help prevent all types of harm, including SEAH.