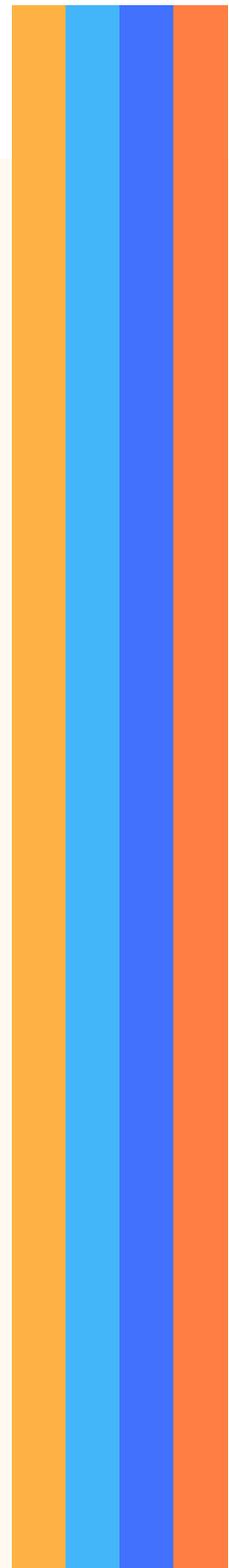


Handbook on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Prevention (SEAH):

A Practical Guide for Environmental
Sector Stakeholders in Maldives



Ocean Country Partnership Programme

Handbook on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Prevention (SEAH): A Practical Guide for Environmental Sector Stake holders in Maldives

J.E.A. 2025. Handbook on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Prevention (SEAH): A Practical Guide for Environmental Sector Stakeholders in Maldives. OCPP Project Report, 85 pp.

Author(s): JEA Consulting and Communications

Date: February 2026

For further information please contact:

Joint Nature Conservation Committee
Quay House
2 East Station Road
Fletton Quays
Peterborough
PE2 8YY

<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ocean-country-partnership-programme/>
Communications@jncc.gov.uk

Recommended citation:

Funding Acknowledgement: This project was funded with UK International Development from the UK Government.

Evidence Quality Assurance: This report is compliant with JNCC's Evidence Quality Assurance Policy <https://jncc.gov.uk/about-jncc/corporate-information/evidence-quality-assurance/>

Ocean Country Partnership Programme: The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) is a bilateral technical assistance and capacity building programme that provides tailored support to countries to manage the marine environment more sustainably, including by strengthening marine science expertise, developing science-based policy and management tools and creating educational resources for coastal communities. The OCP delivers work under three thematic areas: biodiversity, marine pollution, and sustainable seafood.

Open Government Licence: This information is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/. Note that some images may not be Crown Copyright; please check sources for conditions of re-use.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Challenge

Environmental initiatives in the Maldives face risks of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) due to remote work locations, power imbalances, and limited oversight mechanisms. Without proper safeguarding measures, these risks undermine both project effectiveness and stakeholder safety.

The Solution

This handbook provides a practical framework for preventing and responding to SEAH in environmental work, helping organisations move from basic awareness to comprehensive protection systems tailored to the Maldives context.



What's Inside

- Context and principles explaining why SEAH prevention matters and core safeguarding frameworks
- Assessment tools to evaluate organisational readiness and compliance levels
- Risk identification guidance covering environmental work-specific vulnerabilities and warning signs
- Reporting and response procedures including survivor-centred approaches and referral pathways
- Monitoring frameworks for continuous improvement and accountability
- Practical tools accessible via QR codes, adaptable to different organisational contexts

Key Features

All content is specifically designed for environmental work in the Maldives, with examples from marine conservation, waste management, climate adaptation, and other environmental initiatives. The handbook addresses unique challenges including remote island locations, digital safeguarding risks, and protection of young people involved in environmental programmes.

Target Impact

Organisations will develop capacity to design environmental initiatives that effectively prevent SEAH whilst ensuring appropriate response when incidents occur. This creates safer working environments that strengthen both protection outcomes and environmental effectiveness, ensuring no one is harmed in the pursuit of environmental goals.



FOREWORD



The Maldives faces unprecedented environmental pressures that demand urgent, collaborative action across all sectors of society. Our environmental initiatives bring together government officials, project staff, researchers, community members, and international partners in close working relationships that span our dispersed geography. These collaborations are essential for addressing challenges from climate change adaptation to waste management, from marine conservation to renewable energy development.

However, the nature of environmental work, often conducted in remote locations with complex power dynamics and diverse stakeholder groups, can create vulnerabilities that require proactive safeguarding measures. This handbook provides the practical guidance our environmental sector needs to prevent sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment whilst building the trust and participation necessary for effective environmental management.

The Government of the Maldives is committed to both environmental protection and human rights. Through our national legislation and international commitments, we have established clear standards that protect all individuals from harm. This handbook translates those commitments into practical action for environmental practitioners, ensuring that our environmental initiatives serve as models of respect, safety, and inclusion.

I commend the UK Government and the Ocean Country Partnership Programme for supporting this initiative, and all partners involved in developing this resource. The tools and frameworks in this handbook will strengthen your capacity to create safe working environments whilst advancing the environmental objectives that are essential for our people's future.

Environmental protection and respect for human rights and dignity must go hand in hand. This handbook provides practical guidance on how to achieve this.

Thoriq Ibrahim
Minister of Tourism and Environment



CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION	01
1.1 About this handbook	01
1.2 Key objectives	02
1.3 Target audience	02
1.4 How to use this handbook	03
1.5 Acknowledgements	03
<hr/>	
2. UNDERSTANDING SEAH: CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES	04
2.1 What is SEAH?	04
2.2 Core principles	05
<hr/>	
3. WHY SEAH PREVENTION MATTERS	08
3.1 Everyone's responsibility	08
3.2 Risks in environmental work in the Maldives	08
3.3 Legal requirements and international commitments	09
<hr/>	
4. YOUR ORGANISATION'S READINESS	11
4.1 Basic, enhanced, or advanced - where are you?	11
4.2 Next steps to improve	15
<hr/>	
5. KNOW YOUR RISKS	16
5.1 Warning signs to watch for	16
5.2 Your role in prevention	19
<hr/>	
6. HOW TO REPORT AND GET HELP	21
6.1 Ways to report and get support	21
6.2 What to expect when you report	23



7. SURVIVOR-CENTRED RESPONSE	26
7.1 Fundamental survivor rights	26
7.2 Immediate response and support	27
7.3 Ongoing care and referrals	28
<hr/>	
8. KEEPING YOUR SYSTEMS STRONG	30
8.1 Monitoring and Learning	30
8.2 Making Improvements	30
<hr/>	
9. REFERENCES	32
<hr/>	
10. GLOSSARY OF TERMS	35
<hr/>	

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About this handbook

This handbook provides the practical guidance needed to move from recognising the importance of SEAH prevention to effectively implementing safeguarding systems that protect everyone involved in, and affected by environmental initiatives. It offers tools and frameworks specifically adapted to the unique geographic, cultural, and institutional realities of the Maldives environment sector.

This handbook covers organisational prevention and response systems. It does not replace legal obligations to report criminal conduct to authorities or seek emergency medical care.

The Maldives environment sector operates within unique contexts that create specific SEAH risks requiring targeted prevention strategies. Environmental work often involves fieldwork in remote island locations, power dynamics between external staff and local communities, extended periods in isolated settings, and close collaboration across different sectors. These factors, combined with the geographic isolation of atoll communities and limited recourse mechanisms, can create vulnerabilities that require proactive safeguarding measures.

Environmental initiatives bring together people with different levels of power, resources, and vulnerability. Project staff, community members, researchers, government officials,

and partner organisations all interact in ways that can either create safe, respectful environments or inadvertently enable exploitation and harm. Without active commitment to SEAH prevention, these power differences can create opportunities for inappropriate behaviour whilst barriers to reporting can prevent early intervention.

SEAH prevention is not just a moral imperative, or just a legal requirement—it is essential for effective environmental work. Incidents of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment undermine project objectives by reducing community trust and participation, creating hostile work environments, diverting resources from environmental outcomes to crisis management, and damaging relationships with key stakeholders and partners.

Environmental work that prioritises SEAH prevention can: International Development (Gender Equality) Act, 2014; Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office [FCDO], 2025; United Nations, 2019; United Nations, 2015).

- Create safe environments where all stakeholders can participate fully without fear
- Build stronger community partnerships based on trust and respect
- Harness diverse perspectives and knowledge through inclusive participation
- Ensure environmental gains benefit all community members equitably
- Support long-term sustainability



through social cohesion and institutional credibility

- Contribute to broader efforts to address gender-based violence and promote human rights

This handbook provides the practical guidance needed to move from recognising the importance of SEAH prevention to effectively implementing safeguarding systems that protect everyone involved in, and affected by environmental initiatives. It offers tools and frameworks specifically adapted to the unique geographic, cultural, and institutional realities of the Maldives environment sector.



This handbook covers organisational prevention and response systems. It does not replace legal obligations to report criminal conduct to authorities or seek emergency medical care.

1.2 Key Objectives

Build Safeguarding Capacity: Develop comprehensive understanding of SEAH prevention principles, risk identification, and response procedures relevant to environmental work in the Maldives context.

Provide Practical Implementation

Tools: Offer accessible, user-friendly tools and templates that can be immediately applied to environmental initiatives across different scales, sectors, and compliance levels.

Address Maldivian Context: Provide context-specific guidance tailored to the unique environmental, cultural, and institutional realities of working across the dispersed geography and small island communities of the Maldives.

1.3 Target Audience

Primary Users:

- Environmental project managers and programme officers
- Government officials in environmental ministries and agencies
- NGO and civil society organisation staff working on environmental initiatives
- Designated safeguarding focal points and HR personnel
- Field researchers and technical specialists

Secondary Users:

- Community members participating in environmental projects
- Local council members and Women's Development Committee representatives
- Partner organisations and contractors
- Policy makers and academic institutions working in environmental fields
- Community members affected by environmental initiatives
- Community leaders, elders, and informal networks
- Beneficiaries of environmental programmes and their families



While this handbook focuses specifically on environmental sector contexts in the Maldives, the principles, tools, and frameworks can be adapted for use across other development sectors including health, education, tourism, and community development programmes.



1.4 How to use this handbook

This handbook is designed as a practical tool for environmental practitioners to develop their safeguarding capacity and implement effective SEAH prevention systems. Each chapter includes:

- Key concepts for understanding SEAH prevention in environmental contexts
- Practical examples from Maldivian environmental work settings
- Step-by-step guidance for implementing safeguarding measures

The handbook follows a logical progression from understanding concepts through practical implementation. Chapters build upon each other to create comprehensive understanding, but can also be used individually to focus on specific aspects of SEAH prevention as needed.

1.4.1 How to Access and Use the Tools in This Handbook

Throughout this handbook, you'll see references to practical tools that support SEAH Compliance. All tools are provided in the separate attached Tools document.

How the tools work:

- All tools and frameworks are provided in the separate PDF document attached to this handbook
- Use as reference guides to understand good practices, or
- Use as working templates by filling out tables and frameworks directly
- Adapt to your context - all are examples and can be modified for your specific situation

Choose the approach that best fits your needs and organisational context. All tools are designed to be practical and immediately applicable to environmental work in the Maldives.

1.5 Acknowledgements

This handbook was developed through the Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism and Environment (MoTE), Republic of Maldives. We are grateful for the leadership and guidance provided by both institutions throughout the development process.

We extend our sincere appreciation to the diverse stakeholders who contributed their time, expertise, and insights during the handbook's development, including government officials, civil society organisations, environmental and development practitioners throughout the process. Their participation and feedback were essential in ensuring this resource reflects the realities and needs of environmental work in the Maldives.

Special thanks to all who shared their experiences and approaches to strengthening safeguarding in environmental initiatives, helping to ground this handbook in practical, locally relevant guidance.

The development of this handbook was made possible through funding from UK International Development, and we acknowledge the ongoing support of the OCP team.

2. UNDERSTANDING SEAH: CONCEPTS AND PRINCIPLES

2.1 What is SEAH?

SEAH stands for Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment. Understanding what these terms mean helps you recognise inappropriate behaviour and know when to take action (United Nations, 2003; United Nations, 2019; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2019).

Sexual Exploitation

Using a position of power or trust to get sexual favours from someone. This includes using project benefits or opportunities to exploit vulnerable people.

Sexual Abuse

Any unwanted sexual contact or activity, including when someone cannot give proper consent due to age, disability, or dependency.

Sexual Harassment

Unwelcome sexual behaviour that makes someone uncomfortable or afraid, including sexual comments, inappropriate touching, or creating hostile environments.

Examples in environmental work

- A project manager suggesting that community participation in environmental activities depends on personal relationships
- Field researchers making unwelcome comments about community members' appearance or personal lives
- Senior staff creating hostile work environments through sexual jokes or inappropriate touching
- Using project resources or positions to pressure individuals into sexual relationships
- Colleagues pressuring team members to participate in social activities that make them uncomfortable



PRACTITIONER TIP

When explaining SEAH to your team or community, use specific examples from environmental work rather than abstract definitions. People understand better when they can see how these behaviours might actually happen in their workplace.



2.2 Core principles

Six core principles guide all SEAH prevention and response work. Understanding and applying these principles helps create safe environments for everyone involved in environmental projects (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2013, 2019, 2022; United Nations, 2025).

Zero tolerance

No level of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment is acceptable under any circumstances. This means taking all reports seriously, having clear consequences for harmful behaviour, and creating environments where SEAH cannot happen.

Everyone's responsibility

SEAH prevention is not just the job of managers or HR. Every staff member, partner, and participant has a role in keeping people safe. This includes understanding policies, recognising warning signs, and taking action when concerns arise.

Confidentiality

Information about SEAH incidents is shared only with those who need to know to ensure safety and appropriate response. This protects survivors' privacy whilst allowing organisations to take necessary action.

Non-retaliation

People who report SEAH concerns in good faith are protected from negative consequences like losing their job, being excluded from activities, or facing harassment. This protection encourages people to speak up.

Safety

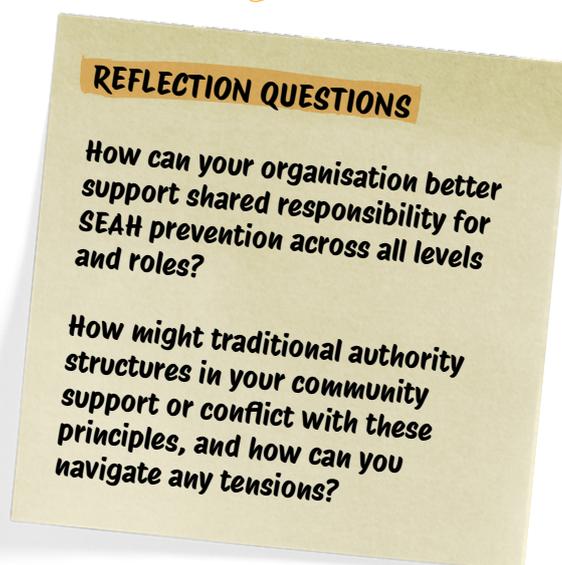
Survivor safety and wellbeing comes first, above project timelines, organisational reputation, or administrative convenience. All decisions must prioritise protecting people from further harm.

Accountability

Individuals and organisations must take responsibility for SEAH prevention and response. This includes having clear policies, training staff, investigating incidents properly, and making improvements when needed.

For detailed guidance

For comprehensive information on applying these principles in practice, see the [OCPP GESI & SEAH Safeguards Assessment \(2025\)](#).



For guidance on applying accountability principles in practice

Tool 6: SEAH Accountability Levels Framework



FROM UNDERSTANDING TO ACTION

Chapters 1-3 gave you the foundation - why SEAH prevention matters and key concepts. Now we move to the practical steps.

The next chapters show you how to actually implement SEAH prevention:

- **Chapter 4:** Assess your organisation's current readiness
- **Chapter 5:** Identify and prevent risks in your work
- **Chapters 6-7:** Handle reporting and support survivors
- **Chapter 8:** Keep improving your systems

Let's start by understanding where your organisation stands now...

3. WHY SEAH PREVENTION MATTERS

3.1 Everyone's responsibility

SEAH prevention is not just the job of managers or designated safeguarding officers. Every person working in environmental projects across the Maldives has a role in creating safe environments where everyone can participate without fear (JEA Consulting, 2025; CARE International, 2020).

Why everyone needs to be involved

Environmental work in the Maldives often involves working in remote island locations with small teams, close collaboration between staff and communities, and complex social dynamics. These include power imbalances between project staff and communities, but also peer-to-peer risks within teams, gender-based vulnerabilities, and situations where socio-cultural norms may prevent people from speaking up. These conditions mean that problems can develop quickly if people aren't watching out for each other.

When everyone takes responsibility for preventing SEAH, we create stronger protection for vulnerable people. No single person can watch everything or be everywhere, but when the whole team is committed to safety, harmful behaviour becomes much harder to hide.

Your role in prevention

Everyone working in environmental projects should:

- Know your organisation's SEAH policies and how to report concerns
- Recognise warning signs of inappropriate behaviour
- Treat all colleagues and community members with respect
- Support people who want to report problems
- Take appropriate action when you witness concerning behaviour

When everyone understands and fulfils these responsibilities, environmental projects become places where all participants can contribute safely and effectively to environmental management goals.

3.2 Risks in environmental work in the Maldives

Environmental work in the Maldives creates specific SEAH risks that you need to know about.

Where risks happen

Remote islands: Working on isolated islands with limited supervision and restricted access to support services can create opportunities for inappropriate behaviour to occur and go unaddressed.

Boats and field sites: Working closely together in small spaces, sometimes overnight, can lead to boundary problems.

Community engagement: Power



differences between project staff and communities, economic dependency, and cultural barriers to discussing SEAH can create exploitation risks.

Digital environments: Environmental projects are heavily dependent on online and digital technology, and this can create new opportunities for inappropriate behaviour.

Who faces higher risks

Some people are more vulnerable because of power imbalances, dependency relationships, or social barriers:

- Women and girls due to traditional gender roles and economic dependency
- Young people due to power imbalances with adult staff and authority figures
- Persons with disabilities who may face isolation and dependency
- Community members who rely on project opportunities for their livelihoods
- Migrant workers with limited legal protections and language barriers

For comprehensive information on SEAH risks and vulnerabilities in the Maldives environment sector, see the [OCPP Maldives GESI and SEAH Status Report \(2025\)](#). 

Environmental work should be safe for everyone. Knowing these risks helps you prevent problems before they start.

3.3 Legal requirements and international commitments

The Maldives has established legal frameworks and signed international agreements that support SEAH prevention efforts and create obligations for environmental sector organisations.

For comprehensive information on legal frameworks regarding SEAH and context in the Maldives, see the [OCPP Maldives GESI and SEAH Status Report \(2025\)](#). 

Understanding these requirements helps ensure your organisation meets its legal obligations and can access funding that requires safeguarding compliance.

For comprehensive information on legal frameworks, international standards, donor requirements, and implementation strategies relevant to the Maldives context:

Tool 1: International Human Rights and Labour Standards



Tool 2: UN System and International Humanitarian Standards



Tool 3: Donor-Specific Requirements



Tool 4: Implementation in the Maldives context



4. YOUR ORGANISATION'S READINESS

4.1 Basic, enhanced, or advanced ◀ Where are you?

Understanding your organisation's current safeguarding level helps you identify what improvements are needed and plan realistic next steps for strengthening SEAH prevention (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2013; United Nations Children's Fund, 2024; United Nations, 2025).

Basic level

Your organisation has minimum safeguarding requirements in place but operates mainly in reactive mode - responding to problems when they occur rather than preventing them.

At this level you have:

- Basic SEAH policy that meets legal requirements
- At least one way for people to report concerns
- Basic training so staff understand what SEAH is
- Clear consequences for harmful behaviour
- Basic support for anyone who reports problems

Enhanced level

Your organisation actively works to prevent SEAH through systematic approaches and proactive measures that go beyond minimum requirements.

At this level you have:

- Comprehensive policies with regular risk assessments
- Multiple, accessible reporting channels for different groups
- Role-specific training that addresses environmental work risks
- Strong support systems for survivors
- Regular monitoring and improvement of safeguarding systems

Advanced level

Your organisation demonstrates safeguarding excellence and helps strengthen protection across the entire environmental sector.

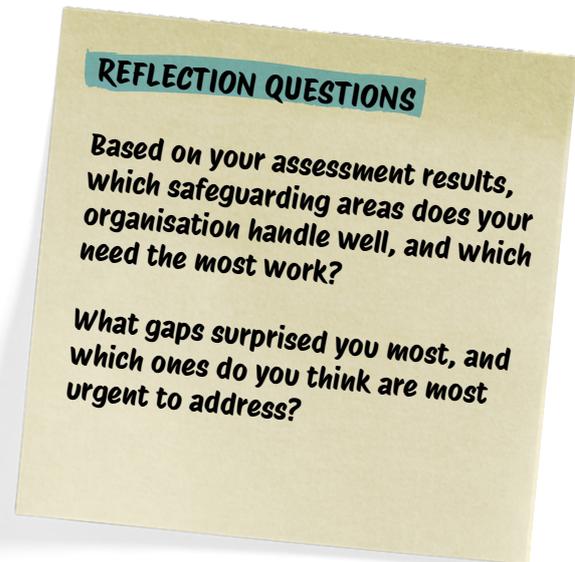
At this level you have:

- Safeguarding fully integrated into all decision-making
- Professional expertise and sophisticated support systems
- Evidence-based approaches with measurable impact
- Leadership in sector-wide safeguarding improvements
- Comprehensive support for vulnerable populations



Quick self-assessment

- Understanding where your organisation currently stands helps you identify priority areas for improvement and plan realistic next steps.



PRACTITIONER TIP

When mapping stakeholders, pay special attention to Women's Development Committees and island councils as formal entry points, but also identify informal women leaders, elderly knowledge holders, youth groups, migrant worker communities, and persons with disabilities who may not have official roles but hold significant community influence and face unique barriers to participation.

For detailed comparison of compliance requirements

Tool 9: Summary of Compliance Requirements



Use the self-assessment tool to evaluate your organisation's safeguarding systems against basic, enhanced, and advanced requirements. Be honest about your actual practices rather than what policies say or what you aspire to achieve.

For systematic assessment and understanding your results

Tool 10: SEAH Compliance Assessment Checklist



Tool 11: SEAH Compliance Assessment Interpretation Guide





4.2 Next steps: Moving up the compliance levels

After completing your self-assessment, you'll know which compliance level your organisation is currently at. This section shows you how to move to the next level and why it matters (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2013; United Nations Children's Fund, 2024; United Nations, 2025).

Why move up compliance levels?

Higher compliance levels mean stronger protection for your staff and communities. Each level builds better prevention systems, faster response capabilities, and more comprehensive support for anyone who experiences problems.

How progression works

From basic to enhanced: Move from responding to incidents after they happen to actively preventing them through risk assessment, multiple reporting options, and role-specific training.

From enhanced to advanced: Integrate safeguarding into all organisational decisions, develop professional expertise, and demonstrate measurable impact on reducing SEAH risks.

Implementation principles

- Strengthen existing systems before adding complexity
- Build staff capacity gradually through ongoing support
- Allow time for changes to become part of organisational culture



PRACTITIONER TIP

Moving up compliance levels is about building genuine capacity to protect people, not just improving documentation. Focus on changes that actually make people safer rather than policies that look good on paper.

5. KNOW YOUR RISKS

Effective SEAH prevention starts with understanding the specific risks in your environmental work. This chapter helps you recognise dangerous situations, spot warning signs, and understand your role in prevention.

Recognising warning signs early helps you intervene before risks become serious incidents. These signs often develop gradually, so watch for patterns and changes in behaviour rather than waiting for obvious problems (United Nations Children's Fund, 2024; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2016; World Health Organization, 2023; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2025).

Individual behaviour warning signs

- Staff showing favouritism or giving special treatment
- Inappropriate comments about appearance or personal lives
- Seeking unnecessary one-on-one time with community members or young people
- Offering personal gifts or unnecessary physical contact
- Violating established boundaries or safety protocols

Community and group warning signs

- Community members becoming reluctant to participate or appearing distressed
- Changes in team dynamics or participation patterns
- Multiple informal complaints about the same person
- Patterns of people withdrawing from project activities
- Breakdown in community trust or participation levels

Workplace warning signs

- Breakdown in normal supervision or accountability systems
- Economic pressure on community members to participate in activities
- Communication problems preventing people from giving feedback
- Changes to established safety protocols without explanation

Digital warning signs

Digital SEAH risks are particularly hard to spot because they happen in private, one-on-one communications away from normal supervision. Therefore, watch for:

- Inappropriate messages through project communication platforms
- Sharing personal photos or contact information
- Private communications outside official channels
- Misuse of community data or images

The key is recognising these situations early and taking action to prevent harm.



CHILD PROTECTION FOCUS

Environmental projects frequently involve students and youth volunteers in data collection, awareness campaigns, and community activities. Children and young people require enhanced safeguarding measures due to their developmental stage, power imbalances with adult staff, and potential unfamiliarity with professional boundaries and reporting mechanisms.

For understanding vulnerabilities, to monitor risks, and for safeguarding against digital threats

Tool 5: Intersectional Vulnerability Assessment Matrix



Tool 14: Ongoing Risk Monitoring Framework



Tool 18: Digital Safeguarding Risk Assessment





5.2 Your role in prevention

Everyone involved in environmental work has a specific role in preventing SEAH risks. Understanding your responsibilities helps create multiple layers of protection that keep everyone safe.

What everyone must do

Know the risks: Understand the specific SEAH risks that exist in your type of environmental work and learn to recognise warning signs before they escalate.
Follow boundaries: Maintain professional relationships with colleagues and community members. Avoid situations that could create inappropriate power dynamics or misunderstandings.

Report concerns: Speak up when you notice warning signs or inappropriate behaviour. This includes supporting colleagues who want to report problems.
Create safe environments: Actively contribute to respectful, inclusive working environments where people feel comfortable raising concerns.

Specific responsibilities by role

Different roles require different types of SEAH

prevention action: Field staff and researchers focus on maintaining appropriate boundaries during community work, ensuring voluntary consent in data collection, and recognising signs of distress.

Project managers are responsible for team culture development, early intervention when concerns arise, and supporting staff who report problems. Senior leadership must demonstrate visible commitment, allocate adequate resources, and ensure organisational accountability for safeguarding.

Community members should understand their rights, know how to report concerns safely, and support peers who may need help.

Taking action when you spot risks

When you identify risks or warning signs:

- Take immediate steps to reduce dangers (increase supervision, modify arrangements)
- Document what you observe while maintaining confidentiality
- Report serious concerns promptly through appropriate channels
- Follow up to ensure action is taken
- Prevention is everyone's responsibility and requires active participation from all levels.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

How will you know if your prevention efforts are actually working to reduce SEAH risks rather than just following procedures?

When you spot warning signs, what will determine whether you take immediate action yourself or escalate to someone else?

What early warning signs would be most relevant to watch for in your particular type of environmental work?

How can you balance thorough risk monitoring with maintaining trust and positive working relationships?



For detailed guidance on prevention responsibilities and actions

Tool 8: Role-Specific SEAH Responsibilities Matrix



Tool 13: Risk Identification by Project Stage Framework



Tool 15: Activity-Level Risk Assessment Questions



Tool 16: SEAH Responsibilities by Role Framework



Tool 17: Risk Mitigation Strategy Selection Framework



6. HOW TO REPORT AND GET HELP

When SEAH concerns arise, knowing how to report them and access support is crucial for everyone's safety. Effective reporting systems protect both those who experience harm and those who witness concerning behaviour. This chapter provides practical guidance on reporting options available in the Maldives and what happens when you make a report.

6.1 Ways to report and get support

When SEAH concerns arise, you need to know how to report them safely and where to get help. This section explains your options in the Maldives context.



IMMEDIATE DANGER

If there is immediate physical danger, a crime in progress, or someone needs urgent medical attention:

- Contact emergency services immediately
- Emergency Services: 911
- Ensure immediate safety first
- Then follow organisational reporting procedures

Reporting principles

All effective reporting follows three key principles:

- Confidentiality - information shared only on need-to-know basis
- Non-retaliation - protection from negative consequences
- Safety - your wellbeing comes first

Your reporting options

Within your organisation:

- Designated safeguarding focal points
- Trusted managers or supervisors
- Anonymous systems (mail boxes, online forms)

External agencies: Limited national services exist (Family Protection Authority, Human Rights Commission) but coverage across islands is often insufficient. Your organisation may need to provide primary reporting capabilities whilst connecting with available services when possible.

Overcoming barriers

Effective reporting systems protect both those who experience harm and those who witness concerning behaviour (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2016, 2024; DG ECHO Partners Helpdesk, 2025).

Your organisational reporting system may be the primary or only protection mechanism available.

Focus on creating effective safeguarding for your stakeholders whilst remaining ready to connect with services as they become available.

For reporting contacts, overcoming barriers, and practical case studies

Tool 7: Maldives SEAH Referral and Coordination Contacts



Tool 19: Overcoming Reporting Barriers Framework



Tool 21: Applying Reporting Principles Framework



Tool 23: Comprehensive Reporting Channel Framework



Tool 24: Maldives SEAH Response Case Studies and Available Mechanisms





6.2 What to expect when you report

Understanding what happens when you make a SEAH report helps you know your rights and what support is available throughout the process (United Nations, 2019; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2024; United Nations Children’s Fund, 2024).

Immediate response

When you report a concern, the person receiving it should: • Listen without judgement and thank you for coming forward • Ask about your immediate safety and take steps to protect you • Explain confidentiality limits and get your consent before sharing information • Focus on your experience and avoid pressing for details you’re not ready to share • Respect your choices about next steps

What they should NOT do • Express shock, disbelief, or question why you didn’t report sooner • Make assumptions about what happened or question inconsistencies aggressively • Make decisions for you or pressure you to take formal action • Share information without your permission or make promises they cannot keep

The response process

Within 24 hours: Initial safety assessment, documentation, and notification of appropriate personnel whilst maintaining confidentiality.

Ongoing: Regular check-ins on your wellbeing, connection with support services, and updates on any actions taken with your consent.

Throughout: You maintain control over the pace and extent of any response, with your safety and choices prioritised above organisational concerns.

Escalation and decision-making

Different situations require different levels of response. Critical situations involving immediate danger receive emergency response, whilst other concerns follow established procedures with appropriate timelines and authority levels.

Your protections

You are protected from retaliation in any form, including employment consequences, social pressure, or harassment. These protections apply regardless of whether formal findings result from your report.



PRACTITIONER TIP

Remember that making a report is an act of courage that helps protect others. Focus on your safety and wellbeing, and don’t hesitate to ask for support throughout the process.

What to Report

CASE STUDY 1

A young female CSO leader attending a 3-day residential climate training reported that a male national consultant—who was facilitating the workshop—invited her to dinner alone and made repeated comments implying she could gain professional opportunities if she “spent more time” with him. He also messaged her late at night and attempted to enter her accommodation.

Sexual Exploitation: Using power or vulnerability to obtain sexual favours or benefits.

CASE STUDY 2

During a beach clean-up weekend, a female migrant worker employed by the contracted waste company reported being asked for sexual favours in exchange for overtime pay by her site supervisor. The harassment took place in a secluded disposal area after other workers had left. She feared retaliation or job loss if she reported the incident, as she was undocumented.

Sexual Abuse: Actual or attempted sexual acts without consent or through pressure or control.

CASE STUDY 3

A group of women from a local cooperative were hired under a community-based coconut palm conservation project, focused on reviving traditional coconut tree care and replanting efforts. A male council representative, responsible for coordinating payment and work schedules, frequently made unwelcome comments about the women’s bodies and implied that “closer friendship” with him could secure longer-term roles. He also requested private meetings with selected women during non-working hours.

Sexual Harassment: Unwanted sexual behaviour or requests that create discomfort, pressure, or disrespect.

For detailed guidance on response processes and protections

Tool 20: Creating a Reporting Culture Framework



Tool 22: Appropriate Response Guide



Tool 25: SEAH Escalation and Response Framework



Tool 26: Whistleblower Protection Framework



7. SURVIVOR-CENTRED RESPONSE

Survivors of SEAH have fundamental rights that must be respected and protected throughout all response processes (United Nations, 2019, 2025; World Health Organization, 2023).

7.1 Fundamental survivor rights

Right to safety and protection

- Physical safety from further harm, retaliation, or intimidation
- Emotional safety through trauma-informed, respectful treatment
- Protection of identity and personal information
- Safe accommodation and support arrangements when needed

Right to information and choice

- Clear information about available options and their implications
- Understanding of formal processes and their rights within them
- Time and space to make decisions without pressure
- Right to change decisions as circumstances evolve

Right to confidentiality and privacy

- Control over who has access to information about their situation
- Protection from gossip, speculation, or unauthorised disclosure
- Secure storage and handling of all documentation
- Limited sharing based on explicit consent and safety necessities

Right to dignity and respect

- Treatment as a whole person rather than just a case or incident
- Respect for personal values and preferences
- Recognition of their expertise about their own experience
- Freedom from judgement, blame, or discrimination

Right to support and services

- Access to appropriate counselling and mental health support
- Medical care for physical health consequences
- Legal information and representation when desired
- Practical support for immediate needs throughout recovery



7.2 Immediate response and support

The first hours after a SEAH disclosure are critical for survivor wellbeing and response effectiveness. This section provides guidance for immediate response that prioritises survivor safety and choice.

Immediate priorities

- Ensure immediate physical safety for the survivor and others
- Provide emergency medical care if needed
- Offer emotional support and reassurance
- Begin appropriate documentation whilst respecting confidentiality

Key response principles

- Let the survivor control the pace and extent of information sharing
- Focus on immediate safety and support needs rather than detailed investigation
- Ask open-ended questions and use the survivor's own words
- Limit information sharing to need-to-know basis with survivor consent
- Store all documentation securely with restricted access

Making critical decisions First response requires urgent decisions about safety measures, support services, information sharing, and formal processes. These decisions must balance survivor autonomy with safety requirements whilst prioritising immediate needs.



PRACTITIONER TIP

Effective survivor support is individualised rather than standardised. Ask survivors what they need and how they prefer to receive support rather than assuming all survivors want the same services.



7.3 Ongoing care and referrals

Survivor support extends beyond immediate response to include ongoing care, connection with specialised services, and long-term recovery support.

Types of ongoing support

- Crisis response: Emergency counselling, medical care, safe accommodation
- Therapeutic support: Individual counselling, trauma treatment, mental health care
- Legal support: Legal advice, court representation, rights education
- Practical support: Financial assistance, housing help, employment support

When services are limited

In many locations across the Maldives, specialised support services may be limited or unavailable. When formal services aren't accessible:

- Train staff in basic crisis counselling and psychological first aid
- Develop partnerships with available health facilities for medical support
- Establish emergency funds for immediate practical needs
- Create peer support networks among staff and community members
- Use technology for remote counselling when possible

(United Nations, 2019; United Nations Children's Fund, 2024; World Health Organization, 2023; Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2013).

Creating effective referrals: Successful referrals require preparation, clear communication, and follow-up. Assess what services the survivor wants, explain available options honestly, obtain consent for information sharing, and coordinate timing to ensure services are available.

Building support networks: When formal referral services are unavailable, create alternative support through trusted community members, health workers, family contacts, and partnerships with other organisations to share resources and expertise.



PRACTITIONER TIP

Build referral relationships before you need them. Having established contacts and understanding service capacity enables much more effective referrals when urgent situations arise.

For comprehensive response and referral guidance

Tool 27: SEAH Response Responsibilities Framework



Tool 28: First Response Decision Framework



Tool 29: Survivor Support Framework



Tool 30: Referral Process Framework



8. KEEPING YOUR SYSTEMS STRONG

Implementing SEAH prevention is not a one-time task – it requires ongoing commitment to monitor, learn, and improve your safeguarding systems. This final chapter helps you maintain and strengthen the protection measures you've built throughout this handbook (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2013, 2022; United Nations Children's Fund, 2024; United Nations, 2025).

8.1 Monitoring and learning

Effective safeguarding systems continuously evolve based on evidence and experience. Regular monitoring helps you understand what's working, identify gaps, and adapt your approach to better protect everyone involved in your environmental work.

Track what matters

Monitor both system performance (are your policies and procedures being followed?) and protection outcomes (are people actually safer?). Use simple indicators that directly address your biggest concerns rather than trying to measure everything.

Learn from experience

Create regular opportunities for staff and community members to share feedback about safeguarding. Document lessons learned, both successes and challenges, to improve your approach over time.

8.2 Making improvements

Strong safeguarding requires continuous improvement based on what you learn from monitoring and feedback.

Build accountability

Make safeguarding everyone's responsibility by including it in job descriptions, recognising good practice, and ensuring leadership demonstrates visible commitment to protection.

Keep evolving

Use evidence from your monitoring to strengthen policies, improve training, enhance reporting systems, and build better support for those who need help.

For systematic monitoring and improvement

Tool 31: SEAH Monitoring Indicators Framework

Tool 32: Data Collection and Analysis Framework

Tool 33: Safeguarding Review Framework

Tool 34: SEAH Accountability Framework

8. REFERENCES

CARE International. (2020). CARE's gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) framework: Power analysis and intersectionality for addressing social inequalities.

CARE. <https://www.care.org/news-and-stories/resources/cares-gender-equality-framework/>

CHS Alliance. (2020). Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) implementation quick reference handbook. CHS Alliance. <https://www.chsalliance.org/get-support/resource/pseah-implementation-quick-reference-handbook/>

DG ECHO Partners Helpdesk. (2025). SEAH reporting guidance and templates for partners. European Commission. <https://www.dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/reference-documents-ngo>

Department for International Development (DFID). (2018). Safeguarding against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) within the aid sector. UK Government. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-against-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-and-sexual-harassment>

Family Protection Authority, Maldives. (2023). National guidelines on the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). Malé: FPA Maldives.

Female Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Programme. (2024). Integrating SEAH prevention in community-based rehabilitation: A case study from Malé. [NGO publication].

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. (2018). UK aid: Safeguarding against sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) within the aid sector. UK Government.

Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office. (2025, April 24). Safeguarding and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEAH) in the aid sector. GOV.UK. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-against-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse-and-sexual-harassment-seah-in-the-aid-sector>

Fuvahmulah Women's Empowerment Initiative. (2023). Standard operating procedures for women's access to institutional services and SEAH reporting mechanisms. [Internal document].

GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR). (2020). Guidelines for integrating GBV and SEAH prevention in humanitarian response. GBV AoR. <https://gbvaor.net/>

Global Affairs Canada. (2017). Policy on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH). Government of Canada. <https://www.international.gc.ca>



Government of Maldives. (2014). Sexual Offences Act (Law No. 17/2014). Malé: Government of Maldives.

Government of Maldives. (2016). Gender Equality Act (Law No. 18/2016). Malé: Government of Maldives.

Government of Maldives. (2021). Workplace Sexual Harassment Prevention Act (Law No. 21/2021). Malé: Government of Maldives.

Human Rights Commission of the Maldives. (2022). Annual report on human rights and SEAH cases. Malé: HRCM.

Human Rights Commission of the Maldives. (2023). National guidelines on safeguarding and SEAH prevention. Malé: HRCM.

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2013). Minimum operating standards for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. IASC. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-minimum-operating-standards-psea>

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2015). Guidelines for integrating gender-based violence interventions in humanitarian action. IASC. <https://gbvguidelines.org>

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2016). Best practice guide: Inter-agency community-based complaint mechanisms. IASC. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/document/best-practice-guide-inter-agency-community-based-complaint-mechanisms>

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2019). Six core principles relating to sexual exploitation and abuse. IASC. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/iasc-six-core-principles-relating-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2022). Vision and strategy on protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, 2022–2026. IASC. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/document/iasc-vision-and-strategy-pseah-2022-2026>

Inter-Agency Standing Committee. (2024). Guidance note on inter-agency referral procedures for sexual exploitation and abuse. IASC. <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/document/iasc-guidance-note-inter-agency-referral-procedures-sea>

InterAction. (2017). PSEA operational framework. InterAction. <https://www.interaction.org/>

JEA Consulting. (2025). Framework for assessing gender equality, social inclusion (GESI) and SEAH integration. JEA Consulting. [Unpublished framework].

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) / Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP). (2025). GESI and SEAH safeguards assessment and recommendations for the Maldives. [Unpublished report].



Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) / Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP). (2025). Notes from SEAH prevention and mitigation workshop, Maldives. [Unpublished workshop document].

Keeping Children Safe. (2014). Child safeguarding standards. Keeping Children Safe. <https://www.keepingchildrensafe.global/>

OECD DAC. (2019). Recommendation on ending sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in development co-operation and humanitarian assistance. OECD. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/gender-development/ending-sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment.htm>

Ocean Women's Project. (2024). Gender inclusion and SEAH prevention in marine conservation: Lessons from the Maldives. [Unpublished report].

Oxfam. (2018). PSEA toolkit: Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse. Oxfam. <https://oxfamilibrary.openrepository.com>

Sphere Association. (2018). The Sphere Handbook: Humanitarian charter and minimum standards in humanitarian response. Sphere.
United Kingdom. (2014). International Development (Gender Equality) Act 2014.

The Stationery Office. <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/9/enacted>
United Nations. (2003). Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13). United Nations. <https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/96240>

United Nations. (2015). Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (A/RES/70/1). United Nations. <https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda>

United Nations. (2018). United Nations protocol on allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse involving implementing partners. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/policies-and-protocols>

United Nations. (2019). Addressing discrimination, harassment, including sexual harassment, and abuse of authority (ST/SGB/2019/8). United Nations. <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/policies-and-protocols>

United Nations. (2019). United Nations protocol on the provision of assistance to victims of sexual exploitation and abuse. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/policies-and-protocols>

United Nations. (2021). Report of the Secretary-General: Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. United Nations.

United Nations. (2025). Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and abuse: Report of the Secretary-General (A/79/789). United Nations. <https://undocs.org/en/A/79/789>



United Nations Children's Fund. (2020). Protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) toolkit for UNICEF and partners. UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/protection/protection-against-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse>

United Nations Children's Fund. (2024). UNICEF toolkit on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (2nd ed.). UNICEF. <https://www.unicef.org/documents/psea-toolkit>

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2025). UNHCR PSEA policy and resources. UNHCR. <https://psea.unhcr.org>

United Nations Population Fund. (2023). Gender-based violence and SEAH response mechanisms in small island states: Maldives country profile. UNFPA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific.

United Nations Victims' Rights Advocate. (2021). Victims' rights advocate resources. United Nations. <https://www.un.org/preventing-sexual-exploitation-and-abuse/content/victims-rights-advocate>

World Health Organization. (2003). Guidelines for medico-legal care for victims of sexual violence. WHO.

World Health Organization. (2019). Policy on preventing and addressing sexual misconduct. WHO. <https://www.who.int/about/ethics/sexual-exploitation-abuse-and-harassment>

World Health Organization. (2023). Policy on preventing and addressing sexual misconduct. WHO. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240068834>

9. GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Accountability Mechanisms that ensure individuals and organisations take responsibility for SEAH prevention and response through transparent systems that can be accessed and evaluated by those they serve.

Advanced Compliance Comprehensive safeguarding systems that demonstrate organisational excellence and contribute to sector-wide improvement in SEAH prevention.

Basic Compliance Minimum requirements for SEAH prevention that focus on essential protections, legal adherence, and foundation-building for more comprehensive safeguarding systems.

Child Protection Specific safeguarding measures for children and young people under 18 who require enhanced protection due to their developmental stage and power imbalances with adults.

Confidentiality Protecting information about SEAH reports and limiting sharing to only those who need to know to ensure appropriate response and support.

Consent Explicit, voluntary agreement given freely without coercion, with full understanding of what is involved, and the capacity and power to make that decision.

Digital Safeguarding Protection measures that address SEAH risks arising from the use of digital technologies, online platforms, and digital communication in environmental work.

Enhanced Compliance Safeguarding systems that build upon basic requirements through proactive measures, systematic approaches, and demonstrated organisational commitment beyond minimum standards.

Escalation The process of referring SEAH reports to appropriate levels of authority based on their severity, complexity, and the resources needed for adequate response.

Everyone's Responsibility The principle that SEAH prevention requires active participation from every individual involved in environmental work, not just designated safeguarding officers.

Family Protection Authority (FPA) The Maldivian government agency responsible for coordinating domestic violence response, shelter services, and victim support across the country.

First Response The immediate actions taken in the first hours after a SEAH disclosure or incident to ensure survivor safety and establish the foundation for longer-term support.



Intersectionality A framework that analyses how overlapping social identities create unique patterns of vulnerability and experiences of discrimination or privilege.

Marginalised Groups People who are excluded from mainstream social, economic, and political activities due to systemic barriers, including women, persons with disabilities, youth, elderly, and island communities communities.

Non-retaliation Protection ensuring that people who report SEAH concerns in good faith are protected from negative consequences such as dismissal, harassment, or social exclusion.

Perpetrator An individual who commits sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment.

Power Dynamics The ways in which power is distributed and exercised within relationships and structures, affecting who has influence and who is excluded.

Red Flags Observable behaviours, situations, or patterns that indicate increased SEAH risk and require immediate attention and possibly intervention.

Referral Pathways Systematic processes for connecting survivors with specialised services and support that environmental organisations cannot provide internally.

Safeguarding The active responsibility and duty of care to protect all people, especially those who are vulnerable, from harm, abuse, and exploitation in all organisational activities.

SEAH Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment - a spectrum of harmful behaviours that exploit power imbalances and require prevention and response measures.

Sexual Abuse Actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

Sexual Exploitation Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes.

Sexual Harassment Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates hostile environments or affects participation.

Survivor A person who has experienced sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment. This term emphasises resilience and agency rather than helplessness.

Survivor-Centred Approach A framework that places survivors' rights, needs, and wishes at the centre of all response efforts, recognising them as experts on their own experiences.



Vulnerable Person An individual who, due to age, disability, mental or physical impairment, or emotional distress, may be unable to protect themselves from harm or exploitation.

Warning Signs Early indicators of potential SEAH risks or concerning behaviour that help identify problems before they escalate into serious incidents.

Whistleblower Protection Comprehensive, long-term protection for those who report SEAH concerns, extending beyond immediate response to include ongoing support and monitoring.

Women's Development Committee (WDC) Local-level women's organisations in the Maldives that promote women's participation in community development and provide formal mechanisms for women's engagement in local governance.

Zero Tolerance The principle that no level of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment is acceptable under any circumstances, requiring consistent enforcement and swift response to incidents.

SEAH Prevention Handbook Tools

A Practical Toolkit for Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Prevention in Environmental Projects

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

• Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) • Ministry of Tourism and Environment, Republic of Maldives • UK International Development

OCEAN COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

• The Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCP) is a bilateral technical assistance and capacity building programme that provides tailored support to countries to manage the marine environment more sustainably, including by strengthening marine science expertise, developing science-based policy and management tools and creating educational resources for coastal communities. The OCP delivers work under three thematic areas: biodiversity, marine pollution, and sustainable seafood.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Joint Nature Conservation Committee

Quay House 2 East Station Road

Fletton Quays Peterborough PE2 8YY

<https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/ocean-country-partnership-programme/> Communications@jncc.gov.uk

OGL © Crown copyright 2026

 **UK International
Development**
Partnership | Progress | Prosperity

About This Toolkit

This SEAH Prevention Handbook Tools document is a companion resource to the main Handbook on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (SEAH) Prevention: A Practical Guide for Environmental Sector Stakeholders in Maldives.

The toolkit contains 34 practical tools referenced throughout the main handbook, designed to support environmental practitioners in implementing comprehensive SEAH prevention systems in their work. These tools are designed to be used as part of a systematic safeguarding approach that prioritises survivor-centred responses and accountability.

How to Use This Toolkit

- Use alongside the main SEAH Prevention Handbook for complete guidance
- Tools can be adapted to your specific context and project needs
- Each tool includes examples relevant to the Maldives environmental sector Tools are designed for immediate practical application
- All tools prioritise survivor safety and choice

For the complete framework, guidance and case studies, refer to the main SEAH Prevention Handbook document.

Contents

Tool 1: International Human Rights and Labour Standards	1
Tool 2: UN System and International Humanitarian Standards	2
Tool 3: Donor-Specific Requirements	3
Tool 4: Implementation in the Maldives Context	4
Tool 5: Key Intersectional Vulnerabilities in Maldives Environmental Work	5
Tool 6: Levels of Accountability	6
Tool 7: Maldives SEAH Referral and Coordination Contacts	7
Tool 8: Role-Specific Applications	8
Tool 9: Summary of Compliance Requirements	9
Tool 10: SEAH Compliance Assessment Checklist	10
Tool 11: SEAH Compliance Assessment Interpretation	12
Tool 12: SEAH Compliance Progression: Quick Guide	13
Tool 13: Risk Identification by Project Stage	14
Tool 14: Ongoing Risk Monitoring Framework	15
Tool 15: Activity-Level Risk Assessment Questions	16
Tool 16: SEAH Responsibilities by Role	17
Tool 17: Risk Mitigation Strategy Selection	18
Tool 18: Digital Safeguarding Risk Assessment	19
Tool 19: Overcoming Reporting Barriers	20
Tool 20: Creating a Reporting Culture Framework	21
Tool 21: Applying Reporting Principles Framework	22
Tool 22: Appropriate Response Guide	23
Tool 23: Comprehensive Reporting Channel Framework	24
Tool 24: Maldives SEAH Response Case Studies and Available Mechanisms	25
Tool 25: SEAH Escalation and Response Framework	26
Tool 26: Whistleblower Protection Framework	27
Tool 27: SEAH Response Responsibilities Framework	28
Tool 28: First Response Decision Framework	29
Tool 29: Survivor Support Framework	30
Tool 30: Referral Process Framework	31
Tool 31: SEAH Monitoring Indicators Framework	32
Tool 32: Data Collection and Analysis Framework	33
Tool 33: Safeguarding Review Framework	34
Tool 34: SEAH Accountability Framework	35

SEAH Prevention Handbook Tools

Tool 1:

International Human Rights and Labour Standards

Use this table to understand how international human rights frameworks apply to your environmental work and ensure compliance with legal obligations.

Standard/Convention	Key SEAH-Related Provisions	Implementation Requirements
Universal Declaration of Human Rights	Article 3: Right to security of person – Article 5: Prohibition of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment	Fundamental basis for all SEAH prevention efforts – Must be reflected in organisational policies and practices
CEDAW (Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women)	Elimination of discrimination and violence against women – Protection in workplace and project contexts	Maldives’ ratification creates legal obligation – Environmental projects must contribute to CEDAW implementation
ILO Convention 190	Elimination of violence and harassment in the world of work – Comprehensive prevention and response measures	Apply workplace protections to environmental field settings – Establish inclusive definition of “workplace”
ILO Convention 111	Elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation	Ensure equal treatment and protection for all staff – Address intersectional discrimination

Tool 2: UN System and International Humanitarian Standards

Use this table to align your SEAH prevention efforts with UN standards and humanitarian frameworks relevant to environmental and climate work.

Framework	Core Requirements	Application to Environment Sector
UN System-Wide Standards on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	Zero tolerance policies - Survivor-centred approaches - Mandatory reporting - Training obligations - Independent oversight	Must be adopted by UN-partnered organisations - Influence best practice for all environmental actors
Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines	Risk assessment methodologies - Community engagement strategies - Complaint and feedback mechanisms - Capacity building requirements	Detailed operational guidance - Applicable to humanitarian-development nexus work including climate adaptation
Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)	Commitment to do no harm - Enable complaint mechanisms - Manage staff appropriately - Support organisational learning	Quality framework extending beyond humanitarian contexts - Relevant for community-based environmental work
ILO Convention 111	Elimination of discrimination in employment and occupation	Ensure equal treatment and protection for all staff – Address intersectional discrimination

Tool 3: Donor-Specific Requirements

Use this table to understand specific SEAH requirements from different donor types and plan compliance strategies for funding applications and project implementation.

Donor Type	Typical SEAH Requirements	Compliance Expectations
Bilateral Government Donors	Comprehensive safeguarding policies - Regular risk assessments - Mandatory staff training - Accessible reporting mechanisms - Survivor-centred responses	Pre-funding due diligence assessments - Regular monitoring and reporting - Independent audits - Corrective action plans when needed
Multilateral Organisations (World Bank, Asian Development Bank)	Environmental and social safeguards - Grievance redress mechanisms - Stakeholder engagement standards - SEAH risk management	Integration with environmental safeguards - Community consultation on safeguarding - Regular supervision and review
UN Agencies	Adoption of UN system-wide standards - Harmonised approach across implementing partners - Capacity building support	Alignment with UN SEAH standards - Participation in inter-agency coordination - Joint training and capacity building
International NGOs and Foundations	Organisational safeguarding policies - Partner due diligence - Community feedback mechanisms - Learning and improvement systems	Partnership agreements with SEAH clauses - Joint monitoring and evaluation - Shared learning platforms

Tool 4: Implementation in the Maldives context

Use this table to identify implementation challenges and leverage existing strengths when applying survivor-centred approaches in the Maldives context.

Challenges	Strengths to Leverage
Limited geographic coverage of specialised services (Ministry of Gender on only 20 of 189 islands) with transportation barriers and overburdened caseworkers (70-80 cases vs recommended 25-30)	Strong digital connectivity enables remote support, counselling services, and anonymous reporting options
Economic vulnerabilities that can limit survivors' options for safe alternatives	Women's Development Committees (WDCs) and local councils on inhabited islands can coordinate community-level responses and referrals
Small island communities where confidentiality can be difficult to maintain and social pressure may affect survivor choices	Strong existing legal frameworks provide formal protections
Limited civil society presence to provide additional support channels	

Tool 5: Key intersectional vulnerabilities in Maldives environmental work

Use this table to identify how multiple identities create specific SEAH risks in your environmental work to help you develop targeted protection strategies.

Intersectional Vulnerability	Description	Specific Risks in Environmental Work
Gender and Geography	Women in outer islands face compounded barriers due to limited services, social isolation, and cultural expectations	26% labour underutilisation in atolls vs 18% in Malé creates additional economic vulnerabilities and dependency on project opportunities
Disability and Dependency	Persons with disabilities experience heightened risks due to increased dependency, communication barriers, and social attitudes	40-60% of women with disabilities report experiencing sexual abuse
Age and Economic Status	Young people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds may face exploitation when projects offer rare opportunities	Youth unemployment at 26% nationally, with NEET rates reaching 42.7% for women in atolls, creating desperation for opportunities
Nationality and Legal Status	Migrant workers (one in four residents) may experience SEAH but fear reporting due to immigration concerns	Language barriers, unfamiliarity with local systems, and fear of deportation prevent reporting and seeking help

Tool 6: Levels of accountability

Use this table to establish clear accountability mechanisms across individual, organizational, community, and systemic levels.

Level	Key Elements
Individual	Professional behaviour • Reporting obligations • Survivor support • Ongoing learning
Organisational	Policies & procedures • Resource allocation • Monitoring & evaluation • Transparency
Community	Feedback mechanisms • Regular communication • Input opportunities • Traditional knowledge
Systemic	National integration • Authority coordination • Knowledge sharing • Policy advocacy

Tool 7: Maldives SEAH Referral and Coordination Contacts

Use this table to identify appropriate referral contacts for different types of SEAH concerns and understand service coverage limitations across the Maldives¹.

Agency/Service	Contact Purpose	Contact Details	Geographic Coverage
Family Protection Authority (FPA)	Domestic violence coordination, shelter services, victim support	Phone: 3010551 - Email: info@fpa.gov.mv	National coordination from Malé
Stakeholder Ministry	SEAH case coordination, survivor support	Phone: +960 301 3017 - Email: info@gender.gov.mv	Only 20 of 189 inhabited islands
Maldives Police Service	Criminal reporting, emergency response	Emergency: 119 - Domestic violence: 332 2111/2112	All islands
Human Rights Commission (HRCM)	Rights violations, SEAH compliance monitoring	Email: info@hrcm.org.mv - Hotline: 1424 - Phone: 3336539	National - can receive complaints from all islands
Employment Tribunal	Workplace harassment disputes, employment rights	Phone: 3307701 - Email: www.employmenttribunal.gov.mv	National jurisdiction - formal legal process
Labour Relations Authority	Employment rights enforcement, workplace complaints	Phone: 332 8282 / 332 4545 - Mobile: 720 8282	National enforcement body
Women's Development Committees (WDCs)	Local women's advocacy, community support	Contact local council offices	Present on all inhabited islands
Island Councils/City Councils	Local authority coordination, community referrals	Contact local council offices	All inhabited islands
Family and Children's Service Centres	Direct survivor support services	Contact or refer to nearest available, or via Ministry	16 centres across atolls - refer to nearest available
Child Helpline	Cases involving minors under 18	1412	National hotline

¹ As of July 2025

Tool 8: Role-Specific Applications

Use this table to clarify specific safeguarding focus areas and responsibilities for different roles in environmental work.

Role	Key Focus Areas
Field Staff & Researchers	Professional boundaries in community work • Voluntary consent in data collection • Recognising distress signals
Project Managers	Team culture development • Early intervention • Supporting staff who report concerns
Senior Leadership	Visible commitment • Resource allocation • Organisational accountability
Community Members	Rights awareness • Safe reporting when appropriate • Peer support
Partner Organisations	Equivalent safeguarding standards • Response coordination • Knowledge sharing

Tool 9: Summary of Compliance Requirements

Element	Basic Compliance	Enhanced Compliance	Advanced Compliance
Policies	Written SEAH policy, Code of conduct	Comprehensive procedures manual, Risk assessment templates	Evidence-based strategy, Policy advocacy
Systems	One reporting channel, Designated focal point	Multiple reporting options, Trained focal points	Independent oversight, Advanced data systems
Training	Annual awareness training, Basic orientation	Role-specific training, Community programmes	Professional specialists, Training delivery capacity
Response	Basic escalation procedures, Referral knowledge	Trained first responders, Partner relationships	Specialist support, Advocacy capabilities
Prevention	Simple risk assessment, Basic supervision	Proactive mitigation, Enhanced supervision	Comprehensive risk management, Innovation
Accountability	Basic record-keeping, Simple reporting	Regular monitoring, Stakeholder feedback	Public reporting, External auditing

Tool 10: SEAH Compliance Assessment Checklist

Use this checklist to evaluate your organisation's current safeguarding systems and identify which compliance level you have achieved.

Analysis and Design	
REQUIREMENT	✓/✗
Gender and social analysis conducted during project planning phase	<input type="checkbox"/>
Specific vulnerabilities (gender, island communities, disability, youth, elderly, foreign migrant workers, and SEAH risks) identified in project design	<input type="checkbox"/>
Project action plan includes clear SEAH goals with allocated resources	<input type="checkbox"/>
Risk mitigation measures developed and integrated into project activities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Community consultation conducted including discussion of safeguarding concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>

SEAH Prevention and Safeguarding Systems	
REQUIREMENT	✓/✗
SEAH prevention mechanisms (reporting systems, codes of conduct) in place and operational	<input type="checkbox"/>
SEAH risks and reporting mechanisms clearly communicated to stakeholders and communities	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multiple reporting channels accessible to all staff and community members	<input type="checkbox"/>
Staff training provided on SEAH awareness and environmental sector-specific risks	<input type="checkbox"/>
Supervision systems in place for fieldwork and community activities	<input type="checkbox"/>

Response and Support	
REQUIREMENT	✓/✗
Survivor-centred response protocols established prioritising safety and choice	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trained staff available to receive and respond to SEAH reports appropriately	<input type="checkbox"/>
Referral pathways identified for connecting survivors with support services	<input type="checkbox"/>
Confidentiality protections in place for reporting and response processes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Documentation systems for tracking incidents and responses whilst protecting survivor privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>

Monitoring and Evaluation	
REQUIREMENT	✓/✗
Gender-sensitive and inclusion-specific metrics part of project monitoring framework	<input type="checkbox"/>
Regular monitoring and evaluation of SEAH prevention system effectiveness	<input type="checkbox"/>
Observable changes in community attitudes or practices related to safeguarding	<input type="checkbox"/>
Policies or practices adopted to enhance safeguarding as result of project learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Stakeholder feedback mechanisms for ongoing improvement of safeguarding approaches	<input type="checkbox"/>

Accountability and Learning	
REQUIREMENT	✓/✗
Performance accountability for safeguarding integrated into staff management systems	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning and adaptation processes based on safeguarding experience and feedback	<input type="checkbox"/>
Transparent reporting on safeguarding efforts whilst respecting confidentiality	<input type="checkbox"/>
Coordination with local authorities and protection services where appropriate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Contribution to sector-wide learning and safeguarding improvement	<input type="checkbox"/>

Understanding Your Assessment Results

Your assessment results will help you identify which compliance level your organisation currently operates at and pinpoint the most important areas for improvement to strengthen your safeguarding systems.

Tool 11: SEAH Compliance Assessment Interpretation

No. of Items Checked	Compliance Level	What This Means	Next Steps
22-25	Advanced	Comprehensive safeguarding systems with evidence of continuous improvement and sector leadership	Focus on innovation and supporting other organisations whilst maintaining high standards
16-21	Enhanced	Strong foundations with systematic approaches to prevention and response across most areas	Priority on expanding coverage and deepening implementation quality
10-15	Basic	Essential elements in place but requiring systematic development across multiple areas	Focus on building core prevention and response capabilities whilst maintaining existing protections
Under 10	Pre-Compliance	Significant system building needed with fundamental gaps in policies and procedures	Immediate priority on establishing fundamental policies, training, and reporting mechanisms

Tool 12: SEAH Compliance Progression: Quick Guide

Use this table to identify your next steps for strengthening safeguarding systems. Based on your compliance assessment results, find your current level and focus on the priority actions needed to advance whilst addressing common challenges that may arise during implementation.

From	To	Priority Actions	Common Challenges	Key Success Indicators
Pre-Compliance	Basic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written SEAH policy & code of conduct • One reliable reporting channel • Designated focal point • Annual staff training • Basic incident procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited resources • Staff resistance to change • Lack of expertise • Geographic constraints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff know how to report • Clear response procedures exist • Communities understand rights • Basic documentation in place
Basic	Enhanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple reporting channels • Role-specific training • Risk assessment for activities • Community awareness programmes • Case management system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity overstretch • Quality vs quantity balance • Staff turnover • Community reluctance to discuss SEAH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiple reporting options used • Staff competent in risk recognition • Community participation in discussions • Evidence of prevention effectiveness
Enhanced	Advanced	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based strategy • Professional specialists • Independent oversight • Sector leadership activities • Public accountability reporting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining high standards • Balancing innovation with reliability • Managing external expectations • Sustaining investment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurable risk reduction • Sector leadership recognition • Support to other organisations • Policy development contribution
Under 10	Pre-Compliance	Significant system building needed with fundamental gaps in policies and procedures	Immediate priority on establishing fundamental policies, training, and reporting mechanisms	

Tool 13: Risk Identification by Project Stage

Use this table to understand what actions you can take at each project stage to identify risks and what warning signs to watch for:

Project Stage	Key Risk Identification Activities	What to Look For
Planning & Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess work locations and isolation levels Review team composition and power dynamics Research community context and vulnerabilities Map existing support services Identify high-risk activities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remote locations with limited oversight Power imbalances in team structure Vulnerable groups in target communities Cultural barriers to reporting Activities requiring one-on-one interaction
Project Start-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct team orientation on risks and boundaries Establish community feedback mechanisms Brief local partners on safeguarding Set up supervision structures Create documentation systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team members unclear on boundaries Inadequate supervision arrangements Community confusion about rights Missing reporting channels Poor communication systems
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly team check-ins on concerns Monitor community participation patterns Observe team interactions and behaviour Pre-activity risk assessments Document emerging issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changes in participation or behaviour Inappropriate comments or conduct Community reluctance or complaints Boundary violations Isolation of vulnerable individuals
Mid-Point Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess effectiveness of safeguarding measures Review any incidents or concerns raised Adjust risk mitigation strategies Strengthen weak areas identified Update risk assessment based on learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterns of concerning behaviour Gaps in protection systems Community feedback on safety Staff comfort with reporting Effectiveness of supervision
Project Closure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final risk assessment and handover Ensure ongoing support for any affected individuals Document lessons learned Brief successor teams or partners Maintain confidential records appropriately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unresolved concerns or incidents Vulnerable individuals needing continued support Systems gaps for future projects Institutional knowledge preservation Appropriate record management

Tool 14: Ongoing Risk Monitoring Framework

Use this table to establish regular monitoring routines that help you spot emerging risks before they escalate into incidents:

Monitoring Level	Activities	What to Do
Team-Level	Weekly Team Check-ins	Ask open-ended questions about comfort levels and any concerns
Team-Level	Behaviour Observation	Watch team interactions for signs of inappropriate behaviour
Team-Level	Feedback Review	Discuss any feedback received from community members
Team-Level	Dynamic Changes	Monitor changes in work arrangements or team relationships
Team-Level	Pattern Documentation	Record recurring issues or emerging trends
Community-Level	Private Feedback Opportunities	Create multiple ways for community members to share concerns safely
Community-Level	Trusted Contact Networks	Establish regular informal conversations with reliable community contacts
Community-Level	Participation Tracking	Monitor engagement levels and participation patterns
Community-Level	Behavioural Changes	Pay attention to withdrawal or distress signals
Community-Level	Indirect Complaints	Follow up on hints, rumours, or indirect concerns about problems

Tool 15: Activity-Level Risk Assessment Questions

Use this quick assessment before each activity to identify immediate risks and adjust your approach accordingly:

Assessment Area	Key Questions
People & Power	Who will be present and what are the power dynamics?
Location & Isolation	Where will this take place and how isolated is the location?
Duration & Supervision	How long will the activity last and what supervision exists?
Cultural Sensitivity	What cultural factors might affect this interaction?
Reporting Access	How will people be able to report concerns if they arise?

Tool 16: SEAH Responsibilities by Role

Use this table to understand what each role should do to support effective SEAH risk management:

Role	Key Responsibilities	Specific Actions
Senior Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish organisational SEAH policies and culture Allocate resources for safeguarding systems Ensure compliance with legal and donor requirements Provide visible leadership on safeguarding Make final decisions on serious incidents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve SEAH policies and procedures Budget for training and safeguarding systems Communicate zero tolerance publicly Review serious incident reports Support staff who report concerns
Project Managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement SEAH policies in project design and execution Conduct risk assessments for all project activities Supervise staff safeguarding performance Coordinate with local authorities and support services Maintain project-level incident documentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include SEAH measures in project plans Monitor team compliance with codes of conduct Establish community feedback mechanisms Brief new team members on safeguarding Review and adjust risk mitigation strategies
Safeguarding Focal Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve as primary contact for SEAH reports and concerns Provide first response to survivors Coordinate with support services and authorities Maintain confidential incident records Support investigations and follow-up actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and document SEAH reports Connect survivors with appropriate services Brief management on incidents (maintaining confidentiality) Participate in incident response teams Monitor effectiveness of safeguarding measures
Field Staff & Researchers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain professional boundaries with community members Identify and report SEAH risks and incidents Follow codes of conduct and safety protocols Support colleagues and community members appropriately Participate in safeguarding training and capacity building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete mandatory SEAH training Report concerns through established channels Maintain appropriate relationships with community members Support survivors with dignity and confidentiality Contribute to risk assessment and mitigation planning
Community Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand rights and available protections Report SEAH concerns when safe to do so Support fellow community members experiencing difficulties Participate in safeguarding awareness activities Provide feedback on project safeguarding measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn about reporting mechanisms and support services Share concerns with trusted contacts when appropriate Support peers who may experience SEAH Participate in community safeguarding discussions Give feedback on project safety and comfort levels
Partner Organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Align safeguarding policies with project standards Train their staff on SEAH prevention and response Report incidents involving their personnel Coordinate safeguarding efforts with project team Share learning and best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop equivalent SEAH policies and procedures Ensure staff understand project safeguarding requirements Establish compatible reporting and response systems Participate in joint safeguarding training Contribute to safeguarding reviews and improvements

Tool 17: Risk Mitigation Strategy Selection

Use this framework to select appropriate mitigation strategies based on your specific risk assessment:

Risk Level	Risk Type	Recommended Strategies	Implementation Priority
Low	General environmental risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic supervision protocols • Standard boundary training • Regular team check-ins 	Ongoing routine measures
Medium	Specific situational risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced supervision • Modified work arrangements • Additional training • Strengthened feedback mechanisms 	Immediate implementation
High	Individual behaviour concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased monitoring • Restricted access to vulnerable individuals • Mandatory supervision for high-risk activities • Preparation for potential escalation 	Urgent implementation within 24 hours
Critical	Immediate threat to safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency intervention protocols • Temporary suspension of activities • Immediate involvement of authorities • Crisis support activation 	Immediate action required

Tool 18: Digital Safeguarding Risk Assessment

Use this table to identify and mitigate digital SEAH risks in your environmental project:

Digital Activity	Potential SEAH Risks	Mitigation Measures
Virtual training/meetings	Online harassment, inappropriate behaviour	Moderated sessions, clear digital conduct codes, recording policies
Data collection apps	Inappropriate contact information use, photo sharing	Secure data protocols, consent procedures
Social media engagement	Boundary violations, private messaging	Social media policies, supervised accounts
Project communications	Cyberbullying or intimidation through inappropriate content	Communication guidelines, reporting mechanisms
Photo/video documentation	Non-consensual sharing, exploitation	Consent protocols, secure storage, limited access

Tool 19: Overcoming Reporting Barriers

Use this table to identify potential obstacles to reporting in your context and develop strategies to overcome them:

Barrier Type	Specific Barriers	How to Address Them
Fear of Retaliation	Concern about job loss, social consequences, or further harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish strong anti-retaliation policies with clear consequences Provide multiple reporting channels including anonymous options Ensure confidentiality protections are clearly explained Create support systems for those who report concerns Demonstrate organisational commitment to protecting reporters
Lack of Trust in Systems	Belief that nothing will be done or that reports will be ignored	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build transparency around how reports are handled Share information about actions taken (whilst maintaining confidentiality) Involve community members in designing reporting mechanisms Address past failures openly and honestly Consistently follow through on commitments made
Cultural and Social Barriers	Shame, stigma, or pressure to maintain family/community reputation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adapt reporting mechanisms to local cultural contexts Provide options that respect traditional authority structures Offer reporting in multiple languages and culturally appropriate channels Address stigma through community education and awareness Work with traditional leaders to support reporting when appropriate
Practical Barriers	Geographic isolation, technology access, language, or disability constraints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure reporting channels work across geographic constraints Provide multiple options for different communication preferences Address cost barriers (phone calls, internet, transport) Create flexible timing for work schedules and family obligations Offer assistance with language, literacy, or disability needs
Photo/video documentation	Non-consensual sharing, exploitation	Consent protocols, secure storage, limited access

Tool 20: Creating a Reporting Culture Framework

Use this table to build a culture where reporting SEAH concerns is encouraged, supported, and protected at all levels:

Level	Key Actions	Specific Steps
Leadership Commitment	Demonstrate visible support for reporting and accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior leaders publicly support and encourage reporting • Policies clearly state that reporting is expected and protected • Allocate resources to make reporting systems function effectively • Regular communication reinforces importance of speaking up • Leadership responses demonstrate concerns are taken seriously
Team Dynamics	Foster supportive team environments that encourage speaking up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create team norms that support speaking up about concerns • Address gossip, speculation, or criticism of those who report • Encourage peer support for colleagues facing difficult situations • Provide training that builds confidence in recognising and reporting • Recognise and appreciate appropriate reporting behaviour
Community Engagement	Build trust and participation in safeguarding approaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve communities in designing reporting mechanisms • Provide clear information about rights, protections, and support • Create multiple opportunities for feedback on safeguarding • Build relationships with community leaders and trusted individuals • Demonstrate respect for community values whilst maintaining standards

Tool 21: Applying Reporting Principles Framework

Use this framework to ensure your reporting systems uphold these essential principles:

Principle	Key Requirements	Practical Implementation
Confidentiality	Information shared only on need-to-know basis with explicit consent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain confidentiality limits before receiving reports • Obtain consent before sharing information • Use secure storage and restricted access for records • Avoid identifying details in documentation • Brief managers using general terms only
Non-Retaliation	Protection from negative consequences for reporting in good faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include anti-retaliation policies in all agreements • Train supervisors on recognising retaliation • Monitor situations after reports are made • Provide multiple channels for reporting retaliation • Take swift action against retaliatory behaviour
Safety	Physical and emotional wellbeing prioritised above all other considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove people from dangerous situations immediately • Provide safe accommodation when needed • Use trauma-informed approaches throughout • Respect survivor choice and control • Plan for safety challenges in small communities

Tool 22: Appropriate Response Guide

Use this table to ensure you respond appropriately when receiving SEAH disclosures whilst upholding all three reporting principles:

Situation	DO	DON'T
Initial Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen actively without judgement • Thank them for coming forward • Ask about immediate safety • Explain confidentiality limits upfront 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Express shock or disbelief • Ask "why didn't you report sooner?" • Make assumptions about what happened • Rush to take action immediately
Information Gathering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use their own words in documentation • Ask open-ended questions • Focus on facts and their experience • Record dates, times, and locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask leading or suggestive questions • Press for details they're not ready to share • Question inconsistencies aggressively • Record your opinions or interpretations
Decision Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect their choices about next steps • Provide information about options • Support their autonomy • Ask for consent before taking action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make decisions for them • Pressure them to take formal action • Share information without permission • Impose your timeline on their process
Ongoing Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check in regularly on their wellbeing • Connect them with appropriate services • Maintain confidentiality as agreed • Provide updates on any actions taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assume they're fine without checking • Share details with unnecessary people • Make promises you cannot keep • Focus on organisational needs over theirs

Tool 23: Comprehensive Reporting Channel Framework

Use this comprehensive framework to understand each reporting channel option and select the best combination for your context:

Channel Type	Best For	Advantages	Considerations	Best Practices
Designated Staff	Personal support and immediate response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal connection and immediate support • Cultural sensitivity and language support • Immediate safety assessment • Trust building over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be trusted and impartial • Requires trauma-informed training • Risk of overwhelming one person • Need for backup arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select respected individuals • Provide comprehensive training • Create backup systems • Ensure authority to act
Digital Platforms	Anonymous reporting and detailed documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 availability • Anonymous reporting options • Detailed documentation capability • Automated tracking • Secure storage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires internet and digital literacy • May exclude some users • Security vulnerabilities • Less personal connection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mobile-friendly design • Multiple language options • Clear safety guidance • Regular security updates
Hotlines	Immediate support across geographic distances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographic accessibility • Immediate human contact • Language accommodation • Familiar technology • Urgent response capability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires consistent staffing • Phone costs may be barrier • Limited privacy • Documentation challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toll-free numbers • Trained personnel • Callback options • Detailed protocols
Drop Boxes	Complete anonymity and low-tech access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete anonymity • Low-tech solution • Familiar concept • Accessible placement • Minimal ongoing costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No follow-up ability • Limited information • Tampering potential • Delayed response • Verification difficulties 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure placement • Regular collection • Clear instructions • Secure handling
Community-Based	Culturally appropriate and locally trusted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing trust relationships • Cultural appropriateness • Local knowledge • Community ownership • Sustainable solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflicts of interest • Varying capacity • Traditional vs professional standards • Consistency challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparent selection • Appropriate training • Clear escalation protocols • Regular supervision

TOOL 24: Maldives SEAH Response Case Studies and Available Mechanisms

Use these case studies to understand approaches adopted by local NGOs that have worked in the Maldives context and identify elements you can adapt for your own organisational safe-guarding systems:

Case Study	Context & Intervention	Survivor-Centered Practices	Key Outcomes
Women in Fuvahmulah	Community assessments identified barriers women faced in reporting SEAH, including cultural stigma and lack of information. SOPs were co-created with women to guide access to institutional services and grievance mechanisms. Partnerships with local councils strengthened institutional accountability.	Confidential consultations with survivors shaped SOPs; multiple reporting options respected survivor choice; community sessions created safe spaces.	Increased trust in reporting systems; functional grievance pathways; improved institutional response capacity.
Ocean Women's Project	Women entering male-dominated marine conservation fields were supported through informal engagement sessions and peer networks. SEAH reporting protocols and workplace safety measures were introduced alongside skills training in diving and conservation.	Informal "coffee meetings" enabled women to voice SEAH concerns safely; peer networks supported survivor resilience; reporting options were integrated into training programs.	More women engaged in marine careers; safer workplaces; shifts in attitudes towards women in non-traditional roles.
Women's Football Club	A rehabilitation program for women recovering from substance use disorders integrated SEAH prevention by providing safe spaces, trauma-informed counselling, and advocacy for workplace protections. Community football and ocean therapy were used to rebuild confidence.	Survivor autonomy prioritized in designing support services; safe spaces and trauma-informed counselling reduced stigma and enabled disclosures.	Improved mental health outcomes; increased SEAH awareness in communities; advocacy initiated for vulnerable women's workplace rights.
Drop Boxes	Complete anonymity and low-tech access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete anonymity • Low-tech solution • Familiar concept • Accessible placement • Minimal ongoing costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No follow-up ability • Limited information • Tampering potential • Delayed response • Verification difficulties
Community-Based	Culturally appropriate and locally trusted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existing trust relationships • Cultural appropriateness • Local knowledge • Community ownership • Sustainable solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential conflicts of interest • Varying capacity • Traditional vs professional standards • Consistency challenges

Tool 25: SEAH Escalation and Response Framework

Use these case studies to understand approaches adopted by local NGOs that have worked in the Maldives context and identify elements you can adapt for your own organisational safeguarding systems:

Situation Type	Examples	Escalation Timeline	Response Authority	Key Actions	Decision Scope
Critical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate physical danger • Criminal offences requiring police • Child abuse or exploitation • Senior leadership involvement 	Immediate (within hours)	Senior management + external authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure immediate safety • Involve police/medical services • Activate crisis protocols • Notify Board/oversight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency interventions • External authority coordination • Crisis communication • Organisational protection
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sexual harassment by authority figures • Exploitation of power relationships • Repeat violations • Cases requiring specialist expertise 	Within 24 hours	Senior management + specialist support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate investigation • Implement protective measures • Engage external expertise • Plan comprehensive response 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investigation management • Resource allocation • Stakeholder coordination • Policy enforcement
Standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Code of conduct violations • Professional boundary issues • Workplace harassment • System improvement needs 	Within established time-frames	Project management + HR support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct initial assessment • Implement routine measures • Provide standard support • Document and monitor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational adjustments • Basic support provision • Normal disciplinary action • System improvements

Tool 26: Whistleblower Protection Framework

Use this table to ensure comprehensive, long-term protection for those who report SEAH concerns:

Situation Type	Examples	Escalation Timeline
Beyond Basic Non-Retaliation	Extend protection beyond immediate response period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long-term monitoring for delayed retaliation • Support for social or community pressure • Protect employment references and career advancement • Assist with legal or financial pressures
Ongoing Support Systems	Provide continuous assistance throughout and after reporting process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular check-ins on safety and wellbeing • Access to counselling and support services • Flexibility in work arrangements • Clear channels for reporting new incidents
Organisational Accountability	Demonstrate visible commitment to protecting those who report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership support for whistleblowers • Swift action against retaliation • Recognise reporting as organisational improvement • Integrate protection into performance systems

Tool 27: SEAH Response Responsibilities Framework

Use this framework to ensure clear, coordinated response responsibilities:

Response Level	Key Personnel	Primary Responsibilities	Timeline	Key Actions
Immediate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First responders • Safeguarding focal points • Project managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure immediate safety • Provide initial support • Activate response procedures • Document appropriately 	Within hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety assessment • Crisis intervention • Initial documentation • Authority notification
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senior management • HR officers • Safeguarding specialists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate comprehensive response • Allocate resources • Manage communications • Ensure compliance 	Within 24-48 hours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response planning • Resource allocation • External coordination • Decision-making
Oversight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive leadership • Board of Directors • Independent oversight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure accountability • Approve major decisions • Manage external relations • Drive improvements 	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic decisions • Public accountability • Systemic review • Policy development

Tool 28: First Response Decision Framework

Use this framework to guide immediate response decisions:

Decision Area	Key Considerations	Immediate Actions	Who Decides	Key Actions
Safety Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical safety risks Ongoing threat assessment Retaliation possibilities Emergency medical needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove from danger Restrict perpetrator access Provide emergency care Activate security protocols 	First responder with supervisor consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safety assessment Crisis intervention Initial documentation Authority notification
Support Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivor preferences Available resources Cultural considerations Immediate vs long-term needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Connect with counselling Arrange safe accommodation Contact trusted support persons Provide crisis intervention 	Survivor choice with guidance from first responder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response planning Resource allocation External coordination Decision-making
Information Sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidentiality requirements Safety necessities Legal obligations Survivor consent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit to need-to-know basis Obtain explicit consent Follow mandatory reporting laws Protect survivor identity 	Joint decision with survivor when possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic decisions Public accountability Systemic review Policy development
Formal Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Criminal activity indicators Survivor preferences Organisational policies Evidence preservation needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to authorities if required Preserve evidence appropriately Document for investigations Begin formal procedures 	Combination of policy requirements and survivor choice	

Tool 29: Survivor Support Framework

Use this table to understand the different types of support survivors need and how to ensure they can access appropriate services in your context:

Support Category	Key Services	Delivery Methods	Access Requirements
Crisis Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency counselling • Medical care • Safe accommodation • Crisis intervention • Family notification 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 24/7 availability • Mobile response teams • Emergency hotlines • Safe houses/shelters • Hospital partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate access • No cost barriers • Multiple contact methods • Geographic coverage • Language support
Therapeutic Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual counselling • Group therapy • Trauma treatment • Mental health care • Ongoing case management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional therapists • Peer support groups • Community counsellors • Online/remote options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Survivor choice • Appropriate services • Flexible scheduling • Long-term availability • Confidential settings
Legal Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal advice • Court representation • Rights education • Process navigation • Compensation assistance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Legal aid lawyers • Paralegal support • Rights advocates • Court accompaniment • Documentation help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free or low-cost • Survivor-led decisions • Independent advice • Clear communication
Practical Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial assistance • Housing support • Employment help • Education continuation • Childcare services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency funds • Safe housing options • Job placement • Educational advocacy • Family support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate availability • Flexible criteria • Ongoing assistance • Skills building • Family-friendly

Tool 30: Referral Process Framework

Use this table to ensure systematic and effective referrals that truly support survivors:

Referral Stage	Key Actions	Essential Considerations	Documentation Needs
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify survivor needs and preferences Research available services Assess accessibility and appropriateness Discuss options with survivor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivor choice and consent Service availability and capacity Geographic and practical barriers Cultural and language needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivor consent forms Service contact information Assessment of needs Referral justification
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact receiving services Prepare necessary documentation Arrange logistics and support Brief survivor on what to expect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Confidentiality protections Information sharing agreements Transportation and timing Interpreter or advocacy needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral letters Case summaries Consent documentation Service agreements
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitate initial contact Provide accompaniment if desired Ensure smooth transition Address immediate barriers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivor comfort and safety Service responsiveness Communication effectiveness Problem-solving capacity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Referral confirmation Initial service contact Any issues or concerns Follow-up arrangements
Follow-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check on service satisfaction Maintain supportive contact Coordinate ongoing care Evaluate referral success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing survivor needs Service quality and appropriateness Continuity of care Relationship maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow-up contacts Service feedback Outcome assessment Learning for improvement

Tool 31: SEAH Monitoring Indicators Framework

Use this framework to select appropriate indicators for your context and capacity:

Indicator Category	What to Measure	Data Sources	Collection Methods
System Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training completion rates • Risk assessment quality • Response timeframes • Resource allocation • Policy compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training records • Assessment reports • Incident logs • Budget allocations • Compliance audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative data • Document review • Process monitoring • Financial tracking • Regular reporting
Stakeholder Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived safety levels • Reporting confidence • Support satisfaction • System accessibility • Trust in protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Focus groups • Interviews • Feedback forms • Community meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anonymous surveys • Facilitated discussions • Key informant interviews • Suggestion systems • Participatory methods
Protection Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident reduction • Survivor wellbeing • Community empowerment • Barrier reduction • System strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident data • Survivor feedback • Community assessments • Barrier analysis • Capacity measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend analysis • Outcome tracking • Most significant change • Before/after studies • Participatory evaluation
Follow-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check on service satisfaction • Maintain supportive contact • Coordinate ongoing care • Evaluate referral success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing survivor needs • Service quality and appropriateness • Continuity of care • Relationship maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up contacts • Service feedback • Outcome assessment • Learning for improvement

Tool 32: Data Collection and Analysis Framework

Use this framework to select appropriate indicators for your context and capacity:

Indicator Category	What to Measure	Data Sources	Collection Methods
System Function	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training completion rates • Risk assessment quality • Response timeframes • Resource allocation • Policy compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training records • Assessment reports • Incident logs • Budget allocations • Compliance audits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative data • Document review • Process monitoring • Financial tracking • Regular reporting
Stakeholder Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perceived safety levels • Reporting confidence • Support satisfaction • System accessibility • Trust in protection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surveys • Focus groups • Interviews • Feedback forms • Community meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anonymous surveys • Facilitated discussions • Key informant interviews • Suggestion systems • Participatory methods
Protection Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident reduction • Survivor wellbeing • Community empowerment • Barrier reduction • System strengthening 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incident data • Survivor feedback • Community assessments • Barrier analysis • Capacity measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend analysis • Outcome tracking • Most significant change • Before/after studies • Participatory evaluation
Follow-Up	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check on service satisfaction • Maintain supportive contact • Coordinate ongoing care • Evaluate referral success 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing survivor needs • Service quality and appropriateness • Continuity of care • Relationship maintenance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up contacts • Service feedback • Outcome assessment • Learning for improvement

Tool 33: Safeguarding Review Framework

Use this framework to plan and conduct effective safeguarding reviews:

Review Type	Frequency	Key Focus Areas	Methods	Outcomes
Ongoing Feedback	Weekly/Monthly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> System functionality Stakeholder experience Emerging issues Quick wins Immediate adjustments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team discussions Informal check-ins Rapid feedback tools Real-time monitoring Peer consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rapid improvements Issue identification System adjustments Enhanced responsiveness Continuous learning
Annual Internal Review	Yearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall system effectiveness Policy and procedure relevance Resource adequacy Strategic priorities Capacity development needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis Stakeholder surveys Focus groups Document review Process mapping 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic planning Policy updates Resource allocation Training priorities System enhancement
Incident Review	As needed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Response effectiveness System failures Contributing factors Prevention opportunities Support quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incident analysis Stakeholder interviews Process review Root cause analysis Comparative assessment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific improvements Policy changes Training needs System strengthening Learning documentation
External Evaluation	Every 2-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Independent assessment Sector benchmarking Blind spot identification Strategic development Innovation opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External review Comparative analysis Stakeholder consultation Best practice review Recommendation development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Objective validation Strategic direction Sector learning Innovation adoption System transformation

Tool 34: SEAH Accountability Framework

Use this framework to establish comprehensive accountability mechanisms:

Accountability Level	Key Mechanisms	Support Systems	Performance Measures
Individual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role-specific expectations in job descriptions • Regular performance reviews • Personal development planning • Recognition and consequences 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training and development • Coaching and mentoring • Peer support networks • Resource provision • Clear guidance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of training • Quality of risk assessments • Appropriate incident response • Stakeholder feedback • Continuous improvement
Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team safeguarding targets • Collective performance monitoring • Group accountability sessions • Shared responsibility culture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team training sessions • Collective problem-solving • Shared learning opportunities • Resource sharing • Mutual support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team safeguarding indicators • Collective outcomes • Stakeholder satisfaction • System improvements • Learning demonstration
Organisational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Board-level oversight • Public accountability reporting • External auditing • Stakeholder feedback systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership development • System strengthening • Policy development • Capacity building • Partnership building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall safeguarding effectiveness • Stakeholder trust • Incident prevention • System resilience • Sector leadership

