

## PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE AND HARASSMENT POLICY

Policy number	PCG-7	Version	002
Policy accountability	CEO	First approved	January 2020
Last revision	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	Next revision	December 2024
Policy Implementation Responsibility		Implementation Manager	

### INTRODUCTION

Fundamental to the operation of the Global EverGreening Alliance (the Alliance) is respect for the dignity and basic human rights of people within Australia and throughout the world. Every person who represents the Alliance is expected to reflect these values in their professional conduct, regardless of whom they are dealing with, or where they are working.

Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH) is a violation of basic human rights. The Alliance aims to provide a safe and trusted environment that safeguards those under its duty of care from SEAH. This includes beneficiary communities, workers, program participants and workers of implementing or partner organisations.

The Alliance is committed to safeguarding the people it helps and works with. The Alliance's workers and program participants have an obligation to uphold high standards of personal and professional conduct at all times and must not abuse this position to exploit, abuse or harass another person.

The Alliance will actively prevent and respond to SEAH and maintain an organisational culture that prioritises safeguarding against SEAH so that it is safe for those affected to come forward and report incidents and concerns with the assurance they will be handled sensitively and appropriately.

### DEFINITIONS

1. **Sexual exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes. It includes profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from sexual exploitation of another<sup>1</sup>.
2. **Sexual abuse:** The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions<sup>2</sup>.
3. **Sexual harassment:** Unwanted physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature that can include indecent remarks or sexual demands. In this policy, sexual harassment is understood as behaviour that is unwanted in the eyes of the persons directly or indirectly affected. This includes, but is not limited to:
  - a. physical approaches or physical contact of a sexual nature, or sexual assault;
  - b. gestures and other non-verbal communication with sexual undertones;

<sup>1</sup> Source: the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

<sup>2</sup> Source: the UN Secretary General's Bulletin on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

- c. comments of a sexual nature about individuals and/or their body, conduct, sex life or sexual identity;
  - d. sexually discriminatory language and humiliating remarks, including sexually explicit jokes;
  - e. requests to perform sexual activities;
  - f. showing or displaying pornographic or sexist images;
  - g. repetitive questions or prying into an individual's relationship status or details of their relationship;
  - h. invitations to inappropriate locations outside the workplace for work-related meetings
  - i. the sending of gifts that are unwelcome, out of context or embarrassing to an individual;
  - j. suggestive logistics or questions around work trips, including offers to share hotel rooms and unwelcome social invitations; and
  - k. sexually motivated stalking.
4. **Transactional sex:** The exchange of money, employment, goods, services or other benefit for sex, including sexual favours.
  5. **Safeguarding:** Actions, policies and procedures that create and maintain protective environments to protect people from exploitation, harm and abuse of all kinds.

## PRINCIPLES

The Alliance's commitment to the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment is informed by the following principles:

1. The Alliance upholds the rights of all children and adults as articulated in the International Bill of Human Rights, The UN Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women and The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and promotes the right of all adults and children to be protected from all forms of violence including SEAH.
2. Issues of SEAH are fundamentally about abuse of power. Situations of poverty, vulnerability and discrimination as well as power inequities between genders; between aid workers/volunteers and beneficiary communities; and within organisations; create unequal power dynamics resulting in environments where SEAH can exist. The Alliance acknowledges the impact of SEAH on an individual's health and well-being, and in particular that negative physical, mental health and social outcomes that are likely to be compounded when perpetrated by a person in authority.
3. Expected behaviours of those representing the Alliance: Communities trust that the people representing the Alliance will conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and not engage in behaviour contrary to the safety or wellbeing of the children and adults they come into contact with.
4. Zero tolerance of behaviour by the Alliance's employees, volunteers, Board members, Fellows or representatives of implementing organisations that
  - a. results in the sexual exploitation or abuse of anyone,
  - b. helps facilitate SEAH or
  - c. ignores allegations of SEAH by the Alliance or partner organisation personnel.
5. Taking action to prevent SEAH: The Alliance aims to prevent SEAH through implementation of this Policy, communication, training and working collaboratively with all personnel, and partner organisations to safeguard all stakeholders against SEAH.

## SCOPE

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) is a shared responsibility, and this policy applies to all personnel of the Alliance, including members of the Board, employees, volunteers, Fellows, ambassadors, implementing partners and contractors. It will be extended to implementing partners by Programme Implementation Agreements.

## PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to:

1. develop an organisation-wide culture of increased awareness of SEAH, with a scope that covers the workplace, partner organisations and the communities we seek to serve;
2. maintain a safe and nurturing environment for all people;
3. communicate the shared responsibility of all Alliance members and personnel in the prevention of SEAH;
4. uphold acceptable, caring and respectful behaviour at all times; and
5. relay the consequences for personnel who engage in inappropriate behaviour and actions that endanger the welfare of others.

## POLICY

1. Alliance employees, volunteers and member organisations are expected to behave in accordance with Alliance values.
2. The Alliance is committed to the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of all people at all times. All people, regardless of their gender, race, religious beliefs, age, disability, sexual orientation, or family or social background, have equal rights to safeguarding from sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH).
3. The Alliance equips all employees, interns, volunteers, Fellows and Board members to understand and perform their safeguarding responsibilities and obligations.
4. The Alliance applies appropriate standards to external parties, including visitors, contractors, partners, and others affiliated with partners or contractors, to address SEAH risks relating to their engagement with the Alliance's work.
5. All Alliance's employees, volunteers, interns, Fellows and Board members sign an acknowledgement that they have read, understand and agree to abide by this Policy. Signed agreements are kept on file by the Alliance.
6. Alliance employees and affiliates must behave in ways that prevent sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment and prevent any other intentional or unintentional harm to the people the Alliance serves or works amongst.
7. Alliance employees, volunteers and representatives must not engage in any form of harassment, discrimination, physical or verbal abuse, intimidation, favouritism or exploitative sexual relations.
8. Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment constitute acts of gross misconduct and are grounds for termination of employment, engagement or inclusion with the Alliance. Where such an act is suspected, all relevant legal steps will be taken, having regard to the legal and social conditions of the local situation.
9. Transactional sex (namely, exchange of money, gifts, employment, goods, assistance or services for sex, including sexual favours) or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour) is prohibited.
10. Sexual activity with children (persons under the age of 18) is prohibited, regardless of the age of majority or age of consent locally. Mistaken belief in the age of a child is not an excuse.

11. Alliance personnel must not engage in any use of inappropriate language, communication, use of alcohol or drugs, photos, or images that contravene the Alliance's Codes of Conduct.
12. The Alliance's People and Culture Manager is the organisational focal person for the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse.

## **RECRUITMENT**

1. The Alliance takes diligent measures to screen out people who might seek to use the Alliance to harm children or adult beneficiaries, or whose past actions indicate an unacceptable risk of such harm. These measures include addressing safeguarding in job advertisements (when feasible), applications, interviews and references.
2. Safeguarding screening measures are applied to all candidates for employment, Board members, volunteers, interns and individual contractors who will have access to children or adult beneficiaries or to their personal data.
3. Candidates for employment, Board members, Fellows, volunteers, and interns—as well as relevant personnel of contractors and partners—have an identification check and an appropriate criminal record/police background check, to the extent permitted by law, prior to employment or engagement with the Alliance, and periodically thereafter as required by law or appropriate for the context.

## **REPORTING**

The Alliance provides a safe, supportive and secure environment to report SEAH without fear of reprisals. The Alliance will take all concerns seriously and respond immediately. All reports of SEAH will be recorded, regardless of whether they are substantiated or investigated. All information will be saved securely and confidentially, in compliance with the Alliance's Privacy Policy. The principles of natural justice will apply to all investigations. Complaints will be de-identified if requested by the complainant.

All employees, affiliates and partners are responsible and obligated to report any suspicions of child or adult beneficiary abuse (or other safeguarding concerns, including any violations of this Policy) that is connected to the Alliance or its programs.

In addition, any credible concern or suspicion of sexual abuse or exploitation by a worker outside the Alliance will be immediately reported. Where interagency mechanisms are established, these will be utilised to report the incident, in consultation with the Alliance or its partners.

The Alliance's Complaints Handling Procedures detail how and to whom complaints can be lodged in Australia. Program implementation agreements require that implementing partners comply with this policy and have a grievance/reporting mechanism that is culturally appropriate and accessible to primary stakeholders.

## **MANAGING REPORTS**

1. The Alliance is committed to handling reports of abuse, exploitation and harassment according to our Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures and Privacy Policy
2. The Alliance is committed wherever possible, to protecting the privacy of alleged perpetrators, survivors, and whistleblowers.
3. Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment of individuals under the age of 18 years will be handled according to the Alliance's Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy and Privacy Policy.

4. The Alliance will refer alleged SEAH incidents that involve a criminal aspect to local law enforcement channels where it is safe to do so and is in accordance with the wishes of the victims/survivors.

## SAFE PROGRAMMING/RISK MANAGEMENT

1. The Alliance is committed to ensuring that protection and safeguarding are always considered in risk assessments and ensuring the inclusion of explicit prompts or criteria that relate to the risks associated with protection and safeguarding of vulnerable people.
2. The Alliance is committed to ensuring that due diligence and/or capacity assessments of partners include an assessment of partners' implementation of key safeguarding and risk policies including the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment.

## RELATED POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

GEA Child Safeguarding and Protection Policy  
 GEA Human Rights Policy  
 GEA Workplace Code of Conduct  
 GEA Child and Vulnerable Adult Safeguarding Code of Conduct  
 GEA Privacy Policy  
 GEA Whistleblower Policy and Procedures  
 GEA Complaints Handling Policy and Procedures

## REVISION HISTORY

Revision Date	Revision no:	Summary description of revision(s) made	Section(s) changed:
19 December 2019	1	Creation of Policy	All
November 2023	2	Policy version control box i.e., responsible person; 1 year policy revision period; policy implementation responsibility Policy updated to include the People and Culture Manager as a focal person for PSEAH; and reference to the Privacy Policy and Complaints Handling Policy Alignment with GEA Whistleblower Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minor grammatical/clarifying changes throughout</li> <li>• Version Control box</li> <li>• Policy item 12</li> <li>• Reporting</li> <li>• Managing Reports</li> <li>• Related Policies and Procedures</li> </ul>

## AUTHORISATION



Signature of Board Secretary  
 20<sup>th</sup> December 2023  
 Global EverGreening Alliance Ltd

