

PSEA ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT TOOL NARRATIVE



Foreword

Every organization has the obligation to think about the implications of their work, and the safety and well-being of the people they are working with. Are you sure your organization is not putting your program participants at serious risk of sexual exploitation or abuse by your staff, volunteers, and partners?

Digna's no-obligation, customizable self-assessment is a useful tool that helps organizational leaders to gain a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their organization's prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) implementation. This is the first step of a journey that will enable your organization to implement the best and most appropriate PSEA measures.

You will learn that, while the development of strong PSEA policies and operating procedures is essential, this is just the start of a much deeper process of self-reflection, engagement, leadership and accountability that will get your organization to a point at which it can start to embed robust systems and processes, and start a shift of responsibility-sharing within its working culture.

The tool is not meant as an audit, but rather to examine accountability as a mutual commitment, by organizations, their partners, and other stakeholders – including rights holders/targeted communities in their institution, their offices, and within their programmes and projects.

1. Introduction

This tool is meant to support upholding the highest standards of quality and accountability towards the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). The tool is meant not to judge or test organizations or the people working on PSEA, but to encourage honest, internal reflection to ensure progress is made in combating SEA. The tool, therefore, is meant to enable organizations to advance in their own efforts to prevent SEA and show progress over time, and to enable organizations to reach out for support. Every organization will be at different places depending on their unique situation, but all should be working towards bettering their practices and processes on PSEA. It is not meant to single out organizations or individuals, but rather meant to create a process of internal reflection to ensure continuous improvement of systems and processes for PSEA.

Some of the data is requested to be shared with Digna as noted below, for reporting purposes and to inform the programming offered to support organizations on their PSEA journey.

2. Purpose of the Tool

The tool is meant to help organizations hold themselves accountable to core commitments on PSEA, to their partners, based on mutual respect, fairness, and accountability, and to the people they aim to support. Dialogue, openness, and mutual support between organizations, and between organizations and their partners, in order to learn from each other, is critical. The tool highlights good practices, identifies areas where support is needed, and helps to track overall successes, challenges, and gaps in SEA prevention and response, and helps to show improvements/progress as organizations and with their partners.

The tool is a guide that can be tailored/adapted to the organization's specific needs and operations; no one tool can serve/match exactly the wide variety of organizations within the Canadian NGO sector, and thus it is meant as guidance on key areas and mechanisms that can be put in place to better be accountable for PSEA. While using the tool is voluntary, it will be helpful to gauge progress in implementing holistic SEA prevention and response measures within organizations and, if organizations are willing to share, within the Canadian NGO sector. Doing so helps to demonstrate the deep commitment of Canadian organizations to growth and improvement on issues related to PSEA, and a commitment to hold themselves accountable on a voluntary basis.

Digna is committed to supporting organizations in the process of building capacity and accountability for PSEA. The tool provides users with an opportunity to highlight good practices and highlight areas where they feel they need support.

3. Use of the Tool for Organizational Leaders



As noted above, the tool is an overarching assessment for organizations to use to track their internal progress on implementing PSEA measures. While understandably an organizational leader/CEO will delegate the task of completing a form to a PSEA focal point or other person, ultimately accountability for implementation of PSEA measures and reporting lies with organizational leadership.

General Instructions:

It is recommended that this tool is used in the following way by leaders:

- Review the tool to track progress and challenges in the organization to inform a PSEA work plan for the organization. All organizations will be at different phases in terms of meeting the standards, and work plans will need to be realistic for the organization, but the focus is on progress in implementing the standards, and critically in reducing the risk of SEA.
- Review the tool to look for red flags that need immediate attention and to set organizational priorities based on the assessment results for the coming year/work plan.
- If applicable, use the information within the tool to report to the organization's Board of Directors on PSEA, as per Tab 3, which can be transcribed into challenges, gaps, progress, successes, and planning the way forward. Inform the Board of immediate concerns/red flags to be addressed and get an endorsement on priority actions for the work plan.

Focus on making progress. Organizations should strive for continuous incremental improvement, as implementing all measures takes time and resources to do so. An annual review will be led by Digna to support organizations with this process.

A step by step guide:

Minimum:

This step is for all organizations. If your organization is smaller or has limited time/capacity, this is an easier first step to prepare for a more comprehensive review.

1. The organization's leader (CEO, Executive director, president) and/or PSEA focal point completes the Minimum Standards tab.
2. If it was completed by the PSEA focal point, there should be a discussion with the organization's leader to see if the organization is meeting minimum standards after reviewing the summary data.
3. The leader of the organization shares a copy of The Minimum Standards tab with Digna, by submitting it to digna.info@cooperation.ca by January 24, 2022. Sharing this data is voluntary, but highly encouraged for Leaders Pledge signatories.

Comprehensive:

Ideally, this is the process that all organizations who have the capacity will follow, to provide more opportunity for internal reflection and a two-step verification between the PSEA focal point and organizational leader.

1. The PSEA Focal Point or relevant staff completes the Canadian Level assessment (tab 2) in consultation with relevant stakeholders.
2. The leader of the organization completes the Minimum Standards tab based on their own self-assessment of their organization.
3. The leader reviews the summary sheet and has a discussion with the PSEA focal point or person who completed the Canadian Level assessment. The Minimum Standards sheet allows the leader to compare responses to see if the organization is meeting minimum standards after reviewing the detailed data.
4. *Complete step 3 of the above 'minimum'.*

A global perspective:

This may take more time, but will ultimately lead to a more robust reflection on all levels of an organization's duty of care towards the people they work with, including through partner organizations.

1. Complete all steps in the 'Comprehensive' instructions.
2. The Country Level and Program level tabs are shared with country teams and program staff to support them to assess PSEA capacity and gaps.
3. A discussion between the Leader, the PSEA focal point, and the country/program level focal points is held to review the results of all processes, and create an action plan to address any gaps at all levels.

4. Information Sharing Protocol

Digna encourages participating organizations to share their data and has developed a self-assessment summary sheet on the Minimum Standards within the tool. Digna would like to publish aggregate data in order to share good practices, identify common challenges and monitor sector-wide progress. After a trial period, the tool will be adapted as required.

Digna's information sharing protocol to ensure confidentiality of the information includes:

1. Only Digna staff will have access to the shared raw data from participating organizations. Identifying data will not be shared in any way.
2. When publishing aggregate data, Digna will ensure the anonymity of responses.
3. Data will not be used to evaluate organizations, only to identify areas for support by Digna.
4. When reporting to GAC, Digna only reports on:
 - a. Response rates (not specific organizations)
 - b. Indicators in the Digna PMF related to overall sector progress, disaggregated by the size of organizations

5. Components of the Tool

The tool enables organizations to examine key areas within the organization, its country offices, its staff, partners, affiliated personnel, as well as its projects and programmes to see if all measures possible are in place to prevent and respond to SEA. The tool is divided into 6 components (each has its own tab in Excel). These include:

Tab 1: Information about the tool and how to fill out

This provides general guidance on the excel tool, and the minimum to fill out. ENSURE to save a copy for sharing with Digna tab 3: Minimum Standards. If you complete the rest of the tool for internal reflection, save that separately from the data you submit to Digna.

Tab 2: Canadian Level

These questions are meant to examine practices within the Canadian office, and within the organization more broadly, including: policies; awareness-raising training of staff, board, and other personnel; resources dedicated to PSEA; hiring and on-boarding procedures for new staff; requirements for partners/country offices; as well as complaints and investigations handling and procedures. There is space to explain, list best practices, as well as identify areas of support needed.

Tab 3: Minimum standards (data to be shared with Digna)

This is meant to be completed by the organizational leader, after discussing the form with the person who completes it. The leader completing the sheet reviews the summary sheet and the more detailed sheets to obtain the information to complete these questions. There is space to explain, list best practices, as well as identify areas of support needed. These basic questions are the minimum and can help the leader decide what to report to their board, if applicable.

This should be shared in line with the Digna information sharing protocol.

Tab 4: Summary Sheet

DO NOT FILL OUT - this automatically populates from the questions in Tab 2.

It is important to note that ownership of the following two assessment processes should lie with local staff, first and foremost to demonstrate the power shift to locally-led, and away from top-down approaches. This is just part of decolonizing practices and creating organizational culture change.

Tab 5: Country Level

These questions are meant to examine practices within country/implementing offices and their partners. If an organization operates mostly through partners, this section could be used for their partners' offices.

It includes some similar components to the Canadian office level with respect to staff and other personnel, resources dedicated to PSEA; hiring and on-boarding procedures for new staff; but also about partners' processes and procedures (if applicable); information to communities about PSEA; complaints and feedback mechanisms; and referral pathways/support to survivors of SEA.

Tab 6: Project Level

This examines how projects or programmes in countries of operation comply with donor requirements on PSEA; if they examine, address/mitigate, and monitor PSEA risks; complaints and feedback mechanisms, as well as how project/programme participants and communities are engaged in assessing risk and engagement with complaints mechanisms. It contains different headings including: general information about the project/programme, risk mitigation, partnerships, participant/community involvement, and monitoring and evaluation.

Additional considerations

In addition to the organizational assessment, Digna recommends that organizations also have the following in place:

Reporting Systems

Each organization will have their own reporting systems, depending on the context and structure of their organization. In terms of the requirements for Canadian organizations, GAC expects partner organizations to report allegations within 48 hours of determining that an allegation is credible. Please see [Digna's GAC Requirements](#) page for more details, and the resource library for [examples of reporting mechanisms](#).

A sample has been provided, that is from [InterAction's PSEA Training Module](#) handout from Module 1: Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Response Flowchart. [See here for more examples.](#)

Risk Assessments

A risk assessment should be created and elaborated as a separate tool, and is beyond the scope of this particular tool. A risk assessment is key to helping an organization determine more definitively what risks exist in their operations/contexts in which they work, strategies to mitigate them, and if the measures sufficiently reduce the risk to right's holders/communities with whom organizations work.

Fundamentally, examining risk of PSEA in context is critical to ensuring all measures are being taken that are appropriate to the context and circumstances in which projects/programmes operate and to reduce specific risks. While there are always important generalized measures such as training and a code of conduct, different situations of risk may call for increased mitigation measures (e.g. staff working in pairs etc.).

Risks are contextual and very much depend on the operational environment, activities, targeted population. Risk assessments should be participatory with the community.

There are two samples within this tab

1. The first is a quick (true or false) checklist-which asks basic questions about the context, the population targeted, the response type and ways of working, and finally on steps taken by the organization to mitigate risk (adapted from the British Red Cross). The more “trues” that exist in the checklist, the higher the risk of PSEA is, and greater the potential risk, and the need for ensuring mitigating measures are in place in specific locations or projects/programmes.
2. The second is a basic risk analysis sample tool, which has to be done by context, examining what risks present themselves in the context or in the programme/project, what situation is present that may contribute to the risk, what reduces the risk that is already in place, and what mitigation measures are or could be put in place, what is the likelihood of the risk and then examining the risk after putting in place mitigation measures to see if it is acceptable (1). There are many ways to do a risk analysis, and this is a simple example.

A basic example of a risk is given within the sample tool but, as noted, risks are very specific to situations and need to be examined closely with regards to the context in which they exist. [See here for more examples.](#)

(1) Impact was not included as the impact of SEA is serious in all cases.

Support and resources for completing the tool

Digna recognizes that doing an organizational assessment can seem overwhelming, and doing it right is important. Below are some additional resources to support your organization in completing the tool. You can also reach out to digna.info@cooperation.ca at any time for support.

Other resources:

The minimum standards

- [Global Affairs Canada requirements](#)
- [DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance: Key Pillars of Prevention and Response](#)
- [Leaders Pledge on preventing sexual exploitation and abuse](#)
- [IASC core principles](#)

[Risk Assessment and Management Reporting Mechanisms](#)

Lessons learned from the PSEA Focal Points Community of Practice meeting on October 19th 2021.

- Organizational assessments are helpful in identifying gaps, and knowing what needs to be done.
- Process and ownership: PSEA is everybody's job, yet ownership of an organizational assessment should be a shared responsibility between leadership and the PSEA focal point. There will be a need to involve many colleagues including HR, gender, security, governance and other management in the process, and in safeguarding work day to day.
- Conducting an assessment requires trust from all parties involved, so it is recommended to take time to build strong relationships.
- Contextualizing is key, specifically regarding the organizational structure, local context, languages, and varied standards by country.
- The assessment is just the first step and requires follow-up, and this will take time (sometimes years!). Having a policy in place is first, then ensuring all implementing partners apply those policies, and conducting refreshers and reminders will be needed. Time and resources are always needed.

FAQs from the PSEA focal points

Our organization has limited financial and human resources to dedicate capacity to completing this tool. Can Digna support?

This tool has been designed to support organizations so they don't need to invent their own assessment processes, and to be completed by the PSEA focal point. Digna is unable to provide financial support to organizations, however we will be hosting future conversations with the Community of Practice to give you the chance to ask your questions and receive support from other PSEA Focal Points. If having dedicated support is of interest, please consult [Digna's Directory of PSEA Service Providers](#) to find a consultant who can meet your needs, or reach out to digna.info@cooperation.ca and we can direct you to the appropriate resources.

How do organizations monitor/enforce the completion of this assessment with country offices and partner organizations?

This tool is not meant as an audit or compliance mechanism, but rather to provide organizations with the tools to effectively assess PSEA capacity at all levels. Ownership of the country and program-level assessment processes should lie with local staff, first and foremost to demonstrate the power shift to locally-led, and away from top-down approaches.

This is just part of decolonizing practices and creating organizational culture change. This can be done by “[a]ssessing the safeguarding policies, processes, and training within partner organizations, and facilitating them to address those of [Canadian organizations], in order to understand where both organization's approaches can be improved and redesigned using local knowledge and expertise.” - [Safeguarding in successful partnerships](#).

How can organizations prioritize as well as align policies on PSEA, Diversity Equity and Inclusion, decolonization, etc.?

Doing an intersectional analysis of organizational culture, systems, policies and practices is a priority for PSEA as well as for tackling other systemic issues in organizations and the sector as a whole. Preventing sexual exploitation and abuse is a specific goal that fits within the context of larger sectoral shifts related to locally-led initiatives, anti-racism, decolonization and others. Ultimately, gendered and racialized power dynamics will influence the risk of SEA being perpetrated by staff of an organization, in addition to other factors such as the specific identities and needs of program participants, so prioritizing PSEA in this context will help identify other areas for alignment.

How do we navigate difficult conversations around PSEA, including varied cultural standards, resistance/defensiveness, and limited capacity?

As mentioned before, contextualizing and local ownership are essential for an effective process. Here are a few tools to support you in navigating difficult conversations:

- [Developing and modelling a positive safeguarding culture: A tool for leaders](#) A discussion-based tool to support leaders of organisations to understand what a positive safeguarding culture looks like.
- [IASC Communications Package on Addressing Sexual Misconduct](#) A simple tool to guide senior managers in holding a one-hour discussion with staff on SEA.
- [3 practical ideas to shift the power in partnerships](#)



DIGNA, THE CANADIAN CENTRE OF EXPERTISE ON THE PREVENTION OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE, IS A PROGRAM OF COOPERATION CANADA



DIGNA IS MADE POSSIBLE IN PART THANKS TO THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA THROUGH GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA