



## **SAFEGUARDING POLICY**

### **1. PREAMBLE**

The CSOs Engagement Forum (CEF), established pursuant to its Constitution, is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and ethical conduct in the pursuit of its mandate. In accordance with the principles of human dignity, equality, and protection enshrined in the Constitution of CEF, this Safeguarding Policy is adopted to prevent and respond to all forms of abuse, exploitation, harassment, and harm.

CEF recognizes its duty of care to all individuals it engages with, including staff, volunteers, partners, consultants, community members, and beneficiaries, particularly children and other vulnerable persons.

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### **2. LEGAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS**

This Policy is developed and implemented pursuant to:

- The CEF Constitution provisions on ethical leadership, accountability, and protection of members and stakeholders;
- Applicable national laws and regulations;
- International best practices and donor safeguarding requirements.

This Policy shall be binding on all persons acting for or on behalf of CEF.

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### **3. PURPOSE OF THE POLICY**

The purpose of this Safeguarding Policy is to:

1. Prevent abuse, exploitation, and harassment in all CEF activities;
  2. Establish clear standards of behavior for all CEF representatives;
  3. Provide safe, confidential, and effective reporting mechanisms;
  4. Ensure prompt, fair, and survivor-centered responses to safeguarding concerns;
  5. Demonstrate CEF's ethical responsibility and institutional risk awareness.
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### **4. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

This Policy applies to:



- Members of the CEF Governing Bodies;
- Secretariat staff and volunteers;
- Consultants and interns;
- Partner organizations and implementing entities;
- Any individual representing or acting on behalf of CEF.

Compliance with this Policy is a condition of engagement with CEF.

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## 5. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this Policy:

- Safeguarding means the responsibility to protect people from harm, including abuse, exploitation, harassment, and neglect.
  - Abuse includes physical, sexual, emotional, or psychological harm.
  - Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) refers to any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, power, or trust for sexual purposes.
  - Harassment includes any unwelcome conduct that violates dignity or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
  - Child means any person under the age of eighteen (18) years.
  - Vulnerable Person refers to any individual who may be at increased risk of harm due to age, disability, socio-economic status, or other factors.
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## 6. POLICY STATEMENT

CEF adopts a zero-tolerance approach to all forms of abuse, exploitation, and harassment. Any act or omission that contravenes this Policy shall constitute serious misconduct and shall attract disciplinary, contractual, and/or legal consequences.

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## 7. PREVENTION MEASURES

### 7.1 Code of Conduct

All CEF representatives shall:

- Uphold respect, professionalism, and integrity;



- Refrain from any conduct that may cause harm or exploitation;
- Avoid conflicts of interest that may compromise safeguarding.

## 7.2 Vetting and Due Diligence

CEF shall implement appropriate vetting procedures, including:

- Background and reference checks for staff, volunteers, and consultants;
  - Safeguarding assessments of partner organizations;
  - Mandatory declaration of past safeguarding-related disciplinary actions.
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## 8. REPORTING MECHANISMS

CEF shall establish safe, accessible, and confidential reporting channels, which may include:

- A designated Safeguarding Focal Person;
- Written or electronic reporting mechanisms;
- Anonymous reporting where feasible.

All reports shall be treated with confidentiality, dignity, and seriousness. Retaliation against any person who reports a safeguarding concern in good faith is strictly prohibited.

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## 9. RESPONSE AND CASE MANAGEMENT

Upon receipt of a safeguarding concern, CEF shall:

1. Take immediate steps to ensure safety and protection of affected persons;
  2. Conduct a timely, impartial, and confidential assessment;
  3. Apply survivor-centered principles, including respect, consent, and non-discrimination;
  4. Institute appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the CEF Constitution and applicable policies;
  5. Refer matters to competent authorities where required by law.
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## 10. TRAINING AND AWARENESS

CEF shall ensure that:



- All staff, members, and partners receive regular safeguarding training;
  - Safeguarding obligations are integrated into induction processes;
  - Awareness materials are disseminated across all levels of the organization.
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## 11. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 11.1 Governing Body

- Provide oversight and ensure institutional compliance with this Policy;
- Allocate adequate resources for safeguarding implementation.

### 11.2 Secretariat

- Implement and operationalize the Policy;
- Maintain safeguarding records and reports.

### 11.3 Members, Staff, and Partners

- Comply fully with this Policy;
  - Report any safeguarding concerns promptly.
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## 12. MONITORING, REVIEW, AND AMENDMENT

This Policy shall be reviewed periodically to ensure alignment with:

- The CEF Constitution;
- Applicable laws;
- Donor requirements and best practices.

Any amendments shall be approved in accordance with the governance procedures set out in the CEF Constitution.

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## 13. COMMENCEMENT

This Safeguarding Policy shall take effect upon approval by the competent organ of CEF and shall remain in force unless amended or repealed in accordance with the CEF Constitution.

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Approved \_\_\_\_\_ by \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Board: \_\_\_\_\_