



ATPS SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE, AND HARASSMENT (SEAH) POLICY 2025

This policy aims to prevent SEAH, support survivors, and hold perpetrators accountable.



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ATPS SEXUAL EXPLOITATION, ABUSE, AND HARASSMENT (SEAH) POLICY 2025

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Introduction and Rationale

The African Technology Policy Studies Network (ATPS) is dedicated to promoting the generation, dissemination, and application of science, technology, and innovation (STI) for African development, environmental sustainability, and global inclusion. A key component of our commitment to fostering an inclusive and sustainable environment is ensuring the safety and dignity of all individuals associated with ATPS. Sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) are severe violations of fundamental human rights and undermine our mission. This policy aims to prevent SEAH, support survivors, and hold perpetrators accountable. ATPS is committed to upholding universally recognized human rights and international legal norms, including the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles. SEAH violates these standards and undermines our mission to foster inclusive development. This policy adopts a **zero-tolerance approach** to SEAH and prioritizes survivor dignity, accountability, and systemic prevention.

Definition of Key Terms

- **Sexual Exploitation:** Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust for sexual purposes, including, but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.
- **Sexual Abuse:** The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
- **Sexual Harassment:** Any unwelcome sexual advance, request for sexual favors, or other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive environment.
- **Survivor/Victim:** A person who has been sexually exploited, abused, or harassed.
- **Perpetrator:** A person who commits an act of sexual exploitation, abuse, or harassment.
- **Whistleblower:** A person who reports information or activities that they believe to be unethical or illegal.
- **Third Parties:** Individuals or communities benefiting from ATPS activities, including direct/indirect recipients of assistance.
- **Survivor-Centered Approach:** Ensuring survivors' rights, safety, and dignity guide all responses, balanced with procedural fairness.
- **Best Interests of the Child:** Prioritizing child welfare in all actions involving minors (persons under 18).

Goals and Objectives

1. **Prevent SEAH:** Establish a zero-tolerance culture towards SEAH and implement preventive measures.
2. **Support Survivors:** Provide comprehensive support to survivors of SEAH.

3. **Ensure Accountability:** Hold perpetrators accountable and enforce consequences for SEAH.
4. **Foster a Safe Environment:** Create a safe and respectful environment for all staff, partners, and stakeholders.

Objectives

1. **Establish Clear Guidelines:** Develop and enforce clear guidelines and procedures for preventing and addressing SEAH. **Raise Awareness:** Conduct regular training and awareness campaigns on SEAH.
2. **Encourage Reporting:** Create a safe and confidential reporting mechanism for SEAH.
3. **Provide Support Services:** Offer medical, psychological, and legal support to survivors.
4. **Implement Disciplinary Actions:** Apply appropriate disciplinary measures against perpetrators of SEAH.
5. **Promote Collaboration:** Work with stakeholders to uphold the highest standards of conduct.

Core Principles

1. **Zero Tolerance:** SEAH constitutes gross misconduct and grounds for termination.
2. **Prohibition of Child Exploitation:** Sexual activity with minors (<18) is prohibited, regardless of local consent laws. Mistaken belief about age is not a defense.
3. **No Exchange for Favors:** Prohibition of exchanging money, employment, goods, or services for sexual acts.
4. **Abuse of Power:** Prohibited sexual relationships leveraging position, rank, or influence.
5. **Mandatory Reporting:** All staff and partners must report SEAH incidents.
6. **Collective Responsibility:** Everyone must foster a safe environment free from SEAH.

Policy Framework

Preventive Measures

- **Code of Conduct:** All staff, partners, and stakeholders must adhere to the ATPS Code of Conduct, which explicitly prohibits SEAH.
- **Background Checks:** Conduct thorough background checks on all prospective employees and partners to prevent individuals with a history of SEAH from being hired or engaged.
- **Training Programs:** Implement mandatory SEAH training for all employees, including senior management, to raise awareness and promote understanding of SEAH issues.
- **Safe Recruitment Practices:** Ensure that recruitment processes are transparent and free from bias or favoritism, particularly concerning gender.

Roles and Responsibilities

ATPS Employees/Partners:

- Must never engage in SEAH or retaliate against reporters.

- Report incidents promptly via designated channels.
- Complete mandatory SEAH training annually.

Managers/Supervisors:

- Ensure staff/partners understand and comply with this policy.
- Address reports promptly, confidentially, and impartially.

Executive Director:

- Allocate resources for SEAH prevention, survivor support, and investigations.
- Report annually to the Board on SEAH cases and policy efficacy.

Working with Partners

ATPS partners must:

- Adhere to this policy and IASC Core Principles.
- Conduct background checks on personnel and report SEAH incidents to ATPS.
- Implement survivor-centered reporting mechanisms and collaborate on investigations.
- Failure to comply may result in contract termination or funding withdrawal.

Reporting Mechanisms

- **Confidential Reporting Channels:** Establish secure and confidential reporting mechanisms, including a hotline and an online platform, for individuals to report SEAH incidents.
 - Hotline: +254- 020 2714092 (24/7, toll-free).
 - Online portal: ATPS-SEAH-Report.org.
 - Email: seah-report@atpsnet.org.
- **Whistleblower Protection:** Ensure that whistleblowers are protected from retaliation and that their reports are handled with the utmost confidentiality. Retaliation against reporters is prohibited and will result in disciplinary action.
- **Anonymous Reporting:** Allow for anonymous reporting to encourage individuals who may fear retribution to come forward. Allowed to encourage disclosure.

Support for Survivors

- **Immediate Assistance:** Provide immediate medical and psychological assistance to survivors of SEAH.
- **Counseling Services:** Offer ongoing counseling and support services to help survivors cope with the trauma and facilitate their recovery.
- **Legal Assistance:** Provide legal support and guidance to survivors who wish to pursue legal action against perpetrators.

- **Safe Spaces:** Create safe spaces within ATPS offices and project sites where survivors can receive support without fear of further harm.

Investigation and Accountability

- **Investigation Procedures:** Develop and implement clear procedures for investigating SEAH allegations, ensuring that investigations are conducted promptly, thoroughly, and impartially.
- **Independent Oversight:** Where necessary, involve independent external bodies to oversee investigations and ensure objectivity.
- **Disciplinary Measures:** Apply strict disciplinary measures, including termination of employment and legal action, against individuals found guilty of SEAH.
- **Transparency:** Communicate the outcomes of SEAH investigations to the relevant parties while respecting the privacy and confidentiality of those involved.

Investigations will be impartial, timely, and survivor-centered. External experts may be engaged for objectivity. Survivors may bring a support person to interviews and will receive referrals to medical/legal services, regardless of investigation outcomes.

- **Consequences:**
 - Employees: Termination, legal action.
 - Partners: Contract termination, funding withdrawal.
 - Third Parties: Reported to local authorities.

Implementation Strategy

- **Leadership Commitment:** Ensure that ATPS leadership is committed to upholding and enforcing the SEAH policy.
- **Resource Allocation:** Allocate necessary resources, including funding and personnel, to support SEAH prevention and response initiatives.
- **Policy Integration:** Integrate SEAH prevention and response measures into all aspects of ATPS operations and decision-making processes.
- **Continuous Improvement:** Regularly review and update the policy to reflect evolving best practices and emerging threats.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring

- **Regular Audits:** Conduct regular audits to ensure compliance with SEAH policies and procedures.
- **Feedback Mechanisms:** Implement feedback mechanisms to gather input from staff, partners, and

stakeholders on the effectiveness of SEAH measures.

- **Performance Indicators:** Develop and track performance indicators related to SEAH prevention and response efforts.

Evaluation

- **Annual Reviews:** Conduct annual reviews of the SEAH policy and its implementation to identify areas for improvement.
- **Impact Assessment:** Assess the impact of SEAH prevention and response initiatives on the organizational culture and the safety of staff, partners, and stakeholders.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Engage with stakeholders, including survivors, to evaluate the effectiveness of support services and reporting mechanisms.

Training and Policy Review

- **Mandatory Training:** Annual SEAH training for all staff/partners, including digital safeguarding and child protection.
- **Policy Review:** Annual updates to align with international standards (e.g., IASC, UN guidelines).

Scope of Application

This policy applies to all regular and contractual staff of ATPS, as well as partners and stakeholders involved in ATPS operations and activities. Compliance with this policy is mandatory, and any breaches will be addressed promptly and decisively.

Conclusion

The ATPS Policy on Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment underscores our commitment to maintaining a safe and respectful environment for all individuals associated with ATPS. By fostering a culture of zero tolerance towards SEAH, implementing robust preventive measures, providing comprehensive support to survivors, and ensuring accountability, ATPS aims to uphold the highest standards of conduct and contribute to sustainable development and innovation. ATPS reaffirms its commitment to eradicating SEAH through robust prevention, survivor-centered responses, and accountability. By integrating global best practices, we strive to create a safe, equitable environment for all.

Related References

- Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Six Core Principles.
- UN Secretary-General's Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse.
- Convention on the Rights of the Child.



Science Technology and Innovation for African Development

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