

Association for Water and Rural Development (AWARD) Protection from Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (SEAH) Policy

Last updated: 1st December 2024

v.1.0

Addendum 2

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the commitment of the Association for Water and Rural Development (hereafter 'AWARD') to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) in all its forms and in all aspects of its operations. This commitment aligns with our values, South African legal frameworks, and the international norms and standards set by our respective funding partners and agencies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all AWARD employees, board members, associates, volunteers, contractors, consultants, and any other individuals engaged with AWARD, including entities acting on behalf of the organisation and beneficiaries of our programs. It also extends to all operational contexts, whether in the Republic of South Africa (hereafter 'South Africa') or internationally. Furthermore, this policy applies to all interactions, whether conducted in-person or via a virtual means, such as computer, telephone, or cellphone. This Addendum 2 is added to the AWARD Human Resources Policy and its provisions.

3. Policy Statement

AWARD has zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment in any form. We are committed to maintaining the highest standards of integrity, accountability, and transparency, while providing safeguards commensurate with our organisation's size and non-profit status.

4. Definitions

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

4.2. Sexual Abuse: The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.

4.3. Sexual Harassment: Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours, or other physical conduct of a sexual nature.

5. Principles

5.1. Zero Tolerance: AWARD adopts a zero-tolerance approach to SEAH.

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5.2. Survivor-Centred Approach: We prioritize the rights, needs, and wishes of survivors, ensuring confidentiality and support.

5.3. Accountability: All personnel are held accountable for their behaviour, with clear consequences for violations.

5.4. Inclusivity: Policies and practices are designed to be inclusive, addressing the specific vulnerabilities of marginalized groups.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

- The Board of Directors is responsible for overseeing the implementation and monitoring of this policy
- Senior management of the organisation are to ensure this policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
- Employees, associates, consultants, contractors, volunteers and any other individuals interacting with the organisation must adhere to this policy and report any concerns or incidents.

7. Prevention Measures

- Recruitment: Strict vetting processes will be used for new employees, consultants and associates, including reference verification and (in the case of full-time employees) basic background checks.
- Training: Periodic SEAH training for all personnel will be conducted, emphasising prevention and reporting.
- Code of Conduct: All personnel must sign and adhere to a Code of Conduct that outlines behavioural expectations.

8. Reporting Mechanisms

- Confidential Channels: Multiple reporting options are available, as detailed in **Section 13**.
- Protection for Whistleblowers: Safeguards against retaliation for those who report incidents in good faith.

9. Response Mechanisms

- Investigation: Prompt, fair, and confidential investigations of all reports.
- Support for Survivors: Access to medical, psychological, and legal support services.
- Disciplinary Action: Appropriate measures, up to and including termination, for confirmed violations.

10. Compliance with Legal and Funding Requirements

This policy aligns with South African laws, including the Protection from Harassment Act (No. 17 of 2011), as well as international funding requirements (such as those set by the European Union).

11. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or when significant changes occur in legislation, organisational operations, or funder requirements.

12. Contact Information

For concerns or to report an incident, AWARD management can be contacted anonymously via the office telephone number (+27 67 657 7935) or via email to the general AWARD email address (info@award.org.za) or directly to the Board of Directors, via board@award.org.za.

13. Commitment Statement

By adopting this policy, AWARD affirms its dedication to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH) in all its forms and in all aspects of its operations. All employees, partners, and stakeholders are expected to uphold this commitment.

Signed:



Date: 01 / 12 / 2024

Approved by:

Dr Jai K. Clifford-Holmes

Executive Director and member of the AWARD Board of Directors