



IDI SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2025



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VERSION DETAILS:

1.	Date Effective from	1 December 2025
2.	Process of Development and Approval	The current version is a light touch update of the 2023 IDI Safeguarding Policy. The update was done by CS. Approval was accorded by the IDI Director General upon the recommendation of the Deputy Director General (CS).
3.	Schedule of Maintenance	Annual
4.	Version being replaced	2023 IDI Safeguarding Policy has been updated and is not being replaced
5.	Available at	MS Teams_ALL STAFF_IDI Policies_2025 IDI Policies

1. SAFEGUARDING AND ITS IMPORTANCE FOR IDI

1.1 CONTEXT

The development sector has long been a high-risk environment for sexual exploitation and abuse. Stories of sexual exploitation of children and adults who are at risk for a variety of reasons have been reported globally for many years.

The stories led to fundamental questions of how development organisations prevent and respond to sexual exploitation. It impacted heavily on organisations working in development – both providers of support and development partners – as well many sections of local communities in developing countries. In response, many organisations working in the development sector have taken it upon themselves to review and strengthen their approaches to safeguarding. IDI takes this safeguarding very seriously and aims to create a safe environment in which no people will experience harm or exploitation during their work and contact with us.

1.2 DEFINITIONS

Safeguarding in its broadest sense means protecting people and the environment from unintended harm. In this policy, IDI is focusing on preventing **sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment or bullying**¹, and in the event this does take place, taking appropriate action towards those responsible as well as providing support to those affected. The aim is to minimise the likelihood and impact of these actions towards the people we are trying to help, people in the local communities we work with, and also people who work for, or with, IDI.

An important part of safeguarding is focused on protecting **children, young people and vulnerable adults** in local communities, as well as the staff and volunteers of development organisations. The standard legal definition of vulnerable adult is someone who may be for any reason unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation.

1.3 RELEVANCE FOR IDI

IDI does not engage in front line services which includes working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. However, IDI staff and others who work with IDI spend significant time in developing countries, living and working in

¹ These terms are explained in more detail in IDI's Code of Ethics, and repeated in section 2.1 below.

local communities where children, young people and vulnerable adults are present. In addition, sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment and bullying are all issues which could occur within any organisation.

This policy is therefore intended to help IDI adopt a more comprehensive safeguarding practice and culture. It focuses on IDI's ability to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults in communities where IDI staff live and work, as well as IDI's own staff and volunteers, from sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, and bullying.

As a Norwegian foundation, IDI is bound by Norwegian law. In Norway, safeguarding issues are covered in a number of laws, including but not limited to the Norwegian Law on Equality and Prohibition of Discrimination, the Gender Equality Act (especially section 8 on sexual harassment), and the Norwegian Working Environment Act.

Safeguarding issues are already enshrined in the following policies that apply to IDI staff and those who work with IDI. These are therefore referred to throughout this policy. The intention of this policy is to bring these together in one place to promote understanding and adherence, and to fill any gaps.

- IDI Code of Ethics
- IDI Complaints Framework
- [Ethical Guidelines for the Norwegian Public Service](#) (2017)

2. IDI SAFEGUARDING POLICY STATEMENT

2.1 IDI POLICY

IDI has a zero-tolerance policy towards sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment and bullying. All reports and suspicions of breaches to this policy will be followed up and reported to IDI's Safeguarding Officer, and to the appropriate authorities.

This is set out in more detail in the IDI Code of Ethics, Ethical Value 6: Respect, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Sexual Exploitation, as follows:

"At the organisational level, IDI shall:

- a) Strive to build and inspire a culture of respect and tolerance, where all staff² behave in a manner that is free of intimidation, hostility, offence, discrimination, harassment or abuse.*

² "All IDI staff, and those working on behalf of the IDI are expected to familiarise themselves with this Code of Ethics and to apply it in all aspects of their work in and for IDI." *IDI Code of Ethics, pg1.*

- b) Enforce a zero-tolerance policy for sexual exploitation or abuse as it violates universally recognised international human rights, legal norms and standards. This entails that IDI staff are prohibited from taking advantage or exploiting others for sexual or other illicit purposes, both in the workplace and outside. This includes any actual or attempted use or abuse of power or trust for sexual purposes, including but not limited to profiting financially, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of others. Sexual abuse includes an actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive functions.*
- c) Report any cases or suspicions of sexual exploitation or abuse to the appropriate legal authorities.*
- d) p and take appropriate action of any reported or suspected instances of harassment, discrimination or abuse of authority. Harassment and abuse include bullying, exclusion, marginalisation, humiliation, screaming/yelling use of profanity and physical and verbal threats.”*

In addition to adherence to this policy, IDI staff and those working with IDI must also ensure adherence to local laws in the countries in which they operate. However, this policy does not override any of the Norwegian, or where applicable other countries, rules, regulations, or laws should these contradict the policy.

An important part of building a culture free from sexual exploitation, harassment, abuse and bullying is recruiting staff and selecting resource persons and experts. IDI will integrate safeguarding issues into its recruitment processes by addressing attitudes to safeguarding during interviews³. Where feasible, IDI will endeavour to ensure that the selection of resource persons and commissioning of consultancy services also takes safeguarding issues into consideration.

2.2 APPLICABILITY

As per the Code of Ethics, this policy is applicable to all IDI staff and Board members, as well as others working on behalf of IDI including but not restricted to the following:

- Staff of SAls and INTOSAI regional bodies engaged as resource persons on IDI initiatives
- Staff of partners carrying out work on behalf of IDI, when they represent IDI
- Consultants hired by IDI

3. SAFEGUARDING RESPONSIBILITIES IN IDI

³ Under Norwegian Law, as an organisation that does not work directly with children, young people and vulnerable adults, IDI does not have legal authority to undertake criminal background checks on potential recruits

The IDI Board is responsible for approval and oversight of implementation of the IDI Safeguarding Policy. The Board takes collective responsibility for safeguarding and therefore does not assign any individual Board member responsibility for safeguarding. The Board has delegated the role of safeguarding officer to the IDI Director General. Safeguarding matters are brought to the attention of the IDI Board at each Board meeting under the Agenda Item on the IDI Corporate and Developmental Risk Register. Corporate Risk **15) Staff conduct and safeguarding**: major breach in IDI ethics, principles or values by an IDI employee could significantly damage IDI's reputation, credibility as a delivery partner and its ability to secure funding

Reporting to the IDI Board is covered in section 6 below.

The IDI Director General (DG) is the responsible safeguarding officer, under delegated powers from the IDI Board. As safeguarding officer, the DG is responsible for dissemination and implementation of the IDI Safeguarding Policy across IDI, including ensuring suitable staff induction, ongoing training on safeguarding issues, and a system for ensuring all staff declare their awareness and understanding of the IDI Code of Ethics. The DG is also responsible for reporting safeguarding concerns (see section 6 below). In the event of long-term vacancy or absence of the DG, this role shall be delegated to the IDI DDG (CS).

IDI Deputy Director Generals (DDGs) are responsible for ensuring staff in their departments and units are aware of and adhere to the IDI Safeguarding Policy.

IDI People and Culture Manager is responsible for advising the IDI leadership team (DG and DDGs) and ADGs on HR issues around safeguarding, including compliance with Norwegian law, use of disciplinary procedures, and ensuring safeguarding issues and embedded in recruitment. The HR manager is also responsible for maintaining the IDI complaints register, including safeguarding concerns.

All members of the leadership team in IDI (DG and DDGs) and ADGs share the following responsibilities (IDI Code of Ethics, section 4.4):

"Building an ethical culture in an organisation starts with its leadership, and managers in IDI are expected to individually and collectively:

(a) set ethics as an explicit IDI priority;

- (b) reinforce this priority by clear, consistent and regular messages to staff;*
- (c) implement strategies, policies and procedures to promote ethics in IDI;*
- (d) lead by example through their own behaviour;*
- (f) encourage an open and mutual learning environment, where difficult and sensitive questions can be raised and discussed;*
- (g) provide an environment in which staff experience fair treatment, conducive to good relationships among colleagues;*
- (h) recognise good ethical behaviour, while addressing misconduct; and*
- (i) ensure that the Code of Ethics, policies and procedures are applied consistently and fairly.”*

All staff in IDI share the following responsibilities, and are required to adhere to all IDI policies:

“At the individual level IDI staff shall:

Behave in a cordial and respectful manner while interacting with their colleagues and stakeholders

Report any observed or suspected instances of sexual exploitation, harassment or abuse to IDI management.”

(Source, IDI Code of Ethics, Ethical Value 6: Respect, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, Harassment and Sexual Exploitation)

4. COMPLAINTS, INVESTIGATIONS AND WHISTLE BLOWING

4.1 COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS PROCEDURE

Processes for making, investigating and resolving internal and external complaints, including anonymous (whistleblowing) complaints are laid down in the IDI Complaints Framework. Regarding internal complaints, this states (page 2):

“IDI staff members observing any behaviour in breach of Norwegian law or internal IDI rules and regulations, at any point of time, are expected to alert the fellow employee in breach. If the breach is of a serious character, staff are obligated to alert either IDI leadership, the IDI safety representative, the IDI people and culture (P&C) manager or the Chair of the IDI Board. The Norwegian Working Environment Act states in §2-4, 2-5 and 3-6 “that the working environment of an organization will be organized in such a manner that staff can report on any areas of concern”.

The IDI Code of Ethics also states that all IDI staff “have a responsibility to report any instances of breach of laws, regulations, IDI policies or suspicions of wasteful use of IDI resources or corrupt practices (5.5.d.)” as well as any “observed or suspected instances of sexual exploitation, harassment or abuse (5.6.e.)”.

Examples of issues which might give rise to a complaint include:

- Bullying
- Harassment
- Relationships at work
- Working environment
- Discrimination
- Terms and conditions of employment
- Health and safety
- Theft
- Corrupt practices

The IDI complaints framework is applicable to all IDI staff, as well as members of the IDI Board and others conducting work on behalf of the IDI.”

Internal complaints may be made as informal or formal complaints, depending on their severity. Informal complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved may be escalated to formal complaints. The detailed processes to be followed in the case of both formal and informal complaints are set out in the IDI Complaints Framework. Detailed guidance for individuals and managers seeking to resolve complaints, making written complaints, verifying and following-up complaints, conducting complaints meetings, and conducting appeal meetings, are also provided in the Complaints framework. The IDI website provides the functionality of reporting concerns online <https://idi.no/how-to-voice-a-concern/>.

The Complaints Framework also sets out processes to be followed in the event that a complaint is directed at the complainant’s line manager, or an individual that may be involved in resolving the complaint (e.g. IDI Director General or Chair of the IDI Board). It further sets out processes for appealing in the event the complainant feels the complaint has not been handled appropriately and fairly.

External complaints are also covered in the IDI Complaints Framework (page 6), as follows.

“All official complaints communicated by external parties regarding IDI or IDI employees shall be escalated to the Director General for appropriate action.

In case of unprofessional or unethical behavior by any IDI staff member, the IDI would urge that the issue is reported to the IDI. Any external complaints related to IDI staff should be addressed in writing to the Director General for follow up and appropriate action. If the complaint refers to the Director General or members of the IDI Board they should be directed to the Chair of the IDI Board.”

The detailed process for investigating and following-up external complaints is also set out in the IDI Complaints Framework.

4.2 WHISTLE BLOWING

The IDI Complaints Framework provides for IDI staff, as well as members of the IDI Board and others conducting work on behalf of the IDI, to make their complaints anonymously, and for the welfare of the person making the complaint to be protected. Page 2-3 states:

“All disclosures will be treated confidentially and sensitively. The name of the person making the complaint will be kept confidential if so desired by the complainant.

While staff are encouraged to put their name on any concern raised, there may be sound reasons for making the complaint anonymously and the wish to remain anonymous shall be respected. All complaints made, whether anonymous or not shall be substantiated and followed up. In doing so the IDI shall ensure that the rights and welfare of both the person making the complaint, and the person complained against shall be ensured.”

4.3 SUPPORT TO COMPLAINANTS AND THOSE COMPLAINED AGAINST

IDI recognises the mental and emotional strain that safeguarding issues may place on those affected, both complainants and those complained against. The IDI Complaints Framework (page 5) provides for the provision of counselling services.

“The IDI shall take all necessary steps to look after the staff member making the complaint also after the complaint has been resolved. Both the complainant and the person who has received a complaint will be offered counselling services through IDI’s employment health service both during the process and after the case has been processed.”

5. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

A range of possible disciplinary procedures may be applied in the event of a breach to IDI rules and procedures, including the IDI Safeguarding Policy, as set out in section 4.3 of the Code of Ethics.

“IDI has a responsibility to have appropriate safeguards in place to ensure the ethical behaviour of IDI staff or those performing work on behalf of IDI, to follow up any suspected or reported breaches in an effective and fair manner, and to take corrective action if there are established violations of laws and regulations or IDI policies (including the Code of Ethics). Any violations of applicable laws have to be reported to the appropriate legal authorities, while breaches of IDI rules and procedures may lead to a range of disciplinary actions dependent on the seriousness of the violation. Disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to: oral warnings, written warnings, change of job level, suspension and in severe cases dismissal or non-renewal of contracts.”

Non-IDI staff working for and on behalf of IDI, including resource persons from SAIs and other partners, or hired consultants, could breach IDI rules and procedures, including this safeguarding policy. Regarding resource persons, possible actions may include removing the individual from the initiative, raising a formal complaint with their employer, and blacklisting them from future work for IDI. Regarding consultants, possible actions may include termination of the contract, raising a formal complaint with their employer (if they are not self-employed), and blacklisting them from future work for IDI. In both cases, the Safeguarding Officer will also consider the need to report the matter, including the name of the individual involved, to external partners, as per section six below. In all cases, violations of applicable laws have to be reported to the appropriate legal authorities.

Normally, any possible disciplinary action would be agreed as the end result of processing a complaint and handling any possible appeal, i.e. only once a breach to IDI rules and procedures has been established. However, in cases of a breach to the IDI Safeguarding Policy, there could be cases where it may be inappropriate for the person complained against to remain in the IDI work place during the investigation period. IDI’s HR manager (to whom all formal complaints are to be copied) will therefore consider whether the nature of the complaint may justify removing the person complained against from the IDI work place, and if so, will recommend this to the DG for decision.

In the event that the P&C manager is the person complained against, the DG shall consult an appropriate independent HR specialist and take the decision together with an IDI DDG. In the event that the DG is the person complained against, the P&C manager shall discuss with an IDI DDG, and the DDG and P&C manager shall make a recommendation to the Chair of the IDI Board. In the event that the Chair of the IDI Board is the person complained against, the DG and (P&C) manager shall make a recommendation to a committee of three Board members, established by the Deputy Chair of the Board.

IDI takes seriously any intentionally false complaints. This is covered in the IDI Complaints Framework, page 3.

“Any complaints forwarded that prove to be intentionally false complaints will be treated with disciplinary action.”

The process for determining the disciplinary action shall be the same as above. Such action will only be taken once it has been determined that an intentionally false complaint has been made.

6. RECORDING AND REPORTING SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

6.1 RECORDING

The IDI P&C manager will maintain a register of all formal internal complaints, and all external complaints received by IDI, including date, name of complainant (or anonymous or withheld), nature of complaint, and resolution of complaint. This includes, but is not limited to, breaches to the IDI Safeguarding Policy.

6.2 REPORTING

As responsible safeguarding officer, the IDI DG is responsible for ensuring safeguarding issues are reported appropriately. In the event the DG is involved as complainant or person complained against, this role shall be delegated to the IDI DDG (CS), or another DDG should both the DG and DDG (CS) be involved.

Reporting to legal authorities: as noted in section 4.3 of the Code of Ethics:

“Any violations of applicable laws have to be reported to the appropriate legal authorities”.

The most relevant applicable Norwegian laws are listed in section 1.3 above. In considering the need to report to legal authorities, the Safeguarding Officer will also consider the applicability of local laws in the jurisdiction in which the incident took place. The Reporting Officer will, where necessary, seek assistance from the country’s SAI to better understand the applicable local laws.

Reporting to the IDI Board: the IDI DG shall bring all breaches to the safeguarding policy to the attention of the IDI Board. This shall be done at each Board meeting, under the standing agenda item on the IDI Corporate and Developmental Risk Register. The Risk Register includes a risk on staff conduct, under which such breaches fall. In addition, based on the severity of the issue, the IDI DG shall consider the need to report breaches to the safeguarding policy to the Chair of the IDI Board as soon as a complaint is recorded.

Reporting to external stakeholders: As noted in the Code of Ethics, ethical value 2:

“The credibility and accountability of IDI is essential for the trust of SAI partners and key stakeholders such as development partners and the INTOSAI community”

IDI has many partners with which it is closely associated, and whose reputations could be impacted by a safeguarding concern within IDI. This includes INTOSAI, INTOSAI Committees, INTOSAI Regions, individual SAIs, donors, and organisations with whom IDI partners. To protect IDI's reputation, and the reputation of IDI's partners, it is essential that IDI is able to demonstrate to partners that it takes appropriate action in response to safeguarding concerns.

At the point at which a formal complaint is made (i.e. there is a concern that a possible breach to the safeguarding policy has occurred), the responsible safeguarding officer will consider the need to report the matter to external stakeholders. In doing so the safeguarding officer will consider the severity of the complaint, any risk that reporting would cause further harm to those involved, and which stakeholders may be affected by the possible breach.

The reporting officer must adhere to all requirements in any legal agreements to which IDI is a signatory which require immediate reporting of safeguarding concerns to another party.