SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY & PROCEDURE

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to protect people, particularly children, vulnerable adults and beneficiaries of assistance, from any harm that may be caused by coming into contact with FFI. This includes harm arising from the conduct of staff or personnel associated with FFI, and/or the design and implementation of FFI’s programmes and activities.

The policy informs staff and associates of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding, how to receive and make a report regarding a safeguarding concern, and the commitments made by FFI.

SCOPE – this Policy is mandatory for, and requires compliance from:

1. Members of Council and its sub-committees, FFI employees and temporary staff provided through agencies, consultants, contractors, volunteers, interns, students, secondees and programme visitors.

   The above will be referred to collectively throughout the policy as ‘staff and associates.’

2. Partners, including but not limited to, sub-grantees, service providers and any third parties who carry out work on behalf of, in partnership with or in conjunction with FFI.

   This policy applies in full, during and outside office hours, within and outside FFI premises or workspaces when dealing with safeguarding concerns that may arise in relation to our staff and representatives, and the children, vulnerable adults, local communities and beneficiaries we engage with in our work.

   Whilst some of the international principles, sector standards and requirements upon which this policy is based originate in the UK, the general principles of this policy apply to FFI worldwide. Practice may vary to take account of local laws and appropriate safeguarding practice for the country.

   This policy does not cover safeguarding concerns in the wider community not perpetrated by FFI or associates.

   This policy does not cover allegations of harassment, bullying or sexual harassment between staff, which is covered by the FFI Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy.
WHAT IS SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is the responsibility of organisations to make sure their staff, operations, and programmes do no harm to children and vulnerable adults nor expose them to abuse or exploitation, bullying or harassment including sexual harassment. It also covers how we safeguard our staff and associates from harm and inappropriate behaviour. It is the actual or perceived imbalance of power inherent in our work that generates the risk of a safeguarding breach.

Whilst safeguarding focuses on the behavior of staff, associates and partners operating through our programmes, FFI must also ensure the adoption of social safeguards, which focus on managing the risk of adverse impact on human rights as a consequence of our programmes and operations.

The principle of ‘do no harm’ means safeguarding also links closely with our duty of care under health and safety provisions.

There is inevitably an overlap between these areas, but this policy aims to provide clear guidance as to the circumstances which should be reported as a safeguarding concern.

Further definitions relating to safeguarding are provided in the glossary in Appendix 2

POLICY STATEMENT

FFI believes that everyone we come into contact with, regardless of age, gender identity, disability, sexual orientation or ethnic origin, has the right to be protected from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect, bullying, harassment and exploitation.

This is a zero-tolerance policy, approved and endorsed by the FFI Senior Management Team and Council. This means all proportionate and appropriate measures will be taken to prevent an incident, and respond effectively if an incident arises. FFI will act on every allegation and expects our partners to do the same.

Disciplinary action will be taken against all who are found to be in breach of this policy, which may include dismissal or, in the case of sub-grantee or partner organisations, suspension or repayment of funding or termination of partner agreement or contract. Where appropriate, the case will be referred to the relevant authorities for criminal prosecution.

This policy will address child safeguarding, adult safeguarding, and protection from sexual exploitation and abuse. These key areas of safeguarding may also have complementary policies and procedures associated with them (see Associated Policies).

FFI is committed to addressing safeguarding throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

PREVENTION

FFI responsibilities

FFI will:

- ensure all staff have access to, are familiar with, and know their responsibilities within this policy and provide associates with access to and require their adherence to this policy
- design and undertake all its programmes and activities in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with FFI
- implement safeguarding procedures when recruiting, managing and deploying staff and associates
• ensure staff receive training on safeguarding at a level commensurate with their role in the organisation and provide associates with access to training
• apply safeguarding good practice when collecting, storing and using information about individuals in our programmes
• follow up on reports of safeguarding concerns promptly and according to due process
• support partners to meet minimum requirements on safeguarding

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

Some staff and associates will have greater day to day contact with potential safeguarding concerns than others but everyone must be aware of and promote safeguarding when they come into contact with children or vulnerable adults during the course of their work with FFI, and work in accordance with this policy and the FFI Staff Code of Conduct (in development).

CHILD SAFEGUARDING

FFI staff and associates must not:

• engage in sexual activity or marriage with anyone under the age of 18, irrespective of the age of consent within country. Mistaken belief about the age of a child is not a defence.
• sexually abuse or exploit children
• subject a child to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
• engage in any commercially exploitative activities with children including child labour or trafficking

ADULT SAFEGUARDING

FFI staff and associates must not:

• engage in sexual activity with vulnerable adults
• sexually abuse or exploit vulnerable adults
• subject a vulnerable adult to physical, emotional or psychological abuse, or neglect
• engage in any commercially exploitative activities with vulnerable adults including trafficking

PROTECTION FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

FFI staff and associates must not:

• exchange money, employment, goods or services for sexual activity, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading or exploitative behaviour, whether the money, services etc lie within or outside the scope of an FFI project. This includes any exchange of assistance that is due to beneficiaries of assistance
• engage in any sexual relationships with beneficiaries of assistance, since they are based on inherently unequal power dynamics

Additionally, FFI staff and associates must:

• contribute to creating and maintaining an environment that prevents safeguarding violations and promotes the implementation of the Staff Code of Conduct and the Safeguarding Policy, including
participating in safeguarding training. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.

- report any concerns or suspicions regarding safeguarding violations by an FFI staff member or associate to the appropriate staff member. Please refer to the ‘Reporting’ section.

Any staff member or associate who develops concerns or suspicions regarding sexual abuse or exploitation by a fellow worker, whether in the same organisation or not, must report such concerns via the appropriate reporting mechanisms.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARTNERS (AS DEFINED IN SCOPE)

Partners are required to work in accordance with this policy as a condition of their involvement with FFI, unless they confirm to FFI that they have their own safeguarding policy which is at least equivalent to the FFI policy, and meets the criteria within the ‘Bond Safeguarding Policy checklist’.

EMPLOYMENT OF STAFF

FFI is committed to rigorous recruitment and selection procedures which minimise the risk of engaging individuals who may pose a risk to children or vulnerable adults. Further details are available in the FFI Recruitment and Selection policy and procedure, which can be accessed in the Resources section of OurFFI. Advice is available from your HR representative or the UK HR team.

TRAINING

All staff will be required to complete Introductory level safeguarding training as part of their induction, and existing staff are required to complete periodic refresher training.

Staff with specific responsibilities for safeguarding e.g., Safeguarding Focal Points, will undertake additional training as required.

Associates such as consultants will also be required to undertake Introductory level safeguarding training as appropriate to the nature of their engagement with FFI, unless they can demonstrate prior equivalent training in the last 12 months. This applies to consultants who are engaged with FFI for more than one-month contract duration, or on a series of successive short-term contracts, however FFI encourages all consultants to participate in the training, irrespective of the duration or nature of their contract.

DATA PROTECTION

All images and information that may identify children and vulnerable adults should be used and stored in accordance with relevant privacy and data protection laws.

USE OF VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN’S IMAGES

When photographing or filming a child/vulnerable adult or using their image for work-related purposes, staff or associates must:

- obtain written and informed consent from the child/vulnerable adult, where they are competent to give consent, and/or from either the parent/guardian of the child/vulnerable adult or from an appropriate representative of the local community wherever possible, prior to taking the photograph
or film. This will include explaining how the photograph or film will be used and the scope of distribution

- obtain an understanding of, and comply with, any traditions or restrictions relating to photographing or filming or reproducing images
- ensure images present children and vulnerable adults in a dignified and respectful manner. This includes ensuring that the subjects are adequately clothed
- ensure images are honest representations of the context and the facts
- ensure that file labels, meta data, text descriptions or any other data do not reveal identifying information about a child/vulnerable adult, when sending, storing or publishing images in any form
- distinctive buildings, street signs, landmarks must not be included in images
- child friendly and disability inclusive procedures for obtaining consent must be included

REPORTING

FFI will make safe, appropriate and accessible means of reporting safeguarding concerns available to staff and associates, and the communities we work with where applicable.

FFI accepts complaints from external sources such as members of the public, partners and official bodies.

Where relevant, each country will be responsible for devising and implementing a plan, to communicate the safeguarding reporting mechanism to local communities and beneficiaries, considering local circumstances.

Any staff and associates reporting safeguarding concerns in good faith will be protected from repercussions or victimisation, in accordance with our Whistleblowing policy.

How to report a safeguarding concern

If you have experienced, witnessed or suspect a safeguarding incident, you must report it as soon as is reasonably possible to your Safeguarding Focal Point.

If you do not feel comfortable reporting to your Safeguarding Focal Point (for example, if you believe the report will not be taken seriously, or if that person is implicated in the concern) you must

- report to another member of staff named within the safeguarding structure chart, but do not delay the report. The contact details for in-country Safeguarding Focal Points, as well as the other contact points within the FFI safeguarding structure, are contained in Appendix 3.

OR

- report via the confidential email Safeguarding@fauna-flora.org This email address is only accessible to the UK Safeguarding Leads and the Safeguarding Officer.

OR

- contact the UK Safeguarding Leads or Safeguarding Officer for support or guidance.
OR

FFI would encourage to report any concerns internally in the first instance, but if you feel unable to report to anyone within the FFI Safeguarding Structure, you may refer direct to the Charity Commission by using the email address whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk. Further guidance is available here.

How to respond if a safeguarding concern is reported to you

Any member of staff or associates may find themselves receiving a safeguarding report, perhaps by a beneficiary in a local community, or through a colleague or an FFI partner. You may be approached informally, perhaps whilst working in the field or after a community meeting, someone may come into the office to report it, or simply because you are recognised as representing FFI.

If someone tells you something that is a safeguarding issue, you must report it and let others who are trained in safeguarding investigate it. Failure to do so could have serious consequences for the complainant who may experience further harm, and also FFI itself as the organisation would be unaware and unable to take appropriate action to respond to the situation.

If you don’t feel confident in taking details, you can support the person to make the complaint to the Safeguarding Focal Point.

If someone makes a report to you but doesn’t want to give you their contact details or further information, you must still report what you know.

If you are unsure what to do, contact your Safeguarding Focal Point or a UK Safeguarding Lead, who will advise you.

RESPONSE

In accordance with its zero-tolerance approach to safeguarding breaches, FFI will respond to all reports of potential safeguarding violations made in good faith. FFI will conduct a thorough, objective and timely investigation. The findings will be documented and reported, with information redacted and shared on a need to know basis. FFI will incorporate learning into our systems, processes and training, and take appropriate corrective action to minimise risk of future safeguarding breaches.

FFI will offer appropriate support to victims of harm caused by staff or associates, regardless of whether a formal internal response is carried out (such as an investigation). Decisions regarding support will be led by the victim.

All safeguarding reports from a child or vulnerable person should be made through this safeguarding policy and the nominated safeguarding reporting structure. However, anyone who has a reasonable belief that there has been a failure to report, respond to or manage a safeguarding allegation or risk should report it under the FFI Whistleblowing policy.

Confidentiality

It is essential that confidentiality is maintained at all stages when dealing with safeguarding concerns. This is to protect the integrity of an investigation, preserve evidence, and prevent intimidation, discrimination or retaliation. Information relating to the concern and subsequent case management will be shared on a need to know basis only, and will be kept secure at all times.
Reporting and monitoring

All safeguarding concerns received through the formal reporting structure (Safeguarding Focal Points, Safeguarding Leads/Officer and the Safeguarding@fauna-flora.org email will be logged by the Safeguarding Lead(s) in a confidential Safeguarding Register.

An anonymised report summarising any safeguarding incidents, will be submitted to SMT and Executive Committee, and to the Council.

In the event of a serious safeguarding allegation, FFI will notify the Charity Commission and relevant donors in accordance with our contractual and statutory obligations.

Policy implementation and review

Regular updates will be provided to the Senior Management Team, Executive Committee and Council, in relation to progress made in the implementation of this policy.

This policy forms part of the terms and conditions of service that govern employment or engagement with FFI. However, it does not form part of Contracts of Employment and we may review and amend it at any time, including in the event of changes to legislation or good practice, and as a minimum we will regularly review, at least every 2 years.

Associated Policies & Procedures

FFI Staff Code of Conduct (to be written)
FFI Ranger Code of Conduct (to be written)
FFI Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policy
FFI Whistleblowing Policy
FFI Disciplinary procedures within UK Employee Handbook
FFI Recruitment and Selection Policy & Procedure
FFI Data Protection Policy
FFI Safeguarding Investigation guidance (to be written)
FFI UK Health and Safety Policy and in-country Health and Safety policies
APPENDIX 1

References and sources

This policy and procedure was developed with reference to the following international safeguarding principles, sector standards and good practice guidance:

Bond Safeguarding Policy checklist
https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-duties-for-charity-trustees

Charity Governance Code 2020 https://www.charitygovernancecode.org

DFID/FCDO Enhanced Due Diligence: Safeguarding for external partners updated 2020:

DFID/FCDO Enhanced Due diligence standards for Child Safeguarding updated 2020:

DFID/FCDO Supply Partner Code of Conduct 2018:

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Task Force on Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Six core principles relating to sexual exploitation and abuse, revised in 2019

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) 1989:

APPENDIX 2

Glossary of terms

Allegation: describes an assertion of misconduct based on a complaint that has not yet been investigated or proven on the balance of probability.

Beneficiary of Assistance: someone who directly receives goods or services from FFI’s programmes. Misuse of power can also apply to the wider community that FFI serves, and also can include exploitation by giving the perception of being in a position of power.

Child: a person below the age of 18, irrespective of the age of consent or minority within a country.

Complaint: describes a matter raised which refers to an alleged incident of harm or potential harm. A complaint may be raised by the individual affected or by a witness, and may be made directly to FFI, another organisation or through a whistleblowing procedure. It may be based on suspicion or experience.

Harm: Any misuse of position of power, authority or trust which leads to:

• Physical abuse: results in actual or potential physical harm, including death, from an interaction or lack of interaction. There may be single or repeated incidents. Examples include smacking, hitting, shaking, poisoning, burning, drowning or suffocating, or deliberately making someone ill.

• Mental/emotional abuse: includes humiliating and degrading treatment such as constant criticism, belittling, ridiculing and insults, persistent shaming, scaring or threatening, scapegoating and physical or social isolation or exclusion, or other non-physical forms of hostile or rejecting treatment.

• Sexual abuse: the involvement of a child or vulnerable adult in sexual activity that he or she does not fully comprehend, is unable to give informed consent to, or for which the child or vulnerable adult is not developmentally prepared and cannot give consent, or that violates the laws or social taboos of society. The activity is intended to gratify the needs of the perpetrator. It includes being touched in a way that is inappropriate; being forced to look at sexual pictures or videos; being forced to watch someone do something sexual; being forced to make sexually explicit pictures or videos and have them shared through technology; made to do something sexual to someone that may feel uncomfortable or wrong.

• Sexual exploitation: the 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. This definition includes human trafficking, modern slavery, and using or paying for a sex worker.

• Economic and commercial exploitation: using children or vulnerable adults to work or perform other activities for the benefit of others where the perpetrator profits monetarily, socially, politically, or in other ways in exchange for gifts, cash, offer of employment or provisions such as food.

• Financial abuse: includes theft, fraud, exploitation, and pressure in connection to wills, property, inheritance, and financial transactions, or inciting a child or vulnerable adult to do any of these things on another individual’s behalf. It may also involve the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions, and benefits belonging to children or vulnerable adults.

• Neglect or negligent treatment: includes the failure to properly protect children and vulnerable adults from harm as much as is feasible. This also includes a failure to supervise staff and associates properly and regularly that results in harm, as well as a failure, or omission to act, whether deliberate or unintentional, that contributes to actual or potential harm, for example, a failure to report a safeguarding concern.
• **Bullying, harassment and sexual harassment:** bullying can be characterised as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or an abuse or misuse of power, which is meant to undermine, humiliate or injure an individual. Bullying can range from seemingly trivial acts to outright abuse against a person. Harassment is unwanted conduct related to a relevant protected characteristic, which has the purpose or effect of violating an individual’s dignity or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for that individual. Sexual harassment includes unwanted sexual advances, comments, touching, leering, etc.

• **Harmful traditional practice:** practices based on traditional beliefs or values, for example, child marriage.

• **Spiritual abuse:** using text from spiritual books or quoting scripture as an excuse to perpetrate abuse and violence or to instil fear in children and vulnerable adults.

**Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA):** The term used by the humanitarian and development community to refer to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse of affected populations by staff or associated personnel. The term derives from the United Nations Secretary General’s Bulletin on Special Measures for Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (ST/SGB/2003/13). It is often expanded to include sexual harassment (PSEAH).

**Safeguarding:** Safeguarding means we as an organisation taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment from occurring; to protect people, especially vulnerable adults and children, from that harm; and to respond appropriately when harm does occur. Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes, partners and staff. It requires proactively identifying, preventing and guarding against all risks of harm, exploitation and abuse and having mature, accountable and transparent systems for response, reporting and learning when risks materialise. Those systems must be victim-centred and also protect those accused until allegations are substantiated and/or proven guilty.

**Serious safeguarding allegation:** whilst all safeguarding allegations made in good faith will be taken seriously and investigated, some allegations are so serious they require referral to the Charities Commission and relevant donors. Examples include a beneficiary or other individual connected with FFI’s activities alleging to have suffered serious harm, or any allegation that a trustee, staff member or volunteer has been sexually assaulted by another trustee, staff member or volunteer.

**Victim:** the person who has been abused or exploited. The term ‘survivor’ is often used in preference to ‘victim’ as it implies strength, resilience and the capacity to survive, however, not all victims are empowered or survive. It is the individual's choice how they wish to identify themselves.

**Vulnerable adult:** Sometimes referred to as an adult at risk of harm. A person who is, or may be, in need of care by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of themselves, or unable to protect themselves against significant harm or exploitation; and/or who is affected by a factor such as economic disadvantage that might lead to an imbalance of power. Levels of vulnerability will vary according to time, location and situation. An individual may be vulnerable in one context but not in another.
APPENDIX 3

If you have a safeguarding concern, you have a responsibility to report it as soon as possible and can do so in the following ways:

By email

Please send an email to safeguarding@fauna-flora.org. This email inbox is accessible to the UK Safeguarding Lead and the Safeguarding Officer only.

To your local Safeguarding Focal Point

You can raise a concern in person, through a letter (marked ‘Private & confidential’), or by phone or email to your local Safeguarding Focal Point. The contact details for local Safeguarding Focal Points are provided below. If you do not wish to report to your Local Safeguarding Focal Point, or do not yet have an in-country Focal Point, you can report to another Focal Point, or to the Safeguarding Lead or Safeguarding Officer in the UK.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Local safeguarding focal points</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Job title</th>
<th>Country</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Neus Estela</td>
<td>Landscape Manager, Guinee Forestiere</td>
<td>Guinea</td>
<td>Email address <a href="mailto:Neus.Estela@fauna-flora.org">Neus.Estela@fauna-flora.org</a></td>
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<td>Work phone number +224 (0)625 677547</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Work address: For attention of N Estela, Bureau Fauna &amp; Flora International, Seredou, Macenta (Guinea)</td>
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**To the Charity Commission**

FFI would encourage to report any concerns internally in the first instance, but if you feel unable to report to anyone within the FFI Safeguarding Structure, you may refer direct to the Charity Commission by using the email address whistleblowing@charitycommission.gov.uk. Further guidance is available [here](#).