

# Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment in ADB Financed Projects

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# What is SEAH?

- SEAH is the term used to refer to **sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and sexual harassment**.
- SEAH may occur anywhere in society, however the way the term is used within the development sector is to refer to acts of SEAH perpetrated by those **working in, with or through** development actors and their projects.
- This includes **within a program** setting or **as a part of work**; and includes
- travel, or online interactions.



# Sexual Exploitation

Any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power or trust for sexual purposes including profiting monetarily, socially, or politically from the sexual exploitation of another.

In other words, sexual exploitation is when someone working in the project gives something in exchange for sex and exploits the position of the person.

A health care worker threatens to withhold medical care from a trans person unless there is an exchange for sex

A young woman is offered a well-paying office job, but the boss insists that she must sleep with him to secure the job.

# Consent to sexual activity

Consent is when an adult chooses to do something where they understand what they are doing, and they are not being pressured or threatened.

## CONSENT



**F**reely Given  
**R**eversible  
**I**nformed  
**E**nthusiastic  
**S**pecific

# Consent to sexual activity

Consent is when an adult chooses to do something, understand what they are doing and they are not being pressured or threatened.

A person did not consent to sex if they were:

Forced

Threatened

Scared of being hurt

Asleep or unconscious

Drunk or under the influence  
of drugs

Unable to understand what  
they were doing

A person also did not consent to sex if the other person:

Had power or control of them

Lied to them

# Sexual Abuse

The actual or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions and includes rape and other forms of sexual assault which is without consent.

Sexual abuse is rape or physical sexual violence or threats of physical sexual violence.

When a female engineer wants to make a complaint against her senior manager for discrimination, he starts sending messages saying that he will follow her home and rape her if she does not withdraw the complaint.

A driver saw a young woman near the far end of the work zone. No one else was around, and the driver pulled over and forced her to have sex with him.

# Children and Sexual Abuse

**Important:** No matter the circumstances, any type of sex with a child is considered as sexual abuse.

Children are unable to provide informed consent to sexual activity as they are still developing the cognitive, behavioral, and emotional faculties that are needed to fully assess the future consequences of their actions.

*ADB considers anyone **under the age of 18** as a child.*

# Sexual Harassment

Any unwelcome conduct of a sexual nature that might reasonably be expected or be perceived to cause offence or humiliation, or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment.

Sexual harassment is behavior that: is unwelcome, is sexual in nature, and that could make the person feel offended.

Sexual harassment does not need to be between colleagues and can occur within society in general. It can involve teasing, sexualized jokes, comments or gestures and may involve any conduct of a verbal, nonverbal, or physical nature.

It does not matter whether the person who used harassment meant to make the person feel offended. It matters if the person who experienced the harassment felt offended



## Quick quiz

A worker on a roads project paid to have sex with a 16-year-old girl who lives in a brothel nearby.

Project engineer offers better-paying job or overtime to women from the local community in exchange for sexual favors.

A woman's boss often makes comments about her clothing and how she should wear more makeup. He says clients like to see pretty women in the office.

# ADB's Focus on sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment

**SEAH-forms of gender-based violence, and violence against children, that may be related to ADB-financed projects.**

**ADB-financed projects do not cause the violence, but Projects may provide increased opportunities for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment to occur.**

**Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment by someone working on the Project may occur**

**in the workplace,  
worker-to-worker nexus**

**in the community,  
worker –to community member**

## Project affected people

Any person located **within and immediately adjacent to the project site and area of operations**, such as storage and assembly yards, workers' barracks, access areas to the project, and **public areas bordering project construction sites**, who are subject to actual or potential direct risks and/or adverse impacts related to the construction or operation of the project.



# SEAH Risk Factors in Projects

High levels of Gender based violence (GBV).

High levels of acceptance of GBV, including cultural norms and practices that justify GBV.

Challenges for survivors to access justice.

Barriers for survivors of GBV to access services.

Low reporting of GBV by survivors.

# SEAH Risk Factors in Projects

## Labour Influx

Workers with increased income and frequent access to women and children in the community.

## Male Dominated Sector

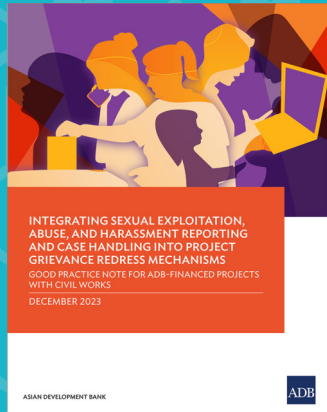
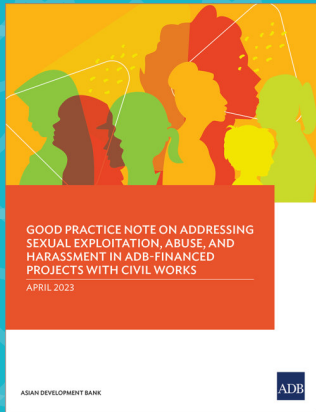
Sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment are more likely to occur in male dominated sectors, like construction.

## Isolation

Some project activities are implemented in isolated locations, or locations with limited supervision.

## Size of workforce

Employees are more likely to develop close relationships which can mean perpetrators are protected.



## ADB Good Practice Notes

<https://www.adb.org/publications/seah-reporting-good-practice-note>

<https://www.adb.org/documents/good-practice-seah-ADB-financed-projects>

To assist with SEAH risk identification within selected ADB financed sovereign projects with civil works

To advise ADB staff and borrowers on how best to prevent, mitigate and respond to SEAH risks

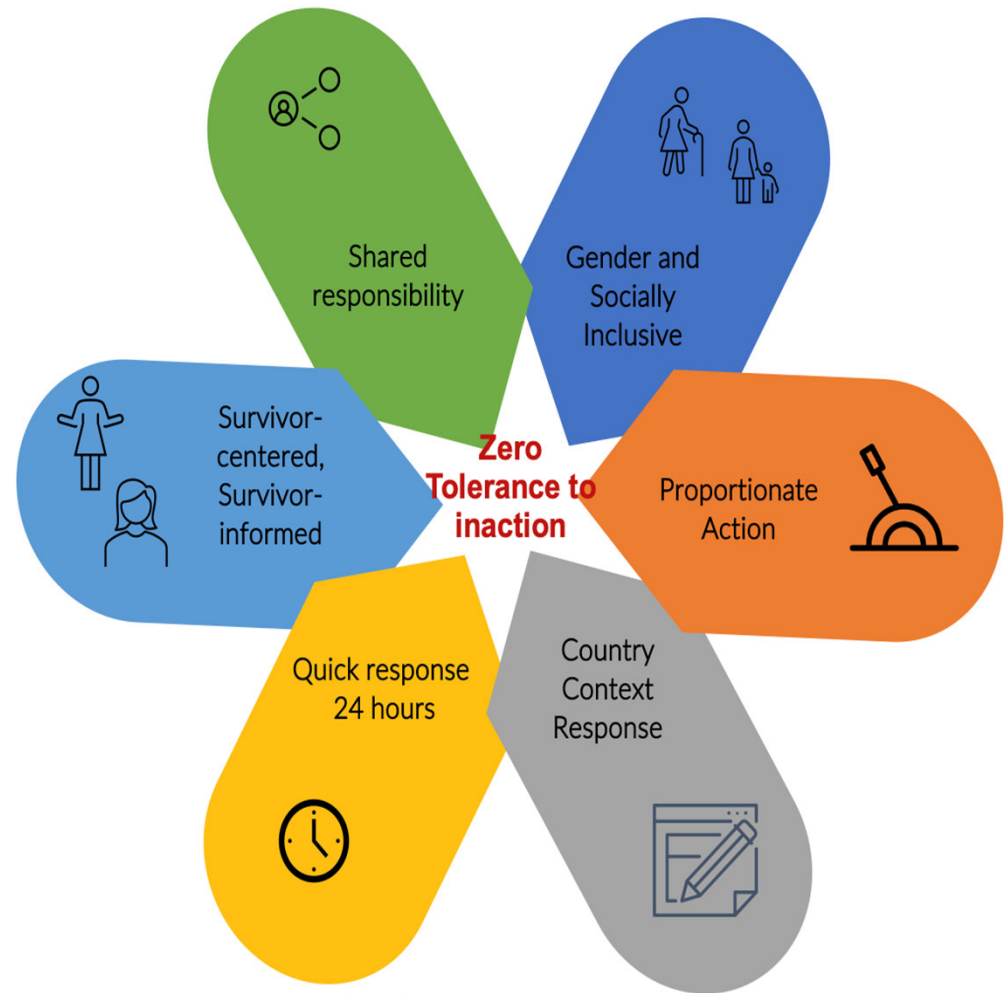
They are advisory in nature and apply only to new sovereign projects, with civil works, in selected ADB developing member countries, for a pilot period.

# Good Practice Notes (GPN) on Addressing SEAH in ADB-financed Projects

- Provide **guidance, set of tools, checklists, templates and minimum good practice standards** that can be used by counterpart staff and contractors to tackle SEAH during project design and implementation
  - Outline **responsibilities** for incorporating, implementing, and monitoring and reporting.
  - Provide recommendations on **SEAH incident response and case handling**
- **ADB Safeguards Policy** has been undergoing review with extensive consultation and latest draft incorporates SEAH across several ESF standards.
  - **New ADB Safeguards Policy** is expected to be approved in late 2024, with effectivity from late 2025.



# Guiding Principles for addressing SEAH





# Prevention, Mitigation, and Response to SEAH



**SEAH RISK  
ASSESSMENT &  
PROJECT RISK  
CATEGORY**



**PSEAH CAPACITY  
ASSESSMENT AND  
NEEDS FOR  
SUPPORT**



**SERVICE  
MAPPING FOR  
REFERRALS**



**SEAH ACTION  
PLAN, BUDGET,  
AND  
RESPONSIBILITIES**



**SEAH IN  
GRIEVANCE  
REDRESS  
MECHANISM**



**PROJECT MONITORING  
SYSTEM AND  
REPORTING ON SEAH**



**CAPACITY  
BUILDING**

# Managing SEAH risks and Responding to SEAH incidents in projects

ADB

SEAH Requirements in Bidding documents and Contracts

Contractors' Code of Conduct with explicit SEAH provisions

SEAH Reporting Mechanism in Project GRM

Referral Systems for SEAH Survivors

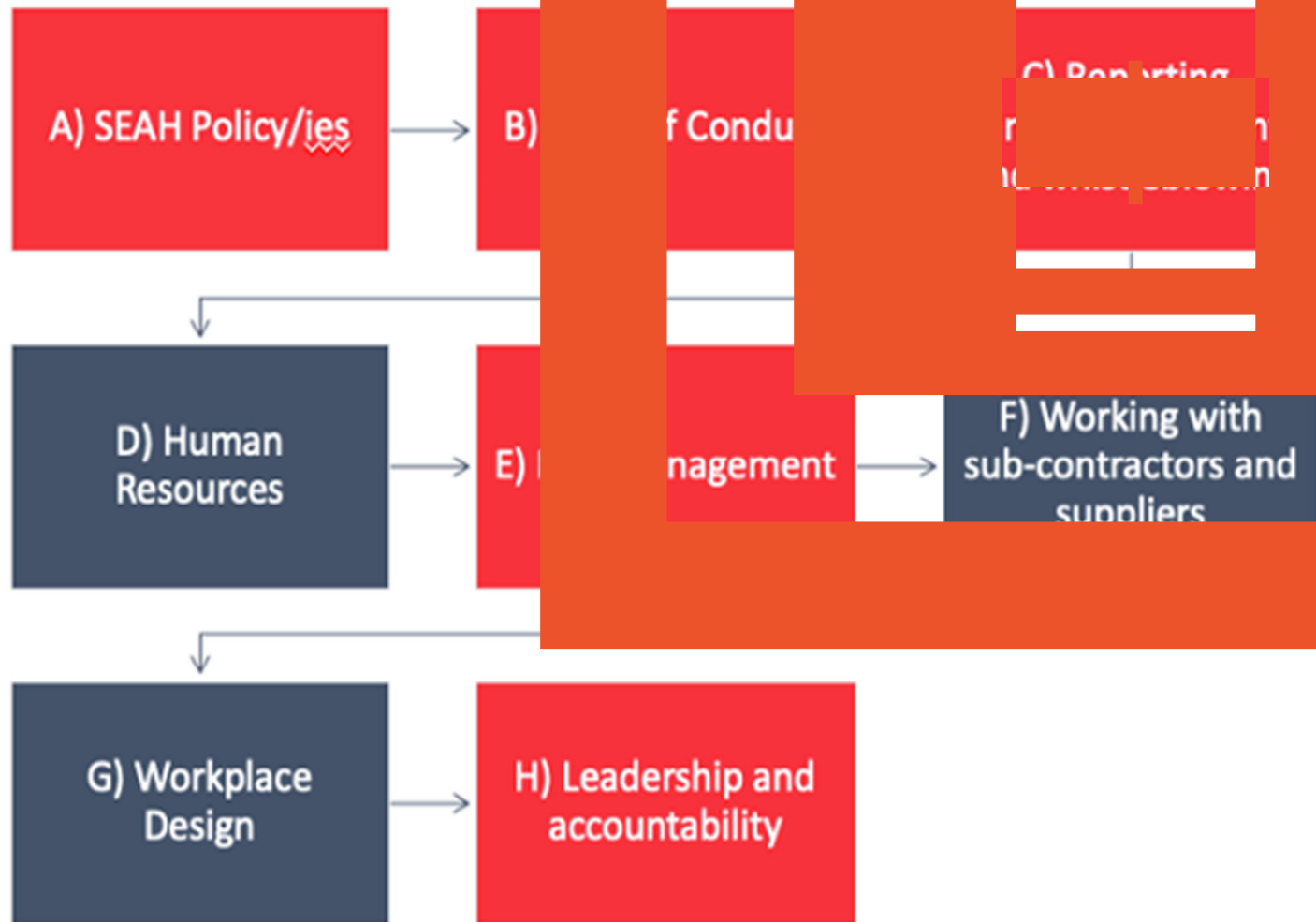
Awareness raising and training for all workers, consultants, and community members.

Case Handling mechanism with SOP and SEAH investigators

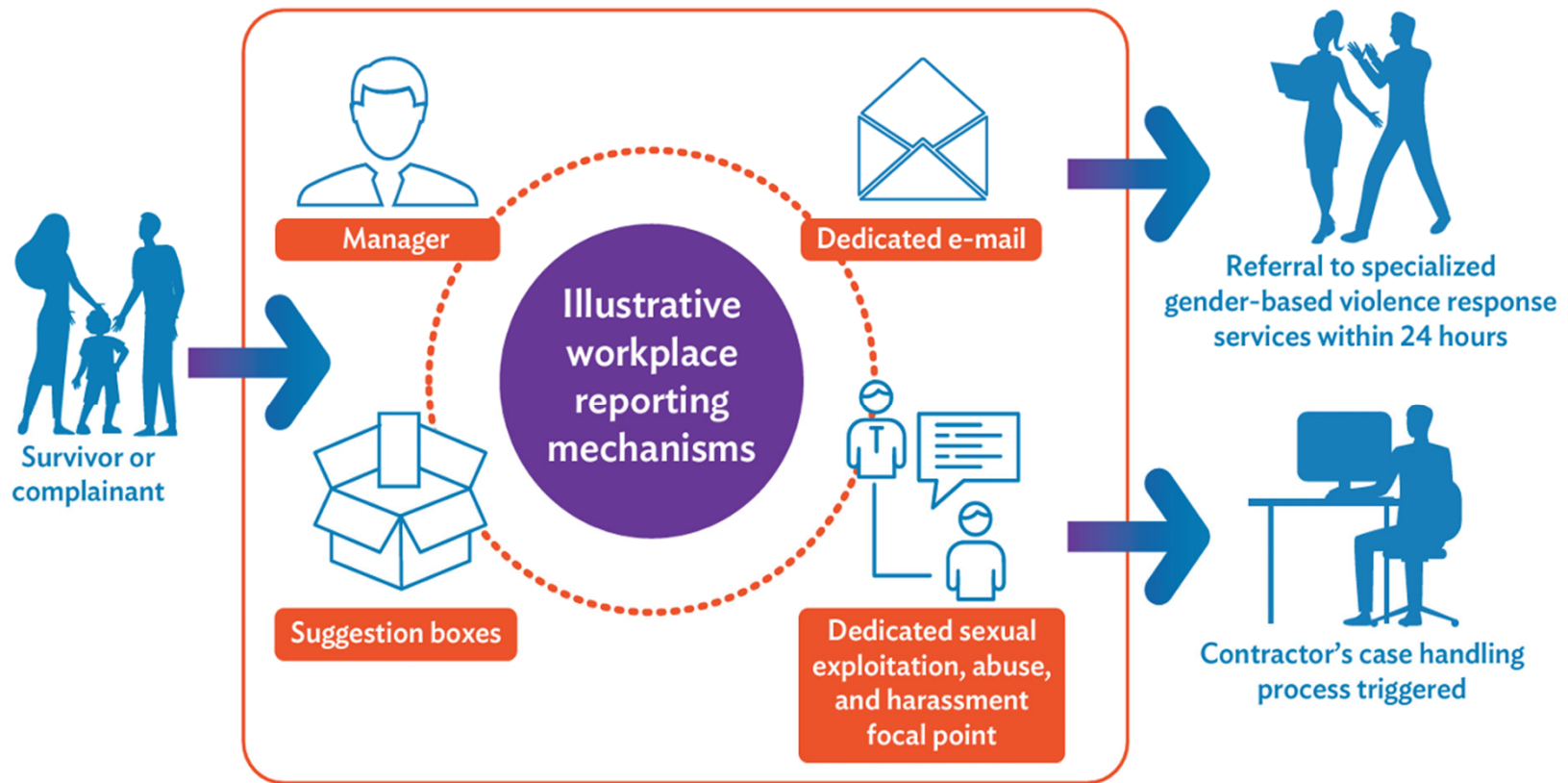
Monitoring and Reporting on SEAH to ADB



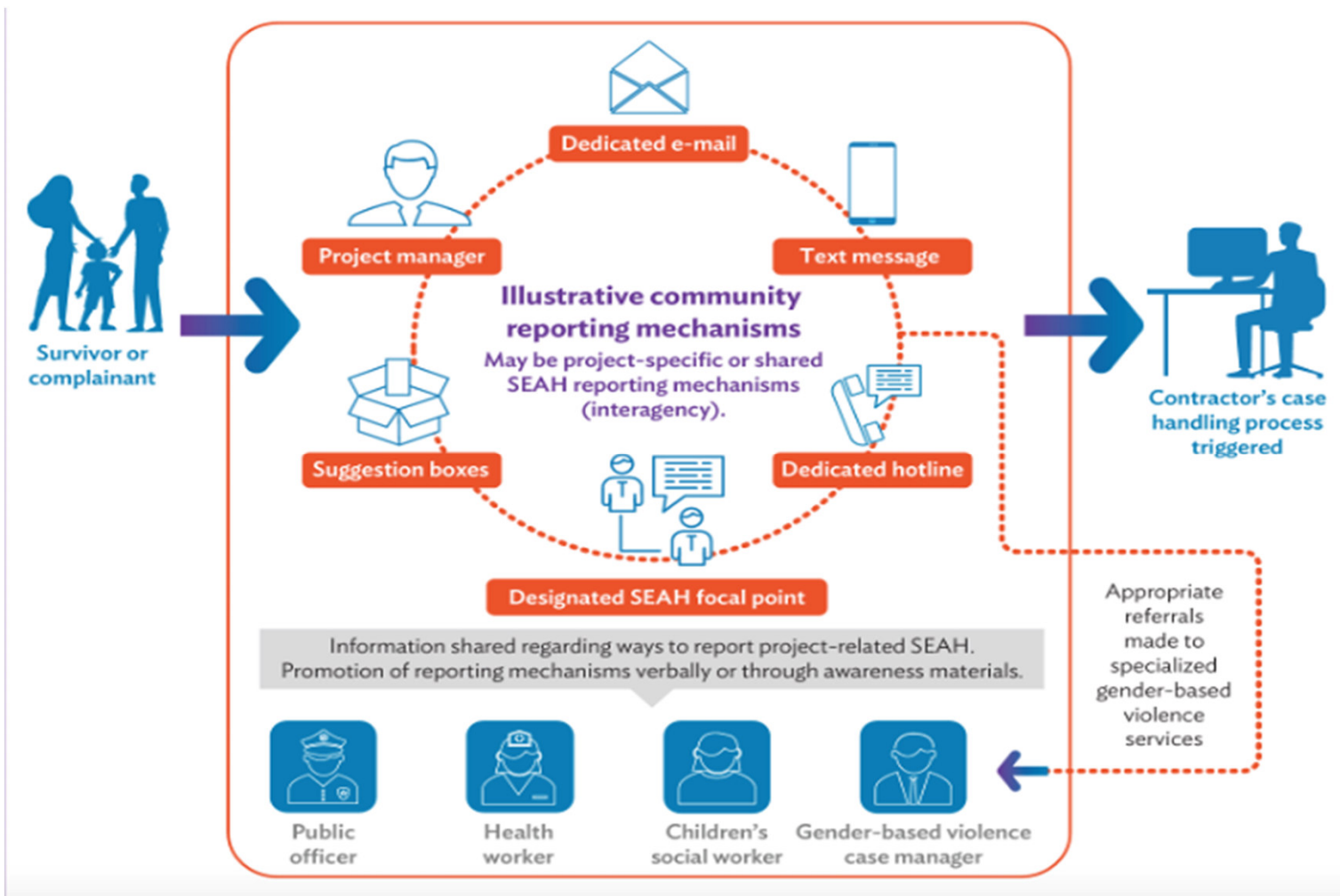
# Good Practice Standards for Contractors



# Workplace reporting mechanisms for SEAH incidents



# Community based reporting mechanisms for SEAH incidents



# Principles of SEAH incident management

## Speed of response

- Each complaint must be responded to within 24 hours of receipt of the report

## Confidentiality protocols and ethical handling

- Protect the victim-survivor's identity, privacy, and safety.

## Multiple survivor-centered reporting mechanisms.

- Survivors and complainants should be able to access several modes and channels for reporting with ease and convenience

## Ensuring specific expertise is available within the response

- Addressing SEAH complaints requires specialized knowledge.

## Support, not compensation.

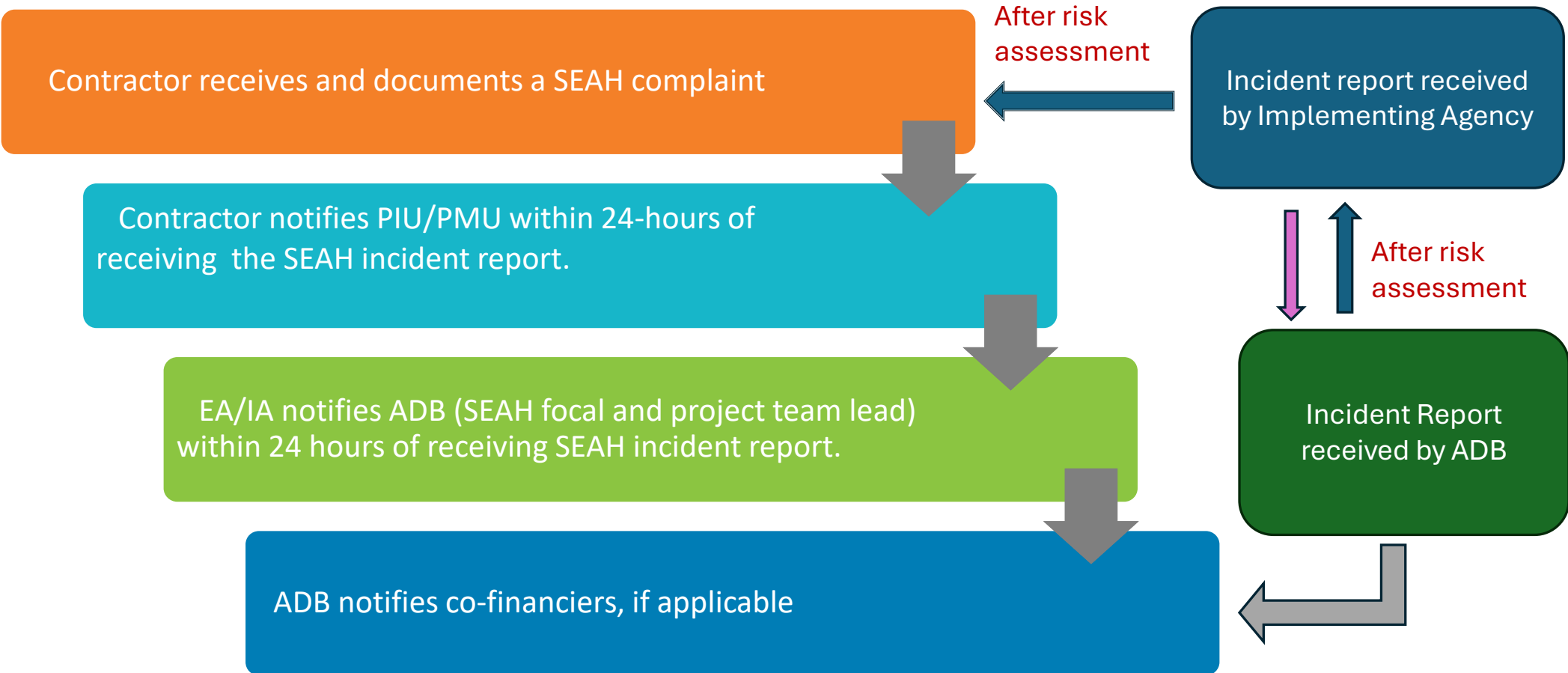
- Provide support to the survivor when the initial report is made.
- Ensure appropriate action is taken if the allegation is substantiated.
- Funds may only be used to help survivors access response services.
- No compensation should be provided as a part of responding to SEAH



## Example of Case Handling Flow Procedure for Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment Incidents that Contractors will Prepare as a Summary of Their Standard Operating Procedure



# SEAH Reporting Mechanisms and Case Handling Oversight





Thank you.

