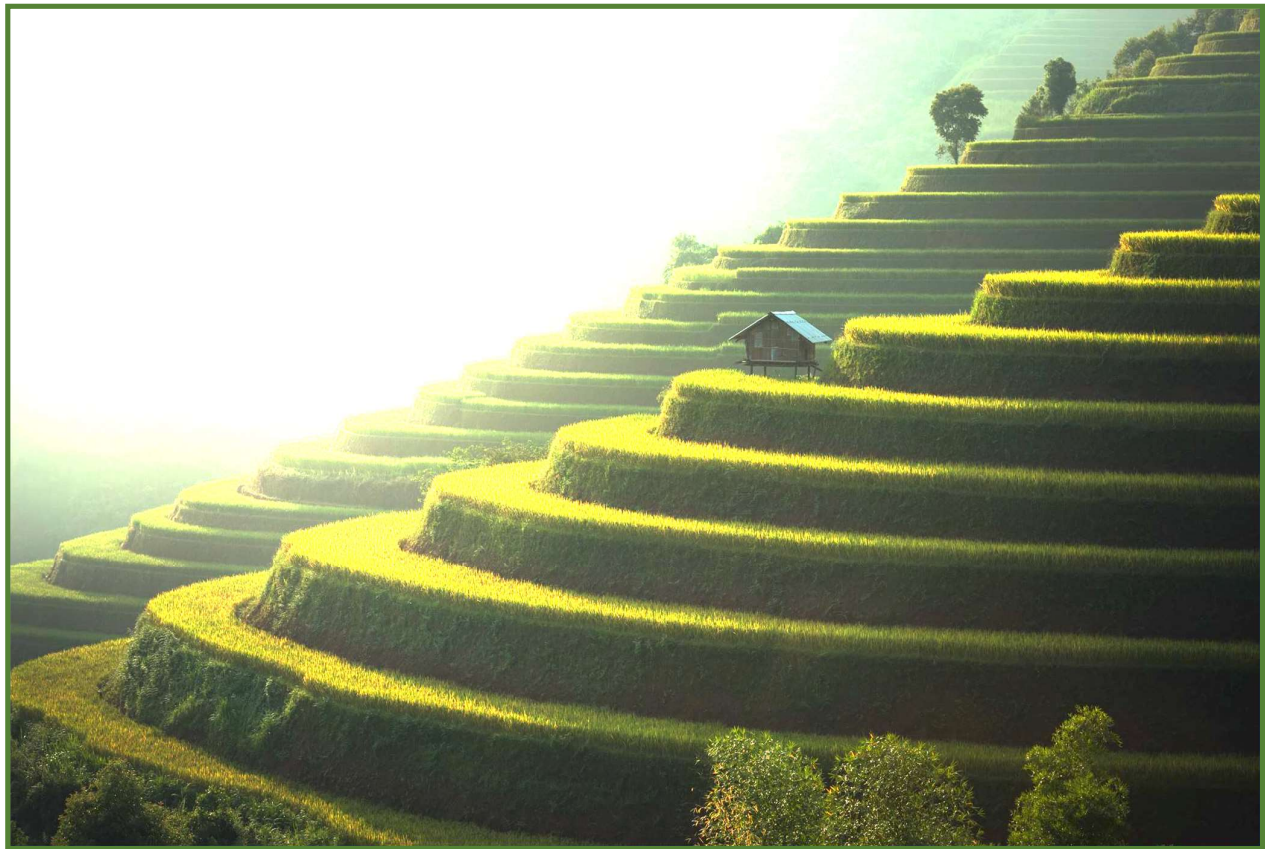


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# Sustainable Rice Platform Safeguarding Policy

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### About the Sustainable Rice Platform

The Sustainable Rice Platform e.V. (SRP) is a global multi-stakeholder alliance comprising over 100 institutional members from public, private, research, civil society and the financial sector. Originally co-convened by the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and private partners, SRP is an independent member association, working together with its partners to transform the global rice sector by improving smallholder livelihoods, reducing the social, environmental and climate footprint of rice production, and by offering the global rice market an assured supply of sustainably produced rice.

### Contact details

E-mail: [info@sustainablerice.org](mailto:info@sustainablerice.org)

Web: [www.sustainablerice.org](http://www.sustainablerice.org)

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## Contents

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<b>Purpose</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Scope</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Policy Statement</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Terms and Definitions</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>What is Safeguarding?</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Our approach to safeguarding: prevention</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>Our approach to safeguarding: reporting</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Our approach to safeguarding: response</b> .....	<b>9</b>
<b>Contact Information</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>Review Schedule</b> .....	<b>10</b>

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## Purpose

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The purpose of the **Sustainable Rice Platform Safeguarding Policy** is to protect persons and communities with whom we work and serve from any harms arising from their interactions with the Sustainable Rice Platform (SRP).

Harms may arise from the conduct of Members and their designated representatives, staff, consultants, service providers, and other individuals affiliated or associated with SRP. They may also arise from the design and implementation of SRP programs and activities.

## Scope

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This Policy aims to safeguard all persons coming into contact with SRP. Particular concern is given to children, vulnerable adults, and other groups that are at risk of exploitation through imbalances of power.

The specific harms addressed by this Policy include sexual abuse, sexual exploitation, harassment, child labour, forced labour, and other egregious labour rights violations.

This Policy applies to the following individuals affiliated with SRP, collectively referred to as "SRP participants:"

- Members' designated representatives, staff, consultants, and service providers
- Assurance Scheme participants, including producers, producer groups, Conformity Assessment Body contacts, and auditors
- Authorized Training Providers and Authorized Trainers
- Strategic and project partners that have signed contracts or memoranda of understanding with SRP.

## Policy Statement

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**The Sustainable Rice Platform believes that any person coming into contact with our organization, people, or programs has the right to safety at all times.**

**We maintain a zero-tolerance approach to attitudes, actions, or behaviors that put individuals at risk of harm.**

**We treat safeguarding violations as acts of gross misconduct and grounds for immediate termination and referral to legal authorities for criminal prosecution.**

## Terms and Definitions

Term	Definition
Child	Any person below the age of 18.
Child abuse	Any physical, sexual or emotional mistreatment, neglect, bullying, child labour, or violence experienced by a person under the age of 18.
Child labour	Work that deprives children of their childhood, their potential and their dignity, and that is harmful to physical and mental development.
Forced labour	Work or service that is exacted from any person under the threat of a penalty and for which the person did not offer voluntarily.
Harassment	Any behavior that affects a person's dignity, which is considered by the recipient to be unwanted, unacceptable, inappropriate or offensive and that creates an intimidating, hostile, or unstable work environment.
Safeguarding	The act of taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm from occurring, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, and violence; protect people from that harm, especially children and vulnerable adults; and respond appropriately when harm does occur.
Safeguarding Focal Points	SRP personnel with specialized training to steward this Policy, receive Incident Reports, and process investigations with care, compassion, integrity, and confidentiality.
Sexual abuse	Actual, attempted, or threatened physical intrusion of a sexual nature, whether by force or under unequal or coercive conditions.
Sexual exploitation	Actual or attempted abuse of power or trust for sexual purposes
Survivor	A person who has experienced harm. The term "survivor" is often preferred over "victim" as it conveys strength and resilience, but choices over terminology remain with the individual.
Vulnerable adult	<p>A person over the age of 18 who may require care due to mental or physical disability, age, or illness, and who may be unable to ensure self-care or protection against significant harm or exploitation.</p> <p>Members of marginalized populations who may be at increased risk of exploitation in the countries they reside, including but not limited to ethnic minorities, people of color, people of scheduled tribes or castes, women and girls, LGBTQ+ groups, refugees, and internally displaced people.</p>

*Note:* These definitions have been adapted from the International Labour Organization, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Safeguarding Resource and Support Hub.

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## What is Safeguarding?

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We define safeguarding as taking all reasonable steps to prevent harm from occurring, particularly sexual exploitation, abuse, harassment, and violence; protecting people from that harm, especially children and vulnerable adults; and responding appropriately when harm does occur.

**We take “all reasonable steps” across three areas: prevention, reporting, and response.**

## Our approach to safeguarding: prevention

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SRP can better safeguard individuals by avoiding risks in the recruitment and retention of staff, consultants, and service providers. We also take proactive measures within SRP by socializing our organization to the importance of safe and secure workplace cultures.

Here are the preventive steps we take to prevent harms from occurring:

- **Job listings.** Our safeguarding policy statement is included or referenced in all job advertisements for staff, consultants, and service providers.
- **References.** Two references from previous employers and/or academic supervisors are required before joining our team, and a safeguarding question is included in all reference requests. For roles with direct contact with children or vulnerable adults, we require applicants to provide three references.
- **Self-disclosure.** Candidates must answer self-disclosure questions regarding their criminal history during the SRP application process.
- **Contracts with individuals.** Our safeguarding policy statement is included in all contracts for staff, consultants, and service providers.
- **Due diligence with organizations.** We require all organizations with which we partner at the technical or project level to either have their own safeguarding policy or commit to respecting this Policy and its reporting framework. This requirement is assessed during our due diligence screening prior to signing an agreement with another organization. We also include a safeguarding clause in such agreements.
- **Code of Conduct.** All Members' designated representatives, staff, consultants, and service providers must read and sign the Sustainable Rice Platform Code of Conduct prior to joining SRP. The Code sets out behaviors expected of our people, including the duty to report safeguarding violations. Breaches of the Code may result in disciplinary action, including suspension, termination, and referral to relevant legal authorities.
- **Training.** New staff, consultants, and service providers are required to complete an online safeguarding training module before commencing their work.

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## Our approach to safeguarding: reporting

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### Reporting Tools

Survivors may use formal or informal methods to alert others of harm. Additionally, individuals who witness, hear about, are made aware of, or suspect harm are more likely to report safeguarding violations if reporting tools are readily available.

We use the following methods and tools to receive information and facilitate reporting in SRP:

- **Safeguarding Liaison.** We designate an SRP Board member to lead a safeguarding focal group. The Liaison is responsible for ensuring accountability for this Policy's implementation and the improvement of the reporting process.
- **Safeguarding Focal Points.** We assign responsibility to key SRP personnel to serve as reporting contacts, as is needed and as capacity allows. Focal Points receive specialized training in safeguarding practices. They include the Safeguarding Liaison and a member of the Secretariat. We also encourage National Chapters to appoint representatives to the focal group.
- **Safeguarding Incident Report.** We use a reporting form to standardize the receipt of sensitive information and the evaluation of reported incidents. The Report includes the following data fields:
  - Name of person filling out the Report
  - Name of the alleged survivor of the safeguarding incident (but only if the survivor does not request anonymity)
  - Name of the alleged perpetrator
  - Description of the incident
  - Date, time, and location of the incident,
- **Safeguarding email account.** SRP has a dedicated email account to receive Incident Reports in addition to communications from individuals with knowledge of safeguarding incidents: [safeguarding@sustainableice.org](mailto:safeguarding@sustainableice.org). Such contact information is published on the SRP website in a way that makes it easily findable.

### Reporting Obligations

SRP staff, consultants, and service providers are required to report any safeguarding violation or potential safeguarding violation that they witness, hear about, are made aware of, or suspect within 24 hours of their knowledge of the incident. Intentionally failing to report is considered misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.

The only criterion for reporting is the good faith belief that a safeguarding violation has occurred. If the report is found to be unsubstantiated, the individual who raised the concern remains protected under the SRP Whistleblowing Policy. However, reporting a concern made in bad faith is considered misconduct and will result in disciplinary action.

## Reporting Protocol

**1. Receiving disclosures about safeguarding violations.** Survivors may use a variety of channels and methods to alert others of harm. SRP personnel (i.e., Board members, Technical Committee members, staff, consultants, and service providers) must be prepared for information to arrive in different ways, including:

- a. Information sent through formal grievance and complaints processes
- b. Emails, texts, or direct messages transmitted through social media
- c. Verbal disclosures made in person or by phone
- d. Rumors or hearsay.

**When receiving disclosures about potential safeguarding violations, SRP personnel must heed the following guidance:**

DO	DON'T
Listen to the person	Interrupt or become defensive
Empathize with the person	Argue with the person
Seek immediate medical care if you have consent or in case of emergency	Pressure the person
Ask who, what, where, when	Ask how or why
Check your understanding/repeat facts	Make assumptions
Ask permission to pass on the disclosure to the Safeguarding Response Team	Investigate yourself
Explain the next step in the reporting process	Make promises about outcomes
Seek confidential support for yourself with a mental health professional	Disclose any information to any person other than a mental health professional for your care

**2. Completing a Safeguarding Incident Report.** During or after the disclosure of a safeguarding incident, it is essential to complete an Incident Report. This may be done by the person receiving the disclosure or notifying a safeguarding Focal Point. Survivors could also submit Reports if they navigate to our website.

**3. Evaluating the Incident Report.** Within 48 hours of receiving an Incident Report, the Safeguarding Liaison and Secretariat Focal Point ("Safeguarding Response Team") shall meet to evaluate the incident. If they deem the Report not to have disclosed a safeguarding incident, it shall be referred to the appropriate reporting mechanism. If, however, they deem the Report to have disclosed a safeguarding incident, an investigation shall be launched after first deciding whether urgent action is required.



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## Our approach to safeguarding: response

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Responding to safeguarding incidents requires, above all, a duty of care to survivors. Serving their immediate needs, welfare, and wellbeing is critical to the integrity of the Safeguarding Policy and its credibility as a trusted mechanism.

- 4. Duty of care to the survivor.** The Response Team shall refer the survivor to social service providers if it receives consent or in the case of an emergency. Consented referrals should take place immediately when sexual abuse or exploitation has been reported. Where it is safe and necessary, the Response Team shall also contact local law enforcement. If necessary, the Response Team may work confidentially with a local partner to facilitate the survivor's care, support, and redress.
- 5. Internal or external investigation.** The Response Team shall determine whether an external investigation is required. If the incident involves a child; sexual abuse or exploitation; a senior staff person or Board member; or is likely to have violated local law, it is mandatory for the incident to be referred to an external investigator. If none of the mandatory criteria for external investigation is met, the Response Team shall have the discretion to decide on whether the incident should be investigated internally or externally. This decision will depend on the scale and severity of the incident in light of safeguarding best practices.
- 6. Duty of care to the accused.** The Response Team shall ensure the individual who is accused of the safeguarding incident is informed, as appropriate, of the nature of the reported incident, that an investigation will proceed, the expected timeline of the investigation, and relevant contact information that may be used to ask questions or express concerns.
- 7. Conducting the investigation.** If an internal investigation is opened, the Response Team shall lead an investigation into the incident. The Liaison may co-opt an additional Focal Point to assist, if necessary. Questions guiding the investigation shall include:
  - a. During the period of investigation, what is our approach for communicating with the survivor and the alleged perpetrator?
  - b. What information do we need to make a valid decision, and what tools or methods should we employ to gather that information?
  - c. What is our proposed timeline?
- 8. Closing the investigation.** The Response Team shall submit a report with anonymized findings to the Executive Director to render a decision on the outcome of the investigation, including disciplinary procedures and referral to legal authorities, if appropriate. Additionally, the Executive Director shall ensure that safeguarding reporting rules are met for any contracts awarded to SRP in the event of a safeguarding incident.
- 9. Learning.** The Liaison shall issue a memorandum on any learnings from SRP's handling of the incident, making recommendations for procedural or policy improvements where applicable.

Any information collected throughout the reporting and response process shall be subject to the SRP Confidentiality Policy and SRP Privacy Policy.

Information shall only be shared on a restricted “need-to-know” basis. Individuals with a need to know may, but not necessarily, include social service providers, emergency services, law enforcement, and members of the Safeguarding Response Team.

## Contact Information

We encourage SRP participants and survivors with information about actual or suspected safeguarding violations to contact a member of the Safeguarding Response Team:

### Sustainable Rice Platform

Name	Position	Email
Natjaree Sovajatsatakul	Safeguarding Liaison	<a href="mailto:safeguarding@sustainableice.org">safeguarding@sustainableice.org</a>
	Secretariat Focal Point	<a href="mailto:info@sustainableice.org">info@sustainableice.org</a>

## Review Schedule

The SRP Board will review this Policy at least every two years and may amend the Policy at any time. The Secretariat will notify SRP Members, staff, consultants, and service providers of any future versions and will publish these versions on the SRP website at <https://www.sustainableice.org>.

### Related Documents

- SRP Confidentiality Policy
- SRP Code of Conduct
- SRP Privacy Policy
- SRP Whistleblowing Policy