



World Land Trust International Safeguarding Policy

Introduction

World Land Trust (WLT) recognises the vital role of engaging all people, including children and adults at risk, in its conservation work and encouraging their innate enthusiasm and interest in the natural world.

WLT further recognises that it works through a network of international partners and that this is an area where should safeguarding incidents arise (alleged or actual), we have least control. WLT has a duty to ensure appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place across the organisation. We have policies and procedures in place for WLT operations and staff based in the UK, and we want to apply the same standards to our international partners, while recognising the fact that many of our partners operate in countries with very different laws, regulations, policies, and practises.

The activities that WLT funds with our international partners would, in general, not give rise to safeguarding concerns. We are, however, aware that our international partners do undertake programmes of work such as community engagement and educational activities with children, using either WLT funding or resources from other donors. In order to follow the requirements of the Charity Commissionⁱ and the enhanced guidance of Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO)ⁱⁱ we must ensure that we observe our legal safeguarding responsibilities in the UK and in those countries where we are working, and that we have a duty of care to ensure that our partners are working towards and implementing best practice in undertaking these activities.

Policy

WLT is committed to safeguarding the welfare and interests of children and adults at risk with whom it interacts in any capacity including through our network of international partners. They are entitled to protection from physical, sexual and emotional harm and have the right to a safe and positive environment when they interact with WLT staff, operations, and programmes. Safeguarding includes considering how we safeguard everyone in our organisation and network of partner organisations, including protecting staff from harm and inappropriate behaviour such as bullying and harassment. Safeguarding also extends to the communities where programmes are taking place and ensuring that they are equally protected, are fully informed and free to give their consent to activities taking place that affect them and can freely report any concerns if these arise.

Key Principles

WLT is committed to applying the following principles in relation to safeguarding. We expect our partners to apply these principles in their work and through their delivery chains.

The safeguarding principles that will underpin our support to international partners are as follows:

- everyone has responsibility for safeguarding
- do no harm
- organisations have a safeguarding duty of care to beneficiaries, staff and volunteers, including where down-stream partners are part of delivery. This includes children and vulnerable adults in the community who are not direct beneficiaries but may be vulnerable to abuse
- act with integrity, be transparent and accountable
- all activity is done in the best interests of the child/vulnerable person
- a child is defined as someone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of majority/consent in country
- all children shall be treated equally, irrespective of race, gender, religion/or none, sexual orientation or disability
- organisations that work with children and vulnerable adults should apply a safeguarding lens to their promotional communications and fundraising activities.

These principles follow FDCO's guidelines on Safeguarding against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) Due Diligence Guidance and which are aligned with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) ⁱⁱⁱ. Furthermore, we support the following two principles for international partners:

- engagement with local communities directly or indirectly affected by projects should follow the guidelines of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), either via a formal FPIC process or through other processes that ensure fair, transparent and comprehensive community engagement.
- and, that communities have a fair process for raising concerns, complaints and grievances.

WLT commits to addressing these safeguarding principles throughout its work, through the three pillars of prevention, reporting and response.

WLT's policy for international partners is to:

- (a) Ensure that all new and all existing partners are aware of and understand the above principles, and are cognizant that WLT's support is conditional on these principles as set out in a joint Memorandum of Understanding signed between WLT and partner organisations,
- (b) Require that partners must inform WLT of any serious (potentially criminal) safeguarding concerns that have occurred in relation to their activities, including programmes of activities funded by WLT as well as activities funded by other organisations,
- (c) Ensure that our due diligence process for new partners and ongoing evaluation and monitoring of existing partners captures their current position and progress towards having adequate safeguarding procedures in place to satisfy the minimum safeguarding requirements of WLT,
- (d) Support partners in the development of their safeguarding procedures through sharing advice, resources (including templates for relevant policies), and facilitating collaboration between WLT partners on this topic,
- (e) Recognise that WLT's partners vary greatly in size, capacity and resources, and work in countries with different laws and customs. And consequently, we take a risk based, proportionate and flexible approach for the policies and procedures that are required and the format of these.

The policy applies to all WLT Conservation Partners.

Responsibilities

Specific responsibilities are as follows:

Trustees

The responsibility for safeguarding rests with the charity's Trustees.

Day to day responsibility is delegated to the CEO, however, all Trustees bear ultimate responsibility for ensuring WLT has the appropriate policy and procedures in place and is committed to promoting and providing a safe environment where the priority is the safety and well-being of children and adults at risk.

The Trustees will appoint a nominated safeguarding trustee to work alongside and support the Chief Executive Officer who will be responsible for reporting back to Trustees.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Trustees have delegated to the CEO responsibility for:

- being the responsible individual as designated safeguarding officer;
- ensuring safeguarding concerns (alleged or actual) are identified and actioned appropriately;
- ensuring that appropriate systems and controls are in place to manage the risk of safeguarding incidents arising, in proportion to the level of risk identified, and to prevent the recurrence of incidents;
- ensuring appropriate mechanisms are in place including quarterly safeguarding reporting to Trustees and responsible for ensuring that Conservation Partners report annually on whether any safeguarding incidents have arisen; and
- ensuring that WLT's policy and procedures on safeguarding are communicated to all international partners.

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and contracts

Ensure that all new and all existing partners are aware of and understand the above principles and are cognizant that WLT's support is conditional on these principles as set out in a joint Memorandum of Understanding signed between WLT and partner organisations.

Reporting concerns or incidents

The Conservation Partner must inform WLT, without due delay, via the Director of Conservation or CEO, of any serious cases or alleged cases of safeguarding.

Serious cases, actual or alleged, are ones where external agencies, such as the Police or local social care agencies/other external agencies are notified.

The Director of Conservation will ensure that a prompt and thorough investigation is made into any allegation or concern, from whatever source, and recommend further course of action, which may include reporting to the Charity Commission as a serious incident or further appropriate actions ultimately including termination of the partnership.

In all events, the CEO should be notified that a concern has been raised.

In addition, we require all Conservation Partners to report annually on whether any safeguarding incidents have arisen (including negative affirmation) and this will be incorporated as part of our procedures.

Due diligence and monitoring

Our Conservation Partners must demonstrate that they already have, or are actively developing, their own policies and procedures for adhering to these principles.

The Conservation Partner must share available evidence of their work on these policies and procedures with WLT at the following stages;

- Due diligence (prior to commencement of any relationship)
- Upon signing the MOU (conditional clause included within agreement)
- As requested by WLT, not limited to but including ongoing evaluation and biannual reporting.

We recognise that some of our Conservation Partners will already have appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures in place. We will monitor and record progress for those partners that are still working towards producing and implementing these policies, procedures and measures in order to fulfil the minimum safeguarding requirements of WLT.

Support and resources

We will share information and resources, including templates of relevant policies with our international partners, including collaboration between partners through knowledge exchanges.

We recognise that our Conservation Partners works across a wide geographical area with significantly differing local laws and customs, and that they vary greatly in organizational size, capacity, resources and activities. However, we will look to achieve common standards and practices across our network and will look to provide clear support and resources to all partners that they can use to develop policies and procedures appropriate for their organisations which meet our policy and principles.

WLT will take a risk-based approach in assessing each partner's policies, procedures and mechanisms in place or being developed proportionate to their size and activities, and be flexible as far as the format and structure of policies and procedures that are produced by partners (e.g. some partners may produce separate Safeguarding Policies, whereas others may adequately capture safeguarding within a Code of Conduct policy).

Safeguarding – definition

Safeguarding

In the UK, safeguarding means protecting peoples' health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.

We understand it to mean protecting people, including children and at-risk adults, from harm that arises from coming into contact with our staff or programmes.

Safeguarding applies consistently and without exception across our programmes and partners. 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 survivor-centred and also protect those accused until proven guilty. Safeguarding puts beneficiaries and affected persons at the centre of all we do.

The International Safeguarding Policy will be reviewed by Trustees every three years unless substantial changes in legislation or guidance are issued.

Policy Owner	CEO
Policy Lead	COO/Director of Conservation
Adopted By	Board of Trustees
Date	June 2025
Next Review	June 2028

Alteration Sheet

Issue Number	Detail	Reason for update	Date
01	First auditable review		Jul 2021
02	Annual review – inclusion of appointment of a nominated safeguarding trustee under trustee responsibilities and addition under CEO responsibilities of working alongside nominated trustee and provision of an annual safeguarding report to trustees. In addition a require for partners to report annually on whether incidents have arisen	Trustee review progress	Sept 2022

03	<p>Amended annual reporting to Trustees to quarterly.</p> <p>Updated wording page 3: FDCO's guidelines on Safeguarding against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment (SEAH) Due Diligence Guidance has replaced DFID's guidelines on Enhanced Due Diligence: Safeguarding for External Partners</p>	Tri-annual review	June 2025

ⁱ [Safeguarding for charities and trustees - GOV.UK](#)

ⁱⁱ [Safeguarding against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and Sexual Harassment \(SEAH\) Due Diligence Guidance for FCDO implementing partners - GOV.UK](#)

ⁱⁱⁱ [Convention on the Rights of the Child | OHCHR](#)