

CHILD SAFEGUARDING POLICY



ORGANIZATION FOR
LOCAL DEVELOPMENT S.A.

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
1.1. Purpose of the policy	3
1.2. Engagement with children	3
3.1 Definitions	4
2. Guiding principles	5
3. Measures to safeguard the welfare of children	6
3.1 Preventive actions – child safety mainstreaming.....	6
3.1.1 Child safety in research and capacity building activities.....	6
3.1.2 Child safety and human Resources.....	7
3.1.3 Recruitment procedure	7
3.1.4 Child safety and projects	8
3.1.5 Child safety and dissemination & Communications activities	9
3.1.6 Ensuring child safety in the implementation phase.....	10
3.1.7 Data protection	11
3.2 Reporting procedure and complaint mechanism	11
4. Monitoring child policy implementation	12
5. Review of the policy	12

Child Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

1.1. Purpose of the policy

This policy outlines the core principles that guide the activities of the Peri Exelixis – Anaptyxiakos Organismos Topikis Aftodioikisis (Organization For Local Development) S.A and distinctive title "Peri Exelixis SA". as well as the preventive and responsive measures the organization undertakes to promote and protect the safety and well-being of all children it interacts with—either directly or indirectly—through its programmes and operations.

The present document defines the organization's child safeguarding policies and associated procedures, which govern its operations to ensure that no harm comes to any child, irrespective of gender, race, country of origin, or religious belief.

1.2. Engagement with children

The Organization Peri Exelixis – Anaptyxiakos Organismos Topikis Aftodioikisis (Organization For Local Development) S.A (hereinafter referred to as 'Peri-Exelixis A.E.')

as company of special purpose, public interest, undertakes the implementation of actions and projects that serve the development objectives and priorities of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, utilizes financial instruments, manages investment and special development programs funded by Greek and European Union resources, with the aim of:

- a) the joint implementation of a development policy with the Local Authorities for the benefit of local communities,
- b) the strengthening of the administrative and technical capacity of Local Authorities through scientific, advisory and technical support.
- c) supporting Local Authorities in the planning, development and implementation of infrastructure projects,
- d) the implementation of actions and projects that are part of the sustainable development goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda,
- e) the implementation of projects and the provision of digital convergence services,
- f) the general support to local authorities in the implementation of local

GEMI: 167822410000

government responsibilities; and

- g) the promotion of sustainable development through participation in relevant programmes and the implementation of relevant policies.

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, children might be involved in a set of activities as research subjects focusing on protection measurements, legal framework and national policies on children's wellbeing. These activities include:

- Fieldwork research which consists of qualitative interviews, focus groups discussions and participatory observations.
- Capacity building and empowerment workshops.

The policy outlines the ways in which the Peri-Exelixis A.E safeguards the well-being and safety of all children with whom it comes in direct or indirect contact in the framework of its programming and operations. The present document describes policies and relevant procedures that regulate the organizations' operations, so that no harm is caused to children, regardless of gender, race, country of origin or religious belief.

3.1 Definitions

Child: Anyone under 18 years of age¹

Child Safeguarding: The actor holds the responsibility to ensure that its staff, operations, and programmes do not cause harm to children, do not expose them to risks of harm or abuse, and that any concerns regarding a child's safety are promptly reported to the appropriate authorities.

This responsibility encompasses both preventive measures—aimed at reducing the likelihood of harm—as well as responsive actions to appropriately address and report any incidents that may occur. The “do no harm” principle reflects the organization's duty to minimize any unintentional harm that could arise as a result of its activities, policies, or presence in the communities it serves:

Child abuse includes actions or omissions which directly or indirectly harm children or damages their prospect of a safe and healthy development into adulthood

Sexual abuse is the involvement of a child in sexual activities, whether the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by

GEMI: 167822410000

penetration or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of,

sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

Physical abuse is the non-accidental use of physical force that deliberately or inadvertently causes a risk of/or actual injury to a child. This may include hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating or otherwise causing non-accidental physical harm to a child. Physical harm can also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces, illness or temporary, permanent injury or disability of a child.

Emotional abuse involves doing harm to a child's emotional, intellectual, mental or psychological development. This may occur as an isolated event or on an ongoing basis. Emotional abuse includes but is not limited to any humiliating or degrading treatment (e.g. bad name calling, threats, yelling/screaming/cursing, teasing, constant criticism, belittling, persistent shaming etc.), failure to meet a child's emotional needs, and rejecting, ignoring, terrorizing, isolating or confining a child.

Child exploitation is an umbrella term used to describe the abuse of children who are forced, tricked, coerced, or trafficked into exploitative activities. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity; (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator.

2. Guiding principles

The Peri-Exelixis A.E Child Safeguarding Policy is based upon the following principles:

- All children have an equal right to protection, as well as to the promotion of their well-being and participation.
- Any action that causes, or could potentially cause, harm or abuse children is strictly prohibited.

GEMI: 167822410000

- All child safeguarding measures must prioritize the best interests of the child. This includes ensuring that all programmes and activities respect children's rights and do not cause them harm.
- This policy is mandatory for everyone working for or on behalf of PERI-EXELIXIS A.E., including all staff, partners, and representatives.
- While training, guidance, and support will be provided, all individuals are expected to actively engage and take responsibility for fulfilling their safeguarding obligations.
- Working within the framework of international and national laws and policies regarding child safeguarding.
- All reports of concern regarding the safety and protection of a child will be taken seriously and necessary, appropriate steps will be taken to protect the child.
- Child Safeguarding must be integrated in all aspects of organizational work, including recruitment, management and behavior of staff.

3. Measures to safeguard the welfare of children

3.1 Preventive actions – child safety mainstreaming

Child safeguarding runs across the whole organization and the concept of thinking about safeguarding - and reducing risk – has been embedded in everything that we do, from recruiting a staff member, to selecting a partner, through to running an activity and designing and implementing a programme or other institutional activity.

3.1.1 Child safety in research and capacity building activities

This section considers the actions that need to be taken to ensure that safeguarding is included in research activities

- Child participation involves engaging children throughout the entire research process, including conducting research both *with* and *about* them.
- Children should be recognized as active social agents. Their capacities and autonomy must be acknowledged and respected.
- A child-centered research approach places children at the core of all activities,

GEMI: 167822410000

emphasizing both their potential contributions and their specific needs.

- The diversity of childhood experiences must be considered. This includes recognizing that perceptions of children's competence, independence, and autonomy vary across cultures and can significantly influence research design and implementation.
- Children must provide clear and informed consent to participate in research. This requires offering age-appropriate, accessible information and ensuring they fully understand what their participation involves.
- Transparent information must be provided to all relevant parties, including organizational staff, children, and parents—regarding the research's purpose, benefits, and participants' rights.
- Institutions or organizations facilitating access to children (e.g. schools) must also be informed and, where appropriate, involved in the research process.

3.1.2 Child safety and human Resources

This section sets out the specific obligations and responsibilities for all adults working with/for Peri-Exelixis A.E, regardless of their contractual relationship with the actor (full or part time, paid or unpaid).

1. The Safeguarding Policy applies to all those working with or on behalf of Peri-Exelixis A.E. By agreeing to work with/for the actor, it is implied that the terms and conditions of the Safeguarding Policy have been accepted as a condition of involvement.
2. All new employees must be properly informed about their obligation to comply with the present Child Safeguarding Policy.
3. All staff members will be given the opportunity to be regularly updated or reminded of child safeguarding policies and procedures, either formally, through relevant training and capacity building activities, or informally through team meetings and discussions with supervisors.
4. Staff members must avoid age-inappropriate language with children, as well as any inappropriate body contact. Professional boundaries should always be respected.

3.1.3 Recruitment procedure

Pre-selection procedure

⇒ Job posts are based on a detailed analysis of tasks and the level of contact

GEMI: 167822410000

with children (if relevant),

- ⇒ Job descriptions clearly detail the organization's values and commitment to its Child Protection policy,
- ⇒ References are asked for all candidates which are kept in HR files and then destroyed in accordance with the applicable data protection rules.
- ⇒ All applications are checked to ensure that they are fully and properly completed,
- ⇒ All applications are considered with regard to any history of gaps or repeated job changes without clear reasoning,
- ⇒ A short list of candidates is prepared.

Evaluation and selections procedure

- ⇒ Selection of potential partners/staff members/external experts/consultants etc. is based on an interview procedure in which among other candidates' ability to work with children is assessed through focused questions,
- ⇒ All candidates must be made aware of and understand the principles of the organization's values and policy,
- ⇒ All candidates are obliged to bring with them to interview their identity.

During the interview, the interviewer explores any gaps and changes in employment history, as well as any discrepancies arising from information supplied by the candidate. After the selection is completed, the candidate is asked to send copies of documents confirming any necessary or relevant educational and professional qualifications and once all pre-employment checks are completed, an offer is sent to the candidate which includes the detailed Child Safeguarding Policy.

Induction and training

Peri-Exelixis A.E's staff have access to training on child protection. This can include an update on the institutional framework and international and local laws related to sexual exploitation (including child exploitation), gender-based violence etc.as well as on information on how to report any incident of abuse or exploitation.

3.1.4 Child safety and projects

Peri-Exelixis A.E implement programmes and projects that take into consideration any potential risk of harm towards children at all stages, from initial programme/project

design to implementation and evaluation phase.

1. Safeguarding must be considered at every stage, from project/programme design and must be reviewed regularly as part of the monitoring of the project's implementation. In this framework risk assessments are conducted in the design, implementation and closure phase to identify areas that are at high risk of child exploitation or abuse.
2. Child safeguarding policies should be taken into consideration for partners identification purposes. When reaching out to partners, particularly for proposal development and potential future collaboration in projects that entail direct contact with children, the project manager in charge needs to assess whether the partner in question is in alignment with Peri-Exelixis A.E Child Safeguarding Policy and overall philosophy as regards child protection. Once the checks are completed, potential partners are asked to declare their commitment to the Peri-Exelixis A.E's Child Safeguarding Policy.
3. All designed and implemented activities should be age-appropriate and safe for children. Respective checks are also conducted.
4. Parental Consent Form (or that of a legally appointed guardian) must be obtained in written and in a language understood by the guardian, prior to conducting activities that require children's participation.
5. Any service provision and/or activity that provides internet access should not expose to pornography. Access to age-inappropriate content should be denied and protective filters should be placed in advance. Relevant IT equipment to which children have access must be placed in a public area, where it can be supervised by adults.
6. Child protection policies and procedures will be subject to regular monitoring and evaluation to ensure proper actions are taken, to properly document any issues or concern and to channel lessons learned back into programming, either for better future design or for re-calibration of existing activities.

3.1.5 Child safety and dissemination & Communications activities

This section considers the actions that need to be taken to ensure that safeguarding is included in dissemination and communication activities and material.

1. All staff members and external contractors must ensure that the safety of children will not be compromised by disseminating or publishing images, videos

GEMI: 167822410000

and/or content of them.

2. Children’s right to privacy should be always respected. No image, video or any other type of content should be disseminated or published unless the parent or legal guardian or the person responsible for the child provides explicit permission to do so. The objective and use of content must be explained to the guardian in advance, in a language that he/she can understand. Children have the right to refuse to participate, even if the responsible adult consents.
3. All dissemination and communication material and content must respect
 - b. children’s dignity.
1. Media or communication material should not include information that could be used to identify children depicted or their location. Such information includes children’s full name, their address or any easily identifiable sign that could be used to locate them

3.1.6 Ensuring child safety in the implementation phase

- ⇒ Conduct background checks on all staff, volunteers, and contractors involved in implementation.
- ⇒ Ensure child safeguarding policies are integrated into all partner agreements and subcontractor arrangements.
- ⇒ Provide training on child protection protocols to all team members before engagement with children.
- ⇒ Establish clear reporting mechanisms for suspected or actual cases of abuse or neglect.
- ⇒ Implement a child-friendly feedback and complaint system that is accessible and confidential.
- ⇒ Supervise all child-facing activities to ensure they are age-appropriate, inclusive, and safe.
- ⇒ Limit one-on-one interactions between adults and children unless in visible, open, and approved settings.
- ⇒ Ensure physical safety by assessing and mitigating environmental risks (e.g., secure locations, transportation, health precautions).
- ⇒ Continuously monitor and evaluate child safety risks throughout the implementation period
- ⇒ Maintain data protection standards for handling children's personal information and consent.

GEMI: 167822410000

- ⇒ Data analysis: Participatory methods, especially with young children involve different techniques (drawings, notes from observations and/or games, videos, pictures).

3.1.7 Data protection

All data and information is stored in a code-protected file accessible only to persons (administrators, researchers) responsible for project management, research and quality control of findings / procedures. Pseudo-anonymization techniques are used to save files related to children. Contact details will only be used for managing the research procedures, they will be stored separately, they will not be transmitted to any other organization and will be destroyed after data collection and quality control has been completed.

3.2 Reporting procedure and complaint mechanism

This section applies when a concern is reported that the child safeguarding policy is not being implemented, or a child protection incident is reported (i.e. where a child may be or is at risk of abuse and actions may be necessary to ensure that the child is protected).

- ⇒ Concerns and reports may be received from several sources – including staff, partners, children and families/community members. All concerns and reports must be taken seriously. If any of them have concerns that a staff member or other associate partner has been or is at risk of being abused, exploited or harmed in any way, they must report it.
- ⇒ All potential, actual or suspected concerns must be reported within 24 hours. In cases of imminent danger for the safety of the child, the report must be submitted immediately
- ⇒ When concerns are raised or reports made, importance must be placed on CONFIDENTIALITY and information must be shared strictly on a need-to-know basis to ensure the child is kept safe and protected.

Reporting procedures as provisioned by the Greek legal framework will be followed. More specifically, any case of child abuse will be reported to the competent authority, namely to the Hellenic Police (ypa.daa@hellenicpolice.gr). Peri-Exelixis A.E is not a child protection actor and does not have the power to conduct any investigations of child abuse. For this reason, the Peri-Exelixis A.E is obliged to follow the instructions

GEMI: 167822410000

provided by the Hellenic Police. More specifically, once a concern is raised, the Peri-Exelixis A.E:

- ⇒ Refers all cases to dedicated and appropriate professionals and organisations (Hellenic police and Prosecutor's Office-Juvenile Division),
- ⇒ Ensure that all decisions are based on the safety of the child and his/her best interest,
- ⇒ We provide a private and safe place to discuss with the child,
- ⇒ We believe what the child tells us, and we do not investigate/ interrogate the child.
- ⇒ We only ask open-ended questions and, on a need, to know basis.
- ⇒ We do not express any judgment about the perpetrator and his actions.
- ⇒ We do not ask questions that begin with the word "why?"
- ⇒ We explain to children that it's not their fault and that there are people who can help,
- ⇒ We explain to the child that we should turn to the competent authorities for help and thank him for the trust he has shown in talking to us.
- ⇒ We report any incident of child abuse immediately. We have an obligation to do so and no excuse to hide it.

4. Monitoring child policy implementation

All Peri-Exelixis A.E staff and everyone working with or on behalf of Peri-Exelixis A.E have a responsibility to ensure that children are safeguarded from any kind of harm or abuse and always remain accountable, towards Peri-Exelixis A.E's beneficiaries and children.

All concerns should be reported in accordance with procedures outlined in this document.

5. Review of the policy

The present policy is reviewed on a three-year basis as well whenever a change in the national, European or international institutional framework is made to remain relevant to context and reflect any significant change that may take place in relation to Peri-Exelixis A. E. 's strategic priorities or project/programme management cycle.

This Child Protection Policy has been reviewed and approved by: Board of Directors of the Organization with its decision number A2/Σ5/2025.
