



RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

GAZA SOCIETY FOR SUSTAINABLE AGRICULTURE AND FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT (SAFE) – OCTOBER 2025

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1. INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

Operating amid the protracted conflict and humanitarian crisis in Gaza, SAFE is committed to carrying out its mission while prioritizing the safety of our staff, volunteers, partners, and the communities we serve. The Gaza context presents extreme risks – from active hostilities and movement restrictions to economic instability – which demand a robust risk management approach. In fact, humanitarian NGOs in conflict settings like ours face requiring organization-wide risk management frameworks to enable effective programming. Gaza has tragically seen some of the highest aid worker casualties on record, with over 300 humanitarian staff killed since 2023 – the vast majority Palestinians – and local NGOs **“bearing the highest risks in delivering aid.”** This policy, therefore, refines SAFE’s risk management processes to ensure we can **continue alleviating suffering while minimizing harm**, aligning with both our humanitarian values and international best practices.

This Risk Management Policy maintains a tone that is formal in its clarity and rigor yet humanitarian in spirit. It has been developed in consultation with frameworks used by our partner agencies and coordination bodies in Gaza – including guidance from UNOCHA (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees), and peer organizations such as Save the Children – to ensure coherence with the wider humanitarian community. It is also aligned with global standards like InterAction’s **NGO Risk Management Handbook**, the *Sphere Handbook* humanitarian standards, and the ISO 31000 principles on risk management, tailoring these to SAFE’s operational reality in Gaza. By adhering to this policy, SAFE commits to a proactive, structured approach to risk that enables us to deliver critical sustainable agriculture and environmental programs even in the most challenging circumstances.

2. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish SAFE’s approach to identifying, assessing, and managing risks that could affect our personnel, our programs, our assets, or the vulnerable populations we work with. Effective risk management is essential to achieving SAFE’s dual mandate of sustainable agriculture development and environmental protection in Gaza’s fragile context. By systematically managing risk, we aim to protect lives and wellbeing, ensure continuity of our humanitarian and development activities, safeguard our organization’s integrity, and uphold the trust of the communities and donors.

- **Scope:** This Risk Management Policy applies to all aspects of SAFE’s operations and to all SAFE personnel. This includes employees, volunteers, contractors, and board members, as well as project partners and sub-grantees engaged in SAFE-supported activities. The policy covers risks at the strategic, operational, and project levels. It encompasses program delivery in the field, staff health and security, financial management, compliance obligations, and reputational considerations. All SAFE team members and partners are expected to understand and fulfill their responsibilities under this policy. Where SAFE works in coordination with other agencies (UN, international or local NGOs), we will also adhere to any joint security protocols or risk measures in place, provided they meet or exceed the standards outlined here. In sum, this policy governs how we manage risk in every aspect of our work, wherever SAFE operates within Gaza.

3. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Our risk management approach is guided by humanitarian principles, organizational values, and internationally recognized standards:

- **Humanity and “Do No Harm”:** SAFE affirms that *“all possible steps should be taken to alleviate human suffering arising out of calamity and conflict”*. We prioritize the safety, dignity, and rights of those we serve. In managing risk, we strive to prevent harm to communities and avoid exposing people to new hazards – for example, we will not implement activities that could inadvertently put beneficiaries in danger or create new conflicts. The humanitarian imperative to save lives and reduce suffering is balanced with careful risk mitigation, so that our aid does not unintentionally cause further harm.
- **Neutrality and Impartiality:** As a nonprofit operating in a conflict zone, SAFE adheres to neutrality and impartiality. We do not take sides in any conflict and provide assistance based on need alone. This principle is a key part of our risk management strategy – by remaining impartial and transparent, we aim to reduce security risks associated with perceptions of bias. We coordinate closely with related working groups, clusters and other agencies to ensure our movements and operations are deconflicted with all parties to the extent possible, reinforcing our status as a purely humanitarian actor. This acceptance-based approach helps secure community trust and consent for our presence, which is one of the most effective risk mitigation measures in insecure environments.
- **Legal and Ethical Compliance:** SAFE upholds all applicable laws, regulations, and ethical standards in its risk management. We are guided by international humanitarian law (IHL)

and local laws, as well as donor requirements (including anti-terrorism financing regulations). In Gaza's context of sanctions and restrictions, we pay special attention to compliance risk – ensuring that our aid delivery and financial transactions do not violate sanctions or counter-terrorism laws. We maintain strict vetting of partners and transparent accounting to prevent any misuse of funds or resources. By protecting our integrity and meeting our obligations, we reduce legal, financial, and reputational risks that could jeopardize our mission.

- **Integration into Organizational Culture:** Risk management is not a separate or one-off task – it is embedded in everything SAFE does. We cultivate a positive risk-aware culture throughout the organization. This means leadership sets the tone by openly prioritizing risk management and accountability, and every team member understands that managing risk is an integral part of their job duties. For example, like Save the Children's approach, we strive to make risk assessment *part of our planning, decision-making, and daily operations*, ensuring it is “**integrated... in everything we do**”. All staff are encouraged and empowered to identify and report risks, without fear of blame, so that issues can be addressed proactively. By fostering this culture, SAFE can respond dynamically to changes on the ground and continuously improve our risk practices.
- **Alignment with Best Practices:** SAFE's risk management draws on widely recognized best practices in the humanitarian sector. We have modeled our framework on international standards such as **ISO 31000:2018**, which provides “*principles and generic guidelines on risk management*”. We also reflect the guidance of the InterAction NGO Risk Management Handbook and the Sphere Project's *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards*. This ensures our approach is comprehensive and up to par with what peer organizations implement. For instance, we embrace tools like risk registers, context analysis, and contingency planning advocated by these standards. We also cooperate with coordination bodies for information-sharing and adopting sector-wide security protocols. By aligning with global and local frameworks, SAFE not only improves its own risk management but also contributes to a coordinated and consistent approach among agencies working in Gaza.
- **Accountability and Transparency:** We recognize that effective risk management underpins our accountability to the people we serve, our donors, and partners. SAFE commits to transparent communication about risks and our responses. Internally, we document risks and decisions and report significant risks to our Board and relevant stakeholders. Externally, we communicate with donors about how we are addressing key risks to programs, and we

coordinate with clusters and partners about shared risks (such as access constraints or security incidents). This transparency helps build trust and allows collective mitigation efforts. We also hold ourselves accountable to learn from incidents or near-misses by conducting debriefs and audits after critical events, embodying a “**continuous improvement**” ethos in our risk management system.

These guiding principles ensure SAFE’s risk management remains both principled and pragmatic – formal in adhering to standards and procedures, yet humanitarian in focusing on people’s safety and needs.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK AND PROCESS

SAFE utilizes a structured risk management framework that encompasses the full cycle of risk management activities: identification, assessment, mitigation, monitoring, and review. This framework is designed in line with ISO 31000’s process and tailored to the Gaza operational context. The key elements of our approach include:

1. **Establishing Context:** We begin by understanding the operating context and the specific environment in which we work. Given Gaza’s volatile security, political, and socio-economic context, this step is critical. We continuously scan and analyze factors such as conflict dynamics, access conditions (e.g. border closures, restrictions on materials), community needs and tensions, stakeholder interests, and seasonal or environmental factors (like electricity outages or climate risks) that could impact our work. We also consider internal context (SAFE’s capacity, resources, and mandate) and coordinate with OCHA-led context analyses (such as Humanitarian Needs Overviews or Emergency Response Preparedness reports) to ground our risk management in the latest situational awareness.
2. **Risk Identification:** SAFE systematically identifies risks across all aspects of our operations. This is a collaborative process involving staff at different levels – field officers, program managers, security focal points, finance officers, etc. – so that we capture diverse perspectives. We use tools such as brainstorming sessions, checklists, and scenario analysis to pinpoint what could threaten our people or programs. Importantly, we categorize risks into key areas to ensure none are overlooked. Based on common NGO risk typologies, the risks we consider include:
 - **Security risks:** threats of violence or crime that could harm staff or assets (e.g. armed attacks on facilities, crossfire or airstrikes, kidnapping). In Gaza, examples are

the risk of military incursions or bombings affecting our project sites, or civil unrest and crime in unstable situations.

- **Safety risks:** accidents or health hazards that could injure staff or beneficiaries (e.g. road traffic accidents, fires at the office, outbreaks of disease). For instance, vehicle accidents during field travel in Gaza's dense urban areas, or staff health emergencies exacerbated by limited medical facilities, fall in this category.
- **Fiduciary risks:** misuse of resources, fraud, or corruption (e.g. theft of aid materials, diversion of funds, bribery). In Gaza's constrained economy, we stay vigilant against fraud and ensure aid supplies are not diverted. We also consider the risk of aid being exploited by armed groups – strict financial controls and partner vetting are in place to mitigate this.
- **Information security risks:** loss or breach of sensitive data (e.g. hacking of beneficiary databases, inappropriate disclosure on social media). SAFE holds personal data on beneficiaries and confidential project information; we identify risks like cyber-attacks or inadvertent leaks and apply measures (staff training on data protection) to safeguard information.
- **Legal/Compliance risks:** violations of laws, regulations, or donor policies (e.g. breaching local labor laws, violating international sanctions or counter-terrorism restrictions). In Gaza, compliance risk is significant due to the complex web of sanctions and restrictions. We identify risks such as unknowingly engaging with a banned entity and we mitigate these by strict adherence to compliance protocols and consulting legal guidance when needed.
- **Reputational risks:** actions or incidents that could damage SAFE's credibility and community trust (e.g. negative media stories, allegations of bias or misconduct by staff). For example, any perception that SAFE is affiliated with political actors could harm our reputation. We identify scenarios like social media controversies or community misunderstandings and manage them through clear communication, staff codes of conduct, and rapid response to concerns.
- **Operational risks:** factors that impede SAFE's ability to achieve its objectives (e.g. access constraints, staffing gaps, funding shortfalls, or even inadvertently causing harm through our programs). In Gaza, operational risks include severe movement restrictions (preventing staff from reaching project sites or beneficiaries from

accessing support), interruptions to supply chains (e.g. due to blockade), or loss of key staff. We also consider the risk of our interventions not delivering expected results due to capacity challenges or external shocks.

This comprehensive risk identification ensures we capture threats ranging from security and safety issues to compliance and programmatic risks. Each identified risk is logged in SAFE's Risk Register with a clear description of its cause and potential impact.

3. **Risk Analysis and Assessment:** Once risks are identified, SAFE analyzes each risk to understand its **likelihood and impact**. We use a qualitative risk rating matrix consistent with humanitarian standards (and similar to UN/NGO security risk assessment scales) – for example, rating likelihood from “Rare/Unlikely” to “Almost Certain” and impact from “Minor” to “Critical/Catastrophic.” This allows us to prioritize risks by determining their level (e.g. low, medium, high, extreme). We also assess the factors that contribute to the risk and who or what would be affected. Wherever possible, we quantify or use evidence: for instance, referencing incident data from OCHA for security risks, or audit findings for fiduciary risks. A risk's context is considered – some risks (like conflict escalation) are largely external and unpredictable, while others can be more directly controlled by us. By analyzing risks systematically, SAFE ensures that we focus resources on the most serious threats to our mission and people. Significant risks that are rated high or extreme are brought to the attention of senior management and the Board immediately. We also determine our **risk appetite** during this assessment: in principle, SAFE has low tolerance for risks that could result in loss of life, serious injury, or ethical breaches, but we may accept higher levels of operational risk when needed to provide life-saving assistance (after mitigating measures) – always weighing the benefits of action against the potential harm.
4. **Risk Mitigation and Control Measures:** For each identified risk, SAFE develops appropriate mitigation measures or controls aimed at reducing the risk's likelihood and/or impact. Our risk management framework emphasizes proactive planning and safeguards at all levels. Key components of our mitigation strategy include:
 - **Security and Safety Measures:** We implement strict security protocols to protect staff in the field (e.g. movement tracking, curfews during heightened tension). We coordinate with other agencies for security updates, and follow UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) guidance when available. For example, if hostilities escalate, we may temporarily suspend field activities, relocate to safer areas, or work remotely until the environment stabilizes. We also ensure all staff receive security

training and first aid training. Safety measures like defensive driving courses and fire safety equipment in offices are in place to mitigate accidents and health risks.

- **Program and Operational Adjustments:** When access is constrained (e.g. crossing closures or red zones due to conflict), SAFE adapts by pre-positioning supplies, using local community networks to distribute aid, or adjusting project timelines. We maintain contingency plans for critical activities – for instance, alternate suppliers if usual channels are disrupted. To prevent doing harm, we design our programs in consultation with communities (in line with Sphere standards) so that interventions are conflict-sensitive and inclusive, reducing any risk of exacerbating tensions. If a particular activity is found to carry unsustainable risk (for example, gathering people in a location that might be targeted), we modify or cancel that activity and find safer alternatives.
- **Policies and Training:** Mitigating many risks requires clear policies and continuous training. SAFE enforces a Code of Conduct and safeguarding policies to address risks of misconduct or abuse. All staff are trained on these policies, including prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, to uphold our humanitarian standards. We also have specific guidelines for data protection to mitigate information security risks – for example, protocols for password management and data encryption, and training on cyber hygiene. Regular refresher trainings keep risk awareness high and equip staff to handle incidents.
- **Critical Incident Preparedness:** Despite our best efforts, some risks may materialize. SAFE is prepared to respond to crises through a defined incident management plan. We have emergency communication trees, so we can account for and assist staff during an incident. A Crisis Management Team (including senior leadership) will convene in the event of serious security incidents, kidnappings, or other emergencies to make decisions (such as evacuation or hibernation, liaising with authorities, and informing families and donors). We also identify triggers for activation of contingency plans – for instance, if conflict reaches a certain threshold, if a staff member is injured, or if our office is at risk – and have predetermined actions for those scenarios. By planning these responses ahead of time, we reduce chaos and damage when a crisis occurs.

In summary, for each major risk we have a mitigation plan. Many of these plans and measures are documented in the Risk Register and in our Standard Operating Procedures

(SOPs). SAFE's risk management framework, as outlined by InterAction, includes maintaining a **risk register, decision-making procedures flowing from risk assessment, routine follow-ups (audits), and weighting of program criticality** when choosing to proceed with risky operations. We use the risk register tool to track our risks, assign ownership of each risk to specific managers, and record the mitigation steps and status. This organized approach ensures accountability – someone is responsible for managing each risk and updating on progress.

5. **Monitoring and Review:** Risk management is an ongoing process. SAFE continually monitors the risk environment and the effectiveness of our controls, adjusting as needed. We schedule regular reviews of the Risk Register (for example, a quarterly risk review meeting by the management team) and also integrate risk discussion into routine staff meetings and project reviews. If new risks emerge or if the context changes (as it often does rapidly in Gaza), we update our assessments promptly. Key risk indicators (such as security incident rates) are tracked to provide early warning of rising risk levels.

In addition, SAFE's senior management and Board review the overall risk profile at least annually, or more frequently during periods of high risk. They assess whether our risk appetite is being respected and if any strategic changes are needed. Internal audits and evaluations include an examination of risk management practices – identifying any gaps in implementation. We also encourage a “lessons learned” approach: after any incident or close call, a debrief is conducted to understand what went wrong and how to prevent it in future. These lessons inform updates to this Policy and to our procedures. Over time, this creates a cycle of continuous improvement. As one of our guiding principles, we are committed to constantly strengthening our risk management capacity – whether through new training, better tools, or learning from other organizations.

SAFE recognizes that risk management in a conflict zone is not a static checkbox exercise but must evolve with the context. We remain vigilant and flexible, knowing that the situation in Gaza can deteriorate or improve unexpectedly. By monitoring conditions closely (liaising with OCHA's security coordination, UNRWA alerts, community feedback, etc.) and reviewing our plans, we strive to stay ahead of risks. Ultimately, success in our risk management will be measured by our ability to keep our team safe and sustain our programs, thus upholding our humanitarian commitments even amid adversity.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Effective risk management is a shared responsibility at SAFE, requiring active involvement from governance bodies down to every staff member and volunteer. The following outlines key roles and their duties under this policy:

- **Board of Directors:** SAFE's Board provides oversight and strategic direction for risk management. The Board is responsible for endorsing this Risk Management Policy and setting the organization's risk appetite (i.e. the level of risk SAFE is willing to accept in pursuit of its objectives). The Board regularly reviews high-level risks and ensures that adequate resources and systems are in place to manage risk. It also upholds a culture of accountability by expecting management to report on significant risks and incidents. In practice, the Board will review risk management status at least annually (or during any emergency board meetings for critical incidents) and will support any major decisions such as evacuations or program suspensions for security reasons.
- **Executive Director and Senior Management:** SAFE's executive leadership is responsible for implementing this policy and integrating risk management into day-to-day operations. The Executive Director (ED) serves as the chief risk officer in effect, championing risk awareness and ensuring all departments follow through on risk assessments and mitigations. The ED, with senior managers, leads the development of risk management plans and allocates resources for mitigation measures (e.g. approving budget for security improvements or staff training). They also make key decisions when responding to imminent risks (for example, deciding to halt activities if intelligence suggests a credible threat). Senior Management Team members each oversee risk management within their area – e.g. the Program Manager monitors programmatic and operational risks, the Finance Manager oversees financial and compliance risks, and the Security Officer (if designated) monitors security threats. They report to the ED and Board on risk issues regularly. Essentially, management ensures that the processes described in this policy are carried out and that risk considerations inform all critical decisions.
- **Risk Focal Point / Risk Management Committee:** SAFE will designate a Risk Focal Point (or establish a Risk Management Committee) to coordinate the implementation of this policy. This person or team is tasked with maintaining the Risk Register, facilitating risk assessment workshops, and following up on mitigation actions across the organization. They act as an internal advisor on risk, staying updated on emerging risks and best practices (for instance, liaising with humanitarian security forums or staying abreast of InterAction

and Sphere updates). The Risk Focal Point ensures that risk information flows properly – upward to management/Board and downward to field teams. They also coordinate with partner organizations’ risk officers as needed when joint projects are undertaken. If a Risk Committee exists, it may comprise representatives from programs, operations, HR, etc., to bring diverse expertise to overseeing risk issues.

- **Project Managers and Team Leaders:** At the field and program level, project managers and team leaders are responsible for applying risk management in their specific activities. They must ensure that a risk assessment is conducted for each project (often as part of project planning and proposal development) and kept up to date. They implement the agreed mitigation measures in their projects – for example, ensuring that distributions are done with crowd control measures. They are also the first line of monitoring – if they observe changes or incidents, they must report these through the proper channels. Essentially, they “own” the risks in their project domain and are accountable for managing them on the ground, with support from senior management.
- **All Staff and Volunteers:** Every member of SAFE’s team has a duty to proactively manage risk. This means being aware of the risks relevant to one’s work, following all safety and security protocols, and reporting any hazards or incidents immediately. For example, field staff should always conduct a brief on-site risk check before an activity (is the situation calm? Are participants feeling safe? Any new threat nearby?) and communicate concerns to their supervisor. Staff must comply with the Code of Conduct and other policies designed to mitigate risk. Volunteers working with SAFE are likewise oriented on the risks and their responsibilities (they often serve as our eyes and ears in communities, so their role in identifying community-level risks is invaluable). We emphasize through training that risk management is “everyone’s job” – not just something senior leaders worry about. A strong culture of safety means staff at all levels look out for each other and for the community, and raise the alarm if something seems unsafe or unethical.
- **Partners and Contractors:** When SAFE works through local partners or hires contractors, we extend our risk management expectations to them. Partners are vetted for their capacity to manage risks and must agree to comply with certain safeguards (for instance, having their own security plans or adopting ours for joint operations). While we cannot control external parties as closely as our own staff, we include risk management clauses in agreements and maintain close communication with them to ensure a coordinated approach to risk (this is

especially important because, as noted, Palestinian NGOs and frontline workers face the highest risks – partnerships must equitably share and address these risks).

In summary, SAFE's structure of accountability for risk mirrors the "three lines of defense" model used by many NGOs: front-line staff and managers manage day-to-day risks (Line 1), specialized oversight and support (like the Risk Focal Point, finance controls, security advisors) provide guidance and ensure policies are applied (Line 2), and governance/audit functions (Board, external auditors) verify that risk management is working effectively (Line 3). By clearly defining these roles and expectations, this policy ensures that risk management is embedded at all levels of SAFE's operations.

6. COORDINATION WITH EXTERNAL AGENCIES AND FRAMEWORKS

SAFE does not operate in isolation when it comes to risk management, especially in a complex environment like Gaza. We actively coordinate and align our risk efforts with those of external agencies to enhance effectiveness and avoid gaps:

- **UNOCHA and Cluster Coordination:** SAFE participates in the UN-led coordination mechanisms, including the Security Coordination meetings and relevant Cluster groups (e.g. Food Security, Health, Protection clusters) where operational challenges and risks are discussed. OCHA provides invaluable security information and access coordination – for instance, OCHA's Humanitarian Access team issues notifications about access routes, potential conflict flare-ups, and procedures like "deconfliction" (notification of our sites to parties to the conflict to prevent accidental targeting). We adhere to these coordinated approaches; for example, if OCHA advises suspension of movement in a certain area due to military operations, SAFE will comply and adjust our plans. Through cluster meetings, we also share our on-the-ground observations and learn from others about how they are managing common risks (like fuel shortages). Such collective risk analysis and action, guided by OCHA's frameworks, strengthen the overall humanitarian response in Gaza and help protect humanitarian space.
- **NGO Networks and Peer Organizations:** We collaborate with international NGOs like Save the Children, Mercy Corps, Islamic Relief, and others present in Gaza, as well as local NGO networks (e.g. PNGO – Palestinian NGO Network). This collaboration may involve joint trainings (such as security workshops or first aid courses), information sharing about incidents or threats, and sometimes coordinated advocacy on issues of humanitarian access and protection. In turn, SAFE shares its local knowledge and community

relationships to help partners navigate risks. By standing together with other NGOs, we amplify calls for the protection of humanitarian workers and civilians.

- **Donors and Funding Mechanisms:** Many of SAFE's donors (UN agencies, international NGOs, government donors, etc.) have their own risk management and compliance expectations. SAFE ensures alignment with frameworks like the UN's Partner Portal risk criteria or the EU/USAID compliance guidelines. For instance, OCHA's Country-Based Pooled Fund (if we receive such grants) employs a risk rating for partners and projects, and we work to maintain a good risk rating by adhering to all accountability measures. We provide donors with risk assessments in proposals and update them if risks materialize, demonstrating transparency. If certain donor regulations (like restrictions on working with specific local entities or requirements for certain insurances) exceed our policy, we incorporate those as needed. Conversely, we also advocate to donors when risk mitigation requires flexibility – such as the need for contingency budget lines for security or staff care. By treating donors as partners in risk management, we help ensure they support necessary safety measures and understand the challenging operating environment we face.
- **International Standards and Audits:** SAFE remains open to external evaluations of our security risk management, as these can provide expert feedback and enhance our credibility. We strive to not only follow but contribute to international best practices, for instance by documenting our experiences managing risk in Gaza and sharing lessons in workshops or publications, helping the wider community benefit from our learning.

Through these layers of coordination – with UN systems, local and international NGOs, and donors – SAFE ensures that our Risk Management Policy is not implemented in a vacuum. Instead, it is part of a coherent, collective effort to manage risk in the Gaza response. This collaboration magnifies the effectiveness of our own measures and helps create a safer operational space for all humanitarian actors.

7. MONITORING, REVIEW, AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

SAFE is dedicated to keeping this Risk Management Policy relevant and effective through regular monitoring and updates. We recognize that the risk landscape in Gaza can change rapidly, and lessons are continually emerging from our experiences and those of others. Therefore, the policy will undergo the following monitoring and review process:

- **Ongoing Monitoring:** The Risk Focal Point (or designated manager) will continuously monitor how well the policy is being put into practice. This includes checking that risk assessments are being done for all projects, that mitigation measures on the Risk Register have owners and deadlines, and that incident reports are analyzed and followed up. If gaps or non-compliance are noticed (for example, a field team not conducting the required security briefings), the issue will be addressed through refresher training or management intervention. We treat each incident or near-miss as an opportunity to test and refine our procedures – for instance, a minor security incident will prompt a review of whether protocols were followed and if enhancements are needed.
- **Annual Policy Review:** At minimum, SAFE will formally review this Risk Management Policy once a year. The review will be led by senior management with input from staff at different levels. We will evaluate whether the policy's principles and processes are still suitable to the context and the organization's needs. Any significant changes in the operating context (e.g. a new phase of the conflict, or new legal requirements) will be reflected in the policy. We will also incorporate any new industry standards or guidance – for example, if the Sphere or CHS standards update their guidance on risk, or if InterAction releases new insights, we'll align accordingly. The annual review is reported to the Board, and any revisions must be approved by the Board to take effect. Updated versions of the policy are then disseminated to all staff and partners, with briefings to ensure everyone understands any changes.
- **Post-Incident Reviews:** In addition to the scheduled annual review, the policy may be updated on an ad-hoc basis after major incidents or audits. If SAFE experiences a serious security incident or a critical audit finding, we will convene a *lessons learned* session specifically to assess policy implications. For example, if an unforeseen type of risk occurred (such as a cybersecurity breach or a new form of access denial), we might need to add new provisions to the policy. Similarly, feedback from staff – if field teams find certain procedures impractical or unclear – will be taken into account to make the policy more user-friendly and applicable.

- **Capacity Building and Drills:** As part of monitoring, SAFE will periodically test the effectiveness of certain risk management plans. This could involve scenario drills (e.g. a simulation of emergency evacuation, to see if our team responds as expected) or testing backup systems (like verifying that our communication tree works, or that data backups are retrievable). These drills serve to both train staff and reveal any weaknesses in our plans in a low-stakes setting. The results of such tests are used to update procedures and are noted in policy revisions if needed. Continuous capacity building – through workshops, training sessions, and mentorship – is also integral to improvement. We encourage staff to pursue trainings offered by partners and bring back knowledge to SAFE. The organization may set learning goals each year, such as increasing staff proficiency in risk assessment tools or first aid, which in turn enhances overall risk management.
- **Documentation and Version Control:** SAFE will maintain records of all risk assessments, risk registers, incident reports, and policy revision documents. This documentation creates an institutional memory that helps in tracking progress. For instance, comparing risk registers year to year can show if certain risks have been reduced due to our interventions or if new risks keep appearing. All versions of this policy will be archived, and the latest version will be clearly marked with an effective date. Staff will always have access to the current policy (hard copy in offices and soft copy via email/intranet), and new staff will receive it as part of induction. By rigorously documenting and controlling the versions, we avoid confusion and ensure everyone is operating under the same guidelines at any given time.

SAFE's commitment to continuous improvement in risk management echoes the approach of many leading NGOs who regularly refine their practices in light of experience and changing contexts. We understand that in a high-risk environment like Gaza, complacency can be dangerous – we must never assume our risk measures are perfect, but rather keep striving to strengthen them. This living policy approach enables SAFE to remain resilient and responsive. Ultimately, our goal is to ensure that despite the risks, SAFE can sustainably carry out its mission to support sustainable agriculture and a healthy environment for the people of Gaza, with the utmost care for the safety and dignity of all involved.

8. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Gaza Society for Sustainable Agriculture and Friendly Environment (SAFE) is steadfast in its dedication to robust risk management as outlined in this policy. By maintaining a mixed formal and humanitarian tone – upholding strict standards while emphasizing compassion – we ensure that risk management is both disciplined and people-centered. The policy above provides SAFE with a clear, comprehensive roadmap to navigate the multitude of risks inherent in Gaza’s context, from security threats to operational hurdles. It consolidates lessons from global best practices and local experience, referencing trusted frameworks (InterAction, Sphere, ISO 31000) and the collective wisdom of partner agencies like OCHA, UNRWA, and Save the Children.

Risk management is fundamentally about enabling SAFE to fulfill its humanitarian and development objectives **safely and effectively**. Through vigilant implementation of this policy, SAFE will strive to anticipate and prevent risks where possible, and to respond decisively when issues arise. Our foremost priority is the wellbeing of our staff and the communities we serve – without them, our mission cannot succeed. Thus, we treat every precaution, every training, and every contingency plan as an investment in lives saved and aid delivered.

SAFE’s Board and leadership endorse this Risk Management Policy and call upon all team members to embrace it in both letter and spirit. In doing so, we honor our duty of care and our humanitarian mandate. Together, as one organization unified by these guidelines, SAFE will continue to operate with courage and prudence even amidst adversity. We will regularly revisit and polish our risk strategies, knowing that adaptability is our strength. By managing risks diligently, SAFE can remain a reliable source of hope and assistance – helping communities build resilience and a better future, securely and sustainably.