

# **Creative Associates International, Inc.’s Combating Trafficking in Persons (“Anti-Trafficking”) and Safeguarding Against Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, Child Abuse and Child Neglect (“Safeguarding”) Compliance Plan**

## ***Background and Purpose***

Creative Associates International, Inc. (“Creative”) has developed its Combating Trafficking in Persons (“Anti-Trafficking”) and Safeguarding Against Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, Child Abuse and Child Neglect (“Safeguarding”) Compliance Plan in accordance with applicable U.S. Government regulations regarding trafficking in persons, exploitation, sexual abuse, child abuse and child neglect by government contractors and award recipients, as set out in Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) [Subpart 22.17](#), [FAR clause 52.222-50 \(h\)](#), [FAR clause 52.222-56](#), [FAR clause 752.7037](#), pertinent to USAID’s Mandatory Standard Provisions ([M20. Trafficking in Persons \(April 2016\)](#) and [M27. Safeguarding Against Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, Child Abuse, and Child Neglect \(October 2023\)](#)), and pertinent to [USAID Acquisition Regulation \(AIDAR\)](#). These regulations/provisions require implementation of a Compliance Plan in instances where supplies, other than commercially available off-the-shelf items, are acquired outside of the United States, or services are to be performed outside the United States; and where such supplies or services have an estimated value that exceeds \$500,000.

Creative’s corporate policies and procedures demonstrate a commitment to ethical behavior in all of its activities and include robust compliance and ethics programs that are aligned with our corporate values. Key elements of Creative’s programs include written compliance standards and procedures, ongoing employee training, regular audit, evaluation, and monitoring the effectiveness of the Compliance Plan, a reporting process for complaints and concerns, corrective disciplinary actions for noncompliance, and review and remediation of problems.

Creative’s **Combating Trafficking in Persons (“Anti-Trafficking”) and Safeguarding Against Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, Child Abuse and Child Neglect (“Safeguarding”) Compliance Plan** has three main anchors, which include: (1) *prohibitions*—to ensure that Creative’s zero tolerance for any violations of anti-trafficking of persons and safeguarding children is publicized and clearly set forth; (2) *prevention* – to specify actions that Creative will take to help prevent the prohibited activities outlined in this Plan from occurring; and (3) *recourse*—to specify reviews and actions that will be taken if human trafficking, exploitation, sexual abuse, child neglect and child abuse activities are suspected or if it occurs.

## ***Applicability***

Creative’s Compliance Plan incorporates U.S. Government baseline standards for anti-trafficking and child safeguarding compliance that apply presumptively to all federally funded awards, other than commercially available off-the-shelf items, that have a value of greater than US\$500,000.

In addition, Creative’s Compliance Plan requires compliance with host country and local child welfare and protection legislation or international standards, whichever gives greater protection, and with U.S. law where applicable.

For all applicable awards, Creative’s project staff, together with “functional area team leaders” from Creative’s support divisions (*Security, Finance, Accounting, Award Management, and Information Systems (FAAMIS), Human Resources (HR), Global Operations and Performance, and Compliance and Legal*), will examine each contract or award individually to assess the risk of human trafficking, child exploitation, child sexual abuse, child neglect and child abuse activities, in any form or medium, based on factors such as country of implementation context, the number of non-U.S. citizens to be employed and whether the contract or award will involve services or supplies susceptible to human trafficking, child exploitation, child sexual abuse, child neglect and child abuse activities.

Creative’s project staff, in consultation with functional area team leaders, will create initial country specific appendixes to this Compliance Plan. These appendixes will contain program specific requirements, as necessary, to ensure that the content is appropriate to the size and complexity of the contract or award and the nature and scope of the activities to be performed.

The three main anchors of Creative’s “Anti-Trafficking” and “Safeguarding” Compliance Plan (*prohibitions, prevention & recourse*) are summarized below.

### ***Anchor # 1: Prohibitions***

Creative’s **Anti-Trafficking Policy** and **Child Safeguarding Policy** on combatting human trafficking, exploitation, sexual abuse, child neglect and child abuse activities identify prohibited activities and the company’s zero tolerance of any activity described in [FAR Subpart 22.17](#), [FAR clause 52.222-50 \(h\)](#) [FAR clause 52.222-56](#), USAID Acquisition Regulation (AIDAR) [clause 752.7037](#), pertinent USAID Mandatory Standard Provisions ([US: M27](#); [Non-US: M25](#)) and the AIDAR; they also describe the actions Creative will take to publicize its prohibitions. Such actions to establish and publicize the company’s prohibitions will include: the roll-out of formal policies and procedures that prohibit activities considered trafficking in persons, exploitation, sexual abuse, child abuse and child neglect; the strategic placement of signage throughout Creative offices that state the prohibitions; publishing and making accessible Creative’s Anti-Trafficking and Child Safeguarding policies, and orienting Creative staff on the policies and obtaining their signed certifications and acknowledgments of receipt.

Creative will ensure that subawardees (*subcontractors, subrecipients, grantees, consultants and vendors under a Creative award that receive funds greater than \$500,000*) are made aware of Creative’s prohibitions, and if/as applicable, obtain copies of their compliance plans. In addition, and in the spirit of the regulations, project and functional area teams will advise on any additional measures or approaches deemed appropriate to ensure that staff and applicable subawardees are informed of the requirements of the regulation and Creative’s strict prohibitions against activities considered trafficking in persons, exploitation, sexual abuse, child abuse and child neglect.

In ensuring that Creative staff are informed of the specific prohibitions, they will be required to read and acknowledge Creative's Anti-Trafficking Policy and Child Safeguarding Policy and complete an on-line training program through Creative's online training platform, "Creative U", which will identify the prohibitions as follows:

- all forms of trafficking in persons;
- the procurement of commercial sex acts;
- the use of forced and child labor; destruction, concealment, confiscation, or denial of access by an employee to the employee's identity or immigration documents;
- engaging in any child exploitation, child sexual abuse, child abuse, or child neglect, supporting or advancing these actions, or intentionally ignoring or failing to act upon allegations of these actions.
- engaging in acts that directly support or advance trafficking in persons, including:
  - a) use of misleading or fraudulent practices during recruitment or offering of employment, or when required by law or contract, failing to provide an employment contract, recruitment agreement or other required work document in writing;
  - b) use of recruiters that do not comply with local labor laws;
  - c) charging of recruitment fees to employees (or prospective employees);
  - d) failing to provide return transportation or paying for the cost of return transportation at the end of employment;
  - e) providing or arranging housing after receiving credible information that such housing is substantially out of compliance with country housing or safety standards; and
  - f) if required by law or contract, failing to provide an employment contract, recruitment agreement or other required work document in writing.

Creative maintains a comprehensive total remuneration program ensuring that employee wages meet applicable country-specific laws and regulations.

Creative posts its Anti-Trafficking Policy and Child Safeguarding Policy, as well as its broader Code of Ethics and Business Conduct, on its Electronic Document Management System ("EDMS") (Intranet), where it can be accessed by all Creative personnel at any time.

### ***Anchor # 2: Prevention***

Creative takes all reasonable and appropriate measures to comply with the letter and spirit of applicable U.S. Government regulations against Combating Trafficking in Persons ("Anti-Trafficking") and Safeguarding Against Exploitation, Sexual Abuse, Child Abuse and Child Neglect ("Safeguarding"), and to the maximum extent practicable, shall employ its online training platform, "Creative U", to deliver training.

While Creative’s prevention measures may vary from award to award depending upon the context of implementation and perceived risks, the two main anchors of Creative’s prevention approach shall include awareness and training programs.

- 1) **Creative’s Awareness Programs:** Raising awareness about *what* anti-trafficking in persons and child safeguarding are in terms of *what* they encompass, *how* they are done, and *why* they are done (*the purpose*) is a critical first step in endeavoring to prevent the occurrence of the prohibited activities outlined in this Plan. Accordingly, Creative’s corporate policies and procedures provide a robust awareness program to help ensure that Creative’s staff at headquarters and in the field are made aware of the critical aspects that characterize and operationally define human trafficking activities, child exploitation, child sexual abuse, child neglect and child abuse and that its external “partners” (to include subawardees, counterpart institutions, beneficiaries, local community members, etc.) are also made aware of applicable prohibited activities and that applicable subawardees have their own Compliance Plans, if required.
  - i. **Raising Awareness Internally to Staff:** The modalities of raising awareness “in house” will vary, but may include, for instance, direct communications from headquarters to staff in the field; broad communications in newsletters or via email; tailored messages from the Compliance Department; policy and procedures roll-outs; and other appropriate means.
  - ii. **Raising Awareness Externally:** Creative will extend its awareness program to any subawardee that receives a subaward of federal funds regardless of its value and, as applicable, review Compliance Plans and share “best practices” in raising awareness.
  - iii. **Raising Awareness with Beneficiaries and Local Community Members:** Creative project staff interact with program beneficiaries and local community members on a regular basis in the implementation of program activities. As part of this interaction, the Chief of Party is responsible for ensuring that program beneficiaries are made aware of prohibited activities and how to report allegations, doing so in a manner which is inclusive, culturally appropriate and sensitive to the context. This outreach may allow safe, accessible and publicly available reporting mechanisms to be integrated with existing or similar mechanisms available to staff and subawardees so that anyone may confidentially report exploitation, sexual abuse, child abuse, and child neglect, with appropriate safeguards to protect whistleblowers and survivors, and including express protection against retaliation for reporting, and documented procedures for protecting personally identifiable information from

unauthorized access and disclosure. This outreach should also reflect appropriate measures to protect survivors of or witnesses to prohibited activities and ensure cooperation with governmental authorities.

- 2) **Creative's Training Program:** Creative's training program is the second step in its overall prevention program. Beyond explaining *what* trafficking and child safeguarding mean, as conveyed through its awareness programs, Creative's training programs are intended to provide concrete, visible presentations via videos and written materials of *how* it is done and *why* it is done. Such training will be provided to all Creative staff at headquarters and in main offices in the field.

Creative will determine what constitutes a viable training program on a case-by-case basis and will determine the most feasible manner of delivering such training, given the particular circumstances of the award. Methodologies may include, for instance, providing written materials, videos, SMS messaging, social media, or by other means that are suitable and feasible in given situations.

In addition to the foregoing, Creative will seek to build the capacity of subawardees in project implementation (if needed) to whom the regulations apply, as follows:

- i. **External Capacity Building:** To the extent practicable, and if deemed necessary, Creative will share its templates, best practices, and lessons learned with its subawardees (subcontractors, subrecipients, grantees, and vendors) to whom the anti-trafficking and child safeguarding regulations apply.
- 3) **Subawardee Awareness:** While all subawardees (subcontractors, subrecipients, grantees, consultants and vendors) will have the anti-trafficking in persons and child safeguarding regulations included in their awards, subawardees with awards greater than \$500,000 will be required to develop and maintain their own procedures to prevent prohibited activities and, as applicable, develop and post their compliance plan(s). Additionally, all subawardees with awards greater than \$500,000 will be required to certify to Creative its compliance.
- 4) Beyond the above measures, Creative strives to consider at the outset of its country planning to what extent its programs and operations pose a risk of child trafficking, child abuse, child exploitation or child neglect to those children who are associated with project activities and operations. In this regard, the Chief of Party is responsible for conducting a child safeguarding and trafficking risk assessment that reveals the ways in which employees and partners come into direct or indirect contact with children for a specific program, project, or activity, and identify risk mitigation measures that will protect children in advance from child abuse, exploitation, and neglect. In addition, the Chief of Party should apply measures to reduce the risk of child abuse, exploitation,

or neglect, including, but not limited to, limiting unsupervised interactions with children; prohibiting exposure to pornography; and complying with applicable laws, regulations, or customs regarding the photographing, filming, or other image-generating activities of children.

Further, the recruitment process for identifying and hiring project staff shall promote child-safe screening procedures for personnel, particularly personnel whose work brings them in direct contact with children.

### ***Anchor # 3: Response***

Creative’s senior leadership, including program and operational teams, will help ensure the appropriate response to trafficking and child safeguarding allegations. Creative will utilize a “survivor-centered approach” in addressing all allegations, to ensure the affected individual’s dignity, needs, and rehabilitation are central to the process. When allegations are related to child safeguarding violations, a “best interest of the child determination” will be utilized. The range of such responses may include, but not be limited to, the following:

- 1) **Security Response:** Creative has well-established and longstanding systems and methodologies for assessing and reporting allegations of misbehaviors and/or wrongdoing. These systems, and the policies and procedures that undergird them, are clearly set forth in Creative’s Headquarters (HQ) and Field Manuals that are accessible online to all staff at headquarters and in the field. One critical component of Creative’s robust “security” system is its allegations “hotline.” Established and monitored by the HQ Security Department, it serves as a vehicle for reporting of allegations. Creative has extended this proven system to include reporting allegations of trafficking and child safeguarding violations, having laid the grounds for understanding *what* it is, *how* it’s done, and *why* it’s done through the company’s awareness and training programs. Such prior awareness raising and prevention are important to ensure that those who choose to use the hotline are informed about what may constitute the behavior that falls within the category of the operational definition of trafficking and child safeguarding.

It is underscored that it is Creative’s policy to ascertain the credibility of any and all allegations, whether the allegations are from known or anonymous sources, deemed credible or not, and to promptly report to appropriate government officials any and all cases of human trafficking, child exploitation, child sexual abuse, child neglect and child abuse. Creative’s Security Department administers the receipt, review, investigation and proper disposition of all allegations of fraud, misconduct, human trafficking activities, child exploitation, child sexual abuse, child neglect and child abuse. All allegations received by Creative personnel that any of the prohibited activities outlined in this Plan has been or may be occurring in the context of program activities that Creative is implementing should

be promptly reported to the Security Department, which has the exclusive responsibility and authority to: a) report violations to the appropriate USG authorities, b) at its discretion, define action plans conducive to establishing the credibility of allegations, and c) launch investigations at the request of or in coordination with authorities. Any allegation regarding a Creative employee, a subawardee, beneficiary, or any other relevant party involving violations of law, government regulations or Creative standards of conduct, must immediately be reported through one of the following mechanisms:

1. Completing the Fraud & Abuse electronic form at: [www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/directline/](http://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/directline/)
2. Reporting to the supervisor/manager/COP, or someone you trust who can contact Creative's HQ Security Department.
3. Emailing Creative's HQ Security Department at [SecurityHQ@CreativeDC.com](mailto:SecurityHQ@CreativeDC.com).
4. Emailing a member of Creative's HQ Security Department directly.
5. Emailing the [Hotline@CreativeDC.com](mailto:Hotline@CreativeDC.com) or [Fraud&Abuse@CreativeDC.com](mailto:Fraud&Abuse@CreativeDC.com)

The HQ Security Department administers the email addresses and online platform and is automatically notified via email when an allegation is made via these methods. If allegations are received from other sources, they must be immediately reported to the HQ Security Department.

- 2) **Compliance and Legal Response:** The Compliance Department will review cases to ascertain whether there has been compliance with Creative's policies and procedures and based on such reviews will recommend the appropriate actions and or remedies. Such reviews also extend to assessing the compliance of applicable subawardees and will include coordination with and input of Creative's project management team in so doing, as appropriate.
- 3) **Human Resources (HR) Response:** The HR Division will review cases involving staff at HQ or in the field to ascertain whether personnel policies and Anti-Trafficking and Child Safeguarding policies and procedures have been complied with. In cases where violations have occurred, HR will recommend appropriate actions up to and including staff terminations.
- 4) **Finance, Accounting, Award Management, and Information Systems (FAAMIS) Response:** Based on the recommendations of Creative's program and functional area teams, FAAMIS will take the appropriate actions, which may include withholding payments, suspending work, or terminating engagements.

## ***Internal Reporting Requirements and Procedures***

All Creative personnel, implementing subawardees, and partners are required to report any suspected prohibited activity or violation of this policy to Creative. Any allegation of suspected cases or known of human trafficking activities, child exploitation, child sexual abuse, child neglect and child abuse regarding a Creative employee, a subawardee, beneficiary, local community member, or any other relevant party involving violations of law, government regulations or Creative standards of conduct, must immediately be reported through one of the following mechanisms:

1. Completing the Fraud & Abuse electronic form at: [www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/directline/](http://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com/directline/)
2. Reporting to the supervisor/manager/COP, or someone you trust who can contact HQ Security.
3. Emailing Creative's HQ Security Department at [SecurityHQ@CreativeDC.com](mailto:SecurityHQ@CreativeDC.com).
4. Emailing a member of Creative's HQ Security Department directly.
5. Emailing the [Hotline@CreativeDC.com](mailto:Hotline@CreativeDC.com) or [Fraud&Abuse@CreativeDC.com](mailto:Fraud&Abuse@CreativeDC.com)

The HQ Security Department administers the email addresses and online platform and is automatically notified via email when an allegation is made via these methods.

In addition, reports may be made to any Creative supervisor, senior country/project office management staff, or to HQ's HR representative. Any Creative supervisor, member of senior country/project management staff, or HQ HR representative who receives such a report is required to immediately forward the report to Creative's Vice President, General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer.

Creative or subawardee personnel – who believe they or others have been subjected to the prohibited activities outlined in this Plan – may also report the activity as outlined above, or may contact the Global Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-844-888-FREE or [help@befree.org](mailto:help@befree.org).

It is each employee's obligation to report known or suspected violations of Creative's Anti-Trafficking and Child Safeguarding Policies or Compliance Plan. If an employee fails to report a suspected violation, he or she could be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Creative strictly prohibits retaliation against any Creative employee who reports any of the prohibited activities outlined in this Plan or other violations of the Anti-Trafficking and Child Safeguarding policies, or who cooperates with any internal or government investigations of such reports. Employees may do so without fear of reprisal. Creative personnel who engage in any form of retaliation against those who report the prohibited activities outlined in this Plan or other violations of this policy are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment with Creative.

## ***Review of Allegations, Remediation, and Disclosure to Government Authorities***



If Creative receives an allegation from an employee report or any other source alleging the prohibited activities outlined in this Plan, Creative’s Senior Director of Global Security will review the information to determine if it is credible and if so, take appropriate referral actions.

Where misconduct is uncovered through an internal investigation, third party audit, or otherwise, the misconduct shall be remedied through corrective action and preventative measures shall be implemented to reduce risk of reoccurrence.

Creative will cooperate fully with any US Government agencies responsible for any investigations, audits or corrective actions relating to trafficking in persons, child exploitation, child sexual abuse, child neglect and child abuse; such support may include, but is not limited to, providing timely and complete responses to document requests, and providing reasonable access to Creative facilities and staff.

Creative will protect all employees suspected of being victims of or witnesses to prohibited activities, prior to returning to the country from which the employee was recruited, and will not prevent or hinder these employees from cooperating fully with U.S. Government authorities. Creative will utilize a “survivor-centered approach”

### ***Posting of Plan***

Creative will post this Plan on its internal and external websites, [www.creativeassociatesinternational.com](http://www.creativeassociatesinternational.com), and at all workplaces, except where the work is being performed in non-fixed locations.

### ***Annual Certification***

Annually after receiving an award, Creative’s Contracts Administrator shall submit a certification to the Agreement or Contracting Officer that certifies:

- Creative, via the specific project, has implemented the Compliance Plan and context- and country-specific procedures to prevent any prohibited activities under the Anti-Trafficking and Child Safeguarding provisions and monitors, detects, and terminates any agent, contractor, subaward, subcontract, subcontractor, subawardee or employees engaging in prohibited activities; and
- After having conducted due diligence:
  - To the best of Creative’s knowledge and belief, neither it nor any of its agents, contractor, subcontractors, subaward, subawardees, employees or their agents is engaged in any such prohibited activities.
  - If abuses relating to any of the activities prohibited by the Anti-Trafficking or Child Safeguarding provisions have been found, Creative or its subcontractor has taken the appropriate remedial and referral actions.

Subawardees are required to submit a certification to Creative prior to the award of the subaward and annually thereafter.

## **Appendixes**

Country-specific appendixes (“Country Compliance Plans”) contain context-specific considerations and requirements appropriate to the size and complexity of the award(s) in country, the nature and scope of activities to be implemented, and particular risks presented by operational and geographic context. They are appended to and are a required supplement of this Compliance Plan.

Country-specific appendixes shall also consider detailed risk analyses and include appropriate mitigation measures to be implemented during an award’s period of performance.

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