

**SAFE – Solidarity  
Action and Fund for  
the Defenders of the  
Commons and ICCAs**

main objective of SAFE

**...protect and promote the rights of the defenders of the commons and ICCAs who are at risk of and/or experience a spectrum of human rights violations...**

## specific objectives

- providing **emergency support** to targeted individuals and groups/ communities...
- **anticipating and reducing the risks that defenders are facing...**
- supporting longer-term action to **secure justice for the affected individuals, families and communities...**
- providing “**solidarity compensation**” for victims who experience very poor chances of a just solution for their cases...

two main types of activities:

## 1. Emergency activities

...**prevent impending harm** to defenders by **strengthening their security** (e.g. enhancing communication, transparency and visibility in risk situation; facilitating rapid escape/ hiding/ moving from high risk areas to safe places) and/or by **assisting actual victims to meet their immediate needs** (e.g. survival and medical costs, communication and appropriate visibility of abuse, legal proceedings and support to seek legal redress and defend victims accused as part of legal intimidation tactics).

## 2. Longer-term activities

- anticipating and reducing the risks of the defenders
- securing justice for the defenders
- providing, in extreme cases, “solidarity compensation” to victims

# anticipating and reducing the risks to the defenders...

- identifying **key defenders** and informants...
- enhancing the capacity for **self-defense and peaceful resistance**...
- securing relevant insurance (?)...
- **field research and analyses** /truthful & fair information
- collecting, storing and diffusing **information** (visibly and/or quietly)
- engaging respected/ powerful individuals, organizations and media to **prevent violence** and promote the **equitable resolution of conflicts**.

# securing justice for the affected individuals, families and communities

- gathering, storing and diffusing (as appropriate) truthful and fair **information**
- building the **capacities** of the victim communities and individuals towards securing justice
- eliciting and sustaining **legal action** for reparation, restitution of rights, punishment for perpetrators, defending victims against smear tactics
- engaging respected/ powerful individuals, organizations and media capable of **mobilizing social, political, policy & financial support** to secure justice...

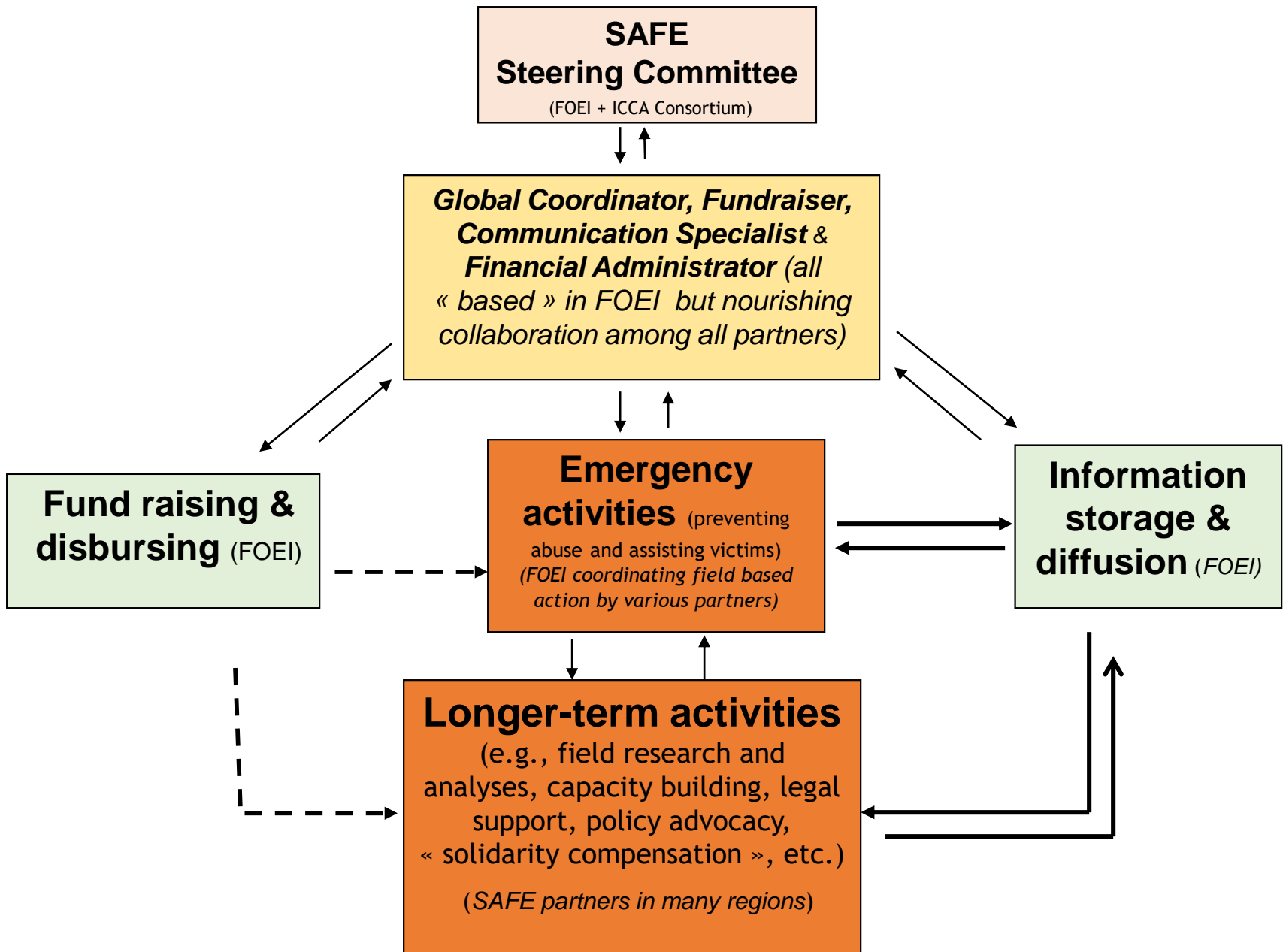
# providing “solidarity compensation” for victims (in extreme, unresolved cases)

- ...to avoid reinforcing a culture of impunity... compensation should be provided by the justice systems of their own countries... but
- ...if justice is not forthcoming or at all likely, the **victims should be supported on the basis of human solidarity** and a **sense of justice** that goes beyond the borders of given countries (but always in parallel with efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators)



# “eligible beneficiaries”

- individuals, families, communities and community-based organizations engaged *bona fide* for the care and defense of their natural commons and ICCAs...
- ...struggling for livelihoods, dignity and the human and environmental rights and responsibilities related to the governance and sound management of natural commons and ICCAs...
- (it is expected that the greater part of the resources will be dedicated to the Global South)



## Some principles

- a **“coalition of the conscientious and willing”**
- enhanced awareness as objective per se
- **communication and networking** are crucial
- building upon the **existence and work of trusted partners**
- **integrity and credibility** of the Fund’s sponsors and Steering Committee
- decentralization and **flexibility** of operations
- management costs minimized

# Defender of the commons and ICCAs

Any person who takes peaceful action to protect the integrity and sustainability of the natural commons and ICCAs whether in their own capacity, or as a professional or paid for such work.

Most defenders of the commons and ICCAs are human rights defenders, and as such are afforded without discrimination all the protection specified in the UN Declaration on Human Rights Defenders. This definition applies to both individuals and organisations.

- **Natural commons:** Land, water and natural resources held, governed, managed (and often also owned) collectively by a given community. According to studies by E. Ostrom “the commons” are defined by properties such as: definable boundaries, presence of a community (with strong social bonds and norms), clear and appropriate community-based rules and procedures.
- **Territories and areas conserved by indigenous peoples and local communities (ICCAs) :** territories and areas *de facto* effectively governed by indigenous peoples or local communities, with positive and effective outcomes for the conservation of biological and cultural diversity.
- ICCAs overlap with the commons although always have a territorial component and a requirement/ striving for effective governance and outcomes for the conservation of bio-cultural diversity.