



PROPOSAL FOR AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP AGREEMENT

A proposal for an International Workshop Agreement (IWA) shall be submitted to the secretariat of the Technical Management Board at ISO/CS (tmb@iso.org). Proposals will be referred to the ISO Technical Management Board for approval (4-week ballot).

Once the proposal for the IWA is approved by the TMB, the proposer will be requested to prepare an announcement/ invitation to the workshop, which will be circulated to the ISO members by ISO/CS. Please note that the announcement must be made at least 90 days in advance of the agreed date to allow potential attendees adequate time to plan on attending the workshop (Annex SI.3).

See the [ISO Supplement Annex SI](#) for full details of the Procedure for the development of IWAs.

Proposer The development for an International Workshop Agreement on a Framework for child-friendly and multiagency response for child abuse is the Ministry for Education and Children in Iceland.
Contact details of proposer Name: Páll Magnússon, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Iceland, Geneva. Email: pallm@mfa.is
Title of the proposed IWA Framework for child-friendly and multiagency response for child abuse

Purpose and justification

A high number of children and adolescents are victims of child abuse and violence. The National Children's Alliance estimates that over 600.000 children are abused in the US each year. According to The Crime Survey for England and Wales, it is estimated that 7,5% of adults aged 18 to 75 years experienced sexual abuse before the age of 16. A new survey data among children in Iceland (Icelandic Youth Study, University of Iceland, 2023) estimates that around 17% of girls and 5% of boys have suffered some form of sexual abuse by age 16. Around 66% of those children state that they never told anyone about the abuse.

"The impact of violence is devastating, immediate and lifelong. Violence against children impairs their brain development, their physical and mental health and their ability to learn." (Annual report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Violence against Children, 2023). Prevention is for most states a priority, but the response is also critical.

In 1998 the Barnahus (children's house) was established in Iceland. Now there are over 40 Barnahus in over 20 European countries. The Council of Europe (CoE) has promoted the Barnahus model since 2015 and has encouraged member states in committing to have at least one Barnahus-type structure in every country.

The Barnahus model is a "child-friendly, multidisciplinary and interagency model that brings together child welfare, criminal, medical, therapeutic and legal services under one roof to coordinate a child-centred response, develop an appropriate governance framework for an interagency service to help reduce re-traumatization for child sexual abuse victims and survivors by preventing the repetition of their experiences". (Report of the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children, including child prostitution, child pornography and other child sexual abuse material, 2023).

The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has recommended States Parties to set up child-friendly and intersectoral/multiagency structures to address violence and/or sexual abuse of children. The Committee has made several references to the Barnahus model in its recommendations to State Parties. (Barnahus: a European journey. Mapping study, 2023)

The Council of Europe, through its Committee of the Parties of the Convention on the Protection of Children from Child Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (Lanzarote Convention and Committee) recognises the Barnahus model as a promising practice and has supported several of its 46 member States in setting up tailor made Barnahus through dedicated cooperation projects, funded by the European Commission DG Reform.

The European Union in its Strategy for the Rights of the Child has also emphasised the urgency to present an initiative aimed at supporting the development and strengthening of integrated child protection systems, which will encourage all relevant authorities and services to better work together, in a system that puts the child at the centre. Barnahus is one of such systems.

There is however a need for better international guidelines or standards for the process to implement and operate a child-friendly multidisciplinary and interagency response center. After years of experience, the Icelandic Barnahus model has become one of the leading child-friendly, multidisciplinary models in the investigation and treatment of child abuse and domestic violence in Europe. The model is flexible and can be adapted to different national contexts. Still, in order to practice as a Barnahus, there are foundational criteria and guidelines that should guide the setup and practice in all countries.

The proposed document would provide guiding principles, requirements, and recommendations for a multiagency and child-friendly response model for abused children and would align territorial approaches of response agencies for child victims, which prevents (re)traumatisation.

The document can be used by governments, international organisations, monitoring bodies stakeholders and agencies or response centres for child abuse.

<p>Does the proposed IWA relate to or impact on any existing work in ISO committees?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>Please list any relevant documents and/or ISO committees</p>
<p>Relevant stakeholders (list of organizations that may be interested)</p> <p>Counsel of Europe, Barnahus Network, States, Local Government, Europol, experts in the field of Children's Right, experts in the field of Human Rights,</p>
<p>Member body willing to act as secretariat</p> <p>Swedish Institute for Standards (SIS)</p>
<p>Number of meetings to be held (if more than one is envisaged) and proposed dates</p> <p>1 Virtual (April), 1 Face-to-Face/Hybrid (June), if needed 1 additional Virtual (Sept/Oct)</p>
<p>Annexes are included with this proposal (give details)</p> <p>Draft IWA document.</p>