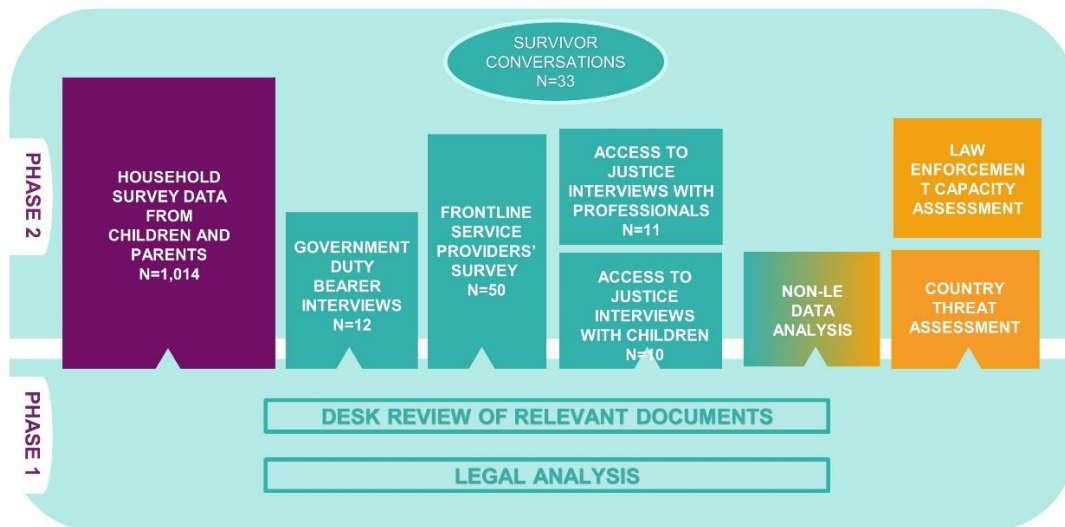


## Methodology: Interviews with Government Duty-Bearers

### Background

*Disrupting Harm* is a large-scale multi-country research project delivered by three partnering organisations, and 14 local organisations in Southeast Asia and Southern and East Africa. The bold scale of the project provided an unprecedented and unique opportunity to gather and consolidate a truly comprehensive picture of OCSEA in each of the target countries. Planning and undertaking research on this enormous scale in the short timeframe required careful planning and delineation of tasks.

Disrupting Harm was therefore planned as a set of nine research activities (see diagram below) that are complementary and interconnected, and fit together to tell a complete story. They are not intended to be considered as stand-alone activities. The three partnering organisations focused on their strengths, networks and collaborations to divide the data collection within each target country. Together, the combined project team then embarked on an analysis phase where cross-comparisons and triangulation was undertaken together as a team to result in the final comprehensive country reports. Triangulating and cross-analysing the data points also reduced reliance on face validity of single activities that sometimes occurs in such research (e.g. taking informant interviews as objective fact with little chance to scrutinise/triangulate what's reported in them).



UNICEF undertook large-scale, population representative surveys of internet-using children and their parents in each country. INTERPOL gathered and analysed existing law enforcement case data and conducted capacity analysis of the personnel making up the national law enforcement response to OCSEA. ECPAT's role focused on describing the context in which OCSEA occurs, along with carefully and ethically consulting samples of young people who had lived experiences of harm from OCSEA.

ECPAT conducted four primary research activities in phase two as depicted in green in the diagram (the access to justice activity was split into two parts during the course of the project).

## This Activity

Between 9 and 12 semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior national government duty-bearers who had a technical mandate inclusive of OCSEA in each country. Interviews focused on exploring the on-the-ground realities of legislation and policy related to OCSEA in the country. Analysis identified strengths and weaknesses of recent progress, emerging trends, upcoming plans and identifying what governments are prioritising.

## Rationale

Engagement with governments in all target countries for *Disrupting Harm* was undertaken from the inception of the project, including communicating about the research design, and seeking formal permissions to proceed with the research (through national ethical review mechanisms). Following on from these ongoing engagements, the interviews with government duty-bearers were therefore seen by participants and the project team alike as an essential set of data that established the 'current state of play' regarding the legislative and policy environment around OCSEA for each country.

A final positive impact was that during analysis, given our understanding of the perspectives of duty-bearers – the project recommendations could be shaped in ways that fit with the unique national-level perspectives and circumstances of each country (and thus hopefully increased the likelihood of uptake).

## Sample

Samples of senior government duty-bearers who held specific responsibilities related to OCSEA at a national level were drafted for each country by the field teams - in consultation with ECPAT member organisations and local experts. Draft samples predominantly included representatives from ministries with responsibilities related to telecommunications, justice, education, children and social welfare/development.

The draft samples were compared between project partners to avoid duplicating with other research activities. (For example, these interviews focused on policy and legislative implementation, but did not explore law enforcement elements as this was explored in INTERPOL activities). Draft samples were reviewed by the ECPAT Head of Research to ensure they reflected a good representation of the target population before recruitment was approved to commence.

In the first instances, participants with the highest levels of responsibility were approached first through formal channels by ECPAT member organisations in each country. At times, these senior staff delegated interviews to departmental staff, or included additional participants together in an interview, however the majority of cases saw those approached agree to participate.

Potential participants were provided with participant information sheets and an informed consent form, translated to local languages (annex A). Participants were given the opportunity to audio-record interviews or for interviewers only to take written notes. All but three interviews were audio-recorded. Participants were asked on the consent form whether they were comfortable being named when quoted, however through the analysis phase, ECPAT decided we would not name any individuals (though role titles were included with quotes where permission was granted).



The interviews were intended to be conducted in-person by our field team researchers who were selected for their extensive knowledge of target countries. However, the COVID-19 pandemic brought about some logistical reorganisation. In many cases, these interviews were still conducted by our field teams using virtual methods (using Skype, Zoom or telephone) but in some instances ECPAT member organisations conducted the interviews following preparations with the field team researchers.

Interviews were conducted in languages preferred by participants, usually also spoken by the interviewers. In a small number of cases, simultaneous interpreters were used.

In the cases where the interviews were not conducted in English, interviews were fully transcribed and translated for later analysis. In cases where the interviews were conducted in English, the audio files were used to conduct analysis.

All analysis of interviews was conducted by the field team researchers.

The table below outlines the number of interviews and participants across the target countries.

Country	Sample
Thailand	10 interviews with 16 people
Indonesia	11 interviews with 12 people
Cambodia	10 interviews with 10 people
Malaysia	11 interviews with 18 people
Philippines	6 interviews with 7 people
Vietnam	<i>This activity not completed (government permissions to proceed were not obtained)</i>
South Africa	11 interviews with 11 people
Namibia	10 interviews with 10 people
Kenya	12 Interviews with 17 people
Uganda	9 interviews with 9 people
Tanzania	9 interviews with 9 people
Ethiopia	9 interviews with 9 people
Mozambique	10 interviews with 11 people
Rwanda	<i>This activity not completed (government permissions to proceed were not obtained)</i>

## Tools

The interviews intended to explore the on-the-ground realities of legislation and policy related to OCSEA. Therefore, in order to gain contextual insights into the nature of any existing efforts to address OCSEA within a given national context, the interviews explored government duty-bearers' perspectives of how policies and laws arose; how they potentially changed over time; any struggles to implement them; and their effectiveness to address OCSEA in their country. Interview data was intended to also be triangulated and cross-analysed with data from other research activities with frontline social service workers, children and families, justice actors and law enforcement.

One 'master' semi-structured interview schedule was developed (see annex B). The questions explored seven thematic areas:

- Infrastructure of agencies involved in preventing and responding to OCSEA
- Law enforcement and justice structures for addressing OCSEA
- Current and emerging trends
- Existing laws, policy and progress regarding their implementation in practice
- Understanding national level apportioning of budget to CP generally and OCSEA specifically
- National level awareness raising and prevention
- National level research, monitoring and the scope of the problem.

However, as the interviews sought to clarify and extend what was learned from the national desk reviews and legal analyses that were conducted in the first phase of *Disrupting Harm*, the interviewers had the scope to amend and expand on this interview schedule to probe and follow threads that emerged during the interviews.

## Data Management

Hardcopy written consent forms were obtained from all participants. Each consent form was given a unique ID number that was also matched to audio recordings. Consent forms were scanned and shared with the central research team via a secure online password-protected platform (never by email) that only the research team and administrators had access too. Hard copies were destroyed. Scans of consent forms were stored separately to the audio files and transcripts. All audio files and transcripts were stored on secure, password protected computers and only transferred via the secure platform (never by email). All recordings and consent forms will be deleted from the ECPAT server six months after the release of national reports.

## Analysis

Initial analysis was conducted by the field team researchers who had conducted the interviews. Analysis prioritised scrutiny of findings from the desk reviews and legal analyses, particularly to understand the practical realities of the 'on paper' intentions of policy and law.

Thematic analysis was encouraged in the following areas, with attention given to the 'general tone' with focus given to notable exceptions or dissenting perspectives.

1. Public awareness of the threat of OCSEA.
2. Government delineations of roles and responsibilities, and coordination of the OCSEA prevention & responses.
3. Effectiveness of existing and emerging policies and laws related to OCSEA.
4. Effectiveness of law enforcement mechanisms for addressing OCSEA
5. Examples of key successes and challenges.

## Limitations and Special Ethical Considerations

Beyond regular research ethics considerations addressed in the design, substantial ethical issues were not anticipated, nor experienced for this research activity.



DISRUPTING HARM

Annex A: Participant information sheet and consent form for government interviews (English versions).

## PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

*Disrupting Harm* is a research project that aims to gather existing data and generate new evidence to understand online child sexual exploitation and abuse in 14 countries. It will inform and motivate effective action to prevent and respond to this problem.

The purpose of this interview is to inform our understanding of the current legislative and policy environment, identify emerging issues and trends, recent progress, upcoming plans and priorities in [country].

We will add your responses from this interview to evidence gathered from a range of research activities in *Disrupting Harm* to develop extensive evidence-based guidance for future prevention and responses to online child sexual exploitation.

If you decide to participate, you will be interviewed for about 1 hour. We would like to record the interview unless you tell us not to. Your participation in the study is voluntary at all times. For example, you may choose not to answer a question or to stop participating at any time.

### ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

You may choose for your participation in the study to remain anonymous. However, if you consent, we would prefer for your position title to be associated with your responses.

If you choose to remain anonymous, all of the information will be kept confidential, an identification number will be used in place of your name and these numbers will be kept separately from the data. All data will be kept securely and it will need a password to access. Only the research team will be able to access it. If we make a recording, then once we have written up the interview, we will delete the recording. All notes will be destroyed no longer than six months after the end of the project.

Some of the questions might be sensitive and personal, and may affect how you feel. You have the right to withdraw from the research project at any time you wish without any consequences. Let us know if you want some support for any feelings or concerns from this interview. You can also contact the lead researcher on the details below at any time.

### COMPENSATION

The study is unable to provide any financial benefit for the participants. However, we will ensure that the interview is conducted at a time and place of your convenience.

### ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research project has been granted ethical approval by [insert] in [country].

### CONCERNS OR COMPLAINTS

If you have any concerns or complaints about the research, or would like to request support, you can directly contact the lead researcher at ECPAT International:

Email: [DH@ecpat.net](mailto:DH@ecpat.net)

Phone: +66 2 215 3388

Whatsapp: +66 82 515 0242



## CONSENT FORM

Please indicate your response to the questions below:

I have been clearly informed about the <i>Disrupting Harm</i> project	Yes	No
Any questions that I have were answered by the researcher	Yes	No
I understand how data I provide will be used by the project	Yes	No
I agree that my name and position will be identified in reporting for the project	Yes	No
I understand how to contact the lead researcher with concerns or complaints	Yes	No
I agree for this interview to be recorded	Yes	No

I hereby give my consent to participate in the *Disrupting Harm* government interviews.

**Name:**.....

**Title:**.....

**Signature**.....

**Date** .....

*Annex B: Semi-structured interview guide for government interviews.*

**Introduction:**

Initial discussion should include a broader framing of child protection, VAC and adverse childhood experiences and some inquiry into the positioning of these issues on the national agenda, as well as priorities within this area. Then moving to discussion sexual abuse and exploitation, and in turn OCSEA. Take time to explain how the project defines the 'key concepts' and 'related concepts' and check for understanding from the participant before proceeding with the interview.

**1. Describe the key government agencies in [country] that have a designated mandate to address the different forms of OCSEA (live streaming, grooming, CSAM)**

- (Discuss project core concepts, related concepts may also be discussed)
- What does cooperation between agencies look like? Is there an inter-agency body? How clear is the division of roles and responsibilities and resourcing (seek documentation)
- How does the government work with NGOs and the private sector when addressing the issue of OCSEA? What could improve?
- What are the main obstacles, gaps, challenges government agencies encounter when fighting OCSEA?
- What is needed to effectively address the issue of OCSEA?

**2. Describe the national law enforcement structures (police and courts) for addressing core concepts of OCSEA and if relevant the related concepts**

- (Discuss project core concepts, related concepts may also be discussed)
- Is there a dedicated law enforcement unit?
- What does the cooperation between LE agencies/units look like on the national and international level?
- Do LE officers, prosecutors, judiciary receive any training on OCSEA-related cases?
- Does the country have a national image database?
- Does the country have access to any international image database (e.g. ICSE)?
- Are there any offender management processes in place?
- How does the reporting mechanisms and takedown procedures look like?
- What are the challenges in the investigation of OCSEA-related cases?
- Do the police cooperate with NGOs and industry? How does this cooperation look like? What improved/what is lacking?
- Are services providers obliged by the law to report child abuse content?
- How have you balanced issues of privacy and security with LE approaches?

**3. What are the current trends being publicly witnessed in the different forms of OCSEA in [country]?**

- What are the most common manifestations?
- Which groups of children are more affected?
- How are OCSEA trends related to offline violence?

4. **Describe any existing policy, laws, or progress to develop laws related to the core concepts of OCSEA in [country].**
  - What was the context for how these emerged? Since when is the country taking action to address this issue?
  - What difficulties and blocks have been encountered to enact these? How could they be overcome?
  - Are children involved in the development of policies and practices?
  - Promising practices/progress made
  
5. **Describe national (and state) level spending on child protection, including details about activities to address core concepts of OCSEA.**
  - (Request documentation)
  - Can you provide spending on prevention programs? Law enforcement, victim support, response and rehabilitation? How is it funded (directly or providers)
  
6. **Describe any national level activities to raise awareness and prevent OCSEA.**
  - Is the government incorporating any education and prevention programs into the school curricula?
  - Existence of prevention/awareness programs targeting families/communities
  - Existence of prevention programs targeting potential offenders
  
7. **Describe any national level research, monitoring or other activities to identify the extent and scope of the problem with core concepts of OCSEA.**