



EASO

Quality Assurance Tool

Examining the application for international protection

Module 1: Personal interview

Module 2: First-instance decision

2019

***Europe Direct is a service to help you find answers
to your questions about the European Union.***

Freephone number (*):

00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11

(*) Certain mobile telephone operators do not allow access to 00800 numbers or these calls may be billed.

More information on the European Union is available on the internet (<http://europa.eu>).

Print ISBN 978-92-9476-338-9 doi:10.2847/00963 BZ-04-18-841-EN-C
PDF ISBN 978-92-9476-356-3 doi:10.2847/202935 BZ-04-18-841-EN-N

© European Asylum Support Office 2019

Neither EASO nor any person acting on its behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained herein.

Printed by Bietlot in Belgium



EASO

Quality Assurance Tool

Examining the application
for international protection

Module 1: Personal interview

Module 2: First-instance decision

Introduction

Why was this tool developed? The **objective** of this quality assurance tool is to provide EU+ States with a common framework for internal quality assessment and assurance.

This is a flexible tool that can bring clarity and consistency in assessing the quality of the asylum process. Both modules of the tool can be used together for a more complete assessment of the overall quality of the examination of applications for international protection, or separately if there is a need to focus on one of the two aspects.

The tool can be used for various purposes, including performance assessment, periodic quality review and thematic audits. It can be used to assess the level of quality on an individual level as well as on a process level.

How was this tool developed? This quality assurance tool was developed by EASO together with experts from EU+ States. Before its finalisation, the tool and the standards and indicators it features were consulted with all EU+ States, the European Commission and UNHCR.

What is the scope of this tool? The tool and its two pilot modules focus on the core of the examination of applications for international protection.



Depending on the evaluation of the pilot modules and on identified needs, additional modules may be developed within the framework of EASO's quality management activities.

Who should use this tool? The tool is intended for anyone conducting quality assessment. It refers to the user as a '**quality assessor**'. In the national set-up this may include supervisors, quality specialists or any other staff with relevant functions.

How does this tool relate to other EASO tools? The tool and its two modules build on the common standards agreed in the following EASO practical guides and should be read in conjunction with them:

- *Practical Guide: Personal interview,*
- *Practical Guide: Evidence assessment,*
- *Practical Guide: Qualification for international protection,*
- *Practical Guide: Exclusion.*

These practical guides should be seen as guidance documents and as useful self-evaluation tools for case officers.

For more information about relevant EASO products see <https://www.easo.europa.eu/practical-tools>

How to use this tool

The tool includes several different elements, as listed below.

Standards and indicators	Firstly, the tool outlines the applicable standards and indicators with regard to the personal interview and the first-instance decision on the substance of an application for international protection.
	Standards and indicators: personal interview..... 5
	Standards and indicators: first-instance decision..... 8
Assessment	Secondly, it provides guidance on how to assess those standards and indicators in practice.
	Assessment methodology11
Feedback and reporting	Thirdly, the tool provides guidance and highlights good practices with regard to the provision of individual feedback and general reporting on quality, with the aim of improving the system.
	Individual feedback.....13
	General reporting.....14
▶ Assessment forms	In this regard, the tool includes add-on assessment forms in Excel format that can be applied directly in an individual quality assessment, along with PDF versions of the forms that can be printed to take handwritten notes during an individual quality assessment (Annex I).
	Annex I: Assessment forms16
▶ Additional guidance for quality assessors (examples)	As further guidance for quality assessors, the tool also provides examples of situations in which the indicators could be assessed as minor or significant errors or marked as 'Not applicable' (Annex II).
	Annex II: Assessment of the personal interview17
	Assessment of the first-instance decision25
Quality Assurance Tool — technical solution	EASO has developed a technical solution for this quality assurance tool that provides EU+ States with a built-in, user-friendly quality assurance tool for a more streamlined and efficient internal quality assurance process.

Standards and indicators: personal interview

The standards and indicators for assessing the quality of a substantive personal interview are divided into the following themes.

Opening the interview

Conducting the interview

Substance of the interview

Closing the interview

Interview record

When assessing whether the standards have been met, the quality assessors should always take into consideration the individual case at hand.

Opening the interview

Standard	1. Previously identified special needs are addressed accordingly.
Indicators	<p>1.1. Special needs, which have been previously identified, are taken into account when arranging the interview.</p> <p><i>For example:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>appropriate gender of the interviewer and/or interpreter;</i> ▪ <i>unaccompanied children have a representative present;</i> ▪ <i>practical arrangements are made for persons with disabilities;</i> ▪ <i>other relevant procedural guarantees are put in place.</i>

Standard	2. The necessary information is provided to the applicant.
Indicators	<p>2.1. Information on the aim of the interview is provided.</p> <p>2.2. Information regarding confidentiality is provided.</p> <p>2.3. Information on the roles of all persons present is provided.</p> <p>2.4. Information on the obligation to cooperate is provided.</p> <p>2.5. Information on breaks and the possibility to ask for breaks is provided.</p> <p>2.6. Other mandatory information according to national practice is provided.</p>

Standard	3. It is ensured that the applicant and the interpreter understand each other.
Indicators	3.1. The applicant is asked whether they understand the interpreter and vice versa.

Standard	4. It is ensured that the applicant is fit to be interviewed.
Indicators	<p>4.1. The applicant is asked and they confirm that they are mentally and physically fit to be interviewed.</p> <p>4.2. The interviewer has effectively picked up on indicators that the interview cannot go ahead.</p>

Conducting the interview

Standard	5. The interviewer displays a professional attitude throughout the interview.
Indicators	<p>5.1. The interviewer appropriately establishes rapport with the applicant.</p> <p>5.2. The interviewer uses appropriate, sensitive and factual language.</p> <p>5.3. The interviewer addresses the applicant directly (in the second person).</p> <p>5.4. The interviewer uses an appropriate tone and appropriate body language throughout the interview.</p>

Standard	6. The interviewer applies appropriate questioning techniques.
Indicators	<p>6.1. The applicant is encouraged to provide a free narrative regarding their reasons for applying for international protection.</p> <p>6.2. Each new focused theme is introduced to the applicant.</p> <p>6.3. The interviewer uses open and/or closed questions appropriately.</p> <p>6.4. Questions are adapted to the capabilities of the applicant.</p> <p>6.5. The interviewer avoids unproductive questions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ leading questions; ▪ multiple-choice questions; ▪ plural questions; ▪ unnecessarily repetitive questions; ▪ irrelevant questions.

Standard	7. The interviewer ensures all persons present act in accordance with their roles and manages the interview effectively.
Indicators	<p>7.1. The interviewer maintains control of the interview situation throughout the interview.</p> <p>7.2. If a challenging situation occurs during the interview, it is effectively handled by the interviewer to the extent possible.</p> <p>7.3. The interviewer ensures that the interpreter acts in accordance with their role and responsibilities.</p> <p>7.4. The legal representative and/or other persons present are allowed to exercise their rights in accordance with national rules and are authorised to intervene at least at the end of the personal interview.</p> <p>7.5. Breaks are taken if necessary or requested and appropriate.</p>

Substance of the interview

Standard	8. All material facts are identified and explored sufficiently.
Indicators	<p>8.1. Where relevant, the identity (including country of origin) of the applicant is established.</p> <p>8.2. Past problems and/or threats are explored sufficiently (what, who, when, where, why).</p> <p>8.3. Future fear is explored.</p> <p>8.4. The availability of protection in the home area in the country of origin is explored sufficiently.</p> <p>8.5. The availability of an internal protection alternative is explored sufficiently.</p>

Standard	9. Documents and other written evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim are handled appropriately.
Indicators	<p>9.1. The interviewer explores the relevance and source of any documents or written information submitted to support the applicant's claim.</p> <p>9.2. All relevant documents presented by the applicant are added to the file.</p>

Standard	10. The applicant is provided with an effective opportunity to address inconsistencies and discrepancies.
Indicators	10.1. All significant inconsistencies and discrepancies are put to the applicant and they are provided with an opportunity to address them.

Standard	11. Where relevant, exclusion considerations are appropriately explored.
Indicators	11.1. Potential exclusion considerations are correctly identified.
	11.2. Potential exclusion considerations are sufficiently explored.

Standard	12. Specific policies and guidelines are followed correctly.
Indicators	12.1. Where applicable, national policy regarding the specific profile of the applicant is followed correctly. <i>For example: specific profiles could include children, victims of trafficking, potential victims of female genital mutilation, applicants with claims related to sexual orientation and gender identity, etc.</i>
	12.2. Where applicable, country-specific guidelines for interviewing are followed correctly.
	12.3. Where applicable, policies regarding the application of additional protection grounds (e.g. humanitarian grounds) are followed correctly.

Closing the interview

Standard	13. The interviewer follows the necessary steps when closing the interview.
Indicators	13.1. The interviewer confirms whether or not the applicant has understood all questions asked.
	13.2. The interviewer asks the applicant whether they want to add anything.
	13.3. The interviewer explains the next steps of the asylum procedure clearly.

Interview record

Standard	14. Interview transcript/report rules are followed accordingly.
Indicators	14.1. A thorough and factual report containing all substantive elements, or a transcript, is made of the personal interview. It contains additional elements if applicable according to national practice.
	14.2. If applicable, an audio or audiovisual recording is made according to national practice.
	14.3. The applicant is provided with an effective opportunity to make comments and/or provide clarification orally and/or in writing with regard to any mistranslations or misconceptions appearing in the interview report/transcript.

These standards and indicators are not meant to be exhaustive. When assessing the overall quality of the interview, additional circumstances may have to be taken into account. These may be due to national procedures and/or the specifics of the case.

National specifics

Please insert here any necessary additional guidance for quality assessors with regard to the standards and indicators for the personal interview.

Standards and indicators: first-instance decision

The standards and indicators for assessing the quality of a first-instance decision on the substance of the application for international protection are divided into the following themes.



When assessing whether the standards have been met, the quality assessors should always take into consideration the individual case at hand.

Introduction

Standard	1. The decision states the applicant's details correctly.
Indicators	1.1. The decision states correct name, country of origin and home area, date of birth and file number, along with other details required by national policy.

Standard	2. If applicable, the decision includes a concise and accurate summary of the immigration history of the applicant.
Indicators	2.1. The decision includes a concise and accurate summary of possible previous applications and other immigration history of the applicant, in accordance with national policy.

Basis of claim

Standard	3. The basis of claim correctly sets out all material facts.
Indicators	3.1. The basis of claim correctly identifies and presents all material facts.

Standard	4. The basis of claim correctly identifies the future fear.
Indicators	4.1. The basis of claim correctly specifies who and what the applicant fears, and why.

Standard	5. If applicable, evidence presented by the applicant is correctly outlined in the basis of claim.
Indicators	5.1. Evidence presented by the applicant is correctly outlined according to national practice.

Credibility assessment

Standard	6. The credibility of each material fact is assessed correctly, including the identity and country of origin of the applicant.
Indicators	6.1. The evidence is linked correctly to each material fact.
	6.2. Credibility indicators are applied correctly.
	6.3. The concept of plausibility is applied objectively.
	6.4. Only inconsistencies/discrepancies that have been put to the applicant for comment have been used in the decision.
	6.5. Country of origin information is relevant, up to date and referenced correctly.

Standard	7. A clear finding is made on each material fact.
Indicators	<p>7.1. For each material fact, the decision clearly states whether it has been accepted or rejected.</p> <p>7.2. Where a material fact is deemed ‘uncertain’, Article 4(5) of the qualification directive ^{1/}‘benefit of the doubt’ has been applied correctly to effectively conclude whether to accept or reject the material fact.</p>

Standard	8. The correct standard and burden of proof is applied.
Indicators	<p>8.1. When assessing the material facts the correct standard of proof is applied, according to national guidance.</p> <p>8.2. The burden of proof has been applied correctly when assessing the material facts.</p> <p>8.3. Individual factors such as age, education and trauma are correctly identified and taken into account.</p>

Risk assessment

Standard	9. The risk on return is accurately and fully assessed.
Indicators	<p>9.1. The decision correctly identifies and assesses the risk on return (who, what and why).</p> <p>9.2. Country of origin information is relevant, up to date and correctly referenced.</p> <p>9.3. The correct standard of proof has been applied (reasonable degree of likelihood) in assessing risk on return.</p>

Legal analysis

Standard	10. Well-founded fear of persecution is assessed correctly.
Indicators	<p>10.1. Whether or not the stated treatment amounts to persecution is assessed correctly.</p> <p>10.2. The subjective and objective elements of the stated fear are assessed correctly.</p>

Standard	11. Reasons for persecution are identified and assessed correctly.
Indicators	<p>11.1. The decision correctly identifies and assesses all applicable reasons for persecution.</p> <p>11.2. The connection (nexus) between the persecution and the reason(s) is assessed correctly.</p>

Standard	12. The real risk of serious harm under Article 15 of the qualification directive is identified and assessed correctly.
Indicators	<p>12.1. The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(a): ‘death penalty or execution’.</p> <p>12.2. The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(b): ‘torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’.</p> <p>12.3. The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(c): ‘serious and individual threat to a civilian’s life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict’.</p>

(¹) Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (qualification directive).

Standard	13. The availability and accessibility of protection in the country of origin is assessed correctly.
Indicators	<p>13.1. The availability and accessibility of protection in the home area of the applicant is assessed correctly.</p> <p>13.2. The applicability of an internal protection alternative is assessed correctly, including its reasonability.</p>

Standard	14. If relevant, exclusion grounds have been identified and assessed correctly.
Indicators	<p>14.1. Exclusion grounds are identified and assessed correctly.</p> <p>14.2. Individual responsibility is assessed correctly.</p> <p>14.3. The correct standard and burden of proof are applied.</p>

Standard	15. If applicable, additional protection grounds are applied correctly.
Indicators	15.1. Where applicable, additional protection grounds (e.g. humanitarian grounds) are applied correctly.

Form

Standard	16. The decision follows a correct structure and includes all required elements.
Indicators	<p>16.1. The decision follows a correct structure and format according to national policies.</p> <p>16.2. The applicant is provided with information on how to challenge a negative decision in writing or by electronic means.</p>

Standard	17. The decision is professionally drafted.
Indicators	<p>17.1. The reasoning is non-speculative.</p> <p>17.2. The language of the decision is appropriate, sensitive and factual.</p> <p>17.3. The rules of grammar and spelling are applied.</p>

Efficiency

Standard	18. The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines.
Indicators	18.1. The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines according to national practice.

The standards and indicators are not meant to be exhaustive. When assessing the overall quality of the first-instance decision, additional circumstances may have to be taken into account. These may be due to national procedures and/or the specifics of the case.

National specifics

Please insert here any necessary additional guidance for quality assessors with regard to the standards and indicators for the first-instance decision on the substance of the application.

Assessment methodology

It is for each national authority to decide on the aim and methodology of the quality assessment it conducts, such as the way it is institutionalised and organised, the sample of assessed cases, the timing and frequency of quality reviews, the way the outcome is reported, etc.

The tool aims to provide a flexible solution that can be applied in different national set-ups. The section below outlines the proposed assessment methodology for the application of the standards and indicators above. Furthermore, it highlights certain examples of good practice identified by experts in the field of quality assurance.

Applying the standards and indicators

The lists of standards and indicators represent guidance regarding the key elements to look at when assessing the quality of an interview or a first-instance decision. They cannot be viewed as exhaustive and, when assessing the overall quality of an interview/decision, quality assessors should take into account any applicable additional elements.

The assessment of each **indicator** falls under the following four different categories.

Correct	Minor error	Significant error	Not applicable
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An indicator should be marked as 'correct' when the quality requirements are met accordingly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An indicator should be marked as a 'Minor error' when the error detected does not detract from the overall quality of the interview or decision and would not affect the outcome of the application. Furthermore, there are no apparent risks or negative impact on the applicant, the determining authority or the state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An indicator should be marked as a 'Significant error' when the error detected detracts from the overall quality of the interview or decision and/or may affect the outcome of the application. Furthermore, there are potential risks or negative impact on the applicant, the determining authority or the state. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An indicator could be marked as 'not applicable' depending on the national system, the method of assessment and/or the individual case.

It is possible that limited assessment options could be available for a given indicator due to its nature and applicability. For example, an error with regard to some indicators would always have a significant impact on the overall quality. Therefore, the option 'Minor error' would not be available for such indicators. Alternatively, some aspects would only have a minimal impact on the overall quality. For such indicators, 'Significant error' would not be an available option. Some indicators would only apply in some cases (e.g. special needs, exclusion considerations). For those, the option 'Not applicable' would be available. This is reflected in the assessment forms provided in **Annex I**.

With regard to the personal interview in particular, the scope of the assessment can vary based on the quality assessment setting itself. Some indicators would only be measurable when the quality assessor is present during the interview and/or on the basis of an audio/audiovisual recording and would be difficult or impossible to assess if the review were based solely on the interview transcript.

Assessment of the outcome

In addition to the assessment of each indicator, the quality assessor should provide their **conclusion on the correctness of the outcome** of the interview or decision. It should be marked in the following way.

Personal interview:

The interview allows an effective and correct decision to be made:

- probably yes
- probably not
- not possible to conclude

First-instance decision:

The decision is:

- probably correct
- probably incorrect
- not possible to conclude

This adds another aspect of the assessment that is of particular importance. An assessment that the interview probably does not allow for an effective and correct decision to be taken or that the decision is probably not correct may require immediate follow-up (e.g. conducting an additional interview, changing a (draft) decision or even withdrawing a decision if feasible within the national system).

Quality assessment set-up and processes

The context of quality assessment in EU+ States may vary: there may be a permanent set-up with a team of quality auditors; the function may be shared with supervisors; or ad hoc quality assessment exercises may be organised. In any case, ensuring that the quality standards and indicators are applied in a consistent manner throughout the system is vital.

Good practice: consistency in the application of standards and indicators

It is important to ensure consistency in the assessment of the different indicators. Here are some examples as to how this may be achieved in practice.

- ▶ At the outset of a new quality assessment exercise, quality assessors review the same sample of cases, assess them and then compare and discuss the results to come to a common understanding of how the different indicators apply.
- ▶ In an ongoing quality assessment exercise, further meetings to ensure consistency in the application of quality standards and indicators can be held on a regular basis.
- ▶ Regular consultations between different members of staff with quality assessment functions (e.g. supervisors and quality auditors) may also be beneficial for the consistent application of standards and indicators when more actors are involved.
- ▶ This tool provides some examples of what could qualify as a 'Minor error' or a 'Significant error' in order to further facilitate a consistent interpretation of the standards and indicators (**Annex II**). States are encouraged to further develop these examples by building on the specific national requirements and practice in order to provide tailor-made guidance to their quality assessors.

Depending on the quality processes in place, it may be possible to review the interviews and decisions together as part of the same case file or to review the interview separately, especially when it is assessed by a quality assessor who is present when it is held.

Good practice: assessing the interview independently from the (outcome of) the decision

When both elements of a case are to be assessed, it is recommended that the assessment of the interview be completed independently of the decision in order to keep the assessment free of bias from additional information and/or the outcome of the application.

That being said, an assessment of the decision cannot be completed without familiarisation with the available information and especially the personal interview.

Individual feedback

The tool is useful for providing individual feedback to the case officer and for encouraging learning on the job, and also for providing feedback to the system, based on a larger sample of assessments. The way the tool is used can vary depending on the objectives of the assessment. Where individual feedback is provided, it is important to stress that the focus is on improving the individual's performance rather than simply on identifying the errors. In this regard, the assessment forms included in this tool (**Annex I**) include space for comments on each indicator. In addition to identifying an error, through the specific comments the quality assessor could provide guidance to the case officer. Such provision of specific feedback should be seen as a key element in the quality assessment.

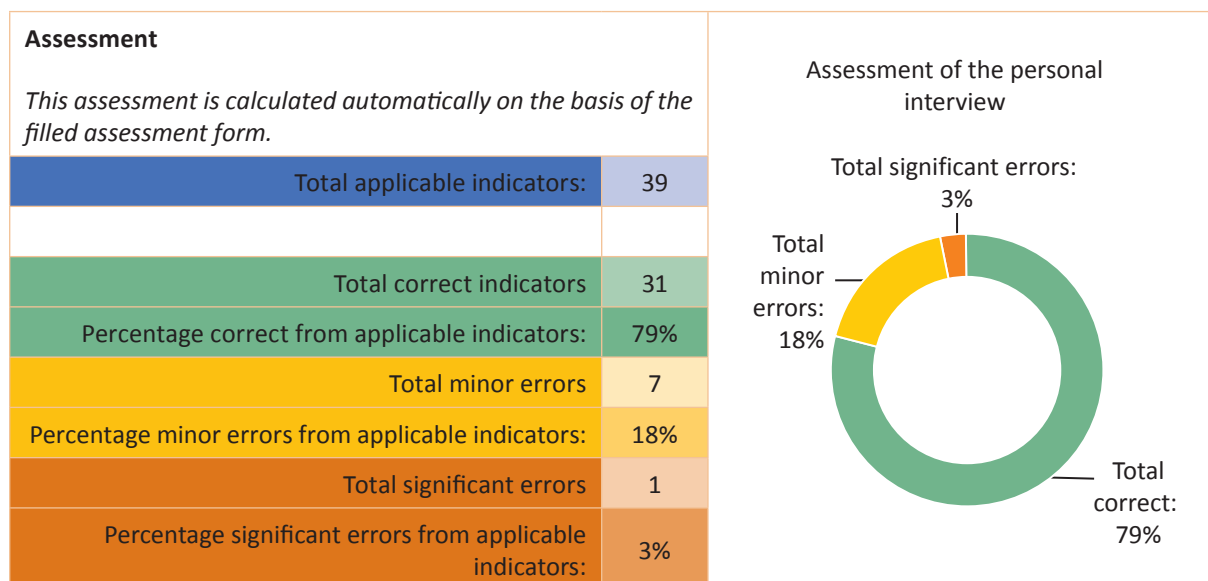
Good practice: providing comments

The following are considered good practice with regard to providing comments in the quality assessment.

- ▶ Highlight good practices identified in the interview/decision.
- ▶ In the comments regarding errors, provide guidance on what would have been the correct approach.
- ▶ In some cases, it may be helpful to explain why a certain error has been assessed as 'Minor' or 'Significant' in that instance.

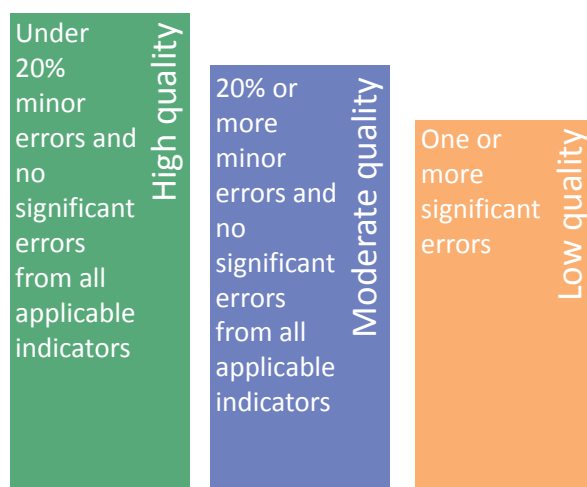
When feedback is provided in order to improve the individual performance, promptness and further guidance on how to apply the standards correctly is particularly important in order to avoid similar errors in the future.

The assessment forms provided with this tool (**Annex I**) automatically generate the assessment of the quality of the interview or the decision by calculating the number of indicators assessed as 'Correct', the number of indicators assessed as 'Minor error' and the total number of indicators assessed as 'Significant error'. Furthermore, they are presented as a percentage of the total of applicable indicators. An example of this is included below.



It is up to the EU+ State to determine what this would represent for the assessment of the overall quality of the interview or the decision.

EASO recommends the following scale for the assessment of overall quality.



This assessment scale is integrated into the forms (**Annex I**), however it can be deleted and replaced with a different or a differently formulated conclusion according to national practice.

General reporting

When feedback is provided to the organisation and on a systemic level, it is important to be able to select an appropriate sample. The file information included in the assessment forms (**Annex I**) can be a useful filtering mechanism in order to select appropriate case files for reporting.

Reporting can, for example, focus on cases concerning applicants from a certain country of origin, or can look at a specific profile or a specific outcome of the decision, etc. Moreover, it could look at the application of all standards and indicators or focus on a specific topic, such as 'credibility assessment' in the first-instance decisions reviewed.

The completed assessments can be used for the purposes of overall periodic reports (monthly, quarterly, yearly, etc.) or thematic audits, including follow-up audit reports, flash reports on certain identified issues of concern, etc.

The technical solution developed by EASO supports such reporting features by automating the filtering and processing of data and its presentation.

Depending on the national system and the purpose of the assessment, the quality assessors could further build on the assessment that is generated and provide analyses and follow-up recommendations.

Reflection should take place on how to respond to various errors, in particular where significant errors are observed. If such significant errors indicate systematic issues they should be shared promptly with the appropriate staff (e.g. managerial level, those responsible for developing and implementing policy, those responsible for training) and addressed accordingly.

Good practice: analysis and follow-up

Analysis of the findings from the quality assessment could include the following.

- ▶ Analysis of the most common problems and, if relevant, possible causes.
- ▶ Recommendations regarding changes in processes, new guidelines, training and other specific actions to be taken.

Each EU+ State should furthermore decide on the distribution of the quality assessment reports and how they are going to be used within the organisation.

Good practice: distribution of the reports

- ▶ Sharing the general findings of the quality assessment with the staff can be beneficial for the system. It is an opportunity to learn from the errors and good practices identified.
- ▶ Where possible, the reports of the assessment should be combined with recommendations and/or an action plan suggesting measures to be taken in order to improve the quality of the process.
- ▶ It may be useful to make the quality assessment reports available to relevant staff with the assistance of an internal communication tool. Specific findings and recommendations could, for example, be included in an internal newsletter, which would promptly reach case officers.

Annex I: Assessment forms

Two sets of add-on **assessment forms** based on the standards and indicators outlined in this document are available in electronic version at www.easo.europa.eu/practical-tools. These assessment forms can be used directly in the individual assessment of a personal interview or a first-instance decision.

Assessment forms in Excel format

- **QAT Assessment Form 1 - Interview.xlsx**
- **QAT Assessment Form 2 - Decision.xlsx**

If you would like to use the assessment forms to take **handwritten notes** during the assessment you can print or copy the static versions provided at the end of this document.

Assessment forms in PDF format — for handwritten notes

- **QAT Assessment Form 1 - Interview.pdf**
- **QAT Assessment Form 2 - Decision.pdf**

Annex II: Examples from practice

The examples below are intended as additional guidance for quality assessors. They are certainly not exhaustive or conclusive; they are simply illustrative of some scenarios in which the indicators could be assessed in a particular manner. The quality assessor should always take into consideration the individual circumstances in the case at hand in light of the guidance provided in this tool with regard to what constitutes a correct application, a minor error or a significant error.

Additionally, the development of examples at the national level is encouraged.

Assessment of the personal interview

Standards and indicators		Examples of situations in which the indicator can be assessed as a 'Minor error'	Examples of situations in which the indicator can be assessed as a 'Significant error'	Examples of situations in which the indicator can be marked as 'Not applicable'	
Opening the interview	1.	Previously identified special needs are addressed accordingly.			
	1.1.	Special needs, which have been previously identified, are taken into account when arranging the interview. For example: - appropriate gender of the interviewer and/or interpreter; - unaccompanied children have a representative present; - practical arrangements are made for persons with disabilities; - other relevant procedural guarantees are put in place.	Special needs are not fully taken into account, but the omissions probably have no serious impact on the interview.	Failure to take into account special needs probably has a negative effect on the applicant's ability to present their grounds.	Use N/A if no special needs have been identified prior to the interview.
	2.	The necessary information is provided to the applicant.			
	2.1.	Information on the aim of the interview is provided.	Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it.	The applicant is not provided with this information.	[option not available]
	2.2.	Information regarding confidentiality is provided.	Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it.	The applicant is not provided with this information.	[option not available]

	2.3.	Information on the roles of all persons present is provided.	Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it.	The applicant is not provided with this information.	[option not available]
	2.4.	Information on the obligation to cooperate is provided.	Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it.	The applicant is not provided with this information.	[option not available]
	2.5.	Information on breaks and the possibility to ask for breaks is provided.	Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it.	The applicant is not provided with this information.	[option not available]
	2.6.	Other mandatory information according to national practice is provided.	Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it.	The applicant is not provided with this information.	Use if it is not mandatory to provide other information.
	3.	It is ensured that the applicant and the interpreter understand each other.			
	3.1.	The applicant is asked whether they understand the interpreter and vice versa.	The specific question is not asked at the outset of the interview, however it is confirmed at a later stage that the applicant and the interpreter understand each other.	It is not confirmed that applicant and interpreter understand each other.	[option not available]
	4.	It is ensured that the applicant is fit to be interviewed.			
	4.1.	The applicant is asked and they confirm that they are mentally and physically fit to be interviewed.	[option not available]	The applicant is not asked about their well-being.	[option not available]
	4.2.	The interviewer has effectively picked up on indicators that the interview cannot go ahead.	[option not available]	Possible indicators are not noticed or are ignored.	Use N/A if there are no such indicators.
Conducting the interview	5.	The interviewer displays a professional attitude throughout the interview.			
	5.1.	The interviewer appropriately establishes rapport with the applicant.	The interviewer does not proactively establish rapport with the applicant, however this only marginally affects the overall quality and/or efficiency of the interview.	The interviewer fails to establish rapport with the applicant due to shortcomings in his/her interview technique that negatively impacts the applicant and/or the overall quality of the interview.	Use N/A if it is not possible to assess this indicator on the basis of the available information.

	5.2.	The interviewer uses appropriate, sensitive and factual language.	The formulation of some questions is not sufficiently clear, taking into account the background of the applicant, however this does not negatively affect the overall efficiency of the interview.	Inappropriate or insensitive questions are asked.	[option not available]
	5.3.	The interviewer addresses the applicant directly (in the second person).	On a few occasions the interviewer uses the third person to address the applicant, however in general the questions are directed to the applicant.	The interviewer repeatedly refers to the applicant in the third person, which probably had an impact on the rapport between the interviewer and the applicant.	[option not available]
	5.4.	The interviewer uses an appropriate tone and appropriate body language throughout the interview.	Tone and/or body language deviates slightly from good practice, however this probably had no or limited impact on the rapport between the interviewer and the applicant.	Tone and/or body language are inappropriate to an extent that it probably had an impact on the rapport between the interviewer and the applicant.	Use N/A if the assessment is made by reading only the transcript/report.
	6.	The interviewer applies appropriate questioning techniques.			
	6.1.	The applicant is encouraged to provide a free narrative regarding their reasons for applying for international protection.	Although the free narrative is limited, the interviewer has not encouraged the applicant to continue with a free narrative and elaborate further.	The applicant is not given the opportunity to provide a free narrative.	[option not available]
	6.2.	Each new focused theme is introduced to the applicant.	Some themes are started without a (sufficiently clear) introduction, however the interview in general follows a logical structure.	New focused themes are started without any or with suggestive introductions, which compromises the structure of the interview and the ability of the applicant to effectively present their case.	Use N/A in interviews in which there are no additional new themes that need to be introduced.
	6.3.	The interviewer uses open and/or closed questions appropriately.	Open questions are used appropriately, but more open questions would most likely provide better results.	Closed questions are used excessively, preventing the applicant from providing a complete account.	[option not available]

	6.4.	Questions are adapted to the capabilities of the applicant.	Several questions have to be rephrased because the applicant does not understand the question.	Although the applicant clearly does not understand some questions, the interviewer does not rephrase accordingly.	[option not available]
	6.5.	The interviewer avoids unproductive questions, such as: - leading questions; - multiple-choice questions; - plural questions; - unnecessarily repetitive questions; - irrelevant questions.	Unproductive questions are used in one or more instances, however this does not negatively affect the overall efficiency of the interview.	Multiple unproductive questions are used that have a significant negative impact on the efficiency of the interview.	[option not available]
	7.	The interviewer ensures all persons present act in accordance with their roles and manages the interview effectively.			
	7.1.	The interviewer maintains control of the interview situation throughout the interview.	The applicant is allowed to talk at great length about matters not material to the application.	The legal representative is allowed to take over parts of the interview.	[option not available]
	7.2.	If a challenging situation occurs during the interview, it is effectively handled by the interviewer to the extent possible.	The interviewer is slow to recognise and resolve a difficult situation, however it is ultimately addressed in an appropriate manner.	The interviewer fails to address a difficult situation, which allows it to escalate and makes it damaging to the well-being of the persons present or significantly compromises the effectiveness of the interview.	Use N/A if there were no noteworthy difficult situations during the interview.
	7.3.	The interviewer ensures that the interpreter acts in accordance with their role and responsibilities.	The interpreter displays body language that deviates slightly from good practice and the interviewer does not address this promptly.	The interviewer does not intervene, although the interpreter talks at length with the applicant without translating the conversation. During the interview, the interpreter is allowed to repeatedly make comments regarding the applicant or the case at hand.	Use N/A if there was no interpreter or if no relevant assessment can be made based on the interview record.

	7.4.	The legal representative and/or other persons present are allowed to exercise their rights in accordance with national rules and are authorised to intervene at least at the end of the personal interview.	The interviewer has not fully explained to other persons present what their rights are in accordance with national rules.	The legal representative is not allowed to speak in accordance with applicable procedural rules.	Use N/A if there are no other persons present in addition to the applicant, the interviewer and the interpreter, if applicable.
	7.5.	Breaks are taken if necessary or requested and appropriate.	The interviewer allows or takes too many or unnecessarily long breaks.	Requests for a break are ignored or no break is taken although the length of the interview would have made a break necessary.	Use N/A if the interview was short and no breaks were needed.
Substance of the interview	8.	All material facts are identified and explored sufficiently.			
	8.1.	Where relevant, the identity (including country of origin) of the applicant is established.	The identity of the applicant is established, but issues that could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed.	The identity of the applicant has not been established sufficiently.	Use N/A if the applicant's identity is sufficiently established prior to the interview and this is not relevant at this stage.
	8.2.	Past problems and/or threats are explored sufficiently (what, who, when, where, why).	All facts that are material are identified and explored, but issues that could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed.	Some material facts are not identified as such and therefore are not explored further.	[option not available]
	8.3.	Future fear is explored.	Future fear is explored to some extent, but further questions could have strengthened the decision.	Future fear is not explored.	[option not available]
	8.4.	The availability of protection in the home area in the country of origin is explored sufficiently.	The availability of protection in the home area is explored to some extent, but further questions could have strengthened the decision.	The availability of protection in the home area in the country of origin is not explored when it could be a potentially viable option.	Use N/A if, in light of the general situation in the country of origin and the individual circumstances of the applicant, it is sufficiently established that no protection is necessary or that no protection is available.

	8.5.	The availability of an internal protection alternative is explored sufficiently.	The availability of an internal protection alternative is explored to some extent, but further questions could have strengthened the decision.	The availability of an internal protection alternative is not explored when it could be a potentially viable option.	Use N/A if, in light of the general situation in the country of origin and the individual circumstances of the applicant, it is sufficiently established that no internal protection alternative is necessary or available.
	9.	Documents and other written evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim are handled appropriately.			
	9.1.	The interviewer explores the relevance and source of any documents or written information submitted to support the applicant's claim.	Excessive time is spent talking about documents with no bearing on the application.	The content and/or relevance of documents is not established during the interview when these are material to the application.	Use N/A if there is no written information presented in the case.
	9.2.	All relevant documents presented by the applicant are added to the file.	All relevant documents are added to the file, however they are not recorded according to national practice.	Relevant documents are not added to the file.	Use N/A if there are no documents presented during the interview.
	10.	The applicant is provided with an effective opportunity to address inconsistencies and discrepancies.			
	10.1.	All significant inconsistencies and discrepancies are put to the applicant and they are provided with an opportunity to address them.	Inconsistencies and/or discrepancies that are not linked to the material facts are unnecessarily explored in great depth.	Significant inconsistencies and/or discrepancies are not put to the applicant.	Use N/A if there are no significant inconsistencies or discrepancies.
	11.	Where relevant, exclusion considerations are appropriately explored.			
	11.1.	Potential exclusion considerations are correctly identified.	[option not available]	Potential exclusion considerations are not identified.	Use N/A if no exclusion considerations arise.

	11.2.	Potential exclusion considerations are sufficiently explored.	Excessive time is spent exploring potential exclusion considerations when these are clearly not relevant in the case at hand.	Potential exclusion considerations are not sufficiently explored.	Use N/A if no exclusion considerations arise.
	12.	Specific policies and guidelines are followed correctly.			
	12.1.	Where applicable, national policy regarding the specific profile of the applicant is followed correctly. <i>For example: specific profiles could include children, victims of trafficking, potential victims of female genital mutilation, applicants with claims related to sexual orientation and gender identity, etc.</i>	The interviewer generally follows the national policy but fails to take certain procedural actions, with no significant effect on the outcome of the application, the applicant, the determining authority or the state.	The interviewer does not follow national policy, which potentially compromises the outcome of the application or places the applicant or the reputation of the determining authority at risk.	Use N/A when the applicant does not have a specific profile of this type or if there is no national policy in place.
	12.2.	Where applicable, country-specific guidelines for interviewing are followed correctly.	The interviewer generally follows the country guidance in the interview but misses some elements, with no significant impact on the outcome of the application.	The interviewer does not follow the specific guidance, which potentially compromises the outcome of the application.	Use N/A when no relevant country guidance for the interview is in place.
	12.3.	Where applicable, policies regarding the application of additional protection grounds (e.g. humanitarian grounds) are followed correctly.	All additional protection grounds according to national policy are identified and explored, but issues that could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed.	Some additional protection grounds according to national policy are not identified as such and therefore are not explored further.	Use N/A when the determining authority is not competent to take decisions on additional protection grounds or when there are no additional grounds.
Closing the interview	13.	The interviewer follows the necessary steps when closing the interview.			
	13.1.	The interviewer confirms whether the applicant has understood all questions asked.	[option not available]	Understanding is not confirmed. The applicant states they did not understand some questions and the interviewer does not follow up accordingly.	[option not available]

	13.2.	The interviewer asks the applicant whether they want to add anything.	[option not available]	The applicant is not given an effective opportunity to add anything.	[option not available]
	13.3.	The interviewer explains the next steps of the asylum procedure clearly.	Only parts of this information are given to the applicant.	The applicant is not informed about the next steps in the asylum procedure.	Use N/A if, according to national practice, the interviewer is not required to provide this information or to record this in the interview record.
Interview record	14.	Interview transcript/report rules are followed accordingly.			
	14.1.	A thorough and factual report containing all substantive elements, or a transcript, is made of the personal interview. It contains additional elements if applicable according to national practice.	<p>The interview record contains numerous spelling mistakes or is slightly difficult to read.</p> <p>The breaks that have been requested and/or taken are not recorded in the interview transcript, when this is expected according to national practice.</p>	The report is not legible or it is clear that some substantive elements are missing or meaning is changed/lost due to excessive paraphrasing	[option not available]
	14.2.	If applicable, an audio or audiovisual recording is made according to national practice.	The recording is made according to national practice, however the interviewer fails to take certain procedural actions (e.g. promptly provide a copy to the applicant, promptly store the recording according to technical regulations), with no significant effect on the procedure or the rights of the applicant.	<p>The interview is not recorded or is only partly recorded when recording is required.</p> <p>The recording is inaudible.</p> <p>The interviewer fails to inform the applicant that they are being recorded.</p>	Use N/A if, according to national practice, no audio/visual recording is made.
	14.3.	The applicant is provided with an effective opportunity to make comments and/or provide clarification orally and/or in writing with regard to any mistranslations or misconceptions appearing in the interview report/transcript.	[option not available]	The applicant is not provided the opportunity to make corrections/clarifications or they (or some) are ignored.	Not necessarily applicable if a recording is made that is admissible evidence in appeals procedures.

Assessment of the first-instance decision

Standards and indicators		Examples of situations in which the indicator can be assessed as a 'Minor error'	Examples of situations in which the indicator can be assessed as a 'Significant error'	Examples of situations in which the indicator can be marked as 'Not applicable'	
Introduction	1.	The decision states the applicant's details correctly.			
	1.1.	The decision states correct name, country of origin and home area, date of birth and file number, along with other details required by national policy.	Alias or disputed identity details are not noted.	The applicant is incorrectly named/ identified.	[option not available]
	2.	If applicable, the decision includes a concise and accurate summary of the immigration history of the applicant.			
	2.1.	The decision includes a concise and accurate summary of possible previous applications and other immigration history of the applicant, in accordance with national policy.	Irrelevant details included, which detracts from key points of the immigration history.	Entirely incorrect details or no history recorded, which impacts on the subsequent consideration or invites challenge.	Use N/A if the immigration history is not required in the decision.
Basis of claim	3.	The basis of claim correctly sets out all material facts.			
	3.1.	The basis of claim correctly identifies and presents all material facts.	Incorrect details included in the outline of the material facts, which does not impact on the subsequent consideration or invite challenge. Unnecessary details included that add no weight to the consideration.	One or more significant material facts are omitted or misrepresented, which compromises the decision. Incoherent summary of facts, including irrelevant facts, leading to failures in the subsequent consideration.	[option not available]
	4.	The basis of claim correctly identifies the future fear.			
	4.1.	The basis of claim correctly specifies who and what the applicant fears, and why.	Too much detail included, which detracts from the key points.	Future fear incorrectly identified or omitted, which compromises the later consideration.	[option not available]

	5.	If applicable, evidence presented by the applicant is correctly outlined in the basis of claim.			
	5.1.	Evidence presented by the applicant is correctly outlined according to national practice.	Incorrect citations used on minor points, which does not negatively impact the subsequent consideration.	Inaccurate information recorded or sources cited that are not authorised for disclosure, which compromises the decision.	[option not available]
Credibility assessment	6.	The credibility of each material fact is assessed correctly, including the identity and country of origin of the applicant.			
	6.1.	The evidence is linked correctly to each material fact.	Sources of evidence not clearly/accurately cited.	Key evidence is omitted or unreliable information is treated as evidence, compromising the consideration.	Use N/A if credibility is not being assessed, e.g. in cases in which no material facts can be identified.
	6.2.	Credibility indicators are applied correctly.	Too much/little weight is given to one indicator without impact on the outcome.	Incorrect application of the indicators leading to an incorrect conclusion on credibility.	Use N/A if credibility is not being assessed, e.g. in cases in which no material facts can be identified.
	6.3.	The concept of plausibility is applied objectively.	Plausibility is misapplied on one point with no impact on the conclusion regarding this material fact.	Subjective interpretation of plausibility leads to unfounded rejection of a material fact.	Use N/A if credibility is not being assessed, e.g. in cases in which no material facts can be identified.
	6.4.	Only inconsistencies/ discrepancies that have been put to the applicant for comment have been used in the decision.	Applicant's response to a challenge has been neglected, or a minor unchallenged point is used, without impact on the outcome regarding this material fact.	Points that have not been clarified with the applicant have been used against them in the consideration of their credibility, weakening the conclusion.	Use N/A if credibility is not being assessed, e.g. in cases in which no material facts can be identified.

	6.5.	Country of origin information is relevant, up to date and referenced correctly.	The most current COI is not used but the chosen source still applies.	Irrelevant, unreliable or outdated COI is used and given undue weight, weakening the conclusion.	Use N/A if credibility is not being assessed, e.g. in cases in which no material facts can be identified.
	7.	A clear finding is made on each material fact.			
	7.1.	For each material fact, the decision clearly states whether it has been accepted or rejected.	The conclusion can be determined from the text but is not explicitly stated.	There is no discernible conclusion regarding one or more material facts, leaving the decision open to challenge.	Use N/A if credibility is not being assessed, e.g. in cases in which no material facts can be identified.
	7.2.	Where a material fact is deemed 'uncertain', Article 4(5) of the qualification directive ² /'benefit of the doubt' has been applied correctly to effectively conclude whether to accept or reject the material fact.	Unnecessarily lengthy consideration, detracting from the key points.	Failure to resolve 'uncertain' issues or incorrect weight applied to a point that results in an unsound conclusion on a material fact.	Use N/A if no facts have been left 'uncertain'.
	8.	The correct standard and burden of proof is applied.			
	8.1.	When assessing the material facts the correct standard of proof is applied, according to national guidance.	Incorrect phrasing is used when describing the standard or the applicant's ability to meet it, but the conclusion is correct.	An excessively high or low standard is applied, resulting in an incorrect or poorly supported conclusion.	Use N/A if credibility is not being assessed, e.g. in cases in which no material facts can be identified.
	8.2.	The burden of proof has been applied correctly when assessing the material facts.	Unclear phrasing regarding the burden of proof with no impact on the conclusion.	The burden is placed solely on the applicant when the organisation has not met its duty to investigate, casting doubt on the decision.	Use N/A if credibility is not being assessed, e.g. in cases in which no material facts can be identified.

⁽¹⁾ Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (qualification directive).

	8.3.	Individual factors such as age, education and trauma are correctly identified and taken into account.	Underlying factors have not explicitly been taken into account with no impact on the conclusion.	Underlying factors have been neglected when assessing the applicant's ability to substantiate their claim, casting doubt on the outcome.	Use N/A if there are no relevant factors to consider.
Risk assessment	9.	The risk on return is accurately and fully assessed.			
	9.1.	The decision correctly identifies and assesses the risk on return (who, what and why).	Irrelevant issues are considered, compromising clarity or efficiency.	Relevant points are omitted or inappropriate arguments used, casting doubt on the conclusion regarding risk on return.	[option not available]
	9.2.	Country of origin information is relevant, up to date and correctly referenced.	COI is not tailored to the claim or is quoted in excessive length, detracting from the point.	Significant relevant COI is omitted, casting doubt on the conclusion and/or leaving it open to challenge.	Use N/A if no relevant COI is available.
	9.3.	The correct standard of proof has been applied (reasonable degree of likelihood) in assessing risk on return.	Unclear phrasing is used when describing the standard of proof, but the conclusion is correct.	An incorrect standard of proof is applied, resulting in an incorrect and/or unsupported conclusion on risk.	[option not available]
Legal analysis	10.	Well-founded fear of persecution is assessed correctly.			
	10.1.	Whether or not the stated treatment amounts to persecution is assessed correctly.	Correct conclusion drawn but not clearly explained.	Incorrect conclusion, casting doubt on the granting or refusal of refugee status.	Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice.
	10.2.	The subjective and objective elements of the stated fear are assessed correctly.	Unclear substantiation of subjective/objective elements with no impact on the outcome.	Incorrect conclusion regarding whether or not the fear is well founded.	Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice.

11.	Reasons for persecution are identified and assessed correctly.			
11.1.	The decision correctly identifies and assesses all applicable reasons for persecution.	Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity but with no impact on the outcome.	Misidentification of a reason for persecution, resulting in incorrect rejection/acceptance that the feared persecution is for a convention reason.	Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice.
11.2.	The connection (nexus) between the persecution and the reason(s) is assessed correctly.	Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity but with no impact on the outcome.	Inadequate assessment of connection leading to an incorrect conclusion.	Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice.
12.	The real risk of serious harm under Article 15 of the qualification directive is identified and assessed correctly.			
12.1.	The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(a): 'death penalty or execution'.	Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity but with no impact on the outcome.	No or inadequate consideration of Article 15(a) of the qualification directive, casting doubt on the decision.	Use N/A if the applicant is granted refugee status.
12.2.	The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(b): 'torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'.	Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity but with no impact on the outcome.	No or inadequate consideration of Article 15(b) of the qualification directive, casting doubt on the decision.	Use N/A if the applicant is granted refugee status.
12.3.	The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(c): 'serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict'.	Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity but with no impact on the outcome.	No or inadequate consideration of Article 15(c) of the qualification directive, casting doubt on the decision.	Use N/A if the applicant is granted refugee status.

13.	The availability and accessibility of protection in the country of origin is assessed correctly.			
13.1.	The availability and accessibility of protection in the home area of the applicant is assessed correctly.	Lengthy and unnecessary evidence cited that detracts from the key points.	No consideration of protection or failure to consider the individual circumstances of the applicant and the profile of the actors of persecution or serious harm.	Use N/A when assessing protection is not appropriate.
13.2.	The applicability of an internal protection alternative is assessed correctly, including its reasonability.	Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity but with no impact on the outcome.	The decision-maker does not stipulate a specific place. Failure to assess the applicant's circumstances and the reasonableness of relocation in light of relevant COI, casting doubt on the conclusion or leaving it vulnerable to challenge when this is key to the decision.	Use N/A when assessing internal protection alternatives is not appropriate.
14.	If relevant, exclusion grounds have been identified and assessed correctly.			
14.1.	Exclusion grounds are identified and assessed correctly.	[option not available]	Exclusion grounds are not identified, or national policy and specific guidance are not applied when considering exclusion, resulting in an incorrect or vulnerable conclusion regarding exclusion.	Use N/A when no exclusion grounds exist.
14.2.	Individual responsibility is assessed correctly.	[option not available]	Individual responsibility has been assessed incorrectly or not at all, resulting in an incorrect or vulnerable conclusion regarding exclusion.	Use N/A when no exclusion grounds exist.
14.3.	The correct standard and burden of proof are applied.	Correct standard and burden of proof are applied but not explained clearly in the decision.	Incorrect standard and/or burden of proof are applied, resulting in an incorrect or vulnerable conclusion regarding exclusion.	Use N/A when no exclusion grounds exist.

	15.	If applicable, additional protection grounds are applied correctly.			
	15.1.	Where applicable, additional protection grounds (e.g. humanitarian grounds) are applied correctly.	Additional arguments are not included that could strengthen the consideration.	Consideration of additional protection grounds is based on inadequate evidence and/or key aspects of the claim are neglected, casting doubt on the decision.	Use N/A when no additional protection grounds are raised or, according to national practice, additional protection grounds are not applied.
Form	16.	The decision follows a correct structure and includes all required elements.			
	16.1.	The decision follows a correct structure and format according to national policies.	Format is appropriate but not fully tailored to the claim.	Incorrect/inappropriate standard paragraphs are used, resulting in an unprofessional presentation and a reputational risk to the organisation.	[option not available]
	16.2.	The applicant is provided with information on how to challenge a negative decision in writing or by electronic means.	Appeal rights information is not issued in the national standard format.	Information on the right to appeal is not issued to the applicant or is issued with incorrect instructions, resulting in the applicant being misinformed.	[option not available]
	17.	The decision is professionally drafted.			
	17.1.	The reasoning is non-speculative.	A minority of arguments are not clearly/fully justified.	Speculative arguments are used that cast doubt on the decision.	[option not available]

	17.2.	The language of the decision is appropriate, sensitive and factual.	[option not available]	Offensive or inappropriate language is used, causing distress to the applicant and creating reputational risk for the organisation.	[option not available]
	17.3.	The rules of grammar and spelling are applied.	A small number of presentational errors are made in grammar, spelling or punctuation.	A significant number of grammatical and spelling mistakes are made, which detract noticeably from the quality of the decision, leading to a degree of reputational risk for the organisation.	[option not available]
	18.	The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines.			
	18.1.	The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines according to national practice.	The decision was unnecessarily delayed awaiting evidence that would clearly have no bearing on the decision.	Insufficient time was given to the applicant to submit evidence key to the claim when they have provided a reasonable explanation for the requested time frame, resulting in a decision that is vulnerable to challenge. Unnecessary delay with no justifiable reason.	[option not available]

Getting in touch with the EU

In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696 or
- by email via: https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en

Finding information about the EU

Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en

EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications at: <https://publications.europa.eu/en/publications>. Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en).

EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu>

Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal (<http://data.europa.eu/euodp/en>) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, for both commercial and non-commercial purposes.

