



Internal evaluation of the Latvia operational plan 2022

Ex post evaluation report

Prepared by the EUAA's Quality Management and Evaluation Sector

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Acronyms and definitions

Term	Definition
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
EU	European Union
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
OCMA	Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs
OP	Operational plan



Executive summary

As of mid-2021, Latvia was confronted with an unexpected high flow of irregular migration through its border with Belarus. The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 led to a nationwide humanitarian emergency. In response to this continued uncertain migration context and in follow-up to an earlier operational plan (OP 2021-2022), Latvia and the Agency agreed on a second OP running from 1 April to 31 December 2022. This OP 2022 had as main intended result the enhanced effectiveness and efficiency in processing asylum applications and in the provision of reception services for applicants of international protection. The OP includes three result outputs, namely the management of asylum procedures, the management of reception procedures and contingency planning on asylum and reception.

The main objective and scope of this evaluation was to assess the results of the Agency's support to Latvia under the OP 2022. It was conducted internally by the Agency and assessed effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and added value. In addition, the evaluation considered priority questions and built on the evaluation covering the previous OP.

In terms of **effectiveness**, the OP delivered on most of its intended activities under the different results. The Agency deployed three interpreters who provided support to asylum determination interviews and to socio-educational activities in reception settings. In addition, the Agency delivered five training sessions in the fields of information provision, reception and reception of vulnerable persons. These training activities included 80 participations involving over 50 Latvian individuals who expressed their very high satisfaction. The translation of the training material contributed to learning and ownership. The intended result output relating to contingency planning was deprioritised and not implemented.

There was no physical coordination presence of the Agency in the country. The OP, however, was implemented in an **efficient** way because of the smooth communication between partner organisations. The Agency invested highly in the translation of training material into Latvian, which could be justified in the longer term if this is used beyond the duration of the OP. The narrow scope of the OP enhanced **coherence** both internally and externally and limited the risk of overlaps with the support provided by other actors in Latvia.

The collaboration was in particular **relevant** and of **added value** in 2021, when the country coped with unexpected high irregular migration flows through its border with Belarus. The OP 2022 took place in a context of stabilised asylum applications, and therefore the contribution of interpretation support remained useful. The OP delivered multiple fit-for-purpose training deliverables in Latvian which were not available before. The availability of the Agency's translated training material should encourage follow-up activities.

In view of the completion of its activities and the reduction of pressure on the Latvian asylum and reception systems, the closure of the OP 2022 is fully justified. Based on the findings, the evaluation makes the following recommendations:

1. Ensure **optimal use of the Latvian training material** through permanent support mechanisms;
2. Improve the **management of translation processes** for future translation of training material taking into account constraints linked with the duration of OPs.



1. Introduction: purpose and scope

Latvia and the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) signed an operational plan (OP) on 30 March 2022 as a follow-up to the previous OP 2021-2022¹. The plan, which foresaw support in the areas of asylum and reception, focused mainly on the provision of training and the continuation of interpretation support between 1 April and 31 December 2022.

The main objective of this evaluation was to assess the results of the operational measure of the Agency's support to Latvia in line with the EC Better Regulation Guidelines. The scope of this evaluation is limited to the results as defined in the OP. The evaluation assessed five evaluation criteria, i.e., effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence, and added value in a light manner in view of the small size of the intervention (refer to Annexes 1 and 2). In addition, it considered the following priority questions:

- What are the main change factors to support OP closure and termination of support?
- What are the main collaboration opportunities for continued permanent support?
- What lessons can be learnt from the Agency's closure exercise in Latvia? To what extent can these be useful for other OPs or their measures in the future?

The evaluation took place between November 2022 and February 2023 and was conducted by the Quality Management and Evaluation Sector of the Agency's Corporate Management Centre. The EU Operations Sector of the Operational Support Centre coordinated the implementation of the OP.

This evaluation built on the preceding evaluation of the OP 2021-2022 and took into consideration a number of interviews with internal and external stakeholders, as well as reports and operational monitoring data. The OP was coordinated remotely from the Agency's headquarters. While this was adequate in view of the size of the operation, it corresponded with less detailed activity reporting, in particular in the field of interpretation.

2. Intended results of the action

This chapter summarises the intended results of the OP and presents the situation prior to the intervention as points of comparison.

2.1. Description of the action and its intended results

The OP 2022 for Latvia included one operational measure relating to asylum and reception support. At result outcome level, it referred to the enhanced effectiveness and efficiency in processing asylum applications and in the provision of reception services for applicants of international protection.

¹ The OP 2021-2022 was in place from 8 September 2021 until 31 March 2022. An internal evaluation of the first OP was conducted between May and August 2022 and a management response was prepared.



The outcome included three result outputs:

1. Enhanced capacity of the Office of Citizenship and Migration Affairs (OCMA) to manage asylum procedures;
2. Enhanced capacity of OCMA to manage reception procedures;
3. Preparedness and enhanced capacity of OCMA for contingency planning on asylum and reception.

The first two outputs related to the provision of interpretation services for information provision and vulnerability identification/assessment, as well as the delivery of training and/or workshops. The third output concerned contingency planning and developing readiness mechanisms for the management of the national asylum and reception systems.

The intervention logic of the OP is presented in Annex 3 to this report.

2.2. Points of comparison

In mid-2021, Latvia was confronted with an unexpected high flow of irregular migrants as a result of the instrumentalisation of migration by the Belarusian regime². For this reason, it declared a state of emergency in the administrative territories bordering Belarus on 10 August 2021³. This state of emergency limited access to the asylum procedure for third-country nationals crossing the border.

Latvia and the Agency signed a first OP in September 2021 to provide support to asylum and reception processes. The plan ended on 31 March 2022 following an extension in December 2021.

The rate of asylum applications, which saw a peak of 385 in August 2021, reduced significantly in the months that followed (monthly average of 29 applications between September 2021 and March 2022⁴). In this period, these included 20 unprecedented applications by unaccompanied minors⁵. The backlog of asylum applications was at its highest in September 2021 with 485 applications and progressively decreased to 155 in March 2022⁶.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 created further uncertainty and led to an additional nationwide humanitarian emergency. By mid-March 2022, some 3 350 Ukrainian refugees, most of whom were women and children, had sought protection in Latvia⁷. An action plan to address the

² Refer to the statement by the President of the European Commission von der Leyen on the situation at the border between Poland and Belarus: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_21_5867

³ Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No. 518 on the Declaration of Emergency Situation of 10 August 2021.

⁴ Eurostat. Source:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYAPPCTZM_custom_4644528/default/table?lang=en

⁵ 15 applications in August 2021 and 5 applications in February 2022. Source:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYUMACTM_custom_4644633/default/table?lang=en

⁶ Eurostat. Source:

https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYPENCTZM_custom_4644470/default/table?lang=en

⁷ Latvian Ministry of the Interior on [Twitter](#) and LETA news agency, *Kopš kara sākuma Ukrainā pašvaldībās pēc palīdzības vērsušies 3350 ukraiņu bēgļi*, 15 March 2022. Source: <https://nra.lv/latvija/375393-kops-kara-sakuma-ukraina-pasvaldibas-pec-palidzibas-versusies-3350-ukrainu-begli.htm>



situation was adopted on 26 February 2022⁸. On 3 March 2022, the parliament passed a law to support civilians of Ukraine⁹.

On 10 March 2022, Latvia formally requested the continuation of the Agency's support until the end of 2022. The Agency conducted a rapid needs assessment with the aim to assess the scope for continued EUAA intervention. It estimated the duration and possible actions of the possible intervention. The rapid needs assessment corroborated the needs presented by the Latvian authorities and justified proceeding with a new OP¹⁰.

The proposed response envisaged a continuation of the support to the asylum and reception systems through the rapid deployment of interpreters, training/workshops, and contingency planning. In view of the ever rapidly changing situation and to ensure continuous relevance of the scope of the OP, the rapid needs assessment recommended to 'maintain an open communication channel with the Latvian authorities in the course of implementation of the OP'.

The Agency's main partners involved in the OP were the Ministry of the Interior, OCMA, and the State Border Guard Service under the Ministry of the Interior. The main reception facility, the accommodation centre for asylum seekers, is managed by OCMA and consists of two units situated in the Mucenieki region (Ropaži Municipality).

The OP foresaw that the Agency would deploy up to one field support officer and up to twenty interpreters to support asylum and/or reception procedures. Moreover, the Agency would provide the required technical equipment and materials for the delivery of the agreed actions.

3. Implementation of the action: current state of play

This chapter describes how the situation in Latvia evolved over the duration of the OP and gives an overview of the main achieved results.

The number of applications for international protection remained stable as of April 2022, with a monthly average of 53 and a peak of 70 applications in June 2022¹¹. The overall number of applications was lower compared to the same period in 2021, mainly due to the peak of 385 applications in August 2021. The backlog of asylum applications ranged between 170 and 225 in this period¹². During the OP,

⁸ Latvian Ministry of the Interior, 26 February 2022. Source: <https://www.iem.gov.lv/lv/media/8086/download>

⁹ Law on the support of civilians of Ukraine, 3 March 2022. Source: <https://likumi.lv/ta/id/330546-ukrainas-civiliedzivotaju-atbalsta-likums>

¹⁰ Covering the period 1 April to 31 December 2022.

¹¹ Average of 53 applications; 60, 40, 70, 40, 50, 50, 60 applications between April and October 2022. Source: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/tps00189/default/table?lang=en>

¹² Eurostat. Source: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/databrowser/view/MIGR_ASYPENTZM_custom_4644470/default/table?lang=en



there were on average 134 asylum seekers in reception facilities¹³ having an estimated capacity of 168¹⁴.

Taking into account the continued risks for irregular migration pressure on the Latvia-Belarus border and Belarus' support for Russia's war in Ukraine, the government of Latvia extended in November 2022 the state of emergency until 10 February 2023¹⁵.

At result outcome level, the Agency enhanced the capacity of OCMA through training and interpretation. By the end of the OP (i.e., 31 December 2022), the Agency had delivered the activities relating to its first and second results outputs. The result relating to contingency planning was not implemented as it was deprioritised.

The Agency provided three interpreters each month achieving the target of 27 planned interpreter-months in the nine-month period. These interpreters provided support to the Mucenieki reception centre. Detailed information on the number of cases supported by interpretation was not available. Interviewees, however, indicated the high value of the interpreters as they provided communication and information to residents, medical personnel and partner organisations, e.g., Caritas. In addition, interpretation support was provided for asylum determination interviews.

In the area of capacity building, the Agency delivered training sessions on EUAA modules, which it translated into Latvian. By the end of the OP, seven training support deliverables were achieved, exceeding the target of six. In more detail, training sessions were delivered in Latvian on:

- *Communication with and Information Provision to Asylum Seekers*: this session was delivered face-to-face in July 2022 and was completed by 19 participants from the reception service, the Department of Asylum, Migration and Citizenship, and the State Border Guard Service;
- The *EUAA Reception* module: two sessions were delivered between September and October 2022 to a total of 26 reception officials and social workers (through online studies and a face-to-face component);
- The *Reception of Vulnerable Persons (Part A)* module: two sessions were concluded at the beginning of December 2022, attended by 35 participants (through online studies and a face-to-face component).

In total, 94 persons enrolled in the training modules, 80 of whom completed them. Post-training delivery surveys indicate very high satisfaction rates¹⁶. These were 98% satisfaction for the *Reception* module and 97% satisfaction for the training related to *Communication with and Information Provision to asylum seekers* and the *Reception of Vulnerable Persons (Part A)* module.

¹³ Data provided via email communication from OCMA. Data refer to the period April to September 2022.

¹⁴ Global detention project, Latvia. source: <https://www.globaldetentionproject.org/countries/europe/latvia#detention-centres>

¹⁵ The government has supported the extension of the state of emergency on the Latvian - Belarusian border until 10 February 2023, 3 November 2022. Source: https://www.iem.gov.lv/en/article/government-has-supported-extension-state-emergency-latvian-belarusian-border-until-10-february-2023?utm_source=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.com%2F

¹⁶ The notion 'satisfaction rates' represents the aggregated percentage of the highest two scores in the five-point scale ('strongly agree' and 'agree') reported in the training session feedback forms.



In addition to the OP, an asylum official participated in the Agency's training session on 'Temporary Protection: Understanding the current framework in the context of the war in Ukraine'. This activity was delivered in April 2022 as part of the permanent training support of the Agency to Member States.

The preconditions of OP 2022 were largely achieved. National focal points were nominated to ensure effective operational coordination, quality assurance and implementation. The Latvian authorities secured the necessary work permits for interpreters. There was no need for office space for deployed personnel. There was two-way data sharing adapted to the needs of the intervention.

In view of the successful completion of these activities and the reduction of pressure on the Latvian asylum and reception system, both parties agreed in October 2022 to conclude the OP without further extension. In early December 2022, a meeting between the Agency and OCMA to discuss the closure of the OP took place in Riga.

4. Evaluation findings

This chapter provides the findings stemming from the analysis of the collected data in response to the evaluation questions. It triangulates evidence from different data sources such as desk research, interviews, direct observation and focus group discussions.

4.1. To what extent was the action successful and why?

In terms of **effectiveness**, the OP achieved its intended results for its outputs relating to interpretation and training. The output relating to contingency planning was deprioritised at the onset and therefore not implemented.

The Agency deployed three interpreters per month as planned. The skills of the deployed interpreters were reported to have been adequate to perform the agreed tasks. The Latvian authorities expressed their highest satisfaction with the interpretation service provided. The lower number of interpreters made coordination easier. At the same time, the three interpreters were still able to cover together six languages, namely Arabic, Behdini, Dari, Farsi, Kurmanji, and Sorani.

The training component was delivered as planned under the OP and the Agency's training plan. In total, five training sessions were delivered on three modules. The training activities received a high interest from OCMA and its partner organisations. 85% (80 out of the 94) of the participants successfully completed the training sessions. This involved over 50 individuals. The training delivery and contents were highly appreciated with satisfaction rates of at least 97% for the sessions that were delivered. The translations of the modules were highly appreciated by national authorities as these allowed for better understanding and ownership on the subject matters. Some of the translated modules could have benefitted from additional language quality review.

Unlike during the previous OP, the COVID-19¹⁷ pandemic did not significantly challenge or delay the planned activities. In relation to **efficiency**, the Agency managed the OP from its headquarters,

¹⁷ Coronavirus disease 2019.



therefore avoiding the cost of deploying coordinating field personnel. The absence of a local coordinator was compensated by the smooth online communication with the Latvian authorities and a focal point interpreter. Two of the three interpreters continued their deployment from the previous OP, enhancing efficiency. The Agency enhanced interpretation support, in line with its follow-up plans of the OP 2022 evaluation recommendations.

Non-validated internal monitoring data indicates that an estimated € 241 000 or 87% of the planned budget of € 277 000 was spent during the OP. This amount, however, does not include salaries of Agency staff that managed and supported operations in Latvia. While there is no full-time equivalent estimate of human resources involved, there were cost savings with the remote coordination of the OP.

The OP allowed the Agency to invest significantly in the translation of training deliverables. About half of the budget was allocated towards the translation of training material into Latvian. In view of the short timeline of the OP, some of these translations were procured under a more costly fast-track procedure. The training modules continue to be available to the Latvian authorities for national training sessions and are hosted in the EUAA Learning Management System (LMS). The continued use and dissemination of the translated material should enhance the cost effectiveness of these investments.

The narrow scope of the OP limited the risk of overlaps with the support provided by other actors in Latvia. Its clear focus enhanced **coherence** both internally and externally. The training was very specific to the Common European Asylum System and not provided by other external actors. The possibility of continued engagement of the interpreters under a national interpretation contract was discussed at the closure meeting of the OP.

The Agency ensured smooth communication with its national counterparts. The absence of Agency field personnel was not considered to have affected the overall communication. More structured exchanges (e.g., bimonthly steering committee meetings) between the Agency and national coordinators could have been instrumental for prospective additional collaboration opportunities. These meetings could have also involved training colleagues, in particular when they dealt with planning matters.

What lessons can be learnt from the Agency's closure exercise in Latvia? To what extent can these be useful for other OPs or their measures in the future?

The OP 2022 was small in volume and focused in scope. Some of its activities were a continuation of the operational support under the previous OP. In early December 2022, a closure exercise between the Agency and OCMA took place in Riga. The main aim of the meeting was to reflect on the achievements under the OP and review a possible follow-up of the different support actions. Continued collaboration under permanent support was also discussed.

The closure of the OP was the result of a mutual agreement between the two parties. The absence of in-country presence did not require any material handover support. The closure was documented with an internal note to the file. The interpretation contractor was informed about the discontinuation of services.



The closure exercise allowed the parties to take stock of the OP collaboration deliverables. It provided a means for exchange of information on managing interpretation services and discussion on potential future collaborations through permanent support. In this regard, the Agency presented its annual training plan for 2023. The participants discussed available training modules for learners and the steps to become trainers. Building on the achievements of the OP, they reviewed the learners' curriculum, upcoming training developments and learning opportunities in the area of reception. The Agency proposed training pathways and specific modules through the Agency's permanent training support¹⁸. Possibilities for additional enrolments in and translations of training modules were discussed.

4.2. How did the Agency make a difference through the action?

In 2021, Latvia was confronted with unexpected increased irregular migration. From a macro perspective, the contribution of the Agency was meaningful, as it was part of a wider multi-Agency EU solidarity response to an EU border Member State under pressure.

The Latvia OP was limited in scope, resources, and types of activities since support mainly related to interpretation services and training. When Latvia was under pressure in 2021, the Agency supported the Member State with interpretation services for languages which were at that time not available under their national contract. In the meantime, and with the number and diversity of nationalities of asylum applicants stabilising, there could be possibilities for the Latvian authorities to take over interpretation under a national contract. Therefore, the interpretation support was of fair added value.

The Agency's added value was more evident in the field of training in view of its technical expertise on the Common European Asylum System. The different training outputs were of added value to the asylum and reception officials particularly since a majority of them were recent employees. National authorities did not have the capacity to translate, organise, and deliver this type of training. The wide participation in the training activities of stakeholders beyond asylum and reception officials allowed for a greater outreach. The availability of the Agency's translated training material should encourage follow-up activities.

4.3. Is the action relevant?

The geopolitical situation in the country, combined with an EU-wide response of solidarity and an explicit request from the authorities justified the Agency's support in mid-2021. Following a new needs assessment, the Agency continued supporting Latvia for nine more months.

The Agency continued providing interpretation services for asylum interviews, notifications of decisions, and legal aid, as well as in reception facilities. It, however, focused more on training deliverables in comparison with the preceding OP and added a result output relating to contingency planning.

¹⁸ E.g., *Reception for vulnerable persons (part B), Management in reception, Conflict management and mediation in reception, Victims of gender-based violence, and Trafficking in human beings (level 1)*.



Interpretation support remained most relevant in reception settings, where interpreters facilitated communication with asylum seekers in social and educational settings. The relevance of interpretation progressively decreased in view of the decrease in the backlog of asylum determination requests.

Interviewees underlined the relevance of training to the needs of the Latvian authorities. They appreciated the possibility to invite stakeholders of multiple institutions to the training activities. In this way, the Latvian counterparts were able to enhance outreach and achieve better understanding of the challenges of their sector. The translation of training material was considered relevant in view of possible future national training needs. In particular, in view of the planned establishment of a new temporary reception centre, Latvia may consider it relevant to organise additional training activities.

Support for contingency planning was deprioritised and therefore not relevant during the duration of the OP.

What are the main change factors to support OP closure and termination of support?

In view of the above achievements, this evaluation concludes that the termination of support is fully justified. The main change factors are:

- The reduced migration pressure on the Latvian reception and asylum systems as evidenced by the reduction in the backlog of pending asylum cases;
- The reduced need for interpretation of certain languages in reception facilities;
- The enhanced capacity of the Latvian authorities as a result of capacity-building activities;
- The agreement of the Agency and the Latvian authorities on the above.

What are the main collaboration opportunities for continued permanent support?

The closure of the OP does not mean an end to the wide number of collaboration opportunities with the EUAA. In parallel with the OP support activities, the collaboration with the Agency allowed Latvia to better understand the modalities for accessing the Agency's permanent support. Examples of relevant collaboration opportunities are:

- In training:
 - The participation of Latvian staff in training organised under the European Asylum Curriculum for learners, as well as in the framework of the trainer pathway (thus enabling them to become certified trainers);
 - The possibility to use the translated material for national training sessions, delivered by national trainers. This can be done upon request and supported by the Agency's staff;
 - Collaboration on other training deliverables as per the working programme of the Agency's training NCP networks.
- In the field of knowledge management:



- Participation in expert networks on specific topics. This can include the development of guidelines, technical peer-to-peer exchange workshops and visits, information management, as well as technical advice;
 - The use of country of origin and country guidance permanent support services, such as guidance notes, country reports and advice through the country of origin help desk.
- Potential for collaboration around interpretation services, online or through funding from the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, and information exchange on technical specifications and management of interpretation services.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Conclusions

The strength of the OP 2022 was that it was very targeted, delivered on its intended results and was concluded in a timely way. The Agency delivered most – and even exceeded in the case of training – of the planned deliverables. Only the contingency planning output was deprioritised. Therefore, this evaluation considers the collaboration as highly **effective**, and the OP closure as fully justified.

The OP 2022 took place in a context of stabilised asylum applications. Similar to the previous OP, interpretation needs were mainly for Kurdish/Arabic-English. Latvia received Agency *interpretation support* for asylum interviews, notifications of decisions and legal aid. In addition, these services were relevant for social and educational communication needs in reception settings. As interpretation resources may be mobilised under national or alternative interpretation contracts, the **relevance** and **EU added value** of this type of support remained fair. The evaluation found evidence with relation to the relevance and added value of the provided *capacity-building activities*. The OP delivered multiple fit-for-purpose training deliverables and the participant feedback on these was very positive.

There was no physical coordination presence of the Agency in the country. The OP, however, was implemented in an **efficient** way because of the smooth communication between the respective coordinators. The Agency invested highly in translating training material into Latvian, which could be justified in the longer term if the material is used beyond the duration of the OP.

The OP support was adequately embedded in the national context and was able to reach out to multiple national stakeholders. The translation of the training material allowed better understanding of the contents and their potential further use at national level. The OP benefitted from a close collaboration between the Agency's operational and training centres. The support was focused and **coherent** with the national context and processes.

The table below gives an overview of the findings of the evaluation, based on a triangulation of different information sources (see Annex 1).



Table 1. Evaluation criteria¹⁹

	Result
Relevance	Good
Effectiveness	Very good
Efficiency	Good
Coherence	Very good
EU added value	Good

5.2. Good practices and lessons learnt

This evaluation has identified multiple good practices. These include:

- In early December 2022, a closure exercise between the Agency and OCMA took place in Riga. The Agency took the opportunity to summarise the achievements under the OP, discuss what had been established and can be accessed and used in the future, and promoted the idea of internal capacity building;
- The flexibility of the interpreters allowed OCMA to use their services in many settings, ranging from asylum interviews to information provision and support for social and educational activities in reception;
- The lack of in-country presence was compensated by smooth remote coordination between representatives of the partner organisations;
- The collaboration allowed the Latvian counterparts to better understand the possible collaboration modalities under the Agency's permanent support;
- The active participation in capacity building activities, high training satisfaction rates, and availability of translated training material demonstrate the potential for future national training initiatives.

This evaluation gathered a number of lessons learnt (and recommendations) which are beyond the scope of the Latvia OP. These elements could be taken on board in future Agency-wide horizontal or meta-evaluations and include:

- In order to support the transition from the Agency's operational support, it is advised that the available services under permanent support are promoted more widely to Member States. The short duration challenged efficient mobilisation of different supporting processes (e.g., translation of training material). Therefore, as feasible, the Agency's aim needs to be the planning of OPs with longer timeframes.

5.3. Recommendations

¹⁹ The five evaluation criteria were rated using a four-point scale (*insufficient, fair, good, very good*). These ratings are judgements based on inputs triangulating different information sources such as interviews and monitoring data.



This evaluation makes the following recommendations building on findings and inputs from the consulted stakeholders involved in the Latvia OP.

1. Ensure **optimal use of the Latvian training material** through permanent support training mechanisms (e.g., trainers' curriculum sessions). The Agency has invested important funding in the translation of training material which can facilitate the enrolment of the Latvian authorities into the trainer's pathway;
2. Improve the **management of translation processes** for future translation of training material taking into account constraints linked with the duration of OPs. Examples are proactive planning and optimisation of quality review mechanisms.



Annex 1: Methodology

With a view to ensuring proportionality and in order to optimise efficiency, the evaluation built on the findings of the Latvia OP 2021-2022 evaluation. The evaluation took into account good practices and lessons learnt in the closure of the operation, with a focus on replicability in other country contexts. In this regard, elements such as environmental and social impacts were not addressed.

The following evaluation questions guided the exercise:

Criteria	Evaluation questions
Relevance	How well has the action been able to respond to the stakeholders' needs? Priority questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the main change factors to support OP closure and termination of support? • What are the main collaboration opportunities for continued permanent support?
Effectiveness	Was the progress of each result conforming to plan (both quality and quantity)?
Efficiency	To what extent are the resources of the support justified given the results? Priority question: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What lessons can be learnt from the Agency's closure exercise in Latvia? To what extent can these be useful for other OPs or their measures in the future?
Coherence	To what extent is the operation coherent internally and externally?
EU added value	What is the added value resulting from the operation, compared to what could have been expected from Latvia acting solely at national level?

The evaluation triangulated information from a number of sources, starting with desk research based on existing documentation. Semi-structured interviews and focus groups with key stakeholders were conducted. This included Agency staff and national counterparts, i.e., OCMA. In total, seven interviews were conducted.



Annex 2: Evaluation matrix

Evaluation criteria	Operationalised questions	Interviews (individual / group)	Desk review
Relevance	How well has the action been able to respond to the stakeholders' needs?	X	X
	Priority question: What are the main (positive) change factors to support OP closure and termination of support?	X	X
	Priority question: What are the main collaboration opportunities for continued permanent support?	X	X
Effectiveness	Was the progress of each result conforming to plan (both quality and quantity)?	X	X
Efficiency	To what extent are the resources of the support justified given the results?	X	X
	Priority question: What lessons can be learnt from the Agency's closure exercise in Latvia? To what extent can these be useful for other OPs or their measures in the future?	X	X
Coherence	To what extent is the operation coherent internally and externally?	X	X
EU added value	What is the added value resulting from the operation, compared to what could have been expected from Latvia acting solely at national level?	X	X



Annex 3: Intervention logic

Needs/problems	Expected objectives
Increasing migratory pressure and IP applications; changed pattern in arrivals.	Support following request of Latvia in response to disproportionate pressure to national asylum and reception systems
Result impact	
The Agency fulfils its mandate, to provide effective operational and technical assistance to Member States, in particular when their asylum and reception systems are subject to disproportionate pressure (Art.2.i. EUAA Regulation)	
Result outcomes	
Enhanced effectiveness and efficiency in processing asylum applications and improved provision of reception services for applicants of international protection	
Result outputs	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced capacity to manage asylum applications 2. Enhanced capacity to manage reception facilities 3. Preparedness and enhanced capacity for contingency planning on asylum and reception 	
Activities	
<p>Provide support in managing asylum procedures (conducting asylum interviews, notification of decision, provision of legal aid)</p> <p>Provide support through the delivery of training to new and experienced case officers</p> <p>Provide support in managing reception procedures (information provision)</p>	
Inputs	
<p>Human resources (up to one member state expert, up to one field support officer, up to twenty interpreters to support asylum and reception procedures)</p> <p>Material resources and horizontal support (equipment, services, training costs, ...)</p>	
External factors	
National emergency context; European Commission Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs policies; national and international practices and policies; availability of financial and human resources; COVID-19 pandemic	