

EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE EUAA'S PRACTICAL TOOLS AND GUIDANCE

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ABSTRACT

This report presents an evaluation of 11 practical guides and tools (PGT) of the European Union Agency for Asylum. The evaluation aimed to determine the extent to which practitioners and policymakers in EU+ countries have used the PGT, how useful they have been, and what their impact has been. The evaluation relied on mixed methods, including an online survey with 90 responses from national contact points in 27 countries and interviews with practitioners across 14 EU+ fieldwork countries. The report finds that the PGT are highly relevant for administrations that have fewer resources or less experience applying certain practices or procedures. However, the report also finds that the relevance of the PGT depends heavily on local contexts, the specificities of national legislation, the existence of national guidance or tools, and the caseload a country faces. Factors related to the design of the PGT, such as their length, can also hinder their use. The EUAA should carefully consider true needs on the ground before deciding to update PGT or develop new ones. Countries where the PGT are used have seen improvements in working procedures and efficiency, and the PGT have been used to develop or refine national guidance.

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ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
ACCORD	Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation
ARC	Assessment of Reception Conditions
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
COI	Country of Origin Information
DG HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECRE	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
EU	European Union
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
IPSN	Identification of Persons with Special Needs
NCP	National contact point
PGT	Practical guides and tools
QAT	Quality Assurance Tool
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

For the sake of clarity and brevity, the PGT are referred to throughout the report and notably graphs by shortened names. The table below shows the full name of each PGT along with the shortened version used in this report.

Full name	Shortened name
Practical Guide on Registration: Lodging of applications for international protection	Guide on registration
Tool for the identification of persons with special needs (IPSN)	IPSN tool
Video Animations: Age assessment for practitioners and for children	Video animations on age assessment
Recommendations on the operational and technical use of DubliNet	DubliNet recommendations
Recommendations of the EASO Network of Dublin Units on Dublin Transfers	Dublin Transfer recommendations

Full name	Shortened name
Practical Guide on the use of Country-of-Origin Information by case officers	Guide on the use of COI
Practical Tool: Identification of potential exclusion cases from Syria ¹	Syria exclusion cases tool
Quality Assurance Tool	QAT
Tool for the assessment of reception conditions (ARC)	ARC tool
Contingency planning in the context of reception	Guide on contingency planning
Practical Guide on the welfare of asylum and reception staff (Parts I-III with animation)	Staff welfare guide

¹ This is a restricted access tool as per MBD No 6 (Art. 9), [lettre \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2022/1000/oj).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an evaluation of the awareness, use and usefulness of 11 practical guides and tools (PGT) of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA):

- [Practical Guide on Registration: Lodging of applications for international protection](#)
- [Tool for the identification of persons with special needs \(IPSN\)](#)
- Video Animations: [Age assessment for practitioners](#) and [for children](#)
- [Recommendations on the operational and technical use of DubliNet](#)
- [Recommendations of the EASO Network of Dublin Units on Dublin Transfers](#)
- [Practical Guide on the use of COI by case officers](#)
- Practical Tool: Identification of potential exclusion cases from Syria (restricted document)²
- [Quality Assurance Tool \(QAT\)](#)
- [Tool for the assessment of reception conditions \(ARC\)](#)
- [Contingency planning in the context of reception](#)
- [Practical Guide on the welfare of asylum and reception staff \(Parts I-III with animation\)](#)

The evaluation supported the EUAA with solid and robust knowledge on the extent to which and how the above-mentioned PGT have been used by relevant practitioners and policymakers in EU+ countries and how they have contributed to a coherent implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) as a result.

Methodology

The evaluation relied on mixed methods, by combining desk research with an online survey that garnered 90 responses from national contact points (NCPs) in 27 EU+ countries; as well as interviews with 132 different practitioners across 14 fieldwork EU+ countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain. These methods were used to collect stakeholder feedback on the PGT framework as a whole as well as on the specific PGT being evaluated.

Evidence collected through these desk and fieldwork activities was analysed and triangulated in order to provide answers to a set of evaluation questions pertaining to the relevance, use and application, effectiveness of outreach and uptake activities, and added value or benefits of the PGT. The conclusions and recommendations were validated with stakeholders during an online workshop on 25 April 2023.

Summary of findings, conclusions and lessons learned

The EUAA's PGT are **highly relevant instruments** to support the Agency's mission of helping Member States implement their CEAS obligations and contributing to convergence in approaches. They are especially relevant for administrations that have fewer (human) resources at their disposal, that do not already have their own guidance in place, or that are less experienced in applying certain practices or procedures that the PGT can help with.

However, **in practice the relevance (and, by extension, use) of the PGT depends heavily on local contexts**: the specificities of national legislation, the existence of national guidance or tools, and the caseload a country faces. PGT which are more 'strategic' in nature tend to be deemed less relevant and thus used to a lesser extent than the more 'operational' tools or the guides that provide concise and concrete information on a specific aspect of the day-to-day work of asylum or reception practitioners. As such, it is **important that the EUAA carefully consider true needs on the ground**

² This is a restricted access tool as per MBD No 6 (Art. 9), [lettre \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2018/1725/oj).

/ at operational level, before deciding to update PGT or develop new ones. Doing so would not only increase the relevance of the PGT overall, but could also lessen the resource burden for the Agency.

There are also **factors related to the design** of the PGT that reportedly hinder their use to a certain extent. The length of guides was often cited as a barrier to use, though users acknowledge the need to be comprehensive in EU level guidance. Nevertheless, shorter documents that are more concrete, such as the recommendations related to Dublin procedures, were more appreciated and thus used more. Similarly, more practical tools or practical parts of guidance documents were generally used more for the same reason. The format of video animations is highly appreciated for its brevity, even though the Video animations on age assessment were not used by many for other, contextual reasons, namely because their own national approaches were not aligned with the EU-backed approach depicted in the videos.

While the **level of awareness about PGT is generally quite high**, it differs significantly across individual PGT and is closely correlated with their perceived relevance and reported use. This is largely because EUAA dissemination activities are targeted primarily at NCPs, who are then expected to further promote the PGT in their administrations and their countries more broadly, depending on the target audience of a given PGT. In reality, the PGT often get 'stuck' at the level of NCPs for several reasons. Sometimes there is a specialised guidance/training unit that considers the content of the PGT in the refinement of their own guidance, training content or tools, and thus consciously chooses not to share the EUAA's PGT further, in favour of applying their own. In other cases, it is a high workload and the existence of many different PGT with different target audiences and purposes that hinders their further dissemination. The EUAA could take actions to facilitate this process and remove some of the burden for NCPs.

In countries where the PGT are being used, they have reportedly been **highly beneficial** in terms of improving how the day-to-day work is carried out, improving working procedures, and improving efficiency. While they are often used in their original form (usually a translated version, where available), several of the PGT have also been used to **either make changes to existing guidance or develop national guidance**. Both this direct and indirect use are beneficial if it means the EU rules and standards are properly applied. However, the fact remains that many countries prefer their own approaches which are tailored to specific local needs, procedures and systems, thus there is still a long way to go towards harmonisation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the evaluation, several recommendations have been put forward. These recommendations may be considered by the EUAA if they are deemed relevant and appropriate.

1. Exploring ways to gather feedback from practitioners at operational level, to support the EUAA's assessment of whether and when to produce new guidance or tools.
2. Better promoting the potential of using technical assistance as a means to support EU+ administrations in adapting the PGT to their local contexts/needs.
3. Making PGT more digestible / accessible to the targeted audience.
4. Identifying relevant policy- and decision-making authorities in EU+ countries as a basis for more targeted dissemination and promotion of more 'strategic' PGT.
5. Using 'country events' as opportunities to present relevant PGT to a wider audience.
6. Incorporating active discussions on relevant PGT during exchange visits, for EU+ countries to share their experience using a given tool, to serve as a source of inspiration and act as a 'reminder' about the existence and possible benefits of the tools.

7. Liaising with other EUAA centres on how to better promote the more 'operational' PGT through operational support and/or integration into training modules.
8. Restructuring the [webpage on EUAA practical guides and tools](#), to be more user-centric, so that practitioners with an interest can easily find relevant PGT.
9. Setting up a newsletter, which practitioners can sign up for on a voluntary basis, so they are informed, based on their self-identified role and interests, when new relevant PGT are launched (including links to launch events).

1. INTRODUCTION

The present document constitutes the final report for the evaluation of the awareness, use and usefulness of 11 practical guides and tools (PGT) of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), namely³:

- [Practical Guide on Registration: Lodging of applications for international protection](#)
- [Tool for the identification of persons with special needs \(IPSN\)](#)
- Video Animations: [Age assessment for practitioners](#) and [for children](#)
- [Recommendations on the operational and technical use of DubliNet](#)
- [Recommendations of the EASO Network of Dublin Units on Dublin Transfers](#)
- [Practical Guide on the use of COI by case officers](#)
- Practical Tool: Identification of potential exclusion cases from Syria (restricted document)⁴
- [Quality Assurance Tool \(QAT\)](#)
- [Tool for the assessment of reception conditions \(ARC\)](#)
- [Contingency planning in the context of reception](#)
- [Practical Guide on the welfare of asylum and reception staff \(Parts I-III with animation\)](#)

The evaluation was intended to support the EUAA with solid and robust knowledge on the extent to which and how the above-mentioned PGT have been used by relevant practitioners and policymakers in EU+ countries⁵ and how they have contributed to a coherent implementation of the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) as a result.

On the basis of the findings, collected primarily through consultations with (intended) users of the guides and tools, the evaluation draws conclusions and recommendations to help the Agency improve its approach to the development,⁶ dissemination and support for the implementation of PGT in the future. In particular, they will inform the EUAA about any need for adjustments to existing tools or guides (in terms of their scope and format), the need to potentially develop new ones, and the respective dissemination and application support strategies and measures to be employed.

This report is structured as set out in the table below.

Table 1. Structure of the report

Chapter	Content of the report
Chapter 1	Introduction (purpose and scope)
Chapter 2	Background to the EUAA's PGT
Chapter 3	Methodology
Chapter 4	Evaluation findings
Chapter 5	Conclusions and recommendations

³ Note, in the remainder of the report, these PGT are referred to by shortened names, as presented in the section on 'Acronyms and definitions'.

⁴ This is a restricted access tool as per MBD No 6 (Art. 9), [lettre \(europa.eu\)](#).

⁵ All EU Member States, as well as Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland.

⁶ Development from the perspective of the scope, content and format of the guides and tools, rather than the development process, which is outside of the scope of this assignment.

2. BACKGROUND

EUAA's mandate and development process of practical guides and tools

As defined in Article 13 of the [EUAA Regulation](#)⁷, the EUAA shall organise and coordinate activities promoting a correct and effective implementation of Union law on asylum, including the development, consultation, communication and monitoring of operational standards, indicators, guidelines and best practices after their adoption by the Management Board. A key aspect of this is the **development of PGT** to support EU+ countries in improving the quality of their asylum processes and achieving convergence in common quality standards in line with the CEAS.

EUAA PGT provide practical support to EU+ countries' authorities such as national asylum and migration authorities, national reception authorities, regional or local services and those on the ground, with the aim to increase their knowledge and skills. The guides and tools translate legal obligations, standards and good practices into commonly agreed guidance in various user-friendly formats, including checklists, pocketbooks, posters, web-based interactive tools, etc.

The EUAA's PGT are the result of a [close working collaboration between the EUAA and five dedicated networks](#). A diversity of professionals from Member States makes up the EUAA Asylum Processes Network, Exclusion Network, Network of Dublin Units, Network of Reception Authorities and the Vulnerability Experts Network. These networks are usually where the idea for developing a new guide or tool originates, based on needs expressed by experts, that are common to several EU+ countries. The networks also cooperate with the European Commission, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), other EU agencies and relevant partners for the exchange of information and expertise, depending on the field. Within these networks, the efficiency and quality of the asylum procedures are further strengthened by placing a specific focus on quality management (including the Quality Matrix process⁸) and digital innovation (through the Asylum Digital Innovation Group).⁹

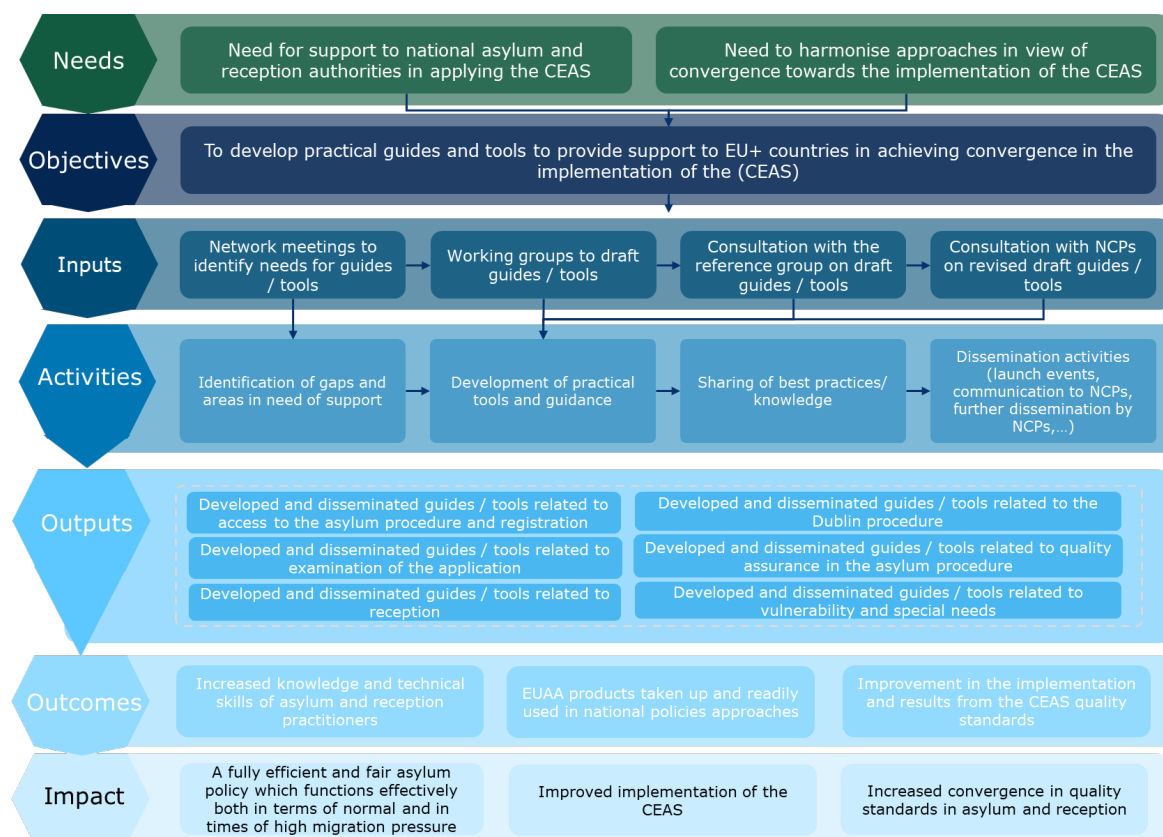
The overarching intervention logic of the EUAA's practical tools/guides in Figure 1 provides an overview of the elements discussed, highlighting the causal links between the activities undertaken, the outputs those lead to, and the eventual results thereof.

⁷ Regulation (EU) 2021/2303 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 December 2021 on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010.

⁸ The Quality Matrix process was launched by the Agency in 2012, with the aim to comprehensively "map EU Member States' practices in implementing key thematic elements of the common legal framework and to identify examples of good practices and available quality tools, relevant projects and initiatives", see: <https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-processes-quality>

⁹ Established in 2020, the Asylum Digital Innovation Group is an intra-EUAA horizontal group that facilitates the exchange of information between centres on asylum and reception-related digital innovation projects in the EU and associated countries and also within the EUAA. The group is also working on strategic objectives and guidelines regarding to the harmonisation of ongoing and planned support activities under this domain.

Figure 1. Overarching intervention logic



EUAA's practical guides and tools

The EUAA PGT come in different forms and cover different thematic areas (based on needs identified with EU+ countries, as explained above). They are designed to be used in conjunction and be complementary. They are also complementary to the EUAA training modules and the EUAA professional development materials¹⁰.

The EUAA has developed over 50 tools and guides and makes a continuous effort to develop more. Each of these falls under one of the following **six areas of support**:

- Access to the asylum procedure and registration
- Dublin procedure
- Examination of the application
- Quality assurance in the asylum procedure
- Reception
- Vulnerability and special needs

Table 2 below provides an overview of the key characteristic of the **eleven** PGT that were evaluated in this study.

¹⁰ EUAA website, [Practical tools and guides](#).

Table 2. Overview of the PGT

Name of the guide / tool	Category	Publication date	Format	Primary target group	Objective
Guide on registration	Asylum processes and the examination of applications for international protection	December 2021	Practical guide	Registration officers, supervisors, team leaders and managers	Improve and harmonise the approach to lodging of applications in line with the CEAS and good practices from across the EU+
IPSN tool	Applicants with special needs	2019	Online tool	Officials and other actors in contact with applicants for international protection	Support the identification and referral of applicants with special needs in line with CEAS and good practices
Video Animations on age assessment	Applicants with special needs	2020	Video animations	Policymakers and officials involved in the age assessment process, children and youth undergoing age assessment	Support the development of the right compliant and effective age assessment procedures in line with CEAS and good practices
DubliNet recommendations	Dublin procedure	November 2020 to main target audience, publicly available since December 2021	Practical guide	Dublin practitioners, managers and policymakers	To promote best practices for the operational and technical use of DubliNet
Dublin Transfer recommendations	Dublin procedure	2019 to main target audience, publicly available since December 2021	Practical guide	Case officers, Dublin practitioners, managers and policymakers	To enhance practical cooperation between Member States to improve the implementation of Dublin transfers

Name of the guide / tool	Category	Publication date	Format	Primary target group	Objective
Guide on the use of COI	Asylum processes and the examination of applications for international protection	December 2020	Practical guide	Case officers, quality assessors, legal advisers	Improve quality and consistency in the use of common COI across the EU+
Syria exclusion cases tool¹¹	Asylum processes and the examination of applications for international protection	December 2021	Practical guide	Registration officers, screeners, case officers, interviewers and decision-makers in the asylum procedure, quality officers and legal advisers	Provide updated COI on Syria and guidance on the identification of potential exclusion cases in line with CEAS and good practices from across the EU+
QAT	Asylum processes and the examination of applications for international protection	March 2021	Practical tool	Case officers and quality assessors, legal advisers	Better quality asylum decisions through strengthening of internal quality assessment and assurance in the context of personal interviews and first instance decisions
ARC tool	Reception	March 2021 (instead of April 2021)	An app and an offline software	Reception officers and policymakers	Support the implementation of the Reception Conditions Directive by facilitating the assessment of reception conditions
Guide on contingency planning	Reception	March 2019	Practical guide	Reception officers, policymakers and managers of national reception authorities	Increase preparedness and ability to cope with situations of mass influx or unexpected events of reception systems through contingency planning
Staff welfare guide	Applicants with special needs	September 2021	Practical guide and a	Managers, team leaders and coordinators as well as first-	Support the establishment of policies and measures to ensure the wellbeing of staff

¹¹ "Practical Tool: Identification of potential exclusion cases from Syria" is a restricted access EUAA tool. It has been shared with the evaluation team, and is subject to a declaration of non-disclosure signed by all team members. When collecting, analysing and reporting on information related to this tool, its restricted nature will be respected.

Name of the guide / tool	Category	Publication date	Format	Primary target group	Objective
			video animation	line staff working in asylum and reception	

3. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation took a mixed methods approach, combining desk research with stakeholder consultations. The bulk of the data collection consisted of an online survey of national contact points (NCPs), in-depth fieldwork in 14 EU+ countries¹², and horizontal interviews with international/EU stakeholders and working group experts.

3.1 Data collection

Online survey

An online survey targeted at all **NCPs of the five networks** of relevance to the PGT under evaluation was carried out between 6 October 2022 and 4 November 2022. The survey aimed to collect data on awareness, relevance, use and impact of the PGT as well as to narrow down the selection of countries for fieldwork. The survey was sent to a total of 231 NCPs of the Asylum Processes Network, Network of Dublin Units, Network of Reception Authorities, Vulnerability Experts Network and Exclusion Network. A total of 90 completed responses were received, constituting a 39% response rate. Responses were received from NCPs from all networks, and 27 out of the 30 targeted EU+ countries (all except Austria, Hungary and Liechtenstein). Table 3 provides an overview of survey responses per PGT. More detailed overview tables containing the responses received per network and per country are presented in Table 6 in Annex 1.

Table 3. Responses to the online survey

PGT	NCPs targeted	Responses received (% response rate)
Guide on registration	Asylum Processes Network (53)	30 (57%)
	Network of Dublin Units (30)	11 (37%)
IPSN tool	Vulnerability Experts Network (50)	26 (52%)
	Asylum Processes Network (53)	30 (57%)
	Network of Reception Authorities (44)	15 (34%)
Video animations on age assessment	Vulnerability Experts Network (50)	26 (52%)
	Asylum Processes Network (53)	30 (57%)
	Network of Dublin Units (30)	11 (37%)
DubliNet recommendations	Network of Dublin Units (30)	11 (37%)
Dublin Transfer recommendations	Network of Dublin Units (30)	11 (37%)

¹² Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain. Initially, 12 countries were chosen for fieldwork. However, some administrations were unable to participate in data collection activities due to their high workloads. This was notably the case in Belgium and Czech Republic, so additional consultations in the Netherlands and Slovakia were organised to fill these gaps. There was also an intention to fill gaps from fieldwork in France with fieldwork in Germany, however, no participation could be offered by German authorities.

PGT	NCPs targeted	Responses received (% response rate)
Guide on the use of COI	Asylum Processes Network (53)	30 (57%)
	Exclusion Network (32)	19 (59%)
Syria exclusion cases tool	Exclusion Network (32)	19 (59%)
QAT	Asylum Processes Network (53)	30 (57%)
ARC tool	Network of Reception Authorities (44)	15 (34%)
Guide on contingency planning	Network of Reception Authorities (44)	15 (34%)
Staff welfare guide	Vulnerability Experts Network (50)	26 (52%)
	Asylum Processes Network (53)	30 (57%)
	Network of Dublin Units (30)	11 (37%)
	Network of Reception Authorities (44)	15 (34%)

While the response rate for most PGT is around 50% and the total response rate is 39%, which is considered sufficient to provide robust evidence for the evaluation, a lot of “do not know” responses were received in relation to several of the PGT, notably those for which questions were asked from NCPs of various networks. This presents a limitation because the remaining responses provide a more limited evidence base. At the same time, it can be considered a strength that the answers received in relation to e.g. the benefits of the PGT were provided only by those who were actually knowledgeable about them.

Interviews with users/in-depth fieldwork

Interviews with users of the EUAA products under evaluation were carried out through **field visits**; an expert for each country (a local language speaker) interviewed users of four to five guides and/or tools covered in their country. A total of 195 persons were interviewed across 14 countries (see Table 4). Some of them were consulted about more than one PGT, so in total, 132 different persons were interviewed.

Table 4. Interviews with (targeted) users of the PGT

Practical guide or tool	Countries covered	Number of interviewees
Guide on registration	Ireland, Latvia, Portugal, Spain	14
IPSN tool	Bulgaria, Ireland, Latvia, Portugal, Slovenia	34
Video animations on age assessment	Belgium, Bulgaria, Luxembourg, Slovenia, the Netherlands	20
DubliNet recommendations	Czech Republic, Greece, Norway, Sweden	13

Practical guide or tool	Countries covered	Number of interviewees
Dublin Transfer recommendations	Luxembourg, Norway, Slovenia	8
Guide on the use of COI	Bulgaria, France, Portugal Slovakia, Spain	25
Syria exclusion cases tool	Bulgaria, Greece, the Netherlands	14
QAT	Belgium, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Spain	21
ARC tool	Greece, Luxembourg, Norway, Slovakia	10
Guide on contingency planning	Latvia, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain	18
Staff welfare guide	France, Greece, Portugal, Slovenia	19
Total	14 countries	195 (132 unique)

The interviewees were identified with support from NCPs. They consisted of both users of the PGT, and targeted users who were not making use of them. In several cases, the interviewee was not aware about a PGT prior to the interview. If this was the case, the PGT was shared with them and questions were adapted to ask for their opinion on the PGT and its potential relevance and usefulness for their work. Their views were considered in the analysis, though with lesser emphasis than the views of those who actually have experience using certain PGT.

Interviews with working group experts and EU / international stakeholders

A series of additional interviews were carried out with **experts from EU+ countries**, who were involved in the development and/or testing of a selection of the PGT, as well as with **EU and international level stakeholders** who reviewed drafts of the guides/tools before they were launched, as members of the Reference Groups, and at least one EUAA staff member responsible for each PGT. A total of 44 interviews were conducted (see Table 5). Additional details are provided in Table 8 in Annex 1.

Table 5. Overview of working group experts & EU/international interviews

Type of stakeholder	Interviewees	Number of interviewees
EUAA staff	Staff responsible for the development and dissemination of given PGT	24
	Operational support staff knowledgeable about the use/application of given PGT in operations	3
	Heads of centres	2
EU/international stakeholders	DG HOME	3
	UNHCR	4

Type of stakeholder	Interviewees	Number of interviewees
Working group experts	European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE)	1
	Expert on Video animations for age assessment	1
	Experts on the ARC tool	2
	Expert on the Staff welfare guide	1
	Experts on the Guide on the use of COI	2
	Expert on the Guide on registration	1

3.2 Data analysis and synthesis

Once all data had been collected, they were analysed and triangulated at the level of specific PGT, and subsequently synthesised at a higher level to draw our key cross-cutting findings, conclusions and recommendations as presented in this evaluation report. The conclusions and recommendations were also validated with EUAA staff and stakeholders from EU+ countries.

Co-creation workshop on recommendations

A workshop involving EUAA staff and the evaluation team on 3 April 2023 was held, where the evaluation team presented preliminary conclusions and recommendations. The workshop served to discuss notably the recommendations for given PGT, to ensure they were relevant, appropriate, and workable given the constraints faced by the Agency.

Validation workshop with stakeholders

A validation workshop was held on 25 April 2023. All NCPs who took part in the survey or interviews and/or supported the evaluation team in reaching out to relevant practitioners for consultations were invited. A total of 27 participants representing all five EUAA networks attended. The workshop served to validate the cross-cutting results of the evaluation, with a view to ensuring transparency and allowing participants to provide any final feedback, as well as their views about the feasibility and potential impact of the proposed recommendations.

4. EVALUATION FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings of the evaluation of the 11 selected PGT.

4.1 Relevance and coherence of the PGT

The EUAA's PGT are highly relevant as **instruments to contribute to harmonisation** in the implementation of the CEAS throughout the EU, as is their ultimate goal. While the CEAS sets out common minimum standards in relation to the procedures for international protection that Member States need to adopt when establishing their own national asylum and reception legislation and guidance, it leaves quite some room for discretion. In practice, this often results in divergences concerning the treatment of applicants and recognition rates across Member States.

For instance, the [Reception Conditions Directive \(2013/33/EU\)](#) (recast) lays down general provisions on reception conditions (Chapter 2) which includes the provision of minimal material reception conditions such as housing and health care (Chapter 17, 18) and emphasises the need to consider special reception needs of the applicant (such as age, gender, disabilities, etc). The [Directive, though, leaves a considerable degree of discretion](#) to define what constitutes a 'dignified standard of living' and how it should be achieved and thus, national reception systems differ greatly in setup and modalities for the provision of reception conditions. Consequently, standards for reception conditions continue to vary across EU Member States, causing differences in the treatment of applicants for international protection. In a similar vein, the [Asylum Procedures Directive \(2013/32/EU\)](#) (recast), the main legal instrument governing rules on registration¹³, mainly refers to mandatory timeframes¹⁴ (Chapter III Article 6), leaving the remainder of the procedure up to national authorities. EUAA PGT such as the ARC tool (and associated guidance on standards and indicators), and the guidance on registration, constitute tools that help EU+ countries implement their obligations and, if deemed necessary, adapt their approaches to be more aligned with good practices observed in other countries/at the EU level.

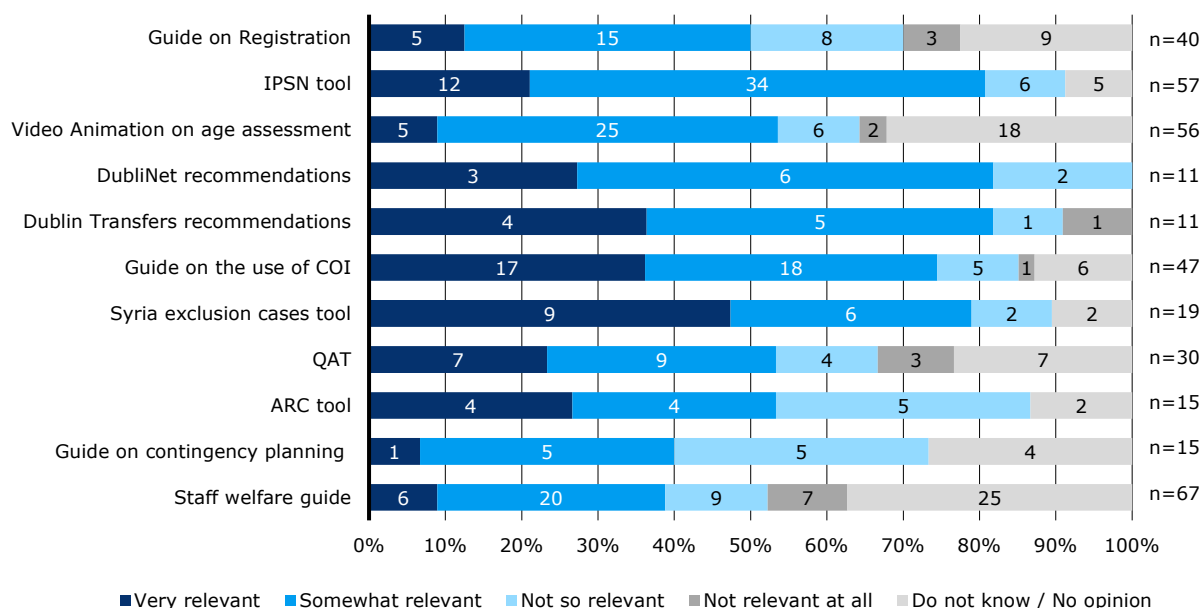
Thus, in light of the nature of the legal framework, **scope and coverage** of the PGT are highly relevant as they provide either a source of information for Member States to understand and apply the relevant rules, or practical solutions to implement them. This was confirmed across the board by consulted stakeholders. While they may not have observed an impact on convergence yet, stakeholders agree that [the PGT are one of the instruments that can contribute to this process](#).

However, the [relevance of the PGT in terms of supporting convergence and implementation of the CEAS does not necessarily align with the operational needs](#) of asylum and reception administrations at the national or local level, leading to varying levels of relevance to the daily needs of administrations across the different PGT (see Figure 2). Thus, while the EUAA practical tools and guides have the potential to enhance convergence and alignment with CEAS across Member States, their [relevance to the end-users is contingent upon several factors](#), which are elaborated on below.

¹³ In addition to the Asylum Procedures Directive, there are other EU legal instruments that regulate the registration of asylum seekers such as Reception Conditions Directive (2013/33/EU), which sets out minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers, and the Eurodac Regulation (Regulation (EU) No 603/2013), which establishes a central database for the comparison of fingerprints of asylum seekers and irregular migrants

¹⁴ When a person makes an application for international protection to an authority competent under national law for registering such applications, the registration shall take place no later than three working days after the application is made.

Figure 2. Survey responses related to the relevance of the PGT to the daily needs of intended users



The graph shows that the guides/tools which were perceived as the most relevant were the DubliNet recommendations, the Dublin Transfer recommendations, the IPSN tool and the Syria exclusion cases tool, with around 80% of respondents stating that they were either very relevant or somewhat relevant. Interviews with users shed light on the reason why: PGT which provide **practical guidance on concrete operational** challenges encountered by users during the asylum procedure are considered to be most relevant to meet the needs of consulted users. For instance, the DubliNet recommendations are found to be highly relevant to address the needs of DubliNet operators, as they provide concrete guidance to overcome operational and technical challenges that may be encountered by the users of the DubliNet system; challenges which are specific to the system. Similarly, the Dublin Transfer recommendations lay out rules and instructions for the effective implementation and cooperation of Dublin transfers, ensuring that they are carried out smoothly. In both cases, these recommendations concern a process that is inherently cross-border and thus requires close coordination between, and harmonisation among, national administrations, which adds to the relevance of producing guidance on them at the EU level. Similarly, the Syria exclusion cases tool was conceived to go beyond the mere identification of exclusion cases and provide practical guidance on how to address identified exclusion cases according to different profiles presented, and the IPSN tool tackles vulnerabilities, which some administrations are less well-acquainted with compared to the more standard procedures such as for registration of applicants.

The guides/tools that were found to be the least relevant, as shown in the graph above, were the Contingency planning guide and the Staff welfare guide, with only 40% of respondents stating that they were either very relevant or somewhat relevant. Fieldwork demonstrated that this is because of the more **“strategic” nature** of these guidance documents. Both of them concern topics that operate in the background or are implicitly incorporated in EU+ countries’ practices, rather than explicitly tackling operational issues. Both guides also address a wide target audience, that goes beyond the administrations of the NCPs that took part in the survey, which explains why they considered them less relevant to the needs of their administrations.

Beyond this distinction between more operational and strategic PGT, the degree of perceived relevance is primarily contingent on **existing practices and approaches at the national level**. This is particularly the case for guides and tools which provide guidance or good practices on specific procedures for which countries have already implemented their own national procedures, such as

the guidance on registration, the QAT or the ARC tool. For example, divergences in the specificities of the registration procedure across Member States makes the use of the Guide on registration less relevant to the daily needs of registration officers, as the guide does not provide support to the specific need of users in the specific context in which they operate. Consulted registration officers explained, for example, that they have specific systems and procedures for data sharing, and specific roles and responsibilities among authorities, which obviously cannot be reflected in guidance at EU level. As a result, they did not feel a need to refer to the Guide on registration. Similarly, in the case of the QAT, in some countries (e.g. Ireland, Italy), other actors such as UNHCR are involved in quality assurance and use their own tools to do so, or the approach is one based on peer reviews, where using the tool is not appropriate. For the ARC tool, some countries (e.g. Belgium and Norway) already had their own tools, which means they have no need to use the one developed by the EUAA. In most cases, however, NCPs in countries that employ their own tools or guidance nevertheless acknowledged the relevance of the existence of the PGT for other countries and administrations, in view of the overall goal of contributing to harmonisation.

Finally, the PGT were found to be **particularly relevant for less experienced or new asylum or reception practitioners**. For instance, administrations in Germany and Bulgaria found particularly relevant the Guide on the use of COI to train new case officers and have incorporated the guide in their national training modules. Similarly, the Video animations on age assessment for practitioners have been used during training sessions for caseworkers in Norway and Bulgaria; and the QAT tool was underlined as being particularly relevant for new or inexperienced staff in Latvia. On the other hand, **users who are more experienced and thus more familiar with the relevant rules and standards have a lesser need for EUAA guidance**. For instance, the Exclusion Network NCP from the Netherlands explained that the Syria exclusion cases tool is used as a starting point for their investigation as researchers in the administrations are well-informed and highly experienced in the field, which limits the relevance of the guide to their needs. Similarly, Member States with well-established COI units and structured approaches to the use of COI (e.g. France, Sweden) were found to find the Guide on the use of COI redundant because their staff were already well aware of how to use COI in their work. The relevance of the guides and tools is, thus, partly determined by the **seniority level of asylum officers** as well as **the maturity and capacity of administrations** in relation to a specific stage of the asylum procedure and reception procedure.

Due to the existence of their own national guidance or tools, some stakeholders **reported a lack of full applicability of the PGT in their national contexts**. This does not, however, constitute a lack of **coherence**: the EUAA's PGT correspond with EU rules and standards, and where there are perceived limitations in Member States it is because of the room for discretion in the CEAS, as explained above. One example is the Video animations on age assessment for practitioners which were reported not fully relevant to case officers in Belgium, Luxembourg, and Bulgaria. In such cases, national or local specificities make it more effective to make use of national guidance instead. While the EUAA in some cases helps tailor PGT to national contexts, this is not always appropriate if the national approaches are not fully aligned with EU standards. However, in most cases, authorities reported that their own guidance was either adapted to be aligned with the EUAA's PGT, or that there was no need to do so because they were already consistent¹⁵.

In terms of coherence with other sources of guidance (at international level), **no overlaps or duplications were identified either**. A couple of examples of guides on related topics developed by other organisations were referred to, including a manual developed by the Austrian Centre for Country of Origin and Asylum Research and Documentation (ACCORD) on the use of COI and a guide developed by Frontex on contingency planning. These instances do not seem to have

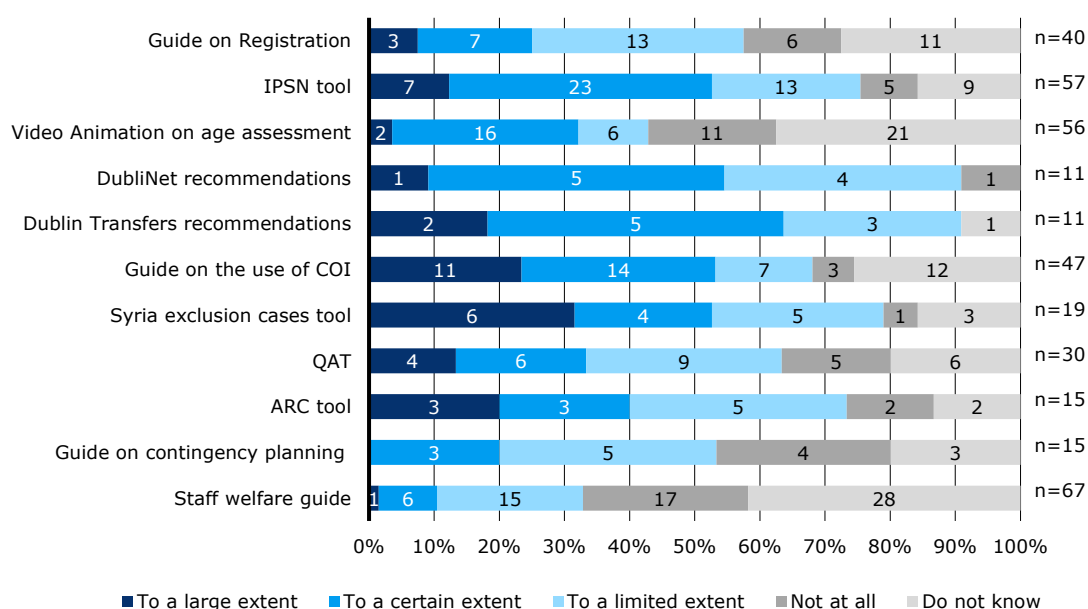
¹⁵ An assessment of coherence with national guidance documents falls outside of the scope of this assignment, which is concerned with assessing the degree of awareness, use, usefulness and impact of the EUAA PGT. Moreover, national guidance tends to not be publicly available for such an assessment to be carried out.

significantly impacted the relevance of the EUAA guides on the same topic, and there were no contradictions between them, though it may impact their added value.

4.2 Use and application of the PGT

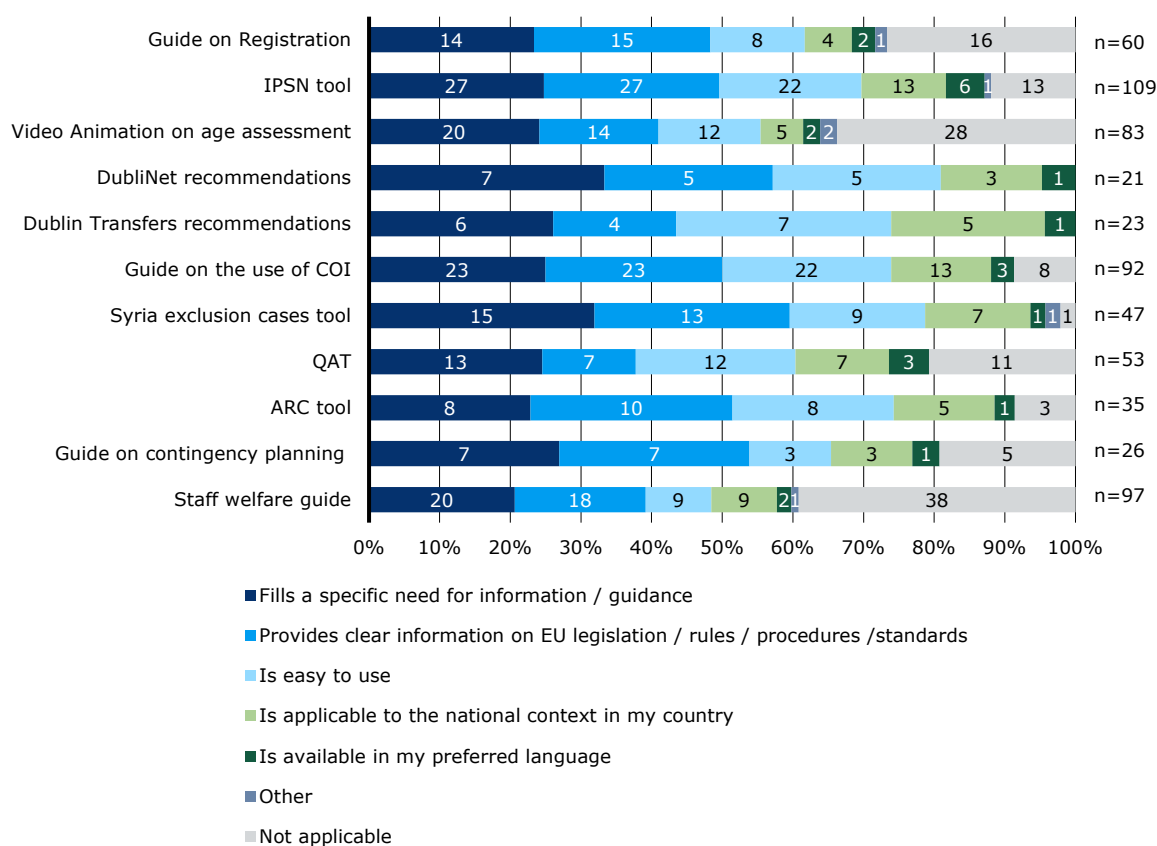
There is **considerable fluctuation** in the degree to which PGT are reportedly used in the relevant administrations in EU+ countries (see Figure 3). This chapter explains the degree of use and non-use, along with the explanatory factors uncovered through field research. Evidence about the use of the PGT should be carefully considered in light of the different objectives and target audiences of the PGT – some guides and tools may not be used on a daily basis by practitioners, or even not be known by them (see section 4.3 for a discussion on awareness), but still have had an influence on the national practices at a higher level. Thus, this section considers the use and application of the PGT at both levels: by practitioners and by policymakers (or others responsible for developing national guidance), where relevant and applicable.

Figure 3. Survey responses related to the degree of use of PGT



The **degree of use of PGT appears to be correlated with their relevance**. As Figure 3 shows, the Dublin Transfer recommendations are used the most, with over 60% of respondents stating that they are used either to a large extent or to a certain extent. The DubliNet recommendations, Syria exclusion cases tool and, IPSN tool and Guide on the use of COI, with over 50% of respondents stating that they are used either to a large or to a certain extent. This shows that **the use of PGT is highest** for guides/tools that are focused on a specific segment or aspect of the asylum procedure, for which information or guidance may not be available elsewhere or for which it makes sense to have such information available at EU level (see Figure 4). Notable examples include the Dublin Transfer recommendations and the DubliNet recommendations – thematically, these recommendations cover a process that is inherently cross-border, a process whereby common practices and procedures are crucial for Member States to properly implement their Dublin Regulation obligations, as already explained above. The use of the Syria exclusion cases tool is also quite high which can be explained by its high relevance and applicability to the local contexts in almost all EU+ countries.

Figure 4. Survey responses related to the reasons for use of the PGT



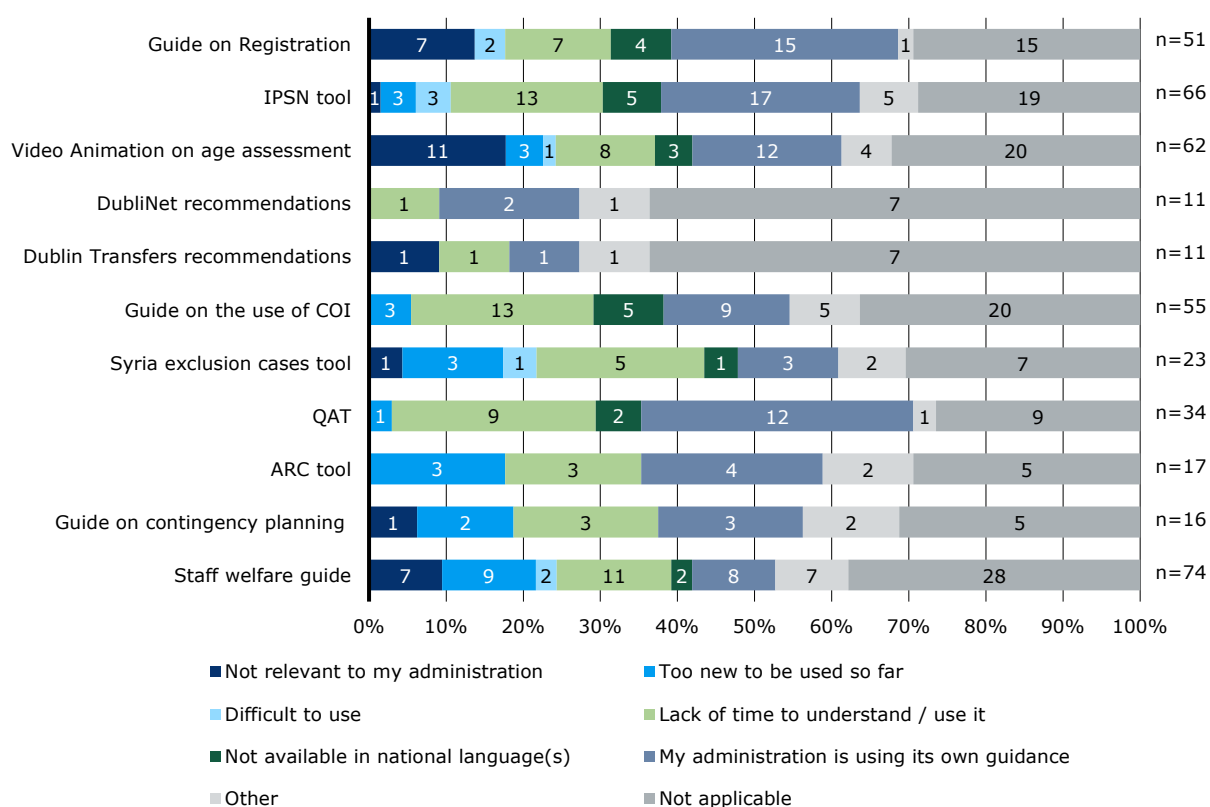
Note: Respondents could answer all options that applied to them. 'Not applicable' answers in this case suggest that the PGT is not being used in the respondent's country.

Relatedly, the use of PGT that address **operational issues that come up in the daily work of administrations are relatively high**. As Figure 3 shows, the Guide on the use of COI and the IPSN tool are also used to a relatively high degree, with over 50% of respondents stating that they are used either to a large or to a certain extent. While they are quite different in nature – the Guide on the use of COI is used more as a reference guide or an instrument for training staff, and the IPSN tool can be used as a tool on a more daily basis – both are applicable to the work of case officers at large, as the use of COI and the identification of vulnerabilities may prove necessary at different phases in the examination procedure.

On the contrary, and also in line with the findings on relevance, **PGT that cover broader topics and not applicable to day-to-day work are used the least**, as seen in relation to the Guide on contingency planning and the Staff welfare guide. In both cases, the target group is broader than for other PGT in that they comprise both professionals at management and decision-making level and (to some extent) first line professionals. As such, fieldwork uncovered a certain lack of ownership among authorities with regard to these guides. Either they pointed towards a different person or ministry as the one responsible for using the PGT, or they struggled to identify who might be the most appropriate person or ministry to take on the task of applying the content of the guides in the national context. Even if the relevant authorities are identified, they would need to coordinate and work together to implement changes in relation to staff welfare and contingency. Thus, **the low level of reported use of these two more 'strategic' PGT can also, in part, be explained by the fact that they are meant to produce more structural, long-term changes in approaches**. They need to be taken into consideration by (a group of different) authorities in their strategic planning, which

makes their use more complex and thus limits the frequency of their use. A **low degree of use of these types of 'strategic' PGT is not negative by definition**, as long as they are used to make more structural or strategic changes (see also section 4.4). Nevertheless, field research found that this is not necessarily the case, with a **lack of resources (and, resultingly, lack of prioritisation)** being cited as the main reason for non-use of these types of guides (see Figure 5); due to the considerable resource constraints faced by all asylum and reception authorities, strategic planning tends to be deprioritised in favour of processing applications.

Figure 5. Survey responses related to the reasons for non-use of the PGT



Note: Respondents could answer all options that applied to them. 'Not applicable' answers in this case suggest that the PGT is being used in the respondent's country.

Differences in the frequency of use are also evident in the other types of PGT. **Those which are more informative in nature (i.e. the guidance documents and recommendations) tend to be used less frequently than the more practical ones (e.g. practical tools)** in general. This is justified by the fact that certain information only needs to be processed once to be understood and subsequently applied. For example, for guides which cover 'basic' asylum procedures, the guides may help to either update or streamline approaches, or (alternatively) be used to train new staff on such procedures. However, staff with longer tenure should already know the EU rules and local specificities (if applicable), so they have a lesser need to make use of the guidance documents. For example, the Guide on the use of COI is one that in theory only needs to be read once, and perhaps referred to as a 'refresher' later on down the line. The guide is much more useful to more junior case officers who do not have ample experience using COI in their daily work, or who need to be trained in doing so. As such, this guidance has in some cases been used to inform/adapt national training modules. Thus, the use of such general guidance depends heavily on the type of user. The reason why the Guide on the use of COI seems to be used more than the other 'informative' PGT is

likely because it filled a specific gap – as explained by an interviewee from Germany, while they have a strong tradition in relation to COI and the development of their own guidance, they had not yet considered combining the two to create guidance on how to make use of COI; as such, they considered the Guide on the use of COI one of the most relevant (and thus most used) in the German context.

Another significant reason for non-use of PGT is the degree to which they are **applicable to national/local contexts** (see also section 4.1). There are two aspects to consider in this respect: the existence of specificities in the national procedures that are not reflected in the EU-level guidance, or the existence of guidance and/or tools at national level which are used instead. In fact, these two elements are interconnected. Where countries have well-developed approaches or processes, they likely also have their own guidance, which is directly applicable to the national/local context and thus leaves no 'gaps' or room for misinterpretation. This issue stems from the fact that the CEAS rules are largely open-ended, as already explained. For example, the Guide on registration outlines the standard approach and good practices based on the minimum EU rules, but it may not be used in practice because countries have specific systems (e.g. for data sharing) and specific roles and responsibilities in the registration which would not be possible to be fully reflected in an EU-level guidance document. A similar finding emerged in relation to some of the more 'practical' PGT, e.g. the Video animations on age assessment, reported as not used by case officers in some Member States due to national approaches varying with respect to the EUAA-backed holistic oriented one; or the ARC tool, where the EU standards and indicators were often considered too 'broad' to fit local needs, thus requiring the development of additional tools at national level. Once an approach has been established or a local tool developed, it tends to render the EUAA's PGT less useful (see Figure 5).

Beyond factors related to the content, scope and target audience of the PGT, there are more **operational factors** that (positively or negatively) affect their use. These include the length, usability and user-friendliness of the PGT, as further detailed below.

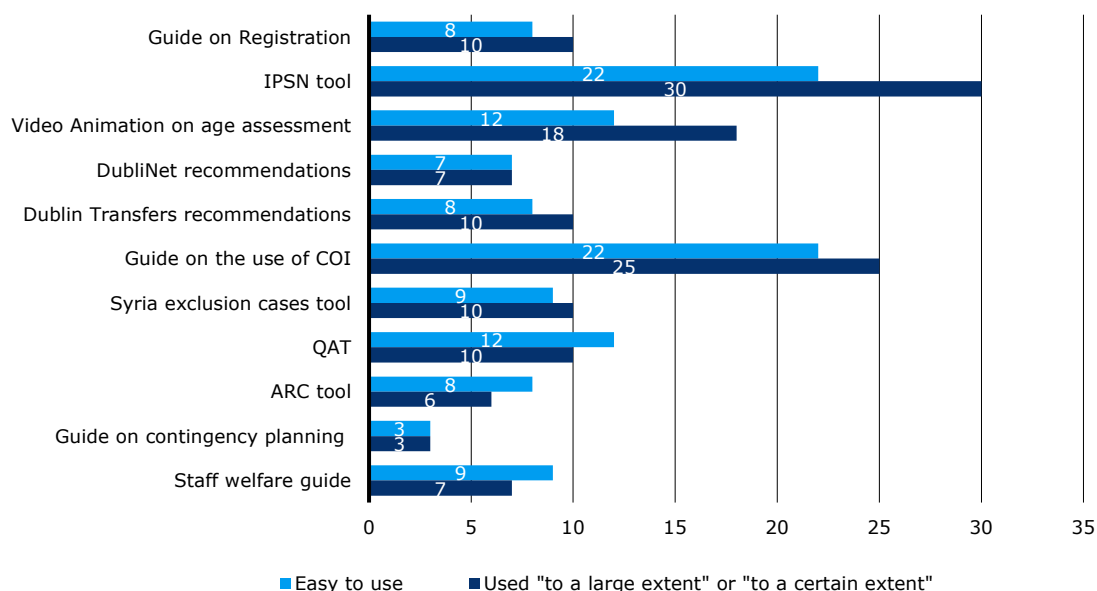
The **length of the guides** was generally considered to be a hindering factor to their use. While stakeholders acknowledge the need to be exhaustive in guidance and to avoid being too prescriptive or making it seem as though a given approach is "better" than another when presenting good practices, they also underlined that due to their high workloads and/or limited resources, the length often ended up being more burdensome than helpful, e.g. in relation to the Guide on registration, the Staff welfare guide and the Guide on contingency planning. Shorter documents, such as the two recommendations related to the Dublin process, as well as the Video animations format were highly appreciated. This links back to the fact that **more concrete, targeted PGT tend to be used more**. In several instances, interviewees therefore suggested producing shorter versions of guides, or even executive summaries to accompany longer versions of guides or otherwise presenting them in a more easy-to-digest manner. This suggestion is not new to the Agency, and in fact the Video animations on age assessment were an attempt at presenting information in an easy-to-digest format. While this format was highly appreciated, their actual use ended up being quite low due to the already explained variations between national approaches and the EUAA-backed holistic oriented approach shown in the video animations, thus future initiatives like this should carefully consider their added value.

Relatedly, the **ease of use** plays a considerable role in the degree to which the PGT are used in practice. As shown in Figure 6, a PGT being considered 'easy to use' is in many cases correlated with a higher degree of use. The graph also shows that, in general, the practical tools are considered easy to use and that this supports their use¹⁶. When asked the opposite question, i.e. whether

¹⁶ Note that the survey question asked for reasons for use. Thus, in countries where the PGT are not being used, usually no answers were provided.

difficulty in using the PGT was a reason for non-use, very few such answers were received; too few to show in the graph below.

Figure 6. Cross-tabulation of ease-of-use and level of use of the PGT, based on NCP survey results



Finally, the availability of **translations** of PGT *can* have an impact on their use, but not in all situations. In the survey, the (non) availability of translations was barely ever highlighted as having had an effect on use (see Figure 4 and Figure 5). Field research suggests that this highly depends on the scope and target group of a PGT, as well as on the country. For example, the more strategic PGT are usually only processed by policymakers, who are more likely to work in international fora and are thus more comfortable using English. The more informative PGT, on the other hand, may be more useful to have translations of, especially if they are used at national level for training purposes of staff who might not master the English language. Finally, in countries where the use of English is more widespread (e.g. the Nordic countries, Western European countries), translations were also considered less important, though this is in part because the PGT tend not to reach the level of practitioners in these countries.

4.3 Effectiveness of outreach and uptake activities

This section presents the findings for the effectiveness of dissemination and promotion (i.e. outreach and uptake activities) of the PGT by the EUAA and relevant administrations, as well as the level of awareness of the existence and purpose of the products.

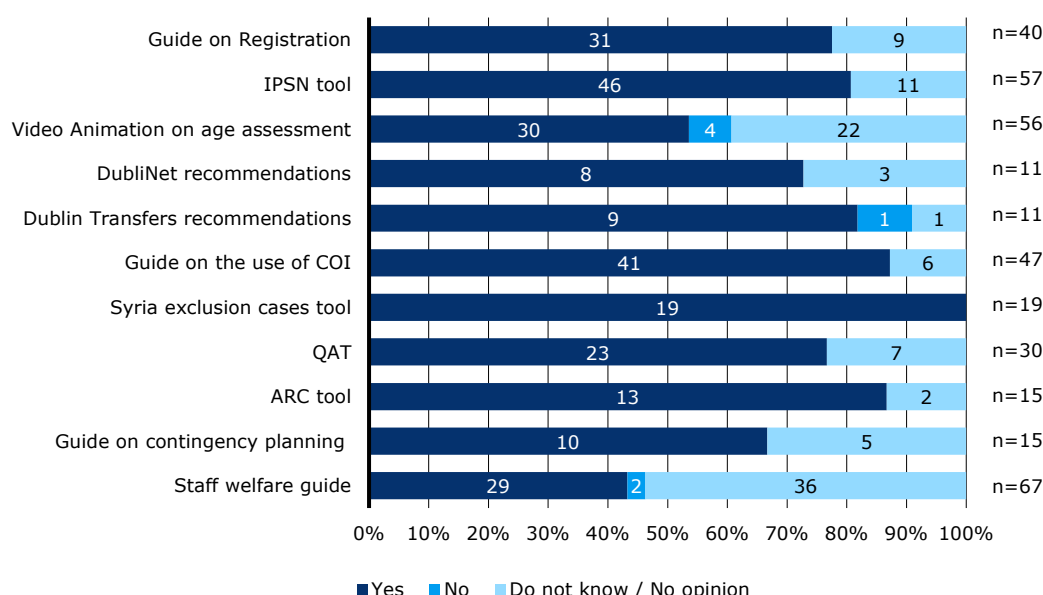
4.3.1 Effectiveness of EUAA outreach activities

Figure 7 below presents the survey findings for whether the EUAA has provided sufficient information or guidance on the purpose, content, scope and intended use of the PGT. While the information provision and guidance from the EUAA were generally found to be sufficient and the guidance to be well-prepared and accessible across most of the products, it was found that even if the information is shared internally, the extent to which this translates to actual use of the products is **highly dependent on whether internal guidance already exists**.

In addition to the EUAA's **usual dissemination channels** (e.g. EUAA networks, social media, website), the EUAA organised a **launch event** for a number of the products (e.g. IPSN tool, Guide

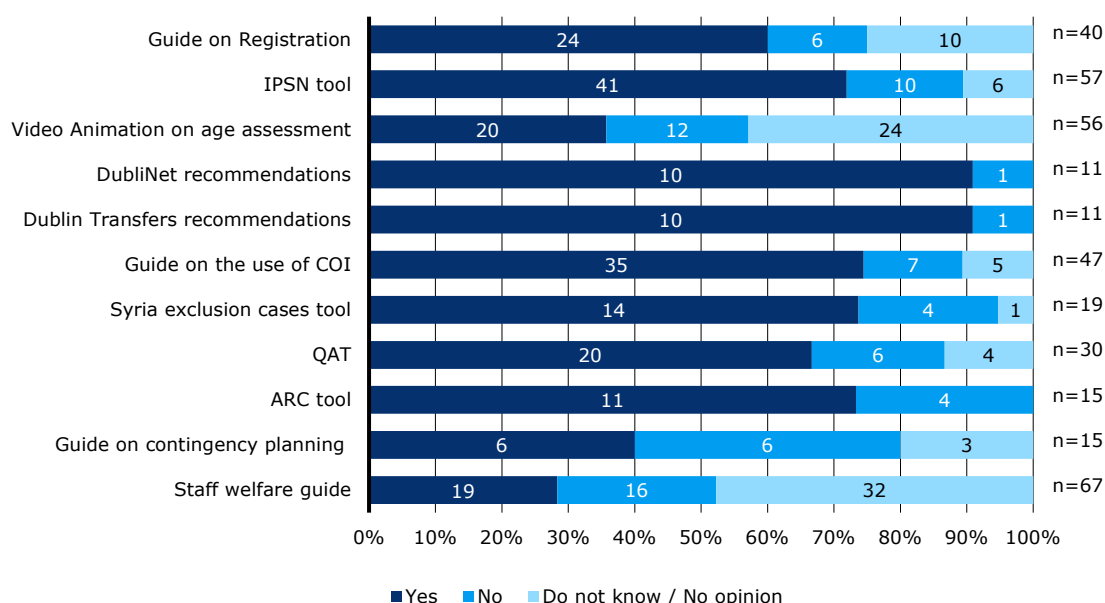
on the use of COI, Staff welfare guide, Syria exclusion cases tool), where the PGT was presented and its use was explained. A number of the guides/tools were disseminated in the context of operational assistance and training organised by the EUAA, which were found to be effective ways of disseminating the products. However, it was pointed out by interviewees for the QAT that there is a **need for more practical guidance on the use of the products in general**, e.g. by using training or workshops to better explain the use of tools in practice. It was also noted that exchanges between EU+ countries, to share experiences on the use of PGT in practice, would be helpful as it would help make more concrete the potential benefits to be accrued from them. In relation to the training offered by the EUAA, it was pointed out that **proficiency of English should not be a requirement** for all international training, particularly with case officers in Bulgaria, as only a limited number of case officers who are fluent in English can benefit from the training.

Figure 7. Survey responses related to the sufficiency of information provision or guidance from the EUAA on the purpose, content, scope and intended use of the PGT



The majority of NCPs believe that the targeted users of the products in their administration are **sufficiently aware of their existence and purpose** (see Figure 8). The highest level of awareness was for the DubliNet and Dublin Transfer recommendations (over 90%) (i.e. the PGT of relevance to the Network of Dublin Units), while the products with the lowest level of awareness were the Staff welfare guide, the Video animations on age assessment, and the Guide on contingency planning. These findings are closely correlated to the findings on relevance and use presented in previous chapters. When asked to provide further explanation, the most common response was that the **administration uses their own guidance** (the Guide on registration, Guide on the use of COI, QAT, IPSN tool, Video animations on age assessment and the Staff welfare guide). Several NCPs who responded 'do not know / no opinion' clarified that the particular guide/tool was not handled by their administration or did not fall under their responsibility. The interview findings support the results of the survey.

Figure 8. Survey responses related to the awareness of targeted users about the PGT

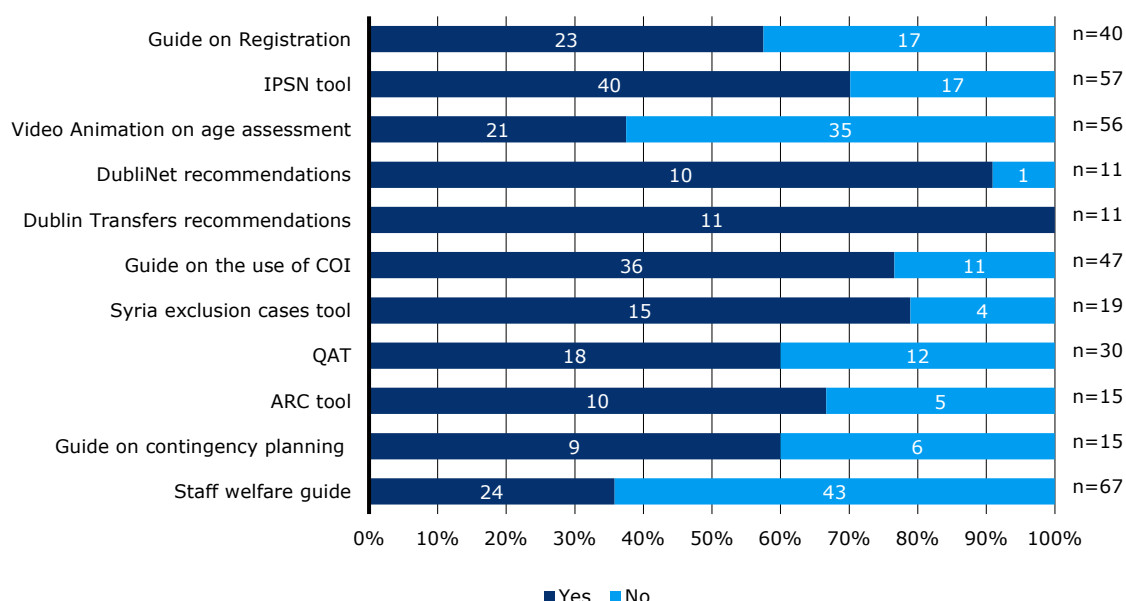


The relatively large share of “do not know” responses in the graph above signals two things: on the one hand, a lack of knowledge among NCPs about the PGT itself, and on the other hand a lack of internal communication between the NCP and the first line professionals that are intended users of the PGT. The latter aspect is further explored below.

4.3.2 Effectiveness of authorities’ uptake activities

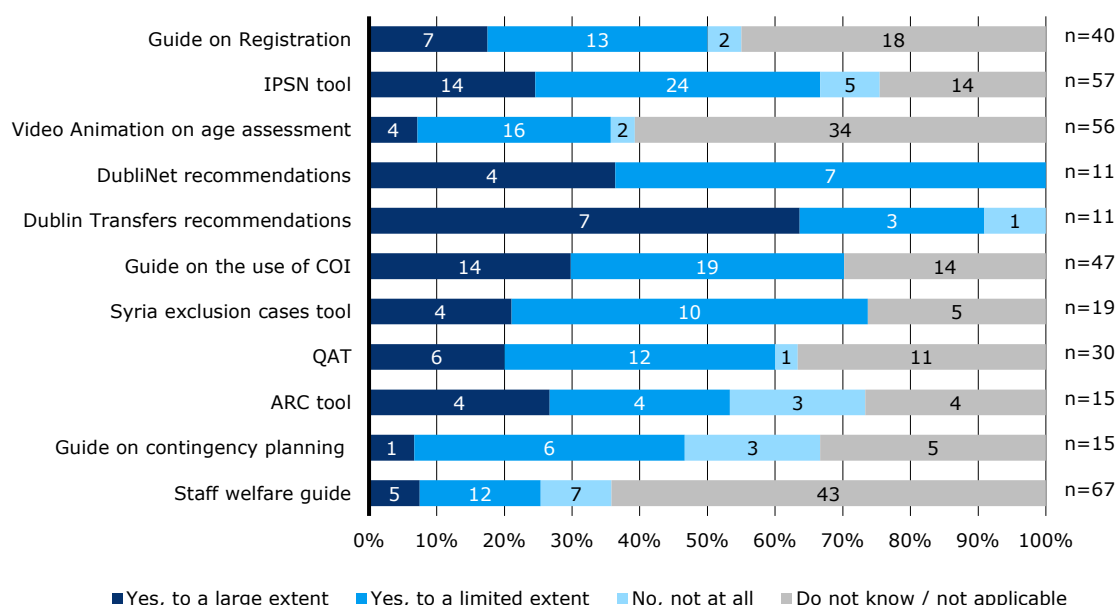
While the level of awareness of the guides/tools is sufficient for most of the PGT according to the survey results, **dissemination efforts by national administrations were found to be somewhat limited** (see Figure 9). For most of the PGT, uptake activities consisted of sharing them via email or during internal meetings or presentations, or uploading them on intranet. Three respondents to the survey also stated that they have a developed system/network in place for forwarding all the information and final guides/tools to the intended users. Some of the guides/tools, such as the Guide on the use of COI in Bulgaria and Germany, have been **integrated into national training programmes**, which was found to be an effective method for increasing awareness and knowledge of the use and purpose of the guides/tools. Interviews confirmed these findings to a large extent: many users indicated that they found out about given PGT through their manager or colleagues, though there were many instances where even if interviewees were aware about a given PGT, they were not instructed to use it (e.g. QAT and Guide on registration in Spain, Syria exclusion cases tool and IPSN tool in Bulgaria, IPSN tool in Slovenia). There were also many instances where targeted users were not aware about the PGT until it was shown to them in the context of the interviews (53 out of 190 interviewees).

Figure 9. Survey responses related to whether the respondent's administration disseminated and promoted EUAA products to share them with the intended users



The fieldwork findings indicate that the authorities' uptake activities within their own countries have been limited because they are **not considered relevant for wide dissemination, mainly due to use of internal guidance**. In some cases, the PGT are disseminated to supervisors and experts but less often to caseworkers as national guidance is used and disseminating EUAA guidance would create confusion. As a result, **there seems to be insufficient trickle down of information to relevant users**, as was also acknowledged by NCPs in the survey (see Figure 10). Examples include the Guide on registration (Spain and Portugal) and the IPSN tool. Interviewees stated that only those involved in workshops or training organised by the EUAA were aware and had knowledge of the PGT, implying that information does not sufficiently trickle down to other relevant users. In addition, specifically for the Guide on registration, it was found that information does not seem to reach the police (where responsible for registration) which may call for additional efforts to reach other relevant users involved in the examination of applications in national administration. Nevertheless, it was highlighted by an NCP (Belgium) that the **fact that the products are not broadly disseminated does not mean that the products are not useful or are not used**, as they can be, and are used by experts, for example as source of inspiration for developing internal guidance.

Figure 10. Survey responses related to whether the dissemination and/or promotion efforts have been effective in increasing the use of the EUAA products



When comparing the findings between the extent to which the promotion efforts have been effective and whether the tools/guides were promoted within one’s administration, it is clear that the top five PGT for which uptake activities were carried out by administrations (Syria exclusion cases tool, DubliNet recommendations, Dublin Transfer recommendations, Guide on the use of COI and the IPSN tool) were also the ones for which the uptake activities were considered to be the most effective in increasing their use. In other words, the survey results indicate that **NCPs generally believe that their dissemination activities have been quite successful**. However, further explanations provided suggest that although the dissemination and promotion efforts of the products have been effective in increasing awareness, **the extent to which their actual use has increased is limited, or at least difficult to measure**. This is partly because many of the PGT are not directly used but provide inspiration for internal guidance and additional information on certain topics (see section 4.4).

The findings also identified an issue with NCPs not having a mechanism to collect feedback to assess how often the guides/tools are used, and how effective the promotion efforts have been. Therefore, **the extent to which the dissemination of the guides/tools results in an increase in use is not known in some cases, which may explain the high proportion of NCPs who responded that they did not know whether their dissemination efforts had been effective**, notably for the Staff welfare guide and the Video animations on age assessment.

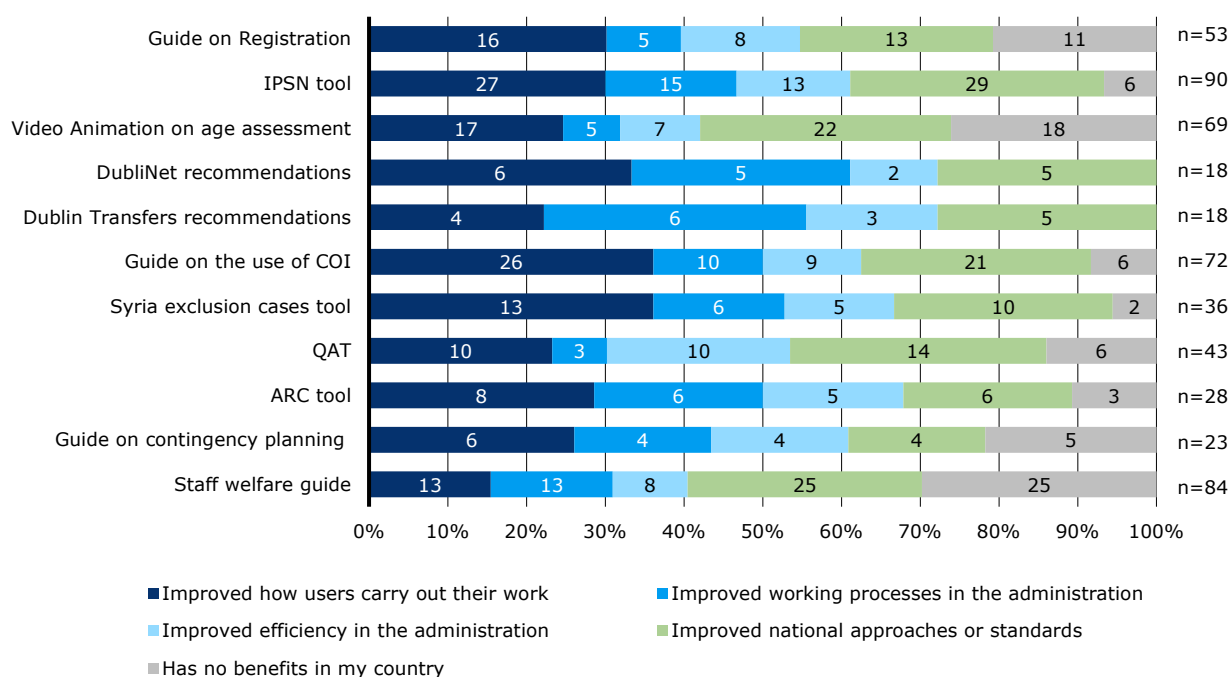
4.4 Benefits of the PGT

As the PGT differ significantly in terms of relevance and use, their impacts on users and policymakers more broadly also vary.

Among those who make use of the PGT, **the most significant benefit has been that their use has improved how the day-to-day work is carried out, followed by improvements in working procedures, and improved efficiency**. There are no clear trends across the different PGT, once again showing that they have different purposes and different intended uses. For example, the PGT which were identified as improving efficiency include some of the more ‘practical’ tools like QAT and ARC tool, which should speed up the work for users compared to a situation in which the work is done

manually. However, there is a certain learning curve associated with the use of tools; one needs to understand how to use a tool, which can take some time and additional resource investments before levelling out and enabling efficiency gains or cost savings.

Figure 11. Survey responses related to the benefits of the PGT



Note: Respondents could answer all options that applied to them.

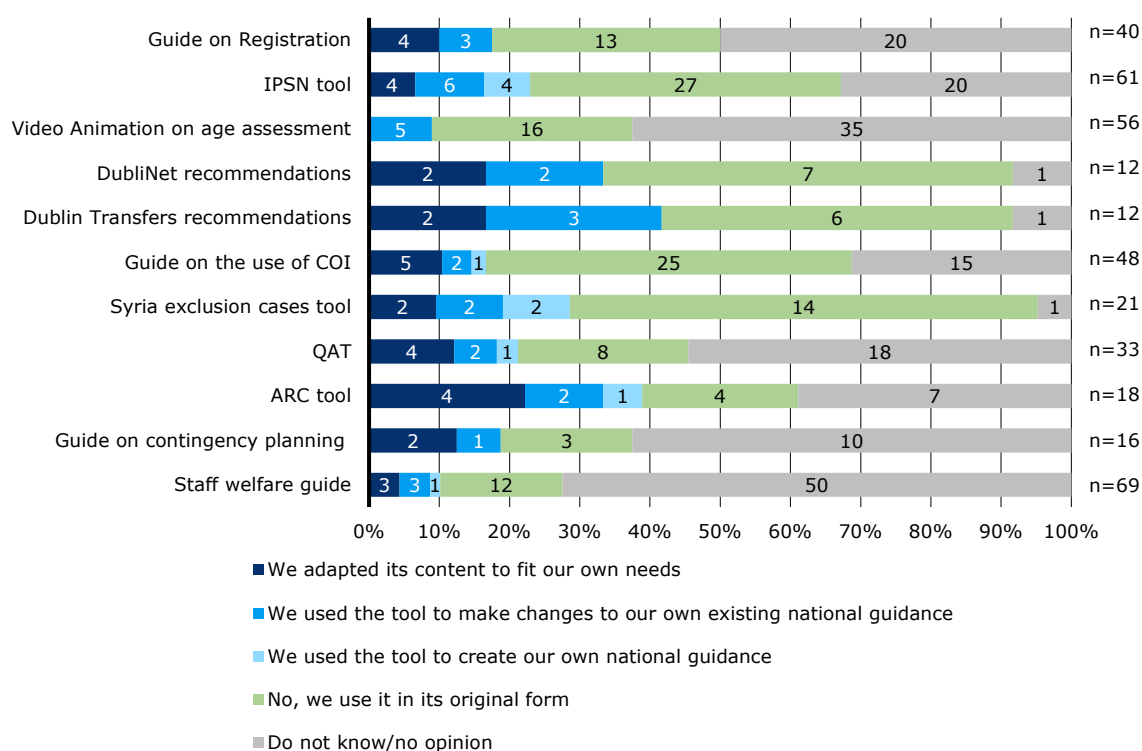
Worthy of note in the graph above is that some of the PGT for which the reported level of use was quite low (see section 4.2) are actually considered to be **quite beneficial** by those who did use them. For example, the Staff welfare guide was considered by 59% of users to improve how users do their work and to have improved working procedures, and by 36% of users considered to have improved efficiency. This implies that the PGT are mainly used when they are expected to have a positive impact; otherwise their use is not worth the effort of reading the guide / learning to use the tool.

While there were instances in which stakeholders **perceived there to be no benefits** of given PGT in their countries, this was almost only the case in countries where the PGT were simply not used. A few exceptions exist, where NCPs indicated that PGT were used to a certain extent or to a limited extent but also that they had no benefits. In almost all such cases, another NCP from the same country either indicated that the PGT was not at all used, or that it had had benefits in their country; so these answers should be considered carefully in light of knowledge gaps. The fieldwork did not uncover any examples of stakeholders using the PGT but them having no positive benefits for them; if they considered them to not be beneficial, they would not use them at all, since their use is voluntary.

Among the NCP survey respondents who indicated that given PGT were used in their administration, responses related to the degree to which the **PGT were used to either (a) make changes to existing guidance or (b) develop own guidance**, were somewhat limited. More often than not, if the PGT had any effect on national guidance, it tended to be in the form of adapting what was already there, rather than to create new guidance, which further underlines the fact that most EU+ countries already have established ways of doing things (see section 4.1). This is notably the case

in countries such as Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and Norway, where they have specific units dealing with the development of training and guidance, which take into consideration all EUAA PGT and adapt national guidance as required. These same countries also reported using the EUAA's PGT to create their own where they did not exist yet (e.g. Belgium in the case of the QAT and the IPSN tool). Beyond that, the EUAA's operational support has played a key role, for example in relation to adapting the ARC tool to the context in Greece and Spain (though in Greece field research uncovered that it is not being used yet), or the adaptations made to the QAT in Italy. There are no clear trends in terms of countries that used the PGT to create their own guidance or tools; it seems to be done on a needs basis. However, *this does not mean that the PGT had a limited impact on national approaches or ways of working; as the PGT which were not used to adapt or create national guidance per se were rather used in their original form in many cases.*

Figure 12. Survey responses related to the impact of the PGT on national guidance



Note: Respondents could answer all options that applied to them. 'No not know/no opinion answers in this case suggest that the PGT is not being used in the respondent's country.'

Finally, in general terms, even if there may not be evidence of convergence having been achieved, consulted stakeholders believe that the PGT are a relevant and useful instrument to contribute to this process, though it is difficult due to the specificities of each national/local context, e.g. in relation to their asylum caseloads, pressures on their reception systems, and workloads in general.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents the evaluation's conclusions and recommendations. As with the findings reported in this report, these conclusions and recommendations are about the PGT in general, though examples from specific PGT are used occasionally.

5.1 Conclusions

The evaluation suggests that all PGT are **highly relevant in terms of their objectives** because they all touch upon aspects of the CEAS where there is an ambition to strive for more convergence and where Member States with less developed asylum and/or reception systems may need guidance. However, **in practice the relevance (and, by extension, use) of the PGT depends heavily on local contexts**: the specificities of national legislation, the existence of national guidance or tools, and the caseload a country faces. For example, if a country has a tool for quality monitoring that it has been using since before the QAT was developed, or if a country has created its own tool to assess reception conditions which is tailored to the standards in that country and available in their own language, there is less of a need to use the EUAA's tools. Similarly, if there are no applicants from Syria, there is no need to use the Syria exclusion cases tool, or if there are no suspected child applicants, there is no need for the Video animations on age assessments. Other reasons for differences in relevance include the maturity of an organisation and the level of seniority of specific practitioners; the more experience a person has with given aspects of the asylum procedure, the less need they have for guidance about it. Conversely, the PGT have been deemed highly useful for the training of new staff.

As such, it is **important that the EUAA carefully consider true needs on the ground / at operational level, before deciding to update PGT or develop new ones**. Doing so would not only increase the relevance of the PGT overall, but could also lessen the resource burden for the Agency. While this is already done through consultations in the context of the Agency's network approach, as well as based on feedback mechanisms such as from operational support, the **new EUAA mandate offers a window of opportunity in this regard**. As of 1 January 2024, the monitoring mandate foreseen for the Agency as per Article 14 of the EUAA Regulation will enter into force. This implies additional obligations for Member States (such as to share their contingency plans with the EUAA), which together with actual monitoring of the implementation of the CEAS may allow the EUAA to pinpoint true problems at the operational level where additional guidance or practical guide or tool development may make sense.

The use of the PGT, as already alluded to above, is closely related to their relevance. Beyond that, **factors which affect their use include both contextual factors that the EUAA have no control over, and factors related to the design of the PGT which the EUAA does have some control over**. Contextual factors include workloads and resources available. Smaller administrations may have less time to go through and make use of the large scope of PGT made available by the EUAA, and large administrations usually have their own approaches. Moreover, if there is a lot of pressure on resources, more strategic PGT such as the Guide on contingency planning and Staff welfare guide tend to be de-prioritised. Factors related to design are primarily related to the format of the PGT. The length of guides was often cited as a barrier to use, though users acknowledge the need to be comprehensive in EU level guidance. On the other hand, shorter documents that are more concrete or operational, such as the recommendations related to Dublin procedures, were more appreciated and thus used more. Similarly, more *practical* parts of guidance documents (e.g. Part B of the Syria exclusion cases tool, or any of the practical tools) were generally used more for the same reason. Though, again, the main reasons for non-use remain the local context specificities.

There is a clear **limitation in the degree to which NCPs disseminate the PGT** among relevant practitioners in their administrations, and especially in their countries more broadly. This is linked to some degree to the size and setup of the administrations. In smaller administrations NCPs are often NCPs for different networks, giving them a large workload which makes it difficult to prioritise the dissemination of PGT, especially since there are numerous PGT falling within their areas of responsibility. In larger administrations, there is often a history of producing their own guidance, which can lead to a conscious decision *not* to disseminate the PGT because national guidance is preferred. NCPs also change over time, so regular reminders about the PGT that are available and what their purpose is, might be pertinent.

Relatedly, the EUAA also could do more to publicise the PGT among targeted end users. It is clear from the operational support context that this can help promote the use of PGT, notably in countries where case officers or other relevant users were not made aware about the PGT by their superiors or peers within their organisations. While it is the role of NCPs, there might be room for the EUAA to support the NCPs in their dissemination.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions presented above, several recommendations are made. In general, it is pertinent that the EUAA continues to carefully assess needs before developing new PGT, and considers who the target audience of those PGT may be and how best to reach them. The EUAA could consider the following recommendations to improve the relevance and use of the PGT, mostly notably through further dissemination and promotion efforts.

5.2.1 Needs assessment and format of the PGT

10. Exploring ways to gather feedback from practitioners at operational level, to support the EUAA's assessment of whether and when to produce new guidance or tools.

The feedback forms included on the [webpage on EUAA practical guides and tools](#) are an appropriate means to do so, though these could benefit from the addition of an open-ended question specifically asking respondents if they have any (operational) needs not currently covered by the PGT. If a decision is made to include such a possibility, it should be promoted at least among NCPs.

11. Better promoting the potential of using technical assistance as a means to support EU+ administrations in adapting the PGT to their local contexts/needs.

This is already being done in the framework of operational support, but can be further promoted. In many countries, the possibility of receiving such support is not yet known. This also includes the possibility of translations of PGT not already available in given EU+ languages, which should be carefully considered but only carried out on the basis of an identified need and taking into account resource availability within the EUAA.

12. Making PGT more digestible / accessible to the targeted audience.

This could include, for example, developing executive summaries or infographics with key messages or making use of HTML (as already done for some PGT). Using HTML facilitates navigation to very specific parts of a guide. Making available brief summaries or infographics might have the added benefit that these can easily be shared by NCPs within their administrations, thus lowering the burden for them to further promote the use of PGT.

5.2.2 Outreach and dissemination at high level

13. Identifying relevant policy- and decision-making authorities in EU+ countries as a basis for more targeted dissemination and promotion of more 'strategic' PGT.

To better target dissemination of the more 'strategic' PGT, it would be beneficial to have an overview of which authorities are relevant to address. This could be achieved through a stakeholder mapping exercise.

14. Using 'country events' as opportunities to present relevant PGT to a wider audience.

Country events or 'roadshows' could offer access to a wider audience, i.e. not only NCPs but also managers and/or practitioners in a given country. Addressing this level is not only relevant for more 'strategic' PGT but also the more 'operational' ones where managers or decision makers tend to be in charge of providing formal instructions to practitioners on whether or not to use PGT; without such instructions, they tend to not be used. Addressing a wider audience would also lessen the burden for dissemination placed on NCPs.

15. Incorporating active discussions on relevant PGT during exchange visits, for EU+ countries to share their experience using a given tool, to serve as a source of inspiration and act as a 'reminder' about the existence and possible benefits of the tools.

Real-life experiences are often more impactful than theoretical notions about how a guide or tool can be beneficial. Encouraging more exchanges between EU+ countries on their experiences could encourage wider use and application of the PGT. This experience-sharing should ideally go beyond the level of NCPs.

5.2.3 Outreach and dissemination to end users

16. Liaising with other EUAA centres on how to better promote the more 'operational' PGT through operational support and/or integration into training modules.

Operational support and training are key avenues for promotion of the PGT, and there is scope to take a more coherent and consistent approach to incorporating them in the activities of the centres responsible for such activities. This is particularly relevant for the more 'operational' PGT that are targeted at practitioners, which the Operational Support Centre and the Training and Professional Development Centre often have a direct link to.

17. Restructuring the [webpage on EUAA practical guides and tools](#), to be more user-centric, so that practitioners with an interest can easily find relevant PGT.

While progress has already been made in restructuring the webpage by clusters of themes, it can be made further user-centric. This can be done, for instance, by including a function that filters the content according to what is relevant for specific users (e.g. function 'Show me content relevant for registration officers', 'Show me content relevant for social workers', and so on).

18. Setting up a newsletter, which practitioners can sign up for on a voluntary basis, so they are informed, based on their self-identified role and interests, when new relevant PGT are launched (including links to launch events).

To avoid confusion with already existing EUAA newsletters, perhaps a different name can be sought, e.g. 'Asylum and reception cooperation and guidance bulletin'. A quarterly or biannual frequency for such updates could be considered.

Annex 1 Details on the methodology

Data collection consisted of an online targeted survey targeted to NCPs, in-depth fieldwork in 14 EU+ countries¹⁷, and horizontal interviews with international/EU stakeholders and working group experts. Some key information regarding the number and type of consulted stakeholders and the focus of consultations is presented in the following sections.

Targeted survey

A targeted survey to **NCPs of the five networks** of relevance to the PGT under evaluation (i.e. Asylum Processes Network, Network of Dublin Units, Network of Reception Authorities, Vulnerability Experts Network and Exclusion Network) was launched on 6 October 2022 and closed for responses on 4 November 2022. It was distributed to 204 NCPs (142 primary NCPs and 62 alternate NCPs), of whom 83 completed it (69 primary NCPs and 14 alternate NCPs), constituting a 41% response rate.

An additional, slightly adapted survey was disseminated to the Advisory Group members of the Vulnerability Expert Network (VEN). It was launched on 31 October 2022 and closed on 11 November 2022. This survey was distributed to 27 respondents (representatives from civil society organisations in the Member States), of whom seven completed it, constituting a 26% response rate.

In total, responses were received from almost all targeted countries (all except Austria, Hungary and Liechtenstein).

Table 6. Overview of survey responses per network and country

Network	Guides/tools covered	Number complete responses	of Countries responded
Asylum Processes Network	Guide on registration Guide on the use of COI QAT IPSN tool Video animations on age assessment Staff welfare guide	30 (out of 53 targeted, i.e. 57% response rate)	Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland
Network of Dublin Units	DubliNet recommendations Dublin Transfer recommendations Guide on registration Video animations on age assessment Staff welfare guide	11 (out of 30 targeted, i.e. 37% response rate)	Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Norway, Switzerland

¹⁷ Initially, 12 countries were chosen for fieldwork. However, some administrations were unable to participate in data collection activities due to their high workloads. This was notably the case in Belgium and Czech Republic, so additional consultations in the Netherlands and Slovakia were organised to fill these gaps. There was also an intention to fill gaps from fieldwork in France with fieldwork in Germany, however, no participation could be offered by German authorities.

Network	Guides/tools covered	Number of complete responses	Countries responded
Network of Reception Authorities	ARC tool Guide on contingency planning IPSN tool Staff welfare guide	15 (out of 44 targeted, i.e. 34% response rate)	Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland
Vulnerability Expert Network	Staff welfare guide Video animations on age assessment IPSN tool	26 (19 Member State representatives out of 43 targeted, i.e. 44% response rate; 7 Advisory Group members out of 27 targeted, i.e. 26% response rate)	Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Norway
Exclusion Network	Syria exclusion cases tool Guide on the use of COI	19 (out of 32 targeted, i.e. 59% response rate)	Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Norway

Interviews with users/in-depth fieldwork

Interviews with users of the EUAA products under evaluation were carried out through **field visits**; an expert for each country (someone who speaks the local language) spoke with users of four to five guides and/or tools covered in their country.

A total of 14 countries were covered during fieldwork. Table 7 provides an overview of the countries covered for each of the PGT, including the number of interviewees consulted per country.

Table 7. Interviews conducted through fieldwork

Practical guide or tool	Countries covered & number of interviewees
Guide on registration	ES (2), IE (2), LV (4), NL (1), PT (5)
IPSN tool	BG (10), IE (1), LV (14), PT (5), SI (4)
Video animations on age assessment	BE (3), BG (9), LU (1), NL (3), SI (4)
DubliNet recommendations	CZ (6), EL (3), NO (1), SE (3)
Dublin Transfer recommendations	LU (1), NO (2), SI (4)
Guide on the use of COI	BG (8), ES (5), FR (2), NL (1), PT (3), SK (6)

Practical guide or tool	Countries covered & number of interviewees
Syria exclusion cases tool	BG (8), EL (5), NL (1)
QAT	BE (1), EL (5), ES (5), IE (1), LV (9)
ARC tool	BE (1), EL (2), LU (2), NO (2), SK (3)
Guide on contingency planning	ES (6), LV (10), LU (1), NO (1)
Staff welfare guide	BE (1), EL (5), FR (3), PT (3), SI (4), SK (3)

Interviews with EUAA staff

A series of exploratory interviews with EUAA staff were carried out during the inception phase of the evaluation, to gain a deeper understanding of the background to the PGT under evaluation, the dissemination activities carried out, and any initial insights about their use and application in EU+ countries. These consisted of interviews with staff responsible for given PGT, as well as a few interviews with operational support staff knowledgeable about the application of given PGT in operational support contexts. A couple of horizontal interviews were also conducted.

Type of stakeholder	Number of interviewees	PGT focus
EUAA staff	2	Guide on registration
	4	IPSN tool
	2	Video animations on age assessment
	2	DubliNet recommendations
	2	Dublin Transfer recommendations
	2	Guide on the use of COI
	2	Syria exclusion cases tool
	4	QAT
	2	ARC tool
	3	Guide on contingency planning
	2	Staff welfare guide
	2	All / cross-cutting

Interviews with working group experts and EU / international stakeholders

A series of interviews were carried out with **experts from EU+ countries**, who were involved in the development and/or testing of a selection of the PGT, as well as with **EU and international level stakeholders** who reviewed drafts of the guides/tools before they were launched, as members of the Reference Groups.

Table 8 provides an overview of the number of interviewees consulted among EU/international stakeholders and working group experts, along with the PGT their interviews focused on.

Table 8. Overview of working group experts & EU/international interviews

Type of stakeholder	Interviews	PGT focus
EU/international stakeholders	DG HOME, 3 interviewees	All / cross-cutting
	UNHCR, 4 interviewees	All / cross-cutting IPSN tool Syria exclusion cases tool Guide on the use of COI
	ECRE, 1 interviewee	All / cross-cutting
Working group experts	1 interviewee	Video animations on age assessment
	2 interviewees	ARC tool
	1 interviewee	Staff welfare guide
	2 interviewees	Guide on the use of COI
	1 interviewee	Guide on Registration

Annex 2 Evaluation questions matrix

The questions are structured along the key themes of interest, in line with the intervention logic of the PGT:

- Degree of use and application of the guides and tools [EQ 1]
 - By direct users (e.g. in day-to-day work)
 - At the policy level (e.g. to inform national guidance and policies)
- Degree of relevance of the guides and tools [EQ 2]
 - Relevance of the guides and tools (including the format and usability) for direct users
 - Relevance of the guides and tools (including the format and usability) at the policy level
 - Relevance of the guides and tools in the national framework and coherence with existing policies and guidance
- Effectiveness of outreach and uptake activities [EQ 3]
 - Degree to which outreach activities carried out by the EUAA increased awareness and use
 - Degree to which uptake activities carried out by authorities within their administrations increased awareness and use
- Benefits of the guides and tools for direct users [EQ 4]
 - Usefulness in daily work (related to format and usability)
 - Degree to which the guides and tools have increased knowledge and skills
 - Efficiency gains resulting from the use of the guides and tools
- Benefits of the guides and tools for EU+ countries' administrations at policy level [EQ 5]
 - Changes enacted in national legislation, policies, guidance and practice
 - Effects on the degree of implementation of and convergence in CEAS quality standards at national level
 - Efficiency gains in the application of quality standards in asylum and reception

Table 9. Evaluation matrix

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
1. What is the type and degree of use and application of EUAA products?		a. What is the type and degree of use and application of EUAA products by the target group (directly in daily work, for quality monitoring; ad hoc, etc.).	<p>To what extent are the products used and how (e.g. printed copy, online PDF, web-based tool,...)? What factors reasons explain use / non-use?</p> <p>To what extent does having translations in national languages add value? How does this compare across countries and/or products?</p> <p>Were the products adapted to the national systems? Why and how?</p> <p>Are there examples of good practices / lessons learned among the products being evaluated?</p> <p>How could the use and application of the products be maximised in the future?</p>	Relevance	<p>Evidence / examples of use and application of EUAA products in different countries / contexts</p> <p>Identified factors explaining use / non-use</p> <p>Evidence / examples of EUAA products being translated and/or adapted to national/local contexts</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the appropriateness of the translations / adaptations</p> <p>Identified examples of good practices among the products being evaluated</p> <p>Identified lessons learned</p>	N/A – descriptive question	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey</p> <p>Interviews with EUAA staff</p> <p>Interviews with experts</p> <p>Interviews with users</p>

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
					Suggestions / recommendations for improvement		
		<p>b. What is the type and degree of use and application of EUAA products in national practice (e.g. incorporated in national guidance, used for establishing standards and indicators, for benchmarking of existing national guidance, for quality monitoring; ad hoc, etc.).</p>	<p>To what extent are the products used and how (by incorporating in national guidance, for establishing standards and indicators, etc.)? What factors explain use / non-use?</p> <p>To what extent does having translations in national languages add value? How does this compare across countries and/or products?</p> <p>Were the products adapted to the national systems? Why and how?</p> <p>Were the products used to adapt existing guidance (national or from other actors like UNHCR)? Why and how?</p> <p>How could the use and application of the products be maximised in the future?</p>	Relevance	<p>Evidence / examples of use and application of EUAA products in different countries / contexts</p> <p>Identified factors explaining use / non-use</p> <p>Evidence / examples of EUAA products being translated and/or adapted to national/local contexts</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the appropriateness of the translations / adaptations</p> <p>Suggestions / recommendations for improvement</p>	N/A – descriptive question	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey</p> <p>Interviews with EUAA staff</p> <p>Interviews with experts</p> <p>Interviews with users</p>
2. To what extent have EUAA products responded to the		a. To what extent have EUAA products responded to the	To what extent are the products relevant to their users? What factors explain	Relevance	Evidence / examples of gaps	A broad range of users (in different countries)	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey</p>

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
needs of the stakeholders?		needs of their direct users ? Which needs, if any, were not met?	<p>this (e.g. format, scope, content, user-friendliness,...)</p> <p>Were there any gaps / needs of users that were not met by the EUAA products? Which ones?</p> <p>If there were gaps, what explains those gaps? (e.g. <i>linked to the outreach activities, uptake activities, differences in needs per country,...</i>)</p> <p>Are there differences across countries? What factors explain these differences?</p> <p>Which good practices related to the format, scope, content, etc. of the products can be observed?</p> <p>How could the relevance of the products be maximised in the future?</p>		<p>or needs not covered</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the relevance of the EUAA products available to them</p> <p>Identified examples of good practices that made products relevant to the needs of users</p> <p>Suggestions / recommendations for improvement</p>	<p>consider the tools relevant to their needs</p> <p>No significant / valid gaps are identified</p>	<p>Interviews with EUAA staff</p> <p>Interviews with experts</p> <p>Interviews with EU / international stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews with users</p>
		b. To what extent have EUAA products responded to the needs of policymakers in EU+ countries? Which needs, if	<p>To what extent are the products relevant to policymakers in EU+ countries?</p> <p>Were there any gaps / needs of users that were not met by</p>	Relevance	<p>Evidence / examples of gaps or needs not covered</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the relevance of the EUAA</p>	<p>A broad range of users (in different countries) consider the tools relevant to their needs</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey</p> <p>Interviews with EUAA staff</p> <p>Interviews with experts</p>

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
		any, were not met?	<p>the EUAA products? Which ones?</p> <p>If there were gaps, what explains those gaps? (e.g. <i>linked to the development process, outreach activities, uptake activities, differences in needs per country,...</i>)</p> <p>Are there differences across countries? What factors explain these differences?</p> <p>Which good practices related to the format, scope, content, etc. of the products can be observed?</p> <p>How could the relevance of the products be maximised in the future?</p>		<p>products available to them</p> <p>Identified examples of good practices that made products relevant to the needs of policymakers</p> <p>Suggestions / recommendations for improvement</p>	No significant / valid gaps are identified	<p>Interviews with EU / international stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews with users</p>
	c.	To what extent were the EUAA products coherent with and complementary to existing practices? ¹⁸ Were there any	<p>How and to what extent do EUAA products complement (in terms of objectives and approaches) existing <i>national</i> practices? How does this compare across products / across countries?</p> <p>How and to what extent do EUAA products complement</p>	Coherence	<p>Evidence / examples of complementarities between EUAA products and other guidelines or approaches</p> <p>Evidence / examples of</p>	There is evidence that the EUAA products complement existing EU and national guidelines and practices	<p><i>Results from questions pertaining to relevance and usefulness</i></p> <p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey</p>

¹⁸ The two questions under coherence presented in the Technical Specifications have been used as sub-questions here, under the same overarching question pertaining to coherence and complementarity.

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
		tensions or inconsistencies?	(in terms of objectives and approaches) existing international guidance? How does this compare across products? Are there points of tension in terms of potentially contradictory objectives and approaches with existing national practices? How does this compare across products / across countries? Are there examples of good practices / lessons learned to improve coherence / complementarity of specific products or in specific countries?		inconsistencies or tensions between EUAA products and other guidelines or approaches Evidence / examples of differences across countries / products Identified good practices Identified lessons learned	There is no evidence of points of tension or contradictions between the EUAA products and existing EU and national guidelines and practices	Interviews with EUAA staff Interviews with experts Interviews with EU / international stakeholders Interviews with users
3. To what extent have uptake¹⁹ and outreach²⁰ activities and channels been effective?		a. To what extent have outreach activities carried out by the EUAA been effective to raise awareness about and promote the	What dissemination channels and promotion efforts (outreach activities) were enacted by EUAA to raise awareness about and promote access to the products? How effective were the different outreach activities in	Effectiveness	Documentation on dissemination promotional activities & launch events Degree of use of EUAA products (across all EU+ countries)	There is evidence of increased awareness and/or use of (certain) EUAA products which can reliably be attributed to the outreach	Desk research Survey Interviews with EUAA staff Interviews with experts

¹⁹ Uptake considers efforts on the part of national authorities in distributing and promoting EUAA products to the end users. It also regards the motivation and will of management to introduce the products in the national authority policies and practices.

²⁰ Outreach considers the access to EUAA products by their respective target groups (both management and practitioners) following dissemination channels and promotion efforts enacted by EUAA.

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
		use of the guides and tools?	<p>promoting awareness and use of the products?</p> <p>What factors explain differences in effectiveness of the outreach activities (including in different countries)?</p> <p>Do the authorities feel adequately supported by EUAA in their uptake activities?</p> <p>What lessons can be learned to improve outreach in the future?</p>		<p>Stakeholder views on the effectiveness of the outreach activities</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the level of awareness about EUAA products</p> <p>Evidence / examples of differences between outreach activities and countries</p> <p>Identified reasons for differences</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which they feel supported by the EUAA in their uptake activities</p> <p>Identified lessons learned</p>	<p>activities of EUAA</p> <p>In the absence of robust evidence of increased awareness and/or use, stakeholders agree that the outreach activities have been effective in promoting awareness and use of (certain) EUAA products</p>	Interviews with users
		b. To what extent have uptake activities carried out by the authorities been effective to	What efforts were made by national authorities to distribute and promote EUAA products (uptake activities) to the end users?	Effectiveness	<p>Evidence / examples of activities by national authorities to disseminate /</p>	<p>There is evidence of increased awareness and/or use of (certain) EUAA</p>	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Survey</p> <p>Interviews with EUAA staff</p>

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
		raise awareness about and promote the use of the guides and tools?	<p>To what extent is are end users encouraged to use the products, and how?</p> <p>How effective were the different distribution and promotion efforts in promoting uptake among end users?</p> <p>What factors explain differences in effectiveness of the uptake activities, including in different countries (e.g. language, access, organisation, resources,...)?</p> <p>Are there examples of good practices among the products being evaluated?</p> <p>What lessons can be learned to improve uptake in the future?</p>		<p>promote the EUAA products</p> <p>Degree of use of EUAA products (across all EU+ countries)</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the level of awareness about EUAA products</p> <p>Evidence / examples of differences between products and countries</p> <p>Identified reasons for differences</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which they feel supported by the EUAA in their uptake activities</p> <p>Identified examples of good practices among the products being evaluated</p> <p>Identified lessons learned</p>	<p>products among end users which can reliably be attributed to the uptake activities of authorities</p> <p>In the absence of robust evidence of increased awareness and/or use, stakeholders agree that the uptake activities have been effective in promoting awareness and use of (certain) EUAA products</p>	<p>Interviews with experts</p> <p>Interviews with users</p>

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
4. What are the benefits for the users that can be attributed mainly to the EUAA practical guides and tools?		a. To what extent have EUAA guides and tools been useful in the work of intended users?	<p>Are the EUAA products user-friendly and useful to the daily work of the target groups?</p> <p>How do user-friendliness and usefulness differ across products? What factors explain these differences?</p> <p>Are there any good practices / lessons learned from the existing EUAA products that could help improve revisions / future products?</p>	Effectiveness	<p>Stakeholder views on the user-friendliness and usefulness of the EUAA products they use</p> <p>Evidence / examples of differences across products</p> <p>Identified reasons for differences</p> <p>Identified examples of good practices among the products being evaluated</p> <p>Identified lessons learned</p>	Users agree that (certain) EUAA products are user-friendly and useful for their work	<p>Interviews with experts</p> <p>Interviews with EU / international stakeholders</p> <p>Interviews with users</p>
		b. To what extent have the products increased knowledge and technical skills of asylum and reception practitioners?	<p>To what extent have the products increased knowledge and technical skills of asylum and reception practitioners?</p> <p>How does effectiveness differ across products and/or countries? What factors explain these differences?</p> <p>Are there examples of good practices among the products being evaluated?</p>	Effectiveness	<p>Evidence / examples of increased knowledge and technical skills of asylum and reception practitioners</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which the EUAA products have</p>	<p>There is evidence that (certain) EUAA products have increased knowledge and technical skills of their users</p> <p>Users agree that their knowledge and/or</p>	<p>Survey</p> <p>Interviews with experts</p> <p>Interviews with users</p>

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
			Are there any good practices / lessons learned from the existing EUAA products that could help improve revisions / future products?		increased their knowledge and skills Evidence / examples of differences across products and countries Identified reasons for differences Identified examples of good practices among the products being evaluated Identified lessons learned	technical skills have improved due to the use of (certain) EUAA products	
		c. To what extent have EUAA products led to efficiency gains for users in their daily work? ²¹	Has the work of asylum and reception practitioners become more efficient due to the use of EUAA products? If so, how? Are there differences across products and/or countries? What explains these differences? Are there any good practices / lessons learned from the	Efficiency	Evidence / examples of improved productivity, efficiency Stakeholder views on the degree to which their work has become more efficient due to the	There is evidence of efficiency gains that can be reliably attributed to (certain) EUAA products In the absence of robust evidence of	Survey Interviews with experts Interviews with users

²¹ This question has been rephrased slightly relative to the Technical Specifications, to make the link to efficiency clearer. Original phrasing: *To what extent EUAA products provide support to target groups in their daily work?*. The original phrasing has been retained under the criterion of effectiveness.

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
			existing EUAA products that could help improve revisions / future products?		use of the EUAA products Evidence / examples of differences across products and countries Identified reasons for differences Identified examples of good practices among the products being evaluated	efficiency gains, users agree that (certain) EUAA products have improved the efficiency of their work	
5. What are the benefits for EU+ countries' administrations that can be attributed mainly to the EUAA practical guides and tools?	a.	What changes in national legislation, policies, guidance and practice might have been enacted as result of / influenced by the introduction, use and application of EUAA practical guides and tools?	<p>To what extent were there changes in national legislation, policies, guidance and practice as result of the introduction, use and application of EUAA practical guides and tools?</p> <p>To what extent have the products been 'mainstreamed' in the national authority policies and practices?</p> <p>What does this look like in different countries / contexts (e.g. use of EUAA tools as such or adapted to local context)?</p> <p>What factors explain differences in the degree to</p>	Effectiveness / impact, EU added value	<p>Degree of use of EUAA products (in fieldwork countries)</p> <p>Evidence / examples of EUAA products being adapted to national / local contexts</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the visibility of EUAA as developer of the products</p> <p>Evidence of changes in</p>	<p>There is evidence of changes in national legislation / policy / guidance / practices which can reliably be attributed to (certain) EUAA products</p> <p>In the absence of robust evidence of convergence, there is evidence that</p>	<p><i>Results from other questions pertaining to relevance and effectiveness at national level</i></p> <p>Survey</p> <p>Interviews with EUAA staff</p> <p>Interviews with experts</p> <p>Interviews with users</p>

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
			<p>which EUAA products are 'mainstreamed' in the national authority policies and practices?</p> <p>What factors explain differences across products and/or countries?</p> <p>How could the impact of the products on national practices, guidance, policies be maximised in the future?</p>		<p>national legislation / policy / guidance / practices</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which national legislation / policy / guidance / practices changed</p> <p>Evidence / examples of differences between products and countries</p> <p>Identified reasons for differences</p> <p>Suggestions / recommendations to maximise impact</p>	EUAA products might have achieved national changes in the absence of external influencing factors	
		b. To what extent are EUAA products perceived to have assisted national administrations in the implementation of CEAS quality standards ?	<p>Has there been an observable/perceived change in the implementation of CEAS quality standards as a result of the use of the products?</p> <p>To what extent can convergence in quality standards in asylum and reception be</p>	Effectiveness / impact, EU added value	Evidence of a change in the implementation of CEAS quality standards (e.g. trends in	There is evidence that (certain) EUAA products have assisted authorities in the implementation of CEAS quality standards	<p>Desk research</p> <p>Interviews with EUAA staff</p> <p>Interviews with experts</p> <p>Interviews with EU / international stakeholders</p>

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
			<p>observed/perceived as a result of the use of the products?</p> <p>What factors helped or hindered convergence?</p> <p>Are there differences across products and/or countries? What caused these differences?</p> <p>How could the impact of the products on (convergence in) application of the CEAS be maximised in the future?</p>		<p>infringement procedures)²²</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which the EUAA products have helped improve the implementation of CEAS quality standards</p> <p>Evidence of convergence across countries (in legislation / policy / guidance / practices)</p> <p>Stakeholder views on the degree to which the EUAA products have led to convergence</p> <p>Identified helping or hindering factors</p> <p>Evidence / examples of differences across</p>	<p>There is evidence of convergence in quality standards that can reliably be attributed to (certain) EUAA products</p> <p>In the absence of robust evidence of convergence, there is evidence that EUAA products might have achieved convergence in the absence of external influencing factors</p>	<p>(DG HOME specifically)</p> <p>Interviews with users</p>

²² This will be difficult to measure as the EUAA does not yet have a monitoring function, and infringement procedures stemming from the European Commission are limited. We will explore, together with the EUAA, alternative indicators for this sub-question.

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
					products and countries Identified reasons for differences Suggestions / recommendation for improvement		
		c. To what extent are the EUAA products perceived to have assisted national administrations in establishing more efficient work processes in asylum and reception?	Have there been changes in the efficiency with which quality standards in asylum and reception have been applied as a result of the EUAA products? Are there differences across products and/or countries? What explains these differences? How could the impact of the products on (convergence in) application of the CEAS be maximised in the future?	Efficiency, EU added value	Evidence / examples of improved efficiency Evidence / examples of EUAA products having had an effect on efficiency Stakeholder views on the degree to which the application of quality standards has become more efficient due to the use of EUAA products Evidence / examples of differences across products and countries	There is evidence that (certain) EUAA products helped improve the efficiency of the application of quality standards in asylum and/or reception	Desk research Survey Interviews with EUAA staff Interviews with experts Interviews with users

Key questions	evaluation	Sub-questions	Operationalised questions	Evaluation criteria	Indicators / descriptors	Success criteria	Sources of evidence
					Identified reasons for differences		