External evaluation of the implementation of Operating Plan 2019 (OP 2019) of EASO intervention in Greece

Summary report

04/05/2020

Authors

This report was prepared by:

André Estignard, Partner
BearingPoint
Tour CBX
1, Passerelle des Reflets
92913 Paris La Défense Cedex
France
andre.estignard@bearingpoint.com

Wim Palmers, Senior Manager
BearingPoint
Rue Montoyer Straat 25
1000 Brussels
Belgium
wim.palmers@bearingpoint.com

Lyra Jakuleviciene, Senior Quality Assurance evaluation expert

Kenneth Brant Hansen, Country evaluator Greece

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This page was added to the report on 6/12/2023

Executive summary

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has provided operational support to Greece as a Member State (MS) under particular pressure since 2011, intensifying this support since 2015. In December 2019, EASO launched the second external evaluation of its operations in Greece, which covered the implementation of the 2019 Operating Plan (OP2019). This evaluation sought to assess the achievement of OP2019 objectives, determine the relevance and achievement of results, assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the activities performed, highlight good practices and lessons learned, and provide appropriate recommendations. OP2019 was assessed against the following evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and added value. This document is the summary report on that external evaluation.

OP2019 encompassed two measures (M1 and M2) and eight sub-measures covering asylum and reception procedures. Five sub-measures focused specifically on asylum procedures: the border procedure under the European Union (EU) – Turkey Statement, the regular procedure, the Dublin and appeals procedures. Three measures related to capacity-building and supporting the reception system.

EASO contributed to the asylum procedures by processing 47% of all asylum registrations, conducting a total of 8,833 interviews and producing 8,213 concluding remarks in both procedures. These results were below the targets defined in the results framework and generally lower than in 2018. Information on access to the asylum procedure and on individual cases was provided to 21,898 persons. Support to the Dublin procedures resulted in personnel deployed by EASO handling 53% of all outgoing Dublin requests, which was above the initial target. Legal rapporteurs supported the appeals process by producing 1,944 files (in line with the target). The Reception and Identification Service (RIS) was provided with strategic support at its headquarters, together with field support in the form of multidisciplinary teams deployed to five islands, identifying and assisting more than 6,590 vulnerable persons. The Samos pilot project supported unaccompanied minors through material and psychosocial assistance. Across all measures, training was provided to 980 participants, including national authorities.

Substantial progress was made in 2019 through the **full introduction of the results and monitoring framework,** with systematic monitoring and recording of outputs, creating more **coherence** between the outputs and their final impact. The **effectiveness** of the intervention for key outputs was fair to good, but generally lower than planned. This was mainly due to lower resource consumption than foreseen. **Significant efficiency gains** were achieved for Measure 1 by introducing several good practices at field level to increase outputs while maintaining the overall quality of the process. The lack of targets for Measure 2 made it difficult to assess the efficiency of the intervention in supporting reception. The **relevance** of the intervention remains very high for both measures, amid an increase in asylum applications, the need for a more efficient reception system, and the ability to quickly mobilise and deploy experts to emergency settings or for a longer term. The intervention is **coherent and complementary to** the supports and facilities of other stakeholders, as well as with the Common European Asylum System (CEAS). The **added value for M1** (asylum) is substantial, in providing additional resources to the asylum procedure and supporting the national authorities to process the relatively high number of asylum applications. The **added value for M2** (reception) could be further enhanced by developing a **clearer intervention logic** to frame EASO's intervention on reception and define its intended support at a strategic and/or operational level.

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS AT STRATEGIC LEVEL

SR1: Define a concrete working plan to translate the high-level OP into actual implementation actions in a transparent and systematic way.

SR2: Advance the level of maturity of results-based planning, implementation and monitoring.

SR3: Harmonise the implementation of quality systems with those of national authorities.

SR4: Consider different *modus operandi* to strengthen the continuity and stability of resources (including human resources) for the intervention.

SR5: Enhance data collection and reporting practices.

SR6: Improve the intervention logic where it is unclear (e.g. reception).

SUMMARY RECOMMENDATIONS AT OPERATIONAL LEVEL

OR1: Make internal inquiries on the use and usefulness of the information and documentation system (IDS) operational platform for Greece.

OR2: Assess and address – together with national authorities – data protection issues regarding work performed by personnel deployed by the EASO intervention at appeals.

OR3: Ensure that caseworkers and team leaders are consulted and/or informed sufficiently in advance when new approaches are being tested.

OR4: Create ways for team leaders to respond/discuss feedback received and/or to review feedback before it is shared, in order to strengthen the Quality Assurance Tool.

OR5: Consider – in agreement with national authorities – providing support to the offices of local prosecutors.

OR6: Enhance the recording of the results of multidisciplinary teams in Reception and Identification Centres (RICs).

1 Introduction and methodology

The European Asylum Support Office (EASO) has offered operational support to Greece since 2011, with intensified effort from 2015, following the large influx of refugees and migrants in 2015 and early 2016. In December 2018, a new Operating Plan for 2019 (OP2019) was agreed between EASO and the Greek government. It reiterated the relevance of the intervention in enhancing the capacity of the Greek Asylum Service (GAS) and the Appeals Authority to implement the asylum procedure efficiently, as well as improving the capacity of the Reception and Identification Service (RIS) to manage and operate reception centres. The planned EASO intervention for 2019 continued to support GAS and RIS to contribute to the enhanced implementation of the EU asylum acquis and EU reception standards for persons in need of protection in Greece.

Two measures, each with a specific set of sub-measures, emphasise the intended results of the intervention.

The objective of **Measure 1 (M1)** was to enhance the capacity of GAS and the Appeals Authority to implement the asylum procedure efficiently and in a timely manner, ensure the protection of fundamental rights of applicants for international protection and guarantee full implementation of the EU asylum acquis. M1 incorporated the following sub-measures:
- 1.0: Support GAS to strategically plan and manage the asylum service;
- 1.1: Support GAS to process applications for international protection at first instance falling under the border procedure (EU-Turkey Statement implementation);
- 1.2: Support GAS to process applications for international protection at first instance falling under the regular procedure;
- 1.3: Support the GAS Dublin Unit to process outgoing requests according to the Dublin Regulation criteria;
- 1.4: Support the Appeals Authority in timely issuing of second instance decisions.

The objective of **Measure 2 (M2)** was to improve the capacity of the RIS to manage and operate reception centres, ensuring implementation of the minimum EU reception standards. It encompassed the following sub-measures:
- 2.0: Support the national reception authorities to strategically plan and manage the national reception system;
- 2.1: Support the national reception authorities to manage first-line reception;
- 2.2: Support the national reception authorities to manage second-line reception.

In December 2019, EASO launched the second external evaluation of its operations in Greece, which covered the implementation of OP2019. This evaluation sought to assess the OP2019 against the following evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and added value. The evaluation provides recommendations to support EASO internal decision-making and to improve operations and future interventions.

The *ex post* evaluation of OP2019 had three phases:
- Inception phase: clarified the evaluation methodology and described the intervention logic and the analytical framework of the evaluation.
- Implementation phase: covered data collection and reporting activities. Data collection was triangulated, covering desk research on quantitative and qualitative data, a sample review of eight evaluation feedback forms, 13 in-depth interviews with EASO staff, GAS, RIS and the United Nations

Refugee Agency (UNHCR), six focus group meetings with EASO team leaders, social workers, legal rapporteurs and interpreters, and a field visit to Greece.

- Final phase: validated the main findings and final report. An Overview Analytical Report has also been established, capturing the commonalities and differences in findings between the three Member States (MSs) that underwent this evaluation (Greece, Italy, Cyprus).

2 Findings

2.1. Key highlights

Asylum procedures:

✓ EASO contributed to the border procedure, with 17,888 registrations, 6,047 interviews and 5,365 opinions. These results were achieved in the context of a 15% increase in applications for international protection compared to 2018.

✓ The median days between the interview and submission of the draft opinion in the border procedure decreased from 28 to 18 days.

✓ The workflow for vulnerability assessment was modified mid-year, resulting in more completed interviews and increased effectiveness in the second half of the year.

✓ New backlog management tools and changes to the interview process (among other initiatives) increased the effectiveness of the intervention.

✓ EASO contributed to the regular procedure, with 17,655 registrations, 5,088 pre-registrations, 2,786 interviews and 2,848 opinions.

✓ 21,898 asylum seekers received information on access to the asylum procedure, the framework of the asylum procedures in Greece, and progress of their individual cases.

✓ EASO supported the Dublin Unit within GAS with the preparation of documentation for 2,847 outgoing requests (54% of all outgoing requests) and processing of 1,004 re-examination requests.

✓ EASO supported the appeal process, with 1,944 files submitted to the Appeals Committees, prepared within a median time of four days (compared to eight days in 2018).

✓ Capacity-building activities resulted in 69 training sessions, covering 980 participants. This included 86 people trained as trainers, with a multiplier effect of 10.

Reception:

✓ The self-assessment tool developed by EASO Greece Operations and tailored to the Greek context as part of the National Reception Monitoring Framework (NRMF) was piloted in one of the reception centres.

✓ Capacity-building in RIS resulted in three study visits, 140 RIS personnel trained in the EASO reception module, and a reinforced pool of trainers.

- ✓ The Samos pilot project mapped the entire population of unaccompanied minors in the Vathy Reception and Identification Centre (RIC), contributing to better psychosocial support and well-being among this group, as well as providing material assistance for improved living conditions.

- ✓ Vulnerability teams in the RICs on the islands of Lesvos, Samos, Kos, Chios and Leros identified and referred 6,590 vulnerable persons to the appropriate supports.

- ✓ Under the referral mechanisms established for second-line reception, 4,722 people were referred to access procedures and private accommodation schemes.

2.2. Measure-specific findings

Measure 1: Enhanced capacity of the GAS and Appeals Authority to implement the asylum procedure efficiently and in a timely manner, ensuring the protection of fundamental rights of applicants for international protection and guaranteeing the full implementation of the EU asylum acquis

Sub-measure 1.0: Support GAS to strategically plan and manage the asylum service

EASO planned to support the Greek authorities through training activities, facilitation of coordination meetings, and the design of new approaches to information provision and flow management. **Effectiveness** of this measure is assessed as good. A **pilot project** saw the substitution of all MS experts acting as information providers/flow managers with specifically trained interims deployed to GAS, allowing more stability, sustainability and coherence in information provision. The **efficiency** of the intervention could not be evaluated, however, due to limitations on information and appropriate disaggregated data.

Sub-measure 1.1: Support GAS to process applications for international protection at first instance falling under the border procedure (EU-Turkey Statement implementation)

EASO accounted for **47% of all registrations** on the islands and conducted **6,047 interviews,** resulting in **5,309 concluding remarks**. The **effectiveness** of registrations, interviews and opinions was lower than planned and lower than 2018. The number of interviews conducted by EASO fell by 32.6%, while the number of opinions issued under the border procedure fell by 35%, despite a 15.4% increase in asylum applications. The median time between registration and interview was longer than in 2018, mainly due to the influx of asylum seekers from September onwards. However, the median number of days between interview and opinion fell from 28 to 18 days. Several constraints in reaching productivity targets were identified:
a) Resources allocated and available for the measure were lower than originally planned;
b) Fewer deployments for the border procedure resulted in lower output;
c) The workflow on vulnerability assessment until July 2019 resulted in the interruption of most of the interviews for referral for vulnerability assessment and thus resulted in fewer completed interviews. After a change of practice from July 2019, the overall effectiveness increased, with the majority of interviews completed without interruption;
d) Infrastructure and space impacted effectiveness and efficiency.

New productivity practices and tools were introduced:
- **Tracking of backlog** by **team leaders and field coordinators;**
- Changes to workflow - **interviews for one week, followed by one week of opinion-drafting,** as well as productivity targets for individual caseworkers (mainly applicable to Lesvos);
- **Discontinuation of systematic breaks for caseworkers to consult team leaders;**

- **Increase in numbers of daily interviews conducted in Lesvos**. From October 2019, the target was seven interviews per week, which seemed to increase productivity.

EASO has developed a comprehensive quality system whose standards and tools reflect good practices in asylum-processing across Europe. The tools include Quality Feedback Reports on interviews and opinions, and relevant **guidance** to caseworkers. The **information and documentation system (IDS) operational platform** for Greece contains useful information, although EASO could examine the extent of its use at field level. The **queries system** and the helpdesk were also considered useful. The effectiveness of the peer-to-peer **quality assurance tool** could be improved. Despite the existence of the elaborate quality system, there is no efficient scoring system **to measure the quality of outputs.** The high focus on quality and the related EASO-developed tools and practices appeared to impair the efficiency of the intervention, with various stakeholders noting that CEAS standards could be maintained with significantly higher efficiency, highlighting that speed is itself a quality requirement for applicants waiting for a final decision. **Efficiency** gains were achieved in 2019, as evidenced by the number of workdays per output compared to 2018. According to EASO, a change of contract with the supplier of interpreters significantly reduced the cost of interpretation services. Limitations on the available data make it difficult to assess efficiency in depth, however.

Sub-measure 1.2: Support GAS to process applications for international protection at first instance falling under the regular procedure

In Thessalonica and Lesvos, caseworkers and team leaders provided support to GAS by conducting asylum interviews and drafting opinions. EASO support to the regular procedure in Lesvos stopped in October 2019, with staff and resources diverted to the border procedure. In the regular procedure, 2,786 interviews were conducted and 2,847 opinions issued. **Effectiveness** is assessed as fair, as the results were below the targets set for 2019 and below 2018 numbers. This was primarily the result of fewer resources and the GAS decision to discontinue interviews under the regular procedure in Lesvos. Other factors included the lack of sufficient working space, which prevented the planned intervention in Athens and limited the numbers of interviews in Thessalonica. Approximately 20% of all cases were rescheduled and 9% of applicants did not attend their interview. The planned targets of reducing delivery time of opinions and increasing the numbers of interviews and opinions for 2019 were not reached. Reducing the times between processing interviews and delivery of opinions should be set as a priority, in cooperation with the national authorities. Participants' feedback assessed training as generally good. Information and registration support for applicants was provided successfully, facilitating access to the asylum procedure. Compared to 2018, there were significant **efficiency** gains, chiefly stemming from the reduced costs for interpretation services.

Sub-measure 1.3: Support the GAS Dublin Unit to process outgoing requests according to the Dublin Regulation criteria

The support to the Dublin Unit is a good example of a very **effective** intervention, producing solid high-quality results and appreciated by all stakeholders. The outputs of this sub-measure substantially exceeded the results set for 2019, at 80% above the target for outgoing requests. Of the 5,309 Dublin outgoing requests, more than 50% were processed by EASO deployed personnel. Despite conflicting evidence concerning the planned training activity, EASO notes that it was implemented to a satisfactory degree, albeit with fewer participants than planned. The quality of the EASO deployed personnel was reported to be very good. The increase in working days in 2019 significantly improved the **efficiency** of delivery. Outputs produced compared to resources spent were substantially higher than in 2018 or planned for 2019, thus efficiency is assessed as very good overall.

Sub-measure 1.4: Support the Appeals Authority in timely issuing of second instance decisions

The number of appeals lodged in 2019 was almost the same as in 2018. The team of rapporteurs deployed managed to maintain good **effectiveness**, with a small increase, with 1,944 files prepared and submitted to the Appeals Committees. Overall, file quality is good but feedback from some judges suggested that more concise reports could enhance their usefulness. Despite rapporteurs providing the service for a limited period of time, they nevertheless developed internal tools on country of origin information (COI), increasing the effectiveness of their work. Increased **efficiency** is confirmed by the number of workdays, which decreased by 22% yet produced more completed files. The deployed personnel thus demonstrated a significant improvement in cost-efficiency.

Effectiveness achieved for outcomes of Measure 1

For most of the outcome indicators, 2019 resulted in more pending cases and processing times. There was an increase in the stock of pending cases at first instance, reaching 87,461 pending cases at the end of 2019. It is understood that EASO does not affect certain parts of the procedure, such as the time from appeal until the case is distributed to EASO rapporteurs, which was 252 days in 2019. The same applies to the first instance procedures, where parts of the process are the responsibility of the national authorities. It also reflects the complexity of the situation on the ground and the difficulty of setting up long-term outcome indicators in an operational context that saw a large increase in new arrivals and asylum applications in 2019.

Relevance of Measure 1

EASO support to asylum procedures is considered highly relevant and necessary. Following the significant increase in new arrivals in 2019, the rate of influx and pending cases surpassed the capacity of the Greek authorities. EASO thus represents vital support to alleviate an extremely difficult situation in Greece.

Coherence of Measure 1

The results framework introduced in 2019 ensured better coherence between the outputs and their final impact. It was supplemented by a detailed Fidelity Monitoring Plan and specifically developed tools for field staff to monitor the results. The intervention is also entirely complementary with UNHCR and other stakeholders' actions, as well as EU policy and legislation.

Added value of Measure 1

EASO brought added value by facilitating better and faster decisions, as well as providing training and operational support. The Agency worked efficiently with the Greek authorities and input additional financial and human resources to the asylum system. The support remains essential to processing the large number of cases. The consequences of stopping or withdrawing the intervention would immediately and substantially decrease Greece's capacity to register asylum seekers, process new cases and clear the backlog. EASO can continue to bring added value by bringing in MS experts on specific issues to gain more knowledge on other MS approaches to this issue.

Operational recommendations - Measure 1	
OR1	**Make an internal inquiry on the use and usefulness of IDS operational platform.** Further examine if IDS operational platform is used as intended and whether its content is adapted to optimally support the work in the field.
OR2	**Assess and address - with the Greek authorities - data protection issues in EASO intervention at the appeals instance.** While the national authorities are responsible for securing data protection and safe transfer of sensitive data in the course of their operations, EASO may run reputational and/or contract risks should breaches of EU data protection rules be identified in relation to personnel deployed by the Agency.

OR3	**Ensure that caseworkers and team leaders are consulted early where new approaches are being tested**, particularly those not related to sudden or urgent needs in the field.
OR4	**To strengthen the Quality Assurance Tool** (peer review), team leaders should have the opportunity to respond to feedback provided by their peers. The effectiveness of the tool would be further increased if the feedback was validated centrally by EASO and/or if it could be jointly discussed during team leader meetings.

Measure 2: Enhanced capacity of the national reception and identification authorities to manage and operate the national reception system, ensuring the implementation of the minimum EU reception standards

Sub-measure 2.0: Support the national reception authorities to strategically plan and manage the national reception system

The EASO intervention involved capacity-building support to RIS, at both HQ level and in the field. EASO provided support in the design and implementation of the NRMF, training activities, design of a new RIC, and support in the management and daily operation of unaccompanied minor sections in RICs (Samos pilot project). Overall, EASO support is still relevant at strategic level but a clearer intervention logic for reception might help to improve effectiveness. The implementation of the above targets was limited by the frequent institutional changes to RIS. One of the most important **effectiveness** achievements was the piloting of a self-assessment tool developed by EASO Greece Operations and the EASO Reception Team in Malta, based on EASO Standards and Indicators, and tailored to the Greek context as part of the NRMF. Training activities were accomplished by the end of the year, with the exception of the 10 planned workshops, which were delayed while waiting for the adoption of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) by the RIS.

The Samos pilot project improved the living conditions of the unaccompanied minors in the minors' section and in the wider camp. One of the main achievements of the EASO social team was the tracking and mapping exercise that identified unaccompanied minors and facilitated their access to services. The contribution and quality of the work of EASO deployed personnel was highly appreciated by RIS. The sub-measure was not assessed for **efficiency** due to limitations in the available data (see Final Report for detail).

Sub-measure 2.1: Support the national reception authorities to manage first-line reception

EASO provided support to develop and implement SOPs for **first-line reception management**, as well as supporting enhanced processing of cases of vulnerable persons. The most significant result was the identification and referral of 6,590 vulnerable persons, including unaccompanied minors. The deployment of Vulnerability Focal Points (VFPs) to the islands of Lesvos, Samos, Chios, Leros and Kos had a direct impact on beneficiaries and were very **effective**. In general, the deployment of multidisciplinary teams to the RICs increased the RIS' ability to perform its duties in identifying and referring the most vulnerable populations to the appropriate services. The quality of the work of the deployed staff was highly regarded by the RIC Commanders. The intervention is considered effective, although there was no planned output for the number of unaccompanied minors identified and referred. Compared to 2018, however, more than three times as many people with special vulnerabilities were referred. The sub-measure was not assessed for **efficiency** due to limitations in the available data.

Sub-measure 2.2: Support the national reception authorities to manage second-line reception

EASO planned to provide support in developing and implementing SOPs for **second-line reception management**, as well as supporting the daily operation and management of second-line reception sites and training of EASO deployed personnel. The effectiveness of the intervention is assessed as good, with

more than 7,000 persons referred to the asylum procedure in the seven months of the intervention. It was planned that RIS would take over the coordination of second-line reception in 2019. This did not happen, however, meaning that the planned SOPs were not developed nor were any training activities recorded or staff recruited. This also resulted in the actual spending on interim personnel reaching only 26% of the planned expenditure. The sub-measure was not assessed for **efficiency** due to limitations in the available data.

Effectiveness achieved for outcomes of Measure 2

The results at outcome level were not provided, but some progress was achieved in 2019 for indicator 1 (operational NRMF) and indicator 3 (first-line vulnerability referral). The piloting of the self-assessment tool for open accommodation sites was a clear breakthrough in progress towards increased ownership and lessons learned, while the multidisciplinary teams seconded to the RIS on the islands were appreciated and may be further embedded within RIS in the future. In order to further progress towards the outcomes listed above, the EASO intervention logic for reception needs to be further strengthened.

Relevance of Measure 2

All stakeholders confirmed that EASO support to RIS was very relevant and should continue. One of the most valuable features noted by RIS was the provision of equipment and services that RIS could not easily obtain, such as printers, toners, office supplies, as well as human resources (interpreters). EASO strategic support at central level also remains relevant.

Coherence of Measure 2

The evaluation of Measure 2 suggested good complementarity between actors, while frequent coordination between state and non-state actors (e.g. in Lesvos) prevented overlaps. It is important to clearly define what EASO is willing to achieve in reception, to agree with the authorities and define a clear intervention logic to guide the intervention and associated assessments of the standards in place at the centres.

Added value of Measure 2

The added value of Measure 2 was limited to activities embedded in the national authorities (mainly support to HQ and to RICs on the islands). In this respect, EASO brought added value by supporting the RIS to develop tools such as the NRMF, thus indirectly improving reception conditions. One important element of added value was the provision of interpreters to various activities.

Operational recommendations – Measure 2	
OR5	Consider - in agreement with national authorities - providing **support to the offices of local prosecutors,** mainly on the islands, by seconding personnel to assist in the administration of cases to ensure priority for cases of unaccompanied minors.
OR6	**Improve recording of results of multidisciplinary teams in RICs**. The work of the multidisciplinary teams should be clearly defined and aligned throughout the operation and in all reporting documents.

3 Conclusions

3.1. General

EASO provides support to the Greek asylum and reception authorities in a challenging environment. Important steps have been taken by EASO in planning and monitoring OP2019. Firstly, the introduction of the results framework and the operational monitoring tool strengthened the transparency and consistency of the operation and its results. Some indicators did not have targets, however, and the rationale behind the targets was not always apparent. Most indicators related to effectiveness, with none addressing quality or efficiency.

Overall, EASO's contribution yielded important results in registrations, interviews, opinions, capacity-building activities (e.g. training), and strategic decision-making (piloting the NRMF). The efficiency of the intervention in the border and regular asylum procedures also improved. Nevertheless, some structural issues need to be resolved to ensure full effectiveness and efficiency of the intervention. The low rate of deployment of MS experts and frequent interruptions of the contracts of interims slowed down productivity. By contrast, the increased use of interim personnel for certain functions improved the effectiveness and coherence of the intervention. Other important issues addressed in 2019 were the modification of the vulnerability workflow in the border procedure, and timely processing of applications.

The recommendations in the external evaluation of OP2018 were accepted by EASO and addressed in the management response. Good progress was noted on most recommendations, particularly implementing the results framework and reassessment of the vulnerability workflow.

3.2. Conclusions per evaluation criterion

Effectiveness
The effectiveness of the EASO contribution to the Greek asylum system (M1) is evident in the registration of 47% of all types of procedures (regular and border). EASO support was particularly effective in providing opinions and interpretation, with both considered high quality. There was progress on enhancing efficiency, while keeping a high level of quality in interviews and opinions. Despite this, various stakeholders found the current quality management system one of the main reasons for inefficiency in EASO operations, arguing that CEAS standards could be achieved at lower cost. The three interventions on support to reception authorities (M2) were generally effective, although targets were not set for all indicators. The increased influx of migrants to Greece saw less progress on outcome targets than in 2018 for M1, while some progress was observed for M2 in terms of embedding vulnerability referrals in the national authorities' processes and piloting the NRMF self-assessment tool.

Efficiency
Actual resource consumption was generally lower than planned for most of the sub-measures, mainly due to lower levels of deployment and cheaper resources (in particular for interpreters). Efficiency gains were detected for sub-measures 1.1 and 1.2, as more outputs were produced with fewer resources. This is also true of sub-measures 1.3 and 1.4, both of which were very efficient. The lack of targets for outputs in M2 made it difficult to assess the efficiency of the intervention in supporting reception. The absence of monitoring of costs per (type of) outputs generally reduced the possibility to evaluate the efficiency of the intervention.

Relevance
In light of the increasing pressure on the Greek asylum and reception systems, all stakeholders acknowledged the ongoing relevance of EASO support. For EASO to remain relevant, however, it must strengthen its ability to quickly mobilise and deploy experts in emergency settings or in long-term interventions.

Coherence
Coherence and complementarity with other stakeholders were very good. Support under M1 was predominantly provided to the asylum procedure and the involvement of other actors is minimal, while, under Measure 2, EASO actively participated in central and regional

coordination meetings with all stakeholders to ensure that the intervention was coherent and complementary. The EASO intervention was coherent with the CEAS overall. EASO's training programmes for national authorities, as well as EASO interim staff and MS experts, go some way towards ensuring that good practices are implemented in the asylum procedures and reception structures.

Added value

EASO provided substantial added value to Greece, which would otherwise have faced serious challenges in coping with the influx of refugees. An area that may be further exploited is the first-line and second-line reception of asylum seekers. It is recommended that EASO and the Greek authorities define a clearer intervention logic for reception, specifying where and how EASO could best support Greece, considering the Agency's mandate, added value and feasibility of influencing changes.

The following table summarises the scores of the evaluation for each evaluation criterion per sub-measure. The Final Evaluation Report contains further details for each of these scores.

	SM 1.0	SM 1.1	SM 1.2	SM 1.3	SM 1.4	SM 2.0	SM 2.1	SM 2.2
Effectiveness	Good	Good	Fair	Very good	Good	Fair	Good	Good
Efficiency	Non-rateable	Good	Very good	Very good	Very good	Non-rateable	Non-rateable	Non-rateable
Relevance	Good					Very good		
Coherence	Very good					Very good		
Impact	Fair							
Added value	Good					Fair		

4   Strategic level recommendations

SR1: Define a concrete working plan to translate the high-level OP into actual implementation actions
Make it transparent how the ambitions stated in the OP are translated into operational actions and outputs and why certain resource allocations (e.g. between islands and mainland) are chosen.

SR2: Advance the level of maturity of results-based planning, implementation and monitoring of the EASO intervention in Greece

- Current strategic documents should reflect the different phases of development (emergency response, transition or exit-related actions);
- Ensure that the process of setting targets for the upcoming OP is transparent, robust, coherent with targets and/or achievements of previous years and explicit about underlying assumptions;
- Enhance the monitoring mechanism for efficiency and quality of operations.

SR3: Harmonise the implementation of quality systems with those of national authorities

- Explore avenues to systematically monitor the quality of work of personnel deployed by EASO to the Greek authorities;
- Where possible, use the quality mechanisms and practices for asylum interviews of the authorities.

SR4: Consider different *modus operandi* to strengthen the continuity and stability of resources (including human resources)

Assess the possibility to improve the conditions of interim personnel (contract duration, interruption) and continue to deploy MS experts for tasks where specific technical expertise is required, with clearly defined deliverables.

SR5: Enhance data collection and reporting practices

- Align monitoring and reporting instruments and bring together all information related to the intervention in the country in the monitoring reports;
- Clearly define how actions in the field are measured and reported and use the same methods across all reporting instruments.

SR6: Improve intervention logic on reception

- Define EASO role and added value in the following areas: expansion of interpretation services, expansion of vulnerability team, increased secondment of experts in the central offices to support critical administrative functions (communication, funding, procurement), capacity-building for key roles in top and middle management of relevant authorities, capacity-building in referral systems for unaccompanied minors, administrative support to relevant authorities for handling files of unaccompanied minors, escorting minors from islands to mainland and between shelters, information provision to beneficiaries;
- Narrative in the OP needs to reflect and connect to the rationale for EASO involvement.