

Quality Assurance Tool

Examining the application for international protection



EUAA Quality Assurance Tool

Examining the application for international protection

1. Substance of an application

- Personal interview
- First-instance decision

2. Admissibility procedure — safe third country concept

- Personal interview
- First-instance decision



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About this tool

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

The tool provides the framework of objective and commonly agreed criteria for a systematic quality review of personal interview and decisions on applications for international protection. It can be used for different purposes, including performance assessment, periodic quality reviews, thematic audits, etc. It may be used to assess the level of quality on an individual level as well as on a process level.

How was this tool developed? This quality assurance tool was developed by EUAA together with experts from EU+ countries. Before its finalisation, the tool and the standards and indicators it features were consulted with all EU+ countries, the European Commission and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

What is the scope of this tool? This tool includes standards and indicators regarding the personal interview and the first-instance decision for the assessment of cases in substance and on admissibility grounds (known as the safe third country concept).

In substance examination

Admissibility procedure
(safe third countries)

Depending on the evaluation of the existing standards and indicators and on identified needs, additional standards and indicators may be developed in the framework of EUAA quality management activities.

In 2022, this tool was further developed to include a set of standards and indicators for the admissibility examination under the safe third country concept in accordance with Article 38 Directive (2011/32/EU) ⁽¹⁾. Further clarifications on the assessment methodology and the examples for assessing the indicators were also provided. This development was supported by experts from EU+ countries, with valuable input from the European Commission and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Thanks are expressed to the members of the working group who prepared the drafting of this guide, including Evdokia Gouma, Daniel Kaspar, Anja Siebert. The process was facilitated and coordinated by the EUAA. Before its finalisation, a consultation of the tool was carried out with all EU+ countries through the EUAA Asylum Processes Network. The tool reflects commonly agreed standards as adopted by the EUAA Management Board on 2 April 2024.

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

⁽¹⁾ [Directive 2013/32/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast), (OJ L 180/60, 29.6.2013).





case officers and any other person working or involved in the field of international protection in the EU context.

What are the elements of the tool?

This tool includes several different elements.

Firstly, the tool outlines the applicable **standards and indicators** regarding the personal interview and the first-instance decision on the substance of an application for international protection and when applying the admissibility procedure for cases falling under the safe third country concept.

Secondly, it provides **the methodology** on how to assess those standards and indicators in practice.

The tool also provides **additional guidance** based on descriptions of situations where the indicators could be assessed as minor or significant errors or marked as 'not applicable'.

What formats of the tool are available?

The tool is available in different formats.

1. **Assessment forms in PDF** for handwritten notes.
2. **Quality assurance tool app**: an application that provides EU+ countries with a built-in, user-friendly quality assurance tool, for a more streamlined and efficient internal quality assurance process and with reporting functions that provide insights into the overall quality of the interviewing and decision-making processes.

How does the tool relate to other EUAA tools? This tool and its two modules build on the common standards agreed in the below listed EUAA practical guides and should be read in conjunction with them:

- [Practical Guide: Personal interview](#)
- [Practical Guide on Evidence and Risk Assessment](#)
- [Practical Guide: Qualification for international protection](#)
- [Practical Guide: Exclusion](#)

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

For more information about relevant EUAA products, visit <https://euaa.europa.eu/practical-tools-and-guides>





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1. Standards and indicators on the substance of an application

Personal Interview

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



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

Opening the interview

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 1. | Previously identified special needs are addressed accordingly. |
| Indicators | 1.1. | Special needs, which have been previously identified, are taken into account when arranging the interview. <i>For example:</i> <i>appropriate gender of the interviewer and/or interpreter;</i> <i>unaccompanied children have a representative present;</i> <i>practical arrangements are made for persons with disabilities;</i> <i>other relevant procedural guarantees are put in place.</i> |

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 2. | The necessary information is provided to the applicant. |
| Indicators | 2.1. | Information on the aim of the interview is provided. |
| | 2.2. | Information regarding confidentiality is provided. |
| | 2.3. | Information on the roles of all persons present is provided. |
| | 2.4. | Information on the applicant’s obligation to cooperate is provided. |
| | 2.5. | Information on breaks and the possibility to ask for breaks is provided. |
| | 2.6. | Other mandatory information according to national legislation and policy is provided. |





| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Standard | 3. | The understanding between the applicant and the interpreter is ensured. |
| Indicators | 3.1. | The applicant is asked whether they understand the interpreter and vice versa and encouraged to flag if they do not understand a question during the interview or if there are any communication problems. |

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

Conducting the interview

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 5. | The interviewer displays a professional attitude throughout the interview. |
| Indicators | 5.1. | The interviewer appropriately establishes rapport with the applicant. |
| | 5.2. | The interviewer uses appropriate, sensitive and factual language. |
| | 5.3. | The interviewer addresses the applicant directly (in the second person). |

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 6. | The interviewer ensures all persons present act according to their roles and manages the interview effectively. |
| Indicators | 6.1. | The interviewer maintains control of the interview situation throughout the interview. |
| | 6.2. | If a challenging situation occurs during the interview, it is effectively handled by the interviewer to the extent possible. |
| | 6.3. | The interviewer ensures that the interpreter acts according to their role and responsibilities. |
| | 6.4. | The legal representative and/or other persons present are allowed to exercise their rights according to national rules and are authorised to intervene at least at the end of the personal interview. |
| | 6.5. | Breaks are taken if necessary or requested and appropriate. |





| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Standard | 7. | The interviewer applies the appropriate questioning techniques. |
| Indicators | 7.1. | The applicant is encouraged to provide a free narrative regarding their reasons for applying for international protection. |
| | 7.2. | Each new focused theme is introduced to the applicant. |
| | 7.3. | The interviewer uses open and/or closed questions appropriately. |
| | 7.4. | Questions are adapted to the capabilities, individual circumstances and the profile of the applicant. |
| | 7.5. | The interviewer avoids unproductive questions, such as: leading questions; multiple choice questions; plural questions; unnecessarily repetitive questions; irrelevant questions. |

Substance of the interview

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

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Standard | 9. | Documents and other evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim are handled appropriately. |
| Indicators | 9.1. | The interviewer explores the relevance and source of any documentary or other evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim. |
| | 9.2. | All relevant documentary or other evidence presented by the applicant is added to the file. |

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



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

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

Closing the interview

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Standard | 13. | The interviewer follows the necessary steps when closing the interview. |
| Indicators | 13.1. | The interviewer confirms whether the applicant has understood all questions asked. |
| | 13.2. | The interviewer asks the applicant whether they want to add anything. |
| | 13.3. | The interviewer explains the next steps of the asylum procedure clearly. |

Interview record

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

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



National specifics

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

First instance decision

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



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

Introduction

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 1. | The decision states the applicant’s details correctly. |
| Indicators | 1.1. | The decision states the correct name, country of origin and home area, date of birth and file number, as well as other details required by national policy. |

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Standard | 2. | If applicable, the decision includes a concise and accurate summary of the immigration history of the applicant. |
| Indicators | 2.1. | The decision includes a concise and accurate summary of possible previous applications and the immigration history of the applicant, according to national policy. |



Basis of claim

| Standard | 3. | The basis of claim correctly outlines all material facts, future fear and evidence. |
|------------|------|---|
| Indicators | 3.1. | All material facts are correctly identified and stated. |
| | 3.2. | The basis of claim correctly specifies who and what the applicant fears, and/or why they cannot go back to their country of origin or habitual residence. |
| | 3.3. | Evidence (documentary or other evidence) presented by the applicant is correctly outlined according to national practice. |

Credibility assessment

| Standard | 4. | The credibility of each material fact is assessed correctly, including the identity and country of origin of the applicant. |
|------------|------|---|
| Indicators | 4.1. | Each material fact is correctly formulated. |
| | 4.2. | The evidence (the applicant's statements, documentary or other evidence) is linked correctly to each material fact. |
| | 4.3. | Internal credibility indicators are applied and analysed correctly including the assessment and explanations of the indicators. |
| | 4.4. | External credibility indicators are applied and analysed correctly including the assessment and explanations of the indicators. |
| | 4.5. | The concept of plausibility is applied objectively. |
| | 4.6. | Only inconsistencies/discrepancies that have been put to the applicant for comment are used in the decision. |
| | 4.7. | COI is relevant, up-to-date and referenced correctly. |

| Standard | 5. | A clear finding is made on each material fact. |
|------------|------|--|
| Indicators | 5.1. | For each material fact, the decision clearly states whether it is accepted or rejected. |
| | 5.2. | Where needed, Article 4(5) of the qualification directive ⁽¹⁾ is applied correctly. |

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



| Standard | 6. | The correct standard and burden of proof is applied. |
|------------|------|--|
| Indicators | 6.1. | When assessing the material facts, the correct standard of proof is applied, according to national guidance. |
| | 6.2. | The burden of proof is applied correctly when assessing the material facts. |
| | 6.3. | Individual circumstances and individual factors such as age, gender, education, and trauma are correctly identified and taken into account when assessing the applicant's ability to substantiate their claim. |

Risk assessment

| Standard | 7. | The risk upon return is accurately and fully assessed. |
|------------|------|---|
| Indicators | 7.1. | The decision correctly identifies and assesses the risk on return (who, what, why and in which circumstances) and takes into account the individual circumstances of the applicant. |
| | 7.2. | If applicable, the decision correctly takes into account past persecution when assessing risk upon return. |
| | 7.3. | The correct standard of proof is applied (reasonable degree of likelihood) in assessing risk upon return. |
| | 7.4. | COI is relevant, up-to-date and correctly referenced. |

Legal analysis

| Standard | 8. | Well-founded fear of persecution is assessed correctly. |
|------------|------|---|
| Indicators | 8.1. | The well-foundedness of the identified risk is assessed correctly. |
| | 8.2. | Whether or not the stated treatment amounts to persecution is assessed correctly. |

| Standard | 9. | Reasons for persecution are identified and assessed correctly. |
|------------|------|---|
| Indicators | 9.1. | The decision correctly identifies and assesses all applicable reasons for persecution. |
| | 9.2. | The connection (nexus) between the persecution and the reason(s) is assessed correctly. |



| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Standard | 10. | The real risk of serious harm under Article 15 of the qualification directive ⁽²⁾ is identified and assessed correctly. |
| Indicators | 10.1. | The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(a): ‘death penalty or execution’. |
| | 10.2. | The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(b): ‘torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment’. |
| | 10.3. | The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(c): ‘serious and individual threat to a civilian’s life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict’. |

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Standard | 11. | The availability and accessibility of protection in the country of origin is assessed correctly. |
| Indicators | 11.1. | The availability and accessibility of protection in the home area of the applicant is assessed correctly. |
| | 11.2. | The applicability of an internal protection alternative is assessed correctly, including its reasonableness. |

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Standard | 12. | If relevant, exclusion grounds are identified and assessed correctly. |
| Indicators | 12.1. | Exclusion grounds are identified and assessed correctly. |
| | 12.2. | Individual responsibility is assessed correctly. |
| | 12.3. | The correct standard and burden of proof are applied. |

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Standard | 13. | If applicable, additional protection grounds are applied correctly. |
| Indicators | 13.1. | Where applicable, additional protection grounds (e.g. humanitarian grounds) are applied correctly. |

Form

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---|
| Standard | 14. | The decision follows a correct structure and includes all required elements. |
| Indicators | 14.1. | The decision follows a correct structure and format according to national policies. |
| | 14.2. | The applicant is provided information on how to challenge a decision in writing or by electronic means. |

⁽²⁾ [Directive 2011/95/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted (qualification directive).



| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---|
| Standard | 15. | The decision is professionally drafted. |
| Indicators | 15.1. | The reasoning is non-speculative. |
| | 15.2. | The language of the decision is appropriate, sensitive and factual. |
| | 15.3. | The rules of grammar and spelling are applied. |

Efficiency

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Standard | 16. | The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines. |
| Indicators | 16.1. | The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines according to national legislation and policy. |

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

National specifics

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



2. Standards and indicators for the admissibility procedure – safe third country concept

Personal Interview on admissibility



Opening the interview

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 1. | Previously identified special needs are addressed accordingly. |
| Indicators | 1.1. | Special needs, which have been previously identified, are taken into account when arranging the interview. <i>For example:</i> <i>appropriate gender of the interviewer and/or interpreter;</i> <i>unaccompanied children have a representative present;</i> <i>practical arrangements are made for persons with disabilities;</i> <i>other relevant procedural guarantees are put in place.</i> |

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Standard | 2. | The necessary information is provided to the applicant. |
| Indicators | 2.1. | Information on the aim of the admissibility interview, on the concept of the safe third country and the possibility to challenge it is provided. |
| | 2.2. | Information regarding confidentiality is provided. |
| | 2.3. | Information on the roles of all persons present is provided. |
| | 2.4. | Information on the applicant's obligation to cooperate is provided. |
| | 2.5. | Information on breaks and the possibility to ask for breaks is provided. |
| | 2.6. | Other mandatory information on the admissibility procedure according to national legislation and policy is provided. |



| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 3. | The understanding between the applicant and the interpreter is ensured. |
| Indicators | 3.1. | The applicant is asked whether they understand the interpreter and vice versa and is encouraged to flag if they do not understand a question during the interview or if there are any communication problems. |

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

Conducting the interview

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 5. | The interviewer displays a professional attitude throughout the interview. |
| Indicators | 5.1. | The interviewer appropriately establishes rapport with the applicant. |
| | 5.2. | The interviewer uses appropriate, sensitive and factual language. |
| | 5.3. | The interviewer addresses the applicant directly (in the second person). |

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 6. | The interviewer ensures all persons present act according to their roles and manages the interview effectively. |
| Indicators | 6.1. | The interviewer maintains control of the interview situation throughout the interview. |
| | 6.2. | If a challenging situation occurs during the interview, it is effectively handled by the interviewer to the extent possible. |
| | 6.3. | The interviewer ensures that the interpreter acts according to their role and responsibilities. |
| | 6.4. | The legal representative and/or other persons present are allowed to exercise their rights according to the national rules and are authorised to intervene at least at the end of the personal interview. |
| | 6.5. | Breaks are taken if necessary or requested and appropriate. |





| Standard | 7. | The interviewer applies the appropriate questioning techniques. |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Indicators | 7.1. | The applicant is encouraged to provide a free narrative on the reasons the third country is not safe for them to return to. |
| | 7.2. | Each new focused theme is introduced to the applicant. |
| | 7.3. | The interviewer uses open and/or closed questions appropriately. |
| | 7.4. | Questions are adapted to the capabilities, individual circumstances and the profile of the applicant. |
| | 7.5. | The interviewer avoids unproductive questions, such as: leading questions; multiple choice questions; plural questions; unnecessarily repetitive questions; irrelevant questions. |

Substance of the interview

| Standard | 8. | Material facts on whether or not the third country is safe for the applicant are identified and explored |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Indicators | 8.1. | The identity (including the country of origin) of the applicant is established sufficiently and the personal circumstances are explored sufficiently. |
| | 8.2. | The applicant is given the opportunity to explain why the third country is not safe due to their particular circumstances. |
| | 8.3. | Past problems and/or threats to life and liberty on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion are explored sufficiently (what, who, when, where, why) with regard to the third country. |
| | 8.4. | Risk of serious harm is explored sufficiently (what, who, when, where, why) with regard to the third country. |
| | 8.5. | Facts relating to the respect of the principle of <i>non-refoulement</i> and to the prohibition of removal, in violation of the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are explored. |
| | 8.6. | Facts relating to the possibility to request refugee status and to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention are explored. |
| | 8.7. | A connection between the applicant and the third country concerned on the basis of which it would be reasonable for them to go to that country is explored. |
| | 8.8. | Future fear is explored. |





| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Standard | 9. | Documents and other evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim are handled appropriately. |
| Indicators | 9.1. | The interviewer explores the relevance and source of any documentary or other evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim. |
| | 9.2. | All relevant documentary or other evidence presented by the applicant is added to the file. |

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

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---|
| Standard | 11. | Where relevant, exclusion considerations are appropriately explored. |
| Indicators | 11.1. | Potential exclusion considerations are correctly identified and indicated (to be further explored in the interview on the substance that may follow according to national practices). |

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

Closing the interview

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Standard | 13. | The interviewer follows the necessary steps when closing the interview. |
| Indicators | 13.1. | The interviewer confirms whether the applicant has understood all questions asked. |
| | 13.2. | The interviewer asks the applicant whether they want to add anything. |
| | 13.3. | The interviewer explains the next steps of the asylum procedure clearly. |



Interview record

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

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

| National specifics |
|---|
| <i>Please insert here any necessary additional guidance for quality assessors with regard to the standards and indicators for the personal interview.</i> |

First-instance decision on admissibility



Introduction

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



| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Standard | 2. | If applicable, the decision includes a concise and accurate summary of the immigration history of the applicant. |
| Indicators | 2.2. | The decision includes a concise and accurate summary of possible previous applications and the immigration history of the applicant, according to national policy. |

Basis of claim

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 3. | The basis of claim correctly outlines all material facts, future fear and evidence. |
| Indicators | 3.1. | All the material facts relevant to whether the third country is safe for the applicant are correctly identified and stated. |
| | 3.2. | The basis of the claim correctly specifies who and what the applicant fears, and why, in the context of the third country. |
| | 3.3. | Evidence (documentary or other evidence) presented by the applicant is correctly outlined according to national practice. |

Credibility assessment

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Standard | 4. | The credibility of each material fact is assessed correctly, including the identity and country of origin of the applicant. |
| Indicators | 4.1. | Each material fact is correctly formulated. |
| | 4.2. | The evidence (the applicant's statements, documentary or other evidence) is linked correctly to each material fact. |
| | 4.3. | Internal credibility indicators are applied and analysed correctly including the assessment and explanations of the indicators. |
| | 4.4. | External credibility indicators are applied and analysed correctly including the assessment and explanations of the indicators. |
| | 4.5. | The concept of plausibility is applied objectively. |
| | 4.6. | Only inconsistencies / discrepancies that have been put to the applicant for comment are used in the decision. |
| | 4.7. | COI is relevant, up-to-date and referenced correctly. |

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Standard | 5. | A clear finding is made on each material fact. |
| Indicators | 5.1. | For each material fact, the decision clearly states whether it is accepted or rejected. |
| | 5.2. | Where needed, Article 4(5) of the qualification directive ⁽³⁾ is applied correctly. |

⁽³⁾ [Directive 2011/95/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted.



| Standard | 6. | The correct standard and burden of proof is applied. |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Indicators | 6.1. | When assessing the material facts, the correct standard of proof is applied, according to national guidance. |
| | 6.2. | The burden of proof is applied correctly when assessing the material facts. |
| | 6.3. | Individual circumstances and individual factors such as age, gender, education, and trauma are correctly identified and taken into account when assessing the applicant's ability to substantiate their claim. |

Risk assessment

| Standard | 7. | The risk upon return to the third country is accurately and fully assessed. |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Indicators | 7.1. | The decision correctly identifies and assesses the risk upon return (who, what, why and in which circumstances), in the context of the third country. |
| | 7.2. | The correct standard of proof is applied (reasonable degree of likelihood) in assessing risk upon return. |
| | 7.3. | COI with regard to the third country is relevant, up-to-date and correctly referenced |
| | 7.4. | The particular circumstances of the applicant are taken into account and assessed correctly regarding the safety of the country and the connection with the applicant. |

Legal analysis

| Standard | 8. | Threat to life and liberty or risk of serious harm is identified and assessed correctly. |
|-------------------|-------------|--|
| Indicators | 8.1. | The well-foundedness of the identified risk is assessed correctly. |
| | 8.2. | The decision correctly identifies and assesses all applicable reasons for the threat to life and liberty (on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion), if applicable. |
| | 8.3. | The decision correctly assesses the real risk of serious harm (e.g. torture, inhuman degrading treatment or punishment), if applicable. |



| | | |
|-------------------|-------------|---|
| Standard | 9. | The respect of the principle of <i>non-refoulement</i> in accordance with the Geneva Convention and the prohibition of removal are respected. |
| Indicators | 9.1. | The respect of the principle of <i>non-refoulement</i> in accordance with the Geneva Convention is identified and assessed correctly. |
| | 9.2. | The prohibition of removal, in violation of the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment as laid down in international law is identified and assessed correctly. |

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Standard | 10. | The existence of the possibility to request refugee status and, if found to be a refugee, to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention is applied in the third country concerned. |
| Indicators | 10.1. | The existence of the possibility to request refugee status is assessed correctly. |
| | 10.2. | If found to be a refugee, the possibility to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention is assessed correctly. |

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---|
| Standard | 11. | A connection between the applicant and the third country concerned on the basis of which it would be reasonable for that person to go to that country is established. |
| Indicators | 11.1. | A connection between the applicant and the third country concerned on the basis of which it would be reasonable for that person to go to that country is identified and assessed correctly. |

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|--|
| Standard | 12. | If applicable, additional protection grounds are applied correctly. |
| Indicators | 12.1. | Where applicable, additional protection grounds (e.g. protection for victims of trafficking according to national legislation and policy) are applied correctly. |

Form

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------|---|
| Standard | 13. | The decision follows a correct structure and includes all required elements. |
| Indicators | 13.1. | The decision follows a correct structure and format according to national policies. |
| | 13.2. | The applicant is provided information on how to challenge a decision in writing or by electronic means. |





| Standard | 14. | The decision is professionally drafted. |
|------------|-------|---|
| Indicators | 14.1. | The reasoning is non-speculative. |
| | 14.2. | The language of the decision is appropriate, sensitive and factual. |
| | 14.3. | The rules of grammar and spelling are applied. |

Efficiency

| Standard | 15. | The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines. |
|------------|-------|--|
| Indicators | 15.1. | The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines according to national legislation and policy. |

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

National specifics

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

[write here]





3. Assessment methodology

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

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

Applying the standards and indicators

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

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

| Correct | Minor error | Significant error | Not applicable |
|--|---|---|---|
| An indicator should be marked as 'correct' where the quality requirements are met accordingly. | An indicator should be marked as a 'minor error' when the error detected does not detract from the overall quality of the interview or decision and would not affect the outcome of the application. Furthermore, there are no apparent risks or negative effects on the applicant, the determining authority or the state. | An indicator should be marked as a 'significant error' when the error detected detracts from the overall quality of the interview or decision and may affect the outcome of the application. Furthermore, there are potential risks or negative effects on the applicant, the determining authority or the state. | An indicator could be marked as 'not applicable' depending on the national system, the method of assessment and/or the individual case. |

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





– for those, the option ‘not applicable’ would be available. This is reflected in the assessment forms provided in **Annex I**.

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

Conclusion

In addition to the assessment of each indicator, the quality assessor should provide their **conclusion on the minor and significant errors** of the interview or decision as well as **recommendations if follow-up is needed**. This should be reflected in the two boxes available in the tool.

Conclusion

A conclusion on the overall quality, pointing out the identified good practices, weaknesses, and recommendations, how the personal interview or first-instance decision could be further improved.

Follow-up

A conclusion that the interview does not allow for an effective and correct decision to be taken or that the decision is probably not correct may require immediate follow-up (e.g. conducting an additional interview, changing a (draft) decision or even withdrawing a decision if feasible within the national system).

Quality assessment set-up and processes

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





Good practice: consistency in the application of standards and indicators

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

- ▶ At the outset of a new quality assessment exercise, quality assessors review the same sample of cases, assess them and then compare and discuss the results to come to a common understanding of how the different indicators apply.
- ▶ In an ongoing quality assessment exercise, further meetings to ensure consistency in the application of quality standards and indicators can be held on a regular basis.
- ▶ Regular consultations between different staff with quality assessment functions (e.g. supervisors and quality auditors) may also be beneficial for the consistent application of standards and indicators when more actors are involved.
- ▶ This tool provides some examples of situations what could qualify as a 'minor error' or a 'significant error' in order to further facilitate a consistent interpretation of the standards and indicators (Chapter 6). States are encouraged to further develop these examples by building on the specific national requirements and practice in order to provide tailor-made guidance to their quality assessors.

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

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

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

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



4. Individual feedback

The Quality Assurance Tool provides individual feedback to the case officer and encourages learning on the job. Where individual feedback is provided, it is important to stress that the focus is on improving the individual's performance rather than simply identifying the errors. In this regard, the assessment forms included in this tool offer space for comments on each indicator. Through the specific comments, the quality assessor can provide customised guidance to the case officer.

Good practice: providing comments

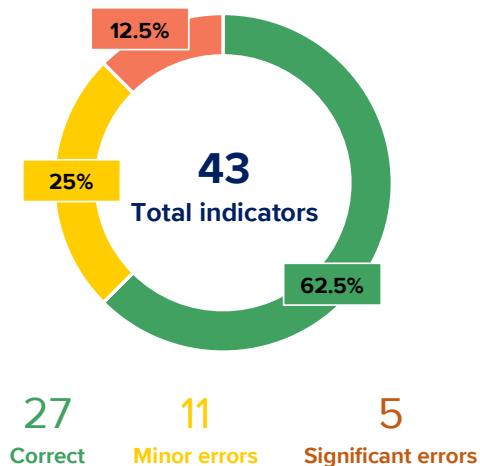
The following are considered good practice with regard to providing comments in the quality assessment:

- ▶ highlight good practices identified in the interview/decision.
- ▶ provide tips and guidance on what could be further improved and how.
- ▶ in the comments regarding errors, explain why the indicator has been assessed as 'minor' or 'significant' error and provide guidance on what would have been the correct approach.
- ▶ in some cases, it may be helpful to explain why a certain error has been assessed as 'minor' or 'significant' in that instance.

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

The assessment forms provided with this tool automatically generate the assessment of the quality of the interview or the decision by calculating the number of indicators assessed as 'correct', the number of indicators assessed as 'minor error' and the total number of indicators assessed as 'significant error'. Furthermore, those are presented as a percentage of the total of applicable indicators as shown in the example in Figure 2.

Figure 1. Example of assessment results











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

The EUAA recommends the following scale for the assessment of overall quality.

Figure 2. Assessment scale

| | | | |
|-----------------|---|---|---|
| HIGH |  |  | Under 20 % minor errors and no significant errors from all applicable indicators. |
| MODERATE |  |  | 20 % or more minor errors and no significant errors from all applicable indicators. |
| LOW |  |  | One or more significant error. |

This assessment scale is integrated in the forms; however, it can be deleted and replaced by a different or a differently formulated conclusion according to national practice.



5. General reporting

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

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

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

The technical solution developed by the EUAA aims at supporting such reporting features by automating the filtering and processing of data and its presentation.

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

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

Good practice: analysis and follow-up

Analysis of the findings from the quality assessment could include:

- ▶ analysis of most common problems and, if relevant, possible causes.
- ▶ recommendations regarding changes in process, new guidelines, training and other specific actions to be taken.

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

Good practice: distribution of the reports

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



6. Situational guidance

Examination in substance of the application

Guidance on situations encountered by the quality assessor is provided in the tables below. The guidance is based on the most commonly encountered scenarios that can occur during the assessment of a case. It aims at outlining a practical manner to assess them correctly and with uniformity among the assessors with regard to what constitutes a correct application, a minor error or a significant error. The situations described are not exhaustive or conclusive and the quality assessor should always take into consideration the individual circumstances in the case at hand.

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



**Assessment of the personal interview in substance**

| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---|--|---|--|
| OPENING THE INTERVIEW | 1. | Previously identified special needs are addressed accordingly. | | | |
| | 1.1. | Special needs, which have been previously identified, are taken into account when arranging the interview. <i>For example:</i> <i>appropriate gender of the interviewer and/or interpreter;</i> <i>unaccompanied children have a representative present;</i> <i>practical arrangements are made for persons with disabilities;</i> <i>other relevant procedural guarantees are put in place.</i> | Special needs are not fully taken into account, but the omissions have no serious impact on the interview. | Failure to take into account the special needs probably has a negative effect on the applicant's ability to present their grounds. Special needs were identified but adequate support was not provided to conduct the interview. | Use N/A if no special needs have been identified prior to the interview. |
| | 2. | The necessary information is provided to the applicant. | | | |
| | 2.1. | Information on the aim of the interview is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | [option not available] |
| | 2.2. | Information regarding confidentiality is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | [option not available] |
| | 2.3. | Information on the roles of all persons present is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|------|--|--|--|--|
| OPENING THE INTERVIEW | 2.4. | Information on the applicant's obligation to cooperate is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | [option not available] |
| | 2.5. | Information on breaks and the possibility to ask for breaks is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | [option not available] |
| | 2.6. | Other mandatory information according to national legislation and policy is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | Use N/A if no other information is mandatory to provide. |
| | 3. | The understanding between the applicant and the interpreter is ensured. | | | |
| | 3.1. | The applicant is asked whether they understand the interpreter and vice versa and encouraged to flag if they do not understand a question during the interview or if there are any communication problems. | The specific question is not asked at the outset of the interview, however it is confirmed at a later stage that the applicant and the interpreter understand each other. The applicant is not informed to flag if they do not understand a question during the interview or if there are any communication problems. | The understanding between applicant and interpreter is not confirmed. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--|--|--|--|
| OPENING THE INTERVIEW | 4. | It is ensured that the applicant is fit to be interviewed. | | | |
| | 4.1. | The applicant is asked to confirm that they are mentally and physically fit to be interviewed. | [option not available] | The applicant is not asked about their well-being. | [option not available] |
| | 4.2. | The interviewer has effectively picked up on indicators that the interview cannot go ahead. | [option not available] | Possible indicators are not noticed or are ignored. | Use N/A if there are no such indicators. |
| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 5. | The interviewer displays a professional attitude throughout the interview. | | | |
| | 5.1. | The interviewer appropriately establishes rapport with the applicant. | The interviewer does not proactively establish rapport with the applicant, however, this only marginally affects the overall quality or efficiency of the interview. | The interviewer fails to establish rapport with the applicant due to shortcomings in their interview techniques, which negatively impacts the applicant or the overall quality of the interview. | Use N/A if it is not possible to assess this indicator on the basis of the available information, for example, if the assessment cannot be made by reading only the transcript/report. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|------|---|---|--|------------------------|
| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 5.2. | <p>The interviewer uses appropriate, sensitive and factual language.</p> | <p>Some questions are vague / not specific / not neutral /; however, this does not negatively affect the overall efficiency of the interview.</p> <p>Choice of words, tone or body language deviates slightly from good practice, however, this probably had no or limited impact on the rapport between the interviewer and the applicant.</p> | <p>Inappropriate or provocative/biased questions are asked, which negatively affects the applicant or the overall quality of the interview.</p> <p>Inappropriate questions are asked to the applicant without taking into account a gender appropriate and sensitive language which negatively affects the applicant or the overall quality of the interview.</p> <p>Choice of words, tone or body language are inappropriate to an extent, which can have a negative impact on the rapport between the interviewer and the applicant.</p> | [option not available] |
| | 5.3. | <p>The interviewer addresses the applicant directly (in the second person).</p> | <p>On a few occasions, the interviewer uses the third person to address the applicant, however in general the questions are directed to the applicant.</p> | <p>The interviewer repeatedly refers to the applicant in the third person, which can have a negative impact on the rapport between the interviewer and the applicant.</p> | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 6. | The interviewer ensures all persons present act according to their roles and manages the interview effectively. | | | |
| | 6.1. | The interviewer maintains control of the interview situation throughout the interview. | The applicant is allowed to talk at great length about matters not material to the application. | The legal representative is allowed to take over parts of the interview or is allowed to disregard procedural rules. | [option not available] |
| | 6.2. | If a challenging situation occurs during the interview, it is effectively handled by the interviewer to the extent possible. | The interviewer is slow to recognise and resolve a difficult situation, however, it is ultimately addressed in an appropriate manner. | The interviewer fails to address a difficult situation. The situation escalates and makes it damaging to the well-being of the persons present or significantly compromises the effectiveness of the interview. Indications that the applicant does not understand one or more questions (e.g. the provided answer is not relevant to the question asked) were not addressed. Technical problems occur during the remote interview however the interviewer does not address them and the understanding of the applicant on the questions asked is compromised. | Use N/A if there were no noteworthy difficult situations during the interview. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---|---|--|--|
| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 6.3. | The interviewer ensures that the interpreter acts according to their role and responsibilities. | The interpreter uses tone or language (including body language) which deviates slightly from good practice and the interviewer does not address this promptly. The interpreter made an undue comment and the interviewer does not address this promptly. This does not affect the overall quality of the interpretation. | The interviewer does not intervene, although the interpreter talks at length with the applicant without translating the conversation. During the interview, the interpreter is allowed to repeatedly make comments regarding the applicant or the case at hand. | Use N/A if there was no interpreter. |
| | 6.4. | The legal representative and/or other persons present are allowed to exercise their rights according to national rules and are authorised to intervene at least at the end of the personal interview. | The interviewer has not fully explained to other persons present what their rights are according to national rules. | The legal representative is not allowed to speak according to applicable procedural rules. | Use N/A if there are no other persons present in addition to the applicant, the interviewer and the interpreter if applicable. |
| | 6.5. | Breaks are taken if necessary or requested and appropriate. | The interviewer allows or takes too many or unnecessarily long breaks. | Requests for a break are ignored or no break is taken although the length of the interview would have made a break necessary. | Use N/A if the interview was short and no breaks were needed. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--|---|---|---|
| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 7. | The interviewer applies the appropriate questioning techniques. | | | |
| | 7.1. | The applicant is encouraged to provide a free narrative regarding their reasons for applying for international protection. | Although the free narrative is limited, the interviewer has not encouraged the applicant to continue with a free narrative and elaborate further. | The applicant is not given the opportunity to provide free narrative. | [option not available] |
| | 7.2. | Each new focused theme is introduced to the applicant. | Some themes are started without a (sufficiently clear) introduction, however, the interview in general follows a logical structure. | New focused themes are started without any or with suggestive introductions, which compromises the structure of the interview and the ability of the applicant to effectively present their case. | Use N/A in interviews where there are no additional new themes which need to be introduced. |
| | 7.3. | The interviewer uses open and/or closed questions appropriately. | Open questions are used appropriately, but more open questions would most likely provide better results. | Closed questions are used excessively preventing the applicant from providing a complete account. | [option not available] |
| | 7.4. | Questions are adapted to the capabilities, individual circumstances and the profile of the applicant. | The formulation of some questions is not sufficiently clear, considering the individual circumstances of the applicant with no impact on the overall efficiency of the interview. | Although the applicant clearly does not understand some questions, for example, due to individual circumstances or profiles, the interviewer does not rephrase accordingly. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|----------------------------|------|--|--|--|---|
| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 7.5. | The interviewer avoids unproductive questions, such as: leading questions; multiple choice questions; plural questions; unnecessarily repetitive questions; irrelevant questions. | Unproductive questions were used in one or more instances, however, this does not negatively affect the overall efficiency of the interview. | Multiple unproductive questions are used which have a significant negative impact on the efficiency of the interview. | [option not available] |
| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 8. | All material facts are identified and explored sufficiently. | | | |
| | 8.1. | The identity (including the country of origin) of the applicant is established sufficiently and the personal circumstances are explored sufficiently. | The identity of the applicant is explored, but issues which could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed. | The identity of the applicant has not been explored sufficiently. | Use N/A if the applicant's identity is established prior to the interview and this is not relevant at this stage, for example, the identity was explored during a previous interview. |
| | 8.2. | Past problems and/or threats are explored sufficiently (what, who, when, where, why). | All material facts are identified and explored, but issues which could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed. | Some material facts are identified but not sufficiently explored, or, some material facts are not identified as such and therefore not explored. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|----------------------------|------|--|---|--|--|
| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 8.3. | Future fear is explored. | The future fear of the applicant and, if relevant, of the dependant(s), is explored to some extent, but further questions could have strengthened the decision. | The future fear of the applicant is not explored or, when relevant, different fear of dependant(s) is not explored. The future fear of the applicant is not sufficiently explored and does not allow for the assessment of the material facts in relation to it. | [option not available] |
| | 8.4. | The availability of protection in the home area in the country of origin is explored sufficiently. | The availability of protection in the home area is explored to some extent, but further questions could have strengthened the decision. | The availability of protection in the home area in the country of origin is not explored, where it could be a potentially viable option. The availability of protection in the home area in the country of origin is not sufficiently explored and does not allow for the assessment of the material facts in relation to it. | Use N/A if, in light of the general situation in the country of origin and the individual circumstances of the applicant, it is sufficiently established that no protection is necessary or that no protection is available. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|----------------------------|------|--|---|--|---|
| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 8.5. | The availability of internal protection alternative is explored sufficiently. | The availability of an internal protection alternative and the individual circumstances of the applicant are explored to some extent, but further questions could have strengthened the decision. | The availability of internal protection alternative is not explored, where it could be a potentially viable option. The individual circumstances of the applicant are not explored. The availability of an internal protection alternative is not sufficiently explored and does not allow for the assessment of the material facts in relation to it. | Use N/A if, in light of the general situation in the country of origin and the individual circumstances of the applicant, it is sufficiently established that no internal protection alternative is necessary or available. |
| | 9. | Documents and other evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim are handled appropriately. | | | |
| | 9.1. | The interviewer explores the relevance and source of any documentary or other evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim. | Excessive time is used talking about documentary or other evidence with no bearing on the application. | The content, source, relevance of documentary or other evidence, etc. is not explored or is not sufficiently explored during the interview though these are essential to the application. | Use N/A if there is no documentary or other evidence presented in the case. |
| | 9.2. | All relevant documentary or other evidence presented by the applicant is added to the file. | All relevant documentary or other evidence is added to the file, however, they are not recorded according to national practice. | Relevant documentary or other evidence is not added to the file. | Use N/A if there is no documentary or other evidence presented during the interview. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--|---|---|---|
| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 10. | The applicant is provided with an effective opportunity to address inconsistencies and discrepancies. | | | |
| | 10.1. | All significant inconsistencies and discrepancies are put to the applicant and they are provided with an opportunity to address them. | Inconsistencies or discrepancies that are not linked to the material facts are unnecessarily explored in great depth. | Significant inconsistencies, lack of details or discrepancies are not put to the applicant. | Use N/A if there are no significant inconsistencies or discrepancies. |
| | 11. | Where relevant, exclusion considerations are appropriately explored. | | | |
| | 11.1. | Potential exclusion considerations are correctly identified. | [option not available] | Potential exclusion considerations are not identified. | Use N/A if no exclusion considerations arise. |
| | 11.2. | Potential exclusion considerations are sufficiently explored. | Excessive time is spent exploring potential exclusion considerations where these are clearly not relevant in the case at hand. | Potential exclusion considerations are not sufficiently explored. | Use N/A if no exclusion considerations arise. |
| | 12. | Specific policies and guidelines are followed correctly. | | | |
| | 12.1. | Where applicable, national policy regarding the specific profile of the applicant is followed correctly For example, specific profiles could include children, victims of trafficking, potential victims of female genital mutilation, applicants with claims related to sexual orientation and gender identity, etc. | The interviewer generally follows the national policy, however, fails to take certain procedural actions with no significant impact on the outcome of the application, the applicant, the determining authority or the state. | The interviewer does not follow national policy, which potentially compromises the outcome of the application or places the applicant or the reputation of the determining authority at risk. | Use N/A where the applicant does not have such specific profile or if there is no national policy in place. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|----------------------------|-------|---|---|--|---|
| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 12.2. | Where applicable, country-specific guidelines for interviewing are followed correctly. | The interviewer generally follows the country guidance in the interview, but misses some elements, with no significant impact on the outcome of the application. | The interviewer does not follow the specific guidance, which potentially compromises the outcome of the application. | Use N/A where no relevant country guidance for the interview is in place. |
| | 12.3. | Where applicable, policies regarding the application of additional protection grounds (e.g. humanitarian grounds, protection for victims of trafficking according to national legislation and policy) are followed correctly. | All additional protection grounds according to national policy are identified and explored, but issues that could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed. | Some additional protection grounds according to national policy are not identified as such and therefore not explored. | Use N/A where the determining authority is not competent to make decisions on additional protection grounds or where there are no additional grounds. |
| CLOSING THE INTERVIEW | 13. | The interviewer follows the necessary steps when closing the interview. | | | |
| | 13.1. | The interviewer confirms whether the applicant has understood all questions asked. | The applicant is not explicitly asked at the end of the interview but understanding has been confirmed throughout the interview. | The understanding has not been confirmed. The applicant states they did not understand and the interviewer does not follow up accordingly. | [option not available] |
| | 13.2. | The interviewer asks the applicant whether they want to add anything. | [option not available] | The applicant is not given an effective opportunity to add anything. | [option not available] |
| | 13.3. | The interviewer explains the next steps of the asylum procedure clearly. | Only parts of this information are given to the applicant. | The applicant is not informed about the next steps in the asylum procedure. | Use N/A if according to national practice the interviewer is not required to provide this information or to record this in the interview record. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|--------------|---|---|--|---|
| INTERVIEW RECORD | 14. | Interview transcript/report rules are followed accordingly. | | | |
| | 14.1. | A thorough and factual report containing all substantive elements or a transcript is made of the personal interview. It contains additional elements if applicable according to national legislation and policy. | The interview record contains numerous spelling mistakes or is slightly difficult to read. The breaks that have been requested or taken are not recorded in the interview transcript where this is expected according to national practice. | The report is not legible or it is clear that some substantive elements are missing or meaning is changed/lost due to excessive paraphrasing. | [option not available] |
| | 14.2. | If applicable, an audio or audio-visual recording is made according to national legislation and policy. | The recording is made according to national practice, however, the interviewer fails to take certain procedural actions (e.g. by failing to promptly provide a copy to the applicant or failing to promptly store the recording according to technical regulations) with no significant effect on the procedure or the rights of the applicant. | The interview is not recorded or is only partly recorded where recording is required. The quality of the recording is inaudible. The interviewer fails to inform the applicant that they are being recorded. | Use N/A if no audio/audio-visual recording is made according to national practice. |
| | 14.3. | The applicant is provided with an effective opportunity to make comments and/or provide clarification orally and/or in writing with regard to any mistranslations or misconceptions appearing in the interview report/transcript. | [option not available] | The applicant is not provided the opportunity to make corrections/clarifications or they (or some) are ignored. | Not necessarily applicable if a recording is made that is admissible evidence in appeals. |





Assessment of the first-instance decision in substance

| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--|--|---|--|
| INTRODUCTION | 1. | The decision correctly states the applicant's details. | | | |
| | 1.1. | The decision states the correct name, country of origin and home area, date of birth and file number, as well as other details required by national policy. | [option not available] | The applicant is incorrectly or incompletely named/ identified. | Use N/A if the data are not accessible due to the national practice. |
| | 2. | If applicable, the decision includes a concise and accurate summary of the immigration history of the applicant. | | | |
| | 2.1. | The decision includes a concise and accurate summary of possible previous applications and the immigration history of the applicant, according to national policy. | Irrelevant details are included, which detract from key points of the immigration history. | Entirely incorrect details or no history are recorded, which have an impact on the subsequent consideration or invites challenge. | Use N/A if the immigration history is not required in the decision. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---|---|---|------------------------|
| BASIS OF CLAIM | 3 | The basis of claim correctly outlines all material facts, future fear and evidence. | | | |
| | 3.1. | All material facts are correctly identified and stated. | Incorrect details are included in the outline of the material facts, with no impact on the outcome. Unnecessary details are included, which add no weight to the consideration. | One or more significant material facts are omitted or misrepresented which compromises the decision. An incoherent summary of facts, including irrelevant facts, leading to failures in the subsequent consideration. | [option not available] |
| | 3.2. | The basis of the claim correctly specifies who and what the applicant fears, and/or why they cannot go back to their country of origin or habitual residence. | Too much detail included, detracting from the key points. | The future fear is incorrectly identified or omitted which compromises the later consideration. | [option not available] |
| | 3.3. | Evidence (documentary or other evidence) presented by the applicant is correctly outlined according to national practice. | Incorrect citations used on minor points, which does not have a negative impact on the subsequent consideration. | Inaccurate information recorded or sources are cited that are not authorised for disclosure, which compromises the decision. Evidence that was presented is not cited at all. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--|---|--|------------------------|
| CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT | 4 | The credibility of each material fact is assessed correctly, including the identity and country of origin of the applicant. | | | |
| | 4.1. | Each material fact is correctly formulated. | Incorrect, unnecessary details or future risks included in the formulation of material fact(s) or combination of materials facts instead of formulating them separately with no impact on the subsequent consideration. | Inaccurate formulation of material fact(s), or future risks included in the formulation of material fact(s), or combination of materials facts instead of formulating them separately leading to failures in the subsequent consideration. | [option not available] |
| | 4.2. | The evidence (the applicant's statements, documentary or other evidence) is linked correctly to each material fact. | Sources of evidence not clearly/accurately cited. | Relevant evidence is omitted or unreliable information is treated as evidence, compromising the consideration. | [option not available] |
| | 4.3. | Internal credibility indicators are applied and analysed correctly including the assessment and explanations of the indicators. | Too much/little weight is given to one internal credibility indicator with no impact on the outcome. Further analyses (argumentation) could be provided to strengthen the internal credibility assessment. | Incorrect application of the internal credibility indicators or a lack of analyses leading to an incorrect conclusion on internal credibility. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|------|---|--|---|--|
| CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT | 4.4. | External credibility indicators are applied and analysed correctly including the assessment and explanations of the indicators. | Further supporting COI or explanations as to how the COI supports or contradicts the applicant's statements could be provided to strengthen the external credibility assessment. | There is lack of supporting COI or explanations as to how the COI supports or contradicts the applicant's statements leading to an incorrect conclusion on external credibility. | [option not available] |
| | 4.5. | The concept of plausibility is applied objectively. | Plausibility is applied unnecessarily or misapplied on one point with no impact on the conclusion regarding this material fact. | Subjective interpretation of plausibility leads to unfounded rejection of a material fact. | Use N/A if the concept of plausibility is not applied. |
| | 4.6. | Only inconsistencies/discrepancies that have been put to the applicant for comment are used in the decision. | The applicant's response to a challenge is neglected, or a minor unchallenged point is used, with no impact on the outcome regarding this material fact. | Points that have not been clarified with the applicant are used against them in the consideration of their credibility, which weakens the conclusion. | Use N/A if there were no inconsistencies/ discrepancies. |
| | 4.7. | COI is relevant, up-to-date and referenced correctly. | The most up-to-date COI is not used but the chosen source still applies. COI regarding the general situation in the country of origin which would be relevant is missing, without having an impact on the outcome. | Irrelevant, unreliable or outdated COI is used and given undue weight, weakening the conclusion. COI regarding the general situation in the country of origin which would be relevant is missing and leads to an incorrect conclusion on credibility. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---|---|---|--|
| CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT | 5. | A clear finding is made on each material fact. | | | |
| | 5.1. | For each material fact, the decision clearly states whether it is accepted or rejected. | The conclusion can be determined from the text but is not explicitly stated. | There is no discernible conclusion regarding one or more material facts, leaving the decision open to challenge. | [option not available] |
| | 5.2. | Where needed, Article 4(5) of the qualification directive ⁽⁴⁾ is applied correctly. | [option not available] | The material fact has been rejected even though all conditions of Article 4(5) of the qualification directive have been met. | Use N/A when Article 4(5) of the qualification directive is not relevant for the case. |
| | 6 | The correct standard and burden of proof is applied. | | | |
| | 6.1. | When assessing the material facts the correct standard of proof is applied, according to national guidance. | Incorrect phrasing is used when describing the standard or the applicant's ability to meet it, but the conclusion is correct. | An excessively high or low standard is applied, resulting in an incorrect or poorly supported conclusion. | [option not available] |
| | 6.2. | The burden of proof is applied correctly when assessing the material facts. | Unclear phrasing regarding the burden of proof with no impact on the conclusion. | The burden is placed solely on the applicant, when the organisation has not met their duty to investigate, casting doubt on the decision. | [option not available] |

⁽⁴⁾ [Directive 2011/95/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted.





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT | 6.3. | Individual circumstances and individual factors such as age, gender, education, and trauma are correctly identified and taken into account when assessing the applicant's ability to substantiate their claim. | Underlying factors have not explicitly been taken into account, without having an impact on the conclusion. | Underlying factors have been neglected when assessing the applicant's ability to substantiate their claim, casting doubt on the outcome. | Use N/A if there are no relevant factors to consider. |
| | 7 | The risk upon return is accurately and fully assessed. | | | |
| RISK ASSESSMENT | 7.1. | The decision correctly identifies and assesses the risk upon return (who, what, why and in which circumstances) and takes into account the individual circumstances of the applicant. | Irrelevant issues are considered, compromising clarity or efficiency with no impact on the outcome. | Relevant points are omitted or inappropriate arguments used, casting doubt on the conclusion regarding risk upon return. | [option not available] |
| | 7.2. | If applicable, the decision correctly takes into account past persecution when assessing risk upon return. | Past persecution is identified but not properly assessed in relation with the risk upon return, without impact on the conclusion. | Past persecution has not been identified or has not been taken into account in relation to the assessment of the risk upon return. | Use N/A when past persecution is not applicable in this case |
| | 7.3. | The correct standard of proof is applied (reasonable degree of likelihood) in assessing risk upon return. | Unclear phrasing is used when describing the standard of proof, but the conclusion is correct. | Incorrect standard of proof is applied, resulting in an incorrect or unsupported conclusion on risk. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|---|--|--|--|
| RISK ASSESSMENT | 7.4. | COI is relevant, up-to-date and correctly referenced. | COI is not tailored to the claim or is quoted in excessive length, detracting from the point. More elaborated explanation on how COI is supporting the risk assessment could have strengthened the decision. | Significant relevant COI is omitted, casting doubt on the conclusion or leaving it open to challenge. | Use N/A if no relevant COI is available. |
| | 8 | Well-founded fear of persecution is assessed correctly. | | | |
| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 8.1. | The well-foundedness of the identified risk is assessed correctly. | Unclear substantiation of the well-foundedness of the identified risk with no impact on the outcome. | Incorrect conclusion regarding whether or not the identified risk is well-founded. | Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice. Use N/A if, based on the previous assessment and available information, there was no risk identified. |
| | 8.2. | Whether or not the stated treatment amounts to persecution is assessed correctly. | The correct conclusion has been drawn, however not clearly explained. | The nature, severity, impact of each type of harm identified has not been correctly assessed leading to an incorrect conclusion. | Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice. Use N/A if, there was no risk identified. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|--------------|---|---|--|--|
| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 9 | Reasons for persecution are identified and assessed correctly. | | | |
| | 9.1. | The decision correctly identifies and assesses all applicable reasons for persecution. | Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity with no impact on the outcome. | Misidentification of a reason for persecution, resulting in incorrect rejection/acceptance that the feared persecution is for a Convention reason. | Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice. Use N/A if, there was no persecution identified. |
| | 9.2. | The connection (nexus) between the persecution and the reason(s) is assessed correctly. | Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity with no impact on the outcome. | Inadequate assessment of connection leading to incorrect conclusion. | Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice. Use N/A if, there was no persecution identified. |
| | 10 | The real risk of serious harm under Article 15 of the qualification directive ⁽⁵⁾ is identified and assessed correctly. | | | |
| | 10.1. | The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(a): 'death penalty or execution'. | Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity with no impact on the outcome. | No or inadequate consideration of Article 15(a) of the qualification directive, casting doubt on the decision. | Use N/A if the applicant is granted refugee status. |
| | 10.2 | The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(b): 'torture or inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment'. | Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity with no impact on the outcome. | No or inadequate consideration of Article 15(b) of the qualification directive, casting doubt on the decision. | Use N/A if the applicant is granted refugee status. |

⁽⁵⁾ [Directive 2011/95/EU](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 December 2011 on standards for the qualification of third-country nationals or stateless persons as beneficiaries of international protection, for a uniform status for refugees or for persons eligible for subsidiary protection, and for the content of the protection granted.





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|--|---|--|
| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 10.3 | The decision correctly assesses the applicability of Article 15(c): 'serious and individual threat to a civilian's life or person by reason of indiscriminate violence in situations of international or internal armed conflict'. | Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity. Individual circumstances of the applicant were not taken into account with no impact on the outcome. | No or inadequate consideration of Article 15(c) of the qualification directive, casting doubt on the decision. | Use N/A if the applicant is granted refugee status. |
| | 11. | The availability and accessibility of protection in the country of origin is assessed correctly. | | | |
| | 11.1. | The availability and accessibility of protection in the home area of the applicant is assessed correctly. | Lengthy and unnecessary evidence cited which detracts from the key points. | No consideration or insufficient assessment of protection or if the protection is effective, casting doubt on the outcome. Failure to consider the individual circumstances of the applicant or the profile of the actors of persecution or serious harm. | Use N/A where assessing protection is not appropriate. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|--|--|---|
| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 11.2. | The applicability of an internal protection alternative is assessed correctly, including its reasonableness. | Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity but with no impact on the outcome. Correct burden of proof is applied but not explained clearly in the decision. | The decision-maker does not stipulate a specific place. Failure to assess the safety, travel and admittance, the applicant's circumstances and the reasonableness of relocation in light of relevant COI, casting doubt on the conclusion or leaving it open to challenge where this is key to the decision. An incorrect burden of proof is applied, resulting in an incorrect conclusion or one that could invite challenge on an internal protection alternative. | Use N/A where assessing internal protection alternative is not appropriate. |
| | 12. | If relevant, exclusion grounds are identified and assessed correctly. | | | |
| | 12.1. | Exclusion grounds are identified and assessed correctly. | [option not available] | The exclusion grounds are not identified or assessed, or national policy and specific guidance are not applied when considering exclusion, resulting in an incorrect conclusion or one that could invite challenge regarding exclusion. | Use N/A where no exclusion grounds exist. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|---|--|--|
| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 12.2 | Individual responsibility is assessed correctly. | [option not available] | Individual responsibility has been assessed incorrectly or not at all, resulting in an incorrect or conclusion or one that could invite challenge regarding exclusion. | Use N/A where no exclusion grounds exist. |
| | 12.3 | The correct standard and burden of proof are applied. | Correct standard and burden of proof are applied but not explained clearly in the decision. | Incorrect standard or burden of proof is applied, resulting in an incorrect or conclusion or one that could invite challenge regarding exclusion. | Use N/A where no exclusion grounds exist. |
| | 13. | If applicable, additional protection grounds are applied correctly. | | | |
| | 13.1. | Where applicable, additional protection grounds (e.g. humanitarian grounds) are applied correctly. | Additional arguments are not included, which could strengthen the consideration. | Consideration of additional protection grounds is based on inadequate evidence or key aspects of the claim are neglected, casting doubt on the decision. | Use N/A where no additional protection grounds are raised or according to national practice additional protection grounds are not applied. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|--------------|---|---|--|--|
| FORM | 14. | The decision follows a correct structure and includes all required elements. | | | |
| | 14.1. | The decision follows a correct structure and format according to national policies. | Format is appropriate but is not fully tailored to the claim. Slight variations of the standard paragraphs/ structure are used without resulting in an unprofessional presentation of the decision. | Incorrect/inappropriate standard paragraphs are used, resulting in unprofessional presentation and a reputational risk to the organisation. | [option not available] |
| | 14.2 | The applicant is provided information on how to challenge a decision in writing or by electronic means. | Appeal rights information not issued in the national standard format. | Information on the right to appeal is not issued to the applicant, or is issued with incorrect instructions, resulting in the applicant being misinformed. | Use N/A if there is no right to appeal or if the applicant was granted refugee status. |
| | 15. | The decision is professionally drafted. | | | |
| | 15.1. | The reasoning is non-speculative. | A minority of arguments are not clearly/fully justified that are not compromising the structure and substantiation of the decision. | Speculative arguments are used which cast doubt on the decision. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|------|--|--|---|------------------------|
| FORM | 15.2 | The language of the decision is appropriate, sensitive and factual. | Some sentences are vague / not specific; however, without having an impact on the overall quality of the decision. | Offensive or inappropriate language is used creating reputational risk for the organisation. The decision includes unnecessary and inappropriate details without taking into account gender appropriate language creating reputational risk for the organisation. | [option not available] |
| | 15.3 | The rules of grammar and spelling are applied. | There are a small number of presentational errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation. | Significant number of grammatical and spelling mistakes, which detract noticeably from the quality of the decision, leading to a degree of reputational risk for the organisation. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|--|---|
| EFFICIENCY | 16. | The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines. | | |
| | 16.1. | The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines according to national legislation and policy. | The decision was unnecessarily delayed awaiting evidence which would clearly not have any bearing on the decision. | Insufficient time was given to the applicant to submit evidence key to the claim when they have provided a reasonable explanation for the requested timeframe, resulting in a decision, which is open to challenge. Unnecessary delay with no justifiable reason. |





Admissibility procedure — safe third country concept

Guidance on situations encountered by the quality assessor is provided in the tables below. The guidance is based on the most commonly encountered scenarios that can occur during the assessment of a case. It aims at outlining a practical manner to assess them correctly and with uniformity among the assessors with regard to what constitutes a correct application, a minor error or a significant error. The situations described are not exhaustive or conclusive and the quality assessor should always take into consideration the individual circumstances in the case at hand.

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



**Assessment of the personal interview on admissibility – safe third country concept**

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





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|------|---|--|--|--|
| OPENING THE INTERVIEW | 2.3. | Information on the roles of all persons present is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | [option not available] |
| | 2.4. | Information on the applicant's obligation to cooperate is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | [option not available] |
| | 2.5. | Information on breaks and the possibility to ask for breaks is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | [option not available] |
| | 2.6. | Other mandatory information on the admissibility procedure according to national legislation and policy is provided. | Information is given, but it is not confirmed that the applicant has understood it. | The applicant is not provided with this information. | Use N/A if no other information is mandatory to provide. |
| | 3. | The understanding between the applicant and the interpreter is ensured. | | | |
| | 3.1. | The applicant is asked whether they understand the interpreter and vice versa and is encouraged to flag if they do not understand a question during the interview or if there are any communication problems. | The specific question is not asked at the outset of the interview, however it is confirmed at a later stage that the applicant and the interpreter understand each other. The applicant is not informed to flag if they do not understand a question during the interview or if there are any communication problems. | The understanding between applicant and interpreter is not confirmed. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' |
|--------------------------|-------------|--|--|--|
| OPENING THE INTERVIEW | 4. | It is ensured that the applicant is fit to be interviewed. | | |
| | 4.1. | The applicant is asked to confirm that they are mentally and physically fit to be interviewed. | [option not available] | The applicant is not asked about their well-being. |
| | 4.2. | The interviewer has effectively picked up on indicators that the interview cannot go ahead. | [option not available] | Possible indicators are not noticed or are ignored. |
| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 5. | The interviewer displays a professional attitude throughout the interview. | | |
| | 5.1. | The interviewer appropriately establishes rapport with the applicant. | The interviewer does not proactively establish rapport with the applicant, however, this only marginally affects the overall quality and/or efficiency of the interview. | The interviewer fails to establish rapport with the applicant due to shortcomings in their interview techniques, which has a negative impact on the applicant and/or the overall quality of the interview. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|------|--|---|---|------------------------|
| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 5.2. | The interviewer uses appropriate, sensitive and factual language. | Some questions are vague / not specific / not neutral /; however, this does not negatively affect the overall efficiency of the interview. Choice of words, tone and/ or body language deviates slightly from good practice, however this probably had no or limited impact on the rapport between the interviewer and the applicant. | Inappropriate or provocative/biased questions are asked, which negatively affects the applicant and/or the overall quality of the interview. Inappropriate questions are asked of the applicant without taking into account gender appropriate and sensitive language, which negatively affects the applicant or the overall quality of the interview. Choice of words, tone and/ or body language are inappropriate to an extent, which can have a negative impact on the rapport between the interviewer and the applicant. | [option not available] |
| | 5.3. | The interviewer addresses the applicant directly (in the second person). | On a few occasions, the interviewer uses the third person to address the applicant, however, in general, the questions are directed to the applicant. | The interviewer repeatedly refers to the applicant in the third person, which can have a negative impact on the rapport between the interviewer and the applicant. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--|---|--|--|
| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 6. | The interviewer ensures all persons present act according to their roles and manages the interview effectively. | | | |
| | 6.1. | The interviewer maintains control of the interview situation throughout the interview. | The applicant is allowed to talk at great length about matters not material to the application. | The legal representative is allowed to take over parts of the interview or is allowed to disregard procedural rules. | [option not available] |
| | 6.2. | If a challenging situation occurs during the interview, it is effectively handled by the interviewer to the extent possible. | The interviewer is slow to recognise and resolve a difficult situation, however, it is ultimately addressed in an appropriate manner. | The interviewer fails to address a difficult situation. The situation escalates and makes it damaging to the well-being of the persons present or significantly compromises the effectiveness of the interview. Indications that the applicant does not understand one or more questions (e.g. the provided answer is not relevant to the question asked) were not addressed. Technical problems occur during a remote interview however the interviewer does not address them and the understanding of the applicant on the questions asked is compromised. | Use N/A if there were no noteworthy difficult situations during the interview. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 6.3. | The interviewer ensures that the interpreter acts according to their role and responsibilities. | The interpreter uses tone, and or language (including body language) which deviates slightly from good practice and the interviewer does not address this promptly. The interpreter made an undue comment and the interviewer does not address this promptly. This does not affect the overall quality of the interpretation. | The interviewer does not intervene, although the interpreter talks at length with the applicant without translating the conversation. During the interview, the interpreter is allowed to repeatedly make comments regarding the applicant or the case at hand. | Use N/A if there was no interpreter |
| | 6.4. | The legal representative and/or other persons present are allowed to exercise their rights according to national rules and are authorised to intervene at least at the end of the personal interview. | The interviewer has not fully explained to other persons present what their rights are according to national rules. | The legal representative is not allowed to speak according to applicable procedural rules. | Use N/A if there are no other persons present in addition to the applicant, the interviewer and the interpreter if applicable. |
| | 6.5. | Breaks are taken if necessary or requested and appropriate. | The interviewer allows or takes too many or unnecessarily long breaks | Requests for a break are ignored or no break is taken although the length of the interview would have made a break necessary. | Use N/A if the interview was short and no breaks were needed. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 7. | The interviewer applies the appropriate questioning techniques. | | | |
| | 7.1. | The applicant is encouraged to provide a free narrative on the reasons the third country is not safe for them to return to. | Although the free narrative is limited, the interviewer has not encouraged the applicant to continue with a free narrative and elaborate further. | The applicant is not given the opportunity to provide free narrative. | [option not available] |
| | 7.2. | Each new focused theme is introduced to the applicant. | Some themes are started without a (sufficiently clear) introduction, however, the interview in general follows a logical structure. | New focused themes are started without any or with suggestive introductions, which compromises the structure of the interview and the ability of the applicant to effectively present their case. | Use N/A in interviews where there are no additional new themes which need to be introduced. |
| | 7.3. | The interviewer uses open and/or closed questions appropriately. | Open questions are used appropriately, but more open questions would most likely provide better results. | Closed questions are used excessively preventing the applicant from providing a complete account. | [option not available] |
| | 7.4. | Questions are adapted to the capabilities, individual circumstances and the profile of the applicant. | The formulation of some questions is not sufficiently clear, considering the individual circumstances of the applicant, with no impact on the overall efficiency of the interview.. | Although the applicant clearly does not understand some questions, for example, due to individual circumstances or profiles, the interviewer does not rephrase accordingly. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW | 7.5. | The interviewer avoids unproductive questions, such as: leading questions; multiple choice questions; plural questions; unnecessarily repetitive questions; irrelevant questions. | Unproductive questions were used in one or more instances, however, this does not negatively affect the overall efficiency of the interview. | Multiple unproductive questions are used which have a significant negative impact on the efficiency of the interview. | [option not available] |
| | 8. | Material facts on whether the third country is safe for the applicant or not are identified and explored. | | | |
| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 8.1. | The identity (including the country of origin) of the applicant is established sufficiently and the personal circumstances are explored sufficiently | The identity of the applicant is established, but issues which could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed. | The identity of the applicant has not been established sufficiently. | Use N/A if the applicant's identity is sufficiently established prior to the interview and this is not relevant at this stage, for example, the identity was established during the previous interview. |
| | 8.2. | The applicant is given the opportunity to explain why the third country is not safe due to their particular circumstances. | [option not available] | The applicant is not given the opportunity to explain why the third country is not safe for them. Relevant claims of the applicant on why the country is not safe are not being followed up by the interviewer having an impact to the efficiency of the interview. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 8.3. | Past problems and/or threats to life and liberty on account of race, religion, nationality, membership in a particular social group or political opinion are explored sufficiently (what, who, when, where, why) with regard to the third country. | All facts that are material are identified and explored, but issues which could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed. | Some material facts are identified but not sufficiently explored, Some material facts are not identified as such and therefore not explored further. | [option not available] |
| | 8.4. | Risk of serious harm is explored sufficiently (what, who, when, where, why) with regard to the third country. | All facts that are material are identified and explored, but issues which could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed. | Some material facts are identified but not sufficiently explored. Some material facts are not identified as such and therefore not explored further. | [option not available] |
| | 8.5 | Facts relating to the respect of the principle of <i>non-refoulement</i> and to the prohibition of removal, in violation of the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment are explored. | Incidents/facts related to the respect of the principle of <i>non-refoulement</i> and to the prohibition of removal are identified and to some extent explored, but further questions and document exploration could have strengthened the decision. | Incidents/facts related to the respect of the principle of <i>non-refoulement</i> and to the prohibition of removal are ignored or identified but not sufficiently explored. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|----------------------------|------------|---|--|---|------------------------|
| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 8.6 | Facts relevant to the possibility to request refugee status and to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention are explored. | Facts relevant to the possibility to request refugee status and to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention are identified and to some extent explored, but further issues that could have strengthened the decision are not addressed. | Facts relevant to the possibility to request refugee status and to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention are ignored or identified but not sufficiently explored. | [option not available] |
| | 8.7 | A connection between the applicant and the third country concerned on the basis of which it would be reasonable for them to go to that country is explored. | A connection between the applicant and the third country is explored to some extent but issues which could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed. | A connection between the applicant and the third country, while taking into account the personal circumstances of the applicant, is not identified as such or is ignored and therefore not explored sufficiently. | [option not available] |
| | 8.8 | Future fear is explored. | The future fear of the applicant and, if relevant, of the family members is explored to some extent, but further questions could have strengthened the decision. | The future fear of the applicant is not explored or, when relevant, different fears of family members are not explored. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 9. | Documents and other evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim are handled appropriately. | | | |
| | 9.1. | The interviewer explores the relevance and source of any documentary or other evidence submitted to support the applicant's claim. | Excessive time is used talking about documents that have no bearing on the application. | The content, source, relevance of documentary or other evidence, etc. is not explored or is not sufficiently explored during the interview though they are essential to the application. | Use N/A if there is no written information presented in the case. |
| | 9.2. | All relevant documentary or other evidence presented by the applicant is added to the file. | All relevant documentary or other evidence is added to the file, however, they are not recorded according to national practice. | Relevant documentary or other evidence is not added to the file. | Use N/A if there is no documentary or other evidence presented during the interview. |
| | 10. | The applicant is provided with an effective opportunity to address inconsistencies and discrepancies. | | | |
| | 10.1. | All significant inconsistencies and discrepancies are put to the applicant and they are provided with an opportunity to address them. | Inconsistencies and/or discrepancies that are not linked to the material facts are unnecessarily explored in great depth. | Significant inconsistencies lack of details or discrepancies are not put to the applicant. | Use N/A if there are no significant inconsistencies or discrepancies. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 11. | Where relevant, exclusion considerations are appropriately explored. | | | |
| | 11.1. | Potential exclusion considerations are correctly identified and indicated (to be further explored in the interview on the substance that may follow according to national practices). | [option not available] | Potential exclusion considerations are not identified. Potential exclusion considerations are not flagged for possible further follow-up. | Use N/A if no exclusion considerations arise. |
| | 12. | Specific policies and guidelines are followed correctly. | | | |
| | 12.1. | Where applicable, national policy regarding the specific profile of the applicant is followed correctly <i>For example, specific profiles could include unaccompanied children, victims of trafficking, potential victims of female genital mutilation, applicants with claims related to sexual orientation and gender identity, guidelines on family unity / application of the Dublin III regulation, etc.</i> | The interviewer generally follows the national policy, however, fails to take certain procedural actions with no significant effect on the outcome of the application, the applicant, the determining authority or the state. | The interviewer does not follow national policy, which potentially compromises the outcome of the application or places the applicant or the reputation of the determining authority at risk. | Use N/A where the applicant does not have such specific profile or if there is no national policy in place. |
| | 12.2. | Where applicable, country-specific guidelines for interviewing are followed correctly. | The interviewer generally follows the country guidance in the interview, but misses some elements, with no significant impact on the outcome of the application. | The interviewer does not follow the specific guidance, which potentially compromises the outcome of the application. | Use N/A where no relevant country guidance for the interview is in place. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| SUBSTANCE OF THE INTERVIEW | 12.3. | Where applicable, policies regarding the application of additional protection grounds (e.g. humanitarian grounds, protection for victims of trafficking according to national legislation and policy) are followed correctly. | All additional protection grounds according to national policy are identified and explored, but issues which could have further strengthened the decision are not addressed. | Some additional protection grounds according to national policy are not identified as such and therefore not explored further. | Use N/A where the determining authority is not competent to take decisions on additional protection grounds or where there are no additional grounds. |
| | 13. | The interviewer follows the necessary steps when closing the interview. | | | |
| CLOSING THE INTERVIEW | 13.1. | The interviewer confirms whether the applicant has understood all questions asked. | The applicant is not explicitly asked at the end of the interview but understanding has been confirmed throughout the interview. | The understanding has not been confirmed. The applicant states they did not understand and the interviewer does not follow up accordingly. | [option not available] |
| | 13.2. | The interviewer asks the applicant whether they want to add anything. | [option not available] | The applicant is not given an effective opportunity to add anything. | [option not available] |
| | 13.3. | The interviewer explains the next steps of the asylum procedure clearly. | Only parts of this information are given to the applicant. | The applicant is not informed about the next steps in the asylum procedure. | Use N/A if according to national practice the interviewer is not required to provide this information or to record this in the interview record. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| INTERVIEW RECORD | 14. | Interview transcript/report rules are followed accordingly. | | | |
| | 14.1. | A thorough and factual report containing all substantive elements or a transcript is made of the personal interview. It contains additional elements if applicable according to national legislation and policy. | The interview record contains numerous spelling mistakes or is slightly difficult to read. The breaks which have been requested and/or taken are not recorded in the interview transcript where this is expected according to national practice. | The report is not legible or it is clear that some substantive elements are missing or meaning is changed/lost due to excessive paraphrasing. | [option not available] |
| | 14.2. | If applicable, an audio or audio-visual recording is made according to national legislation and policy. | The recording is made according to national practice, however, the interviewer fails to take certain procedural actions (for example, by failing to promptly provide a copy to the applicant, or by failing to promptly store the recording according to technical regulations) with no significant effect on the procedure or the rights of the applicant. | The interview is not recorded or is only partly recorded where recording is required. The quality of the recording is inaudible. The interviewer fails to inform the applicant that they are being recorded. | Use N/A if no audio/audio-visual recording is made according to national practice. |





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| 14.3. | The applicant is provided with an effective opportunity to make comments and/or provide clarification orally and/or in writing with regard to any mistranslations or misconceptions appearing in the interview report/transcript. | [option not available] | The applicant is not provided the opportunity to make corrections/clarifications or they (or some) are ignored. | Not necessarily applicable if a recording is made that is admissible evidence in appeals. |





Assessment of the first-instance decision on admissibility – safe third country concept

| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--|--|---|--|
| INTRODUCTION | 1. | The decision correctly states the applicant's details. | | | |
| | 1.1. | The decision states the correct name, country of origin and home area, date of birth and file number, as well as other details required by national policy. | [option not available] | The applicant is incorrectly or incompletely named/ identified. | Use N/A if the data are not accessible due to the national practice. |
| | 2. | If applicable, the decision includes a concise and accurate summary of the immigration history of the applicant. | | | |
| | 2.1. | The decision includes a concise and accurate summary of possible previous applications and the immigration history of the applicant, according to national policy. | Irrelevant details are included, which detract from key points of the immigration history. | Entirely incorrect details or no history are recorded, which have an impact on the subsequent consideration or invites challenge. | Use N/A if the immigration history is not required in the decision. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| BASIS OF CLAIM | 3 | The basis of claim correctly outlines all material facts, future fear and evidence | | | |
| | 3.1. | All the material facts relevant to whether the third country is safe for the applicant are correctly identified and stated. | Incorrect details are included in the outline of the material facts, with no impact on the outcome. Unnecessary details are included, which add no weight to the consideration. | One or more significant material facts are omitted or misrepresented, which compromises the decision. Incoherent summary of facts, including irrelevant facts, leading to failures in the subsequent consideration. | [option not available] |
| | 3.2. | The basis of claim correctly specifies who and what the applicant fears, and why, in the context of the third country. | Too much detail included, detracting from the key points. | The future fear is incorrectly identified or omitted, which compromises the later consideration. | [option not available] |
| | 3.3. | Evidence (documentary or other evidence) presented by the applicant is correctly outlined according to national practice. | Incorrect citations used on minor points, which does not have a negative impact on the subsequent consideration. | Inaccurate information recorded or sources are cited that are not authorised for disclosure, which compromises the decision. Evidence that was presented is not cited at all. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT | 4. | The credibility of each material fact is assessed correctly, including the identity and country of origin of the applicant. | | | |
| | 4.1. | Each material fact is correctly formulated. | Incorrect, unnecessary details and/or future risks included in the formulation of material fact(s) or combination of materials facts instead of formulating them separately with no impact on the subsequent consideration. | Inaccurate formulation of material fact(s), and/or future risks included in the formulation of material fact(s), and/or combination of materials facts instead of formulating them separately leading to failures in the subsequent consideration. | [option not available] |
| | 4.2. | The evidence (the applicant's statements, documentary or other evidence) is linked correctly to each material fact. | Sources of evidence not clearly/accurately cited. | Relevant evidence is omitted or unreliable information is treated as evidence, compromising the consideration. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT | 4.3. | Internal credibility indicators are applied and analysed correctly including the assessment and explanations of the indicators. | Too much/little weight is given to one internal credibility indicator. Further analyses (argumentation) should be provided to strengthen the internal credibility assessment. | Incorrect application of the internal credibility indicators or a lack of analyses leading to an incorrect conclusion on internal credibility. | [option not available] |
| | 4.4. | External credibility indicators are applied and analysed correctly including the assessment and explanations of the indicators. | Further supporting COI and/or explanations as to how the COI supports or contradicts the applicant's statements should be provided to strengthen the external credibility assessment. | There is lack of supporting COI or explanations as to how the COI supports or contradicts the applicant statements leading to an incorrect conclusion on external credibility. | [option not available] |
| | 4.5. | The concept of plausibility is applied objectively. | Plausibility is applied unnecessarily or misapplied on one point with no impact on the conclusion regarding this material fact. | Subjective interpretation of plausibility leads to unfounded rejection of a material fact. | Use N/A if the concept of plausibility is not applied. |
| | 4.6. | Only inconsistencies/discrepancies that have been put to the applicant for comment are used in the decision. | The applicant's response to a challenge is neglected, or a minor unchallenged point is used, without having an impact on the outcome regarding this material fact. | Points which have not been clarified with the applicant have been used against them in the consideration of their credibility, which weakens the conclusion. | Use N/A if there were no inconsistencies/ discrepancies. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT | 4.7. | COI is relevant, up-to-date and referenced correctly. | The most up-to-date COI is not used but the chosen source still applies. COI regarding the general situation in the third country which would be relevant is missing, without having an impact on the outcome. | Irrelevant, unreliable or outdated COI is used and given undue weight, weakening the conclusion. COI regarding the general situation in the third country which would be relevant is missing and leads to an incorrect conclusion on credibility. | [option not available] |
| | 5. | A clear finding is made on each material fact. | | | |
| | 5.1. | For each material fact, the decision clearly states whether it is accepted or rejected. | The conclusion can be determined from the text but is not explicitly stated. | There is no discernible conclusion regarding one or more material facts, leaving the decision open to challenge. | [option not available] |
| | 5.2. | Where needed, Article 4(5) of the qualification directive is applied correctly. | [option not available] | The material fact has been rejected even though all conditions of Article 4(5) of the qualification directive have been met. | Use N/A where Article 4(5) of the qualification directive is not relevant for the case. |
| | 6. | The correct standard and burden of proof is applied. | | | |
| | 6.1. | When assessing the material facts the correct standard of proof is applied, according to national guidance. | Incorrect phrasing is used when describing the standard or the applicant's ability to meet it, but the conclusion is correct. | An excessively high or low standard is applied, resulting in an incorrect or poorly supported conclusion. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
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| CREDIBILITY ASSESSMENT | 6.2. | The burden of proof is applied correctly when assessing the material facts. | Unclear phrasing regarding the burden of proof with no impact on the conclusion. | The burden is placed solely on the applicant, when the organisation has not met their duty to investigate, casting doubt on the decision. | [option not available] |
| | 6.3. | Individual circumstances and individual factors such as age, gender, education, and trauma are correctly identified and taken into account when assessing the applicant's ability to substantiate their claim. | Underlying individual factors and individual circumstances have not explicitly been taken into account, without having an impact on the conclusion. | Failure to assess the applicant's circumstances. Underlying individual factors have been neglected casting doubt on the outcome. | Use N/A if there are no relevant factors to consider. |
| RISK ASSESSMENT | 7 | The risk upon return is accurately and fully assessed. | | | |
| | 7.1. | The decision correctly identifies and assesses the risk upon return (who, what why and in which circumstances) in the context of the third country. | Irrelevant issues are considered, compromising clarity or efficiency with no impact on the outcome. | Relevant points are omitted or inappropriate arguments used, casting doubt on the conclusion regarding risk on return. | [option not available] |
| | 7.2. | The correct standard of proof is applied (reasonable degree of likelihood) in assessing risk upon return. | Unclear phrasing is used when describing the standard of proof, but the conclusion is correct. | Incorrect standard of proof is applied, resulting in an incorrect and/or unsupported conclusion on risk. | [option not available] |





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| RISK ASSESSMENT | 7.3. | COI with regard to the third country is relevant, up-to-date and correctly referenced. | COI is not tailored to the claim or is quoted in excessive length, detracting from the point. More elaborated explanation on how COI is supporting the risk assessment could have strengthened the decision. | Significant relevant COI is omitted, casting doubt on the conclusion and/or leaving it open to challenge. | Use N/A if no relevant COI is available. |
| | 7.4. | The particular circumstances of the applicant are taken into account and assessed correctly regarding the safety of the country and the connection with the applicant. | Certain aspects of the applicant's circumstances have not been thoroughly assessed, but without having an impact on the outcome of the decision. | Failure to assess the applicant's circumstances. Particular circumstances of the applicant have been neglected casting doubt on the outcome. | Use N/A if no particular circumstances were identified in this case. |
| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 8 | Threat to life and liberty or risk of serious harm is identified and assessed correctly. | | | |
| | 8.1. | The well-foundedness of the identified risk is assessed correctly. | Unclear substantiation of the well-foundedness of the identified risk with no impact on the outcome. | Incorrect conclusion regarding whether or not the identified risk is well-founded. | Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice. Use N/A if, based on the previous assessment and available information, there was no risk identified. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|------|--|---|---|---|
| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 8.2. | The decision correctly identifies and assesses all applicable reasons for the threat to life and liberty (on account of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion), if applicable. | Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity but without having an impact on the outcome. | Misidentification of a reason for persecution, resulting in incorrect rejection/acceptance that the feared threat is for a respective reason. | Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice. Use N/A if, based on the previous assessment there was no risk identified. |
| | 8.3. | The decision correctly assesses the real risk of serious harm (e.g. torture, inhuman degrading treatment or punishment), if applicable. | Overall correct assessment however more thorough or clear assessment could have strengthened the decision. | Inadequate assessment of the real risk of serious harm compromising the conclusion. | Use N/A if it is possible to omit this assessment in certain decisions according to national practice. Use N/A based on the previous assessment there was no risk identified. |
| | 9. | The respect of the principle of <i>non-refoulement</i> in accordance with the Geneva Convention and the prohibition of removal are respected | | | |
| | 9.1. | The respect of the principle of <i>non-refoulement</i> in accordance with the Geneva Convention is identified and assessed correctly. | The correct assessment has been reached, however more thorough / clear explanations could have strengthened the decision. | Incidents (material facts) related to the principle of <i>non-refoulement</i> are not identified and consequently not assessed. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|-------|--|---|--|------------------------|
| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 9.2. | The prohibition of removal, in violation of the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment as laid down in international law is identified and assessed correctly. | Unclear or overly long consideration, compromising clarity but with no impact on the outcome. Correct conclusion drawn but not clearly or sufficiently explained. | No or inadequate consideration of the prohibition of removal, in violation of the right to freedom from torture and cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment as laid down in international law. | [option not available] |
| | 10. | The existence of the possibility to request refugee status and, if found to be a refugee, to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention is applied in the third country concerned. | | | |
| | 10.1. | The existence of the possibility to request refugee status is assessed correctly. | There are some unclear elements in the reasoning, with no impact on the outcome. | Inadequate assessment of the existence of the possibility to request refugee status compromising the conclusion. | [option not available] |
| | 10.2. | If found to be a refugee, the possibility to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention is assessed correctly. | There are some unclear elements in the reasoning, with no impact on conclusion the outcome. | Inadequate assessment of possibility to receive protection in accordance with the Geneva Convention compromising the conclusion. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' |
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| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 11. | A connection between the applicant and the third country concerned on the basis of which it would be reasonable for that person to go to that country is established. | | |
| | 11.1. | A connection between the applicant and the third country concerned on the basis of which it would be reasonable for that person to go to that country is identified and assessed correctly. | The correct assessment has been reached concerning the reasonable ability of the applicant to return to the third country drawn but not clearly or too generally explained. The general circumstances and elements concerning the connection of the applicant with the third country are identified but are not fully assessed, with no impact on the decision. | Personal circumstances have not been taken into account and the elements that establish the connection to the third country. The conclusion is only based on the use of standardised argumentation without any reasoning concerning the personal circumstances of the applicant. Elements concerning the connection of the applicant with the third country are not considered or are ignored and not correctly assessed. The decision follows the template without any individual assessment. |
| | | | | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|---|--|--|
| LEGAL ANALYSIS | 12. | If applicable, additional protection grounds are applied correctly. | | | |
| | 12.1. | Where applicable, additional protection grounds (e.g. protection for victims of trafficking according to national legislation and policy) are applied correctly. | Additional arguments are not included which could strengthen the consideration. | Consideration of additional protection grounds is based on inadequate evidence and/or key aspects of the claim are neglected, casting doubt on the decision. | Use N/A where no additional protection grounds are raised or according to national practice additional protection grounds are not applied. |
| FORM | 13. | The decision follows a correct structure and includes all required elements. | | | |
| | 13.1. | The decision follows a correct structure and format according to national policies. | Format is appropriate but is not fully tailored to the claim. Slight variations of the standard paragraphs/ structure are used without resulting in an unprofessional presentation of the decision. | Incorrect/inappropriate standard paragraphs are used, resulting in unprofessional presentation and a reputational risk to the organisation. | [option not available] |
| | 13.2. | The applicant is provided information on how to challenge a decision in writing or by electronic means. | Appeal rights information not issued in the national standard format. | Information on the right to appeal is not issued to the applicant, or is issued with incorrect instructions, resulting in the applicant being misinformed. | Use N/A if there is not right to appeal, for example, if the application was admissible. |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' | |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|---|---|------------------------|
| FORM | 14. | The decision is professionally drafted. | | | |
| | 14.1. | The reasoning is non-speculative. | A minority of arguments are not clearly/fully justified that are not compromising the structure and substantiation of the decision. | Speculative arguments are used which cast doubt on the decision. | [option not available] |
| | 14.2. | The language of the decision is appropriate, sensitive and factual. | Some sentences are vague / not specific; however, without having an impact on the overall quality of the decision. | Offensive or inappropriate language is used creating reputational risk for the organisation. The decision includes unnecessary and inappropriate details without taking into account gender appropriate and sensitive language creating reputational risk for the organisation. | [option not available] |
| | 14.3. | The rules of grammar and spelling are applied. | There are a small number of presentational errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation. | Significant number of grammatical and spelling mistakes which detract noticeably from the quality of the decision, leading to a degree of reputational risk for the organisation. | [option not available] |





| Standards and indicators | | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as minor error | Examples of situations when the indicator can be assessed as significant error | Examples of situations where the indicator can be marked as 'not applicable' |
|--------------------------|--------------|--|--|--|
| EFFICIENCY | 15. | The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines. | | |
| | 15.1. | The decision is issued according to the prescribed timelines according to national legislation and policy. | The decision was unnecessarily delayed awaiting evidence which would clearly not have any bearing on the decision. | Insufficient time was given to the applicant to submit evidence key to the claim when they have provided a reasonable explanation for the requested timeframe, resulting in a decision which is open to challenge. Unnecessary delay with no justifiable reason. |
| | | | | Use N/A if the information is not available. |



Annex I. Assessment forms for handwritten notes

Assessment forms for the examination in substance



For notes –
Interview.pdf



For notes –
Decision.pdf

Assessment forms for the admissibility examination (safe third country concept)



For notes –
Interview.pdf



For notes –
Decision.pdf

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