

Guidance on Contingency Planning and Preparedness in the Asylum Procedure

Operational standards and indicators



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May 2024

On 19 January 2022, the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) became the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA). All references to EASO, EASO products and bodies should be understood as references to the EUAA.



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About the guide

Why was this guide created? The mission of the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) is to facilitate and support the activities of EU Member States and the Schengen associated countries (EU+ countries ⁽¹⁾) in the implementation of the Common European Asylum System. According to its overall aim to promote a correct and effective implementation of the Common European Asylum System and to enable convergence, the EUAA develops common operational standards and indicators, guidelines and practical tools.

How was this guide developed? This guide is the result of a joint effort between experts from the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees and the EUAA, with valuable input received from the European Commission, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration ⁽²⁾. The development was facilitated and coordinated by the EUAA. Before its finalisation, a consultation on the guide was carried out with all EU+ countries through the EUAA Asylum Processes Network. The EUAA would like to extend its thanks to the members of the working group who were consulted during the development of this guide: Diana-Beatrice Bercht, Frank Hauenstein and Dieter Kerwer.

Who should use this guide? This guide is primarily intended for personnel responsible for contingency planning in the asylum procedure, as well as policymakers in the national determining authorities of international protection in the EU context.

How does this guide relate to national legislation and practice? This is a soft convergence tool. It is not legally binding and reflects commonly agreed standards as adopted by the EUAA Management Board on 6 May 2024.

How does this guide relate to other EUAA tools? This guidance should be used in conjunction with the EUAA's operational standards and indicators on the asylum procedure ⁽³⁾ as well as the guidance on contingency planning in the context of reception ⁽⁴⁾. All EUAA practical tools are publicly available online on the EUAA website:

<https://euaa.europa.eu/practical-tools-and-guides>

Disclaimer

This guide was prepared without prejudice to the principle that only the Court of Justice of the European Union can give an authoritative interpretation of EU law.

⁽¹⁾ The 27 EU Member States, complemented by Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Switzerland.

⁽²⁾ The finalised guide does not necessarily reflect the positions of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration.

⁽³⁾ EASO, [Guidance on asylum procedure: operational standards and indicators](#), September 2019.

⁽⁴⁾ EASO, [Guidance on contingency planning in the context of reception](#), March 2018.





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List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
EU+ countries	EU Member States and the Schengen associated countries
Member States	EU Member States



Introduction

Migration is a dynamic and complex phenomenon, which can change rapidly and unexpectedly. It has become evident that the asylum authorities in the EU Member States and the Schengen associated countries (EU+ countries) need to strengthen their ability to cope with possible volatile situations that can put the asylum systems of the countries under high pressure. It is critical to strengthen the preparedness of the asylum authorities and their ability to cope with situations that create organisational strain.

Contingency planning ensures a rapid and deliberate, well-thought-out response to any extreme situation or event that requires special contingency measures. As a result, contingency planning should always take place where there is a risk of ‘a sudden inflow of nationals of third countries’ (an emergency situation ⁽⁵⁾). This is a different situation to that of a situation of preparedness, where there are sufficient resources to allocate in order to ensure that asylum systems in EU+ countries are resilient, well-prepared and efficient in a daily basis. Contingency planning ensures functional asylum procedures while maintaining the fundamental rights of the applicants, such as the right to asylum ⁽⁶⁾ and the principle of *non-refoulement*.

Contingency plans need to be practical, realistic and flexible ⁽⁷⁾. When implemented, they should easily translate into an operational response plan. The plan should be specific rather than generic and process driven. Contingency should be developed on the basis of a risk analysis and needs assessment. Contingency planning lays the groundwork for management of an emergency situation but cannot replace it. For this reason, many of the measures that will be activated during the implementation of contingency must be defined and prepared in advance. This entails, for example, conducting shorter and targeted interviews depending on the profile and nationality of the applicants or conducting remote interview and interpretation. This allows for the process to be adjusted rapidly when there is an emergency situation.

Thorough planning will improve the quality of the contingency plan and to respond to an emergency in a timely and effective manner. Any adjustments to the legislation necessitated by the contingency plan need to be made prior to the emergency to ensure the contingency plan is legally enforceable. For example, many administrations require legal amendments to be implemented to be able to conduct remote interpretation and/or interviews. The digitalisation of the system is also very important. Electronic files not only make the procedure more transparent and efficient but will facilitate the accurate, fast and efficient adjustment of the plan in an emergency situation.

Planning gives those concerned the time to think through and address essential questions such as:

- what could happen and what might the impact be?

⁽⁵⁾ Article 78(3) of the [Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union](#) (OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 47–390).

⁽⁶⁾ Article 18 of the European Union, [Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#), (OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, p. 391–407) (EU Charter).

⁽⁷⁾ EASO, [Guidance on Contingency Planning in the Context of Reception](#), March 2018, p. 9.



- what actions and resources would this require?
- what could be done to enable better readiness?
- what impact could the contingency plan have?

Scope of the guidance

This guidance provides standards and indicators on contingency planning in the asylum procedure. These standards and indicators take into account the different structures of asylum authorities as well as the varying decision-making processes in EU+ countries. A ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach is not possible. The objective of the guidance is to help EU+ countries to build or review their national contingency plans based on the proposed standards. While contingency planning may be needed for a number of possible types of emergencies, this guidance focuses mainly on situations where contingency planning is required due to a high influx of applicants for international protection, which can result in resource constraints in the asylum system.

Standards and indicators on contingency planning for the asylum procedure focus on asylum authorities and have been written with the staff of the asylum authorities in mind. There are elements, however, that are applicable to other migration and non-migration related authorities, as well as a wide range of staff regardless of their role in the authorities. Contingency plans should be developed in all areas liable to experience crises, such as environment policy, migration policy and natural hazard management (e.g. fires, earthquakes). The development and the implementation of contingency plans in all the different areas liable to experience crises can follow similar methodologies, as suggested in this guidance, taking into consideration the particularities of each area.

The guidance provides a framework for contingency planning through standards and indicators to enhance preparedness for emergency situations. It also provides guidance on the implementation of mechanisms for a coordinated and efficient response. In particular, this guidance covers the asylum procedure in the first instance, starting from the making and the registering of an application for international protection to the notification of the first instance decision. Additional explanations have been added to expand on the standards and indicators where needed.

Importantly, EU+ countries may introduce or retain provisions in the field of asylum procedures for applicants that are more favourable than those included in this guidance. Under no circumstances should this document be understood as an invitation to lower existing standards but rather as an encouragement to reach, as a minimum, the benchmarks developed herein.

Standard	describes a commonly agreed practice that is considered achievable by all Member States. Standards aim to ensure the establishment of fair and efficient asylum and reception systems in compliance with the provisions set out in the Common European Asylum System.
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Indicator	is what can be observed and/or measured to demonstrate whether the operational standard is achieved. Indicators listed under each standard should be understood as cumulative without an order of hierarchy.
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Additional remark highlights specific points of attention, particular circumstances or exceptions for applying the indicator. In light of the different national contexts, the applicability of the additional remarks might vary across Member States.

Good practice means practices that Member States are encouraged to consider adopting in their national systems, even though they do not constitute commonly agreed practices.

The document is divided into four sections:

1. [Governance and decision-making processes](#)
2. [Operationalisation: the practical implementation of the plan](#)
3. [Personal and material scale-up capabilities](#)
4. [Evaluation and testing of the plan.](#)

Guiding principles

This guidance is founded on the following guiding principles ⁽⁸⁾.

- **Fundamental rights.** Every human being must be valued and respected, regardless of the emergency situation. This guidance should be applied according to the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights ⁽⁹⁾, the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ⁽¹⁰⁾, the EU Charter as well as the case-law of the Court of Justice of the European Union and the European Court of Human Rights.
- **Access to asylum.** The overall right to seek asylum and the rights of persons in need of international protection, regardless of the situation, must be respected, in accordance with the international law and the EU Charter. Ensure swift access to the asylum procedure and compliance with procedural guarantees as well as quick access to reception conditions ⁽¹¹⁾.
- **Accountability.** The application of this guidance should be based on transparent and fair rules and decision-making procedures. Without prejudice to the relevance of involving additional actors for the implementation of specific tasks in national asylum systems, the overall responsibility for achieving the envisaged results lies with the asylum authority.
- **Cooperation.** Contingency planning is most effective when conducted as part of a participatory and inclusive process. Cooperation within respective mandates and alignment of goals and strategies with other authorities — especially the reception authority — and concerned stakeholders will greatly improve the outcome of the response.

⁽⁸⁾ EUAA, [Guidance on Contingency Planning in the Context of Reception](#), March 2018, p. 10.

⁽⁹⁾ UN General Assembly, [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#), 10 December 1948, 217 A (III).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Council of Europe, [European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms](#), as amended by Protocols Nos. 11 and 14, 4 November 1950, ETS 5.

⁽¹¹⁾ EUAA, [Guidance on Reception: Operational standards and indicators](#), 2024.



Governance and decision-making processes

Standard 1. Contingency and preparedness unit or team

The role of the team or unit is to oversee the contingency planning, i.e. to ensure preparedness, so that in the event of an emergency situation the envisaged response measures can be implemented according to the contingency plan. Moreover, the team’s role is to continuously develop and improve the efficiency of the plan.

The exact number and composition of the team will depend on the national context. It is recommended that members of the team possess comprehensive knowledge of the institution they represent as well as extensive knowledge of the asylum procedure in that EU+ country. Members of the team would preferably possess operational experience as well as experience working in different environments, such as experience working abroad. To ensure continuity, the transfer of institutional knowledge needs to be ensured, notably when members of the team are replaced or new members are assigned. The working methods of the team, including file management, should be captured in a handbook or standard operating procedures.

Standard 1. There is a contingency and preparedness unit or team responsible for the management and overview of contingency planning at central level.	
Indicators	Indicator 1.1. Terms of reference describing the organisation of the team, along with the content and the duration of the tasks of the team members, are in place.
	Indicator 1.2. The team at central level manages a network of focal points within each of the departments involved in contingency planning. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>The contingency and preparedness unit or team also manages a network of contact or focal points. This network spans all departments involved in contingency planning within the asylum authority and with the contingency planning contact point(s) of other, relevant organisations. The unit or team holds a meeting with all the focal points at least once a year or more, if need be.</i>
	Indicator 1.3. The responsibilities and accountabilities of network members are defined.
	Indicator 1.4. The reporting within the contingency and preparedness unit or team as well as within the network is defined.



Standard 2. Scenarios

A scenario plan is established for a national asylum system to be prepared for an emergency situation and to handle a sudden increase of applications for international protection. The different scenarios will help administrations to develop an adequate response strategy depending on the level of the emergency situation, to activate a set of corresponding measures, and to ensure that all stakeholders know their roles and tasks. Relevant stakeholders include first-contact officials, the authorities responsible for the registration and/or lodging of the application, the authority responsible for the Dublin procedure ⁽¹²⁾, the determining authority, the appeal courts and the reception authorities. These authorities should be consulted during the drafting of the scenario plan. The possible impact of emergency situations on the concerned staff should be taken into account in the design of the contingency plan.

The scenario plan defines possible scenarios considering daily numbers of arrivals of persons intending to apply for international protection (thresholds) over a defined timeframe (e.g. weekly or monthly) and considering other events that may seriously hamper or disrupt the functioning of the asylum procedure. Scenarios can differentiate in between situations in which special procedures apply, in which the caseload is likely to result in a high or low recognition rate, and in which new, complex claims put forward require additional country of origin research, judicial analysis and/or a policy framework.

For each scenario a set of possible contingency measures is formulated.

Possible types of contingency measures

Contingency measures include a wide variety of possible measures. Contingency measures include upscaling resources (eventually through external support) but are not limited to this. Contingency measures include, first and foremost, the reallocation of the tasks within the existing resources to those activities that are under pressure, as well as streamlining of the asylum processes. These two measures do not entail upscaling resources.

The streamlining of asylum processes can be implemented in different ways, notably by establishing or strengthening a channelling system (also known as a triaging system). Through a channelling system, new applications are differentiated as early as possible in the process and channelled to different tracks at the examination stage. The aim is to enhance the efficiency of the examination process. The channelling system can be designed in various ways, and include different tracks, such as:

- A 'prioritisation' track (e.g. for vulnerable applicants, cases that are likely to be well-founded);
- a track for **accelerated procedures** (e.g. applicants from safe countries of origin);

⁽¹²⁾ Procedures in accordance with [Regulation \(EU\) No 604/2013](#) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 establishing the criteria and mechanisms for determining the Member State responsible for examining an application for international protection lodged in one of the Member States by a third-country national or a stateless person (recast) (OJ L 180, 29.6.2013).



- a track for a **specific caseload or profile** (e.g. where that caseload is important in terms of the number of cases and/or the office has specialised staff for that caseload);
- a track for the **admissibility procedure** (e.g. for applicants who have already received international protection in another Member State or for subsequent applications).
- a track for the **‘regular’ procedure**, i.e. for cases that do not fall in any of the other defined tracks.

The streamlining of the asylum procedure can also consist of developing case-processing strategies or tools, such as the development of caseload-specific templates or caseload-specific question catalogues. Introducing remote registration or remote interviews may also contribute to streamlining the asylum procedure ⁽¹³⁾.

Good practice: a scenario plan with three possible levels of emergency situations (green, yellow, red)

It is good practice to have three levels of emergency situations laid out in a scenario plan. Each scenario is associated with a colour, for example green, yellow and red and each colour denotes the level of severity of the scenario.

- The ‘green’ level corresponds to a situation of ‘normal business’ where no additional capacity is needed. It is important to define this ‘green’ level as a baseline scenario, allowing for an evaluation of the regular output of the different actors involved in contingency planning.
- The ‘yellow’ level corresponds to a situation where the influx of applicants or a disruptive event requires the process to be streamlined (e.g. introducing a channelling mechanism, allowing overtime, reallocation of staff, etc.) but without requiring external support.
- The ‘red’ level corresponds to a situation where the influx reaches such a high threshold or an event is of such disruptive nature that external support, and notably support from external authorities, is needed.

With regards to the inflow, the number of arrivals is not the sole criterion to determine the level of emergency situation. Also the nature of the caseload (familiarity of the administration with the type of claims, likeliness of the need for international protection) needs to be taken into account, as well as the duration of the increased inflow. If, for example, a ‘yellow’ level situation continues over a long period, streamlining the process may not be sustainable. A ‘yellow’ level situation may therefore need to be scaled up to ‘red’ level situation after a pre-defined period.

⁽¹³⁾ EASO, [Practical recommendations on conducting the personal interview remotely](#), May 2020; EASO, [Practical recommendations on conducting remote/online registration \(lodging\)](#), June 2020.



When an emergency occurs a response strategy needs to be developed that takes into account the specificities of the emergency situation to determine which possible measures will be activated and/or with which priority.

Good practice: present the scenario plan in an action matrix

The scenario plan should contain the main characteristics of an action matrix. An action matrix defines the actor responsible to activate measures as well as the actor responsible for implementing the measures in each scenario. An authority or unit at management level is responsible for determining which scenario is in force based on thresholds and, consequently, the measures that are triggered by the activated scenario. The action matrix is used in a flexible manner allowing for real time adjustments according to concrete circumstances.

If the contingency plan is activated, decisions and the implementation of the plan is documented.

See [Annex 1. Example of an action matrix.](#)

Standard 2. A contingency plan outlines different scenarios of increased influx and the measures to be activated for each scenario.

Indicators	Indicator 2.1. The scenario plan defines possible scenarios based on different thresholds of weekly or monthly arrivals of persons intending to apply for international protection or other events that may seriously hamper or disrupt the functioning of the asylum procedure.
	Indicator 2.2. The plan describes for each scenario the possible measures to be activated in line with the response strategy.
	Indicator 2.3. The plan details which actor is responsible for each measure and the timeframe within which the measure should be implemented.
	Indicator 2.4. There is one contingency and preparedness unit or team that bears the exclusive responsibility of determining the scenario currently in force based on the number of arrivals over a defined period. This unit is responsible for deciding to activate the measures triggered by the scenario.
	Indicator 2.5. An activity is conducted to outline an overview of the main internal and external actors that could be involved in the implementation of the contingency plan. Their contact information is stored with the contingency plan.



Good practice: roles and responsibilities

Responsible, accountable, consulted and informed (RACI) matrix. Roles and responsibilities can be captured in a RACI matrix to outline the involvement of various stakeholders and stakeholder groups in relation to the implementation of the contingency plan and responding to an emergency situation.

See [Annex 2. Example of a 'responsible, accountable, consulted and informed' matrix.](#)

<p>Indicator</p>	<p>Indicator 2.6. A handbook containing all information related to the contingency plan is available to the staff of all the authorities involved in the plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Additional remarks: <i>The handbook contains the scenario plan, the measures linked to each of the scenarios, the responsible actors and a contact list. The contact list contains the contact details of all actors involved in the contingency plan. Responsibilities of the different members are described and clear to all members. The handbook is administered and updated regularly by a designated unit.</i></p> <p><i>It is important that all the concerned stakeholders are aware of the plan as well as of the (new or additional) tasks assigned to them linked to the measures laid out in the scenario plan. All authorities and staff involved in the implementation of the contingency plan are aware and have access to the handbook. Each actor has access to the list and is aware of how to reach the other actors.</i></p> <p>See Annex 3. Example of a stakeholder/contact list</p>
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Good practice: checklists in the handbook

It is good practice to include checklists in the handbook that provide stakeholders with an overview of their tasks and responsibilities for each scenario.



Operationalisation: the practical implementation of the plan

Operationalisation refers to the practical implementation of contingency planning and preparedness measures in the asylum procedure.

Standard 3. Early warning system

A robust early warning system can indicate when and which resources should be allocated to handle crises. The aim of the early warning system is to inform on the state and capacity of the asylum and reception systems, including in periods of emergency situations. The system monitors the numbers and trends related to the relevant asylum and reception system indicators. The information from this system, after evaluation by the contingency planning and preparedness unit or team, may trigger the activation of specific contingency measures. In times of emergency, the regular information collection systems may need to be complemented by ad hoc mechanisms, such as additional resources, to ensure the continuous flow of information. In order to function effectively, the early warning system needs to be digital.

Qualified staff are able to use the early warning system and analyse the data to provide up-to-date situational awareness to the central authority responsible for contingency planning. The system can also provide an outlook on possible developments for the asylum and reception systems. In this context, a broad range of quantitative indicators are regularly monitored in the early warning system.

A first set of indicators pertain to the **state of play of the national asylum and reception systems**, such as the numbers of arrivals and the number of applications for international protection, delays between the making and the registration and/or lodging of applications, the issuance of first instance decisions, cases pending at first instance, reception capacity and the occupancy rate, vulnerability profiles and human resources. These indicators inform on the current state of play and capacity of your national asylum and reception system.

A second set relates to **migration drivers** (push, pull and enabling factors) in countries of origin, in transit countries and in the countries of destination. These drivers may have been linked to the situation in the countries of origin, such as the political situation, natural disasters, food shortages and the threat of (civil) war.

In addition, comprehensive **scenarios forecasting the medium-term prognosis** of the national asylum and reception situation are regularly formulated, updated and taken into account in the scenario planning and associated contingency plan. To formulate scenarios for medium term prognosis a holistic approach is needed, combining quantitative methods with qualitative data

The early warning system requires consultation with different (internal) stakeholders or units.

It is very important that the contingency and preparedness unit or team receives in a timely manner the necessary information to be able to assess if contingency plans need to be



activated. In the framework of an early warning system, it is advised to develop a numerical definition at the national level of what is considered an emergency situation that may require the activation of contingency measures. Triggers and thresholds should be well defined and indicators should be clearly characterised to enable a timely response. For example, one possible threshold could be a certain increase of arrivals over a defined period.

The EUAA has developed an Early Warning and Preparedness System (EPS). The EPS indicators focus on all the key stages of the CEAS; access to procedures, reception system, first instance determination, Dublin indicators, appeal procedures and resettlement ⁽¹⁴⁾.

Standard 3. A robust early warning system to detect potential emergencies or crises is established.	
Indicators	Indicator 3.1. An oversight mechanism to collect, analyse and disseminate data that is related to at least key indicators on the state of play of the asylum and reception systems is in place.
	Indicator 3.2. Mechanisms, including for the provisions of additional resources ⁽¹⁵⁾ , are in place to ensure the required flow of information in emergency situations.
	Indicator 3.3. Staff provided with the appropriate background information and training have been assigned the clear responsibility of monitoring the early warning system, analysing the data on the national situation, disseminating the results to the contingency and preparedness unit or team and to alert key stakeholders, if needed.
	Indicator 3.4. The contingency and preparedness unit or team receives timely the data, the analysis of the data and the key alerts in order to assess the situation and develop a response strategy on the measures to be activated linked to a contingency plan.
	Indicator 3.5. The early warning system supports the formulation of comprehensive scenarios for the medium term prognosis, which are taken into account for the development and the update of the scenario plan.

⁽¹⁴⁾ For more details on the EUAA analytical framework, see Albertinelli et al., [Forecasting asylum-related migration to the European Union, and bridging the gap between evidence and policy](#), International Organisation for Migration, *Migration Policy Practice*, Vol. X, No 4, September–December 2020 and the Data analysis and research pages on the EUAA website; <https://euaa.europa.eu/asylum-knowledge/data-analysis-and-research>.

⁽¹⁵⁾ When an emergency situation occurs, often in practice, data collection or associated processes are down prioritised or skipped. This would lead to the early warning system being ineffective by not being able to reflect the ongoing situation. Therefore, in such instances, resources need to be made available and allocated to ensure that the data and associated process continue. What these resources entails will depend on the information and early warning system of each country ranging from the data entry agents, data management officers to data analysts or registration officers, etc.



Good practice: monitoring of key indicators

Key indicators are monitored regularly and the frequency of the monitoring and reporting is increased to a weekly or daily basis at times of emergency to ensure that the contingency and preparedness unit or team and other managers receive timely information to adjust the response strategy if needed.

Standard 4. Training

During times of ‘normal business’ (i.e. the ‘green’ emergency situation level) there are training modules available and the staff receive specific training on the different areas of the asylum procedure. These training courses are based on a national curriculum. The staff follows the courses depending on the expertise required of them in their everyday tasks.

When the situation becomes more demanding (i.e. the ‘yellow’ level) trained staff can be used to carry out different tasks based on the training they have already received. When the needs increase to the level that external staff is hired, then more flexible tailored training modules are available for the staff to be trained quickly and efficiently, for example training for case officers on the use of templates.

Standard 4. Training plans and training modules tailored to the emergency situation, are available.**Indicator**

Indicator 4.1. Staff available to deliver training courses are identified and made readily available.

Indicator 4.2. Training modules that are shorter than the standard and that can be tailored to the different stages of the asylum procedure in the first instance are available for those staff members that are hired or re-allocated to support the procedure during an emergency situation.

Standard 5. Internal coordination

The coordination within the national asylum authority between internal units and departments during the emergency situation is crucial for the successful implementation of the contingency plan.

The units and departments in an asylum authority that are responsible for the implementation of a contingency plan can vary depending on the specific structure and organisation of the authority. Some of the units and departments commonly involved are listed below.

- **Crisis management unit/department.** This unit/department is typically responsible for overseeing and coordinating the implementation of the contingency plan. They assess the situation, activate the plan and ensure that all relevant departments and personnel are informed and involved in the response.
- **Operations unit/department.** During the emergency situation, the unit/department under the biggest pressure is the one that is responsible for registering/lodging and



examining (conducting the personal interviews and issuing decisions on) the applications for international protection ⁽¹⁶⁾. The operations unit/department can also have security functions if there is not a separate unit/department for security.

- **Data and analysis unit/department.** The unit/department that monitors and analyses the data needs to follow all the developments and changes regarding the numbers. This will define the time of the implementation of the contingency plan.
- **Human resources unit/department.** During the emergency period, the human resources department ensures appropriate staffing levels, training and support for the employees involved in the asylum process. They may recruit additional personnel, provide counselling services and address staff welfare issues.
- **IT and facility management unit/department.** These units/departments define the needs regarding technical equipment and any other facilities. At times of ‘normal business’, they are responsible for keeping track of all the available equipment and facilities as well as the equipment that is required during the emergency situation.
- **Procurement unit/department.** During the emergency situation, the procurement department ensures fast and efficient procedures for sufficient workspace, stationery and office supplies as well as technical and any other necessary equipment.
- **Communication and public relations unit/department.** This unit/department is responsible for managing internal and external communication during the emergency situation. They disseminate information to staff, applicants and the public. Their role includes media relations, public statements and ensuring consistent messaging to maintain transparency and manage public perceptions.
- **Legal / policy / asylum procedure unit/department.** These units/departments play a crucial role during the implementation of a contingency plan. They provide guidance on the legal framework, regulations, procedures related to asylum, processing applications and overseeing the overall functioning of the asylum process.

Standard 5. Ensure coordination within the national asylum authority between internal units and departments.

Indicator	<p>Indicator 5.1. There is an internal mechanism for the coordination between the different units/departments of the authority that are involved in the implementation of the contingency plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>An internal mechanism for the coordination between different units/departments involved in the implementation of a contingency plan can include various components and processes. There are different models for structuring this mechanism. One option is that the units/departments stay as they are and there is one manager responsible for coordinating the communication. Another is that there is one officer from each unit/department that is responsible for the communication or</i>
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⁽¹⁶⁾ Depending on the national set up, the registrations/lodgings and the interviews/decisions might be conducted by the same authority or a different one.



	<p><i>otherwise there is a team made up of staff from each unit/department that decides. The asylum authority needs to decide either to establish a dedicated organisation for the internal coordination or to use the regular one. Irrespective of the organisational structure, the mechanism must facilitate quick decision-making.</i></p> <p><i>The below listed are common elements that can be part of an internal coordination mechanism.</i></p> <p>Communication channels: <i>internal communication between units/departments is crucial to ensure high quality and efficiency during the response during a high-influx situation. Establish formal communication channels, such as regular meetings, lists of email addresses, instant messaging platforms or project management software to facilitate information sharing and collaboration between units/departments.</i></p> <p>Information sharing: <i>implement information sharing systems, such as shared databases, document repositories or collaborative platforms, where units/departments can access and update relevant information in real time.</i></p> <p>Liaison officers: <i>appoint liaison officers from each unit/department to serve as points of contact for coordination purposes. These officers facilitate communication, gather relevant information and ensure effective collaboration between their respective units/departments. Depending on the national context, this role can be assigned to the Head of Department/ Unit.</i></p> <p>Reporting: <i>reporting in a timely manner facilitates coordination, allows for the early identification of issues and supports decision-making at higher levels.</i></p> <p>Performance measurement: <i>define key performance indicators and metrics to assess the effectiveness of the coordination mechanism. Monitor and evaluate these metrics to help identify strengths and weaknesses and to enable adjustments and improvements as necessary.</i></p>
	<p>Indicator 5.2. The representative of the internal coordination mechanism reports both up and down the organisation.</p>

Good practice: hierarchical structure during the emergency situation

At the beginning of the emergency, the hierarchical structure of the organisation does not need to change, in the sense that the normal hierarchy can handle the situation and run the coordination mechanism. If the emergency situation continues, it is advised to establish a new structure, for example a new unit, or to use a dedicated (pre-identified) unit/department to coordinate the response. This unit can save time and limit bureaucracy.



Standard 6. External coordination and communication

To be able to manage emergency situations, asylum authorities depend on cooperation with different external stakeholders such as the reception and migration authorities, appeal boards, security authorities, regional and local authorities, civil society organisations and volunteers. To be able to manage exceptional situations, it is important to coordinate with all external actors. The purpose of coordination is to marshal and utilise the total resources available in the most efficient way possible to handle the situation at hand.

The principle of cooperation means that all authorities and organisations have a well-defined responsibility within the broader cooperation framework to ensure the best possible coordination and use of resources. A general framework of cooperation between the authorities can be stipulated by the political or administrative authority concerned. For more detailed arrangements, as well as cooperation between other stakeholders, it is necessary to work together while developing the contingency plan.

During the development of the plan, the authorities are advised to conduct broad research into which institutions could help to achieve the stipulated goals in the most efficient way. It is also advised to engage with the cabinet of the responsible minister or secretary of state for asylum on occasion during times of 'normal business', as standard practice. The purpose of this engagement is to explain the existing oversight mechanisms, the contingency plans and the needs of the administration in times of emergency, including the consequences if the needs are not met. This will ensure the full understanding of those who are politically responsible and allow for quick action when the influx occurs.

Standard 6. All external stakeholders involved in response to an emergency situation act in a coordinated manner and communication between them is ensured.

Indicators	<p>Indicator 6.1. Each authority involved in the implementation of the contingency plan has clearly defined tasks and responsibilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Additional remarks: <i>Keep in mind that the task and the responsibilities of the authorities might change during the implementation due to the evaluation and update of the plan. Despite this, the tasks and responsibilities should always be clear.</i></p>
	<p>Indicator 6.2. Channels are in place for communication within different authorities.</p>
	<p>Indicator 6.3. Channels are in place for communication with applicants for international protection, non-governmental organisations, the media and the public.</p>



Personal and material scale-up capabilities

An emergency situation requires a national asylum system to be able to rapidly scale up its asylum capabilities, including by increasing its human resources and its material capacities.

Regarding the increase of human resources, the national asylum system can establish pools of internal and/ or external staff, as well as a fast-track recruitment process for temporary agents.

Similarly, contingency planning for emergency situations in the asylum procedure involves ensuring that there are adequate material reserves available to respond to unexpected events that may arise during the process.

Standard 7. Human resources

Workflows to rapidly increase the workforce are established. These workflows can take different forms, i.e. workflows for the internal reallocation of staff to units that are under pressure, the secondment of staff from other national authorities, the fast recruitment of temporary staff through framework contracts and the recruitment of staff from external pools.

These measures can be integrated into the scenario plan defined in i.e. as responses to be activated in a given scenario. For example, the scenario plan could provide that:

- in a 'green' level scenario (i.e. normal business) no increase of human resources is required;
- in a 'yellow' level scenario, the reallocation of internal staff and, if needed, the secondment of staff to units that are under pressure is activated;
- in a 'red' level scenario, external recruitment is activated, in addition to the internal reallocation and secondment of staff.

It is important to bear in mind that for all of these measures, the increase of human resources requires the increase of the human resources unit itself.

Standard 7. There is a workflow in place that allows for the rapid increase of human resources required to implement the contingency plan.

Indicators

Indicator 7.1. A workflow is in place that allows for the rapid and temporary reallocation of staff.

- **Additional remarks:** *An emergency situation may result in shifting priorities and a sudden need for additional workforce for some specific tasks. In order to respond to such needs, workflows allowing for the rapid reallocation of staff to the priority tasks can be introduced. This flexibility can be introduced in job descriptions, with provisions anticipating that the concerned staff may have an extended or altered role in the event of an emergency situation.*



	<p>Indicator 7.2. A workflow is in place that allows secondments from other national authorities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>The determining authority could make agreements with other national authorities for the provision of support for administrative tasks, including bodies such as the labour office, the armed forces and the customs authorities, for example.</i>
	<p>Indicator 7.3. A process is in place for the fast recruitment of temporary staff through framework contracts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>The recruitment of temporary staff is a crucial component of contingency planning. A list of the possible job profiles required should the contingency plan be activated can be established in advance. The framework contracts are for fixed-term durations only and not an indefinite duration. The fast recruitment process should be completed in a timely manner.</i> <p><i>The recruitment of temporary staff can be used for different purposes, for example to provide an additional workforce for the core tasks or take on basic tasks to free up existing staff for more specialised tasks.</i></p> <p><i>National authorities also have the possibility to request support from the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA) and more precisely to benefit from the support of the already established EUAA Asylum Reserve Pool. This is a pool of 500 Member State experts that can be deployed in the event of disproportionate pressure on the asylum and reception system of a Member State. To ensure that EU Member States can receive the support of the Asylum Reserve Pool in a timely manner, as early as possible once the need arises, Member States should ensure that such support is possible under their national legal framework.</i></p>

Good practice: list of identified tasks and profiles

It is good practice to have a list of identified tasks and profiles that can be quickly integrated to support the national administration.

	<p>Indicator 7.4. When external expert pools are used, a workflow is in place that allows recruitment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional remarks: <i>Establish a pool of external staff composed of experts that are immediately deployable or under short notice. The pool may include different profiles of experts, some of whom are specialised in certain fields (e.g. gender-based violence).</i>
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	<p><i>The pool may notably include former staff members of the determining authority. The former staff members may have voluntarily left the determining authority or have been transferred to other authorities following professional development and career progression. The pool may also include recently retired staff, provided they have not reached the legal working age limit. The pool should not include former staff members who left the determining authority due to disciplinary measures. The external staff members should have received adequate training at the time of their service with the determining authority, and also if need be upon their recruitment from the expert pool, allowing them to perform the tasks they are assigned in the context of the contingency plan.</i></p>
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Standard 8. Workspaces

Standard 8. Additional workspace (including the increased possibility of remote working or interviewing) can be made available in the event of an emergency situation.

Indicator	Indicator 8.1. The authority has an overview of all the available workspaces on any given day.
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Good practice: a digital overview of available workspaces

Use an IT tool to keep track of all the available workspaces and define who is responsible for the tracking. The responsibility would usually lie with the IT and/or facility management unit/department.

Indicator	Indicator 8.2. Solutions are in place to increase the capacity of existing facilities in the event of an emergency situation. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Additional remark: <i>There is a plan in place that allows temporary solutions for workspace for staff during emergency situations, such as the use of containers or the use of space managed by other agencies</i>
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Good practice: remote work capabilities

Working remotely, for example from home, is an efficient solution if there is an issue of available workspace during an emergency situation. In this case, the administration must be ready to provide IT support and IT equipment to staff.



Good practice: the use of temporary facilities

Procurement contracts are already in place so that the administration is ready to immediately acquire temporary facilities such as containers. Additionally, contacts can be made with other governmental agencies who may be able to make workspace available.

Indicators	Indicator 8.3. There is a plan for developing more permanent solutions, such as new buildings, in case the emergency continues beyond a short period.
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Good practice: the use of containers

Containers are used for one year maximum. Beyond that time, the administration should provide structurally solid workspace in a solid structure for the staff.

Standard 9. Procurement procedures

The ability to quickly initiate procurement procedures, identify suitable suppliers or service providers, efficiently negotiate contracts, and mobilise the necessary resources is crucial for an effective contingency plan in the event of an emergency. Rapid procurement procedures are particularly important for contingency planning in the event of an emergency in many different areas, such as workspace, technical equipment, stationery and office supplies and interpretation services.

Standard 9. Rapid procurement procedures can be implemented in the event of emergency situation.

Indicators	Indicator 9.1. There are framework contracts with applicable standards, for example regarding workspace, containers, IT equipment and temporary workers for rapid procurement procedures that ensure a flexible, short-term response to the needs that emerge during an emergency situation.
	Indicator 9.2. There are internal guidelines for the staff responsible for conducting procurement procedures. The guidelines describe the details and the modalities for activating the framework contracts during rapid procurement procedures.
	Indicator 9.3. The staff responsible for conducting procurement procedures are trained and ready to act in an emergency situation.

Good practice: framework contracts

Framework contracts are in place and ready to be activated in an emergency situation. These contracts could concern, for example, the essential stationery and office in the event of an emergency.



Standard 10. Technical equipment

Standard 10. The necessary technical equipment can rapidly be made available in the event of an emergency situation.

Indicators	Indicator 10.1. The ICT infrastructure is functional and secure and includes a reliable internet connection, Wi-Fi, a mobile phone network and satellite uplink.
	Indicator 10.2. Provisions are in place to increase the capacity of the ICT infrastructure in the event of an emergency situation. This may include hardware such as computers, printers, scanners as well as software and a reliable and secure internet connection.

Standard 11. Interpretation services

Standard 11. The necessary interpretation services can rapidly be made available in the event of an emergency situation.

Indicators	Indicator 11.1. An up-to-date list of interpretation services is available detailing the capacity of the services and qualifications of the interpreters.
	Indicator 11.2. A clear plan details how to increase the capacity of interpretation services in the event of an emergency situation.

Good practice: remote interpretation

Modalities for remote interpretation are available from different hubs around the country.



Evaluation and testing of the plan

The contingency plan should be regularly updated and tested in practice. Information from process evaluation conducted by internal or external stakeholders may offer valuable information that can deepen the assessment process of the contingency plan.

It is advised that evaluation is conducted regularly even if no situation of increased influx has occurred. This process will help to identify gaps, shortcomings and detect any changes that have occurred since the establishment of the plan (e.g. institutional and legislative modifications). The evaluation will assist the authority in making the necessary changes to the contingency plan for the future responses.

In addition to periodic reviews, an evaluation must be carried out each time the contingency plan is activated. This is done to determine whether the measures in the plan produced the intended results. If the measures do not produce the intended results it will reveal the reasons for this.

Standard 12. Guidelines for evaluating the plans

Standard 12. Guidelines are in place detailing the evaluation of the plan.	
Indicators	Indicator 12.1. The implementation of the contingency plan is evaluated regularly.
	Indicator 12.2. Practical testing of the contingency plan is conducted on a regular basis.
	<p>Indicator 12.3. A mechanism for feedback is established in the guidelines of the plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional remarks: <i>The contingency plan contains a section on the mechanism for feedback and the results of the lessons learned are communicated to all the relevant staff. Different methods can be established to collect feedback such as holding meetings and running surveys.</i> <p><i>The setup may depend on whether the information is collected within the authority or if it comes from external stakeholders. It is advised to develop a system to help with the collection and analysis of new information from the implementation of the plan. The results of the analysis should be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.</i></p>
	<p>Indicator 12.4. The regular adaptation of the plan is ensured.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Additional remarks: <i>As the risks and the assessment of risks can change over time, the contingency plan must be adapted</i>



	<p><i>accordingly. The rules for the adaptation should be established in the contingency plan and should be based on the results of the analysis of the lessons learned. The changes must be implemented by all the relevant actors.</i></p> <p><i>Other relevant factors need to be taken into account during the implementation of the changes, such as the capacity of the authority and any legal implications. If these adaptations are not followed up by the authorities, the practical implementation of the plan may not be carried out properly and the determining authority may not be able to execute the appropriate responses during the emergency situation. This can happen, for example, if new legislation changes the authority responsible for the emergency reception facilities from a local authority to a regional one. In this case, if the contingency plan is not modified, there would likely be unnecessary communication with the previously responsible local authorities, which would delay the swift accommodation of the applicants.</i></p> <p><i>In another scenario, a practical test may reveal that the existing list of reserve personnel is not up to date and most of the people on the list could not be contacted directly because their contact details (such as telephone numbers and email addresses) were not correct. This list should be updated with the correct contact information and it should be communicated to all the relevant authorities. These adjustments should be followed up by all relevant actors. Any changes made should increase the preparedness of the authority, not reduce it.</i></p>
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Good practice: joint exercises, workshop and simulations

Run joint exercises, workshops and simulations for the practical testing of the contingency plan at least once every two years.

A joint simulation exercise focuses on testing and improving the response to an emergency influx arriving at a designated border crossing point. A scenario simulation is described below.

Scenario development. The exercise organisers create a scenario that simulates a high influx arriving at a specific border crossing point. The scenario includes details such as the number of asylum seekers arriving, the demographics of those arriving and any immediate needs they may have.

Participant selection and preparation. Representatives from relevant stakeholders involved in the emergency response are invited to participate in the simulation. Planning meetings are conducted to establish exercise objectives, roles and the responsibilities for each participant.



Simulation execution. The simulation exercise takes place over a designated period, typically spanning a few days. It can involve a combination of discussions on the simulated emergency situation (tabletop exercise), command post exercises and field activities. Participants assume their respective roles and work together to address the challenges posed by the emergency situation.

One example for practical testing would be to run a simulation on procedural issues. This could be done on the registration/lodging phase, for example, to determine whether the stakeholders involved are prepared to handle the number of applicants in the scenario and to channel the applicants to the applicable procedure (e.g. the accelerated procedure or the prioritisation of certain applications). Another example could involve a stress test of the interpreter hub, specifically whether the logistical and IT setup of the hub can function during an emergency situation when an increased number of remote interviews are conducted.



Annex 1. Example of an action matrix

Action	Which authority is responsible for deciding the launch of the action?	Which authority(-ies) is/are responsible for conducting the action?	When will the launch of the action be decided?	When will the action be completed?
1. <i>e.g. implement a triage system, reallocate internal staff to units under pressure</i>				
2.				
3.				
4.				
...				



Annex 2. Example of a ‘responsible, accountable, consulted and informed’ matrix

Tasks (examples)	Ministry of the interior	Asylum authority	Registration authority	Implementing partner
Planning				
Prevention				
Response				
<p>R: Responsible</p> <p>Those that do the work to complete the task.</p>	<p>A: Accountable</p> <p>The person who is ultimately answerable for the correct and thorough completion of the task, the one who ensures the prerequisites of the task are met and who delegates the work to those responsible.</p>			
<p>C: Consulted</p> <p>Those whose opinions are sought, typically subject matter experts and with whom there is two-way communication.</p>	<p>I: Informed</p> <p>Those who are kept up-to-date on progress, often only on completion of the task or deliverable and with whom there is only one-way communication.</p>			



Annex 3. Example of a stakeholder/contact list

Stakeholder subgroup	Stakeholder name	Role in the contingency plan	Point of contact	Availability	Deputy point of contact	Deputy availability
Governmental/administrative authority						
Ministries						
Authorities/Agencies						
Asylum authorities						
Determining authority						
Registration authority						
Operational partners						
Private Companies / sub-contractors						
Humanitarian organisations						
Civil society, other authorities and partners						
Humanitarian organisations						
International organisations						



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