



Evaluation of the EASO Training Curriculum

Final Report

20th December 2017



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Evaluation of the EASO Training Curriculum

Final Report

A report submitted by [ICF Consulting Services Limited](#)

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Executive summary

Purpose of the evaluation

ICF was contracted by EASO to evaluate its Training Curriculum and provide an analysis of its impact in Member States. In particular, the evaluation team analysed the impact, effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value of the Curriculum. The scope of the evaluation covered all EU+ States, as well as third countries who made use of the Curriculum in the context of the external dimension. The evaluation covered the period from 2012 to 2016.

Main findings

Supporting Member States in addressing their training needs

The Training Curriculum is relevant to the current needs of Member States

The evaluation found that, overall, the Training Curriculum, in terms of its content and its methodology, was relevant to the needs of Member States. Indeed, while the challenge in elaborating a common training programme that took account of the differences between Member States and in participants' background and experience was acknowledged, the Training Curriculum provided relevant content and offered the possibility of tailoring to national contexts.

The Training Curriculum has remained relevant over time to Member States' needs

In addition, over the last two years, the Curriculum proved its flexibility and adaptability over time and to changing circumstances. The update of the modules on offer and the introduction of new modules enabled the Curriculum to retain its relevance. While the migration crisis in 2015-2016 did not change Member States' training needs substantially, it created a need to train new, inexperienced hires and the nature of the claims for international protection changed in some Member States. Member States who received a particularly high number of claims for international protection could not always maintain levels of training, as it was seen as too time- and resource-consuming. However, the need for a balance between quantity and quality was frequently highlighted by stakeholders, and given the extreme circumstances prevailing during the evaluation period, the Curriculum was considered as having performed reasonably well.

A number of recommendations were identified by the evaluation team.

- **Provide further guidance to Member States on target groups for each module.** This would help ensure that the programmes are attended by those that will benefit most from the training. It will also help Member States to develop progression pathways where staff are encouraged to undertake particular training courses as they gain experience.
- **Further increase the flexibility of the Training Curriculum to ensure quick adaptability to changing circumstances.** This includes ensuring sufficient training resources for newly-hired staff and responding to training needs on specific subjects. Linked to this, and in order to address the training needs of both experienced and recently-hired case officers, modules could more systematically differentiate between basic and advanced materials. This could be particularly relevant for the core modules.

Providing Member States with a high-quality training programme

The Training Curriculum content and method were of high quality, despite some translation issues

The evaluation confirmed a general agreement on the overall high quality of the Training Curriculum and the high levels of enthusiasm of end-users, although this assessment varied from module to module. In general, the blended method used in the Curriculum was considered to be suited to its objectives. The e-learning session provided a good preparation for the face-to-face session, although, in some modules, its length and/or technicality were not always adapted to participants' workload and experience. Face-to-face sessions were assessed very positively as they provided a practical perspective on the subject of the module and a forum for exchange and discussion, including between practitioners in different services or with different levels of experience. One downside identified by participants concerned the absence of translated versions of some modules, which were only available in English, or the relatively low-quality of the translation offered on some of the modules, although the improvement of this situation over the evaluation period was generally highlighted.

In the train-the-trainer course, the didactics session was highlighted as providing the most added value amongst trainers with no previous teaching experience, although it was considered a bit short in comparison with the rest of the session.

The Training Curriculum was internally and externally coherent

EASO modules were found to provide a coherent pathway covering the topics relevant to participants' needs. Participants reported that they were generally complementary, although some overlaps between specific modules were identified. EASO has been working on reducing these overlaps via the update/upgrade of the modules concerned. The Training Curriculum also appeared to provide a complementary training offer to other national and international trainings available. The EASO Training Curriculum was perceived as the only structured training opportunity that comprehensively covers all necessary topics, while other trainings tended to be used as supplements.

A number of recommendations were identified by the evaluation team.

EASO should:

- **Extend the length of the didactics session in train-the-trainer sessions**, in particular for those participants who do not have previous teaching/training experience. To increase the effectiveness of this measure, EASO should consider introducing a requirement for participating trainers to have previously followed the relevant module in order to ensure that they have the required subject knowledge to take part in the train-the-trainer session. Likewise, trainers' manual can be enhanced to strengthen the didactics content.
- **Keep up the efforts undertaken to control the quality and thoroughly review the quality of the translation** of the modules. Whenever possible, trainers could support the quality control and regular check of existing translations, thereby helping to improve quality/robustness.
- **Continue its work aiming to address the overlaps identified between the modules in order to ensure that they are complementary**. This is important as the modules are quite time consuming and many stakeholders have identified a lack of time as one of the main obstacles to their participation in the Training Curriculum.

Member States should:

- **Support/Collaborate with EASO in its continuous effort to ensure the quality and thorough review of module translations.** Trainers could be involved in quality checks on the translation of modules for their respective Member States.
- **Reduce the costs involved in translating EASO modules** by sharing translation costs between Member States speaking the same language.

Building mutual trust and cooperation between Member States

The Training Curriculum contributed to the mutual trust between national administrations

The knowledge amongst civil servants in the field of asylum that their counterparts had followed the same training fostered their trust in other asylum systems in the EU. In general, the knowledge that uniform standards were taught across the EU enabled case officers to understand that their daily work was part of a broader, common system, and that equivalent quality standards were applied across the EU.

Some evidence shows that common standards taught across the EU via the Training Curriculum may positively influence the implementation of legal instruments such as the Dublin III Regulation. Similar observations were made by COI officers who had taken the COI module regarding the use of COI compiled and analysed by other Member States. Several participants in EASO modules expressed an interest in the inclusion of additional comparative information on Member States' diverging practices or interpretations.

The Training Curriculum fostered cooperation between Member States

The Training Curriculum also created opportunities for cooperation between Member States. At trainer level, the train-the-trainer model enabled participants to interact and exchange with their counterparts in other Member States. In addition, some Member States made use of the opportunity to organise joint trainings with neighbouring countries. However, this was mostly aimed at participants whose role had an international dimension or in the case of regional training activities.

In addition, support to Member States facing an important pressure on their asylum system was offered in the form of training activities, especially in the context of Emergency and Special support. Capacity issues were flagged by Member States who did not receive Emergency and Special support to contribute to the sharing of responsibilities.

A number of recommendations were identified by the evaluation team.

EASO should:

- **Facilitate regional cooperation between Member States** with identified training needs and encourage the mobility of trainers to other Member States speaking the same language and/or with similar asylum systems.
- **Incorporate different national practices in Member States more systematically** into each module, particularly to facilitate the exchange of good practices.
- **In modules where this is not currently the case, structure the content of the e-learning session** in a way that presents first elements to EU standards, and then elements relating to national practices and interpretations. Diverging practices should be presented in the context of different Member States so as to provide a broad overview of national practices across the EU.

Contributing to the fairness, rapidity and quality of asylum decisions in the EU

The Training Curriculum increased the fairness of asylum decisions within Member States by encouraging the convergence of practices

The use of the Training Curriculum increased harmonisation of practices within Member States and a more systematic approach to asylum decisions, especially in those Member States that did not previously have centralised training programmes. This guaranteed a fairer treatment of applicants for international protection within a given Member States. **Divergences in national practices** was acknowledged as an issue by several stakeholders. Stakeholders considered that solving this problem went beyond the possible impact of the Training Curriculum.

The Training Curriculum had limited impact on the harmonisation of practices across the EU due to external factors

When it comes to the harmonisation of practices across the EU, however, a number of external factors, including political priorities and national interpretations of asylum law remained the primary influences over the outcome of asylum decisions. Training could not address these issues, especially since the format of the Training Curriculum allows for the tailoring of the modules to national law and practices in the face-to-face sessions. In addition, the need to find a “common denominator” to the standards presented in the modules led, in some cases, to lower standards than those in place in some Member States being taught in some modules. One additional issue, which could be addressed by the Curriculum with time, was the remaining diverging practices taught by some managers and supervisors who started in their role prior to the introduction of the Curriculum and therefore continued to teach ‘outdated’ practices and standards.

The Training Curriculum was an efficient tool for national administrations to train their staff, although its efficiency could be improved

The central development of the EASO modules, the mixed delivery methods, EASO’s expertise and support in term of resources all helped to ensure the efficiency of the Training Curriculum and enabled Member States to realise economies of scale and concentrate their resources on other aspects of the asylum procedure.

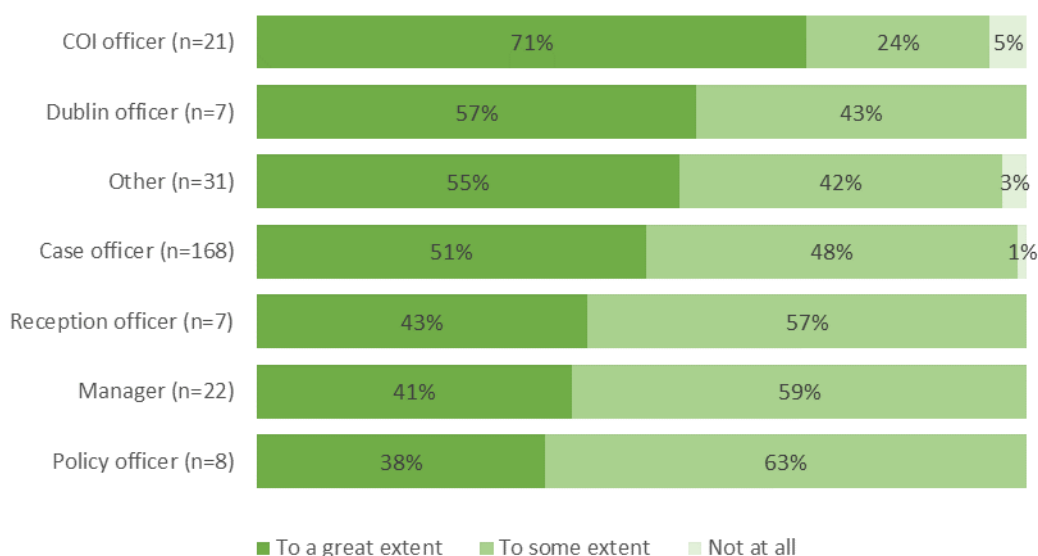
The main challenge identified by the evaluation concerned the time required to complete the modules (i.e. training being too time consuming to manage in relation to the workload), which led to some line managers being unwilling to release staff for training. Likewise, some trainers found it challenging to tailor the face-to-face sessions adequately because of their workload. In addition, the organisation of train-the-trainer sessions at EASO’s premises was time- and resource-consuming for Member States that were not well connected to Malta. Again, persuading Heads of Units to release staff for the Experts and Trainers’ pool, and the relatively short time to respond to requests were flagged as challenges.

The Training Curriculum improved participants’ knowledge of EU standards and led to changes in approaches in national administrations

The TC contributed to improving participants’ knowledge and understanding of the EU acquis, as well as of international and ECHR standards, even when they had some pre-existing knowledge on these topics. The complementary roles of the e-learning and face-to-face sessions was generally highlighted by participants.

In the online survey, a vast majority of participants indicated that their knowledge and understanding of key issues had improved to some or to a great extent following their participation in the TC. The greatest level of satisfaction with the improved knowledge and understanding was reported by COI officers. More than half of the case officers who responded considered that following the modules had improved their knowledge and understanding of EU standards to a great extent.

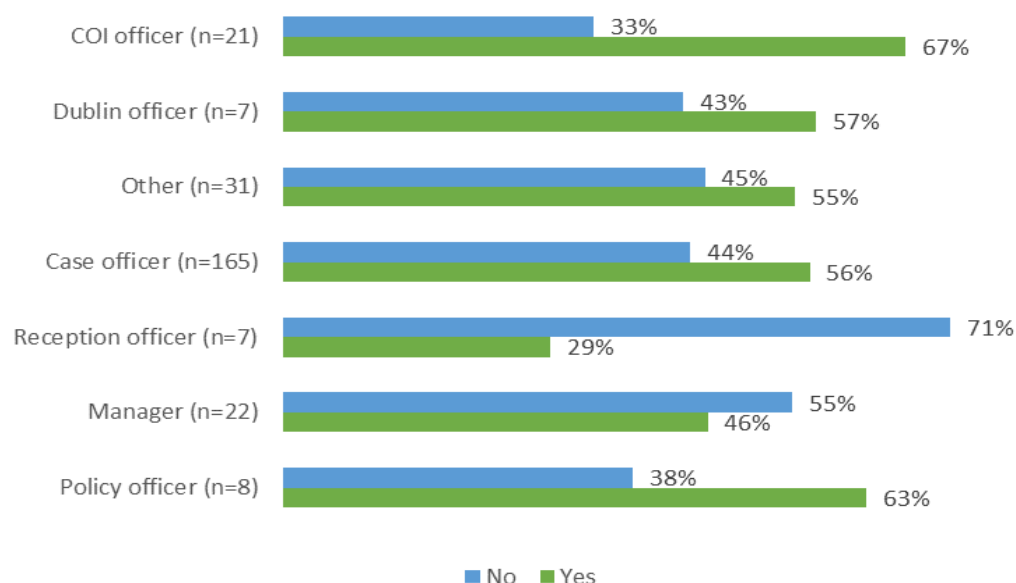
Figure ES1.1 To what extent do you believe that taking part in the EASO Training Curriculum directly improved your knowledge and understanding of the key issue covered by the module(s)?



Source: ICF survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q.21. N=264. Not asked to trainers.

This improved knowledge translated into changing practices in some of the Member States. A majority of the categories of stakeholders who responded to the online survey reported that they had changed their practice as a direct consequence of their participation in the Training Curriculum. This was particularly true for COI, Policy, Dublin and Case Officers. However, there are indications that participation in the Training Curriculum was less likely to influence practice amongst reception officers and managers.

Figure ES1.2 Have you changed your approach to any aspect of your role as a direct consequence of each of the modules (if relevant) you attended?



Source: ICF survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q.24. N=261. not asked to trainers – no responses from the 'other' category.

Three main impacts were identified that influenced the quality of asylum decisions overall:

- The blended methodology of the Training Curriculum facilitated the translation of theoretical knowledge into practice.
- Modules provided innovative and structured tools and approaches to participants. This was particularly true in relation to 'methodological' modules such as the Interview Techniques and Evidence Assessment modules;
- The Training Curriculum acted as an "eye-opener" for participants on issues such as vulnerable groups, but also in terms of the level of their expectations of applicants in the context of interviews.

In some Member States, non-State actors were involved in the delivery of training activities. In particular, UNHCR was involved in the delivery and monitoring of training activities, and its materials were used as a complement in some Member States. In addition, specialised NGOs were involved in the delivery of some modules to share their expertise.

A number of recommendations were identified by the evaluation team.

EASO may:

- If the new Regulation for an EU asylum agency is adopted, **make use of its new monitoring functions to promote a minimum use** of the Training Curriculum modules, in particular core modules, in all EU Member States. In particular, the impact of the Curriculum could be monitored by disseminating an online survey by the EASO Training Cockpit to participants six months after they have completed the module. EASO could provide national feedback reports to Member States on the basis of the results of the survey.

EASO should:

- Provide **access to the online platform for a reasonably longer period of time prior to the face-to-face session** so that participants can still complete the e-learning session in periods of important workload or if they are absent from the office during that time (e.g. on annual leave).
- **Organise more regional train-the-trainer sessions.** This would reduce Member States costs for sending staff to the training. Providing regional training will enable countries to send more delegates and trainers to the sessions.
- **Develop guidance to help Member States measure the impact of the EASO training** on improving the efficiency, quality and consistency of their work. By collecting tangible information on impact, NCPs will be better able to demonstrate to heads of units the value of EASO training and consequently encourage them to send more staff on training.

Member States should:

- **Provide enough time and resources for national trainers to tailor face-to-face sessions** with examples relating their national context, case law and legislation as well as to the characteristics of a particular group of participants (e.g. the experience levels of its members);
- **Make sure that senior officials**, especially when they have responsibilities as managers, **also take part in training sessions** along with less experienced participants. This would contribute to raising awareness amongst senior staff about the Training Curriculum, and reduce the risk of different standards and practices being taught locally.
- **Ensure that adequate time, human and material resources are made available** so staff, in particular trainers, can fully participate and/or implement training activities. A good practice identified in some Member States was to allocate specific time for training in staff members' monthly planning. This will reduce the pressure on participants to complete the e-learning element quickly and also encourage more line managers to send their staff to training, as they recognise it will not have an undue impact on their performance targets.
- **Make sure that trainees receive enough information in advance about the length of training session, in particular e-learning.** This will raise awareness among future trainees on the time required for the training and eventually help them managing their time and expectations.

Creating long-term effects in national administrations

Structures to support sustainability are in place, but some operational improvements would enhance sustainability over time

One of the key factors to ensure/promote sustainability and ownership of EASO training activities at national level was Member States' engagement in the development of modules. The sustainability of the effects of the EASO Training Curriculum could, however, be improved in several Member States. Indeed, the long-term effects of the modules were somewhat hampered by technical limitations such as the time-limited access to online content or the unavailability of handbooks for some modules.

A number of recommendations were identified by the evaluation team.

EASO should:

- **Keep the online content of modules accessible for an extended period of time after the face-to-face session.** Although this on-line material may not be regularly updated, this practice still would enable participants to go back to the online content if they need to refresh their knowledge of this information to perform their daily work.
- **Extend the number of handbooks for all modules on the basis of the handbook provided for the Inclusion module,** as well as any other relevant printed material. Alternatively, print-ready handbooks can be made available online for all modules.
- Support Member States with the organisation and delivery of short follow-up/refreshment face-to-face sessions so previous participants can keep their knowledge and practice up-to-date.

Developing the external dimension of EASO's external action

The external dimension of the Training Curriculum was assessed positively, despite some remaining challenges

Despite an overall positive assessment of the use of the Training Curriculum in some third countries, a few obstacles to the Curriculum's impact on the external dimension were identified. These related mainly to difficulties encountered in organising training sessions in third countries via the national authorities there. Where such countries were at the same time countries of origin of applicants for international protection, this made the use of the modules there ambiguous, and some country-specific case studies used in the modules made the delivery of those modules problematic in the third-countries referenced. Finally, another issue was the resources needed for Member States to contribute to the development of the external dimension of the Curriculum, often requiring certain language skills and knowledge, which made it less accessible to some Member States.

A number of recommendations were identified by the evaluation team.

EASO should:

- **Adapt the content of modules used in the external dimension to the national system** of the third-country receiving the training. This includes selecting case studies that do not include examples targeting the third-country in question.

Overview of the methodology

The methodology applied by ICF was structured in three phases:

- The Inception Phase, during which the methodology and research tools were refined by the evaluation team in consultation with EASO, and preliminary contacts were established with relevant stakeholders;
- The Data Collection Phase, during which the evaluation team conducted desk research, face-to-face interviews in a selection of EU Member States validated by EASO (AT, BE, DE, EL, FI, FR, IT, NL, SE, SK), and ran an online survey in all EU+ States and two third countries; and
- The Analysis Phase, during which the evaluation team triangulated and analysed the evidence collected in the previous phase, and formulated appropriate conclusions and recommendations.

Throughout the assignment, regular contacts were organised between ICF and EASO in the form of catch-up phone calls every two weeks and regular face-to-face meetings in Malta.

The evaluation was conducted by a team of researchers with thorough knowledge and experience in both the asylum and the training fields. The combination of an online survey circulated to all EU+ States and a selection of third countries with face-to-face interviews in selected case study countries enabled the evaluation team to reach out to a large number of stakeholders. The online survey provided the team with quantitative evidence to answer the evaluation questions, which was completed with the qualitative evidence collected in face-to-face interviews. The evidence collected was particularly rich due to stakeholders' marked interest in the Curriculum and its evolution.

The main challenges identified in the course of the evaluation related to the identification and contacts with participants in the online survey and face-to-face interviews. In particular, identifying former participants in EASO training activities was challenging, especially since some of them may have changed jobs since. Contacts with Training NCPs in the Member States helped with reaching out to participants, but also limited ICF's possibility to monitor the number of people who had been contacted, especially to circulate the survey link. The timing of the data collection phase, which largely took place over the summer period, limited the availability of stakeholders for interviews and for taking the survey. Interviews were initially foreseen in Tunisia, but could not be arranged due to the difficulty of coordinating the organisation of interviews in the absence of a contact point.

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose, context and scope of the evaluation

This assignment aimed to evaluate the EASO Training Curriculum and to provide a comprehensive and concise analysis of its impact in Member States. In particular, the evaluation team examined the Curriculum's impact, relevance and effectiveness, efficiency and the extent to which it has provided added value at the EU level, as set out in the Terms of Reference.

The scope of the evaluation was clarified during the kick-off meeting that was held between EASO and ICF between the 17th and 19th of January 2017 in Malta.

Table 1.1 below presents the main elements of the scope of the evaluation as updated after the kick-off meeting.

Table 1.1 Updated scope of the evaluation

Scoping element	In scope	Out of scope
Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All 28 Member States Third countries who have made use of the Curriculum in the framework of the external dimension (i.e. Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan) <p>Although the ToR does not require the inclusion of Norway and Switzerland, it was agreed during the kick-off meeting that working arrangements regarding these countries would be included in the scope of the study.</p>	Third countries that did not take part in EASO training activities
Time-frame	2012- to date ¹	Training activities implemented under the pilot project initiative EAC (before January 2012)
Type of activities	<p>The Evaluation focuses on EASO's training activities, in particular the EASO Training Curriculum. As such it includes the following activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of common training materials (TC modules, training manuals, training handbooks) Organisation and delivery of train-the-trainer sessions in Malta, EASO regional trainings, trainings within the external dimension and within EASO Operational Support E-learning platform/e-courses Organisation and delivery of subsequent national trainings 	<p>Other EASO activities such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information and analysis support Other activities than under the provision of Permanent Support e.g. the Quality Matrixes, production of COI reports, practical cooperation meetings, etc. Other activities than those including a training component under the provision of Emergency and Special Support Other activities than training in the framework of the external dimension

¹ While the time frame covered by the evaluation runs from 2012 to the start of the evaluation (end of 2016), the evaluation team will take into account in their assessment the important changes that occurred in Member States' asylum units during the evaluation period, due to the migration crisis.

Scoping element	In scope	Out of scope
Legislative instruments	<p>The main legislative instruments which underpin the CEAS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Dublin Regulation ■ RCD ■ APD ■ QD ■ EASO Regulation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Temporary Protection Directive ■ ERF/AMIF ■ Eurodac Regulation (under eu-LISA's competence though it is invoked in the module on the Dublin Regulation)
Stakeholder type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EU level ■ EASO staff, e.g. Office of the Executive Director, Training Unit (head of the unit and relevant policy officers), EASO Training Cockpit, Certification and Accreditation Working Group ■ European Commission (Asylum Unit) ■ NGOs, ECRE ■ International level ■ UNHCR ■ National level ■ EASO NCPs ■ Training and Expert Pool (training experts, content experts, didactic experts) ■ National trainers ■ Case officers ■ Managers of asylum units ■ Policy officers ■ COI researchers ■ Reception officers ■ NGOs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ All other ■ National courts and tribunals do not receive training as such; and fall under the competence of the Asylum Support Unit.

Source: ICF

1.2 Objectives of the final report

This final report presents ICF's analytical approach to the study, its methodology, and its findings, by following the tasks below:

- Providing an overview of each step of the methodology followed by the evaluation team from the start of the assignment and highlighting its strengths and weaknesses;
- Providing an updated overview of key issues relating to the EASO Training Curriculum, based on the research conducted by the evaluation team and information collected during the data collection phase;
- Presenting the findings on each of the evaluation questions based on the analysis and triangulation of the data collected via desk research, interviews, and the online survey;
- Presenting conclusions and recommendations based on the evaluation findings;
- Providing a series of annexes including the full data collected in the survey, bibliography, and all relevant documents and information.

1.3 Structure of the final report

The final report includes:

- An executive summary of the report presenting an overall synthesis of the findings, conclusions and recommendations on the study;
- A step-by-step overview of the methodology followed by the evaluation team since the beginning of the assignment;
- An overview of the context of the evaluation, including a general presentation of EASO's Training Curriculum and of its intervention logic;
- A presentation of the findings on each evaluation criterion; and
- Conclusions and recommendations based on the main findings of the report.

2 Methodological approach

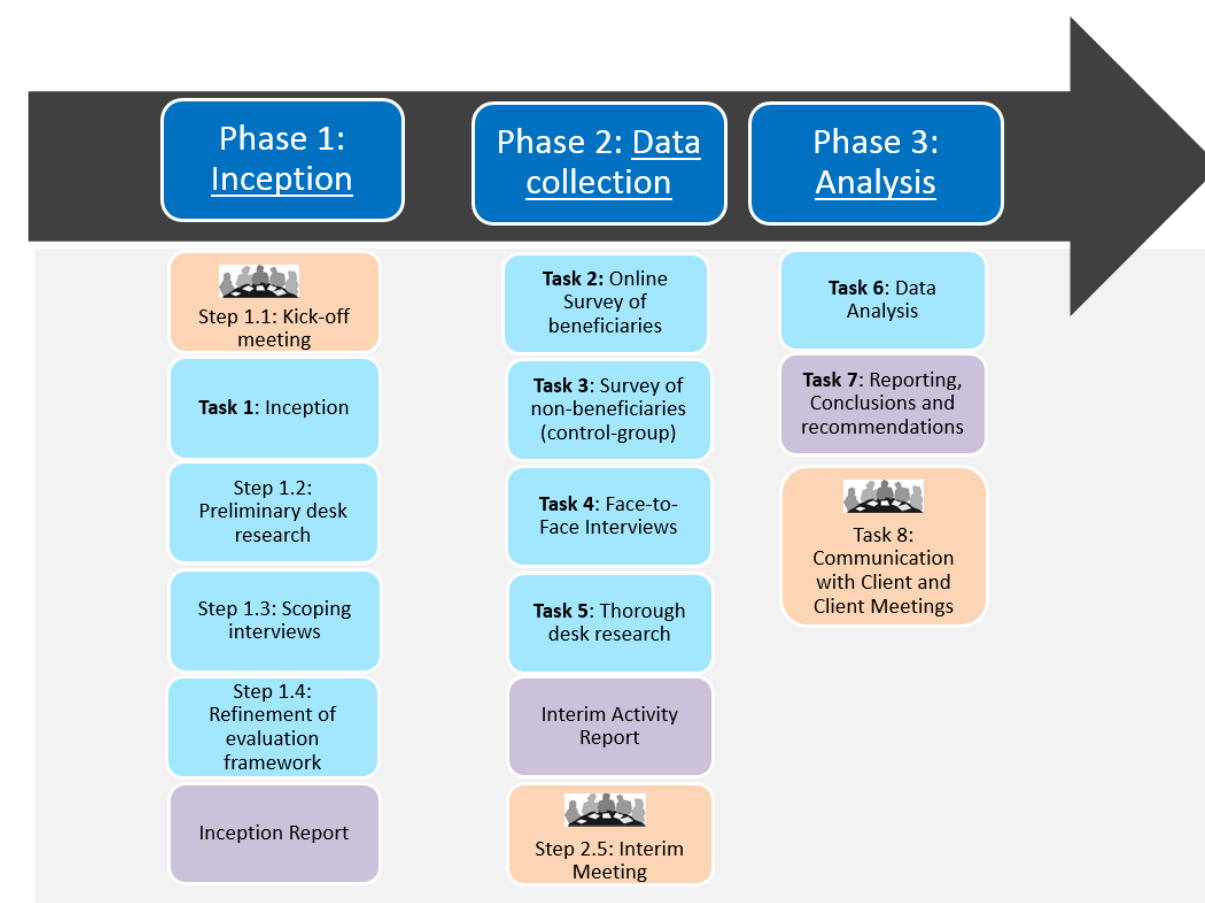
This section outlines each of the methodological steps followed by the evaluation team to collect, analyse and triangulate the data collected during the data collection phase. It also examines the strengths and weaknesses of the proposed methodology in the light of the achievements and challenges observed in the course of the assignment.

2.1 Description of the methodology

2.1.1 Overview

The implementation of the evaluation was structured in three phases composed of a series of tasks and steps. Figure 2.1 presents an overview of these phases and of each of the corresponding deliverables. Some of the tasks presented below were conducted in parallel.

Figure 2.1 Overview of the methodology



Source: ICF

Since the beginning of the assignment, and following the project kick-off meeting in January 2017, EASO has been kept updated of the progress of the research via two face-to-face meetings held in Malta on the 23rd March 2017 and on the 27th July 2017, as well as regular progress updates held over the phone between ICF and EASO. During these regular meetings, EASO was provided with an update on the latest developments in the evaluation process and made aware of challenges met by the

evaluation team. In particular, challenges in contacting stakeholders and obtaining responses to the online survey were flagged by ICF, and EASO supported the evaluation team by providing and establishing contacts, as well as by promoting the online survey with the national authorities concerned.

2.1.2 Desk research

In addition to the list of documents presented in the proposal, the evaluation team undertook complementary desk research in the Inception and Data Collection phases. A complete list of the documents reviewed for the purpose of this assignment is presented in Annex 2.

2.1.3 Face-to-face interviews

A selection of the Member States and third countries to be consulted via face-to-face interviews was elaborated by the evaluation team and fine-tuned in agreement with EASO during the kick-off meeting. The selection of Member States was drawn on the basis of a range of criteria, such as the Member States' geographical position, the size and structure of its asylum unit, specificities in the asylum procedure, the extent to which the Member State's asylum system faces pressure, the nature of its involvement in EASO training activities and the extent to which it implements national trainings. In addition, Tunisia was chosen as an example of a third-country where the external dimension of the Training Curriculum was implemented.

The following 10 Member States were identified as particularly relevant in the context of the evaluation, following the selection criteria listed above:

Table 2.1 Member States selected for interviews

Member States	Rationale
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High increase in the use of the EASO TC (number of training participants and training sessions) in 2015 ■ High pressure on the asylum system since 2015 ■ Large national asylum unit (1,284)
Belgium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Overall active user of the EASO TC, and high multiplier effect at national level ■ External dimension: use of the EASO TC in Burundi
Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High increase of the number of participants in 2015 ■ High multiplier effect ■ Pressure on the national asylum system ■ Small to medium asylum unit (grew from 107 in early 2015 to 515 in early 2016)
France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase in the use of the EASO TC (number of training participants and training sessions) in 2015 ■ Variation in implementation of the EASO TC over time ■ Medium to large national asylum unit (800)
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Increase in the use of the EASO TC (number of training participants and training sessions) since 2013, with a peak in 2015 ■ High pressure on the asylum system ■ Large national asylum unit (1,760) ■ Organised regional trainings
Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Variation in implementation of the EASO TC over time (peak in 2013, followed by a decrease in number of participants in 2014 and increase in 2015)

Member States	Rationale
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ High pressure on the asylum system ■ Received Emergency and Special Support from EASO
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use of the EASO TC started in 2014, with a high increase in 2015 ■ Received Emergency and Special Support from EASO ■ Medium asylum unit (168)
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Constant increase in the use of the EASO TC with a peak in 2015 following new hires ■ Relatively large asylum unit ■ Organised regional trainings
Slovak Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use of both national trainings and EASO TC ■ Cooperation with the Czech Republic in delivering joint trainings ■ Variable use of the EASO TC over the years with an increase from 2014
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Constant use of the EASO TC and yearly increase in number of participants and training sessions until 2014, then decrease in 2015 ■ Received Special Support from EASO ■ High pressure on the asylum system ■ Large asylum unit (1,609)

Interviews have been completed in all but one of these Member States (BE, DE, EL, FI, FR, IT, NL, SE, SK). Austria provided written answers to the questionnaires by some categories of stakeholder (Training NCP and trainers). Other stakeholders in Austria had not contributed to the study at the time of submission of the final report.

Interviews with Tunisian officials could not be organised, due to difficulties in identifying a contact point and finding a suitable date for all former participants in EASO training activities. However, Tunisian officials' perspectives were collected in the online survey. Table 2.2 below presents an overview of the number and type of stakeholders who have been interviewed in each Member State.

In some instances (highlighted in red), the number of interviews conducted was lower than the initially planned number. In such cases, national researchers could indeed not meet with all the stakeholders due to their workload (AT, NL). EASO was informed regularly about the state of play of the consultation and challenges encountered by the evaluation team.

Table 2.2 Overview of the stakeholder consultation

Member State	NCP	Case officers	Trainers	COI officer	Reception officer	Operational manager	Strategic manager	Policy officer	Total
Austria	1	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	4
Belgium	1	5	3	1	0	1	2	0	13
Finland	1	4	2	1	1	1	0	1	11
France	1	5	6	1	0	1	1	0	15
Germany	1	4	4	4	0	1	1	0	15
Greece	1	4	0	0	0	1	1	0	7
Italy	1	4	2	1	0	1	0	0	9

Member State	NCP	Case officers	Trainers	COI officer	Reception officer	Operational manager	Strategic manager	Policy officer	Total
Netherlands	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	5
Slovak Republic	1	5	6	1	0	1	0	1	15
Sweden	1	6	4	1	0	1	1	1	15
Tunisia	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: ICF

In addition to interviews conducted in the Member States, the study team interviewed a representative of UNHCR's liaison office with EASO in Malta in July 2017, as well as a representative of DG HOME of the European Commission in September 2017 and a representative of ECRE in October 2017.

The study team agreed with EASO that, for the purpose of the final report, the findings of the interviews would be attributed to stakeholder types only, without reference to the Member State of the author of the statement. This will guarantee the anonymity of the statements. Two versions of the final report were submitted to EASO. The first version included full references to the authors of the statements used, in order to facilitate the tracing back of specific statements by the evaluation team in case they need to be clarified. In the second version, all references to individual Member States were replaced by references to categories of Member States. Where relevant, the following categories were used to identify the main characteristics of Member States referred to:

- Member States with a particularly high pressure on their asylum system (AT, DE, EL, NL, SE)
- Member States with a medium pressure on their asylum system (BE, FI, FR)
- Member States who received operational support from EASO (EL, IT)
- Member States whose use of the Curriculum has increased in recent years (AT, FI)
- Member States who actively use the Curriculum (BE, NL, SE)
- Member States who are involved in regional cooperation activities (AT, DE, SK)

2.1.4 Online survey

The draft questionnaire for the online survey was finalised and piloted on the 31st May 2017 among five civil servants working in the Belgian asylum authority, the Office of the Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRA – CGVS). The aim was to gather feedback on the content of the questions as well as to assess the accessibility and user-friendliness of the questionnaire and to do so in time to make any changes before its launch. The feedback received from those involved was positive and no further changes to the questionnaire were required.

Following the pilot phase, the survey was launched on Monday 19th June 2017 in the EU 28 Member States as well as Norway, Switzerland, Georgia and Tunisia. On the 23rd June 2017, a French and a German version of the questionnaire were also launched. The survey ran for a total of three months and was finally closed on 18th

September 2017. A total of 372 (314 fully completed and 58 partially completed) responses were received (A5.1). These latter responses are the explanation as to why some of the survey questions in the core of the report present a response rate that is higher than the total number of (fully) completed responses.

The proposal initially foresaw that contact details of participants in training modules would be provided to the evaluation team so that the link could be circulated directly to them. During the kick-off meeting in January 2017, ICF discussed with EASO the best way to disseminate the survey link to participants. EASO made clear that it could not provide ICF with contact details for data protection reasons, and it was agreed that Training National Contact Points (NCPs) would be best placed to assist ICF with the dissemination process. Risks relating to indirect dissemination methods were highlighted by ICF both in its proposal and during the kick-off meeting (see Section 2.2 for more information).

There were two methods for disseminating the questionnaire: by email either directly by ICF or by the NCPs themselves.

- In Cyprus, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Tunisia, ICF contacted participants directly on the basis of contacts provided by the NCPs.
- In Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland NCPs sent out the surveys directly to participants.

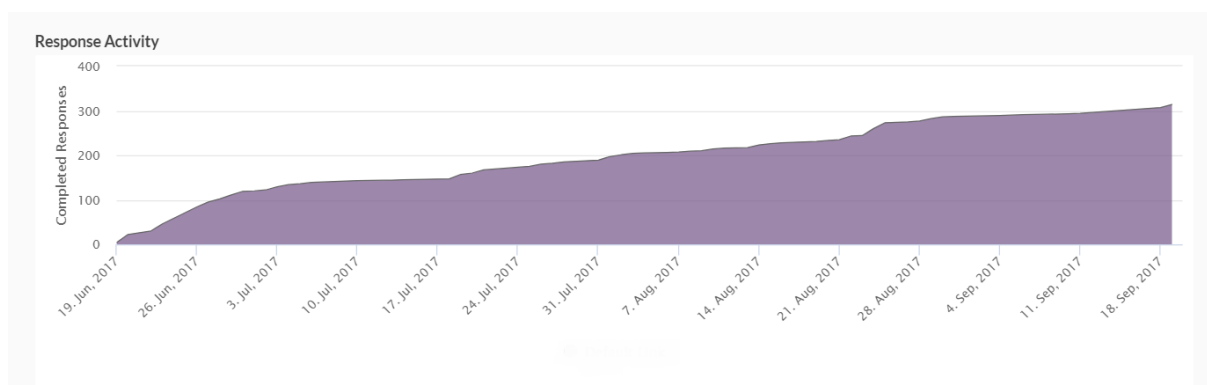
ICF set up a functional mailbox dedicated to managing communication related to the survey in question and asked NCPs to keep the mailbox in copy of any correspondence so as to monitor progress. Not all NCPs followed this suggestion however, making it impossible for ICF to establish precisely how many people had been contacted by the NCPs or if indeed the survey had been disseminated at all. This information has since been requested to the NCPs concerned.

About 172 participants and NCPs were contacted directly by ICF. ICF also requested all NCPs to provide them with information about the number of participants to whom they circulated the survey link. However, not all of them provided this information, which is why an estimate of the total number of people finally reached by the survey cannot be provided. On the basis of the information provided by these latter NCPs, ICF identified 523 participants that had been contacted by NCPs at the time the report was submitted.

The Dutch NCP was not given an authorisation to circulate the survey to the entire Immigration and Naturalisation Service (IND) due to their high workload during the evaluation. For this reason, the link to the online survey was only circulated to those civil servants who took part in the face-to-face interviews (see Section 2.1.3).

The evaluation team worked closely with EASO to maximise the response rate to the online survey. In particular, they contacted Training NCPs directly via email and over the phone to promote the survey. Response rates from each Member States were monitored on a weekly basis so that missing countries or countries with a low response rate could be sent a reminder. The evolution of responses throughout can be observed in Figure 2.2 below. This figure shows an increase in the number of responses from the end of August, which may be explained by the combination of the end of the summer period and the additional efforts undertaken by the evaluation team to reach out to NCPs and participants. EASO also provided additional assistance to the evaluation team by making direct contact with some of the NCPs to request their support.

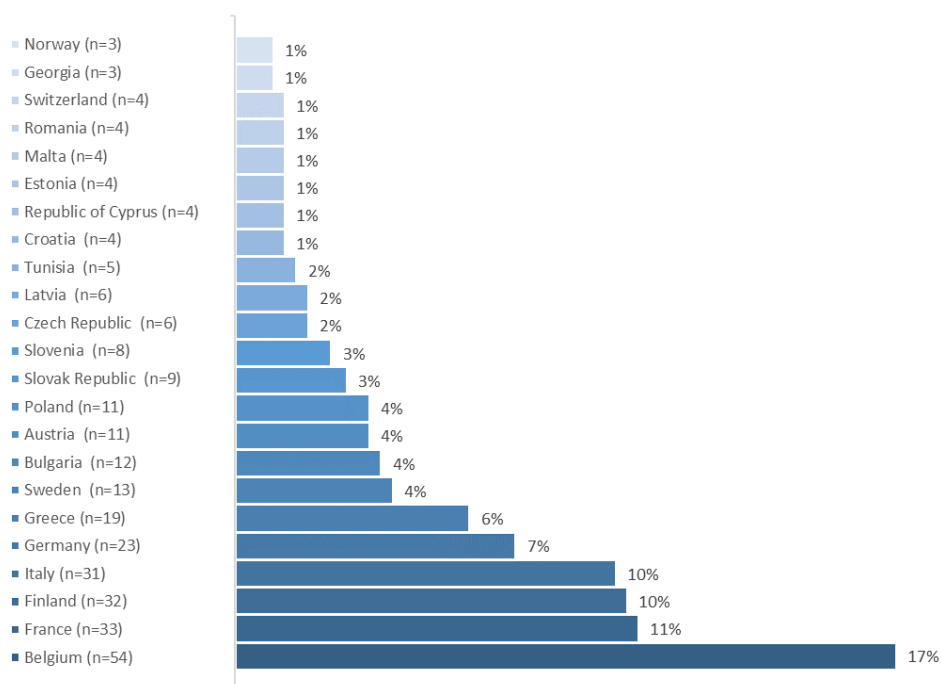
Figure 2.2 Evolution of the response rate to the survey



Source: ICF based on Survey Gizmo extracted on 20/09/2017

In terms of geographic distribution, the responses received cover 30 of the 32 countries contacted. The missing countries are Denmark and Spain. The response rates across the various participating countries is shown below.

Figure 2.3 In which country are you currently employed?



Source: ICF based on Survey Gizmo extracted on 20/09/2017 [respondents: 314 – asked to all]. HU, LT and PT provided 1 response each. IE, LU, NL and UK provided 2 responses each.

What were the profiles of those participating in the survey? In relation to employment position, 54% of the respondents participated in their capacity as case officers (A.5.6). This reflects the high proportion of case officers in each Member State who have participated in the training. Of the 314 respondents, 64% identified themselves as female and 34% male (A5.3) - the remainder preferred not to say. In terms of their age profile, respondents were predominantly (73%) in the early phase of their working life (44 years of age or younger) with 46% of respondents within the age band 25-34 years old, with a further 27% aged 35-44. 20% were aged 45-54, and only 6% 55-64 years old (A.5.4).

2.1.5 Final report

The draft final report was sent to the evaluation team's external experts for comments. Their comments and suggestions were taken into account by the evaluation team in the drafting of the present report.

Following the submission of the draft final report, a workshop was organised on the 29th of September 2017 with the core members of the evaluation team, ICF's external experts and EASO. The workshop focused on the main conclusions of the report and corresponding recommendations. The results of the discussions held during the workshop were integrated into the final report.

EASO's comments on the draft final report were received by ICF on the 23rd of October 2017. The final report was submitted on the 7th of November 2017.

2.2 Strengths and weaknesses

The methodology used by the evaluation team to conduct this assignment presented a number of advantages. The evaluation was conducted by a team of researchers with thorough knowledge and experience in both the asylum and the training field. This mixed set of skills enabled the evaluation team to clearly identify and contextualise the main issues arising from the evaluation findings. Regular briefing and brainstorming sessions were organised between the researchers who undertook interviews in case study countries and members of the team in charge of drafting the report throughout the assignment.

The combination of an online survey circulated to all Member States, associated States using the Training Curriculum and a selection of third countries with face-to-face interviews in selected case study countries enabled the evaluation team to reach out to a large number of stakeholders. The online survey provided the team with quantitative evidence to answer the evaluation questions, which was completed with the qualitative evidence collected in face-to-face interviews. The evidence collected was particularly rich due to stakeholders' marked interest in the Curriculum and its evolution. However, a number of challenges were identified in the course of the assignment.

2.2.1 Identification of survey participants

In its proposal, ICF suggested that responses from around 10% of a maximum of 9,000 participants in training sessions would be collected. This figure was extracted from EASO's Annual Training Reports. It is however impossible to know the exact number of participants in training sessions as the EASO Training Cockpit only counts training participants; one individual attending several training sessions could thus be counted several times.

As mentioned in Section 2.1.4, the fact that ICF's mailbox was not copied into communication pertinent to NCP dissemination of the survey has made it impossible to provide an accurate appraisal of the response rate to the survey. It is possible however to provide an estimate based on the numbers that we do have. In fact, we know for certain that 695 people were contacted either directly by ICF or through NCPs.

2.2.2 Dissemination of the survey link

Relying on Training NCPs to circulate the link presented both advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand, the trusted relationship between Training NCPs and participants was undoubtedly a factor in convincing the latter to take the survey. On the other hand, it made it more difficult for ICF to monitor the number of people who received access to the survey.

2.2.3 Contacts with participants and organisation of interviews

The fact that a large part of the data collection phase took place during the summer period made it difficult to establish contacts with some Training NCPs and to reach out to stakeholders, due to the number of targeted civil servants in national administrations who were on holidays. Some delays were thus encountered to obtain responses to the online survey and to arrange the field visits to conduct the interviews.

In the case of Tunisia, the organisation of the face-to-face interviews presented several challenges, and indeed, no such interviews could be arranged during the timeframe of the study. First of all, the stakeholder consultation started during the Ramadan period, during which civil servants have shorter working hours, which created delays in identifying a time period when stakeholders would be available for an interview. In addition, it emerged that the categories of participants in the Curriculum did not match the categories defined for other case study countries. In the end, it was decided that two group interviews would be organised rather than individual interviews. Finally, the fact that there is no NCP in Tunisia required additional efforts from the evaluation team to coordinate participants' availabilities and find a suitable date. In the end, contributions from stakeholders in Tunisia took place only via the on-line survey.

3 Overview of the EASO Training Curriculum and its intervention logic

3.1 Presentation of the EASO Training Curriculum

3.1.1 EASO's training mandate

Support for training is one of EASO's duties, as defined under Article 6 of Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 ('the EASO Regulation')². This duty registers within the purpose of the Office, which is defined in Article 2 of the Regulation as to "**facilitate, coordinate and strengthen practical cooperation** among Member States on the many aspects of asylum and help to **improve the implementation of the CEAS.**"

The training of national officials in the field of asylum remains a **duty of the Member States**. Indeed, Articles 4(3) and (4) of the Asylum Procedures Directive ('APD')³ provide that Member States have an obligation to ensure that the personnel of the authorities in charge of the determination of international protection statuses "are properly trained", and that authorities in charge of granting or refusing permission to enter in the framework of border procedures and of processing Dublin cases "have the appropriate knowledge or receive the necessary training to fulfil their obligations." In this context, Member States must "take into account" the trainings developed by EASO. As a minimum, the subjects defined in Article 6 of the EASO Regulation⁴ must be covered by trainings in all Member States, though Member States are free to complement them with other subjects.⁵

EASO's role is not to monitor the way trainings are delivered, but to **support** their organisation, in particular by delivering training materials and providing access to the online platform. Article 6(5) of the EASO Regulation provides that trainings offered by EASO "shall be of high quality and shall identify key principles and best practices with a view to greater convergence of administrative methods and decisions and legal practice, in full respect of the independence of national courts and tribunals." The Training Curriculum answers the need for national authorities to have a common understanding and application of EU standards in the field of asylum. It is a tool for "bottom-up harmonisation that completes top-down harmonisation achieved through the *acquis*."⁶

² Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office.

³ Directive 2013/32 of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast)

⁴ International human rights and the asylum *acquis*, including specific legal and case-law issues, issues relating to the handling of asylum applications from minors and vulnerable persons with specific needs, interview techniques, the use of expert medical and legal reports in asylum procedures, issues relating to the production and use of information on countries of origin, and reception conditions, including special attention given to vulnerable groups and victims of torture.

⁵ Peers, S., Moreno-Lax, V., Garlick, M., Guild, E., *EU Immigration and Asylum Law (Text and Commentary): Second Revised Edition: Volume 3: EU Asylum Law*, Brill/Nijhoff Publishing, 2015.

⁶ Scoping interview with a representative of the Odysseus Network, February 2017.

3.1.2 Key features of the Training Curriculum

EASO's core training tool (material) is the **EASO Training Curriculum**, a programme/training system which is meant to serve as a common training base aimed at contributing to the effective and harmonised implementation of the CEAS.

Key features of the EASO Training Curriculum, as defined by EASO, are set out in the box below.

Table 3.1 EASO Training Curriculum main characteristics

What is the EASO Training Curriculum?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ A common vocational training system designed mainly for case officers and other asylum practitioners throughout the EU. ■ A training system which covers the “core” aspects of the asylum procedure by means of a set of interactive modules. ■ A blended learning methodology, enabling both theoretical and practical approaches to training by combining an e-learning method and face-to-face sessions. ■ A training material developed by expert teams from different Member States and regularly updated and reviewed with the support of EASO's Reference Group, consisting of different international organisations and stakeholders from the civil society, the academia and the judiciary. ■ A set of training modules developed in the English language, and being progressively translated by Member States into their national languages.

Source: EASO Training Brochure

The TC consists of different modules which cover core aspects of the asylum procedure. The EASO TC is currently based around a set of 21 interactive modules.

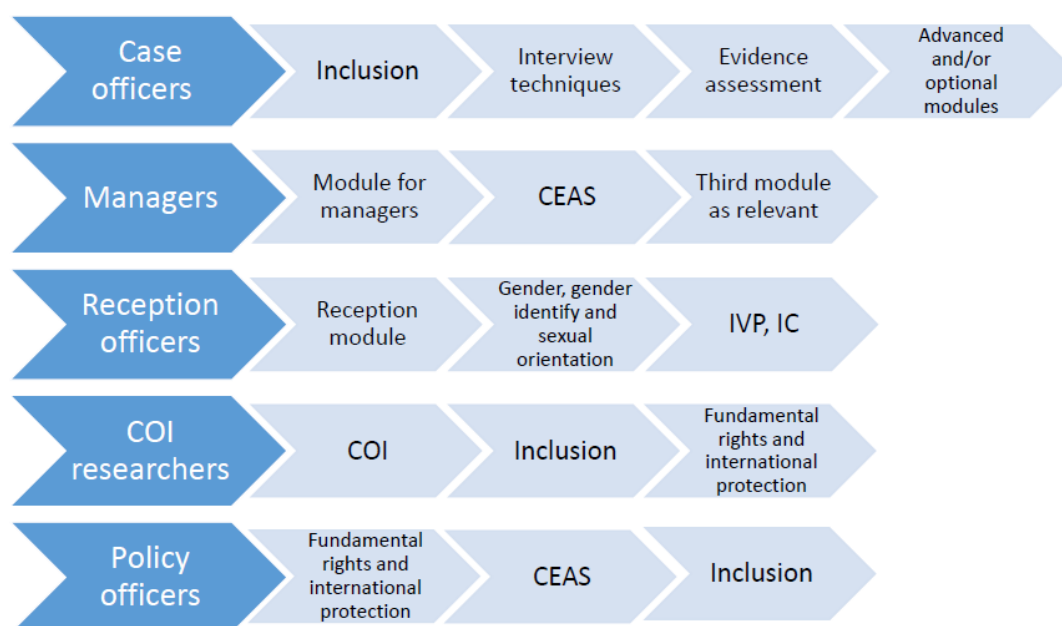
Table 3.2 EASO Training Modules available in 2017

Modules
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Inclusion; ■ Interview Techniques; ■ Evidence Assessment; ■ Interviewing Vulnerable Persons; ■ Interviewing Children; ■ Gender, Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation; ■ Trafficking of Human Beings; ■ Inclusion Advanced; ■ Reception; ■ Dublin III Regulation; ■ Asylum Procedures Directive; ■ Country of Origin Information (COI); ■ Exclusion; ■ End of Protection; ■ Resettlement; ■ Interpreters; ■ Module for Managers; ■ Fundamental Rights and International Protection in the EU; ■ Common European Asylum System (CEAS); ■ Introduction to International Protection; and ■ Introduction to Didactics.

Source: ICF based on EASO's Training Brochure 2017

EASO developed a learning path for each target group of participants, which is illustrated in Figure 3.1 below.

Figure 3.1 Learning path for the main target groups of participants



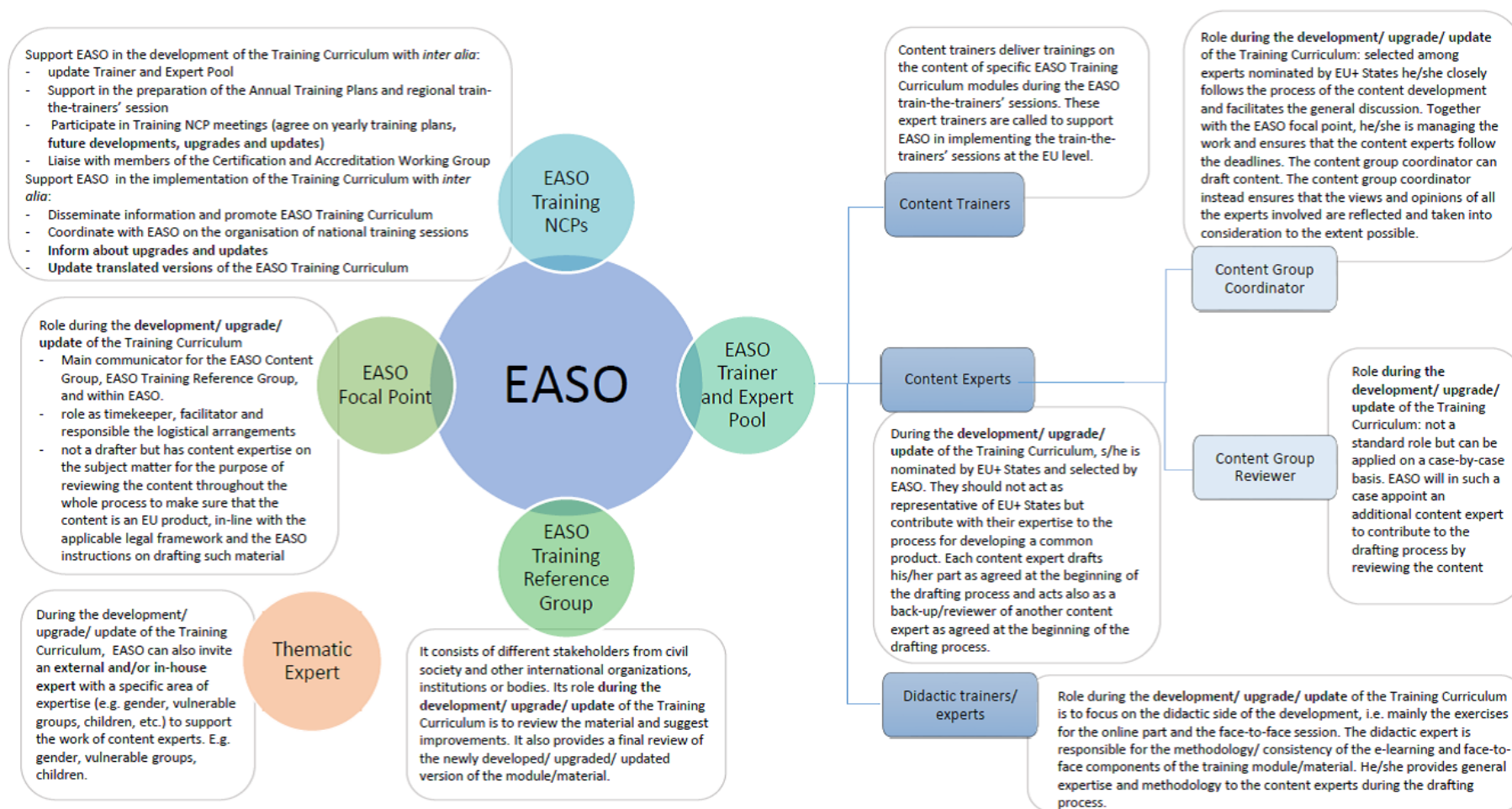
Source: ICF based on EASO's Training Brochure 2017

3.1.3 Development, upgrade and update of the EASO training modules

3.1.3.1 Stakeholders involved in the development of modules

Figure 3.2 provides a schematic overview of the main stakeholders involved in all the steps of the creation of EASO training modules and materials.

Figure 3.2 Overview of the main roles and responsibilities within the EASO Training Curriculum activity⁷



⁷ Source: ICF on the basis of the Terms of Reference

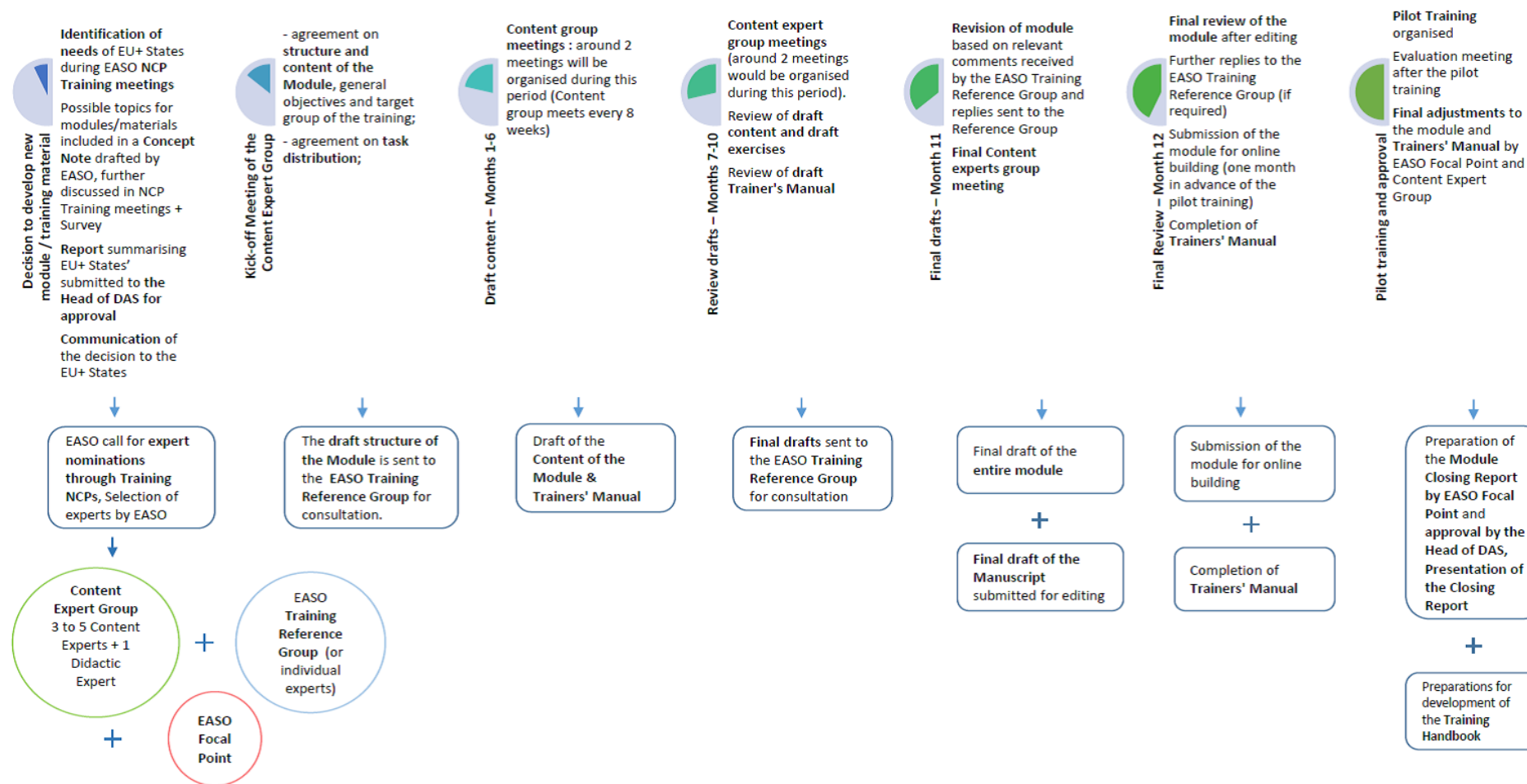
3.1.3.2 Development of training modules/materials

As a rule, a **training module** is composed of the three following materials: a Manuscript, a Trainer's Manual and a Training Handbook (although exceptionally, EASO may decide not to develop a Handbook for a specific module).

Figure 3.3 below represents the whole process followed to develop a new training module, from the decision to develop it to its approval. Overall, the full process takes about a year.

Figure 3.3 Overview of the procedure to develop training modules and materials⁸

Development of Training Module/Material



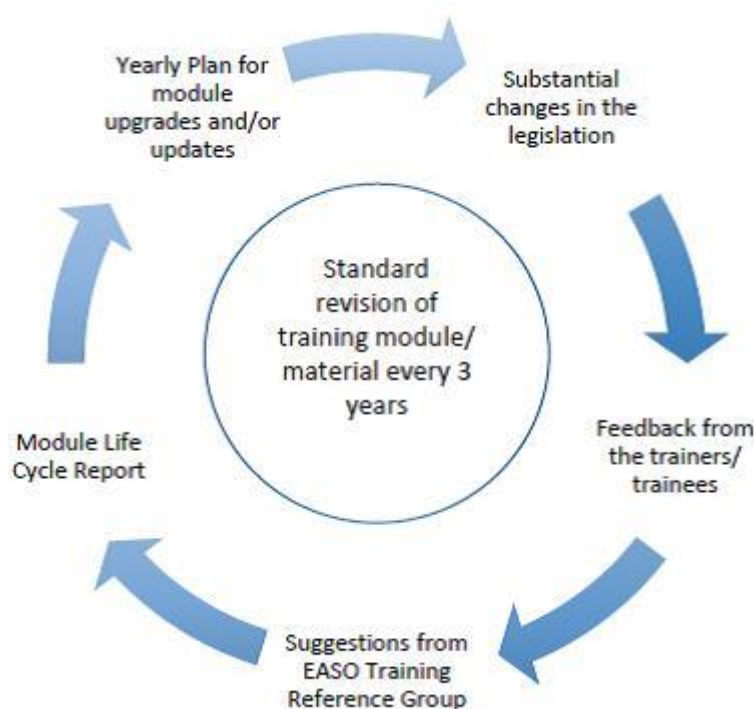
⁸ Source: ICF on the basis of the Terms of Reference

3.1.4 Module Life Cycle

Once adopted, every module has a life cycle of three years, meaning that, following the three-year period, an assessment to evaluate whether the module needs revision shall be conducted. In case revision is needed the module will be upgraded or updated, depending on the nature of the changes. However, substantial changes in the legislation, feedback collected from the trainers/trainees and feedback collected throughout the Life Cycle as well as the yearly Plan for module upgrades or updates may trigger a revision of modules and/or training materials before this period.

A **Module Life Cycle Report** is submitted by the EASO Focal Point to the Head of the Training Unit and compiles feedback and suggestions from trainers, experts and EASO Training Reference Group to ensure a proper evaluation and review of the module. Based on this process, a **Plan for module upgrades and/or updates** is drafted every year and identifies modules and/or training materials that need to be reviewed in the coming years. This Plan is shared with the Training NCPs for information.

Figure 3.4 Module Life Cycle



Source: ICF on the basis of the Terms of Reference

3.1.5 Upgrade/update of training modules and materials

The main differences between the procedures to upgrade and update training materials/modules are summarised in Table 3.3. To update a module requires a lighter procedure than to upgrade it, the nature of changes being one of the main differences between the two. A detailed overview of the respective procedures to upgrade and update a module/material can be found in Annex 3.

Table 3.3 Differences between the upgrade and update of training modules

	Upgrade	Update
Changes to the content of the module/material	Substantial changes: restructuring, extensive changes in the content, learning outcomes or didactic elements	Lighter changes: touching only certain sections of the module or training material
Stakeholders involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EASO focal point ■ Training NCPs ■ EASO content experts x 3-5 ■ Didactic expert ■ Members of the EASO Training Reference Group or other individual experts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EASO Focal Point ■ EASO content experts x 3-5 ■ Didactic expert ■ Members of the EASO Training Reference Group or other individual experts
Deployment of experts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The EASO Training Unit launches a call to EU+ States through the Training NCPs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ EASO Training Unit does not initiate a new call for nomination of experts but launches a procedure to select experts who are already part of the pool.
Time frame	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 8 – 10 months ■ Each expert is expected to work approximately 30 days over the entire period 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ 4 – 6 months ■ Each expert is expected to work approximately 20 days over the entire period
Final approval	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Pilot training session & Evaluation of the Pilot session ■ Module closing report to be submitted to the Head of the Training Unit and formally approved by the Head of Department of Asylum Support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No pilot training session ■ Module Update report & Module closing Report submitted to the Head of the Training Unit and formally approved by the Head of Department for Asylum Support

Source: ICF on the basis of the Terms of Reference

3.2 Training sessions

3.2.1 Train-the-trainer session

EASO uses a ‘train-the-trainer’ methodology to deliver its trainings. This method aims at the development of the knowledge and skills of national trainers who, after following a ‘train-the-trainer’ session, can then subsequently train personnel in their respective national administrations. As a result, training sessions have a ‘multiplier effect’ at national level.

The training consists of two elements: online studies and a face-to-face session. The face-to-face session is composed of exercises aiming at developing skills and building up on the knowledge acquired by the trainees during the online studies

The quality of the train-the-trainer sessions is ensured through the delivery of the sessions by two experienced content trainers. They can be assisted by a junior trainer in the delivery of the content-related matters of the training, and this process ensures that new trainers for future train-the-trainer sessions are prepared. Junior trainers are experts who already followed and completed at least one train-the-trainer session and are preferably already trainers for national sessions.

At least one ‘train-the-trainer’ session is organised in each of EASO’s training modules each year. EASO is supported by the Training NCPs in this task when developing and adopting its annual Training Plan. A survey is sent to the Training NCPs twice a year by EASO to determine their additional training needs and serve as a basis to organise regional train-the-trainers’ sessions. The content of regional sessions is identical to the train-the-trainer sessions.

Although train-the-trainer sessions usually take place at EASO’s premises, a regional train-the-trainer session is organised at the premises of other EU agencies, and exceptionally by one Member State after providing justifications to EASO and contingent upon the Member State ability to deploy EASO trainers to deliver this session. This session is subsequently open to all Member States. For instance, sessions have previously been organised in Germany and the Netherlands.⁹

3.2.2 Didactic and e-learning sessions

Training sessions at national level are organised by Member States. Training NCPs provide EASO with the list of participants two weeks prior to the start of the online phase. Participants are then registered by EASO, who grants access to the online sessions on its e-learning platform.

EASO suggests that around four weeks elapse between the moment the trainees are enrolled in the online session and their participation in the face-to-face session. This time enable trainees to take in and process the information learned online before moving on to the didactic part of the training. In practice however, this time period may vary depending on the Member State’s circumstances and the urgency to train staff members, in particular new hires in times of significant increase in the number of applications for international protection.

Training manuals include very detailed instructions to ensure the consistency of trainings delivered across Member States. However, trainings are delivered in the national context. References are made to EU legislation and policies, but the Member State’s own practice will be presented. Forum discussions online allow participants to discuss specific points of interpretation if they wish to do so.

In 2017, a new online training platform was launched. While this development is not covered in the evaluation period, it will be taken into account by the evaluation team when drafting recommendations. In practice the two systems will run in parallel and this will not affect the availability of information for the evaluation.¹⁰

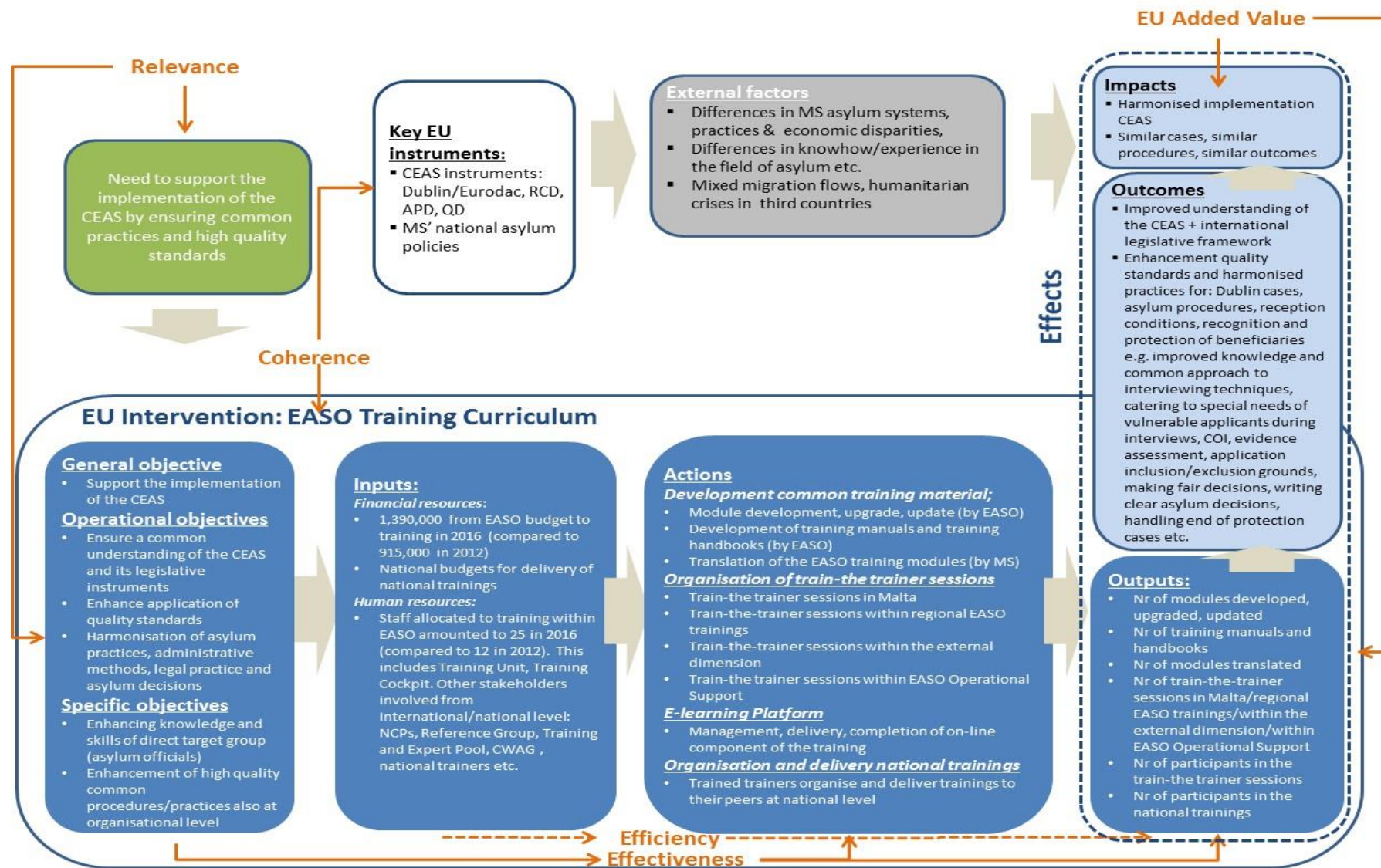
3.2.3 Intervention logic

Figure 3.5 presents the intervention logic of the Curriculum.

⁹ Scoping interview with the Training Unit. January 2017.

¹⁰ Scoping interview with the e-learning team, January 2017.

Figure 3.5 Intervention logic of the Training Curriculum



4 Findings on the evaluation questions

This section presents the findings on each of the evaluation criteria and corresponding evaluation questions, based on the analysis and triangulation of the evidence collected in the course of the study.

4.1 Impact

Key findings

- Overall, the understanding and knowledge of EU standards of national civil servants who followed EASO modules improved as a consequence, no matter how familiar they were with these standards before. The Training Curriculum also taught them new working methods and practices, which are now increasingly used in Member States using the Curriculum.
- The Training Curriculum contributed to harmonising practices within Member States by providing a single training method and centrally elaborated training materials. However, the impact of the Curriculum over the harmonisation of practices across the EU remained limited, as these are influenced by other external factors, such as political priorities.
- Some EASO training activities fostered cooperation between Member States, in particular joint/regional trainings, train-the-trainer sessions, and the deployment of experts, which are mostly offered to managers or experienced staff members. For 'regular' civil servants, interactions with other Member States were limited, thus the impact of the Curriculum over cooperation was limited.
- As part of its emergency and special support activities, EASO offered support in the form of training to Member States whose asylum system was under particular pressure. This support was appreciated by Member States that benefited from it, though other Member States affected by the migration crisis observed that they had not had the time and resources necessary to contribute to this supporting effort by deploying experts.
- Overall the external dimension of the Training Curriculum appeared as a good way to share knowledge and awareness about EU legislation and standards in the field of asylum. However, some concerns were voiced by stakeholders about possible ambiguities with using the Training Curriculum in some third countries, which may themselves be countries of origin of asylum seekers.

This section will analyse the findings on the impact of EASO's Training Curriculum. For this purpose, the evaluation team answered the following evaluation questions:

- To what extent have EASO's training activities facilitated the development of the CEAS and the implementation of the EU asylum acquis?
- To what extent have EASO's training activities increased harmonisation and reduced disparities in the field of asylum at EU level?
- To what extent have EASO's training activities improved practical cooperation amongst Member States in the field of asylum and reception?
- To what extent have EASO's training activities contributed to the external dimension of the CEAS?

The original evaluation questions included the following: "To what extent have EASO's training activities been able to engage MS in effective solidarity and sharing of responsibilities with Member States under pressure?" In order to avoid confusion with the current reform of the Dublin Regulation, it was agreed that this question would be

merged with the previous evaluation question on cooperation amongst Member States.

This section provides an assessment of the impact of the European Asylum Support Office's (EASO) Training Curriculum over the development of the CEAS, as well as its impact on each of the purposes of EASO as defined in Article 1 of the EASO Regulation.¹¹

Measuring the impact of a training programme is challenging, as many other external factors can influence practices, methods and decisions at national level. In addition, National Contact Points (NCPs) in the case study Member States indicated that there was no monitoring of the impact of the Training Curriculum in their respective Member States. In some Member States, it was assumed that the participation in the modules was enough to provide participants with the necessary knowledge, and it was therefore not evaluated. Regular performance reviews with their managers highlighted the potential need for further training.¹² However, in some Member States, this impact could be assessed through quality checks of the asylum procedures in its different aspects. In another Member State, the Training NCP suggested organising a follow-up session with participants six months after they took the training, to check whether participants had implemented the changes they said they would during the session, but this has not been implemented yet.

4.1.1 Impact on the development of the CEAS

The creation of EASO was explicitly motivated by the European Commission's willingness to develop the CEAS in its Policy Plan on Asylum adopted in 2008.¹³ This motivation is recalled in Recital (3) of the EASO Regulation.¹⁴ This section analyses the impact of the Training Curriculum over the development of the CEAS on the basis of the findings of the whole evaluation. A number of issues are further developed in the subsequent sections of the present report.

The evidence collected in the course of this evaluation shows that the Training Curriculum had some overarching impacts over different aspects of the CEAS.

First of all, the knowledge amongst civil servants in the field of asylum that their counterparts had followed the same training fostered their trust in other asylum systems in the EU. For instance, some evidence shows that common standards taught across the EU via the Training Curriculum may positively influence the implementation of legal instruments such as the Dublin III Regulation. Indeed, several case officers highlighted that the facilitation of the implementation of uniform standards across the EU enabled case officers to understand that their daily work was part of a broader, common system,¹⁵ and that equivalent quality standards were applied across the EU, which was particularly valuable in the context of Dublin procedures.¹⁶ Similar observations were made by COI officers who had taken the COI module regarding the use of COI compiled and analysed by other Member States.

¹¹ Regulation (EU) No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office.

¹² Interviews with Training NCPs.

¹³ European Commission, Policy Plan on Asylum – An Integrated Approach to Protection Across the EU, COM(2008) 360 final, 17 June 2008.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*

¹⁵ Interview with an operational manager, and with case officers in two Member States.

¹⁶ Interview with a case officer.

In addition, the CEAS aims to providing better access to the asylum procedure for those who seek protection, and to ensuring fairer, quicker, and better quality asylum decisions.¹⁷

- The 'fairness' of asylum decisions across the EU is also strengthened by the increased consistency in asylum practices within and across Member States, although the evaluation showed that the influence of national political priorities and traditions remained strong and the Training Curriculum only could not suffice to harmonise practices (see Section 4.1.3).
- The rapidity of the asylum process, while influenced by numerous external factors including the caseload in each national administration, was also influenced to some extent by the use of the Training Curriculum. In particular, it enabled national administrations who made use of the Curriculum to save time and resources on the elaboration of trainings for their staff (see Section 4.3.1).
- The improvement of the quality of asylum decisions is facilitated by the positive impact of the Curriculum over national practices and methods, which led to asylum decisions being taken on the basis of structured and methodologically sound interviews, and explicitly referring to EU and international standards in the field of asylum (see Section 4.1.2.2).

4.1.2 Impact on the implementation of the EU asylum acquis

This section analyses the impact of the Training Curriculum over the implementation of the EU asylum acquis, which includes the Qualification Directive (QD),¹⁸ the Asylum Procedures Directive (APD),¹⁹ the Reception Conditions Directive (RCD)²⁰ and the Dublin III Regulation,²¹ as well as relevant EU case law.

4.1.2.1 Understanding and knowledge of EU standards at national level

First of all, evidence shows that, overall, the understanding and knowledge of EU standards of national civil servants who followed EASO modules improved as a consequence, no matter how familiar they were with these standards before.

A majority of the stakeholders consulted stated that they had some prior knowledge of EU standards in the field of asylum before taking part in EASO training modules,²² even if they did not always know that they were EU standards.²³ They had acquired this knowledge via:

- Their academic background;

¹⁷ European Commission, Brochure on a Common European Asylum System, 2014, available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/e-library/docs/ceas-fact-sheets/ceas_factsheet_en.pdf

¹⁸ Directive 2011/95/EU of the European Parliament and 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

¹⁹ Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection

²⁰ Directive 2013/33/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection

²¹ 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)

²² Interviews with case officers, a reception officer, and with a COI officer in four different Member States.

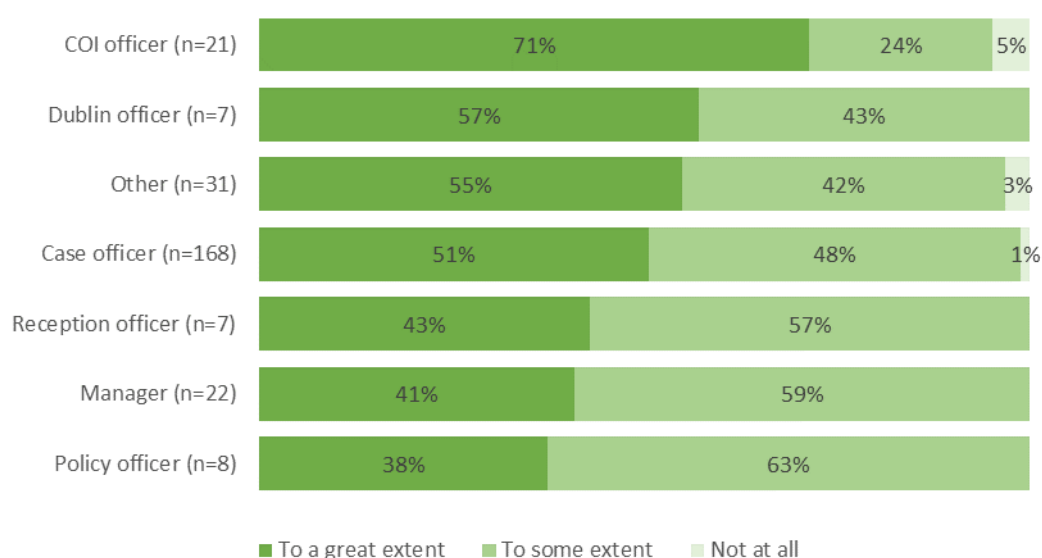
²³ Interview with a reception officer.

- Past professional experience in another job;
- Past professional experience in their current job; or
- Previous trainings (e.g. by UNHCR or national trainings)

However, other stakeholders stated that they did not know about EU standards before participating in EASO training modules.²⁴ In one Member State with a particularly high pressure on its asylum system, this particularly was true of recently hired case officers. In other Member States, trainers and one operational manager considered that participation in the Training Curriculum was essential to make sure that staff members understood the standards applicable to their role, even when they had prior knowledge or experience of the subject matter.

In the online survey, a vast majority of participants indicated that their knowledge and understanding of key issues had improved to a great or to some extent following their participation in the TC. The greatest level of satisfaction with the improvement of the participants' knowledge and understanding was expressed by COI officers (95%), police officers (100%), and Reception officers (100%). More than half of the case officers considered that following the modules had improved their knowledge and understanding of EU standards to a great extent.

Figure 4.1 To what extent do you believe that taking part in the EASO Training Curriculum directly improved your knowledge and understanding of the key issues covered by the module(s)?



Source: ICF survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q. 21. N=264. not asked to trainers.

This finding appeared to be confirmed in the interviews where, in nearly all cases, the Training Curriculum was considered as instrumental in providing case officers, COI officers and reception officers with a **better understanding of the EU acquis** and of the way national law registered within a wider ensemble. One NCP said the trainings have helped infusing a stronger European perspective into national understanding

²⁴ Interview with case officers

and practices.²⁵ In particular, the Training Curriculum provided participants with deeper knowledge of their field of work, and references to EU and ECtHR case law or legislation that they could use in their daily work. For instance, one strategic manager observed that case officers in his/her Member State were increasingly using EU law expressions and terminology in their daily work. Similarly, a reception officer in another Member State noted that thanks to the Training Curriculum s/he now found it easier to make reference to EU law and case law when writing national guidelines. A representative for ECRE also confirmed that they considered the Training Curriculum as an important tool due to the correlation between quality training and the knowledge of applicable standards amongst national civil servants. In addition, face-to-face sessions were said to facilitate the understanding of references to EU legislation tackled in the e-learning session, which could be difficult for some participants.²⁶

However, some evidence shows that experienced case officers considered that they did not need to participate EASO core modules as they already had the necessary knowledge.²⁷ This view was not shared across all national asylum authorities, as some senior case officers acknowledged that they had learned a lot in EASO training modules despite their experience, while another considered that refreshers were always useful, and that training sessions were an occasion to question old habits. According to case officers in one Member State, all case officers – experienced and recently hired – would benefit from taking part in the Curriculum.

Box 1 Teaching EU standards at all levels – the Finnish example

In Finland, managers are involved not only in the module for Managers, which is useful to teach management techniques to new managers, but also in a broader set of modules such as the Evidence Assessment, Asylum Procedures Directive and CEAS modules. According to the Finnish NCP, this practice enabled managers to have an understanding of the training received by their direct reports, and to help perpetuating the use of good practices across their teams.

Stakeholders pointed out **differences between the standards taught in the modules and national standards**, which were sometimes stricter than what is taught in the EASO Training Curriculum. For instance, in one Member State, a case officer explained that, before taking EASO training modules, she hardly ever granted subsidiary protection to applicants as the thresholds defined at the national level had been higher to qualify for this protection status. In other instances, standards taught in EASO modules were deemed “too basic” in comparison with national standards. For instance, a reception officer pointed out that the standards on reception conditions in his/her Member State were generally higher than the standards presented in the module.

4.1.2.2 Implementation of EU standards at national level

On top of facilitating the understanding and the acquisition of knowledge of national civil servants in the field of asylum, the Training Curriculum provided guidance regarding the practical application of these standards.

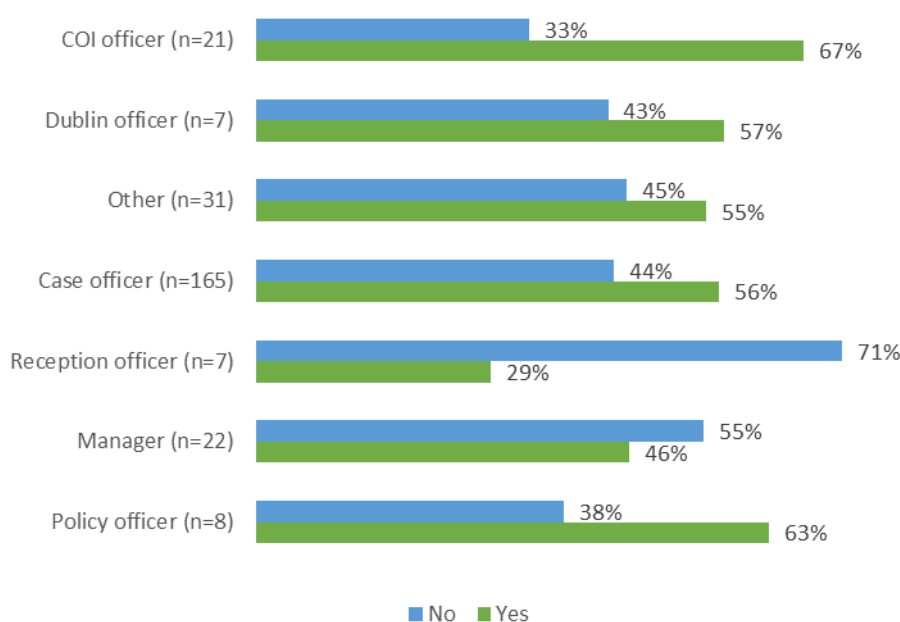
²⁵ For instance, the template containing standard phrases used by case officers to draft their decisions was amended in order to include wording and material/information directly drawn from the Interviewing Vulnerable Persons module. These amendments included, among other things, links to CJEU case law.

²⁶ Interviews with case officers and reception officers.

²⁷ Interview with some trainers, some case officers and with senior case officers and one operational manager.

A majority of the categories of stakeholders who responded to the online survey considered that they had changed their practice as a direct consequence of their participation in the Training Curriculum. This was particularly true for COI officers (over 66%), policy officers (62.5%), Dublin officers and case officers (both around 57%). However, a large majority of reception officers indicated that their participation in EASO modules had not led to a change in their practice.

Figure 4.2 Have you changed your approach as a direct consequence of each of the modules (if relevant) you attended?



Source: ICF survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q.24. N=261. Not asked to trainers – no responses from the 'other' category.

In addition, when considering the role of the EASO Training Curriculum in the implementation of the asylum acquis, amongst trainers and managers responding to the survey, almost **73% agreed (33%) or somewhat agreed (40%) that the EASO Training Curriculum had led to a more consistent practice** across the administration (i.e. similar problems are answered with similar solutions); 20% neither agreed nor disagreed; the remainder (7%) disagreed or somewhat disagreed with the statement. Over 60% of this category of respondents also agreed (33%) or somewhat agreed (27.5%) that since EASO training modules had been available, the **quality of asylum decisions had improved**. About 1/3 of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed, leaving only about 10% disagreeing or somewhat disagreeing with the statement.

The stakeholder consultation in a selection of Member States confirmed to a certain extent that the use of the Training Curriculum had had a positive impact over the implementation of EU standards by national asylum authorities. Overall a majority of the NCPs consulted agreed that the Training Curriculum had led to changes in national practices, with positive impacts being reported by interviewees in the majority of the Member States consulted.²⁸ This view was shared by a representative of the European Commission. Case officers' perceptions of the **positive impact of the Training Curriculum** on their application of EU standards were generally confirmed

²⁸ Interviews with Training NCPs in eight Member States.

by managers and trainers, who have an overarching perspective on their direct reports' and their trainees' performance in practice. This positive impact was observed both for new staff members, who acquired their knowledge through the Training Curriculum, and for more experienced staff members, for whom EASO modules helped in "rationalising their skills"²⁹.

First of all, the training methodology used in the Curriculum, which **mixes practical and theoretical knowledge**, was generally acknowledged by participants and trainers alike as facilitating this translation of theoretical knowledge into practice. For instance, case officers pointed out that the exercises proposed in practical modules, such as the Interview Techniques or the Interviewing Vulnerable People modules, were particularly useful to prepare participants for real-life cases.³⁰

Box 2 Impact of the Evidence Assessment module in Belgium³¹

Before the Training Curriculum was introduced, Belgium used the UNHCR module as their main training material. The manual focused mainly on Inclusion issues, but also included some elements about the assessment of the burden of proof in the asylum procedure. Evidence assessment standards in the EU have evolved a lot as a consequence of the Qualification Directive. The assessment of the credibility of the claim was not framed by specific rules or standards, and case officers did not refer to the right concepts in their decisions. Following the introduction of the Training Curriculum, case officers now have a more structured line of thought and use the appropriate vocabulary and concepts. This also facilitated exchanges between colleagues on this subject.

Beyond facilitating the implementation of legal standards, the Training Curriculum was also widely recognised as providing a **method and practical tools** for participants to conduct their daily tasks. In particular, the core modules were acknowledged as having an important positive impact on the quality standards of the asylum procedure in Member States consulted.

When it comes to participants in the training, face-to-face interviews revealed that the methodological impact of the Curriculum was particularly noted in the field of COI research. COI officers reported particularly strong effects of the Curriculum on their day-to-day work. These included changes in the way evidence was gathered, and sources assessed and referenced; more regular communication and discussions with other colleagues within the COI unit and from the asylum unit; the sharpening of the officers' analytical skills; and the overall implementation of a more systematic approach to the performance of their tasks.

Other modules also introduced notable methodological changes. For instance, one NCP gave a detailed account of the effects of specific modules:

- the Exclusion Module had helped the asylum authorities to develop their own pool of specialists on the subject at the national level;
- the Modules on Drafting and Decision Making (before it was integrated into the Evidence Assessment module), Evidence Assessment and Interview Techniques had had a strong impact in how decisions were phrased and interviews conducted respectively; and
- the Dublin Module had led to a better understanding of the Regulation and contributed to procedures being streamlined.

²⁹ Interview with a trainer.

³⁰ Interview with case officers.

³¹ Interview with an operational manager

Box 3 illustrates how the methodology used in asylum interviews changed as a consequence of the Training Curriculum.

Box 3 Impact of the Interview Techniques module

A Training NCP and trainers explained that the Interview Techniques modules had had a clear impact over the decisions taken by case officers on asylum applications. Decisions are now more structured, and transcripts of the interview reflect that interviews are conducted as conversations rather than inquiries. In addition, Belgian trainers explained that the Interview Techniques module had changed their interviewing method: while asylum interviews used to be much more one-sided, they are now based on the Dialogical Communication Method (DCM). This method was initially developed to interview children and vulnerable persons in a police context,³² but its use is now widespread in the asylum context in those Member States that use EASO's Interview Techniques module.

"After following the module on Interview Techniques, case officers have been sensitised on how to conduct an interview, being more aware of prejudices or special needs of vulnerable groups. Case officers apply the DCM which guides them through the interview by creating a mind map"

Trainer

"A new methodology has been applied after following the Interview Techniques module. A new practice has also been put in place on the basis of the Evidence assessment module."

NCP

Finally, Curriculum modules were acknowledged by some case officers as an '**eye-opener**'. For instance, the focus of some EASO modules on the vulnerability of asylum applicants (in specific modules such as the Interviewing Children and Interviewing Vulnerable Persons modules, but also in other modules) led case officers to adapt their interviewing techniques, and reminded them of the importance of empathy in this line of work.³³ More generally, the exercises proposed in the Interview Techniques module reportedly confronted case officers to the difficulty of telling a story accurately and to the limits of their own memory, which enabled them to adapt their expectations towards applicants for international protection.³⁴ One case officer was particularly struck by how difficult it was to accurately draw an identity card from memory, which made the group realise that an applicant's inability to do so was not necessarily a sign that his/her claim was not credible.

However, a minority of stakeholders considered that the Curriculum **had not led to a better implementation of EU standards**. Two strategic managers expressed doubts over this. One considered that this was too ambitious an objective for a training programme, as many factors impacted the implementation of such standards (e.g. the high turn-over of case officers in national asylum authorities, or the culture of each service within the national administration). Another one thought that internal guidelines were more effective. When she previously acted as Head of Section, she organised systematic feedback sessions about the trainings followed by her staff, and observed that for complex modules such as the Exclusion module, she did not observe a better capacity to process exclusion cases following the module. She added however that this was not due to the quality of the module, but rather that one could only learn to process such cases with practice, and exclusion cases are rare.

³² Credibility Assessment in Asylum Procedures, Experts roundtable held in Budapest on 14-15 January 2015, available at <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/554c9aba4.pdf>

³³ Interviews with case officers and with an operational manager.

³⁴ Interviews with case officers.

However, trainers in one Member States expressed contradictory views about this particular statement, arguing that the Exclusion module was the only training offered on the subject in their asylum authority and that it has led to a clear improvement in case officers' practices.

It is difficult to assess with certainty whether the Training Curriculum has had an **influence over the quality of asylum decisions**. However, a number of examples collected during the data collection phase tend to show that the training is important to guarantee asylum procedures and decisions of consistently high quality. For instance, in one Member State, trainings received by case officers are scrutinised by lawyers representing asylum seekers as well as courts. One case officer and the NCP reported that an asylum decision had been quashed in court because the case officer had not received adequate training. In addition, in another Member State whose asylum system had been under particularly strong pressure, the Training NCP reported that the quality of asylum decisions had gone down since 2015, which corresponds to the moment the influx of asylum seekers increased in a number of Member States. This led to a shift of focus on targets in the asylum authority of the Member States concerned. One Strategic Manager confirmed that at the time, the hiring of new, inexperienced staff was not accompanied with more trainings. In fact, a number of EASO trainings were dropped at the time. While other factors may have influenced the quality of asylum decisions taken (e.g. time available to interview asylum seekers, complexity of cases, availability of interpreters...), this finding may indicate that the use of the Training Curriculum contributes to the application of high standards in asylum procedures, and that where training has been reduced, standards have correspondingly fallen. In another Member State, where no training programme was available prior to the introduction of the Curriculum, all the interviewees stated that the increase in quality of case officers' decisions was the best indicator of the Curriculum's impact.

4.1.3 Impact on harmonisation and disparities between Member States in the field of asylum at EU level

This section analyses whether the use of the Training Curriculum across Member States has led to more uniform practices in the field of asylum in the EU.

4.1.3.1 Impact on the harmonisation of practices within Member States

The implementation of the Training Curriculum harmonised training practices in some Member States, which in turn led to **more consistency in national practices** in the field of asylum. For example, in one Member State where the asylum authority has decentralised officers, each office used to have its own training sessions, which led to divergences in practices from one location to another.³⁵ The "train-the-trainer" methodology applied in the Training Curriculum guarantees that trainers operating this Member State all followed the same training methodology and taught the same content. In another decentralised Member State, the NCP also considered that disparities between local asylum authorities had been reduced to a minimum thanks to the Training Curriculum, especially when it comes to interview techniques. This view was shared by trainers in a Member State with a centralised asylum authority, according to whom the Interview Technique module enabled to generalise the DCM in asylum interviews within the authority. However, the same trainers stressed that the benefits of the Training Curriculum could be outweighed by contradictory methods

³⁵ Interviews with an operational manager and one NCP.

taught by supervisors and managers in the asylum authorities. Managers usually have several years of experience, and some of them still apply the methods and standards that prevailed before the introduction of the Curriculum. In their supervision role, especially during the first weeks/months after a new case officer started in his/her role, they usually have an important supervisory and advisory mandate. It is therefore important that the standards they recommend to apply are in line with those taught in the initial training sessions followed by new starters.

In general, COI officers and case officers reported a more systematic approach in their daily tasks, in particular when it comes to assessing information and evidence. Along with the training delivery method, this may have contributed to more uniform practices at the national level.

However, the **subjective nature of the assessment** of asylum applications was also recalled by several stakeholders, which explains that there will always be some divergences between decisions taken by case officers.³⁶

Divergences in national practices was acknowledged as an issue by several stakeholders. Stakeholders considered that solving this problem went beyond the possible impact of the Training Curriculum.³⁷ Several asylum authorities have set up different initiatives to favour the harmonisation and uniformity of practices across their services (e.g. setting up of a harmonisation committee and of internal working groups on thematic issues in one Member State).

4.1.3.2 Impact on the harmonisation of practices across the EU

A large majority of stakeholders were of the view that divergences between national practices remained strong across the EU. One of the possible explanations for this was that **national political choices and interpretations of the legislation** were key in determining national practices, independently from the Training Curriculum. For instance, EU provisions that are not transposed into national law (e.g. the internal flight alternative defined in the Qualification Directive is not transposed into some Member States' legislation) are not taught as part of the modules concerned in a given Member State. Some provisions are also interpreted and applied differently (e.g. Articles 14(4) or 15(5) of the Qualification Directive). This may result in differences in recognition rates for specific nationalities across the EU. Another example concerned the Evidence Assessment module, about which several Member States stated that its content was not compatible with their national approach to decision making in the field of asylum so they did not use it. A representative for ECRE was also of the opinion that ultimately, the decision to apply a legal provision in a certain way lied with national administrations; in this context, the possible impact of training programmes should not be overestimated. However, ECRE welcomed the fact that modules now included more references to national case law and different interpretations than in the past, which at least could teach participants about other possible applications of the provision concerned.

In contrast, a few stakeholder were of the view that the Training Curriculum **had increased harmonisation and decreased disparities** in the field of asylum across the EU. Despite the fact that the impact of the Training Curriculum is difficult to measure and separate from the impact of other factors, they considered that it had created a common and consistent approach amongst practitioners.³⁸ In particular,

³⁶ Interviews with a case officer and with an operational manager.

³⁷ Interview with a representative of ECRE.

³⁸ Interviews with a case officer and a trainer, a COI officer, with an operational manager and one NCP.

practices to collect and analyse COI seemed to have become more streamlined as a consequence of the COI module of the Training Curriculum, according to COI researchers, who noted that the analysis of COI reports and practices across Member States showed similarities. However, one operational manager mitigated this finding by explaining that the assessment of COI in Member States was also largely based on historical and diplomatic factors, and thus could differ from one Member State to another, despite the use of EASO's COI module, which is more about research methods than the interpretation of the information. In this respect, the use of COI reports elaborated by EASO may be more suited to harmonising the use of COI than training sessions.

Training activities with a cross-border dimension, such as train-the-trainer sessions or deployments of experts in the 'hotspots', were thought to foster such harmonisation by some trainers and case officers who took part in them. Trainers stated that differences between practices in EU Member States became clear during train-the-trainer sessions, but that with time, further convergence could be observed between national practices.

However some stakeholders reported that differences were still noted across the different Member States despite their participation in the Curriculum.³⁹ In general, a trainer observed that for the Training Curriculum to help harmonising practices across the EU, it would have to be used consistently by all Member States. In practice, the **use of the Training Curriculum is not uniform across Member States**. Indeed, some asylum authorities use the Curriculum exclusively to train their staff, while others only use the core modules and/or selected modules, and others barely use it. Trainers in one Member State that actively uses the Training Curriculum noted that the same Member States tended to systematically be the most involved in the elaboration, update and upgrade of modules as well as in the participation in train-the-trainer sessions. This may be due to differences in the perception of the purpose of the Curriculum: while some Member States substituted their national training programmes with EASO modules or introduced such training when the modules were created, others see the Curriculum as a complement to their training programmes, which did not aim to influencing national practices.

4.1.4 Impact on practical cooperation amongst Member States in the field of asylum and reception

4.1.4.1 General cooperation between Member States

Evidence collected showed that **some of EASO's training activities had contributed to developing cooperation** between Member States in the field of asylum. When reflecting on the role of the EASO Training Curriculum (including regional trainings) in reinforcing cooperation between EU+ States, of the trainers and managers (except third countries) who responded, 79% agreed (34%) or somewhat agreed (45%) with the statement that since the EASO Training Curriculum had been available, mutual knowledge of the *acquis* between EU+ States had increased. Of this group, 67% agreed (32%) or somewhat agreed (35%) with the statement that operational cooperation between EU+ States had also increased.

³⁹ Interviews with a case officer, a strategic manager and with one NCP

In most cases, such cooperation was facilitated by pre-existing relationships, and/or geographical proximity, which enabled the organisation of joint activities, such as regional trainings.

Box 4 Joint trainings between the Czech Republic and Slovakia

Language similarities between the Czech Republic and Slovakia enabled the two Member States to organise joint training sessions, during which participants could exchange good practices and transfer skills and knowledge. In 2015, the following trainings were organised:

- A joint training session on the Inclusion module was organised in Slovakia and in Slovak with 17 participants from Slovakia and 16 participants from the Czech Republic;
- A joint training session on the Interview Techniques module was organised in the Czech Republic and in Czech with 16 participants from Slovakia.

In general, several Training NCPs, operational managers and trainers considered that a common knowledge base and common working methods facilitated the dialogue with other Member States. However, this seemed to be mostly true for stakeholders at management level or those case officers who were deployed on international missions. For instance, deployed experts in the hotspots work together with experts from other Member States. In this context it is a positive thing that they have been trained with the Training Curriculum before, as it facilitates their communication and daily cooperation with their peers with similar standards. Case workers and trainers who took part in such missions also reported a good cooperation with the authorities in the hosting Member State. One NCP and one operational manager also noted that Training NCP and Management Board meetings between Member States fostered dialogue between EU counterparts. Aside from these specific examples, case officers had few or in some cases, no occasions to interact with other case officers in the EU, and therefore to cooperate.

In the field of COI research specifically, one COI officer noted that knowing that other COI researchers in the EU applied the same research methods facilitated the trust in their information and the exchange of such information between COI services, which is an important way for national asylum authorities to compile COI.⁴⁰

However, such cooperation could be short-lived as some stakeholders who took part in training activities abroad involving other Member States (e.g. Trainers who took part in train-the-trainer sessions) did not maintain contacts with other participants once they went back to their respective Member States. The reason for this was the rather national dimension of their role.

4.1.4.2 Cooperation with Member States whose asylum system was under pressure

In those Member States where the asylum system was under particular pressure and that faced difficulties to train new staff and strengthen their workforce, the Training Curriculum was acknowledged as valuable. In addition, the fact that experts deployed to the 'hotspots' had been trained with EASO modules facilitated their cooperation and mutual trust on the ground.

In the context of the contribution of the use of the EASO Training Curriculum to intra-EU solidarity with Member States under particular pressure, over 50% of respondents from Member States that received special support in recent years agreed (21.5%) or somewhat agreed (29%) that the training support received helped relieve some of the

⁴⁰ Interview with a COI officer and trainers in one Member State.

pressure on their administrations, whilst 34% neither agreed nor disagreed. Less than 15% disagreed or somewhat disagreed with the statement.

During face-to-face interviews, the Training NCP in one Member State that received Emergency and Special Support from EASO considered that the Training Curriculum was **one element that had contributed to support Member States under particular pressure within the EU**. This was made possible not only via the training of case workers in post, but also via the training of interim staff to support the administration, who also needed to be trained to perform their tasks.⁴¹

According to those Member States that participated in Emergency and Special Support missions however, their success **largely depended on the level and qualifications of the trainers** sent by Member States. Language could be an obstacle if the civil servants deployed by their Member State could not communicate effectively in English. Trainings in the context of support missions could be challenging for the trainer as the discussions between participants were largely about specificities in their national system. However, one NCP stated that, although the correlation between the Training Curriculum and the development of cooperation between Member States was not clear, civil servants trained with the Training Curriculum were generally better prepared to take part in support missions.

However, following the modules and training trainers in the context of the Curriculum takes **time and resources**. Some senior managers from Member States that did not receive Emergency and Special Support agreed that the Training Curriculum could constitute welcome support between Member States but added that their own capacity issues during the migration crisis had made it difficult for them to deploy experts. During the crisis, some Member States called for additional training support as well, by organising more regional trainings closer to Member States under pressure – including northern Member States – in order to train staff members as trainers without committing two days of time for them to travel to Malta to be trained. However, some initiatives were identified where Member States who were under pressure but did not benefit from Emergency and Special Support also benefited from support in the field of training. The NCP in a Member State whose asylum system had been under particular pressure noted that neighbouring Member States had sent trainers to their asylum authority because they did not have trainer capacity.

4.1.5 Impact on the external dimension of the CEAS

Some managers indicated that the use of the Training Curriculum in third countries provided officials in those countries with a **better understanding of the legislation and of the asylum procedure in the EU**. Its function as a capacity building instrument was also acknowledged by a representative of the European Commission. It also helped third countries with strengthening their capacity so that they can grant adequate protection to third-country nationals who need it. A trainer deployed in third countries added that training participants had shown a real willingness to improve their practice, independently from the national policy in place in their country.

A few **obstacles to the Curriculum's impact on the external dimension** were identified. One particularly negative experience was recounted by one trainer, who had encountered difficulties in organising training sessions in third countries via the national authorities there, and indeed some of the countries in which the Curriculum was applied were at the same time countries of origin of applicants for international

⁴¹ Interview with one Training NCP.

protection, which made the use of the modules there ambiguous.⁴² On this note, a case officer indicated that the Inclusion module had included case studies based on specific countries, and thus wondered how this module could sensibly be used in that country. Finally, another issue was the resources needed for Member States to contribute to the development of the external dimension of the Curriculum. A policy officer in a Member State that did not take part in the external dimension of the Training Curriculum explained that doing so required certain language skills and knowledge, which made it less accessible to some Member States.

A representative for ECRE also stated that one issue with the external dimension was that EU asylum law was not always the same as international standards (e.g. regarding the notion of safe third countries), which apply to third countries.

4.2 Effectiveness

Key findings

- EASO training activities were overall considered to be of high quality, fit for purpose and positively contribute to fulfil the agency's primary objectives, even if variations/mixed reviews exist on the quality specific modules and the effectiveness of the training delivery methods (e-learning vs. face-to-face).
- Sustainability and ownership of EASO training activities at the national level appeared as low and there was room for EASO and Member States to increase action in this regard.
- On the other hand, existing data/evidence could not determine whether EASO training activities led to deeper organisational/structural changes in national asylum institutions.
- Training activities were overall delivered on time and according to plan even if on some occasions external factors (e.g. lack of time, human or material resources) may have posed challenges to their planning and/or implementation.
- The majority of Member States consulted cooperated with non-State actors at different stages of the training processes (i.e. design and delivery of training activities); the nature and degree of such cooperation tended to vary across Member States but was overall seen as positive.

This section analyses the findings on the effectiveness of EASO's Training Curriculum. For this purpose, the evaluation team answered the following evaluation questions:

- To what extent have EASO's training activities implemented the tasks set out in its mandate as laid down in the EASO Regulation?
- To what extent are EASO's training activities sustainable, did they create ownership and impacts that can be preserved over time?
- Has EASO training contributed to change in behaviours and practices at work (taking into account the evolutionary nature of the Curriculum)?
- Were the anticipated training activities and outputs delivered on time and according to plan?
- What are the possible/potential problems and constraints faced by national asylum authorities during the implementation of EASO training activities?
- To what extent has EASO been able to engage different stakeholders in its training related work, including non-state actors?

⁴² Interview with a strategic manager.

In the ToR, an additional evaluation question was listed under the Effectiveness criterion:

- How have the changes in behaviours and work practices (if any) impacted on the organisation?

The findings of these evaluation questions related more to the *impact* of the Curriculum. In order to avoid redundancies, the evaluation team chose to integrate them into Section 4.1.2.

This section provides an assessment of the effectiveness of EASO's Training Curriculum in implementing the agency's mandate, as laid down in its founding Regulation. Article 2 of Regulation 439/2010 describes EASO's mission as "facilitating, coordinating and strengthening practical cooperation among Member States on the many aspects of asylum and helping to improve the implementation of the CEAS".⁴³ Article 6 regulates the support provided in terms of training, specifying that it must be "of high quality" and identifying "key principles and best practices" with a view to enabling greater convergence in methods, practices and outcomes in the area of asylum.⁴⁴

Against this backdrop, the evaluation of the Curriculum's effectiveness discusses the extent to which it was able to meet its set objectives, has been sustainable and has been able to trigger practical and organisational changes at the national level. The section also assesses whether training activities have progressed according to plan and whether non-State actors have been effectively involvement in their implementation. Any obstacles faced by national authorities in getting their staff trained in the Training Curriculum are also examined.

4.2.1 Effectively fulfilling EASO's training mandate

Overall, EASO's training activities can be considered of high standard of quality and as such they positively contribute to fulfil the agency's primary objectives, namely strengthening practical cooperation amongst national authorities and improving the implementation of the CEAS in the Member States. This general finding is supported by the data collected in the ten Member States consulted, but also the online survey and desk research. However, there are significant variations in terms of the quality of specific modules and mixed reviews on the effectiveness of the training delivery methods (e-learning vs. face-to-face).

4.2.1.1 Overall quality and fitness for purpose

EASO's Training Curriculum is of **high quality, fit for purpose and met its objectives**. Such general appraisal is shared by most strategic/ operational managers and national policy officers interviewed. Similar views were also expressed by other stakeholders at various levels, including NCPs, trainers and the case officers and COI officers who had followed the courses. In some Member States, participants have shown high levels of enthusiasm and a growing interest in accessing EASO's training materials. This is in fact (partly) evidenced by the EASO Annual Training

⁴³ Article 2(1), European Union, Regulation No 439/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 May 2010 establishing a European Asylum Support Office, 19 May 2010, OJ L.132/11-132/28; 29.5.2010, (EU)No 439/2010, available at: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32010R0439> [accessed 13 July 2017]

⁴⁴ Article 6(5), Ibid.

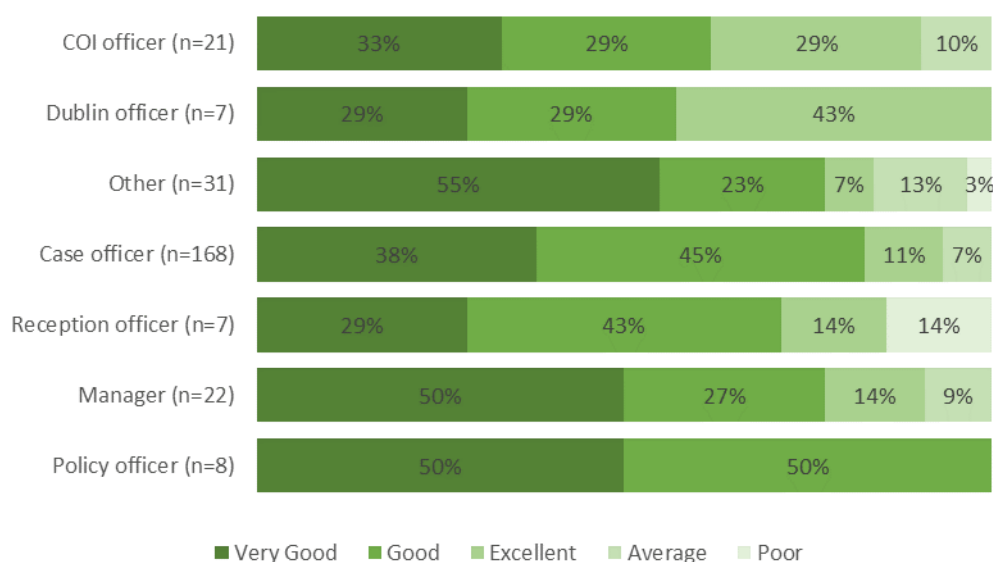
Report 2016⁴⁵, which shows a significant (44 %) rise in national participation in the EASO training modules compared to 2015.

“The Training Curriculum is excellent. It is very educational and brings a lot of value, both from a methodological and a substantial point of view. The e-learning session is educational/pedagogic and interactive. The face-to-face session is interesting and keeps people interested.”

Operational manager

This finding was moreover confirmed by the online survey. Indeed, participants in all stakeholders' categories overwhelmingly considered that the quality of the module(s) they participated in was good, very good, or excellent. This enthusiasm was particularly marked amongst Dublin officers, policy officers, and case officers, as illustrated in the figure below.

Figure 4.3 How do you rate the fitness for purpose of the module(s) you attended?

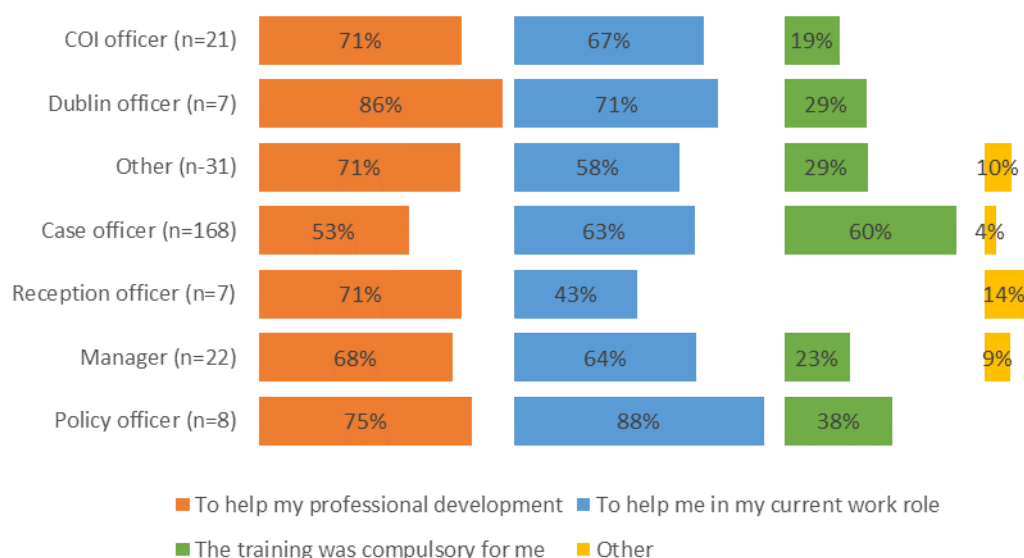


Cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q.22. N=264. Not asked to trainers.

Likewise, an overwhelming majority was encouraged to participate in EASO trainings because they help them in their current role (88%) and professional development (80%). These figures illustrate not only the overall recognition of the 'fitness for purpose' character of the Curriculum, but also that end-users/trainees are increasingly interested in taking part in training activities, beyond the fact that they are compulsory in some cases.

⁴⁵ See EASO Annual Training Report 2016, July 2017, available at: https://www.easo.europa.eu/sites/default/files/EASO_Training_Report_2016.pdf

Figure 4.4 Which of the following reasons motivated you to take part in the EASO Training Curriculum?



Source: ICF survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q. 23. N=264, multiple responses possible therefore percentages may exceed 100.

4.2.1.2 Quality of specific modules

Primary data also reveals that, despite the overall positive assessment of the Training Curriculum, **specific modules present better design and quality than others.**

The **quality of the case studies and some examples presented** were in some cases deemed too generic, simplistic, 'old' and not sufficiently grounded on national experience. For instance, a case officer explained that the case studies proposed in the Inclusion module could be outdated due to the evolution of the situation in countries of origin (e.g. Sri Lanka). Interviewees⁴⁶ also stressed that some modules would gain in quality - and thus effectiveness - if they were more adapted to the national context where they are taught. While there was awareness that adjustments could be introduced by the trainers themselves for the purposes of the delivery of training courses at the national level, some stakeholders noted that lack of time could prevent them from customising the examples used.⁴⁷ Likewise, the ability to adapt the training content also depends on quality of trainers themselves, which is not always the same within and across Member States. The existence of **overlaps between the modules** (see Section 5.5) was also considered problematic as it led to the materials being seen as repetitive and made following the training more time-consuming than it should have been.

In contrast, the quality of the **Introduction to Didactics Module was considered particularly strong.** This finding was supported by several national trainers who valued the usefulness of the pedagogic techniques taught and the individualised feedback provided on their presentation and teaching skills.⁴⁸ A number of them also stated that they wished the didactics session would have taken up more of the total training time as, while they were familiar with the content of the module because they

⁴⁶ Interview with a case officer and a strategic manager.

⁴⁷ For example, trainers, case officers and a strategic manager.

⁴⁸ Interviews with trainers in five Member States

had taken it before, they had no previous teaching or training experience. Therefore they considered that the Didactics session added the most value in the train-the-trainer session.

Similarly, **modules on inclusion, interviewing techniques, exclusion and evidence assessment are also considered well designed and useful.** This general finding is backed by interviews with trainers and case-officers in four Member States,⁴⁹ operational managers in two others,⁵⁰ and the Training NCP in another one.⁵¹ According to an operational manager, the Interview Techniques modules proved extremely useful to improve overall communication skills applied not only to their daily practices, but also outside the work environment. One NCP considered the exclusion technique module particularly good, both in terms of quality of the content and the methodology; the module has moreover helped in building up national skills in this specific area. In another Member State, the Evidence Assessment had received a very positive assessment and was viewed as one of the best modules of EASO's Training Curriculum.⁵²

These modules show also high attendance levels – which has in fact been increasing in past the last years. The Inclusion module has seen the number of participants grow 106 % between 2015 and 2016; similar trends can be identified in the interviewing techniques (27%), exclusion (20%) and, to a minor extent also the evidence assessment (5%) module.⁵³

4.2.1.3 Effectiveness of the delivery methods

Generally, **the multiplier effect of the train-the-trainer model proved highly efficient.** This result/conclusion is supported by primary data, notably the interviews with national stakeholders. On the other hand, the interviews also revealed a lack of consensus on the effectiveness of the delivery methods used to impart the training (i.e. e-learning vs. face-to-face sessions).

4.2.1.4 Effectiveness of the train-the-trainer method

The **multiplier effects of the 'train-the-the-trainers' method was noted as a benefit** of the Training Curriculum leading to quality and to efficiency gains. Such 'multiplier' effect was considered effective by the majority of operational managers consulted. In addition, the train-the trainer model also fosters cooperation and exchange among practitioners across the EU and ultimately also strengthen the coherence of the CEAS.

⁴⁹ Interviews with case officers and trainers in four Member States.

⁵⁰ Interviews with operational managers in two Member States

⁵¹ Interview with the Training NCP in one Member State

⁵² Interview with a trainer

⁵³ See EASO Annual Training Report 2016, op. cit.

“One of the main benefits of the train-the-trainer model is that it ensures that all trainers, at a European level, receive the same training. This reinforces the CEAS, at least with regard to the basic modules. In addition, the model fosters cooperation of practitioners at a high level, the exchange of experiences, as well as the further development of the modules.”

Trainer

Box 5 provides an overview of the main benefits of the train-the-trainer method in the opinion of trainers.

Box 5 The positive aspects of the train-the-trainer method

According to interview with trainers in several Member States,⁵⁴ EASO train-the-trainer methodology presents several positive aspects:

- Train-the-trainer sessions are based on a good mix between theory and practice;
- As trainers contribute to the elaboration of the Curriculum, the training is tailored to match their specific needs;
- Train-the-trainer sessions ensure that all Member States have access to the same training methodology and content;
- The trainings have a meta-component: trainers are placed in the role of the trainees and can therefore observe/assess the appropriateness of training methodologies, etc.;
- Train-the-trainer sessions offer an opportunity for asylum officials from different Member States to meet and exchange, thus creating a (informal) community of practice;
- The train-the-trainer ensured that knowledge was retained within the organisation, even if staff left;

The train-the-trainer method facilitated the provision of training to numerous new hired during the migration crisis in 2015-2016.

Some challenges/issues have also been highlighted by stakeholders during the interviews, some of which may have influenced the train-the-trainer sessions' impact and outreach. In some occasions, it was noted that not all the participants that attended train-the-trainer sessions acted as trainers once they went back to their Member States.⁵⁵ The overall experience/background of those selected to become trainers has also been questioned in some occasions. Trainers in one Member State emphasised for instance that participants expected trainers in the train-the-trainer session to be more experienced than them and able to answer their questions on the modules, which was not always the case.⁵⁶ All these aspects seem also linked to Member States' capacity/aptitude to select appropriate personnel, and above all to ensure that the individuals that attended train-the-trainer sessions are kept in positions where they will effectively be able to act as such. This is moreover key to guarantee the ownership and sustainability of the train-the-trainer model.

Interviews also revealed that the train-the-trainer sessions could also gain in strength/impact if they were **more operational** (e.g. focusing on issues such as how to manage the time needed for the preparation of the training, how to manage a group of people, especially since they had to deal with big groups during the crisis etc.). Other interviewees also highlighted that the didactic content was about creating a

⁵⁴ Interviews with trainers in eight Member States.

⁵⁵ This issue was raised for example in interviews with trainers and a COI researcher

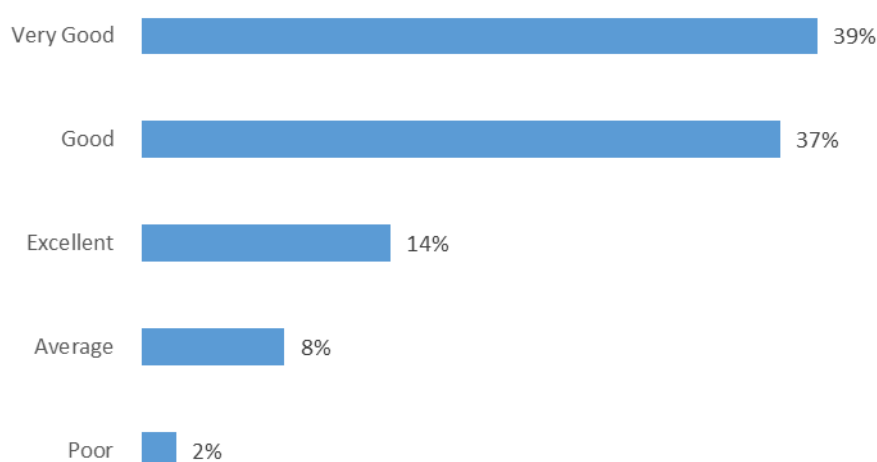
⁵⁶ In addition, they recommended that the main focus of the sessions should be on the pedagogic and didactic aspects rather than on the substance of the module concerned.

good atmosphere for the class, but not so much on more practical, didactic advice needed to organise trainings.

4.2.1.5 Quality of the e-learning sessions

Overall, e-learning sessions are **interactive, visually attractive, well-conceived**, offering also a **good preparation to face-to-face sessions**. This assessment was shared by several stakeholders during the interviews.⁵⁷ According to the online survey, the assessment of the e-learning method ranked particularly highly among trainers, as illustrated by the survey results. Indeed, 90% of them considered the e-learning sessions good, very good or excellent.

Figure 4.5 In the ‘train-the-trainer’ session, how would you rate the e-learning session?



Source: ICF survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q.12. N=49 – Only asked to trainers.

However, **primary data also revealed areas where improvement was possible**, in particular when it comes to access and language/presentation of training content.⁵⁸ The main issue observed concerned **linguistic issues**, both related to the quality of the English used and, where relevant, of the translated versions of the online content, were also raised by trainers and COI officers in four Member States and case officers and a strategy manager in two others. It was however acknowledged that there have been improvements, in particular in relation to the usage of English. EASO has increased efforts to make sure that more and more training material is available in national languages where training is delivered. Yet, as Member States are primarily responsible for translations, it did not always seem possible for EASO to keep the control over the quality and rigour of the translated material.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ One reception officer, two COI officers, several case officers and one operational manager.

⁵⁸ Indeed, few participants considered the e-learning platform cumbersome to use and unappealing. In this regard, case officers in one Member State complained about the platform being slow and the language used in the e-learning session being too technical. In this case, the level of experience of the participants did not seem to have an impact over their appreciation of the platform as this view was expressed by both experienced and recently hired case officers.

⁵⁹ See EASO Training Report 2016m op. cit. and “Terms of Reference for the EASO Training Curriculum”, Valletta Harbour, 31 January 2017, EASO/DAS/2017/107

Indeed, a case officer in one Member State explained that due to the poor translation and wording of a question in the e-learning session of a module s/he followed, all the participants got the same questions wrong because they had not understood them correctly. Similarly, trainers in another Member State also flagged up problems in the translated modules, reporting that trainees were sometimes not able to understand the question/content. This view was not shared by all stakeholders who noted translation issues, as in the same Member State case officers indicated that it had not prevented them from understanding the content of the module.

The **length of the e-learning session** was also flagged as problematic in the light of participants' capacity to take part in trainings. Indeed, interviews showed⁶⁰ that despite their quality, e-learning sessions could be too long and therefore not adapted to the reality of the daily work in national asylum organisations. Although it is true that the e-learning format allows for greater flexibility, considering the workload in certain national administrations, many trainees/end-users were obliged to complete the trainings outside their normal working hours. Similarly, for the same reasons, the four weeks during which access to the e-learning session is open prior to the face-to-face session may not be enough for trainees/end-users to complete the whole modules, in particular those that are more dense/technical (e.g. Inclusion, Exclusion) and require further work.⁶¹

While the amount of time national authorities can dedicate to training activities is a matter of national competence, alternative and relatively easy solutions can be found, e.g. expanding the time for accessing the platform beyond four weeks.

Quality of the face-to-face sessions

Face-to-face sessions were overall of good quality and seen as positive by many Member States. While it was felt that their quality was highly dependent on the skills of the trainer or the number of participants⁶², they were described as a 'safe environment' for exchanging and discussing specific aspects of their work.

In addition to other aspects, face-to-face sessions had a clear **social dimension**. This aspect was particularly valued by participants and trainers alike. Indeed, several stakeholders emphasised the positive side-effects of bringing together officials from different Member States or diverse national institutions within the same country, as well as participants with different levels of experience. Face-to-face sessions were largely praised as forum for exchange and dialogue, which placed all participants of all levels of experience "on the same level"⁶³ and enabled them to discuss practical cases and learn from each other.⁶⁴ An overview of the side benefits of face-to-face sessions is provided in the box below.

Box 6 Side-benefits of the face-to-face training sessions

Face-to-face sessions were found to have a number of benefits besides the acquisition of knowledge and skills. One case officer stressed that these gave them respite from their daily routines. In turn, this provided an opportunity for case officers to reflect on their work and their practices, and what the practice should be. One trainer highlighted the added value of mixed groups consisting of officials with various levels of skills and experience. More

⁶⁰ Interview with case officers.

⁶¹ Interview with case officers.

⁶² Interview with a trainer.

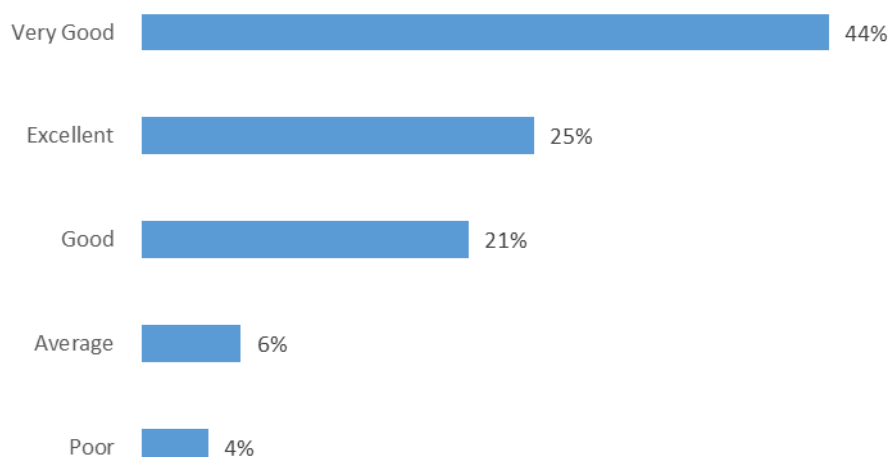
⁶³ Interview with a case officer.

⁶⁴ Interviews with an operational manager, with case officers, with trainers. .

experienced case officers usually asked more in-depth questions, grounded in specific cases they had handled, which created learning opportunities for newcomers. On the other hand, it was suggested that practical exercises could also take experienced officers out of their comfort zone and reveal that their standard practice was actually defective. More generally, the trainer stressed the psychological benefits of sharing experiences. The nature of the case work meant that after several years of dealing with asylum cases, and sometimes with applicants from specific countries of origin, case officers often developed 'blind spots', lost empathy or, on the contrary, became excessively empathic, which compromised the quality of their work. The face-to-face sessions created an outlet for these tensions and offered case officers the chance to see that others faced similar experiences. Finally, a trainer highlighted that one of the greatest benefits of the face-to-face sessions was related to the establishment of contacts in other Member States. This meant, for example, that case officers could directly call their counterparts in other countries when handling Dublin transfers, which considerably simplified their work.

In the train-the-trainer sessions, the quality of the face-to-face sessions received the same level of enthusiasm as the e-learning session (see previous subsection), with 90% of respondents considering the face-to-face session to be good, very good or excellent.

Figure 4.6 In the 'train-the-trainer' session, how would you rate the face-to-face session?



Source: ICF survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q.13. N=48. Only asked to trainers.

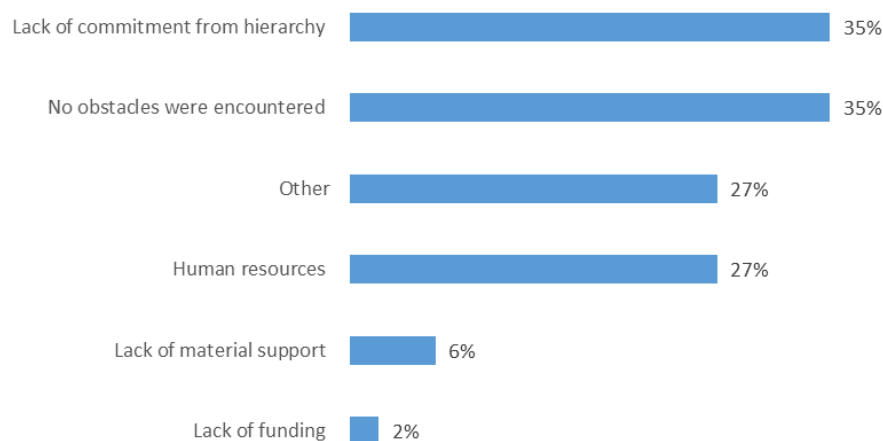
4.2.1.6 Access to training sessions

A specific factor that had a negative impact on the effectiveness of the delivery of the Training Curriculum, concerned its **accessibility**, both with regard to the e-learning sessions - due to technical issues – and, in the case of train-the-trainer sessions, the face-to-face sessions – given the difficulties faced in reaching Malta from some Member States.

The online survey provided an overview of the main obstacles faced by trainers to the effective delivery of trainings in their national administration. Over 35% of respondents indicated that a lack of commitment from their hierarchy presented an obstacle to the delivery of trainings. It is worth noting however that the same share of responses indicates an absence of obstacles altogether. Other obstacles cited included heavy

workloads and lack of time due to other priorities (5) or organisational obstacles (3) or insufficient need (4), or the absence of translation (1).

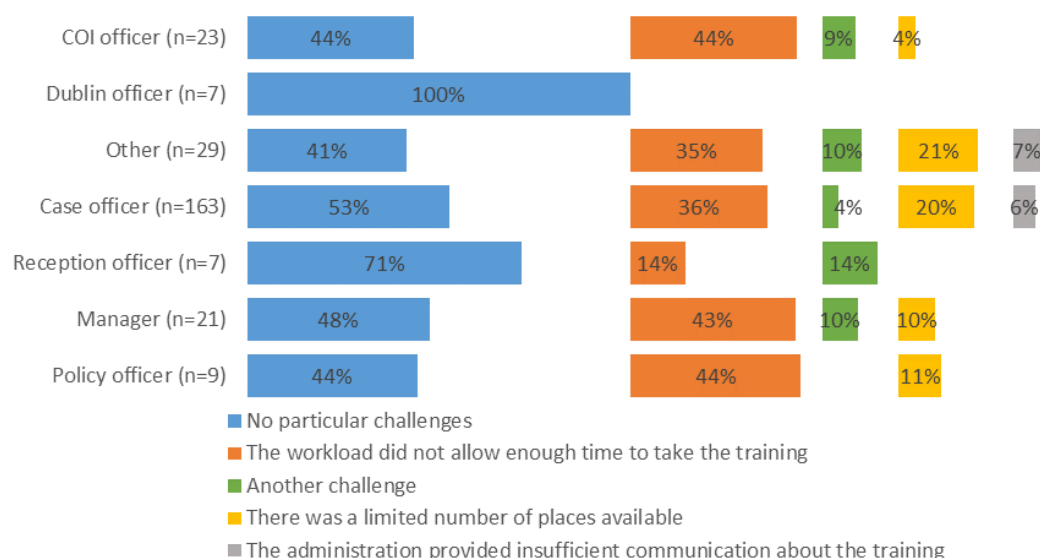
Figure 4.7 Which, if any, of the following practical obstacles to the effective delivery of national trainings have you encountered?



Source: ICF survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q.15. N=64, multiple choice, only asked to trainers.

Primary data also shows the challenges met by participants when trying to enroll in national training modules. As the survey results indicate, to the large majority of stakeholders (all categories considered), the difficulty to reconcile their workload with training activities stands out as the most important obstacle. Other challenges reported included the fact that the training was not compulsory, lack of time, insufficient material resources (e.g. training room) or a lack of interest from participants.

Figure 4.8 Which, if any, of the following challenges did you encounter when you chose to take part in the EASO Training Curriculum?



Source: ICF survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q. 26. N=259, not asked to trainers, multiple responses possible therefore the percentages may exceed 100.

Face-to-face interviews only provided anecdotal evidence concerning challenges with national training sessions, in particular concerning technical issues with the online platform. The introduction of a new online platform appeared to solve some of these issues (e.g. access to training materials) but the transition to the new format created new ones (e.g. broken links). In such cases, interviewees pointed out that they had received a swift and adequate support from EASO to solve their technical difficulties.

Concerning attendance in face-to-face modules (in the train-the-trainer course), interviews also suggest that, despite their quality and overall positive (side) effects, travelling to Malta require an important investment in time and resources. This is particularly true for Member States/national authorities that have poor travel connections with Malta.⁶⁵ Increasing the number of regional train-the-trainer sessions, in addition to Malta-based ones, could be one possible measure to mitigate this challenge.

4.2.2 Sustainability and ownership of EASO's training activities

A training programme's effectiveness is also guaranteed by the sustainability of its effects (i.e. whether or not they last over time). In the case of the Training Curriculum, Member States implemented a number of measures to ensure the sustainability of training activities at the national level.

NCPs reported on the actions taken to promote the sustainability of trainings received by civil servants in their respective Member States. Such measures included:

- the performance of regular quality checks to ensure that case officers applied the knowledge acquired during the training courses (e.g. random selection and check of case files);

⁶⁵ These stakeholders in particular say they end up losing four days needed to participate in the sessions. Interviews with trainers in northern Member States.

- the monitoring of work practices by trainers following the training (e.g. trainers could join the interview led by a case officer who participated in the training);
- the use of assessment forms as reminders;
- the availability of an up-to-date electronic manual and some good practice examples on how to handle asylum cases;
- the availability of handbooks for certain modules, and the translation into the national language of the UNHCR 2011 project on Further Developing Asylum Quality in the EU (FDQ)⁶⁶; and
- the organisation of short refresher trainings.

Indeed, one of the key factors to ensure/promote ownership of EASO training activities at national level was Member States' engagement in particular in the development of modules.⁶⁷ National officers who had been involved in specific modules tended then to become the bearers ('owners') of the knowledge and skills acquired through training, making sure these are 'replicated' at the national level. In short, the more Member States were engaged in the design and implementation of EASO training activities, the more they would be sustainable.

However, the interviews revealed a lack of awareness and use of existing measures to promote the sustainability of the Training Curriculum at the operational level. For example, one of the trainers interviewed reported that there were no such measures in place while the other noted that learning outcomes were ascertained indirectly through quality checks. Other stakeholders interviewed would have moreover welcomed additional actions to ensure that the knowledge acquired thanks to the EASO Training Curriculum is better integrated into their day-to-day operations. Even in Member States where such tools had been developed, one NCP acknowledged that their implementation had not been systematic. A structured approach was also lacking in another Member State, where the adoption of additional actions to promote sustainability was on the agenda.⁶⁸ In a third Member State sustainability was ensured thanks to the availability of training under EASO's Special Support Plan, but would have been otherwise problematic due to the limited budget available to travel for the purposes of receiving training.⁶⁹ Similarly, according to a trainer in a fourth Member State, no specific measure has been put in place to ensure the sustainability of EASO's training activities in the country and that there was definitely room to improve the situation.⁷⁰

4.2.3 Effects on the structure and organisation of national asylum authorities

There is **mixed evidence** concerning whether EASO training activities have been effective in leading to **deeper organisational and structural changes** in national asylum authorities. Whereas NCPs in two Member States reported that their internal

⁶⁶ UNHCR, Further Developing Asylum Quality in the EU (FDQ): Summary Project Report, September 2011, available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/4e85b41f2.html> [accessed 13 July 2017]

⁶⁷ Meeting with EASO to discuss the draft final report, 29 September 2017.

⁶⁸ Interview with one NCP.

⁶⁹ According to the views expressed by one NCP.

⁷⁰ The NCP mentioned though the existence of an annual meeting organised by the national authority/government to facilitate the exchange of experience amongst all national case officers, in particular those who participated in one of EASO training modules. According to the same NCP, this annual meeting was however not held in 2016 or 2017.

guidelines had been modified as a consequence of the Curriculum and, in the case of one of them, gained in complexity and sophistication, this was not the case in other Member States.

In one Member States whose asylum system had been under particular pressure, the high workload and the overwhelming preoccupation with meeting targets were mentioned as the key factors preventing further adaptations in national procedures.⁷¹ In another, while the Training Curriculum was not considered to have had an impact on policies, a change in approach had been observed at the level of territorial commissions where decision-making on asylum cases took place.⁷² A similar remark was made by stakeholders in a third Member State: while an operational manager saw no real change in national procedures or guidelines, the NCP considered that national authorities had adopted a more European approach as a result of EASO training activities (see above).⁷³

4.2.4 Effective delivery of planned activities

While, overall, training activities seemed to have been **delivered as intended** in the Member States consulted, some factors affected the planning and implementation of training courses. This included, first and foremost, the migration crisis, the unavailability of a sufficient number of trainers, the insufficiency of the time allocated to deliver trainings in comparison with the amount of information contained in the module; and delays in obtaining necessary translations.

Evidence in some Member States showed that **staff were not always allowed to participate** in the trainings or provided sufficient time to do so, which could have limited the effectiveness of the Training Curriculum at the national level. Examples include:

- In one Member State, case officers and COI officers noted that they had had to complete the e-learning sessions outside their normal office hours, and thus would have welcomed more time to complete the modules.
- In another, management could refuse to allow staff to take part in training courses and cancel training sessions due to the workload.⁷⁴ While case officers were generally allowed to take the modules later, this could pose a problem for new staff lacking basic training to do their jobs.⁷⁵
- Similar problems were reported in a third Member State, where heads of unit were responsible for approving their staff member's applications to follow the e-learning sessions, and, given the high number of asylum applications to be processed, often rejected such requests.⁷⁶ To address this problem it was planned to introduce a centralised selection approach.⁷⁷

⁷¹ Interview with NCP.

⁷² Interview with NCP.

⁷³ Interview with NCP and Operational Manager.

⁷⁴ Interview with NCP.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Interviews with strategic manager and case officer.

⁷⁷ Interview with strategic manager.

4.2.5 Potential constraints/problems hindering the implementation of EASO training activities

As observed above, despite the overall positive appraisal received by Member States, some problems were identified in the implementation of EASO training activities. These were generally not fundamental issues as they did not threaten the full or effective implementation of training activities, but they posed challenges to the training experience of end-users of the Training Curriculum, as well as to the national authorities responsible for organising these activities.

The evaluation showed that **lack of time** was the most frequent obstacle highlighted by stakeholders – all positions and Member States considered. In particular, trainers and operational managers from seven Member States consulted via face-to-face interviews indicated that releasing staff to participate in EASO training activities was challenging at times when their workload was particularly high.⁷⁸ On the other hand, **the short-term costs posed by the organisation of trainings were overall outweighed by long term benefits.**⁷⁹

Without questioning the pace or quality of the training per se, the lack of time to properly follow after e-learning sessions and do the practical exercises before the face-to-face training⁸⁰ was another issue that came out in the evaluation data.

On a related note, the **heavy workload** in some national administrations may create a disincentive for civil servants to sign up as trainers. In this regard, the trainers interviewed in one Member State indicated that the relatively high turnover of trainers could be attributed to the fact that assuming this role did not bring any financial gains and could actually have a negative impact on the staff member as it reduced their capacity to meet their targets. In another, time constraints due to an important workload have also posed problems to trainers when trying to organise and/or attend training activities. One trainer in another Member State made a similar remark, pointing out that trainees often have to fit in completion of the e-learning and carry out their normal work at the same time, which eventually harms the quality of the learning process. It would be then necessary to allocate a specific number of hours for training activities, or create systems that would compensate the time spent on training without increasing their workload.

4.2.6 Engagement of non-State actors in training activities

The majority of the Member States consulted via face-to-face interviews cooperated with non-State actors at different stages of the training activities.

Firstly, UNCHR was engaged in training activities not only with EASO as a member of the Reference Group, but also with several Member States.⁸¹ UNHCR has a long-

⁷⁸ For example, one operational manager noted that trainers were also case officers and that it was difficult for them to meet their targets if they were frequently away on training, in particular if this involved traveling to Malta. In his view, 'managers had to decide whether to send people on training or to achieve results'. A similar remark was made by one NCP in another Member State who pointed out that holding regional trainings tend to be a better alternative, as travelling to a neighbouring country is less time consuming than travelling to Malta.

⁷⁹ Interviews with operational manager. This view was implicitly supported by their counterpart in another Member State, who noted that there had been a drop in the quality of decisions linked to lack of training on the Evidence Assessment Module during the previous year.

⁸⁰ This issue was raised, for example, in interviews with case officers and trainers, a trainer and a COI officer.

⁸¹ According to an official of UNHCR, the institution is indeed very active in the training designing and/or delivery both at the European and national/Member States level. Interview with UNHCR liaison office with EASO

standing experience in the field of training of asylum professionals, and as such its activities often interact with EASO's when it comes to training.

- In three Member State, UNHCR was involved in parts or the whole training process.
- In another, UNHCR procedural guides tended to be used in internal trainings - now complemented by EASO modules, such as interviewing techniques and evidence assessment.
- UNHCR had a strong cooperation with the one of the Member States' asylum service, according to the country's strategic manager. It notably helped the setting up and staffing of the Asylum service, especially the COI Unit. UNHCR has also collaborated in the development of more specialised trainings.⁸²
- In another Member State, an external control, "training-on-the-job" monitoring was carried out by UNHCR once or twice a year.⁸³

In addition to UNHCR, several Member States reported cooperating with NGOs and civil society organisations

- In one Member State the authorities cooperated with relevant NGOs, for example by inviting experienced guest speakers to provide training on specific modules (e.g. NGOs specialised in LGBTQ matters);
- Another Member State emphasised the role played by non-State actors such as the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the European Migration Network (EMN) in training activities.
- In a third Member State, NGOs and associations that worked on specific issues, such as gender, trafficking or minors, were often asked to provide training in these areas.⁸⁴

In addition to non-state actors specialised in the field of asylum, **experts and institutions from other disciplines** also took part in the delivery of trainings in some Member States. For example, an association affiliated to the psychiatric department in a hospital (Solentra) that was already involved in the delivery of national trainings in one Member State, had been invited to support the design of an EASO module. External experts also provided support/upgrades on interview techniques modules, such as Interviewing Children and Interviewing Vulnerable Persons.⁸⁵

Existing variation in the types of cooperation appeared to be linked to the quality (and tradition) of Member States' relations with civil society organisations – and ultimately also to Member States' capacity and willingness to give them space and a more active role in asylum (training) matters. Indeed, as reminded by a senior official of ECRE, not all Member States have an open/positive dialogue with civil society organisations and NGOs, notably when it comes to politically sensitive matters such as asylum. In these cases, the collaboration with such actors tend to be fairly limited or non-existent. Data collected for this evaluation provide some insights on these matters. Hence, one national stakeholder⁸⁶ expressed **reservations about the involvement of NGOs and academic institutions** in the elaboration and development of the training modules and materials, arguing that these actors may be too idealistic and their

⁸² Interview with a strategic manager and NPC.

⁸³ Interview with a trainer.

⁸⁴ Interview with a NPC.

⁸⁵ Interview with trainers.

⁸⁶ Interview with a NPC.

priorities not fully compatible with those of national authorities. Similarly, another stakeholder⁸⁷ stressed that while civil society actors could provide welcome support in the elaboration and delivery of trainings, the Training Curriculum should remain in the hands of EASO and the Member States – and answer Member States' needs in the first place.

4.3 Efficiency

This section analyses the findings on the efficiency of EASO's Training Curriculum. For this purpose, the evaluation team answered the following evaluation questions:

- Were EASO's training activities efficient in training asylum personnel?
- What are the major challenges, strengths and weaknesses of EASO's training methods and activities?
- How efficient has EASO been in utilising the Expert and Trainer's pool and in deploying trainers for training related activities?
- Do the procedures in place ensure smooth and efficient processes, such as selection of trainers, preparation of trainings, and development of training material?
- Is the EASO Training Strategy in line with the objective of achieving efficient results?

⁸⁷ Interview with a NPC in France.

Key findings

- The approach adopted by EASO to support training for national asylum personnel was largely an effective use of resources. Stakeholders believed that the centralised development of training content was significantly more efficient than countries developing their own training. Stakeholders also believed the training was a good use of their time and included a good mix of face-to-face and e-learning
- Member States also employed effective approaches to deliver training based on the EASO training curriculum. Most countries employed a systematic approach for selecting participants for the training, and covered translation costs and staff time for delivering or attending the training.
- Many participants did however have difficulties in accessing the training due to work pressures. Most did not have their targets adjusted for attending or delivering training. Moreover, in one Member State, participants were not given sufficient time to undertake the e-learning element of their training.
- Member States also covered the costs for their staff to attend the train-the-trainer sessions. However, many reported that the cost of sending staff to Malta was high, and would prefer the availability of more regional training.
- Most countries employed clear and effective criteria for selecting staff to the Expert and Trainer's pool. However, some experienced difficulties in getting staff to release staff to deliver the train-the-trainer sessions and as a consequence a significant proportion of countries were not able to always release trainers.

4.3.1 Efficiency of the programme model for training asylum personnel

Overall, EASO's approach for supporting training for national asylum personnel was considered a very **efficient use of resources**. The centralised development of a training curriculum with national authority experts was felt to be far **more efficient than countries developing the training themselves**. Moreover, the support provided to Member States through the train-the-trainer sessions also helped ensure the training was delivered to a high standard.

NCPs and senior managers also believed that the mix of e-learning and short face-to-face sessions has helped **minimise the amount of time required** to undertake the training, while ensuring participants gained a broad knowledge of EU systems for asylum contextualised for their country. Participants similarly believed that the training was an efficient use of their time.

Member States and EASO generally allocated sufficient resources to ensure the training was delivered effectively. The EASO expertise was felt to be important for shaping the Training Curriculum and ensuring it was of a good quality. Member States generally provided sufficient resources to cover the costs of national and train-the-trainer training, even though not all line managers and heads of unit gave their staff sufficient time to conduct e-learning.

4.3.1.1 Member States approaches for delivering the national training

National training

In the Member States consulted for the evaluation, all **national authorities covered all the direct costs of the training**. As the training was in all cases delivered in-

house, this mostly included covering the cost of staff time to deliver or attend the training and travel costs where participants travelled from other regional offices.

Most **Member States also funded the translation** of some or all of the face-to-face elements of the training modules into their national language. Only two of the Member States interviewed did not translate any of the EASO training materials. This was not due to financial reasons but because the national authority believed all participants were fluent enough in English.

Most trainers and course participants believed that the national authority contribution to the costs generally made the training accessible to all potential participants. Moreover, most national authorities also invested in regional and local training, so case officers and COI/reception officers did not have to travel far to access training.

Most Member States also reported that they gave staff sufficient staff time to undertake training. In some Member States, the EASO training was a mandatory requirement of staff. Other Member States employed an open application process where staff could apply for training where they could demonstrate that it met a need identified in their learning and development plan.

Box 7 Example: Greece

In Greece, the EASO training is embedded within the country's induction process for new case workers. When a case worker starts, in the first week they are required to undertake basic health and training on the Greek system for Asylum. Then in the second week they are required to undertake firstly the online the inclusion training, and then the face-to-face training. Depending on time pressure, they are then invited to undertake other introductory EASO training.

The EASO training is translated into Greece. Although all case workers are proficient in English, the national authority believed that it would be quicker and therefore more efficient for trainees to undertake the training in their mother tongue.

Case officers and COI researchers did however report challenges in balancing the time to undertake the training around their work pressures. This most likely reflects that very few Member States adjust staff performance targets when individuals are sent to training. This was particularly a challenge during the crisis when many countries had a backload of cases and a shortage of experienced staff.

Similar findings were identified from the online survey. About 60% of respondents reported challenges to the organisation of EASO training, of which the most commonly challenge was difficulties in balancing the training with their workload, which was reported by 46% of respondents. Some 17% indicated a lack of qualified staff members as an organisational challenge whilst financial challenges were identified as barriers to the organisation of train-the-trainer sessions (8%) and national trainings (7%).

These pressures in some cases affected the benefit that staff gained from the training. In one Member State whose asylum system had been under particular pressure, for example, trainers and case officers reported that their managers did not give them sufficient time in their working day to undertake the e-learning element of the training, which meant they had to undertake the e-learning element of the module in evenings or in weekends. This meant that the training was often undertaken late, in some cases only 1-2 days before the face-to-face session. As a consequence, they felt less prepared for the session and less likely to gain maximum benefit from the training.

Train-the-trainer training

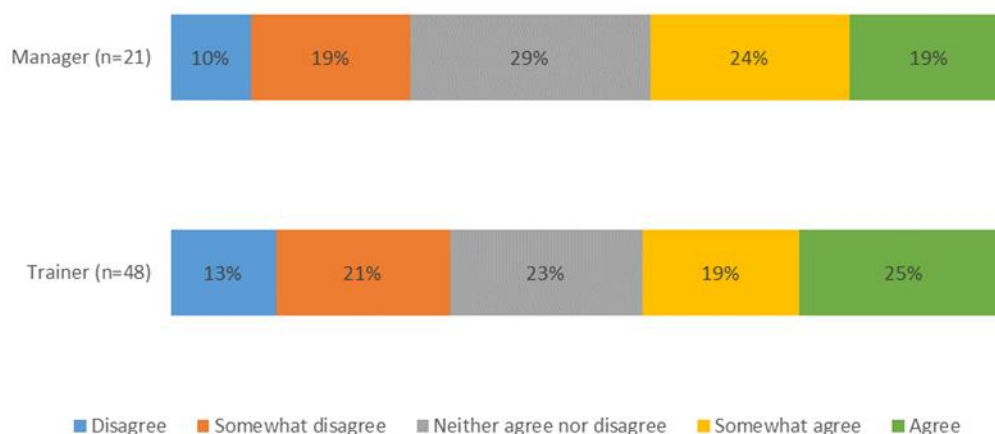
In the Member States consulted for this evaluation, most NCPs and trainers reported that the Member State provided significant resources and staff time for individuals to attend the train-the-trainer sessions. All countries paid the staff and travel costs for participating in the training, as well as the time staff spent travelling to the session.

In four Member States, senior managers and NCPs stated that they felt the cost of participating in the train-the-trainer sessions were high. The main cost was stated to be the cost of replacing staff that are attending training. This was a particular challenge when competent authorities were experiencing staff shortages due to a heavy workload.

Amongst the stakeholders interviewed, most northern national authorities also reported that the delivery of most training in Malta significantly increased the costs they incurred from the programme. This was largely because the lack of direct flights meant that travelling to Malta took a day as it required a changeover at another European airport. This meant that to undertake the training, staff had to be released from two days in addition to the time spent training.

The costs of sending staff to train-the-trainer sessions may be discouraging countries from send staff. In the survey, nearly a third (32%) of respondents did not believe their country had sufficient national trainers to ensure the availability of EASO national training (see Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9 To what extent do you agree with the following statement? “The number of national trainers available is sufficient to ensure the availability of trainings”.



Source: ICF survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q. 37. N=69).

To improve efficiency, senior managers in most Member States believed that there should be more regional training. This would reduce travel and staff costs while also providing additional benefits in creating greater networking opportunities for national authority staff working in neighbouring countries. It was acknowledged that this would however have a greater cost implication on EASO staff, who would be required to undertake more travel to deliver the training.

Only one Member State consulted for interviews delivering train-the-trainer sessions in house. In some Member States with large asylum offices this is possible as many employ Training Pool experts that deliver the train-the-trainer sessions. Increasing the

delivery of in house train-the-trainer sessions is a potential opportunity for generating further efficiencies.

One NCP also reported that they did not believe that the use of national staff for delivering train-the-trainer training was allocated unfairly across Member States. They stated that some countries, which had more experienced trainers, were more likely to be asked to send staff to deliver the train-the-trainer sessions. These countries therefore had to provide greater resources to support the delivery of the EASO Training Curriculum. This could potentially be an unintended consequence of the EASO 'credit system' for trainers, which means that those that have delivered the most training (and consequently have more credits) are more likely to be selected again.

4.3.1.2 Resources allocated by EASO to meet the objectives of its training mandate

Senior managers consulted for the evaluation generally believed that EASO allocated significant resources to the programme, which have generated efficiencies in the Member State. In particular, the role EASO played in coordinating the production of training modules and in providing train-the-trainer sessions were generally felt to have significantly reduced the amount of time that trainers would have spent to deliver similar training. Senior managers also stated that they needed to spend less time quality assuring the training, as most were confident that EASO's role in producing the modules would ensure they are of a high quality.

NCPs and trainers also generally believed that EASO invests appropriate resources in supporting the delivery of the train-the-trainer and national training sessions. Most stated that the events were effectively organised and when participants have experienced issues with the data portal or the online training, they reported that staff in EASO were available to help them to overcome their problem.

4.3.1.3 Participants' perceptions of the value of the training

In the Member States where interviews were organised, nearly all the individuals that participated in national training believed the training was an efficient use of their time.

"The training is great value for money. In fact, it is only value, not money!"

Case worker

Participants generally believed:

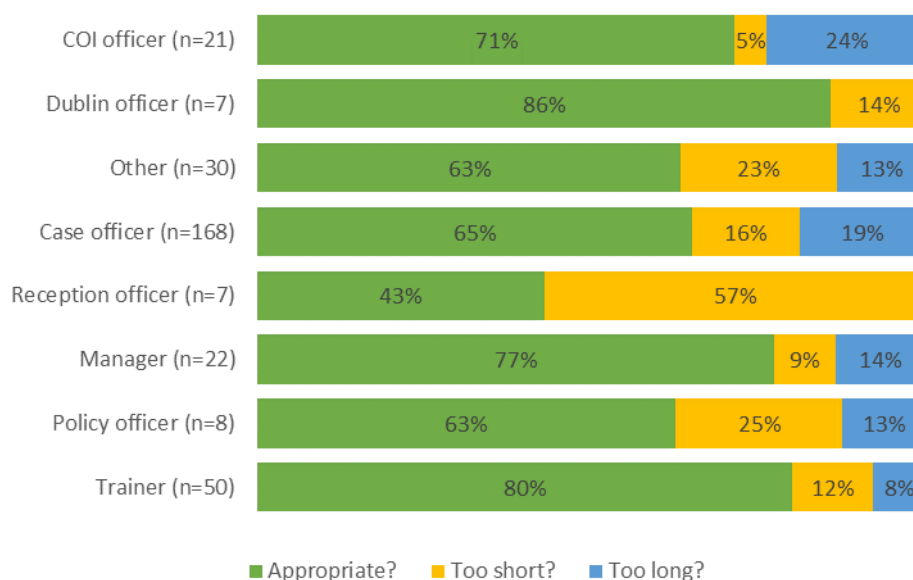
- The e-learning allowed training to fit around work commitments.
- The face-to-face sessions were also believed to provide valuable knowledge and was at an appropriate pace and length.

The training was also felt to provide information on the EU legislation that underpins national asylum laws. This information is not generally taught in induction or in other national training and participants felt it would be far more time-consuming to find out this information by themselves.

Some training participants did however, state that where they already had significant experience in the subject area, the training was less valuable to them. In some cases, this was because the participants did not understand the level the training was aimed at and the progression between different modules.

These findings are reflected in the online survey. As shown in Figure 4.10, around two-thirds (68%) of survey respondents stated that the programme was of a suitable length, but 16% believing the training was too long and 16% believing it was too short. This was broadly consistent across all types of national authority staff (case workers, trainers, managers and COI researchers).

Figure 4.10 Considering the amount of information obtained, do you think the time spent on each module was: too long / too short / appropriate?



Source: ICF survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q. 35. N=313.

To meet the needs of more experienced staff members, some participants suggested that it would be useful to run shorter 'refresher' courses for more experienced staff and also those that undertook the training a while ago and would like to be kept up-to-date with new developments.

Most of the trainers that were interviewed also believed the train-the-trainer sessions were valuable and a good use of their time. The trainers particularly believed that the didactic training provided important information on how to teach the modules, which helped them ensure the national training was delivered effectively and efficiently.

The subject training received mixed feedback. Some trainers believed it was valuable as it enabled them to learn new teaching approaches by observing an experienced teacher, and one participant also stated it was useful to "put yourself in the learners' shoes". However, other participants believed it provided little value as the trainer was already familiar with the subject content.

4.3.2 Challenges, strengths and weaknesses of EASO training methods and activities

The main strength of the programme is that the model for developing and delivering the training was felt to be efficient. The main weakness was that Member States believed the delivery of the train-the-trainer sessions in Malta meant that staff in some countries often had to spend two days travelling to and from the training sessions.

The main national challenges to delivering the training was a high turnover of tutors, and heads of unit and line managers being unwilling to release staff for e-learning or the train-the-trainer training.

4.3.2.1 Strengths

The main strength of the programme was the **efficiency of the model for developing the training**. Trainers, COI/reception staff and case officers all believed that the approach of developing centralised training was significantly more efficient than each country developing training themselves, and has resulted in a high quality, consistent training.

Another key strength of the programme was believed to be the **blended approach to delivering the training**. Training participants believed it contained a good mix of information. The e-learning provided information on EU legislation and in the face-to-face training participants explored how this was applied in the national context and discussed practical examples for delivering high quality activities.

Another strength of the programme is that it was perceived to **distribute resources relatively evenly among Member States**, with all countries providing members to the Experts and Trainers Pool. In the case studies, most countries believe the procedures for selecting staff was effective and utilising country experts provided significant added value as they could draw on recent experiences from their country.

4.3.2.2 Weaknesses

The weaknesses reported in the case studies were generally recognised as being minor. The most common weakness reported by trainers was the **high cost incurred by the Member State in sending staff to the train-the-trainer training** held in Malta. This meant that releasing staff to participate in or deliver the training had a significant resource impact on their organisation.

Another perceived weakness was that at a national level some Member States found that **heads of units were unwilling to give staff sufficient time** to undertake the training. This largely reflected that the units were under pressure to achieve their targets and did not understand the value the training would provide in improving the quality, consistency and efficiency of participants' work.

4.3.2.3 Challenges to delivering the training

A few Member States reported that they had a relatively high turnover of trainers, which also affected the efficiency of delivering the training, as it meant a high volume of staff needed to be trained. The high turnover was largely attributed to the national authority not providing a financial uplift for staff undertaking training and not adjusting staff performance targets for trainers, which meant that many gave up training as it made it more difficult for them to achieve their targets.

In a few Member States, participants also reported difficulties in finding appropriate facilities to deliver the training and in accessing training sessions at locations near their work. The latter is likely to be particular to issue large national authorities which have a range of regional or local offices.

4.3.3 Utilisation of the Expert and Trainers pool

Most Member States actively participated in the programme and supplied staff for the Expert and Trainers Pool, with many employing systematic processes to select

appropriate staff members for the Pool. Although participation has a resource implication on Member States, most believed the benefits of identifying best practice from other countries outweighed the costs.

However, Member States were not always able to provide experts when requested by EASO. NCPs in three Member States stated they experienced internal challenges in convincing heads of units to release senior staff to support EASO activities, as their absence often had a negative impact on the work of their teams. Four Member States also reported that they did not always have enough time or resources to respond to EASO requests.

4.3.3.1 Selection of trainers for the Expert and Trainers Pool

NCPs generally believed they employed an effective approach to identify nominations for the Expert and Trainer Pool, which broadly matched EASO's requirements. In all Member States, experts were required to have:

- Considerable experience in the topic area;
- Seniority in the organisation; and
- Willingness to undertake the work.

A few Member States also required individual's international experience or experience in delivering training. In some other Member States this was a desirable but not essential requirement.

Box 8 Example: Sweden

In Sweden, the NCP sends an email request to all trainers asking if they would be interested in participating in the Expert and Trainers Pool. Those that wish to apply are asked to specify:

- Their understanding of the subject area
- Their experience in teaching the subject
- Any international experience

The applications are then assessed by the NCP to develop a short-list of potential candidates. These candidates are then interviewed and their application is also discussed with their head of unit, who must also ultimately agree for the staff member being part of the Pool.

In most Member States, any staff member in the national authority could apply directly to be nominated for the Expert and Training Pool. This was found to be more effective than requesting nominations from heads of units, as in many cases they were reluctant to release their experienced staff members. However, final decisions were often made following interviews of the individual and their line manager.

A few countries did however report that this meant that decisions were also largely based on practical and personal considerations. Those with time and an interest in participating in the Expert and Trainers Pool were more likely to put themselves forward

NCPs believed that their selection approach provided EASO with an effective pool of potential trainers that had a good understanding of national asylum services. Most NCPs agreed that this provided significant saving to EASO as it meant they could draw on a range of trainers with recent experience of different national asylum systems without having to employ them directly.

4.3.3.2 Perceived value of sending staff to the Expert and Trainers Pool

Most NCPs believed that participation in the Expert and Trainers Pool provided benefits to the national authority, as it enabled the trainer to gain a better understanding of different asylum systems and identify best practice that could be employed in their Member State. A few trainers also reported that participating in the Expert and Trainers Pool helped them keep them abreast of new activities and programmes being delivered by EASO.

In most cases, NCPs believed that the benefits of sending staff to the Expert and Trainers Pool outweighed the costs of sending staff to respond to EASO requests. However, two NCPs reported that their country decided not to provide staff for the Expert Training Pool as they did not have the resources to do so.

4.3.3.3 Responding to EASO requests for Expert and Trainers Pool members

In all the case study countries interviewed, NCPs reported that for each module topic they nominated 1-2 staff members to the Expert and Trainers Pool. However, NCPs in most case study countries stated that they often experienced difficulties in responding to EASO requests for Expert and Trainers Pool members. The main reasons for this were:

- Difficulties in persuading heads of units to release staff to support EASO activities. In most Member States the members of the Expert and Trainers Pool were employed in operational teams and were senior experts. As a consequence, heads of units were reluctant to release them as it had a negative impact on the work of their team.
- Having a relatively short time period to respond to requests. A few Member States reported that they sometimes only had less than a month to respond to a request for EASO. As a consequence, they were not able to arrange cover for the individual to attend the training.

As a consequence, some NCPs stated that they were not always able to provide an Expert Training Pool member when requested by EASO. To address this issue, one Member State had decided to move its experts out of their operational team and into the international team. Although they were still able to do case work, the change in teams meant that their experts' first priority was to respond to EASO requests.

4.3.4 Effectiveness of procedures for selecting trainers, preparing training and developing course material

Most of the Member States consulted also employed a clear, systematic plan for planning training programmes in a year. This commonly included:

- An assessment of training needs in the national authority. This is commonly conducted through consulting with heads of unit and senior staff within the organisation;
- A plan of the units that will be delivered in the coming year, and the frequency with which they will be delivered;
- A review of the availability of trainers and the timetabling of the training; and
- Publication of the courses and inviting potential participants to apply for the training.

In the case studies, most Member States employed formal approaches to select staff members to undertake the training modules based on the EASO curriculum. In two Member States it is a mandatory part of staff induction and their professional development. Where it is not mandatory, most countries have an open application process where staff member can apply for training that they believe will address their learning and development goals.

Box 9 Example: Slovakia

In Slovakia, the organisation and delivery of EASO training is conducted through a three-stage process.

Stage 1: Planning what courses will be delivered

Every year the national authority conducts research on staff skills to identify any gaps that need to be addressed. The national authority then identified EASO training that could be used to address these skills needs, and the potential scale of demand for certain courses. The national authority then checks the availability of trainers and then develops a training plan for the year.

Stage 2: Marketing courses

In Slovakia, the training unit informs all units of the training planned for the year and to register delegates. Decisions on the staff to put forward are generally undertaken by staff members in discussion with their line manager. The registration forms are then sent to the NCP, who sends the information to EASO

Stage 3: Training delivery

Learners are then registered for the online training. The NCP provides guidance and advice to support staff undertaking this training and monitor whether it has been completed. Delegates then undertake the face-to-face learning, where the EASO training curriculum has been translated to the national language.

Nearly all of the training participants believed the process for undertaking the training went smoothly. Most reported that the online system was clear and efficient, the training was well organised and the materials were relevant. In nearly all cases the NCP stated they were able to source an appropriate, experienced trainer to provide the training. The process for identifying training needs was also felt to be effective in ensuring provision is targeted effectively at those that would benefit most.

4.3.5 Is the EASO Training Strategy in line with the objective of achieving efficient results?

All NCPs reported that EASO's Training Strategy was conducive in ensuring Member States can up-skill their staff efficiently. This was largely attributed to EASO developing the strategy collaboratively with national authorities. Most NCPs believed they had a good relationship with EASO.

"EASO listens very well to the needs of Member States"

NCP

Nearly all NCPs believed that the steps laid out in the Strategy were appropriate and contained a reasonable mix of EASO and national authority actions. However, one NCP felt the requirement for countries to translate the training materials was unreasonable. This was because, according to him/her, many countries did not have the resources to translate both the original training materials and the updates and upgrades.

4.4 Relevance

This section analyses the findings on the relevance of EASO's Training Curriculum. For this purpose, the evaluation team answered the following evaluation question:

- To what extent are the training activities relevant in view of the current needs and challenges?

4.4.1 The relevance of training activities to Member States' needs and challenges

This section first analyses the relevance of the Training Curriculum as a whole to national needs, then examines the relevance of individual modules.

Box 10 Key findings

- EASO's training activities in general as well as the individual modules were deemed relevant in light of Member States' needs and challenges;
- The difficulty of creating a training programme which fully corresponds to the needs of every Member States and staff members with different levels of experience and background was acknowledged;
- Emerging needs, in particular those arising as a result of the 'refugee crisis', were considered to have been addressed sufficiently by the Training Curriculum;
- The majority of suggestions for improvements related to providing more guidance to new case officers in interviews, as well as including more information on national practices.

4.4.1.1 Overall assessment of the relevance of the Training Curriculum

Overall, the modules of the EASO Training Curriculum **were found to be relevant** in view of Member States' current needs and challenges. In particular, a majority of operational managers and about half of the trainers interviewed agreed that the Training Curriculum was adequately tailored to correspond to their needs in their respective national contexts. This view was confirmed by participants in the training, as indeed close to all the case officers interviewed agreed that the Training Curriculum had adequately addressed their needs to perform their duties.

Little evidence was collected in interviews about a potential lack of relevance of the Training Curriculum as a whole to national needs. For some trainers in one Member State, the Training Curriculum did not adequately address their needs specifically with regard to substantive law. However, trainers highlighted the fact that considerable preparatory work is done in order to adapt the content to the national practice, case law and interpretations on a regular basis, thereby ensuring the relevance to the national context.⁸⁸ Next to relevance of the Training Curriculum to national needs, two COI officers from different Member States also considered it important for the COI module to be regularly adapted to technological developments, such as the role of social media and its credibility as a source of information.⁸⁹ Various case officers who had been recently hired would have welcomed **information on the different national practices** across Member States regarding asylum procedures. This view was shared by respondents to the online survey; ten case officers, as well as one manager and one policy officers also called for the inclusion of more examples of national/good practices.

⁸⁸ Interview with a trainer.

⁸⁹ Interview with COI researchers.

There were mixed reviews across Member States as to whether the substance of the modules and their level of complexity was **adapted to the needs of participants** in the training. Indeed, case officers explained that some elements of some training modules could be overwhelming for new starters, such as long bibliographies with numerous legal reference. On the other hand, a few participants in training modules expressed some criticism of the relevance of the Curriculum to their particular needs. For instance, one COI officer, one NCP, one reception officer, two case officers and trainers considered the content of some of the modules to be too basic or had received such feedback. A respondent from ECRE confirmed the difficulty in tailoring modules to the variety of backgrounds of participants – in particular the e-learning session. Similarly, the content of the core modules was alternatively described by different stakeholders in one Member State as ‘overall basic’ (by a recently hired case officer) and ‘difficult’ and ‘too dense’ (by a reception officer, speaking about the legal sections). At the same time, trainers in another Member State found the core modules to cover the basic training needs in an excellent manner. This illustrates the difficulties of striking an optimal balance in meeting the training needs of staff with diverse qualifications and skill levels, and originating from different national and organisational contexts.

However, some of these issues and challenges were recognised as inherent to the nature of the Training Curriculum in some Member States. Indeed, stakeholders acknowledged the challenge of addressing both the needs of new officers and more experienced ones⁹⁰ and the responsibility of each Member State to complement EASO’s training modules with national tools and resources.⁹¹

The online survey provided examples of **good practices adopted by trainers to ensure the relevance** of the training. It revealed that 54% of the trainers who took the survey were already trainers delivering national training; however, almost 90% had adapted their approach in terms of the training methodology, and almost 60% in terms of content, which may suggest that EASO approach has introduced new approaches and materials not currently available in the Member State. Two respondents specified that they had incorporated teaching examples and interactive exercises from EASO modules into their other trainings. Such use of the Training Curriculum at the national level was confirmed by interviewees. A trainer in one Member State highlighted the fact that considerable preparatory work is committed from trainers in order to adapt the content to the national practice, case law and interpretations on a regular basis. In turn, a trainer anticipated that an increasing number of EASO training modules would be incorporated into their national training in the future – a development which would be welcomed by the trainer.

The Belgian practice, presented in Box 11, illustrates how the Training Curriculum can be adapted to match a national need.

⁹⁰ Interview with case officers.

⁹¹ Interview with a case officer.

Box 11 Adapting the Training Curriculum to match needs – the Belgian example

The Belgian asylum authority [CGRA] uses advanced modules of the Training Curriculum in accordance with its needs. The point of this approach is that specialised people follow the full module but other staff members are also provided with basic knowledge about the subject of the module. Therefore, trainings elaborated at national level on the basis of EASO modules are offered to all case officers. Following these shorter trainings is less time and resource consuming than taking a whole EASO module. This approach provides all the case officers with the basic knowledge they need to identify and handle cases involving minors or an exclusion situation, before they can follow the full corresponding module. It is an example of the flexibility with which training materials prepared for the Training Curriculum can be used by national administrations.

4.4.1.2 Assessment of the relevance of the Training Curriculum modules

Overall, individual modules of the Training Curriculum that were identified as **most relevant** were those relating to interviewing applicants (Interview Techniques, Interviewing Vulnerable People, Interviewing Children) and other **methodological modules**. For example, the COI module was thought to cover all the elements relating to research and presentation, which were considered especially useful by COI officers.⁹² At the same time, the aspects covered by this module regarding legislation were described as less essential by a minority of stakeholders.⁹³ However, as suggested above, this latter feedback has to be seen in light of the different national contexts prevailing in Member States; one can assume that the relevance of the elements taught to participants on legislation very much depends on its applicability with the national legislation in place in the Member State. Furthermore, although considered superfluous by one trainer, the recent introduction of the module on trafficking in human beings was welcomed and considered essential by a different trainer from the same Member State and an NCP.⁹⁴

Identified shortcomings of individual modules by Member States related more to their perceptions of **incompleteness of modules or topics that were missing** altogether than to the information provided not being considered relevant by participants. With regard to modules that were thought to be incomplete, suggestions for amendments were either made with a view to better matching national contexts or to ensure that the training modules address the needs of a wider range of staff with various levels of experience and differing challenges. For instance, the module on Interviewing Children was not considered very relevant to the context of one Member State, as the majority of minors they interviewed were teenagers, making some aspects of the module irrelevant, such as creating a child-friendly atmosphere in the room, for example by providing toys. Thus, it was suggested to add elements specifically tailored to interviewing teenagers to this module. As a second example, while modules relating to the methodology and techniques for interviews were generally deemed relevant and useful, interviewees were critical that both the Interview Techniques and the Interviewing Vulnerable Persons modules did not always adequately prepare them for special cases, such as LGBT applicants⁹⁵ or stressed persons.⁹⁶ One can

⁹² Interview with COI officers in the three Member States

⁹³ Interview with COI officer

⁹⁴ Interview with trainers and NCP .

⁹⁵ Guidance on interviewing LGBT applicants is likely to be provided by the “Gender, gender identity and sexual orientation module”.

⁹⁶ Interviews with a reception officer, with operational managers in two Member States, and case officers.

assume that this was particularly the case for less experienced case officers, who did not yet have the long-standing practice in interviewing applicants. However, every case officer can find themselves interviewing a vulnerable person, even if they were not formally identified as such in the application process.⁹⁷ For this reason, there is a clear need for a broad spectrum of vulnerabilities to be covered during the training received by case officers. However, with the inclusion of the upgraded pilot module on Interviewing Techniques in EASO's 2017 Training Plan, as well as the upgrade of the module on Interviewing Vulnerable persons, some of these needs are now likely to be addressed, as it aims at providing more in-depth guidance on interviewing applicants. As a third example, a strategic manager found that the managers' module did not answer the particular challenges and requirements attached to management positions in the field of asylum, and that the e-learning session did not provide much added-value compared to any other training on management one can receive from the private sector or the national institute of training for civil servants.⁹⁸

Overall, the Training Curriculum was appreciated as covering a wide range of topics relevant to the work of the participants. Nevertheless, **a number of missing topics were identified** amongst existing modules.

- A case officer suggested to include a module on the assessment of the applicant's family life and medical assessment in the training for case officers.⁹⁹
- Training on effective communication to build a relationship based on trust with applicants for international protection was deemed to be missing by case officers.¹⁰⁰ Again, this is assumingly particularly useful for less experienced case officers. An operational manager made a similar call against the background of communication differences between various cultures and countries.¹⁰¹
- UNHCR pointed out that topics such as self-care and vicarious trauma are not at all covered by the Training Curriculum, which would surely be relevant for case officers with all levels of experience.¹⁰²
- Finally, a COI officer noted the increased attention from the public and from the media on the topic of safe countries of origin and the related issue of return. This brought about the idea of providing training to senior COI/case officers on how to effectively communicate their (often politically sensitive) working method to a wider audience.¹⁰³

Finally, the relevance of the different modules could be affected by the **unequal time allocated to different topics** within one module.¹⁰⁴ In particular, in the Inclusion module, the content was reportedly not equally spread throughout the two days of training, as the second day of the training covered an extensive number of topics (i.e. subsidiary protection, exclusion as well as a role play exercise) in comparison with the first day of training (dedicated to refugee status), which created an imbalance. However, one can assume that it is at the discretion of each trainer to adjust the time

⁹⁷ Case officer.

⁹⁸ Interview with a strategic manager.

⁹⁹ Interview with case officer

¹⁰⁰ Interview with case officers.

¹⁰¹ Interview with an operational manager.

¹⁰² Interview with UNHCR's Liaison Office.

¹⁰³ Interview with a COI officer.

¹⁰⁴ Interview with trainers.

spent on each element of a specific module in such ways that it corresponds to the needs of the participants.

4.4.2 Responsiveness of EASO training activities to changing circumstances and user feedback

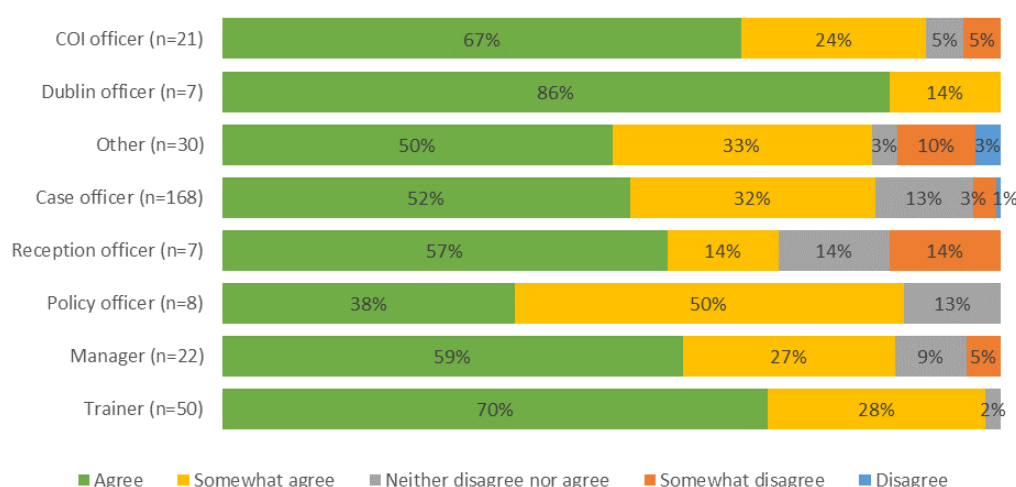
Overall, EASO's training activities had remained relevant in response to changing circumstances and user feedback throughout the evaluation period. Indeed, all stakeholders - including those from Member States substantially impacted by the high inflow of refugees and asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 - argued that their training needs had not changed during this time period, as the general procedure of processing asylum claims had remained the same. In fact, a case officer with more than 20 years of experience found the training modules to be more relevant today than ever, and expressed the view that instead of creating new modules, existing ones should be updated.

"The EASO Training Curriculum has to a great extent been responsive to the changing circumstances of the Greek Asylum Service during the evolution of the migration crisis"

Strategic Manager

This finding is supported by the results of the online survey. As shown in the figure below, the majority of respondents across all target groups agreed with the statement that the content of the training modules has remained relevant to their work over time.

Figure 4.11 To what extent do you agree with the following statement? "The content of the training has remained relevant to my work over time."



Source: ICF survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q.42. N=313

At the same time, some Member States identified a number of emerging needs that were generated by the large influx of refugees and asylum seekers in 2015. These were considered two-fold by Member States affected by an increased inflow of refugees.

Firstly, there was an emerging need relating to finding the resources to **train a large number of newly hired- and inexperienced staff** within a short time period, and secondly, finding the **time to carry out the training** amidst high pressure to process the unprecedentedly high number of asylum applications. This left Member States with the challenge of striking the right balance between ensuring the training of new

staff and handling the substantial workload. As a result of the large influx of asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016, the asylum authority in a Member State whose asylum system was under particular pressure had hired a large number of new staff. However, the resources to cover their training needs were insufficient. An operational manager and a COI researcher in two Member States with medium pressure on their asylum system also pointed to the difficulty of finding the time and resources to properly train staff in times of high pressure, but both recognised that the modules could not be shortened as this would reduce their quality and output. Trainers in a third Member State mentioned this difficulty specifically with regard to the e-learning session; due to the heavy workload, it was often difficult for case officers to spend sufficient time on this. Similarly, UNHCR argued that, in moments of crisis when staff needs to be trained very quickly, the flexibility of trainings and the possibility to upscale resources for new/additional training products has to be ensured. In case this is not possible and in order to prepare new staff who have never dealt with asylum issues, other tools such as mentoring and on-the-job monitoring of new staff should be considered.¹⁰⁵

Next to these resource-related emerging needs, **the unprecedented migration flows into Europe in 2015 also gave rise to new demands** with regard to the content of the modules. For example, the fact that many of the asylum seekers arriving in 2015 originated from conflict regions in the Middle East, especially Syria, led to an increased need for case officers to assess the provision of subsidiary protection as a possible form of protection, in comparison with previous cases.¹⁰⁶ Lastly, the need for more in-depth guidance on assessing subsidiary protection and the (practical) application of Article 15(c) of the Qualification Directive¹⁰⁷ was expressed by a number of stakeholders.¹⁰⁸ This request came in particular against the background of the refugee crisis and shifts in the main countries of origin of applicants and their circumstances. In the post-migration crisis context and as a consequence of the security situation in the Middle-East and the increased terrorist threat in the EU, the need for training on exclusion matters was also noted as more important nowadays, and a high demand was observed amongst participants and managers alike.¹⁰⁹

The Training Curriculum **generally responded well to these emerging challenges**. For example, the training needs of newly-hired staff were fulfilled by the Training Curriculum to the extent possible. The limits of the Training Curriculum to prepare case officers were acknowledged by national authorities, who underlined the indispensability of practical experience and on-the-job training to master all the necessary skills to perform their tasks. However, a national policy officer in one Member State whose asylum system was under particular pressure pointed out that although training national officials had remained relevant, the heavy workload in 2015 and 2016 had shifted their priorities to making the asylum procedure as efficient as possible. The set-up of the Training Curriculum did not always make it possible to accommodate this need for more efficiency. In fact, a strategic manager reflected that, due to this increasing need for efficiency in periods of high pressure, trainings tended to be dropped, irrespective of whether these were considered to be relevant or not.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Interview with UNHCR's Liaison Office.

¹⁰⁶ Interview with case officers.

¹⁰⁷ 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 (recast), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2011:337:0009:0026:en:PDF>

¹⁰⁸ Interviews with case officers; with a COI officer and with a trainer.

¹⁰⁹ Interviews with NCP, and trainers.

¹¹⁰ Interview with a strategic manager in Sweden.

In addition, the inclusion of new modules in response to the refugee crisis added to the responsiveness of EASO's training activities. Example of this are the introduction of a new training module on resettlement¹¹¹ and the update of the Evidence Assessment and Interviewing Vulnerable Persons modules.¹¹²

Lastly, it should be noted that in general, trainers and NCPs did not anticipate the emergence of any new training needs in the coming years that are not covered by the current Training Curriculum. However, the current negotiations on the asylum package may mean that updates and upgrades of existing modules will be needed in the near future.¹¹³

With a view to further ensuring the responsiveness of the Training Curriculum to Member States' needs, trainers in eight Member States generally reported that feedback from participants was collected and taken into account after each training session. This was done through, for example, surveys handed out to training participants or a "post-it system" used at the end of the training session. Trainers in five Member States stressed their efforts to take this feedback into account for future sessions and the fact that both e-learning sessions and face-to-face sessions, as well as the work of the trainers, were evaluated. In one Member State, participants could also share their expectations at the beginning of the training. However, the fact that trainers could not provide feedback to EASO on the training materials and course content was highlighted as a weakness in another Member State.

4.5 Coherence

This section presents the analysis of the findings on the coherence of EASO's Training Curriculum. For this purpose, the evaluation team answered the following evaluation question:

- To what extent is the Training Curriculum coherent and/or complementary with other EU, international and national interventions?

4.5.1 Internal coherence of the Training Curriculum

Box 12 Key findings

- Concerning the internal coherence of the Training Curriculum, the modules covered an exhaustive number of topics considered relevant by asylum staff engaged in the process of this evaluation. Stakeholders also found the face to face session to be coherent with the e-learning session
- Some thematic overlaps between modules were identified, however this could be considered of marginal importance with little to no impact on the quality of the training provided.
- When it comes to the external coherence of the Training Curriculum, it was identified as a fundamental part of the training received by those involved in the asylum process within Member States and could be considered complementary to other trainings provided at national level.
- No significant overlap between the Training Curriculum and other training opportunities was identified.

The evaluation findings indicated that the Training Curriculum **provided a coherent pathway** that covered the relevant topics required to properly train asylum staff. As

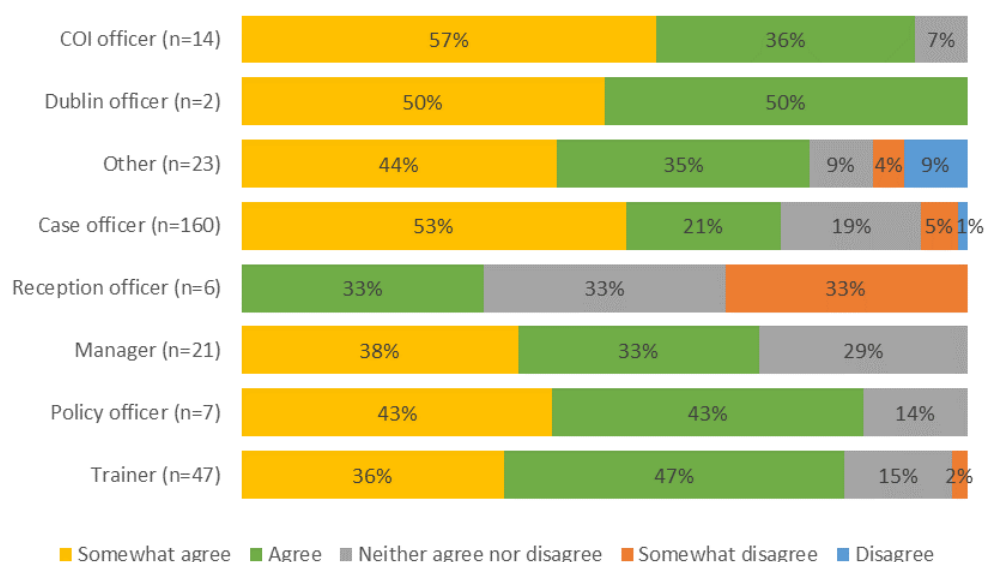
¹¹¹ Interview with COI officer in Slovakia.

¹¹² Interview with Finland.

¹¹³ Interview with a representative of the European Commission

illustrated in Figure 4.12 below all stakeholder groups engaged described the content of the modules as satisfactory and noted how the modules tended to complement one another rather than overlap. Indeed, across all stakeholder groups except for reception officers, a majority of respondents somewhat or fully agreed that the modules they had followed were complementary. A minority of respondents¹¹⁴ disagreed with the fact that the modules were complementary.

Figure 4.12 To what extent do you agree with the following statement regarding the content of the Training Curriculum modules? “The content of the different modules was complementary”



Source: ICF survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q. 5 and Q.43. N=280.

The interviews provided a few examples of the internal coherence of the Training Curriculum. One NCP and COI researchers expressed satisfaction with the level of coherence between the E-Learning and the face-to-face sessions. Trainers in two Member States expressed satisfaction with the level of coherence between the module on Inclusion and the module on Exclusion.

While the above represents the overall trend based on a majority of responses, interviews did also reveal some instances in which the modules overlapped with one another.

¹¹⁴ 5.7% of respondents overall replied either “disagree” or “somewhat disagree” to Q. 43.

Box 13 Overlap between modules

Overlaps were reported between the following modules:

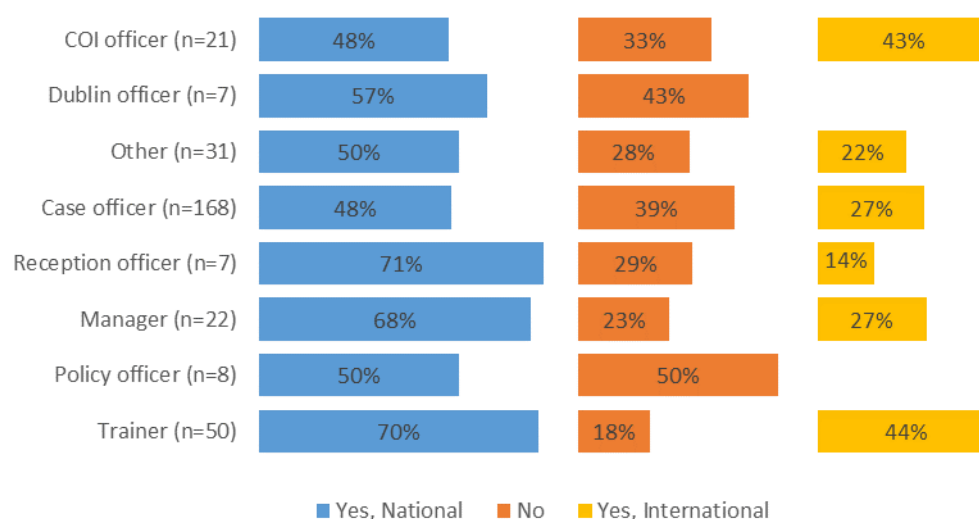
- Modules on Interview Techniques and on Interviewing Children;¹¹⁵
- Modules on Interviewing Children and on Interviewing Vulnerable People;¹¹⁶
- Modules on Interview Techniques and Evidence Assessment;¹¹⁷
- Modules on the CEAS and on the APD.¹¹⁸

In all cases, however, interviewees pointed out that these issues had had a negligible impact on the successful implementation of the modules. One trainer indeed pointed out that refreshers and reminders are not necessarily a bad thing when it comes to training¹¹⁹, an opinion held also by stakeholders from UNHCR as well as case officers.

4.5.2 External coherence of the Training Curriculum

The online survey revealed that, in addition to Training Curriculum modules, a majority of respondents also took part in training programmes elaborated at national or international level in the field of asylum. About a third of the respondents only participated in EASO modules, which may indicate that no other training programme was available in their Member State(s).

Figure 4.13 Have you taken part in other training courses/programmes at national or international level in the field of asylum?



Source: ICF Survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q. 10.

Note: N=314, multiple choice therefore percentages may exceed 100.

Trainings elaborated at national level were identified overall as less structured and often provided on an ad-hoc basis, depending either on specific needs or on regional peculiarities. Overall, the evaluation showed that in several Member States, EASO modules were seen as complementary to national training programmes and materials.

¹¹⁵ Trainers as well as a case officer

¹¹⁶ Operational Manager

¹¹⁷ Case officer

¹¹⁸ Operational manager

¹¹⁹ Interview with a trainer

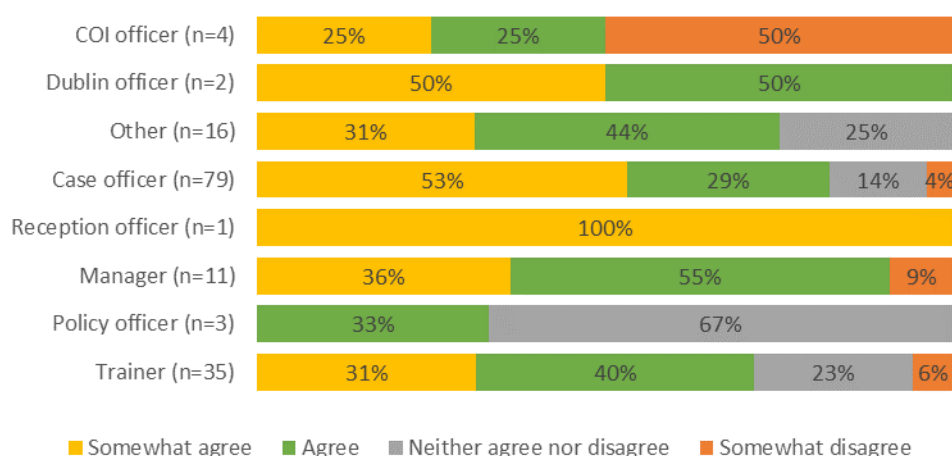
They emerged as a fundamental tool in this sense because, as mentioned by one NCP interviewed, it “provides the basis of the national training programme [while] all other training [elaborated at national level] fills in the gaps”.

“Trainings at national level are considered more relevant to issues relating to the law and the drafting of decisions, while issues relating to skills are taught with EASO modules.”

Operational manager

The Training Curriculum was identified by almost all Member States as the only structured training opportunity offering content that could comprehensively cover all necessary topics and reported duplication was minimal. In fact, while survey results indicated that there were similarities between trainings elaborated at national/international level and the Training Curriculum, a majority of respondents (83%) also identified the trainings as being complementary¹²⁰.

Figure 4.14 To what extent do you agree with the following statement? “The content of the EASO modules was complementary to the content of trainings elaborated at national level”



Source: ICF survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.5 and Q. 45.

Note: no respondent indicated “disagree”. N=151. Only asked to those who replied yes to Q. 44 “are other trainings elaborated at national level”.

The only evidence pointing to overlaps with training provided by international organisations was anecdotal. Indeed, one case officer highlighted the fact that interview techniques and issues relating to decision making had already been covered also in trainings offered by UNHCR.

4.6 EU Added Value

This section analyses the findings on the EU added value of EASO’s Training Curriculum. For this purpose, the evaluation team answered the following evaluation questions:

- What have been the advantages or disadvantages of having a common curriculum and training activities at EU level?

¹²⁰ Please see Figure 4.1 above.

- To what extent has EASO training provided outputs that could not have been achieved at national level?
- To what extent did EASO training activities reduce duplication of work in the field of asylum training in the EU?
- To what extent have EASO's training activities been more cost-effective than individual MS actions?

Box 14 Key findings

- EASO training modules brought advantages both to Member States that did not previously elaborate trainings at national level and to Member States that already had training programmes at national level. In general, the Training Curriculum brought more consistent and uniform training practices in all Member States.
- The main advantages brought by EASO modules at EU level are the development of a common denominator of practices and processes across Member States, as well as supporting a harmonised application of the EU asylum acquis and enabling exchanges of views between practitioners across EU Member States.
- Disadvantages of EASO's Training Curriculum were inherently linked to the need for a common denominator in terms of the content of the EASO modules, the language in which EASO Training Curriculum is designed and delivered, and the location of the train-the-trainer sessions in Malta.
- Some of the results of the EASO Training Curriculum could not otherwise have been achieved at national level. These were due to its elaboration at EU level creating economies of scale and enabling a uniform implementation of its content. Indeed uniform standards developed at EU level were implemented in a more efficient and uniform manner than Member States developing and implementing separate standards at national level.
- The risk of a duplications of work in the field of asylum training in the EU was not reported in Member States using EASO modules as their main training tool. In Member States that elaborated national training programmes, a reduction of the risk of duplication was observed as national asylum authorities chose to either reduce the number of national trainings or adjust their content on the basis of the standards set in EASO modules. .

4.6.1 Advantages and disadvantages of a common curriculum and training activities at EU level

This section presents the identified advantages and disadvantages to having EU training activities at EU level by assessing (i) the advantages brought to Member States and (ii) those brought to the EU. It will also analyse (iii) the disadvantages of EASO training activities.

4.6.1.1 Advantages of EASO training activities at Member States level

The findings of the evaluation show that the advantages brought by the Training Curriculum in Member States are threefold:

- It introduced training practices and materials for those Member States that did not previously elaborate trainings for civil servants in the field of asylum;
- It brought consistent and uniform training practices within Member States, even in those that previously had training programmes at national level.
- In those Member States that already had training programmes at national level, it brought complementary and innovative training methods and contents.

EASO training activities appear to have brought advantages to **Member States that had not previously elaborated structured trainings at national level** for their case officers. In those Member States, EASO modules have been used not only to train case officers but also as an inspiration to change national guidelines and practices in line with the standards promoted by EASO modules.¹²¹ The creation and implementation of the Training Curriculum thus created an opportunity for some EU Member States to introduce training practices and use training materials with an aim to improve the standards applicable in their asylum system.

The Curriculum was also acknowledged as providing advantages by **Member States that already made use of trainings elaborated at national level**. Indeed, the high quality and consistency of the Curriculum was highlighted in several Member States (see also Section 4.5 on this point). For instance, in one Member State, a trainer emphasised that the **regular updates** of EASO modules ensured the quality of the training delivered to case officers, in contrast to national trainings which were revised on less regular intervals.¹²² Other stakeholders underlined that using the Training Curriculum had led to a **greater consistency** in national practices.¹²³ They perceived the uniform provision of the training to case officers as an important element contributing to a common understanding and interpretation of concepts relevant to the work of case officers in their Member State.¹²⁴ As another example, the provision of **uniform training and harmonisation of skills** between asylum units and regions within the country appeared to be an important advantage for Member States where the delivery of trainings at national level had not previously been centralised.¹²⁵ Indeed, the absence of a centralised training methodology prior to the implementation of the Training Curriculum led to discrepancies in practices implemented in different offices of the asylum authority across a number of Member States.¹²⁶ As a result of the implementation of the Training Curriculum, the provision of uniform training also fostered exchange of views and collaboration between members of staff within the asylum authority¹²⁷ or across several institutions involved in the asylum process in the same Member State (e.g. asylum services, immigration services, reception services, judiciary), thus enhancing the quality of the decision-making process as a whole.¹²⁸

The training methodology and approach used to deliver EASO modules are another strong advantage for Member States by enhancing a common understanding of the asylum application procedures among participants, and includes both theoretical and practical exercises.¹²⁹ According to trainers and case officers, the training methodology creates a level playing field among case officers in terms of providing common competences and understanding of the asylum application process.¹³⁰ Stakeholders in Member States which elaborated trainings at national level highlighted in particular the advantage of the face-to-face sessions to make the content of the module more accessible and practical to case officers, but also to foster

¹²¹ Interviews with the Training NCP and an operational manager, National Policy Officer.

¹²² Interview (written contribution) of a trainer.

¹²³ Interviews with case officers and an operational manager.

¹²⁴ Interviews with case officers and an operational manager, and with a strategic manager.

¹²⁵ Interview with an operational manager and with the Training NCP. Interviews with an operational manager and COI officer, and with a trainer.

¹²⁶ Interviews with the training NCP and the operational manager.

¹²⁷ Interview with the Training NCP.

¹²⁸ Interview with a strategic manager and with ECRE, Head of Legal and Policy Research.

¹²⁹ Interviews with Training NCP, trainer, COI officer, and with case officers.

¹³⁰ Interviews with a trainer, and with case officers.

discussions and eventually a critical approach of participants on the topics covered by the module.¹³¹

“The methodology is engaging and practical which is a big break from classic training sessions that are delivered in Italy. These are often very academic and require only passive participation, while EASO [Training Curriculum] is much more engaging. [...] The methodology is key [...] because it is the only efficient answer to disseminate a common methodology and a common approach.”

Trainer

4.6.1.2 Advantages of EASO training activities at EU level

The evaluation revealed a number of advantages brought by EASO modules at EU level. In particular, strategic and operational managers, trainers and case officers highlighted that, in their opinion, EASO training activities **likely supported the development of a common denominator of practices and processes** among case officers across Member States, which in turn would benefit applicants for international protection and contribute to preventing asylum shopping between Member States.¹³² In general, trainers and participants were of the view that EASO training activities supported a harmonised application of the EU asylum acquis to a certain extent (see Section 4.6.3 on this point).¹³³

Some case officers were of the view that EASO training activities also **raised awareness on standards and practices applied in other Member States**, thus providing for a comparative view and understanding of the EU asylum acquis on a higher perspective.¹³⁴ The comprehensive content of the Inclusion module was an example cited in this regard. A number of stakeholders also suggested that EASO training modules could further strengthen this aspect and include additional examples and information on practices used across the EU Member States on certain topics.¹³⁵ In their view, this could be included in the e-learning session of certain modules as the face-to-face sessions were usually dedicated to explaining and exercises focused on national practices. The Interviewing Techniques, Interviewing Children and Interviewing Vulnerable Persons modules were cited as relevant modules where to implement such changes in the future as practices and standards among Member States particularly diverge in these modules.

In this context, some trainers pointed out to the greater cooperation between Member States as a result of the train-the-trainer sessions. The organisation of these sessions include the participation of trainers and managers from different Member States, thus providing opportunities for networking and exchange of experiences with practitioners from other Member States.

4.6.1.3 Disadvantages of EASO training activities

Fewer disadvantages than advantages were identified about having a Training Curriculum at EU level during the evaluation. The disadvantages identified related

¹³¹ Interview with two trainers, one COI officer, one Training NCP and a strategic manager.

¹³² Interviews with two strategic managers, two operational managers, three trainers and three training NCPs, and case officers.

¹³³ Interviews with four trainers, two strategic managers, two operational managers, three Training NCPs, and case officers.

¹³⁴ Interviews with case officers.

¹³⁵ Interviews with one operational manager, one trainer and case officers.

mainly to the fact that the EU nature of the Curriculum required compromises to be reached and common solutions to be found, both at the elaboration and delivery stages.

First of all, case officers and trainers noted that the compromise that needed to be made on the substance of modules during their elaboration may at times bring the standards taught in EASO modules to the lowest common denominator.¹³⁶ This resulted in some of the modules setting lower standards and not providing added value in comparison with standards taught at national level and thus not being applied (e.g. Managers module; Reception module).¹³⁷ This may be due in part to the stronger reliance on national legislation and institutional organisation in certain areas (e.g. reception conditions, role of managers and supervisors in national asylum services) which is specific to each Member State and hence are areas where harmonisation of standards represents a bigger challenge.¹³⁸

In other Member States, on the contrary, some modules were considered as setting sometimes unrealistically high standards with regard to the material conditions available in some Member States.¹³⁹ An example of this is the modules concerning interview techniques, and more specifically the Interviewing Children module, which underlined the need for comfortable interview conditions that are adapted to the age of the applicant and set a good atmosphere for the interview (e.g. availability of games and toys for children). Additional examples of the different (good) practices in other Member States on this topic already at the stage of the e-learning session could “add flesh to the bones” of the EU standards presented in the EASO modules mentioned above. This approach could thus facilitate the delivery of their content in the face-to-face session by national trainers and support a better understanding of EU standards by participants where practices at national level deviate from these EU standards.¹⁴⁰

In addition, the **need to find a common location for the organisation of train-the-trainer sessions** was flagged as another disadvantage.¹⁴¹ Indeed, Malta is not an easy location to reach for all Member States, and organising training sessions there is costly and time consuming. However, it could be argued that any location in the EU would potentially be inconvenient for some of the Member States.¹⁴²

The EU nature of the Training Curriculum also creates a language issue, with training materials either **needing to be translated into national languages**, which is a costly process, **or to be elaborated in a common language** (i.e. English) for everyone to be able to take it. English as the predominant language used for the delivery of EASO training modules has decreased in the past three years, going from 67% of participants receiving EASO training modules in English in 2014 to 51% in 2016.¹⁴³ Some stakeholders pointed out that the use of English may have limited the accessibility of e-learning session for case officers in their Member States.¹⁴⁴ The limited translation of a number of more advanced modules, such as Interviewing Vulnerable Persons module, Interviewing Children module and Exclusion module,

¹³⁶ Interviews with one strategic manager, case officers, one reception case worker and trainers.

¹³⁷ Interviews with a training NCP, a case officer in Finland, one operational manager, one strategic manager and one trainer.

¹³⁸ Interview with one reception officer and one strategic manager.

¹³⁹ Interviews with one trainer and one operational manager.

¹⁴⁰ Interview with one trainer and one operational manager, and one case officer.

¹⁴¹ Interviews with one operational manager and one strategic manager.

¹⁴² Interview with one operational manager.

¹⁴³ EASO Training Reports of 2014, 2015 and 2016.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with one operational manager and with one Training NCP.

was also perceived as limiting the delivery of these modules in a few Member States.¹⁴⁵

Box 15 Mitigating translation costs

A good practice mitigating the translation costs of EASO modules was developed by a number of Member States which use the same language and thus share the translation costs.¹⁴⁶

Finally, some stakeholders pointed out to the limitations of the train-the-trainer sessions as they appear to **vary in quality due to the varied skills and sometimes limited preparation of the trainers** delivering this session.¹⁴⁷ This issue may potentially have far reaching consequences as it does not only affect the participant in the training, but also civil servants who will later be trained by the participant. At national level, these consequences are limited by the practice encouraged by EASO to have 'junior' trainers follow at least three train-the-trainer sessions before conducting face-to-face sessions at national level.¹⁴⁸

4.6.2 Providing outputs that could not have been achieved at national level

On top of the advantages listed in the previous section, the added value of the Training Curriculum lies in the fact that it can **provide outputs that could not otherwise be achieved at national level**, either due to its elaboration at EU level creating economies of scale and enabling its uniform content, or due to the specificities of its methodology.

First of all, the elaboration of a Training Curriculum at EU level, and thus of a uniform standard for processing asylum applications in Member States, appears to be **more efficient than leaving it up to Member States** to elaborate their own training programmes and separate standards at national level.¹⁴⁹

In Member States with high numbers of asylum applications and of newly recruited case officers, the implementation of EASO Training Curriculum resulted in the **training of new case officers in a more systematic pace and structured manner** than what could have been achieved in the absence of EASO modules.¹⁵⁰ In particular, the EASO core training modules were considered as a solid introductory basis to the nature of the work and duties of case officers. Additionally, the already available training materials and e-learning platform have enabled a quicker implementation of the EASO training modules compared to available national training programmes that were either less structured or non-existent. For instance, in the case of Greece, the implementation of the EASO training modules accompanied the establishment of the national asylum service and facilitated the training of new members of staff.

¹⁴⁵ Interview with one Training NCP.

¹⁴⁶ Interview with one Training NCP.

¹⁴⁷ Interviews with one Training NCP and trainers.

¹⁴⁸ Interviews with trainers.

¹⁴⁹ Interviews with a strategic manager and trainer.

¹⁵⁰ Interviews with trainers and with one Training NCP.

“The implementation of the EU asylum acquis could not have been done in Greece without the EASO Training Curriculum. Greece did not have a pre-existing national TC of its own, the country would have to create one and this would have certainly delayed implementation [of the EU asylum acquis]. [...] Given that EASO’s Training Curriculum was developed at the same time as the establishment of the current Asylum Service, Greece did not have to develop one.”

Training NCP

Finally, in some Member States using EASO modules in addition to other trainings elaborated at national level, trainers and case officers were of the view that the training methodology used for EASO modules, including both e-learning sessions and face-to-face sessions, provided a more comprehensive set of information to participants than their own training programmes for several reasons:¹⁵¹

- The face-to-face sessions were **more practical and interactive** than national trainings, which tended to take the form of lectures or seminars;
- There is **no equivalent to the e-learning sessions and platform at national level** in the Member States consulted. The latter provides for sufficient flexibility to case officers who can follow the material at their own pace and have the training material accessible on one single platform.

4.6.3 Reducing duplication of work in the field of asylum training in the EU

Little evidence was collected during this evaluation that pointed to duplications of work between the Training Curriculum and other training activities in the field of asylum.

In three Member States using EASO modules as their main training tool, the risk of duplication of work in the field of asylum training did not exist as there were no separate trainings elaborated at national level.¹⁵²

In Member States where other trainings were elaborated at national level, stakeholders pointed out that without EASO modules, the training provided to national case officers would have been more fragmented between units and/or regions within the Member State.¹⁵³ In these Member States, there was a reduction in duplication of work as national asylum authorities could reduce the number of national trainings offered, adjust the content of the trainings or training materials elaborated at national level on the basis of the standards set in EASO modules. Reducing duplication of work in the field of asylum training in the EU could be achieved by the EASO Training Curriculum up to a certain point in the absence of a full EU harmonisation of the CEAS. In this regard, a number of Member States noted that a balance needed to be found between the Training Curriculum’s objective to harmonise practices across EU Member States and the possibility to take into account the specificities of national procedures.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Interviews with trainers, and with case officers.

¹⁵² Interviews with Training NCPs, and with trainers.

¹⁵³ Interviews with case officers and an operational manager, one Training NCP and trainers.

¹⁵⁴ Interviews with trainers, case officers, and an operational manager.

“A balance needs to be found between a harmonisation and common standards for processing asylum applications, presenting practices which are common to several Member States while at the same time considering specificities between Member States. For example, interviewing techniques are rarely similar from one Member State to another.”

Case officer

A representative of the European Commission added that a certain flexibility of the Curriculum's content was needed to be able to adapt to Member States' national context. These specificities resulted in part from the national transposition by Member States of EU asylum Directives, where a margin of discretion was left to Member States on a number of issues, and the subsequent interpretation of these provisions by national courts. For example, interviewing techniques, material reception conditions or the assessment of the evidentiary value of documents submitted by applicants diverged between Member States. Hence the perception by a number of stakeholders of the need to continue elaborating trainings at national level to complement the content EASO training modules.

4.6.4 Cost-effectiveness of EASO's training activities in comparison to individual Member States' actions

Little evidence was collected regarding the cost-effectiveness of the Training Curriculum in comparison with national actions. In particular, no quantitative evidence was collected regarding this issue.

From a qualitative perspective, stakeholders in Member States using the EASO Training Curriculum as their main training tool for case officers underlined that EASO modules had had no impact on their costs.¹⁵⁵

Stakeholders in Member States using EASO Training Curriculum in addition to other trainings elaborated at national level highlighted that the elaboration of e-learning sessions brought particularly cost-effective results.¹⁵⁶ The elaboration of the e-learning sessions by EASO saves resources at national level by reducing time and inputs needed for the delivery of the face-to-face sessions of the EASO modules at the national level. In addition, in the view of certain stakeholders, the organisation of the train-the-trainer sessions reduces the overall travelling costs as only the trainers are required to travel, whilst participants can be trained in their own Member State.

¹⁵⁵ Interviews with one Training NCP, and one operational manager.

¹⁵⁶ Interviews with one Strategic manager, one Training NCP, and trainers.

5 Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Impact

While the difficulty to measure the impact of the Training Curriculum with certainty was acknowledged by many stakeholders, the evaluation revealed a number of elements that are likely to have been influenced by it.

First of all, participation in the Training Curriculum was widely said to have improved the knowledge and understanding of EU law and standards in the field of asylum by national officials, and infused a European perspective into officials' daily work. Indeed, even participants who previously knew about these legal standards stated that they had learned things in the modules they took. This improved knowledge appeared to have been translated into the adoption of new practices at national level. The impact of the Curriculum over national practices appeared to be threefold:

- The blended method of the Training Curriculum facilitated the translation of the theoretical knowledge transmitted in the training into practice;
- Modules provided participants with methodological tools to perform their daily tasks; impacts were specifically noted for the Inclusion, Evidence Assessment and COI modules;
- The Curriculum in general, and some exercises in particular, acted as 'eye-openers' for participants regarding their expectations from applicants for international protection, and raised awareness about standards applicable to vulnerable persons.

However, some of these impacts were mitigated by the fact that, in some cases, the standards taught in the Curriculum were not always as high as those implemented in Member States.

In addition, the use of the Curriculum brought a certain consistency in practices within Member States. The harmonisation of practices within a Member States could be hindered by supervisors' and managers' reluctance to change their own practices. At EU level, the main obstacle to harmonisation via uniform trainings was that Member States' use of the Curriculum is very different, and that national policies and priorities still play a role in the way the content of the modules is taught.

To a certain extent, the use of the Training Curriculum facilitated cooperation between Member States. However, this was mostly true for participants whose role had a certain international dimension or in the case of regional training activities.

The support brought by EASO training activities was acknowledged by Member States that benefited from Emergency and Special support. In some cases, Member States who did not receive such support but whose asylum system was also under pressure welcomed the possibility to use trainers from other Member States. However, the ability of Member States to support others was hindered by their own capacity issues in times of high influx of applicants.

Overall, the external dimension of the Curriculum was assessed positively by those Member States that participated in trainings in third countries. The political situation in some of these Member States was noted as a potential challenge for the successful delivery of trainings, both because an instance where the authorities created difficulties for the organisation of the training session was reported, and because some of these Member States could also be countries of origin of applicants for international protection in the EU.

On the other hand, there is still little evidence on whether EASO trainings lead to deeper changes in national asylum institutions, notably by transforming their organisation and/or structures.

Recommendations

EASO should:

1. **Encourage regional cooperation between Member States** with identified training needs and the mobility of trainers to other Member States speaking the same language and/or with similar asylum systems;
2. **Adapt the content of modules used in the external dimension to the national system** of the third-country receiving the training. This includes selecting case studies that do not include examples targeting this third-country.

EASO may:

3. If the new Regulation for an EU asylum agency is adopted, **make use of its new monitoring functions to promote a minimum use** of the Training Curriculum modules, in particular core modules, in all EU Member States. In particular, the impact of the Curriculum could be monitored by disseminating an online survey by the EASO Training Cockpit to participants six months after they have completed the module. EASO could provide national feedback reports to Member States on the basis of the results of the survey.

Member States should:

4. **Provide enough time and resources for national trainers to tailor face-to-face sessions** with examples relating their national context, case law and legislation as well as to the characteristics of a particular group of participants (e.g. the experience levels of its members);
5. **Make sure that senior officials**, especially when they have responsibilities as managers, **also take part in training sessions** along with less experienced participants. This would contribute to raising awareness amongst senior staff about the Training Curriculum, and reduce the risks that they teach different standards and practices to those they themselves manage.

5.2 Effectiveness

The evaluation showed that EASO training activities were overall of high quality, as well as the Curriculum as a whole. They were viewed by stakeholders as well designed, fit for purpose, suitably delivered and effectively meeting their specific objectives.

E-learning sessions were well generally designed, interactive and provided an adequate preparation to face-to-face sessions. However, case officers in several Member States observed that online modules tended to be too long, dense and/or theoretical, especially when compared to face-to-face sessions, which were more dynamic and interactive by nature. Indeed, face-to-face sessions were of very good quality and had several positive effects, in addition to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

In general, national authorities did not face major problems to organise and/or implement trainings. Nonetheless, some factors, such as the lack of time, human or material resources were identified as sources of problems, constraining the planning and/or delivery of training activities.

The train-the-trainer approach was seen in general as a rather effective method to multiply knowledge and practices, and ensure these could be adequately transferred to the national level. On the other hand, as these sessions tended to require travel, they were sometimes also considered rather time-consuming, which could in turn hinder the participation of some Member States - notably those with poor or difficult connections to Malta, and/or whose asylum system was under pressure.

The main criticisms about the Training Curriculum, in particular the e-learning sessions, related to some quality issues in the translation of modules, the inadequate provision of training materials in other languages, and/or the lack of frequent revision/update, which could at times impair the quality of some modules. Overall levels of sustainability and ownership of EASO training activities seemed rather low and there was room for improvement in this regard. A point frequently mentioned by Member States was the lack of handbooks and/or printed material to ensure that trainees can always come back to the content of the trainings

Finally, evidence shows that the majority of Member States consulted cooperated in some form with non-state actors and engaged with them at different stages of national training processes. In particular, UNHCR was involved in some or all training activities in several Member States. In addition, other Member States cooperated with civil society organisations and/or NGOs in the delivery of national trainings. In general, such cooperation is viewed both by Member States and non-state actors as positive and mutually supportive. The participation of external experts was particularly valued for their know-how on specific issues such as gender or vulnerable groups. Multidisciplinary approaches to training were therefore proving quite effective in enhancing national asylum authorities' understanding and skills.

Recommendations

The study identified the following recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the Training Curriculum.

EASO should:

1. **Provide access to the online platform for a longer period of time prior to the face-to-face session** so that participants can still complete the e-learning session in periods of heightened workload or in the event that they are absent from the office during that time (e.g. on annual leave). This needs to be supported by Member States' action in order to raise awareness among trainees on the length of training activities, but also to accommodate enough time for the completion of training modules (see Recommendations 8 and 9).
2. **Keep the online content of modules accessible for an extended period of time after the face-to-face session.** Although this on-line material may not be regularly updated, this practice still would enable participants to go back to the online content if they need to refresh their knowledge of this information to perform their daily work.
3. **Extend the number of handbooks for all modules on the basis of the handbook provided for the Inclusion module**, as well as any other relevant printed material. Alternatively, print-ready handbooks can be made available online for all modules. This recommendation could be an alternative to Recommendation 2 as it also accommodates regular updates of the content.
4. **Support Member States with the organisation and delivery of short follow-up/refreshment face-to-face sessions** so previous participants can keep their knowledge and practice up-to-date. This can be done on the basis of existing

refreshers provided to upgraded modules, which are available to past participants by e-mail. While a full training session including the e-learning session may be too time consuming and/or redundant, such short face-to-face sessions would add flexibility to the modules as they would permit the provision of new/updated information and foster exchanges between participants after they have implemented what they have learned in the module.

5. **Extend the length of the didactics session in train-the-trainer sessions**, in particular for those participants who do not have previous teaching/training experience. To increase the effectiveness of this measure, having previously followed the relevant module could also be compulsory for trainers, in order to ensure that they have the required substantial knowledge to take part in the train-the-trainer session. Likewise, trainers' manual can be enhanced to strengthen the didactics content.
6. **Keep up the efforts undertaken to control the quality and thoroughly review the quality of the translation** of the modules. Whenever possible, trainers could support the quality control and regular check of existing translations thereby helping to improve their quality/robustness.

Member States should:

7. **Ensure that adequate time, human and material resources are made available** so staff, in particular trainers, can fully participate and/or implement training activities. A good practice identified in some Member States consists in allocating specific time for trainings in staff members' monthly planning (This recommendation would also feed into the efficiency of the Curriculum).
8. **Make sure that trainees and managers receive enough information in advance about the length of training session, in particular e-learning.** This will raise awareness among future trainees and their managers on the time required for the training and eventually help them to manage their time and expectations.
9. **Support EASO in its continuous effort to ensure the quality and thoroughly review of translations** of the modules. Trainers could be involved in quality checks on the translation of modules for their respective Member States.

5.3 Efficiency

The EASO Training Curriculum programme was generally believed to be an efficient way of up-skilling Member States. The centralised development of resources was felt to be more cost effective than Member States developing the training themselves, and the e-learning and face-to-face component was considered an efficient way to deliver the training.

Most countries provided sufficient resources to deliver the national training efficiently. However, in a few countries line managers were unwilling to release some staff for training as they believed it would have a negative impact on their targets. This was a particular issue during times when the national authorities had a high workload.

Most countries provided similar resources to allow individuals to attend the train-the-trainer sessions. However, most Member States reported that there was a high cost for attending these sessions, particularly as the sessions were mostly in Malta, which northern Member States had difficulty travelling to.

Participants generally believed the training was an efficient use of their time. The only exceptions were when experienced staff believed that introductory courses such as inclusion were too basic for their needs.

Participants also believed participating in the Expert and Trainers group was an efficient use of their time, as it enabled them to learn best practice from other Member States.

Countries did however experience difficulties in providing staff for the Expert and Trainers group and releasing them to deliver the train-the-trainer sessions. This was due to difficulties in convincing Heads of Unit to release staff members and the short notice given for some requests.

Recommendations

The study identified the following recommendations for improving the efficiency of the programme.

EASO should:

1. **Organise more regional train-the-trainer sessions.** This would reduce Member States costs for sending staff to the training. These sessions could be organised in countries with large asylum services (such as Sweden and Germany) who would likely need to send a range of staff to the training, or in countries with good travel links (such as the Netherlands and Austria). Providing regional training will enable countries to send more delegates and trainers to the sessions.
2. **Develop guidance to help Member States measure the impact of the EASO training** on improving the efficiency, quality and consistency of their work. By collecting tangible information on impact, NCPs will be better able to demonstrate to heads of units the value of EASO training and consequently encourage them to send more staff on training. This would be particularly beneficial when national authorities have a high workload, where the need to achieve targets and address a backlog of applications can mean heads of unit are unwilling to release staff for trainings.
3. **Provide further guidance to Member States on target groups for each module.** This would help ensure that the programmes are attended by those that will benefit most from the training. It will also help Member States to develop progression pathways where staff are encouraged to undertake particular training courses as they gain experience.

Member States should:

4. **Ensure staff attendance in training is considered in their work planning.** This will reduce the pressure on participants to complete the e-learning element quickly and also encourage more line managers to send their staff to training as they recognise it will not have an undue impact on their performance targets.
5. **Consider delivering 'light touch' or refresher modules to encourage wider take-up of training.** These courses would help individuals that may have considerable experience but may have changed role (for example, a case worker specialising in working with children is reassigned to working with a broader range or vulnerable group) and may consequently may not wish to undertake the full module. The light touch training may also be something that EASO may wish to introduce in a future crisis where national authority workloads may mean they are unwilling to send staff on long training courses.

5.4 Relevance

Overall, the Training Curriculum was found to be relevant and adequately addressed the needs of participants to perform their duties. Factors which curtailed the relevance of EASO training activities are mostly inherent to the nature of the curriculum and a consequence of wide-ranging differences in national practices and circumstances, as well as differing needs of staff as a result of varying work experience.

In light of this, there is a need for the provision of more information on national practices in EU Member States with the Training Curriculum. Furthermore, Member States face difficulties in finding the right balance between processing asylum claims as quickly as possible while simultaneously ensuring the proper training of staff.

Individual modules of the Training Curriculum that were identified as **most relevant** were those relating to interviewing applicants (Interview Techniques, Interviewing Vulnerable People, Interviewing Children) and other **methodological modules**. At the same time, the former did not always adequately prepare case officers for more challenging interviews, such as those with stressed or LGBT applicants. With regard to the COI module, the role of social media as a source of information for COI researchers was not sufficiently taken into account.

In terms of the responsiveness of EASO training activities to changing circumstances and user feedback, the Curriculum had remained relevant over the evaluation period and emerging needs were addressed. This was *inter alia* done through regular collection of feedback from participants but also through efforts from trainers to adjust the modules to the national context. The training needs that emerged as a result of the refugee crisis related more to providing sufficient capacity and resources for training, rather than their quality and content. Nevertheless, the fact that a large number of new staff was hired as a result of the high influx of asylum seekers in 2015 and 2016 gave rise to new needs, such as additional guidance with regard to interviewing, in addition to more in-depth training on assessing subsidiary protection and the application of the Qualification Directive.

Recommendations

EASO should:

1. **Increase the flexibility of the Training Curriculum to ensure quick adaptability to changing circumstances**, such as ensuring sufficient training resources for newly hired staff and responding to training needs on specific subjects. Linked to this, and in order to address the training needs of both experienced case officers and those recently hired, modules could more systematically differentiate between basic and advanced material. This could be particularly relevant for the core modules.
2. **Incorporate different national practices in Member States more systematically** into each module, particularly to facilitate the exchange of good practices.

5.5 Coherence

The modules provided in the Training Curriculum are considered to be complementary as well as essential. The low level of trainings elaborated at national level with a depth and structure comparable to those of the national trainings means that EASO's modules are a fundamental training element in a majority of the Member States consulted as part of this evaluation. Interviewees also pointed out the

fundamental methodological difference between EASO trainings and trainings elaborated at national level, with the former being a more engaging and proactive model.

While the modules can be considered internally coherent, there is some limited overlap between certain modules. The overlap that was mentioned most often was between the module on Interview Techniques and the module on Interviewing Children, although it is understood that this issue is currently being addressed by EASO.

Recommendations

The study identified the following recommendations to improve the relevance of the Curriculum.

EASO should:

1. **Include more examples of practices used in other Member States** to increase awareness of standards and practices used across the EU in its training modules.
2. **Continue its work aiming to address the overlaps identified between the modules in order to ensure that they are complementary.** This is important as the modules are quite time consuming and many stakeholders have identified a lack of time as one of the main obstacles to their participation in the Training Curriculum.

5.6 EU Added Value

The EASO Training Curriculum created added value to EU Member States by bringing consistent practices and a better understanding of the EU asylum acquis throughout all Member States. This was a result of EASO's Training Curriculum methodology and training materials, which supported a common understanding of participants' role in relation to EU standards in the field of asylum. For instance, in Member States without previous trainings at national level, EASO modules introduced training practices and materials which improved the standards applicable in the national asylum system. In Member States with training programmes elaborated at national level, EASO modules created a level-playing field among case officers in terms of providing common competences and understanding of the asylum application process. The provision of uniform training also fostered exchange of views and collaboration between members of staff within the asylum authority or across several institutions involved in the asylum process in the same Member State, thus enhancing the quality of the decision-making process as a whole. In addition, the delivery of the EASO Training Curriculum in all Member States has supported – up to a certain extent – the harmonisation of the EU asylum acquis.

Fewer disadvantages than advantages were identified about having a Training Curriculum at EU level. These mostly related to the challenge of finding a common denominator on the content, language and location to deliver EASO training modules.

Member States could not have achieved a number of results without the implementation of EASO training modules at national level. EASO modules enabled a more structured training programme for participants than national training programmes. Additionally, the methodology developed by the Training Curriculum enabled to provide a more comprehensive set of information to participants than national training activities.

The EASO Training Curriculum has reduced the risk of duplication of training needs in the EU. Member States are either using the Training Curriculum as their main training tool or use it as the backbone of the trainings delivered to their staff. In the latter case, trainings elaborated at national level are adjusted to the content of EASO training modules. Cost-effectiveness of EASO's training modules is mainly observed in relation to the elaboration and delivery of its e-learning sessions and common training platform.

Recommendations

The study identified the following recommendations to improve the added-value at EU level of the Curriculum.

EASO should:

1. **In modules where this is not the case, structure the content of the e-learning session** in a way that presents first elements to EU standards, and then elements relating to national practices and interpretations. Diverging practices should be presented in the context of different Member States so as to provide a broad overview of national practices across the EU.
2. **Provide for a longer preparation meeting for trainers delivering train-the-trainer sessions** to enhance coordination and exchange of practices between them, as they are generally with different backgrounds and experiences.

Member States should:

3. **Reduce the costs involved in translating EASO modules** by sharing translation costs between Member States speaking the same language.

Part A: ANNEXES

Annex 1 Glossary

Term	Definition	Source
Advanced modules	Training modules within the EASO Training Curriculum that help the user increase his/her level of specialisation.	EASO training brochure, p. 7
Asylum intervention pool	Database of experts for deployment in asylum support teams, trained by EASO. Also includes a list of interpreters	Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 (Article 15 (1), Article 6 (6))
Asylum support team	Teams of asylum experts requested by and deployed to a Member State subject to particular pressure on their asylum and reception system, providing for example, interpreting services, COI information, on the basis of an operating plan	Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 (Recital 15, Article 17)
Common European Asylum System	Policy designed to establish a common asylum area by means of an effective harmonised procedure consistent with the values and humanitarian tradition of the European Union	Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 (Recital 1)
Core modules	Training modules within the EASO Training Curriculum providing trainees with the same fundamental training, creating a common level playing field for a particular target group.	EASO training brochure, p. 7
EASO Training Cockpit	Monitoring and evaluation mechanism of the implementation of EASO training activities at EU+ States as well as national level	EASO training brochure, p. 10
EASO Training Curriculum	Common vocational training system designed mainly for case officers and other asylum officials throughout the EU. It involves a blended learning methodology enabling both a theoretical and practical approach to training, combining: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Online e-learning format ■ Face-to-face sessions 	EASO training brochure, p. 6
Emergency support	To organise solidarity for Member States subject to particular pressures by providing temporary support and assistance to repair or rebuild asylum and reception systems	EASO website https://www.easo.europa.eu/operational-support and referred to in Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 (Article 8)
European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument project	Project aiming to familiarise third-country officials from Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia with the mandate, tools and instruments of EASO and Frontex, and	EASO website, https://www.easo.europa.eu/external-dimension

Term	Definition	Source
	cooperation models developed with EU Member States.	
Joint processing	A new field of operations based on e.g. geographical proximity or language similarities, drawing on a broader sense of contingency planning and response, which encourages Member States to enhance their cooperation. Joint Processing activities are not limited to emergency situations.	EASO website https://www.easo.europa.eu/operational-support
Learning path	Set of core, advanced and optional modules defined for each target group of the Curriculum.	EASO training brochure p. 7
National contact point	A contact point designated by each Member State for communications with EASO.	Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 (Article 19)
National expert pool	National experts contributed by Member States to the asylum intervention pool on the basis of defined profiles. Member States also identify interpreters for the list of interpreters.	Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 (Article 15 (2))
Operating plan	The plan sets out in detail the conditions for deployment of the Asylum Support Teams. It is established by EASO in cooperation with the Member State (MS) under particular pressure, requesting technical and operational support of EASO.	EASO website https://www.easo.europa.eu/operational-support And Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 Chapter 3 (articles 13 to 18)
Operational cooperation	Cooperation between Member States subject to particular pressure on their asylum and reception systems, to ensure that common rules are implemented effectively.	Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 (Recital 3 and Article 1)
Operational support	Different types of specific operational support from EASO to Member States (including special and emergency support).	EASO website https://www.easo.europa.eu/operational-support
Optional modules	Training module that help the user increase his/her level of specialisation.	EASO training brochure, p.7
Practical cooperation	Cooperation between Member States in order to increase convergence and ensure quality of Member State's decision making within the European legislative framework (e.g. training).	Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 (Recital 5)
Regional session	Training sessions for individuals who will become national trainers in the EASO training modules,	EASO plan of the regional train-the-trainer session

Term	Definition	Source
	organised in one of the EU+ States. The language of the course depends on its location.	
Special support	Tailor-made assistance in order to improve the implementation of the CEAS: capacity building, facilitation and coordination of relocation, specific support and special quality control tools	EASO website https://www.easo.europa.eu/operational-support
Special support plan	The Special Support Plan sets out in detail the conditions for participation in EASO targeted support measures	EASO website https://www.easo.europa.eu/operational-support Regulation (EU) No. 439/2010 Articles 2(1), 3, 4 and 5
Train the trainer sessions	Training sessions, where participants are trained to become national trainers, ensuring the multiplier effect of the EASO Training Curriculum	EASO website https://www.easo.europa.eu/training

Annex 2 Bibliography

A2.1 EASO documents

EASO Training Strategy

EASO Training Brochure 2012-2017

EASO Annual Training Reports 2012-2016

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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A2.2 EU documents and legal instruments

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European Commission, Proposal for a Regulation on the European Union Agency for Asylum and repealing Regulation (EU) No 439/2010, COM(2016) 271 final, 4 May 2016.

A2.3 Relevant reports and studies

Ernst and Young, Independent External Evaluation of EASO's activities covering the period from February 2011 to June 2014, Final Report, December 2015.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

A2.4 Academic publications

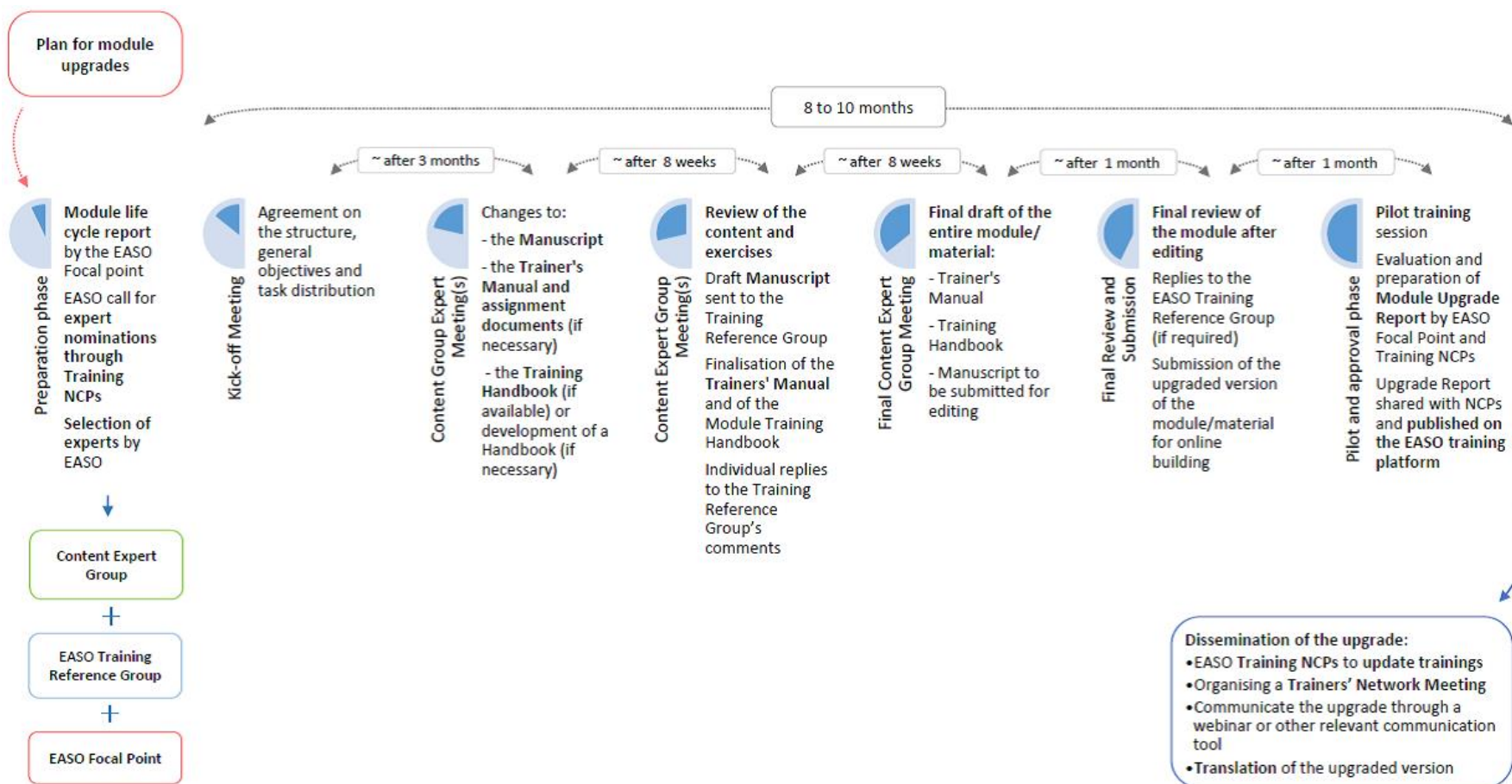
De Bruycker, P. and Tsourdi, L., 'Building the Common European Asylum System beyond Legislative Harmonisation: Practical Cooperation, Solidarity and External Dimension', in *Reforming the Common European Asylum System – The New European Refugee Law*, eds. V. Chetail, P. De Bruycker, and F. Maiani, Brill Nijhof, 2016.

Peers, S., Moreno-Lax, V., Garlick, M., Guild, E., *EU Immigration and Asylum Law (Text and Commentary)*: Second Revised Edition: Volume 3: EU Asylum Law, Hoteli Publishing, 2015.

Tsourdi, L., *Bottom-up Salvation? From Practical Cooperation towards Joint Implementation through the European Asylum Support Office*, European Papers, Vol. 1, No 3, 2016, pp. 997-1031

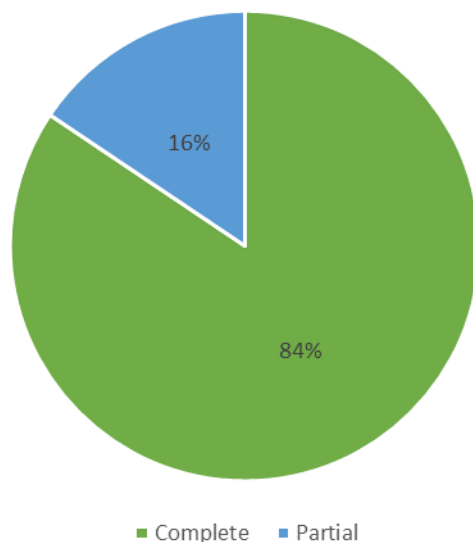
Annex 3 Upgrade and update procedures

Figure A3.1 Upgrade of training modules/materials



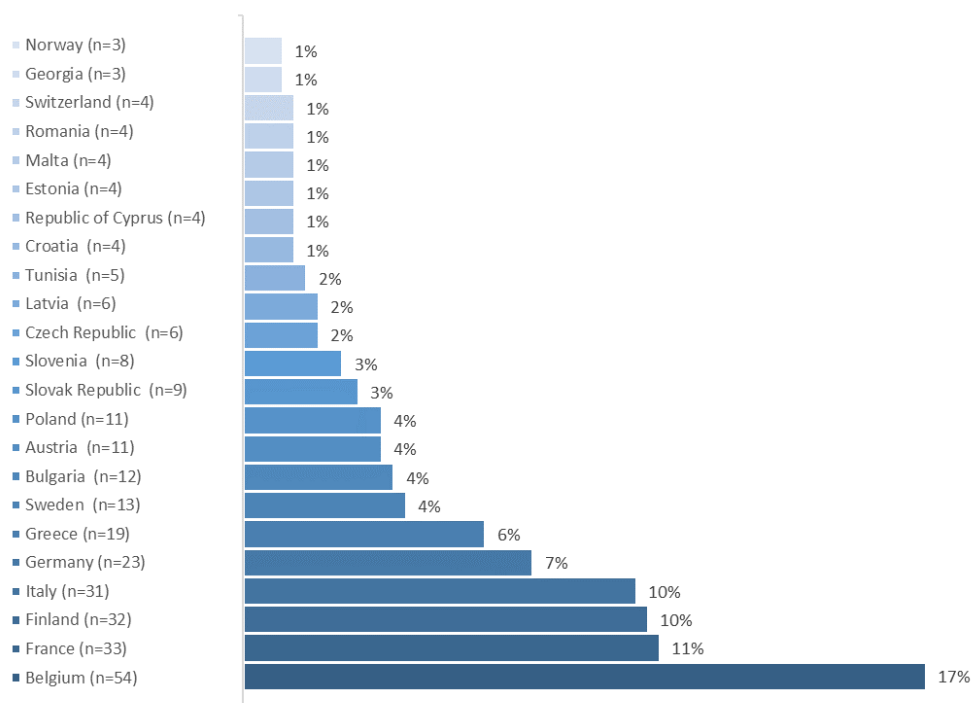
Annex 4 Overall survey results

A4.1 Response Statistics



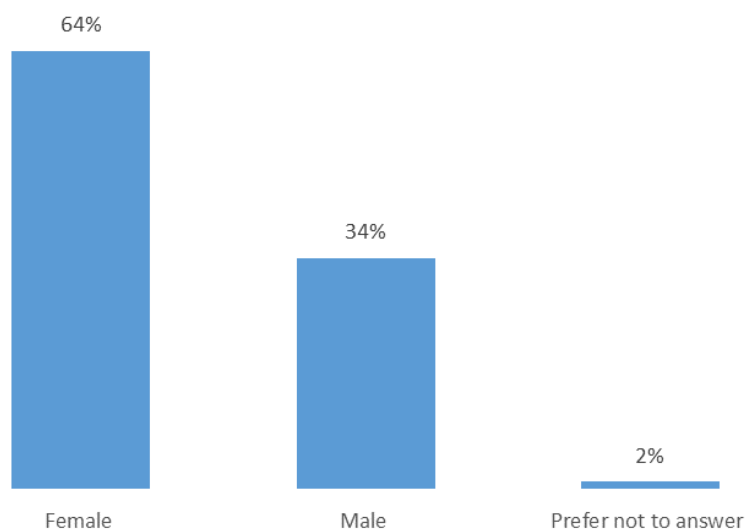
Respondents (372). 0 disqualified responses.

A4.2 In which country are you employed?



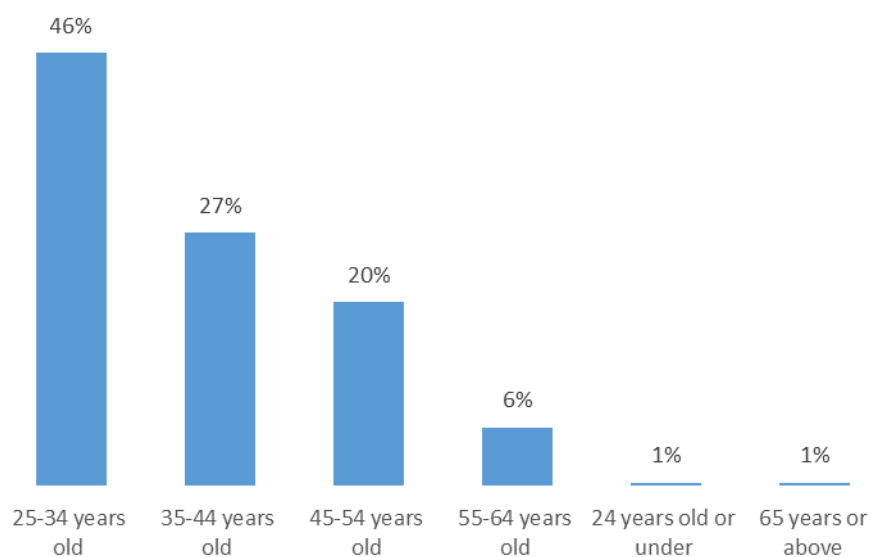
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 1. N=314.

A4.3 Please specify whether you are:



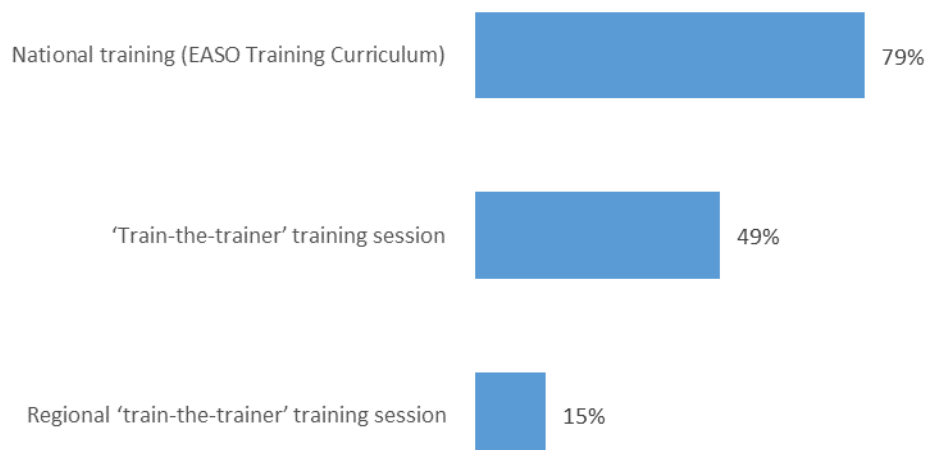
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 2. N=314. Only 1 response for 'other'.

A4.4 Which of the following age bands do you fit into?



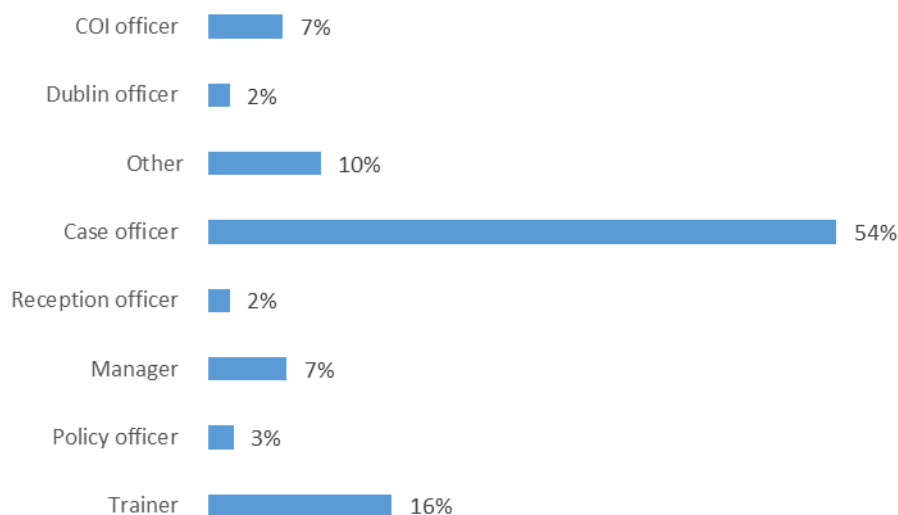
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 2. N=312.

A4.5 In which EASO training activities have you participated?



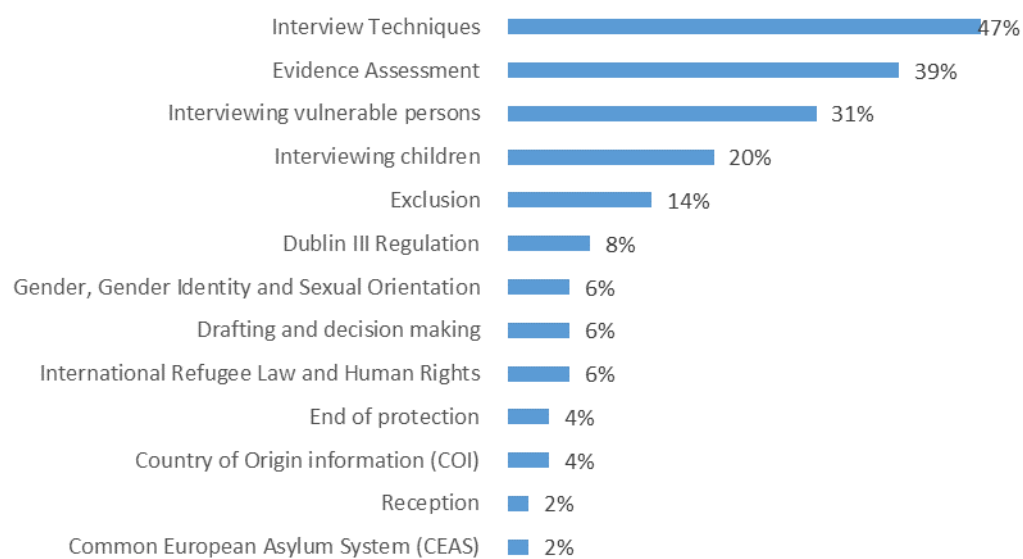
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 4. N=312. Multiple responses possible.

A4.6 What was your position at the time of your (most recent) participation in the training module(s)?



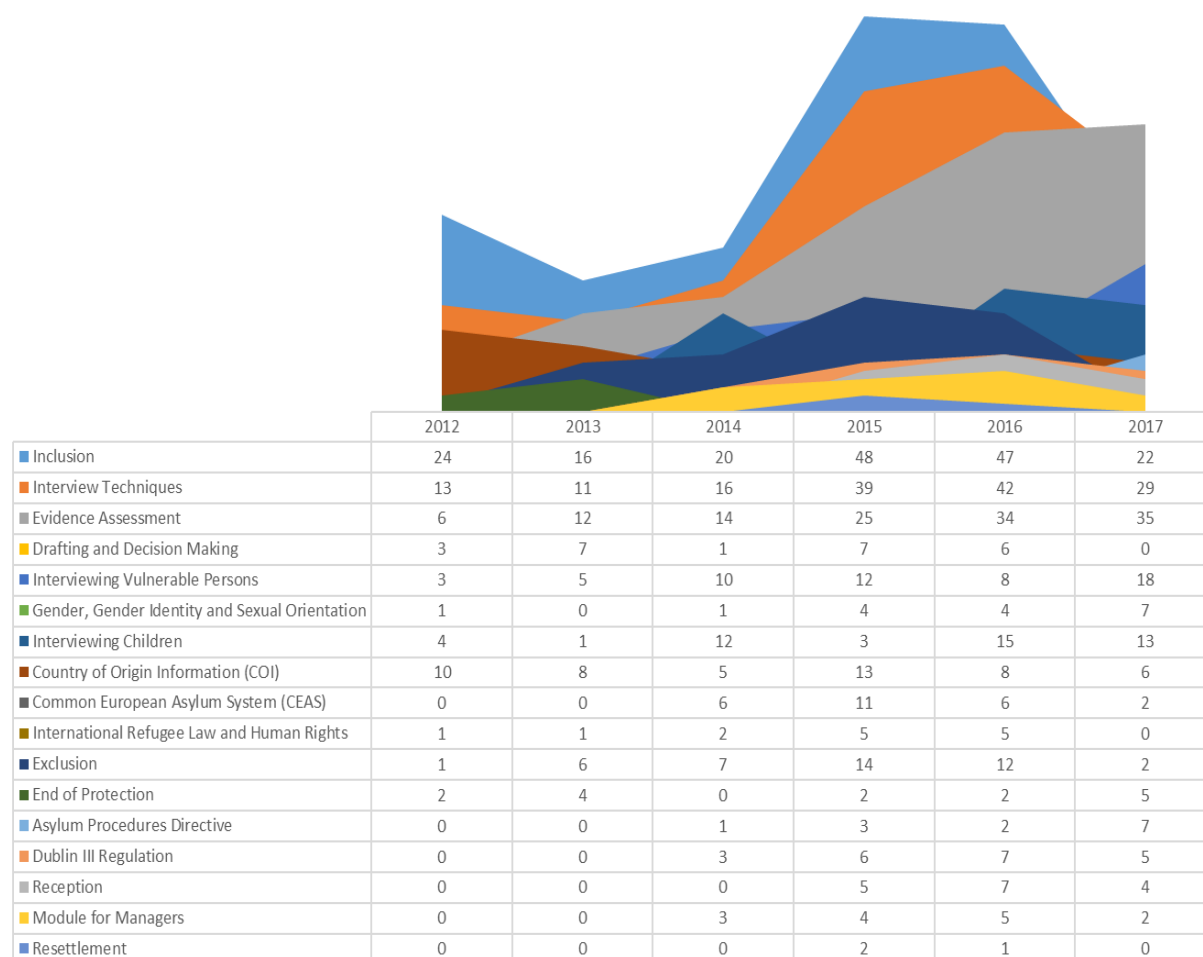
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 5. N=314.

A4.7 Which modules did you deliver in your trainings?



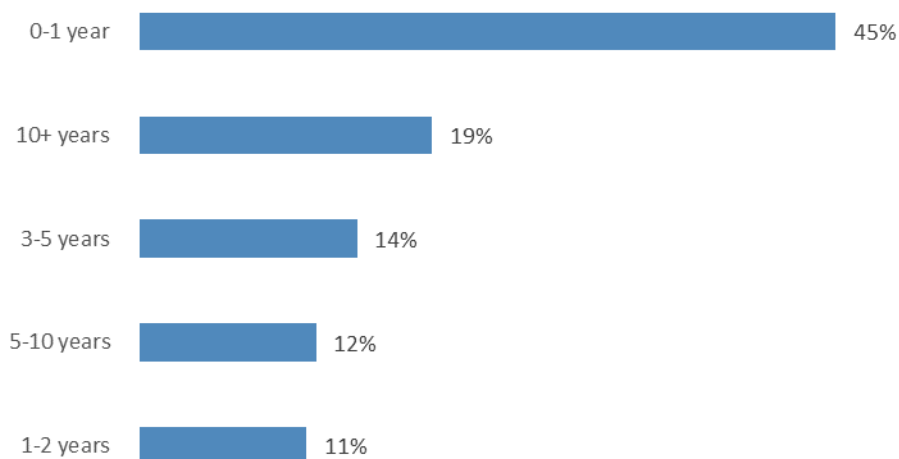
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 6. N=49. Only asked to trainers.

A4.8 Please indicate the EASO training module(s) you participated in by specifying the year (approximately)



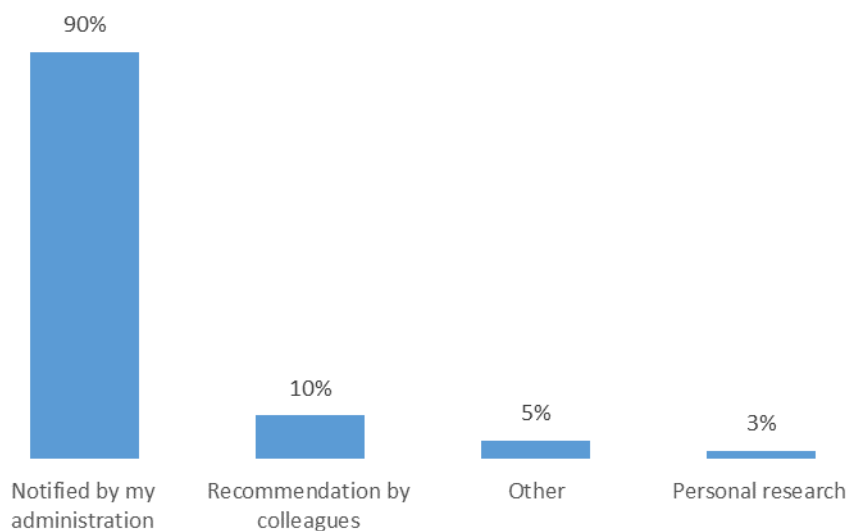
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 7. N=314.

A4.9 How many years of experience did you have in the field of asylum when you participated in your first training module?



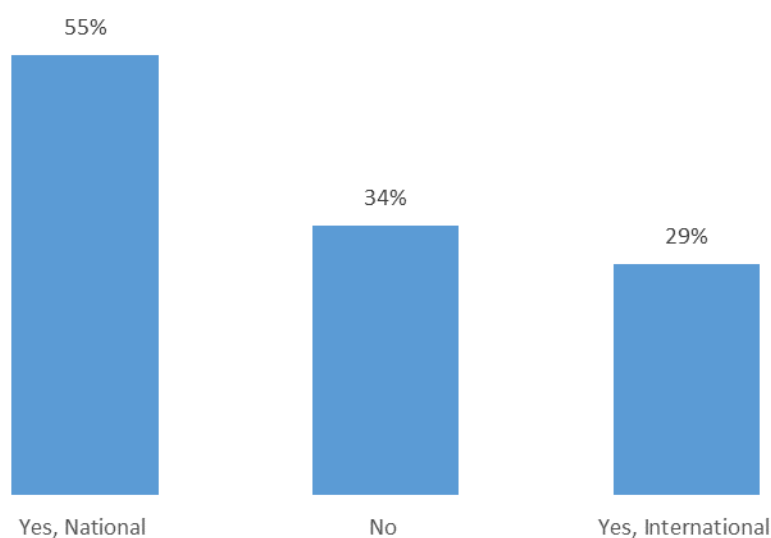
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.8. N=314.

A4.10 How did you find out about the EASO Training Curriculum?



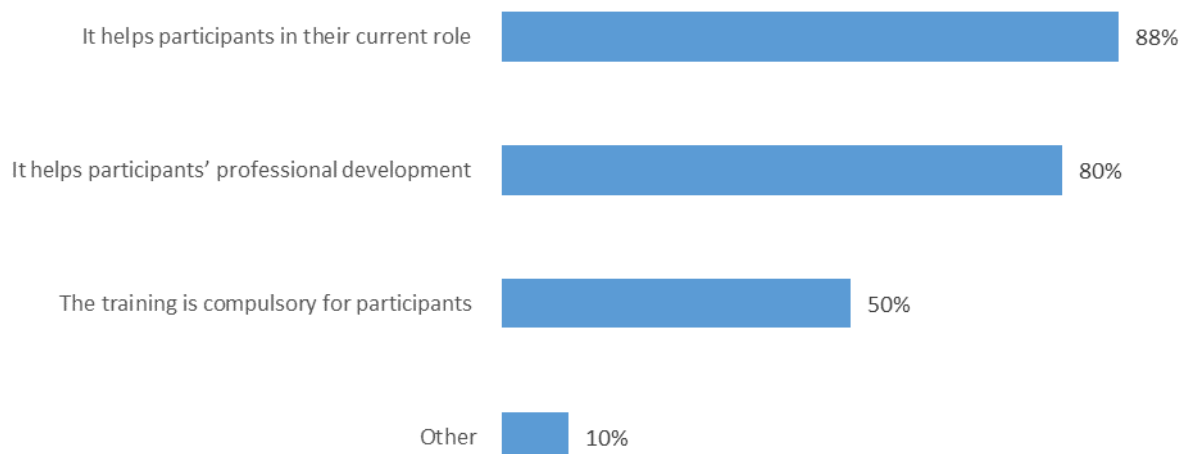
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 9. N=314. Multiple responses possible.

A4.11 Have you taken part in other training courses/programmes at national or international level in the field of asylum?



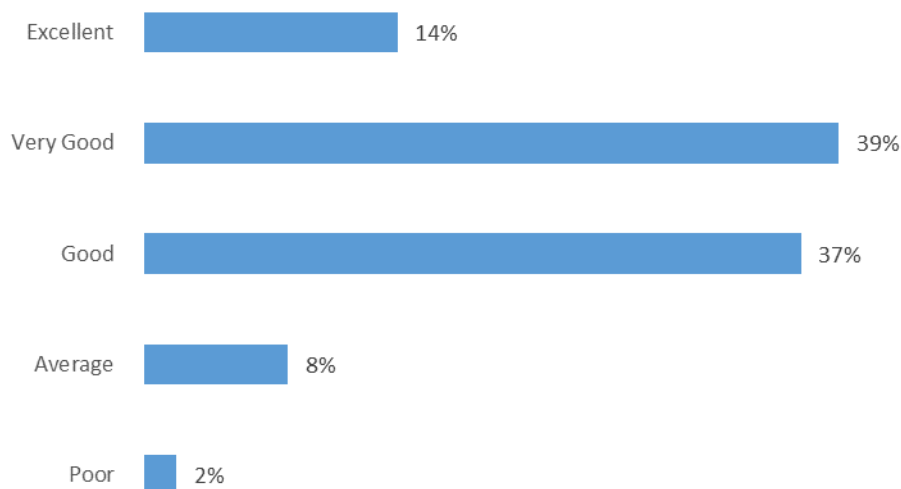
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 10. N=314. Multiple responses possible.

A4.12 Which of the following reasons do you believe encourages participation in national trainings?



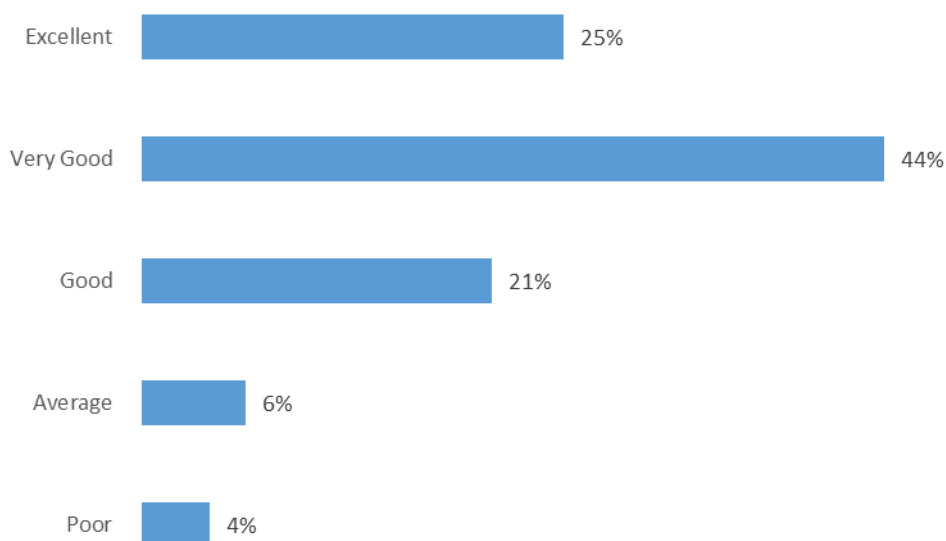
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 11. N=50. Multiple responses possible. Only asked to trainers.

A4.13 In the 'train-the-trainer' session, how would you rate the e-learning session?



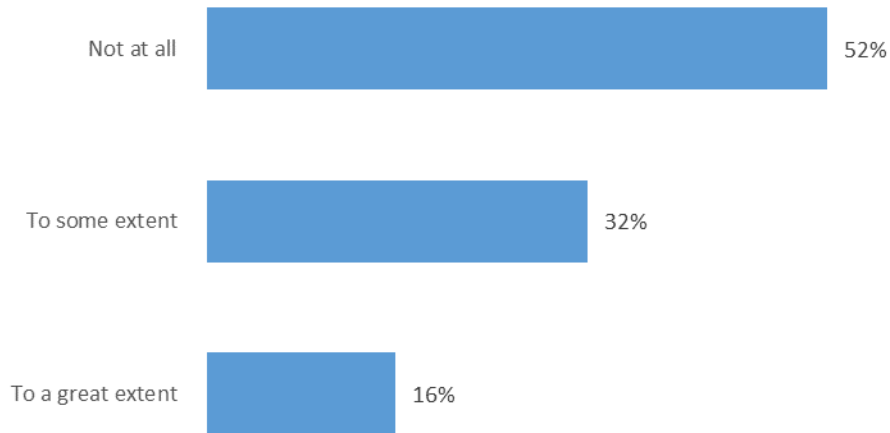
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 12. N=59. Only asked to trainers.

A4.14 In the 'train-the-trainer' session, how would you rate the face-to-face session?



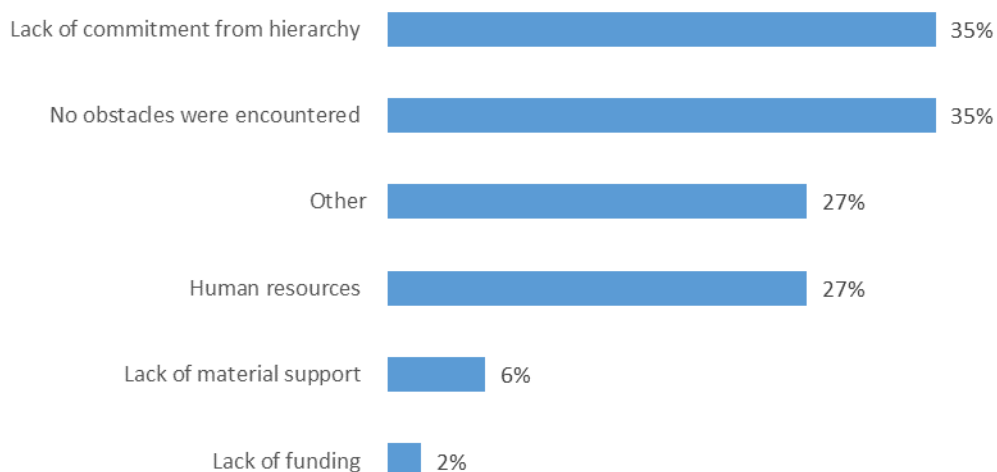
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 13. N=48. Only asked to trainers.

A4.15 To what extent are non-State stakeholders (e.g. UNHCR) involved in the delivery of national trainings in EASO modules?



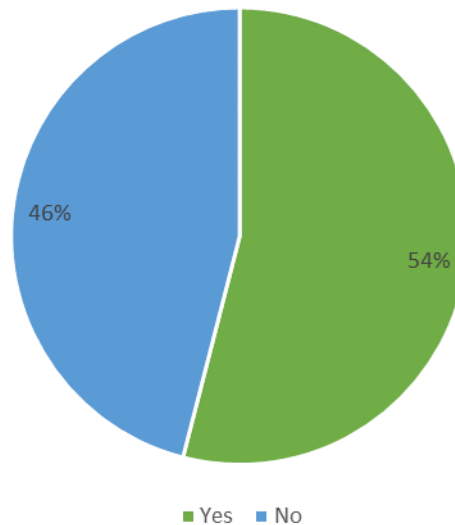
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 14. N=50. No response provided for 'an overwhelming extent'. Only asked to trainers.

A4.16 Which, if any, of the following practical obstacles to the effective delivery of national trainings have you encountered?



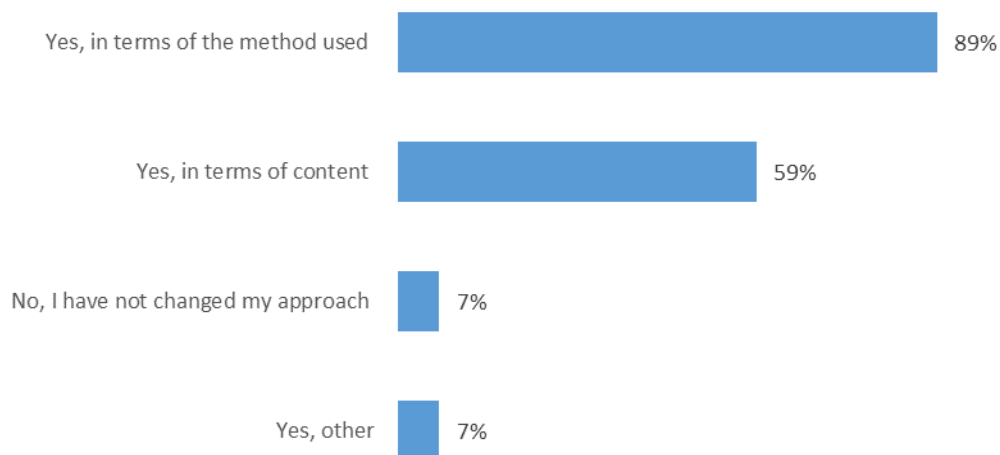
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 15. N=48. Only asked to trainers.

A4.17 Before becoming an EASO trainer, did you have experience as a trainer in the context of national training programmes in the field of asylum?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 16. N=50. Only asked to trainers.

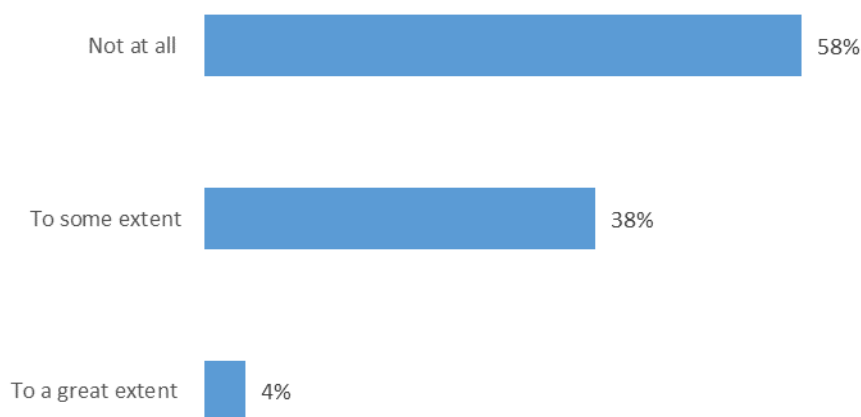
A4.18 Have you adapted your approach to delivering training since becoming an EASO trainer? (select all that apply)



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 17 – multiple responses possible. Only asked to trainers who replied "Yes" to Q. 16.

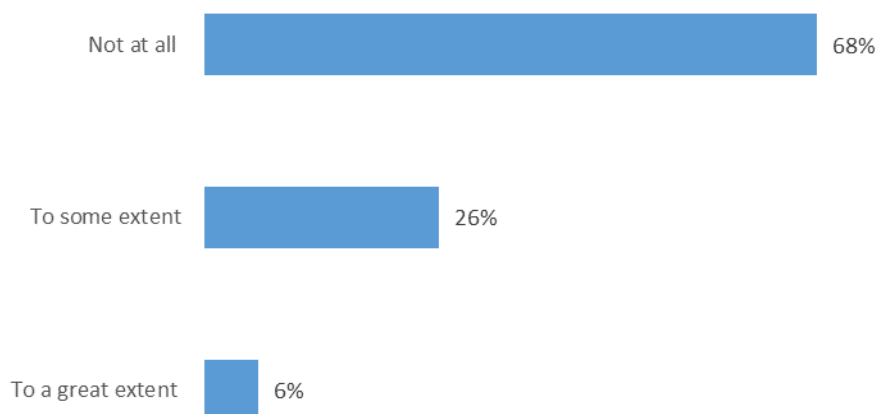
A4.19 Did the following represent a challenge for you in the delivery of training sessions?

A4.19.1 The content of the modules (i.e. complex, overly technical)



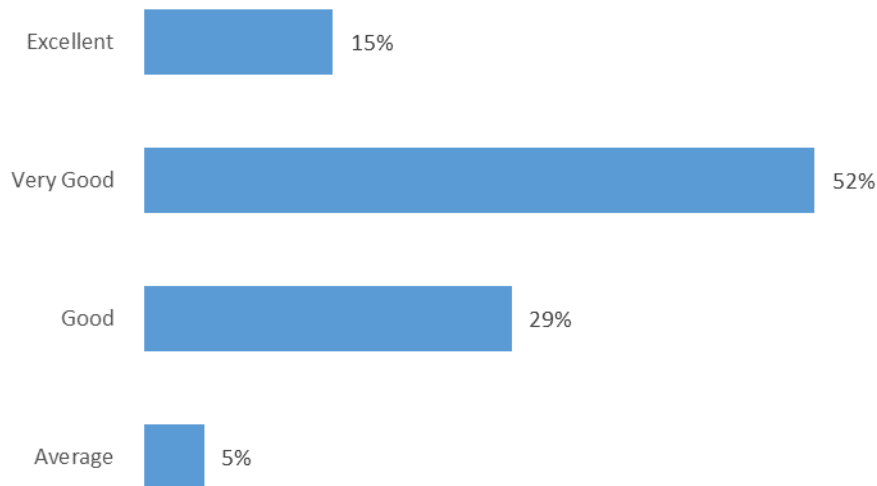
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 18. N=50. Only asked to trainers.

A4.19.2 The language of the modules (e.g. not in my national language / only in English)



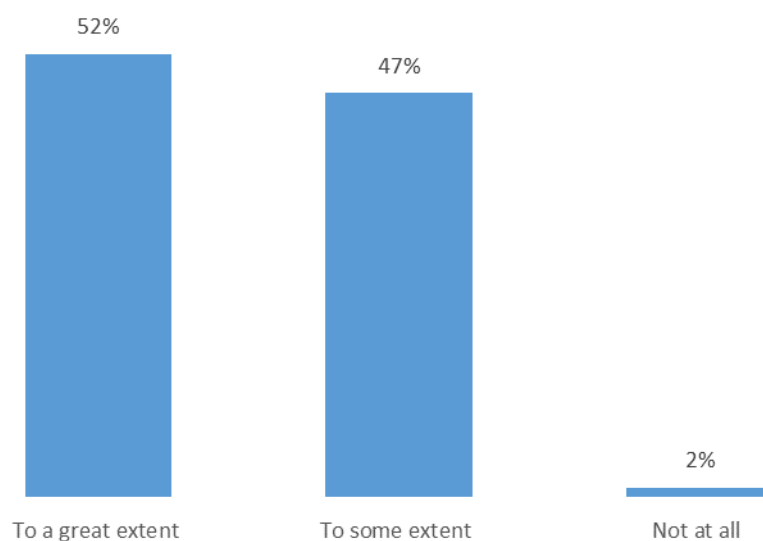
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 18. N=50. Only asked to trainers.

A4.20 Overall, how do you rate your current knowledge and understanding of the key issues covered by the module(s) you have followed?



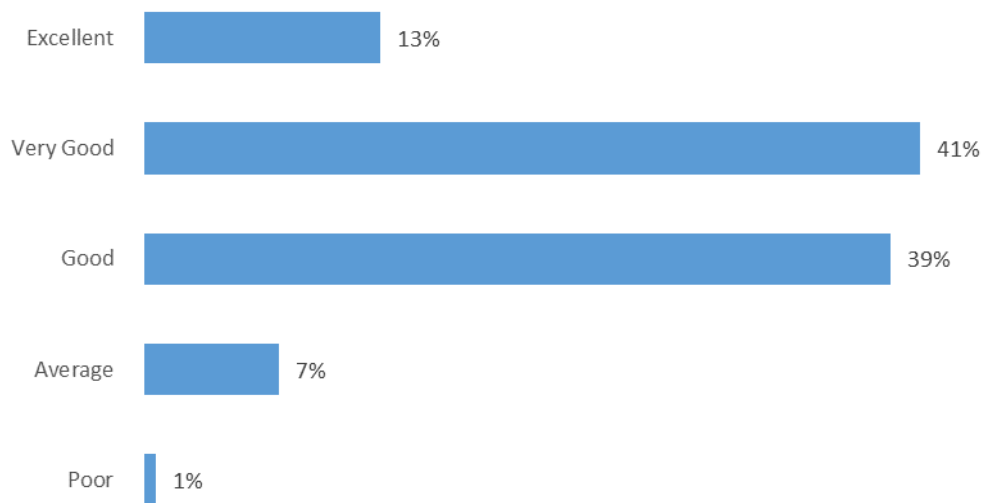
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 20. N=263. Not asked to trainers.

A4.21 To what extent do you believe that taking part in the EASO Training Curriculum directly improved your knowledge and understanding of the key issues covered by the module(s)?



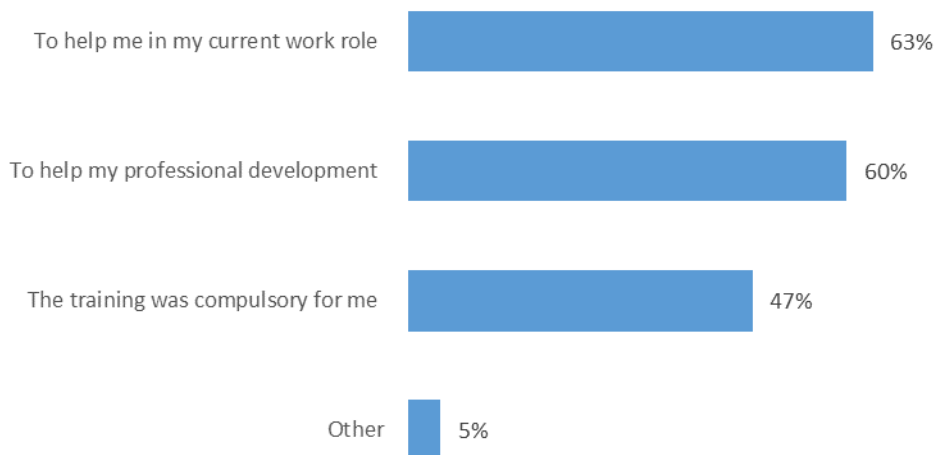
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 21. N=264. Not asked to trainers.

A4.22 How do you rate the fitness for purpose of the module(s) you attended?



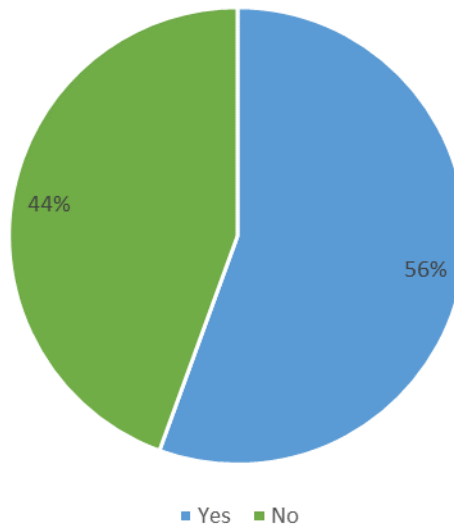
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 22. N=264. Not asked to trainers.

A4.23 Which of the following reasons motivated you to take part in the EASO Training Curriculum?



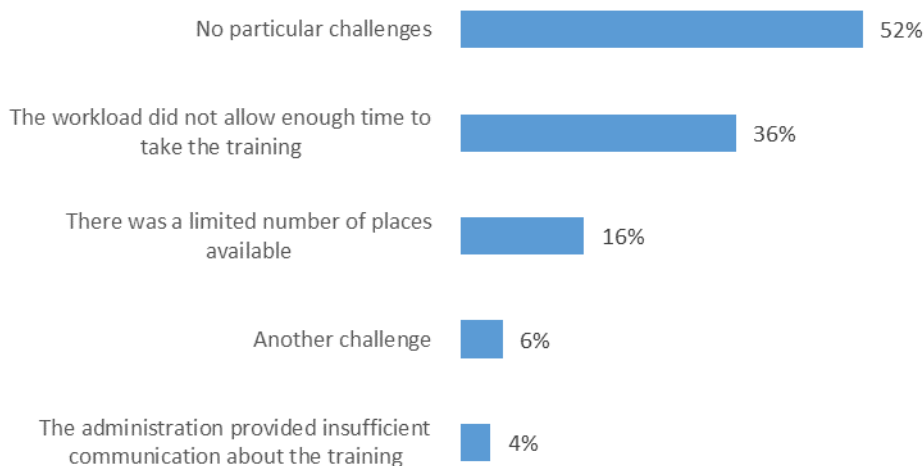
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 23. N=264. Not asked to trainers.

A4.24 Have you changed your approach to any aspect of your role as a direct consequence of each of the modules (if relevant) you attended?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 24. N=261. Not asked to trainers.

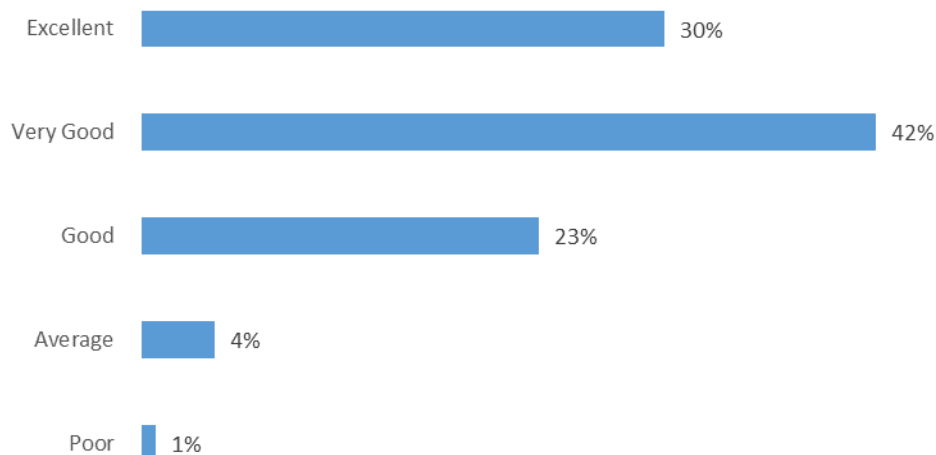
A4.25 Which, if any, of the following challenges did you encounter when you chose to take part in the EASO Training Curriculum?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 26. N=256. Not asked to trainers.

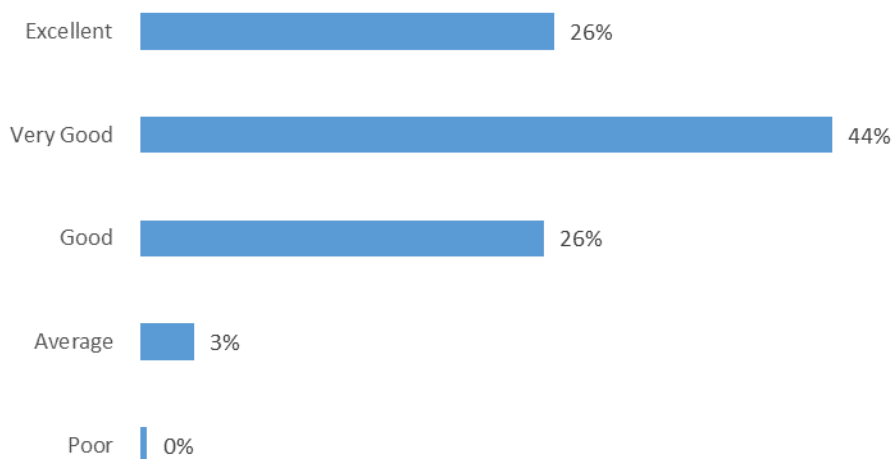
A4.26 In general, how would you rate the following aspects of the training modules you participated in?

A4.26.1 The competence of the trainer



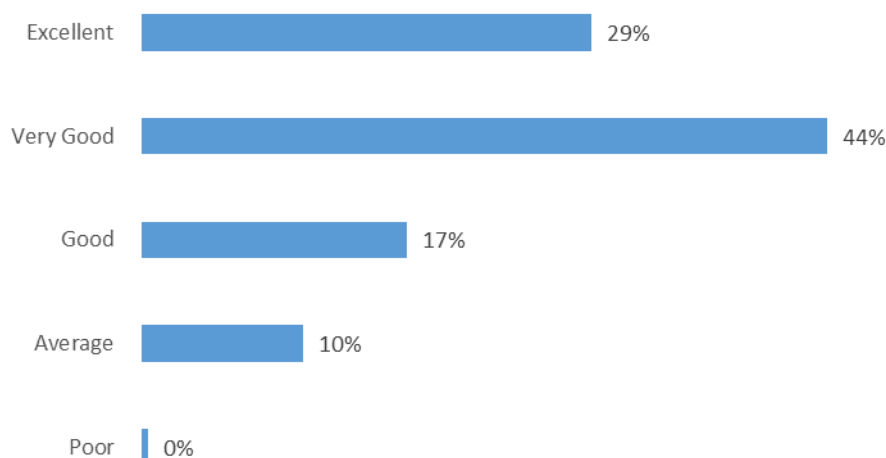
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 28. N=263. Not asked to trainers.

A4.26.2 The accessibility of the e-learning component



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 28. N=261. Not asked to trainers.

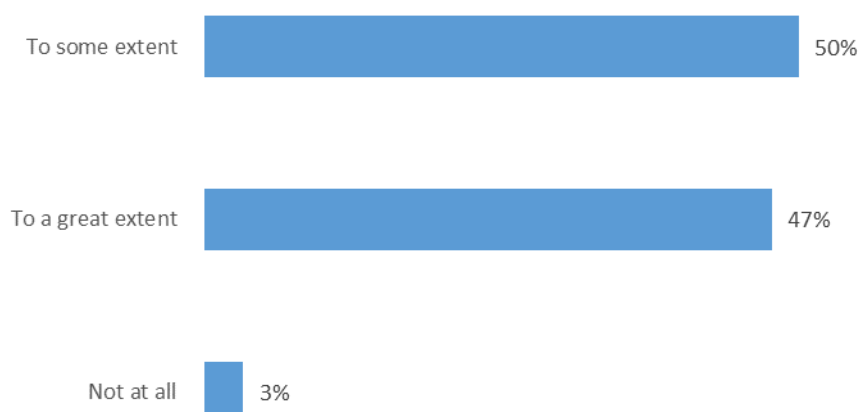
A4.26.3 The relevance of the module(s) in your national context



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 28. N=261. Not asked to trainers.

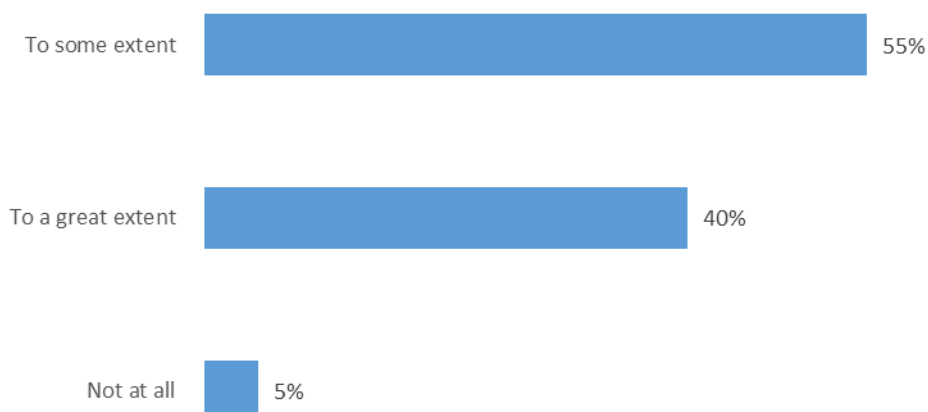
A4.27 To what extent did your participation in the Training Curriculum improve the following?

A4.27.1 Your knowledge and understanding of EU standards and practices in your field of work



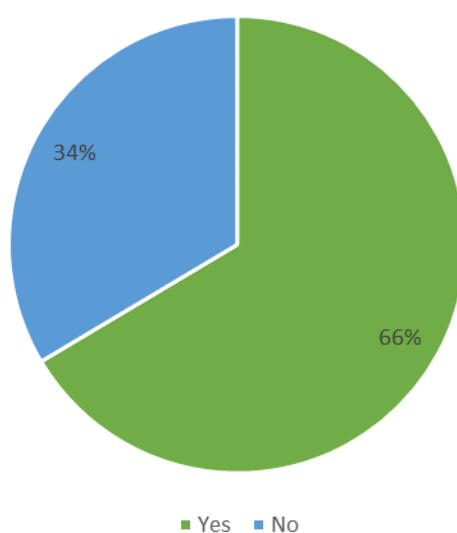
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 29. N=311.

A4.27.2 Your own practice and working methods



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 29. N=310.

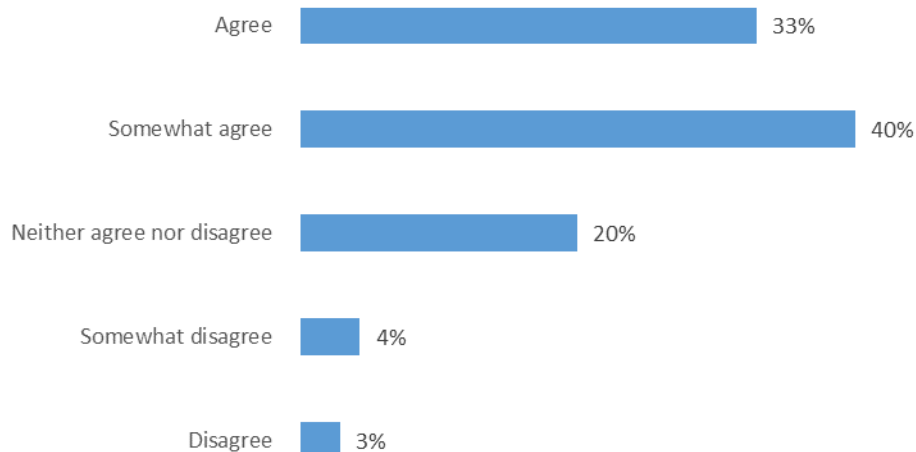
A4.28 Have you been able to identify any concrete changes / improvements in your own practice as a result of the modules you took?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 30. N=307.

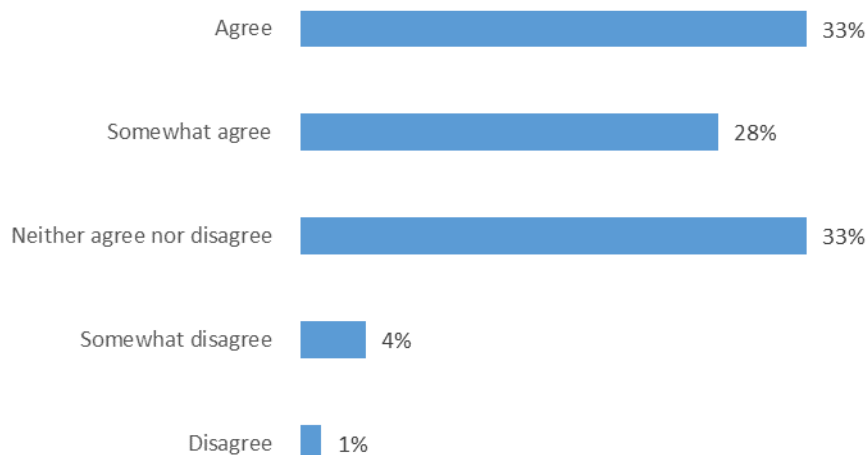
A4.29 To what extent do you agree with the following statements relating to the role of the EASO Training Curriculum in the implementation of the asylum acquis?

A4.29.1 The EASO Training Curriculum has led to a more consistent practice across the administration (i.e. similar problems are answered with similar solutions)



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 32. N=70. Only asked to trainers and managers.

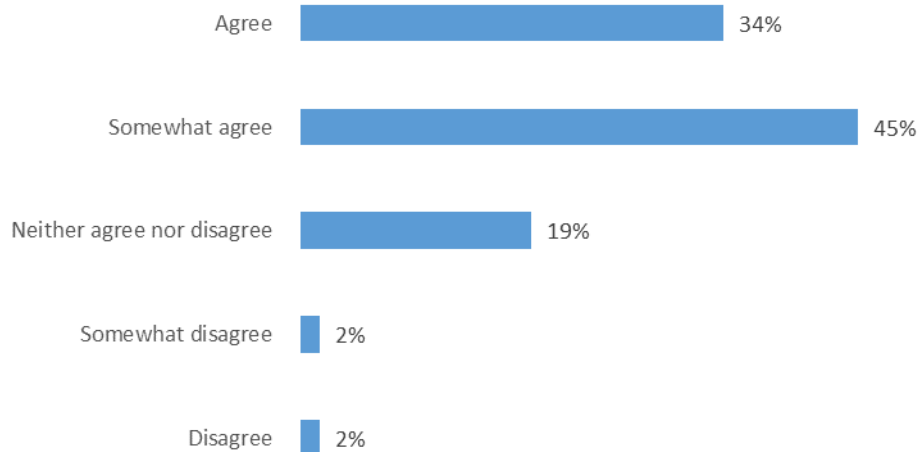
A4.29.2 Since EASO training modules are available, the quality of asylum decisions has improved



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 32. N=69. Only asked to trainers and managers.

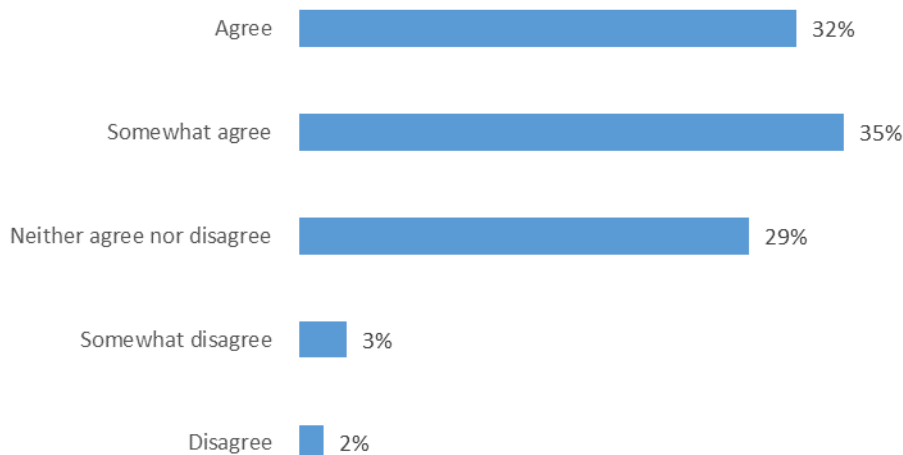
A4.30 To what extent do you agree with the following statements relating to the role of the EASO Training Curriculum (including regional trainings) in reinforcing cooperation between EU+ States?

A4.30.1 Since the EASO Training Curriculum is available, mutual knowledge of the acquis between EU+ States increased



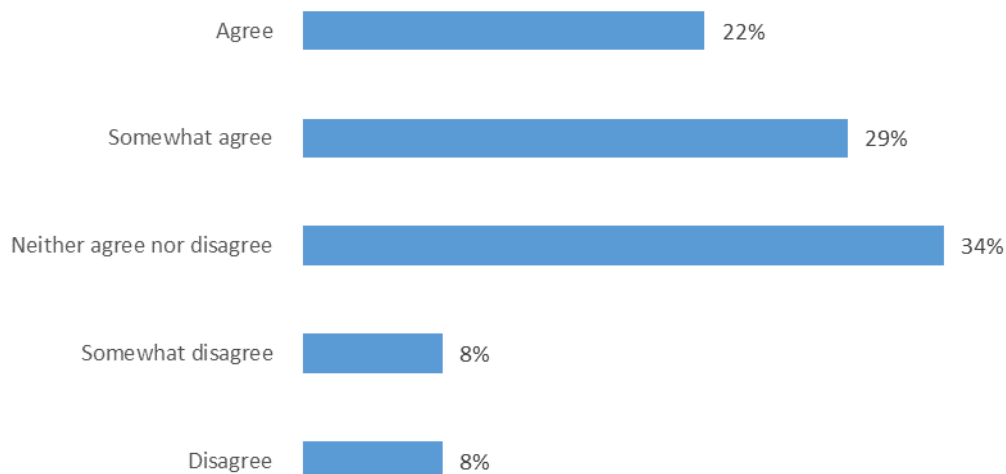
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 33. N=65. Only asked to trainers and managers.

A4.30.2 Since the EASO Training Curriculum is available, operational cooperation between EU+ States increased



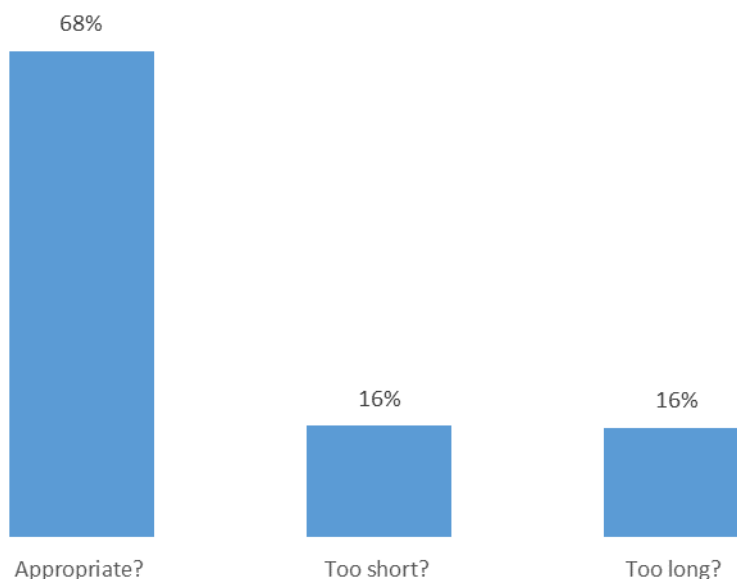
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 33. N=65. Only asked to trainers and managers.

A4.31 To what extent do you agree with the following statement relating to the contribution of the use of the EASO Training Curriculum to intra-EU solidarity with Member States under particular pressure? “The training support received helped relieving some of the pressure on our administration”



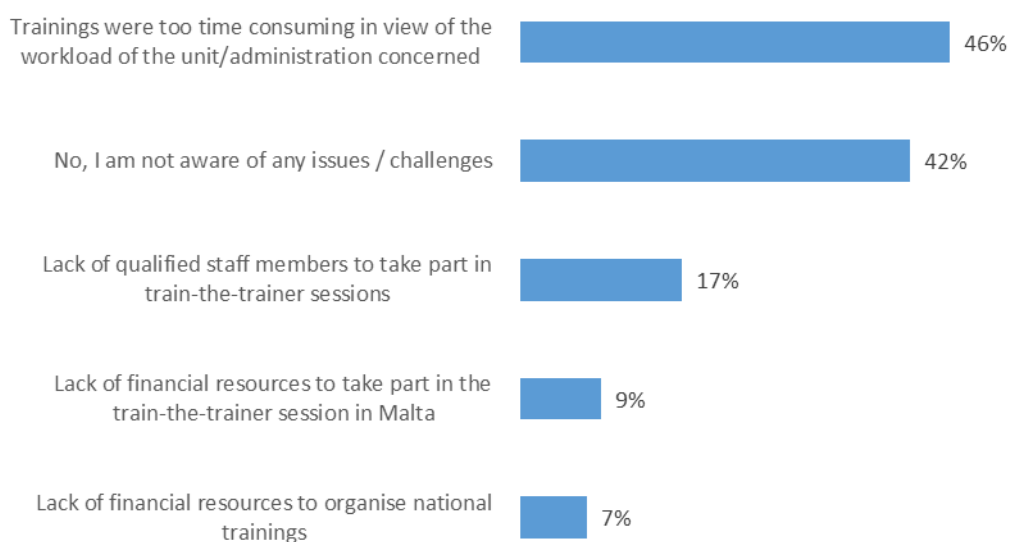
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 34. N=79. Only asked to respondents from Bulgaria, Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Sweden.

A4.32 Considering the amount of information obtained, do you think the time spent on each module was...



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 35. N=313

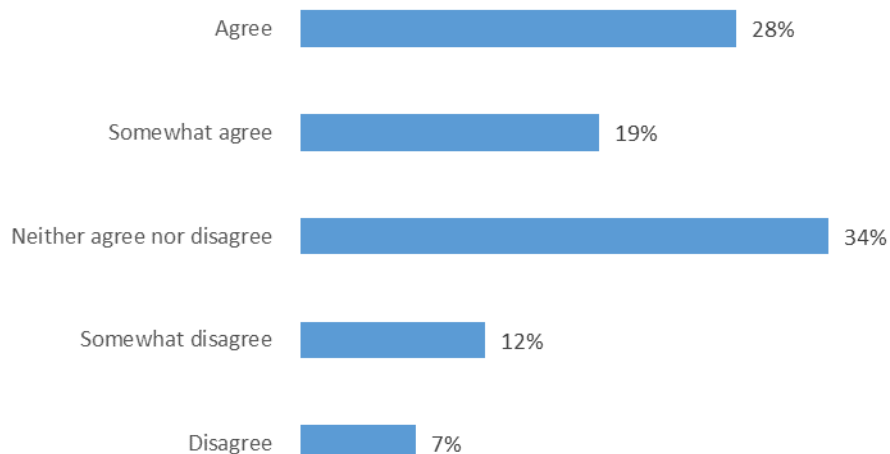
A4.33 Are you aware of any of the following issues or challenges related to the organisation of EASO trainings in your Member State?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 36. N=69. Multiple responses possible, therefore percentages may exceed 100. Only asked to trainers and managers.

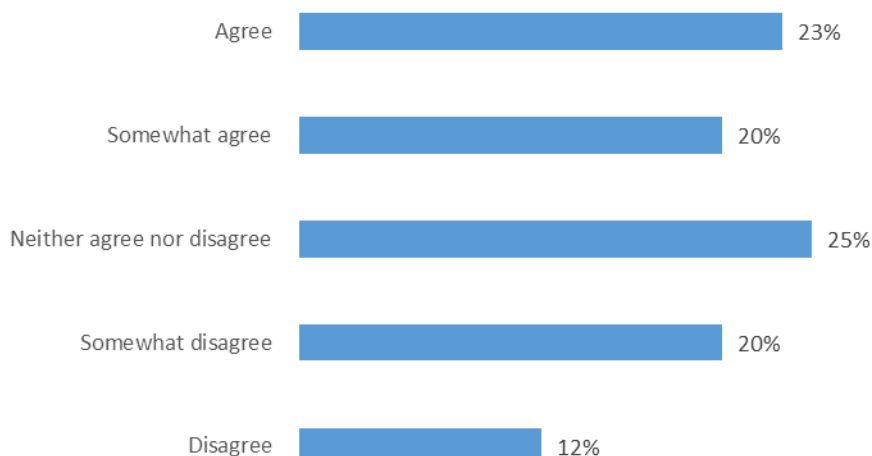
A4.34 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

A4.34.1 There are sufficient registered national staff available to participate in train-the-trainer sessions



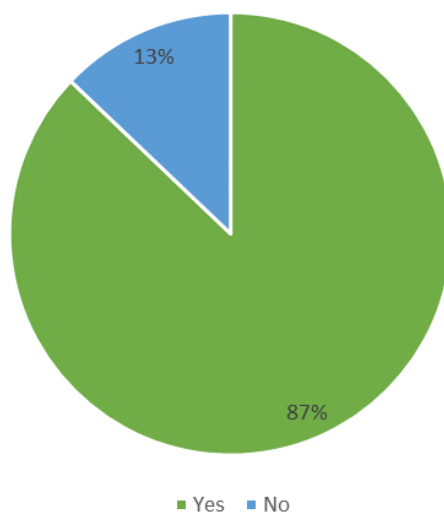
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 37. N=68. Only asked to trainers and managers.

A4.34.2 The number of national trainers available is sufficient to ensure the availability of trainings



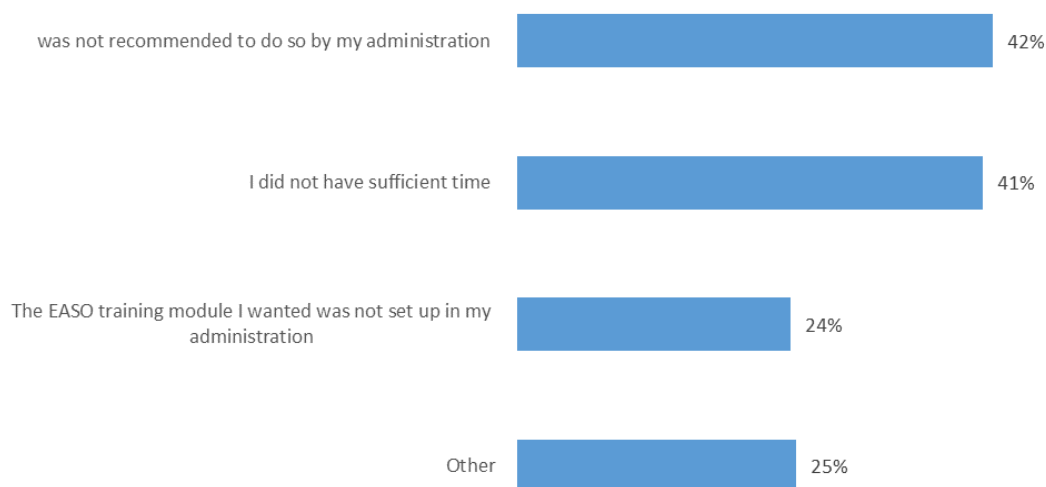
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 37. N=69. Only asked to trainers and managers.

A4.35 Would you have liked to participate in more of the EASO training modules?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 38. N=264. Not asked to trainers.

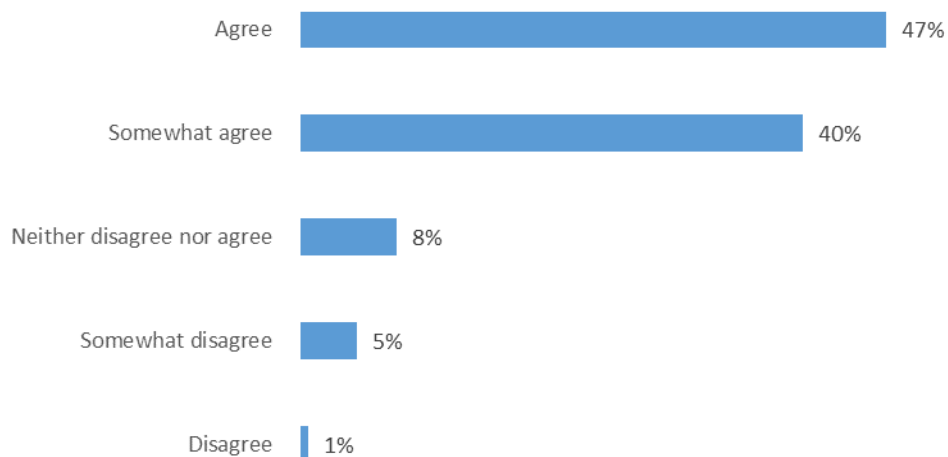
A4.35.1 If Yes, why didn't you participate?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 39. N=228. Asked only to those who replied "Yes" to Q.38.

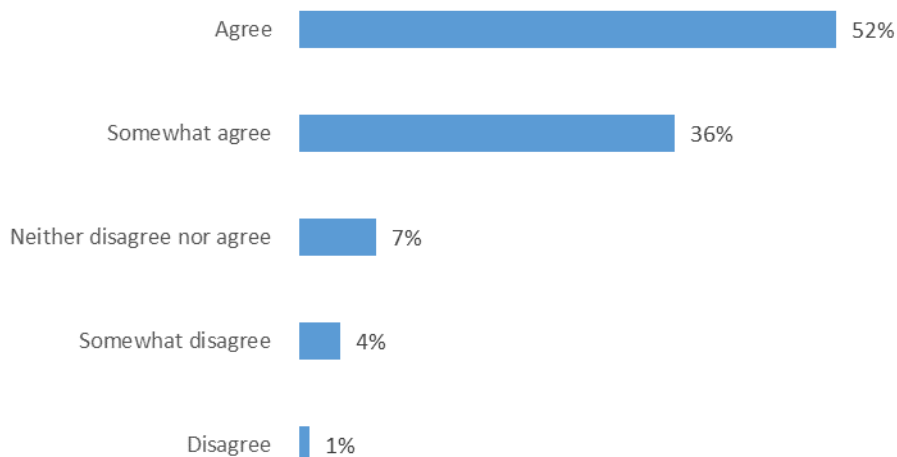
A4.36 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

A4.36.1 The modules I took met my expectations



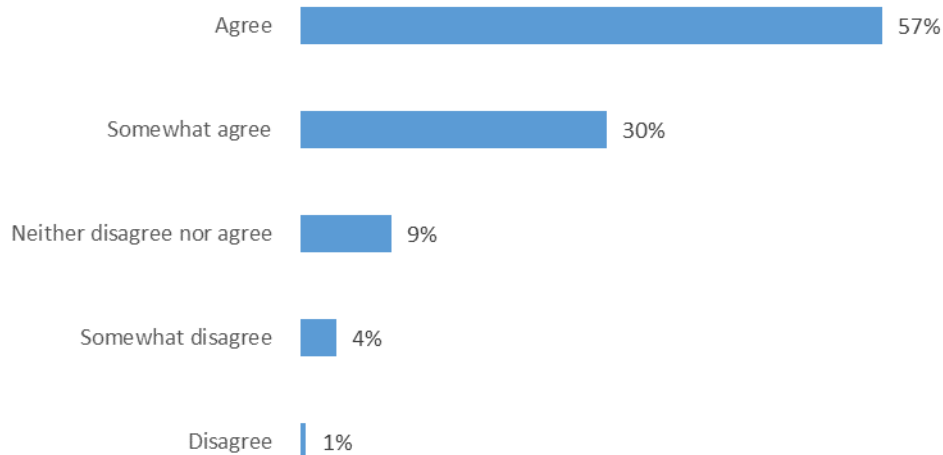
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 42. N=311

A4.36.2 The topics covered in the modules helped me in my day-to-day role



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 42. N=310.

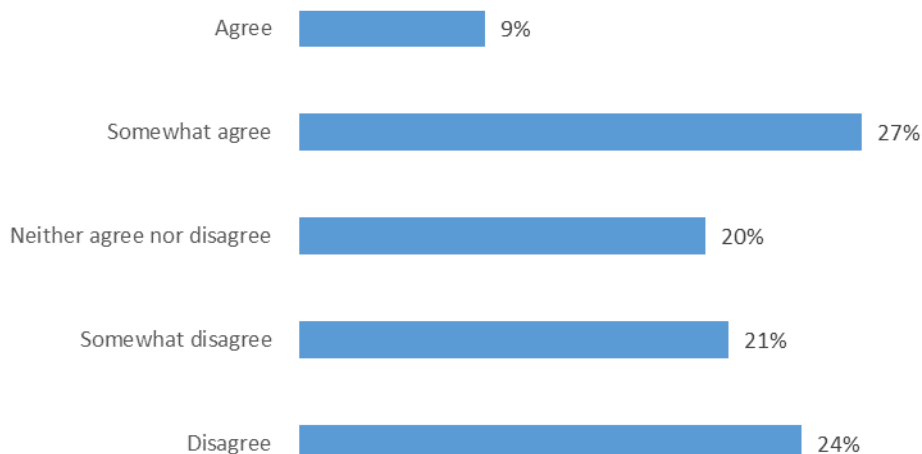
A4.36.3 The content of the training has remained relevant to my work over time



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 42. N=313.

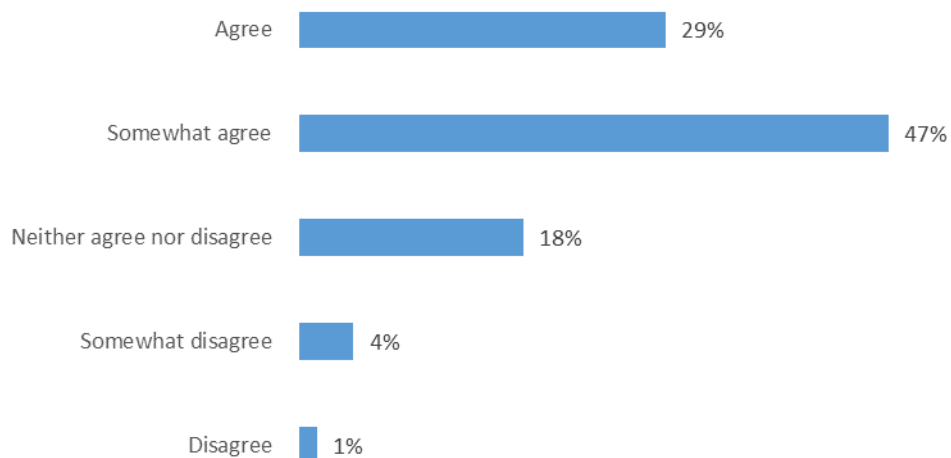
A4.37 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the content of the Training Curriculum modules? (if you followed more than one module)?

A4.37.1 The content of the different modules was repetitive and overlapped



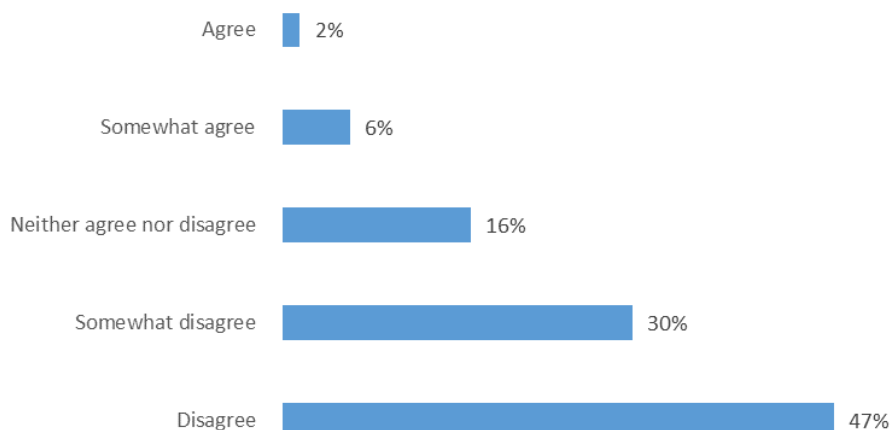
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 43. N=282.

A4.37.2 The content of the different modules was complementary



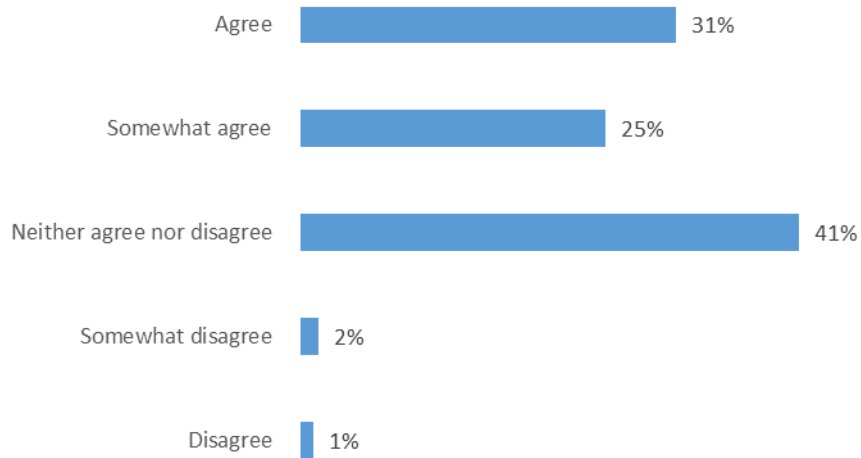
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 43. N=280

A4.37.3 It was difficult to understand the link between the different modules



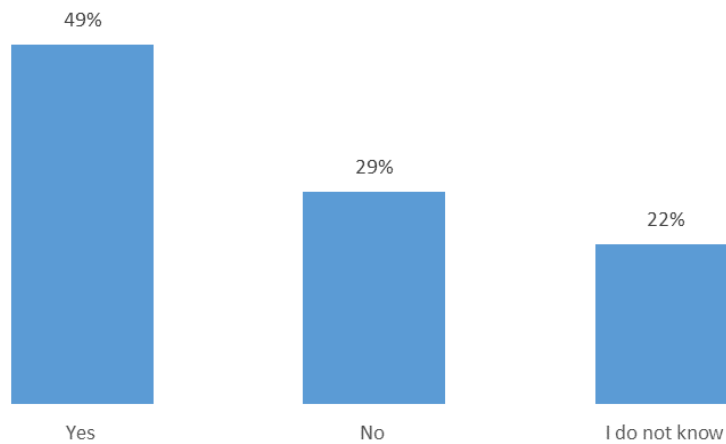
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 43. N=275.

A4.37.4 The modules helped me understand the content of the advanced modules



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 43. N=274.

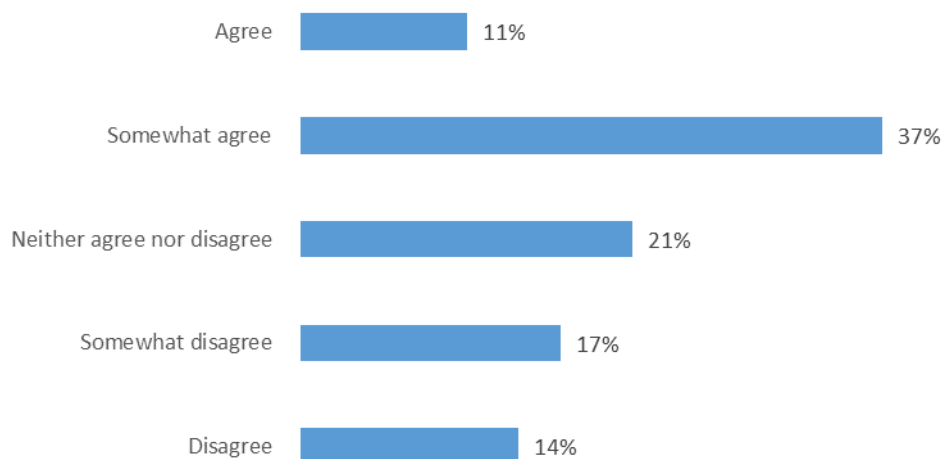
A4.38 Are other national trainings elaborated by your administration available in parallel to the EASO Training Curriculum?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 44. N=313.

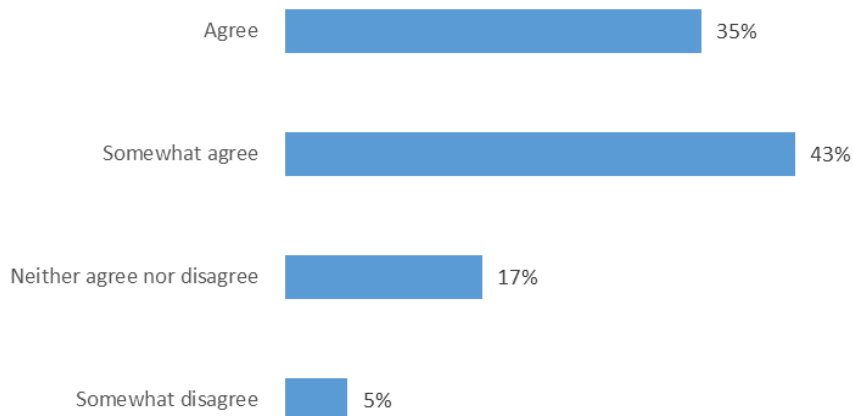
A4.39 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

A4.39.1 The content of the EASO modules was similar to the content of trainings elaborated at national level



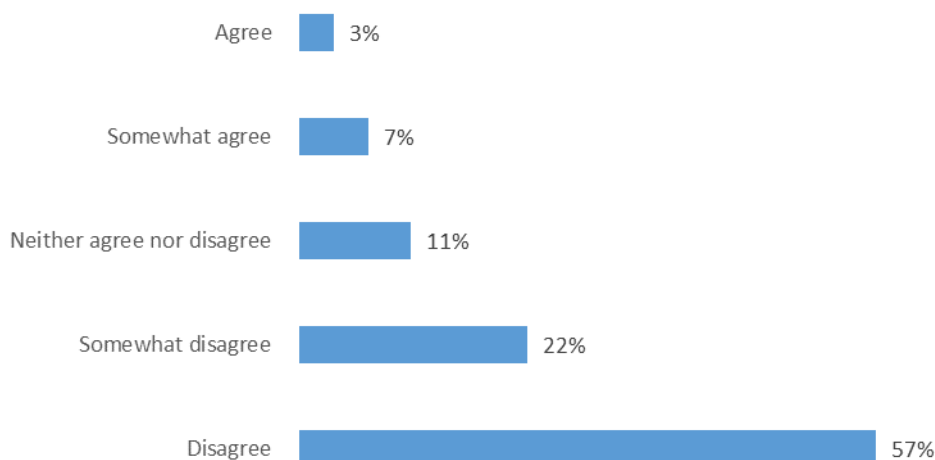
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 45. N=150.

A4.39.2 The content of the EASO modules was complementary to the content of trainings elaborated at national level



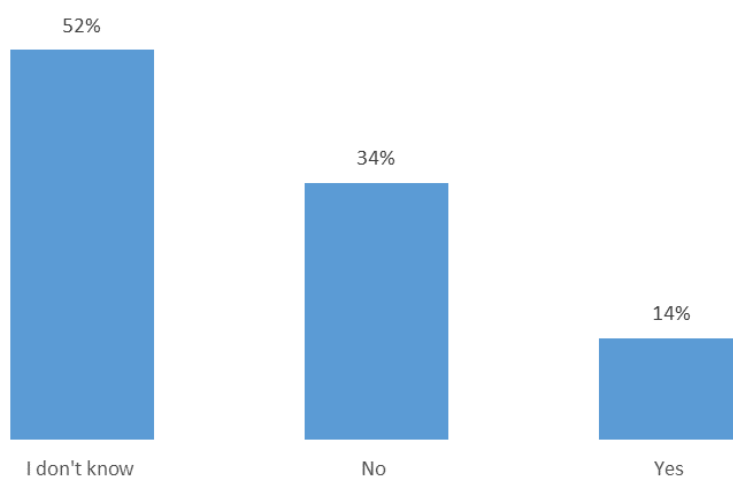
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 45. N=151. No responses provided for 'disagree'.

A4.39.3 The content of the EASO modules and of the training elaborated at national level were contradictory



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 45. N=147.

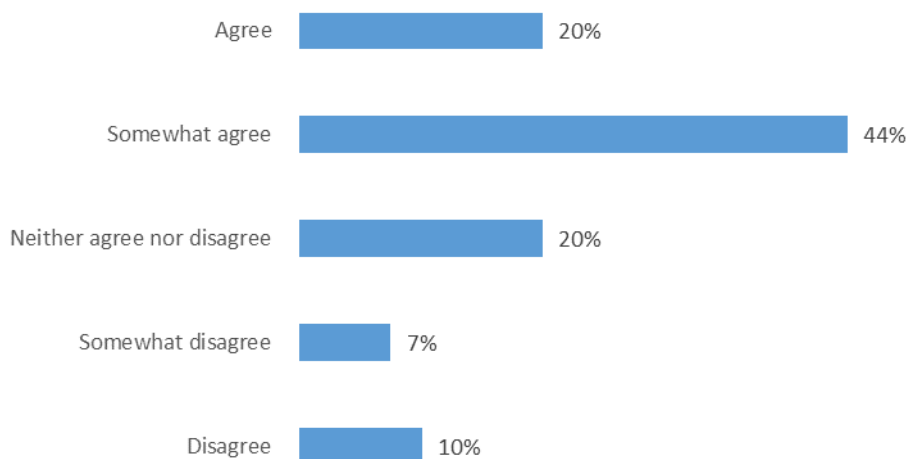
A4.40 Are other trainings elaborated at international level (e.g. with the UN) available in parallel to the EASO Training Curriculum?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 46. N=312

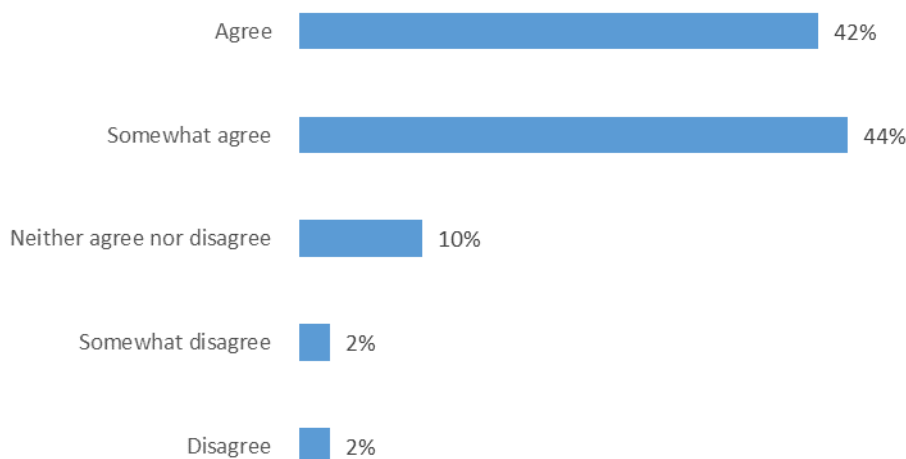
A4.41 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

A4.41.1 The content of the EASO modules was similar to the content of trainings elaborated at international level



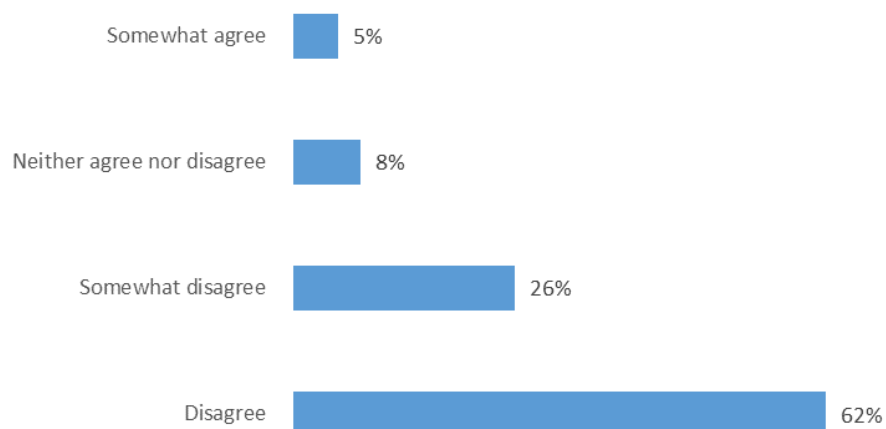
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 47. N=41. Only asked to those who replied "Yes" to Q.46.

A4.41.2 The content of the EASO modules was complementary to the content of trainings elaborated at international level



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 47. N=41. Only asked to those who replied "Yes" to Q.46.

A4.41.3 The content of the EASO modules and of the trainings elaborated at international level was contradictory

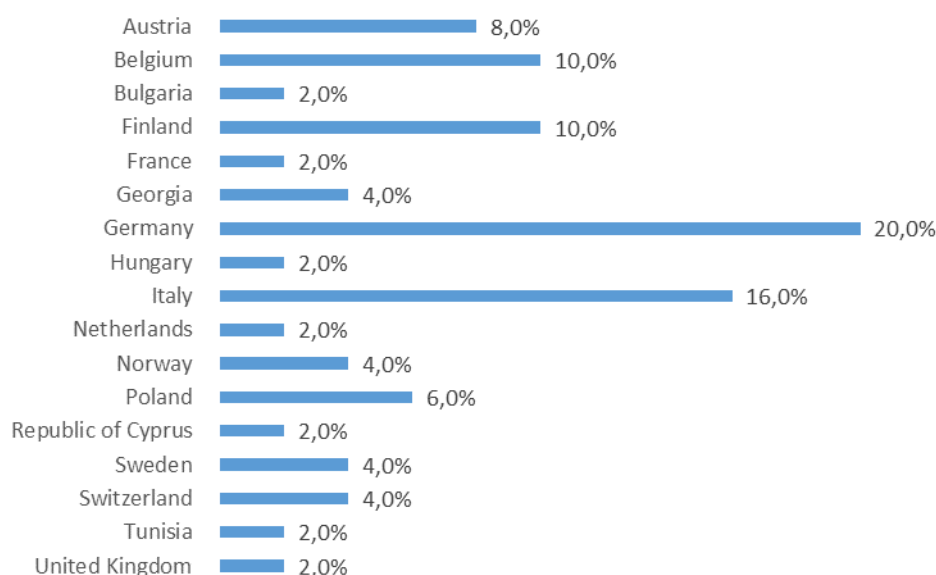


Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 47. N=39. Only asked to those who replied "Yes" to Q.46. No response for 'agree'.

Annex 5 Full survey based on category of stakeholder

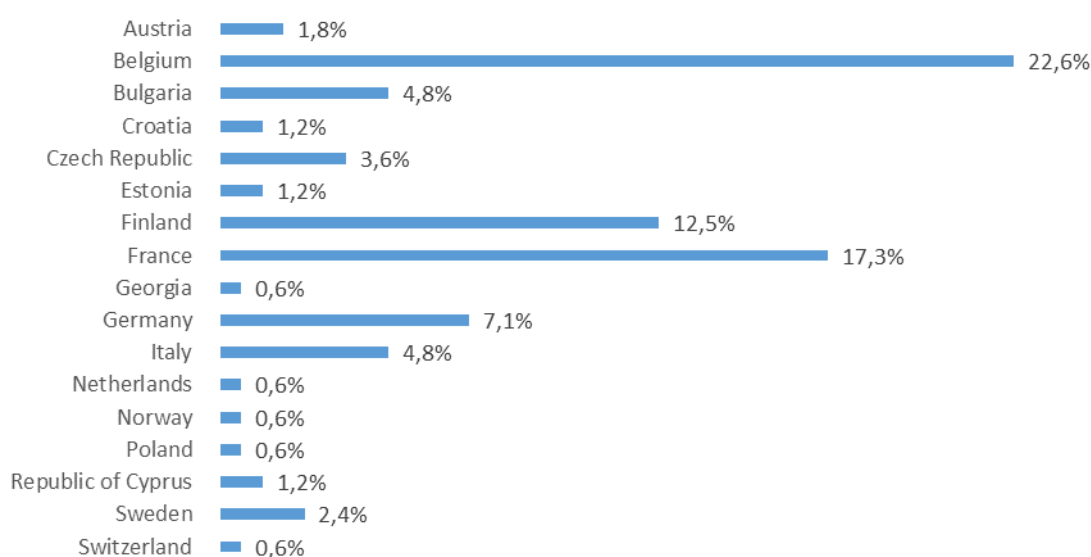
A5.1 In which country are you currently employed?

A5.1.1 Trainers



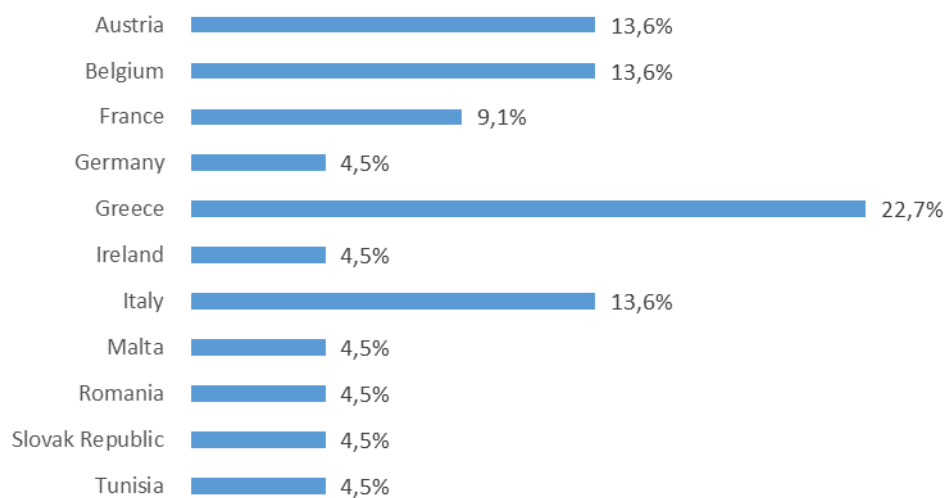
Source: ICF Survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.1 and Q.5. N=50. No responses from CZ, DK, ES, EE, EL, HR, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, PT, RO, SI, SK,

A5.1.2 Case officers



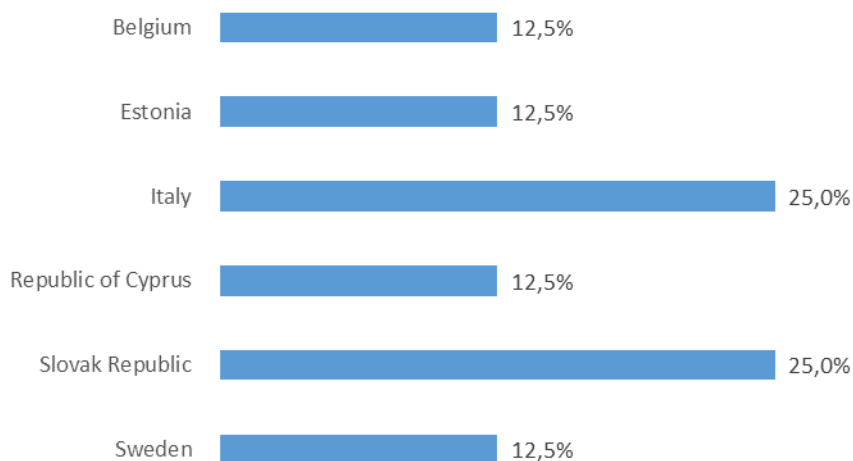
Source: ICF Survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.1 and Q.5. N=168. No responses from EL, ES, DK, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, PT, RO, SI, SK, TN, UK

A5.1.3 Managers



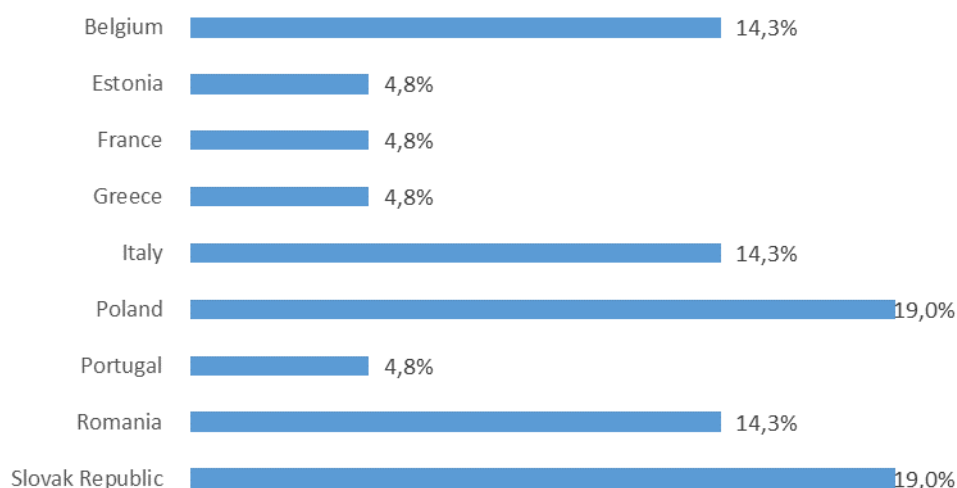
Source: ICF Survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.1 and Q.5. N=22. No responses from BG, CH, CY, CZ, DK, EE, ES, FI, GE, HR, HU, LT, LU, LV, NL, NO, PL, PT, SE, SI, UK.

A5.1.4 Policy officers



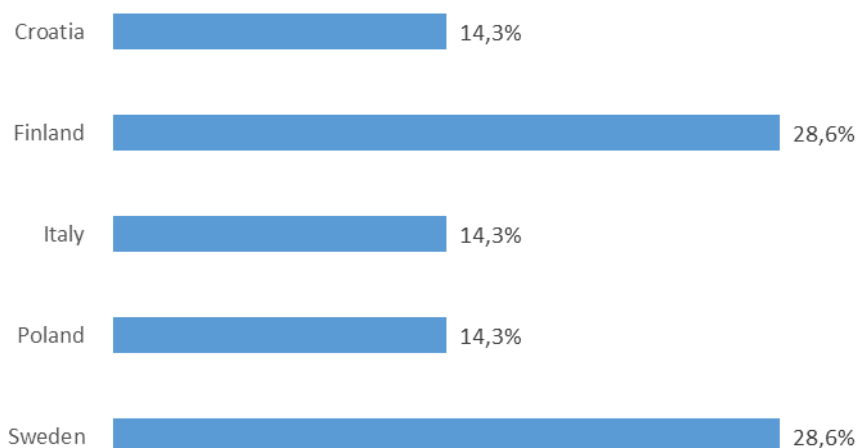
Source: ICF Survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.1 and Q.5. N=8. No responses from AT, BG, CH, CZ, DE, DK, EL, ES, FI, FR, GE, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, PL, PT, RO, SI, TN, UK.

A5.1.5 Country of Origin Information Officers



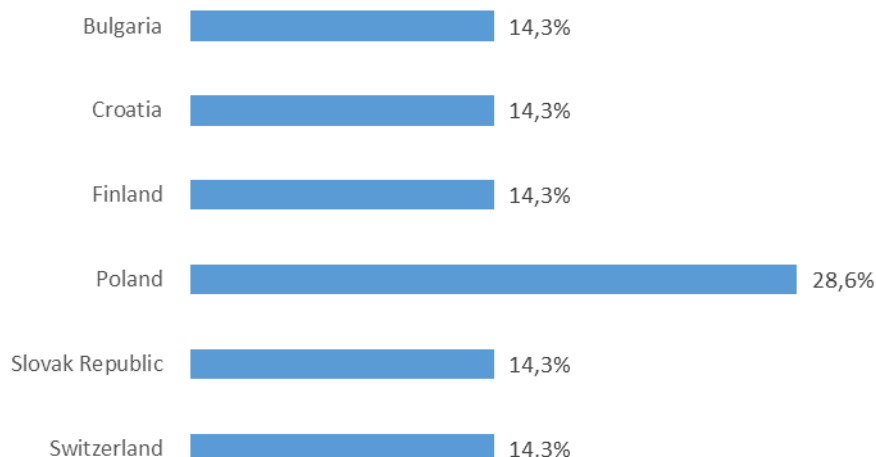
Source: ICF Survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.1 and Q.5. N=21. No responses from AT, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, ES, FI, GE, HR, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, SE, SI, TN, UK.

A5.1.6 Reception officers



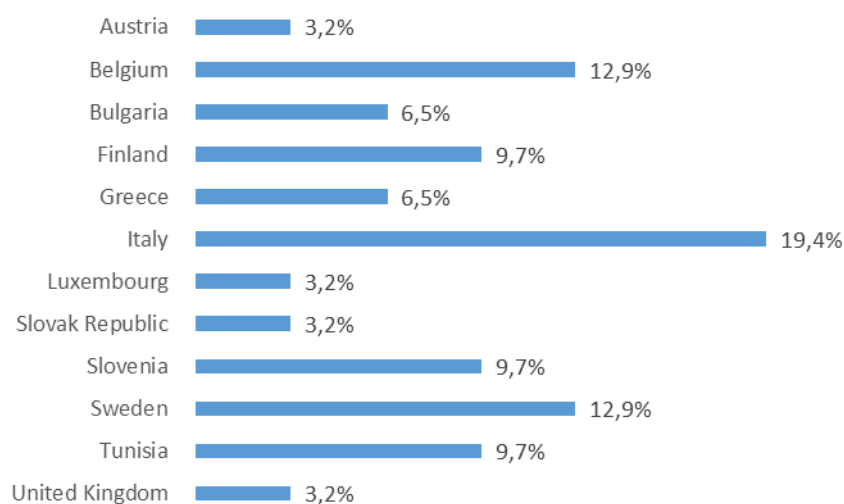
Source: ICF Survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.1 and Q.5. N=7. No responses from AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, GE, HU, IE, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO, SI, SK, TN, UK.

A5.1.7 Dublin officers



Source: ICF Survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.1 and Q.5. N=7. No responses from AT, BE, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, EL, ES, FR, GE, HU, IE, IT, LT, LU, LV, MT, NL, NO, PT, RO, SE, SI, TN, UK.

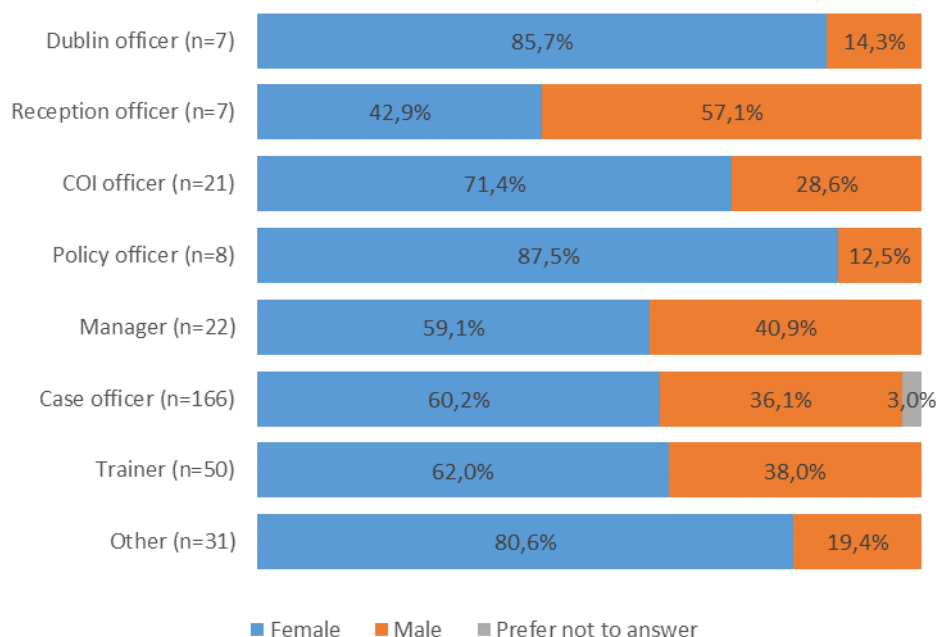
A5.1.8 Other¹⁵⁷



Source: ICF Survey on the EASO Training Curriculum, cross tabulation between Q.1 and Q.5. N=31. No responses from CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FR, GE, HR, HU, IE, LT, LV, MT, NL, NO, PL, PT, RO.

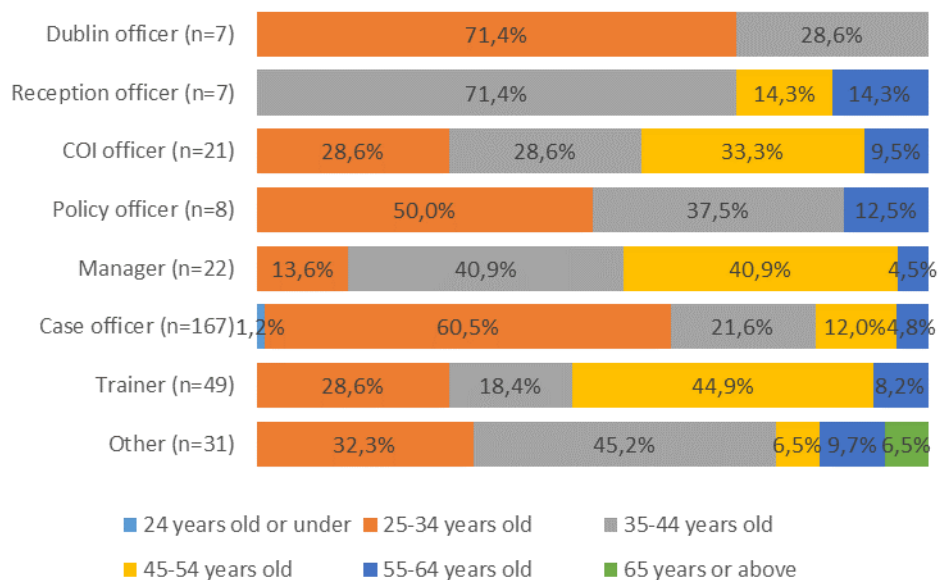
¹⁵⁷ Between case officer and manager; Member of the Association of Italian Councils (Componente Commissione ANCI); Decision maker; Expert; Head of training unit; Lawyer; Legal adviser/expert; Legal advisor; Legal officer; Litigation Officer; Member of Territorial Commission; President of Commission for International Protection of Ancona; Protection Officer; Quality Assessor; Social worker; Team leader; Team leader; coordination of case officers; Employee of the ministry; Employee of the local council; judicial analysis/advice; research magistrate at the Ministry of Justice; manager -case officer-trainer; public officer; social worker; deputy director at the national migration observatory; trainee.

A5.2 Please specify whether you are male, female, or prefer not to say



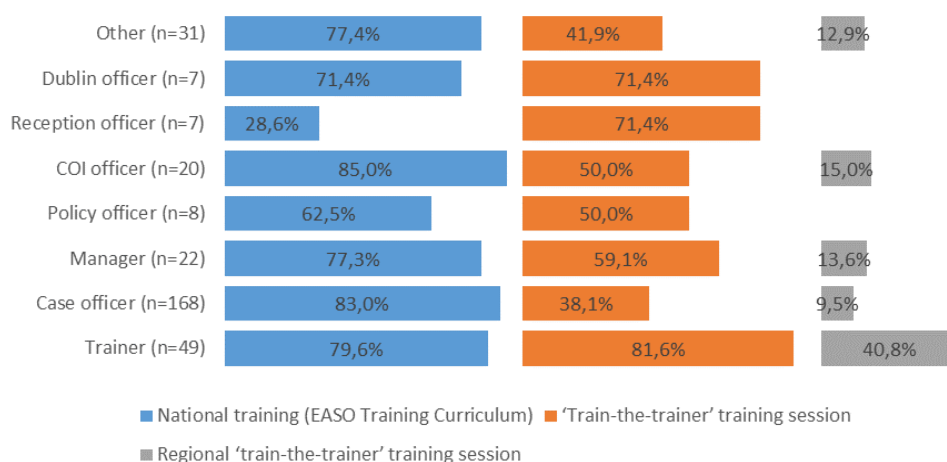
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.2. N=312. Only one response provided for 'other' by a case officer.

A5.3 Which of the following age bands do you fit into?



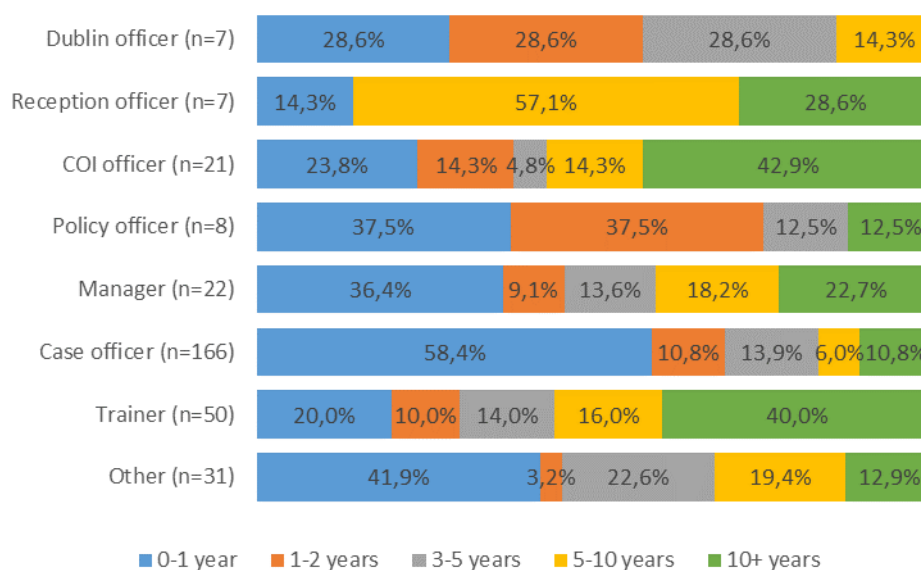
ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.3. N=312.

A5.4 In which EASO training activities have you participated?



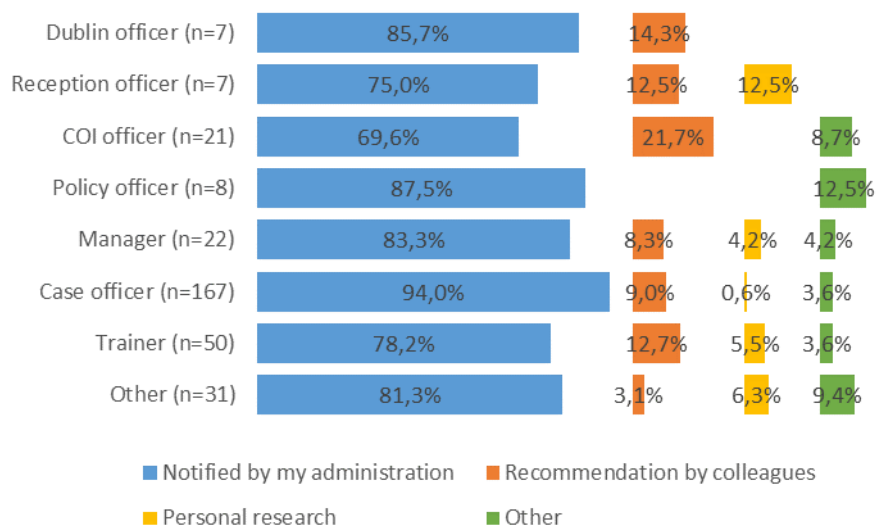
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, N=312, multiple choice therefore the percentages may exceed 100.

A5.5 How many years of experience did you have in the field of asylum when you participated in your first training module?



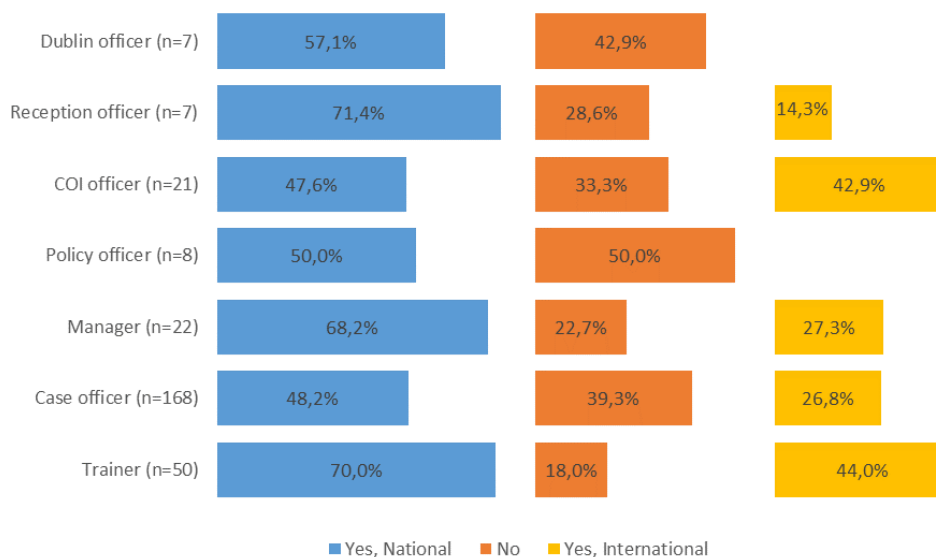
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.8. N=312.

A5.6 How did you find out about the EASO Training Curriculum?



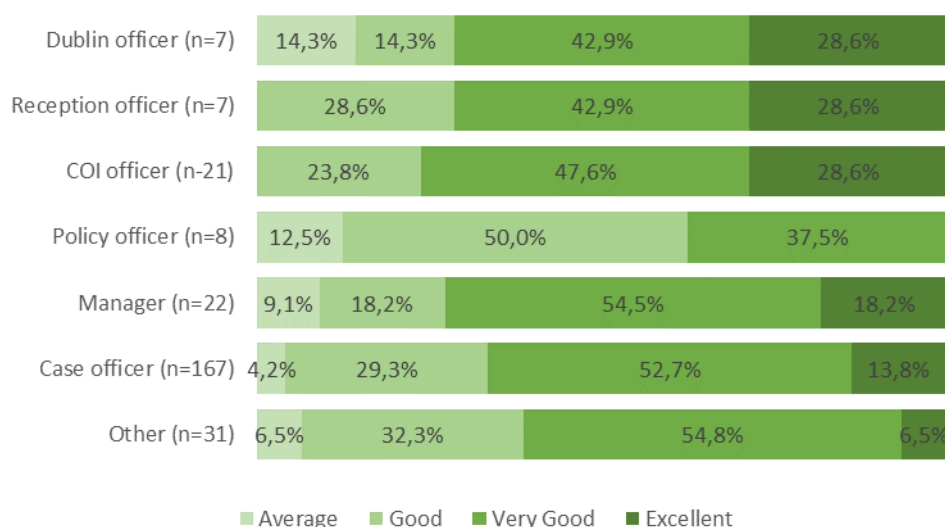
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.9. N=313. Multiple responses possible therefore the percentages may exceed 100.

A5.7 Have you taken part in other training courses/programmes at national or international level in the field of asylum?



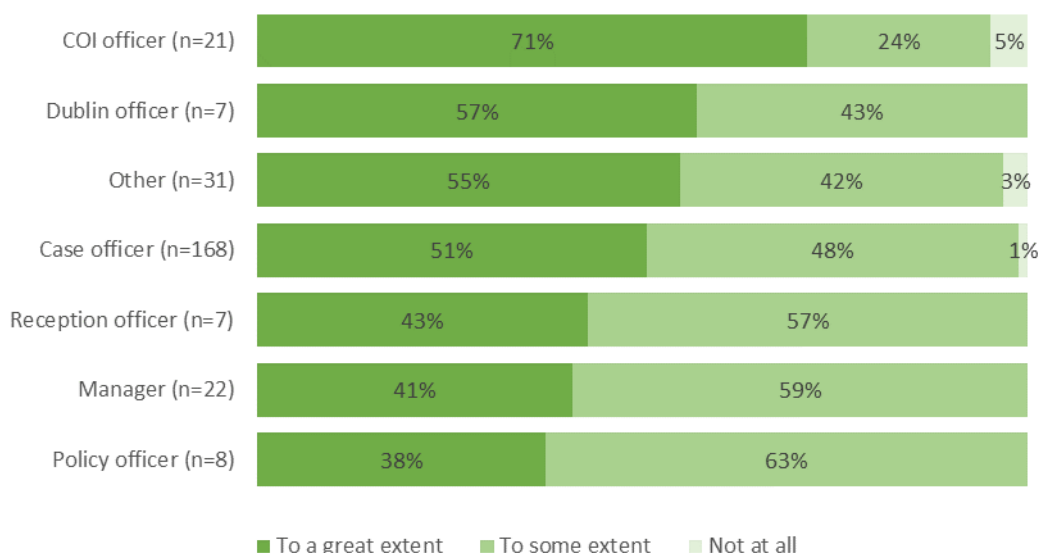
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.10. N=314. Multiple responses possible therefore percentages may exceed 100.

A5.8 Overall, how do you rate your current knowledge and understanding of the key issues covered by the module(s) you have followed?¹⁵⁸



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.20. N=263, not asked to trainers.

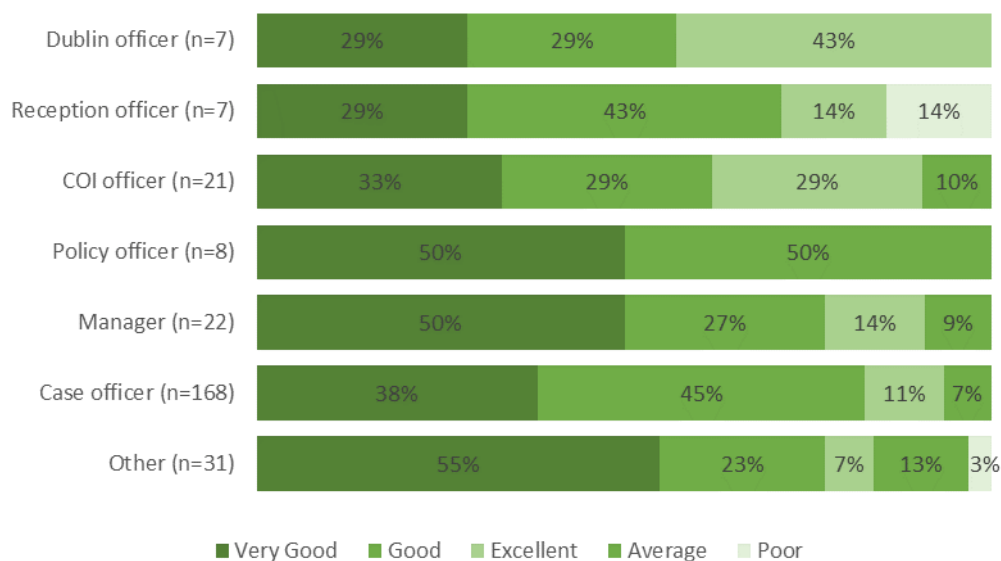
A5.9 To what extent do you believe that taking part in the EASO Training Curriculum directly improved your knowledge and understanding of the key issues covered by the module(s)?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.21. N=264. Not asked to trainers.

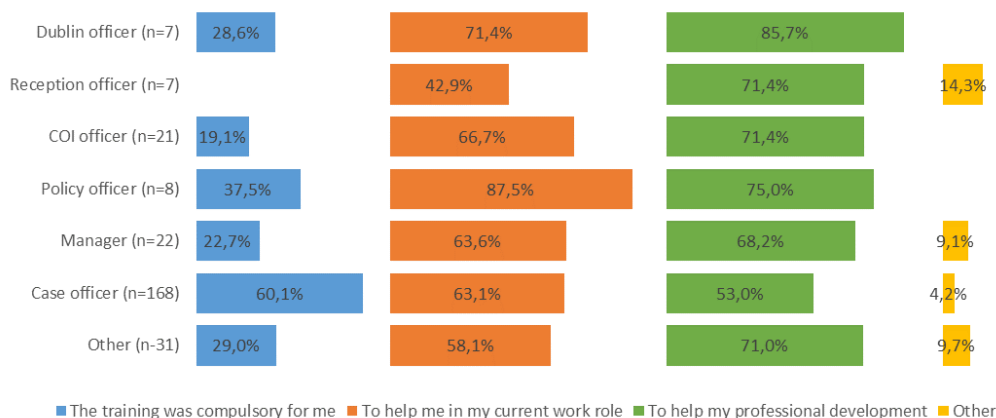
¹⁵⁸ Questions 11-19 not included as they were only asked to trainers and as such are already included in the annex containing the general survey results.

A5.10 How do you rate the fitness for purpose of the module(s) you attended?



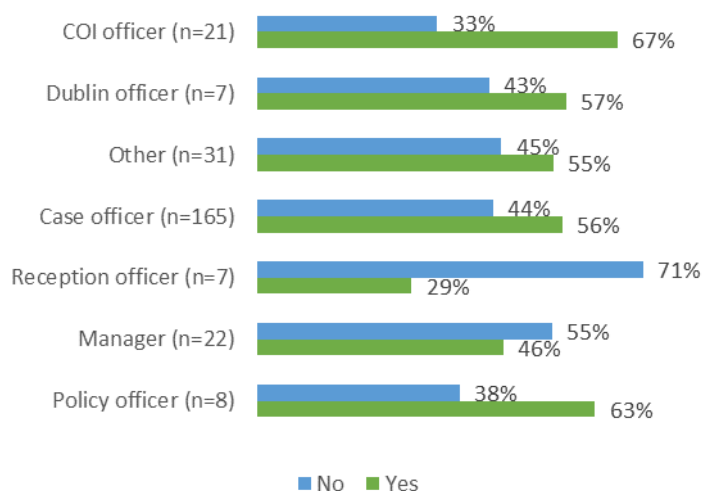
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.22. N=264, not asked to trainers.

A5.11 Which of the following reasons motivated you to take part in the EASO Training Curriculum?



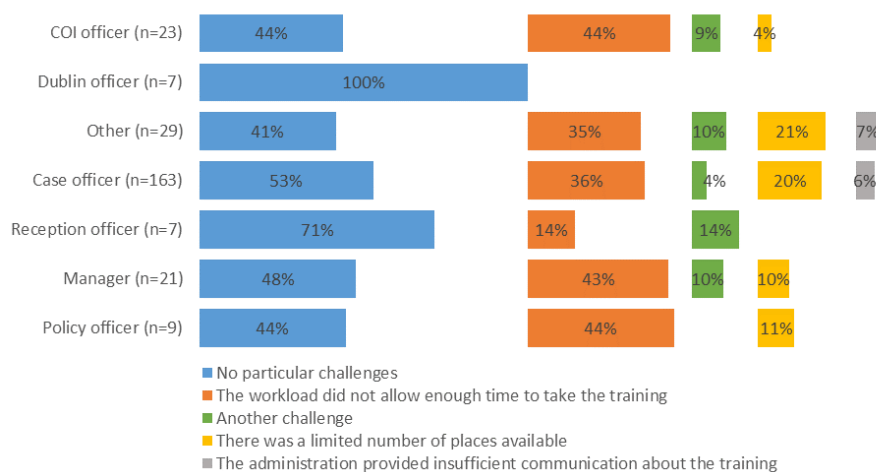
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.23. N=264. Multiple responses possible therefore percentages may exceed 100. Not asked to trainers.

A5.12 Have you changed your approach to any aspect of your role as a direct consequence of each of the modules (if relevant) you attended?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 24. N=261. Not asked to trainers.

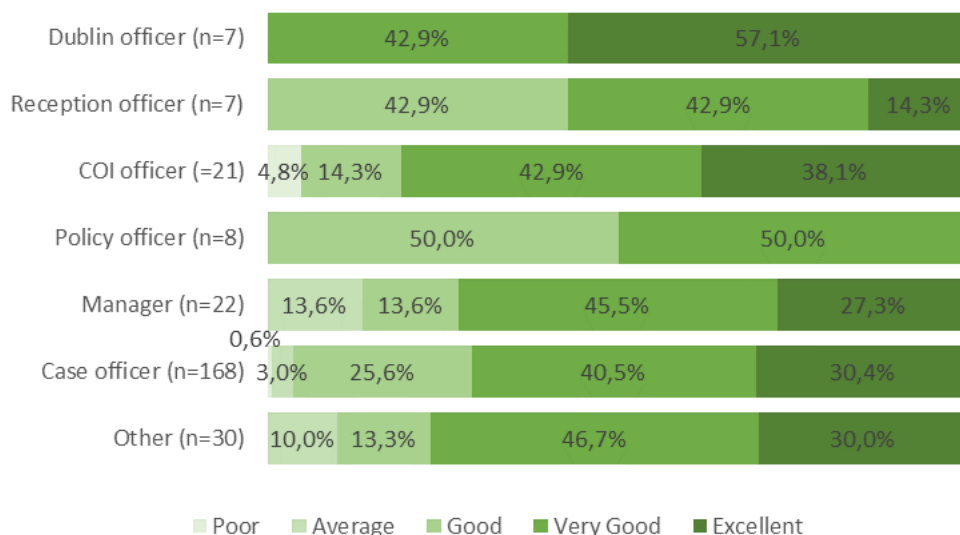
A5.13 Which, if any, of the following challenges did you encounter when you chose to take part in the EASO Training Curriculum?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.26. N=259. Not asked to trainers. No response provided for 'other'.

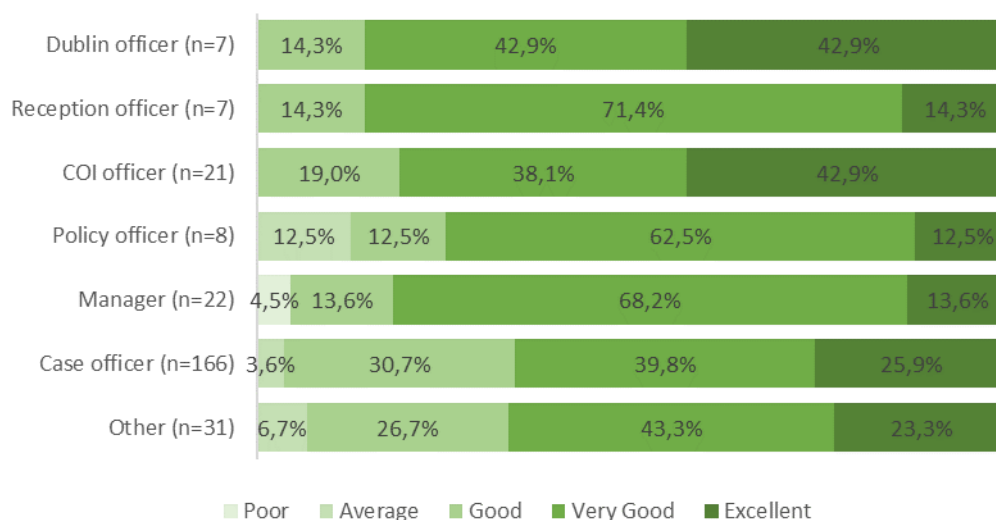
A5.14 In general, how would you rate the following aspect of the training modules you participated in?

A5.14.1 'The competence of the trainer'



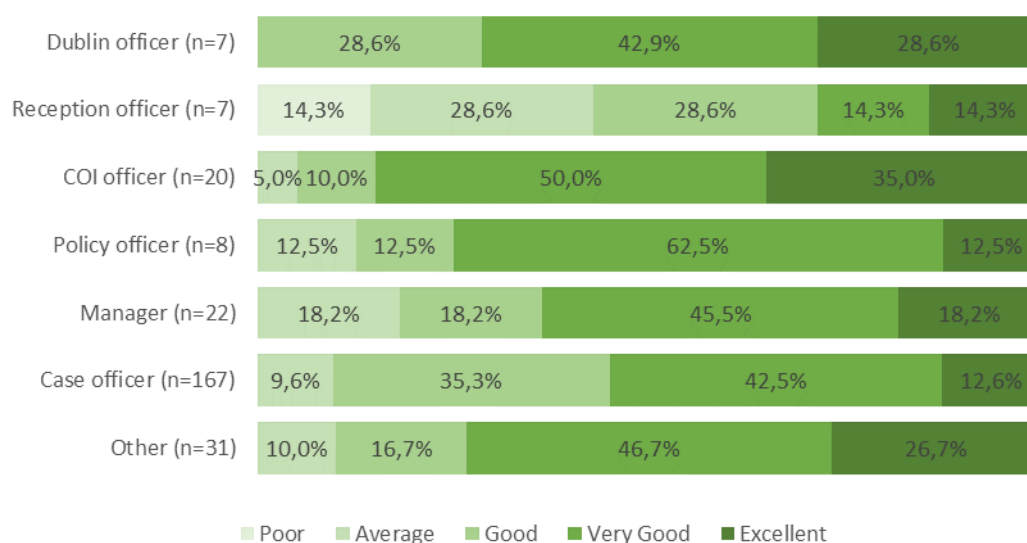
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.28. N=263. Not asked to trainers.

A5.14.2 'The accessibility of the e-learning component'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.28. N=261. Not asked to trainers.

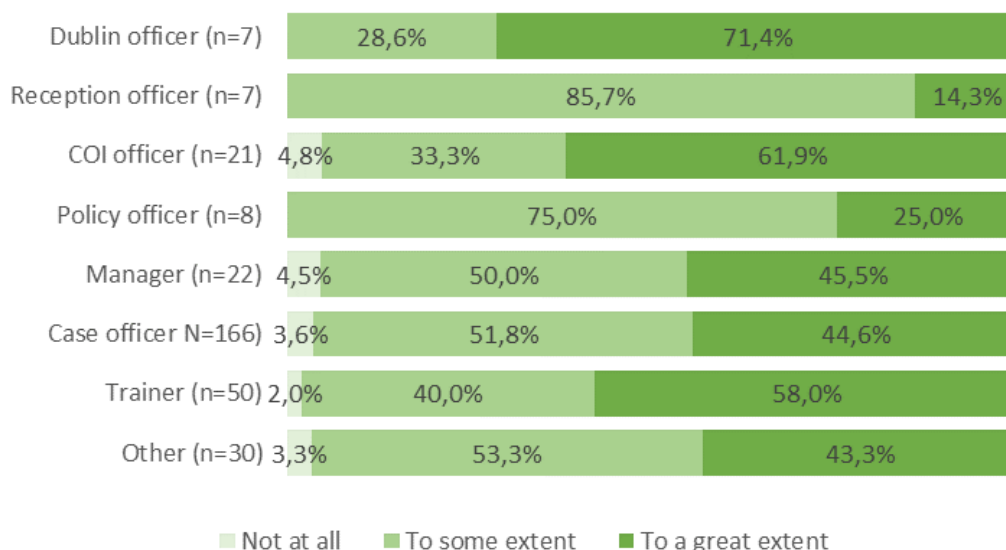
A5.14.3 'The relevance of the module(s) in your national context'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.28. N=261. Not asked to trainers.

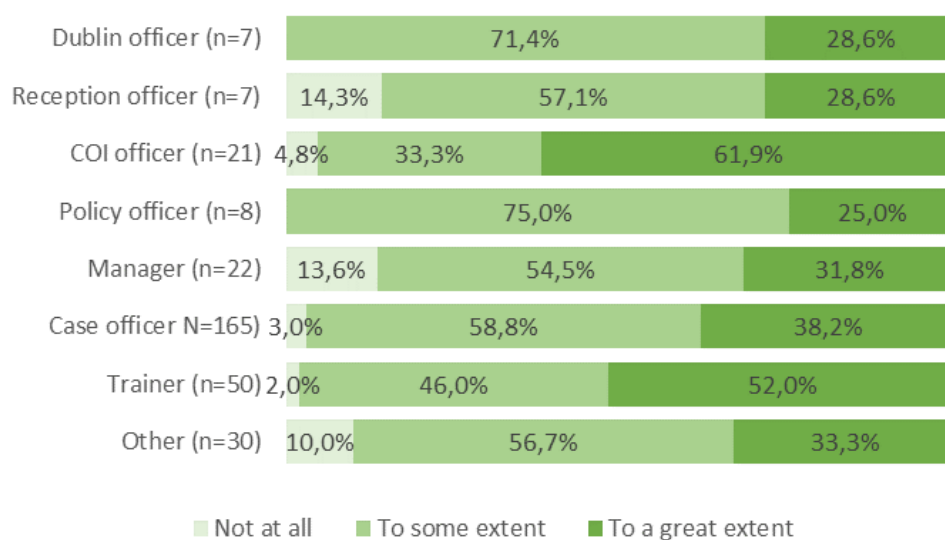
A5.15 To what extent did your participation in the Training Curriculum improve the following?

A5.15.1 'Your knowledge and understanding of EU standards and practices in your field of work'



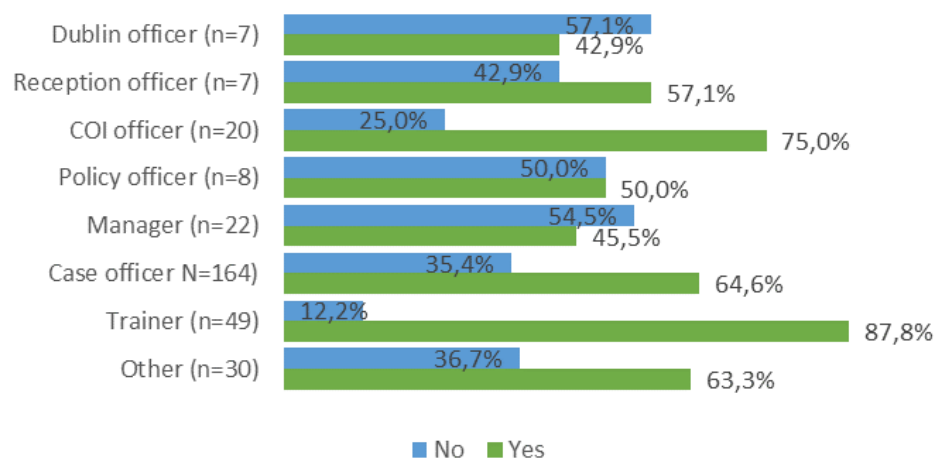
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.29. N=311.

A5.15.2 'Your own practice and working methods'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.29. N=310.

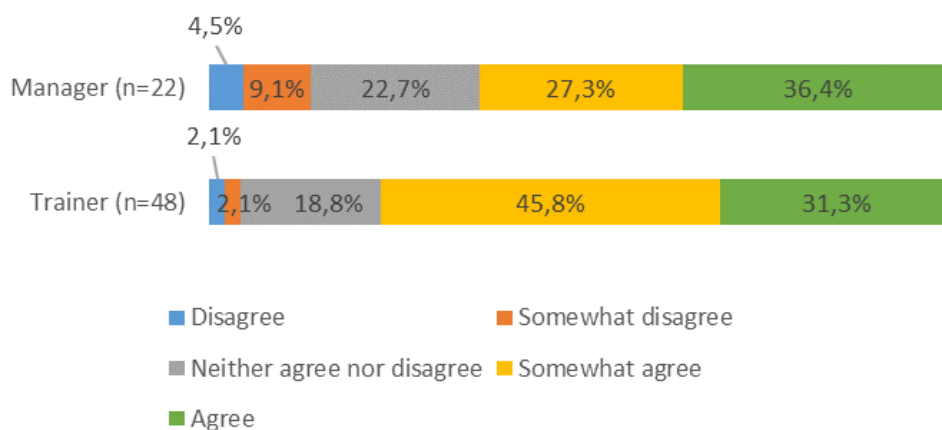
A5.16 Have you been able to identify any concrete changes / improvements in your own practice as a result of the modules you took?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.30. N=307.

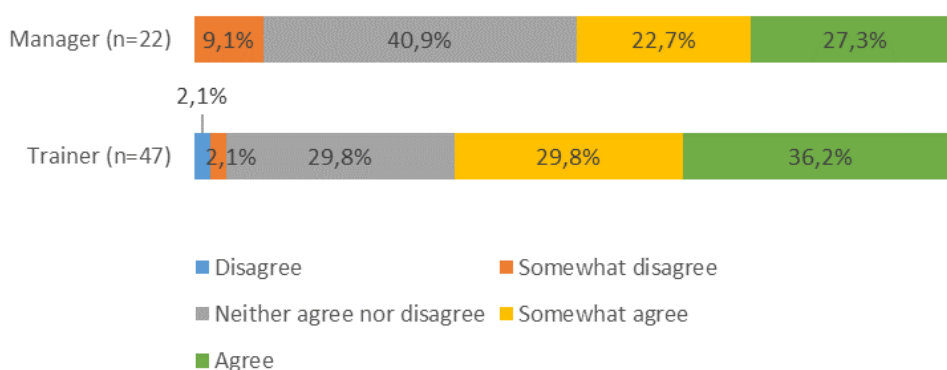
A5.17 To what extent do you agree with the following statements relating to the role of the EASO Training Curriculum in the implementation of the asylum acquis?

A5.17.1 'The EASO Training Curriculum has led to a more consistent practice across the administration (i.e. similar problems are answered with similar solutions)'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.32. N=70. Only asked to Managers and Trainers.

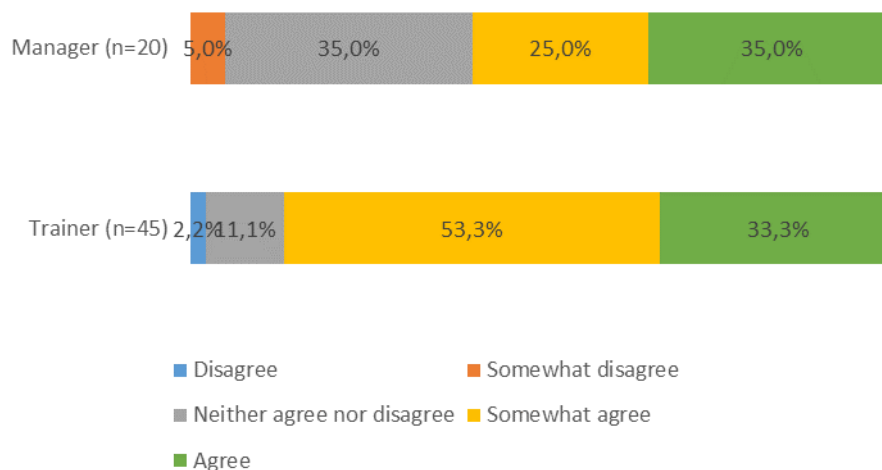
A5.17.2 Since EASO training modules are available, the quality of asylum decisions has improved



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.32. N=69. Only asked to Managers and Trainers.

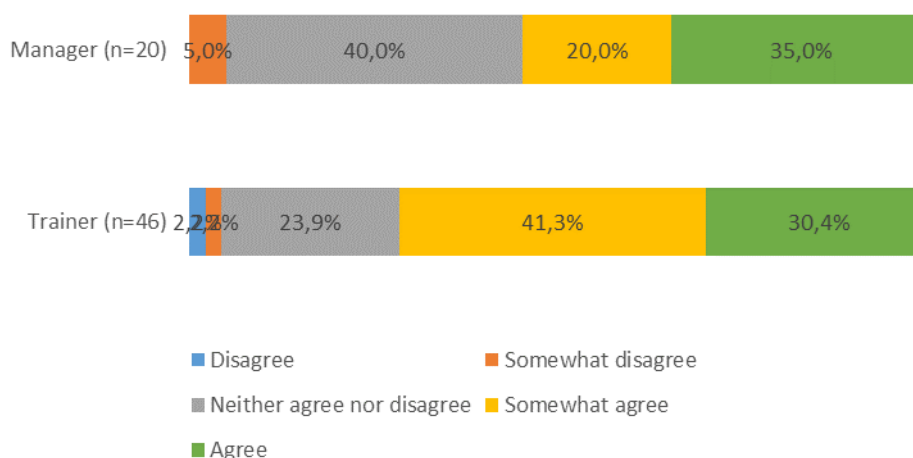
A5.18 To what extent do you agree with the following statements relating to the role of the EASO Training Curriculum (including regional trainings) in reinforcing cooperation between EU+ States?

A5.18.1 'Since the EASO Training Curriculum is available, mutual knowledge of the acquis between EU+ States increased'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.32. N=65. Only asked to Managers and Trainers.

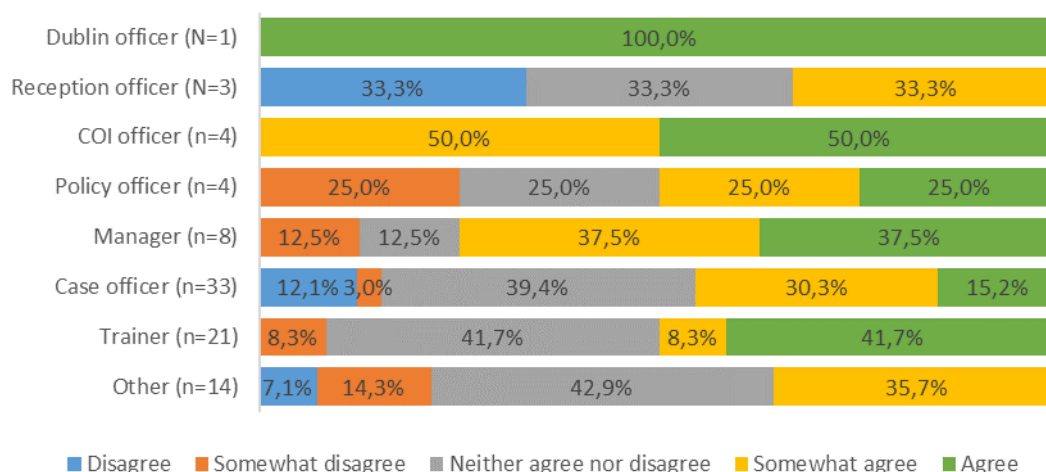
A5.18.2 'Since the EASO Training Curriculum is available, operational cooperation between EU+ States increased'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.32. N=66. Only asked to Managers and Trainers.

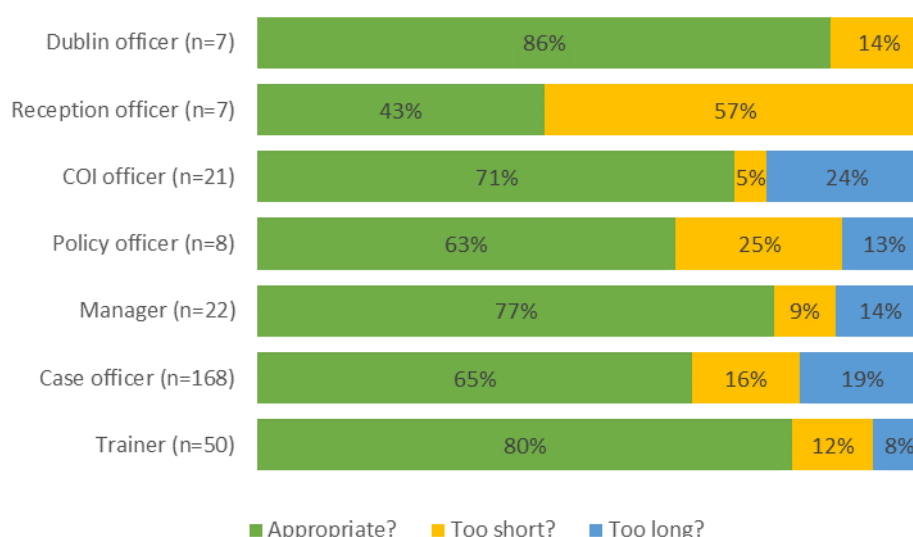
A5.19 To what extent do you agree with the following statement relating to the contribution of the use of the EASO Training Curriculum to intra-EU solidarity with Member States under particular pressure?

A5.19.1 'The training support received helped relieving some of the pressure on our administration'



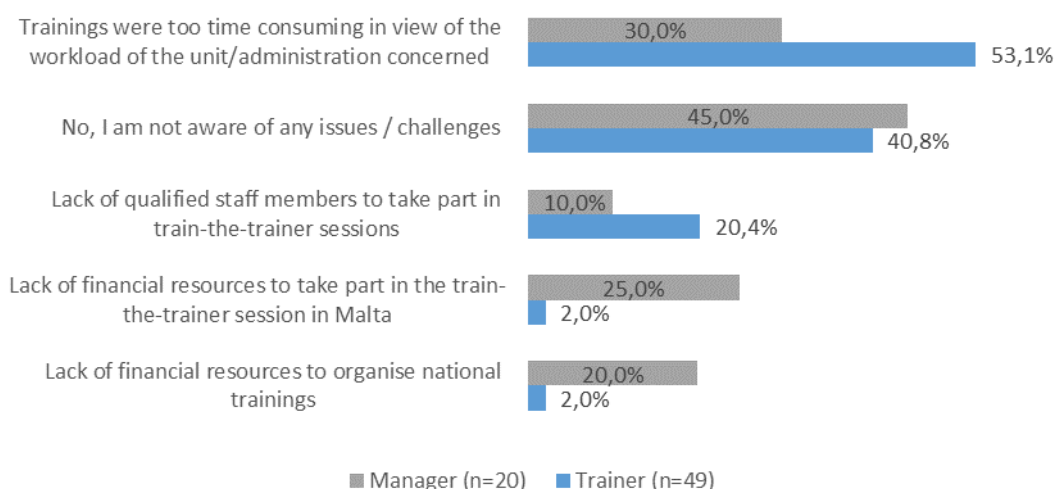
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 34. N=79. Only asked to respondents from Bulgaria, Republic of Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Sweden.

A5.20 Considering the amount of information obtained, do you think the time spent on each module was...



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.35. N=313.

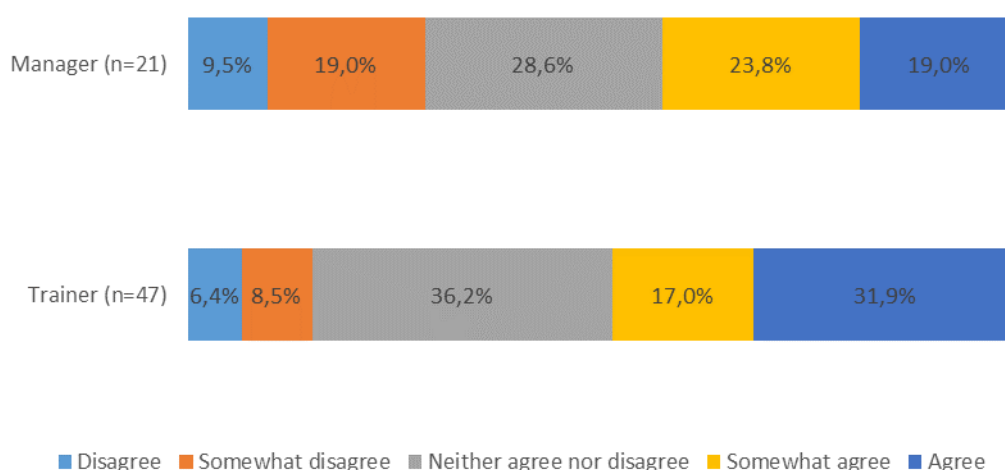
A5.21 Are you aware of any of the following issues or challenges related to the organisation of EASO trainings in your Member State?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.36. N=69. Only asked to managers and Trainers. Multiple responses available therefore percentages may exceed 100.

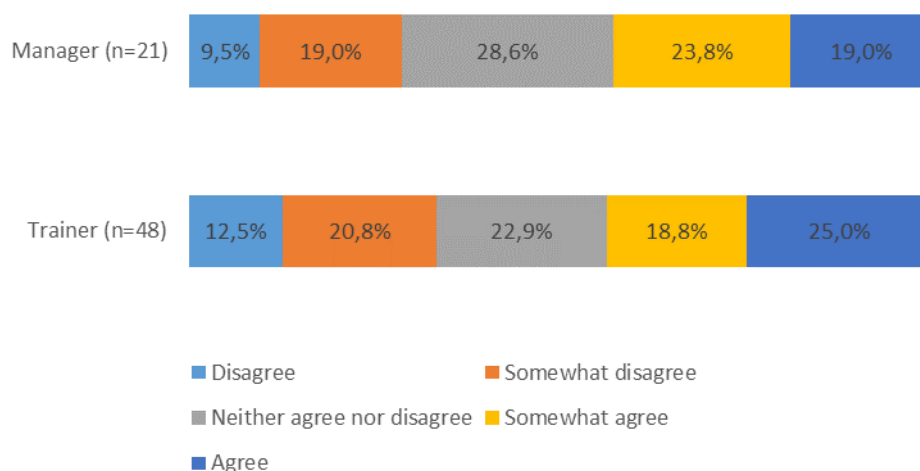
A5.22 To what extent do you agree with the following statement?

A5.22.1 'There are sufficient registered national staff available to participate in train-the-trainer sessions'



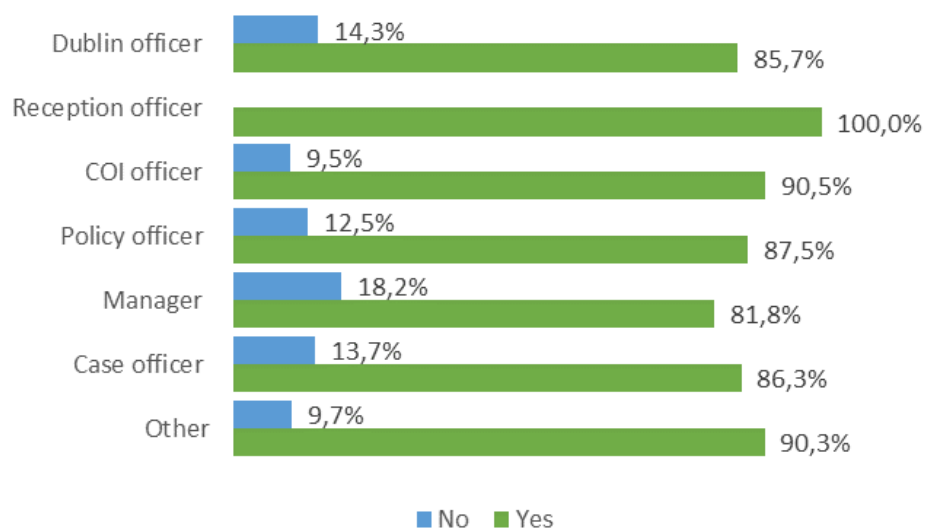
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 37. N=68. Only asked to Managers and Trainers.

A5.22.2 'The number of national trainers available is sufficient to ensure the availability of trainings'



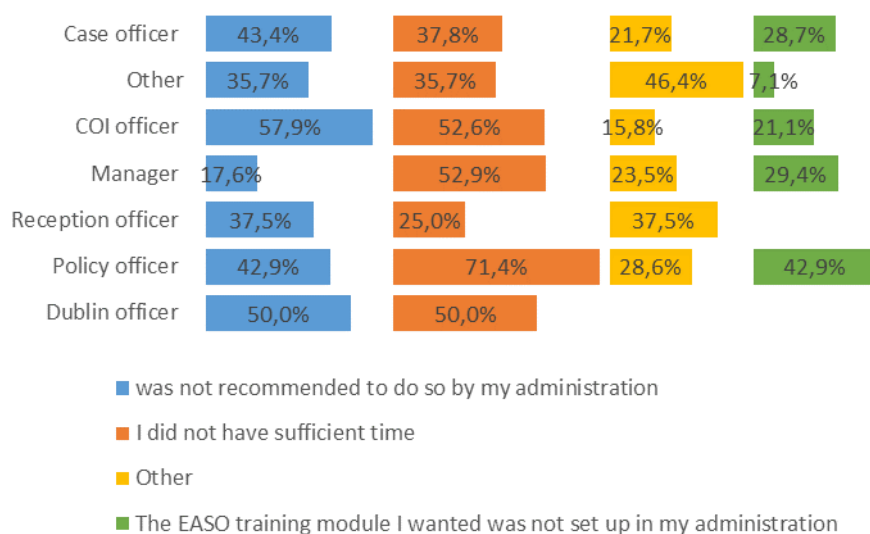
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q. 37. N=69. Only asked to Managers and Trainers.

A5.23 Would you have liked to participate in more of the EASO training modules?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.38. N=264. Not asked to Trainers.

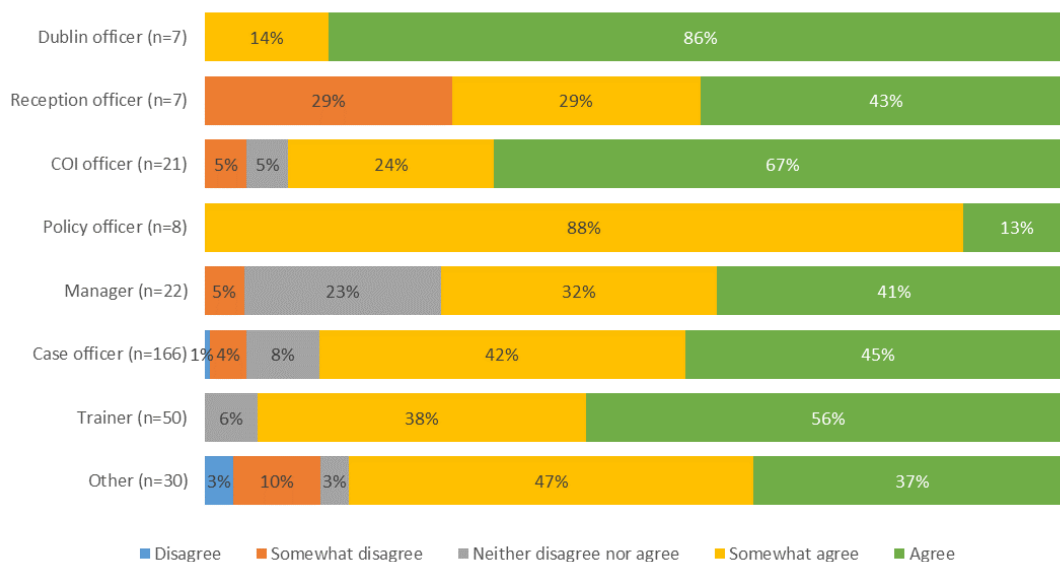
A5.23.1 If Yes, why didn't you participate?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.39. N=228. Not asked to trainers. Multiple responses possible therefore the percentages may exceed 100.

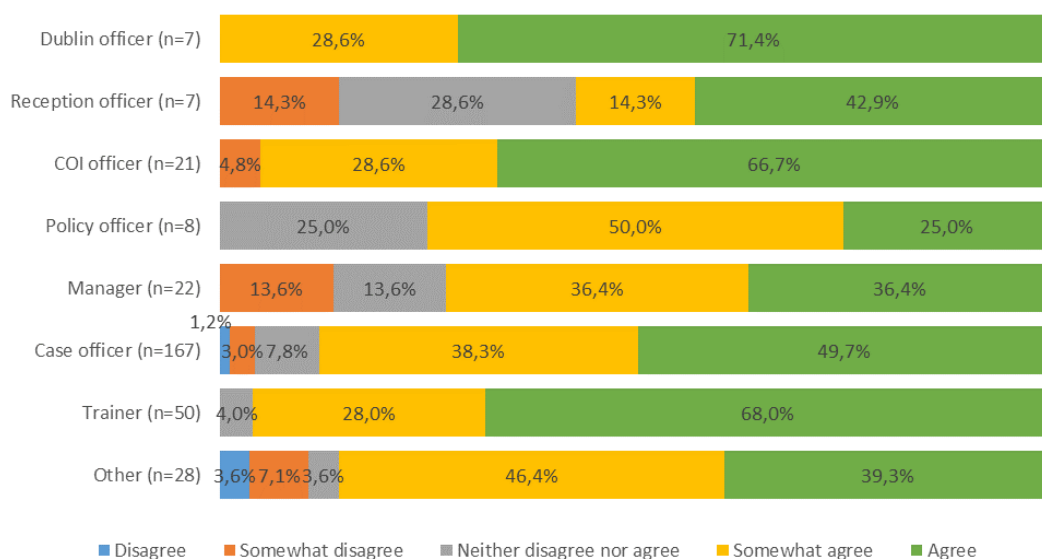
A5.24 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

A5.24.1 'The modules I took met my expectations'



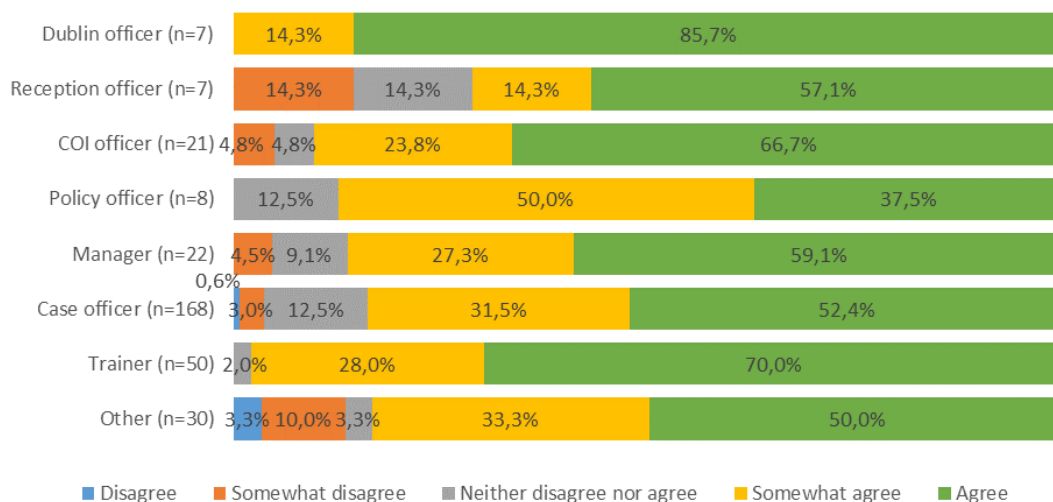
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.42. N=311.

A5.24.2 'The topics covered in the modules helped me in my day-to-day role'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.42. N=310

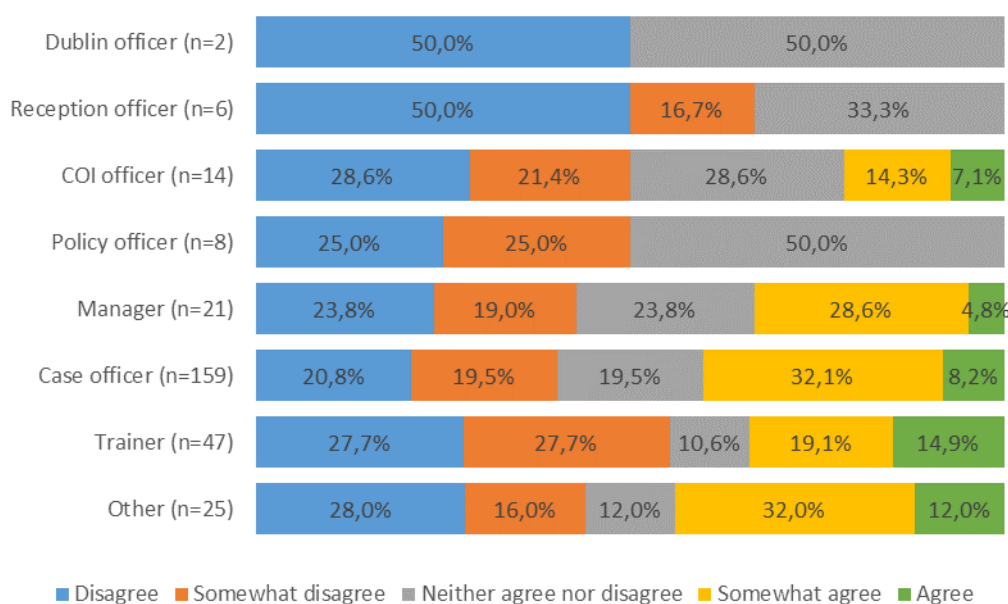
A5.24.3 'The content of the training has remained relevant to my work over time'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.42. N=313.

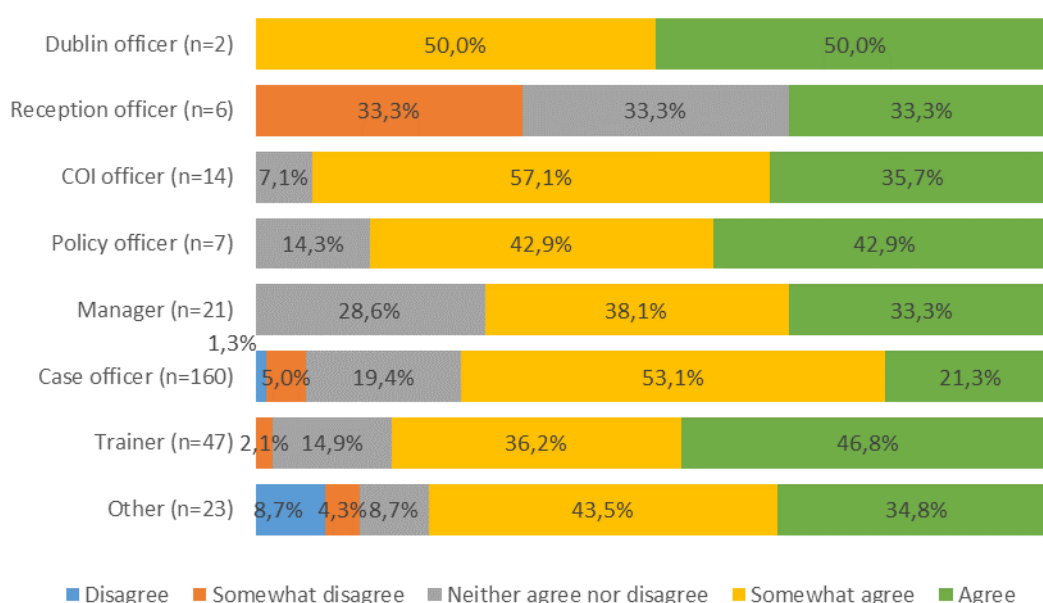
A5.25 To what extent do you agree with the following statements regarding the content of the Training Curriculum modules? (if you followed more than one module)?

A5.25.1 'The content of the different modules was repetitive and overlapped'



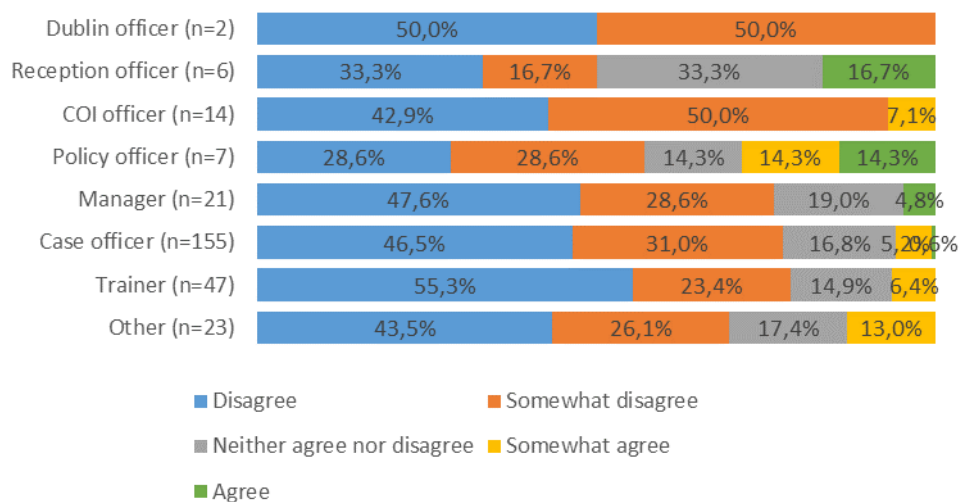
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.43. N=282.

A5.25.2 'The content of the different modules was complementary'



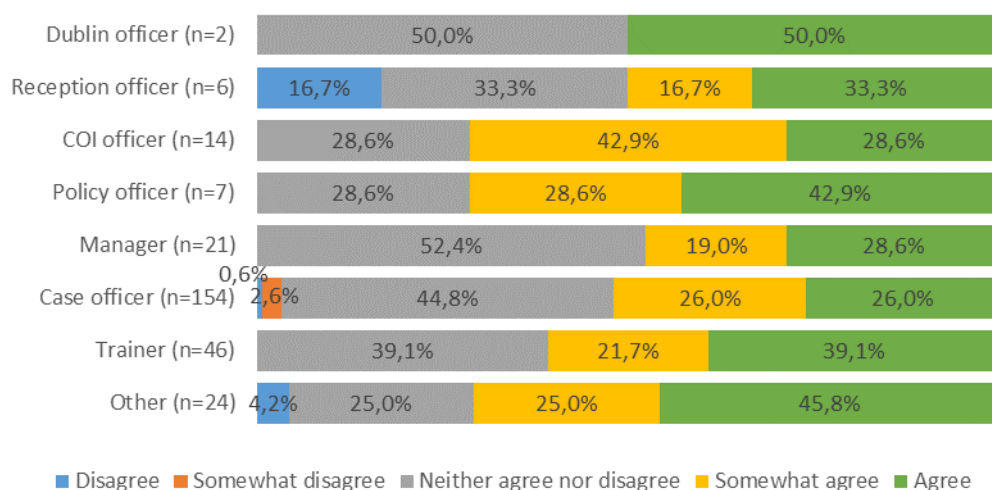
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.43. N=280.

A5.25.3 'It was difficult to understand the link between the different modules'



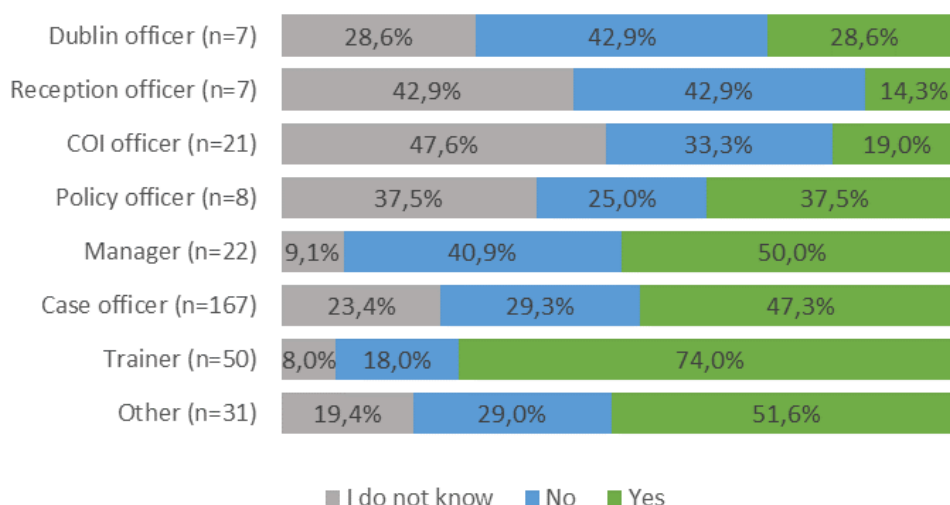
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.43. N=275.

A5.25.4 'The modules helped me understand the content of the advanced modules'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.43. N=274.

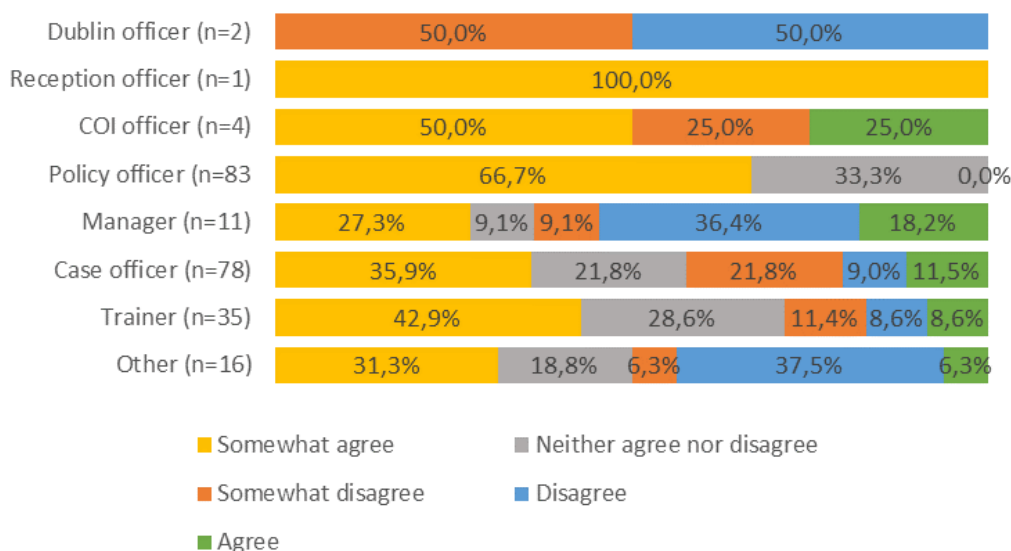
A5.26 Are other national trainings elaborated by your administration available in parallel to the EASO Training Curriculum?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.44. N=313.

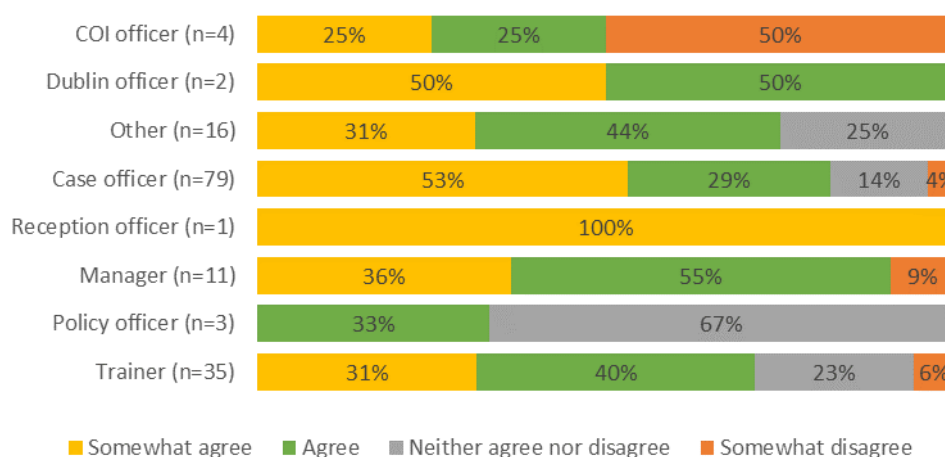
A5.27 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

A5.27.1 'The content of the EASO modules was similar to the content of trainings elaborated at national level'



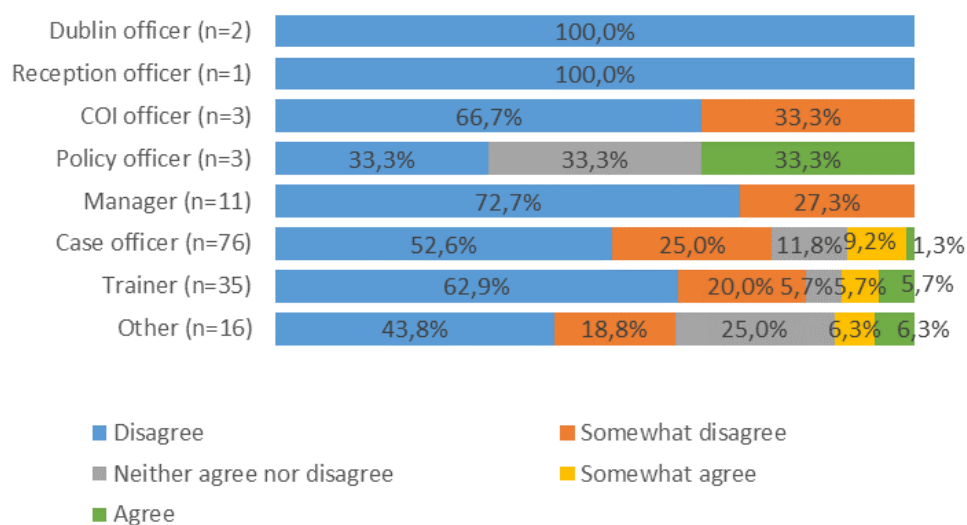
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.45. N=150. Only asked to those who replied yes to Q. 44 "are other trainings elaborated at national level".

A5.27.2 The content of the EASO modules was complementary to the content of trainings elaborated at national level



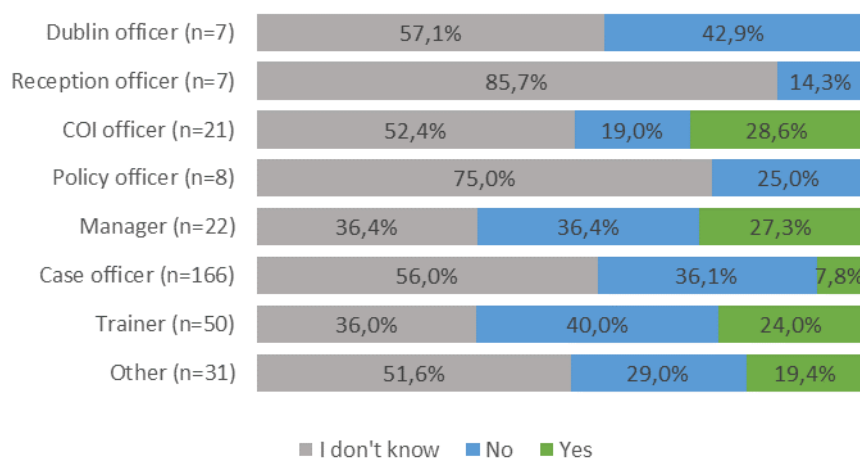
Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.45. N=151. Only asked to those who replied yes to Q. 44 "are other trainings elaborated at national level". No responses provided for 'disagree'.

A5.27.3 'The content of the EASO modules and of the training elaborated at national level were contradictory'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.46. N=147. Only asked to those who replied yes to Q. 44 "are other trainings elaborated at national level".

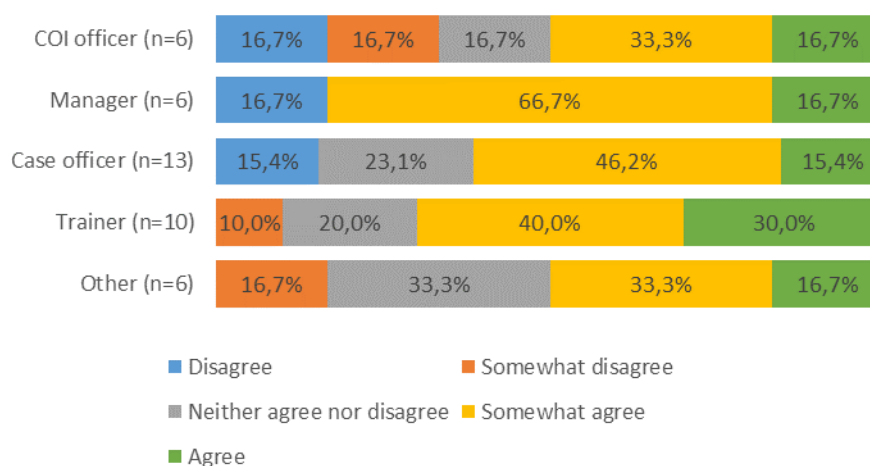
A5.28 Are other trainings elaborated at international level (e.g. with the UN) available in parallel to the EASO Training Curriculum?



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.46. N=312.

A5.29 To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

A5.29.1 'The content of the EASO modules was similar to the content of trainings elaborated at international level'



Source: ICF Survey of the EASO Training Curriculum, Q.47. N=41. Only asked to those who replied "Yes" to Q.46.

