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5

MECHANISMS FOR SCREENING AND REFERRAL

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INTRODUCTION

Mechanisms to differentiate between various categories of persons soon after they arrive in a host State can facilitate management of mixed movements, especially those involving large-scale arrivals. Such mechanisms can ensure that asylum-seekers and others with specific needs are identified and their needs are addressed. The information gathered through these mechanisms can be used to facilitate individual processing.

The updated 10-Point Plan in Action uses the phrase “screening and referral” to refer to such mechanisms.¹ The term “profiling”, as used in the previous edition and the original 10-Point Plan, has been replaced by “screening” for purposes of clarity in recognition of the fact that, in a number of contexts “profiling” refers to data collection on trends and patterns.

UNHCR uses screening and referral mechanisms as a non-binding process that precedes any formal status determination procedure and aims to identify the needs of, and differentiate between, categories of persons travelling as part of mixed movements as soon as possible after they arrive in the host State. Its core elements include providing information to new arrivals, gathering information through questionnaires, informal interviews, establishing a preliminary profile for each person, and counselling and referring individuals to the authorities, services or procedures that can best meet their needs and manage their cases. Measures undertaken by States to identify persons who may pose a security risk are sometimes referred to as “screening”. Such processes are an important component of protection-sensitive border management² but are not the focus of this chapter.

Dividing people into different categories (e.g. asylum-seeker, “woman-at-risk”, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied or separated child) requires caution. Categories are not mutually exclusive. Individuals may have multiple needs, and the identification of these various needs, especially in the immediate post-arrival phase, can be challenging. For a variety of reasons, individuals may not always be forthcoming with information or self-identify with any particular category or group. An environment of trust, confidence and transparency where individuals know what they can expect and where service providers have adequate capacity to assist arrivals, is a necessary pre-condition to an effective screening and referral exercise. Even where such an enabling environment exists, screening in the immediate post-arrival phase may wrongly categorize individuals or not identify all of their needs. This possibility needs to be accounted for by allowing for persons to be referred to more appropriate procedures at any stage during processing. Importantly, screening and referral processes are typically provisional, subject to later reassessment, and should not involve substantive determination of refugee-protection needs or other issues of legal status. Further, the process of categorizing different groups of arrivals should not detract from the development of measures to protect the human rights of all persons without discrimination. Screening and referral is simply a tool to enable responses to be better targeted towards needs within existing international and national standards.

¹ The previous edition, following the original 10-Point Plan, used the phrase “profiling and referral”. This edition uses “screening”, rather than “profiling”, for greater clarity. One reason for this is that “profiling” is often used to refer to data collection to identify trends and patterns, or to law-enforcement procedures targeting individuals or groups on the basis of personal characteristics.

² See generally UNHCR, “Addressing security concerns without undermining refugee protection: UNHCR’s perspective”, 17 December 2015, Rev.2. Available at: www.refworld.org/docid/5672aed34.html.

Screening and referral can be more or less complex, depending on the situation and available resources. A simple screening and referral exercise can be undertaken in any protection-sensitive entry procedure, generally by “first contact” entry officials (see Chapter 3). In some countries, more developed mechanisms for screening and referral have been established, where entry officials are assisted by experts or expert teams from relevant international organizations and NGOs.

Screening and referral is often undertaken as part of initial reception arrangements described in Chapter 4. Screening and referral mechanisms are also closely linked to the differentiated processes and procedures outlined in Chapter 6. Accordingly, Chapters 4, 5 and 6 of this 10-Point Plan should be consulted together.

OPERATIONALIZING MECHANISMS FOR SCREENING AND REFERRAL: SUGGESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS AND SUPPORT UNHCR CAN PROVIDE TO PARTNERS



SUGGESTIONS FOR STAKEHOLDERS

- Engage with law enforcement, civil society and international organizations to develop appropriate mechanisms to identify the immediate and longer-term needs of new arrivals.
- Encourage the development of teams with members who bring different expertise (such as entry officials, NGOs and international organizations) to support the screening and referral of large numbers of persons arriving as part of mixed movements.
- Develop standardized questionnaires and other practical tools to conduct screening and referral.
- Provide counselling and inform new arrivals of their rights and obligations to facilitate their access to organizations that provide support services such as psychosocial and medical assistance.
- Gather information to establish a profile of individuals for the purpose of identifying those who may be at risk or have special needs. Some screening procedures may also involve seeking information on migratory routes, means of transport, use of facilitators, family members undertaking the journey, reasons for leaving the country of origin and intended destinations, or other matters. This can be useful to assist stakeholders to identify trends and develop effective responses (see section 5.1.1). However, information gathering of this type should always be subject to the immediate needs of new arrivals and to personal data-protection considerations. (For confidentiality and data protection standards, see Chapter 2.)
- Conduct case assessments to determine possible protection or other special needs of individuals, and coordinate with relevant actors to provide assistance and protection.
- Refer individuals to the appropriate response mechanisms (e.g. asylum procedure, child protection system, processes for victims of trafficking and women and girls at risk and assisted voluntary return programmes).



SUPPORT UNHCR CAN PROVIDE TO PARTNERS

- Engage in a dialogue with government authorities and other stakeholders, including international organizations and partner NGOs, on the potential benefits of screening and referral and the specific arrangements that could be necessary and appropriate in the particular context.
- Participate in multi-agency response teams to ensure the identification of persons who may have international protection needs and other persons with specific needs.
- Provide operational guidance regarding protection-sensitive responses to the arrival of larger numbers of persons travelling as part of mixed movements.
- Compile information, including country-of-origin information, and help develop standard operating procedures and standardized questionnaires.
- Provide expert advice where screening and referral is carried out by governmental bodies or other stakeholders, and work closely with partners to help identify persons of concern to UNHCR.
- Provide training on asylum and refugee issues for authorities involved in screening activities.
- Develop guidelines and other tools on identifying persons who may have international protection needs.

Note: Generally, UNHCR should not be the sole agency involved in conducting screening and referral, given that the process is conducted prior to asylum procedures and is designed to engage and assist all persons in mixed movement situations, whether they need international protection or not.



With the help of an interpreter from the Greek NGO METAction, a UNHCR staff member provides procedural and legal information to a group of new arrivals at the identification centre in Mersinidi, Chios. © UNHCR / A. Kitidi / August 2015

5.1

Practical suggestions for designing and implementing a screening and referral mechanism

CORE ELEMENTS

1: Providing information

- **Ensure that comprehensive and accurate information is provided as early as possible** to the individual, in a language and manner they understand. This should include information on the right to seek asylum, on options for regularizing their status or for receiving voluntary return assistance where appropriate, on available services and supports, and on rights and obligations.
- **Distribute information leaflets** or other material, in a range of suitable languages and in clear and easy-to-understand terms, presenting information on relevant processes and procedures, legal rights and obligations, and available services. Written materials are important but may need to be complemented by other approaches to delivering reliable information.

2: Gathering information and establishing a preliminary profile

- Gather information from arrivals to assess individual needs by completing basic questionnaires or arranging individual interviews by trained staff.
- Consider using a standard screening form as a tool for preliminary identification of a range of possible needs.

- Establish a preliminary profile for each person, identifying particular categories (such as asylum-seekers, persons moving for work or family reasons, unaccompanied or separated children and victims of trafficking) likely to require access to different types of processes or supports.

3: Counselling and referring

- **Counsel persons about available options and obtain informed consent** to share personal data with third parties, where relevant.
- **Inform individuals** that they may be approached for a follow up intervention.
- **Counsel persons who are not in need of international protection** about the limits of applying for asylum, ensure that they have realistic expectations, and refer them to appropriate alternative procedures.
- **Refer** to differentiated procedures, such as refugee status determination procedures for asylum-seekers, support services for direct assistance for victims of trafficking, child protection systems for unaccompanied and separated children, legal migration channels for labour migrants and voluntary return assistance.
- **Provide authorities with information about each group** as a whole; such information can also be used to establish a more strategic response to mixed movements.
- **Ensure that personal data is only shared** with third parties if the individual provides informed consent.

IMPLEMENTATION

Where can screening and referral activities be conducted?

- Screening and referral can be conducted at border or coastal entry points, in group reception facilities or in places where detention takes place (including detention centres). (See Chapter 4 for details on reception arrangements.) Expert screening teams can also be deployed on a temporary basis to various locations according to needs in particular circumstances.

When can screening and referral activities be conducted?

- The objective is to complete the screening and referral process as soon as possible after arrival so as to allow for the rapid identification of individual needs. The process can be completed within a short time. The recommended screening time is between 30 minutes and a few hours per person. Screening and referral are integral parts of registration procedures. However, opportunities for identification and referral may arise at any stage in the case management process, as well as in general protection and monitoring activities.

Who can carry out screening and referral activities?

- Screening and referral can be carried out by first contact entry officials who have been trained in interviewing techniques and identification of needs, and who are familiar with available follow-up processes and procedures. (See Chapter 3 for further information.) The process can also be carried out by a team of experts drawn from government authorities, international organizations and partner NGOs with relevant mandates and expertise.
- Joint screening teams, with male and female staff from different backgrounds and, ideally, including persons from the same background as arrivals, can help ensure that individual needs are accurately identified and enhance the legitimacy of the process. In general, host government authorities should be part of screening teams.

5.1.1 Screening

PROVIDING INFORMATION

Providing general information to new arrivals helps to establish trust, manage expectations and orient them within their new environment.

Information leaflets are a useful tool to explain the obligations and basic rights of arrivals in the host country, the different processes and procedures available (including the right to seek asylum), and anticipated timeframes for processing, in a manner that is gender- and age-sensitive. Information leaflets are also a simple way to provide clear, practical information about available legal and other support services, such as a list of lawyers offering pro bono services, telephone numbers of consulates, NGOs and/or toll-free hotlines for direct assistance.

Data collected about various groups making up the mixed movement can be used to ensure that relevant information is provided in appropriate languages. Where language barriers and illiteracy are of concern, information leaflets could also include drawings or figures or be supplemented with pre-recorded video or audio presentations, or with live briefings by government authorities or other agencies. It may also be useful to set up information points in reception centres with representatives from the government, international organizations or NGOs on-site to respond to questions and to provide further details on the material distributed.

GATHERING INFORMATION

Screening provides an opportunity to collect information from individuals travelling as part of mixed movements at an early stage. While this information can be used to establish individual preliminary case profiles (as outlined below), when collated and analysed it also provides significant data on the overall group that can enhance the efficiency of subsequent responses to mixed movements, including asylum procedures and other processes, as well as broader strategy and policy development.

In order to facilitate the information-gathering process, individuals can be asked to respond to simple, standardized questions about their background and reasons for moving by filling out questionnaires. The accuracy and comprehensiveness of the information provided can be enhanced if trained staff are available to help people complete the questionnaires. In certain contexts, it may be more appropriate or effective to gather this information in a screening interview, which may include specific questions adapted to the group and the context. Consistency and coherence between interviews can be best ensured if the staff conducting the screening interviews maintain a careful record of the information they provide to interviewees, and the responses and other statements made by the individuals concerned.

ESTABLISHING A PRELIMINARY PROFILE

Information provided in screening questionnaires or during interviews can be used to establish a preliminary profile of each person travelling within mixed movements. The identification of specific needs should be accompanied by, at the soonest appropriate point, a more detailed assessment of the person's situation. These preliminary profiles are intended to identify both immediate needs that may require urgent attention, and

longer-term processes and procedures that may be available to provide the individual with an appropriate outcome. Profiles are not necessarily mutually exclusive and could include:

- Asylum-seekers;
- Asylum-seekers and refugees who have moved from their first country of asylum;
- Persons who may be victims of human trafficking or torture;
- Unaccompanied and separated children;
- Women and girls at risk;
- Stateless persons;
- Persons with physical and mental disabilities and older persons;
- Persons with other specific needs;
- Persons seeking to join their families (in the host country or in a third country);
- Persons whose movement is primarily motivated by economic concerns; or
- Persons who voluntarily express a wish to return to their country of origin.

IDENTIFYING VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

Victims of trafficking are often in need of a range of protection and assistance services, including, but not limited to, physical and legal security, emergency medical attention and psycho-social support. While victims of trafficking may express the wish to return to their place of origin, some individuals may be in need of international protection which includes protection against *refoulement* as well as simultaneous access to long-term solutions as appropriate. The identification of victims of trafficking among refugees and migrants is therefore necessary in order to ensure that they receive the assistance, protection and solutions they need.

What indicators are used to assist in the identification of victims of trafficking need to be adjusted and adapted according to the specific context and to the changing approaches taken by traffickers, who may also abuse asylum and immigration procedures to traffic migrants or refugees.

Identifying a victim of trafficking is inherently difficult. Barriers to identification can include fear of stigmatization, particularly if the exploitation suffered was sexual in nature. Irregular migrants may fear deportation if they identify themselves to authorities. Individuals screened may also still be under the control or influence of traffickers and unwilling to reveal their situations for fear of retaliation. In some cases, they may be entirely dependent on their traffickers or indeed, related to them.

To improve the likelihood of successfully identifying victims of trafficking when screening persons in mixed flows, the following is recommended.

- Screening should be undertaken on an individual basis in a confidential space and in an age- and gender-sensitive manner.
- Along with information on how to access and apply for asylum procedures, information should be provided about the rights and services available to victims of trafficking, as well as what support is available to them when pursuing remedies in criminal justice procedures.
- Questions should be asked to clarify each individual's situation before asking if trafficked has occurred. Victims of trafficking may not be aware that they have been or are being trafficked. Such questions may be about the level of control a person exerts over his or her present or past living situation and/or movement, and whether or not he or she has or is currently providing, without pay or to settle debt, services such as work, sex, personal servitude or support for criminal activities in a manner that is, for example, indeterminate or characterized by unsafe conditions.

IDENTIFYING CHILDREN AT RISK

Children face particular protection concerns and have greater needs and rights than adults do. Care must be taken to ensure that the specific needs, capabilities, and rights of children – girls and boys of all ages and backgrounds – are identified, understood and attended to.

Arrival, reception and screening activities are key points in the process of protecting and assisting children. These processes often provide the first formal opportunities to identify children with specific vulnerabilities and needs. They are also opportunities to assess children's emotional and mental maturity and development, their ability to communicate, understand and to cooperate, as well as to understand each child's plans and wishes, and to provide information about processes and procedures.

Information gathered should inform immediate support measures (for example, accommodation arrangements and family tracing, health, education and counselling services) that provide care and protection including referrals and subsequent protection and assistance interventions. Basic screening interviews with children to identify those in need of further protection and assistance can be conducted by staff with minimal training. The use of a screening form can be useful to ensure that relevant information on various risk factors is gathered and appropriate follow-up action is taken, i.e. referrals to differentiated procedures tailored to specific needs (see Chapter 6).

Where a need for more in-depth assessment of needs and vulnerabilities is identified, a referral should be made to staff skilled in child protection and communication with children. Below are some suggestions to assist non-specialized staff with screening interviews with families and children.

- As a general rule, children with independent asylum claims as well as unaccompanied or separated children should have individual interviews. It is important to ask questions that help to identify vulnerabilities in a way that is appropriate to the age, gender and cultural background of the child.
- Take time to explain to children the process and the use of any equipment (e.g. tablets and biometric equipment) to help allay any fears that they may have. Children may have been coerced to provide false information about their situation to conceal exploitation or in the belief that this could help their claims. Being open about the purpose and the confidentiality of interviews and counselling (including the limitations of confidentiality) is essential to building trust.
- Special efforts should be made to ensure that children, in particular unaccompanied or separated children or others with specific vulnerabilities and needs, have access to information on asylum procedures, including the right to submit an independent asylum claim.
- In order to provide information to children and to support identification, a group activity may help engage children in waiting areas and draw out any general concerns or queries they might have. Outdoor games can also be set up so that children are kept busy and perceive the waiting space as less intimidating.
- A children's desk manned by staff dedicated to assisting and supporting children (especially unaccompanied and separated children) at reception/screening centres is recognized good practice. This allows for more in-depth assessment and referral as soon as possible. Where possible, staff from child protection services (NGO, government, etc.) should be present to provide in-depth assessment of needs and vulnerabilities if required.

IDENTIFYING WOMEN AT RISK

Displacement can expose women to a range of factors that may put them at additional risk of violations of their rights. These may be due to the displacement environment (which may include security and communication problems, limited access to services, information or assistance, dependency, and isolation) and/or be the result of the individual's particular circumstances (for example, resulting from her civil status or position in the group; previous exposure to sexual and gender-based violence or other forms of violence; and the need for specific health care or other support).

Basic screening interviews to identify women in need of further protection and assistance can be conducted by staff with minimal training. Where the need for more in-depth assessment of needs and vulnerabilities is identified, a referral should be made to staff with training and expertise in working with women with specific needs. Below are some practical suggestions to help non-specialized staff with screening of women at risk.

- Women should be interviewed individually in a safe, confidential space with female interviewers and translators.
- Interviewers should provide information about available services for survivors of sexual and gender based violence and may offer to support individuals to access these services. Information about any experience of sexual and gender-based violence should not be collected at the screening stage, but rather at the point of service provision.

5.1.2 Referral

COUNSELLING

After a person's profile has been established, this assessment is discussed with the individual, who is counselled on all of the options available. This does not create any binding obligations for the individual. Instead, counselling aims to provide advice to individuals so that their expectations remain realistic and they can determine the most appropriate way forward. For instance, individuals could be cautioned that it may not be possible for them to receive a "positive" or "hoped for" outcome, such as the right to remain in the host country, and that the advantages of the asylum procedure are limited for persons without international protection needs. As noted above, it is important that counselling be provided by trained staff and that staff retain a careful record of the information or advice provided to the interviewee, as well as any statements or explanations given by that individual.

Screening and referral is a non-binding process: it does not replace refugee status determination, nor is it a de facto refugee status determination procedure; it does not have any procedural guarantees. While this may mean that some persons without protection needs continue to apply for asylum, discouraging unfounded asylum claims is only one of the goals of screening and referral. The value of the process also lies in its capacity to provide authorities with overall data on the mixed movement, to provide new arrivals with information, to manage expectations, and to facilitate early identification of protection and other needs.

REFERRAL SYSTEMS

After counselling, a person can be referred – with his or her agreement – to one of a number of processes and procedures to meet any immediate needs, and/or for further consideration of his or her situation. The different applicable processes and procedures, as well as practical examples are outlined in Chapter 6.

PROTECTING PERSONAL DATA

Confidentiality and security guidelines apply to all personal data and information, including name, date of birth, place of origin, contact information, as well as narrative interview records, questionnaires and other records.³ Ensuring the confidentiality of data and information provided during screening mechanisms, whether through a questionnaire or an interview, also establishes an environment of trust and allows individuals to provide sensitive information without fear of negative repercussions. (See Chapter 2 for data protection standards.)

Where appropriate, the information gathered during screening and referral may be forwarded to government agencies, NGOs or international organizations for use in subsequent processes and procedures. Any transfer or sharing of such information is subject to informed consent of individuals concerned. Individuals should also be informed that the information they provide during screening may be used in subsequent procedures and that they should be as accurate and truthful as possible during the interview process. Further, the sharing of personal data for subsequent procedures, such as registration, should be subject to a formal data-sharing agreement, ensuring that data protection safeguards are in place.

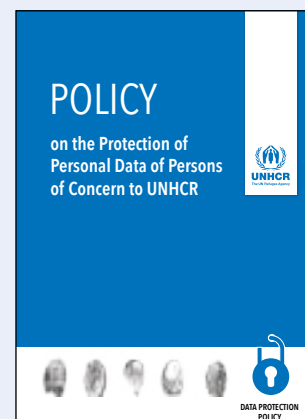
UNHCR'S DATA PROTECTION POLICY

In May 2015, UNHCR issued its “Policy on the protection of personal data of persons of concern to UNHCR” to ensure that UNHCR processes personal data in a way that is consistent with the 1990 UN General Assembly’s “Guidelines for the regulation of computerized personal data files” and other international instruments concerning the protection of personal data and individual privacy.

The Policy applies to all personal data held by UNHCR in relation to persons of concern to UNHCR. It sets forward clear criteria for data sharing with partners and other third parties, and commits UNHCR and its partners to maintain a high level of data security.

The Policy does not apply to aggregate and statistical data, although specific protection concerns may be applicable, in particular, in the case of small data sets, or data sets that are considered particularly sensitive (such as health data, data on sexual orientation, or data on sexual and gender-based violence).

The Policy is available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/55643c1d4.html>.



³ Personal data is defined by UNHCR as: “Any data related to an individual who can be identified from that data; from that data and other information; or by means reasonably likely to be used related to that data. Personal data includes biographical data (biodata) such as name, sex, marital status, date and place of birth, country of origin, country of asylum, individual registration number, occupation, religion and ethnicity, biometric data, such as a photograph, fingerprint, facial or iris image, as well as any expression of opinion about the individual, such as assessments of the status and/or specific needs.”



At the Yumbe reception centre in Uganda, South Sudanese refugees queue for registration, to receive shelter and to be referred to medical assistance. © UNHCR / M. Farman-Farmaian / August 2016

5.2

Practical tools and examples of screening and referral mechanisms

5.2.1 Providing information

Help.unhcr.org: Dedicated website with information for asylum-seekers

Help.unhcr.org is an online platform that aims to deliver relevant and easy-to-access information to refugees and asylum-seekers. Its first functional prototype was publicly launched in June 2015 in Costa Rica and has since been expanded to Brazil, Senegal, and Niger. The platform provides refugees with general country information that is particularly relevant in the first days of arrival, along with information on the asylum claim process, additional support programmes (e.g. legal support) and the rights and obligations of refugees or asylum seekers.





Austria: Child-friendly information platform on access to asylum

A Background and rationale

The initiative to develop child-friendly information material was first taken in the context of UNHCR's 2012 quality assurance project in collaboration with the then Austrian Federal Asylum Agency (now Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum). Participatory assessments with unaccompanied and separated children as well as audits of interviews and analyses of first- and second-instance decisions on their cases indicated that such children lacked understandable and child-friendly information. It highlighted that unaccompanied and separated children were not aware of the procedures in Austria, their rights, procedural guarantees, and possible outcomes of the procedures.

B Actors

- UNHCR
- Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum
- University of Applied Sciences in St. Pölten
- Child asylum-seekers and refugees

C Actions

-
- In 2012, UNHCR Austria, in collaboration with the Austrian Federal Office for Immigration and Asylum, developed the first child-friendly information brochure for separated asylum-seeking children in Austria. The brochure has since been updated to reflect legal amendments.
-
- Various experts in the field of asylum, linguists as well as child asylum-seekers and refugees were consulted in the context of a reference group. The development of a brochure included an exercise in which children explained the asylum process to other children, capturing the language and descriptions they used with each other.
-
- In light of the huge demand for the information brochure and the lack of funds for printing thousands of copies every year, the print version of the brochure was complemented by a web-based platform.
-
- With the help of students from the University of Applied Sciences in St. Pölten, a web-based version has been available since the end of 2015. The web-based information is available in German, English and Arabic languages. Dari/Farsi and Pashtu language versions are currently being developed.

D Review

The brochure is widely used by child asylum-seekers in Austria, their legal representatives, social workers and the Youth Welfare Agency. The brochure is intended to complement individual legal counseling.

The brochure was developed with the support of linguists and based on the findings of an exercise during which children explained the asylum process to other children. This exercise allowed for the capture of language and descriptions children used with each other and the identification of terms that are familiar to children.

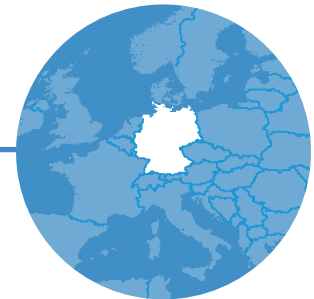
E Further information

The child-friendly information platform on access to asylum in Austria is available in German, English and Arabic at: <http://www.deinasylverfahren.at>.

Farsi/Dari and Pashtu versions are currently being developed.

2015–PRESENT

Germany: The Ankommen (Arrival) app



The German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in collaboration with the Federal Employment Agency, the Goethe Institute and Bavarian Broadcasting developed the Ankommen (Arrival) app. The app provides information on the asylum procedure, vocational training, work and living in Germany. In addition, the app provides German lessons and is intended to promote integration.

A flyer with information on the app in French, English, German, Arabic and Farsi is available at: <http://goo.gl/Do3kfX>.

The Ankommen app can be downloaded for free here: <https://www.ankommenapp.de>.



5.2.2 Gathering information and establishing a preliminary profile

The “Heightened risk identification tool”

The “Heightened risk identification tool” was developed to enhance UNHCR’s effectiveness in identifying refugees at risk by linking community-based/participatory assessments with individual assessment methodologies. It has been designed for use by UNHCR staff involved in community services and/or protection activities (including resettlement) and by partner agencies.

It can be used during all stages of displacement, in urban as well as rural and camp situations. It can, for instance, be used as follow-up to registration exercises and/or to participatory assessments.

Since it is a tool to assist in the early identification of persons at heightened risk where further referral, in-depth assessment and evaluation will normally be needed, use of the tool does not require expertise on risk assessment.

The “Heightened risk identification tool” is available at:
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/4c46c6860.html>.

A user guide for the “Heightened risk identification tool” is available at:
<http://www.refworld.org/docid/46f7c0cd2.html>.



The “Vulnerability screening tool”

Key objective: UNHCR and the International Detention Coalition developed the “Vulnerability screening tool” jointly. Like the “Heightened risk identification tool”, it provides guidance on how to screen for, detect and identify vulnerabilities. However, the “Vulnerability screening tool” is specifically designed to help guide and inform frontline workers and decision-makers on the relevance of vulnerability factors to detention decisions, on referrals to alternatives to detention, on open reception facilities, and on community-based placement and support options in the context of asylum and migration procedures and systems.

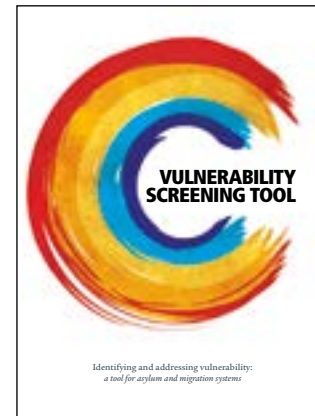
When to use the “Vulnerability screening tool”: The tool can be used both in interviews prior to decisions about detention, alternatives to detention or placement options in the community, and at periodic intervals during asylum and migration procedures to review and adjust decisions about placement and support. Repeat screening of individuals in detention is critical.

Who should use the tool: The tool is primarily designed to assist front-line decision makers, immigration officials and other practitioners with responsibility for making decisions concerning the asylum or migration process, in particular, for placement and support arrangements.

Methodology: The case assessment covers two phases. The first section focuses on identifying situations of vulnerability, while the second section analyzes different options for referral to placement and support.

1. The introductory section focuses on gathering information on a range of vulnerability factors through structured interviews. Prompts and questions guide interviewers in their explorations of potential vulnerability factors. These together with suggested questions to ask the interviewee help clarify risk of harm.
2. The tool outlines a four-step decision-making process for referral to placement and support. The process asks decision makers to consider placement options, support options and ways to strengthen resilience before reaching the fourth step: the final decision and referral.

The “Vulnerability screening tool” is available at:
<http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/57f21f6b4.pdf>.



European Asylum Support Office tool for the identification of persons with special needs

Key objective: The primary objective of this tool is to facilitate the timely identification of persons with special procedural and/or reception needs. The tool is an interactive platform, which assists the user in identifying special needs by detecting certain indicators. The indicators are marked based on the observation of the user. This generates customized information on the special needs of the person being interviewed and provides the user with guidance on relevant safeguards and procedural rights.

When to use the tool: The tool may be used at any stage of the asylum procedure and at any stage of the reception process. It addresses certain procedural stages and outlines the safeguards and procedural rights **of the applicant at each stage:** reception, making an application, lodging the application, personal interview, and the end of the first-instance asylum procedure. The tool does not provide guidance on the refugee status determination process, but focuses solely on procedural guarantees and reception support.

Who should use the tool: This is a practical support tool for officials involved in the asylum procedure and reception, and does not presuppose expert knowledge in medicine, psychology or other fields outside the asylum procedure.

Methodology: The tool identifies 14 categories of applicants who may have special procedural and/or reception needs, reflecting EU asylum legislation and the practice of EU States. For each category, the tool includes information that is important for identification, as well as tailored support measures. Its purpose is to guide users in a process through which they can ensure that appropriate individual responses are provided to the special needs of particular applicants.

The European Asylum Support Office’s tool for the identification of persons with special needs is available at:
<https://ipsn.easo.europa.eu/easo-tool-identification-persons-special-needs>.

UNHCR/IOM joint sample screening questionnaire

A draft questionnaire for screening was developed by UNHCR and IOM in the context of the 10-Point Plan Expert Roundtable, “Different People, Different Needs”, held in Tunis in July 2009.

The questionnaire provides a template that can be adjusted to different contexts for first contact and referral purposes. It is divided into two sections:

Section 1. Interview to gather information on:

- Personal background and data;
- Migration or flight process;
- Situation in host country; and
- Prospects (onward movement, voluntary return and fear of return).

Section 2. Case analysis to establish a preliminary profile:

- Identification of risk categories (victim of trafficking, minor, woman at risk, etc.); and
- Provision of immediate assistance and referral for additional assistance.

The sample questionnaire is available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/4ae581f29.html>.

UNHCR/IOM joint screening questionnaire in Ukraine

UNHCR and IOM operations in Ukraine have jointly developed an adapted version of the questionnaire that was developed at the “Different People, Different Needs” roundtable held in July 2009 in Tunis. The adapted version includes questions to establish individual profiles of asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants, migratory routes and experiences, case analysis, and indicators for referral to support services based on the category of identification.

The questionnaire includes a useful explanatory note that outlines relevant national and international legislation, as well as roles and responsibilities of the State border guard services, UNHCR and IOM.

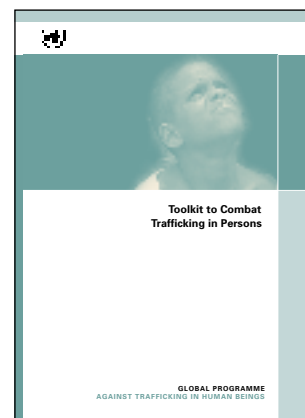
The joint screening questionnaire is available at: <http://goo.gl/UyLa3e>.



Victim identification in the UNODC “Toolkit to combat trafficking in persons”

The UNODC has published various tools to assist stakeholders in the identification and protection of victims of trafficking including the online edition of its “Toolkit to combat trafficking in persons”. The Toolkit contains a chapter with practical tools for victim identification which addresses issues to be considered before victims are identified (Tool 6.2) and offers guidelines on victim identification (Tool 6.3) and indicators of trafficking (Tool 6.4). In addition, the Toolkit also provides the IOM victim screening interview form along with other checklists to facilitate victim identification.

The “Toolkit to combat trafficking in persons” is available in Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish at: <https://goo.gl/snWMJj>.



UNHCR’s rapid best interests assessment form

UNHCR has developed a rapid best interests assessment (BIA) form to be used as soon as a child is identified as unaccompanied or separated or otherwise at risk. A BIA is essential before any action affecting an individual child of concern to UNHCR is taken, unless a best interests determination (BID) is needed. It should be carried out, for example, prior to referring the child for family tracing or temporary care. The rapid BIA form gathers brief information on the history of flight/separation, current care arrangements, and protection, psychosocial, education and health issues of the child. Based on this rapid assessment, follow-up action should be taken as appropriate, including referrals for BID, tracing services, and psychosocial care.

This rapid assessment is informal, and it can be done either by one person or in consultation with others. It does not require the strict procedural safeguards of a formal determination, but staff should receive appropriate training in child protection.

The rapid best interests assessment form is available at: <http://goo.gl/1AbM2l>.

UNHCR's prioritization tool

The prioritization tool was developed in an effort to assist staff in the identification of persons with specific needs and to ensure a common understanding of which indicators correspond to which level of risk, and whether there is a need for immediate follow-up. It has been put to use in different UNHCR operations and should be adapted to specific operational contexts.

The tool provides general screening questions for families, single parents or caregivers, and vulnerable children. The tool then offers guidance for relating gathered information to corresponding risk levels: level 1, cases with a low risk level; level 2, cases at risk with no immediate needs; and level 3, cases at risk with immediate needs. The tool then provides guidance on appropriate follow-up action.

The tool can be used by itself or, in the case of unaccompanied or separated children, in combination with the rapid best interests assessment form.

A sample prioritization tool is available at: <http://goo.gl/99y6V9>.

Specific Need Category	RISK SCREENING QUESTIONS	LEVEL 1 Case (Low Risk)	LEVEL 2 Case (At Risk with no immediate needs)	LEVEL 3 Case (At Risk with immediate needs)
GENERAL BEST INTERESTS	<p>Do you consider the best interests of the child?</p> <p>1. Is the child in need of protection?</p> <p>2. Does the child have a right to be heard?</p> <p>3. Does the child have a right to be heard in a fair and impartial manner?</p>	<p>The child is not in need of protection.</p> <p>The child has a right to be heard.</p> <p>The child's best interests are not at risk.</p>	<p>The child is in need of protection.</p> <p>The child's best interests are at risk.</p> <p>The child's right to be heard is not at risk.</p>	<p>The child is in need of protection.</p> <p>The child's best interests are at risk.</p> <p>The child's right to be heard is at risk.</p>
UNACCOMPANIED OR SEPARATED CHILDREN	<p>Do you consider the best interests of the child?</p> <p>1. Is the child in need of protection?</p> <p>2. Does the child have a right to be heard?</p> <p>3. Does the child have a right to be heard in a fair and impartial manner?</p>	<p>The child is not in need of protection.</p> <p>The child has a right to be heard.</p> <p>The child's best interests are not at risk.</p>	<p>The child is in need of protection.</p> <p>The child's best interests are at risk.</p> <p>The child's right to be heard is not at risk.</p>	<p>The child is in need of protection.</p> <p>The child's best interests are at risk.</p> <p>The child's right to be heard is at risk.</p>
INDIVIDUAL CASES OF VULNERABLE CHILDREN (UNUC) OR OR & FAMILY	<p>Do you consider the best interests of the child?</p> <p>1. Is the child in need of protection?</p> <p>2. Does the child have a right to be heard?</p> <p>3. Does the child have a right to be heard in a fair and impartial manner?</p>	<p>The child is not in need of protection.</p> <p>The child has a right to be heard.</p> <p>The child's best interests are not at risk.</p>	<p>The child is in need of protection.</p> <p>The child's best interests are at risk.</p> <p>The child's right to be heard is not at risk.</p>	<p>The child is in need of protection.</p> <p>The child's best interests are at risk.</p> <p>The child's right to be heard is at risk.</p>
General screening questions	1	Level 1 Case 1.1	Level 2 Case 2.1	Level 3 Case 3.1
Unaccompanied or separated children	2	Level 1 Case 1.2	Level 2 Case 2.2	Level 3 Case 3.2
Individual cases of vulnerable children (UNUC) OR OR & FAMILY	3	Level 1 Case 1.3	Level 2 Case 2.3	Level 3 Case 3.3
Other persons and/or groups	4	Level 1 Case 1.4	Level 2 Case 2.4	Level 3 Case 3.4
Other persons and/or groups	5	Level 1 Case 1.5	Level 2 Case 2.5	Level 3 Case 3.5
Other persons and/or groups	6	Level 1 Case 1.6	Level 2 Case 2.6	Level 3 Case 3.6
Other persons and/or groups	7	Level 1 Case 1.7	Level 2 Case 2.7	Level 3 Case 3.7
Other persons and/or groups	8	Level 1 Case 1.8	Level 2 Case 2.8	Level 3 Case 3.8
Other persons and/or groups	9	Level 1 Case 1.9	Level 2 Case 2.9	Level 3 Case 3.9
Other persons and/or groups	10	Level 1 Case 1.10	Level 2 Case 2.10	Level 3 Case 3.10

5.2.3 Establishing standard operating procedures for screening and referral

Standard operating procedures (SOPs) are established and concrete measures that can greatly facilitate cooperation among partners for the identification and referral of persons with special needs in a mixed migration context. SOPs can help ensure that all relevant stakeholders involved in the screening and referral mechanism have a common understanding of categories of vulnerable individuals and enable the identification of the specific needs of different types of people on the move, such as victims of trafficking, unaccompanied or separated children, women at risk, stateless persons and asylum seekers.

UNHCR and IOM framework document for developing standard operating procedures for the identification and protection of victims of trafficking (2009)

IOM and UNHCR staff regularly come into contact with victims of trafficking or those who may be at risk of being trafficked among migrants and persons of concern to UNHCR. UNHCR and IOM both have a role to play in ensuring the cross-referral of such persons between national referral mechanisms and UNHCR/IOM offices. In the absence of an effective national referral mechanism, UNHCR and IOM will provide the appropriate protection, assistance and solutions for victims of trafficking in accordance with their respective mandates.

In 2009, IOM and UNHCR jointly launched the guiding framework document “Developing standard operating procedures to facilitate the protection of trafficked persons”. The overall objective of this document is to strengthen cooperation and coordination between IOM and UNHCR in the identification and protection of victims of trafficking, as well as migrants or persons of concern to UNHCR at risk of being trafficked. Specifically, this document provides a predictable procedure to be tailored and adopted between IOM and UNHCR at the field level to ensure that the available expertise, capacities, and potential of each agency are effectively employed.

Note that UNHCR and IOM should not wait for persons to approach them with a specific complaint, and should be alert to trafficking among new arrivals, in all areas where refugees and/or migrants reside, in regular border and detention monitoring, and in particular among women and unaccompanied and separated children.

UNHCR and IOM’s “Developing standard operating procedures to facilitate the protection of trafficked persons” is available at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57fde2bd4.html>.

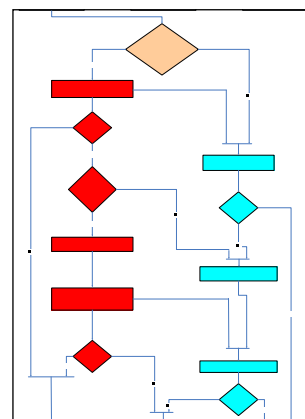
UNHCR The 10-Point Plan: Schematic representation of a screening and referral mechanism

UNHCR has developed a simple schematic representation of a screening and referral mechanism in the context of mixed movements. The diagram highlights three channels to ensure an appropriate response mechanism upon completion of the screening exercise:

- Referral for adjudication of asylum claims;
- Referral to other legal migration channels; and
- Referral for return assistance.

The schematic representation illustrates in some detail a step-by-step guide through the adjudication of asylum claims.

The schematic diagram is available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/474acdc42.html>.





Niger: Standard operating procedures for the identification and referral of asylum-seekers between IOM and UNHCR

A Background and rationale

Due to Niger's strategic geographical position, significant mixed migratory flows transit through the country. IOM established three transit centres and one resource centre to assist migrants in transit. They are designed to receive and screen approaching migrants in order to offer them targeted assistance. Placed at strategic locations along known migration routes, the centres are currently operating in Agadez, Arlit, Niamey and Dirkou.

UNHCR and IOM operations in Niger have enhanced their cooperation to ensure that persons in need of international protection are identified and provided access to refugee status determination, and to offer them safe alternatives to irregular and unsafe migration.

B Actors

- IOM
- UNHCR

C Actions

-
- In 2016, IOM and UNHCR finalized SOPs for the referral of persons in need of international protection found in mixed flows. These SOPs outline procedural steps for IOM to identify asylum-seekers and refer them to UNHCR, and for UNHCR to ensure that identified asylum-seekers are able to access refugee status determination procedures established by the Government of Niger. The SOPs also establish procedures through which individuals found not to be in need of international protection and who seek assistance to return to their country of origin are referred to and supported by IOM.
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- The standard operating procedures contain a screening form that is used at IOM migrant transit centres. It contains targeted questions on the individual's reasons for flight that may indicate whether someone is in need of international protection, and help identify stateless persons. It also includes several questions targeted at the identification of victims of trafficking and abuse.
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- In addition to the procedural safeguards that are contained in the SOPs, a consent form has been developed by the two offices. Migrants and asylum-seekers need to provide informed consent for the exchange of their personal data between the two agencies.

D Review

The SOPs in Niger have established mechanisms for screening and referral through clearly defined responsibilities and coordinated actions. These mechanisms have been useful in facilitating collaboration between IOM and UNHCR.

The formalization of IOM's commitment to provide return assistance to rejected asylum-seekers represents an important achievement of this cooperation framework.

E Further information

The SOPs for the identification and referral of asylum seekers between IOM and UNHCR are available in French at: <http://www.refworld.org/docid/57fde5cf4.html>.

2013–PRESENT

Tunisia: Development of standard operating procedures for post-disembarkation activities



A Background and rationale

Departures for mixed maritime movements from Tunisia and Libya have become frequent due to these countries' proximity to the Italian coast and the rise of mixed migration movements towards Europe. Since 2011, Tunisian naval forces have rescued an increasing number of boats lost at sea or facing danger. Among the sea arrivals were asylum-seekers, refugees and migrants from various countries.

UNHCR convened several meetings between 2013 and 2015 between key stakeholders in rescue at sea situations in Tunisia in an effort to enhance preparedness and strengthen national capacities and coordination in post-disembarkation activities. (For more information, see related example in Chapter 3.) The concerned actors engaged in a joint drafting exercise to establish a set of standard operating procedures for all post-disembarkation activities, including screening and referral.

B Actors

- Tunisian authorities at the central and local level: Ministry of Interior; Ministry of Social Affairs; Ministry of Transport; Ministry of Health; Ministry of Foreign Affairs; National Maritime Guard; Civil Protection; Governorate of Medenine.
- IOM
- UNHCR
- Tunisian Red Crescent

C Actions

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- UNHCR, acting as the main partner of the Tunisian Government, convened several meetings between 2013 and 2015. The drafting exercise, funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, started in August 2013. In December 2014, UNHCR held a workshop gathering various Tunisian officials from different ministries in order to discuss the standard operating procedures.
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- Although not yet formally endorsed by authorities, the standard operating procedures are currently implemented by relevant stakeholders in all post-rescue-at-sea activities. Early identification of UNHCR persons of concern is done on the basis of nationality and is followed by screening interviews. The Tunisian Red Crescent conducts screening interviews and refers individuals to UNHCR for further assistance.
-
- UNHCR interviews and counsels individuals to assess the appropriate response mechanisms.

D Review

The rescue at sea standard operating procedures in Tunisia have established mechanisms for screening and referral through clearly defined responsibilities and coordinated actions in accordance with the respective mandates and level of responsibility of all actors. These mechanisms have proven to be useful in the latest rescue at sea operations in Tunisia. A more fluid screening exercise has led to a quicker identification of people of concern to UNHCR and migrants with particular vulnerabilities in need of specific assistance.

5.2.4 Developing standards and regional guidelines for screening and referral

AUGUST 2014–MAY 2015

Asia-Pacific: The Bali Process policy guides on the identification and protection of victims of trafficking



A Background and rationale

With the sudden increase in arrivals of people crossing the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea by boat in 2014, the reception capacity of some States was overstretched, resulting in inadequate reception conditions. In the context of the Senior Officials Meeting of the Bali process, held in August 2014, States acknowledged the need for support and guidance to improve reception conditions and facilities and to ensure the early identification of individuals with specific needs and the timely referral to appropriate services. Bali Process Member States recommended the development of guidance on identification and protection of victims of trafficking.

B Actors

- The Regional Support Office of the Bali Process
- UNHCR
- Governments of Australia, Indonesia, the Maldives, the Philippines and Thailand
- IOM

C Actions

- The Bali Process Regional Support Office, co-chaired by the Governments of Australia and Indonesia, and in consultation with UNHCR and IOM, established a drafting committee comprised of experts from the Governments of Australia, Indonesia, the Maldives, the Philippines, and Thailand.
- The drafting committee met on four occasions and jointly developed two guides to assist policy makers and practitioners: “Policy guide on identifying victims of trafficking” and “Policy guide on protecting victims of trafficking”.
- These policy guides provide a clear and concise overview of applicable international and regional standards for the identification and protection of victims of trafficking. They provide practical guidance by drawing on examples of good practice from Bali Process Member States. The policy guides aim to build the involved actors’ capacity to understand and distinguish different forms of human trafficking, encouraging States to adopt a victim-centred approach that takes into account the individual needs of victims of trafficking and to tailor protection responses accordingly. Recognizing that coordination is a key component of comprehensive protection, the policy guides contain a section which outlines the roles and responsibilities of different actors and coordination measures at the political and operational level.
- Upon completion of the policy guides, a full Bali Process membership consultations workshop on identifying and protecting victims of trafficking was held in Bangkok on March 23–24, 2015.

D Review

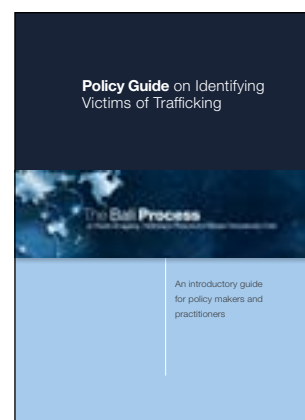
The policy guides provide detailed and practical guidance to support States in setting up effective screening, identification and protection mechanisms for victims of trafficking. In an effort to translate the policy guides into practice, the Bali Process Working Group on Trafficking in Persons is promoting the use and implementation of the policy guides in the region. The 2015–2017 work plan includes a range of planned actions such as regional launches of the policy guides and the provision of training, to this effect.

Although the policy guides have been developed for the particular context of the Asia and Pacific region, they provide excellent guidance useful in many different regional contexts. The policy guides contain instructions where indicators, and mechanisms need to be tailored to the specific situations.

E Further information

The “Policy guide on identifying victims of trafficking” is available at:
<http://goo.gl/L196QF>.

The “Policy guide on protecting victims of trafficking” is available at:
<http://goo.gl/MtaopL>.





Latin America: “Regional guidelines for the preliminary identification and referral mechanisms for migrant populations in vulnerable situations”

A Background and rationale

The “Regional guidelines for the preliminary identification and referral mechanisms for migrant populations in vulnerable situations” were developed through a consultative and participatory process in the context of the Regional Conference on Migration, which is a multilateral regional forum on international migration involving eleven member countries from North and Latin America.

B Actors

- Member States of the Regional Conference on Migration: Belize, Canada, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama and the United States of America
- IOM
- UNHCR

C Actions

- ➔ The Guidelines were drafted by IOM with the support of UNHCR, which provided technical expertise and advice on refugees and other persons of concern to UNHCR.
- ➔ The Guidelines were approved in San Jose, Costa Rica, during the XVIII Vice-Ministerial Meeting of the Regional Conference on Migration in June 2013.
- ➔ Several capacity building and training activities with government officials (mainly from migration offices) have been implemented to incorporate the Guidelines into the national legal and institutional framework.

D Review

The Guidelines are the result of consultations between different stakeholders as well as coordination at the national and regional level. The Guidelines are a concrete tool devised to assist Regional Conference on Migration Member States in identifying migrants or groups of migrants in vulnerable situations and in providing targeted assistance. These Guidelines facilitate coordination and cooperation by outlining steps to be taken by each key actor within the identification and referral mechanism.

E Further information

The “Regional guidelines for the preliminary identification and referral mechanisms for migrant populations in vulnerable situations” are available at: <http://goo.gl/72e2Dm>.

The training manual used for the capacity building and training activities with government officials is available (in Spanish) at: <http://goo.gl/MywH4R>.

