European Asylum Support Office

EASO guidance on contingency planning in the context of reception

EASO Practical Guides Series

March 2018

SUPPORT IS OUR MISSION

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List of abbreviations

AMIF	EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
APD	asylum procedure directive Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection
CEAS	Common European Asylum System
CSO	civil society organisations — non-governmental organisations and institutions working in the interest of the citizens, but outside the governmental or profit sector
Dublin III regulation	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
EU + states	EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland
HQ	headquarters
ICT	information and communications technology
LGBT	lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender
NGO	non-governmental organisation
QD	qualification directive 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)
RCD	reception conditions directive 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 (recast)
SGP	Stability and Growth Pact
SOP	standard operating procedure

Contents

A. Introduction

1. Background

Every year, millions of people are affected by armed conflicts and natural disasters or try to escape poverty. These factors can create a mass movement of people looking for safe havens and seeking refuge in Europe. Migration is a very dynamic and complex phenomenon, which can change rapidly and unexpectedly.

Large-scale arrivals in 2015 and 2016 have shown that EU + states (EU Member States plus Norway and Switzerland) need an effective and efficient reception system for applicants for international protection. Such systems must be capable of assuring that reception conditions are provided in line with the reception conditions directive (RCD) and other related legal instruments, even if the reception system might be under great strain. It is crucial for a credible and effective asylum system to provide sufficient and dignified reception conditions throughout the EU and to ensure adherence to reception standards. The high-influx situation in 2015 and 2016 has furthermore exposed the need for EU + states to be better prepared to deal with disproportionate numbers of migrants seeking refuge. It has therefore become evident that the reception authorities need to strengthen their ability to cope with possible volatile situations that can put the reception systems of the countries involved under high pressure.

It is critical to strengthen the reception authorities' preparedness and ability to cope with situations that create organisational strain. Whether it is from high-influx situations as seen in Europe in recent times or from some other factors (e.g. fire, epidemic, earthquake), an immediate, coordinated and pre-planned response is essential.

Contingency planning ensures a rapid and deliberate well-thought-out response to any extreme situation or event that requires special contingency measures. As a result, contingency planning should always be undertaken when there is a risk or a high probability that a high-influx situation may occur.

This context has led the European Commission to make some proposals to adapt the Common European Asylum System (CEAS) and to change the legal framework. The proposal would turn all asylum-related directives into regulations, apart from the RCD, which would remain a directive, but would be revised as well. The recast RCD would require EU + states to have national contingency plans that would be better prepared in case of a sudden high influx. Note that at the time of drafting this document, the final recast directive and regulations were still under negotiation.

Contingency plans need to be practical, realistic and flexible. When implemented, they should easily translate into an operational response plan. The plan should be specific rather than generic and process-driven. Planning gives those concerned the time to think through and address some essential questions including the following:

- What could happen and what might the impact be?
- What actions and resources would this require?
- What could be done to enable better readiness?

2. Purpose and scope of the guidance

The purpose of this guidance is multiple. As such:

It is meant to serve as an aid to the detailed planning and management of the various actors in a high-influx situation and to facilitate early action against a potentially serious situation.

It should also serve as a tool to help manage future uncertainty by developing responses in advance when there is a great risk or probability that a high-influx situation may occur.

It will help reception authorities to anticipate and solve problems that arise in situations with a swift build up that require an immediate response.

The scope of this document is to provide guidance on contingency planning on reception. However, the content of this document is not in and of itself a contingency plan and cannot therefore be directly copy-pasted as one. Furthermore, the structure of reception authorities, decision-making processes, responsibilities and so on differ from Member State to Member State, meaning that a 'one-size-fits-all' approach is not possible. However, the content of this guide can help Member States to tailor their national contingency plans, utilising different parts of the guide as needed. While contingency planning may be needed for a number of possible emergencies, this guidance focuses mainly on situations where contingency planning is required due to a high influx of applicants for international protection that has caused resource constraints in the reception system.

Note that reception is part of the asylum system and interdependent with asylum determination. Any changes in the asylum procedures directive and qualification directive will automatically reflect changes in the reception systems.

The guidance on contingency planning focuses on reception authorities and is written with reception staff in mind. However, there are elements that are applicable to a wide range of staff regardless of their position in the EU + states' respective authorities. This document aims to give guidance to EU + states' reception authorities to ensure that they have the capacity to quickly handle all types of emergencies that affect or may affect the reception system. This is essentially a framework for contingency planning including guidance and the sharing of best practices in order to enhance preparedness for emergency situations, as well as acquiring mechanisms for a coordinated and efficient response.

This tool is created to help decision-makers make informed decisions on actions that may have sustainable effects on the authorities' reception system and to manage future uncertainties by developing relevant and effective responses to various emergency scenarios.

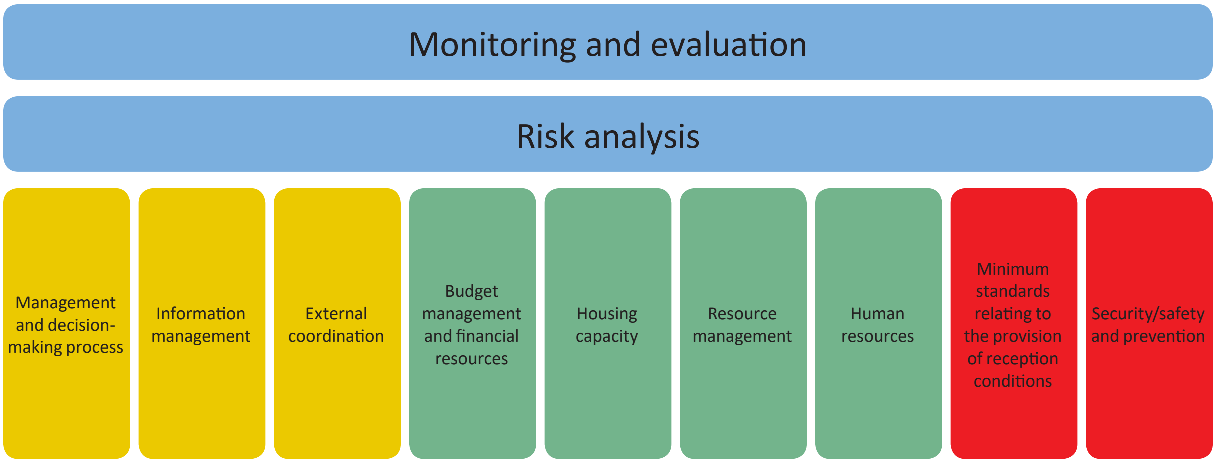
3. Guiding principles

This contingency planning guidance is founded on these guiding principles.

- Every human being is valued and respected, regardless of the emergency situation. The application of this guidance should be done in accordance with the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union and the reception conditions directive and with the EASO guidance on reception conditions in mind.
- Respect the overall right to seek asylum and the rights of persons in need of international protection, regardless of the situation, in accordance with the international and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Ensure swift access to registration and compliance with procedural guarantees as well as quick access to reception conditions.
- Transparency and accountability. The application of this guidance should be based on transparent and fair rules and decision-making procedures. Without prejudice to the relevance of involving additional actors for the implementation of specific tasks in national reception systems, the overall responsibility for achieving the highest levels of transparency and accountability lies with the respective reception authority
- Participation. Contingency planning is most effective when done as part of a participatory and inclusive process. Cooperation within respective mandates and alignment of goals and strategies with other authorities — especially the determining authority — and concerned stakeholders will greatly improve the outcome of the response.

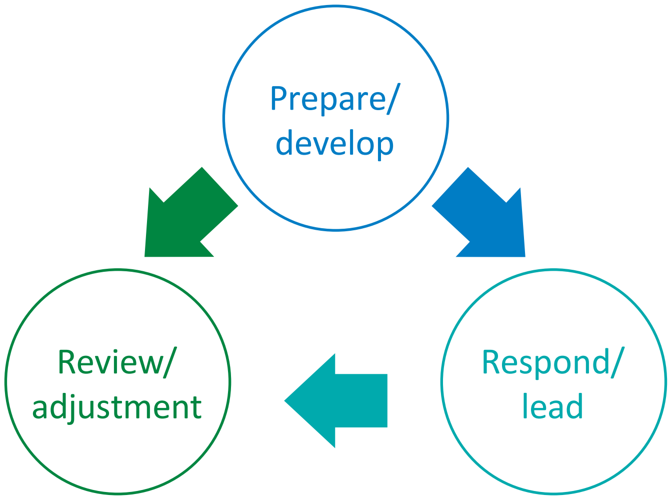
4. Structure and format of the guidance

The document is divided into 13 sections. The following chapter, *Chapter B — An integral approach to contingency planning*, aims to lay out the overall approach to contingency planning to those involved in the development of an overall plan. Subsequent chapters cover specific aspects linked to contingency planning that focus more on the specialised staff working on one of the following aspects linked to contingency planning.



B. An integral approach to contingency planning

These guidelines are an approach to how to think about what needs to be prepared for, and how to plan so that a possible response plan can be more effective. In order to achieve this, a cyclical approach has been taken, covering the six aspects that can be found in the figure below. The aspects are interconnected and together they form a systematic, cohesive and holistic approach to contingency planning in order to facilitate an effective response to high-influx situations within the reception system. The sections are as follows:



The guidance describes what can be done in a certain situation and shows actions that should be done before, during and after a high-influx situation. When drafting a contingency plan it is recommended that the respective reception authorities develop a comprehensive toolkit along with templates, standardised preparedness actions, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and a series of other measures and recommendations to tackle anticipated risks and enable efficient and dependable results. The following sections will include references to aspects where these templates and SOPs will be particularly useful. Even though the scope of this guidance is reception, asylum is an interlinked system that includes determining, immigration and reception authorities, and all actions should be viewed in that sense.

The suggestions included in this document reflect pre-existing practice in EU + states. Depending on what the anticipated risks are, prioritising and implementing pre-planned actions is crucial. So is monitoring early alert indicators for developments that could trigger a response and transform pre-planned intentions into action.

1. The phase of prepare and develop

The first phase in contingency planning is about being prepared. Planning begins with situational assessments. Intelligence gathering, analysis and risk assessment are the basis of contingency planning. It is therefore important to link the plan to risk analysis and monitoring so that the plan reflects specific information.

The main objective is to enable reception authorities to develop a necessary level of preparedness that ensures that a sufficient response can be made to a potential high-influx situation. There are multiple preparedness actions that can be identified and processes that can be established ahead of time, before it happens.

This chapter looks at how specific parts of a plan can be put into place in anticipation of a potential high-influx situation. These should be seen as recommendations on how to engage in a planning process to develop strategies and countermeasures in dealing with the likely impact. Developers of a contingency plan are encouraged to think in a wide context of inter-agency relations when preparing the plan and to not limit the planning just to the reception authority.

Moreover, when developing the contingency plan it is vital to formulate realistic scenarios and design efficient response plans that build the base of the contingency plan. The chapter also outlines key elements which are important in order to achieve the operational objective. Doing the right thing at the right time in an emergency situation is of the utmost importance. Proceeding with great haste while minimising mistakes is the desired effect.

- ### Active preparedness

This concept refers to a proactive approach to preparation. This can mean preparing inventories of all standby resources such as extra places and supplies as well as listing and regularly updating information such as registries, inventories, stock level and lists of staff and their capabilities. Lastly, it refers to the proactive identification of all relevant actors including the private sector and examines their capacity.

- ### Developing scenarios and planning assumptions

A scenario-based planning process enables planning ahead in order to orchestrate a coordinated response plan. Developing scenarios of anticipated situations will help the developers of the contingency plan to think through its possible implications for the reception system. Trying to anticipate how a situation will develop will make any response strategy more effective. By formulating plausible agreed upon scenarios, reception authorities can plan a response strategy and set out the scale of the response. The focus should always be on operational issues. Planning assumptions should be clearly defined as well as what the anticipated or plausible scenarios might be. Early alert triggers and indicators should be identified in the scenario-building process (e.g. occupation rate, in- and outflow, processing time of determination). Building in thresholds and scales of alertness levels will help determine when the situation has transitioned from one level to another. What activates the change of level is an important distinction. By monitoring the development against thresholds, the severity can be better determined.

The purpose of the alertness levels is also to control the activities internally and in relation to other actors and to provide a uniform nomenclature. Raising the alertness level is a proactive measure, which could be applied when there is an enhanced risk that the reception authority will not be able to manage its assignment and a prioritisation of resource use should take place. Each increase or decrease in alertness level has consequences for the reception authority and the actors involved and therefore efficient communication of any decision is of key importance.

- ### Developing a contingency plan

Analysing the anticipated risk means striving to prevent or mitigate the possible impact. The response plan will be dependent on the authorities' level of preparedness and planning. Further work should be done to identify the capacities and resources needed, what the possible gaps are and what relevant countermeasures can be deployed in order to minimise the scale of impact and make for a successful response. It is also important to identify practical procedures and potential operational constraints; these should then be used to formulate a response plan. Taking a scenario to conclusion is a crucial step in achieving operational success.

2. The phase of respond and lead

The contingency plan should give guidance on how the response plan is to be activated and identify who will respond, when and where. Working with a solution-oriented and inclusive approach will enhance your chances of operational success. Establishing clear divisions of roles, responsibilities and mandates is critical in order to translate the plan into an actionable response.

- ### Activating the plan

Knowing **when** to respond is nearly as important as knowing **how** to respond. This can save much-needed time. Triggers and thresholds should be well defined and indicators should be clearly characterised to enable a timely response. It would be good, in the framework of an early warning system, to come up with a numeric definition at the national level of the term high influx. Possible thresholds could be: a certain increase of arrivals over a defined period of time, crossing a predefined occupancy rate for a period of time (which defines a decrease of qualitative reception because of workload), increase of persons with special needs, etc. Furthermore triggers and indicators should be adapted to the context of the emerging risk at hand. The mandate for activating the plan should be predetermined.

- ### Responding to the high influx and leading the action

An effective and efficient response requires collective action. Leading and coordinating is crucial to enhance the capability to withstand and endure an emergency situation. Measures and decisions need to be taken to assign different responsibilities and to determine what timelines are applicable. Make sure they are mutually agreed upon. It is important to already have cooperation structures in place between authorities and relevant actors. Securing operational continuity and efficient coordinating structures ensures that the measures taken are coherent and effective. The aim is that the 'respond and lead' phase should be as short as possible.

3. The phase of review and adjust

The implementation of these guidelines should be evaluated at regular intervals. Contingency planning is an ongoing process, and regular and scheduled reviews and updates ensure that the plan stays relevant. Whether it is a situation of mass influx with a swift build-up and sharp decline or whether there is no sudden decline in sight, the reception authority should have a plan in place for how the organisation as a whole is going to adjust to the situation at hand outside of the contingency plan. Concerning the constant monitoring, an analysis should be done in the form of an adjustment plan on how to adjust the organisation to the new situation so that the reception authority can adapt and adjust to the new environment it is operating in in an efficient way. Typically, the response to the situation is followed by a downscaling and a gradual de-escalation of contingency measures should then be implemented. But further upscaling might also be necessary if the monitoring does not show that the measures taken are sufficient as a response.

• Evaluating the plan and the response

Evaluation is an important accountability mechanism. After a response has been completed an extensive review of the actions taken should be conducted to determine whether relevant and sustainable measures were undertaken and relief was obtained as intended.

Decisions and actions should be correctly documented and carried out in a previously established order. Transparency and accountability are paramount in the review process and the possibility that an outside audit might take place must be kept in mind. Furthermore, all moments of non-compliance with law or procedures should be documented immediately and analysed as they take place.

• Seek feedback and utilise lessons learned

Results and lessons learned should be communicated within the authority and to other stakeholders and partners. It is important to make efforts to get feedback and suggestions for improvements and changes from all parties involved, including the beneficiaries. Contingency planning is a process so the plan should be expected to change as new experiences and insights are brought in to the planning process.

In order to disseminate knowledge on lessons learned and established best practices it is of great importance to identify, collect and analyse information. This will facilitate the necessary adaptation to enhance future responses and institutionalise know-how as well as improving organisational integration. Evaluation plays an important part in the pursuit of continual improvement and should be done on all levels in an organisation; this will undoubtedly influence the outcome of upcoming actions positively.

• Adjustment

Contingency planning is a result of risk assessment. Therefore a contingency plan has to be adapted when a risk changes significantly. Other factors, such as changes in the law, can also require an update to the plan. It is recommended that the plan be reviewed and that elements that might no longer be applicable or need review on a regular basis be identified.

The capacity to change should be taken into account when implementing the adjustments. Changes have to be adopted at all levels and implemented by all actors. This is especially relevant if the reception authority's plan represents the basis for cooperation with different authorities. Therefore the plan should be updated in a manner that does not lower the reception authority's readiness for action.

C. Monitoring and evaluation

Throughout the planning process, specific preparedness actions or issues requiring follow-up should be identified and recorded. Contingency planning is an integral part of the ongoing planning process and should not be seen as an exceptional activity. It is also a process of constantly monitoring progression and adjusting objectives to take new realities into account, as the situation develops and new events emerge.

What is the purpose of early alerts?

An early alert serves a number of functions, namely to:

- predict that something might happen before it happens — create awareness;
- make an assessment of possible consequences if it actually happens — ensure preparedness;
- communicate the conclusions and assessments to the people who can make relevant decisions based on facts and analysis rather than presumptions — ensure fact-based decision-making.

The purpose is to provide information for decision-making in order to avoid a situation where events are already unfolding and it might be too late to act. Hence, it is about planning and taking precautions. An early alert that does not fit into this description is not very useful. Early alerts also serve a purpose in emergency planning. In this case, coordinated efforts with other national and international actors (e.g. EU, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, International Organisation for Migration, International Red Cross) can be initiated based on the information and analysis contained in an early alert. The use of existing documents and tools like the Early Warning and Preparedness System (EPS) and the Push and Pull factors database is recommended.

When is an early alert issued?

An alert should be issued when your capacity is not sufficiently flexible or capable of absorbing the influx. It should give reception authorities enough time to act. Reception authorities should define in advance how much time will be needed to, for example, activate extra capacity or create specific places for children and people with mobility issues.

These are the characteristics that need to be in place for an early alert to be issued:

TIMELY	**CLEAR**	**ANALYTICAL**	**RELEVANT**
identification	identification	in respect of the consequences	concerning the consequences
If something is identified too late it is no longer an early warning – but rather an explanation of what is already happening	What is actually being talked about? Just talking about a seasonal influx, for example, might not be specific enough. It would be better to specify the time period and the nationalities affected, as well as the cause.	If this is not done, the relevant leadership will not be able to make fully informed decisions.	If the consequences are marginal it would not be right to issue an early alert.

The more relevant the information contained in the alert, the better it is. It is also important to issue alerts in time. It is often difficult to pinpoint the consequences when a dramatic event is unfolding.

Good practice
The analytical model implemented in an EU + state reception authority

One way in which an EU + state has approached the implementation of the early alert system is through the creation of a unit for migration intelligence. This system is incorporated within the unit's analytical model. Currently the unit produces intelligence material and analysis for three main products — four annual prognosis papers, a monthly report and a weekly report. The products focus on different time periods and therefore take different approaches to early alerts.

The weekly report is focused on intelligence material and is descriptive rather than analytical. The monthly report makes an assessment of the number of applicants for international protection expected in the next 3 months, and has more analytical depth. The prognosis paper focuses on the number of applicants for international protection in the current and coming years. In the prognosis paper a number of key factors are identified — factors that could influence the number of applicants for international protection depending on how events unfold. These are of course possible but known events — identifiable scenarios.

The monthly reports aim to make an assessment of the most probable development for applicants for international protection within a shorter time frame (1 to 3 months). They also focus on possible alternative developments. They then identify indicators that suggest a development with a deviating effect on the number of applicants for international protection in the country. The primary aim is to identify indicators that point to an alternative development.

In the weekly reports, intelligence material is gathered based on these indicators. Based on what comes in, the assessments from the last monthly report are evaluated and new indicators are derived from the analytical process. The quality of the indicators is crucial for the early warning system. The indicators have to have a specific connection to the identified event and updated information on the indicator has to be readily available. It is always preferable if the indicator is a number or at least quantifiable. Reaction to the numbers and monitoring of indicators is done consistently in the weekly reports. These reports also touch on a number of other subjects and aim to identify new patterns — for example a sudden influx of a certain nationality — and to explain the incoming number of applicants for international protection in general. In this way, the aim is to cover the consequences of unknown events that influence the number of applicants for international protection. While it is difficult to identify the events that cause shifts in the number of applicants for international protection the effect can be identified quite early in the process.

Last but equally important is the rather wide scope of intelligence material that has to be gathered. This material is not exclusively aimed at being a specific contribution to one of the products or at an identified indicator. On the contrary, most of the intelligence gathered never makes it into a product and does not fit into the analytical system of indicators. The idea is to be as broad as possible because one cannot know what will be important next week or next month. This part of the search for early alerts is therefore partly blind.

D. Risk analysis

As one cannot plan for every eventuality, a risk analysis will help in identifying and understanding potential problems and the probability of them materialising. In turn, it is possible to manage these problems and minimise their impact. Information from the risk analysis together with the information from the early alert system will provide a base of information from which one can prioritise what risk will be monitored more closely. It is important to have a fast and efficient risk assessment mechanism in place in order to be able to enhance readiness.

The role of prevention is hard to overestimate; it means being proactive. High-influx situations could lead to threats against reception authorities' capability to provide reception conditions. In any other action against possible threats, the main focus should be on prevention. Reception authorities should assess what the impact is for factors such as the duration of stay of applicants, budget, HR needs, prevention of incidents or child impact analysis. Possible threats can be placed in a proper category according to the possibility to happen and scope of caused damage:

Possibility of happening	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
Damage caused				
Low				
Moderate				
High				
Very high				

General principles of risk management should be applied; for example, threats assigned to red squares should be treated as a top priority.

It is important to choose a proper reaction for a risk, which can be:

Avoiding
- This strategy gives a high level of safety but leads to abstention from risky actions and therefore limits operational power.

Controlling
- This strategy enables operations but requires the use of more resources for extraordinary safety measures.

Mitigating
- This is appropriate for threats with a high possibility of happening and a low level of damage likely to be caused. We accept the damage and mitigate its effects.

Accepting
- This involves performing actions regardless of any threats because of their low probability of happening and the low level of damage likely to be caused.

Transferring
- This means transferring the risk to another entity — e.g. insurance.

Mitigating measures

To choose a proper measure, it is necessary to determine the level of the particular threat (e.g. by using the risk analysis table above) and then attaching it to the appropriate reaction for the risk. It is important to remember to go deeper into each risk looking for the different aspects influencing its likelihood of happening and its impact. Both *a priori* assumptions and long-lasting experience can be used to point out factors in each danger and determine their level.

Simulations and desktop exercises might be organised during the 'prepare and develop' phase to better identify the risks and related mitigating measures.

Example: a risk of violence in facilities which is caused, for example, by accommodating different ethnic groups together. The possible reactions to this threat are:

- avoiding — making every effort to separate these two groups, even if this leads to lower capacity, the spending of many more resources, etc.;
- controlling — safeguards, video surveillance, etc.;
- mitigating — mediation between conflicted groups in case of violence;
- accepting — assumption that due to very limited resources there is no possibility to prevent violence, calling police and legal actions if the law is broken.

E. Management and decision-making process

1. Introduction

The objective of this chapter is to establish swift decision-making processes during a high-influx situation. In order to achieve this, it is important to ensure a clear structure establishing who is authorised to activate the contingency plan and to create situational awareness in order to ensure that everybody is informed about its activation. These processes should be clear at the national or sub-national levels, depending on the structure of the reception system and the impact of the high-influx situation.

It is crucial to have well-defined responsibilities and mandates in place and to identify and establish swift decision-making processes that will contribute to transparency in these processes in advance. Furthermore a description of the contingency management levels should be in place and known throughout the organisation.

In striving to attain the best possible contingency plan and response it is recommended to work according to these principles:

Responsibility

- The person responsible under normal circumstances also has the responsibility to take necessary precautions related to emergency preparedness and to handle extraordinary incidents within his or her area of responsibility. It should be decided beforehand which tasks can be suspended or delegated, etc.

Equality

- The organisational structure during a high-influx situation should resemble the structure employed under normal conditions.
- If possible, operations should also be managed on the same site as under normal conditions.

Proximity

- Make sure that the decisions taken are based on information from the field, and are adapted to the specific situation.
- Situations should be handled as close as possible to the site where they occur and by those who are affected and responsible.

Cooperation

- The authorities, enterprises and departments all have a responsibility to secure the best possible cooperation with relevant actors and enterprises in the efforts to prevent, be prepared for and manage an emergency.

2. The phase of prepare and develop

• Setting strategy

It is fundamental to outline clearly the overall objective of the contingency plan, in order to help define response goals and objectives. This is essential in ensuring that the right actions are put in place and that everyone is working towards the same goal. Developers of contingency plans should make sure that there is a structured process for following up so that the chosen actions support the overall objective.

• Roles and mandates

Ownership and mandates should be defined at all levels of the organisation. Management should ensure that decisions are taken at a strategic level and should be responsible for long-term planning as well. They should also ensure that solutions are implemented with the active cooperation of all actors involved. In situations where some members of the reception authority, or the authority in its entirety, are under strain, it is particularly important to demonstrate a leadership presence on the ground to ensure that proper support is in place. It should also be made clear who has the mandate to decide on changing the alertness levels.

• Validation

Validation is not only a formal procedure. It is also a key element as it affects all the institutions for which the plan is binding. Therefore, the validation level should be consistent and sufficiently high in hierarchy, to cover all authorities stipulated in the plan to perform the tasks given to them. The broader the scope is, the longer the amount of time needed to validate or later update the plan. Therefore, including as many institutions as possible is not always a good solution. To make the plan effective, a distinction should be made as to which authorities are actually essential to achieve the goals and which of them don't need necessary consultation.

• The decision-making process

The decision-making process should facilitate swift, timely and transparent decisions. It is important that a process is in place so that the intended part of the authority can receive and execute the directives and assignments in an effective manner. The capabilities of the reception authority to take quick and efficient decisions should be analysed in all phases.

Keep existing organisational structures as far as possible, rather than building new or parallel structures. This will, to a greater extent, ensure that the action stays with those that work in the field and know the procedures, the limitations and the challenges.

During a high-influx situation there is not usually enough time to prepare and act. Therefore it is essential to decide on an order of actions beforehand. It is useful to first establish which actions are dependent on others and then create a sequence of actions. This will help to identify root causes of challenges and priorities. The key in a decision-making process is to prioritise actions based on factors like time, probability and availability of resources, in order to use them efficiently.

Prioritising on the basis of efficiency therefore requires an enhanced analysis of the provision of reception conditions and is a part of choosing the right methodology for each service.

• Activating an internal coordination mechanism

A way to facilitate an efficient decision-making process without replacing existing structures, in a high-influx situation, is to activate an internal coordination mechanism, represented by an internally defined team.

It is necessary to clearly define the mandate of the coordination team ahead of the high-influx situation so that members of the team know how to act and what to expect. The mandate of the coordination team should always include the following:

- sharing of information across departments;
- raising situational awareness throughout the organisation and ensuring that every service/department switches into the lead/action phase;
- defining/adjusting quality standards and ensuring compliance;
- spending resources in line with needs;
- reporting back to the relevant services/departments about decisions taken.

The representatives engaged in the team could be focal points from each of the relevant services/functions within the reception authority that are needed to ensure that each of the aspects addressed within this document are adequately covered. The composition of this team should resemble as closely as possible the management structure within the 'prepare and develop' phase and should be defined prior to the start of the high-influx situation ('respond and lead' phase). Ideally, the mechanism should be capable of being activated at all times from a 'standby' mode, such as through regular meetings to ensure that everyone is on the same page as regards the migratory pressure in the country. The same representatives should subsequently be closely involved in the implementation of the contingency plan during the 'respond and lead' phase. This should be done through an enhanced rhythm of meetings (e.g. daily meetings rather than once per month).

Good practice

It is considered good practice to carry out dry run exercises with members of coordination meetings outside a crisis sitatution. Ensure that the staff remains the same. Train staff on contingency issues. Ensure that there is a system of replacement to avoid fatigue among members of the coordination team if the crisis is over an extended period of time.

3. The phase of respond and lead

In the 'respond and lead' phase, the internal coordination mechanism/team is activated and the frequency of meetings goes up. Actions taken are followed up and reviewed if necessary. The representative of the internal coordination mechanism reports both up and down within the organisation. Structured situational scenarios should be established and priority guidelines should be built based on the different anticipated scenarios and on how the situation is evolving. An adjustment plan should also be prepared so that it can be applied when the time is right.

4. The phase of review and adjust

The return to lower preparedness or normal operation should be done as soon as possible. Actions beyond the contingency plan could be relevant and are planned in consultation with other stakeholders. If there is still a strong strain on the reception authority, there should be a plan to adjust the organisation to the new conditions at hand. Following the implementation of the contingency plan, the event and the measures taken should be followed up and reviewed. This can serve as a basis for the continuous improvement work that should be done at all organisational levels. This is also an opportunity to streamline the decision-making process, to learn from the things that did not function well and implement modifications in the regular decision-making processes and structures.

F. Information management and communication

1. Introduction

Communication is defined as all flows of information between different organisations and across equal and different hierarchical levels. Whether or not there is a situation of high influx, it is important to establish different layers of communication and to have a coherent strategic communication adapted to each channel of communication. Distinctions should be made between political statements and communications by the reception authority, but they have to be in line with each other. Without prejudice to the importance of effective communication with external actors, internal communication between staff is equally relevant to ensure high quality and efficiency before, during and after the response during a high-influx situation.

2. Underlying principles of efficient information management

• The phase of prepare and develop

Information sharing is a prerequisite for effective coordination between different actors and specifying provisions for this should receive considerable emphasis during the planning process. The different stakeholders and actors should be identified. This includes an overview of their mandates, levels of organisation, relevant contact points and existing channels for communication.

Sharing of information can be achieved through several types of channels of communication: face to face, email, telephone, broadcasts, information mediated trough liaisons. Different channels are suited to different type of information content and situations. Contingency plans should specify the types of channels that are preferred for different purposes. This includes predefined fora or meetings for information sharing and participation. It is recommended that the terms of reference of each forum (objectives, frequency, moderator, actors involved, mandate, etc.) be set in advance so that it is clear what can or cannot be decided.

The information that is to be shared in high-influx situations is often in a form that reoccurs, like lists of people or resources, statistics, mandates or task descriptions. Reoccurring types of information can be identified and templates for such information should be prepared in advance. This should also include guidance of what information may be legally shared and how this information can be disseminated in a manner that is consistent with national laws and regulations, in order to ensure confidentiality and 'need-to-know' principles.

• The phase of respond and lead

Efficient communication in a high-influx situation entails dispersing relevant information quickly and proactively to the relevant stakeholders (e.g. national authorities, reception partners, contractors). There should be follow-up to check that incorrect information or misunderstandings have not been transmitted. It is therefore recommended that there is an emphasis on checking that information is both received and understood in communications with different stakeholders and actors, with special attention to accuracy and coherence of the message.

Different types of information are communicated through different levels of organisation. Who the transmitter of the information is provides a strong context for how the information is interpreted. It is therefore recommended that contingency plans are specific with regard to the kind of information that can be conveyed by different levels and functions within the organisation, and that care is taken to adhere to established routines and guidelines when communicating about activities. However, at the same time, this should not hinder the necessary exchange of information on the lower and operative levels (e.g. daily briefings or emails).

• The phase of review and adjust

It is recommended that reception authorities routinely conduct evaluations of communication activities with the relevant stakeholders and actors. Care should be taken to evaluate if the most efficient channels have been utilised, that different information content has been transmitted and received between the appropriate levels and that the necessary feedback arrangements are in place to identify and resolve misunderstandings.

3. Internal communication

• The phase of prepare and develop

Internal communication about a possible high influx should start at a very early stage. All levels of the organisation should always be kept well informed about the migratory context in which they are operating. The focus should always be on points that can emerge in situations of high influx, in addition to your general guidelines.

• The phase of respond and lead

The key priority during this phase is to keep staff informed at all times and to minimise internal rumours and false reports on social media or elsewhere. In this context, daily reports to update the staff about the current situation as well as the progress of the management or implementation of the contingency plan can be useful. This should be accompanied by ongoing efforts to show recognition and appreciation for the staff's efforts and quality of work.

• The phase of review and adjust

Even more than during the previous phase, the appreciation and recognition of the efforts and performance of staff becomes of fundamental importance. Additionally, this phase is a key factor for giving and seeking feedback from the staff to understand the positive and negative aspects of the management of the high-influx situation and carrying out necessary adjustments.

4. Communication with applicants for international protection

• The phase of prepare and develop

Reception authorities should consider how to adapt efficient methodologies and channels for information provision to a higher number of applicants, in line with Article 5 of the RCD. In addition, a strategy should be added on how to repeat information in a simple manner considering that applicants might be transferred within a short time period.

Good practice

Communication via social media and developing platforms to communicate with applicants for international protection are good ways to convey information and the message that is desired. By developing an app for mobile phones, the reception authority can easily reach a large number of persons to inform.

• The phase of respond and lead

Regular information provision to and dialogue with all reception beneficiaries should be adapted during high-influx situations. This refers in particular to information about contingency measures that affect their daily life, such as suspending direct access to a long-term reception facility, an increase in the number of occupants of a facility, transfers to different facilities or long waiting periods for a decision on their claims for international protection. The objective is to avoid frustration and misinterpretations; being proactive is more efficient. Such information provision should be closely coordinated with the determining authority.

Good practice

Develop and regularly update frequently asked questions and answers that can be used before but especially also during situations of high influx.

Organise regular meetings between reception beneficiaries and staff.

• The phase of review and adjust

It is recommended that the relationship with reception beneficiaries be built on, including launching a survey among applicants for international protection to discover which elements were perceived as positive and which as less positive during the high-influx situation. This exercise could subsequently complement an overall 'lessons learnt' exercise.

5. External communication with society and the media

• The phase of prepare and develop

In a period of high influx, a specially adapted communication plan should be prepared and implemented, based on the regular communication strategy and focusing on the aspects in the box.

Aspects to be included in a communication plan adapted to high-influx situations
☐ Specify the objective of the communication.
☐ Highlight key messages to be communicated to external stakeholders.
☐ Clarify procedures on how to deal with media requests, including identification of spokespersons.
☐ Address and provide guidance on sensitive aspects that might give rise to criticisms or tensions.
☐ Provide guidance on how to deal with information concerning the work of the reception agency on social media.

This plan should clearly specify the principle objective for communication during the specific high-influx situation. Keep a positive though balanced vision of the organisation as well as its role and mandate. This involves the preparation of certain aspects that are specifically linked to the high influx context and to anticipate critics or tensions that can arise in the media as well as a response system for these. Any communication plan should consider information published by the reception authority and other actors on social media.

As part of the communication plan, key messages that need to be externally communicated to the media should be defined. These should be clear and short in order to reach recipients that might not be familiar with official policy and interests in a way that they would be fully understood. Lastly, the development of a communication plan should entail a policy on what to do and should involve relevant spokespersons to deal with any requests from the media. This person should be trained in media communication (*cf. Chapter K — Human resources*). Only authorised spokespersons should speak for and communicate on the high-influx situation. The guidelines and the communication channels during the 'respond and lead' phase of the plan are pre-agreed.

Good practice

Insert a clause on communication with the media and the society within public tenders and make volunteers sign an agreement on communication

• The phase of respond and lead

The principle points to take into account in the ‘respond and lead’ phase are as follows:

- Issue holding statements immediately after a high influx, to be used for a wide variety of scenarios to which the organisation is perceived to be vulnerable, based on the assessment that was conducted previously and the reality of the situation itself. Written and verbal initial comments should be pre-agreed for immediate reactions, with no delays and to maintain balanced communication on the situation.
- Maintain continuous communication with society and media via different communication channels, including:

updated information on the Agency’s website and social media channels	press releases	invitations to the representatives of the local community to meet and talk about the situation and measures taken

- Be consistent over communication with other authorities and stakeholders involved such as the determination body or medical services through the use of coordination mechanisms if need be (*cf.* *Chapter G — External coordination*).
- Be clear about the limitations of your role and mandate.
- Ensure that the internal communication service is informed about the current situation and the measures in place (*cf.* *Internal communication*).

Good practice

It is considered good practice to have a dialogue with the local community before opening a new reception facility (e.g. public meetings, newsletters) and, after opening, to invest in initiatives that include the neighbours. These might include meetings where neighbourhood residents can come to listen and learn more about the reception centre and the asylum process.

A visit by the media before the opening of a centre is an efficient way to ensure that the public are informed.

• The phase of review and adjust

The following questions should be raised in this phase:

- Was anything lacking in the communication plan?
- Did any unexpected surprises come up related to communication through the media?

At the same time, the reception authority should proactively communicate and underline the positive aspects and achievements resulting from the influx period in the media. It is recommended that the authority build upon any positive relations that were created during the high-influx situation and reinforce its cooperation and communication with media representatives to ensure that messages are transmitted in a more efficient and effective way in the future.

G. External coordination

1. Introduction

The term external coordination refers to the reception authorities' coordination with other external actors through the execution of planning, joint actions, organising, influencing and controlling. The term **external actors** refers in this context to all other actors related to reception.

To manage exceptional situations in the national reception system, reception authorities depend on different external actors such as determining and migration authorities, security authorities, regional and local authorities, civil society organisations and volunteers.

To be able to manage exceptional situations, it is important to coordinate with all external actors. The purpose of coordination is to marshal and utilise the total resources available in the most efficient way possible to handle the situation at hand. The principle of cooperation means that all authorities and organisations have an independent responsibility to ensure the best possible coordination with other relevant actors in prevention or management of a possible emergency situation. All stakeholders should be involved, to the extent possible, in the design of a contingency plan.

A general framework of cooperation between authorities can be stipulated by the political or administrative authority concerned. For more detailed arrangements, as well as cooperation between other stakeholders it is necessary to work together while developing the contingency plan. If there is no plan at a higher level, then all arrangements have to be organised by the authorities themselves.

During the development of the plan, the authorities are advised to carry out a broad range of research into which institutions could help to achieve the stipulated goals in the most efficient way. Even if there is no plan at a higher level, ministerial or national, any lack of coherence between equivalent authorities should be solved by the political or administrative authority concerned.

This section will focus on coordination with the following actors:

Determining and migration authorities	Operational reception partners	Civil society, other authorities and volunteers
All authorities dealing with the determination of international protection, including registration, the Dublin regulation, the asylum procedure directive and the qualification directive.	All possible actors who are directly involved in reception activities. These can be national, regional and local authorities, private companies or public authorities and humanitarian organisations managing reception facilities.	All others actors who are influencing or contributing to reception and are as such involved.

The objective is to shorten communication and decision chains while ensuring that all actions are broadly supported and understood.

Contingency plans for handling high-influx situations should as far as possible make use of, and be consistent with, already established channels and arrangements for coordination between authorities and organisations, for example existing routines and arrangements related to emergency and evacuation plans on the national and regional levels.

2. The phase of prepare and develop

It is paramount that all relevant actors familiarise themselves with the processes, workflow and mandate of reception in advance. They have to be fully aware about what challenges await the reception system in times of high influx. These other actors can become a great help or a heavy obstacle in facing these challenges. Therefore, the necessary coordination and cooperation protocols and memorandum of understanding should be agreed upon in advance.

• Determining and migration authorities

The link between the reception and determining authorities is evident. In high-influx situations, the processing time for asylum procedures will most probably be delayed. The speed with which determining authorities decide on asylum demands determines the speed of the outflow from the reception network. This influences the total amount of reception places and financial investment needed. The cost of increasing the decision-making capacity of the determining authorities is lower than the cost of creating new reception places and so it is preferable to invest in the means to upscale the decision-making capacity, by hiring staff and investing in training, without losing quality in the decision-making capacity. The independence of determining authorities, especially appeal authorities, makes this coordination challenging.

Several measures are possible to link the contingency planning of asylum and reception, keeping in mind that the quality of the asylum procedure should be guaranteed regardless of the situation. In order to estimate the necessary reception capacity, a continued, structured and mutual exchange of data on the expected and effective inflow and outflow should be shared as well as data on the average duration of decision-making on applications for international protection. A common database between determining, migration and reception authorities can facilitate the monitoring process considerably. A consultative structure should be created between reception and determining and migration authorities, eventually complemented with other relevant actors, such as those dealing with schooling, housing and integration, which can be quickly activated when necessary. If possible, the different authorities should be moved to the same location.

The focus should not only be on reception capacity extension and increased decision-making capacity but also on other steps in the asylum process such as facilitating integration for applicants for international protection that receive a positive decision and voluntary and forced return for applicants with a negative decision.

It is important to address the issue of outflow with the determining and migration authorities and other related services or administrations, with the objective of accelerating outflow by fast-track procedures, (e.g. Dublin cases, age assessment of unaccompanied children) taking into account the necessary safeguards. An extended stay in a reception centre can take a psychological toll on residents and can make it harder to manage the centre, due to tensions or institutionalisation of applicants.

Both the reception and the determining authorities have to pay attention to the specific situation of people with special needs, for example medical profiles, unaccompanied children, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people, etc. The reception and decision process for people with special needs differs from that for the generic applicant for international protection. Therefore specific measures should be prepared in case of an increased influx of persons with special needs. If the influx rises overall, a higher influx can be expected. But the influx of people with special needs can also rise when the overall influx is stable (e.g. more medical profiles due to resettlement). Both scenarios have to be considered and integrated in the contingency plans.

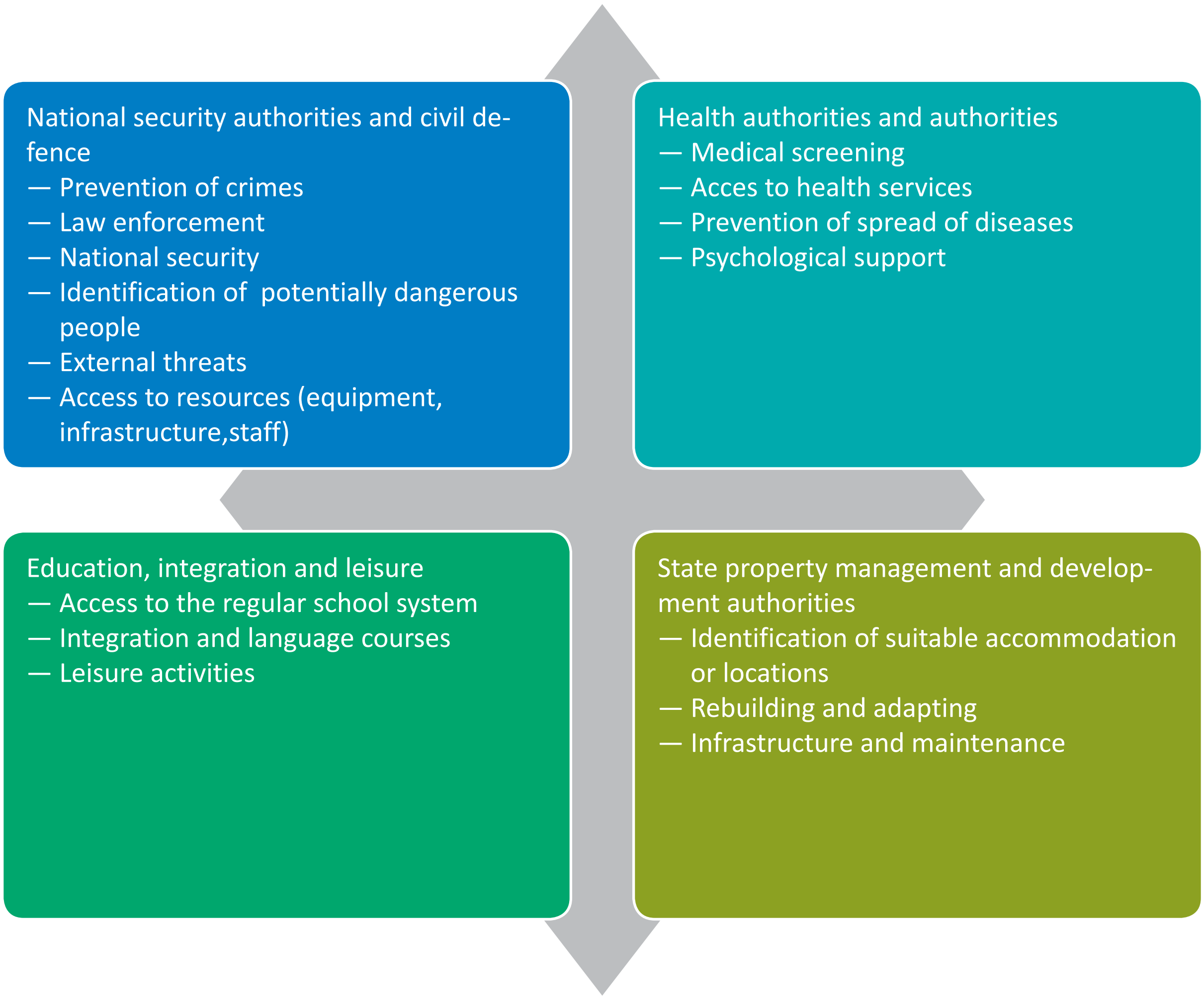
• Operational reception partners

Contingency plans for handling high-influx situations should include a description of the relevant stakeholders' mandates, existing or prearranged contact points and what resources the stakeholders could contribute in a contingency situation. They should make provisions for mobilisation, establishment and management of the coordination with such stakeholders. This includes specifying the internal responsibilities with regard to managing such communication and coordination with external authorities and organisations.

The appropriate channels for coordination with the different stakeholders and actors should be identified and planned for. The main mechanisms for structured coordination between authorities are: written or verbal communication; regular meetings between a designated set of people; use of prearranged mailing lists for dispersing specific types of information; and exchange of liaison officers between authorities.

The proximity principle, which stipulates that a crisis should organisationally be handled at the lowest possible level, should be adopted as a basic principle in any contingency plan. Contingency plans for high-influx situations should however lay a framework for cooperation and coordination between authorities at both strategic and operational levels, and specify clearly which matters should be handled at each level.

Some authorities and organisations must be included in planning and coordination on a strategic level. Other organisations are more relevant on an operational level. The authorities that are crucial for establishing a comprehensive situational strategy should be identified and clear mechanisms for involvement should be established in the form of pre-established cooperation agreements and signed memorandums of understanding. This should in most cases include national security authorities and national health and education services. Civil defence authorities are also highly relevant on this level and can often provide both a general competence in handling emergency situations and important operational services. National actors that have a role in coordination between different levels of government (county governors, etc.) are also highly relevant on this level.



Preparedness with regard to coordination may include, as mentioned before, pre-established cooperation agreements that specify what resources can be made available, when these resources will be accessible and how the assistance is to be coordinated (liaison, etc.). Partnerships with private operators and the scope to subcontract should be considered. To avoid losing time during the 'respond and lead' phase, market research should be carried out and a list drawn up of potential companies that could provide services during the high-influx situation. For the most crucial resources, pre-arranged framework agreements should be considered. The agreements or contracts can regard extra capacity which is ready for use under precisely stipulated circumstances (i.e. when the emergency situation starts). This solution is dependent on the national situation and reception systems — including the obligation to apply tender procedures and financial possibilities.

Involvement in plans for new reception facilities should also be achieved at the earliest stage possible. This should include local law enforcement, health services and community organisations.

Good practice

It is considered good practice to use measures established by the reception authorities for handling high-influx situations to enhance the general preparedness of society by providing means for handling emergencies that require solutions for the accommodation of a large number of people (evacuations, etc.). In an EU + state, the civil defence corps is responsible for the storage and maintenance of the reception authorities' tents and beds that will be used to accommodate applicants for international protection. The corps is also responsbile for setting up the tents and, if necessary, operating a tent camp until a regular operator is in place. In return, the tents are placed at the disposal of the civil defence corps for use in national emergencies, and thereby enhance the general national preparedness level. Such dual-use with its associated gains may also help to legitimise the costs of preparedness measures which would otherwise not be deemed to have a financial basis.

• Civil society, other authorities and volunteers

Civil society organisations that have a mandate with regard to humanitarian support and civil rights should be considered for early involvement. When making agreements with CSOs to give access to the reception facilities, the description of their roles and functions is of major importance as well as how the coordination of the activities will be managed by the reception authority. Such agreements should also include screening of staff and should require everyone who is in direct contact with applicants for international protection, especially children and people with special needs, to sign a code of conduct.

When developing a contingency plan, it can be very helpful to contain support from civil society (NGOs, individual volunteers, members of the migrant diaspora, etc.). Appropriate public communication regarding the involvement of civil society in collecting goods or providing services can generate an output such as a database of potential support services (translation, cultural mediation, mentoring, etc.) and means (e.g. clothes, toys, other donations) and also housing (for instance, landlords who are willing to rent houses, or buildings that could be used for accommodation). Balanced communication is important to avoid an overwhelming volume of donations or to give the impression that the situation is out of control.

A list of stakeholders can be created at this stage, including all the organisations (NGOs, local and national authorities, companies, volunteers, etc.) that could potentially contribute to meeting reception needs.

3. The phase of respond and lead

• Determining and migration authorities

This phase sees the activation of the prepared measures based on the early alert system. Statistics issued by the national determining and migration authorities are an important source for estimating the reception capacity requirements. Information from European institutions and other EU + states can also be used. Ideally a system is put in place to monitor threshold values that serve as an early alert system (*cf. Chapter C — Monitoring and evaluation*) which can indicate if special measures should be taken.

Once the contingency plan has been activated, regular meetings with asylum and migration administrations are needed to inform them about the reception situation and the expected evolution. This creates a situational awareness which means that reception, determining and migration authorities will be more likely to act in the coherent way.

• Operational reception partners

External coordination should be initiated at the appropriate **level**. It is recommended that initial meetings include higher levels in the relevant organisations and that subsequent coordination activities on lower levels are given a clear mandate and scope.

Care should be taken that the meeting points and other means of coordination are implemented as agreed upon and that necessary changes in the routines are cleared at the appropriate levels in each organisation.

It is recommended that regular meetings are conducted between the principal actors involved in the handling of the processes connected to people applying for protection in a large influx situation. Regular meetings should be based on prearranged participation, fixed agenda items and prepared and standardised reporting on key data such as number of new arrivals, distribution of these on different nationalities, number of residents in reception centres, and data on processing times and size of backlog for key operations in the asylum process. Such an overview of key information can be obtained either by retrieving the necessary information from a shared database, if available, prior to the meeting or by an arrangement whereby each authority provides key information on its areas of responsibility in the meeting.

Good practice

Exchange of information between authorities that cooperate on multiple levels through liaison officers are often recommended as this arrangement ensures that the relevant information is filtered and is understood by the receiver in the correct context. The liaison officer also ensures that information is transmitted to — and received by — the relevant people on the right level.

Coordination on local and operational levels should be initiated with a clear mandate from the central level in all involved authorities, and relevant guidelines for such coordination should be provided with the mandate. It is recommended that such guidelines give the necessary room for manoeuvre and adaptation on the local level.

Early involvement at the appropriate level of other state authorities that are relevant at the strategic level should be given a high priority. The focus should initially be on establishing a shared situational awareness, and identifying what contributions the respective authorities can provide in handling the situation. Situational strategies evolved in this way should then be made operational through the prearranged means of coordination.

In this context, it is recommended that procedures for coordination with local law enforcement in connection with reception facilities are implemented at the earliest possible moment, especially with regard to planned or newly established facilities. There should also be a strong focus on cooperation in assessing external threats toward reception and processing facilities at both local and national levels. Priority should be given to implementing the arrangements for keeping relevant national security authorities continuously updated on newly arrived applicants for international protection, to ensure that these authorities can analyse the composition of the applicants for international protection that have arrived and follow up on persons of interest.

- ### Civil society, other authorities and volunteers

The reception authorities should plan a joint meeting with the most relevant civil society organisations as early as possible in a situation of high influx. The first meeting should be attended by high-level representatives from all organisations and the agenda should focus on identifying areas where humanitarian organisations can contribute most effectively and on establishing an overall framework for further cooperation.

Any activities that humanitarian organisations provide for applicants for international protection should be coordinated as closely as possible. Problems with regard to their role and functions should be identified as early as possible and resolved through prearranged means for coordination (regular meetings, etc.). Special care should be given to monitoring humanitarian workers who come into contact with children and other people in vulnerable situations.

Volunteers' access to applicants for international protection in reception and processing facilities should be actively managed and regulated by reception authorities, operational partners and/or civil society organisations, with attention to complementarity and avoiding duplication. This is especially important with regard to their access to children and other vulnerable groups.

Volunteers' access can be regulated either by the reception authorities or by structured cooperation with humanitarian organisations. Management by structured cooperation with responsible humanitarian organisations is recommended if this is possible in the national context, preferably by an arrangement whereby volunteers are referred to such organisations. Training and briefing about roles can be given by the humanitarian organisations under such arrangements.

If the reception authority makes direct use of volunteers it is recommended that dedicated staff be given the responsibility to provide code of conducts, training and clarification of roles, coordinate the volunteers' contributions and manage their access to applicants for international protection in reception.

The training and use of volunteers should be actively monitored at the central level and clear guidelines for such use should be provided at the local level.

4. The phase of review and adjust

• Determining and migration authorities

The contingency plan should include all links in the asylum process and transcend the barriers between authorities. A review point is recommended during this phase with both asylum and reception authorities. This should aim to clarify which measures worked sufficiently well and which measures should be adjusted in order to be prepared for new exceptional situations.

When reception capacity is being downsized, a clear link remains between the decision process and the reception capacity. Arrangements can be made to facilitate the closing of reception facilities. The determining authorities can prioritise cases per site, to create an outflow, and facilities can be closed down quickly. This is to avoid the unnecessary displacement of people within the reception network.

In the context of altered capacities after periods of high influx, the use of existing capacity by another EU + state that is still in need of additional reception capacity should be examined instead of deciding that closing the reception facility is the only possible option. Shared capacity in different EU + states could be created, to allow national authorities to discuss possible cross-border use of accommodation.

Good practice

An EU + state has been using a reception facility in a neighbouring country to host applicants during the asylum determination process, while keeping full responsibility for the asylum procedure and financing the accommodation during that time.

• Operational reception partners

In the 'review and adjust' phase reception authorities should take the initiative to evaluate the coordination efforts with the relevant external actors, identify points for improvement and cooperate in the development of measures to correct weaknesses. Such joint evaluation can be done bilaterally or collectively between all the key governmental actors. The conclusions of these evaluations could provide a basis for later revision of contingency plans in the affected authorities.

Along the same lines as actors at the national level, all actors involved to at least some extent in the response to the high-influx situation should be involved in a 'lessons learnt' exercise which aims at gathering input on positive aspects related to the implementation of the contingency plan, as well as those points that need to be strengthened in future contingency planning.

Good practice

The use of survey software can dramatically reduce the costs associated with retrieving feedback from multiple actors and stakeholders. Such systems can also significantly reduce the time spent on processing, compiling and presenting results of the survey. The same software can, as a next step, be used to retrieve feedback on proposed measures developed to correct weaknesses and faults.

The subsequent review and adjustment of the contingency plan should take place in consultation with all the actors concerned and they should be adequately informed as to what will be expected from them in future situations where the contingency plan needs to be activated.

• Civil society, other authorities and volunteers

After a high-influx situation has been managed, the reception authorities should assess the value of the efforts of the volunteers. The evaluation should identify weaknesses in the use of volunteers and relevant measures for ensuring that they can contribute in an appropriate manner in future situations and adjust the contingency plan accordingly. Reception authorities can also consider using surveys to obtain feedback directly from volunteers or retrieving the feedback through the relevant humanitarian organisations the volunteers were associated with.

H. Budget management and financial resources

1. Introduction

All EU + state reception authorities work with a budget, prepared on the basis of forecasts for the coming period. The degree of accuracy of the forecast for inflow, outflow, occupation rate and required reception capacity determines the degree of accuracy of the required budget.

However in contingency planning reception authorities are preparing for situations that normally have not been foreseen. If this situation has an impact on the entire reception system or on most of the budget period, it is probable that the forecast budget will not match the financial needs for organising the required reception capacity.

The budget, or rather the lack of it, can be a major obstacle when reception authorities are trying to execute a contingency plan. Actors in both the private and the public sectors will not offer their goods or services if payment cannot be guaranteed within a reasonable time.

Different measures can be taken to help remove potential obstacles before an unforeseen situation.

2. The phase of prepare and develop

• Scenario-based budgeting

Most public authorities or private companies find budgeting a formidable challenge even under stable conditions. Under volatile conditions, when forecasts change from week to week, developing a reliable budget for a longer period in the future (e.g. next fiscal year) is very difficult. Those volatile conditions apply to reception authorities given the difficulty in predicting future influx. Advanced monitoring and analysis of relevant influx data may increase the reliability of the predictions and the budget forecast, but it can never be 100 % certain.

One option for handling uncertainty is to budget based on a worst-case scenario. This means that a certain error margin is taken into account to cover expenses for an unexpected event. On the other hand, budgeting based on a best-case scenario is more risky.

In the end it is all about getting adequate insurance against unexpected events. Just as individual people insure themselves in their day-to-day life against the risks of unexpected events, a reception authority can insure itself against the risk of high influx. The major question is how much a reception authority is willing to pay to for this. This largely depends on the probability of the risk, which varies widely from state to state. It also depends on the coverage that the authority wishes to obtain — be it complete or partial — which in turn depends greatly on the available budget in the state concerned. Because budgets are not unlimited, the reception authority should not be over-insured, with so-called excess insurance, considering the principle that the government should use the taxpayers' money in a prudent manner.

Good practices

Maintaining a high occupation rate without a mechanism in place to rapidly increase the overall capacity is very risky.

Taking this into consideration, **extra places which are non-operational but can be quickly activated** offer relatively good and efficient coverage against the risks of high influx from an insurance point of view (*cf. Chapter I — Housing capacity*). They cost less compared to places that remain operational, but offer almost the same guarantees (provided there are sufficiently flexible mechanisms to quickly adapt the budget once these extra places have been activated and are operational).

Keeping more staff or having a recruitment pool for handling cases in case of a sudden increase of influx is often more efficient than maintaining reception capacity because the cost of reception capacity is generally higher than the cost of case handling (especially in the respond and lead phase). An additional benefit of this type of insurance is that reception capacity can be held at a more stable level so that more sustainable investments in infrastructure (e.g. renovation works to improve the quality of the building) and staff (e.g. training) are possible. Big fluctuations in reception capacity imply the loss of many of those material and immaterial assets.

• Foreseeing budgetary flexibility

Given the difficulty of budget forecasting in the field of reception, following the traditional budget process may even be unproductive. Therefore, it is recommended that sufficiently flexibility mechanisms are foreseen to allow the budget to adapt to the new circumstances. These mechanisms can be:

- automatic adaption of the budget depending on the influx of reception beneficiaries;
- budgeting for shorter periods (e.g. quarterly budgeting instead of yearly budgeting) or reviewing the budget more frequently (e.g. four times a year instead of one);
- rapid and specific emergency procedures for demanding additional resources;
- establishing financial reserves that can be used awaiting a formal increase of the reception budget.

The lack of such flexibility mechanisms is a risk. It makes reception authorities unable to contract legal commitments with partners who provide reception facilities. Unless these partners can pre-finance at their own risk, precious time can be lost here.

• Preparation of efficient strategies

In the 'prepare and develop' phase, reception authorities should reflect on strategies to save money in the 'respond and lead' phase. From a readiness point of view, it is better to adjust the size of the reception facilities than to build up a new facility or abolish one, as expenses are higher in the latter case.

The law of supply and demand applies to reception as well. If demand is much higher than supply, prices will quickly rise and/or delivery times will extend. During the 2015 period of high influx in the EU, different EU + states faced great shortages of containers, beds, mattresses, etc. Because of this, prices and delivery times rose.

A possible strategy could be to obtain strategic stocks of necessary products. Of course, the cost of inventory management (stock, security, control, etc.) should be weighed against the possible benefits.

Another efficient strategy is to seek 'scale' effects by sharing stocks with other public or private bodies that need the same assets (e.g. sharing stocks of essential supplies such as beds and blankets with humanitarian organisations that provide aid in emergency situations).

• Mapping of available EU or national emergency funds

It can be useful to investigate and list in advance the different national and European funds that provide financial assistance in case of emergency and to prepare the procedures for accessing this assistance to save time in the 'respond and lead' phase.

The more important European funding and support instruments in this field are:

- the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF);
- the Internal Security Fund — Borders and Visa (ISF — Borders and Visa);
- the Emergency Support Instrument;
- the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.

More information can be found at: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/financing/fundings/migration-asylum-borders/asylum-migration-integration-fund_en

3. The phase of respond and lead

Budget forecasting for reception is already difficult in normal times and becomes even more complicated in times of high influx. Therefore, it can be useful to increase the frequency of budget forecasts.

An **effective monitoring mechanism** should be put in place to monitor the expenses and the financial needs in real time and to measure the budgetary impact of the implementation of the contingency plan.

These financial analyses can be used to motivate and justify additional budget demands for the reception authority and the use of the budgetary flexibility mechanisms that exist in the EU + state concerned.

The exceptional expenses for reception can have a significant effect on the national budget and affect EU + states' ability to meet the requirements of the **European Stability and Growth Pact** (SGP). The SGP aims to prevent and correct excessive budget deficits or excessive public debt burdens. During the recent period of high influx, the European Commission agreed to grant the appropriate breathing space allowed for by the pact to address 'unusual events outside the control of the EU + states' with a major impact on their public finances. Specifically, EU + states can submit a **request to the Commission** to take into account the exceptional additional resources allocated for assisting applicants.

Speed is paramount in the 'respond and lead' phase. Contracts have to be drawn up much faster than in normal times in order to get the necessary supplies at the right time. Errors and mistakes in procedure are more likely to arise in these circumstances. For reasons of financial control and audit, it is very important to keep **track of procedural and financial irregularities** in the procurement of services and supplies (*see also* *Chapter H — Procurement*) and to build in time after the crisis to regulate these administrative mistakes.

4. The phase of review and adjust

This phase should be used to evaluate and occasionally adapt the budget forecasting and the existing flexibility mechanisms and to decide on new thresholds in the risk assessment if needed.

This time should also be used to handle procedural and financial irregularities that were tracked during the implementation phase and could not be fixed immediately.

It is recommended that the reception budget be linked with an evaluated processing time for the asylum requests, and with reception beneficiaries' profiles and needs.

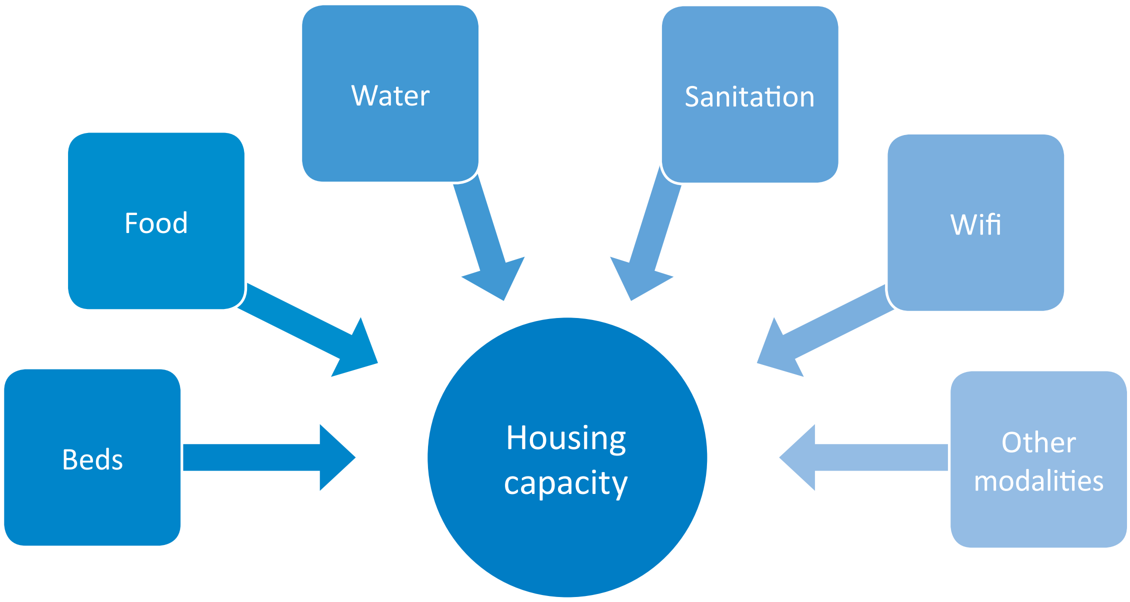
I. Housing capacity

1. Introduction

Housing of the applicants is one of the biggest challenges in contingency planning. If there is a sudden extra need for capacity it is difficult, and usually more expensive, to find enough housing of acceptable quality. Therefore, it is important to be prepared.

Definitions

In this section the expression **housing capacity** means more than just the real estate, as illustrated in the figure below (for the logistics involved, see *Chapter J — Resource management*).



Extra capacity refers to vacant capacity, either own capacity or through activating external service providers, that the reception authorities are certain to have at their disposal in the short term.

2. The phase of prepare and develop

During this phase, the reception authority can prepare itself for the actions needed to scale up capacity fast through a comprehensive registration of all available capacity as well as a clear determination of the responsiveness of the reception system.

- **Ensure up-to-date registration of available capacity**

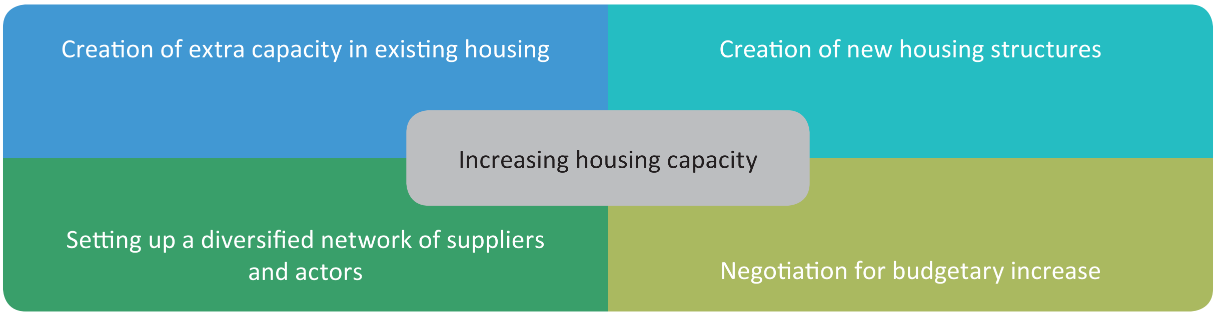
Registration of available capacity and occupancy is essential for efficient utilisation of existing capacity, for planning for extra capacity and to address the needs of people with special reception needs. In times of a high influx it is important that everybody in the reception system is registered, preferably in a centralised and/or decentralised accessible system. This is also useful to facilitate asylum interviews (*cf. first bullet point, Determining and migration authorities, in Chapter G.2 on coordination with the determining authority*). Extra human resources might be needed in order to maintain registration during high influx (*see also Chapter K — Human resources)*. Extra attention to the process of identification and registration in the beginning of the influx pays off later on.

• Determine the needs for and requirements of extra capacity

Determining the need for extra housing capacity is the result of an assessment of the dynamics between inflow and outflow:

- When the inflow goes up and the outflow is stable, more capacity is needed and vice versa.
- When it takes more time to make a decision on an asylum procedure, applicants' stay in the reception facility will be longer and there will be a higher need for capacity (*see Chapter G.2 on external coordination/determining and migration authorities*).
- Assess the time that is needed to find other solutions for scaling up capacity.

Based on the available capacity and the determined responsiveness, the objective in this phase is to develop different **possibilities** to increase housing capacity.



The **amount** of extra capacity that can be created depends on:

- the budget that is available;
- the costs of extra capacity.

✓ Think about the immediateness and certainty of your extra capacity and build a portfolio based on this.

Some measures allow an increase in housing capacity in a sure and immediate way, for example by increasing capacity within the existing reception facility, while it is only possible to implement others in the longer term or they might be less certain. A combination of certain and less certain, as well as immediate and less immediate, available measures is recommendable.

Within the extra capacity it is necessary to pay attention to the need for extra or special capacity for applicants with special needs. It is likely that when, for example, the general influx goes up, the influx of people with special needs will also go up.

The geographical distribution of the extra capacity should be considered, depending on the situation in the EU + state. For some EU + states it may be advisable to organise extra capacity in the proximity of the borders; for others it may be advisable to organise the extra capacity in the neighbourhood of the places where the asylum procedure is being handled and for still others a balanced geographical distribution is important. As mentioned above, the possibility of exchanging housing capacities between EU+ states is worth examining.

• Create extra capacity

The extra capacity, as defined in the introduction, may come in different forms:

- increasing capacity within an active reception facility (e.g. empty rooms or buildings on the premises, using common areas as bedrooms) to benefit from the existing staff and the network around the reception centre (e.g. schools and medical services);
- keeping an empty reception centre;
- an area, inside or outside the premises of an active reception centre, with only infrastructure on the ground (e.g. electricity, water supplies and sewerage) and a contract enabling a company to build extra housing capacity;
- a prearranged contract with external service providers (e.g. private actors, national real estate suppliers) with a minimum cost or without paying for empty places;
- other alternatives, like contingency clauses in framework contracts (e.g. urgent delivery).

Good practice

Arrange for the necessary permits for opening new housing capacity to save time or arrange for a general exception for setting up reception facilities in case of an high-influx situation.

Make sure that the (public and private) service providers (e.g. schools, catering, medical services, police, etc.) in the neighbourhood are informed about and prepared for the possibility of extra capacity

• Management and planning of the extra capacity

It is recommended that a dynamic system to manage and monitor available extra capacity be established (e.g. registering all locations according to certain elements such as availability price, capacity, quality and suitability for special reception needs).

✓ Take the potential upscaling or downscaling into account in the opening phase.

The prioritisation of the possibility to scale up or down should be addressed. It is a part of a contingency plan that actors know up front what to do and when to do it. Depending on the number of places needed and the speed with which they are required, measures may be deployed one after another or simultaneously.

• Prepare for the acquisition of new capacity

Procedure

Tools to prepare for the fast acquisition of new housing capacity
☐ Checklists for the acquisition of new centres (quality standards, relevant safety criteria, infrastructure and availability of services)
☐ Clear procedure for validation of new locations
☐ Standard contracts

If the extra capacity prepared is not sufficient, the housing capacity might have to be extended through the acquisition of new locations. In order to proceed fast when needed, it is advisable to prepare in advance: checklists for the acquisition of new facilities (e.g. quality standards, safety criteria, infrastructure, availability of services, etc.) and standard contracts should be available and a clear procedure for validation of a new location should be in place.

Setting up a network of suppliers and other actors

Having a good network of suppliers of housing capacity can help to speed up the acquisition of new capacity. This means that, even in times of relatively smooth fluctuations inoccupation, this network needs to be informed about the situation and expectations so that members of it can act fast if necessary. These expectations may be already organised in procurement contracts (tendering) (*cf. Chapter J.2.1.*)

3. The phase of respond and lead

In this phase there is a sudden need for extra capacity. This section will examine the possibilities to scale up the capacity or to reduce the need for capacity. The following are some of the possible measures.

Raise the occupation rate in the reception system

- Inform the operators about the situation of high influx and the urgent need for capacity.
- Make the necessary arrangements with operators to make the increase of the occupation rate possible (e.g. suspending renovation works, reducing 'lost beds' because of mismatch).

Deploy the prepared extra capacity

- The extra capacity that has prepared can be deployed. Depending on the form of extra capacity all sorts of actions are necessary for the stakeholders in the neighbourhood of the extra capacity.

Expand capacity in the locations that are already in use

- Expanding capacity in the locations that are already in use has the benefit that the network of stakeholders and necessary partners is already active and 'only' needs to be scaled up. This can be done through the contracts which have been prepared in the phase of preparedness and public procurement may be a part of the preparation. Possibilities of using mobile structures can be considered.

Expand capacity through acquiring new locations

- The acquisition of new locations will be done differently within the national context of each EU + Member State and will also depend on the responsibilities of the reception authority. The new locations may have been buildings which were used by (other) ministries, such as army barracks, former hospitals or office buildings, etc. Another possibility is that the capacity is organised by other (public) actors such as NGOs or municipalities or by procurement on the private market.

Facilitate measures for applicants to stay outside the reception facilities

- The reception conditions directive gives the EU + states the responsibility of providing applicants with the material reception conditions, including housing, via a financial allowance instead of in kind (and in accordance with the possibility of finding suitable housing). If the applicant for international protection stays within the reception system but does not need reception capacity, he or she will still have the same rights as mentioned in the RCD.

Promote outflow measures

- Promote outflow measures to prevent the reception system from becoming overcrowded. The occupation rate is the result of influx minus outflow. Possible measures on outflow are: (1) speeding up the outflow of permit holders to municipalities; (2) speeding up the outflow of applicants with a Dublin claim; and (3) speed up the outflow of people who are not entitled to reception.

Good practice

In times of a sudden increase in occupation and in housing capacity, there is an extra need for coordination of which reception facility is opened and to which facility people (e.g. with special reception needs) go. This coordination (mandate, hierarchy, communication lines, financial mandate, meetings, etc.) should be agreed upon in advance and people and functions should also be assigned, as well as determining how their day-to-day tasks will be carried out.

4. The phase of review and adjust

During the phase of review and adjust, business adjusts to the new situation. This can lead to two scenarios:

1. The organisation has adapted to the new situation and new reality. In this scenario it might be possible to take the time and build up the extra capacity again and focus on the quality and the costs of the capacity.

2. The sudden extra need for capacity is no longer present. In this scenario it is time to select the locations or facilities which are important to the operational management in terms of finance, geographic area, value to the chain process, local and political foundation, quality, etc. This knowledge helps in scaling down and deciding which locations the reception organisation wants to keep and which locations can be closed. Scaling down is the ideal moment to create some sort of extra capacity and to select the facilities of better quality, to be better prepared for the next high-influx situation.

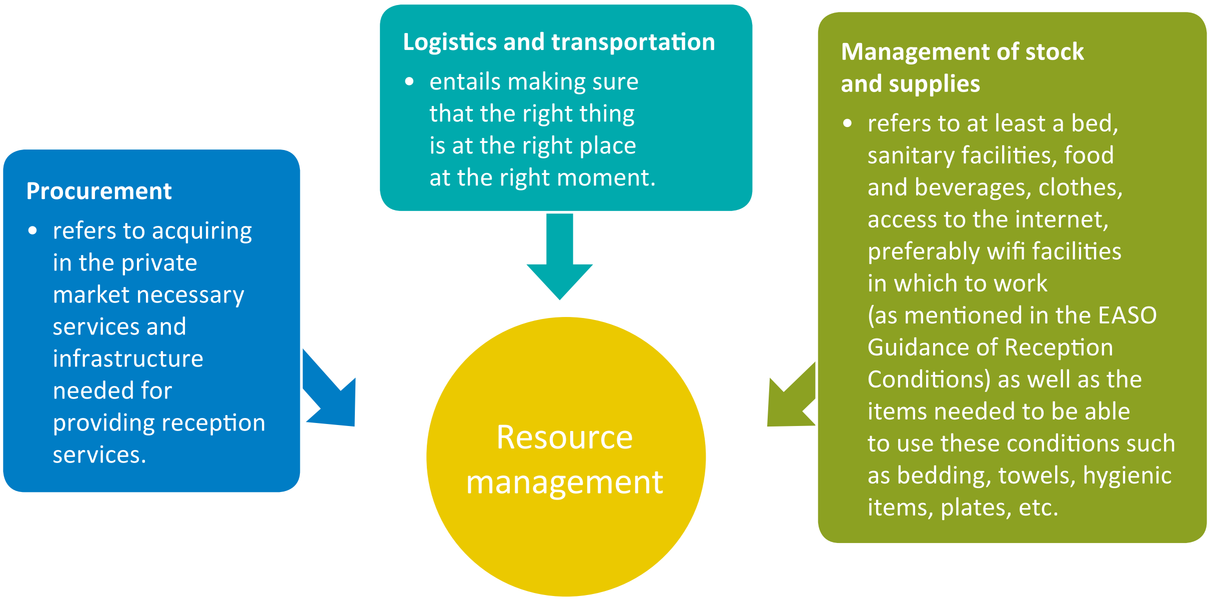
The high-influx phase should be reviewed so that lessons learned can be implemented within the organisation and make it better prepared for a possible new high influx.

Questions/topics to cover during the review and adjust phase
☐ Capacity and timing: did the portfolio match the required capacity and did the timing work?
☐ Partners: who were the most effective partners (based on quality, cost efficiency, flexibility)?
☐ Which contracts were not respected and what was the reason? Is it possible to take legal steps?
☐ Were contractual obligations met?
☐ Process: which (part of) the process to increase capacity needs adjustment?
☐ Evaluation of the portfolio of reception locations (based on quality, cost-efficiency, etc.): which capacity can be kept as (future) extra capacity?

J. Resources management

1. Introduction

Obtaining new resources, managing a wide set of resources and finding alternatives for resources could be challenging in times of high influx. Different types of resources have to be made accessible at the right time and in the right place. This section focuses on (1) procurement, (2) logistics and transportation and (3) management of stock and supplies (including IT tools).



2. The phase of prepare and develop

The objective is to prepare all processes in order to ensure that everything works efficiently whenever things need to move faster in a high-influx situation. For each sub-section, make sure that checklists are provided so that the reception authorities can be better prepared.

• Procurement

The challenge is to find ways to acquire the necessary resources through procedures that are both cost and time efficient and legal. When drawing up the specifications for the contract, the reception authority should consider that the inflows and outflows of applicants are not stable figures and are very difficult to forecast. The need for certain supplies, products or services will therefore change accordingly. It might be relevant to refer to the communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament and the Council (COM(2015) 454) on 'Public procurement rules in connection with the current asylum crisis', which describes more precise and useful guidelines for the preparation of contracts (framework agreements, emergency procedures, etc.) that comply with the law. Collaboration between EU Member States on joint procurement should be promoted as they all have the same needs.

Good practice

Public procurement is a good way of maintaining a good network of suppliers of housing capacity. This is not a procedure can easily be carried out when the high influx is a fact. It must be made in advance.

Preparatory steps from a procurement perspective
☐ Make an assessment of the needs for procurement and public tendering for the services and supplies in case of high influx.
☐ Carry out a mapping of possible suppliers for key resources and prioritise them.
☐ Draw up specifications and contract templates for tendering for the services and supplies needed.
☐ Establish clear procedures and activating mechanisms that can be put in place in a high-influx situation.
☐ Have the procurement done beforehand, for example by use of framework agreements.

The term of delivery might be different in a normal situation and in a situation of high influx. EU tendering rules provide a possibility for a dynamic tendering procedure commonly used for off-the-shelf products, works or services which are generally available on the market. This should be prepared to give relief in the phase of high influx.

Having contact with different suppliers for a product makes the EU + state more flexible and less dependent on one supplier.

In general, if the required time to deliver is short, the contract partner might have to keep supplies in store, which could raise the price of the product.

The reception authority might consider just-in-time contracts under which the products arrive at the very moment they are needed so the reception authority does not have to store them.

- ## Logistics and transportation

Preparatory steps from a logistics and transportation perspective
☐ Carry out an assessment of the logistics and transportation system to verify whether extra means will be needed in a high-influx situation.
☐ Create a list of contacts (cf. *Chapter G — External coordination*). This list should be up to date.
☐ Plan logistics and transportation of goods and people to new and more remote locations.
☐ Prepare transportation arrangements for applicants with special needs (e.g. taxis, ambulances).
☐ Take into account the timing of logistics and transportation.
☐ Conclude contracts with transportation companies and/or other governmental bodies engaged in transport and logistics.

• Management of stocks and supplies

Preparatory steps from the perspective of management of stocks and supplies
☐ Carry out an assessment of the type and quantity of supplies needed.
☐ Prepare a network of suppliers, always ensuring more than one supplier for each item.
☐ Assess options of stocking vs just in time contracting for items needed, depending on the capacity of companies to deliver quickly and in relation to the quantity of extra supplies needed. The number in stock depends on the time in which companies can deliver them. Update supply inventory so that supply can be ordered efficiently (avoid over or understock).

Depending on the type of extra capacity, food and the preparation of food need to be thought through carefully. There are three options:

- contracting a catering company which prepares the meals outside the reception facility;
- having the meals prepared within the premises (e.g. army barracks);
- letting the applicants prepare their meals on their own.

ICT (means of communication, IT equipment and tools) is also important for staff and applicants.

- For staff: there are two types of communication:
  1. Depending on the size of the reception facility it might be necessary to have an adequate means of communication on the premises, such as walkie-talkies, for the safety of the staff and for reasons of efficiency.
  2. The communication with the head office and planning unit is of importance in managing the flows, therefore the staff need a means of communication. Depending on the situation in the EU + state, the tools could be desktop computers, laptops, etc. One piece of equipment might be enough to start up the new facility, but this would need to be scaled up to the necessary number. Staff training in the use of new communication tools should be carried out.
- For applicants: in the first phase, it is important for them to be able to communicate with their relatives. However, if they stay longer in the facility, it is also important that they can communicate with other people such as lawyers. Communication with relatives nowadays takes place through mobile phones and the internet. To facilitate communication and access to information, access to internet (Wi-Fi) is recommendable, especially because many applicants have a smartphone.

The IT infrastructure should be able to handle sudden increases in demand in existing facilities, and should be set up quickly in new facilities. It should be possible for the tool for the management and the monitoring of the reception system to be scaled up and to be accessible from different places, in alignment with the policy on data protection.

Good practice

Joint use of stocks and supplies can be cost-effective. Cooperation with the army, NGOs, etc. can be useful for the purchase, transport, storage and installation of beds, tents, etc. It is even an option to make the army responsible for the procurement of these joint stocks and supplies.

3. The phase of respond and lead

• Procurement

Procurement might already have been done prior to the sudden influx. However, the need for certain products, supplies or services may be higher in reality than expected. In such a situation there are still several options within the European tendering rules. There are the possibilities for:

- an emergency procedure: this is like the normal public tendering procedure but processing times are much shorter;
- a forced emergency procedure: this procedure makes it possible to start the negotiations for a contract with a supplier straight away. This can only be done in the case of a calamity which could not be foreseen. Strictly interpreted, once the procedure has been used it is difficult to claim a future high influx as 'unforeseen'. The organisation should have learned from the experience (after all, situations of high influx are part of the reception of applicants for international protection) and should have prepared itself.

Good practice

At certain moments of high-influx situations decisions have to be taken more quickly and as a consequence, public tendering rules are not always strictly respected. In that case make sure you keep track of your assessments and the decisions that underlie the choice of procedure, in order to be able to explain the choice later on to an auditing committee.

• Logistics and transportation

Swift logistics and transportation of good and people are key elements in periods of high influx.

When the high influx is there and people need to be moved, for example from the point of entry to a location where they can stay for some time, extra means of logistics and transportation should be deployed in order to be able to move both people and goods. In cases of high influx people with special reception needs require extra attention and some may have to be moved to a hospital or to special (reception) facilities.

Good practice

When people are transported from, for example, the point of entry to a place where they can sleep, it is advisable to organise the transfer of a list of their names from the departure point to the arrival point. This enables the people at the receiving end to know exactly how many people should be in the bus, and who they are. In some cases it might be advisable to have a member of staff in the vehicle too.

• Management of stocks and supplies

When new reception facilities are opened, extra beds and other supplies should come out of stock and be deployed. At the moment the supplies are deployed, new orders need to be issued to refill the stocks, to be prepared for a further influx.

During periods of high influx the IT tools and devices need to be deployed rapidly. For the staff, a means of communication is important condition to be able to work, manage the flow and organise a certain level of safety. For applicants to be able to have contact with relatives, access to the internet and electricity should be arranged. When new facilities are opened, it is important to have a means of communication to the outside world (e.g. to communicate with relatives or emergency services) in addition to mobile devices.

To provide and maintain support, hiring extra helpdesks from an external consultant could be considered (*cf. Chapter K — Human resources*).

Good practice

For short periods of time, the outsourcing of IT services should be considered.

4. The phase of review and adjust

• Procurement

The reception authority should evaluate the contracts and the performance of the suppliers (responsiveness, quality, efficiency, etc.) and check whether the contracts were sufficient to handle the high-influx situation. The result of this evaluation provides input for subsequent contracts.

• Logistics and transportation

The extra means of logistics and transportation may be suspended and transportation revert to normal means. It is necessary in this phase to evaluate the processes and availability of means of transportation and to check if the timing worked. This information can be used to improve in the next ‘prepare and develop’ phase.

• Management of stocks and supplies

When reception facilities are closed, the extra supplies can be sent back to stock or back to the owner if rented. In some cases the stocks need to be refilled. A quality check of the equipment used in other facilities should be done, to assure if old equipment needs to be replaced by the equipment of the closing facility. It is advisable to see if remaining reception locations can be upgraded with the stocks and supplies that have been returned. An evaluation is also advised on whether the stocks and the ‘just-in-time’ contracts were sufficient or need to be adjusted to be prepared for a new high influx.

K. Human resources

1. Introduction

Staff are not only the most valuable asset needed to manage a rise in influx. They are also the most difficult to plan and acquire in advance. A contingency plan should focus not only on staff within the reception facilities, but also on those in the supporting services (e.g. at the headquarters).

2. The phase of prepare and develop

• Effective management of existing human resources

As it takes time to hire new staff, the heaviest burden concerning human resources in case of a high influx initially lies with the existing staff. They should therefore be prepared as much as possible for their specific role in case of a high influx. It is recommended that all profiles within the current workforce are included systematically. A description of their tasks and roles in times of sudden increase of influx should be clearly described in advance. In order to promote mobility, a mapping of available staff should be kept up to date. This ensures that there is knowledge at all times of who can be deployed, where to and to do what tasks.

Preparatory steps for human resources management
☐ Include for all profiles within the current workforce a description of tasks/roles to be taken up during a sudden high influx.
☐ Ensure a balance between old/experienced and new staff.
☐ Train staff that will need to take on new roles in high-influx situations (establishment of ‘flying teams’).
☐ Have a pre-established prioritisation of tasks for staff.
☐ Promote actions for mobility of staff.

Staff members who take up a new role in case of a sudden influx should receive training for these roles in advance (e.g. a deputy director who takes up the role of director, a logistics employee who can help with accounting, etc.). This can take the form of flying squads that are created in the ‘prepare and develop’ phase and can be easily deployed to start a new centre during the implementation phase. The remaining staff will need to divide tasks amongst themselves more efficiently in order to keep the existing facilities running as well. This also implies determining in advance which tasks could be put on hold or carried out to a lesser degree in order to manage the facility while awaiting reinforcements.

There should, ideally, always be a balance between new and experienced staff in order to avoid having a support service or facility run on new staff only.

Good practice

Experienced staff can manage the start-up of new centres and guide new staff and are often referred to as start-up managers. In addition, such start-up managers are well placed to ensure communication with the headquarters support services. A mentoring system in which existing facilities guide and support new facilities has proven to be very effective, provided that the director of the new facility has been given a clear mandate by the director of the existing facility to make use of his/her staff, material, etc. Training of the staff who will have a mentor role and will train the new colleagues is recommended.

• Recruitment of additional human resources

To reduce time to acquire new staff, standardised job descriptions with detailed descriptions of the required skills and tasks should be provided at any time and kept up to date.

The administrative burden during urgent recruiting should be analysed. Every step should be checked to see if it is necessary and if there are opportunities to shorten the process. Urgent procedures can be negotiated with people or organisations that have to give official approval (e.g. director, financial inspector).

Preparatory steps for recruitment
☐ Prepare standardised job descriptions for all profiles.
☐ Prepare standardised organisational charts for all reception facilities.
☐ Minimise administrative procedures for recruitment.
☐ Establish cooperation with national/local employment authorities.
☐ Consider outsourcing recruitment to interim offices.
☐ Set up and maintain recruitment pools.
☐ Develop an HR strategy on how to contract additional staff.
☐ Prepare promotional/awareness-raising audiovisual materials to provide information about the work of the reception authority.

Standardised job descriptions, notices of vacancies, selection tests, etc. should be developed in advance. Required basic skills for new staff should be determined and the jury members for selection procedures could be preassigned. An organisation chart for a standard-sized facility, detailing all the profiles of staff needed to accommodate different target groups (e.g. unaccompanied minors, medical profiles, etc.) could be developed and agreed upon in advance with the relevant services. This framework should be respected as much as possible.

Recruiting methods and procedures and collaboration protocols should be established. The most effective method regarding recruitment in the 'prepare and develop' phase is the setting up and maintenance of recruitment pools. These are crucial for vital functions in the start-up of new centres. Furthermore national or local employment authorities could be contacted in advance to agree upon collaboration protocols which describe how they can rapidly help recruit staff. The outsourcing of recruitment or a part of it (e.g. preselection) to interim offices or other job agencies should also be considered. Secondment agreements could be made with government authorities, NGOs, etc. with similar activities (detention centres, homeless shelters, local shelter initiatives, etc.) to cope with a temporary shortage of staff. Ideally, these people should also receive training in advance.

An efficient HR strategy on how to contract additional staff should be analysed and prepared in advance. A film could be made to show the different roles within centres and in HQ support services. This could then be used during group sessions in municipalities where new facilities will open, at universities at the end of the academic year, etc. These group sessions will give interested people a better image of the content of the work and act as a form of auto-preselection *(cf. Chapter G.2 cooperation with volunteers).*

Good practice

A reception authority should think about the type of contracts that are offered to newly hired staff, keeping in mind the volatile context and the uncertainty about the duration of the high-influx situation. Offering open-ended employment contracts containing a clause that stipulates that the contract will end when the centre closes down can be a good compromise between flexibility and giving a longer-term perspective to the new staff than a temporary contract.

- **Training and coaching of new human resources**

During a high influx there is a risk of focusing more on recruiting and less on training. To guarantee the quality of the reception and keep the staff motivated, training should be given a substantial amount of time. Basic training packages (code of conduct, professional basic attitude, first aid, fire prevention, conflict-solving, asylum law, internal procedures, etc.) should be prepared in advance and be kept up to date. It is also important to make a clear distinction between 'need to have' and 'nice to have' training.

Preparatory steps for staff training
☐ Prepare basic and must-have training packages.
☐ Make use of EASO training modules on reception and related topics.
☐ Develop methodologies for coaching of new staff (peer coaching).

In this respect, it is advisable to make use of EASO-developed training modules on reception and to provide train-the trainer sessions.

Although there is an obvious need for multi-skilled staff, there should also be a balance between multi-skilled and specialised staff and between new and experienced staff. This balance can be achieved by establishing mentorships and help desks.

• Staff training on contingency planning

Staff should be well trained and well prepared with specific attention to and awareness of contingency response exercises. Engaging in scenario-based training in an authentic operational environment provides more realistic decision-making opportunities. It facilitates an efficient training experience in a realistic context and is essential to ensure that staff understand their roles and responsibilities in critical situations and are well equipped to respond.

3. The phase of respond and lead

• Recruiting and training the new staff

It is recommended that the following aspects are taken into account when recruiting new staff.

Use different media channels to inform the people you are hiring (Facebook, LinkedIn, websites, etc.). Ask your current staff to spread the word as well (specifying which skills and competences are required).

Organise **local job events** to present your organisation. Let experienced staff explain the work first hand. In those municipalities where new facilities will open, dedicated information sessions could be organised, explaining what working in a reception facility is like.

Adapt your selection procedure to a swifter process (e.g. organise the selections near the actual location of the facility, decentralise the processes).

Establish **good communication channels between services**, so the HR department can communicate on the progress of a certain selection procedure and in turn receive information on which facilities open when and for which target group (UAM, medical profile, regular, etc.).

Take into account that a lot can change at the last moment (e.g. start-up dates can be postponed or put on hold indefinitely, target groups can change). This information and its changing nature need to be conveyed clearly to new as well as existing staff: focus on the temporary nature and the need for flexibility. In addition take into account the following:

- **Experienced staff can be motivated** to assist in the start-up of new facilities by covering transportation costs, including travel time as working hours or renting of hotel rooms if the facility is far away.
- **Reinforce the HR services themselves** so that they can keep up with workload and ensure smooth recruitment of new staff.
- **Decentralise paperwork:** during the start-up phase of a facility, someone from the HR service has to be on site to manage the paperwork more efficiently (signing of employment contracts and other contracts).
- **Anticipate an initial possible lack** of equipment by proactively developing creative solutions (e.g. overtime registration in the absence of a time clock, organisation of shifts, etc.)
- **Make sure that sufficient staff** who have the expertise to handle important but time-consuming procedures, such as determining seniority, sick-leave, accidents at work, payroll, etc., are on hand

Basic training alone is not sufficient to fully prepare new staff for their job. There is a need for additional coaching as well. At least one experienced colleague should be chosen in each department, team or job category who can help newly recruited staff with a variety of questions (mentoring). This person should be given the necessary time and space to fulfil this task.

Good practice

A help desk system could be created, where experienced staff members answer the questions of new staff from a distance. This can help to spread the burden of assisting new staff.

• Managing the pressure on staff

A period of high influx puts constant and high pressure on staff members in all reception activities. A high level of pressure can be motivating. However, if pressures become unmanageable or excessive, this may lead to stress shown as physiological or psychological illness. People vary in how they react to pressure. What is stimulating for one may be stressful for another. Excessive stress can have an impact on performance, health and relationships. Managers and team leaders should constantly take this into account by monitoring and managing this pressure on their staff members using pre-established indicators (e.g. sick leaves, departures). Effective HR policies should be put in place to prevent sickness due to high work pressure. A pool of experts can be trained as ‘stress teams’ to provide counselling and support.

Finally, it is vital to create effective cooperation between staff and volunteers, to the extent that they are involved, (*see Chapter G.2 on external coordination with volunteers*). Volunteers can soften the burden for staff, but if not organised properly, they can be counterproductive.

Management should keep staff motivated by showing appreciation for their work and engagement on a regular basis and in different ways (writing a personalised thank you letter, putting a video message online, organising a staff event, monetary rewards, etc.)

It is also important that management maintains clear and realistic communication regarding the possible closure of the facility.

4. The phase of review and adjust

This phase should be used to finalise the training of new staff.

If reception capacity has to be downsized, the reception authority should have a well-thought-out HR strategy with clear criteria for lay-offs. Internal and external replacements, involving other authorities that are linked to the reception authority such as the determining and migration authorities, should be considered.

It should always be taken into account that a sufficient number of staff need to remain on site until a facility actually closes. Some kind of incentive, such as a monetary reward, could be considered to motivate people to stay until the end.

A communication strategy to inform reception officers about the closure of facilities (timing, means of closing, involvement of trade unions, etc.) should be defined.

If temporary employees perceive that they are fairly treated, even after the end of their contract, they can recommend the authority as an employer and consider to work for the authority again in the future.

Ensure that there are enough staff to process the termination of contracts. This creates a big workload and should be dealt with as quickly as possible.

L. Managing the provision of reception conditions in a situation of high influx

1. Introduction

The provision of reception conditions for applicants is regulated by the RCD and a contingency plan should be in line with this directive. As the RCD leaves a considerable degree of discretion to define what constitutes a dignified standard of living and how it should be achieved, EASO has developed guidance on reception conditions which provides EU + states with more detailed standards and indicators on reception conditions. However the EASO guidance is designed for a normal situation and does not include adjustments for high influx. Therefore, the aim of this chapter is to advise the EU + states on how to provide reception conditions during situations of high influx, taking Article 18(9)(b) of the RCD into consideration.

In the respect of applicants' needs it is essential to remember that the general provisions from the EASO guidance on reception conditions should be always met, namely: (1) transparency and accountability; (2) non-discrimination; and (3) consideration for special needs. As explained above, the standards laid down in the RCD for non-exceptional situations should stay as the reference during high-influx situations as well.

Provision of reception conditions during a high-influx situation is of course more difficult than in a normal situation. Many things depend on national law — including tender procedures, labour law, communication with municipalities, etc. — and on the fact that a state's resources are not of inexhaustible nature. There are limitations to the reception systems and in many cases scarce resources, even in terms of HR, time and energy. Therefore, it is difficult to stipulate any general provision, but certain elements need to be taken into consideration.

2. The phase of prepare and develop

As explained above, the minimum standards should also act as a reference during crises, although the time frame for achieving them can be different compared to periods when new facilities are being created without time pressure. In this way, achieving the standards can be seen as a work in progress but should still be the final goal.

The contingency plan should seek a way to provide reception conditions in line with the RCD as quickly as possible. This mainly requires preparation to identify alternative channels to purchase goods and services rather than using tender procedures. If it is not possible, one solution could be to buy earlier and stock some supplies which could be used during the high-influx situation. Another solution is flexibility of contracts that can allow for the purchasing of additional goods and services from companies chosen before within a tender procedure or to add just-in-time delivery in public tendering, to avoid stocking goods and be able to order at the last minute *(cf.* *Chapter E — Management and decision-making process* and *J — Resource management**)*.

Moreover it can be useful to build capacity among civil society and volunteers. Try to create an efficient network of NGOs and individuals that can provide different elements of assistance during the high-influx situation.

To be able to manage the reception part, a clear view of the number of applicants, their personal data and their special needs is necessary.

Tools to prepare for suitable reception conditions
☐ Design a fluent process concerning who is doing what and when, to register every applicant before accommodation is given.
☐ Keep checklist sto identify (obvious) vulnerability, so that people with specific needs can get the most suitable reception facilities.
☐ Keep records of people, so they can be traced.

Design a fluid process

Preparing a fluid process from the moment of arrival until the moment of accommodation, defining who does what and when, will facilitate implementation.

Besides focusing on housing standards, it is very important to register every applicant before they are assigned to reception facilities. Registering every single reception beneficiary and keeping track of their location is crucial to be able to trace them in a later stage and especially to find family members who got separated during travel or disembarkation.

Sufficient resources should be provided to identify special needs at the earliest stage possible. In light of the generally limited resources and time that characterise a high-influx situation, this aspect becomes even more important compared to the normal operation of the reception system. In this way, people who need special care can get the most suitable accommodation and guidance. If not, their needs will become more important and the efforts to remedy them will consume more time and resources.

Good practice

EASO Tool for Identification of Persons with Special Needs (IPSN)

In order to support EU + states with the identification and assessment of special needs in terms of procedural and reception guarantees, EASO has developed a web-based interactive tool, publicly accessible in a number of EU languages.

The IPSN tool is an intuitive practical instrument intended to support the timely and ongoing identification of individual special needs without the requirement of specialised knowledge. It relies on an outline of indicators, linked to different categories of people with potential special needs. The list includes all categories mentioned by the RCD, as well as LGBTI people and people with gender-related special needs. Selecting a category provides further information in order to assess whether the applicant has the respective special needs and generates a checklist and brief guidance on relevant support measures. Reception support is one of the aspects developed within the IPSN tool.

Once the user has generated the relevant information, he or she can choose to print or save a report, including a selection of different elements. The report can be further individualised for the particular case at hand before it is saved or printed.

The integration of the IPSN tool in a national mechanism, which is in accordance with the standards in this section, is recommended as good practice.

The tool is available at https://ipsn.easo.europa.eu

3. The phase of respond and lead

If the activation of the contingency plan has an impact on reception conditions, it is important to inform the applicants of the consequences. If the expected standards are not yet in place or the time frames or the standard process or conditions are not met, up-to-date information and next steps should be put in place to inform the applicants in a transparent way (*cf. Chapters E — Management and decision-making structure, F — Information management and communication* and *G — External coordination*).

Good practice

During the process of registration a checklist with vulnerability criteria is filled in to identify special needs. If special needs arise, adapted reception facilities are given to those who need them most according to priorities.

The checklist is kept in the record of the applicant, who is informed about the exceptional situation and the next steps to be taken.

A record of the accommodation where the applicant is sent to is kept.

4. The phase of review and adjust

During this phase, all activities should strive towards a full implementation of the RCD as well as the *EASO guidance on reception conditions: operational standards and indicators*. Monitoring the activities and results and reporting to the hierarchy are necessary to be able to adjust where necessary. Action plans to adjust the ‘as is’ towards a ‘to be’ and to keep track of changes and evolutions will make results visible. Reception conditions that do not reach the standards yet will receive a framework and timeline for meeting the objectives, taking into account developments in the actual situation.

M. Security/prevention and safety

1. Introduction

While developing a contingency plan it is reasonable to assume a broad apprehension of security. Not only physical aspects should be considered, but also other dimensions such as health (including mental health), personal data and security of family (respect for family relations).

Security constitutes a main principle which cannot be lowered and is a precondition for providing other services. However some situations require that priority is given to one aspect of security. Therefore, there should be a constant focus on security, including aspects for both applicants and staff.

In a high-influx situation some elements are new, such as staff or infrastructure, and the risk could be higher than in existing facilities. Therefore, special attention should be paid to familiarising new staff with security and prevention measures and to checking all the security-related aspects of new facilities. Another risk factor is that actions have to be taken rapidly, which increases the possibility of mistakes. If possible, it would be useful to provide a clear path to correct errors made.

2. The phase of prepare and develop

Preparatory steps regarding security and prevention
☐ Identify specific threats.
☐ Prepare relevant security measures in advance, including house rules.
☐ Map all relevant actors.

The first element that should be addressed is to identify weak points and to link them with potential threats. This assessment is done according to experience to date or by using an external expert to objectively analyse the system. The next step is to find out the most efficient measures to prevent the potential threats.

The most common threats are as follows:

- diseases (especially contagious diseases);
- psycho-social issues;
- riots (e.g. due to ethnic tensions, inadequate reception conditions or overcrowding)
- difficulties in monitoring staff because of an emergency which might create situations where staff do not behave appropriately or insufficiently trained staff;
- domestic violence and incorrect or insufficient parental care;
- sexual harassment;
- demands from applicants and pressure exerted by them (especially strikes);
- violation of house rules (not obeying night silence, drug abuse, vandalism)
- persecution and victimisation by applicants or staff (e.g. on ethnic and religious basis or towards LGBT persons);
- disclosure of personal data or any confidential information;

- suspicion of radicalism or contacts with terrorists;
- external threats (defined as a threat from a person and/or an organisation from the outside towards the reception facility (infrastructure, staff or the applicants).

✓ **With regard to external threats, it should be noted that threats to a reception facility — such as the risk of arson — might present before it has opened.**

While preparing to cope with the abovementioned threats it is possible to use different measures such as:
- physical security measures (e.g. guards, fences, video surveillance);
- information (e.g. leaflets, meetings, videos);
- mentoring of new staff;
- mediation in conflict;
- reporting channels (e.g. alarm phones, GSM reach, possibility to share information confidentially);
- maintenance of proper relations with the local community;
- IT (for example use of virtual private networks (VPNs), proper password policy);
- organisational measures (for instance shifts for using mixed bathrooms, isolation of sick people, swift transport of water and medicaments);
- preparing SOPs for high-risk or highly probable incidents that might have an impact on capacity (e.g. fire);
- proper prevention and containment measures for each contagious disease;
- developing a proper sanction policy.

When opening new facilities during a high influx, they need to begin operating as soon as possible. Therefore it is of great importance to prepare relevant security measures in advance: these include house rules, proper procedures and necessary contracts (e.g. with a security company). Normally house rules and procedures already exist but not all of them apply to facilities that are operated in a high-influx situation (with less time, more crowded facilities, and different stakeholders than in a normal situation). The reception authority then has to find out what kind of adjustment is required.

Preparations should be made for increased security risks that can appear during a high-influx situation and if possible try to devise clear procedures that stipulate how staff should act in a given situation. While procedures which set out how to deal with most dangerous situations may exist, it is important to analyse them in case modifications are needed for a high influx.

In situations of high influx, it is not always possible to ensure all security aspects at the same time. Therefore an analysis of particular security elements should be done to determine which should be given priority (e.g. fire regulations).

A sufficient level of training and knowledge of procedures among staff is crucial to make the abovementioned measures possible, because security is not only created by hardware and by setting rules and regulations. It is a product of a safe and respectful atmosphere in the reception facility. This atmosphere can only be built through respectful human interaction with asylum applicants, and ensuring that they are always treated with dignity. Communication is of critical importance. It is also good to develop and apply security strategies in dialogue with reception beneficiaries. In particular, additional security measures should be made available for people with special needs during high-influx periods (e.g. protecting children or women from sexual harassment).

Be aware that it is not possible to foresee all situations. The reception authority may not have the mandate and would need support to apply some security measures. Therefore it is useful to map all relevant actors who can provide the required assistance, like police and fire services, and establish forms of continuous cooperation.

To assure that an efficient security system is in place, it is of the utmost importance to check and assess all measures applied. It is especially important to assess relevant experiences with a security impact and not to limit the assessment to the assumed security risks. The results of the assessment later provide input for updating and upgrading the plan. It is also important for the 'review and adjust' phase because it shows precisely the damage that needs to be restored.

It is essential to remember that this assessment will be more efficient if it is done jointly by operational reception staff and an outsourced security expert. This solution gives the highest possible level of objectivity and comprehensiveness which makes the results more valuable and fair. A second opinion is recommended. Use the structures in place such as fire security checks and regulations.

This should be a joint process: assessment on paper and on location.

3. The phase of respond and lead

Security cannot be reduced during a period of high influx; it should be the principal point for both management and staff. Security is particularly crucial during an unusual situation like high influx, for not only ensuring dignified standards of living but also saving lives. Obtaining a sufficient level of security during a high-influx situation would be impossible without proper cooperation between all relevant stakeholders and between reception staff and applicants. Therefore it is important to make them conscious of all threats and security measures. During regular information provision activities information on security and prevention should be prioritised. Be careful to not overburden applicants with information; choose what they should receive immediately and what they can get later. It is not necessary to hand out all the information to individuals; in some instances it may be enough to put it in visible places. The visibility of safety signs should be ensured (evacuation, extinguishers, etc.).

Sometimes staff realise that it is not appropriate to follow procedures established during the 'prepare and develop' phase or that they are not sufficient to deal with a problem. Therefore it is extremely important to ensure that there is the possibility for immediate and swift consultation between the staff and their direct advisers. All security measures need constant and ongoing evaluation of their appropriateness and efficiency and, if needed, they should be adjusted to the situation.

Constant and ongoing assessments should also be carried out in respect of risks and weak points. The monitoring of security circumstances is not a part of any particular phase but rather a permanent activity which should be increased during high-influx situations.

Remember to also include security measures for the staff, for example when organising communication activities with the surrounding community. Ensure an effective channel for reporting any doubtful situations noticed by the staff and the proper collection of all information relating to these situations to facilitate subsequent investigation or legal action.

High-influx situations also require increased and faster cooperation with other stakeholders. For more information about this issue see Chapter G.2 second bullet point 'Operational reception partners'.

Good practice

Install a box to collect free (possibly also anonymous) conclusions and proposals regarding identified weaknesses and opportunities for improvement. It would be good to give the staff and the asylum applicants the ability to be creative and a feeling that each idea would be treated seriously.

4. The phase of review and adjust

Apart from a constant and ongoing evaluation carried out during the 'respond and lead' phase, a complete summary and evaluation after the high-influx situation is very useful. The results of the evaluation can be used for future preparedness. As far as possible, reception authorities should try to ensure a sufficient level of objectivity while evaluating. It could be good to use outsourced expertise, such as an audit agency or company.

Without prejudice to the above, internal opinions and evaluations can also be of great value. Considering and acting on the suggestions made by staff (see box above) is advisable, as well as identifying solutions that the staff found to be the most problematic to apply or the least efficient. Procedures or house rules could be reviewed accordingly if necessary.

Obtaining some feedback from applicants is also beneficial. A summary of reported dangers and uncomfortable situations can lead to a better mapping of possible threats and weak points within any future 'prepare and develop' phase.

It can be difficult to evaluate which extraordinary security measures worked well during the 'respond and lead' phase and should be kept afterwards. Some of them may be useful while dealing with normal situations. Therefore the evaluation cannot only be used for the next 'prepare and develop' phase, as lessons learnt, but also for adjustment to the normal situation and the upgrading of the normal security system.

Annex. Checklists

Aspects to be included in a communication plan adapted to high-influx situations
☐ Specify the objective of the communication.
☐ Highlight key messages to be communicated to external stakeholders.
☐ Clarify procedures on how to deal with media requests, including identification of spokespersons.
☐ Address and provide guidance on sensitive aspects that might give rise to criticisms or tensions.
☐ Provide guidance on how to deal with information concerning the work of the reception agency on social media.

Tools to prepare for the fast acquisition of new housing capacity
☐ Checklists for the acquisition of new centres (quality standards, relevant safety criteria, infrastructure and availability of services)
☐ Clear procedure for validation of new locations
☐ Standard contracts

Questions/topics to cover during the review and adjust phase
☐ Capacity and timing: did the portfolio match the required capacity and did the timing work?
☐ Partners: who were the most effective partners (based on quality, cost efficiency, flexibility)?
☐ Which contracts were not respected and what was the reason? Is it possible to take legal steps?
☐ Were contractual obligations met?
☐ Process: which (part of) the process to increase capacity needs adjustment?
☐ Evaluation of the portfolio of reception locations (based on quality, cost-efficiency, etc.): which capacity can be kept as (future) extra capacity?

Preparatory steps from a logistics and transportation perspective
☐ Carry out an assessment of the logistics and transportation system to verify whether extra means will be needed in a high-influx situation.
☐ Create a list of contacts (cf. *Chapter E — External coordination*). This list should be up to date.
☐ Plan logistics and transportation of goods and people to new and more remote locations.
☐ Prepare transportation arrangements for applicants with special needs (e.g. taxis, ambulances).
☐ Take into account the timing of logistics and transportation.
☐ Conclude contracts with transportation companies and/or other governmental bodies engaged in transport and logistics.

Preparatory steps from a procurement perspective
☐ Make an assessment of the needs for procurement and public tendering for the services and supplies in case of high influx.
☐ Carry out a mapping of possible suppliers for key resources and prioritise them.
☐ Draw up specifications and contract templates for tendering for the services and supplies needed.
☐ Establish clear procedures and activating mechanisms that can be put in place in a high-influx situation.
☐ Have the procurement done beforehand, for example by use of framework agreements.

Preparatory steps from the perspective of management of stocks and supplies
☐ Carry out an assessment of the type and quantity of supplies needed.
☐ Prepare a network of suppliers, always ensuring more than one supplier for each item.
☐ Assess options of stocking vs just in time contracting for items needed, depending on the capacity of companies to deliver quickly and in relation to the quantity of extra supplies needed. The number in stock depends on the time in which companies can deliver them. Update supply inventory so that supply can be ordered efficiently (avoid over or understock).

Preparatory steps for human resources management
☐ Include for all profiles within the current workforce a description of tasks/roles to be taken up during a sudden high influx.
☐ Ensure a balance between old/experienced and new staff.
☐ Train staff that will need to take on new roles in high-influx situations (establishment of 'flying teams').
☐ Have a pre-established prioritisation of tasks for staff.
☐ Promote actions for mobility of staff.

Preparatory steps for recruitment
☐ Prepare standardised job descriptions for all profiles.
☐ Prepare standardised organisational charts for all reception facilities.
☐ Minimise administrative procedures for recruitment.
☐ Establish cooperation with national/local employment authorities.
☐ Consider outsourcing recruitment to interim offices.
☐ Set up and maintain recruitment pools.
☐ Develop an HR strategy on how to contract additional staff.
☐ Prepare promotional/awareness-raising audiovisual materials to provide information about the work of the reception authority.

Preparatory steps for staff training
☐ Prepare basic and must-have training packages.
☐ Make use of EASO training modules on reception and related topics.
☐ Develop methodologies for coaching of new staff (peer coaching).

Tools to prepare for suitable reception conditions
☐ Design a fluent process concerning who is doing what and when, to register every applicant before accommodation is given.
☐ Keep checklists to identify (obvious) vulnerability, so that people with specific needs can get the most suitable reception facilities.
☐ Keep records of people, so they can be traced.

Preparatory steps regarding security and prevention
☐ Identify specific threats.
☐ Prepare relevant security measures in advance, including house rules.
☐ Map all relevant actors.

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