

# Asylum Capacity Support Group Mechanism: Guide to Working Modalities

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## 1. Background

The Asylum Capacity Support Group (ACSG) is outlined in paragraph 62 of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)<sup>1</sup>:

**Paragraph 62:** *Without prejudice to activities carried out under its mandate, UNHCR will establish an Asylum Capacity Support Group with participation of experts from relevant technical areas. Due regard will be paid to regional diversity. The group would draw on pledges and contributions made as part of Global Refugee Forums, whether in terms of expertise or funding. The group could be activated on the request of a concerned State to provide support to relevant national authorities – in line with applicable international, regional and national instruments and laws – to strengthen aspects of their asylum systems, with a view to ensuring their fairness, efficiency, adaptability and integrity. Support could include standby arrangements and sharing of good practices between States on all aspects of asylum systems, including case-processing modalities (e.g. simplified or accelerated procedures for cases likely to be manifestly founded or unfounded), registration and case management processes, interviewing techniques and broader institutional capacity development.*

The ACSG Mechanism was formally launched by UNHCR at the first Global Refugee Forum (GRF) on 18 December 2019. In the lead up to and during the GRF, many pledges were made by states to improve their national asylum systems, including some which explicitly asked for support to be made available through the ACSG or the international community. Additionally, pledges were made to provide asylum capacity support by states and other stakeholders, including civil society and private sector actors.

As the ACSG Mechanism becomes operational the pledges and commitments made at the GRF in relation to asylum capacity will be assessed. States seeking support will be encouraged to submit more detailed requests to the ACSG Secretariat (the “Secretariat”) in UNHCR’s Division of International Protection (DIP). Similarly, states or other stakeholders having already made pledges of support may be approached to further specify their offers.

The pledges and commitments made at the first GRF will only be a prioritized starting point for ACSG projects/initiatives in 2020. Once the ACSG Mechanism is operational additional requests for and offers of support can be made through the mechanism at any time.

Given that capacity support provided through the ACSG Mechanism forms part of GCR implementation, procedures and modalities will be further developed so that information from the ACSG Mechanism is also reflected in the GCR/GRF reporting.

## 2. Purpose of this Document

This document aims to provide detailed guidance on the operationalization of the ACSG Mechanism’s Working Modalities<sup>2</sup>. It provides detail on the:

<sup>1</sup> Global Compact on Refugees, UN doc A/73/12 (Part II) (2 August 2018). Available at: [https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR\\_English.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/gcr/GCR_English.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Asylum Capacity Support Group Mechanism: Working Modalities. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/5defe77b7.pdf> (“ACSG Working Modalities”)

- 1) coordination and the role of the ACSG Secretariat;
- 2) types of asylum capacity support requests and offers that will be positively considered and channelled through the ACSG Mechanism;
- 3) procedure for submitting requests and offers to the ACSG Mechanism;
- 4) criteria and procedure for evaluating and prioritising support requests/offers;
- 5) matching of requests; and,
- 6) arrangements for continued engagement and assessing impact of ACSG projects.

### 3. Coordination and Secretariat

Since the ACSG Mechanism is premised on a state-led approach, whereby states evaluate their own capacity, identify gaps and needs, and make requests for capacity support accordingly, discussions leading up to a request being made to the ACSG will mainly take place at the national and regional level between states, UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders. Similarly, implementation of ACSG projects/initiatives will be managed in a decentralized manner. Notwithstanding this, as the purpose of the ACSG is to be a mechanism for coherent and consistent support to increase the capacity of national asylum/Refugee Status Determination (RSD) systems, it will be important that requests and offers of support are made, coordinated and evaluated in a consistent manner at global level. For this reason, UNHCR will set up an online portal for the ACSG where requests and offers of support can be made as well as a small coordination secretariat.

#### ACSG Portal

The online portal will be found at [acsg.unhcr.org](https://acsg.unhcr.org). The portal will be administered by the ACSG Secretariat with support from other stakeholders as necessary and will be continuously updated with relevant documents for states and other stakeholders engaged in asylum capacity strengthening. Specifically, the portal may include information relating to:

- 1) the requests and offers of support that are made and matched under the ACSG Mechanism;
- 2) information about asylum capacity support provided outside of the ACSG Mechanism, to reduce overlap and redundancy;
- 3) good practice examples of asylum capacity support projects and/or capacity assessments;
- 4) tools and guidance in relation to capacity assessments or improving the fairness, efficiency, adaptability or integrity of national asylum systems; and,
- 5) tools for establishing benchmarks and assessing impact of projects.

The goal of the portal is to be useful for states and other stakeholders, therefore, it will not remain static and will evolve as the ACSG Mechanism becomes operational and will speak to expressed needs of those states or other stakeholders making use of it.

#### Secretariat

As outlined in the ACSG Working Modalities a small secretariat will be established in UNHCR's DIP. The Secretariat will coordinate internally and work in close collaboration with UNHCR's Regional Bureaux and country operations to ensure that states and other stakeholders are supported in a decentralized manner to make use of the ACSG

Mechanism. The Secretariat will also coordinate with external stakeholders where appropriate, and with due regard to geographic diversity and expertise.

The Secretariat's specific responsibilities will be as follows:

- 1) Managing the online portal;
- 2) Providing support and guidance on the submission of requests and offers of support, including following up on requests that are incomplete or that do not meet the established criteria;
- 3) Evaluating and prioritising requests for/offers of support in line with this guidance;
- 4) Coordinating the matching of support requests with offers of support (in accordance with the section on [Matching](#) below);
- 5) Reporting on support provided under the ACSG Mechanism.

#### **Role of UNHCR Country Offices & Regional Bureaux**

While the ACSG Secretariat will have a coordinating role in relation to the ACSG Mechanism, UNHCR Country Offices will continue to act as primary interlocutor to national systems in line with UNHCR's Mandate. In addition, UNHCR Country Offices will, among other roles, support states in conducting capacity assessments and, in line with the national workplan/strategy, determining which capacity support needs are of priority and should be addressed to the ACSG. UNHCR Country Offices may equally advocate that states that have asylum system expertise offer support to others through the ACSG Mechanism. As part of their regular engagement in supporting states, and without prejudice to any other asylum capacity support provided under its mandate, UNHCR Country Offices may also support the formulation of capacity requests and offers to the ACSG and engage in the implementation of capacity support projects, including assessing impact and reporting on achievements.

UNHCR Country Offices will coordinate with UNHCR's Regional Bureaux to provide inputs to the Secretariat on the ACSG matching process. Regional Bureaux will coordinate with the ACSG Mechanism at a regional level, in particular in relation to regional processes or intergovernmental organizations, and provide support to both UNHCR Country Offices and input to the ACSG Secretariat as to regional priorities and needs. Both UNHCR Country Offices and Regional Bureaux may identify good practices and encourage their submission to the ACSG Portal.

#### **Requests/Offers Made as Part of the GRF**

As noted above, several states have already made requests for support or offers of support at the first GRF. Depending on the substance of the request or offer, concerned UNHCR Country Offices will, as part of their GRF follow up activities, engage on these pledges to unpack the various components of the requests and offers so as to have sufficient information to carry out the matching as described in the following sections. Where the necessary information relating to a pledge/request is not provided and the advocacy and support initiatives undertaken by the Country Offices to collect the details are exhausted, then a request may be deprioritized for action under the ACSG Mechanism.

## 4. Requests for Support

### Entities who can Submit Requests

A request for support through the ACSG Mechanism can be submitted by a state, or multiple states working together (e.g. in the context of a regional or sub-regional initiative). A request for support can also be made by other relevant stakeholders working in partnership with a state (or states) to improve one or more element of its/their asylum system(s) with the authorisation of the relevant state(s). If a request is submitted by several stakeholders working together, all involved stakeholders should have reviewed and endorsed the request prior to it being made.

In line with the principles outlined in the GCR, which emphasizes the importance of a whole of society approach, and in recognition that civil society and other stakeholders are often well placed to support initiatives aimed at improving a national asylum system, UNHCR encourages states to involve relevant national and/or regional stakeholders in preparing a request for asylum capacity support.

Requests can be made/reviewed/endorsed by specific ministries, departments, or other entities within a state, provided they have the authority to do so, or by multiple ministries, departments, entities working together. Given the importance of ensuring that a national asylum system is embedded within broader government budgeting and planning, as well as relevant whole of government projects, entities submitting a request to the ACSG are encouraged to conduct necessary internal coordination prior to a submission and include relevant information in their requests, thus reflecting political and operational commitments from other relevant authorities.

### Format of Requests

Prior to submitting a request for support to the ACSG Mechanism (or prior to precisising a previously made request) states<sup>3</sup> are encouraged to engage with UNHCR Country/Multi-Country Offices for support in the conceptualising, preparing and submitting requests.

Once developed, requests are encouraged to be submitted in the prescribed format to the ACSG portal. A request form will be developed and made available online to ensure that requests contain the relevant information. In order to avoid duplication, states and other stakeholders will be encouraged to draw on existing information to populate a request. The format of the request form will be flexible to allow supporting material developed in different contexts to be used.

### Assessment of Capacity Gaps

As requests to the ACSG Mechanism should aim to fill a concrete gap in the asylum system, states are generally expected to have conducted an assessment of capacity gaps prior to submitting the request. As a request/initiative could focus on one or more elements of an asylum system (e.g. access to legal aid, the decision making process at first instance, implementation of case processing modalities, fraud prevention or interpretation) the capacity assessment may focus on one particular element or it may be a broader assessment aimed at looking at several elements or the entirety of the asylum system. The request for support should contain the main findings of such an

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<sup>3</sup> either by themselves or jointly with relevant stakeholders

assessment to provide background for the support request and its evaluation/prioritisation.

### Capacity Assessments

Capacity assessments should generally be government-led or co-led and conducted using good-practice methodologies. UNHCR may be able to help facilitate this process, ensure the quality of the assessment methodology and guide or support interested stakeholders in conducting an asylum system capacity assessment. There is no “one size fits all” approach to conducting a capacity assessment, as it will largely depend on what element or elements of the asylum system is/are being assessed<sup>4</sup>.

A capacity assessment is usually divided into three main steps:

1. Mobilize and Design
2. Conduct Capacity Assessment
3. Summarize and Interpret Results

There are different ways of structuring the capacity assessment and analysis that can be considered, depending on the scope of project envisioned. The assessment may take the form of a working meeting or workshop where self-assessment questionnaires are used and a gaps mapping is conducted with relevant stakeholders; it may also be conducted through focus group discussions, quality assurance questionnaires, key informant interviews or other sampling methodology led by a government task team, with support from UNHCR.

Regardless of the methodology chosen, a key element of a capacity assessment is the systematic analysis of the results. In the context of an asylum system, at the end of this phase, it should be possible for a state (jointly with UNHCR and other relevant stakeholders) to identify the weaknesses of the RSD system (e.g. the appeal, the budgeting, the staffing, the scheduling, technical capacity needs of the eligibility, review) or quality assurance staff) or in a specific element of the substantive RSD issues (e.g. applying the exclusion criteria, interviewing techniques). This may result in recommendations as to where capacity development support should be targeted. While in a small project, the assessment phase does not need to be a complex process, it is still important to conduct this assessment to establish needs and baselines.

There are three types of requests for capacity support from the ACSG Mechanism that do not always require an assessment of capacity gaps prior to the request being made:

- 1) Support in developing a legal framework relating to asylum;
- 2) Support in revising and bringing an existent legislative/regulatory framework in line with international standards; and,
- 3) Support in conducting a capacity assessment on one or more elements of a national asylum system.

## Components of Requests for Support

### Objectives and Milestones

The request should include the project’s overall priority objectives and milestones (qualitative and quantitative). These priority objectives and milestones will normally also be reflected in the larger, national asylum capacity strengthening plan. While the

<sup>4</sup> See e.g. Capacity Assessment Methodology: User Guide, Capacity Development Group Bureau for Development Policy, 2008, UNDP. Available at: <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/aplaws/publication/en/publications/capacity-development/undp-capacity-assessment-methodology/UNDP%20Capacity%20Assessment%20Users%20Guide.pdf>

overall priority objectives and milestones should be articulated at the stage of the request, any more detailed objectives may be worked out during the matching phase as the scope of the support to be provided is outlined and developed by both parties.

The priority objectives and milestones outlined in the request (as well as those created at the matching stage) should allow for assessment of impact and reporting on the use of the support provided through the ACSG.

As support requests to the ACSG Mechanism should aim to fulfil a concrete gap in the asylum system, the request should outline the reasons why the area where one or multiple gaps have been identified is a priority, any existing national capacity in the prioritized area and how changes or initiatives already set in motion at a national level will be supported through the ACSG Mechanism.

### National Plan

Ensuring that the project/initiative is embedded in a broader national plan is key. This will help to ensure that the capacity development will be sustainable over the longer term after a specific ACSG project/initiative has ended.

The outcome and findings of a capacity assessment would normally result in a state being able to establish prioritized actions for asylum system strengthening. These prioritized actions would then be incorporated into the state's national plan for development of their asylum system, as is mentioned in the ACSG Mechanism's Working Modalities. This national plan is not intended to be a standalone or additional document although in some cases it could be; it would normally be incorporated into a state's national arrangements for a comprehensive response to a specific refugee situation as outlined in the GCR<sup>5</sup> and/or in a state's national development plan.

### Subject Matter of Requests

As outlined in the ACSG Working Modalities, a request for support should aim to improve one or more of the fairness, efficiency, adaptability or integrity (as assessed against international standards) of the requesting state's asylum/RSD system. The references cited below will help assess how these terms will be applied in the context of evaluating a request.

#### Characteristics of a Robust National Asylum System

**Fairness:** a fair asylum system requires both an institutional structure and procedures that uphold robust due process standards. Due process promotes consistency in decision-making as each case is dealt with according to the same set of standards. Institutional elements that promote fairness include when there is a clearly identified centralized authority established by law with a mandate to examine and take decisions on applications for refugee status at first instance as well as a separate authority with the mandate to examine and take decisions at appeal.<sup>6</sup> A fair RSD authority should have clearly

<sup>5</sup> GCR at paras 20-21

<sup>6</sup> Due process/fairness standards are set out in many global, regional and national documents including e.g. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Note on Determination of Refugee Status under International Instruments*, 24 August 1977, EC/SCP/5, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/3ae68cc04.html>; Regional Refugee Instruments & Related, *Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action*, 3 December 2014, at p. 9 available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5487065b4.html>; European Union: Council of the European Union, *Directive 2013/32/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on common procedures for granting and withdrawing international protection (recast)*, 29 June 2013, OJ L. 180/60 - 180/95; 29.6.2013, 2013/32/EU, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/51d29b224.html>

established procedures that incorporate due process standards, and its decision-makers should have the skills to apply the refugee legal framework. Elements increasing the fairness of an asylum system include, but are not limited to, procedures where applicants have the ability to access the procedures without discrimination as well as procedures that provide the following rights to the applicants:

- Right to notice;
- Right to be heard, including by competent adjudicators;
- Right to competent interpreter;
- Right to legal advice and representation;
- Right to documentation;
- Right to written decision, including a reasoned negative decision;
- Right to appeal negative decisions.

Requests/offers to improve fairness could include efforts to develop/implement standard operating procedures or increase capacities of staff.

**Efficiency:** optimising the use of resources, preventing and responding to backlog situations and identifying those who qualify for international protection as well as those who do not in a timely manner are important elements of an efficient procedure. An asylum system should aim to process claims as efficiently as possible without compromising the system's fairness, adaptability or integrity. The efficiency of an asylum system can be increased at the structural level (e.g. geographic or decision-making decentralization, staff retention and recruitment, ensuring co-location of services or improving technology) or at a technical level, by ensuring that systems are in place for the timely production of country of origin information and country guidance as well as for developing diversified case processing modalities for appropriate caseloads.<sup>7</sup>

**Adaptability:** an asylum system should have sufficient institutional adaptability to allow it to respond to changing conditions, including increased rates of arrivals, changing operational modalities, and to allow it to adjust and innovate in order to meet projected needs or respond to sudden and unforeseen ones.<sup>8</sup> Projects/initiatives targeting increased adaptability could improve preparedness and contingency planning, procedures for quickly implementing differentiated case processing strategies, introduction of new technologies to allow for electronic registration/document filing, flexible surge human resource capacity, and capacity to analyse country of origin information.

**Integrity:** to ensure the integrity of an asylum system, there must be procedures for quality control and assurance of decisions, as well as institutional structures that ensure accountability and performance management. Such systems could take the form of quality assurance initiatives<sup>9</sup> or procedures that systematically review or spot check decisions. Additional projects/initiatives that improve integrity could help strengthen record keeping, case management, performance management or disciplinary systems, or support the drafting and rollout of a code of conduct.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Aide-Memoire & Glossary of case processing modalities, terms and concepts applicable to RSD under UNHCR's Mandate (The Glossary)*, 2017, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5a2657e44.html>; UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UNHCR Discussion Paper Fair and Fast - Accelerated and Simplified Procedures in the European Union, 25 July 2018, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/5b589eef4.html>

<sup>8</sup> See e.g. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) *Governance Principles, Institutional Capacity and Quality*, 2011, available at: [https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Poverty%20Reduction/Inclusive%20development/Towards%20Human%20Resilience/Towards\\_SustainingMDGProgress\\_Ch8.pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/undp/library/Poverty%20Reduction/Inclusive%20development/Towards%20Human%20Resilience/Towards_SustainingMDGProgress_Ch8.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> See e.g. resources on Quality Assurance Initiatives available at: <https://www.refworld.org/qualityassurance.html>

<sup>10</sup> See e.g. OECD, Recommendations of the Council on Public Integrity <http://www.oecd.org/gov/ethics/OECD-Recommendation-Public-Integrity.pdf>

Other, more specific, examples of projects/initiatives that may be supported by the ACSG are elaborated in the [ACSG Note for Discussion](#). [Annex 1](#) provides more details on the different areas of an asylum system which may be subject to a request/offer of support.

Since the ACSG speaks to asylum systems, requests related to other types of state systems will generally not be supported. However, if a state does not yet have an asylum system based on international standards but plans to establish one in order to make protection and access to solutions more effective, support could be sought for various aspects relating the establishment, including but not limited to, drafting or the revision of legislation or support in establishing institutions.

## 5. Offers of Support

### Entities Making Offers of Support

States and other stakeholders are encouraged - whether individually or jointly – to make offers of capacity support available to the ACSG Mechanism. It is anticipated that this will be done in two main ways:

- 1) states or other stakeholders will make pro-active offers of support that will be matched to a request, should the need arise; and,
- 2) an offer of support will be made in response to a specific request made through the ACSG in the context of a project/initiative, for which support-offers have not yet been identified.

UNHCR encourages proactive offers of capacity support as it may act as a catalyst for states with capacity needs to initiate asylum/RSD capacity projects, knowing that capacity support is available. UNHCR encourages states and other stakeholders to be willing to positively consider specific offers of support in response to requests received. UNHCR Bureaux and Country Offices are encouraged to actively engage with states and other stakeholders on the relevance of the ACSG and the opportunities that arise from this mechanism to promote engagement by those states that have not submitted pledges during the December 2019 GRF.

In situations where there are insufficient offers of support or the offers of support do not address the identified needs, UNHCR may approach stakeholders with demonstrated expertise in this type of request to see if a matching offer could be made.

For the purposes of seeking out additional offers of support, or in situations where there is a need to determine how offered support should be matched, the ACSG Secretariat will take into account the following as appropriate:

- 1) previous relationship between the requesting state and the stakeholder approached;
- 2) expression of interest in collaborative projects/initiatives in a specific country or region;
- 3) regional frameworks or initiatives;
- 4) similarity in legal or institutional structures; and,
- 5) language.

A significant number of offers of support were already made as part of the GRF pledging process, some without specificity (e.g. technical support without the type of technical support being articulated). As the requests for support become more

detailed, UNHCR will approach stakeholders that have made offers with a proposal to match their offer to a particular request or ask the offering entity to precise the offer so as to match it with a suitable request in the future.

## Content of Offers of Support

Offers of capacity support can be comprised of one or more of the following:

- 1) Financial, either specific allocation to a project/initiative or a more general allocation;
- 2) Material, including physical infrastructure (e.g. offices, interview rooms, registration facilities) as well as electronic infrastructure (e.g. case management systems, computers, internet connectivity);
- 3) Technical (e.g. providing expertise or guidance in the form of secondments or deployed experts to support the development/improvement of a technical aspect of the asylum system).

When making offers of support, stakeholders are encouraged to take into consideration the timeframe of the project/initiative requesting support.

States with expertise or best practice in different aspects of their asylum system are particularly encouraged to offer support in this area. In this regard, best practices should be assessed against the principles of fairness, efficiency, adaptability and integrity described above.

If states or other stakeholders also provide asylum capacity support bilaterally outside of the ACSG Mechanism, they are encouraged to coordinate with the Secretariat and provide information about other support provided so that it can be posted on the ACSG portal to avoid overlapping or inconsistent support provision, and to enable greater coordination to maximize impact.

## Format of Offers of Support

Offers of support can be made through the ACSG portal using the electronic request submission form. UNHCR will work with states that have previously made a pledge of support at the GRF or other forums to formally submit their offer.

# 6. Assessment of Requests & Offers

## Sharing of Information

Detailed project information about a request for support will not be shared externally by UNHCR without the consent of the submitting entity. However, the main elements of a request and the offer to which it is eventually matched will normally be published on the ACSG portal by the Secretariat, once finalized with the concerned entities.

The Secretariat will inform the requesting and offering entities of any potential matches of support and obtain their consent before providing detailed information about the request or offer to the other party and proceeding with the match. Once a potential match has been identified, both parties will be informed and arrangements for further sharing of information will be made.

## Incomplete Requests

All requests for support will be screened by the Secretariat for completeness. In situations where the request is incomplete, the Secretariat will reach out to the requesting entity, in coordination with the relevant UNHCR Country Office and/or Regional Bureau, to support the submission with additional information.

## Assessment of Requests

Once a request for support is made, it will be evaluated by the Secretariat in consultation with one or more of;

- 1) UNHCR Country Offices;
- 2) UNHCR Regional Bureaux;
- 3) relevant UNHCR subject-matter experts (depending on the request subject matter); and/or,
- 4) Relevant state and non-state stakeholders (with the consent of the entity who submitted the request).

The request will be assessed to see whether it fulfils the criteria outlined in [Components of Request for Support](#).

Where a complete request appears not to fulfil one or more of the criteria, the identified issues will be raised bilaterally with the entity submitting the request to see if further discussions or the provision of additional information can resolve the concern. The Secretariat, UNHCR Regional Bureaux and/or Country Offices may support states and/or other stakeholders submitting the request to adjust it to ensure that it is in line with good practices on asylum capacity development.

## Assessment of Offers

Once an offer for support is made, it will be evaluated by the Secretariat in consultation with:

- 1) UNHCR Country Offices;
- 2) UNHCR Regional Bureaux;
- 3) relevant UNHCR subject-matter experts (depending on the offer subject matter); and/or,
- 4) Relevant state and non-state stakeholders (with the consent of the entity who submitted the offer).

The purpose of the assessment of offers will be aimed at finding suitable matches and where necessary, identifying possible synergies based on complementarities of offers. If exceptionally, an offer of support raises any issues as to whether the offer is one that should be operationalized through the ACSG Mechanism, either because it does not speak to the objectives of the ACSG or otherwise, these issues will be raised bilaterally with the offering state and with its consent, other stakeholders to see if the offer can be reformulated or adjusted.

## 7. Matching

### Prioritization

The ACSG Mechanism will aim to match all requests for capacity support meeting the criteria outlined in [Components of Request for Support](#), there may be situations where requests for support may have to be deprioritized due to an insufficient number of

matching offers or because of a large volume of support requests. In such a situation, UNHCR may make use of relevant global and regional forums to advocate for additional support being made available, in coordination with involved states and other stakeholders.

The ACSG Secretariat will use the following considerations when determining when an accepted request for support will be prioritized:

- 1) a pledge or commitment was made at the GRF in relation to the subject matter of the request;
- 2) the request has the potential to have significant impacts on asylum-seekers, refugees and/or host communities;
- 3) the request is structured in a way that it may lead to longer and more sustainable development of national asylum/RSD capacity as well as protection or solution dividends;
- 4) the extent to which the request is reflected in a national or (sub-) regional longer-term strategy or plan of action;
- 5) the request seeks to leverage, build on or consolidate previously received capacity support (such as quality assurance initiatives);
- 6) the requesting state has already taken demonstrated steps to improve its asylum system (within existing capacity) and/or,
- 7) there is proactive offer of support made that will address the request;

If the Secretariat proposes an offer of support to be matched with a request, the requesting state may decline and the match will not proceed. While the Secretariat will endeavour to propose suitable matches in line with the requesting state's preferences, the ability of the ACSG to match a request with an offer of support from a particular entity may be limited. A request for support will remain active if an offer of support is declined by the requesting entity; however, other requests for support may take priority.

Similarly, support offers will only be matched with a request following the consent of the offering entity or entities.

The Secretariat will pay particular attention to existing or upcoming opportunities for multi-stakeholder support as well as communicate any risks of duplicating efforts.

## Coordination

The Secretariat will aim to match requests with offers in line with the prioritization criteria listed above. Once a request has been matched, the Secretariat will engage with parties to the match, UNHCR Country Offices and Regional Bureaux, as well as all other relevant stakeholders, to ensure that the details of the project/initiative are agreed and that the relevant objectives and milestones are documented.

## Channelling of Support

For support matched through the ACSG Mechanism, support can either be channelled through UNHCR or provided on a bilateral basis, depending on the nature of the support and the needs of the parties.

For situations where asylum capacity support is provided bi or multi-laterally outside of the ACSG Mechanism, states or other stakeholders receiving or offering such support are asked to share that information with the Secretariat so the support provided can be outlined on the ACSG portal. This will enable asylum capacity support to be

coordinated in a more transparent, consistent and predictable manner, in line with the aims of the GCR.

### Continued Engagement, Assessing Impact and Reporting

The Secretariat will periodically report on the operation of the ACSG Mechanism and the matched projects on the ACSG Portal. This reporting will be aligned with the reporting on GRF implementation.

### Guidance on Asylum Capacity Support

The Secretariat will engage with relevant stakeholders (including both internal UNHCR and external stakeholders) to develop further guidance and tools in relation to capacity assessments and best practices in the provision of capacity support in relation to asylum systems. The Secretariat will also publish good practice examples of successful asylum capacity support initiatives.

## Annex 1 – Example Areas for ACSG Support

<b>Assessment of Capacity Gaps</b>	Assessing the capacity gaps in all or a portion of a national asylum system with a view of drawing up a workplan for its improvement (including for the purposes of requesting capacity support through the ACSG).
	Assessing the governance and legal framework with a view of drawing up a workplan for the development of a new asylum system.
<b>Legislative &amp; Regulatory Framework</b>	Drafting or amending laws on asylum to apply international standards and/or to improve the fairness, efficiency, adaptability or integrity of the institutions managing asylum.
	Drafting or amending regulations relating to asylum to apply international standards and/or to improve the fairness, efficiency, adaptability or integrity of the institutional structure related to asylum.
<b>Institutional Structure</b>	Operationalizing one or more procedural parts of an asylum system that is not yet operational (e.g. appeal).
	Decentralizing an asylum system's decision-making structure to increase geographic accessibility and efficiency
	Restructuring asylum system service provision centres to ensure that relevant institutional actors (e.g. registration, identity checks, interviews, counselling) are co-located to improve efficiency.
	Developing, implementing and monitoring appropriate delegation of RSD decision-making authority to professional RSD staff, whether such staff falls under the authority of the decision-making body or another institution
	Creating expert units within an asylum institution, including country of origin information research, exclusion or complex cases, working with child applicants etc.
<b>Budget &amp; Strategic Planning</b>	Developing or improving the effective participation of the asylum system in government wide budgeting and/or strategic planning activities.
<b>Human Resources</b>	Conducting a functional review of the staffing needs for all or part of an asylum system, including technical staff for reception, registration and status determination as well as appropriate support staff including interpreters/translators, IT, and administrative support.
	Developing or improving systems for recruitment of qualified candidates to fill roles within the asylum system (including standardising job descriptions, publicising vacancies, conducting merit-based recruitment, and streamlining the onboarding of new staff).
	Developing or improving mechanisms to provide internal surge capacity to adapt to fluctuating needs.
	Developing or improving a performance management system for those working in the asylum system that considers functional roles and responsibilities (including performance targets as necessary).
	Designing and implementing staff welfare programmes for asylum system staff to reduce burnout and improve productivity, quality and retention of staff.
<b>Electronic Systems</b>	Implementing digital solutions for reception and registration, such as biometric systems.
	Developing or improving registration or RSD case management systems to, among other things, better capture specific needs/vulnerabilities, document family relationships, identification of case profiles to facilitate the implementation of differentiated case processing modalities and/or to identify bottlenecks in the processing of claims.
	Developing or improving systems to allow for statistical reporting on asylum cases processing, including disaggregation of data by age, gender, disability and diversity.
	Developing or improving interoperability between the asylum system electronic systems and other relevant government systems to allow more efficient referrals, protection follow up or issuance of documentation.
	Developing or improving knowledge management systems.
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Building, procuring and/or maintaining appropriate physical structures to allow for effective functioning of the asylum system at all stages (reception, registration and status determination), including confidential interview rooms, secure office space, filing rooms, waiting areas for asylum-seekers as well as a safe water supply and sanitation facilities.

	Putting in place appropriate equipment to allow for effective functioning of the asylum system at all stages (reception, registration and status determination), including computers, phones, photocopiers/printers/scanners, office furniture, filing and office supplies.
	Putting in place and /or maintaining appropriate technology to allow for effective functioning of the asylum system at all stages (reception, registration and status determination), including electricity, internet connectivity, adequate and secure server capacity.
<b>Induction &amp; Training Programmes</b>	Training and sensitising asylum entities on the refugee legal framework.
	Developing and/or implementing substantive induction programmes in different functional areas for newly onboarded staff.
	Developing and/or implementing training programmes on refugees and asylum for different actors that may need to provide information to asylum-seekers, including border guards, immigration officials, police and bar associations.
	Developing and/or implementing age, gender, diversity sensitive training packages on the asylum-system as well as coaching/mentoring programmes for legal aid lawyers and NGOs.
	Developing and/or implementing coaching/mentoring/on-the-job training programmes for dedicated expert government staff to ensure fair and fast adjudication of asylum claims (including working with asylum-seekers, interviewing, legal analysis, country of origin information research, decision drafting etc).
	Developing and/or implementing of training programs for interpreters.
	Developing internal capacity to train staff (through training of trainers, creation of eLearnings or other means).
<b>Quality Control &amp; Assurance</b>	Improving or creating systems for quality monitoring of RSD decisions, including systematic spot-checking of decisions and provision of feedback.
	Implementing a Quality Assurance Initiative to enable improved and consistent application of legal frameworks including through an age, gender and diversity lens.
	Putting in place systems for regular and systematic review, evaluation, reporting and monitoring of the work of the asylum/RSD system, at individual staff and/or institutional level.
<b>Procedures Design</b>	Designing, drafting and implementing procedures to maximize asylum system efficiency while still maintaining fairness, adaptability and integrity. This could include procedures for protection sensitive entry, registration, referral, filing, RSD scheduling, triaging, prioritization, or differentiated RSD case processing modalities (including group, simplified or accelerated RSD).
<b>Tools &amp; Guidance</b>	Designing, drafting and implementing tools or guidance for different aspects of asylum processing, including standardized application, decision, appeal forms.
	Designing, drafting and implementing tools designed to increase efficiency in decision making, including template analysis for common claims, decision-making guides, or eligibility guidance.
<b>Legal Aid</b>	Development and implementation of government and/or civil society legal aid and protection services to enable refugee access to information and participation in the procedures.
	Drafting and dissemination of legal information for asylum-seekers.
<b>Interpretation &amp; Translation</b>	Designing and operationalizing systems for interpretation and translation for the asylum process (see also sections on human resources and training)
<b>Filing</b>	Designing and developing efficient physical and/or digital file management systems for registration and RSD (see also section on infrastructure and electronic systems).