

Asylum Capacity Support Group – A roadmap for enhanced engagement



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ACSG Secretariat / DIP, 2022

Reflecting on Progress and Challenges



The Asylum Capacity Support Group (ACSG) is a special initiative of the Global Compact on Refugees established to provide coherent and consistent support to individual countries to improve the fairness, efficiency, adaptability, and integrity of their asylum systems. Since its inception in 2019, the ACSG has mostly focused on matching State pledges relating to asylum capacity and showcasing good practices on asylum capacity issues via the [ACSG portal](#).

In the lead up to the first High-Level Officials Meeting in December 2021, the ACSG Secretariat held a virtual Stocktaking Event in October 2021, which brought together Governments, civil society, UN and other stakeholders to review progress and challenges. Three recommendations were made to further advance the objective of the ACSG namely: (1) expand the impact of the ACSG; (2) expand the ways of engaging with the ACSG; and, (3) expand stakeholders engaging with the ACSG (see [outcome report](#)). Further discussions took place during a side event on the 2022 ExCom on the ACSG themed Promoting Partnerships to Strengthen National Asylum Systems.

To implement these recommendations and in the lead up to the 2023 GRF, the ACSG Secretariat in DIP initiated a series of brainstorming discussions with the Regional Bureaux, Country Operations and Headquarters entities on areas for increased engagement. The discussions focused on the following areas and proposals:

1) Engagement without a formal pledge:

⇒ Participants observed that collaboration on asylum capacity strengthening is ongoing among States with or without pledges. Participants recommended that the ACSG looks for opportunities to integrate such efforts without the requirement of a formal pledge. Such ‘light matches’ could demonstrate the added value of the ACSG and encourage State collaboration in the future.

2) Virtual dialogues and events:

⇒ Participants commented that the ACSG was ‘missing a face’ and suggested that the ACSG finds opportunities to be a convener of State-to-State dialogues on specific topics or good practices without duplicating existing forums. ACSG leadership in this area could provide added value to States by providing a forum for comparing protection-oriented approaches on asylum capacity strengthening issues.

⇒ Participants also saw value in strengthening the ‘working group’ aspect of the ACSG. Going beyond the conventional partnerships and depending on the topic, this activity could be led by NGOs working on asylum capacity.

3) Interlinkages with bilateral or multilateral asylum capacity frameworks and processes:

⇒ To date, there is no clearly established link between the different regional asylum capacity frameworks and the ACSG. In the Africa region, various regional forums are developing their own policies on asylum which could be strategically used to advance the implementation of asylum capacity strengthening pledges.

⇒ Specific to the Americas is that States are engaged in different multilateral processes to which the ACSG is currently not considered to add value. Linked to this, participants suggested to co-brand activities between the regional process and the ACSG. It was further suggested to create a ‘group of experts’ or ‘group of friends’ that could include actors from existing bilateral or multilateral asylum capacity frameworks to create linkages.

4) Multistakeholder Visibility:

⇒ Participants recommended to explore synergies between the ACSG with academic networks/universities, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, intergovernmental entities and International organisations like International Association of Refugee and Migration Judges (IARMJ).

5) Creation of tools and content:

⇒ It was recommended that the ACSG, together with Divisions and Bureaux, lead in developing tools and content or build on already existing tools of interest to States.

6) Modalities for resource mobilization:

⇒ It was emphasized to advocate for matches accompanied with funding or other types of support to strengthen the ACSG and enable it to work on specific technical projects. Some concrete suggestions were to support State funded deployments to work towards progressing State asylum systems or earmarked funding to support ACSG specific projects/activities.

Proposed Way Forward



Based on the inputs of the brainstorming and ACSG events, the ACSG Secretariat proposes to enhance the mechanism beyond the core activities currently implemented in the lead up to the next GRF in 2023. Key areas for renewed and strategic engagement are presented below:

1) Expand the ways of engaging with the ACSG

⊗ **Engage States on light matches:** It is proposed that the ACSG pilots less formal or light matches with States interested in supporting asylum capacity, including when they have not made a pledge to do so. Practical examples have already been made by CO's and RB's including study visits, deployment support or direct technical support.

⊗ **Engage States in meetings on the ACSG:** As a way to mobilise State and non-state entities to engage as champions for the ACSG, the ACSG Secretariat proposes to engage States, and other entities as appropriate, in meetings of the ACSG. This activity is expected to be implemented through the identification of participants and the establishment of a coordination structure. This activity will include representatives from regional processes and align with the preparations for the GRF.

2) Expand the impact of the ACSG

⊗ **Organize ACSG dialogues and events:** The ACSG Secretariat proposes to organise, with States and support of Regional Bureaux and country offices, dialogues or roundtables on asylum capacity strengthening issues linked to specific thematic, institutional aspects of asylum systems. The ACSG Secretariat aims at organising two events in 2023 in close coordination with States.

⊗ **Develop tools and content:** The potential for the ACSG to lead in the development of tools and specialised content on asylum capacity development issues is widely recognized. The details on specific tools and content require further engagement with States and other stakeholders.

3) Expand stakeholders engaging with the ACSG

⊗ **Engage civil society and academia:** The ACSG will actively engage NGOs and academia. It is proposed that the ACSG focus on a drive to showcase good practices involving non-state stakeholders, particularly those entities that made pledges. In formalizing the ACSG, the roles and responsibilities of civil society actors will be integrated from the beginning and their active engagement sought. The ACSG Secretariat will also convene virtual dialogues with key civil society actors involved in asylum issues to encourage their engagement and support.

⊗ **Engage with law firms and bar associations:** The ACSG will explore potential opportunities to engage with law firms and bar associations. The examples of collaboration can result in different types of projects, including legal mapping and information provision in relation to asylum, research on good practices in State asylum contexts and other types of support.