

# ASYLUM CAPACITY SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

## Frequently Asked Questions

*This document is a compilation of responses to the common questions UNHCR has received regarding the [Asylum Capacity Self-Assessment Tool](#). It has been developed as a complementary material to the [2-pager presentation](#) to help you find the information you need.*

### 1. What is the rationale of the Asylum Capacity Self-Assessment Tool?

UNHCR provides strategic support to States to strengthen their national asylum systems focusing on implementing and managing asylum procedures, improving their quality, and ensuring their sustainability and ownership. Given the rise in asylum applications and the growing complexity of displacement situations globally, it is essential to enhance the efficiency of asylum strengthening efforts. Robust evidence-based assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of asylum systems have been far developed at country and regional level mostly. The Asylum Capacity Self-Assessment Tool is a tool based on existing good practices which proposes a primary method of analysis in the [Self-Assessment Questionnaire](#) and a methodology informed by key principles in the [How-to Guide](#) that supports the assessment the planning of strengthening projects in asylum systems.<sup>1</sup> Covering from the explorative stage to define the need and scope of an assessment to the planning and prioritization of the intervention, the Tool provides for flexibility and possibilities to localize to different contexts including in the situations of onward and mixed movements.<sup>2</sup> The Tool also contributes to the objectives of the [Global Compact on Refugees \(GCR\)](#) by providing direct support for implementing a fair, efficient, and adaptable asylum process that functions with integrity.<sup>3</sup>

### 2. What makes this Tool innovative and impactful in assessing asylum capacity?

Guided by the capacity development approach adopted by the [United Nations Sustainable Development Group](#), the Tool is a culmination of the most relevant aspects of the existing tools and best practices to assess national asylum systems. It harmonizes good practice assessments developed by national authorities and UNHCR operations into standardized technical assessment guidance.<sup>4</sup> For instance, all available Quality Assurance tools (including checklists) for asylum capacity assessment informed the creation of the Self-Assessment Questionnaire.

The Tool recognizes that the structures, functions, capacities and processes a State uses to manage its asylum procedures enable institutions to meet procedural standards and/or address quality concerns during the asylum processing. The Tool looks holistically to reflect on the government structure and how it operates in relation to asylum procedures. It supports asylum authorities in assessing further issues such as the normative framework, institutional considerations, material assets and infrastructure, planning and resource management, as well as case processing modalities. Overall, the proposed assessment process ensures an analysis of the underlying root causes that are leading to quality deficits in an asylum system.

Against this background, the Tool can be used in a complementary fashion with other existing tools and initiatives on asylum capacity, including in settings where regional organizations are already engaged on that matter.

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<sup>1</sup> Key principles include, but are not limited to national ownership, multi-stakeholder engagement, expertise of the relevant actors, participatory methods, evidence-based decision-making, sustainability and accountability.

<sup>2</sup> UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), [A Route-Based Approach: Strengthening Protection and Solutions in the Context of Mixed Movements of Refugees and Migrants](#), June 2024.

<sup>3</sup> For further information regarding the [Global Compact on Refugees](#) (2018), see paragraph 62, p.23.

<sup>4</sup> The development of a global tool was further a recommendation in the Independent Evaluation of UNHCR's Support for Strengthening National Asylum Systems (February 2022).

### **3. Can the Tool be used where there is no or a very initial asylum system?**

The Asylum Capacity Self-Assessment Tool is dedicated to States interested in assessing their existing national asylum system. It has been developed for use by national authorities in charge of asylum procedures; from accessing the procedures to the final determination of an asylum claim. In contexts where there is no or a very initial asylum system, the core areas covered by the Self-Assessment Questionnaire and some thematic modules could still inform and support national authorities who are planning to setup or strengthen national asylum procedures. The Tool provides for assessment and analysis of enabling areas such as the law and policy framework, institutional set-up, infrastructure availability, human resources, and operational considerations which might be in place before an operationalization of the asylum procedures.

### **4. Who can access the data inputted to the Self-Assessment Questionnaire?**

The Self-Assessment Questionnaire is composed of nine modules and 20 sub-modules, the selection of which can be adjusted for purposes of flexibility and localization. The questionnaire further facilitates the analysis of the collected data across topics and over time as it is linked to an [interactive Power BI dashboard](#) that is automatically generated once the Questionnaire is completed. In looking for solutions which provided flexibility and standardized analysis, UNHCR has selected the Kobo Toolbox, an open-source platform designed for collecting, managing and visualizing data, as the best option to develop the [Self-Assessment Questionnaire](#).

When filling out the Questionnaire, each country has access to their dedicated secure folder on the UNHCR Kobo server. Raw data remains the property of countries and they have access to it. Accessing data from a different country is not possible. To access their secure Kobo folder, every country needs to create an account on [kobo.unhcr.org](https://kobo.unhcr.org) with their own credentials. There is one account per country, usually owned by the assessment coordinator. A country can still add users by requesting the UNHCR Kobo support team to proceed accordingly.

As the owner, UNHCR has access to the data stored in the UNHCR Kobo server. However, the data recorded by a country through their secured and private account will not be used or shared by UNHCR. Access to the data is restricted to the UNHCR Kobo support team (for technical support to countries when challenges emerge) and to staff members of the Asylum Systems & Determination Section at the Division of International Protection (DIP) in Geneva. The latter, who are involved in the development of the Kobo form, may make substantive improvements to it based on the feedback provided by States.

In addition, after submitting a Kobo form, each country could designate their own storage space for the data, such as a SharePoint folder. The UNHCR Kobo support team can then connect the SharePoint folder to Power BI to allow for further data analysis and the country can subsequently delete the submission in Kobo.

In many contexts, States may still find it beneficial to share the assessment data with their national UNHCR counterparts (and other stakeholders as appropriate) as part of the assessment process, but this will be on their initiative.

For any query relating to the Tool, kindly contact us through [acsg@unhcr.org](mailto:acsg@unhcr.org).

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