

Harmonisation, Establishment and Certification of Best Interests Procedures



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Migration & Asylum
General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons &
Institutional Protection



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



euaa
EUROPEAN UNION
AGENCY FOR ASYLUM

Best Interests Principle and Procedures

Article 3 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)

“In all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, **the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration**”.

Best interests assessment and Best interests determination of the child aim to identify durable solutions and safeguard children's rights.

Best Interests Assessment in Greece

- A Best Interests Assessment was not a prerequisite in case management
- Several different forms used by different organisations
- No guidelines on how to conduct the procedure
- No training of the assessors
- Fragmented information about the child
- Possible re-traumatisation of the child

National Strategy for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors in Greece (2020)

Pillar 1, Goal 2, Objective 5, Action 5.1:

Introducing a widespread use of a best interests assessment by:

- Developing a **template for best interest assessment**
- Developing a **training module for the use of BIA**
- **Mainstreaming** the use of BIAs by delivering the template to all organisations
- **Legally framing** the deployment of BIA and BID, as well as the accreditation process of professionals
- The BIA should be seen as a **valuable process** to gain insight into the various aspects of a child's life and understand what their needs are. The guardian plays a central role in a Best Interests Assessment.

Article 66-XXIV of Law 4939/2022 (A' 111)

Guidelines and standard operating procedures

The Institutional Protection Unit shall organise and coordinate policies for the proper and effective implementation of the European, international and national rules applicable to the guardianship of unaccompanied minors, by:

...

b) compiling indicators for assessing the best interests of the unaccompanied minor, in collaboration with international and European organisations and, in particular, the UNHCR and the EU Agency for Asylum, and establishing a standard assessment form and procedures for determining the best interests of the child;

General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection – Institutional Protection Unit



Implementation of the "Harmonization, Establishment and Certification of Best Interests Procedures" project



In co-operation with UNHCR and EUAA



Since November 2022



With a view to establish standardized tools and harmonize the best interests assessment procedure of the child

"Harmonization, Establishment and Certification of Best Interests Procedures"

- Project Outline

1. Development of a new Best Interests Procedures (BIP) Toolkit
2. Launch of the pilot implementation of the new BIP Toolkit
3. Delivery of Trainings of Trainers (ToTs) on BIP
4. Delivery of secondary trainings to the professionals conducting best interests assessments in the field
5. Finalisation of the BIP Toolkit and harmonisation of the procedure throughout Greece
6. Certification of the trained Trainers and the professionals in the field trained by the trained Trainers

Development process of the new Best Interests Procedures (BIP) Toolkit



Research on existing BIA tools used in the field



Focused discussions with actors conducting BIAs



GS Inter-departmental Working Group



Expert feedback from UNHCR and EUAA



Endorsement by Heads of Units and SG

Best Interests Procedures Toolkit

The BIP Toolkit consists of the following documents:

1. Theoretical and Legal Framework for the Best Interests of the Child
2. Guidelines and Methodology for the Best Interests Assessment Procedure
3. Short Best Interests Assessment Form and User Guide and
4. Comprehensive Best Interests Assessment Form and User Guide.



Short Best Interests Assessment Form

- Used for an initial assessment of child's risk and vulnerability factors
- A one-off process: illustrates child's situation, conditions and needs at the specific place and time
- Used by trained child protection professionals
- In cases of homeless children or children living in precarious conditions, in the framework of NERM
- In cases of street work interventions
- In cases of identified unaccompanied children in RICs (conducted by Guardians)
- In an "emergency" context
- Case prioritisation tool
- Includes recommended actions



Comprehensive Best Interests Assessment Form

- Regular assessment of the child's living conditions, protection needs, other issues during their stay in Greece
- Used for every case of unaccompanied and separated child
- **One form for every child** that is complementarily used by several professionals, in cooperation with the Guardian, during their stay in Greece
- Child-centered tool, guarantees child participation in action planning
- Regularly updated
- Soon in digital form

Significant outcomes of the project



The BIP Toolkit is used on a national level for conducting the child's best interests assessment in a **harmonised** way



BIA is **established** as a standard process in child protection case management



BIA is ultimately conducted only by **certified** in BIP child protection professionals



HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Ministry of Migration & Asylum
General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons &
Institutional Protection



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



Harmonisation, Establishment and Certification of Best Interests Procedures

- **Pilot implementation phase**
- **Trainings of Trainers**
- **Secondary trainings**
- **Certification Process**

Pilot implementation phase of the BIP toolkit

- 24 CP actors
- 6 – 9 months
- Monitoring and support by GSVPIP

Participating child protection actors

- NERM partners
- Emergency Accommodation Facilities for Unaccompanied Minors
- Accommodation Centers for Unaccompanied Minors
- Supervised Semi-Independent Living Apartments
- Guardians

Focal Points

What is their role in the pilot implementation phase of the project?

- Liaise between GS and the actor
- Disseminate information
- Share challenges in the field and questions
- Share monthly reports, sample BIAs and feedback
- Receive training on the BIPs

Current status quo

- 2 August 2023 - Launch of Pilot Implementation Phase
- Monthly reports
- Monthly sample BIA data collection
- Regular focus group discussions with focal points
- Online Feedback Form on the BIP Toolbox

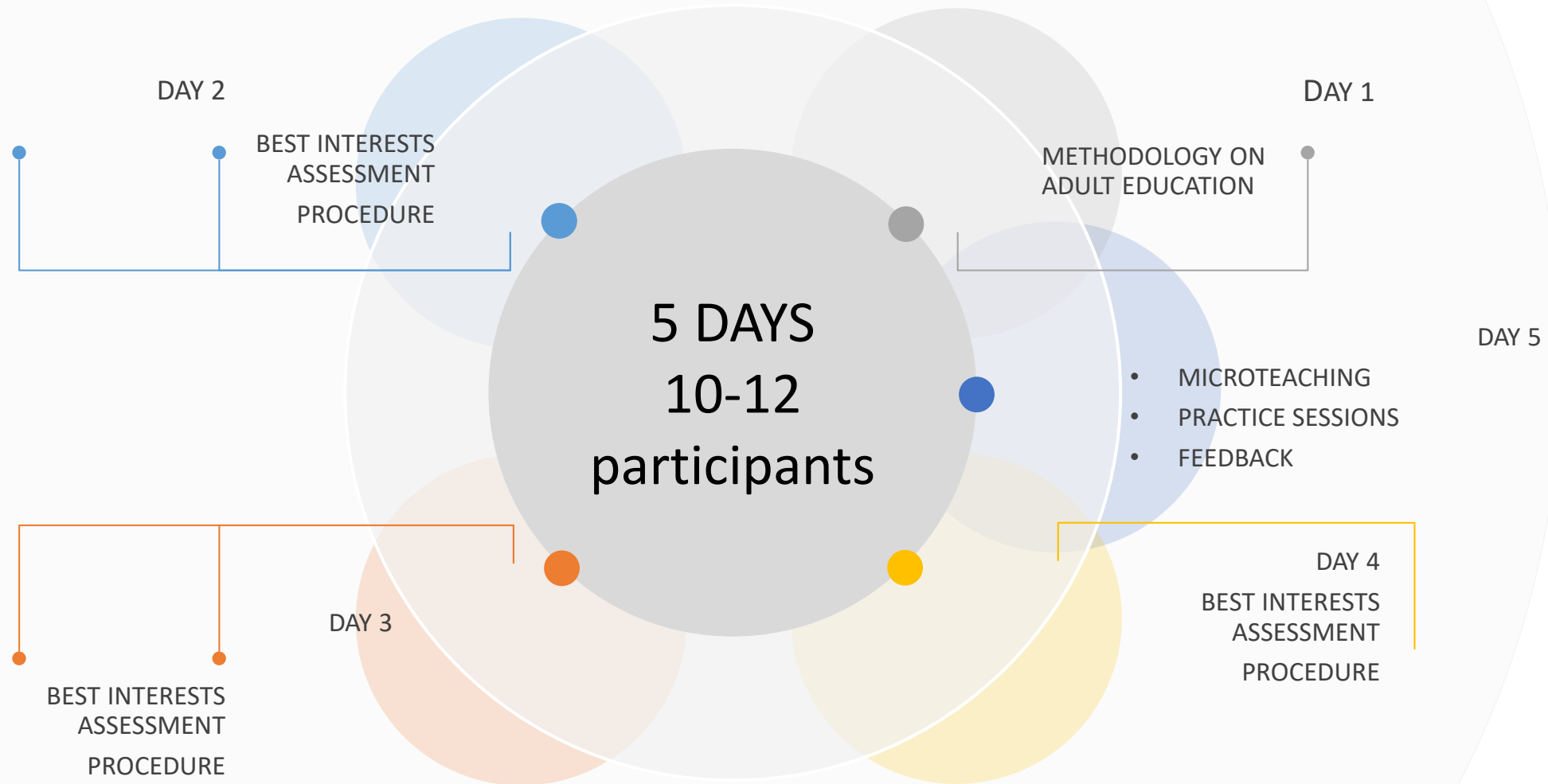
Expected outcomes of the Pilot Implementation Phase

- Monitoring the effective implementation of BIP in the field for all UAC
- Evaluation of the BIP Toolkit and use in the field
- Potential adjustments to the BIP Toolkit
- Provision of practical support to the professionals in the field
- Strengthening of the professionals' knowledge and skills for the implementation of BIP
- Mainstreaming the continuous use of BIAs in the field as part of a comprehensive child protection case management system,
- Identifying challenges and good practices in the use of the tools

Trainings of Trainers

- On Best Interests Procedures-Best Interests Assessment
 - Delivered to focal points
 - By the GS

“Best Interests Procedures-Best Interests assessment” Training of Trainers Outline



DAY 1: Methodology of Adult Training

- Theory and principles of adult training
- Challenges for adult learners
- Role of the trainer
- How to improve facilitative skills
- How to design a training
- Adult learning techniques
- Disruptive learner behaviors
- Evaluation, Self evaluation, Constructive feedback

DAYS 2,3,4: Best Interests Assessment

- Basic terms and key principles
- Theoretical and legal background of the principle of the Best Interests of the child
- Best Interests Assessment Procedure
- 4 factor Analysis
- Verbal communication and active listening
- Interview techniques with children
- BIA steps and tools
- Preparation and documentation
- Action Plan-Case Planning

DAY 5: Micro teaching- Feedback

- Implementation of Micro-teaching in Adult Education
- 20 minutes micro teaching practice sessions
- Constructive feedback for the participants
- Final Remarks

Secondary trainings

- Delivered by the trained Trainers
 - Within two months from the ToT
 - Monitored and supported by the GS
-

Certification process

- Certification of the trained Trainers
- Certification of the professionals conducting BIAs in the field

Thank you !

Institutional Protection Unit

Tel: 213-212-8390

E-mail: sg.vp.guardianship@migration.gov.gr
a.moustaka@migration.gov.gr
o.ziori@migration.gov.gr