

ANNEX I

European Migration Network work programme for 2017-2018

Policy context

The European Migration Network (EMN) was established by Council Decision 2008/381/EC¹ as an EU co-funded network whose purpose is to provide up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information on migration and asylum for the institutions of the EU as well as its Member States, plus Norway², in order to inform policymaking as well as the wider public and facilitate practical cooperation. It is made up of the European Commission and National Contact Points (EMN NCPs).

Europe is facing an unprecedented surge in the influx of asylum seekers. While far from the levels seen in other parts of world, these flows have put considerable strain on several Member States' administrations. EU countries are affected to different degrees. The routes by which asylum seekers enter the EU have changed in the course of 2015 and 2016, thereby gradually affecting more Member States, but the flows differ substantially across countries. The refugee situation requires a comprehensive EU response. At present, there is little that suggests that the current inflows are to subside and, although substantially more funds could support the acute situation in the countries of origin and their neighbouring countries, geopolitical tensions must also be addressed. However, unwillingness to create subsequent or additional pull factors must also be underlined in due course of the abovementioned actions. In order to build a comprehensive approach to migration management, actions in several fronts have been put forward. In particular, in May 2015 the Commission adopted the European Agenda on Migration³, followed by several rounds of discussions and proposals on actions and implementation packages. The aim of the Agenda is to set out medium to long term priorities that will help EU and its Member States to manage the current challenge and, looking beyond the crises and emergencies, to capitalise the opportunities. Although many steps have been taken in ensuring a rapid and coordinated European response to the refugee situation and in building a sustainable system of migration management, their actual implementation still lags behind. Moreover, while the EU, and its Member States has a crucial role to play in the management of this crisis, it could not do so without a close cooperation with its global partners.

In the past five years, policies have been developed to promote a more open and secure Europe. A Common European Asylum System has been agreed, improving standards for those in need of protection. Channels for legal migration have been reinforced; there are now clearer conditions for entry and stay and a common set of rights for migrants exists.

¹ Council Decision 2008/381/EC of 14 May 2008 establishing a European Migration Network (OJ L 131, 21.5.2008, p. 7). Decision as last amended by Regulation (EU) No 516/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 establishing the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund, amending Council Decision 2008/381/EC and repealing Decisions No 573/2007/EC and No 575/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decision 2007/435/EC (OJ L 150, 20.5.2014, p. 168).

² Norway participates in the work of the EMN, but its NCP is not entitled to receive a grant under this work programme, as Norway does not participate in the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF).

³ *A European Agenda on Migration*, Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (COM(2015) 240 final).

The common visa policy has undergone major modifications and now simplifies the entry of bona fide travellers to the European Union. Visa requirements for several third countries have been abolished. Finally, a framework for the EU's external migration and asylum policies has been put in place, allowing the EU to engage in a comprehensive manner with countries in its neighbourhood and beyond.

The achievements are noteworthy but the work is not finished. Much remains to be done to ensure full implementation and enforcement of existing instruments. Managing the current inflow of asylum seekers has proven a major challenge at both the Member-State and EU level. First, the scope and pace of flows are unprecedented in size, putting the reception facilities and the EU capacity to adapt under considerable strain. Second, the newly-arrived migrants represent a very diverse group of persons whose needs and potential cannot be easily addressed or nurtured with one-size-fits-all solutions. The economic impact of the inflow of asylum seekers is also set to differ substantially across EU countries that are not all directly or equally affected. Under current conditions return, reception, relocation, resettlement, smuggling of migrants, human trafficking, integration and cooperation with third countries are currently high on the EU agenda. Moreover the European Migration Network was also entrusted by JHA Council Conclusions of 3rd and 4th December 2015 with the aim of creating a platform to exchange information and good practices in the field of statelessness. The EU also has to compete for a global pool of talent with a growing number of other destinations. Priorities for the EMN should also reflect Member States legal migration needs in attracting highly skilled migrants, students and researchers from abroad while addressing labour and skills shortages thus strengthening the EU's competitiveness and economic growth. Labour market integration of third-country nationals is key to making migration a benefit for the economy and cohesion of our society.

1.1. Introduction

With the objective to provide the European Union (EU) institutions as well as the Member States' authorities and institutions with up-to-date, objective, reliable, relevant and comparable information on migration and asylum, defined by Article 1(2) of Council Decision 2008/381/EC, the European Migration Network (EMN) 2017-2018 work programme contains the following actions and budget breakdown for 2017:

Grants implemented under direct management (1.2):	EUR 18 910 000
Procurement implemented under direct management (1.3):	EUR 2 078 000
Other actions (1.4):	EUR 2 900 000
TOTAL:	EUR 23 888 000

1.2. Grants

1.2.1. Direct award of action grants to EMN national contact points

Legal basis

Article 22(3) of Regulation (EU) No 516/2014

Budget line

18 03 01 02

Priorities for the year, objectives pursued and expected results

The main objective for the EMN Work Programme 2017-2018 is to produce up-to-date, objective, reliable, relevant and comparable information to support policymakers, practitioners, academia and the wider public by:

- Identifying information/knowledge of policy relevance at national/EU levels that is needed in view of contributing to practical responses to the crisis;
- Providing up-to-date, objective, reliable, relevant and comparable information, in response to identified needs while **ensuring complementarity with other Member States and EU institution initiatives**;
- Increasing the EMN's ability to proactively respond to the needs of policymakers at national/EU level and other target groups, addressing both short and longer-term strategic objectives;
- Sharing good practices and contributing to the development of practical cooperation and knowledge building on migration and asylum to overcome identified challenges and barriers;

To achieve these objectives, the specific priorities shall be:

- **Identify, analyse and meet information needs of EU and national policymakers**, through the **timely provision of relevant information** in an **appropriate, concise format**;
- **Share knowledge of policy developments** across the EU taking into account specific needs and different approaches of Member States by encouraging **greater use and** facilitate access to EMN publications, documents, dialogues and websites;
- Further develop **networking and support practical cooperation** at both national and European level on migration and asylum **using the EMN as a platform for raising awareness about migration and asylum issues**;
- Where deemed justified and of added value, foster exchanges and cooperation also with third countries on an ad hoc basis, in line with EU policies and preferably following consultations with the competent Commission services and the European External Action Service;
- **Gather information on Member States' practices and facilitate practical cooperation** with Member States on specific **aspects of asylum and migration including identifying and sharing innovative best practices to the challenges faced by policy makers and practitioners**;
- **Improve comparability** of statistics and other information at EU-level, including continued cooperation with Eurostat and the on-going development of the **EMN Glossary**;
- **Increase further the impact/effectiveness of the EMN by means of** targeted communication **and strategic dissemination** of EMN outputs in appropriate formats;
- Develop migration IT-tools (together with the Joint Research Centre (JRC)) where needed, bringing about novel ideas and tools.

The EMN adds a unique demonstrated added value due to its strong presence in the Member States through the quality of its outputs and their EU-wide coverage, with a strong focus on analysis and the public availability of its outputs. The EMN shall therefore continue to enhance cooperation and strengthen synergies with, and avoid duplicating the work of, existing EU instruments or structures (i.e. FRA, EUROPOL, EASO, FRONTEX) whose purpose is to collect and exchange information in the areas of migration and asylum. The EMN will continue to implement the recommendations provided in the independent external evaluation report issued in the autumn 2015.

Activities to be funded from the grants awarded without a call for proposals under Article 190 of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012⁴ (the Rules of Application)

1. Ad-Hoc Queries, Reports, Studies and other Outputs

The outputs of the EMN will be targeted at policymakers and practitioners at EU and national levels, as well as the wider public including academia. To improve the relevance of the EMN to policymaking, emphasis shall continue to be placed on improving the practical use of information provided, building on the experience of the EMN Work Programme 2015-16. This will include responding quickly and effectively to short-term needs, improving the timeliness of the activities undertaken and working with EU and national policymakers at an early stage of planning to ensure outputs are drafted in a format which is policy relevant and readily accessible.

Greater emphasis will also be placed on facilitating practical cooperation between Member States through the gathering of information and on identifying innovative solutions/good practices to challenges faced by policy makers and practitioners.

Where deemed justified, the EMN Steering Board may reduce the number of EMN studies in order to be able to better respond to short-term needs, by producing or updating more succinct products on shorter notice (e.g. Informs/policy briefs) and facilitating expert meetings. In case the EMN Steering Board decides on the reduction of the number of the studies, members of the network have the right to make use of the available financial resources that were allocated to other budget lines of the bi-annual grant agreement. In order to promote comparability, the multilingual EMN **Glossary** shall be maintained and terms will be shared with relevant EU level institutions as well as national experts.

The EMN shall research, compile and analyse information in the following ways:

- Ad-Hoc Queries;
- Annual Policy Reports;
- EMN Country Factsheets;
- Studies, consisting of National Reports as well as a concise, succinct Synthesis Report;
- EMN Informs and other concise products;
- EMN glossary;
- EMN Bulletin;

⁴ Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 1268/2012 of 29 October 2012 on the rules of application of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union (OJ L 362, 31.12.2012, p. 1).

- Contribution to the EU Immigration Portal.

Duplication of data collection should be avoided. Data collected by other relevant entities should be taken into account whenever relevant (e.g. Eurofound, GDISC, ICMPD, IGC, ILO, IOM, MPC, OECD, UN).

1.1 Ad-Hoc Queries

Ad-Hoc Queries are a very effective means to quickly gather comparative information in order to meet current needs and are an important activity. Queries shall be launched, responded to and subsequent compilations disseminated in accordance with the Vademecum for EMN Ad-Hoc Queries and Ad Hoc Query Checklist. The Ad-Hoc Query Working Group will update the Vade-mecum to reflect the amendments done to the EMN Information Exchange System (IES) and continue to monitor their adherence while reporting back to NCPs on the implementation. Ad-Hoc Queries may also be used to obtain specific (updated) information on a particular topic or aspect of a previous EMN study in order to support a topical policy initiative.

Member States can launch individual or joint ad-hoc queries on relevant issues that can have incidences in various Member States. The Commission encourages these transversal synergies in order to optimise the rational use of resources and avoid duplications. Moreover, the Commission as well as the NCPs shall promote the Ad Hoc Queries as the main tool for searching for viable information within diverse bodies and institutions on EU lever (e.g. FRA, Frontex, EASO etc.).

Ad-hoc queries have to be focused on specific migration or asylum issues. The questions should not overlap with the ones launched by other EU agencies (i.e. Europol, EASO, Eurojust); or with previous Ad-Hoc Queries

Where deemed necessary and relevant, cooperation and coordination will take place with other EU and international entities in the launching of Ad-Hoc Queries (which can only be done by an EMN NCP or the European Commission) and in the compilation, preparation of summaries, analysis, storage and retrieval of replies to ensure the most appropriate mechanism is used to obtain a response to the Ad-Hoc Query, and to avoid duplication of effort. Information shared across (Member) States will fully respect data protection commitments.

The EMN will continue to develop concise, succinct overviews of the main outcomes of EMN Ad-Hoc Queries on issues considered of particular topical policy relevance according to the following guidelines: a) for all Ad-Hoc Queries launched by the Commission or which the Commission considers of particular policy relevance; and b) when an EMN NCP(s) specifically requests this to the Commission. The overviews shall be provided to the EMN NCPs for verification before distribution outside of the EMN, giving the EMN NCPs sufficient time for review, including those that may be used for wider dissemination. In some cases, where relevant and useful to policymakers, summaries will be developed as EMN Informs by the EMN Service Provider. All NCPs launching Ad-Hoc Queries should also produce and circulate overviews of its results.

NCPs are encouraged to disseminate widely (the competent authorities and Ministries in

their Member State) the annual leaflet of Ad-Hoc Queries separated by subject that will be produced by the Service provider.

Costs related to the preparation and translation of replies to EMN Ad-Hoc Queries may be declared on the basis of unit costs.

1.2 Annual Policy Reporting

EMN Annual Policy Reports serve to provide an overall insight into the most significant political and legislative (including EU) developments, as well as public debates, in the area of migration and asylum. The National Policy Reports also serve national needs so their structure must remain flexible in order to adjust it to the national audiences.

A synthesis of Member States National Annual Policy Reports 2016 and 2017 (Part 1) and a Statistical Annex of key asylum and migration statistics shall be completed in early 2017 and 2018 respectively. Coherence of the EMN's report with EASO's annual report shall be ensured, in order to avoid duplication.

The Member States National Annual Policy Reports (Part 2) will focus on national developments in Member States and will be submitted in the 2nd quarter of 2017 and 2018 respectively.

Monitoring the effectiveness of EU legislation and policies should be made an integral part of the EU policy cycle. The EMN would contribute to this monitoring progress in accordance with its mandate and following guidance by the EMN Steering Board year on year of the implementation of the migration and asylum agenda of Home Affairs. Contributions by the EMN to the monitoring process would be limited to providing objective and factual information. The EMN will continue to work to adjust the annual policy reporting with a view to facilitate impact analysis of EU policies and contribute to monitoring by relevant parties.

1.3 EMN Country Factsheets

Based on information gathered during the Annual Policy Reporting process, succinct **EMN Country Factsheets** will be updated in 2017 and 2018 by the EMN Service Provider. The Factsheets, one per (Member) State, will present up-to-date information on policy developments in migration and asylum in (Member) States, including latest relevant, and to the extent possible, comparable Eurostat statistics, supplemented by national statistics, presented in tables and diagrams. Statistics should be based on the EMN Annual Policy Report, and updated on an annual basis either at the initiative of the EMN Service Provider⁵, or of the National Contact Point (NCP) of EMN. They can also be updated on an individual basis by NCPs when important changes has taken place in a Member State

1.4 EMN Studies

EMN Studies are consisting of National Reports prepared according to common specifications plus a concise, succinct Synthesis Report, to fulfil the EMN mandate.

EMN shall initiate four studies in 2017 and four studies in 2018. Thematic priorities for

⁵ Please see section 1.3 "Procurement" for information on the service contract with the EMN Service Provider.

2017 and 2018 should be based on strategic policy developments and needs in the EU in order to:

- i. Maximise the benefits of mobility and of legal migration and integration;
- ii. Develop a credible approach on irregular migration, return and smuggling;
- iii. Enhance the implementation of the Common European Asylum System and the Common policy on visas.
- iv. Strengthen synergies between asylum, migration and the external dimension including integration (in close cooperation with the European Integration Network).

Based on these priorities, **the European Commission and the EMN NCPs will propose relevant and timely study topics.** As part of their regular networking activity, EMN NCPs should encourage national network members, including NGOs, international organisations etc. to issue suggestions for studies' topics to be proposed to the EMN.

Supported by the EMN Service Provider, the European Commission draws up a list of proposals for 2017 and 2018 respectively where each study proposal is carefully scrutinised taking into account relevant policy priorities. EMN NCPs are then asked to vote on this list to indicate their preferred choices thereby giving their endorsement. Thereafter the recommended choices are submitted to the annual EMN Steering Board meeting for approval, in the autumn of the year prior to the commencement of the reference period for the Studies.

The Steering Board at the meeting in the autumn only decides on three study topics for the coming year in order for the fourth and last study topic to be decided at the Steering Board meeting during spring the following year. This is in order for the last study topic of the year to be more current and topical and for the EMN to increase its flexibility. From the proposals that are not selected, the Steering Board may select at least two topics on which information will be collected for an EMN Inform and national factsheets.

To enable the EMN to better respond to identified information needs in light of topical policy developments during 2017-2018, the Steering Board may decide, either in the framework of a programmed meeting, or by written procedure, on an alternative topic for a study. Alternatively, the Steering Board may agree on updating or extending a previous EMN study instead, in order to provide updated information of topical relevance to policymakers, where a need is clearly identified. EMN studies aim at being concise, comparable and, above all, timely providing the needed information.

Studies from 2016 and 2017 respectively shall be completed as required, and an update, if necessary, of the National Reports for the Study on Organisation of Asylum and Migration Policies in the EU Member States, may be done in order to maintain an up-to-date reference. This may also include updating the short, three-page *Organograms of Asylum and Migration Policies* produced on the basis of a National Report in each Member State

EMN NCPs are encouraged to seek additional inputs from external stakeholders, including NGOs, academia, civil society and international organizations on a case by case basis to further improve the experience/field basis and practical angle of studies and Informs.

1.5 EMN Informs

EMN Informs provide succinct key findings and messages targeted for policymakers on a specific topic based on the results of information gathered and analysed by the EMN, for example, from EMN Annual Policy Reports, Studies and Ad-Hoc Queries Up to 15 EMN Informs will be developed in 2017 and 2018 respectively. EMN Informs are developed by the EMN Service Provider, based on a selection carried out by EMN NCPs together with the EC among the list of study topic proposals, also leaving some room for ad hoc informs as the need arises.

1.6 EMN Glossary

The EMN Glossary improves comparability by enabling a common understanding and use of terms based on agreed definitions of concepts relating to asylum and migration. The Glossary draws on a variety of sources, primarily those given in the EU asylum and immigration acquis, and makes these available in the majority of official (Member) State languages. A new “pdf” and “printer-friendly” version of the EMN Glossary (Version 4) will be developed by May 2018. However, new Glossary terms will be added to the on-line EMN Glossary as needed throughout the period as required. EMN Glossary and Thesaurus working group discuss the inclusion of new terms. Member states who do not participate in the working group can provide suggestions. Translations into further EU / non-EU languages will be encouraged when the need is proven. Cooperation with IATE and other entities developing glossary information on migration and asylum will be strengthened.

1.7 EMN Bulletin

The NCPs contribute to the EMN Bulletin which provides regular, topical information required by and of relevance to (senior) EU and national policymakers and other interested stakeholders highlighting recent EU and National developments, outputs and activities of the EMN. Relevant information extracted from the EMN's existing knowledge plus (latest) published statistics, primarily from Eurostat, will continue to be produced as an EMN Bulletin. Up to four editions in 2017 and 2018 respectively will be produced and circulated publically also to a wide audience.

1.8 EMN Status Report 2016 and 2017

The NCPs contribute to the EMN status report which is subsequently provided to the European Parliament, the Council, the Commission, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions concerning the on-going activities of the EMN. The 2016 and 2017 report shall outline the key findings of the studies completed in 2016 and 2017 and the main impacts of the EMN, in particular, in informing policymaking at national and EU levels.

1.9 EU Immigration Portal

The EMN will continue to provide national level updates as required to some of the content of the EU Immigration Portal, specifically the 'country information sheet' and the document entitled 'What do I need before leaving?' on an annual basis. NCPs will therefore receive an annual reminder to check their national content by means of a Word document containing the information which at that point is available online (in the Portal) and NCPs will then provide the necessary corrections to this file.

2. Expert and Working Groups

2.1 Return Expert Group

The European Migration Network's Return Expert Group (EMN REG) functions as a platform for practical cooperation and the sharing of expertise. It builds synergies by providing the structure for the follow-up, planning and monitoring of the practical cooperation of return activities in the EU. The EMN REG connects all key stakeholders, including not just Member States, but also representatives of EU funded programmes (incl. the European Integrated Approach on Return towards Third Countries (EURINT), the European Reintegration Instrument Network (ERIN) and the European Return Liaison Officers network (EURLO) and the Forced Return Monitoring 2 Project (FREM2)) and when necessary civil society. In this sense, the EMN REG provides a common work environment with Frontex doing operational coordination. This working arrangement will continue as before with the Integrated Return Management Application (dedicated IT-tool) being used as a common tool for the necessary information sharing platform needed to connect the key stakeholders.

The EMN Ad-Hoc Query tool will continue to collect information on how Member States deal with specific aspects of return and reintegration in the countries of origin. EMN REG Ad-Hoc Queries will be answered by EMN REG members. The EMN's Service Provider will, under the management of the Commission, support the on-going implementation by preparing EMN REG-related issues and administrative follow-up and the launching of Ad-Hoc Queries by the Commission. Where deemed relevant, the EMN NCP meetings will also be used to involve and ensure the participation of expertise in the return field.

Discussion at EMN REG meetings aims to do the following:

- i. Share good practice in the field of return and reintegration to increase coherence in the implementation of return programmes and reintegration projects. Based on these discussions Member States develop common standards and guidelines to ensure a European approach on return actions.
- ii. Exchange information about the initiatives taken towards the countries of origin or transit to ensure a sustainable return of the irregular migrants (i.e. reintegration measures, re-documentation).
- iii. Support the development of practical solutions and implementation of EU funded actions in the field of return and readmission to overcome challenges and barriers to return and reintegration. This includes cooperation with authorities in countries of return.
- iv. Draw on stakeholders' expertise on relevant issues related to return and

reintegration of irregular migrants.

- v. Questions concerning the use of the Integrated Return Management Application (IRMA) including management of content, new requirements and future system development.
- vi. Contributing to the availability and collection of statistics on return and reintegration.

For each aspect of return, agreed through consultation with EMN members, the EMN REG will provide a clear overview of the situation across EMN Member States. This overview will serve as a basis to exchange best practices. Meetings will provide for the opportunity to discuss current and future programs and to identify synergies. This will support better coordination of the actions of Member States on return and reintegration in and towards third countries.

The EMN REG experts will meet regularly (on average four times per year). The resources to finance this activity will be included within the EMN grants. All relevant projects/programmes in the field of return (e.g. EURINT, ERIN, EURLO and FREM2) will designate a representative who will attend and participate in the EMN REG meetings.

The EMN REG is sub-divided into two parts:

- **EMN REG Practitioners Group: MS officials (practitioners)** where restricted information exchanges can take place to support practical cooperation where needed among MS. Participation in this work area is strictly limited to designated MS (or bodies authorised to represent the MS), EU Agency and COM officials to avoid any potential for conflict of interests/ethical challenges with civil society and/or international organisations being present as EMN REG Members. Civil Society and International Organisations may be invited only on an ad hoc needs basis where deemed relevant and appropriate
- **EMN REG wider group**, same composition as above but with EMN MS represented by civil/society and/or international organisations.

2.2 Other working groups

Apart from the above mentioned Return Expert Group, the following working groups work currently in the framework of the EMN, together with a non-permanent Platform on Stateless Persons created in 2016:

- Glossary Working Group
- Communication and Dissemination Working Group
- Ad Hoc Query Working Group
- Statistics Working Group

Creation of new ad-hoc working groups are subject to decision of the EMN Steering Board in line with the Council Decision establishing the EMN to deal with relevant issues on migration, and asylum at the regional or European level.

3. Networking Building and collaboration

Effective networking is an essential component required for the functioning of the EMN, and the EMN will continue to expand its networking planning, scale and use of networking activities at EU and national levels in 2017 and 2018 to further establish its role within the architecture of existing European organisations and institutions. The aim is to continue to identify opportunities for the EMN to collaborate with stakeholders and to encourage complementarity in activities and outputs, avoiding also any duplication while promoting the sharing of ideas and best practices etc.

Cooperation and networking on inter NCP level should be encouraged and strengthened and NCPs should be encouraged to undertake more joint ventures, conferences and organise events with other NCPs and their national networks. The system of thematic conferences is a useful instrument to collaborate with stakeholders, international organisations, academia and civil society in order to develop networking and further collaboration with other actors in the field.

On an annual basis up to 8 EMN NCP full day meetings and corresponding workshop meetings may be organized together with 2 annual Steering Board meetings.

3.1 Networking and Collaboration amongst EMN NCPs

To facilitate the implementation of this Work Programme and in accordance with Articles 7 and 8 of Decision 2008/381/EC, the exchange of information amongst EMN NCPs shall be undertaken through specific meetings and via the Information Exchange System. The EMN encourage more topic related debates by means of dedicated thematic workshops to become more content oriented as a new focus. EMN NCPs will be encouraged to organise ‘cluster meetings’ to facilitate discussions amongst clusters of EMN NCPs on a particular topic or issue. Also the joint launching of ad-hoc queries in subjects where synergies and exchange of good practices shall be encouraged.

EMN NCPs may also attend events organised by other EMN NCPs and contribute to these by enabling national experts to attend, thus contributing to the exchange of information between Member States.

3.2 Networking and collaboration at the national level

In accordance with Article 5(d) of Decision 2008/381/EC, national networks with an appropriate balance of members representing all relevant stakeholders, including national policymakers, will be developed and maintained. National network members may contribute, even on an ad-hoc basis, to relevant activities in order to extend the scope of information sources available to the EMN. NCPs are encouraged to have annual priorities and goals and direct their activities towards their fulfilment. National networks will be encouraged to play an important role in information dissemination, including a greater emphasis on communicating to the wider public and national media, and involving a wider range of entities relevant in migration and international protection debates. This will require the role of the EMN NCPs to be enhanced further so that they are each able to act as a national hub for information gathering and analysis, and dissemination as well as sharing experiences in how to develop and build a national network. Efforts will be made

to provide greater operational support for this activity in 2017 and 2018.

3.3 Network-building and collaboration with relevant EU and non-EU entities

Priority will be given in 2017-2018 to continue working with relevant EU instruments and structures in the area of migration and asylum, as well as with other relevant international organisations. This include in particular working with the European Parliament who is an active member of the EMN as well as Eurostat and EU agencies, such as FRA, Frontex, EASO, Europol and the National Contact Points on Integration who may attend Steering Board and EMN NCP meetings by invitation. The EMN will likewise solicit the support from JRC to provide support for the development of migration IT-tools⁶. Collaboration with the JRC started in 2016. All these entities may provide specific inputs into EMN Reports, Studies and other EMN outputs, for example, joining the advisory group for a particular study. Where deemed of added value, other stakeholders identified in the EMN Communications and Dissemination Strategy, including International Organisations, NGOs, Civil Society may also be consulted when drafting EMN outputs.

The role of the EMN Steering Board will be to identify any other strategic co-operative relationships with other (non-EU) organisations (European or International), institutions and networks pursuing similar objectives. Where deemed relevant and appropriate, the EMN will strengthen links with other relevant EU and non-EU entities such as academia, civil society and think tanks including co-operation/sharing information with relevant third countries, in line with EU policies and preferably following consultations with the competent Commission services and the European External Action Service.

3.4 Co-operation with Commission appointed contractors/collaborators

Where deemed relevant and justifiable, the EMN may co-operate with external contractors or Service Providers acting on behalf of the Commission or EU Agencies for a specific project after the approval of the Steering Board.

4. EMN Communication and Dissemination

Effective targeting of the information produced by the EMN through its communication and dissemination activities coordinated through the EMN Communication and Dissemination working group is an essential element for the EMN to achieve its objectives, in particular informing policymakers. It is therefore important to focus on the timely publication and strategically advantageous distribution of the EMN's outputs at national, European, and international levels.

In 2018 it will be 10 years since the Decision 2008/381/EC was adopted and a dedicated event should be organised in relation to this fact. The anniversary event could be linked to the annual EMN Conference. The form, responsible organisers and thematic approaches, as well as participants, will be determined by the European Commission and EMN NCPs.

⁶ Please see section 1.4 "Other actions".

The EMN NCPs may contribute to the preparation of the "EMN Day" to be organised every year in June at EU level in regard to the publication of the EMN Annual Policy Report and attend the event.

The EMN Communication and Dissemination Strategy will be used to focus and streamline a range of EMN activities aimed at increasing the visibility of the EMN and to ensure the most effective dissemination of its products. Activities will be planned centrally within an annual Action Plan produced by the Commission with the agreement of NCPs. A coordinated, annual event/series of events may be held in order to further develop a unified EMN identity/message. This shall be on the basis of the Commission's Visual Identity and EMN Design Guide, as well, for national products, that of an EMN NCP's legal entity. New measures will continue to be considered in 2017-2018 in relation to the provision of information to the wider public and the media and where relevant translation of national legislation including efforts to capitalise on the potential of social media tools.

The Commission, supported by the relevant EMN ad hoc working groups, will play an active role in communicating and disseminating EMN outputs, where possible, through press releases, news articles, seminars, events and presentations, engaging key stakeholders on the EU and international level and raising awareness with the wider public on the outputs of the EMN. At the national level, EMN NCPs may promote specific communication, dissemination and visibility strategies, based on national needs.

4.1 EMN and National Websites

The public EMN Website is managed by the Commission and will be improved in order to better serve as an up-to-date point-of-reference for the wider public, whereby they can easily access EMN generated outputs as well as related projects coordinated and funded by the Commission linked to EMN and its working groups. Other target audiences include EMN NCPs, EU agencies and other institutional referrers, and the wider public interested in finding up-to-date, objective, reliable and comparable information about migration and international protection in the EU and Norway. The EMN website will complement and be coherent with other relevant EU websites, such as the EU Immigration Portal, the European Website on Integration and the EU anti-trafficking website. Efforts will be continued in order to monitor and analyse website access by users. The non-public Information Exchange System for EMN NCPs will continue to be maintained to serve as an up-to-date point-of-reference for policymakers and practitioners, whereby they can access EMN generated information to support their needs.

EMN NCPs shall maintain complementary national websites providing targeted information tailored to their national audiences, which may include a repository of national case law, legislation and non-EMN publications. National websites should also take account of the information needs of the wider public. Whilst the specific design of a national website shall be the responsibility of an individual EMN NCP, it shall nevertheless make clear that they are part of the EMN. The Commission will place a greater emphasis on monitoring website usage also at national levels.

4.2 EMN Conference 2017-2018

Up to two EMN Conferences could be organised annually in 2017 and 2018 respectively.

The form, responsible organisers and thematic approaches, as well as participants, will be determined by the European Commission and EMN NCPs.

A parallel cluster meeting could be organised at the same time in order to maximise the use of resources.

4.3 National EMN Conferences

NCPs are encouraged to organise national conferences and events promoting the work of the EMN within its national network and facilitating cooperation between Member States.

4.4 (Inter) National Events

EMN NCPs may participate in other (inter)national workshops/seminars/conferences not organised by the EMN, but only when the event occurs within an EU Member State or Norway and when an EMN NCP's participation involves the presentation of an EMN Study or concerns a topic of relevance to the activities of the EMN. Participation at an event outside the EU or Norway may be possible following prior approval by the Commission, again subject to the presentation of an EMN Study or where the event concerns a topic of relevance to the activities of the EMN and if this is consistent with the approach for networking with other entities or relevant third countries.

5. Implementation of Integrated Return Management Application (IRMA)

The grants fund a proportionate and reasonable part of the additional costs incurred by Member States in relation to the implementation of IRMA at national level. The funding covers proportionate specific national IT-development needs, system alignment of local IT-systems and other relevant related costs (such as staff), in order to streamline the systems and indicators for the data to be collected and uploaded in IRMA.

Grant Implementation Conditions

All NCPs shall, as a minimum, provide written replies to the Ad-Hoc Queries (please see section 1.1 above), prepare National Annual Policy Reports (please see section 1.2 above) and provide data for the EMN Studies (please see section 1.4 above). Moreover the EMN REG Practitioners shall provide as far as possible operational data on forced and assisted voluntary returns as follows: number of irregular migrants issued with a return decision, number of irregular migrants in detention / under a restricting measure, time of placement in detention / spent in detention, when identification/verification has been requested / travel documents requested, travel documents already issued; in all cases broken down by nationality, sex, family and vulnerable groups. Available data shall be regularly uploaded in IRMA on a weekly basis.

The NCPs are encouraged to participate as much as possible in all the other above-mentioned activities.

Detailed conditions for the implementation of the actions will be defined in grant agreements to be concluded between the Commission and the EMN NCPs listed in Annex II.

Essential eligibility, selection and award criteria

Eligibility criteria

The action grants will be awarded directly (without a call for proposals) following an invitation to the EMN NCPs listed in Annex II, in accordance with Article 128 of Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012⁷ (the Financial Regulation) and Article 190(1)(f) of the Rules of Application.

The direct award of the grant is justified by the specific characteristics of the action, requiring technical competence, a high degree of specialisation and administrative power that only the EMN NCPs possess.

Selection criteria

In accordance with Article 132 of the Financial Regulation and Article 202 of the Rules of Application, proposals will be evaluated on the basis of the following selection criteria:

- financial capacity — applicants and co-applicants must have stable and sufficient sources of funding to maintain their activity throughout the period in which the action is carried out and to participate in its funding; and
- operational capacity — applicants and co-applicants must have the professional resources, competencies and qualifications required to complete the proposed action.

These are not verified in respect of public bodies and international organisations.

Award criteria

In accordance with Article 132 of the Financial Regulation and Article 203 of the Rules of Application, proposals will be evaluated on the basis of relevance; quality; European added value; expected results, dissemination, sustainability and long-term impact; and cost-effectiveness.

Indicative timetable and amount

Reference	Date	Amount
HOME/2017/AMIF/AG/EMNS	Q1 2017	EUR 18 910 000

Implementation

⁷ Regulation (EU, Euratom) No 966/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 October 2012 on the financial rules applicable to the general budget of the Union and repealing Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 (OJ L 298, 26.10.2012, p. 1).

The action will be implemented directly by DG HOME

Maximum rate of co-financing of eligible costs

95 %

1.3. Procurement

The indicative overall budgetary allocation reserved for the EMN procurement contracts in 2017 is EUR 2 078 000.

Legal basis

Article 22(3) of Regulation (EU) No 516/2014

Budget line

18 03 01 02

Subject matter of the envisaged contracts

1. Service Provider activities to assist the Commission in the organisation of the work of the EMN.
2. Further development of IT migration management tools for the Member States and the Commission.
3. Organization of EU level events for the dissemination of the main results of the EMN activities.

Type of contract

It is envisaged that action 1 will be implemented via an existing contract and a new contract and that actions 2 and 3 will be implemented via specific contracts under existing framework contracts.

Indicative number of contracts envisaged

1 existing contract, 1 new contract, approximately 10 specific contracts under existing framework contracts.

Indicative timeframe for launching the procurement procedures

Q2 2017

Implementation

Actions will be implemented by DG HOME.

1.4. Other actions

1.4.1. Support activities provided by the Joint Research Centre

Legal basis

Article 22 of Regulation (EU) No 516/2014

Budget line

18 03 01 02

Amount

EUR 400 000

Description and objective of the implementing measure

Performing activities related to the activities of the EMN NCPs and/or specific studies which are, for example, very technical and/or concern activities of non-EU actors which the EMN NCPs are not in a position to do.

Implementation

The action will be implemented via an administrative arrangement with the JRC.

1.4.2. IT services provided by the Commission's Directorate-General for Informatics

Legal basis

Article 22 of Regulation (EU) No 516/2014

Budget line

18 03 01 02

Amount

EUR 2 500 000

Description and objective of the implementing measure

1. Integrated Return Management Application (IRMA) software development, encryption tools and distribution, hosting and third country electronic platforms interfaces.
2. Annual hosting of the EMN IT system.
3. EMN website development update.

Implementation

The action will be implemented via a co-delegation to the Directorate-General for Informatics (DIGIT).