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Purpose and scope of the guidance

The purpose of the guidance is not to prescribe a method for the provision of reception conditions. Therefore, unless stated otherwise, the standards and indicators in this document are applicable to the provision of material reception conditions irrespectively of whether these are provided in kind, as financial allowance or in the form of vouchers. This approach follows Article 2(g) RCD, which lists different modalities for the provision of material reception conditions. This means, for example, that Member States either need to ensure the provision of clothing in accordance with the standards included in this guidance or that the level of financial allowance provided should be adequate to cover the applicant's expenses for clothing as per the standards included in the document.

Without prejudice to its focus on open reception facilities, as per recital 8 RCD, the scope of the guidance includes 'all stages and types of procedures concerning applications for international protection, in all locations and facilities hosting applicants and for as long as they are allowed to remain in the territory of the Member State' [3].

The thematic scope of the guidance includes certain key provisions of the RCD which form part of national reception systems for applicants of international protection as outlined in Figure 1 below. Specifically, the document focuses on the in-kind provision of reception conditions, the identification, assessment of and response to special reception needs and the provision of training to staff working in national reception systems. It is considered that all standards across these sections are important to ensure the provision of reception conditions in line with the RCD.



Throughout the guidance, indicators have been integrated into the different sections to measure whether adequate arrangements have been made to cater for special needs within the national reception system. At the same time, this guidance does not go into the needs of applicants with special reception needs, such as unaccompanied children, in depth.

This guidance should be considered as a first step and effort to facilitate the application of certain provisions of the RCD. Not all aspects falling within the scope of the RCD have been addressed in this document, such as the reduction and withdrawal of material reception conditions, detention, access to schooling and education for children and employment and vocational training for adults, and appeal procedures. Moreover, aspects linked to the integration of beneficiaries of international protection or the preparation of the return of

applicants whose application for international protection has been rejected have not been covered in this document.

Most importantly, the guidance has been developed for the regular functioning of the reception system. Situations falling under an emergency framework, such as the use of the provisions of Article 18(9) RCD on emergency housing, fall outside the scope of this guidance. These aspects could be the focus of additional guidance and/or tools to be developed in the future.

The ultimate responsibility for the application of these standards lies with the Member States' authorities and most of the standards in this guidance would, in particular, be within the competence of the national reception authorities. In practice, however, other actors are often involved in the provision of material and non-material reception conditions, including for example other state, regional or local services and intergovernmental or non-governmental organisations.

The standards included in this document reflect already existing practice in EU Member States. As such, it does not endeavour to create a model for the perfect reception system; instead, it aims at compiling agreed standards, indicators and good practices which are applicable and achievable across all EU Member States.

Importantly, in line with the spirit of Article 4 RCD, Member States may introduce or retain more favourable provisions in the field of reception conditions for applicants than those included in this guidance. Under no circumstances should this document be understood as an invitation to lower existing standards, but rather as an encouragement to reach, as a minimum, the benchmarks developed herein.

3 Recital 8 RCD.

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