



European Asylum  
Support Office



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**EASO Guidelines for  
Local MedCOI expert  
providing Medical Country of Origin Information**

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## Table of Contents

Abbreviations and definitions .....	4
Document version history .....	5
1. Introduction .....	6
2. Covered Population .....	6
3. Request types and delivery times .....	6
Administrative procedures .....	7
1 Ordering Process .....	7
2 Quarterly reporting.....	7
3 Billing and Payments .....	7
4 Contacts.....	8
Procedure for the provision of information on medication availability (Field A) and availability of medical treatments (Field C) .....	9
1. Request Handling Procedure .....	9
2. Requirements for the content of responses.....	9
2.1 General.....	9
2.2. Regarding geographic areas .....	10
2.3. Regarding availability of treatment and laboratory controls/check-ups (Field C) .....	11
2.4. Regarding availability of medication (Field A).....	11
Table 1: Determining medication availability .....	14
Table 2: Determining medication availability .....	15
3. Procedure in case of an Unclear Request /Answer Clarification.....	16
4. Procedure in case of impossibility to deliver information.....	16
5. Examples of questions and/answer forms .....	16
Example of case description of an individual request on patient-related case.....	17
Examples of questions for Field A: Information on medication availability.....	17
Example answer form: .....	18
Examples for Field C: Information on availability of medical treatments .....	19
Example answer form: .....	19
Procedure for the provision of information on information on Medication prices, cost coverage (Field B), General or case-specific Information on medical treatments’ prices, cost coverage (Field D), General or case-specific Information on insurance schemes (public and private), social protection schemes, healthcare system (Field E) .....	21
Scope of Services .....	22
1. Request handling procedure .....	22
2. Requirements for the content of responses.....	22



3. Procedure in case of an Unclear Request /Answer Clarification	25
4. Examples of questions on medication prices and cost coverage (Field B).....	26
5. Examples of questions on medical treatments' prices, cost coverage (Field D) .	27
6. Examples of questions with regard to general or case-specific information on healthcare system, insurance schemes (public and private), social protection schemes (Field E) .....	30
6.1 Questions about the healthcare system .....	30
6.2 Questions about health insurances schemes .....	30
6.3 Questions about social security/ social protection .....	32
6.4 Questions about Non-governmental support .....	32
6.5 Other questions .....	33

DRAFT



## Abbreviations and definitions

EASO	European Asylum Support Office ( Contractual Authority)
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
Local expert	Local MedCOI expert

Additional request	An additional request following a response accepted by the EASO in relation to new information.
Clarification Request	A request seeking clarification of unclear or inconsistent information in a response delivered to EASO.
Country-specific medical information	Factual information regarding the absence or presence of medical treatments and medication in countries of origin, or information regarding healthcare, social protection , insurance systems.
General Request	A request relating to general country-specific medical information, usually focusing on a specific medical treatment or group of medications, without the response being intended for a patient-related case.
Registration of medicine	Registration of medication by the local [health] authorities in a particular country, e.g. by the national food and drugs administration or ministry of health. This registered medication is often specified in a list of medications and is known by, for example, [central] pharmacies in the country concerned.
Regular Request	A request in a specific patient-related case
Request	<p>A set of questions by EASO to the Local MedCOI expert for country-specific medical information.</p> <p>A <b>request may</b> comprise, depending on the fields covered by the expert, the following components:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>i. Country/region of the desired information.</li><li>ii. Brief description of the complaints and/or diagnosis and, in the case of a patient-related request (regular request), the age and gender of the patient.</li><li>iii. The required medical treatment(s) and treatment modalities such as laboratory tests.</li><li>iv. The required medicines and alternative medicines. The generic names of medicines are given by EASO and, if deemed appropriate, the brand names are also stated. The medicines are clustered in medication groups by EASO and it is stated what medicines can serve as an alternative.</li><li>v. reference to the country-specific healthcare system, insurance/social protection schemes.</li></ol>
Response	Factual country-specific medical information obtained by the expert following a request.
Services	The delivery of responses under the contract which meet the quality requirements set.
Treatment modality	Actual specific medical treatment possibilities (clinical, outpatient, specific operations, paramedical treatment, diagnostics, specific medication and medical devices etc.) .
Validation request	Request to validate a response given for the purpose of verifying the information and thus monitor the quality of a given response.



### Document version history

<b>Date</b>	<b>Revision No.</b>	<b>Description of Change</b>
01/10/2018	0	1 <sup>st</sup> version of document

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## 1. Introduction

The main task of EASO is to provide very precise, objective, and factual, medical information as input for well-founded and careful decision making for vulnerable groups like migrants and asylum seekers with medical needs. In this regard, it is considered to be highly important that EASO operates as an independent party providing support to the EU+ Member States.

## 2. Covered Population

Patients mentioned in the requests are **always nationals** of the requested country of origin.

No information should be provided for expats and travellers as they are not covered under current contract.

## 3. Request types and delivery times

EASO may submit the following types of requests:

- A Regular (case specific) or General (not case specific) request
- An Additional (request for information additional to an existing response)
- A Validation (request to verify information of an existing response or verify information from a third party)
- A Clarification request is sent if a response is not yet clear or complete according to EASO.

The delivery/response times are

- Normal: 14 calendar days
- Semi-urgent: 7 calendar days
- Special: 28 calendar days

**Table: Summary request types and delivery times**

Request type	Delivery Times		
	Normal	Semi urgent	Special
Regular	14 calendar days	7 calendar days	/
Additional	14 calendar days	7 calendar days	/
Validation	14 calendar days	7 calendar days	/
Clarification	3 calendar days	2 calendar days	7 calendar days
General	/	/	28 calendar days



## Administrative procedures

<b>1 Ordering Process</b>	
<b>a</b>	EASO shall submit to the local expert <u>the contract (Annex III)</u> indicating the period of execution of the tasks and the price for the service provided by local expert.
<b>b</b>	The local expert shall send the contract back to EASO, duly signed, within <b>3 working days</b> . Once the contract is signed by both parties the assignment can start.  e.g.: Contract 01: covering period of first year (will be continued by Contract . 2, for the second year etc.)
<b>c</b>	Once the contract is signed by both EASO and local expert , EASO may start submitting requests to local expert.

<b>2 Quarterly reporting</b>	
<b>a</b>	In the first week following the end of each quarter EASO will send to local expert an Application for Payment form together with a deliverables report containing request reference(s), start and completion date of all requests completed by the expert in the quarter in question.
<b>b</b>	Local expert provides feedback to EASO in case of any inconsistencies <i>asap</i> .
<b>c</b>	Final report is used as confirmation of deliverables by local expert.

<b>3 Billing and Payments</b>	
<b>a</b>	Only actually provided services can be invoiced. EASO must approve any submitted documents or deliverables.  In the first/second week following the end of each quarter EASO, after verification of deliverables report, the local expert shall submit the Application for Payment form and the approved deliverables report to EASO functional email <a href="mailto:MedCOI@easo.europa.eu">MedCOI@easo.europa.eu</a>
<b>b</b>	The Application for Payment form should contain correct information: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❖ Name, address and bank account details of the payee</li><li>❖ Amount and currency (EUR): corresponding final report</li><li>❖ Service execution dates</li><li>❖ Contract and order form reference e.g. EASO/2018/XXX- Order Form 01</li><li>❖ Date and signature of the expert</li></ul> The Application for Payment should <b>not</b> include VAT



<b>c</b>	EASO pays via a bank transfer within 30 days from receipt of the Application for Payment.  In case of inconsistencies/incompleteness: payment suspension until correct information provided
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<b>4 Contacts</b>		
<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>E-mail address</b>
EASO MedCOI Team/secretariat	Functional mailbox	<a href="mailto:MedCOI@easo.europa.eu">MedCOI@easo.europa.eu</a>
Invoicing	Functional mailbox	<a href="mailto:contracts@easo.europa.eu">contracts@easo.europa.eu</a> In CC always: <a href="mailto:MedCOI@easo.europa.eu">MedCOI@easo.europa.eu</a>

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## Procedure for the provision of information on medication availability (Field A) and availability of medical treatments (Field C)

Medical treatment possibilities in the countries of origin are researched by EASO by using several information sources to determine medical treatment possibilities in countries of origin, including by local expert.

Availability is defined as whether medical treatment (including medication) for a specific case may be absent /present /partially present at least in a certain (public or private) medical facility at a certain time somewhere in the country of origin. Although the requested information is mainly case (patient)-specific, it may sometimes be of a more general nature [e.g. General Medication List, General HIV and General Psychiatry]. Availability of medical treatment does not refer to the economic/geographical/political accessibility of any treatment or general safety problems in the country.

### Scope of Services

Local expert provides information regarding the availability of medical care and/or medication in the specific country upon request of EASO via web platform/ MedCOI database <https://medcoi.easo.europa.eu>.

### 1. Request Handling Procedure

1	EASO adds a (new) request to the workload of local expert which triggers an automatic notification by e-mail <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>The subject line of this notification email contains the request identification number and the country in question.</li><li>The email text mentions the request status. There are two status options: Answer or Clarification.</li></ol>
2	The local expert returns the completed request form by clicking “send Answer” at the bottom of the online form. EASO receives an automatic email notification.

### 2. Requirements for the content of responses

<b>2.1 General</b>	
<b>a.</b>	<b>Content of the responses</b> <p>The expert shall be able to ascertain the information on availability of medical treatments and/or medications and respond in accordance with the content of the described medical case.</p> <p>The expert shall be able to examine all specific medications and/or treatment options and modalities requested by EASO. If something is not clear to the expert, an</p>



	explanation should be asked to EASO (see section <a href="#">7. Procedure in case of an Unclear Request /Answer Clarification</a> ).
<b>b.</b>	<b>Consistency with previous answers</b> The expert shall, on each occasion, compare the response with previously provided responses about the same subject (in the MedCOI database) or same region within the country of origin.  If newly obtained answer differs from the previous one, a logic <u>explanation should be included</u> for the change, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-when treatment/medication is no longer available;</li><li>-when treatment/medication is now available and previously not;</li></ul>
<b>c.</b>	<b>Objectivity</b> The expert should avoid subjective/general comments such as personal views on the quality level of healthcare or other personal opinions, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ‘treatments are far from western standards’</li><li>- ‘there are country wide problems with fake medication’, etc.</li></ul>
<b>d.</b>	<b>Sources</b> -Information <b>always</b> needs to be gathered/verified at a medical treatment facility by the local expert. It is not allowed to only consult a database or online information.  - <b>Public/ private:</b> First availability is researched in <u>public</u> facilities; If not available there, then in <u>private</u> facilities.  -When treatment or medication is <b>not</b> available, at least <b>two facilities</b> need to be mentioned where the information is obtained (this is to increase the chance that a NO is really a NO for that country or region and not just an accidental NO for a specific facility). Additional information may be provided in the dedicated field.
<b>e.</b>	<b>Quality</b> A response should <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-contain objective, truthful and complete information;</li><li>-be formulated (in medical terms) in clear English;</li><li>-deal with every part of the request;</li></ul>
<b>2.2. Regarding geographic areas</b>	
	If treatment and/or medication is asked <b>in the country in general:</b> Information is gathered in the capital city or the city with most appropriate facilities (if that is not the case with the capital city).
	If treatment and/or medication is asked <b>in a specific region or city within the country:</b> Information should be gathered for that area/region or city. If no information can be obtained for that specific area, reasons have to be given for this and information is then gathered from the closest relevant region/city within that country.



<b>2.3. Regarding availability of treatment and laboratory controls/check-ups (Field C)</b>	
<b>A</b>	<p>Treatment is available if requested treatment modality is present in the country or requested region of the country,</p> <p><b><u>In this case the response in the form should be YES.</u></b> (The names and addresses of the hospitals or other health facilities where treatment is available are mentioned)</p>
<b>B</b>	<p>Treatment is not available. The requested treatment is NOT available in the requested country or requested region of the country.</p> <p><b><u>In this case the response in the form should be NO and at least two facilities should be mentioned where the information was gathered.</u></b> (also here, the names and complete addresses of the hospitals or other health facilities where treatment is not available are mentioned).</p>
<b>C</b>	<p>Treatment is partly available if part of the requested treatment is present and another part not. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the requested surgeon is available, but cannot perform the requested surgery</li><li>- if, in general, a medical specialist is available but cannot carry out part of the treatment modalities.</li></ul> <p><b><u>In this case the response on the form should be <u>PARTLY AVAILABLE</u> and additional explanation should be provided.</u></b> (The names and addresses of the hospitals or other health facilities where treatment is available are mentioned)</p>
<b>2.4. Regarding availability of medication (Field A)</b>	
<b>A</b>	<p>The medicines are clustered in medication groups by EASO as far as possible and it is stated which medicines are currently used by the patient and which can serve as an alternative.</p> <p>The generic names of medicines are provided by the EASO and, if deemed appropriate, the brand names are also stated.</p> <p>The following instructions apply (see also below decision <a href="#">Tables 1</a> and <a href="#">2</a>) :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Use only <b>generic</b> names for medicines. Be aware that sometimes medication is registered under brand names.</li><li>- Be aware that medication being illegally available, available under-the-counter or on the black market falls <b>out of the scope of medication availability</b>.</li><li>- When medication is available, the medicine is [as a rule] registered and in stock in local pharmacies or other medical institutions. In general, there are no supply shortages for the requested medicine. Please mention at least one facility/pharmacy where the availability information was obtained.</li><li>- When medication is <b>not</b> available, the medicine is [as a rule] not registered and/or cannot be obtained in the country via pharmacies or other medical institutions. <b>At least two facilities/pharmacies</b> should be mentioned where the</li></ul>



availability information was obtained. (this is to increase the chance that a NO is really a NO for that country or region and not just an accidental NO for a specific facility).

- When medication is **Available, but currently experiencing supply problems**, time of resupply should be indicated. Please, be aware that *currently experiencing serious supply problems* means that now and/or during the last four weeks there were supply problems with the requested medication. The medicine is therefore registered in the country, but is currently not in stock. The medicine then has to be resupplied or ordered via a wholesaler, central pharmacy or directly from abroad. In this case, it is essential to provide an indication of the supply or delivery time in weeks.
- Any **exceptional cases** (see below point), in which it appears that a non-registered medicine is available via special arrangements, should be explained in the free text field “Additional information on medication availability” found under the medication list of the answer form.

## **B Determining medication availability**

The main factors in establishing if medication can be considered available or not:

1. Registration
2. Stock
3. Supply details

### **1. Registration**

Registration of medication, which is usually done by the ministry of health is a good indicator for availability of a certain medicine but it is not the only indicator.

Sometimes not registered medication is still present and on the other hand registered medication is sometimes not present.

Actual suppliers/pharmacies need to be contacted to find out if the medicine in question can in fact be obtained, purchased or legally ordered.

Details about stock and supply are therefore also important indicators.

### **2. Stock**

This describes if the requested medicine is in stock at the contacted pharmacy/supplier/health facility at the time of research and during the 4 weeks prior to the research. If medication is not in stock at the time of research or during the 4 weeks prior to the research, supply details need to be investigated.

### **3. Supply details**

If the requested medication is not in stock (now or in the last 4 weeks) but (re)supply is possible (for instance from a national or international pharmacy/ whole sale company/ distributor / manufacturer) the time of resupply needs to be mentioned as exact as possible in a number of weeks. If the time of re-supply is unknown this also needs to be mentioned.

It also needs to be established that the resupply/ ordering/ purchasing of medication is done legally (for instance: through licensed pharmacies)



### Common situations / exceptional situations

Most common situations are:

- Registered medication can be purchased, obtained or ordered.
- Medication that is not registered cannot be purchased, obtained or ordered.

Examples of exceptional situations:

- Registered medication cannot be purchased, obtained or ordered.
- The requested medication can be purchased, obtained or ordered, but it is not registered. In such a case expert needs to explain to EASO that purchasing, obtaining or ordering of this medicine is legal (for instance: through licensed pharmacies) and not part of the black market.

Note: Any exceptional situations should be explained in the free text field “ Additional information on medication availability” found under the medication list of the answer form.

**Tables 1 and 2 below visualize the above mentioned information concerning availability of medication and explain what to mention in the answer forms in the different situations.**

**The vast majority of circumstances that determine medication availability will fall into the pink areas.**

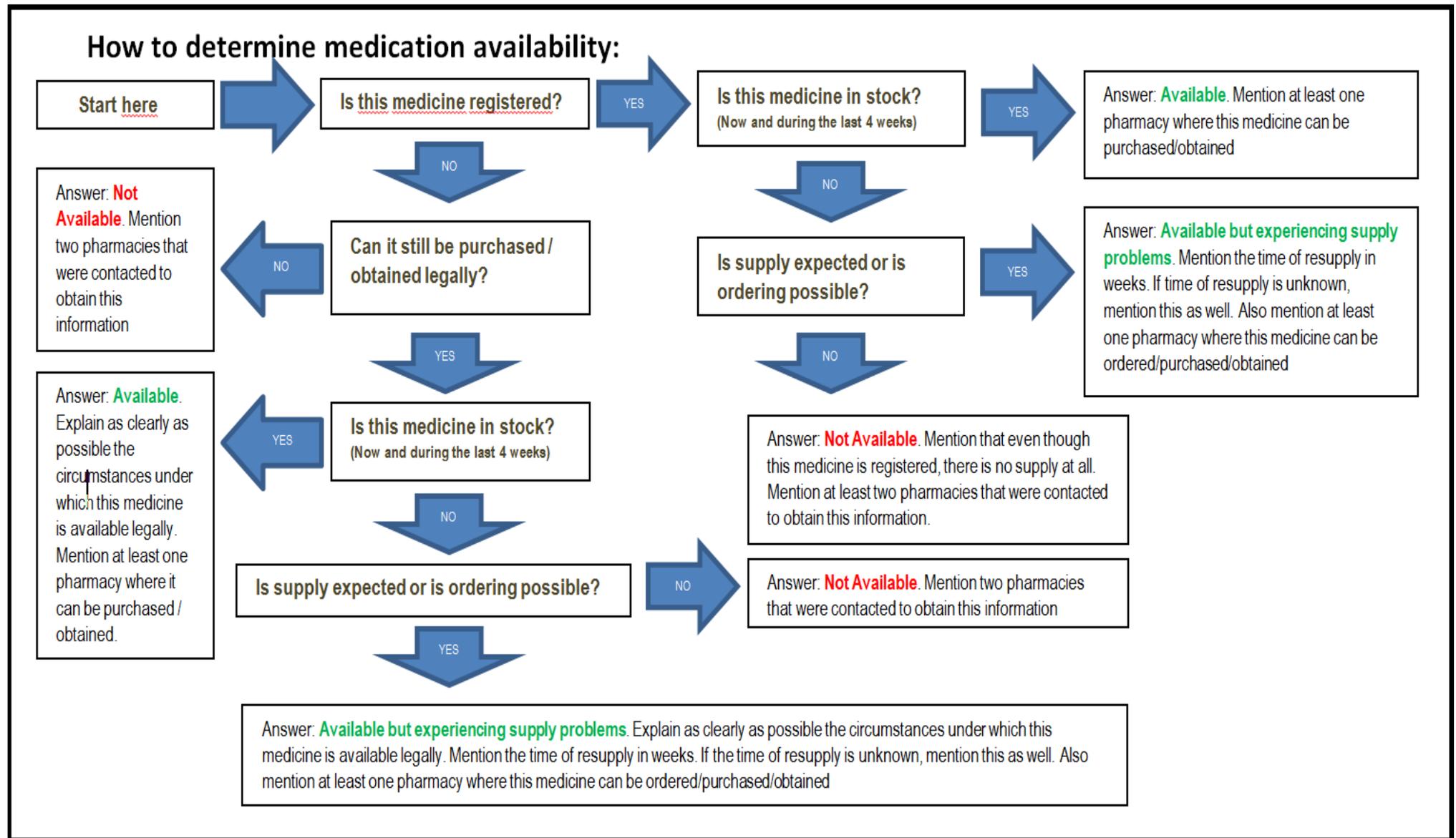
**The circumstances reflected in green are less common. In these situations, registration and stock/supply do not match. To be able to consider non-registered medication as available it needs to be established whether medication can be obtained legally. This could be for instance through licensed pharmacies.**

**Should you encounter a situation in which other legal ways are used to make medication available please describe this situation in the “Additional information on medication availability” field.**

**Table 1: Determining medication availability**

	<b>In stock</b> (stable supply in pharmacy)	<b>Current supply problems</b> (or in last 4 weeks) Supply is expected or ordering is possible (from abroad or central pharmacy).	<b>No stock at all</b> (ordering from abroad or from other pharmacy inside the country is not possible)
Medication is <b>registered</b> in country	<b>In answer form:</b> <b>YES</b>	<b>In answer form:</b> <b>AVAILABLE BUT CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING SUPPLY PROBLEMS</b> <b>+ Time of re-supply 1,2,3,4 weeks, more or unknown</b>	<b>In answer form:</b> <b>NO</b> <i>In additional information on medication availability, please add the following:</i> <b>Although medication is registered, there is no supply at all</b>
Medication is <b>not registered</b> in country	<b>Under these circumstances:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is <u>legally</u> available for example through licensed pharmacies</li> <li>- availability on the black market has not been included in your research.</li> <li>- It can be legally ordered from abroad</li> </ul> <b>In answer form:</b> <b>YES</b> <i>In additional information on medication availability, please add the following:</i> <b>Although medication is not registered, it is legally available in the following way:</b> <i>( explain as clearly as possible the circumstances under which the medication in question is available )....</i>	<b>Under these circumstances:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- It is <u>legally</u> available for example through licensed pharmacies</li> <li>- It can be legally ordered from abroad</li> <li>- availability on the black market has not been included in your research</li> </ul> <b>In answer form:</b> <b>AVAILABLE BUT CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING SUPPLY PROBLEMS</b> <b>+ select time of re-supply: 1,2,3,4 weeks, more or unknown</b> <i>In additional information on medication availability, please add the following:</i> <b>Although medication is not registered, it is legally available (but currently experiencing supply problems) in the following way:</b> <i>(explain as clearly as possible the circumstances under which the medication in question is available )</i>	<b>In answer form:</b> <b>NO</b>

**Table 2: Determining medication availability**





### 3. Procedure in case of an Unclear Request /Answer Clarification<sup>1</sup>

<b>a</b>	<b>Unclear request submitted by EASO to local expert</b>
	If something is missing or unclear, the expert needs to complete request within the original timeframe. The expert has 1 working day to inform EASO in case of an unclear request. This is done by inserting a comment in the free text “Comments”- field found under the tab “Activity & Comments” tab.
<b>b</b>	<b>Unclear response submitted by local expert to EASO</b>
	The request is assigned to the “clarification” status and an automatic e-mail is sent to the expert. The need to clarify may occur in following situations:
	<b>Clarification of a normal response</b> which is delivered within the delivery time: clarification response is needed within the original delivery time, or within 3 calendar days.
	<b>Clarification of a semi-urgent response</b> which is delivered within the delivery time: clarification response is needed within the original delivery time, or within 2 calendar days.
	<b>Clarification of a special response</b> which is delivered within the delivery time: clarification response is needed within the original delivery time, or within 7 calendar days.

### 4. Procedure in case of impossibility to deliver information

<b>a</b>	The expert shall make several attempts to gather the requested information, and if the attempts fail or fail to gather a part of the information, the response shall include a clear justification why information could not be obtained. The justification should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a description of the attempt to gather the information (e.g. the process followed, the communication channels used, etc.)</li> <li>- the reason that the information could not be retrieved.</li> </ul>
	<b>Not acceptable</b> to include vague explanations like: “I could not reach the local centre or the local contacts although I tried several times to contact them”.

### 5. Examples of questions and/answer forms

<sup>1</sup> Clarification of an answer is free of charge for EASO



**Example of case description of an individual request on patient-related case**

CASE DESCRIPTION			
Request Type	Normal	Case Reference	BMA 1234
Patient Country of Origin	Country X	Patient age	52
Specific Region or city within country of origin		Patient Gender	Male
ICD-10 Codes	M54.1, F43.1, K80.2,		
Medical Specialism(s)	Gastroenterology, anaesthesiology, psychiatry, surgery		
BACKGROUND INFORMATION			
Patient (Male; age:52) diagnosed with:  -PTSD (F43.1) -lumbar pain due to discopathy (M54.1) -Cholelithiasis (K80.2) (Calculus of gallbladder with other cholecystitis)			

**Examples of questions for Field A: Information on medication availability**

For every requested medication it is indicated which medication group it belongs to and whether it is currently used by the patient or has been suggested as an alternative.

The below is considered containing four questions:

- Is Oxycodone available?
- Is Paracetamol + tramadol (combination) available?
- Is Prothipendyl available?
- Is Flupentixol available?

Possible answers: Yes/ No/ Available, but currently experiencing supply problems, time of resupply). In case the asked medication is currently experiencing serious supply problems, always mention the average time of resupply: 1,2,3,4 weeks, more, or unknown, and provide additional explanation. In any answer the local expert should mention the name, the address and the type (public/private) of facility where information was obtained. In case the answer is NO, at least two facilities must be provided.

Any additional information on medication availability may be provided in a separate field.



**Example answer form:**

**ANSWERS REGARDING AVAILABILITY OF MEDICATION (FOR URGENT, SEMI-URGENT & NORMAL REQUESTS)**

**In case the asked medication is currently experiencing serious supply problems, always mention the average time of resupply: 1,2,3,4 weeks, more, or unknown**

**1. Name of Medication:** Oxycodone  
**Medication Group:** Pain medication: strong medication  
**Medication type:** Current medication

Availability		Explanation
YES	NO	AVAILABLE, BUT CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING SUPPLY PROBLEMS, TIME OF RESUPPLY

**MEDICAL FACILITIES:**

Public	Private	Address	City	County
Name of the facility 1				
Name of the facility 2				

**2. Name of Medication:** Paracetamol + tramadol (combination)  
**Medication Group:** Pain medication; analgetics  
**Medication type:** Alternative medication

Availability		Explanation
YES	NO	AVAILABLE, BUT CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING SUPPLY PROBLEMS, TIME OF RESUPPLY

**MEDICAL FACILITIES:**

Public	Private	Address	City	County
Name of the facility 1				
Name of the facility 2				

**3. Name of Medication:** Prothipendyl  
**Medication Group:** Psychiatry; antipsychotics  
**Medication type:** Current medication

Availability		Explanation
YES	NO	AVAILABLE, BUT CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING SUPPLY PROBLEMS, TIME OF RESUPPLY

**MEDICAL FACILITIES:**

Public	Private	Address	City	County
Name of the facility 1				
Name of the facility 2				

**4. Name of Medication:** Flupentixol  
**Medication Group:** Psychiatry; antipsychotics  
**Medication type:** Alternative medication

Availability		Explanation



	YES	NO	AVAILABLE, BUT CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING SUPPLY PROBLEMS, TIME OF RESUPPLY	
<b>MEDICAL FACILITIES:</b>				
	Public	Private		
Name of the facility 1		Address		City County
	Public	Private		
Name of the facility 2		Address		City County

<b>Additional information on medication availability</b>	
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**Examples for Field C: Information on availability of medical treatments**

The below example is considered containing five questions:

- 1) Is surgery, and more specifically orthopaedic surgery of the spine available?
- 2) Is outpatient treatment and follow-up by psychiatrist available?
- 3) Laboratory research
- 4) Diagnostic imaging: ECG (electro cardio gram; cardiology)
- 5) Open question: Is it possible to perform epidural injections for back pain; if yes, by which kind of specialist and in which facility?

For all questions: Possible answers: Yes/ No/ Partly available. In case the asked treatment is Partly available, additional explanation should be provided. In every answer, the local expert should mention the name, the address and the type (public/private) of facility where the information was obtained. In case the answer is NO, at least two facilities must be provided.

**Example answer form:**

<b>1. Surgery, and more specifically orthopaedic surgery of the spine</b>				
<b>ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS REGARDING TREATMENT</b>			<b>Explanation (ONLY WHEN PARTLY AVAILABLE)</b>	
YES	NO	Partly available		
<b>MEDICAL FACILITIES:</b>				
	Public	Private		
Name of the facility		Address		City County

<b>2. Outpatient treatment and follow-up by psychiatrist</b>				
<b>ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS REGARDING TREATMENT</b>			<b>Explanation (ONLY WHEN PARTLY AVAILABLE)</b>	
YES	NO	Partly available		
<b>MEDICAL FACILITIES:</b>				
	Public	Private		
Name of the facility		Address		City County



<b>3. Laboratory research</b>				
<b>ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS REGARDING TREATMENT</b>			<b>Explanation (ONLY WHEN PARTLY AVAILABLE)</b>	
YES	NO	Partly available		
<b>MEDICAL FACILITIES:</b>				
	Public	Private		
Name of the facility		Address		City County

<b>4. Diagnostic imaging: ECG (electro cardio gram; cardiology)</b>				
<b>ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS REGARDING TREATMENT</b>			<b>Explanation (ONLY WHEN PARTLY AVAILABLE)</b>	
YES	NO	Partly available		
<b>MEDICAL FACILITIES:</b>				
	Public	Private		
Name of the facility		Address		City County

<b>5. Is it possible to perform epidural injections for back pain; if yes, by which kind of specialist and in which facility?</b>				
<b>ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS REGARDING TREATMENT</b>			<b>Explanation (ONLY WHEN PARTLY AVAILABLE)</b>	
YES	NO	Partly available		
<b>MEDICAL FACILITIES:</b>				
	Public	Private		
Name of the facility		Address		City County

<b>Additional information on treatment availability</b>	
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**Procedure for the provision of information on information on Medication prices, cost coverage (Field B), General or case-specific Information on medical treatments' prices, cost coverage (Field D), General or case-specific Information on insurance schemes (public and private), social protection schemes, healthcare system (Field E)**



## Scope of Services

The expert provides information regarding the accessibility of medical care and medication in a specific country upon request of EASO. The expert's information is corroborated with information from other sources.

### 1. Request handling procedure

<b>1</b>	<p>EASO shall contact the local expert by e-mail. In this communication the following elements will be mentioned:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the request identification number</li> <li>- if it concerns a semi-urgent, normal or special request</li> <li>- the response delivery time</li> <li>- the number of questions</li> </ul> <p>the request form must shall be sent in attachment</p> <p>Example:</p> <p><i>Please find enclosed the request: BDA-6864. It is a normal request; therefore, the information is required within 14 calendar days. The request has [XX] questions, including medication and treatment costs. According to the contract this request is paid [XX] EUR (or equivalent in another currency).</i></p> <p><i>Kind regards,</i></p> <p><i>EASO MedCOI team</i></p>
<b>2</b>	<p>The local expert returns the completed request form by email to <a href="mailto:MedCOI@easo.europa.eu">MedCOI@easo.europa.eu</a>.</p>

### 2. Requirements for the content of responses

<b>1 General</b>	
<b>a.</b>	<p><b>Content of the responses</b></p> <p>Local expert shall be able to respond to the information request in accordance with the content of the described medical case.</p> <p>If something is not clear to the expert, an explanation should be asked to EASO (see below section <b>3. Procedure in case of an Unclear Request /Answer Clarification</b>)</p>
<b>b.</b>	<p><b>Consistency with previous answers</b></p>



	<p>Local expert shall, on each occasion, compare the response with previously provided responses about the same subject in the country and/or specific region within same country.</p>
<b>c.</b>	<p><b>Objectivity</b> Avoid subjective/general comments such as personal views on the quality level of healthcare or other personal opinions, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- ‘treatments are far from western standards’</li><li>- ‘there are country wide problems with fake medication’, etc.</li></ul>
<b>d.</b>	<p><b>Sources</b> -Information <b>always</b> needs to be gathered/verified at a medical treatment facility by the expert. It is not allowed to only consult a database or online information</p> <p><b>-Public/ private:</b> First availability is researched in <u>public</u> facilities; If not available there, then in <u>private</u> facilities.</p>
<b>e.</b>	<p><b>Quality</b> The expert is expected to do his/her utmost to retrieve up-to-date and accurate information. If needed, he/she is expected to contact pharmacies, hospitals and other sources in the field of healthcare.</p> <p>The information provided by the expert must meet several quality standards. Therefore, the experts are asked to be transparent about the sources of the information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- If the information is obtained through literature, the author, title, page and, if possible, the internet link should be mentioned.</li><li>- If the information is obtained in a medical institution, an international organisation, an NGO, etc., the name of this institution or organisation, as well as the address and the date of contact must be mentioned.</li></ul> <p>A reply should</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-contain objective, truthful precise and complete information;</li><li>-be formulated (in medical terms) in clear English;</li><li>-deal with every part of the request;</li></ul>
<b>d.</b>	<p><b>Geographic accessibility</b> Geographic accessibility assesses whether the patient may practically travel from his/her place of residence to the location where the medicine/treatment is available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-the proximity of medical facilities and pharmacies in relation to the individual’s place of residence</li><li>- the physical ability of the applicant to reach medical facilities</li><li>- the influence of the security situation in the country of origin</li><li>- the availability of transport</li><li>- the necessary frequency of travelling to a medical facility</li></ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- the costs of transportation</li><li>- the access to medical care in another country (medical bridge option)</li><li>- the access to specialist referral system</li></ul>
<b>e.</b>	<p><b>Economic accessibility</b></p> <p>Economic accessibility assesses whether a patient upon return to his/her country of origin/residence will be able to access medical treatment due to her/his economic situation.</p> <p>Factors which may affect economic accessibility include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the cost of medication</li><li>• the cost of treatment</li><li>• the health insurance system (universal, public, private), governmental aid programs, international aid programs, community health insurances, regional initiatives, etc.</li><li>• the social security system: pensions, unemployment benefits, disability benefits</li><li>• the individual's financial means (personal or familial) to afford the necessary treatment and medication, etc.</li></ul>
<b>f.</b>	<p><b>Political accessibility</b></p> <p>Political accessibility assesses whether healthcare is denied on discriminatory grounds, i.e. whether a person is denied:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• access to medical facilities</li><li>• access to public insurance systems</li></ul> <p>due to the concerned person's race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or his/her political opinion.</p>



### 3. Procedure in case of an Unclear Request /Answer Clarification<sup>2</sup>

<b>a</b>	<b>Unclear request submitted by EASO to local expert</b>
	<p>If something is missing or unclear, the expert needs to complete request within the original timeframe. The expert has 1 working day to inform EASO in case of an unclear request.</p> <p>This is done by inserting a comment in the free text “Comments”- field found under the tab “Activity &amp; Comments” tab.</p>
<b>b</b>	<b>Unclear response submitted by local expert to EASO</b>
	<p>The request is assigned to the “clarification” status and an automatic e-mail is sent to the expert. The need to clarify may occur in following situations:</p>
	<p><i>Clarification of a normal response</i> which is delivered within the delivery time: clarification response is needed within the original delivery time, or within 3 calendar days.</p>
	<p><i>Clarification of a semi-urgent response</i> which is delivered within the delivery time: clarification response is needed within the original delivery time, or within 2 calendar days.</p>
	<p><i>Clarification of a special response</i> which is delivered within the delivery time: clarification response is needed within the original delivery time, or within 7 calendar days.</p>

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<sup>2</sup> Clarification of an answer is free of charge for EASO



#### 4. Examples of questions on medication prices and cost coverage (Field B)

**1** Medication information is requested in a table. The first column indicates the number of the question. Information requested in the table include: brand name, dosage, form, number of units in the container, price per box, place where the information was found and reimbursement rates. Each medication is considered as 1 question.  
The example below is counted as 7 questions.

N°	Generic Name	Brand name	Dosage	Form	Number of units in the container	Price per box in local currency	Place where the information was obtained (Pharmacy, hospital,...)	Reimbursement/special program/free (Is it covered by some kind of public health insurance, national programme or NGO or must the patient pay everything him/herself? )
1	Acetylsalicylic acid (Aspirin®)							
2	Carvedilol							
3	Digoxin							
4	Metoprolol							
5	Spirolactone							
6	Sertraline							
7	Warfarin							

## 5. Examples of questions on medical treatments' prices, cost coverage (Field D)

<b>1</b>	<p>Treatment information is requested in a table. Each outpatient treatment (in public and private hospitals) is considered as one question and each inpatient treatment (in public and private hospitals) is considered as another question. Any specific hospitalization fees should be mentioned.</p> <p>Elements requested in the table include: price in public and private hospital, the name of the hospital where the information was found and the reimbursement rate.</p>
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Example1 contains 7 questions:

Question number	Type of care	Public hospital		Private hospital		Reimbursement/ special program/free/comments
		Price in local currency	Hospital name	Price in local currency	Hospital name	
	<b>Specialist</b>					
1)	Outpatient treatment and follow-up by an HIV specialist					
2)	Inpatient treatment an HIV specialist					
	<b>Hospital stay</b>					
3)	Rate per night*					
	<b>Clinical biology</b>					
4)	CD 4 count					
	<b>Medical imaging</b>					
5)	MRI-Scan					
	<b>Treatment</b>					
6)	Dialysis	price per session				
7)	Other costs related to treatment: e.g. administration fees?					

\* Please provide the rate in a standard room/ward or mention a cost range of a stay from the least and most expensive room rate.

Example 2 contains 16 questions:

Question number	Treatment type	Public hospital		Private hospital		Reimbursement/special program/free/comments
		Price in local currency	Hospital name	Price in local currency	Hospital name	
1	inpatient treatment by a cardiologist (+ the cost of a night in the hospital)					



Question number	Treatment type	Public hospital		Private hospital		Reimbursement/special program/free/comments
		Price in local currency	Hospital name	Price in local currency	Hospital name	
2	outpatient treatment and follow up by a cardiologist					
4	inpatient treatment by a cardiac surgeon (+ the cost of a night in the hospital)					
5	outpatient treatment and follow up by a cardiac surgeon					
6	cardiac surgery: heart valve surgery					
7	cardiac surgery: open heart surgery					
8	inpatient treatment by a psychiatrist (+ the cost of a night in the hospital)					
9	outpatient treatment and follow up by a psychiatrist					
10	inpatient treatment by a psychologist (+ the cost of a night in the hospital)					
11	outpatient treatment and follow up by a psychologist					
12	diagnostic imaging: ECG (electro cardio gram; cardiology)					
13	laboratory research of blood; INR e.g. in case of acenocoumarol anticlotting					
14	laboratory research for					



Question number	Treatment type	Public hospital		Private hospital		Reimbursement/special program/free/comments
		Price in local currency	Hospital name	Price in local currency	Hospital name	
	creatinin kinase					
15	Laboratory research for electrolytes; potassium, sodium, calcium and magnesium					
16	Hospitalization fees for inpatient treatments					



## 6. Examples of questions with regard to general or case-specific information on healthcare system, insurance schemes (public and private), social protection schemes (Field E)

### 6.1 Questions about the healthcare system

Depending on the needs, questions about the organisation of the healthcare system may be subdivided in sub-questions, but it will be still considered as one question. For example,

**Question 1: Healthcare organisation: Please explain how the healthcare system is organized in [country]?**

Please specify:

- *How is healthcare provision organised? What are the levels? Is there a mandatory referral system?*
- *Are human resources and infrastructures enough to meet the country's needs?*

The management of a specific disease is considered as a separate question. For example,

**Question 2: How is the treatment for HIV organised?**

Please specify

- *What is the patient's pathway? Is there a referral system?*
- *At which level of the healthcare pyramid is treatment provided?*
- *Is treatment provided in public and private facilities?*

### 6.2 Questions about health insurances schemes

Depending on the needs, health insurance questions may be divided in sub-questions, but are considered as one question. Topics related to public health insurance are considered as one question and topics related to private health insurance are considered a separate question. Some countries have mutual health insurances, which is then also a separate question. Questions on national programmes covering the treatment of specific diseases (e.g. HIV) or providing free healthcare to specific population groups (e.g. children, the elderly) are considered as separate questions. For example:



**Question 1: Please explain the public health insurance:**

- *How is it organised? Is it mandatory?*
- *Who can benefit?*
- *Who contributes and what is the amount?*
- *What is covered? At what rate?*

**Question 2: Is private health insurance available? Please explain:**

- *How is it organised?*
- *Who can join?*
- *What is the premium?*
- *What is covered? At what rate?*

**Question 3: Are there community based health insurances in [country]? Please explain the system:**

- *How is it organised?*
- *What are the eligibility criteria?*
- *What does it cost?*

**Question 4: Is there a national programme that provides free treatment or at a reduced rate for [disease]?**

- *How is it organised?*
- *What are the conditions to join the programme?*
- *What treatment, care, medicines are covered? What is not included?*

**Question 5: Is there a national programme that provides free treatment or at a reduced price for [population group]?**

- *How is it organised?*
- *What are the conditions to join the programme?*
- *What treatment, care, medicines are covered? What is not included?*



### 6.3 Questions about social security/ social protection

Social security as a topic can cover different aspects. For example:

**Question 1: How is the social security organized in [country]?**

Please specify

- *Is it a mandatory system?*
- *Which schemes are currently implemented?*
- *What are the benefits?*

**Question 2: Would the patient be entitled to some sort of benefit or subsidy because of a (partial) disablement/invalidity as a result of the illness?**

Please specify

- *What legislation governs this?*
- *Who is eligible?*
- *What are the benefits?*
- *How does it work in practice?*

### 6.4 Questions about Non-governmental support

Non-governmental supports include NGOs, charity organizations, religious organizations, etc. Each topic about the management of a specific disease is considered one question. For example:

**Question 1: Non-governmental supports for HIV patients?**

*–Are there any NGO, charity organizations, religious organizations, etc. that focus on the access to HIV treatment?*

- *Who can benefit?*
- *What (kind of support) is provided?*



## 6.5 Other questions

1. If a disease cannot be treated in the country, is there a possibility of accessing the necessary care in another country?
2. What is the incidence of [disease] in the country? What are the most frequent kinds?
3. Is someone who has not worked in [country] entitled to public health insurance or social security protection (pension)?
4. Can one obtain the medicines with a prescription of a physician in the province where one lives or is a prescription required from a doctor in the province where one wants to buy the medicines?