

Clarification 1. Rationale for counting in-donor refugee costs as ODA Q1/ Describe in a nutshell the asylum procedure in your country.

The State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) is responsible for carrying out all asylum procedures in Switzerland. Under the revised Asylum Act in force since 1 March 2019, there are typically three asylum procedure tracks: Dublin, accelerated, and extended. The track type is decided on after a preparatory phase. The aim is to have fast and fair asylum procedures and to decide as many cases as possible during the initial stay of the asylum seekers in a federal asylum centre (Bundesasylzentrum, BAZ). Under the new law, the maximum length of stay in a federal asylum centre is 140 days. The associated costs during this stay are part of the subventions, i.e. counted in ODA.

Asylum seekers whose application cannot be dealt with during this time, for example because further information is required, are transferred to a cantonal asylum centre until their application has been fully processed.

An extended procedure is conducted, if further information on the asylum seeker's grounds for asylum is required following the interview. The Confederation allocates the asylum seeker to one of the 26 cantons according to a national distribution key (and provides **subventions** to cover the costs), which then becomes responsible for all further steps in the process (integration in the case of asylum being granted; return procedure in the case of asylum being rejected).

Diagram of asylum procedure

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/asyl/beschleunigung/grafik-asylprozess-e.pdf>

Federal asylum centres

There are three different types of federal asylum centre (the costs are merged, the detailed breakdown is not available):

- **Federal asylum centre with processing facilities**

Asylum seekers can lodge an asylum application in these asylum centres. All applications are examined and the decision over whether to grant asylum made at the centre. The entire process takes place under one roof, thus speeding up the asylum procedure. Asylum seekers remain in these centres while their application is processed; they are no longer transferred to the cantonal authorities, unless additional information has to be obtained and an extended procedure is required. These federal asylum centres house accommodation for asylum seekers as well as offices for interviewers, interpreters, document examiners and lawyers.

- **Federal asylum centre without processing facilities**

People who are susceptible to go to another Dublin member state under the Dublin Regulation, or whose asylum applications have been rejected mainly occupy this type of federal asylum centres. They remain in the federal centres and are not transferred to a cantonal asylum centre, unless the procedure for their exclusion takes longer than the maximum legal stay of 140 days. These centres therefore house people who usually have to leave Switzerland within a shorter period.

- **(Special centres)**

Cases of asylum seekers whose behaviour significantly endangers the public safety or threaten the smooth conduct of the asylum centres *may* be temporarily accommodated in a special centre.

Return

As a rule, asylum seekers whose applications have been rejected have to leave Switzerland. In such cases, however, the office has to examine whether there are any obstacles to their return to their country of origin, in case of which the State Secretariat for Migration grants the asylum seeker temporary admission to Switzerland. Otherwise, the cantonal migration offices – often in consultation with the competent federal authorities – are responsible for ensuring the return.

Clarification 2. Meaning of the term “refugees”

Q2/ Indicate the categories of refugees for which costs are included in your ODA reporting: asylum seekers, recognised refugees, persons granted temporary or subsidiary protection.

The costs for asylum seekers (including ultimately rejected asylum seekers), recognised refugees, temporarily admitted refugees and temporarily admitted persons are included in Switzerland’s ODA reporting.

The categories included in the calculation are the following:

- a) for the subventions of the Confederation to the cantons:
 - costs for asylum seekers and for ultimately accepted asylum seekers H03
 - costs for ultimately rejected asylum seekers H04
 - costs for refugees H05
- b) for the other eligible costs: registration centres, procedures, interpretation services, occupation programmes, school costs, the breakdown per category is not available. Clarifications have to be done to see if a share could be defined to identify the categories H03, H04, H05.

The share of ultimately rejected asylum seekers is difficult to evaluate in relation to costs reported as ODA, since the detail is not available for all the different categories of costs. What is officially communicated by the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) is the protection rate (positive asylum decisions and provisional admissions following first instance decisions): it reached 59.3% in 2019 (compared to 60.8% in 2018), which means that the share of rejected applications (inclusive Dublin cases) was 40.7%% in 2019 (compared to 39.2% in 2018).

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/dam/data/sem/publiservice/statistik/asylstatistik/2019/12/7-20-Mouv-demandes-d-asile-a-f-2019-12.xlsx>

Since 2013, Switzerland has been increasingly involved in the admission of groups of refugees under the resettlement program of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). This program is aimed at particularly vulnerable people, to whom the UNHCR has recognized refugee status, primarily people who have fled to neighbouring countries, but who cannot remain in these countries or return to their country of origin. Since 2013 and till the end of 2019, 4197 people have found refuge in Switzerland thanks to various resettlement programs. The costs are included in ODA.

[\(Website SEM\)](#)

Clarification 3. Twelve-month rule

Q3/ When does the twelve-month rule start (date of application, date of entry into the country, date of start of support)?

The twelve months rule is applied from the entry date (+ maximum 365 days). For the school costs, the costs associated to the first twelve months are also identified and calculated. As concerns the costs linked to the procedures (judicial support and interpretation services), the assumption is also that they occur during the first year of stay.

Under the revised Asylum Act in force since 1 March 2019, the maximum duration of stay in federal centres is 140 days. Allocation to a canton has to take place at the end of this period. (Art. 24 al. 4 AsylG). The Confederation does not allocate global subventions for the stay in the centres.

The calculation of the amount of the subventions bases itself on the costs for asylum seekers, temporarily admitted persons up to seven years and refugees up to five years after the date of the asylum application.

The SEM's IT system makes it possible to determine the amount of social assistance lump sums paid to the cantons for these persons, since their entry date in Switzerland until maximum 365 days.



Switzerland does not exclude ex-post the costs for ultimately rejected asylum seekers. The effective expenditures of the centres are reported, since a finer breakdown is not available.

<https://www.efv.admin.ch/efv/en/home/finanzberichterstattung/finanzberichte/grundlagen.html>

Clarification 4. Eligibility of specific cost items

Q4/ Provide the list of cost items included in ODA for each category of refugee and a justification for their inclusion.

A. Federal subventions to the cantons

The cantons are responsible for assessing and granting social welfare and emergency aid to persons in need of support. Under the law, the federal authorities must subsidise these payments, i.e. reimburse the cantons for these expenditures.

<https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/fr/home/asyl/sozialhilfesubventionen/bundessubventionen.html>

Social Aid for asylum seekers (forfait global 1)

The Confederation pays lump sums to the cantons for all asylum seekers and for persons admitted on a temporary basis who have been in Switzerland for less than 7 years. Within these lump sums, the cantons finance the costs of accommodation, assistance and health insurance and receive a contribution for assistance services. These costs correspond to the notion of temporary assistance. It is possible to determine (approximately) the amount of federal subsidies to the cantons for: accommodation, assistance, health insurance and contribution for assistance services.

Social Aid for refugees (forfait global 2)

The Geneva Convention relating to the Status of Refugees stipulates that recognized refugees are entitled to get an equal treatment with nationals benefitting from social assistance. In addition, the new federal law specifies that the special situation of refugees must be taken into account. In particular, professional and social integration must be facilitated. The Confederation pays the cantons flat-rate allowances for a maximum of five years from the date of the application for asylum for refugees with the granting of asylum) and for a maximum of 7 years following the entry in Switzerland for refugees admitted on a provisional basis. With these lump sums, the cantons finance the expenses for accommodation, general care as well as health insurance and receive a contribution for the assistance services and the administrative expenses.

B. Federal Centres

Costs for shelter, food, medical care, clothing:

The costs for health care include in particular the costs of health insurance and costs of medical care.

Furniture, pocket money, transport costs, maintenance of buildings, rents and occupation programs.

A separate budget item covers the daily needs of asylum seekers (layers, clothes, toilet requisites, etc.), laundry, or waste disposal.

Security staff:

Another budget line concerns the 7/24 presence of the security staff to assist asylum seekers and welcome new migrants.

Personnel affected for the provision of eligible services:

Occupation programmes take place in the centres and are not meant to facilitate integration into the labour market.

According to the SEM, the major bulk of services is eligible and more detailed data are not available.

The reported costs are of temporary nature and do not promote the more permanent integration.



Since a finer breakdown per asylum seeker is not available, the effective expenditures of the centres are reported for each eligible item.

<https://www.efv.admin.ch/efv/en/home/finanzberichterstattung/finanzberichte/grundlagen.html>

C. Other included costs

Procedures: costs for the assistance provided to asylum seekers during the auditions.

Interpretation services: costs for the assistance provided to asylum seekers during the auditions.

School costs: imputed school costs for refugee children borne by the cantons.

Switzerland currently discounts the share of asylum seekers from non-ODA countries only for the subventions, which is in average 98%. This coefficient will also be applied to the other costs in the future.

D. Excluded costs

Switzerland excludes administrative lump sums, integration lump sums, emergency aid lump sums (after rejection), costs for new constructions and costs for controls at the border.

Voluntary returns are counted in ODA, but under the countries of return, not as part of in-donor refugee costs.

Clarification 5. Methodology for assessing costs

Q5/ Describe the methodology used for assessing ODA-eligible costs and provide the actual data points and detailed calculations used to reach the figures reported as ODA.

A. Subventions

Number of eligible months/eligible categories of asylum seekers, persons admitted on a temporary basis and refugees multiplied by the average lump sum. In parallel, identification of the number of new asylum requests for persons originating from ODA countries. Attribution of the ODA share (approximately 98%).

B. Centres

Financial reporting in the State account. Exclusion of controls at the border and of some non-eligible operating costs (for example IT services)

C. Other costs

Procedures and interpretation services: reporting of amounts according to State accounts.

School costs: number of children at school age and number of months during the first year of stay

Is the same methodology used to assess the different categories of refugees?

The information is only available for the subventions, in this case the methodology is the same. For the other reported costs, the breakdown is not available.

How does the methodology ensure there is no double counting?

There is a personal identification number for the subventions. For the centres, the SEM calculates the costs according to an estimated number of asylum seekers.

Do you use imputations when refugees benefit from the services available to all citizens (e.g. Education and Health)?

Yes, for school costs.

How do you clearly define the estimate of the refugees/asylum seekers benefiting from a particular service for up to 12 months?

For the 12 months, the identification is pretty clear for the subventions (see above). For imputed school costs: reported



number of children at school age and reported number of months during the first year of stay. For the other costs, the assumption is that the majority of persons benefitting from them are in their first year of stay.

What estimates do you use? What is their source and their frequency of updating?

For the subventions, real numbers. For the other costs, the SEM defines its budget calculation based on estimated numbers of asylum seekers updated twice a year; the reported costs correspond to the budget items in the State accounts.

How do you assess the share of rejected asylum seekers: based on real data, estimates, well founded expectations? Based on first instance or on final rejection?

Rejected asylum seekers: as concerns the subventions, rejected asylum seekers get an emergency lump sum, therefore the excluded costs are based on real data and on first instance. For the costs for finally rejected asylum seekers prior to decision (H05), the data is calculated ex-post based on real data. For all other costs, the assumption is that the majority of the asylum seekers are still waiting for a decision during the first year of stay. Switzerland does not distinguish between first and final instance. During the whole procedure, the asylum seekers have a permit N. This category gets the global lump sum (forfait global 1) assigned for the asylum seekers.

Provide data on the number of refugees and per capita costs (included in ODA), the average time to get a decision on status, the average time on support, the share of rejected asylum seekers.

To divide the total sum per new asylum requests and take that as per capita costs would be an error because of the multiplicity of the costs. The only significant average cost is the average lump sum per month per person, which is about 1 500 CHF. As concerns the share of rejected persons, see above.

Average time to get a decision on the status

From 2019, under the new law, the legal delay in the accelerated procedure is for the first instance decision maximum 21 days in the preparatory phase, plus 8 working days in the decision phase. The delay for the extended procedure is maximum 21 days. The first instance decision should be done within 2 month.

Dublin Procedures: 10 days in the preparatory phase and afterwards it depends on the answer according to the Dublin regulation.

Link: <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/asy/asylverfahren/dublin-verfahren.html>

Average duration of support

The Confederation grants subventions to the cantons for all asylum seekers, provisionally admitted persons and temporarily admitted refugees up to seven year from the date of entry into Switzerland. For recognized refugees, the Confederation grants subventions to the cantons up to five years from the date of the request.

ODA costs in 2018 and 2019

| Category | Description | Aid Typology | Sector code | Sector text | it 2018 reported as ODA | it 2019 reported as ODA |
|---------------------------------------|--|--------------|-------------|---|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| Federal subventions to cantons | Asylum seekers, positive decision | H03 | 93010 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries (non-sector allocable) | 75427044 | 611863863 |
| Federal subventions to cantons | Asylum seekers, ultimate negative decision | H04 | 93010 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries (non-sector allocable) | 6456964 | 3355758 |
| Federal subventions to cantons | Recognized refugees | H05 | 93010 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries (non-sector allocable) | 43502558 | 35909676 |
| Federal subventions to cantons | Occupation programs | H02 | 93010 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries (non-sector allocable) | 4253074 | 4220178 |
| Total subventions costs | | | | | 129'639'640 | 105'349'476 |
| Federal centers | Supervisory staff (loges) | H02 | 93018 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - administrative costs | 44'410'411 | 48'655'040 |
| Federal centers | Assistance costs | H02 | 93018 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - administrative costs | 24'124'589 | 29'002'824 |
| Federal centers | Rents | H02 | 93011 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - food and shelter | 17'777'352 | 23'174'398 |
| Federal centers | Medical visits and health insurance | H02 | 93013 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - health | 5'986'037 | 11'489'575 |
| Federal centers | Food | H02 | 93011 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - food and shelter | 10'193'946 | 11'033'578 |
| Federal centers | General expenditures | H02 | 93018 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - administrative costs | 4'155'643 | 4'221'591 |
| Federal centers | Medical costs | H02 | 93013 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - health | 3'340'956 | 4'215'664 |
| Federal centers | Transport cost | H02 | 93016 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - transport | 2'202'423 | 2'443'555 |
| Federal centers | Rents, furniture, office and medical equipment | H02 | 93011 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - food and shelter | 1'828'132 | 2'426'055 |
| Federal centers | Rents for civilian accomodation | H02 | 93011 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - food and shelter | 2'032'978 | 2'059'324 |
| Federal centers | Costs for the preparation and rehabilitation of military cantonements | H02 | 93011 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - food and shelter | 953'431 | 1'786'265 |
| Federal centers | Pocket money | H02 | 93014 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - other temporary sustenance | 1'344'349 | 1'534'867 |
| Federal centers | Costs for the supervision of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers | H02 | 93018 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - administrative costs | - | 1'038'296 |
| Federal centers | Special equipment for the accomodation | H02 | 93011 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - food and shelter | 784'968 | 951'801 |
| Federal centers | Temporary accomodation in cantonal structures | H02 | 93011 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - food and shelter | 322'361 | 228'000 |
| Federal centers | Clothing | H02 | 93011 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - food and shelter | 52'701 | 67'056 |
| Total Federal Centers costs | | | | | 119'510'277 | 144'327'889 |
| Non governmental organisations as | Presence of NGOs during the hearings, lump sums | H02 | 93014 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - other temporary sustenance | 4'189'412 | 14'102'41 |
| Legal representation | Costs for legal representation | H02 | 93014 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - other temporary sustenance | 3'526'725 | 15'466'108 |
| Legal representation | Costs for legal representation, extended procedures | H02 | 93014 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - other temporary sustenance | - | 763'350 |
| Total procedures costs | | | | | 7'716'137 | 17'639'699 |
| Linguistic experts and interpretation | Costs resulting from the hiring of linguistic experts and interpreters for the asylum procedure. The hearing of asylum seekers on the grounds of their request, carried out in the presence of an interpreter, is provided for in the Law of 26 June 1998 on asylum (LAsi), which also prescribes the record of the minutes of the audience. | H02 | 93014 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - other temporary sustenance | 11'062'000 | 8'294'000 |
| Total interpretation costs | | | | | 11'062'000 | 8'294'000 |
| School costs | School costs during the first twelve months | H02 | 93012 | Refugees/asylum seekers in donor countries - training | 7'608'150 | 6'283'200 |
| Total School costs | | | | | 7'608'150 | 6'283'200 |
| Total in-donor refugee costs | | | | | 275'536'201 | 281'894'264 |

OECD DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION DIRECTORATE
 OECD DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE
www.oecd.org/dac

© OECD June 2021

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD Member countries. This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.



IN-DONOR REFUGEE COSTS IN ODA