

Regional Safe Spaces Network (RSSN) Cross-border Case Referral and Transfer Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

1. Introduction

The following Standard Operating Procedures (hereinafter SOPs) establish the actions and roles of members of the Regional Safe Spaces Network (RSSN), particularly the case manager, in the cross-border transfer and referral processes of cases of persons with specific protection needs, at-risk persons—including survivors of sexual and gender-based violence—as well as at-risk children and adolescents—including unaccompanied and separated children—in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru or Chile.

2. Definitions

2.1. Cross-border Referrals

A referral is the process of requesting services for an individual through an established procedure. The case manager retains overall responsibility of the case regardless of the referrals made.

A cross-border case referral will be made when the RSSN service user in Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru or Chile, or their legal representative, informs the case manager of their decision to travel to another country (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru or Chile).

Similarly, the case will be referred to another country when the case manager identifies a service that only exists in another country that allows it to respond to the needs of the RSSN service user in the region. In both situations, the management of the case will remain in the country of identification, and the case would only be referred for the provision of one or more services in another country. The action plan is maintained with the original case manager.

2.2. Cross-border Transfers

The cross-border case transfer will be carried out when the RSSN service user or the person legally responsible in the case of children and adolescents informs the case manager of their decision to move to another country (Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru or Chile).

In this situation, management of the case will be transferred to the country of destination of the RSSN service user.

3. Procedures

Cases involving children and adolescents

Before determining whether a referral or transfer should be made in cases involving children and adolescents, the case manager should carry out a Best Interest Assessment (BIA). A BIA should also be carried out before informing the competent authorities of the case (see the *Need to Know* document that includes information on the duty to report in the respective country). It will also determine whether the case requires a Best Interest Determination (BID, **see annex xx**) by the competent authority. This entire process must comply with local laws in both the country of departure and the country of destination.

For both case transfers and referrals, the case manager in the departure country must carry out the following steps:

- Before sharing information related to the country of destination with the RSSN service user or their legal representative, and having confirmed their decision to move permanently or temporarily to the country of destination, the case manager must request the written informed consent or assent of the RSSN service user or the informed consent of their legal representative, using the required forms (**see annex XX**).
- The RSSN case manager or focal point in the country of departure will identify the RSSN case manager in the country of destination to begin the case and file transfer process to the country of destination. If there is no case manager identified in the destination country, the case manager in the country of departure will contact the national RSSN focal point in the destination country directly.
- The case manager or local RSSN focal point, supported by the national RSSN focal point, will contact the national RSSN focal point in the country of destination to forward the **Case Referral Form** (Annex 1-A), inform them of case details, estimated travel dates and discuss possible risks in the cross-border referral or transfer of the case, as well as share details of available services and any issues related to protection risks during travel or upon arrival in the country of destination.
 - This step is particularly important in cases where the RSSN service user requires travelling but is in need of international protection in the country where they reside and want to return to their country of origin. In this situation, the voluntary repatriation focal point at the local UNHCR office should be contacted to make an assessment and analysis of such a possible durable solution.
- In cross-border case referrals, the case manager will contact the service providing organization in the destination country to obtain confirmation of the availability of the services required by each of the beneficiaries.
- For complicated or high risk cases, the case manager or RSSN focal point should organise a case conference with all those involved in the case, the RSSN focal points at both the

local and national level, and the supervisors of both offices. For additional guidance on risk classification criteria see the national SGBV and Child Protection SOPs. Also refer to the Inter-agency Guidelines for the Management of Gender-Based Violence and the Inter-agency Guidelines for Case Management and Child Protection.

- With informed written consent or assent of the RSSN service user or their legal representative, the case manager will make the transfer or referral, as deemed appropriate, sending the necessary information about the case by email. Both in case transfers and case referrals, when sending the case information, all documents will be protected by a password generated according to the standard coding system of the RSSN (**see annex xx**).
- In the case of a **referral**, the case manager will share in a secure manner (password-protected) the referral/transfer form (**see annex xx**) and any other information required by the service providing organisation in the destination country, copying both local and national RSSN focal points. Only case managers will have access to the most sensitive case information and password.
- In the case of a **transfer**, the case manager will send in a secure manner (password-protected) the referral/transfer form (**see annex xx**) and any other information in the file, including an assessment report and case description, to the case manager in the destination country, copying both local and national RSSN focal points. Only case managers will have access to the most sensitive case information and password.
- The RSSN service user or their legal representative will fill out an evaluation form for the care provided by the RSSN member organisations (**see annex xx**). The evaluation form will be analysed by the person managing the case.
- The case manager or organization providing the service in the destination country must confirm receipt of the case referral/transfer form or file to the RSSN case manager.
- In the case of a referral, the organization that will provide services in the destination country must have a continuous exchange of information with the RSSN case manager. This can be done verbally, documenting each decision taken, or by email and using a password generated in accordance with the RSSN standard coding system. All actions will be documented through the RSSN service user's action plan and according to the national SOPs.
- Every procedure performed during the cross-border case transfer or referral process will be documented by the RSSN case manager in proGres or using available KoBo forms.
- In case transfers, the RSSN case manager will close the case with the approval of his or her supervisor and prepare an evaluation report and description of each procedure performed and share it with the local and national RSSN focal points