

# UNHCR BIP GUIDELINES

**A QUICK GUIDE TO THE NEW 2018 GUIDELINES ON ASSESSING AND DETERMINING THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD (BIP GUIDELINES)**



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## IN BRIEF

- ✓ UNHCR has updated its [Guidelines on Assessing and Determining the Best Interests of the Child \(Best Interests Procedure \(BIP\) Guidelines\)](#).
- ✓ The [BIP Guidelines](#) combine a conceptual framework of the best interests of the child with field-driven, operational guidance to provide one consolidated, [practical frame of reference for staff and partners in the field](#).
- ✓ They are based on [extensive consultation](#) with UNHCR and partners, and replace the 2008 Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child and the accompanying Field Handbook.
- ✓ Feedback on the [BIP Guidelines](#) to ensure that they are fully responsive to the needs of the field is welcome during the [provisional release period](#) until mid-2019 via this [link](#).

## 10 YEARS OF APPLICATION

UNHCR’s experience since its inception in implementing the best interests principle for children of concern resulted in the release in 2008 of the [UNHCR Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child \(2008 BID Guidelines\)](#), and added its accompanying [Field Handbook](#) in partnership with IRC in 2011. For the last 10 years, these tools have provided staff and partners with practical guidance, processes and tools on applying the best interests principle in decisions affecting children at risk in particular children who are separated from their parents and families.

## WHY REVISE THE GUIDELINES?

The learning and knowledge derived from the implementation of 2008 BID Guidelines and Field handbook, increased understanding of protection risks and their impact on girls and boys of concern, new developments within the child protection sector, and the release of key policy documents have necessitated the revision of 2008 BID Guidelines.

## WHAT’S NEW?

**The Best Interests Procedure is UNHCR’s case management process:** The [BIP Guidelines](#) reinforce that the Best Interests Procedure is UNHCR’s tool for the case management of children at risk and not a separate or parallel process. The BIP thus includes identification, Best Interests Assessment, case planning and implementation, follow-up and closure of child protection cases, in addition to BID for those cases that require it.



**Strengthened guidance on working with national child protection systems:** The importance of working with child protection systems is specifically underscored by UNHCR's Executive Committee in its [Conclusion on Children at Risk \(no.107\)](#). The [BIP Guidelines](#) include additional guidance on [how UNHCR should engage with national child protection systems in different contexts](#).

**Revised criteria for Best Interests Determinations:** While the criteria for BID remain largely unchanged, there are two notable revisions:

- i. A BID remains necessary for durable solutions and complementary pathways for unaccompanied children, [but is only required for separated children where there is an additional significant risk factor or protection concern](#).
- ii. The possibility for [context-specific BID criteria for other children at risk in exceptional situations](#) has been introduced in recognition of the specific operational needs of different contexts and operations.

**Expanded practical guidance on key topics:** These include: prioritisation, staffing and resources for BIP; child participation in BIP; information management for BIP; simplified BID procedures; and consensus decision-making instead of voting in BID Panels.

## THE REVISION PROCESS

The review of the 2008 BID Guidelines commenced in early 2017 based on extensive consultation with UNHCR and partners including UN agencies, international and national non-governmental organizations and government staff. The revision process concluded in 2018 with the provisional release of UNHCR's [Guidelines on the Assessing and Determining the Best Interests of the Child](#). Over the course of 2018, over 125 UNHCR staff and partners have been trained on the new [BIP Guidelines](#).

The [BIP Guidelines](#) combine the conceptual structure of the original 2008 BID Guidelines with the operational guidance of the BID Handbook in order to provide one consolidated, practical frame of reference for staff and partners in the field.

## What Next?

The [BIP Guidelines](#) have been issued as a provisional release until end 2019. This means that feedback collected from colleagues as they implement the guidelines can be integrated to ensure that they are truly responsive to the needs of the field. Feedback on the content of the Guidelines where errors, inconsistencies or omissions are welcome and can be shared through the following [link](#).

The BIP Guidelines are online and can be downloaded in [English](#), with Arabic, French, and Spanish forthcoming soon. Coordination and partnership are instrumental in the dissemination and implementation of the BIP Guidelines. Two tools to accompany the guidelines will therefore be released in early 2019 – the BIP Standard Operating Procedures Toolkit, and the BIP Caseworker Training Package. Please check the [Child Protection and Youth RefWorld page](#) to access more information and updates, or contact [hqchipro@unhcr.org](mailto:hqchipro@unhcr.org).