

SPRING

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Sustainable Practices of Integration

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SUMMARY

This deliverable contains a validation grid with a set of criteria for sustainable and successful practices. The aim of this grid is to provide an evaluation tool to examine different aspects of migrant integration practices to assess their quality. It consists of five main criteria, relevant key questions, and checklist items. The checklist items represent the fundamental features every migrant integration practice should strive for. Assessments will be carried out by considering the scope, the context and target groups of practices and highlight their quality with regard to the criteria where they can be considered as being exemplary.

This deliverable also contains a guideline for assessing the transferability and adaptability of good practices. Transferability has a relational nature and is not usually a quality criterion in integration practices which can rely on the conditions in a specific context. However, the main ideas and values behind the practice and certain elements of the practice might be transferable to another context. This guideline helps assessing the feasibility of the transfer and identifying transferable/adaptable elements in a practice.

PROCESS TO DEVELOP THE VALIDATION GRID

The validation grid has been developed with a co-design approach where inputs from other WP partners, Members of the Spring Advisory Group and Expert Reflection Group have been incorporated. Coordination meetings with, WP2 (integrating taxonomy in validation grid), WP4 (coordinating the validation grid with evaluation toolkit) and WP5 (presentation of the grid on the platform) were organized since the beginning of the task.

A draft version of the grid was shared with all project partners and Advisory Group members. MPG integrated their feedbacks into the final version of the grid.

MPG brought together a practitioner Expert Reflection Group from eight Member State contexts with longstanding, on-the-ground experiences in managing projects, measures and policies aimed at the integration of recently arrived migrants and refugees. The group's members supported the development of the validation grid for good practices, assessed and confirmed a set of criteria developed by MPG for successful and sustainable integration practices. In cooperation with SOLIDAR and MPG, the group met in June and September 2021 to provide feedback on the proposed benchmarks, and they agreed to accompany its implementation until early 2023.

EVALUATION GRID FOR ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF MIGRANT INTEGRATION PRACTICES

INTRODUCTION

The aim of this grid is to provide an evaluation tool to examine different aspects of migrant integration practices to assess their quality. The draft below consists of five main criteria, relevant key questions, and checklist items. The checklist items represent the fundamental features every migrant integration practice should strive for. However, the grid will not be used as a holistic tool for all good practices and assessments will be carried out by considering the scope, the context and target groups of practices and highlight their quality with regard to the criteria where they can be considered as being exemplary.

This evaluation grid is in line with the [Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration](#). The comprehensive set of 11 principles is as follows:

- Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.
- Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.
- Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.
- Basic knowledge of the host society's language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.
- Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.
- Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration.
- Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, inter-cultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.
- The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.
- The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.
- Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.
- Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective.

In line with [the European Pillar of Social Rights](#) and common European values enshrined in the EU Treaties and in [the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union](#), integration practices should

strive for a intercultural integration model which considers respective differences, empowers those facing disadvantages, gives equal opportunities to all to enjoy their rights and participate in community and social life. Integration practices can address social, economic and cultural integration in different stages and phases of integration process such as pre-departure, early integration and long-term integration through mainstream or tailor-made services. As stated in the [EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion \(2021-2027\)](#), adapting and transforming mainstream policies to the needs of a diverse society, taking into account the specific challenges and needs of different groups are essential to supporting ongoing inclusion and meaningful participation.

Title of the Practice	
Integration Areas	
Target Group(s)	
Project Duration	
Type of the practice	Mainstream <input type="checkbox"/> Tailor-made <input type="checkbox"/>

Inclusivity & Participation

Contrary to a top-down policy-driven method, a participatory and inclusive form of action is crucial for a two-way long-term integration. The basis for successful migrant integration also lies in respect for diverse cultures, religions, and ethnicities. Integration practices should aim to provide services which ensures that equal access is central to all activities. Services should also recognize and respond to specific needs and vulnerabilities of their migrant beneficiaries. Migrants’ participation and meaningful engagement is key to improve integration practices.

Key Questions

✓ **Does the practice ensure that its services are accessible and responsive to diverse groups?**

Checklist

- ✓ Adopt a participatory, gender mainstreaming and age sensitive inclusive approach and secure equal opportunities to your beneficiaries (women and men of all ages, LGBTI depending on the specific target group, persons with disabilities and specific needs, such as women at risk and unaccompanied minors)
- ✓ Make sure to provide precise, easy-to-read and accessible information on how to access services in different languages, formats and through different communication channels
- ✓ Ensure that equality and diversity are an essential part of how services are delivered, taking into consideration the different needs and capacities.
- ✓ Make reasonable adjustments in the way you deliver services to take account of particular needs of your target group (e.g providing childcare for (single) parents, specific adjustments for disabled persons, providing flexible services at flexible hours, adapted and informal support for migrants)

✓ **Does the practice involve active participation of the receiving society?**

Checklist

- ✓ Consider integration as a two-way process and aim to contribute to changes also on the side of the receiving society (behaviour, norms, institutions)
- ✓ Foresee an active role of the receiving society in the design and implementation stages (e.g. volunteers) and encourage members of the receiving communities and beneficiaries to work together in the actions
- ✓ **Does the practice consult to its beneficiaries and involve them in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the action?**
 - Checklist
 - ✓ Organize consultation activities with beneficiaries (e.g migrants, migrant associations, community leaders) to co-create the actions together with migrants where possible and get their feedback on the design and evaluation of the action
 - ✓ Use flexible and interculturally adapted formats and compensate participants for their contribution
 - ✓ Provide appropriate feedback mechanisms for beneficiaries to safely express their opinions about the quality of services

Relevance & Complementarity

Aligning with the needs of migrants and other beneficiaries is crucial to develop successful integration practices. The practices should consider their actions' relevance to context, relevance to quality and systematic improvement among migrant groups in general, and relevance for long-term integration. The practices should also be relevant to wider integration priorities and strategies and strive for filling existing gaps in integration support through their actions.

Key Questions

- **Are the objectives and activities of the practice relevant to the needs of the migrants?**

Checklist

- ✓ Identify and analyse the needs of migrant target groups and prioritize methods which ask migrants about their needs directly (interviews/focus groups and surveys)
- ✓ Identify and analyse gaps in integration support and design actions to fill these gaps
- ✓ Aim for a systemic improvement, satisfying the needs of a majority of the target group in the target area

- **Is the practice relevant to empower migrants, strengthen their autonomy and support long-term integration?**

Checklist

- ✓ Devise the actions with the overarching goal to provide positive feedback and make migrants more confident, autonomous and independent
- ✓ Contribute to migrants' engagement with the community for the common good
- ✓ Make sure that your services contribute to the strengthening of the capacities of migrants/migrant communities
- ✓ Include (or create the preconditions for) actions that facilitate long-term integration (such as providing language courses in higher proficiency levels as well; vocational training and employment opportunities tailored to the needs of migrants)
- ✓ Make sure to address discrimination and information gaps as obstacles to long-term integration

- **Does the practice align with the priorities, strategic goals and policies of other relevant stakeholders, and contribute to the wider integration framework?**

Checklist

- ✓ Ensure that all actions are in line with international and European human rights standards
- ✓ Employ regional/local, national and EU/international level integration related guidelines and tools
- ✓ Make sure that your services contribute to the strengthening of the capacities of relevant institutions to support future development (the contributions of the practice might include: policy or strategy change; legislative reform; institutional reforms; governance reforms; increased accountability for public expenditures; or improved processes for public consultation in development planning)

Effectiveness

Evaluation and assessment are key to understand the extent of achievement of objectives in integration practices. To offer an effective integration service to migrants, practices should have clear and comprehensive plans for every step of the action and constantly monitor the progress of the action. The implementors should also be prepared for potential obstacles during implementation and be able to plan alternative scenarios.

Key Questions

- **Is the practice adequately planned and based on a comprehensive design?**

Checklist

- ✓ Aim for actions that achieve observable outcomes among the target group or contributes to changes (individual, community or institutional levels) over the implementation of the action
- ✓ Make sure that the objectives and planned results (outputs, outcomes) of your activity are feasible and clear
- ✓ Make sure that your practice is based on indicators that are measurable, achievable and relevant
- ✓ Develop a staff management plan to identify the human resources with the right skills to work with beneficiaries, training needs and further qualification of team members
- ✓ Develop a communication strategy already in the design phase of the action and pay attention to communication with host communities and local authorities

- **Does the practice regularly monitor implementation and evaluate its results?**

Checklist

- ✓ Make sure to regularly monitor the implementation of the action and compare actual performance (e.g budget, scope, schedules) to the goals set in the design of the action
- ✓ Anticipate the obstacles that might occur and plan alternative scenarios during the design phase of the action
- ✓ Make sure that you achieve your intended results with your outputs and outcomes (e.g training, handbooks, tools, research)
- ✓ Identify if the outcomes of the practice are considered successful by beneficiaries, the host community, funders, practitioner community and policymakers

- ✓ Identify if your interventions contribute to long-term sustainable changes (e.g. by consulting beneficiaries at least one year after receiving support)

Sustainability

Sustainability is crucial to maintain the continuity of the benefits of migrant integration practices overtime. To have sustainable integration practices, it is necessary to get access to long-term funding or generate own resources through business development and entrepreneurship activities. Sustainability is also about examining financial, social, environmental, and organizational capacities to assess the continuity of integration activities. In some specific situations (e.g improvements in the target group, changes in the system etc), sustainability of good practices might not be possible and/or necessary. Therefore, assessments will be carried out by considering these specific situations.

Key Questions

- **Does the practice prepare to utilize its benefits after the completion of the action?**

Checklist

- ✓ Anticipate already in the design phase opportunities to continue the intervention after completion;
- ✓ Prepare and apply a well-defined sustainability plan (including costs and finances) to ensure the continuation of the positive effects and benefits of the action
- ✓ Devote resources in the implementation phase to the build-up of capacities to make sure that the human resources, expertise and infrastructure are in place to sustain the services at the end of the action

- **Does the practice attract structural funding, support from new sponsors and individuals or have a potential to develop a business model to generate its own resources?**

Checklist

- ✓ Develop partnerships and relations with relevant stakeholders at the early stage of the action to ensure that you have strong support and potential partners to continue after the primary funding terminates
- ✓ Identify new EU and national funding opportunities for long-term integration (e.g shifting from project-based initiatives that are limited in time, dependent on one (external) donor, to a comprehensive multi-year strategy based on secured funding or diverse funding opportunities)
- ✓ Diversify funding opportunities and identify options for self-financing through business activities or social entrepreneurship

Partnership & Cooperation

Strong cooperation between the different actors (e.g. migrants, host communities, public authorities and institutions, social and economic partners, civil society organisations, academia, schools, churches, religious and other value-based communities and the private sector) working at various levels is essential for successful, effective and sustainable integration. Integration practices, therefore, should engage in regular consultation and structural dialogue with relevant stakeholders at every stage of their action.

Key Questions

- **Does the practice establish communication and coordination with other relevant actors to foster the integration of migrants? (e.g migrants, civil society, public authorities, businesses)**

Checklist

- ✓ Ensure the involvement and participation of key stakeholders in development phase and develop strategies to involve them in the action
 - ✓ Include multi-stakeholder consultation to involve professionals, institutions and citizens to promote meaningful participation of refugees and migrants, and support a joint sense of ownership of decisions and actions
- **Does the practice contribute to discussion on improvement of integration support policies?**
- Checklist**
- ✓ Seize opportunities to contribute to the development of comprehensive integration strategies involving EU-level/national/regional/local authorities, service providers and civil society
 - ✓ Work with relevant partners (local authorities, NGOs, social partners, research, institutions, etc.) to jointly review operations, practices, services and integration outcomes

GUIDELINE FOR ASSESSING THE TRANSFERABILITY/ADAPTABILITY OF MIGRANT INTEGRATION PRACTICES

POTENTIAL FOR TRANSFERABILITY AND ADAPTABILITY

Transferability has a relational nature and is not usually a quality criterion in integration practices which can rely on the conditions in a specific context. However, the main ideas and values behind the practice and certain elements of the practice might be transferable to another context. When transferring the elements of a practice to a different context, it is crucial to consider the adaptability of the elements to the characteristics of the local setting. Selecting a good practice of strategic interest should be followed by evaluation of the key features and workplan of the practice and assessment of the conditions and readiness in the new environment where the practice will be transferred. This assessment will help to understand the feasibility of the transfer. The following questions will help to identify transferable/adaptable elements in a practice.

Key Questions

- **Does the practice show potential for replication in and adaptation to different contexts and towards different target groups? Which elements of the practice are transferable and adaptable (or not)?**
 - ✓ Has the practice shown to work well, achieved its objectives and therefore can be recommended as a model?
 - ✓ Are the purpose, core ideas and values behind the practice transferable?
 - ✓ Are there some modalities, elements and techniques that can be adapted to another practice?
 - ✓ To which settings elements of the practice can be transferable/adaptable?
 - ✓ For which type of organizations is the practice suitable to replicate?
 - ✓ Does the practice rely on a specific policy and legal context?
 - ✓ Does the practice rely on a country-specific frame conditions or is it flexible and adaptable to similar objectives in varying situations?
 - ✓ Has the practice innovated/planned to innovate new tools, techniques or modals that could be transferred/adaptable to other contexts?
 - ✓ Is the practice ready to be transferred with available materials such as guidelines, handbooks and tools that can facilitate the transfer?
- **Are there any measures foreseen to communicate the results of the project to the relevant stakeholders? Will there be an effort to transfer the necessary knowledge and skills?**
 - ✓ Is there a communication strategy to transfer the results and knowledge generated through the project to relevant stakeholders?
- **Is the plan of the practice sufficiently detailed?**
 - ✓ Does the practice have a workplan to give information about the target groups, objectives, intended outcomes, timeline, financial and administrative planning, sustainability plan, human resources required?
 - ✓ Is it possible to transfer the practice as a social franchise with the same name and methodology?