SPRING

## Toolkit

# Good Practice Adaptation

integrationpractices.eu

SPRING has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the grant agreement 101004635.

# SPRING
# Sustainable Practices of Integration

Start date of project: 1st March 2021 Duration: 24 months

## Good Practice Adaptation Toolkit

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| WP n° and title | WP3 – Identification of practices |
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| Version | Final |

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# Introduction

*All over Europe, there is increasing need for quality integration support, helping migrants and their descendants to settle in and become a respected part of society.*

The recent arrival of large groups of forcibly displaced persons only adds to this need. At the same time, more than four decades of deliberate focus on integration policy in Europe has led to a wealth of expertise and experience at local, regional and national level in how to support the integration of recently arrived refugees, labour migrants, family members, and citizens and residents with a migrant background.

Building on existing knowledge of what is already working has proven successful when creating or further developing practices. Following existing models allows us to learn from good practices, fast- track the introduction of effective measures, and capitalise on lessons learnt elsewhere. Indeed, the transfer of good practices and mutual learning is prominent on the European integration policy agenda, and is gaining the attention of practitioners and policymakers across all levels.

However, actual adaptation of a model found elsewhere and the direct transfer of expertise is surprisingly rare.
Often, a number of practical and structural obstacles prevent the growth and upscaling of existing good practices. One of the main objectives of the SPRING initiative, therefore, has been to explore the quality criteria of good practices and the conditions under which good practices can effectively inspire the development of new practices.

Building on SPRING research, this toolkit seeks to overcome the obstacles in the way of successfully adapting a good practice. Its primary target audience is practitioners interested in following a good practice found elsewhere, working in the non-governmental sector, public authorities and services, or any other organisation or initiative concerned with migrant integration. Practitioners looking to spread their existing practice and share their know-how, or who are already involved in transfer processes, may also learn from this toolkit.

*There are 12 questions everyone interested in adapting an integration model practice should ask herself or himself. The more questions can be answered in a satisfactory way, the higher are the chances for successful adaptation.*

# 20 questions to ask:

## *1. Quality of the model practice*

*Has the potential practice proven to be successful and worth being transferred/upscaled?*

1.1 Does the supposed model practice follow an inclusive and participatory approach?
1.2 Is the supposed model practice relevant and complementary in its own context?
1.3 Is the supposed model practice effective?
1.4 Is the supposed model practice sustainable?
1.5 Does the supposed model practice strive for cooperation and partnerships?

## *2. Practical transferability and adaptability*

*Does a model practice lend itself to being adapted?*

2.1 Is the model practice based on a clear core idea and simple principles?
2.2 Is information about the model practice easily available?
2.3 Are there elements of the model practice that could be adapted in a stand-alone way?
2.4 Is the model practice separable from the original institutional context?
2.5 Has the model practice already proven to be transferable and adaptable?

## *3.Capacity to adapt*

*Is the model practice suitable to the receiving context and are the frame conditions in place to successfully adopt it?*

3.1 Is the model practice applicable under our sociocultural, socioeconomic, institutional and political frame conditions?
3.2 Does the model practice accurately respond to clearly established needs of migrants in our context?
3.3 Does adapting the model practice contribute to the wider integration support system?
3.4 Can we fulfil all practical requirements to implement an adapted model practice?
3.5 Can we build stakeholder support and commitment for implementing and sustaining an adapted model?

## *4.Transfer conditions*

*What facilitates the process of transferring the practice and its adaptation to a different situation?*

4.1 Will we receive active support from the model practice?
4.2 How will we involve the model practice in the adaptation process?
4.3 Are we prepared for a lengthy process of learning and adaptation?
4.4 How will we monitor, evaluate and, if necessary, modify the adapted practice?
4.5 How will we develop and confirm a sustainability/upscaling perspective as part of the process?

# 1. Quality of the model practice

## Has the potential practice proven to be successful and worth being transferred/upscaled?

*There is no point in following a bad example, or in copying an alleged model practice which in fact does not fulfil certain quality standards. Before adapting any model practice to their own context, practitioners should make sure it fulfils the criteria for a good practice.*

1.1 Does the supposed model practice follow an inclusive and participatory approach?
1.2 Is the supposed model practice relevant and complementary in its own context?
1.3 Is the supposed model practice effective?
1.4 Is the supposed model practice sustainable?
1.5 Does the supposed model practice strive for cooperation and partnerships?

# 1. Quality of the model practice

Has the potential practice proven to be successful and worth being transferred/upscaled ?

## 1.1

# Does the supposed model practice follow an inclusive and participatory approach?

## Why ask the question?

*Bottom-up, participatory and inclusive action is crucial for long-term integration. The basis for successful migrant integration lies in respect for diversity and the active involvement of the receiving society. A good model practice should provide services which ensure that equal access is central to all its activities, responding to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of their migrant beneficiaries. Migrants' participation and meaningful engagement in design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation is key to developing and improving quality integration practices.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

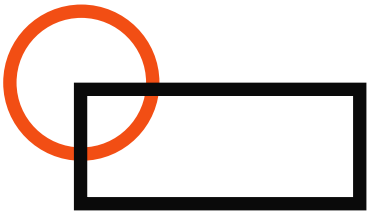
To identify potential model practices which follow an inclusive and participatory approach, consult the SPRING database of validated good practices and search under "Inclusivity & Participation".

Inspiring practices can also be found by searching a range of other collections of 'good' or 'promising' practices, which can be accessed through the SPRING repository of repositories. Users should be aware that the way these collections are compiled are based on varying and often loosely defined criteria.

Generally, practices which can serve as a model in this regard will ensure:

- a diversity-oriented, gender mainstreamed and age sensitive approach to securing equal opportunities for beneficiaries;
- availability of accessible information on how to access services in different languages, formats and through different communication channels;
- awareness of equality and diversity criteria when delivering services, including making adjustments to take into account particular needs and capacities;
- integration is understood as a two-way process leading to changes in the institutions, norms and behaviour of the receiving society;
- an active role of the receiving society in the design and implementation stages as well as collaboration with beneficiaries in the actions;
- flexible and interculturally adapted formats for the involvement of beneficiaries and their representatives in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the practice.

More details on the quality criteria for integration practices concerning inclusivity and participation can be found in the SPRING good practice evaluation grid.



## 1. Quality of the model practice

Has the potential practice proven to be successful and worth being transferred/upscaled ?

## 1.2

# Is the supposed model practice relevant and complementary in its own context?

## Why ask the question?

*Aligning with the needs of migrants and other beneficiaries is crucial for developing successful integration practices. A good model practice should demonstrate – in its context – how to be relevant to efforts towards the systematic improvement of migrants' long-term integration, autonomy and empowerment. The practice should also show how to be relevant to the wider integration priorities and strategies of other stakeholders, and be exemplary for filling existing gaps in integration support.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

To identify potential model practices which are appropriate, consult the SPRING database of validated good practices and search under "Relevance & Complementarity".

Inspiring practices can also be found by searching a range of other collections of 'good' or 'promising' practices, which can be accessed through the SPRING repository of repositories. Users should be aware that the way these collections are compiled are based on varying and often loosely defined criteria.

Generally, practices which can serve as a model in this regard will ensure:

- thorough identification of the specific needs of migrant target groups with the aim of filling gaps in integration support systems;
- systematic improvement of integration support on a scale that benefits a significant portion of the potential target group(s);
- a focus on (self-)empowerment and capacity building, for migrants to become more confident, autonomous and independent;
- orientation towards long-term integration, including high sensitivity for discrimination issues and in-depth knowledge about the receiving country;
- alignment with the priorities, strategic goals and policies of other relevant stakeholders, to contribute to the wider integration framework.

More details on the quality criteria for integration practices concerning relevance and complementarity can be found in the SPRING good practice evaluation grid.

# 1. Quality of the model practice

Has the potential practice proven to be successful and worth being transferred/upscaled ?

## 1.3

# Is the supposed model practice effective?

## Why ask the question?

*Only those practices that have proven to be effective and have achieved outstanding results, confirmed through evaluation, should be considered for adaptation. Systematic assessment is key to understanding the extent to which objectives in integration practices are achieved. Thus, to offer an effective integration service to migrants, a good model practice should have clear and comprehensive plans for every step of the action, constantly monitor its progress, and evaluate its results*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

To identify potential model practices which are effective, consult the SPRING database of validated good practices and search under “Effectiveness”.
Inspiring practices can also be found by searching a range of other collections of ‘good’ or ‘promising’ practices, which can be accessed through the SPRING repository of repositories. Users should be aware that the way these collections are compiled are based on varying and often loosely defined criteria.

Generally, practices which can serve as a model in this regard will ensure:

- a comprehensive design including distinct and feasible results, relevant and measurable outcomes, and anticipation of possible obstacles in implementation;
- interculturally competent staff with the necessary language skills, based on a corresponding recruitment and human resources development strategy;
- a multi-layered communication strategy targeting various audiences and starting in the early phases of implementation;
- regular monitoring of implementation, comparing actual performance with the objectives of the practice and taking remedial action if needed;
- evaluation of results, by involving researchers, beneficiaries, the practitioner community, policymakers, the host community and funders;
- long-term impact assessment, surveying the situation of beneficiaries of the practice over a prolonged timespan.

More details on the quality criteria for integration practices concerning effectiveness can be found in the SPRING good practice evaluation grid.
Evaluations of a presumed model practice are especially valuable if they go beyond merely assessing anticipated performance indicators of the activity. Most useful are impact assessments, and evaluations looking at the situation of former beneficiaries a while after their participation in a programme or use of a service. Databases which include a dedicated section on evaluation include:

- the SPRING database of validated good practices;
- the European Website on Integration.

The SPRING handbook for practitioners contains a review of research on integration policy practices in relation to 11 themes, including analysis of policy effects and effectiveness. It also summarises current policy approaches and instruments and providesactionable recommendations.
Chapter 4 of the SPRING migrant integration toolkit provides further guidance on finding and assessing evidence, including on mapping and measuring impact.

## 1. Quality of the model practice

Has the potential practice proven to be successful and worth being transferred/upscaled ?

## 1.4

# Is the supposed model practice sustainable?

## Why ask the question?

*Sustainability is crucial to maintaining the benefits of migrant integration practices over time. A good model practice has shown to leverage financial, social, environmental, and organisational capacities for the continuity of integration activities.*
*Based on sound sustainability planning and diversified partnerships, the model should attract structural funding, receive support from sponsors and individuals, or operate a business model generating its own resources.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

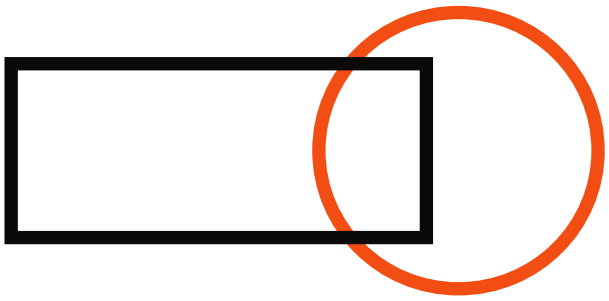
To identify potential model practices which are viable in the long run, consult the SPRING database of validated good practices and search under “Sustainability”.

Inspiring practices can also be found by searching a range of other collections of ‘good’ or ‘promising’ practices, which can be accessed through the SPRING repository of repositories. Users should be aware that the way these collections are compiled are based on varying and often loosely defined criteria.

Generally, practices which can serve as a model in this regard will ensure:

- early anticipation of opportunities to continue the intervention and development of a well-defined sustainability plan;
- build-up of capacities so that the human resources, expertise and infrastructure are in place to sustain the services;
- partnerships and relations with relevant stakeholders to gain strong support and potential partners to continue after the primary funding terminates;
- diversification of funding sources and/or identification of options for self-financing through business activities or social entrepreneurship.

More details on the quality criteria for integration practices concerning sustainability can be found in the SPRING good practice evaluation grid.



## 1. Quality of the model practice

Has the potential practice proven to be successful and worth being transferred/upscaled ?

### 1.5

# Does the supposed model practice strive for cooperation and partnerships?

## Why ask the question?

*Strong cooperation between the relevant actors – migrants, host communities, public authorities and institutions, social and economic partners, civil society organisations, academia, schools, churches, religious and other value-based communities, the private sector – working at various levels is essential for successful integration. A good model practice, therefore, should engage in regular consultation and structural dialogue with its stakeholders at every stage of its activities.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

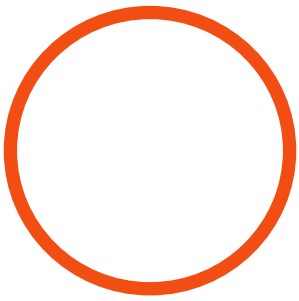
To identify potential model practices which follow a collaborative approach, consult the SPRING database of validated good practices and search under "Partnership & Cooperation".

Inspiring practices can also be found by searching a range of other collections of 'good' or 'promising' practices, which can be accessed through the SPRING repository of repositories. Users should be aware that the way these collections are compiled are based on varying and often loosely defined criteria.

Generally, practices which can serve as a model in this regard will ensure:

- participation of key stakeholders in the development phase and strategies to keep them involved in the action;
- multi-stakeholder consultations with professionals, institutions, migrants and citizens to foster a joint sense of ownership of decisions and actions;
- an active approach to contributing to comprehensive integration strategies involving authorities, service providers and civil society;
- collaborative review of operations, practices, services and integration outcomes with relevant partners, e.g., authorities, NGOs and research institutions.

More details on the quality criteria for integration practices concerning cooperation and partnerships can be found in the SPRING good practice evaluation grid.



# 2. Practical transferability and adaptability

# Does a model practice lend itself to adaptation?

*At a practical level, some practices are more transferable than others. The complexity of a presumed model and its embeddedness in specific structures can stand in the way of easy adaptation. Clear-cut ideas and principles can promote adaptation, as can readily available information and a track record of previous transfer / adaptation to other locations.*

2.1 Is the model practice based on a clear core idea and simple principles?
2.2 Is information about the model practice readily available?
2.3 Are there elements of the model practice that could be adapted in a stand-alone way?
2.4 Is the model practice separable from the original institutional context?
2.5 Has the model practice already proven to be transferable and adaptable?

# 2. Practical transferability and adaptability

Does a model practice lend itself to adaptation?

## 2.1

# Is the model practice based on a clear core idea and simple principles?

## Why ask the question?

*The most transferable practices rest on a clear core idea and simple principles that can be easily adapted to other contexts. Examples of successful cross-country adaptation in the area of migrant integration abound, with straightforward ideas like 'one-stop shop support in early integration', 'neighbourhood mothers' or 'modular add-on vocational training'. These are clear-cut and plausible concepts representing 'best principles' rather than elaborated project designs. Such concepts are particularly suitable for adaptation to the needs of specific contexts – e.g., by modifying the target group, or by applying the approach to a variety of support service types.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

A good way to find out about core ideas that have already worked is to consult the numerous repositories of integration practices, since it is this type of action which mostly populates such deliberate efforts at collecting models.

Comparing practices which address similar problems by using similar methods will help to identify common principles, revealing a model approach to be followed.

The annotated SPRING repository of repositories provides easy access to a wide range of collections of integration practices.

## 2. Practical transferability and adaptability

Does a model practice lend itself to adaptation?

## 2.2

# Is information about the model practice easily available?

## Why ask the question?

*At a very practical level, learning and adapting from other localities depends on easy access to information and, in the majority of cases, overcoming language barriers. Well-documented models, with reports and materials readily available, are easier to tap into than those which do not publish documentation or are not otherwise made public. Key information sources are the people who are or were involved in a model practice. Their insights are particularly important once a model is to be followed in earnest and the adaptation and implementation process starts.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

The more documentation and formal or informal information about a practice is available, the easier the process of identifying it as a model, drawing lessons and adapting it will be. Detailed documentation of a model practice should include a comprehensive work plan in terms of:

- target groups;
- objectives;
- intended outcomes;
- communication/dissemination strategy;
- timelines;
- financial and administrative planning;
- sustainability;
- resources required.

At the implementation level, availability of materials (such as handbooks, guidelines and toolkits) also renders a practice more tangible. Such outputs and concrete illustrations of the example can serve as direct inspiration and help garner support for setting up a new practice.

Such information can be found through:

- practices' own websites;
- online repositories of integration practices (e.g. through the SPRING repository of repositories);
- persons carrying a practice, as a source of 'grey' and unpublished documentation and of first-hand and informal insights.

## 2. Practical transferability and adaptability

Does a model practice lend itself to adaptation?

## 2.3

# Are there elements of the model practice that could be adapted in a stand-alone way?

## Why ask the question?

*An inspiring practice with a modular structure and separable elements offers the possibility of being adapted in a step-by-step or selective manner. Models which innately allow for a pick-and-choose approach are well-suited for settings in which there is only limited scope or budget for implementation on the adapting side. Also, partial transfer and adaptation may suffice to respond to very specific needs. Not least, some practices are interesting as models due to particular methodologies, techniques and modalities for achieving results in an already established area of intervention*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

Often, whether an existing practice has features suited to partial adaptation is not self-evident. Interesting 'small ideas, for example, may remain undiscovered when not deliberately published and shared by a potential model practice. Indications that a practice (found for instance through a search via the SPRING repository of repositories) may lend itself to focused adaptation are:

- being a rather small practice with a moderate budget;
- having a segmental structure (e.g., EU-funded projects with their "work packages");
- promoting specific methods, techniques or modalities in a given area of integration support.

A good way to find out about specific, separable elements of a potential model practice is to get involved in relevant networks and platforms, offering access to in-person contacts, ongoing information sharing, or study trips (see question 4.1).

## 2. Practical transferability and adaptability

Does a model practice lend itself to adaptation?

## 2.4

# Is the model practice separable from the original institutional context?

## Why ask the question?

*Everyone interested in adapting an existing model should be keenly aware that practices may be less transferable the more they are embedded in location-specific institutional structures. 'Institutional structures' need to be understood broadly: they can refer to the substance of public policies, to the way policy areas are organised, managed and funded across various levels of governments, to divergent patterns of public and private responsibilities, to different roles and funding backgrounds of civil society organisations, and so on. It may also be the case that a presumed model was founded in a particular institutional setting with the task of responding to a specific need at a certain time.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

The general rule to follow is that the 'lighter' the institutional context of a practice, the easier it may be to transfer and adapt it to the circumstances of another country. While in some dimensions of the integration process it has proven rather hard to disentangle practices from their institutional context, areas where numerous practices have spread are in particular:

- comprehensive welcome programmes;
- advice and support in the early integration phase;
- social and cultural orientation;
- language learning and social orientation;
- employment support;
- vocational training;
- education.

Awareness of areas where the adaptation of model practices is generally easier due to less complex settings should not discourage attempts in more challenging areas. But practitioners do need to be aware of potential obstacles, and to carefully conduct a feasibility check on the model's applicability in their own situation (see question 3.1).

## 2. Practical transferability and adaptability

Does a model practice lend itself to adaptation?

## 2.5

# Has the model practice already proven to be transferable and adaptable?

## Why ask the question?

*Adapting a practice that has already spread from one locality to one or more other places means to follow a model that has proven to be transferable in principle. In choosing such a model, risks of failure and setbacks can be mitigated, as the earlier adapters have likely already encountered and overcome challenges in transferring the model. Lessons learnt in the past will have become incorporated in the model's application elsewhere, leading to more robust standards to follow. With practices that already have a track record of proliferating it is also easier to tap into a community of practitioners experienced in implementing the model.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

There are few existing mappings of practices which have spread and therefore proven to be adaptable. The SPRING analysis of key trends and features of transferability contains 24 examples of practices which saw such proliferation. Generally, informal knowledge on practices which originated from international inspiration and transfer of know-how is best accessed by joining relevant EU and/or national networks or platforms, and meeting the people involved (see question 4.1).

Some practices are designed from the beginning to be implemented in different countries, typically in the context of EU-funded transnational projects, or EU programmes aimed at innovation and transfer (as also highlighted in the SPRING analysis of key trends and features of transferability). As such they are generally easier to adapt.

Following a new and innovative model: The opposite to searching for an approach that is already tried and tested in several places is to follow an innovative idea that has been implemented for the first time. Potentially, there is value in being an early adapter of a newly conceived practice. It can allow for becoming internationally 'state-of-the-art' in a given area of integration support, presumably drawing on the latest development work and research and incorporating previous lessons learnt in the relevant country.

This said, there is a twofold warning when it comes to taking inspiration from markedly innovative practices:

- Innovative practices in their early implementation phase must rather be seen as promising practices, as their quality - based on evaluation – will be revealed only after some time. It is advisable to adopt such a practice only once its effectiveness is established.

- There might be a "pitfall of excellence" where designated best practices result from competitive bids encouraging innovation. Such models may be extraordinary, demanding, and rather difficult to adapt outside the initiator's context.

## 3. Capacity to adapt

# Is the model practice suitable to the receiving context and are the necessary conditions in place to successfully adopt it?

*At least as important as scrutinising potential models is a critical assessment of the existing context. This includes determining whether the necessary frame conditions are in place, the precise needs to which the newly developed practice should respond, and the role and place of the presumed practice in the integration support environment.*

3.1 Is the model practice applicable under our sociocultural, socioeconomic, institutional and political frame conditions?
3.2 Does the model practice accurately respond to clearly established needs of migrants in our context?
3.3 Does adapting the model practice contribute to the wider integration support system?
3.4 Can we fulfil all practical requirements to implement an adapted model practice?
3.5 Can we build stakeholder support and commitment for implementing and sustaining an adapted model?

## 3. Capacity to adapt

Is the model practice suitable to the receiving context and are the necessary conditions in place to successfully adopt it?

### 3.1

# Is the model practice applicable under our sociocultural, socioeconomic, institutional and political frame conditions?

## Why ask the question?

*Often what is considered a successful measure or policy in another country is highly dependent on that country's context and needs. For a multitude of reasons, this is especially true when it comes to migrant integration and long-term inclusion. Practitioners interested in adapting an international model must be very careful to understand the frame conditions under which practices are deemed successful. To avoid misguided and failed attempts at adaptation, they must be sure that their own context offers similarly advantageous circumstances. Only what fits into their own sociocultural, socioeconomic, institutional and political frame conditions will work.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

A feasibility check looking at the presumed model in light of the practitioner's own situation will clarify its applicability. The goal is to understand the context of the model as compared to the specific sociocultural, socioeconomic, institutional, and political conditions of the country, region or municipality where a new practice is envisaged.

Some good questions to ask, ideally by getting in touch with the practitioners directly, include:

Comparable structures of potential beneficiaries:

- Are the patterns of migration comparable, in particular what concerns the shares of newly arrived, temporary and long-term residents, as well as their reasons for migration?
- Are the socio-economic profiles of the migrant populations comparable, in terms of education, income levels, employment?
- Are the migrant populations demographically comparable, in terms of gender, age, origin?

Comparable receiving societies:

- Are the societies comparable, along a spectrum from more recent destinations to already highly diversified societies with a long history of immigration?
- Are the levels of awareness for the needs and circumstances of migrant groups comparable, among the population at large, media, mainstream service providers, public authorities and policymakers?
- Are the social climates comparable, in terms of attitudes in the receiving society, potential citizen engagement and support from civil society, prevalence of discriminatory behaviour?

Comparable spaces of intervention:

- Are the social-spatial settings comparable, in terms of urban or rural environments, density of employment opportunities and social infrastructures, and/or existence of territorial disadvantages?

- Are the stakeholder situations comparable, in terms of available partners, strength of civil society organisations, public authorities with a mandate and/or legal competencies to act in migrant integration?

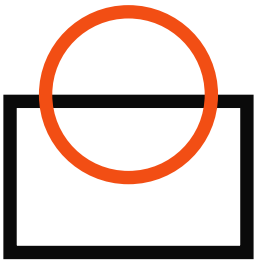
- Is the political commitment to improve integration support comparable, in terms of openness for novel approaches, willingness to overcome resistance, and/or provision of necessary resources?

As a general rule, the more similar the frame conditions are, the more aligned a model practice will be with the new circumstances and the easier its adaptation should be. Practitioners keen on following a model are therefore well-advised to look at places which resemble their own environment. It is not geographic proximity that is important but rather comparable stages in the development of overall integration frameworks, under equivalent conditions.

**Adapting to a very divergent context:** This correlation, though, also means that obstacles may be especially high where the goal is to adapt good practices from long-standing countries of immigration in a more recent destination country. This desire is perfectly legitimate, as it promises to fast-track the implementation of advanced integration support. Practitioners in such settings need to be aware of the potential difficulties and prepare for:

- a careful analysis of the dissimilarities and gaps between the two countries, with plans on how to compensate specific deviations and shortcomings;

- far-reaching adaptation, possibly reducing the model to its very core idea and building a tailored new practice according to new constraints and circumstances.



## 3. Capacity to adapt

Is the model practice suitable to the receiving context and are the necessary conditions in place to successfully adopt it?

## 3.2

# Does the model practice accurately respond to clearly established needs of migrants in our context?

## Why ask the question?

*Integration policies, programmes or projects will only be successful when highly attuned to the needs of their target groups. These specific requirements have to be established first, before potential model practices responding to such needs in other places can be identified. It would be mistaken to attempt to adapt a perceived good, effective practice with only a vague idea on whether the needs to which the presumed model responds actually match those in the new area.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

In-depth knowledge of needs – and consequently, of the gaps in integration support to be filled through a new practice – may stem from various sources. It can be derived from:

- own insights from current operations;
- (where they exist) high-quality, evidence based integration strategies rooted in analysis of the state of migrant integration and main challenges;
- a thorough needs assessment process conducted together with stakeholders.

The purpose of a **needs assessment process** is to tap into the expertise and practical knowledge of the integration practitioner community, including public and civil society organisations, policymakers, researchers and migrant communities. The goal is to identify the exact nature of needs in the area of the envisaged intervention. Based on such a specification, a more accurate response to the relevant needs can be planned and potentially matching models can be better explored. During consultations it is of paramount importance to follow a participatory approach, including potential beneficiaries and representatives of migrant communities. They are experts on their own situation, and no support measure for them should be developed without their inclusion. Also, a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder needs assessment is the ideal first step in a stakeholder engagement process (see question 3.5).

When involving the different stakeholder groups, the following points should be considered:

- **Consultation activities with potential beneficiaries** (migrants, migrant-led organisations, community representatives) should be approached as a co-creation process, exploring together needs of migrant target groups and discussing possible solutions. Key considerations are trust-building in interviews and focus groups, ensuring that all perspectives are equally represented (gender, age groups, nationalities, educational levels, disabilities, etc.), flexible and interculturally adapted formats, as well as compensating participants for their contribution.

- **Consulting research evidence** should start with, but not be limited to, desk research and seeking insights from literature. In-person engagement with researchers (especially those familiar with the local context) is the most direct and efficient way to gather information and sharpen the assessment of needs. Next to expert interviews, hearing-like seminars represent a suitable format.

- **Consulting integration practitioners** will take advantage of different perspectives and distil needs from the experiences, expertise and practical knowledge of people who work on the issues at hand in various settings. Representatives of civil society organisations, public authorities at various levels of government, public and semi-public services and agencies, social partners and private/philanthropic actors can all provide specific insights. Holding an event in an open space conference format will provide an opportunity to tap into this knowledge, and on top of that foster a community of practice.

- **Consulting policymakers** at administrative and political levels should start with integration policy objectives, ongoing and planned activities and related challenges. Ensuing conversation can focus on which known needs are still insufficiently addressed. The exchange can also involve a mirroring exercise in which policy objectives are discussed in light of the needs identified by other stakeholders. Responses from this kind of consultations may be biased towards existing approaches, but usually draw on valuable in-house expertise and internal administrative data.

- **Minding data and data gaps:** In all consultations of the needs assessment, careful attention should be given to the availability (or lack) of data, their quality and reliability. Indeed, it may be a good idea to consult with specialised statistical experts as well. Lack of data should not preclude the development of a practice if stakeholders broadly agree on an obvious need for action. However, proponents need to be aware of such limitations – especially when it comes to evaluating a practice later on – and should consider whether the generation of better data could become part of the envisaged action.

- **Aiming for stakeholder consensus:** Once a clearer picture of needs has emerged from various stakeholder consultations, a round table-style event can help to verify the findings and build a consensus around identified needs and possible solutions. Such a consensus will help to create a supportive environment and promote better conditions for acquiring funding.

- **Formulating the way forward:** A concluding document on needs, gaps and priorities for improvement resulting from the needs assessment process can serve as the starting point for identifying suitable model practices elsewhere, designing a practice that is accurately in line with needs, and securing adequate support and funding.

Chapter 4 of the SPRING migrant integration toolkit provides insights on where to find evidence for the process of policy design, including databases and other sources of evidence.

## 3. Capacity to adapt

Is the model practice suitable to the receiving context and are the necessary conditions in place to successfully adopt it?

## 3.3

# Does adapting the model practice contribute to the wider integration support system?

## Why ask the question?

*Whether a measure is well integrated into the wider support system for migrants is part of the quality criteria of a good practice. Newly established integration practices should be complementary to what already exists, in that they feed into established integration strategies and align with the priorities, strategic goals and policies of other relevant stakeholders. Ideally, the prospective practice will fill a gap in the system and will be coordinated with other actors who provide services related to the envisaged measure. It should contribute to a more comprehensive integration support environment, in which services are synchronised and stakeholders collaborate to improve the overall integration framework.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

The needs analysis preceding any adaptation of a model practice (see question 3.1) will reveal the gaps in the existing support system which would be filled by the newly introduced measure. In the next step, the consequences of establishing a new practice for the broader integration policy environment and its actors should be explored.
Key questions to be addressed include:

- Existing practices and coordination mechanisms: Is the planned practice covered by the objectives of existing integration policy frameworks, be they national, regional or local (this question may also refer to the priorities of relevant EU programmes)? Which practices already exist in the area of intervention, and who are the actors involved? Are there any bodies or fora to coordinate interrelated integration services, and if not, is there a need to initiate collaboration when the new practice will enter into service?

- Operational cooperation and information needs: Will there be overlaps with integration support services offered by other actors? What are the ensuing needs for coordination, alignment and mutual referral of clients? Is there a need to inform potential beneficiaries about the specific goals, target groups and advantages of the new practice, as compared with similar offers?

- Subsequent information needs: Which other institutions, organisations and services will the beneficiaries of the envisaged practice approach as a result of their participation? What information will these actors require about the new practice, and is there a need for ongoing coordination (for example with public employment services if the new practice is a vocational training programme)?

- Systemic contribution and impact: What will be the contribution(s) of the envisaged practice towards a more comprehensive integration framework, e.g. in terms of policy or strategy change; legislative reforms; institutional reforms; governance reforms; increased accountability for public expenditures; improved public consultation processes?

An articulated strategy of engagement with all relevant actors affected by the prospective practice should be the outcome of these considerations. Well before implementation of a new integration practice, its carriers should have a roadmap towards exchange, collaboration and coordination and a clear vision on its place and role in the wider migrant integration support system.

## 3. Capacity to adapt

Is the model practice suitable to the receiving context and are the necessary conditions in place to successfully adopt it?

### 3.4

# Can we fulfil all practical requirements to implement an adapted model practice?

## Why ask the question?

*Before starting a process of adaptation and implementation it must be clear that the means and capacities are there to follow it through. Being guided by an established model, rather than developing a practice from scratch, may be easier in terms of gaining know-how. But it may well be more challenging in terms of organisational capacities, because it involves a complex process of transnational exchange and learning. A feasibility check in this regard needs to look at financial, staff, administrative, partnership and other requirements. This may lead to organisational changes or adjustments in the funding model before adaptation and implementation of the new practice can start.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

A feasibility check on the practical requirements should follow three guiding questions:

- What are the conditions under which a model practice is able to operate in its context, and would these conditions be fulfilled if the practice were implemented in our own context?

- What are the prerequisites for implementing an adapted practice, also considering that the institutional, legal and political frame conditions may be different from those in the place of the model?

- Which specific capacities are needed to successfully conduct a comprehensive learning and adaptation process (see questions of chapter 4)?

Answers to these questions will relate to a number of issues, possibly requiring specific efforts to create the pre-conditions for successful adaptation:

- Structure of the organisation: Form of enterprise, financial and operational capacity, management structure, internal commitment and leadership, administrative/project and financial management capacities.

- Human resources: Sufficient staff qualified for the envisaged tasks, intercultural competencies, language skills related to the target group(s), training and further education needs and programmes.

- Partnerships: Other organisations and players whose commitment is crucially important for the implementation of the envisaged practice; stakeholder partnerships which will facilitate development, implementation and evaluation of the practice (see question 3.5).

- Public authority/political support: Securing the level of support needed for successful implementation from the relevant administrative or political players with responsibilities in the area of intervention.

- Funding: Awareness of alternative (public, private, philanthropic) financing options, securing of primary and supplementary (co-)funding for development, adaptation, (experimental) implementation and perpetuation/upscaling of the practice.

Chapter 2 of the SPRING migrant integration toolkit on funding provides an overview of different funding opportunities, how to access them and how to best allocate funding in migrant integration projects.

## 3. Capacity to adapt

Is the model practice suitable to the receiving context and are the necessary conditions in place to successfully adopt it?

### 3.5

# Can we build stakeholder support and commitment for implementing and sustaining an adapted model?

## Why ask the question?

*Launching a new integration practice needs attention and support from stakeholders if it is to become sustainable in the long run. The goal is to create buy-in and commitment from policymakers, migrant representatives, donors, funding authorities and other potential sources of support. Such actors should be convinced about the need for the envisaged practice, as filling a gap in the existing system and bringing added value. Being inspired by international good practice, the adapted practice should become recognised by these players as a new benchmark for integration action, worthy of future support and upscaling*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

Stakeholder action planning to verify needs and test the feasibility of the proposed practice is an excellent way to engage key stakeholders in its development phase and lay the foundations for their constructive involvement later on. Elements of a successful stakeholder engagement process are:

- Stakeholder identification: Identification (through mapping and analysis) of those key stakeholders who are potential supporters and allies due to their interests in the integration area at hand, and/or their potential influence on the success or failure of the project.

- Relationship building and joint development: Workshops and targeted bilateral meetings for reflection on the results of the needs analysis (cf. 3.1), to gain feedback on the envisaged action, and to explore how existing guidelines and tools provided by stakeholders could be incorporated. Next to making use of stakeholders' insights, expertise and concerns for the development of the practice, these exchanges will help to build co-ownership and long-term relationships based on trust.

- Understanding the stakeholders: A clear understanding of stakeholders' motives and interests when engaging with the proposed action. It is essential to know which parts of the suggested practice are most relevant for them, the factors which will determine the extent of their support, and their expectations of specific results.

- Promoting the good practice adaptation approach: Elaboration and highlighting of the added value of adapting an international good practice from the point of view of the various stakeholders. Vis-à-vis policymakers, this will be vital to ensuring political support and sponsorship. Vis-à-vis public or private funding bodies, this will be crucial to gaining funding support. Either way, this is a key step towards long-term sustainability and the upscaling of the envisaged practice.

- Involvement in review and evaluation: Continued involvement of key stakeholders in the review and evaluation of the practice, especially concerning collaborative implementation, quality assessment of services and impact of the practice on integration outcomes.

- Promoting the contribution to comprehensive integration: Seizing of any opportunity to feed the emerging new practice into policy and stakeholder debates about improved integration policies, and to position it as a contribution to more comprehensive migrant and refugee integration.

Chapter 3 of the SPRING migrant integration toolkit provides further guidance on involving and engaging stakeholders in evidence-based policymaking, including methods and examples on promoting the involvement of specific stakeholders.

## 4. Transfer conditions

# What facilitates the process of transferring the practice and its adaptation to a different situation?

*Adapting a model to a new context is a process which necessarily involves input from the side of the model. Taking into account the preconditions for a successful transfer and adaptation process and carefully planning the related learning and testing will lead to a well-targeted, effective and sustainable new integration practice.*

4.1 Will we receive active support from the model practice?
4.2 How will we involve the model practice in the adaptation process?
4.3 Are we prepared for a lengthy process of learning and adaptation?
4.4 How will we monitor, evaluate and, if necessary, modify the adapted practice?
4.5 How will we develop and confirm a sustainability/upscaling perspective as part of the process?

# 4. Transfer conditions

What facilitates the process of transferring the practice and its adaptation to a different situation?

## 4.1

# Will we receive active support from the model practice?

## Why ask the question?

*Virtually all instances of successful adaptation of a model practice in a new context have involved direct, in person interaction between practitioners on both sides. Personal contacts, networking and exchange of experiences are key factors for success, requiring a whole process which entails both the receiving and the sharing ends. Having the possibility to tap into 'insider' information, advice and lessons learnt is thus essential for transferring and adapting a model practice.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

A relatively formalised peer learning process with ongoing interpersonal contact will allow for systematic transfer of specific knowledge beyond the knowledge accessible through existing documentation. However, identifying the right models and partners is time-consuming and challenging. Consulting databases of (assessed) good practices is only a starting point.

To find the right partners and peers, it is advisable to make use of existing platforms, networks, programmes or knowledge brokers for inspiration, facilitation and effortless access to those running a model:

- **European networks:** Transnationally, European networks representing civil society or local and regional authorities, as well as networks associated with specific EU programmes, offer the possibility of becoming strategically engaged and more easily gaining access to practitioner knowledge. The SPRING analysis on trends and key features of transferability contains an overview of EU-level structures relevant for cross-border spread of integration practices.

- **National networks:** Within countries, such structures may include national networks bringing together civil society organisations or local and regional authorities, as well as – where they exist – national integration contact points or agencies, which can play a useful role in reinforcing the top-down spread of practices. Getting involved or becoming a member can help to secure contact with existing models in the relevant country but also internationally, as these structures tend to be connected to European counterparts and umbrella organisations.

- **SPRING resources:** The SPRING community and the SPRING collection of exemplary practices provide access to integration actors in Europe and Canada who are dedicated to needs-based good practices, the growing of transnational communities of practice and the sharing of know-how.

## 4. Transfer conditions

What facilitates the process of transferring the practice and its adaptation to a different situation?

## 4.2

# How will we involve the model practice in the adaptation process?

## Why ask the question?

*A tailored methodology is needed to make the most of the support that representatives of a model practice can provide to the adaptation process. Indeed, a smart way of involving the model is crucial for keeping up the interest in sharing and exchanging over a longer period. Minimum requirements for such an approach are, as well as thorough initial presentation of the model, the possibility of influencing the design and development of the practice and as the existence of regular occasions to provide feedback and advice during implementation. Finding a way to involve relevant peers in the evaluation of the adapted practice will add valuable perspectives to assessing its impact and facilitate its further development.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

Ideally, the exchange would be organised in a structured way, offering numerous occasions to meet, and supported by sufficient resources. Designing the adaptation process and its peer support as an outright project comes with multiple advantages. In the project design framework, the different stages will be well-defined and continuous advice and feedback from the sharing practice will be ensured, making it easier to secure funding. Ideally, funding for the transfer of know-how and the peer support process would be delivered in conjunction with funding for the practical creation of the practice.

The **peer support process** has clearly distinguished phases, and at least some of the exchanges should take place as in-person meetings rather than virtually. Generally, it is important to create informal, trust-based settings in which practitioners feel comfortable to discuss failures and things which did not work, as it is in environments like these that the most learning takes place.

Design and co-development phase:

- **Understanding the model:** A deep and thorough understanding of the model practice, including its objectives, methods and history, should be the starting point. A study visit, meeting various actors, can greatly help to understand what triggered the development of the model practice and why it is a successful measure in its specific context.

- **Collaborative learning:** Interactive formats work best for learning from an example. Organisations interested in adapting a practice should, along with those delivering the model, identify critical success factors and consider together what these critical success factors would mean in the new context.

- **Input and feedback to the work plan:** Exchange with the model and the ensuing insights into what presumably works best under the new circumstances should feed into the work plan of the emerging adapted practice (see question 4.3). Representatives of the model practice should be given the possibility of commenting on the draft work plan, with this feedback to be incorporated into the finalised work plan.

Implementation phase:

- **Ongoing feedback and advice:** Regular peer learning workshops, bringing together the model and its "adapters" will allow continuous feedback on the unfolding implementation process and joint problem-solving. While representatives of the new, adapted practice can bring up any challenges encountered and ask for advice, representatives of the model can share experiences and tacit knowledge and ask critical questions.

- **Bringing in additional practices:** In the context of such workshops, it is advisable to receive peer feedback from a wider community of practitioners, beyond the place from where a model is adapted. Representatives of similar practices or from the model's stakeholder community can greatly enrich the debate and help to accentuate critical issues and lessons to be learned. To achieve such settings and identify participants, it helps to participate in dedicated networks for the exchange of experiences and sharing of information (see question 4.1).

- **Co-development and impulse for model practice:** Instead of a purely one-way transfer from the model to the adapting practice, peer learning encounters should become a process of common learning and joint development. As the sharing side gains from new insights and ideas for the further development of its own model, there will be an additional incentive to stay involved. If the entire process of sharing and adapting good practices is organised as a dedicated, multilateral project setting, all sides will be able and willing to give and receive equally.

Evaluation phase:

- **Contribution to evaluation methodology:** Peers from the model practice should be given a role in the development of the evaluation framework of the emerging practice. They can provide input about their own assessment experiences and methodologies, and share critical feedback on draft evaluation and impact assessment strategies.

- **Involvement in monitoring and evaluation:** Representatives of model practices may also be directly involved in the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the adapted practice. For example, they could become members of an expert sounding board overseeing implementation, assess how well beneficiaries of the action are involved in its evaluation, or provide feedback on long-term impact assessments and comparisons with the impact the model practice has had.

## 4. Transfer conditions

What facilitates the process of transferring the practice and its adaptation to a different situation?

# 4.3

# Are we prepared for a lengthy process of learning and adaptation?

## Why ask the question?

*Adapting a model and introducing a new practice does not come easily. It takes time and a protracted process of design, trial, assessment and revision. It may also mean to find equivalent solutions in case some elements of the model are found to be non-transferable. This all requires resources and commitment. To achieve a tried-and-tested measure ready to be continued and scaled up, the lengthy nature of developing, implementing and further adjusting it in a specific context needs to be acknowledged first.*

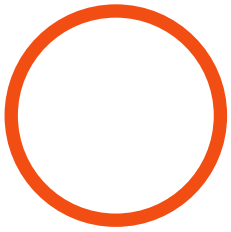
## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

To establish a new practice inspired by a model found elsewhere, sufficient dedication, time and means must be available for development and testing. The goal of the adaptation and learning process is to gradually build up the capacities to maintain the practice in the long run.

- **Work plan – adaptation instead of replication:** Rather than attempting a 1:1 transfer of the existing model, the whole process should aim for tailor-made adaptation in line with identified needs and the frame conditions of the new context. This entails genuine development work which should take core ideas, purposes, specific elements and modalities of the model as starting points and transform them into a genuinely new practice based on a clear work plan. Part of this translation process is to find equivalent solutions when certain parts turn out to be non-transferable.

- **Experimental implementation:** Ample time should be allowed for practically testing the new approach. This will lead to better understanding of which principles and elements are applicable and which adjustments need to be made. In addition, experimental implementation will help to anticipate obstacles that might occur, plan alternative scenarios or propose possible changes in the policy/regulatory environment to make the practice successful and scalable.

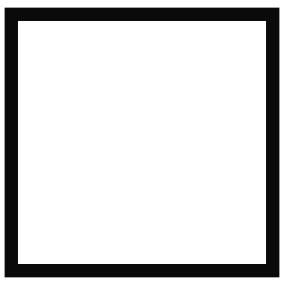
- **Start with pilots and demonstrators:** The best way to make experimental implementation happen is to plan pilot and demonstration actions on a smaller scale (but endowed with sufficient seed money). The advantages are twofold: on the one hand, such laboratories allow for capacity building in organisations, trial-and-error, immediate feedback from beneficiaries and peers, and easy fine-tuning and revision of the action. On the other hand, the concrete experiences and results will help to garner support from funding or policy stakeholders, thereby feeding into the acquisition of follow-up funding and promoting the sustainability of the emerging practice.



- **Sound planning and comprehensive design:** As with any effective integration measure, the adapted practice should aim for observable outcomes among the target group or contribute to changes at individual, community or institutional levels. Objectives and planned results (both in terms of outputs and outcomes) of the activity should be feasible and clear; indicators to assess its success must be measurable, achievable and relevant.

- **Working with the right people:** A fitting staff development strategy represents a core element of the adaptation and development process. It will identify the human resources needed in the carrier organisation of the practice, with regard to the intercultural and language skills for working with beneficiaries, training needs and further qualification of team members.

- **Multi-layered communication and outreach:** A communication strategy should be developed already in the design phase of the action. It should comprise targeted communication with potential beneficiaries in line with their communication habits, strategic communication with (public, private, civil society) integration stakeholders, and defined communication goals and narratives when it comes to host communities and the public at large. Pilot and demonstration actions are also a good place to test and fine-tune communication strategy.



## 4. Transfer conditions

What facilitates the process of transferring the practice and its adaptation to a different situation?

### 4.4

# How will we monitor, evaluate and, if necessary, modify the adapted practice?

## Why ask the question?

*The effectiveness of a practice adapted from another context can never be taken for granted. As with any newly established measure, ongoing monitoring of its implementation and assessment of its impact are essential for fine-tuning the practice to the requirements of the local environment. The methodology of this accompanying evaluation needs to be developed in advance, with sufficient resources earmarked and competent evaluators already committed by the time the adaptation process starts. With such a framework in place, it will be possible to immediately take remedial action if needed, in order to modify and further improve the emerging practice.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

Careful monitoring of the effectiveness of the adapted practice should include the following elements:

- Overarching consideration of the appropriateness of the adapted practice, constantly assessing its practicability in view of the new frame conditions
- ongoing performance tracking related to the intended outreach, outputs and outcomes for the beneficiaries of the action
- ongoing performance tracking related to the budget goals and schedules laid out in the design phase of the action
- a strategy for involving the beneficiaries of the practice in its evaluation, as a source of essential feedback
- regular external evaluation of implementation, employing academic and/or practitioner expertise; possibly in the guise of an expert sounding board
- stakeholder involvement in impact assessment, asking whether the practice is considered successful by the practitioner community, policymakers, migrant representatives, the host community, and funders (see question 3.5)
- peer involvement from model practices (see question 4.2)
- evaluation research, establishing whether the intervention contributes to long-term sustainable changes (e.g. by consulting beneficiaries at least one year after receiving support)

Chapter 5 of the SPRING migrant integration toolkit on evaluation offers detailed guidance on how to carry out different types of evaluation and how to use cost-benefit analysis to improve migrant integration policymaking.

## 4. Transfer conditions

What facilitates the process of transferring the practice and its adaptation to a different situation?

# 4.5

# How will we develop and confirm a sustainability/ upscaling perspective as part of the process?

## Why ask the question?

*Establishing an enduring, new practice that will last in the long run is the core intention of every effort to transfer and adapt a model practice from another context. Building on the stakeholder outreach conducted in the preparatory and planning phase, the actual transfer and adaptation phase is the best time to develop and secure a perspective for sustaining - and potentially upscaling - the practice.*

*A detailed sustainability plan will help to outline the way forward and to secure support and commitment from key stakeholders and facilitators.*

## *Suggestions, tips & inspiration to answer the question*

Striving for sustainability and preparing for possible upscaling of the practice should entail a number of activities:

- Sustainability plan: The creation of a detailed sustainability plan will provide a roadmap for how, under which conditions and for what costs, the practice can be continued after the primary funding expires. Demonstrating the feasibility, positive effects and benefits of the newly adapted and tested practice, such a sustainability plan will allow practitioners to better approach potential funding bodies, partners and supporters.
- Multi-year strategy and secure funding: Shifting from a project-type initiative, limited in time, to a comprehensive multi-year strategy - based on secured funding or diversified funding opportunities - should be at the centre of any sustainability plan. Therefore, the plan must identify funding needs and potential (national, European, public and private) funding sources for long-term integration support. Considering options for self-financing or a business model to generate own resources (such as in the case of social entrepreneurship) may be a crucial part of this exercise.
- Upscaling strategy: If the goal is to upscale and further spread the practice, the sustainability plan needs to include an upscaling strategy, identifying the intended scope, necessary partners and actors, policy and institutional conditions, as well as funding needs and possibilities. Usually, upscaling is the way forward to systemic improvement, satisfying the needs of a majority of the target group in the target area. However, it can only take place where the practice is not dependent on small-scale implementation for its success and effectiveness. Especially informal, community-based activities may be difficult to turn into more standardised and regulated forms.
- Stakeholder relationships: Relationships with relevant stakeholders established at an earlier stage should be nurtured continuously to ensure strong support and potential future partners. Discussing and promoting the sustainability plan thus should become a core part of the stakeholder engagement process (see question 3.5) in order to explore the possibilities for perpetuation, gain commitments and attract structural funding.
- Continued build-up of capacities: Resources should be devoted to the further build-up of capacities, to make sure that the skills, expertise and infrastructure are in place to sustain the practice. Pilot actions (see question 4.5) can be a catalyst for developing capacities, but a future perpetuated service is likely to go beyond of what is necessary in the stage of experimental implementation.

Chapter 2 of the SPRING migrant integration toolkit on funding includes information on how diversifying funding sources can help projects become sustainable and upscale.
**Becoming a new model practice:** A newly established practice which was inspired by international good practice will be highly interesting for further expansion across borders, serving as model practice in its own right. Representatives of adapted practices therefore should disseminate and feed their experiences into the growing community of practitioners, actively add to databases/repositories of good practices, and contribute to relevant transnational networks and knowledge platforms. The effect will be a cascading, growing number of practices that can be further adapted and are visible to the transnational integration community.

SPRING