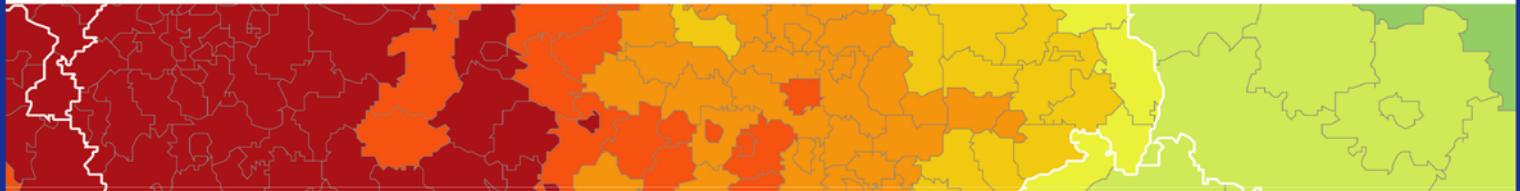


Inspire policy making by territorial evidence



MIGRARE – Impacts of refugee flows to territorial development in Europe

Guidelines for local and regional policy makers to practically support the integration and inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees

Applied Research

Final Report

19/07/2019

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1 Introduction: rationale and purpose

1.1 Rationale for these guidelines

European regions and cities are at the forefront of the migration and integration policy challenge. They are the places where the needs of refugees and asylum seekers seeking humanitarian support must be reconciled with the legitimate requirements of local communities' needs and their dynamics, also to maximise the positive impacts of social inclusion.

A smooth integration process has to be ensured at local and regional level from the moment the asylum application is lodged. This is to minimise short-term tensions and maximise potential positive impacts. This integration process entails measures such as providing basic health and housing support, as well as identification of skills and competencies which can be reinforced through formal and informal qualification to enable a smooth access to local labour opportunities.

These are complex policy actions which require full ability, capacity and commitment at the local levels, but also imply a strong cooperation among various actors (public, private, civil society organisations etc.) and levels of governance. Furthermore, effective coordination between cities and regions within and across countries poses also relevant challenges to policymaking. These can all be reflected into EU policy support and cross-country cooperation agreements, but many of these actions remain a specific competence and responsibility of local and regional administrations and other involved stakeholders.

1.2 Purpose of the guidelines

These guidelines are one of the deliverables stemming from the study 'Impacts of refugee flows to territorial development in Europe' performed under the guidance of ESPON EGTC.

The involvement of local and regional levels is crucial in ensuring successful reception of asylum applicants and/or beneficiaries of international protection as well as their integration in short-, medium- and long-term. Therefore, the purpose of these guidelines is to provide suggestions to policymakers, whether on local, regional, national or European level, as well as other interested stakeholders on how to:

- Best activate the available resources (human, financial, material etc.) in their area;
- Address the needs of the area (e.g. labour shortages) in the implementation of integration measures;
- Facilitate the integration of asylum seekers and refugees;
- Ensure fruitful cooperation of all actors involved; to then
- Avoid the rise of negative attitudes towards refugees and migrants among the population.



Further ESPON MIGRARE reading:

Final and Inception Report

2 Absorption capacity of regions

Different types of European regions offer different absorption potentials to asylum seekers – with more competitive regions being among those primarily targeted by asylum seekers and refugees. Absorption capacity depends on economic, demographic and social conditions, including quality of government, public services, inclusion policies and local political and social climate. At the same time, socio-economic performance is a strong predictor for the ‘absorption potentials’ of the different regions – i.e. the ability to ensure social inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees through access to local labour markets and employment over time.

Absorption depends on the matching of local needs and specific qualities of individual asylum seekers and refugees. More economically advanced regions may in fact need specific skillsets to fully employ asylum seekers and refugees, while less performing regions could benefit from young families to repopulate their settlements and improve their social and even economic performance.

The figure on the left illustrate the differences among regional potentials and challenges. This is done by grouping territories in a range of clusters – these are generated through the aggregation of a number of significative indicators covering economic development and innovation performance, labour market conditions and demographic and migration rates (EU and non-EU). While the figure on the right combines the clusters with the regional (at NUTS2 level) distribution of asylum seekers.

Figure 2.2 Clustering of regions (NUTS2) based on differences in socio-economic performances (2017)

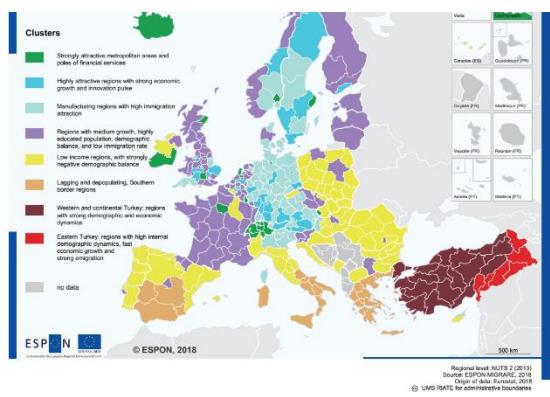
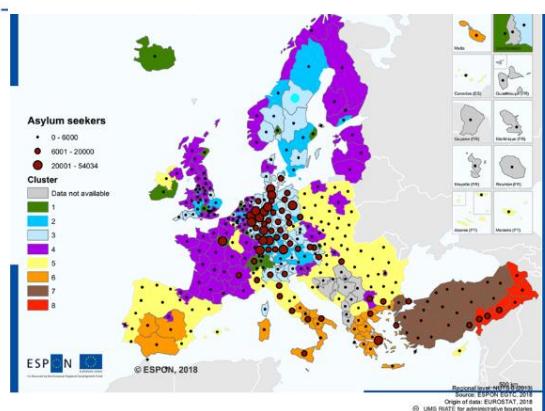


Figure 2.1 Asylum seekers per NUTS2 region and regional typology



Source: Elaboration based on EUROSTAT and country-level data from country research

Clusters with a higher number of asylum seekers are those in arrival regions (Cluster 6) and destination regions (Clusters 3, 2 and 1). This is an important factor, as pressure from asylum seekers occurs in very different types of territories, resulting in different degrees of social inclusion and absorption in local labour markets.

3 Challenges associated with reception and integration

It is vital for local and regional policymakers to understand the needs and potentials of asylum seekers and refugees as well as of the local communities to turn the challenges into positive local effects (including through the maximisation of their potential economic contribution). This in turn may increase citizens' predisposition to accept the refugee inflows, and reduce social and political tensions at local, national and EU level.

In this context, local institutions and non-state actors, including international organisations and national/local NGOs, play a crucial role in providing humanitarian assistance and shelter for asylum seekers and refugees and in supporting their socio-economic integration intFrequently, i local communities, while often facing many legal, institutional and socio-economic challenges and constraints, namely:

- *Legal challenges* related to the regulation of the asylum procedures, and the definition of working, residence, citizenship and political rights.
- *Institutional challenges* relating to the resources (human and financial) available in the receiving community for the implementation of reception and integration policies.
- *Socio-economic challenges* related to the availability of local services and facilities supporting access to education and training, the labour market, healthcare, housing and other welfare benefits and services necessary for socio-economic integration in the community.

3.1 Legal challenges: the length of recognition procedures and the status of asylum seekers

Frequently, integration measures target only regular migrants and/or persons with a recognised protective status. Asylum seekers, however, in most EU countries have restricted access or no access at all to integration services and benefits. Furthermore, the uncertainty of the outcome of the procedure discourages asylum seekers from undertaking integration measures and also local stakeholders from participating in integration measures. The time needed for the recognition of a refugee or other protective status is, therefore, one of the main challenges for both asylum seekers and for local communities. Mainly because during this period asylum seekers usually cannot work, are not eligible for full integration measures and in most countries have to stay in reception or detention centres.

Another challenge is the situation of asylum seekers who do not receive a protective status and become **irregular migrants** after their claim is rejected, without any access to regular employment and socio-economic support. Irregular migrants are either deported or remain in the arrival country, living at the margins of society, relying on charity for survival or are employed in the black economy or engage in criminal activity.

3.2 Institutional challenges: lack of capacity and funding

In many cases, local communities, especially in border areas, have had to face large and sudden inflows of asylum seekers with little previous experience and limited financial resources.

In these cases, the role of **international institutions and of NGOs in providing initial**

support and capacity building among local institutions is crucial. In this context, **greater vertical and horizontal coordination and the sharing of good practices** are also necessary to support effective intervention. In border areas, **coordination is also needed across borders.**

The **lack of continuous funding** is another challenge. Budget cuts and recruitment freezes have reduced the capacity of local governments to address the inflows of migrants and asylum seekers. Municipalities with a tradition of strong and well-funded public services are better placed to cope with this situation. The reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees is considered an investment, as its short-term high costs may produce positive returns in the medium- to long-term depending on the effectiveness of the implemented measures.

In arrival and transit areas effective use of EU and private funding is particularly important. However, **local actors cannot easily access EU funds**, that are often managed either by national or regional authorities. Another crucial challenge related to the funding system is the **long-run sustainability of implemented measures**. Often EU and private funding are project based and thus clash with the long duration of integration processes.

3.3 Socio-economic challenges: difficult economic and social integration

A major obstacle to economic independence and social integration is the **difficult access of asylum seekers and refugees to the labour market**, which is hampered by a number of factors. Asylum seekers usually need a work permit or a residence permit to access the regular labour market and this is usually obtained only once their application has been approved. The conditions for granting access to the labour market for asylum applicants are defined by the Member States and are affected by the administrative capacity to handle large numbers of applications. These limitations generate an administrative burden when seeking employment, which disincentivises employers from hiring them.

The **lack of host-country language knowledge** and **recognition of certification of qualifications** are other obstacles to labour market integration. Except for France, all countries grant access to **language training**, but the intensity of the courses and the level offered differ. Formal and informal qualification and educational levels of asylum seekers and refugees are often not recognised in receiving countries and skill assessment is lacking in many countries.

Undeclared work is also rather widespread, particularly where the welfare support system incentivises welfare dependency among refugees and where regular jobs available to refugees do not ensure a sufficient income. Employed migrants and refugees, particularly **women** and those arriving from Africa, are more likely than native-born to be **discriminated against in the labour market and to be employed in low-pay and irregular jobs**.

Accommodation is another main challenge at the local level, as the provision of social housing is usually a regional or local competence. Asylum seekers are often accommodated in reception centres for the time needed for the application procedures to be completed and are

thus limited in their mobility. Rejected asylum seekers and irregular immigrants are either held in detention centers until returned to their countries, or have to rely on charities or become homeless and/or live in irregular camps. Recognised refugees usually have to either apply for public social housing or rent an accommodation in the private market (which is often unaffordable due to high rents) and request advance payments and credentials. Providing affordable housing options for refugees is extremely challenging for local authorities, given that **the shortage of social housing** and **competition** between recognised refugees and the native population increases pressure on the local housing markets. These factors can trigger **segregation and social conflict** and hinder integration into local society.

While recognised beneficiaries of international protection are usually entitled to welfare benefits and services as natives, asylum seekers are instead only entitled to small monetary allowances during their stay in reception centres and in some countries are excluded from access to welfare services. In most EU countries, there is a move towards an '**activation' approach**, as **access to social services** is increasingly made **conditional on participation in introduction programmes and language courses**.

Regarding **healthcare**, in some countries it is universal, while in other cases rejected asylum seekers and irregular immigrants have only access to emergency services. Access to healthcare is also limited by a lack of knowledge of rights, the complexity of administrative procedures and the lack of training among healthcare and social workers. Women, unaccompanied minors, people with health and disability problems, and irregular migrants are more at risk than others.

Many countries promote the inclusion of newly arrived children into the education system. However, children of rejected asylum seekers and irregular migrants are at high risk of exclusion. In addition, often teachers are **not adequately trained** and there is not enough funding for the effective integration of foreign children and young people into the education system. Children and young people of foreign origin tend to have much higher drop-out rates, thus reinforcing social and economic exclusion.



Further ESPON MIGRARE reading:

Annex 1 Scientific overview

4 Preparatory steps towards integration and inclusion support

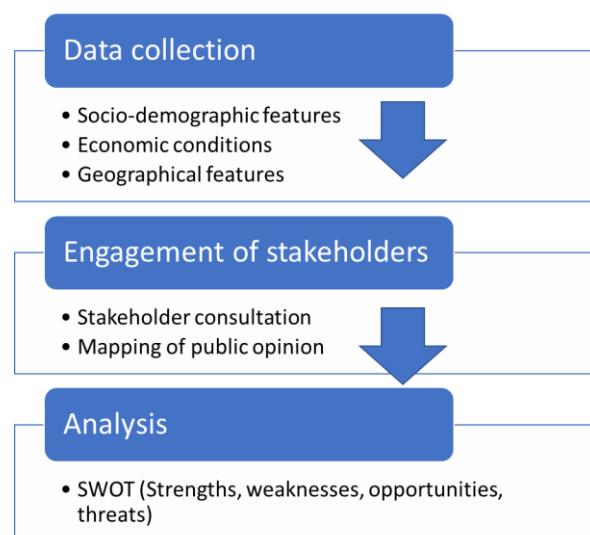
The reception and socio-economic integration of refugees can be a source of economic, social, political and institutional stress in arrival, transit and destination territories. On the other hand, if well managed, reception and integration policies may provide an opportunity for improving the overall inclusion capacity in such areas, with indirect benefits for the broader population and socio-economic development.

When designing policies, it has to be taken into account that every territory has a different absorption capacity, intended as the ability to ensure the inclusion of asylum seekers and refugees through access to local labour markets and employment, accommodation, social and healthcare services and education.

4.1 Analysis of the local/regional context

The analysis of the socio-economic context of a specific territory should aim at exploring the potential assets for a better integration of refugees. Therefore, the analysis should firstly consider and describe the specific characteristics of the area, from different perspectives.

The following steps should be considered by local policymakers and officials who aim to set up a multidimensional analysis of the territory:



Step 1: Data collection

As a first step, the policymakers should gather data on the following:

- Socio-demographic features and trends through an assessment of indicators available at a local level:
 - **Demographic features:** number and age composition of inhabitants, ageing population (age dependency ratio), birth rate (fertility rates), crude rate of natural population increase (net of migration), crude rate of net migration, share of immigrants/third country nationals on total population.
 - **Social conditions:** at risk of poverty rates etc.
- Economic conditions of the area through:
 - **an assessment of economic indicators available at a local level:** GDP growth rates and trends, per capita GDP, mapping of main economic sectors and actors.
 - **an assessment of the labour market conditions:** employment/unemployment/activity rates total and disaggregated by gender, age, educational levels, employment by economic sector, skills and labour mismatches and shortages, job vacancy rates, etc.

- Geographical features, such as urban/rural area, border/non-border region etc. Particularly should these have an influence on the one of the factors above.

These data would serve as a basis for further analysis and would identify short-, medium- and long-term trends that the area has been experiencing. This overview could also highlight specific patterns that could be further analysed.



Migrants and refugees often belong to economically active age groups and can provide diversified skills that in the long run could support the economy and reduce labour shortages, particularly in many of Europe's ageing societies. They tend to be complementary to the native workforce, as they work in important niches both in fast-growing and declining sectors of the economy not considered by the native workers, and contribute to the flexibility of the labour market.

Step 2: Engagement of the stakeholders and mapping of public attitudes

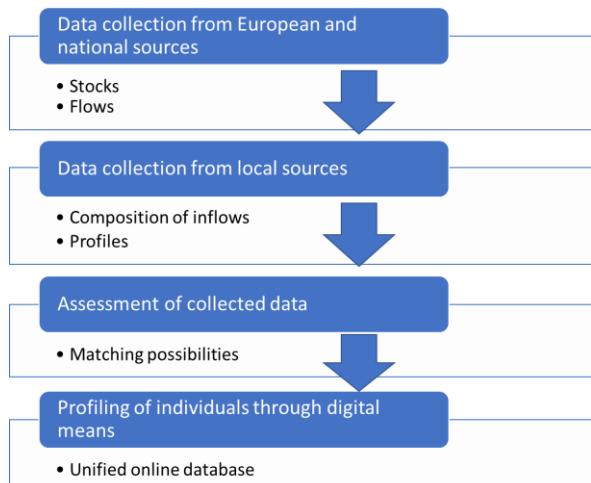
As a second step, policymakers should consult a wide-range of stakeholders to assess the current and future socio-economic needs of the area. In-depth interviews/focus groups with representatives of NGOs, companies/business associations should be conducted to assess the needs in terms of labour forces and skills needed in the local job market as well as to engage these stakeholder in future policies. The consultation should focus on measuring public opinion attitudes towards migration and asylum seekers. This can be done through alternative methods including available national/local opinion surveys and creating a new survey.

Step 3: (SWOT) Analysis

As a last step, policymakers should assess the data, information and feedback collected. One way to do this is through a SWOT analysis. A SWOT analysis is useful in order to develop a full awareness of all the factors involved in a decision-making process. Taking into account strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the current demographic and socio-economic situation allows for an assessment of future needs of the territory and also highlights the areas where future investment would be beneficial for the growth of the area.

4.2 Monitoring of the migration situation (inflows/outflows) and the profile of the migrants in the area

Hand in hand with the analysis of socio-economic situation on the particular territory, policymakers also need to look into past and present trends of asylum seekers and refugees in the specific area. The continuous monitoring and data collection of the migratory situation should be a priority for the local policymakers as this will contribute to a better understanding of incoming persons and, in turn, facilitate more targeted policymaking in the area of reception and integration policies.



The following steps should be considered by local policymakers and other involved officials who aim to set up a multidimensional analysis of the migration on their territory:

Step 1: Data collection from European and national sources

Firstly, data on the current situation and main trends of migration from a macro-perspective should be consulted. One of the sources that should be used is the risk analysis performed periodically by EBCGA¹. The main information that should be obtained is:

- Stocks: distribution of asylum seekers and refugees at national and European level: analysis of migrant concentration.
- Flows from abroad, from other regions in the country
- Monitoring of secondary movement within the European countries.
- Main nationalities of asylum seekers.
- Forecasting for the future based on the current inflows and to the policy development at international level.

This allows regional authorities to formulate forward-looking policies in relation to potential increase in the inflow of migrants and refugees in potential critical areas such as the border, entry and transit point in migration routes.

Step 2: Data collection from local sources, stakeholders and consultation of asylum seekers and refugees

More importantly an analysis of the local sources should be implemented in order to collect information on migration from regional and local sources. The data collection process should aim at merging together different sources, such as law-enforcement forces, NGOs, local

¹ Risk Analysis for 2019 is available at: <https://frontex.europa.eu/publications/risk-analysis-for-2019-RPPmXE>.

communities and also directly through surveys to be collected among migrants. The main information to be obtained include:

- Flows: past and present trends of asylum seekers and refugees in the region and in the specific area under analysis.
- Stocks of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants residing in the area.
- Composition of stocks and flows by sex, age, education level, country of origin, family status (individuals or families), incidence of family reunification, vulnerabilities and special needs (unaccompanied minors, single women with children, elderly, etc).
- Labour market conditions of asylum seekers and refugees.
- Skills of refugees present in the area and over/under qualification of refugees.

Step 3: Assessment of data collected, forward-looking analysis

This is fundamental in order to provide enough information for matching the specificities of refugees (and asylum seekers) and territories. In fact, the objective should be to highlight the assessment of expected future inflows and the best practices for successful integration of refugees into the local communities, societies and labour markets at regional and local level.

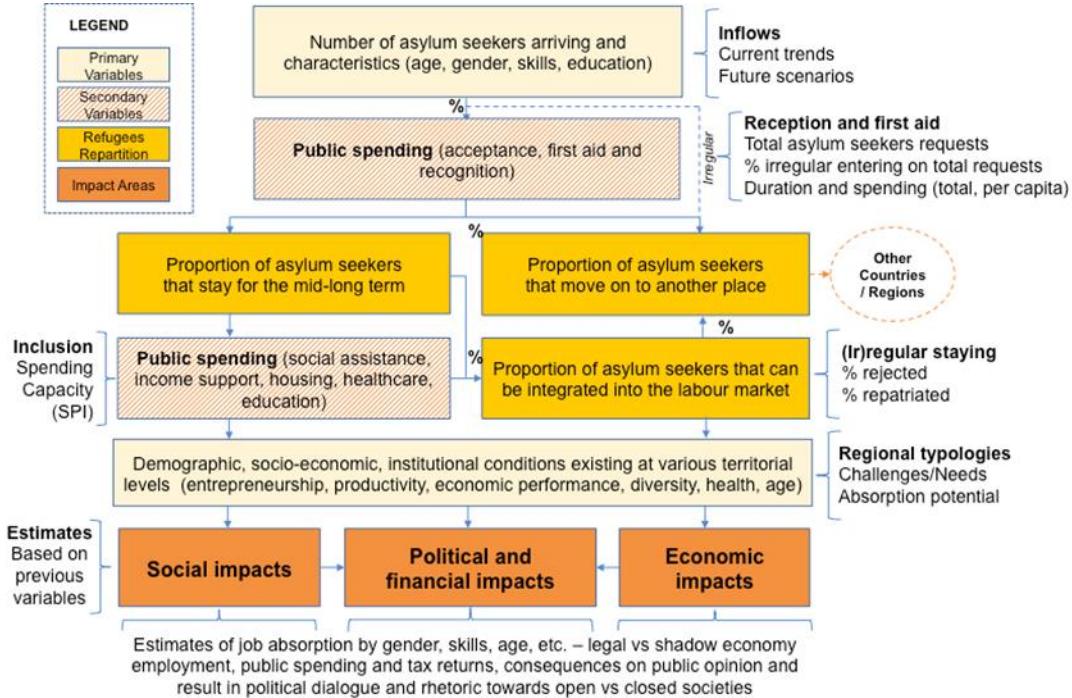
Step 4: Profiling of individuals through digital means

Profiling of incoming migrants is important not only to provide a clear overview of the individual's situation but also to predict what type of support he/she may need. As currently a lot of information regarding the profiles of asylum seekers and refugees are scattered across various databases, it would be beneficial if all this information could be accessible through one single database to which all involved actors would have access.

While this approach might require some initial investment, in the long-term it would contribute to the reduction of administrative burden and make the support system more efficient. Skills matching of refugees remains one of the key challenges. A creation of a single database would contribute to a more effective matching system as Public Employment Service operators, would be able to extract all the necessary information on a specific individual and develop tailor-made support services (e.g vocational training or further upskilling or job matching).

An overview of the various types of sources and indicators at disposal for the mapping of flows and characteristics, towards the understanding of possible impacts, is provided below.

Figure 4.1 Overview of different aspects to be considered and main related indicators



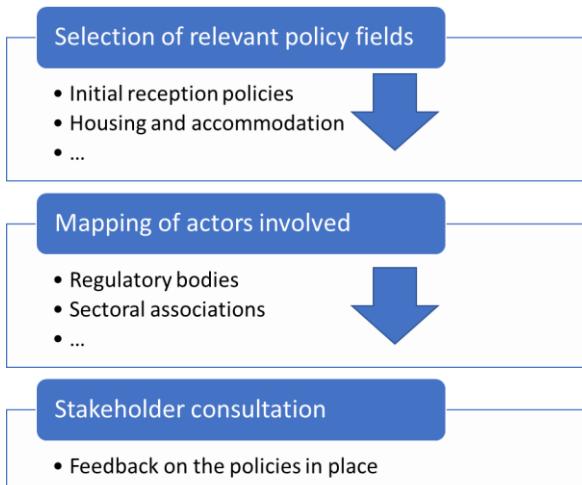
Source: Authors' elaboration

4.3 Mapping of policy infrastructure and measures in place and identification of policy gaps and opportunities

Accompanying the analysis of the local and regional contexts should be the mapping of the various national, regional and local policy infrastructures in place. This means that the involved policymakers and other actors should take stock of the policies and other support measures that are already in place and being implemented in the area, be it measures prescribed from the national level, regional or local level, public or even private initiatives. This overview, when combined with the observed patterns in the number and composition of the refugees in the area and the area's soci-economic needs, could further identify opportunities for future investment, particularly in the area of education and skills of refugees or newly arrived (irregular) migrants.

4.3.1 Mapping of reception/integration policies already in place and of relevant stakeholders in the relevant policy fields

To ensure that the provided support is as effective as possible to successfully and adequately tackle the arisen needs and to avoid duplication and overlapping of efforts, it is important that a mapping of all existing policies, programmes, projects and initiatives is performed. It should be accompanied by an overview of the main stakeholders involved in such measures and/or in local partnerships addressing employment and social policies for the integration of marginalised groups. The mapping may also contribute to addressing the lack of experience and capacity in the reception and integration of large inflows of asylum seekers and refugees of local stakeholders.



The mapping should be performed along these steps:

Step 1: Selection of the relevant policy fields in the region/area

To ensure an effective and complete overview, the mapping should start with selecting the relevant policies that are already in place in the area for the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees. Policies and initiatives connected to the following policy areas should be considered:

- Crisis response measures;
- Initial reception policies;
- Dispersal policy (both at national and regional level as well as across reception centres);
- Housing and accommodation;
- Access to healthcare;
- Access to education;
- Language and skills training and re-qualification courses;
- Access to labour market;
- Social assistance and income support;
- Social integration policies.

This step should be completed by performing a desk research into these areas to see what regulatory requirements are in place as well as existing strategies, initiatives, programmes and projects.

Step 2: Mapping of the relevant actors involved

At the same time as selecting a list of relevant policy areas to be looked into more closely, a list of all actors already active or those who could be involved in the future in asylum seeker and refugee support should be put together. The actors could involve the following:

- Public authorities and agencies at national, regional and local level;
- Regulatory bodies at national, regional and local level;
- Sectoral associations (e.g. national/local Chambers of Commerce, professional associations);
- Educational institutions and other institutions providing training;
- NGOs, not-for-profit organisations;
- Civic and voluntary associations, organisations and societies;
- Minority communities, community leaders and cultural mediators;
- Other actors and private citizens;
- If relevant, international organisations.

The list of actors should be accompanied by a brief description of their role and their activities in the area of asylum seeker and refugee support together with their perspectives and interests. Further, the description should include the relationships between the various stakeholders identified. Based on this, the stakeholders should be ranked according to their relevance and contribution as well as what is their main objective in connection with asylum seekers and refugees.

Step 3: Stakeholder consultation

Once the two previous steps have been completed, another round of stakeholder consultation should be performed. The consultation should focus on obtaining feedback regarding how the policies in place work in practice, what are their advantages/shortcomings and how could they be further improved. At the same time, feedback should be sought about good practices in the area of asylum seeker and refugee support, not only from the organisations and actors involved in the provision of support but also those receiving the support.



Strengthen the focus of policy intervention at the local level on employment and skills development as employment is an important driver for integration. The difficulties in finding employment trigger a vicious cycle of exclusion. To ensure labour market integration it is necessary to involve employers in integration policies and support guidance and training as well as invest in language courses and vocational training programmes at the reception level and also later stages.

4.3.2 Identifying policy gaps, challenges and opportunities

The mapping of existing measures and actors involved compared with the local socio-economic conditions and the specific features of asylum and refugees inflows should allow the

identification of the main policy gaps, challenges and opportunities at the local level, some of which have been described in section 3.

These challenges could then be considered for the design of local reception and integration strategies. More specifically, the outcome of the mapping should be combined with the forecasting of future inflows into the area as well as the SWOT analysis. These findings would then form the basis for drafting of local strategies and action plans.

5 Defining sectoral and integrated strategies at local level strategies and action plans

Integration of refugees is a long-term process. This means that refugees need constant support over a long period of time to address the challenges. The length of the integration process is not always reconcilable with short-term programmes that are often in place. Long-term strategies, projects and initiatives should be implemented in order to favour the effectiveness of the integration measures.

The regulatory framework falls within the competence national authorities and to some extent the EU. Often, local actors have a limited role in setting up the framework, although they are strongly affected as the number of asylum seekers and refugees arriving and staying in each area depend on the national migration and refugees policy and dispersal mechanisms. A greater involvement of regional and local authorities, at least in internal dispersal policies and funding, could improve the planning and implementation of reception and integration policies at the local level. The mapping of existing measures should result in the identification of the main gaps and opportunities in policy making to fill in thematic action plan, that then result in an integrated strategy.

5.1.1 Sectoral policies and thematic actions plans

Crisis response measures and initial reception policies

Given the fact that the initial gap in assessing the refugees' inclusion potentials results in years of delays in an effective integration, the strategy should develop a comprehensive approach to address as early as possible all the dimensions of integration. The integration process should start immediately after arrival, already supporting and promoting the asylum seekers' active engagement when they are in the reception centres ensuring also:

- Access to adequate and sustainable accommodation, as housing is a necessary step to regularise their status (see Auzolana project in the Basque Country, Spain).
- Immediate access to education for children and young asylum seekers and prevention of early school leaving.
- Support early labour market integration, since this represents an essential component of the integration process, while at the same time incentivise self-supporting behaviours (see the Telge programme in Södertälje, Sweden).
- Adapt social services and reduce the administrative burden to address the barriers that asylum seekers and refugees experience.



While in the short run additional public spending is likely for the provision of first reception and support services, in the medium and long run the contribution of refugees and migrants to the host country depends on the speed and quality of their integration into the labour market. If not well managed, large inflows of migrants and asylum seekers can also increase social problems and costs.

Housing and accommodation

There is a need to ensure a sufficient provision of affordable housing options while avoiding concentration and segregation of asylum seekers/refugees from the local population. Intervention in this field should consider the following tips:

- Provide accommodation of asylum seekers in small accomodation facilities (see SPRAR system in Italy),
- Provide social housing facilities to those more likely to be recognised as refugees to shorten the uncertain period (see the Gmünder Weg model of Baden Württemberg in Germany).
- Support the accommodation of recognised refugees in social housing located through out the territorial area or providing them with financial support for renting.
- Provide incentives to the local community to rent apartments to refugees and regular migrants.
- Introduce a buddy system where young adult refugees co-habitate with their native counterparts which has a positive effect on the integration while providing benefits to the local population as well (see CURANT project in Flanders, Belgium).

Access to healthcare:

Asylum seekers and refugees have complex needs that require an intense assistance especially in the social and educational area. However, project resources are usually limited compared to the number of people to be assisted and the wide range of services to be provided.

To this end, it is desirable to:

- Reduce administrative and language barriers to access to the healthcare system and prepare the health care operators in addressing the specific needs of refugees.
- Ensure early acquisition of the arrival country language and culture/values with adequate language courses.
- Support social interactions between refugees and local communities through specific initiatives like the creation of social and cultural centres open to all, co-housing projects or asylum seekers and refugees with local population, or cultural and awareness raising initiatives (see Giocherenda or Ragazzi Harraga initiatives in Sicily, Italy).

Access to education:

Asylum and refugee children are at high risk of bad school performance and dropping out of school. They hardly ever benefit from parents' support in the learning process, due to insufficient language skills, limited skills for dealing with learning issues raised in the educational process, etc. This coupled with the insufficient learning assistance provided by schools, risks triggering drop out tendencies of these children. Thus, an intense educational support should be provided to prevent their bad school performances:

- Providing fast and appropriate integration pathways into the education system to all asylum seeker and refugee children and young adults (see the approach of Kapfenburg, Austria).
- Prevent segregation in education and early school leaving.
- Inform and support children and parents on educational opportunities.
- Provide specific training to teachers and educational operators.

- Provide loans, grants and scholarships to refugee children for higher education, i.e. university and vocational courses (see the approach of the city of Limerick, Ireland).

Language and skills training and re-qualification courses and access to labour market

- Support early labour market integration while at the same time promoting self-support as soon as possible. To this end, targeted employment services and training measures, combined with job grants or traineeships opportunities are useful, together with support to business creation and social enterprises often involving also the local community. In order to start as early as possible, traineeships and involvement in local community programmes could be offered also to asylum seekers attending the conclusion of their application procedure.
- Involve employers in integration policies and provide hiring incentives and guidance for employers, also addressing employment discrimination (see Telge programme in Södertälje, Sweden).
- Remove current legal obstacles to the employment of asylum seekers. The quarantine time for the right of asylum seekers to work should be reconsidered and should not be lengthened.
- Ensure a fast assessment and recognition of formal and informal skills and qualifications of asylum seekers and an effective support with information on jobs and training opportunities, as well as employment services.
- Invest in language courses and vocational up-skilling programmes.
- Provide targeted support to female refugees finding ways to overcome the cultural barriers which impede their labour market integration. Migrant women with family responsibilities should be supported and offered training opportunities, language courses and opportunities to gain work experience in order to better integrate them into the job market.

5.1.2 Integrated strategy

The points above together with the challenges mentioned in section 3 should present the main aims of the integration strategy and the envisaged measures. These should be accompanied by a clear indication of the stakeholders to be involved and their role, the governance mechanisms, timing of the various measures, implementation phases and specific ongoing objectives. It should also be supplemented by information on the financial and human resources to be allocated for each measure, and the monitoring and evaluation system put in place to monitor the implementation and outcomes of the strategy.

In order for the documents to be functional and effective, the strategy and action plans should consider the following aspects:

- Adoption of individualised approaches integrating measures covering different policy domains and the capacity to explore innovative ways in policy design and implementation tailored to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees is highly desirable (see the multi-annual integration plan devised by the city of Limerick, Ireland).
- Long-term sustainability as one of the key aspects to integration measures. Particularly as currently, many integration measures are funded with EU and international programmes, which are largely project based. Project-based funding does not allow for sufficiently long-term planning and activities, limiting the development of more

comprehensive practices and the scaling up of the expertise into long-term strategies and policies, thus undermining the overall effectiveness of integration policies.

- The creation of one-stop shops providing all the main administrative and support services in one place to facilitate access to information and to pool resources. Furthermore, support provision through individual case managers to ensure personalised pathways to integration (see INTERACT project in Bucharest, Romania).
- Increase in the number of hours dedicated to providing social and educational assistance.
- Promote integration measures targeting not only refugees but also the local communities to support social integration and community building (see OMNES's approach in Kilkis, Greece).
- Strong attention to awareness raising and to the design of interventions combining support to refugees with support to local socio-economic conditions and to the activation of local actors (e.g. the business sector, families, young people, schools and training providers, healthcare institutions, etc.) through the adoption of participatory processes and support to community building to prevent social conflicts and discrimination and to activate innovative approaches and attract additional human and financial resources.



A comprehensive approach should be developed to address as early as possible all the dimensions of integration. The integration process should start immediately after arrival, already supporting and promoting the asylum seekers' active engagement when they are in the reception centres.

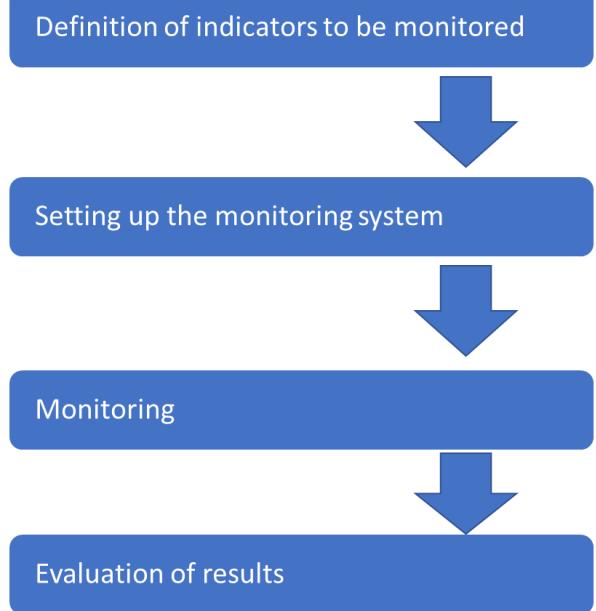


Further ESPON MIGRARE reading:

Annex 3 Case studies

6 Setting up a monitoring and evaluation system

One way for the implemented reception and integration strategies, policies and initiatives to be effective is through a development of monitoring and evaluation system. Particularly as currently, there are a number of initiatives implemented at local level focused at better integration of asylum seekers and refugees, however, more often than not, they are not systematically evaluated. This makes it even harder to assess to what degree the implemented interventions contributed to the observed results. A well functioning monitoring system is also useful as it provides not only a clear overview of the status of the implementation but can also identify gaps and opportunities for further improvement.



There is a need to monitor, evaluate and learn from the positive experiences related to the reception and integration of asylum seekers and refugees to improve the integration approaches.

- More evidence-based knowledge is needed, in relation to their economic situation, employment, and access to various public services. Currently little data is collected to monitor and evaluate the impact of different public policies on the various aspects of the integration of refugees and migrants. (see OMNES in Kilkis, Greece)
- The collection of data disaggregated by personal characteristics (e.g. age, gender, educational level) would increase knowledge about differences in integration patterns and about the effects of integration policies on different groups of refugees and migrants.

For the development of a functional and efficient monitoring, the following steps are necessary:

Step 1: Definition of indicators to be monitored

As a first step in developing a monitoring system is the identification of indicators relevant for the initiative to be monitored. The system should contain both quantitative and qualitative indicators. As an example, the indicators could include:

- Number of participants in the initiative and their profile;
- Number and type of support provided;
- Number and profile of participants receiving specific support;
- Number of participants successfully completing training/education and their profile;
- Cooperation between participating actors/organisations;
- Challenges/opportunities experienced

- Survey of affected target groups, such participants and other non-directly involved actors (e.g. for monitoring of training initiatives the persons/organisations providing training)

Step 2: Setting up the monitoring system

While establishing the list of indicators, other functionalities of the monitoring system should be considered as well. Particularly, the periodicity with which the monitoring will be performed (i.e. every six months/year), through which means will the data be collected (i.e. individual interviews, monitoring spreadsheets) and what tools are necessary for the data collection (e.g. online software, Microsoft Excel etc.)

Step 3: Monitoring

Once the previous two steps are agreed, guidelines for all involved sides should be developed together with precise instructions on what to collect when and how.

Step 4: Evaluation of results

Once the monitoring exercise has been performed, the collected data should be analysed focusing on the results obtained, main findings, lessons learnt and recommendations on how could the monitored initiative/monitoring system be improved in the future.



There is a need to evaluate and learn from previous experiences to improve the approach both towards new arrivals and those already settled in European countries with modest progress in terms of integration. The collection of data disaggregated by personal characteristics (e.g. age, gender, educational level) would increase knowledge about differences in integration patterns and about the effects of integration policies on different groups of refugees and migrants.

7 Defining effective governance mechanisms

Refugees, and migrants in general, face multifaceted and interlinked problems that require the collaboration and coordination of various public and private actors at all levels. Multilevel governance based on strong vertical and horizontal coordination among public institutions at different levels and other key actors involved in the reception and integration policies is crucial for the development of effective policies and for ensuring their sustainability over time. The adoption of participatory processes supporting community building is also a key factor for both reducing rising tensions among the local population towards asylum seekers, refugees and/or migrants, and for attracting additional capacity and financial resources from the third sector, the private sector and citizens.

7.1 Vertical and horizontal multi-sector coordination

The reception and integration of third country individuals is a multidimensional process involving a wide number of policy domains usually managed by separate departments at different institutional levels. An acknowledged key success factor is the adoption of an integrated approach based on a strong vertical and horizontal coordination among all key actors involved in reception and integration policies dealing with the different dimensions of integration: labour market and economic integration, educational integration, housing and healthcare, social and cultural integration, etc.

This coordination could be set up by involving both public and private stakeholders, for example, through:

- Creation of working groups;
- Formalised partnership agreements;
- Activation of the local network of social actors;
- Existing public private partnerships;
- Public procurement.

Capacity building and awareness raising activities at all levels of the public administration are essential for increasing the knowledge of public and private operators of the needs and rights of asylum seekers and refugees, their skills and on how to develop specific measures for their social and labour market integration. Skills are essential for the development of intercultural strategies at local level in all areas of life (e.g. intercultural planning of the urban environment, enhancing entrepreneurship for refugees, etc.). Capacity building interventions are also essential for increasing the awareness of public administration staff of the needs of refugees through:

- Promotion of awareness raising and capacity building tools and training for local stakeholders.
- Support the definition of stress management strategies and support for operators in reception and integration measures to prevent their burnout, due to an increase in the psychological and emotional load following interaction of staff with a high number of beneficiaries.

- Support the definition of procedures and rules to ensure the commitment and activation of asylum seekers and refugees in the integration process. A possibility is to extend to asylum seekers and refugees some of the tools and mechanisms designed for the activation of beneficiaries of employment and social policies, e.g. specific agreements between service operators and beneficiaries defining the responsibilities of both sides in order to make beneficiaries aware of their own role in the integration process and enhance commitment. A set of behavioural rules could also be defined and shared with the beneficiary at the beginning of the integration process (see INTERACT project in Bucharest, Romania).

7.2 Involvement of the private sector, NGOs and supranational actors

Involvement of public local actors is essential for understanding possible bottlenecks of national policies at local level, for building bottom-up solutions, but also for increasing their awareness of refugees' needs and rights. Strategies for the involvement of and support to NGOs and the local community should be implemented as part of local integration strategies, as well as the set-up of formal agreements between authorities and civil organisations to avoid uncertainty on roles and responsibilities and enhance flexible and effective interventions.

This would strengthen trust and activate local economies and communities in innovative ways, targeting both refugees/asylum seekers and local population at large and supporting local development. The active involvement of refugees' communities already established in the area may also allow for greater potentials in integration, including through better understanding of local culture and structures. Civil society organisations can provide relevant insights into refugees' problems and contribute to the improvement of policies in this area and to their delivery. International organisations, such as IOM or UNHCR, can bring in relevant resources (e.g. knowledge, financial, legal, etc.) in the definition and implementation of integration policies. Furthermore, they can have a relevant role in raising awareness of public actors regarding the needs of asylum seekers and refugees and the necessity to adopt specific procedures to ease their integration process.

Local and non-state actors, including international organisations and national/local NGOs, are pivotal in providing humanitarian assistance and shelter for asylum seekers and refugees and in supporting their socio-economic integration into local communities through the provision of education and health care services, as well as accommodation and skills assessment and employment to enable refugees to become self-supporting. To this end, besides supporting the creation of new partnerships, the review of local public-private partnerships already in place in the relevant policy fields is very useful in order to assess whether these partnerships could be scaled-up, extended or even replicated to fit the needs of the asylum seekers and refugees.

Effective partnerships should be based on well-defined roles and coordination mechanisms, the sharing of information, the creation of coordination bodies, and a strong political and administrative leadership, either taken by a public local institution or by a non-state organisation. This depending on the capacity and experience of local institutions in defining and managing integration plans.

Investment in the capacity building of local public and private actors is beneficial in order to support the implementation of effective and evidence-based integration strategies combining short-term emergency measures with measures supporting the integration of refugees and migrants in a regional socio-economic development perspective. Capacity building in refugees' integration policies has also important spillover effects on social integration policies targeted to other marginalised groups in local communities, e.g. long-term unemployed, low skilled persons, etc.



Strategies for the involvement and support of NGOs and the local community should be implemented, as well as the set-up of formal agreements between authorities and civil organisations. This is to avoid uncertainty over roles and responsibilities and enhance flexible and effective interventions. This would strengthen trust and activate local economies and communities in innovative ways, targeting both refugees/asylum seekers and the local population, and supporting local development.

7.3 Financing mechanisms

The long-term sustainability of integration measures is another crucial issue. Most of the integration measures are funded with EU and international programmes, which are largely project based. Most of the activities and expertise in reception and integration measures are fragmented into short-term projects with *ad hoc* funding. While there have been several successful projects with innovations and an accumulation of know-how, integration activities should not rely on project-based funding as heavily as they currently do.

Integration should be a long-term strategy, and project-based funding does not allow for sufficiently long-term planning and activities. This impedes the development of more comprehensive practices and the scaling up of the expertise into long-term strategies and policies. Thus undermining the overall effectiveness of integration policies. More long-term funding and large-scale projects with enough flexibility to carry them out locally are necessary. This would reduce the national and regional unequal conditions of asylum seekers and refugees when it comes to the access and quality of services.

Support of the efficient pooling and use of available resources, including EU funding and funding from international organisations, charities, foundations, and private citizens, and the capacity to activate long-term funding from international financial institutions, donations, business sector contributions, and other sources through incentives and fund raising programmes is crucial to ensure the long-term sustainability of integration measures.

Sources of funding could include:

- Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF);
- European Social Fund (ESF);

- European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF);
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF);
- Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD);
- European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD);
- European Maritime and Fishery Fund (EMFF);
- Cohesion Fund;
- Horizon 2020;
- Erasmus+;
- European Solidarity Corps;
- Creative Europe;
- Europe for Citizens;
- Internal security Fund;
- Rights, Equality and Citizenship;
- EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (MADAD Fund);
- Other EU grants;
- Funding from international organisations (e.g. UNHCR, UNICEF, IOM);
- National support programmes;
- National development funds;
- Funding programmes of European and national business associations;
- European networks supporting integration efforts;
- Chambers of commerce;
- Not-for-profit initiatives;
- Funding initiatives organised by charities and religious organisations;
- Private initiatives of multinational corporations;
- Crowdfunding.

Economic activities can also be set up in order to support the sustainability of integration measures where little national/regional funding is available. Regarding direct financial assistance to asylum seekers and refugees (such as contributions to rental expenses, meal tickets, income support etc.), while it is important, it should be accompanied by interventions that would allow the recipients to become autonomous so as to prevent long-term dependency of refugees on the support system. The interventions could include:

- Employment search support;
- Language courses;
- Vocational and upskilling courses;
- Cultural orientation sessions;
- Business and start up development (see the case of Youth Hostel of Ragazzi Harraga in Sicily, Italy).

Participation to such intervention could even be a set condition for the receipt of such financial assistance.



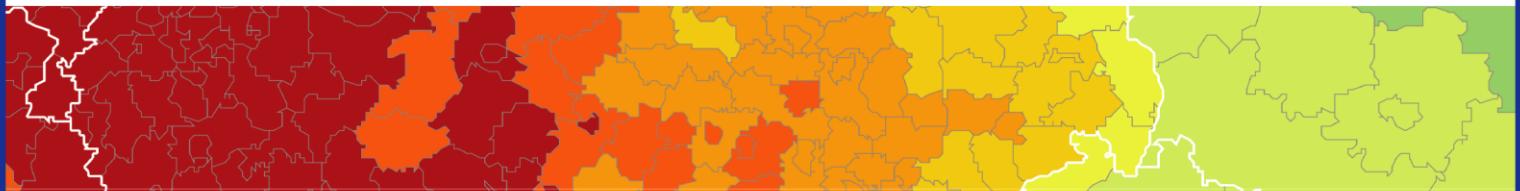
Further ESPON MIGRARE reading:

Final Report and Annex 3 Case Studies

8 Further recommendations for national and EU policymakers

While the impact of well-functioning integration measures are mostly visible in the European regions and cities, there is a need for also a more top-down approach in ensuring positive outcomes for all. To this end, the following suggestions should be taken up at the national and European level:

1. **Greater cooperation** among European territories is essential in addressing the challenges posed by the arrival and stay of asylum seekers and refugees. Longer-term coordinated responses and cooperation in supporting mutual capacity across European regions would also favour greater policy response for local communities, as it allows innovative policy measures to be identified enabling the employability and social inclusion of less privileged communities.
2. To maximise impacts integration between territorial responses and across different sectoral policy is required together with an adoption of an **integrated approach towards newcomers and the local population**.
3. Revision of the reception and distribution mechanisms and of the multi-level governance of reception and integration systems across and within countries is needed, taking into sufficient account where individuals wish to apply for asylum in the selection of the country that will be responsible for their claim. Until a non-coercive system of responsibility allocation is in place, irregular secondary flows and human rights violations will continue, as people will find ways to reunite with family and friends.
4. There is a need for an **improvement of data collection and establishing an EU coordinated information system**, also for the monitoring and evaluation of reception and integration measures.
5. Foster **better networking** among local stakeholders and between stakeholders across the EU in arrival, transit and destination regions and support more structured cooperation across authorities and stakeholders across regions throughout migration paths.
6. Increase EU funding and support to the planning and implementation of long-term comprehensive reception and integration strategies, especially at the local level, making access easier for local authorities and NGOs, reducing administrative complexity in their use and promoting vertical and horizontal coordination and public-private partnerships.
7. Restrictions in asylum procedures may have a number of negative effects, increasing the number of irregular migrants living off of expedients and reducing the effectiveness of integration policies while increasing social tensions in reception areas. It is necessary to **improve and fasten the asylum procedure**, supporting asylum seekers with all the necessary information and legal aid. The dignity and fundamental rights of all asylum seekers should be guaranteed together with effective access to protection and a fair procedure.



ESPON 2020 – More information

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