MIPEX – R Handbook for Self-Assessment

A STEP-BY-STEP PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF REGIONAL INTEGRATION PRACTICES

MPG
MIGRATION POLICY GROUP

REGIN
REGIONS FOR MIGRANTS
AND REFUGEES INTEGRATION

This handbook was written by Stefano Deodati (MPG), with the support of Carmine Conte (MPG) and Giacomo Solano (MPG), and graphically designed by Mariangela Boe (MPG)

REGIN project partners:

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Introduction

The integration of migrants and refugees is of paramount importance for the creation of inclusive, stable and resilient European societies. Integration is conventionally conceptualised as a dynamic two-way process, involving beneficiaries and host societies, as expressed in the Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy in the EU (Council of the EU, 2004).

The presence of a favourable national legal and policy framework is fundamental to favour migrant and refugee integration, yet the regional and local level are often crucial in the governance of the integration process. Integration is increasingly governed through multilevel arrangements which pose significant responsibilities on regional administrations. These responsibilities span from the formulation, to the implementation and evaluation of policies, and regional administrations sometimes do not have access to clear and accessible guidelines on how to carry out their duties successfully.

Thus, through this Handbook, the REGIN project aims to help regional administrations autonomously assess the quality of their integration policies and provide them with the necessary guidance on how to further improve their integration policies. Furthermore, the regional level of migration governance has not traditionally been the object of focused comparative research, which has most often focused on the national level. The REGIN project contributes to bridging this gap through its thorough comparative analysis and its accessible presentation of results. This easy-to-read guide gives regional administrations the opportunity to assess their integration policies and practices, pointing them towards practical instances of how different regions approach the migrant and refugee integration question.

PART 1

How does the Toolkit work?

This handbook is conceived as a guide for regional level stakeholders and practitioners, particularly from the administrative sectors, to develop comprehensive, inclusive and efficient migrant integration policies.

The aims of the handbook are manifold.

- Firstly the handbook, through its simple checklist, can constitute a **self-assessment tool** through which regional administrations can evaluate their performance in the formulation, content, implementation and evaluation of policies. For this purpose, it will suffice for practitioners to tick the boxes that apply to their integration strategy, thus obtaining a numerical score, easily contextualised by the scoring system present at the end of the handbook.

- Secondly, the handbook functions as a **blueprint for the improvement** of regional practices, as each item on the checklist represents a stepping stone towards an inclusive, participatory, sustainable and efficient migrant integration strategy. Thus, regions whose integration strategy is not well-developed can use the checklist as a general to-do list on their pathway to better migrant integration policies.

- Thirdly, after assessing their performance, regional administrations are pointed to **good regional practices**, based on their overall checklist score and on their score on the individual policy cycle stages. For instance, if a region has a low score on formulation of policies, it will be given examples of regions with higher scores in that area. The regional administration can then consult the profile of the region on the MIPEX-R website at https://r.mipex.eu/ .

PART 2

Overarching Priorities for Integration

This handbook was created by the Migration Policy Group (https://www.migpolgroup.com/) based on the MIPEX-R questionnaire elaborated in collaboration with CIDOB, the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (https://www.cidob.org/en/). The items on the checklists are primarily inspired by the questionnaire, following the analytical axes and the rationale of the MIPEX-R project.

However, the checklists were also elaborated taking into account some overarching principles and values necessary for the creation of successful integration policies, which may result in diverse, equal and resilient societies in which migrants benefit from equal opportunities as the rest of the regional population.

In particular, this handbook took in consideration one recently developed instruments in the field of migrant integration.

The instrument considered is the "Evaluation Grid for Assessing the Quality of Migrant Integration Practices" (D3.2, available at https://integrationpractices.eu/deliverables) elaborated by the Migration Policy Group in the context of the SPRING Project (Sustainable Practices of Integration, https://integrationpractices.eu/). This evaluation grid used five criteria to identify good practices:

o **Inclusivity and participation**
o **Relevance and complementarity**
o **Effectiveness**
o **Sustainability**
o **Partnership and coordination**

These key dimensions for the development of successful and inclusive migrant integration practices were of inspiration to the development of the present handbook.

PART 3

Checklists by Policy Cycle Stages

One of the core analytical axes employed in MIPEX-R refers to the multidimensionality of the policy cycle, by identifying four different stages of policy-making: **formulation, output, implementation and evaluation**. For each step of the policy cycle, this handbook will offer comprehensive checklists to answer the needs of all regional administrations, including those which have limited competences regarding migrant integration.

Within this distinction by policy cycle stages, the checklists are based on three analytical elements representing the complexity of migrants' integration governance: **actions, actors & relations and resources**. The inclusion of these elements is connected to the importance of:

- elaborating **targeted and well-structured actions**, taking into account the needs of diverse groups of potential beneficiaries and understanding how to make them **effective, inclusive and sustainable**;

- adopting a **multi-stakeholder** and **multi-level approach**, involving relevant **actors** in the field of migrant integration across various administrative levels (national, regional and local), as well as from different sectors (NGOs, private or governmental organisations), to create a diverse and large network of stakeholders;

- adopting a **sustainable funding model**, which promotes a **virtuous use of diversified resources** to guarantee the long-term provision of services and support for beneficiaries.

3.1 Formulation

The stage of formulation is conventionally considered the chronologically first stage in an ideal conceptualisation of the policy cycle. This stage is concerned with **decision-making and policy-discussion**, and depending on the institutional set-up of the region, it may be more or less subject to electoral and political dynamics.

Actions

☐ Promote, if missing, **the development of a regional unit** or office **dedicated to** TCNs and BIPs **integration**, to produce focused integration measures and promote accountability.

☐ Systematically **use** relevant and reliable **qualitative and quantitative data** on the situation of TCNs and BIPs in the region **to inform regional decision-making**, in order to produce necessary and evidence-based integration measures.

Actors & Relations

☐ Sistematically **involve all relevant stakeholders** (e.g. **regional** offices, **national** units and representatives, **municipal** and **provincial** offices, **migrant and non-migrant NGOs**, labour organisations, migrant consultative bodies and civil society) **in the policy-making process**. The resulting multiplicity of inputs is likely to contribute to better-informed, inclusive and effective integration practices.

☐ **Consult with migrant groups** who can provide an overview of the diversified support needed, in order to develop integration policies which answer the needs of a diverse migrant population, including vulnerable categories.

☐ **Exchange knowledge and information with national authorities** on integration matters decided nationally, to pursue regional integration needs on a national level.

Resources

☐**Allocate funds** to the adoption of a **multi-stakeholder approach**, where diverse stakeholders can **contribute to the continuity of service provision** for beneficiaries after the reception and early integration phases and to the development of sustainable long-term practices.

☐For long-lasting and sustainable practices, systematically **monito**r possible **funding opportunities** on a **national and European level** and **diversify funding sources** across sectors.

☐**Anticipate possible strategies for support** to be maintained **after the end of fixed-term projects**, to provide long-lasting support.

3.2 Output

The policy output can be understood as the formal issuing of the final product of the decision-making process, setting out the content of **policies 'on paper'** in a specific area. Analyses which do not adopt a multi-stage approach to the study of policies would normally limit their focus to this stage.

Actions

☐ Adopt a **multiannual** migrant **integration strategy** based on clear and relevant goals, an appropriate **budget**, targeted **actions** and a functional **coordination structure**.

☐ **Include** in the integration strategy targeted actions to support migrants in **all relevant policy areas** (e.g. **labour, education, housing, health, language, religion, social security and culture**).

☐ Ensure fair **institutional representation** of migrants within the regional administrative offices and in services controlled by the Region, in order to provide **multiculturally competent front-offices** and a better understanding of needs and obstacles by providers, as well as **empowering beneficiaries** and encouraging beneficiaries' **participation and trust** in the system.

☐ *(Only tick this box if at least three options apply)* In order to facilitate accessibility to services and initiatives, **provide interculturally adapted services**, such as
  - services diversified for **specific needs**,
  - measures to **lower thresholds for access to services**,
  - **targeted information** in multiple languages (e.g. community outreach, dissemination campaigns),
  - **interpretation services**,
  - **interculturally competent** front-offices.

☐Regularly **organise** or fund **public events and debates** on the subject of **migrant integration**, to **raise awareness** on the situation of migrants and to encourage involvement of the receiving society and beneficiaries.

☐ **Organise specific campaigns on the value that migrants bring to receiving societies** and **adopt a leadership narrative** highlighting the latter, contributing to shape public perceptions on the positive impact of TCNs and BIPs integration.

☐ Compile and update a **public list of civil society and grassroots organisations active in the field of migrant integration** in the region, in order to facilitate a multi-stakeholder approach and beneficiaries' access.

☐Promote and **encourage** opportunities for **formal or non-formal political participation** (in compliance with legal eligibility rules) **for migrants** in the region, to favour the empowerment and representation of migrants on the territory.

☐*(Only tick this box if at least two options apply)* In order to provide efficient and inclusive services, regularly and **actively promote the integration-related competences of regional staff**, through:
- Intercultural trainings/seminars
- Language courses for staff
- Recruitment of staff with migrant background
- Requirement of intercultural competences for senior positions

Actors & Relations

☐ Institute a **consultative body through which migrants can voice their concerns** to policy-makers, for inclusive and effective integration policies.

☐ *(Only tick this box if at least two options apply)* In order to encourage participation of migrants to regional problem-solving:

- systematically **confer with the consultative body**
- provide to the body **the right of initiative to make recommendations**, even if not requested
- provide a **regional response to the body's recommendations and advice**.

☐ Create in the **administrative** regional structure a **permanent body dedicated to the integration of migrants**, to favour a systematic regional commitment to migrant integration.

☐ Assign, if missing, a **multiannual budget** to the integration body, in order to augment the reach and effectiveness of regional practices on integration.

☐ **Systematically monitor** and, where possible, **seize opportunities for collaboration with other national regions** on migrant integration matters, in order to maximise opportunities for knowledge transfers and policy contamination.

☐ **Systematically monitor** and, where possible, **seize opportunities for collaboration with other European regions** on migrant integration matters, to learn from different integration paradigms.

Resources

☐ Systematically **allocate funding to intercultural training of regional staff**, in order to provide inclusive and accessible services.

☐ **Allocate funding** to the provision of **tailored services** in multiple languages, to lower barriers to access services.

☐ **Allocate funding to awareness-raising** campaigns on the situation of migrants on the territory, so as to better promote migrant integration.

☐ **Systematically monitor funding opportunities** at a **national** and **European** level, including projects entailing inter-regional cooperation, in order to augment the regional budget capacity for integration. On a European level, a list of funding and tender opportunities can be found at https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home, where the most relevant funds for integration initiatives are the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund (ESF).

☐ In order to boost the possibilities to obtain European funding, **consult** available **resources** on the **requirements for a successful application**, such as application guides (e.g. https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/data/ref/other_eu_prog/common/justdrugs-isfp-isfb-amif_guide-applicants-20_en.pdf) or research on different funding modalities (e.g. https://www.migpolgroup.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Final-Synthetic-Report-Future-EU-funding-to-support-the-integration-of-refugees-and-migrants.pdf).

3.3 Implementation

This stage of the policy cycle looks at how policies are put into practice, which are the bodies or organisations responsible for **implementation** and how closely the practice adheres to the planned policy goals. Understanding the way in which rules are **enforced in practice** is crucial for the successful achievement of policy objectives.

Actions

☐Adopt an **inclusive and participatory approach** to the implementation of services, with an eye to **gender**, **age** and **specific vulnerabilities**, in order to grant beneficiaries equal opportunities to benefit from services.

☐Strategically consider locating implemented services in geographical areas that may favour accessibility for migrants.

☐ *(Only tick this box if at least two options apply)* Adopt an intercultural approach to the delivery and implementation of services, through:
- **targeted information** in multiple languages (e.g. on other services offered regionally),
- **interpretation service**s,
- **interculturally competent front-offices** (e.g. through trainings or employees of migrant background)
- tailored support

Actors & Relations

☐ Systematically **involve all relevant stakeholders** (e.g. **regional** offices, **national** units and representatives, **municipal** and **provincial** offices, **migrant and non-migrant NGOs**, labour organisations, **migrant consultative bodies** and civil society) **in the implementation** of practices, in order to implement integration policies inclusively and efficiently.

Resources

☐ *(Only tick this box if at least two options apply)* In order to augment the reach and level of projects provided in the region, systematically **allocate resources to NGOs** and **organisations** carrying out projects for migrant integration, including:
- Material support (e.g. locations, commodities, goods, etc.)
- Immaterial support (e.g. trainings, seminars for know-how for project development)
- Financial support via mainstream or targeted funds.

☐ *(Only tick this box if at least two options apply)* To improve the capacity of public services provided for migrants' integration, systematically **allocate resources to local authorities** working on migrants' integration, including:
- Material support (e.g. locations, commodities, goods, etc.)
- Immaterial support (e.g. trainings, seminars for know-how for project development)
- Financial support via mainstream or targeted funds.

☐ *(Only tick this box if at least two options apply)* To contribute to the financial sustainability of integration policies, diversify funding sources, combining:
- Regional funds
- National funds
- European funds

3.4. Evaluation

This stage of the policy cycle is concerned with the **systematic reflection** of the policy-makers on the quality of policies, with regards to their formulation, content and implementation. Structured **control and assessment of policies**, through quantitative and qualitative data, are fundamental to identify their strengths and weaknesses, enabling improvement of suboptimal policies.

Actions

☐ **Implement a systematic and structured monitoring and evaluation process** for integration measures, in order to successfully review the application of integration policies.

☐ **Systematically monitor** the extent of **service usage by migrants** across all relevant policy areas, to evaluate the effectiveness and demand for integration measures.

Actors & Relations

☐ **Systematically involve NGOs and organisations** active in the implementation of integration projects in regular evaluation of the latter, to carry out exhaustive evaluation of integration practices. This may provide more practical inputs for the understanding of needs and issues on the ground.

☐ **Systematically involve municipal authorities** active in the implementation of integration projects in regular evaluation of integration practices.

☐ **Systematically adopt feedback mechanisms** for beneficiaries to appropriately voice their concerns and suggestions for improvement, to contribute to an inclusive and participatory review system.

Resources

☐ **Allocate funds to the collection of quantitative and qualitative data** on the migrants' use of services, to rely on reliable data for policy evaluation.

☐ **Allocate funds** to the creation appropriate and accessible avenues (e.g. questionnaires, focus groups, surveys) **for beneficiaries to give feedback on integration activities** and services.

PART 4

Scoring System for Self-Evaluation

In order to calculate your score, tick the items which apply to your regional migrant integration strategy. For instance, if your region has a unit dedicated to migrant integration, you will tick the corresponding item and that tick will count for one point on your overall score. After you have read all items on the checklist and ticked all those that apply to your region, you can count how many ticks you have accumulated. The number of ticks corresponds with your overall score. The same mechanism applies if you are looking to calculate your score only for one specific policy cycle stage (e.g. formulation).

Once you have your numerical score, you can consult the key below, which will tell you what your score means i.e. whether your policies are poorly developed, partially developed or well-developed. Once you have found which category your region belongs to, you can find examples of regions which have better practices, which may be of inspiration for the improvement of your migrant integration practices.

Overall score

0 – 14 Poorly developed
As a feasible example of how to improve your regional migrant integration practices see **Bavaria**, **Skäne**, **Catalonia** and **Västra Götland.**

15 – 28 Partially developed
As a feasible example of how to improve your regional migrant integration practices see **Emilia-Romagna**, **Berlin**, **Veneto**, and **Vorarlberg**.

29 – 42 Well-developed
As a feasible example of how to further improve your regional migrant integration practices see **Tyrol**, **Lisbon**, **Basque Country** and **Vienna**.

Formulation

0 – 2 Poorly developed

As a feasible example of how to improve the regional formulation of integration policies see **Navarre, Apulia,** and **Skäne**.

3 – 5 Partially developed

As a feasible example of how to improve the regional formulation of integration policies see **Basque Country, Tyrol,** and **Emilia-Romagna**.

6 – 8 Well-developed

As a feasible example of how to further improve the regional formulation of integration policies see **Lisbon, Veneto** and **Vorarlberg**.

Output

0 – 6 Poorly developed

As a feasible example of how to improve the quality and content of regional integration policies see **Bavaria, South-Tyrol** and **Västra Götland**.

7 – 13 Partially developed

As a feasible example of how to improve the quality and content of regional integration policies see **Veneto, Berlin** and **Catalonia**.

14 – 20 Well-developed

As a feasible example of how to further improve the quality and content of regional integration policies see **Lisbon , Basque country** and **Vienna**.

Implementation

0 – 2 Poorly developed

As a feasible example of how to improve the regional implementation of integration policies see **Catalonia**, **Bavaria** and **Apulia**.

3 – 5 Partially developed

As a feasible example of how to improve the regional formulation of integration policies see **Vorarlberg**, **Navarre** and **Berlin**.

6 – 7 Well-developed

As a feasible example of how to further improve the regional formulation of integration policies see **Vienna**, **Lisbon** and **Basque country**.

Evaluation

0 – 2 Poorly developed

As a feasible example of how to improve the regional monitoring and evaluation of integration policies see **Bavaria**, **Basque country** and **Apulia**.

3 – 5 Partially developed

As a feasible example of how to improve the regional monitoring and evaluation of integration policies see **Vienna**, **Lisbon** and **Veneto**.

6 – 7 Well-developed

As a feasible example of how to further improve the regional monitoring and evaluation of integration policies see **Flanders**, **Emilia-Romagna** and **Tyrol**.

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