IncluCities Benchmarks – Working versions

4 June 2021

What are IncluCities Benchmarks?

The IncluCities-benchmarks are qualitative standards for integration policies based on best practice and normative standards from across Europe. They are a tool for self-assessment and setting goals and a means to structure exchange and discussions between mentors & mentees.

Which themes do IncluCities Benchmarks cover?

Based on needs analyses produced by the mentor and mentee cities, a subsequent matching process and an intense process of deliberation between the partners, the following topics for the four mentoring schemes and the benchmarks guiding them have been defined:

1. Conducting a strategic assessment of the needs of migrant residents and developing an appropriate, gender-sensitive response
Mentors: City of Brussels / Brulocalis
Mentees: Saint-Jean-de-la-Ruelle / AFFCCR

2. How to build a vision of a 'city for all' (
Mentors: City of Mechelen/Association of Flemish Cities and Municipalities
Mentees: City of Partinico / AICCRE

3. Mobilising citizens to develop tools for decent employment and entrepreneurship for migrants and refugees
Mentors: City of Fuenlabrada / Federación Española de Municipios y Provincias (FEMP)
Mentee: City of Livadia / Central Union of Greek Municipalities (K.E.D.E.)

4. Supporting language learning in formal and non-formal settings
Mentors: City of Schaerbeek/ Brulocalis
 Mentees: City of Jelgava / Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments

The cross-cutting general Benchmark

Based on the wish from the CEMR secretariat to strengthen the between the 4 mentopring schemes and to work on general principles of local integration policies, a general and cross-cutting benchmark

0. Developing a strategic approach to integration at the local level

was developed in addition to the four thematic benchmarks.

The process of developing each of the BMs

The working versions of the 5 BM were developed between autum 2020 and spring 2021. The process consisted of

- MigrationWork developing a first draft of each BM based on "matching" process and first discussions with partners (see above)
- City and association partners providing feedback on the draft, sometimes over several rounds, lead to a final working version of the BMs.

Structure of the benchmarks

As a result of discussions during the Steering Group meeting in October 2020, the structure of the BM was slightly adapted, to make the BMs more user-friedly and to include more guidance.

Each BM now consists of

- A set of key factors that define the critical conditions for success in that thematic area.
- Each key factor is illustrated with a section "why and how" explaining why the factor is relevant and how it can be addressed
- guiding questions to help a city to find out whether it has the key factor in place;
- practical tips on how to get started, where to get support etc.;
- good practice examples of how other cities have met the key factor.
- Context factors that can affect the ability of a city to meet the benchmark and help to specify the context in which the city operates.

Final revision of the five Benchmarks

By the end of the project, a final version of each BM will be developed for dissemination (e.g. as part of the IncluCities toolkits). This version will incorporate an additional round of feedback from partners based on their experience of working with the BM. It will also take into account a more rigorous selection of good practice examples coming from a wider range of cities. This is because for the working version, many propositions for good practice examples came from the mentor city and association involved in each mentoring scheme.

IncluCities Benchmark 0 ("general benchmark") on "Developing a strategic approach to integration at the local level"

Version 2.3 (31 Jan 2021)

Changes since version 1.2
- Incorporated feedback and good practice proposals from Mechelen/VVSG, Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments/Jelgava, Brussels, Schaerbeek, Brulocalis
- Included additional key factor on communication (VVSG/Mechelen)
    - o Strengthened dimension of multi-level governance in some key factors, while maintaining a separate key factor 10 to highlight the importance of the issue (following suggestion from Brulocalis)
- Stronger intersectional perspective, e.g.migrants/cultural diversity within policies for women, youth, LGBTI etc. (BXL) added in KF 5 and 6
- Included a section "What is a benchmark and what is its purpose?" to give a realistic impression about the status of the benchmark as a standard which is not fully achievable by a city; adding additional "Practical tips" to avoid being perceived as discouraging
- Number of questions slightly reduced (but could still do with more reduction)

What is a benchmark and what is its purpose?

The IncluCities-benchmarks are qualitative standards for integration policies based on best practice and normative standards from across Europe. As such, it is unlikely that a city will fully meet all of its standards. It is nevertheless a good tool for self-assessment and setting goals and a means to structure exchange and discussions between mentors & mentees.

IncluCities benchmarks consist of
1) A set of **key factors** that define the critical conditions for success in that thematic area. Each key factor is illustrated with a section **why and how** explaining why the factor is relevant and how it can be addressed, **guiding questions** to help a city to find out whether it has the key factor in place; **practical tips** on how to get started, where to get support etc. and **good practice examples** of how other cities have met the key factor.
2) **Context factors** that can affect the ability of a city to meet the benchmark and help to specify the context in which the city operates.

This benchmark on "Developing a strategic approach to integration at the local level" will help to structure in particular the first part of the mentoring process, when mentors and mentees

discuss their general setup of integration policies. It will help them to set a focus for mentoring (which does not have to cover the whole benchmark, but should be covered by it), structure the meeting and identify good practice. All five IncluCities benchmarks will be adapted based on the experience of using them in IncluCities, and be completed with tips and good practice as the project is implemented. This will lead to a final version at the end of the project.

Context factors for this benchmark:

The following are a list of factors that can affect the ability of your city to meet the benchmark. You can refer to these to explain a particular context in which the city operates in reaching the standard set out by the benchmark.

- Distribution of competences and relations across levels of government
- National or regional policy framework's supportiveness for integration of the city's integration goals
- Economic situation, unemployment
- Electoral cycles
- National discourses and debates about migration
- Degree of politicisation of migration in public discourse and political system
- Data availability
- Migrant Population structure (qualifications, demographics, forced migrants)
- Budgetary situation
- Human resources

Key Factors	Why is this important and How might you go about it?	
1 **Demonstrating political leadership & public commitment to integration**	Strong political leadership and commitment to the idea that migration is an important and normal part of the city and a new reality to which all need to adapt are key to make integration a priority for city residents, the municipal administration and external partners. Political leadership can spark a constructive public discussion about what needs to be done and how to do it between the different actors involved. It enables dedicated resources and structures to be created to deliver integration policy aims across the longer term. Showcasing a proactive position in public can counter the spread of false rumours, prejudice and hate speech. Showing public commitment to integration does not imply conveying a rosy picture of migration or denying conflicts, but rather taking a realistic view, which frames integration as a normal policy issue. Addressing integration from a perspective that focuses not on migrants alone but that takes into account, whenever possible, the whole society (e.g. local pride and identity, non-discrimination, equal opportunities, local identity etc.) can be one way of doing this. Leadership is also about promoting a local model of integration policy	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Does your city provide an official vision on integration and diversity in dedicated strategies or the wider city strategy? • Do political leaders communicate about migration in your city and how do they refer to it? (with which language, and concepts, e.g. us and them, community or communities…) • Has the city leadership sought cross or multi party agreement to shape a common understanding of integration and ensure long-term political commitment that can remain constant and withstand political change? • Do political leaders from all major parties refer frequently to the city as an inclusive place/ this commitment? • Is it clear that political leaders' commitment to integration covers all citizens and all types of migrants? • Do political leaders address citizens raising concerns about migration and take position in • Do political leaders actively promote their city's model with other administrations? **Practical tips:** • Teaming up with other cities or city association in demonstrating commitment can strengthen the arguments for making integration work. • Define at the political and management team level to clear common positions on sensitive issues (e.g. regarding language use, towards religion etc.) **Good practice examples:** • Mechelen vision, strategy and narrative concerning inclusive city/living together in diversity • VVSG centrumstedenoverleg integratie & diversiteit

	model with other administrations, and defending it against discourses challenging it.	• ECCAR • City of Brussels vision, strategy and narrative concerning inclusive city/living together in diversity - The City of Brussels has the vocation to be a hospitable city ("commune hospitalière"). In order to achieve this, several measures and concrete actions have been undertaken by various departments of the City of Brussels and the network of associations located on its territory. • Future action plan against Racism, Brussels • Creation of a reception office for newcomers "BAPA BXL" in view of the need to set up a coherent, structured reception programme adapted to the specific needs of migrants, specifically the newcomers.
2 **Conducting a needs analysis**	A needs analysis uses up-to-date qualitative and quantitative data to understand how new arrivals experience a city and what the needs are in fields such as language learning or access to key mainstream services such as education, employment and health services. It helps cities to design and adapt services to meet evolving needs and build necessary flexibility into governance strategy and arrangements and also provides the baseline for later assessing the effects of your policies (see KF 11 Monitoring and Evaluation). A needs analysis is a precondition for developing sound integration policies. In order to capture the different facets of the reality of migration in the city, a needs analysis should include available data on integration policy outcomes as well as unmet needs identified by civil society organisations and migrants. Participation should be meaningful and not tokenistic and should also	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • What data sources on the situation of migrants do you already use to understand their needs? • Does the city have evidence on the specific problems newcomers face when they arrive, including information that is collected directly from this group? • How does this information feed into the planning processes of the city? • Are you working in partnership with research institutions, universities, national statistics offices, migrant associations etc. to improve information on migration and integration in your city? • Do you have sufficient capacity (professional and technical) and resources to collect data on the situation of migrants in the city, including qualitative data for the needs assessment? • Does your city have an overview on who does to foster migrant integration (institutional mapping or similar)? **Practical tips:** • Your institutional mapping and needs analysis should not stop where the city's competences end. It is important also to know which other areas represent obstacles for migrant integration to eventually address them with creative means or by building bridges to other

	include all relevant sectors of the local administration. A collaborative needs analysis can go hand in hand institutional mapping to identify potential partners and understand what is already being done. If done collaboratively, a needs analysis can be the beginning of a process of co-creating integration policies and developing actions in a strategic way. It is a means to empower migrants through shared decision making, build trust in the city's agenda, facilitate better coordination between local actors and eventually make policies more effective.	services. **Good practice examples:** • CAMIM mapping of support gaps in integration (Schaerbeek) • Flanders, Local Integration Monitor (Lokale Integratie en Inburgeringsmonitor LIIM; https://integratiebeleid.vlaanderen.be/lokal e-inburgerings-en-integratiemonitor-editie-2019-0 Local Integration Monitor (LIIM): the LIIM summarises the figures on migration, integration and civic integration for each municipality. The data come from central Flemish or federal databases. Every year there is an update. In this way, the monitor helps local authorities to plan their integration policy. • Regions in numbers (Provincie in cijfers), role of central and regional governments: https://provincies.incijfers.be/databank • Format data analysis Flemish Agency of Integration and Civic Integration • Stadsmonitor • SID-survey (general not specific for each city and municipality : https://samenleven-in-diversiteit.vlaanderen.be/ • City of Brussels: Municipal social cohesion programme (Municipal coordination by Jeunesse à Bruxelles asbl)
3 Developing an integration strategy document	An integration strategy is a policy document setting out shared values, goals, actions and resources for their implementation. Mirroring the transversal nature of integration policies, it should involve a wide range of actors, sectors and services inside and outside the municipality. The document sets out clear and measurable targets to which the municipality is held accountable and enable the measurement of progress. With targets set, the municipality can assign human and financial resources to the relevant	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Does your city have an integration strategy document (as a separate document or as part of a wider strategy?) • Does the document identify integration policy goals, actions and actors responsible for implementing them? • Is there an appropriate budget allocated for the different actions? • Is there a person (or body) with sufficient authority and resources assigned to coordinate and monitor the implementation of the strategy? • Is there a dedicated administrative structure or inter-departmental committee to coordinate implementation across departments?

departments towards these. An integration strategy is also a good tool to encourage collaboration between different departments and with external partners.

The strategy should assign a clear coordination role for the implementation of the strategy to a specific person or department/ body with enough authority to deliver and coordinate the different actors. This responsibility can be initiated by and through the process of developing the document, and can also include designated people in each department and from external partners.

The process of developing an integration strategy should aspire to seek a political and societal consensus that is as wide as possible, and be adopted by the city council. It should follow a logic of co-production and ensure that all relevant actors are involved and consulted. This fosters a collective sense of ownership of and responsibility towards the integration strategy and avoids that some might see it as something that is outside their remit.

- Have you involved wider civil society, including migrants and other citizens in the development of the strategy?
- Have you involved actors from institutions outside the municipality that you consider relevant for the development and implementation of the strategy?
- Have you made efforts to reach a wide political consensus backing up the strategy?
- Is the strategy document accessible to wider public, especially those who do not master the official language/s of the city (e.g. simplified language, translations?)

Practical tips:
- An integration strategy document can have many different titles, depending on the priorities and the challenges that were identified in the needs analysis. It can also focus on social inclusion or social justice beyond migration.
- The work of coordinating the strategy can be combined with other roles: the key is that the work is coordinated.
- Someone with the responsibility assigned – for ex 'a champion' (a person who knows that they have this responsibility alongside their other work and coordinates it with the central person or body in charge of it) within each department enables consistency and focus across all areas.
- A transversal drafting committee can ensure that each department's contribution is acknowledged and the targets and measurements are clearly communication to relevant staff and encourages a sense of ownership.
- Other cities and city associations can provide models and support for setting up an integration strategy document (e.g. the Flemish Agency for Integration and Civic Integration providing support to local authorities in setting up local integration policies)

Good practice examples:
- Inclusive city strategy document of Mechelen

		• ECCAR ten-point action plan as a framework regarding tackling racism •
4 **Acting as a point of first contact for integration information, guidance, orientation and support**	Integration policies consist of many different actors and services from different levels of government. This situation can cause confusion among newcomers having a problem related to their residence status, employment and training etc. about who is responsible. Even within one specific area, such as language learning, there might be a host of different offers and services for different target groups, which can seriously hamper finding the right offer. Although local authorities do not hold all competences, they can put order into integration-related service offers by acting as first contact point, coordinating between them and thereby ensuring that migrants have better information and access to make the best use. Depending on the local context, they can fulfil this role themselves or put another organisation in charge. Offers of a local first contact point can include: - individualised support / coaching - bridging services for supporting migrants in their communication with other administrative levels (e.g. recognition of qualifications, residence permits…) - information about civil society (e.g. on mentoring,	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Is this support to newcomers accessible to all migrants, regardless their residence status? • Does your city have a low-threshold first entry point for migrants to come to when looking for integration-related information? • Does this first entry point provide personalised support and, if necessary, referral to other services? • In how far is this service designed based on experience and needs of migrants and input you received directly from service users? • Do you have a one-stop shop bringing together integration-related actors and services from inside and outside the municipality? • Does your city provide support in accessing rights and services that are under the control of other administrations (e.g. recognition of qualifications, health care..? **Practical tips:** **Good practice examples:** • City of Leuven: project 'De Nomade' • City of Mechelen: Steunpunt Asiel en Migratie in cooperation with the city + Welcome in Mechelen vzw • Several services within the administration (Permanences sociales of the Brussels Council for Cultural Diversity (CBDC),) as well as through Bravvo asbl offer this service of individual guidance, and BAPA BXL: Information and citizenship courses in different languages for newcomers; social guidance; orientation, French courses, etc. • MANAE programme Schaerbeek: for new arrivals from abroad, who wish to settle in Schaerbeek, but who do not understand the administrative procedures (registration, re-registration, application for naturalization, etc.). MANAE can help them see more clearly. MANAE offers them individual and personalized follow-up, e.,g. Space for

	welcoming) - one-stop shops bringing together integration-related actors and services from inside and outside the municipality - online and mobile guides providing orientation - providing support in making other services more accessible and culture-sensitive Coordination should be organised around citizens and their support needs and can be guided by a participatory needs analysis (KF2).	listening, Information about the administrative registration procedures, referral to other actors, when needed (for ex.: finding a school, a doctor, a French or Dutch course, a citizenship course ...). •
5 **Building partnerships with actors outside the city administration**	Working with partners outside the city administrations can mobilise additional resources for integration and significantly widen the local policy's depth and scope. Depending on their respective area of work, external partners have expertise and practical experience as well as abilities to reach migrants and communities that local government might lack (e.g. NGOs, migrant organisations, employers and trade unions). Such partnerships can and should cover the intersections between migrants and other groups such as youth, women, LGBTI, people with disabilities, older people etc. Building partnerships with institutions representing mainstream society (e.g. media, businesses, sports clubs, neighbourhood associations) can also trigger processes in these organisations that lead to opening up to the diversity of the city, increase trust	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Which partners outside the city administration are formal partners in the city's integration efforts? • Do partnerships on integration policies mobilise external partners from all relevant sectors (culture, business, sport, neighbourhoods etc.?) • How does the city administration work together with migrant associations? • Are there funds or other support for organisational capacity building? **Practical tips:** • In order to enable strong partnerships with civil society and migrant organisations, it might be necessary for the city to look into how to build these organisations' capacity to meaningfully contribute. **Good practice examples:**

	demonstrate that it is shared by actors with different interests.	
6 **Building institutional capacity to understand migrant needs**	In order to provide equal access to rights and opportunities, the municipality and other local institutions need to have the capacity to deal with diversity and the specific needs of their new citizens. Having staff that understands the situation and needs of all citizens, including the most vulnerable ones, will foster the latter's identification with the city and strengthen social cohesion. In order to do this, municipal staff can be trained to better understand the social situation, rights and entitlements and cultural specificities of different migrant groups. Such competences can be embedded in a formal framework for defining and measuring them and taking them into account in recruitment and promotion. Ideally, the competences are linked to the values defined in the city vision and integration strategy. The municipality can also address barriers for migrants and their descendants to become part of the city's workforce so it better reflects the city population un its diversity. The municipality can provide organisational support helping other institutions in opening to the city's diverse population, e.g. through capacity building and training. In doing this, the city should look beyond areas that are typically associated with migration and also the culture sector, youth, women, disabilities, entrepreneurship etc.	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • In how far does the municipality's staff reflect the diversity of the population and which groups are underrepresented? • Does staff (in particular outside the services dealing exclusively with migrants) feel competent to understand the situation and specific needs of migrants? • Does your city have a framework in place to define intercultural competences and to strengthen them in training? • Do systems for staff appraisal, targets and reward systems allow to measure and recognise such competences? • To which degree do local institutions reflect the city's diversity and make efforts into this direction? • Is there a particular attention for intersectional representation of migrant publics (e.g. migrant women, migrant youth, people with disabilities, LGBTQI+ communities,…) • Does the city hall offer capacity building for those that don't? • Does the person coordinating the city's integration strategy know about the roles migrants play in providing key services? • Does the procurement process enable migrant-run businesses (and indeed, those run by other target groups of diversity policies) to bid for city contracts and commissions (using all the relevant options for including social value as a criterion for choosing contractors)? • Does the city's procurement framework reward businesses which comply with the city's goals in social inclusion, recognising diversity and fighting discrimination? **Practical tips:** • Other cities and city associations can provide support on how to technically implement frameworks for staff training or applying equality and diversity criteria in public

	The city can give special recognition to companies and social organisations making efforts to recognise diversity and inequalities and discrimination in its grants system and partnerships and through its procurement framework. It thereby creates further leverage for integration processes outside the municipality.	procurement. **Good practice examples:** • City of Gent: non-discrimination clause in public contracts • Mechelen: Framework for intercultural competences + DNA/key values/ deontological code • Mechelen: Internal learning network • Mechelen: Internal trajectory concerning hate speech and policy/framework for action • Schaerbeek: The municipality has a diversity plan since November 2017, managed by a Gender and Diversity Manager who implements various actions to promote the internal diversity of municipal staff and equal treatment of all staff (Belgian and non-Belgian). • Brussels: There is a project from Actiris with IOM and EC bringing together stakeholders for labour market integration of newcomers in the Brussels-Capital Region: https://belgium.iom.int/actiris-coordination-platform
7 **Monitoring and tackling discrimination**	Discrimination undermines equal opportunities, trust in institutions, social cohesion and a sense of belonging. While policy frameworks and institutions have been set up all over the EU monitor and tackle discrimination, in particular national equality bodies, they are not always effective, and/or specific enough to make a difference at the local level. Cities might therefore decide to set up their own monitoring and support mechanism for victims of discrimination in cooperation with existing initiatives at national, regional level or with local civil society organisations. In doing this, they can cooperate with national equality bodies and local civil	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Does your city have data available on experiences of discrimination of its citizens? • Do political leaders of the city council publicly embrace the goal to tackle discrimination in your city? • Has the city assigned responsibility for implementing its anti-discrimination goals to a specific person or body with sufficient authority to ensure delivery? • Do you have a dedicated institution where victims of discrimination can report to and file complaints? • Does this body record and regularly publicise cases of discrimination? • Does this body offer legal support to defend victims of discrimination? • Does the city effectively communicate information to migrants about their rights in relation to discrimination and ways of finding

	society organisations that are already active in the field. Depending on the city's context, such initiatives can tackle discrimination on grounds that are specific to migrants and ethnic minorities (e.g. ethnicity, religion) or address these in a wider framework, which also include other grounds of discrimination (e.g. age, gender, disabilities, sexual orientation). The city's anti-discrimination policies can be part of the integration strategy or an independent policy, e.g. related to human rights.	advocacy and getting redress, when they feel their rights have been breached? **Practical tips:** • Develop an internal policy and framework for city employees on how to deal with hate speech (Mechelen) • The network European Coalition of Cities against Racism (ECCAR) offers support on how to set up local action plans against racism **Good practice examples:** • City of Mechelen (and others): research into discrimination in the labour market and discrimination in the private rental market through practical tests • Cooperations agreements of UNIA with 13 Flemish centre cities • Projects, activities, information, partnerships, etc. are developed by the services within the city (ex. equal opportunities unit of the City of Brussels, international solidarity unit) and local associations (ex. BAPA BXL, BRAVVO, Maison de quartiers, etc): to fight again discrimination, promote equal opportunities, fundamental rights, etc
8 **Providing incentives for mixing and interaction between different population groups**	The interaction –on equal footing– between different social groups is an essential element for integration and social cohesion and a key remedy against prejudice. When there is less segregation (in neighbourhoods, educational and cultural institutions, at work) interaction is more likely to happen. But extra efforts may still be needed to remove barriers for interaction or incentivise mixing. Such efforts can consist of providing guidance to local institutions to get better in attracting and reflecting the whole society, e.g. business associations, parents associations, sports clubs, volunteer projects, cultural	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Which are the local institutions in which the diversity of the city population is not yet reflected? • Do you find some groups underrepresented in public spaces of your city and do you understand why that is? • Have you consulted with underrepresented group about the reasons for their absence from public space? • Have you identified initiatives that have s high potential for bringing different people, including migrants, together to act towards a meaningful shared goal? • When participative urban planning processes are held in your city, do migrants participate? • Is the attention for diversity in the activities of local actors a precondition for obtaining financial and/or logistic support of the

	initiates. They should take into account that the more interaction is anchored in real life, e.g. in finding together a solution for a shared problem, the greater is its effect for overcoming stereotypes and promoting a common identity. Only tokenistic or even forced forms of interaction are much less effective in bringing people together and reducing stereotypes between different groups. A key area for fostering interaction are public spaces, the spaces of everyday encounters per se. Their design can help or impede encounters between different groups. This is why understanding which social and urbanistic barriers may prevent mixing, and overcoming them, represent a key building block for integration. Participative planning processes that ensure that (really) everybody participates do not only produce more inclusive public spaces, they are also in themselves an excellent opportunity to foster exchange and mixing.	municipality?
		
		Practical tips:
		
		• Funding events/ projects - within and outside the control of the city council can be a good way to foster exchange and mixing
		• Conduct participative communications campaigns to fight segregation as a result of stigma and prejudice towards certain neighbourhoods
		
		Good practice examples:
		• Fuenlabrada MILMA project
		• Mechelen:
		    ○ Approach Oud-Oefenplein
		    ○ Project Pleinmakers
		    ○ Project youthwork for everybody
		• Brussels - Activities in the associations recognized as operators for social cohesion; Neighbourhood houses; Civic internship project (Department of Public Education); cultural spaces: North Pole Centre and the Tour-à-Plomb Cultural Centre; Espace Magh Cultural Centre

9 **Demonstrating commitment to political rights for all residents**	Full integration requires equal rights and civic participation. This includes being able to influence political decisions. From a democratic perspective it is appropriate to give migrants who pay taxes a say on how these taxes are spent, and to influence laws which will be applied on them. Membership in a city is defined by factual residency and not by nationality, so long-term residents should not be excluded from local political participation by the passport they hold. Apart from this being a question of fairness,	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** *Formal voting rights in local elections* • Is your city's vision of integration based on promoting equal rights, also in the political domain, as precondition for full integration? • If non-EU citizens are allowed to vote locally, do you know what their actual participation is compared to the rest of the population? • Are there formal (registration processes) or informal barriers that may prevent non-citizen residents from taking up their right to vote? Have you tried to overcome them? • If in your country non-EU citizens are not allowed to vote in local elections, do political and/or administrative representatives of the

political participation has proven to strengthen identification and other dimensions of integration. The joint involvement in associations, urban planning processes and other forms of participation is one of the most effective ways to bring newcomers and established residents together (see KF 8).

When full political rights of migrants not holding the nationality of their country of residence is already granted at local level, cities should ensure that this right is properly understood and taken up by migrants, e.g. through information and registration campaigns. Where it does not exist, cities can promote to change the legal or constitutional status quo towards non-citizen enfranchisement in through alliances with other cities (see also KF 10).

While full political rights for migrants cannot be attained, resources that help non-citizen residents to articulate their interests should be created and made available to them. This includes granting access to public referenda or participatory budgeting exercises, neighbourhood councils, or citizens committees based on residency.

Migrant consultative bodies are a specific participation tool for integration policies. They should have a sufficient degree of autonomy from the city council, and an authority stemming from being formally elected and being experienced in migration matters.

city actively lobby for extending local voting rights?

Promoting participation
- Are all local structures for participation accessible to non-citizen residents, and is their participation actively promoted?
- What structures for political and civic participants in particular of the local migrant population have been established?
- Is access granted for representatives of associations or organisations only or are they open also to individuals?
- How does your city ensure that access is fair and transparent, also with regard to gender, age and disabilities?
- Is access granted to refugees and asylum seekers and are their specific concerns considered?
- How do political parties respond to the participation mechanism? Is there a general sense of support and respect or are they rather reserved towards this potential competition?
- Who leads work within the city to establish and support equal participation?
- What channels do political or administrative representatives use to make the case for participation?

Migrant consultative body
- If your city has a consultative body on migration, does this body have its own agenda or are the issues pre-selected by the local authority?
- Does the body have the right to a receive a response from the administration on its requests?
- Are members of the body elected by migrants or appointed by the administration?
- Do members of the body have a formal, long-term mandate or is representation rather loose and spontaneous?

Practical tips:

Good practice examples:
- Barcelona strategy for participation and non-

	But beyond enabling their participation on migration issues it is important to recognise that migrants are also women, older people, users of transport or local shop and young people, LGBT communities and neighbours who have their stakes in these roles and should be represented in consultation and committees taking decisions in sectors that are not directly related to migration.	Spanish voter registration initiative • Mechelen: project people make the city, section policy participation. With the local elections of 2018 there was a campaign at the Flemish level to motivate and stimulate citizens with a migrant background to vote: http://www.ikstemook.be/ • Schaerbeek: During the municipal elections of October 14, 2018, we launched a campaign for registration on the voters list by post. For this local election, letters were sent to all European citizens registered in our registers as well as to non-European citizens legally residing for at least 5 years in Belgium. • Brussels: Association "Objectif asbl" provides information about the political rights, supports EU/non UE citizen, etc. • Brussels: A new strategy has been developed lately with the ambition of enhancing the participation of Brussels citizens through an online platform: https://www.fairebruxelles.be/ and local citizen committees. A toolbox is under construction to support all administrative units in order to better organize civil participation in decision processes • Brussels: Conseil Bruxellois de la Diversité Culturelle (CBDC), originally created in 1972 as a representative body of Brussels citizens with foreign origins aiming at facilitating access to the Belgian nationality and the right to participate to the political system. The mission/agenda has evolved over the years according to evolutions in terms of rights on the national level + demographic evolutions in the City >> Full history here and here. The City of Brussels counts a total of 6 Advisory councils for different areas.
10 Coordinating with other administrations and tackling coordination obstacles	It is useful to have allies and to avoid working in isolation. In the multi-level area of integration policies, understanding which role the different actors have for integration is key in defining local interventions. Policies that influence integration do not stop at city boundaries, and	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Have you looked into teaming up with other cities of the metropolitan or regional area to improve policy coordination in sectors such as labour market integration? • Do you use forums for exchanging with other cities on solutions to your problems found elsewhere? • Is your city active in formal city associations

cities should not conceive their efforts to foster integration solely by themselves.

- Working relationships with other administrations at political and technical level can provide opportunities for learning and improving governance setups.
- Formulating joint policy responses with other municipalities at metropolitan level can be a more appropriate scale for designing policies, e.g. in labour market inclusion and housing.
- City-to-city exchanges at all levels can generate new ideas and make you aware of solutions to your problems found elsewhere. City associations can provide structures and resources to make such an exchange more effective.

Cities should actively liaise with actors operating at the regional and national level to improve coordination and to strategically steer their own interventions.
They can set up a single, local access point for the services provided by different governments to make available support measures more transparent for newcomers or build other types of "bridges" to services that are under the control of other levels of government (see KF 4).
City associations can help to communicate problems and bottlenecks of multi-level coordination through the formal

that have communication channels with administrations at the regional, national and European level?
- Which main bottlenecks for integration in your city are caused by policies at other levels of government?
- Have you tried to liaise with the respective administrations in a strategic way to tackle these bottlenecks, at technical and/or political level?
- Do you keep track over time of how your city's engagement helps to tackle these problems?
- In the orientation you provide to migrants, do you also support them to access services and take up rights that are under the control of other administrations (e.g. recognition of qualifications, social rights, access to health care, etc.)

Practical tips:
- Use engagement with other cities and levels of government strategically and in a targeted manner to address problems of integration policy that you identified previously

Good practice examples:
- Finnish employment policy experiment devolution / Tampere region
- Dutch cities lobbying bringing back local level competences in inburgering (integration) policy?
- VVSG Centrumstedenoverleg integratie
- Mechelen Research Stadsgenoten on 'living together in a metropolitan context' → report/publication

	and informal communication channels they entertain with other levels of government. Seeking a structured and regular dialogue between different levels of government can contribute to learning to how governments can support each other in policy-making and delivery, to assess the local impact of policies made at national or EU level and to influence these policies. While the national context is key for integration, the European Union can provide technical guidance and financial support that is less affected by the limitations that national political debates and ideological conflicts sometimes impose.	
11 Monitoring integration policies and evaluating their outcomes	Evaluation is necessary for ensuring integration policies are implemented effectively and services are improved through reflection. Evaluation is part of establishing a culture of institutional learning, in which policies and services are adapted to best respond to local needs. It includes: • regular monitoring that policy measures are actually implemented according to plan • evaluating whether the goals of the strategy are met in terms of their outcomes • publicising the results of monitoring and evaluation • drawing conclusions of the results of monitoring and evaluation and changing	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • How does the city know whether public perception of migration and diversity is positive or negative, and how it is changing? • Does the city measure migrants' own views as to how they are perceived in the city? • How do these measurements feed into the planning processes of the city? • Does the city have any way of independently monitoring the progress of its strategy? • How does the city know what works and does not work in its strategy? • Are all these measurements used to drive a process of continuous improvement of the strategy? • Can the city demonstrate how it has used these measurements as the basis for changing its strategy or its work? • What mechanism is in place to check the procedures and impact of participation schemes on a regular basis? • How are changes to the participation schemes being decided? • Which quantitative and qualitative indicators

	the actions if necessary • being able to capture new and emerging trends that make new goals and actions necessary. In contexts and times where social spending might be under scrutiny, cost-benefit type of evaluations can provide good arguments by estimating economic benefits of integration and social inclusion, e.g. earlier labour market integration, professional training avoiding "brain waste", avoiding delays in medical treatment or the use of emergency health services by removing obstacles to access basic health care. Such evaluations should have a wide enough scope to ensure that they really capture all the benefits of a policy, including those that are difficult to measure, or that materialise only in the long term. While such evaluations are complex, cities can build partnerships with universities to implement them, and use foundations or other, e.g. European funds to find the necessary financial resources. Involving external partners, and local communities and migrants in monitoring and evaluation (with resources to ensure this) increases the credibility of the integration strategy and can generate new ideas, bring new resources, and establish new methods of communication. This links closely to needs assessment process and working with people with in-depth knowledge from the ground, who	should you use for evaluation? • Are indicators meaningful to migrants themselves? • Can they be jointly selected /tested (via focus groups etc.) with range of community members? • Is there already city-wide / regional data to help with both the design and monitoring of the strategy? • If there are good data sources already available, do they include migrant lived experience and is there both quantitative and qualitative data available? **Practical tips:** • The best moment to start defining an evaluation framework is when you start thinking about a new policy, i.e. with the needs analysis (KF 2). • Use the capacity of external partners, from migrant organisations to evaluation experts to design your evaluation • When working with standardised indicators from public statistics, make use of EU integration indicators ("Zaragoza indicators") which can ensure data availability and comparability at different levels. **Good practice examples:** • Survey Municipality-City Monitor (Gemeente-Stadsmonitor), a triennial citizen's survey, almost 400,000 citizens, aged between 17 and 85, are invited by the Agency of Internal Affairs (Flemish government) to give their opinion on all kinds of local policy themes.

	also need to be involved in monitoring and evaluation. Broader indicators keeping track of employment, education, social inequalities, opinions, support for anti-immigrant parties etc. can also provide useful information for municipalities, not so much to evaluate the impact of concrete policies, but to be aware of the key problems it needs to tackle in the city.	
12 Communicating results	The city should invest resources into communicating about its integration policies. Communication efforts can relate to the city's vision as a place that it supportive of integration and communicate successes of its policies to the citizenry and external partners to show that collective efforts pay off, and increase public support. This includes small and often invisible changes that policy made for the people living in the city. In communicating about integration policies it is important to reflect how they address priorities of the whole society and how they bring newcomers and established residents together instead of reproducing an "us vs. them" logic. Personal stories are one means to foster empathy and a common identity	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Do you regularly communicate the outcomes of your integration policies? • Do you use an inclusive communication style that does not distinguish between us and them? • Are voices of citizen, including those of migrants included in communication strategies? **Practical tips:** **Good practice examples:** • "People make the city narrative" Mechelen. • On several symbolic dates (21/03; 21/05; 08/04; 18/12;…) events or communications from the city are developed in order to support cultural diversity, encounters and awareness raising. Funds are reserved for this kind of actions organized by local actors – cfr comment above (Brussels)

Main sources used

- EUROCITIES, Benchmarks for the projects INTI-Cities, MIXITIES and ImpleMentoring

- Intercultural Cities, Core ICC Index: 14 'core indicators'

- Migration Policy Institute, Doing more with less. A new toolkit for integration policy. Meghan Benton and Alexandra Embiricos, 2019

- Migration Policy Institute, Communicating Strategically about Immigrant Integration. Aliyyah Ahad and Natalia Banulescu-Bogdan, 2019

- OECD Working Together for Local Integration of Migrants and Refugees. 2019.

IncluCities Specific Benchmark 1 on "Conducting a strategic assessment of the needs of migrant residents and developing an appropriate, gender-sensitive response"
Version 2.0 (Mar 2021)

What is a benchmark and what is its purpose?

The IncluCities benchmarks are qualitative standards for integration policies based on best practice and accepted standards from across Europe. As such, it is unlikely that a city will fully meet all of its standards. It is nevertheless a good tool for self-assessment and setting goals and a means to structure exchange and discussions between mentors & mentees.

IncluCities benchmarks consist of

1) A set of key factors that define the critical conditions for success in that thematic area. Each key factor is illustrated with a section why and how explaining why the factor is relevant and how it can be addressed, guiding questions to help a city to find out whether it has the key factor in place; practical tips on how to get started, where to get support etc. and good practice examples of how other cities have met the key factor.

2) Context factors that can affect the ability of a city to meet the benchmark and help to specify the context in which the city operates.

3)

This benchmark on "Conducting a strategic assessment of the needs of migrant residents and developing an appropriate, gender-sensitive response" will help to structure the second part of the mentoring scheme Brulocalis/Ville de Bruxelles and Association Francaise du Conseil des Communes et Régions d'Europe/St Jean de la Ruelle. It should help them to define a focus for the mentoring scheme (which does not have to cover the whole

benchmark, but should be covered by it), structure the mentoring visits, identify good practice.

All five IncluCities benchmarks will be adapted based on the experience of using them in IncluCities, and will be completed with tips and good practice as the project is implemented. This will lead to a final version at the end of the project.

Rationale:

Migrant populations are highly diverse, with a variety of cultural and economic strengths/assets, as well as a range of needs and aspirations. The characteristics of those populations and their needs may change rapidly and it is essential for a city to be able to assess them properly and ensure that services respond promptly. A co-produced needs assessment should lead to actions that address the actual needs of migrants and contribute to social justice and community cohesion. Coproduction is consistent with the EU's Common Basic Principles of Integration:

CBP 9: 'The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration'.[1]

Why a focus on migrant women? Migrant women often face a 'double disadvantage' due to their status as women as well as migrants, sometimes even a triple disadvantage as ethnic minorities[2]. About a third of migrant women in Europe come via family migration, so they do not have an existing connection with the labour market[3] and may bring with them

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[1] Common Basic Principles http://www.eesc.europa.eu/resources/docs/common-basic-principles_en.pdf

[2] Liebig, T. and K. Tronstad, Triple Disadvantage?: A first overview of the integration of refugee women, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No.216, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018, p. 8. https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/triple-disadvantage_3f3a9612-en

[3] How to strengthen the integration of migrant women? OECD, Nov 2020 http://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/migration-policy-debates-25.pdf

domestic responsibilities that can prevent them from fully participating in the labour market and in integration programmes and other measures that do not offer appropriate childcare. When employed, migrant women are more likely to be over-qualified for their jobs than other women[4]. Refugee women in particular are more likely to suffer from health problems than other women, or male refugees[5].

Working towards equal opportunity for migrant women is both an end itself and also helps promote the inclusion of their children[6] . "When women do well, their children do well", Ylva Johansson EU Commissioner for Home Affairs has said[7]. Yet a 2018 report by the EU Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) found that across the EU, there was little evidence of action plans and strategies with a particular focus on migrant women or gender issues. Integration efforts aimed at migrant women are predominantly bottom-up, civil society-led responses, with NGOs filling the policy vacuum by campaigning for rights and integration conditions and by offering integration support to migrant women[8].

This benchmark, therefore, will have a particular emphasis on the needs and assets of migrant women and girls. It aims to help identify and close gaps between national, municipal and civil society-led efforts to support integration and responses.

[4] EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, European Commission, Nov 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/pdf/action_plan_on_integration_and_inclusion_2021-2027.pdf

[5] Liebig, T. and K. Tronstad, Triple Disadvantage?: A first overview of the integration of refugee women, OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers, No.216, OECD Publishing, Paris, 2018 https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/employment/triple-disadvantage_3f3a9612-en

[6] How to strengthen the integration of migrant women? OECD, NOV 2020
http://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/migration-policy-debates-25.pdf

[7] Commissioner Ylva Johansson, speaking at Eurocities' Integrating Cities Online Conference, 2 December 2020
https://twitter.com/eurocities/status/1334070617340076032

[8] Integration of migrant women. EWSI, 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/feature/integration-of-migrant-women

For the purposes of this benchmark, "migrant(s)" will be understood to include refugees, asylum seekers and undocumented migrants, unless otherwise stated.

The key factors are listed approximately in the chronological order that they should be addressed, but this can be adapted according to local circumstances.

Context factors for this benchmark:

The following are a list of factors that can affect the ability of your city to meet the benchmark. You can refer to these to explain a particular context in which the city operates in reaching the standard set out by the benchmark.

- Distribution of competences and relations across levels of government
- A national or regional policy framework for integration that is supportive of the city's integration goals
- The general economic situation. in particular the level of unemployment
- National discourses and debates about migration
- Degree of politicisation of migration in public discourse and political system, and position in electoral cycle
- Availability of data on migrant and ethnic minority populations
- Migrant population structure (qualifications, demographics, forced migrants)
- City council's budget and human resources available
- Awareness of gender equality issues and a gender approach in the city council and partner organisations

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Key Factor	Why is this important and How might you go about it?	
1 **The needs assessment and response are co-produced with migrant women, men and young people**[9]	Co-production is when professionals co-design and co-deliver services with service-users and other members of target communities. It has a range of benefits, such as: reaching target groups and drawing on their 'expertise by experience', which ensures that services are well designed to meet their needs, while fostering skills and encouraging civic participation. For migrant women, it can avoid paternalistic attitudes, such as men speaking for them and can facilitate discussion of sensitive issues or trauma-focused issues, such as domestic violence and sexual exploitation. Key principles for including migrants in the production of needs assessments have been identified as:[10]:	**Questions :** How is it carried politically, with which message and legitimacy? - importance of political support/advocacy How are migrant women, men and young people - included in the governance of the study e.g. in any steering committee? - involved in carrying out the study e.g. as "community researchers"? - included in the process of producing an action plan? - included in any monitoring & evaluation? **Good practice examples :** In Brighton & Hove, a steering group oversaw the production of a migrant needs assessment. This comprised statutory, academic, voluntary, and community sector representatives, including experts on migration and "experts by experience" of being a migrant in the local area

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[9] In the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion for the period 2021-2027, Member states are encouraged to "Involve migrants and migrant organisations in the design, implementation and evaluation of integration and inclusion policies and programmes, including when EU-funded". https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/pdf/action_plan_on_integration_and_inclusion_2021-2027.pdf

[10] Rose N, Stirling S, Ricketts A, Chappel D. Including migrant populations in Joint Strategic Needs Assessment:

	• All community members are hidden resources and assets. • A broad range of people (clients, practitioners, voluntary, community and other organisations) are acknowledged as legitimate partners and information sources. • A network of people are involved in creating, disseminating and using knowledge collaboratively. • A participative, community development approach is used. • Qualitative tools such as networking, interviewing, case studies and visits are used. • The process of generating shared information also creates capacity for service development. • Long term participation secures sustainability and flexibility in the face of change. • The process is iterative and non-linear	or of delivering services to vulnerable migrants. The University of Brighton trained a team of 22 "community researchers" to conduct interviews and focus groups with members of their own communities. This produced more, better quality data, but also gave those individuals temporary employment and valuable new skills that increased their employability.[11] Schaerbeek's CAMIM project put new arrivals at the heart of a reflection process and series of workshops with the target group, which resulted in: - The creation of a volunteer unit - A new module on self-confidence - The opening of a "(French) Immersion House"
2 **A multi-stakeholder partnership steers the assessment**	Stakeholders steering the study should include representatives of all relevant services/ departments, particularly those related to the main integration challenges (education,	**Questions :** • Has the city mapped all key internal and external stakeholders? • Has the city identified services, and invited them to join the partnership, which are most used by migrants, particularly migrant women?

a guide. February 2011
http://www.equalityhumanrights.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/documents/1120/a%20guide%20to%20including%20migrants.pdf

[11] Condon, R, Hill, A and Bryson, L. International Migrants in Brighton & Hove, January 2018 P133
https://phantom.brighton-hove.gov.uk/mgConvert2PDF.aspx?ID=123725

	employment, health care and housing)[12], as well as representatives of civil society organisations, local universities and migrants themselves. Coproduction of knowledge can bring about innovation and increased quality. In order to do that, a network needs to be built, based on trust and reciprocity and a recognition of the contribution that all partners can make.	● Has the city identified services, and invited them to join the partnership, which seem to be under-used, given the characteristics of the migrant population?
3 **The city has good connections with local migrant groups and networks**	Some cities have formal migrant councils or consultative forums. If this is not the case, the city needs to identify local migrant groups and their networks and establish a trusted, working relationship, in order for the co-production approach to be effective.	**Questions :** ● Does the city have a migrant consultative forum? ● Have creative ways of engaging with migrant populations been identified? ● How can women be reached so that their voices are not mediated, particularly by men? ● How can undocumented migrant women and men be reached and engaged? ● Has a safe and respectful environment been cultivated to encourage participation? **Good practice examples:** ● Bilbao's Women, Health and Violence programme[13] started by partnering with community organisations to understand the health needs of migrant women. Women were trained as "agents of

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[12] EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion

[13] Putting Women's Health in Women's Hands. Cities of Migration, June 28, 2012
http://citiesofmigration.ca/good_idea/womens-health-in-women%e2%80%99s-hands/

		empowerment" and asked to create a safe space for conversation, encourage intercultural exchange, and promote discuss gender violence and sexual health in community forums. ● Migrant mothers may be reached through their children's schools[14] or food parcel deliveries during the COVID epidemic. ● When the City of Antwerp was looking to improve its relations with minority communities, after banning headscarves in schools, it decided to ask the Brussels-based NGO Minderhedenforum (Forum of Ethnic Cultural Communities) to open a branch. Critically, the city recognized the Forum as an independent organisation and voice for ethnic minorities.
4 **The assessment adopts an asset-based approach**	The central idea in co-production is that people who use services are hidden resources, not drains on the system, and that no service that ignores this resource can be efficient." [15] An asset-based approach values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections and potential in a community. Volunteers, including migrant volunteers, may be such hidden assets. Techniques, such as asset mapping may be used.	**Questions :** ● Is the needs analysis seeking to identify the assets that migrants bring and how they benefit the city, as well as their needs? **Good practice examples:** The Neue Nachbarn ("new neighbours") initiative in Arnsberg, Nordrhein-Westfalen, is a migrant/refugee-led initiative that shows that migrants are not passive recipients of resources, but active members of a supportive community, benefitting non-migrants, as well as refugees. Established refugees help new arrivals with orientation and connect with non-refugees by sharing stories with older people and playing football. The mayor recognised the

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[14] How to strengthen the integration of migrant women? OECD, Nov 2020
http://www.oecd.org/migration/mig/migration-policy-debates-25.pdf

[15] Boyle and Harris. 2009. The Challenge of Co-production. NEF and NESTA. P11.
https://www.nesta.org.uk/report/the-challenge-of-co-production/

		group's capacity to strengthen integration and gave them an office in the town hall.[16] Toulouse plans to link its early years service with an NGO, Melting Potes, realising that unaccompanied teenage migrants were an unused asset and could support young migrant families with their language skills and knowledge of the city.
5 **All available national, regional and local quantitative data are gathered and analysed**	The EU has an agreed set of integrators of integration, but not all Members States report against them systematically. Data are fragmented and gaps in knowledge remain, particularly at the local level.	**Questions :** ● Is there city-wide / regional data to help with both the design and monitoring of actions? ● If there are good data sources already available, do they include migrants' lived experience?
6 **A wide range of qualitative research methods are used**	A wide range of methods may be used to explore migrants' needs and assets, the barriers they face to accessing services, gaps in them and their strengths and weaknesses. Possible methods for use with service providers and other stakeholders include online surveys, focus group discussions and interviews. Community research, using	**Questions :** ● What research methods are appropriate for service providers and other stakeholders? ● Does the city have the time, resources and commitment to embark on community research? ● How can participative methods be adapted to the specific context of the city? **Good practice examples:** Examples of participative methods include: ● mapping exercises (where do migrants feel (un)safe? How well do they know the city?) ● mind-maps of key services; problem trees (e.g. to describe challenges when arriving in the city and potential solutions) and

	participative methods can enable migrants, to share their experiences and views when visited at a convenient location and in their own language, if needed.	• asset maps (for individuals and communities)
7 **A workable, multi-agency action plan is produced**	Actions may be identified for any of the stakeholders and should be specific and resourced, if needed. Those aimed at migrant women and girls are likely to fall into three main areas: 1. Social Integration 2. Discrimination and rights 3. Help into work[17] It is likely that actions to facilitate social integration and employment will need to be aligned with strategies and actions to tackle racism and racial discrimination	**Questions :** • Do the agreed actions correspond to the needs identified? • Is the link between actions and desired outcomes clear? • Are actions time-specific? • Is it clear who is responsible for each action? • Are resources available to fund actions, if needed?
8 **The implementation of agreed actions is monitored and evaluated, using a coproduction approach**	Evaluation is necessary for ensuring actions resulting from the needs assessment are being implemented effectively and services are improved through reflection. Evaluation is part of establishing a culture of institutional learning, in which policies and services are adapted to best respond to local needs. It	**Questions :** • How does the city know it is achieving the results of actions that resulted from the needs assessment? • Does the city have any way of independently monitoring the progress of its actions and what works and does not work? • How frequently is that progress reviewed? • Does it have a clear idea of the 'indicators of success' of those actions? • Are indicators <u>meaningful</u> to migrants

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[17] Integration of migrant women. EWSI, 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/feature/integration-of-migrant-women

	includes: - Regular monitoring that policy measures are implemented according to plan - Evaluating whether the goals of the action plan are met - Publicising the results of monitoring and evaluation - Drawing conclusions from the results of monitoring and evaluation and adapting the actions accordingly - Being able to capture new and emerging trends that make new goals and actions necessary Involving external partners, and local communities and migrants in monitoring and evaluation (resourced accordingly) increases the credibility of actions and can generate new ideas, bring new resources, and establish new methods of communication.	themselves? Can they be jointly selected /tested (via focus groups etc.) with a range of community members?

Main sources used

- European Commission, ESF Technical Dossier No.4. Co-production: Enhancing the role of citizens in governance and service delivery, 2018
https://ec.europa.eu/esf/transnationality/filedepot_download/1145/1723
- European Commission, EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion, European Commission, Nov 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/pdf/action_plan_on_integration_and_inclusion_2021-2027.pdf
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- EWSI Integration of migrant women., 2018 https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/feature/integration-of-migrant-women
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IncluCities Specific Benchmark 2 on "How to build a vision of a 'city for all' "

Focussing on the initial stages of creating an inclusive culture, including building relationships and collaborations, getting 'buy in' and beginning to get people to articulate ways in which they would like the city to change.

Version 2.0 (Mar 2021)

What is a benchmark and what is its purpose?

The IncluCities-benchmarks are qualitative standards for integration policies based on best practice and normative standards from across Europe. As such, it is unlikely that a city will fully meet all of its standards. It is nevertheless a good tool for self-assessment and setting goals and a means to structure exchange and discussions between mentors & mentees.

IncluCities benchmarks consist of
1) A set of **key factors** that define the critical conditions for success in that thematic area. Each key factor is illustrated with a section **why and how** explaining why the factor is relevant and how it can be addressed, **guiding questions** to help a city to find out whether it has the key factor in place; **practical tips** on how to get started, where to get support etc. and **good practice examples** of how other cities have met the key factor.
2) **Context factors** that can affect the ability of a city to meet the benchmark and help to specify the context in which the city operates.

All five IncluCities benchmarks will be adapted based on the experience of using them in IncluCities, and be completed with tips and good practice as the project is implemented. This will lead to a final version at the end of the project.

Context factors for this benchmark

The following are a list of factors that can affect the ability of your city to meet the benchmark. You can refer to these to explain a particular context in which the city operates in reaching the standard set out by the benchmark.

- Distribution of competences and relations across levels of government
- National or regional policy framework's supportiveness for integration of the city's integration goals

- Economic situation, unemployment
- Electoral cycles
- National discourses and debates about migration
- Degree of politicisation of migration in public discourse and political system
- Data availability
- Characteristics of migrant population (qualifications, demographics, forced migrants, legal status (e.g. undocumented), transit/settled intentions)
- Budgetary situation
- Human resources

Key Factor	Why is this important and How might you go about it?	
1 **Get to know the local context by engaging citizens**	Identifying needs, demands, questions, strengths, weaknesses, bottlenecks, challenges is key to set priorities and detect partners, key figures, bridge figures and allies at the local level. For start-up communities (e.g. Partinico) this is a necessary (first) step to create a base of support and allies for the implementation of a local integration policy (initiatives, strategy, vision). Invest in building trust through networking, networking and networking again…..and start or engage as a municipality/city in a structural dialogue with (multi-voiced) partners at the local level. Get to know the local context by: (1) Stakeholder mapping Stakeholder mapping requires a minimum of human resources but allows you to identify all relevant stakeholders. This makes it clear what their position is in relation to	**Questions**: • Are there e.g. interpreters available in case of language barriers? • Which instruments are available at the municipality level to bridge the language gap? • Do you have local advisory boards? Local participation forums? • Do you cooperate with religious associations? Charity organisations? With expert organisations regarding social work? Education? … • Are there initiatives from the bottom up? • Is there an active association life? • What does this association life looks like? Sports clubs? Youth work? Youth movements? Entrepreneurs? Artists? **Practical tips:** • Start by appointing 1 trustee (point of contact, liaison) within the municipality, but do not let it depend on this 1 person, immediately involve the right department/team depending on the policy domain. **Good practice examples:** 1) Mechelen:

	your organisation. In addition, you can map out what interests they have. In addition, you check whether they support or counteract the goals of your organisation. Furthermore, you will find out how the stakeholders and the organisation depend on each other. A stakeholder folder therefore provides insight into the way in which stakeholders are important to you and vice versa. (2) Practice-oriented research. This requires time, which means human resources, but is invaluable. Objectives of such research is: To understand the needs and requirements (preparing questions, what do you want to know for what purpose?) To work on a relationship of trust To start from a concrete reason/question… (what?) Methodology: 1 on 1 interviews (informal) In-depth interviews (formal) Focus groups Dialogue groups World Café … Involve citizens by implementing a structural and formal dialogue: formalise the informal encounters (a formal structure, recognized by the city council, with a clear mandate). This dialogue can have different forms and intensity depending on the capacity of the municipality/city (e.g. a consultation structure for organisations/stakeholders, networking events, reflection group, feedback group,…)	• Interreligious/Inter-philosophical Platform: a structural dialogue between the city and the different religions/philosophies present in Mechelen (2010). The project 'start to believe' is a specific outcome from this platform (https://www.mechelen.be/start-to-believe-een-interlevensbeschouwelijk-parcours) • Local advisory board regarding ethnic-cultural diversity (2004) • Diversity forum (2011) • Structural dialogue between the city and the representatives of the mosques (from ad hoc meetings to a structural dialogue, 2x/year from 2014) • Dialogue groups specifically for women (2012)

| 2
Strengthen individuals and organisations who want to be actively involved and want to be (or potentially can be) an active partner of the city | Ideally the city/municipality is a network organisation, meaning that the local authority does not always need to take the lead or be promotor. The local authority can stimulate, support and facilitate initiatives from the bottom-up. In order to do this there should be a (policy) framework and clear vision: what will the local authority support and what not? And why? Citizens need to have first of all confidence in the local authority, and they need to know the possibilities (funding, cooperation, support,…) and the policy goals and priorities.

This works in two ways, the city needs to know what is happening on the field and what ideas are out there. First line (and even zero line) (streetworkers, sports coaches, youthworkers, social workers, bridge figures…) are essential players, links and antennas to detect these innovative ideas.
It should be a combination of a top down (city as promotor) but also a bottom up approach (city as facilitator).

Offer training for individuals to develop motivation and skills and to get them engaged at the policy participation level. | **Questions:**

• What are the financial resources at the disposal of local authorities?
• Are there organisations who can take up a supportive role towards ethnic-cultural organisations? (E.g. in Flanders, the 'federations' take up this role)
• Which first line (or zero line) workers are active in the field? (cfr. Stakeholder mapping)

Practical tips:

• If the (financial) resources are limited, try to be creative: offer logistical support or other kind of support, e.g. making meeting rooms/venues/material of the municipality available for external use
• offer training/workshops on e.g. how to organise an activity,…
• develop an organisational toolkit

Good practice examples:

1) Mechelen
• Pocketbook of intercultural activities
• Welcome in Mechelen vzw (2016): group of citizens of Mechelen who voluntarily (but with the support of the city) organise different activities for newcomers with support from the city: (https://www.vluchtelingenwerk.be/vrijwilligersgroep/welcomeinmechelen), they started in February 2016 and in November 2016 they are a recognized non-profit organization.
• Festival Ottertrotter & Mechelen Mixt (2011): an intercultural festival organised by the city, where we specifically work together with divers communities and ethnic-cultural organisations to stimulate intercultural encounters and to give these organisations a forum/platform.
• Subsidy regulations to support immigrant associations/ethnic-cultural organisations (2007-2012) |

		2) Other • Project Changemakers: http://www.changemakers.be/over-changemakers/historiek/ • A seat at the table: https://www.asatt.eu/
3 **Build skills and under-standing around inclusion and diversity across the municipality (internal (HR) policy)**	To create enthusiasm for an inclusive vision, people need to understand and know why it is important. This key factor is about building that internal support. There are various ways it can do this. The city/municipality needs to represent diverse society on all levels. Accessible recruitment and hiring procedures are important, but so is a retention policy, with specific attention on diversity in the workplace. Walk the talk: It is essential to work on the attitude and mindset of employees to actually make the necessary changes (as an integral part of the professional conduct) in their day to day work, and to be a fully accessible organisation. Approach diversity as an added value, not as something extra, in the beginning it means extra investment but it will pay off in the long term. Strengthen staff in dealing with diversity issues, polarisation, racist and discriminatory statements. Organise advice, guidance, training and education on diversity and integral accessibility (including language, culture-sensitive working, polarisation, etc.) for employees of the municipality, e.g.	**Questions:** • What diversity or inclusion training happens already for workers in the municipality? • Is this a requirement or optional? • How far do HR policies and procedures reflect diversity principles • Do you have an internal communication platform? • Does HR has a training policy for employees? • Deontological code? • Dilemma training? • Welcoming HR policy for new employees? • Mission/key values/DNA of the organisation? **Practical tips:** • Screening regarding attitudes and mindset (language accessibility, intercultural competences, prejudice & white privilege,…) • Give priority to first line services and employees (e.g. civil affairs, counter services,…) • Get support and commitment from the board and management (mandate!) • Create an internal (digital) knowledge platform • Make a plan regarding the internal communication (communication matrix): e.g. use international days as steppingstones • **Good practice examples:** 1) Mechelen • Language policy and training regarding 'accessible' language (use) • Intercultural competence range

	front-line services Change, transition, critical self-reflection is a slow, difficult and sensitive process. Communicate on a regular basis about diversity topics/activities/events through internal communication channels. Use a tailor-made approach.	• Lunch seminars (e.g. gendertalks, workshop mapping Mechelen) • International days (e.g. 21/03, 18/12) and awareness-raising activities for employees • Actionplan diversity & HR policy • Learning network diversity and inclusion • Internal trajectory regarding hate speech and discriminating behaviour • Landing page on the internal communication platform
4 **Networking and accessibility**	The local authority should support initiatives and projects which bring citizens together and that stimulate intergroup contact and activates citizens to get out of their comfort zone. There should be a smooth transition between primary civic integration (regional/national programs) and secondary civic integration (local government/host society). Social networks are essential for newly arrived citizens to speed up their secondary integration process, moreover one-on-one contact and support has the most impact, it accelerates the integration process. (social) Mentoring is a valuable methodology. Bridge figures, ambassadors, role models (volunteers, teachers, ethnic-cultural organisations,…) can play an essential role in welcoming newcomers and guiding them towards the regular services. In addition local authorities need to be aware of thresholds and be culture-sensitive in order for newly arrived citizens to fully participate to activities (sport, youth, culture,…) of the local community. Ethnic-cultural organisations can	**Questions:** • Does the municipality work with volunteers for specific events? What profile do these volunteers have? • What opportunities are there for participation? • Mentoring projects? • Participation of newcomers? • Does the municipality have figures regarding the participation of newcomers in activities and events? • Natural meeting points? • Which public holidays are actively being celebrated (events) by the municipality at the local level? • Which other activities (e. g. annually) or being organised by the municipality of the regional/national government? • How is the civic integration process organised? At the national/regional, local level? **Practical tips:** • Try to mobilise/activate people with a migration background • Search for starting points with existing initiatives: New Year's drink? Winter market? …? Linking with existing initiatives will be particularly useful if you have fewer resources. • Invest in initiatives at district, neighbourhood and street level: Intergroup Contact theory! • Use the capacity and strength of your own organisation (e.g. potential

	fill in an important gap and are an important safety net upon arrival, but their efforts (and therefore the thresholds/needs) remain under the radar. Many of these bridge figures eventually drop out because they do not receive support/coaching for this and often take this on in addition to a full time job.	mentors/volunteers)
		• An accessible and multi-use public domain can stimulate intergroup contact.
		
		Good practice examples:
		
		1) Mechelen
		• Maanrock (annually music festival) and the active participation of refugees from the collective shelter as volunteers pre, during and after the event
		• Project Bijt in Mechelen (2011)
		• Project Samen Lopen
		• Project Samen Inburgeren (2012): this buddyproject we started in 2012 with resources from the regional government, until 2014, from then onwards we structurally imbedded this project with regular resources.
		• Day of the volunteer (annually)
		• Mini-Win-Win-Fair (2012): a trade fair, through a supply and demand wall, associations could exchange material or services with each other.
		• *E.g. a neighbourhood committee organises a street party and is looking for a dance group to perform. An Armenian dance group is interested and negotiates with the neighbourhood committee. In exchange for a dance performance, they can use the neighbourhood committee's tent for one of their activities free of charge.*
		• *Reading sessions for children in the library e.g. Vilvoorde homework help in the library, study places for vulnerable pupils in the library, language learning and language points in the library, play cases with community and youth workers*
		• "Aan Tafel op de Haverwerf" during Week van de smaak (2007-2010):
		   ○ A multicultural food market, in cooperation with, but not solely, ethnic-cultural organisations during this annually National culinary event which usually focuses on traditional, artisanal, sustainable food and Slow Food.
		   ○ The annually National "neighbour's day" (different Flemish cities,

		including Mechelen): streets in Mechelen can subscribe in spring for this event, they receive basic support (food, drinks, material) from the city to put out their chair that day and sit outside to meet your neighbours. Few years ago we started also with a winter edition of neighbour's day.
5 **Working on imaging of citizens with migration background** •	Positive and connecting stories (and language use) form the conditions that make positive social contact possible. Social contact helps to reduce fears, stereotypes and distrust of others. 'Imagined contacts' can also make such fears and stereotypes disappear. This is an important insight that demonstrates the importance of a positive/ nuanced image of religious and multicultural diversity. Representation at all levels and domeins in society is important: communication, HR, literature, culture, media,… Pay attention to diversity in content and image. Focus on similarities. It is a reality, treat it like that and not as something exceptional or exotic or only related to specific events or international days, normalise it. Be sensitive to the essence and importance of the use of specific terms and words.	**Questions:** • Which communication channels are available to you? City magazine? Website? Other? • How is your relationship with the local media? • Is your communication service familiar with inclusive communication? • Do you work with a focus- of feedback group to test your material? - **Practical tips:** • Use authentic and recognisable images • Focus on similarities not on differences: do not focus on one sub-identity such as gender, age or ethnic culture, but find out what your target group has in common and use this in your image creation. This way, you will appeal to as large a target group as possible. • Avoid clichés and offensive messages • Storytelling can be a very welcome communication strategy and methodology: tell personal stories that focus on connection. • Test your material with your target group • Be aware of polarisation – work out a communication strategy to counter this • Start with harvesting low-hanging fruit, go for the quick wins in the first place and communicate about these successes (internally and externally) **Good practice examples:** 1) Mechelen • Project wijkelingen (van 2004 tot 2006) • https://www.nieuwsblad.be/cnt/gl1q2rto • Organisation of several information evenings

		in different neighbourhoods, • each time one of the participating "cultures" will be explained in detail. These Malinois tell where they come from, who or what they fled from and go into a dialogue with the participants. In this way, the city wanted to promote acquaintance and encounters between different cultures. • Project de mensen maken de stad (2014) 2) Others • Antwerpen – Brugge – Gent --> Tutti Partinico https://kifkif.be/cnt/artikel/de-echte-betekenis-van-diversiteit-inclusie-en-representatie-7281

IncluCities Specific Benchmark 3 on "Mobilising citizens to develop tools for decent employment and entrepreneurship for migrants and refugees"

The city ensures that it provides opportunities for citizens to help develop tools to provide decent employment and entrepreneurship for migrants and refugees.

Version 3 (9 Mar 2021)

What is a benchmark and what is its purpose?

The IncluCities-benchmarks are qualitative standards for integration policies based on best practice and normative standards from across Europe. As such, it is unlikely that a city will fully meet all of its standards. It is nevertheless a good tool for self-assessment and setting goals and a means to structure exchange and discussions between mentors & mentees.

IncluCities benchmarks consist of
1) A set of **key factors** that define the critical conditions for success in that thematic area. Each key factor is illustrated with a section **why and how** explaining why the factor is relevant and how it can be addressed, **guiding questions** to help a city to find out whether it has the key factor in place; **practical tips** on how to get started, where to get support etc. and **good practice examples** of how other cities have met the key factor.
2) **Context factors** that can affect the ability of a city to meet the benchmark and help to specify the context in which the city operates.

All five IncluCities benchmarks will be adapted based on the experience of using them in IncluCities, and be completed with tips and good practice as the project is implemented. This will lead to a final version at the end of the project.

Rationale and scope of this benchmark

- Migrants often struggle to find appropriate work or business opportunities, and cities thus fail to realise the "migrant advantage" because migrant skills and qualifications are not used well
- For more skilled or professional work, migrants also lack access to the networks and contacts that are used by others to find opportunities

- Cities have many residents who would like to promote migrant welcome and opportunity but may not have opportunities to do so
- Local labour markets often struggle to fill skills gaps
- City administrations generally are keen to promote initiatives that build solidarity and bring people together, and are not seen as privileging one group over another

Context factors for this benchmark

To be completed

Key Factors	Why is this important and How might you go about it?	
1 **Labour market and business opportunities analysis**	In order to assist migrants to train, find opportunities or develop businesses the city needs to know what local labour market needs are and what possible businesses migrants may be placed to develop. The city may get this information from its own economic development or planning activities, from local chambers of commerce, through periodic enquiries or investigations or by commissioning it e.g. from local universities.	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • What information is available about the local labour market? • What information is available about possible business opportunities in the city? • Does this include options to develop new small and medium enterprises? • If up to date information is not available about these, how can we get this information? • Who else in our cities may have useful information to contribute
2 **Network with local businesses**	The city needs to secure the support of local businesses and use the intelligence they supply to shape programmes, projects and interventions Most cities have formal and/or informal business networks, with which the city may develop relationships.	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • What business associations exist in the city? • What relationships does the city have with them? • How can the city develop and strengthen these relationships? • Can the city discuss initiatives with these associations? • If not, how can it develop the space to do this?

3 **Good links between the city and migrants and their organisations**	Good links with migrants and their organisations enables the city to • Find out about the skills and potential of migrants • Be informed of changes in migrant populations and demographies • Recruit suitable migrants to programmes • Ensure programmes are tailored to real and understood needs The city may have an existing mechanism for this, via a migrant consultative council or a coordinating body. Where this exists, the city can seek to open discussions about how they can provide the information the city needs. Where no such mechanism exists, cities can explore setting one up. It may be helpful to start with a less formal meeting place, which will allow the participants to explore what level of organisation and involvement is appropriate. This will also allow the city to exchange information and ideas with migrant residents	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Is there a migrant council or coordinating body in the city? • Does it allow the city to consult it about migrant skills and demographies? • Can it help recruit migrants to employment and entrepreneurship programmes? • How does the city work with the migrant or consultative body to develop, shape and improve its programmes? • If there is no migrant council or consultative body: can the city bring migrant community leaders together informally? • Can this eventually develop into a more formal body? Or at least meet regularly to provide feedback and intelligence?
4 **Opportunities to recruit citizens who want to promote migrant integration and are willing to volunteer their expertise**	Offering skills and time is a practical expression of solidarity with migrants and allows citizens to be personally involved in promoting migrant integration. The city may have an existing volunteer bureau, or have an NGO that recruits volunteers to deploy across the city. Where this does not exist, the city may need to conduct a recruitment campaign for project	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Does the city have a volunteer bureau or similar? • Do NGOs in the city recruit, train and support volunteers? • Can the city, maybe in conjunction with NGOs, run a recruitment campaign for volunteers who want to work on migrant integration? • Can the city seek to recruit volunteers with

	volunteers. Local NGOs may be able to help with this The opportunity to work with migrants may attract new volunteers, including migrants themselves.	particular knowledge of useful areas of employment and entrepreneurship? • How will such volunteers be supported and trained?
5 **Support for volunteer mentors**	One very effective way to use citizens' skills and goodwill is as mentors for migrants entering the labour market or going into business. The project to improve migrant labour market and local economic integration can thus draw on a wide range of local skills, goodwill and networks. The support for the volunteer mentors should be integral to the project, and offer • Induction that explains the role of migrants and refugees in the city • Matching of mentors with mentees (this needs to be sensitive to gender, age, etc as well as matching common areas of interest and availability) • Help if mentors encounter problems with the mentoring relationship Opportunities for mentors to feed back on the project and offer suggestions for improvement or development	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Can the city provide a simple framework to support volunteer mentors? E.g. regular meetings with project leads • Do volunteer mentors have an induction programme? • What are the criteria for matching mentors to mentees? • How can mentors feed back into the project? • How can mentors comment on and improve the project?
6 **Mechanism for exchange of information between employers, officials who support business development and**	Any programme to enable migrants to enter the labour market or become entrepreneurs needs up to date and good quality information about the locality's needs, opportunities and constraints. The city may already have a mechanism for collating labour market and local economic development information, that	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Who holds information about labour market needs in the city? • Who holds information about business development needs in the city? • How often is this collected and in what form? • Who collates this information and uses it to inform the mentors or the project?

those deploying and supporting possible mentors	simply needs to be processed and passed on to mentors. If not, then one can be established by setting up a regular reporting process (e.g. quarterly) and then passing this on as a briefing.	
7 **A programme to support migrants into employment or entrepreneurship that is focused on decent employment and opportunities**	the aim is not simply to ensure migrants are working but also that their skills and aptitudes are fully utilised so that they do not undercut labour market standards or become trapped in poor quality low paid work. The programme needs to establish at the start what constitutes decent employment and opportunities, and review it regularly using the intelligence collected.	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • What are local decent wage levels? • What are the minimum employment conditions that are decent? • How does the programme ensure that it is preparing migrants for decent employment and entrepreneurship?

IncluCities Specific Benchmark 4 on "Supporting language learning in formal and non-formal settings"

Version 2.1 (24 Feb 2021)

Changes since version 1.0
- Incorporated feedback and good practice proposals from Brulocalis and Schaerbeek

What is a benchmark and what is its purpose?

The IncluCities-benchmarks are qualitative standards for integration policies based on best practice and normative standards from across Europe. As such, it is unlikely that a city will fully meet all of its standards. It is nevertheless a good tool for self-assessment and setting goals and a means to structure exchange and discussions between mentors & mentees.

IncluCities benchmarks consist of
1) A set of **key factors** that define the critical conditions for success in that thematic area. Each key factor is illustrated with a section **why and how** explaining why the factor is relevant and how it can be addressed, **guiding questions** to help a city to find out whether it has the key factor in place; **practical tips** on how to get started, where to get support etc. and **good practice examples** of how other cities have met the key factor.
2) **Context factors** that can affect the ability of a city to meet the benchmark and help to specify the context in which the city operates.

This benchmark on "Supporting language learning in formal and non-formal settings" will help to structure in particular the second part of the mentoring scheme Brulocalis / Schaerbeek and Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments / Jelgava. It should help them to define a focus for the mentoring scheme (which does not have to cover the whole benchmark, but should be covered by it), structure the mentoring visits, identify good practice.
All five IncluCities benchmarks will be adapted based on the experience of using them in IncluCities, and be completed with tips and good practice as the project is implemented. This will lead to a final version at the end of the project.

Rationale and scope of this benchmark

Being able to express oneself in the host society's official language/s is one of the most important, if not the single most important step in the integration process. Language skills are a pre-condition for full participation and influence many other domains, such as work, education and social interaction.

Many national and regional governments have set up programmes which support language learning, often in a package with civic education. While these programmes are an important resource for language learning, some of them do not seem to be flexible and specific enough to meet the needs of different target groups and life situations. In addition to that, access to such programmes is often conditional on certain types of residence status and therefore not accessible for all migrants.

From this background, cities as places of arrival and city councils as administration closest to their citizens have a role to act as coordinator of the existing offer for language learning and as facilitator to ensure that support is available to all. This involves providing information and orientation, helping migrants to find the best offer for their needs and, where necessary, ensuring that additional language learning opportunities are created to address unmet needs. The focus of this benchmark is language-learning opportunities for adult migrants in both formal, classroom type settings and in non-formal contexts, e.g. through volunteering. It includes face-to-face and ICT-based support. While policies supporting newly arrived children are equally important, they are not covered here as they usually happen within schools, involve different actors and learning and therefore deserve a separate reflection.

Context factors for this benchmark

The following are a list of factors that can affect the ability of your city to meet the benchmark. You can refer to these to explain a particular context in which the city operates in reaching the standard set out by the benchmark.

- Distribution of competences and relations across levels of government
- Existence of a national or regional policy framework for integration that is supportive of the city's integration goals
- Migrant Population structure (educational background, qualifications, demographics, forced migrants)
- City council's budget and human resources
- Existence of civil society language learning support initiatives
- Human Resources available in the city council
- Degree of coordination with other relevant stakeholders, including multi-level coordination

Key Factors	Why is this important and How might you go about it?	
1 **Leadership and public commitment**	Political leaders are in a key position to stress the importance of all residents being able to communicate in the city's official language/s for equal opportunities. By making the support of language acquisition a priority, and stressing why it is an investment that will generate many positive returns (e.g. in terms of labour market integration or social interaction) leaders can ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to this goal and mobilise other actors to participate in a collective effort to imrpove language-learning. Leadership and commitment do not need to be limited to migrants or the city's official language/s but can also include supporting multilingualism or the acquisitions of migrants' mother tongues, in particular for their children.	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Do political leaders publicly stress the importance of supporting learning of the city's official languages? • Do political leaders provide arguments (internally and to the wider public) why this is important and why the city should have a role in this? **Good practice examples:** • Utrecht/Manchester: cities' engagement for multilingualism?
2 **Mapping language learning needs and opportunities**	The city's role in ensuring access to language support for migrants should be based on evidence on language learning needs across different migrant profiles. A needs assessment that draws on the perspective of migrants can identify aspirations, learning profiles, available time with regard to language acquisition and perceptions of the existing course offer. Through mapping these learning needs against an inventory of language learning opportunities, support gaps and	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Have you consulted with migrants on their language learning needs and aspirations and their perception of the existing language support offer? • Do you have an inventory of stakeholders and existing language learning opportunities offered in your city by different actors? **Good practice examples:** • CAMIM project (House of Immersion): for

	coordination/information needs can be identified, which can help in defining the city's role and measures that should be prioritised.	mapping language-learning needs with migrants and stakeholders. • The municipality of Schaerbeek has a publicly available <u>list of courses</u> for alphabetisation and French language learning from different providers.
3 **Defining actions to support language acquisition**	The needs analysis should lead to a set of actions to foster language acquisition that is properly resourced to ensure their implementation. This can be done within the context of a wider integration strategy or in whatever form is most appropriate to the city's governance system.	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Have you defined a series of actions to foster language - learning including resources and responsible actors? • Are these actions part of a policy document that has been adopted by the city council?
4 **Coordination between providers of language learning opportunities**	The city should take the role as a coordinator of the language learning offer that is available for its migrant citizens, regardless of who provides courses. Where other levels of government and non-governmental actors offer language learning opportunities, it is crucial to take a coordinating role with these actors, and the language learning offers they provide. This can take the form of a coordination body or round table on language learning support with all actors involved to steer and improve the existing offer. Coordination can also lead to designing a local service centralising information and advice about language learning opportunities based on individual needs to facilitate access to the best language support measures of all providers.	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Are you in contact with the actors implementing language learning opportunities in your city to understand their offer and coordinate with them? **Good practice examples:** • ZAM Nuremberg – ZAM is a one-stop-shop for people with migration experience, which includes a local entry point for language provision which includes local language course providers, the local branch of the federal employment office, the regional immigration agency and the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, which is responsible for the Federal Integration Courses. • Schaerbeek: VIA has developed a <u>video</u> showing the different steps of the integration path without words, so that anyone can understand the different steps, including the need to learn the local language.
5	Flexible modes of delivery are	**Questions to help you assess whether this**

Flexible delivery in time and space of language learning support to adapt to different life circumstances	crucial for adapting language learning support to the very diverse and often precarious life circumstances of newcomers - especially of the most disadvantaged and hard to reach groups. Language learning opportunities should be flexible in adapting to language learners' different time budgets and cover different times of the day to make them combinable with work and care-duties. Combining traditional courses or learning approaches with online learning (blended learning) is another way to make language learning more adaptable to different life circumstances. The places where language learning takes place should be easy to reach and include neighbourhoods where migrants settle. Conducting language courses in facilities with low entry thresholds (e.g. libraries) can reduce barriers; holding them in childcare facilities or schools can be an effective means to reach persons with child care duties.	**key factor is in place in your city:** • Is language learning support in your city provided in different neighbourhoods, at a wide variety of places, including in combination with other services? • Are courses held at different times of the day (e.g. during school hours and in the evening?) • Are there courses for different time budgets? • Can people with care duties realistically attend courses? **Good practice examples:** • Rucksack schools providing language learning for parents at their children's schools • VIA Schaerbeek works with different language operators (school partners) in different parts of the city to ensure that newcomers have access to a school facility that is close to their home (ex. less than 45 min). The partners also cover different time schedules (day-evening);
6 **Providing for different learning types and goals**	Migrants have a variety of educational and professional backgrounds, prior experience with language learning and linguistic backgrounds. All of these have an effect on their needs with regard to how learning should be organised. This means that the course offer should cover different learning speeds and levels, including entry-courses for people who cannot read or write or are unfamiliar with the Latin alphabet. On the other hand, language-learning opportunities	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Does language learning support in your city cover all levels, from basic to advanced? • Does the course organisation take into account different types of learners and learning speeds? • Are there specific entry courses for people without reading or writing skills, or who are unfamiliar with the Latin alphabet? **Good practice examples:** • Schaerbeek: VIA provides classes at different entry levels, as many newcomers need

		alphabetisation to start, requiring 1 or 2 years to acquire this competence. Beyond A2 some language courses may be situated in other parts of the city and may demand tuition fees.
7 **Combining language training with volunteer jobs, job placements and employment**	In the context of active labour market policies and in cooperation with employers, cities can provide (further) language training for workers with a specific professional/vocational profile or aspiration. Such training can be organised together with employers and employer associations as well as volunteer initiatives and be combined with relevant professional training, job placements or employment. This is a particularly useful option in labour market sectors with shortages in your city. It can also help to overcome doubts of employers about whether migrants have sufficient language skills to fill vacancies.	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Have you liaised with local employers to assess their interest in supporting on-the-job language training for migrants? • Have you explored a vocational language-training offer combined with professional training in sectors with shortages in your city? **Good practice examples:** • Brussels region: The regional office for employment Actiris provides language classes linked to professional training (language learning according to the professional skills). VIA links up newcomers to these classes when they correspond to their needs. • UIA Birmingham –language training for future health workers
8 **Supporting volunteering and non-formal language learning**	Volunteer work offers a great potential for language learning. It can reach migrants who are not reached by or available for classroom-based learning and can provide highly personalised support. There are a variety of settings in which volunteering can support language learning, including within existing services (e.g. drop-in cafés, community centres, cooking clubs, social support in working with migrants in the education and health sectors). Volunteers can take roles such as language buddies and mentors, tutors for small groups or	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Are migrants in your city aware of opportunities? • Are volunteer initiatives making efforts to engage migrants? • Have you explored, together with volunteering initiatives how to support language learning in these initi9atives? **Practical tips:** • The Erasmus project VIME developed training modules for language volunteers and other support material which provides a good basis for getting started with supporting language learning through volunteering

	assistants/coaches in formal language courses and carry language learning into the real world. In order to embrace this potential, cities can: - run campaigns to recruit language volunteers, also within wider volunteering initiatives - initiate a local network for language volunteering to coordinate offers - provide an information service for non-formal language learning opportunities (this can also be part of a wider service facilitating access to language learning opportunities) - provide training for language volunteers together with volunteer and language learning organisations - help organisations to monitor and improve language learning outcomes.	**Good practice examples:** • In the project EIL- European Integration Languages partners experimented with "sociolinguistic workshops" for language learning in informal settings, such as a multicultural choir or cooking workshops. https://epale.ec.europa.eu/en/blog/eil-european-integration-languages • Schaerbeek CAMIM Project: improving language skills while doing volunteering activities. • UK Share my language project (ESOL brochure)
9 **Drawing on digital learning tools and blended learning**	Digital learning tools such as online learning platforms, mobile applications and massive open online courses (MOOC) can be a useful and flexible addition to face-to-face formal and non-formal learning. There is a variety of free or low-cost platforms, also specifically for refugees and migrants, which municipalities can build upon. Such platforms should ideally be "blended" with face-to-face learning in formal (e.g. with adult education centres) or non-formal settings (e.g. with volunteers).	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Have you identified quality online-learning tools which could be suitable to complement your city's offer for supporting language learning? • Do existing language learning support offers in your city already use such online learning platforms? • Which interfaces does your city need to provide to blend face-to-face learning with relevant online resources? (e.g. facilitators, technical support,…) **Practical tips:** • In order to have the best possible impact, online learning tools should not be too demanding on ICT skills and hardware and offer tutors

		Good practice examples:
		• Brulingua online language learning app for 3 official languages and English (free for Brussels Residents), initiated by Actiris employment service). • Catalonia: Parla.cat • Swedish online learning platform • Austrian online learning platform
10 **Governance / city associations improving the multi-level coordination of language learning support**	City associations are well placed to improve coordination between national and regional integration frameworks on the one side, and local policies on the other. They can communicate unmet needs in language learning support for migrants to other levels of government and lobby for adequate resources for local-level policies. Cities should use this channel to convey information about obstacles they encounter in developing an adequate local support for language learning.	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Is your city in contact (directly or via the national city association) with the relevant level of government to coordinate language learning support? • Have you made recommendations to the regional or national level (whichever is relevant) on how to improve language-learning support? **Good practice examples:** • VIA and all Bruxelles BAPA, the French language community organisation COCOF and other language course providers (e.g.. schools) have monthly meeting to define problems and identify solutions according to the regional decree in a coordinated manner. • Dutch cities lobbying for change of state government's inburgering policy
11 **Monitoring & Evaluation**	Courses should be regularly monitored and evaluated to ensure they are fit for purpose, benefit participants, and demonstrate improvement over time. Most providers of language courses can assess whether priority groups have been reached, and whether targets for recruitment, completions and achievements have been met, which can be compared over time. Progress in individual language learning can be measured using frameworks like Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) for language learning. Beyond the question whether course objectives have been met, the benefits of language courses	**Questions to help you assess whether this key factor is in place in your city:** • Is the city aware of unmet language learning needs of its migrant population? • Is your city aware of how the present language learning support measures work? • Which quantitative and qualitative indicators do you use for evaluating this? • Can the city demonstrate how it has used this information on improving language-learning support? **Practical tips:** • The best moment to start defining an evaluation framework is when you start thinking about a new policy, i.e. with the needs analysis (KF 2). • Use the capacity of external partners, from migrant organisations to evaluation experts to design your evaluation

	with regard to non-language integration objectives (e.g. labour market integration) are another important dimension of evaluation. Evaluation should include feedback from all stakeholders, including migrants and course participants themselves.	

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