

Regional Strategies for Inclusive Migration and Integration Practices

State-of-the-Art Report

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INVOLVIM



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A group of people holding hands in a circle, symbolizing unity and support. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent red circle on the left side.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



This report provides an extensive and detailed comparative analysis of migration and integration practices **among INVOLVIM partner regions**.

It examines the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) for each partner in depth, highlighting unique regional dynamics. The analysis emphasizes common challenges such as coordination gaps and public resistance, as well as shared opportunities like leveraging EU funding for integration programs.

Additionally, the report identifies areas of mutual learning, including stakeholder engagement, holistic integration strategies, and the development of centralized services.

Data collected from partner questionnaires were methodically analysed to illustrate socio-economic impacts, innovative solutions, and recurring barriers to successful integration, forming the basis for actionable and inclusive policy recommendations.

 Please note that this document uses words *migrant* and *immigrant* interchangeably.

The background of the slide features a grayscale photograph of several hands gently cradling a baby. The hands are positioned around the baby, with fingers visible, suggesting a protective and caring gesture. The baby's head and part of their body are visible in the center. The overall tone is soft and intimate. A large, semi-transparent red shape, resembling a stylized 'C' or a thick brushstroke, is overlaid on the right side of the image, extending from the top to the bottom.

01

**INVOLVIM
PROJECT
OVERVIEW**

INVOLVIM

Informal and Voluntary Services for Work Based Immigrants

The INVOLVIM project, funded under the Interreg Europe programme, is a transnational initiative aimed at improving regional policies and services for work-based migrants through collaborative learning and the exchange of good practices. By addressing gaps in informal and voluntary services, the project strives to foster inclusive integration frameworks tailored to local needs and challenges.

Key Objectives:

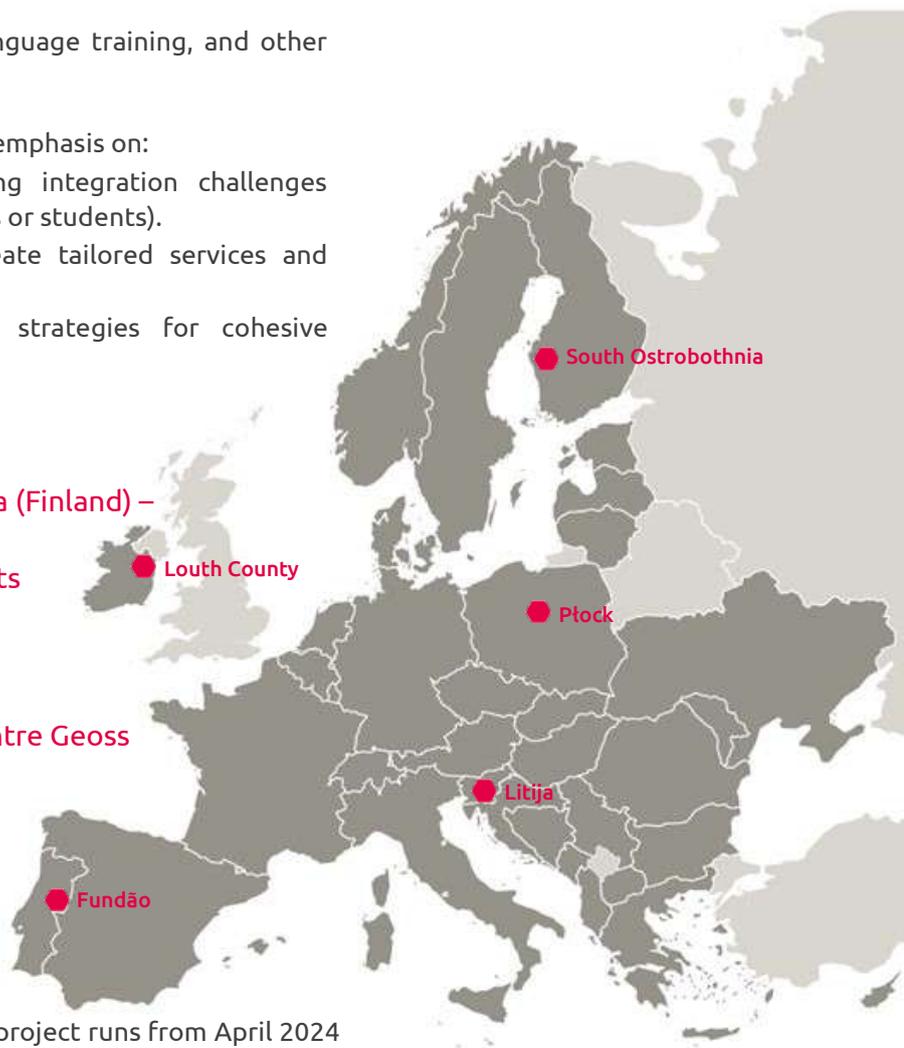
- Develop informal and voluntary support services for work-based migrants.
- Influence regional and local policy instruments to enhance integration efforts.
- Address specific needs of overlooked groups, such as migrant workers, homemakers, and retirees.
- Promote collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including public authorities, NGOs, and employers.
- Facilitate access to housing, education, language training, and other essential services.

Scope and Focus: The project places a strong emphasis on:

- Preventing social exclusion by addressing integration challenges beyond traditional categories (e.g., refugees or students).
- Engaging multiple stakeholders to co-create tailored services and solutions.
- Aligning regional efforts with EU-level strategies for cohesive integration policies.

Participating Partners:

1. Regional Council of South Ostrobothnia (Finland) – Lead Partner.
2. Municipality of Fundão (Portugal) and its associated policy authority, CCDRC.
3. Louth County Council (Ireland).
4. City of Płock (Poland).
5. Municipality of Litija and Education Centre Geoss (Slovenia).



Project Timeline and Budget: The INVOLVIM project runs from April 2024 to June 2028, with a total budget of €998,889. It facilitates knowledge sharing, policy alignment, and localised service development, leveraging EU funds to optimise long-term integration outcomes.



02

**PARTNER
REGION
PROFILES**

2.1 REGIONAL COUNCIL OF SOUTH OSTROBOTHNIA

Inhabitants: 190,539

South Ostrobothnia: Bridging Demographic Gaps through Migration

South Ostrobothnia is a rural region with a strong agricultural tradition. Facing population decline, it has embraced migration as a means of economic revitalization. Migrants are integrated into key sectors such as manufacturing, agriculture, and healthcare, addressing critical labour shortages.



Focus in INVOLVIM: South Ostrobothnia is focused on refining its integration framework to improve employment accessibility, cultural inclusion, and community cohesion. The region aims to enhance collaboration between local businesses, public institutions, and migrant communities to create long-term opportunities for newcomers.



Migrant Population: The region hosts 8,125 migrants from over 100 countries, including Ukrainians, Estonians, and Russians. These individuals play crucial roles in the local economy but face challenges related to language and cultural differences.



Socio-Economic Context: South Ostrobothnia's economy relies on SMEs and traditional industries. Migrants provide essential labour, but the region's rural character presents unique challenges in service accessibility and public awareness.



Challenges and Needs: Improving municipal coordination and providing tailored language and cultural orientation programs are critical priorities.



Local Strategies: South Ostrobothnia has launched targeted employment programs, vocational training initiatives, and language courses to support migrants in gaining economic independence. Community engagement projects are also being expanded to foster inclusivity.



Distribution of Competencies and Funding: Funding is primarily sourced from national programs, with EU contributions supplementing efforts to improve integration infrastructure.



Good Practices and Elements to Share: The region's low-threshold immigration service model and partnerships between public and private sectors provide useful insights for other areas addressing demographic decline through migration.



SWOT



STRENGTHS

A robust network of low-threshold immigration services

Strong partnerships between public institutions and local businesses to facilitate employment.

Active community-based initiatives promoting cultural exchange and inclusion.

Proactive municipal leadership addressing labor market gaps.

WEAKNESSES

Limited availability of affordable housing in rural areas.

Cultural resistance to diversity among some segments of the population

Fragmented coordination between smaller municipalities within the region.

OPPORTUNITIES

Expanding the use of public-private partnerships to enhance job placement services.

Developing targeted language and cultural orientation programs for new arrivals

Leveraging national and EU funding to address infrastructure gaps.

THREATS

Aging population creating additional economic and social pressures.

Resistance to policy changes promoting inclusivity.

Overburdening of existing public services due to growing migrant needs

2.2 MUNICIPALITY OF FUNDÃO

Inhabitants: 26,503

Fundão: The Embracing Land of Opportunity and Integration.

Fundão, a municipality in the Beira Baixa region, has redefined itself as a hub for innovation and integration. Historically, Fundão faced significant population decline due to rural exodus and an aging population. However, proactive policies have transformed it into a thriving community that balances economic growth with social inclusion. The city's historical charm, combined with modern infrastructure, attracts talent from diverse fields such as ICT, agriculture, and creative industries. Its welcoming environment for migrants reflects its strategic vision for demographic and economic revitalization.



Focus in INVOLVIM: Fundão aims to enhance its best practices in migrant integration, particularly in housing access, employment strategies, and educational adaptation. Through INVOLVIM, Fundão seeks to consolidate its Migration Centre as a national and international model while addressing social inclusion challenges in small urban areas.



Migrant Population: The migrant population includes 3,737 individuals from 73 countries. Key groups are Brazilians, Romanians, and Ukrainians. While many are highly skilled ICT professionals, others are employed in seasonal agricultural roles, contributing to the local economy's diversification.



Socio-Economic Context: Fundão's economy is bolstered by the "Move to Fundão" initiative, which incentivizes businesses to relocate to the municipality. The tech industry, supported by a growing talent pool of migrants, has become a vital sector. However, the local housing market struggles to meet the demand, and transport infrastructure requires further investment to connect rural areas effectively.



Challenges and Needs: Administrative inefficiencies, housing shortages, and the need for better public transportation are critical challenges. Social integration efforts must also address cultural barriers to ensure long-term inclusion.



Local Strategies: The Migration Centre provides holistic services, including language classes tailored to professional needs, employment placement, and cultural activities. Collaborative projects with NGOs and private enterprises strengthen its outreach.



Distribution of Competencies and Funding: Municipal funding complemented by European Union resources such as AMIF, ensures the sustainability of Fundão's integration initiatives.



Good Practices and Elements to Share: The city's business relocation incentives and personalized migrant support services, are exemplary. Its use of ICT to streamline administrative processes offers valuable lessons for other municipalities.



SWOT



STRENGTHS

A well-established Migration Centre offering comprehensive services tailored to diverse migrant needs.

Strong municipal leadership committed to inclusive policies.

Proactive initiatives like "Move to Fundão" that attract businesses and talent.

Integration of migrants into key economic sectors, including ICT and agriculture.

WEAKNESSES

Persistent housing shortages limit the municipality's capacity to accommodate new arrivals.

Limited public transportation options, particularly for rural areas, affect accessibility to services.

Dependency on external funding for large-scale initiatives.

OPPORTUNITIES

Potential to become a national and EU model for rural migration integration.

Expanding partnerships with the private sector to create targeted employment opportunities.

Leveraging EU funding to develop sustainable housing solutions.

THREATS

Resource constraints that may hinder the expansion of services.

Community resistance or backlash against perceived preferential treatment for migrants.

Vulnerability to shifts in national or EU migration policies that could impact funding.

2.3 LOUTH COUNTY COUNCIL

Inhabitants: 139,100

Louth: A Strategic Migration Hub in a Border Region

Louth County, located on Ireland's eastern border, serves as a strategic gateway between Dublin and Belfast. This geographic advantage has positioned it as a critical hub for migration. The urban centers of Dundalk and Drogheda are vibrant, cosmopolitan spaces where migration has enriched the local culture and economy. The region has also become a sanctuary for refugees, particularly those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine.



Focus in INVOLVIM: Louth aims to refine its migrant support network, ensuring better inter-agency coordination, outreach to undocumented workers, and expanding services for refugees. The county is particularly focused on reinforcing public perceptions of migration and countering misinformation.



Migrant Population: The county hosts 20,000 migrants, including 2,700 Ukrainian refugees. The majority are engaged in construction, healthcare, and manufacturing, though some face difficulties accessing long-term employment.



Socio-Economic Context: The county benefits from a robust economy with employment opportunities in manufacturing, tech, and logistics. However, misinformation and limited outreach to undocumented migrants remain barriers to inclusion.



Challenges and Needs: Key needs include better coordination across agencies, targeted public awareness campaigns, and expanded housing solutions.



Local Strategies: The county has implemented targeted policies to improve housing availability, expand language training, and engage local communities in intercultural initiatives. The Community Integration Forum provides a platform for stakeholders to collaborate on addressing migration-related challenges effectively.



Distribution of Competencies and Funding: Louth's integration efforts are supported by national funding schemes and EU contributions. Sustainable financing remains a key priority to ensure long-term support for migrant communities.



Good Practices and Elements to Share: The Community Integration Forum and Louth's holistic approach to service provision can serve as models for other regions looking to enhance migrant support mechanisms.



SWOT



STRENGTHS

Comprehensive Joint Migrant Integration Strategy providing a clear framework for action.

Robust inter-agency collaboration through the Community Integration Forum (CIF).

Diverse economy offering migrants opportunities in manufacturing, tech, and logistics sectors.

Strong political commitment to inclusivity and anti-racism initiatives.

WEAKNESSES

Limited housing stock constrains the ability to accommodate migrants.

Persistent misinformation and negative public perceptions of migration.

Gaps in outreach to undocumented migrants and those with precarious legal status.

OPPORTUNITIES

Expansion of "one-stop-shop" services to reduce administrative barriers.

Increased public awareness campaigns to counter misinformation and foster social cohesion.

Collaboration with NGOs and businesses to create innovative integration programs.

THREATS

Over-reliance on short-term funding for critical services.

Rising housing costs could exacerbate social tensions.

Potential backlash from local communities due to perceived competition for resources.

2.4 CITY OF PŁOCK

Inhabitants: 110,495

Płock: Managing Rapid Migration Growth in an Industrial City

Płock, located in central Poland along the Vistula River, is a historic city known for its strong industrial base, particularly in the petrochemical sector. In recent years, it has experienced a substantial demographic transformation, driven by the influx of more than 10,000 migrants, primarily from Ukraine and other non-EU countries. This increase in migration has played a crucial role in addressing labor shortages but has also presented significant integration challenges. As one of Poland's key economic centers, Płock now faces the complex task of balancing economic growth with effective social policies that promote inclusion, fair labor conditions, and adequate housing solutions.



Focus in INVOLVIM: The city is structuring policies to ensure fair employment, housing access, and social inclusion. Migration-sensitive policies are being integrated into the Sustainable Development Strategy, strengthening public-private partnerships for sustainable employment pathways.



Migrant Population: Migrants constitute 10% of Płock's population, mainly employed in industrial sectors. However, many face precarious housing due to private market constraints and require legal assistance for documentation and social benefits.



Socio-Economic Context: Płock's economy heavily depends on migrant labour in petrochemicals and construction. Despite job availability, bureaucratic barriers in residence permits and employment rights complicate integration. The city is working to streamline these processes..



Challenges and Needs: Płock struggles with fragmented coordination between stakeholders, making migration management inefficient. Public perception of migrants remains a challenge, requiring awareness campaigns. Complex administrative procedures delay access to essential services and make it necessary for adopting informal approach to integration. Proper needs analysis and local potential mapping is crucial to provide effective support. Addressing these issues will help build a more inclusive and resilient migration framework.



Local Strategies: Płock is incorporating migration-focused policies into urban planning and labor strategies, ensuring access to housing and employment while fostering community participation. Legal aid services are being expanded to support migrants.



Distribution of Competencies and Funding: While the city covers immediate needs, national and EU funding plays a crucial role in sustaining long-term integration programs, including housing and vocational training.



Good Practices and Elements to Share: Płock's effective crisis response for Ukrainian refugees highlights best practices in emergency coordination. Its integration of migration into urban planning and digitalization of administrative processes provide replicable models for other cities.



SWOT



STRENGTHS

Resilient municipal services capable of managing crisis situations.

Strong political commitment to integrating migration into the Sustainable Development Strategy

Experience in providing large-scale humanitarian aid during the Ukraine crisis.

Emerging collaborations with NGOs to support refugee integration.

WEAKNESSES

Limited tools for effective communication between local NGOs and municipal authorities

Insufficient resources to address the growing needs of diverse migrant groups.

Gaps in data collection and analysis regarding migrant demographics and needs.

OPPORTUNITIES

Leveraging the economic potential of migrants to drive urban development.

Expanding local services to support long-term integration

Developing public awareness campaigns to reduce stereotypes and foster inclusion.

THREATS

Deeply entrenched stereotypes among local communities.

Limited capacity of existing public services to handle growing demand.

Challenges in aligning national and local policies on migration.

2.5 MUNICIPALITY OF LITIJA

Inhabitants: 15,644

Litija: A Small Municipality with Big Aspirations for Integration

Litija, a small municipality in central Slovenia, has faced demographic decline and labor shortages in recent years. To address this, it has seen a growing influx of migrants, mainly from Bosnia, Kosovo, and Serbia, who contribute to key sectors such as construction, manufacturing, and services. However, the municipality lacks a formal migration policy, relying heavily on NGOs and local initiatives for integration support. Despite these challenges, Litija has the potential to become a model for smaller municipalities aiming to build structured migration frameworks.



Focus in INVOLVIM: Litija aims to develop a coordinated stakeholder network to improve migrant support services, focusing on employment, education, and social inclusion. Through INVOLVIM, the municipality seeks to adopt best practices and establish long-term integration strategies.



Migrant Population: Migrants make up approximately 6% of Litija's population, with around 940 foreign residents. The majority work in manual labor sectors, particularly in construction and agriculture. Many rely on NGO support for language training, job placement, and housing assistance due to the absence of a formal integration framework.



Socio-Economic Context: Litija's economy is based on small businesses, trade, and agriculture, with migrants playing a vital role in filling labor gaps. However, limited access to stable jobs, affordable housing, and administrative support makes integration challenging.



Challenges and Needs: The absence of a migration strategy results in fragmented integration efforts. Housing shortages, high rental costs, and bureaucratic hurdles complicate settlement for migrants. Social perceptions of migration also need to be addressed through community engagement and awareness initiatives.



Local Strategies: Despite lacking a formal migration policy, Litija has introduced language courses, cultural events, and employment programs. The municipality is working to expand legal aid and strengthen partnerships between businesses and migrant workers to improve economic integration.



Distribution of Competencies and Funding: Integration initiatives rely on municipal and EU funding, but securing long-term financial support remains a challenge. Strengthening national and regional partnerships is essential for sustainability.



Good Practices and Elements to Share: Litija's community-driven approach to integration demonstrates the effectiveness of grassroots initiatives. Strong NGO involvement in migrant support services, particularly in language education and social inclusion, serves as a model for small municipalities with limited resources.



SWOT



STRENGTHS

Active NGOs with experience in fostering cultural exchange and social inclusion.

Political willingness from the municipal leadership to prioritize migration issues.

Small-scale but impactful initiatives like language courses and cultural activities..

Strong connections to regional development agencies that facilitate project funding.

WEAKNESSES

Lack of a formal integration strategy or dedicated resources for migrant support.

Fragmented coordination among local stakeholders.

Limited awareness among residents about the benefits of migration.

OPPORTUNITIES

Leveraging EU funding to develop systematic support services.

Establishing a publicly recognized stakeholder network to coordinate efforts.

Enhancing partnerships with private sector employers to address labor market needs.

THREATS

Public skepticism and prejudices toward migrants.

Resistance from specific community groups to integration initiatives.

Dependency on external funding for long-term sustainability.



03

**COMPARATIVE
ANALYSIS**



3.1 COMMON CHALLENGES

Migration integration across the INVOLVIM partner regions presents several recurring challenges. One of the most pressing issues is the **shortage of affordable housing**, particularly in Fundão and Płock, where rising rental costs and a lack of available housing options make it difficult for migrants to settle. South Ostrobothnia and Litija also report housing instability, as migrants often rely on temporary accommodations due to limited housing stock in rural areas. The housing crisis is exacerbated by insufficient government investments in social housing and restrictive rental markets that limit access for migrants.

Labor market integration remains a significant challenge across all regions. Migrants frequently struggle to secure stable employment due to language barriers, skill recognition issues, and bureaucratic complexities. In South Ostrobothnia, demand for labor is high, yet many migrants face obstacles in acquiring the necessary language proficiency to access job opportunities. Similarly, in Louth, many migrants are confined to low-wage, temporary jobs without prospects for long-term career progression, which contributes to economic instability and social exclusion.

The **fragmentation of migrant support services** is another common concern. Across all regions, migrant support services are often divided among multiple entities, including local governments, NGOs, and private organizations. This lack of

coordination leads to service gaps, inefficiencies, and difficulties in tracking and responding to migrant needs effectively. Płock, for example, is still developing its migration policies, resulting in inconsistencies in service provision and limited access to structured support.

Public perceptions and social inclusion pose ongoing challenges, particularly in Louth and Płock, where migration has occasionally been met with scepticism or resistance from local communities. Misconceptions and stereotypes about migrants can create barriers to integration, preventing social cohesion and fostering exclusion. Addressing these issues requires targeted public awareness campaigns, intercultural initiatives, and educational programs to encourage positive engagement between local and migrant communities.

Another challenge across all regions is **bureaucratic and administrative barriers**. Many migrants struggle with complex legal and documentation processes, making it difficult to obtain work permits, residence registration, and access to healthcare and education. In Fundão, Płock and Litija, migrants frequently encounter difficulties navigating these systems, leading to delays and uncertainty. Simplifying administrative procedures, offering multilingual support, and streamlining documentation processes would significantly improve migrant access to essential services

Common Challenges Overview Table

Challenge	South Ostrobothnia	Fundão	Louth	Płock	Litija
Affordable housing shortages	High	High	Medium	High	High
Labor market barriers	High	Medium	High	Medium	Medium
Fragmented migrant support services	High	Medium	Medium	High	High
Public perceptions & social inclusion	Medium	Low	High	High	Medium
Bureaucratic & administrative barriers	High	Medium	Medium	High	High

This detailed overview of common challenges demonstrates that while regions differ in their levels of difficulty, housing shortages, employment integration, and bureaucratic complexity are recurring themes across all partners. Addressing these challenges requires targeted strategies that consider local capacities, economic contexts, and governance structures.



3.2 AREAS OF SIMILARITY

Despite differences in regional policies and capacities, several key areas of similarity exist across the partner regions. One of the most evident similarities is the **recognition of employment as a fundamental pillar of migrant integration**. All regions prioritize connecting migrants with local labor markets through targeted employment programs, vocational training, and job placement services. In Fundão and Louth, these efforts are reinforced by partnerships with local businesses, while South Ostrobothnia actively recruits international workers to address labor shortages.

Another shared approach is the **importance of language acquisition** in integration policies. Language barriers are a common obstacle, and all regions have implemented language training programs tailored to migrant needs. Fundão, South Ostrobothnia, Litija and Louth have structured courses, while Płock are expanding their programs to increase accessibility.

The **role of local governance and multi-stakeholder collaboration** is also a common feature across the regions. While the degree of municipal autonomy varies, local

governments, NGOs, and private sector actors play an active role in shaping integration policies. Fundão and Louth, for example, benefit from strong local partnerships that coordinate services efficiently, while Litija and Płock rely on NGOs to fill gaps in formal support structures.

Social inclusion efforts, particularly through **community engagement initiatives**, are another area of alignment. All regions recognize the importance of fostering positive relationships between local populations and migrants. Fundão, Louth, and South Ostrobothnia emphasize cultural events and public forums as tools to encourage interaction, while Płock and Litija are developing similar initiatives to combat social isolation among migrant communities.

Finally, **EU funding and policy alignment** are critical components of migration governance across all regions. Most partners rely on European programs such as the Asylum, Migration, and Integration Fund (AMIF) to finance integration efforts, reinforcing the importance of EU-wide cooperation in shaping migration policies..

Areas of Similarity Overview Table

Area of Similarity	South Ostrobothnia	Fundão	Louth	Płock	Litija
Employment as an integration pillar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Language training programs	Yes	Yes	Yes	Developing	Yes
Multi-stakeholder collaboration	Moderate	Strong	Strong	Limited	Limited
Community engagement initiatives	Yes	Yes	Yes	Developing	Developing
EU funding & policy alignment	Yes	Yes	Yes	Limited	Limited

This comparison highlights that, while approaches and resources differ, the fundamental elements of employment access, language support, community engagement, and stakeholder collaboration are shared priorities across the partner regions. Strengthening these common strategies can enhance integration outcomes and create more cohesive, inclusive communities.



3.3 DIVERGENT APPROACHES

While the regions share common goals, their approaches to migration integration vary significantly depending on economic priorities, governance structures, and demographic contexts.

South Ostrobothnia prioritizes **economic migration** as a response to population decline, actively recruiting foreign workers and offering employment-driven incentives. Unlike other regions that focus on social integration, its policies emphasize workforce retention and business engagement. The region has developed specific employment initiatives targeted at key economic sectors, ensuring that migrants meet labor market demands.

Fundão adopts an **innovation-driven model**, leveraging its Migration Centre to centralize services, facilitate employment, and foster community engagement. Its holistic approach integrates migration policies with economic development, making it a leader in rural migrant integration. The municipality has also focused on business incentives to attract skilled migrant workers and entrepreneurs.

Louth follows a **bottom-up, partnership-based approach**, where NGOs, businesses, and government agencies

collaborate to create an integrated support system. Community forums and consultation processes are key tools in its migration governance. Rather than relying on a single centralized structure, Louth prioritizes decentralization and the empowerment of local stakeholders to provide specialized services tailored to migrant needs.

Płock is still in the early stages of migration policy development, adopting a **rapid-response model** due to the sudden influx of refugees. Its primary focus is on emergency assistance, housing, and administrative support, with long-term integration plans still evolving. Unlike other regions that have well-structured policies, Płock's approach remains reactive rather than proactive, requiring further investment in structured, sustainable migration governance.

Litija, as a small municipality, lacks a formal migration strategy and instead relies on **grassroots initiatives** led by NGOs and local volunteers. While effective on a small scale, this approach faces sustainability challenges due to inconsistent funding and limited municipal involvement. The reliance on external organizations for service provision means that access to integration programs can be inconsistent, particularly when funding is uncertain.

Divergent Approaches Overview Table

Region	Governance Approach	Key Strategies	Unique Aspects
South Ostrobothnia	Employment-first approach	Targeted employment programs, workforce retention	Migration as a tool for counteracting population decline
Fundão	Innovation-driven, centralized integration	Migration Centre, employment matching, incentives	Holistic integration model linked to economic development
Louth	Bottom-up, stakeholder-led	Local partnerships, decentralized service provision	Strong NGO and business involvement
Płock	Rapid-response, emergency-focused migration policy	Emergency housing, administrative support	Reactive model due to recent migration surges
Litija	NGO-led, grassroots initiatives	Community-based services, informal integration efforts	Small-scale integration model with limited government involvement

This analysis underscores that while regions face similar migration challenges, their responses are shaped by local socio-economic contexts and governance capacities. While some regions prioritize long-term integration through structured policies, others rely on ad-hoc or emergency measures to manage migration flows effectively.



04

**AREAS OF
COMMON
INTEREST AND
LEARNING**

4.1 HOLISTIC INTEGRATION MODELS

Holistic integration models aim to provide a comprehensive framework for migrant inclusion, addressing employment, housing, education, and social participation in a coordinated manner. Across the INVOLVIM partner regions, there are varying degrees of structured integration approaches, with Fundão and Louth leading in established models, while Litija and Płock are still developing long-term strategies.

Fundão's Migration Centre is a prime example of a holistic approach, providing one-stop access to employment support, administrative assistance, and social inclusion programs. The Centre integrates multiple services under one framework, streamlining migrant access to resources while fostering economic and social participation. **Louth** employs a **multi-stakeholder strategy**, where government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector collaborate to provide services, ensuring that migrants benefit from a wide network of coordinated support.

South Ostrobothnia, facing demographic decline, integrates migration policies directly with labour market needs, ensuring that migrants contribute to regional economic stability. This workforce-driven model focuses primarily on attracting and retaining skilled migrants to meet the demands of local industries, with vocational training programs tailored to specific sectors.

In contrast, **Litija's** approach remains largely **community-driven**, with integration efforts led by NGOs and local community groups. While this bottom-up approach provides essential social support, the absence of a formal municipal migration strategy results in inconsistencies in service provision. **Płock**, which has experienced a sudden influx of refugees, has prioritized **emergency response mechanisms** but is in the process of structuring a more sustainable integration framework.



Region	Holistic Integration Model	Key Features
South Ostrobothnia	Workforce-driven model	Labor market alignment, vocational training, demographic renewal
Fundão	Centralized Migration Centre	Employment matching, social services, legal support, cultural integration
Louth	Multi-stakeholder approach	Strong NGO involvement, public-private cooperation, employment
Płock	Reactive model	Focus on emergency services, transitional housing, evolving policy
Litija	Emerging grassroots model	Community-led initiatives, informal migrant support networks, Employment support, limited policy structure

4.2 STAKEHOLDER NETWORKS

Stakeholder engagement is fundamental for the success of migration governance, ensuring that policies and services are well-coordinated and responsive to the needs of migrants. The strength of these networks varies significantly across the INVOLVIM partner regions, affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of integration strategies.

Highly Developed Stakeholder Networks

Fundão and Louth exemplify well-developed stakeholder networks with strong partnerships among government entities, NGOs, businesses, and social service providers. These networks facilitate a structured approach to migrant support, ensuring seamless coordination between different actors. The municipalities have formal agreements with service providers, and there are regular multi-sectoral meetings to align integration efforts.

- **Fundão:** Government, businesses, social services, and educational institutions work together through the Migration Centre, which acts as a coordination hub.
- **Louth:** A diverse network involving NGOs, private sector actors, and cultural organizations ensures widespread support for migrants.



Moderately Developed Networks

South Ostrobothnia operates within a moderate collaboration framework, with stakeholder engagement focused on labor market integration. The region prioritizes partnerships with employers, vocational training providers, and local government to facilitate the entry of migrants into the workforce. However, broader social integration mechanisms, such as cultural exchange programs, are less developed.

- **South Ostrobothnia:** Partnerships are largely labor-market-driven, with active engagement from employers and workforce agencies.



Emerging and Fragmented Networks

Litija and Płock struggle with stakeholder coordination, relying heavily on external actors like NGOs and community-based organizations. In these regions, municipal governments have limited direct involvement in migration integration efforts, leading to fragmented service provision. The absence of institutionalized cooperation mechanisms means that NGOs often work independently, without clear linkages to municipal policies.

- **Litija:** Migrant support is mainly provided by NGOs and community groups, with little direct municipal intervention.
- **Płock:** Emergency response networks play a dominant role, but long-term integration strategies remain underdeveloped.

Region	Level of Stakeholder Collaboration	Key Actors Involved
South Ostrobothnia	Moderate	Labor market sector, vocational training providers, local government
Fundão	High	Government, businesses, NGOs, social services, educational institutions
Louth	High	Public-private partnerships, NGOs, migrant organizations, cultural associations
Płock	Developing	Limited engagement, emergency response networks
Litija	Low	NGOs, informal community groups, educational institutions, social and employment services

4.3 INCLUSIVE POLICY FRAMEWORKS

Inclusive policy frameworks play a critical role in ensuring that migration governance is sustainable, equitable, and aligned with both national and European directives. The INVOLVIM partner regions demonstrate varied levels of policy development, with some municipalities implementing structured, long-term integration strategies, while others rely on more fragmented, ad-hoc approaches.

Well-Structured Policy Frameworks

Fundão and Louth are leading examples of municipalities with well-structured and comprehensive migration policies. These regions have successfully integrated migration governance within their broader social, economic, and urban development strategies.

- **Fundão** has developed a robust municipal migration strategy aligned with EU and national frameworks, ensuring stable funding and institutional backing. The region has prioritized long-term migrant integration through dedicated programs focused on education, employment, and social inclusion.
- **Louth** has institutionalized its migration policies, embedding them within its local governance framework. The municipality has strong links with national migration strategies and has successfully leveraged funding from EU programs to enhance its integration efforts.

Labor Market-Driven Policies

South Ostrobothnia follows a workforce-driven approach, where migration policy is closely linked to economic planning. Migration is seen as a strategic solution to address workforce shortages, and policies focus primarily on attracting and retaining foreign workers.

The regional government collaborates with local businesses and vocational training institutions to facilitate employment-based integration. While employment pathways are well-structured, broader social inclusion mechanisms, such as cultural adaptation programs and housing support, require further development.

Developing and Fragmented Policies

Litija and Płock still face challenges in structuring their migration policies. These municipalities have yet to develop formalized frameworks and remain dependent on temporary funding and NGO-led initiatives.

- **Litija** lacks a comprehensive municipal migration policy, with most integration efforts being led by NGOs and community-based organizations. The absence of government-led coordination has resulted in inconsistencies in service provision, particularly in housing and labor market access.
- **Płock** is still in the early stages of migration policy development, with its efforts largely focused on emergency support rather than long-term integration planning. The region is gradually working towards formalizing its strategies, but gaps in municipal leadership and funding remain key barriers.



Region	Development of Policy Framework	Key Focus Areas
South Ostrobothnia	Labor-market focused	Workforce-driven migration, employment facilitation, economic stability
Fundão	Advanced	Comprehensive municipal migration strategy, long-term integration
Louth	Well-structured	Strong national/EU alignment, sustainable funding mechanisms
Płock	Developing	Emergency-focused approach, early-stage policy formalization
Litija	Limited	NGO-driven initiatives, lack of municipal coordination

This analysis demonstrates that while some regions have advanced migration governance frameworks, others are still in the process of developing structured approaches. Strengthening stakeholder networks, expanding municipal leadership in integration strategies, and aligning policies with broader frameworks will be key to ensuring sustainable migration management across all partner municipalities.



05

RECOMMENDATIONS



5.1 GOVERNANCE

Effective governance structures are crucial to ensuring that migration policies are sustainable, coordinated, and responsive to the needs of both migrants and local communities. The INVOLVIM partner regions exhibit varying levels of governance efficiency, with some municipalities demonstrating structured approaches, while others rely on fragmented strategies.

Recommendations:

- **Develop Integrated Migration Strategies:** Municipalities should adopt long-term migration governance frameworks aligned with national and EU policies, ensuring coherence in policy implementation. This includes creating specific action plans that address areas such as employment, housing, education, and social participation of migrants.
- **Establish Dedicated Migration Units:** Local governments should create specialised migration offices or coordination bodies to oversee integration strategies, reducing administrative bottlenecks and enhancing policy execution. These units can act as focal points for migration issues, facilitating communication between different departments and ensuring a cohesive approach.
- **Enhance Inter-Governmental Coordination:** Improved collaboration between local, regional, and national governments is necessary to align policies and funding mechanisms, ensuring consistency and resource efficiency. This can be achieved through regular dialogue forums and information-sharing platforms.
- **Implement Performance Monitoring Systems:** Establishing clear indicators and evaluation mechanisms can help municipalities track the impact of migration policies and adjust strategies accordingly. This includes collecting data on migrant integration and the effectiveness of implemented programmes.

5.2 DATA COLLECTION

Reliable data collection is fundamental to designing and evaluating migration policies effectively. Currently, data collection efforts vary significantly across the partner regions, with some municipalities lacking comprehensive monitoring mechanisms.

Recommendations:

- **Create Centralised Migration Databases:** Municipalities should establish unified data systems to track migrant demographics, employment trends, and social integration outcomes. This facilitates trend analysis and informed decision-making.
- **Standardise Data Collection Methods:** Adopting common methodologies aligned with EU standards will improve data comparability and facilitate evidence-based policymaking. This includes defining common indicators and using harmonised data collection tools.
- **Increase Data Transparency:** Making migration-related data accessible to policymakers, NGOs, and researchers can enhance collaboration and policy effectiveness. This can be achieved through public data portals and regular reports on migration statistics.
- **Use Digital Tools for Real-Time Monitoring:** Leveraging technology, such as GIS mapping and AI analytics, can improve the accuracy and timeliness of migration data. This allows for quicker responses to emerging trends and challenges in migrant integration.



5.3 TRAINING PROGRAMMES

Capacity-building initiatives are essential to equipping local authorities, service providers, and community organisations with the skills necessary to manage migration effectively. While some regions have developed training programmes, others lack structured approaches.

Recommendations:

- **Provide Specialised Training for Municipal Staff:** Public officials should receive training on migration governance, intercultural communication, and legal frameworks to improve service delivery. This includes workshops, seminars, and continuous professional development courses.
- **Develop Vocational and Language Training for Migrants:** Expanding employment-focused training programmes will enhance migrant employability and economic integration. This can include local language courses, as well as vocational training aligned with local labour market needs.
- **Encourage Peer Learning and Exchange Programmes:** Facilitating knowledge-sharing among municipalities can help transfer best practices and strengthen institutional capacity. This can be achieved through study visits, learning networks, and experience-sharing platforms.
- **Collaborate with Universities and Research Institutions:** Partnerships with academic institutions can provide evidence-based training modules and policy recommendations. This ensures that training programmes are informed by the latest research and best practices.

5.4 PUBLIC DIALOGUE

Public perception plays a crucial role in shaping migration policies and social cohesion. In some partner regions, negative narratives about migration persist, creating barriers to effective integration.

Recommendations:

- **Launch Awareness Campaigns:** Targeted media campaigns can help dispel myths about migration and promote positive narratives. This includes using migrant success stories and highlighting the benefits of migration to society.
- **Organise Community Engagement Initiatives:** Intercultural events, public forums, and participatory decision-making processes can encourage interaction between migrants and local communities. This promotes mutual understanding and reduces prejudices.
- **Encourage Local Leadership in Migration Discourse:** Municipal leaders should actively engage with the public to communicate the benefits of migration and counter misinformation. This can involve public speeches, community meetings, and social media engagement.
- **Develop Media Guidelines on Migration Reporting:** Working with journalists to promote responsible reporting can improve public understanding and reduce stigmatisation. This includes training sessions for media professionals and developing ethical guidelines for migration coverage.



5.5 FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Securing stable funding is a major challenge for municipalities implementing migration policies. While some regions successfully leverage EU funds, others remain dependent on short-term project funding, limiting the sustainability of integration efforts.

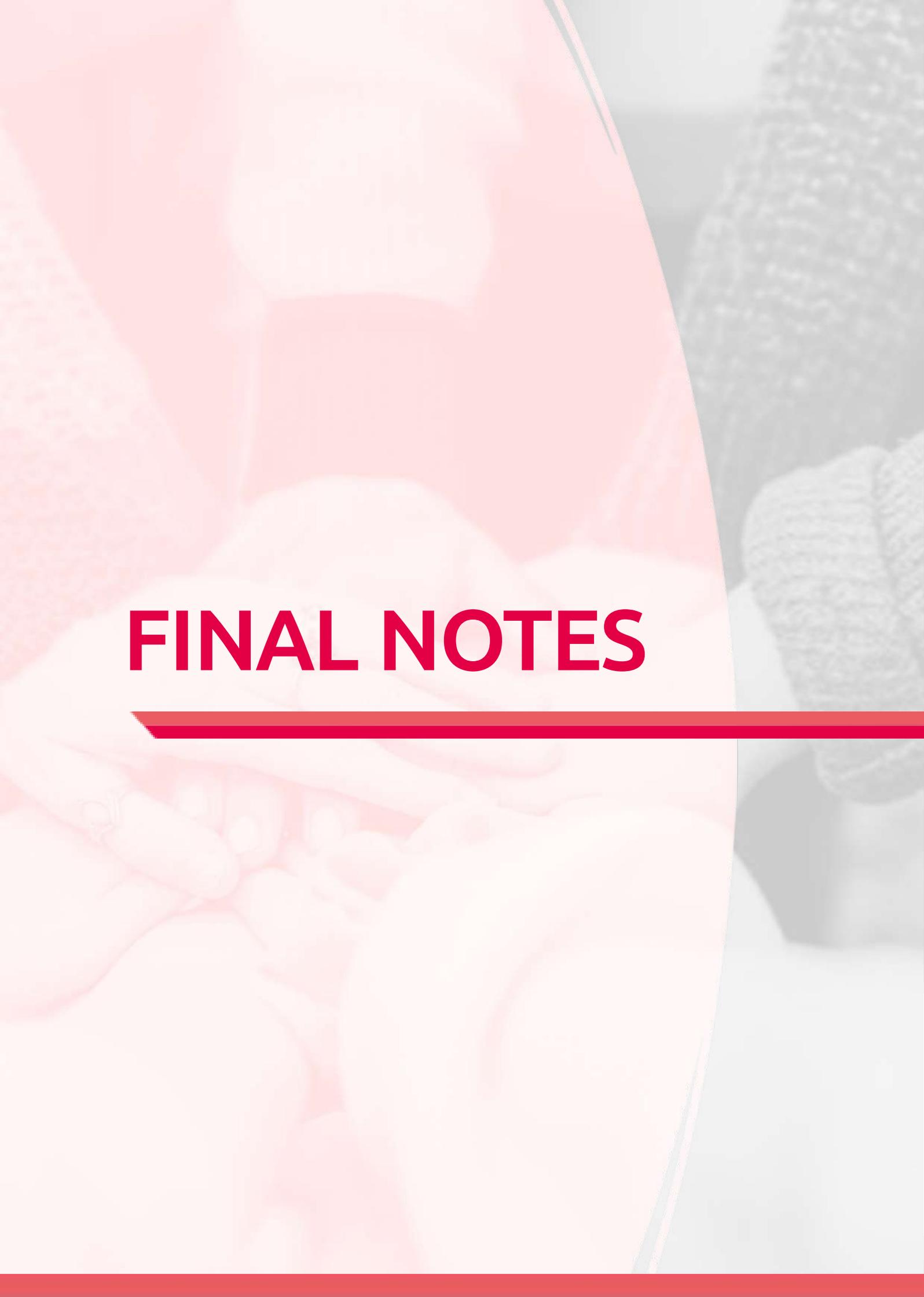
Recommendations:

- **Increase Municipal Budget Allocations for Migration Programmes:** Ensuring long-term financial commitment from local governments will reduce dependency on external funding. This demonstrates a commitment to sustainable integration efforts.
- **Enhance Access to EU and International Funds:** Municipalities should strengthen their capacity to apply for European funding mechanisms such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund (ESF). This can involve training staff in grant writing and project management.
- **Develop Public-Private Partnerships:** Engaging businesses in migration integration efforts can unlock additional financial and operational support. This can include sponsorships, joint projects, and corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Implementing these comprehensive recommendations will enable INVOLVIM partner municipalities to establish more resilient and inclusive migration systems.

By focusing on effective governance, robust data collection, targeted training programmes, proactive public dialogue, and diversified funding opportunities, municipalities can develop sustainable integration policies that benefit both migrants and local communities.

The adoption of these strategies is not merely beneficial but essential for fostering social cohesion, economic growth, and cultural enrichment within the regions. Prompt and decisive action in these areas will position municipalities to effectively manage migration challenges and harness the opportunities that a diverse population brings. The time to act is now, to ensure a harmonious and prosperous future for all community members.



FINAL NOTES



The "Regional Strategies for Inclusive Migration and Integration Practices" document has been developed with the invaluable contributions of our partners and the insights gathered from the distributed questionnaire. These inputs have laid a solid foundation for the commencement of the INVOLVIM project.

Each partner has provided unique perspectives and expertise, enriching the project's framework. The information and insights provided through the questionnaire were instrumental in the development of this document, which will serve as the basis for the next stages of the INVOLVIM project. We are confident that, with the continuation of this collaboration, we will achieve our objectives of promoting inclusive migration and integration practices across all partner regions.

Once again, we express our sincere gratitude to all partners and participants for their invaluable contributions.



REGIONAL COUNCIL OF
South Ostrobothnia



Câmara Municipal

CC DR **CENTRO**

COMISSÃO DE COORDENAÇÃO E DESEMPENHO
REGIONAL DO CENTRO-LA



Comhairle Contae Lú
Louth County Council

