

Multi-stakeholder review and co-development of support systems for migrant entrepreneurship: a step-by-step guide for municipalities and local stakeholders

1. Introduction

Migrant entrepreneurship plays a significant role in economic resilience and social inclusion across European cities. Yet support systems often remain fragmented, insufficiently coordinated, linguistically inaccessible and poorly aligned with the structural realities migrants face on a daily basis.

This guide provides a step-by-step description of the engagement process for a multi-stakeholder review and co-development of support systems for migrant entrepreneurship, developed and tested within the INNOVATE Migration Research to Policy project. It is intended as a practical reference for municipalities and local stakeholders interested in applying a structured multi-stakeholder approach to reviewing and strengthening their local support ecosystem for migrant entrepreneurship.

The engagement process enables cities to jointly assess current support systems, identify gaps and priorities, and develop concrete follow-up measures. Its structured approach facilitates learning across actors, promotes evidence-informed decision-making, and encourages the co-development of solutions. It also makes use of researchers – who can build on knowledge already generated by academic and applied research on the topic – to ensure the presence of critical friends at the table who are able to reflect on results and planned policies.

Supporting tools for this process — including questionnaires and templates — are [provided separately](#) and referenced throughout this guide. These tools can be adapted by municipalities and local stakeholders seeking to replicate the approach tested in INNOVATE.

What is the engagement process?

The engagement process comprises six round table meetings with key local stakeholders, supported by structured inputs and tools. The process moves from establishing a shared understanding of the local support ecosystem to identifying gaps and prioritising development needs, to developing pilot actions and a jointly agreed ‘Way forward’ note.

This guide focuses on the **sequence of steps and practical implementation**, while the supporting materials provide detailed templates and examples for each step.

2. Stakeholders

Balanced representation is essential to ensure inclusive discussion and meaningful participation, especially from migrant entrepreneurs and their organisations. Potential stakeholders include:

- municipal departments
- entrepreneurship support organisations
- chambers of commerce
- migrant organisations
- migrant entrepreneurs
- finance providers
- researchers or academic experts

Stakeholders should be invited with a clear explanation of the process, expected commitment, and planned outputs. Including actors with direct contact with migrant entrepreneurs, as well as migrant entrepreneurs themselves, ensures discussions reflect real needs and barriers rather than assumptions.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- **Municipal lead / process owner:** Anchors the process; convenes stakeholders; connects outcomes to local policy and strategy.
- **Facilitator / moderator:** Ensures structured discussion; balanced participation; action orientation.
- **Secretariat / coordination:** Organises meetings; prepares minutes; tracks follow-up tasks; manages communication of outputs.
- **Round table participants:** Contribute knowledge; validate needs; co-develop priorities; identify solutions.
- **Researchers/experts:** Provide evidence input; share international good practice examples; interpret benchmarking and policy data.

4. Step-by-step engagement process

Step 1: Define scope

Clarify what “migrant entrepreneurship” means locally and define expected outputs. Confirm municipal competencies and share a short internal concept note with stakeholders. This helps to align expectations across all actors.

Step 2: Stakeholder mapping and recruitment

Identify and invite relevant actors from the local support ecosystem. Tools such as the stakeholder mapping questionnaire can be used to ensure that all relevant actors are considered and that migrant representatives are included meaningfully.

Step 3: Plan round table meetings

Schedule six meetings, define duration and format, and clarify organisation, documentation and accessibility arrangements.

Step 4: Meeting 1 – Kick-off and ecosystem mapping

Introduce objectives, roles, and process structure. Begin mapping existing support structures and agree on next steps. Outputs from this meeting form the baseline for the structured needs assessment, and participants can use the benchmarking questionnaire to inform subsequent discussions.

Step 5: Needs assessment (between meetings 1 and 2)

Stakeholders complete the structured benchmarking questionnaire. Responses are compiled and summarised to create a shared understanding of gaps and strengths in the support ecosystem. The results provide evidence for informed discussion in meeting 2.

Step 6: Meeting 2 – Discussion of needs assessment

Present and validate questionnaire results; identify key gaps and development needs. This discussion can also draw on insights from participants working with (potential) entrepreneurs to highlight practical experiences of supporting migrant businesses.

Step 7: Meeting 3 – Prioritisation and evidence input

Prioritise development needs and integrate international evidence or good practices where available. Supporting policy briefs, tailored to the gaps identified, and research inputs provide guidance for evidence-informed decision-making. Agree on a shortlist of priority areas for action, as a preliminary ‘Way forward’ note.

Step 8: Meeting 4 – Co-design solutions and pilot options

Develop concrete proposals for the priority areas. Identify gaps suitable for one or more pilot actions. Use the pilot action template to structure the proposed interventions and define responsibilities, timeline, and expected results.

Step 9: Meeting 5 – Pilot implementation and interim exchange

Launch and implement the pilot action(s). Use the Round Table meeting to take stock of early experiences, practical challenges, and emerging outcomes. This meeting supports shared learning among stakeholders and allows for adjustments where needed. Take into account observations, advice and evidence (taken from other contexts) brought into the debate by researchers.

Step 10: Meeting 6 – Draft and finalise the ‘Way forward’ note

Based on the results of the needs assessment process and lessons emerging from pilot implementation, consolidate outcomes into a jointly agreed ‘Way forward’ note detailing priorities, proposed measures, responsibilities, and follow-up steps. This document serves as roadmap for further strengthening of the support eco-system and policy change resulting from the action.

The engagement process is supported by the [following materials](#):

- **Benchmarking questionnaire:** to systematically assess current support services and identify gaps.
- **Stakeholder mapping questionnaire:** ensures broad, balanced participation.
- **‘Way forward’ note template:** guides the formalisation of agreed priorities and responsibilities.
- **Pilot action template:** supports structured design of concrete interventions.

5. Follow-up and documentation

After the round tables, the pilot action should be implemented by the relevant partners and lessons should be documented for future learning. Outputs – including the needs assessment summary, the ‘Way forward’ note, and pilot action description – should be shared with all participants. Policymakers should confirm their commitment to the agreed action plan and implementation. The round table process can be institutionalised, as a regular multi-stakeholder governance structure devoted to the design, evaluation and further development of local-level policies which help migrants to start, sustain and grow businesses.



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