OECD

Making Integration Work

Integration Governance



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BETTER POLICIES FOR BETTER LIVES

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Foreword

This is the seventh publication in “Making Integration Work”, a series that provides accessible, non-technical summaries of the main lessons from the OECD’s work on integration policies, highlighting key challenges and good practices to support the lasting integration of immigrants and their children.

This edition takes stock of the experiences of OECD countries regarding integration governance, exploring key considerations for designing effective structures for integration policy. It draws on examples of good practice and innovation and offers a comparative overview of the policy frameworks governing integration policy in member countries. Information about the different policy frameworks was gathered through a questionnaire sent to member countries.

Previous editions of this series have examined the integration of refugees and others in need of protection, the assessment and recognition of foreign qualifications, integration of family migrants, integration of young people with migrant parents, language learning for adult migrants, and introduction measures for newly-arrived migrants.

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Introduction

Migration to OECD countries has increased over recent decades, reflecting demographic, economic and geopolitical developments. In 2024, OECD countries recorded 6.2 million new permanent immigrants (OECD, 2025[1]). Migrants and their children account for a growing share of the working-age and youth populations in many member countries, with long-term implications for labour markets, education systems and social cohesion. Ensuring effective integration of migrants in society and working life has therefore become an important policy issue in OECD countries. Measurable progress has been achieved, most notably in labour-market inclusion, with the average migrant employment rate across the OECD reaching a record high of 71% in 2024. Nevertheless, many countries still face challenges in translating policy ambitions into coherent and sustainable long-term outcomes (OECD, 2025[1]).

The outcomes of integration measures, whether it is language courses, labour market programmes or community-based initiatives, rarely depend on the measures alone. They are also shaped by the governance frameworks in which the measures are embedded. These frameworks determine how responsibilities and resources are allocated and co-ordinated across policy fields and levels of government. They are the focus of this report.

Throughout the report, integration governance refers to the mechanisms through which roles and responsibilities for migrant integration are defined, co-ordinated and implemented at different levels of government and among relevant stakeholders. While integration policy defines *what* is done, integration governance defines *how* and *by whom* it is carried out.

This distinction matters because similar policies can lead to different outcomes depending on how responsibilities and co-ordination mechanisms are structured. In addition, migrant integration presents particular governance challenges. It does not fall neatly within a single policy area or level of government. Integration policies cut across employment, education, housing, health and social services. Local and regional authorities play a central role in implementation, while non-governmental actors, including civil society organisations, employers and migrant-led organisations, contribute to service delivery and support. This institutional complexity can make the co-ordination of integration policy particularly challenging.

The governance structures for integration vary across OECD countries. In some countries, integration frameworks have developed over decades of immigration experience. In others, systems have been built more recently in response to changing migration patterns. These different starting points, along with differences in labour-market structures and administrative systems, influence how integration policies are organised and implemented. Despite these differences, OECD countries face several common governance challenges. These include aligning responsibilities between levels of government, co-ordinating policies between sectors, involving stakeholders, ensuring stable and adequate financing, and building systems that can adapt to changing migration patterns and policy priorities. This report examines how OECD countries respond to these challenges, focussing on the design and functioning of integration governance systems.

Well-functioning governance frameworks can help make integration measures coherent across policy areas, responsive to local needs and sustainable over time. Where governance is weak or fragmented, policies may be more difficult to implement and resources may be used inefficiently, for example, through overlapping responsibilities or services not reaching their intended target groups.

Integration governance is also part of a broader political and societal context. Although integration policies generally aim to support the long-term social and economic inclusion of migrants, they are also shaped by broader policy and political objectives. They may be used to respond to wider political concerns related to migration and, at times, to support migration management objectives. When these objectives diverge, tensions may arise, leading to reactive policy adjustments, blurred institutional accountability and weaker long-term planning.

In addition, structural challenges such as housing shortages, school segregation or labour-market segmentation are often associated in public debate with migration and integration. While these challenges are linked both to integration and migration dynamics and to wider societal and policy factors, integration systems are often used to respond to them. When co-ordination with other policy areas is limited or responsibilities are poorly aligned, this can result in over-reliance on integration-specific instruments to address issues that require broader cross-sectoral responses.

When governance systems are transparent and accountable, they foster trust and can support public confidence that integration is being handled consistently and fairly (OECD, 2025[2]). Strengthening integration governance is therefore important for supporting more effective and inclusive outcomes for migrants and societies as a whole.

Across OECD countries, integration governance is receiving increased attention. In the European Union, the implementation of the new Pact on Migration and Asylum and discussions on the next Multiannual Financial Framework are likely to influence how integration efforts are organised and financed. The Pact also reinforces the importance of early integration measures and co-ordination between migration and integration policies (see also Box 4). For EU Member States, this creates a need to ensure that governance systems can support both effective use of funding and continuity in implementation. At the same time, other OECD countries are adapting their integration systems in response to shifting migration patterns, labour-market needs and fiscal pressures. In different ways, these developments reflect a common underlying challenge – ensuring that governance systems can maintain direction while adapting to changing conditions. This report therefore focusses on how integration governance can support more coherent and sustainable integration outcomes over time.

Navigating the report

This report aims to support policymakers and practitioners working to strengthen migrant integration governance. It draws on experiences from OECD and EU countries, as well as empirical studies, case studies and the responses to an OECD policy questionnaire completed by national authorities. Insights from previous OECD work on migrant integration also inform the analysis. The report concentrates on migrants settling on a long-term basis, including humanitarian migrants, family migrants, and labour migrants with permanent or long-term residence (see Box 1).

The publication is organised around seven guiding questions. Each chapter focusses on one of these questions and highlights how different aspects of governance can contribute to more coherent, inclusive and effective integration policy.

1. How can strategic goals and legal frameworks strengthen integration policy?
2. How can co-ordination between national, regional, and local authorities be strengthened to support the design and implementation of coherent and effective integration policies?
3. How can governments better involve civil society, businesses, social partners and migrant-led organisations in shaping and delivering integration policy?
4. How can funding mechanisms ensure the long-term sustainability and adaptability of integration efforts?
5. How can data and evidence be more effectively used to guide integration policy?

6. How can governance mechanisms strengthen transparency and accountability in integration outcomes?
7. How can integration frameworks be designed to support innovation and respond effectively to changing migration and societal needs?

Box 1. A note on target groups and integration governance

OECD countries differ significantly in how they define the populations covered by integration policies. While some countries focus primarily on humanitarian migrants (refugees or beneficiaries of international protection and their families), others extend integration measures to additional groups, such as labour migrants, or adopt broader, mainstreamed approaches that include long-term residents, citizens with a migrant background or, in some cases, the population at large. Many OECD countries also differentiate integration support, rights and obligations between migrant categories. These choices reflect national legal frameworks, migration histories, institutional traditions and political priorities.

This report concentrates on migrants settling on a long-term basis, including humanitarian migrants, family migrants, and labour migrants with permanent or long-term residence. Asylum seekers, temporary workers, and international students are not covered, as their needs might differ substantially and are typically governed through separate policy frameworks and institutional structures. The report examines how countries organise integration governance for the populations covered by their national integration frameworks.

References

OECD (2025), *Government at a Glance 2025*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/0efd0bcd-en. [2]

OECD (2025), *International Migration Outlook 2025*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/ae26c893-en. [1]

1 Foundations of integration governance. Objectives, strategies and legal frameworks

How can strategic goals and legal frameworks strengthen integration policy? This chapter examines how national objectives, strategies and legal frameworks provide long-term direction and coherence for integration policy.

Integration outcomes depend not only on policy design but also on how governance structures are organised. Similar policies may produce different outcomes in different governance systems. To understand how these systems function, it is useful to examine the foundational elements that define direction and organise responsibilities and implementation. In OECD countries, these typically include integration objectives, strategic frameworks and legal and regulatory instruments.

These elements serve distinct but closely related functions. Objectives define what integration policy aims to achieve. Strategic frameworks organise these objectives between policy areas and levels of government, while also allocating responsibilities for implementation. Legal and regulatory instruments translate them into binding rules and institutional mandates. This distinction is consistent with public policy research, which emphasises the importance of aligning policy goals with the tools and institutional arrangements used to achieve them (Howlett, 2023[1]).

This chapter examines how countries define and structure integration governance through objectives, strategic frameworks and legal instruments. Together, these elements form the basis for the governance issues discussed in the following chapters, including co-ordination between levels of government, stakeholder engagement, financing, monitoring and accountability.

Table 1.1 provides an overview of national integration objectives, strategies and legal frameworks in OECD countries.

Table 1.1. National integration strategies, objectives and frameworks

Country	National integration objectives	National integration strategy	Legal framework	Comment
Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework.
Austria	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Belgium	Regional only	Regional only	Regional only	Integration governance is decentralised, with separate frameworks in Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels and the German-speaking Community.
Bulgaria	No	No	No	
Canada	Yes	No	Yes	Objectives defined through federal immigration legislation and the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Strategic Plan for Immigration under the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration.
Chile	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Costa Rica	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Croatia	No	No	No	
Czechia	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Denmark	Yes	No	Yes	Objectives defined through the Integration Act and the Integration Barometer.
Estonia	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Finland	Yes	Yes	Yes	
France	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Germany	Yes	No	Yes	Objectives embedded in sectoral legislation and federal co-ordination frameworks.
Greece	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Hungary	No	No	Yes	Legal framework regulates residence and rights of third-country nationals.
Iceland	Yes	No	Yes	Objectives defined through the national action plan.
Ireland	No	No	No	
Israel	Yes	No	Yes	Integration framework applies to Jewish immigrants under the Law of Return.
Italy	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Country	National integration objectives	National integration strategy	Legal framework	Comment
Japan	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Korea	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Latvia	Yes	No	No	Objectives embedded in broader social cohesion and participation policies.
Lithuania	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Luxembourg	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Netherlands	Yes	Yes	Yes	
New Zealand	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Norway	Yes	No	Yes	Objectives defined through legislation and government white papers.
Poland	Yes	No	No	
Portugal	Yes	No	Yes	Objectives are set out in the 2024 Action Plan for Migration. A new National Integration Plan is under development.
Romania	Yes	No	Yes	
Slovenia	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Spain	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Sweden	Yes	No	Yes	Objectives defined as standalone government goals and through sectoral legal frameworks.
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Türkiye	Yes	Yes	Yes	
United Kingdom	No	No	No	

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

1.1. Defining integration objectives

Although widely used, the term integration is not always clearly defined. In general, it refers to the process through which migrants participate fully in the economic, social and civic life of the receiving society (OECD, 2023[2]). In OECD countries, this concept is interpreted in different ways. These different interpretations are reflected in how governments define the objectives of integration policy.

Integration objectives set out what governments aim to achieve through integration policy and clarify what "successful integration" means within a given national context. From a governance perspective, integration objectives have a foundational role: they provide political direction and can serve as reference points for monitoring and accountability. Where they are clearly articulated, they allow governments to assess progress and hold institutions accountable for results. Integration objectives differ in how they are formulated, how they are used, and which policy areas they prioritise. The following sections examine these dimensions.

1.1.1. Where integration objectives are defined

In OECD countries, integration objectives are articulated in different ways. In 24 out of the 35 responding countries, objectives are set out as part of a national integration strategy. In others, objectives exist independently of a formal strategy. Objectives define the ends, he goals of integration policy, while strategies also cover the means, specifying how institutions are expected to achieve them.

Several countries, including Canada, Denmark, Iceland, Latvia and Sweden, define integration objectives without adopting a national integration strategy. In these cases, objectives are defined as standalone government goals, embedded in legislation, or, in decentralised systems, defined at the regional or local level. Co-ordination between sectors and levels of government is achieved through administrative

arrangements, funding mechanisms or legal obligations. Canada has established clear federal integration objectives without adopting a single national strategy. Instead, co-ordination is organised through federal – provincial/territorial collaboration at the multilateral and bilateral level and co-planning of supports for newcomers funded by respective federal and provincial/territorial levels of government. In Belgium, which has a constitutionally decentralised governance structure, integration objectives are set at the regional and community level.

1.1.2. How integration objectives are defined

Countries also differ in how objectives are formulated and used. One approach is to organise integration objectives through operational frameworks built around measurable targets and indicators. In these cases, objectives are detailed, organised into different areas and directly linked to indicators and monitoring systems. Denmark's Integration Barometer and Australia's Refugee and Humanitarian Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework provide examples. In both cases, objectives are grouped into defined areas, such as employment, language or social participation, and are systematically linked to monitoring and evaluation (see also Chapter 5). Denmark defines nine operational integration objectives monitored through its Integration Barometer, and implementation is closely embedded in municipal employment services.

A second approach anchors integration objectives in legislation, where they are linked to rights and obligations. In Austria, Finland and the Netherlands, for example, objectives are closely tied to participation requirements, particularly in language training and labour-market integration, and may be linked to access to benefits or residence conditions. These approaches often overlap. In some countries, integration objectives are defined in legislation and are also being operationalised through monitoring frameworks.

In other countries, objectives are framed more broadly as qualitative or cross-sectoral goals spanning multiple policy areas rather than around quantified operational targets. They may be set out in national strategies, as in Chile and Greece, or embedded in different sectoral policies without a single consolidated framework, as in Germany, Japan and Romania. Objectives primarily provide strategic direction and are not always linked to quantified indicators or formal monitoring frameworks.

1.1.3. Integration objectives in OECD countries

Beyond where and how objectives are formulated, countries also differ in what integration policy is expected to achieve. Countries prioritise different dimensions of integration and place emphasis on different policy areas. There is broad convergence, however, around labour-market participation as a central integration objective. Employment is seen as an outcome in its own right and also as a pathway to financial independence, social participation and long-term inclusion. Countries such as Denmark, Finland, Norway, Austria and the Netherlands explicitly prioritise rapid labour-market entry and economic self-sufficiency as overarching integration objectives.

Language acquisition is also widely emphasised. In many countries, language proficiency is considered essential for accessing employment, public services and civic life. In France, Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands, language requirements are embedded in legislation governing long-term residence, linking language learning both to residence status and, in some cases, eligibility for certain benefits.

Although language acquisition is widely emphasised, a small group of countries, including Iceland, Chile, Costa Rica, Türkiye and Luxembourg, do not list language acquisition as an explicit objective. In this countries, language training is generally available but not framed as an objective of national integration policy.

Beyond employment and language, many countries define integration objectives related to access to services, civic participation and equal opportunities. These objectives focus on ensuring access to

education, healthcare, housing and social services, as well as participation in economic and civic life. These objectives are often formulated in broad terms and are not always linked to specific targets or indicators.

In addition, some countries incorporate shared or national values within their integration objectives. Countries define these objectives differently, ranging from civic knowledge and democratic principles to broader notions of national values and social norms. While such objectives can signal political priorities, they are often difficult to operationalise and therefore pose specific challenges for monitoring and evaluation. This links to the broader question of how integration outcomes are measured, discussed below.

Table 1.2 summarises integration objectives reported by OECD countries and how they are articulated in national frameworks.

Table 1.2. National integration objectives in OECD countries

Country	Employ-ment	Language Acquisition	Equal Access to Rights and Services	Civic Participation	Shared values	Anti-discrimination /Equality	Reference policy framework
Australia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Refugee and Humanitarian Entrant Settlement and Integration Outcomes Framework
Austria	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	*Integrationsgesetz* (Integration Act)
Belgium	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Objectives defined at regional level
Bulgaria							No national integration objectives.
Canada	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Immigration and Refugee Protection Act and federal settlement and integration framework (IRCC)
Chile	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	*Política Nacional de Migración y Extranjería*, PNME (National Migration and Foreigners Policy)
Costa Rica	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Política Migratoria Integral para Costa Rica 2013-2023 (Comprehensive Migration Policy for Costa Rica 2013-2023)
Croatia							No national integration objectives.
Czechia	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No	*Koncepce integrace cizinců – Ve vzájemném respektu* (Concept for the Integration of Foreigners – In Mutual Respect)
Denmark	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Integrationsloven* (Integration Act) Integrationsbarometeret (Integration Barometer)
Estonia	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Sidusa Eesti arengukava* 2021-2030 (Cohesive Estonia Development Plan 2021-2030)
Finland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	*Laki kotoutumisen edistämisestä* (Act on the Promotion of Integration)
France	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	*Programme 104 Intégration et accès à la nationalité française, Contrat d'Intégration Républicaine* (CIR)
Germany	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Objectives exist but are not

Country	Employ-ment	Language Acquisition	Equal Access to Rights and Services	Civic Participation	Shared values	Anti-discrimination /Equality	Reference policy framework
							categorised. *Nationaler Aktionsplan Integration* (National Action Plan on Integration), *Aufenthaltsgesetz* (Residence Act)
Greece	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Εθνική Στρατηγική για την Κοινωνική Ένταξη των Πολιτών Τρίτων Χωρών, (National Strategy for the Social Integration of Third-Country Nationals)
Hungary							No national integration objectives.
Iceland	No	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	*Aðgerðaáætlun í málefnum innflytjenda* 2022-2025 (Action Plan on Matters of Immigrants 2022-2025)
Ireland							No national integration objectives.
Israel	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Objectives embedded in sectoral policies.
Italy	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	*Portale Integrazione Migranti*, FAMI (National integration programming framework)
Japan	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	外国人の受入れ・秩序ある共生のための総合的対応策 (Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and Well-Ordered and Harmonious Coexistence)
Korea	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	재한외국인 처우 기본법 (Framework Act on Treatment of Foreigners Residing in the Republic of Korea)
Latvia	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	*Saliedētas un pilsoniski aktīvas sabiedrības attīstības pamatnostādnes* 2021-2027 (Guidelines for the Development of a Cohesive and Civically Active Society 2021-2027)
Lithuania	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	*Lietuvos demografijos, migracijos ir integracijos politikos strategija* 2018-2030 (Strategy for Demographic, Migration and Integration Policy 2018-2030)
Luxembourg	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Loi du 23 août 2023 relative au vivre-ensemble interculturel* (Law on Intercultural Living Together)
Netherlands	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	*Wet inburgering 2021* (Civic Integration Act 2021)
New Zealand	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Refugee Resettlement Strategy
Norway	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Meld. St. 17 (2023-2024) – Integreringspolitikken* (White Paper to the Norwegian Parliament on integration policy)
Poland	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	*Strategia migracyjna Polski* 2025-2030 (Migration Strategy for

Country	Employ-ment	Language Acquisition	Equal Access to Rights and Services	Civic Participation	Shared values	Anti-discrimination /Equality	Reference policy framework
							Poland 2025-2030)
Portugal	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Plano de Ação para as Migrações* (Action Plan for Migration)
Romania	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Objectives are embedded in broader social inclusion strategy. Not explicitly categorised.
Slovenia	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	*Urad Vlade Republike Slovenije za oskrbo in integracijo migrantov* (Government Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants)
Spain	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	*Marco Estratégico de Ciudadanía e Inclusión* (Strategic Framework for Citizenship and Inclusion)
Sweden	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	*Mål och delmål för integrationspolitiken* (Objectives and sub-objectives of integration policy)
Switzerland	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	*Integrations Agenda Schweiz*, IAS (Swiss Integration Agenda for Refugees)
Türkiye	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No	Harmonization Strategy Document and National Action Plan; Law No 6 458 on Foreigners and International Protection.
United Kingdom							No national integration objectives.

Note: The table lists explicitly stated integration objectives reported by EU and OECD countries. Several countries do not structure integration objectives in this way. In Germany, Israel, and Romania, objectives are articulated in policy documents or legislation but are not presented as a clearly defined set of categories.
Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

The choice of integration objectives has important governance implications. Beyond signalling policy priorities, integration objectives influence how policies are implemented in practice. They are reflected in how responsibilities are divided between institutions and the indicators used to monitor progress. Where labour-market participation is defined as the central objective, integration systems generally place greater emphasis on employment outcomes through job-placement services, language training linked to work and co-ordination with public employment services. Where objectives emphasise social inclusion or equal access to services, integration policies may instead focus more strongly on education systems, anti-discrimination measures and community-level initiatives.

1.1.4. How integration objectives are framed

Beyond differences in policy domains and level of detail, countries also differ in how integration objectives are framed. While employment and language acquisition are used in most OECD countries, objectives related to rights, participation and shared values vary more substantially in how they are articulated and what they expect of migrants and institutions.

Some countries emphasise integration as a rights-based process, centred on equal opportunities, participation and anti-discrimination. Canada, Costa Rica, Iceland, Spain and Luxembourg exemplify this approach. In this context, integration is often described as a two-way process, where public institutions

and service systems are expected to adapt to population diversity, rather than placing responsibility for integration solely on individual migrants.

In Iceland, the integration objectives set out in the current *Action Plan on Matters of Immigrants 2022-2025* place responsibility on public institutions to ensure equal access to services and co-ordinated support. The framework emphasises equal treatment and requires institutions to adapt services to the needs of a diverse population. Rather than linking integration primarily to individual obligations, the policy framework assigns responsibility to public authorities for organising welfare, education and labour market services in ways that support participation. On a similar note, Estonia's integration objective is to "develop a cohesive society in which people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds actively participate in society and have equal opportunities for self-realisation." Luxembourg integrates its objectives into a dedicated Intercultural Living Together law, reflecting a broader whole-of-society framing.

Other countries place stronger emphasis on individual responsibility, obligations and conditionality. Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway increasingly articulate objectives that link access to integration support, benefits or long-term residency to mandatory participation in language training, employment programmes or civic orientation. Denmark provides a clear example of this approach. Participation in language training and employment-oriented integration programmes is mandatory for newly arrived refugees and family migrants, and municipalities are responsible for ensuring compliance with these requirements as part of the national integration programme. Recent reforms in several OECD countries have placed greater emphasis on conditionality, particularly in relation to language acquisition and labour-market participation.

Objectives, monitoring and outcomes

Integration objectives also shape how governments assess progress and evaluate outcomes. Well-defined objectives provide reference points for indicators and monitoring systems, enabling policymakers to track whether integration policies are achieving their intended effects. In practice, many countries face challenges in translating broad integration objectives, such as social participation or shared values into measurable indicators.

Where they are implemented, shared-values objectives are typically operationalised through mandatory civic orientation courses or integration contracts. In Austria, for example, the Integration Act requires participation in "Value and Orientation"-courses that follow specified content, attendance rules and certification procedures. France has a different approach through the integration contract, *Contrat d'Intégration Républicaine* (CIR), which links participation in civic-orientation courses and prescribed language training to residence pathways. Completion of the CIR is considered in residence permit renewal decisions.

Several countries refer to broader outcomes such as social cohesion or a sense of belonging, although these are inherently difficult to define and measure. They can nonetheless serve as important reference points for policy direction. Some countries have also begun to explore ways of translating these broader outcomes into measurable indicators. Switzerland, for example, combines broader objectives related to participation, social cohesion and shared civic responsibilities with cantonal integration programmes that seek to translate these principles into implementation and monitoring frameworks. As some objectives are inherently difficult to quantify, and data availability on migrant outcomes varies across policy domains, monitoring systems tend to focus more on labour-market outcomes or education indicators, where administrative data are more readily available. Chapter 5 examines these challenges in greater detail.

How countries define their objectives has major implications for implementation. Objectives reflect legal frameworks, welfare-state models, public debates and institutional structures, and they evolve as migration patterns and political priorities change. These differences influence the policy tools countries use, how responsibilities are assigned and how funding and programmes are organised.

While integration objectives set out the goals of integration policy, integration strategies provide a broader framework for organising priorities, responsibilities and co-ordination.

1.2. Integration strategies

National integration strategies are one of the main tools governments use to organise and co-ordinate integration policy between institutions, policy areas and levels of government.

Of the 35 responding OECD countries, 24 report having a national integration strategy. National integration strategies set out a country's long-term vision, priorities and planned actions, and serve as a shared reference point between different ministries, agencies and levels of government. They can also support implementation by clarifying responsibilities, co-ordination mechanisms and concrete measures (OECD, 2018[3]; OECD, 2023[4]). Some countries, such as Finland, France and Spain, use comprehensive cross-sectoral strategies. These multi-year documents cover employment, education, housing, health and civic participation.

Other countries rely on more concise strategies that focus on specific priorities or target groups. Latvia and Poland exemplify this approach, anchoring integration in shorter documents or action plans that highlight priority areas rather than providing an overarching framework. Latvia's strategy focusses on early integration measures for newcomers, such as language support and orientation. Poland uses a short action-plan format that highlights a limited number of practical priorities, mainly language learning, access to basic services and co-operation with municipalities, rather than setting out a full cross-government framework.

In federal or highly decentralised systems, integration strategies may be developed primarily at the regional level, reflecting constitutional divisions of responsibility. Belgium and Australia exemplify this model: regions and states design their own strategies or integration pathways, while national authorities provide overarching migration and settlement frameworks. In Belgium, regions and language communities are responsible for integration policy. Australia combines national settlement strategies with state-level strategies and implementation frameworks. In Germany, federal legislation and co-ordination structures coexist with Länder-level integration strategies and legislation.

Several OECD countries organise integration governance without a national integration strategy. Co-ordination is achieved through existing sectoral policy frameworks, such as employment, education or social policy, as well as through legislative and administrative arrangements. Rather than being brought together in a single cross-government strategy, integration priorities are embedded within mainstream policy systems.

Canada and Sweden follow this approach. In Canada, the federal government is responsible for administering the Settlement Program, where third party Service Provider Organizations are funded to deliver settlement support to newcomers. Most provinces and territories also fund some settlement support for newcomers. The federal government collaborates with provinces and territories multilaterally via the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration and bilaterally via Settlement Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to co-ordinate and align respective settlement programming for newcomers. In Sweden, integration is guided by national policy objectives and implemented through sectoral frameworks, without a national strategy.

A small number of OECD countries report neither a national integration strategy nor clearly defined national integration objectives. The United Kingdom is the clearest example of a system where integration is not organised through a comprehensive national framework but is instead addressed in a more limited and fragmented way through mainstream sectoral policies and local initiatives. In other countries, such as Ireland, Bulgaria and Croatia, the absence of formal objectives and strategies reflects less institutionalised or evolving governance frameworks.

National integration strategies vary in how strongly they are anchored in governance systems. Some strategies are closely linked to institutional responsibilities, co-ordination mechanisms and funding arrangements, and play an active role in guiding implementation between different ministries and levels of government. Other strategies are primarily declaratory. They set out objectives and priorities and can still provide a shared direction for integration policy, even where links to implementation are limited.

Costa Rica (Box 1.1) and Finland (Box 1.2) have two different approaches to implementing integration strategies. Costa Rica represents a mainstreamed approach, where integration priorities are set out in a national plan but implemented through existing sectoral systems rather than through a standalone integration framework. Finland represents a more formalised model where the Integration Act provides the legal basis and the government Integration Programme translates it into concrete priorities and responsibilities.

Integration objectives and strategies are typically complemented by legal or regulatory frameworks that formally anchor integration policy and allocate responsibilities between institutions. The following section examines these legal foundations in more detail.

Box 1.1. A targeted, programme-based approach to integration in Costa Rica

Costa Rica's approach to migrant integration is set out in the Plan Nacional de Integración 2023-2027, developed through consultation with government institutions, local authorities and civil society organisations. Instead of creating a separate integration service system, the plan works as a co-ordination and prioritisation framework that steers how existing sectoral institutions support migrants.

The plan is structured around a set of thematic pillars that give a shared direction for integration efforts between policy areas, while allowing implementation through education, labour market, health and social protection systems that already serve the wider population:

- Education and skills development, focussing on access to education and training opportunities that support social and economic inclusion.
- Health and social services, ensuring access to core public services and addressing specific vulnerabilities.
- Diversity and social inclusion, including measures to combat discrimination and promote intercultural dialogue.
- Vulnerability and protection, with targeted responses for groups facing heightened risks.
- Inter-institutional co-ordination, strengthening co-operation among government agencies, local authorities and civil society.
- Institutional capacity development, reinforcing governance structures for implementing integration objectives.

Integration support is delivered mainly through mainstream public services rather than through separate migrant specific programmes. However, the plan still contains targeted measures for groups with particular needs, especially those facing vulnerability, discrimination or barriers to inclusion, such as women, children and families, migrants exposed to discrimination, or people with protection-related needs. These measures are implemented through tailored interventions within mainstream systems and in partnership with civil society.

Source: Dirección General de Migración y Extranjería, (2023), Plan Nacional de Integración Costa Rica 2023-2027, Ministry of Governance and Police, San José.

1.3. Legal frameworks anchoring integration policy

Legal frameworks translate integration strategies and objectives into binding and enforceable rules and provide the formal basis for integration policy.

Unlike objectives and strategies, legal frameworks are binding and tend to be more stable over time. Because laws are more complex to amend than strategies, they can provide continuity and predictability in the governance of integration policy. Legal frameworks also clarify institutional mandates and define the obligations of both public authorities and migrants, supporting accountability throughout the system.

OECD countries differ in how they anchor integration objectives in legal and regulatory frameworks. These differences reflect national legal systems, welfare-state models and political traditions. Three broad approaches can be identified, often combined in the same system.

1.3.1. Dedicated integration acts

In some countries, integration is governed through dedicated integration acts that explicitly define objectives, instruments and institutional responsibilities. These laws create binding requirements for both migrants and public authorities and provide a clear legal basis for implementation and accountability. Austria, the Netherlands, Finland and Norway have adopted dedicated integration acts.

In Austria, for instance, the Integration Act mandates the Federal Chancellery and the Austrian Integration Fund (ÖIF) to deliver mandatory language and civic-orientation courses. Legislation regulates participation in integration programmes and defines the conditions under which benefits or residence security are linked to participation. Individual integration or introduction plans are set out in law, and sanctions for non-compliance are clearly defined. Failure to participate can affect both benefit entitlements and residence security.

Box 1.2. Strategic integration governance in Finland

Finland provides an example of how a legal framework can support a national integration strategy. The approach is guided by the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, which underwent a comprehensive reform and entered into force in January 2025. The government Integration Programme for 2024-2027 sets the national direction for integration policy. This revised policy explicitly shifts emphasis from the rights of migrant toward their obligations and own responsibility.

The government Integration Programme for 2024-2027 is built around a set of clearly defined objectives. These include prioritising labour-market integration through Finnish or Swedish language acquisition, strengthening individual responsibility and participation obligations, preventing the emergence of parallel societies, and recognising integration as a whole-of-family concern. This reflects a shift from an individual focus to a stronger emphasis on family-level factors that influence long-term outcomes.

The strategy is implemented through Integration Programmes at national and municipal levels, with measurable objectives and regular evaluations. Institutional reforms accompanied the 2025 legislative changes. Responsibility for delivering integration services was transferred from governmental Employment and Economic Development Offices to municipalities, increasing local responsibility. Immigrant clients are required to follow individual integration plans, and sanctions may apply in cases of non-compliance.

Co-ordination is supported by Finland's Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO), which brings together immigrants, public authorities, political representatives and civil society to contribute to policy development.

Source: Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (2025), *Government Integration Programme 2024-2027*, Publications of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2025:4, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Helsinki.

1.3.2. Integration objectives embedded in sectoral legislation

A second model embeds integration objectives through laws in related policy areas, such as migration, labour-market regulation, education or social welfare. In Sweden, Germany, France, Switzerland and Italy, integration objectives are embedded in the legal frameworks governing mainstream services. In France, access to language training and civic orientation is regulated through provisions in the *Code de l'Entrée et du Séjour des Étrangers* (CESEDA), which governs the entry and residence of foreign nationals. In Switzerland, cantonal education laws govern access to preparatory classes and language support for migrant children. Italy's social-welfare legislation links certain benefits and activation measures to participation in integration activities.

In this model, integration rules are embedded in labour, education, social-welfare and migration legislation rather than consolidated in a single integration act. Integration thus becomes part of the regular functioning of employment, education, health and social-protection systems. The advantage is strong mainstreaming, where integration is treated as a shared institutional responsibility. At the same time, the legal basis is more dispersed, meaning the overall system depends on how well rules in different policy areas align, rather than on one unified framework.

1.3.3. Programme-based frameworks without dedicated integration legislation

A third group of countries organises integration policy primarily through programmes, funding arrangements and administrative guidelines rather than through dedicated legislation. Canada and Spain follow this approach.

Canada provides an example of a system without a dedicated integration act. Instead of using a single legal framework, settlement and integration measures are governed through federally funded programmes and funding agreements with service providers. The federal government sets priorities through strategies, action plans and administrative guidelines, which define target groups, services, standards, outcomes and reporting requirements. Implementation is carried out by funded organisations throughout the country. As a result, Canada's integration system is regulated primarily through programme rules, funding agreements, performance requirements and monitoring obligations rather than through a unified integration law.

Spain follows a similar pattern. Integration objectives are outlined in strategic documents, while implementation is delivered through a mix of sectoral policies, dedicated programmes and co-operation agreements with regional or local authorities. Rules governing access to services or participation in programmes are usually set through administrative guidelines or funding arrangements rather than through binding integration legislation. Governance relies primarily on administrative tools, including programme guidelines, funding contracts and monitoring requirements that define responsibilities and support implementation.

These systems can be flexible, but they also require strong co-ordination and administrative capacity. Without a legal framework providing long-term continuity or clearly setting out responsibilities, effective implementation depends on how well institutions work together between sectors and levels of government.

1.4. Key takeaways

This chapter has shown that OECD countries organise integration governance through different combinations of objectives, strategies and legal frameworks. Some countries anchor integration in comprehensive legal and strategic frameworks, such as Austria, Finland and the Netherlands, where objectives, implementation tools and responsibilities are closely aligned. Others rely on strategic co-ordination without a single legal framework, as in France, while countries such as Canada organise integration primarily through programme-based systems and funding arrangements. In decentralised systems such as Belgium and Australia, integration is largely organised at the regional or state level, with national frameworks providing overall direction. Although OECD countries organise integration governance in different ways, there are a few key considerations worth bearing in mind:

- Clarity of objectives matters, regardless of the choice of instrument. Systems tend to function more effectively when objectives are clearly defined and responsibilities are aligned between institutions. For example, when legal frameworks, strategies or programmes explicitly specify which institutions are responsible for which outcome. These conditions can be achieved through different combinations of strategies, legal frameworks and programmes.
- Each approach involves trade-offs. Legal frameworks can strengthen stability and accountability but may be less adaptable to changing circumstances than strategies or programme-based arrangements. Strategies can support co-ordination but depend on effective implementation and co-ordination between institutions. Programme-based systems allow for adaptation but require strong co-ordination and administrative capacity.
- Different types of objectives carry different practical implications. Objectives such as employment or language acquisition can be linked to concrete measures and indicators. Broader objectives, such as social cohesion or shared values, can provide strategic direction, but their meaning, expected outcomes and indicators may be less clearly defined. Where such objectives are translated into specific requirements or activities, such as civic orientation courses, this gives them a more concrete form, although the relationship between these activities and the broader objective may not always be straightforward.

These considerations suggest that the choice of instrument matters less than how well it is implemented (clear objectives, aligned responsibilities), and the approach is suited to the institutional context. The following chapters examine how co-ordination mechanisms, stakeholder engagement, financing, monitoring and accountability can help translate policy objectives into practice.

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2 Aligning national, regional, and local integration efforts

How can co-ordination between national, regional and local authorities be strengthened to support coherent and effective integration policies? This chapter explores the mechanisms that support both vertical co-ordination between levels of government and horizontal co-ordination between different ministries, agencies and policy fields.

Integration policy is rarely delivered by a single institution. A newly arrived migrant may learn the national language through one provider, receive employment support from another authority, access housing through municipal services and rely on schools, health services or civil society organisations for everyday support. Integration outcomes in these areas are often interrelated, meaning that barriers in one area may create disadvantages in others, including labour-market participation and educational outcomes. (OECD, 2023[1]).

In most OECD countries, national authorities set overall direction while regional and local actors adapt policy to local conditions and deliver services that shape migrants' everyday lives. This means that effective integration governance relies on the ability of national, regional and local authorities to work together in a coherent and predictable way.

This creates two related co-ordination challenges: aligning responsibilities between levels of government (vertical co-ordination) and ensuring coherence across different policy sectors (horizontal co-ordination). These challenges are often described through the concept of multi-level governance, defined as the dispersion of authority between different interacting levels of government, requiring co-ordination mechanisms to align objectives and implementation (Hooghe and Marks, 2003[2]).

Research on integration governance also shows that co-ordination is not always linear or hierarchical. Local authorities may adapt, complement or, at times, diverge from national policies to respond to practical needs (Zapata-Barrero, Caponio and Scholten, 2017[3]). These patterns reflect a broader shift, with cities and regions having an increasingly active role in shaping integration, particularly in areas such as service delivery and community-level support. This means that local implementation may diverge from national approaches as authorities adapt policies to local conditions and service needs.

Co-ordination is therefore not only about aligning responsibilities. It also involves managing differences between levels of government so that local adaptation does not undermine overall policy coherence. In addition, formal institutional arrangements do not determine implementation outcomes on their own. Administrative capacity, organisational routines and the role of public officials also affect how policies are interpreted and co-ordinated in practice. In multi-level systems, operational decisions taken by ministries, municipalities and frontline agencies can influence how national objectives are translated into local implementation (Caponio and Borkert, 2025[4]).

This chapter examines how OECD countries respond to these challenges by looking at how national authorities steer and co-ordinate policy, how responsibilities are distributed across levels of government and policy areas, and which tools are used to connect policy design with implementation.

2.1. National responsibility for integration policy

Responsibilities for integration policy are shared between levels of government, but the balance between national direction and local implementation varies considerably between OECD countries. These differences reflect institutional traditions, administrative systems and the way migration policy has evolved nationally. Table 2.1 provides an overview of the central co-ordinating bodies and co-ordination mechanisms reported by OECD countries. Despite these differences, four broad organisational models can be identified, each with implications for co-ordination, accountability and policy coherence. The rest of this section describes these models.

Table 2.1. Formal co-ordination mechanisms for integration governance

Country	Central co-ordinating body	National – subnational co-ordination	Advisory/consultative body	Notes
Australia	Department of Home Affairs	Federal – state/territory – local co-ordination through SOSOG, the Senior Officials Settlement Outcomes Group	Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs; SOSOG	Highly structured settlement co-ordination system
Austria	Federal Chancellery (Minister for Europe, Integration and Family); ÖIF, Austrian Integration Fund operational	National – regional (Länder) co-ordination with municipal implementation	Advisory Committee on Integration	Integration Act defines responsibilities; Länder retain autonomy
Belgium	No single co-ordinating body; regions and communities lead	Regional/community co-ordination with municipal implementation	Regional bodies (e.g. Walloon Observatory; COCOM Brussels)	Highly decentralised governance structure. Integration is a regional competence.
Bulgaria	National Council on Migration, Borders, Asylum and Integration	National Association of Municipalities represented in the National Council	National Council on Migration, Borders, Asylum and Integration	
Canada	Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)	Federal – provincial/territorial co-ordination with municipal involvement through Local Immigration Partnerships (where applicable)	Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration	Quebec has special autonomy under the 1991 Canada-Quebec Accord
Chile	National Migration Service (SERMIG)	National, regional and local co-ordination through the Regional Management Model	Interministerial Advisory Committee	Coordination structured through the national migration policy framework
Czechia	Ministry of Interior (Department for Asylum and Migration Policy)	National – regional – local co-ordination through Integration Centers and municipalities	Coordination Committee on Integration	Major cities have developed local integration policies
Denmark	Ministry of Immigration and Integration	National – local co-ordination through municipalities under the Integration Act	National Integration Council	Municipalities have primary implementation responsibility
Estonia	Ministry of Culture (integration); cross-ministerial steering	National – local co-ordination with no regional tier	Cohesive Estonia steering committee	Tallinn provides additional local integration services. Recent policy developments also focus on strengthening municipal capacity across Estonia.
Finland	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (KEHA, ELY Centers)	National – regional – local co-ordination through ELY Centers and municipalities	Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO)	Municipalities have legal autonomy
France	OFII and Ministry of Interior (DGEF)	National – regional – local co-ordination through prefectures and departments	No dedicated advisory body	Strong central steering through prefectural system

Country	Central co-ordinating body	National – subnational co-ordination	Advisory/consultative body	Notes
Germany	Federal Ministry of Interior; BAMF operational	Federal – Länder – municipal co-ordination	Conference of Integration Ministers	Highly decentralised design and implementation
Greece	Directorate of Social Integration (Ministry of Migration and Asylum)	National – regional co-ordination through HELIOS+ and local partnerships	No dedicated advisory body	Implementation relies strongly on civil society organisations and IOs
Hungary	Ministry of Interior	National – local co-ordination with voluntary municipal involvement	No dedicated advisory body	Integration governance weakly institutionalised
Iceland	Ministry of Social Affairs and Housing	National – local co-ordination with no regional tier	Immigration Council for project funding	Municipal autonomy in service delivery
Ireland	Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration	National – local co-ordination through Local Authority Integration Teams and Community Integration Fora	National Co-ordination Team (LGMA)	Local authorities develop local integration strategies
Israel	Ministry of Aliyah and Integration	National – regional – local co-ordination through ministry districts and municipalities	Knesset Committee on Aliyah and Integration	
Italy	Ministry of Labour and Social Policy and Ministry of Interior	National – regional – local co-ordination through regions and municipalities	Interministerial committees; Territorial Councils for Immigration	Regions retain strong competences
Japan	Immigration Services Agency; Cabinet Secretariat (co-ordination)	National – local co-ordination with limited regional autonomy	Ministerial Council on the Acceptance of Foreign Nationals and the Realization of a Society of Well-Ordered and Harmonious Coexistence	Highly centralised co-ordination model
Korea	Ministry of Justice; Korea Immigration Service	National – regional – local co-ordination through the Immigration Policy Commission	Immigration Policy Commission, chaired by the Prime Minister; working committees	Strong legal basis in Framework Act..
Latvia	Ministry of Culture and Society Integration Foundation	National – local co-ordination with significant municipal variation	No dedicated advisory body	
Lithuania	Ministry of Social Security and Labour	National – regional – local co-ordination involving municipalities and civil society organisations	Government Commission on Integration	Municipalities adapt measures locally
Luxembourg	Ministry of Family Affairs, Solidarity, Living Together and Reception (MFSVA)	National – local co-ordination through communes and the Gemengepakt framework	High Council for Intercultural Living-Together	Law of 23 August 2023 defines governance framework
Netherlands	Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment	National – local co-ordination through municipalities implementing the Civic Integration Act	No dedicated advisory body	Municipal autonomy within national legislation
New Zealand	Immigration New Zealand	National – regional – local co-ordination through Regional Refugee Steering Groups	Senior Officials' Group; Refugee	Strong local – national partnership model

Country	Central co-ordinating body	National – subnational co-ordination	Advisory/consultative body	Notes
	(MBIE)		Advisory Panel	
Norway	Ministry of Labour and Social Inclusion; IMDi	National – regional – local co-ordination through counties and municipalities	No dedicated advisory body	Regional responsibilities expanded in 2021
Poland	Department of Social Integration (Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Policy)	National – regional – local co-ordination through voivodes, marshals and municipalities	Interministerial Team for Migration	Major cities have developed advanced local policies
Portugal	Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA)	National-regional-local co-ordination through municipalities, inter-municipal communities and local integration support networks	National Council for Migration and Asylum (CNMA)	AIMA co-ordinates integration, migration and asylum policies across levels of government.
Romania	General Inspectorate for Immigration (IGI, Ministry of Internal Affairs)	National – regional – local co-ordination through prefectures, county agencies and municipalities	No dedicated advisory body beyond EU project committees	IGI co-ordinates AMIF funding and monitoring
Slovenia	Ministry of Interior; Office for the Support and Integration of Migrants	National – local co-ordination with voluntary municipal initiatives	Informal co-ordination groups	AMIF co-funding plays a central role
Spain	Ministry of Inclusion, Social Security and Migration	National – regional – local co-ordination through autonomous communities and municipalities	Sectoral Conference on Immigration	Strong regional competences in social policy
Sweden	Ministry of Education; Public Employment Service	National – regional – local co-ordination through County Administrative Boards	No dedicated advisory body	Agency-based co-ordination model
Switzerland	State Secretariat for Migration (SEM)	Federal – cantonal – municipal co-ordination	Swiss Conference of Integration Delegates	Cantons retain strong autonomy
Türkiye	Presidency of Migration Management (PMM)	National – regional – local co-ordination through provinces, governorates and municipalities	PMM co-ordination structures; technical working groups	
United Kingdom	No single co-ordinating body; Home Office leads migration policy	National – regional – local co-ordination through devolved administrations and local authorities	No dedicated advisory body	No overarching national integration strategy

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

2.1.1. Single national lead ministry or agency

OECD countries differ not only in the level of government responsible for integration policy, but also in the degree of institutional specialisation. Some countries have established dedicated integration agencies or authorities with operational responsibility for integration policy, while others locate responsibility within

mainstream ministries such as labour, interior or social affairs ministries. Many countries combine elements of both approaches.

In the most common model, a single national ministry or agency co-ordinates integration policy. This can strengthen accountability and provide other ministries and levels of government with a stable point of contact. In some countries, responsibility is assigned to a dedicated integration or migration ministry or agency with an explicit mandate for integration policy. This can increase the visibility of integration within government and help build specialised expertise and institutional relationships over time.

Countries using this model include Denmark, where the Ministry of Immigration and Integration develops national policy while municipalities deliver introduction programmes and language and employment support under national legislation. Israel has a more centralised variant, with overarching responsibility held by the Ministry of Aliyah and Integration. The ministry's mandate focusses on Jewish immigrants and returning Jewish residents under the Law of Return and combines policy steering with direct responsibility for reception and integration measures. Implementation is supported by a nationwide network of regional and local offices that deliver services directly and work with municipalities and other public bodies.

In other countries, integration policy is co-ordinated through a sectoral ministry, such as interior, labour or social affairs, linking integration more closely to broader policy areas, which can support mainstreaming but may also increase the need for co-ordination. Australia provides an example of this approach, where the Department of Home Affairs provides strategic direction in close co-operation with states, territories and contracted service providers. Variations of this model are also found in several other OECD countries, although the balance between national steering and local implementation differs considerably.

Dedicated integration authorities often combine policy co-ordination with functions such as programme delivery, funding management, monitoring or data collection. Dedicated authorities are particularly common in countries where integration policy has evolved into a distinct policy field with its own operational infrastructure, such as the *Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration* (OFII) in France, the Agency for Integration, Migration and Asylum (AIMA) in Portugal and the National Migration Service (SERMIG) in Chile. Countries where integration responsibilities remain embedded within mainstream ministries often rely more on interministerial and intergovernmental co-ordination mechanisms to align integration objectives across policy areas. These different arrangements reflect broader administrative traditions rather than a single preferred model of integration governance.

2.1.2. Shared national responsibility between multiple ministries

A second group of countries distribute national integration responsibilities between several national ministries, reflecting the fact that integration policies involve employment, education, health, housing, social services and migration. This allows sectoral expertise to inform policy and helps ensure that integration is not treated as a standalone policy area, making it easier to embed integration objectives into mainstream institutions and services.

At the same time, it increases co-ordination demands. When responsibilities are divided between multiple actors without clear co-ordination, systems may face duplication, inconsistent delivery or gaps in support. Because integration involves many policy fields, these co-ordination challenges can be particularly pronounced. The risk of fragmentation has been identified in research on multi-level governance integration systems, especially where responsibilities are shared between institutions and levels of government without strong co-ordination mechanisms or clearly aligned objectives (OECD, 2018[5]) (Scholten, 2012[6]).

In Germany, integration responsibilities are shared between the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, the Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and other sectoral ministries at federal level. Implementation largely takes place at Länder level, combining shared ministerial co-ordination with significant decentralisation in practice. Italy similarly involves multiple ministries, including Interior, Labour,

Education and Health ministries, alongside important roles for regions and municipalities. In Czechia, responsibilities are also distributed across multiple ministries, with funding for integration measures provided through interior, education and labour portfolios, co-ordinated locally through municipalities and regional integration centres.

2.1.3. Dedicated co-ordination bodies

In some countries, shared ministerial responsibility is brought together through dedicated national co-ordination bodies established specifically to facilitate co-ordination between ministries and, in some cases, between national and subnational authorities. These bodies support a whole-of-government approach in a policy area that depends on alignment between sectors.

In some countries, co-ordination is supported by dedicated ministers, state secretaries, commissioners or specialised bodies with mandates that extend across sectors. Portugal's former High Commission for Migration introduced a model where integration co-ordination was organised through a dedicated cross-sectoral body that worked with ministries, municipalities and civil-society organisations. Access to central decision-making structures, including the prime minister's office or cabinet-level co-ordination mechanisms, may strengthen the ability to align integration priorities between ministries. This can be particularly important because integration policy often depends on co-operation between sectors that are not formally under the same authority.

Chile's National Migration Service *SERMIG* serves as the central co-ordinating body for integration policy. Its work is supported by an Interministerial Advisory Committee that monitors the National Policy on Migration and Integration and brings together relevant ministries for joint implementation. Switzerland has also established structured co-ordination arrangements. The State Secretariat for Migration works closely with cantonal and municipal integration delegates, providing a stable point of contact between federal direction and subnational implementation.

2.1.4. Decentralised or regional governance

Finally, in a few countries there is no national institution that holds overall responsibility for integration policy, usually because the competence lies with subnational governments. In these cases, the national level provides only limited or programme-specific co-ordination. In Belgium integration governance is fully decentralised by constitutional design, with Regions and Communities responsible for integration policy and delivery. This results in structurally different frameworks in Flanders, Wallonia, Brussels and the German-speaking Community, supported by an Interministerial Conference that facilitates co-ordination between levels. The United Kingdom also lacks a national integration authority. Integration is led independently by the devolved administrations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, while in England co-ordination occurs through ad-hoc, programme-specific arrangements rather than permanent structures.

Where national co-ordination arrangements exist, they can help maintain consistency in a policy area involving many sectors and actors. In more decentralised systems, integration frameworks are shaped primarily at regional or local level. Responsibilities may also shift over time as governments reorganise ministerial portfolios or create new co-ordination arrangements in response to changing policy priorities.

2.2. Implementation at different levels of government

Because integration policies are defined at national level but implemented through a wide range of institutions and administrative systems at national, regional and local level, the way responsibilities are shared between levels of government is central to integration governance functions in practice. National authorities generally set overall direction, legal frameworks and funding arrangements, while regional and

local authorities play a key role in translating these frameworks into institutional practices and concrete actions.

This includes not only the implementation of measures targeted at migrants, but also the adaptation and co-ordination of mainstream administrative systems and procedures. For example, co-ordination may involve population registers, tax and social security authorities, employment services and public information platforms, so that national rules are applied consistently, information is coherent between institutions, and responsibilities can be exercised effectively between levels of government. In practice, this also requires co-ordination between mainstream public services such as schools, employment services, housing authorities and healthcare providers, which often operate under different administrative rules and funding structures.

2.2.1. Centralised implementation

In some countries, implementation remains largely centralised. National agencies are responsible for delivering key measures such as language programmes, civic-orientation courses or certain forms of employment support. France and Greece are notable examples of predominantly centralised delivery. In France, for example, OFII operates through a network of territorial offices responsible for implementing the *Contrat d'Intégration Républicaine*. In Greece, central ministries and international organisations deliver the core components of the integration programme. Delivery is typically organised through regional or local offices and accredited providers, allowing nationally defined programmes to be implemented consistently across the country while maintaining uniform standards.

Centralised implementation can help maintain consistent access and uniform standards across the country. This is particularly important when measures are closely linked to conditions for residence or benefits, because nationally defined legal requirements and eligibility rules must be applied consistently in all regions. A key limitation is that centralised systems may have less flexibility to tailor interventions to local labour-market conditions or migrant populations.

2.2.2. Municipal delivery and local adaptation

In many OECD countries, implementation is delegated to municipalities. This is particularly common in the Nordic countries. In Denmark, Finland and Norway, municipalities organise introduction programmes, language training and labour-market measures. National authorities set objectives and funding frameworks, while municipalities adapt service delivery to local conditions. Local delivery can make measures more relevant and easier to access, but it works well only when municipalities receive predictable funding and clear guidance to support consistency between regions. Switzerland follows a cantonal delivery model, in which cantons and municipalities deliver integration activities under federal – cantonal programme agreements. Local authorities also play an important role in Ireland and New Zealand. In Ireland, local authorities co-ordinate integration plans and receive funding through national programmes such as the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), which supports disadvantaged individuals and communities through local development structures, including measures relevant to migrant integration. In New Zealand, the Welcoming Communities programme provides initial central funding to help municipalities build integration capacity. Over time, responsibility for continuing and financing these activities shifts to local authorities, which integrate them into regular service provision and local planning frameworks.

2.2.3. Federal and regional systems

Federal and highly decentralised countries follow a different pattern. In Belgium, integration competences rest primarily with regions and language communities. Germany combines federal legislation with Länder-level strategies and municipal delivery. Switzerland relies heavily on cantonal structures, and in

Spain, autonomous communities have legislative powers in social policy and are responsible for organising and delivering most integration services. In practice, these structures facilitate regional adaptation but depend on strong co-ordination mechanisms to maintain overall coherence.

2.3. Subnational autonomy and role in policy design

Regional and local authorities also contribute to the design of integration policy, although the extent of this involvement varies. In OECD countries, the degree of autonomy granted to regional and local authorities varies widely, ranging from extensive design and implementation powers to highly centralised systems where local discretion is limited. Importantly, implementation responsibility and design autonomy do not always align. In several countries, local actors can both design and implement integration measures. In others their role is largely limited to implementing nationally defined programmes. Table 2.2 summarises reported differences in the degree of autonomy granted to regional and local authorities in the design and implementation of integration measures.

Table 2.2. Subnational autonomy in integration governance in OECD countries

Autonomy level	Characteristics	Countries
High autonomy	Subnational authorities play a role in both policy design and implementation.	Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Spain.
Moderate autonomy	Subnational authorities primarily implement measures but can adapt delivery to local circumstances.	Germany, the Netherlands, Estonia, Lithuania, Sweden, Portugal.
Low autonomy	Subnational authorities mainly implement nationally defined measures and have limited discretion.	France, Greece, Japan, Korea, Hungary, Croatia.

Note: Examples are illustrative and do not capture all institutional differences.
Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

In federal and highly decentralised systems, regions often hold formal responsibilities for both design and implementation. Belgian regions define their own strategies. Spain's autonomous communities develop regional plans within national frameworks. German Länder adopt their own integration concepts to complement federal rules, and Swiss cantons develop and deliver integration measures within national – cantonal programme agreements. In Canada, most provincial and territorial governments also fund some settlement support for newcomers in addition to the federal Settlement Programme. They are also consulted extensively on the federal Settlement Programme. Portugal provides an example of substantial local autonomy despite operating within a nationally co-ordinated framework. Municipalities can develop integration measures tailored to local circumstances through Municipal Plans for the Integration of Migrants, provided these remain consistent with national legislation. In some municipalities, local social-network platforms bring together public authorities, civil-society organisations and other actors to identify priorities and develop migrant-focussed initiatives.

In more centralised systems, regional and local authorities may not have legislative powers but can still influence policy development in informal or consultative ways such as participation in national – local co-ordination platforms, structured consultations during strategy development, feedback mechanisms linked to implementation, or pilot programmes whose results inform national reforms. These mechanisms help ensure that national frameworks reflect local conditions, but they also increase the need for co-ordination to maintain coherence within the system. In some more centrally governed countries municipalities deliver nationally defined measures but have limited autonomy to adapt programmes locally. This pattern is observed for example in Korea, where municipalities are responsible for implementation but have limited influence over programme design.

2.4. Co-ordination instruments

A clear division of responsibilities is important, but it is only the starting point. Effective integration governance also requires practical ways for different parts of government to work together. As national, regional and local authorities may interpret or adapt policies differently, co-ordination mechanisms are needed to manage these differences and maintain overall coherence. In OECD countries, these co-ordination instruments take different forms, including inter-ministerial committees, multi-level co-ordination platforms and structured co-operation between central, regional and local authorities. These tools support both co-ordination between ministries and co-ordination between levels of government.

Co-ordination is not only required between ministries and levels of government but also within local implementation systems. Because integration measures are delivered through multiple services at local level, municipalities often develop their own local co-ordination arrangements to align employment services, education providers, social services and other actors. These local mechanisms complement national governance structures and are essential for translating policy into coherent service delivery.

2.4.1. Horizontal co-ordination between ministries and agencies

At national level, most countries use formal inter-ministerial committees or working groups to bring together relevant ministries to discuss priorities, respond to cross-cutting issues and ensure that sectoral policies support shared integration objectives. They typically cover areas such as employment, education, health and housing. These arrangements differ in form, but they serve a similar function: to ensure that integration policy is not confined to a single ministry, but is taken into account between sectors, so that co-ordination is organised in a structured way and policies reach the whole population.

Examples vary in structure. Austria has an Advisory Committee on Integration. Italy uses inter-ministerial bodies alongside provincial Territorial Councils for Immigration. Korea's Immigration Policy Commission is chaired by the Prime Minister. Finland has a Co-operation Group for the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, led by the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment. Chile established an Inter-ministerial Advisory Committee in 2024 to support implementation of its national policy. Japan co-ordinates through a central unit in the Cabinet Secretariat, which helps align decisions between the ministries responsible for labour, interior affairs, education and social policy.

In other countries, co-ordination is less formal. Germany relies on regular Bund – Länder meetings and the Conference of Integration Ministers, which bring together senior officials to respond to shared priorities. Sweden's Ministry of Education convenes national agencies periodically to co-ordinate integration-related work. These approaches are not always anchored in legislation, but they still help reduce fragmentation through regular administrative routines.

2.4.2. Vertical co-ordination between levels of government

Co-ordination instruments also support collaboration between national, regional and local authorities. This reflects the fact that national governments define frameworks, while implementation often takes place at subnational levels. Instruments range from formal agreements and committees to more flexible dialogue platforms.

Switzerland provides a structured example. Multi-year programme agreements between the federal government and cantons define objectives, funding and reporting requirements, while allowing cantons a high degree of autonomy. Portugal supports co-ordination through a network of Local Support Centres for the Integration of Migrants (CLAIM), operated by municipalities and other local partners in co-operation with AIMA. The network provides a practical link between national integration structures and local implementation. In the Netherlands, national ministries meet regularly with the Association of the

Netherlands Municipalities to discuss implementation issues and adjust guidance. Spain uses national – regional platforms to align measures taken by autonomous communities with national priorities.

Australia co-ordinates between levels of government through the Ministerial Forum on Multicultural Affairs and supporting officials' groups. Italy combines national co-ordination with regional and provincial structures, including Territorial Councils for Immigration. New Zealand links national co-ordination with regional steering groups to support alignment between strategy and local delivery. In Canada, the federal government collaborates with provinces and territories multilaterally via the Forum of Ministers Responsible for Immigration, and bilaterally via Settlement Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) to align respective programming in an effort to minimise gaps and duplication.

These mechanisms differ in formality, but they serve a common purpose: to ensure that local implementation remains connected to national objectives. Co-ordination is also important over time, as individuals move between programmes and services, particularly when responsibilities shift between institutions or levels of government. Even where mandates are clearly defined, institutions may lack incentives or formal responsibilities to align their activities. As responsibilities change, existing co-ordination arrangements may not adapt at the same pace, increasing the risk of gaps between services or policy areas.

Not all countries have formal or institutionalised co-ordination mechanisms. In the United Kingdom, co-ordination at national level is largely programme-based, while regional administrations operate their own systems independently. Croatia and Hungary also report limited formal co-ordination between ministries or levels of government. In such cases, integration governance may remain more fragmented, as there is no stable mechanism linking actors within the system.

In practice, countries rarely rely on a single mechanism. Formal bodies help align policy direction, dialogue platforms support information-sharing, and programme agreements or planning cycles provide predictability for subnational actors. The way these tools are combined and used influences how well integration systems function in practice.

Co-ordination instruments also need to adapt, as countries adjust institutional structures or respond to new policy priorities. Several countries, including Chile, Ireland and Lithuania, have recently strengthened or restructured their co-ordination mechanisms. In some cases, co-ordination is supported by digital tools that facilitate information-sharing and monitoring, such as Switzerland's ELSI platform, which supports information exchange between integration actors, or Latvia's Integration Measures Database, which tracks integration measures and their implementation. The wider role of digital tools is discussed in chapter 5.

Co-ordination mechanisms may also operate above the national level. In the European Union, the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 provides a framework for policy co-ordination, funding and exchange between Member States. Although responsibility for integration policy remains national, these frameworks support Member States through funding instruments, peer learning and implementation guidance (see Box 2.1).

Box 2.1. EU frameworks supporting integration governance and co-ordination

The European Union supports its Member States through funding, policy exchange and co-ordination frameworks, while integration policy remains the responsibility of the Member States.

The EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027 provides a framework for strengthening co-ordination across policy areas and levels of government. The Action Plan promotes a cross-sectoral approach linking integration to employment, education, housing, health and social inclusion policies. It also encourages co-operation between national authorities, regional and local governments, civil society organisations and social partners. A mid-term review published in 2025 highlighted progress in

implementation but also pointed to continuing governance challenges, including co-ordination between levels of government and the need to strengthen partnerships with local actors and civil society. The Action Plan supports Member States through:

- policy co-ordination and exchange of practices between Member States.
- financial support through instruments such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the European Social Fund Plus. (see Chapter 4).
- support for multi-level partnerships and local implementation capacity.

More recently, the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum has introduced a stronger focus on preparedness, co-ordination and implementation capacity. Although the Pact primarily concerns asylum and migration management, it also places greater emphasis on early integration and inclusion, particularly for applicants for, and beneficiaries of, international protection. Recent reforms strengthen access to integration related support, including labour market participation, language learning and civic orientation, and reinforce the links between reception, asylum and longer-term integration policies.

The implementation of the Pact is expected to affect integration governance through increased co-ordination requirements, stronger monitoring and reporting obligations, and greater emphasis on reception and contingency planning.

The implications are nevertheless likely to vary between countries. Existing governance structures, administrative capacity and co-ordination arrangements differ considerably across EU Member States, which may influence how EU-level frameworks are implemented in practice.

Source: European Commission (2020), Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027; European Commission (2025), Mid-term Review of the Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion 2021-2027; European Union (2024), Pact on Migration and Asylum.

2.5. Institutional stability and governance change

Institutional arrangements for integration change over time. These shifts occur when governments adjust ministerial portfolios, update political priorities, re-organise administrative structures or respond to new migration patterns. As responsibilities move between ministries or are re-allocated to different levels of government, these shifts may in some cases reflect efforts to link integration more closely with specific policy fields such as employment, education, housing or social services, or to strengthen co-ordination within the system.

Such re-organisations bring both benefits and risks. They can strengthen co-ordination between policy areas, increase the visibility of integration within government, or align responsibilities more closely with the policy instruments needed for implementation. But institutional change can also interrupt established routines, create uncertainty about who does what and weaken institutional memory. Because integration policy depends on co-operation between ministries and levels of government, disruptions to these relationships can have direct implications for implementation.

National reforms can also significantly reshape local room for manoeuvre even within systems with strong municipal autonomy. Municipalities may retain responsibility for implementation, but with less flexibility over priorities, timing or settlement arrangements.

Countries with stable co-ordination mechanisms generally manage transitions more smoothly. Chile, Japan and Switzerland make use of formal bodies that continue operating even when responsibilities shift, helping ensure continuity during administrative change. Several Nordic countries highlight that municipalities value predictable national guidance and stable funding rules during reforms. In federal systems such as Germany and Switzerland, clearly defined legal mandates and established national – regional relationships help

prevent unintended consequences when responsibilities change at one level of government. Other recent reforms include Ireland's creation of a cross-government Strategic Migration Policy Group in 2024 and Lithuania's effort to strengthen co-ordination between migrant reception, labour-market integration and municipal service delivery. In Canada and Belgium, responsibilities are periodically reallocated between federal and regional authorities, but long-standing intergovernmental arrangements help support continuity during these transitions.

Maintaining institutional memory is also critical. Integration policy relies on long-standing co-operation and practical experience that can be difficult to rebuild once lost. Some countries maintain continuity through standing working groups, documented guidance and shared data systems. Switzerland's network of cantonal and municipal integration delegates provides a consistent point of contact with the federal level. Norway's Directorate of Integration and Diversity has maintained leadership through several ministerial re-organisations. Australia's multiyear agreements and established federal – state platforms likewise help sustain implementation despite periodic administrative adjustments.

Stable governance frameworks, predictable procedures and clear communication can help systems adapt to new demands without losing coherence. This is particularly important in multi-level systems, where changes at one level of government can affect implementation practices and responsibilities elsewhere in the system.

2.6. Key takeaways

National responsibility for integration policy varies between OECD countries, with systems ranging from single-ministry leadership as in Denmark, to shared ministerial arrangements as in Germany and Italy, and decentralised or subnational-led models in Belgium and Canada. Implementation structures similarly vary, from centralised delivery as in France to municipal models in the Nordic countries and federal or regional systems. These differences reflect institutional traditions and shape how co-ordination is organised in practice. Despite this variation, there are a few key considerations worth bearing in mind:

- Horizontal co-ordination, between ministries and policy areas, is essential because implementation typically involves mainstream services such as employment, education, housing and social protection. Dedicated co-ordination bodies that bring together the relevant ministries around shared integration objectives can help ensure alignment, particularly where no single ministry has full responsibility.
- Vertical co-ordination, between national and subnational levels, is complicated by the fact that implementation responsibilities and policy autonomy do not always align. In many countries, local authorities deliver integration measures but operate within nationally defined frameworks and funding structures. Where local authorities have delivery responsibility without the autonomy to adapt measures to local conditions, or autonomy without the capacity or resources to use it, this mismatch can itself be a reason integration outcomes fall short.

Both forms of co-ordination depend on continuity. Institutional arrangements rarely remain static. Responsibilities, mandates and governance structures are regularly adjusted in response to changing migration patterns, labour-market needs and policy priorities. Many countries use standing co-ordination mechanisms, such as a designated lead institution, a network of regional or local contact points and shared data and reporting systems, that can help maintain coherence across both ministries and levels of government during periods of change.

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3 Stakeholder engagement in integration governance

How can governments better involve civil society, businesses, and migrant-led organisations in shaping and delivering integration policy? This chapter examines governance frameworks for including non-governmental stakeholders in the design and delivery of integration policies.

Integration governance depends heavily on co-operation between public authorities and actors outside government. National, regional and local authorities set direction and deliver many services, but much of the day-to-day work of integration is carried out by civil-society organisations, employers, social partners, migrant-led organisations and private providers. Involving these actors matters for several reasons. Non-governmental organisations often have reach and trust that public authorities lack, particularly with groups who are harder to engage through formal channels. Employers and social partners shape labour market access in ways that policy alone cannot. Migrant-led organisations bring direct knowledge of barriers and needs. Without structured engagement, integration systems risk being designed and delivered without adequate knowledge of the realities they are meant to address.

In OECD countries, non-governmental actors are involved mainly in two ways. First, organisations contribute to policy design through advisory bodies, participation in strategy processes, structured consultations or direct dialogue with ministries. There is substantial variation between countries in how this is organised. Some countries rely on permanent bodies with defined mandates, while others consult stakeholders mainly during legislative reforms or strategy updates.

Second, non-governmental actors are heavily involved in service delivery. In many countries, they provide language training, employment support, civic orientation, settlement services and targeted programmes for women, young people and other groups facing specific barriers. Their delivery role is often more structured and formalised than their involvement in policy design, typically governed by long-standing contracts and partnerships with national, regional and municipal authorities, though in some countries arrangements remain more informal or dependent on short-term project funding.

Migrant-led organisations have a distinct role. Their close links to communities can help identify practical barriers that may not appear in administrative data, facilitate communication with public authorities and strengthen trust in institutions. In some countries, they also contribute directly to service delivery or community outreach. However, their involvement is often constrained by limited organisational capacity and administrative requirements that favour larger providers.

This chapter examines how OECD countries involve non-governmental actors in the design and delivery of integration policies. It identifies the main forms of participation, highlights common governance challenges and examines the conditions that support more sustained and effective co-operation.

3.1. Stakeholder involvement in policy design

Stakeholders are involved in policy design through a wide range of mechanisms. These differ in OECD countries in their degree of formality, predictability and influence. In some systems, standing advisory bodies have ongoing mandates. In others, participation is linked to strategy or legislative cycles, while some countries rely on more flexible or ad hoc consultation formats. In many systems, participation ultimately depends on whether and when public authorities choose to initiate consultations, which can result in uneven participation over time.

Several OECD countries, including Finland, Korea, Belgium (Flanders and Brussels), Australia, Germany, Portugal, Chile and Spain use permanent advisory or consultative bodies to involve stakeholders in integration policy development. These structures generally meet regularly, bring together different types of actors and provide continuity between policy cycles.

Finland is a clear example. The Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) brings together migrant communities, civil-society organisations, labour-market actors and public authorities at both national and regional levels. ETNO contributes to policy preparation through statements, consultations and dialogue with ministries, and also functions as a channel for raising emerging issues from regional and local levels. Korea's Immigration Policy Commission follows a similar model, bringing together government representatives, academics, civil-society organisations and private-sector actors to review policy proposals

and discuss broader immigration and integration priorities. In Belgium, advisory bodies and participation organisations in Flanders and Brussels are established by decree and provide structured input during strategy development and policy revisions, giving stakeholders a more institutionalised role in policy discussions. Portugal's National Council for Migration and Asylum provides a formal mechanism for consultation on migration and integration policy, bringing together government representatives, migrant organisations, social partners, civil-society actors and the private sector. These arrangements create greater continuity and predictability in stakeholder participation, although their influence still depends on how consultation results are incorporated into final decisions.

In several OECD countries, stakeholder involvement in policy design is organised mainly through strategy revisions, legislative reforms or recurring consultation exercises rather than through permanent advisory structures. These mechanisms create more formal opportunities for participation, but their frequency and continuity vary considerably between countries. Luxembourg consults civil-society organisations during revisions of its national integration framework, while Ireland combined a public consultation with targeted workshops when preparing its new strategy. Australia involved service providers, community actors and employers in redesigning its settlement-services model. Denmark routinely gathers stakeholder input through public-hearing procedures linked to legislative proposals. In Sweden, the Ministry of Education organises annual dialogue meetings with civil-society organisations on selected themes, whereas France frequently collects written feedback from associations and service providers when adjusting integration programmes. These approaches can support broad participation at key moments and may allow governments to engage a wider range of actors than permanent advisory bodies. At the same time, participation can become uneven when consultation depends on reform cycles, political priorities or short-term initiatives.

Several countries also rely on more flexible consultation formats, including bilateral meetings, workshops, targeted focus groups or issue-specific consultations. These approaches can broaden participation, particularly for organisations and groups that are not represented in permanent advisory structures. However, they are often less predictable and may depend heavily on administrative initiative or available resources. Smaller organisations and migrant-led groups may find it particularly difficult to monitor consultation processes or respond quickly to requests for input.

A further dimension is that stakeholder engagement may function differently outside major urban centres. Recent findings from the *EU Horizon 2020 Whole-COMM project* suggest that in small and medium-sized towns and rural areas, co-operation often depends less on formal co-ordination structures and more on local social capital and informal relationships. Municipalities may rely heavily on volunteers, schools, local associations and migrant-led networks to organise orientation activities, language support and community-building initiatives. Evidence from Austria and other countries indicates that local co-ordinators or trusted intermediaries can play an important role in maintaining co-operation between municipalities, civil society and migrant groups (Pettrachin and Caponio, 2024[1]) (Skrivanek and Kraler, 2024[2]).

Table 3.1 shows the wide variation in how OECD countries organise stakeholder participation in integration policy design, ranging from permanent advisory structures to more ad hoc consultation arrangements.

Table 3.1. Mechanisms for stakeholder involvement in integration policy design

Country	Main mechanism for stakeholder involvement in policy design		Note
Australia	Structured consultation		Service providers, community actors and employers formally consulted, including in redesign of settlement services model
Austria	Structured consultation		Formal review process for legislative changes; Advisory Committee on Integration provides structured input
Belgium	Brussels	Permanent	Civil society and migrant-led organisations have institutionalised roles

Country	Main mechanism for stakeholder involvement in policy design		Note
	region	advisory body	
	Flanders	Permanent advisory body	Advisory bodies established by decree; participation organisations formally represent migrant communities
	Wallonia	Structured consultation	Civil society organisations formally involved in design of language and civic orientation courses
Bulgaria	Informal/ad hoc		Involvement fragmented and limited
Canada	Informal/ad hoc		No formal national co-design structure: some informal engagement reported under “other”
Chile	Structured consultation		Non-government stakeholders formally involved in design of national migration policy (PNME)
Costa Rica	Structured consultation		Civil society formally involved in language, civic orientation, labour market and social measures
Croatia	Informal/ad hoc		Very limited involvement; social partners involved in labour market measures only
Czechia	Permanent advisory body		Civil society and migrant-led organisations broadly involved across most policy areas including course design
Denmark	Structured consultation		Public hearing processes linked to legislative proposals; no formal embedded role in policy design
Estonia	Structured consultation		Standard practice to involve relevant organisations in legislative process through formal and informal consultations
Finland	Structured consultation		Annual dialogue meetings and consultations used in policy development; no formal statutory role for non-government stakeholders
France	Structured consultation		Civil society involved across language, civic orientation, housing and social measures through programme structures and co-ordination with OFII
Germany	Permanent advisory body		Civil society and social partners integrated into advisory structures across multiple policy areas
Greece	Informal/ad hoc		No formal involvement reported
Hungary	No involvement reported		No formal involvement reported
Iceland	Informal/ad hoc		No formal structure: some multi-stakeholder co-operation on specific issues such as preventing labour exploitation
Ireland	Informal/ad hoc		Stakeholders consulted during strategy development but no formalised or permanent consultation mechanism
Israel	Structured consultation		Civil society organisations formally involved across language, civic orientation, labour market and social measures
Italy	Permanent advisory body		Civil society and social partners embedded in multi-level governance framework across multiple policy areas
Japan	Structured consultation		Consultations, expert panels and hearings in selected areas, co-ordinated through Cabinet Secretariat
Korea	Permanent advisory body		Immigration Policy Commission formally includes civil society, academic and NGO members under the Framework Act
Latvia	Structured consultation		Civil society formally involved in selected areas: language, civic orientation and social activities
Lithuania	Structured consultation		Civil society formally involved in language, civic orientation, labour market, housing and social measures
Luxembourg	Informal/ad hoc		Civil society consulted during revisions of national integration framework; no formal ongoing mechanism
Netherlands	Informal/ad hoc		No formal involvement in policy design reported
New Zealand	Structured consultation		Formal involvement in Refugee Resettlement Strategy; varies across policy areas and stakeholder types
Norway	Structured consultation		Civil society formally involved; emphasis on ongoing co-operation and dialogue with civil society and immigrant organisations
Poland	Structured consultation		Partial formal involvement: Department of Social Integration prioritise stakeholder co-operation during policy development
Portugal	Permanent advisory body		CNMA brings together government, migrant-led organisations, social partners, civil society and private sector; AIMA conducts regular in-person and online consultations
Romania	Structured consultation		Involvement primarily consultative; civil society involved in language, civic orientation and social

Country	Main mechanism for stakeholder involvement in policy design	Note
		measures
Slovenia	Structured consultation	Civil society formally involved in all policy areas; working group established during 2023 Integration Strategy preparation
Spain	Permanent advisory body	Civil society formally involved in all policy areas through the Forum for Social Integration of Immigrants
Sweden	Informal/ad hoc	Ministry of Education organises annual dialogue meetings on selected themes; no formal statutory role
Switzerland	Structured consultation	Formal involvement of the cantons in policy development and programme design, joint steering group with representatives of cantons and municipalities, ongoing dialogue with civil society organisations, private sector, social partners and other stakeholders

Note: Permanent advisory body: standing body with a formal mandate meeting regularly to provide input into policy development. Structured consultation: formal involvement linked to legislative processes, strategy cycles or recurring consultation exercises. Informal/ad hoc: consultation that occurs without a permanent structure, typically dependent on administrative initiative or specific reform moments. No involvement reported: no formal or informal mechanism for non-government stakeholder involvement in policy design reported.
Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

3.2. Stakeholder involvement in service delivery

Stakeholder involvement is often more structured in service delivery than in policy design. In most OECD countries certain integration measures are delivered by organisations outside government. The types of actors involved often differ by policy area. Civil-society organisations, private providers, social enterprises and, in some cases, migrant-led organisations contribute to language training, employment support, civic-orientation courses, settlement services and targeted programmes for specific groups. In many systems, these organisations complement mainstream public services rather than replace them entirely. Municipalities, public employment services, schools and regional authorities often retain overall co-ordination responsibilities while relying on external actors for specialised support, outreach or programme delivery.

Non-governmental actors play particularly important roles in language training, settlement services and targeted support for vulnerable groups. Civil-society organisations are often involved in community-based mentoring, women's programmes, orientation activities and support for newly arrived migrants, while private providers are more commonly used for accredited language courses or employment-related services. Employers and social partners also contribute in some countries through apprenticeships, workplace language training, vocational pathways or information on labour rights. These arrangements reflect different governance models but also different understandings of which services are best delivered through public institutions and which benefit from community-based or specialised actors. How these boundaries are drawn has implications for co-ordination, accountability and the consistency of services across regions. They may also shift as governments reassess delivery models, respond to capacity pressures or follow evidence on what works.

In many OECD countries, non-governmental organisations deliver a substantial share of operational tasks. Canada is a well-known example, where federally funded settlement services are delivered largely through external provider organisations under multi-year funding agreements that define funding conditions, reporting obligations and service objectives with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. This model gives providers flexibility to adapt services to local needs while operating within a common performance and reporting framework. Germany follows a different pattern: accredited providers approved under federal quality standards deliver integration and language courses but operate within a nationally regulated framework that includes common curricula, qualification requirements and monitoring arrangements. Spain also relies heavily on civil-society organisations for language training, employment-

related measures and social services, often through regional or municipal contracts. Similar arrangements exist in the Nordic countries, where municipalities co-ordinate integration programmes but work with civil-society organisations to provide mentoring, community-based support or specialised services.

In several OECD countries, labour-market integration is also organised through broader labour-market institutions involving employers' organisations and trade unions. Social partners contribute to both policy development and implementation through vocational training systems, apprenticeships and labour-market dialogue structures. Their involvement means that integration governance is organised through broader labour-market institutions rather than separate migration-specific structures (Box 3.1).

Box 3.1. The Role of social partners in labour-market integration governance

Labour-market integration often involves actors beyond public authorities and civil society organisations. In several OECD countries, social partners (employer organisations and trade unions) play a structured role in shaping and supporting labour-market integration measures.

In countries where labour-market policy is developed through established co-operation between government and organised labour-market actors, including Denmark, Finland, Germany and Austria, social partners often contribute to the design of employment and skills policies that affect migrants. Their involvement may take place through formal consultation mechanisms, advisory bodies or participation in governance structures linked to public employment services and vocational education and training systems.

In Germany and Austria, labour-market integration measures operate within broader labour-market governance systems in which employer organisations and trade unions have recognised consultative roles. Similar patterns exist in Belgium at regional level and in the Netherlands, where labour-market dialogue structures contribute to employment and training policies that apply to both native-born and migrant workers.

Social partners may also contribute to implementation. Employer organisations can facilitate access to apprenticeships, work-based learning and job placements, while trade unions often provide information on labour rights and working conditions or support workers facing discrimination or exploitation. Migrant labour-market integration is embedded within mainstream labour-market institutions rather than organised through separate, migration-specific frameworks.

Embedding migrant integration within existing labour-market structures can help avoid the development of parallel systems and support equal treatment between worker groups.

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025)

Although governance structures differ substantially, many OECD countries rely heavily on external actors for operational delivery, particularly in language training, settlement support and targeted services. The degree of delegation varies considerably between countries and policy areas. In some systems, municipalities, education institutions and public employment services remain the primary delivery actors but rely on external organisations for specific components. In others, large parts of operational delivery are contracted out to non-governmental providers. (See also Chapter 4). Table 3.2 provides an overview of how non-government actors contribute to integration service delivery across OECD countries.

Table 3.2. Stakeholder involvement in integration service delivery

Country	Main role of non-government actors		Main governance arrangement
Australia	Primary service delivery		Competitive tenders and contracted providers
Austria	Primary service delivery		Civil society organisations deliver integration services
Belgium	Brussels region	Primary service delivery	Institutionalised service-delivery roles
	Flanders	Primary service delivery	Participation organisations established by decree
	Wallonia	Primary service delivery	Civil society organisations largely deliver integration services
Bulgaria	Limited involvement		Fragmented involvement
Canada	Primary service delivery		More than 500 contracted settlement service providers
Chile	Co-delivery with public authorities		Civil society and migrant-led organisations involved
Costa Rica	Targeted service delivery		Selected service-delivery partnerships
Croatia	Limited involvement		Mainly ad hoc arrangements
Czechia	Co-delivery with public authorities		Stakeholders integrated into adaptation and integration courses
Denmark	Primary service delivery		Municipal contractors and private providers
Estonia	Co-delivery with public authorities		Co-delivery in labour-market and language integration
Finland	Co-delivery with public authorities		Municipal grants to non-governmental organisations
France	Primary service delivery		Calls for projects under Programme 104
Germany	Co-delivery with public authorities		Accredited providers under federal quality standards
Greece	Primary service delivery		Strong reliance on international organisations and civil society organisations
Iceland	Co-delivery with public authorities		Project-based grants for language and employment support
Israel	Co-delivery with public authorities		Public-interest providers formally engaged
Italy	Co-delivery with public authorities		Civil society and social partners involved in reception and integration
Japan	Co-delivery with public authorities		Stakeholder delivery under central co-ordination
Korea	Co-delivery with public authorities		Civil society organisations involved in implementation
Latvia	Co-delivery with public authorities		Formal civil-society involvement
Lithuania	Co-delivery with public authorities		Stakeholders integrated into implementation
Luxembourg	Co-delivery with public authorities		Service delivery embedded in integration framework
Netherlands	Co-delivery with municipalities		Municipal-led delivery with stakeholder participation
New Zealand	Co-delivery with public		Refugee Resettlement Strategy implemented with stakeholders

Country	Main role of non-government actors	Main governance arrangement
	authorities	
Norway	Co-delivery with municipalities	Municipal responsibility combined with NGO delivery
Poland	Primary service delivery	Large role for local and international organisations
Portugal	Co-delivery with municipalities	Partnership-based delivery through municipalities, migrant associations, civil society organisations and local integration support centres
Romania	Co-delivery with public authorities	Stakeholder involvement through co-ordination mechanisms
Slovenia	Primary service delivery	Civil society delivers language and civic courses
Spain	Co-delivery with regional authorities	Coordination with autonomous communities and civil society
Sweden	Targeted service delivery	Stakeholders integrated into selected delivery systems
Switzerland	Co-delivery with cantons	Cantonal arrangements with stakeholder delivery
Türkiye	Co-delivery with public authorities	NGO co-ordination in harmonisation services
United Kingdom	Primary service delivery	Strong reliance on local authorities and NGOs

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

These arrangements can increase flexibility and responsiveness, particularly where external actors have close links to local communities or specialised expertise. At the same time, they create governance challenges that affect both service quality and provider diversity. Short-term and project-based funding makes long-term planning difficult, limits investment in staff and organisational capacity, and tends to favour larger, more professionalised providers over smaller community-based actors. Competitive tendering can disadvantage smaller or migrant-led organisations that lack administrative capacity, even where they have strong local knowledge or community trust.

Effective service delivery depends in practice on more than which actors deliver services. How funding arrangements, procurement rules and monitoring requirements are designed matters considerably. These issues are examined in more detail in Chapters 4 and 5.

Migrant-led organisations play a specific and often under-recognised role. Their close ties to communities allow them to identify practical barriers, support outreach and provide services tailored to linguistic or cultural needs. In some countries, they also help connect public institutions with groups that may otherwise be difficult to reach. However, these organisations often face particular constraints, including short-term funding, limited administrative capacity and procurement requirements that favour larger providers. Box 3.2 discusses their contribution and challenges in more detail.

Box 3.2. Migrant consultation mechanisms

Migrant-led organisations are organisations that primarily represent, or are rooted in, specific migrant communities and are run by people with similar backgrounds. This distinguishes them from broader civil society organisations that work on integration but are not organised around community-based representation. There are three main ways in which migrant led organisations contribute to integration governance.

- First, they play a representative role. They raise issues that matter to their communities and provide insights on how policies and services work in practice. Because they work closely with migrants these organisations can often identify barriers such as administrative complexity, unclear information or unmet needs, that do not always appear in official data.
- Second, they serve as a bridge between communities and public authorities. They help make institutions more accessible by sharing information, explaining procedures and supporting communication in familiar languages or formats. This can strengthen trust in public services and improve participation in programmes, especially among groups who may hesitate to engage with authorities.
- Third, they can support co-production of services. In several OECD countries, migrant-led organisations deliver services themselves or work in partnership with municipalities and civil-society organisations. Their involvement can help tailor programmes to different linguistic, cultural or community needs, improving relevance and reach.

The institutionalisation of migrant-led participation varies in OECD countries. Finland's Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) provides a formal platform for dialogue between migrant communities and government. In Canada, many migrant-serving organisations, including migrant-led ones, participate both in consultation processes and in the delivery of federally funded settlement services. In most other OECD countries, participation is less structured and occurs through general civil-society channels. France, for instance, consults associations through broader equality and civil-society mechanisms, without dedicated migrant-specific advisory bodies.

Despite their contributions, migrant-led organisations often face persistent constraints. Limited and short-term funding makes it difficult to maintain stable engagement or retain staff. Administrative and reporting requirements, particularly for tendered or EU-funded projects, tend to favour larger organisations with more capacity. As a result, many smaller community-based groups are excluded from structured consultation or competitive procurement. Effective involvement therefore depends not only on formal consultation mechanisms, but also on predictable funding, proportionate administrative requirements and recognition of the value of community-based knowledge within wider governance systems.

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025); European Commission (2021), *Mapping Key Migrant-Led Organisations across the EU*, Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission, Brussels.

3.3. Key takeaways – conditions for effective and sustainable stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder involvement in OECD countries takes different forms, ranging from institutionalised advisory bodies, as in Finland and Belgium, to service-delivery partnerships, as in Canada, and more ad hoc consultation processes in other countries. Despite these differences, several common conditions shape whether stakeholder involvement becomes sustained and influential or remains limited and uneven over time.

- **Clear roles and mandates.** Participation tends to be more stable when responsibilities are defined in laws, strategies or formal agreements. Clear mandates make participation more predictable and help clarify the role different organisations are expected to play. In Finland, for example, the Advisory Board for Ethnic Relations (ETNO) operates with a defined mandate for national and regional dialogue. Where responsibilities remain informal or unclear, participation often depends more heavily on ad hoc decisions or individual initiatives, making it harder for smaller organisations to remain involved.

- **Regular dialogue and feedback channels.** Participation is generally more sustained when consultation is embedded in recurring decision-making processes rather than linked only to reforms or crisis periods. Permanent advisory councils and regular dialogue meetings can create continuity between governments and stakeholder organisations. In Belgium, regional advisory structures provide ongoing input into strategy development and review, while Sweden's recurring dialogue meetings with civil-society organisations help maintain regular exchange between government and non-governmental actors.
- **A range of organisations, large and small**. Consultation systems work better when they include organisations with strong administrative capacity, as well as those with closer ties to specific communities or sectors, including migrant-led organisations, which themselves range from grassroots community groups to professional associations and service providers. Where smaller or less established organisations are left out of consultation, integration policy risks drawing on a narrower set of perspectives.
- **Predictable and adequate financing.** Stable funding is important for sustained participation and service delivery. Short project cycles and fragmented funding streams can make long-term planning difficult and can favour larger organisations with stronger administrative capacity. Multi-year funding agreements, such as those used in Canada's settlement programme, allow organisations to maintain staff capacity and service continuity. Annual calls or short-term project funding, on the other hand, can create greater fluctuations in participation and organisational capacity. Chapter 4 discusses financing structures in more detail.
- **Monitoring and quality standards.** Monitoring helps ensure that delegated services remain aligned with broader policy objectives, particularly where delivery is carried out by external providers. Accreditation systems, reporting obligations and performance indicators can support consistency and accountability. In Germany, accreditation requirements for integration and language-course providers help maintain common standards within a delegated delivery model. At the same time, monitoring requirements need to remain proportionate so that smaller or migrant-led organisations are not unintentionally excluded from participation. Chapter 5 examines monitoring frameworks and evaluation systems in more detail.

These conditions are mutually reinforcing. Stable financing supports organisational capacity, clear mandates make monitoring meaningful, and regular dialogue channels can improve policy design. Together, these conditions shape whether stakeholder involvement becomes a stable part of integration governance and whether integration measures reach the people and communities they are intended to serve.

References

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4 Financing integration. Sustainable and responsive funding models

How can funding mechanisms ensure long-term sustainability and adaptability of integration efforts? This chapter examines how integration is financed, how resources are organised and allocated, and how funding arrangements shape implementation, co-ordination and accountability.

Integration financing is often subject to particular scrutiny, reflecting both broader fiscal pressures and the political sensitivity of migration-related spending. This increases the need to show that resources are used efficiently and deliver measurable outcomes. Cost-effectiveness, predictability and the ability to adjust resources when needs change are therefore central issues in integration governance. In practice, this requires attention to several key features:

- Predictability: whether funding is stable enough to support planning, staffing and continuity.
- Flexibility: whether resources can be adjusted when needs or arrivals change.
- Allocation and contracting rules: how resources flow between levels of government and to non-governmental actors.
- Administrative burden and reliance on project-based funding: whether funding structures support continuity or lead to fragmentation.

Integration financing shares these features with many other areas of public spending but combines several sources of complexity. It typically involves multiple levels of government, spans policy areas such as education, housing and employment, and is shaped by legal entitlements and migration-related decisions. As a result, funding arrangements do more than distribute resources. They influence who delivers services, how stable programmes are, and whether systems can adjust when needs change.

A central challenge is to balance stability and flexibility. Stable, multi-year financing supports long-term planning and capacity building, while flexible mechanisms allow systems to adjust to changing migration patterns and local pressures. In European OECD countries, reliance on EU or project-based funding adds a further dimension. This can support innovation but may also complicate continuity and long-term capacity building. The following sections examine how OECD countries organise these financing systems and how different approaches affect implementation, co-ordination and sustainability.

4.1. Sources of integration financing

Understanding integration financing begins with identifying where the funding comes from. The mix of funding sources matters because each source carries different implications, giving different actors influence over priorities, accountability and flexibility.

National public budgets are the main source of integration financing in most OECD countries, even where implementation relies heavily on local authorities or contracted providers. These resources are typically allocated either through dedicated integration budget lines or through mainstream social policy budgets in areas such as education, employment and health.

In most OECD countries, regional and local authorities also contribute to the financing of integration measures, particularly where they are responsible for service delivery. In countries such as Norway and Sweden, municipalities play a central role in financing and delivering integration services, while in Germany responsibilities for financing and delivering integration services are shared between Länder and municipalities. These resources usually come from general municipal or regional budgets, funded through a mix of local taxes and transfers from the national government. Dedicated local integration budget lines are rare. More commonly, funding for housing support, social services or supplementary language provision is drawn from broader local public services budgets. The extent of subnational financial autonomy varies in OECD countries and influences how far local authorities can adapt resources and services to local integration needs.

In some countries, integration financing is also supported by supranational or international sources. In the European Union, the *Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF)* and the *European Social Fund Plus (ESF+)* provide substantial support. Their role varies: in some countries, EU funds represent a major share of integration financing, while others use them primarily for innovation pilots or supplementary measures

(see also Section The role of EU funds in national integration financing). Outside the EU, several countries collaborate with international organisations to support settlement and reception programmes, particularly where national systems are still developing.

Additional contributions may come from private philanthropic foundations or private sector actors, such as companies co-financing language training or job-related upskilling. These sources generally complement public funding rather than constituting core financing streams. Although smaller in scale and difficult to track systematically across countries, these sources can play a strategic role by supporting innovation, encouraging partnerships and promoting whole-of-society approaches.

At the same time, reliance on non-public funding may raise concerns related to sustainability, accountability, alignment with policy objectives and equal access. In some systems, migrants themselves may also contribute to certain types of integration courses or assessments. Cost-sharing arrangements differ widely. While some countries provide early-phase measures such as basic language training and civic orientation free of charge, others apply fees at various stages, and the level and structure of these contributions varies considerably across countries depending on eligibility rules, benefit entitlements and local practice.

Budget allocations are generally set through annual or multi-year budget cycles, based on factors such as expected numbers of arrivals, legal obligations to provide support and government priorities. In the European Union, funds such as AMIF and ESF+ follow multi-year programming periods, while national and subnational budgets are adjusted annually to respond to demographic trends and policy developments.

4.2. Organising national integration budgets

Beyond the source of funding, countries also differ in how integration budgets are organised and how financial responsibilities are allocated between institutions and levels of government. In OECD countries, integration budgets are commonly organised in three broad ways, and many countries combine elements of more than one.

In centralised models, responsibility for integration funding is concentrated at the national level, typically within a single ministry or a designated agency. Germany and Spain, for example, organise integration budgets primarily through one ministry or federal agency, supported by implementing bodies such as Germany's *Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF).*

In multi-ministry frameworks, responsibilities and budgets are shared between several departments, such as labour, education, health, and home affairs, and are often co-ordinated through interministerial committees or agreements (OECD, 2018[1]). Australia distributes integration-related budgets between Home Affairs, Employment, Education, Health and Social Services, while Italy funds integration jointly through the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. Lithuania, Japan and Romania follow similar approaches, with resources spread across multiple portfolios.

In some countries, responsibility for funding and implementation is largely assigned to subnational or local authorities, such as municipalities or regions. In Denmark and Norway, for example, national governments allocate funding for newly arrived residents directly to municipalities, which are then responsible for organising and delivering integration services.

Centralised systems provide clear accountability, making it easier to align with national priorities and international commitments, but they can be rigid and may be less responsive to local conditions. Multi-ministry frameworks support cross-sectoral collaboration and help mainstream integration into broader social policies, yet they can make co-ordination more demanding and may reduce visibility of integration-specific spending. Decentralised systems allow local authorities to tailor measures to local

labour-market conditions and community needs, but outcomes may vary if local authorities do not receive sufficient resources or if monitoring and accountability arrangements are weak.

In practice, many countries use hybrid arrangements that combine central funding decisions, multi-ministry co-ordination and local implementation. For example, Austria manages national integration funds centrally through the Federal Chancellery (BKA) and EU programmes such as AMIF, while federal states (Bundesländer) co-finance projects and deliver complementary measures. In Canada, both the federal government and the provinces/territories fund settlement support for newcomers. The federal government administers the federal Settlement Program, where third-party Service Provider Organizations are funded to deliver settlement supports to newcomers. Provinces and territories often target their support to migrants who are ineligible to receive federally funded settlement support. These governance models highlight the trade-offs countries face between accountability, co-ordination and local flexibility when organising integration financing.

4.3. Stability and flexibility in integration financing

Financing systems often involve a tension between stability and flexibility. In integration financing, stability supports long-term planning and sustained capacity. Flexibility helps governments respond to changing migration patterns and local pressures. Stable, multi-year financing allows national and local authorities, as well as non-governmental organisations, to plan activities, recruit and retain staff, and invest in quality improvements. Short-term funding cycles can undermine providers' capacity and often favour large, professionalised organisations over smaller community-based actors.

In Canada, multi-year funding agreements in the federal settlement system align with expected volumes of newcomer arrivals and provide a higher degree of predictability for service providers. Austria's national integration funds, managed through the Federal Chancellery, similarly offer multi-year stability for key integration programmes. Finland also uses multi-year frameworks for local integration planning, which help municipalities maintain staffing and programme continuity.

In EU Member States these dynamics are often shaped by the project-based nature of EU funding. In countries where AMIF or ESF+ represent a substantial share of integration financing, such as Lithuania, Romania, Poland or Slovenia, funding is often organised through time-limited projects linked to EU programming cycles. Project-based financing can create gaps between funding periods, limit the ability to retain staff and reduce incentives for longer-term investment in organisational development.

Flexibility is equally important, especially in systems that experience fluctuations in arrivals or sudden pressure on services such as reception, case management or language training. Denmark and Norway provide examples of flexible allocation systems, where municipalities receive per-capita funding that adjusts automatically to changes in the number of new migrants. In Germany, *the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF)* adjusts annual quotas and budgets for integration and language courses in line with demand, allowing providers to scale provision up or down in the short term.

Flexibility can also take the form of contingency funds (reserve budgets for unexpected needs), supplementary budgets approved during the year, or emergency envelopes issued when the number of migrants rises more quickly than anticipated. These mechanisms help governments respond to short term pressures, but challenges may arise in increasing capacity quickly. They can also make long-term planning more difficult if they replace stable baseline funding.

Countries often struggle to achieve both objectives simultaneously. Systems that prioritise flexibility may lack continuity, which can undermine quality and capacity. Systems that prioritise stability may be slower to respond to sudden changes in arrivals, leaving local authorities and providers with insufficient resources at critical moments.

This tension is particularly visible when funding depends on multiple government levels or external sources. Municipalities may receive stable block grants for long-term activities but rely on short-term project funding for specific groups or emerging needs. Civil-society organisations may deliver core services through annual contracts while depending on short-term EU funding for targeted or pilot initiatives. These mixed arrangements can result in uneven programme continuity and inconsistent service availability between regions.

Most OECD countries therefore combine a stable baseline with flexible adjustment mechanisms. Canada supplements its multi-year funding with additional targeted envelopes, such as if additional funding is approved to support specific initiatives or in case of short-term mass arrivals. Germany uses national standards but adjusts budgets annually to match demand for language and integration courses. Denmark and Norway rely on per-capita models that automatically track changes in newcomer numbers. Austria and Finland combine centrally managed multi-year funds with regional co-financing and local flexibility.

The balance between stability and flexibility is not fixed and depends on administrative rules, fiscal frameworks and political priorities. The challenge is to ensure that financing systems support predictable long-term planning while remaining responsive to new pressures and emerging needs. How this balance is managed affects implementation capacity, co-ordination between levels of government and the overall efficiency of integration systems.

4.4. Allocation mechanisms between levels of government

While governance models set out who is responsible for managing integration budgets, allocation mechanisms determine how funding is distributed from national budgets to regional and local authorities and how resources reach the actors who deliver services. Well-designed allocation systems aim to balance predictability, equity and responsiveness, ensuring that funding reflects actual needs and supports coherent implementation. Four common allocation mechanisms can be identified. These approaches are often combined. A country may use formula-based transfers for municipalities, earmarked grants for specific priorities and competitive calls for smaller pilot initiatives.

4.4.1. Formula-based transfers

Formula-based transfers allocate funding to municipalities according to predefined criteria such as the number of newcomers, socio-economic indicators or regional labour-market conditions. These formulas are widely used to ensure predictability and horizontal equity. Denmark and Finland calculate municipal grants based on arrivals and estimated local costs, while Norway uses a similar approach with adjustments for specific needs or vulnerabilities. Formula-based systems promote transparency but can limit flexibility if criteria do not adjust quickly to changing circumstances.

4.4.2. Earmarked grants

Earmarked grants support specific priorities such as language training, employment assistance or civic orientation. France’s Programme 104 is an example where national allocations support core measures while regional prefectures issue calls for projects for local implementation. Earmarked funding can help maintain strategic focus but may lack flexibility if priorities evolve or if local conditions diverge from national assumptions.

4.4.3. Competitive calls for proposals

Competitive calls distribute resources through open competition among municipalities or service providers. These mechanisms are often used to stimulate innovation, pilot new approaches or encourage

partnerships between public authorities and civil-society organisations. The main risk is that they may favour short-term initiatives over long-term system building and can disadvantage municipalities or organisations with less administrative capacity.

4.4.4. Formal agreements and negotiated arrangements

Some countries use bilateral agreements between national and regional or local authorities to set objectives, funding levels and responsibilities, linking national priorities with local implementation. These can be used to clarify expectations, ensure joint planning and tailor resources to regional conditions. Agreements may also specify co-financing, reporting obligations and performance indicators. For example, in France, *Contrats territoriaux d'accueil et d'intégration* are co-constructed between the government and local authorities based on a shared territorial diagnosis, combining financial support with agreed priorities and co-ordination between sectors. In Switzerland, similar co-ordination is achieved through multi-year programme agreements between the Confederation and cantons under the Cantonal Integration Programmes (KIP), which define shared objectives, co-financing arrangements and reporting requirements for integration measures.

In many OECD countries, settlement systems are closely tied to financial allocation. Sweden uses an allocation algorithm to distribute newcomers and corresponding grants to municipalities based on factors such as recent migrant arrivals, municipal reception capacity and local labour-market conditions, intended to balance responsibilities between municipalities. The system has been criticised for limited flexibility in responding to changing local conditions. Some municipalities facing labour shortages argued that they could receive more newcomers, while others requested lower allocations, but opportunities for adjustment have been limited. A recent government inquiry has proposed a shift to a model where settlement and funding are more responsive to local reception capacity and housing conditions (Statens Offentliga Utredningar, 2025[2]).

4.4.5. Performance-linked allocation

Performance-linked mechanisms link a portion of funding to measurable outcomes. Austria includes reporting on course completion rates in multi-year agreements. Canada weights its settlement funding formula to account for refugees' higher expected support needs. Finland combines fixed compensation with outcome-related elements tied to refugee employment, while Norway adjusts municipal grants based on support needs and progression. These mechanisms can enhance accountability but require robust monitoring systems and may risk incentivising "cream-skimming" if not balanced by safeguards.

Allocation mechanisms distribute resources, but they also create incentives for municipalities and service providers. They influence settlement decisions, programme design and the types of support available in different regions. The challenge is to allocate resources in a way that provides predictable funding while remaining responsive to differences in local needs and changing circumstances.

4.5. Financing of non-governmental actors – contracting and procurement

Allocation mechanisms determine how resources flow between levels of government. Financing arrangements with non-governmental actors shape how integration services are delivered and how risks and responsibilities are shared. Civil-society organisations, private providers, social enterprises and, in some cases, migrant-led organisations play a central role in the delivery of language training, employment support, civic orientation and settlement services in OECD countries. Governments therefore use a range of contracting and grant mechanisms. These affect service quality, organisational stability and which providers are able to participate. Table 4.1 shows how widely non-governmental actors are involved in service delivery and the diversity of financing arrangements used.

Table 4.1. Use of contracted providers in integration service delivery in OECD countries

Country	Uses contractors		Measures	Providers	Type of financing
Australia	Yes		Settlement, employment, language	Private providers; civil society organisations	Tenders; grants
Austria	Yes		Employment, education, language courses	Private providers; civil society organisations	Tenders; grants
Belgium	Brussels	Yes	Language courses, citizenship education, employment support, digital inclusion	Civil society organisations	Grants; project-based
	Flanders	Yes			
	Wallonia	Yes			
Bulgaria	No		N/A	N/A	N/A
Canada	Yes		Settlement services (includes employment-related services, language training)	Community organisations; non-profits	Tenders; programme-based
Chile	No		N/A	N/A	N/A
Costa Rica	No		N/A	N/A	N/A
Croatia	Yes		Language courses	Private providers	Tenders; per-participant
Czechia	Yes		Adaptation and Integration Courses	Migrant-led and civil society organisations	Grants; outcome-based
Denmark	Yes		Language training; employment-related services	Municipal contractors; private providers	Tenders; per-participant
Estonia	Yes		Language, civic orientation, labour market	Private providers; civil society organisations	Tenders; per-participant
Finland	Yes		Language training; employment support; integration services	Municipalities; civil society organisations; private providers	Grants; per-participant
France	Yes		Language training (linguistic and civic formation under the CIR), employment support (programme AGIR), civic orientation courses	Civil society organisations; private providers; public institutions	Tenders; grants; per-participant
Germany	Yes		Integration courses	Accredited private providers; civil society organisations	Per-participant
Greece	Yes		Language courses, vocational training, civic orientation, awareness courses	Civil society organisations; international organisations	Grants
Hungary	No		N/A	N/A	N/A
Iceland	Yes		Language training; empowerment; employment support	Icelandic Red Cross	Grants
Ireland	Yes		Integration and employment support	Civil society organisations	Grants; programme-based; outcome-based
Israel	Yes		Language and integration services	Public interest and private providers	Programme-based
Italy	Yes		Reception and integration services	Civil society organisations; social co-operatives	Grants
Japan	Yes		Language and settlement support	Local Civil society organisations; foundations	Grants
Korea	Yes		Integration, language, employment support	Civil society organisations	Programme-based
Latvia	Yes		Language courses; integration courses	Civil society organisations	Grants
Lithuania	Yes		Language, civic orientation, employment, psychosocial support, housing assistance	Civil society organisations	Grants; per-participant.
Luxembourg	No		N/A	N/A	N/A
Netherlands	Yes		Integration and employment services	Private providers; municipalities	Per-participant; outcome-based
New Zealand	Yes		Targeted integration services under	Civil society; private; public;	Per-participant

Country	Uses contractors	Measures	Providers	Type of financing
		the Refugee Quota Programme	migrant-led organisations	
Norway	Yes	Language training; employment support	Municipal contractors; civil society organisations	Per-participant; outcome-based
Poland	Yes	Integration and social inclusion services	Civil society organisations	Grants
Portugal	Yes	Language training; employment support; integration and reception services	Municipalities; civil society organisations; migrant associations; international organisations	Grants
Romania	Yes	Integration and language support	Civil society organisations	Grants
Slovenia	Yes	Language courses; civic orientation	Accredited providers	Per-participant
Spain	Yes	Integration and employment services	Civil society organisations	Grants
Sweden	Yes	Language, civic orientation, employment and integration courses	Private providers; civil society organisations	Tenders; Per-participant; outcome-based
Switzerland	Yes	Orientation, language, education, employment, social inclusion, protection against discrimination and interpretation support	Cantons, municipalities, civil society organisations, private providers	Programme-based, grants
Türkiye	Yes	Employment, vocational training, language and integration courses, psychosocial support	Civil society organisations; private sector actors	Grants; per-participant
United Kingdom	Yes	Integration, employment and housing-related support	Civil society organisations; private providers	Grants; outcome-based

Note: Tenders: competitive procurement processes. Grants: direct funding to organisations. Per-participant: payments linked to enrolment, attendance or course completion. Programme-based: multi-year contribution agreements. Outcome-based: payments linked to measurable results.
Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

Countries often combine grants, tenders, per-participant funding and programme-based contracts, with outcome-linked models used more selectively. These choices influence provider stability, administrative burden and the diversity of organisations able to participate.

- Grants: Common for targeted programmes or community-based initiatives, often used to support civil-society organisations. Finland and Iceland use grant schemes to support Civil society organisations delivering language support, empowerment activities or targeted services for women and youth.
- Competitive tenders: Frequently used where services are standardised and large in scale. Australia, Denmark and Estonia tender language or employment-related services to private providers or municipal contractors. This model can foster innovation but may disadvantage smaller organisations with limited administrative capacity.
- Per-participant funding: Used when services are delivered at scale and participation can be tracked. Germany finances integration and language courses through per-participant payments to accredited providers. Croatia and Slovenia use similar models for basic language and orientation courses.
- Outcome-based or performance-linked funding: Used to reward providers that achieve specific outcomes. The Netherlands and the United Kingdom use outcome-linked pilots for parts of their integration and employment services. Austria includes performance indicators in multi-year agreements for language training.
- Programme-based contracting: Canada exemplifies this model. The federal settlement programme funds more than 500 service-provider organisations through multi-year funding agreements, offering stability and flexibility while maintaining clear reporting requirements.

- Project-based funding linked to EU programmes: In many EU Member States, civil-society organisations deliver integration services under AMIF or ESF+ projects. This supports innovation but can lead to discontinuity between programming cycles, as seen in Lithuania, Greece, Latvia and Italy.

Involving non-governmental actors can expand delivery capacity, bring specialised expertise and often improve service accessibility. However, financing arrangements can also create challenges. Funding and procurement rules can favour larger, more professionalised providers. This may improve administrative control, but it can also reduce diversity among providers and make it harder for smaller civil-society or migrant-led organisations to participate.

Key challenges include short-term funding cycles that undermine organisational stability, procurement rules that can disadvantage smaller providers, and project-based EU funding that may create gaps between funding cycles or shift attention toward fundable priorities rather than long-term needs. Administrative requirements, particularly in EU-funded programmes, can further limit participation by smaller or migrant-led organisations. Where monitoring frameworks are not proportionate, rapid expansion of contracted services may also affect quality and consistency.

Where service delivery is delegated to external providers or subnational actors, governments often use accreditation systems, reporting requirements and performance monitoring to maintain common standards and monitor implementation. In Germany, BAMF accredits providers delivering federally funded integration and language courses and sets common standards for course content, teacher qualifications and reporting. In France, organisations receiving funding under Programme 104 are subject to reporting and performance requirements linked to implementation objectives and administrative follow-up. Canada illustrates a different approach, where competitive calls for proposals are established multi-year funding agreements with settlement providers and to support continuity and longer-term planning, while performance reporting is integrated into funding arrangements.[1]

4.5.1. Partnerships with employers and social partners

In several countries, employers and social partners contribute financially or through in-kind support. Denmark's workplace-based Danish programmes and Germany's job-related German courses involve co-financing from employers in sectors facing labour shortages. Social partners play a structured role in Austria, Germany, Belgium (Flanders) and the Netherlands, linking labour-market integration to vocational training systems, apprenticeships and employment standards. These partnerships can help align integration services with labour-market needs, but they require clear rules on responsibilities, accountability and equal access.

Contracted providers are widely used, but financing arrangements vary between countries. These differences matter. They influence which organisations are able to participate and whether service provision remains stable over time or can adapt to changing needs.

Innovative financing instruments, such as Social Impact Bonds (SIB) and outcome-linked pilots, have been tested in some countries. These remain relatively limited and are typically used in pilot settings rather than as part of regular financing systems. Finland's Koto-SIB is one example. Private investors funded tailored employment services for refugees, and the government repaid only if agreed outcomes were met (see Box 4.1). Similarly, the United Kingdom Refugee Transitions Outcomes Fund piloted an outcome-based model linking payments to refugee employment and housing outcomes. These approaches aim to strengthen efficiency and accountability by paying only for verified outcomes, however, they require safeguards against unintended effects, such as "cream skimming", where service providers may prioritise participants who are easier to integrate, while neglecting those facing greater barriers.

Other approaches focus on supporting community participation and local involvement. For example, New Zealand's Meaningful Refugee Participation Fund allocates resources to regional and national fund

holders, which directly finance initiatives tailored to local priorities, helping improve responsiveness to local needs.

Box 4.1. Case study: The Koto-Social Impact Bond in Finland

The Finnish Koto-SIB (Integration Social Impact Bond) demonstrates how outcomes-based financing can be applied to immigrant integration in practice. The initiative aimed to improve labour-market participation among highly educated immigrants and refugees through a public-private partnership that tested innovative service-delivery approaches. The model brought together public and private actors in a results-based financing arrangement.

- Private investors provided the initial capital, covering the upfront costs of integration services.
- Service providers delivered targeted and individualised employment and upskilling support, with remuneration fully linked to the achievement of agreed outcomes.
- The Finnish Government acted as outcome payer, reimbursing investors only if predefined results were achieved, thereby shifting financial risk away from the public budget.

Outcomes were measured using administrative data, in particular employment records and changes in benefit dependency, which allowed for relatively robust and standardised verification. This data-based approach strengthened accountability and reduced discretion in performance assessment.

The design created strong incentives for efficiency and adaptation. By linking payments to sustained employment outcomes, public funding was directed towards interventions that produced measurable results. Providers also developed more tailored approaches, including mentoring, skills matching and job coaching, moving beyond standardised programme models.

The model also revealed important limitations. Transaction costs were relatively high, reflecting the complexity of contracting, performance measurement and co-ordination between actors. In addition, defining and verifying outcomes required significant administrative capacity. There were also concerns about equity. The reliance on outcome payments may create incentives to prioritise participants who are closer to the labour market, potentially limiting access for those facing more complex barriers.

Programme monitoring and reported results indicate improved employment outcomes for participants compared to baseline expectations, particularly faster entry into employment and reduced reliance on benefits. At the same time, results varied across participant groups, indicating that outcomes-based models may be more effective for individuals with relatively strong labour-market attachment. While the model strengthened performance orientation and accountability, it also required substantial investment in data systems and monitoring capacity. This may make the model more difficult to replicate in contexts where administrative data are less developed or co-ordination between actors is weaker.

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025), Karinen, R. et al., (2024[3]), *Impacts and practical implementation of the Koto-SIB experiment*.

Financing arrangements do more than fund service delivery. They create incentives, influence which actors participate and affect how easily systems can be co-ordinated. Where funding is stable and rules are proportionate, providers are better able to invest in capacity and maintain service quality. Where funding is fragmented or heavily project-based, providers may face discontinuities and higher administrative burdens, which can affect both access and outcomes.

4.6. The role of EU funds in national integration financing

In EU countries, EU funding complements national resources but also introduces governance requirements that shape how programmes are designed and delivered. This primarily takes the form of EU funds, notably the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF), and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) (see Box 4.2). In some countries, these resources represent a substantial share of integration financing and influence both priorities and delivery models.

Box 4.2. Main EU funding instruments supporting integration

Several European Union funding instruments support the integration of migrants and beneficiaries of international protection in OECD countries that are EU Member States. The main instruments include:

- The Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), which supports reception, integration, asylum and migration-management measures, including integration measures implemented by local and regional authorities and civil society organisations. The European Social Fund Plus (ESF+), which finances labour-market integration, skills development, social inclusion and education measures relevant to migrants and their children.
- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), which can support infrastructure and local development projects linked to housing, education, health and social inclusion in areas affected by migration pressures.
- The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), introduced following the COVID-19 pandemic, which has in some countries supported reforms and investments affecting integration systems, including digitalisation and labour-market participation.

Other instruments, including Erasmus+, Horizon Europe and targeted emergency assistance, may also support specific integration-related projects and co-ordination initiatives.

AMIF and ESF+ play complementary roles in supporting integration. AMIF primarily supports measures tailored to the needs of third-country nationals during the early stages of integration, such as language training, orientation services and targeted support for beneficiaries of international protection, while ESF+ more often supports longer-term inclusion through employment, education and social inclusion measures.

EU funding is generally implemented through shared management between the European Commission and Member States, often involving regional and local authorities as well as civil society organisations.

EU funds can support innovation and capacity building particularly where national resources are limited, but their longer-term contribution depends on how well they are embedded in national financing frameworks, implementation responsibilities and mainstream service systems. Transparent calls, reporting requirements and audit procedures can help manage complexity and support accountability. Where EU-funded projects are linked to national strategies and budget lines they are more likely to support sustainability and policy coherence. (OECD/European Union, 2018[4]).

The share of EU funding in integration financing varies widely between countries. Table 4.2 provides an overview of this, grouping countries by the share of EU funds in annual integration budgets and indicating the main programmes used.

Table 4.2. Share of EU funding for integration in European OECD countries

Country	Category	Main programmes	Notes
Austria	Low	AMIF	Approx. 6%
Bulgaria	Moderate	AMIF, ESF+	
Croatia	Moderate		
Czechia	High		
Denmark	Low	N/A	Small number of municipal projects receive EU funding.
Estonia	High	AMIF, ESF+	70-80%
Finland	Low	AMIF, ESF+	<5%. EU funds are used mainly for pilots.
France	Low	AMIF	
Germany	Low	AMIF	
Greece	High	AMIF, ESF+	Approx. 80%.
Hungary	High	AMIF	
Ireland	Moderate	AMIF, ESF+	
Italy	High	AMIF, ESF+	
Latvia	High/Moderate	AMIF, ESF+	High reliance on EU funds for integration. Support for Ukrainians financed nationally.
Lithuania	High	AMIF, ESF+	
Luxembourg	N/A	AMIF, ESF+	Mainstreamed programmes and budgeting.
Netherlands	Low		
Poland	High	AMIF, ESF+, ERDF	No permanent national budget for integration.
Portugal	High	AMIF, ESF+, CERV	EU funds complement public investment by national and local authorities
Romania	High	ESF+, AMIF	EU funds finance most integration activities.
Slovenia	High	AMIF	Approx. 66%
Sweden	Low	AMIF, ESF+	EU funds used supplementary.

Note: High: ≥ 50% of annual integration funding from EU sources; Moderate: 10-49%; Low: < 10%. Classification based on annualised EU-share vs. annual national integration budget.
Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

In countries such as Romania, Estonia, Slovenia and Italy, EU funds account for more than half of integration financing. By contrast, Finland, France and Denmark report a low share, using EU funds mainly for pilot projects or supplementary measures.

In some countries, integration financing is largely embedded in broader social policy budgets, making it difficult to isolate dedicated spending. For Luxembourg, no precise estimate of the share of EU funds in integration budgets is available, due to its mainstreamed integration policy framework, *Vivre Ensemble Interculturel*, which targets nationals, EU citizens, cross-border workers, and third-country nationals. Some countries also maintain separate national funding streams for specific groups, such as Ukrainians. In Latvia, while a large share of general integration measures is financed through EU funds, specific national budget allocations are provided under the Law on Assistance to Ukrainian Civilians.

Questionnaire responses suggest that differences in EU funding shares are closely linked to how integration systems are organised. Where EU funding represents a large share, financing is often structured through time-limited projects linked to EU programming cycles.

EU funding can shape national integration programming by linking it to EU-level priorities. For instance, EU funds are often used to support pilot projects and experimentation that would be difficult to finance through domestic budgets. In Finland and France, AMIF resources have been used to support refugee employment pilots and testing alternative service delivery models. In some countries, EU funding has also been used to test digital tools or new partnerships with employers.

Estonia provides another example of using EU funds for innovation through its Adaptation and Integration Measure, which seeks to reduce linguistic, cultural, and social barriers faced by new immigrants and less-integrated residents. The project combines modular language courses, cultural orientation and digital tools to adapt services to local needs. ESF funding supported multilingual platforms, welcome programmes, integration courses, and capacity building for service providers, alongside mid-term evaluations to strengthen evidence-based policy design (OECD, 2025[5]).

In addition, ESF+ introduces horizontal principles such as gender equality, anti-discrimination and social inclusion, which must be embedded in project design. These principles are reflected in both the content of funded activities and in how national calls for proposals are structured, as applicants are required to demonstrate how they will integrate them into implementation. This conditionality can help embed EU priorities in national programmes, although its effect on implementation varies between countries. EU funding can therefore influence not only what is financed, but also how projects are designed and assessed (OECD, 2025[5]).

At the same time, EU funding introduces specific governance challenges. Reporting and audit requirements increase administrative burdens, which can limit access for smaller civil-society organisations. Eligibility thresholds, including minimum project size and reimbursement rules, tend to favour larger organisations and may reduce diversity among providers. (European Commission, 2025[6]). These challenges may be particularly pronounced for smaller municipalities and rural areas, which often have more limited administrative capacity to prepare applications, manage reporting requirements and secure co-financing.

Sustainability is a recurring issue identified by several countries in the questionnaire responses. Where EU funds make up a large share of financing, continuity may be difficult to maintain between funding cycles. Several countries have developed approaches to strengthen continuity, including integrating EU-funded activities into national budget lines or providing national funding to continue successful initiatives beyond the lifetime of individual projects.

For national and regional authorities, these funds can be difficult to use in practice because programming requirements, co-financing rules and audit procedures are often complex. Flexibility to reallocate resources may also be limited, which can delay implementation and make it harder to respond to evolving priorities. In addition, once programmes are agreed, resources are often tied to predefined objectives and timelines, reducing the scope for adjustments during implementation.

Countries have adopted different approaches to manage these challenges. Austria complements AMIF with national funding to maintain continuity beyond EU cycles. France integrates AMIF-funded initiatives into *Programme 104*, reducing reliance on EU funding. Lithuania combines AMIF with national resources and support from international organisations to maintain more stable programming.

4.7. Inclusive integration financing

A sustainable financing system for integration should ensure that funding reaches different groups targeted by integration policies and supports broader social cohesion. This requires structuring funding and service delivery so that resources are accessible, including for individuals facing gender-related barriers or multiple obstacles to participation. These issues are particularly relevant for groups with weaker labour-market attachment, such as low-skilled refugees or migrant mothers with care responsibilities, who may face overlapping barriers to participation (Liebig and Tronstad, 2018[7]).

Gender-responsive budgeting integrates a gender perspective throughout the budget cycle, from planning and allocation to implementation and evaluation, to ensure that public resources are used effectively and reach intended groups. For integration policy, this means asking which measures are funded, whom they target, and under what conditions. Effective gender-responsive budgeting relies on gender-disaggregated

data and analysis of care responsibilities, employment barriers, access to services and gender-specific risks. Available evidence suggests that gender-responsive financing can improve labour-market participation and reduce longer-term dependency (OECD, 2023[8]).

Funding choices, even when formally neutral, can generate unintended gender impacts that affect labour-market participation and access to services. For example, cash-for-care schemes or family-based benefits may discourage labour-market participation among migrant women, slowing integration outcomes. A gender-responsive approach helps identify and mitigate such effects, and can improve access to language training, employment programmes, childcare and other services (OECD, 2023[9]).

Several OECD countries embed gender considerations in public budgeting processes. In Sweden, gender budgeting has been integrated into the government budget process since the early 2000s, with budget proposals and allocations assessed for their gender-equality impacts. The Swedish Government's "BUDGe for Gender Equality"-tool supports this analysis, ensuring that revenue and expenditure decisions are assessed in relation to gender-equality objectives. Integration-related funding undergoes the same gender review, aligning integration policy with broader gender-equality commitments.

In Belgium, the 2007 Gender Mainstreaming Law requires public administrations to integrate a gender perspective into policies and budgets. A 2010 circular further requires draft budgets to include a "gender note" outlining allocations linked to gender equality. Regional authorities, including Wallonia and Flanders, apply gender mainstreaming in social and cohesion funding. European Social Fund (ESF+) programme managing authorities in these regions apply gender as a horizontal principle in project calls, selection criteria, and budget allocations. As a result, regional funding channels relevant for migrant integration formally include gender considerations.

Other countries have adopted more targeted gender-sensitive initiatives in integration policy. In Iceland, the Ministry of Justice operates a Gender Equality Fund that finances projects such as language and empowerment workshops for migrant women, mentoring schemes and partnerships with civil society. In Finland, the municipal state-subsidy system includes funding aimed at promoting the employment of migrant mothers, reflecting OECD findings on the importance of childcare and targeted outreach (OECD, 2023[9]).

Together, these examples show how financing arrangements can influence access to services and labour-market participation, and how integrating a gender perspective can help reduce barriers for specific groups.

4.8. Building transparent and accountable funding systems

Transparency and accountability are essential for effective integration financing, particularly because funding for integration often passes through several levels of government and a wide range of providers. They help ensure that resources are used as intended, reduce the risk of misuse and allow policymakers and the public to assess whether funding reaches intended groups and supports consistent outcomes. Without these safeguards, even well-funded systems may struggle to deliver services effectively.

Many countries embed transparency requirements in budget legislation and procurement frameworks. In integration financing, this also involves clarifying how funds are allocated between national, regional and local levels and how contracted providers report on activities and results. For example, Norway's Freedom of Information Act ensures public access to government documents, including budget allocations, while Austria's Federal Budget Act requires detailed reporting on integration expenditures. Public procurement rules further reinforce transparency by setting clear eligibility criteria and selection procedures for grants and tenders. In France, calls for projects under *Programme 104* are published with explicit guidelines on objectives, funding amounts, and reporting obligations.

Digital tools are increasingly used to strengthen transparency and monitoring. Estonia's EU fund management system provides real-time tracking of allocations and compliance with reporting requirements, and Germany and Finland are piloting dashboards that combine financial data with performance indicators. These tools are particularly relevant in integration policy, where funding is often fragmented and delivered through multiple programmes, making it more difficult to track how resources translate into outcomes.

In Israel, where integration policy is directed at Jewish immigrants relocating under the Law of Return, a multi-layered system of legal, administrative and financial controls supports transparency and accountability in the allocation and use of integration funds. Parliamentary approval through the Knesset, open tender procedures, public reporting, and external audits are combined with result-based funding and compliance checks.

When financial reporting is linked to digital tracking and performance data, it becomes easier to assess not just whether funds were spent correctly, but whether they achieved results. EU co-financing rules reflect this by requiring public disclosure of funded projects and beneficiaries.

Applying these principles to integration financing has clear benefits. Stronger digital tracking of integration funding could help policymakers and citizens assess not only how much money is spent, but also how spending relates to results. This could strengthen accountability, improve resource allocation, and make progress toward inclusion goals more visible and measurable.

Transparency and accountability are not only compliance requirements. In integration financing, they are practical tools for tracking how resources are used, whether they reach intended groups and how spending relates to results. This is particularly important in systems where funding is fragmented and delivered through multiple actors. These issues are examined in further in Chapter 6.

4.9. Key takeaways

Integration financing in OECD countries is organised through different governance models, ranging from centralised budget frameworks to decentralised or formula-based transfers to municipalities, as in the Nordic countries, and programme-based systems relying on funding agreements with service providers, as in Canada. EU funding instruments, particularly AMIF and ESF+, also play an important role in shaping national financing arrangements in many EU countries. Despite these differences, there are a few key considerations worth bearing in mind:

- Funding for integration is typically drawn from multiple sources. In addition to dedicated integration budgets and programmes, many countries finance integration measures through mainstream education, employment, housing and social policy budgets. This reflects the cross-cutting nature of integration policy but can make it harder to track total spending and identify gaps across policy areas. Mapping integration-related spending across these different budgets, even where funding remains decentralised, makes it easier to identify where resources are concentrated and where gaps remain.
- How funds are allocated shapes how integration is delivered. The criteria used to distribute funding between levels of government may influence where migrants settle, which services are available and how municipalities and providers plan their work. Allocation systems that do not reflect actual needs can create mismatches between resources and local needs. Allocation criteria that are reviewed periodically and adjusted in light of changing settlement patterns or service demand can help reduce this kind of mismatch over time.
- How resources are allocated can also influence who benefits from integration measures. Funding choices that appear neutral can have unequal effects in practice, for example when care responsibilities or other participation barriers are not accounted for. Several countries have

introduced gender-responsive budgeting and targeted financing criteria to improve access and ensure resources reach their intended target groups. This can also help identify gaps that are not always visible in standard monitoring data.

- Funding rules influence which organisations can participate in service delivery. Short funding cycles, heavy procurement requirements and complex reporting obligations tend to favour larger providers. Smaller civil-society and migrant-led organisations may find it harder to participate. Multi-year funding arrangements and procurement or reporting requirements proportionate to the size of the grant can help smaller organisations participate on a more sustained basis.
- In many EU Member States, EU funds cover a large share of integration financing. This can support innovation and capacity building. It also introduces continuity risks between programming cycles. Countries have adopted different approaches to strengthen continuity, including embedding EU-funded activities in national budget frameworks and providing national funding to continue successful initiatives beyond the lifetime of individual projects.

Financing arrangements determine how resources are allocated, which actors are involved and how services are delivered. However, understanding how these resources translate into outcomes requires reliable data and monitoring systems. The next chapter examines how OECD countries track integration outcomes and use evidence to inform policy decisions.

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Notes

[1] Canada's National Settlement Funding Formula is used to align the distribution of funding invested in each jurisdiction based on historical and projected share of arrivals, relative to other jurisdictions, with an additional weight to account for refugees' higher expected settlement needs.

5 Evidence-based decision making

How can data and evidence be more effectively used to guide integration policy? This chapter examines how monitoring and evaluation are used in practice to guide integration policy. It focusses on how evidence feeds into governance processes and how it is used to inform decision making.

A central element of integration governance is the ability to identify what works in practice and use that knowledge to improve policy over time. Monitoring systems and regular evaluation help governments assess outcomes, identify gaps and adapt implementation when results fall short.

This chapter examines how OECD countries collect, organise and use data to monitor integration outcomes. It looks at how different types of evidence, including administrative data and surveys capturing migrants' experiences, are used in governance and decision-making processes, how they inform policy and implementation, and where important gaps remain.

Practices differ substantially between countries. Some countries have well-established monitoring and evaluation systems, whereas others rely on more fragmented arrangements or have limited analytical capacity. Monitoring systems are common in OECD countries, though their scope and level of integration vary considerably. Evaluation practices are more uneven, and evidence does not always feed systematically into policy decisions. This creates an important governance challenge: ensuring that monitoring and evaluation not only produce information but also support policy learning and adaptation over time.

5.1. Monitoring frameworks. Administrative and survey data

Administrative registers, such as employment, education or social security records, form the backbone of integration monitoring in most OECD countries. They provide consistent and detailed information on employment, education, language learning and participation in integration programmes, and in some cases on benefits or housing support. These systems enable systematic data collection with national coverage and allow outcomes to be tracked over time.

In most OECD countries, responsibility for monitoring integration outcomes is anchored in ministries responsible for migration or interior affairs, often in co-operation with employment, education or social-affairs authorities. In countries where monitoring indicators are linked to budgeting or performance management, finance ministries may also play a role.

5.1.1. Administrative data

Most OECD countries report having established monitoring systems based on administrative data and formal reporting frameworks, although they vary in scope and how far data are integrated between systems and institutions. A majority of responding countries report having monitoring frameworks for integration outcomes (27 countries), while a smaller number report no such framework (seven countries).

Across OECD countries, monitoring systems tend to focus more strongly on participation and short-term administrative outcomes than on longer-term integration trajectories. Administrative data are generally strongest in areas such as language-course participation, employment registration or programme completion, whereas outcomes related to sustained employment, social inclusion or civic participation are tracked less systematically.

In several countries, administrative data are embedded directly in performance frameworks or budget processes. In the Nordic countries, where municipalities are responsible for much of integration service delivery, monitoring systems are designed to aggregate local administrative data into national frameworks. In Denmark and Norway, administrative indicators on participation in language courses and use of integration measures are collected systematically at municipal level and reported through national frameworks. This allows for comparison of outcomes between municipalities.

In Germany, Austria and the Netherlands, monitoring obligations are formally anchored in legislation governing migration or integration. This creates stable, long-term reporting obligations. In Germany, integration and orientation courses, language provision and related measures are regulated in federal law. This legislation defines who must report, what must be reported, and how frequently. Länder and municipalities then complement this with their own monitoring frameworks. In the Netherlands, the Civic

Integration Act establishes the monitoring and reporting duties for municipalities and contracted providers involved in the civic-integration system. Because these requirements are defined in law, they apply consistently across regions. This helps ensure that monitoring remains standardised and comparable between regions and provides continuity across political cycles.

Differences in monitoring systems often reflect broader institutional arrangements, including how integration responsibilities are distributed between levels of government, the role of contracted service providers, and whether monitoring focusses primarily on migration management or longer-term integration outcomes. Examples from other OECD regions illustrate these different approaches. In New Zealand, administrative data are complemented by the Integrated Data Infrastructure (IDI), a linked data environment covering the whole population. While the IDI is not migration-specific, it allows outcomes to be analysed by migration characteristics such as visa category, time since arrival or residence status, which can support longitudinal analysis of integration outcomes across policy areas. In Japan and Korea, monitoring frameworks are more closely linked to migration status categories rather than broader integration outcomes, although targeted initiatives exist for specific groups such as marriage migrants.

5.1.2. Survey-based evidence

Despite their strengths, administrative datasets do not capture all dimensions of integration. Administrative monitoring systems are effective for tracking participation in programmes and socio-economic outcomes, but they are less well suited to capturing how migrants experience integration in practice. These limitations create important governance blind spots in areas such as discrimination, institutional trust, social participation or perceived belonging, which are difficult to capture. Several of these aspects are not reflected in administrative indicators, including understanding institutional procedures, navigating services or feeling welcome (OECD, 2023[1]). To reduce such blind spots, many OECD countries complement administrative statistics with periodic surveys or thematic studies. These instruments make it possible to measure subjective outcomes, attitudes and experiences not reflected in administrative systems. France's Longitudinal Survey on the Integration of First-Time Arrivals (ELIPA), for example, complements administrative monitoring systems by tracking integration trajectories over time (see Box 5.1).

Box 5.1. Longitudinal monitoring of integration trajectories in France: The ELIPA survey

In France, longitudinal survey tools complement administrative monitoring by providing information on longer-term integration trajectories and experiences that are not visible through administrative data alone.

Alongside administrative reporting linked to the *Contrat d'intégration républicaine* (CIR), France has developed the *Enquête longitudinale sur l'intégration des primo-arrivants* (ELIPA), a longitudinal survey following first-time arrivals through different stages of the integration process.

ELIPA complements administrative monitoring by collecting information on dimensions of integration that are more difficult to capture through administrative registers alone. These include migrants' experiences with public services, language acquisition, housing conditions, employment trajectories, social participation and perceptions of discrimination. By following individuals over several years, the survey also provides information on how integration outcomes evolve over time rather than only at a single point of contact with public institutions.

The survey forms part of a broader monitoring framework linking the Ministry of the Interior, OFII and other public actors involved in integration policy. It supports evaluation of integration measures and contributes evidence for policy development and programme adjustment. The second ELIPA survey (ELIPA 2), launched in 2019, expanded the use of longitudinal monitoring within France's integration system.

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

In most OECD countries, labour force, education and living conditions surveys provide harmonised data that allow comparison between countries and over time. Other examples include settlement outcome surveys in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, which capture aspects such as belonging, perceived discrimination, well-being and access to services. Switzerland combines administrative data with survey-based indicators capturing subjective dimensions such as sense of belonging, perceived discrimination and social participation. These indicators are integrated into the national monitoring system and used alongside socio-economic measures, reflecting broader efforts in some OECD countries to integrate also measures of social inclusion. Some countries also commission targeted studies on specific groups, such as youth with migrant parents or beneficiaries of protection.

Survey-based evidence remains unevenly developed. This reflects, in part, their resource-intensive nature, as regular surveys require sustained funding, technical capacity and repeated fieldwork that may not be prioritised. In countries with small migration flows, the use of dedicated surveys may be limited. In fact, only a minority of countries run regular, dedicated surveys on migrant integration. Where these data are missing, important aspects of integration, such as whether people feel they belong, understand how to navigate institutions, or experience discrimination, are often not visible in policy discussions. Where such data exist, they are important for broadening analysis and for informing policies that respond more effectively to barriers that are otherwise difficult to detect through administrative systems alone.

5.1.3. Integrated monitoring tools – dashboards and barometers

Several countries have developed integrated monitoring systems that combine indicators from administrative data, surveys and programme reporting into a policy-oriented format. These tools are typically managed by ministries or specialised integration agencies, often in co-operation with statistical authorities and local governments. They mark a shift from periodic reporting towards continuous monitoring that can support operational follow-up and co-ordination. Data are used not only to track outcomes but also to support day-to-day implementation and co-ordination decisions across levels of government.

In Denmark, the national government manages the Integration Barometer, which tracks nationally defined objectives in areas such as employment, education, language proficiency, civic participation and equal treatment. It is used by municipalities to benchmark performance and adjust local strategies and is publicly available. In Norway, the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (IMDi) manages a barometer integrating administrative data with selected survey and programme indicators. It enables counties and municipalities to monitor progress under the Introduction Programme and related measures. In France, SI-AGIR dashboards used by central authorities and contracted service providers provide near real-time monitoring of support intensity, duration and outcomes for beneficiaries of international protection.

Dashboard-based monitoring is in some cases used to inform concrete adjustments. In Denmark, Integration Barometer results are used in dialogue between central government and municipalities and inform the calibration of performance-linked financial incentives within the integration system.

Despite these developments, integrated monitoring tools remain relatively uncommon in OECD countries. In many countries, data are collected separately by policy area such as employment, education or housing. As a result, the same information may be collected multiple times, while important links between policy areas remain difficult to identify. This fragmentation can make it harder to co-ordinate action between institutions, monitor longer-term integration trajectories or build a coherent picture of overall progress.

Countries using integrated dashboards and barometers report that combining data within a single system can support co-ordination, improve understanding of implementation and make gaps between policy areas more visible. However, these tools also have limitations. They depend on the quality and comparability of underlying data, which can vary by sector and level of government. They also reflect a broader limitation of monitoring systems: they tend to prioritise what can be measured. Indicators tend to focus on outcomes that are easier to quantify, such as employment or programme participation, whereas broader dimensions

of integration, including social inclusion, discrimination, access to services or lived experience, are sometimes captured in surveys but generally less consistently.

When monitoring systems rely heavily on standardised indicators, they may create incentives to prioritise outcomes that are easier to measure in the short term, such as rapid labour-market entry or programme completion. In integration policy, this can make it more difficult to capture longer-term processes such as language acquisition, social participation or gradual labour-market progression. Monitoring indicators also often focus on final outcomes rather than intermediate stages of integration. As a result, measures that improve skills, work readiness or understanding of institutions may appear less effective when only immediate outcomes are considered.

5.1.4. International benchmarking

The choice of benchmark also matters. Comparing outcomes to native-born populations can highlight gaps but may not reflect differences in starting points or barriers faced by migrants. International comparisons can be a valuable tool for strengthening monitoring systems where indicators are defined consistently and interpreted carefully. Where data are harmonised between countries and linked to comparable policy objectives, cross-country benchmarks can help identify gaps, contextualise performance and highlight areas for improvement. Regional statistical co-operation provides one way to support this (see Box 5.2).

Box 5.2. Nordic statistics: A harmonised regional approach to integration monitoring

The Nordic countries have developed a shared transnational monitoring system for integration. The Nordic Statistics Database, which is updated annually, provides harmonised indicators on population, labour-market participation, education, income and housing for both native-born and foreign-born residents.

The integration and migration statistics in the database are the result of a co-operation project involving the Nordic Statistical Institutes. This project has been ongoing since 2015 with the aim to harmonise immigration and integration statistics among the Nordic countries.

Key features include:

- Consistent definitions enabling cross-country comparison.
- Integration of multiple administrative registers, creating longitudinal datasets.
- Alignment with national monitoring frameworks, ensuring coherence between national and regional reporting systems.
- Accessible data, supporting researchers, municipalities and civil society in planning.

Regional statistical co-operation can support more coherent and comparative monitoring of migrant integration. EU-wide frameworks such as Eurostat provide harmonised integration statistics for EU Member States, while regional co-operation can enable more timely and granular analysis by aligning national registers and reporting cycles. This type of harmonised statistical co-operation also supports broader comparative analysis of integration outcomes. OECD comparative work, including the *Settling In* series, similarly relies on internationally comparable indicators to analyse migrant integration outcomes across countries and over time.

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025); Nordic Statistics Database, https://nordicstatistics.org.

International frameworks increasingly support co-ordination and comparability in integration governance. While monitoring systems are developed nationally, international co-operation helps governments

compare approaches, develop common indicators and exchange operational information on implementation and outcomes.

At EU level, the EU Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027) encourages EU Member States to strengthen monitoring systems and improve data collection, including the use of disaggregated data. EU funding instruments such as the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) also require reporting on measurable outputs and outcomes, reinforcing the link between funding and monitoring. A mid-term review of the Action Plan published in 2025 highlighted continued governance challenges, including co-ordination across levels of government and the need to strengthen partnerships with local actors and civil society organisations (European Commission, 2025[2]).

The European Integration Network (EIN) is the main EU-level forum for exchange between national authorities responsible for migrant integration. It provides a structured setting for Member States to discuss policy developments, implementation challenges and governance approaches in areas such as employment, education, health, housing and social inclusion. Through meetings, peer exchange and thematic discussions, the Network contributes to greater comparability in how integration policies are monitored and organised across Member States.

The European Migration Network (EMN), also established by the European Commission, supports comparative analysis and information exchange on migration, asylum and integration policies. Through studies, policy reports and ad hoc queries, the EMN helps governments to compare policy approaches and share practical experience across EU Member States.

At OECD level, comparative data collections, peer reviews and flagship publications such as *Settling In,* developed jointly with the European Commission (see Box 5.3) support benchmarking and cross-country learning. The OECD's Continuous Reporting System on Migration, known by its French acronym SOPEMI, provides a long-standing mechanism for collecting and comparing information on migration trends and policy developments across OECD countries through a network of national correspondents. The annual OECD International Migration Outlook is based on this system.

These international frameworks support the exchange of information, development of comparable indicators and access to cross-country evidence on integration outcomes and governance systems. They can also encourage greater consistency in reporting practices and provide governments with comparative information on how integration governance is organised and monitored.

Box 5.3. *Indicators of Immigrant Integration: Settling In*

The joint OECD-European Commission publication *Indicators of Immigrant Integration – Settling In* provides a comprehensive comparison of the integration outcomes of immigrants and their children in OECD, EU and selected other countries. The report compiles harmonised indicators based on comparable administrative and survey data and includes 83 indicators covering three broad areas: labour market and skills; living conditions; and civic engagement and social integration. These indicators span areas such as employment, education, income, housing, health, civic participation and social inclusion, while also providing detailed information on the characteristics of immigrant populations and households.

Source: EC-OECD, Settling In: OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration (2012[3]; 2015[4]; 2018[5]; 2023[6]).

5.2. Disaggregated data and differential outcomes

Differences in integration outcomes between women and men are well documented in OECD countries, but the treatment in monitoring and evaluation frameworks remains limited and uneven. Differences in integration outcomes depend in part on their statistical visibility, that is, how well they are captured in data. This means that monitoring systems shape not only what governments know about integration outcomes, but also which groups and barriers become visible in policymaking. For example, if differences in access to employment measures or childcare are not systematically tracked, they may remain under-recognised in integration policies, even where they have a direct impact on labour-market participation.

Most countries collect sex-disaggregated data in key policy fields such as employment services, language programmes, health and social services. However, these differences are seldom analysed systematically or translated into policy adjustments. The main challenge often lies less in data availability than in the systematic use of evidence in policymaking.

Some targeted approaches exist. France integrates gender considerations into its national evaluation framework and finances measures targeting barriers faced by migrant women, such as childcare constraints and access to health services. These barriers can affect participation in language training and employment programmes and are not always visible in standard monitoring indicators. In the Nordic countries, sex-disaggregated indicators are routinely published in labour, education and family policy areas, and countries increasingly combine these with other variables such as age, educational background and migration background. In contrast, Korea and Japan primarily organise monitoring by visa category rather than by sex, although targeted initiatives exist for migrants arriving through marriage channels, who are predominantly women.

Many countries still face challenges in analysing how integration outcomes differ across groups with different characteristics and support needs. A smaller number of countries systematically combine sex with other variables such as age, educational background, disability, migration channel or protection status. Outcomes may differ substantially between groups, including young women with low literacy, older migrants with limited schooling and beneficiaries of protection with trauma histories. More detailed and connected monitoring systems can help governments identify cumulative disadvantages and design more targeted measures. This often requires linking data from different policy areas and ensuring that different administrative systems can be combined. In many countries, this remains a technical and institutional challenge. More flexible monitoring systems may also be needed to respond to changing migration patterns and emerging forms of vulnerabilities.

5.3. Evaluation

In contrast to the widespread use of monitoring, evaluation practices remain more fragmented and unevenly institutionalised across countries. Monitoring systems track participation, outputs and short-term outcomes through regular indicators and reporting. Evaluation goes further by assessing whether policies and programmes are achieving their intended results, why some measures work better than others, and how implementation affects outcomes over time. In integration policy, this is particularly important because outcomes often depend on co-ordination across multiple policy areas and levels of government.

Although many countries conduct evaluations of specific integration measures or programmes, fewer report having a comprehensive or recurring evaluation framework covering integration policy as a whole. Many evaluations are commissioned on an ad hoc basis, particularly in connection with externally funded programmes, especially those supported by EU funds, rather than being embedded in a systematic national evaluation cycle. As a result, countries differ in how evaluation is organised, ranging from regular, legally anchored evaluation cycles to more project-based approaches. Evaluation also tends to be less

developed in policy areas characterised by shared responsibilities and long-term outcomes, such as integration, where results depend on multiple actors and policy areas.

Some countries have institutionalised evaluation requirements in legislation, strategies or programme contracts. Finland and Norway, for example, conduct regular evaluations linked to statutory programme cycles. In other countries, including Germany, Austria, France and the Netherlands, evaluation is embedded in accreditation and quality-control systems for service providers, combined with performance indicators and reporting obligations. Canada and Australia complement monitoring systems with beneficiary surveys, third-party evaluations and outcome-based assessments of settlement programmes. These examples highlight the variety of mechanisms countries use to integrate evaluation into governance systems, including legal requirements, administrative procedures and programme-based assessments.

In contrast, several countries, particularly those with more decentralised or project-based approaches, rely more heavily on ad hoc evaluations. This makes it more difficult to assess long-term results, compare performance between regions, or ensure continuity in learning over time. In many cases, evaluations are conducted by external actors such as research institutes or consultants, which can strengthen analytical quality if findings are integrated into policy processes.

5.4. How evidence informs policy

The central governance question is how monitoring and evaluation findings are translated into policy decisions. The availability of data does not automatically lead to evidence-informed policymaking, particularly in complex policy areas involving multiple actors and levels of government.

Only a limited number of countries report having formalised processes through which monitoring data or evaluation findings are systematically used to inform adjustments to integration policy or funding. Where such feedback mechanisms exist, they are most often embedded in broader budgetary or performance-management processes, such as annual programme reviews, budget hearings or action-plan updates. In many countries, by contrast, monitoring and evaluation primarily serve reporting and accountability purposes, with limited evidence of structured mechanisms to translate findings into policy or funding changes.

Many countries still struggle to translate monitoring results into policy adjustments. This reflects both institutional and political constraints, including limited analytical capacity and competing policy priorities.

Some countries have nonetheless developed more structured feedback mechanisms linking monitoring and evaluation to operational or budgetary decisions. Some governments link budget allocations to performance indicators or require periodic strategy reviews based on monitoring results. In Denmark, Integration Barometer results feed directly into municipal funding decisions. Municipalities receive performance subsidies tied to successful employment and education outcomes tracked by the barometer, creating a legally established link between monitoring data and resource allocation. In countries using digital monitoring tools, such as AGIR in France or the Introduction Programme in Norway, real-time data can support operational adjustments, for example by adapting guidance to service providers or reallocating support measures. In addition, some countries with long-standing experience of large-scale displacement, such as Türkiye, report using monitoring and evaluation findings to adjust programmes and budgets on a regular basis, illustrating how evidence can support operational management in large-scale integration systems. In Estonia, findings from the 2023 Integration Monitoring Survey identifying gaps in language proficiency among adults led to additional national and EU resources being allocated to expand free Estonian language courses and digital learning opportunities.

The use of evidence nonetheless remains uneven. Countries report limited uptake of findings on discrimination, social exclusion or gender disparities. Although these dimensions are widely recognised as important, they are less consistently reflected in policy adjustments, partly because they are more difficult

to measure and less directly linked to existing performance frameworks. This is consistent with findings from the OECD and European Migration Network, which indicate that although Member States have developed a wide range of indicators and monitoring tools, these often remain fragmented by policy area and do not capture the full range of integration outcomes (EMN; OECD, 2024[7]).

OECD country reviews also suggest that the extent to which evaluation findings are systematically linked to policy development varies across countries. In systems where monitoring and evaluation are embedded in legal or strategic review cycles, such as Norway and Finland, feedback mechanisms tend to be more structured. In other contexts, monitoring may be well developed in specific policy areas, while evaluation remains more project-based or decentralised, as in Sweden and Iceland.

Several factors help explain these differences. Monitoring and evaluation can be resource-intensive and are not always prioritised alongside service delivery. In some systems, limited analytical capacity or fragmented data infrastructures constrain the ability to generate and use evidence effectively. Institutional arrangements may also play a role, particularly where responsibilities for data collection, analysis and policy design are distributed between multiple actors without clear co-ordination mechanisms. In addition, some outcomes of integration, such as social inclusion or experiences of discrimination, are inherently more difficult to measure, which can limit the scope of monitoring systems. As a result, governments may have limited information on which integration measures are most effective, particularly for groups facing complex barriers.

5.5. Key takeaways

Administrative data form the basis of integration monitoring in almost all OECD countries, though the extent to which this is complemented by surveys, dashboards or longitudinal studies varies. Evaluation practices are more uneven, ranging from regular, legally anchored cycles to ad hoc, project-based assessments. Despite this variation, a few considerations stand out:

- Countries that combine administrative data with regular surveys and qualitative evidence are better placed to track outcomes such as belonging, discrimination and lived experience.
- While monitoring systems are widely established, evaluation remains less consistently embedded. In many countries, evaluations are carried out at programme level and are not systematically linked to policy reform. Countries that require evaluation findings to feed into strategy reviews or budget cycles may more easily identify effective measures and reallocate resources accordingly.
- Disaggregated data shape which groups and barriers become visible in policymaking and which remain invisible. Where differences between women and men in access to employment measures, childcare or health services are not tracked, policies risk being designed around an incomplete picture of about half the migrant population.
- Integrated monitoring tools such as dashboards and barometers can bring together data across policy areas. While still relatively uncommon, countries that have developed such tools report stronger co-ordination between institutions and clearer accountability for outcomes. However, these tools are only as good as the data that feed into them. Expanding their use requires investment in common indicators, data-sharing arrangements and attention to data quality.

For many OECD countries, the main challenge is no longer necessarily data availability but its use. Monitoring and evaluation often generate substantial information that does not consistently reach policy or budget decisions. Closing this gap between what is known and what is acted on remains one of the central governance challenges for integration policy.

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6 Transparent and accountable policies

How can governance systems strengthen transparency and accountability in integration policy? This chapter explores how institutional processes, ranging from clear legal mandates to reporting, monitoring and accountability mechanisms help ensure that policymakers and service providers are answerable for their decisions and performance.

Monitoring and evaluation systems provide information on implementation and outcomes. Transparency and accountability mechanisms determine how that information is scrutinised, reviewed and used to hold institutions responsible for their actions.

In integration policy, accountability can be complex because outcomes depend on co-ordination across multiple policy areas and levels of government. This can make it harder to determine which institutions are responsible for outcomes or implementation failures. Clearly defined mechanisms for reporting, accountability and access to information can help make integration systems more transparent and easier to scrutinise. In addition, where the public can see how systems are organised and what results they produce, this can also strengthen confidence that public resources are being used as intended and that institutions are acting fairly. This chapter examines how OECD countries organise reporting, accountability and access to information within integration systems.

6.1. Legal foundations for accountability

Well-defined legal mandates support accountability by clarifying institutional responsibilities. When responsibilities are defined in legislation, it becomes easier to assess performance, understand how decisions are made and hold institutions accountable.

As outlined in Chapter 1, countries use different legal and regulatory instruments to allocate responsibilities for integration policy. Some rely on dedicated integration acts, while others use migration, education or labour legislation. In federal and decentralised systems, responsibilities may also be defined through regional frameworks. These legal frameworks shape how responsibilities are distributed between ministries, public agencies, regional authorities and municipalities.

The majority of responding countries have integration policy supported by a legal or regulatory framework. Exceptions are Croatia, Ireland, Latvia, Poland and the United Kingdom. In these countries, integration responsibilities are often defined through policy documents, programme frameworks or administrative guidelines rather than legislation.

Where mandates are not set in law, they can be easier to change but it may be more difficult to assign responsibility for policy decisions or implementation shortcomings. Fragmented or implicit mandates can make it more difficult to collect comparable information, establish consistent reporting practices and assess performance.

In Germany, federal legislation governing integration and language courses establishes shared reporting obligations and accreditation requirements for the Länder, helping to standardise data collection despite decentralised delivery. Switzerland similarly combines shared responsibilities at federal, cantonal and municipal levels with a common legislative framework that defines roles and reporting arrangements. Where responsibilities are divided between multiple ministries or levels of government, co-ordination mechanisms and shared reporting frameworks help clarify responsibilities and support accountability.

6.2. Reporting and public scrutiny

Transparency in integration policy depends on whether information on implementation, spending and outcomes is publicly available and accessible for scrutiny. Regular reporting to parliaments and the publication of performance indicators support democratic scrutiny and informed public debate. Transparent reporting can strengthen public confidence in integration systems and support more informed discussions on integration policy (OECD, 2025[1]).

Transparency also requires that information on how policies are implemented and what results they produce is accessible to parliaments, researchers and the wider public. Several OECD countries publish

integration strategies, monitoring reports, evaluation findings or administrative statistics online. In some cases, governments also provide public dashboards tracking integration outcomes or programme performance. These tools can strengthen transparency and support accountability by making information on objectives, implementation and results more accessible.

There is substantial variation in how OECD countries organise public reporting on integration outcomes. Some countries publish regular national reports covering areas such as employment, education, housing, language learning and participation in integration programmes. Others rely more heavily on programme-level reporting, internal monitoring documents or regional arrangements that are not always consolidated or publicly accessible, limiting comparability between programmes and over time.

In most responding countries, reporting is co-ordinated by national ministries or specialised agencies, often in co-operation with statistical offices. In some systems, reporting obligations are linked to legislation, budget processes or formal strategy cycles, requiring regular publication and parliamentary review. In other systems, publication is more discretionary and depends on administrative capacity or political priorities. Many OECD countries collect more administrative data than they publish systematically. In several cases data are gathered at municipal or regional level without being aggregated nationally.

Transparency tends to be stronger where reporting is built into legal requirements, regular publication cycles or budget and strategy processes. Sweden, for example, integrates reporting into the national budget process, allowing annual parliamentary scrutiny. Finland and Norway have reporting cycles set out in law, while France publishes regular reporting on the *Contrat d'intégration républicaine* (CIR) and complements administrative data with surveys tracking newcomer pathways. In Flanders, Belgium, legislation requires the government to report to parliament every three years on how the integration programme is being implemented and whether it is working.

By contrast, where there is no legal requirement to publish, reporting is often more fragmented and sometimes limited to internal or project-level documents. This makes it harder to compare integration outcomes between programmes and over time, and reduces the scope for public scrutiny.

Most publicly available reporting focusses on core indicators such as participation in language courses, civic-orientation outcomes, employment and education. Fewer countries publish regular information on broader dimensions of integration, such as social inclusion, discrimination, access to services or user satisfaction. This suggests that transparency depends not only on data availability, but also on how reporting systems are organised, co-ordinated and made publicly accessible.

6.3. Accountability mechanisms

Accountability mechanisms help ensure that authorities at all levels implement their responsibilities and use public resources as intended. In integration governance, accountability is complicated by the number of institutions involved. Responsibilities for funding, implementation and monitoring are frequently divided between ministries, municipalities and contracted providers, which means that no single institution may be clearly accountable for outcomes. When results fall short, it can be difficult to establish whether the problem lies with policy design, insufficient funding, co-ordination gaps or local capacity.

At national level, accountability is typically organised through reporting, monitoring and external scrutiny. Ministries are generally required to report on integration policies, explain how funds are used and assess progress against government objectives. Parliamentary committees review performance and examine spending, and in some cases request follow-up measures. National audit institutions and parliamentary budget offices have a formal role for integration in some countries, reviewing integration spending and assessing whether programmes are on track. In France, Sweden and Estonia, for example, the national audit office evaluates integration programmes and reports findings to parliament. Where EU funds such as AMIF and ESF+ are involved, the European Court of Auditors provides an additional layer of

independent scrutiny, examining how these resources are used and whether they are achieving their intended objectives. These arrangements make independent scrutiny a more formal part of this process, complementing ministerial reporting.

In multi-level systems, accountability can be diffuse. Several actors may contribute to the same outcome without any one of them being clearly responsible, which makes it harder to assess performance or take corrective action when things go wrong.

In decentralised systems, accountability also operates between levels of government. Municipalities and regions are often required to report to national authorities on how programmes are implemented and how funds are used. In Denmark and Finland, municipalities report regularly to national authorities. In Germany, reporting is organised through the Länder, creating shared accountability for service delivery and funding. In Italy and Spain, national steering is combined with regional accountability, particularly for EU-funded measures.

Where local authorities rely on central funding, accountability is often linked to funding conditions. This can include performance agreements, indicator-based reviews or audits of spending and outcomes. In Canada, accountability is maintained primarily through contractual arrangements with third party service providers, reporting requirements and performance monitoring rather than through direct administrative control (see Box 6.1).

Box 6.1. Decentralised service delivery and accountability in Canada

Canada provides an example of how accountability and performance management can be integrated into a decentralised service delivery model.

- A network of over 530 service provider organisations, funded under the federal Settlement programme, deliver integration services for newcomers. These organisations include non-profit organisations, community associations and other service providers.
- The federal government influences service delivery primarily through funding conditions, reporting obligations and evaluation requirements rather than through direct administrative control.
- Service providers are required to report regularly on activities and outputs, such as participation in language training, employment services and orientation programmes. These reporting requirements are standardised, allowing the federal government to monitor service delivery across a large and diverse network of providers.
- Accountability is also supported through programme reviews, third-party evaluations and beneficiary surveys. Evaluation findings are used to inform programme adjustments and the design of future calls for proposals, linking evidence to policy and operational decisions.

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

There are recurring challenges. In some systems, accountability relies more on informal co-ordination than on formal reporting and review mechanisms. In others, national authorities have limited capacity to follow up on municipal performance. Differences in reporting quality between regions can also make it difficult to compare results and ensure consistent monitoring and accountability. Some countries have sought to strengthen accountability by requiring regular review of implementation in legislation. The Netherlands, for example, designed the 2021 Civil Integration Act as a learning system, with regular stakeholder meetings to review implementation findings and adjust the programme accordingly. This creates a more direct link between evidence, review and adjustment in practice.

In some OECD countries, accountability is also supported by independent institutions that oversee equal treatment and provide avenues for complaint and review. Norway's Equality and Anti-Discrimination Ombud, for example, has a cross-cutting role that extends to integration governance.

Overall, accountability tends to be stronger where mandates are clearly defined, responsibilities can be traced, and reporting is linked to funding or regular review processes. However, well-developed data collection and reporting systems do not automatically ensure that findings are acted upon. As Chapter 5 shows, the gap between data collection and policy adjustment is a wider pattern across OECD countries.

6.4. Key takeaways

OECD countries have developed a range of mechanisms to support transparency and accountability in integration governance, although important gaps remain, particularly where responsibilities are shared between several institutions and levels of government.

- Clear legal mandates make it easier to assign responsibility and reduce fragmentation between ministries, agencies and levels of government.
- Regular and comparable reporting strengthens transparency by making it easier for policymakers, parliaments and the public to follow implementation and assess results over time. Reporting tends to be most effective when it is linked to established processes such as budget cycles, parliamentary review or strategy updates.
- Independent scrutiny complements internal reporting and monitoring. National audit institutions, parliamentary review and, where EU funds are involved, the European Court of Auditors can provide additional scrutiny of how integration measures are implemented and financed. Around half of responding countries report having independent bodies that review or assess integration policies and outcomes, although the extent to which findings influence policy varies.

Transparency and accountability depend on more than data collection. Monitoring can provide information on implementation and outcomes, but accountability also requires clear responsibilities, mechanisms for review and institutions that can act on findings. These mechanisms can also support learning and adaptation, helping integration systems respond to changing circumstances.

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7 Navigating uncertainty. Innovation and policy adaptability

How can integration frameworks support innovation and respond to changing migration and societal needs? This chapter looks at how integration governance can move beyond reactive responses and remain effective when conditions change unexpectedly.

Migration is inherently dynamic and evolves over time in response to economic conditions, demographic change, labour-market demand, political developments and humanitarian crises. Integration systems must therefore operate under continuous change and uncertainty. At times, these changes can occur rapidly, placing integration systems under sudden pressure. Governance frameworks must therefore combine stability with adaptability. This requires systems that can test new approaches, learn from experience and adapt institutional frameworks without losing continuity or accountability.

This chapter examines how OECD countries organise integration systems that can respond to shocks while maintaining longer-term coherence. It brings together the governance dimensions discussed in earlier chapters and considers how they shape the ability of systems to adapt, learn and respond to changing conditions. It also looks at how pilot programmes and emergency measures are used in practice and whether temporary arrangements become part of longer-term governance structures or are phased out once pressures subside.

7.1. From emergency response to long-term integration governance

Migration-related shocks place integration systems under strain. Large-scale displacement or changes in migration patterns can quickly reshape integration needs and increase demand for reception, housing, education, health services and labour-market support. Unlike more gradual migration processes, these situations unfold under pressure and uncertainty, often requiring immediate action before longer-term policy direction is in place. In this sense, crises function as stress tests for integration governance, revealing both the capacity of systems and their vulnerabilities.

Integration governance systems are especially exposed in these situations. Responsibilities are spread across multiple policy areas and levels of government, and access to services for migrants often depends on legal status. When arrivals increase rapidly or new protection statuses are introduced, existing co-ordination mechanisms, funding arrangements and implementation capacities may no longer match the needs.

Governments typically respond with emergency governance measures. These often include temporary co-ordination structures, such as inter-ministerial task forces, to speed up decision making and align action across policy areas and between different stakeholders. Funding is often mobilised more quickly, using emergency budgets or simplified allocation procedures, with additional resources frequently channelled to regional and local authorities, service providers and civil society organisations. Legal or administrative rules may also be adjusted, for example through temporary protection statuses, simplified registration, or exemptions from standard eligibility rules. In several countries responding to the arrival of displaced persons from Ukraine, dedicated registration procedures, temporary protection frameworks and targeted employment co-ordination mechanisms were introduced alongside existing integration systems.

In some OECD countries, temporary arrangements have applied only to specific nationalities or migration categories, creating parallel access routes to services alongside existing integration systems. While such arrangements can improve responsiveness and accelerate access to services, they may also increase co-ordination challenges, create uneven access to services between different target groups and blur institutional responsibilities over time. After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the activation of the EU Temporary Protection Directive (see Box 7.1) led many OECD and EU countries to introduce temporary protection arrangements alongside existing integration systems. In Czechia, as in many other EU countries, these arrangements raised questions about how emergency frameworks fit with established responsibilities and co-ordination structures (see Box 7.2).

Box 7.1. Crisis co-ordination and temporary protection in the European Union

The large-scale displacement following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 tested the ability of European integration systems to respond rapidly under conditions of uncertainty. The activation of the *EU Temporary Protection Directive* created a common legal framework granting displaced persons immediate access to residence, labour markets, education, healthcare and social services across EU Member States.

The response highlighted how emergency governance mechanisms can shape reception systems as well as longer-term integration frameworks. Implementing temporary protection required rapid co-ordination between migration authorities and mainstream service systems, including schools, employment services, healthcare providers and municipal administrations.

In many countries, existing integration frameworks were adapted at short notice to accommodate large numbers of displaced persons. Governments expanded language training, school capacity, housing support and employment services, often through temporary co-ordination arrangements bringing together ministries, regional authorities and municipalities that did not normally co-operate through established integration structures.

At EU level, broader crisis-co-ordination mechanisms also supported implementation and policy exchange during the crisis. The *Integrated Political Crisis Response (IPCR)* arrangements facilitated information sharing, political co-ordination and shared situational awareness between Member States and EU institutions. In parallel, the *EU Blueprint Network* brought together national authorities to exchange operational experience and discuss challenges related to labour-market integration, skills assessment and access to services for displaced persons. These mechanisms helped support co-ordination and institutional learning during a period of rapid policy adaptation.

Source: Directive 2001/55/EC on temporary protection; OECD (2022[1]), *Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries*.

Box 7.2. Adapting governance from emergency aid to long-term integration in Czechia

Following Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Czechia faced an unprecedented and rapid increase in arrivals under temporary protection. With limited recent experience of large-scale displacement, the initial response relied on emergency arrangements to ensure immediate access to protection, housing and basic services. This required fast decision making, legal flexibility and co-ordination between national, regional and local levels.

In the early phase, governance structures were largely temporary and operated alongside existing integration systems. Co-ordination was led by the Ministry of the Interior, while municipalities and regional Integration Centres took on key roles in implementation. Civil society organisations also played an important role, particularly in reception, information provision and case management. Emergency funding, supported in part by EU funds, made it possible to scale up services quickly.

As the situation shifted from immediate response to longer-term settlement, challenges emerged around coherence and sustainability. Temporary protection created parallel access routes to services, raising questions about how these arrangements aligned with mainstream integration systems and responsibilities. This required clarifying roles between emergency structures and standard service

provision, particularly at the municipal level. Integrating temporary measures into existing structures became increasingly important.

Over time, governance structures became more institutionalised. Integration Centres and municipalities took on a more central role in co-ordinating longer-term support, while funding and co-ordination mechanisms were gradually adjusted to more stable needs. The Czech experience highlights the challenges of integrating emergency arrangements into mainstream governance as displacement situations evolve over time.

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025); OECD (2022[1]), *Rights and Support for Ukrainian Refugees in Receiving Countries*.

Crisis responses often bypass established procedures and rely on more informal solutions. This can improve speed and flexibility in the short term, but it can make it harder to align policy frameworks, funding structures and implementation responsibilities over time. In federal and highly decentralised systems, an effective crisis response depends on co-ordination between national, regional and local authorities. This can allow responses to be adapted to local conditions but also means that alignment between different levels of government becomes more challenging and also more important.

As the main actors responsible for delivering integration measures, local authorities are often required to operate both emergency and regular systems at the same time, with different funding rules, reporting requirements and eligibility criteria. This can increase administrative complexity and make it more difficult to ensure consistent service delivery between groups and territories, a challenge particularly visible in countries with strong municipal responsibility such as the Nordic countries, where local authorities are required to manage both emergency and regular systems simultaneously.

Governments often rely on existing networks of civil society organisations to deliver support quickly during periods of pressure, particularly in areas such as housing, language assistance, case management and community outreach. In practice, these organisations often function as an extension of public systems rather than alongside them. This can increase capacity and improve responsiveness, but it also raises questions about co-ordination, accountability and the sustainability of services once emergency arrangements are withdrawn.

The COVID-19 pandemic provides another example of how integration governance systems can adapt under pressure. In many OECD countries, integration services were rapidly digitalised, administrative procedures adjusted, and delivery responsibilities shifted towards local and non-governmental actors. Although not all emergency measures were retained some have persisted, particularly digital and hybrid service models. This shows that crises can accelerate changes in delivery mechanisms, even when the underlying governance structures stay the same.

Once pressures ease, governments need to decide whether temporary arrangements should be phased out, aligned with existing systems or developed into more permanent solutions. This transition can be difficult because temporary arrangements may operate under different rules and co-ordination arrangements than mainstream integration systems and governments may need to clarify responsibilities between temporary and permanent actors. They must also decide whether temporary service structures should be integrated into existing systems or phased out. More broadly, crisis responses can expose co-ordination gaps or capacity constraints that were less visible under normal conditions.

Similar patterns can also be observed outside Europe. As Colombia's response to large-scale Venezuelan displacement shows (see Box 7.3), temporary or emergency arrangements may gradually evolve into longer-term structures as displacement becomes more prolonged and integration needs expand.

Box 7.3. Large scale reception and integration of Venezuelan migrants in Colombia

Over the past decade, Colombia has faced significant governance challenges associated with becoming the main destination for Venezuelan migrants and refugees in Latin America. This shift has transformed Colombia from a country historically characterised by emigration into a major country of reception, requiring rapid and sustained institutional adaptation.

The initial response focussed on broad regularisation measures to respond to the scale and urgency of arrivals. The Temporary Protection Statute for Venezuelan Migrants granted legal status and access to the labour market for large numbers of people, helping to reduce irregularity and provide a basis for early inclusion. It also established a common registration and identification framework, facilitating access to formal employment and public services.

As displacement has continued, the main governance challenge has moved from access to status toward how to support integration over time, particularly in regions and cities where arrivals are concentrated. This has required expanding the capacity of existing systems for employment, education, health and social services, and strengthening co-ordination between national frameworks and subnational delivery, although progress has remained uneven and continues to evolve.

Colombia's experience highlights that frameworks designed for large-scale reception may need to evolve as governance priorities shift over time. Managing entry at scale and sustaining system capacity over the longer-term place different demands on governance systems and require different policy tools.

Source: OECD (2024[2]), *International Migration Outlook 2024*; OECD (2025[3]), I*nternational Migration Outlook 2025*.

7.2. Pilot programmes and experimentation

Many OECD countries use pilot programmes to test new instruments or delivery models on a limited scale. Unlike emergency measures, which are reactive and time-critical, pilots are used more deliberately to find out what works and inform future decisions. They are usually time-limited, targeted at specific groups or locations, and operate within defined administrative or legal settings. Some pilots respond to needs identified during crises. Others are introduced when existing systems are seen as insufficiently effective or flexible, for example in service co-ordination, access to labour markets or the use of digital tools.

Pilots allow governments to test new approaches without committing to system-wide reform, limiting financial and political risks while gathering information before scaling up. They can also create space for co-operation between sectors and levels of government, where existing structures make this difficult. The effectiveness of pilots depends on having clear mandates, adequate funding and the ability to monitor and document results.

Pilots are more likely to be sustained and scaled up when they are embedded in existing governance structures rather than operating as standalone projects dependent on temporary funding. In Denmark, for example, pilot approaches are often embedded within a broader performance framework, allowing municipalities to test new approaches while maintaining alignment with national objectives.

Many countries report difficulties in moving beyond the pilot phase. Where pilots are not linked to broader strategies or decision-making processes, successful initiatives may remain isolated or dependent on temporary funding. In other cases, pilots continue beyond their original purpose without a clear decision on whether they should be scaled up, adapted or discontinued, adding to institutional complexity. Estonia

provides an example of how pilot initiatives in digital service co-ordination can gradually become integrated into mainstream integration governance frameworks (see Box 7.4).

Box 7.4. Innovative digital integration governance and service co-ordination in Estonia

Estonia has a long-standing use of digital governance tools to simplify access to integration services and improve co-ordination between institutions. The Settle in Estonia programme, introduced in 2015, provides newly arrived migrants with access to language training, orientation modules and practical information through a centralised digital platform. The programme includes thematic modules covering areas such as employment, education and everyday life in Estonia.

In Estonia, digitalisation has increasingly been integrated into broader integration policy. Pilot initiatives have included the Settle in Estonia portal and the *Eestis kohanemine* event-based service model, which combines information from different state registries to support more personalised integration pathways. Two of these pilot-initiatives have since been integrated into mainstream national integration policy. This process has continued with the launch, in December 2025, of the first phase of the personalised Settling in Estonia event-based service, which brings together information from different public authorities and provides newcomers with personalised guidance and service recommendations based on their individual circumstances.

Local pilot projects in Tallinn are being used to explore how municipalities can be more systematically involved in Estonia's integration governance framework. Recent efforts have increasingly focussed on providing dedicated capacity-building support to municipalities across the country. Estonia has also expanded flexible learning formats, including e-learning and blended language training, in response to demographic and labour-market changes. Over time, these initiatives have become an integrated part of Estonia's broader integration framework.

Source: OECD questionnaire on integration governance (2025).

Pilot programmes are often initiated by individual ministries, agencies or local authorities, sometimes in partnership with non-governmental actors. They can adapt to local needs and support innovation, but without clearly defined roles and responsibilities, findings may be difficult to connect to broader national objectives or scale up into mainstream systems.

In decentralised systems, locally driven pilots can generate valuable experience, but scaling them up requires co-ordination between levels of government and integration into national frameworks. In Canada, for example, pilot initiatives are often implemented through funding agreements with service providers, allowing new approaches to be tested within existing funding frameworks.

Financing arrangements shape how pilots are governed and how long they last. Project-based or external funding can make it easier to start new initiatives but can also create uncertainty about sustainability and make it difficult to retain knowledge once funding ends. Deliberate choices about funding arrangements are therefore part of governing experimentation well, not just a technical detail.

Overall, pilot programmes provide an important way for integration systems to adapt under uncertainty. They allow governments to test new solutions while limiting risk**.** However, the contribution of pilot programmes to long-term adaptability depends on whether the lessons they generate are captured and used. Pilots that are clearly defined, time-limited and linked to decision making processes are more likely to lead to lasting change than those that remain isolated or disconnected from broader systems. The next section examines how institutional learning mechanisms support this process.

7.3. Institutional learning mechanisms

Crises and pilot initiatives often generate new practices, but these do not automatically become part of regular governance systems. Whether systems actually learn depends on whether experience is documented, assessed and used to adjust existing policy and governance frameworks.

This remains uneven across OECD countries. Many systems still lack structured processes for documenting experience and using it systematically to adjust policies. In many cases, emergency arrangements and pilot initiatives end once pressures ease or funding expires. When this happens without structured review, valuable experience may be lost, and systems may revert to previous arrangements without resolving co-ordination gaps or capacity constraints exposed during the crisis.

Several governance tools can support institutional learning. One is the use of formal evaluation and reporting requirements linked to emergency measures or pilot programmes. Where initiatives have clear objectives, timelines and documentation requirements, governments are better able to assess whether they should be integrated into mainstream systems, adapted, or discontinued. Where experimentation takes place through ad hoc projects or informal arrangements, decisions about next steps are often more fragmented or delayed. This also reflects broader patterns identified in monitoring and evaluation systems (see Chapter 5), where data collection is not always systematically linked to policy adjustment or institutional change.

A second area concerns co-ordination and knowledge transfer between institutions and levels of government. Standing inter-ministerial bodies, multi-level co-ordination platforms, and permanent advisory structures can help retain institutional memory and ensure that experiences from crises or pilots inform future reforms. In decentralised systems, mechanisms that support exchange between municipalities or regions are particularly important, as they allow locally generated knowledge to be shared and reduce duplication. Without such channels, learning may remain confined to individual organisations or projects. In some cases, experiences from repeated crises have also led to broader institutional reforms. At the EU level, the Pact on Migration and Asylum reflects efforts to strengthen preparedness and information-sharing within migration governance.

Institutional learning is also shaped by how responsibilities are organised once emergency conditions subside. Transitions from temporary to longer-term arrangements can be difficult where mandates are unclear or when emergency responses rely heavily on actors outside regular governance systems. If responsibilities are not clearly reassigned, temporary solutions may continue alongside existing systems. This can increase complexity and make it harder to integrate lessons into regular governance systems. Clear decisions about who takes responsibility once emergency arrangements end are therefore central to institutional learning.

In practice, structural factors often limit institutional learning. High staff turnover, reliance on short-term funding and frequent changes in institutional responsibilities can weaken institutional memory. In crisis situations, administrative capacity is often focussed on immediate operational needs, leaving limited scope for documentation, reflection or evaluation. As a result, learning may remain fragmented rather than systemic, and opportunities to strengthen governance systems can be missed.

7.3.1. International learning and policy exchange

Learning processes are also shaped by exchanges beyond national governance systems and administrative structures. A range of international networks at the OECD, EU and other international fora provide structured spaces for exchange between governments, joint problem solving and the sharing of practical experience, complementing national evaluation and co-ordination mechanisms. Although such exchanges take place continuously, they tend to become particularly important during periods of rapid change or crisis. The COVID-19 pandemic and the arrival of displaced persons following Russia's full-

scale invasion of Ukraine increased the need for rapid information-sharing and operational co-ordination between countries and levels of government.

At both OECD and EU level, policy networks facilitate learning by enabling discussion of common challenges, including capacity constraints, service co-ordination and adaptation under uncertainty. Unlike international data-sharing frameworks, which primarily support transparency and comparability, these networks focus more directly on practical experience and shared policy challenges. Learning and adaptation can also be supported through broader international review and benchmarking frameworks that connect integration-related challenges to wider economic and social policy discussions (see Box 7.5).

Box 7.5. The European Semester and integration governance

The European Semester is the European Union's main framework for co-ordinating economic, employment and social policies between Member States. Through country reports, country-specific recommendations and monitoring of national reforms, it supports policy co-ordination, benchmarking and mutual learning across a broad range of policy areas.

Although integration is the responsibility of the Member States and migrant integration is not a standalone component of the Semester, integration-related challenges feature in discussions on labour-market participation, skills, education, housing, social inclusion and public-service capacity.

Similar dynamics can also be observed in OECD Economic Surveys and related country reviews, where integration-related challenges appear in discussions on labour-market performance, skills and social inclusion. More detailed analysis of integration governance is also carried out in OECD country reviews and thematic publications, particularly through, for example, the *OECD's Working Together* series on selected member countries.

Findings and recommendations emerging from these frameworks could be taken more systematically into account in national integration governance frameworks and policy co-ordination processes.

By making experience from other countries easier to access and reducing uncertainty around policy change, international networks can help governments adapt policies and respond more quickly to new challenges. They may also help preserve institutional memory through continued exchange and documentation. International policy networks can therefore complement national co-ordination and learning arrangements. Institutional learning does not happen automatically. It depends on deliberate governance choices, including investment in evaluation capacity, co-ordination structures that extend beyond crisis periods, and procedures that link experience to policy development. Where such mechanisms are in place, integration governance systems are generally better able to adapt over time without losing coherence or accountability.

7.4. Key takeaways – building resilient integration governance

How well integration governance functions has a direct impact on the lives of migrants, refugees as well as on the communities that receive them. With responsibilities that are clearly defined, co-ordination that reaches the relevant actors, financing that supports continuity, and monitoring systems that provide timely information, integration systems can adapt to changing conditions without missing key target groups or becoming difficult to sustain over time.

At the same time, strong governance cannot compensate for weak policy design. Even well-functioning systems may struggle to deliver sustained outcomes when policy objectives or instruments do not reflect practical realities, such as housing shortages, labour-market barriers or unequal access to services.

Frequent shifts in integration objectives driven by short-term political pressures rather than longer-term implementation needs can also weaken outcomes over time. Strengthening how governance arrangements function in practice is therefore central both for current outcomes and for how well systems can respond to future pressures.

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Making Integration Work

Integration Governance

The OECD series *Making Integration Work* summarises, in a non-technical way, the main issues surrounding the integration of immigrants and their children into their host countries. Each book presents concrete policy lessons for its theme, along with supporting examples of good practices and comparisons of the migrant integration policy frameworks in different OECD countries. This seventh volume takes stock of the experiences of OECD countries regarding integration governance, exploring key considerations for designing effective structures for integration policy.

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