TOWARDS A NATIONAL MIGRANT INTEGRATION STRATEGY
2015 – 2020

Framework Document
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IF</td>
<td>Integration Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSDC</td>
<td>Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGOs</td>
<td>Non-governmental organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>TCNs</td>
<td>Third Country Nationals</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMCI</td>
<td>Inter-Ministerial Committee on Integration</td>
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Key terms used in this document

This Framework Document follows terminology developed, recognised and used by international institutions, whilst recognising the complex meanings and understandings of each term, also presents some key concepts that need to be defined.

**Interculturality:** This term is used as it is understood and defined by the Council of Europe. Rather than ignoring diversity, denying diversity or overemphasising diversity and thereby reinforcing walls between culturally distinct groups, interculturality is about explicitly recognising the value of diversity while doing everything possible to increase interaction, mixing and hybridisation between cultural communities.

Interculturality is also about addressing issues of cultural conflict or tension openly through public debate, with the involvement of all stakeholders.

Interculturality strongly recognises the need to enable each culture to survive and flourish but also underlines the right of all cultures to contribute to the cultural landscape of the society they are present in.

Interculturality derives from the understanding that cultures flourish in contact with other cultures, not in isolation. It seeks to reinforce intercultural interaction as a means of building trust and reinforcing the fabric of the community.

The development of a cultural sensitivity, the encouragement of intercultural interaction and mixing are seen not as the responsibility of a special department or officer but as an essential aspect of the functioning of all departments and services.

**Stakeholders** are all those groups and individuals of minority or majority background who play a role and have interests (a “stake”) in intercultural dialogue – most prominently policy makers in governments and parliaments at all levels, local and regional authorities, civil society organisations, migrant and religious communities, cultural and media organisations, journalists, social partners, the educational infrastructure, as well as each and every citizen.

**Social cohesion** denotes the capacity of a society to ensure the welfare of all its members, minimising disparities and avoiding polarisation. A cohesive society is a mutually supportive community of free individuals pursuing these common goals by democratic means.

**Public authorities** include the national government and political and administrative bodies at the regional, central and local levels. The term also covers local councils, as well as natural or legal persons under private law who perform public functions or exercise administrative authority.

**Integration** (also referred to as social integration/inclusion) is understood as a two-sided process and as the capacity of people to live together with full respect for the dignity of each individual, the common good, pluralism and diversity, non-
violence and solidarity, as well as their ability to participate in social, cultural, economic and political life. It encompasses all aspects of social development and all policies. It implies the protection of the weak, as well as the right to differ, to create and to innovate.

Effective integration policies are needed to allow migrants to participate fully in the life of the host country. Migrants should, as everybody else, abide by and respect the laws and the basic values of the host country and its cultural heritage. Strategies for integration must necessarily encompass all areas of society, and include social, political and cultural aspects of that society. They should respect migrants’ dignity and distinct identity and take them into account when developing policies.

1. Current context, beliefs and values

The Maltese Government has pledged to open society, to celebrate diversity, to recognise the social realities around it, to cherish Maltese identity without discrimination, to ensure equality and respect towards minority groups and above all, to safeguard the fundamental human rights and freedoms of all. It is Government’s belief that the current realities faced by migrants coming from third countries (i.e., countries that are not EU Member States), require immediate attention.
For this reason, the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (MSDC) has embarked on a project entitled Mind D Gap: Together we can make a difference (IF 2013/17). Its aim is to support efforts that enable third country nationals (TCNs) of diverse national, economic, social, cultural, religious, linguistic and ethnic backgrounds to fulfil the conditions of residence and to facilitate their integration within Maltese society. The project led to the formulation of this Framework Document, which is intended to shape and inform the National Migrant Integration Strategy 2015-2020 expected to be launched later on during 2015.

This Framework Document was developed by current expertise within MSDC who, in collaboration with the relevant stakeholders (including other Ministries and civil society organizations), took into consideration the multi-faceted dimensions of this matter. This preliminary document outlines core concepts that address integration, point out legislative, policy and programmes-based objectives that aim to ensure fuller integration of TCNs, recommends general measures that will be developed into a national action plan by the relevant directorates / departments and entities, and focuses on areas that are important to achieve the goal of integration. This work will be followed by further collaboration with the relevant social partners, and elaboration of the National Strategy over the coming months.

The National Strategy will promote human rights, equal opportunities and obligations for all, and amongst other things, it will promote diversity as a basic value necessary to achieving greater social cohesion. The aim of the Strategy is to bring about real changes for third country nationals and other migrants within our society, and to build a strong community where everyone, regardless of race, colour, religious or political opinion, age, sex, gender, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or any other status, can live, work and prosper in a context of fairness, equality, rights, responsibilities and respect.

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**Fig. 1 Steps for formulating a National Migrant Integration Strategy**

- Assessment of current context
- Project: Fact-finding exercise
- Desk Research: Review existing policy documents
- Integrated data collection
- Drafting of strategy
- Validation of strategy (public consultation)
- Implementation of national strategy 2015-2020
2. Process for the development of the framework

A systematic approach was adopted towards this framework, and MSDC initiated a number of processes that led to the formulation of this document, and will further contribute towards the development and implementation of the National Migrant Integration Strategy 2015-2020.

The methodology developed as part of the Mind d Gap project aims to provide a standard and integrated approach towards the National Strategy, policies and institutional change. It consists of a number of steps and key components, which are expanded on briefly below.

2.1 Inter-Ministerial Committee on Integration

An Inter-Ministerial Committee on Integration (IMCI) was set up to co-ordinate input towards this Framework Document, and further work on the National Strategy and subsequent actions that will ensure its effective implementation. The IMCI aims to point out legislative and policy objectives that aim to ensure fuller integration; propose general measures for implementation for the whole population, that will be developed into national action plans by the relevant Ministries, directorates, departments and other relevant entities; and focus on areas that are relevant and important to achieve the goal of integration, such as the areas of education, employment, healthcare, family reunification and anti-discrimination measures.
The Committee is currently composed by a high official from each of the following Ministries:

1. Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties (MSDC)
2. Ministry for Family and Social Solidarity (MFSS)
3. Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE)
4. Ministry for Energy and Health (MEH)
5. Ministry for Home Affairs and National Security (MHAS)

### 2.2 General public consultation

On 5th May 2015, an online consultation was launched by the Government on [www.socialdialogue.gov.mt/integration](http://www.socialdialogue.gov.mt/integration) with the aim of reaching the wider population and collecting input from the general public, civil society organisations, trade unions, business organisations, political parties, governmental institutions and all others that would like to contribute towards this process. In total, the MSDC received 15 submissions, as listed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Submission</th>
<th>No. of Submissions</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individuals</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Various individuals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Civil society organisations | 5                  | 1. The People for Change Foundation  
2. SOS Malta  
3. Malta Migrants Association  
4. Għaqda Patrijotti Maltin  
5. Joint Submission from Aditus Foundation, Jesuit Refugee Service, Integra Foundation, Kopin, and Organisation for Friendship in Diversity |
| Academic institutions    | 1                  | Representatives from the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, Faculty for Social Wellbeing, University of Malta |
| International institutions | 2                  | 1. International Organisation for Migration  
2. United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights (Malta) |
2.3 Public service and public sector consultation

A questionnaire was sent out to Directors General, Directors, Heads of entities / agencies and authorities across the Ministries represented on the Inter-Ministerial Committee. This consultation sought further answers regarding measures that are already being taken, any planned measures and measures that could be taken towards integration of TCNs and other migrants in Malta.

In total, the MSDC received 24 submissions from public service and public sector officials as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>Department</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MSDC</td>
<td>National Commission for the Promotion of Equality</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| MHAS     | Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers  
Aviation Security Malta  
Department of Probation and Parole  
Identity Malta Agency  
Malta Police Force  
Office of the Refugee Commissioner  
Office of the Regulator (IIP)  
Permanent Secretariat |
| MEDE     | Department of Curriculum Management and E-Learning  
Department of Quality Assurance |
| MEH      | Cancer Care Pathways  
Department of Health (Central Procurement & Supplies Unit)  
Department of Health-Rehabilitation Services  
Directorate for Allied Healthcare Services  
Directorate General Finance and Administration (Health)  
Healthcare Standards  
Mater Dei Hospital  
Office Of The Chief Medical Officer  
Primary Health Care Department |
| MFSS     | Agenzija Appogg, Foundation for Social Welfare Services  
Directorate General (Social Policy)  
Housing Authority  
Office of the Commissioner for Children |
2.4 National survey on perceptions on TCNs and immigration in Malta

MSDC commissioned this research which was designed to assess general perceptions in relation to TCNs and other migrants, migration and integration. The survey was carried out using telephone questionnaires and aimed to assess how the general population perceives and interacts with TCNs and other foreign nationals.

The research\(^1\) found that the majority of respondents have contact with foreigners living in Malta although a sizeable minority which includes a large segment of women and older respondents have less contact. While a minority still thinks that there are far more foreigners living in Malta than there actually are, most Maltese have a more correct estimate of the number of foreigners. A small majority knows what integration means and a relative majority agrees that government should make an effort to encourage the integration of foreign communities in Malta. However, a section of the population remains undecided or hostile to the presence of foreigners, although some make a distinction between asylum seekers and richer foreigners. Attitudes towards foreigners tend to be selective and utilitarian, with most respondents viewing foreigners either as a source of investment, especially in property or as an invisible army of labour which takes up those jobs which are not wanted by the Maltese.

On knowing foreigners personally

56% of respondents know a foreign resident in Malta by name. This indicates a degree of familiarity between respondents and foreigners living in Malta. The percentage rises to 66% among males aged under 35 years of age and to 76% amongst persons with a university education. The rate falls to 37.2% among females aged over 55 years and 37% among pensioners.

On integration

Respondents were asked to state whether they know what the term ‘integration’ means. A majority of 52.6% declared that they know what the term means but a large segment of the population (47.2%) is unfamiliar with this term and do not know its meaning.

\(^1\) From report’s executive summary
A breakdown by age reveals that females aged over 55 years are the least familiar with the term while males under the age of 34 years are the most familiar. Males are in general more aware of the term. The survey shows a deep knowledge gap between post-secondary and those respondents with a secondary education level.

Respondents were provided with a definition of integration "as a process of dialogue to help foreign communities participate and contribute to Maltese society". They were then asked whether government should endeavour to enact this policy. A relative majority of 48.6% replied “Yes”, but while only 27.4% replied “No”, a substantial 13.4% replied “depends” while 10.6% were “not sure”.

Respondents who do not know any foreigners who live in Malta are more likely to oppose integration, and so are those who think that there are more than 18,000 irregular migrants still living in Malta, or who think that more than 30,000 foreigners are living in Malta. This suggests that perceptions on numbers have an impact on views on integration.

Those who disagree with government encouraging integration are most likely to oppose it because of the island’s small size and a perception that there are already too many foreigners. However, others are motivated by more irrational fears like that of foreigners taking over the country or supplanting the local population.

3. Strategic recommendations

Following an analysis of the research carried out and the feedback received from consultation, the Ministry for Social Dialogue, Consumer Affairs and Civil Liberties is presenting the following Framework as a next step towards Government adopting a National Migrant Integration Strategy. This Framework is built on a human rights basis, strengthened by the key principles of

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2 We acknowledge that “citizenship” is a complex term and carries with it several meanings. In this process, our understanding of this term changed from viewing it in terms of identity (that implies homogeneity) to that of ‘affinity’ and thus a politics that identifies with and upholds diversity. (Lazaridis, G. (2015). International Migration into Europe: From subjects to abjects. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.)
We assert our commitment towards the recognition and guaranteeing of equal rights and opportunities for all, which are achieved through the promotion of effective dialogue and active participation when exercising our rights and duties.

Moreover, we recognise that such a Framework needs to be developed in an environment that welcomes diversity and understands difference as a form of enrichment to our society.

Ultimately, our goal is to close discriminatory gaps in order to get to know and respond better to the realities of all citizens by remaining attentive to those realities through policies and other measures.

Such a goal will be achieved by focusing on areas that require attention – either by supporting and strengthening existing measures or by developing new measures that will help attain our goals. There are five policy areas that we want to focus on and this document sets out the main aims under each of these policy areas.

### 3.1 Defending rights and fulfilling duties: Anti-discrimination and equality

Clear anti-discrimination laws and policies are crucial to successful migrant integration. The key area of anti-discrimination and equality combined with the process of the White Paper Towards the establishment of the Human Rights and Equality Commission, will review existing equality legislation and establish a Human Rights and Equality Commission. The Framework recommends:

- Giving a clear remit and strong enforcement powers to the new Human Rights and Equality Commission;
- Developing a simple complaints procedure that takes into account intersectional and/or multiple discrimination, including the rights of all categories of migrants;
c. Increasing accessible information about reporting procedures to address under-reporting;
d. Developing a policy against racial discrimination, which includes discriminatory practices in different domains such as the labour market, healthcare, education and housing;
e. Mainstreaming race equality and integration policies and practices throughout public service and public institutions;
f. Consolidating existing equality legislations into one comprehensive Equality Act, which includes all forms of discrimination, standard definitions and clear procedures and tackles discrimination and equality on an intersectional basis.
g. Recognising the ethnic diversity that exists within the Maltese population.

3.2 Resolving social barriers and providing opportunities

Education / Family / Labour Market / Healthcare

There is a need to address existing barriers to legal employment (as opposed to irregular and poor working conditions), access to the labour market, healthcare and equal opportunities in education. The Framework recommends:

a. Ensuring that public spaces are safe, shared and welcoming to the whole society;
b. Avoiding unnecessary duplication of services and ensuring delivery of shared services on the basis of objective need/s;
c. Developing a longer term strategic approach to helping marginalised young people especially through educational programmes;
d. Supporting young people by facilitating and empowering youth groups to work together on 'civic responsibility' projects;
e. Focusing on education and promoting greater understanding of shared values;
f. Establishing multi-agency partnerships between ethnic minorities and migrant worker communities to address the specific needs of the young people in those populations.

Education

a. Reviewing the national curriculum framework with a view to ensuring the presence of themes such as social justice, multicultural diversity, inclusiveness, contemporary cultures, awareness of ethnic diversity and the understanding of different religious beliefs;
b. Introducing initiatives aimed at migrants into the national provision, such as proficiency classes in Maltese and English;
c. Facilitating the entrance of migrant students into Maltese schools;
d. Ensuring that educators are provided with the adequate skills, knowledge and support to be able to understand and work with an increasingly diverse and dynamic student population;
e. Ensuring that knowledge, skills and competences from the personal, civic, social and employment-related perspectives run through formal, non-formal and informal learning, spanning from primary level to adult and lifelong learning;
f. Harmonising entry procedures and eligibility of access to higher education and training for different migrant groups, as well as ensuring a transparent and efficient framework for the recognition of qualifications.

Family

a. Recognising the importance of family reunification that allows for the broadening of the definition of what constitutes the ‘family’ under the Regulations to comprise partners, and possibly also other dependants;
b. Providing for the broadening of the existing eligibility criteria in order to allow for other categories of beneficiaries of international protection to be able to be reunified with their family members;
c. Applying standard operating procedures in the reunification of unaccompanied migrant children whose parents (and/or siblings) are to be found in another EU member state.
Labour Market
a. Harmonised procedures for the granting of a single residence and employment licence;
b. All workers holding an employment license to benefit from equal treatment in terms of when seeking employment and once in the job, including equal pay for equal work and other worker’s rights;
c. Improving intercultural preparation for migrants and their families, including basic information on employment and labour in Malta, cultural and social issues, integration and linguistic training;
d. Ensuring that measures are in place to protect migrant workers who have suffered breaches of labour law and labour exploitation.

Health
a. Ensuring that healthcare entitlements and provision to migrants are given their due importance and are legally formalised;
b. Emphasising the importance of specific health services that need to be offered to victims of trauma and torture;
c. Ensure that cultural mediators are mainstreamed in the provision of all healthcare services in a sustainable and constant manner;
d. Promoting and recognising the importance of cultural competent care.

3.3 Promoting intercultural relations: Empowering local communities

Empowering local communities and challenging negative perception of TCNs and migrants will improve access to public services and fuller participation for everyone in the community. The Framework recommends:
a. Working with and supporting local communities to resolve contentious cultural issues;
b. Promoting greater understanding of interculturality, cultural diversity and expressions of cultural identity;
c. Encouraging greater engagement with, and understanding of, cultural diversity and intercultural relations;
d. Promoting intercultural exchanges, joint events and tourism initiatives;
e. Recognising the role of the media in giving a voice to TCNs and migrants, and raising awareness on related issues.
f. Encouraging community events which reflect cultural diversity and are open, welcoming and inclusive to all;

**A secure society**

a. Working towards the elimination of racist and xenophobic hate speech and crime;
b. Ensuring that all responsible agencies and entities continue to provide a high level of community safety delivered within a rights-based framework and an overarching ethos of mutual respect;
c. Continuing to promote initiatives based on the principle of mutual respect, which reflect acceptance of cultural diversity and the ways in which it is expressed;
d. Building community support networks across community, cultural and minority ethnic groups;
e. Building the capacity of the local and minority ethnic communities to support people who have experienced hate crime.

**A cohesive society**

a. Allowing zero tolerance for crimes motivated by prejudice and all forms of hate crime, whilst actively promoting rights and respect;
b. Building an inclusive community open to all, regardless of people’s background;
c. Promoting greater understanding between established sections of the community and new arrivals;
d. Encouraging greater understanding of new cultures and new sections of the community;

**Supporting communities**

a. Continuing to support Local Councils’ initiatives of intercultural programmes, projects and activities;
b. Ensuring that TCN and migrant communities are integral to the decision making and implementation process of the Strategy;
c. Nurturing leadership at a local level and empowering the local community to identify solutions to local issues.

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**3.4 Civil participation: Outreach to communities of TCNs**

As already stated above, the Government has already set up an Inter-Ministerial Committee on Integration chaired by the MSDC to oversee the development and effective implementation of any measures towards greater integration in Malta.

Moreover, the Government’s Electoral Manifesto has committed to set up a Consultative Council for Integration Affairs which will be appointed by the MSDC and will include community partners and representatives from a range of community organisations. The Consultative Council will ensure the participation and collaboration of migrant communities, social partners and social solidarity institutions in the definition of social integration policies and policies that combat social exclusion.

Furthermore, this Framework recommends:

a. Increasing migrant participation in the democratic process through national and local awareness raising information campaigns and capacity-building;
b. Recognising the important role played by diaspora/migrant organisations in global development and in policy implementation;
c. Facilitating and encouraging migrant participation in mainstream organisations, such as trade unions women’s organisations, political parties, and local advocacy groups;
d. Supporting funds aimed at promoting social participation and active citizenship measures for migrants and/or their descendants;
e. Recognising the role of civil society organisations and the importance of supporting their work through financial assistance, the establishment of collaborative partnerships and meaningful consultation processes.

3.5 Institutional dialogue: Policy-makers and decision-makers

a. Identifying key projects which have proven track records of success in promoting integration;
b. Sharing of relevant research and experiences on national, regional (European and Mediterranean) and international basis;
c. Mutual promotion of cultural diversity and encouraging better social networks on national, Mediterranean, European and international levels.
4. Expressed concerns

A number of persons expressed concerns and fears associated with the development of the National Migrant Integration Strategy 2015-2020.

To summarise, most expressed concern regarding any legislation concerning integration particularly due to the lack of knowledge and public awareness about the meaning of ‘integration’.

The Government noted and listened to these concerns, which also informed the decision to emphasise the need for public awareness about the meaning of integration, integration processes, interculturality, and more information about what an ‘integrated migrant’ looks like.

5. Review, assessment and monitoring

The Framework provides an indicative outline of the National Strategy, which will be more comprehensive and will include goals and mechanisms for review and evaluation. It is also being recommended that the National Strategy allows for the compilation and collection of valid disaggregated data that should be analysed on a regular basis; as well as consistent monitoring and assessment to ensure effective implementation of the Strategy.

6. Conclusion: towards a national migrant integration strategy 2015-2020

This National Migrant Integration Strategy 2015-2020 seeks to establish a framework within which available resources can be managed more effectively and integrated to target the funding strategically, avoid duplication, ensure complementarity, and maximise the impact at ground level.

We acknowledge the limited scope of this Framework document, and recognise that for a National Strategy to be fully inclusive, it has to include all different groups (TCNs, refugees and asylum seekers, those with temporary protection, etc.). Moreover, an intersectional perspective should be applied in the development and implementation of the Strategy to ensure that it is cohesive and inclusive.
If you wish to send your comments/suggestions about this Framework Document Towards a National Migrant Integration Strategy 2015-2020 please send an email:

integration@gov.mt

www.socialdialogue.gov.mt/integration
www.integration.gov.mt