

Toolbox for local authorities on local action planning for LGBTQI+ migrants' inclusion



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@nclusion

Fostering inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants at local level

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D5.3 Toolbox for local authorities on local action planning for LGBTQI+ migrants' inclusion

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Introduction and objectives of the toolbox

1.1 Purpose and Function: Why a Specific Toolbox on the Reception of LGBTQI+ Migrants and Refugees for SOGIESC Reasons?

Individuals who seek asylum on the basis of **persecution related to sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or sex characteristics (SOGIESC)** often challenge deeply entrenched heteronormative and cisnormative social orders in their countries of origin. In contexts where conformity to dominant norms regarding sexuality and gender is strictly enforced, those who diverge from these expectations are frequently perceived as transgressors and, as a result, they face heightened risks of **discrimination, harassment, and violence**, with their **sexual orientation or gender identity** becoming central grounds for persecution.

Across the globe, many people are forced to flee precisely because of such persecution. For them, leaving their home country is not a choice but a necessary step to secure safety and survival. **Yet displacement does not automatically bring protection:** upon arrival in a host country, discrimination and vulnerability often persist in new forms.

Within European contexts, despite formal recognition in many legal systems that SOGIESC may constitute valid grounds for international protection, **LGBTQI+ asylum seekers** frequently continue to experience **specific vulnerabilities, prejudice and intolerance**. These may arise both at the **social level** and within **institutional settings**, including **reception systems and administrative procedures**, exposing them to ongoing **physical, psychological, and emotional harm**.

Research conducted as part of the @nclusion project across Cyprus, Greece, Germany, Poland, Spain, and Italy has highlighted **persistent gaps between legislation and practice at the local level**. Individuals with LGBTQI+ backgrounds frequently face compounded vulnerabilities arising from the intersection of migration status, SOGIESC, ethnicity, religion, language barriers, and socioeconomic precarity, as well as potential trauma linked to forced displacement. These intersecting factors can result in **unsafe reception environments, limited access to culturally competent health and psychological services, exposure to discrimination or violence within reception centres, and intrusive or inappropriate procedures for determining asylum claims**.

In response to these challenges and using the results of the good and bad practices exchange workshop conducted by the project partners, this toolbox aims to develop practical guidelines for local authorities on how to incorporate proposals and good practices into local action planning. The ultimate aim is to promote the **effective inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees in the local context** and provide both common horizontal guidelines applicable across contexts and country-specific guidance tailored to local structures and legal frameworks, making it accessible in digital format on the project website.

For the development of this toolbox, another useful tool has been the document “**Rainbow Cities in Action - LGBTI Policy Guidelines for Local Governments**”. These guidelines are developed in the framework of the Europe for Citizens project “**LGBTI policy Guidelines for Local Governments**” and

provide a comprehensive framework designed to support municipalities in developing and implementing inclusive local policies addressing the rights and needs of LGBTQI+ individuals. The guidelines are structured around **four intersectional policy strands** – responsibility and accountability, awareness and education, access and participation, and visibility and representation – then applied across **thirteen policy fields**, including health, employment, social services, cultural diversity and migration, safety, and public space management. By combining these transversal principles with sector-specific policy areas, the document proposes a structured approach that allows municipalities to assess existing policies, identify gaps, and develop targeted interventions addressing the diverse realities of LGBTQI+ communities. Importantly for the purposes of the @nclusion toolbox, the guidelines also recognise the intersection between sexual and gender diversity and migration and include recommendations such as ensuring safe accommodation for LGBTQI+ migrants, providing specialised legal and psychological support, facilitating access to healthcare services including gender-affirming treatments, training staff working in refugee reception systems, and supporting NGOs and community initiatives that work with LGBTQI+ migrants. The document also highlights the importance of preventing violence in reception facilities and promoting inclusive practices that respect gender identity and family configurations.

In this context, a specific toolbox is necessary to translate **research findings and policy recommendations** into **operational guidance for local authorities** and actors responsible for reception and integration. The toolbox offers a methodological framework designed to support the creation of **Local Action Plans** through participatory processes led by **Local Working Groups**, enabling local actors to identify gaps, design inclusive measures, and implement practices that safeguard the dignity, privacy, and rights of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees. It emphasises the importance of sensitive, non-intrusive approaches grounded in an understanding of the complex and heterogeneous experiences of LGBTQI+ individuals, while recognising that **legal frameworks alone are insufficient without adequate local implementation**.

This toolbox assumes that effective inclusion requires attention to **intersectionality** and that participation by affected communities and civil society is essential for designing responsive measures. It seeks to suggest the use of **practical instruments** — such as checklists, templates, and guidance on ethical and operational standards — allowing local actors to convert principles of protection and inclusion into concrete, actionable measures within their specific contexts.

1.2 Target of the Toolbox

This toolbox is intended as a **cross-cutting resource for local authorities on how to incorporate proposals and good practices in local action planning in order to promote the effective inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants in their local context**. It aims to provide **practical guidance and methodological support** across multiple sectors and professional roles, fostering a shared understanding of the specific needs and vulnerabilities faced by LGBTQI+ migrants. It equips stakeholders with the tools to **identify barriers to inclusion, to reduce discrimination, and to promote safety, dignity, and well-being in reception and integration processes**.

Furthermore, the toolbox targets not only professional actors but also the structures and mechanisms through which services are delivered, encouraging the establishment of inclusive operational practices, standardized procedures, and collaborative networks at the local level: in fact, its primary purpose is to **support these actors in the co-creation of Local Action Plans led by Local Working Groups that**

improve the inclusion and well-being of LGBTQI+ migrants, including those seeking asylum on SOGIESC grounds. By providing a shared methodological framework and practical operational tools to be used across Europe, the toolbox enables local stakeholders to identify vulnerabilities and coordinate services that are culturally competent and sensitive to the specific needs of LGBTQI+ individuals. **Rather than presenting a rigid model, the toolbox is designed as a guiding framework that allows for adaptation to the particular legal, social, and institutional context of each partner country.**

It seeks to **facilitate collaboration across different sectors**, encourage the development of locally relevant and feasible interventions, and translate the principles of non-discrimination, privacy, and dignity into everyday practices within reception and integration services. In doing so, it becomes not only a reference document, but also a practical instrument for action, guiding partners through the process of **co-designing policies and measures that are responsive to foster the social inclusion and effective integration of LGBTQI+ migrants.**

Regulatory analysis and critical issues at European level

2.1 The common European framework: brief analysis

In the evolution of the international refugee protection system, **the recognition of sexual orientation and gender identity as grounds of persecution is relatively recent**. The 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol contain no explicit reference to sexual and gender minorities, and for decades early cases involving LGBTQI+ applicants were therefore subsumed under political or religious grounds¹. Within an increasingly complex and politicised asylum policy context, domestic jurisdictions started granting international protection – including refugee status – to SOGI asylum claimants in the early 1980s, under the “**particular social group**” (PSG) ground: this development gradually, but very slowly, took place across other jurisdictions in Europe and around the world².

But it was only in 2008 that the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) clarified its position on LGBTQI+-related asylum claims: at first, it issued a “**Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity**”³, subsequently replaced by the 2012 “**Guidelines on International Protection no. 9**”⁴. They are still the only official and authoritative UNHCR document addressed to Member States and regional authorities on asylum claims based on SOGIESC grounds. They are based on standards that emerged during the **2010 UNHCR Roundtable**⁵ on the issue of asylum seekers persecuted for their sexual orientation or gender identity, considered a crucial moment in the development of the first international protection policies for LGBTQI+ persons.

Although by 2008 many countries across the world already granted refugee status to SOGI asylum claimants within the scope of membership of a PSG ground, the UNHCR Guidance set out fundamental principles such as: the **right to self-define one's identity**, the **legitimacy of not having to hide or renounce one's sexuality or gender**, and the **need not to generalize the experiences of LGBTQI+ people**, especially on the basis of gender. Furthermore, they recognize that not all LGBTQI+ people must

¹ Tim Sahliu, Braimah, *Divorcing sexual orientation from religion and politics: Utilizing the convention grounds of religion and political opinion in same-sex oriented asylum claims*, International Journal of Refugee Law, vol. 27, no. 3, 2015, pp. 481-497.

² Douglas, McDonald-Norman, *Freedom to Be: Assessing the Claims of LGBTQ Asylum Seekers*, Socio-Legal Review, vol. 10, 2014, pp. 35 - 52.

³ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*, Geneva, 2008. [UNHCR Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity](#)

⁴ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), *Guidelines on International Protection No. 9: Claims to Refugee Status based on Sexual Orientation and/or Gender Identity*, Geneva, 2012. [Guidelines on international protection no. 9.](#)

⁵ *Summary Conclusions: Asylum-Seekers and Refugees Seeking Protection on Account of their Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity*, Expert roundtable organized by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Geneva, Switzerland, 30 September - 1 October 2010. [Asylum-Seekers and Refugees Seeking Protection](#)

have already suffered persecution in order to request protection, and clarify that **persecution can be physical, psychological, social, or systemic**⁶. An **intersectional perspective** is also introduced, recognizing more complex situations of exclusion. In fact, it states:

Although being fired is not generally considered persecution – even if discriminatory or unfair – if an individual can demonstrate that their LGBTI identity makes it highly unlikely that they will obtain any type of employment in their country of origin, this may constitute persecution.

Other than that, the UNHCR Guidelines stipulate that **territorial commissions should never request photographic or video evidence of a private nature, nor resort to medical, physical, or psychological tests to confirm the applicant's sexual orientation**. Prior to 2012, the absence of common guidelines left room for national authorities to use highly intrusive tools that violated human dignity to “verify” the applicant's sexual identity.

While the UNHCR's efforts in this field are commendable, **there are still strong signs that the SOGI dimensions of asylum claims are treated in a particularly insensitive way in many countries, often inappropriately at legal, cultural and social levels**.

At the international level, therefore, recognition of refugee status on the basis of homo-, bi-, or transphobic persecution remained for a long time largely dependent on the discretion of individual states⁷.

At European level, the progressive deepening of cooperation in the field of asylum led to the development of a more coherent and harmonised framework. Politically launched in 1999, the **Common European Asylum System (CEAS)** was conceived as a mechanism to establish common minimum standards among EU Member States concerning the qualification of refugees, asylum procedures, and reception conditions. Its overarching objectives are fairness and effectiveness: ensuring that individuals in need of protection are treated according to shared standards, while promoting consistency and responsibility across national systems.

The inclusion of LGBTQI+ and SOGI-related rights within the CEAS did not occur from the outset but developed progressively through legislative reform and judicial clarification: a decisive turning point came in 2004 with the adoption of the first **Council Directive (Directive 2004/83/EC)**⁸. For the first time at EU level, in the Article 10 of the Directive it was explicitly **recognised that sexual orientation may constitute a characteristic defining a PSG within the meaning of refugee law**. This marked a fundamental shift from earlier reliance on implicit interpretation toward formal legal recognition, and although text did not fully articulate gender identity as a distinct concept, it opened the way for broader protection and aligned EU asylum law more closely with evolving international human rights standards. It was only in 2011, within the recast of the Directive (Directive 2011/95/EU⁹), that gender-related aspects were further clarified, specifying that **gender identity must also be duly considered when**

⁶ LaViolette, Nicole, *UNHCR Guidance Note on Refugee Claims Relating to Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity: a Critical Commentary*, International Journal of Refugee Law, vol. 22, no. 2, July 2010, pp. 173 – 208.

⁷ Braimah, *Divorcing sexual orientation from religion and politics*, cit.

⁸ Council Directive 2004/83/EC on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees, Official Journal of the European Union, 2004-[COUNCIL DIRECTIVE 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004](#)

⁹ Directive 2011/95/EU (Recast Qualification Directive), Official Journal of the European Union. [Directive 2011/95/eu of the european parliament and of the council](#)

determining membership of a PSG. This amendment represented an important step in consolidating protection for individuals fleeing persecution on SOGIESC grounds and in addressing previously inconsistent national practices across Europe.

In parallel, within the CEAS framework, also the **Reception Conditions Directive** (Directive 2013/33/EU¹⁰) plays a central role in defining the standards of living and treatment that EU Member States must ensure for applicants for international protection: its core purpose is to guarantee that all applicants are afforded a dignified standard of living and comparable reception conditions across the EU, thereby reducing disparities that might otherwise lead to secondary movements between Member States. Although the Directive does not explicitly list sexual orientation, gender identity or sex characteristics as standalone vulnerability categories, it is highly relevant for SOGI-based asylum requests for several reasons.

First, many LGBTQI+ asylum seekers have experienced violence, trauma, family rejection, sexual assault, or state-sponsored persecution in their countries of origin: the Directive's provisions on vulnerability and **access to physical and mental healthcare** create a legal basis for ensuring that such trauma is recognised and adequately addressed during reception.

Second, **accommodation standards** are particularly important in SOGI cases: LGBTQI+ applicants may face harassment, violence, forced outing, or re-traumatisation in shared reception facilities, and the Directive's requirement to guarantee safety, dignity, and appropriate living conditions provides a normative framework to argue for alternative housing arrangements, privacy safeguards, or transfers when necessary.

Third, the Directive reinforces procedural fairness indirectly: inadequate reception conditions, lack of privacy, or psychological distress can affect an applicant's ability to present their claim coherently. **Ensuring dignified and safe reception conditions** therefore contributes to the overall fairness and effectiveness of SOGI asylum procedures.

Despite the progress achieved within the CEAS, significant challenges remain in the practical handling of SOGIESC-based asylum claims. **Credibility assessment** continues to be a particularly sensitive issue as it is proven that in many cases the focus shifts from evaluating the risk of persecution to questioning whether the applicant is "truly" LGBTQI+, leading at times to stereotypical assumptions or inappropriate methods of proof. Although European jurisprudence has rejected intrusive practices and the so-called "**discretion requirement**", according to which applicants could avoid persecution by concealing their identity, elements of these approaches can still influence administrative reasoning. The **personal interview**, a central moment in the asylum procedure, may also be shaped by implicit expectations about how sexual orientation or gender identity should be experienced and narrated. Research has shown that decision-makers sometimes rely on **Western identity models** or **expect expressions of shame, secrecy, or internal conflict**, revealing that structural biases can persist despite formal legal safeguards¹¹.

At the same time, while the Reception Conditions Directive establishes obligations regarding vulnerability assessments, dignity, and access to healthcare, implementation at national and local level

¹⁰ Directive 2013/33/EU laying down standards for the reception of applicants for international protection (Reception Conditions Directive), [Official Journal of the European Union](#).

¹¹ Berg, L., & Millbank, J., *Constructing the Personal Narratives of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Asylum Claimants*, Journal of Refugee Studies, vol. 22 no. 2, 2009, pp. 195–223.

remains uneven. SOGIESC-related risks are not always adequately identified, and reception environments may fail to ensure privacy and safety. This highlights a broader issue: although European law provides a solid normative framework, its effectiveness ultimately depends on how it is translated into everyday practices.

ILGA Europe also reiterates the position of UNHCR as expressed in their “Guidelines on International Protection No. 9”, calling on governments, legislators, decision-makers and the judiciary, as well as UNHCR staff to **ensure full and explicitly inclusion of trans and intersex people**, and add the ground of **gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics** to the draft proposals¹².

Legal recognition alone does not guarantee protection: **greater awareness of the specific vulnerabilities of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers is still needed to bridge the gap between standards and lived experience**, and that’s why this Toolbox aims to be an instrument for local authorities, who play a key role in ensuring that European principles are reflected in everyday practices within reception, housing, social services, and integration measures.

2.2 UNHCR and DSSH: critical issues in asylum application assessment procedures

A critical reflection on SOGIESC-based asylum procedures must engage with two key reference frameworks: the UNHCR Guidelines on International Protection No. 9 (2012) and the DSSH (Difference, Stigma, Shame, Harm) model. Both were developed with the aim of strengthening the protection of LGBTQI+ applicants and reducing the use of intrusive, stereotypical or degrading assessment practices. At the same time, their interpretation and practical application reveal structural tensions that remain highly relevant when analysing how asylum systems function in reality.

As stated before, the UNHCR Guidelines marked an important step in clarifying that claims based on sexual orientation and gender identity fall within the refugee definition and must be assessed with sensitivity to the particular risks faced by LGBTQI+ individuals. They explicitly rejected stereotypical assumptions, invasive questioning about intimate sexual practices, and the expectation that applicants provide explicit “proof” of their sexuality. They also took a clear position against so-called “**discretion reasoning**”, the idea that an applicant could avoid persecution by concealing their sexual orientation or gender identity upon return to their country of origin. This reasoning, later firmly rejected by the Court of Justice of the European Union, was recognised as incompatible with the core principles of refugee protection, since requiring concealment effectively demands the suppression of a fundamental aspect of identity.

Yet, despite formal prohibitions, discretion logic has not entirely disappeared: in some contexts, it re-emerges in subtler forms, for example when authorities minimise restrictions on self-expression or assume that an individual could live “quietly” without attracting attention.

A similar dynamic can be observed in **credibility assessment**: once sexual orientation and gender identity were recognised as legitimate grounds for protection, the focus of decision-making increasingly shifted toward determining whether the applicant was “genuinely” LGBTQI+. Earlier practices often relied on **highly sexualised representations and explicit questioning**, approaches that have since

¹² ILGA Europe, Policy Briefing on LGBTI Refugees and EU asylum legislation September 2021, p. 2. [Policy Briefing on LGBTI Refugees and EU asylum legislation](#)

been curtailed through jurisprudence and international guidance. However, the underlying challenge persists: how can decision-makers assess credibility without resorting to stereotypes or culturally specific expectations about how LGBTQI+ identities should be experienced and narrated?

The **DSSH model** was developed in response to this dilemma, proposing a structured but less intrusive way of conducting interviews. **By focusing on experiences of difference, stigma, shame and harm, it sought to move away from explicit sexual details and instead explore broader life experiences within heteronormative and transphobic environments.** The model has been recognised by UNHCR, recommended by the European Union Agency for Asylum, and adopted or referenced in several national contexts as a more humane approach to SOGIESC-based claims.

However, critical scholarship has highlighted that **even this model may generate new forms of standardisation.** The narrative it presupposes is largely grounded in Western understandings of sexual identity development, often reflecting experiences historically associated with gay men. While feelings of stigma or shame may indeed be part of many applicants' experiences, they are not universal or necessarily central to every person's self-understanding. When such elements are treated not as possible indicators but as implicit requirements, the model risks transforming from a flexible tool into a prescriptive template. Applicants whose life trajectories do not conform to this emotional script — due to cultural, social or personal differences — may find it more difficult to be perceived as credible.

In this sense, **both the UNHCR Guidelines and the DSSH model reveal an important paradox:** they were designed to protect applicants from degrading and stereotypical practices, and they have undoubtedly contributed to raising standards within asylum procedures; at the same time, when applied rigidly, they may inadvertently reinforce new normative expectations about how LGBTQI+ identities should be articulated. **The persistence of credibility-related challenges suggests that procedural tools alone cannot fully eliminate structural biases embedded within administrative systems.**

For Local Working Groups, engaging with these issues is essential not in order to question the legitimacy of existing frameworks, but to recognise their limits. Although asylum determination is primarily a national competence, local actors operate within reception and integration systems that interact closely with these procedures. Awareness of the structural pressures shaping credibility assessments, the legacy of discretion reasoning, and the potential constraints of models such as DSSH can inform local mitigation strategies. These may include trauma-informed support, careful preparation for interviews, professional training, and the creation of safe spaces where individuals can articulate their experiences without fear of judgment. Understanding these dynamics helps ensure that European and international standards are not only formally respected, but meaningfully translated into practices that acknowledge the complexity and diversity of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers' lives.

Good practices that can be replicated at the local level

This chapter serves as a starting point for continuous learning and exchange across partner countries and presents **examples of initiatives that can inspire local authorities and stakeholders working on the inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants.**

The aim is not to propose fixed models, but to provide practical references that may support Local Working Groups in the development of Local Action Plans and in the design of locally adapted measures. WGs are encouraged to build on the examples presented here by identifying and strengthening existing initiatives within their own territories, while also documenting new practices that may emerge during the project.

For the purposes of this toolbox, a *good practice* can refer to different types of initiatives: a project, service, or policy already implemented; a pilot or local experiment; an informal protocol developed by institutions or organisations, or an established collaboration between public authorities and civil society actors.

3.1 Cyprus

Name of the initiative / good practice	HelpRefugeesWork (HRW) (online platform)
Type of intervention: (housing, legal, psychological, peer support, advocacy, capacity building, multi-agency, etc.); useful for classifying practices in the toolbox and allowing partners to quickly identify similar or complementary models.	HRW is an initiative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Office in Cyprus, in collaboration with Cyprus Refugee Council (CyRC) ¹³ , and is implemented across Cyprus (nationwide) ¹⁴ . The HRW scheme provides employment-specific support and targets people who have been granted international protection (IP) ¹⁵ - referring either to refugee status or subsidiary protection (note: among those benefiting from the scheme, are many individuals who identify as members of the LGBTQIA+ community).
Objectives: the main objectives of the good practice model (integration, health and	HRW is an online platform which aims to support the integration of refugees in Cyprus's labor market, by connecting job-seeking IP holders with employers, institutions running vocational education

¹³HelpRefugeesWork (2025) *About HelpRefugeesWork*. Available at: <https://www.helprefugeeswork.org/en/about> [Accessed 2 March 2026]

¹⁴ Ibid

¹⁵HelpRefugeesWork (2025) *Candidates*.

Available at: <https://www.helprefugeeswork.org/en/content/candidates> [Accessed 2 March 2026]

psychological support, language learning, housing) and the degree of alignment with the objective of the @nclusion project.	and training (VET) programs, as well as individuals and organizations committed to promoting social participation, inclusion and diversity¹⁶. As UNHCR Cyprus's implementing partner, CyRC staff provide hands-on support and guidance to IP holders, employers and training providers - ranging from assistance to register on the platform to securing successful matches¹⁷. The team also facilitates targeted matches (connecting the 'right' people with the 'right' opportunities), acting as mediators to streamline the process. HRW's services are free of charge
Duration and implementation status: (ongoing/completed/experimental/pilot) useful for distinguishing established practices from experiments and assessing their sustainability over time.	Ongoing. Since its launch in 2018, HRW has been a long-term support scheme which continues to play a key role in facilitating job and training matches across the country¹⁸.
Level of replicability: assess whether the model could be replicated and transferred to other national/regional/local contexts based on the human resources, skills, and partnerships required for its operation.	Medium to high replicability. The HRW scheme shows strong potential for adaptability and transferability to support LGBTQIA+ migrants, as well as different legal and social contexts in partner countries. Its core model - connecting beneficiaries of IP with employers, training providers, and mentorship opportunities - is based on practical, needs-focused support, rather than highly country-specific structures, making it flexible for customization. HRW's emphasis on inclusivity and diversity is a key asset for adaptation. The scheme already supports individuals from the LGBTQIA+ community. This suggests that processes, outreach and support mechanisms can be adjusted to meet the specific challenges LGBTQIA+ migrants/refugees often face, such as discrimination, social marginalization or limited access to safe networks. Tailored mentoring, employer sensitization and targeted matching strategies could further enhance inclusivity for this group. The platform-based approach - offering registration, matching and follow-up guidance - can be adapted across different legal and

¹⁶ HelpRefugeesWork (n 1)

¹⁷ HelpRefugeesWork (2025) How to Support. Available at: <https://www.helprefugeeswork.org/en/how-to-support> [Accessed 2 March 2026]

¹⁸ HelpRefugeesWork (n 3)

	administrative contexts. While accreditation, licensing or documentation procedures differ between countries, HRW's method of practical guidance, advocacy and mediation remains broadly applicable. For example, CyRc staff (working on the HRW platform) currently assist participants in navigating qualification recognition and employment requirements. In partner countries with similar barriers, the scheme could provide locally relevant support, including translation services, legal guidance and connections to community-based support networks. Successful transfer requires attention to the socio-legal context of each country. Variations in labor laws, social protections, anti-discrimination legislation and recognition of LGBTQIA+ rights may influence implementation. Partner countries with stronger protections may need fewer structural adjustments, while those with limited legal recognition or higher social stigma may require additional measures, such as safe recruitment channels, confidentiality safeguards and targeted awareness-raising for employers. In conclusion, HRW's principles of practical support, inclusivity and active facilitation make it broadly adaptable. With appropriate contextualization to legal frameworks, cultural norms and the needs of LGBTQIA+ migrants/refugees, the model can be successfully transferred and customized to promote equitable access to employment and training opportunities in diverse partner countries.
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3.2 Germany

Name of the initiative / good practice	Queer Safety – A series of workshops and lectures (Queere Sicherheit: Räume schaffen, Hass bekämpfen) Good practices 2025. (2025.) https://www.rainbowcities.com/wp-content/uploads/2025/10/Good-Practices-2025_final.pdf#page=55&zoom=100,44,78 (Source: Rainbow Cities– Good Practices 2025, page 57)
Type of intervention: (housing, legal, psychological, peer support, advocacy, capacity building, multi-agency, etc.); useful for	• Capacity building • Peer support and community-based activities • Advocacy and awareness raising • Protection and prevention • Multi-agency

classifying practices in the toolbox and allowing partners to quickly identify similar or complementary models.	• Legal support The practice operates as a structured municipality level workshop series (one session per month) bringing together LGBTQIA+ people and allies with civil society as well as local police, and municipal administration bodies. The workshops focus on practical empowerment tools, community dialogues and institutional cooperation, with regular and low-barrier spaces where LGBTQIA+ people and allies can co-develop strategies against hate and discrimination.
Objectives: the main objectives of the good practice model (integration, health and psychological support, language learning, housing) and the degree of alignment with the objective of the @nclusion project.	• Provide and build safer spaces for LGBTQI+ people across different social environments such as sports, education, nightlife, church and family. • Provide affected individuals structured platforms to voice experiences and needs. • Co-develop local strategies to prevent and combat homophobia and queerphobia violence. • Provide and improve knowledge of affected individual about reporting and legal pathways (criminal charges). • Community empowerment through practical safety strategies across everyday settings. • Enhance dialogue, trust and cooperation between the LGBTQIA+ community, police and municipal administration • Support social inclusion and stabilisation pathways for exiled LGBTQI+ individuals.
Duration and implementation status: (ongoing/complete/experimental/pilot) useful for distinguishing established practices from experiments and assessing their sustainability over time.	Start: May 2025 End: November 2025 Nature: Municipal workshop series initiative (not pilot) “Queere Sicherheit” was officially launched by the city of Braunschweig in May 2025, its implementation was structured, cost-free, monthly based workshops that ran until November 2025. Each month was dedicated to a specific social environment e.g., sports, education, nightlife, church and family; Delivered in cooperation with civil society, police and municipal stakeholders. This initiative was a clearly defined municipal programme format, supported by the city and the local LSBTIQ+ office. This cross-sector collaboration indicates a strong potential continuation or replication, indicating medium to long-term sustainability beyond the original programme cycle.

Level of replicability: assess whether the model could be replicated and transferred to other national/regional/local contexts based on the human resources, skills, and partnerships required for its operation.	Medium to high replicability, depending on local context. The model is transferable to other municipalities or local organisations provided that: • a minimum ecosystem of relevant actors exist, that includes specialised NGOs, municipalities, refugee organisations and civil society partners • municipalities can allocate or repurpose a physical space; • formal cooperation agreements are established between public authorities and civil society; • at least one or more LGBTQIA+ advocacy organisation is available as local partner; • Police or public representatives are willing to engage in dialogue; • Basic facilitation capacity is available • Accessible venues can be secured; The approach is resource light, compared to permanent service hubs. It does not require dedicated infrastructure or high financial investments. Approach is highly adaptable and scalable. Cities may replicate it as a 3-4 pilot workshops series or even integrate it into city Pride programming. This practice is particularly suitable for urban contexts seeking to establish a visible, coordinated support infrastructure for LGBTQIA+ migrants and refugees, combining protection, inclusion, and community-building. In addition, it is suitable for municipalities seeking to strengthening community trust and local prevention through community empowerment and cooperation that builds practical safety strategy across everyday settings.
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3.3 Greece

Name of the initiative / good practice	ACCMR- Athens Coordination Center for Migrant & Refugee issues
Type of intervention: (housing, legal, psychological, peer support, advocacy, capacity building, multi-	Three working groups facilitated by civic society organisations, migrant and refugee communities in Greece. • Job Consulting

agency, etc.); useful for classifying practices in the toolbox and allowing partners to quickly identify similar or complementary models.	• Education • Promote social inclusion and community participation ACCMR functions as a coordination platform bringing together municipal/services, NGO's, migrant and refugee communities, and international organizations in order to improve service delivery and integration outcomes for migrants and refugees. Each working group holds its own dedicated meetings, allowing for focused discussion and thematic coordination among relevant stakeholders. During these meetings, needs are systematically identified and mapped according to the specific thematic focus and priorities of each working group
Objectives: the main objectives of the good practice model (integration, health and psychological support, language learning, housing) and the degree of alignment with the objective of the @nclusion project.	• Facilitating cooperation between the City of Athens and civil society, international organizations and central government and enabling effective integration policies. Meetings bring together municipal authorities, migrant communities and civil society organisations, fostering inclusive dialogue and participatory decision-making. It also conducts systematic mapping of services and needs and ACCMR supports social events organised by society organisations, migrants and refugee communities • Support social inclusion and for LGBTQI+ individuals.
Duration and implementation status: (ongoing/completed/experimental/pilot) useful for distinguishing established practices from experiments and assessing their sustainability over time.	Status: Ongoing Start: 2017 Nature: Institutionalized municipal coordination mechanism
Level of replicability: assess whether the model could be replicated and transferred to other national/regional/local contexts based on the human resources, skills, and partnerships required for its operation.	Minimum to high replicability, depending on the local governance framework and stakeholder ecosystem The ACCMR model is transferable to other municipalities provided that: • There is political commitment from local authorities to support structured coordination mechanisms • A basic ecosystem of NGOs, migrant-led organisations and service providers exists • Formal coordination staff and clear communication channels are ensured

- While the model requires institutional support and administrative capacity, it is adaptable and scalable.

3.4 Italy

Name of the initiative / good practice	<i>CIDAS – LGBTQIA+ Dedicated Reception within the SAI of Bologna</i> ¹⁹
Type of intervention: (housing, legal, psychological, peer support, advocacy, capacity building, multi-agency, etc.); useful for classifying practices in the toolbox and allowing partners to quickly identify similar or complementary models.	• Housing and safe accommodation for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection; Legal, health and psychological support; • Peer support (presence of a peer operator and self/mutual-help groups); • Capacity building and staff training • Social and labour market integration; • Personalised case management through the PPAI (Personalised Reception and Integration Plan). The practice brings together municipal services and specialised NGOs in a shared physical space to provide coordinated support specifically to Trans people experiencing multiple forms of vulnerability, including migrants and refugees.
Objectives: the main objectives of the good practice model (integration, health and psychological support, language learning, housing) and the degree of alignment with the objective of the @nclusion project.	To provide a safe, non-discriminatory and empowering reception pathway for LGBTQIA+ migrants and refugees, with particular attention to trans persons and individuals exposed to intersecting forms of marginalisation (e.g., homelessness, sex work, trafficking, health vulnerability). More specifically, the model aims to: • Guarantee safe housing conditions through dedicated reception places (43 within the SAI of Bologna); • Ensure access to specialised healthcare, including physical and psychological support and gender-affirming transition pathways; • Provide legal assistance in asylum and civil status procedures; • Promote labour market integration and housing autonomy, as demonstrated by the high number of beneficiaries exiting with stable employment contracts and independent accommodation; • Strengthen individual agency through the co-construction of a Personalised Reception and Integration Plan (PPAI), allowing

¹⁹ [CIDAS-società e diritti](#)

	beneficiaries to actively participate in defining and monitoring their objectives; • Build inclusive professional practices through continuous staff training and collaboration with specialised LGBTQIA+ organisations.
Duration and implementation status: (ongoing/completed/experimental/pilot) useful for distinguishing established practices from experiments and assessing their sustainability over time.	Status: Ongoing Start: 2018 Nature: Institutionalised local initiative embedded within the public reception system (SAI – Sistema di Accoglienza e Integrazione), implemented by a third-sector social cooperative (CIDAS) in formal partnership with the Municipality of Bologna and specialised LGBTQIA+ organisations. The dedicated LGBTQIA+ reception pathway has been active since 2018 within the SAI framework in Bologna. The earlier pilot project <i>Casa Caterina</i> represented the first experimental phase, which led to the development of Guidelines for the creation of reception houses addressed to trans* asylum seekers and beneficiaries of protection under the “Rise the Difference” project.
Level of replicability: assess whether the model could be replicated and transferred to other national/regional/local contexts based on the human resources, skills, and partnerships required for its operation.	• High potential for replicability, particularly in contexts where local authorities are willing to cooperate with specialised third-sector organisations. Key enabling factors include: • The presence of a strong partnership with LGBTQIA+ organisations (e.g., MIT), ensuring specialised expertise in health, legal and peer-support dimensions; • A structured governance mechanism (e.g., steering group for pre-assessment of admissions) to manage cohabitation and vulnerability assessments; • Investment in continuous staff training to guarantee non-judgmental and competent practices; • The use of a personalised planning tool (PPAI), which can be adapted to different administrative frameworks.

3.5 Poland

Name of the initiative / good practice	“Razem w Polsce – Integracja bez Granic” (Together in Poland – Integration without Borders) https://www.lambdawarszawa.org/newsy-i-inicjatywy/bezplatna-pomoc-psychologiczna
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Objectives: the main objectives of the good practice model (integration, health and psychological support, language learning, housing) and the degree of alignment with the objective of the @nclusion project.	The main objective of the project is to provide psychological and legal support to LGBTQI+ migrants in adaptation to new environment, prevent exclusion and discrimination and foster development of new skills and knowledge on their rights as migrants and workers. The project is highly aligned with the goals of the @nclusion project.
Duration and implementation status: (ongoing/completed/experimental/pilot) useful for distinguishing established practices from experiments and assessing their sustainability over time.	Ongoing (since 2025).
Level of replicability: assess whether the model could be replicated and transferred to other national/regional/local contexts based on the human resources, skills, and partnerships required for its operation.	The municipalities that are participating in the @nclusion project, can replicate the practices and actions implemented in the frames of the project in the local context. The model is transferable to the municipalities provided that: • The municipality allocates space for the consultations and trainings accessible for the LGBTQI+ migrants; • The municipality appoints specialists responsible for coordinating the support programme and employment of the psychologists (ENG, PL, UA, RU) and legal advisors, translators, communication specialists.

3.6 Spain

Name of the initiative / good practice	Local multi-agency governance and capacity-building model for LGBTQI+ migrant inclusion (Alzira)
Type of intervention: (housing, legal, psychological, peer support, advocacy,	• Multi-agency coordination • Capacity building • Local policy development • Advocacy and awareness raising

capacity building, multi-agency, etc.); useful for classifying practices in the toolbox and allowing partners to quickly identify similar or complementary models.	• Protection-oriented intervention for vulnerable groups The practice operates as a structured municipal governance model that strengthens institutional capacities and intersectoral cooperation to incorporate LGBTQI+ migrant inclusion into local policies, services and community initiatives. It is based on the consolidation of a participatory local body (Mesa de la Convivencia), reinforced institutional training pathways, and coordinated collaboration between municipal departments, civil society organisations and regional public services.
Objectives: the main objectives of the good practice model (integration, health and psychological support, language learning, housing) and the degree of alignment with the objective of the @nclusion project.	• Strengthen institutional competences of municipal staff (social services, equality units, local police) in diversity, gender identity, and migration-related vulnerabilities. • Reduce structural and procedural barriers faced by LGBTQI+ migrants in accessing public services. • Integrate LGBTQI+ and intersectional perspectives into local strategic planning, including the Municipal Equality Plan and the ongoing Municipal LGTBIQ+ Plan. • Establish stable cooperation mechanisms between the municipality and specialised NGOs. • Promote inclusive community environments through coordinated public initiatives (e.g. Migration Week, LGTBIQ+ Week). • Develop evidence-based local planning through participatory questionnaires and needs assessment processes.
Duration and implementation status: (ongoing/completed/experimental/pilot) useful for distinguishing established practices from experiments and assessing their sustainability over time.	Status: Ongoing and progressively consolidated Nature: Institutionalised municipal governance model (not a pilot initiative) The model builds upon an already existing participatory body (Mesa de la Convivencia), which has progressively integrated LGBTQI+ migrant inclusion into its scope of action in response to evolving local needs. Key components include: • Structured training activities addressed to municipal staff, local police, NGOs and LGTBIQ+ associations. • Active cooperation with specialised organisations such as Cruz Roja, CEPAIM and the local LGTBIQ+ association Gailles. • Coordination with regional-level public programmes such as PANGEA and ORIENTA (Generalitat Valenciana).

	Participatory diagnostic processes supporting the development of local equality and LGTBIQ+ policy instruments
Level of replicability: assess whether the model could be replicated and transferred to other national/regional/local contexts based on the human resources, skills, and partnerships required for its operation.	High, subject to political commitment and minimum coordination capacity. The model can be transferred to other municipalities provided that: - A participatory or consultative local body is established or activated. - Formal or informal cooperation mechanisms are created between local authorities and specialised civil society organisations. - Basic institutional training on LGBTIQ+ and migration issues is delivered to frontline staff. - Inclusion objectives are integrated into local planning instruments. - Regional public resources are mapped and connected to local referral pathways. - The approach does not require significant financial investment or dedicated infrastructure. Its sustainability relies primarily on structured coordination, institutional engagement and intersectoral cooperation.

The good practices identified across partner countries reveal both shared priorities and context-specific approaches in addressing the inclusion of LGBTIQ+ migrants at the local level. **While the initiatives differ in structure and scope, several common patterns emerge.** First, many practices rely on **multi-agency cooperation** between municipalities, civil society organisations and specialised LGBTIQ+ groups, highlighting the importance of coordinated governance structures in responding to complex intersectional vulnerabilities. For example, the Italian case focuses on specialised reception and personalised support pathways, providing safe accommodation, legal assistance and health services for LGBTIQ+ asylum seekers, particularly trans individuals.

In contrast, the Greek and Spanish experiences emphasise institutional coordination and participatory governance mechanisms, such as municipal working groups or local consultation platforms that bring together authorities, NGOs and migrant communities to identify needs and design inclusive policies. Other practices, such as those identified in Germany and Poland, highlight the role of capacity building, awareness-raising and psychosocial support, focusing on strengthening professional competences, combating discrimination and facilitating integration through training, community dialogue and access to specialised services.

Another similarity concerns the **central role of safe spaces and tailored support services**, and at the same time differences emerge in the **level of institutionalisation** of these practices: in some countries they are embedded within municipal policies or national reception frameworks, while in others they remain primarily **civil-society-driven initiatives** supported by NGOs.

Finally, the practices vary in their target focus, with some initiatives prioritising immediate protection and reception conditions, while others concentrate more strongly on long-term integration measures, such as access to employment, community participation and social inclusion.

Creation and operation of Local Working Groups (WGs)

Within the framework of the @nclusion project, **Local Working Groups (WGs) function as a central mechanism for translating the knowledge and recommendations generated throughout the project into concrete policy actions.** Established in all 6 countries of the project, **their main purpose is to establish collaborative spaces in which local authorities, civil society organisations, and community representatives can jointly contribute to the development of Local Action Plans aimed at strengthening the inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants.** Through this process, the project seeks to ensure that migrant integration policies better reflect the specific needs of individuals who experience discrimination at the intersection of migration status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and sex characteristics (SOGIESC).

Each partner country will establish at least one Working Group, coordinated by the national project partners and involving representatives of municipalities, migrant and refugee organisations, LGBTQI+ associations, civil society organisations, and other relevant actors working in the areas of migration, social inclusion, equality, or human rights, in order to foster sustainable networks and collaborative practices that can continue to support the inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees in the long term. The participation of individuals with lived experience as LGBTQI+ migrants is strongly encouraged in order to ensure that the planning process reflects real needs and lived experiences, rather than relying exclusively on institutional perspectives.

The work of the WGs will take place over an extended period that combines participatory planning with monitoring and evaluation activities. During the initial phase, members will meet regularly – both online and, where possible, face-to-face – to jointly analyse local contexts and co-develop Local Action Plans. Depending on the priorities emerging from each national and local context, the WGs may focus on one or more areas of integration, such as access to housing, labour market inclusion, healthcare and psychological support, social participation, or the strengthening of links between migrant communities and host societies.

A central principle guiding the work of the WGs is the recognition that LGBTQI+ communities are not homogeneous and that policies based on a “one-size-fits-all” approach risk reproducing forms of marginalisation rather than addressing them. LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees may experience **multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination** related to gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, migration status, or socio-economic conditions: for this reason, the participatory planning process promoted through the WGs seeks to incorporate an intersectional perspective capable of reflecting the diversity of experiences within LGBTQI+ communities and ensuring that the resulting policy proposals are inclusive and context-sensitive.

Methodologically, the work of the Working Groups follows a structured participatory approach organised into four main phases:

The **first phase** focuses on the formal constitution of the WGs and the definition of the collaborative framework. During this stage, members are identified and invited to participate, an initial meeting is organised to clarify objectives and timelines, and a formal constitution document is signed to establish the shared commitment of participants. A shared digital workspace is also created to facilitate documentation and communication throughout the process.

The **second phase** consists of a participatory diagnosis of the local situation. During this stage, Working Group members collectively analyse the current conditions affecting the inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees in their respective territories. This includes mapping existing services and resources, identifying structural barriers and gaps in protection, and gathering qualitative insights through participatory activities such as focus groups and collaborative digital tools. The outcome of this phase is a concise diagnostic report that summarises the main challenges and opportunities identified at the local level.

Building on this analysis, the **third phase** focuses on the co-creation of the Local Action Plans. Members of the WGs define concrete objectives, identify priority areas of intervention, and develop specific actions designed to address the challenges highlighted during the diagnostic stage. This phase also includes the identification of responsibilities, potential partnerships, and available resources necessary for implementation. The Local Action Plans are drafted using a common template provided within the project framework, ensuring a degree of coherence across countries while allowing sufficient flexibility to adapt measures to local contexts.

The **final phase** involves the validation and evaluation of the Local Action Plans. Once finalised, the plans are presented to relevant local institutions and stakeholders for endorsement and future implementation. At the same time, the WGs evaluate the participatory process itself, collecting feedback from participants and assessing the effectiveness of the collaborative methodology adopted. The results of these processes will be consolidated into National Final Reports, which will document the outcomes achieved, the challenges encountered, and recommendations for strengthening implementation in the future.

Importantly, the role of the WGs does not end with the drafting of the Local Action Plans: **members will continue to meet during an additional monitoring period in order to review progress in implementation, identify potential shortcomings, and propose adjustments or improvements where necessary.** This extended phase of monitoring and reflection allows the plans to evolve in response to emerging needs and ensures that they remain relevant beyond the lifespan of the project itself.

In order to ensure consistency and accountability across the different national contexts, the implementation of the WGs will also be monitored through a set of common success indicators defined at project level. **A key expected outcome of this process is the development and validation of six Local Action Plans and at least seven documented meetings per WG.** Particular attention will also be paid to the inclusiveness of the WGs themselves, ensuring balanced participation across gender identities, sexual orientations and migration backgrounds, and promoting the meaningful involvement of actors representing diverse communities.

Finally, the effectiveness and perceived value of the process will be assessed through stakeholder feedback, with **the objective of reaching a satisfaction level of at least 80% among participants involved in the WGs.** These indicators will contribute to the overall evaluation of the activity and will inform the National Reports produced at the end of the project.

How to develop Local Action Plans at national or local level

This section provides a **methodological framework** to support **project partners** and **Local Working Groups (WGs)** in the development of **Local Action Plans**: its purpose is to help translate the **policy principles** and analytical insights presented in the previous chapters of the toolbox into **concrete measures** that can be implemented at the **local level**.

The chapter therefore functions as a **bridge between policy analysis and operational planning**: while earlier sections of the toolbox examine the broader **legal, institutional, and social context** shaping the reception and inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants, this section focuses on how local actors can transform that knowledge into coordinated actions, services, and policies adapted to their territorial context.

Rather than proposing rigid models, the tools presented here are designed to be **flexible and adaptable**. For this reason, the chapter offers **practical guidance and planning tools** that can be adjusted by partners according to their **national and local circumstances**. They will be useful for WGs as they are expected to analyse **local challenges**, identify priorities, and develop feasible actions intended to ensure that **Local Action Plans respond to concrete needs** and reflect a plurality of perspectives, including those of **organisations working directly with migrant and LGBTQI+ communities**.

The development of Local Action Plans should therefore follow a **structured yet participatory process**: this process includes analysing the national and local context, identifying institutional actors and services, assessing existing gaps or barriers, and designing targeted actions capable of improving current policies and practices. The operational tools presented in this chapter – such as context analysis frameworks, stakeholder mapping exercises, needs assessments, and action planning templates – are intended to guide this process and facilitate coordination among stakeholders.

Finally, the **operational tools and checklists** included in this section are intended to support local authorities and partners in translating policy priorities into **concrete and measurable actions**. These tools are designed to be **developed and adapted by Local Working Groups**, or provided as **guiding templates**, with the objective of encouraging the production of **practical materials** – such as **brochures, guidance sheets, or similar resources** – addressed to practitioners and professionals involved in reception and integration services. Such materials can serve as **accessible reference tools**, providing **useful information and suggestions for improvement** in everyday professional settings. In this way, Local Working Groups are encouraged to collectively reflect on existing practices and translate the insights generated through the project into **practical, context-specific resources** that can support the **effective inclusion and protection of LGBTQI+ migrants**.

Introduction to the templates

The following templates are designed to support Local Working Groups in the practical development of Local Action Plans. The templates translate the planning approach into structured fields that guide the process step by step and facilitate the organisation of information needed for the design of local actions.

Each template focuses on a specific phase of the local planning process and helps partners organise information in a clear and systematic way. Rather than acting as rigid forms, they should be understood as guiding tools that facilitate reflection, discussion and coordination among stakeholders involved in the development of Local Action Plans.

The templates are structured through tables that include titles and guiding fields. The titles indicate the type of information that should be collected, while the content fields allow Working Groups to describe the local situation, identify priorities and outline possible actions. These elements are intended to support a collective and evidence-based analysis of the local context and to ensure that proposed actions are realistic, coherent and responsive to the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.²⁰

In particular, the templates guide users through several key steps of the planning process, which correspond to the following sections of this chapter:

- 5.1 Analysis of the National and Local Context
- 5.2 Institutional Actors
- 5.3 Structure and Functioning of the Reception System
- 5.4 Social and Health Services
- 5.5 Third Sector and Civil Society
- 5.6 Operational Tools and Checklists

The **Context Analysis template** supports partners in describing the national and local policy environment. It invites Working Groups to reflect on the regulatory framework, existing services and structural conditions that influence the reception and inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants²¹. The fields included in this template encourage a concise overview of the institutional context, highlighting both existing resources and potential limitations.

The **Stakeholder Mapping template** helps identify the main actors involved in reception, protection and integration processes at local level. Through this tool, Working Groups can map institutions, civil society organisations, service providers and community actors, clarifying their roles, responsibilities and potential contributions to the Local Action Plan²².

The **Needs and Gap Assessment template** is designed to support a more in-depth reflection on the challenges faced by LGBTQI+ migrants within the local context. The fields encourage partners to identify

²⁰ [Rainbow Cities Network \(2023\). *Rainbow Cities in Action: LGBTI Policy Guidelines for Municipalities*.](#)

²¹ [UNHCR \(2012\). *Guidelines on International Protection No. 9: Claims to refugee status based on sexual orientation and/or gender identity*.](#)

²² [Rainbow Cities Network \(2023\). *Rainbow Cities Network One-pagers 2023: LGBTQI+ Best Practices*.](#)

gaps in services, barriers to access and specific vulnerabilities, drawing on the experiences of practitioners, organisations and community representatives²³.

Finally, the **Action Planning template** supports the definition of concrete measures. It guides Working Groups in defining objectives, proposed actions, responsible actors, timelines and expected outcomes²⁴. This template helps ensure that the Local Action Plan includes clear and feasible steps that can contribute to improving policies, services and practices at the local level.

Together, these templates provide a structured yet flexible framework for the development of Local Action Plans. By completing them collaboratively, Local Working Groups can organise relevant information, identify priorities and outline practical actions tailored to their territorial context.

5.1 Analysis of the National and Local Context

This section supports partners in analysing the broader regulatory, institutional and social context in which the Local Action Plan will be developed. Understanding the national and local framework is a crucial first step for identifying opportunities, constraints and existing policy approaches that shape the reception and inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

The template included in this section guides Working Groups in collecting key information on relevant legislation, policy frameworks and local dynamics. This analysis helps create a shared understanding of the environment in which local actions will be implemented.

5.1 ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL AND LOCAL CONTEXT	
Country / Local Area	Indicate the country and the specific municipality/region where the Local Action Plan will be developed.
Partner Organisation	Name the organisation responsible for coordinating the contribution and the local Working Group process.
Overview of the national framework regarding migration, asylum and LGBTQI+ rights	Briefly summarise the key national laws/policies and institutional arrangements relevant to asylum, reception and LGBTQI+ rights.
National regulatory frameworks: a comparative overview	This section should provide a comparative overview of the national legal and policy frameworks relevant to the reception, protection and inclusion of LGBTQI+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers in the partner countries.

²³ [European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights \(2020\), A Long Way to Go for LGBTI Equality.](#)

²⁴ [European Commission \(2020\), LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020–2025.](#)

	It aims to highlight similarities and differences across national contexts, identify key regulatory provisions and policy approaches, and outline the main challenges and gaps affecting the protection of LGBTQI+ individuals within asylum and reception systems. The comparative analysis supports a better understanding of the institutional and legal environments in which Local Action Plans will be developed, helping partners identify transferable practices, common challenges and potential areas for policy improvement.
Description of the local context	Describe the local setting (services available, key stakeholders, local policies, community needs and current initiatives).
Key challenges faced by LGBTQI+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers	List the main barriers and risks identified locally (e.g., safety, access to services, discrimination, housing, legal/health support).

5.2 Institutional Actors

The development of effective Local Action Plans requires the involvement of a wide range of institutional actors operating at national, regional and local level. Public authorities, administrative bodies and public service providers often play a central role in shaping reception systems and integration policies. The template in this section helps identify the main institutional actors involved in migration management, social services, and protection systems. By mapping these actors and their responsibilities, Local Working Groups can better understand institutional coordination mechanisms and identify potential partners for the implementation of local actions.

5.2 INSTITUTIONAL ACTORS	
Institution	List the main public institutions involved (e.g., ministries, regional authorities, municipalities, asylum services).
Role / Responsibility	Describe the mandate of each institution and its responsibilities in reception, integration, protection and service delivery.
Level (national / regional / local)	Specify the administrative level at which the institution operates and takes decisions.
Coordination / referral mechanisms	Briefly explain how institutions coordinate and refer cases (formal agreements, protocols, working tables, focal points).

5.3 Structure and Functioning of the Reception System

Reception systems represent a key component of the protection framework for migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. Their structure, accessibility and functioning directly influence the conditions under which individuals can access services, protection measures and integration opportunities. This section invites Working Groups to analyse how reception systems are organised within their national and local context. The template helps describe the different types of reception facilities, governance arrangements and operational practices, with particular attention to the inclusion and protection of LGBTQI+ migrants.

5.3 STRUCTURE AND FUNCTIONING OF THE RECEPTION SYSTEM	
Reception structure / facility type	Indicate the types of facilities in place (first reception, shelters, community housing, specialised services, etc.).
Responsible authority / managing body	Specify who manages or oversees each structure (public authority, private provider, NGO, mixed models).
Access conditions and key steps	Explain how people enter the system and the main steps/phases (registration, assessment, allocation, services provided).
Key challenges for LGBTQI+ persons	Note barriers, risks or protection gaps affecting LGBTQI+ asylum seekers and refugees within the reception system.

5.4 Social and Health Services

Access to social and health services plays a fundamental role in ensuring the well-being, protection and social inclusion of migrants and refugees. For LGBTQI+ migrants in particular, these services may represent essential points of support for addressing vulnerabilities, discrimination and specific health needs.

The template in this section helps map the main social and health services available at local level, highlighting accessibility, potential barriers and existing support mechanisms. This information contributes to identifying gaps and opportunities for strengthening service provision within the Local Action Plan.

5.4 SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES

Service type	List the relevant services (healthcare, mental health, psychosocial support, sexual health, legal aid, social services).
Responsible provider	Indicate which institution/organisation provides the service and whether it is public/private/third sector.
Accessibility for LGBTQI+ persons	Describe access requirements, availability of trained staff, confidentiality, non-discrimination measures, and any specialised provision.
Key challenges and gaps	Identify service gaps (waiting times, lack of training, language barriers, limited referral pathways, stigma).

5.5 Third Sector and Civil Society

Civil society organisations, community groups and third sector actors often play a crucial role in supporting migrants and refugees, particularly in areas where institutional responses may be limited or fragmented. These organisations frequently provide specialised services, advocacy and community-based support.

The template in this section encourages Working Groups to identify and map the organisations active in the field of migration, social inclusion and LGBTQI+ rights. Understanding the contribution of these actors helps strengthen collaboration and promotes a more coordinated local response.

5.5 THIRD SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY	
Service type	List NGOs/CSOs/community groups working on migration, asylum, LGBTQI+ rights, anti-discrimination and protection.
Type of support provided	Describe the support offered (legal, psychosocial, housing, community outreach, advocacy, mediation, emergency support).
Target group	Specify who the organisation supports (asylum seekers, refugees, LGBTQI+ persons, survivors of violence, etc.).
Partnerships and collaboration	Mention existing collaborations with public authorities and opportunities to strengthen local coordination.

5.6 Operational Tools and Checklists

The final section translates the analytical work carried out in the previous sections into practical planning tools. Once the local context, institutional actors and service systems have been analysed, Working Groups can begin to define concrete actions and priorities for the Local Action Plan. The operational tools and checklists provided here guide partners in structuring feasible measures, defining responsibilities, setting timelines and identifying expected outcomes. These templates support a coordinated and action-oriented planning process, helping transform analysis into concrete steps that can improve policies, services and practices at the local level.

In addition, each Local Working Group is encouraged to identify and include recommended tools and practical resources that can support the initial reception and orientation of beneficiaries, particularly LGBTQI+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. These may include guidance materials, information sheets, referral pathways or other practical instruments that can assist practitioners and service providers in responding effectively to the specific needs of beneficiaries during the early stages of reception and support.

5.6 OPERATIONAL TOOLS AND CHECKLISTS	
Tools for the initial reception of beneficiaries: some recommendations	Each working group should include recommended tools for the initial reception of beneficiaries. <i>Example: here the WG develops a first-contact protocol for reception services that includes:</i> <i>a multilingual welcome leaflet explaining rights;</i> <i>useful/safe contacts and spaces;</i> <i>a template for reporting discrimination or violence in reception settings.</i>
Operational checklists for operators	<i>Example: The WG creates a short checklist for frontline operators (social workers, asylum case managers, reception staff), to be used during interviews and case management. The checklist includes prompts such as:</i> <i>Do not assume sexual orientation or gender identity</i> <i>Avoid intrusive or irrelevant questions about private life.</i> <i>Ask for consent before recording SOGIESC-related information</i> <i>Assess whether the person feels safe in their current accommodation.</i> <i>Provide information about local LGBTQI+ support organisations.</i> <i>The checklist is integrated into training sessions and daily practice guidelines.</i>

Ethical principles and inclusive intervention standards	<i>Example: The WG co-defines an Ethical Map based on principles such as:</i> <i>confidentiality and data protection.</i> <i>non-discrimination and respect for self-identification.</i> <i>intersectionality,</i> <i>zero tolerance for harassment, outing, or secondary victimisation in services.</i> <i>trauma-informed approaches.</i>
Map of the local support network: safe contacts	<i>The WG co-produces at a regional level an LGBTQI+ Support Map, listing:</i> <i>LGBTQI+ friendly legal aid providers.</i> <i>mental health and psychosocial services with cultural competence.</i> <i>safe shelters or emergency housing options.</i> <i>community organisations and peer-support groups.</i> <i>municipal focal points for discrimination complaints.</i>
Operational forms and templates	<i>Example: The WG develops standardised templates to support inclusive practice, such as: monitoring templates to track inclusion measures and outcomes;</i>

Towards Inclusive Local Action

The tools presented in this section aim to support Local Working Groups and project partners in the structured development of Local Action Plans addressing the needs of LGBTQI+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

By organising the analysis of the national and local context, mapping institutional actors and services, and identifying existing gaps and challenges, the templates provide a practical framework that can facilitate coordinated planning processes at the local level. Their flexible structure allows partners to adapt the tools to their specific institutional, legal and social environments while maintaining a common methodological approach.

The use of these templates encourages a participatory process involving public authorities, civil society organisations, service providers and community representatives. Through collaborative analysis and planning, Local Working Groups can identify concrete priorities and define feasible actions that respond to the specific needs of LGBTQI+ migrants within their territorial context.

Ultimately, the structured information collected through these tools can contribute to strengthening cooperation among stakeholders, improving service provision and promoting more inclusive reception and integration systems. By translating analysis into practical actions, Local Action Plans can support the development of more coordinated and responsive local policies aimed at ensuring protection, inclusion and equal access to services for LGBTQI+ migrants, refugees and asylum seekers.

Conclusions

The toolbox highlights that, despite significant progress in the legal recognition of SOGIESC-based asylum claims at international and European level, **substantial gaps persist between formal frameworks and their implementation in practice**, particularly at the local level. Evidence collected across partner countries shows that LGBTQI+ migrants and refugees continue to face **intersectional vulnerabilities**, including unsafe reception conditions, limited access to specialised health and psychosocial services, and exposure to discrimination within institutional settings. In response, the toolbox underlines the need to move beyond purely normative approaches by strengthening **local governance, coordination, and participatory planning mechanisms**, especially through the establishment of Local Working Groups. A key conclusion is that **effective inclusion** requires context-sensitive, flexible and intersectional strategies co-developed with civil society and affected communities. The analysis of good practices further demonstrates that **multi-agency cooperation, safe spaces, and tailored support services** are essential components of successful interventions, although their level of institutionalisation varies across contexts.

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