

Making use of European Structural and Investment Funds for Roma Inclusion

A Guide for Local Authorities



Contact Details

Technical Secretariat:



C/ Ahijones, s/n
28018 Madrid (Spain)

Tel: +34 91 422 09 60
Fax: +34 91 422 09 61
Email: info@euromanet.eu
Web: www.euromanet.eu

Disclaimer

All the pictures included in this publication are property of Fundación Secretariado Gitano and cannot be used or reproduced without permission.

Legal Deposit:

1. INTRODUCTION	3	4. WHAT ARE THE EXISTING BARRIERS AND HOW CAN THEY BE OVERCOME?	41
1.1 Why this guide?		4.1 Existing barriers for municipalities accessing EU Funds for Roma inclusion	
1.2 The purpose of the guide		4.2 Five steps to overcome these barriers	
1.3 Target audiences and how to use this guide			
1.4 A new positive political framework			
1.5 The local level as key factor in the integration of Roma			
1.6 Content of this Guide			
2. THE MAIN MESSAGES AND KEYS TO SUCCESS	13	5. POTENTIAL OPTIONS FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES TO ACCESS EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS AS A TOOL TO PROMOTE ROMA INCLUSION	61
2.1 Main messages		5.1. Four models to access Structural and Investment Funds at local level	
2.2. Keys to success and practical recommendations		5.1.1. Community-led local development (CLLD) initiatives	
		5.1.2. Sustainable urban development	
3. FOSTERING LOCAL ROMA POLICIES WITH THE SUPPORT OF EUROPEAN STRUCTURAL AND INVESTMENT FUNDS	19	5.1.3. Integrated Rehousing Operation	
3.1 Increasing relevancy of the Roma inclusion in the EU Agenda		5.1.4. Global Grants	
3.1.1. The need to improve the Roma's social situation		5.2. Examples of local and regional authorities using Structural and Investment Funds for Roma inclusion	
3.1.2. A positive framework of EU Roma policies			
3.3.1. How European Structural and Investment Funds work			
3.3.2. European Structural and Investment Funds at the local level			
3.3.3. How are the European Structural and Investment Funds related to the Roma?			
3.3.4. What are the added values of applying European Structural and Investment Funds for Roma inclusion?			
3.4. Which types of Operational Programmes promote Roma inclusion?			
		RELEVANT WEBSITES	73
		ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	75



1. INTRODUCTION



1.1 WHY THIS GUIDE?

The publication of this guide arrives at a critical moment: the planning phase for the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESI Funds) of the next programming period 2014-2020 is currently on-going, future Regulations have already been approved and Member States are either in the final steps of signing or have just signed their Partnership Agreements (PAs) and Operational Programmes (OPs). **Now it is time to implement!**

The local level plays a crucial role in the implementation of ESI Funds and hence, local administrations are vital in ensuring that the funds get to the local level, that is, to their beneficiaries, including the Roma population.

The ESI Funds, in particular the European Social Fund (ESF) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), are the EU's main financial and policy instruments at the disposal of Member States to design and implement policies aimed at enhancing social cohesion and reducing inequalities within the EU. As a consequence, in many countries the ESI Funds are a major **opportunity for investing in Roma communities**.

In fact, they offer a pool for designing more effective long-term policies, fostering the cooperation between the national, regional and local administrations and involving different actors including Roma organisations. They are therefore a particularly relevant means of facilitating the inclusion of the Roma in terms of combating discrimination, promoting equal opportunities and improving their situation in the areas of employment, education, healthcare and housing conditions. Furthermore, they allow for undertaking long-term integrated operations in all these areas.

Roma issues have become more and more relevant at the European level and promoting the social inclusion of the Roma form part of an ESF key investment priority “integration of marginalised communities such as the Roma”. Furthermore, both **ESF and ERDF Regulations explicitly refer to the Roma population as target beneficiaries: 20%** of the ESF has been earmarked for fighting social exclusion and poverty, which includes the Roma population as target beneficiaries; housing interventions are eligible as part of an integrated intervention under the ERDF – they may also be covered by the ESF on a complementary basis.

However, one of the most important reasons for publishing this guide is that there is a need for a more efficient impact of the ESI Funds with regards to Roma integration at the local level; in fact, many municipalities are interested in accessing the ESI Funds in order to **improve the situation of their Roma population at local level.**

1.2 THE PURPOSE OF THE GUIDE

The central aim of the present guide is to provide **guidelines and practical suggestions on the use of the SF for Roma inclusion at the local level.** The guide should be seen in the context of the emerging European Union (EU) policy framework embodied in the Europe 2020 Strategy, the EU Framework for National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS), the current (2007-2013) and future (2014-2020) programming period for ESI Funds. It complements the EURoma guide Tackling Roma needs in the 2014-2020 Structural Funds Programming Period. Guide to improve the planning process by shifting the focus from the national and regional planning processes of Partnership Agreements and Operational Programmes to **local planning for effective interventions with Roma by using ESI Funds.**

1. Introduction



EURoma Guide “Tackling Roma needs in the 2014-2020 Structural Funds Programming Period. Guide to improve the planning process”: http://www.euromanet.eu/newsroom/archive/euroma_launches_publication_to_support_the_effective_inclusion_of_roma_in_the_next_programming_period.html

AIM OF THIS GUIDE

- ➔ Give practical information on how Structural Funds Regulations work
- ➔ Explain the priorities of the funds
- ➔ Explain how local authorities can access funds as a tool to promote social inclusion and improve living conditions of Roma in situations of exclusion
- ➔ Propose practical models
- ➔ Refer to existing experiences



**Enhance the effectiveness of local interventions with Roma and
make a real difference on the ground**



1.3 TARGET AUDIENCES AND HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The primary target audience of this guide are **local administrations**, in particular staff in charge of Roma policies and staff in charge of policies affecting the Roma (i.e. education, employment, housing, social services etc.), as it provides practical guidelines and recommendations of how to access ESI Funds in order to implement Roma inclusion activities at local level.

In addition, this guide can be useful to **institutions at the national and regional level** that are responsible for the design of the ESI Funds, especially the Operational Programmes, as it provides concrete models and recommendations on how the funds can be implemented at local level. Indeed, regional and national authorities have the responsibility of allowing, and ensuring, the appropriate involvement of local authorities in accessing EU funding.

Furthermore, **National Roma Contact Points** can also make use of this guide and disseminate the information to the local level in their respective countries; **Roma organisations** can use it as well for activating their dialogue with local authorities and contributing to the planning process.

1.4 A NEW POSITIVE POLITICAL FRAMEWORK

Recent developments of the EU policy framework facilitate the promotion of Roma inclusion at the local level:

In 2010, the EU adopted the Europe **2020 Strategy as its overarching framework for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth for the coming decade**. The strategy includes specific targets related to employment, education, poverty reduction and social inclusion, which directly concern special groups, such as the Roma. These targets are currently guiding the national, regional and local policy processes towards achieving the set objectives in 2020. More specifically, these targets form an important part of the European semester process and are therefore reflected annually in its key documents, such as the Annual Growth Survey (AGS), the National Reform Programmes (NRP) and the Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) that, in several cases, explicitly recommend strengthening efforts to improve the situation of the Roma population at the local level.

1. Introduction

The EU Framework for **National Roma Integration Strategies** was adopted in 2011 and calls on Member States to draft NRIS. These national strategies should specify **concrete targets in the four main pillars: education, employment, healthcare and housing**. These objectives have to be consistent with the Europe 2020 Strategy and each Member States NRP.

Continuous monitoring and evaluation of the implantation of NRIS have demonstrated that, in many cases, the **national strategies are lacking implementation at the local level**; in fact, more and more EU institutions have expressed their opinion that “NRIS should work at local level.” Therefore, the **access to ESI Funds at local level has to be strengthened significantly** in the next programming period 2014-2020. As a response to it, this guide provides practical information on how to achieve the respective national Roma integration targets at local level by applying ESI Funds.



1.5 THE LOCAL LEVEL AS KEY FACTOR IN THE INTEGRATION OF ROMA

As mentioned above, local institutions play a crucial role in the implementation of Roma integration strategies, as they are the ones dealing directly with Roma issues. An effective implementation of a national policy at local level implies specific and concrete measures and active participation of the local institutions and stakeholders.

Depending on the administrative structure in the Member States, the local level tends to have between relatively many and a lot of competencies, which means that many of the **challenges for Roma inclusion are the responsibility of local administrations**. In many countries, they are **key decision makers and providers of services, such as housing**, urban planning, education, health care, social and environmental services – all these are key determinants of the integration of Roma communities.

Local interventions promoting the integration of the Roma are in the benefit of all citizens and are therefore vital to:

- Break the inter-generational transmission of poverty and exclusion among Roma;
- Unleash the energies of Roma youth to generate new sources of growth and fiscal revenue;
- Foster constructive relationships in villages and neighbourhoods and contribute to social cohesion in a local, national and European context;
- Contribute to the EU's democratic viability by ensuring the involvement of Roma in the local political arena as a springboard for their involvement in national and EU politics;

1. Introduction

1.6 CONTENT OF THIS GUIDE

What are the main messages and keys to success

- ➔ It gives concrete recommendations on successful approaches, good practices and lessons learnt from other experiences at local level.

How to design local Roma policies with the support of the ESI Funds

- ➔ It outlines the increasing relevancy of Roma inclusion in the EU Agenda and explains the existing framework and instruments that can be applied at local level.
- ➔ It highlights the problems and challenges of Roma inclusion policies at local level and explains how ESI Funds can be used to implement initiatives that promote Roma inclusion at local level.
- ➔ It gives an overview of the advantages and added value of Roma integration policies and provides examples and good practices at local level.

How to address key issues

- ➔ It analyses existing barriers for municipalities to accessing Structural Funds and gives practical tips on how to overcome them.

How to take the initiative

- ➔ It provides useful suggestions on how to get informed, form partnerships and participate in and influence the planning process of ESI Funds.

Exploring potential options

- ➔ It presents a concrete example of ways to accessing Structural Funds from the local level – the dos and don'ts as well as how they work in practice.



2. THE MAIN MESSAGES AND KEYS TO SUCCESS




This chapter outlines the key ideas of this guide, summarising practical recommendations and main messages for implementing successful Roma Inclusion policies at local level.

2.1 MAIN MESSAGES

Based on recommendations and practical suggestions presented in this guide, the following factors have been identified as having a positive effect on the success of local Roma inclusion programmes:

1 Take sufficient time for planning and **plan for the medium and long-term** (e.g. projects for 3-4 years up to 7 years and more) and with the objective of achieving sustainable results by performing a proper diagnostic analysis of the situation and setting measurable indicators in the key areas of Roma inclusion (i.e. education, employment, health, housing).

2 Combine actions that address the multiple dimensions of problems faced by Roma. In doing so, an **integrated approach** should be applied (e.g. specific and adapted education, employment, health and housing programmes in good coordination with social services and other services; individual itineraries).

A vertical photograph on the left side of the page showing several chefs in white uniforms and hairnets working in a kitchen. One chef in the foreground is stretching a long strand of yellow dough. In the background, another chef is also working with dough.

3 Build on existing experiences that guarantee continuity and sustainability of the actions in the medium to long term.

4 **Define mandates and responsibilities** (with room for shared responsibilities) for the programme. The leadership function has to be defined clearly.

5 **Access to employment and housing** are the central drivers **in urban areas** (including for Roma migrants): employment combined with social housing can act as a springboard complemented with training activities and individual education itineraries (including systematic support to Roma children to prevent early school leaving).

6 **Actively involve and empower Roma** from the planning phase onwards (incl. implementation, monitoring and evaluation), including through Roma mediators. Partnerships should be formed with civil society organisations, especially Roma organisations. Plans should involve capacity-building actions for all involved actors

7 Consider the particular situation of **Roma women**, in particular multiple forms of discrimination and gender inequalities.

8 Improve knowhow and specialisation of local staff and **raise political and public awareness** about prejudice and discrimination.

9 Aim for the **mainstreaming of Roma issues** into general policies (avoiding segregated or parallel programmes). Mainstream services should be adapted to Roma needs.

10 Initiatives must achieve **“explicit but not exclusive targeting”**, meaning that they should be adapted and open to Roma, but they should also include other potential beneficiaries, particularly the vulnerable and marginalised.

11 Mobilise **all existing resources** (human, institutional, economic) for the projects.

A vertical photograph on the right side of the page showing a chef in a white uniform and hairnet working in a kitchen. The chef is focused on a task, possibly preparing dough. In the foreground, there are metal bowls and a white plate on a dark countertop.

2.1 KEYS TO SUCCESS AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on recommendations and practical suggestions presented in this guide, the main messages can be summarised as follows:

Message 1: Roma inclusion is a duty of local authorities. Above all, it is to the benefit of the entire community, not only to the Roma.

Facts to remember

- At European level, there is a framework for the National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS) which insists on action at the local level.
- Your country is due to implement a NRIS which identifies actions and potential territorial areas of focus.
- Promoting Roma inclusion not only saves money and avoids future problems and conflicts, but also brings economic and social returns for the entire community

2. The Main Messages And Keys To Success

Practical suggestions:

- Make Roma inclusion a political priority on the local agenda
- Define a policy strategy for the inclusion of the Roma based on a (local) diagnosis of the situation
- Identify clear priorities and targets
- Involve and empower Roma at all stages of Roma integration initiatives
- Learn from experiences and connect with other villages/municipalities/cities.

Message 2: Municipalities can benefit from the ESI Funds for Roma inclusion by developing projects particularly aimed at the integration of Roma or by developing projects that focus on areas with a high Roma concentration.

Facts to remember:

- Right now, your country is planning its actions for the financing period until 2020.
- The ESI include objectives related to education, employment, and social inclusion.
- There is one ESF investing priority specifically focusing on Roma and other marginalised communities.
- With the support of the ESI, local authorities can undertake integrated operations aiming at the desegregation of segregated settlements where Roma are living

Practical suggestions:

- Find out how the ESI are being implemented in your country
- Identify the bodies responsible for the implementation of the ESI Operational Programmes
- Benefit from a broad range of organisations that can provide you information and advice on implementing ESI-funded local Roma integration activities



Message 3: There are different ways of addressing Roma needs through EU funds and different needs can be addressed through different funds.

Facts to remember:

- You can access funds for projects that specifically focus on Roma inclusion in the areas of education, employment, social inclusion and fighting discrimination.
- You can access funds for activities in territorial areas where Roma are living.
- You can develop community-led local initiatives involving the local actors.
- You can access funds for capacity building and technical assistance

Practical suggestions:

- Explore and consider potential options and select the most adequate one for the circumstances of your village/municipality/city
- Learn how other cities deal with Roma inclusion
- Learn from lessons identified in other reports and good practices