

ONE-STOP-SHOP

A NEW ANSWER FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION



(JLS/2006/INTI/148)

**Project funded by the European Commission INTI Fund
Directorate-General Justice, Freedom and Security**

1. Coordinating Organisation:

High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI, I.P.)

Address: Rua Álvaro Coutinho, 14, 1150-025 Lisboa – Portugal

Mrs. Catarina Reis Oliveira

catarina.oliveira@acidi.gov.pt / telf. 00351 218 106 125

2. Partners:

1	Alto Comissariado para a Imigração e Diálogo Intercultural, ACIDI, IP	PT	Lisbon
2	Dirección General de Integración de los Inmigrantes	ES	Madrid
3	Hellenic Migration Policy Institute, IMEPO	EL	Athens
4	Immigrant Council of Ireland	IE	Dublin
5	Direzione Generale dell' Immigrazione	IT	Rome
6	Netzwerk Migration in Europa e. V.	DE	Berlin
7	International Organization for Migration, IOM – Mission in Portugal	PT	Lisbon
8	Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies	NL	Amsterdam

3. SUMMARY OF THE PROJECT:

1. The management of the integration of immigrants in the European Union is one of the most challenging responsibilities that most Member States are facing today. Both countries with longer histories of immigration and countries that are experiencing immigration flows for the first time are being confronted with the need to define a sustainable integration policy.

2. In relation to immigrant communities, different Member States share several common difficulties that often compromise the consistent integration of immigrants. To be more precise, among the problems most often cited are: the range of institutions involved in the integration process, the lack of cooperation between government services and their dispersed locations, the diversity of procedures, complex bureaucracy, communication difficulties as a result of cultural and linguistic diversity, and the difficulties of immigrant participation in decision-making.

3. Aiming to confront these challenges and define proposals for concrete measures, the European Commission, in the Common Agenda for Integration

(COM 2005 389), defined as priorities strengthening the capacity of public and private service providers to interact with third-country nationals via intercultural interpretation and translation, mentoring, mediation services by immigrant communities, 'one-stop-shop' information points and building sustainable organisational structures for integration and diversity management. The Commission also stressed the necessity for developing modes of co-operation between stakeholders enabling officials to exchange information and pool resources (cbp 6) .

4. Accordingly, inspired by the Common Agenda for Integration, several Member States have been defining concrete integration programmes for immigrants that commonly refer to the 'one-stop-shop' (OSS) model. The integration of, and cooperation between, different public services, previously located in different places and working according to different schedules, together with the creation of new services to cater for the concrete needs of immigrants, became a fundamental response to the arrival of newcomers and the settlement of permanent immigrants. The Portuguese experience, within this innovative One-Stop-Shop strategy, was also considered as an example in order to contextualise this project. In 2004, Portugal, through ACIDI, I.P., developed two One-Stop-Shops with the official name *National Immigrant Support Centres*. These two centres, created exclusively for immigrants, bring together under the same roof a number of services related to immigration. Following the philosophy of working with partners to develop good integration policies and outcomes, in a context of shared responsibility – as also defined as a priority in the seventh and ninth Common Basic Principles on Integration –, the centres involve the departments of six Ministries and offer specialised offices that provide specific support.

5. Within this innovative model of OSS, the participation of cultural mediators is fundamental. These mediators guarantee not only a cultural and linguistic proximity to each immigrant accessing the services of these one-stop shops, but also provide an essential link between public administration and immigrants. Furthermore, the participation of civil society institutions, as partners in the management of this project, can bring important outcomes, as the development of immigrant integration policies becomes a shared responsibility.

6. Hence, the core activities of this project were:

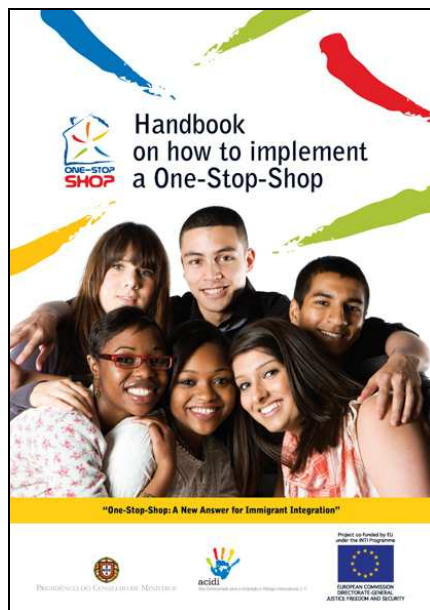
- Assess the application of the OSS as a model for immigrant integration in Member States, not only in reference to its general characteristics (stimulating partnership between public and private institutions as an integrated and cooperative response), but also in its specificities (namely through the involvement of cultural mediators from civil society institutions).
- Collate concrete examples of integrated solution (as defined by the OSS model), that are already being put in place in Member States.
- Define a local network of institutions within the definition of an OSS in

each country/partner involved in the project.

- Write and disseminate a *Handbook on how to implement a One-Stop-Shop for Immigrant integration* in Member States.
- Promote the application of the OSS approach (recognising the necessary adaptations to each context) in several Member States at national, regional and local levels.

7. In practice, this project had the following deliverables:

- Country reports with the identification of services that support immigrant integration in the country and of the main difficulties that immigrants experience in relation to those services;
- Identification of national networks of central Government, national/regional/local authorities, social partners and civil society (including immigrant associations), as advisory committees for the project, aiming to promote discussion on the OSS model and its possible applicability in the country;
- Organisation of three workshops on:
 - 1) The integration of different public services in an OSS;
 - 2) The role of socio-cultural mediators in an OSS;
 - 3) Partnerships between NGOs and Government actors in providing services to migrants.
- Development of a Project Website www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt where all these deliverables are fully presented and several project documents are available for download.
- *Handbook on How to Implement a One-Stop-Shop for Immigrant Integration*. Publication and dissemination of the book.
- Final International Conference with the participation of representatives of all EU Member States (through the National Contact Points on Integration): 6 February 2009.



HANDBOOK ON HOW TO IMPLEMENT A ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION

By Catarina Reis Oliveira (ACIDI, I.P.), Maria Abranches (IOM – Mission in Portugal) and Claire Healy (ACIDI, I.P.)

With a Preface by Jan Niessen

ISBN 978-989-8000-76-7

This Handbook has been funded by the European Commission INTI Fund (Directorate-General Justice, Freedom and Security) and promoted by the Portuguese High Commission for Immigration and Intercultural Dialogue (ACIDI, I.P.).

The Handbook can be downloaded from the project website www.oss.inti.acidi.gov.pt. The Handbook is available to download in English, Portuguese, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish. To request a hardcopy of the book in English, please send an email to oss@acidi.gov.pt

SUMMARY

According to the most recent estimates, the population of third-country nationals residing in European Union countries is around 18.5 million, corresponding to 3.8% of the total population. Hence the management of the integration of immigrants in the European Union is one of the most challenging responsibilities that most Member States are facing today. Both countries with longer histories of immigration and countries that are experiencing immigration flows for the first time are being confronted with the need to define sustainable integration policies.

The European Commission, also aiming to achieve this goal, has been supporting the Member States in formulating integration policy by developing common approaches for the integration of immigrants and in promoting the exchange of best practices. Among the most relevant recent developments in this area are the *Common Basic Principles on Integration*, the general framework for the integration of third-country nationals in the European Union adopted through the Commission Communication A *Common Agenda for Integration*, the *Annual Reports on Migration and Integration*, and the two editions of the *Handbook on Integration for policy-makers and practitioners*. Additionally, in 2008, the Council of the European Union adopted the *European Pact on Immigration and Asylum* and the European Ministerial Conference on Integration approved the *Vichy Declaration*.

These EU documents concur in recommending a coherent, whole-of-government approach to integration, and working in partnership with immigrant communities. Integration is seen as a process of mutual accommodation, where the receiving society as well as the immigrants take part in the adaptation required.

In addition, the *Common Agenda for Integration* - the European Commission's first response to the recommendation of the European Council to establish a coherent European framework for integration - proposes concrete measures and encourages Member States to strengthen their efforts in developing integration strategies (COM (2005) 389 final). In relation to the sixth Common Basic Principle in the *Common Agenda*, dealing with access for immigrants to institutions and services with a view to facilitating the integration process, actions are recommended that correspond to the overall characteristics of One-Stop-Shops - stimulating partnerships between public and private institutions in order to promote integrated responses -, and to its specificities - involving cultural mediators from civil society institutions and developing the intercultural competences of service providers.

In response to these recommendations, this Handbook presents the One-Stop-Shop service as an approach for immigrant integration. As is comprehensively and clearly described in the Handbook, this approach represents an essential tool in successfully managing integration to realise the full benefits of immigration, specifically in relation to service provision to immigrants. The One-Stop Shop is a contribution to ensuring that integration is a two-way process, where the receiving society actively engages in adaptation.

The *European Pact on Immigration and Asylum* invites Member States to establish ambitious policies to promote harmonious integration based on a balance between immigrants' rights and duties (13189/08 ASIM 68: 6). Consequently, the One-Stop-Shop approach is presented as an ambitious and yet realistic proposal for providing services to immigrants, improving integration and providing more and better information on the rights and duties of immigrants in EU Member States.

As is fully described in the Handbook, the One-Stop-Shop service is a policy that approaches integration from the perspective of the adaptation of the receiving society and the services that it provides, combined with a consultative and cooperative process working with immigrants, to further the integration of both immigrants and the receiving society. It thereby meets the two-way challenge of integration in a sensible and flexible way.

The Handbook is composed of six chapters. The Introduction defines a One-Stop-Shop, outlines the benefits of its implementation and sets out the prerequisites and necessary steps for its creation. It further addresses potential challenges to the creation of a One-Stop-Shop, in order to provide a realistic guide. Subsequent chapters deal with the fundamental pillars of a One-Stop-Shop service: partnership and coordination in the designing and provision of services (Chapter 2); mediation by immigrant communities (Chapter 3); services provided (Chapter 4); and issues relating to accessibility (Chapter 5). The final chapter relates to economic and public finance aspects in terms of the human and material resources that are needed for the implementation of One-Stop-Shops in Member States (Chapter 6).