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Promoting Entrepreneurship among Young People with Migrant Background, focusing on the Trade of Natural Products

Policy Brief Recommendations: Leveraging Technology and Innovation for Secure and Inclusive Migrant Entrepreneurship (Policy Brief 3)

Project Number: 2022-2-CY02-KA220-YOU-000100524



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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IDENTITY

Work Package:	5
Grant Agreement No.:	2022-2-CY02-KA220-YOU-000100524
Acronym:	NaturalOrigins
Title:	Promoting Entrepreneurship among Young People with Migrant Background, focusing on the Trade of Natural Products
URL:	www.naturalorigins.eu



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KONNEKTABLE TECHNOLOGIES LIMITED	Ireland



Executive Summary

Migrant entrepreneurship has become a vital component of economic growth and innovation in the EU. The contributions of migrant entrepreneurs are evident across Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Turkey, and Ireland, where they bring diverse perspectives, skills, and resilience to the entrepreneurial landscape.

Leveraging technology and innovation is crucial for empowering migrant entrepreneurs, enhancing their competitiveness, and fostering inclusive economic development. This policy brief outlines key findings and recommendations from each partner country, offering a comprehensive approach to support migrant entrepreneurship through strategic investments in digital infrastructure, supportive ecosystems, financial incentives, and capacity-building initiatives.





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Introduction

The economic landscape across Greece, Cyprus, Spain, Italy, Turkey, and Ireland has seen a significant improvement as a result of the contributions of migrant entrepreneurs. These individuals bring innovation, cultural diversity, and entrepreneurial spirit, playing a pivotal role in job creation and economic growth.

However, the response of the public at large has not been as welcoming to the community. Migrants face numerous challenges, including limited access to financial resources, digital literacy gaps, and cultural and linguistic barriers. Access to capital, markets, and networks remains elusive for many, compounded by language barriers, regulatory hurdles, and social marginalization. These barriers not only impede the success of individual ventures but also limit the broader contributions of migrant entrepreneurship to Europe's economy and society.

By leveraging technology and innovation, we can create a more secure and inclusive environment for migrant entrepreneurs, enabling them to overcome these challenges and thrive. Digital tools, platforms, and innovative approaches hold the promise of breaking down barriers, amplifying opportunities, and fostering a more inclusive entrepreneurial ecosystem. Whether through e-commerce platforms that connect migrant artisans with global markets, digital skills training programs tailored to the needs of migrant entrepreneurs, or innovative financing solutions that democratize access to capital, technology has the power to level the playing field and unleash the full potential of migrant entrepreneurship.





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Background

Greece

In recent decades, Greece has experienced significant demographic changes, with migrants playing an essential role in various economic sectors, including entrepreneurship. Migrant entrepreneurs contribute to job creation, innovation, and economic growth, enriching Greece's entrepreneurial landscape with diverse perspectives. However, they face numerous challenges, such as limited access to financial resources, cultural and linguistic barriers, and disparities in digital infrastructure and skills (ELSTAT, 2020; IOM, 2019).



Cyprus

Cyprus recognizes the importance of digital skills for migrants and refugees, emphasizing the need for high-tech skills to secure better opportunities. Digital literacy offers social and economic advantages, particularly for vulnerable groups. Human Level (2013) reports that digital skills are essential for accessing online healthcare, immigration services, and banking facilities, which are crucial for social inclusion. Inclusive business models and partnerships with educational institutions can help develop personalized digital literacy programs for migrants (Mosbah et al., 2018).

Spain

Migrant entrepreneurs in Spain are key drivers of innovation, bringing new perspectives and identifying unmet market needs. They foster cross-cultural collaborations and knowledge sharing, which are crucial for accessing global markets and forming strategic partnerships. However, they face challenges such as limited access to capital and regulatory barriers. The examples of Elon Musk, Sergey Brin, and Vinod Khosla illustrate how migrant entrepreneurs can revolutionize industries through innovation and perseverance (Faster Capital, 2024). Supportive policies and financial assistance programs are necessary to overcome these obstacles.

Italy

Italy's technology sector is growing, with migrant entrepreneurs contributing significantly to its expansion. However, challenges such as limited access to funding, language barriers, and digital literacy gaps persist. Targeted initiatives, such as startup incubators tailored to migrant entrepreneurs and government-sponsored digital literacy programs, are paving the way for their integration and success. According to ISTAT (2022), Italy's ICT sector has been growing steadily, supported by initiatives like the National Innovation Fund and tax breaks for R&D investments.



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Turkey

In Turkey, migrant entrepreneurship is on the rise, driven by the need for economic opportunities and the entrepreneurial spirit of migrants. Technology and innovation can play a crucial role in supporting these entrepreneurs by enhancing their access to markets, resources, and networks. Tailored digital skills training programs and partnerships with technology providers are essential to empower migrant entrepreneurs. Kloosterman (2010) highlights the importance of matching opportunities with resources and understanding the embeddedness of migrant entrepreneurs in the local context.



Ireland

Ireland's economy thrives on innovation and entrepreneurship, with migrant communities playing an increasingly vital role. Leveraging technology and innovation presents a transformative opportunity to empower migrant entrepreneurs. Digital inclusion initiatives, supportive ecosystems, and financial incentives are crucial for creating an enabling environment where migrant entrepreneurs can thrive. The Future of Digital Skills and Jobs in Greece (KPMG, 2020) emphasizes the importance of digital and business skills for entrepreneurial success.



Analysis of the Issue

Migrant entrepreneurs face several barriers that hinder their ability to establish and grow businesses effectively. These include:

- **Digital Divide:** Limited access to reliable internet and digital devices impedes the ability to leverage technology for business. Disparities in digital literacy prevent full utilization of digital tools and platforms (World Bank, 2019). The European Commission (2020) notes that many migrants lack access to reliable internet and digital devices, impacting their ability to leverage technology for business.
- **Support Ecosystems:** Existing startup support mechanisms often do not cater to the specific needs of migrant entrepreneurs. Tailored incubation programs, mentorship networks, and access to finance are critical. The OECD (2018) highlights the need for startup support mechanisms that cater specifically to migrant entrepreneurs' needs.
- **Financial Barriers:** Migrants face challenges accessing capital due to limited familiarity with banking systems and credit constraints. Targeted financial support mechanisms, such as microloans and grants, are needed (OECD, 2020). Migrants often encounter difficulties in accessing financial resources, which hampers their ability to start and grow businesses (IOM, 2019).
- **Skill Enhancement:** Digital and business skills are crucial for success. Training programs and workshops can empower migrant entrepreneurs to compete effectively. Training programs and workshops are essential for enhancing digital and business skills, crucial for success in the entrepreneurial landscape (KPMG, 2020).
- **Market Access:** Migrant entrepreneurs struggle to access markets due to language barriers, limited networks, and cultural differences. Digital platforms, trade missions, and networking events can help broaden their market reach. Access to markets is often restricted for migrant entrepreneurs due to language barriers and limited networks (OECD, 2018).





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Policy Recommendation

- **Digital Inclusion:** Ensure universal access to high-speed internet and digital literacy programs, focusing on underserved migrant communities. Establish community centers or digital hubs where migrants can access technology resources and training (European Commission, 2020; World Bank, 2019).
- **Supportive Ecosystems:** Create migrant-focused incubators and accelerators providing tailored support and mentorship. Foster partnerships between migrant entrepreneurs, local businesses, and educational institutions for knowledge exchange and collaboration (OECD, 2018; European Migration Network, 2020).
- **Financial Support:** Introduce grants, loans, and tax incentives specifically targeted at migrant-led startups. Encourage banks and financial institutions to develop tailored financial products for migrant entrepreneurs (OECD, 2020; IOM, 2019).
- **Capacity Building:** Develop training programs covering digital skills, business management, and financial literacy. Partner with community organizations, NGOs, and educational institutions to deliver these programs (KPMG, 2020; Literacy Rochester, 2019).
- **Market Access:** Facilitate access to domestic and international markets through digital platforms, trade missions, and business networking events. Support participation in industry-specific trade fairs and exhibitions to promote market visibility (OECD, 2018; Faster Capital, 2024).





Conclusion

In harnessing the power of technology and innovation to empower migrant entrepreneurship, Ireland has the opportunity to forge a more inclusive and prosperous future. By addressing the unique challenges faced by migrant entrepreneurs and leveraging their diverse talents and perspectives, the country can unlock new pathways to economic growth, innovation, and social cohesion.

Through targeted interventions such as digital inclusion initiatives, ecosystem support programs, financial assistance mechanisms, capacity-building efforts, and market access facilitation, Ireland can create an enabling environment where migrant entrepreneurs can thrive and contribute meaningfully to the economy.

As Europe continues on its journey toward economic resilience and competitiveness, it is essential to recognize the invaluable contributions of migrant entrepreneurs and to invest in policies and initiatives that support their success. By embracing diversity, fostering inclusivity, and promoting innovation, it can build a more vibrant and dynamic entrepreneurial ecosystem that benefits all members of society.

In closing, the recommendations outlined in this Policy Brief 3 serve as a roadmap for policymakers, stakeholders, and community leaders to collaborate effectively in supporting and empowering migrant entrepreneurs.



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