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WISE

# Financial Intelligence Competence Framework



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# Table of Contents


**Introduction** ..... **4**

1.1. Project Overview: WISE Objectives and Financial Inclusion for Migrant Women ..... 6
1.2. Methodological Approach: Data Collection and Evidence-Based Research ..... 8
1.3. Research-Based Financial Education Principles ..... 10
1.4. Transnational Perspective: Alignment with EU Strategies and Lifelong Learning ..... 11

**Part I: Financial Intelligence – Importance and Role** ..... **14**

2.1. Defining Financial Intelligence: Understanding the core concept of financial literacy ..... 15
2.2. The Role of Financial Literacy in Migration: Navigating new financial systems ..... 16
2.3. Impact on Integration: The Role of Financial Literacy in Economic Empowerment and Employment ..... 16
2.4. Identifying Challenges: Addressing the specific financial needs of migrant women ..... 17

**Part II: Key Financial Intelligence Competences** ..... **18**

3.1. Competence 1: Budgeting and household management: Navigating income and expenses sources ..... 20
3.2. Competence 2: Saving and investing: Saving strategies for building financial security ..... 32
3.3. Competence 3: Financial rights and consumer protection: Understanding legal rights and local financial systems ..... 44
3.4. Competence 4: Digital banking and fintech: Confidence in utilizing online financial tools and products ..... 55
3.5. Competence 5: Fraud prevention and financial cybersecurity: Identifying financial scams and securing digital transactions ..... 66
3.6. Competence 6: Responsible financial decision-making: Evaluating risks, loans and avoiding debt ..... 77

**Part III: Self-Assessment Tool and Learning Pathways** ..... **88**

4.1. The WISE Self-Assessment Tool (WISE SAT): Evaluation of financial knowledge ..... 89

**Bibliography** ..... **92**
**Glossary** ..... **97**

# Introduction



***Dear Readers, Learners, Financial Education Trainers, and Professionals working in the hosting communities,***

*The WISE project team is proud to present the WISE Financial Intelligence Competence Framework. This resource has been specifically developed for learners, trainers, educators, and professionals working with migrant women across Europe—mainly in Sweden, Poland, Slovakia, Czechia, Romania, Austria, and Germany – partnership countries of WISE consortium.*

*Migrant women often face a unique intersection of challenges: navigating unfamiliar financial systems, overcoming language barriers, and managing economic instability while seeking integration. With this framework—a structured, research-based reference—we aim to provide the foundational support necessary for true financial and social empowerment. The materials are rooted in extensive transnational research, stakeholder interviews, evidence-based financial education principles and expertise of the partnership members in delivering financial education interventions , ensuring they are tailored to the lived realities of those we serve.*

*Financial intelligence is more than just a survival skill; it is a catalyst for autonomy and dignity which is everyone's right not a desire. As emphasized in the OECD Recommendation on Financial Literacy, training educators is the most effective way to ensure that practical, high-quality knowledge reaches those who need it most. We add empowering to this approach. The WISE framework responds to this global call by offering a high-quality, 100-page structured guide that transforms personal finance management concepts into accessible learning pathways.*

*Benjamin Franklin once said: "An investment in knowledge pays the best interest." Inspired by this, we encourage educators and learners alike to use this framework to invest in themselves, break cycles of financial exclusion, and build a secure foundation for the future.*

# About project

WISE is a European project focused on supporting migrant women in developing financial skills and strengthening their economic independence. Through innovative educational tools, a European competence framework, and a certification system, the project aims to improve access to financial knowledge and promote inclusion.



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# Objectives

1. Support migrant women in developing essential financial skills to manage their resources, make informed decisions, and achieve economic independence.

2. Develop accessible educational tools and a European competence framework for financial intelligence.

3. Train educators and professionals to deliver effective financial literacy education tailored to migrant women.

4. Promote inclusion, empowerment, and lifelong learning opportunities for women in vulnerable situations.



## 1.2. Methodological Approach: Data Collection and Evidence-Based Research

### Purpose of the Framework

The WISE Financial Intelligence Competence Framework is a structured reference defining key financial literacy competences tailored to the needs of migrant women. It serves as a dual-purpose tool:

**For Educators:** It provides a standardized methodology to deliver effective financial literacy training, track learner progress, and identify knowledge gaps.

**For Learners:** It offers a roadmap for self-improvement, helping them navigate mainly, but not only: budgeting, banking, and financial rights in their host country.

The framework ensures accessibility by incorporating research-based principles and real-world case studies. By equipping aid workers and educators with these practical tools, we strengthen the professional capacity of organizations and empower migrant women to move from financial dependency to economic independence.

### Structure of the Framework

To ensure a comprehensive and logical progression, the framework is organized into three core sections:

**Part I:** Financial Intelligence – Importance and Role Explores the theoretical foundations of financial intelligence, the specific impact of financial literacy on the migration process, and its critical role in economic empowerment and employment.

**Part II:** Key Financial Intelligence Competences Defines the essential competences necessary for both educators and learners. This section covers six core competences:

- Budgeting and Household Management: Navigating daily expenses and income.
- Saving Strategies: Building reserves and long-term security.
- Financial Rights and Consumer Protection: Understanding customer protection principles.
- Digital Banking and FinTech: Utilizing modern financial tools.
- Fraud Prevention and CyberSecurity: Identifying scams and securing digital transactions.
- Responsible Financial Decision-Making: Evaluating risks, loans, and avoiding debt.

**Part III:** The Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) and Learning Pathways Details the interactive tool that enables learners to evaluate their skills, identify gaps, and design personalized learning trajectories. This section also introduces the WISE Certification Framework, providing formal recognition of skills aligned with EU Micro-credential and EUROPASS standards.

## Methodological Principles: The Competency Triad

This framework is built upon a unified pedagogical approach that applies across all modules.

We utilize **The Competency Triad** to ensure holistic learning:

**Knowledge (K):** Providing the theoretical facts and regulatory information required to understand host-country financial systems.

**Skills (S):** Developing the practical ability to apply knowledge (e.g., using a banking app or calculating a loan's total cost).

**Attitudes (A):** Fostering the psychological and ethical dispositions—such as confidence, responsibility, and resilience—necessary for sound decision-making.



### K Knowledge

The theoretical facts and regulatory information needed to understand the financial system of the host country.

- What the rules are, and who makes them.
- What a term on a document actually means.
- How a product is priced, and where the cost hides.



### S Skills

The practical ability to apply that knowledge - using a banking app, calculating the total cost of a loan.

- Doing the task, not describing it.
- Repeating it until it is routine.
- Recovering when a step goes wrong.



### A Attitudes

The psychological and ethical dispositions - confidence, responsibility and resilience - that sound decisions rest on.

- Believing the task can be learned.
- Owning the decision and its consequences.
- Staying steady when results are slow.

## 1.3. Research-Based Financial Education Principles

### Our Educational Philosophy

The WISE approach recognizes that financial education for migrant women must be:
Research-Based and Validated: Rooted in data and industry feedback.
Inclusive and Accessible: Materials are available in 7 languages, including assessment support in Ukrainian and Arabic.
Action-Oriented: We move beyond lecturing to "activation," using case studies and scenario-based tasks to make learning immediate and relevant.
Empowerment-Focused: We believe that clarity is a form of respect. By simplifying complex terms, we restore the learner's belief that they are capable of informed financial agency.

### How to Use the Framework

This document is designed to be a flexible, living resource:
Competence Levels: Each competence is broken down into Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced levels to facilitate gradual progression and formal certification.
Integrated Assessment: Use the Self-Assessment Tool in Part III early in the process to pinpoint exactly where a learner needs the most support.
Case Studies: Use the provided Learner and Educator case studies to facilitate group discussions and role-play simulations.

We invite you to explore these pages and join us in building a more inclusive financial future for migrant women across Europe.

## 1.4. Transnational Perspective: Alignment with EU Strategies and Lifelong Learning

To provide a comprehensive description of the Transnational Perspective: Alignment with EU Strategies and Lifelong Learning, WISE team synthesized the core objectives of the WISE project with the broader European policy landscape, drawing on the provided research, policy briefs, and international guidelines.

### Introduction: A Unified European Vision

The WISE Financial Intelligence of Competence Framework is not developed in isolation but is positioned as a critical response to the evolving European socio-economic landscape. At its core, the project embraces a transnational perspective, recognizing that the economic inclusion of migrant women is a shared European challenge that requires a standardized, high-quality educational response. By aligning with the EU Financial Competence Framework for Adults and the European Skills Agenda, WISE ensures that the competences developed are recognized, transferable, and relevant across the European Union.

This alignment serves a dual purpose: first, it provides a "common language" for financial literacy that transcends national borders; and second, it integrates financial intelligence into the broader "lifelong learning" paradigm, viewing it as a transversal skill essential for personal development, active citizenship, and employability.

### Strategic Alignment with the EU/OECD Financial Competence Framework

The primary benchmark for the WISE framework is the Joint EU/OECD-INFE Financial Competence Framework for Adults (2022). This document serves as the "gold standard" for defining what an adult in the EU needs to know and do to manage their finances effectively. The WISE framework adopts the "triad" approach established in the EU/OECD document, defining competences through three distinct dimensions:

Knowledge and Understanding: The factual foundation required to navigate financial systems.

Skills and Behavior: The practical application of knowledge to achieve financial goals.

Confidence, Motivation, and Attitudes: The psychological disposition that ensures sustainable financial habits.

By mapping its modules—such as Budgeting, Saving, and Digital Banking—directly to the EU/OECD's four content areas (Money and Transactions, Planning and Managing Finances, Risk and Reward, and the Financial Landscape), WISE ensures its curriculum is grounded in globally recognized standards. This is particularly evident in the treatment of "Digital Financial Competence," where WISE incorporates the digital safeguards and FinTech literacy emphasized by the European Commission to protect vulnerable consumers.

### Financial Intelligence and the European Skills Agenda

The European Skills Agenda highlights the necessity of "transversal skills" in the modern economy. Financial literacy is increasingly recognized as a core entrepreneurial competence, as noted in the Eurochambres input on the European Financial Literacy Strategy. Eurochambres emphasizes that financial literacy is essential for business creation and sustainable growth, identifying it as a pillar of the EntreComp (Entrepreneurship Competence Framework).

The WISE framework bridges the gap between financial literacy and employment. For migrant women, financial intelligence is often the "missing link" that enables them to transition from dependency to self-employment or entrepreneurship. Research provided by Lusardi and De Beckker (2025) indicates that financial literacy has a significant long-term impact on wealth accumulation, though it also notes a persistent gender disparity. The WISE project seeks to mitigate this disparity by providing targeted, gender-sensitive education that aligns with the EU's goal of gender equality in economic participation.

### The Role of the Self-Assessment Tool (SAT) in Lifelong Learning

Central to the WISE methodology is the integration of an interactive Self-Assessment Tool (SAT). As outlined the SAT operationalizes the framework by allowing learners to evaluate their knowledge, identify skill gaps, and track their progress over time.

In the context of lifelong learning, the SAT serves as a "diagnostic engine." It moves away from a "one-size-fits-all" approach, recognizing that migrant women arrive with diverse backgrounds and "disrupted financial histories," as highlighted in the IMMERSED Financial Resilience Toolkit. By enabling educators to tailor learning pathways based on SAT results, the WISE framework supports the Council Recommendation on Micro-credentials, providing a modular way to recognize small, specific blocks of learning that can eventually lead to formal qualifications via EUROPASS.

## Economic Integration and the Refugee Context

The transnational relevance of the framework is underscored by the current migration patterns in Europe, particularly the influx of refugees from Ukraine. The Deloitte/UNHCR (2025) analysis of the impact of Ukrainian refugees on the Polish economy demonstrates that successful integration is tied to the ability of households to manage income and contribute to consumption. Financial literacy is a prerequisite for this contribution.

Furthermore, OECD Working Papers (Atkinson & Messy) emphasize that migrants often face higher costs of financial services and are more vulnerable to fraud. The WISE framework's inclusion of "Fraud Prevention and CyberSecurity" as a key competence reflects the EBF Financial Literacy Playbook's call for increased digital safety education to build "financial resilience" among vulnerable groups. This resilience is what allows a migrant woman to move beyond "survival mode" and engage in long-term financial planning, as discussed in "Financial Education in Europe: Trends and Recent Developments".

## Transnational Best Practices and Validation

The WISE framework incorporates "Selected European Best Practice Cases," drawing on successful models from across the continent. By synthesizing these practices—ranging from gamified learning to trauma-informed pedagogy—WISE ensures that its methodology is not only strategically aligned with EU policy but also practically effective at the "grassroots" level.
The framework's commitment to 7-language accessibility (including Ukrainian and Arabic) is a direct application of the EU's principle of inclusive education. This ensures that the transnational perspective is not just a high-level policy goal but a tangible reality for the women who use the tool.

## Conclusion: A Driver of European Competitiveness

In conclusion, the WISE Financial Intelligence Competence Framework represents a vital intersection of migration policy, financial education, and lifelong learning. By aligning with the EU Financial Competence Framework for Adults and the European Skills Agenda, it provides a validated, standardized, and portable system for economic empowerment. Through the use of the SAT and a focus on formal certification (EUROPASS), WISE empowers migrant women to document their skills, overcome systemic barriers, and contribute to the long-term competitiveness and social cohesion of the European Union.

# Part I:

# Financial Intelligence – Importance and Role



## 2.1. Defining Financial Intelligence: Understanding the core concept of financial literacy

Financial intelligence, within the context of the WISE framework and broader European standards, is defined as a multi-dimensional construct that extends far beyond basic mathematical numeracy. According to the Joint EU/OECD-INFE Financial Competence Framework for Adults, financial literacy is the combination of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors necessary to make sound financial decisions and ultimately achieve individual financial well-being. This "triad" of competence—knowledge, behavior, and attitude—serves as the foundation for the WISE project's educational modules.

The first dimension, Knowledge and Understanding, refers to the grasp of fundamental financial concepts such as interest rates, inflation, and the risks associated with various financial products. For migrant women, this knowledge is often "disrupted" due to shifting from one economic system to another, where terms and conditions for banking or taxation may vary significantly. However, knowledge alone does not guarantee financial success. The second dimension, Skills and Behavior, involves the practical application of this knowledge—such as the ability to create a household budget, use digital banking tools safely, or track expenses. The WISE framework emphasizes "Digital Financial Competence" as a critical sub-set of these skills, particularly as financial services in the EU become increasingly digitized.

The third and perhaps most critical dimension is Confidence, Motivation, and Attitudes. This relates to a person's psychological disposition toward money, including their propensity to save for the long term rather than focus solely on short-term consumption. Research indicates that attitudes toward risk and financial planning are significant predictors of long-term wealth accumulation. In the WISE project, financial intelligence is further framed as a "transversal skill"—a core competency that supports active citizenship, lifelong learning, and entrepreneurship. By integrating a Self-Assessment Tool (SAT), the project enables learners to identify their specific gaps across these dimensions, transforming abstract intelligence into a personalized roadmap for financial resilience.

In light of the new 2025 European Commission Financial Literacy Strategy, financial intelligence is no longer seen merely as a numeracy skill, but as the foundation for citizens' well-being, security, and independence. The strategy emphasizes that theoretical knowledge alone is insufficient; the key is to link skills with the opportunity to take action. Consequently, financial intelligence within the WISE framework is expanded to include the four EU pillars: coordination of actions, access to high-quality educational materials, targeted support for vulnerable groups, and protection against fraud and scams.

## 2.2. The Role of Financial Literacy in Migration: Navigating New Financial Systems

For migrants, financial literacy is the "essential compass" needed to navigate the complexities of a host country's economic landscape. Migration often involves a transition between vastly different financial ecosystems, where previous knowledge may become obsolete or even misleading. The OECD Working Paper on Financial Education for Migrants highlights that international migrants often face significant barriers, including language difficulties, lack of familiarity with local regulations, and exclusion from mainstream financial services.

Navigating a new system begins with the most basic interactions: opening a bank account, understanding a new currency, and managing remittances. The WISE research report notes that in countries like Poland, Germany, or Austria, the "financial landscape" for migrants is complicated by the need to understand local tax laws, social security contributions, and insurance requirements. Without adequate financial intelligence, migrant women may fall victim to predatory lending or high-cost remittance services, which significantly drains their limited resources.

Furthermore, migration often results in "financial fragility." Many migrants arrive with limited savings and are immediately faced with the high costs of integration—housing deposits, legal fees, and language courses. The IMMERSED Financial Resilience Toolkit points out that financial literacy serves as a protective layer during this "survival phase," helping migrants prioritize spending and avoid over-indebtedness. By mastering the "financial language" of their host country, migrant women can move from being passive recipients of aid to active participants in the economy, capable of managing their own contracts and protecting their consumer rights.

## 2.3. Impact on Integration: The Role of Financial Literacy in Economic Empowerment and Employment

Financial literacy is a powerful driver of socio-economic integration. It is not merely an auxiliary skill but a prerequisite for sustainable employment and long-term stability in a new country. According to the IMMERSED Employment Sustainability Toolkit, there is a direct correlation between a person's financial stability and their ability to maintain long-term employment. When migrant workers are stressed by debt or a lack of savings, their focus and productivity at work decline, often leading to "churn" in the labor market.



Economic empowerment through financial intelligence allows migrant women to negotiate fairer wages and understand the value of their labor. For example, the Deloitte/UNHCR analysis of Ukrainian refugees in Poland demonstrates that those who successfully integrated into the labor market were those who could effectively manage their household finances and transition from social assistance to self-sufficiency. Furthermore, financial literacy is recognized as a "core entrepreneurial competence" in the EU's EntreComp framework. For many migrant women, entrepreneurship is a viable path to employment when traditional job markets are inaccessible due to credential recognition issues.

Moreover, the WISE Certification—aligned with the EU Europass and Micro-credential Framework—provides formal recognition of these financial skills. This certification acts as a "signal" to employers that the individual possesses the necessary transversal skills to handle responsibilities, manage resources, and engage in professional growth. By building "Financial Resilience," migrant women are better equipped to handle economic shocks—such as job loss or illness—without falling back into poverty, thereby ensuring a more stable and cohesive integration into European society.

## 2.4. Identifying Challenges: Addressing the Specific Financial Needs of Migrant Women

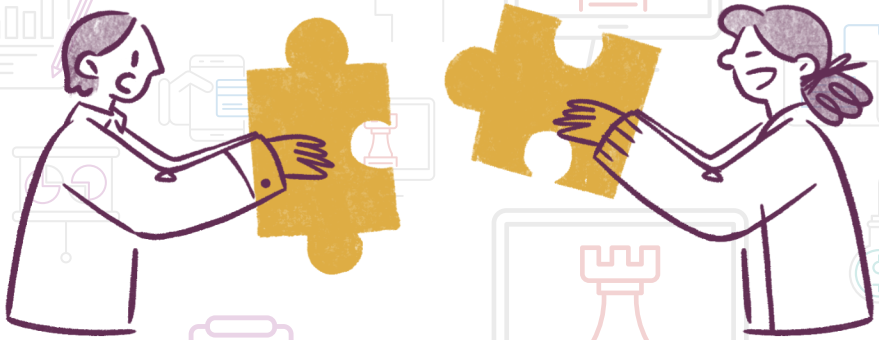
Migrant women face a "double burden" of challenges that makes their need for targeted financial education particularly acute. They often experience the combined effects of gender-based discrimination and the systemic barriers inherent in being a foreigner. Research highlights a persistent "gender gap" in financial literacy, where women generally report lower levels of financial confidence and knowledge than men.

One of the primary challenges identified in the WISE Research Report is the "interrupted career path" often associated with female migration. Many women migrate for family reunification or as refugees (as seen in the Ukrainian context), often prioritizing the care of children and elders over their own employment. This leads to long periods of economic inactivity, which diminishes their financial autonomy and makes them more dependent on partners or social welfare. Furthermore, migrant women are disproportionately represented in low-paid, informal sectors (such as domestic work), where they lack access to employer-sponsored financial planning or social protections.

Additionally, migrant women often face "digital and financial exclusion". They may lack the "credit history" required to access loans in the host country, even if they were financially successful in their country of origin. The WISE framework addresses these specific needs by focusing on "trauma-informed pedagogy" and gender-sensitive modules that empower women to take control of their own financial futures. By focusing on topics like "Digital Banking Safety" and "Long-term Saving for Pensions," the WISE project seeks to close the gender wealth gap and provide migrant women with the tools needed for independent stability and empowerment.

# Part II:

# Key Financial Intelligence Competences



# Core Competences

1. Budgeting and household management:
   *Navigating income and expenses sources.*

2. Saving and investing:
   *Saving strategies for building financial security.*

3. Financial rights and consumer protection:
   *Understanding legal rights and local financial systems.*

4. Digital banking and fintech:
   *Confidence in utilizing online financial tools and products.*

5. Fraud prevention and financial cybersecurity:
   *Identifying financial scams and securing digital transactions.*

6. Responsible financial decision-making:
   *Evaluating risks, loans and avoiding debt.*

# Competence 1

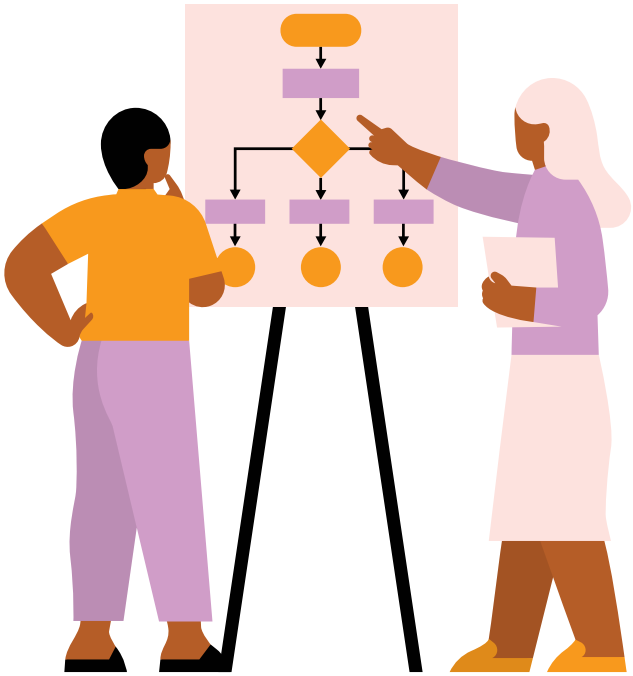
## Budgeting and household management:

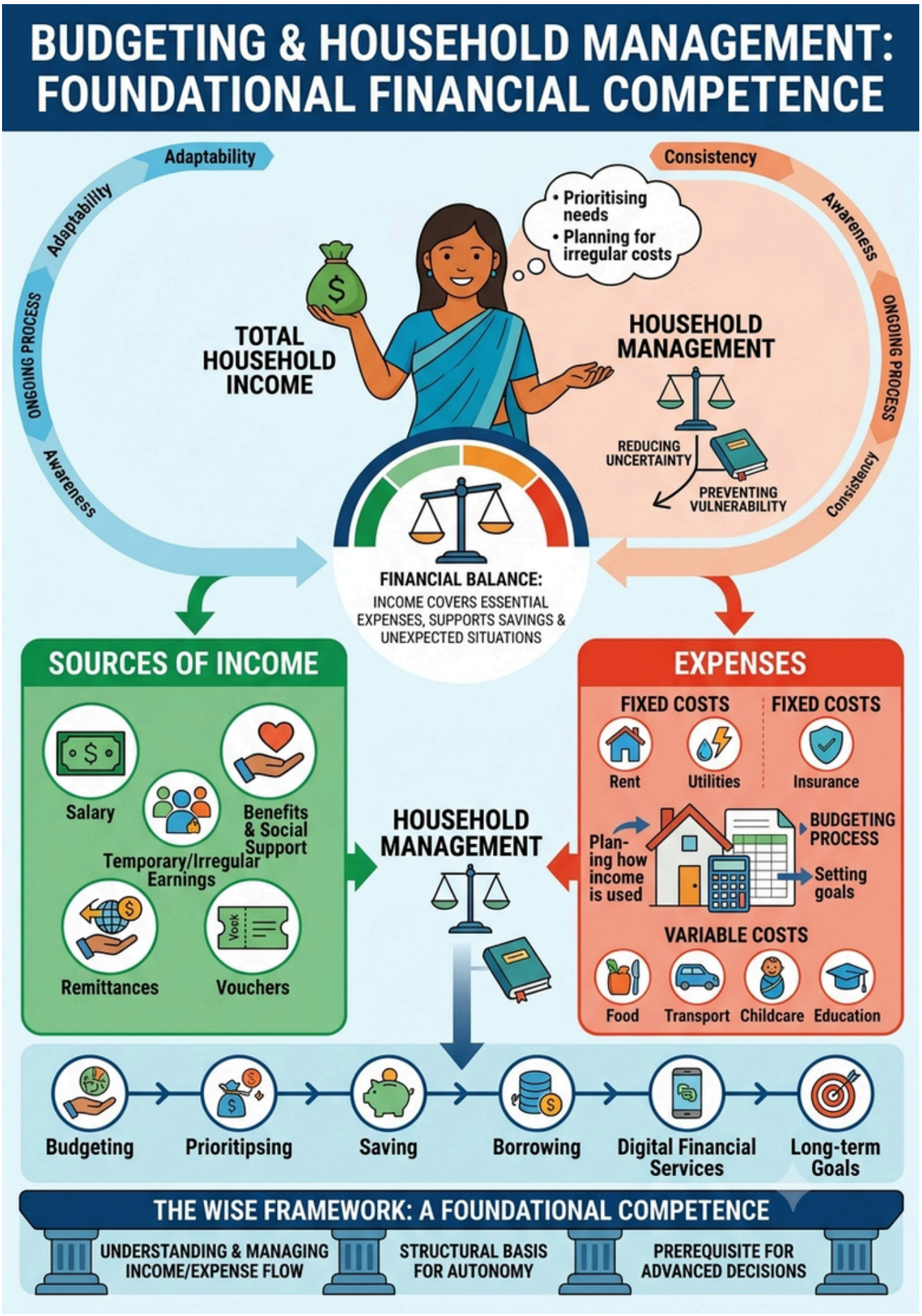
## *Navigating income and expenses sources*



# What's Inside

1. **What it is**
   Income and expenses in a country where everything works differently.
2. **What you'll be able to do**
   See the money, build the budget, keep it under control.
3. **Knowledge, skills, attitudes**
   What a budget is, the habit of tracking, the confidence to keep going.
4. **Three levels**
   From recognising income and expenses to planning ahead alone.
5. **Two real stories**
   Olena in Romania, and a classroom that used one realistic month.
6. **Where to go next**
   Sources and tools for household budgeting.




BUDGETING & HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT: FOUNDATIONAL FINANCIAL COMPETENCE
Adaptability
Consistency
Awareness
ONGOING PROCESS
Adaptability
ONGOING PROCESS
Awareness
Consistency
• Prioritising needs
• Planning for irregular costs
TOTAL HOUSEHOLD INCOME
HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT
REDUCING UNCERTAINTY
PREVENTING VULNERABILITY
FINANCIAL BALANCE:
INCOME COVERS ESSENTIAL EXPENSES, SUPPORTS SAVINGS & UNEXPECTED SITUATIONS
SOURCES OF INCOME
Salary
Benefits & Social Support
Temporary/Irregular Earnings
Remittances
Vouchers
HOUSEHOLD MANAGEMENT
EXPENSES
FIXED COSTS
Rent
Utilities
FIXED COSTS
Insurance
Plan-ing how income is used
BUDGETING PROCESS
Setting goals
VARIABLE COSTS
Food
Transport
Childcare
Education
Budgeting
Prioritipsing
Saving
Borrowing
Digital Financial Services
Long-term Goals
THE WISE FRAMEWORK: A FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCE
UNDERSTANDING & MANAGING INCOME/EXPENSE FLOW
STRUCTURAL BASIS FOR AUTONOMY
PREREQUISITE FOR ADVANCED DECISIONS

# 1. Competence Overview

## 1.1 Title and Definition - WHAT IT IS

Budgeting and household management represents a core competence in the development of financial stability and independence. It refers to the ability to understand how financial resources are generated, distributed and managed within a household. In the context of everyday life, this competence supports individuals in making informed decisions about spending, prioritising essential needs, and planning for both regular and unexpected costs. Rather than being a one-time activity, budgeting is understood as an ongoing process that requires awareness, consistency and the ability to adapt to changing financial circumstances.

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Within contemporary financial systems, managing income and expenses has become increasingly complex. Individuals are expected to navigate multiple sources of income, contractual obligations, recurring payments and variable costs, often within digital or formalised systems. For migrant women, this complexity is further amplified by the need to adjust to new economic environments, unfamiliar institutional frameworks and different cost-of-living structures. Income may also be temporary, part-time, seasonal or irregular. In this context, budgeting and household management becomes a key competence for reducing uncertainty, preventing financial vulnerability and supporting integration into the economic life of the host country.

Within the WISE framework, this competence is defined as foundational. It underpins the development of all other financial competences, as the ability to understand and manage the flow of income and expenses is a prerequisite for engaging with more advanced financial decisions, such as saving, borrowing, using digital financial services or planning for long-term goals. As such, budgeting and household management provides the structural basis for the development of financial autonomy and informed decision-making.

For the purpose of this competence, several key concepts are used:

- Budgeting refers to the process of planning how income will be used to cover expenses, meet obligations and support future goals.
- Household management refers to the organisation and prioritisation of financial resources within a household, including rent, utilities, food, transport, childcare, education-related costs and other recurring or occasional expenses.
- Income refers to all financial resources available to a person or household, including salary, benefits, social support, vouchers, remittances or temporary/irregular earnings.
- Expenses refer to the money spent on goods, services and obligations. These may be fixed, such as rent, or variable, such as utilities, food, transport or emergency costs. They may also be regular, occasional or unexpected.
- Financial balance is achieved when total planned household expenses do not exceed available income, while financial planning also takes account of future and unexpected costs.

Together, these elements define budgeting and household management as the ability to understand, organise and balance household financial resources in a way that supports stability, autonomy and informed decision-making.

## 1.2. Relevance for Migrant Women - WHY IT MATTERS FOR YOU

For migrant women, budgeting and household management is a key competence because migration often changes the entire financial context in which daily decisions are made. Prices, housing systems, employment rules, taxation, social benefits, banking procedures and payment habits may differ significantly from those in the country of origin. At the same time, many migrant women need to manage household responsibilities while adapting to a new language, new institutions and, in many cases, temporary, irregular or transitional income. This makes financial planning more complex, but also more necessary.

The relevance of this competence is also closely linked to the specific vulnerabilities migrant women may face. Limited knowledge of the host country's financial system, lack of familiarity with employment contracts, responsibility for children or relatives, reduced access to informal support networks, and limited confidence in dealing with institutions can all influence how financial decisions are made. As a result, financial decisions are often made under pressure, with a focus on immediate needs rather than longer-term stability.

Budgeting can reduce this uncertainty by helping learners organise their financial situation in a structured and realistic way. By understanding how income and expenses function, and by planning ahead for both regular and unexpected costs, migrant women can gain more control over their household finances. While budgeting does not remove structural barriers such as low income or limited access to services, it provides an essential tool for making more informed and consistent financial decisions.

In practical terms, this competence supports learners in:

- understanding how income and expenses function in the host country;
- planning household spending based on real priorities;
- preparing for seasonal or unexpected costs;
- identifying situations where spending may exceed available income;;
- strengthening autonomy in everyday financial decision-making.

Within the WISE framework, this competence is therefore closely connected to empowerment and inclusion. A woman who understands her household budget is better prepared to access employment, use financial and social services, support her family, and participate more actively in the economic and social life of the host country.

## 1.3. Learning Objectives - WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

### See the money



- Identify different sources of income and types of household expenses.
- Distinguish between gross and net income in a practical context.
- Distinguish between fixed, variable, regular, occasional and unexpected expenses.

1

### Build the budget



- Create and maintain a simple household budget based on your own situation.
- Prioritise essential needs and distinguish them from non-essential wants.

### Keep it under control



- Monitor whether spending is within available income, and adjust it when necessary.
- Plan for predictable irregular or seasonal expenses.
- Recognise how everyday decisions influence stability and longer-term independence.

### Learning objectives for the educator

- Support learners in understanding financial systems through practical examples.
- Adapt teaching to different levels of literacy, language and confidence.
- Use culturally sensitive and learner-centred methods.
- Facilitate budgeting activities based on realistic household scenarios.
- Encourage learners to apply budgeting skills in their daily life.
- Create a safe learning environment that builds financial confidence.

## 2. The Competency Triad: KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

### K Knowledge

*The facts, concepts and rules this competence rests on*

★ ☆ ☆

- What a household budget is, and why it supports financial stability.
- Where income comes from - wages, benefits, remittances, occasional work - and the difference between gross and net.
- Fixed, variable, regular, occasional and unexpected expenses.
- Balance, deficit and surplus, and what each one means for the household.
- Essential needs against non-essential wants, and how seasonal costs change the month.

### S Skills

*The practical ability to apply that knowledge to real tasks*

★ ★ ☆

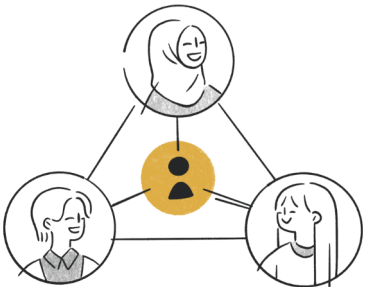
- Work out how much income is actually available after deductions.
- Record and sort household income and expenses in a clear, structured way.
- Build a simple budget that matches her real situation, and prioritise rent, food, utilities and transport.
- See when planned spending will exceed income, and correct it in time.
- Plan ahead for recurring and seasonal payments, using a notebook, a table or an app.

### A Attitudes

*The dispositions that carry it: confidence, responsibility, resilience*

★ ★ ★

- Responsibility: owning financial decisions and their consequences.
- Confidence: believing these tasks can be learned, even in an unfamiliar system.
- Forward-looking orientation: planning for what is coming, not only for today.
- Consistency and adaptability: keeping the habit, adjusting the plan when circumstances change.
- Resilience: staying calm in difficulty and continuing when results are slow.



## 3. Levels of Proficiency

The WISE framework defines three progressive levels of proficiency for each financial intelligence competence. For budgeting and household management, progression is understood through the learner's ability to move from basic recognition of income and expenses, to independent household financial organisation, and finally to strategic financial planning and peer support.

The levels reflect not only what the learner knows, but also how independently she can apply this knowledge in real-life situations. They show the gradual development of confidence, responsibility and autonomy in managing household finances.

| LEVEL 1<br>**Basic** | LEVEL 2<br>**Intermediate** | LEVEL 3<br>**Advanced** |
|---|---|---|
| *Foundational understanding and the ability to perform simple tasks with guidance.* | *Independent application of skills in common financial scenarios.* | *High-level mastery, including complex problem-solving and the ability to mentor others.* |
| **SNAPSHOT**<br>*With guidance she names her main income sources and her essential household expenses, and begins to see where the money comes from and where it goes.* | *She creates, maintains and adjusts a household budget on her own. Budgeting has become part of her regular routine.* | *She uses budgeting strategically – to plan ahead, manage risk, and help others understand how a household budget works.* |
| **AUTONOMY**<br>Works step by step with an educator, a template or a visual tool. | Has moved from guided learning to practical autonomy; decides by priorities rather than under immediate pressure. | High autonomy. Connects everyday spending with future goals – savings, training, work, a child's education. |
| **COMPLEXITY OF TASKS**<br>No full overview of the month yet. She is learning to tell income from expenses, and needs from wants. | Tracks finances over time and sees the patterns. Separates fixed from variable costs and adjusts when circumstances change. | Anticipates trouble and adjusts before it turns critical – seasonal costs, income changes, family needs, unexpected events. |
| **SUPPORTING OTHERS**<br>Still on the receiving side of support. The aim here is awareness and confidence, not yet independence. | Not a mentoring role yet. The shift is inward: from recording what happened to planning what should happen next. | Explains basic budgeting principles to peers and family, and shares practical strategies from her own experience. |
| **WHAT SHE CAN DO**<br>• Identifies main income sources – salary, benefits, vouchers, remittances, social support.<br>• Recognises essential expenses – rent, food, utilities, transport, childcare, school costs.<br>• Understands the basic difference between income and expenses.<br>• Distinguishes essential needs from non-essential wants, with guidance.<br>• Follows simple steps to build a basic budget from a template.<br>• Recognises when expenses may be higher than the income available. | • Prepares a weekly or monthly household budget independently.<br>• Tracks income and expenses in a notebook, table, spreadsheet or app.<br>• Sorts expenses into fixed, variable, regular and irregular costs.<br>• Prioritises essential expenses before non-essential spending.<br>• Sees whether the budget is balanced, in deficit or in surplus.<br>• Plans recurring payments and reviews the budget at the end of the month. | • Plans beyond the month, for irregular and seasonal expenses.<br>• Decides how to allocate a surplus against household priorities.<br>• Absorbs a financial shock without losing control of the budget.<br>• Compares options and decides on cost, necessity and risk.<br>• Explains basic budgeting principles to peers and family members.<br>• Helps others identify income, expenses, needs and wants in a budget. |

## 4. Applied Case Studies - TWO REAL STORIES

### 4.1. Learner-Centric Case Study

### Olena - living in Romania with her two children

From uncertainty to control

#### 1 The situation

- A new job, about 3,800 RON net a month - more stable than her first months in the country.
- The difficulty is not the level of the income but the lack of structure in managing it.
- Rent falls at the start of the month, utilities swing with the season, and daily costs are not tracked at all.
- Unexpected medical or school costs force her to borrow small amounts from friends, or delay other payments.
- The result is stress and a constant sense of instability - even in months when the income covers the basics.

#### 2 What she did

- Wrote down every source of income, and listed household expenses in a structured way.
- Separated essential costs - rent, food, utilities, transport - from what can be reduced when necessary.
- Built her first household budget on a simple monthly template, and found the points in the month where things get tight.
- Started planning ahead for variable costs, especially utilities, and cut some non-essential spending.
- Set aside a small amount for unexpected costs, and reviewed the budget against real spending.

#### 3 What changed

- Her income has not risen significantly - but she can now anticipate and manage her expenses.
- She needs emergency financial support less often than before.
- Financial decisions became deliberate rather than reactive.

**What this case shows**

Basic budgeting skills can move a woman from uncertainty and short-term coping towards stability, confidence and autonomy - without her income changing.

## 4.2. Educator-Centric Case Study

### An adult educator - a financial literacy group

Using real-life budgeting in the classroom

#### 1 The challenge

- The group is diverse in language, schooling and financial experience.
- Some learners have never used a written budget; others manage money informally without tracking anything.
- Many feel disconnected from budgeting: too complex, or pointless on a limited and unstable income.
- Abstract definitions produce no engagement, and learners will not apply them to their own situation.

#### 2 What the educator did

- Replaced theory with a scenario built on a realistic household: fixed income, rent, utilities, food, transport, school costs.
- Added one unexpected cost and one seasonal expense, so the scenario behaves like a real month.
- Small groups sorted essential from non-essential spending and decided whether the budget lands in balance, deficit or surplus.
- Then each learner drafted her own simplified budget - with fictional or anonymised figures where she preferred not to disclose anything.
- Visual materials, plain language and peer discussion carried the activity; the educator asked each woman to name one concrete change she could make at home.

#### 3 What changed

- Budgeting became practical rather than abstract, and both engagement and confidence rose.
- Learners could name specific actions to improve their own situation.
- Participation increased, and with it the willingness to raise financial topics in later sessions.

**Pedagogical approach and impact**

Practical, learner-centred work matters most in groups with mixed backgrounds and uneven confidence - the scenario gives everyone the same safe starting point.

## 5. Additional learning materials - WHERE TO GO NEXT

Learners and educators can use the following resources to better understand budgeting and household financial management:

- What is Budgeting? | Practical Money Skills

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQzoZfc3GwQ

- Managing Your Money – Basic Budgeting Tips

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVKQn2I4HDM

- OECD Financial Literacy Resources

https://www.oecd.org/financial/education/

These materials provide simple explanations and practical examples that support the development of everyday financial skills.

# Competence 2

## Saving and investing:

## *Saving strategies for building financial security*

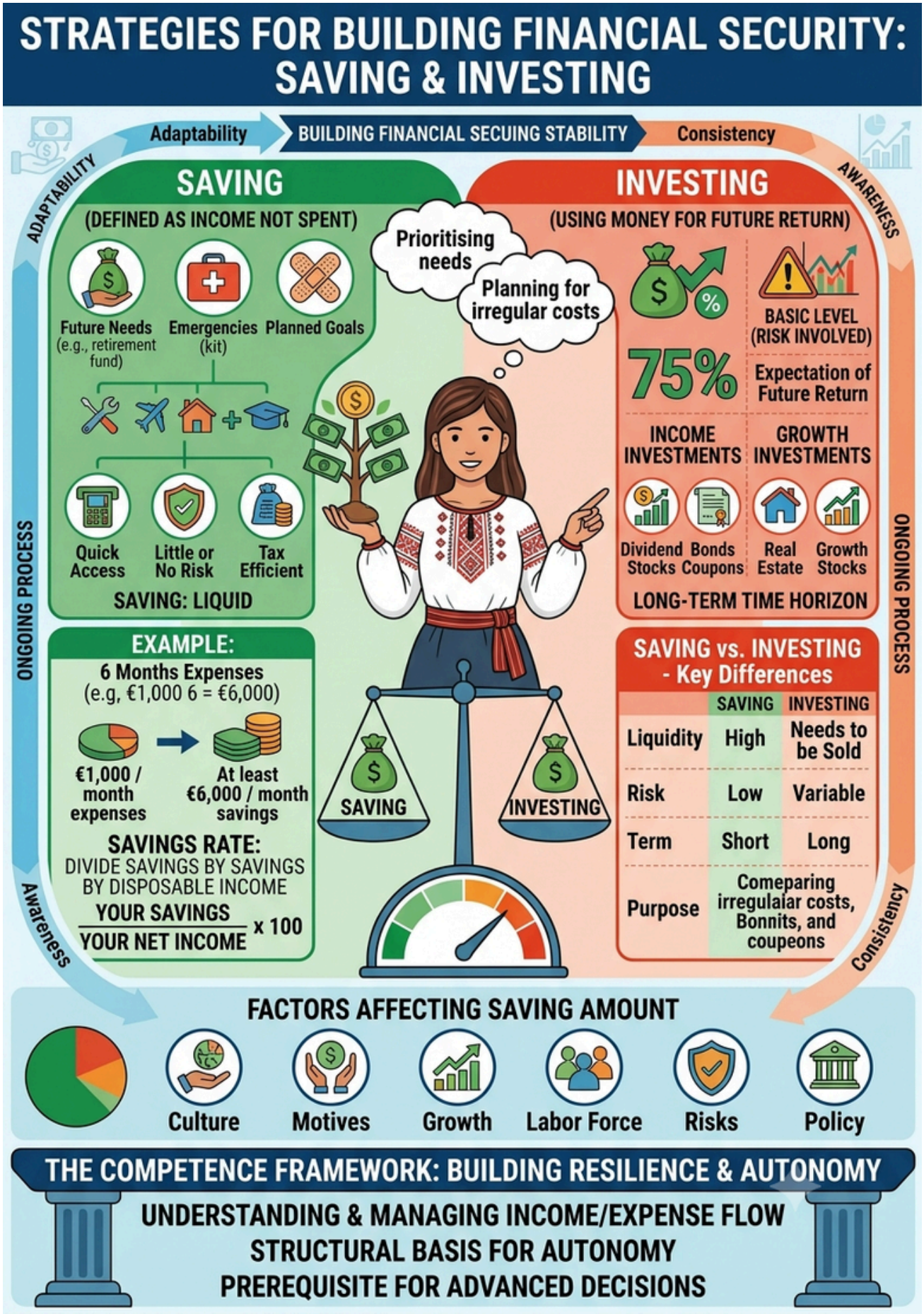


# What's Inside



1. **What it is**
   Setting money aside - and the difference between saving and investing.
2. **What you'll be able to do**
   Why and how much, risk and safety net, choosing safely.
3. **Knowledge, skills, attitudes**
   What an emergency fund is for, the habit, and patience with results.
4. **Three levels**
   From saving what is left, to a plan with goals, to judging risk alone.
5. **Two real stories**
   Amina in Sweden, and a classroom where saving stopped being for the rich.
6. **Where to go next**
   Sources and tools on saving and first investment ideas.




STRATEGIES FOR BUILDING FINANCIAL SECURITY: SAVING & INVESTING
Adaptability
BUILDING FINANCIAL SECUING STABILITY
Consistency
ADAPTABILITY
AWARENESS
SAVING
(DEFINED AS INCOME NOT SPENT)
Future Needs (e.g., retirement fund)
Emergencies (kit)
Planned Goals
Quick Access
Little or No Risk
Tax Efficient
SAVING: LIQUID
Prioritising needs
Planning for irregular costs
INVESTING
(USING MONEY FOR FUTURE RETURN)
BASIC LEVEL (RISK INVOLVED)
75%
Expectation of Future Return
INCOME INVESTMENTS
GROWTH INVESTMENTS
Dividend Stocks
Bonds Coupons
Real Estate
Growth Stocks
LONG-TERM TIME HORIZON
ONGOING PROCESS
ONGOING PROCESS
EXAMPLE:
6 Months Expenses
(e.g, €1,000 6 = €6,000)
€1,000 / month expenses
At least €6,000 / month savings
SAVINGS RATE:
DIVIDE SAVINGS BY SAVINGS BY DISPOSABLE INCOME
YOUR SAVINGS / YOUR NET INCOME x 100
SAVING
INVESTING
SAVING vs. INVESTING - Key Differences
SAVING
INVESTING
Liquidity
High
Needs to be Sold
Risk
Low
Variable
Term
Short
Long
Purpose
Comeparing irregulaiar costs, Bonnits, and coupeons
Awareness
Consistency
FACTORS AFFECTING SAVING AMOUNT
Culture
Motives
Growth
Labor Force
Risks
Policy
THE COMPETENCE FRAMEWORK: BUILDING RESILIENCE & AUTONOMY
UNDERSTANDING & MANAGING INCOME/EXPENSE FLOW
STRUCTURAL BASIS FOR AUTONOMY
PREREQUISITE FOR ADVANCED DECISIONS

# 1. Competence Overview

## 1.1. Title and Definition - WHAT IT IS

This competence focuses on the ability to manage personal income through effective saving strategies and a basic understanding of how savings can support financial security and long-term stability.

However, the terms saving and investing are often used interchangeably, but there's a difference.
Definitions:

- **Saving** is defined as the part of income that is not spent on immediate consumption but is set aside for future needs, emergencies, or planned goals. It's money you want to be able to access quickly, with little or no risk, and with the least amount of taxes.
- **Investing** is introduced at a basic level as using money with the expectation of future financial return (long-term goals), while recognizing that it involves risk. Investing is buying assets such as stocks, bonds, mutual funds or real estate with the expectation that your investment will make money for you. Investments can be categorized as income investments or growth investments.

The savings are highly liquid and available for immediate use, while the investments must first be sold into usable cash. Also, the investments entail some sort of long-term time horizon to allow the money to grow and appreciate.

Some of the factors that affect the amount people save are culture, differences in saving motives, economic growth, demographics, how many people in the economy are in the labor force, the insurability of risks, and economic policy.

The competence supports learners in building financial resilience, planning for uncertainty, and making informed financial decisions in everyday life.

Example!
An individual or a household should save at least six months' worth of expenses in order to be considered as financially secure. For example, a household that has a cost of 1.000€ for expenses per month should have at least 6.000€ in savings (1.000€ x 6 months). Therefore, an individual should save the 10- 20% of his/her income until the appropriate amount of savings is reached.

**How to Calculate Your Savings Rate?**
Savings rate is the percentage of disposable personal income that is kept rather than spent on consumption or obligations. Dividing savings by disposable income yields the saving rate (your savings / your net income x 100).

## 1.2. Relevance for Migrant Women - WHY IT MATTERS FOR YOU

Saving and investing are important for migrant women to achieve economic inclusion and empowerment by providing financial security, fostering independence from precarious informal economies, and enabling control over their own financial futures. These practices allow them to build resilience against income shocks, invest in children's lives, and facilitate secure remittances, countering structural, cultural, and gendered barriers in host countries.

Research consistently shows that migrant women experience multiple, overlapping disadvantages as women and as migrants, which significantly affect their financial stability and long-term economic prospects. Migrant women are more likely to experience labour market vulnerability, including higher unemployment rates, underemployment, and deskilling compared to both native-born women and migrant men. Even when employed, they are often concentrated in low-paid, unstable jobs, limiting their ability to accumulate savings and increasing their exposure to financial shocks.

Moreover, there is strong evidence of gender gaps in financial literacy. OECD data shows that women consistently score lower than men in financial knowledge across most countries, which affects their ability to make informed financial decisions . When combined with migrant status, this gap is further exacerbated by language barriers, unfamiliar financial systems, and limited access to formal financial education.

Importantly, saving behaviour is directly linked to financial resilience. Building even small savings helps individuals cope with unexpected expenses, avoid debt, and reduce their vulnerability to poverty. For migrant women, who often lack family safety nets in host countries, this is particularly critical for achieving independence and stability.

**Why Saving and Investing is Vital for migrant women**

Financial Autonomy and Empowerment: Access to individual, private savings accounts increases women's control over household finances, giving them greater decision-making power and boosting self-reliance.

Building Resilience: Savings enable women to manage risks, such as unexpected medical emergencies or the sudden loss of income, without falling into debt.

Entrepreneurship and Growth: Saving is a crucial step towards building capital, enabling migrant women to start, grow, or invest in small businesses (microentrepreneurship), which is a key pathway to economic independence.

**Key Solutions for Empowerment**

Digital Financial Services (DFS): Mobile money and digital apps enable low-cost, secure, and private savings and remittances, bypassing geographical barriers to banks.

Financial Literacy Training: Offering targeted, language-appropriate financial education helps women understand investment opportunities, manage debt, and confidently use formal financial systems.

Gender-Sensitive Financial Products: Banks and remittance providers must design products that address the specific needs of women, such as lower or no-frill account fees and flexible onboarding processes.

Support Networks and Groups: Forming self-help groups and participating in community networks allows women to save together and share knowledge.

## Why and how much



- Understand the purpose and importance of saving for financial security.
- Develop realistic saving habits, including when income is low or irregular.
- Set short-, medium- and long-term financial goals.

## Risk and safety net



- Understand the purpose of an emergency fund.
- Distinguish between saving and investing.
- Understand how risk, return, liquidity and time horizon relate.

## Choosing safely



- Identify regulated and appropriate saving options.
- Recognise misleading or high-risk investment offers.
- Decide how to allocate available surplus toward future needs and goals.

## Learning objectives for the educator

- Facilitate understanding of saving behaviour and financial planning.
- Use real-life examples and culturally sensitive teaching methods.
- Support learners in creating realistic personal saving strategies.
- Encourage financial confidence and long-term thinking.

## 2. The Competency Triad - KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTITUDES

### K Knowledge

*The facts, concepts and rules this competence rests on*

★ ☆ ☆

- What savings are, and how they build stability, independence and resilience.
- The purpose of an emergency fund - usually three to six months of living costs.
- Safe saving options and how interest works; the risk of keeping cash at home.
- What investing is, and how risk, return, liquidity and time horizon relate.
- Fraud risks and misleading offers, and why a "guaranteed" high return is a warning sign.
- How habits and impulse spending shape how much can be saved at all.

### S Skills

*The practical ability to apply that knowledge to real tasks*

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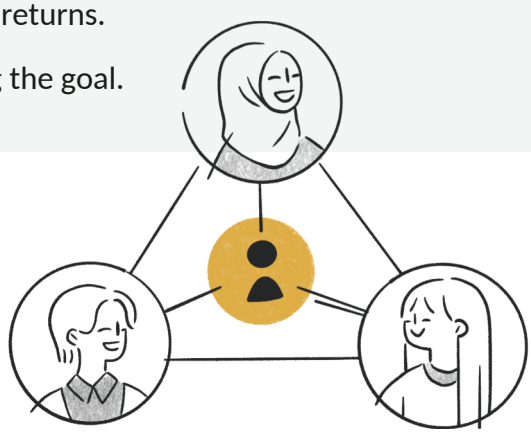
- Judge what she can realistically set aside, given her own situation.
- Set short-, medium- and long-term goals, and a saving plan to match them.
- Save small amounts consistently, before non-essential spending, even on irregular income.
- Build and maintain an emergency fund, and adjust it when circumstances change.
- Compare saving options on access, safety, cost and return - and tell saving from investing.
- Recognise unrealistic offers and check reliable sources before deciding.

### A Attitudes

*The dispositions that carry it: confidence, responsibility, resilience*

★ ★ ★

- Responsibility: protecting the money set aside for essentials and emergencies.
- Future orientation: valuing security ahead, and delaying non-essential spending.
- Confidence: believing that saving is possible at any income level.
- Risk awareness: healthy scepticism towards "guaranteed" returns.
- Resilience: keeping the habit after a setback, and adapting the goal.



## 3. Levels of Proficiency

| LEVEL 1<br>**Basic**<br>€ | LEVEL 2<br>**Intermediate** | LEVEL 3<br>**Advanced** |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| ***Foundational understanding and the ability to perform simple tasks with guidance.*** | ***Independent application of skills in common financial scenarios.*** | ***High-level mastery, including complex problem-solving and the ability to mentor others.*** |
| **SNAPSHOT**<br>*She understands saving as a way of preparing for emergencies and personal goals, and begins to set money aside regularly – with guidance, in small amounts.* | *She runs a structured saving plan on her own: realistic goals, regular contributions, an emergency fund, and adjustments when income or expenses change.* | *She plans strategically – balancing liquidity, safety, risk and long-term growth – and helps others understand safe saving and investing.* |
| **AUTONOMY**<br>Needs guidance to set a goal, decide an amount and choose a safe place to keep the money. | Saves without external prompting and revises the plan herself when circumstances change. | High autonomy. Links saving and basic investment decisions to major life goals – housing, education, retirement, a business. |
| **COMPLEXITY OF TASKS**<br>One simple short-term goal at a time. Choosing specific investments is not expected at this level. | Compares basic savings products on interest, fees, access and safety, and judges simple options by risk, return, liquidity and time horizon. | Weighs risk, return, liquidity, fees and time horizon. Understands that diversification manages risk but does not remove it. |
| **SUPPORTING OTHERS**<br>Still on the receiving side of support. The focus is awareness and confidence, not reaching a particular amount. | Not a mentoring role yet. She looks for reliable information before using an unfamiliar product, and does not invest because others are doing so. | Explains saving, risk and investment principles to peers and family – and points them to regulated or professional sources when a question outgrows her. |
| **WHAT SHE CAN DO**<br>• Explains in simple terms what saving means and why people save.<br>• Names common reasons to save – emergencies, education, housing, family needs.<br>• Identifies a realistic amount she could set aside regularly, however small.<br>• Sets a simple short-term saving goal and follows a basic plan, with guidance.<br>• Knows how saving differs from investing, and that investments can lose value.<br>• Keeps savings with safe, regulated institutions; knows cash at home can be lost or stolen. | • Creates and follows a saving plan based on her income, priorities and goals.<br>• Sets aside a fixed amount or share of income, using automatic transfers.<br>• Calculates a realistic emergency-fund target and tracks progress towards it.<br>• Compares savings products on interest, fees, access conditions and security.<br>• Checks whether a provider is authorised or regulated before using it.<br>• Revises contributions when income drops or an unexpected expense appears. | • Builds a multi-year saving and investment plan tied to household goals.<br>• Splits resources between emergency savings, near-term goals and long-term investments.<br>• Compares investment products on risk, return, liquidity and fees.<br>• Adapts the plan after a job loss, an income change or a major family expense.<br>• Questions guaranteed profits, unrealistic returns and pressure to invest fast.<br>• Explains principles to others – and points them to professional advice when needed. |

# 4. Applied Case Studies - TWO REAL STORIES

## 4.1. Learner-Centric Case Study

### Amina, 32 - a cleaning job in Sweden

From survival to stability

#### 1 The situation

- A stable but modest income. After rent, food and transport there is very little left at the end of the month.
- No emergency savings at all, and constant worry about an unexpected expense.
- She believes her income is simply too low to save.
- What she does have sits in her everyday account, and she is unsure which saving options are safe.

#### 2 What she did

- Set a first goal she could picture: an emergency fund of EUR 300. Then longer ones - a laptop for online training, then several months of essential expenses.
- Started small: a fixed amount from every salary, on the understanding that consistency beats size.
- Made it automatic - a standing transfer to a separate savings account the moment her salary arrives.
- Checked progress regularly. In expensive months she saved less rather than abandoning the plan.
- Compared basic savings accounts on access, fees, interest and the safety of the institution, and chose a regulated one.
- Learned the difference between saving and investing - and kept the emergency fund out of anything risky.

#### 3 What changed

- After a year: a modest emergency fund, and a saving habit that holds.
- More confidence about the financial future, and better preparation for the unexpected.
- She can tell when saving is the right answer and when investing might be - and she ignores social-media offers promising guaranteed returns.

**Learning point**

Financial security can be built progressively through realistic goals, consistency and safe saving practices, even when income is limited.

## An adult educator in Sweden - a diverse group of migrant women

Supporting financial confidence in the classroom

### 1 The challenge

- Learners believe they have "nothing left to save", and focus on immediate needs only.
- Financial terminology is difficult, and experience with formal saving products is limited.
- Underneath it: little confidence that a financial goal is achievable at all.
- Explaining what saving is will not be enough - it has to be experienced as realistic.

### 2 What the educator did

- "Small steps": each learner gets a fictional income and a set of expenses, and names a realistic amount she could save - not a fixed percentage.
- Goal-based activity: she chooses a goal - EUR 300 emergency fund, training, a phone, a housing deposit - and works out the monthly amount and how long it would take.
- Strategy simulation: saving right after payday, small weekly amounts, automatic transfers, trimming non-essentials - and which suits which circumstances.
- Saving or investing: "you need this in three months" against "you will not need this for ten years" - goal, time horizon, liquidity and risk, without advanced theory.
- Reflection: each woman writes one saving behaviour she can realistically start, and a simple personal plan.

### 3 What changed

- Learners discuss saving and financial goals with more confidence.
- They see that saving can start small, and that different goals need different strategies.
- The distinction between safe short-term saving and longer-term investing is now on the table.

**Learning point**

Simulation, goal setting and reflection turn saving from an abstract financial concept into an achievable everyday behaviour. The aim is the habit, not the amount.

## 5. Additional learning materials - WHERE TO GO NEXT

Watch the following video about savings for deeper understanding:

- What is Saving? | Money Instructor

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wXHQjScKPzc

- What are Savings?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=08vVgzM_tyc

The Difference Between Saving, Investing, and Speculating
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=blnbxbftme0

# Competence 3

## Financial rights and consumer protection:

## *Understanding legal rights and local financial systems*

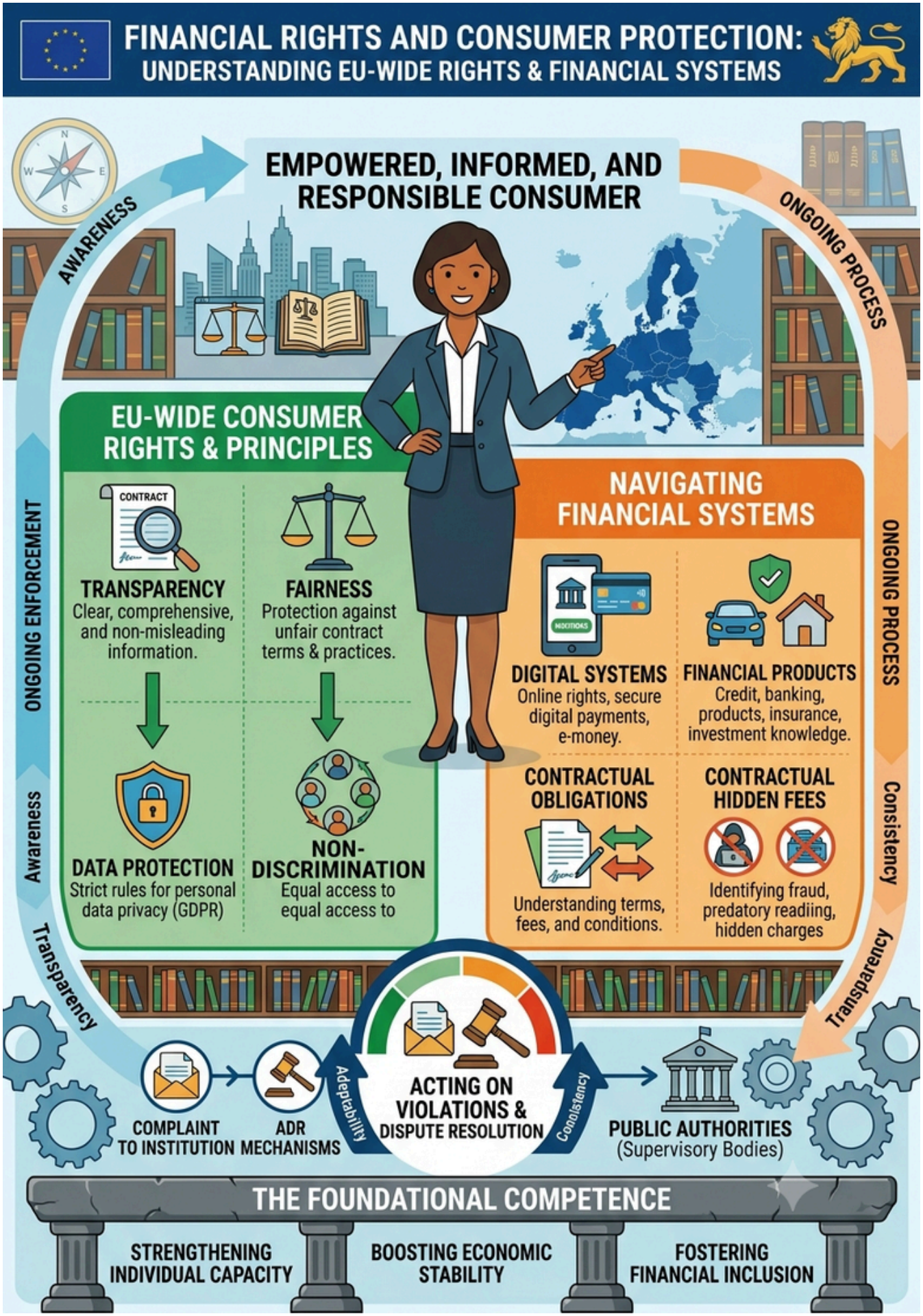


# What's Inside

3

1. **What it is**
   The rules that protect you as a customer, and who enforces them.
2. **What you'll be able to do**
   Know your rights, read the contract, judge the offer, act on them.
3. **Knowledge, skills, attitudes**
   The frameworks, reading a contract, the nerve to question a term.
4. **Three levels**
   From knowing the rules exist, to comparing alone, to cross-border cases.
5. **Two real stories**
   Olena and a fast loan that was not what it looked like.
6. **Where to go next**
   EU consumer rights, complaint routes and dispute resolution.




FINANCIAL RIGHTS AND CONSUMER PROTECTION:
UNDERSTANDING EU-WIDE RIGHTS & FINANCIAL SYSTEMS
EMPOWERED, INFORMED, AND RESPONSIBLE CONSUMER
AWARENESS
ONGOING PROCESS
ONGOING ENFORCEMENT
ONGOING PROCESS
Awareness
Consistency
Transparency
Transparency
EU-WIDE CONSUMER RIGHTS & PRINCIPLES
CONTRACT
TRANSPARENCY
Clear, comprehensive, and non-misleading information.
FAIRNESS
Protection against unfair contract terms & practices.
DATA PROTECTION
Strict rules for personal data privacy (GDPR)
NON-DISCRIMINATION
Equal access to equal access to
NAVIGATING FINANCIAL SYSTEMS
DIGITAL SYSTEMS
Online rights, secure digital payments, e-money.
FINANCIAL PRODUCTS
Credit, banking, products, insurance, investment knowledge.
CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS
Understanding terms, fees, and conditions.
CONTRACTUAL HIDDEN FEES
Identifying fraud, predatory readiing, hidden charges
COMPLAINT TO INSTITUTION
ADR MECHANISMS
Adeptability
ACTING ON VIOLATIONS & DISPUTE RESOLUTION
Consistency
PUBLIC AUTHORITIES
(Supervisory Bodies)
THE FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCE
STRENGTHENING INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY
BOOSTING ECONOMIC STABILITY
FOSTERING FINANCIAL INCLUSION

# 1. Competence Overview

## 1.1. Title and Definition - WHAT IT IS

Title:

Financial Rights and Consumer Protection: Understanding EU-wide Consumer Protection Rights and Financial Systems.

Definition:

This competence encompasses the comprehensive understanding and practical application of financial rights and consumer protection mechanisms within the European Union and its member states. It refers to an individual's ability to navigate legal and institutional frameworks governing financial services, including banking, credit, insurance, digital financial products, and contractual obligations.

At its core, this competence involves knowledge of fundamental EU consumer protection principles—such as transparency, fairness, non-discrimination, data protection, and the right to information—as well as awareness of national regulations and supervisory authorities responsible for enforcing these rights. It includes familiarity with key instruments such as contracts, terms and conditions, complaint procedures, dispute resolution mechanisms, and regulatory bodies.

Beyond theoretical understanding, this competence requires the ability to critically assess financial offers, identify misleading or unfair practices, and take appropriate action when rights are violated. This includes accessing reliable information, comparing financial products, understanding legal obligations, and effectively engaging with financial institutions and public authorities.

In the context of increasingly digitalized financial systems, the competence also integrates awareness of online consumer rights, digital banking environments, and cross-border financial services within the EU single market. It supports individuals in recognizing risks associated with fraud, predatory lending, hidden fees, and complex financial products.

Ultimately, this competence empowers individuals to act as informed and responsible consumers, capable of protecting their financial interests, making legally sound decisions, and confidently participating in the economic life of their host country. It contributes to financial inclusion, legal awareness, and long-term economic stability by strengthening the individual's capacity to exercise their rights and responsibilities within diverse financial systems.

## 1.2. Relevance for Migrant Women - WHY IT MATTERS FOR YOU

Financial rights and consumer protection are critically important for migrant women, as they often face multiple structural, informational, and systemic barriers when accessing and navigating financial systems in a new country. These barriers may include limited knowledge of local regulations, language difficulties, unfamiliarity with financial institutions, and reduced access to trustworthy information. As a result, migrant women may face greater difficulties in understanding their rights and may be more vulnerable to unfair contractual terms, misleading financial offers, or inappropriate financial products.

In many cases, migrant women may lack confidence in interacting with formal financial systems or may rely on informal networks rather than verified sources of information. Additionally, differences between financial systems in the country of origin and the host country can create confusion regarding rights, obligations, and available protections. Without adequate understanding of consumer rights and legal safeguards, individuals may be unable to recognize violations or take appropriate action when their rights are infringed.

Strengthening this competence directly supports economic inclusion by enabling migrant women to understand their rights, access financial services, and interact more confidently with financial institutions It enhances their ability to understand financial contracts, compare products, recognise their rights and obligations, and make informed decisions regarding savings, loans, insurance, and other financial services. Moreover, it builds the capacity to engage with public institutions, submit complaints, and seek redress through official channels when necessary.
From an empowerment perspective, this competence fosters autonomy, confidence, and resilience in financial decision-making. It supports migrant women in gaining control over their financial lives, reducing dependency, and improving their long-term economic stability. It also contributes to broader social integration by facilitating participation in the formal economy and strengthening trust in public and financial institutions.

At the European level, this competence aligns with key priorities related to financial inclusion, consumer protection, equal access to financial services, and migrant integration within the EU. By equipping migrant women with the knowledge and tools to understand and exercise their financial rights, this competence plays a crucial role in promoting equitable access to economic opportunities and ensuring that no group is left behind in increasingly complex financial environments.

In this context, developing financial rights and consumer protection competence strengthens individual autonomy while contributing to more inclusive and financially resilient societies.

## 1.3. Learning Objectives - WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

### Know your rights



- Understand the fundamental EU and national consumer protection rights that cover financial services.
- Know the principles behind them: transparency, fairness, and access to clear and reliable information.

### Read the contract



- Interpret the key elements of financial products and contractual agreements.

Read bank account terms, credit offers, insurance policies and conditions with understanding.

### Judge the offer



- Critically assess a financial offer and identify misleading or unfair practices.
- Recognise potential risks, including fraud and exploitation.

### Act on your rights



- Navigate local financial systems and deal with institutions and public authorities.
- Use complaint procedures, consumer protection mechanisms and dispute resolution when your rights are violated.

### Learning objectives for the educator

- Facilitate understanding of consumer protection frameworks through clear, practical, culturally sensitive approaches.
- Promote critical thinking and risk awareness in financial decision-making.
- Create an inclusive, supportive environment that builds confidence.
- Support learners in interpreting financial documents and legal terminology.
- Guide learners towards reliable sources and strategies against misinformation.
- Use case studies, simulations and scenario-based learning.

## 2. The Competency Triad - KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTITUDES

### K Knowledge

*The facts, concepts and rules this competence rests on*

★ ☆ ☆

- EU consumer protection principles: transparency, fairness, non-discrimination, clear information.
- The frameworks that matter - Consumer Rights Directive, PSD2, GDPR - and who enforces them nationally.
- Which institutions do what: banks, credit and insurance providers, supervisors, consumer bodies.
- What is inside a financial contract: terms, fees, interest, withdrawal rights, complaint routes.
- Where to go with a problem: consumer agencies, ombudsman services, alternative dispute resolution.
- Unfair practices by name: misleading advertising, hidden costs, predatory lending.

### S Skills

*The practical ability to apply that knowledge to real tasks*

★ ★ ☆

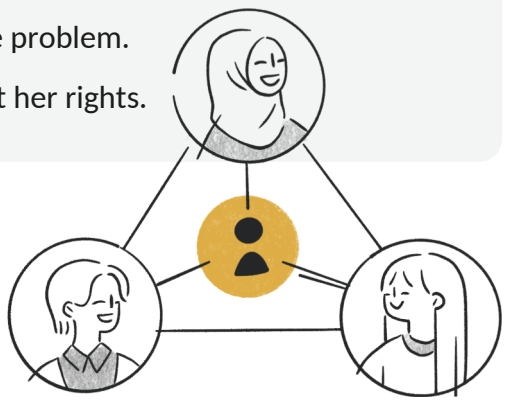
- Read a contract or terms and conditions and find the fees, rates and obligations.
- Spot unclear or potentially misleading clauses before signing.
- Compare financial products, with comparison tools as well as by asking.
- Ask questions, request clarification, complete forms, and keep records of what was agreed.
- Recognise a violation of her rights and act: refuse, seek advice, or complain.
- File a complaint and follow it through to an ombudsman or an ADR body.

### A Attitudes

*The dispositions that carry it: confidence, responsibility, resilience*

★ ★ ★

- Confidence to deal with institutions and authorities, despite language or past experience.
- Responsibility for her decisions and for the obligations a contract creates.
- Critical awareness: questioning unclear terms, refusing to decide under pressure.
- Resilience: using the complaint route rather than avoiding the problem.
- Empowerment: feeling entitled to ask, to refuse, and to assert her rights.



## 3. Levels of Proficiency

| LEVEL 1<br>**Basic** | LEVEL 2<br>**Intermediate** | LEVEL 3<br>**Advanced** |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| ***Foundational understanding and the ability to perform simple tasks with guidance.*** | ***Independent application of skills in common financial scenarios.*** | ***High-level mastery, including complex problem-solving and the ability to mentor others.*** |
| **SNAPSHOT**<br>*She knows that rules exist to protect her as a consumer, and can open a basic account or use standard payment methods when someone guides her through it.* | *She reads and evaluates contracts and product information on her own, compares options, and deals with providers directly.* | *She handles complex national and cross-border cases on her own, pursues formal complaints, and helps other women understand their rights.* |
| **AUTONOMY**<br>Follows step-by-step instructions and leans on educators, support services or trusted people. Hesitant to contact an institution alone. | Acts independently in routine situations and needs less support – but still seeks guidance when a case is complex or unfamiliar. | High autonomy, including with public authorities – and she knows the limits of her own knowledge and when to seek professional advice. |
| **COMPLEXITY OF TASKS**<br>Simple products and routine tasks. Beginning to notice fraud, misleading offers or unfair terms, but needs support to judge them. | Compares products on cost, conditions and consumer protection. Spots misleading information, unfair terms and unclear fees. | Examines complex contracts for problematic clauses and weighs long-term loans and insurance. Handles cross-border situations within the EU. |
| **SUPPORTING OTHERS**<br>Still on the receiving side of support. Confidence and legal awareness are only starting to build. | Not a mentoring role yet. The shift is towards confidence, responsibility and critical thinking in her own decisions. | Guides peers, particularly other migrant women, towards their rights and the right support services. May contribute to community financial education. |
| **WHAT SHE CAN DO**<br>• Knows that legal frameworks exist to protect consumers in financial dealings.<br>• Names the right to clear information, transparent terms and fair treatment.<br>• Recognises key institutions – banks, payment providers, consumer bodies.<br>• Opens a basic bank account or uses standard payment methods, with guidance.<br>• Finds the essential parts of a document – terms, fees, payment obligations.<br>• Knows that complaint procedures and support services exist. | • Reads contracts and terms with reasonable accuracy and finds what matters.<br>• Identifies fees, interest rates, obligations, cancellation conditions and risks.<br>• Compares products on cost, conditions and consumer protection.<br>• Handles routine dealings with providers and asks for clarification herself.<br>• Questions unclear conditions and seeks advice when her rights may be affected.<br>• Files a complaint and uses support services without relying on others. | • Reads complex contracts and flags unclear or problematic clauses.<br>• Compares long-term loans and insurance on cost, conditions, risk and protection.<br>• Manages cross-border financial situations within the EU.<br>• Assesses how reliable a source of financial information is.<br>• Submits formal complaints and follows dispute-resolution procedures.<br>• Helps other migrant women find their rights and the right support services. |

## 4. Applied Case Studies - TWO REAL STORIES

### 4.1. Learner-Centric Case Study



### Olena, 34 - recently arrived in Germany

Understanding a financial offer and exercising consumer rights

**1 The situation**

- Unexpected medical costs, and she needs money quickly.
- An online advertisement offers a fast loan: immediate approval, minimal documentation.
- The total cost is not stated, and the terms run long in complex language.
- She is new to the German financial system and feels pressed to decide.

**2 What she did**

- Read the loan conditions carefully instead of accepting the offer.
- Found the total cost higher than expected, with fees and conditions not clearly presented.
- Saw that withdrawal rights, repayment conditions and total cost were unclear - and asked for clarification.
- Compared offers from regulated providers on total cost, fees, repayment terms and consumer protection.
- Consulted a local consumer protection service to confirm her understanding.

**3 What changed**

- She refused the first offer and took a transparent, affordable loan with clearly stated terms.
- She reported the misleading advertisement to a consumer protection authority.
- She showed she can assess a financial offer critically and act to protect her own interests.

**K** Consumer rights, contractual conditions and fees - and why clear, transparent information matters.

**S** Reading and comparing offers, asking for clarification, finding reliable information, using complaint and support mechanisms.

**A** Confidence, critical thinking, caution, willingness to ask, readiness to exercise her rights.

## A community learning centre - a group of migrant women

Building confidence to understand and exercise consumer rights

### 1 The challenge

- Learners lose confidence in front of financial documents - loan, mobile and insurance contracts.
- They are unsure what their rights are, what to ask, and where to get help when something is unclear.
- Many avoid reading such documents, or leave the decision entirely to someone else.
- Behind it: language barriers, unfamiliar terminology, and fear of making a mistake.

### 2 What the educator did

- Opened with the key concepts: fees, interest, duration, withdrawal, consumer rights, complaint procedures.
- Handed out a realistic but simplified contract and led a structured analysis in small groups.
- Asked guiding questions and put legal terminology into accessible language, with visual and digital aids.
- Set a decision task - accept or reject this offer - and had learners justify and compare their choices.
- Introduced the consumer protection mechanisms: the right of withdrawal, and where to seek external advice.
- Had learners practise asking a provider for clarification and judging when a complaint is appropriate.

### 3 What changed

- Learners read financial documents with more confidence, and ask questions about them.
- They recognise a potential consumer protection problem and know where to seek support.
- The practical format reduced fear and built a sense of empowerment.

**Pedagogical approach and impact**

Scenario-based, learner-centred work makes consumer rights practical: learners rehearse real situations instead of studying legal concepts in the abstract.

## 5. Additional learning materials - WHERE TO GO NEXT

To support the development of financial rights and consumer protection competence, a range of high-quality, accessible, and evidence-based learning resources can be used. These materials are designed to provide both theoretical knowledge and practical guidance, with a focus on the needs of migrant women navigating financial systems within the European Union.

- European Commission – Consumer Rights and Protection

*Official information on EU consumer rights, including financial services, contracts, and dispute resolution mechanisms.*

https://commission.europa.eu/live-work-travel-eu/consumer-rights-and-complaints_en

- Your Europe Portal (EU)

*A comprehensive platform providing practical information on consumer rights, financial services, and cross-border issues within the EU.*

https://europa.eu/youreurope

- European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net)

*Support and advice on cross-border consumer issues, including financial services and dispute resolution.*

https://www.eccnet.eu

- OECD/INFE Financial Education Resources

*Guidelines, tools, and educational materials focused on financial literacy and consumer protection.*

https://www.oecd.org/financial/education

- European Banking Authority (EBA) – Consumer Corner

*Information on banking products, consumer rights, and financial safety within the EU.*

https://www.eba.europa.eu/consumer-corner

- National Consumer Protection Agencies (e.g., Germany – Verbraucherzentrale)

*Practical advice, counseling services, and educational materials on financial products, contracts, and consumer rights.*

https://www.verbraucherzentrale.de

- Money Matters – Financial Literacy Platform (various EU initiatives)

*Online tools and courses covering budgeting, financial decision-making, and consumer awareness.*

- Digital Finance Platforms and Comparison Tools (e.g., Check24, Finanzcheck)

*Tools that allow users to compare financial products such as loans, insurance, and bank accounts in a transparent and structured way.*

These materials can be used by both learners and educators to strengthen knowledge, support practical application, and ensure access to reliable and up-to-date information within the EU financial and legal context.

# Competence 4

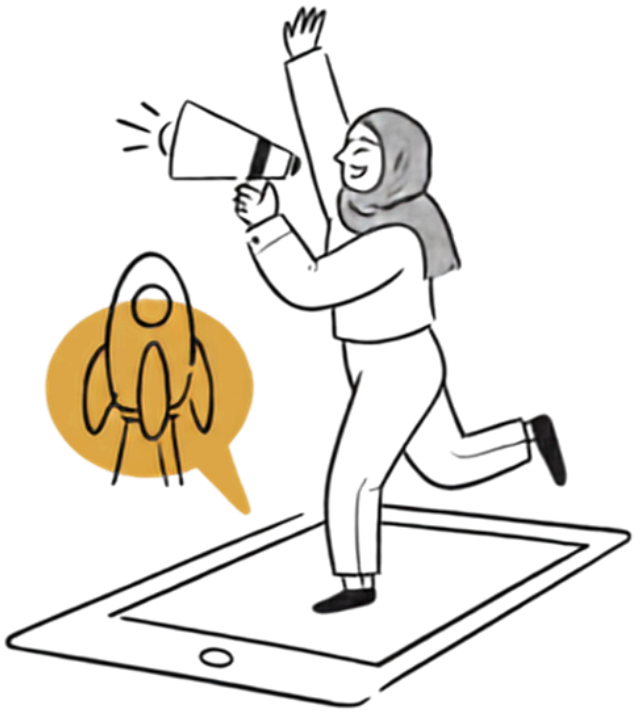
## Digital banking and fintech:

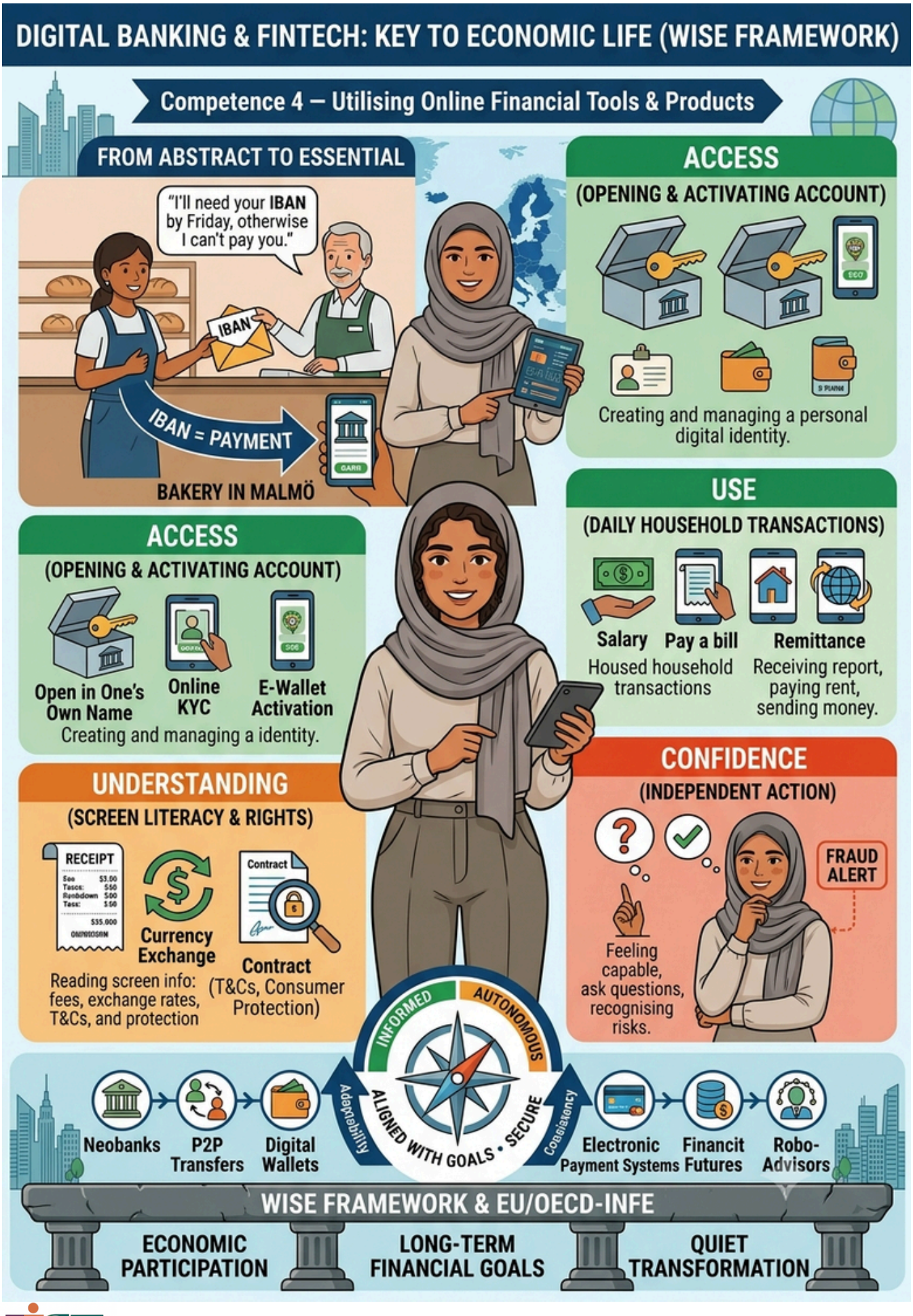
## *Confidence in utilizing online financial tools and products*



# What's Inside

1. **What it is**
   Digital financial services, from opening an account to a transfer home.
2. **What you'll be able to do**
   Get set up, use it day to day, stay safe and know your rights.
3. **Knowledge, skills, attitudes**
   How payments work, what to do in the app, calm after a mistake.
4. **Three levels**
   From a first guided login to comparing providers and mentoring.
5. **Two real stories**
   Amina and the call that tried to take her first salary.
6. **Where to go next**
   EU frameworks, and a free remittance price comparison tool.




DIGITAL BANKING & FINTECH: KEY TO ECONOMIC LIFE (WISE FRAMEWORK)
Competence 4 — Utilising Online Financial Tools & Products
FROM ABSTRACT TO ESSENTIAL
"I'll need your IBAN by Friday, otherwise I can't pay you."
IBAN
IBAN = PAYMENT
BAKERY IN MALMÖ
ACCESS
(OPENING & ACTIVATING ACCOUNT)
Creating and managing a personal digital identity.
USE
(DAILY HOUSEHOLD TRANSACTIONS)
Salary
Housed household transactions
Pay a bill
Remittance
Receiving report, paying rent, sending money.
ACCESS
(OPENING & ACTIVATING ACCOUNT)
Open in One's Own Name
Online KYC
E-Wallet Activation
Creating and managing a identity.
UNDERSTANDING
(SCREEN LITERACY & RIGHTS)
RECEIPT
Currency Exchange
Contract
Contract (T&Cs, Consumer Protection)
Reading screen info: fees, exchange rates, T&Cs, and protection
CONFIDENCE
(INDEPENDENT ACTION)
FRAUD ALERT
Feeling capable, ask questions, recognising risks.
INFORMED
AUTONOMOUS
ALIGNED WITH GOALS • SECURE
Adaptability
Consistency
Neobanks
P2P Transfers
Digital Wallets
Electronic Payment Systems
Financit Futures
Robo-Advisors
WISE FRAMEWORK & EU/OECD-INFE
ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION
LONG-TERM FINANCIAL GOALS
QUIET TRANSFORMATION

# 1. Competence Overview

## 1.1. Title and Definition - WHAT IT IS

A migrant woman walks into a bakery in Malmö for her first day of work. Before she has even put on her apron, the manager slides a piece of paper across the counter and says: “I’ll need your IBAN by Friday, otherwise I can’t pay you.” In that single moment, digital banking stops being an abstract topic. It becomes a passport to economic life.

4

Competence 4 — Digital Banking and Fintech: Confidence in Utilizing Online Financial Tools and Products — refers to the combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that allow an individual to access, understand and safely use digital financial services in everyday life. Building on the EU/OECD-INFE Financial Competence Framework for Adults (2022), the WISE Framework defines digital financial competence as the ability to interact confidently with the tools that shape modern personal finance: online and mobile banking, electronic payment systems, digital wallets, peer-to-peer transfer apps, neobanks, robo-advisors and the wider fintech landscape — in a way that is informed, autonomous, secure and aligned with one’s own goals.

Crucially, this is not framed as a purely technical skill. Pressing the right button matters less than knowing which button to press, why, and when to refuse. The competence rests on four interlocking dimensions:

- Access — opening, activating and managing a personal account or e-wallet through digital channels, in one’s own name.
- Use — performing the everyday transactions that hold a household together: receiving wages, paying rent and bills, sending remittances, setting small amounts aside.
- Understanding — reading what lies behind the screen: fees, exchange rates, security prompts, terms of service and consumer rights.
- Confidence — feeling capable of acting independently, asking informed questions, and recognising the moment when something does not add up.

Together, these four dimensions describe a quietly transformative capability: the ability of a woman who, sometimes for the first time in her life, holds the keys to her own financial story.

## 1.2. Relevance for Migrant Women - WHY IT MATTERS FOR YOU

Across the European Union, branch closures, contactless cards, e-government portals and salary deposits have made digital banking the default rather than the alternative. This rapid digitalisation can create additional barriers for people who have limited digital skills or are unfamiliar with the financial system in their host country. For migrant women, that gap between rapid digitalisation and uneven inclusion translates into very concrete obstacles.

Research consistently points to a compound digital and financial divide. The RIDE study on six European countries identified language barriers, non-recognition of qualifications, low prior exposure to digital tools and disproportionate childcare responsibilities as recurring obstacles to digital participation among migrant and refugee women (European Network of Migrant Women, 2021). The OECD/INFE 2023 International Survey of Adult Financial Literacy adds a further layer: women, migrants and lower-income groups consistently score below the population average on both financial and digital financial literacy indicators.

This competence directly addresses five barriers that disproportionately affect migrant women:

- Access to banking: Without a verified digital identity or familiarity with local KYC requirements, many migrant women remain underbanked, depending on cash or on a male relative's account.
- Remittances and transaction costs: UNCDF data show that women migrants tend to use cash-based, agent-led channels more than men, paying higher fees and missing out on linked financial products (UNCDF, 2023).
- Employment and financial autonomy: Access to a personal bank account and digital financial services can facilitate receiving a salary, paying bills, accessing services and managing self-employment activities.
- Digital safety and fraud risks: Limited digital literacy increases vulnerability to phishing, fake apps, romance scams and "bank advisor" phone calls — risks heightened when the conversation takes place in a non-native language.
- Financial empowerment: Independent control of a digital account is a recognised pathway to autonomy, especially in households where finances have traditionally been managed by others.

Mastering digital banking is therefore a gateway competence: it unlocks employment, housing, public services, entrepreneurship and personal safety at the same time. For many of the women WISE seeks to support, it is also the first concrete experience of financial citizenship in the host country.

## 1.3. Learning Objectives - WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO LEARN

### Get set up



- Identify the main digital financial services in the host country and what each one is for.
- Complete basic digital onboarding for an account or e-wallet, reviewing key terms and fees first.

### Use it day to day



- Carry out core transactions: balances, bills, transfers, remittances, standing orders.
- Compare products on cost, security, accessibility and reputation, and select the right one.

### Stay safe and know your rights



- Recognise phishing, smishing, fake apps and weak passwords, and apply protective measures.
- Know your rights under PSD2 and GDPR, and how to file a complaint.

### Learning objectives for the educator

- Design scenario-based, low-stakes activities to practise before using real money.
- Use plain language and visual supports: screenshots, step cards, glossaries.
- Keep materials current with fintech, EU regulation and new fraud techniques.
- Identify cultural, linguistic and gendered barriers, and adjust pace and examples.
- Facilitate peer learning so confident learners can support newcomers.
- Assess against the WISE levels and give feedback that builds confidence.

## 2. The Competency Triad - KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTITUDES

### K Knowledge

*The facts, concepts and rules this competence rests on*

★ ☆ ☆

- Who the providers are: banks, neobanks, payment and e-money institutions, fintech apps.
- What the products are: current account, debit and credit card, prepaid card, digital wallet.
- How payments work: SEPA and instant transfers, IBAN/BIC, contactless, mobile and QR payments.
- Where the costs hide: account and transaction fees, ATM charges abroad, currency mark-ups.
- Security basics: strong customer authentication, two-factor login, one-time codes, fake apps.
- Her rights: GDPR, the right to a basic payment account, the EUR 100,000 deposit guarantee, national supervisors.

### S Skills

*The practical ability to apply that knowledge to real tasks*

★ ★ ☆

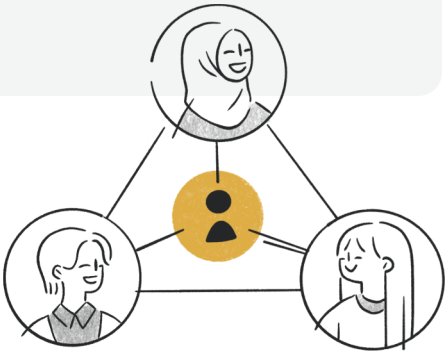
- Install and verify a genuine banking app, log in securely, read a statement, set transaction alerts.
- Make a SEPA or instant transfer, set up a standing order, pay contactless or by phone.
- Send a remittance through a regulated provider - and keep the receipt.
- Compare providers on fees, speed and exchange rate, including the hidden FX margin.
- Recognise phishing, smishing and fake bank calls; block a card and report an unauthorised transaction in time.
- Contact customer service, or the financial ombudsman when a dispute escalates.

### A Attitudes

*The dispositions that carry it: confidence, responsibility, resilience*

★ ★ ★

- Confidence: digital banking is learnable, and mistakes are recoverable.
- Autonomy: managing her own money rather than through a partner, employer or broker.
- Healthy scepticism: pausing before clicking, reading urgency as a red flag.
- Responsibility: protecting credentials, using shared devices carefully, asking for help early.
- Resilience: a blocked card or a small loss does not end the story.



## 3. Levels of Proficiency

The WISE Framework defines three progressive levels of proficiency. The structure is aligned with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) levels 2 to 5 and with the descriptors of the EU Digital Competence Framework for Citizens (DigComp 2.2). Each level is described in terms of three things: the autonomy with which the learner acts, the complexity of the tasks she handles, and her ability to support others.

| LEVEL 1<br>**Basic** | LEVEL 2<br>**Intermediate** | LEVEL 3<br>**Advanced** |
|---|---|---|
| <br>***Foundational understanding and the ability to perform simple tasks with guidance.*** | <br>***Independent application of skills in common financial scenarios.*** | <br>***High-level mastery, including complex problem-solving and the ability to mentor others.*** |
| **SNAPSHOT**<br>*She logs in, checks her balance and pays for groceries by tapping her card. If something unexpected appears on the screen, she pauses and asks.* | *She compares two remittance apps before sending money home, picks the cheaper one, and explains her choice to a friend.* | *She runs a Saturday peer session at the community centre, walking three newer arrivals through their first SEPA transfer.* |
| **AUTONOMY**<br>Acts with step-by-step guidance, inside one familiar app. | Acts independently in routine situations; security routines have become automatic. | Uses digital finance strategically – and knows the limits of her own knowledge, and when to escalate to a professional. |
| **COMPLEXITY OF TASKS**<br>Single routine tasks she has practised. Not yet comparing providers or troubleshooting alone – and she does not need to be. | Chains operations into a system – salary, bill, savings, remittance – and recovers when a step fails. | Handles complex, non-routine problems and formal disputes, including cross-border ones. |
| **SUPPORTING OTHERS**<br>Still on the receiving side of support. What matters here is that the tool stops feeling locked. | Explains her own reasoning to a peer. She has a sense of what "normal" looks like – which is what lets her catch what is not. | Becomes a multiplier: mentors peers and translates technical terms into her own community's language. |
| **WHAT SHE CAN DO**<br>• Knows her own bank, IBAN, card number and banking app.<br>• Logs in with PIN, password or biometrics. Reads her balance; recognises salary, rent and standing orders.<br>• Pays contactless and transfers to a saved beneficiary, using a checklist.<br>• Treats requests for passwords or codes as suspicious – and asks first. | • Opens an account or e-wallet through digital onboarding, video ID included.<br>• Sets up and adjusts standing orders and direct debits.<br>• Compares remittance providers on cost, speed and exchange rate.<br>• Uses two-factor authentication; blocks a lost card; reports phishing.<br>• Reads her statement critically – duplicate charges, forgotten subscriptions. | • Compares banks, robo-advisors and fintech products on fees and security.<br>• Manages and reconciles multiple accounts within one budget.<br>• Escalates disputes through the bank, the ombudsman and FIN-NET.<br>• Mentors peers and runs small peer-learning sessions.<br>• Appraises new fintech offers – BNPL, crypto, gamified investing. |

# 4. Applied Case Studies - TWO REAL STORIES

## 4.1. Learner-Centric Case Study



### Amina, 34 - from Aleppo, two years in Malmö

Her first salary, and the call that tried to take it

**1 The situation**

- Her first job in Sweden: part-time at a neighbourhood bakery, salary paid by direct deposit.
- On the first morning the manager asks for her IBAN. She has never had a bank account in her own name.
- In Aleppo her father, and later her husband, kept the family's only book.
- Divorced and rebuilding: a smartphone, a residence permit, her own rent to pay - and 100 EUR a month for her mother in Lebanon.

**2 The challenge**

- Two days into the job a man calls, speaking Arabic, and says he is from her bank.
- He names her recent salary set-up, and asks for her BankID code "to confirm her identity".
- Friendly at first, then suddenly urgent: act within five minutes, or the salary will be delayed.

**3 What changed**

- She lost no money - and that is not the point.
- She found she now had the tools, the language and the confidence to defend her own financial life.
- At the next women's-group meeting she turned the call into a teaching tool; three other learners spotted the same pattern within a week.

**K** Authentication codes are never given to someone who contacts you unexpectedly: strong customer authentication exists to make that call impossible.

**S** Ended the call without panicking, opened the banking app from the home screen - never from a link - confirmed in-app that no transaction was pending, and reported the number to the national fraud line.

**A** First reaction: embarrassment, she had nearly trusted him. Then she made it useful to other women instead of hiding it.

## Petra - twelve years in adult literacy and basic skills

Confidence before competence: a 12-hour module on digital banking

### 1 The challenge

- Fourteen learners from seven countries of origin, from limited formal schooling to a postgraduate degree in pharmacy.
- Digital exposure just as uneven: two have never created an email address, three are fluent on WhatsApp, shopping and TikTok.
- Within half an hour, several women freeze when asked to open their banking apps.
- "I will press the wrong button and lose all my money." Another does not know her own password - her husband manages the account.

### 2 What the educator did

- Abandoned the lesson plan for a sandboxed simulation, on the principle that confidence is built before competence.
- Vocabulary wall: the group co-creates a multilingual glossary of twenty terms - IBAN, OTP, KYC, phishing, 2FA - with pictures and example sentences.
- Guided demonstration in a banking sandbox where no real money moves. She makes a mistake on purpose and shows how to recover from it.
- Pair practice: every duo pairs a confident learner with a less confident one, through five tasks - log in, check balance, transfer, standing order, block a card.
- Reflection circle: each woman names one thing she can now do and one that still feels difficult. Petra adapts the next session.

### 3 What changed

- All fourteen learners complete the five tasks in the simulator.
- Eleven transfer the skills to their own real accounts within four weeks.
- Three volunteer as peer mentors for the next cohort, and Petra documents the lesson plan for the wider WISE partnership.

**Pedagogical approach and impact**

When fear is the barrier, design beats lecture. The module builds confidence in a place where mistakes cost nothing, before any real money moves.

## 5. Additional learning materials - WHERE TO GO NEXT

The resources below are open-access, multilingual where possible, and selected because they speak to both educators and learners — some as teaching tools, others as places to send a learner who wants to keep going on her own. They are organised loosely from frameworks ("what to teach") to practical tools ("how to use it tomorrow").

- European Commission — Financial Competence Framework for Adults in the EU (2022).

*The reference document for everything in this competence; especially useful for educators designing curricula.*
https://finance.ec.europa.eu/consumer-finance-and-payments/financial-literacy/financial-competence-framework_en

- OECD/INFE — Policy briefs on digital financial literacy (2024–2025).

*Short, evidence-rich notes on digital payments, online credit, Buy Now Pay Later and crypto-asset users; useful as preparation material before teaching.*
https://www.oecd.org/finance/financial-education/

- European Banking Authority — Consumer corner.

*Plain-language information on digital payments, PSD2 rights, complaint procedures and a fraud-awareness section. Good "classroom handout" material.*
https://www.eba.europa.eu/consumer-corner

- European Consumer Centres Network (ECC-Net).

*Free help with cross-border issues in 30 European countries; multilingual guides on online payments and dispute resolution. Particularly relevant for migrants moving between two EU states.*
https://www.eccnet.eu

- World Bank — Remittance Prices Worldwide.

*A free, regularly updated comparison tool for international transfers. An excellent class exercise: have learners price the same remittance through four different providers.*
https://remittanceprices.worldbank.org

- FIN-NET.

*The European network for resolving cross-border financial disputes out of court. A useful safety net to mention at the end of any module on consumer rights.*
https://finance.ec.europa.eu/consumer-finance-and-payments/retail-financial-services/financial-dispute-resolution-network-fin-net_en

- Europol — Cybercrime awareness materials.

*Multilingual posters, infographics and short videos on phishing, smishing, romance scams and money mules. Visual material works particularly well with learners whose host-country language is still developing.*
https://www.europol.europa.eu/cybercrime

- Payment services:

https://finance.ec.europa.eu/consumer-finance-and-payments/payment-services/payment-services_en

- Financial competence framework for adults in the European Union

https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/financial-competence-framework-for-adults-in-the-european-union_510f133c-en.html?

- Deposit guarantee schemes

https://finance.ec.europa.eu/banking/banking-regulation/deposit-guarantee-schemes_en?

# Competence 5

## Fraud prevention and financial cybersecurity:

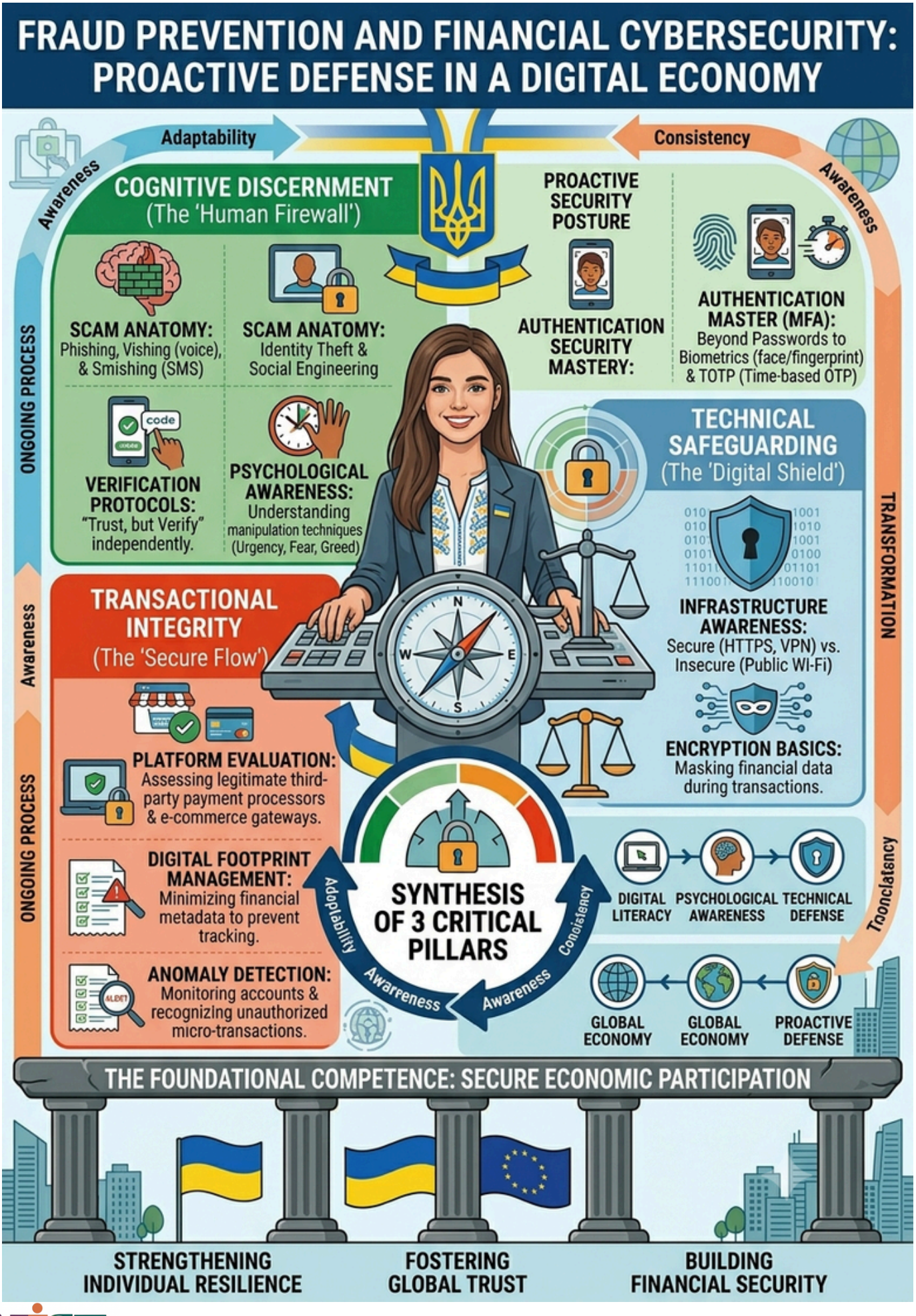
## *Identifying financial scams and securing digital transactions*



# What's Inside

1. **What it is**
   Recognising scams, and securing the money that moves through a phone.
2. **What you'll be able to do**
   Detect deception, security habits, secure transactions, respond well.
3. **Knowledge, skills, attitudes**
   How scams work, how to harden an account, why it is not your failure.
4. **Three levels**
   From spotting an obvious scam to helping a community see one coming.
5. **Two real stories**
   Adelaida and Amara, and a module taught at three levels.
6. **Where to go next**
   Interactive tools and classroom hooks for every level.




FRAUD PREVENTION AND FINANCIAL CYBERSECURITY: PROACTIVE DEFENSE IN A DIGITAL ECONOMY
Adaptability
Consistency
Awareness
Awareness
ONGOING PROCESS
COGNITIVE DISCERNMENT
(The 'Human Firewall')
SCAM ANATOMY:
Phishing, Vishing (voice), & Smishing (SMS)
SCAM ANATOMY:
Identity Theft & Social Engineering
VERIFICATION PROTOCOLS:
"Trust, but Verify" independently.
PSYCHOLOGICAL AWARENESS:
Understanding manipulation techniques (Urgency, Fear, Greed)
PROACTIVE SECURITY POSTURE
AUTHENTICATION SECURITY MASTERY:
AUTHENTICATION MASTER (MFA):
Beyond Passwords to Biometrics (face/fingerprint) & TOTP (Time-based OTP)
TECHNICAL SAFEGUARDING
(The 'Digital Shield')
INFRASTRUCTURE AWARENESS:
Secure (HTTPS, VPN) vs. Insecure (Public WI-Fi)
ENCRYPTION BASICS:
Masking financial data during transactions.
TRANSFORMATION
Awareness
ONGOING PROCESS
TRANSACTIONAL INTEGRITY
(The 'Secure Flow')
PLATFORM EVALUATION:
Assessing legitimate third-party payment processors & e-commerce gateways.
DIGITAL FOOTPRINT MANAGEMENT:
Minimizing financial metadata to prevent tracking.
ANOMALY DETECTION:
Monitoring accounts & recognizing unauthorized micro-transactions.
SYNTHESIS OF 3 CRITICAL PILLARS
Adaptability
Consistency
Awareness
Awareness
DIGITAL LITERACY
PSYCHOLOGICAL AWARENESS
TECHNICAL DEFENSE
Toonclatency
GLOBAL ECONOMY
GLOBAL ECONOMY
PROACTIVE DEFENSE
THE FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCE: SECURE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION
STRENGTHENING INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE
FOSTERING GLOBAL TRUST
BUILDING FINANCIAL SECURITY

# 1. Competence Overview

## 1.1. Title and Definition - WHAT IT IS

**Competence Title:** Fraud Prevention and Financial Cybersecurity

**Definition:** This competence involves the ability to recognize, navigate, and mitigate risks associated with digital financial environments. It encompasses the identification of sophisticated scams (such as phishing, identity theft, and social engineering) and the ability to recognize, prevent, and respond to financial fraud and cybersecurity risks by applying practical security measures and safe digital behaviors (such as multi-factor authentication and secure payment gateways) to protect personal and business assets during digital transactions.

This competence represents a specialized intersection of digital literacy, psychological awareness, and technical defense. It is the ability to maintain a proactive "security posture" while navigating the modern global economy.

At its core, this competence is the synthesis of 3 critical pillars:

**1. Recognizing fraud and manipulation** (The "Human Firewall")

This is the psychological ability to recognize social engineering - the manipulation techniques used by scammers to trigger urgency, fear, or greed. A competent individual understands:

- The anatomy of a scam: Recognizing the structure of phishing, vishing (voice scams), and smishing (SMS scams).
- Verification protocols: The habit of "trusting but verifying" by checking the authenticity of communication through independent channels before sharing sensitive data.

**2. Technical safeguarding (The Digital Shield)**

This involves the practical application of security tools to create layers of protection around financial assets. It moves from passive awareness to active defense:

- Authentication mastery: Moving beyond simple passwords to managing Biometric Data and Time-based One-Time Passwords (TOTP).
- Infrastructure awareness: Understanding the difference between secure (HTTPS) and insecure (Public Wi-Fi) environments for conducting sensitive transactions.
- Encryption basics: Recognizing how data is masked during digital handshakes between a user and a financial institution.

**3. Transactional integrity (The Secure Flow)**

This aspect focuses on the "action" phase - ensuring that the lifecycle of a digital payment is secure from start to finish. This includes:

- Platform evaluation: Assessing the legitimacy of third-party payment processors and e-commerce gateways.
- Digital footprint management: Minimizing the amount of financial metadata shared during transactions to prevent long-term tracking or profiling by malicious actors.
- Anomaly detection: The ability to monitor accounts and recognize unauthorized "micro-transactions" or suspicious activities that indicate a silent breach.

## 1.2. Relevance for Migrant Women - WHY IT MATTERS FOR YOU

For migrant women, financial cybersecurity is not just a technical skill, it is a critical pillar of economic agency. This group often faces unique vulnerabilities that make this competence vital:

- **Protection of remittances**: Many migrant women serve as financial anchors for families back home. Learning to secure digital transfers ensures that hard-earned money reaches its destination without being intercepted by fraudulent intermediaries.
- **Navigating new systems**: Entering a foreign financial ecosystem involves a steep learning curve. Understanding local digital norms prevents "newcomer targeting," where scammers exploit a lack of familiarity with local banking regulations.
- **Business empowerment**: As many migrant women turn to entrepreneurship and e-commerce for financial independence, the ability to conduct secure transactions is essential for building customer trust and maintaining business viability.
- **Safeguarding identity**: Cyber-attacks often target personal data. For women navigating residency or work permits, an identity theft incident can have catastrophic legal and administrative consequences.

Migrant women may also hesitate to report fraud due to language barriers, uncertainty about where to seek help, fear of embarrassment, or concerns that they may be blamed for the incident. Developing confidence in reporting suspicious activity and seeking support is therefore an essential part of financial empowerment.



## 1.3. Learning Objectives - WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

### Detect deception



- Discern the subtle signs of financial scams.
- Recognise social engineering tactics and spoofed digital interfaces.

### Security-first habits



- Apply strong password management and use encrypted networks for banking.
- Enable biometric or two-factor authentication, consistently.

### Secure transactions



- Use digital wallets, banking apps and transfer platforms with confidence.
- Verify the legitimacy of the recipient and the service provider.

### Respond effectively



- Know the protocols for freezing accounts and reporting a data breach.
- Know which financial authorities to contact after a security compromise.

### Learning objectives for the educator

- Translate cybersecurity jargon into accessible, culturally sensitive language.
- Foster a mindset where learners feel empowered to report fraud, not stigmatised by it.
- Design simulated environments for spotting red flags in emails, SMS and payment portals.

## 2. The Competency Triad - KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTITUDES

### K Knowledge

*The facts, concepts and rules this competence rests on*

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- How digital money actually moves: transfers, payment gateways and processors, and who encrypts what.
- Why crypto-asset transactions are usually irreversible, and what that means for risk.
- The psychology of scams - scarcity, authority, fear - and how phishing, vishing and smishing differ.
- How malware and keyloggers capture banking credentials.
- Encryption and authentication: what the padlock means, and the logic of multi-factor login.
- The rules that protect her: GDPR, unauthorised-transaction rights, AML/KYC, and where to report.

### S Skills

*The practical ability to apply that knowledge to real tasks*

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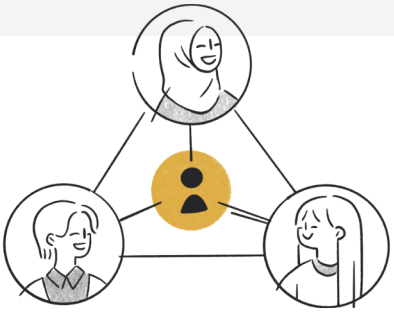
- Audit a link before clicking, and verify the real destination of a URL.
- Check the connection - and know that HTTPS alone does not make a site legitimate.
- Run a password manager, and set up 2FA with an authenticator app rather than SMS.
- Turn on biometric login and real-time alerts for every transaction.
- Use virtual cards and digital wallets, so a merchant never sees the account number.
- Freeze a card instantly, screenshot the evidence, and file a formal report.

### A Attitudes

*The dispositions that carry it: confidence, responsibility, resilience*

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- Critical scepticism: unsolicited means unverified, and urgency is a tactic.
- Confidence: entitled to use security features, and to challenge a suspicious "official".
- Proactive responsibility: security as a daily habit, protecting her family as well as herself.
- No stigma: being targeted is a crime committed against her, not a personal failure.
- Persistence and willingness to ask: reporting and seeking help is responsible, not weak.



## 3. Levels of Proficiency

| LEVEL 1<br>**Basic** | LEVEL 2<br>**Intermediate** | LEVEL 3<br>**Advanced** |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| ***Foundational understanding and the ability to perform simple tasks with guidance.*** | ***Independent application of skills in common financial scenarios.*** | ***High-level mastery, including complex problem-solving and the ability to mentor others.*** |
| **SNAPSHOT**<br>*Not a cybersecurity expert but a safe traveller: she handles essential financial tasks with a checklist or a mentor beside her.* | *She no longer needs a checklist or a mentor. The security-first mindset is internalised and she manages her digital finances across platforms alone.* | *She acts as a security advocate – troubleshooting complex digital crises and building a collective shield around her community.* |
| **AUTONOMY**<br>Works from a checklist or with mentor support. Not ashamed to stop a transaction and ask for a second opinion when something feels off. | An independent navigator, confident enough to adopt new financial technology safely and without supervision. | Leads a recovery herself: an identity hard-reset, credit bureaus notified, secondary accounts secured. |
| **COMPLEXITY OF TASKS**<br>Essential, protocol-driven tasks. She can lock the digital front door; judging a threat on her own comes later. | Spots spoofed sender addresses and social-engineering tactics on the phone. Tells a real bank alert from a fake pop-up warning. | Deconstructs multi-layered investment and romance scams before the money is gone. Knows how AI and deepfakes mimic a voice or a face. |
| **SUPPORTING OTHERS**<br>Still on the receiving side of support – and knowing where to go for help is itself one of the goals of this level. | Not a mentoring role yet. She is the primary guardian of her own financial data. | Protects the more vulnerable – elderly and newly arrived people – and mentors without judgement, treating her knowledge as a community asset. |
| **WHAT SHE CAN DO**<br>• Enables two-factor authentication on her main email or banking account.<br>• Buys online through known, trusted platforms rather than social media links.<br>• Knows who to call immediately if she suspects her card is compromised.<br>• Knows a bank will never ask for a password by phone or text message.<br>• Screenshots a suspicious message so she can show it to a mentor.<br>• Updates her banking app when prompted. | • Runs a password manager and never reuses a password across accounts.<br>• Uses virtual or disposable cards when shopping on unfamiliar sites.<br>• Tunes the privacy settings of her banking and social media apps.<br>• Verifies independently – finds the official number rather than the one in the message.<br>• Audits her own statements and privacy settings as a routine.<br>• Knows the legal deadlines for reporting fraud to secure full reimbursement. | • Leads recovery after a breach –resets every credential, secures side accounts.<br>• Migrates a peer from high - risk transfer methods to encrypted platforms.<br>• Uses domain-age lookups and email metadata to prove a source is fraudulent.<br>• Explains data-sharing and liability clauses to peers facing language barriers.<br>• Recognises SIM swapping and synthetic identity fraud.<br>• Runs a basic security audit for a small home-based business. |

## 4. Applied Case Studies - TWO REAL STORIES

### 4.1. Learner-Centric Case Study



#### Adelaida and Amara - the same reflex at two levels

Spotting the scam, and securing the transfer

**1 Basic: a first suspicious text**

- Newly arrived, first local bank account. A text: "Urgent: your account has been flagged. Click here to verify your identity or your funds will be frozen."
- Pause: she resists the urge to click, despite the fear of losing access to her money.
- Verify: the link reads bank-verify-secure.net, not her bank's address.
- Act safely: she closes the message, opens the banking app from her home screen, and sees her balance is fine.
- It was smishing. She deletes it - and feels a surge of confidence for having protected her own account.

**2 Intermediate: securing the family remittance**

- Working full-time now and sending money home monthly. A new transfer app offers better rates, but her bank details would sit on an unknown platform.
- Technical defence: instead of her debit card she generates a virtual card with a set limit, just for this transaction.
- Identity: a password manager creates a unique 20-character password, and she turns on biometric login.
- Monitoring: instant alerts, so she knows the second money leaves her account.
- The transfer goes through. Even if the new app were breached later, her main account stays out of reach.

**What both cases share**

The same three moves at two levels of skill: stop before reacting, verify through a channel you opened yourself, and keep the main account out of the transaction.

## One module, three levels of the same skill

From compliance, to hardened habits, to protecting others

### 1 Basic: breaking the authority bias

- The challenge: migrant women hesitate to question "official" digital messages - language barriers, and fear of legal consequences in a new country.
- Hook: a mock urgent SMS sent to the group during class, claiming their residency status is at risk because of a banking error.
- Lesson: a "stop and breathe" exercise with a three-point checklist - spelling errors, sender number, and find the official site separately.
- Outcome: verification before reaction. The shift is from compliance to caution.

### 2 Intermediate: the app-audit workshop

- The challenge: learners know the basics but reuse one weak password everywhere and monitor nothing.
- Hook: a leaked-data search tool shows whether their own email has appeared in a past breach.
- Lesson: a live setup session - install a password manager, generate a 16-character string, enable 2FA or biometrics on the banking app, and switch on notifications for every transaction.
- Outcome: they leave with a hardened environment, not with theory.

### 3 Advanced: the community advocate roleplay

- The challenge: investment scams that target close-knit migrant communities through social proof and emotional pressure.
- Hook: a real "high-yield" crypto flyer circulating in local community groups.
- Lesson: learners work as financial detectives - reverse image search on the promoters' photos, domain lookups on the website's age.
- Task: roleplay explaining the risk, gently but firmly, to a vulnerable friend played by the educator.
- Outcome: complex problem-solving, plus the skill to protect peers and family.

**Pedagogical approach and impact**

Each level starts with a hook that makes the risk personal before any technique is taught - the fear is addressed first, the tool second.

## 5. Additional learning materials - WHERE TO GO NEXT

Interactive Tools and Practical "Hooks" to engage learners at all proficiency levels:

- Have I Been Pwned?

*Check if an email or phone number has been compromised in a data breach.*
https://haveibeenpwned.com

- Google: Be Internet Awesome (Interland - Reality River)

*A gamified way to teach the "Basic Level" skill of spotting fake links.*
https://beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com/pl_all/interland/

- FDIC: Money Smart for Adults

*Comprehensive instructor-led modules on avoiding financial exploitation.*
https://www.fdic.gov/consumer-resource-center/money-smart-older-adults

Multi-Language & Specialized Scam Resources essential for supporting migrant women in their native languages:

- FTC: Consumer Advice in Multiple Languages

*Scam alerts and videos in Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and more.*
https://consumer.ftc.gov/node/76751

- Europol: IOCTA 2026 (Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment)

*Reports on how AI and deepfakes are currently being used in fraud.*
https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/iocta-2026-evolving-threat-landscape

- Cyber Readiness Institute

*Free guides for individuals and small businesses to secure digital identities.*
https://cyberreadinessinstitute.org

# Competence 6

## Responsible financial decision-making:

## *Evaluating risks, loans and avoiding debt*



# What's Inside

1. **What it is**
   Judging credit, risk and debt before signing - not after.

2. **What you'll be able to do**
   Know the products, count the true cost, refuse what is unsafe.

3. **Knowledge, skills, attitudes**
   APR and the debt spiral, the arithmetic, the nerve to say no.

4. **Three levels**
   From naming the products to weighing several obligations at once.

5. **Two real stories**
   A EUR 900 deposit and a loan that looked easy, and a role-play.

6. **Where to go next**
   OECD and EU sources on over-indebtedness and consumer protection.




RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL DECISION-MAKING: EVALUATING RISKS, LOANS & AVOIDING DEBT
A clear statement of what the competence entails
Adaptability
Consistency
Awareness
Ongoing process
1.1 BASIC FINANCIAL UNDERSTANDING
EVALUATE FINANCIAL OFFERS-S COMPARE ALTERNATIVES
ASSESS RISKS & UNCERTAINTY
UNDERSTAND LOAN CONDITIONS
DEBT
PREVENT UNSUSTAINABLE DEET
ONGOING CYCLE OF REFLECTION
INFORMED
FORWARD-LOOKING
1.0 TECHNICAL & ANALYTICAL ASSESSMENT STABILITY & PERSONAL GOALS
2.0 RECOGNIZE BENAVIOURAL TENDENCIES
1.2 REFLECTIVE ACTION & CONSCIOUS CHOICES
RECOGNIZE IMPULSE BUYING
BEHAVIOURAL REFLECTION & CONSCIDUS CHOICES
RECOGNIZE HERD BEHAVIOUR
VS
DISTINGUISH NEEDS vs. WANTS
UNDERSTAND OPPORTUNITY COST (Trade-offe)
Trustworthy
1.1 BASIC FINANCIAL UNDERSTANDING
EVALUATE FINANCIAL OFFERS & COMPARE ALTERNATIVES
ASSESS RISKS & UNCERTAINTY
UNDERSTANO LOAN CONDITIONS
DEBT
PREVENT UNSUSTAINABLE DEBT
1.2 REFLECTIVE ACTION & CONSCIOUS CHOICES
RECOGNIZE IMPULSE BUYING
BEHAVIOURAL REFLECTION & CONSCIOUS CHOICES
RECOGNIZE HERD BEHAVIOUR
VS
DISTINGUISH NEEDS vs. WANTS
UNDERSTANO OPPORTUNITY COST (Trade-offe)
CRITICAL
INFORMED
LOOKING
ONGOING CYCLE OF REFLECTION
GROWING
HABITS, PERCEPTIONS
ANTICIPATE SOCIAL CONTEXT
TIFLANCE RGHTS
FONANCAL HITVING
ANTICIPATE CONSEQUENCES
RESILIENCE
SECURITY
RIGHTS AND CHOICES
TIFLANCE RIGHTS
FONANCAL HITVING
DECISIONS
THE FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCE: RESPONSIBLE ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION
STRENGTHENING INDIVIDUAL RESILIENCE
FOSTERING CONSCIOUS CHOICES
ANTICIPATING CONSEQUENCES
A CLEAR STATEMENT OF WHAT THE COMPETREMCE ENTAILS AND ACCURATE MANNER.

# 1. Competence Overview

## 1.1. Title and Definition - WHAT IT IS

Responsible financial decision-making refers to the ability to make informed, critical, and forward-looking financial decisions by assessing risks, understanding loan conditions, and preventing unsustainable debt. It involves evaluating financial offers, comparing alternatives, and aligning decisions with long-term financial stability and personal goals (Ref 1).

Within this competence, financial decision-making is understood not only as a technical process, but also as a behavioural one. Individuals constantly make choices between competing priorities, and these choices are influenced by habits, perceptions, and social context. Impulse buying, driven by immediate emotional triggers rather than planning, and herd behaviour, the tendency to follow what others around us do regardless of independent assessment, are two of the most financially damaging (Ref 2). Concepts such as distinguishing between needs and wants or recognising the trade-offs behind financial decisions (opportunity cost) form an important foundation. At the same time, awareness of the above mentioned tendencies support more conscious and responsible decision-making (Ref 3).

The competence therefore combines basic financial understanding with the ability to reflect on one's own behaviour and anticipate the consequences of financial choices.



## 1.2. Relevance for Migrant Women - WHY IT MATTERS FOR YOU

Migrant women face specific challenges that make responsible financial decision-making particularly important. They often navigate financial systems that are unfamiliar, in not native languages, and under the pressure of immediate financial needs. These conditions can significantly increase vulnerability to poor financial decisions, including taking on unsuitable debt. As stated by OECD (Ref 4) financial literacy is lower among migrant populations and this gap translates into measurable economic disadvantage, including higher rates of over-indebtedness and limited access to regulated financial instruments such as personal loans and credit cards. In addition, several practical barriers can make financial decisions even more difficult. Migrants often cannot transfer their credit history to the host country, which can limit access to mainstream financial services and make borrowing more difficult. At the same time, differences in financial experience, trust, and cultural attitudes towards banks and borrowing can shape how migrant women interact with financial institutions. These combined factors can reduce confidence and limit access to safer, regulated financial services.

Key Risks for Migrant Women

- Limited familiarity with host-country financial systems and institutions
- Language barriers when interpreting contracts and financial terms
- Reduced access to formal financial services due to lack of credit history
- Higher exposure to predatory lending or informal borrowing
- Urgent financial pressures (housing costs, family obligations, employment gaps)

Strengthening financial decision-making contributes not only to improved financial stability and resilience but also to greater autonomy, confidence and protection against exploitation (Ref 5). According to European Commission (Ref 6) financial literacy empowers people to manage their budgets, protect from scams and misinformation, save more efficiently, avoid over-indebtedness, plan for their future life goals – including retirement and make informed investment choices.

## 1.3. Learning Objectives - WHAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO DO

### Know the products



- Explain how credit cards, overdrafts, consumer loans, mortgages and microloans differ.
- Describe the key conditions and risks that come with each of them.

### Count the true cost



- Compare loan products on interest rate, terms and hidden costs.
- Calculate what a loan will actually cost you in total.

### Refuse what is unsafe



- Recognise unsafe financial offers such as predatory lending.
- Know how to refuse them, report them, or seek legal advice.

### Stay out of debt



- Apply budgeting, needs-versus-wants analysis and contract reading to avoid over-indebtedness.
- Name the behavioural biases that push your decisions - and strategies to counter them.

### Learning objectives for the educator

- Create safe, culturally sensitive environments for the financial risks migrant women actually face.
- Use visual tools, role-play and peer learning to practise decision-making.
- Facilitate understanding of risk evaluation, loan mechanics and debt dynamics through real scenarios.
- Introduce opportunity cost, behavioural biases and debt prevention in jargon-free language.

## 2. The Competency Triad - KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS, ATTITUDES

### K Knowledge

*The facts, concepts and rules this competence rests on*

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- Credit and loan products: what each one is for, what it costs, what it risks.
- The vocabulary that decides everything: APR, principal, instalment, amortisation, collateral, creditworthiness.
- Where the cost hides: fees, insurance add-ons, penalties, rollover charges.
- EU and national consumer credit law, and what a borrower is entitled to.
- Behavioural biases - impulse buying, herd behaviour - and what they cost.
- The debt spiral: how it starts, how it builds, and what it does.

### S Skills

*The practical ability to apply that knowledge to real tasks*

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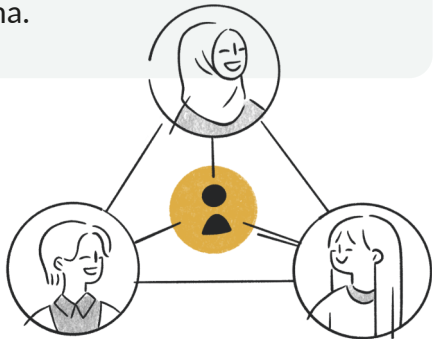
- Calculate the true total cost of a loan: principal, all interest, all fees.
- Compare products with comparison tools, rather than judging one offer alone.
- Assess her own repayment capacity honestly before committing.
- Read the pre-contractual information (SECCI) and the contract itself.
- Build a repayment strategy, and recognise when professional debt counselling is needed.
- Refuse misleading or predatory offers, and find national consumer protection or counselling services.

### A Attitudes

*The dispositions that carry it: confidence, responsibility, resilience*

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- Responsibility: owning decisions and their long-term consequences.
- Resilience: responding constructively to setbacks, and asking for support.
- Critical thinking: questioning offers and seeking independent information.
- Long-term orientation: future stability ahead of immediate gratification.
- Healthy scepticism: an unusually favourable offer, or pressure to sign now, is a warning.
- Assertiveness: refusing unsuitable products without shame or stigma.



## 3. Levels of Proficiency

| LEVEL 1<br>**Basic** | LEVEL 2<br>**Intermediate** | LEVEL 3<br>**Advanced** |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| *Foundational understanding and the ability to perform simple tasks with guidance.* | *Independent application of skills in common financial scenarios.* | *High-level mastery, including complex problem-solving and the ability to mentor others.* |
| **SNAPSHOT**<br>*She can name the main credit products and put APR or an instalment into plain words – and she knows to pause and ask before signing anything.* | *She compares products on APR and total repayment cost herself, and can tell when a loan would become unsustainable.* | *She weighs situations with several obligations and competing priorities – and knows when a case belongs with a professional.* |
| **AUTONOMY**<br>Decides with support, using simple tools – a basic cost calculator, a budget worksheet. | Makes informed decisions in routine situations without guidance, and keeps a basic budget running. | Uses consumer protection resources, debt counselling and regulatory complaint mechanisms on her own. |
| **COMPLEXITY OF TASKS**<br>Recognises basic warning signs of high-risk or misleading offers, and applies needs versus wants with guidance. | Reads her own repayment capacity, avoids common debt traps and understands how a debt spiral builds. | Analyses situations involving multiple financial tools, competing priorities and long-term consequences. |
| **SUPPORTING OTHERS**<br>Still on the receiving side of support. Knowing when to stop and ask is itself the skill being built here. | Not a mentoring role yet. The work is on herself: naming her own behavioural biases and countering them. | Shares general knowledge with peers – while recognising the limits of her own expertise and referring complex cases to qualified professionals. |
| **WHAT SHE CAN DO**<br>• Names the main credit products–cards, overdrafts, consumer loans, mortgages, buy-now-pay-later.<br>• Describes APR, instalment and interest rate in simple language.<br>• Spots basic warning signs of high-risk, misleading or unsuitable offers.<br>• Applies needs versus wants as a budgeting idea, with guidance.<br>• Understands that borrowing costs more than the amount received.<br>• Knows when to pause and seek guidance before taking on debt. | • Compares financial products independently on APR and total repayment cost.<br>• Evaluates her own repayment capacity before committing.<br>• Recognises when a loan would create unsustainable obligations.<br>• Identifies her own behavioural biases and applies strategies to counter them.<br>• Avoids common debt traps and understands how a debt spiral builds.<br>• Makes informed decisions in routine situations and keeps a basic budget. | • Analyses situations with several financial tools and competing priorities.<br>• Weighs the long-term consequences of borrowing and multiple obligations.<br>• Builds proactive strategies to prevent debt.<br>• Identifies debt-management options and professional support when trouble starts.<br>• Uses consumer protection resources and complaint mechanisms independently.<br>• Supports peers – and refers complex cases to qualified professionals. |

## 4. Applied Case Studies - TWO REAL STORIES

### 4.1. Learner-Centric Case Study

### A woman of 31 - two years abroad, working part-time

A EUR 900 deposit, and a loan that looked easy

#### 1 The situation

- She is looking for a larger apartment. The agency wants a deposit of EUR 900, which she does not have.
- An unsolicited SMS offers an instant online loan of EUR 1,000: "3 % monthly fee", same-day payout, no credit check.
- She must judge the offer quickly, under financial and time pressure.
- She is not fully confident reading financial documents in the local language, and has no credit history.

#### 2 What she did

- Recognised that a 3 % monthly charge changes the total cost, and decided to calculate the full repayment before agreeing to anything.
- Noticed the missing pre-contractual information and the "no credit check" claim - both markers of an unregulated lender.
- Used a free loan calculator: EUR 1,000 at 42.6 % APR over 12 months costs about EUR 1,240 - EUR 240 more than she borrowed.
- Found a regulated microloan at 9.9 % APR through a consumer advice centre: about EUR 1,055 in total.
- Checked it against her budget: EUR 88 a month is 8.4 % of her net income - manageable.
- Verified the lender in the official register, and declined the unsolicited offer.

#### 3 What changed

- She saved roughly EUR 185 in borrowing costs, and avoided a high-risk product.
- She began building a formal credit history through a regulated institution.
- That history improves her access to fair credit from here on.

**K** A monthly fee compounds into a very different total; missing pre-contractual information and "no credit check" are markers of an unregulated lender.

**S** Calculating total cost, comparing APR against a regulated alternative, and testing the instalment against her own budget.

**A** No impulsive decision under pressure: scepticism, an independent check of the register, and the refusal of an unsuitable offer.



## A facilitator - a session on loans and debt

Fictional roles as a safe entry to a painful subject

### 1 The challenge

- A group of migrant women from various countries, in a community learning centre.
- When the session turns to personal debt, several participants disengage or show visible discomfort.
- Two say they have taken high-interest loans before, and feel ashamed.
- The barrier is not knowledge. It is low confidence and avoidance of the topic itself.

### 2 What the educator did

- Introduced a fictional scenario: a woman considering a loan to cover her daughter's school costs.
- Split the group into roles - the woman, two lenders (one regulated, one with predatory terms), and advisers.
- Gave each group a simple character card, and set the task: negotiate the terms, find the hidden costs, make a decision.
- All of it inside fictional roles, where nothing said belongs to anyone personally.
- Then a structured debrief that bridges the fictional case and real experience.

### 3 What changed

- Separating personal identity from financial mistakes lowered the emotional barrier.
- The group gained a safer entry point for talking about financial vulnerability - deeper confidence needs repeated sessions.
- The educator could then name debt counselling and consumer support services, and state plainly that financial difficulty is not personal failure.

**Pedagogical approach and impact**

Where shame is the barrier, a fictional role is the safest door into the room: the decision can be examined without anyone having to own it.

## 5. Additional learning materials - WHERE TO GO NEXT

- OECD – Financial Consumer Protection and Education resources

*Focus on over-indebtedness, financial risks, and consumer protection frameworks*

https://www.oecd.org/en/topics/financial-consumer-protection.html

- European Commission – Financial literacy and consumer finance policy resources

*EU-level framework for improving financial competence and protection*

https://finance.ec.europa.eu/consumer-finance-and-payments/financial-literacy_en

6

# Part III:

# Self-Assessment Tool and Learning Pathways



Introduction to the WISE Self-Assessment Tool

Welcome to the **WISE Self-Assessment Tool**, a core digital component of the Financial Intelligence of Immigrant Women for Independent Stability and Empowerment (WISE) project. Developed under the WISE Project, this tool is designed to help migrant and immigrant women evaluate, understand, and build their financial confidence and independence.

The primary purpose of this tool is to provide a clear, personalized map of your financial capabilities, identifying areas of strength and opportunities for further learning.

**How It Works?**

The self-assessment is structured around the **WISE Financial Intelligence Competence Framework**, which aligns directly with the **EU/OECD financial frameworks** and European educational standards (**EUROPASS** and **EU Micro-credentials**).

- The Structure: The tool consists of a **25-point assessment**

**What It Measures?**

It evaluates your **Knowledge**, **Skills**, and **Attitudes** across 6 core financial modules:

- Budgeting and household management.
- Saving and investing
- Financial rights and consumer protection
- Digital banking and fintech
- Fraud prevention and financial cybersecurity
- Responsible financial decision-making

**The Results:** After completion, you can determine your current competence level across three tiers: **Basic**, **Intermediate**, or **Advanced**.

**Why Take the Assessment?**

**Empowerment through knowledge:** Managing finances in a new country can be complex. This tool translates European financial literacy standards into plain, practical language, giving you a clear picture of where you stand.

- **Tailored for you:** The tool features scenario-based tasks designed to mirror real-life situations you might encounter.
- **No language barriers:** To ensure maximum accessibility, the platform and assessment are fully localized into multiple languages, including **Ukrainian** and **Arabic**.
- **A pathway to certification:** This assessment is the first step in the **WISE Certification Protocol**. By validating your financial skills, you can earn a recognized credential that supports your social, economic, and professional integration in Europe.

# WISE PROJECT: FINANCIAL INTELLIGENCE SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

## How to use this tool

Read each statement and mark the circle that matches you today.
**There is no wrong answer - this is a map, not an exam.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Basic** | Limited awareness. I need help or guidance to do this. |
| 2 | **Intermediate** | Good understanding. I can do this on my own in daily life. |
| 3 | **Advanced** | High proficiency. I handle complex tasks and can advise others. |

## 1 Budgeting and household management

1 2 3

*Navigating daily expenses and income effectively.*

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I understand how to calculate my net "take-home" pay after taxes and deductions. | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I can distinguish between "essential" (needs) and "non-essential" (wants) expenses. | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I use a budget tracker (app, paper, or digital) to record every expense I make. | S | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I feel disciplined enough to adjust my spending immediately if I see I am going over budget. | A | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Subtotal** ☐

## 2 Saving strategies

1 2 3

*Building financial reserves and ensuring long-term security.*

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I know how much money I need to save for an "emergency fund" (3–6 months of living costs). | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I understand how interest rates (and inflation) affect the value of my savings over time. | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I can set clear, time-bound saving goals (e.g., for education, a deposit, or travel). | S | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I prioritize saving a portion of my income as soon as I receive it ("pay myself first"). | A | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Subtotal** ☐

## 3 Financial rights and consumer protection

1 2 3

*Understanding customer protection principles and institutional support.*

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I am aware of my right to a "Basic Payment Account" as a resident in the EU. | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I know which local or European authorities to contact if I have a dispute with a bank. | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I can read a financial contract and identify the most important terms and fees. | S | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I feel confident questioning a financial advisor or bank clerk if I do not understand a product. | A | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Subtotal** ☐

## 4 Digital banking and fintech

1 2 3

*Utilizing modern financial tools and online services safely.*

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I understand the difference between traditional banks and digital-only platforms (FinTech). | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I can safely navigate a mobile banking app to check balances and pay bills. | S | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I can use digital tools to compare the costs of sending money abroad (remittances). | S | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I am open to using digital tools to automate my finances and reduce transaction costs. | A | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Subtotal** ☐

## 5 Fraud prevention and financial cybersecurity

1 2 3

*Identifying scams and securing digital transactions.*

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I can recognize common signs of "phishing" (fake emails, SMS, or websites). | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I know the importance of using Two-Factor Authentication (2FA) for all financial accounts. | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I regularly update my passwords and know how to check if my data has been compromised. | S | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I know exactly how to report a fraud and freeze my accounts if my phone or card is stolen. | S | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I am naturally skeptical of "guaranteed" high-return investment offers found on social media. | A | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Subtotal** ☐

## 6 Responsible financial decision-making

1 2 3

*Evaluating risks, loans, and avoiding the debt trap.*

| | | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| I understand the difference between low-cost loans and high-interest "payday" loans. | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I know how my credit score (or debt history) can affect my future ability to rent or borrow. | K | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I can calculate the total cost of a loan (including interest and fees) before signing. | S | ○ | ○ | ○ |
| I take full responsibility for my financial decisions and avoid borrowing for non-essentials. | A | ○ | ○ | ○ |

**Subtotal** ☐

**Your total** ☐ Add the six subtotals. 25 is the lowest possible score, 75 the highest.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **25 – 40** | **Level 1 · Basic** | Building foundational knowledge and a first financial footing. |
| **41 – 60** | **Level 2 · Intermediate** | Independence, saving habits and digital competence. |
| **61 – 75** | **Level 3 · Advanced** | Resilience, investment readiness, high security awareness. |

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## 6. Glossary

This glossary provides clear and accessible definitions of key financial, digital, legal, and educational terms used throughout the WISE Financial Competence Framework. The definitions are intended to support learners, educators, and practitioners and should be understood in the context of the financial systems and regulations applicable in the learner's country of residence.

## Accounts and payments

- **Debit card**
  A card linked to your account. It spends the money that is actually there.
- **Digital banking**
  Reaching your bank through a website or an app instead of a branch.
- **Digital financial literacy**
  Knowing how to use digital money tools safely - and having the confidence to do it.
- **Digital wallet**
  Apple Pay, Google Pay and the like. The shop never sees your real card number.
- **Exchange rate**
  What one currency is worth in another. It decides how much arrives when you send money home.
- **IBAN / BIC**
  The account number and bank code used for transfers in Europe. Your salary is paid to your IBAN.
- **Mobile banking**
  Banking from your phone, usually through the bank's own app.
- **Neobank**
  A bank that exists only as an app, with no branches.
- **Overdraft**
  Permission to take an account below zero. Convenient, and usually expensive.
- **Remittance**
  Money sent to family in another country. The cost varies widely - compare before sending.
- **SEPA**
  Single euro payments area: euro transfers between participating countries under one set of rules.
- **Standing order**
  An instruction to your bank to pay the same amount on the same day each month, by itself.

## Saving and borrowing

- **APR**
  Annual percentage rate: the full yearly cost of a loan, interest and fees together. Compare offers on this.
- **Collateral**
  Something you pledge - a car, a flat - that the lender can take if you do not repay.
- **Creditworthiness**
  A lender's judgement of whether you are likely to repay, built from your record of paying on time.
- **Debt**
  Money you owe to a person, a bank or another institution.
- **Debt management**
  Keeping track of what you owe and repaying it at a pace you can sustain.
- **Debt spiral**
  When new borrowing is used to repay old borrowing, and the total grows every month.
- **Emergency fund**
  Money set aside for the unexpected. The usual target is three to six months of living costs.
- **Hidden fees**
  Costs that are not obvious at first sight. Read the full cost information before you agree.
- **Interest rate**
  The percentage used to work out what borrowing costs you, or what savings earn.
- **Liquidity**
  How fast money turns into cash without losing value. A savings account is liquid; a flat is not.
- **Microloan**
  A small loan, often for people with little access to ordinary credit. Conditions vary a great deal.
- **Over-indebtedness**
  When what comes in no longer covers the debts and bills going out, month after month.
- **Principal**
  The amount you actually borrowed, before interest and fees.
- **SECCI**
  Standard European Consumer Credit Information: the sheet a lender must give you before a credit contract, with the APR and total cost.

## Scams, and staying safe

- **Encryption**
  Scrambling information so that someone who intercepts it cannot read it.
- **Fraud**
  Deliberate deception to take money, personal data or another benefit unlawfully.
- **Healthy scepticism**
  Questioning an offer instead of accepting it - especially when it presses you to decide right now.
- **Identity theft**
  Someone using your personal details, usually to take money or credit in your name.
- **Impulse buying**
  Buying on a feeling of the moment rather than on a decision you made.
- **OTP**
  One-time password: the single-use code sent to your phone. A bank will never ask you to read it out.
- **Phishing, smishing, vishing**
  The same trick by email, by SMS and by phone: someone pretends to be your bank to get your codes.
- **Predatory lending**
  Offers built to trap: unclear costs, very high interest, pressure to sign right now.
- **Scam**
  A scheme built to trick you into handing over money, data or access to your account.
- **Strong customer authentication**
  SCA: the rule that certain online payments must be confirmed in two ways, not one.
- **Two-factor authentication**
  A second proof that it is you - a code, a fingerprint, a face. A stolen password is then not enough.
- **Virtual card**
  A temporary card number for one purchase or one site. If it leaks, your real account is untouched.

## Rules that protect you

- **ADR**
  Alternative dispute resolution: settling a complaint against a bank without going to court.
- **AML / KYC**
  The rules that make a bank ask for your ID and documents. They stop money laundering - they are not aimed at you.
- **Deposit guarantee**
  EU protection for money in a bank account: up to EUR 100,000 per person per bank, even if the bank fails.
- **Digital consumer rights**
  The same consumer protections, applied when you buy or sign online.
- **EU single market**
  The EU system that lets goods, services, money and people move between member states.
- **FIN-NET**
  The European network that settles financial disputes across borders, out of court.
- **GDPR**
  The EU data protection law: your right to know what a company holds about you, and to have it erased.
- **Ombudsman**
  An independent body that examines complaints against financial institutions. Free for the consumer.
- **PSD2**
  The EU payment services law. It is why paying online asks you for a second confirmation.

## 6.1. Glossary - EU and OECD official definitions

These definitions are set out in the existing EU legal acts, build on the relevant definitions or provisions in the existing EU legal acts, or are based on globally recognised OECD policy instruments and publications. In some cases, these definitions have been shortened or simplified. In the cases where definitions were shortened, simplified or introduced solely for the purpose of this document, they do not constitute an established legal definition.

Terms and expressions defined in this glossary are highlighted in italics in the text of the framework.

## Official definitions

- **Crypto-asset**
  A digital representation of value or rights, held and transferred electronically on a distributed ledger.
  MiCA Regulation

- **Electronic signature**
  Data in electronic form, attached to a document, that the signatory uses to sign it.
  eIDAS Regulation 910/2014

- **Financial education**
  Learning about financial products, concepts and risks - and gaining the confidence to choose well and to know where to ask for help.
  OECD/INFE High-level Principles

- **Financial literacy**
  Awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour together: enough to decide soundly and reach financial well-being.
  OECD Council Recommendation, 2020

- **Financial resilience**
  Being able to withstand a financial shock, cope with it and recover from it.
  G20/OECD-INFE report

- **Greenwashing**
  Marketing a financial product as environmentally friendly when it does not meet basic environmental standards.
  Taxonomy Regulation 2020/852

- **Impartial**
  Unbiased and free of any conflict of interest. Used in this sense here; it is not an EU legal term.
  this framework

- **Independent financial advice**
  Advice given on an independent basis: a wide enough range of products, and no commission or benefit from a third party.
  MiFID II, Directive 2014/65/EU

- **Payment account with basic features**
  A basic account anyone may open: pay money in, take cash out, receive payments and make transfers.
  Payment Accounts Directive 2014/92/EU

- **Personal data**
  Any information about an identified or identifiable person: a name, an ID number, location, an online identifier.
  GDPR, Regulation 2016/679

- **Sustainable investment**
  An investment in an activity that helps the environment, society or people - without significant harm to the others, in a well-governed company.
  SFDR, Regulation 2019/2088