

# EDIF | European Union Global Diaspora Facility



## DIASPORA CONSULTATION: SOUTHWEST EUROPE

9-10 November 2019  
Lisbon, Portugal

## REPORT

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## Executive summary

The first European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) Diaspora Consultation was held in Lisbon 9-10 November 2019. Fourteen representatives of diaspora organisations joined the consultation, including nine based in Spain and five in Portugal.<sup>1</sup> All participating organisations engage in development cooperation in their countries of origin located in Africa and Latin America.

The main objectives of the consultation were to exchange on the opportunities and challenges linked to diaspora engagement for the development of countries of origin; to better grasp the profile and dynamics of diaspora organisations in South-West Europe; and to establish networks between diaspora organisations.

Participating organisations stressed the following points:



**Without proper integration, diaspora members cannot contribute to the development of their home countries.** Therefore, the support in terms of funding and capacity building provided to diaspora organisation should not only focus on their development activities in their countries of origin, but also support the integration of immigrants in the host country.



**Access to funding is a key challenge.** The main sources of funding of the participating organisations are local authorities in EU member states, private sponsors and membership fees. Only two organisations had directly received EU funding. Organisations face difficulties in accessing funding because they lack financial, human and administrative capacity. There is a clear need for professionalization and support in finding and applying for funding.



**The diversity of diaspora organisations in Europe requires a comprehensive approach to engagement.** Because of geographic spread within Europe and in terms of countries of heritage, diaspora organisations are incredibly varied in their interests and activities, as well as their organisational structure and establishment. Inter-diaspora networking allows organisations at different stages of their genesis to share and learn from each other. Speaking with one voice on common needs and challenges despite (and because of) this diversity is seen as powerful, but requires network-building.



**National policies on diaspora engagement** are still lacking in many countries of origin. Policies to frame and facilitate engagement would greatly contribute to the much-needed trust building process between diaspora and government. In addition, diaspora organisations need to be explicitly recognised as actors of development by their countries of origin and donors, including the EU.



**Systematic data collection** on development projects involving or related to diaspora is needed in order to avoid duplication and to consolidate knowledge created through past projects. Most development activities led by diaspora organisations are neither visible nor recorded and project implementation is often poorly documented. This makes it difficult to steer them and to measure their impact over time.

During the consultation, participants developed a set of working recommendations. EUDiF will act on key recommendations through inclusive dialogue, capacity building activities and deployment of diaspora experts to support development projects in countries of origin.

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<sup>1</sup> Participants were selected based on the size of the diaspora community they represent and their capacity to implement development-related activities in their country of origin sustainably.

## 1. Introduction

**Diaspora consultations** are part of the facility's **Outreach & Partnership Component**, which aims to create, maintain and formalise a constant communication, interaction and channel for exchange between the European Union (EU) (including EU Member States) and EU-based diaspora groups.<sup>2</sup>

Five diaspora consultations will be organised during the project in order to cover the regions of Europe. The first consultation took place in Lisbon, Portugal, on 9-10 November 2019, gathering representatives of diaspora organisations based in Portugal and Spain.

Although **Portugal** is traditionally known as a country of emigration, with members of the Portuguese diaspora established all over the world, the country is also home to significant diaspora communities. In particular, it is a major destination for diaspora from other Portuguese-speaking countries. Sizeable diaspora communities from Angola, Brazil, Cabo Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique reside in Portugal. In addition, Portugal is home to diasporas from several countries in Eastern and Central Europe, such as Moldova, Romania and Ukraine.

**Spain** is also home to large diaspora communities, with the two biggest formed by Romanian and Moroccan emigrants residing in the country. In addition, Spain has the largest Latin American diaspora in Europe: Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru all have significant communities established across the country.

Both Portugal and Spain host a wide variety of diaspora groups representing different nationalities and socio-economic backgrounds. While these groups share common needs and challenges in engaging with the EU, as well as with their host countries and the governments of their countries of origin, they also have different interests, aspirations and specificities.

The main objectives of the consultation were to exchange on the opportunities and challenges linked to diaspora engagement for the development of countries of origin; to better grasp the profile and dynamics of diaspora organisations in Europe; and to establish networks between diaspora organisations.

<sup>2</sup> The European Union Global Diaspora Facility is built around four main components: 1. Diaspora Engagement mapping, research and evidence to generate diaspora engagement country factsheets on policies and practices in countries of origin; 2. Capacity building activities for governments and diaspora actors; 3. Outreach and partnership activities; and 4. a roster of diaspora development experts to be deployed for development projects.

## 2. Profile of the participating diaspora organisations

### General overview

14 participants joined the consultation, including nine based in Spain and five in Portugal. Most of these organisations have been operating for several years, except for two new Portuguese organisations created within the last three years. All Spanish organisations were of significant size - between 8 and 40 staff members and 150 volunteers or more. The Portuguese organisations were smaller, with only one or two staff members and few volunteers.

Participating organisations		
Country of origin	Country of residence	Organisation
Bolivia	Spain	ACOBÉ – Asociación de Cooperación Bolivia – España
Cabo Verde	Portugal	FASCP – Fundo de Apolo Social de Cabo-verdianos em Portugal
Colombia	Spain	AESCO – América, España, Solidaridad y Cooperación
Colombia	Spain	POR TI MUJER
CPLP <sup>3</sup>	Portugal	Associação Nasce e Renasce
Ecuador	Spain	Ruminahui
Guinea-Bissau	Portugal	AFAFC – Associação dos Amigos e Filhos de Farim
Guinea-Bissau	Portugal	Associação BALODIREN
LAC <sup>4</sup>	Spain	FEDELATINA – Federación De Entidades Latinoamericanas De Catalunya
Latin America	Portugal	Rede Espaço Sem Fronteiras
Morocco	Spain	Fundacion Ibn-Battuta
Morocco	Spain	CODENAF
Morocco	Spain	La Asociación Marroquí para la Integración de Inmigrantes
Senegal	Spain	CASC – Cens d'Associacions Senegaleses de Catalunya

<sup>3</sup> Community of Portuguese Language Countries

<sup>4</sup> Latin America and the Caribbean

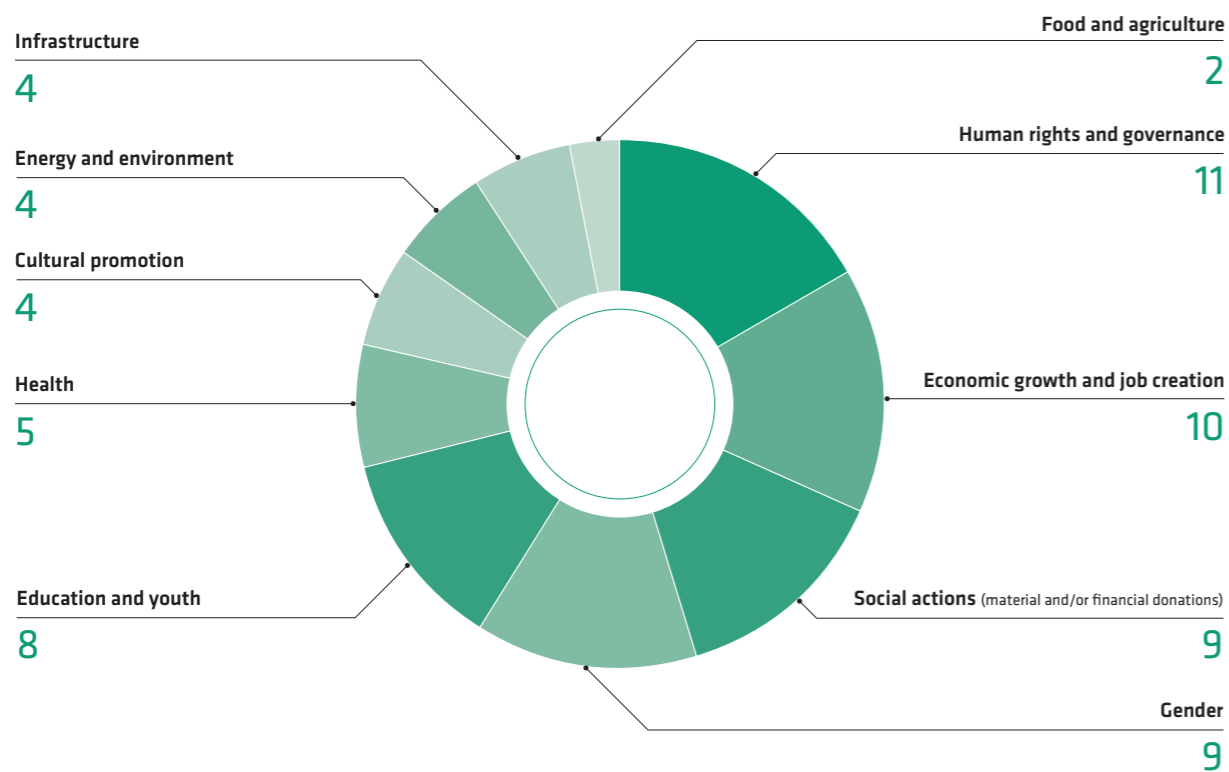
## Sectors of activity

Within the EU, **integration and community support** feature as the top sectors of activity of all diaspora organisations that took part in the event. Secondary sectors in Spain and Portugal include education and training activities, human rights, sharing of good practices and supporting the creation of links between diaspora members and the country of origin.

During the consultation, participants emphasised that without proper integration, diaspora members are not able to contribute to the development of their home country. Additionally, several participants highlighted the need to have a more age-balanced group at the consultation, meaning that more young people should be included. The challenge faced here is that as diaspora organisations need time to expand their activities from integration to country of origin development, organisations who are active in such work tend to be longer established and therefore have an older workforce.

The activities carried out in **countries of origin** by the represented diaspora organisations are relatively varied. The pie-chart below shows the main areas in which they work.

Areas of activity in countries/regions of origin



Participants presented other noteworthy cooperation initiatives in their countries of origin including:

- Facilitation of partnerships supporting circular migration, for example between Cabo Verde and Portugal (twinning agreements between cities);
- Organisation of regional events such as the Global Social Forum on Migration in Brazil involving 41 countries, or thematic seminars on migration, refugees, human rights etc.;



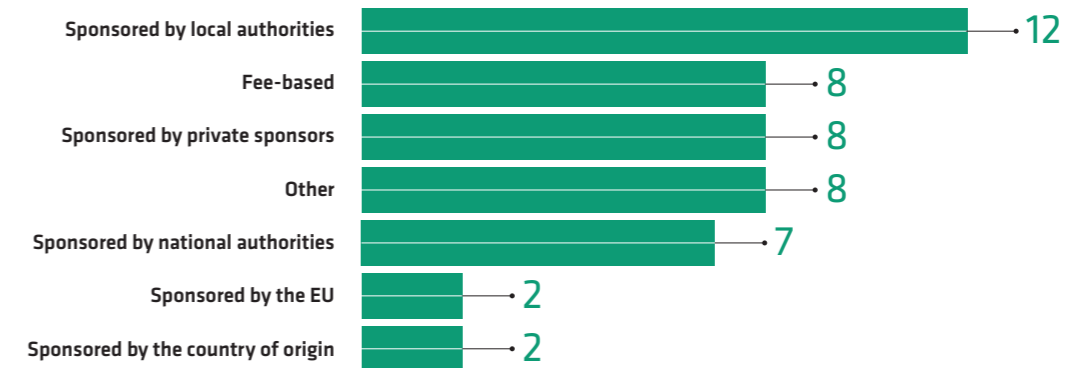
- Support in drafting of new laws (Brazilian Migration Law of 2017).

Finally, yet importantly, it was underlined that most development activities led by diaspora organisations are neither visible nor recorded and that finding ways to collect data and shed light on those activities should be explored. In this light, the EUDiF website could feature selected success stories implemented by diaspora organisations, including those that do not have access to their own communication channels.

## Sources of funding

The main sources of funding of the participating organisations are local authorities, private sponsors and membership fees. Other sources of funding include the organisation of events and the delivery of services, such as trainings provided to institutions. It should be noted that the EU has only funded two organisations participating in the Diaspora Consultation covering Southwest Europe. Diaspora organisations explained that the difficulty of accessing EU funding is linked to the financial, human and administrative capacities. This crucial aspect is also reflected in the demands for capacity building summarised in the next section. Lastly, two participants have accessed funding from their countries of origin (Morocco and Colombia).

Organisations:



## 3. Needs and challenges

### Funding

A key challenge faced unanimously by the participating diaspora organisations is the overall access to funding as well as the need to be supported in finding sources of funding and applying to them. The creation of a specific EU fund for diaspora organisations was requested. However, such a fund could lead to practical issues linked to the scattering of funding; hence further complicating the current financial framework.

Participants also underlined that most national and EU funds can only be accessed by a few large and well-established NGOs. Despite local organisations having better knowledge of the field realities and stronger relations with local partners, they are usually unable to meet EU and national funding eligibility criteria. The co-development model - whereby small organisations in the country of origin join forces with more established organisations in the country of destination to implement joint development projects - was proposed as an option to be further considered.

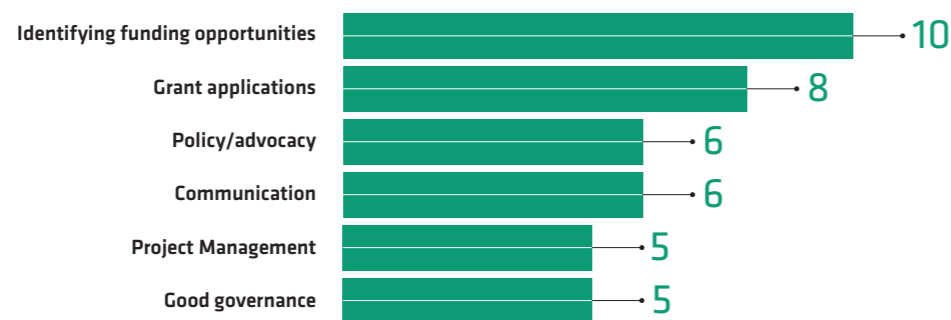


Additionally, the importance of widening the criteria used by DG DEVCO to define priority countries, beyond financials, were discussed. Taking Latin America as a case in point, participants stressed that the official national level of development should not be the principal criteria since it does not reflect the significant local disparities within the countries. This call is in line with the 2019 Human Development Report that focuses on inequalities and underlines the need to look beyond income when looking at development level.<sup>5</sup>

## Capacity building

First, diaspora organisations requested professionalization training, including how to develop solid project proposals/grant applications as well as support to identify funding opportunities. Other capacity building topics of interest for most participants relate to advocacy and communication, including enhancing the organisations' visibility and ability to communicate with authorities.

### Capacity building suggestions:



Moreover, some participants expressed the need for capacity building in specific areas, such as financial/budget management, quality control and data collection. The need to provide training of trainers modules to support the training of partner organisations in similar areas was also been mentioned.

## Creation of networks and alliances

Several participating organisations are already well connected and part of diverse international and regional networks that can provide a variety of services and opportunities, such as the Euromed Network, the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), [the Africa-Europe Diaspora Development Platform](#) (ADEPT),<sup>6</sup> [FEDELATINA](#) (Latin America) and the [Rede Espaço Sem Fronteiras](#) (Latin American based network in Brazil).

However, additional support is needed to connect diaspora organisations. Many organisations work in silos, either because they are not aware of organisations with similar interests or because they do not trust other organisations. This can lead to overlaps and mispending of resources but also to conflicts. The desire to create and sustain diaspora networks was made clear by all participants, as well as the importance of creating spaces for exchanging good practices. Furthermore, the creation of a network of diaspora organisations would provide the EU with a much-needed interlocutor via which to identify contact points and a unified voice via which diasporas could engage at EU-level.

<sup>5</sup> UNDP, 'Human Development Report 2019, beyond income, beyond average, beyond today: Inequalities in human development in the 21st century' (2019) available at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2019-report>

<sup>6</sup> Three ADEPT members participated in the consultation.

## Recognition

The participants stressed that diaspora organisations need to be explicitly recognised as actors of development by donors – including the EU – and their countries of origin, while avoiding being used for political manoeuvring. In this context, due attention should be paid to give equality and equity to the value of all diasporas. It would represent a major step to include diaspora members in consultative development processes at national and local levels – e.g. when negotiating agreements targeting development sectors to which diaspora organisations are contributing.

Based on the participants as a sample, diaspora organisations seek political recognition as well as a clear public status in both the country of origin and the country of destination. Moreover, political recognition could allow diaspora organisations to influence the narrative on migration and it would expand their ability to influence policy-makers.

## Engagement and dialogue with authorities

National policies on diaspora engagement are still to be developed in many countries in order to frame and facilitate diaspora engagement. Such policies would greatly contribute to the much-needed trust building process between diaspora organisations and national authorities in the country of origin.

The participating diaspora organisations are already engaging with authorities at different levels. They chiefly engage with municipal and local authorities, but in some cases, they also engage directly with national authorities and relevant ministries, such as the ministry of development. The nature of the relationship between diaspora organisation and authority varies from longstanding partnerships to more challenging ones.

## Needs assessment and diagnosis

Many diaspora-led development projects implemented in countries of origin are designed without a sound prior needs assessment. As a result, the projects are sometimes disconnected from reality. In addition, project implementation is often poorly documented which makes it difficult to steer them and to measure their impact over time. There is a need for systematic data collection in order to avoid duplication and to consolidate knowledge created through past projects.

## Diversity and cultural preservation

The diversity of diaspora needs to be acknowledged and taken into account. Even members of a given diaspora group might not share the same interests, nor a willingness to engage for the development of their country of origin. Furthermore, the understanding of diaspora engagement can differ depending on cultural, social and economic factors.

## Sustainability of projects

A recurring challenge of diaspora-led development projects is linked to their sustainability and their added-value to national, regional and international development frameworks – such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In this regards, the need to involve the private sector was mentioned, as it is considered to be a key actor in economic development and job creation.

## 4. Recommendations

The main recommendations and key issues for further consideration, which could be explored in future EUDiF activities, include the following:

- Building the capacities of diaspora organisations in the area of fundraising, ranging from the identification of funds to the submission of the project proposal. Diaspora organisations should have the possibility to choose the body providing the expertise to avoid interferences. Furthermore, such trainings should be provided free of charge;
- Creation of dedicated diaspora funds at EU and EU Member States levels accepting grant applications on a rolling basis throughout the year to support projects in both host and home countries, providing the funds in question should be accessible by small diaspora organisations;
- Creation of a networking platform for diaspora organisations as well as a shared agenda to facilitate the coordination of diaspora events. This network would support regular exchange of good practices and make sure that diaspora voices are heard;
- Facilitating and strengthening dialogue between origin and destination countries as well as between the EU and diaspora organisations;
- Creation of a website to increase the visibility of projects implemented by diaspora organisations as well as to connect relevant stakeholders.

EUDiF will explore ways to both promote and respond to the recommendations through its capacity building and dialogue activities.

## 5. Conclusions and way forward

The Diaspora Consultation: Southwest Europe was a first step in the effort to create a mosaic profile of the diaspora development organisations in Europe in terms of their organisational structure, capacities, thematic focus, activities, as well as their perceived needs and challenges as development actors. EUDiF will add to this Europe-wide mosaic profile through the subsequent diaspora consultations held across Europe.

The reports of these consultations will be made publically available on the EUDiF website. The reports will also feed into the regional thematic meetings to discuss interests and challenges of countries of origin in the field of diaspora engagement. Understanding both the interests and needs of diaspora organisations and countries of origin will help the EUDiF Team as well as other relevant actors to match potential initiatives.

Additionally, the consultation recommendations will be shared with the participants of the subsequent consultations and will be used as a basis to develop concrete recommendations to be presented to authorities in the countries of origin or destination or to the EU. These recommendations will also help identify themes and issues for the Annual EU Global Diaspora Forums. Subsequently, key recommendations will be operationalised through capacity building activities and diaspora experts' deployment to support development projects in countries of heritage.



The EU Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) is the first EU-funded initiative to take a global approach to consolidating diaspora engagement for development. EUDiF supports diaspora organisations in Europe, countries of origin and the European Union and its Member States to engage and collaborate more effectively with each other and mainstream diaspora involvement on development issues. Running from June 2019 - December 2022, EUDiF takes a multi-stakeholder, consultative approach in its research, capacity building, dialogues and diaspora expert deployments.

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