



European Union
Global Diaspora Facility

DIASPORA CONSULTATION: SW EUROPE

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.¹ 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.

¹ 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.



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.

Diaspora recommendations

Following a participatory workshop to identify common interests, needs and challenges for diaspora as development actors, participants developed joint recommendations in response. The following recommendations are relevant at local, national and EU level, as well as for countries of origin.

- 1. Build the fundraising capacities of diaspora organisations**, ranging from the identification of funds to the submission of the project proposal;
 - Diaspora organisations should be able to choose the body providing the expertise to avoid conflicts of interest
 - Training should be free of charge
- 2. Establish dedicated diaspora funds at EU and EU Member State levels** accepting grant applications on a rolling basis throughout the year to support projects in both host and heritage countries;
 - Funds should be accessible to small diaspora organisations
- 3. Build an EU-wide networking platform for diaspora organisations** to allow regular exchange and make sure that diaspora voices are heard;
 - Success stories and practices
 - Shared agenda of diaspora events
- 4. Facilitate and strengthen dialogue** between origin and destination countries as well as between the EU and diaspora organisations;
- 5. Create 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.

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