



Diaspora engagement mapping MOROCCO

Facts & figures

Terminology: The Kingdom of Morocco refers to its diaspora as 'Moroccans [living] abroad' MLA or 'MRE' (French, *Marocains résidant à l'étranger*, Arabic المغاربة المقيمين بالخارج *al-maghāribat al-muqiyimoun bi-l-kharj*), although in some internal documents it also refers to the Moroccan diaspora, and 'Moroccans of the world' (Marocains du monde).

Political rights



Dual citizenship^{1,2}



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad³



Voting from abroad⁴



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: 8.33%
Remittances inflow (USD million): 11,755

Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from UNDESA (2024) and remittances from the World Bank (2023).

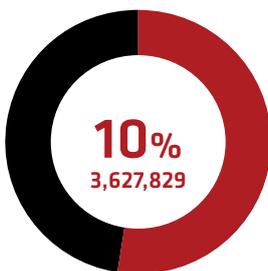
Emigration



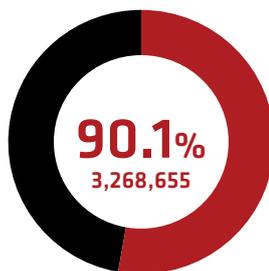
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 52.5%
♀ 47.5%



♂ 53%
♀ 47%

Top countries of destination



Spain	1,088,408
France	1,066,129
Italy	472,734
Belgium	246,575
Israel	190,607

1 Art. 16 of the 2011 Constitution states 'it [Morocco] ensures...the strengthening of ties of amity and of cooperation between the governments and the societies of the countries where they reside and of which they are citizens'.

The full text of the Moroccan constitution is available here: (French version: http://www.maroc.ma/en/system/files/documents_page/bo_5964bis_fr_3.pdf ; Arabic version: <https://learningpartnership.org/sites/default/files/resources/pdfs/Morocco%20Constitution%202011-Arabic.pdf>)

2 The reform of the Family Code, the *moudawana*, in 2004, gave Moroccan mothers the right to pass on the Moroccan nationality, where this is in accordance with the Nationality Code (Code de Nationalité), a move that was seen positively by many in the diaspora. The Nationality Code was revised in 2007 to permit Moroccan mothers to pass Moroccan nationality to their children where the father is also Muslim and married to the mother. An unofficial English translation of the Family Code is available here: <http://www.hrea.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/Moudawana.pdf> ; a French version of the Nationality Code is available here: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/501fc9822.pdf>

3 2011 Constitution, available at : http://www.maroc.ma/en/system/files/documents_page/bo_5964bis_fr_3.pdf

4 Ibid.

National Strategy for Moroccans Living Abroad



Morocco launched its draft National Strategy for Moroccans Living Abroad (Stratégie nationale en faveur des Marocains du Monde) in 2014.⁵ The strategy was developed in the context of the new Migration and Asylum Policy, initiated in September 2013 by King Mohammed VI and adopted in 2014.⁶ The strategy has three strategic objectives: Preserving the identity of MLAs, protecting the rights and interests of MLAs, and encouraging MLA contributions to the development of the country. It focuses on mobilising the skills of MLAs, attracting their investment and improving their access to public services.⁷

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2011** ● **Revised Constitution** sets out various provisions recognising Moroccans Living Abroad, including the following:⁸
- **Article 16** – Recognises dual citizenship of Moroccans Living Abroad
 - **Article 17** – Moroccans Living Abroad enjoy full rights as citizens, including the right to vote in elections (however there is no voting from abroad).
 - **Article 18** – The Moroccan government commits to consulting Moroccans abroad on governance issues.
 - **Article 30** – Permits Moroccans abroad to return to the country to participate in elections.
 - **Article 163** – Stipulates that the Council of Moroccans Living Abroad should publish advice on policies enabling Moroccans Living Abroad to maintain their links with their Moroccan identity, guarantee their rights, and to contribute to the sustainable and human development of their fatherland.



Trends & achievements

Morocco has undergone a shift in policy from a guest workers & remittances-focused approach in the 2000s to a transnational policy based on skills-mobilisation that forms the broad focus of Moroccan diaspora governance today.⁹ Whereas the Moroccan state previously sought to control both outward emigration and diaspora interactions with the homeland, this position changed (in part at least) due to the declining importance of remittance flows from the 2000s onwards. The Moroccan government shifted therefore to trying to 'court' its diaspora with increased civic and political rights (such as recognising the dual identity of the diaspora), as well as dedicated diaspora engagement policies and programmes. This has been further demonstrated by both the revised constitution of 2011 and the 2014 National Strategy

⁵ Full version available in French at: <https://marocainsdumonde.gov.ma/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Strate%CC%81gie-Nationale-en-faveur-des-Marocains-du-Monde-Fr.pdf>

⁶ The formal status of the National Strategy for Moroccans Residing Abroad remains unclear and its implementation has thus been challenged – see <https://www.oujdacity.net/national-article-123501-fr/strategie-nationale-mre-fake-news.html>

⁷ MCMREAM, *Stratégie Nationale pour les Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger, Bilan 2013-2016* (2016)

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid; see also Özge Bilgili and Silja Weyel – 'Diaspora Engagement Policies of Countries with Similar Emigration Histories: Morocco and Turkey' in Douglas J. Besharov and Mark H. Lopez (eds) (2016), *Adjusting to a World in Motion: Trends in Global Migration and Migration Policy*, Oxford University Press



for Moroccans Living Abroad.¹⁰

Although Morocco has become less dependent on remittances than a generation ago, remittances continue to play a role in providing hard currency and reducing poverty. However, it is increasingly acknowledged by the government (and the wider public) that Moroccans residing abroad bring other forms of beneficial transfers to their country of origin, in the shape of technological, managerial, and entrepreneurial skills and expertise.¹¹

The Moroccan diaspora are therefore now increasingly seen as drivers of innovation, employment, and economic growth.¹² Some strategic partnerships with incubators play a role in channelling people and bridging Morocco with its diaspora, although accessing start-up funds continues to be a barrier to expanding this.¹³ There is an increasing trend for diaspora entrepreneurs to return to Morocco to set up businesses, but their return tends to be on a circular, rather than permanent, basis.¹⁴

Morocco has fairly well-developed institutions and capacities in terms of diaspora engagement, in comparison to other African states.¹⁵ Morocco has been the recipient of significant capacity-building support in this regard from a range of international partners, including the EC, EU member states, and IOM.¹⁶

Morocco has also invested in the creation of institutions and programmes to engage with its diaspora more effectively. However, there remain concerns about implementation of diaspora engagement plans and programmes, as well as the extent to which the policy framework is predicated on permanent, rather than circular, diaspora return.¹⁷

Another shift in diaspora governance in Morocco is the acknowledgment of the fact that Moroccans have settled in their countries of residence and have adopted other nationalities. This has challenged the traditional concept of the nation, and required a greater appreciation of this dual identity, a process that is arguably still ongoing.¹⁸ Recognition of second and third generations of Moroccan emigrants with other nationalities as Moroccan diaspora has also increased the numbers of those considered as Moroccans abroad.¹⁹

Continuing to innovate its approach to diaspora engagement, in November 2024, King Mohamed VI announced an institutional restructuring of diaspora engagement to respond better to diaspora needs and expectations. Within this, the CCME is positioned as a strategic

10 Hanafi et al (2017), 'Morocco and Diaspora Engagement: A Contemporary Portrait' in Mangala (ed) (2017), *Africa and its Global Diaspora - The Policy and Politics of Emigration*, Palgrave Macmillan. C.f. also De Haas, H. (2007a), *Between courting and controlling: The Moroccan state and "its" emigrants*, Centre on Migration, Policy and Society, WP-07-54, University of Oxford; and De Haas, H. (2007b), 'Morocco's Migration Experience: A Transitional Perspective', in *International Migration*, Vol. 45 (4), pp. 39-70 ; and Bilgili, Ozge & Weyel, S.. (2009). *Migration in Morocco: history, current trends and future prospects*, Migration and Development Country Profiles.

11 De Haas, H. (2007b), 'Morocco's Migration Experience: A Transitional Perspective', in *International Migration*, Vol. 45 (4), pp. 39-70

12 See, inter alia, Dadush (2015), *Diaspora, Development, and Morocco*, Policy Paper, OCP, available at: <https://www.policycenter.ma/sites/default/files/OCPPC-PP1518v4.pdf> ; Boukarouhaa, N. et al (2014), "The Moroccan Diaspora and its Contribution to the Development of Innovation in Morocco", *The Global Innovation Index 2014: The human factor in innovation*, available at: https://www.wipo.int/edocs/pubdocs/en/wipo_pub_gii_2014-chapter8.pdf .

However, this is challenged by Gabrielli and Franco-Guillén (2018), *Transnational Diaspora Entrepreneurship: The case of Moroccans in Catalonia*, GRITIM-UPF, who argue that most Moroccan diaspora enterprises in Catalonia are too small to have significant impacts on innovation and job creation in Morocco.

13 Hanafi et al (2017), 'Morocco and Diaspora Engagement: A Contemporary Portrait' in Mangala (ed) (2017), *Africa and its Global Diaspora - The Policy and Politics of Emigration*, Palgrave Macmillan

14 Personal communication, Start-up Maroc, 2019

15 R. Zapata-Barrero & Z. Hellgren (2019): 'Harnessing the potential of Moroccans living abroad through diaspora policies? Assessing the factors of success and failure of a new structure of opportunities for transnational entrepreneurs', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*

16 Personal communication, MMRE 2019

17 C.f. Hanafi L. & Hites D. (2017); R. Zapata-Barrero & Z. Hellgren (2019)

18 Hanafi L & Hites D (2017)

19 See, inter alia, Hanafi L., Hites D. (2017) ; Anna Jacobs (2019), 'Morocco's Migration Policy: Understanding the Contradiction between Policy and Reality', Moroccan Institute for Policy Analysis (available at: <https://mipa.institute/6872>)

coordination entity and a complementary new foundation, *Fondation Mohammedia des Marocains résidant à l'étranger*, to be charged with mobilising and increasing diaspora engagement in Morocco's development.

Obstacles



- **Lack of economic opportunities**, especially for high-skilled migrants, poses a barrier to returning migrants and continues to drive emigration of professionals from the country.
- **Perceived utilitarian approach**: Some Moroccans in the diaspora are sceptical about the government's focus on harnessing diaspora resources and talent, which they perceive as transactional.
- **Lack of voting abroad**: Some diaspora members are concerned that voting abroad is still not permitted, affecting their position as citizens, and they argue that the government simply presents excuses to avoid introducing voting from abroad.
- **Mistrust of government bureaucracy** among the diaspora is widespread; government bureaucracy is perceived as intrusive and a barrier to greater engagement.

SPOTLIGHT: Effective practices

Explore 400+ practices by country, SDG or sector of engagement in the [interactive database!](#)



Maison des Marocains du Monde

CULTURE

The Maison des Marocains du Monde network provides the main point of access and services for MLAs. It provides on a network of cultural centres in several countries of residence which organise activities to promote Moroccan culture and build links between the diaspora (especially the 2nd and 3rd generations), such as Moroccan Arabic language courses or 'summer universities'.

Programmes supporting diaspora entrepreneurs

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Examples of programmes to support diaspora enterprise include Maroc Entrepreneurs, a non-profit organisation created in 1999, and Start-up Maroc, which work to promote economic development through three main strands: encouraging Moroccans Living Abroad to start their own businesses in Morocco; sharing information about business start-ups and investment opportunities; and establishing synergies between companies based in Morocco and the expertise of Moroccans in the diaspora.

Guide for Moroccans Living Abroad

INFORMATION

In 2015, the Moroccan government issued a guide for Moroccans living abroad.²⁰ This guide explains the priorities of the Moroccan government towards the diaspora. It includes social programmes for Moroccans abroad such as professional training as well as financial help for Moroccan children living in Côte d'Ivoire or Algeria to attend school, for university bursaries and for the repatriation of corpses.²¹

20 MCMREAM, Guide des Marocains Résidant à l'Etranger

21 Circulaire n°430 du 9 juin 2014.



Programmes supporting diaspora investment

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Residing Abroad, specifically within its Department of Moroccans Residing Abroad has launched several initiatives to support diaspora investment over the past years. Some of the examples of these initiatives are

1. Through the General Confederation of Enterprises of Morocco (CGEM), and to build on the increasing trend in diaspora investment, CGEM added a 13th economic zone in Morocco as a virtual region to facilitate the integration of Moroccan businessmen overseas into the Moroccan economy by bringing their experience and know-how on the one hand, and by benefiting from Moroccan experience in the different fields on the other hand.
2. Partnerships with ENABEL and the French Agency for Development to support the creation of businesses by Moroccans residing abroad through the provision of investment information, technical assistance, coaching and networking activities.
3. MDM Invest Fund provides financial grants to Moroccans residing abroad wishing to develop a small or medium business in Morocco of up to 1 million Drhs (approximately 90,000 USD) in certain sectors of the economy such as industry, services, education, hotels and health.

INVESTMENT

Summer university for young Moroccans living abroad

As part of its programmes aimed at preserving and strengthening the national identity of the younger generation, since 2009 the Department of Moroccans Living Abroad (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates) organises an annual “Summer university”. The 15th edition in 2024 brought together 300 participants between the ages of 18 and 25 from over 30 different countries, compared to 50 participants in 2022. The summer school offers the opportunity for young diasporans to meet and exchange whilst discovering Morocco’s history, culture, value system and economy, whilst inviting them to follow and engage in the country’s development priorities.

YOUTH

MRE Academy (2020)

As part of its strategy to mobilise Moroccans residing abroad’s skills and formalise their participation in priority development projects in Morocco, the Ministry of Moroccans Residing Abroad is working with the Office of Vocational Training and Work Promotion to set up the “MRE Academy” programme. This program aims to enhance the contribution of Moroccan skills networks abroad to the Kingdom’s economic and sustainable development, by facilitating the transfer of expertise in various fields and enabling these networks to pass on their know-how to vocational training students, aligning their skills with the needs of the job market.

SKILLS TRANSFER

Diaspora Engagement in Agroecology Development in Morocco 2018-2022

This project explored the Moroccan diaspora’s role in sustainable development and climate change mitigation through income-generating agriculture in Morocco. It had three main objectives: (1) Analysing migration paths and profiles of returnees engaged in agroecology projects to understand their motivations; (2) Conducting economic and agronomic analyses of these projects to demonstrate their potential and social impact; (3) Developing tools and organising a conference to share findings and best practices with decision-makers and diaspora associations. The project aimed to contribute insights applicable to countries with similar profiles, addressing development and climate change issues.

GREEN & SUSTAINABILITY +
AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY



DIASDEV project 2021

FINANCE + LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

The project is a collaboration between the French Development Agency and Caisses des Dépôts in Morocco, Tunisia, Senegal, France, and Italy, and focuses on facilitating and securing financial flows (remittances, savings, investments) from the diaspora in Europe and Africa. It aims to promote local development through the productive use of these financial resources. Services include analysing diaspora financial patterns, mapping relevant operators, identifying market gaps, and providing recommendations in three key components: an information platform, support to actors/operators, and innovative savings mobilization instruments. The project seeks to centralise information, promote good practices, offer technical and financial support to diaspora-related operators, and create innovative solutions through Caisses de Dépôt for risk-free savings tools benefiting the territories of origin.

Marhaba operation

COMMUNICATION & INFORMATION + SOCIAL PROTECTION

Running since 2000, each summer the Mohammed V Foundation runs its summer Marhaba operation, a reception system to provide information and support to Moroccans in the diaspora returning to Morocco between June and September. The 24th edition in 2024 included services at entry points in Morocco, as well as departure points in France Spain and Italy, as well as a 24/7 hotline. The Marhaba reception sites offer a range of social assistance and medical care services coordinated between different institutions, ensuring a smooth transition for returning Moroccans. The organisers reported over 3.7million arrivals, up 10.8% from 2023.

Modernised consular services

CONSULAR SERVICES

In 2024, Morocco introduced improvements to consular services for Moroccans living abroad, allowing them to access consular services at any embassy or consulate, regardless of their place of residence. The improvements were made possible by creation of a centralised electronic register with unique identifiers and upgraded digital systems, enabling MREs to book appointments and receive services like passport issuance, notarial acts, and legalisations from any consular location. Following testing in France and Spain in late 2023, the system was rolled out globally.”

Annex:

List of Actors

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 430+ institutions](#)



Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO)

Morocco re-joined the African Union in 2017 and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent Morocco as part of the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO) Continental Meetings. It has also held discussions about joining ECOWAS, which have so far proved inconclusive.

Arab League, Arab Maghreb Union, Union of the Mediterranean

Morocco is a member of all three organisations.

<http://www.leagueofarabstates.net/ar/Pages/default.aspx> (Arabic; English version under construction)

<https://www.uneca.org/oria/pages/amu-arab-maghreb-union>

<https://ufmsecretariat.org/s>

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

Ministry for Moroccans residing abroad (Ministère des Marocains résidents à l'étranger)

In 1990 the Ministry was created alongside the Hassan II Foundation for Moroccans Residing Abroad (*Fondation Hassan II pour les Marocains Résidant à l'étranger*, see below) to strengthen the links between Moroccans abroad and Morocco.

This Ministry, delegated to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccans Abroad since 2013, prepares and implements government policy concerning Moroccans residing abroad, in coordination with the relevant ministries and the institutions inside and outside Morocco. In 2013, the inter-ministerial committee of Moroccans living abroad was created coordinating the new strategy for emigration.

- At sub-ministerial level

Hassan II Foundation

The Foundation was founded in 1990 with the purpose of ensuring that the Moroccan diaspora maintain ties with their country of origin through religion, education, cultural and linguistic means. It supports and informs Moroccans abroad on different topics such as investment opportunities in Morocco, organises summer camps or summer schools for Moroccan children living abroad and finances Arabic teachers abroad to teach the language to Moroccan children.²²

²² Macarena Nuno et Farida Souiah, Les politiques mises en place par le Maroc envers ses ressortissants, Hommes et migrations 1303 2013, 147, 149 mis en ligne le 31 décembre 2015, <http://hommesmigrations.revues.org/2574>

Council for the Moroccan Community Abroad (Conseil de la Communauté Marocaine à l'Étranger, CCME)

CCME was created in 2007 and is composed of Moroccan emigrants. It advises the Moroccan government on how to protect Moroccan interests abroad and encourage the development of the country of origin.²³ The CCME mainly assesses public policies towards MLAs, advises the government and commissions research studies.

National Social Security Fund

The NSSF manages international social security conventions with countries of residence of Moroccan nationals. Morocco has signed social security agreements with 17 countries (Algeria, Egypt, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Portugal, Denmark, Sweden, Romania, Tunisia, Libya, Mauritania, Canada, Quebec and Luxembourg).

Maisons of Moroccans Resident Abroad and Migration Affairs

A network of regional and local offices was established in Morocco to ensure reception, orientation, and communication with MLAs during their stay in Morocco. They facilitate coordination with local authorities and services in different sectors to respond to their needs, especially administrative or legal.

La Fondation Mohammed V pour la Solidarité

The Mohammed V Foundation for Solidarity is recognised as a public utility entity; it was established by King Mohammed VI in 1999 when he was prince. Under the banner “Ready to help the needy,” the foundation delivers social programmes in coordination with public authorities. It provides humanitarian assistance (in Morocco and abroad), and offers programmes in sectors related to social progress including education, health, employment and financial autonomy. The foundation runs the Marhaba reception operation to support diaspora returning to Morocco in the summer months (see spotlight practices).

Diaspora organisations in Europe

Association des Marocains de France (AMF)

☑ Development activities

Created in January 1961, AMF is one of the oldest immigration associations in France. It has gone through all the stages of the integration of immigrant populations. Its socio-political line has always been adapted to the requirements of the historical evolution of Moroccan immigration to France. It has conducted several co-development training and education and exchange initiatives in Morocco.

Deutsch-Marokkanische Kompetenznetzwerk e.V. (DMK) Germany

☑ Development activities

A Moroccan diaspora professionals and skills transfer network based in Germany, DMK has its headquarters in Munich and was founded in 2009. It sees itself as an intermediary between Germany and Morocco.

Read more about diaspora organisations in [“Starting guide: What is a diaspora organisation”](#)



²³ Hein de Haas, Morocco: Setting the Stage for Becoming a Migration Transition Country?, Migration Policy Institute, 19 March 2014 <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/morocco-setting-stage-becoming-migration-transition-country>



The aim of the network is to promote sustainable development in Morocco and to support the integration of Moroccan citizens in Germany.

FÉDÉRATION DES AMIS DE FIGUIG France

Development activities

A network of Moroccan diaspora organisations in France, FAF implement education, training, volunteering, and agriculture programmes in the local region of Figuig oasis in Morocco.

Forum des Organisations de Solidarité Internationale issues des Migrations (FORIM) France

Development activities

FORIM is a leading African diaspora network based in France. Although not primarily a Moroccan diaspora group, its members include many Moroccan organisations in France and they have funded and co-delivered a range of educational, enterprise, WASH, and other development projects in Morocco over the last decade.

Fundación Ibn Battuta Spain

Development activities

Integration activities

Fundación Ibn Battuta is a national organisation that aims to promote cultural and social exchange and the dissemination of scientific knowledge between Morocco and Spain. Founded in 2013 and based in Barcelona, Fundación Ibn Battuta provides social, cultural, educational, and employment support to Moroccans living in Spain with the aim of making them full European citizens.

Les Bourgeois de l'Atlas France

Development activities

The organisation provides relief materials to children and vulnerable women in the villages of the Eastern High Atlas Mountains as well as literacy and social development programmes.

Migrations et Développement France

Development activities

The organisation was Created in 1986 by Moroccan migrants to carry out development actions in the villages of their region of origin, the Moroccan Atlas and Anti-Atlas, struck by a severe drought since the mid-1970s. With the support of French volunteer experts, the first actions focused on infrastructure: electrification of villages, hillside reservoirs and irrigation, schools and dispensaries, drinking water supply etc. Gradually, an integrated rural development programme was developed in participation with local populations and migrants. This program was supported by researchers, donors from the North and Moroccan local and national authorities.

Co.Dias.Co. 2021 Italy

Development activities

An umbrella organisation that encompasses diaspora representation from various regions, including Morocco. Actively involving the network of diasporic associations in Piedmont, Co.Dias.Co. aims to reshape the landscape of international cooperation. It addresses the resource gap for migrant associations and facilitates their meaningful participation in international cooperation projects. With a strong emphasis on social innovation, Co.Dias.Co. leverages creative potential to implement inclusive projects both in the home countries and within the local community. Notably, organisations such as “Albedaya” and “A.M.E.C.E. (Association Maison d’Enfant pour la Culture et l’Education)” from the Moroccan diaspora play a significant role in contributing to the collective efforts.

Written by: **AFFORD**
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