



Diaspora engagement mapping DJIBOUTI

Facts & figures

Terminology: Djibouti refers to its diaspora as 'Djiboutians abroad' (French: *Djiboutiens à l'étranger*), but the term diaspora is also widely used.

Political rights



Dual citizenship¹



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad²



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **1.35%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **56**

Voting from abroad:³

At embassies/consulates



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 (2024).

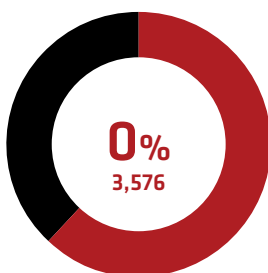
Emigration



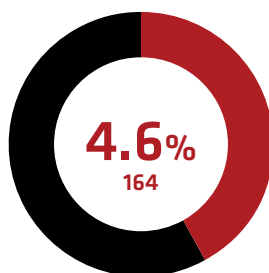
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 62.2%
♀ 37.8%



♂ 42.1%
♀ 57.9%

Top countries of destination



Libya	1,606
Ethiopia	1,364
Egypt	223
Australia	204
Norway	68

1 2018 Loi n° 003/AN/18/8 ème L du 12 avril 2018 portant Code civil., available at: <https://www.droit-afrique.com/uploads/Djibouti-Code-civil-2018.pdf>. This updated the former Code de nationalité and integrated it with other legal provisions. Article 30 of Chapter 2 defines Djiboutian nationals as those born to a Djiboutian parent, either in Djibouti or abroad. The law also permits dual citizenship. See also <https://www2.ohchr.org/english/issues/women/docs/OtherEntities/OSJI%20CitizenshipAfricaStudy.pdf>

2 1992 Constitution de Djibouti 1992. Available at: <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/lexdocs/laws/fr/dj/dj002fr.pdf> See also <https://www.idea.int/sites/default/files/publications/voting-from-abroad-the-international-idea-handbook.pdf> Voting for those living abroad extends to both presidential and legislative elections/

3 https://www.cairn-int.info/article-E_AFCO_256_0104--the-limits-to-external-voting-expansion-.htm

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- The **National Strategy for Migration**⁴ recognises diaspora as a vital asset for national development and outlines comprehensive measures to strengthen their engagement across various sectors, including the creation of platforms for dialogue and collaboration between diaspora and national institutions, economic engagement through investments and remittances, skills and knowledge transfer by leveraging the expertise of the diaspora and by promoting their involvement in sectors such as education, health, and technology.

- **Diaspora Engagement Policy** On February 25, 2021, the national strategy of engagement of the Djiboutian diaspora was launched at the Institute of Diplomatic Studies. The official launch of the national diaspora strategy document is not an isolated action in the sense that it paves the way for many perspectives with the aim of better involving members of the Djiboutian diaspora in the country's development.

Practices

Explore 520+ practices by country, SDG or sector of engagement in the [interactive database!](#)



Consulting and Mapping the Djiboutian Diaspora 2017-2020

In December 2017, IOM organised a Diaspora Consultation Day in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAEIC) and the World Bank. The event focused on diaspora mobilisation, transfer of human capital, philanthropy, and tourism. Since 2019, IOM has also been conducting a mapping exercise of the Djiboutian diaspora worldwide.⁵ In January 2020, it collaborated with the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC) in the Netherlands to convene a diaspora workshop with representatives of the Djiboutian diaspora as part of this mapping exercise.⁶ The discussions and recommendations of these activities informed the development of the national diaspora strategy.⁷

E-documents service 2019

Djibouti Post Office has developed a new e-documents service for the diaspora to enable them to order official justice documents (such as duplicate marriage certificates) securely online.⁸

Diaspora Engagement Workshops

IOM and the Global Djibouti Diaspora have launched a workshop aiming at strengthening collaboration and connections between Djibouti and its diaspora. The initiative focuses on developing a national strategy and conducting a diaspora mapping exercise to help identify skills, resources and opportunities to better engage with Djiboutians living abroad and enhance their contributions to national development.

4 <https://acsrn-au.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Strategie-Nationale-pour-les-Migrations-121526.pdf>

5 <https://www.hch24.com/actualites/07/2019/djibouti-oim-la-cartographie-et-le-profilage-de-la-diaspora-djiboutienne-et-le-developement-dune-strategie-nationale/>

6 <https://hi-in.facebook.com/djiboutidiasporas/posts/diaspora-workshop-in-the-netherlandthe-first-diaspora-workshop-has-been-held-in-/1236073829916508/>

7 ILO (2020) *op. cit.*

8 <https://www.rtd.dj/actualites/social/la-poste-de-djibouti-offre-un-nouveau-service-a-la-diaspora-djiboutienne>

Observations

The “Observations” and “Obstacles” sections contain additional information on the context of diaspora engagement that does not fit directly into the other sections. They are based on a combination of literature review and comments from the authors. New information is incorporated during the annual updates. Readers are invited to verify the relevance of the information at the time of reading, as the context may have evolved.

Diaspora engagement has been rather limited historically, although this has started to change in recent years. One reason for this is a lack of dependence on diaspora contributions - Djiboutian diaspora remittances are relatively low in absolute terms, making up less than 3% of GDP. The Djiboutian economy relies mainly on shipping and port revenues, as well as the service sector, which has made the government far less reliant on diaspora remittance flows than other countries in the Horn of Africa.⁹

Nevertheless, the links of Djibouti’s large Somali-Djiboutian community to wealthy Somali diaspora investors in the Gulf have been important in forging business and investment ties between Djibouti and UAE and other Gulf states.¹⁰

In recent years, there has also been a growing trend for skilled Djiboutian diaspora returnees to seek economic opportunities in the country, especially in the hospitality, IT, service, and culture sectors.¹¹

Recent cooperation initiatives with international partners, including the EU and IOM, have focused on strengthening migration governance, promoting regular migration pathways and labour mobility and improving institutional capacities to manage mixed migration flows.

Achievements

In 2019, the government also announced the launch of an e-visa scheme in partnership with IOM, the EC, and BMZ, (the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), which aims to facilitate diaspora return as well as foreign visitors and investors, complementing the work on developing the draft diaspora strategy.¹² In April 2019, Djibouti’s first e-Visa counter was set up at Djibouti International Airport; visitors can now apply for visas in advance for collection upon arrival at the airport.

In July 2021, with the support of IOM, the government inaugurated the Office of the National Coordination Mechanism on Migration to coordinate all migration-related issues, including diaspora engagement.

9 Styan, D. (2013) *Djibouti: Changing Influence in the Horn’s Strategic Hub*, Chatham House Briefing Paper.

10 Styan, D. (2013) *Djibouti: Changing Influence in the Horn’s Strategic Hub*, Chatham House Briefing Paper.

11 <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/375564/societe/diaspora-partir-de-djibouti-mieux-y-revenir/> ; https://mg.co.za/africa/2020-07-17-meet-lula-ali-ismail-djiboutis-first-lady-of-film/?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Twitter&__twitter_impression=true

12 <https://www.facebook.com/Diaspora-djiboutienne-dans-le-monde-2074536805960561/>

Obstacles



- **Lack of trust:** There is a lack of trust between the government and its diaspora, which in France (the principal country of residence in Europe) tends to be polarised and politicised. This acts as a barrier to diaspora engagement in Djibouti.¹³
- **Lack of capacity:** Djibouti lacks institutional structures and capacities to implement a diaspora engagement agenda; existing structures need strengthening.¹⁴
- **Lack of policy focus:** Djibouti has yet to develop policy frameworks for diaspora engagement or migration.

¹³ See, for example, Le Monde; Ard-Djibouti; and Djib Live

¹⁴ https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---africa/---ro-abidjan/---sro-addis_ababa/documents/publication/wcms_743309.pdf

Annex:

List of Actors

Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU-CIDO) 2008

AU-CIDO is responsible for implementing the AU's engagement with non-state actors through the involvement of the diaspora and civil society. Djibouti nominates a diaspora focal point to represent the country at AU-CIDO Continental Meetings.

Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) 1996

Djibouti is a member of IGAD, which works to promote regional cooperation and integration to add value to Member States' efforts in achieving peace, security, and prosperity. The 2012 IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework prioritises collaboration with the diaspora for national development and to address brain-drain.

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (*Ministère des Affaires étrangères et de la Coopération internationale, MAECI*) 2001

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation is the lead agency for diaspora engagement and is responsible for the implementation of foreign policy, the conduct of international negotiations and the promotion of political, economic, cultural, scientific and international cooperation relations of the Republic of Djibouti.

- At sub-ministerial level

National Agency for Employment, Training and Professional Integration (*Agence Nationale de l'Emploi, de la Formation et de l'Insertion Professionnelle, ANEFIP*) 2007

ANEFIP works to provide the country with a tool for designing, monitoring, and evaluating employment and professional integration policies, including labour migration.

Legal Department in charge of the Diaspora (*Département Juridique en charge de la diaspora*) 2016

This department is responsible for diaspora registration, including diaspora births.

Global Djibouti Diaspora (*Diaspora djiboutienne dans le monde, GDD*) 2019, officially inaugurated in 2021

An initiative of MAECI, GDD works to provide information about services to the diaspora, and aims to be a new umbrella and resource centre for Djiboutian diaspora communities around the world.

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 520+ institutions](#)



Diaspora organisations in Europe

Association Belgique-Djibouti (ABED) 2004 Belgium

- ✓ Development activities
- ✓ Integration activities

ABED's members work with all sectors of Belgian civil society to promote the integration of migrant communities, especially those from East Africa. They also initiate, support, and mentor development and humanitarian projects in Djibouti.

Association Djibouti Bretagne (AJIB) 1994 France

- ✓ Development activities
- ✓ Integration activities

AJIB works to promote Djiboutian culture in France, and runs co-development projects between Bretagne and Djibouti in the educational and humanitarian sectors.

Association des Djiboutiens de Provence (ADjiP) 1948 France

- ✓ Integration activities

ADjiP, formerly known as Amicale des Originaires de Djibouti was founded by sailors who came to settle in the port of Marseille. It works to facilitate the reception and integration of Djiboutian families who came to settle in Marseille.

ASSOCIATION DJIBOUTIENNE DE SOLIDARITE (ADS) 2013 France

- ✓ Development activities
- ✓ Integration activities

ADS works to promote Djiboutian culture in France and in the Republic of Djibouti, and undertakes solidarity projects in rural areas in Djibouti. It also supports Djiboutian students in France and in the Djibouti, and promotes intercultural exchange between French and Djiboutian students in both countries.

Association djiboutienne de France pour l'Amitié et la Solidarité (ADFAS) 2011 France

- ✓ Development activities
- ✓ Integration activities

ADFAS is a humanitarian, international solidarity, and socio-cultural association. It sends food and medical equipment to people in need in Djibouti, and has set up several local development projects, such as sending solar-powered lamps to schoolchildren in rural villages or establishing local libraries. It also works to promote Djiboutian culture in France.

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



Association France Djibouti (AFD) 1984 France

- ☑ **Development activities**
- ☑ **Integration activities**

The aim of the association is to promote Djiboutian culture, develop intercultural links, welcome and support Djiboutian students, and implement international cooperation projects between Djibouti and Dunkirk.

Côte à Côte 2007 France

- ☑ **Development activities**
- ☑ **Integration activities**

Côte à Côte is a diaspora organisation based in France that works to promote co-development in Djibouti and France. The association works in two main areas, education and water. It supports education through opening of new rural schools, and sending textbooks and school supplies. It also runs potable water schemes in rural areas.

Fédération des Associations Djiboutiennes en France (FADF) 1994 France

- ☑ **Development activities**
- ☑ **Integration activities**

The federation aims to enable Djiboutian men and women to meet, organise, inform, train and develop autonomy. It provides centralised information on Djiboutian associations, and coordinates the activities of all associations affiliated to it. It also offers professional and social consultation service, as well as training, information and lobbying courses and seminars.

Stay Active Association (SAA) 2015 France

- ☑ **Development activities**
- ☑ **Integration activities**

SAA works to combat economic inactivity among young Djiboutian Graduates by offering them professional internships. It also runs urban community development projects in Djibouti.

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