



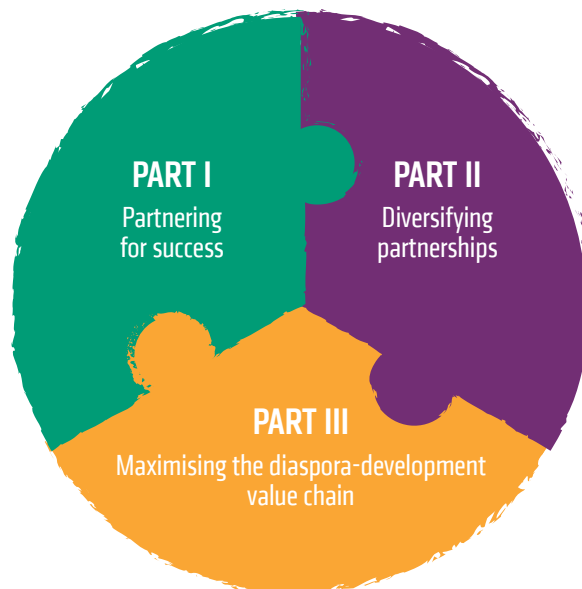
DIASPORA PARTNERSHIP FUNDAMENTALS

Pre-Future Forum reading on partnering in the diaspora-development ecosystem

Why a series on diaspora partnership fundamentals?

Partnerships are at the heart of EUDiF. They are the cornerstone of successful diaspora engagement for development and the backbone of our work – from research, to dialogue, to technical support. Partnerships are so important that they even have their own SDG – check out [SDG 17!](#) – so it is crucial to have a good grasp of the basics.

Based on four years of implementation, EUDiF has consolidated its knowledge on how to build partnerships that work into a three-part series in which we share how to master cross-sector partnering in the diaspora-development ecosystem. In this series, we draw insights from our research and practical experience to explore three fundamental aspects of partnerships in a concise way, helping guide you no matter what stage of the partnership journey you are on:



Welcome to EUDiF's **Diaspora Partnership Fundamentals**, essential reading on partnering in the diaspora-development ecosystem in advance of the third Future Forum.¹

¹ This Diaspora Partnerships Fundamentals series builds on the SME Partnerships guide created by EUDiF and its partners for one of the practical workshops we ran during Future Forum 2022.

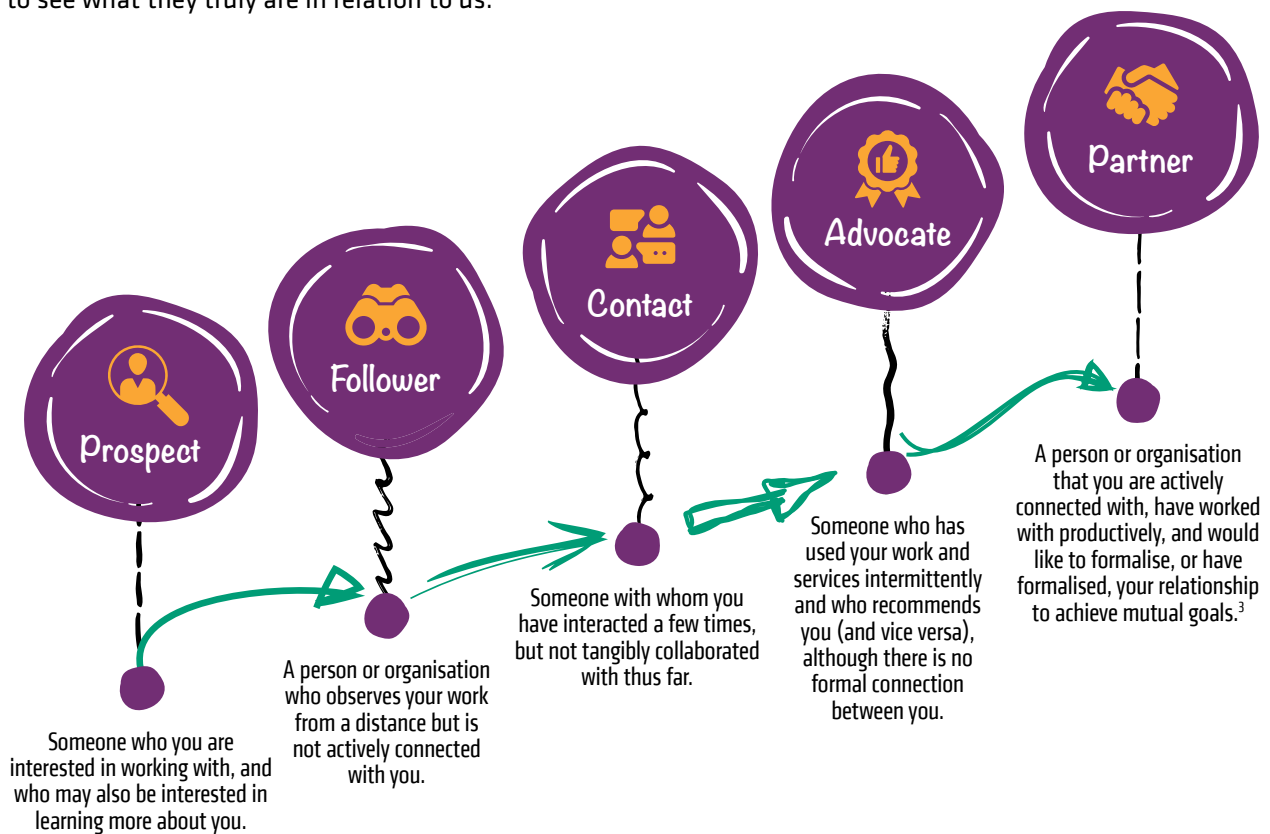
PART I

Partnering for success

● When is a partnership a partnership?

A partnership may be defined as “Two or more organisations acting together by contributing their diverse resources to pursue a common vision with clearly defined goals and objectives. The objective of the partnership should be to deliver more than the sum of the individual parts.”²

This is a great definition on paper, but how does it work in real life? How do we know which interactions count as partnerships, and which do not? Everyday, we interact with plenty of people, organisations and entities, and depending on how often we engage with each other and how closely intertwined our activities are, we can start to see what they truly are in relation to us:



A partnership is the culmination of relationships into a formalised arrangement, which can be established by a legal document, verbal agreement or other means of confirming your connection. This list is a helpful way to reflect on your relationships and to see if they count as partnerships or could be partnerships in the making – at least for now!

² Modified from the Ashridge Centre for Business and Society's definition of partnership.

³ Adapted from Bookkah P. (2023), *The Ladder of Loyalty*, <https://bookkah.com/ladder-of-loyalty/>.

● Why are partnerships needed?

🗨️ A decision to partner is taken when there is a serious expectation that significant results will be achieved more effectively together than could have been achieved through other single-sector solutions or ways of working.⁴ 🗨️

Partnerships are a collaborative mechanism to support the successful delivery of concrete projects. To help you understand the concept better, it may be helpful for you to think of the project itself as the “what” and the partnership as the “how”.

Partnership should never be an end-goal in itself; successful partnership can enhance effectiveness, sustainability and impact to address societal, economic and community issues. Success lies in devising and running joint initiatives which leverage the resources of each partner for society’s benefit.

● How do I know if I’m entering into the right partnership?

For partnerships to be successful, there are several criteria that you would have to consider when identifying a potential partner. Think about whether your potential partner has the same aspirations and inspirations as you, and whether they have what it takes to turn this shared vision into reality. Ask yourself a few simple questions about your common denominators and goals:

Reflection time!

In your organisation, do you have specific partner criteria? Do you know what assets you are looking for to launch your next initiative?

Have you mapped your assets so you can show potential partners what role you could take? EUDiF has a skills audit which might help you – ask the team for more info.

Do they have assets (skills, competencies, networks, resources, etc.) that complement those of my organisation and of other potential partners?

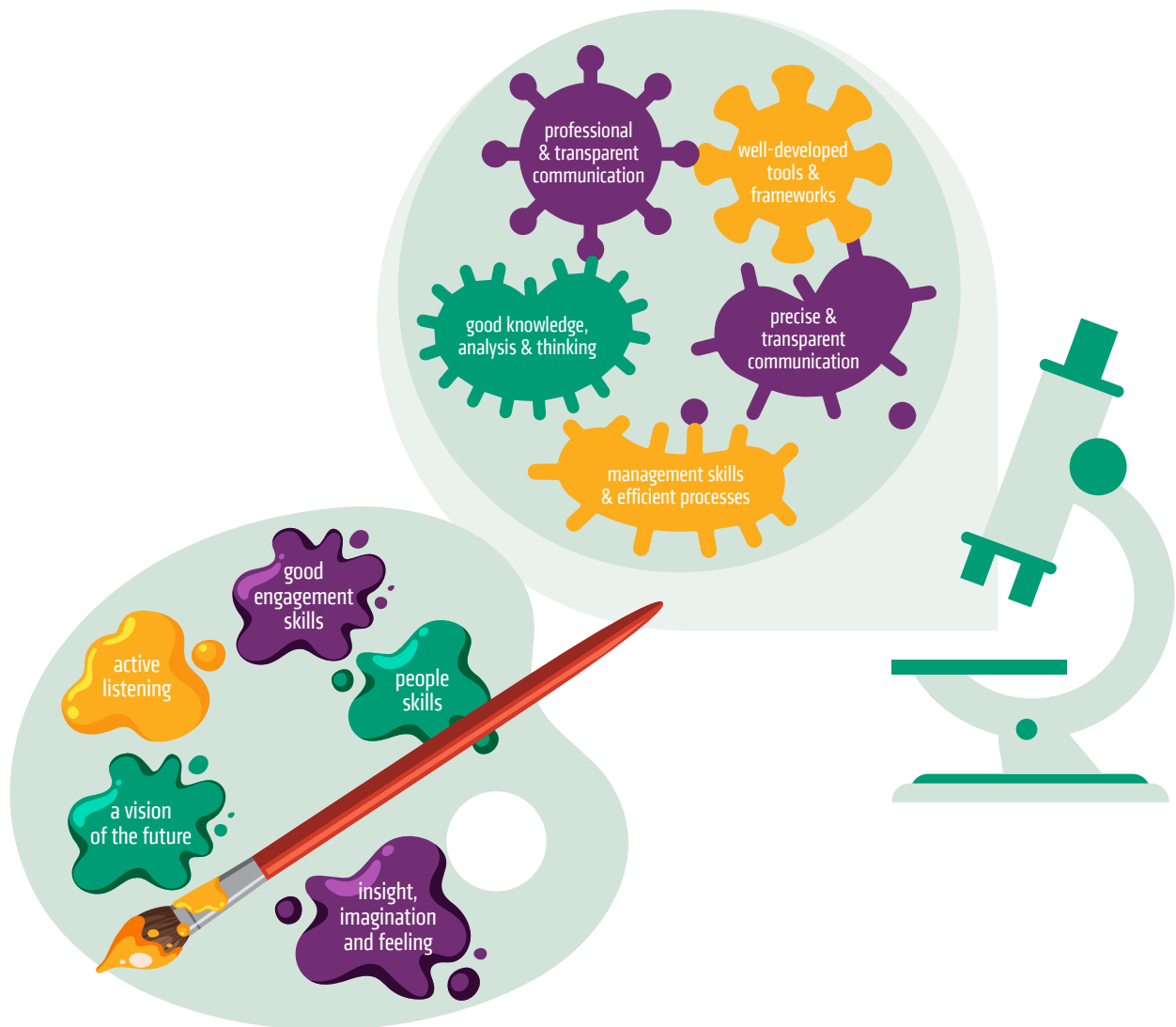
Are they committed to my chosen cause?

Are they active in the countries in which I seek their involvement?



4 The Partnering Initiative (2009), *Moving On: Effective Management for Partnership Transitions, Transformations and Exits*, <https://thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/MovingOnToolbook.pdf>.

● Partnering is an art and a science



● Approaching your perfect partner

If you think you have spotted your desired partner organisation(s), take time to get to know each other. Be curious about each other, do not be shy, ask many questions, and test your assumptions about each other! Share your organisations' stories and explore any mutual histories and cultures.

While a partnership ultimately requires a shared goal, it is important to remember that your partner may have needs and expectations quite different from your own. You may come from different cultures and/or different sectors, resulting in different values, views, approaches and ways of working. However, remember that at the end of the day, every partner – no matter how different they may be from your organisation – can bring valuable contributions. Be it knowledge about development, project experience, a network of relevant contacts, project funding or business development know-how, all have value, relevance and importance in making a project successful and impactful.

It is important to ensure that there is a good fit from start to finish. In practice, this means having sound partnership management principles that tick the following criteria:



Appropriate representation: Each partner is regularly participating and has the appropriate knowledge, skills and experience to engage in active discussion and provide input, drawing on a good track record in terms of the results they achieve.



Clearly defined roles: The division of labour in your partnership is based on the optimal use of each partner's unique skills, perspectives and resources.



Sufficient resources: Both of you are well-equipped with staff, funding and equipment to implement the work you have agreed on.



Partner equity: There is a good balance of power in a partnership and a sense of mutual respect, despite differences in the resources and/or influence that each partner brings.



Sound decision-making: The partnership has a transparent and inclusive decision-making process, where all voices are heard before decisions are taken.



Effective operational processes and open communication: Both of you have a clear, mutual understanding of deliverables, accountabilities and timeframes, and you and your partners regularly and openly communicate to review them for further optimisation.

Now that you have laid the foundations for building a successful partnership, are you aware of the different types of partners you could find out there? Be on the lookout for part two, which focuses on **diversifying partnerships**.

➔ PART II

Diversifying partnerships

● Why diversify?

The great value of a multi-stakeholder partnership lies in the fact that your partners can bring experience, competencies, values, priorities, resources, and styles of operation that your organisation may not necessarily have. Through skillful and successful partnering, all of these additional assets can be brought together to achieve a common vision and goal.

A partnership benefits from diverse perspectives, competences and contributions. It is exactly the partnership “mix” that contains the potential for innovation, and here that a diaspora perspective can prove particularly valuable in scenarios where the diaspora have not previously been considered as partners.

💬 This was the first time that Berytech was involved in a project with the diaspora. It turned out to be very beneficial and led to the creation of the new association “Cedars Tech”. The EUDiF project has laid the groundwork for a long-term relationship with the diaspora based in France and this will be expanded in the future to other countries. 🍷

- Fadi Khoneisser

Director of Development and Growth, Berytech

● What different kinds of partners are out there?

In diaspora engagement, we observe a range of different partner types⁵, some of which have been in the diaspora-development ecosystem for longer than others. The more established actors, such as international organisations and central public sector institutions, have been instrumental in building the foundations of diaspora policies, programmes and initiatives around the world. As the development space has expanded, new actors have moved into diaspora engagement. Emerging partners bring new and innovative ways of engaging with the diaspora, which is extremely exciting to see.

5 Check out EUDiF's recent thematic dossier “[Success factors for capacity development in diaspora engagement](#)”, in which we summarise the different types of stakeholders we have worked with and briefly discuss how our partnership with them capitalised on their strengths.

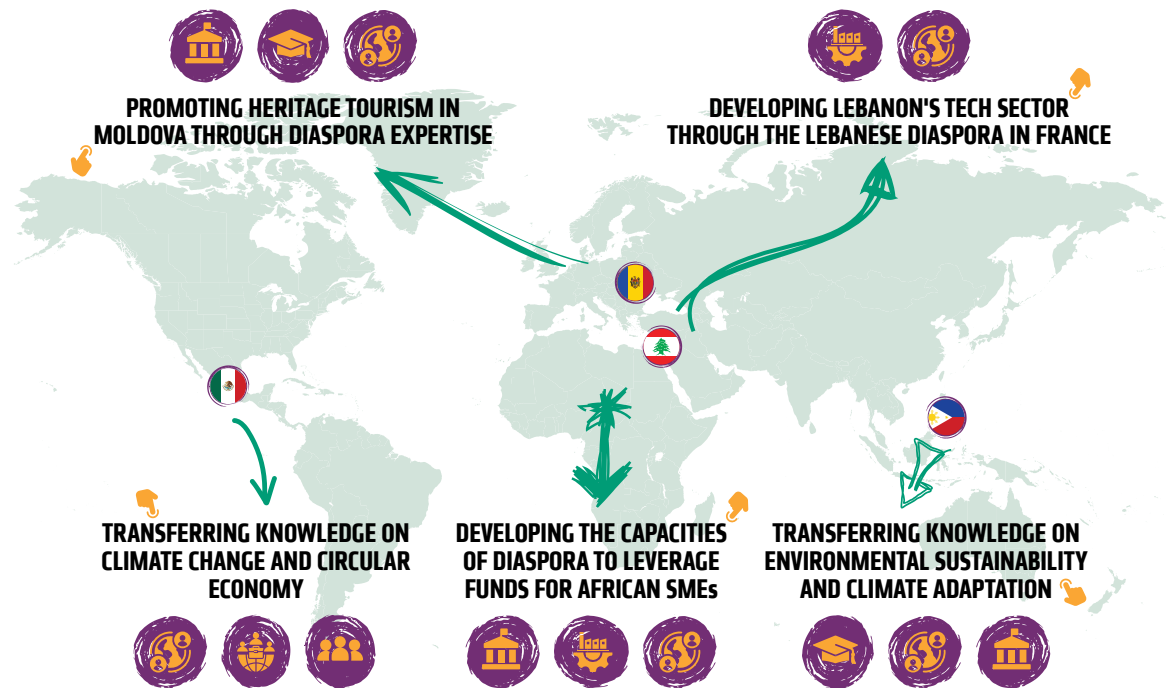
There is great diversity within each grouping. For instance, while the public sector includes Ministries of Foreign Affairs, embassies and municipalities, which may be considered traditional partners, there are also sub-categories within this group which are new to diaspora partnerships, such as national museums (check out our [action on heritage tourism with a national museum in Moldova](#)).



Did you know?

While we look at diaspora as one type of actor, diaspora themselves are found in all of these spaces. Diaspora are everywhere, giving many potential entry points for a new partnership...

Given this proliferation of partners, there are infinite ways to mix and match when creating a partnership! Want to learn from examples? At EUDiF, we have supported different combinations of partners in [our actions](#), such as:



Top tip!

It may seem daunting to connect with diaspora partners on your own, especially because diaspora partnerships can come with pre-existing political, social and cultural sensitivities. When this is the case, you can consider approaching a gatekeeper for help. A gatekeeper is an individual or organisation that acts as a trusted intermediary and gives you access to potential partners. They can indicate the best way to go about things according to political, social and cultural context, helping ensure that your partnership starts off on the right foot.

● Deep dive: Where to find diaspora partners

There are many different ways to look for actors in the diaspora who can make your partnership successful and who can help you achieve your development objectives. Wondering where to start? Here are some entry points to diaspora partners:



Now that you have found your partners and diversified your partnership, how can you ensure the partnership brings about impactful and sustainable change? Look out for the next and last part of this partnerships series, which focuses on **maximising the diaspora-development value chain**.



PART III

Maximising the diaspora-development value chain

● What makes a partnership impactful?

Having an impactful partnership mainly means three things:

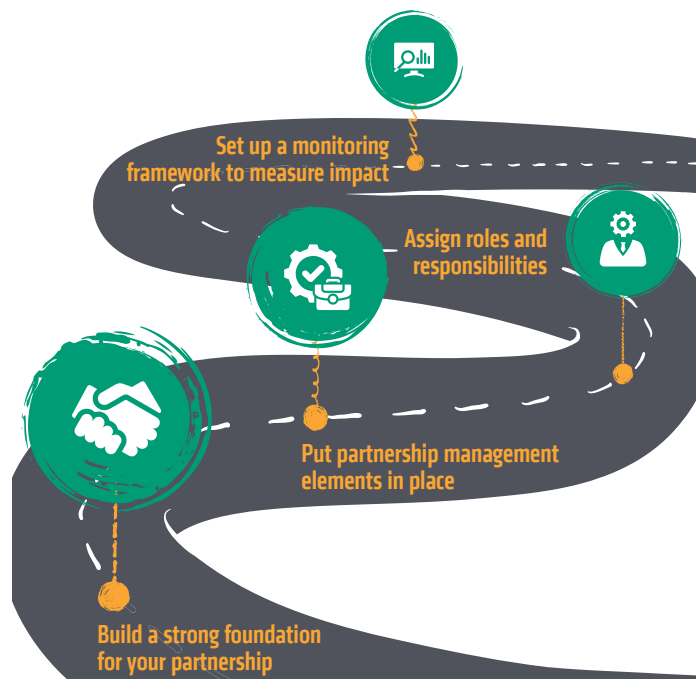
- ✓ The partnership is effective in achieving its aims;
- ✓ All partners benefit from their involvement;
- ✓ Partnering is the best way to achieve the agreed goals.

This can happen only when a partnership is *well designed and managed* with shared principles, frameworks, processes and tools governing its operations. This is the “science” bit of partnerships – don’t forget to use the checklist on sound partnership management principles in Part I. But of course, partnering is also an “art”, requiring things such as good engagement skills and a shared vision of the future. We can maximise impact and create value only when there is good coordination, a high-level of buy-in from partners, and a shared and full understanding of the partnership’s goals at the highest levels in your organisation (and, of course, those of your partners).

Partners should define partnership management together, including the roles to play along the way. By setting foundations and being effective at partnership management, organisations can co-create solutions and share risks. They can increase the scale and positive change or impact of their projects. This is called **collaborative impact**.

● How do we continuously monitor the partnership and ensure we are making an impact?

Once you have established your relationship, put management frameworks and processes in place, and assigned roles and responsibilities, you will have worked your way quite far through the **partnering cycle**. As partners, you will have achieved these initial milestones together. Gradually, you may want to turn your thoughts to setting up your monitoring activities as part of your partnership implementation.

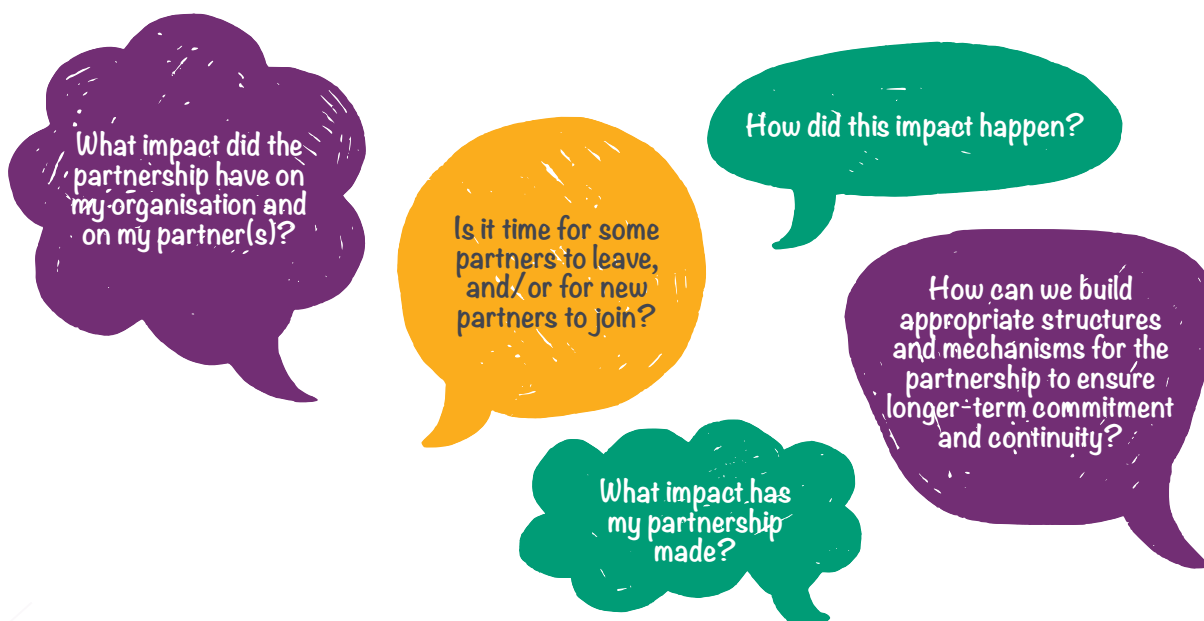


As part of your monitoring efforts, all stakeholders in the partnership need to regularly reflect on and learn from what is working well and what is not, as well as whether your partnership is achieving its goals. In monitoring, it is absolutely essential to have data, and that this data accurately measures the progress you are making. When setting up your monitoring framework, there are a few basic questions you and your partner should start with:⁶



Conducting a monitoring exercise on an ongoing basis can help collect information that enables your partnership to make changes to improve effectiveness. Collecting such feedback is an important element in good partnership management and can be conducted at any point in the lifespan of a partnership (preferably multiple times!).

In addition to monitoring, evaluation is also undertaken (often at the end of a project) to assess the degree of impact made by the partnership's programme of work. Monitoring is best understood as an *ongoing process* that supports the relationships upon which the partnership is based, and ultimately the effective functioning of the partnership, whilst an evaluation exercise will help you answer a wide variety of questions about the impact of your partnership:



⁶ Adapted from IOM (2020), *Contributions and Counting: Guidance on Measuring the Economic Impact of Your Diaspora Beyond Remittances*, <https://publications.iom.int/books/contributions-and-counting-guidance-measuring-economic-impact-your-diaspora-beyond-remittances>.

Despite subtle differences between the two, monitoring and evaluation – also called M&E – go hand in hand. The findings of M&E exercises should be used to support and inform adjustments in your implementation, as well as assess the overall impact of your partnership and therefore help you plan for subsequent initiatives with the same partners, or create new partnerships based on the lessons learned. This can help add greater value to your partnership, since M&E aims to find areas of improvement in your work and address them in the most effective way.

● Reflection: How can we measure the development impact of a partnership?

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals explains that a successful sustainable development agenda requires inclusive partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society⁷, further underscoring the value of partnerships that we have been highlighting in this series. In line with SDG 17, we at EUDiF envision diaspora-development partnerships as a powerful way to address various societal, economic and community challenges that we aim to collectively address as a global community. However, while this is an honourable ambition, the big question of how to measure our achievement of SDG 17 – and the other SDGs in general – remains.

Remittances have traditionally been the de-facto proxy for measuring the impact of diaspora contributions. However, partnerships in the diaspora-development space are evolving now more than ever, and there is increasing acknowledgement of the many other ways through which they contribute to national development, such as knowledge transfer, entrepreneurship, and the mobilisation of diaspora investments, among many others.⁸

While this is all exciting, quantifying the development impacts of our partnerships has become an even more immense task, and many questions remain unanswered. What do we even mean by “impact on development”? What challenges do we face in quantifying the impacts of our partnerships? What information, tools and resources do we need to address these gaps, and how could the different partner types contribute to addressing them?

As the diaspora-development ecosystem gets bigger in scope, more exciting questions such as these will surely arise, and we are only beginning to answer some of them. Every partnership that is undertaken provides us with new experiences and lessons learned, helping us amplify our impact and solve more development riddles, both in countries of heritage and countries of residence.

All the best with your future partnership building and managing! We hope you found this guide useful. Please visit the EUDiF website and explore our other helpful resources: www.diasporaforddevelopment.eu.

7 Ritchie, Roser, Mispy & Ortiz-Ospina (2018), *Measuring progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals*, <https://sdg-tracker.org/global-partnerships>.

8 IOM (2020), *Contributions and Counting: Guidance on Measuring the Economic Impact of Your Diaspora Beyond Remittances*, <https://publications.iom.int/books/contributions-and-counting-guidance-measuring-economic-impact-your-diaspora-beyond-remittances>.

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