

Learning by doing



series drawing on research and capacity development actions

# COMMUNICATION FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

## Establishing foundations and running campaigns

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# Table of contents

- 03**  
Context
- 05**  
Communication truths
- 06**  
The communication process
- 08**  
Communication in action
  - 08 Guyana: Establishing foundations & developing skills
  - 10 Egypt: Specialist investment campaigning with an established network
  - 12 Saint Lucia: Catalysing campaigning with multi-level government-diaspora collaboration
- 15**  
What comes next?
- 16**  
Observations
- 18**  
Learn more



# Context

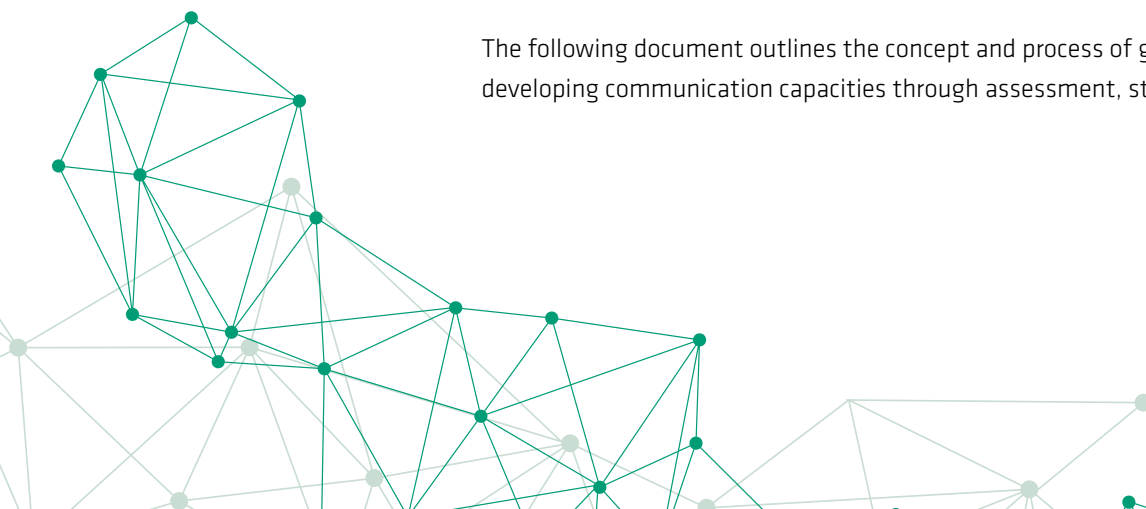
Diaspora engagement is a multi-directional process, in which consistent, high-quality outreach and communication is an essential element. Outreach and communication is never an end-goal. It is a cross-cultural process that plays a big role in any and all diaspora-engagement initiatives and, ultimately, in achieving each of the Sustainable Development Goals, not least SDG 17 “Partnerships for the goals”.

The most basic type of government communication is to inform, but engagement is two-way as it calls for contributions from the target community. Therefore, whilst there are varying definitions of communication and outreach, in the context of diaspora engagement, **EUDiF considers government communication and outreach activities as the different ways to share information, stories and opportunities with the diaspora in order to drive interest in supporting the country of heritage in its development.**

Done well, government communication with the diaspora will build relationships, create community, generate trust, drive collaboration and partnerships and – ultimately – contribute to national development.

However, limited capacity for communication is a recurrent issue for government institutions, discussed during regional thematic meetings, diaspora consultations and in applications for technical support via EUDiF’s Capacity Development Lab.

The following document outlines the concept and process of government-diaspora communication and presents EUDiF’s experience and lessons from developing communication capacities through assessment, strategy development and accompanied campaigns.





Communication is the keystone of trust - that elusive but essential ingredient of diaspora engagement. Without communication, there is neither community building in the diaspora, nor the possibility to build government-diaspora relations. The best communication is regular, consistent, high-quality and two-way.

- Charlotte Griffiths,  
EUDiF Communications Officer



#### Top tip

Effective communication and outreach are core to the success of any initiative. Yet communication is often considered late and can be seen as secondary to the main objective of an initiative, such as launching a diaspora bond, recruiting diaspora expertise, or promoting tourism. From the first stages of action design, EUDiF works with its partners to ensure communication is factored in from the start, both in terms of internal and external communication. This has proved highly effective for creating shared ownership and – more practically – for agreeing on messages and distributing roles early on.

# Communication truths

Based on our research, dialogue with diaspora and government, as well as the communication work in EUDiF actions, we have identified our “universal truths” applicable to all government communication. Their importance is heightened in the context of diaspora engagement where tensions and distrust can exist for a multitude of reasons, including preconceptions and stereotypes stemming from the country’s political, social and migration history and present. Government institutions and their partners should factor these truths in when engaging the diaspora for development purposes.



## **Trust is the core tenet of government-community relations.**

Although it can seem abstract and is challenging to measure, investing in trust-building in all interactions with the diaspora is crucial.



## **Trust is impossible without trustworthy information.**

The foundation of communication with the diaspora is providing timely and accurate information, make sure that websites are up to date and regularly reviewed, and that information at points of contact (most often embassies and consulates) is high quality.



## **Face-time counts.**

Government institutions are often faceless and inaccessible. Creating virtual and in-person opportunities for interaction between government staff and the diaspora community leads to inclusive, respectful dialogue and improved public participation in government initiatives.



## **Working with real people leads to real results.**

There is little more powerful in communication than personal connections and endorsement: find, train and work with “champions” who can act as messengers and relays with diaspora communities.



## **Data trumps assumptions.**

Governments need to regularly generate and use data to accurately understand diaspora demographics, interests, issues, preferences and how they perceive the government so as to adapt communication in terms of tone, message, channel, frequency...

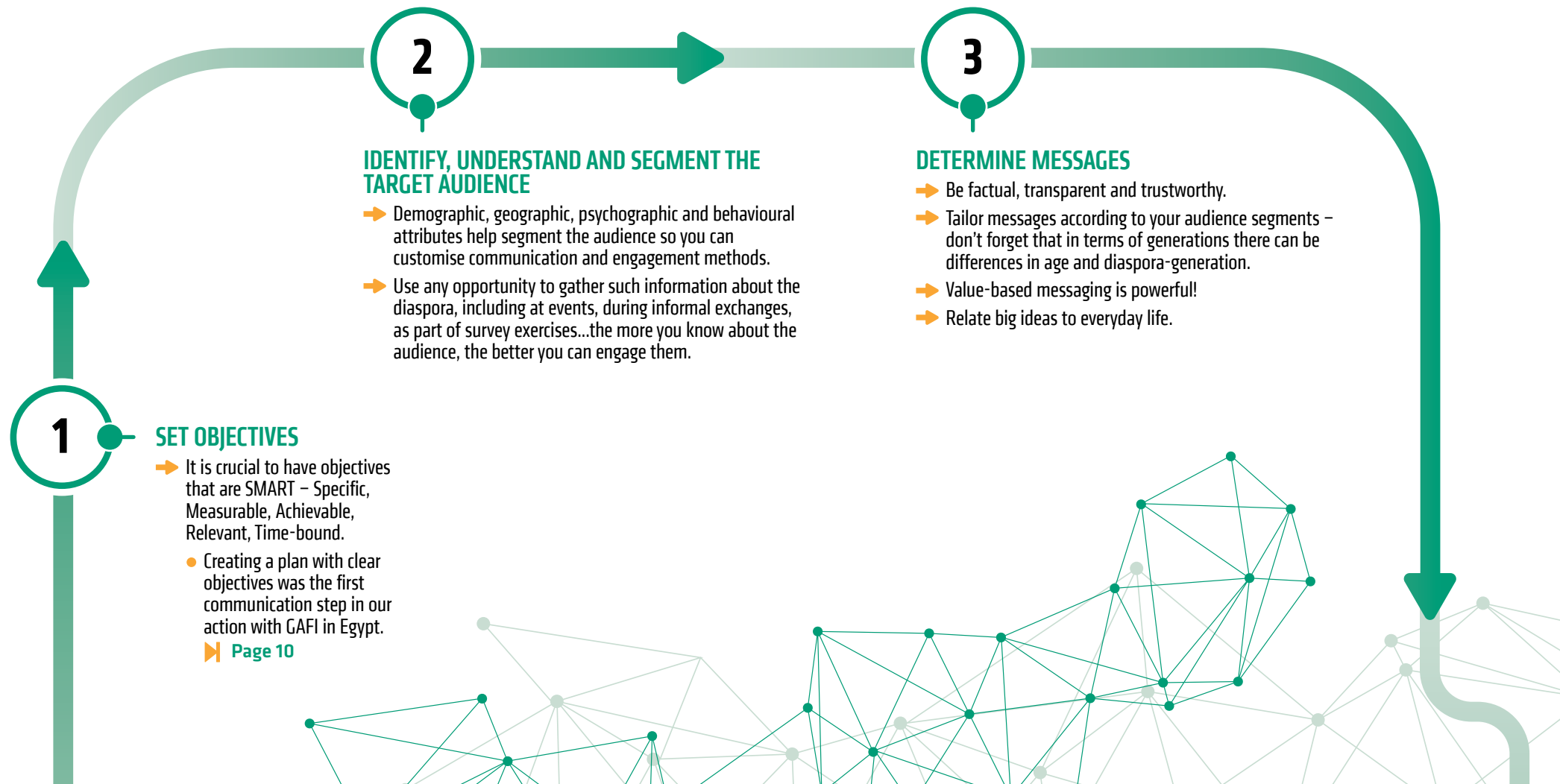


## **Balance and consistency is key.**

Government communication needs to strike a balance between providing information, asking for engagement and creating spaces for active listening. Extractive approaches – such as only making contact to ask for something – cause a breakdown in trust.

# The communication process

Governments undertake communication with the diaspora as an **ongoing process**, integrated in service delivery, as well as in **specific campaigns**. Both should be framed within a strategy and, broadly speaking, follow the same steps, although they are more distinct when running a campaign:



6

**MONITOR & EVALUATE;  
IMPROVE & UPSKILL**

- During and at the end of a campaign, reflect on how you are progressing and what you have learned: Are you reaching your intended audience? How are they responding? Ask for opinions, find out what works for different segments.
- For ongoing communication, run an annual review then organise training and develop resources based on the results.
  - ▶ **Page 08.** Read about how we worked with the Diaspora Unit of Guyana to assess the team's communication skills and institutional resources.

**SELECT CHANNELS & METHODS**

- Choose how to communicate based on your institutional standards and the most suitable channels for the segment of the diaspora you are targeting.
- Invest in staff and empower them to meet and engage the diaspora across channels (in person and digitally).

4

5

**IMPLEMENT**

- Create a consistent visual identity to tie multi-platform messaging together.
- Keep an eye on your budget.
- Mobilise your network to amplify your communications.
  - ▶ **Page 10.** Working with GAFI, Egypt on diaspora investment, we joined forces with a network of trust to expand the reach.
  - ▶ **Page 12.** With Saint Lucia we took a multi-institutional approach, as well as working with a diaspora champion to make sure its skills mapping campaign reached as many segments of the diaspora in the UK as possible.

# Communication in action



## Guyana: Establishing foundations & developing skills

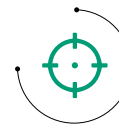
In partnership with the Diaspora Unit of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

### Summary:

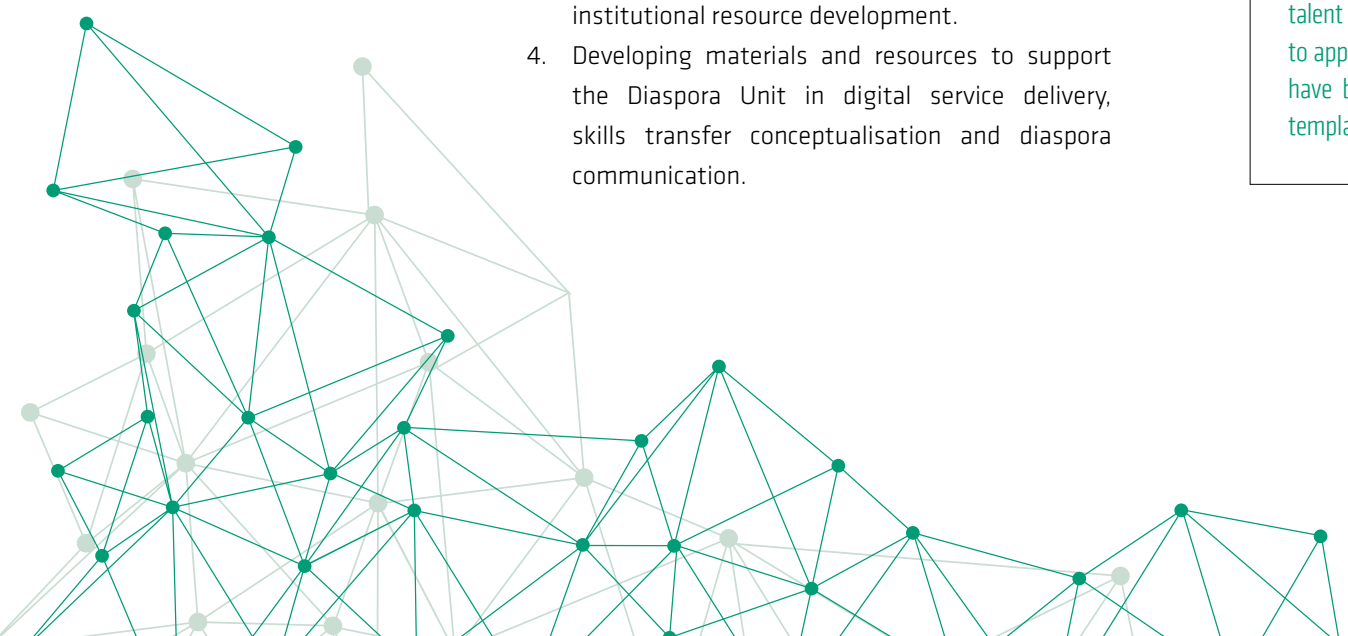
The action supports the Diaspora Unit by preparing it to advocate for mainstreaming diaspora engagement into national digitalisation efforts, simultaneously developing its knowledge and skills in digital service delivery and skills transfer mechanisms and platforms.

### Strands of work:

1. Assessment of institutional priorities and capacities.
2. Peer-learning via research and live exchange on diaspora engagement and skills transfer practices in the Caribbean and beyond.
3. Communication skills workshops and tailored institutional resource development.
4. Developing materials and resources to support the Diaspora Unit in digital service delivery, skills transfer conceptualisation and diaspora communication.



Communication is a core part of diaspora engagement, digital transformation and citizen service delivery. As such, we embedded communication across the action and undertook activities under **step 6** to ensure the Diaspora Unit's readiness to communicate with its diaspora as it rolls out digital services and works towards a skills transfer programme. The peer learning research covered tried-and-tested communication practices, whilst the skills development workshops honed-in on talent attraction and place marketing, exploring theory and best practices and how to apply such concepts in the Guyanese context. Tailored communication resources have been created, including campaign content creation guidelines, a planning template and monitoring framework.

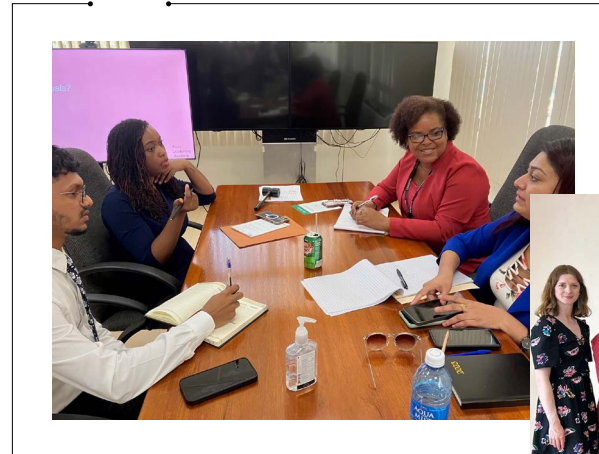
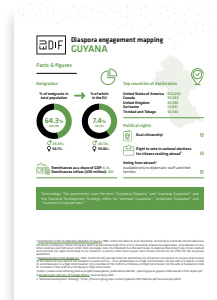




Read more about

 The action

 Guyana



**Interinstitutional coordination – the internal communication gold standard**

During our collaboration, Guyana's Diaspora Unit coordinated interinstitutional coordination meetings attended by around 15 other government agencies. These meetings allowed the agencies to exchange on challenges and share solutions to digital service delivery, as well as to identify shared communication objectives and opportunities to combine forces when conducting diaspora outreach.

Communication between government agencies is hugely valuable for maximising resources, identifying opportunities and ensuring coherent communication from government to diaspora, which is vital for trust-building.

Interinstitutional coordination is part of institutionalisation, the focus of another dossier in this series.



## Egypt: Specialist investment campaigning with an established network

In partnership with Egypt's General Authority for Investment and Free Zones (GAFI)

### Summary:

The action seeks to enhance GAFI's understanding of Egyptian expatriate investment and develop their institutional capacities to attract investment sustainably into Egypt, through research, resource development and diaspora outreach.

### Strands of work:

1. Developing a diaspora investment roadmap for Egypt by benchmarking existing approaches.
2. Gathering data on investment interest in the diaspora through digital communication and surveying.

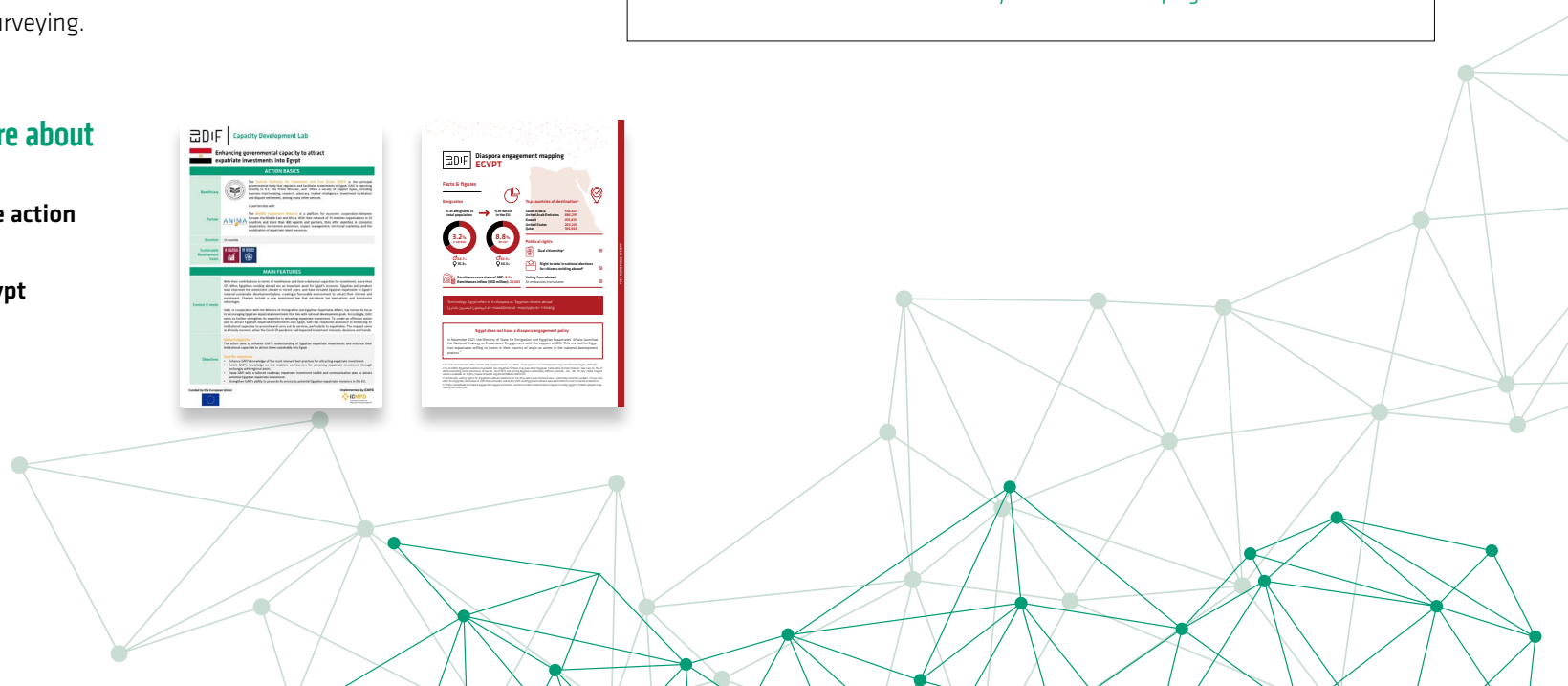
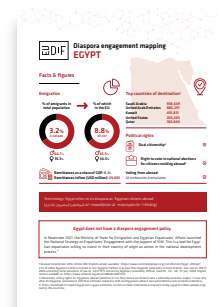
In order to develop the roadmap, we undertook communication activities [steps 1-5] with the objective of better understanding the investment potential of Egyptian expatriates. This began with a mapping of existing networks, followed by development of communication templates for a variety of media in order to engage contacts and run a survey on the investment appetite of Egyptian expatriates.

Whilst investment is an area which benefits from in-person activities, such as exhibitions or investment missions, in this case we worked on preparing the ground by stimulating new diaspora interest, gauging the appetite, and identifying new contacts for GAFI. The results of this preparatory work feed directly into the roadmap and allow GAFI to follow up with more traditional investment engagement. Casting a wide net using digital communication is low in cost whilst collaborating with an established network is an efficient way to roll-out a campaign.

### Read more about

 The action

 Egypt



### Trusting partnerships to break barriers

Money is often a sensitive topic. Combining this with diaspora-state relations can make it even more so. When it comes to investment initiatives, it is extra important to consider questions of trust and how to approach the diaspora.

In the case of GAFI, collaborating with the Egyptian Professionals Network had the double benefit of being able to communicate to a large established network of engaged Egyptians abroad and offering reassurance in terms of how and why data was being used.

Building partnerships with such a “network of trust” is an effective way to deliver and amplify institutional messages and helps to break down sensitive communication barriers.

### Tips for communicating with diaspora investors:

- **The relationship approach:** Take a personalised, creative and committed approach to identifying and using the diaspora to promote investments. Target audience segmentation helps to choose appropriate activities, ranging from email to one-to-one meetings, to social events and much more.
- **Seniority approach:** Place senior people in front of senior people (e.g. ministers in front of high-net-worth individuals). Ensure you have the capacity to mobilise and provide access to senior people, they make diaspora members feel valued.
- **Diaspora celebrities:** Work with diaspora celebrities as promoters of investment activities and events.
- **In-country presence:** Physical presence is important for relationship building in focus markets; create opportunities for diaspora to visit and network.



For more, read the [Benchmark report: Diaspora investment practices](#)





## Saint Lucia: Catalysing campaigning with multi-level government-diaspora collaboration

In collaboration with the Diaspora Affairs Office and the High Commission of Saint Lucia to the United Kingdom.

### Summary:

The action accompanied the Diaspora Affairs Office and High Commission in running a skills mapping of the diaspora in the UK. The accompanied exercise equips the government with the tools and knowledge needed to map the technical, intellectual and financial skills of the Saint Lucian diaspora.

### Strands of work:

1. An accompanied skills mapping and analysis exercise, with objectives, scale and methods co-designed and implemented.
2. Skills development workshops on research principles, survey design, data analysis and communication.

The Saint Lucia action included a specific communication campaign to encourage the diaspora to complete a skills survey. The partners designed and implemented the campaign and received training to do so [steps 1-6]. The training covered the full communication process, with a particular focus on audience segmentation and targeted messaging. Subsequently, the campaign was coordinated by the diaspora professional who provided expertise across the action and played the role of **diaspora champion**, amplifying the message of the government and gaining access to groups beyond institutional reach. Running this campaign generated lessons learnt and a campaign blueprint which the institutions can follow in future.

### Read more about



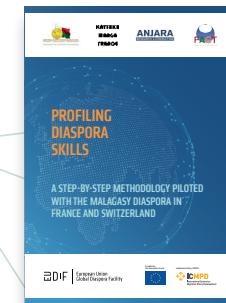
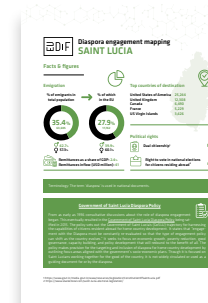
The action



Saint Lucia



Profiling diaspora skills - a step-by-step methodology



### Championing champions

The Saint Lucia action was designed in collaboration with a Saint Lucian diaspora professional. As part of her work, she played the role of a “champion” for the campaign, leveraging her existing networks and using community events to promote the action and the survey.

In addition to this key player, other diaspora leaders were invited to the skills workshop with the High Commission so that they were informed on the mission and technicalities of the action. The workshop served as a focus group to design key messages and identify communication channels, whilst also developing the participants’ own skills in research ethics, survey design and the communication process.

As well as skills-building, including diaspora in the workshop served to build trust in the initiative and test-run the communication materials. This encourages and empowers more of the diaspora to act as champions for High Commission initiatives, starting with the skills survey.





### What's in a name?

Before Saint Lucia, EUDiF ran a skills mapping exercise with Madagascar. Malagasy surnames are particularly recognisable. The diaspora champion working on this action was able to identify likely-diasporans based on their surnames and send them personalised messages on LinkedIn. This micro-targeting was very effective.

Depending on the diaspora, it may be interesting to consider how such data can be used for campaigning. In this vein, big data offers interesting potential for audience identification and segmentation, as well as selecting appropriate channels.

>> For more on big data, see “Mapping and profiling, a digital future” (pg. 12 of the [Future Forum 2021 conference report](#)).



# What comes next?

## Scalability and replicability

### Specific campaigns

With adequate tailoring, there is significant potential for replication on different levels:

- ▶ **Geographic:** Egypt and Saint Lucia could follow the same blueprint to run their campaigns in other regions. Particular care should be paid to steps 3 and 4 of the communication process to tailor a replicated campaign appropriately.
- ▶ **Topic:** Both governments can apply the same campaign logic to other diaspora engagement topics by adapting the objectives, key messages, channels etc.
- ▶ **Collaboration:** Each government could explore partnerships with different champions, networks, or other stakeholders when launching campaigns in different regions and/or on different topics.

### Upskilling

The materials created for Guyana and Saint Lucia can be reused to cascade knowledge within the governments, whether to new staff or to other departments with an interest in communicating with the diaspora.

### Monitoring and evaluation

The campaign monitoring and improvement practiced in the cases of Saint Lucia and Egypt and the monitoring guidelines developed for Guyana position all three governments well to continue improving their ongoing and future outreach activities. Having undertaken a full Communication Capacity Assessment, Guyana would do well to repeat the exercise on an annual basis to monitor improvement and identify additional training and resource needs.

The actions with Egypt, Guyana and Saint Lucia each included elements of peer learning, and development of step-by-step processes. These methodologies are highly adaptable to different national contexts and can be used by other countries to enhance in their outreach activities, whether on investment, skills transfer or any other sector of diaspora engagement. EUDiF actions are characterised by being sustainably-designed, practical in nature and maximising learning potential within and beyond a particular action. For more details on what we see as the success factors for capacity development, explore ["Learning by doing: Success factors for capacity development in diaspora engagement."](#)

# Observations

The accompanied campaigning and assessment processes has resulted in increased knowledge and capacities on designing communication campaigns, partnering with diaspora during implementation and evaluation during campaigning and at institution-level for these three institutions. For each, the tailored tools help to ensure institutional memory and equip the respective institutions with resources to run more campaigns to engage the diaspora.

A few things stand out which are worth highlighting to institutions reflecting on their own communication practices...

## During campaign design and implementation (steps 1-5)

- ▶ **Bringing together a mixed project team to design a campaign means you benefit from different experiences and specialisations.**

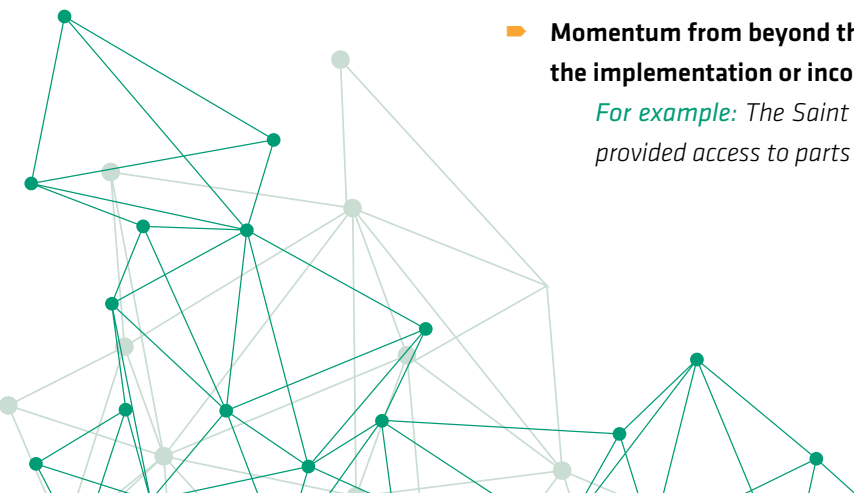
*For example:* The GAFI communications were designed between the national investment authority, a consultancy specialising in remittances and investment, a network for Egyptian professionals abroad and an international partner, meaning that the campaign drew on experience communicating with Egyptian expatriates, on diaspora investment, and on best practices from around the world.

- ▶ **Combining multi-level government communication with diaspora champions ensures a cohesive narrative and helps a campaign reach part of the diaspora that may not otherwise be engaged with institutions.**

*For example:* The dynamic action from the Saint Lucian diaspora champion created incredible momentum in the UK, whilst the High Commission communicated formally. Meanwhile, the Diaspora Office at central level targeted the family of diaspora in Saint Lucia. The three-pronged approach led to a response rate that far exceeded expectations.

- ▶ **Momentum from beyond the campaign can be beneficial. “Piggybacking” on other things (such as events) should ideally be planned into the implementation or incorporated if discovered along the way.**

*For example:* The Saint Lucia survey ran in June when there were a lot of Saint Lucian and Caribbean events happening in the UK. These provided access to parts of the community which may not otherwise have engaged with this sort of exercise.





## Stepping back to move forward (step 6)

- ▶ **Taking a step back to assess communications is an extremely helpful exercise for any institution to undertake. It is particularly important in the diaspora engagement context where trust is built on high quality communication.**

*For example:* As the Diaspora Unit of Guyana was rebuilt in 2021, its first years have been dedicated to networking with the diaspora in order to understand needs and interests. As the Diaspora Unit strives to systematise its standard services (such as provision of information and liaison with other agencies), developing institutional communication resources and staff competencies will be key to freeing up the unit's resources for more complex initiatives.

- ▶ **Monitoring during a campaign allows you to refine and adjust the campaign so as to achieve the objectives.**

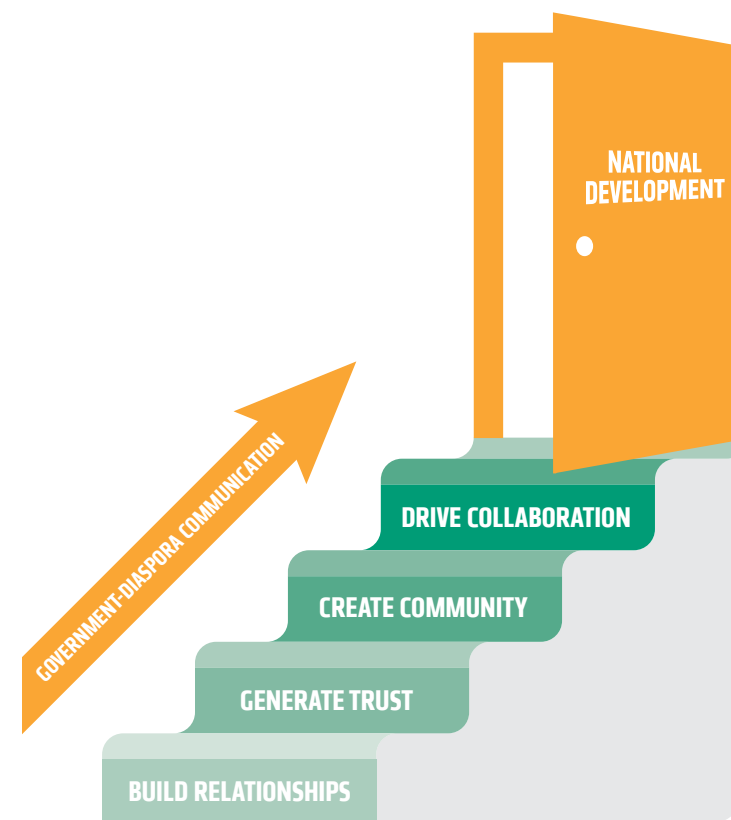
*For example:* Under the action with GAFI, initial direct communication to Egyptian organisations did not generate as much interest as hoped, so the project team reviewed steps 3 and 4. This resulted in a new partnership with a network to act as facilitator and champion and resulted in a stronger response rate.

## Beyond these actions

Recalling the universal truths of communication and that communication is an essential transversal for all sectors of diaspora engagement, institutions would do well to ensure communication is fully integrated in diaspora engagement, from strategic to operational level.

Thanks to the experiences presented here and EUDiF's extensive experience in diaspora outreach across its six partner regions, the facility is well placed to provide capacity development on outreach and communication as a standalone topic, as well as building it into sector-specific initiatives.

No matter the area you wish to work on, get in touch to discuss how to build in communication needs from day one: [eu-diaspora@icmpd.org](mailto:eu-diaspora@icmpd.org).



# Learn more



## **Benchmark Report: Diaspora Investment Practices (2023) DMA Global**

Produced during the action to support the Egyptian General Authority for Investment and Free Zones (GAFI), this report includes a series of diaspora investment practices, including information on related communication with the diaspora.

## **Communication Capacity Assessment Tool (2022) EUDI**

The CCAT is designed to guide an institution in reviewing its communication resources and staff skills. It is used during capacity development work during the needs assessment stage.

## **Communication competencies, culture and SDGs: effective processes to cross-cultural communication**

Arirguzoh, S. (2023) Humanities and Social Sciences Communications

**Deloitte.**  
Insights

## **Designing for inclusive engagement (2022) Deloitte Insights**



## **Plan your marketing campaign in 6 simple steps (2022) Adobe**



# European Union Global Diaspora Facility

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