



# Diaspora engagement mapping

## SAINT KITTS AND NEVIS

### Facts & figures

#### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



Voting from abroad



#### Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: 3.45%  
Remittances inflow (USD million): 38,74

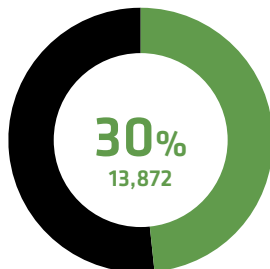
#### Emigration



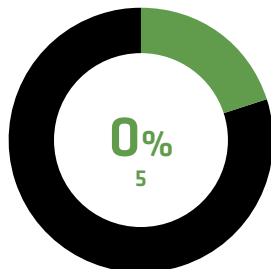
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 48.5%  
♀ 51.5%



♂ 20%  
♀ 80%

#### 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).

#### Top countries of destination



|                              |       |
|------------------------------|-------|
| United States Virgin Islands | 7,107 |
| British Virgin Islands       | 1,741 |
| Peru                         | 1,159 |
| Sint Maarten (Dutch part)    | 1,149 |
| Anguilla                     | 975   |

#### Diaspora policy 2020



The Diaspora Policy of Saint Kitts and Nevis was approved by the government to guide its engagement with nationals living abroad. This policy, developed through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, aims to foster a stronger relationship with Kittitian-Nevisian citizens who reside in other parts of the world.

<sup>1</sup> Saint Kitts and Nevis allows dual citizenship based on the 1984 Citizenship Act and Constitution. As a part of the Commonwealth, nationality and citizenship are used interchangeably. Legal text available online at: <https://www.gov.kn/the-constitution/>.

<sup>2</sup> Voting for nationals residing abroad is permitted, pending return and prior registration. New electoral reforms are likely to facilitate voting from abroad in the next elections which would enhance accessibility and participation. Available online at: <https://www.legal.gov.kn/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/National-Assembly-Elections-Act.pdf>.

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2022** ● **The Returning Nationals Policy and Procedures** is a framework governing voluntary and involuntary return migration to Saint Kitts and Nevis (SKN). The document lists eligibility criteria for nationals living abroad, with several tax exemptions for imported goods, tools of trade and repatriated capital.
- 2023** ● **The St Kitts and Nevis Citizenship by Substantial Investment Regulation** in its revised form provides certain benefits and incentives for nationals living abroad, such as business facilitation and access to financing streams, as well as the option of selling property to those wishing to apply for economic citizenship in Saint Kitts and Nevis, upon prior registration with the Citizenship by Investment (CBI) Board of Governors.
- 2025** ● **Nevis Returning National/Diaspora Investment Policy (2025)**. Introduced by the Nevis Island Administration, the policy seeks to facilitate the return and reintegration of nationals abroad while simultaneously incentivising diaspora investment through a comprehensive package of fiscal concessions, including exemptions on import duties for personal effects, vehicles, construction materials and business-related equipment. By targeting priority sectors such as agriculture, tourism, renewable energy and services, the framework promotes diaspora entrepreneurship and capital mobilisation. The establishment of a dedicated institutional mechanism functioning as a one-stop shop for returning nationals aims to streamline administrative processes and enhance government support.

## Practices

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



### Diaspora Conference

Started in 2018, the regular conferences centre on building lasting partnerships for sustainable development and draw wide community participation. The event is spearheaded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in coordination with the Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Ministries of Finance, Tourism, and Information Technology, the SKN Information Service, the Citizenship by Investment Unit, the Nevis Tourism Authority and the St Kitts Investment Promotion Agency. Among others, the discussions include investment opportunities, fostering greater awareness and developing a diaspora expertise database. The forum exemplified the government's commitment towards developing and improving mechanisms for diaspora engagement, which translated into several dedicated units and targeted consultations for the elaboration of a diaspora policy.

### Online Portal for Returning Nationals

Administered by the Returning Nationals Secretariate, a governmental department, the online portal disseminates up-to-date information for potential returnees, including easy-to-download application forms (organised by categories), personalised guidance, and access to various services aimed at facilitating the repatriation process. Moreover, the platform also lists a number of incentives, including duty-free concessions for imported household goods and vehicles, and simplified customs procedures. Eligible returnees are those 18 years or older who resided abroad for 10 continuous years or more and decided to repatriate permanently.

## Diaspora consultations 2023

Some diplomatic missions have organised onsite diaspora consultations as part of a move to institutionalise dialogue on diaspora contributions for socio-economic development. Other topics included education, mapping needs at home and abroad, heritage, and youth participation. In general, diplomatic teams have a dedicated diaspora officer who provides an interface with communities and organisations and is tasked with the overall coordination of diaspora affairs. The event also provided space for networking and socialisation.

## SMARTS E-Services Portal 2024

Presented in the Diaspora Digest newsletter, the SMARTS (Sustainable, Modernised, Administrative Revenue Tax Administration) e-services platform developed for the Inland Revenue Department purports to ensure “unparalleled access to tax management services”, which would also benefit taxpayers in the diaspora.

### **>> 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.

#### **Digitalisation**

Exemplified by platforms such as SMARTS for the Inland Revenue Department, SKN's government streamlines administrative processes for diaspora nationals, facilitating tax compliance and encouraging participation in the national economy.

#### **Networking**

By actively engaging through regional and international frameworks such as the OECS, CARICOM and the Commonwealth, which provide visibility and technical support for policy and programmes, the Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit (RIDU) coordinates with these bodies and other stakeholders to foster global connections and regional integration. Communication tools like the quarterly Diaspora Digest, diplomatic missions and diaspora officers facilitate regular consultation and cultural engagement. UK-based diaspora associations have further enhanced networking by organising townhall meetings in collaboration with national institutions, creating structured platforms for dialogue and targeted contributions.

#### **Economic and investment incentives**

The government has enhanced diaspora engagement through business facilitation, property ownership, tax concessions and amendments to the Citizenship by Investment (CBI) programme, which now benefits nationals wishing to repatriate capital and pursue entrepreneurship. This includes access to financing schemes and private home sale options, enabling diaspora homeowners to sell property to citizenship applicants, thereby stimulating local employment, capacity building and technology transfer.

### Governance and reintegration

Supported by several sub-ministerial units and the Returning Nationals Secretariat, SKN supports comprehensive repatriation and reintegration schemes, together with an integrated portal consolidating eligibility criteria, instructions and application forms. It demonstrates a proactive effort to support both voluntary and involuntary returnees, including students and deportees.”

## Obstacles



- **Politicisation:** Some diaspora organisations express concerns that consultations and diaspora issues in general risk being captured by political parties seeking to capitalise on these strategic constituencies.
- **Trust:** Although the government made significant progress in terms of administrative reforms and the adoption of anti-corruption laws, implementation has not always been consistent. Relatively high levels of corruption undermine public trust and may dissuade citizens living abroad from repatriating capital. In recent years, some public concern has been raised regarding the SKN's Citizenship by Investment and Residence by Investment programmes. In response, the government introduced expanded background checks and stricter oversight.
- **Marginalisation:** As national legal frameworks do not protect sexual orientation and gender identity, LGBTQ+ communities face pervasive societal discrimination. Therefore, engagement with national institutions may pose obstacles for those who decided to emigrate on grounds of discrimination and lack of acceptance.

## Annex:

# List of Actors

### Diaspora related institutions

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

#### **Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MFA**

Based on its mission, the Ministry is tasked with formulating and implementing the foreign policy of SKN, promoting, protecting, and advancing the country's strategic interests abroad with an emphasis on development. The official website also links to a dedicated Diaspora page.

- At sub-ministerial level

#### **Diaspora Secretariat**

The secretariat plays a crucial role in connecting and engaging with the Kittitian-Nevisian community around the world. It provides an official guide for living, working, visiting, and investing in Saint Kitts and Nevis, offers local services, programs, and initiatives, facilitates connections between the diaspora and the homeland and supports Kittitian-Nevisian nationals in various aspects of their lives abroad.

#### **Returning Nationals Secretariate, RNS 2012**

A department in the Prime Minister's Office, the Secretariate was established to specifically coordinate the relationship with returning nationals, in collaboration with ministerial bodies, community organisations and other stakeholders. Its vision "is to establish a seamless and empowering experience for individuals returning to their home after living abroad", through a centralised platform that "offers comprehensive support" and access to services facilitating the reintegration process. The institutional mandate also covers involuntary returned migrants (deportees) and students.

#### **Regional Integration and Diaspora Unit, RIDU 2020**

Operating under the remit of the Prime Minister's Office, RIDU leads the implementation of a range of initiatives connected with the OECS (Organization of Eastern Caribbean States) regional integration movement, working in close collaboration with the Regional Integration Unit of OECS (based in Saint Lucia). One of its objectives is to deepen the diaspora engagement through awareness and information campaigns.

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



## Diaspora organisations in Europe

### **Association of St Kitts and Nevis Descendants, ASKaND**

2022 United Kingdom

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



#### **Development activities**

The organisation brings people of St Kitts and Nevis heritage together through advocacy, arts, education and a range of socio-cultural activities. It also disseminates a monthly bulletin to its membership and has been an active promoter of culture and heritage, nurturing a sense of community cohesion. Some of its efforts focused on securing funding and grants from the National Lottery Community Fund and Birmingham City Council. The association also engages in development activities, fundraising and procuring medical equipment for hospitals in St Kitts and Nevis.

### **Association of Young Professionals of St Kitts and Nevis, SKNYPNUK** United Kingdom

#### **Integration activities**

Also mentioned in the Diaspora Digest (disseminated by RIDU), the professional network engages the youth diaspora residing in the United Kingdom through meetings and socialisation events.

### **St Kitts and Nevis Association of Leeds, SKNA** United Kingdom

#### **Integration activities**

According to its official website, SKNA was established to advance and meet the needs of nationals living in Leeds and the surrounding districts, to disseminate information on health and education and to develop links with nationals from other Caribbean islands. The association co-organised consultations on relevant issues such as voting from abroad with the participation of diplomatic mission staff and representatives from the diaspora unit.

### **St Kitts and Nevis London Association, SKANLA** 2016 United Kingdom

#### **Integration activities**

A membership-based organisation, it was set up by a group of volunteers to inform, socialise, befriend and prevent the exclusion of nationals residing in the London area. In 2022, SKANLA was awarded a recognition prize by Brent Council for its community services and proactive involvement.

### **St Kitts and Nevis Association Slough, SANAS** 1998 United Kingdom

#### **Integration activities**

The association promotes health and well-being, family unity and education, offering a support network for nationals residing in the United Kingdom. A recent event raised funds to host a Christmas luncheon dedicated to the community's elders.

**St Kitts/Nevis & Friends Association Birmingham**, N/A United Kingdom**☑ Integration activities**

The organisation was established to meet the needs of nationals living in the UK, particularly in the Midlands area, as well as to develop links with other Caribbean islanders. Similar to other community organisations, it provides support and socialisation opportunities for the elderly.

**St Kitts, Nevis and Friends Association of Luton** 1984 United Kingdom**☑ Integration activities**

The association was formed after SKN's independence and serves communities based in Bedfordshire through an array of socio-cultural activities, including the Luton International Carnival and events to celebrate the heritage and contributions of the Windrush generations to British society.

**St Kitts and Nevis Friendly Association**, United Kingdom**☑ Integration activities**

The association focuses on youth-related activities, including sports, training, and social interaction. It also operates a youth club that convenes regularly (mainly during weekends).

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