Diaspora Engagement Model for Development

german cooperation
DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENARBEIT

Implemented by
giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

African Diaspora POLICY CENTRE

KnowledgePlatform
FOR MIGRATION GOVERNANCE IN AFRICA

Published by:
African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC)
Laan van Meerdervoort 70
2517 AN Den Haag
T +31707537731
E info@diaspora-centre.org
I www.diaspora-centre.org

Responsible:
Dr. Awil Mohamoud

Design and photos:
Gordon Sana

Supported by:
Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

On behalf of:
German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Division 220
Policy issues of displacement and Migration

The Hague, Netherlands, 2021

The project was supported by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) under grant agreement No. 81248929 and implemented by the African Diaspora Policy Centre. The content reflects the author's views and the GIZ is not responsible for any use that may be made of the information in this document.

Table of Contents

Executive Summary 5

Introduction 7

Setting the Context 9

Key Pillars of the Model 10

1. **Political Will** 12
2. **Knowing your Diaspora** 15
3. **Diaspora-Friendly Environment** 18
4. **National Diaspora Policy** 21
5. **Consultation Mechanism** 24
6. **Outreach Mobilisation Strategy** 27
8. **Diaspora-Oriented Programmes** 33

Case Studies 36

Senegal 37

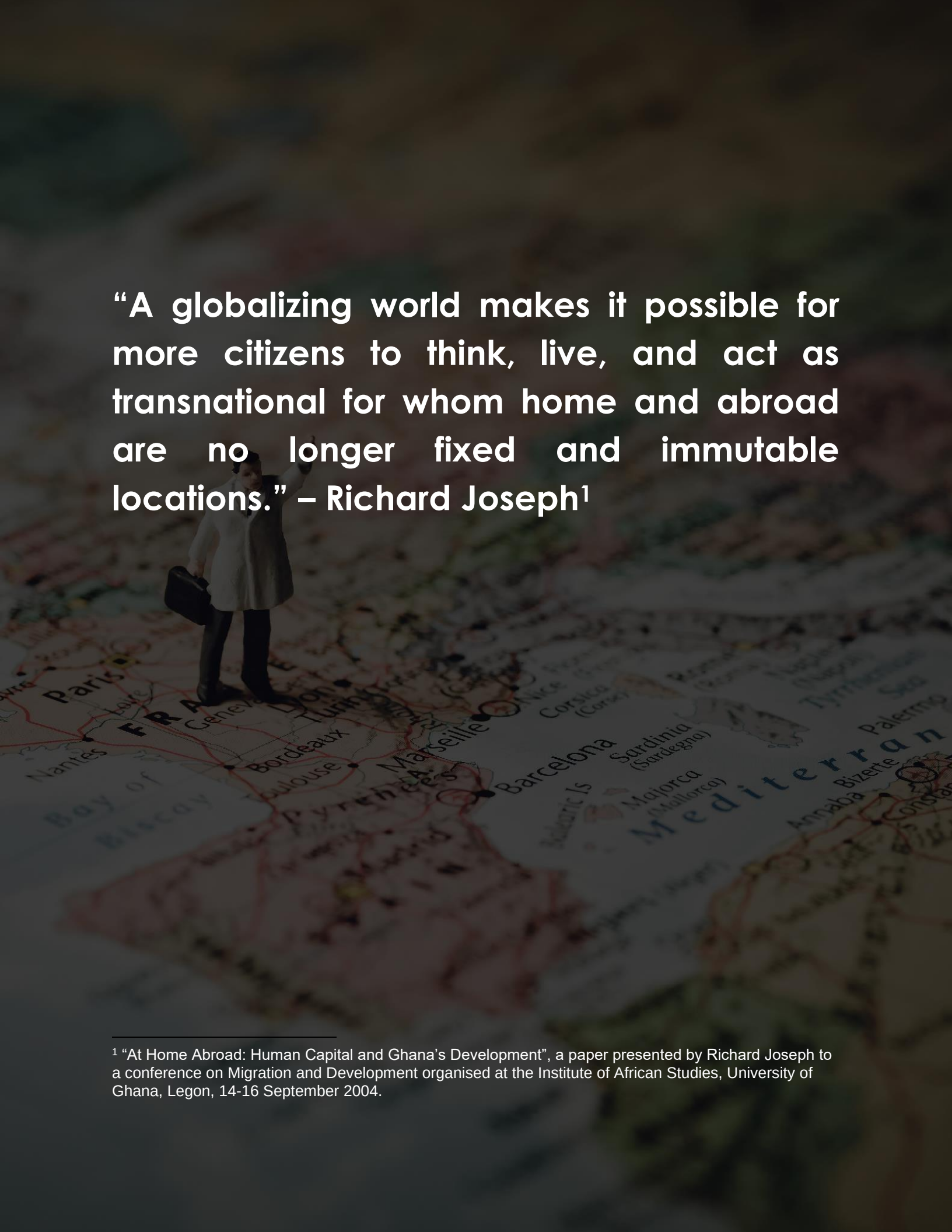
Ghana 38

Mali 39

Mauritius 40

Conclusion 41

References 42



"A globalizing world makes it possible for more citizens to think, live, and act as transnational for whom home and abroad are no longer fixed and immutable locations." – Richard Joseph[1]

[1] "At Home Abroad: Human Capital and Ghana's Development", a paper presented by Richard Joseph to a conference on Migration and Development organised at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana, Legon, 14-16 September 2004.

Executive Summary

The Diaspora Engagement Model for Development provides a comprehensive Diaspora engagement strategy. It is based on good practices that have been successfully in the past for engaging the Diaspora for development in their countries of origin. Here, the benchmark for success is established with governments who have managed to cultivate valuable partnerships with the Diaspora in the context of wider national development efforts. The model presents a viable toolkit that will enable governments to improve their Diaspora engagement strategy in a systematic manner. It will also help governments harness the potential of migration for development by implementing projects and initiatives that aim to promote coherent and development-oriented migration policies. To realise this, governments can undertake necessary steps in the short-, medium-, and long-term for the adoption and implementation of the pillars of the model.

In essence, the model is a Diaspora engagement strategy for governments in countries of origin. It can be globally adopted as it provides governments with a step-by-step process for engaging the Diaspora in national development – at scale and anywhere. It is designed in a manner that facilitates tangible, realistic, and actionable results within the existing human resource capacities of any given country. The model presents a set of key pillars, lays out an action plan and provides several good practice cases, and offers a roadmap for a viable Diaspora engagement strategy. The case studies are selected so that interested parties can learn from the experiences and good practices of the forerunners in this field. More importantly, the model's toolkit is intended to increase government policymakers' understanding of how Diaspora engagement in local development works best and how it can be better organised and more effectively harnessed.

However, many governments still do not yet have a comprehensive instrument that they can adopt to engage the Diaspora in their respective national development plans in a structured and effective manner. The key challenge in this regard is the absence of a reliable roadmap or a good practice blueprint for a Diaspora engagement model. To this end, developing a set of policies and a practical toolkit for governments will advance Diaspora efforts. Such a model will also enable governments to systematically scale-up development interventions by the Diaspora and achieve more productive engagement in the future.

The key advantage of having a Diaspora engagement model for development is that it ensures that development interventions undertaken by the Diaspora are structurally organised and formally facilitated. The lack of a comprehensive policy toolbox available to governments has gravely limited the contribution of the Diaspora to national development. The model mitigates this problem and seeks to maximise the considerable potential and benefits of Diaspora engagement in the country of origin. It also provides a blueprint for governments committed to integrating Diaspora-driven development into the national development agenda in the short-, medium-, and long-term. To adopt and implement the pillars of the model, governments can seek the support of donor institutions operating in their respective countries. There are several agencies and institutions running migration/Diaspora-oriented programmes such as the

International Organisation for Migration (IOM); International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD); the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Programme Migration & Diaspora (PMD); and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) among others. Also, some donor countries' embassies support migration/Diaspora-oriented projects. Government officials can reach out to these agencies and institutions for capacity development training, funding for Diaspora-related activities and for technical assistance in diverse areas regarding migration.

Introduction

This Diaspora engagement model for development is specifically tailored to the policymaking needs of governments of countries of origin engaged in involving the Diaspora in national development more effectively. In terms of the information gathered in this model, the collection and analysis of the required materials is largely qualitative. This includes examining and analysing cases in different countries[2], reviewing existing documentation on the topic, and consulting with several experts[3] through online meetings. The model is workable and can be implemented in the short-, medium-, and long-term. To this end, the model is expected to support key government decision-makers in being better informed about policy choices and, in turn, empowering them to make appropriate and practical decisions in this area. The starting point for the model is the need to develop a national policy strategy that works best within the local context of each country. It has been generally observed that in any given situation, a workable strategy is one that can be easily translated into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions within a realistic time frame. A successful strategy also guides feasible actions that can demonstrate quick and tangible results to the potential Diaspora that any government is seeking to engage in the development of its country. It should be noted that a Diaspora engagement model is only useful when it is accessible and can be implemented within the budget and human resources available in a government agency or department tasked to implement it. Likewise, successful implementation relies on commitment at the highest levels of government. A Diaspora engagement model works best when its implementation is coordinated and based on inter-agency collaboration and partnerships.

These are the lessons learned from past experiences of Diaspora engagement, specifically which policies and strategies work and which ones do not. For example, in previous years, many governments have developed Diaspora engagement strategies but with little practical use. All too frequently, many of these strategies have been forgotten, consigned to the drawers of agency offices and departments tasked to implement them. This failed implementation is largely due to a lack of good and thoughtful preparation beforehand, limited human resources, weak political will from the top, and an absence of inter-agency coordination and collaboration. Adoption of the innovative, multi-faceted, and comprehensive model set out here will mitigate such issues. The model has been developed by being mindful of the lessons of the past, and in such a way that it can be implemented in the social, political, and economic dynamics of any given country or government aspiring to engage the Diaspora more effectively. In other words, learning what works and what does not work prior to the adoption and implementation of the Diaspora Engagement Model is crucial to the success of this endeavour. The model builds on

[2] Such as Mexico, India, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Morocco, and Senegal among others.

[3] Experts consulted in the process of developing the model are: (1) Badara Ndiaye from Senegal; (2) Jide Olatuyi from Nigeria; (3) Mehdi Lahlou from Morocco; (4) Eyachew Tefera from Ethiopia; and (5) Mary Setrana from Ghana. All the experts are the members of the 'Knowledge Platform for Migration Governance in Africa', coordinated by the African Diaspora Policy Centre (ADPC). For information about the Platform, see: www.diaspora-centre.org

existing, proven policy measures and instruments adopted in exemplary countries cited in the good practice cases in the second section of this document.

Setting the Context

In many developing countries, Diaspora communities constitute a great offshore asset due to the potential of their considerable human and financial capital. Indeed, Diaspora communities operate as potential agents of economic growth, inclusive development, and positive social change in their respective countries of origin. Diaspora communities are therefore increasingly seen as a critical development constituency in the development of their countries of origin. This is the overwhelming reason why many developing countries are seeking to benefit from the resources (capital, knowledge, and networks) of their Diaspora communities overseas.[4] Furthermore, many governments consider the Diaspora to be a force for positive change that should be harnessed for the benefit of the country. This relates to efforts geared towards achieving inclusive development and social change and it is the reason why many governments are seeking to implement more sustainable and effective Diaspora-led development.[5]

In fact, Diaspora communities are already involved in the development of their respective country of origin as humanitarian volunteers, development practitioners, business entrepreneurs, and skilled professionals, but their involvement needs to be expanded and scaled up through knowledge input, appropriate policy measures and targeted Diaspora-oriented programmes.[6] The model is developed to achieve this objective. It aims to establish reliable policy instruments that can be effectively used to scale-up the engagement of the Diaspora in the development of their respective countries of origin.

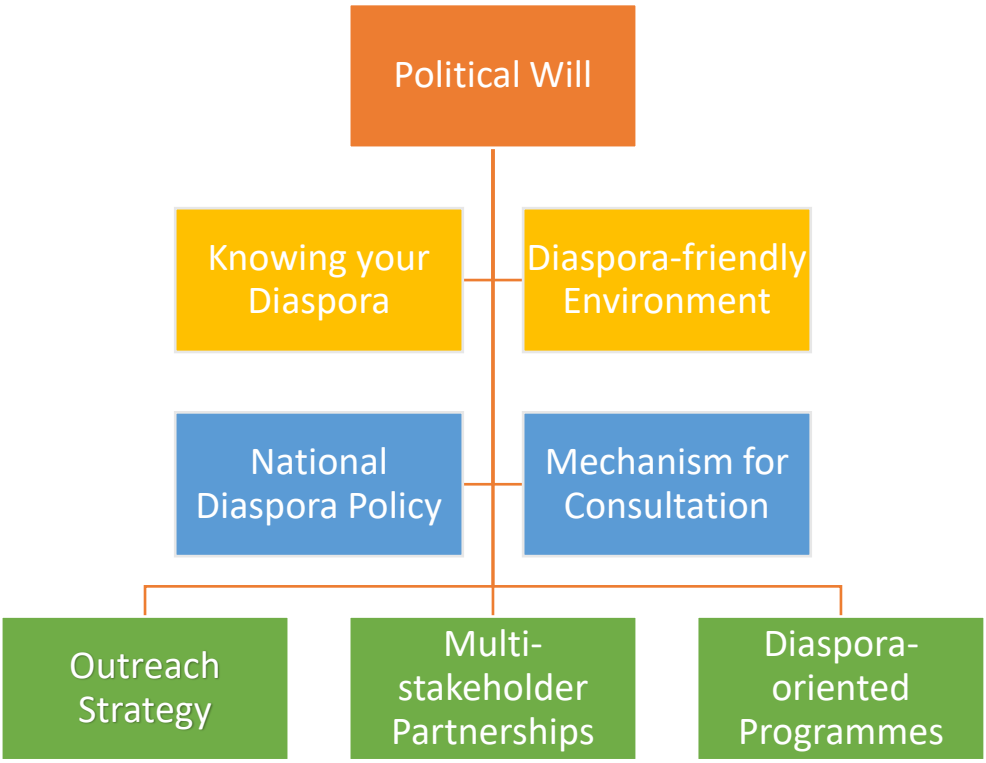
A Diaspora engagement strategy works best as a two-way street, in which all parties see the clear benefits of working together. It also means recognising the Diaspora as a potential resource and key partner in the development of the country. Furthermore, Diaspora engagement is an incremental process and requires concerted efforts across a broad front. And from the outset, the engagement must be guided by a series of logical steps carried out in sequential order. The governments in countries of origin that have successfully engaged the Diaspora in overall domestic development in a meaningful manner are those that have undertaken several critical steps towards this objective.[7]

[4] (Newland (ed.), Diasporas: New Partners in Global Dvelopment Policy, 2010)
[5] (Ratha & Plaza, 2011)
[6] (Mueller & Kuschminder, 2019)
[7] For more information on this, see: Iskander, 2010

Key Pillars of the Model

The key pillars of the model are chronologically organised here in an accessible manner that enables government policymakers to easily understand what they can do, how they can do it, and the resources needed to achieve short-, medium-, and long-term goals in this regard. Furthermore, the pillars assist government policymakers in assessing what measures have already been put in place and the gaps that must be addressed to establish a successful Diaspora engagement model for development.

The pillars presented here will enable government policymakers to develop a checklist, which they can tick off as they work towards engaging with the Diaspora. It is acknowledged that having all the pillars in place simultaneously is a monumental task for any country and demands much effort, time, and resources that are not easily marshalled. The model's strategy proposes implementing the pillars within a reasonable period of time, depending on the capacity and context of each country. For this reason, the process of adopting the pillars of the model will differ from one country to another as not all countries are at the same level when it comes to Diaspora engagement. Nonetheless, successful translation of the model's pillars into an action plan requires training, coaching, and mentoring of government officials tasked to develop and implement it.



The pillars laid out above are those adopted by countries successfully engaging the Diaspora in development. These countries have invested sufficient political and institutional resources in creating an enabling environment on the ground.[8] Effectively adopting the above pillars requires a dedicated political commitment with a long-term goal. This is crucial given the importance of serious preparation and coherence in Diaspora engagement. Likewise, Diaspora engagement is best approached as a process rather than as a one-time action or series of separate actions. In short, getting the process right beforehand is a recipe for successful Diaspora engagement in the development of countries of origin.

The guiding pillars for a successful Diaspora engagement strategy are summarised here in a chronological order. The importance of these pillars cannot be underestimated. For instance, the African Union (AU) based its Scorecard tool for Member States on these pillars, recognising its benchmarking value in the engagement of the Diaspora. The AU has developed the African Diaspora Scorecard to enhance the technical capacity of Member States and policymakers on the continent as well as to understand their level of progress in Diaspora engagement in general. The purpose of the AU Scorecard is threefold. Firstly, it supports Member States in accelerating the formulation and implementation of Diaspora strategies in accordance with the Diaspora Declaration and Agenda 2063. Secondly, it provides member States with an easy and quick instrument to assess their progress in effectively harnessing the power of the Diaspora for development. Finally, it supports Member States in taking comprehensive steps and actions towards identifying capacity gaps and building their abilities.[9] In short, the pillars of the model have already been adopted by the AU as an important instrument in the process of engaging the Diaspora in a systematic manner.

[8] (IOM, 2021)
[9] See further the AU Diaspora Engagement Self-Assessment Tool, published in 2019.

1. Political Will

The first and the foremost pillar is the existence of a strong political will at the highest level of government for the engagement of the Diaspora in the development of the country of origin. This means having a committed leadership that sees the Diaspora as a force for positive change and as a partner in the country's development. In this regard, having a president or a prime minister who is a dedicated champion can make a difference, as the experiences in Mexico, India, Ethiopia, Senegal, and Nigeria exemplify.[10] All these countries have made the Diaspora a key enabler for achieving development goals on poverty reduction, humanitarian support, and economic growth. Likewise, these leading countries have accumulated a wealth of experience that other countries can learn from with an aim to adopt similar strategies in their own context. A good example in the context of Africa is the leadership role played by the former president of Nigeria, Olusegun Obasanjo.[11]

In 2001, Obasanjo issued a presidential decree establishing the Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO) platform. He also personally appointed a special advisor for Diaspora issues, tasked with mainstreaming Diaspora-driven development within key government ministries. Furthermore, he instructed Nigerian Embassies and High Commissions around the globe to encourage the Nigerian Diaspora to come together under the platform of NIDO and contribute to development efforts in the country. The establishment of NIDO has significantly enhanced the institutionalisation of cooperation between the Diaspora and the government, deepening the involvement of the Nigerian Diaspora in the development of the country, particularly in knowledge-intensive parts of the economy such as the private sector as well as health and education.

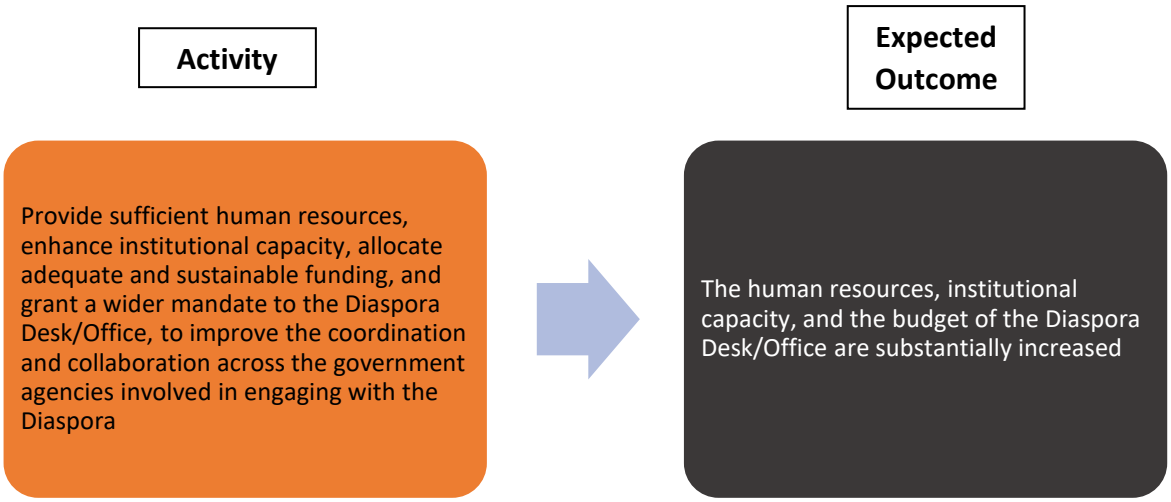
The example of Nigeria reveals the significance of a dedicated champion at the highest level of government. It also makes clear that having a strong political will from the outset can make a difference in terms of successful efforts to engage the Diaspora in national development. The challenge is sustaining political will from the top when the leadership in government changes. Another important point is the need to groom leaders from different institutions to sustain the political will even if the government changes. This has been the case in Nigeria. The subsequent leadership has more or less sustained the political will in the process of engaging the Diaspora in the development of the country, which is a major feat. Nurturing and maintaining political will is not always be easy as the interests and focus of a new regime may shift to other policy matters. For this reason, a successful strategy involves training dedicated champions to operate in positions and institutions where they can translate the political will into sustainable measures that endure beyond their term in office.

[10] (Tittel-Mosser, 2021)
[11] See further: Sharkdam, Ibonye, & Akinkuotu, 2014

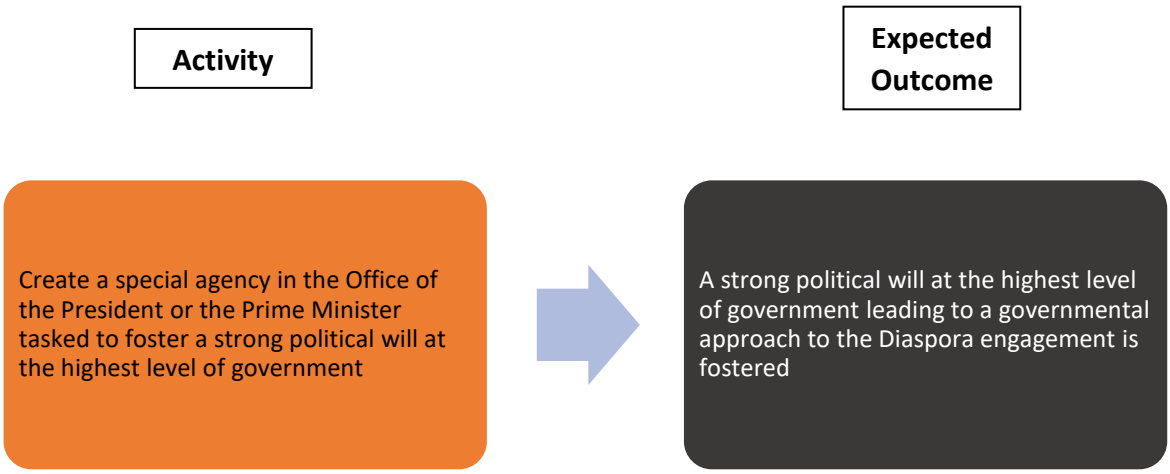
Action Plan

- Nurture political commitment – coordinated, consistent and vocal representatives from the highest levels of government who see the Diaspora as a partner for positive change.
- Create a Diaspora Desk / Office – centralized and focused with a mandate beyond consular affairs.
    - Technical Capacity – able to carry out mandate & advance new initiatives
    - Financial Capacity – designated fit for purpose budget beyond donor funding
- Enhance coordination & cooperation – input is valued and consulted across the government.

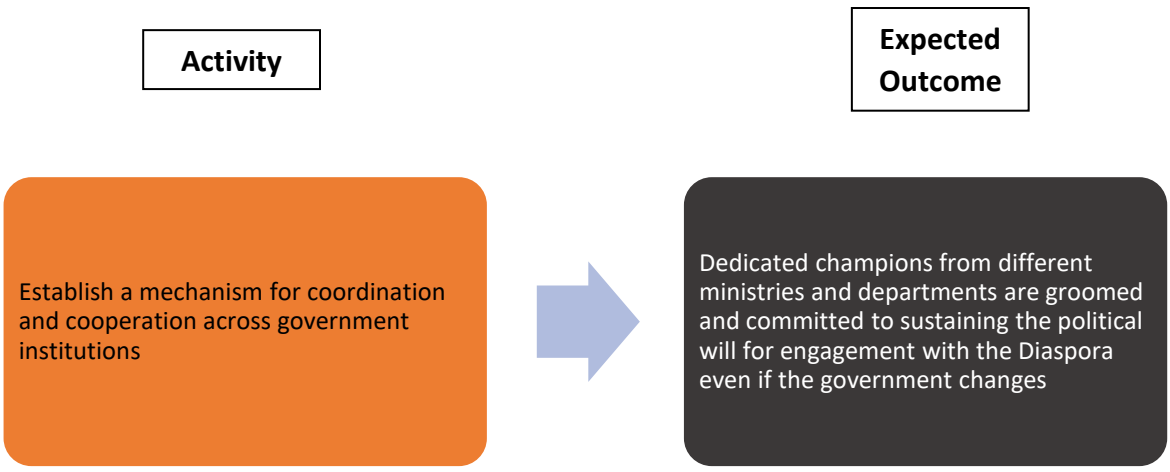
Short-term action:



Medium-term action:



Long-term action:



2. Knowing your Diaspora

The second pillar is "Knowing your Diaspora." This requires having access to reliable information about the whereabouts and profiles of the members of your Diaspora population overseas. Collecting and documenting accurate Diaspora data beforehand is essential. The aim is to know more about the profiles of the Diaspora across different countries and regions in the world. Thus, undertaking Diaspora mapping exercises and understanding what they have to offer, what they are willing to offer, and what they expect in return from the government, is crucial to knowing your Diaspora.[12] There are, however, other relevant handbooks and profiles that are available and can be consulted in the process of developing a country-specific Diaspora mapping exercise.[13] This validates the imperative of undertaking a country-specific Diaspora mapping exercise before implementing next steps. For instance, having baseline data in advance increases and enhances understanding about the nature of different Diaspora profiles. Conducting a mapping exercise is an important first step as it provides accurate baseline information about: the size and composition of the Diaspora; generations; their geographical locations; how they organise themselves; levels of education; breakdown of professions and skills profiles. All this information is needed to devise a targeted outreach strategy towards the Diaspora. It is also a prerequisite to understanding the needs, expectations, and development potential of the Diaspora before any policy action is formulated.

[12] For more information, see: Agunias & Newland, Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A handbook for policymakers and practitioners in home and host countries, 2012

[13] There are also other important mappings done by the IOM, AU, ICMP, and GIZ worth consulting in any future Diaspora mapping exercise.

Action Plan

- Mapping the Diaspora is not a one-off exercise, it is an ongoing process that responds to the changing context and needs of a given country at a particular time.
- Governments need to undertake a country-specific mapping exercise about the profiles of their Diaspora communities. Such information provides governments the necessary tools to work out a targeted outreach strategy towards the Diaspora.

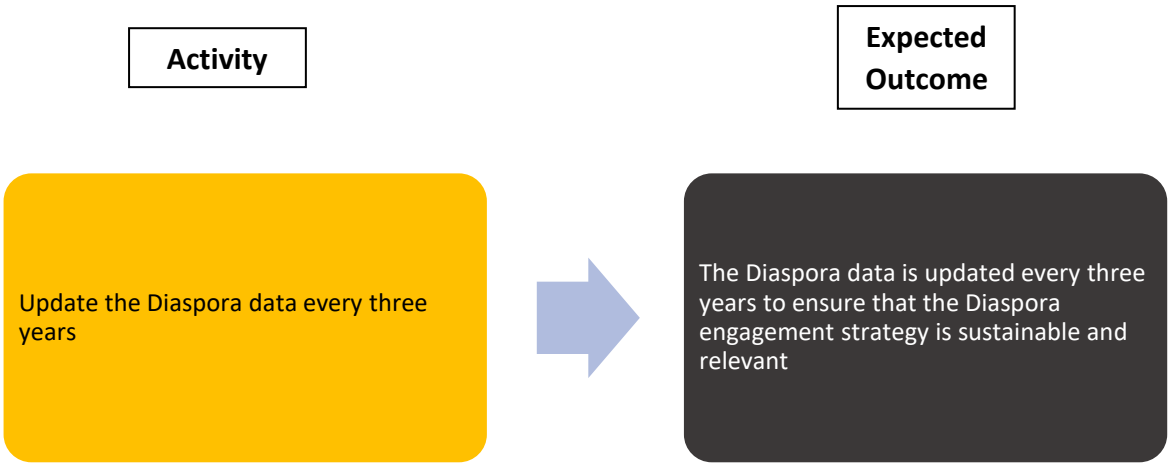
Short-term action:

Activity	Expected Outcome
Undertake a country-specific mapping exercise about the profiles of the Diaspora	Governments get a better understanding of and reliable information about the Diaspora

Medium-term action:

Activity	Expected Outcome
Design targeted outreach strategies towards the Diaspora in the form of brochures and other publications informing the Diaspora about policies, programmes, and development needs in the country	Diaspora become familiar with the local social and economic conditions, development needs, and opportunities in the country

Long-term action:



3. Diaspora-Friendly Environment

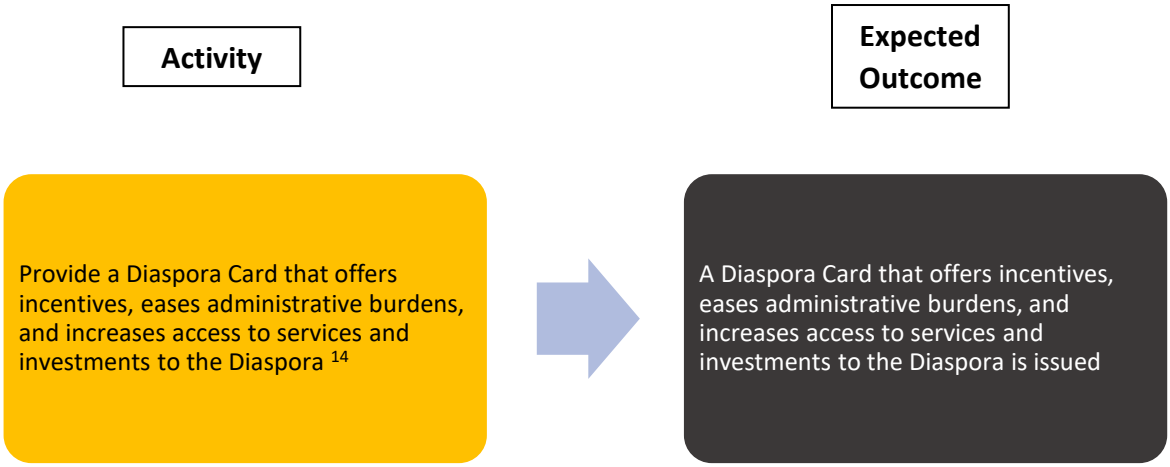
The third pillar is the creation of a Diaspora-friendly environment on the ground coupled with sound domestic institutions, both public and private. In practice, this means putting in place sound legal, regulatory, and/or institutional frameworks that encourage the increased participation of the Diaspora in the development of the country of origin. It also means improving the investment climate in the country of origin by, for example, reducing administrative burdens, bureaucratic red tape, creating greater transparency in regulations and licensing requirements, and ensuring a more consistent application of property law. Another enabling policy act could be the devising of institutional mechanisms aimed at supporting Diaspora returnees in terms of administration, registration, logistical support, and business counselling for those seeking to set up development related projects or businesses in the country. It would be beneficial for the country of origin to coordinate their Diaspora engagement efforts with those of the host country to achieve synergies. This includes working with governments in host countries in new joint programmes addressing these issues. Examples of these include the “Programme Migration & Diaspora (PMD)” and “Return to New Opportunities” managed by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). Popularizing the existence of such programmes among government policymakers in countries of origin is critical.

The creation of a Diaspora-friendly environment is indeed a precondition for engaging the Diaspora in the overall development of the country of origin. Having a Diaspora-friendly environment will motivate the Diaspora to contribute more to the development of the country. Moreover, positive rapprochement from the governments of their respective countries of origin often encourages members of the Diaspora to view and relate to the situation “back home” in new, different, and, most importantly, constructive ways.

Action Plan

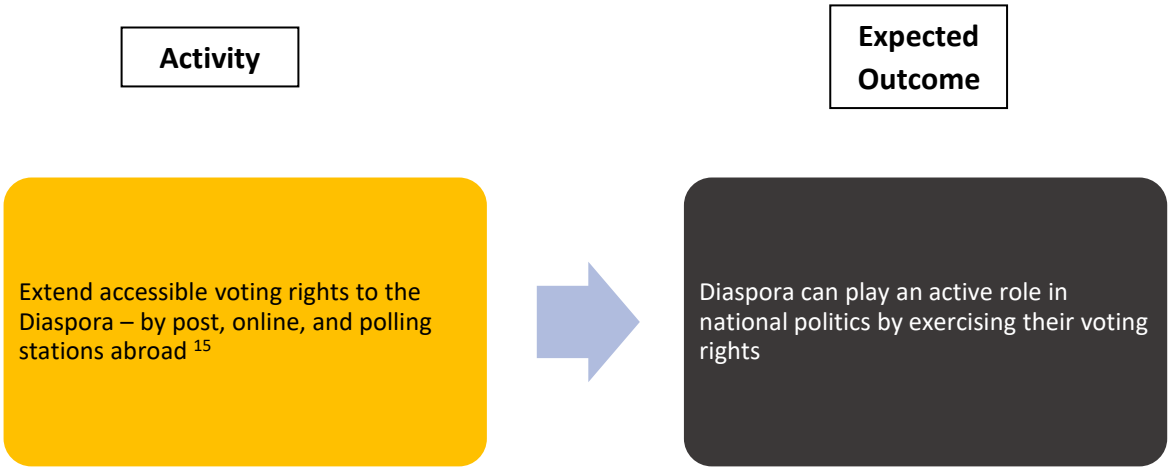
- Targeted positive rapprochement from the governments towards the Diaspora can encourage the Diaspora to relate to their country of origin in new, different, and constructive ways.
- Grant the Diaspora rights and political representation entrenched in the constitution, similar to that available to the nationals living in the country.
- Enact Diaspora social and economic policies, namely: pre-departure orientation programs; Diaspora services overseas and reintegration administration services.

Short-term action:

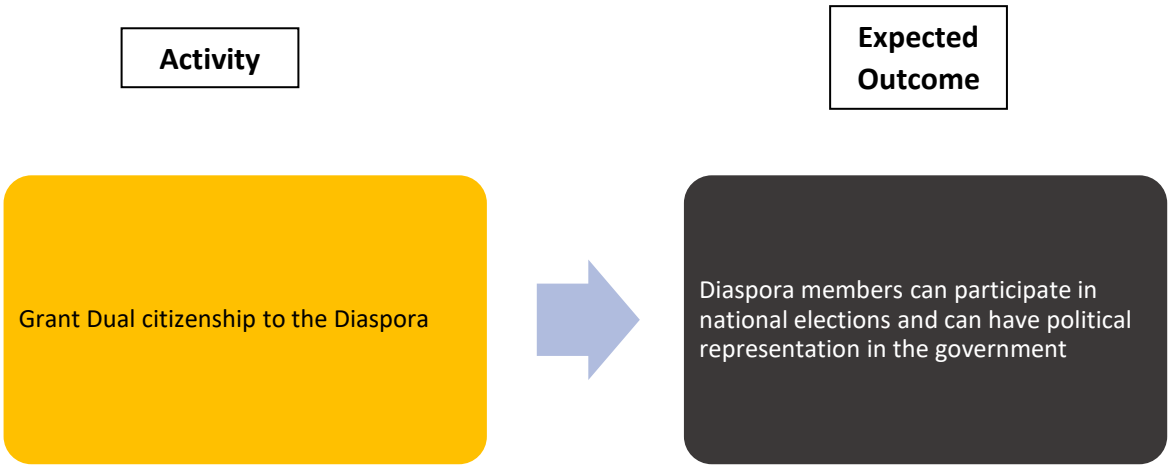


[14] The government of Ethiopia provides a Diaspora Card that offers Diaspora returnees all kinds of incentives, such as administrative support, access to essential information, business counselling, and much more.

Medium-term action:



Long-term action:



[15] For instance, the Cape Verdean Diaspora can vote and participate in parliamentary and presidential elections from abroad, at any Cape Verdean embassy.

4. National Diaspora Policy

The fourth pillar involves establishing a national Diaspora policy, as well as the capacity to translate it into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions. As every action starts with a defined policy strategy, developing a national Diaspora policy beforehand remains a key priority from the outset. This is a policy that helps policymakers plan strategically and, from the beginning, establish a workable plan with short-, medium-, and long-term goals in the process of engaging the Diaspora in development of the country of origin.

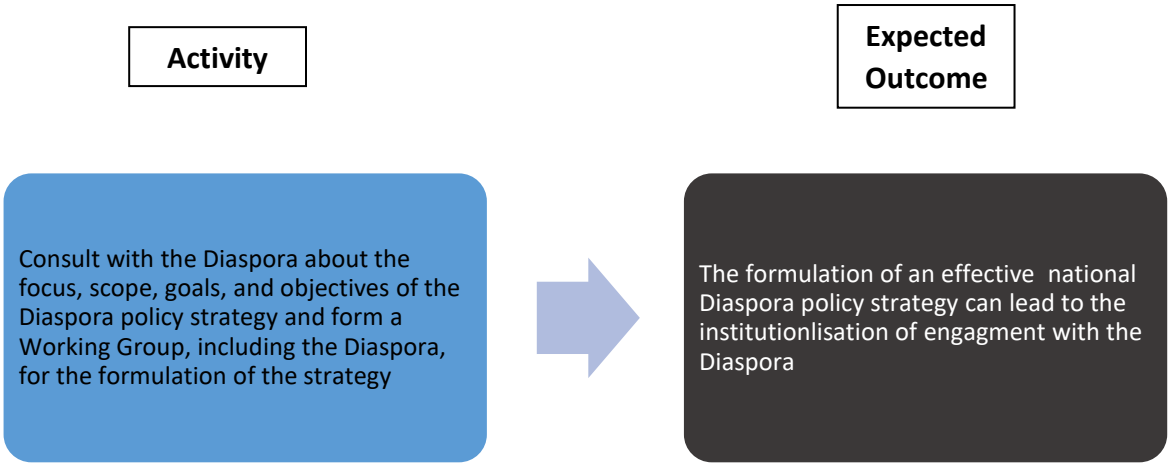
The existence of a clearly designed national Diaspora policy, tailored to the context and specific needs of a country, can help guide policymakers to undertake actions that can demonstrate quick and tangible results to the potential Diaspora considering connecting to the development of the country. More importantly, having a national Diaspora policy with a specific scope and orientation with respect to the country of origin and its Diaspora will contribute to building, strengthening, and institutionalising the relationships between a country of origin and its migrants overseas in a productive and sustainable manner.

It is important to state here, however, that the key to developing a successful policy is to involve members of the Diaspora in designing the strategy. Simply put, they are the ultimate stakeholders and, therefore, any Diaspora strategy must include their views and ideas. Furthermore, since Diaspora engagement in the development of their respective countries cuts across different ministries and sectors, an effective policy strategy is essential for coordinating the diverse stakeholders active in this area. The successful implementation of a national Diaspora policy requires a government agency dedicated to Diaspora issues and tasked with facilitating inter-ministerial communication, coordination, and coherence. This is not happening in many cases with respect to the broader process of engaging the Diaspora in national development. There are several ways that coordination can be improved, including: the creation of multi-stakeholder partnership networks; inter-agency dialogue processes; and setting up an agency dedicated to leading and sustaining coordination across sectors and agencies active in this area.

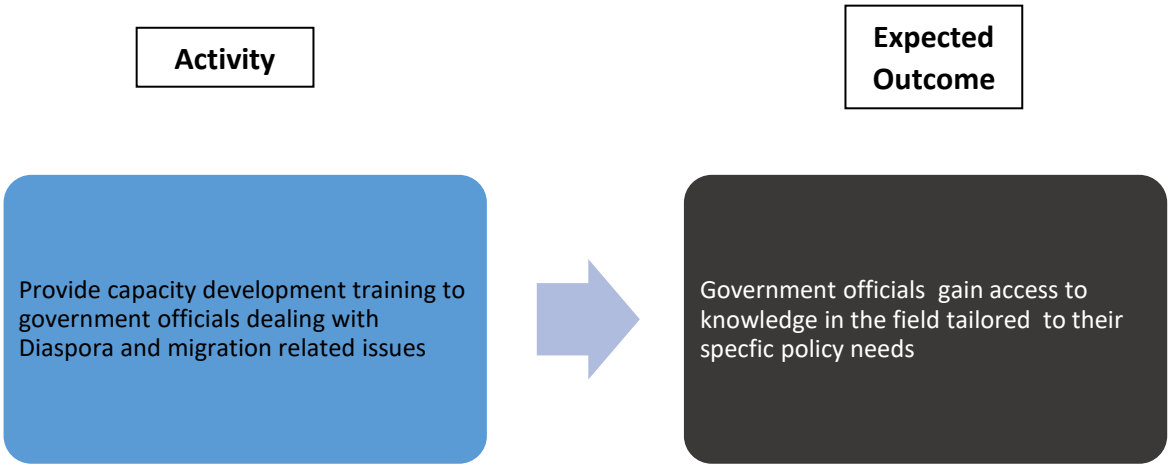
Action Plan

- A defined policy strategy helps policymakers to plan strategically and, from the beginning, establish a workable plan with short-, medium- and long-term goals in the process of engaging the Diaspora in the development of their country of origin.
- It is a key priority and ensures that there is the capacity to translate goals into feasible strategic interventions and realisable actions. It mobilises stakeholders around a common goal and operational objectives.
- It provides a roadmap for all other activities to be developed against so that everyone is working towards a common goal.

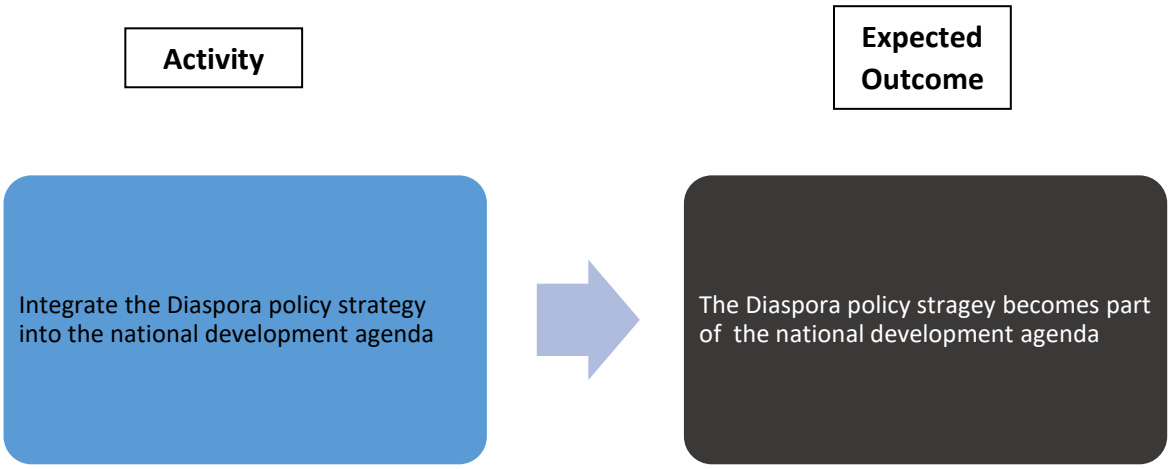
Short-term action:



Medium-term action:



Long-term action:



5. Consultation Mechanism

The fifth pillar is the setting up of a consultation mechanism with the Diaspora. This mechanism facilitates regular consultation with the Diaspora to build confidence and trust with the government in the country of origin. It also facilitates the development of formal channels of communication between the Diaspora and the government in the country of origin, which allow for the input of the Diaspora into the formulation of sound Diaspora and development-related policy.

Currently, in most cases, communication with the Diaspora remains ad-hoc and fragmented. This is because there are no reliable channels of communication to facilitate a constructive dialogue between the Diaspora and governments in most countries in Africa. Hence, organising annual homecoming summits as well as establishing a standing Diaspora leadership task force or setting up Diaspora advisory councils like those in Mexico[16] could contribute to this process.[17]

Having an official channel of communication between the Diaspora and governments in the country of origin is imperative. It will improve relations and reduce conflicts and tensions that might already exist between them. It will also contribute to a situation in which the needs, concerns, and interests of the Diaspora can be addressed, and potential differences in expectations can be mitigated. Direct communication, dialogue, and the “do no harm” principle are the best ways to promote mutual understanding and cooperation between the government and the Diaspora, even in settings with diverse political interests.

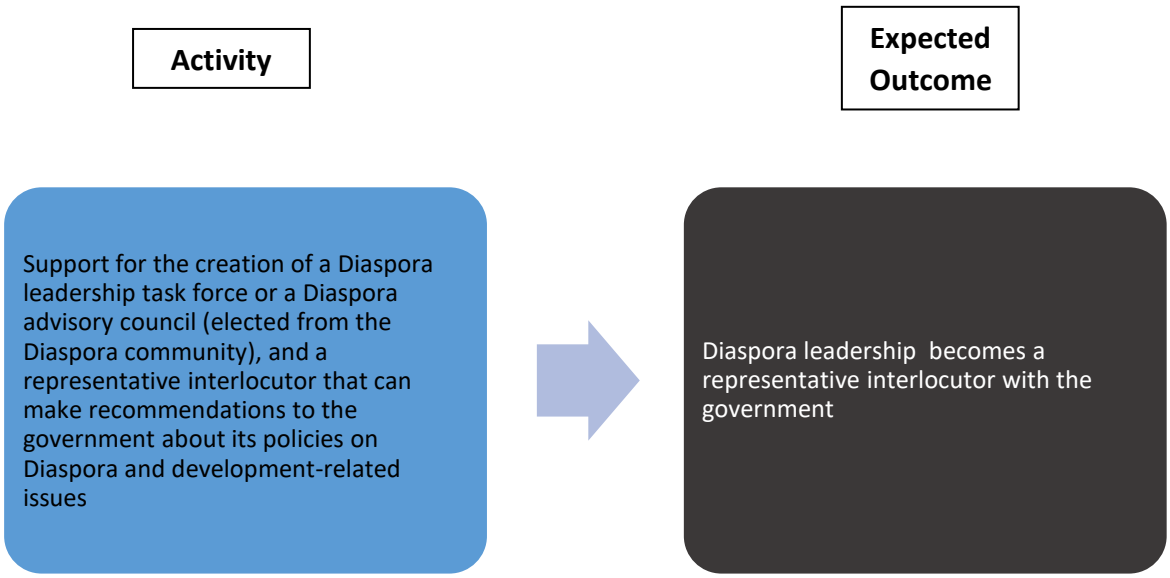
More importantly, having a reliable channel of communication in place would encourage formal recognition of the Diaspora as a credible and indispensable agent for development in the country of origin in established development circles. Additionally, formal, and strategic cooperation with governments in countries of origin would endow the Diaspora with a voice and political clout in decision-making processes regarding migration and development-related issues. This relationship can also profit from involving consulates in host countries.

[16] The Mexican Diaspora Consultative Council makes recommendations to the government about its Diaspora policies and advises it on Diaspora-related matters. It also operates as a key trust-building organ between the Diaspora and the government.
[17] (Engelstad, Otieno, & Owino, 2008)

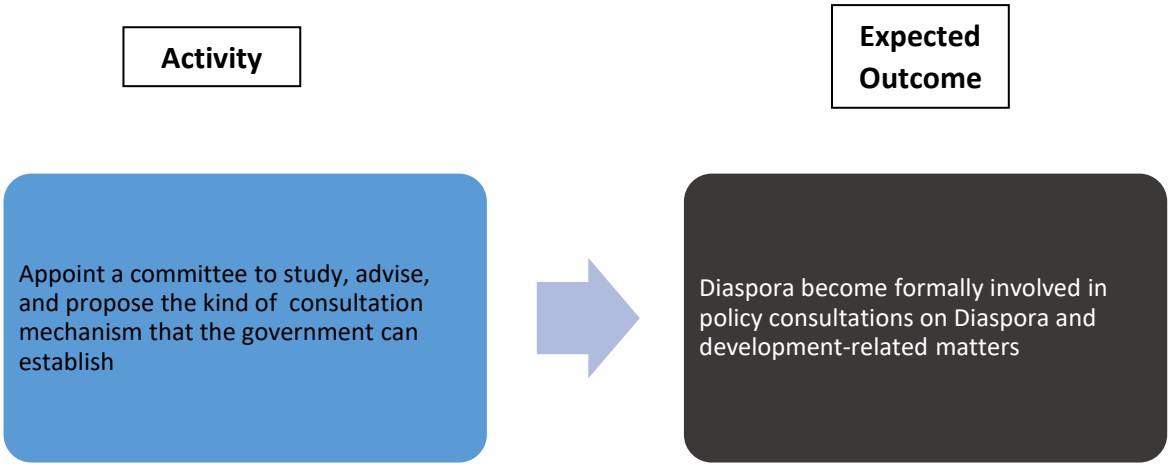
Action Plan

- Establish a consultation mechanism that gives the Diaspora a voice in Diaspora-led development interventions. Involving the Diaspora in policy consultation in this area helps local decision-makers to become more aware and conscious in their practical actions.
- Facilitate the inclusion of Diaspora views and perspectives in the national policy deliberations relating to efforts to engage the Diaspora with the national development.
- Ensure that good communication is a two-way conversation leading to amicable relations which are important for building trust and establishing long term partnerships.
- Do not limit consultation with the Diaspora to state-led channels; encourage private sector and civil society involvement in consultations.

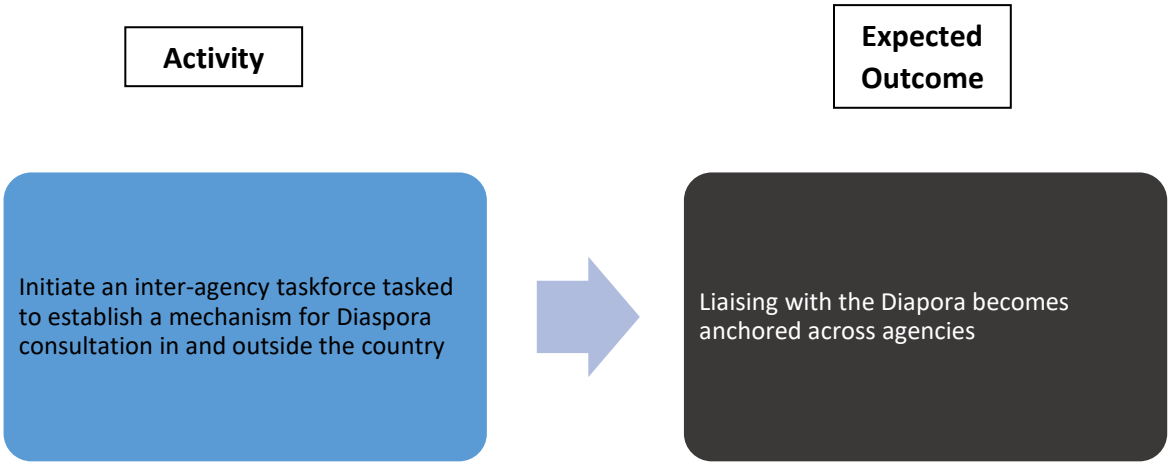
Short-term action:



Medium-term action:



Long-term action:



6. Outreach Mobilisation Strategy

The sixth pillar involves developing an effective outreach mobilisation strategy for reaching out to the Diaspora and structurally connecting it with development in the country of origin. Good communication and amicable relations are the building blocks of an effective outreach mobilisation strategy. They are crucial for building trust and establishing long-term partnerships.

Governments can use different channels to reach out to the Diaspora, including formal channels at the grass-roots level which could entail dialogue between Diaspora NGOs and local authorities. Likewise, it is important to exploit formal channels at higher levels, i.e., targeting Diaspora representatives on key strategic platforms (e.g. Diaspora advisory councils, etc). Developing an effective outreach strategy for the Diaspora can be costly. Governments can use their limited resources through a mix of channels according to the different profiles, geographical locations, and types of Diaspora engagement implemented in the development of the country. Moreover, Diaspora communities usually have their own social media platforms that governments can use to reach out to the Diaspora at a minimum cost. Governments seeking effective outreach should consider these Diaspora-owned platforms “low-hanging fruit”.

In addition, established Diaspora umbrella organisations can be partnered with to assist governments’ mobilisation strategy. The Nigerians in Diaspora Organization (NIDO), established in 2001, is a good example of this. This Diaspora umbrella platform has chapters in different countries and continents across the globe, which it mobilises for development in Nigeria. Furthermore, NIDO facilitates effective communication between the Nigerian government and the Diaspora through the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM).[18] Specifically, NiDCOM uses its website to inform the Diaspora about Diaspora-related activities and opportunities within Nigeria. Similar umbrella organisations have been created elsewhere, which governments should seek to partner with to progress their outreach mobilisation strategies.

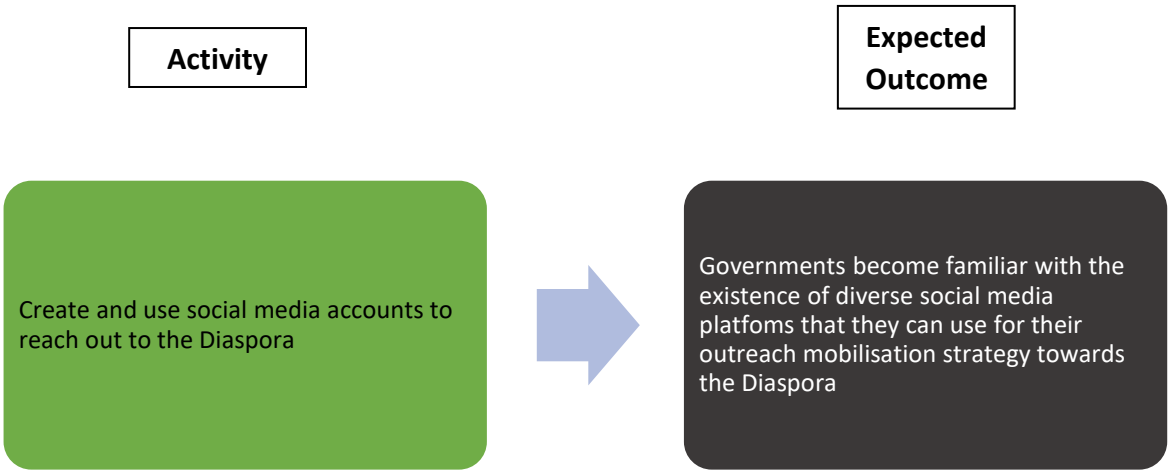
Developing an effective outreach strategy towards the Diaspora can take different forms and governments can utilize different tools. For instance, governments can coordinate and collaborate with the private sector, academic institutions, and civil society. Establishing such connections takes advantage of the fact that Diaspora groups are active in many different institutions and sectors in society, e.g., some members of the Diaspora work with their counterparts in academic institutions while others are entrepreneurs and have their own business ventures with local entrepreneurs. Others work in the civil society realm with local NGOs, etc. All these existing contacts can enhance mobilisation efforts with regards to the Diaspora. In short, governments can deploy different instruments at different levels and sectors to develop a multi-faceted outreach mobilization strategy targeted at the Diaspora.

[18] NIDCOM is the commission responsible for ensuring NIDO’s engagement in policies and projects for the development of Nigeria. NIDCOM was established in 2019. For more information, see the website of NIDCOM: www.nidcom.gov.ng.

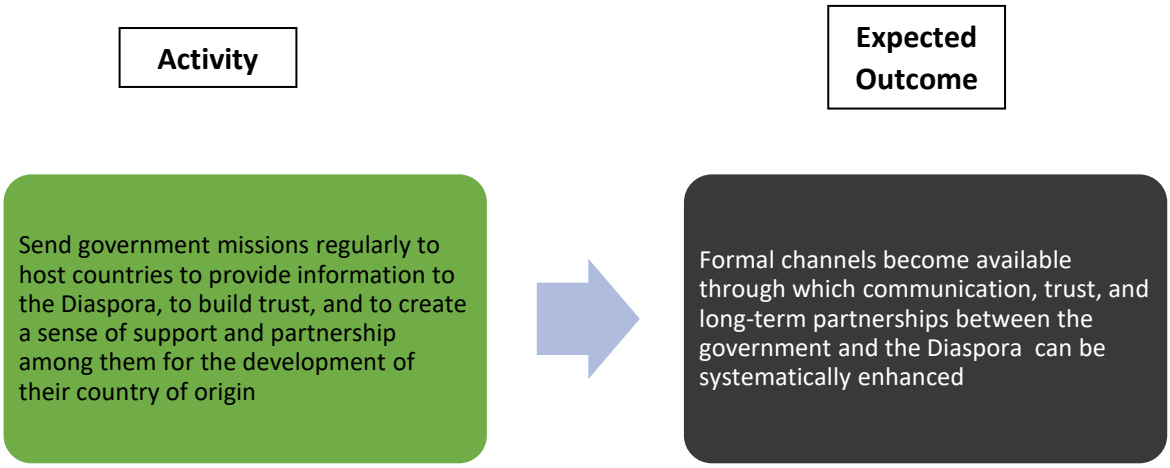
Action Plan

- Be innovative with your limited resources and use social media, radio, and other platforms to engage with the Diaspora.
- Use a mix of channels according to the different Diaspora profiles and geographies, consulting with the Diaspora in terms of the best mechanisms to use.
- Make sure the communication channels are well-known and there is no restriction on access.
- Don't discriminate against members of the Diaspora according to politics, tribal affiliations, religion, wealth, etc.
- Make sure it is a two-way conversation; not pushing information one way but also listening.
- Support Diaspora umbrella organizations.

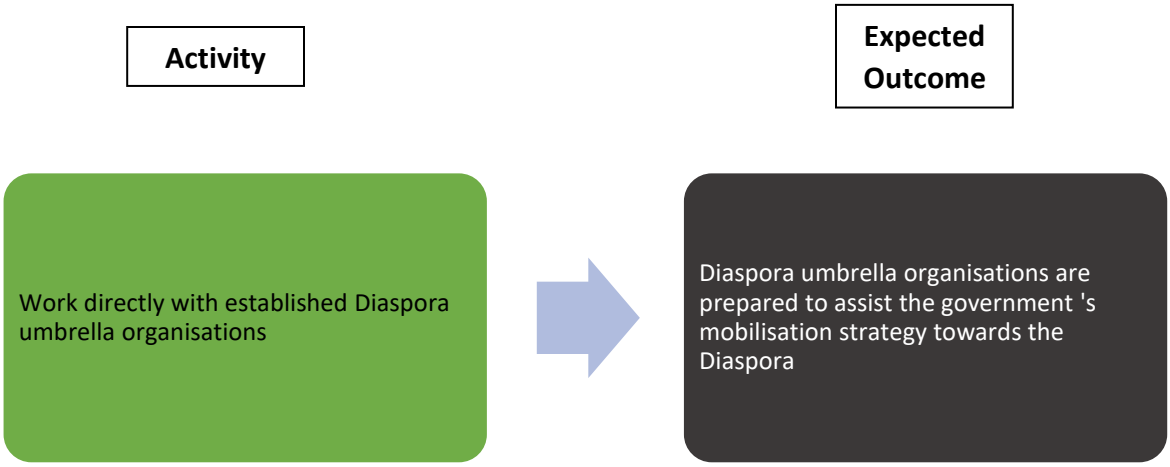
Short-term action:



Medium-term action:



Long-term action:



7. Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships

The seventh pillar is the imperative to establish a national mechanism for facilitating multi-stakeholder partnerships and cooperation. The aim is to incentivise key stakeholders and strategic partners in diverse sectors of the economy to participate in efforts geared to leveraging and engaging the Diaspora more deeply in national development.

Mobilising and establishing multi-stakeholder partnerships among potential stakeholders in different sectors is critical. Diaspora engagement in domestic development cuts across different sectors both in the public and private domains of economy, politics, and society. In this regard, building solid multi-stakeholder partnerships and cooperation at the local and national levels is the cornerstone of any process of engaging the Diaspora in the national development agenda. This is the lesson learned from successful countries like Mexico and India and from Diaspora policy and practice in general. In practice, key stakeholders that need to be mobilised to work together include:

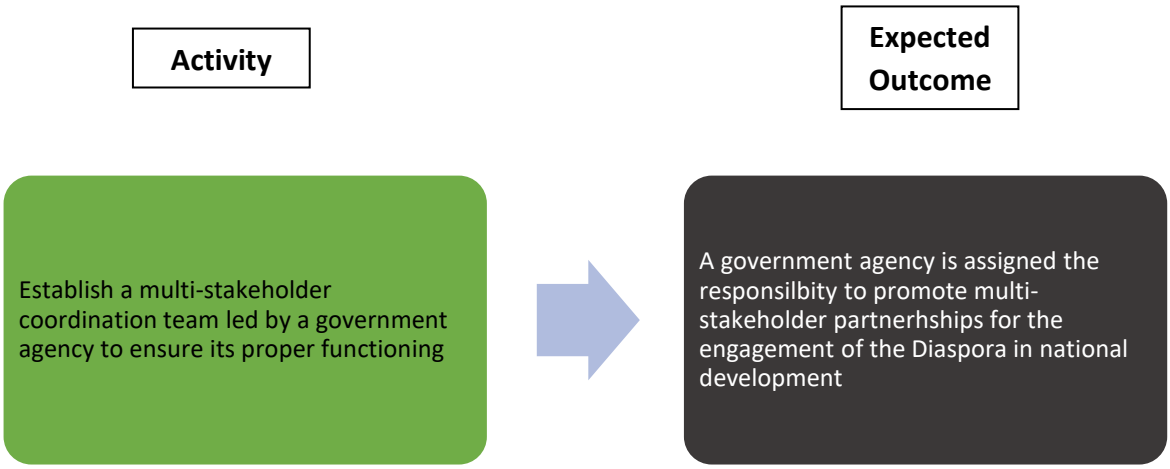
- Government representatives: Ministry of Foreign Affairs; Ministry of Development Planning; Ministries of Labour and Finance; Central Banks; Local Authorities, Municipality, etc.
- Private sector representatives: Chamber of Commerce; Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises such as Diaspora-owned and money transfer companies directly involved in Diaspora remittances transfers.
- Civil society representatives: grass-roots NGOs; community welfare programmes; Diaspora returnees and philanthropists.

The aim must be to build a local constituency and coalition of partners representing diverse sectors in national development with the aim of advancing and deepening Diaspora engagement. In short, establishing a mechanism for multi-stakeholder partnerships is essential to creating an integrated approach to Diaspora engagement at the domestic level.

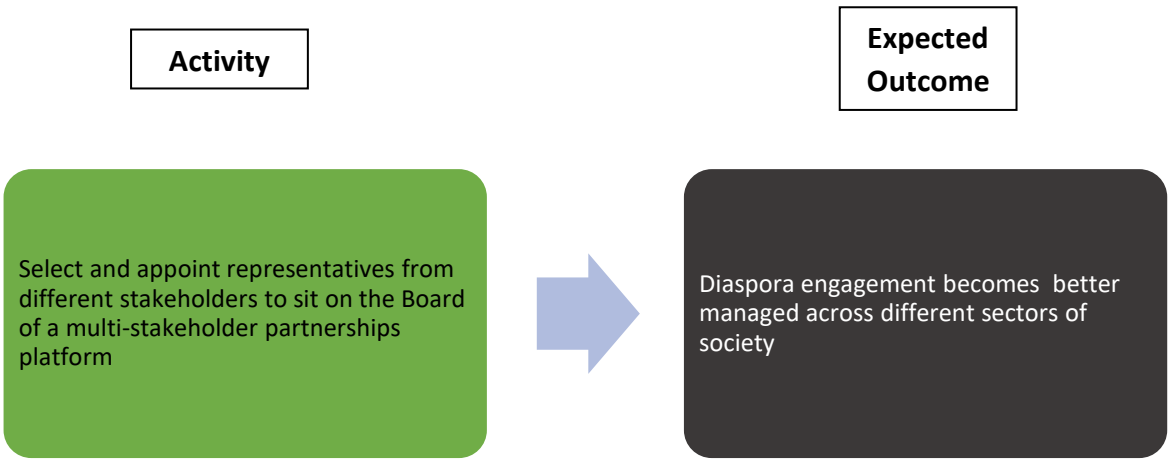
Action Plan

- Develop a mechanism that promotes multi-stakeholder partnerships across different sectors.
- Create a forum through which diverse stakeholders acquire the opportunity to learn from each other and exchange experiences and good practices with respect to involving the Diaspora in national development more broadly.
- Build up a durable local constituency and partnerships for the engagement with the Diaspora.

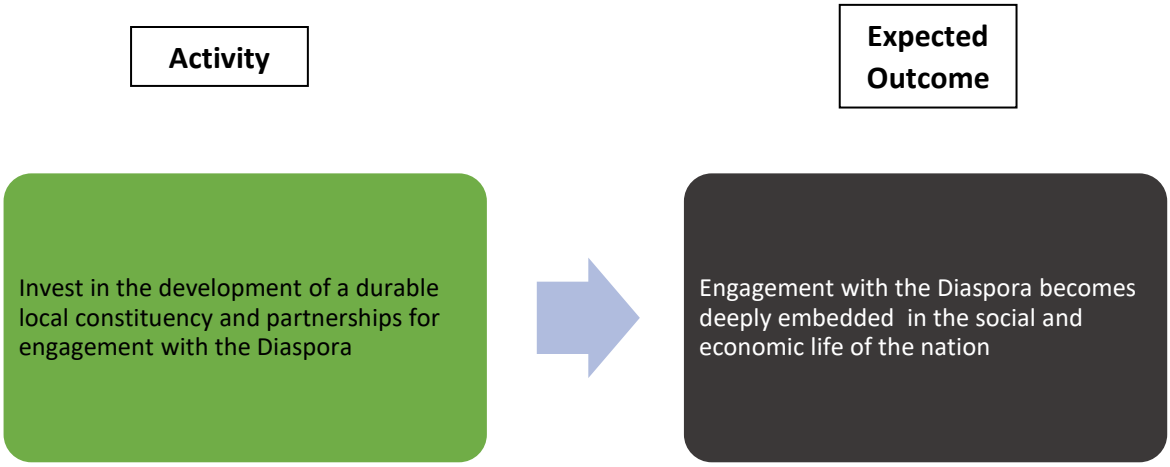
Short-term action:



Medium-term action:



Long-term action:



8. Diaspora-Oriented Programmes

The eighth pillar is to develop Diaspora-oriented programmes on the ground. Diaspora development organisations, professionally organised groups, and individuals are already involved in the development of their country of origin in different ways. Yet, their intervention in development remains informal, ad hoc, and fragmented. As a result, the developmental work of the Diaspora is not structurally aligned with key economic and social sectors of the national development agenda, sectors such as health, education, and private development, particularly Small- and Medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Fortunately, the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development with its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offers a window of opportunity for governments in countries of origin. Migration targets were explicitly incorporated under the goals of economic growth, employment, and decent work (SDG 8), addressing inequality (SDG 10), and means of implementation (SDG 17). Furthermore, both the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the AU's Agenda 2063 explicitly support Diaspora engagement efforts. In this regard, governments, in partnership with the Diaspora, can translate their migration-related goals and targets into realisable national development programmes within a foreseeable period. This means that each government should identify key priority areas and develop strategies through which Diaspora can tangibly contribute to their achievement through different means. In addition to goals and targets, governments need to develop indicators to monitor the precise contribution of the Diaspora to the achievement of the SDGs within the context of each country by 2030.

The sudden outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic created new and additional socio-economic challenges that need to be prioritized when it comes to developing Diaspora-oriented projects in any given period (short-, medium-, or long-term). The impact of the current COVID-19 crisis is negatively affecting the lives and livelihoods of people. In particular, it is impacting the provision of adequate basic healthcare services and access to food (jeopardising food security) for vulnerable people in many countries. This reality highlights the urgent need to develop Diaspora-oriented projects addressing humanitarian emergencies, to save both lives and livelihoods while the COVID-19 crisis continues. In practice, this means mobilising medical doctors and nurses in the Diaspora to support healthcare facilities in countries with e.g., telemedicine services and sending basic healthcare supplies, etc. It also requires Diaspora members to create emergency humanitarian relief funds that can support food provision programmes that are now urgently needed and widely used in many countries in the world today. This is one way to ensure that poor and marginalised groups have food security in this difficult time.

In addition, Diaspora-oriented projects must be developed to contribute to post-COVID-19 recovery efforts in countries of origin in different areas. Such Diaspora-oriented projects can be designed specifically to contribute to the overall efforts to achieve the SDGs in their countries of origin by 2030.

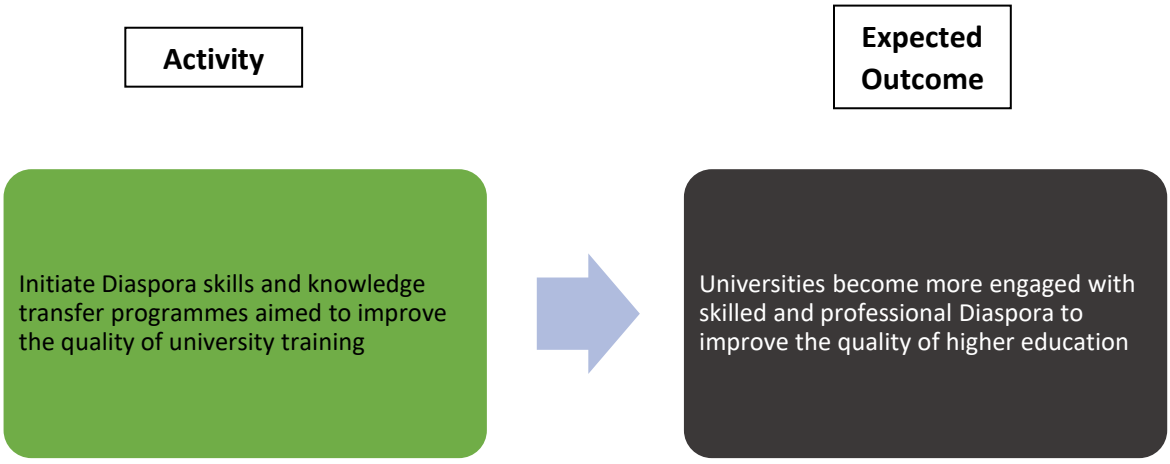
Action Plan

- Promote and design Diaspora-oriented programmes that are in line with other development agendas using the SDGs. Each government should identify key priority areas and develop strategies through which the Diaspora can tangibility contribute to the SDGs through different means.
- Develop local authorities' knowledge for programming effective Diaspora entrepreneurship and investment schemes allowing for a systematic way to measure their readiness to attract Diaspora capital.
- Government can leverage certain disjointed Diaspora development activities towards goals aligned with the national strategy, maximizing efforts made by Diaspora groups and individuals.

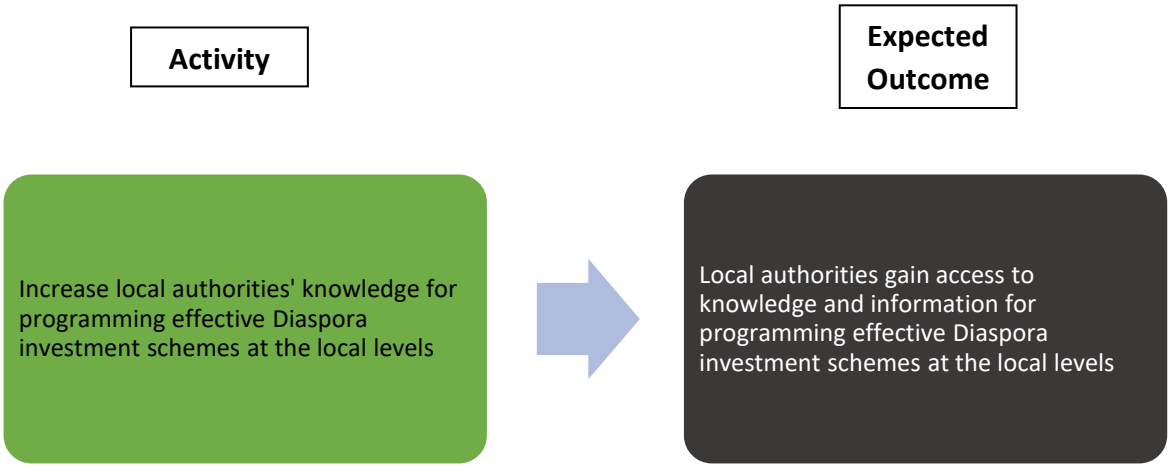
Short-term action:

Activity	Expected Outcome
Undertake outreach Diaspora activities in partnership with Diaspora organisations appealing for the creation of a Diaspora Fund for humanitarian relief assistance in times of calamities	Diaspora and the government work together for the creation of a COVID-19 resilience Diaspora Trust Fund that supports the provision of basic hygiene supplies to healthcare facilities and food aid to destitute communities

Medium-term action:



Long-term action:



Case Studies

It is important to note here that not all countries are at the same stage in their engagement with the Diaspora. Some are already leading the way, while others have only recently started the process of engaging the Diaspora in a meaningful manner. The selected case studies highlight good Diaspora-oriented policies and practices that already exist among certain countries and that can be replicated elsewhere. Governments considering developing Diaspora-oriented programmes can take inspiration from these case studies. The cases also provide general lessons that can be learned from the experiences and good practices of those at the forefront of Diaspora engagement.

Senegal

The case of Senegal gives an overview of the pillars of the model that the government had more or less adopted and proactively implemented. For instance, the Government of Senegal has developed a national Diaspora policy, put in place a consultation mechanism with the Diaspora by organising regular events in the country, and by developing a skills database for Diaspora members.

Senegal was the first country in Africa to create a Diaspora-related ministry when it established the Ministry of Senegalese Living Abroad in 1993. Since then, the Government of Senegal has been organising high-profile Diaspora-oriented events in the country, which have been dubbed “partnerships for development”. Furthermore, Senegal is one of the few countries in Africa to have developed a national Diaspora strategy through intensive consultations with the Diaspora abroad. The national Diaspora strategy was designed to facilitate the government in reaching out to the Diaspora, making it easy for them to return, set up businesses, transfer needed knowledge, expertise, and resources and, thereby, commit to and engage with the development of the country.

More importantly, the Ministry of Senegalese Living Abroad has set up a branch office in Paris to facilitate face-to-face communication with the Senegalese Diaspora in France. The main function of the office in Paris is to raise awareness, mobilise, strengthen the partnership for development between Diaspora and the government, and to inform the Diaspora about the challenges, needs, and opportunities within the country.

Furthermore, Senegal has succeeded in compiling a database of 5,000 skilled Senegalese abroad, which it uses to entice them to return for short missions to share their expertise. It is important to note here that, to date, Senegal is the only country in Africa that insists on including experts from the Senegalese Diaspora in the pool of technical experts that donors send to the country. The Government of Senegal believes that Senegalese Diaspora experts have added value as they understand the local conditions and the development complexity in the country.

Recently, the government has developed a “solidarity programme” aimed at engaging the Diaspora in development through the following key areas: encouraging Diaspora investment in capital markets in the country; actively mobilising Senegalese Diaspora scientists and engineers for short-term return missions to Senegal in a “brain circulation scheme”; supporting local development projects in sectors such as clean water, health, education, infrastructure, and agriculture; and finally, asking Diaspora to contribute to bringing ICT and innovation to remote areas.

Ghana

The case of Ghana demonstrates a few pillars of the model that the government has so far implemented. The government has adopted an effective outreach mobilisation strategy towards the Diaspora by organising homecoming summits; it has developed a draft for a national Diaspora policy; and formulated a strategy for a consultation mechanism through initiatives via an online Diaspora portal.

Ghana has long been a forerunner in Diaspora-related initiatives. As early as 1993, it set up the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations (MTDR) – renamed the Ministry of Tourism in 2009 – with the aim of developing policies and programmes targeted at engaging the Ghanaian Diaspora as an essential actor in Ghana's development process.

Since 2001, the Government of Ghana has implemented several high-profile programmes. Notable examples include the Home Coming Summit, the Joseph Project, Emancipation Day, and Panafest (a cultural event dedicated to promoting the ideals of Pan-Africanism and the development of the African continent).

Furthermore, in 2000, Ghana passed a law permitting dual citizenship and, in 2006, it granted voting rights to Ghanaians abroad. The Government of Ghana has granted these concessions to its Diaspora community abroad with the objective of instilling a sense of belonging to the country, which it believes will foster deeper engagement.[19] Recently, the Government of Ghana has drafted the Diaspora engagement initiative concept paper aimed to provide an outline for a future national Diaspora policy. It outlines broad engagement objectives, which include informing the Diaspora about social and economic development initiatives via an online Diaspora portal to engage them in policymaking; strengthening the role of the foreign ministry in advocating for Diaspora members across the government; facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technical resources; and encouraging philanthropic contributions.[20]

[19] See: Alhassan, 2010

[20] For more information about this new initiative, see the "Diaspora engagement mapping on Ghana", published by ICMD EU Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) in 2020.

Mali

The case of Mali presents examples of the best ways that some of the pillars of the model can be adopted and implemented in a practical manner. For instance, the Government of Mali has implemented the Mechanism for Consultation pillar by creating a Diaspora leadership task force or a Diaspora advisory council (elected from the Diaspora community); and by developing a practical guide for Malians abroad. This guide provides relevant information about the development needs, investment opportunities, and return provisions in the country, etc. The Government of Mali also developed Diaspora-oriented programmes in a region that is home to many Malian migrants.

Mali created a Ministry for Malians Abroad and African Integration in 2000. The ministry facilitates the active participation of the Diaspora in the economic and social development of the country. Furthermore, the government regards Malians in the Diaspora as the "ninth region of Mali". Among other initiatives, the government established the High Council for Malians Abroad (HCME) as a consultative body composed of representatives elected by national councils of Malians residing in more than 50 countries.

The members of the High Council have an official role in presenting the interests and views of the Malian Diaspora to the government in Bamako. Similarly, they work to extend the capacity of the government in their countries of residence to strengthen the Diaspora's ties to the country. In addition, the Malian government has developed a "practical guide for Malians abroad", which provides basic information about employment, social security, reintegration, consular services, and remittances. The ministry also manages the administration of Diaspora skill transfer programmes, such as the United Nation's Transfer of Knowledge through the Expatriate Nationals program (TOKTEN).

Furthermore, the government has been successful in encouraging the Diaspora to undertake development partnerships at the local level. For instance, the French town of Montreuil launched a development programme in Mali's Yelimane region, which is the original home of most of its 6,000 Malian migrants. The initiative has attracted substantial Diaspora financing, as well as funding from the municipality, the French government, and numerous other public and private partners.[21] In addition, the Government of Mali organised a Diaspora Forum for Investment in 2009 and a Diaspora Forum for Intellectual Engagement in 2010 to maximise the contribution of the Diaspora to the overall development of the country.

[21] See also: Agunias, Closing the Distance: How Governments Strengthen Ties with Their Diasporas, 2009

Mauritius

The case of Mauritius highlights the importance of circular labour migration when it is creatively implemented. The Government of Mauritius has development-oriented programmes to promote a circular labour migration programme among low- and semi-skilled Mauritians working abroad. To achieve this objective, it signed bilateral agreements with the governments of Canada and France.

Mauritius initiated an innovative Circular Migration Model in 2008, which other African countries can learn positive lessons from. The Government of Mauritius promoted this unique initiative to formally integrate circular migration into its national economic planning. The policy to encourage circular migration is twofold: it provides for temporary, well-trained labour on the international market, and it enables the Mauritian workforce to benefit from professional experience in a new work environment, which helps them build new capacities in Mauritius on their return.

The circular labour migration programme aims, primarily, to empower low- and semi-skilled Mauritian workers. For instance, the Government of Mauritius has signed a bilateral agreement with the Government of France, providing migrant workers with opportunities for employment in France for a specific period. This gives them valuable experience, a chance to save money, and to return home to invest in Small- and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs). Circular labour migration is just one of the successful strategies adopted by the Government of Mauritius in its economic restructuring policy to diversify the economy and react to the multiple shocks (reduced sugar prices, higher oil prices, etc.) that have impacted its economy. Circular migration can add a totally new dimension to labour policy in the countries of origin and, thus, make a significant contribution to raising the productivity, knowledge, and skills of domestic workers.[22]

In conclusion, these countries represent just a few examples of forerunners in Africa in Diaspora engagement endeavours. The governments of these countries have adopted exemplary policy interventions strategically targeted to connect the Diaspora to the development of their respective countries and that newcomers in the field can learn valuable lessons from.

[22] See: Newland, Circular Migration and Human Development, 2013

Conclusion

The pillars in the toolkit and the action plans outlined in the model are significant aids for governments aspiring to engage and build a closer partnership with their Diaspora. The pillars in the model provide guidance through systematic steps that governments can undertake in the process of increasing Diaspora engagement in national development. Likewise, they offer a template through which governments can take actions in the short-, medium-, and long-term. Engaging the Diaspora requires targeted and serious efforts. It also requires access to up-to-date information specifically tailored to policymaking needs of governments in this area. This is a precondition to engaging the Diaspora in national development. Most of the time, the issue is not the lack of a policy commitment to engage with the Diaspora; rather, it is the lack of access to useful information required to make an appropriate policy based on the needs and the context of a given country. This is exacerbated by a lack of funding to support the activities of governments aimed at building sufficient capacities regarding engaging the Diaspora. In some countries, there are donor funds available that governments can use to support the adoption of the pillars of the model. To this end, governments will need capacity development training to gain essential knowledge in the field, new skills, and tools to develop feasible policies aimed at maximising the contribution of the Diaspora to national development more effectively. In addition, governments also need direct technical support in the form of consultancy, coaching, and mentoring services in this area. This is an important aspect that donors must consider when developing programmes in their partner countries targeted at supporting the adaption and implementation of the model's pillars in the short- and medium-term. This can be done within the framework of supporting partner governments to better harness the potential of migration for development by implementing projects and initiatives that aim to promote coherent development-oriented migration policies.

The model distils and brings together good practices and lessons learned from Diaspora engagement endeavours both in the past and present. It concisely outlines what has worked, how it has worked, and what policy steps successful governments have adopted to make it work. Furthermore, the model provides evidence-based guidance to committed governments seeking to chart their own Diaspora engagement policy strategies in a manner of their choosing. It is expected that the information provided in the model will increase the policy and practical insights of governments determined to engage the Diaspora more effectively in the foreseeable future.

References

Agunias, D. R. (ed.) (2009). *Closing the Distance: How Governments Strengthen Ties with Their Diasporas.* Washington: Migration Policy Institute.

Agunias, D. R., & Newland, K. (2012, October 6). *Developing a Road Map for Engaging Diasporas in Development: A handbook for policymakers and practitioners in home and host countries.* Geneva: IOM. Retrieved from IOM.

Alhassan, O. (2010). The Case of Ghana. In A. Mahmoud (ed.), *Building Institutional Cooperation Between the Diaspoa and Homeland Governments in Africa: The cases of Ghana, Nigeria, Germany, USA and the UK.* The Hague: African Diaspora Policy Centre.

Engelstad, S., Otieno, M., & Owino, D. (2008). *Do No Harm in Somalia.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

IOM. (2021, March 8). *Global Best Practices in Diaspora Engagement: Lessons for Armenia.* Retrieved from IOM Publications Platform: https://publications.iom.int/books/global-best-practices-diaspora-engagement-lessons-armenia-armenian

Iskander, N. (2010). *Creative State: Forty Years of Migration and Development Policy in Morocco and Mexico.* New York: Cornell University Press.

Joseph, R. (2005). At Home Abroad: Human Capital and Ghana's Development. In T. Manuh, *At Home in the World? International Migration and Development in Contemporary Ghana and West Africa.* Accra: Sub-Saharan Publishers.

Mueller, C., & Kuschminder, K. (2019). *Connecting Diaspora for Development.* UNU-MERIT.

Newland, K. (ed.) (2010). *Diasporas: New Partners in Global Dvelopment Policy.* Retrieved from Migration Policy Institute: https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/Diasporas-Partners.pdf

Newland, K. (2013). *Circular Migration and Human Development.* Retrieved from UNDP Human Development Reports: http://hdr.undp.org/en/content/circular-migration-and-human-development

Ratha, D., & Plaza, S. (2011). *Diaspora for Development in Africa.* Washington: The World Bank Group.

Sharkdam, W., Ibonye, V., & Akinkuotu, O. (2014). The Nigerian Diaspora and NAtional Development: Contributions, Challenges, and Lessons from Other Countries. *Kritika Kultura*, 292-342.

Tittel-Mosser, F. (2021). *Diaspora engagement: Latin America and the Caribbean.* Brussels: EUDiF.