

IOM defines diasporas as Individuals who are migrants or descendants of migrants, and whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. Through maintaining strong transnational connections with their countries of origin, diaspora have the great potential of contributing to development through skills transfer, productive investment, and by promoting trade and sharing new ideas and savoir faire, amongst others. Diaspora also promote development in their countries of destination, through similar activities and by fostering transnational ties and flows to and from their home countries. Drawing on its long-standing experience, IOM has formulated a comprehensive strategic approach on diaspora and development centred on the 3Es for action: to enable, engage and empower transnational communities as agents for development – with each area involving a range of interventions by governments and other stakeholders, supported by IOM through policy advice and programming.



Under the Labour Mobility and Human Development department in West and Central Africa, the IOM implements a wide range of diaspora focused projects. These primarily include research and diaspora mapping, policy and institutional capacity building, and the engagement of diaspora members of productive investment and skills and knowledge transfer programs.

Key Projects

IOM's projects in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire are engaging diaspora members to invest in projects related to youth education, employment and entrepreneurship, and healthcare and agriculture. IOM WCA also conducts diaspora mapping exercises with local government partners to gather knowledge on the diaspora communities of various countries in the region.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Below are a few highlights from diaspora focused projects in the region:

COUNTRY/ LOCATION	PROJECT TITLE AND DESCRIPTION	HIGHLIGHTS
Côte d'Ivoire	<p>Development of an online tool to map the Ivorian diaspora</p> <p>Aims to develop a functional tool that will enable the Ivorian Ministry of African Integration and Ivorians of the Exterior (MIAIE) to reliably collect information on the Ivorian diaspora.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A study was conducted that analysed data available on the Ivorian diaspora and then proposed a harmonized and reliable data collection methodology. The National Committee of Remote Sensing and Geographic Information (CNTIG) was chosen and contracted to design and implementation of a mapping tool for the Ivorian diaspora. Several working sessions were organized with the main stakeholders in the aim of improving and operationalizing the platform. The main stakeholders presented and validated the prototype of the platform as well as the online diaspora registration mechanism.

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Ghana	<p>Promoting and facilitating diaspora entrepreneurship in Ghana and Ethiopia Aims to encourage the Ghanaian and Ethiopian diaspora residing in the Netherlands, or Dutch entrepreneurs in partnership with the diaspora, to engage as entrepreneurs for the development of the private sector in Ghana and Ethiopia</p> <p>ACP-EU Technical Assistance Aims to develop concrete recommendations for how Ghana can harness remittances for national development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for entrepreneurship and selection of promising business ideas • Outreach to Ghanaian diaspora members in the Netherlands • Training and mentoring of Ghanaian diaspora members in the Netherlands • Access to finance for Ghanaian diaspora entrepreneurs • Project reviewed financial transfers and remittance mechanisms in Ghana
Liberia	<p>Capacity Building for Diaspora Engagement in Liberia Focuses on building the capacity of the Diaspora Office in Liberia to effectively engage with the diaspora community abroad, and specifically in the United States.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Established a taskforce to promote diaspora engagement in Liberia, made up of 5 male and 5 female candidates from several targeted ministries and agencies including the Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Education (MoE), National Investment Commission (NIC), Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoF), Ministry of State (MoS), and Ministry of Labor (MoL), in the objective of sharing experiences on diaspora issues and promoting diaspora engagement initiatives. • The Diaspora Office in Monrovia has been renovated and is now fully functional and equipped with laptops, projectors, and data storage drives. Other office supplies will be sent to 3 workstations in the Diaspora Affairs Unit to facilitate the mobilization of diaspora skills and resources. • IOM Liberia partnered with IOM-USA to develop a mapping report to track members of the Liberian diaspora in the United States. They also carried out an outreach campaign in the eventual goal of creating an official database of the Liberian diaspora in the U.S. • A webpage for the diaspora mapping project was designed and endorsed by the taskforce and the Deputy Minister.

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Sierra Leone	<p>Engaging Diaspora to Strengthen the Health, Flood Prevention and Agriculture Sectors</p> <p>Aims to strengthen the health care system through the deployment of experienced diaspora health care workers to Sierra Leone.</p> <p>Diaspora Agribusiness Forum</p> <p>Proposed to strengthen the investment of diaspora in Sierra Leone through the organization of a Diaspora Agribusiness Forum.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IOM Sierra Leone selected several diaspora members abroad and organized their temporary return to participate in the project. • Diaspora members were able to provide highly skilled health services to rural populations as well as six Peripheral Health Units (PHU) in the country. • Specifically, surgeons from the diaspora were able to conduct over 150 surgical treatments. • A World Diabetes Day Campaign was also organized, during which over 170 residents of the rural area were screened for diabetes. • Diaspora members provided health related training and information to local health workers (including over 200 nurses), 50 government authorities, and 350 school children. • During the two-day conference, IOM invited 11 diaspora members, 12 foreign investors and 350 local attendees including entrepreneurs for the Diaspora Investment Forum, to encourage networking and business development. • Since the forum, a number of diaspora members have started new businesses in Sierra Leone with the assistance of invited foreign investors.