

About IOM and the Diaspora Engagement Project

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and works closely with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners. IOM works to help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration, to promote international cooperation on migration issues, to assist in the search for practical solutions to migration problems and to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants in need, including refugees and internally displaced people.

IOM migration and development programmes seek to harness the development potential migration for the benefit of both societies and migrants and to contribute to sustainable development and poverty reduction.

Engaging Diaspora for Development

In 2011, IOM launched a diaspora engagement project as part of a collaborative initiative between IOM Ghana and the Government of Ghana (GoG). The primary objective was to improve linkages and better engage with the three (3) million active Ghanaian diaspora worldwide. Diaspora groups in five pilot countries with the highest concentration of Ghanaian emigrants outside Africa – Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, United Kingdom and United States – were identified.

A national diaspora colloquium was held in August 2012 in Accra to open dialogue between GoG and Ghanaian diaspora. Further, a Diaspora Support Unit (DSU) was established in November 2012 within the Legal and Consular Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. The DSU placed within the Ministry allows for more direct liaison between diaspora and various government agencies.

The project focuses on four key components:

- 1) Mapping of diaspora associations in the five pilot countries;
- 2) Diaspora dialogue with relevant state and non-state institution;
- 3) The establishment of a national Diaspora Support Unit (DSU) to engage directly with diaspora; and
- 4) Creation of a diaspora association database and an interactive diaspora website.



Main Achievements

The establishment of the DSU within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration has allowed for the creation of a key link between the GoG and Ghanaian diaspora. The unit also maintains a network of both state and non-state actors, which assists diaspora in achieving development and investment goals.

A mapping exercise of Ghanaian diaspora associations in five pilot countries has been completed, and an outreach campaign to diaspora abroad continues to be rolled-out, including the fully functioning diaspora website. As part of engagement efforts a Diaspora Business Summit was held in September 2013 in Accra, Ghana, with more than 208 participants in attendance. It was an unprecedented event, attracting major media coverage within Ghana.

Finally, the DSU has transitioned from an IOM-led initiative, to a government supported entity. In January 2014, it became a part of the newly established Diaspora Affairs Bureau within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. This is a landmark achievement on the part of the GoG and demonstrates their commitment to diaspora engagement and the importance of the IOM-International Development Fund (IDF) in supporting sustainable migration management initiatives.