

International Migration Review Forum '26

May 5-8, 2026



Strategizing cooperation with diaspora groups – from bridge builders to institutional partners

Tentative Concept Note for a Side Event at
the Second International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) in New York
May 6, 2026 – 6:30 pm – Headquarters of the UN

In cooperation with and the support of



Organized by



Title: *Strategizing cooperation with diaspora groups – from bridge builders to institutional partners*

Proposed by: Transnational Corridors, in cooperation with BMZ/GIZ

Event Type: Side Event of 90 minutes – presentation of national progress reports and of case studies, panel discussion, exchange with the audience

Date: 6th Mai 2026, New York, 6:30 pm

Target Audience: policymakers, civil society leaders, social entrepreneurs, development agencies, private sector representatives, philanthropic organizations, foundations, academia, migration and diaspora experts, representatives of diaspora groups.

1. Background and Rationale

Diaspora groups contribute to social cohesion, international knowledge transfers and investments. They play a vital role in alleviating poverty and facilitating access to education, healthcare, and housing in both their countries of origin and destination. For these reasons, Objective 19 of the GCM requires signatory states to “create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries.” In these uncertain times marked by global demographic, economic, and political shifts, this mission becomes increasingly crucial. Consequently, diaspora groups are evolving into strategic partners in policy-making and institutional frameworks at the communal, national, and multilateral levels — a trend highlighted in the 2024 Global Mapping by the EU Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF). While it has been beneficial to include the diaspora in the Global Compact for Migration, their representatives have rarely been consulted regarding their views and priorities. Consequently, public diaspora policies tend to be more utilitarian than people-centred, thus failing to fully unlock potential. What is required to transform the perception and position of diaspora groups from bridge builders to strategic and institutional partners? What types of instruments and formats have proven effective since 2022? What challenges do we face? How to overcome these challenges?

2. Objectives

1. **Inspire:** Showcase successful transformations of diaspora groups from bridge builders into institutional partners
 2. **Equip:** Provide participants with actionable tools and frameworks to materialise this transformation
 3. **Connect:** Build a network of change-makers
 4. **Advocate:** Highlight policy and financing mechanisms that can support this transition
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3. Proposed Agenda (90 minutes)

Opening Remarks (5 min)

- Olivia Davis-Mbou, Africa-German Working Community/Mapubi, welcome, process of the side event, housekeeping rules (2,5’).
- Dr. Rachid L’Aoufir, Africa-German Working Community/Transnational Corridors, statement on the importance of strategizing diaspora policies (2,5’)

Keynote Session (5 min)

- Angela Naa Afoley Odai (tbc), Directorate of Citizens and Diaspora Organisations (CIDO) of the African Union, Head of the Diaspora Division – progresses on the institutionalisation of diaspora cooperation from the perspective of the African Union (5’)

Country level progresses from Diaspora perspectives (15 min)

Guiding questions, “Which diaspora cooperation instruments have been implemented in Germany, Cameroun, Nigeria, and Madagascar since 2022? What is effective? What should be improved?”

- Dr Rachid L’Aoufir, Africa-German Working Community/Transnational Corridors, Chairman of the Board, experience from Germany” (5’)
- Olivia Davis Mbou, Africa-German Working Community/Mapubi, experience from Cameroon (5’)
- Mirana Rajoharison, Alefa Diaspora, Brussels / experience from Madagascar (5’)

Country level progresses from governmental perspectives (15 min)

Guiding questions, “Which instruments of diaspora cooperation do you consider as effective?” What further developments towards a strategic diaspora cooperation are planned in your organisation? What are the challenges?

- Dr Rafaella Greco Tonegutti, lead expert on migration and development, Belgian Development Agency - Enabel (5’)
- Government of Madagascar (5’)
- Hannah Conrad (tbc), Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development of the Federal Republic of Germany (BMZ), Head of the Division “Policy issues of Displacement and Migration” (5’)

Comments from panellists (10’)

- IOM (tbc) (5’)
- Expertise France (tbc) (5’)

Interactive discussion with the audience (20 min)

- Guided by facilitators, the comments will be visualised

Policy recommendations and closing remarks (10 min)

- Dr Rachid L’Aoufir

4. Methodology

The side event will examine and discuss instruments introduced and exchange formats established by governmental bodies for the institutionalisation of diaspora cooperation since May 2022, based on experiences of the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), Enabel, Expertise France, the African Union and IOM. We will present these instruments and engage the audience in discussions to identify further formats, support knowledge transfers and facilitate the convergence of perspectives between diaspora groups and governments.

5. Expected Outcomes

1. At least 80 representatives of governments, foundations and diaspora organisations exposed to concrete examples and tools for strategic diaspora cooperation.
 2. Extended collaborative network of interested stakeholders to continue discussions post IMRF.
 3. Documentation of best practices and lessons learned to be shared with global networks.
 4. Set of policy recommendations aimed at strengthening partnerships with diaspora organizations.
 5. Increased awareness and commitment among stakeholders to engage diaspora groups as strategic partners.
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6. Alignment with the GCM

This side event supports the GCM Objective 19 by

- integrating migration into development planning at the local, national, regional and global levels,
 - facilitating the contributions of diaspora by establishing mechanisms at all levels, such as dedicated diaspora offices or focal points, diaspora policy advisory boards for Governments to account for the potential of diasporas in migration and development policymaking,
 - providing easily accessible information and guidance to all stakeholders of diaspora policies,
 - building partnerships to promote knowledge and skills transfer between countries of origin and countries of destination.
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7. Organising Partners

Partners include development cooperation agencies, umbrella organisations of diaspora groups, multilateral organisations, think tanks, government representatives and research institutions.

8. Conclusion

This side event offers a unique platform to identify how diaspora groups can be strategically engaged—not as temporary bridge builders but as permanent actors in inclusive, sustainable international cooperation. By equipping the stakeholders with proven tools and shared experiences, we can ensure that the social mission of diaspora groups reaches its full potential, contributing directly to the IMRF's vision of a fairer, more resilient global society.

9. Examples of formats

The instruments presented in will include: (1) Annual Dialogue on Development Cooperation between BMZ and diaspora groups, featuring participation from the responsible minister, (2) National Diaspora Summit organized by a coalition of diaspora organizations and funded by BMZ, (3) Participation in expert exchanges organized by various divisions and thematic teams within the BMZ, such as (a) the division "Principles of Cooperation with Africa" which hosts the biannual "Discussion Group Africa", (b) the division "Policy issues of Displacement and Migration" which offers the annual "BMZ Meets Diaspora" format, (c) country divisions that hold conferences preceding bilateral governmental negotiations, (d) the thematic teams focusing on "Human Rights" and "Feminist Development Cooperation", (4) Involvement of Diaspora Experts in strategic governmental consultations, including the BMZ's Africa strategy and the Federal Government's Africa Policy guidelines, (5) Diaspora Advisory Board for the program "Shaping Development-Oriented Migration" (MEG) and other boards, (6) Recognition of Diaspora in official documents such as guidelines, strategy papers, and bilateral migration agreements. We will consider also hearings of Diaspora Experts in parliamentary committees.

10. Questions for the discussion

Diaspora Groups' Perspective: How can our expertise be monetized—for example, through grants to support research activities, commissioned studies, and operational projects? Whose knowledge / expertise is validated by whom? How can we effectively navigate our lives between two countries? What models of circular migration do we envision? What implications arise for diaspora groups when commercial and security interests shape the new political agenda? What are the roles of diaspora groups in the localisation agenda?

Government Representatives' Perspective: Who represents the diaspora groups? Can we collaborate only with initiatives that align with our agenda and bring strong networks and knowledge? Should we create specific funds, rules, and laws for diaspora actors, or should they operate within existing frameworks? How can we facilitate access for diaspora groups to funding for large-scale development cooperation projects? How can we channel diaspora funds into public institutions or institution building?



Transnational Corridors is committed to unlocking the potential of talented youth and empowering civil society organizations engaged in development cooperation. Our Berlin-based organization has extensive experience in advancing social upward mobility and fostering the active participation of marginalized and disadvantaged communities. We serve as a catalyst for civil society initiatives, offering strategic support and leadership development to emerging civil society actors. Through our policy advisory activities, we promote people-centred approaches in political and administrative decision-making at local, national, and multilateral levels.



Afrikanisch-Deutsche Arbeitsgemeinschaft (Africa-German Working Community) is a Berlin-based federal umbrella organization of African CSO engaged in communal, regional, national and international development cooperation. The organisation facilitates the communication between the stakeholders of development cooperation, structures and disseminates knowledge generated in transnational diaspora networks, and strengthens the operational capabilities of the involved actors.

Contact information

Dr Rachid L'Aoufir

Transnational Corridors e. V.

E-Mail: info@transnational-corridors.com

Mobile: +49 176 49 82 20 12