



Processus de Rabat

Dialogue Euro-Africain sur la
Migration et le Développement

Thematic Meeting

Promoting the positive effects of regular migration for sustainable development: the role of entrepreneurship and diaspora engagement

Outcome
document

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Feira Internacional de Lisboa

R. do Bojador, 1998-010 Lisboa



Under the co-chairmanship of Portugal and Senegal

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Introduction

Thematic meeting on the positive effects of regular migration for sustainable development: the role of entrepreneurship and diaspora engagement:

- Echoes Objective 1 (Action 3) of the 2023-2027 Cadiz Action Plan ;
- Co-chaired by Portugal and Senegal, in close collaboration with Nigeria, reference country for Area 1 of the Dialogue's strategic framework ;
- For the first time, a side event with civil society organisations (CSOs) was organised, with the objective to provide a venue for exchanges and dialogue between Rabat Process' partner countries and CSOs from the diaspora ;
- The meeting gathered a diverse audience of around 110 participants, from 33 European and African countries.

Objectives of the Thematic meeting:

- Identify examples of good practices and case studies from various organisations and governments aiming to facilitate diaspora engagement and entrepreneurship in countries of origin, with a specific attention to those involving women and young people.
- Pinpoint existing challenges and barriers that might hinder further diaspora engagement and look at recommendations to minimise them.
- Identify evidenced-based strategies and policies to increase the dialogue between countries of origin and destination to promote the transfer of skills, knowledge, and resources to countries of origin.
- Strengthen dialogue between countries of origin and destination to promote knowledge and resource transfer.

Expected results of the Thematic meeting:

- Increased knowledge of positive experiences regarding the impact of regular migration for sustainable development through the promotion of entrepreneurship and diaspora engagement.
- Strengthened awareness of the role of diasporas for development.
- Recommendations on ways forward to increase the potential of the positive impact of migration on the sustainable development of both countries of origin and destination, and specifically improving diaspora policies and practices.

This document gives an overview of the main discussions and **conclusions of the Thematic Meeting**, as well as **good practices, challenges** and **recommendations** highlighted by participants, linked to the role of diasporas for sustainable development of countries of origin, transit and destination.

1) High-level opening ceremony

The **high-level opening ceremony** took place in the presence of H.E. Rui Armindo Freitas, Deputy Minister for the Presidency of Portugal; H.E. Amadou Chérif Diouf, State Secretary for Senegalese Abroad; Michele Amedeo, Deputy Head of the Migration Unit for DG NEAR of the European Commission; and Monica Zanette, Head of Pan-African initiatives at the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

The Portuguese high representative underscored the need to strengthen mutually beneficial, regular, safe and orderly migration pathways, which simultaneously contribute to a dignified integration of migrants in host countries, to the reduction of irregular migration and migrants' exploitation, as well as to the development of conditions that allow migrants to become **actors of change** and promoters of sustainable development, of employment creation, innovation, and cultural dissemination.

Similarly, Senegal recalled the central role of diasporas in the **creation of jobs** in migrants' origin countries, notably through youth and women. In this regard, the Senegalese government has reinforced its support mechanisms for its diaspora, as represented by an **Action Plan** currently in the pipeline which will aim to better channel the contributions of Senegalese living abroad towards national development, through a dedicated bank.

The European Union representative indicated that members of the diaspora play **an essential role in the development of their origin country**: on the one hand, as direct investors and entrepreneurs; and on the other, as drivers of human capital development and through the transfer of knowledge and technologies, as well as by promoting sociocultural and human relations between Africa and Europe.

During this opening ceremony, it was recalled that the **Rabat Process** has continuously promoted, since its inception, the positive effects of regular migration for sustainable development and the key role of diaspora for countries of origin, transit, and destination, as set out in the Cadiz Declaration and related Action Plan adopted in December 2022.

Finally, the high-level speakers welcomed the initiative aiming to value, through a dedicated event, the important work carried out by **civil society organisations** from the diaspora, who are **key partners** in the success of policies designed to promote a positive relation between migration and sustainable development.

2) Capitalising on the Dialogue results in the field of Migration and Development

The migration-development nexus, and most specifically the implication and mobilisation of diasporas, has emerged as a **central issue** since the creation of the Rabat Process in 2006. Strengthening the link between migration and development is a priority area and a specific characteristic of the Dialogue, as underscored in the Objective 1 of the Cadiz Action Plan which aims to "maximise the positive impact of regular migration", in particular for youth and women between and within Europe, North, West, and Central Africa.

Throughout the years, the following themes have been tackled in Thematic Meetings, knowledge products or through strategic documents:

- **Diaspora engagement**, specifically linked to entrepreneurship and investment:
- **Remittances**, their facilitation and their contribution to sustainable development in origin, transit and destination countries;
- The link between migration and development, with a specific attention to the contributions of the **diaspora, youth and women**.

The activities undertaken by the Rabat Process in recent years have led to a series of **concrete achievements**:

- The **presentation of several initiatives, programmes and policies** which equipped different partners with increased knowledge of the practices of their counterparts, and in certain cases, allowed to replicate them successfully.
- Meetings and events have always been accompanied, before or after, by **knowledge products** and concrete recommendations, turning the Rabat Process into an **evidence-based Dialogue**.
- **Sustained conversations between diverse stakeholders** (governments, experts, researchers, civil society, international organisations) have facilitated the dialogue between actors who are not often in contact with each other.
- These activities have helped **maintain the issue of migration and development on the agenda** in European and African partner countries, by always adopting a positive and constructive approach.
- **Following-up on conclusions and recommendations** from the thematic and technical meetings is fundamental and crucial to help achieve tangible results, facilitate decision-making processes and influence policy development.

Area 1: Development benefits of migration and root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement


10 thematic meetings


10 knowledge tools
(studies, mappings, assessments)


18 strategic documents
(outcome reports, recommendations)


6 videos


3 infographics

3) Setting the scene: where are we at and what have we learnt?

The first panel presented current trends of diaspora engagement, by highlighting **research work**, alongside **initiatives and projects** supported by partners countries of the Rabat Process and organisations from the diaspora.

Recent trends of diaspora engagement

According to **data from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**, diaspora engagement in national development is a priority for many countries and takes shape mainly through the elaboration of strategies linking migration and development.

The OECD has set up a **National Development Plans (NDP) database** spanning 108 countries around the world from 1997 to 2023. The following information emerges:

- More than 17% of total references (661 out of 3863) relate to diasporas, which makes it the second most frequent keyword after migration.
- 48% of National Development Plans analysed contain references to diaspora (76 out of 158 NDP);
- 58% of analysed countries reference diaspora in their NDP (60 out of 108 countries).

There are several ways of engaging the diaspora in countries of origin and destination:

- **Institutional reforms and coordination :**

- The Gambia created a Diaspora Directorate to coordinate the work of the government to maximise diaspora contributions to national development.
- Ghana transferred the Diaspora Affairs Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Office of the President, as part of their Coordinated Programme for Economic and Social Development Policies (CPESDP) for 2017-2024.
- Kenya created a National Diaspora Council (NADICOK) comprising several government agencies to monitor, evaluate and develop the national action plan.

- **Need for strategies involving the diasporas:**

- Cameroon has put in place a strategy towards its diaspora through 1) the creation of a framework for permanent dialogue between the government and diaspora businesses ; 2) the creation of a specialised institution in charge of diaspora issues ; 3) the efficient management of dual citizenship and the improvement of banking systems to facilitate remittances and granting of loans and 4) campaigns to strengthen national unity and means to support diaspora (for instance consular services).

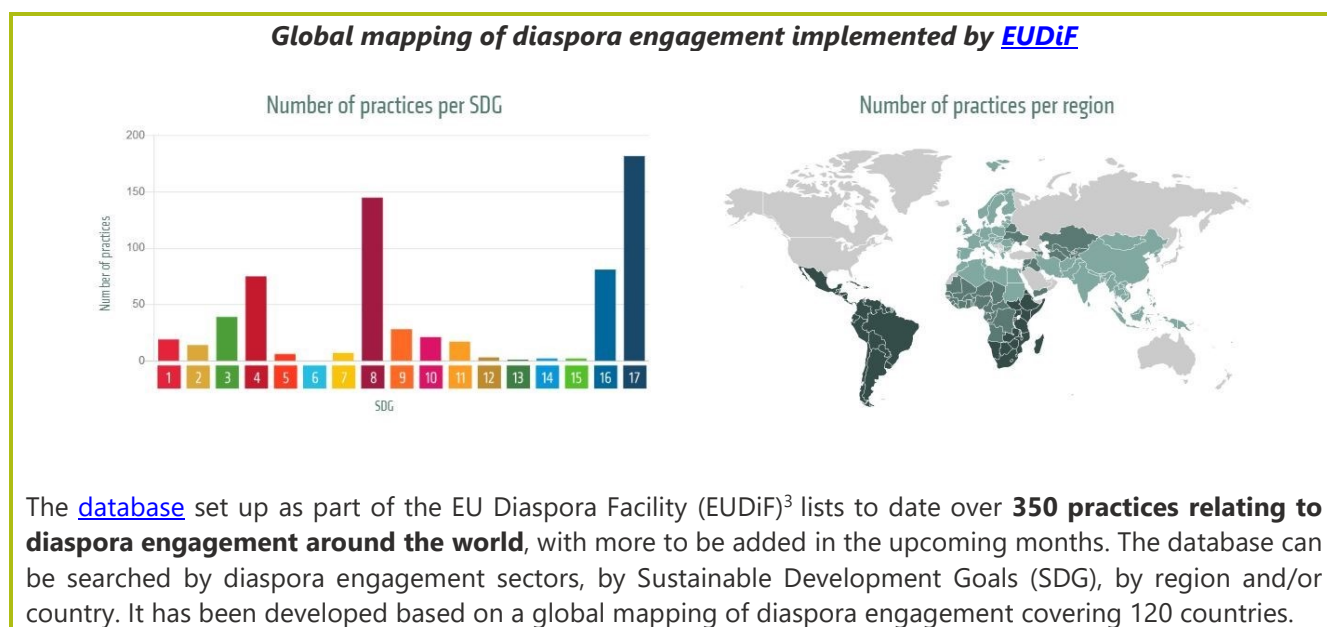
- **Engaging diasporas in destination countries:**

- Niger has strengthened the integration of their diaspora in countries of destination to enhance its role as a development actor.
- Cabo Verde has supported the integration, well-being and empowerment of its diaspora (and their descendants) in countries of destination, in social, economic and political terms.

According to the **Migration Policy Institute (MPI)**, countries of destination tend to adopt **two different approaches**¹ to engagement with diasporas, although the reality is more diverse:

- The co-development approach: linking the diaspora with its origin country ;
- The leveraging approach: diasporas are seen as resources to stimulate development priorities

Discussions often lack nuance when we're talking about **FinTech**² which is a diverse area, including particularly cryptocurrencies, and mobile banking services. FinTech can be a useful tool to connect the recipients of remittances to other services, but this also bears risks: the use of these services implies a high level of financial and digital literacy, as well as debt risks.



¹ MPI research, April 2022, [Destination-country policies to foster diaspora engagement in development](#)

² MPI research, February 2024, [Leaving no one behind: Inclusive Fintech for remittances](#)

³ EUDiF is a pilot project funded by DG INTPA of the European Commission and implemented by ICMPD.

Initiatives and projects in favour of diaspora engagement

Ashoka, changemaker in partnership with diasporas

Named by Forbes as one of the most innovative and impactful organisations, Ashoka counts to date 6 regional offices in Africa with over 590 members. Ashoka aims to identify and **support social entrepreneurs across the world**. Thanks to the "[Diaspora networks](#)" initiative, Ashoka aims to support leaders, groups and organisations from the diaspora by strengthening their role as catalysts of change.



Ashoka defends the idea that diasporas have various skills and are **agents of change and partners in ecosystem-building, both in countries of origin and destination**. It is important to make public, through media platforms, the idea that diaspora organisations are partners in the double space of countries of origin and destination. This could help to change the perception and narratives on migrants and diasporas.

« [Shaping Development-oriented Migration](#) » programme, supported by GIZ



Since 2009, the global programme « Shaping development-oriented migration » supports around 15 partner countries (of which 4 African countries) to harness the benefits of regular migration and diaspora engagement for sustainable development. This programme aims to:

- Support partner countries in the elaboration of their migration policies ;
- Strengthen the protection of migrants' rights ;
- Promote policy coherence, gender equality and cooperation with civil society ;
- Promote investment, knowledge exchange and innovation in partner countries by supporting development-oriented diaspora engagement in Germany;
- Strengthen partnerships with multilateral and international organisations.

This programme, which demonstrates the German government's commitment to supporting diaspora-led initiatives, has led to the implementation of a number of **good practices**:

- **Diasporas were associated from the starting phase of the programme**, which enabled their needs to be met.
- The creation of a **Consultative Council** involving diasporas and competent authorities helped to forge links with local communities and to anchor projects at the local level.
- This programme led to the creation of a diaspora incubator.

One of the **lessons learned** from this programme is that diaspora entrepreneurs lack access to funding and loans to launch their businesses. But afterwards, they have the **same needs as any other entrepreneur**, and should be able to join the ecosystem of the country in which they are located.

4) How to foster diaspora engagement: perspectives from Rabat Process countries

The second panel was an opportunity to learn more about **practices and initiatives of several partner countries** of the Dialogue, in terms of diaspora engagement, considering cross-cutting topics such as entrepreneurship, local engagement, and strategies involving more specifically women and youth.

Perspectives from Rabat Process' countries

- **France's perspective**

A **French strategy** « [Migration and Development](#) » including a component on the benefits of regular migration for sustainable development will be published shortly. An action plan associating civil society organisations will be crafted afterwards.

Simultaneously, the French Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs adopted an **internal strategy on African diaspora** which aims to 1) know diasporas residing in France; 2) implement a dialogue with these diasporas and 3) support them in mobilising their expertise.

France's action in terms of diaspora engagement is specifically **tailored for young generations and women** with specific needs.

- **Nigeria's perspective**

Nigeria set up a [Nigerians in Diaspora Commission \(NIDCOM\)](#) which helped establish a mapping of Nigerian diaspora. Moreover, a **Diaspora Summit** is held each November and a **Diaspora Investment Funds** worth 20 billion dollars was created to support projects in priority sectors such as infrastructure, healthcare and education. Its launch is part of national efforts to strengthen the links between Nigeria and its diaspora, to promote national development and to valorise Nigerian abroad contributions as agents of change and development.

Fund in Support of the Investment of Senegalese Abroad (FAISE)

The [Fund in Support of the Investment of Senegalese Abroad](#) (FAISE) is an investment and guarantee fund, set up by Senegal, to promote productive investment of Senegalese living abroad. The Fund ambitions to be the main lever for promoting investment of Senegalese living abroad, offering **technical and financial support to all Senegalese living abroad** who have a development project, with the aim of creating jobs in Senegal.

In addition, a special fund dedicated to promoting the economic activities of women from the diaspora, the « [Fund for Women in the Diaspora](#) (FFD) », was set up in 2014. It seeks to 1) support women in identifying promising projects with the support of the FAISE focal point in the country of residence ; 2) facilitate networking between different women's groups; 3) monitor the implementation of the project and redirect it if necessary. Since its creation, the Fund for Women in the Diaspora has supported more than 6000 women entrepreneurs from the Senegalese diaspora.

The « Migration and Development » approach promoted by Spain

A new **Law on Cooperation for sustainable development and global solidarity** was adopted in Spain in 2023. It notably seeks to strengthen the role of the [Spanish Agency of International Cooperation for Development \(AECID\)](#).

The latter outlines several priorities in terms of migration and development:

- Cooperation with origin countries is a central stake.
- Vocational training is crucial for job creation in countries of origin.

- The Emergency Trust Fund (FFU) allowed AECID to work with partner countries' governments in countries of origin.
- Spain grants scholarships to African students studying in Spain.
- Circular migration programmes have enabled 150 Senegalese workers to work in the agricultural sector in Spain.
- Several cooperation agreements were signed with partner countries at their request.
- AECID has a long history of working with development agencies of the AU (NEPAD) and ECOWAS in a regional approach.

Challenges and recommendations to foster better diaspora engagement

- Diaspora organisations often lack trust in the authorities. As such, it is crucial to implement **partnerships based on transparency and trust** between political authorities and diaspora organisations.
- Cooperation does not produce immediate results. It is therefore necessary to **set up measures and projects in the long term**, by also involving the new generations from the diaspora.
- It is necessary to involve and valorise diasporas **in both origin and destination countries** because they are actors of development in the double space.
- It is crucial to associate diasporas **since the conception and throughout the elaboration of programmes, policies and strategies** which are targeted towards them (diaspora institutionalisation).
- Programmes of support to entrepreneurship **specifically dedicated to youth and women** should be prioritised.
- Programmes involving the diaspora are often compartmentalised and should be **linked to other programmes**, such as agricultural programmes, by working closely with diaspora in this area.
- Diaspora access to information and data is insufficient: it is necessary to **facilitate access to information** on investment possibilities in particular.

5) Supporting the socio-economic impact of diasporas and their investment capacities

This first working group provided an opportunity to reflect collectively on **how to better support the socio-economic impact of diaspora communities and their investment capacities**, by focusing more specifically on the active involvement of women and young people in these policies and initiatives.

The participants highlighted the following **challenges**:

- Lack of policies or support system in countries of origin to help their diaspora start a business or invest ;
- Misperceptions about migrants due to existing narratives about diasporas in countries of origin and destination
- Lack of links between diasporas and their countries of origin (embassies, networking) ;
- Duplication of existing policies and measures (many initiatives already exist) ;
- Semantic challenge : migrant v. expat ;
- Limited access to financial products in countries of destination ;
- Lack of information on investments ;
- Challenge of dual citizenship for access to investment ;
- Unstable political environment does not encourage diaspora participation in their countries of origin.

This working group also identified a series of **good practices**:

- Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NIDCOM): recognition of the key role and engagement of the Nigerian diaspora in shaping national development policies and projects ;
- Digital solutions to connect diasporas (platforms, networks and databases) ;
- Fund in Support of the Investment of Senegalese Abroad (FAISE) ;
- Access to property for the diaspora project / diaspora obligations (Nigeria) ;
- One-stop shop for business start-ups in 24h (Niger, Senegal, Cabo Verde) ;
- Opening of interest-bearing savings account for diasporas (Cabo Verde).

Recommendations from Working Group 1

- Modify and strengthen narratives to **recognise the role of diasporas as agents of change** contributing to the development of countries of origin and destination, in close collaboration with the media (awareness raising issue).
- Put in place measures to foster **trust and transparency** to encourage diasporas to invest in their countries of origin.
- Create a **one-stop shop for diasporas** to access information on policies, laws, programmes, investment funds and events.
- **Better structure diaspora organisations** around a representative entity.
- **Involve diasporas in decision-making** and processes to ensure that their needs and priorities are taken into account (institutionalisation of the diaspora).
- Support **initiatives led by women and young entrepreneurs** (investment funds, mentoring, training, networks).
- **Provide avenues for dialogue between governments**, businesses and diaspora organisations to identify investment opportunities.

6) Maximising the impact of skills transfers and knowledge-exchange programmes on national development

This second working group aimed to reflect collectively on how to **maximise the impact of skills transfer and knowledge-exchange programmes on national development**, focusing more particularly on the active involvement of women and youth in these policies and initiatives.

The participants highlighted the following **challenges**:

- Difficulty to guarantee the success of skills exchanges partnerships;
- Diverse pool of needs within the diaspora and young generations;
- Portability of social rights;
- Digitalisation of diploma recognition and driver license systems;
- Lack of data on the skills and interests of the diaspora and the needs of the job market.

This working group also helped identify a series of **good practices**:

- Skills transfer: GIZ organises short-term missions for diaspora in 14 partner countries ;
- Creation of networks between professionals/specialists: networks of Spanish scientists abroad organisations, association of Tunisian doctors in Germany, partnerships between public hospitals and Tunisian psychologists ;
- Creation of spaces to tackle issues relating to the diaspora, bringing together key stakeholders, specifically embassies and entrepreneurs ;
- Celebrating members of the diaspora who have succeeded abroad (Nigeria, Ireland, Cabo Verde) ;
- Creation of a one-stop shop (Gambia).

Recommendations from Working Group 2

- Create a culture around the value and **enhancement of diaspora contributions**.
- Identify and **match diaspora skills with country needs** by encouraging all segments of the diaspora to promote the adoption of strategies, and by leaning on universities and academics, as well as new technologies.
- Develop a **diverse portfolio of skills transfer programmes**, including voluntary skills, short-term skills transfer and long-term talent attraction strategies.
- **Identify friction points** that prevent diaspora engagement in countries of origin and destination.
- Make effective use of **digital tools** to improve all services to citizens, including diaspora.
- **Improve access to information** and to personalised services for diaspora.
- **Involve the diaspora from the inception of projects** and initiatives to build trust and accountability.
- Provide for the **engagement of future generations of the diaspora** by connecting to the African continent, promoting accurate knowledge, specifically on the history, trajectory, resources, state of the art and opportunities in Africa, and by linking them to the 2063 Agenda.

7) Involving civil society for a better development impact

For the first time a side event with civil society organisations (CSOs) from the diaspora was organised to **provide a venue for exchange and dialogue** between the latter and the Dialogue's partner countries.

Diaspora organisations had the opportunity to present their work, to discuss with governmental representatives from Dialogue's partner countries and to shed light on lessons learnt and good practices in the framework of projects involving the diaspora. In return, Dialogue's partner countries had the opportunity to better understand the needs and challenges faced by CSOs and to benefit from their expertise, ideas and field experience.

A new format in the framework of the Rabat Process

Constantly on the search for activities that foster collaboration, inclusion and innovation, the Rabat Process Secretariat, in close collaboration with Portugal and Senegal, wished to organise this event to **strengthen its engagement with CSOs** by creating a space for interaction and discussion. Indeed, CSOs have a central role to play as intermediaries between diaspora communities and governments, businesses, and other stakeholders. The event provided an opportunity for partner countries and CSOs to come together in a relaxed and informal setting to share views, discuss challenges and explore avenues for future collaboration.

Around 10 CSOs took part in this event:

- **African Union Diaspora Youth Initiative**: an initiative from the AU Permanent Mission to the EU to promote the involvement and collaboration between diaspora youth and their organisations across Europe, mobilising youth from the diaspora to actively get involved in the African socio-economic and political landscape.
- **Ashoka** : the world's largest network of social entrepreneurs.
- **Associação dos Amigos e Filhos de Farim (A.F.A.F.C.)**: association promoting the integration of Guineans in Portugal and their involvement in Guinea-Bissau.
- **Civil Society Network on Migration and Development (CSOnetMADE)**: platform gathering civil society organisations in Nigeria which support and defend migrants.
- **Centre for Enterprise Learning – Management for Development Foundation (MDF)** : ghanaiian branch of the CSO MDF West Africa, focusing on migration and development issues.
- **Maroc entrepreneurs** : organisation promoting entrepreneurship and investment in Morocco to the Moroccan diaspora living in France.

- **Plataforma Associação Cabo Verde Diaspora (PLTCVD)** : organisation which aims to strengthen the links between Cabo Verde and its diaspora to reinforce the diaspora fabric across different continents.
- **Migration Development Network (REMIDEV)**: platform bringing together several Senegalese NGOs and organisations working on migration in Senegal.
- **Repat Africa**: organisation with 400 members dedicated to mobilising the African diaspora to invest, create businesses and settle in Africa.

The importance of actively engaging with CSOs for a better development impact

Diaspora CSOs are active in several areas:

- They raise funds for investment and philanthropy ;
- They help migrants and diaspora communities to integrate into host communities ;
- They build networks of influence and wealth that support diaspora entrepreneurship and remittances ;
- They act as an interface and mediator between diasporas and other stakeholders.

These organisations should not only be seen as beneficiaries or groups of people to be consulted, but as **partners in their own right**: they are indeed able to relay diaspora needs and expectations to governments. In this respect, during the Thematic Meeting on diaspora engagement, Senegal and Nigeria mentioned the active partnership they maintain with their diaspora, and GIZ highlighted the role of the Consultative Council involving diasporas and relevant authorities, implemented as part of the global programme “Shaping development-oriented migration”.

The Rabat Process believes that it is important to ensure that the voices, perspectives, and interests of diaspora communities are heard and represented in **decision-making processes and policy development**.

Conclusions and ways forward

Several results emerged from this side event:

- This event gave space not only to smaller organisations but also to **umbrella organisations and platforms**, such as the Platform of the Cap-Verdean diaspora (PLTCVD) and Remidev.
- It also showed the importance to adopt different types of models and structures: represented CSOs were not charity-based in need of government funding, **but they rely on a paying membership model and have their own funds**.
- **Networking is key**: governments want to create databases on diasporas and leverage diaspora investment. For example, Maroc Entrepreneurs and Ashoka are creating networks of diaspora investors and entrepreneurs.
- Diaspora organisations have a **strong impact on the development of both countries of origin and destination**, as demonstrated by A.F.A.F.C., the association promoting the integration of Guineans in Portugal and their involvement in Guinea-Bissau.

The organisation of a side event showcasing civil society organisations was as initiative welcomed by most participants, who noted the relevance and importance of such a platform to **nourish the dialogue** and inform on organisations working closely with diaspora.

The involvement of CSOs was recognised as an essential component of the Dialogue, and the field experience of CSOs was considered **central to the elaboration of relevant and inclusive recommendations**.

Participants expressed a strong interest in informal exchanges with the organisations present and wished to see more organisations and other stakeholders represented.

Finally, participants expressed their enthusiasm for the **continuation of such events** in the framework of the Rabat Process, stressing the central role of civil society organisations and the importance of their inclusion within the Dialogue as regular stakeholders.

Analysis of the participation to the Thematic Meeting and to the Side Event⁴

- The event gathered a diverse audience of 110 participants from 33 partner countries.
- Overall, participants were very satisfied with the quality of the discussions and presentations of the thematic meeting, with a 4.4/5 satisfaction average.
- The side event, involving civil society organisations, received many positive comments and was highlighted as a relevant and important initiative to be continued in the framework of the Dialogue. The inclusion of CSOs was recognised as an essential component of the Dialogue and the field experience of CSOs has been flagged as central to the elaboration of relevant and inclusive recommendations.
- The event was largely relayed on Rabat Process social media networks, with 16 tweets and 3 LinkedIn posts which led to 3354 impressions on X and 5039 reactions on LinkedIn.

⁴ This analysis is based on participants' answers to the feedback form.