



Diaspora Development Fund (DDF) was developed as part of a MSDG Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) which was initiated by GK Partners (GKP) in 2017 and co-financed by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and GKP; implemented by GKP in partnership with the Government of The Gambia



Diaspora Development Fund (DDF) & Diaspora Fellowship Programme

Briefing Notes & Application Guidelines

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1. Strategic Context of the Diaspora Development Fund and Fellowship Programme

- 1.1 MSDG Programme:** The Diaspora Development Fund (DDF) is part of the 'Migration and Sustainable Development in The Gambia project (MSDG)', initiated by GK Partners in 2017. MSDG is a diaspora-led Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), *initiated and implemented by GK Partners (GKP), in partnership with the Government of The Gambia; co-financed by GKP, Government of Switzerland (2017-24), and the International Organization for Migration (2026).*
- 1.2 Optimising Diaspora Role:** The first ever Gambian Diaspora Strategy (GDS) was fully incorporated in the National Development Plan (NDP 2018-21). The GDS/NDP declared that the *diaspora is the Eighth Region* of The Gambia, and set a goal to: *"expand, enhance and optimise the role of the diaspora in national development, as valued partners"*.
- 1.3 Co-Finance and Leverage:** To expand and enhance diaspora contributions, it is essential that *co-finance and match-funding facilities are made available* to diaspora-development practitioners, *to leverage and optimise the cash and in-kind resources* they invest in different forms of community, sectoral and national socioeconomic development projects and initiatives in rural and urban Gambia.
- 1.4 Types of Diaspora Co-Finance:** The GDS has commitments to support and facilitate, amongst other things: *Civil Society and Social Impact Projects; Access to Diaspora Professionals and Experts; Diaspora Direct Investments*. The DDF provides co-finance for these three types of diaspora-development initiatives.
- 1.5 MSD Diaspora Fellows:** The recipients of DDF awards are *also appointed as Migration and Sustainable Development MSD Diaspora Fellows for a period of five years*, in recognition of their ongoing development engagement beyond the life of the DDF project, and to optimise their mentorship and knowledge and skills transfer activities.
- 1.6 DDF as a GDS Commitment:** One of the *2018 GDS commitments was the creation of a DDF*: *"For Gambian diaspora organisations involved in community, civil society, social enterprise and cooperative activities in different parts of the country, the Diaspora Development Fund (DDF) will provide project co-financing.....Hometown, district, alumni and sectoral non-for-profit diaspora groups will apply to the fund to leverage and supplement the resources they raise by themselves. For diaspora entrepreneurs and investors, the DDF shall provide loans, equity investment and other forms of co-investment, to stimulate and expand job creation and social impact investments in The Gambia"*.

- 1.7 Global Compact for Migration:** The *DDF goals and commitments set out in the 2018 GDS/NDP are consistent with international frameworks* on diaspora-development. Objective 19, Section 35(e)(j) of the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) commit UN Member States to: *“Develop targeted support programmes and financial products that facilitate migrant and diaspora investments and entrepreneurship.....support in business creation, granting seed capital-matching, establish.....diaspora development funds.....Build partnerships between local authorities, local communities, the private sector, diasporas, hometown associations and migrant organizations to promote knowledge and skills transfer”*.

2. Progress of the Diaspora Fellowship Programme of the Diaspora Development Fund

- 2.1 2020/21 Pilot Project:** The Diaspora Fellowship Programme of the Diaspora Development Fund *was piloted in 2020/21 during the Covid19 pandemic under the ‘Gambia Diaspora Technical Support (GDTS)’ scheme*. GK Partners (GKP) provided cash co-finance and technical support to a total of 10 Gambian diaspora professionals and development practitioners, *who were designated as Diaspora Fellows*. They undertook a diverse range of projects in The Gambia, in collaboration with local partner organisations and institutions.
- 2.2 Financial Leverage:** Under the pilot scheme, *GKP provided total co-finance of €74,890 (Euros), equivalent to 4,685,000 (Gambia Dalasi)*. Using the GKP co-finance funds as leverage, *the Diaspora Fellows successfully generated a further €710,280 (Euros) through cash donations, technical expertise, and in-kind materials, supplies and resources*. For every 1 Euro MSDG provided, the pilot scheme generated a further 9.4 Euros. This demonstrated the resourcefulness, commitment and productivity of the diaspora as development actors. Consequently, the pilot scheme *provided socioeconomic investment in The Gambia to the value of €785,170 (Euros), being equivalent to about 50 million Gambian Dalasi*.
- 2.3 Project Diversity:** The 2020/21 *pilot project was implemented during MSDG2* (the second phase of the MSDG programme) and was co-financed by the Government of Switzerland and GKP. The *Diaspora Fellows comprised 5 women and 5 men, with bases in five countries*, namely: United States, United Kingdom, Norway, Saudi Arabia and Nigeria. Of the 10 Fellows, 6 were still resident in the diaspora and 4 were recent returnees to Gambia. *The fellowship projects covered different sectors*, including: health and social care; education and information technology; parliamentary television and law hub; business and youth employability; university scholarship endowment fund.
- 2.4 2022/24 Programme Roll-Out:** The 2022/24 *Diaspora Fellowship and DDF was rolled-out during MSDG3* (the third phase of the MSDG programme) *with 44 new Fellows*, co-financed by the Government of Switzerland and GKP. The Fellows were based in 15 countries and 12 were recent returnees to The Gambia. By 30 June 2024, the total of *54 Diaspora Fellows comprised 22 women and 32 men, who implemented 67 different projects; 26 rural; 15 urban; 26 rural and urban*.

- 2.5 Continued Co-Finance:** By June 2024, GKP provided DDF **cash co-finance of €500,000 Euros (about 37 million Dalasi) for the 67 projects ran by the 54 Diaspora Fellows, who leveraged and raised €4 million Euros (about 295 million Dalasi)** in cash and in kind. The projects covered different sectors, including: job creation and employability schemes; agricultural and veterinary development; education and training; multimedia, film and digital technology; music, arts and cultural products and services; light manufacturing and production; clinics and healthcare services; mental health and counselling.
- 2.6 2026 Fellowship Cohort:** In 2026, **funds of \$115,000 (about 8 million Dalasi) was provided for 15 new projects, delivered by 4 existing and 11 new Diaspora Fellows, comprising 8 women and 7 men**, co-financed by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and GKP. The new Fellows are based in 8 countries and 5 are recent returnees to The Gambia.



54 Diaspora Fellows & 67 Projects (2021-2024)

Co-Financed by GK Partners and Government of Switzerland



11 New Diaspora Fellows & 15 Projects (2026)

Co-Financed by GK Partners and International Organization for Migration

3. Components of the Diaspora Fellowships of the Diaspora Development Fund

- 3.1 DDF Purpose and Aims:** The purpose of the Diaspora Development Fund (DDF) is to use co-financing and technical support as practical means of stimulating, leveraging, expanding and enhancing different forms of diaspora contributions to national development. The specific aims of the DDF are as follows:
- Expand project interventions** undertaken in rural and urban Gambia by the diaspora
 - Enhance collaborations** with local and international partners to increase socioeconomic impact
 - Increase diaspora contributions** through cash and in-kind donations, and collective remittances
 - Leverage diaspora resources** and networks to obtain additional development inputs for Gambia
 - Facilitate 'Brain Gain'** to optimise the contributions of Gambian diaspora experts and specialists
 - Stimulate start-up projects** by innovators and young and multigenerational Gambian diaspora.

Applicants need to fall under one or more, not all the above DDF aims

3.2 DDF Programme: The Diaspora Fellowship programme of the DDF entails the following key features:

- a. **Select diaspora-development projects** through the DDF selection process
- b. **Provide match-funding awards** in the form of cash project co-finance
- c. **Award \$X,000 (varies per programme)** co-finance to each selected DDF project
- d. **Designate as MSD Diaspora Fellows**, the individuals who lead the selected and funded projects
- e. **Provide technical support** to assist the Diaspora Fellows to implement their projects
- f. **Monitor, report and publicise** the work and impact of the DDF projects and Diaspora Fellows.

The DDF programme was conceived, and is delivered and administered in line with the GKP's organisational values of: Generosity, Humility and Excellence

3.3 Three Categories of DDF Awards: The DDF co-finance will be awarded to three (3) categories of recipients, namely:

- a. **Independent Professionals** with specialist initiatives, working with local in country partners
- b. **Affiliates of Diaspora organisations** working on different forms of socioeconomic development
- c. **Impact Investors** involved in different forms of job creation and economic development.

3.4 DDF Application Process: All applicants must submit by email to (ddf@gkpartners.co.uk), the following documents:

- a. Fully completed and **signed DDF Application Form** (signed by the prospective Diaspora Fellow)
- b. **Signed partner letter** confirming project cooperation with the local in-country partner organisation
- c. Up-to-date **Curriculum Vitae (CV)/Résumé** of the project leader (the prospective Diaspora Fellow)
- d. Recent **Annual Report and Accounts** (for organisations and businesses).

The deadline for submission of the completed application form and supporting documents will be published

Please note that when the the number of projects to be co-financed are not many, GKP will undertake selection through network consultations and review of existing pipeline projects rather than making an open call for submission of applications

3.5 DDF Eligibility Criteria: The main eligibility criteria to apply for DDF co-finance/match-funding are:

- a. **Gambian citizen based in the diaspora or having returned to The Gambia in the past 5 years; applying as:**
 - (i) Independent Individual Professional or specialist; **OR**
 - (ii) Affiliate of a Diaspora Organisation registered outside The Gambia; **OR**
 - (iii) Impact Entrepreneur and Investor involved in business in The Gambia.
- b. **Formal partnership with an organisation or institution in The Gambia; the partner can be a:**
 - (i) Community, civil society or other non-governmental organisation; **OR**
 - (ii) Social or commercial enterprise or business network; **OR**
 - (iii) Ministry, Department, Agency of the government or a State-Owned Enterprise.

- c. **Ability to implement the project within a timeframe of 3 to 9 months (as specified in the call for applications); and deliver positive and measurable socioeconomic impacts; in one or more of the following priority areas:**
- (i) Job creation, especially for young people (aged 35 and under);
 - (ii) Different forms of rural development;
 - (iii) Medical, health and care services;
 - (iv) Education, training and skills development;
 - (v) ICT, innovative and tech-based services;
 - (vi) Agriculture, produce processing and packaging;
 - (vii) Environmental protection and disaster prevention;
 - (viii) Other beneficial and impactful sectors and services.
- d. **Ability to generate minimum match-funding to complement the DDF cash project co-finance; as set out for each fellowship cohort:**
- (i) \$X,000 match-funding for individuals and diaspora organisations; **AND**
 - (ii) \$XX,000 match-funding for impact entrepreneurs and commercial investors.

The DDF project proposal submitted by applicants in the application form can focus on expansion or replication of existing programmes, or the launch of new initiatives

3.6 Applicant Match-Funding: The match-funding **specifically generated and spent on the DDF project** can include one or more of the following forms of resources:

- a. Cash contributions through individual and collective **donations and subscriptions**
- b. Cash contributions from different online and community **fundraising activities**
- c. Cash contributions from existing **organisational funds, project or reserve accounts**
- d. Cash contributions from **grants, sponsorships and service level agreements**
- e. **Donated or discounted goods**, equipment, materials and supplies used in the project
- f. **Donated or discounted services** including freight, transport, storage, accommodation etc
- g. Unpaid and **pro bono services of professionals**, experts and specialists working on the project
- h. Capital injection through **equity or loans** from impact entrepreneur, co-investors, banks etc.

The stipulated match-funding of \$XX,000 (and \$XX,000 for impact entrepreneurs and commercial investors) are minimum requirement; it is expected that Diaspora Fellows will leverage the cash project co-finance to generate high values of cash and in-kind resources, to optimise their development projects

3.7 Selection and Award Criteria: The DDF Awards Panel will assess applications and make recommendations based on a balanced assessment of the following criteria:

- a. **Feasibility:** (Likelihood of successful implementation of the project activities considering: the timescale; level of financial resources available through the project co-finance and match-funding; other human, physical and technical resources available)
- b. **Impact:** (Expected number, and profile of beneficiaries; nature of benefits delivered; extent of positive change regarding improvement in livelihoods, self-reliance, resilience, personal and community development)

- c. **Rural Focus:** *(Majority of the project beneficiaries located in the rural parts of The Gambia, being all areas outside the Greater Banjul Area (GBA), as defined by Ministry of Lands and Regional Government. GBA is from Banjul to Brikama eastwards; and to Brufut on the southern coast)*
- d. **Job Creation:** *(Expected number, and profile of jobs created, especially for young people)*
- e. **Match-Funding:** *(Expected amount of cash and in-kind match-funding to be generated)*
- f. **Value-Added:** *(Levels of value-added; skills and knowledge development and transfer; sectoral innovation; self-motivation and partnership with organisations and institutions in The Gambia)*
- g. **Sustainability:** *(Overall soundness of the project, and likelihood of project survival, expansion and further development, after the DDF project)*
- h. **Diversity:** *(Balance in the gender and geographical diversity of the applicants)*

3.8 **DDF Selection Process:** The DDF selection process involves the following steps and actions:

- a. **Initial Administrative Review:** MSDG staff will review applications received to ensure that all required information and supporting documents are in order; and produce a long and short list of applications, using the selection and awards criteria. The reviewed applications will then be handed over to the DDF Awards Panel for their assessment and recommendations. *(If applications are submitted early, the GKP staff may be able to advise applicants to make necessary adjustments in order to be fully compliant).*
- b. **Assessment by the DDF Awards Panel:** The DDF Awards Panel will assess the reviewed applications, using the selection and award criteria. The Panel's assessment and selection activities will include: Making declarations that there are no material conflicts of interest regarding them and the DDF applicants and partners; Individually reading, assessing and making notes about the completed Application Forms, CVs/Résumés and partner letters; Participating in panel discussions about the applications; Making collective panel recommendations; Providing suggestions for revisions, or reasons for non-approval.
- c. **Award Recommendations:** The DDF Awards Panel can make one of three recommendations, namely: **Approval; Approval Subject to Revisions; Non-Approval.** If revisions are recommended, the specific suggestions will be discussed and agreed by GKP staff with the applicant, without any further referrals to the Awards Panel. For applications that are not approved, the reasons for non-approval will be provided by the Awards Panel. These will be communicated to the applicant as feedback. **The recommendation of the Awards Panel is to be taken as final.** If there are exceptional reasons to warrant a review of recommendations, this will be undertaken by senior GKP personnel in consultation with the Panel.

3.9 **DDF Award Management:** The management of the Development Fund (DDF) project will entail the following main steps and actions:

1. **Signature of award agreement** between the GKP-MSDG and the MSDG Fellow
2. **Disbursement of a percentage** of the DDF award funds after signature of agreement
3. **Submission of Interim Monitoring Report** and expenses receipts, 35 days after the start date
4. **Disbursement of remaining funds** after review and approval of the Interim Monitoring Report
5. **Submission of DDF Final Report** and expenses receipts, 35 days after project completion
6. **Ongoing participation in DDF publicity**, public communications and case study analyses.

The DDF programme can technically be described as ‘unrestricted funding’; GKP is relatively flexible in terms of how the DDF funds are to be used, as long as they are spent 100% on activities and expenses relating to the implementation of the approved project. The GKP staff will be available to give advice on eligibility of costs, project monitoring and other operational matters

For the purposes of effectiveness and impact, and based on the assessment of GKP, 100% disbursements may be made where appropriate. This may be necessary when dealing with existing Fellows, long-term partners, or critical project cash flow needs.

The interim reporting requirement may also be waived where appropriate. This may arise when dealing with tight implementation schedules or where GKP is undertaking close supervisory support and engagement. This document is a guide, some of the stipulations may be waived or amended and new rules and requirements introduced as appropriate

- 3.10 DDF Awards Panel:** For major DDF calls for proposals/applications, an Awards Panel is convened, comprising experienced professionals who are familiar with Gambian diaspora-development issues and the MSDG Project. For small DDF programmes or ones with a tight implementation period, Awards Panel will comprise GKP staff, working in consultation with funders and/or other partners.

Brusubi, West Coast Region, The Gambia, Updated April 2026.