

OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL

EVALUATION OF THE *MIDA ITALY* PROJECT

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IOM International Organization for Migration

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DFID	United Kingdom Government's Department for International Development
DRD	Donor Relations Division
ERD	External Relations Department
IOM	International Organization for Migration
MIDA	Migration for Development in Africa
MMS	Migration Management Services
MOU	Memorandum Of Understanding
MPRC	Migration Policy, Research and Communications Department
MRF	Mission with Regional Functions
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
R&R	Return and Reintegration
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

One of the objectives in evaluating the '*Migration for Development in Africa (MIDA) Pilot Project – Italy*' was to obtain a review of a concrete implementation of the MIDA concept actively promoted by IOM since its launch in 2001. The analysis of a practical experiment is useful for documenting the concept's performance and achievements and refining its strategy. *MIDA Italy* is one of the few MIDA projects with a significant budget implemented since the concept's launch and, as a pilot project, several new fields of activity were tested. It also included topics increasingly important in the general debate on migration and development, such as diasporas' investments and the use of remittances. The evaluation will also be used in the discussions on the project extension, currently under examination with the Italian Government, who funded the pilot phase.

The MIDA concept was initially defined as a capacity building programme, whose objective was the mobilization or transfer of knowledge, expertise, finance and other resources from the African diaspora to meet identified needs for development in African countries. The *MIDA Italy* pilot project was to define a strategy for mobilizing human, technical and financial resources to benefit target sectors in pilot countries, by enhancing the active engagement and role as development agents of African nationals residing in Italy.

Information on community and individual skills, investment capacities and plans to support their communities of origin was to be collected through research and registration in databases. Several modes of skills transfer (virtual, sequenced or permanent) were planned for implementing development activities and institutional capacity building. The project was to focus on those migrants willing to set up micro-enterprises and job-generating activities in their areas of origin. It was divided in two phases: the preparatory phase, focusing on preliminary research, database creation and promotional activities, and a second phase concentrating on investment projects in the selected countries of Ghana and Ethiopia.

This evaluation first examines the relevance of the *MIDA Italy* strategy and finds that one of the key recommendations adopted during the Libreville Workshop in 2001 was not met: there was no concrete commitment from the Governments or private sectors of the countries of origin to support pilot project implementation and play a pivotal role in integrating *MIDA Italy* into national policies for using the diasporas' skills and resources. Ownership of *MIDA Italy* did not rest with the African countries, as also recommended, but with the Italian Government. Lack of ownership is demonstrated through the absence of a formal institutional agreement in the case of Ethiopia and the inadequate agreement signed in Ghana, despite the strong interest shown by both countries during preliminary discussions.

The selection process of the countries of origin and target groups was well detailed and may be considered as relevant to the *MIDA Italy* pilot project's objectives. The project document and implementation however entirely lacked gender focus, which should be rectified in the extension phase under discussion and other future MIDA projects. This evaluation also recommends refining the analysis of the diaspora concept, especially its potential for skills transfers and investments.

Analysis of the project's performance focuses on the effectiveness of the preparatory phase, skills transfers and investment projects. Most of the activities in the preparatory phase were implemented in Italy. IOM contracted a specialized centre in international development studies to conduct three research studies: the concept of decentralized cooperation for development and its link with the African diasporas living in Italy; the use of remittances and investments for development; transnational links among migrant communities with a focus on cooperation and development.

The research is of good quality and useful not only to IOM, but also to partners in Italy. Three databases were developed by IOM Rome, the main one listing African communities and associations in Italy and used for promotional activities. A second database records all the investment projects submitted by the African nationals interested in MIDA and a third, with a more restricted scope, was set up to create the *MIDA Italy Club*. Several promotional activities were also implemented during the preparatory phase, with good overall performance. An identified weakness was the imbalance between promotional activities in Italy and in the selected countries of origin, which did not aid promotion of the MIDA concept in those countries, already affected by low institutional commitment.

The project was not effective in transferring skills and capacity building activities, as no transfer took place, contrary to initial plans. In Ethiopia, a web site was created with the objective of raising interest among the diaspora in investing in its country of origin. However its implementation was not made in cooperation with the Ethiopian Government, as initially discussed, and its sustainability is not guaranteed. No investment projects were implemented. Six pilot investment projects were identified in Ghana and continue with the financial support of MIDA. However, the results in terms of contribution to development are weak and the overall approach requires further analysis. No transfer of skills took place under the investment projects. Important lessons can be learnt for the implementation of those components, both for IOM Rome in the discussions for the extension phase and for IOM for future MIDA projects. Lessons learnt also include weaknesses identified in the project's overall management.

The final section draws conclusions applicable to the MIDA concept in general, concerning its various components, ownership, promotion through practical experiments and integration into other IOM activities.

## SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### Conclusions

1. *The Italian central government and regional and local authorities showed enthusiasm for and commitment to promoting the MIDA concept and the MIDA Italy project; the work at that level deserves recognition. However, and contrary to the recommendations adopted by the African countries during the Libreville Workshop and the Lusaka Summit, commitment and ownership by the countries of origin remain very weak. The support shown through political declarations was not translated into effective implementation.*
2. *The selection processes for the implementation countries and the target group were thorough and can be considered as relevant to MIDA Italy's objectives. The major problem lies in the absence of a gender dimension in the project document and implementation.*
3. *The promotional activities in Italy were efficient and reached a broad population with a potential interest in MIDA. The main weakness lies in the quasi-absence of promotional activities in the targeted countries. The sustainability of the MIDA promotion may be guaranteed through the planned extension, especially for the Ghanaian and Senegalese diasporas; without an extension, sustainability is not guaranteed.*
4. *Three major conclusions are drawn here: firstly, and in addition to the establishment of formal agreements, integration of MIDA Italy into the country's development strategy and collaboration with other development programmes are important factors for success. MIDA projects should not work in isolation but instead should use existing projects promoting, for instance, micro-credit schemes. Secondly, the definition of the link between diaspora and development should be better defined at project inception, reducing the risks of overestimating possible investment. Thirdly, the decentralized cooperation concept merits further exploration, both in terms of integrating the migrant population and involving the diaspora as an agent for development. The project proposals submitted to the Italian Government for the pilot phase extension already take into account these conclusions and therefore it is unnecessary to make a recommendation. IOM Rome should not underestimate the importance of these three factors during implementation.*

### Recommendations

1. **As an extension of *MIDA Italy* is under discussion at the time of writing this report, IOM should work closely with the Governments of the countries selected, to guarantee their commitment and support for project implementation - key elements of the Resolution adopted by the African Heads of State during the Lusaka Summit and of the Recommendations adopted at the Libreville Workshop.**
2. **If there is a project extension, the gender dimension should be better integrated, in order to have a more informed analysis of the contribution possible from the diaspora's women to the development of their country of origin. The analysis may be made both in terms of economic development ('financial capital' transfer) and also in terms of social development ('social capital' transfer).**

3. If the extension phase for Ghana and Senegal is approved, IOM Rome and the Italian Government should explore opportunities, either during the life of the project or at its end, to organize events and conferences extending beyond the Senegalese and Ghanaian diasporas, as planned in the project extension proposals. A broader population should be targeted, as was the case for the final conference of the pilot phase. IOM and the Italian Government could invite other EU countries, with a view to promoting MIDA in the EU.
4. IOM Rome should retain responsibility for overall project management, should there be an extension, but should also consider the needs of IOM's offices in the countries of origin. A detailed analysis of staffing and financial requirements should be made at the beginning of the project, in accordance with the action plan, together with monitoring and reporting requirements between all missions involved. All Chiefs of Missions concerned should formally agree on what is expected from each in terms of management, to avoid the problems encountered in Ghana during the pilot phase.
5. IOM Headquarters should refine the MIDA concept and strategy, based on the practical experiments, research and internal dialogue achieved to date, focusing on the diasporas' role and the use of remittances. A discussion should be organized on which entity should take the lead in continuing MIDA's promotion and in adjusting the programme's approach when necessary. The discussion could also include the IOM MRFs in Africa.