

Rationale

The Diaspora is fast emerging as one of the forces for development in the globalizing world. In its website, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) identifies the wide range of development potential of diasporas, in that *"..(it) accumulate human and financial capital for economic and social development in their host communities. Like temporary migrants, the wider Diasporas have been contributing to development of their home countries by sending remittances and managing businesses in their home countries. Many members of Diasporas work in skill sectors that are of critical importance to their home countries. Many accumulate knowledge to establish and manage their own enterprises and are equally at home with the general situation and business cultures of both their original and host countries. Members of Diasporas have contacts with potential business partners in countries of destination and can facilitate the establishment of trade and production links that promote the market access of export goods from developing countries. Diaspora communities can also influence the economic and political processes of host countries in favour of their home countries..."*

In the Philippines, government has recognized this potential as early as 30 years ago, creating the Commission on Filipinos Overseas, mandating it to provide services to overseas Filipinos. As early as 1989, the CFO institutionalized the Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino (LINKAPIL) program, which became the main conduit for development support from overseas filipino communities. Currently, it has channeled over 2 billion pesos worth of development assistance.

This year, with the new administration significantly enhancing the scope and coverage of CFO's vision, mission and goals, there is a need to strengthen and increase the comprehensiveness of CFO's services for overseas Filipinos. A review of the literature on best practices of other countries, from China's trade focused initiatives, to India's brain drain reversal focus, and Venezuela's expert exchange visits, have provided successful models upon which to build a comprehensive, integrated constellation of programs all designed to maximize the potential developmental contributions of migrants to home country development.

Thus, the Diaspora to Development Initiative was designed, taking as models these best practices from countries that have shown significant progress in mobilizing their Diaspora communities to contribute to home country development.

The D2D initiative seeks to provide the framework and strategies for mobilizing the Philippine Diaspora for development in 8 areas of actions:

- [Business Advisory Circle](#) – is a matching and linkage program that assists overseas Filipino set up business partnerships in the country

- [Alay Dunong Program](#) – is a program that systematizes and strengthens the skills and technology exchange/transfer between overseas Filipinos and the mother country, in fields such as science and technology, engineering, arts and culture, among others.

- [Diaspora Philanthropy](#) – (Lingkod sa Kapwa Pilipino) is one of the existing programs of CFO that is currently being reformatted to focus primarily on facilitating donations in cash or in kind for development projects

- **Diaspora Investment** – a program where new financial instruments are developed and promoted for overseas Filipinos to invest in

- **Balik-Turo (Teach-Share)/Educational Exchange** – is the continuing Professional and Vocational Education Exchange program of CFO, under which CFO intends to entice the return of academics and professionals to teach and work with the academe in strengthening and enhancing the academic programmes of partner schools.

- **Tourism Initiatives** – focuses on supporting the drive for Balik-bayan tourism by encouraging migrant investments in small tourism enterprises, like local bed and breakfasts, and other tourism related services, such as health and wellness services, among others.

- **Global Legal assistance Program** –mobilizes the support of overseas and local Filipino lawyers and legal experts to provide legal assistance and advice to overseas Filipinos in distress.

- **Medical Missions** – coordinates and facilitates the conduct of medical missions sponsored and organized by overseas Filipinos in areas that requiring these medical interventions.

- **Arts and Culture Exchange** – promotes and facilitates the exchange of artistic and cultural workers between the country and Filipino communities abroad.

- **Return and Reintegration** – focuses on providing returning OF and retirees information and facilitating services for a successful reintegration into local life

Under these 10 areas of action, CFO should be able to comprehensively provide the services

and support to enable Overseas Filipinos to effectively engage government towards national development.