



# Diaspora engagement mapping

## MALI

### Facts & figures

Terminology: Mali refers to its diaspora as 'Malians abroad' (*Maliens de l'Extérieur*); this includes children and grandchildren of Malian citizens.

#### Political rights



Dual citizenship<sup>1</sup>



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad<sup>2</sup>



#### Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **5.52%**  
Remittances inflow (USD million): **1,153**

#### Voting from abroad:

At embassies/consulates



#### Data disclaimer

As diaspora definitions vary widely, we have chosen to use comparable data on emigration as a proxy. This does not include all who consider themselves diaspora and is not necessarily aligned with national definitions of diaspora. Emigration data comes from UNDESA (2024) and remittances from the World Bank (2023).

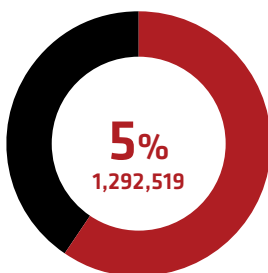
#### Emigration



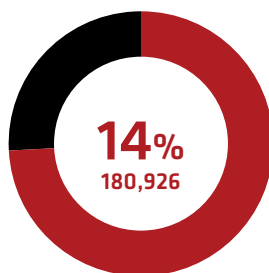
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 59.6%  
♀ 40.4%



♂ 74.2%  
♀ 25.8%

#### Top countries of destination



Côte d'Ivoire	403,646
Nigeria	184,965
Niger	140,431
Mauritania	122,945
France	120,393

<sup>1</sup> The Act No. 95-70 of 25 August 1995 on the Malian Nationality Code, replaced by Act No. 2011-087 on 30 December 2011 stipulates that any adult of Malian nationality, residing abroad, who voluntarily acquires a foreign nationality will only lose their Malian nationality if they make a formal declaration. Full text available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/48ee15a12.html>

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Loi électorale du Mali (Modification 2018) [http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/ML/mali-loi-n2018-014-modification-loi-electorale/view?set\\_language=fr](http://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/ML/mali-loi-n2018-014-modification-loi-electorale/view?set_language=fr)

## Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2010** ● **National Consultation Framework for Malians Abroad.** The role of this framework is to promote actions pertaining to labour migration and provide support in the development and implementation of national migration policies. It includes a thematic group on diaspora, migration and development that sought to inform development of policy areas relating to diaspora engagement for national development, in particular ways of harnessing diaspora intellectual and financial capital for national development. The diaspora were closely involved in the process to develop the national migration policy through the High Council of Malians Abroad.<sup>3</sup>
- 2014** ● **National Migration Policy (PONAM)** was launched by Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration with the vision to make migration a real asset for development by mobilising the diaspora to become a tool for social advancement.<sup>4</sup> Its action plan includes the TOKTEN programme (see below) for the development of diaspora human capital to make it a real development lever for Mali. The document also addresses the recognition of diaspora competences and the relationship between the government and migrant associations and civil society.
- 2018** ● **Handbook for Labour Migration Management** - The Malian government developed implementation guidelines on migration management as part of the MIEUX programme. They were finalised in 2018<sup>5</sup> and will be used to train staff from the National Employment Agency (ANPE) and other stakeholders in labour migration management in the country, including the Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration, and the National Institute of Statistics (INSTAT). However, the implementation status remains unclear.
- 2023** ● **Diaspora Representation** - The 2023 Constitution, particularly Article 102, establishes a system where Malians residing abroad are represented in the Senate through a High Council of Collectives. This provision aims to ensure that Malians living abroad have a voice in the legislative process and contribute to national decision-making.

### » Trends & achievements

The contribution of the Malian diaspora to Mali's overall economy is quite substantial, with remittances alone estimated at \$964 bn USD in 2019, continuing a trend of upward growth since 2016.<sup>6</sup> While it is difficult to track diaspora direct investment flows into Mali accurately due to a lack of data, the continued growth in remittance flows suggests that Mali has a decent enabling environment vis à vis promoting diaspora remittances and investments, despite the continued lack of security and the high cost of remittances to the country that act as barriers to greater diaspora investment.<sup>7</sup>

In order to facilitate better engagement with its diaspora, the Malian government revisited its nationality code in 2011 to grant full citizenship to Malians who reside abroad and who have taken the nationality of their host country, a move that was well received by the diaspora. The adoption of the PONAM and the creation of additional structures for diaspora engagement (see Annex) demonstrate that Mali has sought to take diaspora engagement for national development increasingly seriously.

There are two strategic groups for Mali in terms of diaspora engagement: the Malian diaspora in neighbouring countries in West Africa and the Malian diaspora in Europe and

3 <https://migrationdataportal.org/sites/default/files/2018-05/MGI%20Mali%20final%20%281%29.pdf>

4 Full text of the Politique Nationale de Migration. (French only) available here: [http://www.maliens-exterieur.gouv.ml/docs/Brochures\\_Politiques.pdf](http://www.maliens-exterieur.gouv.ml/docs/Brochures_Politiques.pdf).

5 <https://www.mieux-initiative.eu/en/news-events/news/95-spotlight-on-west-africa-mali-and-benin>

6 World Bank 2019

7 AFFORD (forthcoming) Diaspora Direct Investment (DDI) Index

North America. There remains great potential for enhancing Mali's diaspora engagement with the diaspora in Europe and America, especially in relation to diaspora remittances and investments, as well as skills transfer and scientific and technical innovation.

However, there remain significant gaps between policy and implementation and there are challenges in allocating adequate resources to diaspora engagement programmes. The government has tended to prioritise border management and reducing irregular migration over diaspora engagement, reflecting the strategic priorities of its EU partners. This creates a tension between these two policy areas that will continue to need managing.

In 2023, the government took a notable step to address this by convening the États Généraux des Maliens de l'Extérieur, a large-scale consultative forum bringing together diaspora representatives from over 50 countries. The initiative aimed to identify concrete measures to improve engagement and align national strategies with diaspora expectations. Oversight of the forum's recommendations by the Prime Minister's Office signalled an intention to bridge the gap between policy and practice, offering a potential turning point for more structured and responsive diaspora engagement. Nonetheless, broader structural challenges remain.

A related concern in this regard is the ongoing lack of security in the country which, combined with concerns about irregular migration, has led Mali's strategic partners to prioritise the migration-development-security nexus, an approach which is itself not without risk, and arguably threatens to undermine diaspora engagement.<sup>8</sup> Amongst other issues, this contributes to a disconnect between Mali's concern to promote more routes to legal migration, and the concerns of strategic partners to reduce irregular migration without necessarily increasing pathways for circular migration.

## Obstacles



- **Lack of data:** The lack of data on migration and diaspora limits the possibilities for evidence-based policymaking and implementation.
- **Lack of resources:** The General Delegation of Malians Abroad (DGME) lacks funds and resources to develop and implement its policies. Hence, the opportunities to enhance Malian remittances spending in development projects are constrained.
- **Security issues:** The ongoing lack of security and the insurgency in the north of the country in particular have stimulated high numbers of irregular migration and human trafficking that demand a lot of attention from the Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration.
- **High cost of remittances:** Remittance pricing is a huge constraint for the diaspora and a barrier to investment, especially in the micro-, small-, and medium-enterprise (MSME) sector that is the principal motor for job creation in the country.

<sup>8</sup> Elise Cuny (2018), The EU's New Migration Partnership with Mali: Shifting towards a Risky Security-Migration-Development Nexus, EU Diplomacy Paper, College of Europe, available at: [http://aei.pitt.edu/97350/1/edp-1-2018\\_cuny.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/97350/1/edp-1-2018_cuny.pdf)

## SPOTLIGHT: effective practices

Explore 400+ practices by country, SDG or sector of engagement in the [interactive database!](#)



### Guide for Malians Abroad

#### INFORMATION + PROTECTION

A guide for the Malian diaspora was drawn up in 1998, updated in 2004 and is currently being revised to adapt it to the institutional changes that have taken place and to the new context of migration.<sup>9</sup> It contains information on the High Council of Malians Living Abroad and the criteria for the status of Malian abroad. It lists the structures available for the assistance, protection and social security of migrants. Its updated version also promises to give improved information on current conditions for remittances as well as investment and employment opportunities in Mali, the formalities of business creation, and the role of the one-stop shop for future investors from the diaspora.

### Diaspora Investment Measures

In order to promote diaspora investment and its contribution to economic development in Mali, the government has taken a range of measures, including:

#### INVESTMENT

- Establishment of a 'one-stop shop' to provide advice on and facilitate registration of businesses, which can act as a barrier to diaspora investment; it now only takes 72 hours to establish a business in Mali. Registration of businesses is a significant barrier for diaspora investors in many countries so this strongly participates to creating an enabling environment for entrepreneurs;
- Customs exemption on investment equipment for Malians in the diaspora;
- Signature of an agreement with two banks (ATTIJIARIWAFA BANK, BIM and the Development Bank of Mali, BDM) to facilitate remittance transfers and diaspora investments, as well as develop financial products targeting the diaspora, such as diaspora savings accounts;
- Signature of conventions with some host countries to better protect Malians abroad and their assets.

### TOKTEN

#### HUMAN CAPITAL

The TOKTEN programme was established in Mali in 1998 to enable the Malian diaspora to contribute with their skills to the economic and social development of the country in key areas such as education, technical and vocational training in health, agriculture and SMEs. TOKTEN allows the temporary return of the scientific and technical diaspora with the aim of contributing to compensate for the lack of qualified teaching staff to improve the quality of tertiary teaching and training. The programme is under the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration for its daily administrative management with the support of UNDP and the EU.

#### INVESTMENT AND HUMAN CAPITAL

### Project to support investments by the Malian diaspora in their regions of origin

The project aims to support and promote diaspora collective investment in and skills transfer to development initiatives in Mali. Implemented by the French Agency for Development and the Ministry of Malians Living Abroad and African Integration, the project has two objectives, (1) to strengthen the capacities of Mali and Malian local authorities to integrate migration into their development strategy; (2) to mobilise diaspora established in France and Spain to contribute to economic and social development in Mali.

<sup>9</sup> Personal communication, DGME December 2019

## The Diaspora Investment in Sustainable Rural Youth Entrepreneurship in Mali programme

The programme seeks to empower Mali's diaspora to contribute significantly to sustainable rural youth entrepreneurship, fostering economic development and social impact in the country. Co-financed with the European Union Trust Fund, the program, facilitated by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), tailors investment options to meet the specific needs of the diaspora. It aims to enhance diaspora awareness of investment opportunities through data sharing, provision of information on productive investments, financial education, and the organisation of events.

INVESTMENT

## Mobilisation of Diaspora Skills for Employment in Mali 2021

The programme aims to harness the financial contributions and intellectual expertise of the Malian diaspora. Over a five-year period, the initiative focuses on sustainable development, emphasising entrepreneurship and skill transfer to bolster economic growth. Aligned with national policies on professional training and employment, the program targets key sectors like agriculture, technology, finance, health, education, and renewable energy. By involving the diaspora and utilising national languages for accessibility, the initiative seeks to enhance Mali's resilience and reduce endemic poverty. The programme is implemented through a strategic partnership between the Mali government and the United Nations, with UNESCO overseeing its execution.

SKILLS TRANSFER

## Streamlining Diaspora Engagement to Catalyse Private Investments and Entrepreneurship for Enhanced Resilience 2023

The target countries are The Gambia, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Somalia, South Sudan, Togo and Zimbabwe. The project will assist the recipient countries to identify the best methods for effectively mobilizing the human and financial capital of the diaspora, either to support socioeconomic development by reviving the domestic private sector, or recovery from political or humanitarian crisis by leveraging the expertise and networks of Diaspora groups.

SKILLS TRANSFER

## Rural Youth Vocational Training, Employment, and Entrepreneurship Support Project (FIER) (2013-2022)

The FIER project, supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), collaborates with France's ABC Microfinance and its Babyloan crowdfunding platform. FIER aims to enhance rural youth vocational training, employment, and entrepreneurship. The project, in partnership with Babyloan, utilises crowdfunding to leverage diaspora remittances for additional funding to support rural entrepreneurship in Mali.

YOUTH

## Streamlining Diaspora Engagement to Catalyze Private Investments and Entrepreneurship for Enhanced Resilience (SDE4R)

In December 2023, the African Union Commission, African Development Bank, and International Organization for Migration launched the SDE4R project, allocating \$5.2 million to strengthen diaspora engagement in eight African countries, including Mali. The initiative focuses on mobilising diaspora resources to support socioeconomic development, revive the domestic private sector, and aid recovery from crises by leveraging diaspora expertise and networks.

INVESTMENT +  
ENTREPRENEURSHIP +  
SKILLS TRANSFER

## Social housing for the diaspora

In 2023, Mali's Ministry for Malians Abroad initiated a programme to construct 600 social housing units for diaspora members. The first batch of homes was delivered in the first half of 2024. This initiative aims to encourage diaspora investment in Mali's housing sector and provide tangible benefits to returning citizens.

## Annex:

# List of Actors

Explore the institutionalisation of diaspora engagement worldwide via the [typology of 430+ institutions](#)

### Diaspora related institutions

- **At regional level**

#### African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO)

Mali is a member of the African Union and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent Mali as part of the African Union Citizens and Diaspora Directorate (AU CIDO) Continental Meetings.

#### Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

Mali is a member of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), and has established cooperation frameworks with ECOWAS and with countries such as Morocco and Cameroon so as to ensure the free mobility of persons and to abolish visa requirements. Through ECOWAS, Mali cooperates with international parties and establishes agreements with international bodies to organise and facilitate emigration and explore the causes of irregular emigration.

- **National institutions**

- At ministerial level

#### Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration

The ministry designs action plans and policies to facilitate and encourage legal Malian emigration; protects Malians abroad and defends their interests; defines and puts in place action plans to ensure and coordinate their participation in local development and to facilitate their socioeconomic reintegration upon their return (under the auspices of the High Council of Malians Abroad); puts in place, in cooperation with concerned institutions, a national policy plan for African integration; favours investments from Malians abroad; establishes and finances centres, associations and forums to study migration dynamics in Mali (e.g. CIGEM) and to organise relations with the diaspora (via the General Delegation of Malians Living Abroad, see below).<sup>10</sup>

#### **Ministry of Economy and Finance**

The ministry has established mechanisms to reduce the costs of transferring remittances and thus facilitating the absorption of informal flows. There is interest in receiving technical assistance to ensure that these mechanisms will be able to achieve the desired objectives.<sup>11</sup>

10 [https://unctad.org/en/docs/emditctnecd\\_07\\_fr.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/docs/emditctnecd_07_fr.pdf) (p5)

11 <https://www.rabat-process.org/images/RabatProcess/Documents/context-document-malian-diaspora-engagement-thematic-meeting-2016-bamako-diaspora-engagement-rabat-process.pdf>

- At sub-ministerial level

### **General Delegation of Malians Abroad (DGME)**

Created on 31 December 2015, DGME is a central structure of the Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration with the mission to draw up the elements of the national migration policy which relate to the administration, assistance, protection and promotion of Malians living abroad and to ensure the coordination and the control of Diplomatic and Consular Missions which contribute to the implementation of policies and initiatives.<sup>12</sup>

### **The High Council of Malians Abroad (HCME)**

HCME was created in 1991 following the request of the Malian diaspora at the National Conference. It is an official institution linking the Malian public authorities and the diaspora, serving as an integration instrument and consultation framework for the problems faced by the Malian diaspora.

HCME is an umbrella structure for diaspora associations with sixty-five (65) external branches called Base Councils of Malians Abroad (CBME). There is one CBME per host country whose office provides valuable advisory support to diplomatic and consular missions in the management of the Malian community.

### **Centre for Migration Management and Information (CIGEM - Centre d'Information et de Gestion des Migrations)**

CIGEM was created in 2008 through an agreement between the European Union, ECOWAS and the Government of Mali. Its main objectives are the definition and implementation of a Malian migration policy adapted to national, regional and international dynamics in constant evolution, with particular emphasis on the link between migration and development. CIGEM has supported over 8,000 visitors with information, and provides support facilities for potential and returning migrants, including in relation to employment and training opportunities in Mali and abroad.<sup>13</sup>

## **Diaspora organisations in Europe**

### **African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe (ADYFE)**

#### **✓ Development activities**

The African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe (ADYFE) is a platform consisting of nearly 110 youth organizations of the African Diaspora present in 31 countries of the Council of Europe. Founded in 2014, ADYFE aims to empower African diaspora youth through three pillars of action: entrepreneurship, employability, and civic engagement.

### **Association Amiens/Bamako** France

#### **✓ Development activities**

The association aims to support child literacy by building schools in Bamako, Mali and monitor its management and educational programme.

Read more about diaspora organisations  
in "[Starting guide: What is a diaspora  
organisation](#)"



<sup>12</sup> [https://unctad.org/en/docs/emditctncd\\_07\\_fr.pdf](https://unctad.org/en/docs/emditctncd_07_fr.pdf) (p6)

<sup>13</sup> <https://gfmd.org/pfp/ppd/1863>

### **Association des Ressortissants et Amis de la Commune de Kassama en France**

#### **Development activities**

The association works to develop projects to improve the living, socio-economic and cultural conditions of the populations of the commune of Kassama and the other communes of the cercle of Kéniéba.

### **Association de Soutien aux Malades Nephrotiques au Mali (ASMNM) France**

#### **Development activities**

ASMNM aims to help Malians suffering from kidney disease, whether they reside in France, Mali or elsewhere in the world.

### **Association Lahidou de Kersignan  (Kaniaga) France**

#### **Development activities**

The association aims to promote health, education, socio-economic and cultural development in the town of Kersignan  (Kaniaga) located in the circle of Y liman  (Kayes region).

### **Conseil des Maliens d'Italie**

#### **Development activities**

The federal organisation brings together all the Malian associations in Italy. It acts as a relay between Malian immigrants in Italy and the Malian government. It supports the implementation in Italy of international cooperation programmes involving Mali.

### **La F d ration Euro-Africaine de Solidarit  (EFASO) France**

#### **Development activities**

EFASO brings together nearly 252 associations, mainly migrant organisations operating in Africa. In addition to its role as a network, EFASO accompanies migrants on a daily basis, throughout their integration and business creation processes.

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