



Diaspora engagement mapping

GHANA

Facts & figures

Terminology: 'Diaspora' has generally been used to refer to persons of Ghanaian descent living abroad, as well as 'persons of African descent in the Diaspora' as noted in the Rights to Abode under *Citizenship Regulation 2001*.¹

Political rights



Dual citizenship^{2,3,4}



Right to vote in national elections for citizens residing abroad⁵



Remittances



Remittances as a share of GDP: **3.18%**
Remittances inflow (USD million): **2,431**

Voting from abroad:

Not yet implemented



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 \(2023\)](#).

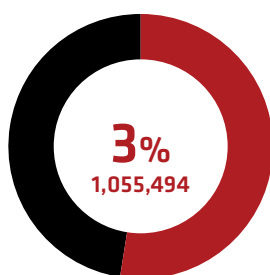
Emigration



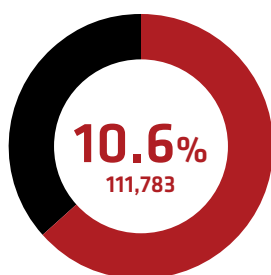
% of emigrants in total population



% of which in the EU



♂ 51.6%
♀ 48.4%



♂ 63.4%
♀ 36.6%

Top countries of destination



United States	258,358
Nigeria	255,531
United Kingdom	154,782
Côte d'Ivoire	97,313
Italy	48,828

¹ Ghana Immigration Service. 2020. *Right of Abode*. https://www.gis.gov.gh/right_of_abode.html.

² *Citizenship Act 2000 (Act 591)*. Ghana.

³ *Citizenship Regulation 2001 (LI 1690)*. Ghana.

⁴ The Immigration Regulations, 2001 (Regulation 13) grant individuals who have lost their citizenship or who are of African descent in the diaspora the right to abode

⁵ The right to vote for citizens abroad was passed into law in 2006. However, the legislation has yet to be implemented. In 2017, the Accra High Court ordered the Electoral Commission to fully implement external voting for the 2020 elections. [Ghanaweb.com. 2017. *Court Clears Ghanaians In Diaspora to Vote In 2020*. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Court-clears-Ghanaians-in-diaspora-to-vote-in-2020-610657>.]

Overview of the policy and legislative framework



- 2014** ● The **Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (II) 2014-2017 (CSGDA)**⁶, the operational framework for the previous guiding development policy, builds on its predecessor (CSGDA I), which mentioned need for diaspora investment incentives. CSGDA II makes several references to mobilising diaspora resources and expertise for national development. It also identifies lack of coordination as an issue in diaspora engagement.
- 2016** ● The **National Migration Policy**⁷ represents the first comprehensive national migration policy framework. The policy establishes several objectives and strategies related to brain drain/gain and the return and reintegration of emigrants, as well as the role of diasporas in supporting development through resource and knowledge transfers. The policy also recommends strategies to increase remittance flows, while facilitating dual citizenship and transnationalism.
- 2017** ● The **Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017-2024**⁸ – the government's latest guiding development policy – outlines diaspora engagement priorities, including promoting and protecting the welfare of Ghanaians abroad, ensuring their participation in national development, developing a diaspora engagement policy, relocating the Diaspora Affairs Bureau from the foreign ministry to the Office of the President, and facilitating the implementation of the Representation of the People Amendment Act (ROPAA). The document also states that the government will establish a Diaspora Fund to tap into diaspora resources for the purposes of development.
- 2019** ● The **Diaspora Engagement Initiative Concept Paper**⁹ provides an outline for a future national diaspora policy. It outlines broad engagement objectives, which include informing the diaspora on social and economic development initiatives via an online diaspora portal to engage diasporas in policy-making; strengthening the role of the foreign ministry in advocating for diasporas across government; facilitating the transfer of knowledge and technical resources; and encouraging philanthropic contributions. Additional focus areas include mobilising the diaspora for development in health, agriculture, and education; as well as promoting direct diaspora investment in local firms through joint ventures, restructuring investment promotion agencies, and launching products like diaspora bonds; and supporting innovative products that enable remittance recipients to gain access to financial services and business support.
- 2022** ▼
2025 ● The **Medium-Term Development Policy Framework 2022-2025**¹⁰ develops upon the objectives and strategies identified in previous development policies with a visible shift in the positioning of diaspora. This policy frames diaspora as national development partners envisioning a cross cutting role with strategies including extending political, economic and social rights of the diaspora; ensuring participation of Ghanaians abroad in national development; implementing the Diaspora Engagement Policy; repositioning Diaspora Affairs Bureau to effectively support the diaspora; promoting and protect the welfare of Ghanaians abroad; and attracting and retaining mutually beneficial and sustainable partnerships with Ghanaians in the diaspora. The policy also highlights supporting the rights of Ghanaians abroad e.g. portability of social security, expediting the ability to vote from abroad and identifying ways of connecting second generation diaspora and Ghanaian youth for development.

6 National Development Planning Commission, 2014. Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (GSGDA) II, 2014-2017. <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/gha152510.pdf>.

7 Ministry of the Interior, 2016. National Migration Policy for Ghana. <http://www.migratingoutofpoverty.org/files/file.php?name=national-migration-policy-for-ghana.pdf&site=354>.

8 Government of Ghana, 2017. *The Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017-2024*. <http://www.mop.gov.gh/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Coordinated-Programme-Of-Economic-And-Social-Development-Policies.pdf>.

9 Diaspora Affairs Bureau, 2019. *The Diaspora Engagement Initiative Concept Paper*. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. https://ghanaemblem.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/DAB_CONCEPT_PAPER.pdf.

10 <https://www.climate-laws.org/geographies/ghana/policies/medium-term-development-policy-framework-2022-2025>

Ghana Diaspora Engagement Policy. Ghana intends to leverage diaspora engagement and coordination at the political, social and economic levels. Development, cultural heritage, capacity building, social protection and youth diaspora are key pillars of the Policy. Overall, the DEP aims to create an institutional framework that incorporates diaspora contributions to development through skills transfer, remittances and investment, protects the diaspora's rights abroad, and outlines strategies to support their return and readmission in the country.

» Trends & achievements

Following the success of Ghana's Panafest African diaspora celebration in the 1990s, the government began to more actively court Ghanaians abroad at the turn of the century, when it launched a national process to formalise its relationship with the diaspora – Ghana's '11th region' – beginning with a 'Homecoming Summit'.¹¹ Around the same time, the government broadened its previous focus on large diaspora investors to include the development role of remittances sent by the diaspora as a whole.¹² The state's increasing diaspora focus was further demonstrated through moves to permit dual citizenship (including to anyone of African descent) and the diaspora vote, enacted in law in 2002 and 2006, respectively, although the right to vote continued to face implementation challenges at the time of writing (August 2020).

At the institutional level, the management of diaspora engagement has shifted between several ministries, with various offices opening and moving within the tourism, interior and foreign ministries from 2006.¹³ Alongside the institutional tweaking, the government continued to experiment with different programmes on diaspora return, outreach and investment. It also organised various diaspora events in the early 2010s, including the 2013 Diaspora Business Forum.¹⁴ On diaspora investment, it attempted (unsuccessfully) to issue bonds targeted at the diaspora in 2007,¹⁵ before shifting focus to addressing financial system constraints on remittances, as well as offering tax breaks for direct diaspora investments in specific regions.¹⁶ Ghana also worked with international partners to facilitate the temporary return of diaspora professionals.¹⁷

More recently, in 2017, the Office of the Presidency established its own Diaspora Affairs Office to engage with diaspora associations and international partners more directly, underscoring the importance of diaspora to the highest levels of government. Ghana, whose remittance inflows exploded from \$114 million in 2009 to around \$3.5 billion in 2019,¹⁸ showcased its sustained commitment to diaspora engagement by organising a large-scale outreach campaign, the Year of Return, in 2019 (see 'spotlight' below), reaching Ghanaian and African diaspora communities across the world. Following the campaign, the government announced that it would issue a new diaspora bond in 2020 to raise \$3 billion to fund infrastructure investment.¹⁹

11 Coffie, Amanda. 2016. *Policy Brief: National Diaspora Engagement Policy*. Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338920902_Ghana_Diaspora_Engagement_Policy.

12 Ibid.

13 IOM Mission to Ghana. *Diaspora Engagement Project*. IOM. <https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/country/docs/ghana/IOM-Ghana-Diaspora-Engagement-Project.pdf>.

14 Coffie, Amanda. 2016. *Policy Brief: National Diaspora Engagement Policy*. Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338920902_Ghana_Diaspora_Engagement_Policy.

15 Rustonjee, Cyrus. 2018. *Issues and Challenges in Mobilizing African Diaspora Investment*. Centre for International Governance Innovation. https://media.africaportal.org/documents/PB_no.130.pdf.

16 Coffie, Amanda. 2016. *Policy Brief: National Diaspora Engagement Policy*. Legon Centre for International Affairs and Diplomacy. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/338920902_Ghana_Diaspora_Engagement_Policy.

17 International Organization for Migration. 2012. "MIDA Ghana Health Project". The Hague: International Organization for Migration. <https://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/MIDA-Ghana-Health-Project-2012.pdf>.

18 World Bank. 2020. Migration and Remittances Data: Annual Remittances Data April 2020.

19 Ghanaweb.com. 2020. *Diaspora bond or Ghana diaspora growth fund?*. <https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/features/Diaspora-bond-or-Ghana-diaspora-growth-fund-847474>.

Obstacles



- **Failure to implement the diaspora vote:** Voting remains an issue of contention for diasporas, despite being legally given the right to vote in 2006. In 2017, a court ruled in favour of the diaspora vote but doubts remain about whether the diaspora will be able to exercise their rights in the 2020 elections.
- **Lack of clarity in institutional and policy frameworks:** Overlapping and changing mandates among the government's various diaspora engagement units over the years make it unclear to some diaspora stakeholders whom they should communicate with. In addition, although the 2019 Diaspora Engagement Concept Paper outlined the intention to launch a full diaspora policy in the near future, the lack of a clear policy has meant engagement efforts have arguably remained ad hoc.
- **Diaspora associational makeup:** The diverse Ghanaian diaspora organise themselves in a range of ways, including through faith-based and ethnic-based associations at national and local levels. The diversity of diaspora representations poses a challenge to the government in 'speaking to the diaspora' and ensuring that all voices are represented in the formulation of policies and programmes.
- **Focus of engagement on Europe and North America-based diaspora communities:** The government has aimed many of its engagement initiatives at developing relations with Ghanaians in Europe and North America. Activities to engage communities resident in the region remain marginal despite their significant representation in the total emigrant population.

SPOTLIGHT: Effective practices

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



Year of Return and Beyond the Return

The Year of Return and Beyond the Return campaigns are aimed at encouraging African diasporas to visit, return to, and invest in Ghana. In 2019, the Office of Diaspora Affairs worked with the tourism ministry and several organisations to organise a series of events, commemorating the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first recorded African slave in the Americas.²⁰ As a result, Ghana experienced a record number of visa applications and tourist visits, including a 45% year-on-year increase in visitors (around 237,000 additional visitors) from January–September 2019.²¹ The tourism ministry subsequently launched the Beyond the Return initiative, a 10-year plan to encourage sustained dialogue with diasporas and inbound investment. The two campaigns underlined the government's innovative approach to broadening diaspora engagement to reach the many African diaspora communities around the world, including people of African descent from the Americas. In 2024, 524 members of the African diaspora were officially granted Ghanaian citizenship at the Third Diaspora Citizenship Ceremony, marking the historic moment of these campaigns and celebrating strong ties between Ghana and its diaspora.

TOURISM +
IDENTITY

Ghana Diaspora Homecoming Summit

The first summit was held in 2001. It provides an opportunity for diaspora members to support and contribute to the country's development and progress through a series of networking opportunities and presentations on engagement opportunities.²² Past summits have also seen cultural and business-related tours

NETWORKS

20 BBC News. 2020. African diaspora: *Did Ghana's Year of Return attract foreign visitors?* <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-51191409>.
21 Ibid.

22 Vezzoli, Simona & Lacroix, Thomas. 2010. *Building bonds for migration and development: Diaspora engagement policies of Ghana, India and Serbia*. Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH <https://www.migrationinstitute.org/files/news/building-bonds-for-migration-and-development.pdf>.

run in parallel.²³ The regular summit also gives the chance for the government to engage directly with the diaspora, with the President and several other senior state representatives speaking at the 2019 summit.

Diaspora Investment Desk 2020

The GIPC introduced the Diaspora Investment Desk (DID) to bridge the gap between residents of Ghana and Ghanaians living abroad as well as diasporas of African descent to create a new stream of investments for the Ghanaian economy. By harnessing the global Ghanaian resource potential for accelerated national development, a healthy economic relationship between Ghana and its diaspora community can be built and maintained. DID, coordinates diaspora activities, serves as the liaison for all projects, programs, and issues involving the diaspora community. They also promote and maintain active communication among resident and non-resident Ghanaians advise diasporas about the investment climate and opportunities available in Ghana and maintain a database of all diaspora connections.²⁴

INVESTMENT

Consulting the Ghanaian diaspora on the upcoming diaspora engagement policy

The Diaspora Affairs unit of the Office of the President, supported by ICMPD, has consulted diaspora communities across Europe as part of the process to develop the government's upcoming diaspora engagement policy.²⁵ This process included an online survey and two face-to-face consultations with diaspora organisations in the UK and Germany in the run-up to the Ghana Diaspora Celebration and Homecoming Summit 2019.²⁶

POLICY

Boosting Green employment and Enterprise Opportunities (GrEEn) 2020

GrEEn is a four-year action from the European Union, the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ghana, UNCDF and SNV. The project aims at creating greater economic and employment opportunities for youth, women and returning migrants by promoting and supporting sustainable, green businesses in selected regions (Ashanti and Western). GrEEn is implemented under the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) for Africa.

GREEN +
EMPLOYMENT

Capacity development of diaspora to leverage funds for African SMEs 2022-2023

The action implemented by EUDiF aimed at addressing the financing and skills gaps of MSMEs, developing the online fundraising capacity of African diaspora investors, through training on crowdfunding and crowd-lending to raise philanthropic and investment financing for MSMEs.

CAPACITY
DEVELOPMENT

23 "GDHS - CULTURAL HERITAGE BUSINESS TOUR - Ghana Diaspora Homecoming Summit". 2017. *Ghana Diaspora Homecoming Summit*. <http://www.ghanadiasporahs.org/gdhs-cultural-heritage-business-tour/>.

24 "About Us | One District". 2020. *1D1f.Gov.Gh*. Accessed June 22. <http://1d1f.gov.gh/about-us/>.

25 Ghana Embassy in France. 2019. "Survey On Diaspora Engagement Policy Of Ghana". <https://paris.embassy.gov.gh/survey-on-diaspora-engagement-policy-of-ghana/>.

26 «Recent Actions In Diaspora Engagement». 2019. *Mieux-Initiative.Eu*. <https://www.mieux-initiative.eu/en/news-events/news/134-recent-actions-in-diaspora-engagement>.



REMITTANCES

PRIME Africa 2022E

Enhances the financial resilience and economic empowerment of remittance families through cost-effective digital channelling of remittance flows and financial inclusion innovations. The project targets 12,000 remittance recipients in rural regions of Ghana receiving the greatest inflow of cash-based remittances through Fidelity Bank.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

AFFORD Business Centre (ABC)

Aims at providing funding and business development support to diaspora and local entrepreneurs and TVET institutions, including a business development accelerator, diaspora resource persons support, and grant financing for job creation.

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)

Ghana is a member of the African Union and nominates a diaspora focal point to represent Ghana as part of the AU CIDO Continental Meetings.

- **National institutions**

Diaspora Affairs Unit

The Diaspora Affairs Unit is housed within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration. Previously the Diaspora Affairs Bureau, before the Diaspora Affairs Office was established under the Office of the President, the Diaspora Affairs Unit is responsible for establishing the government's database of Ghanaians abroad and encouraging involvement in the country's socioeconomic activities. The unit has a network of diaspora desk officers based at Ghanaian diplomatic missions, who interface with the diaspora residents of their respective countries.

Diaspora Affairs, Office of the President (DAOOP)

The DAOOP was established in 2017. Its objectives include strengthening relations with the diaspora, promoting youth engagement, and maintaining a diaspora database.

Migration Unit

Established in 2008 within the Ministry of Interior, the unit leads the government's efforts to streamline migration within the national development framework.

Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Migration (IMSCM)

Chaired within the Ministry of Interior, the 16-member IMSCM is comprised of representatives from government institutions, academia and other partners with the purpose of integrating migration and development within national frameworks. The Government of Ghana plans to establish a Ghana National Migration Commission as a means to coordinate all migration-related interventions,²⁷ including those related to diaspora engagement.²⁸

Ghana Investment Promotion Centre

GIPC is the government-funded business and investment hub for diasporas interested in doing business in Ghana.²⁹

27 International Organization for Migration. 2019. "IOM Supports The Government Of Ghana In The Establishment Of The Ghana National Migration Commission". <https://rodakar.iom.int/news/iom-supports-government-ghana-establishment-ghana-national-migration-commission>.

28 Key informant interview, Diaspora Affairs Unit of Ghana, 15 July 2020.

29 *Ghana Investment Promotion Centre Act 2013 (Act 865)*. Ghana.

Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

Previously the Ministry of Tourism and Diaspora Relations, the ministry has worked with the diaspora offices and units to develop campaigns to encourage diaspora visits.

Diaspora organisations in Europe

The Ghanaian diaspora is represented by a range of organisations across Europe, from larger national-level “Ghana Unions” to local-level churches or groups representing specific ethnic groups.

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



Council of Ghanaian Organisations in the Netherlands (COGHAN) The Netherlands

Integration activities

COGHAN was formed to support the Ghanaian community organisations and associations in the Netherlands. The Council promotes intercultural dialogue and the long history of Ghanaians in the country.

DIANA ry

Development activities

DIANA ry is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation aimed at mobilising expertise of African academics, researchers and scientists in the diaspora and related resources.

Ghana Austria Business Association (GHABA) Austria 2013

-  **Development activities**
-  **Integration activities**

The non-profit seeks to strengthen trade, diplomatic, social and cultural bonds between Austria and Ghana.

Ghanaian Community in France Council (GHACIF) France

Integration activities

GHACIF aims to enable Ghanaians in France to network and contribute to community initiatives.

Ghanaian Community in Geneva (GCC) Switzerland 2015

Integration activities

The GCC acts as the main liaison for the Ghanaian community in Geneva. It promotes welfare and fosters unity amongst Ghanaians by organising social and cultural activities.

Ghanaian Londoners Network UK 2009**☑ Integration activities**

The network provides educational and networking opportunities for the Ghanaian diaspora in London.

Ghana Union UK 1979**☑ Integration activities**

The Ghana Union is an independent charity formed by the Ghanaian Chaplaincy in 1979. It seeks to provide aid to Ghanaians in the UK and to promote the social and cultural traditions of Ghana.

Ghana Union Association Caserta Italy (GUACI) Italy**☑ Integration activities**

The association supports Ghanaians in accessing information and services in the province of Caserta and around the municipality of Naples.

Ghana Union Stor Stockholm (GUSS) Sweden 1983**☑ Integration activities****☑ Development activities**

The Ghana Union is the oldest association of Ghanaians in Sweden. The Union has several bodies which provide services to the Ghanaian community, promote cultural heritage events, and support dialogue and development between Ghana and Sweden.

National Council of Ghanaian Unions (NCGU) UK 2013**☑ Integration activities**

The NCGU is the umbrella body for the regional diaspora unions in the UK. It aims to identify the needs of the Ghanaian diaspora community in the UK and to promote their social and economic development.

Organisation of Ghanaians Abroad (OGHA) France**☑ Integration activities****☑ Development activities**

OGHA, the successor to the Federation of Ghanaian Diaspora in Europe, aims to bring together all Ghanaians abroad for the development of Ghana.³⁰ OGHA shares its president with GHACIF.³¹

30 "Organisation of Ghanaians Abroad (OGHA) | Ville de Garges." n.d. www.villedegarges.fr/annuaires/associations/culture-solidarite-internationale/organisation-ghanaïens-abroad-ogha. Accessed July 2, 2020.

31 "Organisation of Ghanaians Abroad Invites Awua-Ababio to France." 2019. Modern Ghana. August 30, 2019. <https://www.modernghana.com/news/952730/organisation-of-ghanaïens-abroad-invites-awua.html>.

SANKOFA France

- ☑ Integration activities
- ☑ Development activities

The association promotes the intercultural and bilateral development between France and Ghana. SANKOFA has organised several cultural and artistic events and exhibitions in France and has directly administered assistance to Ghanaian migrants.

Star 100 UK 2004

- ☑ Development Activities

Star 100 is a Ghana-focused diaspora network, with the aim of connecting 100 likeminded professionals. Today they have over 900 registered member covering a wide range of professions from Finance, Management Consultancy, Law, Media and Entertainment to Technology, Civil Engineering and Social Work. Their aims is to network online and offline, for social and business purposes, develop their personal and career skills, learn about Ghana's history, culture, politics and economics, give back to and create links with Ghana.

The Italian Business Association of Ghana Italy 2015

- ☑ Development activities

The association aims to support cultural, economic and trading opportunities between Ghana and Italy. It provides advisory services to companies interested in the Italian and Ghanaian markets.

The Representative Council of Ghanaian Organizations in the Netherlands (RECOGIN) Netherlands 1993

- ☑ Integration activities

RECOGIN is an umbrella organisation for 48 Ghanaian associations and churches in the Netherlands, and owns the Ghanaian Community Foundation Netherlands. The organisation provides funding, workshops, ICT and language training, amongst many other activities.

The Union of Ghanaian Association in Germany (UGAG) Germany 2003

- ☑ Integration activities
- ☑ Development activities

The organisation seeks to support the functioning of Ghanaian associations and unions in Germany. UGAG has also participated in several philanthropic activities to support educational attainment and development in Ghana.

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