

# Diaspora and development policies in Africa and West Africa

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- What diaspora policies and institutions are being adopted by the African Union and the ECOWAS and its Member States?



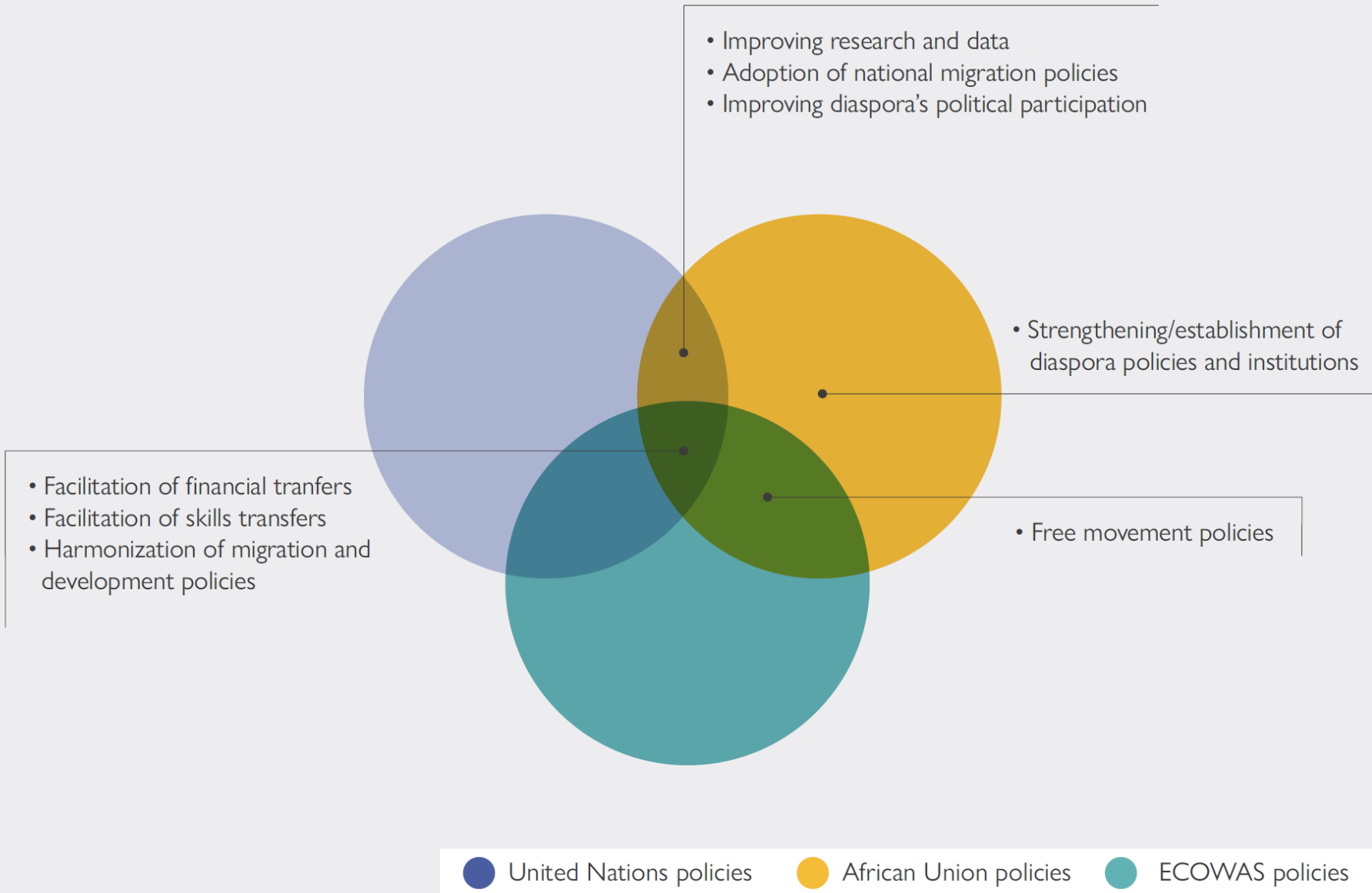
# Who is part of the diaspora?

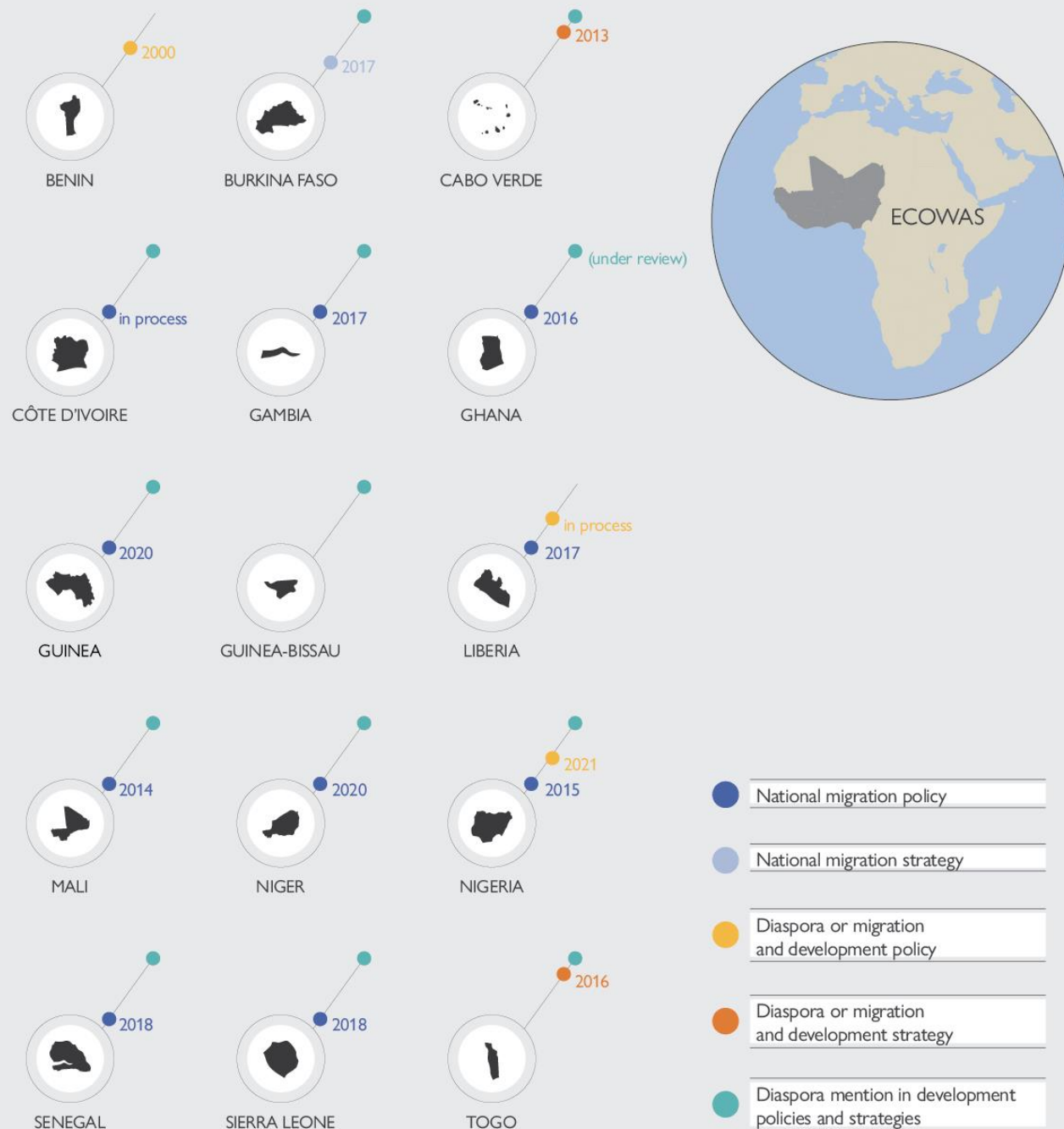
- State approaches often tend to focus on **non-resident citizens**, including emigrants and their descendants (Collyer 2013)
- “...and who maintain a **connection** to their homeland” (IMF 2011)
- The **African Union** defines the diaspora as “consisting of people of African origin living outside the continent, irrespective of their citizenship and nationality and who are willing to contribute to the development of the continent and the building of the African Union”
- **Recognition of different feelings of belonging and willingness to engage** -> alternative definitions based on i) an “ongoing orientation towards a ‘homeland’ and maintenance of a group identity over time” (Gamlen 2019) ; ii) recognition that the composition of diasporas can change over time.

## State efforts to engage with diasporas are on the rise

- States engage with their diasporas with **different objectives**, such as a) supporting national development, b) extending political and administrative functions abroad, and c) increasing emigrants' political participation (Collyer 2013)
- **Diaspora institutions**, as “formal State offices dedicated to emigrants and their descendants” (Gamlen 2014: 182) with different functions, such as i) tapping, ii) embracing, and iii) governing.

# Key diaspora engagement strategies recommended in United Nations, African Union and ECOWAS policies





## Diaspora policies in West African States

- National migration policies: since 2014
- 8 countries have developed or are developing diaspora or migration and development policies, strategies or regulations
- Migrants' contributions mentioned in 12 national development plans
- Different approaches to diaspora contributions to development (e.g. transfer of financial contributions, skills and influence, lower costs of remittances)
- Political engagement
- 13 countries have established diaspora institutions
- Diaspora data and mapping

# Conclusion

- Diaspora policies are on the rise in Africa.
- Diaspora-related issues are currently **mainstreamed in the development plans** of most ECOWAS Member States. The recent diffusion of diaspora policies and engagement measures has been accompanied by the creation of **diaspora institutions** at different levels.
- ECOWAS Member States strengthen their engagement with the diaspora, with the aim of supporting emigrants' **potential contributions to development**, to extend the **political and administrative functions of the State** beyond national borders and to **increase emigrants' political participation**.
- They dedicate particular attention to **financial transfers** at the micro and macro levels, whereas measures targeting **non-financial contributions** are still less frequent.
- **Better data** are needed for comprehensive and evidence-based diaspora policies

<https://publications.iom.int/books/migration-west-and-north-africa-and-across-mediterranean-chapter-33>



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