



Africa Visa Openness Report 2017



AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP



AFRICAN UNION

“We are trying to drive a continental visa policy reform programme for all of Africa. We want to remove many of the challenges and procedures facing many people when they travel. We want to make sure there is reciprocity on visa issuance across countries and we want to promote talent mobility all across Africa.”

Akinwumi Adesina, *President*, African Development Bank Group



Migration, the movement of people from one place to another, is at the foundation of Africa's collective history. Travel across regions has led to trade, investment and innovation, and has promoted stronger connections between countries and citizens continent-wide. There is a growing momentum on making it easier for Africans to travel across the continent, whether as business people, students or tourists.



With the recent global debates on closing down borders, the trend for greater openness in Africa offers a positive counterbalance, where instead, breaking down barriers to travel is seen to promote prosperity and growth.

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The Africa Visa Openness Report 2017

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Special recognition goes to Elena von Essen for writing the report and to Peggy Ford-Fyffe King for the design and graphics as well as to José Carlos Alexandre for the images.

Moono Mupotola

Director



The High 5 for transforming Africa

The High 5 development priorities for Africa driving the Bank's work across the continent:

- Light up and power Africa
- Feed Africa
- Industrialize Africa
- Integrate Africa
- Improve the quality of life for the people of Africa

Integrate Africa

Free movement of people is a cornerstone of regional integration and the Bank's vision to create the next global market in Africa. Creating larger, more attractive markets and supporting intra-African trade are boosted by greater mobility. When business people and traders move more easily across the continent, thanks to liberal visa policies, they bring higher levels of investment, fresh skills and expand the range of goods and services on offer.

To deliver on **Integrate Africa**, the Bank is developing a new regional integration strategy to expand the size of the regional market through: building regional infrastructure; boosting intra-African trade and investment; and, facilitating the movement of people across borders. The Africa Visa Openness Index will play a central role in operationalizing the new strategy.



Foreword, African Development Bank

Against a backdrop of falling commodity prices and slower growth prospects, 2016 has been a year of remarkable progress in opening up the continent, bringing greater potential for investment in key sectors of the economy. Over the last year, across Africa, business and government leaders took the visa openness debate centre-stage, and showed what can happen when countries take a strong stand. Over a third of African countries have more liberal visa policies than in 2015 and four countries have moved up into the top 20 most visa open countries.

This is welcome news. But we cannot stop here. Visa openness policies are the result of strong leadership and political will – take Ghana’s recent decision to offer visas on arrival for most African countries. Efforts need to be reinforced and not reversed.

At the African Development Bank, we are trying to drive a continental visa policy reform programme for all of Africa. While we encourage reciprocity on visa issuance across countries, visa solutions can also be adopted unilaterally as is the case for Seychelles – once again the top performing country in Africa.

At the same many of the challenges and procedures facing people when they travel should be removed. We need to match the realities with the rhetoric. That is why, for our next edition of the Africa Visa Openness Index, we intend to look at the time, cost and documents involved in the visa process to improve the travel experience for African visitors on the ground. And, with this second edition, a new online platform is available to help visitors navigate countries’ visa policies, opening up more of the continent to more people.

When it comes to greater visa openness, we know the business case. If we see Africa as one market, if we believe in integrating Africa and if we want to promote talent mobility all across Africa, greater freedom of movement is a necessity. As some recent global developments have led to more restrictive policies, Africa is moving toward greater openness and a connected vision of prosperity and hope. Let us aim higher together.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'PG' with a stylized flourish.

Pierre Guislain

Vice President, Private Sector, Infrastructure and Industrialization
African Development Bank

African Union's Agenda 2063*

Aspiration 2 -

An Integrated Continent, Politically United Based on the Ideals of Pan Africanism and the Vision of Africa's Renaissance

20. We aspire that by 2063, Africa will:

Be a United Africa

Have world class, integrative infrastructure that criss-crosses the continent;

Have dynamic and mutually beneficial links with her Diaspora; and

Be a continent with seamless borders, and management of cross border resources through dialogue.

24. Africa shall be a continent where the free movement of people, capital, goods and services will result in significant increases in trade and investments amongst African countries rising to unprecedented levels, and strengthen Africa's place in global trade.

A Call to Action

72. We hereby adopt Agenda 2063, as a collective vision and roadmap for the next fifty years and therefore commit to speed-up actions to:

I. Introduce an African Passport, issued by Member states, capitalising on the global migration towards e-passports, and with the abolishment of visa requirements for all African citizens in all African countries by 2018.

* Selected extracts: http://au.int/en/sites/default/files/Agenda2063_Popular_Version_English_0.pdf



Foreword, African Union Commission

By the end of 2016, Africa had advanced moderately towards greater freedom of movement for its people. The goal of an integrated Africa as envisaged in Agenda 2063 is slowly getting into sharper focus. The collective African Union decision for Member States to grant a 30-day visa-on-arrival to all African passport holders is being implemented by leading reformers such as Ghana, who this year have joined Rwanda, Mauritius and Seychelles to implement this system. Meanwhile, other African countries have also announced their intention to do so. Their experience follows in the footsteps of some Regional Economic Communities who have already established a system for free movement of people across their borders, such as ECOWAS and EAC.

Countries who have demonstrated such leadership need to be acknowledged. Findings of this second Africa Visa Openness Index highlight the positive momentum for promoting African travel across the Continent.

The process of facilitating visa issuance has improved tangibly since 2015. Besides, the majority of African countries have either opened up further or stayed the same during that period. The top 20 most visa-open countries have higher scores compared to the previous year, and only very few countries remain which do not yet grant visas on arrival.

In July 2016, another milestone was realized with the successful launch of the African Union Passport. This was issued to Heads of State and Government as well as high-level representatives. We are proud to report the tremendous interest in the initiative from governments, businesses and Africans across the Continent. The African Union has future plans to support Member States in rolling out the African Union passport to all citizens, granting them visa-free access to explore the Continent for business, pleasure, leisure and tourism.

Challenges to freedom of movement across Africa undoubtedly still exist. Policy makers, business leaders, civil society and engaged citizens need to highlight where gaps still exist to enable appropriate reforms to be undertaken. African governments are revising their immigration regulations with a view to facilitate movement across the Continent in line with the relevant decision of the Assembly of Heads of State, so as to afford greater opportunities within Africa for our youth and to strengthen the culture of a united, integrated Africa, at peace with itself and with the world.

Thomas Kwesi Quartey
Deputy Chairperson
African Union Commission

Glossary

| | |
|---------|---|
| AfDB | African Development Bank |
| AU | African Union |
| CEN-SAD | Community of Sahel-Saharan States |
| EAC | East African Community |
| ECCAS | Economic Community of Central African States |
| ECOWAS | Economic Community of West African States |
| EU | European Union |
| eVisa | Electronic visa |
| FDI | Foreign Direct Investment |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| ICT | Information and Communications Technology |
| REC | Regional Economic Community |
| RIPoS | Regional Integration Policy and Strategy (of the AfDB) |
| RMC | Regional Member Country (of the AfDB) |
| SADC | Southern African Development Community |
| SDG | Sustainable Development Goal (of the United Nations) |
| SEF | German Development and Peace Foundation |
| UMA | Arab Maghreb Union |
| UNWTO | United Nations World Tourism Organization |
| USD | US Dollar |
| WEF | World Economic Forum |
| WTTC | World Travel and Tourism Council |

Definitions

A VISA is an endorsement (through a certificate or stamp in a travel document) showing a visitor is allowed to enter the country for a specific length of time and for specific activities.

VISA REQUIRED means a visa has to be obtained before departure from an embassy, an honorary consulate or another official representative.

VISA ON ARRIVAL means a visa has to be obtained on arrival in the country. This includes filling out any visa forms, paying the visa fee if applicable and receiving a visa in a travel document.

NO VISA means that there is no visa needed either before departure or on arrival, with no entry authorisation required to enter freely into the country. Entry procedures still need to be complied with – these can include filling out entry forms and receiving an entry stamp.

The African passport

African Union passports to African citizenry – Summary of 27th African Union summit decisions¹



A steady step toward the objective of creating a strong, prosperous and integrated Africa, driven by its own citizens and capable of taking its rightful place on the world stage.”

Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, *Former Chairperson, AU Commission*²

Following the launch of the African Union Passport and the overwhelming enthusiasm that greeted it, the Assembly also decided to encourage all Member States to adopt the African Passport. The Commission will provide technical support to Member States to enable them to produce and issue the African Passport to their citizens. The Commission has to put in place an implementation roadmap for the development of a Protocol on the Free Movement of persons in Africa by January 2018, which should come into immediate effect in Member States, in line with the continental transformation framework, Agenda 2063.

The African Union launched the first African Passport at the 27th AU Summit in July 2016. The electronic passport with inscriptions in English, French, Arabic, Portuguese and Swahili is being issued to AU Heads of State and Government, Foreign Ministers and other high-level representatives. The goal is to work towards rolling out the passport for all African citizens. Africa’s visa-free passport is a core part of realizing the goals set out in Agenda 2063 to integrate and unite the continent, helping to facilitate free movement of people, building on regional protocols, and promoting open visa policies and procedures for African travellers.

The Africa Visa Openness Index

The **Africa Visa Openness Index** measures how open African countries are when it comes to visas by looking at what they ask of citizens from other countries in Africa when they travel. It aims to show at a glance which countries are facilitating travel for citizens of other countries and how: whether they allow people to travel to their country without a visa, if travellers can get a visa on arrival in the country or if visitors need to get a visa before travel.

Data on visa openness was collected between September 2016 and January 2017. The primary source of information was the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Data was also collected through questionnaires sent to national focal points.

The **Africa Visa Openness Index** is tracking changes in country scores over time to show which countries are making improvements that support freer movement of people across Africa. In future editions, the Report will look at how countries are facilitating visa openness by cutting time, reducing costs or simplifying the visa process as well as how far a visitor's experience on the ground matches up to the agreements or visa policies in place on paper.

Methodology

The higher a country's score in the Index, the more visa-open it is and the higher it ranks. Scores range from 0 – 1 (highest).

Index categories:

- Visa required
- Visa on arrival
- No visa

Each category is weighted based on its degree of openness. For example, a 'no visa' result is weighted by 1 (high openness), 'visa on arrival' is weighted by 0.8 and a 'visa required' by 0.

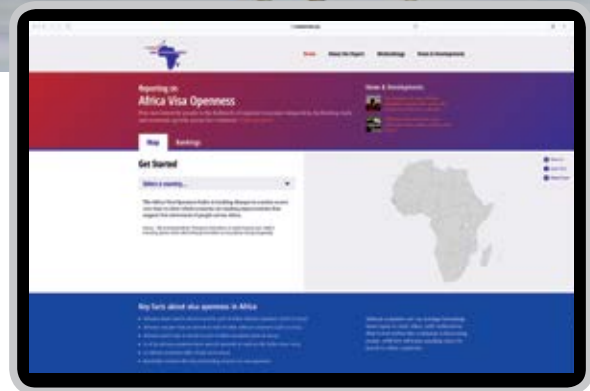
Index category indicators based on 55 African countries:*

- Number of countries from whose citizens a **visa is required** as a % of total number of countries
- Number of countries whose citizens can get a **visa on arrival** as a % of total number of countries
- Number of countries from whose citizens **no visa is required** as a % of total number of countries

A country's score is calculated by adding the results from all three indicators:

$$(\% \text{ of visa required} \times 0) + (\% \text{ of visa on arrival} \times 0.8) + (\% \text{ of no visa} \times 1) = \text{country visa openness score.}$$

*54 African countries recognized by the African Union, <http://www.au.int/en/countryprofiles>, plus Morocco



www.visaopenness.org

Visa Openness online platform

To support this second edition of the Index, a new visa openness online platform is available at www.visaopenness.org

The platform will showcase how African countries are performing on visa openness overall and the progress being made on scores and rankings on an ongoing basis. To promote greater transparency and ease of travel, the platform will highlight the visa policy of each country, empowering Africans to access information from a centralized hub.



VISA OPENNESS means how easy it is for visitors to travel to a country when it comes to visas.

A MORE VISA-OPEN COUNTRY has a liberal or relaxed visa policy for travellers, so that visitors either do not need a visa when they enter or can get a visa on arrival. A more visa-restrictive country requires visitors to get a visa before they travel, for example, from an Embassy.

VISAS ARE USED FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, as a security measure to control the entry and duration of the stay of people coming into a country, to limit a visitor's activities, to generate revenue or to show reciprocity to match the treatment other countries give to one's citizens.

Visa openness in Africa in 2016

Against a backdrop of the global commodity price shocks of 2016, there were calls for Africa to focus on building a bigger, more integrated market to promote greater stability. Increased intra-African investments (with FDI totalling USD 55 billion³) will play a vital role, as will a more favourable business environment (as 40 African countries improve in the World Bank's *Doing Business 2017*).⁴ Yet, Africa's competitiveness is also dependent on labour mobility.

“ Our own leaders must give incentives. For example, little things like visa issuance. You go to a country that is looking for investment, that particular country will give you a run around for getting a visa. Despite the size of our group, I need 38 visas to move around Africa.”

Aliko Dangote, *President and CEO, Dangote Group*⁵

The question of opening up Africa's borders to get people moving across the continent made headlines in 2016, in leadership events at the Africa CEO Forum in March to the World Economic Forum on Africa in May, alongside the debates trending on Africa's social media. Business leaders looked at the impact open visa policies would have for

high-priority sectors in the economy, from tourism to investment. Development institutions flagged the potential that freer movement of people could have in driving Africa's regional integration efforts and promoting human capital. Africans took to online platforms to highlight how greater access would benefit ordinary travellers keen to experience what their continent has to offer.

Important progress was made on visa openness in 2016, with African countries on average becoming more open to each other. During the year, milestones for greater freedom of movement across the continent included the launch of the African passport in July, and greater reciprocity within Regional Economic Communities, promoting regional integration.

The findings from the first edition of the Africa Visa Openness Index, launched in March 2016, energized the debate, highlighting the continent's top performing countries and the priority visa openness solutions that countries could adopt as policy reforms. Over the year, four countries moved up into the top 20 most open countries in the Index, and over a third of countries put in place efforts to offer more liberal visa policies. At the same time, more countries announced specific measures to improve their visa regimes going forward.

2016 Findings: Visa Openness

In 2016, Africa's visa openness landscape presents a mixed reality. Much more can be achieved across the continent as a whole, however, progress has been made in key areas.

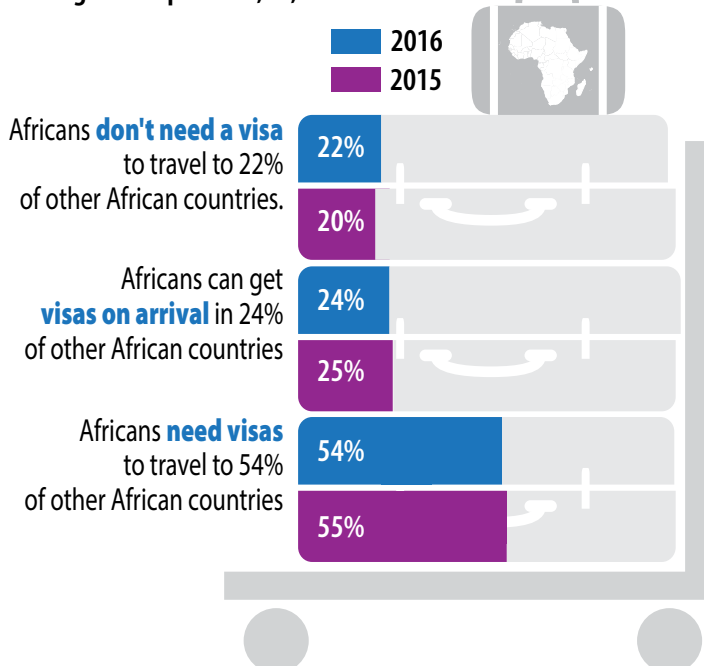
Progress made on visa openness between 2015-2016

African countries are on average becoming more open to each other, with indications that travel within the continent is becoming easier. Progress has been made in 2016, compared to 2015, against each of the visa openness indicators. Africans currently don't need a visa to travel to more countries than previously and they need visas to travel to fewer countries.

“When we started this work, only five African countries offered liberal access to all Africans. We are making progress, but need to accelerate the pace. For countries who have either visa-free or visa-on-arrival policies you can see the positive impact on the number of visitors to those countries. Over time, you'll also see it in the trade figures.”

Acha Leke, Director, McKinsey & Company and member of the WEF Global Agenda Council on Africa⁶

Average visa openness, %, 2015-2016



Average visa openness

The fall in the number of visas on arrival is due to some African countries having increased the number of 'no visas' for African travellers to replace the number of visas given on arrival.

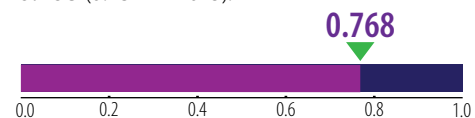
Facilitating visa access improved in 2016, with fewer countries with low visa openness scores not offering any visas on arrival. At the same time, more countries offered eVisas in 2016.

- **13 African countries out of 55 offer eVisas** (9 in 2015).



The top 20 most visa-open countries also improved their overall average score in 2016. The majority of African countries have either improved their visa openness scores (by offering visas on arrival or not requiring visas for other Africans) or have kept their 2015 scores.

- **Average score for the top 20 countries is 0.768** (0.734 in 2015).

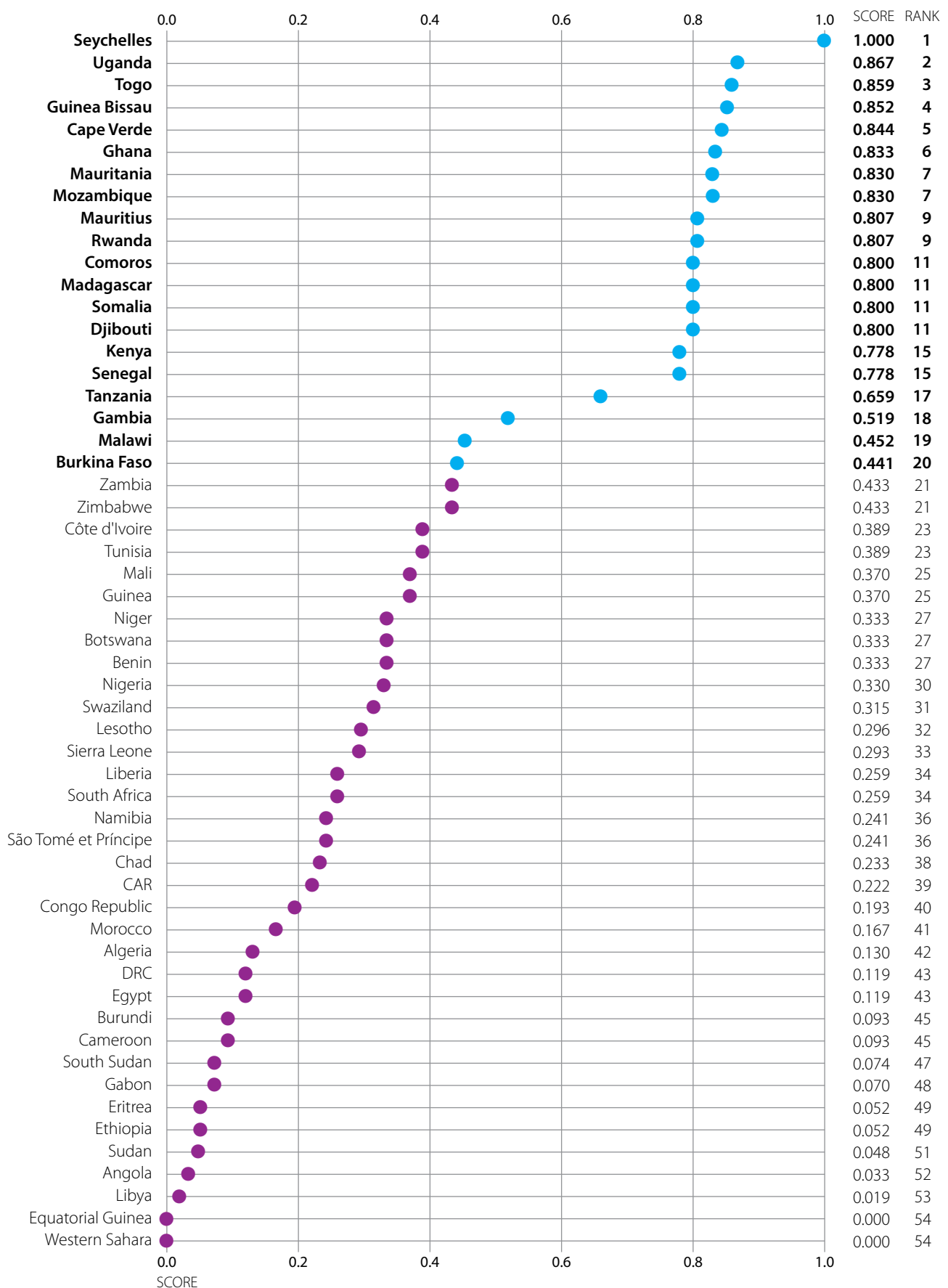


- **21 of 55 African countries have moved upwards in rank on the Index since 2015. 47 countries have improved or maintained their visa openness scores.**

Seychelles is still the only country on the continent to offer visa-free access for all Africans.

- **Seychelles remains the top performing country on visa openness.**

Visa openness in Africa 2016: country scores and ranking

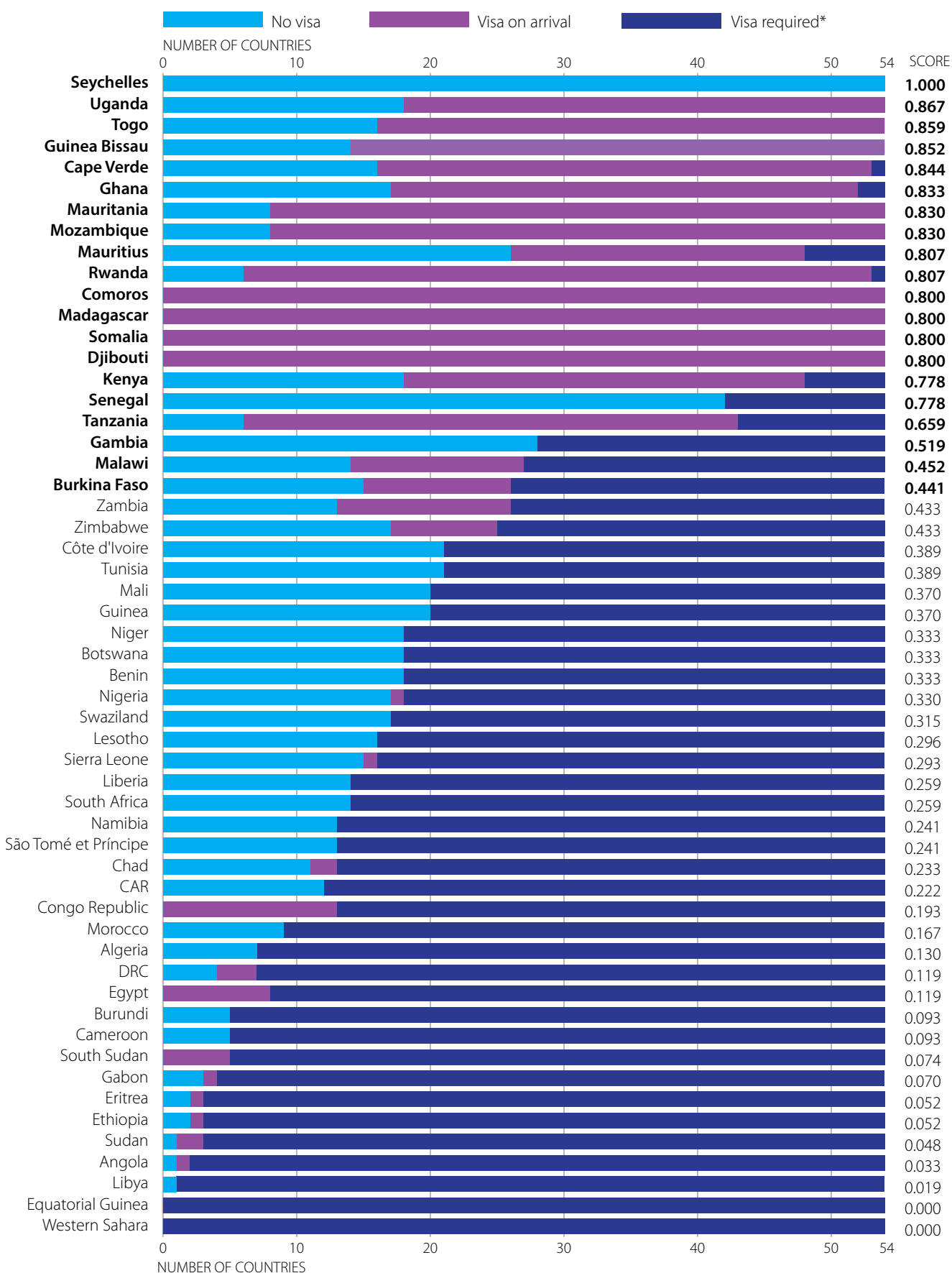


Scores range from 0 to 1 (highest)

* Visa required means a visa has to be obtained before departure and is not an eVisa.

Source: AfDB calculation based on data obtained from IATA – January, 2017.

Visa openness in Africa by category: no visa, visa on arrival, visa required



Scores range from 0 to 1 (highest)

* Visa required means a visa has to be obtained before departure and is not an eVisa.

Source : AfDB calculation based on data obtained from IATA – January, 2017.

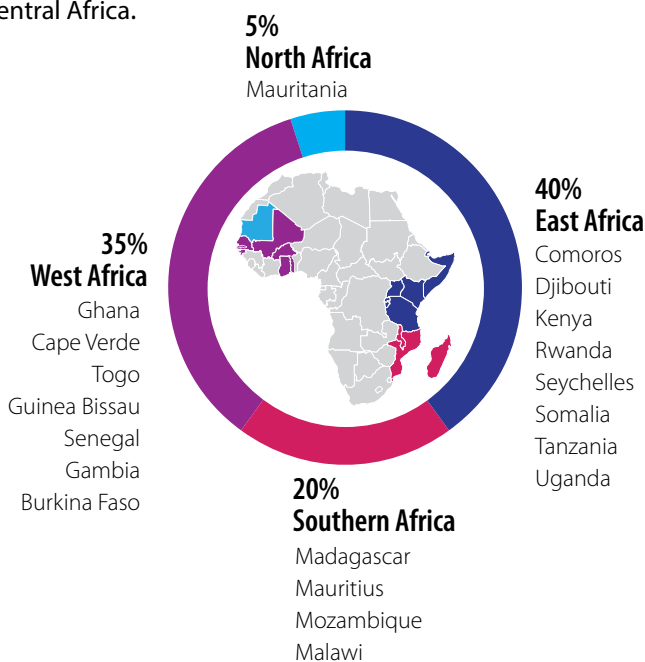


2016 Findings show where more progress is needed

Free movement of people continues to vary region by region. Central Africa still remains the most closed region. Good results in West Africa are due to the Free movement of persons protocol and in East Africa are a result of the high number of visa on arrival policies.

40% of countries in the top 20 most visa-open countries are in East Africa; 35% are in West Africa; 20% are in Southern Africa, and 5% are in North Africa.

In the top 20 most visa-open countries, none are in Central Africa.



Still less than a quarter of all African countries provide liberal access at entry for all African citizens. To improve their scores countries can remove visas or offer more visas on arrival.

10 out of 55 countries offer liberal access (visa-free or visa on arrival) to all Africans.



Many of the continent's regional and strategic hubs continue to have restrictive visa policies. Africa's Upper Middle Income countries as a group have low visa openness scores.

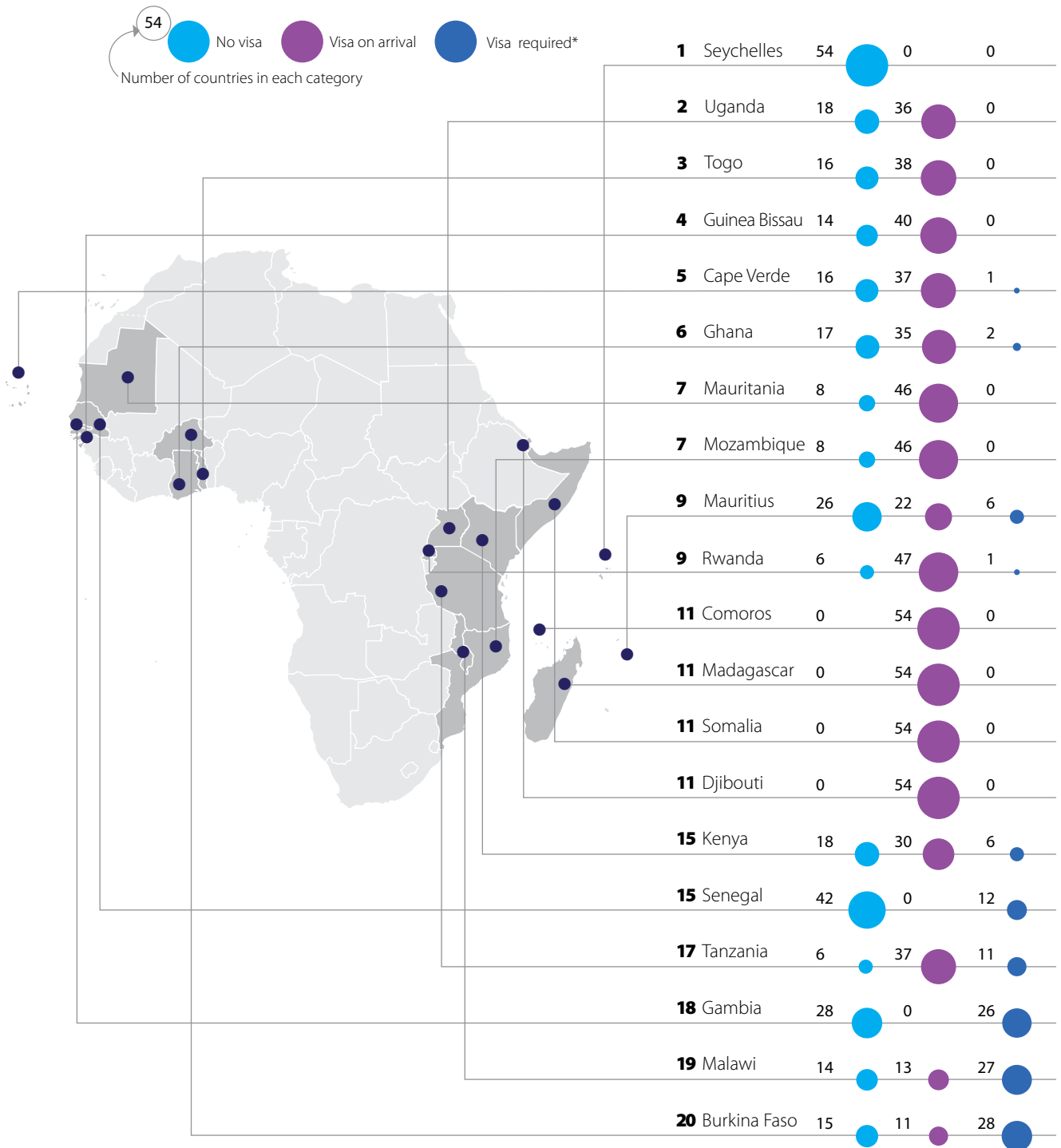
8 out of 9 of Africa's Upper Middle Income Countries have low visa openness scores.



Africa's small, landlocked and island states are more open, promoting trade links with their neighbours.

2016 Findings: Top 20 scoring countries

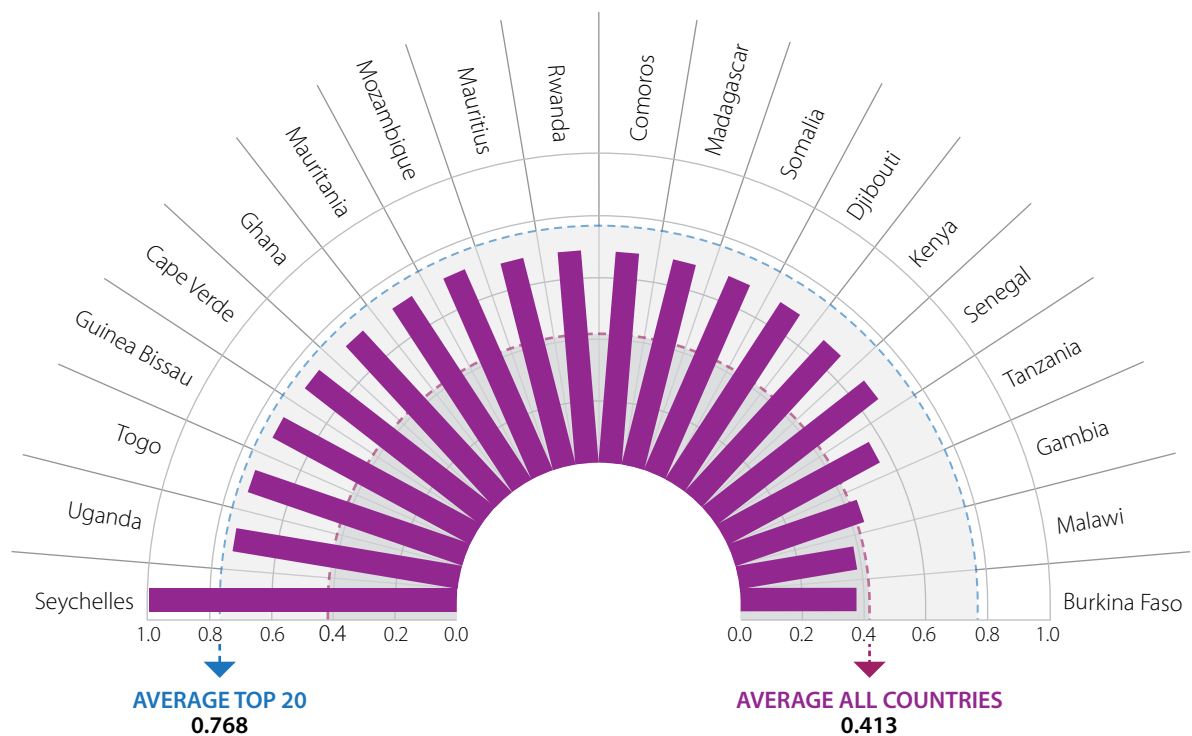
A closer look at visa openness by category in the top 20 scoring countries:
no visa, visa on arrival, visa required*



Scores range from 0 to 1 (highest)

*Visa required means a visa has to be obtained before departure and is not an eVisa.

A closer look at visa openness by rank in the top 20 scoring countries



2016 Findings: Countries moving up

While a number of countries still have a distance to travel to make greater progress on visa openness, countries from across West Africa, North Africa and Southern Africa moved up the Index rankings in 2016. In the top 20 most visa-open countries in Africa in 2016, there are four new countries.

“With effect from July this year, we will be allowing citizens of AU Member States to enter our country and obtain visas on arrival with the option to stay for up to thirty days and experience what our country has to offer. This measure, with time, should stimulate air travel, trade, investment and tourism.”

President John Dramani Mahama of Ghana, State of the Nation address, 25 February 2016⁷

Ghana

- **2016: Ghana offers visas on arrival to most African countries**
- **2016 Index ranking: no. 6** (2015: no. 22)
- **2016 Liberal access (visa-free or visa on arrival) to Africans: 96%** (2015: 39%)

Continent-wide, Ghana has made the most progress in 2016 in opening up its borders for other African travellers, moving into sixth place in the Index, up sixteen places from 2015. The country offers 96% liberal access to all Africans. This is the case either through offering visa-free access to almost a third of all countries (including for the other 14 ECOWAS member states) or visas on arrival to almost two thirds of countries in Africa (from less than 10% in 2015).

Ghana’s policy decision follows a resolution adopted in early 2016 at the AU’s Executive Council on issuing visas on arrival for member states, with the possibility of a 30-day stay. This ties in with Ghana’s pledge to support the continent’s wider integration efforts and Agenda 2063, including through forging stronger links with its Francophone neighbours.

Economic drivers play an important part in Ghana's new open visa policy in encouraging African visitors to the country, particularly in promoting the country's travel, tourism, trade and investment sectors. Total travel and tourism contributed 7.8% to Ghana's GDP in 2015 and is forecast to rise by 2.4% in 2016, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council.⁸

Ghana's visa policy

African Union citizens are to be issued with visas on arrival, valid for 30 days, at Kotoka International Airport, with other ports of entry to follow. Visitors must have return air ticket/evidence of onward travel, evidence of sufficient funds, and proof of accommodation.



African citizens, affected by the policy, who arrive in the country must have a passport valid for at least three months from the date of entry. GIS has put in place measures to ensure the smooth implementation of the policy."

Francis Palmdeti, Ghana Immigration Service (GIS)⁹

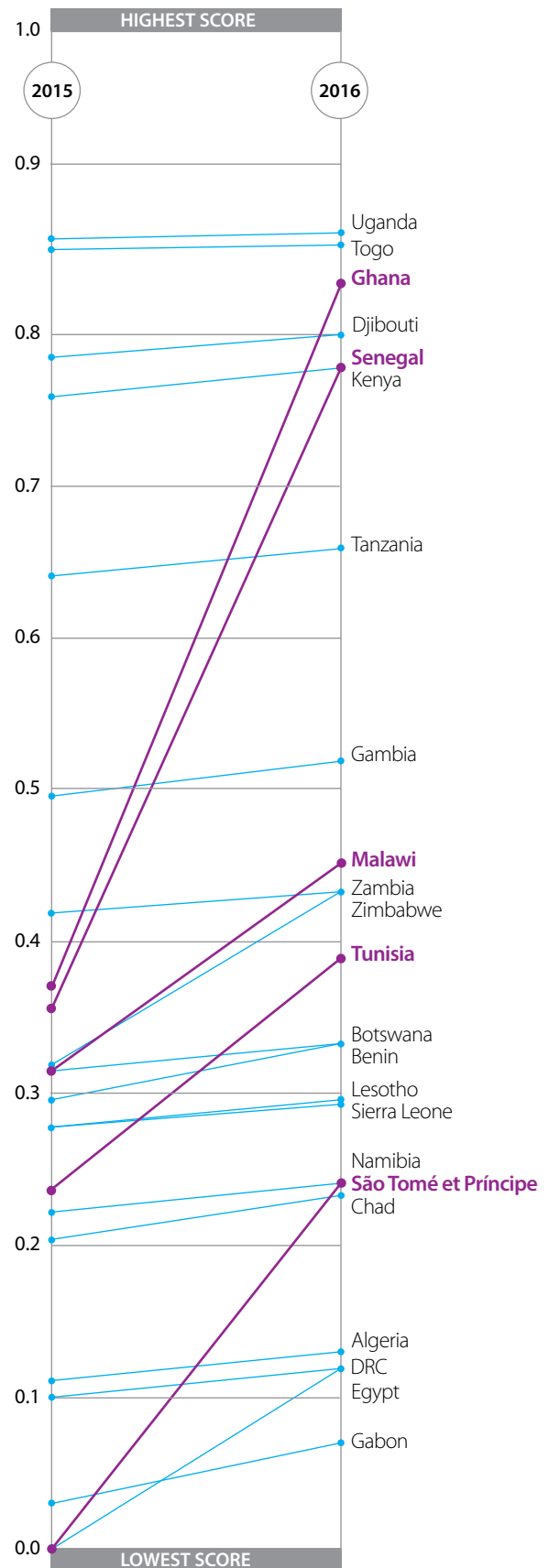
Senegal

- **2016: Senegal offers visa-free access to 42 African countries** (from 16 countries in 2015)
- **2016 Index ranking: no. 15** (2015: no. 24)
- **2016 Liberal access (visa-free or visa on arrival) to Africans: 78%** (2015: 37%)

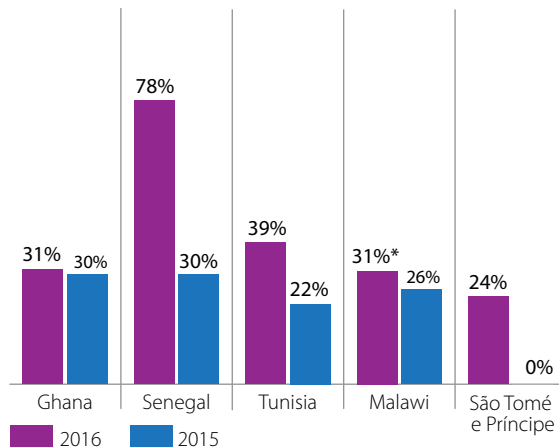
Senegal has moved into the top 20 most visa open countries in Africa, up 9 places from 2015 by offering visa-free access to 42 African countries alongside other ECOWAS member states. The country offers 78% liberal access to all Africans, more than double the figure from 2015. In order to match the ranking of Seychelles – the most visa-open country in the Index – Senegal would need to offer visa-free access to 12 more African countries.

Senegal's visa policy decision to promote freedom of movement for Africans builds on the country's efforts since 2015 to re-energize the tourism sector. This has included a set of measures to cut payments for visas to the country, and to lower prices by reducing informal taxes on air tickets by 50%, particularly passenger fees, insurance tax and stamp duty. In line with these initiatives, total travel and tourism contributed 12.4% to GDP in 2015 and was forecast to rise by 4.4% in 2016, according to the World Travel and Tourism Council.¹⁰

Visa openness in Africa: upwards progress of scores, 2015-2016

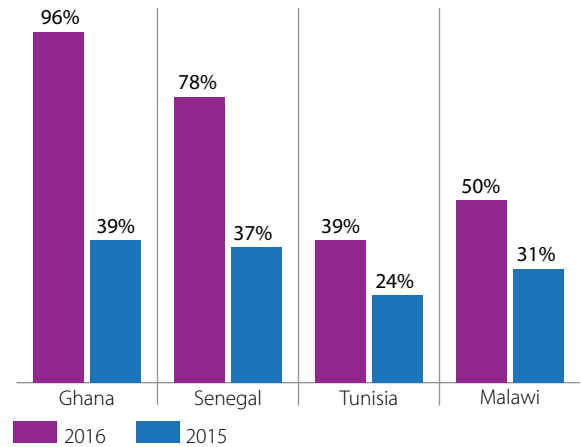


Visa openness in Africa: progress in countries offering **visa free access, 2015-2016 (by %)**



*Visas are also not required from SADC and COMESA member states (as long as they do not require visas from citizens of Malawi).

Visa openness in Africa: progress in countries offering **liberal access (visa-free or visa on arrival), 2015-2016 (by %)**



Tunisia

- **2016: Tunisia lifts visas on arrival for 21 African countries** (9 more countries than 2015)
- **2016 Index ranking: no. 23** (2015: no. 36)
- **2016 Liberal access (visa-free or visa on arrival) to Africans: 39%** (2015: 24%)

Tunisia has moved up 13 places from 2015. The country offers 39% liberal access to all Africans. In early 2016, visas on arrival for citizens of 21 African countries were lifted. This follows a 2015 visa policy decision, which offered six African countries visa-free access to the country.

Tunisia’s visa policy decision to open up to citizens from across the continent supports the country’s efforts to revitalize the high-value tourism sector following security incidents in 2015. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, total travel and tourism contributed 12.6% to GDP in 2015 and was forecast to fall by 0.9% in 2016.¹¹ The policy also ties in with national efforts to engage with the African market and boost economic growth.

“After Ghana, I am convinced that many other African countries will follow suit, in the interest of achieving an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa.”

Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma,
Former Chairperson, AU Commission¹²

Malawi

- **2016: Malawi does not require visas from 14 African countries as well as from SADC and COMESA member states** (as long as they do not require visas from citizens of Malawi)
- **2016 Index ranking: no. 19** (2015: no. 28)
- **2016 Liberal access (visa-free or visa on arrival) to Africans: 50%** (2015: 31%)

Malawi has moved into the top 20 most visa open countries in Africa, up 9 places from 2015, and offers liberal access to half of all African citizens, up from less than a third in 2015. The country is supporting regional integration efforts to promote free movement of people through its visa reciprocity policy with citizens of countries in SADC and COMESA. Malawi is also looking into introducing eVisas as part of a new visa policy to facilitate travel access.¹³

São Tomé et Príncipe

- **2016: São Tomé et Príncipe moved higher up the Index in 2016, with 13 African countries now no longer needing a visa.** In 2015 all Africans required a visa to travel to the country.
- **2016 Index ranking: no. 36** (2015: no. 52)

São Tomé et Príncipe is one of 13 African countries that offers eVisas, in the case of both tourists and business people where there is no diplomatic or consulate representation of the country. The authorities introduced the system in 2012 to facilitate the entry process and there has since been a significant uptake of the service from travellers visiting the country.¹⁴



Countries looking to open up on visas

After the launch of the Africa Visa Openness Index, a number of countries in West Africa and Southern Africa signalled their intention to allow greater access for African travellers and facilitate the movement of people across the continent. The measures proposed include removing visas for Africans, granting multiple entry visas for African business and academics and removing visas within Regional Economic Communities. The drivers behind the policy changes include promoting the tourism sector, economic growth and regional integration.

Benin *“Inspired by Rwanda’s experience, I have come to the decision that Benin will no longer demand visas for Africans. This South-South cooperation can become a reality.”*

Patrice Talon, *President of Benin*¹⁵

- **2016 Index ranking: no. 27** (2015: no. 31)
- **Benin has announced a decision to remove visas on arrival for all African passport/national identity card holders** to stay in the country for up to 90 days. The decision is part of the government’s vision to build a proactive tourism industry.

South Africa *“In line with its commitment to ensure that immigration served as a vehicle for enhancing economic growth, the Minister of Home Affairs approved the granting of 10-year multiple entry visas to business and academics from Africa.”*

Mkuseli Apleni, *Director-General, Home Affairs*¹⁶

- **2016 Index ranking: no. 34** (2015: no. 35)
- **South Africa has approved 10-year multiple entry visas** to African businesses and academics to boost growth, alongside immigration concessions to support tourism.

Namibia *“This is how we celebrate Namibia, but obviously we would also want other SADC member states to follow suit because we want to see cordial relations being strengthened among member states.”*

Tjekero Tweya, *Minister ICT, Namibia*¹⁷

- **2016 Index ranking: no. 36** (2015: no. 38)
- **Namibia has announced that SADC citizens will not require visas** to visit the country for either business or tourism so as to boost free movement of people within SADC.

Zimbabwe *“This new position completes the circle and process for us as Zimbabwe, in line with and fulfilment of the spirit and objectives of the SADC Protocol on the Facilitation of Movement of Persons.”*

Clarence Masango, *Principal Director, Department of Immigration*¹⁸

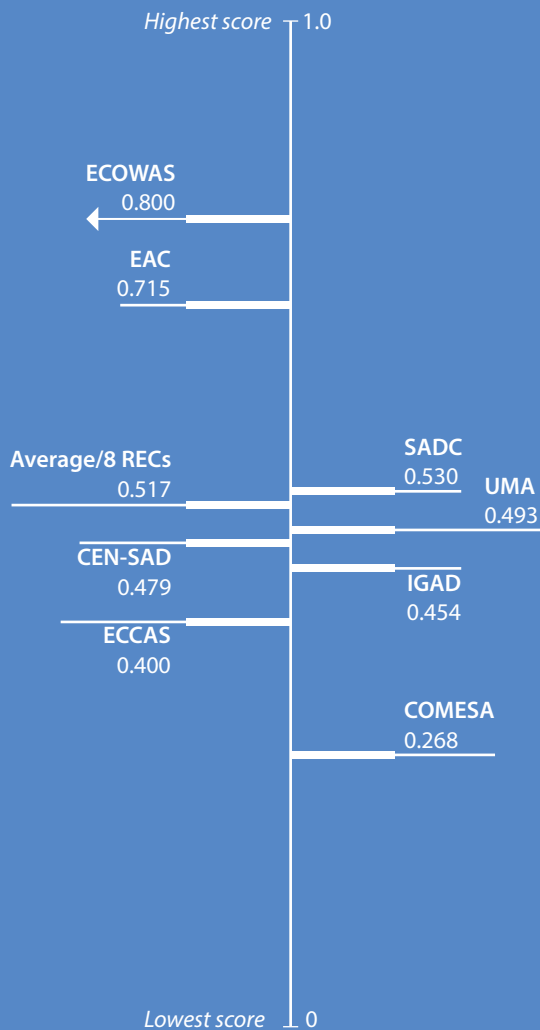
- **2016 Index ranking: no. 21** (2015: no. 27)
- **Zimbabwe has announced that all SADC citizens can now visit the country visa-free** in order to boost the tourism sector and bring sustainable socio-economic benefits.

Africa's regional mobility

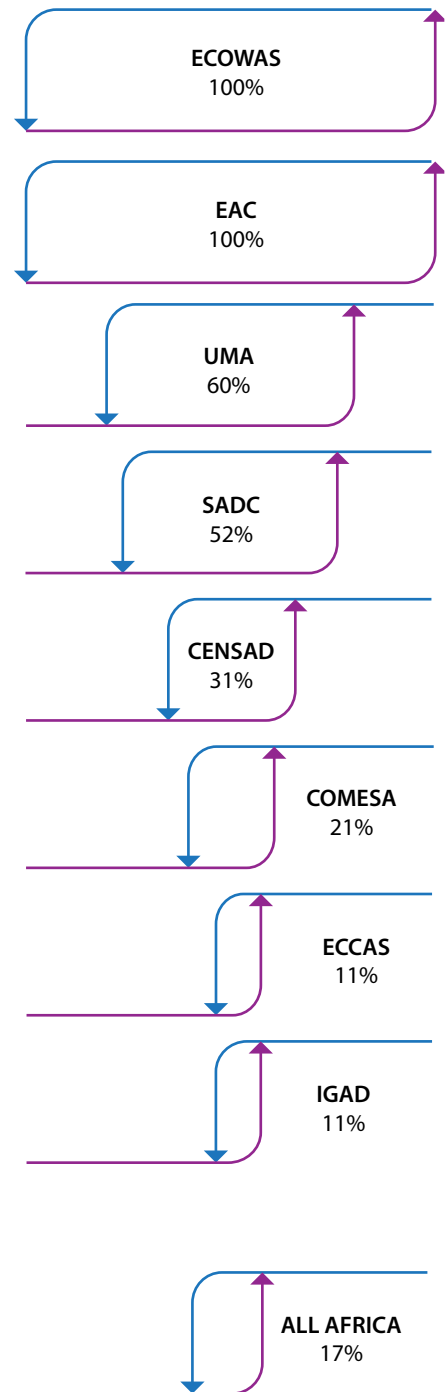
Findings from the **2016 Africa Regional Integration Index**¹⁹ developed by the African Union, African Development Bank and Economic Commission for Africa, show that the continent's regional integration can progress further across priority dimensions. In 2016, the continent's open reciprocity (measuring 'no visa' policies) stood at 17%, and closed reciprocity at 36%.

At the level of Africa's Regional Economic Communities (RECs), mutually open visa policies among member states vary across different regional bodies. Reciprocal open visa policies are highest in ECOWAS (100%), EAC (100%), UMA (60%) and SADC (52%). This matches findings from the Index, which show that ECOWAS, EAC and SADC are the highest performing RECs on Free movement of people as measured by the ratification of protocols, no visa and visa-on-arrival policies.²⁰ While Free movement of persons protocols exist, countries within RECs have not all put them into practice. Promoting more visa-free regional blocs will support both visa openness and regional integration.

Comparison of average scores by REC on Free movement of people (2016 Africa Regional Integration Index)



Top scores in reciprocity of visa policies within RECs



Global migration in 2016

Migration and links to freedom of movement dominated international news in 2016. In contrast to the headlines from North America to Europe around immigration, global trends showed that South-South migration rose faster than South-North migration.²¹ Across most regions worldwide, migration is also viewed more favourably than commonly perceived.²²

In early 2016, the overall global trend was still towards greater visa openness, with visas required at their lowest level and continuing to decline, and major changes recorded in countries granting more visas on arrival and more eVisa options.²³ Progress has been driven by governments using visa policies as a tool for economic growth and job creation, according to the UNWTO Visa Openness Report 2015.²⁴ This global picture matches progress made in Africa in 2016, as countries adopted open visa policies to promote tourism and investment.

In 2016 the migration crisis in the Mediterranean has been a key focus for debate in Europe. There were calls to deliver on the EU-Africa post-Valetta Summit action plan to support positive migration initiatives in Africa, and contribute towards SDG 10's target on managed migration and mobility. Promoting greater freedom of movement within Africa is a powerful tool that gives Africans a wider set of options to travel, study, work and do business staying on the continent. According to the AU Commissioner for Social Affairs, these alternatives can start to bring renewed hope to people looking to migrate via insecure routes to Europe.²⁵

Visa Solutions

Visa on arrival for Africans

Visa-free regional blocs

Regional bloc visas

Multi-year visas after assessing applicant

Promoting positive reciprocity

(for citizens of countries that relaxed visa requirements to benefit from similar requirements when visiting other African countries)

Opening up on visas unilaterally

Simplifying the visa process:

documents required, fees, processing time, online applications (introducing eVisas can help to facilitate visitor access)

Improving access to information:

online and in different languages

Travel Document Solutions

Regional travel using regional passports or national identity cards

African passport for business people

(issued by competent authority to strict criteria)

African passport for all African citizens

(issued by national authorities to follow the African Union passport rolled out in 2016)



A Forward Look

Africans were able to travel more freely across the continent in 2016, as visa openness levels improved from 2015. The priority is to continue this positive trend and deliver on the AU's decision for countries to issue visas on arrival for all Africans in line with Agenda 2063.²⁶

This Index is going to expand the discussion about regional integration. It is time to check what leaders and governments are doing in terms of human mobility. You can see how much integration we need to make progress, taking into account the opportunities offered by a growing market that is going to grow to 2 billion by 2050."

Carlos Lopez, *Former Executive Secretary,*
United Nations Economic Commission for Africa²⁷

At the same time, African countries can make progress by facilitating visa procedures, cutting the time, documents and costs involved, as well as by making air travel cheaper and more accessible. Countries can also take advantage of technology developments and put in place electronic systems, which also promote regional security and cooperation. And, in a period of slow economic growth due to falling commodity prices, alongside a decline in international tourist arrivals in Africa,²⁸ more open visa policies can help to re-energize the tourism industry, promote more African tourists and build the AU's vision of Brand Africa.²⁹

Migration could break or make the future of the continent, according to a recent study by SEF,³⁰ which includes a call to action for governments, business and civil society to promote freer movement of people that integrates economies and builds strong cultural and social ties. Going forward, greater visa openness in Africa can help to tackle global migration challenges, such as the Mediterranean crisis, while building a people-centered African integration that offers new travel, trade, leisure, study and job opportunities for all Africans.

Africa Visa Openness Next Edition

The third edition of the **Africa Visa Openness Index** will widen its scope to cover both African countries' visa openness policies ('no visas,' 'visas on arrival' and 'visas required') and, for the first time, their visa openness procedures. Indicators on countries' visa procedures will measure the degree of openness in relation to time, cost and documents involved.

How far countries are facilitating travel is closely linked to the experience of African visitors on the ground, where lengthy forms, costly fees and uncertain delays put a break on travel plans. Countries may adopt liberal visa policies and not fully facilitate the ease of travel continent-wide. For example, eVisas support travel if information is readily available and online systems work effectively during the application process. Alternatively, weak internet access, a lack of transparency or high costs impact directly on the travel experience. Greater awareness of visa solutions is needed among governments and policy makers, and among business leaders and citizens who can highlight where gaps exist and call for reforms.

Annex 1. Visa openness in Africa: country scores and ranking

| COUNTRY | VISA OPENNESS INDICATORS (by number of African countries) | | | Score | Rank |
|----------------------------------|--|----------------------|---------------------|-------|------|
| | No visa required 2016 | Visa on arrival 2016 | Visa required* 2016 | | |
| Seychelles | 54 | 0 | 0 | 1.000 | 1 |
| Uganda | 18 | 36 | 0 | 0.867 | 2 |
| Togo | 16 | 38 | 0 | 0.859 | 3 |
| Guinea Bissau | 14 | 40 | 0 | 0.852 | 4 |
| Cape Verde | 16 | 37 | 1 | 0.844 | 5 |
| Ghana | 17 | 35 | 2 | 0.833 | 6 |
| Mauritania | 8 | 46 | 0 | 0.830 | 7 |
| Mozambique | 8 | 46 | 0 | 0.830 | 7 |
| Mauritius | 26 | 22 | 6 | 0.807 | 9 |
| Rwanda | 6 | 47 | 1 | 0.807 | 9 |
| Comoros | 0 | 54 | 0 | 0.800 | 11 |
| Madagascar | 0 | 54 | 0 | 0.800 | 11 |
| Somalia | 0 | 54 | 0 | 0.800 | 11 |
| Djibouti | 0 | 54 | 0 | 0.800 | 11 |
| Kenya | 18 | 30 | 6 | 0.778 | 15 |
| Senegal | 42 | 0 | 12 | 0.778 | 15 |
| Tanzania | 6 | 37 | 11 | 0.659 | 17 |
| Gambia | 28 | 0 | 26 | 0.519 | 18 |
| Malawi | 14 | 13 | 27 | 0.452 | 19 |
| Burkina Faso | 15 | 11 | 28 | 0.441 | 20 |
| Zambia | 13 | 13 | 28 | 0.433 | 21 |
| Zimbabwe | 17 | 8 | 29 | 0.433 | 21 |
| Côte d'Ivoire | 21 | 0 | 33 | 0.389 | 23 |
| Tunisia | 21 | 0 | 33 | 0.389 | 23 |
| Mali | 20 | 0 | 34 | 0.370 | 25 |
| Guinea | 20 | 0 | 34 | 0.370 | 25 |
| Niger | 18 | 0 | 36 | 0.333 | 27 |
| Botswana | 18 | 0 | 36 | 0.333 | 27 |
| Benin | 18 | 0 | 36 | 0.333 | 27 |
| Nigeria | 17 | 1 | 36 | 0.330 | 30 |
| Swaziland | 17 | 0 | 37 | 0.315 | 31 |
| Lesotho | 16 | 0 | 38 | 0.296 | 32 |
| Sierra Leone | 15 | 1 | 38 | 0.293 | 33 |
| Liberia | 14 | 0 | 40 | 0.259 | 34 |
| South Africa | 14 | 0 | 40 | 0.259 | 34 |
| Namibia | 13 | 0 | 41 | 0.241 | 36 |
| São tome et Principe | 13 | 0 | 41 | 0.241 | 36 |
| Chad | 11 | 2 | 41 | 0.233 | 38 |
| Central African Republic | 12 | 0 | 42 | 0.222 | 39 |
| Congo Republic | 0 | 13 | 41 | 0.193 | 40 |
| Morocco | 9 | 0 | 45 | 0.167 | 41 |
| Algeria | 7 | 0 | 47 | 0.130 | 42 |
| Democratic Republic of the Congo | 4 | 3 | 47 | 0.119 | 43 |
| Egypt | 0 | 8 | 46 | 0.119 | 43 |
| Burundi | 5 | 0 | 49 | 0.093 | 45 |
| Cameroon | 5 | 0 | 49 | 0.093 | 45 |
| South Sudan | 0 | 5 | 49 | 0.074 | 47 |
| Gabon | 3 | 1 | 50 | 0.070 | 48 |
| Eritrea | 2 | 1 | 51 | 0.052 | 49 |
| Ethiopia | 2 | 1 | 51 | 0.052 | 49 |
| Sudan | 1 | 2 | 51 | 0.048 | 51 |
| Angola | 1 | 1 | 52 | 0.033 | 52 |
| Libya | 1 | 0 | 53 | 0.019 | 53 |
| Equatorial Guinea | 0 | 0 | 54 | 0.000 | 54 |
| Western Sahara | 0 | 0 | 54 | 0.000 | 54 |

Scores range from 0 to 1 (highest)

* Visa required means a visa has to be obtained before departure and is not an eVisa.

Source: IATA (January 24th, 2017), National services of Immigration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Notes

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