

**UNWTO**  
World Tourism Organization

# 2019 Visa Openness Report for Africa Preliminary Report



# **2019 Visa Openness Report for Africa**

**Prepared for the 1st UNWTO/ICAO Ministerial Conference**  
Tourism and Air Transport in Africa

Cabo Verde

27–29 March 2019



# Table of Contents

## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Methodological note
- 2.1 The functions of visas

## **2 Visa requirements and international tourism**

- 2.1 Worldwide population affected by visa policies
- 2.2 Worldwide openness
- 2.3 Mobility of citizens around the world

## **3 Openness of Africa**

- 3.1 The openness of Africa to the regions of the world
- 3.2 The openness of Africa's subregions to each other
- 3.3 Destinations in Africa which have improved visa procedures

## **4 Reciprocity in Africa**

## **Annex**



# 1 Introduction

UNWTO surveys visa policies around the world since 2008. The *Visa Openness Reports*, produced by UNWTO, focus on the entry requirements for tourism purposes.

The *2019 Visa Openness Report for Africa* prepared by UNWTO<sup>1</sup> continues the analysis of visa policies and progress made in visa facilitation over the past ten years, supporting destinations with evidence-based policy making and helping prioritize activities within their facilitation policies. Besides presenting the global perspective, the following report gives specific insights into the temporal changes as well as current context in regard to visa policies implemented by African economies and their impact on temporary visitors. In addition, the impacts of visa policies implemented by countries of other regions on the citizens of African countries are being presented.

## 1.1 Methodological note

For this report data collection took place between February and May 2018.<sup>2</sup> The process included a full review of official destinations' websites, the verification of information against secondary public sources, and a detailed formal consultation process on the findings with national authorities in April 2018. In addition, visa policies of African destinations were reviewed for a second time in December 2018.

For the purpose of the study, only rules applicable to temporary visitors (tourists) holding ordinary passports<sup>3</sup> were taken into account. The following four main visa categories for tourism purposes are distinguished:

- **Traditional visa:** all traditional paper visas which are placed in the passport, as well as any other type of non-electronic visas that have to be obtained prior to departure;
- **eVisa:** all types of electronic entry and travel authorizations that need to be obtained prior to departure by the traveller;
- **Visa on arrival:** all visas obtained upon arrival at the destination without preparation before initiating the journey. Usually, this type of visa has the form of a stamp, sticker or other visible evidences of clearance in the passport; and
- **No visa:** no entry permit is requested when entering the destination.

---

<sup>1</sup> This report was prepared by the Sustainable Development of Tourism Programme of the World Tourism Organization under the supervision of Dr. Dirk Glaesser. Lead contributor was Lorna Hartantyo. Comments on the draft of this report were provided by Birka Valentin, Elcia Grandcourt, Jaime Mayaki and Marianna Stori.

<sup>2</sup> Visa policy changes that were implemented after May 2018 are not reflected in this report.

<sup>3</sup> Excluding diplomatic passports or similar.

## 1.2 The functions of visas

Visa policies are among the most important governmental formalities influencing international tourism. The development of policies and procedures for visas, as well as for other important travel documents such as passports, is closely linked to the development of tourism. With the swift growth of international tourism in the last six decades, the quality, reliability, and functionality of visas and other travel documents has evolved. Only half a century ago, travel was heavily impacted by customs regulations, currency exchange limitations and visa formalities. A great deal of progress has been made in facilitation, which has contributed to the remarkable growth of the tourism sector. Especially noteworthy are the multilateral agreements that mutually exempt all or certain categories of travellers from the visa requirement. However, despite the progress made, visa policies are still often inadequate and inefficient, and are thus acknowledged to be an obstacle to tourism growth.

Visas perform several functions. They serve:

- To ensure security;
- To control immigration and limit the entry, duration of stay, or activities of travellers;
- To generate revenue and apply measures of reciprocity; and
- To ensure a destination's carrying capacity and control tourism demand.

Although 'security' is commonly stated to be the main reason to impose a visa requirement, in practice, all the functions noted here can be observed, and form a reason to introduce or maintain a visa.

From a traveller's point of view, visas are mainly perceived as a formality that imposes a cost. If the cost of obtaining a visa – either the direct monetary cost imposed in the form of fees or the indirect costs, which can include distance, time spent waiting in lines, and the complexity of the process – exceeds a threshold, potential travellers are simply deterred from making a particular journey or choose an alternative destination with facilitated entry. This finding is not new. It is interesting in this context to note that, in 1963, the delegates of 87 states agreed, at the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism in

Rome, that "Governments should extend to the maximum number of countries the practice of abolishing, through bilateral agreements or by unilateral decision, the requirement of entry visas for temporary visitors"<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>3</sup> United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism (1964), *Recommendations on International Travel and Tourism, August 21–September 5, 1963. Rome*. States represented at the conference were: Afghanistan, Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bolivia,

## 2 Visa requirements and international tourism

Tourism is continuing to grow at a remarkable pace, placing it as one of the largest and fastest growing economic sectors in the world. In 2018, international tourist arrivals increased by 6% to 1.4 billion. This expansion was accelerated amongst others by stronger economic growth, more affordable air travel, better connectivity and greater visa facilitation around the world.

When looking at the different regions around the world, international tourism arrivals have registered an unprecedented growth in the global economy in 2018, with the Middle East (+10%) leading, followed by Africa (+7%), Asia and the Pacific and Europe (both at +6%). Arrivals to the Americas were below the world average growth with +3%.

In order to fully reap the socio-economic benefits international tourism can bring to a country, it is necessary to put in place conditions that make a country competitive, among which most importantly, to make it easy to visit.

### 2.1 Worldwide population affected by visa policies

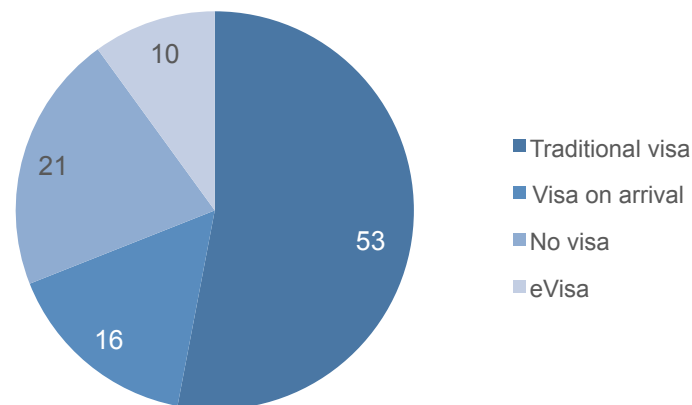
Visa policies are among the most important governmental formalities influencing international tourism. Overall, the share of tourists requiring to obtain a visa to travel continues to decline and is currently at its lowest level ever.

In 2018, 53% of the world's population was required to obtain a traditional visa before initiating their international journey. Another 10% of the population were allowed to apply for an eVisa while 16% were able to apply for a visa on arrival. Only 21% of the world's population did not require a visa when travelling for tourism purposes (figure 2.1).

---

Brazil, Bulgaria, Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Ceylon, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo (Leopold-Ville), Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Federal Republic of Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Guatemala, Holy See, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Liberia, Libya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Mali, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Korea, Romania, San Marino, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Somalia, Republic of South Africa, Spain, Sudan, Sweden, Switzerland, Syria, Thailand, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, United Arab Republic, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Venezuela, Yugoslavia. UN Specialized Agencies: FAO, UNESCO, ICAO, WHO, IMCO.

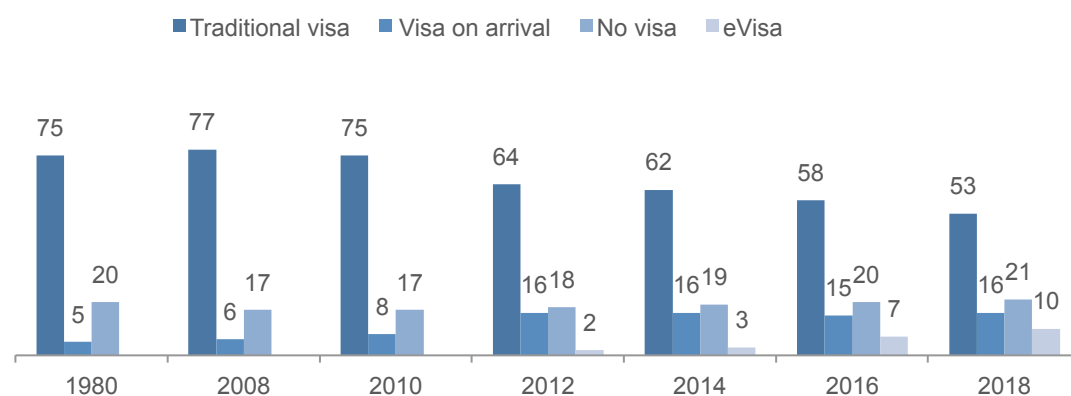
**Figure 2.1: World population affected by visa policies, 2018 (%)**



When analysing changes in visa policies around the world over time (figure 2.2), it can be observed that the proportion of the world population affected by traditional visa requirements has decreased by 22 percentage points between 1980 and 2018 (from 75% to 53%). At the same time, visa exemptions increased by 1 percentage point, indicating that other forms of visa requirements have been implemented as alternative. This choice of alternative requirements and thus the diversification of the types of visa policies implemented by countries can be seen when looking at the percentage of visa on arrival which has increased by 11 percentage points. At the same time, eVisa requirements have increased by 10 percentage points.

When looking more in detail, the largest decrease so far in traditional visa policies in the shortest time span could be observed between 2010 and 2012 and resulted in a visible increase of visa on arrival policies. Since then, it has been especially eVisa policies that have gained more and more popularity around the world, reflecting also the general advances in technological solutions and systems.

**Figure 2.2: World population affected by visa policies, 1980–2018 (%)**



Note: Before 2012 no differentiation was made between eVisa and Visa on arrival. Both categories were grouped under the latter.

Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

The following table provides an overview of the impacts different visa policies implemented by the five regions around the world had on travellers in 2018. It can be seen that – although still the most popular visa policy implemented – less than half of the world’s population is currently affected by traditional visa policies of African countries. Besides that, visa on arrival represents the second most common facilitation policy. Interestingly enough, at this moment in time, almost the same amount of the world population is affected by eVisas and visa exemption. For subregional insights please see the Annex.

**Table 2.1: World population affected by visa policies of different regions around the world, 2018(%)**

	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional visa
<b>World</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>53</b>
Advanced economies <sup>b</sup>	24	0	6	70
Emerging economies <sup>b</sup>	20	20	11	49
<b>By UNWTO region</b>				
<b>Africa</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>45</b>
Americas	35	5	5	56
Asia and the Pacific	22	21	17	41
Europe	24	4	7	66
Middle East	6	17	17	60

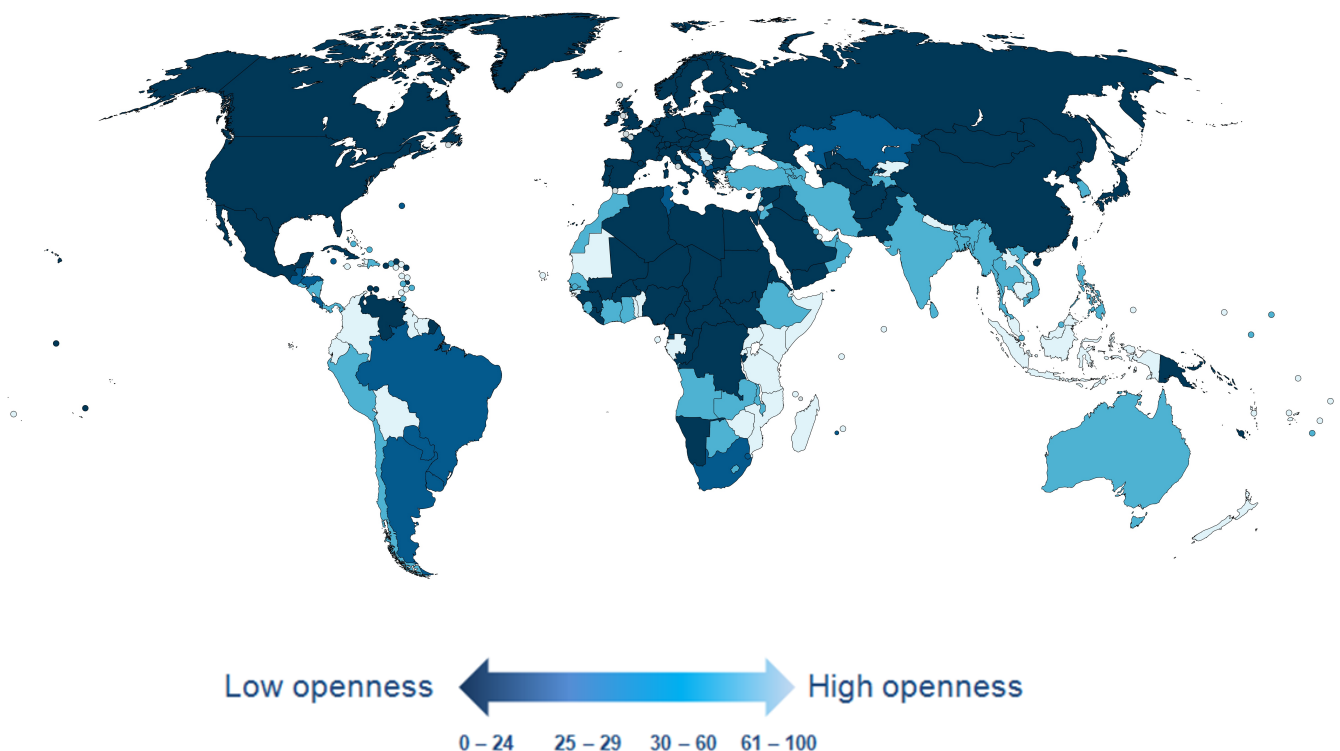
Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions

## 2.2 Worldwide openness

The previously explained impacts of different visa policies implemented by countries around the world can be transformed into a global openness index. 'Visa Openness' indicates to what extent a destination is facilitating tourism, encompassing a score range from 0 to 100. The higher the score, the more open a country is in terms of visa facilitation.

In consequence to the global policy advances made in recent years, the world's openness has also continued to grow and stands now at its highest level ever, counting in total 37 index points in 2018.

**Figure 2.3: Tourism visa openness by country, 2018**



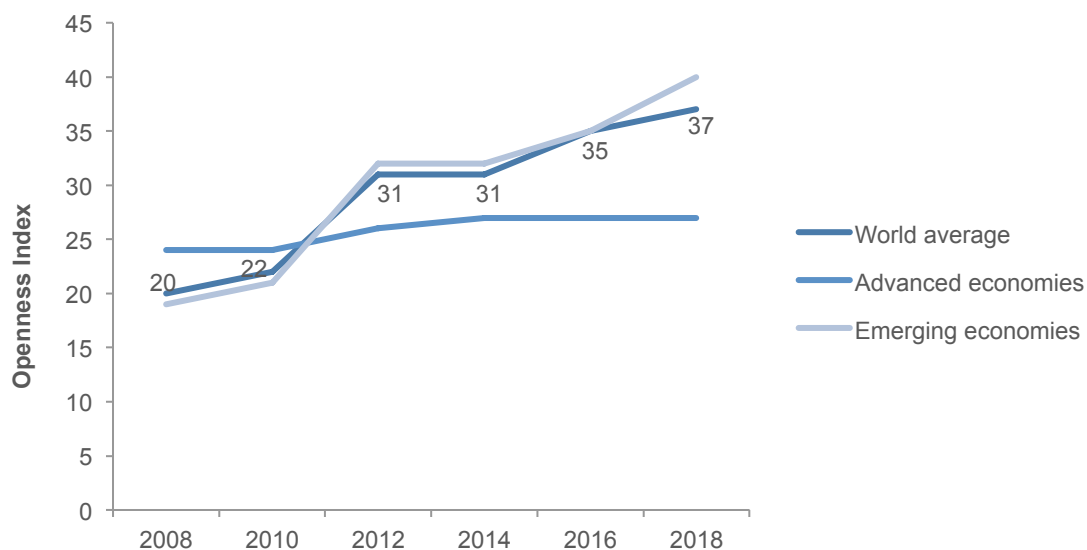
**Note:** The Openness Index is calculated by summing the percentage of the world population affected by no visa weighted by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7, eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0.

**Source:** Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

**Disclaimer:** The maps elaborated by UNWTO are for reference only and do not imply any judgement on the legal status of any territory, or any endorsement or acceptance of such boundaries.

When contrasting visa facilitation efforts of **emerging and advanced economies**<sup>4</sup> with the **openness at the global level**, data indicates that in 2018, emerging economies were most open in terms of entry visa requirements for tourism purposes with an openness of 40 index points. While the openness of emerging countries have generally followed the same development pattern of the world average over the past ten years, increasing significantly between 2010 and 2012 (from 21 to 32 openness index points) and further developing steadily the years thereafter, it was only in 2016 that the openness of this group of countries has surpassed the global average of 37 points climbing to an all-time high of 40 points in 2018. Hence, emerging economies are, and continue to be, the drivers behind the overall globally increasing openness. This trend shows the ongoing strong commitment of emerging countries to further open up to international travellers from around the world. In contrast, advanced economies have remained at the same, and lower, level of openness throughout the past decade.

**Figure 2.4: Openness Index: global trends in visa policy openness, 2008–2018**



Note: The Openness Index ranges from 0 to 100. However, to facilitate understanding, the above visualization only portrays ranges up to 45.

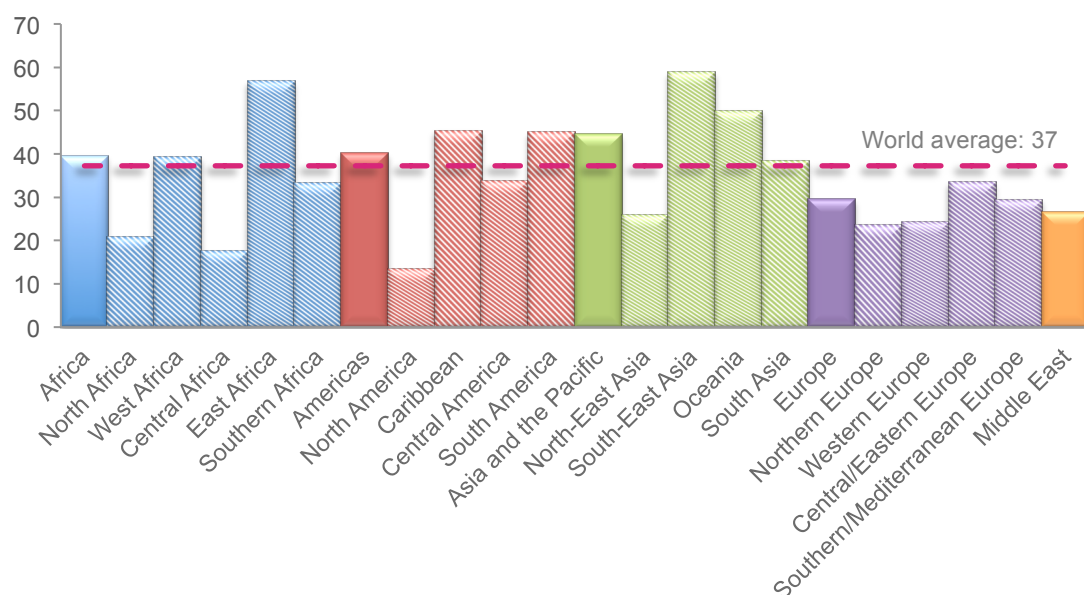
Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

As indicated before, visa policies implemented by the **different regions around the world** and their effects on the world population translated into a global average openness of 37 index points in 2018, compared to 19 points in 2008. In 2018, Asia and the Pacific continued to lead as a region in terms of visa openness with 45 index points, followed by the Americas and Africa (both 40 points) – hence all three regions showing a total

<sup>4</sup> Advanced and emerging economies classifications are based on the International Monetary Fund (IMF); see World Economic Outlook of 2018: [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2018/02/weodata/weoselagr.aspx#a110](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2018/02/weodata/weoselagr.aspx#a110).

openness score above the world average in 2018. While the openness of 40 points of Africa is especially owed to the more diverse use of visa policies (see table 2.1), the openness of the Americas results from more extensive visa exemptions. Leading subregions are: South-East Asia, East Africa and Oceania.

**Figure 2.5: Openness Index: scores by subregions, 2018**



Note: For the (sub)regional totals, the percentages of the four different visa categories and the resulting openness score represent the averages of economies in that group (where destination economies are weighted by natural logarithm of the population size in order to take into account differences in destination size).

The Openness Index ranges from 0 to 100. However, to facilitate understanding, the above visualization only portrays ranges up to 70.

Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

**Asia and the Pacific could secure its leading position in visa facilitation in 2018** by offering diverse visa policy options for travellers, exempting an average of 22% of the world's population from visa requirements and allowing another 21% to obtain a visa on arrival and 17% an eVisa.

In comparison, as stated above, **the Americas were the region that had implemented most visa exemptions** as a group, allowing 35% of the world's population to travel without a visa. Here, the Caribbean was the leading subregion, offering 43% of the world's population to enter without a visa. Nevertheless, North America was the least open subregion in the world, which is why the overall analysis for America states that 56% of the

world's population are required to obtain a traditional visa prior to departure when travelling to the region, lowering its overall openness score in 2018 to just above world average.

Furthermore, **Europe continued to be among the most restrictive destinations**, requesting on average the highest proportion of the world population to obtain a traditional visa prior to departure (66%), although the region had seen an increase of popularity for eVisas (7%). In addition, visa on arrival was only available for an average of 4% of the world's population when travelling to the region.

Although only **10% of the world's population was exempt of visa when visiting Africa in 2018** the region continued to have the highest percentage of countries whose visitors are able to obtain a visa on arrival (33%) and is the second region behind Asia and the Pacific showing the strongest efforts in regard to eliminating the option of traditional visa.

In the **Middle East, 60% of the world population was required to obtain a traditional visa prior to departure** in 2018, while only 6% can travel to the region without a visa. Nevertheless, eVisa continues to gain popularity, with 17% of the world's population abled to apply for an eVisa before travelling to the region.

The following table presents an overview of the 20 most open destinations.

**Table 2.2: Openness Index – least restrictive destinations, 2018**

Country			Country		
Openness Index			Openness Index		
1	Cook Islands	100,0	11	Vanuatu	78,3
	Micronesia	100,0	12	Fiji	78,1
	Niue	100,0	13	Guyana	77,8
4	Dominica	99,9	14	St Vincent and Grenadines	76,6
5	Haiti	99,0	15	Montserrat	76,4
6	Ecuador	88,7	16	Bolivia	75,7
7	St Kitts and Nevis	87,5	17	Antigua and Barbuda	74,6
8	Qatar	86,4	18	<b>Benin</b>	<b>73,2</b>
9	Indonesia	86,0	19	Samoa	72,4
10	<b>Mauritius</b>	<b>84,6</b>	20	Cambodia	72,3

Note: The Openness Index ranges from 0 to 100; the higher the score, the more open the destination.

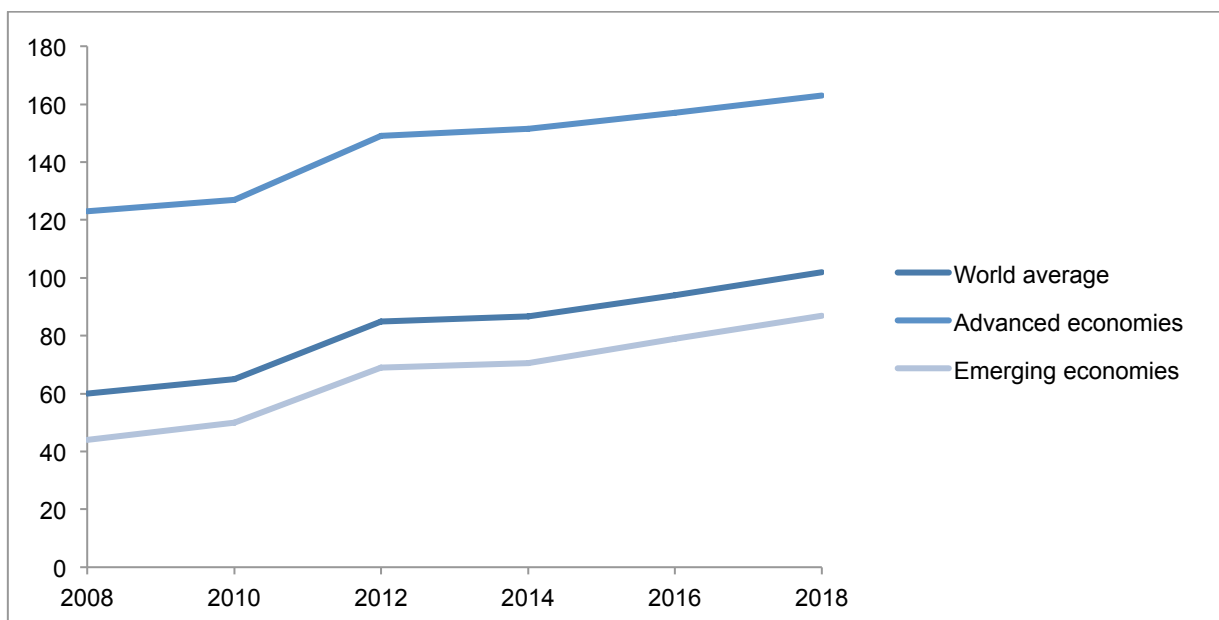
Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

For further information on visa policies per regions and subregions and the corresponding openness of each of them, please see the Annex.

## 2.3 Mobility of citizens around the world

As indicated in the previous sections, implemented visa policies affect the world population differently. Going in more detail into the effects on citizens of specific countries, it can be observed that some countries' citizens enjoy enormous advantages while others are faced with vast challenges due to more stringent visa requirements. This section analyses these trends more in detail, giving insights into the global and regional mobility of citizens. The Mobility Score calculated for this indicator ranges from 0 to 215 – the higher the score, the more mobile citizens of a country are i.e. the easier it is for these citizens to travel in respect to visa requirements encountered.

**Figure 2.6: Mobility Score – global trends in mobility, 2008–2018**



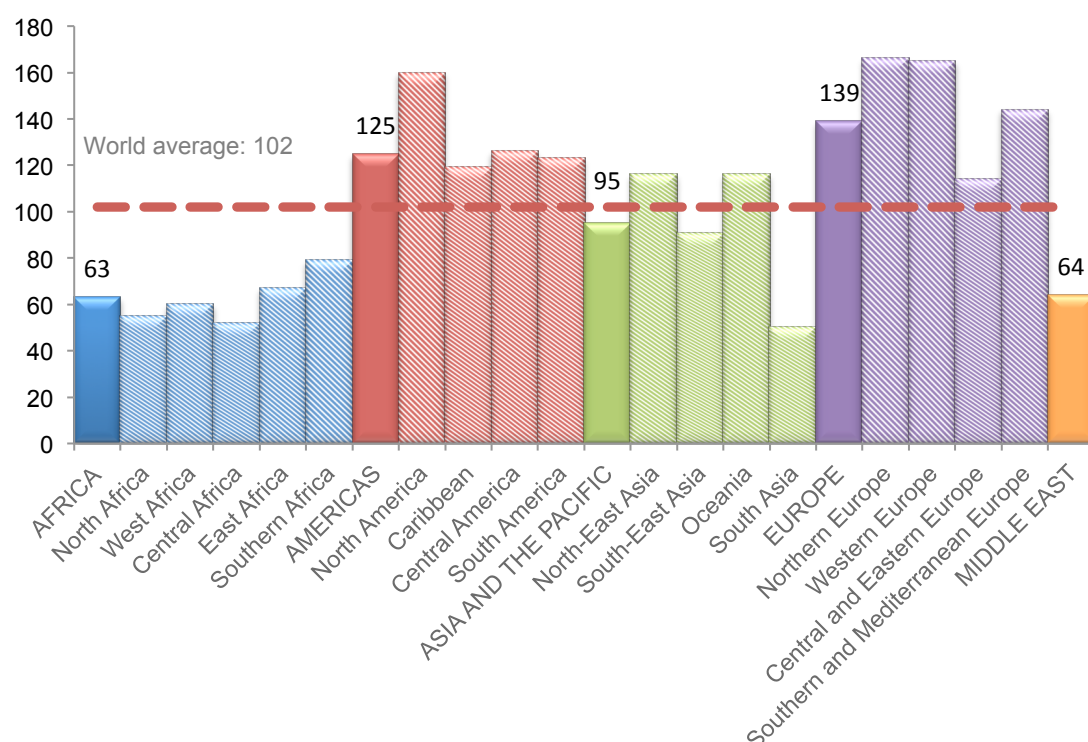
Note: The Mobility score calculated for this indicator ranges from 0 to 215 – the higher the score, the more mobile citizens of a country are. To facilitate understanding, the above visualization only portrays a score range up to 180.

Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

Overall, the mobility of citizens has continuously increased over the past decade, mirroring the facilitation efforts of destinations as explained in the previous section of the report. Especially citizens of advanced economies enjoy much freedom when travelling for tourism purposes, with a mobility score that for the past ten years, has tended to be twice as high as the world's average mobility.

The following Figure provides insights into the mobility of citizens of different regions and subregions.

**Figure 2.7: Mobility Score by region, 2018**



Note: The Mobility score calculated for this indicator ranges from 0 to 215 – the higher the score, the more mobile citizens of a country are.

Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

From a regional perspective, citizens of countries belonging to the regions of **Europe and the Americas currently enjoy the highest mobility**, with 139 and 125 mobility score points, respectively. In comparison, **citizens of the regions of Africa and the Middle East are the least mobile**, facing most visa restrictions when travelling (63 and 64 mobility score points, respectively). The mobility for citizens of the region of Asia and the Pacific falls slightly below the world average of 95 score points.

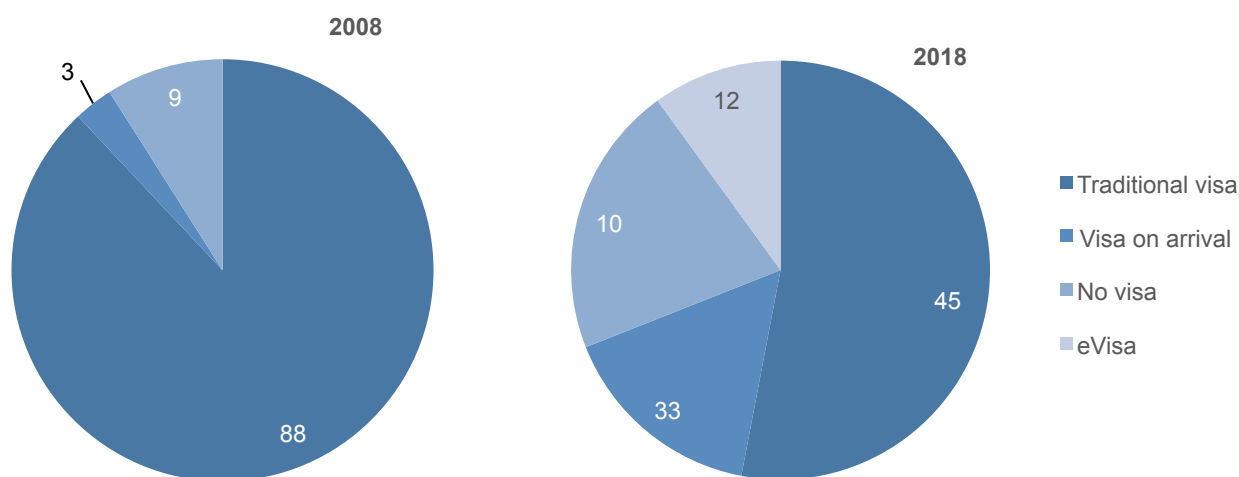
Within the subregions, citizens of Northern and Western European countries benefit from the highest mobility (166 and 165 respectively), followed by North America (160). Citizens from South Asian countries and African subregions were the least mobile in 2018.

### 3 Openness in Africa

The following section focuses specifically on the changes in visa requirements in Africa, diving deeper into subregional visa facilitation patterns and their impacts on citizens of the region and the related subregions, as well as impacts on citizens of other regions around the world.

Looking at the affects on the world population of visa policies implemented by African countries and its evolution over time, it can be observed that in the past decade, a remarkable facilitation trend has taken place in the region. While in 2008, on average a total of 88% of the world population needed to obtain a traditional visa when travelling to Africa, only 45% needed to do so in 2018. As mentioned before, while the amount of visa exemptions has stayed stable, it is especially due to the diversification of visa policies i.e. the increasing introduction of visa on arrival or eVisa policies that have driven the improvements in the region.

**Figure 3.1: World population affected by visa policies when travelling to Africa, 2008 and 2018 (%)**



Note: Before 2012 no differentiation was made between eVisa and Visa on arrival. Both categories were grouped under the latter.

Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

### 3.1 The openness of Africa to the regions of the world

The following table indicates the visa requirements of Africa and its subregions, towards the world population, in percentage. It can be observed that countries from Southern Africa have implemented most visa exemptions. At the same time, the high proportion of traditional visa policies of North, Central and Southern Africa indicate that there is a high potential for progress to apply a greater variety of visa policies, making active use of alternatives such as visa on arrival and eVisa policies.

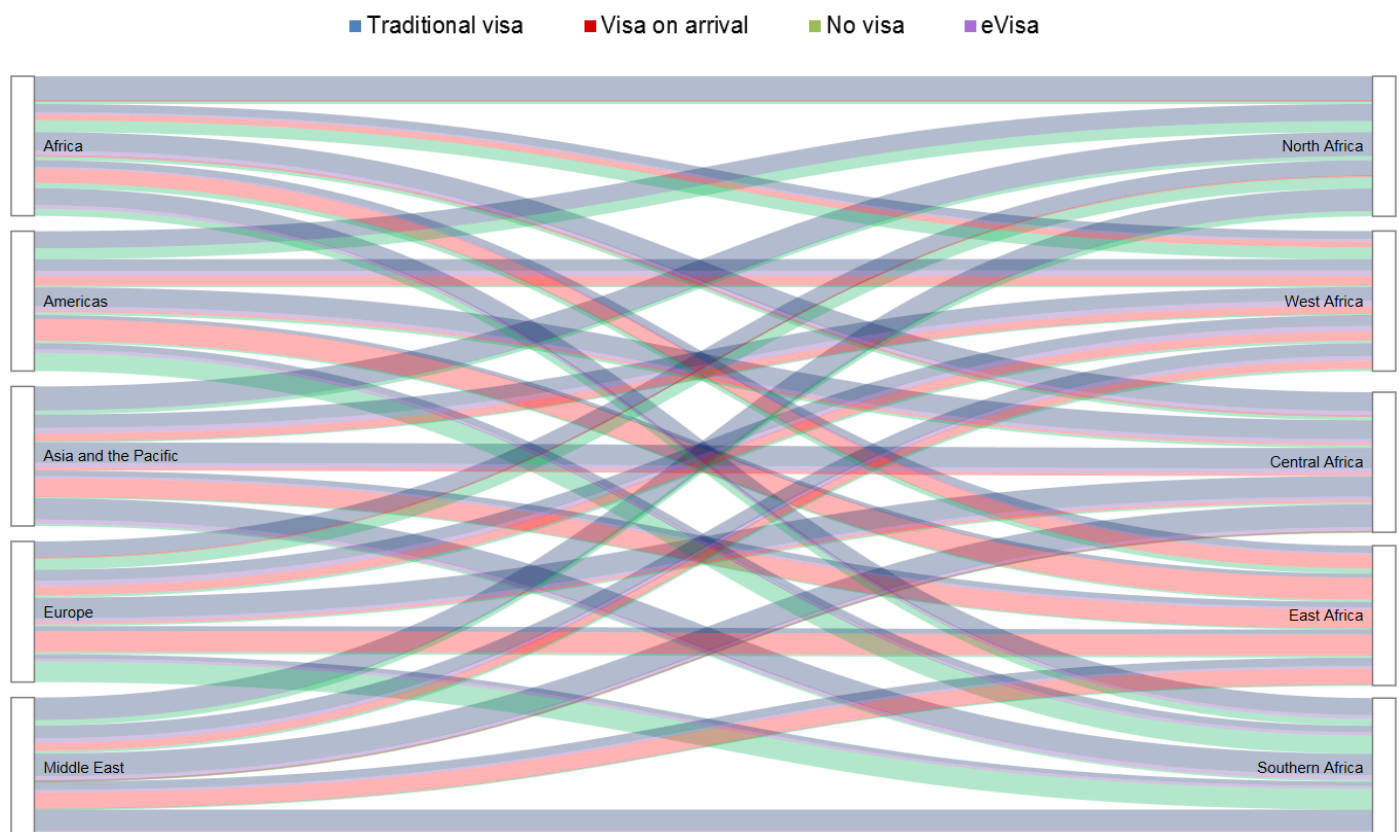
**Table 3.1: World population affected by types of visa in Africa, 2018 (%)**

	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional visa
<b>Africa</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>45</b>
North Africa	20	1	0	79
West Africa	11	28	18	43
Central Africa	4	8	16	72
East Africa	7	67	6	20
Southern Africa	26	0	15	59

Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

The following figure visualises the regional differences and the population affected by Africa's subregional visa policies in 2018. It clearly shows how Southern Africa used the no visa approach for the European market as well as for the Americas. It also shows how East Africa applied its Visa on arrival approach to all regions around the world.

**Figure 3.2: Population affected by interregional visa facilitation, 2018**

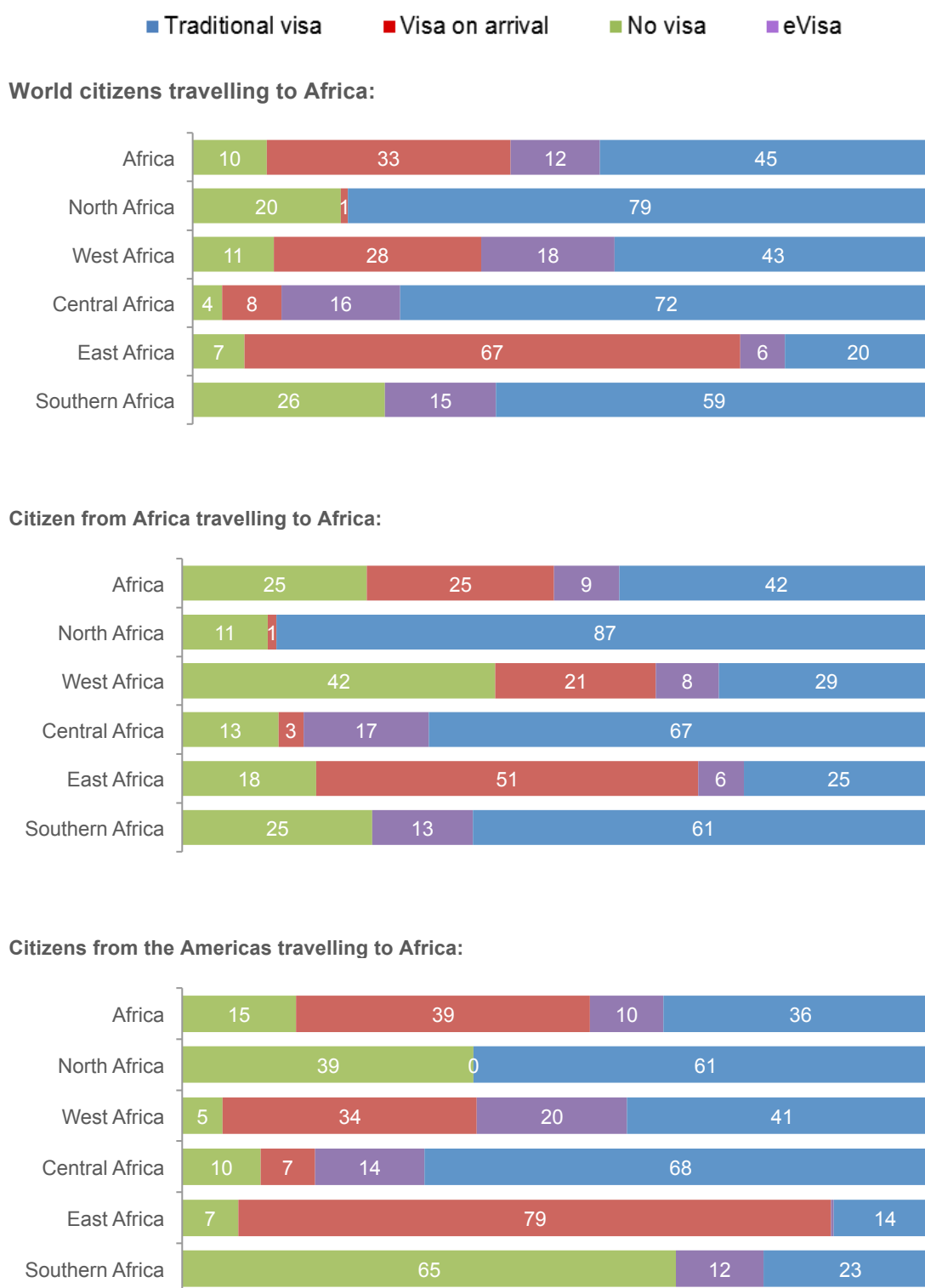


**Note:** The five regions of origins of travellers are connected with the five African subregions of destination, through coloured stripes lines, where each of these lines represents a type of policy. The width of the lines between the two groups (origin and destination) shows the scope of population affected from a regional source-market travelling to a regional tourist destination. The wider the line, the more population is affected.

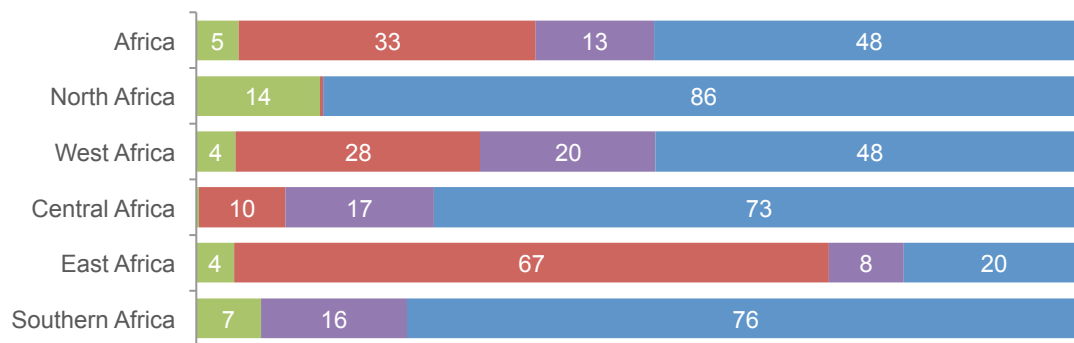
**Source:** Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

The following pages provide an overview of the changes in the distribution of the visa policies over the past ten years of Africa and its subregions towards the world population in general, as well as towards the citizens of the different incoming regions.

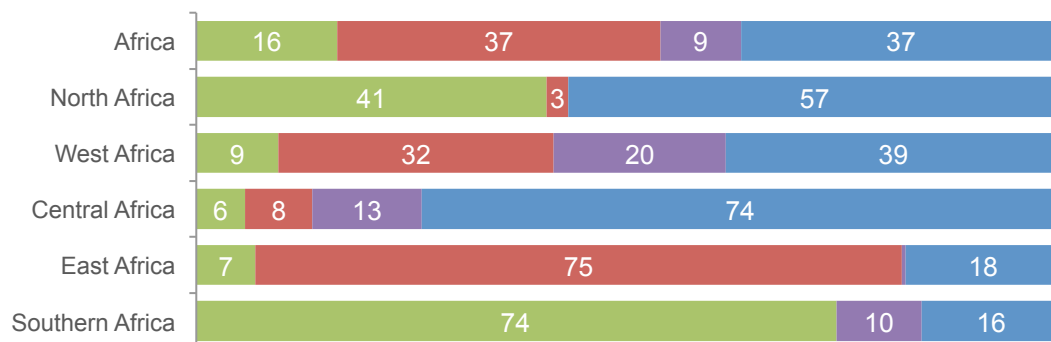
Figure 3.3: Population affected by visa policies of Africa, 2018 (%)



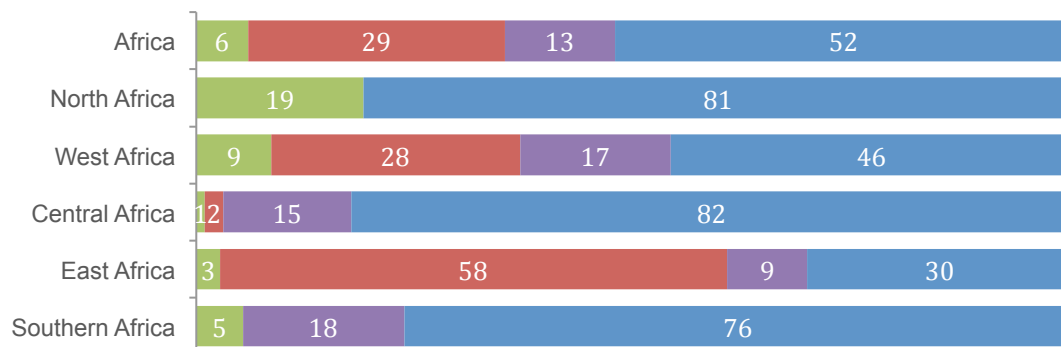
#### Citizens from Asia and the Pacific travelling to Africa:



#### Citizens from Europe travelling to Africa:



#### Citizens from the Middle East travelling to Africa:



Comparing the above 2018 data and data from 2008 (see the following pages), analysing the impacts of different visa policies implemented by the subregions in Africa on the citizens of different regions around the world, the following can be observed:

In 2008, 88% of the world population required a traditional visa before travelling to Africa and only 3% were allowed to apply a visa upon arrival at the border, while 9% were exempted of a visa when travelling to Africa.

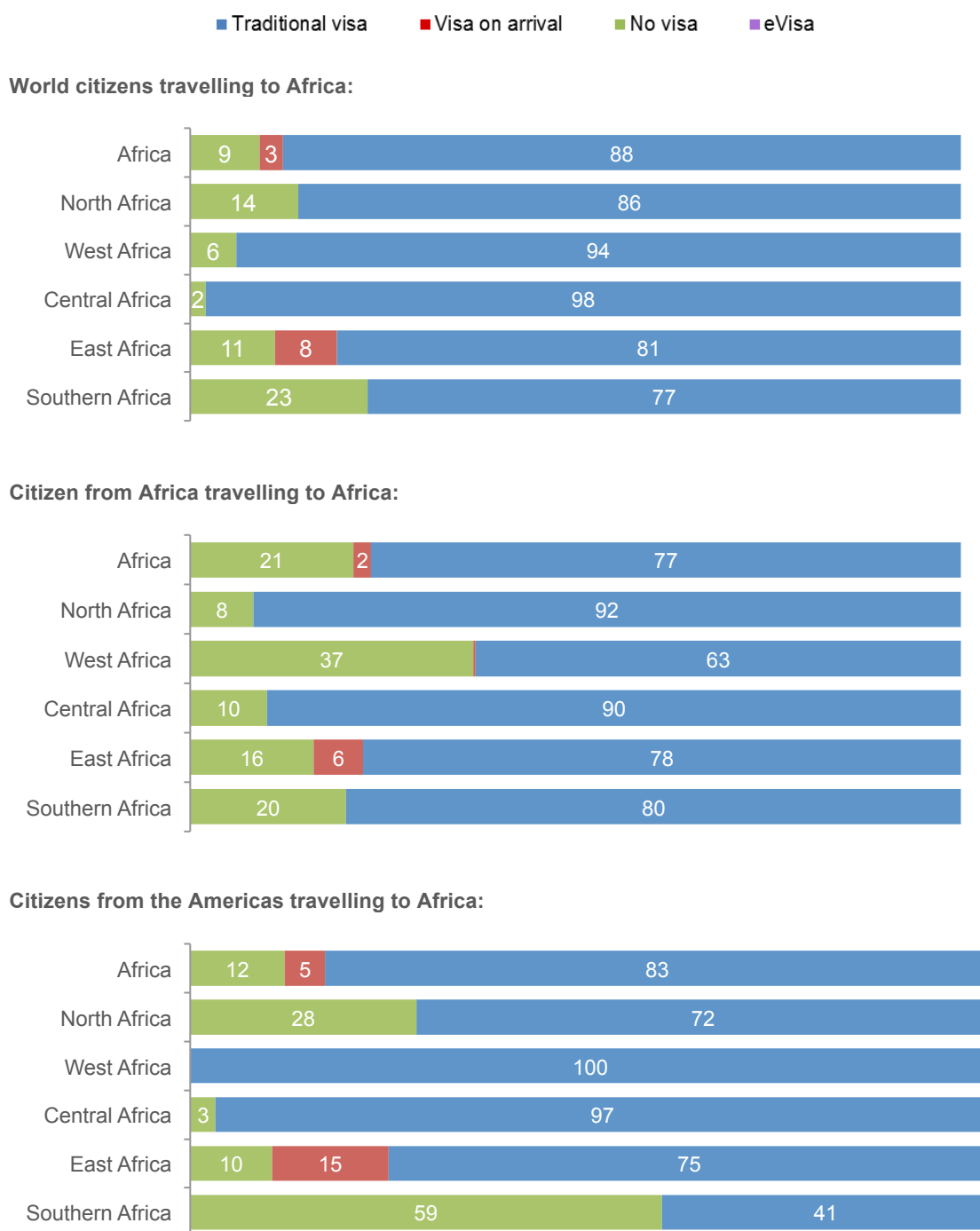
Since then, data indicates that much facilitation has taken place, replacing traditional visa through eVisa and Visa on arrival systems and making use of modern information technology.

In 2018, while 45% of the world population required a traditional visa before travelling to Africa, only some 10% of the world's population was able to enter a destination without a visa. The significant changes are displayed in the popularity of facilitation through the implementation of visa on arrival facilitation measures (33%), followed by eVisa (12%).

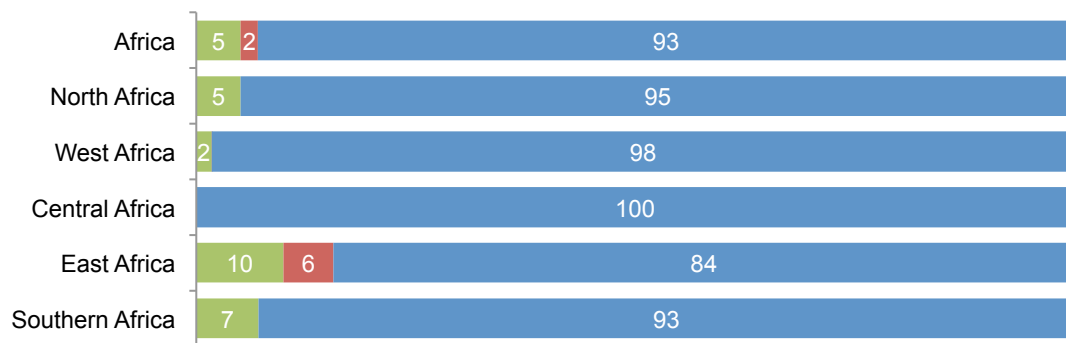
While Central Africa is one of the most restricted subregion in the world, East Africa is the second most open subregion in the world.

- With 87% of citizens from Africa able to travel to a destination in West Africa without a visa makes **West Africa, the subregion which has facilitated visa most to Africans.**
- **Southern Africa is the subregion which allows most citizens from the Americas and most citizens from Europe to enter most without a visa**, with 65% and 74% of their citizens respectively.
- With 67% of the world population able to apply for a visa at the border, this positions **Visa on arrival as the most popular visa policies in East Africa.**
- Although **Central Africa is one of the most closed subregions in the world**, with 72% of the world population required to obtain a traditional visa in 2018, the subregion has slowly introduced visa facilitation compared to 2008, when 98% of the world population was required to obtain a traditional visa.
- Although **North Africa** subregion is the only subregion not applying eVisa, it **is the second leading subregion in Africa** (after Southern Africa) **in terms of visa exemptions** (20% of the world's population does not need a visa to visit North Africa).

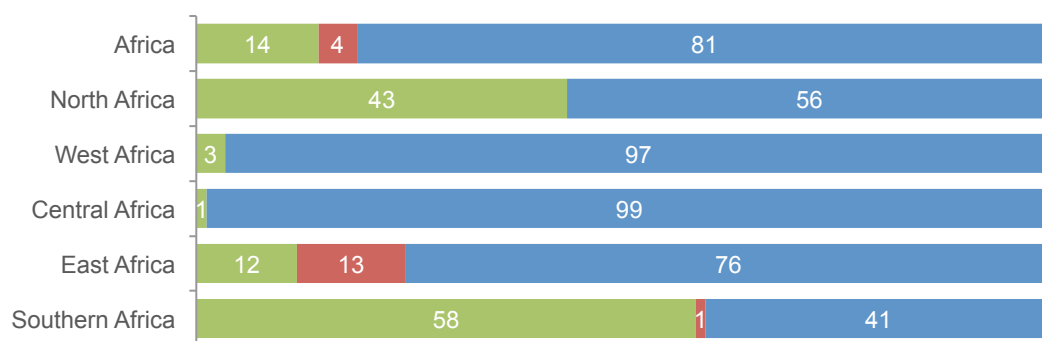
Figure 3.4: Population affected by visa policies of Africa, 2008 (%)



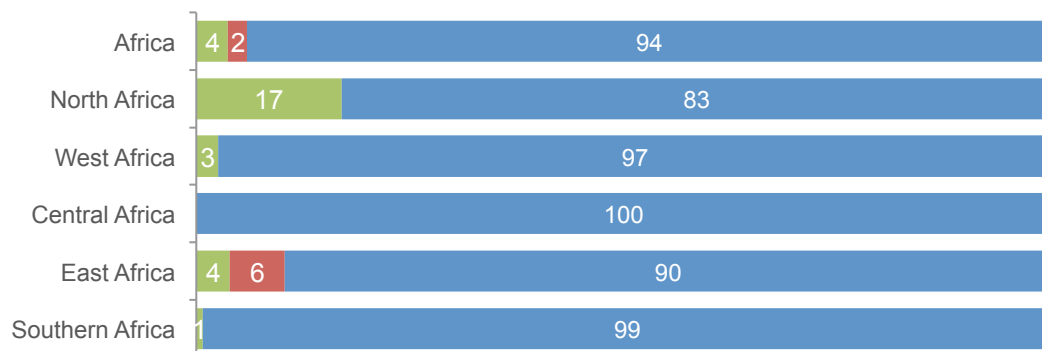
**Citizens from Asia and the Pacific travelling to Africa:**



**Citizens from Europe travelling to Africa:**



**Citizens from the Middle East travelling to Africa:**



## 3.2 The openness of Africa's subregions to each other

Table 3.2 indicates the visa requirements of Africa and its subregions, towards its own citizens, in percentage. Overall, it can be observed that Africa as a region has implemented more visa exemptions instead of using visa on arrival policies for the citizens of the region than towards the overall global population (see table 3.1 for comparison). It is especially West Africa that offers currently more visa exemption to African citizens but all of the other regions follow a similar tendency, except for South Africa, which has very similar policy patterns for citizens of Africa than generally towards the world.

**Table 3.2: Population of Africa affected by intraregional types of visa within Africa, 2018 (%)**

	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional visa
<b>Africa</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>42</b>
North Africa	11	1	0	87
West Africa	42	21	8	29
Central Africa	13	3	17	67
East Africa	18	51	6	25
Southern Africa	25	0	13	61

Source: Compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

The following figure visualises the subregional differences and population of Africa affected by its own visa policies in 2018. In the cases of West and South Africa it shows a dominating no visa policy approach towards the citizens of its own region. Also clearly visible is the East Africa's tendency of implementing a Visa on arrival policy.

**Figure 3.5: Population affected by intraregional visa facilitation, 2018**



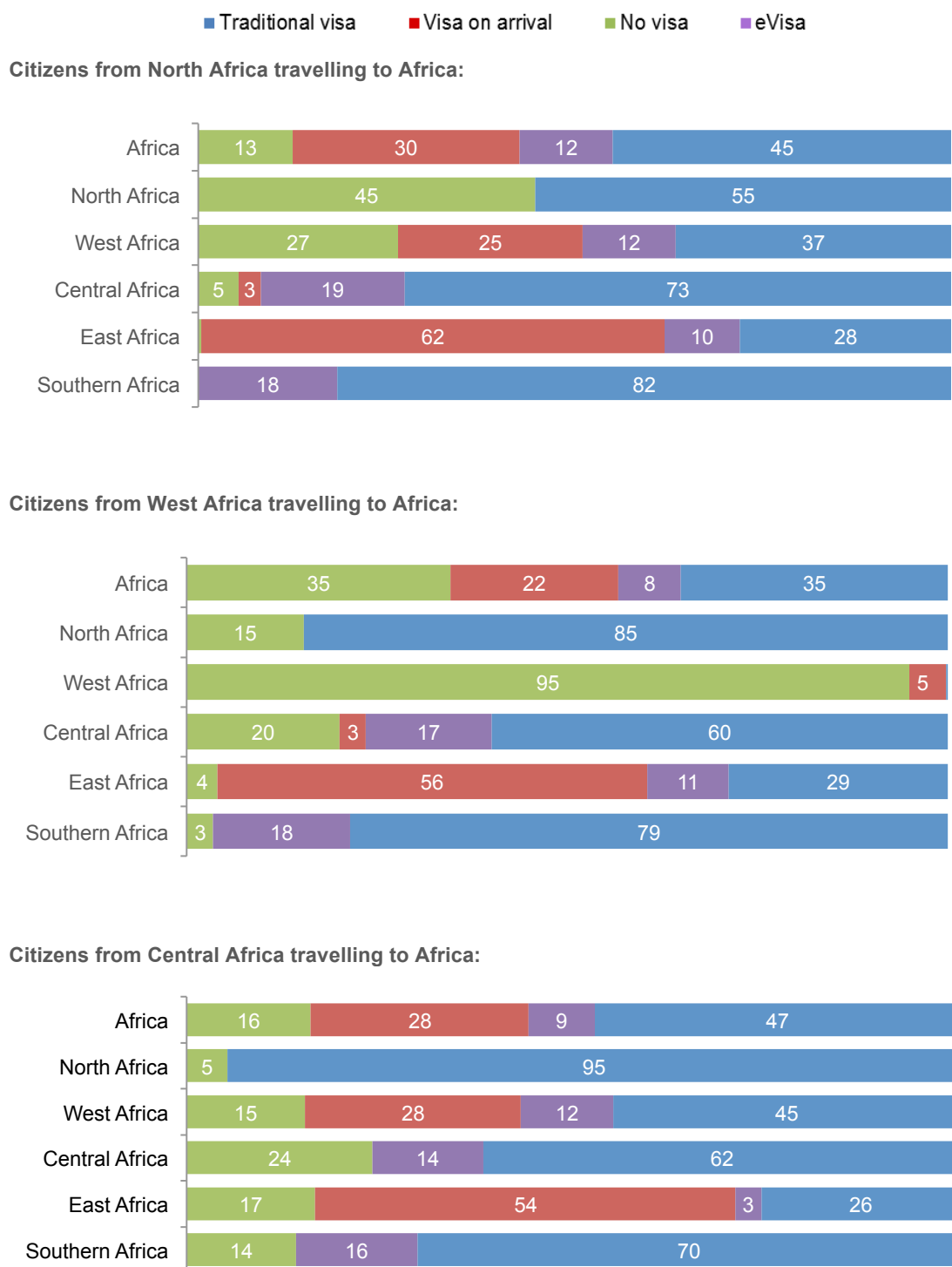
Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.

The following pages provide more detail about the changes in the distribution of the visa policies over the past ten years of Africa and its subregions towards its own population.

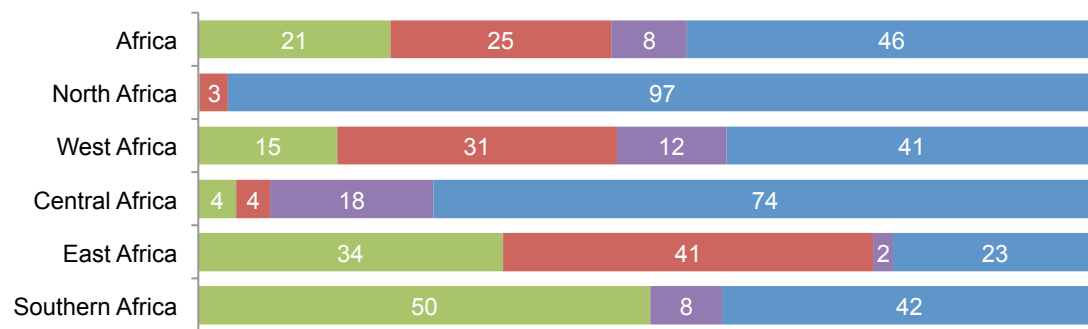
Note: The five subregions of origin are connected with five subregions of destinations through coloured striped lines, where each of these lines represents a type of visa policy. The width of the striped lines between two subregions shows the population affected from a subregional source-market travelling to a subregional tourist destination. The wider the line, the more population affected.

The following figure indicates the percentage distribution of visa policies of each of the subregions of origin applied to the source market citizens of Africa.

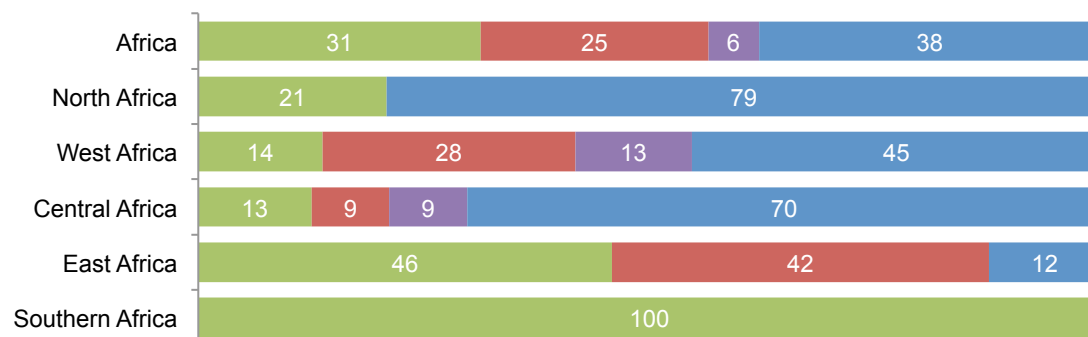
**Figure 3.6: Citizens of Africa affected by intraregional visa policies of Africa, 2018 (%)**



### Citizens from East Africa travelling to Africa:



### Citizens from Southern Africa travelling to Africa:



From analysing the above data, the following observations within Africa can be made for 2018:

- The two subregions within Africa which facilitate more to citizens of their own regions are West Africa and Southern Africa
- **West Africa's** high level of open policies towards citizens of its own region is mainly driven by the facilitation measures of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), enabling the free movement of people within its economic bloc;
- **Southern Africa's** 100% free movement of its citizens within their subregion can be credited to the Southern African Development Community (SADC), enabling the free movement of its citizens within its territories;
- When further looking into intraregional visa policies within Africa, 62% of citizens of **Central Africa** still require a traditional visa when travelling within their own subregion;

- In the case of intraregional travel within **North Africa**, slightly more than half of its citizens still require a traditional visa to travel within their own region, while slightly less than half of its citizens do not require a visa; and
- For citizens of **East Africa**, visa policies which applied to citizens of its own region varies significantly, with 41% of its citizens abled to apply for its visa at the border, 2% through eVisa, and 23% through a traditional visa, while 34% of its citizens do not require any visas.

The following table presents an overview of the leading destinations in Africa in terms of openness.

**Table 3.3: Openness Index – least restrictive destinations in Africa, 2018**

	Country	Country openness		Country	Country openness
1	Mauritius	84,6	11	Djibouti	70,0
2	Benin	74,9		Comoros Islands	70,0
3	Rwanda	71,8		Madagascar	70,0
4	Guinea-Bissau	71,5		Somalia	70,0
5	Togo	71,4	15	Kenya	69,7
6	Cape Verde	71,3	16	Zimbabwe	67,9
7	Uganda	71,1	17	Tunisia	67,4
8	Mozambique	70,8	18	Senegal	66,8
9	Seychelles	70,6	19	Ethiopia	65,1
10	Mauritania	70,4	20	São Tomé e Príncipe	64,7

Note: Scores range from 0 to 100; the higher the score, the better.

Source: Data compiled by the UNWTO, based on information of national official institutions.

### 3.3 Destinations in Africa which have improved visa procedures

In terms of improvements of visa facilitation over the last decade in Africa, the determined actions taken by the governments have led to a total of **4170 positive improvements of visa procedures for destination-source market pairs**, by either allowing a visa to be obtained in electronic form (**eVisa**) (**25% of total positive improvements**), or to be obtained **on arrival** (**62% of total positive improvements**), or by simply **abolishing the visa requirement altogether** (**12% of total positive improvements**).

By analysing the improvements made, by the destinations of the 5 subregions of Africa over the past 10 years (2008-2018), of visa procedures for destination-source market pairs:

- **North Africa introduced 33 positive improvements of visa procedures** for destination-source market pairs, of which, 85% of the positive changes consisted of abolishing visa requirement altogether, while the remaining 15% consisted in facilitating the visitor by allowing a visa to be obtained on arrival;
- **West Africa introduced 1649 positive improvements of visa procedures** for destination-source market pairs, of which, 56% of the positive changes consisted of facilitating visitors by allowing a visa to be obtained on arrival, while 30% consisted in facilitating through eVisa, and 14% positive changes consisted of abolishing visa requirement altogether;
- **Central Africa introduced 482 positive improvements of visa procedures** for each destination-source market pairs, of which the majority of the positive changes (70%) consisted in facilitating visitors by allowing a visa to be obtained electronically through an eVisa, while 12% could obtained a visa on arrival. 18% of the positive changes consisted of abolishing visa requirement;
- **East Africa introduced 1810 positive improvements of visa procedures** for each destination-source market pairs, of which, the majority of the positive changes (89%) constituted in facilitating visitors by allowing visa to be obtained on arrival, while 6% of the positive changes allowed visitors to apply an eVisa, and 5% consisted in abolishing visa altogether; and
- **Southern Africa 196 positive improvements of visa procedures** for each destination-source market pair, of which, 39% of the positive changes consisted of abolishing visa procedures altogether, while the remaining 61% consisted in facilitating the visitor by allowing a visa to be obtained electronically.

The table below lists the destinations, which have improved visa procedures for 100 or more countries of origin during the last ten years.

**Table 3.4: Destinations in Africa which improved visa procedures for 100 or more countries of origin between 2008 –2018**

Destination	Number of improvements
Gabon	194
São Tomé e Príncipe	194
Madagascar	194
Somalia	194
Djibouti	193
Rwanda	187
Mozambique	186
Guinea-Bissau	180
Sierra Leone	179
Togo	179
Cabo Verde	178
Ghana	176
Côte d'Ivoire	175
Benin	170
Mauritania	169
Uganda	162
Kenya	143
Lesotho	127
Tanzania	125
Zimbabwe	120
Senegal	100

Note: An improvement is the facilitation of a visa formality by either simply abolishing the traditional paper visa or allowing an eVisa or visa on arrival. Each destination-country of origin pair is calculated.

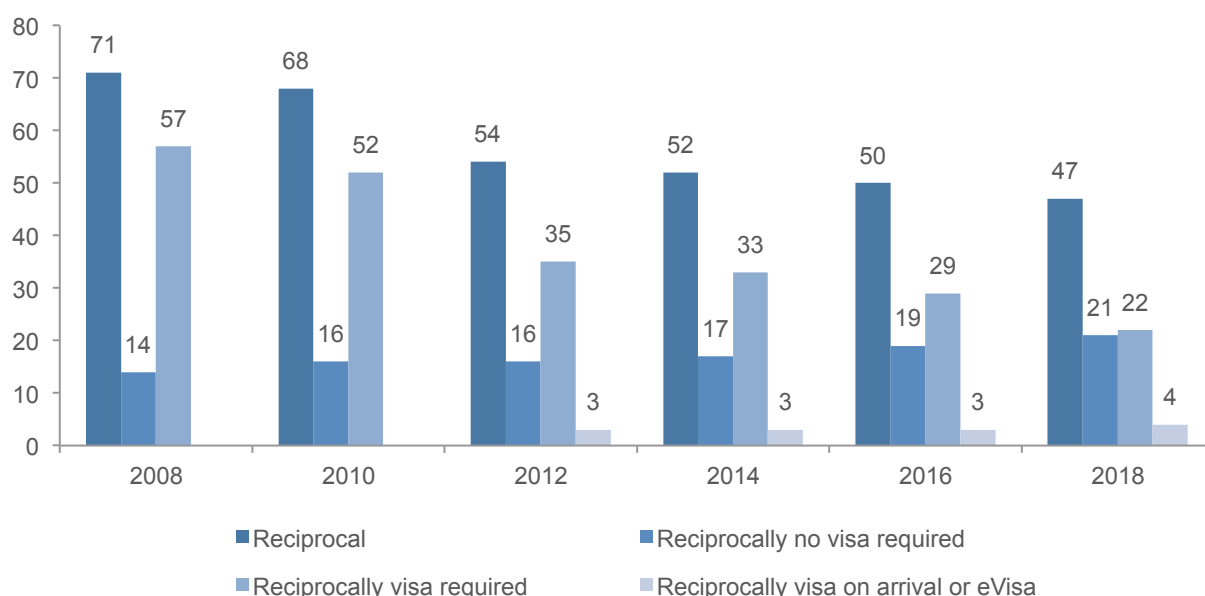
Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information from national official institutions.

## 4 Reciprocity

When analysing countries' openness to one another, it can be observed that in 2018, 47% of all visa policies were reciprocal, with 21% of these policies being mutually open and 22% being mutually closed. Furthermore, in 3% of policy pairs, both countries had visa on arrival, while in 1% of the pairs both countries had an eVisa.<sup>5</sup>

Between 2008 and 2018, the proportion of reciprocally open policies, (i.e. neither country requires the other's citizens to obtain a visa) increased from 14% of all pairs to 21%. In the same period, reciprocally closed policies (i.e. both countries require each other's citizens to obtain a traditional visa) considerably decreased, from 57% to 22%.

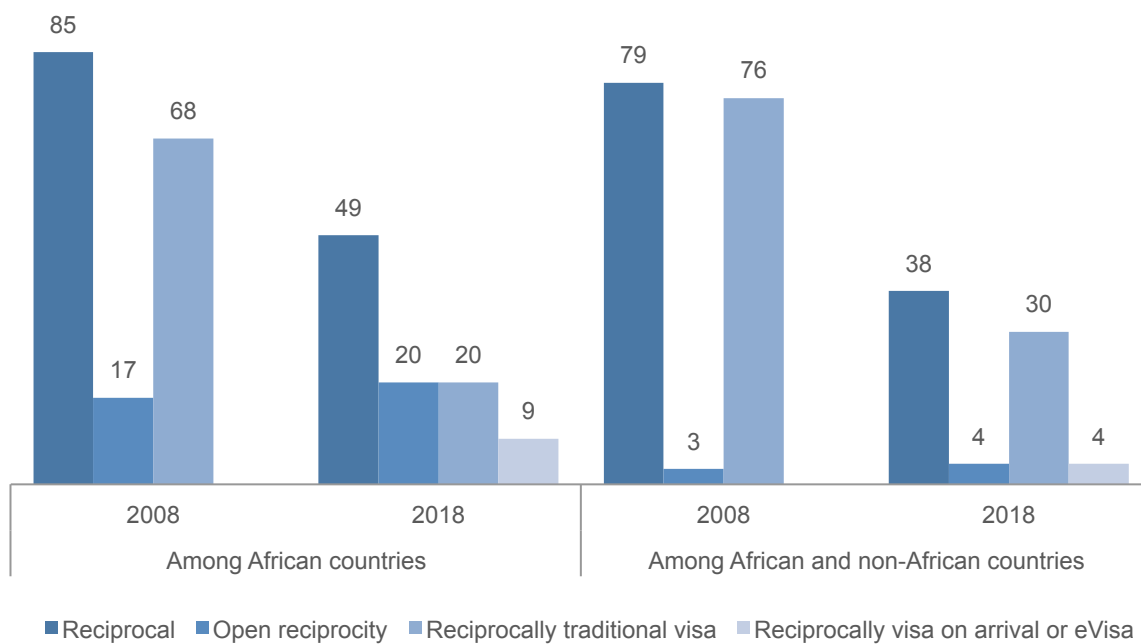
**Figure 4.1: Global reciprocal policies, 2008–2018 (%)**



Looking at Africa's open reciprocity, countries of Africa with reciprocally open policies improved from 17% in 2008 to 20% in 2018, while at the same time, reciprocally open policies between African countries and non-African countries only improved from 3% to 4% in the past decade.

<sup>5</sup> For the analysis of reciprocity, data has been used on 37,830 country pairs in total [ $37,830 = (195 \times 195) - 195$ ]. As each pair is combined with its reciprocal (for instance Kenya–Rwanda with Rwanda–Kenya), there is consequently only half the number of reciprocal pairs (i.e., 18,915).

**Figure 4.2: Reciprocal policies among African countries and non-African countries, 2008–2018 (%)**



## Annex

**Table A.1: World population affected by visa policies of different subregions around the world, 2018**

	Openness <sup>a</sup>	No visa	Visa on arrival	eVisa	Traditional visa
	World population affected by visa policies (%)				
<b>World</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>53</b>
Advanced economies <sup>b</sup>	27	24	0	6	70
Emerging economies <sup>b</sup>	40	20	20	11	49
By UNWTO regions:					
<b>Africa</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>45</b>
North Africa	21	20	1	0	79
West Africa	39	11	28	18	43
Central Africa	18	4	8	16	72
East Africa	57	7	67	6	20
Southern Africa	33	26	0	15	59
<b>Americas</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>56</b>
North America	13	9	0	10	82
Caribbean	45	43	1	3	52
Central America	34	32	3	0	65
South America	45	34	11	7	48
<b>Asia and the Pacific</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>41</b>
North-East Asia	26	23	2	3	72
South-East Asia	59	32	26	17	26
Oceania	50	27	18	21	34
South Asia	38	2	34	25	39
<b>Europe</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>66</b>
Northern Europe	24	24	0	0	76
Western Europe	24	24	0	0	76
Central/Eastern Europe	33	20	8	15	57
Southern/ Mediterranean Europe	29	28	1	2	69
of which EU-28 <sup>c</sup>	24	24	0	0	76
<b>Middle East</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>60</b>

- Notes:
- a) Scores range from 0 to 100; the higher the openness score, the more open a country is. Openness indicates to what extent a destination is facilitating tourism. It is calculated by summing the percentage of the world population exempt from obtaining a visa with the percentages of no visa weighted by 1, visa on arrival weighted by 0.7, eVisa by 0.5 and traditional visa weighted by 0. For the (sub)regional totals, the percentages of the four different visa categories and the resulting openness score represent the averages of economies in that group (where destination economies are weighted by natural logarithm of the population size (i.e.  $\ln [1,000 \text{ population}]$ ) in order to take into account differences in destination size).
  - b) Advanced and emerging economies classifications are based on the International Monetary Fund (IMF); see World Economic Outlook of 2018 (access date: January 2019): <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2018/02/weodata/weoselagr.aspx#a110>
  - c) The EU-28 countries are Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Ireland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Source: Data compiled by UNWTO based on information of national official institutions.



Copyright © 2019, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)  
Copyright cover photo: © Sam74100 | Dreamstime.com

**2019 Visa Openness Report for Africa, preliminary report**

ISBN (printed version): 978-92-844-2079-7  
ISBN (electronic version): 978-92-844-2080-3 | DOI: 10.18111/9789284420803

Published by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Madrid, Spain.  
First printing: 2019  
All rights reserved.

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) T  
Calle del Poeta Joan Maragall, 42  
28020 Madrid  
Spain

el.: (+34) 915 67 81 00  
Fax: (+34) 915 71 37 33  
Website: [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)  
E-mail: [info@unwto.org](mailto:info@unwto.org)

**Note: This edition is a preliminary issue prepared exclusively for the 1st UNWTO/ICAO Ministerial Conference – Tourism and Air Transport in Africa held in Cabo Verde on 27–29 March 2019. Content might not coincide with later released versions.**

The designations employed and the presentation of material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinions whatsoever on the part of the Secretariat of the World Tourism Organization concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area, or of its authorities or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

**Citation:** World Tourism Organization (2019), *2019 Visa Openness Report for Africa, preliminary report*, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420803>.

All UNWTO publications are protected by copyright. Therefore, and unless otherwise specified, no part of a UNWTO publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or utilized in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, microfilm, scanning, without prior permission in writing. UNWTO encourages dissemination of its work and is pleased to consider permissions, licensing, and translation requests related to UNWTO publications.

Permission to photocopy UNWTO material in Spain must be obtained through:

CEDRO, Centro Español de Derechos Reprográficos  
Calle Alcalá, 26, 3º  
28014 Madrid  
Spain

Tel.: (+34) 913 08 63 30  
Fax: (+34) 913 08 63 27  
Website: [www.cedro.org](http://www.cedro.org)  
E-mail: [cedro@cedro.org](mailto:cedro@cedro.org)

For authorization of the reproduction of UNWTO works outside of Spain, please contact one of CEDRO's partner organizations, with which bilateral agreements are in place (see: [www.cedro.org/en](http://www.cedro.org/en)).

For all remaining countries as well as for other permissions, requests should be addressed directly to the World Tourism Organization. For applications see: <http://publications.unwto.org/content/rights-permissions>.



The **World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**, a United Nations specialized agency, is the leading international organization with the decisive and central role in promoting the development of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It serves as a global forum for tourism policy issues and a practical source of tourism know-how. Its membership includes 158 countries, 6 territories, 2 permanent observers and over 500 Affiliate Members.



World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) [www.unwto.org](http://www.unwto.org)

