

STRATEGIC SUMMARY: MOBILIZING THE INTRA-AFRICAN DIASPORA

The participation paradox: high digital engagement vs. systemic retreat

The primary story of African migration is fundamentally African. With **24.1 million people**¹ officially recorded as living and remitting within the continent, as of 2024, the intra-African diaspora represents our most proximate and underutilised sovereign wealth engine. However, phase 1 findings reveal a profound **systems failure** rather than a lack of interest preventing their mobilisation. We must move beyond merely counting this community to building the trust frameworks and visibility infrastructure where digital dark zones exist, and move the diaspora from the shadows of informality into the formal investment economy.

Segment 1: digital visibility vs. institutional invisibility

Using pioneering digital nowcasting, phase 1 of our study proved that the diaspora is hyper-active and identifiable in digital spaces. **We established a statistically significant 0.76 correlation between official UN migration data and Meta API reach, proving that the intra-African diaspora is digitally active. For instance, an analysis of three main regional corridors established a near-perfect alignment between 2024 UN DESA migrant stock data vs Meta reach data.**² This near-perfect alignment (96% coverage) proves that in digitally integrated regions, Meta's "Expatriate" algorithm is a high-fidelity mirror of reality. This latent intent was confirmed by a targeted campaign in the South Africa-Zimbabwe corridor, which reached approximately one million individuals and achieved a 4.29% click-through rate, more than double the industry standard.³ However, this high level of digital engagement was accompanied by a staggering 99.98% abandonment rate at the point of financial data commitment. This is not a research failure; it is empirical proof of a deep-seated trust deficit. The diaspora displays a strategic desire to remain invisible to the formal institutional systems.

Segment 2: systems failure – the barrier to inclusion

Traditional "top-down" formalisation efforts are failing because they ignore the community's strategic need for privacy and the infrastructure gaps in critical regions. While the World Bank estimates that at least 50% of African remittances flow through informal channels, our data suggests this is a deliberate choice to avoid institutional risk rather than a mere consequence of high costs. **Qualitative insights reveal a latent investment class with a profound appetite for wealth-building.** Despite this readiness to invest, there is currently no trust infrastructure that allows the diaspora to mobilise capital without feeling exposed to legal or regulatory scrutiny. This infrastructure gap confirms that the barrier to inclusion is a system failure—a lack of secure, value-first mechanisms designed for a population that survives through bottom-up informality. **Furthermore, Phase 1 identified a market failure in digital dark zones such as Sudan, South Sudan, and Burkina Faso, where ad-tech firms like Meta fail to provide any granular data.** This

¹ 2024 UN DESA migrant stock data. Available at: [Remitscope](#).

² Zimbabwe-RSA (1,072,600 vs ~1,031,900); Nigeria-Benin (92,400 vs ~83,800); and Kenya-Uganda (23,499 vs ~51,050)

³ Industry standards for financial/remittance services average a 1-2% CTR, this campaign achieved a 4.29% unique CTR, representing a 4.5x higher engagement rate than expected. This, combined with a 92.36% saturation of the known migrant stock, validates the high latent demand for the proposed economic framework.

is not a random oversight; it is the result of data poverty within these countries. Meta's expat targeting - which identifies people who "Lived in X country" - relies on high-frequency digital signals like credit card transactions, frequent international travel, and high-speed broadband usage. If a migrant from Sudan to South Sudan relies on cash, uses an unlinked SIM card, and does not have a long-term digital footprint in the host country's formal e-commerce sector, the algorithm fails to categorise them as an expat.⁴ Equally, legal and safety barriers prevent ad-tech companies like Meta from operating at full capacity in certain African nations due to longstanding conflict, sanctions, device anonymity costs, and high data costs.⁵

The targeting logic confirms that the barrier to inclusion is a dual system failure: a lack of secure, value-first financial mechanisms and a lack of sovereign digital sensors to identify migrants in less integrated corridors.

Segment 3: strategic roadmap – Building the infrastructure for continental visibility

Phase 2 of this initiative moves beyond static estimates to focus on the systematic elimination of digital dark zones and the construction of trust-anchored pathways. The primary goal is to rally support for investment in **continental visibility infrastructure**. This begins with the development of **corridor-specific digital proxies** - utilising peer-to-peer networks and mobile-money data-sharing agreements to identify migrant communities in regions where global platforms record zero reach. By resourcing these "Proxies," we can convert invisible flows into identifiable economic energy without compromising migrant safety. Our objective is to build the digital plumbing that ensures no African migrant—regardless of their corridor—is left invisible to the systems that could accelerate their continental impact.

While the intra-African diaspora is hyper-active in integrated corridors, a fundamental data poverty persists in essential routes such as Sudan-South Sudan and Burkina Faso-Côte d'Ivoire, which are among the largest migration corridors. Of the Top 100 intra-African migration corridors, less than one-third are digitally mapped. Global ad-tech platforms are commercially and technically misaligned with the African migration reality, resulting in digital dark zones where millions of economic actors remain invisible to formal systems. To unlock the proximity dividend, the strategic priority must shift from relying on external tech stacks to investing in sovereign **continental visibility infrastructure**. This is not merely a data challenge; it is a prerequisite for financial inclusion. The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) estimates that USD 10 to 24 billion is lost annually to informal cross-border trade.⁶ **Without infrastructure designed to navigate high-informality zones, the informal economy will remain unmapped and unmobilized.**

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⁴ Fatehkia, M., Kashyap, R., & Weber, I. (2018). Using Facebook ad data to track the global digital gender gap. *World Development*, 107, 189–209.

⁵ Villa, M., Pavia, A. (2023). Irregular migration from North Africa: Shifting local and regional dynamics

⁶ Kedir, A. M., J. Siwale, and S. Kamara. (2025). The contribution of informal cross-border trade to a successful African Continental Free Trade Area. *AIB Insights* 26, no. 1.