

2021

ANNUAL REPORT



APRI
AFRICA POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE



This Report is an account of the work of APRI – Africa Policy Research Institute – in 2025. APRI is an independent and nonpartisan African think tank based in Berlin, Germany. It researches key policy issues affecting African countries and the African continent. APRI aims to provide insights to the German and European Union policy-making process on Africa.

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Note from our Executive Director

I am very proud to share with you APRI's Annual Report for 2025.

Looking back, what stands out to me about the year is not a single event, but the extent to which the system the world has relied on no longer holds in the same way. The fallout from the war in Ukraine exposed Europe's energy and industrial vulnerabilities more starkly than many had assumed. At the same time, developments in the United States, alongside the conflict in the Middle East, have introduced a level of uncertainty into global alliances that was previously difficult to imagine, with direct implications for Europe's position. China's economic and industrial scale is also reshaping global production and power relations in ways that are not yet fully understood. In my view, these are not isolated disruptions, but signals of something more fundamental. The assumptions that once underpinned global cooperation no longer hold, and what replaces them remains unclear. It is within this context that APRI seeks to contribute to more grounded and practical policy engagement on Africa's role in the world.

Our work in 2025 therefore moved from a strong focus on visibility and amplifying African perspectives, to a more targeted approach that combines public engagement with direct policy discussions and advisory work, such as closed-door policy exchange formats.

With Europe's role as a partner to Africa changing, particularly in relation to energy, industrial capacity and development cooperation, we focused more directly on Europe's vulnerabilities, while positioning Africa as part of the solution in areas such as energy, critical minerals and industrialisation. Geopolitics became even more central, so we gave greater focus to Africa's external partnerships and what they mean for economic transformation.

This is reflected in the launch of our new Just Green Technology Transition programme, with its focus on trade and technology transfer, and our work on other global actors, such as Turkey and China.

In addition my office launched a new project that explores how Africa's mineral wealth can be governed to support industrialisation and development. APRI also continued our [Africa in the World Roundtable Series](#), facilitating dialogue on how partnerships are evolving in a fragmented and competitive world. I am also very encouraged by how we've strengthened APRI's communications, putting more emphasis on [data visualisation](#) and accessible ways to communicate complex data, such as through our climate finance cooperation mapping work.

I am particularly proud to report that we've appointed our first Director of Operations, and that the Abuja office in Nigeria is now fully operational. The office has significantly deepened engagement with the Nigerian government through flagship work on the [country's critical minerals strategy](#) and by co-convening, with the government a South-South peer learning exercise on country platforms for climate action (read more in the Climate Transitions Programme section).

We also strengthened our presence in key policy spaces, with my office participating in a number of major global engagements, including the Sino-German Forum on Sustainable Development 2025 in Beijing, an ODI Europe panel in Brussels on exploring new narratives for aid in the context of the EU's strategic agenda, and Mining Indaba in South Africa.

Across the year, we produced 75 publications, convened 18 events, and saw 23 media mentions, which reflect both the scale and reach of our work.

Much more changed in the wider landscape in 2025, from the dismantling of USAID, which has placed Germany at the centre of development cooperation, to China's continued strategic direction, most recently reflected in its latest 15th Five-Year Plan ([read my commentary on this](#)). For Africa, this more complex, uncertain and contested environment is not new. We are accustomed to navigating challenging conditions and making progress despite them. This long-standing resilience – a pragmatic ability to adapt, absorb shocks, and continue moving forward – will be critical in shaping how the continent engages with the rupture in the global landscape. As my grandmother used to say, you never use your last tomato at home – a simple reminder to maintain reserves and avoid absolute dependence.

From this perspective, APRI's work remains focused on contributing to clearer thinking and more practical engagement. As always, I am deeply grateful to the APRI team for their commitment, hard work, and the quality of contributions in a challenging but consequential period.

My sincere thanks, as always, to our partners and supporters for their continued trust and collaboration. I invite you to engage with the live links throughout this report and to explore the ideas and insights we're developing. As the world continues to evolve, we look forward to working together to better understand and navigate what lies ahead. If you're not already a partner or collaborator, please do reach out to join our work.



Dr Olumide Abimbola, Executive Director

APRI Partners

To our funders and partners, thank you for your continued trust, collaboration, and support. In a rapidly changing global environment, partnerships like these matter deeply. Your belief in APRI's work enables us to continue asking important questions, convening critical conversations, and contributing to practical policy engagement.



Thank you!

Our Advisory Board

APRI's work is strengthened by the guidance of an exceptional advisory board whose expertise spans academia, policymaking, finance, international development, and multilateral institutions across Africa, Germany, and the EU. Their strategic perspective and experience help ensure our work remains rigorous, relevant, and responsive to a changing global context.



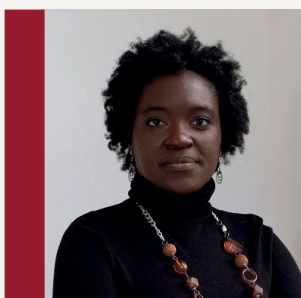
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APRI in Numbers

**75**

PUBLICATIONS

**3214**NEWSLETTER
SUBSCRIBERS**1810**POLICY BRIEF
DOWNLOADS**160k**WEBSITE
VISITORS**18**

HOSTED EVENTS

**31**STAFF
MEMBERS**5**YOUTH & RESILIENCE
PODCAST STORIES**20%**SOCIAL MEDIA
GROWTH**23**MEDIA
MENTIONS

Most Popular Publications by Website Visits

01[Industrialisation in Africa: Leading Countries and Reasons for their Success](#)**02**[Mapping Africa's Green Mineral Partnerships](#)**03**[China's Role in Africa's Critical Minerals Landscape](#)



APRI Thought Leadership and News

In 2025, our work continued to reach audiences across Africa and globally through media coverage spanning climate policy, critical minerals, industrialisation, and Africa's evolving global partnerships. Coverage in outlets such as Premium Times, Vanguard, The Guardian Nigeria, and El País helped bring APRI's research and perspectives into wider public debate.

This visibility reflects APRI's continued commitment to ensuring that African priorities, grounded research, and practical policy insights inform public discourse across regions and audiences.

MEDIA COVERAGE

Radio France Internationale (RFI)

West African group Ecowas turns 50 amid struggle to stay united

24 April, 2025

Tribune Online (Nigeria)

Nigeria to host Global South workshop on climate action, energy transition

27 April, 2025

Vanguard News (Nigeria)

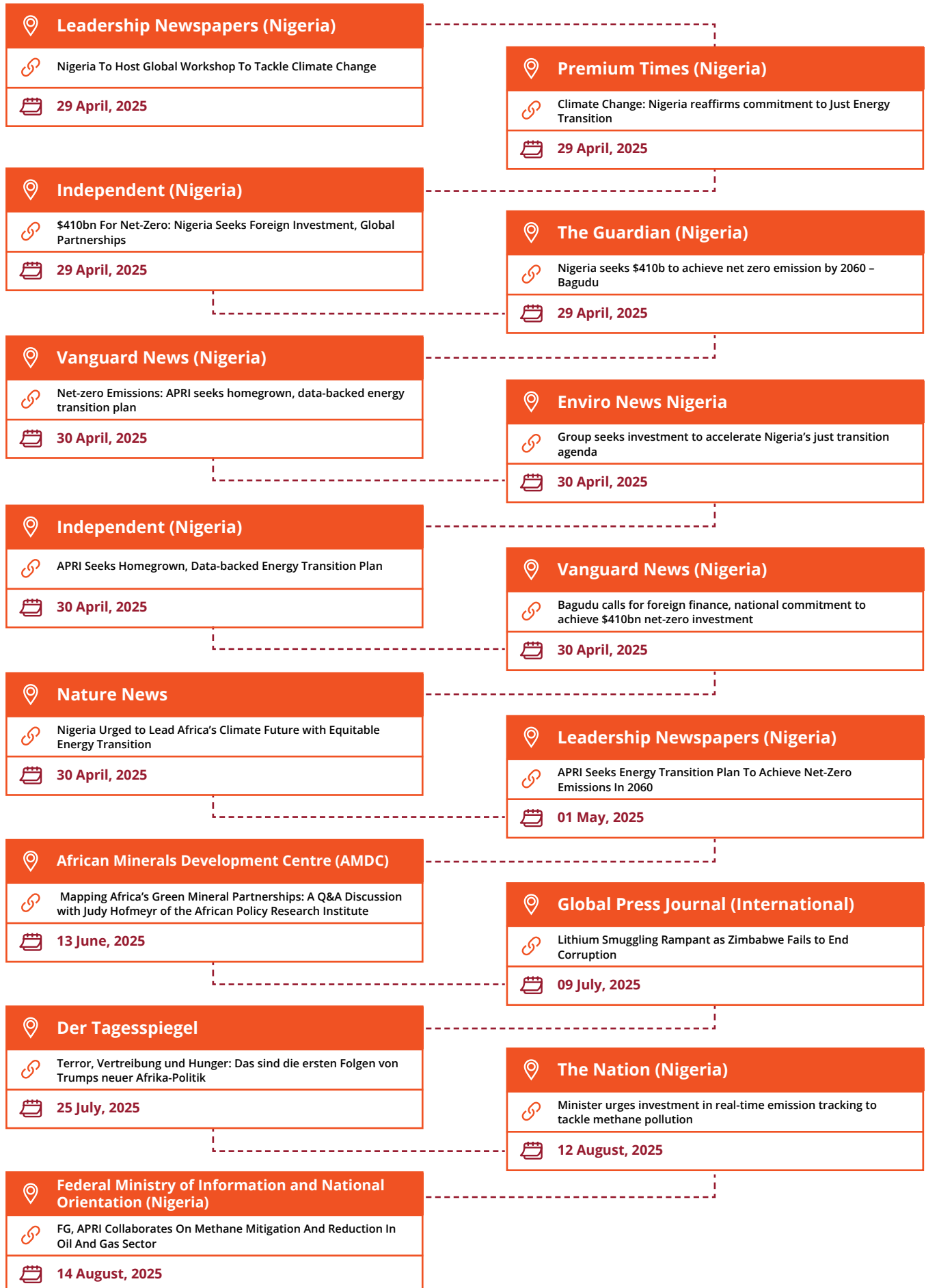
Nigeria to host global South workshop on Climate Action and Just Energy Transition

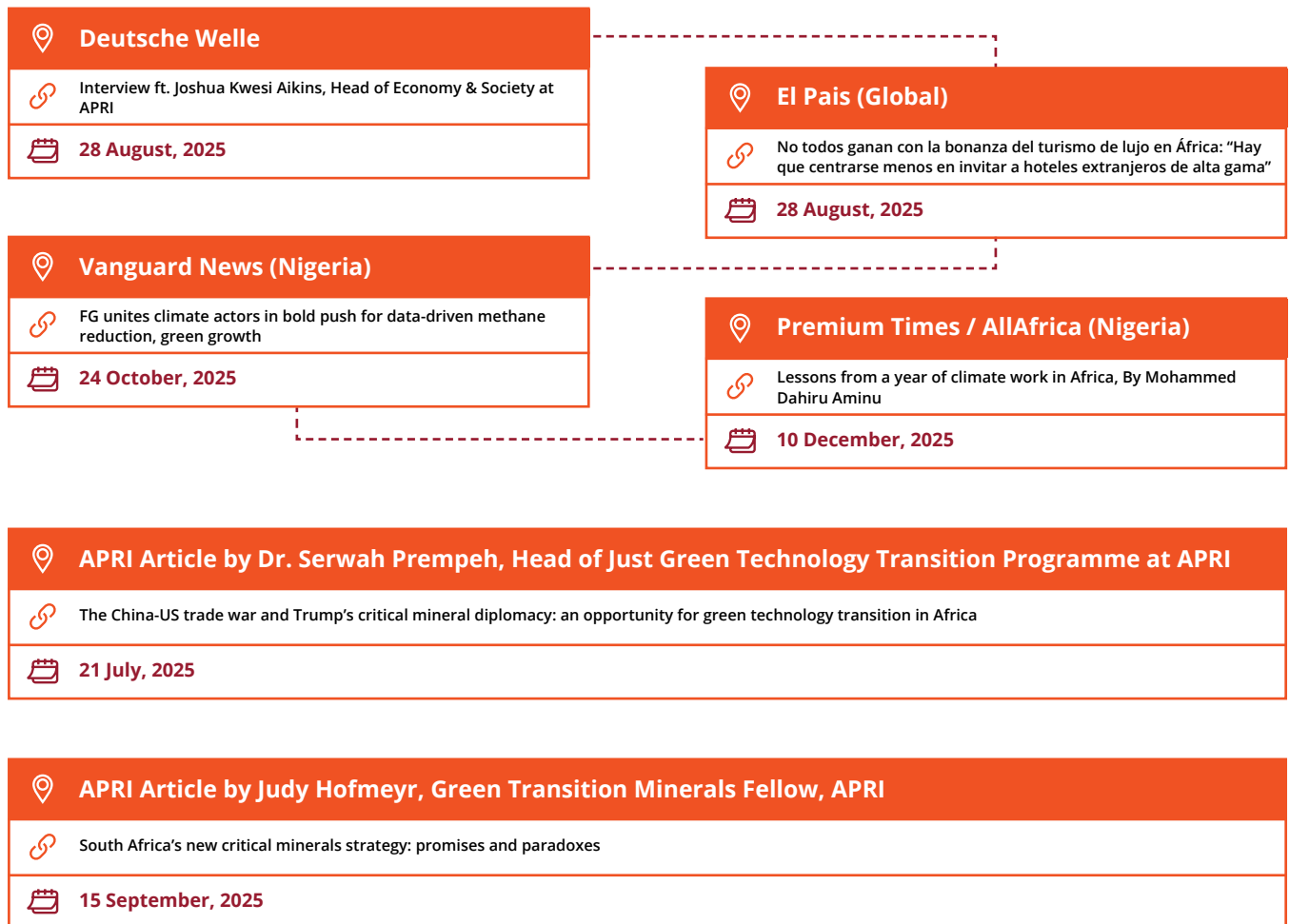
27 April, 2025

Enviro News Nigeria

Nigeria's energy transition should lead Africa's climate future – APRI boss

28 April, 2025







Economy and Society Programme

In 2025, APRI's Economy and Society Programme entered a new phase under the leadership of Senior Fellow and Head of Programme, Joshua Kwesi Aikins, building on a strong foundation of research, partnerships and engagement.

WE FOCUSED ON THREE AREAS

01

Strengthening internal capacity through data, visualisation and MEL, including the recruitment of an in-house data scientist

02

Expanding targeted engagement with German and European policymakers

03

Producing grounded research centred on African agency and cooperation in practice

Two elements of this work are highlighted below: the internal tools developed to strengthen APRI's MEL, and our Policy Exchange and Advice (PXA) sessions.

WHAT SHAPED OUR WORK IN 2025



Changing global partnerships and geopolitical realignment



Growing emphasis on African agency in global policy debates



Resurgence and more transparent push for transactional forms of cooperation



Structural inequalities and power asymmetries in development cooperation



Pressure for industrialisation and value creation

FOCUS AREAS



International cooperation and partnerships



Trade, industrialisation and economic transformation



Governance, institutions and policy processes



Political transitions and elections

OUR WORK



Research and analysis



Policy exchange (PXA)



Data and visualisation



Partnerships and collaboration

Strengthening Internal Capacity with Data Visualisation and Tools

In 2025, we strengthened APRI's monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) capabilities to better understand how our work reaches and engages different audiences. Supported by the recruitment of an in-house data scientist, this included developing new tools to track engagement, gather feedback, organise knowledge and improve data analysis across the organisation.

TOOLS DEVELOPED AND PROTOTYPED



Decolonising Development Mapping Tool: Interactive web tool mapping key debates, literature and perspectives on decolonising development.



APRI Content Mapping Tool: Interactive map enabling users to explore APRI outputs by topic, geography and programme.

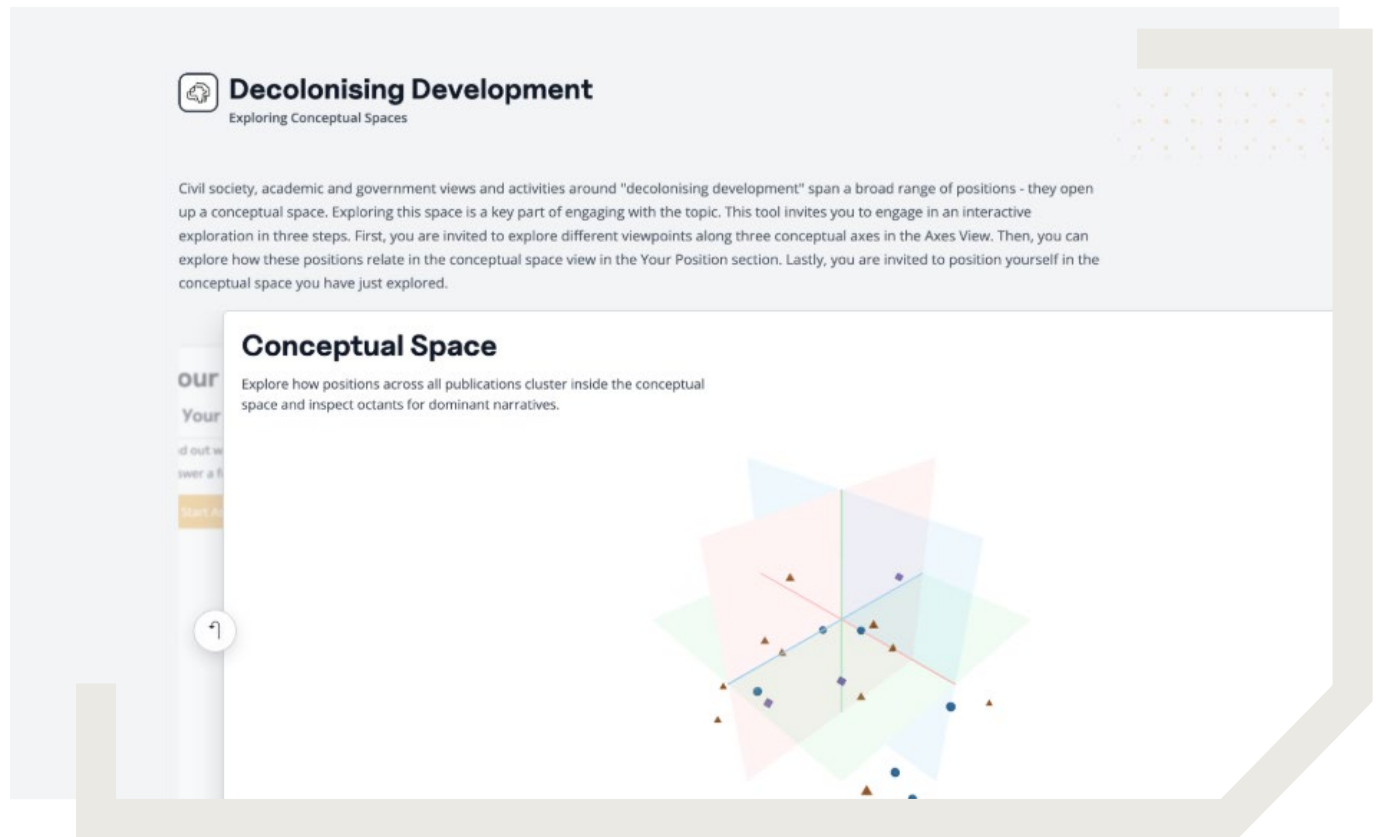


Survey and feedback tools: Internal dashboards to strengthen MEL and audience insight.

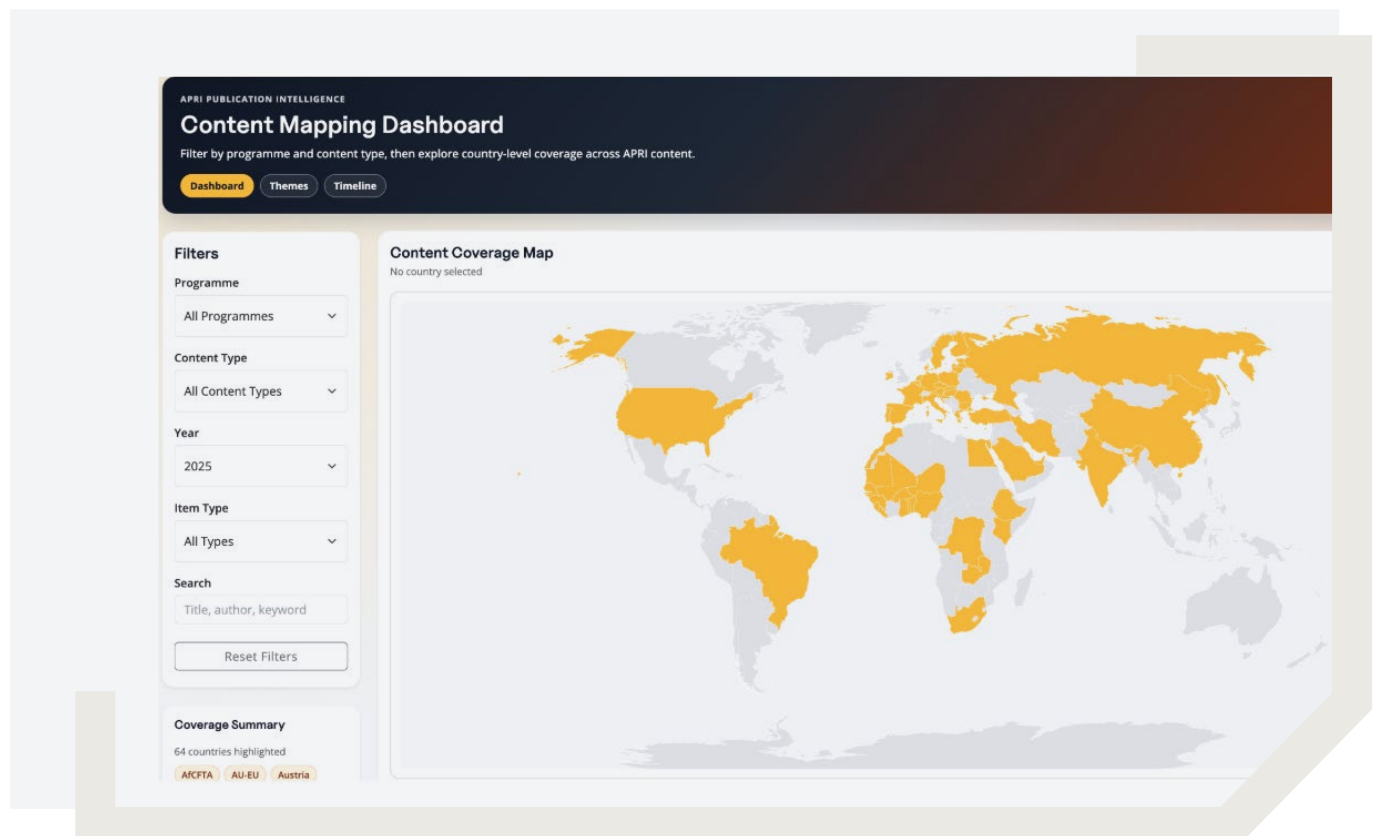


A unified in-house architecture for data analysis and visualisation: Unified internal stack in development to improve analysis and knowledge management.

These are being prototyped within the E&S programme, with the intention of scaling them across APRI.



The Decolonising Development interactive mapping tool



The APRI content mapping tool in development

Policy Exchange and Advice (PXA)

In 2025, we introduced PXA: closed-door sessions under Chatham House Rules bringing policymakers, practitioners and researchers into candid dialogue.

The first session explored German-African cooperation in a changing geopolitical context, building on earlier public exchanges such as one on realigning German international cooperation with Ghana and Senegal.



KEY INSIGHT

Structured exchange between researchers and policymakers helps translate analysis into more practical, partner-oriented approaches.



Insights from these exchanges informed subsequent analysis, including APRI's research and recommendations for strengthening German-Ghanaian relations.

Research and Analysis

Alongside this engagement and internal work, we also produced analyses examining how international cooperation and economic policy are evolving in practice.

“Traditional foreign development frameworks often fail to address complex challenges because they are not designed with the needs of marginalised African women and girls in mind.

From APRI's short analysis on German-African feminist development policy

- Analysis on the Germany-South Africa Just Energy Transition Partnership (JET-P) showed that “just” ambitions depend on deeper reforms.
- Policy briefs on agrifood partnerships and renewable energy highlighted the need to align investment with local capacity and coherent policy.
- Analysis of AUDA-NEPAD and the AU's G20 membership examined the gap between institutional ambition and practical influence.
- Analysis on power grabs in West Africa and a policy brief on pandemic preparedness explored governance resilience and the need for stronger, fairer institutions.
- Analysis on Germany-Ghana relations, colonial legacies in Namibia, debt reform and the future of development cooperation examined shifting global partnerships and structural asymmetries.
- A debate published in Good Impact Magazine with Christoph Kannegießer of the German-African Business Association questioned whether the traditional model of development cooperation remains relevant in its current form.



Climate Transitions Programme

In 2025, APRI's Climate Transitions Programme focused on a **central challenge shaping climate action across Africa: how to move from ambition to implementation**. While policy moves forward, delivery is constrained by fragmented institutions, weak coordination, and ongoing challenges in mobilising and using climate finance.

We therefore focused on the practical conditions needed to deliver transitions at country level. This included how climate priorities can be built into national systems, how finance can support development goals, and how global dynamics shape what is possible in practice.

Nigeria remained our main focus country. We also expanded our in-country team and partnerships in 2025 to support research and policy engagement.

Our team produced 12 publications and hosted 4 events.

WHAT SHAPED OUR WORK IN 2025



Climate finance constraints



Implementation gap



Coordination

PROGRAMME THEMES



Policy & political economy



Climate diplomacy



Green industrialisation



Just transition



Climate finance

Embedding Climate Action into National Systems

A central focus of our work was how climate action can be built into the institutions that shape economic and social outcomes. Rather than treating climate as a separate policy area, we looked at how it can be integrated across sectors, ministries and planning processes.

- Across transportation and agriculture and food security, we showed how policy reform, clean technologies and community-led approaches can support more resilient and inclusive systems.
- At the institutional level, our work on the Federal Ministry of Industry, Trade and Investment, smarter diplomacy and on budgeting and economic planning highlights the need for better coordination, stronger data systems and clearer links between policy, finance and delivery. Lessons from countries such as Ethiopia and Kenya point to the importance of inter-ministerial collaboration and climate finance tracking.



A brief on integrating policing explored the climate-security nexus as shown in the graphic. Case studies from Lake Chad, the Niger Delta and North-Central Nigeria show how environmental pressures and loss of livelihoods can contribute to conflict and displacement.

Climate Diplomacy, Finance and Structural Constraints

While strengthening domestic systems is essential, delivery is also shaped by financial constraints and global dynamics.

- A policy brief on [Nigeria's climate agenda](#) shows that what's needed is simpler, more coordinated governance that links climate goals with economic priorities.
- Access to finance remains a major constraint. Our analysis of the [foreign exchange constraint](#) highlights a key challenge for many African economies: capital that flows in must also flow out, which limits investment regardless of ambition. These constraints are shaped by wider global change, as explored in an analysis on whether [the petrodollar will be replaced by the electroyuan](#).
- We also asked how climate finance can better support development. Linking climate commitments to national planning was explored during an event on [Nigeria's climate-economy nexus](#), while an analysis on [redefining climate finance](#) highlighted the need for funding for decentralised energy markets.



Green Industrialisation and Inclusive Transitions

Building on this, we also explored how climate transitions can support industrial development and more inclusive economic outcomes.

01

A policy brief on [Nigeria's critical minerals sector](#) highlights the need to move beyond raw exports towards refining, manufacturing and stronger governance to capture value.

02

A webinar on [Ghana's green minerals policy](#) investigated how countries can translate resource endowment into broader economic benefits.

Nigeria Country Platform for Climate Action

A central focus of our work in 2025 was support for discussions around a coordinated country platform for climate action in Nigeria. A country platform is a national framework that aligns policy, finance and stakeholders to coordinate and deliver climate priorities at scale.

Our analysis shows that Nigeria's climate landscape is shaped less by a lack of ambition than by complexity and fragmentation, with overlapping policies, institutions and funding channels limiting coordination and investor confidence. In our work on whether a country platform is right for Nigeria and Nigeria's climate transition in 2025, we highlight the need for a more coherent, government-led framework that aligns climate action with national development priorities.

Through the Global South peer learning workshop and accompanying insight brief, we also drew on lessons from other countries. We show that an effective country platform needs to be politically anchored, nationally owned, and able to coordinate across sectors, levels of government and stakeholders.



KEY INSIGHTS FOR A COUNTRY PLATFORM

- ✓ Aligns climate commitments with national development plans and economic priorities
- ✓ Creates a clear interface for investors and partners
- ✓ Improves coordination across ministries, states and stakeholders
- ✓ Builds a pipeline of bankable, implementation-ready projects





Geopolitics and Geoeconomics Programme

In 2024, APRI launched our Geopolitics and Geoeconomics programme to better understand Africa's place in a changing global landscape. In 2025, the team built on this foundation, focusing on how African countries are navigating this environment. Our capacity expanded through increased funding and the addition of new team members, with further growth planned through the recruitment of an EU-based fellow.

We produced **26 publications**, including **policy briefs, reports and data tools**, and shared our insights through **10 events and dialogues**.

At the core of this work is APRI's role as a bridge between African and European stakeholders, combining analysis and convening. We aligned this work with key milestones including South Africa's G20 presidency, the EU-AU summit, and ECOWAS' 50th anniversary, while maintaining focus on changes in the global order and what they mean for Africa.

WHAT SHAPED OUR WORK IN 2025



PROGRAMME THEMES

-  Global partnerships
-  Minerals, energy & industrialisation
-  Corridors & resource diplomacy
-  ECOWAS
-  Data visualisation

Two areas were a particular focus: the programme's engagement with ECOWAS, and its expanding data visualisation work. These are explored below.

Global Partnerships

We examined Africa's external partnerships, including engagement through Africa+1 summits and dynamics in [Africa-Europe relations](#), which reflects the diversification of partners, more transactional engagement, and growing competition for influence across the continent.

- These themes were also explored through events on [diplomatic summits and African foreign policy](#) and APRI's flagship Africa in the World event, which this year focused on [Africa-Europe relations](#).

Minerals Diplomacy and Energy Transition

- The team examined the geopolitics of critical minerals and energy transition including Africa's role in the [EU-BRICS critical minerals nexus](#), the role of gas in [Nigeria's industrialisation pathway](#), and the dynamics of [EU-China-Africa cooperation](#).
- We also provided commentary and analyses on strategic regional corridors and resource diplomacy, including the [Lobito Corridor](#) and [resource-for-security deals](#).
- Our country-level analysis brought these dynamics into sharper focus, including:
 - [South Africa's critical minerals strategy](#) and the role of [platinum group minerals in SA's energy transition](#)
 - [Morocco's positioning between China and the EU](#)
- These themes were also explored through events on [Europe-China-Gulf countries investment strategies in Africa](#).



As raw materials become a new currency of power, African countries have an opportunity to negotiate more equitable partnerships and support regional industrialisation.

ECOWAS Policy Analysis Series

The [ECOWAS Policy Analysis Series](#) brings together 14 papers by African scholars and practitioners examining the organisation's future priorities and challenges. For an overview, read the [Introduction to the series](#).

WHAT THIS SERIES COVERS

	Peace & security		Migration & mobility
	Democracy & governance		Health systems
	Infrastructure & energy		Inclusion & gender
	Trade & industrialisation		

The series was complemented by dedicated policy dialogues held in [Accra](#) and in [Brussels](#) that brought together policymakers, practitioners and researchers.

Guiding Question

How can ECOWAS adapt its norms, practices and partnerships with West African non-state actors to respond to regional integration challenges amid an evolving global order?



KEY INSIGHT

- ✓ ECOWAS remains central to regional governance but faces pressure to deliver
- ✓ Regional integration requires more coordinated, cross-sector approaches
- ✓ Future priorities include resilience building, inclusive governance and regional value chains

ECOWAS Handbook and Book Sprint

APRI supported the development of a handbook to mark ECOWAS' 50th anniversary, designed as an accessible resource capturing the organisation's evolution, achievements and future direction.

HOW IT WORKS



What is a Book Sprint Methodology?

A Book Sprint is a facilitated process that brings experts together to co-create a publication in a compressed timeframe.

What the handbook covers

- ✓ ECOWAS' institutional evolution
- ✓ Key achievements in regional integration
- ✓ Institutional structure and processes
- ✓ Priorities for the next 50 years

What makes this approach different?

- ➔ ECOWAS-led content
- ➔ Multi-stakeholder input
- ➔ Co-produced, not commissioned
- ➔ Designed for accessibility and use

Data Visualisation and Policy Tools

In 2025, the team expanded their data visualisation work to make complex trends more visible, accessible and usable.



Mapping Africa's External Partnerships

- The [Africa+1 summits mapping](#) shows how diplomatic engagement between African countries and global partners has developed over time.



Additional Data Tools

- [Interactive map of cooperation in climate finance](#) developed from multiple datasets on trade, investment, and flagship green projects between African countries and China, EU and Gulf countries.
- [Africa's green mineral partnerships](#)



Policy Guides (Africa and Europe)

- [African Green Minerals Strategy \(AGMS\)](#)
- [European Critical Raw Materials Act \(CRMA\)](#)
- These **concise, interactive guides** allow users to navigate complex African and European policy frameworks.

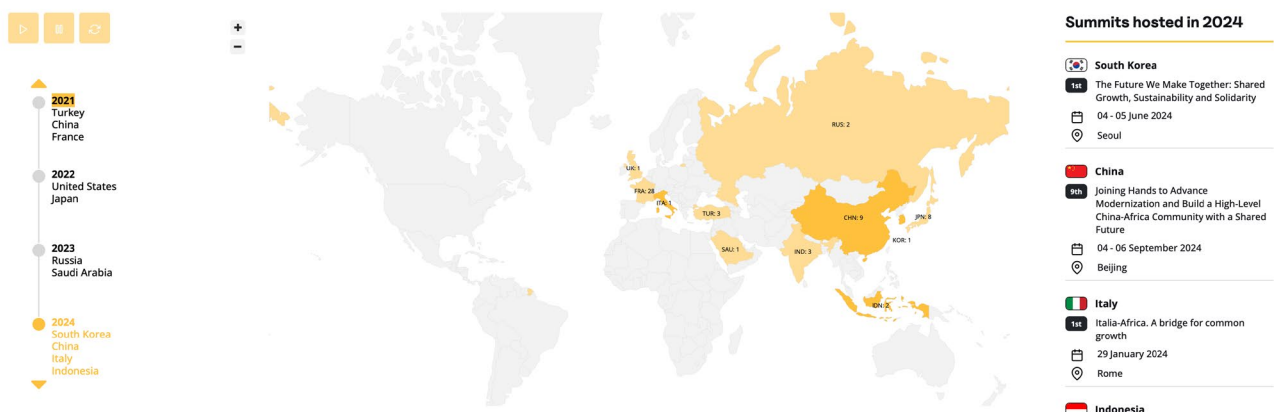


Why this matters?

Together, these tools support more informed engagement on key issues shaping Africa-Europe cooperation and broader global partnerships.

THE CHANGING GEOGRAPHY OF AFRICA+1 SUMMITS

Use the [interactive map](#) to explore how Africa's global partnerships have developed over time.





Just Green Technology Transitions Programme

In 2025, APRI proudly launched our new Just Green Tech Transitions Programme to address the gap between global climate ambitions and realities of technology access, local manufacturing capacity, and value creation in Africa. It also grew directly from APRI's earlier green tech project on youth employment and innovation ecosystems, which highlighted both entrepreneurial potential and barriers to scale.

The team undertook scoping research and stakeholder engagement across key partner countries, including Kenya and South Africa, as well as Germany and Europe. We identified common bottlenecks in technology diffusion, including intellectual property governance constraints, financing constraints, regulatory fragmentation and weak integration into global value chains, alongside opportunities for industrial policy and regional cooperation under frameworks such as AfCFTA and EU-Africa partnerships.

As technology transfer, localisation and industrial upgrading move up the policy agenda, the programme provides a platform for analysis, dialogue and engagement on practical policy questions. In total, our team **produced 11/12 publications** exploring how Africa can capture greater economic value from the green technology transition.



How can Africa capture more value from the green transition?

The opportunity goes beyond resource extraction and technology imports to local value creation in sectors such as energy, agriculture, transport and the circular economy, supported by stronger industries, skills and jobs.

WHAT SHAPED OUR WORK IN 2025



Industrialisation and value



Technology transfer



Youth jobs



Trade and investment rules and compliance

PROGRAMME THEMES

Practical research on how Africa can capture more value from:



Local innovation systems



Technology transfer



Indigenous knowledge and innovation



Critical minerals and supply chains



Green jobs and SMEs

Research Highlights

While building these foundations, we also produced research linking green transitions to [technology transfer](#), employment, entrepreneurship, geopolitics and local knowledge systems:

Youth, Jobs And Entrepreneurship

- Our [Youth Technoentrepreneurship series](#) highlights green tech innovation in Nigeria, Ghana and Kenya, showcasing youth founders' journeys and the support needed to expand ventures.
- A policy brief on [youth inclusion in green technology](#) identified strong potential in solar mini-grids, E-mobility and Climate-Smart Agriculture.
- Work on [SME innovation and intellectual property rights](#) argued that smaller firms need stronger pathways to commercialise ideas, create jobs and scale.

Geopolitics And Markets

- Analysis of the [China-US trade war and critical minerals diplomacy](#) suggested that African countries can strengthen bargaining power by diversifying investment partners beyond the US and China.

Local Innovation Pathways

- Research on [e-mobility in Kenya](#) and [climate-smart agriculture in Ghana](#) highlighted how Indigenous knowledge and modern technologies can reinforce one another when purposefully integrated and implemented into policymaking processes.

The programme also expanded our external engagement through partnerships and convening.

- In July 2025, APRI, in partnership with the Technical University of Berlin's SMUS centre and supported by DAAD, convened a workshop on [Wicked Urban Problems in African Cities](#), exploring informality, citizen-led innovation and data for better urban policy.



At the workshop 'Wicked Urban Problems in African Cities', participants called for greater recognition of grassroots innovation and community-led solutions.

Two flagship publications, highlighted below, examined how policy and trade can help Africa capture more value from the green transition.

Can Technology Imports become Industrial Capability?

In this [policy paper](#) on South Africa and green technology transfer, we explored how policy, regulation and institutions shape SA's ability to attract, absorb and scale green technologies.

What we learned

- ✓ Technology transfer requires more than importing equipment
- ✓ Clear and consistent policy settings help attract investment
- ✓ Local skills, research capacity and supplier development shape longer-term gains
- ✓ Without deliberate strategy, much of the economic value will remain offshore



Green technology imports create the greatest value when they are linked to local skills, industry development and innovation.



Can Regional Trade Help Create Green Jobs?

In this [policy paper](#) on the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCFTA) and green job opportunities, our team explored how regional integration can be harnessed to support employment creation, industrialisation and new green value chains across Africa.

What we learned

- ✓ Larger integrated markets can help green industries scale
- ✓ Regional value chains can create new business and employment opportunities
- ✓ Trade agreements alone are not enough without infrastructure and implementation
- ✓ Skills development will influence who benefits from new opportunities



The AfCFTA can help unlock green jobs, but real gains will depend on execution, investment and workforce readiness.



Together, these outputs reflect the programme's guiding premise: Africa's green transition is a broader economic transformation shaped by jobs, trade, innovation and local capability, not just an evolution in energy systems.



Special APRI Projects

Africa in the World Series: Shaping Global Policy Dialogue

APRI launched our Africa in the World series in 2024 as a high-level platform to open fresh conversations about the future of development cooperation. In 2025, we built on this as part of our growing focus on direct, policy-relevant engagement between decision-makers, researchers, and practitioners.

This year's dialogue, *Africa-Europe Relations in a Changing Global Political Order*, brought together 100 participants to examine how strategic competition and evolving priorities around energy, critical raw materials, and industrial policy are reshaping the partnership.

Through plenary and breakaway discussions, participants explored Europe's evolving policy frameworks, including its approach to critical minerals and the green transition, and how these intersect with African priorities around industrialisation, value addition, and economic sovereignty.

These themes are explored further in a [commentary](#) by event moderator Lidet Tadesse Shiferaw.

ABOUT APRI

Founded in 2021 in Berlin, APRI provides nuanced, multidimensional analysis of African countries and their place in global policy. As Africa's economies expand, its population grows and its importance in global supply chains increases, APRI offers independent, nonpartisan policy recommendations across sectors like trade, governance, security, technology, and climate.

With offices in Berlin and Abuja, APRI transcends traditional approaches, using our research to address the complex socio-economic, political and environmental dynamics defining Africa's current and future role on the world stage.



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