



# APRI STRATEGY

## 2026–2030





# STRATEGY OVERVIEW



## WHERE WE STAND

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APRI has grown in size, operating in several locations throughout Africa and Europe. We have also expanded our horizons beyond Europe – looking to connect Africa globally.



## WHO WE ARE

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An independent, nonpartisan, African think tank. We connect Africa and African policymaking with Europe and the world through research, convening and more.



## HOW WE WORK

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All of our work fits into three broad categories: evidence-based analysis, fostering informed debate and dialogue, and impactful action.



## OUR CURRENT PROGRAMMES

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We focus on five programme areas that matter most for African countries, spanning governance, economy, climate change and industrial development.



## OUR STRUCTURE AND FOOTPRINT

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We are focused on Africa, and its relations with Europe, and we are taking an increasingly global view of African issues.



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How we take forward our mission – of informing and empowering African governments and organisations in their dealings with the rest of the world.

# WHERE WE STAND

## GROWING IN STATURE – GROWING IN SCOPE

When APRI launched in Berlin five years ago, it was the only Africa-focused think tank in the city, and it focused on three core areas: Economy & Society, Africa's Climate Agenda, and Africa's Digital Agenda. Our mandate was to provide insights to German and European Union policymaking, and to provide policy options to African stakeholders.

Five years on, that modest bridging function has grown into something much larger. In addition to the initial three focus areas, APRI now works on geopolitics and geoeconomics, the green technology transition, minerals and development and climate transitions, and, more broadly, Africa's relations with other regions of the world. APRI also opened a second office in Abuja in 2024.

But the more consequential shift has not been in scale but in posture. We have worked hard to remain flexible and nimble in how we engage, and by expanding our focus and approach we have been able to anticipate some of the changing demands in our sector, and to move quickly in response to the fundamental shifts taking place around the world.

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This growing remit has meant adopting a wider analytical lens, moving from an exclusive focus on Germany/Europe–Africa relations to a broader ‘Africa in the world’ framing. This is a significant change since 2021: the donor–recipient model being dismantled, in large part by donors themselves, and Africa’s partnerships now extending across many collaborators and constellations. Supporting relationships that realistically centre African objectives – sometimes by working together, sometimes by working alongside others in various arrangements – has become part of what we do.

Our mandate now is to strengthen the hand of African governments in the relationships shaping the continent’s economic transformation, and to help build partnerships that work for Africa, Europe and other international actors alike. Our work is to inform the terms of those partnerships directly, and to support African governments in shaping what they can look like when they are built around African objectives.

This is our bearing for the next five years. APRI’s task is to keep producing evidence of sufficient rigour and quality that African governments can act on – empirically, not rhetorically – and to help shape partnerships that are more balanced as a result. This strategy sets out how we intend to do that.

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# WHO WE ARE

## AN INDEPENDENT, AFRICAN AND AFRICA-FOCUSED THINK TANK CONNECTING THE CONTINENT WITH THE WORLD

APRI – Africa Policy Research Institute is an independent and nonpartisan African think tank with registered offices in Berlin, Germany, and Abuja, Nigeria.

We research key policy issues affecting African countries and the African continent. Through our institutional African partnerships, we link research to evidence-based policy and practice, as well as amplifying existing analysis and co-creating new work. Our work supports African policymakers, strengthening their positions in interactions with external partners. We also work to insert Africa-specific analysis into the wider global debates that shape the continent's prospects, even when – and sometimes especially because – African governments are not formally involved.

We are also a public-facing institute, offering innovative platforms where policymakers, businesses, media, civil society organisations, and research communities from Africa and elsewhere engage with one another.

With teams working across Africa and outside of the continent, we are able directly to observe the plans and strategies of African actors – and of their

international partners. These teams are driven by researchers and experts from across Africa and worldwide, allowing us to present and platform African expert perspectives. This means focusing on individual countries and the relationships within and among African countries, as well as on African regional organisations, international partnerships and multilateral bodies of every kind. We build a broad, deep understanding, and we use it to sharpen the policy options, analysis and support we offer to our stakeholders.

**Through our institutional African partnerships, we link research to evidence-based policy and practice, as well as amplifying existing analysis and co-creating new work**



## OUR VISION AND MISSION

Our vision is a future where African thought leadership is central to global decision-making and where Africa is strategically positioned within the global geopolitical landscape to drive its transformative future.

APRI's mission is to be a catalyst towards that future: to bridge Africa and the world by driving impactful dialogue and action supported by evidence-based analysis.



## OUR ROUTE TO IMPACT

We bring African perspectives to global platforms and foster informed debate and policy within African nations and organisations through global insights drawn from African and global expertise.



# HOW WE WORK

## EVIDENCE, DIALOGUE, ACTION

Our work spans three broad categories that define our efforts and our impact:



## EVIDENCE-BASED ANALYSIS

### Rigorous research, data analysis and foresight

Our reports and policy papers are our most substantial output. They give decision-makers, practitioners and technical experts the depth and context needed to respond to pressing policy questions. We combine qualitative and quantitative methods with multi-sited and multi-positional inquiry, and we read the large volume of data about Africa and its external relations. We move beyond alignment with current development buzzwords, aiming instead to create proactive analysis that centres African perspectives on the important issues of today and tomorrow.

### Engaging formats

We also produce work aimed at audiences beyond specialists: explainers, visual formats, and expert conversations that make technical debates legible to a wider public without diluting the analysis behind them. Beyond the written word, we present our work as data visualisations, interactive tools and audio formats, to inform our diverse audiences – and to reach new ones.

**We move beyond alignment with current development buzzwords, aiming instead to create proactive analysis that centres African perspectives**



## FOSTERING INFORMED DEBATE AND DIALOGUE

### Platforms for discussion

We offer platforms for discussion, collaboration and broader policy and practical engagement: forums that bring decision-makers and analysts into the same room. These gatherings – from closed-door policy exchanges to flagship dialogues such as our Africa in the World series – are where ideas are presented and debated, positions are tested, and people who might not otherwise meet are connected across sectors and regions, and across research and practice. Bringing the right people together while a question is still open is, for us, a critical form of engagement.

### Network and partnership building

We tap into the expertise of African intellectuals, scholars and activist networks at home and abroad, and bring an array of voices and disciplines to policy discussions. We invest in network structures and ecosystem building to create an environment for dialogue and for fostering ideas. We combine academic rigour with strong communication and advocacy alliances to push for change. We believe in the importance of challenging and pushing our partners, and we welcome being challenged ourselves – though without compromising on our values.

### Bridging Africa and the world

Bridging Africa and the world requires sustained, bidirectional engagement. We approach partnerships with mutual curiosity and openness to learning, and our team maintains an active presence in many of the locations we serve – to nurture existing relationships and forge new ones.



## IMPACTFUL ACTION

### Working with state and non-state players

We work with state and non-state players to design actionable policies and pathways. Convenings are central to this: they are a vital form of engagement, not merely an opportunity to promote research. They bring the right people into the room while a policy question is still open and able to be shaped.

### Policy and practice

Influence, for us, is measured not just by reach but by use. That means understanding whether our analysis has shaped the position a government or institution brings into a partnership, the design of a policy under implementation, or the terms on which a debate about Africa's economic future is conducted – in rooms to which the continent is not automatically invited. Some of that influence is visible: a citation, a policy adopted, an invitation to advise. Much of it is not.

### Technical assistance

The same evidence base that underpins a report or policy brief also feeds the direct technical assistance we provide to governments. We help to close the distance between diagnosis and delivery, rather than stopping at recommendations alone.

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# OUR CURRENT PROGRAMMES

## NEW CHALLENGES MEAN ADJUSTING OUR THEMES AND ADDING NEW LAYERS

We focus our efforts on the most urgent questions facing Africa: how the continent navigates intensifying global competition (our Geopolitics & Geoeconomics Programme); how this is playing out in the minerals sector (Minerals and Development); how it reshapes its own economies and societies (Economy & Society); and how it governs the green and climate transitions on equitable terms (Just Green Technology Transition and Climate Transitions). These are the arenas in which the critical terms of Africa's partnerships are being set and around which we build our programmes, always shaped by considerations of how African governments and institutions can actually operate in each area.

These will remain our priorities, but change is a constant and APRI is always looking to anticipate and respond. To focus tightly on impact, we are deepening our reading of the role of Brussels and the EU, including through a dedicated EU Fellow. We are treating climate as a cross-cutting issue, including adaptation and resilience, right through to the global effort to address the climate crisis and what it means for the continent. This includes global decarbonisation efforts and the global minerals economy – tracing and analysing Africa's engagement with external actors such as the US, China and the EU. We follow the rise of south-south partnerships and create engagement platforms that can lead to more balanced relationships between countries, blocs and continents.

Here, we introduce each programme – as well as the unique functions of our Executive Office – setting out their work as it is today, and the vision for how each of these themes could develop.

## EXECUTIVE OFFICE

The Executive Office at APRI serves as the institute's core, leading engagements with key stakeholders and external partners, and setting its strategic, operational and management direction.

It also functions as a space for incubating new ideas, thematic focus areas, priority regions, and initiatives. Through this work, the Executive Office regularly publishes policy analyses and commentaries, and hosts **The Africa Hour Podcast**, contributing to ongoing policy conversations and public engagement.

Our leadership is actively engaged in global policy discussions and debates. By identifying emerging themes and partnerships, the Executive Office supports new initiatives with the resources and structure needed to evolve from conceptual ideas into impactful programmes and projects.

By fostering forward-looking policy dialogues and collaborating with strategic partners, we translate innovative concepts into evidence-based insights that drive actionable impact.

### THE GOAL

Supporting APRI to anticipate and respond to the complexities of emerging thematic issues and to grow engagement into new regions around the world.

# GEOPOLITICS & GEOECONOMICS

Africa is at the centre of intensifying global competition. Every major power now seeks strategic partnerships with African states – over critical minerals, infrastructure, energy, security and trade. Yet most African governments engage in this competition reactively, bilaterally, and without the evidence or analytical frameworks needed to convert opportunity into leverage.

The Geopolitics and Geoeconomics Programme exists to close that gap. Unlike most research on Africa's external partnerships, our analysis is built from the perspective of what African leaders and institutions should do – not what external partners should offer. We focus on two gaps that limit African governments' ability to act. The first is understanding what different external partners – the EU, China, Gulf countries, and middle powers such as India or Turkey – actually seek from these relationships and where their real flexibility lies. The second is converting that knowledge into specific, actionable positions on what to demand, from which partner, on what terms, and in what sequence.

We work directly with the individuals and institutions that influence decision-making processes – from governments to regional institutions, particularly ECOWAS and continental bodies such as the AU Commission – through closed-door events and structured dialogues. We are expanding these activities to include foresight exercises and coordination processes ahead of key external engagements. We collaborate with African and European research partners, civil society and private sector actors who share our commitment to African-defined outcomes. We do so through tailored research and joint activities designed to ensure that external partnerships align with African priorities and leadership.



**We work directly with the individuals and institutions that influence decision-making processes – from governments to regional institutions, particularly ECOWAS and continental bodies such as the AU Commission**

## THE GOAL

African governments arriving at the negotiating table better informed, better coordinated, and better able to shape the terms of their own partnerships.

# ECONOMY & SOCIETY

African economies and societies are being reshaped by shifting global partnerships, efforts at continental integration, and political transitions unfolding on the world's youngest continent. Debates over what development means, and who gets to define it, run through both domestic and partner-facing policy. Across all of these, one broad question is central to African agency: who shapes economic and social change, under what constraints, and with what room to manoeuvre?

The Economy & Society Programme takes up that question. We ask who is actually able to shape outcomes, at every scale – from solopreneurs and cooperatives to ministries and companies operating across the continent, and from local initiatives to the diaspora. Our analysis is historically grounded, reading today's structural inequalities and economic shifts against the history that produced them.

Three areas anchor our work: trade and the political economy of AfCFTA implementation; elections, political transitions and their economic and social consequences; and reimagining African economies, where our “What Works” series tests claims about what should, could, or supposedly cannot work in African contexts – and for whom.

We work through publications, short analysis and commentary, and policy exchange formats in which we co-create ideas with key actors in the German and EU Africa policy landscape.



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## THE GOAL

Contribute to policy debates that promote fuller understanding of African agency among policy makers, experts, civil society and media.

# JUST GREEN TECHNOLOGY TRANSITION

Africa is central to the global green transition, yet the continent struggles to develop, adapt and govern green technologies on its own terms. Critical technologies remain largely externally controlled, poorly suited to local conditions, and only weakly rooted in domestic economies. Meanwhile, African innovators are building solutions of their own – often in informal, under-recognised spaces that policy and market support rarely reach.

The Just Green Technology Transition Programme works to close these gaps by strengthening African control over how green technology is developed, adopted and governed. Combining policy research, evidence-based advisory work and multi-stakeholder engagement, we co-create solutions that make green technology pathways both locally grounded and globally competitive. We use political economy analysis to map the opportunities and constraints across local, regional and global innovation systems, and we turn that analysis into practical strategies for governments, firms, communities and international bodies.



**Combining policy research, evidence-based advisory work and multi-stakeholder engagement, we co-create solutions that make green technology pathways both locally grounded and globally competitive**

## THE GOAL

A more coordinated, equitable and African-led green technology innovation system that expands local capability, supports decent jobs and ensures that the benefits and adjustment costs of the transition are distributed more fairly.

# CLIMATE TRANSITIONS

The Climate Transitions Programme focuses on helping African countries navigate climate and energy transitions in ways that reflect local realities, development priorities and a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape. We work at the intersection of climate, geopolitics and development, recognising that transition choices in the region are shaped not only by emissions targets, but also by energy security, fiscal pressures, industrialisation, jobs, adaptation needs, regional integration and global economic shifts.

Our approach combines rigorous research, political-economy analysis, strategic convening and embedded advisory support. We produce evidence and policy outputs that are practical, context-specific and decision-oriented, translating complex transition debates into options that governments, institutions and partners can use.

We collaborate with national, regional and continental public institutions, African experts and research organisations, civil society, private sector actors, development partners and international policy communities, while maintaining APRI's independent and nonpartisan role.



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## THE GOAL

Africa is moving from fragmented climate ambition to development-centred strategies that are politically realistic, economically grounded and globally relevant.

# MINERALS AND DEVELOPMENT

Rising demand tied to the energy transition and digitalisation has intensified competition for Africa's mineral resources, drawing renewed interest from states, investors and multinational corporations. The moment offers real opportunity for industrialisation and economic transformation – but it also carries the risk of reproducing long-standing extractive dynamics, in which raw materials are exported with little local value creation and uneven social and environmental outcomes.



The Minerals and Development Programme examines how minerals can be mobilised as building blocks for development rather than ends in themselves. We focus on the governance choices that determine whether extraction contributes to structural transformation: the development of productive capabilities, regional value chains and industrial ecosystems. We engage critically with industrial policy, trade arrangements and investment frameworks to understand how African states can move beyond enclave extraction towards more diversified economies. Because minerals-led development raises contested questions, we also integrate human rights, environmental governance and distributive equity into our analysis – paying close attention to who bears the costs and who captures the benefits.

Through research, policy dialogue and public engagement, we work with policymakers, researchers, civil society and industry, grounding our analysis in African perspectives and real-world governance challenges.

**We engage critically with industrial policy, trade arrangements and investment frameworks to understand how African states can move beyond enclave extraction towards more diversified economies**

## THE GOAL

More coherent, equitable and development-oriented approaches to Africa's mineral future – a future in which partnerships, regional cooperation and continental frameworks strengthen African bargaining power and align external engagement with African development priorities.

# OUR STRUCTURE AND FOOTPRINT

WE ARE INCREASINGLY GLOBAL,  
BUT TIGHTLY FOCUSED ON  
AFRICA AND AFRICAN ISSUES

## OUR GLOBAL FOOTPRINT

site or subject of APRI work

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COUNTRIES



APRI maintains registered entities and offices in Berlin, Germany and Abuja, Nigeria, supplemented by strategic research hubs in South Africa and Kenya. While our core staff serve as the operational, strategic and research backbone of the organisation, our work is supported by a group of Visiting Fellows, Non-Resident Fellows and Advisors who bring deep expertise and experience. We further leverage a network of experts from across the continent and beyond to bring in perspectives and knowledge from local contexts.

In our first five years, our distributed approach allowed APRI to build a strong institutional infrastructure, while remaining lean and adaptable to change. As we look ahead, our next strategic phase prioritises investing more in our people – deepening our in-house research capabilities and developing APRI talent, while continuing to leverage the vital expertise of our continental network.

## FUNDING

Our funders power our mission. They are essential to the work we do. The support of a broad base of partners – among them philanthropic foundations, development institutions and research bodies across the world – has enabled APRI to grow from a single Berlin office into the continent-spanning institute we are today, and continually to expand the range and ambition of our work.

Effective partnerships must be mutually beneficial and grounded in clear communication, trust and a shared commitment to defined goals. As an independent, nonpartisan think tank, we prioritise our intellectual autonomy and the flexibility to respond. Over the next five years, we will continue to diversify our income base and engage new funding partners.

**Our funders power our mission**



# WHERE WE ARE HEADING

## BRIDGING AFRICA AND THE WORLD: SEEING OUR MISSION THROUGH A WIDER LENS

APRI has a significant task in the coming five years: to establish ourselves as a genuinely global organisation, working throughout Africa and worldwide, wherever the terms of Africa-related policies and partnerships are being set.

There is real opportunity here. The hierarchies that once defined how Africa engaged with the world are giving way to more nuanced, and sometimes more balanced relationships. African governments are increasingly able to engage as genuine partners. That means re-situating the relationships we know best. Germany and the EU remain central to our work – and we will keep developing our expertise in this area. However, these relationships now sit within a more open field, as the quality of Africa's engagement with an ever wider constellation of partners evolves. Several African countries are exploring deeper collaborations with China and South East Asia, North America, Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Latin America and others, and Africa's deliberate efforts to grow engagement among the Global South are another important path by which the continent is shaping its own future.

Our mission runs through it all: to bolster the position of African governments and institutions in the partnerships that will drive the continent's economic transformation, by producing rigorous evidence, developing expertise, growing networks, driving impactful action and building understanding, so that African governments can act on the best available evidence while the terms are being set.

The sands of geopolitics, trade, conflict and climate continue to shift beneath us, but the terms on which Africa engages with the world are more open now than they have been in a long time: open to revision, or to a complete reset.

**Join us to help shape the next five years**







## Imprint

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