



THE NORDIC
AFRICA INSTITUTE
NORDISKA AFRIKAINSTITUTET

Action Plan and Budget 2026

Revised 2026-02-05

Table of contents

1. The Director’s introduction	2
2. Strategic and Organisational Framework	3
2.1 Ordinance with instructions for the Nordic Africa Institute	3
2.2 Organisational structure of the Nordic Africa Institute	3
2.3 Bridging into NAI Strategy 2027-2031	3
3. Annual follow up and the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework	5
4. Institutional targets with activities	6
4.1 Prioritized annual targets and process indicators	6
Annual target 1: Strengthen engagement with Africa-based stakeholders	6
Annual target 2: Create the best possible conditions for creating and sharing new and relevant knowledge	7
Annual target 3: Deepen academic collaboration and policy exchange across the Nordics.....	7
Annual target 4: Through increased visibility, raise awareness of the institute’s relevance across policy spheres	8
Target 5: Strengthen Information Security for a Robust and Resilient Information Management Framework	8
5. Risk matrix and risk mitigation plan	9
6. Budget and finances 2026	11
6.1 NAI Programme budget 2026	11
6.2 NAI Administration budget 2026 – only funded by the Government of Sweden	13

1. The Director's introduction

The world is undergoing profound political, economic, and environmental transformation. Amid growing geopolitical tensions and pressures on democratic values, there is an urgent need for new and constructive forms of partnerships. Both Africa and the Nordic countries are well placed to contribute to shaping such a future — one grounded in knowledge exchange, scaling innovations, and people-to-people relations.

Africa's increasing geopolitical weight and youthful population make it a key partner in addressing shared global challenges, from climate adaptation and sustainable energy transitions to inclusive growth and democratic renewal. Across the continent, young people are driving movements for social justice, accountability, and participation, embodying the creativity and resilience that define Africa's future. At the same time, governments are pursuing ambitious development agendas to promote economic transformation, regional integration, and value addition through industrialization and technological innovation. These developments present unique opportunities for renewed collaboration and learning between Africa and the Nordic region.

For the Nordic countries, strengthening the ties with people and their leaders across Africa is both a strategic priority and a shared responsibility. In order to develop our relations, we need a deeper understanding of the realities, aspirations, and innovations shaping Africa tomorrow — knowledge that is grounded in research and evidence. The Nordic Africa Institute plays a central role in advancing this understanding. Through empirical research, evidence-based policy dialogue, and tailored formats of knowledge exchanges, the institute connects researchers, policymakers, and associated changemakers from both regions. By fostering mutual learning and informed engagement, we contribute to the development of a more equitable, sustainable, and knowledge-driven global future.

The Action Plan for 2026 operationalizes the final year of our current organisational strategy. It reaffirms our mission to generate and share knowledge that strengthens relations between Africa and the Nordic countries — a mission highly relevant in a rapidly changing world.

Therése Sjömander

Director Nordic Africa Institute
November 2025

2. Strategic and Organisational Framework

2.1 Ordinance with instructions for the Nordic Africa Institute

According to the ordinance with instructions (SFS 2021:371) from the Swedish government, the Nordic Africa Institute shall contribute to a deeper understanding of modern Africa among Nordic decision makers by

1. conducting, making available and disseminating interdisciplinary research and analysis concerning relevant social challenges in Africa;
2. creating conditions for a research-based policy dialogue about Africa in the Nordic countries and on the African continent;
3. stimulating research concerning Africa in the Nordic countries and promoting research cooperation between Nordic and African researchers;
4. providing a library in order to acquire and make available literature and other information sources that are relevant to research and study of modern Africa.

Through its activities, the agency shall contribute to achieving the goal of international development cooperation as part of the implementation of Sweden's global development policy, and to the implementation of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

2.2 Organisational structure of the Nordic Africa Institute

The Nordic Africa Institute is led by a Director, who serves as the Head of Agency. The institute is organised into three core units: Research unit, Communication unit, and Library unit. A fourth unit, the Central Administration and Organisational Development unit, ensures good and effective working conditions, planning and follow-up processes.

The Nordic Africa Institute has an advisory body called the Programme and Research Council. Each Nordic country that funds NAI can suggest two representatives: one from the Foreign Ministry and one from the academic sector. The Director formally appoints the representatives. In addition, the Director appoints representatives from Uppsala University Library, Sida, and representatives from academic institutions in Denmark and Norway participate, reflecting their close collaboration with the institute.

This Action Plan is developed end of 2025, while the Letter of appropriation for 2026 is decided by the Swedish Government in December 2025. The Action Plan has therefore been developed to take into account and enable the deliverable of tasks that will be prioritised by the government.

2.3 Bridging into NAI Strategy 2027-2031

The institute's current organisational five-year strategy (2022-2026) guides the agency's operations and clarifies how NAI co-creates, communicates and disseminates knowledge and ultimately contributes to a deeper understanding of Africa. Our annual Action Plans are based on contributions to the operational objectives defined in the strategy. The Action Plan for 2026 will therefore also include activities which aims to contribute to the development of the forthcoming organisational strategy 2027-2031.

Vision

African and Nordic decision-makers work effectively together to improve the equality, dignity and welfare of people across contexts in Africa

Mission

Provide deeper understanding amongst Nordic decision-makers and associated change-makers of contemporary African perspectives and societal dynamics

To enable the institute to fulfil its mission and to contribute to its vision, three interlinked outcomes will be pursued throughout the strategy period: a knowledge-generating profile; a policy-informing role; and an established position within the Nordic region as a collaborative and learning knowledge hub.

In order to reach its three interlinked outcomes, the following overarching operational objectives are set:

Strengthen its capacity for knowledge co-creation between Nordic and African partners;

Strengthen its bridging role between African perspectives and Nordic policy audiences;

Strengthen its cross-unit collaboration and learning, including through digitalisation;

Leadership at NAI is trust-based, and the institute strives to uphold a culture of equality, diversity and inclusion. Embedded within this are the three C's of NAI's HR policy and strategy, representing the main parts in our collective effort:



CULTURE. Staff have a collective responsibility to contribute towards a caring and collegial workplace that enables individuals to fulfil their duties to the highest standard.



COMPETENCE. Staff have equal opportunities to perform their work duties, get satisfaction from their work, flourish within their field of expertise, and experience personal development.



CAPACITY. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities in their respective units, while 'working as one' in an integrated fashion, taking into account the entire organisation while respecting diversity and difference.

3. Annual follow up and the monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework

The annual follow-up cycle below visualizes the institute’s processes for planning, implementation and monitoring, including annual institutional processes to comply the governance of Swedish public agencies according to for example The Swedish National Financial Management Authority.

NAI’s annual follow-up cycle will also feed information and understanding into the agency’s annual planning and budget cycle. Follow-up processes are aligned with and carried out on an individual, unit and institutional level.

NAI’s monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) framework aims to follow-up on the Action plan and institutional strategy. Additionally, NAI will integrate insights from the MEL processes into deeper organisational learning, allowing for ongoing refinement of strategy-based achievements which will also bridge into the NAI Strategy 2027-2031.






Picture: Annual follow up cycle for planning, implementation and monitoring, including annual institutional processes

4. Institutional targets with activities

Four of the cross-organisational targets from 2025 have been re-prioritised and remain relevant as annual targets for 2026. A fifth target has been added for 2026 which focuses on information security as this is a highly prioritised area for the government and for NAI. These five targets are complemented by unit-wise workplans that include both regular planned activities and those responding to emerging demands throughout the operational year.

All units are also engaged in cross-unit organisational processes led by the unit for Central Administration and Organisational Development, including sustainability issues, crisis management, information handling, travel security, information security, and work environment.

Each of the five institutional targets are linked to the institute's overarching operational objectives. A single activity aiming for a certain target may therefore contribute to one, two, or three operational objectives, as these objectives are interlinked. The targets with prioritised activities, and how they correspond to the operational objectives and assignments, are presented in the matrix below.





As a reminder, NAI's three interlinked operational objectives are:	Strengthen its capacity for knowledge co-creation between Nordic and African partners.	
	Strengthen its bridging role between African perspectives and Nordic policy audiences.	
	Strengthen its cross-unit collaboration and learning, including through digitalisation.	

4.1 Prioritized annual targets and process indicators

Annual target 1: Strengthen engagement with Africa-based stakeholders

Justification for target






Central to the NAI strategy is our bridging role between African and Nordic perspectives and between research and policy. By closer and continuous involvement and engagement with key thinkers and change-makers on the continent, NAI will be able to strengthen the African perspectives in the science to policy outreach. Our convening power and extensive network can provide strategic opportunities for Nordic policy makers based on the African continent to engage in relevant knowledge exchanges with NAI and its partners.

Activities	Indicators	Data	Achievement
Develop and launch a NAI alumni network, including establishing channel(s) for communication.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ NAI-alumni outreach channel established 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept note for network • List of alumni • Channel data 	 
Organise at least two events - in different thematic fields and locations on the African continent - involving members of the policy-making collective as well as academia and alumni as speakers and audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Policymakers and scholars invited as speakers as well as audience. ✓ Alumni involved in at least one NAI event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event programmes 	 

Annual target 2: Create the best possible conditions for creating and sharing new and relevant knowledge

Justification for target



Justification 2026: NAI strives to create a conducive environment for knowledge-sharing and academic exchange, and for enhancing the co-creation of knowledge. In 2026, we will continue to strengthen our infrastructure to enable empirical research on Africa and will investigate reciprocal staff mobility as a tool for knowledge-sharing.



Activities	Indicators	Data	Achievement
Strengthen the connection between NAI's digital collections and physical library resources to enhance visibility and access to NAIs Africa-focused research infrastructure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Gaps in the metadata for the physical collection identified that blocks usage ✓ Increase of metadata added 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Library unit meeting minutes identified gaps • Updated records in DiVA 	  
Pilot reciprocal staff mobility to strategically strengthen the Institute's visibility, partnerships, and presence across policy and academic spheres.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 1–3 individuals from NAI and 1–3 from partner organisations participating in incoming and outgoing staff mobility, leading to subsequent joint activities or collaborations. ✓ New collaborations, networks, or formal partnerships established. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint, policy and/or scholarly activities initiated following the mobility. • Reflection report from participating staff (both incoming and outgoing). 	 

Annual target 3: Deepen academic collaboration and policy exchange across the Nordics

Justification for target

There is value of strengthening academic collaboration across the Nordics. NAI will continue to strengthen its engagement with both academia and policymakers in Sweden, Finland and Iceland. We will also work to deepen our research collaboration and use opportunities to strategically engage with policy makers in Denmark and Norway.





Activities	Indicators	Data	Achievement
Organise a visit to a Nordic capital for participants of the Early Career Diplomats programme in order to deepen the understanding of Nordic policy perspectives on Africa.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ At least 20 early career diplomats attending the programme in a Nordic capital. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation by participants • Programme for the visit • List of participants. 	 

Organise a scientifically based event targeting Nordic decision makers on understanding African perspectives on a new world order.	✓ At least 5 Nordic policy makers attending.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of participants Invitation Concept Note for the event 	 
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Annual target 4: Through increased visibility, raise awareness of the institute’s relevance across policy spheres

Justification for target


NAI expects that increased visibility will raise the awareness of the institute’s relevance across policy spheres and thereby strengthen its role and image as a go-to partner of choice. During 2026 NAI will continue to enhance its virtual and physical visibility with partners, while also, in the lead-up to the next strategy period, clarifying its approach to knowledge transfer and policy engagement.


Activities	Indicators	Data	Achievement
Formulate, package, and communicate NAIs approach to knowledge transfer and evidence-based knowledge co-creation with policy-makers.	✓ Concept formulated and visible on NAI external website, documents and/or PPTs available for sharing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Place on nai.uu.se 	 
Develop at least 3 stories of change to evidence impact of NAI’s science to policy engagement, each aligning with our MEL framework.	✓ At least 3 stories of change produced and formatted, with supporting evidence collated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3 lists of evidences 	 

Target 5: Strengthen Information Security for a Robust and Resilient Information Management Framework

Justification for target

A robust approach to information security is essential to ensure the integrity, confidentiality, and availability of NAI’s information assets. As digital operations expand and regulatory requirements (including the NIS2 Directive and MSBFS 2020:6) evolve, NAI must reinforce its capacity to prevent, detect, and respond to information security incidents. Strengthening information security governance and awareness will enhance organisational resilience and safeguard NAI’s mission-critical operations and reputation.

Activities	Indicators	Data	Achievement
Review and align NAI’s information security framework with relevant national and EU regulations, including an adopted and updated Information Security	✓ A revised information security policy approved and launched	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised security policy 2026 	

Policy with clearly defined roles and procedures.			
Implement mandatory information security training and awareness activities for all employees, including periodic exercises such as simulated phishing or incident response drills.	✓ At least one drill implanted at organisational level.	• An internal MEL session evaluating NAI's security culture following the drill	

5. Risk matrix and risk mitigation plan

In carrying out the annual operations of the Nordic Africa Institute, the following main risks (below) and risk mitigation strategies have been identified for 2026.

The management team systematically follow and assess the geopolitical situation in the neighbourhood of Sweden. The Director of the institute is part of overall government coordination and information sharing meetings.

The management team continuously revisit the institute's crisis management, and crisis preparedness, and will use scenario planning. A designated group has performed a detailed risk analysis of the overall conditions. The mitigation measures aim to enhance a strong safety culture through the entire organisation.

NAI's overall organisational risk level is assessed as low to medium, with the strongest vulnerabilities found in information-security, financial support, and internal capacity. Most operational and reputational risks are mitigated by proactive governance, strong Nordic partnerships, and continuous staff training.

Risk Area	Description	Probability (1–4)	Consequence (1–4)	Risk Level	Mitigation Measures
Information Security & Data Protection	Unauthorised access to internal systems, research data or personal information; inadequate compliance with GDPR or Swedish security regulations.	3	4	Medium–High	Confidentiality, integrity and availability assessment; mandatory information-security training; restricted guest access; annual audit; updated continuity and backup routines.
Credibility/reputational risk	Undermining NAIs credibility as evidence-based voice, by e. g mis-interpretation of NAI outputs as politically biased; manipulation of NAI outputs in digital media.	2	3	Medium	Continuous monitoring of NAI channels; Clear and accessible editorial policy for SoMe channels; consistent, fact-based responses in digital

					channels; Raised to NAI Spokesperson (Director) level when appropriate.
Geopolitical Context	Political instability in Nordics and/or Africa affects collaboration with partners.	3	3	Medium–High	Continuous dialogue with Nordic and African partners; scenario planning; diversification of partnerships.
Internal Capacity & Competence	Key staff turnover, recruitment delays, or insufficient cross-unit coordination.	3	3	Medium–High	Succession planning; cross-training; workload monitoring; flexible resource allocation.
Financial Risk	Delays or changes in Nordic MFA funding to NAI; exchange-rate fluctuations; under- or over-spending relative to LoA.	2	3	Medium	Quarterly budget monitoring; financial buffer allocation; proactive dialogue with MFA's.

6. Budget and finances 2026

Finances and annual budget of the Nordic Africa Institute

In addition to Swedish funding, the Nordic Africa Institute receives annual contributions from the governments of Finland and Iceland for programme activities within research, communication and library. The institute is mainly financed from the Swedish government's development aid budget through two different allocations, one for programmatic activities, and one for administration and running costs. The institute's financial resources also include an annual contribution earmarked for library acquisitions from Uppsala University. Externally funded research projects are ongoing. The grant amounts NAI receives varies from one year to another, but is estimated to be a decreasing part of NAI's budget in 2026.

6.1 NAI Programme budget 2026

Income

Source	Budget 2026 Numbers in TSEK
Swedish Government contribution 07 1:1 ap8	22 000
Finland	4 227 ¹⁾
- <i>Transferred funds from previous year</i>	115
Iceland	1 000
- <i>Transferred funds from previous year</i>	17
Danish contribution to the Early Career Diplomats Programme	1 294
Uppsala University	400
Revenue from book sales and Interlibrary loan fees	60
Total	29 113
<i>Externally funded research projects</i>	<i>193²⁾</i>

1) New agreement will be negotiated during 2026.

2) Estimated amounts as per signed agreements February 2026. NAI submits external research proposals all year around, decisions are made by research councils throughout the year.

Expenditure

Source	Budget 2026 Numbers in TSEK
Research unit	
Research salaries ³⁾	13 703
Research activities, incl. open access	865
Strategic policy engagement	80
Nordic scholarships	225
African scholarships	910
Claude Ake Visiting Chair ⁴⁾	75
Total research	15 858
Communication unit	
Communication salaries ⁵⁾	7 031
Web	100
Digital services	70
NAI publications	240
Coaching and training programmes ⁶⁾	590
External policy activities	305
Total communication	8 336
Library unit	
Library salaries ⁷⁾	3 969
Library acquisitions ⁴⁾	950
Total library	4 919
Total expenditure	29 113

3) Including research salaries allocated to the ECDP, financed through the Danish contribution.

4) The Danish, Finnish and Icelandic contributions do not finance the Claude Ake Scholarship and Library acquisitions.

5) Including communication staff salaries allocated to the ECDP, financed through the Danish contribution.

6) The amount includes the co-financing of the EDDP program from the Governments of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Iceland, covering the funding of 2-3 participants from their respective countries. It also includes the directorial and administrative time allocated to the ECDP, financed through the Danish contribution to a maximum of 80 000 SEK.

7) Including librarian salary allocated to the ECDP, financed through the Danish contribution.

6.2 NAI Administration budget 2026 – only funded by the Government of Sweden

Income

Source	Budget 2026 Numbers in TSEK
Swedish Government contribution 07 1:3 ap1	18 448
Transfer remaining funds	503
Over Head from externally financed research projects	200 ⁸⁾
Total	19 151

8) Estimated amount.

Expenditure

Source	Budget 2026 Numbers in TSEK
Director salary	2 069
Director activities	225
Programme and Research Council	75
Central admin salaries	6 594
Office premises and staff costs	6 063
IT/digitalisation	2 400
External services finances/HR	1 125
Extraordinary expenditure for 2026: in-house email solution	600
Total	19 151