

STRATEGIC PLAN for CASA ÁFRICA 2022-2024

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Africa, our neighbour

In an increasingly interconnected world, the relationship with our neighbouring continent, Africa, is crucial, both for Spain and for the well-being of all. This is reflected in both Spanish foreign policy and at a local level, as is evident in the case of the Canary Islands and other autonomous communities with close ties to Africa. Africa's future is our business, in the same way that the fight for peace, human rights and gender equality, combating climate change or ecological and digital transition are global issues that affect us all and require solutions beyond our borders.

Public diplomacy approaches these transnational challenges from a positive perspective of collaboration among equals and in search of mutual benefit. Moreover, and as a tool for external action, it recognises the vital importance of civil society and public opinion in international relations and in positioning a country on the global agenda. In this context, reciprocal knowledge, trust and long-term alliances are useful instruments, as is constructive dialogue between Africans and Spaniards in the common search for fresh solutions.

In contrast to traditional diplomacy, which is exercised by diplomats and directed primarily at other diplomats or foreign government representatives, public diplomacy is a much broader concept that is primarily aimed at civil society and is exercised by all types of players, both governmental and non-governmental, in favour of the country's interests. In our case, the goal is to raise awareness about Africa in Spain, and vice versa, and to help key players north and south of the Mediterranean meet and get acquainted.

This work carried out by Casa África for the benefit of Spanish and African societies is influenced by the social, economic, technological, environmental and cultural changes that occur over time. The coronavirus pandemic, along with the resultant health, social, economic and migratory crises, reveal the magnitude of global interdependence and the value of international cooperation in terms of addressing shared challenges. The inherent elements of public diplomacy - mutual awareness, trust, understanding and solidarity - are essential in terms of constructing these international ecosystems of engagement and partnership, not forgetting that is essential for us to be able to count on Africans residents in our country to assist in this construction.

The disruptive changes brought about by the pandemic have not only put digital capabilities at the centre of public diplomacy, but also strategic thinking, as they have revealed the advantages of having a vision of the future and agile strategic planning in terms of both facing threats and taking advantage of opportunities that arise. And that is precisely the goal of this strategic plan, to prepare Casa África as an institution that can better respond to the current needs and future demands of civil society while continuing our commitment to working towards making this a more egalitarian, caring world and to bringing Africa and Spain ever closer together.

About this Plan

Casa África's IV Strategic Plan was approved by the Consortium's Governing Council in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria on the ~~XXX~~ and will remain in force until 2024. The Plan seeks to align the institution's activities with the needs of its stakeholders while fostering improvements in the results of its programming in line with the mission, vision, values of the institution and its proposed objectives.

The legal framework for the design of the Strategic Plan is determined by the general principles of action of public sector entities, provided for by Law 40/2015, of the 1st of October, on the Legal Regime of the Public Sector: planning and management by objectives; management control; evaluation of the results of public policies; efficiency in the fulfilment of the objectives set, and economy, sufficiency and strict adaptation of the means for institutional purposes.

Likewise, the aforementioned law establishes the obligation for State Public Institutional Sector (SPIE) entities such as Casa África to possess a multi-annual action plan that establishes the strategic lines for the entity. In addition, the institution must draw up an annual plan for every year covered by the development of the Strategic Plan.

The starting point for the drafting process for this Strategic Plan were the priorities of Casa África's stakeholders and Spain's international commitments with relevance to Spanish public diplomacy with Africa. It has also integrated valuable contributions made by Casa África board members in order to enhance the various synergies that exist between their respective priorities.

In addition, the needs of citizens and other Casa África stakeholders, such as its collaborators, have been taken into account, these having been expressed either verbally or via an open survey disseminated through the institution's

official channels on social networks and available on the website www.casafrica.es during the period XXX to XXX.

The Plan is divided into three main sections. The first defines Casa Africa's framework for action and encompasses administrative, governmental and conceptual aspects that contextualise its current situation as well as the General Objectives that define the action.

The second section details the institution's *Mission, Vision and Values*, which establish the objectives and paths to follow over the next three years. Based on these, three types of differentiated strategic axes are established: *Fundamental, Transversal and Instrumental*.

Fundamental Bases prioritise large thematic blocks (they answer the question "What to address?"). The subcategory *Priority Themes* defines these in greater detail within the framework of Casa África initiatives. *Transversal Bases* define how to act to generate the best results and are understood as essential in terms of success (they answer the question "How to provide the service?"). Finally, the *Instrumental Bases* define how to allocate and manage resources so that they lead to the fulfilment of the Vision (they answer the question "How to manage and allocate resources").

The third section of this plan describes the operational framework of the institution and encompasses the definition of its programmes. This gives rise to the Annual Action Plans (AAP), operational plans that lend maximum importance to their alignment with the priorities established in this Strategic Plan in order to achieve the greatest coherence with regard to action.

As a public entity, Casa África also possesses an *Evaluation and Monitoring System* with measurable results indicators that make it possible to gauge, based on objective information, the level of compliance with the Annual Action Plan, as well as the results of programming in terms of effectiveness, efficiency, coherence and satisfaction.

It should be stressed that the success of this plan depends on the implementation process, management leadership and team involvement, as well as on the allocation of the financial, human, administrative and technological resources required.

Casa África operational framework

Administrative framework

The organisations that constitute the Casa África Consortium are the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation (MAUC), the Government of the Canary Islands and the City Council of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria.

The organisation was constituted on the 26th of June, 2006 as a **public consortium** and is configured as a Public Law Entity of an inter-administrative nature, with its own legal personality and full capacity to act. The consortium is fully integrated in the State Public Sector and is attached to the MAUC, its principal consortium partner. As part of the **Spanish public administration**, its annual accounts are audited by the General Comptroller of the State Administration (IGAE) and published in the Official State Bulletin (BOE). Its performance is audited by the Court of Auditors and a transparency portal is available on the institutional website.

The Casa África Consortium is governed by the provisions of its **Statutes**, the sixth and latest version of which was approved by the Governing Council on the 18th of December, 2018. These define, as the objective of its activity, the improvement of relations with Africa through the management of socio-cultural and training services, institutional services and support for development cooperation and economic cooperation. The Casa also serves as a meeting and exchange space that seeks to improve reciprocal knowledge between Spain and the African continent and to promote the Canary Islands as a platform for knowledge, services and cooperation with Africa. It should also aid the diplomatic representations of African countries in the dissemination of the realities of their countries.

The institution is part of the Red de Casas (House Network) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation, which includes Casa África, Casa de América, Casa Árabe, Casa Asia, Casa Mediterráneo and Centro Sefarad-Israel. According to the ministry itself, this group of institutions constitutes "*a powerful network of **public diplomacy** of the Spanish Government aimed at political and economic cooperation, intercultural dialogue, reciprocal knowledge and the strengthening of ties between civil societies in the different geographical areas in which it operates*". Casa África represents Spain's and the Canary Islands' commitment to Africa and, in particular, to sub-Saharan Africa.

Casa África public diplomacy

Public diplomacy is a branch of international relations that, over the last decade, has gained ground internationally as a tool for external action by many developed states. Despite academic advances and 'on the ground' implementation, the term does not have a single agreed definition with clear boundaries, but rather a variety of different perspectives.

Public diplomacy has entered a stage of maturity and professionalisation in which it is increasingly defined as the transparent actions by which a country communicates and builds networks and alliances in an effort to gain wider acceptance of its values, interests and positions on the global stage. We are talking about mutually beneficial relationships that seek new solutions to shared challenges (see more on the new public diplomacy and Spanish public diplomacy in Annex I).

General objectives

The general objectives of an organisation aim to both solve problems and determine the approach to the problems to be solved. They condense the core ideas and the purpose of the action, i.e., the *raison d'être* of the entity.

Casa África's General Objectives seek to foster relations of trust between Africa and Spain and are defined as follows (more information on the general objectives can be found in Annex II):

General Objectives:

1. Raise awareness regarding:
 - Africa in Spain and Spain in Africa
 - Spain as a country committed to Africa
 - The Canary Islands as a bridge to Africa
2. Foment mutually beneficial relationships via:
 - Contact networks
 - Alliances

The current socio-economic context

Casa África now faces the drafting of this new strategic plan in a context in which migration has once again become a key issue on the public agenda, both in Europe and in Spain and the Canary Islands. The coronavirus crisis has hit the entire planet and has had a profound effect on economies worldwide. In the case of Africa, it has led to the collapse of sectors such as tourism and trade, the destruction of jobs, the growth of poverty and the

extreme vulnerability of large sectors of the population, while its societies struggle with a lack of vaccines, weak health and education systems, rising debt and other circumstances that make them vulnerable, such as climate change, conflicts and many other factors that offer a complex scenario full of challenges.

Coinciding with the pandemic, there has also been an upsurge in the arrival of African immigrants to the Canary Islands by sea, on a dangerous route that has claimed many lives and the reactivation of which has created a certain amount of social and media alarm. The situation of irregular migrants has led to episodes of racism and xenophobia in a traditionally welcoming society in which some of the most vulnerable sectors have felt more vulnerable as a result of an additional crisis. In this context, by imposition of the central and local government and out of a pure sense of responsibility, Casa África has become involved in this issue by facilitating bridges between citizens, fighting against stereotypes and racism and planting seeds of knowledge and harmony. This task was also a priority at the time of the Casa's creation, which coincided with what was known as the "Cayuco crisis" in 2006 (more information on the historical context of Casa África's creation can be found in Annex III).

Geostrategic situation

The Casa África head offices are located in an emblematic building in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria that is on loan from the Government of the Canary Islands. The archipelago of the Canary Islands occupies a privileged geographical location just 100 kilometres off the northwest coast of Africa. The islands sit on the African plate and form part of the natural region of Macaronesia. This proximity, together with the historical and geographical links with Africa, means that the Canary Islands act as a nexus with the continent.

The Canary Islands were recognised by the Treaty of Amsterdam and in Article 349 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) as an outermost region of the European Union. As such, the Canary Islands are covered by specific measures and derogations provided for in EU legislation that help address the main challenges it faces due to its remoteness, insularity, small size, difficult climate and topography, and economic model. The European Commission is working on updating the Outermost Regions' (OR) partnership relations in order to adapt the conditions of this strategic partnership to the EU's new priorities. Taking advantage of this aid and the advantages of their proximity to the African

continent to definitively become a platform that serves as a bridge to the continent is a priority for the Government of the Canary Islands and for Casa África. Within this framework, it also seeks to strengthen ties with the other ORs in an effort to move forward together.

Priorities of the consortium stakeholders

As a tool for External Action for Africa, Casa África has aligned this Strategic Plan with the most relevant MAUC priorities, while taking into account the strategic priorities of the other consortium partners: the Government of the Canary Islands and the City Council of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, and, always in its natural context, Spanish public diplomacy for Africa.

It also assumes the principal international commitments made by the Government of Spain, such as the *Sustainable Development Goals* (SDGs) contained in the United Nations *2030 Agenda*, and those included in the *Paris Agreement on Climate Change* and the African Union's *Agenda 2063* (2013-2023). These documents respond in a coordinated manner to the major global challenges of the coming years, and the international community is currently pinning its hopes on their capacity as useful tools for economic recovery once the coronavirus pandemic has been overcome.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, European Union and Cooperation

Early in 2021 the Spanish Government approved the new Foreign Action Strategy 2021-2024, which underlines, as a strategic priority, the need to contribute to the mutual prosperity of Spain and Africa. The strategy articulates foreign policy around four fundamental lines of action: i) Human rights, democracy, security and feminism; ii) Integrated, fair and equitable global economy and society; iii) A more sustainable, habitable and green planet; and iv) Regional integration and strengthened multilateralism.

For its part, foreign policy regarding Africa is defined in the III Africa Plan published by the MAUC in 2019 under the title "Spain and Africa: challenge and opportunity". This identifies four strategic objectives: i) Peace and security; ii) Sustainable development, inclusive and resilient economic growth; iii) Institutionalism; and iv) Orderly, regular and secure mobility.

The objectives of the III Africa Plan are explored, in turn, in the operational programme Africa Focus 2023, aligned with the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda and the objectives of the African Union's Agenda 2063. With regard to geographical priorities, it focuses on Nigeria, Ethiopia and South Africa,

considered "anchor countries" due to their demographic nature, political-economic projection and influence on the stability of their sub-regions, as well as Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique and Angola as "priority countries".

Government of The Canary Islands

At the time of drafting this plan, the Government of the Canary Islands is working on a *Strategic Plan 2021-2023* for the Directorate General for Economic Affairs with Africa. This plan establishes economic diplomacy and territorial cooperation, training and knowledge transfer, Canary Islands-Africa innovation and strategic information as priorities.

In the search for further correlations, we should bear in mind that for the Autonomous Community of the Canary Islands, the efforts of the political, social and economic agents have materialised in an exceptional and extraordinary agreement in the face of the COVID-19 health emergency: *The Pact for the Social and Economic Reactivation of the Canary Islands*. This pact has taken the form of the *Plan for the Social and Economic Reactivation of the Canary Islands 2020-2023*, which focuses on the preservation of essential public services, the reinforcement of health and socio-health capacities, attention to the most vulnerable groups, the maintenance and recovery of employment, the boosting of economic activity and the streamlining, simplification, cooperation and coordination of administrative procedures, among others.

City Council of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria

For its part, the City Council of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria has adopted the *City of the Sea 2030 Strategy*, the aim of which is to position Las Palmas de Gran Canaria as an international benchmark for local governance in sustainability and competitiveness of the blue economy, with values such as participation, transparency, innovation and, once again, sustainability. These are priorities that, in our opinion, must be aligned with the interests of the various African partners in an effort to create shared agendas in cases where objectives are shared.

Other relevant priorities for Casa África actions

In addition to aligning its actions with the priorities of its consortium partners, Casa África initiatives also aim to take into account other relevant strategies.

While the following summary does not pretend to be exhaustive, it does include some of the documents to be taken into account:

To begin with, as a member of the European Union, Spain will be obliged to implement the new European strategy for Africa. This strategy was approved by the European Parliament in March, 2021, under the title *EU-Africa Strategy: A Partnership for Sustainable and Inclusive Development*, and proposes building a true partnership between equals that transcends the traditional donor-beneficiary relationship in an effort to reflect the new priorities of African countries and place human development at the heart of the strategy via concrete initiatives that challenge inequality and empower women and young people in general.

The strategy also identifies as a priority reducing Africa's dependence on imports, strengthening intra-African trade and investments in infrastructure, the ecological and digital transition, promoting sustainable agriculture, modernisation of the agricultural sector, the transition to a clean, circular economy and a migration policy based on solidarity and shared responsibility.

The *V Master Plan of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (2018-2021)* is another fundamental element in the construction of Spanish-African relations and, as such, is also fundamental for Casa África. This plan includes the fight against poverty while attempting to coherently integrate the transversal principles of Spanish Cooperation (SC), such as an approach based on human rights and fundamental freedoms, gender equality, respect for cultural diversity, environmental sustainability and the fight against climate change.

Also relevant is the commercial and financial strategy *Horizon Africa*, drawn up by the Spanish government in 2020 with the aim of supporting the internationalisation of Spanish companies in the African market and favouring a growing and solid Spanish presence on the continent. The strategy identifies water and sanitation, transport (especially rail) and energy infrastructures as key investment sectors, in which Spanish companies have extensive international experience and which contribute to favouring the economic and sustainable growth of the countries.

Strategy 2022-2024

Mission, vision, values and motto

Mission and Vision form the framework from which the rest of the strategy is defined, establishing both the way forward and the ultimate goal. *Mission* shapes the organisation's identity, while *Vision* reflects the desired future image of the entity. In Casa África's case, both arise from the institution's mandate (defined in the Statutes and General Objectives) and organisational culture, while the *Values* represent the beliefs, convictions and philosophy that motivate and propel the institution in its efforts to attain its objectives.

Mission

Mission reflects the *raison d'être* of the entity, including its field of activity, essential capacities and values. It represents its identity and personality, now and in the future, from a general perspective. It must provide the organisation and its members with a valid reference as to its essence and serve as an element of identification and cohesion for the team.

To create mutually beneficial relations between Africa and Spain within the framework of Spanish public diplomacy via the creation of reciprocal knowledge and trust that, in turn, promote the social, economic and cultural development of Spain and Africa and the creation of a better world.

Vision

Vision is the intention of the organisation, or the path it takes to reach a desired state. It establishes both what the entity will be or should be in the future and the criteria for achieving this end. It therefore establishes the path to be followed and serves as a reference for the actions and decisions of the management and the team. For non-profit organisations, it is defined as the contribution they want to make to society.

To be a catalyst for sustainable, inclusive, equitable change that contributes to solving the great challenges of our time. To be known and recognised for the true value it brings to Spanish and African societies, seeking excellence based on its strengths and lifelong learning and innovation.

Motto

The motto used in Casa África's external communications sums up our mission and vision:

Africa and Spain, closer and closer

Values

The *Values* of an organisation should reflect the heart of the organisational culture. These may be ethical guidelines or qualities that add value and quality to services. They give meaning to the people who carry out the activity and set the tone for the relationship between the organisation and its external stakeholders.

Casa África's values differentiate us from other entities by contributing to both the quality of the services we provide and our own identity. We understand them as the basis for improving relations, both between the institution and its stakeholders and between Africans and Spaniards:

Public accountability: we promote an ethical commitment to the public that is embodied in the transparent management of public funds, citizen participation, social and environmental commitment, gender equality and equal opportunities.

Professionalism and teamwork: we are committed to offering quality services, ongoing training and openness to continuous innovation and improvement, as well as collaboration in multidisciplinary teams, both national and international.

Mutual respect: this is the basis of our coexistence, given that we work in culturally diverse scenarios, and it is essential if we are to create relationships of trust and cohesion with society. It also extends to the defence of diversity and respect for the individual and especially for the rights of vulnerable groups.

Shared benefit: mutual benefit must always be the result of our actions. To this end, we defend and promote a two-way model of symmetrical commitment in which the parties actively listen to each other, engage in dialogue and seek common ground.

Dynamism: we promote proactive behaviour that takes constant evolution and transformation of the environment as a starting point for progress and development.

Strategic objectives 2022-2024

Fundamental bases

The Fundamental Bases are axes that provide a framework within which large blocks of thematic priorities are defined for the next three years. They consist of interrelated contents that are both complex and wide-ranging.

Casa África considers its fundamental bases from the perspective of the structure defined in Spain's *Foreign Action Strategy 2021-2024*, which in turn is aligned with both the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063. The aim is to ensure the highest level of coherence between Casa África's programming and that of its main consortium partner and between its international commitments and the interests of the African continent itself. This approach also aims to facilitate the monitoring and traceability of the results generated in relation to the objectives of Spanish overseas action.

Casa África's commitment to the 2030 Agenda dates back to 2018. The SDGs (see Sustainable Development Goals in Annex V) are taken as the main reference, both for their relevance regarding the development of the neighbouring continent and to our own country. The Casa is a strong advocate of this agenda, both for its values and for its usefulness as a tool for bringing together multiple actors in an effort to meet current shared global challenges with a clear focus on creating a better world. Priority is given to issues of special relevance for relations between Spain and Africa and which capitalise on Spain's comparative strengths and values.

The priorities of the African Union's Agenda 2063 are also integrated into the strategy in an effort to both ensure African interests and make their presence visible. We are convinced that this is essential in terms of laying the foundations for a shared agenda that succeeds in generating benefits for both Spain and Africa.

- **Human rights, democracy, security and feminism** (in line with SDGs 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 10 of 2030 Agenda and objectives 1, 2, 3, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16 17, 18 and 19 of Agenda 2063).
- **Integrated, fair and equitable global economy and society** (in line with SDGs 8, 9, 10 and 16 of 2030 Agenda and objectives 4, 5, 9 and 20 of Agenda 2063)
- **More sustainable, habitable, green planet** (in line with SDGs 7, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 of 2030 Agenda and objectives 6 and 7 of Agenda 2063)
- **Regional integration and enhanced multilateralism** (in line with the SDGs 16 and 17 of 2030 Agenda and objectives 8, 10, 12 and 19 of Agenda 2063)

Thematic Priorities

Thematic Priorities refer simply to content that will lend purpose and coherence to our planning; key concepts that can be handled from a variety of sub-themes and perspectives.

In order to achieve an approach that is simultaneously coherent and agile within the framework of the fundamental bases, Casa África defines priorities within its own field of action. The chosen areas correspond to some of the most important challenges of our time and are considered especially significant in terms of relationships with our neighbouring continent. The intention is to allocate additional resources to these programming themes during the lifespan of this plan.

It is worth emphasising that, on a transversal level, priority will be given to new interdisciplinary approaches that breach traditional boundaries between different areas and which may give rise to a new understanding of the interrelationships between economic, social and human development.

1. **Climate change.** Climate change and the problems this causes constitute a global challenge of the highest level. The fight against climate change and solutions for mitigation of the same are therefore established as a priority for Casa África, which has defined a new specific roadmap for programmes relating to this issue, the aim being to contribute to the challenge of achieving carbon neutrality and reactivating the economy from this very perspective. The fact is that, within the area of public diplomacy, what is known as green diplomacy is gaining ground as a promotional tool that could lead to a more sustainable future while positioning the country on the international agenda.
2. **Migratory phenomena and their consequences.** Migratory phenomena represent an important challenge for the EU, Spain and The Canary Islands. Casa África's approach focuses on raising awareness regarding the contexts that motivate migration and the realities that migrants experience both in their countries of origin and in Spain. We defend human rights, inclusion and diversity in the construction of an open, tolerant and racism-free society.
3. **The role of women in development.** Women are a source of vitality throughout Africa, despite the fact that discrimination limits the

opportunities available to them. Aware of this reality, Casa África considers it essential to foment the role of women as drivers of economic, social and cultural development and to raise awareness regarding female leaders who serve as examples on both shores.

4. **Spain's commitment to Africa.** In addition to the dissemination of Africa and African culture in Spain, Casa África attempts to reinforce the image of Spain as a trusted country among African audiences. Our values and, above all, our commitment to the African continent, serve as a basis for promoting the image of Spain as a modern, supportive, innovative and talented country. In addition, we promote those sectors of Spanish excellence that represent a comparative advantage on the African continent.

Transversal Bases

The *Transversal Bases* constitute the areas which will be the subject of focus over the coming years and affect all strategic objectives.

1. **Citizen participation.** As part of the Spanish public administration, the needs and aspirations of citizens constitute the starting point for our initiatives. Citizens are the true protagonists of our activity and must, therefore, transcend the role of mere recipients in order to become indispensable collaborators, both in terms of definition of services and the generation of results. Citizen participation is an essential tool in a democratic society and, as such, we advocate a service model aimed at generating dialogue, interaction and co-creation projects involving both Africans and Spaniards. As an administration we seek a close relationship with our citizens, one that is capable of creating loyalty on the basis of the real value we create for them.

Objectives:

- Create services that respond to citizen contribution.
 - Involve citizens in the design of all new Casa initiatives (programmes, activities, strategies, etc.).
 - All initiatives should be interactive and have citizens and their needs at the centre.
2. **African contribution.** African citizen participation in Casa África's activity and definition of the same is essential in terms of their appropriation of the agenda and the generation of their own narrative, thereby reaching a deeper understanding of their situation, needs,

priorities and projects. With their knowledge and know-how, no-one is better placed to explain Africa better than African people and institutions. Giving our African partners a leading role is also fundamental in terms of identifying emerging issues, trends and people of interest on the continent.

Objectives:

- Ensure that all initiatives include the participation or vision of notable African figures or those with knowledge of African realities.
- Strengthen contacts with diplomatic and consular representatives of African countries in Spain, particularly in the Canary Islands.
- Promote frequent contact with associations, collectives and diverse entities of Africans living in Spain and especially in the Canary Islands.

3. **Transformative capacity.** Casa África's services are educational tools and, as such, must serve as a driving force for the social, economic and cultural changes necessary to improve relations between Africa and Spain. To this end, our activities focus on generating awareness, motivation and commitment to action in our users so that they, consequently, may also act as driving forces behind relations with Africa. We try to achieve real changes that lead to the betterment of people's lives.

Objectives:

- Develop and implement an in-house model for the generation of transformative capacities within the programming framework.
- Monitor macro-level changes in Spanish-African relations.

4. **Innovation and digital transformation.** Casa África promotes innovation as a tool that helps us meet new global challenges that are of shared interest to Africa and Spain. New technologies broaden horizons for the sharing and creation of ideas, values, solutions and alliances in a collaborative manner, broadening the scope of our public action and widening the spectrum to include new partners and less likely figures (radical collaborations). Moreover, ongoing improvement accompanied by digital transformation has become a necessity in terms of ensuring the relevance and continuity of our services.

Objectives:

- Implementation of an integrated innovation project or model for the improvement of Casa África's services.
- Transforming existing services into digital ones or replacing them with new services better adapted to the needs of digital citizenship beyond the digitalisation of existing services.
- Promote new initiatives to reach more diverse and numerous audiences through social networks.

5. **Academic and scientific collaboration.** Scientific diplomacy is called upon to play a leading role in the consolidation of relations between the African continent and Spain and, above all, in the generation of new solutions to shared challenges. Scientific collaboration has proven to be a fundamental element in promoting integration and cohesion. Casa África emphasises coordination between academic and scientific institutions and the sharing of best practices.

Objectives:

- Promote scientific or academic exchanges among Africans in Casa África and other Canary Island institutions and Spaniards in Africa.
- Organise actions aimed at debating and disseminating scientific and academic production in areas of interest to the continent and African citizens.

Instrumental Bases

The *Instrumental (or functional) Bases* seek to improve internal processes in order to support fulfilment of the Transversal Bases and are grouped into three value drivers: internal processes, learning and growth, and financial resources.

Internal processes

1. **Efficient, agile and transparent management.** In accordance with the institution's values and in an effort to increase trust among citizens and other stakeholders, Casa África exercises an ethical and responsible administration that pays attention to efficiency in both management and the use of resources. In order to get even closer to African and Spanish societies and place their needs at the centre of attention, we consider it essential to move towards an agile, dynamic entity, away from traditional bureaucratic models, and to increase

transparency by providing complete, useful and, of course, accurate information about the institution's activity.

Objectives:

- Adapt the Casa África statutes in accordance with the institution's current legal, administrative and organisational context and improve them from a technical point of view.
- Streamline administrative procedures through the implementation of technical solutions and agile methodologies that ensure greater efficiency in management.
- Take full advantage of the knowledge provided by Casa África's Evaluation and Monitoring System, on the one hand, as a tool for transparency and, on the other, to improve decision making.

2. **Responsible and sustainable management.** As a public body committed to sustainability and 2030 Agenda, Casa África must constitute a model institution at the forefront of ecological transition in its environment. This implies acting responsibly and sustainably in our own administrative and contractual activity, following the principles of rationality, necessity, suitability and efficiency.

Objectives:

- Transition to renewable energy sources at Casa África's head office.
- Eliminate the use of plastic.
- Reduce paper use.
- Introduce environmental criteria in public procurement and decision-making.

Learning and growth

3. **Ongoing training.** In a context as changeable as the current one, a context of lifelong learning, it is necessary to maintain the professional quality of the team and their motivation in order to improve the quality of the service. For this reason, Casa África is committed to carrying out training actions and other capacity-building initiatives that promote personal and professional development via both formal and informal training and with an emphasis on reconciling the personal and professional lives of the team members.

Objectives:

- Promote training on African issues in order to provide added value and bring the institution closer to a *think and do tank* that creates its own new knowledge on African issues.
 - Promote training in ICTs.
 - Promote temporary professional mobility with relevant entities and partners to increase African knowledge and contacts.
4. **Expansion of human resources.** The relaunching of the consortium's activity requires adaptation of the staff in order to bring it in line with the priorities of this Strategic Plan and the demands of the consortium members. The institution's trend towards greater professionalism and the increase in activities and fields of action must be accompanied by the necessary resources to fulfil the commitment to the consortium members. It is also in line with the MAUC's objective of strengthening the role of the Red de Casas (Network) as entities belonging to the ecosystem of the State's external action.

Objectives:

- Filling of staff vacancies.
 - Increase in personnel resources through an increase in staff and through mobility procedures for public employees from other Public Administrations, especially from consortium entities.
 - Improving Casa África's organisational structure, incorporating new areas of activity.
 - Establish staff exchange formulas between the consortium members that allow for greater mobility and recycling of the people who make up Casa África's staff.
5. **Strategic alliances.** Casa África's modus operandi is to collaborate with other public and private entities. To this end, both specific agreements and general action protocols are signed in an effort to consolidate alliances with other organisations that share Casa África's strategic objectives. They allow for better use of available resources and greater efficiency in management, with a multiplying effect that benefits the signatories. In an increasingly complex context, the diversification and expansion of these strategic alliances are necessary, not only for the organisation of the activity and its scope, but also in terms of innovation and digital transformation.

Objectives:

- Strengthening relations with Spanish embassies and consulates on the African continent.

- Strengthening relations with the embassies and consulates of African countries in Spain and the Canary Islands.
- Increase and diversification of the agreements that Casa África signs with other entities, such as universities, public administrations, foundations and other less likely actors, etc.
- Increase and diversification of the General Protocols of Action signed by Casa África.

Financial Resources

6. Sustainability and financial soundness. The principles of sustainability and budgetary balance guide our actions and help us optimise resources. We also promote greater co-financing from agents aligned with our objectives and financing from other external sources such as European, state or local funds. On the other hand, the achievement of our objectives requires stable means or resources that the consortium members must ensure on an on-going basis and guarantee in the long-term.

Objectives:

- Increase the contributions of the consortium members in line with the relaunching of the Casa's activity and to help balance the budget.
- Increase external financing through European funds and other subsidies.

7. Rigorous budget management. Rigour is key to our budgetary management and, to this end, up-to-date budgetary information must be available at all stages of expenditure. This facilitates the work of the governing, executive and management bodies as well as control bodies, contributing to the efficiency, reliability and transparency of management.

Objectives:

- Strengthening of internal budgetary and accounting management and reporting processes.
- Modernisation of accounting systems.

Operational framework

Operational activity and its scope

Located in the Canary Islands, a strategic enclave for relations with Africa, Casa África carries out a large part of its programming from its head offices in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria. In-person activities also extend to the rest of Spain and, to a lesser extent, African countries, particularly in **Sub-Saharan Africa**.

Since its earliest days, Casa África has also possessed a powerful digital strategy. The **digitalisation of services** has increased significantly over the last three years, and especially since the COVID-19 pandemic, which has made it possible to reach new audiences beyond physical borders.

Casa África organises some **450 activities** every year, including events of all kinds as well as strategic communication actions aimed at different audiences depending on the chosen themes and objectives, some examples being professional meetings, conferences, training courses, cultural activities, competitions and publications, both online and offline. Online and social media strategic communication is also very diverse and includes the production of videos, video infographics, e-books, awareness campaigns, etc. The Casa also acts as a facilitator of contacts and lobbying in defence of Spanish-African interests.

Areas of action

Given that public diplomacy as a whole is a very broad concept, the establishment of policy areas as conceptual subcategories allows for greater effectiveness at an operational level, including management, organisation and communication:

- Public Diplomacy
- Economic Diplomacy
- Cultural Diplomacy
- Digital Diplomacy
- Institutional Sphere

Programmes

Within each of these areas of action, a variety of **programmes** have been established as a result of the good practices developed. All of these aims to offer one or more services to the various Casa stakeholders.

INSTITUTIONAL SPHERE (IS):

- CASA AFRICA COUNCILS

- INSTITUTIONAL EVENTS
- STRATEGIC ALLIANCES
- ANALYSIS AND STRATEGY
- CORPORATE IMAGE
- INNOVATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

PUBLIC DIPLOMACY (PD):

- PROFESSIONAL CONFERENCES (Digital Society Conference, Journalists Conference, Hispanist Conference, Think Tank Conference, etc.)
- CASA AFRICA AWARDS
- - #AFRICAISNEWS
- 2030 AGENDA FORUMS
- CASA AFRICA COLLECTIONS (Casa África's Essay, Literature, History and Politics Collections; Co-publications, Literary Collaborations and Digital Editions)
- TEACHING AFRICA
- GUIDED VISITS TO CASA AFRICA
- ACADEMIC COLLABORATION
- MEDIA RELATIONS

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY (ED):

- ÁFRICA CRECE
- ELLAS AVANZAN
- AFRITURISMO/INVESTOUR
- TRAINING IN THE ECONOMIC SPHERE
- EUROPEAN PROJECTS

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY (CD):

- VIS A VIS
- LETRAS AFRICANAS
- EXHIBITIONS
- ÁFRICA EN MOVIMIENTO
- ÁFRICA VIVE
- CINE

DIGITAL DIPLOMACY (DD):

- WWW.CASAÁFRICA.ES
- CASA ÁFRICA MEDIA LIBRARY
- CASA ÁFRICA RESPONDE
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- ONLINE PUBLISHING RESOURCES (Casa África Blog: EsÁfrica.es; Videoinfographs, Radio Kuwamba, Thematic and audio-visual series and Subtitling for African films)
- PROYECTO MEMORIA

Casa África Stakeholders

Casa África defines the following principal stakeholders:

- Beneficiaries of the services: Spanish and African civil societies
- Collaborators
- Consortium bodies
- Casa África management and team

Beneficiaries of the services

The main beneficiary of the institution's services is the Spanish citizenry, with the African diaspora and Afro-descendants, inevitable bridges between Spanish and African realities, occupying a prominent place. Given that our motto speaks of rapprochement between Africa and Spain, it goes without saying that African societies also benefit from the action.

Casa África directly addresses these people in an effort to influence their attitude towards Africa and Spain, their people, and the relations between the two. Among these beneficiaries are representatives of institutions, companies and various different associations, universities and study centres, NGOs, the media and other relevant bodies.

Each of Casa África's programmes has one or more defined target audiences, and it is very important to establish in detail who these are, differentiate them and identify, in each case, their needs and communication consumption patterns in order to be able to offer them services and establish bilateral relationships.

Collaborators

Casa África enriches its services through collaboration with other Spanish and African entities and institutions in an effort to carry out initiatives of common interest. Likewise, it facilitates and promotes the work of others with the aim of achieving shared objectives with Casa África, as established in the statutes. For example: **universities and think tanks, chambers of commerce, associations, NGOs, festivals, media, island and town councils, as well as international organisations such as the UN, the African Union, the African Development Bank and the World Bank.** In the case of initiatives with an impact on the African continent, the Casa depends to a large extent on collaboration with African civil society protagonists and Spanish protagonists that make up the ecosystem of external action in Africa.

From an organisational point of view, these collaborations not only facilitate the implementation of activities, co-financing them and multiplying their effects and scope, but also create awareness and alliances at an organisational level. In other words, by collaborating with other entities, Casa África manages to mobilise important additional efforts and resources for the fulfilment of its mission and vision. Furthermore, and given that Casa África is the only public institution dedicated exclusively to improving relations with Sub-Saharan Africa, it is logical that the Casa should assume a facilitating role between the various protagonists, seeking synergies and avoiding duplication between different areas and protagonists in Spain and Africa.

On the other hand, Casa África's activity depends to a large extent on the contribution of **experts, personalities, artists, journalists, professionals of all kinds and other influencers** from different environments who, with their knowledge, add value to the programme's activities. In this sense, thanks to global interconnectedness, non-official or non-governmental actors are increasingly influential in public opinion and international relations. Indeed, in the eyes of specialised audiences, they often have greater credibility than other actors, such as governmental authorities or agents. The most successful protagonists are those who seek dialogue, negotiation and the creation of new ideas and innovation between groups of people, organisations and individuals from different societies.

For this reason, the **African players** invited to participate do not necessarily belong to the structures of government or power, as in the case of traditional diplomacy. We are talking about intellectuals, university professors and researchers, artists, activists, entrepreneurs, journalists and members of civil society who work both inside and outside their countries to create knowledge and disseminate it and inspire thought, debate and development. Many of them are **opinion leaders** who give a voice or mobilise a certain group of people, raise awareness on certain issues or promote agendas in line with the Casa's objectives.

The **media**, given the extent of their reach and impact on public opinion, are also key partners. Some media have shown a growing interest in open and sensitive coverage and approaches to Africa, giving special attention and support and facilitating a different style of communication regarding the African continent and its realities. These are not limited to traditional media, but also alternative sources that including a wide range of protagonists who are active on social media.

ANNEX I: New public diplomacy and Spanish public diplomacy

What is known as 'new public diplomacy' adopts a broad, multidirectional approach that embraces a wide range of protagonists. It aims at the democratisation of information and networking through new media and communication technologies and constitutes a channel for direct contact with society and for the empowerment of non-state actors. In the context of the current institutional crisis, public diplomacy has strengthened its role and legitimacy as part of the external action of states, and as part of international relations as a whole.

It is worth mentioning that foreign policy is increasingly linked to the domestic politics of each state and is, in this sense, a variable of domestic politics. International, political, strategic, commercial, financial, social, demographic, scientific-technological, cultural and communication processes can negatively or positively influence a government's efforts to advance transformation and consolidate democracy and the rule of law.

According to the Spanish model, public diplomacy seeks to publicise and project the reality of our country with greater effectiveness and scope, and to explain Spain's foreign policy and the country's positions on the main international issues to a wide variety of audiences.

The Red de Casas (Network of Houses) of Spanish public diplomacy carries out a large part of its work on Spanish territory in an effort to raise awareness among Spaniards regarding their respective geographical areas and bring their cultures, societies and business opportunities closer to them. Key players in the economy, society, culture and academia, among others, are invited to Spain to participate in different forums to learn first-hand about their historical and current realities and their plans for the future. However, its work does not end in the domestic arena, but is also projected outwards, through these actors and directly aimed at African civil societies.

In addition to the Red de Casas network, the Cervantes Institute, cultural councils, the Carolina Foundation, council-foundations and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation are identified by the MAUC as public diplomacy entities. Embassies and cultural centres (Malabo and Bata on the African continent) are also protagonists that carry out activities in this field of work, primarily aimed at civil society.

ANNEX II: Hypothesis relating to Casa África's public diplomacy and its general objectives

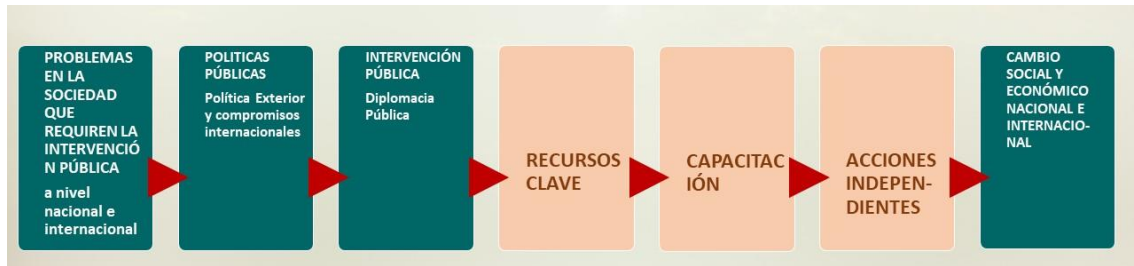
Hypothesis of Casa África's public diplomacy

The underlying theory of public intervention is that there are **needs** or problems in society that individuals cannot solve on their own, so **solutions** are defined and assumed as the responsibility of the state, which is financed with public funds. For each public intervention there must be a hypothesis and a causal model between the political priorities, its programmes, the desired results and the impacts it seeks to generate in society as a final goal.

Given that Casa África constitutes part of Spain's foreign action and public diplomacy, it not only watches over Spain's interests at home, but also aims to advance the country's position and values on the global agenda. The actions it carries out makes this institution a conciliatory instrument between national and global interests. In particular, it watches over the values and interests shared with Africa and mutually beneficial relations in search of a better world.

The hypothesis on the cause-effect relationship of Casa África's public diplomacy is defined as follows:

- **Need:** Spanish-African relations offer untapped opportunities, both in terms of economic, social and cultural development on both sides and in terms of risk and conflict prevention. This situation is due to: 1) mutual lack of knowledge and trust regarding each other's capabilities and 2) the absence of personal contact networks that facilitate the development of collaborative projects between Africa and Spain.
- **Solution:** Generate reciprocal knowledge, contact networks and alliances between Africans and Spaniards through public diplomacy actions with Africa. These social resources that are also sources of knowledge and mutual trust are considered necessary in order to promote changes in Spanish and African societies and to take advantage of the opportunities offered by relations between Africa and Spain.



(Non editable images)

Translation:

SOCIETAL PROBLEMS THAT REQUIRE PUBIC INTERVENTION on a national and international level

PUBLIC POLICIES – Foreign Policy and international commitments

PUBLIC INTERVENTION – Public Diplomacy

KEY RESOURCES – TRAINING – INDEPENDENT ACTIONS

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CHANGE

General Objectives of Casa África

On the basis of this recreated hypothesis, the aim of the activity is defined as the fostering of relationships of trust between Africa and Spain and the General Objectives as 1) the creation of knowledge about Africa in Spain and vice versa, and Spain's commitment to the continent and the suitability of the Canary Islands as a meeting point and 2) the promotion of relations through contact networks and lasting alliances.

Shared knowledge

The generation of shared knowledge and trust is one of the key functions of public diplomacy, which includes actions aimed at achieving a social and political climate favourable to the country's interests on both a national and an international level. In this case, the aim is to generate knowledge about Africa in Spain and vice versa.

This is **knowledge** that is based on authenticity and credibility and seeks to help the protagonist relate to their "counterpart" and understand the environment that surrounds them. When the protagonists possess the knowledge, they consider necessary, they will make informed decisions, and for this reason knowledge is understood as a tool for influencing society and the economic, social and cultural development of the same.

At Casa África we understand the generation of new knowledge as a process through which the stimuli generated by the various public diplomacy actions (for example, messages, images and interaction) are interpreted by individuals and integrated into their previous perceptions, ideas, images and experiences. The way in which this image is managed and messages are projected therefore plays an essential role in today's international relations and serves as a tool for public diplomacy.

Casa África is therefore a tool for the promotion of *Global Spain*, a state policy the objective of which is to improve the image of our country through the dissemination of its positive aspects. The aim is to create confidence in Spain, its people and Spanish know-how, by supporting institutions, companies and civil society in their relations with Africa.

Casa África contributes to projecting Spain's competence, excellence, values and, particularly, its commitment to Africa. On its way to achieving this, it possesses some important advantages, including Spanish diplomatic deployment in Africa, a private sector with interest or interests in the continent, the trajectory of the agency Spanish Cooperation, the solidarity of Spaniards, a universal culture and language, and a commitment to peace and security.

Based in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, Casa África specifically strengthens the role of the Canary Islands as a meeting point between **Spain, Europe, Africa and the Americas, due to their geostrategic position**. The recognition of the islands as an outermost region in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union implies recognising the specific and often unfavourable conditions to which these regions of the planet are subjected, but also the opportunities they present. Casa África aligns itself with the regional government and assumes the need to strengthen this strategic position as a crossroads between continents.

In addition, Casa África's work promotes a **positive image of Africa** as multifaceted and nuanced; a continent of opportunity. The contemporary image that is presented distances itself from stereotypes, generalisations and the narrative that focusses on the problems of the continent and its people in an effort to promote the view of Africa as a diverse, rich and complex continent. It also seeks to help people understand that the future of Spain depends, to a large extent, on the future of this neighbour and that the best way to progress and advance is to do so together.

Mutually beneficial relationships

The generation of mutually beneficial relations between Africa and Spain is another main function of Casa África's public diplomacy. To boost relations and trust between players, these must meet, familiarise, and interact. Preferably this involves face-to-face contacts, although virtual meetings or hybrid formats are increasingly gaining ground.

Trust is another key concept, as it underpins all social, commercial and diplomatic relations and influences decisions about which players are welcome at negotiating and collaborative tables around the world. It is considered an emotional resource that enables individuals and institutions to take risks, contribute their own resources in the search for peaceful, lasting solutions.

Casa África also promotes the creation of **contact networks**. Networks are structures that bring people together with the aim of seeking synergies and transversal or interdisciplinary solutions. While networks are useful for understanding and managing international relations, they are equally important as a social resource in the economy and in relations between all types of agents.

We also seek to promote **strategic alliances** between other entities. In this area, Casa África acts as an interlocutor for the mobilisation of African agents around agendas in which Spain can provide added value and where interest is shown by African partners. As a model for collaboration, alliances (or partnerships) go a step further than one-off collaborations and seek to ensure the permanence and sustainability of the commitment through co-responsibility in management, the generation of mutually beneficial solutions and the creation of a consensual vision of the future. For this reason, Casa África aims to ensure that the alliances are formalised and that the results are documented so that they last over time and so increase their impact.

ANNEX III: Origin of Casa África's intervention and its historical context

The founding of Casa África in 2006 was motivated by a number of reasons, though one of these stood out above the rest: what is known as the '*Cayuco crisis*' of 2006. During that year, 39,108 immigrants arrived in the Canary Islands archipelago by sea, a situation to which the government reacted by launching its own rescue operation, which was followed by a further rescue operation, this time with the help of the European Union. The EU deployed the first maritime mission of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex, with French, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish troops), which was responsible for coordinating surveillance work along the African Atlantic

coast to prevent the boats from setting sail. Other key factors in handling the situation were the agreements with Mauritania and Senegal, which allowed the Guardia Civil to work together with the respective countries on their own coastlines, and mechanisms that guaranteed repatriations.

That same year, Spain launched its *Africa Plan*, a specific national foreign policy for the continent that cited as national interests, apart from irregular migratory flows, reasons that were simultaneously political, economic and relating to cooperation on development, while also claiming as justification co-responsibility in global problems such as poverty, the terrorist threat or the preservation of the environment. This document has already undergone two renewals and has evolved from merely establishing a commitment to international interests and the Millennium Development Goals to being linked to the *2030 Agenda* and *Sustainable Development Goals*.

Among the priorities of the first Africa Plan are democracy and peace, social and economic wealth, the promotion of education, the expansion of political, diplomatic and institutional presence and cultural exchange. In *Objective 6. Strengthening cultural and scientific cooperation and carrying out cultural projects at the service of development*, the Casa and its function are defined as follows: "One of the reasons for Spain's traditional lack of a true global, concerted foreign action towards Africa arises from Spanish society's lack of knowledge of African cultural realities, and vice versa, and the same could be said in relation to Spain's cultural diversity. The current ease of communication and transmission of information, the increase in Spanish tourism to African countries and the growing presence of African citizens or those of African origin in Spain make it a pressing need for the Spanish government to consider, as an objective of its foreign action towards the sub-Saharan region, bringing Spain and Africa closer together through the promotion of reciprocal knowledge and appreciation. The opening of Casa África in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria in 2006 thus constitutes a central vector within this section." Further on in the document, reference is also made to the importance of developing activities aimed at integrating the African diaspora resident in Spain.

In this first Africa Plan, public diplomacy is defined as "a means of external action that the Spanish Administration has decided to promote as one of the essential functions of our foreign service. Just as traditional diplomacy deals primarily with relations between governments; public diplomacy addresses public opinion in third countries, the business world and civil society in general. Public diplomacy is particularly useful in Spain's relations with sub-Saharan countries, given the great lack of knowledge of our current realities. Moreover, the phenomenon of immigration, both legal and illegal, is promoting a

distorted or greatly limited image of several sub-Saharan countries in Spain and vice versa."

Subsequently, on the 26th of June, 2006, the Casa was constituted as a public consortium, as a Public Law Entity of an inter-administrative nature with its own legal personality and full capacity for action. Its operation and activity are governed by the provisions of its Statutes, where its general mandate is defined as follows: "management of socio-cultural and training services, institutional services and support for development cooperation and economic cooperation [...]", all with the aim of improving relations between Spain and Africa, particularly Sub-Saharan Africa. In addition, the Casa operates as a meeting and exchange space that seeks to promote the global development of Spanish-African relations through the promotion of institutional, economic, scientific, cultural, educational, academic and cooperation activities.

Following some years of operation, the MAUC launched the second *Africa Plan* (Government of Spain, 2009), where Casa África is mentioned in the following terms: "Casa África, created within the framework of the *Africa Plan 2006-2008*, is consolidated in this Plan as an essential instrument of Spanish and European public diplomacy in African countries. Casa África, due to its high potential and its capacity to serve as a privileged place for meeting, dialogue and reciprocal knowledge between Africa, Europe and Spain, is given greater importance and content within the *Africa Plan 2009-2012*".

During the years of the Spanish economic crisis that began in 2008, Casa África received instructions from its partners to lend further importance, within public diplomacy, to Economic Diplomacy and to strengthen public-private collaboration. Between 2012 and 2014, Casa África made an effort to create new collaboration networks, including think tanks, non-governmental organisations, foundations or associations with which it had not previously worked. It is our opinion that only by fostering alliances with them and through networking in general and in social networks in particular, can its reach be expanded.

Also in 2012, Spain launched the Marca España project, which, as in the case of other countries, sought to improve the country's image in an effort to position its companies and improve its international status, which had been damaged as a result of economic problems. As explained in the *Foreign Action Strategy* (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, 2015): 'The starting point was to bridge the gap between the reality of the country, i.e., its economic, cultural, artistic and creative potential, its historical heritage, its technological level, a supportive civil society, its human capital, the weight of

its multinationals, to name but a few variables, and how it was portrayed, i.e., its "image" or "stereotype".

In this document, along with the traditional priorities of Spanish foreign policy, the communication aspect (including public diplomacy) was reinforced, focussing on four axes, all with implications for communication: i) coherence, effectiveness and transparency of foreign action, ii) promoting and projecting our values and interests, iii) placing the citizen at the centre of foreign policy, and iv) projecting ourselves globally as an advanced country. According to the document, both Marca España and public diplomacy are seen as key instruments in terms of steering national interest towards public opinion in third world countries on the basis of reciprocal knowledge and alliances and with the ultimate objective of achieving greater world influence.

The MAUC defines a number of entities as instruments of external action in general and of Spanish public diplomacy in particular: the Red de Casas (Network), the Cervantes Institute, cultural councils, the Carolina Foundation, council-foundations and the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation itself, which are entities that, in many cases, have other roles in addition to public diplomacy. From this moment on, communication, alliances and influence are consolidated as key concepts for Casa África's activity, along with its role as an interlocutor with civil society both in Spain and abroad. Casa África incorporates this aspect into its programming and, later on, also integrates it into its second *Strategic Plan 2015-2017*.

At this time, another document entitled *La Diplomacia pública como reto de la Política Exterior* (Public Diplomacy as a challenge for Foreign Policy, 2014) was published on the basis of a seminar organised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and its Diplomatic School, together with the Real Instituto Elcano *think tank*. The document explains that the Red de Casas public diplomacy has become a "solid and innovative instrument of public diplomacy whose activity aims to cover practically all regions of the world. The Casas programming includes activities of a cultural, scientific and economic nature, with a clear role for civil society. The Casas are not only an example of collaboration between the different levels of government in Spain, but also of public-private collaboration". The importance of networks and the influence of digital transformation in this work are also emphasised.

Another publication, *La diplomacia española ante el reto digital* (Spanish diplomacy and the digital challenge), by the Diplomatic Information Office (2016), focuses on the inevitable implications that technological development has on Foreign Action and also on public diplomacy, given that social networks allow actors to bring foreign policy closer to citizens in an agile and simple

manner and make public opinion easier to gauge. All of this is a continuous learning process and a key element of what is known as Digital Diplomacy, the most powerful tool of public diplomacy. Furthermore, the document explains that the impacts of the new digital era "transcend notions relating to our *soft power*. They also have to do with our ability to adapt quickly to the future, to modernise our methods and mentalities, to make us more flexible in order to remain relevant drivers of an increasingly democratised, responsive and horizontal external action".

In 2017, Casa África attempted to reach a consensus and document the definition of its own public diplomacy. This need arose due to the absence of such a definition in the Statutes of the entity. This description details the creation of: 1) relations, 2) knowledge and 3) goodwill (as was then included in its third Strategic Plan), the three objectives as a whole seeking to influence its audiences (African and Spanish) so that these may take better advantage of the opportunities offered by Africa and promote sustainable development in the continent (which, as our direct neighbour, has a direct impact on Spain). Although this definition helped to specify the type of work to be carried out and its goals, they were still objectives that were very generalised and non-quantifiable.

In 2018, after almost six years without a specific foreign policy for Africa, the MAUC proposed drafting a third Africa Plan, which was finally approved in March of 2019. In section 3.1.3. Institutional Strengthening, there is a reference to Casa África and its work: "We aspire to a two-way communication: in Spain to promote knowledge of the realities, opportunities and changes occurring on the African continent, and in Africa about Spain, and eventually Spain as a bridge with Europe and Latin America. An important asset is the intense public diplomacy work carried out by the Casas, both Casa Árabe and especially Casa África, based in the Canary Islands, which celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2017. Casa África is one of the most emblematic projects of Spain's new African policy and has five fundamental fields of action: public diplomacy, economic, cultural, digital and institutional diplomacy. Casa África contributes to building trust in Spain and the know-how of its institutions, companies and civil society and its activities seek to offer Spanish citizens a positive image of Africa that is more multifaceted, nuanced and full of opportunities and present a contemporary, innovative, creative and entrepreneurial vision of the continent".

For the development of Casa África's Strategic Plan 2018-2021, the priorities of the III Africa Plan of the MAUC were used as a starting point (Casa África participated in its development and therefore had access to its contents before it was approved in 2019). In addition, the United Nations 2030 Agenda

and its Sustainable Development Goals were established as the maximum reference point for its international commitment (document signed by Spain along with the other members of the UN in 2015). Finally, the Casa incorporated into the document the priorities of the other consortium members (Government of the Canary Islands and the City Council of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) for the promotion of relations with Africa, advice offered by the Casa África management team, its own accumulated experience and know-how regarding the needs of citizens.

During the drawing up of this Plan, an effort was made to correct the deficiency detected by the Court of Auditors in relation to the objectives of the previous Plan ("excessively generic and non-quantifiable, without development measures or indicators for monitoring and control"). As the Strategic Plan of its own entity, it defines the Mission, Vision and orients the activity and economic resources around three *Strategic Objectives*: 1) to support the processes of the 2030 Agenda and those of shared economic growth, 2) to promote Casa África and the Canary Islands as a meeting point between Spain and Africa and 3) to promote the creation of contact networks. It also includes four *Transversal Priorities* and six *Institutional Objectives*. In addition, for the first time, it includes a list of the institution's services, *Casa África's Programmes*.

ANNEX V: Sustainable Development Objectives of 2030 Agenda

1. An end to poverty
2. Zero hunger
3. Health and welfare
4. Quality education
5. Gender equality
6. Clean water and sanitation
7. Affordable, clean energy
8. Decent work and economic growth
9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure
10. Reducing inequalities
11. Sustainable cities and communities
12. Responsible production and consumption
13. Climate action
14. Sea life
15. Terrestrial ecosystem life
16. Peace, justice and strong institutions
17. Partnerships as a means of achieving goals

<https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/es/>

ANNEX VI: Objectives of Agenda 2063

1. A high standard of living with quality of life and well-being for all citizens.
2. Well-educated citizens and a skills revolution underpinned by science, technology and innovation.
3. Healthy, well-nourished citizens.
4. Transformed economies.
5. Modern agriculture for increased productivity and production.
6. Blue/Ocean Economy for accelerated economic growth.
7. Environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities.
8. A United Africa (Federal or Confederate).
9. Established and functioning continental financial and monetary institutions.
10. A world class infrastructure throughout Africa.
11. Entrenched democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law.
12. Capable institutions and transformative leadership in place.
13. Peace, security and stability are preserved.
14. A stable and peaceful Africa.
15. A fully functional and operational APSA.
16. African cultural renaissance is paramount.
17. Full gender equality in all walks of life.
18. Engaged and empowered young people and children.
19. Africa as an important partner in global affairs and peaceful coexistence.
20. Africa takes full responsibility for financing its Development Goals.

<https://au.int/en/agenda2063/sdgs>