

FOCAC INTELLIGENCE

Internal Standard | Version 1.0

FOCAC Intelligence Editorial and Quality Standards

How PDIL verifies, reviews, labels, updates and publishes its China-Africa knowledge products

AT A GLANCE

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Evidence grades (A to D)

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Attribution classes (A1 to A5)

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Editions: Public, Executive, Restricted

Quarterly

Refresh cycle for every record



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Applies to: FOCAC Intelligence country briefs, Trade Series briefs, Executive Editions, data products and social media derivatives

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SECTION 1

Purpose

FOCAC Intelligence competes on credibility. Its readers, from senior officials to company boards, use it because it separates what has been announced from what has been delivered, and says how strong the evidence is. These standards make that discipline consistent across every product and every analyst.

SECTION 2

Evidence standards

Grade	Definition	Minimum requirement
A	Independently corroborated	At least two credible sources, one of them official (Chinese or African government, implementing agency or lender)
B	Official documentary	One specific official document from an accountable institution
C	Credible but incomplete	Detailed credible reporting without primary documentation
D	Insufficient	Claim cannot be verified; record the gap, do not report the claim as fact

- Every record carries a delivery stage, an attribution class, an evidence grade, at least one linked source and a last-verified date.
- An MoU or exchange of notes is an Agreement only where it creates obligations; otherwise it is an Announcement. A signed contract without financial close is an Agreement. A trade instrument legally in force is Operational use. Government approval of a loan is not Financing until the loan is signed. A financing commitment is not disbursement. A completed asset is not a result.
- Derived figures are labelled as PDIL calculations and their method is shown in the model or fact sheet.
- Mirror data (Chinese and African customs figures) are never mixed in one series; the reporter is always named.
- The Master Fact Sheet is the single source of truth. No figure appears in any product unless it is in the fact sheet with its status.

SECTION 3

Attribution rulebook

Attribution answers a different question from delivery stage: whether a record is new delivery under the 2024 Beijing Summit, not whether it is real. Analysts apply the classes and stage rules below exactly; where a record fits more than one class, the lower-confidence class applies.

Class	Label	Rule
A1	Direct	An official Chinese or national source states that the specific record implements the 2024 Summit or the Beijing Action Plan, or the record is itself a named Summit deliverable (zero tariffs, framework agreements, items on China's June 2025 FOCAC follow-up list) with no documented earlier activity
A2	Plausible	Announced or signed in a setting officially framed as implementing the Summit outcomes, or a follow-up-list item with documented pre-Summit activity, but with no record-specific link

Class	Label	Rule
A3	Post-summit bilateral	New after September 2024, with no FOCAC framing in the official record (for example, a grant signed with no Summit reference)
A4	Pre-existing	Began, agreed or inaugurated before September 2024, including renewals of earlier instruments (currency swaps, rail loans)
A5	Disputed or unverified	Claimed only in Chinese aggregate reporting, with no host-country confirmation after search

Stage rules

- An MoU or exchange of notes is an Agreement only where it creates obligations; otherwise it is an Announcement.
- A trade instrument legally in force is Operational use; utilisation is reported separately.
- Government approval of a loan is not Financing until the loan is signed.

SECTION 4

Verification workflow

Step	Action	Owner
1. Capture	Log the record with source links and screenshots or archived copies	Analyst
2. Corroborate	Seek a second, independent source; check the official record	Analyst
3. Classify	Assign stage, attribution and grade using the method	Analyst
4. Challenge	Second analyst reviews classification and grade	Second analyst
5. Fact sheet	Enter or update the fact in the Master Fact Sheet	Analyst
6. Sign-off	PDIL approves publication	PDIL

SECTION 5

Peer review protocol

Every flagship product (country brief, Trade Series brief, Executive Edition) is reviewed by at least one independent external reviewer before release. Reviewers are credited by name with their consent.

Inaugural edition: independent external review is being established. The October 2026 inaugural edition of each product was reviewed internally and by one external reader; full external review applies from the next edition.

Reviewer profile	What they check
Trade economist (university or research institute)	Trade data, tariff analysis, models and estimates
Former trade negotiator or trade lawyer	Treaty and WTO interpretation; rules of origin; negotiating analysis
China-Africa specialist	Chinese sources, institutions and attribution judgements
Sector specialist (agriculture, minerals, infrastructure finance)	Sector facts, case studies and commercial realism

- Review window: 5 working days. Reviewers receive the draft, the fact sheet and a checklist: accuracy, sourcing, balance, clarity, and anything that could mislead.

- All reviewer comments and responses are logged. Unresolved disagreements are noted in the product where material.
- Reviewers declare any conflict of interest; reviewers with a stake in a covered deal do not review that product.

SECTION 6

Independence and conflicts of interest

- Products rest entirely on publicly available evidence. No confidential or privileged government information is used, cited or implied.
- Advisory, consulting or government-support roles held by PDIL staff are kept separate from FOCAC Intelligence analysis. Staff do not use information obtained in those roles.
- PDIL does not accept payment from any party covered in a product in exchange for coverage, grading or tone.
- Client relationships that could reasonably be seen as a conflict are disclosed in the relevant product.

SECTION 7

Editions and classification

Edition	Audience	Content rules
Public	Anyone; social media; website	Evidence and analysis; no negotiating positions, red lines or client-specific advice
Executive	Paying clients (internal use)	Adds deal pipeline, counterparty profiles, case studies and board actions; carries terms of use
Restricted	Named government or institutional recipients only	May include negotiating options and recommendations; not for public circulation

Every cover states the edition and version. Social media assets are drawn only from Public editions.

SECTION 8

Versioning, refresh and corrections

- Version numbers: major (x.0) for new analysis; minor (x.1) for updates and corrections.
- Refresh: every record is re-verified at least quarterly, and immediately after major events (FOCAC meetings, new agreements, tariff notices).
- Every product states its evidence cut-off date and version.
- Corrections: material errors are corrected within 5 working days and logged in the Corrections Log. Version 1.0 carries no change history; corrections from v1.1 onwards are listed in each product's version note. Social posts containing an error are corrected publicly.

SECTION 9

Citation, style and design

- Every product carries a "How to cite" line and linked sources with dates.

- Style: British spelling; no em dashes; plain, precise language; acronyms defined in a glossary.
- Design: the FOCAC Intelligence design system. Colours: adire indigo 1F2A5C (anchor), laterite red B4532A (single accent), ochre C98B2B (secondary), kola green 3E6B48 (grade A and delivered), sand F4EDE1 (tints), charcoal 2B2B2B (text). Type: Georgia headlines, Calibri body. PDIL logo; contact block with Ventures Park address, email, web and phone.
- Pattern and imagery: an original adire-eleko-inspired pattern band is used on covers, executive-summary openers and social cards only. No scene illustrations.
- Charts: validated colour palette, direct labels, source line under every figure; alt text on all published images.
- Photographs: only PDIL-owned or properly licensed images, with credit lines.

SECTION 10

Terms of use (Executive Edition template)

This Executive Edition is provided to clients of Policy Delivery International Limited for their internal use. It is analysis based on publicly available information at the stated cut-off date. It is not investment, legal or tax advice, and it should not be the sole basis for any investment or commercial decision. PDIL accepts no liability for decisions taken on the basis of this document. Redistribution outside the client organisation requires PDIL's written consent.



About Policy Delivery International Limited

Policy Delivery International Limited (PDIL) is an Africa-focused governance strategy and institutional reform organisation, beginning from Nigeria. PDIL works with governments, development partners and institutions to connect strategy to execution: national and subnational planning, reform coordination, performance management, policy delivery and institutional strengthening.

PDIL knowledge products combine rigorous evidence with practical implementation guidance for senior policymakers. Its institutional newsletter is The Execution Brief, and FOCAC Intelligence is its policy intelligence initiative on China-Africa cooperation.

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