

THE BABIA ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

A locally grounded approach to unpacking agency, context, and change in evidence-policy systems

Background

Across Africa's dynamic governance landscape, understanding how evidence interacts with politics, power, and practice requires methods that are both contextually sensitive and analytically rigorous. The Babia Analytical Framework (developed by PACKS Africa) responds to this need.

'Babia' (from the Ewe language, meaning to ask) reflects an indigenous epistemic stance: that understanding begins with questioning. The framework provides a structured, multi-level way of asking the right questions to illuminate how actors, systems, and ideas interact in policy processes.

Core Purpose

The Babia Framework helps analysts, researchers, and practitioners:

- Reveal the interactions and power dynamics among actors in evidence ecosystems.
- Interpret how context shapes behaviour, effectiveness, and legitimacy.
- Support adaptive learning for more context-aware and politically informed interventions.

It is particularly suited for political economy analyses, evidence-policy diagnostics, programme evaluations, and institutional learning exercises.

Design Elements

The Babia framework rests on three key design elements:

1. **Question-Centric Inquiry:** Emphasising curiosity, reflexivity, and the value of context-specific questioning.
2. **Layered Analysis:** Moving from data collection (primary) through interpretation (secondary) to synthesis (tertiary).
3. **Adaptive Use:** Applicable across sectors (governance, climate, education, health) and adaptable to both research and practice.



Structure of the Framework

Babia operates through three nested levels of analysis (Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary) each deepening the inquiry into how evidence, agency, and systems co-evolve.

Primary Level: Asking

At the base, Babia begins by asking a wide range of empirical questions about actors and their relationships:

Who is involved? What are they doing? Where do they operate? When do things happen? How do they act? Why do they do what they do?

This level captures granular realities, surfacing data points without aggregation. It is exploratory, mapping the terrain of influence and engagement.

Secondary Level: Aggregating

Here, the questions are clustered and synthesised to build patterns of understanding:

- Who: agency, roles, and networks
- What: outputs, ideas, and actions
- Where: spaces, jurisdictions, and arenas of influence
- When: timing, cycles, and responsiveness
- How: mechanisms, relationships, and processes
- Why: motives, values, and legitimacy

At this stage, Babia supports interpretive reasoning; linking evidence to performance dimensions such as effectiveness (who, what and where), efficiency (when and how), and ethics (why).

Tertiary Level – Scaling and Sustainability

The highest tier asks so what? and what next? – examining in effect:

- The scale and coverage of agency (who holds reach or influence).
- The sustainability of action and change (what persists, transforms, or decays).

This level situates findings within broader systems thinking, identifying leverage points for reform and sustainability.

Why Babia Matters

Babia embodies a decolonial and Afrocentric logic of inquiry, privileging local epistemologies and contextual nuance while meeting global standards of analytical rigour. It allows evidence-to-policy work to be:

- Reflective, by uncovering meaning and motivation.
- Practical, by identifying actionable pathways of change.
- Transformative, by centring local agency and lived experience.

Partner With Us

At PACKS Africa, we are seeking collaborative partners (researchers, institutions, and policy actors) to:

- Apply Babia in country or sector analyses.
- Co-develop training and capacity development modules.
- Integrate Babia into monitoring, evaluation, and learning systems.
- Test its adaptability in regional and transnational studies.

Together, we can refine and expand Babia's use to strengthen evidence-informed policymaking grounded in African realities.

For partnerships or methodological collaborations, contact:



info@packs-africa.org



www.packs-africa.org