

ecdpm

Work plan

24
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Connecting Africa and Europe

“Our mission is to promote innovative forms of international cooperation involving European and African actors to address major global development challenges.”

ECDPM is a leading think and do tank focusing on Africa–Europe relations and on cooperation between the two continents at the global level. Our mission is to promote innovative forms of international cooperation involving European and African actors, to address major global development challenges. We aim to generate sustainable and equitable solutions through dialogue and collaboration, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We produce practical knowledge that is politically savvy and interdisciplinary, to inform policy debates. We act as an independent knowledge broker, facilitate dialogue and collaboration with and between different actors, and contribute to inclusive policymaking and effective policy implementation.

This is the third work plan under ECDPM’s strategy 2022–2026. That strategy sets out the challenges and opportunities we see in the world and how our work contributes to **five broad thematic areas** identified through an inclusive and consultative strategic planning process.

Linked to those thematic areas and envisioned impacts, our work is organised in three clusters:

-  Europe and Africa in the world
-   Peaceful societies and accountable governance
-   Sustainable African economies and climate action

The Centre engages in a dynamic policy space and in policy processes that are multi-actor and contingent. We therefore need to be flexible and able to adapt our plans depending on contextual changes, emerging windows of opportunity and specific demands from our partners. This work plan outlines who our partners are and the key areas of our work, highlighting specific examples of our activities in 2024, and how we will ensure the uptake of our work.

As the drafting of the new work plan starts already early in the second semester, and most of next year’s activities continue the year after, ECDPM works with rolling work plans.

The year ahead

ECDPM's priorities in 2024: Geopolitical shifts and new multilateral perspectives, Europe's role in the world, and Africa's changing global role.

Geopolitical shifts and new multilateral perspectives will dominate the international agenda. We will delve into the choices around the new leadership in Brussels, ahead, during and following the European Parliament Elections. We will look into the evolution of Europe's role in the world, Africa's changing global role and the wider shifts in global governance.

Key activities include supporting the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU on its priorities, including establishing and strengthening health partnerships between the EU, its member states and Africa and their contribution to global health. We will also support Belgium in shaping the discussion on the European financial architecture. By the end of their presidency, a new EU leadership will start to form, which we will follow closely. Regardless of the outcome, we will continue to look at Global Gateway from multiple perspectives as the EU's most important and recent strategy to engage with its partner countries. This also means looking at Europe as a potential global leader in the context of China and the changing Global South.

We want to improve our understanding of legal pathways for labour mobility, look at their effectiveness in serving the labour market needs and check their impact on developments in the countries of origin. We will look at ways to develop mutually beneficial digital partnerships with partner countries and pay close attention to the challenges women face in accessing digital technologies. We will continue our work on the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and expand our research on religious activism and radicalisation in Africa and countering terrorism.

Climate security has become an essential topic in light of protracted crises linked to climate change. We will provide insights on cross-border and cascading climate risks and analyse the political economy of green industrialisation and the geopolitics of green technology. Innovative climate finance should also not be forgotten to bring about real change. We will support the Italy-FAO partnership in developing coordinated, sustainable investments in agri-food systems for improved food security. With our international partners, we aim to create an observatory of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) focusing on identifying ways to help it achieve its industrialisation ambitions.

This work plan presents what our ten workstreams will work on in 2024 to contribute to the five impact areas of our strategy:



Strong international cooperation and partnerships



Prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable African economies



Ambitious and fair responses to the global climate and environmental crises



Peaceful resolution of conflict, human security and increased resilience of communities



Open, equitable, and accountable political spaces and democratic governance systems

Our gender lens



“We will apply our ‘Gender Marker’, a dedicated tool to support our staff throughout their research and policy analysis and facilitation work.”

As part of our 2022-2026 strategy, ECDPM has committed to a meaningful integration of a gender perspective and gender-related issues across our focus areas. The gender core group consists of gender focal points for each thematic cluster, supported by a gender coordinator and our outreach and impact team.

This group’s work is geared toward supporting a more systematic, strategic and accountable approach to gender, bringing gender to a higher and more embedded level in the various clusters.

Through experimentation, learning and adaptation, we will further institutionalise the integration of gender and intersectionality in our work. In particular, we will apply our ‘Gender Marker’, a dedicated tool to support our staff throughout their research and policy analysis and facilitation work. Additionally, we will conduct the following activities:

- Support the workstreams in integrating gender ambitions in their theories of change;
- Develop the institutional accountability to integrate gender and keep track of progress made, for example, by reviewing the integration of gender in our publications by senior staff as well as the gender coordinator in line with their job descriptions;
- Invest in the learning and capacity of the gender focal points and the support function of the gender coordinator;
- Promote the effective and accountable use of ECDPM’s ‘Gender Marker’ within our different workstreams and identify ways to build capacities and knowledge on gender and intersectionality beyond the gender focal points to improve gender mainstreaming (e.g., via training, sharing of tools and guidance);
- Keep abreast of relevant discussions and developments in Europe and Africa on gender and intersectionality and what this means for our work as a think tank working on Africa-Europe relations;
- Seek synergies with internal efforts to explore decolonial approaches, for instance by developing tools that encourage staff to rethink their positionality and language.

Our institutional funders and partners



“Our institutional partners... allow us to produce cutting-edge policy-relevant analysis and engage in European and African policy processes as a non-partisan broker.”



Our institutional partners continue to play a major role in supporting ECDPM’s mandate, strategy and work plans by providing multi-annual institutional and medium-term flexible funding. They allow us to produce cutting-edge policy-relevant analysis and engage in European and African policy processes as a non-partisan broker. ECDPM has built and maintains a solid relationship of trust, even in these volatile times, with the Netherlands, as its founder, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg and Sweden. These multi-annual partnerships are a cornerstone of ECDPM’s way of working. ECDPM in 2024 will also continue to build our capacity to draw in strategically aligned programme and project funding, which makes up almost 45% of our financing.

ECDPM is respected for its wide network of partners and privileged access to key stakeholders and policymakers in foreign and development policy communities in Europe, Africa and beyond. In Europe, we engage with policymakers, including officials from the Council of the EU and working groups, the European Commission, the European External Action Service, the European Parliament, EU delegations, EU council presidencies, EU member states, ministries of interior and foreign affairs/development, national institutions and implementing agencies.

In Africa, we engage with policymakers, the AU Commission and departments, regional economic communities, AU member states, relevant ministries and international organisations such as the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS). On both continents, we work with social and economic actors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, economic agencies, academia and think tanks operating at the continental, regional and national levels.




In 2024, we will continue to search for support for our Young International Professionals (YIP) programme, which gives young African graduates the opportunity to spend 12 months at ECDPM. ECDPM will further strengthen partnerships with African think tanks by engaging in concrete joint activities with the African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET), the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) and the Policy Center for the New South amongst others. The Centre will continue to partner with peer institutions for joint research, publications and events, including through the [European Think Tanks Group \(ETTG\)](#).


How we work

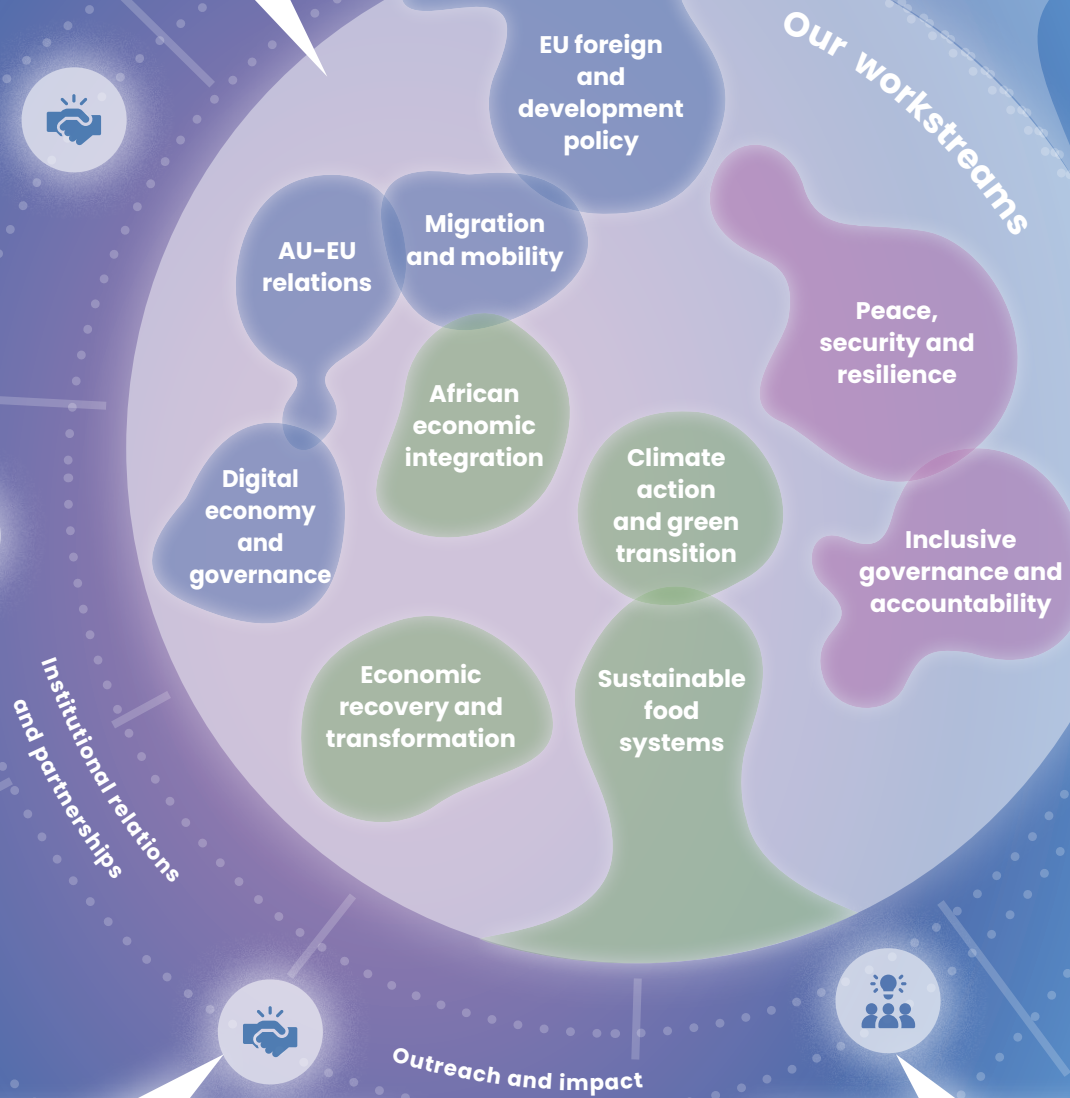
1 We generate knowledge and act as an independent broker.  

We have organised our work in three clusters, linked to the impact areas of the strategy.

The three clusters are:

-  Europe and Africa in the world
-  Peaceful societies and accountable governance
-  Sustainable African economies and climate action

2 We apply a gender lens to address gender equality and women's political and socio-economic participation in all areas of our work. 



3 We collaborate with our partners from around the world.

[Institutional relations and partnerships department]

4 We reach out to European and African policymakers and practitioners to strengthen uptake and impact.

[Outreach and impact department]

Europe and Africa in the world



ECDPM supports European countries and the EU to

become more effective and responsible global actors for sustainable development. We facilitate strong and mutually beneficial international cooperation and partnerships, particularly between Europe and Africa.

In 2024-2025, we will work in four key areas – EU foreign and development policy; migration and mobility; digital economy and governance; AU-EU relations.

EU foreign and development policy

ECDPM will contribute to more effective, **responsible and integrated EU external action and development policy and seek to reduce the policy-to-implementation gap, in collaboration with EU member states.**

The key activities for 2024 include:

- **Global Gateway.** We will support the Belgian Presidency of the Council of the EU on their priorities for EU international and development cooperation, focusing on EU and member states' support to implement Global Gateway through Team Europe and the leverage of private investments.
- **Evaluation of the EU's external financing instruments.** Under the current and previous Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), we will conduct this exercise, which provides the opportunity to assess the relevance, effectiveness and coherence of the changes made under the NDICI-Global Europe and to make recommendations for potential areas of improvement.
- **European parliament elections and new leadership.** We will closely monitor and feed into the debates on the role and place of EU foreign and development policy in the run-up to the EP elections in June 2024, and make policy recommendations for the new European Commission.

HIGHLIGHT

EU's global policy and finance

EU foreign and development policy will likely change based on the mid-term review of NDICI-Global Europe and a new Commission in 2024. The EU needs to revitalise its partnerships, redefine its priorities, adapt its regulatory framework, rethink its funding modalities and focus on innovation if it is to rise to the challenges posed by the current global situation. The project aims to improve how the EU prioritises, designs, funds and implements its policies to become a more effective global development actor.

Specific activities

ECDPM will produce a range of strategically targeted pieces in three areas:

- Improving the EU's international response to the polycrisis;
- Articulating the value of a human development approach to the EU's international cooperation and assessing its implementation;
- Assessing and responding to the practical implications in partner countries of the EU's new approach and instrument for international and development cooperation.

Migration and mobility

In the field of migration and mobility, the Centre will promote **comprehensive, effective and human-centred governance within Europe-Africa relations** and by European and African governments and regional organisations. We aim to maximise the development potential of migration, minimise its risks, support the rights of migrants and refugees and generate ideas for how to address migration-related development challenges.

The key activities for 2024 include:

- **Impact of development-friendly labour migration projects.** We will examine the development impacts of labour migration projects (undertaken by GIZ and ICMPD). The emphasis is on the development contribution of migration to countries of origin and destination, communities and individuals.
- **The DYNAMIG project.** We will continue contributing to this joint project by examining the interaction between policies and migration decisions and behaviours. It gathers insights on the dynamics, trajectories and heterogeneity of migration decisions to assess policies and policymaking and explain their effectiveness.
- **Development approaches to sustainable reintegration.** We aim to support the Belgian presidency with discussions at relevant Council working groups in early 2024 by looking at how to better bridge the internal and external dimensions of return, reintegration and sustainable development assistance in partner countries.

HIGHLIGHT

Labour mobility pathways

We aim to better understand what labour mobility pathways exist in EU member states, to support effective and development-led approaches to labour mobility. We look at how mobility pathways are being utilised and how effective they are in serving labour market needs; how they could be improved to better prepare labour markets for the future; and build the foundations for labour migration-related partnerships.

Specific activities

- We will map the current and future labour market needs and the existing legal and policy framework of all EU member states.
- We will analyse gaps and possibilities for EU member states to effectively contribute to initiatives such as the EU Talent Partnership framework.
- We will have 27 mapping case studies, an overall analysis and a website presenting collected data for each country.

Partners

We work in a consortium with

- OSMOS (Lithuania)
- Centre for Social and Economic Research, CASE (Poland)
- Labor Mobility Partnerships, LamP (United States)
- The project is funded by the Migrations Partnership Facility which is administered by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, ICMPD (Austria)

Digital economy and governance

ECDPM will promote **digital cooperation between Africa and Europe for mutually beneficial, sustainable human development outcomes** and **contribute to developing a more effective EU role in international digital affairs**.

The key activities for 2024 include:

- **To identify the gaps in terms of European financing for digital transformation under Global Gateway and to ensure local ownership.** This work will look at how to practically implement Europe's ambitions for the Global Gateway in the digital domain, identifying solutions to increase public and private funding for digital transformation, seeking to root investments in the needs of partner countries and to ensure local ownership of projects.
- **To support policies that will help achieve an African Digital Single Market.** This work will include delving deeper into selected areas of hard and soft infrastructure – from connectivity to skills to e-governance systems – and the necessary policies – such as data protection and data sharing – that will be essential to building an African Digital Single Market.
- **Europe and Africa in a shifting global landscape.** To understand how the EU and AU are engaging against a backdrop of shifting multilateralism, and to understand what those changes signify for digital governance. This will include engagement around the EU-AU relationship, but also may include engagement with the G20 Brazil and UN institutions.

HIGHLIGHT

EU support to the roll-out of interoperable e-governance infrastructure in Africa

We aim to continue exploring how the EU can contribute to the roll-out of interoperable e-governance and e-services infrastructure in partner countries through brokering dialogues between European and global experts and policymakers, with a special focus on the implementation of digital identification and interoperable cross border digital payment systems. We aim to bring attention to the opportunities and challenges of developing interoperable systems across African countries, and identify opportunities for the EU to expand its support.

Specific activities

- A working group bringing together experts and digital policymakers.
- Draw up concrete recommendations.
- Disseminate recommendations through policy briefs, podcasts, traditional media and social media.

Partners

- Africa Nenda
- Smart Africa
- UN Capital Development Fund

AU-EU relations

ECDPM will explore **how to construct a more mutually beneficial and interest-driven partnership between Europe and Africa** in a post-COVID era. We look at the formal EU-AU partnership, the multilateral level and how to enhance cooperation and include new generations of non-governmental actors.

The key activities for 2024 include:

- **Financing health in Africa.** ECDPM will continue, including throughout the Belgian presidency, shaping discussions on financing health and the AU-EU partnership for global health.
- **Balanced narratives and reality checks.** ECDPM will build on last year's successful project in cooperation with the African Center for Economic Transformation (Ghana), the Institute for Security Studies (South Africa) and the Policy Center for the New South (Morocco). The aim of this cooperation is to move forward from the 2022 EU-AU summit. We will enrich the Africa-Europe relations with joint analyses and facilitate exchanges on how to advance and address continued challenges and expand the network of think tanks. Potential topics of analysis and dialogue include climate and energy diplomacy; digitalisation; and the AfCFTA.
- **Non-state actors in the AU-EU partnership.** We will explore the role of non-state actors in the AU-EU partnership and, in that context, pursue collaborations for an AU-EU youth lab to contribute to the empowerment of youth and to strengthen their involvement as well as involvement of civil society.

HIGHLIGHT

Deepening the understanding of the AU-EU partnership on health

This project analyses the state of the EU-Africa partnership on health, stimulates public debate and makes recommendations on strengthening the partnerships to align with Africa's health sovereignty objectives. In particular, it combines short and long-term perspectives and uses existing African and EU initiatives, institutions and mechanisms on health.

Activities

- Policy briefs, including on the Pandemic Treaty.
- Policy paper on health, climate change and COP28.
- Events on health that bring the voices of European and non-European policymakers and researchers to the fore.

Partners

- The European Think Tanks Group ([ETTG](#)), African think tanks and CSOs.

Interested in working with us?

We offer comprehensive analysis and research | policy briefs and short articles | dialogue and collaboration | advice and support | podcasts and video content | expert information and training | organisation and facilitation of roundtables, events and webinars |

Are you interested in working with us?

Please get in touch with Mariella Di Ciommo, Associate director.

Peaceful societies and accountable governance



ECDPM contributes to the peaceful resolution of



conflict, human security and increased resilience

of communities affected by protracted conflict. We support processes leading to open, equitable and accountable political spaces and democratic governance systems as 'enablers' of sustainable development in Africa and in Europe.

In 2024–2025, we will work in two key areas – peace, security and resilience and inclusive governance and accountability.

Peace, security and resilience

ECDPM will promote the **transition of fragile and conflict-affected environments towards peaceful, well-governed and prosperous societies** in which human security is guaranteed and the resilience of individuals and communities is enhanced.

The key activities for 2024 include:

- **Preventing radicalisation and countering terrorism.** The military coups in the Central Sahel will have a significant influence on the fight against and spread of violent extremism and the future of democracy and accountable governance in the region. We will analyse country and regional situations in West Africa and the Sahel and foster dialogues to enhance the knowledge and action of European and African policymakers to find approaches on how to engage in view of growing fragility and conflict (see the project highlight).
- **Nexus approaches in practice.** We will continue translating nexus approaches, like the humanitarian-development-peace nexus and the climate-security nexus, into practice by African and European actors, with a focus on the intersections between climate adaptation and peacebuilding. This includes support for climate adaptation and environmental peacebuilding in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. We aim to explore the role of religious actors in supporting environmental peacebuilding, building on our analysis of religious and faith-based actors in West Africa and the Sahel.

HIGHLIGHT

Enhancing the understanding of Salafism and its societal implications

We want to enhance the knowledge and expertise of EU staff on Islam in West Africa and the Sahel. These materials are available in English and French, aligning with the languages relevant to the countries of interest, including Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria and Senegal.

Specific activities

Developing a guide on Islam and Salafism in West Africa and the Sahel, supplementary and; training material; country-specific mapping and analyses of religious actors and faith-based organisations; training and capacity strengthening of EU officials on Salafism and religious radicalisation.

Partners

- DG INTPA and EU delegations
- Experts, including from the Leibniz-Orient Centre of Modern Studies (Germany)

Inclusive governance and accountability

To contribute to more peaceful and inclusive societies, ECDPM will inform actors in Europe and Africa about **what drives and enables inclusiveness, responsiveness and accountability to citizens' demands**, and what this means for governance as a public good and as an "enabler" of human rights and wider sustainable development.

The key activities for 2024 include:

- **Digitalisation and governance.** We will further work on the interaction between digital technologies and governance by building on our ongoing Charter Africa Project which looks at the opportunities digital tools and civic tech present to civil society actors working on governance, in their engagement with the African Union and its member states. We will capitalise on the research done thus far to inform AU and EU stakeholders on the policy implications of digitalisation and its impact on civic activism, accountability, service delivery, freedom of speech, elections but also social polarisation and hate speech, propaganda, and radicalisation - by looking at specific country and regional contexts.
- **Sector governance, the rule of law and anti-corruption.** We aim to build on our rule of law work and further engage in sector governance and anti-corruption. To contribute towards a more realistic international discourse around these areas while reducing the research-to-policy and policy-to-practice gaps that prevail within these fields.

HIGHLIGHT

Promoting accountable governance

In 2024, we will seek to explore the potential of coalitions, Team Europe Initiatives and innovative strategies to defend and promote democracy on the African continent. This work includes interrogating the future of the governance agenda in a geopolitical context and seeking pragmatic approaches to accountable governance and democracy promotion that account for the diversity of challenging contexts (ranging, for instance, from post-coup regimes in the Sahel to countries undergoing democratic erosion).

Specific activities and partners

Activities envisioned include informing democracy and inclusive governance strategies of partners (European ministries, development agencies and relevant African normative institutions) in collaboration with researchers in the countries where they operate, as well as continuing the analysis of European joint approaches to identify promising areas for progress.

Interested in working with us?

We offer comprehensive analysis and research | policy briefs and short articles | dialogue and collaboration | advice and support | podcasts and video content | expert information and training | organisation and facilitation of roundtables, events and webinars |

Are you interested in working with us?

Please get in touch with Lidet Tadesse, Associate director.

Sustainable African economies and climate action



Premised on the sustainable use of natural resources and economic



development within our planetary

boundaries, ECDPM contributes to the formulation and implementation of coherent European external economic policies; to prosperous, inclusive and resilient economies in Africa; and to ambitious and fair responses to the global climate and other environmental crises.

In 2024–2025, we will work in four key areas – economic recovery and transformation; climate action and green transition; sustainable food systems; African economic integration.

Economic recovery and transformation

ECDPM will contribute to **more effective and integrated European and African policies and instruments** to support a sustainable, gender-sensitive and inclusive recovery and economic transformation in Africa.

The key activities for 2024 include:

- **European financial architecture.** We will support the Belgian presidency in shaping high-level discussions, for example at CODEV level, on how to strengthen the European financial architecture for development and how to best deliver Global Gateway.
- **Enhance the knowledge and expertise of EU delegations.** We will provide trainings and briefings to the EU delegations on issues relating to i) green regulations and their implications for the local private sector; and ii) potentially the EFSI+ and the need to better understand how it can deliver more and better.
- More broadly, we will keep working and pursuing opportunities with the following focus: **Global Gateway** and the link between commercial and development approaches, instruments and actors, and the engagement of the European private sector; promoting the **local development of circular and sustainable economies** and ways the EU can support smaller and women-led entrepreneurs in this endeavour; drawing **lessons from Ukraine** to replicate in the African context when it comes to mobilising public and private investments; the **debt agenda**, including supporting investments in sustainable development without adding on debt burden, looking at concessional finance, SDRs recycling and debt swaps operations.

HIGHLIGHT

Making development finance more impactful

Provide analysis and recommendations to feed in European Council discussions on:

- How to strengthen the European financial architecture for development by taking stock of what happened since the last Council Conclusions in 2021, and providing recommendations for the way forward.
- How should the MDB reforms agenda be pursued, by taking into account and bridging perspectives between development and finance ministries.
- How the Global Gateway could best deliver, by taking stock of what happened since the introduction of the strategy and identifying strategic areas where the strategy could focus to boost the influence and impact of the EU.

Climate action and green transition

ECDPM seeks to contribute to ambitious, fair and effective responses to the climate crisis. ECDPM will focus on **strengthening adaptation and resilience, supporting the European and African politics of green transition and renewable energy deployment and fostering green recovery through finance and international cooperation.**

The key activities for 2024 include:

- **Clean economy transitions.** Research into the political economy of green industrialisation with a focus on critical raw materials for the battery value chain and hydrogen economy for green fertiliser production.
- **Adaptation without borders.** Together with partners, including SEI, ODI, IDDRI and ENDA Energy, ECDPM will provide insights on cross-border and cascading climate risks in North Africa and the Middle East.
- **Debt and climate.** Our work will focus on the communication and engagement around debt for climate swaps and key missing topics in the global sovereign debt conversation.
- **Europe, China and the Global South and the opportunities and challenges for the EU's external partnerships.** We will analyse the geopolitics of green tech, with a focus on EU, US and Chinese industrial policy and how this relates to Global South economies' green economic development prospects.

HIGHLIGHT

Africa and Europe cooperation on climate action and green transition

This project contributes to the mutually beneficial cooperation between Africa and Europe by providing advice on how to achieve a more equitable climate and green transition agenda in an environment of geo-economic fragmentation and continued tensions. The focus will be on green energy, industrial decarbonisation and trade, and on adaptation and loss and damage to achieve system-wide resilience.

Specific activities

- We will produce policy papers and articles with policy recommendations, building on country-specific analysis, with a link to EU external action, climate diplomacy and EU-Africa cooperation more generally.
- We will host an event with policymakers and experts from the EU and the Global South to further discuss the findings of our respective papers and articles.

Partners

- We will work together with public and private sector, think tanks and civil society organisations in the case study countries, including South Africa, Mozambique, Morocco, Kenya, Malawi, Bangladesh and Vietnam.

Sustainable food systems

ECDPM will work to support **transitions to more sustainable, resilient, equitable and inclusive food systems**. We will pay particular attention to issues of food systems governance, financing and climate adaptation and resilience.

The key activities for 2024 include:

- **Sustainable investments in agri-food systems.** With the International Fund for Agricultural Development, we will support the Finance In Common Agricultural Public Development Banks platform to contribute to more and better coordinated sustainable investments in agri-food systems. We will inform stakeholders how to leverage Special Drawing Rights to address the current food crisis and its causes.
- **Strengthening evidence-based policy and practice for sustainable food systems under the EU-AU partnership.** In partnership with PANAP and other actors, we will train on political economy approaches to strengthen the food systems science-policy interface. We will promote stakeholders' engagement and exchanges through policy dialogues and living labs to support science-based decision-making processes on food systems transformation.
- **Translating science-based innovations into market-ready products.** For CGIAR, we will translate science-based innovations into market-ready products and provide recommendations on how to strengthen the environment for innovation, incentivise research institutions and create the conditions to unlock public funds.

HIGHLIGHT

Agri-food systems transformation in the themes of financing food system transformation and food system adaptation

We will support the Italy-FAO partnership on agrifood systems transformation. We will engage and support the Finance In Common (FIC) Summit process, focusing on more sustainable agrifood systems in Kenya and scaling up blended finance to improve access to finance for smallholders in Egypt.

Specific activities

- Policy dialogues and multi-stakeholder engagements.
- Events to discuss challenges and lessons learnt on blended finance.
- Policy briefs with recommendations to mobilise blended finance for food systems sustainability and resilience in Africa.
- Technical assistance and country-level support to mobilise for the identification of sustainable investment opportunities in agri-food systems and ways to increase access to finance for smallholders, women and small and medium enterprises.

Partners

- Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (global)
- Good Food Finance Network (global)
- Public Development Banks Platform for Food Systems (global)
- Netherlands Food Partnership (Netherlands)
- AKADEMIYA2063 (Rwanda and Senegal)

African economic integration

ECDDPM will explore **how and why regional organisations interact with the AU, the AfCFTA and member states as they do on economic issues. We will focus on** identifying and clarifying the competing agendas and member states' interests. We will analyse how states balance industrialisation agendas and economic growth ambitions with regional trade commitments in practice, while also exploring issues such as decent job creation, value chain linkages and cross-border corridor initiatives, including transport.

The key activities for 2024 include:

- Depending on funding, we aim to create an '**Observatory of the AfCFTA**' with the Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town and a wider research network to provide practical inputs into the AfCFTA process, focusing in particular on ways to help it achieve the stated industrialisation ambitions. The purpose of the project grant is to provide policy research and stakeholder engagement on the drivers and blockers to regional economic integration in Africa, looking at the AfCFTA, shifting national interests and alliances, and the move towards green industrialisation in African economies. We aim to carry out political economy analyses and present these to practitioners on i) the institutional angles of the AfCFTA; ii) the political economy of regional value chain initiatives and iii) the political economy of trade facilitation through corridors.

HIGHLIGHT

Electric vehicle battery value chain

As part of a wider ambition to create an 'Observatory of the AfCFTA' we will carry out a political economy analysis of the electric vehicle battery value chain – a policy ambition under the AfCFTA and one that links to wider issues of industrialisation and critical raw materials.

Specific activities

- We aim to analyse the key actors and interests playing out in the creation of a regional battery value chain in Africa to produce a study that can help inform discussions about ways to support this initiative.
- The initial study will be followed by a workshop to discuss its findings and implications.

Partners

- Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance (South Africa)

Interested in working with us?

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Are you interested in working with us?

Please get in touch with San Bilal, Associate director.

Outreach and impact

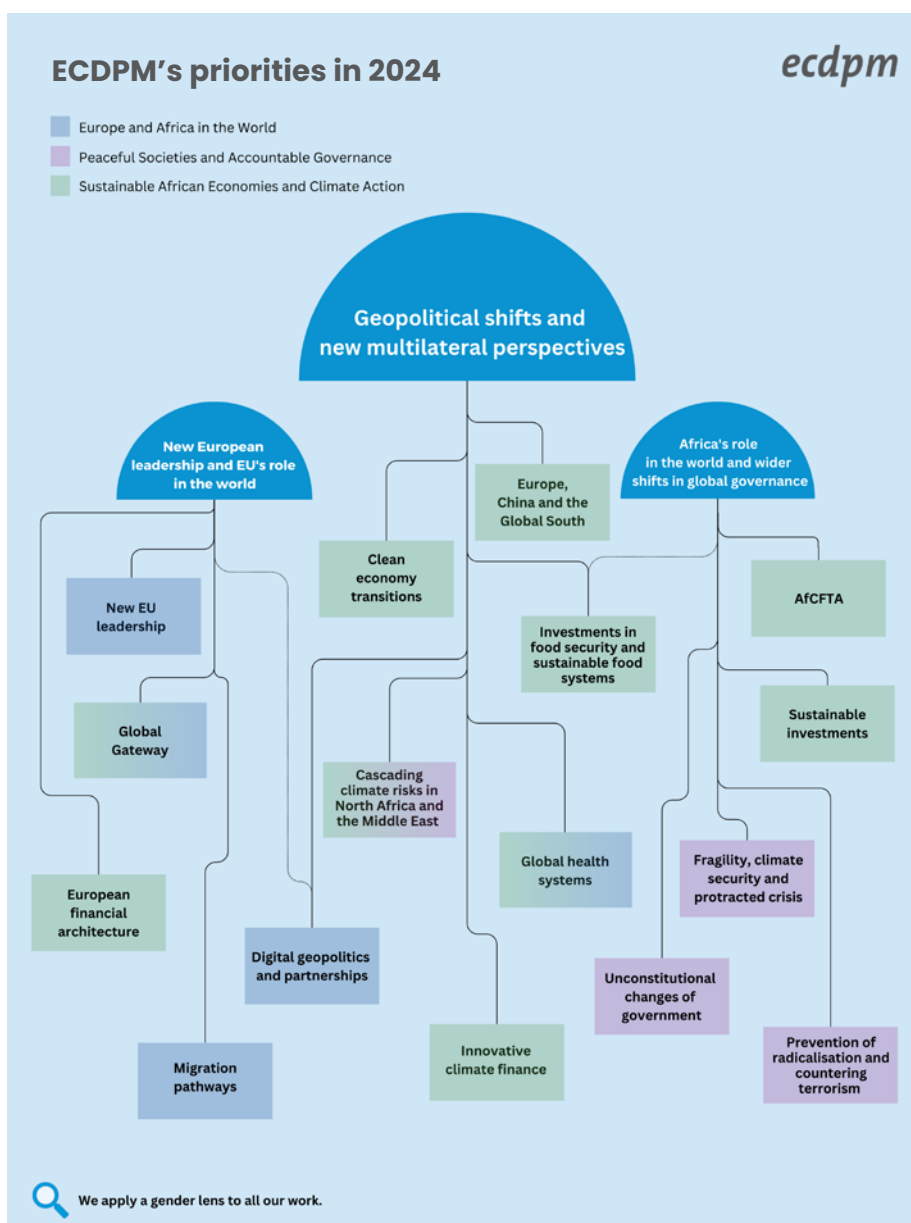


“In our outreach, we will... leverage our contribution to the three all-Centre priorities for 2024.”

For all the areas of work presented above, we aim to have **visibility and impact**. That is why each team, in coordination with the outreach and impact unit, develops targeted outreach and impact strategies.

Our aim is to stimulate dialogue with our partners and get ECDPM’s work and ideas to the right people in the right way, at the right time. This builds understanding and capacity for more inclusive policies and practices. It also cements our legitimacy and reputation and fosters our audiences’ trust in us.

In our outreach, we will emphasise how these various areas of work link together and use these to leverage our contribution to the three all-Centre priorities for 2024.



Centre management

“A major change in the budget process is the alignment of our funding targets with the Centre strategy. As the Centre is now focusing on securing more multi-annual cross-thematic work, our funding targets need to reflect that.”

Finance

ECDPM has a close institutional relationship with nine countries: **The Netherlands** (5-year agreement entered in 2022), **Belgium** (3-year agreement entered in 2021 which we are currently in advanced discussion for renewal), **Luxembourg** (3-year agreement entered in 2021 which we are currently in advanced discussions for renewal), **Sweden** (3-year agreement entered in 2022), **Austria** (3-year agreement entered in 2022), **Denmark** (2-year agreement entered in 2022 which we are currently in advance discussions of renewal), **Finland** (4-year agreement in negotiation from 2023), **Ireland** (1-year contract to be renewed) and **Estonia** (1-year contract to be renewed).

Not considering institutional funding, the Centre has secured €1.9 million (as of the time of this report) of the €4 million additional funding required for 2024. The total annual budget requires an income of €8.79 million, expected to be provided through institutional funding amounting to €4.7 million and €4 million from other sources.

In 2024, we expect institutional funding to make up 54% of our budget (compared to 53% in 2022). The other 46% will come from medium-term flexible funding (previously known as programme funding) and short-term fixed funding (previously known as project funding).

The Centre is adapting its medium- and long-term funding strategy to become more robust.

A major change in the budget process is the alignment of our funding targets with the Centre strategy. As the Centre is now focusing on securing more multi-annual cross-thematic work, our funding targets need to reflect that. The strategy for securing additional projects for the Centre has been adapted to targets for the Centre. The aim of this is to inspire all teams to combine efforts in securing future projects and facilitating more cross-thematic work.

The Centre keeps general and administrative costs at a minimum to ensure that the funds secured are utilised for our research and broker work. However, these costs are increasing over time with both inflation and legislative changes that require the Centre to adapt expenditures.

Our most significant outlay remains personnel costs, which increase annually with inflation. The salary budget saw an increase despite the decrease in staff numbers. This increase is the result of the change in the staff mix to a more senior staff mix, as well as the inflationary increases. The budget also foresaw an inflationary increase during 2024. In addition to the increased salary costs, an increase is also noted in other direct operational expenditures. This increase is the result of the Centre requiring more experts on a contractual basis as well as more physical travel.

Strategic talent management

The 2023 staff survey will be an important basis for the HR working goals. In the survey, staff assessed ten aspects of the organisation, including motivation, working relations and collaboration, gender and diversity, management and career development. Based on the feedback received, we will look into potential incentives for horizontal growth, improve in-house mentoring and coaching systems, increase awareness about how to create an open space within the organisation and strengthen the onboarding of new staff.

Also, building on the outcomes of the 2023 staff survey, we will facilitate in-house trainings, including on fundraising, Salesforce, people leadership skills and gender and diversity. Together with supervisors, HR will ensure staff have conversations about creating effective learning and development opportunities, as research has shown that for effective learning journeys people tend to learn 70% of their knowledge from challenging experiences and assignments, 20% from developmental relationships and 10% from coursework and training.

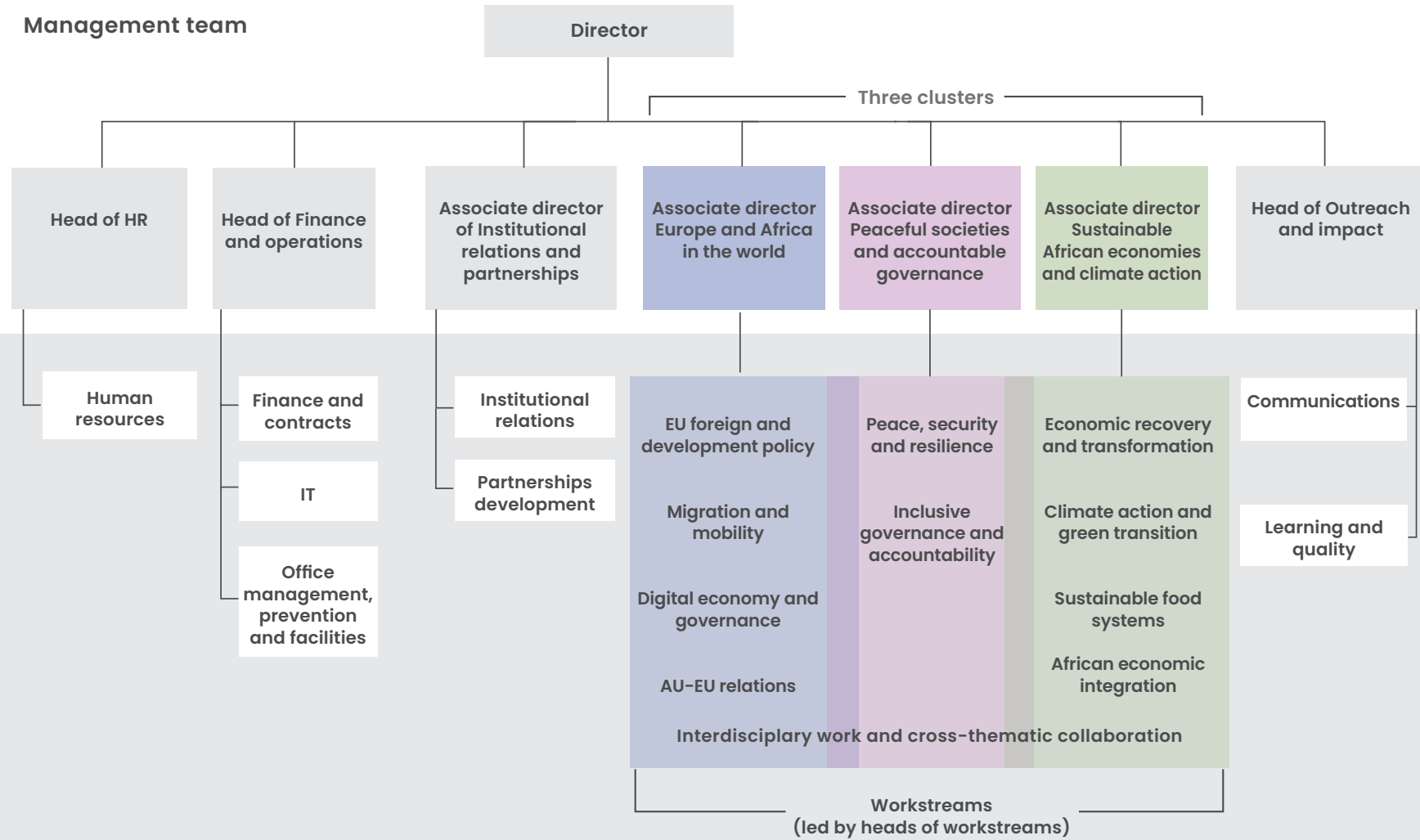
Specifically for ECDPM's leaders, HR outlined a comprehensive leadership development programme.

Key building blocks are:

- Developing people management, strategic thinking and decision making, budgeting and project planning skills;
- Improving systematic internal information sharing;
- Increase efficiency of meetings;
- Strengthen mentoring and coaching scales and peer groups.

ECDPM will also continue to monitor and support the mental well-being of staff. As in other organisations post-Covid, ECDPM has been confronted with an increase of sickness rates due to mental issues. A taskforce including the prevention officer, the trust persons and the HR team monitors closely the mental well-being of staff. ECDPM works with the digital platform 'Open up', which offers to support the mental well-being of staff by professionals. People leaders will also be trained to recognise stress and to monitor the mental well-being of staff members in collaboration with the occupational health service in the Netherlands.

Management team



Want to know more about our work?

ECDPM distributes its work via its [website](#), the [Weekly Compass](#) e-newsletter, social media [channels](#), targeted email campaigns and events.

To stay up to date on our work, [subscribe](#) to our Weekly Compass newsletter.

[The Weekly Compass](#) is the Centre's key communication tool. It informs on the latest work done by ECDPM's experts, provides useful information on events and reports news from the fields of international cooperation and Africa-Europe relations from a multitude of outlets.

ECDPM's [website](#) offers content highlighting progress on the activities described in this work plan:

- Publications (reports, papers and briefs)
- Commentaries and articles
- Events
- Multimedia presentations

We report our monitoring data in line with the standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

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