

ecdpm



WORK PLAN 2022-2023

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Connecting Africa and Europe

“We aim to generate sustainable and equitable solutions through dialogue and collaboration, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”

ECDPM is a leading think and do tank focusing in particular on Europe-Africa relations and on cooperation between Europe and Africa 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 first work plan under ECDPM's new 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 2022, and how we will ensure uptake of our work.

The year ahead

“In the face of polarisation and alternative facts, think tanks are a source of data, information and evidence-based analysis to guide policymaking and political decisions”

We are living in times of change taking place at an unprecedented pace and extraordinary depth. COVID-19 is ushering in a different geopolitical world order; one that is fundamentally more diverse, less dominated by the West and less liberal. In this environment, the EU is actively trying to adapt and to avoid being squeezed between the USA, Russia and China. Africa's partnerships are fundamentally more diverse too, calling on us to rethink the way we interact with our so-called twin continent.

Exacerbated by the COVID crisis, the liberal democratic model is under growing pressure, from both outside and within Europe, and autocratic influences are on the rise. Achievements many of us once thought to be eternal now appear fragile, as demonstrated by the recent discussions about the rule of law within the EU. At the same time, young people, women, members of the LGBTQ+ community and large segments of populations are fighting back to preserve or obtain their political, social, economic, environmental and human rights.

Imagination falls short in trying to fathom what the consequences of the COVID crisis will be. In the Western world, economists appease us by saying that the enormous deficits we are incurring will disappear painlessly once the economy picks up. Meanwhile, Africa has seen the end to its 25-year stretch of continued economic growth, and a slow recovery is being predicted. The vaccination saga does not bode well for international solidarity in the coming years. Solidarity will surely be a topic at the upcoming summit of the EU and African Union (AU). ECDPM will participate in the policy discussions leading up to that event. Our analysis will highlight the different layers of engagement between the EU and the AU, given the economic and social implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on both continents.

Meanwhile, the next crisis is announcing itself with floods, bush fires, hurricanes and droughts. Despite young people's protests for climate justice, it remains to be seen whether our politicians will take decisive action. The lack of bold action at COP26 in Glasgow seems to indicate the opposite.

In other areas, bastions of privilege, power and discrimination are being stormed by people who are tired of waiting and demand change now. Digital innovations fuel these movements – as they also fuel democratic resistance and autocratic control. On top of this, we find ourselves in the last decade before the deadline of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Achieving them in the coming years will require political will and courage.

Times such as these demand the work of active think tanks. In the face of polarisation and alternative facts, think tanks are a source of data, information and evidence-based analysis to guide policymaking and political decisions.

Our gender lens



“We will bring gender to a higher and more embedded level in the various themes”

ECDPM's 2022-2026 strategy commits us to fundamentally integrate gender-related issues across the board. Our ongoing transformation to a new organisational structure, based on a limited set of clusters and workstreams, provides an opportunity to develop a more systematic, strategic, structured and accountable approach to gender.

We will bring gender to a higher and more embedded level in the various themes – building on the work already done by the Centre over the past decade – through collective experimentation, learning and adaptation.

Making optimal use of the new organisational set-up, we will progressively seek to 'institutionalise' integrated approaches to gender by investing in six interrelated challenges and process steps:

- Integrating realistic gender ambitions in the formulation of various theories of change for the workstreams
- Ensuring all new job descriptions, including those of associate directors, workstream leaders and senior fellows, have a clear gender mandate
- Creating an all-Centre gender coordinator function and gender focal points in the clusters
- Promoting the effective and accountable use of the gender marker developed by ECDPM
- Providing incentives to the workstreams to spell out specific and realistic objectives for integrating gender more forcefully in the short, medium and long term
- Putting in place an all-Centre accountability and learning system to ensure progress is achieved on gender issues across the workstreams

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 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 a solid relationship of trust with the Netherlands, as its founder, and with Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg and Sweden. These multi-annual partnerships are a cornerstone of ECDPM's way of working.

ECDPM is respected for its wide network of partners and privileged access to key stakeholders and policymakers in the foreign and development policy communities of Europe, Africa and beyond. In Europe we engage with policymakers, including officials from the Council of the EU and working groups, EU institutions (such as the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INTPA) and the European External Action Service (EEAS)), the European Parliament, EU delegations, EU council presidencies, EU member states, ministries of the 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), civil society actors, the private sector, economic agencies, academia and think tanks operating at the continental, regional and national levels.

The Centre partners with peer institutions for joint research, publications and events through the [European Think Tanks Group \(ETTg\)](#), for which ECDPM hosts the secretariat. With the ETTg, ECDPM is well placed to make valuable contributions to pan-European initiatives. To ensure balanced work on EU-Africa relations across the board, in 2022-2023 the Centre will further strengthen its Africa-focused initiatives and create more space for African agendas, priorities and expertise, in all their diversity, in all of its work areas.

In 2022, we will relaunch the **Young International Professionals (YIP)** programme, which gives young African graduates the opportunity to spend 12 months at ECDPM. This provides them invaluable exposure to European policymaking processes and to methodologies for policy-relevant research and communication, while enabling us to capitalise on the knowledge, skills and networks they bring to the Centre and our thematic areas of work. This year, the Centre will also seek to expand its pool of **Programme Associates (PAs)**. These are senior experts who have a finger on the pulse

in Africa and engage with ECDPM in a structural manner on a longer term basis to share their expertise and diversify our perspectives. The scheme provides the associates with an institutional home and access to a network, knowledge and multidisciplinary team, while allowing the Centre to readily tap into their extensive knowledge and expertise in their respective fields.

ECDPM will strengthen partnerships with African think tanks in a number of ways, including staff exchanges in both directions, having staff from African partners join our Brussels or Maastricht office and having ECDPM staff join partners in Africa for a few months. ECDPM will also continue to strengthen its cooperation with African partners such as the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET), through jointly creating a programme of work and, where appropriate, joint fundraising efforts.

How we work

ecdpm

- 1 We generate knowledge and act as an independent broker.

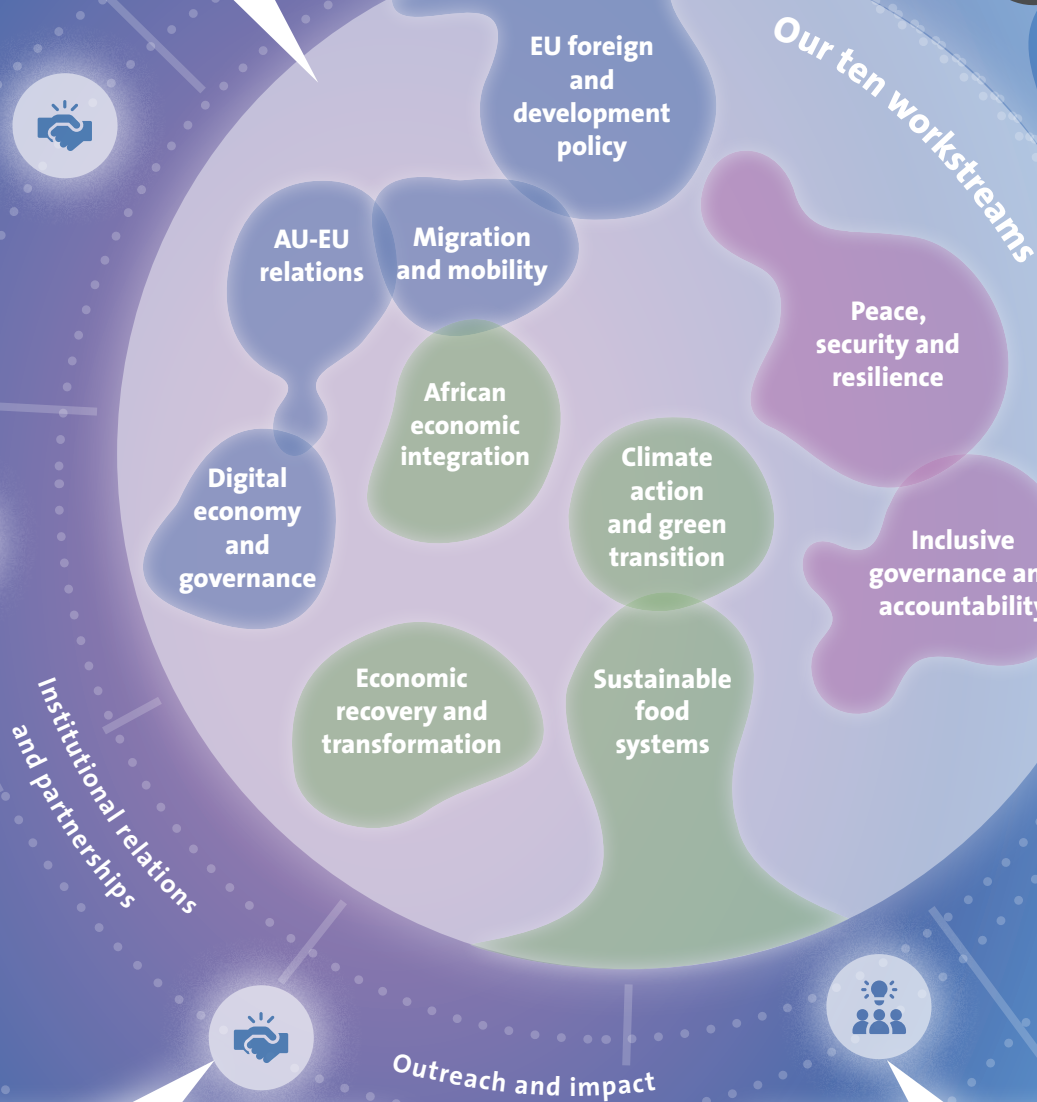


We have organised our work in **three clusters**, linked to the **impact areas** of the strategy.

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 unit]

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

[Outreach and impact unit]

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 2022-2023, we will work in four key areas.

EU foreign and development policy

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

Given the increasing geopolitical framing of EU policies, we will strive to integrate a more global perspective into our work, for example, on the implications of the so-called 'geopolitical' Commission for the EU's cooperation with Africa, on cooperation between the EU and the United Nations, and on the roles of the EU and its member states in international financial institutions and the G20. As an example, we will follow the finalisation of the EU programming of external resources for 2021-2027 and implementation of the €79.5 billion NDICI (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument)-Global Europe, including their linkages with the external dimension of the European Green Deal and digitalisation. We will pay attention to the dynamics of collaboration and coordination between EU member states, but also to competition and divisions, particularly as part of the Team Europe approach.

Our research and analysis will follow the implementation and realisation of the EU's gender objectives and commitments, including the gender spending targets under the NDICI and the Gender Action Plan III.

HIGHLIGHT

The EU's international cooperation response in the COVID-19 era and beyond

With **this project**, ECDPM will promote global economic and social recovery through improved EU international cooperation strategy, policy, and practical and financial responses in the wake of COVID-19. ECDPM will contribute via the creation and uptake of policy and operationally relevant knowledge and dialogue facilitation. We will make use of every opportunity to directly brief policymaking and large implementing bodies on how to adapt strategy, policy, programming systems, methods and processes for the benefit of the poorest and most vulnerable people in developing countries.

Cont'd...



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: ECDPM will publish research reports and concise articles or briefing notes on EU development cooperation in the COVID era and beyond. A key aspect will be to look at how the EU addresses the disproportionate impacts of the COVID-19 crisis on women (in terms of livelihoods, education and violence) in its development cooperation. We will pay particular attention to the knowledge needs of African decision makers in our analysis, to ensure our work adds value to them.



PARTNERS: EU and AU institutions and member states, representatives of public authorities and civil society in Africa and Europe.

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. Key aims are to maximise the development potential of migration, minimise its risks, support the rights of migrants and refugees, and generate ideas for how migration-related development challenges can be addressed.

We will focus on European migration policies, pathways to reconcile different (internal and external) EU agendas and conditions for successful policy implementation on the African continent. Other important focal areas are African migration policies and realities, implications for African regional migration governance, and drivers for African policymakers to implement global, continental and regional migration policy commitments. We will be voicing and supporting African migration narratives, including some that challenge stereotypical views of female migrants, so they are better reflected in the EU-Africa migration discourse and in forming policies. We will also support innovative and development-friendly mobility and migration programmes and schemes between European and African countries, and contribute to gender-sensitive migration and mobility policy.

HIGHLIGHT

Migration programming in Africa under the NDICI

This project will inform policymakers in the EU and EU member states, as well as interested actors from EU-based migration organisations, about the outcomes and implementation processes of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) programmes, with a view to providing tools and knowledge for adaptation. African policymakers and stakeholders will be informed about EU financing in the area of migration and NDICI programme implementation.

Cont'd...



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: ECDPM will publish a briefing note or discussion paper and other shorter contributions on migration programming in Africa under the NDICI.

There is also the possibility of a seminar on lessons learnt from the Team Europe initiatives targeting whole migration routes in Africa.

Digital economy and governance

ECDPM will promote **digital cooperation between Africa and Europe for mutually beneficial, sustainable human development outcomes**. A key aspect will be drawing on our knowledge and network on both continents to build up our expertise in this area, which is new for ECDPM.

We will follow and contribute to digital topics in relation to the EU's geostrategic interests and explore issues such as digital financial services, wider digital infrastructure investments and digital regulation and governance. We will look at what role digitalisation can play in facilitating African regional integration, for example, through the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Particularly, our researchers will look into EU and AU aims in terms of digital development and regulation, drivers of international cooperation in Africa and Europe, and tools available for cooperation between Europe and Africa. Together with ACET and the German Development Institute (DIE) we will publish a book on EU-Africa digital cooperation.

Digitalisation can create opportunities for African entrepreneurs. However, there is a risk of worsening digital divides between and within countries, due to increased unemployment resulting from automatisisation processes and unequal access to digital technologies, for example, between men and women. The gendered impact of digitalisation means that our work will have a gender lens and promote equal opportunities from digitalisation, including in entrepreneurship, access to finance, political participation and accountability.

HIGHLIGHT

Digitalisation in EU external policies and spending

With **this project**, ECDPM seeks to assess, understand and influence how the EU institutions approach digitalisation in external policies and spending, with a focus on EU support relevant to regional harmonisation of digital financial services in Africa. Utilising our research and analysis, ECDPM will seek opportunities to directly brief policymaking and policy implementing bodies on how to adapt strategy, policy, programming systems, methods and processes related to digitalisation.

Cont'd...



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: We will produce a comprehensive research report and briefing note or short article on EU support for digitalisation in Africa, in addition to co-hosting, facilitating or actively participating in a related event.

AU-EU relations

On paper, both the EU and the AU have made commitments to move beyond traditional North-South cooperation towards a more equal, interest-driven partnership. But despite the promising language of successive (and partly overlapping) strategies and political declarations, concrete change is still lagging. ECDPM will explore **how a more mutually beneficial and interest-driven partnership between Europe and Africa can be constructed** in the COVID era and beyond.

In the AU-EU partnership framework, we will focus on the agendas and priorities of each side, including their perspectives on key political issues, and look for areas of common interest. Our focus will be to help achieve a more effective, political and balanced partnership and reduce gaps between EU and AU strategies and implementation. In particular, our analysis and outreach will seek opportunities to enhance the diversity of actors engaging in an effective partnership, with consideration for non-state, socio-economic actors and young generations, and a gender-sensitive approach. We will also look at how the AU-EU partnership might complement or compete with the parallel EU-OACPS agreement.

Using our knowledge of the European institutional and political environment, we aim to support the empowerment of African actors in their engagement with European partners. We will contribute to summits, ministerial meetings and other high-level dialogues and events, as well as participate in exchanges with local governments, businesses, civil society, women's organisations and youth organisations from both continents. We will also follow the AU-EU partnership on specific priority themes, such as green transition, digital transformation, sustainable growth and jobs, peace, security and governance, and migration and mobility.

HIGHLIGHT

Preparation and follow-up to the 6th AU-EU Summit

In the context of the 2022 AU-EU Summit, ECDPM will provide input to the debate and facilitate an inclusive and practical dialogue with a view to generating a better understanding of the AU and EU agendas and priorities regarding the partnership between the two continental unions. This will take place in the broader context of relations between the two continents and with the objective of achieving greater convergence on key political issues, as well as fostering a more balanced partnership. ECDPM will also follow up on the commitments and recommendations from the AU-EU Summit.

HIGHLIGHT

Cont'd...



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: We will contribute articles, blog posts and research papers analysing the status of the EU-AU partnership in the context of the AU-EU Summit and other aspects of relations between the continents. We will co-host, facilitate or actively participate in events associated with the AU-EU Summit, and be involved in mediation efforts around key divergences, while also re-establishing and strengthening relationships with different AU bodies.



PARTNERS: African and European knowledge institutes and institutional partners, such as ACET, the Institute for Security Studies (ISS), ETTG members and others.

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: mdc@ecdpm.org.

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 2022-2023, we will work in two key areas.

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.

To facilitate this goal, we will contribute to policies, approaches, perspectives and a better understanding of how to achieve peace, while supporting the actors that deliver implementation and unpacking political dynamics. We will identify obstacles to women’s active participation and inclusion in political processes and decision-making, as well as opportunities for gender-responsive approaches to participation. With a focus on improving responses to peace, security and resilience at both the policy and the practical level, we will seek to engage effectively with actors in situations of protracted crisis and analyse how to expedite recovery, stabilisation and resilience.

HIGHLIGHT

Promoting endogenous knowledge on resilience

This long-term regional **action research** links practical knowledge and policy on resilience, security, governance and the consequences of environmental degradation across three countries of the Central Sahel (Niger, Mali and Burkina Faso). It responds to the urgent need for stronger endogenous knowledge and awareness of policies concerning the highly interlinked national problems in the Sahel, to help identify how these might be tackled more effectively via coordinated regional approaches. The project combines desk and field research with workshops and policy seminars to inform national, regional and international stakeholders about trends and developments that call for joint approaches. The research and policy dialogue focus on the border regions which connect the three countries. Gender and youth are cross-cutting themes.

Cont'd...



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: ECDPM provides methodological support and leads the research on the role and current engagement of regional organisations in linking climate security and resilience in the Central Sahel. ECDPM, in cooperation with its partners, also leads the research on lessons learnt from activities to strengthen the rights of local communities affected by environmental degradation, conflict and governance problems.



PARTNERS: The project is executed by three leading universities – the University of Science and Policies of Bamako, Mali; the University of Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; and the Abdou Moumouni University, Niger – in cooperation with ECDPM, the Maastricht School of Management and CINOP (a Netherlands-based advisory and research firm).

Inclusive governance and accountability

With a view to contributing 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 Centre will contribute to a more pragmatic international discourse on governance and point to international actors' limitations and opportunities, while studying how national actors can positively influence the governance systems they operate within. Our aim is to achieve a better shared understanding of what the roles of national and international actors can be operationally, for example, in elections, citizen movements, gender equality, local development, international norm setting, rule of law and anti-corruption initiatives. At a structural level, we will focus on Africa-Europe continental dialogue, bilateral relations and country-to-continent relations on political governance.

HIGHLIGHT

The African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance

The Charter project promotes engagement of civil society organisations in the governance agenda across 11 states and four regions in Africa. The focus is the role that digital activism can play in the context of the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, with the goal being to facilitate implementation of the Charter.

HIGHLIGHT

Cont'd...



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: ECDPM is undertaking contextual research and analysis to feed into the project. We will provide research papers and methodological tools in service to the other organisations, whose role is to provide sub-grants and digital tools to activists working on democracy and accountability.



PARTNERS: European Partnership for Democracy (Belgium), Africativistes (Senegal), Gorée Institute (Senegal), Democracy Works (South Africa) and Code for Africa (South Africa/Kenya).

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: lta@ecdpm.org.

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 2022-2023, we will work in four key areas.

Economic recovery and transformation

ECDPM will contribute to **more effective and integrated European and African policies and instruments** to support a sustainable and inclusive COVID-19 recovery and economic transformation in Africa.

We will pay particular attention to how policies interact, seeking to strengthen synergies and coherence between policy areas and instruments, related to private sector development, trade, sustainable investment and finance. We will follow the development and implementation of the EU sustainable corporate governance legislation and its accompanying measures and their impact on Africa. We will also look at policy mixes in the EU and Africa to promote a circular economy transition.

We will analyse and support dialogue and cooperation between and within stakeholder groups, including private sector actors. This will include engaging with European and African financial institutions, as well as other development cooperation actors and local stakeholders, to generate more inclusive and cooperative approaches.

We will integrate gender-related issues into all of our activities, helping stakeholders promote gender transformative approaches, policies and instruments to support women's economic empowerment.

HIGHLIGHT

Circularity in the textile and garment industry in Kenya and the EU

This project contributes to the EU's ambition for more circular textile and garment value chains, meaning value chains with minimalised waste and pollution streams and with existing products and materials in use for longer. It explores how this goal aligns with the priorities and realities of Kenya, an upcoming textile and garment producing and exporting country, and how it affects EU-Kenya relations.

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SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: We will provide insights on circular economy-related EU policy measures and the evolving standards of European brands and importers, including in relation to the new EU strategy for sustainable textiles. We will raise awareness among value chain actors and explore alignment between European perspectives and measures and circular economy opportunities and bottlenecks in Kenya. We will seek to identify entry points for EU-Kenya



cooperation for a more circular value chain, for example, in the area of trade and investment promotion and development cooperation. Implications of the rapid feminisation of the textile and garment industry in Kenya will also be considered. We will present our findings in commentaries and a paper, as well as at two informal dialogue events.



PARTNERS: Msingi (East Africa) and Solidaridad (Netherlands-based).

Climate action and green transition

The next two years will bring major changes in global climate action, including in Europe. ECDPM seeks to play a role in this transformation by contributing to ambitious, fair and effective responses to the global climate crisis. Our work will consider the political, technical, environmental and financial aspects of climate action and green transition. ECDPM will focus on **strengthening adaptation and resilience, supporting the European and African politics of green transition and renewable energy deployment, and fostering a green recovery through finance and international cooperation.**

We will work to strengthen existing and emerging alliances between Europe and Africa for effective climate action and green transition, including analysis and information about the external dimensions of the European Green Deal. By tuning in to European and African debates on global economic recovery, we will seek to identify opportunities for more ambitious international cooperation from a climate justice point of view. While working with partners to unpack the complexity of transboundary climate impacts, we will also look at coherent and integrated policies to respond to these impacts and contribute to the effective localisation of green transition and renewable energy deployment and adaptation.

Within these contributions we will bring out the essential links between gender and climate and green transition, underscoring the need for women's engagement at all levels of the decision-making and implementation processes.

HIGHLIGHT

Cascades

The CASCADES project (2019-2023) identifies how risks due to climate change in countries, economies and societies beyond Europe might have transboundary or cascading effects in Europe. It analyses how these risks interact with major challenges facing European societies, for example, looking at the exposure of the European business and financial sectors to climate-induced risks that originate outside Europe. ECDPM works with stakeholders from within and beyond Europe to support the design of coherent European policy responses to address these interconnected, cross-sectoral and transboundary climate risks.



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: In 2022, ECDPM will produce policy analyses on adaptation, development and security risks caused by cascading climate impacts, as identified in the first phase of the project (2019-2021). We will provide policy recommendations on how to coherently manage these risks within the EU institutions, but also look at the EU's interactions with its member states and the role of the EU within international institutions.



PARTNERS: ECDPM works directly with eleven European organisations and universities. The project is coordinated by the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

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.

Our analysis of the performance of African food systems will lead to a better understanding of context-specific social, economic and environmental challenges. By facilitating dialogue with diverse stakeholders, we will contribute to more coherent, effective and inclusive food systems governance arrangements, and explore ways to bridge the gap between evidence and implementation. We will also support efforts to mobilise public, private and public-private investments to finance food systems transformations. By taking a strong role in various 'communities of practice' and in partnerships, we will contribute to greater uptake of a coherent, integrated, politically sensitive food systems approach in Europe and in Africa.

Gender imbalances both within and outside food systems contribute to the worsening of nutritional outcomes for women and their families, inequality in accessing natural and financial resources and other negative impacts on the SDGs. We will therefore promote gender-sensitive analysis and gender inclusion in food systems governance.

HIGHLIGHT

Agrinvest

The **AgrInvest project** promotes private investments in African agrifood systems that are aligned with the SDGs. Such investments can contribute to sustainable economic growth and boost rural employment, particularly for women and the youth. The project is being implemented in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya and Niger.



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: The two-year AgrInvest project will culminate in 2022. This year's activities will include developing guidelines for promoting sustainable investment in selected agrifood value chains in the four targeted countries. Working with partners and local stakeholders has provided ECDPM with valuable insights and contextual knowledge, which we will apply to formulate actionable recommendations. For the final activity, ECDPM will prepare a synthesis of the lessons learnt through the project and suggest approaches for scaling up sustainable investment efforts using a food systems approach.



PARTNERS: Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO).

African economic integration

ECDPM will explore **how regional organisations interact with the AU, the AfCFTA and member states on economic issues**, given competing agendas and member state interests. We will analyse how states balance industrialisation agendas and economic growth processes with regional trade commitments in practice, while also exploring issues such as job creation, value chain linkages and cross-border corridor initiatives, including transport.

We will carry out political economy analysis and feed results into ongoing dialogues around major concerns such as industrialisation and economic development, including regional and continental trade, to encourage more context-specific and politically informed ways of working. The addition of our independent view will help policymakers identify and understand what drives and constrains African economic integration processes.

With the implementation of the AfCFTA, safeguarding the economic participation of women is a central objective, particularly in informal cross-border trade. We will bring the gender angle into analyses of regional economic issues, as in many cases operators' experiences are gendered.

HIGHLIGHT

Supporting TradeMark East Africa

This **project** provides information and support to policymakers, partners and other actors engaged in regional economic initiatives. The main focus is what drives and hinders progress on regional economic agendas, potentially including analytical case studies of specific corridor initiatives in selected countries and in the context of the AfCFTA. Project results will feed into and help shape dialogues among partners to encourage more context-specific and politically informed ways of working. Project results will be integrated into TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) programmes and their way of engaging with regional bodies.



SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES: ECDPM will conduct political economy analysis and explore further developing the tool prepared to help TMEA build up new programmatic work.

PARTNERS: TradeMark East Africa (Kenya).

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 Jeske van Seters, Associate Director: jvs@ecdpm.org.

Outreach and impact



“To ensure the quality of ECDPM’s output, our work will be evidence-based, politically informed and practical, as well as informed by cross-cutting perspectives”

For all the areas of work presented above, our aim is to have **impact**. That is why each team, in coordination with the new Outreach and Impact Unit, will develop a targeted outreach and impact strategy. These will explain how strategic priorities are embedded in the work and outline the desired uptake. For individual activities, we will identify key stakeholders – potential agents of change – and time our work to align with the relevant policy agendas, understanding the needs of the targeted policymakers and practitioners.

This will be coupled with new forms of collaboration and outreach to different partners. We will involve them from the early stages of projects and team up to formulate customised ways of working and joint engagement and outreach plans.

To ensure the quality of ECDPM’s output, our work will be evidence-based, politically informed and practical, as well as informed by cross-cutting perspectives. As a think tank striving for excellence, we will specifically integrate priorities from our new strategy in terms of how we work, including addressing gender aspects and collaborating cross-team and beyond ECDPM to integrate diverse perspectives and deepen our engagement. We will partner with African and non-African organisations, stakeholders and experts.

As the Centre engages in policy processes that are invariably complex, multi-actor, non-modular and contingent, ECDPM knows that its work depends first and foremost on domestic actors and factors affecting the nature of change or stasis. ECDPM’s contribution to change in policy or practice is based on the assumptions that actors and institutions are open to cooperate and responsive to ECDPM’s knowledge and policy engagement.

Want to know more about our work?

ECDPM distributes its work via its [website](#), the [Weekly Compass](#) e-newsletter and social media channels, like [Twitter](#).

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.

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ECDPM's website offers content highlighting progress on the activities described in this work plan:

- Publications (reports, papers and briefs)
- Commentary
- Our quarterly Great Insights magazine
- Events
- Multimedia presentations

Some of our topical work is collected in special dossiers. If you are looking for a deep dive on a specific topic, try our search function. Use the filters to narrow your results. To stay up to date on our work, [subscribe](#) to our Weekly Compass newsletter.

We report our monitoring data in line with the standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Reports include overviews of our activities designed to generate politically informed, evidence-based and practical knowledge and to facilitate knowledge uptake by key public and private actors through dialogue, implementation support and smart communications. We also provide outcome narratives reflecting on the contributions we make to the changes envisaged in our specific theories of change.

Centre management

“Our ‘Fit for Future’ process prepare the Centre for the next phase of its existence”

This work plan spans the first years of the new **ECDPM strategy**. Built on the Centre’s proven track record and strengths, the strategy is well adapted to the volatile global context and enables us to work on and respond to the most challenging issues. Right now, these include EU-Africa relations with a focus on COVID-19 and the climate crisis, as well as emerging trends offering promise for addressing these challenges, like digitalisation and youth activism. Most importantly, the new strategy helps us maximise the value we can add for our partners, for our various audiences and for all of us with a stake in a fairer, more prosperous, stable and sustainable world.

Based on our ‘Fit for Future’ process to become more efficient and strategic, ECDPM has embarked on a reconstruction of our management team and governance structure, to prepare the Centre for the next phase of its existence. We appointed three associate directors to oversee the three thematic clusters outlined above, with each composed of several workstreams. The new set-up provides us more flexibility, more space for cross-thematic work and a more holistic view of the topics of the day. The structure also offers more opportunities for staff to grow and develop. The merger of the former Communications and Learning and Quality Support departments into the new Outreach and Impact Unit demonstrates the Centre’s intention to increase its footprint in the various policy areas it works in.

All of this will create added value for our funders and stakeholders based on excellence, collaboration and a scorching desire to know and understand.

Finance

ECDPM has a close institutional relationship with nine countries: **The Netherlands** (5-year renewal pending), **Belgium** (3-year agreement entered in 2021), **Luxembourg** (3-year agreement entered in 2021), **Sweden** (3-year renewal pending), **Austria** (renewal pending, extension of 2-year agreement to 3-year agreement under negotiation), **Denmark** (3-year renewal pending), **Finland** (2-year renewal pending), **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 end October 2021) of the €3.36 million additional funding required for 2022. The total annual budget requires an income of €8.0 million, expected to be provided through institutional funding amounting to €4.64 million and €3.36 million from other sources.

Funding overview

| Income stream | Amount in €'000 |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| Institutional partners | 4,647 |
| Other external projects | 3,365 |

In 2022, we expect institutional funding to make up 55% of our budget (compared to 60% in 2021). The other 45% 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 in the process of adapting its medium- and long-term funding strategy to become more robust. In previous years, our focus was on securing multi-annual institutional partnerships, which supported our various external projects. However, the sustainability of such a model has been challenged. The Centre's adjusted financing strategy focuses on increasing medium-term flexible funding. This type of funding is similar to institutional funding, and will reduce the dependence risk of our organisation over time.

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 on securing additional projects for the centre has been adapted to a singular target for the Centre. The aim with this is to inspire all teams in combining efforts in securing future projects and facilitate 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 expenditure.

Our most significant outlay remains personnel costs, which increase annually with inflation. For 2021-2022 the increase was 2%. Beyond that, the organisation has to ensure it has sufficient junior and mid-level staff to support the senior staff with their various tasks. To that end, we have budgeted for a rise in personnel costs to fund growth in content-related staff. The overall staff size budgeted for in 2022 is 66 FTEs (69 headcount), compared to 60.7 FTEs in 2021 (65 headcount).

Staff development

Human Resources (HR) will continue to align the needs of ECDPM's current and future talent with the strategic goals of the organisation, ensuring that the Centre remains an attractive employer where diverse talent can thrive. Learning and development, coaching and mentoring programmes are important motivators for the younger generations, especially in a knowledge-based professional organisation such as ECDPM.

Our HR department is developing programmes, systems and processes to help unlock the potential of managers and individual staff. Examples include a leadership programme in collaboration with the University of Maastricht for mid-level and senior staff. Among others, project management skills will be developed to ensure the efficient execution of projects.

Furthermore, we are conscious that several key senior staff members will retire in the next couple of years. This will be a loss for the organisation, but provides opportunities for new talent development. New roles such as the associate director and workstream leader offer growth potential for our current staff. The newly created position of senior fellow is a role in which coaching, mentoring and knowledge transfer are key elements, alongside assisting with the development of younger professionals.

We work continuously to improve and develop our management performance. The latest achievement is aligning the cycle of determining individual work and development goals with the strategic goals of the workstreams and clusters.

Diversity and inclusion

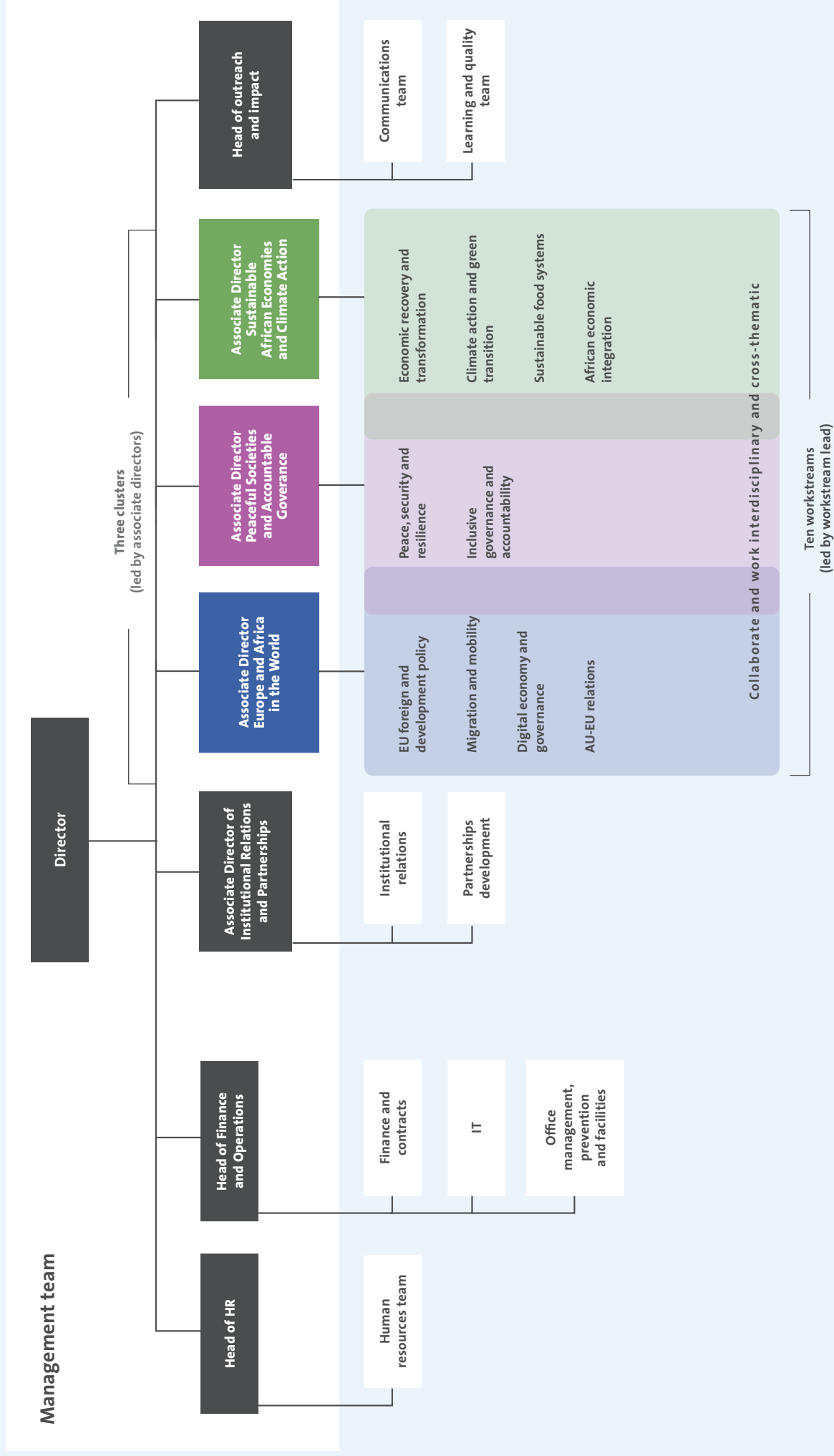
The new structure has provided the organisation the opportunity to ensure that the Centre achieves its diversity and inclusion goals. As part of the Centre's process to achieve diversity, we will fill new roles with this important aspect in mind.

Hybrid working

An internal survey found that the majority of our staff would prefer not returning to an 'industrial' work environment. At the same time, the COVID-19 crisis has shown us that our staff can achieve under any circumstances. Our staff has been flexible and adapted quickly to the various restrictions imposed by governmental bodies. However, with a hybrid structure, the organisation has to ensure that opportunities for contact and cross-fertilisation between colleagues remain. We therefore hold team meetings at the office and organise social events such as walking tours to maintain staff cohesion. HR, as well as supervisors, continuously monitor staff well-being.

Lastly, organising flexibility for 65 staff members with 23 different nationalities in a Dutch and Belgian legal entity in compliance with tax, social security and employment law is and will remain a challenge.

ECDPM in 2022





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