

ecdpm

Work plan

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Bridging Africa and Europe for global solutions

“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 on European external relations, in particular on Africa-Europe relations and the implications of the cooperation between the two continents at the global level. Our mission is to promote innovative forms of international cooperation and relations involving European and African actors to address major global development and climate 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 fourth work plan under ECDPM's 2022-2026 strategy. 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 2025 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

“The EU will need to reach out to its friends and potential allies and listen to their concerns and interests to create truly mutually beneficial and respectful engagements.”

In a fragmented world characterised by uncertainty and volatility – further heightened by the election of the US President Donald Trump – polycrises, geopolitical tensions and increased rivalry, prominent conflicts and rising security concerns, the EU wants to strengthen its own standing, at home and internationally. Under a new European Commission, a more inward-looking EU will increasingly focus on its own security and competitiveness, pursuing more active industrial and innovation policies and building on the EU's digital and green twin transition.

This means making the European economy and supply chains more resilient, diversifying sources of supply and export markets, including through near-and-friend-shoring, fostering the EU's open strategic autonomy and ensuring access to reliable sources of (green) energy and critical raw materials. European geostrategic and policy priorities will also have to be reflected in the EU long-term budget (Multiannual Financial Framework), in the adjustments to the current one (2021-2027) and in the elaboration of the future one (2028-2034).

Yet, a more assertive Europe must also be able to better connect its internal policies with its external relations. This is the case, for instance, on security matters, the fight against climate change, migration policies and its industrial and investment agenda. This will require greater internal European coherence and a whole-of-the-EU geostrategic approach, including in the establishment of its new economic statecraft and foreign economic policy, strategic autonomy, de-risking and diversification and security and defence objectives.

But not only! The EU will need to reach out to its friends and potential allies and listen to their concerns and interests to create truly mutually beneficial and respectful engagements. To this end, the EU and its member states must align their internal policies with their external ambitions better and consolidate their external policy tools, including geostrategic, geoeconomic, security, development and humanitarian cooperation aspirations.

Furthermore, the EU must look for new ways to communicate on international sustainable development and climate policies to avoid sidelining them while stressing that development policies and international cooperation are part and parcel of the European soft-power arsenal. In doing so, Europe will need to reach out to and build on local and international dynamics and initiatives, adopting Team Europe-plus approaches and expanding on its partners' own interests and priorities.

This is all the more important given the lack of progress in the fight against climate change and in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. It is time to address the imbalances in the international world order and global public goods. In the face of increasing disparities and rising vulnerabilities, a more assertive South can lead the way, in its diversity, to new forms of engagement and paths to prosperity.

In 2025, South Africa's G20 Presidency, the new African Union Commission, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FFD4) in Spain and the COP 30 in Brazil will provide some of the key opportunities to better address these challenges.

ECDPM will help tackle these evolutions, focusing more on the interconnectedness of international relations and international cooperation, and the synergies between geostrategic, sustainable development and climate ambitions, for the EU foreign policy, its neighbourhood and Africa, and more broadly the South and the international community. We will continue to facilitate dialogues, advancing knowledge and stimulating partnership approaches.

Navigating geographic, policy and thematic interdependencies, we will follow what we call a bridging approach;

1. Bridging domestic and foreign policy priorities
2. Bridging geostrategic, sustainable development and climate ambitions
3. Bridging partnerships in mutually beneficial ways

This work plan presents what our nine workstreams will work on in 2025 to contribute to the **five impact areas of our strategy**:



Our gender lens



“Workstreams have strengthened their gender ambitions, and with a systematic, strategic and accountable approach,...”

As stated in our 2022–2026 strategy, ECDPM is integrating a gender perspective and addressing gender issues across our work. ECDPM has a gender task force with designated staff (gender focal points, a gender coordinator, our outreach and impact team) that support gender integration in our research and policy work, and a new associate specialised in gender.

Staff can use tools like the ‘Gender Marker’ and benefit from our monitoring and learning to integrate gender and pinpoint areas for further improvement. Workstreams have strengthened their gender ambitions, and with a systematic, strategic and accountable approach, we will support them in consolidating these ambitions further.

In 2025 we will:

- Promote the systematic and accountable use of the updated ECDPM’s ‘Gender Marker’, to make sure that gender perspectives are not diluted but are meaningfully integrated into the final product;
- Consolidate the integration of gender in workstreams’ ambitions in their theories of change by supporting them to reflect on successes and challenges they encounter;
- Strengthen our flow of exchanges between workstreams and the gender core group by systematically dedicating time to discuss gender-related issues and by more purposefully liaising gender focal points with management;
- Support workstreams to fundraise for gender-specific projects while ensuring that they meaningfully integrate gender and apply intersectional lenses to the rest of their work areas;
- Strengthen the visibility and outreach of our gender-related work, including by promoting gender-specific commentaries stemming from research projects;
- Stay updated on relevant discussions and developments in Europe and the world regarding gender and intersectionality (especially the growing backlash against gender equality) and their implications for our role as a think tank.

Our institutional funders and partners



“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.”

Our institutional partners continue to play a major role in supporting ECDPM's mandate, strategy and work plans by providing multiannual institutional and medium-term flexible funding. They allow us to produce cutting-edge policy-relevant analysis and engage in European, International, 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 partnerships are a cornerstone of ECDPM's way of working. In 2025, ECDPM will continue to build its capacity to draw in strategically aligned programme and project funding, which makes up almost 45% of our financing, paying particular attention to building relationships with international foundations that can fund at scale.

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 and financial 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. On both continents and at the global level, we work with multilateral institutions, social and economic actors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), the private sector, economic agencies, academia and think tanks operating at the regional and national levels.

ECDPM will further strengthen partnerships with African think tanks by engaging in concrete joint activities with the African Centre for Economic Transformation (ACET) 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). We are also expanding our network of associates and fellows, who are allies in defining and implementing our work.

How we work

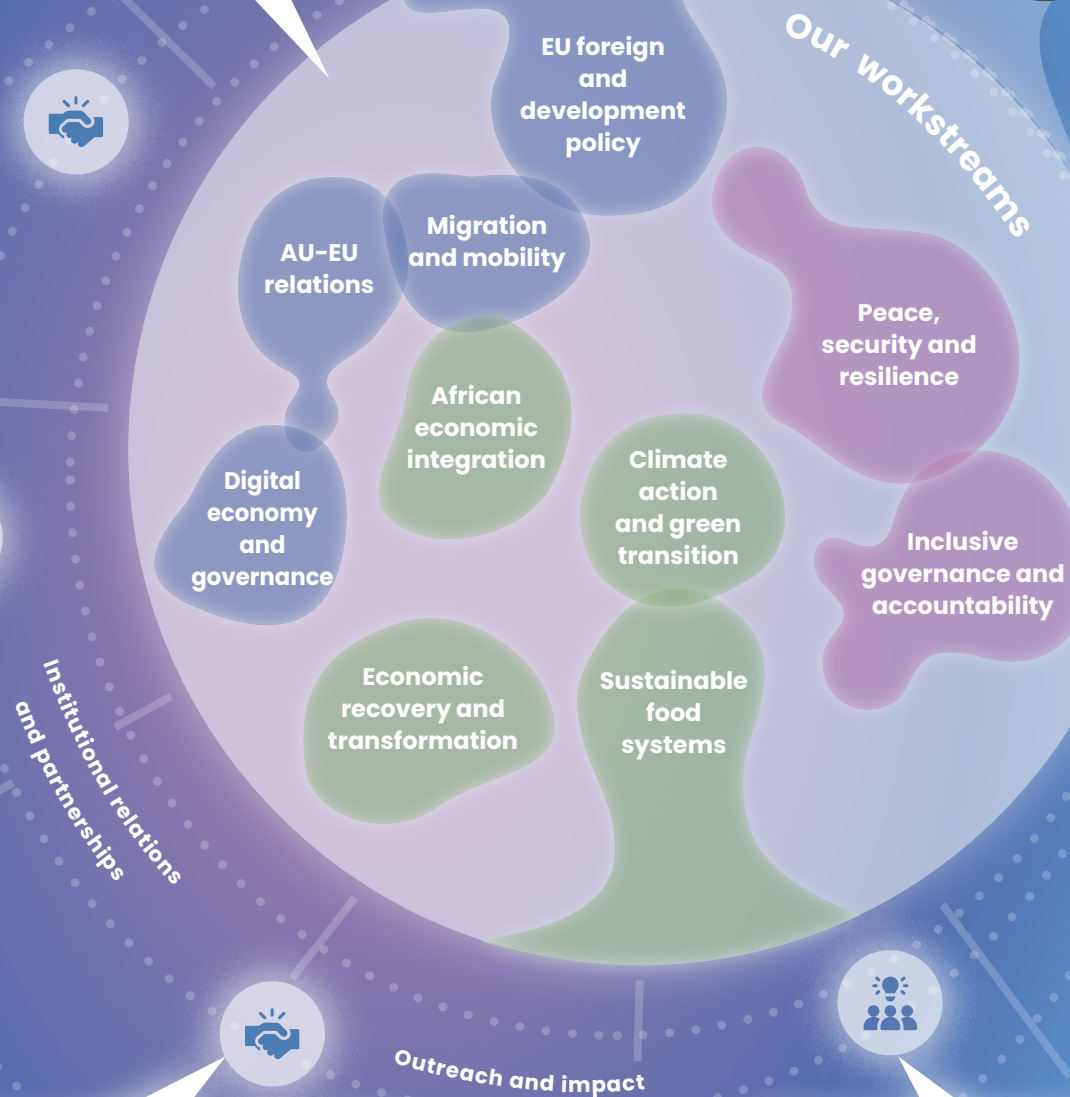
ecdpm

- 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 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



“We will explore the growing integration of domestic EU priorities into foreign and development policy, and regard the EU’s positioning vis-à-vis China in the Global South.”

ECDPM supports European countries and the EU in becoming more effective and responsible global actors for sustainable development. We facilitate strong and mutually beneficial, interest-driven international cooperation and partnerships, particularly between Europe and Africa. We look at the EU-AU partnership and its evolution in a multipolar world, including the geopolitical dynamics and the role of non-state actors.

In 2025–2026, we will work in three key areas – EU foreign and development policy; migration and mobility; digital economy and governance.

EU foreign and development policy

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

The key activities for 2025 include:

- **Changing nature of EU international cooperation.** We will track the new College of Commissioners and its new High Representative and look at political and policy priorities’ impact on EU foreign and development policy in the context of increasing geopolitical and geoeconomic competition. We will explore the growing integration of domestic EU priorities into foreign and development policy, and regard the EU’s positioning vis-à-vis China in the Global South.
- **Next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).** We will closely monitor the ongoing implementation of the NDICI-Global Europe and the further development of initiatives such as the Global Gateway strategy and Team Europe, as well as the EU negotiations on the next long-term budget post-2027.
- **EU’s response to Ukraine and EU-AU summit.** We plan to invest in the EU’s response to Ukraine and reconstruction efforts as well as in the EU-Africa summit, due to happen in 2025.

HIGHLIGHT

Advancing the EU’s global sustainable development impact

ECDPM’s goal is to improve how the EU prioritises, designs, funds and implements its policies to become a more effective global development actor. The EU needs to revitalise its partnerships, redefine its priorities, adapt its regulatory framework, rethink its funding modalities and focus strongly on innovation if it is to rise to the challenges posed by the current global situation.

We will focus on the implications of the new EU political priorities for EU development cooperation, including the scaling up of the Global Gateway.

Partners

This work will involve teams across ECDPM, the European Think Tanks Group and organisations and think tanks working on EU domestic and economic affairs.

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 addressing migration-related development challenges.

The key activities for 2025 include:

- **Development dimensions of labour migration between European and African countries.** We aim to bring together relevant actors for dialogues and carry out research in the context of increasing efforts by EU member states to recruit labour for their labour markets.
- Explore avenues to investigate **how migration is incorporated into the EU comprehensive partnerships** (covering political, economic/investment, security dimensions) and highlight risks and opportunities of partnership approaches.
- **African Union migration governance.** We will clarify the role of the AU Commission in promoting free movement of persons on the continent, contributing to labour migration and the promotion of the rights of migrant workers. With partners such as the Centre for Migration Studies (University of Ghana), we aim to work on the **political economy of African migration governance**.

HIGHLIGHT

DYNAMIG – A better understanding of migration decisions and policies

The project aims to better understand decisions around migration, analyse the extent to which policy formulation considers migrants' diverse experiences, and explore the effectiveness of migration-related policies in shaping migrants' decisions and behaviour. It focuses on African migrants – those contemplating departure, those in transit and those who have returned – as well as policies in the EU and Africa.

Specific activities

Apart from our work on outreach and communication and research to policy support, we will organise three workshops and a conference at the end of 2025.

Partners

- Kiel Institute for the World Economy (Germany)
- Elizade University (Nigeria)
- African Migration and Development Policy Centre (Kenya)
- Mohammed VI Polytechnic University (Morocco)
- University of Luxembourg (Luxembourg)
- European University Institute – Migration Policy Centre (Italy)
- Middlesex University Higher Education Corporation (United Kingdom)

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:

- **Supporting an African digital single market.** We will work on a project on AI for social good, integrating a Global South perspective as well as on the Africa Digital Policy Monitor and on Africa's role in global digital and AI conversations around South Africa's G20 presidency to inform how Africa can successfully implement its ambitions around cross-border data flows, digital public infrastructure and digital trade to contribute to sustainable development.
- **Supporting more effective action on digital and AI in EU external action.** We will focus our work on informing a European approach to digital public infrastructure and integrating Global South perspectives to inform how the EU can promote a free and open internet and respect partners' interests and positions in its approach to digital diplomacy and digital cooperation.
- **Towards better global governance of digital technologies and AI.** We will look at the Global South's role in international cybersecurity governance and cooperation and Africa's role in global digital and AI conversations around South Africa's G20 presidency to explore how the EU, the AU and other partners can work together to develop better multilateral cooperation in the areas of digital and AI governance.

HIGHLIGHT

AI for social good: A Global South perspective

This project aims to explore how Global South countries can effectively leverage AI as a tool for promoting social development in three key sectors where AI holds the potential to drive substantial social and economic benefits: education, healthcare and agriculture. We will examine the opportunities and risks associated with AI adoption, particularly in terms of social and technological exclusion and highlight projects in these sectors where AI has made a significant impact and the potential to scale up these benefits in other countries.

Specific activities

- Short interviews
- Online workshops and events
- Policy briefs

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 at mdc@ecdpm.org.

Peaceful societies and accountable governance



“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.”

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 2025–2026, we will work in two key areas – peace, security and resilience; 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 2025 include:

- **Nexus areas, notably the triple nexus and climate-security.** As the new European Commission, with a focus on the Global Gateway and trade and investments, starts working, we will continue engaging in policy discussions around how the EU can ensure tailored approaches for conflict-affected and fragile settings.
- **The EU’s role in peace and stabilisation.** A number of regions remain under high pressure, such as the Horn, including Sudan and Somalia, but also rising tensions in Ethiopia, the Sahel and West Africa. We will seek to inform and contribute to policy discussion on how the EU can best design and deploy its peace and security toolbox.
- Building on the evaluations of the **financial instruments** and the EU Trust Funds, we will, in the run-up to the new Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), follow developments and discussions around the EU’s external engagement and repercussions for the EU’s role and partnerships around the world, including in Africa.

HIGHLIGHT

Climate-sensitive environmental peacebuilding in the Central Sahel region

This project aims to better understand the current gaps and opportunities related to environmental peacebuilding in the Central Sahel, contribute to institutional learning for the leading peacebuilding organisation ‘Search for Common Ground’ and develop tailored policy recommendations for Belgian, European and international policymakers.

Specific activities

- In-depth desk-based research and key informant interviews with policymakers and experts.
- Two country case studies will be conducted in Niger and Mali
- Search for Common Ground will organise a learning-focused workshop.
- Two short public policy briefs and two events.

Partners

- Search for Common Ground (global)
- Groupe ODYSSE (Mali)
- Independent expert-consultants (Niger)

Inclusive governance and accountability

By 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 key activities for 2025 include:

- **Public media, AI and digital governance.** The advancement of AI and digital innovation has the potential to enhance e-governance and access to information. But legal and policy frameworks to govern AI, digital technologies and the tech companies are only slowly established. We will work with partners to shape emerging normative frameworks on cyber safety and responsible AI, particularly in Africa.
- **Europe and the values agenda.** We will follow how the EU and its member states navigate both the internal (ideological) as well as external (geopolitics) challenges to sustain the normative relevance of accountability, respect for human rights, civic participation and the rule of law. In 2025, we will pay particular attention to the impact of a changing geopolitical context abroad and how the political shift at home affects Europe itself.

HIGHLIGHT

The role of Africa and Europe in reforming global multilateralism

This project aims to identify the perspectives and interests of the actors on the topic and bring them together to bridge the differences and shape the momentum within and between the continents.

Specific activities and partners

We will conduct a political economy analysis on interests and incentives, divergences and shared positions. We will create space for dialogue and exchange within and across European and African policy influencers and disseminate the outcomes of our work to policymakers and the general public.

Partners

We are formalising a partnership with a leading foreign policy think tank in Africa. We aim to liaise and collaborate with other think tanks in Europe and Africa at different phases of the project, including networks such as ETTG and NeTT4peace.

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 Sophie Desmidt, Associate director at sd@ecdpm.org.

Sustainable African economies and climate action



“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.”

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 2025–2026, 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 2025 include:

- In the **Global Gateway strategy**, we look at how the European Commission can adopt its new foreign economic policy to combine its geoeconomic interests with its sustainable development ambitions and build mutually beneficial partnerships. We will work on development finance and the EU external investment mechanisms. We will also work on the Fourth Financing For Development process, Finance in Common, reform of the international financial architecture and other global initiatives.
- **Climate, food and digital finance.** We will work on climate, food (including with AUDA-NEPAD and IFAD) and digital finance. We also aim to further engage in the EU-Africa health agenda.
- We will work on the **agenda of the new European Commission** which puts investment at its heart and more specifically the next MFF (including the EFSD+).

HIGHLIGHT

Africa and Europe cooperation on climate action and green transition

As development cooperation and climate policies are increasingly put into question, it is crucial to foster a new narrative that highlights the value of development finance, including for mutually beneficial outcomes beyond aid, and those of economic and geostrategic interests. We will stimulate strategic reflection and facilitate the positioning of the EIB and Joint European Financiers for International Cooperation in a Team Europe geostrategic framework, including with ECAs and on Ukraine.

Specific activities

- Roundtable discussions
- Briefing notes

Partners

- Agence Française de Développement (France)
- Joint European Financiers for International Cooperation

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 a green recovery through finance and international cooperation.**

The key activities for 2025 include:

- **Green industrialisation.** We will continue to do an in-depth analysis on the political economy of green industrialisation in Africa. We will particularly focus on international finance and investment and trade policy (including CBAM).
- **Africa-Europe climate diplomacy in the next phase of the European Green Deal (2025).** This one-year project highlights the importance of maintaining climate and energy as high priorities on the EU agenda, demonstrating how EU foreign climate policy contributes to European prosperity. The project will focus on shaping the narrative for the next phase of the Green Deal, creating incentives and structures for climate (adaptation) finance and analysing shared industrial opportunities.
- **Climate resilience through a WEFE-nexus and nature-based solutions in MENA cities.** This programme addresses climate impacts on water, energy, food systems and ecosystems (WEFE) in MENA cities through an integrated WEFE nexus approach. Focused on eight cities in five MENA countries, the programme aims to enhance climate resilience and empower women and girls through gender-sensitive, nature-based solutions. Additionally, it explores synergies and trade-offs within the WEFE nexus via demonstration projects and fosters collaboration among local authorities, civil society and academic institutions to share knowledge.

HIGHLIGHT

A grand bargain on green industrialisation between Europe and Africa

This project investigates the need for a new grand bargain between Europe and African countries on green industrialisation. The idea is to unpack the case for a renewable pull, where investments in energy-intensive industries prioritise developing countries with strong renewable energy potential. The project will also look at the (mis)alignment between industrial policies in Europe and African countries, focusing on the EU's Clean Industrial Deal and African initiatives like the African Green industrialisation initiative.

Specific activities

- Research papers
- Stakeholder convening (including at COP30)
- Data tracking

Partners

- Africa-Europe Foundation (Supporter, Brussels)
- CAP-A (Kenya)
- Bellona (Norway, Belgium)

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, climate adaptation and resilience.

The key activities for 2025 include:

- **Food system financing and climate adaptation.** We will support the FAO-Italy partnership on financing the transition to sustainable food systems and climate adaptation in food systems.
- **A think tank ecosystem on agriculture and food systems.** We expect to work with the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data to develop a think tank ecosystem in Rome that facilitates evidence-based and inclusive policy dialogue and decisions on agriculture and food systems through sustained coordination within and between national and international levels.
- **Strengthening evidence-based policy and practice under the EU-AU partnership.** This project aims to enhance the capacities of stakeholders in Africa's food systems. This will involve assessing capacity gaps, providing policy recommendations, conducting PEA training and strengthening the science-policy interface. We will also foster stakeholder engagement to support science-based decision-making for food systems transformation.

HIGHLIGHT

Linking sectors and levels of interventions for higher impact in Africa

The project fosters policy and investment coherence around the climate-food systems nexus in Africa, in the context of the Italian support for the implementation of the Technical Cooperation Collaborative (TCC) and the African processes on food, climate, trade, investment and infrastructure. The objective is to support AUDA-NEPAD – together with the AUC and RECs – to lead continental TCC coordination and services for international technical cooperation, partnerships and knowledge exchanges for enhanced national food and climate plans.

Specific activities

- At the strategic level, we will contribute to the project design and define methodologies and scope implementation objectives.
- At the continental level, we will support CAADP implementation, analyse key institutions involved in continental policy frameworks, support the Common Africa Agro-Parks initiative and promote a regional approach to building climate change resilience.
- At the regional level, we will provide analysis and support in specific regions, focusing on themes like food value chains, agri-food trade, financing food trade corridors and addressing food security in water-scarce regions.

Partners

- AUDA-NEPAD (South Africa)

African economic integration

ECDPM will explore **how and why regional organisations interact with the AU, the AfCFTA and member states as they do on economic issues**. 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 2025 include:

- **Establish a political economy observatory**, in partnership with the Mandela School of Public Governance at the University of Cape Town, to provide analyses in support of the AfCFTA Industrial Advisory Council of the AfCFTA Secretariat that will cover a range of implementation issues linked to specific value chains, corridor and institutional issues.
- We hope to work with AUDA-NEPAD in their drive to help **connect the continental trade, infrastructure and food systems agendas**, again through institutional, value chain and corridor connections.

HIGHLIGHT

Research partnerships to promote trade, implement trade facilitation measures and invest in transport corridors

This project provides analytical insights and facilitates learning around the practical work of TradeMark Africa, a donor-funded trade facilitation organisation in Africa that works to promote regional integration at the regional and continental levels.

Specific activities

- Scoping work on what it would take to have a 'no-stop border', going beyond current 'one-stop borders' using digital technology but also taking account of the associated administrative politics.
- Analysis of the political economy dynamics around corridors in the Horn of Africa, where tensions have often undermined trade objectives.
- Analysis of the potential trade impact of EU climate policies, deforestation regulation and others.
- Further analysis of the AfCFTA institutional arrangements.

Partners

- TradeMark Africa (Kenya/Ghana)

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Are you interested in working with us?

Please get in touch with Bruce Byiers, Associate director at bby@ecdpm.org.

Outreach and impact



“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.”

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 following six all-Centre priorities for 2025:

- South Africa’s G20 presidency
- New African Union Commission
- The negotiations on the EU’s Multiannual Financial Framework
- EU-AU summit
- COP30
- Fourth international conference on Financing for Development

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).

Centre management

“A major change in the budget process is the alignment of our funding targets with the Centre strategy.”

Finance

ECDPM has developed close institutional relationships with various institutional funders over the past years. The funding received from these institutional relationships has enabled the Centre to function independently and be more than just a think tank, but a think and do tank.

Institutional Funding represents approximately 57% of the total funding required by the Centre. This income ratio has been fairly consistent for the past 5 years. The Centre has budgeted income of approximately €9.1 million for 2025, representing a 12% growth from the forecasted revenue of 2024. However, the budgeted revenue of 2025 approximates the actual revenue of 2023. Not considering institutional funding, the Centre has secured €1.9 million (as of the time of this report) of the €3.9 million additional project funding required for 2025.

A major change in the budget process is the alignment of our funding targets with the Centre strategy. As the Centre is focused on securing multiannual 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 secured funds are utilised for our research and brokerage work. However, these costs are increasing over time with both inflation and legislative changes that require the Centre to adapt expenditures.

Our most significant cost outlay remains personnel costs, which are severely impacted by the collective labour agreements from the countries we operate in. To manage the ever-increasing salary costs, the Centre has reduced staff numbers during 2024, without impacting the delivery of research and other thematic projects. To ensure that ECDPM remains the Centre of choice for key expert advice, the Centre has focused on identifying key experts in all relevant fields and cultivating these relationships continuously.

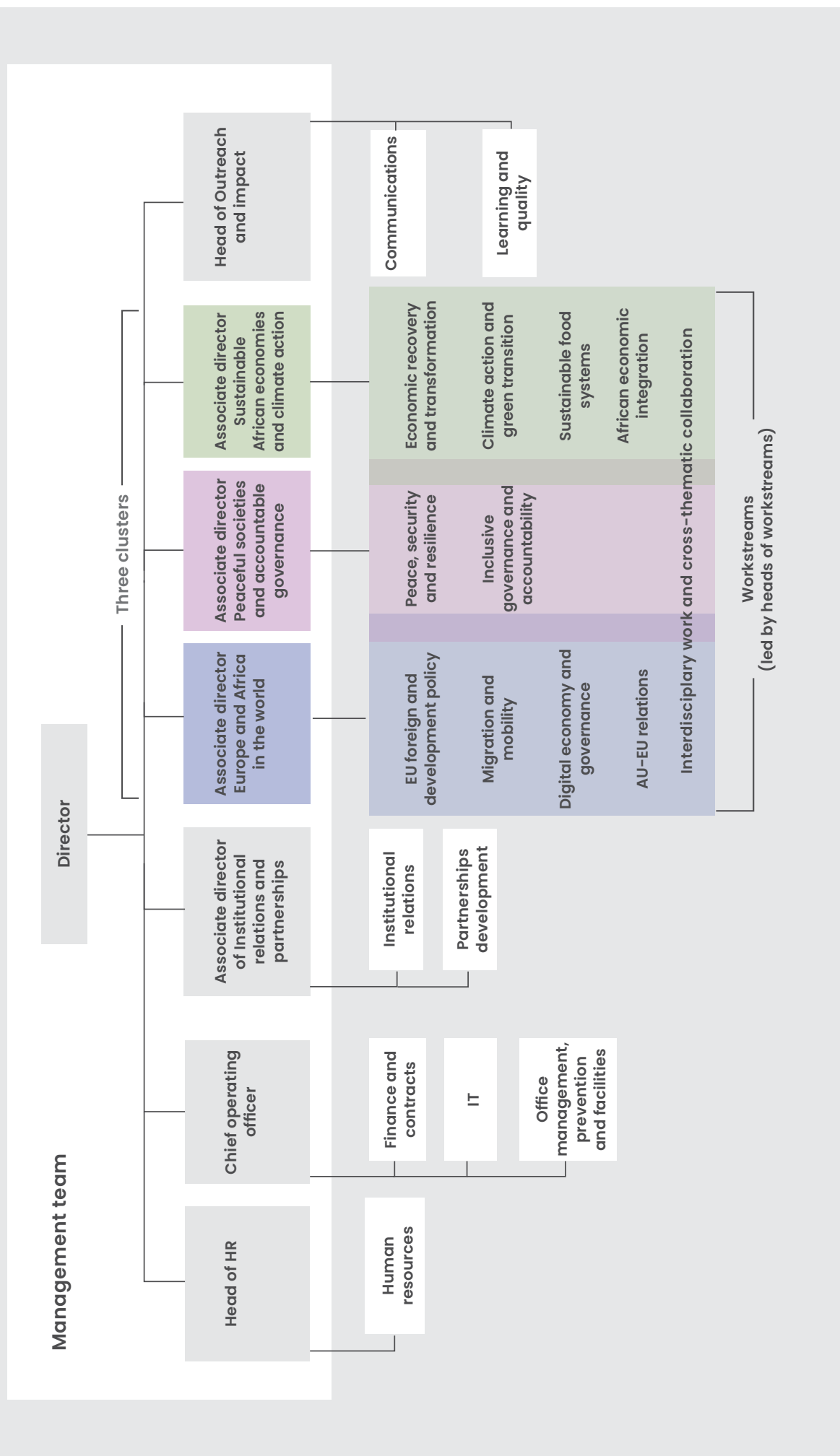
The Centre is a non-profit foundation with the goal of creating knowledge for public benefit. This will remain unchanged. The importance of impact is continuously increasing and the financial strategy of the Centre will continue to focus on supporting impact and Centre sustainability.

Strategic talent management

Our strategic talent management for 2025–2026 is informed by the results of the 2023 and 2024 staff surveys and the budgetary situation. Given the budgetary constraints and work-life balance challenges, we will focus on how our staff can collaborate in the most effective and efficient way and at the same time create a balanced working environment. We will take initiatives to unlock the potential of our staff by organising (in-house) training, mentoring and coaching on thematic and content-related topics, fundraising, project management, networking, people leadership, financial management and budgeting. The HR team will coach our people leaders and their supervisees on how to systematically manage the personal learning journeys of all staff members.

A second focus area is managing the mental well-being of our staff. At the beginning of 2024, we offered training together with our Dutch occupational health service for all people leaders on how to recognise these issues and how to manage them. We will use the results of the 2024 staff survey, together with the works council, the trust persons and the prevention officer to inform more initiatives on mental well-being of our staff. Note: it is a joint responsibility of employer and employee to keep on discussing these challenges and make action plans.

Thirdly, we will develop and offer training for all staff on how to better recognise and understand issues related to gender and diversity. The goal is to check if staff have the necessary knowledge, skills and attitude to manage sensitive issues related to gender, diversity and/or discrimination.



ecdpm

www.ecdpm.org
KvK 41077447

Head office

The Pelican House
Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
6211 HE Maastricht, The Netherlands
Tel +31 (0)43 350 29 00

Brussels office

Avenue des Arts 44
1040 Brussels, Belgium
Tel +32 (0)2 882 50 08

Graphic design: Yaseena Chiu - van 't Hoff