

*ecdpm*



**STRATEGY 2022-2026**



# Our strategy at a glance

<p><b>1. WHO WE ARE</b> (P. 5)</p>	<p>ECDPM is a leading ‘think and do tank’ working for policies that foster sustainable development. We focus in particular on Europe-Africa relations and on cooperation between Europe and Africa at the global level. We support European, African and global actors to develop and implement coherent policy responses to critical sustainable development challenges.</p>	<p>Our mission is to promote innovative forms of international cooperation involving European and African actors, to address major global development challenges and generate sustainable and equitable solutions through dialogue and collaboration, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.</p>
<p><b>2. THE CHANGING WORLD AROUND US</b> (P. 6)</p>	<p> <b>CHALLENGES</b></p> <p>Political polarisation, increasing competition for resources and market access, climate change, violent conflict, democratic recession and impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.</p> <hr/> <p> <b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p>Growing demand for independent analysis and brokerage, new appreciation of the need for international cooperation, EU’s desire to be a more geopolitical Union, Africa’s ambitious continental trade integration agenda, digital revolution and potential of youth.</p>	<p><b>3. HOW WE WORK</b> (P. 8)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> We generate knowledge and act as an independent broker</li> <li> We apply a gender lens</li> <li> We collaborate with our partners around the world</li> <li> We make sure our work is used</li> </ul>
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# PREFACE

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**Faced with a climate crisis, growing inequality, polarisation and a new geopolitical order, an independent think tank is more needed than ever.**

ECDPM developed this 2022-2026 strategy at a time of growing uncertainty, political polarisation, increasing competition for resources and power, and weakening collective action in international affairs. On top of this, the COVID-19 pandemic has continued its devastating effects on human development, poverty, inequality, social cohesion and human rights at the global level. Meanwhile, climate change and unsustainable resource use increasingly threaten our natural world.

In this context, the role of an independent ‘think and do tank’ working on international cooperation for sustainable development is more relevant than ever. ECDPM has a long and successful track record of brokering international cooperation. Focusing in particular on Europe-Africa relations, we support European, African and global actors to develop and implement coherent policy responses to critical sustainable development challenges. We also explore ways in which Europe and Africa can join forces to push for multilateral solutions to global challenges.

Our strategy for 2022-2026 builds on our significant knowledge of European external action and African regional and continental policy processes, as well as our thematic expertise in economic transformation, trade, peace and security, migration, and food security. In the coming period, we will pay greater attention to climate change, gender equality, digitalisation and governance, to address current global development challenges and maximise our influence. We will also seek to deepen our collaboration with African partners and restructure ourselves to become a more agile and flexible organisation, able to respond to the expanding and evolving sustainable development agenda.

# 1. WHO WE ARE

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## **We focus on Europe-Africa relations and on cooperation between Europe and Africa at the global level.**

ECDPM is a leading ‘think and do tank’ working for policies that foster sustainable development. We generate practical knowledge, inform policy debates and engage with relevant actors to facilitate inclusive policymaking and effective policy implementation. We focus in particular on Europe-Africa relations and on cooperation between Europe and Africa at the global level. In doing so, we work with institutional actors, such as the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU), and with a wider community of stakeholders in Europe and Africa.

We produce analysis that is politically savvy, interdisciplinary and practical. We act as an independent knowledge broker, facilitating dialogue and collaboration with and between different actors. We are non-partisan and take an evidence-based, constructive, yet critical stance towards major actors, including the EU, the AU, regional organisations and their respective member states. Finally, we promote innovative forms of international cooperation and inform European and African stakeholders, while also acting as an independent sounding board on the impacts of policies.



### **Our vision**

A sustainable, peaceful and equitable world where citizens, governments, civil society organisations and private sector actors work together for prosperity, social cohesion and human dignity.



### **Our mission**

To promote innovative forms of international cooperation involving European and African actors, to address major global development challenges and generate sustainable and equitable solutions through dialogues and collaboration, in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



### **Our values**

In our work, ECDPM adheres to a set of core values underpinning how we think and act. These include gender equality, diversity and non-discrimination, open and pluralist societies, social justice and human dignity, solidarity, and respect for our planet.

## 2. THE CHANGING WORLD AROUND US

### CHALLENGES

- **Political polarisation** and weakened collective action
- **Increasing competition** for resources, access to markets and geopolitical influence
- **Climate change** and human-driven biodiversity loss
- **Violent conflict** and decline in human security
- **Democratic recession** and empowerment of illiberal regimes
- Impacts of the **COVID-19 crisis**

We live in a time of rapid change and remarkable progress, overshadowed by crisis, violent conflict and disorder. The long-term shift in global power away from the West has gone hand in hand with rising nationalism and ever-greater competition for resources, market access and geopolitical influence. With multipolarity a fact of life, multilateral cooperation and global alliances have become more diverse, less stable and more contested, but they remain a necessity.

The early 2020s will be remembered for the COVID-19 pandemic, which brought the world to its knees and pushed millions into poverty. The pandemic has exposed the depth of class, racial and gender inequality, and the vulnerability of women, children, and sexual minorities in particular to domestic, sexual and social violence. The global economic slowdown, coupled with ongoing public health challenges, has further deepened socio-economic inequalities around the world.

Climate change, meanwhile, has progressed from a looming crisis to an acute emergency reflected in natural disasters of unprecedented intensity and frequency, exacerbating rapid environmental degradation. Human activity has altered climate patterns and land use systems and accelerated biodiversity loss. Addressing the interrelated climate and environmental crises requires greater cooperation, ambition and global leadership.

In the past decade, the world has witnessed a decline in human security and a rise in humanitarian needs due to internationalised conflicts, a spike in non-state violence and forced displacements.

The world is also facing a slow but steady democratic recession and empowerment of illiberal regimes; in Europe, in Africa and elsewhere. Yet, authoritarianism is increasingly being met with popular dissent, expressed by citizens who reject repressive and non-transparent rule, poor public services, corruption and growing inequalities.

All these trends affect Europe-Africa relations. European countries are trying to find a new footing in this more chaotic global environment. The EU has adopted a vision for a stronger, more geopolitical Union, and wants to lead on climate responses and green transition. However, its capacity to act has been hampered by internal divisions and a loss of relative economic power and political influence. Africa is organising itself around an ambitious agenda of continental trade integration. Through the AU, it is trying to carve out a place in global governance, away from the shadow of big power competition. However, the continent also faces an arduous socio-economic recovery from the COVID-19 crisis.



## OPPORTUNITIES

- **Demand** for independent analysis and brokerage
- **Necessity** of international cooperation
- EU's more **geopolitical Union vision**
- Africa's ambitious **continental trade integration** agenda
- **Digital revolution**
- Socio-economic and political **potential of youth**

Even in this challenging context, certain trends present opportunities for building a more equitable and resilient world. The digital revolution and increasing interconnectedness, if well managed, can spur innovation and economic integration. With urbanisation on the rise, cities can become drivers of inclusive politics and sustainable development. The generational shift, too, offers great potential, as young people can drive economic innovation and reshape domestic and global politics. Youth-led protests, for example, are changing the climate movement and shaking political systems to bring about regime change. Movements have also emerged against structural racism within societies. These have sparked new momentum for addressing inequalities in international and Europe-Africa affairs and for rethinking how knowledge of international cooperation and sustainable development is produced, communicated and used. With the AU and EU vying for a more equal and mutual interest-driven cooperation, these trends provide openings for a much-needed renewal of the partnership between the two continents.

### What this means for ECDPM

We are seeing the most profound transformation of international cooperation and global governance since the end of the Cold War. These trends highlight the need for independent analysis and brokerage for international cooperation. Yet, they also oblige us to adapt, both analytically and in the way we work, communicate and organise ourselves.

To respond to the complexities of multipolarity and changing geopolitics, we will adopt a more outward-looking and global perspective in our work on Europe-Africa relations. As a European centre, we will make use of our knowledge, network and insights on European processes, institutions and instruments to investigate how the EU can act as a modern, responsible and effective global player, and how it can balance its search for strategic autonomy and global influence with a mutually beneficial partnership agenda with Africa.

In the face of widespread disinformation and aggressive nationalist agendas in Europe, Africa and beyond, we will work to protect and expand the space for independent knowledge production and evidence-based analysis, and shed light on how knowledge is used and abused in international affairs.

Gender inequality, including gender-based violence, deepens in times of crisis, and today we see attacks on gender equality – including aspects of sexual and reproductive health and rights – by regimes in different parts of the world. In our work we will defend the value of gender equality and emphasise the need to address structural inequalities that prevent women, girls and sexual minorities from fulfilling their potential.

ECDPM has a longstanding tradition of producing knowledge and facilitating policy dialogue in collaboration with experts and practitioners from Europe and Africa. Now we must go further and deepen our engagement with a diverse array of African organisations, stakeholders and experts, to produce analysis that integrates various perspectives and facilitates inclusive policy processes. To this end, we will seek greater proximity to African dynamics and actors.

Finally, as today's major trends (the climate crisis, geopolitical tensions, insecurity, citizen action, digitalisation, et cetera.) are interconnected, we will maintain an interdisciplinary, cross-thematic approach in our work.

# 3. HOW WE WORK



We generate knowledge and act as an independent broker

## 1. Our work is politically informed, evidence-based and interdisciplinary

We aim to influence policy processes by anticipating major changes and helping to set agendas. We produce cutting-edge policy-relevant analysis and engage in European and African policy processes as an independent broker.

### *We apply political economy analysis*

We examine interests, incentives and power relations to produce politically informed and practical analysis. We contribute to a better understanding of the priorities of African and European actors and the implications of their priorities and dynamics for policymaking and policy implementation.

### *We provide independent analysis and brokerage*

We take a non-partisan, evidence-based and constructive stance towards major actors, including the EU, the AU and their respective member states. We create space for formal and informal dialogues, to exchange ideas and converge on shared interests. We spark and facilitate constructive yet critical dialogues, propose compromises and support processes towards mutually beneficial solutions.

### *We bridge policy domains*

We connect different policy domains and knowledge communities to promote more coherent and integrated policymaking. Our interdisciplinary approach enables us to identify connections between the themes we work on, and examine and address issues at the nexus of these different themes. We integrate various technical, policy and political perspectives, while also connecting policy processes at the global, continental, regional, national and local levels.

### *We learn and innovate*

We are committed to **decolonising the production, communication and use of knowledge** in international cooperation and development. This means refining our own understanding on decolonisation in the context of international cooperation, and developing and adapting how we organise ourselves and collaborate with others to contribute to international cooperation in an informed, equitable and effective manner.

We look beyond top-down policymaking and emphasise the **spatial, or territorial, dimensions** of development, as well as the crucial role of local communities and authorities as development actors.

We contribute to realising **policy coherence** in practice and support policymakers in developing more integrated and coherent policies for sustainable development.



We apply a gender lens

## 2. We are serious about gender

We have an intersectional understanding of gender inequality and factor in women's political and socio-economic power and participation in all areas of our work. We apply tools that provide a more nuanced understanding of the differentiated needs and contributions of different segments of society, and how people may be affected by policies in a differentiated way.



We collaborate with our partners around the world

## 3. We bridge communities and produce knowledge through collaboration

We seek to understand the perspectives and concerns of African and European stakeholders regarding: (i) European external action, particularly in relation to Africa; (ii) African policy processes, particularly at the continental and regional levels; and (iii) European support to African policy processes.

We connect and facilitate dialogue between policymakers and other stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society actors in Africa and Europe, capitalising on increased digital connectivity to expand and diversify our networks. We amplify African voices and perspectives on international cooperation by collaborating with a broad network of European and African policymakers, practitioners, researchers, civil society organisations and knowledge institutes, and produce joint analysis and policy inputs.



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

## 4. We make sure our work is used

We ensure that our work and the perspectives and concerns of policymakers and practitioners in Africa and Europe are taken up in African and European policy circles, and use our knowledge of European external action and African policy processes to facilitate discussions about how these actions and processes can best serve sustainable development objectives.

### *We help set policy agendas*

We influence policy processes by anticipating important developments, opportunities and challenges, and helping to set or adapt agendas accordingly.

### *We inform policymaking*

We produce timely inputs for policy processes and dialogues, and we do so in a way that is responsive to changing dynamics and the specific needs of policymakers and other stakeholders.

### *We support implementation*

Policies only have a positive impact when they are implemented effectively. That is why we invest in long-term trust-based relationships with policymakers and other actors to support implementation. Our work 'in the kitchen' of policy implementation has given us first-hand knowledge we can draw on to inform our inputs into policymaking, thereby contributing to more effective policies.

# HOW WE WORK

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**1** We generate **knowledge** and act as an **independent broker** in five broad thematic areas. Our work is **politically informed, evidence-based** and **interdisciplinary**.



Our **five interrelated impact areas** are:

- Europe and Africa in the world
- Prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable African economies
- Green transition and effective climate action
- Peaceful societies and human security
- Accountable governance and engaged citizens

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



Europe and Africa in the world



Green transition and effective climate action



Our five impact areas

Prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable African economies



Peaceful societies and human security



Accountable governance and engaged citizens



Institutional relations and partnerships

Outreach and impact

**3** We **collaborate** with our partners from around the world.



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



# 4. WHAT WE FOCUS ON

*The challenges of sustainable development are enormous, increasingly urgent and interconnected. In the coming five years, we will focus on five interrelated themes. These build on ECDPM's significant expertise and proven track record in several policy areas, while integrating new priorities and ways of working.*

## Europe and Africa in the world

Europe is undergoing profound changes, both internally and in its external relations. The EU has adopted an ambitious vision of a stronger, more autonomous Union. It is seeking to leverage its economic and regulatory power through purposeful diplomacy and action, and lead on a green transition worldwide. Africa too is bolstering its collective agency with an ambitious development strategy (Agenda 2063) and continental trade integration initiative (the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)). African states are also exploring more strategic partnerships with major powers. At the same time, the growing interconnectivity between different regions of the world and the aggregation of global crises signal a need for a fairer and more effective multilateral system, and for international cooperation frameworks that respond to the major challenges of the 21st century.

*ECDPM seeks to support European countries and the EU to become more effective and responsible global actors for sustainable development, and to facilitate strong and mutually beneficial international cooperation and partnerships, particularly between Europe and Africa.*

### **We will focus particularly on the following areas:**

- **The EU as an effective and responsible global actor for sustainable development:** We will support the transformation of EU external action, partnerships and development cooperation agendas. We will work to promote responsible EU external action as the EU develops its strategic autonomy and strives for leadership in areas like digitalisation, the green transition and climate action. We will analyse the changing EU institutional and policy environment, including its financial instruments, such as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe), as well as the way the EU and its member states work together, and how the EU advances its values agenda (for instance on gender equality, including the protection and rights of sexual minorities).
- **Effective African regional and continental institutions that serve the needs of African societies and citizens:** We will analyse important continental and regional policy frameworks and processes, including the AfCFTA, and help inform African external action, particularly AU engagement with European actors.
- **Deeper engagement between Africa and Europe on peace, digitalisation, climate, green transition, migration and other priority issues:** We will support a new chapter in



### Europe and Africa in the world



Prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable African economies



Green transition and effective climate action



Peaceful societies and human security



Accountable governance and engaged citizens

the AU-EU partnership, as a vehicle for deepening cooperation. Our work will promote evidence-based policies for greater convergence between European and African priorities. We will pay particular attention to the governance of migration and mobility between Africa and Europe, emphasising the development potential of migration and the rights of refugees and migrants.

## Prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable African economies

Strong and inclusive economic growth is crucial for Africa's post-COVID recovery and for eradicating poverty, improving food security and raising living standards on the continent. To achieve these aims, Africa's economies must be transformed and diversified, to capitalise on the opportunities presented by digitalisation, urbanisation, technological innovation and regional integration. This will lead to the creation of more and better jobs for Africa's young and rapidly growing population and increase resilience to future shocks. Transformation of Africa's food systems is particularly crucial, given that the vast majority of Africans depend on the food economy for their livelihoods. Africa's economic transformation needs to be inclusive, particularly of women and young people, and equitable, generating shared prosperity and reduced inequality within and between countries. It also needs to be sustainable in terms of its impact on human health, the natural environment, biodiversity and climate. Achieving this requires effective implementation of a range of economic (and other) policies and programmes at the local, national, regional and continental levels, as well as significant investment and financial and technical support from the international community.

*ECDPM aims to contribute to the formulation and implementation of European external economic policies that are more coherent with the Sustainable Development Goals, and with the realisation of prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable economies in Africa.*

### **We will focus particularly on the following areas:**

- **Trade, mobility and regional integration:** We will support the formulation and implementation of European and African trade policies that promote inclusive, sustainable and climate-resilient economic transformation in Africa and globally. We will also inform African policymaking on, and European support to, regional integration processes. These processes can work to connect Africa's markets and facilitate the movement of its people, while also stimulating trade, investment and e-commerce, supporting women's economic empowerment, spurring Africa's industrial development, and creating decent work with respect for workers' rights. In particular, we will look at how digital technologies can be harnessed to promote trade, mobility and regional integration in Africa, while bridging the remaining digital divide and connecting people living in poverty.
- **Finance, the private sector and investment:** We will promote more effective use of development finance, public policy, public-private dialogue and collaboration to enhance the contribution of private sector actors in Europe and Africa to sustainable development, including through investments that create employment (particularly for women and young people) through efforts to make value chains fairer, more inclusive and more sustainable.



- **Sustainable food systems:** Given the importance of the food economy, especially in Africa, we will promote the transition to more sustainable food systems that generate improved livelihoods of small-scale farmers, women and young people, while also providing sufficient affordable, safe and nutritious food for all, protecting the environment and biodiversity, and improving resilience to climate change and other shocks.

## Green transition and effective climate action

In the coming years, the impact of climate change and environmental degradation will be increasingly felt in extreme weather events and human suffering, particularly in Africa, but also in Europe. The stakes have never been higher for both Europe and Africa to take decisive action on climate change, environmental sustainability and biodiversity, yet their respective needs and interests are very different. Through the European Green Deal, the EU has tied its fate to a greener future, adopting an unprecedented level of ambition to green its ageing infrastructure and economy, and committing to becoming climate neutral by 2050. Africa contributed very little to historic emissions, but is the continent most vulnerable to climate variability and change. As it tries to develop more resilient economies while adapting to climate change, Africa is therefore calling for a just and differentiated approach to climate mitigation and adaptation, responsive to its needs.

*ECDPM aims to contribute to ambitious and fair responses to the global climate crisis and to other environmental crises, based on sustainable use of natural resources and economic development within our planetary boundaries.*

### **We will focus particularly on the following areas:**

- **Effective climate diplomacy and international governance for climate justice and a green transition:** We will examine how the EU can be a global climate actor in support of a fair and just transition, and support a mutually beneficial approach to climate and sustainability agendas in EU-Africa relations, as well as in other emerging climate coalitions.
- **An inclusive transition towards climate neutrality and green economies:** The green transition and renewable energy are integrated challenges which call for politically sensitive responses that contribute to inclusive, sustainable and gender-sensitive development. We will apply a cross-sectoral approach to the various aspects of the green transition, examining trade-offs between renewable energy production, environmental protection and socio-economic development in Africa and in Europe. We will also work on the external dimensions of the European Green Deal, including in policy choices and the programming of EU development cooperation, and the external effects of and reactions to the European green transition and economic transformation, particularly in Africa.
- **Building resilience and adapting to climate impacts:** We will support Africa's adaptation by helping to untangle the complexity of its needs (for instance, the interlinkages



between food security, biodiversity, economic development and conflict). We will identify adaptation financing gaps and inform European and global external action to better meet African needs. We will particularly support the transformation of African food systems under climate change, contributing to the use of climate-resilient practices, sustainable policies and finance.

- **Green economic transformation and green finance:** We will contribute to the effective mobilisation and use of climate finance for Africa, with the support of African and other multilateral development banks and development finance institutions, in ways corresponding to national mitigation and adaptation priorities and reducing gender inequalities.

## Peaceful societies and human security

Globally, the vast majority of armed conflicts are internal, marked by political competition over state legitimacy and resources, political crisis and violent extremism. Yet, in the coming years we are likely to see a further internationalisation of armed conflict in Africa, with violence spilling across borders and involving regional and foreign actors. As the world goes digital, cyber security and digital privacy aspects will gain in importance. Moreover, climate change, environmental stress and the long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will affect conflict dynamics, undermining communities' ability to manage and recover from conflict and insecurity. Conflict and protracted crisis invariably manifest in a gendered manner, undermining progress on human security, development and equality. While African stakeholders have significantly enhanced their conflict prevention and management capacities, they still struggle to contain protracted crises in hotspots such as the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region, the Great Lakes region, Central Africa and North Africa. The EU, responding to increasing instability and a changing geopolitical landscape, is taking steps to develop its collective strategic autonomy and deepen its partnership with Africa. Its desire to become a more geopolitical actor has led to a lively debate on how the EU might develop its defence capabilities and become a stronger security partner, particularly in its wider neighbourhood and in Africa. The EU is devising more flexible and responsive hard and soft mechanisms to engage with third countries, although Europe continues to struggle to balance its 'values' with its security 'interests'.

*ECDPM aims to contribute to the peaceful resolution of conflict, to human security and to increased resilience of communities affected by protracted conflict.*

### **We will focus particularly on the following areas:**

- **Human security and resilience:** We will amplify approaches focusing on human security and community resilience in response to protracted conflict and climate-induced disasters, with due consideration for the gendered effects of conflict and climate change. We will analyse displacement, protection of migrants, social cohesion, and look at how human mobility can become one important aspect of resilience. We will keep an eye on the impact of digitalisation on peace and security, and pay particular attention to geopolitical and peace and security dynamics in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel.



- **Accountable and legitimate peacebuilding institutions:** We will contribute to continental and regional institutional frameworks that can help prevent and manage conflict and address structural violence, and work towards effective partnerships among the AU, the EU and the UN to respond to Africa’s conflict prevention and peacebuilding needs. We will contribute to policy dialogues around the fine-tuning and adaptation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and its linkages with the African Governance Architecture (AGA), and the EU’s external peace and security instruments such as the European Peace Facility (EPF).
- **The EU-Africa peace and security partnership:** We will capitalise on our understanding of the European peace and security agenda to bridge the knowledge gap between European and African actors on each other’s respective security interests, policy processes and decisions. This includes our knowledge of EU assistance in conflict prevention and peacebuilding and support for security sector reform, as well as Africa’s peace and security priorities and peacebuilding mechanisms.
- **Gender and the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda:** We will contribute to peace and security policy debates in Europe and Africa. We will work on the WPS agenda and the challenges and opportunities of its implementation at the national and regional levels. We will also pay particular attention to the experiences of women and girls in violence-induced displacement and climate-related security risks, and the long-term effects of violent conflict on gender relations.

## Accountable governance and engaged citizens

Worldwide, we are witnessing a democratic recession, authoritarian resurgence, growing threats to basic freedoms and shrinking space for civic action. These trends are increasingly visible in Africa and in Europe, reflected by a backslide on human rights and the erosion of the rule of law. Along with other political and economic rights, people are fighting for respect to gender and sexual rights. In some contexts this is to gain new rights, while in others it is to maintain existing ones that are threatened by governments or society as a whole. The way states and societies interact is also changing. Concerns around growing social inequalities and the marginalisation and dispossession of whole segments of societies have triggered social movements and citizen mobilisation in both Europe and in Africa, powered by a digitally savvy youth. Young Europeans and Africans are increasingly stepping forward to confront systems of power. They are demanding their rights, pushing for political change and holding their governments to account. In the context of Africa-Europe relations, political and democratic governance is a particularly contested issue, as it recalls a long history of unidirectional action on democratisation and ‘good governance’ promotion by Europe. Despite many structural impediments, African countries, institutions, civil society actors and local/city authorities are working to strengthen democratic and accountable governance systems and enforcement mechanisms, while the EU is seeking ways to inspire democratic governance and the rule of law in today’s more contested environment, both at home and abroad.



Europe and Africa in the world



Prosperous, inclusive, resilient and sustainable African economies



Green transition and effective climate action



Peaceful societies and human security



Accountable governance and engaged citizens

*ECDPM aims to support open, equitable and accountable political spaces and democratic governance systems as enablers of sustainable development in Africa and in Europe.*

***We will focus particularly on the following areas:***

- **Effective state and institutional capacities for responsive multi-level governance:** We will analyse international, continental, regional, national and local agendas for strengthening democratic accountability, improving political governance and developing well-functioning institutions, in line with demands from citizens and civil society actors for accountable, equitable and representative governance systems at various levels and across thematic areas.
- **An enabling environment for social mobilisation and civic action:** We will analyse the role of social and political movements as drivers of change in and across specific countries, particularly in Africa, and seek to inform African and European policies that respond to popular demands and strengthen the space for civic participation and social mobilisation.
- **Enablers of domestic accountability and democratic governance:** Given that systems of political governance are always context specific, we will look at enablers of domestic accountability within formal structures (for instance, elections, legal frameworks, justice provision and anti-corruption agendas) at different levels, including cities as drivers of change. Applying a political economy perspective, we will examine how key dynamics, such as economic reforms, taxation, digitalisation and foreign relations, can contribute to better and more robust state-society relations.
- **Women's political power:** We will work on the many ways in which women exercise political power and how they are excluded from it. We will apply intersectionality to understand how women's positioning within socio-economic, political, religious, age and physical groups affects their inclusion and exclusion from political decision-making. We will look at how gender constructs and social norms define political power and how social transformation through social movements, economic development and digitalisation can alter the role of women in politics and society.

# 5. OUR THEORY OF CHANGE >>>>>>

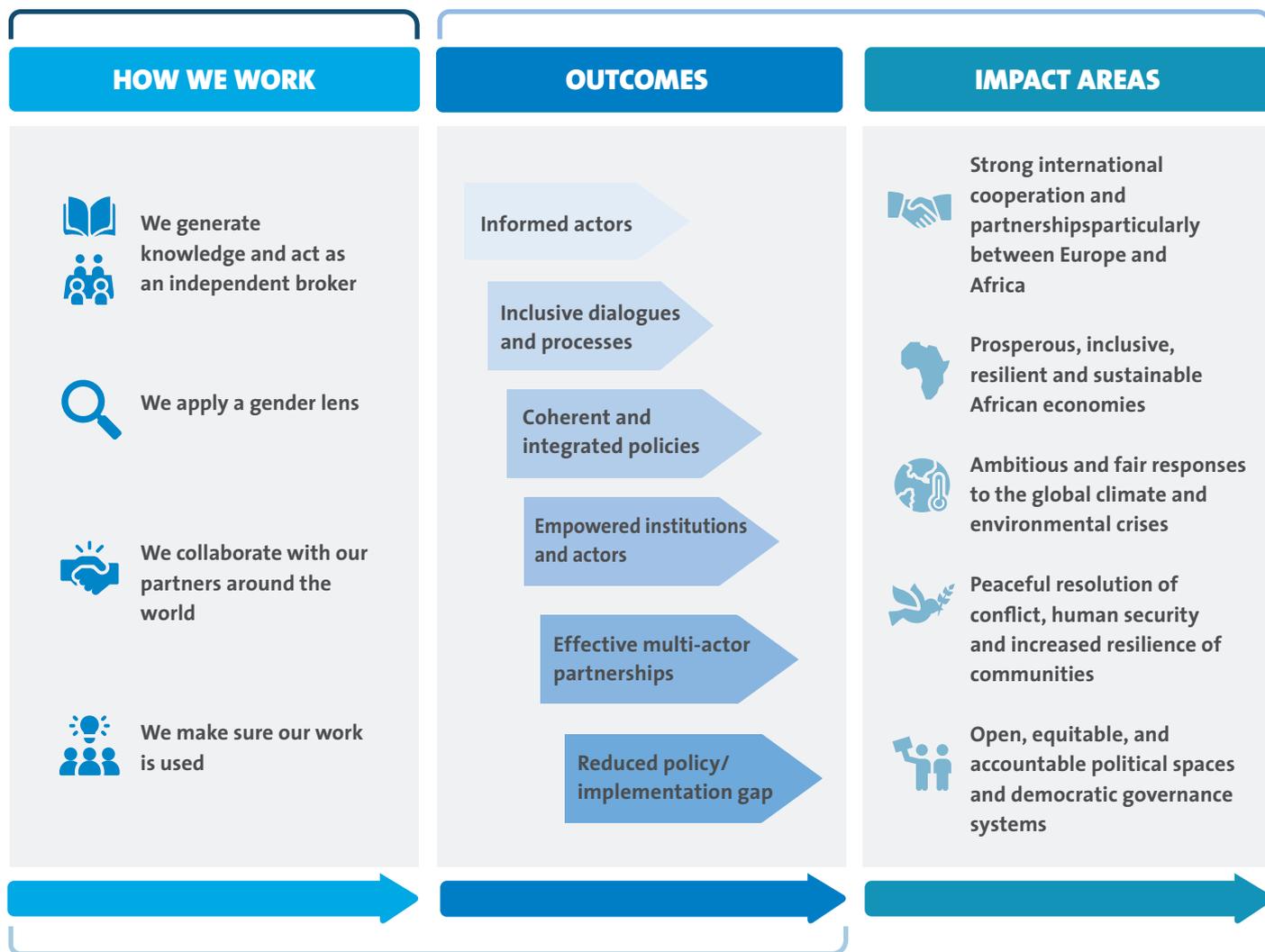
ECDPM's theory of change visualises how our way of working (section 3) contributes to outcomes and impacts in our five priority areas (section 4), and the assumptions our engagements are based on.

### ASSUMPTION

**IF** we generate politically informed, evidence-based, interdisciplinary and practical knowledge that integrates diverse perspectives, and we act as a non-partisan broker that facilitates constructive dialogues, informs policymaking and supports implementation.

### ASSUMPTION

**THEN** policymakers and stakeholders can be better informed of each other's priorities and interests; policy debates in Europe and Africa can be deepened and more evidence-based; policymakers and other relevant actors can be better equipped to negotiate mutually beneficial deals, devise coherent and integrated policies, and address implementation challenges; and they can act jointly to address shared challenges.



### ASSUMPTION

**BECAUSE** actors and institutions are open to cooperate and responsive to relevant, practical and politically savvy knowledge and policy engagement that unearths the interests and positions of multiple stakeholders.

>> We will regularly review our work against this strategy to promote learning and improve our ability to innovate and adapt to important developments. We will conduct an internal mid-term review of our strategy to assess whether and how it may need to be adapted. Towards the end of the strategy period, we will carry out both an internal assessment and an external evaluation of our performance.



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