



Ibrahim, from Gambia in Agadez, Niger. Credit: Pablo Tosco/Oxfam

AN EMERGENCY FOR WHOM?

The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa – migratory routes and development aid in Africa

In 2015, the EU and its member states set up the ‘EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa’ to promote stability and economic opportunities and to strengthen resilience. An Oxfam analysis of all the projects approved under the instrument shows that the instrument’s flexible nature has generated both opportunities and risks, and lacks sufficient checks and balances to ensure that European interests do not take precedence over the needs of the people that aid is intended to help.

SUMMARY

In 2015, in response to the dramatic increase in the number of people crossing the Mediterranean to claim asylum in Europe, the European Union created a new €2bn fund to address multiple aspects of migration along the so-called 'Central Mediterranean route'. The '*European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa*' (EUTF for Africa) was adopted within the framework of the Valletta Action Plan, in connection with the European Agenda on Migration.

The EUTF for Africa was designed as an emergency instrument,¹ to '*respond to the different dimensions of crisis situations by providing support jointly, flexibly and quickly*',² complementing political dialogue, development cooperation programmes, humanitarian assistance and crisis response assistance. Seventy-three percent of its funding comes from the European Development Fund (EDF) and 20 percent from the EU budget, including money for development and humanitarian aid and funds for neighbourhood policies and home affairs. Seven percent comes from member state contributions and other donors. It is managed by a Strategic Board and three Regional Operational Committees: Horn of Africa, Sahel and Lake Chad and North Africa.

It has been recognized that effective responses to crises can benefit from flexible strategic multi-year funding that breaks down the silos of humanitarian response and long-term development assistance. However, the launch of the EUTF for Africa within the context of the European migration agenda raised concerns among NGOs that aid would be used to promote European interests.

Oxfam's analysis has been conducted almost two years after the Valletta Summit on Migration at which the EUTF for Africa was launched. It places each project approved under the EUTF for Africa in one of four categories, based on its objectives, results and indicators, as reported to the European Commission. The categories used for this report are:

- Migration management (migration containment and control, policy reform for returns, population registration systems, awareness raising and facilitated migration);
- Security, peacebuilding, preventing and countering violent extremism (P-CVE);
- Development cooperation; and
- Research and monitoring.

Oxfam's analysis finds that the EUTF for Africa provides much needed support to displaced people and creates opportunities for economic development. At the same time, however, some of its projects respond to a European political sense of urgency to stop irregular migration to Europe. The EUTF for Africa must adopt clearer procedures and more transparent and consultative processes to ensure that short-term interests do not jeopardize the long-term objectives of development, stability, poverty eradication and the protection of rights.

Currently, European governments expect to see the results of quick fixes where there are no quick solutions. The focus of the EUTF for Africa on '*stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa*'

involves both short- and long-term responses to very different situations that have not been properly distinguished. The ability of individuals to travel across borders to engage in trade and labour in a safe and regular way is important for their economic resilience, as well as for their communities of origin and host communities. People who are displaced from their homes by crises such as conflict, persecution and disasters should be supported along their journey. The root causes of their displacement should be addressed for the benefit of all those affected by crises – not only those who are able to flee.

The European migration agenda is prevalent throughout the EUTF for Africa, and a considerable portion of its funding is invested in security measures and border management. Such measures will not meet governments' expectations of stemming irregular migration and should not be expected to achieve this goal. To ensure that interventions funded from the EUTF for Africa do no harm and are conflict-sensitive, the flexible funding must be balanced with adequate accountability mechanisms, in line with humanitarian and development aid principles. Security measures should always be conflict-sensitive and be designed to promote the security of individuals, with a focus on the needs of women. This is particularly important when supporting the security forces of third states.

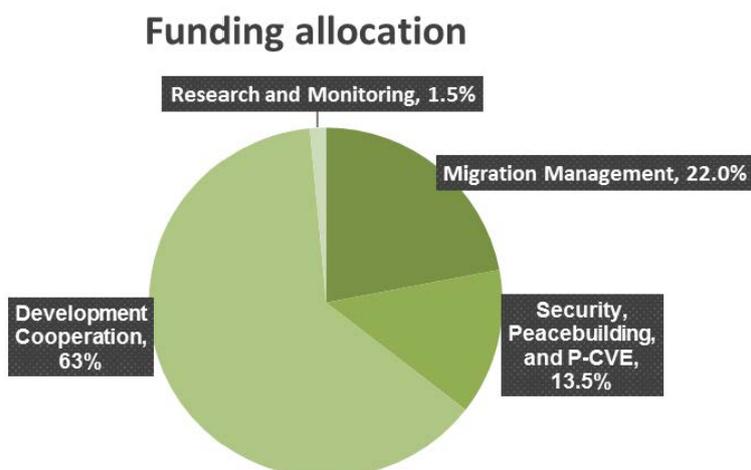
The effectiveness of the EUTF for Africa as a whole should be measured by its overall contribution to the gradual transition from humanitarian to development interventions relating to displacement, and to the promotion of 'resilience, economic and equal opportunities, security and development and better migration management,' as per the instrument's objective.

The EUTF for Africa is a new aid modality and it is setting the trend in development financing. It is the responsibility of the European Commission, the member states, and other donors to ensure that accountability measures relating to project selection and spending are sufficient to address accountability and transparency concerns relating to flexible pooled funding.

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Based on the categories proposed in this report, Oxfam found that 22% of the EUTF for Africa budget is allocated to migration management, 13.5% to security, peacebuilding and P-CVE, 63% to development cooperation and 1.5% to research and monitoring. The details of most projects are accessible online, but the process by which they are adopted and implemented falls short in terms of transparency and inclusive consultation.

Figure 1: Funding allocation, EU Trust Fund for Africa



Development cooperation projects are mainly implemented in countries which the EU views as countries of migration origin, and are far less present in countries of transit. Migration management and support for security forces are the main focuses in countries of transit.

A positive contribution

Despite certain problematic approaches, the EUTF for Africa supports many positive initiatives that should be further explored and built on as a way of bridging the gap between humanitarian assistance and longer term development; building the resilience of the most vulnerable populations, creating economic opportunities and increasing participation in local governance.

Civil society organizations should be able to take an active and propositional role in project development stages by being able to submit proposals for new projects. Their capacities and expertise in the humanitarian and development fields can balance political agendas. Oxfam is implementing four programmes funded by the EUTF for Africa: in Chad, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia and Mali. The experience and lessons learned of Oxfam and other organizations can help in directing the instrument's approach and the development of new projects.

However, it is essential that funding allocated to programmes specifically targeting migrants or migratory routes is *additional* to budgets to address urgent humanitarian needs and existing development aid commitments, in line with national poverty reduction strategies.

Migration management

Within the €400m allocated to migration management, most projects are designed to restrict and discourage irregular migration through migration containment and control (55% of the budget allocated to migration management); raising awareness about the dangers of irregular migration (4%) and implementing policy reforms for returns (25%); and improving the identification of countries' nationals (13%). Only a meagre 3% of the budget is allocated to developing safe and regular routes.

These results show that the approach of European donors to migration management is far more geared to containment and control. This falls short of their commitment under the Valletta Action Plan's second pillar, to 'promot[e] regular channels for migration and mobility from and between European and African countries' or Strategic Development Goal target 10.7, to 'facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration and mobility of people'.

Without sufficient investment in opening more safe and regular mobility pathways – both within Africa and towards Europe – the EUTF will not only fail to achieve its goals for development, but also its migration-related policy goals. Rather than leading to a reduction in migration, restricting irregular migration will simply force migrants to take more dangerous routes.

Security, peacebuilding and P-CVE

About €248m is allocated to projects falling under the category of security, peacebuilding and P-CVE.

Peacebuilding projects are generally implemented with the involvement of development actors and NGOs. Between €87m and €127m is allocated for this work. Yet between €121m and €161m (around 7% of the total EUTF for Africa budget) is dedicated to working directly with security forces. This group of projects is implemented by Interpol, Civipol, member states' national cooperation agencies, and private and public companies.

While improving security and building capacity to prevent violence is an essential step on the way to achieving sustainable development, it is concerning if flexible emergency instruments are used as an opportunity to fund security forces in third countries over solutions that address legitimate grievances (particularly around democratic processes and rule of law, social accountability, wealth distribution/inequality, gender justice and access to services) or without ensuring a focus on human security.

Human security measures – that is, measures that focus on people's need to be and feel safe and secure in their environment, not on the needs of states – are at the centre of development practice and form the core of the EU's approach to stabilization. The OECD Development Assistance Committee rules make similar distinctions, stating that development cooperation should not be used as a vehicle to promote the provider's security interests. Additional analysis would be required to determine whether the DAC ability of EUTF for Africa security projects is reported accurately.

Importantly, security projects are approved without a duty to include a conflict analysis, or an assessment of their impact on conflict dynamics or on the security, safety and protection needs of different groups.

Development cooperation

Sixty-three percent (or €1,141m) of the EUTF for Africa's approved budget is allocated to funding development cooperation, including ensuring access to basic services, economic opportunities and resilience building (86% of the development cooperation budget); followed by good governance and capacity-building (9%) and protection (5%).

Protection projects primarily target refugees, and to a lesser extent internally displaced persons or other communities. Only 36.5% of EUTF development cooperation projects do not identify beneficiaries based on their migratory status (migrant, refugee, etc.) or on the geographical proximity of the intervention area to migratory routes. In many countries, refugees and migrants are among the most vulnerable people who require urgent assistance. However, the decision to focus strands of funding on these people should be based on context-specific vulnerability and needs assessments, not on European political priorities.

A WAY FORWARD AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Flexible, multi-year funding, which allows for adaptation and localization, is important for supporting effective responses to crises. But its effectiveness must be ascertained by measuring its contribution to economic opportunities and equal opportunities for all people, and to strengthening the resilience of vulnerable people, human security and development, rather than reductions in migrant numbers, whether at Europe's borders or between African countries.

The EUTF for Africa represents a new aid modality characterized by flexible, pooled funding – an increasingly common trend. Without adequate transparency of decision making processes and accountability measures, it risks becoming an opportunity for European governments to implement political agendas that do not necessarily promote the interests of people in need or aid objectives.

The EUTF for Africa's objective creates a causal link between investment in economic opportunities and equal opportunities for all people, security and development on the one hand, and stability, displacement and migration on the other. But this link is not always immediate and the measurements of success might not be obvious; for example, higher levels of development are often linked with increased migration.³ Further, according to the EU's own standards, *'development interventions in fragile and conflict-affected situations should bear in mind the "do no harm approach" and need to adopt a more context-specific and flexible planning approach, recognising the high risk of failure and the need to quickly adapt to changing situations'*.⁴

To ensure that the EUTF for Africa succeeds in meeting its objectives, **European donors and the EUTF for Africa's Board and Operational Committees should:**

- Ensure that the EUTF contributes to 'promoting resilience, economic and equal opportunities, security and development and better migration management,' as per the instrument's objective, by:
 1. Removing any requirement for projects to have a direct effect on migratory flows, in their narrative, objectives or expected results. Projects should be prioritized based on context-specific needs and vulnerability assessments.
 2. Increasing funding for facilitated migration, to 'promote regular

channels for migration and mobility from and between European and African countries', in line with the Valletta Action Plan. Both migration and displacement situations must be managed to increase people's safety and livelihood prospects.

3. Adopt a consultative approach to resilience building, with a specific focus on the rights of minority groups, vulnerable people and the role of women. A strong focus on gender and the inclusion of vulnerable and marginal groups is essential as, at times of crisis, the care and subsistence of the household often relies more heavily and sometimes solely on women.
 4. Provide opportunities for civil society organizations to propose new approaches and projects, based on their experience and expertise in the humanitarian and development fields.
- Protect the integrity of development aid by:
 1. Committing to spend as large a portion as possible of the EUTF for Africa budget on official development assistance (ODA) eligible under the OECD DAC rules. For the sake of transparency and monitoring, the EUTF for Africa should follow the spending rules of its largest source, the EDF. This means spending at least 90% of the EUTF for Africa budget on ODA projects.
 2. Adopting transparent and effective oversight mechanisms, including by facilitating parliamentary reviews of the EUTF for Africa, independently of existing oversight of the EUTF's funding sources.
 3. Establish platforms for civil society engagement, to allow public oversight of key conflict and fragility indicators ('do no harm') in the EUTF for Africa.

The Operational Committees should work to improve the operational dimensions of the fund by:

- Requiring that security interventions and projects in fragile and conflict-affected situations explicitly address the 'do no harm' approach and include conflict sensitivity reviews encompassing analysis and mitigation of potential harm and a gender dimension;
- Requiring that each project include justification for its adoption under an emergency instrument. Projects that require a longer scrutiny and community consultation process should be excluded from the EUTF's rapid approval procedures;
- Making coordination and consultation a regular part of the instrument's operation, including with community representatives, local authorities, civil society (with a particular focus on women's rights organizations) and NGOs;
- Record, for each project, its alignment with national development strategies;
- Conduct regular assessments of the impact of migration management projects on protection of human rights, conflict dynamics and economic markets.

Monitoring bodies with oversight capacity such as OECD DAC and parliamentary committees should:

- Ensure that flexible aid modalities are supplemented by transparent and rigorous reporting and scrutiny, with a specific focus on the migration, security and development nexus, to ensure that development aid goals and principles are respected.

NOTES

- 1 European Commission. *Governance and Procedure: EU Trust Fund for Africa for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons*. https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eutf_governance_final_en.pdf
- 2 European Commission (5 February 2016). *Strategic orientation document: the European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa*.
- 3 H. de Haas (2010). Migration transitions: a theoretical and empirical inquiry into the developmental drivers of international migration. Working Paper. International Migration Institute. University of Oxford. <https://www.imi.ox.ac.uk/publications/wp-24-10>
- 4 Council of the European Union (19 May 2017). *Council Conclusions on Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus*. (9417/17).

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For further information on the issues raised in this paper please email advocacy@oxfaminternational.org

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