EU policies and the Majority World

Using rapid horizon scanning to highlight Majority World research priorities

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IIED Europe is an independent policy and research organisation registered in the Netherlands. We work with international partners to generate and communicate compelling evidence on the greatest challenges facing people in Europe and the Majority World — including the impacts of European policies and actors. By connecting people, places and perspectives, we create an informed space for urgent, transformational and just responses to emerge.

This paper reports on a horizon-scanning project undertaken by IIED Europe to help European researchers, policymakers and donors to increase their understanding of how the European Union — its policies, Member States, institutions and citizens — is influencing development in Majority World countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The project gathered the views of sustainable development experts in the global South and North about the key research priorities for understanding the global impacts of European policy and practice. The paper sets out the aims and methodology of the horizon-scanning project, presents the findings, and indicates the next steps.
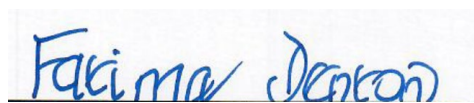
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Foreword

Many African countries have made commitments to move into just transitions for low-carbon societies and economies. However, their prospects to make these changes are shaped in large part by the actions of others. International trade policy, technology transfer, foreign direct investment, overseas development assistance, carbon border adjustments and other factors are hugely significant. With this broad context in mind, IIED Europe has scanned global horizons and sought different perspectives on what needs to be investigated. The aim is to build understanding and action on the impact of the EU's policies, institutions, enterprises, states and citizens on environmental and socio-economic development in Majority World countries.

From the perspective of policy research organisations in Africa such as mine — UNU-INRA — this horizon scanning process and the initial outputs are highly valuable and provide relevant foresight intelligence. Indeed, UNU-INRA will use this informative window on what a wide range of stakeholders consider the highest priority policy research questions as we start-up the AFTER Carbon initiative.

This first horizon scanning sets a baseline for those to follow. It identifies 230 research priority questions framed by specialists across Africa, the Americas, Asia and Australasia. These people have provided key insights on the gaps in current and historic EU policy research. The priorities they identified are potential objectives for new policy research in Asia, Africa, Latin America and the EU to contribute to policymaking processes in all of these contexts.

IIED Europe is making available a searchable database which includes the 230 research questions — the IIED Europe Global Research Priority Tracker. The intention is that researchers, policymakers and funders around the world can investigate the priority questions identified and build their understanding of the research topics Majority World actors think are important. This important IIED Europe methodology paper explains how the horizon scanning was done and the rationale behind the year-long process to generate the tracker. This is supported by several blogs commissioned by IIED Europe, which demonstrate how the tracker can be used to identify trends, comparisons and contrasting perspectives on priority issues.

UNU-INRA looks forward to collaborating with IIED Europe and other partners in investigating the importance of the EU's environment and development policy footprint for Africa and other parts of our planet. I congratulate IIED Europe on this horizon scanning initiative and see it as an important step in democratising policy research processes. Our capacity to produce consumable and marketable policy research is crucial to our collective goal of promoting a just transition in which both small and large economies may grow sustainably. The results are highly relevant to the just transitions which we need to manage in the immediate future worldwide.

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Summary

This working paper reports on a horizon-scanning exercise that identified priorities for research on how European Union policies, institutions and citizens affect the Majority World. The project identified 230 questions highlighted by stakeholders from the global South and North as areas for research on EU policymaking and its impacts in Asia, Africa and Latin America. The horizon scanning aimed to identify priority policy-relevant research questions for researchers and policymakers and to give Southern voices a say in future research and, thereby, policy. The findings could inform efforts within and beyond the European research sector to better align research objectives, funding and policymaking with the needs of Majority World countries.

This paper sets out the aims, methodology and initial findings of the horizon scanning. It does not aim to provide a detailed analysis of the stakeholder responses.

To accompany this paper, IIED Europe is developing a searchable open-access database — the IIED Europe Global Research Priority Tracker — which will allow interrogation of the research priorities identified in this horizon-scanning exercise. Researchers, policymakers and funders will be able to access the research priorities online, and search, filter and sort them by category, keyword or geography, building their understanding of which topics Majority World stakeholders would like EU researchers to prioritise.

IIED Europe plans to repeat this horizon-scanning exercise every two years, improving the reach and the methodology each time and building a long-term tracker of opinions of Majority World actors on significant knowledge gaps and issues requiring analysis.

Context

Effective policymaking relies upon robust evidence-based research to inform the design and implementation of policy. Researchers play a key role in supporting good policy by identifying the priorities and issues that need to be addressed.

The European Union (EU) and its Member States together constitute the world's leading development donor, providing 43% of global Overseas Development Assistance (ODA). The EU is a leader in promoting sustainable development and has established a network of partnerships with Majority World countries. The impact of the EU policymaking processes is much more significant than just its ODA, and covers bilateral agreements, trade agreements, defence and security policies, migration policies, and much more. For example, the European Green Deal, and in particular the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism, has a substantial impact on high-emission sectors, such as steel, cement, aluminium, fertiliser and electricity (Titievskaia et al., 2022). At the same time, the EU has flagged the need to use its resources in a more strategic and effective way.

In the context of EU policy on international issues at a time of rapid social, economic and environmental change, identifying the most critical policy research areas is vital to ensure effective outcomes. However, conventional approaches to identifying international policy research priorities often fail to give space to the voices of stakeholders from the Majority World.

This exercise represents the first time that a comprehensive mapping of Majority World expert opinions on knowledge gaps and research questions on EU impacts has been gathered and made available on an open-source basis for the sustainable development community.

Method

Conventional approaches to defining research priorities and questions can display numerous limitations, particularly when addressing complex socioeconomic systems at a time of rapid change.

This exercise sought to overcome the limitations of standard approaches by adopting an approach designed to bring together Majority World and EU researchers' views about the priorities for researching the global impacts of EU policies and practice. We

selected the rapid horizon scanning methodology, an approach that has been developed over the last 15 years, predominately within the ecological sciences.

This is the first time this method has been used to gather Southern perspectives on research priorities, and we present the methodology we used and our learning from the process in full detail in this paper.

Initial findings

We gathered more than 300 questions, which we distilled down to 230 priority research questions, aggregated into ten clusters. Questions on natural resources and their management, climate change, economics and a just transition made up a significant proportion of the questions.

The research has highlighted sometimes surprising patterns. For example, questions relating to pandemics and security concerns did not feature strongly. We were surprised to note that some themes prominent in current EU debate, such as the blue economy and fisheries, were largely absent.

While these gaps may reflect the priorities of the participants, they could also indicate a global North misinterpretation of global South stakeholders' concerns. Careful analysis of the questions will help researchers and policymakers identify possible gaps between European policy research and the needs of Majority World countries. IIED Europe has carried out some initial assessments of the results using a number of entry points to interpret the data. These are intended to show the richness of the resource for those interested in particular themes and also to demonstrate how the search tool can be utilised.

The future

This is Year One of an ongoing project. We plan to repeat the horizon scanning every two years. As we do so, we aim to widen the reach of our research and increase stakeholder participation in the ranking exercise.

We anticipate that we will see research questions shift over time, informing researchers and policymakers of changing priorities and needs. In this way, IIED Europe aims to enhance and support the ongoing dialogue between EU institutions and citizens in the Majority World. We also hope that the research priorities we identify will be useful for researchers and policymakers beyond the EU.

In this and future rounds of research, we will be transparent about the data and how we gather it.

Structure of this paper

The first part of this paper (sections 1, 2 and 3) discusses why we selected rapid horizon scanning as our research methodology, sets out in detail the process we used and describes some details about the respondents.

Section 4 reports on the outcome of the research: the research questions.

Section 5 discusses our research findings in more detail and looks ahead to the next stage of this work.

IIED EUROPE GLOBAL RESEARCH PRIORITY TRACKER: TO DOWNLOAD AND SHARE

The results from the horizon scanning detailed in this paper are now available to access via an innovative tool developed by IIED Europe and launched in January 2023.

The tool aims to make the priorities available to increase the impacts of European environment and development policies, research practices and funding in other parts of the world.

The searchable tracker allows direct access to the database of priorities that can be searched, filtered and sorted by category, keyword or geographic region, so that users can explore the bigger picture or drill down into the detail. It allows results to be configured so users can download a subset of the data they create and share it with others.

As part of the work to present the priorities in the online tracker, they were further analysed and categorised. We will continue to update and add to the tracker in the future.

The tool can be accessed at: www.iied.org/iied-europe-tracker

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Aims and scope

The horizon-scanning exercise aimed to identify the research questions and the research priorities that need to be addressed to maximise the benefits and minimise the negative impacts on the Majority World of European policies, institutions and citizens (Brooks et al., 2015; Furley et al., 2018; Gaw et al., 2019).

The exercise focused on the Majority World using the 'developing countries' categorisation given by the United Nations in the country classifications section of the statistical annex of the World Economic Situation and Prospects 2022 (United Nations, 2022).

The outcomes of the exercise, in the form of a list of research questions on priority topics, will support short-, mid- and long-term strategy and research planning. The hope is that this list will be used by European and Majority World research organisations that engage in research and policy advice on the complex relationship between the European Union and Majority World countries on the one hand, and policymakers and decision makers in the EU and in Majority World countries on the other. We hope the results will inform and enrich work across this spectrum of actors and improve the connections between them, so decision makers are more directly aware of and informed by the views of Majority World research communities.

The horizon-scanning exercise provides a rigorous evidence-based approach. We hope it will create a framework for greater consensus on research priorities of importance.

1.1 Criteria for the questions

We agreed that the questions should be answerable through research that can have an impact on European policy and decision making. Questions could cover any aspect of the impact of European policies and institutions at the interface between environment and socioeconomic development in Majority World countries.

An ideal question should:

- Address important gaps in knowledge

- Be answerable through a realistic research design

- Have a factual answer that does not depend on opinion or value judgements

- Cover a spatial and temporal scale that could realistically be addressed by a research team with reasonable resources

- Not be answerable by 'it all depends', 'yes' or 'no', and

- If related to impact and interventions, it should contain a subject, an intervention and a measurable outcome.

1.2 Scope

The scope of the horizon scanning covers European institutions and existing policies, as well as policies that are expected to come into force, for example, because they are currently at a draft stage for approval or are in the design phase. More generally, the horizon scanning covers any aspect of the complex relationship between European institutions and their formal and informal policies and decision-making processes that have an impact on the developing world.

It attempts to engage with European policy at a time of great volatility and tries to identify research priorities that address opportunities for change. These can express a need for a better understanding of the real-world impact of existing policies, a desire for existing policies to be modified, but also a desire for new policies to be promoted and put in place to address fundamental issues related to environment and socioeconomic development, as seen by stakeholders.

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Method

2.1 Selecting the method

Evidence-based policymaking and decision making require robust research that produces the necessary evidence. To achieve this, researchers, academics and scholars are tasked with developing research programmes that respond to strict criteria of scientific method, independence and fairness to produce answers to research questions that are of relevance for policymakers and decision makers. This process often meets with constraints of time and budget, hence it is necessary to prioritise certain research questions and their answers; that is, we must decide what research questions need to be answered first or need major investment in order to ensure that the most important policy and decision making processes have the information and evidence they need.

The critical issue then becomes how to define the relevant research questions and how to prioritise them. This issue affects all fields of knowledge that need to generate evidence for policy and decision making, from ecology to engineering, economics, social sciences and so on.

The more conventional approach to research and evidence production, born from a technology-centred vision of the world, has traditionally been to entrust scholars, funders and the relationship between scholars and funders to identify the right priorities — that is, the most important questions that need to be answered, or at least that need to be answered first, and to which it is necessary to allocate most of the funding. In essence, it relies on the conviction that someone knows what is best.

This approach does not work well wherever you need to make decisions that affect complex systems and the human actors and stakeholders who live within them. That is the case, for example, for socioeconomic systems or ecological systems.

In the context of the accelerating climate emergency, unmet development targets, and rapidly progressing and apparently unstoppable environmental degradation, it is critical to produce evidence that supports policy- and decision-making processes at the crossroad between socioeconomic development, environment and climate.

The degree by which we know and understand the very complex dynamics of socioeconomic systems — and their effects on health and wellbeing, opportunities, livelihood, rights, inclusion and equity — is poor at best, yet we need to make critical decisions both as a global, planetary community and as local communities.

The conventional approach to defining research questions and the research priorities, coupled with the very asymmetric availability of funding between developed countries and Majority World countries, brings a host of difficulties, and the outcomes have been questionable. On the one hand, the conventional approach requires defining and prioritising research in the field at all scales on a multitude of dimensions — a challenge that no single researcher, research institute or group, let alone funder, would be able to tackle. On the other hand, the conventional approach has generated partial answers and has side effects that are akin to a form of knowledge-based colonialism, imposing on the Majority World a vision that is alien, out of context and developed elsewhere.

Scholars have been attempting to solve this issue in a number of ways. Over the last fifteen years, an approach has been developed within the ecological sciences to respond to this critical need: horizon scanning (Sutherland et al., 2006). With its rules progressively perfected and fine-tuned, horizon scanning has been deployed to identify research questions and research priorities in a multitude of fields, from ecology to microplastics in waterways (Oliver, 2021).

Horizon scanning involves bringing together in a structured process experts and stakeholders in a field of research and asking them to collaboratively define the priority research questions.

This approach has been initially developed and applied to STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) research, while similar applications in the field of policymaking, decision making, socioeconomic development, climate and environment are only recently starting to emerge.

Our study uses the horizon-scanning approach to achieve a game-changing exercise: asking expert stakeholders from Majority World countries and the EU to come together to define research questions and priorities.

2.2 The method — first steps

To achieve the expected results within the short timescale (six months) and a reduced budget while dealing with the restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we needed to develop a novel rapid approach to horizon scanning.

To do so, we started with some of the most well-regarded horizon-scanning approaches. In particular, we looked to the Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) Global Horizon Scanning Project (Brooks et al., 2015; Furley et al., 2018; Gaw et al., 2019), which was, in turn, built upon previous successful experiences. We operated a series of interventions and modifications to reduce the project duration to under six months.

To ensure our novel horizon-scanning process had the characteristics of robustness required by the scholarly and policymaking community, we asked for external revision from some of the people who had run the SETAC exercise, who also lent us some additional expertise.

To ensure that the horizon scanning captured questions emerging from the real-world impacts and benefits experienced by Majority World countries, we decided to increase the weight of expert stakeholders from Majority World countries within the process: rather than add statistical weights to answers, we opted to engage a majority of expert stakeholders from Majority World countries, and a minority of expert stakeholders from the EU.

We used a bottom-up, participatory, online approach to map stakeholders. This involved IIED staff and collaborators mapping stakeholders using a specifically created online database. We presented our approach to IIED research group meetings and collected feedback, which was then used to fine-tune the approach. Finally, we invited the members of each research group to log the names and contacts of stakeholders in a common document. Each IIED research group nominated one or

more representative who participated in the project and acted as an interface between the research group and the project. They harvested the contacts of the expert stakeholders from the research groups, provided them to the project, and channelled communication between the project, the research group and stakeholders.

We contacted other value-based and like-minded organisations and asked them to share their contacts of expert stakeholders.

In parallel, we ran a social media campaign using Twitter, LinkedIn and ResearchGate to invite people to participate.

Finally, starting from the core stakeholders' group, 'snowballing' was used to progressively extend the scope and reach of our exercise: every expert was asked to reference up to ten additional experts, and so on, in a cascading process.

These different means to engage Majority World experts resulted in a diverse and substantial mix of contacts who were invited to contribute to the exercise.

2.3 Structuring the process

The rapid horizon-scanning process was structured in five separate subprocesses (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Flow diagram for the horizon-scanning exercise
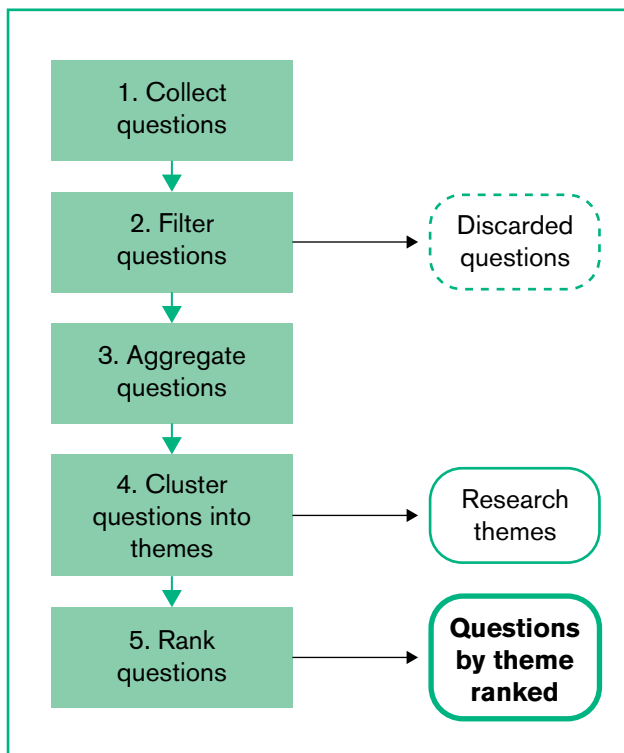
2.3.1 Collecting questions

IIED and external experts submitted research questions through an online portal (subprocess one in Figure 1). Stakeholders could submit their research questions in English, French or Spanish. The aims and scope of the exercise were transparently explained in emails and on the introductory page of the online portal in the three languages, and all fields within the submission system were translated.

2.3.2 Filtering questions

We first translated all research questions from French and Spanish to English, and we assembled all questions in one file.

We removed test or invalid responses, statements or text not framed in a way that could be interpreted as a question, contentious statements, questions that were excessively vague, and so on, as well as all questions that did not meet the criteria. Grammar mistakes and syntax errors were addressed. Questions were then proofread and put into an interrogative form.

We then corrected typos and grammar issues affecting the English research questions. Correction is important because it may cause Natural Language Processing routines to generate wrong 'keywords' (words with contextual semantic meaning or 'n-grams', as explained in more detail in section 2.3.4) frequency data. For example, common spelling mistakes in word roots cause the text analyser to generate non-extant n-grams, for example, 'receive' and 'recieve'.

2.3.3 Aggregating

The expert panel then aggregated a small number of research questions to avoid repetition. Questions that were similar in meaning were brought together, and when several questions dealt with geographical or specific aspects of the same issue, they were represented through one single aggregated question.

2.3.4 Clustering

The next step was clustering, in other words, grouping the questions in clusters or thematic areas. This involved two stages:

N-gram-based clustering through software

The first step of our analysis consisted of running n-gram clustering using software.

To run the analysis, we used a series of routines developed using Natural Language Processing (NLP) Task View, version 2022-05-06 (Wild, 2022), in R programming language 4.2.0 (R Core Team, 2022). We ran the routines through RStudio, version 2022.06.0-daily+478 (RStudio Team, 2020).

We focused on the top 48 significant n-grams with n from 1 (individual word) to 4 (meaningful combination of four words). To avoid concept duplication:

- Common words (that is, 1-grams) were removed

- Words were stemmed (that is, reduced to their root forms)

- Then they were combined in n-grams

- Then common 2- to 4-grams were removed.

For the removal of words, we compounded the 'Classic English dictionary' of common words contained in the software with an iterative run of the routines, where we removed those 1- to 4-grams that were emerging and deemed to be contextually not significant. For example, the 2-grams 'European policy', 'European policies', 'developing country' and 'Majority World countries' may not be significant in a survey about European policies and Majority World countries.

Figures 2–4 show the frequency diagrams for the 1- to 3-grams (4-grams were deemed not meaningful and used only as a control). The n-gram frequency diagrams also illustrate an example of how the expert panel aggregated the n-grams, using colours to manually highlight possible thematic clusters. For simplicity, we do not show all iterations of clustering, but only one specific step to illustrate the process.

Manual clustering

NLP-based clustering informed the manual clustering. The panel of experts analysed the questions and grouped them into separate clusters or themes, using the NLP-based cluster as a basis to develop their taxonomy. The experts worked autonomously to avoid influencing each other. They then came together in a focus group and debated the results of their analysis to achieve an agreed list of clusters and the allocation of questions into the clusters in a process of iterative and progressive refinement.

The exercise resulted in ten clusters, with the number of questions for each cluster ranging from 9 to 36.

The clusters were defined using a participatory approach: five experts from different fields met four times over a six-week period to aggregate the questions into a number of clusters. The panel used an iterative approach that combined software-based n-gram analysis and classification with manual analysis and classification. A different choice of experts, or number of experts, would have resulted in a different aggregation.

Table 1 sets out the ten clusters and the final number of questions in each.

(Note that the order of the clusters in Table 1 does not represent a priority but corresponds to the order of submissions of the questions in the database of answers by the respondents. So, the cluster 'EU

Figure 2. Most frequent 1-grams, with superimposed colours showing an example of clustering n-grams into common themes
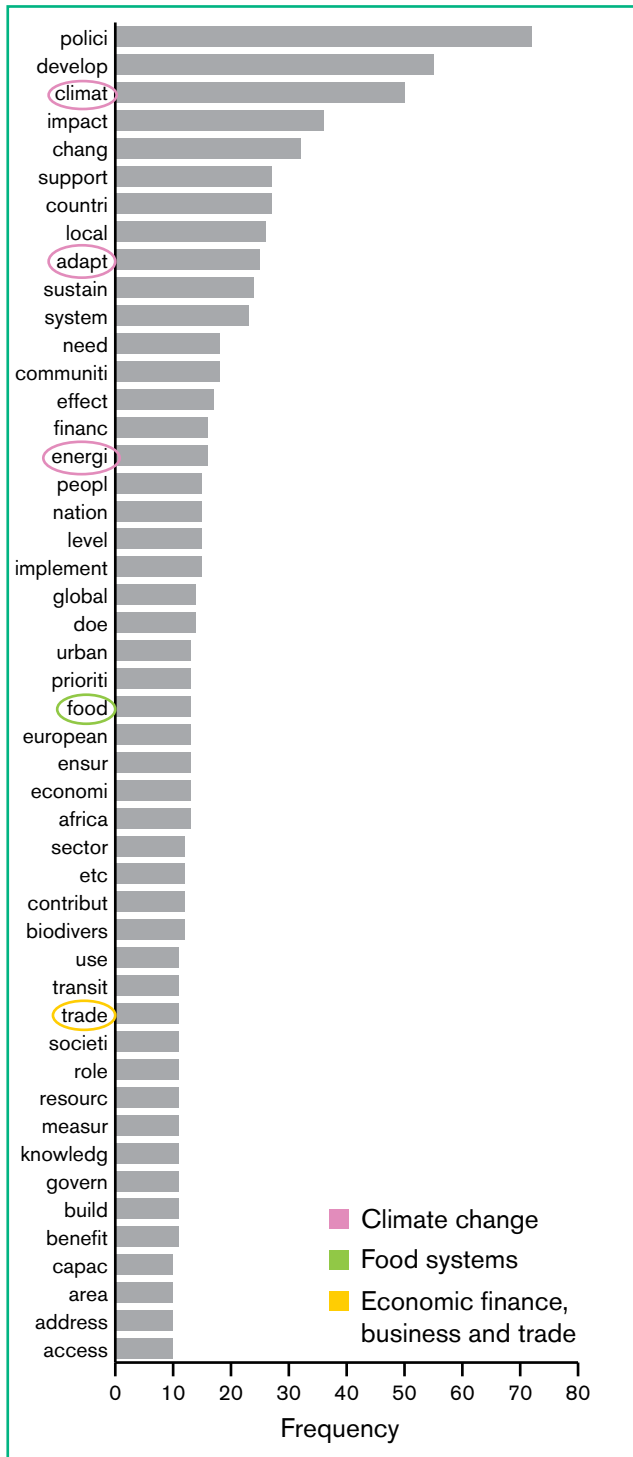
Figure 3. Most frequent 2-grams, with superimposed colours showing an example of clustering n-grams into common themes
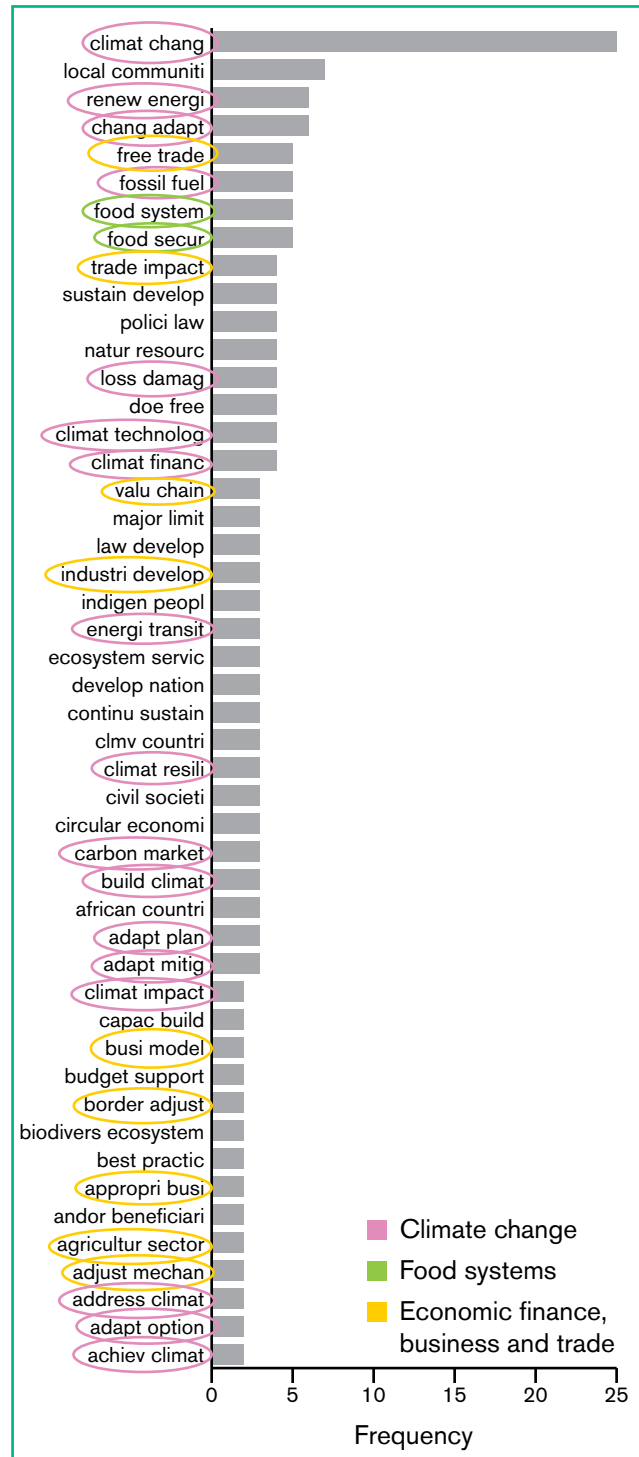
Figure 4. Most frequent 3-grams, with superimposed colours showing an example of clustering n-grams into common themes
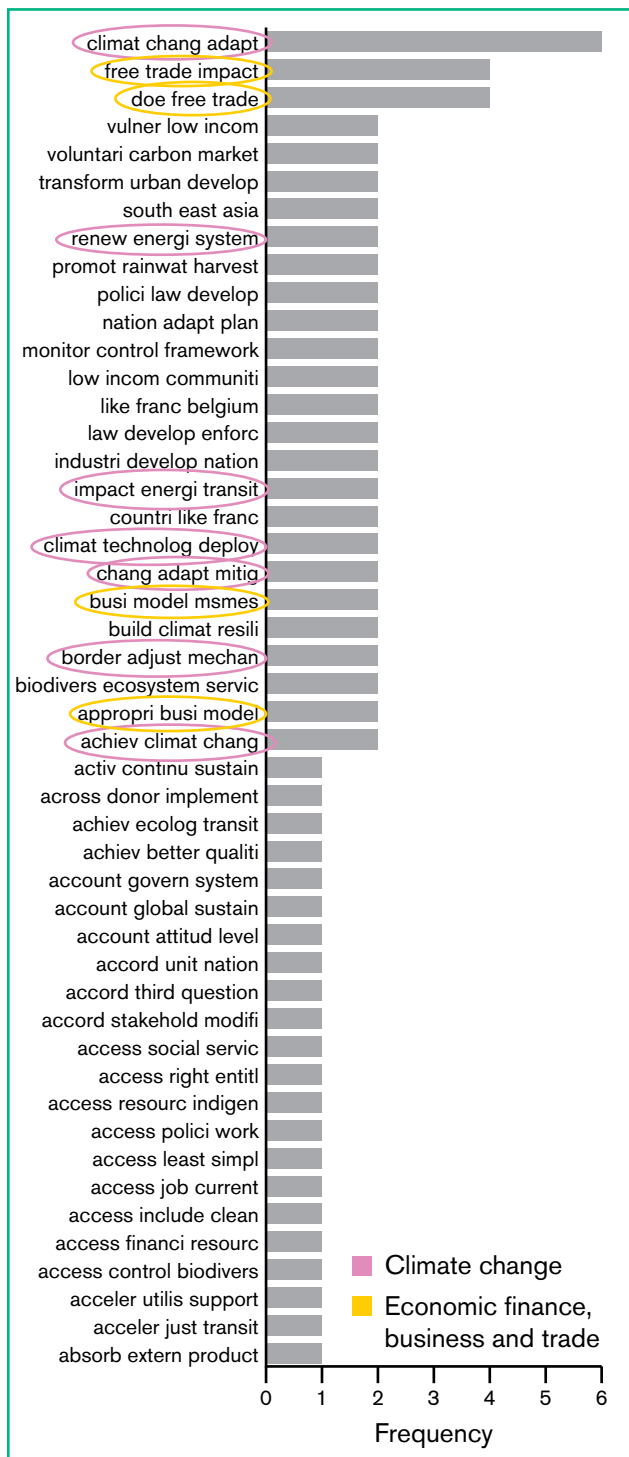
influence on the Majority World: just transition' appears as first in the list only because the first question in the database was allocated to that cluster, and so forth.)

2.3.5 Ranking

The final stage was to have been a ranking process by stakeholders through an online voting system. To rank the questions for each cluster, we had planned to use Maximum Difference (MaxDiff) scaling also known as 'Best-Worst Case', following the example of a very recent horizon-scanning exercise on microplastics (Oliver, 2022).

The whole exercise was partly a victim of its own success: the number of questions that were submitted was much larger than expected; even after the attribution, aggregation and clustering, we found ourselves with a large number of research priorities for each cluster. This meant that the ranking stage required more work than anticipated, and although many respondents indicated they would be willing to participate, the final number of participants was too low to guarantee that the results of the MaxDiff ranking were successful.

For this reason, we had to decide to remove the ranking process before publication. We decided to publish the questions unranked, in the hope that they would attract the interest of researchers who will then undertake the ranking process within their organisations. This does offer an advantage: organisations can shortlist and rank the priority questions we have identified according to their strategic priorities.

Table 1. Clusters and number of questions

CLUSTER	NUMBER OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS
EU influence on the Majority World: just transition	23
EU influence on the Majority World: climate change	31
EU influence on the Majority World: economics, finance, business and trade	31
EU influence on the Majority World: localisation	16
EU influence on the Majority World: natural resources	36
EU influence on the Majority World: monitoring, reporting, evaluation and learning (MREL), evidence, data and knowledge management	19
EU influence on the Majority World: gender, equality and human rights	23
EU influence on the Majority World: food systems	25
EU influence on the Majority World: urban development	17
EU influence on the Majority World: other themes	9

3

Who participated? The respondents

Seventy-one respondents submitted research questions. Of these, 69 responses were deemed valid. 65.28% of the respondents were from the global South, and the remaining 34.72% were from the global North. We received responses from stakeholders in 23 Majority World countries and 10 Minority World countries.

Figures 5 and 6 provide more information about the provenance of respondents.

We offered stakeholders a choice of languages in which to respond. Fifty-nine respondents answered the English version of the survey. Of these, one was interpreted as a test attempt, with all fields filled with random text, and was removed. One response was duplicated because of a database issue, and was counted only once. We ended with 57 accepted English language respondents.

Seven and five respondents answered the French and Spanish versions, respectively. All of these responses were valid.

Offering respondents a choice of languages was helpful, and we aim to expand the choice of languages in future iterations of the exercise, budget and time permitting.

Experts could submit up to ten priority research questions each. They could choose to submit less than ten. The total number of valid questions was 338: 272 in English, 39 in French, and 27 in Spanish. These were filtered down to 230 questions at the aggregation stage.

Forty-four experts indicated they would be willing to participate in a ranking exercise (36 English, five French and three Spanish respondents). However, only 43 could be counted because one expert did not provide their email address. As mentioned above, this stage had to be postponed.

Figure 7 illustrates the respondents by stakeholder group. There was good balance of responses from the groups of stakeholders we had originally expected. Most respondents came from three groups: researchers and scholars; not-for-profit representatives; experts and professionals.

Figure 8 shows the respondents by the length of their experience in their field. People with more than 20 years of experience and people with more than ten years of experience made up the majority of respondents.

Figure 5. Respondents by country of provenance
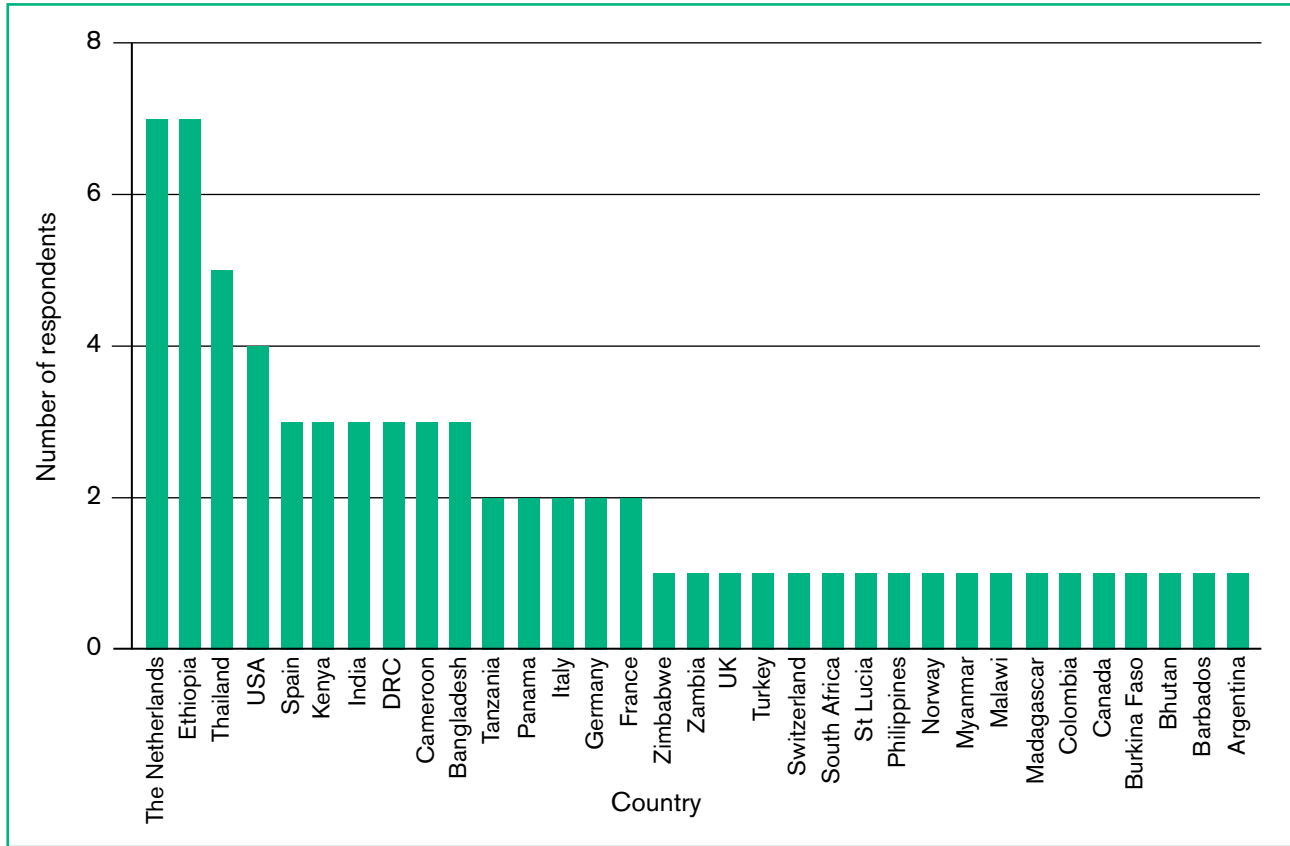
Figure 6. Respondent by country of provenance development status (UN designation)
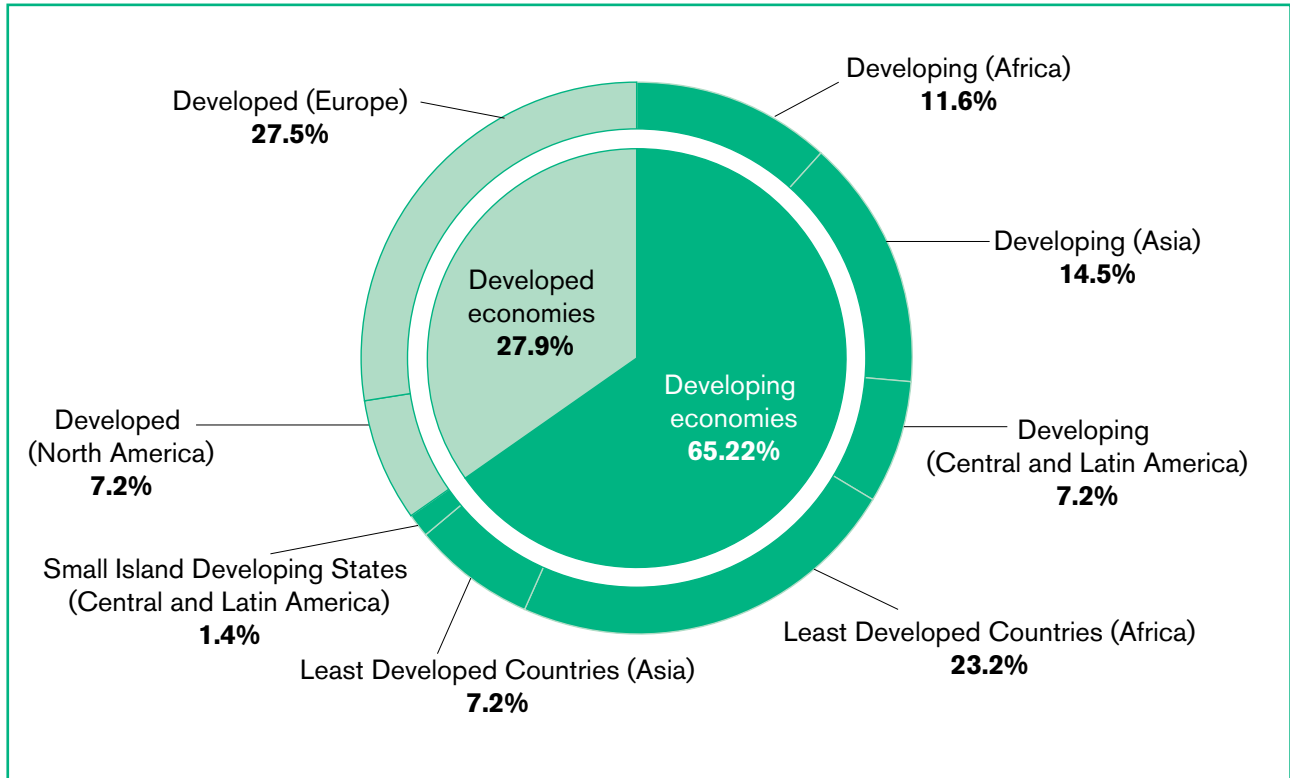
Figure 7. Respondents by stakeholder group

Community leaders and representatives
of citizen organisations
1.4%

Decision makers in or representatives
of private companies
2.9%

Expert citizens
4.3%

Researchers, scholars
and academics
(academia, think tanks
and so on)
43.5%

Non-elected public decision
makers or policymakers (such as
public administration at different
scales, including UN, regional
bodies and so on)
5.8%

Experts or other professionals
20.3%

Not for profit representatives in
charities, NGOs or advocacy
organisations
21.7%

Figure 8. Respondents by length of experience within their sector

Less than 3 years
2.9%

3 to 5 years
5.8%

More than 20 years
36.2%

5 to 10 years
18.8%

10 to 20 years
36.2%
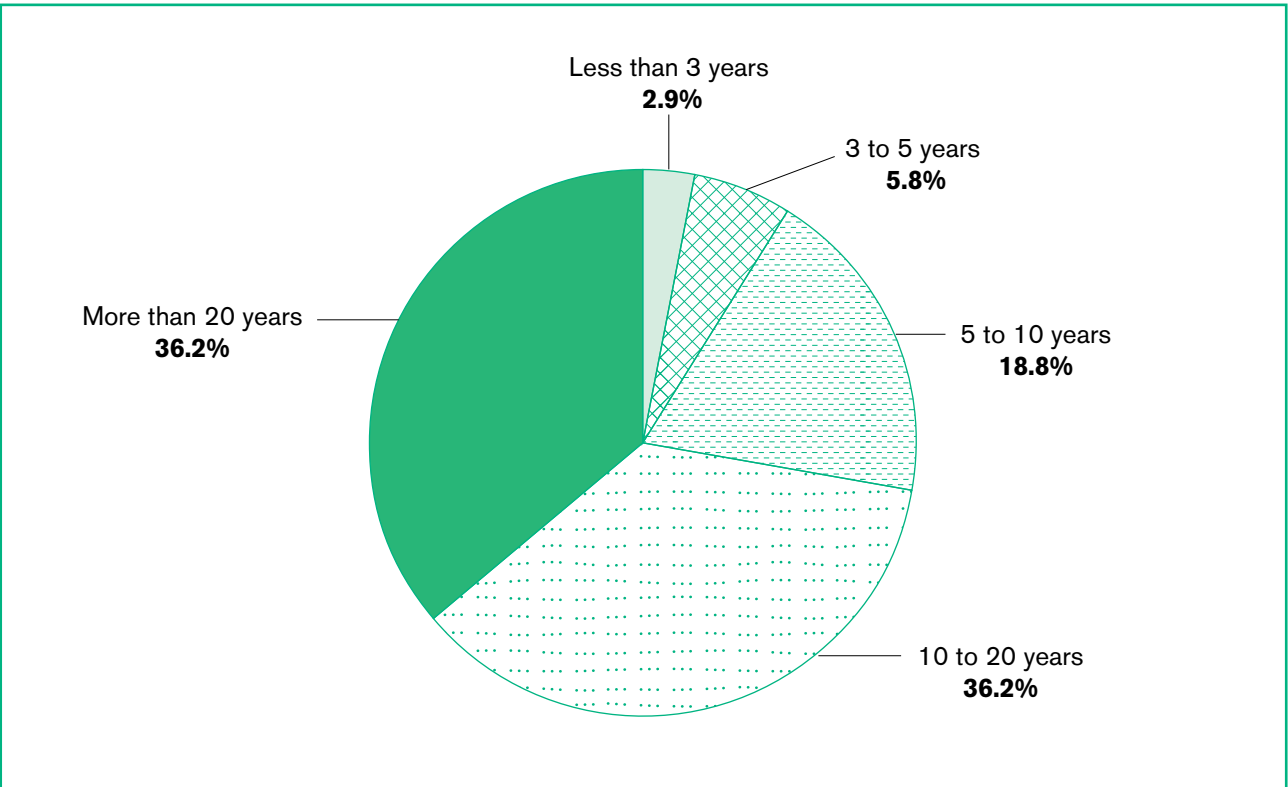
4

Outcomes: the priority research questions

The resulting 230 questions, split into the ten clusters, are presented on the following pages.

As with the clusters, the questions are not presented in order of priority but simply in order of aggregation, which corresponds to the order of submission in the database of answers. Any connection between respondents and questions submitted was lost through the process of anonymisation and aggregation.

Cluster 1. EU influence on the Majority World: just transition

- How can the EU support technology development and transfer to the Majority World?

- How does the EU contribute to the debate on global governance?

- How do EU policies, programmes and projects complement national and local-level development policies in the Majority World?

- How is EU policy support building regional cohesion and alignment across Majority World countries?

- How does the EU develop a partnership with the Majority World to achieve mutual and just-for-all development?

- What are best-practice examples of EU aid and support promoting successful development in the Majority World?

- How do EU policies on forestry and reducing deforestation-linked imports affect people in the Majority World (for example tropical basins), their forest management practices and the development of sustainable value chains?

- What are the mechanisms used by the EU to define its development policy priorities?

- Team Europe is not materialising and competing interests among EU Member States are hindering progress. How can the EU implement a true Team Europe and improve cooperation with non-EU stakeholders?

- How is EU policy and support contributing to more transparency, participation and accountability in governance systems at country level in the Majority World?

- How can the EU ensure involvement of civil society actors, including private sector professionals, in ushering in a successful transition to long-term sustainability through green and blue economy principles in the Majority World?

- How can the EU ensure equity of participation and decision making on projects between developed countries and the Majority World?

- What elements of EU projects do stakeholders think lead to the greatest local impact?

Is it the implementer? Partners? Government or community engagement? Volume of funding? Or something else?

- What environmentally beneficial EU policies have the potential (according to stakeholders) to be modified for implementation in Majority World countries with limited resources?

- What criteria should EU policymakers and decision makers prioritise to ensure human activities' sustainability at the planetary scale?

- How can the EU empower local actors in the Majority World and help to create a Team Africa/Asia/Asia-Pacific/Latin America approach?

- What are the critical policy areas that EU policy should support in the Majority World to ensure the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals?

- What are the synergies and trade-offs between EU policies and development and environmental and social wellbeing in the Majority World?

- What issues and limitations impinge on the EU's ability to act in a consistent manner towards the Majority World in terms of prioritising human rights and international law over self-interest?

- What mutually beneficial ('win–win') mechanisms can the EU use to help local, national and regional development in the Majority World?

- How has the departure of the UK from the EU affected development aid — from the EU and from the UK?

- Which energy access policies work most effectively for the poorest in society? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- Do the policies of the EU and its member states empower countries with damaging policies in the Majority World (for example, through their military and monetary cooperation programmes)?

Cluster 2. EU influence on the Majority World: climate change

- How can EU subsidies for fossil fuels be reformed to accelerate a just transition in the energy sector in the Majority World?

- How will the main policies and programmes that shape the EU's interactions with the Majority World change as a result of the impacts of climate change?

- What are the key issues and impediments in relation to the EU's emission rights transfer policies with a particular focus on the implications for Majority World countries?

- How can European policies incentivise decarbonisation of public–private partnerships in the Majority World through the Carbon Trading System?

- Can the EU identify applicable best practices in building climate finance infrastructure from other regions that can be replicated in the eleven nations that make up the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States?

- How can existing EU policies support climate migrants in the context of climate-resilient development?

- What are the challenges and opportunities of EU policy in relation to climate finance policy and laws, and their impacts on the Majority World?

- How can the concept of incubators and accelerators be utilised to support climate technology deployment in the Majority World?

- What are the barriers to Majority World countries making ambitious, timebound and measurable commitments on climate change? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- How can the concept of 'just resilience' that is set out in the EU Adaptation Strategy be defined and operationalised?

- How can European Net Zero policies incentivise private finance investments from companies (including European companies) for green transitions in the Majority World?

- How can the EU assess and address the need for climate models to be more useful for climate change adaptation and mitigation at local, regional and national levels in the Majority World?

- How can EU policy use sports to achieve climate change targets and commitments in the Majority World?

- How can global climate adaptation and mitigation strategies be designed in ways that do not result in increased socio-environmental injustices in the Majority World?

- How can EU policies and actions provide support and mechanisms for addressing loss and damage from climate change to Majority World countries (and avoid hindering them)?

- How well is European technical and financial support aligned with the priorities identified in Majority World countries' National Adaptation Plans (NAPs) and other national adaptation plans and policies?

- How can the EU convince Majority World countries with fossil fuel reserves to leave them in the ground?

- How does the European Green Deal impact the energy transition in the Majority World?

- How can the EU support green transition solutions by rewarding early adopters and innovators in the Majority World while penalising laggards (for example through policy instruments, aid for trade and green diplomacy)?

- How can EU policy combine climate change interventions with action to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) in the Majority World?

- How relevant are European climate change policies to mitigation and adaptation in the Majority World?

- What action can the EU take to improve earth and scientific data (for example, salinity impact, sea-level rise, groundwater levels, irrigation) to support policy and decision making in climate-vulnerable countries?

- How can the EU assess and address the effects of climate change on migration and mobility patterns in the Majority World?

- How can the EU support strategies to reduce the health impacts of climate change in the Majority World, paying special attention to impacts on vulnerable groups?

- How can the EU support the Majority World in harnessing green energy to power their key production sectors?

- How can the EU support identifying and addressing the priorities, barriers, enablers and opportunities for transformational climate adaptation in the Majority World?

- How can the EU identify and develop early warning and relief and recovery systems to deal with extreme situations in the Majority World (including floods, droughts, heat waves and intense storms with wind, hail, lightning, snow, and so on)?

- How can the EU support wider use of microcredit programmes for climate change adaptation activities in the Majority World?

- How does EU climate emergency policy (Green Deal, fitfor55, Net Zero, Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism and so on) affect development in Majority World countries?

- How can the EU support the diffusion of good practices and lessons learnt on moving from climate mitigation and adaptation planning to implementation?

- How can EU policy support Majority World countries in meeting their capacity needs for the green transition?

Cluster 3. EU influence on the Majority World: economics, finance, business and trade

- How can EU business and trade policies address the need to procure commodities from Majority World countries in sustainable ways?

- How do EU green industrial policies impact the energy transition in the Majority World?

- How can EU border adjustment mechanisms (such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism) maximise benefits for the Majority World?

- How does the EU benefit, in social, economic and political terms, from its relations with Majority World countries?

- How can EU policies on business and trade leverage the critical and ubiquitous tourism sector to catalyse a successful green transition in the Majority World?

- What specific EU actions and initiatives could assist Majority World countries in mainstreaming green economy and blue economy principles into their economic policies?

- The EU has invested heavily in the development of a market for renewable energy systems (standalone, household, mini-grid and grid). What are the implications (impacts, costs, benefits) for markets and market development in Majority World countries?

- How can EU business and trade policies support and strengthen small and medium enterprises in the Majority World and enhance their links to their counterparts in the developed world?

- What are best practice examples of EU aid and support promoting successful climate mitigation and adaptation action (including renewable energy) in the Majority World?

- How can the EU support the most effective mechanisms for implementing voluntary carbon market projects and programmes with suitable environmental and social safeguards?

- Sustainable finance, green finance, climate finance and impact investing should be shifting investments towards the Majority World. This is not happening for a series of reasons, including perceived risks, poor data, lower ranking, and so on. How can the EU overcome these obstacles so that increased and predictable sustainable finance reaches all Majority World regions and in particular Least Developed Countries?

- How can the EU increase much needed and currently insufficient public and private finance to the Majority World for the Sustainable Development Goals, development and climate action under the Paris Agreement and Agenda 2030? And how can it ensure that there is institutional capacity to make use of this finance?

- How can EU policy on deforestation-linked products and value chains ensure that the exports of products linked to deforestation are not directed to countries with less demanding policies?

- How can EU policy support people without electricity in the Majority World to access simple and efficient electricity generation systems (such as solar kits) at low cost?

- How are EU public finance management policies addressing the natural resources crisis in the Majority World?

- Are EU policies helping prices set by private corporations to absorb the externalities their products create?

- How can the EU leverage global and national value chains to ensure that they support climate change adaptation and mitigation in Majority World countries?

- How do European trade policies impact environmental integrity in the Majority World?

- How can the EU support the improvement of entrepreneurial ecosystems in the Majority World, so that entrepreneurs have better access to resources (including financial) for climate solution deployment and diffusion?

- What impacts do free trade agreements, tariffs and economic and development partnerships promoted or participated in by the EU have on the Majority World (for example, in terms of agricultural production, jobs, trade deficits, environmental degradation, drugs and green crime), and how can the benefits for the Majority World be maximised?

- What are the main global policy and legal trends affecting industrial development in Majority World countries, and what are their implications? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- How do corporate social responsibility funds invested by EU private companies in the Majority World contribute to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals?

- How is the EU's Global Gateway perceived among Asian policymakers, one year after its launch?

- How do EU private sector business activities (especially extractives) impact the Majority World, and what measures and sanctions have been established by the EU to compensate countries?

- What role could Green Bonds play outside the EU? Would the European Green Bond Standard be the standard? How could this be implemented?

- What is and should be the EU's role in ensuring that international trade systems (including fossil fuels) work to achieve Sustainable Development Goal targets in the Majority World?

- How can the EU use public finance to leverage private finance for climate and development activities in the Majority World?

- What support do industries (metalworking, electronics, and so on) in the Majority World require so they are prepared and can rapidly adapt their production systems to critical situations (pandemics, natural disasters, and so on)? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What is the net flow of money between the EU and the Majority World in each sector of economic activities, how do these compare to the aid flows for development and finance for climate action?

- How should the EU reform the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and the European Investment Bank so they better meet ambitions for global green transition, in particular in the Majority World?

- How can EU policy identify viable mechanisms for private–public cooperation to mitigate investment risks for climate solutions in the Majority World?

Cluster 4. EU influence on the Majority World: localisation

- How can the EU support the development of grassroots-level and participatory democracy institutions in the Majority World?

- Can power shifting (localisation) for equitable partnerships be stimulated in the Majority World without compromising current monitoring and control frameworks?

- How can EU policy instruments and funding promote a green and just transition in Majority World countries — actively addressing endemic difficulties such as institutional fragmentation, corruption, lack of local capacities and intersectoral conflict?

- Does system strengthening in the Majority World contribute to reduced fragility through an enhanced social contract?

- How do EU policies, programmes and projects engage and involve target communities in the Majority World, from design to implementation?

- How can EU policies on localisation support the design of land governance systems that encourage investment without negatively impacting local communities?

- How can EU policies on localisation contribute to people-owned energy development in Majority World countries?

- How can EU policy on localisation protect community land tenure in the Majority World?

- How can EU policy on localisation support ownership or uptake of policies by target populations?

- How can EU policy identify what monitoring and control framework (modus, instruments) would optimally support the localisation agenda?

- How should EU policy consider the attitude and level of understanding and support of target communities and/or beneficiaries of policies and projects focused on the Majority World?

- How can the EU ensure participation of target groups and/or beneficiaries in the design, planning and execution of policies related to the Majority World?

- How can the EU promote a better understanding of partnership mechanisms and support actions that allow local communities in the Majority World to maximise the benefits?

- How can the EU ensure that it undertakes a robust assessment of the needs and priorities of the local beneficiaries of its policies in the Majority World?

- How do EU policies incorporate the concept of partnerships within societies in Majority World countries, for example partnerships between church and state, partnerships between the state and communities, and the role of civil society in community partnerships?

- How can the EU develop and apply in-depth and multi-disciplinary knowledge of the ecological and socioeconomic realities on the ground in the Majority World?

Cluster 5. EU influence on the Majority World: natural resources

- How can EU policy support control of groundwater depletion in Majority World countries and help identify and support other mechanisms to conserve groundwater?

- Are EU policies on natural resources protecting or damaging the access rights and entitlements of those in the Majority World who protect biodiversity, such as Indigenous Peoples and local communities?

- How can EU policy support Majority World countries to achieve green transitions while maintaining their national development objectives?

- How can EU policy promote rainwater harvesting as a water crisis mitigator and climate change adaptation measure in rain-intensive Majority World countries (for example, India, Bangladesh, Philippines)?

- How can EU policies support and facilitate the transition to a circular economy and the reuse of waste as a resource in Majority World countries?

- How can EU policy on natural resources identify and support actions and incentives to limit deforestation in the Majority World (beyond existing schemes such as REDD)?

- How can EU policy on natural resources support the mapping and strengthening of public institutions in environmental law, development and enforcement in the Majority World?

- What are the best ways to engage and convince EU policymakers and donors about the need to invest in the Triple Nexus (water–food–energy) approach in the Majority World?

- How can EU policy support a reduction in excessive extraction and unsustainable use of biodiversity and ecosystem services in the Majority World — without severely impacting the livelihoods of local communities?

- How can EU policy address population pressures in Majority World countries, particularly considering existing use of natural resources?

- Has EU direct budget support to Majority World governments improved the management of natural resources?

- How can the EU support increasing the awareness of policymakers and the general public in the Majority World so as to achieve conservation goals and the sustainable use of biodiversity?

- How can the expansion of protected areas in the Majority World take place without displacing Indigenous Peoples from their lands, as has been the case in many countries? What are the implications for future EU policies and action?

- How can EU policy support better cooperative governance of international rivers in the Majority World, particularly in relation to sustainable water management in the face of climate change?

- What is the status of water policy and the development and enforcement of related law in the Majority World? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What are the root causes, drivers and effects of biodiversity degradation and loss in the Majority World linked to EU policies?

- How can the EU support innovative wetland management policy and laws in Majority World countries?

- How does the EU measure the negative environmental impacts of mega development projects it funds, and what actions should be taken in future to reduce these impacts?

- How can the EU promote the development of payments for ecosystem services policies and legal frameworks in the Majority World?

- What practical, concrete (not theoretical) on-the-ground steps can the EU support to address governance and organisational challenges in implementing sustainable development policies in Majority World countries, including policies such as national biodiversity plans and national development plans?

- What are the best approaches to improve and strengthen stakeholders' integration (including the participation of local communities) in biodiversity conservation and sustainable utilisation in the Majority World?

- What are locally feasible actions to better manage waste from households and industries in Majority World countries?

- What strategies should the EU employ to ensure that policy and projects related to the Majority World include consideration of the climate–biodiversity–society nexus, and the tensions and synergies related to it?

- What practical, science-based and simple methodologies can be used to generate knowledge and innovation related to biodiversity values, ecosystem functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss? How can the EU support the better dissemination of this information to societies and policymakers in the Majority World?

- What mechanisms can be devised to mitigate the issue of invasive alien species, including actions to regulate the introduction of new ones? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What biocentric policies on restoration, food systems and territorial management can be put in place to favour collective rights and mobile and nomadic livelihoods in the Majority World? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What are the risks and opportunities for the Majority World of the growth in demand for lithium and other electric battery materials? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What are the priorities for soil restoration in the Majority World? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What are the most significant trends in EU wildlife policy and law development, and how do they impact on the Majority World?

- What are the least and most cost-effective policy options for circular economy design and e-waste management in Majority World contexts? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- How do EU-supported land policies in Majority World countries contribute towards sustainability, peace, prosperity and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- How can the EU support watershed restoration in Majority World countries, and what should be the priorities for action?

- How can the EU support the creation of a mechanism to increase area coverage of ecologically representative, networked and effectively managed protected areas and other effective conservation measures in the Majority World, with special emphasis on technical, administrative and financial aspects?

- How can the EU support improved, more responsible and more equitable land governance, and wider property rights in the Majority World (in particular Least Developed Countries)?

- How can the EU support effective mechanisms to improve the contribution of biodiversity and ecosystem services to sustainability and wellbeing in Majority World countries?

- How and why should the EU identify and help address the threat posed by environmental degradation to progress on sustainable development in Majority World countries? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

Cluster 6. EU influence on the Majority World: monitoring, reporting, evaluation and learning (MREL), evidence, data and knowledge management

- How can the EU support the development of alternative knowledge systems incorporating traditional ecological knowledge?

- Development assistance from the EU to the Majority World has been in place for many years. What is the evidence of positive impacts from these financial transfers, given the current state of development in many Majority World countries?

- How does the EU measure and quantify policy coherence for (sustainable) development?

- How is the EU supporting monitoring, reporting, evaluation and learning (MREL) related to adaptation in the Majority World in order to track progress at the national and global levels?

- How can EU policies support the mainstreaming of free, prior and informed consent protocols across donors, implementing partners and national governments?

- How can EU policy support and enhance capacity-building in the Majority World through university linkages and collaboration?

- Are people-centred knowledge and oral knowledge systems considered by EU development policies?

- What is the impact of EU policies on institution building and strengthening — are they contributing to building solid and effective institutions in the Majority World?

- What arrangements can be made to support developing country researchers to participate in international research, design and development projects on an equal footing?

- How can the EU cooperate with Majority World countries on research and innovation?

- Is the EU adopting decolonisation frameworks, and if so, how are EU decolonisation frameworks shaping the conservation of natural landscapes, including knowledge, attitudes and practices, in the Majority World?

- What hierarchies of evidence of knowledge are EU policies observing?

- How can EU policy identify what actions are needed to build the capacity of informal economy organisations in policy engagements in the Majority World?

- Most journals are EU-based. To what extent are journals based in the Majority World used to inform global policy direction?

- How should EU policymakers identify the most vulnerable people in Majority World countries, and what indicators are most useful?

- What are examples of effective scientific cooperation between the EU and Majority World countries, and is it possible to distinguish key features?

- What frameworks for regular exchanges between EU policymakers and Majority World stakeholders should/can be used throughout interventions/policy processes to ensure quality information?

- How should the EU identify, analyse and mitigate the unintended effects of its policies and interventions in Majority World countries?

- How is it possible to ensure that the new topics of artificial intelligence, augmented reality, big data, data mining, and so on, can be incorporated into Majority World educational systems at different levels (from primary to university) to prepare teachers and students in these issues of importance?

Cluster 7. EU influence on the Majority World: gender, equality, and human rights

- How can the EU ensure justice, equity and human rights for all citizens in the Majority World?

- How can the EU promote system strengthening to ensure increased access to (social) services in the Majority World in a sustainable way?

- Do EU policies on gender equality and human rights empower poor and vulnerable sections of society in the Majority World, or do they further intensify marginalisation?

- What actions can be taken by the EU to ensure safe return to their home countries for refugees who fled to neighbouring countries and now wish to go back? (For example, supporting the Rohingya population currently in Bangladesh to return safely to Myanmar.)

- Could the positive results of (some) of the EU cash-based approaches in humanitarian aid also be applied to development assistance in general?

- How do EU policies on gender equality and human rights impact environmental justice and Indigenous rights in the Majority World?

- How can EU policies on gender equality and human rights leverage the work of grassroots environmental defenders, end the violence they face and efficiently bridge the gaps between grassroots communities, the private sector and decision makers to reach socio-environmental justice?

- How can the EU support the development of collaborative and inclusive platforms that bring together stakeholders who may hold conflicting priorities?

- How does the gender digital divide impact women who are informal cross-border traders in the Majority World, and in particular in Least Developed Countries? What are the implications for future EU policies and action?

- How can the EU and Majority World countries act together to ensure that Majority World citizens can access the jobs made available by the transition to a green and climate-smart economy (green jobs), including in the renewable energy sector?

- How can EU policies, initiatives and projects decrease societal disparities in Majority World countries?

- How is gender discrimination affecting development prospects in Majority World countries? What are the implications for future EU policies and action?

- What are the impacts in the Majority World of EU policies in support of service delivery to citizens?

- What experience can the EU share about how to minimise the impacts of agricultural, municipal and industrial waste and pollution on human health and biodiversity in the Majority World?

- What are the possible outcomes of poverty in Majority World countries? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What are the possible causes of gender-based violence in rural society in Majority World countries? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What are the major limitations in understanding and integrating Majority World vulnerability considerations into the EU's policymaking and decision making processes?

- How can the EU use microcredit to promote rainwater harvesting as a tool to empower women in Majority World countries?

- How is EU support for climate change adaptation in the Majority World promoting gender-responsive and socially inclusive approaches?

- How can the EU support a balance between the energy security and climate agendas, addressing both the socioeconomic benefits for the Majority World and the risks of not acting?

- What information and analysis are available on the intersectionality between poverty, gender and equity in the Majority World? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What are EU policies on women and gender in the Majority World, and what are the challenges to their implementation?

- How can EU policies support the empowerment of rural women and young people in Majority World countries?

Cluster 8. EU influence on the Majority World: food systems

- How can EU policy on food systems address the effect of climate change on food security among smallholder farmers?

- How can EU policy on food systems support local institutions in the Majority World, such as producer/ farmer organisations, to provide the necessary production services to its members?

- How can EU policy on food systems support farmers in the Majority World to achieve an agroecological transition?

- What EU policies are in place to protect Indigenous Peoples' food systems — the oldest food systems in the world with proven resilience and sustainability?

- How does EU policy on food systems address the impact of different climate change scenarios on the preservation of food and medicines without cold storage systems?

- How can EU policy on food systems support the role of infrastructure expansion in addressing food security and market accessibility in the Majority World?

- What has been the impact of the EU's biofuel policies on food security, tropical deforestation, and Indigenous and local community land rights? (Note that bioenergy is 60% of Europe's renewable energy, and most of the rest is hydro, not wind and solar.)

- How does EU policy on food systems address the role and importance of the livestock sector in poverty reduction and economic growth in the Majority World?

- How can EU policy on food systems help to develop an entrepreneurial mindset among smallholder farmers in the Majority World?

- How can EU policy on food systems identify and address the actions required for building climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture in the Majority World?

- How can EU policy identify potential adaptation options for agro-pastoral communities living in semi-arid regions?

- How can EU policy identify and support actions and measures for agricultural industries to adopt when establishing projects in Majority World countries (and more specifically in Least Developed Countries) to ensure that their investments are relevant for local communities and promote local agricultural entrepreneurs?

- How can EU policy on food systems support behavioural change in food consumption in the Majority World — especially a dietary shift towards plant-based proteins?

- How can EU policy on food systems support farmers and producers to join farmer organisations?

- How can EU policy on food systems support the introduction and scaling up of climate-smart agriculture in the Majority World?

- How can EU policy on food systems support the transformation and digitalisation of agriculture in the Majority World?

- With rising sea levels, can fishing activities continue to sustain coastal communities in Majority World countries, and in particular in Least Developed Countries? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- Why is food quality a major threat to human security in many Majority World countries (for example, Bangladesh)? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What will be the economic impacts of climate change on those working primarily in the agricultural sector? What are the implications for EU policy in those countries?

- What measures can be taken by Majority World countries to adapt to desertification and food insecurity challenges (for example, the Sahel region)? What are the implications for EU policy in those countries?

- What are the key determinants of embracing agricultural sector insurance among smallholders and farming communities in the Majority World, and in particular in Least Developed Countries? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What are the factors influencing food security of rural households in Majority World countries? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- How can we estimate the contribution made by vegetation (cultivated, trees and natural pastures, and so on) in Majority World countries (for example, Latin America, Borneo) to atmospheric carbon fixation? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What can Majority World farmers do to adapt and continue to produce adequately in the context of climate change-induced distortion of local agricultural calendars? What are the implications for EU policy in those countries?

- What are the policies and normative work used by the EU to support Indigenous Peoples' food systems?

Cluster 9. EU influence on the Majority World: urban development

- Urban deficits (widespread instances of lower-than-average wellbeing and higher-than-average deprivation in urban centres) in the Majority World suggest rethinking the EU approach to international development, including finance. What transformative strategies are appropriate for international finance and development systems, and what could be the role of the EU in promoting such strategies?

- How can EU policy support the informal economy in the Majority World — how can it enhance, grow and promote the informal economy to integrate many urban dwellers whose life skills are not marketable in the formal urban labour market?

- How can the EU contribute to ensuring that urban infrastructure gaps in the Majority World are closed — particularly in relation to the role of off-grid, hybrid, heterogeneous infrastructure and appropriate business models for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises to service vulnerable low-income communities?

- What are the potential feasibility and costs for achieving transformative urban development that incorporates resilience in the Majority World? And what are the implications for future EU policies and practice?

- How can EU policy support the introduction of sustainability criteria in different activities in the Majority World — such as sustainability in construction?

- How can the EU support transformative urban development planning, and what are the governance, policy and financing options that should be considered?

- How can EU policymakers research and address the impact of rising water levels in lakes and oceans and their likely impact on livelihoods and settlement patterns in the Majority World?

- How can the EU ensure that adaptation actions are complemented and linked at multiple spatial scales to build resilience of broader urban systems in different geographical contexts in the Majority World?

- How can cities in the Majority World strengthen their connectedness to deliver increased economic vibrancy while also minimising the risks from climate change of social and economic harm?

- What should be the priorities for climate change adaptation promoted by the EU in urban areas in the Majority World?

- What models are appropriate to address urban challenges in the Majority World? What are the implications for future EU policies and actions?

- What can EU-funded research do to help Majority World municipalities deliver effective climate change action?

- What business models for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises have potential to enable vulnerable low-income communities to be integrated into the urban economy with possible linkages with EU and global value chains?

- What are the impacts of EU policies on movements of citizens between rural and urban contexts in the Majority World?

- How can the EU help Majority World cities to identify, prioritise and finance climate actions?

- What is the potential for the EU to support the development of a circular economy in Majority World urban systems, and what entrepreneurial skills are needed and appropriate to enable product and service development for the connectedness of cities globally?

- What are the likely impacts of urbanisation on the health and wellbeing of Majority World citizens? How should this information influence future EU policies and action?

Cluster 10. EU influence on the Majority World: other themes

- What could be the role of European policymakers in ensuring fair and free elections in Majority World countries (for example, in the coming national election in Bangladesh)?

- What are the determinants of positive outcomes from inclusive peace and reconciliation processes in Majority World countries, and how can the EU contribute?

- How can the EU support the revival of democratic institutions in Majority World countries (for example, Bangladesh)?

- How can the EU support the implementation of the One Health agenda (the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes while recognising the interconnection between people, animals, plants and their shared environment) in the Majority World to achieve a better quality of life?

- How can EU policy support the integration and inclusion of political parties and political groups in the Majority World? And how can EU policy support the role of civil society in the Majority World?

- How can EU policy contribute towards the prevention of new pandemics?

- How can EU policies help to avoid possible negative effects of increased development in the Majority World (for example, preventing the 'brain drain', climate deterioration, increased inequality and migration)?

- How are EU policy failures linked with social problems in the Majority World, such as displacement and violence?

- How are EU economic sanctions on countries in the Majority World affecting people in the Majority World (for example, Myanmar)?

5

Discussion

Through a participatory approach, we defined 230 questions, categorised into ten clusters.

The research questions are specific to the relationship between European institutions and Majority World countries, and the impact of European policy- and decision-making processes on these countries. The questions are also specific to the group of stakeholders that were engaged in the process, and although the group was large and diverse, a different selection may generate a different set of questions.

5.1 Findings

The questions ranged from very specific to very general topics, even after the questions that were too vague to be answered within a reasonable time with reasonable resources were excluded.

Questions on natural resources and their management, climate change, economics and just transition were the majority.

A limited number of questions explored very diverse avenues and could not be assigned to any of the clusters, so were allocated to the cluster 'others'. The nine questions belonging to this cluster may offer interesting insights into emerging issues.

Unexpectedly, questions relating to pandemics and security concerns did not feature strongly; only two aggregated questions made references to these issues, and only one of them directly.

Some questions have been answered to a partial extent by current and past research programmes, but we left them on the list because they remain of concern for stakeholders, and any answers that have been arrived at are deemed to be incomplete.

The discussion within the expert panel was sustained until a consensus was reached on the formulation of an aggregated question. This often led to more generalised questions, for example, in those cases where the

geographic focus was widened from a single country to the Majority World because it had a wider relevance, or where the topic of the question could be subsumed into a systemic question. Finding a carefully weighted balance between questions that were too specific and too general was a challenge.

Themes that seem to dominate much of the EU debate — as well as funding streams — over the last few years, such as the blue economy and fisheries, were notably absent. That may be due to the panel of expert stakeholders who participated, but it may also signal mismatched interpretations of the real needs of the stakeholders.

5.2 Limitations

Some limitations were expected and intrinsic to the approach. First, the research questions that emerged from the horizon-scanning exercise are specific to the stakeholders that were involved and are influenced to some extent by their demographic. (We received responses from stakeholders in 23 Majority World countries and 10 Minority World countries.) We can attempt to reduce this intrinsic limitation by expanding the stakeholder base we engage in the next iterations of the exercise and increasing diversity by recruiting stakeholders from a larger and more varied range of Majority World countries.

The panel of experts that vetted, aggregated and clustered the questions was small, and meetings were predominantly online. This was due predominantly to COVID-19 restrictions and budget limitations but also to cultural resistance.

Cultural resistance was an unexpected limitation. For many of the stakeholders that were contacted, the concept was extremely novel and thus alien and difficult to grasp. The idea that experts from Majority World countries could help shape the agenda and the priorities for research intended to influence European policy and

decision making represented a radical departure from the norm for a number of those consulted. This led to some questions about the purpose and integrity of the exercise. For this reason, some stakeholders refused to participate, while others used the opportunity to vent their distrust. For the next iterations, this will have to be addressed through a carefully constructed and disseminated information campaign.

The short timeframe and reduced budget were two important limitations, forcing us to shrink the scope of the exercise and eliminate some steps, such as in-person focus groups and work groups, and instead develop a novel and rapid version of the horizon scanning, as described in the methods section. As such, this can be considered a first successful pilot of the exercise, and ideally, the next iteration will be deployed with a much larger budget over a longer period of time.

Finally, we had to remove the ranking step of the methodology because the number of people who offered to rank the priorities, albeit high compared to the total number of respondents, was insufficient to ensure the results of the MaxDiff process were sufficiently robust.

5.3 Looking ahead: future plans

Overall, the exercise proved successful at highlighting gaps between the current approach of European institutions and policy- and decision-making processes and the needs of Majority World countries. It opens a new avenue for identifying research priorities to support policy and decision making. This can help to maximise the benefits and reduce the negative externalities of EU policy on Majority World countries and support the building of a better two-way relationship between Europe and its institutions and Majority World countries.

While they may not apply to other contexts or relationships, the questions could offer insight and inspiration for research for policy- and decision-making processes elsewhere, in particular in other developed and high-income countries.

The horizon scanning, combined with a common space, co-designed and worked on by stakeholders, could be the engine to induce transformative change in European policymaking and in the relationship between Europe and the Majority World countries.

Consolidating and expanding the scope of this exercise by making it a regular feature of the research and policymaking landscape is of paramount importance. Priorities are indeed changing, and novel challenges regularly emerge. Tackling these challenges necessitates building a genuine two-way relationship between Europe and Majority World countries, centred around the process of defining research priorities and evidence-building for policy and decision making.

In addition, this biennial exercise can serve as a valuable mechanism for Majority World researchers to regularly communicate their priorities to EU policymakers and researchers.

IIED Europe plans to undertake horizon scanning on a regular basis. Every two years, we will run the horizon-scanning exercise and make the findings openly available. We aim to make the outcomes of this horizon scanning a central reference report for defining research priorities for think tanks, research and policy advisory institutes working at the intersection between European and Majority World policymaking processes.

In parallel, we plan to develop a research and policy lab hosted by IIED Europe, a physical and virtual space for co-design and co-development, where stakeholders will keep the horizon-scanning exercise alive between iterations through debate and co-generation of innovative research questions and collaborative solutions.

Finally, we invite the EU and Majority World research community to actively engage with us and align your research programmes with the priority areas identified in this paper.

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This paper reports on a horizon-scanning project designed to help European researchers, policymakers and donors better understand how the European Union — its policies, Member States, and institutions — is influencing development in Majority World countries. By working with experts in the Majority World to identify the most pressing and relevant research questions, IIED Europe aimed to give Southern voices a say in future EU research and, therefore, policy.

The methodology and outcomes should interest researchers and policymakers both within and beyond the EU. When the 230 priority questions were grouped into themed clusters, we found they largely related to with natural resource management, climate change, economics, and just transition. Surprisingly, few questions related to pandemics or security and some themes prominent in current EU debate were largely absent, including the blue economy.

The paper closes with plans to repeat the exercise every two years, to reveal changing priorities and needs and to support dialogue between EU institutions and policy experts in the Majority World.

IIED Europe is an independent policy and research organisation registered in the Netherlands. We work with international partners to generate and communicate compelling evidence on the greatest challenges facing people in Europe and the Majority World – including the impacts of European policies and actors. By connecting people, places and perspectives, we create an informed space for urgent, transformational and just responses to emerge.

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