



Gulf Research Centre Cambridge

Knowledge for All

GULF RESEARCH MEETING

16th Gulf Research Meeting

21 - 23 July 2026 – University of Cambridge

Workshop No. 3

GCC-Sub-Saharan Africa Economic Relations: Energy, Mining, Infrastructure, and Food Security

Workshop Schedule

Workshop Directors

Dr. Damyana Bakardzhieva
Anwar Gargash Diplomatic Academy, UAE

Hubert Kinkoh
Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO), Germany

Dr. Sebastian Sons
Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient (CARPO), Germany

First Workshop Day - Wednesday, 22 July 2026

08:15 - 08:30 – Welcome coffee and tea

08:30 - 09:00 – Introduction of Workshop and Participants

Geostrategic considerations (chaired by Sebastian Sons)

09:00 - 09:45 – Paper 1: Understanding the capacity gap: a comparative analysis of the Saudi and Emirati economic diplomacies in sub-Saharan Africa

Author: Corrado Cok

Discussant: Phelix Adwar

09:45 - 10:30 – Paper 2: Beyond Competition: Why the Middle East and China Should Work Together in Renewable Energy Investment in Kenya

Author – Phelix Adwar

Discussant: Corrado Cok

10:30 - 10:45 – Coffee and tea break

Food security (chaired by Hubert Kinkoh)

10:45 - 11:30 – Paper 3: Shared Futures, Shared Risks: Repositioning Nigeria–Gulf Relations in the Era of Energy Transition and Food Insecurity

Author - Ukertor Gabriel MOTI

Discussant: Elamin Akoy

11:30 - 12:15 – Paper 4: Building Resilient Food Systems in Sudan through GCC-Supported Renewable Energy and SMEs.

Author - Elamin Akoy, Mawahib El Tayeb Ahmed Alhaj, Asia Adlan Mohamed Abdalla, Tarig Ahmed

Discussant: Ukertor Gabriel MOTI

12:15 - 13:00 – Paper 5: From CEPA to ‘Shirika’? Mapping GCC State Foreign and Humanitarian Policies in Kenya

Author – Robert Mason

Discussant: Oshin Pandey

13:10 - 14:45 – Lunch break (lunch served at King’s College)

End of First Workshop Day

Evening Free

Second Workshop Day - Thursday, 23 July 2026

08:45 - 09:00 – Welcome coffee and tea

Sectoral perspectives (chaired by Hubert Kinkoh)

09:00 - 09:45 – Paper 6: The Port of Berbera Affair: Economic Interdependence and Lessons in Politics.

Author - Chakib Bourayou, Hamisu Salihu

Discussant: Qicheng Liu

09:45 - 10:30 – Paper 7: Aviation Statecraft: Qatar’s Niche Diplomacy and the Race for Air Connectivity in Sub-Saharan Africa

Author - Qicheng Liu

Discussant: Chakib Bourayou

10:30 - 11:15 – Paper 8: Economic Statecraft Through Development Finance: Comparing GCC ODA and Chinese Official Finance in Sub-Saharan Africa

Author – Oshin Pandey, Sami Asad

Discussant: Robert Mason

11:15 - 11:30 – Coffee and tea break

Perspectives on migration and agency (chaired by Sebastian Sons)

11:30 - 12:15 – Paper 9: Cultural and Diaspora Linkages: Omani Community in East Africa and their Economic Impact

Author – Amira Sulaiman Ali Al Harthi

Discussant: Damyana Bakardzhieva

12:15 – 13:00 – Paper 10: Digital Bridges: Emergence and Strategic Dynamics of Gulf–Africa Relations in Digital Payments

Author - Bassem Kamar, Damyana Bakardzhieva

Discussant: Sebastian Sons

13:00 - 14:00 – Lunch break (lunch is served from 13:00 till 14:00 at the workshop venue)

Closing session (chaired by Damyana Bakardzhieva)

14:00-14:30 Debrief on the workshop and its publication outcomes and questionnaires

End of Second and Final Workshop Day

19:00 Farewell Dinner at King’s College

Not in Attendance:

Paper 11: Completing the Picture: Comparing GCC states’ engagement with Arabian, Levantine, North African, and Sub-Saharan African neighbours

Author: Edgar Mwine (discussant to send written comments - Yacouba Gnegne)

Paper 12: Domestic Value Addition in Gulf-Backed Mining in Sub-Saharan Africa: Evidence for Africa-Gulf Strategic Economic Partnerships

Author: Yacouba Gnegne (discussant to send written comments - Edgar Mwine)

Paper 13: America First in Africa: How MAGA Reshapes Gulf Geoeconomics, African Agency, and Strategic Competition in a Multipolar Order

Author: Louise Khabure (discussant to send written comments – Jamal Mahmoud)

Paper 14: CC–Sub-Saharan Africa Economic Relations: Energy and Infrastructure Investments as Catalysts for Food Security

Author - Jamal Mahmoud (discussant to send written comments – Louise Khabure)

Paper 15: Legal Instruments Supporting South-South Economic Diplomacy: The Case of UAE-Kenya Relations

Author - Nimo Jirdeh Jirdeh (discussant to send written comments – Hubert Kinkoh)

Paper 16: African Intermediary Agency and Geoeconomic Statecraft: Morocco within GCC–Sub-Saharan Africa Economic Engagements

Author - Aness Ouadid (discussant to send written comments - Amira Sulaiman Ali Al Harthi)