



Strategy 2017-2021

ABOUT ECDPM

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) is an independent 'think and do tank' working on international cooperation and development policy in Europe and Africa.

Our mission is to promote forms of international cooperation that can effectively address key global development challenges and generate inclusive and sustainable solutions.

We support European, African and global actors in devising coherent, integrated policies and in ensuring effective implementation. We partner with and support responsive institutions and engaged societies, working together to establish innovative cooperation frameworks and tools.

CONTENTS

INTRODUCING OUR NEW STRATEGY	6
THE CHANGING GLOBAL CONTEXT OF OUR WORK	7
THE MAIN CHANGES IN OUR STRATEGY	9
OUR ADDED VALUE	11
OUR FOUR AREAS OF IMPACT FOR 2017–2021	13
PARTNERSHIPS FOR GREATER IMPACT	19
TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING	20
MOBILISING RESOURCES	24

INTRODUCING OUR NEW STRATEGY

A LEADING EUROPEAN ‘THINK AND DO TANK’ WORKING FOR SUSTAINABLE GLOBAL SOLUTIONS

This document spells out our ambition for the next five years to remain a leading European ‘think and do tank’ working for sustainable global solutions. It clarifies how we plan to effectively position ourselves in the rapidly evolving context of international cooperation, particularly at the European level and in relation to the widening global development agenda. It defines four transformational priorities that will help make the Global Goals for Sustainable Development (the 2030 Agenda) a reality for all:

- (i) Effective international cooperation frameworks and tools for tackling global challenges
- (ii) Legitimate and accountable public institutions and engaged societies
- (iii) Peaceful societies based on the rule of law, social cohesion and human dignity
- (iv) Sustainable economic transformation with shared prosperity and decent jobs

ECDPM is well placed to contribute to this agenda. The Centre has served since 1986 as an independent broker linking policy to practice in development contexts. We have informed and influenced European, African and international policies and forged partnerships for sustainable solutions. Our work has encompassed areas such as governance, peace and security, migration, economic transformation and trade, and food security.

The volatility of today’s world obliges us to embrace a wide range of issues and build flexibility into our strategy, in order to accommodate the shifting priorities and demands of our multiple partners. We are aware of the risks attached to such a relatively open-ended approach. Yet we are confident that we can manage this broad agenda by putting in place filters and mechanisms to operationalise the new strategy in a focused, feasible, financially viable and results-oriented manner.

The remainder of this document outlines the changing global context of our work; our way of working; the rationale underlying our four areas of impact; and the organisational changes necessary to deliver on our ambition.

Our 2017–2021 strategy is the product of a comprehensive consultative process involving our Board of Governors, our staff and programme associates, our funders and our partners in Europe, Africa and beyond. It builds on ECDPM’s 30 years of experience in international cooperation, development policy and Africa-Europe relations, and takes into account the results of extensive internal and external performance reviews examining our previous strategy period.

THE CHANGING GLOBAL CONTEXT OF OUR WORK

AN OPPORTUNITY TO QUESTION THE VALIDITY OF CURRENT FRAMEWORKS FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The past 15 years have seen remarkable progress on several human development indicators. Global poverty has dropped spectacularly, though the 'bottom billion' is still very much a reality and huge numbers of people still live in fragile and conflict-ridden environments. Many developing countries nonetheless have achieved impressive economic growth. New players have emerged as economic and political powerhouses, producing a multipolar world in which the longstanding leadership of the West and Europe in global affairs and the aid system is increasingly challenged. Africa is seeking to break out of dependency and assume ownership of its own development agenda at the continental, regional and national levels. This provides an opportunity to question the validity of current frameworks for international cooperation and gradually put in place stronger, more symmetric partnerships based on mutual interests and accountability.

Societies are also on the move, creating opportunities for transformational change. Citizens and civil society organisations across the globe are becoming more and more vocal, demanding accountability and fighting for human dignity and rights. They are dissatisfied with the limited success of both democratic and authoritarian regimes in delivering high-quality public goods and services, managing national resources transparently and equitably, and ensuring that economic growth translates into job creation and shared prosperity. They are pushing for far more inclusive and accountable public institutions at all levels. Positive dynamics can also be observed among private-sector actors, which increasingly recognise the importance of inclusive and sustainable markets. The same applies to subnational authorities, which are displaying growing intent to become effective and accountable development players.

Major trends in Africa intersect with this changing global and societal landscape. Rapid urbanisation, bulging youth populations and new opportunities offered by technology can be drivers of positive change. Migration, a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, illustrates the strong interdependence between development challenges and domestic concerns within the European Union (EU).

Today's world is a volatile and fragile place, affected by major global risks linked to security, migration and refugee flows, energy, finance, demography, food and nutrition insecurity as well as depleting ecosystems. In the face of these risks, global politics seems gridlocked, lacking effective frameworks and institutions for tackling the myriad issues that transcend national boundaries. In many developing countries, unequal distribution of the benefits of globalisation and growth constitute a time bomb. In developed countries too, as the Brexit vote and the election of Trump as the US president show, citizens are highly sceptical about government responses to globalisation and about their own political elites. Inequality is on the rise, hastened by major austerity drives, while economic growth remains sluggish. Not surprisingly, the 2016 World Economic Forum noted concern about the proliferation of protest movements, reflecting a growing gap between public institutions and citizen expectations.

This demonstrates, if anything, the need to find more effective ways of organising international cooperation in order to achieve the Global Goals and make progress on other core economic, foreign policy and security interests, as reflected in key EU and African policy documents. Over the next five years, ECDPM will therefore focus on the transition from primarily aid-driven partnerships to international cooperation approaches that are based on mutual interests and accountability. This will be a politically and technically challenging exercise. A 'business-as-usual' attitude will not suffice. Progress requires big qualitative changes in policymaking and in cooperation, and in the way the growing number of institutions involved in the global agenda function.

THE MAIN CHANGES IN OUR STRATEGY

**OUR STRATEGY
GUARANTEES THE
CONTINUITY OF OUR
CURRENT ACTIVITIES,
BUT ALSO EQUIPS US
TO ADAPT**

Our performance in the previous strategy period

In preparation for our 2017–2021 strategy we assessed our performance in the past five-year period and asked a team of independent evaluators to do the same. Both reviews highlighted areas of improvement, but concluded that we performed well these past five years.

“Overall, the evaluation concludes that ECDPM has performed well throughout the review period. ECDPM is a well-known, highly visible, independent and non-partisan ‘think and do tank’ that contributes meaningfully to a range of development-relevant policy processes within and outside of the EU institutions. Its pertinence and relevance to informing – and sometimes shaping – the European agenda distinguishes it as one of the leading development-focused think tanks in its field.”

“ECDPM’s support has resulted in the Centre gaining growing trust from a range of African institutions, which has in turn helped ECDPM gain critical insights into African change dynamics.”

External Evaluation, 2016

The results of these performance assessments encouraged us to develop a strategy that guarantees the continuity of our current activities. Yet, it must also equip us to adapt, to remain a credible and effective actor in the complex and rapidly evolving global context. Our 2017–2021 strategy therefore introduces some new priorities and changes in the way we organise ourselves to deliver results.

New strategic priorities in 2017–2021

- (i) We will remain engaged in cooperation between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States, in accordance with our original mandate; yet our primary focus will be on Europe-Africa relations.
- (ii) We will fully incorporate North Africa into our geographic remit. This will complement our work in other regions of the continent and help us to foster more effective and mutually beneficial forms of cooperation between Europe and the whole of Africa.
- (iii) To adequately reflect the multi-actor nature of the 2030 Agenda, we will deepen our engagement with government, intergovernmental and diplomatic actors, with private-sector actors and interest groups, and with farmers’ associations, civil society

networks and local authorities. We recognise that development challenges need to be addressed with these actors at different levels – global, regional, national and local. To avoid the risk of spreading our efforts too thinly, we will seek to identify the right mix of actors and appropriate levels of engagement for each of our policy processes.

- (iv) The prevailing political and economic conditions in Europe compel us to consider more deeply the internal factors that shape European external action outcomes. Foreign affairs is ‘coming home’, so to speak. As a European foundation, ECDPM is well placed to analyse core aspects of the domestic policy arena, at both the EU institution and EU member state level. We will also engage more with the non-traditional players that intervene in European external action.

How we will organise ourselves to deliver our strategy

- (i) We will organise our work in multidisciplinary and more flexible delivery structures. We will also seek to better integrate cross-cutting issues into our various work streams, to strengthen the rigour of our analyses and the relevance of our engagement. This applies particularly to gender, cultural sensitivity, environmental sustainability (including climate change) and policy coherence for (sustainable) development.
- (ii) We will prioritise learning, accountability and transparency in order to strengthen organisational efficiency. We will establish a Learning and Quality Support unit to assist all programme staff and the Centre as a whole with monitoring and evaluation and learning. Moreover, a renewed results framework and theories of change will guide all our future work, to strengthen our results orientation and maximise our development impact (see also page 20).
- (iii) We will further strengthen our cooperation in and with Africa at different levels.
- (iv) Partnerships form a crucial element of the 2030 Agenda. We will invest more in a select group of partners and strategic alliances at the European, African and global levels for greater relevance, outreach and impact (see also page 19).
- (v) The scope and depth of our engagement on our four priority areas will depend on our ability to mobilise financial resources. We will strengthen our fundraising efforts by a range of measures (see also page 24).
- (vi) Our organisation has always been very diverse, housing over 25 nationalities. This promotes creativity and flexibility and stimulates discussion, which is why diversity will continue to be a priority. We will pay particular attention to achieving more diversity and gender balance in our management and on our Board.
- (vii) Our investments in communications and knowledge management in the 2012–2016 strategy period have paid off, helping us deliver better results. In the coming years we will build on this so that communications and knowledge management work even better for our programmes and for the Centre as a whole.

OUR ADDED VALUE

OUR COMBINATION OF THREE CORE ROLES DISTINGUISHES US FROM OTHER THINK TANKS

Many organisations, countries and people are working to tackle global challenges, against a backdrop of declining resources for development. Our added value is defined by five unique attributes, which we will use to maintain our position as a leading European ‘think and do tank’ working for global solutions. These are (1) our core roles; (2) our focus on implementation; (3) our way of thinking and working politically; (4) our ability to bridge different policy domains; and (5) our 30 years of experience in Africa-Europe relations.

“ECDPM has consolidated its unique niche as a facilitator, honest broker, convener and supplier of expert thinking. Over and above providing the right analytical input to the right policy actors at the right time, ECDPM moves beyond the generation of knowledge that is the bread and butter of traditional think tanks, and actively brokers policy change – which is why it merits the title think and do tank. It has also achieved considerable progress in ‘thinking and working more politically’, which has proven to be a key strategic choice.”

External Evaluation, 2016

(1) Our core roles

Ever since ECDPM was created in 1986, three roles have been central to our work and proven their effectiveness. These will therefore remain key for achieving impact under our new strategy:

- (i) Generating politically-informed, evidence-based and practical knowledge
- (ii) Facilitating uptake of knowledge by key public and private actors through dialogue, implementation support, smart communications and knowledge management
- (iii) Acting as a non-partisan broker, leveraging our expertise, knowledge and network in Europe and Africa

Our combination of these three roles distinguishes us from other think tanks. We call ourselves a ‘think and do tank’ because we go beyond policy research and analysis to also serve as an independent advisor to policymakers and practitioners. We bring together different organisations and people, because dialogue and cooperation are often required to arrive at impactful solutions.

(2) Our focus on implementation

To make policies work, it is essential to focus on implementation. Our research and analysis therefore looks at what works and what does not, and at what obstacles may hamper effective implementation of policies. This ‘do’ part of our work is not a matter of providing traditional technical assistance or carrying out projects in the field. We support local actors in finding suitable and sustainable solutions to their specific development problems, allowing space for experimentation and learning by doing. The precise modalities we use differ according to the nature of the processes involved. Yet we know from experience that this type of work ‘in the kitchen’ of policymaking and policy implementation requires relationships based on trust, regular dialogue with stakeholders and a willingness to engage over a long period of time.

(3) Thinking and working politically

Achieving change hinges on a variety of actors and factors. It is therefore important to look at power relations, political and economic interests, and incentives – though this often means covering sensitive ground. Our political economy analysis approach is a major asset in this regard. In the next five years, we will incorporate this methodology more systematically into all of our work streams.

(4) Bridging policy domains for greater coherence

Rather than being a thematic or sector specialist, our niche is located ‘where sustainable development meets international relations’. Examples include the nexus between foreign and security policy on the one hand and development and humanitarian assistance on the other; between human rights and development; between trade on the one hand and aid and economic diplomacy on the other; between economic transformation and inclusive development; between food security and sustainable ecosystems; and between migration and development. Linking up these policy domains – which have often been addressed with a ‘silo’ mentality – is a crucial challenge for all actors in international cooperation. It requires out-of-the-box thinking, multi-actor dialogue processes and a joint search for feasible solutions adapted to contextual realities.

(5) Our experience in Africa-Europe relations

Our added value also lies in our 30 years of experience working on Africa-Europe relations. The external evaluation concluded that our knowledge of European and African institutions is a quality that sets us most apart from other organisations operating in the same policy areas.

OUR FOUR AREAS OF IMPACT FOR 2017–2021

AREAS OF TRANSFORMATION WHICH ARE VITAL FOR PROGRESS ON THE GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT AGENDA



Our 2017–2021 strategy is embedded in four major areas of transformation which are vital for progress on the global development agenda and will play a major role in Africa-Europe relations: (1) effective international cooperation frameworks and tools for tackling global challenges; (2) legitimate and accountable public institutions and engaged societies; (3) peaceful societies based on the rule of law, social cohesion and human dignity; and (4) sustainable economic transformation with shared prosperity and decent jobs.

In working towards these four strategic priorities, we will contribute directly to the Global Goals of the 2030 Agenda, particularly Global Goals 2 (zero hunger), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 10 (reduced inequalities), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships for the goals). Indirectly, our activities will contribute to Global Goals 1 (no poverty), 5 (gender equality), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action) and 15 (life on land).



01



Effective international cooperation frameworks and tools for tackling global challenges

Effective international cooperation frameworks and tools for tackling global challenges

Rationale

The 2030 Agenda was agreed in September 2015, so the focus now is on how to implement it. Several institutions with a central position in our 2017–2021 strategy are rethinking ways and means of engaging in international cooperation. These include the African Union, Africa’s regional economic communities, the ACP Group of States, the EU institutions and member states, civil society organisations and local authorities. For all these actors, the exercise involves complex institutional change processes and requires major innovations in partnership frameworks, in delivery strategies for global goods, in funding modalities (beyond aid) and in the tools deployed.

ECDPM’s added value

ECDPM is well placed to assist in such change processes. Over the past decade, we have closely followed the evolving EU external action architecture, generating knowledge on how to improve overall coherence and impact and supporting implementation of innovative policies. We have contributed, for example, to strengthening EU approaches to conflict prevention and to implementation of EU policies on civil society, local authorities and the private sector. We have engaged with African actors, including the African Union and regional economic communities, supporting development of their agendas and frameworks for international cooperation. We have also stimulated innovative thinking on how the partnership between the EU and ACP Group of States could be modernised.

Identifying food security as a priority concern in our 2012–2016 strategy allowed us to test how a knowledge broker like us could deliver added value on global public goods. This led to productive experiences that could be replicated with other public goods.

Objectives

Our work on international cooperation frameworks and tools for tackling global challenges is highly valued by our institutional partners and was commended by the external evaluation, which is why we aim to pursue and deepen it in the next five years. We will address the following objectives in the 2017–2021 period:

- (i) **Helping the EU deliver more coherent and integrated external action**
Specific pressing issues that we plan to address relate to creating a stronger political partnership between Europe and Africa; analysing the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy, the development and implementation of a future EU budget, and the revision of the European Consensus on Development. We will also seek to create stronger synergies between EU member states, so as to pool resources and enhance leverage and impact.
- (ii) **Addressing the link between migration and development**
We will focus particularly on the crucial link between migration and development in the EU-Africa and EU policy context. As an independent broker, ECDPM can play a relevant role in fostering inclusive dialogues and brokering mutually beneficial solutions – beyond mere security responses.

- (iii) **Modernising key policy frameworks for managing international partnerships**
Partnerships play a big role in the 2030 Agenda, and they will be key to achieving many of the Global Goals. Our priorities in this regard include reviewing the partnership between the ACP and the EU; deepening the political partnership between the EU and Africa; and bringing about a coherent integration of North Africa into EU external action for better development results.
- (iv) **Supporting the consolidation of continental and regional processes in Africa**
We will focus primarily on governance, security and agricultural transformation processes, as well as food security and nutrition and climate-smart and environmentally sustainable agriculture and food systems. Key processes we will look at include the African Governance Architecture, the African Peace and Security Architecture and the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme.
- (v) **Adapting the toolbox for international cooperation**
Putting in place effective means of implementing the global agenda is of crucial importance. We aim to strengthen existing tools and contribute new ones, for example, for more solid forms of political dialogue; alternative sources of development finance; domestic resource mobilisation; economic diplomacy; and partnerships between government institutions, the private sector, civil society and local authorities.

02



Legitimate and accountable public institutions and engaged societies

Legitimate and accountable public institutions and engaged societies

Rationale

Institutions play a significant role in economic growth and inclusive development. Countries' developmental track records are hugely influenced by the quality of their institutions, the 'rules of the game' and the incentives affecting how actors function in an economy, the political sphere and interactions between the state and society. Institutions are the vehicles through which public goods and services are delivered. It is via them that citizens can participate in public life, that human rights can be claimed and collective action can be undertaken to address core concerns.

ECDPM's added value

Capacity and institutional development challenges have occupied a central place in our mandate from the outset. Building on our 30 years of experience, we have gradually adopted a more systemic and politically savvy approach to institutional development.

Objectives

Our various programmes and projects will work on institutional and capacity development with the following objectives in mind:

- (i) **Understanding when and how capacity can be developed in a sustainable way**
- (ii) **Exploring the 'demand side' within societies for legitimate and accountable institutions in terms of interactions and bargaining processes involving public authorities**

- (iii) **Analysing the key role played by political and other institutions in change processes**
- (iv) **Sensitising donor agencies to the risks of technocratic approaches for ‘fixing’ formal institutions**
- (v) **Promoting political economy approaches to support institutional change**
Recent ECDPM political economy studies have proven highly valuable. These include a study on the drivers of and constraints to regional integration in Africa and a feasibility analysis of a future partnership between the ACP Group of States and the EU.

To focus our work and ensure impact, five categories of institutions and actors occupy centre stage in our 2017–2021 strategy:

- (i) **EU institutions and actors involved in international cooperation**
We will pay special attention to establishing constructive relations between EU development actors and other core communities in the areas of foreign policy, internal markets, security, home affairs and climate. We will also seek to empower EU delegations to deliver results, as these frontline actors have increasingly complex mandates.
- (ii) **The African Union and regional economic communities**
Both the African Union and Africa’s regional economic communities are assuming greater ownership of their own development agendas, seeking to respond in a coherent and integrated way to myriad interlinking challenges, such as peace and security, governance, economic transformation, trade, food security, climate change and migration.
- (iii) **State institutions and subnational authorities at various levels**
State institutions and subnational authorities could potentially function as a critical link between central government and citizens, or as catalysts for promoting local democracy and inclusive approaches to territorial development.
- (iv) **Civil society and citizen movements**
Civil society and citizen movements are governance actors, as they can help ensure the transparency of development policies, domestic accountability and respect for human rights. Moreover, they are ‘co-producers’ of public goods and services, according to the logic of multi-actor partnerships for effective delivery of development outcomes.
- (v) **Private sector**
Our focus concerning private-sector actors will be mainly on the role of the private sector ‘for’ development, as projected in the 2030 Agenda.

03



Peaceful societies based on the rule of law, social cohesion and human dignity

Peaceful societies based on the rule of law, social cohesion and human dignity

Rationale

Peace and security are global public goods and prerequisites for inclusive and sustainable development. The next decade will see the international community confronted with many situations of conflict and fragility. These will require collective global action based on a deep understanding of underlying problems, comprehensive approaches for preventing conflict, and resolutions that take root causes of conflicts into account. Such situations also highlight the critical importance of the rule of law and rights-based approaches to development, alongside the need to build peaceful and inclusive societies. However, just working to improve governance conditions will not suffice. There is also a need for policies that promote social justice and cohesion by providing social protection, creating decent jobs, fostering gender equality and strengthening resilience.

ECDPM's added value

ECDPM has established itself as a knowledge broker in areas where development meets the peace and security and foreign policy domains. We have engaged in processes that have helped define comprehensive approaches for fragile environments. We contributed to consolidation of the African Peace and Security Architecture and the African Governance Architecture, and we worked to strengthen Europe's overall capacity for comprehensive approaches to conflict prevention and peace-building. We have also worked on economic governance (in natural resources management, for example) and on the rule of law, human rights concerns and issues of inequality (through our work on decentralisation, local governance, civil society and territorial development). Our engagement in the food security domain, moreover, clearly demonstrates the link between these areas and political stability and social cohesion.

Objectives

Four work streams in our new strategy will particularly contribute to advancing peaceful societies based on the rule of law, social cohesion and human dignity:

- (i) **Consolidating African processes and mechanisms for addressing peace, security, governance and development concerns in a coherent and integrated manner**
- (ii) **Strengthening the EU's overall capacity for responding to situations of conflict and fragility through more comprehensive approaches**
- (iii) **Promoting democratic and economic governance conditions for peaceful societies**
We will focus on the rule of law, the inclusive quality of policy formulation and implementation processes, space for citizens' voice and participation, as well as respect for political, social and economic rights, especially of women.
- (iv) **Fostering territorial approaches to local development and democracy**
Territorial approaches can be a strategic tool for reducing inequalities, fostering social cohesion and creating additional wealth and employment.



Sustainable economic transformation with shared prosperity and decent jobs

Sustainable economic transformation with shared prosperity and decent jobs

Rationale

Economic transformation is crucial for achieving sustainable, inclusive and equitable development in Africa. Economic growth and poverty reduction cannot be sustained with a continued dependence on low-value primary commodities. A structural shift is needed towards economic diversification, with high-value products and services that can compete in global markets and create high-quality jobs for expanding populations. While growth is crucial to eradicate poverty, the international agenda clearly stresses the need for economic development to be inclusive (for women and young people in particular), equitable (leading to shared prosperity) and sustainable (particularly in terms of protecting human health and ecosystems). Here, too, there is a critical link with effective governance. Africa will not achieve an economic transformation without economic governance, including the rule of law, property rights, stable business conditions and inclusive and accountable governments.

ECDPM's added value

ECDPM has consolidated its position as a respected knowledge broker on economic development, trade and regional integration and on sustainable natural resources management. One of the ways we have done this is by applying a political economy analysis approach. We have worked closely with private-sector actors, farmers' associations and professional and interest groups and examined how they can play a developmental role. We have also incorporated the spatial dimension of development into our work, examining the potential of corridors and territorial approaches to local development.

Objectives

The following work streams will contribute to advancing sustainable economic transformation over the next five years:

- (i) **Making agriculture and regional and global value chains in natural resources (mining and extractive industries) work for economic transformation, 'green' growth and inclusive development**
To achieve impact, approaches will have to combine economic and political dimensions, such as the rule of law, human rights, corporate social responsibility and policy coherence for (sustainable) development. We will also deepen our work on climate-smart agriculture.
- (ii) **Promoting economic diversification and transformation through industrialisation and development of services**
- (iii) **Supporting trade and promising regional integration dynamics**
- (iv) **Creating a business-friendly climate for the private sector, particularly at the domestic level**
- (v) **Unleashing the development potential of territories, complementing national and regional efforts**

PARTNERSHIPS FOR GREATER IMPACT

COMBINED EFFORTS ARE MORE POWERFUL THAN ANY UNCOORDINATED, INDIVIDUAL ACTION COULD EVER BE

No organisation can bring about change alone. Partnerships have therefore been a cornerstone of our work since our establishment in 1986. Partners inspire new ideas and enable systematic sharing of experiences and best practices. Moreover, combined efforts are more powerful than any uncoordinated, individual action could ever be.

To accomplish the Global Goals by 2030, partnerships will be more crucial than ever before. For that reason, the last of the 17 Global Goals is dedicated entirely to partnerships. New and more sophisticated coalitions will be required for impact, but also to attract funding. We will invest more in a select group of strategic partners and alliances at both the Centre-wide and programme levels in Europe, in Africa and beyond. We will work to establish three types of partnerships in particular:

- (i) Alliances with institutional partners that allow us to interact at the political level. Examples are alliances with the African Union and the regional economic communities in Africa
- (ii) Knowledge-driven partnerships, for example, knowledge platforms that connect a number of African and EU actors, or European institutes specialising in Africa
- (iii) Pragmatic partnerships linked to our work streams. These may be based on shared interests, the pooling of resources or opportunities for greater outreach and impact

In Europe, we will continue to work with a select group of recognised institutes and networks, such as the European Think Tanks Group. We will also continue to share work streams with our current and new partners. In Africa, we will expand and deepen our institutional and strategic partnerships with leading African centres of excellence, private-sector organisations and civil society networks. This will intensify our involvement in the co-creation of relevant policies and practices.

In addition, we will expand our network of programme associates and further develop our Young International Professionals (YIP) programme, which offers young researchers from Africa practical training in international cooperation and development policy research. Participating researchers bring in return specific content expertise and a strong sense of how young people from Africa view the issues we are working on, which helps challenge our views. The programme also aims to build and strengthen relationships with partner institutes in Africa. We will recruit several young professionals in cooperation with African organisations, with the researchers dividing their time between ECDPM and our partner institute. Creation of an alumni network will connect the participating researchers and keep the dialogue going after they leave to continue their careers elsewhere.

TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING

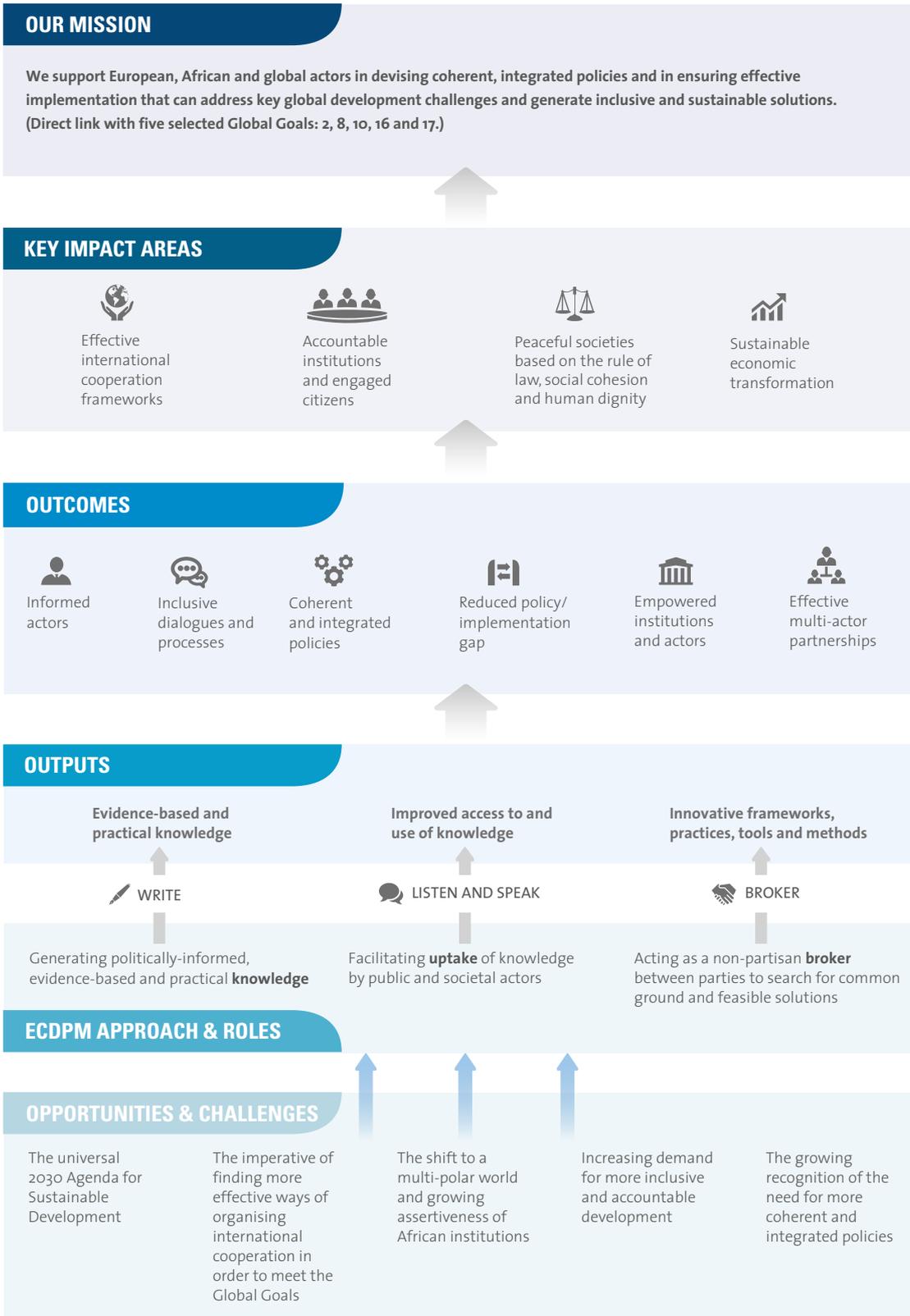
TRANSPARENCY, ACCOUNTABILITY AND LEARNING ARE FOREMOST VALUES AT ECDPM

Transparency, accountability and learning are foremost values at ECDPM. As a 'think and do tank' we have a strong responsibility to be transparent about our operations and accountable for the results of our work. Prioritising learning enhances our organisational efficiency. Learning also informs our strategic programming and ensures that we deliver on our ambitions, while helping us create more valuable knowledge and practices that can be shared with and by our partners.



Figure 1. ECDPM's Centre-wide theory of change (ToC) structure

ECDPM THEORY OF CHANGE



ASSUMPTIONS

Five key factors influencing change (as a non-linear, long-term transformation process):

- power and politics
- societal demand
- receptive and capable institutions
- actors open to cooperate
- relevant and practical knowledge

Write: includes research, policy briefs, discussion papers, studies, evaluations, blogs, newsletters and websites.

Listen and speak: includes networking and contributions to policy events, seminars, multi-stakeholder consultations and strategic discussions.

Broker: includes support to and advisory services for networks, coalitions and key policy actors, as well as innovative practices, frames and methods.

The specific ToCs for the main work streams describe the envisaged links between our activities and the all-Centre outcomes.

Figure 2. ECDPM's Centre-wide theory of change (ToC)

Although we have functional systems and practices in place to ensure transparency, accountability and learning, our 2017–2021 strategy introduces several new tools and guidelines. These are the following:

(i) **A dedicated Learning and Quality Support unit**

The unit will be responsible for planning and review, monitoring and evaluation, quality support and learning.

(ii) **A renewed results framework and theories of change**

A renewed results framework (see Figure 3 on page 23) and theories of change will guide all our future work. An overarching theory of change has been drawn up for the Centre as a whole (see Figure 1 and 2 on page 20 and 21), while specific theories of change will be developed to help us identify the right path for each of the policy processes we engage in. The theories of change will be reviewed on a regular basis, to ensure they keep step with changing realities.

In accordance with best practice, we will continue to provide financial and narrative reports on an annual basis. Furthermore, we will conduct an internal midterm review of our strategy and both an internal assessment and an external evaluation of our performance towards the end of the strategy period.

RESULTS FRAMEWORK

OUR MISSION	ECDPM APPROACH & ROLES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	INDICATORS	OUTCOMES	COMMON QUALITATIVE POINTERS	KEY IMPACT AREAS
Pathways to change: the main steps and actions envisaged are detailed in specific ToCs for the main work streams					The specific outcomes are detailed in specific ToCs for the main work streams		
<p>We support European, African and global actors in devising coherent, integrated policies and in ensuring effective implementation that can address key global development challenges and generate inclusive and sustainable solutions. (Direct link with five selected Global Goals: 2, 8, 10, 16 and 17.)</p>	<p>1) Write: generating politically-informed, evidence-based and practical knowledge</p>	<p>Practical policy-oriented research and strategic knowledge and information services</p>	<p>Evidence-based and practical knowledge</p>	<p># policy briefs, discussion papers, studies, evaluations, blogs, newsletters and websites</p>	<p>Knowledge: informed actors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhanced availability and access to policy-oriented knowledge and information (incidence of changed perceptions attributed – in part – to ECDPM's work) Practical use of policy-oriented knowledge and information (number of actors using materials, frames and approaches resulting from ECDPM's work) 	<p>Effective international cooperation frameworks</p> <p>Accountable institutions and engaged citizens</p> <p>Peaceful societies based on the rule of law, social cohesion and human dignity</p> <p>Sustainable economic transformation</p>
	<p>2) Listen and speak: facilitating uptake of knowledge by public and societal actors</p>	<p>Promoting the use of knowledge and initiating, informing and framing multi-actor dialogue processes</p>	<p>Improved access to and use of knowledge</p>	<p># discussions, consultations and workshops</p>	<p>Inclusiveness: inclusive dialogues and processes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More effective participation in policy-processes by a range of public and private actors from Europe and Africa (incidence of actors viewing things from different angles) Winning trust of policy partners so as to be able to play a facilitating role in (sensitive) policy processes Inputs of weaker actors are taken more seriously (priorities are recognised and made part of the negotiation process) 	
	<p>3) Broker: Acting as a non-partisan broker between parties to search for common ground and feasible solutions</p>	<p>Accompanying processes and inputs in policy and implementation processes</p>	<p>Innovative frameworks, practices, tools and methods</p>	<p># inputs, support and tools</p>	<p>Policies: coherent and integrated policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to alternative or enhanced policy choices or designs (incidence of changed policies attributed – in part – to ECDPM's work) Contributions to more evidence-based and realistic policy-making (incidence of knowledge gaps being filled by ECDPM) 	
					<p>Implementation: reduced policy/implementation gap</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contributions to enhanced, alternative and innovative ways of managing development policy and practices (incidence of changed behaviour attributed – in part – to ECDPM's work) Contributions to a narrower gap between policy-making and implementation (incidence of innovation uptake attributed – in part – to ECDPM's work) 	
					<p>Institutions: empowered institutions and actors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enabling processes that support the development of institutional capacity Applying political economy analyses to support institutional development and change 	
					<p>Partnerships: effective multi-actor partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rebalancing power relationships and building mutual trust and respect Encouraging collective action for effective implementation (among other things by identifying mutual interests) Encouraging mutual accountability 	

Figure 3. ECDPM results framework

MOBILISING RESOURCES

WE WILL PREPARE FOR THE CHANGING TRENDS AFFECTING OUR SECTOR IN THE COMING YEARS

The scope and depth of our engagement on the four strategic priorities will depend on our ability to mobilise adequate financial resources. The following objectives will guide our fundraising efforts in the 2017–2021 period:

- (i) **Maintaining and expanding our network of institutional funders**

We have a good track record in terms of securing flexible institutional funding. This type of funding offers the best guarantees for maximising our development impact as an innovative, non-partisan ‘think and do tank’ in complex and at times controversial political processes. During 2017–2021, we will seek to maintain institutional funding levels from our longstanding network of partners. We will also increase our efforts to find new institutional partners, for example, in the EU-13.
- (ii) **Increasing programme and project funding**

Alongside our efforts to maintain our levels of institutional funding, we will prepare for the changing trends affecting our sector in the coming years. We foresee a likely decrease and potential renationalisation of official development assistance (ODA), combined with a reduced flexibility of funding. This would compel us to seek out ‘second best’ options, such as smart programme and project funding strategically aligned with our mandate and core business. We will increasingly respond to calls for proposals and framework contracts and also explore funding opportunities through EU delegations, member state representations and African institutions such as the African Development Bank.
- (iii) **Diversifying funding sources**

In line with the 2030 Agenda, we will widen our scope, investing more in targeting funding sources beyond the development sector and ODA. Potential new partners include multilateral agencies, development banks, research funds and the broad range of actors working on different components of international relations and economic and sustainable development. We will also explore opportunities for expanded cooperation with development foundations. Joint funding arrangements with strategic partners in Europe and Africa will also become an increasingly important part of our fundraising strategy.
- (iv) **Creating opportunities and more capacity for fundraising**

In the next five years we will strengthen our corporate image among a range of actors not yet familiar with our work, so as to expand potential funding opportunities. We will also make changes to our in-house organisational structures and systems for fundraising, implementing a clear division of responsibility between the Centre-wide and programme levels. Finally, we will strengthen fundraising capacity among our staff.

In order to safeguard the financial health of our organisation, we will pay particular attention to cost containment through improved efficiency and management of financial risks.

(i) **Improved efficiency**

ECDPM management will continue to seek cost reductions, building on the cost-efficiency measures implemented under the previous strategy.

(ii) **Management of financial risks**

The management and Board will actively monitor financial risks with the aid of a risk management dashboard. Where required, appropriate risk mitigation measures will be taken.

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