

# **ECDPM Strategy 2012-2016**

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European Centre for Development  
Policy Management

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**ECDPM works to improve relations between Europe and its partners in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific L'ECDPM œuvre à l'amélioration des relations entre l'Europe et ses partenaires d'Afrique, des Caraïbes et du Pacifique**



# ECDPM's Strategy 2012-2016

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## Executive Summary

### The Strategy 2012–2016 at a glance

ECDPM's Strategy 2012–2016 builds on the Centre's **25 years of practical experience as an independent foundation**. Our dual mission is to develop the capacity of actors from the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP) and to improve (European) international cooperation for better development outcomes.

An analysis of the environment in which we operate highlights the major transitions that are taking place across the landscape of development cooperation. The aid system is giving way to **new forms of international cooperation** that seek to address global development challenges in a more holistic way. A wider range of actors (including the 'BRICs' and other emerging economies) are playing increasingly important roles in responding to issues such as peace and security, climate change, migration and food security. However, the transition is far from complete. The roadmap is still unclear, and the outcomes for developing countries and vulnerable communities remain uncertain.

**All major actors must adjust to the new context.** The European Union is set to build stronger, more differentiated and coherent external action, commensurate with its ambition as a global player. This is quite a challenge in a context of economic and financial crisis, inward-looking tendencies and growing doubts about the relevance of development cooperation. Africa is on the move as well. Several countries are experiencing record growth, but need better governance to reduce inequalities and promote social cohesion. Societies and citizens across the continent are waking up, claiming rights and demanding accountability (as evidenced in North Africa). Institutions at all levels (continental, regional, national and local) are seeking to improve service delivery and be more responsive to societal demands. Africa is increasingly developing its own development agendas and diversifying its partners. The ACP group too has begun a fundamental reflection on its future role in today's world.

As the aid system mutates into more sophisticated forms of international cooperation, **new tools are needed**: well-informed dialogue processes, balanced and reciprocal partnerships, negotiations between actors with competing interests, institutional innovation and joint learning. These are precisely the areas in which ECDPM is consistently recognised as a leader.

Thus, while we move forward with our new strategy, our established **mission and principles of engagement remain fundamentally relevant**. We plan to keep **other unique assets** as well: our non-partisan approach; our clear strategic focus on a limited set of policy areas, or 'policy processes', where we can make a difference; our dual role as an independent knowledge broker and process facilitator; our extensive relations with key actors in Europe and in the ACP; our expertise in linking policy and practice; and our investment in a strong results framework to clearly measure outcomes even within this subtle and complex context.

Over the next five years we will use these **strengths to contribute to the ongoing transformation of international cooperation and the evolving partnership between Europe and the ACP countries**. Our work will focus on a number of major ongoing transitions in the global development arena. Effective management of these (for the benefit of developing countries) requires new 'rules of the game' and changes in the policies, practices and institutions of international cooperation. Some of the key transitions

relate to managing scarcity (particularly of natural resources), ensuring more 'inclusive' and 'green' growth, safeguarding human security, and promoting global public goods and governance mechanisms.

This opens a huge agenda. To work effectively on global development challenges as a small foundation, we must target our efforts. Therefore we have made three strategic choices. First, we selected **four thematic priorities** because they reflect major challenges on the way to a better system of international cooperation. These are: (i) reconciling values and interests within the external action of the European Union; (ii) promoting economic governance and trade for inclusive and sustainable growth; (iii) supporting societal dynamics of change within developing countries; and (iv) addressing food security as a global public good. Each of these themes clearly expresses what ECDPM seeks to achieve. Across the themes, a limited number of programmes will guide our concrete action in the short term. The outcomes of this work will feed into and contribute to the global transitions taking place. As a European foundation, our focus will primarily lie on what all this means for EU external action and EU partnerships with the countries of Africa (including North Africa), the Caribbean and the Pacific.

Second, we will **extend and deepen our partnerships and strategic alliances**. Such alliances strengthen the hand of policy actors in the South, while supporting institutional development and increasing the relevance, effectiveness and legitimacy of our work. And third, we will **strengthen our organisation** to respond to the new agenda. Greater internal flexibility will increase our effectiveness and results orientation. This will allow us to respond more swiftly to new challenges, extend our outreach beyond traditional development actors and become more political when we engage in policy processes

# 1. The evolving landscape of International Cooperation

Over the past five years the world has changed and so has the global development landscape. Emerging economies moved up in the world order achieving a rapid expansion of their global trade and finance, also to developing countries. China, India, Brazil but also Korea, Turkey, Indonesia, and Mexico increased their role in global development. Global platforms, the UN, G8, G20 started to accommodate to the rise of these new regional and global powers. As for Africa, most countries on the continent coped relatively well with the global crisis and show promising dynamics on the economic front. At the same time, Europe faces stormy weather. Fiscal and budgetary constraints keep major donors from meeting their Gleneagles' commitments, the world witnesses an enduring impasse in the talks on global climate finance, and the Euro-zone financial crisis fixates Europe's attention on resolving its own problems more than on dealing with global challenges it faces.

As a result, development thinking is in a flux as the certainties of the past lose momentum. A search is under way for a new development narrative 'post-MDG' that rethinks poverty reduction strategies while addressing upfront global development challenges. There is evidence of an **accelerated dismantling of the traditional 'aid system' based** on donor-recipient relations. Instead, **a new system of international cooperation** is steadily emerging with a key role reserved for collaborative management of global challenges and pursuit of common interests in a multi-polar world. The **direction of change** is clear and manifest in (i) the broad expansion of the global development agenda 'beyond aid'; (ii) new actors ('BRICS' and others) asserting their power (yet without necessarily assuming the corresponding responsibilities); (iii) the more proactive roles played by developing countries in determining their own directions; (iv) the increasing integration between development cooperation and other policy domains; and (v) the growing interdependence between countries and the related emergence of a wide range of (ad hoc) global governance mechanisms.

The deeper causes of these shifts are the **major transitions** that will set the dynamics of international cooperation for years to come. We see six transitions in particular that require new responses at various policy levels:

- *Increasing scarcity, especially of raw materials and water*, leading to global competition for access to resources and a corresponding potential for conflict
- *The transition towards a 'green' economy*, with the related challenge of effective global management of climate change
- *Demands for more 'inclusive' growth for human development*, characterised by increasing pressure 'from below' to achieve a fairer distribution of resources, social justice, democracy and respect for human rights
- *The need to safeguard human security* by addressing conflict and improving the resilience of communities to (external) shocks, such as environmental degradation and rising food prices
- *The acknowledged global responsibility for global public goods*, alongside the question of how to address the broader development agenda via new forms of dialogue and cooperation between various policy domains
- *The restructuring of the global 'multi-level governance system'* and the associated shift of power to new actors and new frameworks of global governance

These **transitions – and the required changes associated with them in terms of policy, practices and institutions – form the basis of the ECDPM strategy for 2012–2016**. By anticipating on these, ECDPM will position itself to deliver real added value in the ongoing transformation of international cooperation. The

ECDPM approach of combining the facilitation of multi-stakeholder policy dialogue, knowledge and information networking, practical policy-oriented research and functional partnerships, will enable us to make specific contributions to this broad agenda.

## 2. What we aim to achieve and our thematic areas

The ECDPM mission has **two components**: (i) to contribute to strengthening the capacity of institutions and actors in the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific and (ii) to improve relations between Europe and the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.

We foresee a number of **development outcomes** of our policy processes, programmes and projects:

- More inclusive and better-informed policy dialogues on global development challenges between actors from Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific.
- More effective participation of public and private actors from Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific in key policy processes that affect their cooperation
- Reduction of the ‘implementation gap’ between policy and practice in key areas that affect the EU’s cooperation with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific in addressing global development challenges
- More integrated and coherent EU external action that reconciles its values and interests and takes account of the impact of its internal and external policies on developing countries in order to level the ‘playing field’ for sustainable global development
- Strengthened partnerships between the EU, its member states and the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific for equitable and sustainable governance of global development challenges.

In the 2007–2011 ECDPM strategy, our choice of thematic priorities was based on the major pillars of the Cotonou Agreement between Europe and the ACP countries. This led to a focus on three core themes (trade, policy dialogue/good governance and European development policy). Given the broadening of the global development agenda, thematic innovation was an imperative.

For the next five years we will address **four major themes**. These themes are at the heart of the major transitions affecting international cooperation. They also represent areas in which ECDPM can add value as an independent broker and facilitator at the interface between policy and practice. To further concretise this work, we will also define a **limited number of cross-thematic programmes**. These will be elaborated in work plans for a period of two years and be open for review.

### **Theme 1: Reconciling values and interests in the external action of the European Union**

This theme is derived from the EU ambition to develop an integrated and coherent external policy in accordance with the provisions of the Treaty of Lisbon and with the support of the new European diplomatic service (EEAS). Europe has major assets with which to assume a leadership role in international cooperation, in particular, owing to the ‘values’ it seeks to promote (e.g. human rights, democracy, social cohesion). Yet to do this the EU will need to find ways to act coherently, speak with one voice, and follow

through on commitments. Europe also confronts major challenges related to shifts in international power, budgetary deficits, and doubts about the effectiveness and future development of the European architecture, to name just a few. These increase the pressure to place 'self-interest' more centrally in EU external action and to account for every euro spent. In this difficult context the task at hand for Europe will be to keep the value of 'solidarity' with developing countries upfront.

The coming five to ten years will be crucial in the evolution of EU external action and the EEAS. Can Europe strike a balance between values and interests, particularly in partnerships with developing countries? Can all available means (diplomacy, political dialogue, development assistance, and economic and military cooperation) be efficiently applied towards an integrated foreign policy aimed at poverty reduction, security and stability, and human rights worldwide?

Our all-Centre programmes will contribute to this theme. The focus will be on a number of issues: effective functioning of the new institutional architecture for EU external action, including stronger linkages with EU member states; modernisation of EU development policy; elaboration of credible EU policies for promoting democracy and human rights; renewal and normalisation of European development agreements, in particular, those with Africa and the ACP Group (e.g. the Cotonou Agreement); and responsible integration of 'development dimensions' into the broader agenda of EU external action. In this context, the Centre will work in a more systematic way on topics at the nexus of security and development, conflict prevention, fragile states and resilience.

This 'European' agenda is of major importance for partner countries. In the role of 'broker' ECDPM seeks to provide critical information on what happens in EU external action to public and private actors in the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific so that they can make their voices heard and defend their interests.

## **Theme 2: Promoting economic governance and trade for inclusive growth**

The need for a transformative agenda on economic governance and trade is widely accepted. As reflected in various forums recently, most notably in the G20's adoption in November 2010 of the **Seoul Development Consensus on Shared Growth**, development requires economic growth that is balanced and shared. This implies not only the establishment of a favourable economic environment to promote private sector investment and employment, but also the adoption of institutional settings at the domestic and international level, which explicitly foster greater social equity, poverty alleviation and sustainable development objectives. This objective is taken as the basis for what we mean when we talk of "improving economic governance".

Recognizing that inclusive growth-promoting policies and institutional arrangements are very much context specific and that there is no "one-size-fits-all" approach, the Centre will focus on the **political economy dimensions** of transformation, considering drivers of change, and notably the private sector, in a reform agenda, with a particular emphasis on the dynamics at the regional and continental levels. There will also be a need for bold global (as well as European) action against international drivers of (bad) governance.

Within this **expanded agenda on trade and economic cooperation**, various ECDPM policy processes will work on the following issues: promotion of economic governance (with special attention for sustainable use of natural resources and improved regulatory capacity); domestic resource mobilisation and accountability; international drivers of governance; strengthening regional integration processes (focusing

on political drivers, appropriate institutions, national-level 'transposition' of regional decisions and a stronger role for the private sector); the economic partnership agreements (EPAs) and 'aid for trade'; as well as the role of emerging players (the 'BRICS') and the corresponding implications for relations between Europe and Africa.

### **Theme 3: Supporting societal dynamics of change in developing countries**

Major changes are taking place in developing countries. Emanating from within many societies is a rising demand for inclusive and transparent systems of democracy as well as for 'governance for development' (leading to job creation and better public services). The 'Arab Spring' symbolises the awakening of active citizens to make their voices heard, calling for democracy, claiming rights and demanding accountability from state institutions, particularly in the use of public resources. These dynamics create opportunities to establish renewed, development-oriented styles of interaction between **state and society**, in the more advanced economies as well as in fragile states (where the challenges include 'state building' and fostering the resilience of local communities). The societal dynamics in the developing world **are not limited to improving governance**. Innovative policies and practices are being elaborated 'from the bottom up' in many other areas as well (e.g. local community development, social protection and resilient endogenous systems).

Particular attention will be on continued support to the institutional drivers of change, including the African Union in its efforts to further consolidate its own norms, development agendas and 'architectures' (such as the 'African Governance Architecture'). We will also engage with societal actors of change that seek to express voice, organise interests and participate in policy processes.

With our deepened engagement in Africa, ECDPM will be well positioned to build bridges with European partners willing to support endogenous processes and 'home-grown' reforms. Our task is to facilitate fertile encounters between the 'demands' emanating from societies and the 'supply' of cooperation that the European Union can give.

### **Theme 4: Addressing food security as a global public good**

The financial and recurrent food crises have brought the global spotlight back onto the dramatic state of food insecurity in the world – affecting more than one billion people. In response, food security has come back on the list of priorities of initiatives led by the AU and some RECs. African countries decided to adopt and implement a common framework for stimulating and guiding national, regional and continental initiatives for food security, the CAADP. In parallel, agriculture is receiving greater attention in donor policies and various measures have been taken to deflect the worst manifestations of food crisis. Yet food security must be addressed in a more ambitious and structural manner as a multi-dimensional worldwide development challenge, anchored as a right in global, regional and national governance. It is no coincidence that both the European Union and the majority of its member states have incorporated this ambition into their policy agendas for the coming years.

We therefore include food security as a **new theme** in our 2012–2016 strategy. It is our conviction that a process-oriented 'broker' such as ECDPM can play a complementary and productive role on this issue. Our intention is not to operate as technical specialists on agriculture and food security. Others have that expertise. What is still lacking, however, is **effective political dialogue, process facilitation and bridges linking the different policy domains** and the various levels involved. These are precisely the areas

where ECDPM has solid expertise, proven methods and practical experience to offer in support of efforts to tackle this global challenge.

Our work will aim to anchor food security at the regional level by strengthening policy, intra-regional trade and African organisations (in conjunction with national and continental policy). Further, we will seek to enhance the business and investment climate through reinforced policy dialogue between national governments and the private sector (business facilitation). Finally, we will address various governance dimensions of food security, such as the (decentralised) management of natural resources, land, water and energy; participation of stakeholder organisations and consumers; the role of women; effective functioning of local markets; the right to food; and EU policy coherence.

### 3. What we offer: ECDPM'S niche and added value

Successive **institutional evaluations** (in 2006 and 2011) have confirmed the unique niche and added value of ECDPM (i) as an initiator and animator of major strategic discussions; (ii) as a sounding board for the ACP in Europe and for Europe in the ACP; (iii) as a knowledge broker for well-informed dialogue; (iv) as a facilitator of complex policy processes; (v) as an advisor on issues of institutional development, particularly for actors in the South.

Our **strengths** are closely associated with the **way** we work. The following are key elements that distinguish our approach:

- Diversity of roles (we act alternately as researcher, knowledge broker, facilitator and policy advisor, including on institutional change processes)
- Engagement as an 'honest broker' (we maintain operational autonomy, inclusive non-partisan stakeholder participation, respect for diversity and creativity, open communication and full transparency of roles)
- Interventions focused on following closely strategic policy processes
- Linking of policy and practice
- Effective combination of capacity strategies (we facilitate initiatives, generate knowledge, maintain functional partnerships and provide demand-driven support for institutional development)
- Long-term perspective

Following this methodology, we offer a selection of services to policymakers and practitioners:

- Prospective strategic analyses that frame the challenges associated with the renewal of international cooperation so that these can be adequately addressed ('framing')
- Policy preparatory work with stakeholders to identify viable scenarios for reform
- Strategies and methods for building bridges in practice between development cooperation and other (external and internal) policy domains
- Pragmatic operational knowledge about how the new policy agendas can be implemented in practice
- Adapted frameworks and methods for conducting inclusive policy dialogue seeking common values and interests (with a focus on negotiated agreements)

- Management of institutional innovation to enable actors from both the South and Europe to participate effectively in the expanded global development agenda

## 4. Ensuring diversified and high quality funding

The overall context for development financing is changing rapidly, partly due to the financial crisis that has hit the European Union. Economic uncertainties impact the volume, modalities and beneficiaries of development funding. Furthermore, pressure to 'show value for money' leads to situations whereby funds are primarily targeted at investments offering quick and visible returns. This may come at the expense of less tangible work on policy and institutional development. Overall, development funding has become more politicised, competitive and market-driven.

We do not fear competition. Yet we are committed to remain true to our identity (as an independent foundation) and our mandate (as a knowledge broker and process facilitator). Only then will we be able to deliver the added value that policymakers and practitioners have learnt to expect and appreciate from us. This means we need types of funding that enable us to maintain the independence and flexibility necessary to engage with policy processes over the medium term. We also believe in the need to diversify the sources of such funding.

The following are some of the ways we will confront this funding challenge:

- Strive for continuation of flexible core and institutional funding from our longstanding institutional partners;
- Further diversify our funding sources by exploring opportunities from development and political foundations in EU member states, and from new actors in the global development arena;
- As much as possible, aim for multi-annual, flexible (programme) funding instead of short-term, more restricted (project) funding;
- Increase our focus on and investment in joint funding operations with our partners in the South
- Improve our internal capacity to mobilise programme funding.

## 5. Strengthening our organisation

We have to be innovative to continue to be relevant, effective and result-oriented. We will take to heart the recommendations of the 2011 External Evaluation in this respect and strengthen our organization, adapting it to the demands emanating from a new development context. We have defined four ambitions for organizational and managerial innovation in the coming years.

First, we will enhance our capacity to respond flexibly under conditions of uncertainty. Our overall 2012–2016 strategy is broad, but we will reinforce our ability to set strategic priorities and to engage our human and financial resources in those policy processes that offer adequate political traction and a realistic chance for our Centre and its strategic partners to make a difference.

Second, we will refine the art of brokerage and multi-stakeholder process facilitation in an increasingly complex policy arena, and strengthen our core competencies in this respect. This will include systematic use of political economy analysis to identify opportunities for institutional transformation; gaining an in-depth understanding of emerging powers and their role in global governance; developing specific criteria for 'development-proofing' EU external and internal action; and strengthening our partnerships and strategic alliances for greater policy impact.

Third, we will enhance our knowledge management expertise, approaches and systems. ECDPM's knowledge networking and information services, public outreach and communication have been highly appreciated by our partners and the stakeholders involved in the various policy processes we engage in. The knowledge management that lays the foundation for these services is strategic to our role as an independent broker at the interface of policy and practice as well. Over the next years, we will further modernise our digital architecture and intensify the use of social media.

Finally, we will seek ways to creatively mobilise the right mix of external expertise to deliver high quality on increasingly specialist public goods and services. This means pooling resources with our strategic partners while at the same time, extending and deepening our partnerships, in Africa in particular. We will also further develop our 'programme associates' initiative, joining up with resource persons from Europe and the ACP who share our values and methods as well as our commitment to improving international cooperation for development.



### **About ECDPM**

Mission: ECDPM was established in 1986 as an independent foundation to improve European cooperation with the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). Its main goal today is to broker effective partnerships between the European Union and the developing world, especially Africa. ECDPM promotes inclusive forms of development and cooperates with public and private sector organisations to better manage international relations. It also supports the reform of policies and institutions in both Europe and the developing world. One of ECDPM's key strengths is its extensive network of relations in developing countries, including emerging economies. Among its partners are multilateral institutions, international centres of excellence and a broad range of state and non-state organisations.

### **Thematic priorities**

ECDPM organises its work around four themes:

- Reconciling values and interests in the external action of the EU and other international players
- Promoting economic governance and trade for inclusive and sustainable growth
- Supporting societal dynamics of change related to democracy and governance in developing countries, particularly Africa
- Addressing food security as a global public good through information and support to regional integration, markets and agriculture

### **Approach**

ECDPM is a “think and do tank”. It links policies and practice using a mix of roles and methods. ECDPM organises and facilitates policy dialogues, provides tailor-made analysis and advice, participates in South-North networks and does policy-oriented research with partners from the South. ECDPM also assists with the implementation of policies and has a strong track record in evaluating policy impact. ECDPM's activities are largely designed to support institutions in the developing world to define their own agendas. ECDPM brings a frank and independent perspective to its activities, entering partnerships with an open mind and a clear focus on results.

For more information please visit [www.ecdpm.org](http://www.ecdpm.org)

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