



External Evaluation of ECDPM

2016-2020

Summary

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Francesca Cook (Team Leader)
Amagoïn Keita
George Mukundi Wachira
Peter Wolff

Table of Contents

1.Executive Summary.....	2
2.Overall Conclusions and Recommendations.....	7
2.1. Conclusions.....	7
2.2. Key Recommendations	9

"Today's problems are a result of yesterday's solutions"

1. Executive Summary

This report is the result of an external evaluation exercise¹ that provides a critical review of the context and performance of ECDPM. The evaluation covers the period 2016 - which marks the end of the last strategic plan - to 2020.

The overarching purpose of the evaluation was to reach judgement on whether, given the evolving context in which it operates, ECDPM has adequately and successfully implemented its 2017-2021 Strategy, and achieved relevant outcomes during the evaluation period. To this end, the evaluation assessed the pertinence and impact of the Centre's work, particularly from the point of view of its diverse stakeholder groups. It also sought to ascertain whether the institutional and programmatic structure was well aligned to deliver on the Centre's mandate and objectives effectively and efficiently. Based on findings and recommendations, the evaluation is also expected to inform the design of ECDPM's 2022-26 Strategy.

It equally served as a learning exercise for ECDPM, an accountability tool for stakeholders and contributes to reporting obligations.

The evaluation was carried out by a four person team and involved multiple - mostly virtual - interactions and consultations with management, staff and board members of ECDPM, institutional partners as well as a reference group of evaluation experts that had been set up for this evaluation. Interviews with external stakeholders was a key dimension. In total, more than 40 internal and over 75 external actors were interviewed, plus 52 respondents to an online survey, with an overall Europe/Africa balance of 65/35.

The evaluation found that:

Overall, ECDPM has adequately and successfully implemented its 2017-2021 Strategy, and achieved many relevant outcomes during the evaluation period. External stakeholders gave positive feedback on the quality of the Centre's work, its role as an independent think tank, and its timely response to new topics. The Centre's ability to pull together timely, relevant knowledge and analysis, and feed that into policy makers and/or policy processes has been a strong point, upheld by its core institutional funding, its ability to raise additional funds, and its ability to work in a "matrix format" that allows it to be relatively reactive and deliver "nexus" analyses across various themes.

On ECDPM's roles and niche the evaluation team concluded that the Centre is arguably one of the top go-to think tanks on understanding EU policy making and the Brussels external action sector, and to some extent its MS. ECDPM provides a plethora of reliable, rigorous and interesting publications and events on contemporary policy debates.

Its commitment to strengthening EU - Africa relations is a driving focus, and its deep understanding of EU policy making processes reinforces its potential to contribute to mutual appreciation of diverse interests and priorities of European and African policy makers. The Centre delivers its "broker role" through a variety of actions, including facilitation of dialogues sometimes under the radar, training, consultancies, consultations, sharing advice, delivery of technical expertise with various actors (including local), and development or application of well appreciated diagnostic tools, amongst others.

¹ March to November 2020.

At the same time, in conjunction with the decolonisation of aid and knowledge, and with Africa's determination to speak for and negotiate for itself, there are more African actors interested and willing to visibly represent "African" perspectives. The AU is not where it was 5 years ago, and there are more (European) institutions working with these actors than was the case five or ten years ago. As a consequence, the Centre no longer stands out as one of the few in Europe sympathetic to an African point of view; and the jury is mixed as to whether the Centre represents Africa through a European lens, or whether the information it presents is based on an interactive process of co-creation and co-analysis with Africans on Africa, or with Africans on Europe. The Centre's credibility as a non-partisan broker in Africa, or for Africa, able to contribute to relations between Africa and the EU from a non-partisan standpoint, is shifting. There are three spaces - European think tanks, African think tanks and research bodies, and the space where these interconnect. Moving forward this space can be a strong focus of the Centre.

What does emerge strongly, however, is that the Centre's knowledge of and on Africa, and its ability to co-create with African institutions, has allowed it to produce knowledge about Africa in a few instances, and to inform its analysis of EU positions and infuse these with an African dimension; and to thereby draw conclusions relevant not just for Europe but for a wider audience.

To uphold the legitimacy and credibility of the Centre in Africa, particularly as the political environment in Africa shifts towards a more equal footing with the outside world, and explores its geopolitical ambitions, it is important, however, for the Centre to do more co-creation with African-led and -based research bodies (and other non-state and state actors), have deeper sustained partnerships, and broaden diversity in the institutional and programmatic set up of the Centre, including in top decision making levels, but also at programme and associate level. This niche area will be weakened, moving forward, if the process for analysing and gathering data on Africa is not more systematically the result of co-creation/co-analysis with dynamic African actors.

In relation to the EU, the Centre has proven manifold the key niche it occupies in its ability to be an institutional memory holder, and a keen and dedicated expert on the many facets of EU external actions, instruments, decision making processes, policies, programmes and its external relations. Its ability to interact regularly with EU and MS officials at many different levels renders it quite uniquely placed, yet able to remain 'non-partisan' and (constructively) critical. Moving forward, the Centre is well placed to push the needle on what the expansion of the EU's global role could look like.

And equally, it is clear that when the Centre takes on a thematic topic (from climate change, to migration, to food security and beyond), the quality of rigour is there; the external uptake and use of the knowledge produced is solid; and important cross-thematic threads are often present. At the same time, much more uptake across Africa would enhance visibility and perhaps credibility.

At the knowledge-driven and pragmatic partnerships levels, the Centre has demonstrated strong ability to reach out to, and work with, a multiplicity of partners. At the same time, there appears to be a lack of a consolidated, explicit "centralised fund-raising strategy" that allows for a complete and focused overview of the whole approach, with most programmes individually responsible for mobilising additional funding and consolidating knowledge driven and pragmatic partnerships; whilst also responding to the "service requests" generated by core institutional funders; and taking on consulting work. The additional funding facilitated consolidation of partnerships and the creation of new ones; though core funding inevitably filled funding gaps that mobilised funds did not quite fill. Mobilised funds clearly facilitated joint research. Some illustrations include the Centre's pivotal role in the European Think Tanks Group (ETTG); or the Centre's valued work with IPSS, in Addis Ababa, on African peace and security related work.

The Centre adopted a multi-pronged approach to address the recommendations of the previous evaluation to increase its ability to think and act politically. It established a theory of change process, meant to guide all workstreams and encourage them to apply a political analysis of pathways and obstacles to change; and it continued to promote application of analytical tools such as political economy analysis (PEA) and ECDPM's particular "5 lenses approach", along with other political analysis approaches, gender analysis, policy coherence for development, and territorial approaches to local development. To make thinking and acting politically systematic and widespread will require time, resources, incentives and deeper collaboration with local actors and technical experts. In fact, the capacity of the Centre to engage and be politically savvy requires continuous investment, buy in and enhancement - to make sure such important work is part and parcel of the Centre's niche and additional value beyond the current levels.

Diversity is not particularly well addressed: though Gender diversity was championed by the creation of a Task Force and later taken up by Human Resources, much work remains in relation to increased diversity amongst staff members, in particular at senior levels, and associates, in relation to the three G's: Geography (race), Generation, and Gender. This is not a question of numbers only so much as it is a question of corporate culture and ensuring diversity integrates how research is framed, what and how questions are asked, and to whom. Diversity of perspectives across the Gs are vital to depth of content, moving forward.

Important strategic choices were made organisationally:

The complex structure of programmes, task forces, cross-cutting themes, analytical tools etc. (and how finances are allocated) dilutes the Centre's ability to strongly focus on its key priorities and appears to place most topics on a horizontal rather than a vertical order of priority, though this is not matched with resources attributions. While multi-disciplinary output and the "nexus" lens is a key Centre attribute, the ability to 'matrix' across programmes and to deliver products that benefit from this, seems to exist despite the structure more than because of the structure.

The establishment of cross-cutting task forces/focus approaches to champion key issues (Africa-EU relations, gender, climate, and policy coherence) contributed to better integrate the contextual complexities that were relevant for the strategic priority areas but suffered from mandates that were not always clear as well as minimal dedicated budgets. Though some cross-cutting areas were explicit focus requests in the theory of change process (gender, climate) others were not (Africa-Europe relations, Africa, Europe, North Africa). Tracking of cross-cutting imperatives and strategic priorities was uneven.

The further professionalisation of functional units supporting primary processes resulted in a reduced reporting burden on programmes; more attention to corporate identity focused decision making; more centralised support for fund raising and clear financial and institutional partnership successes; modernised HR systems; vastly increased visibility and user-friendliness of communication and knowledge products and tools. The creation of the Learning and Quality Support unit strongly contributed to strengthening ECDPM's internal accountability; learning and quality processes. There is strong capacity within the Centre for constructive self-reflection and criticism; reorganisation of working modalities; and high-quality monitoring and reporting.

The evaluation recommends *i.a.*, that as ECDPM devises its next five-year Strategy it should:

Make Strategic Choices for Sustained Outcomes

Reflect, in collaboration with European and African stakeholders, on how the Centre might aspire to influence the conversation about nexus areas between European/EU strategic priorities and African strategic aspirations as identified in policy documents (e.g., Agenda 2063 and Europe/EU Priorities, EU-Africa Strategy).

Engage Differently and More Dynamically with, in, and on Africa

Consider a dedicated and well financed African focused strategy/initiative, led by a senior, politically well leveraged, and networked African researcher and policy expert. Establish presence in Africa - at least in Addis Ababa – to engage with the AU, Member States (PRC) and RECs policy processes, to enhance update and brokerage of knowledge and to strengthen co-creative partnerships and collaboration with peer institutes in Africa towards a dialogue of equals; including as an important factor in strengthening analysis of Europe-Africa relations and the varied perspectives therein. This would help to reinforce the more systematic integration of African dimensions across workstreams; and increase return on investments in deeper partnerships.

Review Niche and Recentre Identity

Ensure that ECDPM's identity going forward is centred on the niche areas of its future. Recognise and reinforce the clear niche on EU and its external actions, EU's geo-political roles and ambitions; consider explicitly broadening the European scope beyond EU, emphasise the nexus lens as a key niche area upheld by the intense capacity to mix multi-disciplinary rigorous analysis with cross-cutting analytical lenses on a broad number of topics. Consider a re-centring towards paying more attention to emerging trends and opportunities (e.g. revitalised agency and strengthened capacities of Africans to address their own priorities as well as the global BLM movement which resonates deeply there) and to contribute to, and play an important part in, decolonisation of knowledge and analysis.

Reimagine Influence and Brokering Modalities

Invest in institutional partnerships and collaboration as a means of delivery, knowledge production, uptake and brokerage with European and African stakeholders - political institutions, think tanks, universities, and other research bodies. Upgrade infrastructure and IT tools for more digitally smart, mobile-friendly, user friendly, modern and multi-lingual communication platforms and presence. Reach into Africa with multi-lingual research products and processes.

Enhance the Corporate Culture and Increase Diversity

People are the backbone to any think tank, including ECDPM. Corporate cultures must keep up with the times and evolve with them. To help effect changes to corporate culture, ECDPM should accelerate its current delivery on the Management Review recommendations; establish a Board led diversity exercise to more precisely identify concerns and issues across the Centre pertaining to the 3 Gs - gender, geography (race), generation - and other corporate-culture topics; and devise a diversity strategy that recognises that this is not only, nor primarily, a numbers game. It is not a question of identity politics. It is about ensuring depth and quality to the analytical process used to frame research, and bolstering credibility.

Restructure towards a Fit-for Future Organisation

Consider a simplified, more matrixed and flexible structure that helps ensure a maximum focus on whichever key future priorities and cross cutting imperatives are identified. Ensure that modalities for tracking delivery against key future priorities are implemented. Move towards an integrated vertical and horizontal decision making modality to help avoid the silo effect, help have a more centralised overview of budget allocations and approach to fund raising in order to ensure core funding for key priorities, and (continue to) avoid being market-driven rather than strategy driven; and to allow programme teams to focus more on delivery of substance.

2. Overall Conclusions and Recommendations

2.1. Conclusions

Taking the 17 judgement criteria and 5 evaluation questions as the yardstick, overall, ECDPM has adequately and successfully implemented its Strategy 2017-2021, and achieved relevant outcomes during the evaluation period.

Its thematic (programmatic) focus, the use of political, gender, policy coherence, and climate change assessments along with the Centre's various cross-cutting imperatives and coupled with active fulfilment of its three core roles and methods of working allowed ECDPM to have plausible and excellent, top drawer contributions towards its key outcome area objectives, namely:

- Better informed and empowered actors
- More inclusive dialogue and policy processes
- Coherent and integrated policies
- Reduced policy gaps
- Empowered institutions
- Effective multi actor partnerships

In relation to ECDPM's roles, value added, and methods of working, the Centre unquestionably:

- Generates knowledge that is politically informed, evidence-based and practical
- Facilitates uptake of knowledge by key public and private actors through dialogue, implementation support and smart communication
- Acts as a non-partisan broker, leveraging expertise, knowledge and networks in Europe
- Bridges many policy domains and delivers pertinent and practical "nexus" insights
- Enjoys a strong reputation as a credible and rigorous think tank and do tank, deeply knowledgeable about EU and MS, that is also a historically important knowledge keeper on Africa, able to influence policy by brokering knowledge and providing advice
- Is active on the EU Africa bridge, and a good source of insight on Africa-EU relations, despite a shifting reputation in this area, in particular, but not only, from African perspectives

ECDPM does indeed deliver: practical policy advice; training and support advice; and expertise by providing background information to partners and the media; thorough and rigorous policy research, sharp analysis and fresh ideas; and partnerships and dialogue - including through organising and speaking at debates, conferences and workshops, and connecting people, brokering partnerships and creating space for dialogue. It does this in a fine and eloquent application of its roles and working methods. It is this particular combination that ensures ECDPM is both a "think" and a "do" tank, and holds a niche in the international cooperation- Europe arena; and influences the EU-Africa' arena.

ECDPM adapted its Strategy 2017-2021 to the evolving general political, institutional and financial context in which think tanks such as ECDPM operate, by making strategic choices regarding 'the what' and the 'how'. These were, for the most part, appropriate. The strategic priorities made sense, and the Centre delivered output and outcomes that supported these priorities. This is in particular true for the priority focused on European external actions, though they are not alone.

At the same time, how the priorities translated into programmes and organisational structure was uneven, with priorities 1) Europe-Africa relations and 2) fully incorporate North Africa rendered to Task Forces (with minimal funding), priority 3) reflect the multi-actor nature of the 2030 Agenda treated as a general principle; and priority 4) consider internal factors that shape European external action outcomes treated as a full-fledged programme. Each of the seven programmes, around which the main body of work and the bulk of staff were organised, addressed topics of relevance to Africa, with both the AIRD and the EAT programme cluster heavily focused on Africa; and the SECURE programme focused explicitly on both Europe and Africa. And other programmes focused on Africa in some instances. However, there was no explicit or measurable "Africa strategy", no "Africa-EU relations" strategy, and though issues of relevance to North Africa have been addressed, all programmes have not yet fully incorporated North Africa.

No tracking systems were used to explicitly track the four priority areas of the Strategy though the 4th area (Europe) had dedicated a programme, so its output was "tracked".

The support to Africa-EU relations, in particular, despite some good outcomes and output, and the thinking through of the Centre's approach to Africa, are in need of a reconceptualisation to fit in with the current evolutions around de-colonisation of aid, decolonisation of knowledge, and the need for stronger and better "co-creation", and realistic assessment of the Centre's value added going forward. Therefore, despite good progress in advancing the four priorities, there is also room to grow.

Important strategic choices were made organisationally on four levels, most tangibly successful, and also with room to grow:

The first level was the choice of Programmes around which the main body of work was focused. These contributed clearly to upholding the Centre's niche, by using its core roles and its working methods. And contributed, with other activities, to its credibility.

The second was to establish cross-cutting task forces or approaches to champion key issues (Africa-EU relations, gender, climate, and policy coherence); with a general push for cross-programmatic and cross-Centre teams and workstreams whenever feasible. These had some real successes but suffered from not always clear mandates, and minimal dedicated budgets, and uneven tracking systems.

The third was to professionalise further the functional units supporting primary processes. The Learning and Quality Support unit was established with success; the Finance unit was enhanced; the Human resources unit was professionalised (and the head is part of senior staff); the Communications unit was further professionalised and (the head is part of senior staff). Each had tangible and relevant impact. This included less reporting burden on programmes, more emphasis on corporate "identity" focused decision making, enhanced learning and accountability; vastly increased visibility and user-friendliness of output/publications, website; more centralised support for fund raising and clear finance and institutional partnership successes; modernised HR systems (with clearer understanding of human resources systems, gaps and opportunities; and a push for better gender-balance; but no senior African currently in the Management Team (MT)).

A fourth was to remain in Europe and to not expand to have a permanent and physical presence in Africa.

In terms of "fit-for-purpose" structure, it was apparent that the Programmes/Task Forces/Cross Centre work organisational choices created a relatively complex organisational structure; and cross-centre collaboration

systematically ran up against funding-financing structures and challenges (that were often overcome but at what opportunity cost).

So organisational choices on the "how" do support the "what" but there is room to grow moving forward. And the how does not yet allow ECDPM to entirely realise its goal to fully integrate EU-Africa *relations* in its programmes, nor fully integrate North Africa. There is a strong imperative to re-consider modalities for increasing co-creation, co-analysis with Africa, in Africa - when it comes to addressing *relations* between the two continents, and when it comes to addressing topics of particular *interest to Africa*; and in ensuring African perspectives help to drive the research frame and the content focus. This is accompanied, in relation to the Centre's quest to be "independent" and "non-partisan" by a strong imperative, moving forward, to consider to what extent its major programme area choices and work topics are relevant and priorities for both Africa and the EU (Europe). And to consider options for stronger presence in Africa.

Finally, in relation to ECDPM's niche and identity, as a "think and do" tank, it very clearly occupies an important niche with unique selling points, not least as a provider of analysis delivered with a rigorous "nexus" lens. It clearly holds a strong and well-recognised niche in relation to the EU, EU Member States, and EU external actions. In terms of its Africa-EU relations, and related "Africa" "niche", the results are patchy at higher continental and regional political/political/policy process levels; whilst its credibility and effectiveness around themes, and therein related to Africa, remains strong. Most importantly, though, the Centre is reviewing what it means to "do" in Africa, as it moves forward, and considering how to ensure it has sufficient co-creation in Africa, given evolving contexts, and this is commendable. Equally, the Centre is considering affirming a future emphasis "on Europe, beyond EU"; and a focus on significant non-EU dynamic actors in Africa (European and others; government and private sector).

ECDPM "niche" is confirmed by the high demand for its services and outputs, more from Europe, but also from Africa, and in particular for more information, i.a.,:

- on Europe, the EU, and its Member States (including for Africa)
- on Africa (including for Europe and for the EU and its Member States)
- political analysis on consequences of policy choices
- insights on gaps and areas of convergence between the Continents, and this for all themes and workstreams
- insights relevant to relations with Africa
- nexus lens on thematic priority issues (i.e. multidisciplinary lens and content)

2.2. Key Recommendations

The evaluation team has synthesised the below set of recommendations, and some of these intentionally overlap. In view of the next strategy of ECDPM, it appears that the ongoing shifts in societies as well as in international politics are disruptive in several respects and probably demand more than the usual incremental adjustments of thematic foci and ways of working. Given these ongoing disruptions - in geopolitics, in Africa, and in the EU; in the ways of cooperation and communication; in debates about interests, values and identity; in the decolonisation of politics and knowledge - what was appropriate five years ago has to be thoroughly reconsidered for the next strategic period. The evaluation team believes that the below elements are highly relevant for shaping the Centre's future work, as it transitions towards a new strategic period to reinforce its strengths, make some evidence-based decisions, seize opportunities and address challenges moving forward.² Detailed options for consideration for each of the 17 judgement criteria used for the evaluation are available in Annex.

² These recommendations do not imply that the Centre is not already addressing or carrying out some of these elements; simply that these are especially important moving forward.

1. Make Strategic Choices as Opportunities for Sustained Outcomes

As ECDPM devises its next five-year Strategy, and makes strategic choices, it could:

- Reflect on how the Centre can influence the debate about the future of European development cooperation, within international cooperation more broadly, the “values” vs “interests” and the “decolonisation of aid and knowledge” debates and what these mean for “international cooperation” (including increased focus on finance mechanisms and private sector and other global actors); and reflect on how this translates across ECDPMs strategic choices.
- Reflect, in collaboration with European and African stakeholders, on how the Centre might aspire to influence the conversation about nexus areas between European/EU strategic priorities and African strategic aspirations as identified in policy documents (e.g., Agenda 2063 and Europe/EU Priorities, EU-Africa Strategy).
- Consider strengthening and broadening non-EU Europe analysis and focus, and the interplay between EU actors and other European actors, and not only in relation to Africa.
- Reflect on how the Centre might aspire to influence the dialogue about relations between the two; and ensure an explicit Africa-EU relations strategy:
 - think politically – what does a political analysis tell us about trade-offs from EU or from Africa perspectives, and
 - review how this informs their relations, and choices made by the Centre.
- Invest in strategic partnering and presence in Europe and in Africa. Politically analyse policies from multi-perspectives, and contribute to policy influence and deliberations.
- Enhance the strategy to manage external know how, outreach and uptake as integral to delivering relevant quality knowledge.
- Create a strategy to co-create and partner with and in Africa.
- Ensure organisational structure and tracking reflect strategic priorities.

2. Review Niches and Identity

Ensure that ECDPM's identity going forward is centred on the niche areas of its future.

- Retain EU's external actions and geopolitical role in the international cooperation context as the Centre's strategic niche area, and provide room and adaptability to integrate global agendas – global sustainable development - and key global players. Consider explicitly broadening the European scope beyond EU.
- Retain Africa-EU strategic priority and focus on Africa as niche areas that require a certain recentring of the identity towards greater multi-actor co-creation with Africa and drill down on the juxtaposition or commonalities of African and European perspectives.
- Consider a re-centring towards paying more attention to emerging trends and opportunities (e.g. revitalised agency and strengthened capacities of Africans to address their own priorities as well as the global BLM movement which resonates deeply there) and to contributing to, and playing an important part in, decolonisation of knowledge and analysis.
- Emphasise the nexus lens as a key identifying element of ECDPM and a niche area upheld by the intense multi-disciplinarity of ECDPM and its capacity to mix multi-and inter-disciplinary analysis with cross-cutting analytical lenses (gender, climate, politics, economics etc on a broad number of topics).
- Interpret explicitly “development” as global sustainable development, with development cooperation as one policy area to be managed, with others, towards sustainable development, and as part of international cooperation.

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- Consider how the Centre's strengths will fit into the evolving environment, and whether some of these, and niche areas it can fill in future, may need to be branded differently, moving forward.
 - Seize and address emerging priorities and diversity in Africa and Europe
 - Reflect these dynamics in the Centre's institutional and organisational structures.
 - Devise a system to allow more systematic delivery of cross-cutting lenses results.
 - Consider more co-creation with actors beyond the Centre to reinforce credibility, identity and effective uptake.

3. Engage Differently and More Dynamically:

with, in, and on Africa

- Deepen political analysis of policy implications of “all sides” Africa, Europe, EU and globally (think politically about policy choices). Consider drilling down on the obstacles and pathways to change - and exposing these from various perspectives.
- Ensure more co-creation, ring-fence funds.
- Consider a dedicated African focused strategy/initiative, core-fund financed, led by a senior, politically well leveraged and networked, African researcher and policy expert.
- Establish presence³ in Africa - at least in Addis Ababa – to engage with the AU, Member States (PRC) and RECs policy processes to enhance update and brokerage of knowledge strengthen co-creative partnerships and collaboration with peer institutes in Africa towards a dialogue of equals; including as an important factor in strengthening analysis of Europe-Africa relations and the varied perspectives therein. This would help to reinforce the more systematic integration of African dimensions across workstreams; and increase return on investments in deeper partnerships.
- Broaden multi-actor focus on dynamic public and private actors and their partnerships in Africa, including beyond EU/European actors.

in Europe, beyond EU

- Continue to work with actors in EU member states (not only governments) on teasing out the influence of EU's internal diversity on its external policies.
- Extend the ETTG to eastern and southern Europe as a research and dialogue platform for the development of coherent EU-policy concepts.
- Consider geopolitics of EU within broader Europe, but also beyond Africa.

4. Reimagine Influence and Brokering Modalities

- Invest in institutional partnerships and collaboration as a means of delivery, knowledge production, uptake and brokerage with European and African stakeholders - political institutions, think tanks and other research bodies.
- Strengthen EU Africa bridge – enhance niche & credibility in and on Africa, establish longer term strategies for consolidated partnering with African stakeholders, consider greater presence, towards more balance of perspectives but also a focus on EU's need to “get behind the scenes” to better understand Africa – and vice versa - towards a dialogue of equals.

³ feasible in a post COVID context to have such presence remotely and innovatively and at minimal costs– by sharing hosting costs with a like-minded think tank.

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- Critically assess the Centre's influence and brokering strategies – strengthen links between influencing policy debates and processes, outreach, communications, co-creation and brokering knowledge for enhanced credibility and depth of knowledge. Communications and outreach are intrinsic to credibility and uptake, impact, and partnering, and not just to visibility.
 - Integrate audience knowledge needs at the early stage of workstream conceptualisation and management to increase potential influence and uptake; and ensure the "fit for purpose" knowledge is identified, "fit for purpose" knowledge sources are used and "fit for end-user" knowledge products released.
 - Upgrade infrastructure and IT tools for more digitally smart, mobile-platform friendly, user friendly modern and multi-lingual communications platforms and presence; including social media.
 - Reach further into Africa with multi-lingual research products and processes; and increase publications in French, Arabic, Portuguese, Spanish.

5. Enhance the Corporate Culture and Increase Diversity

People are the backbone to any think tank, including ECDPM. Corporate cultures must keep up with the times and evolve with them. Corporate cultures affect the depth of analytical lenses and help to frame research. To help evolve the corporate culture:

- Accelerate delivery on the Management Review recommendations.
- Establish a Board led "diversity exercise" to identify a pathway to change across ECDPM pertaining to the 3 Gs - gender, geography (race), generation and other corporate-culture topics so as to broaden internal dialogue, analytical scope and depth.
- Devise a diversity strategy (human resources and programming) that recognises that this is not only, nor primarily, a numbers game. It is about ensuring depth and quality to the analytical process used to frame research, and bolstering credibility

6. Restructure towards a Fit-for Future Organisation

As ECDPM prepares for the future, it could consider the following in order to create a "fit-for-future" organisational structure and management approach, so that structure and fund allocations match strategic priorities.

- Consider a simplified, more matrixed and more flexible structure that helps ensure a maximum focus on whichever key future priorities and cross cutting imperatives are identified (few programs, several cross-centre teams matrixed around workstreams better able to include cross-cutting and multi-thematic analysis and actors, no task forces).
- Strengthen the office of the Director (director and deputy director) toward an integrated vertical and horizontal decision making modality, led by the Director's Office with the Management Team (and staff representation), to help avoid 'silo effect'.
- Strengthen the Africa focus at each level through a senior African advisor/manager position; more consistent and permanent presence and representation in Africa; backed up by more African staff, associates and external experts.
- Retain and strengthen the LQS unit to support planning, internal quality control, improvement, accountability and peer learning etc.
 - Extend LQS mandate to develop 'cross cutting themes and analytical tools' focused on upskilling for (not on delivering on) richer more pertinent analysis.
 - Consider one theory of influence (change) per pillar/programme theme with simplified modalities for each workstream to ensure corporate relevance and identify how it will influence change pathways.

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- Ensure that modalities for tracking delivery against key future priorities and thematic imperatives are implemented.
 - Raise prominence of, and resources for, Outreach and Communications as make or break for a think tank institution like ECDPM
 - Upgrade IT and communications infrastructure for mobile friendly and top quality search enabled platforms.
 - Devote AI resources to multi-language communications.
 - Ensure early audience and stakeholder analysis per workstream/activity, with subsequent outreach, engagement and communications plan as sine qua non for moving forward (and secure funding for this).
 - Review Finance Allocation and Structural Modalities - keep the right balance
 - Beef up core funding or maintain to at least current levels of total funding. ECDPM's unique place is heavily reliant on the independence this provides.
 - Continue to diversify funding, and beef up programme (not project) funding in order to assure the right balance and avoid any danger of being market-driven rather than strategy driven.
 - Revise budget allocation system (driven by Director's Office, with Management Team and staff representation), with a more centralised overview of budget allocations and approach to fund raising in order to ensure core funding for key priorities, and (continue to) avoid being market-driven rather than strategy driven.
 - Ensure key strategic priorities and areas that solidify "niche" are properly financed (and tracked), for example :
 - allocations and long-term strategies for "presence and credibility" in Africa/with Africa and in Europe/with Europe.
 - nexus lens capacities, including ability to work in cross-centre teams, integrate diverse voices, and use the results of "cross cutting" assessments (policy coherence, gender, climate, youth, technology, political analysis, relational analysis, change management, etc).
 - ability to attract, retain, upskill quality staff with field experience.
 - Consolidate centralisation of fund raising, reflect on fundraising pressures, upskilling requirements and the need to allow programme teams to focus mostly on delivery of substance (not fundraising).