

ECDPM External Evaluation 2001-2005

Final Report

Evaluation Team:

**Konrad Matter
Raphael E. Mwai
Edward Sefuke
Andrew Sherriff**

June 2006



EUROPEAN CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY MANAGEMENT
CENTRE EUROPÉEN DE GESTION DES POLITIQUES DE DÉVELOPPEMENT



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Contents

1	Executive Summary	1
2	Findings and Recommendations	3
3	Background	13
	3.1 Introduction to the evaluation	13
	3.2 Approach and methodology	13
4	The overall policy context of ECDPM work	14
	4.1 Global trends impacting development cooperation 2001-05	14
	4.2 The context impacting European development cooperation 2001-05	15
	4.3 The context impacting ACP 2001-05	15
5	Understanding ECDPM	16
	5.1 Mandate and mission	16
	5.2 Strategy 2001-05 and identity	17
	5.3 Strategic choices	17
	5.4 Programs and themes	18
	5.5 Evolution of strategy, strategy revision	18
6	Effectiveness of strategy and programmes	19
	6.1 The mandate seen in the light of the evolution of the context	19
	6.2 Process approach	20
	6.3 Partnership and network approach	21
	6.3.1 Introduction	21
	6.3.2 Partnerships	21
	6.3.3 Network	23
	6.4 ECDPM as an independent broker	24
	6.5 Pertinence and performance of programmatic choices	25
	6.5.1 ACP-EU Trade Relations	25
	6.5.2 Political Dimension of Partnership	26
	6.5.3 Actors of Partnership	28
	6.5.4 Internal Donor Reform and quality of development assistance	30
	6.5.5 Conclusion on programmes and themes	31
	6.6 Information and (external) communications	33
7	Institutional management and development	34
	7.1 Human resource management	34
	7.1.1 Succession planning and recruitment	35
	7.1.2 Human resources profile and deployment	36
	7.1.3 Staff retention and reward system	37
	7.1.4 Training and learning	37
	7.2 Management process and participatory decision making	37
	7.3 Knowledge management and institutional learning	38
8	Financial and fund-raising assessment: raising the 'quality of income'	38
	8.1 Achievement of financial targets	38
	8.2 Evolution of the funding mix	40
	8.3 Fund-raising in a challenging context	40

8.4	Role of the Dutch Trust Fund	42
8.5	Consequences of the change of funding mix	43
8.6	Future Fund-raising, Financial Management and Maintenance of Independence and Strategy	44
8.7	Summary of Key Points	45
9	Assessing ECDM's added value	46
10	Assessing ECDPM's impact	47
10.1	Introduction - Explaining patterns and 'routes' of impact	47
10.2	Key elements influencing ECDPM ability to have impact	48
10.3	Looking forward and improving ECDPM's impact	50
11	Acronyms and abbreviations	51
	Appendix I: Terms of Reference	52
	Appendix II: Elaborating key evaluation questions contained in TOR	58
	Appendix III: List of contacts interviewed by evaluation team	68
	Appendix IV: List of principle documents consulted	71
	Box 1: The Capacity.org strategic alliance	22
	Box 2: ECDPM collaboration with the AU Commission	28
	Box 3: Mechanism for programme development and evolution	32
	Box 4: Types of funding	39
	Box 5: Dilemmas in assessing ECDPM's impact	48
	Box 6: A sampling of impacts	49
	Box 7: Types of impacts expectable	50
	Table 1: Strategic target and assessment of results	39
	Table 2: Evolution in the funding mix	40
	Table 3: Comparative of ECDPM with various other institutes' funding mix and diversity of significant donors, 2004	41
	Table 4: Decreases in income from the Dutch trust fund	43

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1 Executive summary

The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) is an impressive institution with a challenging and unique mandate. Broadly, given its size and structures, it is making an important contribution to the quality and effectiveness of development cooperation between North and South. This is particularly the case with respect to EU-ACP relations, where the Centre is highly regarded and valued by a large number of stakeholders on both sides.

The challenge for ECDPM is to consolidate and improve on its already impressive relevance and impact. The evaluation team noted and assessed a number of areas in which improvement is both possible and desirable. This will require refocus and change within ECDPM, but also support from its principal donors. Indeed, the challenging funding environment in which ECDPM finds itself represents a significant threat to the Centre's mandate, strategy, ways of working and effectiveness.

The Centre evolved considerably during the 2001-05 period. ECDPM grew in size and budget; it became more professional and responsive to "demand" and more deeply engaged in all programme areas. Its new five-year strategy, developed in 2005, is considerably more comprehensive, thought-through and mature than the 2001 strategy, which was clearly written for an organisation in transition. During 2001-05, ECDPM had institutional financial support from the Netherlands, Sweden, Belgium, Switzerland and Portugal. It had programme support from the United Kingdom, with numerous other donors providing more restricted project funds.

The strategic choices made by the Centre in terms of overall focus were extremely pertinent to the evolving policy context during the evaluation period. ECDPM's focus, and its following the evolution of the EU-ACP policy context across all of its programmes, ensured a relevance and utility unmatched by other organisations in this sphere. There were very few areas within the EU-ACP policy nexus for which ECDPM did not produce a relevant publication, organise a timely meeting or provide pertinent formal or informal advice to those closely involved.

ECDPM's unique independent brokerage role is what enabled it to engage to this degree. While not interpreted as neutrality, this role does engender broad trust in the Centre from both the EU and the ACP side. As a *modus operandi* it clearly added value to the range of actors in this policy environment. The non-partisan, independent broker approach did at times cause frustration with stakeholders, some of whom would have liked ECDPM's endorsement of their position in certain circumstances. Yet the vast majority felt that it was important for ECDPM to play this role, rather than one more partisan or advocacy based. There were situations in which ECDPM could not fully play the role of independent broker, particularly on extremely sensitive political issues. Nonetheless, it is desirable that the Centre continue to work in this manner, producing useful materials and undertaking focused events on even the more delicate themes.

ECDPM has chosen to take a process approach in its work. This involves following, engaging in and facilitating processes. Again this has proven to be an effective way for the Centre to have more impact than it might otherwise have had. The Centre's primary focus on the EU-ACP Cotonou Partnership Agreement has provided a strong anchor and locus for Centre activities. It has also allowed the Centre to build an unrivalled knowledge of systems and processes, especially those related to EU-ACP interaction. Additionally, by engaging in processes, ECDPM has gained a systemic understanding of how to positively impact change. It has then worked to achieve and facilitate this through existing networks. ECDPM's network around policy processes remains most developed in the North. Indeed, significant work is needed to enhance the Centre's presence in the South and to genuinely engage primarily with African stakeholders over the longer term. ECDPM's current approach is often too diffuse or short term. Meaningful strategic partnerships, and clarity on criteria for them, are required if ECDPM is to enhance its relevance and impact in the future.

Most of the Centre's programme areas went through varying degrees of evolution during 2001-05. Much of this was related to the evolving policy context. Also, the 2001-05 strategy was clearly written for an organisation in transition that wanted to keep its options open. This in a way represented a weakness that the Centre corrected in its much stronger 2005-10 strategy. Also regarding programming, it appears that the coordinators who strategically and functionally manage the Centre's programmes might have a little too much

latitude in agenda-setting. However, the fundamental changes under way in the type of funding being made available posed one of the most significant challenges to the Centre during 2001-05, forcing ECDPM to become much more demand driven. Yet the funding situation alone cannot explain the degree of strategic deviation in some programmes. Robust mechanisms are needed to ensure that programmes remain focused on the Centre's overarching strategy.

The programmes have established themselves as well regarded in their respective fields of expertise. Also, as ECDPM has tended to focus on processes, rather than on static events or products, the programmes have shown flexibility in evolving as the context changed. The programme themes were generally highly relevant to ongoing EU-ACP and wider development debates. The programmes performed well, generally producing outputs and events regarded as high in quality and relevance. The Centre's approach of placing itself at the nexus of policy, research and practice helped to ensure that its work was consistently valuable to both policymakers and practitioners.

Institutionally, the Centre grew significantly in terms of staff and income during 2001-05. The Centre's staff are highly qualified, motivated and work hard to ensure that ECDPM delivers. Yet questions might be asked as to whether ECDPM currently has the optimal mix in terms of staff competence. A theme consistently raised by stakeholders was the lack of ACP faces within ECDPM. If ECDPM wishes to place itself at the interface of EU-ACP relations this is an issue that requires serious attention. Also, the Centre continues to rely heavily on a few senior individuals who are ECDPM's most known "faces". Clearly an over-reliance on a small number of senior individuals is unhealthy, and ECDPM needs to work to bring on the middle level of programme staff and ensure coverage of staff development and succession issues. This is particularly the case given the specialist nature of ECDPM's work.

The Centre is a complex organisation to understand, and it could certainly improve the way it communicates, particularly on what it is and what it does. This is vital for transparency and also to facilitate engagement of potential stakeholders. If the Centre does not communicate clearly, misunderstandings or unrealistic expectations could be the result. There is also a clear need to ensure that the extremely rich knowledge that the Centre generates gets to the right people, in the right format. Here again, particularly in relation to the South, there is room for improvement.

Overall the Centre was well managed financially over 2001-05. Nonetheless, ECDPM's funding situation has evolved in a negative and potentially risky fashion vis-à-vis the Centre's mandate and ways of working. Since 2004 ECDPM grew almost exclusively on project funding, and this short-term, restricted and quite directive type of income now makes up almost half of its resources. Such a high proportion of this essentially "consultancy" income endangers the ability of the Centre to follow its own strategy, and also undermines its ways of working and overall efficiency. ECDPM has now reached a crunch point, where a further significant erosion of the more flexible types of income would put the very character of the Centre at risk. While ECDPM could perhaps have managed this situation slightly better (e.g. by avoiding growth in project funding), funders, particularly the Netherlands government, also have a responsibility to ensure that the Centre's added value is not lost in its being forced to become market-driven. ECDPM itself must also be more proactive in responding to this funding challenge.

The Centre's primary added value centres around its process orientation and independent broker approach; its unique focus on EU-ACP cooperation; and its positioning in the research-policy-practice triad. Stakeholders also clearly appreciate its network of contacts, flexibility and often rapid response.

It is difficult to draw direct lines of causality regarding the Centre's impact. Yet cumulatively ECDPM does make an important and valuable contribution in the areas in which it engages. The Centre could do more to map and understand its potential impact. It could also be more strategic in terms of the level and depth of its relationships, strategic partnerships and the types of networks most likely to yield maximum impact.

Broadly, the challenge for the Centre in 2006-10 is to consolidate and further improve what it does based on its distinct added value. A renewed and strategic engagement of greater depth within the ACP, particularly Africa, is needed. Provided that the Centre can effectively address the issues raised in this evaluation, there is no doubt that it can considerably enhance its impact. The Centre with support from its key partners should rise to meet this challenge.

2 Findings and recommendations

Section	Findings	Recommendations
6.1	The mandate in light of the evolution of the context	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Since the signing of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, a shift in EU strategic interest towards Africa and away from the Caribbean and Pacific has taken place. Also the Centre's activities in the five-year period under scrutiny were clearly concentrated on Africa. This raises the question of whether the ACP focus of the mandate is still valid or should be revised to reflect an explicit shift of focus to Africa, which in fact is occurring. 2 In the last few years, ECDPM through its capacity programme engaged in countries outside the ACP-EU scope. This raises the question of whether and under what conditions the Centre should expand its activities beyond ACP-EU. 3 ECDPM has had minimal engagement with the new EU member states and in helping ACP stakeholders to understand the implications of the EU enlargement for EU-ACP cooperation. 4 Engagement at a regional or sub-regional level, rather than the country level, is seen as a way to increase effectiveness and impact. The Centre's early engagement with the African Union was highly praised. 5 Several stakeholders urge the Centre to undertake work in new thematic areas of peace and security as well as migration. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ECDPM's focus on Africa is a logical response to the development challenge, the changing context and its own limited capacity to engage meaningfully in so wide and diverse an area as the ACP. This should be reflected in its mandate, to close the gap between theory and practice and avoid false expectations. The deliberate focus on Africa, however, should not exclude sharing experiences among the three regions where appropriate. Also, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, with its innovative elements, should remain the primary reference for ECDPM's strategic orientation. 2 Remaining faithful to its EU-A(CP) focus, ECDPM should continue taking part in the international development debate and learning from other experiences. 3 Taking into account the interests of its ACP stakeholders, ECDPM should analyse whether it can add value by engaging more with new EU member states and work on issues related to EU enlargement. 4 The regional and sub-regional focus instead of engagement at the country level should be re-enforced. Country level engagements should be undertaken only to gain new knowledge, for pilot experiences or for comparative analyses. 5 The Centre should carefully ponder the request to undertake work in new thematic areas in light of its comparative advantage in these fields, the added value they could create and the resources they would require. New areas that are not closely related to EU systems and processes with reference to the ACP should not be considered.

Section	Findings	Recommendations
6.2	Process Approach	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The process approach is the right approach for ECDPM, as it allows the Centre to have much more impact, relevance and adaptability than it might otherwise have. 2 ECDPM engages in a number of processes, the most prominent of which is the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. But it has also engaged with other EU-ACP and OECD processes. 3 ECDPM's knowledge of EU-ACP processes is impressive and unrivalled. 4 At times, ECDPM's process approach has caused difficulty with donors taking a more directive stance on project work. 5 ECDPM is more visible and known in Brussels-level processes than in those within the ACP. 6 ECDPM's current culturally sensitive approach makes it able and suitable to engage in processes; yet further enhancement in this area is required. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ECDPM should continue to develop and refine its process orientation, making it a central tenant of all programmes. 2 ECDPM should focus on a limited number of processes in which it adds the most value. The processes chosen should be exclusively those with an EU aspect related to the ACP or Africa. 3 ECDPM should work to expand and enhance its process-led engagement (in alliances with local peer institutions) in areas most relevant to the ACP, particularly Africa. 4 ECDPM should develop its staff capacity, to ensure that staff are capable of engaging in sensitive process-oriented work - particularly at the middle level within the organisation. 5 ECDPM may need new types of partnerships and to develop its own human resources profile (particularly with individuals from the ACP) to remain capable and sensitive in its process engagements.
6.3	Partnership and Network Approach	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The partnership and networking approach is the appropriate strategic response to the vast and challenging field of the Cotonou Agreement, on one hand, and the Centre's limited resources, on the other. It is a powerful leverage tool that enables ECDPM to reach a wider audience and have stronger impact. 2 ECDPM's key concept of "strategic partner" is not clearly articulated. It confuses strategic partners with both intergovernmental policymaking institutions and with network partners. This lack of clarity hampers the Centre's ability to choose the right strategic partners and to establish a meaningful strategic partnership with them. 3 The Centre has a wide and in some fields unrivalled network, which has proven extremely helpful to achieve outcomes and impact. The network, very strong in the North, has some limitations in the South, which calls for more careful network management. 4 ECDPM has a number of strategic alliances with partner organisations and networks in the North. But it needs to develop strategic alliances in the South to better root its work in ACP processes and to add an African dimension to its presence in Africa. 5 It will not be easy to find strategic allies in the South that have the profile and capacity required. It might thus be necessary for ECDPM to select potential partners and support them in their institutional development. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ECDPM should re-examine its strategic partner concept by clarifying the function and operation of this kind of alliances and by defining a profile for potential strategic partners and allies, especially in the South. 2 A clear distinction should be made between network partnerships, strategic partnerships and strategic alliances with peer institutions and efforts undertaken to establish meaningful strategic alliances in ACP countries for sharing work on key processes. 3 Besides identifying strategic allies in the South and institutionalising cooperation with them, ECDPM should also select potential future strategic allies and support them in their institutional development, in a two-way learning relationship. 4 In its engagement in strategic alliances ECDPM should have a strong focus on key processes in EU-ACP relations or in ACP countries or regions where the cooperation with a local ally or peer institution is crucial for sustaining the process and having impact. 5 Management of the ACP network is recommended, to assess whether it comprises the right partners, to maintain the network and to provide it with the right information, also taking into account the Centre's limited resources.

Section	Findings	Recommendations
6.4	ECDPM as an independent broker	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The strategic choice to be an independent, non-partisan broker has proven to be pertinent and extremely useful in ECDPM's endeavour to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue. It has provided the Centre access to both parties and enabled it to gain their trust, giving it a unique position in the EU-ACP arena. 2 Non-partisanship, however, does not mean neutrality; not having a position. It means not to take sides and not to advocate for a specific solution, but to make the different options and their implications transparent to those involved. 3 In concrete circumstances balance is not always easy to find. Some stakeholders might feel that the Centre is leaning towards one side or should be more proactive. But the stakeholders unanimously agreed that the principle of non-partisanship should be adhered to for the sake of credibility and trustworthiness. 4 ECDPM's ability to play an effective brokerage role is limited when it comes to top-level politically sensitive issues, though the Centre has successfully contributed meaningful analyses to such sensitive debates. 5 The principle of non-partisanship is applicable where the Centre is facilitating dialogue processes, but not when it acts as adviser or service provider. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ECDPM should remain faithful to the non-partisan brokerage approach as a working principle. But it should apply it with flexibility and sensitivity, taking into account disparities in policy dialogues and its own mandate to strengthen the capacity of ACP actors. 2 ECDPM should be aware of the risk that extension of service delivery implies. Increased project/consultancy work could jeopardise its independence and ability to act as a non-partisan broker. 3 In future, more judicious use of the independence of programme coordinators in the selection of specific activities and, more crucially, in making material changes to programmes will ensure a higher level of attainment of the "3Cs" (coordination, coherence and complementarity). 4 The Centre should create incentives to encourage tangible cross-programme initiatives so as to generate greater synergy among the programmes. 5 Unrestricted income (core plus institutional) should be strategically used to ensure coordination, coherence and complementarity in programming.
6.5	Pertinence and performance of programmatic choices	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Generally, the programmatic choices made in consecutive annual work plans and budgets remained pertinent to contextual developments in ACP-EU relations and consequently were consistent with strategic choices made by the centre for the period 2001-2005. 2 The notable exception was the Development Cooperation and Capacity Programme which tended to focus on external (OECD) processes 3 Genuine substantive integrative initiatives that were cross-programmatic in nature were limited to a few: 3Cs, DPS evaluation, support to AUC, Development support to EPA's programme. This is disappointing given the potential added value of cross-programmatic initiatives. 4 There was a sizable number of ad-hoc or demand-driven activities which is in itself a useful indicator of pertinence of the programmatic choices to stakeholder interests. 5 All programmes were adversely impacted (to varying degrees) by the rise in projects funding and the limited 'unrestricted' resources available to allow them to follow their own strategy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 In future, more judicious use of the independence of Programme Coordinators in the selection of specific activities and more crucially, material changes to programmes will ensure higher levels of attainment of the principle of the 3C's (coordination, coherency and complementarity) in the centres activities. 2 The Centre should incentivise tangible cross-programmatic initiatives to create greater synergy between the programmes. 3 Unrestricted income (core + institutional) should be strategically used to ensure coordination, coherence, and complementarity in programming.
6.5.1	ACP-EU Trade Relations	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The programme was very well conceptualised with clear objectives and consequently it generated programme activities that were well attuned to the Centre's mission and strategies. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Programme funding needs to be complemented with institutional resources to increase flexibility.

Section Findings	Recommendations
<p>6.5.1 ACP-EU Trade Relations</p> <p>2 The programme was consistently very well led and qualitatively well supported, a factor that sometimes raised expectations from key stakeholders and other partners beyond what the "installed" capacity of the Centre could realistically deliver.</p> <p>3 Even though difficult to quantify, the programme had significant positive impact on the central objective of supporting EPA negotiations, as acknowledged by both sides in the negotiations.</p> <p>4 Flexible (programme) funding helped maintain programme focus on set objectives whilst allowing flexibility to respond to emerging needs within margins of the budget constraint.</p> <p>5 The programme's objectives lacked provisions for long-term capacity building as a necessary precondition for successful implementation of EPAs, despite honed in-house competences in this area.</p> <p>6 The absence of activities for mainstreaming involvement of the private sector in trade policy management in general and in the EPA negotiations in particular was a major weakness, given the central role that the sector is expected to play in implementation.</p>	<p>2 Synergetic linkages and corresponding activities need to be further developed between the Trade Programme and the Development Cooperation and Capacity Programme in a manner that ensures enhanced operational complementarity as well as an appropriate level of visibility of the Centre's other competences.</p> <p>3 There is an urgent need to develop activities aimed at facilitating greater involvement of the private sector in core programme activities. It may be necessary to partner with institutions that have more competence in private sector organisational matters.</p> <p>4 Greater effort needs to be made in the selection and management of the programme network partners and in matching this with realistic capacity to adequately manage relationships.</p>
<p>6.5.2 Political Dimensions of Partnership</p> <p>1 The Political Dimensions of Partnership programme, and its successor, the Development Policy and EU External Action programme, had difficulty in clearly defining and then maintaining its strategic direction.</p> <p>2 Outputs and policy briefs produced by the programme were generally felt to be high quality and extremely timely.</p> <p>3 In evolving to address the new EU policy agenda the programme ensured that the Centre remained pertinent in a highly dynamic environment.</p> <p>4 The Development Policy and EU External Action programme would seem the most logical to deal with the issue of the new EU member states. Yet the Centre as a whole has not responded adequately to this development.</p> <p>5 The Centre is rightly applauded for its flexible strategic decision to engage with the African Union.</p> <p>6 The programme has become well regarded in a short period of time as highly relevant among Brussels-oriented stakeholders. Yet within the ACP it remains less known and active.</p> <p>7 Lack of flexible resources meant that the programme was too dependent on short-term project income. This negatively impacted the maintenance of strategic focus.</p>	<p>1 The Centre needs to consider how it can effectively engage on the issue of the "new" EU member states with regard to EU-ACP and EU-Africa relations.</p> <p>2 The Development Policy and EU External Action programme must ensure that its engagement and communication with the ACP and Africa is proportionate. This means a significant scaling up and a more proactive approach.</p> <p>3 The programme should focus its engagement on and around the EU-Africa strategy process without neglecting relevant aspects of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.</p> <p>4 The Centre should continue to focus on the African Union in a Centre-wide approach. Yet new modalities of engagement are needed.</p> <p>5 The programme should continue to produce its well regarded and timely written outputs that are responsive to EU policy developments, while making particular effort to communicate these to the South.</p> <p>6 The programme should be mindful that its added value is knowledge of EU systems and processes. It should look to link with institutions with expertise in new areas such as peace and security and migration. Significant in-house expertise does not necessarily need to be developed in these areas.</p> <p>7 The programme should focus on maintaining its strategic coherence, if this means doing less to greater depth, then this is a worthwhile approach.</p>

6.5.3	Actors of Partnership	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The Actors of Partnership programme is widely acknowledged by stakeholders as one of the Centre's most successful programme interventions, in terms of its pioneering work in mainstreaming non-state actor participation in ACP-EU development cooperation as well as specific outputs. 2 The programme was well articulated conceptually and operationally and consistent with the Centre's overall strategy. 3 The range of activities and outputs of the programme's communication and information strategy was outstanding. The popular and widely circulated NSA Guide exemplifies this success. 4 The pragmatic and logical manner in which this programme evolved from a focus on actors of partnership to the wider subject of governance in the subsequent programme cycle (2005-07) is noteworthy. 5 A side-effect of the programme's pioneering role and its hands-on, initiating and driving approach is the generation of expectations about future engagement that are possibly beyond ECDPM's capacity and mandate. 6 In the latter part of the programme cycle, there was a tendency to engage too widely at the expense of depth or consistency of engagement. This was caused mainly by the emergence of interesting prospects, such as work with the AU Commission. 7 The programme promoted, and continues to nurture, the ACP Local Government Platform. In the absence of demonstrated commitment from the relevant stakeholders, this approach is likely to be unsustainable. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The Centre needs to re-examine its role in the creation of stakeholder institutions with a view to ensuring that, from the out-set, the stakeholders take a leading role anchored by demonstrable material and moral commitment to the institution's sustainability. 2 The Centre should ensure that suitable high-level human resources capacity is continually focused on the needs in this important area of work. 	
6.5.4	Internal Donor Reform	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The Internal Donor Reform programme was pertinent to the mandate of the Centre in that it aimed to impact the quality of development cooperation in the context of ACP-EU relations. Most programme activities were, however, not aligned to Centre strategy. Emphasis on the donor aspects of cooperation and limited engagement of ACP policymakers in interrogating the quality of aid delivery mechanisms denied the programme the opportunity to substantially influence change in current practices. Despite the decentralisation of EC development cooperation mechanisms, navigating the complexity of the relevant systems and procedures remains a major challenge to the ACP countries. 2 The extensive capacity studies carried out in the programme provide a strong base on which to build future work on ACP-EU cooperation. The fact that the European Union has finally shown interest in these aspects of development constitutes an opportunity for streamlining the current aid delivery processes. 3 The programme raised the profile of ECDPM in the development cooperation arena. This creates a favourable environment for further success of Centre programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The programme should now make a deliberate attempt to mainstream insights gained in capacity studies to support institutional development in the ACP countries. In particular, the programme could assist these countries to engage in dialogue with the European Union so as to influence substantial reforms in the current aid management systems. 2 The Centre should refocus this programme on the EU-ACP context, yet ensure an appropriate transition strategy so as not to disappoint existing stakeholders. 	

Section	Findings	Recommendations
6.6	Information and (external) Communication	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ECDPM's information output is not only impressive in terms of quantity, its quality is also generally praised. Theme focus, content and accuracy of information material are appreciated. 2 Critical comments were heard on the presentation and readability of the materials. Also questions were raised on the ease of navigation and accuracy of the ECDPM website. 3 The cost-effectiveness of publications and especially their utilisation and impact needs to be assessed. A strategy to actively promote the use of ECDPM publications is also recommendable. 4 The need to integrate programme activities through the communication strategy was noted. Public relations and media relations elements also need to be added as part of a holistic Centre communication strategy. 5 The need to effectively integrate communication into the thematic programmes has been noted in the past. But significant reform and enhancement remain outstanding. 6 ECDPM is not maximising the potential of the knowledge it generates and has access to because its communications are not optimal. 7 Communication and Information is seen as acting as a stand-alone programme, purely a technical service provider to the other programmes, not really as a cross-cutting programme providing strategic support to the thematic programmes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ECDPM needs to re-align its current communications strategy to the wider institutional focus. Such a strategy should include a public relations component. A strategic re-positioning of the Communication and Information programme should now be effected. 2 Communication and Information is encouraged to watch the presentation and readability of the Centre's information materials. It should also strive to promote a corporate identity by consistent and uniform "branding" of published materials as well as the Internet-based tools. 3 The issue of effective utilisation of publications and their cost-benefit ratio should receive more attention, to find an optimum mix of information tools and encourage the proactive use of the Centre's written outputs.
7	Institutional management and development	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 The Centre has developed a high level of competence at its senior level. The orientation towards short-term contracts in recruitment and the over-reliance on interns and programme associates, however, has undermined progressive competence development at the middle and lower levels. The fast growth in programme activities in relation to the existing staff capacity has put staff under considerable pressure to perform. 2 The complexity of thematic programmes and the dynamic environment in which these are implemented calls for a blend of skills that can be acquired only through extended training and development. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ECDPM should create and implement a staff development policy which recognises the competence needs of the programmes and the complex environment in which activities are implemented. Essential elements of such a policy would be succession plans, a structured training and development strategy that incorporates mentoring and exposure opportunities and a more flexible career path for outstanding members of staff. 2 A deliberate attempt should be made to integrate ACP personnel into Centre activities. This can be achieved by either adding more staff from the South to the Centre complement or by institutionalising partnerships in the South which could serve as credible outreach for programme activities.

Section	Findings	Recommendations
7	Institutional management and development	
	<p>3 Limited integration of ACP personnel in the ECDPM staff and lack of clear strategies for developing institutionalised partnerships within these countries could undermine the Centre's effectiveness in brokering relations between ACP and EU partners.</p> <p>4 The Centre's strategic decision to recruit mainly short-term programme associates, research assistants and interns could negatively impact institutional sustainability in the longer term.</p> <p>5 The ratio of programme to support staff should be reviewed at all levels. This is necessary to enhance staff efficiency and reduce institutional costs. There is excessive reliance on in-house capacity in the Communication and Information programme. This could be reduced with cost and efficiency benefits to the organisation.</p> <p>6 The remuneration structure at ECDPM is modelled on that of the Dutch civil service. It is lower than comparable benchmarks. Staff retention is therefore due to an attractive work environment.</p> <p>7 Training and individual learning is based on information sharing, peer review meetings and on-the-job exposure. While a training and development programme is in place, this has not been consistently implemented due to heavy workloads and financial pressures.</p> <p>8 Knowledge management is internalised as a part of the institutional culture. The Strategy and Innovation programme creates opportunities for learning by mainstreaming knowledge and practice into Centre programmes. There is a need to better integrate external knowledge management with internal learning systems.</p> <p>9 The institutional relations component of the Strategy and Innovation programme has enabled the Centre to access funds from non-traditional sources. The need to structure a professional fund-raising mechanism into the organisation is indicated.</p> <p>10 The participatory decision-making process in the Centre motivates staff to excel in their work. There is nonetheless a need to maintain the strategic focus of the programmes and ensure that decisions taken are effectively followed through.</p>	<p>3 An objective study should be carried out to determine the optimal ratio between administrative and programme staff. In arriving at this ratio consideration should be given to the programme value addition of each support position and the need to leverage information technology in the Centre's possession. A bias towards more outsourcing in the Communication and Information programme should also be assessed.</p> <p>4 The integration of external knowledge management processes with internal learning should be more structured in the Strategy and Innovation programme.</p> <p>5 A system of monitoring implementation should be put in place to verify that decisions taken are followed through. This system should also check that programme activities are always aligned to the Centre strategy.</p> <p>6 ECDPM should structure a professional fund-raising function into the organisation.</p>

Section	Findings	Recommendations
8	Finance and fund-raising	
	<p>1 The financial strategy for 2001-05 did not include clear targets for the proportions of different types of funding income between core/institutional, programme and project finance.</p> <p>2 The Dutch trust fund has not yielded the income envisaged upon its creation. The income provided has actually significantly diminished on a year-to-year basis in absolute and relative terms. However, the Centre relies heavily on the fully flexible unrestricted resources provided by the trust, as they allow it to maintain its autonomy and strategy.</p> <p>3 Multi-annual institutional funding agreements were successfully concluded with Switzerland, Sweden, Finland and Belgium, along with a smaller in-kind contribution from Portugal. With these, this "unrestricted" type of finance grew significantly in real terms, rising from zero per cent of Centre income in 2001 to 17 per cent in 2005.</p> <p>4 A certain amount of project-funded work has kept the Centre policy-relevant, ensured accountability and enabled the Centre to work more closely with stakeholders on specific issues (particularly with donors). The result has been a Centre that is more demand driven and responsive to stakeholders. Yet the total amount of growth in this area vis-à-vis other types of funding has now reached unhealthy levels.</p> <p>5 The Centre in 2005 is operating at its least favourable ratio of unrestricted funds to restricted funds since its establishment in 1986. Any further reduction of unrestricted income (from the Dutch trust fund, a successor mechanism or other source) would impact the quality and ability of the institution to fulfil its mandate and maintain its strategy.</p> <p>6 ECDPM growth since 2004 has increasingly been based on project funding. This is inherently risky and ultimately unsustainable. The Centre needs to enhance robust mechanisms to maintain project income at appropriate levels, to keep activities on budget and to hold unbudgeted expenditure to an absolute minimum.</p> <p>7 ECDPM has done well to diversify its sources of flexible funding in a competitive and challenging global funding environment. Further significant growth in terms of entirely unrestricted funding from new sources is likely to be limited, yet there is good scope for growth in programme funding.</p>	<p>1 Ultimately it is the Centre's responsibility to raise its own resources. It should continue to explore and extend its search for alternative and diversified sources of all types of potential income - particularly programme funds where growth is possible and desirable. In doing so it should acquire specialised assistance and assess how peer institutions have managed their evolving fund-raising situations.</p> <p>2 The Centre requires at least two-thirds of its income to be made up of fully flexible (core and institutional) and multi-year programme funding to fulfil its mandate, maintain its character and ensure strategic coherence.</p> <p>3 Further ECDPM growth based on project income is undesirable and unsustainable. The Centre should not grow on project-related funding in the future. It should adopt and aggressively enforce an appropriate ratio between the different types of income (see below). This should be the case even if it requires hard decisions to be made about staffing levels at ECDPM.</p> <p>4 An appropriate and not unrealistic balance range for the Centre to maintain between unrestricted (fully flexible core + institutional), programme (somewhat restricted) and project (most restrictive) income is 40-50 per cent unrestricted, 30-40 per cent programme and 10-20 per cent project income. It is highly undesirable for the total of unrestricted and programme income to be less than 66 per cent of Centre income (i.e. for directive, short-term project funding to make up more than 34 per cent).</p> <p>5 As a Dutch foundation, established and having its original mandate set by the Dutch government and based in Maastricht the Government of the Netherlands has a special responsibility for the Centre when it comes to support. This responsibility could be more evenly shared, and other EU members could be encouraged by the Dutch government to increase or start supporting ECDPM.</p> <p>6 However, income from the Dutch government should be increased to at least 40 per cent of the Centre's projected operating budget for the years 2005-10. Any future Dutch funding mechanism should be multi-year in nature, preferably five years or longer.</p> <p>7 The Centre should develop outcomes based directly on its strategy to ensure continued progress and accountability to its major core and institutional donors.</p>

8	Finance and fund-raising	
	<p>8 The Centre has developed a more appropriate way to assess its "real" costs for projects, but it cannot always get full cost recovery (as this would be above market rates, particularly for senior members of staff). This situation leads to some projects being rejected or run at a loss.</p> <p>9 While some activities can be partially supported by unrestricted funds in line with its strategy, the Centre is becoming increasingly hesitant to take on projects or initiatives that do not lead to some or full cost recovery. This is more likely to negatively impact ACP stakeholders, who can least afford to remunerate ECDPM.</p>	<p>8 The Centre should review its numbers and types of human resources capacity: (i) to raise resources, including becoming proactive in gathering information on potential donors' various funding streams and presenting programme options to donors for support and (ii) to maintain strategic and good functional relations with current and potential donors (through grants management). This should be done Centre-wide and at the programme level. The present amount and type of capacity is insufficient for the task at hand.</p>
Section	Findings	Recommendations
9	Added value	
	<p>1 ECDPM is praised by many stakeholders as unique in the EU-ACP political arena, with a very specific and high added value.</p> <p>2 The unique nature of the organisation, being an independent foundation and not a consultancy firm, academic institution or NGO clearly adds to its value.</p> <p>3 Its main added value derives from its unique position at the interface between the European Union and ACP, its well founded knowledge of the complexities of EU institutions, mechanisms and processes and of the reality, the thinking and feelings of the ACP partners.</p> <p>4 Other factors contributing to the Centre's added value are its nearly ideal mix of policy, practice and research; its holistic perspective; and its endeavour to be strategy and not market driven.</p> <p>5 Its methodological approach and thematic focus, the high quality of its work and staff, and its flexibility and responsiveness to stakeholder needs are considered as creating added value. significant growth in terms of entirely unrestricted funding from new sources is likely to be limited, yet there is good scope for growth in programme funding.</p>	<p>1 ECDPM should focus its strategy and action around the added values identified in this evaluation. It should protect, nurture and develop these aspects.</p>

Section	Findings	Recommendations
10	Impact	
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Given the cumulative nature of feedback from stakeholders, the Centre, especially considering its size, makes a positive and important contribution to North-South relations, and to EU-ACP relations in particular. 2 Assessing ECDPM's impact is challenging because of the nature of its work and the way it works. 3 ECDPM has the potential to impact (i) EU actors (and other donors), (ii) dialogue process between the European Union and the ACP and (iii) ACP actors themselves. 4 Assessing ECDPM's impact is more about making credible and informed judgements than finding definitive lines of causality. 5 ECDPM can have impact/influence by providing timely, credible, relevant and quality information, by being seen as a trusted partner, by being actively consulted (informally and formally) by policymakers and institutions, by ensuring that institutions have the capacity to engage and by convening (and getting organisations to attend) meetings with influential decision makers. There is evidence that ECDPM has done all of these. 6 ECDPM needs to be more explicit and focused about which particular "strategic partners" it is looking for joint impact with or on. 7 ECDPM's diffuse networks and partners and the lack of a semi-formal assessment of how these interact with systems undermines any monitoring of its potential impact. 8 The overcommitted nature of ECDPM staff often means that formal quality monitoring is limited. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 ECDPM should be more explicit and focused regarding its strategic partners, alliances and networks. A greater depth of engagement with a few partners would allow a more ready assessment of impact. 2 Some form of modelling the systems with which ECDPM and its networks engage would give a better understanding of cumulative potential impact. 3 Assumptions underlying potential impact should be developed around qualitative themes such as trust, length of engagement, quality of products, relevance of products and position within the policy process. Some qualitative indicators could be developed and monitored. 4 More staff time is required for effective monitoring of potential impact and for the intellectual work of designing monitoring systems. This needs to be given priority. Although this may be challenging if staff are "project-led", a worthwhile expenditure would certainly be to "buy out" staff time if more flexible funding is forthcoming.

3 Background

3.1 Introduction to the evaluation

ECDPM is an independent foundation, legally constituted in the Netherlands, and began operations in 1986. Its focus is to help build an effective partnership between the European Union and Africa, the Caribbean and Pacific (ACP), particularly related to development cooperation. ECDPM engages in facilitating policy dialogue, creating understanding of processes and institutions and building capacity. ECDPM currently has a staff of 41 and an income of some €4 million, with offices in Maastricht and Brussels. The Centre is supported by a number of donors, the largest of which is the Government of the Netherlands through a trust fund.

3.2 Approach and methodology

This institutional evaluation was initiated by the ECDPM Board of Trustees. Its terms of reference (see Appendix I) were drawn up and agreed upon by the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs. ECDPM plans in five-year cycles, and this evaluation covers the period from 2001 through 2005.

As its terms of reference dictate, this evaluation encompasses four specific objectives:

- assessing the pertinence of the Centre as an independent foundation, taking into account its mandate, strategic and methodological choices, networks, partnerships and stakeholders
- evaluating the effectiveness of the Centre's positioning, external operations and networks
- identifying and tracing plausible patterns of Centre impact regarding the policy processes it has been directly involved in, emphasising both strong and weak points
- formulating recommendations for the further institutional development of the Centre, providing feasible options and future scenarios for consolidation and improvement

The evaluation was undertaken from February to May 2006 by a four-person team composed of two experts from Europe (including the team leader) and two from the ACP (both from Africa). The team's

terms of reference (see Appendix II) provided the basis for the initial evaluation framework. To collect the necessary evidence, the team sought two types of information. Firstly, it drew upon written documentary information based on a wide range of internal and external ECDPM documents and publications (including a specially prepared self-assessment) (see Appendix IV for a full listing of publications). Secondly, it gained information by conducting semi-structured interviews with a sample of (i) ECDPM staff and board members and (ii) external officials representing a variety of ECDPM stakeholders in both the European Union and the ACP (strategic partners, institutional partners, network partners and other informed observers). More than 90 interviews were conducted, the vast majority in teams of two (see Appendix III for a full listing). To encourage a frank offering of insights and information, all interviews were conducted on a non-attributable basis. The evaluation team visited key stakeholders in the Netherlands, Belgium, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, Ethiopia, Kenya, Botswana, South Africa and Zambia. Telephone interviews were conducted with stakeholders in Finland, Sweden and Mali. Further, specific written questions of clarification were posed to ECDPM staff by the team through the Centre Director.

The organisation of this report mirrors the logical flow of the evaluation. It addresses the questions posed in the terms of reference, though it does not directly follow their structure. A draft evaluation report was presented to ECDPM for clarification and correction of factual errors. The executive summary and draft recommendations were also made available for a "peer review" to a select number of heads of relevant institutions.

4 The overall policy context of ECDPM's work

4.1 Global trends impacting development cooperation, 2001-05

In terms of global politics, the 2001-05 period was dominated by the pursuit of the global war on terror, following the attacks on the World Trade Center in New York in September 2001. In most ACP countries, however, the pursuit of terrorism had limited impact, with the evolution of the global trade regime and internal political and economic situations having much more profound effects on the daily lives of ordinary citizens. Yet the global war on terror did have an enduring impact on diplomatic relations - often in the form of a shift in the focus of aid resources as well as a move to more closely align development policies with those in the sphere of security.

The Millennium Development Goals in 2000 reflected a partial consolidation of the view that development cooperation should have a strategic focus on poverty alleviation, with key commitments made and social and economic targets set. At that time, the developed countries also renewed their commitment to meet the 0.7 per cent of GNP target for overseas development assistance (ODA) to help attain the Millennium Goals. Progress, however, towards both the Millennium Goals and the ODA target was patchy during 2001-05. Moreover, the poverty alleviation consensus came under pressure as development agents and processes were compelled to shift their focus more towards democracy and governance, rather than simply social and economic development. International development priorities outside of the Millennium Development Goals centred on fair trade and debt relief, and a number of new global initiatives were launched related to these.

Neo-liberalism, albeit a slightly less aggressive version than that propagated by the World Bank in the 1990s, continued to be the overarching approach to economic development promoted by the countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and international institutions

such as the World Trade Organization (WTO). In Cancun, Doha and Hong Kong, the ACP countries continued to be disappointed by the lack of progress in advancing development interests within the WTO framework.

Economic growth in Asia, particularly China, India and the newly industrialised countries, generally fared quite well over the period, yet the ACP fared less well. Africa, in particular, made slow progress on a variety of social and economic fronts, despite some notable "success stories". Notwithstanding several attempts to raise the profile of Africa and African concerns, the continent and its affairs remained marginal in the broad scheme of global affairs.

At a more functional level there was an emerging understanding that, to be successful, the process of engaging in and supporting development must be more strategic and effective. This resulted in new loci for national development in the World Bank-sponsored poverty-reduction strategy paper (PRSP) processes. In addition to established aid and development modalities, such as technical cooperation, new modes were introduced, such as sector-wide approaches (SWAPs) and sharpened focus on governance, private-sector development, capacity building, "failed" states and countries in conflict. At the global level, concerns were raised time and again that environmental degradation (particularly climate change) and gender issues were not getting the global attention they merited.

In early 2005, the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness* sought to clarify and advance a common and consolidated agenda for development between North and South. It referred to issues of ownership, alignment, harmonisation, results and mutual accountability, including joint donor/recipient commitments and targets. While in itself a recognition of the lack of progress in all of these areas, the Declaration was met with some scepticism by many in the South.

4.2 The context impacting European development cooperation, 2001-05

The European Union and ACP signed the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement in Cotonou on 23 June 2000. This agreement includes many innovative and forward-looking features, particularly in terms of the political and trade dimensions of international rela-

tions, as well as aid modalities. Yet this agreement remains subject to the wider interests and influential dynamics impacting the European Union, both internally and in its relations with the rest of the world. Firstly, the European Union itself expanded from 15 to 25 members, with the new members having neither a significant historical legacy of contact with the ACP nor a strong commitment to or resources for ODA. Secondly, there was a renewed focus on the European Union's "near neighbourhood", that is, countries that directly border or have borders near the European Union. The EU political and diplomatic weight "spent" in the Balkans, for example, was proportionally significantly greater than that devoted to the ACP. Thirdly, the proposed introduction of a new European constitution put into sharper focus the perceived need to rationalise and reorganise wider external relations (including development cooperation) more generally. This was coupled with pressure arising from both the global war on terror, and a growing EU commitment to crisis management and conflict prevention. The European Union became concerned with being more effective in responding to security issues, utilising all means at its disposal, including those related to Africa. A clear expression of this was the designation of €50 million of European Development Fund (EDF) resources to the AU African Peace Facility. Fourthly, the European Union proved unwilling to significantly modify the internal subsidising of its markets (particularly in agriculture). On a more generic level, there was very little growth in the euro-zone economy, and increasing concerns over the size, spending and effectiveness of the public sector put pressure on the aid bureaucracies of the member states and the European Commission.

On a more functional level, several changes were made in the way the European Union delivers its aid, stemming from pressure for reform from member states and internally within the Commission. The Prodi Commission summed up these modifications as four: (i) increasing focus on strategy and programming, (ii) improving working methods, (iii) finalising deconcentration to delegations and (iv) improving financial management and performance. While there were advances in all of these areas with the development of new institutions, processes and policies (such as EuropeAid, the Country Strategy Papers, the new General Affairs Council and the Joint Statement on Development) there is still a considerable way to go for impacts to be felt on the ground. Serious

doubts remained throughout the period as to whether the institutional capacity of the member states and Commission was sufficient to deliver significant positive change, even if the political will was there. Within the Commission, the different competences of the directorate generals of Trade, External Relations and Development, coupled with the varying interests of the member states and the Council, often meant a lack of coherent policy towards ACP countries. The proposed approach to improving coherence with an EU constitution and overarching EU foreign ministry stalled, however; though perhaps even more ominous were the changes that got under way for all EU financing, including development finance, through the Financial Perspectives. The Barroso Commission, established in 2004, was furthermore seen as considerably more "right" leaning than previous commissions, leading to concerns about the place of poverty-focused development cooperation.

The drawing up of the first EU Africa Strategy in 2005 (rather than an EU ACP strategy) was an interesting signal of where the European Union sees its greater strategic and development priority in future years. This was in many ways a *de facto* recognition that the European Union's primary engagement and focus over the previous five years had in fact been Africa rather than the Caribbean or Pacific, and it pointed towards an increased desire for a regional approach in EU international relations.

4.3 The context impacting the ACP, 2001-05

The 2001-05 period was one of extraordinary activity in the ACP, characterised by a number of significant developments for the ACP as a whole, as well as for some of the sub-regions of the group.

At the all-ACP level, the group was engaged in implementation of a new cooperation agreement with the European Union that was substantially different in form and substance from the successive Lomé Conventions. The new agreement, the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (a.k.a. the "Cotonou Agreement") contains a number of innovations, aimed to broaden the basis of cooperation between the partners. It also provides for the negotiation of an additional and separate WTO-compatible trade agreement (the so-called Economic Partnership Agreements or "EPAs") to replace the Lomé trade

preferences, which are due to expire in 2007. This placed an additional burden on the ACP to prepare for another round of ACP-EU negotiations almost immediately after the conclusion of negotiations for the Cotonou Agreement.

Moreover, due to linkages with the proposed EPAs, the ACP for the first time decided to act jointly on a major international undertaking, namely coordinated participation in a new round of WTO negotiations in the talks on the Doha Development Agenda. This action brought a new level of solidarity and camaraderie among ACP states, but it also placed yet another burden on ACP shoulders, especially since most of these states were at the same time also involved in various regional integration processes.

In addition to regional integration, a number of other significant developments were under way in most ACP sub-regions. The Caribbean became engaged in another round of trade negotiations, this time for the Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA). These United States-driven hemispheric negotiations involve the whole of North America, the Caribbean, and Central and South America. They are viewed by some ACP observers as confirmation of the suggestion that the Caribbean, by its geographical proximity, is inescapably socio-economically linked to the United States. This contributed to speculations that formalisation of these economic ties through the FTAA will further alienate the region from the EU-ACP axis.

The Pacific region was significantly affected by the post-9/11 geopolitical realignment, with Australia being seen as taking on a more interventionist role and, in general, being more cognisant of its neighbourhood. The region is also increasingly becoming interwoven into the Southeast Asian economic fabric, with only token economic ties with the European Union beyond preferential access commodities.

Africa, for its part, initiated a number of revolutionary developments aimed at realigning its continental aspirations to the prevailing global economic and political order. Prominent among these was the transformation of the regional body, the outdated Organisation for African Unity, which was more of a platform for decolonisation, into the African Union, an organisation attuned to governance and economic modernisation on the continent.

Alongside this organisational transformation, a new movement arose to promote "an African renaissance", culminating in the crafting of an integrated socio-economic development framework for Africa: the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). Africa also engaged in developing a tighter strategic relationship with its closest neighbour of consequence, Europe. In this regard a number of démarches led to the first Africa-EU Summit of Heads of State and Government in 2000 and the second in 2003. This perceptible urge for renewed relations and closer cooperation between the two parties is sure to recalibrate ACP-EU relations in form and substance.

Events in the later years of the period, such as the formation of the Commission for Africa during the United Kingdom's dual EU-G8 presidency and the European Commission's articulation of separate cooperation strategies with the individual ACP regions with a discernable focus on Africa, served only to reinforce perceptions of the beginning of a structural shift in ACP-EU relations.

5 Understanding ECDPM

This chapter describes ECDPM, its mandate and strategy. It is in fact a brief summary of the document *ECDPM Strategy 2001-05*, with a short discussion of ECDPM's identity in light of how it is perceived by its own staff and stakeholders. The chapter is purely descriptive. The more in-depth analysis of the strategy and the basic strategic principles follows in subsequent chapters.

5.1 Mandate and mission

ECDPM was established in 1986 as a foundation under Dutch law. Its initial core funding was provided by the Netherlands government. The Centre's mandate is two-fold:

- 1 to strengthen the institutional capacity of public and private actors in ACP countries to manage development policy and international cooperation

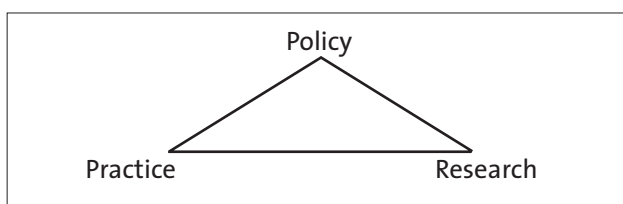
- 2 to improve cooperation between development partners in Europe and in the South

In carrying out its mandate, ECDPM focuses on the effective implementation of development cooperation instruments, specifically the EU-ACP Cotonou Partnership Agreement. The ECDPM mission can therefore be summarised as to help build effective partnerships for development between public and private actors in the European Union and the ACP.

5.2 Strategy 2001-05 and identity

In its *Strategy Paper 2001-05*, ECDPM defines itself primarily as a "process facilitator", linking into policy-related processes that are owned and managed by the relevant stakeholders. In addition, it sees a need for mobilising, generating and sharing policy-related knowledge, involving practitioners, policymakers and specialists. This definition can be visualised in the form of a triangle with the corners representing the three cornerstones of the Centre's action (figure 1).

Figure 1. The cornerstones of ECDPM action



Policy is the core business. The Centre sees its role and competence in the area of ACP-EU development policy. It links into policy-related processes that affect ACP-EU cooperation and supports the partners in designing, implementing and evaluating their development policy. The resort to practical experience and policy-related research are fundamental to effective policy work. The *practice* aspect, thus, expresses the Centre's intention not just to debate policy issues in the abstract but, so to say, to descend into the political arena, to engage in real processes and with the people directly involved in them. The *research* or analysis aspect is instrumental for delivering consistently high quality and accurate work.

This clarification is helpful for understanding the Centre's identity in comparison to other institutions

working on similar topics. ECDPM is certainly not an academic institute, since it does not do research for its own sake. Rather, it conducts research in order to lay and maintain the knowledge base for its policy work. It has sometimes been labelled a think-tank, which, however, is only part of the truth and not quite accurate. Think-tanks produce knowledge and offer it to policymakers, but they do not actively engage in facilitation of processes. Is the Centre then a lobbyist, a non-governmental organisation (NGO) doing advocacy for a cause it wants to promote? Although ECDPM might occasionally be seen in this role, the Centre is cautious not to act and appear as a lobbying institution. It is aware that to be effective as process and dialogue facilitator it cannot have its own agenda (more on this below).

The *Strategy Paper 2001-05* contains a characterisation of ECDPM and its work. According to the paper, to implement the strategy, the Centre relies on six fundamental competences:

- 1 role as an independent broker
- 2 capacity to integrate practical experience with academic theory
- 3 mainstream networking approach
- 4 capacity to operate in, and build bridges between language communities
- 5 commitment to long-term involvement with key stakeholders in policy processes
- 6 desire to focus on a limited number of key issues

In its approach, the Centre uses the following instruments, which are also termed "capacity strategies":

- 1 policy-oriented research
- 2 dialogue and networking
- 3 knowledge and information sharing
- 4 partnership development
- 5 advisory services
- 6 institutional support and services

5.3 Strategic choices

The strategic choices help the Centre to focus its actions in the wide field of development policy management. These appear not in the strategy paper, but in later documents, and evolved during the period. A 2002 document mentions five strategic choices:

- 1 focus on a limited number of core issues (the 2001-05 strategy identifies four key themes, which are described below)
- 2 long-term commitment to state and non-state actors (this is a confirmation of the process approach expressed in the fifth fundamental competency)
- 3 application of a mainstream capacity development approach
- 4 regional focus (versus a country focus)
- 5 evidence-based performance assessment

In the terms of reference for the external evaluation only three strategic choices are mentioned:

- concentration on four areas of strategic importance to the implementation of the Cotonou Agreement (the same as strategic choice 1 above)
- strengthening the Centre's position as an independent broker (a confirmation of the Centre's first fundamental competency)
- critical self-assessment and organisational learning as a means to maintain quality performance in the rapidly changing environment of ACP-EU relations

5.4 Programs and themes

The Centre has identified four key themes or programme areas:

- *ACP-EU Trade Relations*. This programme aims to contribute to the development of an ACP-EU trade regime that promotes sustainable development and the integration of ACP countries into the world economy.
- *The Political Dimensions of Partnership*. This programme is rooted in the innovative element of the Cotonou Agreement, specifically its placing political cooperation at the centre of the partnership relation. Building on past experience, the programme aims to facilitate dialogue, research and dissemination of knowledge on how to implement the new political provisions in a multi-culturally balanced and effective way.
- *Actors of Partnership*. This programme recognises the role played by non-state actors in the Cotonou Agreement. Continuing a line of action developed by the Centre over a number of years, it aims to help implement a pluralistic partnership approach.

- *Internal Donor Reform*. This programme responds to the widespread criticism of traditional development cooperation. Its aim is to act as facilitator for organisations interested in aid management reform and to encourage the dialogue necessary for effective change, particularly for integrating capacity development into cooperation programmes.

Besides these four key themes, which reflect the programmatic choices in the 2001-05 period, the strategy identifies three cross-cutting issues:

- 1 communication, knowledge and information sharing
- 2 strategy development and innovation
- 3 centre management and administration

5.5 Evolution of strategy, strategy revision¹

The Centre has implemented strategic reflection and planning cycles, including in particular an annual retreat, to (re)assess the validity and viability of its strategy. The results of these meetings are fed into the biannual, rolling work plans or, if deemed necessary, into a revision of the five-year strategy itself. In view of the swift changes in the external and EU-ACP context in 2003-04, on the European as well as the ACP side, the Centre brought forward the elaboration of its next five year strategy, which had been planned for 2005, to 2004.

Chapter six addresses the evolution of the four thematic programmes during the five-year period.

Notes

- 1 See *Internal Assessment 2001-05*

6 Effectiveness of strategy and programmes

6.1 The mandate in light of the evolution of the context

As described in Chapter 3, the political context and especially the focus of EU external relations has changed drastically since the signing of the Cotonou Agreement in 2000. Furthermore, the agreement itself has been subject to broader interests and influential internal and external dynamics impacting the European Union. The effects of these changes have also been felt in EU-ACP relations, where a clear shift to Africa and away from the Caribbean and Pacific has taken place. An interesting signal of this shift in strategic focus was the development of the EU Africa Strategy in 2005 - and the subsequent formulation of separate strategies for the Caribbean and Pacific - rather than a single strategy for the ACP as a whole.

The first question then is whether the ECDPM's focus on ACP institutions, processes and countries, as expressed in its strategic objectives, is still realistic. Most of our interlocutors in the stakeholder interviews doubted the longer term viability of the ACP focus of the Centre's mandate. The ACP focus can be questioned on several grounds. As mentioned, the European Union has lost its strategic interest in the ACP (if ever it was there) and is now concentrating on Africa. One interviewee went so far as to call the ACP a 'non-group': it has no inner cohesion, it was an artificial creation according to EU logic, and it is not politically viable. In actuality, the interests of the three ACP groups are quite different. While Africa clearly wants to strengthen its strong historical ties with Europe, the Caribbean has its own organisation and is leaning towards the United States and Latin America; while the Pacific is grouping around the Pacific powers. In fact, ECDPM's real focus in the past has clearly been on Africa, as demonstrated by Centre activities in the period under scrutiny. Of the 33 countries with which ECDPM had the most intensive interaction over the past three years, only three are located in the Caribbean and two in the Pacific. The remaining 28 are African. This picture is confirmed by the distribution of ECDPM publications. Only 3 per cent go to the

Caribbean and 7 per cent to the Pacific, while 41 per cent go to Africa and the rest are distributed in the European Union (41 per cent) and other countries. Thus, it might be wise to concentrate the Centre's limited personnel and financial capacity more explicitly on Africa.

Does a shift in focus away from the ACP mean an exclusive focus on Africa? Or would it constitute an opening to other developing countries, as suggested in some interviews? There is a temptation and even a certain pressure to enlarge the Centre's geographic scope beyond the ACP. Current policy in this regard is not quite clear. In some cases the Centre has already crossed ACP borders (e.g. for work in Indonesia, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Philippines, Russia and Brazil). But this seems less a deliberate choice than a consequence of the dynamics of one programme (the capacity study). There are valid reasons for adopting a thematic focus rather than a geographic one. Development is, after all, the issue. The international development debate has no frontiers, and ECDPM cannot stand aside of the wider discourse. It must take into account what happens elsewhere and strive to learn from valuable experiences of actors in non-ACP parts of the world. The logic of EU relations with the South is basically the same, regardless of the specific geographical location. But does that mean ECDPM should engage anywhere, all over the world, where it finds windows of opportunity? This would result in an absurd dispersal of scarce personnel and financial resources. Therefore, while remaining open to the international development debate and keen to learn lessons from others' experiences, it would seem wise for ECDPM to maintain its geographic focus. The area where it can apply its expertise most effectively is naturally Africa, where the Centre has a comparative advantage due to its long history of engagement.

Such a redefinition of the geographic focus does not mean closing the doors to the Caribbean and the Pacific, as long as they are interested in sharing experiences with Africa. But it should be left to the initiative of their regional organisations and networks to manage inter-regional contacts with Africa and to make use of the potential that such exchanges represent. In our interviews, the Caribbean stakeholders indicated their appreciation of ECDPM's work (particularly that on trade). They generally recognised that the Centre's main focus should be on Africa, but nonetheless believed that it would be a significant loss for them if ECDPM completely abandoned the

Caribbean, since ECDPM 'does things that no other institution does'.

Another way to increase effectiveness and influence, suggested in various interviews, is to strengthen ECDPM's regional and sub-regional focus - rather than work at the country level. This strategy has also been adopted by the European Union. Indeed, regional and sub-regional organisations are growing in importance. The Centre's early engagement with the African Union is an example in this regard, and one viewed as a good strategic decision which has had significant impact. Centre engagement at the country level should be the exception rather than the rule and guided by the aim to gain new knowledge or carry out a pilot project that can be applied later on a wider scale.

Realigning the geographic focus in no way implies abandoning the Cotonou principles, which permeate the Centre's approach and thematic choices. The innovative elements of the Cotonou Agreement, such as partnership and ownership, dialogue and involvement of non-state actors, remain highly relevant in the development policy framework, as do the thematic choices defined in the 2001-05 strategy and evolving during the period under evaluation. The Cotonou fundamentals, in fact, remain a key point of reference in discussions on development policy, all the more because their implementation has hardly started and therefore still constitutes a challenge for all actors involved.

On the EU side, a new challenge for ECDPM is the enlargement from 15 to 25 members. In some interviews, the Centre was criticized for not having been effectively or sufficiently engaged with the new member states and having given insufficient attention to the consequences of the enlargement for future ACP-EU cooperation. African stakeholders, in particular, expressed interest in information and guidance on the implications of EU enlargement for their future relationship with the European Union.

The question of whether ECDPM should enlarge its thematic focus was also brought up by several interlocutors. Peace and security as well as migration and development were mentioned as new thematic challenges. However, we may ask whether the Centre has sufficient competence to add value on these themes - or the resources to build the capacity necessary to deal effectively with them.

6.2 Process approach

ECDPM made a strategic choice to focus on processes; particularly regarding how EU, EC and ACP processes relate to development policies, institutions and mechanisms. This focus has allowed ECDPM to be flexible and maintain a cross-cutting relevance, despite significant evolution in the context. There were few institutional or innovative issues emanating from EU-ACP relations for which ECDPM did not organise a timely event or produce a relevant publication. ECDPM was present, if not always visible, even within higher level EU-ACP processes. For example, ECDPM played important roles regarding the new EU Africa Strategy and in the formulation of the Joint Statement on EU Development Policy.

The focus on processes was strategically sound. It would have been much more difficult for the Centre to remain relevant, to adapt and to evolve appropriately had it chosen another *modus operandi*, such as thematic policy areas (e.g. food security, health, education, infrastructure, agriculture). These areas are in many respects well covered by other international institutions and would have required ECDPM to engage in more research, diverting it from the policy-to-practice angle that constitutes part of its added value.

The process approach has enabled the Centre to remain relevant to a wide range of stakeholders. EU (and particularly EC) institutions, systems and policies are renowned for their complexity and opaqueness, even to stakeholders with significant experience with them. ECDPM frequently sought to bring clarity to these. For the most part, it was successful in doing so. As one interviewee said, 'No one knows EC systems and processes like ECDPM, or is as good at explaining them, or how to engage.' This sentiment was often expressed by a wide range of stakeholders from both the ACP and Europe.

Focusing on processes in many cases led to long-term engagement, which was crucial for promoting and enabling change and therefore for delivering impact. This approach allowed ECDPM to engage and understand systemically where blockages and challenges existed within the overall processes and to address these directly. Yet there were also promising initiatives and processes that were started and not followed through on. While this can to some extent be attributed to the shortage of flexible funding, lack

of funds alone cannot account for the failure to follow through on certain process-oriented initiatives.

In taking a process approach, the Centre benefits from engagement in key policy processes. Obviously the Cotonou Agreement is the main such policy process. Recently, however, the EU Africa Strategy has become another policy nexus within which the Centre can orient itself and engage. ECDPM did not limit its engagement to EU-ACP processes, but began widening its scope to include the evolving AU Commission.

At times, ECDPM's devotion to the process approach was its undoing. Certain stakeholders (primarily donors) which had contracted the ECDPM to do a particular piece of work were at times unhappy because they were looking for specific outputs within a narrow time frame. Thus, ECDPM's emphasis on process (to generate full systematic understanding, to engage internal and external stakeholders, to link into the wider context and to facilitate broader policy change) was not always appreciated by "clients" looking for a "quick fix". Yet on at least one occasion the client felt that 'ECDPM was actually right in its process approach', despite the initial frustration.

Broadly, the Centre has focused its knowledge of systems and institutions and its application of the process approach on the European Commission, the European Union and OECD member states, rather than on institutions residing in ACP countries (other than the African Union). This is partly explained by the impossibility of engaging meaningfully at the country level with each of the ACP's 77 members. However, undoubtedly the challenge to ECDPM is to engage meaningfully with an alliance of ACP partners and to follow ACP processes at the ACP, continental and sub-regional levels.

In engaging in ACP processes (particular those in Africa), ECDPM must ensure that it has the right experiences, capabilities and sensitivities to manage relationships with care. Such processes are delicate. Insensitive or culturally inappropriate responses would quickly undermine the Centre's credibility. For ECDPM, effective partnerships and alliances are vital because it has neither the capacity nor the legitimacy to engage in such processes alone. In the future, it is absolutely essential that the Centre clearly and consistently articulate what processes it is looking to engage in and what select and meaningful partner-

ships it would like to maintain in relation to these processes. If this issue remains unaddressed, ECDPM cannot achieve its objectives.

6.3 Partnership and network approach

6.3.1 Introduction

A cornerstone of ECDPM's capacity strategy is working with partners and networks. Mainstreaming this partnership and network approach enables the Centre to reach out to a wide audience and strengthens its impact. It can also be used as leverage to create the capacity to cover the wide spectrum of Cotonou, which is too broad for a single small organisation with limited resources.

6.3.2 Partnerships

The partnership approach is a logical and necessary complement to the process approach. ECDPM cannot effectively engage in processes without identifying partners. The Centre describes four categories of stakeholders with which it works:

- *users*, which normally have no direct contact with the Centre, but use its products (publications, websites, etc.)
- *network partners*, which regularly participate in dialogue, having a loose connection to the Centre without clear commitment on either side
- *strategic partners*, which collaborate in a reciprocal and complementary way to enhance the quality and innovation of the Centre's programmes and activities
- *institutional partners*, which are the donors that contribute financially to the Centre

For the sake of analysing the partnership approach from a strategic perspective (mainstreaming partnerships as a strategic methodological instrument), the evaluation team focused on the strategic partners, or more precisely, the ACP strategic partners. The crucial question here is how these strategic partnerships should look to effectively perform their role in enhancing ECDPM's impact. While the lists of contacts in Centre annual reports are impressive, they do not distinguish between strategic and network partners.

ECDPM's characterisation of strategic partners is in fact open. The Centre has no clear selection criteria nor does it define the specific function and operation

of these partnerships. Its long lists of strategic partners include such different kinds of actors as ACP governments and institutions, NGOs, academic and research institutions, consultants and donor agencies, among others.² Even more problematic, the lists mix policymakers/policy actors together with policy facilitators, though the role and nature of these two categories of stakeholders and their relationship with ECDPM are fundamentally different. This distinction is of paramount importance if the Centre wants to effectively implement a partnership strategy in its work in the EU-ACP arena, particularly to address the first part of its mandate (to enhance the capacity of public and private actors in ACP countries). For this, a clearer and more functional definition of the concept of strategic partnership is needed, as well as a precise definition of the profile of potential strategic partners.

The Centre engages with two types of strategic partners: (i) governmental and intergovernmental policy-making institutions and non-state policy actors and (ii) peer institutions that have a mission and objectives similar to those of ECDPM. The first type is the Centre's direct target group, that referred to in the first part of the ECDPM mandate (to strengthen the institutional capacity of public and private actors in ACP countries). Examples on the ACP side are the ACP Secretariat, the AU Commission, the Commissariat for Institutional Development (CDI) in Mali and the Alliance for Governance in Africa. It is essential that the Centre identify key actors of this type at the continental level, the regional level and the sub-regional level (e.g. regional economic communities) and develop and maintain good relations with them.

The character of these relationships is nonetheless different from partnerships with peer institutions, which is the second type of strategic partners. Partnerships with peer institutions allow the Centre to join forces and develop synergies and thus considerably enhance its impact. For the sake of clear terminology, this report names this second type of partnership "strategic alliances". ECDPM has an impressive network of such alliances in the North, with institutes working to facilitate policy processes and to enhance the capacity of policy actors. Examples of such partners are EADI, iLEAP, CTA, IFAP, EU-LDC, ICTSD, IEEI and Euforic.³ Another prominent and successful alliance is Capacity.org, a joint venture in which ECDPM, the Netherlands Development Organisation (SNV) and the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP) collaborate in editing an international development magazine and a much appreciated website.

Box 1: The Capacity.org strategic alliance

Capacity.org has become a major success in recent years in terms of knowledge networking and partnering. The path ECDPM followed in creating this networking mechanism reflects the Centre's wider approach towards networking, sharing and building partnerships. Capacity.org is now an instrument through which the Centre can convey its messages to other knowledge communities and reach out to new partners.

Capacity.org was created from scratch in 1999. ECDPM developed it to the point at which it was recognised as a useful dialogue and networking tool to enhance policy debate and learning on capacity development between the North and South. When the UNDP and SNV expressed interest in publishing the magazine and website as a shared product, the Centre agreed, remaining involved from a distance. This approach is fully in line with the spirit of ECDPM to create, let flourish and then step back to permit an initiative to consolidate while at the same time maintaining involvement at a strategic level. Capacity.org is still going strong today.

In the South ECDPM's network of strategic alliances with peer institutions is weak. In addition to the generic benefit of strategic alliances - a joining of forces and generation of synergies resulting in increased impact - alliances with Southern peer institutions would deliver an additional gain: providing intermediaries or bridges between ECPDM and ACP policy actors. Working as it does at the interface between the European Union and the ACP, it seems natural for the Centre to join with local partners that bring a familiarity with and knowledge of the ACP context (or that of a specific region or country). ACP partners might also contribute a rootedness in local processes and networks, adding a Southern dimen-

Notes

- 2 See Internal Assessment p. 5
- 3 The European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI); Canada's International Lawyers and Economists against Poverty (iLEAP), the Netherlands-based Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA), France's International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP), the European Union's Developing Countries Network (EU-LDC), the Switzerland-based International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), Portugal's Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais (IEEI) and Europe's Forum on International Cooperation (Euforic).

sion to the Centre's work. This will become more important in the future if ECDPM wants to maintain its relevance and status as a trusted partner in the ACP arena. Ideally, for each key process the Centre engages in, it should have at least one strategic alliance on the ACP side. Such cooperation would be long term, continuous and institutionalised, with joint programming and monitoring and evaluation. The partnership would be on equal terms, truly reciprocal and complementary, with both sides contributing their specific comparative advantages and expertise.

Such strategic allies would basically have the following characteristics:

- vision, motivation, strategic orientation and methodological approach similar to that of ECDPM
- non-governmental and independent (not advocacy) in nature and established in its field
- possessed of a high level of expertise so as to collaborate as an equal in a knowledge partnership

Before engaging in this type of strategic alliance, a frank and transparent dialogue should bring into the open the mutual expectations and contribution each partner is able and willing to make to achieve the common objective.

It is an illusion to presume that such strategic allies are easily found. This profile of the ideal relationship should therefore be viewed as a guideline and benchmark, helpful in strategic selection of partners, but not a goal that can be realistically achieved in the short term. There might be a few potential partners that come close to the profile and are willing to engage in such an alliance. In the majority of instances, however, strong initial support in institutional development from the ECDPM side will be necessary. The Centre should select from among its current partners a limited number that are amenable to becoming full strategic allies in the future and shape its cooperation with them accordingly. The clear goal here is to bring them to the level required for a strategic alliance. In this sense the Centre could thus distinguish two groups of ACP strategic allies: (i) institutions that meet the criteria in the profile and become full partners on equal terms and (ii) institutions that share the Centre's vision and approach, but still need to strengthen their institutional make-up and basis of knowledge and expertise to become full partners in the not too distant future.

The evaluation team's field visits and interviews did not turn up examples of strategic alliances in the South that conform to these criteria. In fact, cooperation with ACP state and non-state policy actors (local and regional), as described above, currently has a completely different character. To become more stable and less vulnerable than, for example, the Centre's current cooperation with the African Union, exactly these cooperation set-ups need a stronger local anchoring of ECDPM through strategic alliances with local or regional peer institutions. There might be institutions that come close to matching the criteria - for example, the South Africa Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA) and Mali's Centre d'Expertises Politiques et Institutionnelles en Afrique (CEPIA). But here too, the cooperation is too loose and ad hoc to be seen as a full strategic alliance for the time being. To transform these partnerships to the level of full strategic alliance and to develop new partners amenable to becoming strategic allies in the future constitutes the major challenge to ECDPM in mainstreaming its partnership approach in the South. It will require identifying a limited number of key relationships, closely related to key processes and critical impact points, and to focus on developing them into full strategic alliances without abandoning the wider and less dedicated network.

6.3.3 Network

In terms of achieving outcomes ECDPM sees networks as an incredible strength. In its systemic approach to issues of development cooperation, maintaining functioning networks is a powerful tool for achieving outcomes and bringing pragmatism to the challenges that present themselves. Yet confusion between the concept of "strategic partners" and "networks" hampers the Centre in making strategic choices. ECDPM maintains networks of contacts - unrivalled in some areas, such as in EU-ACP trade and in capacity development. ECDPM is also a lead "broker" and connector within its networks and a node that links different network participants. By bringing together donors, ACP officials, NGOs and other agencies, ECDPM creates synergies that would not otherwise exist.

But there are some structural weaknesses within ECDPM's networks. While the Centre's network in Brussels is highly developed - not least because of its opening an office there -, in the ACP its network is limited, often made up primarily of technical assistants, consultants and individuals operating around

policymakers, but not the policymakers themselves. Further, many of these networks are only partially "maintained". Often a network member's relationship is more with an individual employee of ECDPM rather than with ECDPM or one of the Centre's programmes. In a number of stakeholder interviews it became clear that "network" members were unsure how to develop their relationship with ECDPM (or even if this was possible). They also indicated that information flowing from the Centre was often not particularly relevant to the work the "network member" was engaged in. This raises questions of whether databases are being maintained and whether the Centre invests the time needed to understand its network members' real interests.

In terms of assessing and maintaining networks, ECDPM must be judicious in the use of its limited resources. It must constantly assess whether its networks are balanced and optimal for the task at hand and address deficiencies. This proactive approach to network assessment and maintenance, and development of more intensive engagement from ACP network members should be done on a programme and Centre-wide basis. Network development can no longer be left to individuals' preferred contacts. It requires dedicated resources and staff time, rather than simple engagement (see also section 6.6 on communication).

6.4 ECDPM as an independent broker

ECDPM stresses its determination and willingness to act and be seen as an independent, non-partisan and honest broker. The term "broker" might at first seem ambiguous and be open to different interpretation by the Centre's different stakeholders. So let's first try to find out what ECDPM itself means by "independent broker". In its documents, the Centre explains the concept as an 'open-ended, inclusive and non-partisan approach to stakeholder participation; by promoting diversity and creativity rather than exclusivity and adherence to existing patterns; by choosing a long-term engagement in strategic policy processes and ensuring full transparency of different roles and the application of democratic principles'.⁴ The concept is further clarified in the *Strategy Paper 2005-10*:

The Centre strives to maintain its non-partisan position. From a strategic perspective, however, there

may be a need for taking a more proactive stand. The ECDPM will continue to tread carefully as an honest broker, systematically drawing attention to issues that are essential to long-term development success, while resisting the urge to take up positions on more short term political issues that may undermine its trustworthiness in the eyes of its partners.

This last citation provides an interesting clarification. It first states that non-partisanship is not equivalent to neutrality. As several of our interlocutors from the staff put it, the Centre has a position; it is not neutral and indifferent with respect to development problems, and non-partisanship does not exclude empathy. Its position has been described as "common good partisanship". Non-partisanship, then, means not taking sides in the debate, not lobbying for a specific position or solution but making the different options and their implications as transparent as possible. Of course, there is no universal and everlasting definition of the "common good"; it too is subject to contextual circumstances. Therefore the non-partisanship principle cannot be settled once and for all. Rather, it is a goal to strive for and fine-tune in day-to-day activities. The citation also points out the dilemma inherent in balancing disparity between unequal partners in a policy dialogue (e.g. trade negotiations). This dilemma is even embedded in the Centre's mandate: How can actors in the South be empowered without affecting the interests of the other side? There is fine line between not taking sides and indifference.

The stakeholders who were asked whether they perceive ECDPM as an independent, non-partisan and honest broker, gave conflicting answers. Not all think the Centre has always been successful in putting the principle into practice. Depending on the stakeholder's own position and interests, the Centre might be seen as leaning too far towards "the other side" or as not being supportive enough. But most interlocutors, especially the African stakeholders, were generally very positive on the Centre's independent and non-partisan stance. They do not see ECDPM as a European voice, promoting European interests. Rather, they feel the Centre is sympathetic to the South. Neither do they feel that ECDPM is pushing towards a specific direction. Expressing a sentiment of many, one interviewee said, 'I have never seen them advocate a particular approach. They give you the elements you need for a decision, without being prescriptive.' Several interviewees, European as well

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4 ECDPM *Internal Assessment 2001-2005*

as from the South, observed and appreciated ECDPM's critical attitude towards the European Union, which they nonetheless felt was always objective and constructive. In the midst of lobbying institutions defending particular interests, ECDPM is seen as "a niche of integrity" (thanks to funding that allows for this independence and autonomy). As examples of successful brokering, the *User's Guide for Non-State Actors* and ECDPM's contribution to the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiation process were highlighted.

But even if some feel that in certain instances ECDPM has not stuck to its honest broker role or that it should be more proactive, more committed and feel freer to take positions, practically all agreed that non-partisanship is a necessary working principle, essential for the facilitation work of the Centre. Its independence and autonomy from political pressure, as well as its refraining from lobbying, are seen as adding to its value. In this sense the evaluation team fully agrees with the ECDPM's own statement in its internal assessment: 'In order to gain credibility to do this [facilitating policy processes], we need to stick to a non-partisan position, respecting the different views of those that hold political stakes in the outcome of the process.'

It should be noted, however, that the principle of independent brokerage is applicable only where ECDPM is acting as a process facilitator; it cannot be extended to all areas of the Cotonou Agreement. Engaging in, supporting and actually brokering dialogue around very sensitive questions (such as those related to Article 8 and Article 96 of the Agreement) seems almost impossible for ECDPM, notwithstanding the usefulness of the studies produced by the Centre on these themes. For ECDPM - and for that matter for any non-governmental entity - some issues remain too hot for an independent dialogue broker to handle and are probably the exclusive preserve of states and multilateral institutions.

It is also worth remarking that when providing advisory services to specific clients, the Centre is not acting as an independent broker, but is simply delivering the services requested. This highlights a risk inherent in the expansion of service delivery which is implied by increased project/consultancy work, since it may jeopardise the independence of the Centre.

6.5 Pertinence and performance of programmatic choices

At the onset of the period under review, the Centre chose four key themes from among its six programme areas:

- 1 ACP-EU trade relations
- 2 the political dimensions of partnership
- 3 actors of partnership
- 4 internal donor reform

These choices were reportedly selected to match the Centre's 'mandate and comparative advantages with key priorities as expressed by private and public actors in the ACP countries and/or as laid down in the Cotonou Agreement'. Of the four themes, however, all except one, ACP-EU trade relations, experienced significant transformation or evolution in the period under review.

6.5.1 ACP-EU Trade Relations

ACP-EU development policy management in the 2001-05 period was marked by implementation of the new 20-year partnership agreement, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. Prominent among the implementation issues was the agreement to negotiate a new WTO-compatible trade arrangement to replace the non-reciprocal preferential trade arrangements provided for in the successive Lomé accords.

As a guiding principle, these new trade arrangements, the so-called "Economic Partnership Agreements" (EPAs), were to be development-oriented and contribute to alleviate poverty and integrate ACP countries into the global economy. In broad lines, six observations can be made regarding the pertinence and general performance of the ACP-EU Trade Relations programme based on a review of documents and the interviews with stakeholders:

- The ECDPM's response to this new challenge in ACP-EU relations is a telling indicator of the Centre's continued relevance in the ACP-EU development policy value chain. It is therefore natural and consistent with the Centre's overall strategic guidelines for programmatic choices that ACP-EU trade relations was selected as one of the four key themes or programmatic areas of priority.
- In terms of implementation, first and foremost, the programme has been consistently lead and

qualitatively well supported, a factor that sometimes raised expectations from key stakeholders and other partners beyond what the Centre's "installed" capacity could realistically deliver.

- As a tactical objective, the Centre aimed to build an extensive and varied network of partnerships in all ACP regions as well as within EU institutions and in EU member states. The programme is one of the few Centre activities that boasts contacts in all of the ACP regions; and it perhaps also has the largest number of country-level contacts.
- The existence of a sound mechanism for programme development and ability to respond to the evolving context is evidenced by the selection of programme activities, which respond to urgent needs of the parties to the EPA negotiations. An example is the programme's response to the need for issue analyses and intra-ACP coordination. There were, however, limitations in meeting expectations raised by such incisive interventions, due in part to staffing constraints but even more to financial limitations.
- The programme exhibited foresight, not only by responding to current challenges but also foreseeing potential hurdles and proactively preparing and disseminating briefs that could assist the negotiating parties in overcoming the potential hurdles. Notable examples of such work include policy briefs on major themes anticipated to be covered by negotiators; practical research leading to a compendium of comparisons of similar agreements concluded by the European Commission with other developing countries and, most recently, the study and publication of *Alternatives to EPAs*.
- A number of key stakeholders considered the programme activities to have had significant impact on the EPA negotiation processes and outcomes, though it is difficult to establish a clear set of indicators to objectively verify such impacts. Indeed, the combination of the large number of factors affecting negotiating positions and process dynamics, coupled with the low profile of the Centre's own interventions, makes impact measurement impractical and possibly counter-productive. Most stakeholders, however, confirmed that various Centre interventions were influential in some of the positions they took.

In general the output of the programme was nearly universally lauded as pertinent and responsive to the needs of the "season". The few exceptions expressed

by some stakeholders involved the Centre's apparent unwillingness to provide more prescriptive or directional advice.

The need for a non-partisan approach has however been sufficiently dealt with already. In fact, this approach is part of what has enabled the Centre to establish and maintain useful and functional relationships with negotiators on both sides, despite the typically extremely sensitive and delicate environment that characterises such negotiations.

6.5.2 Political Dimensions of Partnership

The Centre created a new programme in 2001 called the Political Dimensions of Partnership. Its initial approach shifted the focus from contributing to implementation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement to wider engagement, specifically the political context in which EU-ACP relations were evolving and the dynamics of the political relationship between the partners. This was highly pertinent to the Centre's context and mandate.

In the review of the strategy in 2004, a new and significant shift took place in response to the dramatic changes within the European Union and in its external relations, resulting in the replacement of the Political Dimensions of Partnership programme with the new Development Policy and EU External Action programme. This programme has followed the impact of changes in EU policies related to development, security and external relations in general and the EU-ACP relationship in particular. With this new programme ECDPM has emphasised its intention to engage actively and systematically in the policy debate, taking into account all aspects of EU external action and its links with development policy and the EU-ACP relationship. This is another example of ECDPM evolving to match and remain relevant within the EU context.

The 2001 strategy originally included issues such as good governance, corruption, conflict prevention and migration under the Political Dimensions of Partnership programme. While governance has since resurfaced in a newly constituted governance programme (see section 6.5.3), the Political Dimensions programme addressed issues of conflict prevention and migration, but on a rather ad hoc basis. The programme's work on both issues was generally well received, though the angle (and added value) was very much in marrying these issues with knowledge

of EU systems and procedures, rather than expertise on these issues in and of themselves. The programme contributed important studies and insights on the most sensitive political dimensions of the Cotonou Agreement (notably on invocation of Article 8 and Article 96). Yet it was unable to engage in independent brokerage between the European Union and ACP around sensitive high-level political issues - perhaps it was unrealistic of the Centre to think as mentioned in the 2001 strategy that it could do so. Some interesting work was undertaken with ACP parliamentarians (funded by Belgium) and with the Joint Parliamentary Assembly, again valued and appreciated by stakeholders.

The Political Dimensions programme clearly had difficulty defining and maintaining a strategic focus, and some of this has carried over to the current Development Policy and EU External Action programme. The 2001 strategy was written before the appointment of the programme coordinator and is in itself a weak document. However, the inability to maintain strategic focus has also been due to the absence of flexible programmed funding that would allow the programme to follow its own strategy coupled with the availability of restricted project funding. Nonetheless, some of the short-term project work undertaken in these circumstances was timely and relevant to the new programme. The evaluation of the Africa Peace Facility is one such example, as well as work around the new EU Joint Policy Statement on Development. Both of these projects were relatively large assignments. Smaller sums made available by various EU member states for background "think pieces" on issues related to the evolving area of external action also placed the programme close to influential policymakers. In these areas the programme made valuable contributions that were generally (though not unanimously) welcomed by stakeholders. However, the continued lack of programme funds certainly restricted the level and extent of the programme's engagement in ACP countries, the vast majority of which had to be covered by core resources.

The outputs and policy briefs produced by the programme were largely viewed as high quality and timely. The programme itself won many engaged and supportive stakeholders from EU member states, the EU Parliament and the cadre of Brussels-based observers. Yet it must guard against becoming too focused on the needs and interests of these groups

at the expense of those in the ACP. ACP stakeholders have significant interest and a crucial lack of information on how EU developments are progressing and analyses of the implications of these.

The current Development Policy and EU External Action programme would also seem to be the most logical to address issues associated with the new EU member states (particularly how they can relate to and have an effective partnership with the ACP). However, the scope and level at which the Centre engages with these member states is generally viewed as insufficient. Facilitating effective engagement and partnership between the new EU members and the ACP will have significant impact on EU-ACP relations more widely.

The programme's primary benefit related to development cooperation should be in informing and engaging ACP stakeholders in the rapid and significant evolution in the EU context. This is a context in which the programme has unrivalled knowledge and a network at the nexus of EU policies on development, security and foreign relations. Functionally, some of this work was undertaken through the Africa Peace Facility evaluation and work with the African Union. Yet a more dedicated focus on communicating and engaging with ACP stakeholders is key for the programme's future. Indeed the programme's profile and work is not generally well understood within the ACP. Communicating with the ACP is also where the programme will gain legitimacy with respect to the Centre's mandate. Indeed, a Development Policy and EU External Action programme concerned primarily with communicating with and between EU stakeholders is inconsistent with the Centre's overall mandate.

Through the programme, ECDPM has responded to the evolving EU institutions and processes and developed clear, valuable, useful and appreciated engagement with them. Yet for an institute that places itself at the interface of EU-ACP relations, the ability to follow processes in the ACP is too little in evidence. There is of course a notable exception in the work related to the African Union. Indeed, the decision to engage with the African Union (albeit as a cross-programme ECDPM initiative emanating primarily from the governance programme) was timely, important and strategically sound, and the Centre is rightly applauded for it. The careful scaling up of this initiative and the genuine practising of a sensitive infor-

mation brokerage role between the African Union, the European Commission and EU member states is quite remarkable. This engagement nonetheless remains fragile and vulnerable to political whims, personnel changes and institutional predilections, much of which is outside of ECDPM control and influence. The Centre may need to look to institutional innovations to manage this risk and nurture its relationship with the African Union. This will necessitate new forms of alliances, capacities and meaningful and significant partnerships with African institutions, which together can complement and add value to ECDPM's engagement.

Box 2: ECDPM collaboration with the AU Commission

ECDPM's involvement of with the AU Commission started in January 2003 with a study to identify possible areas of EU support for the institutional development of the new pan-African institution. The study was well received, in terms of both content and the participatory process that followed.

This positive experience could explain why the AU Commission subsequently asked the Centre to supplement the efforts of Performance Management Consultancy (PMC), an African consulting firm contracted to assist in the development of a strategic plan for the Commission.

The AU Commission's strategic plan, including a whole chapter related to the 'institutional transformation process' was adopted by the AU Summit; and PMC and ECDPM were requested to further support the plan's implementation.

From September 2004 to May 2005, PMC carried out the first phase of the institutional transformation process with limited support from ECDPM. During this phase, PMC conducted a diagnosis of the key institutional challenges facing the AU Commission. However, political dynamics and disagreements within the AU Commission on the follow-up to the institutional transformation process held up its implementation for nine months.

Considering that ECDPM did not have a contractual relationship with the Commission, it was not in a position to influence events.

The follow-up to the institutional transformation process was finally agreed in February 2006. In this framework, the AU Commission requested ECDPM to assist it in programming the €55 million provided to the AU Commission by the European Union.

The Development Policy and EU External Action programme, as a new initiative in a dynamic policy environment, has clearly been "finding its feet" and direction. It was therefore still mainly in a policy research phase in 2004-05. This does not mean it was unproductive. On the contrary, its products had more of a think-tank character. Also, the EU Africa Strategy became a reality, giving the programme an appropriate policy process with which to relate in addition to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

Broadly, a programme focusing on issues of development policy and EU external action can be viewed as a necessary evolution for ECDPM to remain policy relevant. Provided that the governance and political aspects are addressed somewhere in the Centre (most likely within the Centre's programme on governance) and that engagement and communication with the ACP can be addressed, the programme should continue to make an important contribution to the Centre and to EU-ACP relations more widely. This of course is dependent to a large extent (but not exclusively) on the programme's, and the Centre's, ability to attract the right type of funding.

6.5.3 Actors of Partnership

The Actors of Partnership programme was inspired by one of the innovations in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement: the involvement and mainstreaming of decentralised development stakeholders, the so-called "non-state actors" (NSAs), in the full ACP-EU development policy management cycle. This innovation represents a radical departure from the classical highly centralised approach of the hitherto 25 years of cooperation. It led to a need to translate policy intentions into actionable guidelines, as well as for concrete actions to assist in operationalisation. The urge to prioritise Cotonou innovations in its programmatic choices was in this case also bolstered by rather clairvoyant work the Centre did previously in promoting the decentralised cooperation approach under the Lomé Convention as far back as 1994. This programme later evolved to cover wider governance issues.

The stakeholders interviewed widely acknowledged this programme as one of the Centre's most successful interventions in terms of its pioneering work in mainstreaming non-state actor participation in ACP-EU development cooperation, as well as specific outputs. This success can be attributed in part to the clarity of programme design and studious adherence

to the Centre's instruments for programming and implementation, namely, policy-oriented research and systematisation; dialogue and networking; knowledge and information sharing; resource pooling and partnership development; advisory services; and institutional support and services.

Programme activities were closely and logically aligned to these principle instruments. In terms of policy-oriented research and systematisation, the Centre already possessed well researched foundation work that needed only to be aligned to policy intentions in the contextual provisions of the Cotonou chapter on actors of partnership. To establish a workable *modus operandi* for the participatory approaches, the Centre leveraged its reputation as an independent broker in ACP-EU relations and its wide network, to facilitate dialogue among and between the ACP and EU sides.

This is a clear "auditable" trail of activities that illustrates application of the process-oriented approach to programme implementation. In this regard, it is evident, for instance, that there was systematic pre-identification of the key actors, institutional partners and strategic issues: ACP national and regional authorising officers (NAOs and RAOs) and EC Delegates for programming; EU NGOs and the full spectrum of ACP NSAs as beneficiaries, and the ACP Secretariat and European Commission as institutional partners. The Centre was thus able to leverage its relationship with the ACP Secretariat to organise workshops for the NAOs and RAOs and utilise EC Delegates' annual meetings to facilitate dialogue and provide advice on mainstreaming NSAs over the whole spectrum, from programming to implementation of the national and regional indicative programmes. Similarly, the Centre leveraged its institutional relationship with the ACP Secretariat and European Commission to participate in the first meeting of the ACP Business Forum. Equally systematic techniques were used to engage other stakeholders, including ACP local governments and wider European civil society.

The decision to prepare an implementation handbook, the *NSA Guide*, to mitigate the risk that practice would not follow the intentions of the Cotonou Agreement was an innovative and novel approach. The guide is a true flag-bearer, widely distributed and highly appreciated by practitioners on both the EU and ACP side. The guide is well presented and

applicable to many aspects of ACP-EU relations and thus provides a reliable reference for ACP-EU cooperation practitioners of all disciplines. Engagement of the programme in several non-state actor mapping exercises further enabled the Centre to engage with and assess the practice of NSA involvement in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. This included practical research on various aspects of NSA participation, such as assistance in setting-up capacity programmes for NSAs in ACP countries including Burkina Faso, Kenya and Mauritania; institutional development support such as that to set up the ACP Local Government Platform; and information and communication support in the form of the *NSA Guide* and *NSA Country Briefs* among others. The programme maintained a clear and consistent path towards the realisation of the central objective (mainstreaming NSA participation in ACP-EU relations). It also embarked on other value-added practice-based activities that served to augment progress in achieving the central objective. Yet some caution is required in this approach, as it clearly generated expectations about future engagement that ECDPM could not possibly fulfil.

The programme very much tried to ensure that ACP perspectives on governance were facilitated and also impacted thinking within the European Commission. In this regard, it did not focus on the much-covered issues of governance from a donor perspective, such as corruption. Rather, it worked to facilitate African processes. In maintaining a strict ACP-EU focus the programme ensured relevance and added value throughout its activities rather than being distracted by wider considerations.

In assessing the overall performance of the programme, a note of caution must be sounded for future interventions in institutional support. In this regard, even though the request for the establishment of the Local Government Platform emanated from the stakeholders themselves, the Centre did not ensure that there was sufficient moral and material commitment from the project initiators to guarantee the platform's sustainability with minimal assistance from the Centre. There thus seems to be a mistaken impression on the part of platform members that the Centre will continue to lend administrative and financial assistance to the project.

Even though the Centre has a strong institutional development mandate, "capacity building" initiatives

should be properly contextualised and located within the Centre's competences and capacity. In this regard, the Centre does not have the capacity to offer extended institutional capacity-building support of the type required to set up and sustain institutions such as the ACP Local Government Platform. The Centre's specific niche should be limited to technical support and assistance in facilitating relationship-building between institutions in the European Union and those in the ACP.

In general, this programme is deemed to have performed very well given the extent of many of its activities. The pragmatic and logical manner in which the programme evolved from a focus on actors of partnership to the wider subject of governance in the subsequent programme cycle (2005-07) is noteworthy. Also, the programme definitely tried to practice what it preached in terms of taking a facilitating process approach, and also in its utilisation of a networking, knowledge-sharing and capacity-building approach. Yet there was a question of whether the programme engaged too widely at the expense of depth and consistency of engagement. The programme coordinator himself was much in demand, and had other duties at the strategic level, such as pioneering the African Union engagement. Other programme staff was similarly pulled from the programme, a situation compounded by the need to work on "funded" project initiatives. The importance of this programme requires an unwavering focus and hard decisions on what level of engagement is practical and desirable at the country level. Broadly, however, the programme was one of the most consistent with the ECDPM mandate and its 2001-05 strategy.

6.5.4 Internal Donor Reform and Quality of Development Assistance

The objective of the **Internal Donor Reform and Quality of Development Assistance** programme was to improve the quality of EU-ACP development cooperation by championing improved aid mechanisms and capacity building in ACP countries. The particular focus was to assess the effectiveness of the new aid modalities and support organisational change and capacity building among actors in the development process, particularly those in the developing countries. This approach was stimulated by the gradual realisation within the donor community that certain principles underpin the effectiveness of development cooperation. Among these are improved partnership in programme design and implementation; ownership of

the development process by the developing countries; and greater alignment of donor strategies with the development frameworks of the partner countries. There was also a realisation that enhanced coordination between the donor community and developing countries is a prerequisite for aid effectiveness.

The programme was pertinent in that it sought to address an important link in ACP-EU development cooperation, that is, EU aid mechanisms and the capacity of ACP partners to engage with these. Indeed, the complexity of EU systems and procedures is a recurring challenge in ACP-EU relations. The programme aimed to address this. In doing so, it was successful on many fronts. Several examples can be highlighted:

- The study on pooling technical assistance, commissioned by the Dutch government, addressed the impediments to aid effectiveness and technical assistance in general. This work fed into a study on a decentralised approach to budget support incorporating a sector-wide approach (SWAP) into the funding of development programmes. This latter study was contracted by the Netherlands and Belgium government and SNV.
- The study on capacity development, with its focus on the linkage between capacity, organisational change and performance in the development process, was widely acclaimed by the donor community. The study recommendations - with respect to a systems approach to capacity practices, legitimacy aspects in capacity development and the interrelations between networks and capacity development - formed key inputs in the development policy arena.
- Research and consultations leading to the formation of the NAO Platform and institutional development support to CDI in Mali and to Lacor Hospital in Uganda are evidence of the programme's focus on capacity building in ACP partner organisations. The capacity diagnostic study of the Rwandan Revenue Authority was widely acclaimed and now serves as a reference benchmark for similar interventions in institutional development. The work that ECDPM has completed and its ongoing initiatives in the capacity development aspects of aid delivery mechanisms will inform future activities of the Centre across all programme themes.

The initial focus of the capacity-building programme was to support ACP institutions to purposefully engage in the development process within the ACP-EU Cotonou framework. This approach was found unviable due to a variety of circumstances, including staff changes at the Centre and the evolving dynamics of EU external relations, both within Europe and between Europe and developing countries. The programme's evolution from a focus on managing international cooperation (2001) to internal donor reform and the quality of development assistance (2002-03) and then to development cooperation and capacity, indicates a struggle to find the right balance between reform in donor processes and capacity development in ACP countries to assist them in benefiting from the new approaches. In the event, the programme steered more intensively into the general field of development cooperation and aid delivery modalities. Most of the work was donor driven and funded, primarily by OECD countries, and was undertaken outside the framework of EU-ACP cooperation. Only recently has the European Union taken a keen interest in this area of cooperation. The implication is that the engagement of ACP countries in these activities was unstructured so as perhaps to have influenced their effective response to the changes in aid delivery mechanisms as advanced in the studies; and the focus on capacity development in ACP institutions as envisaged in ECDP mandate was compromised. Nonetheless, substantial study was conducted in these countries and expert input included in the programme's reports. The continued involvement of policymakers in the South in the reform of aid delivery mechanisms would positively impact the outcomes of the capacity studies.

A variety of donors made substantial funding available to support the capacity study. In view of the financial pressures arising from the decline in the Centre's institutional core funds, it is understandable that the programme sought to optimise this opportunity. The ACP countries, however, need support to effectively engage in development cooperation processes. The programme should now focus more on providing this support.

It is important to observe that the programme's intensive engagement in the donor reform agenda raised the profile of the Centre in the development cooperation arena. This created a positive environment beyond the thematic boundaries of the programme. Other programmes will benefit from this achievement. The challenge is therefore to ensure that the insights

gained from programme activities are mainstreamed into key aspects of ACP-EU development cooperation. In particular, the evolving engagement with the AU Commission could benefit from the wealth of knowledge gained in the capacity studies.

6.5.5 Conclusion on thematic programmes

In assessing the overall performance of programmatic choices, it was observed that the Centre drew up and implemented its strategy for 2001-05 as an organisation in transition. There was a change in the Centre's top management and equally significant changes at the middle management and programme coordinator levels. These changes certainly impacted that strategy's implementation.

The foregoing notwithstanding, in general the programmatic choices made in consecutive annual work plans and budgets remained pertinent to contextual developments in ACP-EU relations and consistent with strategic choices made by the Centre for the 2001-05 period. Although there may have been some notable exceptions to consistency with strategic choices, the positive outcomes and lessons learnt from the outputs of the programmes largely contributed to enhance the Centre's image.

In the future, more judiciousness in the autonomy granted to programme coordinators in selection of specific activities and, more crucially, in material changes to programmes, will ensure greater attainment of the "3Cs" (coordination, coherence and complementarity) in the Centre's activities. Achievement of that goal would be assisted by more rigorous and frank debate within the ECDPM Programme Coordinators Meeting (PCM) and a more accentuated leadership of the Centre.

Moreover, continued cross-programme collaboration should be encouraged and enhanced by, among other means, raising the visibility of the complementary content provided by other programmes to main programme interventions. This would not only raise awareness of the diversity of the Centre's competences, but would also enable stakeholders to make cross-programme proposals for collaboration.

There is also a question of ascertaining how much the evolution of funding (especially the flow and orientation of external funds) has influenced strategic choices in the sense of focus on specific themes, or has even undermined the strategies.

In some cases pressure to respond to short-term, project-type requests seems to have overridden the long-term strategy of the process approach. Responding to project-type requests may not necessarily bear negative impacts; it could even have positive effects if the projects accepted are consistent with original strategic and programmatic choices. The Centre's current high proportion of project funding, however, remains a threat to its strategic bearing.

ECDPM emphasises the flexibility and adaptability of its programmes, as they are continuously adjusted to emerging policy issues and trends. This is a strength

on the one hand, but could become a weakness if not guided by a clear overall strategy. A problem that might also arise is the dispersal of activities and a jumping from one project to the next, abandoning activities once started and thus depleting scarce resources and demotivating staff. Finally, a contradiction could emerge between the much-lauded flexibility and adaptability of programme work and a strategic choice to seek a long-term engagement with a limited number of key policy processes (as an independent broker).

Box 3: Mechanism for programme development and evolution

ECDPM structures its activities in five-year strategic business cycles that serve to anchor its strategic orientation. Each five-year strategy, or cycle, sets out key themes or programmes through which the Centre aims to achieve its objectives.

Factors affecting programmatic choices

Three factors affect the selection of the key themes or programmatic choices:

- *the Centre's mandate*
- *strategic operational choices*
- *the contextual framework for ACP-EU development cooperation*

The Centre strives to frame the themes to ensure not only that there are linkages between the selected programmes but also to create opportunities for cross-programme collaboration.

Mechanism for programme development

Specific activities are formulated and laid out in annual work plans. On a biannual basis, the Centre reviews its programmatic choices. In designing its programmes, the Centre aims to ensure programme consistency, or thematic focus, while at the same time allowing flexibility for evolution to match the external context.

Factors affecting programme evolution

A variety of factors affect programme evolution. Four major ones are described here:

- *Context. The Centre aims to help build effective partnerships for development between public and private actors in the European Union and ACP countries. This multi-actor axis is characterised by a constantly evolving policy context. In order to maintain programme coherence and pertinence in this changing context, the Centre regularly reviews its programmes and adapts them to the prevailing circumstances.*
- *Demand patterns. The Centre regards the design, negotiation, implementation and evaluation of development policy as well as international cooperation as autonomous processes owned and managed by their respective stakeholders. ECDPM sees its own role as primarily that of facilitator of such process. Consequently, stakeholder demands influence the directional development of the key themes or programmes.*
- *entre capacity. The selection, development and evolution of the programmatic choices are guided by the Centre's core competences, which themselves are a function of the Centre's human resources complement. Evolution in programmatic choices is therefore influenced by evolution of the Centre's staff complement.*
- *Funding. The amount as well as the nature of the funds available are a major determinant of programme evolution.*

6.6 Information and (external) communications

The Centre's information outputs is impressive, as is their dissemination. The number of publications distributed in 2004 reached 63,000. The wide range of information tools that were produced encompasses the more traditional media (printed publications and websites) as well as innovative electronic tools (e-alerts and online discussion groups). The quality of ECDPM materials is generally valued. The theme focus, content and accuracy of the information were particularly appreciated. In the stakeholder interviews, many positive comments were heard: 'The material is excellent, nearly unique.' 'It is practical, compared to most other studies, which are too theoretical.' 'ECDPM has the capacity to put complex issues into an understandable form.' The Centre is considered a complete resource: 'You don't miss anything if you look at the ECDPM materials.' Especially Internet-based materials were highly valued as being well presented, professionally done and up to date. The weekly *ACP-EU E-alert* was often referred to as main source of current information from ECDPM. It is widely used and appreciated for its coverage and accuracy. Considering that this product is outsourced, the need for more support from the Centre was noted. In particular, closer involvement of the communication and information staff and other Centre programmes is needed in the collation of information and its dissemination.

The next question, of course, is whether these materials, especially the printed publications, are really used and if so to what extent. The Centre has conducted a number of users' surveys. The last one was an online survey in December 2005. Unfortunately it did not ask how intensively the materials were read and used.⁵ It is therefore difficult to accurately assess the cost-benefit relation of the publications, especially the printed versions, which are substantially more expensive than those in electronic format.

Nevertheless, hard copies are important for reaching the audience in Africa, where Internet access is limited. ECDPM needs to find a cost-effective way of assessing the impact of its publications. In addition to regular reader surveys and database analyses, additional effort should be made to draw stakeholders' attention to the publications and to monitor the effect of various communication tools and outputs.

This brings us to the question of whether publications are in fact the best way to reach people. Or are

there other, more effective means, such as events with personal participation, direct face-to-face contact and active engagement? Certainly specialised events are sometimes more effective than written outputs. Several interviewees emphasised the value of personal briefings, for example, formal and informal meetings and lunch seminars. While both written and interpersonal communications are necessary, it is through personal contacts that lasting links are established and interest in the Centre's materials awakened. Interpersonal contacts should preferably happen early, before stakeholders have formed an opinion of the Centre. In the process that follows an initial meeting, analyses can be deepened and fine-tuned. ECDPM should also be aware that its information often does not reach the targeted stakeholders: the real policy actors and policymakers such as EPA negotiators and NAOs. Because of time and capacity constraints, individuals in these positions hardly have access to published materials. Such key stakeholders cannot be reached directly, but only through technical assistance people, who can act as agents to channel the relevant information to the right persons. It is strategically important for the Centre to find ways to reach key actors more directly and to establish stable communications with them.

Last but not least, ECDPM's relationship with the media is an undefined area. The users' survey in 2005 revealed a need for more intensive media work, especially in the South. Yet a clear media strategy is still missing. This deficiency is linked to the important but as yet unanswered question of whether the Communication and Information programme has a capacity-development mission towards stakeholders in the South.

Some critical comments were heard on the form and readability of the Centre's written materials. The *Cotonou Infokit* and the *User's Guide for Non-State Actors* were highly praised for their accessible and readable format, while other publications got lesser marks for presentation, form and style. Currently the quality of the information from the different programmes is quite variable. Some publications could be more user-friendly and adapted to a specific target audience. Also the websites received some critical feedback. The navigation of www.ecdpm.org is not optimum; and links to other websites are difficult to find. Neither is the site always up to date. For instance, the new strategy for 2005-10 is not there. Internet readers still have to content themselves

Notes

- 5 The result of this survey might be flawed by the fact that it was conducted online. It would be interesting to learn how the users of hard copies, which are much more expensive than electronic versions, are using them, how thoroughly they are read and used, and by how many readers.

with the 2001-05 strategy. The question of why there are three independent websites instead of one portal with access to the different sites was not answered satisfactorily. A common portal would not only mark the common authorship of the sites; it would also help the Centre present a clear corporate identity. Branding is in fact key to enhancing the ECDPM corporate identity. While it is appreciated that some Centre publications are a joint effort with other institutions and that the Centre identity can be reflected at different levels, an effective way of promoting the "ECDPM brand" should be embedded into all of the Centre's information outputs.

All of the questions and issues discussed in the preceding paragraphs are tied into the Centre communication, information and technology strategy. As presented in the various work plans and annual reports, the aim of the strategy is 'to strengthen ECDPM's communication processes internally and externally by matching technology with information and learning needs of the clients, partners and enablers'. The Centre's internal assessment reads: 'The communication strategy... is defined as broad guidelines, so that it can be adapted to programme and Centre objectives.' According to the 2004 Annual Report, 'The C&I team provides cross-cutting support to the Centre's thematic programmes...The strategic orientation [of C&I] follows that of the Centre as a whole.'

While the evaluation team was impressed by the range and the quality of ECDPM outputs, the need for closer integration of communication and information processes and outputs with the outreach activities of the different programmes was noted. Stakeholders were generally familiar with certain aspects of Centre programmes, but a holistic picture of the Centre was, in most cases, missing. In certain instances, different stakeholders had different expectations of the Centre. In other cases, potential partners and beneficiaries were unable to link with the Centre due to their limited knowledge of its programme themes.

There is thus a clear need to integrate the communication, information and technology strategy with the strategies of the other programmes. The Communication and Information programme should be seen as an integral part of the other programmes, not as a "stand-alone" in itself. This calls for a redefinition of the current communication strategy to bring out this institutional focus. Such a strategic

repositioning is the responsibility of Centre leadership. Public relations and media outreach are important aspects to be integrated into the revised strategy. Also, if the Centre is to communicate effectively with its various stakeholders, it must put in place a clear media strategy. This is necessary to deepen the presence of the Centre, especially in ACP countries.

Communication is an integral part of Centre outreach and identity. The challenge is to ensure that communication serves, in a holistic manner, all of the Centre's programme activities. Communication should also promote Centre identity. The alignment of the Communication and Information programme to the needs of all programmes has long been discussed within the Centre, but without a concrete decision for strategic readjustment of this programme. This decision should now be taken.

7 Institutional management and development

This chapter addresses institutional management and development. It covers the management of human capital, especially human resources planning, recruitment, deployment, retention, the reward system, training and learning; management processes, particularly the participatory mechanism in decision making; and knowledge management and institutional learning. The objective is to assess the extent to which policies and practices in these key aspects are mainstreamed in institutional leadership and management. This assessment provides a basis for evaluating the effectiveness of institutional performance.

7.1 Human resources management

Human resources management at ECDPM responds to the institutional mandate and strategic focus. During the strategic planning cycle 2001-05, competent and highly experienced programme coordinators led the four thematic programmes (Political Dimensions of Partnerships, ACP-EU Trade Relations, Actors of Partnerships and Internal Donor Reform).

The cross-cutting programmes (Strategy and Innovation, Communication and Information and Centre Management and Administration) were led by equally competent staff. Indeed, leadership of the Strategy and Innovation programme was the responsibility of the Centre Director. The commitment of the programme leaders to the Centre's success is demonstrated by the length of service that each has devoted to the institution. The development of the Centre strategy for the period under review, and the strategy's continued evolution, leading to the early launch of the new strategy for 2005-10, indicate a leadership keenly attuned to the fundamental changes under way in the context of the institution's mandate.

It was evident from evaluation discussions and observations that staff at all levels were under considerable pressure of work. To a large extent, this relates to the number and complexity of the programmes in relation to the staff available and the competence required. As Chapter 6 noted, there is evidence that some programmes could have exceeded their strategic boundaries. The autonomy of programme coordinators to pursue exciting initiatives and the pressure to raise project funds in the face of declining core funds could explain this. The effect is that programme officers and assistants carried heavy workloads and were under considerable stress. Two issues therefore arise: (i) the need to be alive to the strategic focus of the institution in relation to the autonomy of the programmes and (ii) the need to align institutional capacity to the demands of programme implementation.

7.1.1 Succession planning and recruitment

The highly technical nature of the thematic programmes and the complex environment in which these are implemented calls for a dynamic blend of staff skills. ECDPM's strategic stance as an independent knowledge broker at the interface of ACP-EU relations and its embracing a process orientation in programme interventions necessitates a combination of expert knowledge in the programme areas and capacity to engage at different levels and in diverse circumstances. Cultural sensitivity is essential in managing relations in both Europe and the ACP, especially when ECDPM is called upon to act as a broker in the context of development cooperation. Its engagement in the evaluation of the Africa Peace Facility and in the strategy development of the AU Commission demonstrates this need for sensitivity.

The retention of ECDPM's services by the African Union in programming its €55 million institutional capacity-building initiative is proof that the Centre has developed a highly effective capacity to engage in development policy cooperation with respect for cultural diversity. Similar examples are found in the other programmes, especially the ACP-EU Economic and Trade Cooperation and Actors of Partnership programmes.

A number of European and African stakeholders expressed concern that ECDPM has not integrated ACP personnel into its staff. This omission, they felt, could undermine its relations with regional networks. As the Centre engages more at the regional level this issue is expected to become more pronounced. Although the Centre now does have a few staff from the South, it is clear that Southern representation in the Centre's work must receive greater attention. In this regard, two options are open to ECDPM: (i) hire more staff from ACP countries and create a real multicultural profile in Centre staff or (ii) institutionalise strategic alliances with regional institutions and networks which could then be the "face" of ECDPM in ACP countries. An intensified exchange or study fellowship programme between ECDPM and regional institutions could also be considered.

Staff competence for effective engagement in development policy management takes time to develop. The Centre's institutional orientation towards the practice part of the knowledge, policy and research triangle denotes a need for sustained institutional capacity building. Staff training and development is critical to the sustainable development of the Centre.

The programme coordinators have developed high-level competence through sustained exposure to key ACP-EU development issues. Indeed, experience is gained through practice in this field. In particular, the process orientation and facilitation that are the hallmark of ECDPM's approach to programme implementation can be acquired only through extended engagement with key decision makers in development policy cooperation. The competence of senior programme staff (programme coordinators and senior programme officers) was continually applauded during the evaluation consultations. There was a distinct view that staff capacity at the lower programme levels (programme officers, assistant programme officers and programme assistants) had not

kept pace with the high demands of the current programmes and the evolving context of ACP-EU cooperation. This is largely attributable to the lack of a clear staff development programme and to the Centre's flexible approach to recruitment which favours short-term contracts, the use of interns in service delivery and expanded engagement of programme associates. Such human resources management has two consequences. First, most staff at the lower levels are "in transit" and, therefore, are not accumulating the essential practical and sustained experience that will be necessary to maintain ECDPM's work into the future. Second, the pressure to perform and to be "on top" of issues in a dynamic programme environment has denied staff opportunities to benefit from a structured staff development programme.

The need to close the "competence gap" between programme coordinators and middle-level and junior staff is therefore evident. Without a specific skills audit, it is impossible to state with any clarity the competence needs of individual staff members. It is, however, important to realise that competence goes beyond technical skills. The practical application of technical skills in a highly political and culturally diverse context, for example that of the AU Commission, calls for well developed interpersonal skills and cultural and political sensitivity. These competences are gained through regular exposure to diverse programme environments and structured mentoring. This is also a succession issue. Should senior staff in the more complex programmes, for example, the Political Dimensions of Partnership programme (now Development Policy and EU External Action) and the Actors of Partnership programme (now Multi-Actor Partnership and Governance) decide to leave the organisation, the Centre would be hard pressed to find suitable replacements from its current staff. An example of a succession issue that ECDPM must now address is the imminent departure of its program coordinator for the Development Cooperation and Capacity programme.

Clearly the Centre must put in place a comprehensive staff development programme. Essential elements of such a programme are succession plans based on Centre strategy, a retention strategy that aims to create a critical mass of highly competent staff in the Centre and a structured training programme that includes both exposure and mentoring elements. Over-reliance on a few highly competent

staff members could undermine institutional sustainability in the long term. There is further a need to examine the current organisational structure to allow faster progression of outstanding individuals along a defined career path.

The Centre has made a strategic decision to recruit mainly short-term staff, mostly research assistants, programme assistants and interns. This is primarily due to funding pressures arising from the decline in core funds. While the pressure on core and institutional funding and the increasing reliance on programme and project funds accentuates reliance on short-term staff, it should be realised that, in the longer term, the stability of the Centre will depend on the high level of competence of core staff in all programme areas. The Centre has taken steps to reverse the decline in core funds. Success in this venture should be reflected in a better balance between "permanent" staff and short-term recruits.

7.1.2 Human resources profile and deployment

Total staff at ECDPM grew from 25.5 in 2001 to 39.7 in 2005, an increase of 14.2, equivalent to 56 per cent. Most of the increase was in programme staff (71 per cent). During the same period, total revenue increased by 47 per cent. Therefore, no direct relationship between increases in staff and revenue can be established. It is noted, however, that during this period, the proportion of external funding increased by 128 per cent. Perhaps most important to assess, on a continuous basis, is the efficiency of staff deployment. A particular focus in this regard should be the ratio of support to programme staff. The current support staff complement (in full-time equivalents) is deployed as follows: information and IT support (4.6); finance and human resources (3.6); secretarial and logistics (6.1).

The balance between support staff and efficiency in deployment of all staff (programme and support) has implications for the Centre's overall cost effectiveness. It is therefore useful to determine the optimal staff complement in all categories and at all levels. In determining the most favourable staff profile, the operational processes in the programmes should receive particular attention, with a key consideration being the alignment of staff to the programmes' strategic objectives. To what extent, for example, does a particular position add value to the achievement of Centre objectives as defined in the programme focus? A similar exercise should be carried

out with regard to the Communication and Information programme. Excessive reliance on in-house staff in publishing and information dissemination could be reduced. Best practice indicates that most of these functions can be outsourced, with efficiency gains and cost benefits to the Centre. A number of these functions are already outsourced, and this approach could be intensified. In arriving at the optimal staffing levels, it will be necessary to clearly define the role of communication in the organisation, both internally and externally with different stakeholders. The staff profile in the programme should therefore reflect more communication expertise than simply the managerial aspects of the programme.

7.1.3 Staff retention and reward

The Centre remuneration structure is aligned to the Dutch civil service system. In reality, and in relation to comparable institutions, the Centre's financial reward system can be viewed as average. Staff retention at the Centre is tied more to the rewarding work environment. This is particularly true for the middle and senior staff cadres, who enjoy the challenge of interacting in policy networks and with leadership in diverse environments. The empowering leadership at the Centre and the collegial management style is a source of institutional motivation. Discussions with this staff cadre confirmed that were this ambience to change, ECDPM would no longer be an attractive institution to work for. Nevertheless, it was obvious from the junior staff cadre and the contract staff that ECDPM is a good institution for gaining experience. This experience was seen as especially useful for advancing a policy analysis career at better paying institutions.

7.1.4 Training and learning

The emphasis on short-term contract staff and transient capacity; and the heavy workload of the programme officers and senior staff, denies staff the opportunity to benefit from formal training and development programmes. Indeed, there is no evidence that such programmes have been integrated into the management of human capital at ECDPM. Yet individual and institutional learning is a central tenet of ECDPM policy. The Centre does view the sharing of experience and knowledge through peer review meetings, programme formulation fora and annual retreats as an important source of staff learning. There is still a need to clearly link individual and institutional learning to the objectives of the

Strategy and Innovation programme. This can be achieved by creating processes by which to feed the outputs of the programme into staff development initiatives.

7.2 Management processes and participatory decision making

ECDPM has a well developed culture of participatory decision making. Avenues for decision making are its Programme Coordinators Meeting and Programme Staff Meeting (PCM and PSM). At these meetings, programme orientations and specific projects are discussed and agreed upon. Institutional challenges are also discussed and resolved. During the evaluation consultations, staff indicated a general satisfaction with the participatory approach to decision making. Aspects mentioned as most rewarding were the open and flexible organisational culture, the freedom to experiment with ideas, the challenge and satisfaction of involvement in determining programme directions and the shared achievement of agreed objectives. The empowering leadership style has created flexibility in programme initiatives and allowed staff to excel in challenging circumstances.

Yet there is nonetheless a danger that too much flexibility could undermine the Centre's strategic focus. A few examples were given of programmes over-emphasising aspects that exceeded the boundaries of the thematic programmes. The Political Dimensions of Partnership programme, for example, emphasised EU institutions more than those in the ACP. While this could be justified in terms of emerging opportunities, it indicates a clear need for an institutional mechanism to check what could easily be an imbalance in programme focus in the context of EU-ACP relations. There was a suggestion that some initiatives were more aligned to the enthusiasm of the programme coordinator than to the broader institutional strategy. There was also concern about delayed decision making on crucial issues. In this regard, the need to fully integrate the communication programme into the strategic mainstream of the Centre strategy was an often-cited example. The role of the PCM as the leadership's decision-making organ was considered inadequate, mainly due to the strong programming function of the programme coordinators. There is a clear need to review current decision-making processes at the leadership level with the aim of maintaining balance between

empowering and participatory decision making, on one hand, and the strategic direction of ECDPM on the other. This is the role of leadership.

7.3 Knowledge management and institutional learning

Knowledge management and institutional learning is the key element of the Strategy and Innovation programme. Two aspects were structured into this programme during the period under review: strategy development and institutional relations. These aspects are entrusted to coordinators who are also responsible for their own programmes. As mentioned earlier, the Centre Director leads the overall programme.

Under the strategy development component, innovations in programme themes have been mainstreamed into Centre strategy and new initiatives started with important partners, specifically the AU Commission and ACP regional networks. As mentioned, learning has been mainstreamed into Centre programmes through structured review meetings (PCM and PSM) and annual retreats. The reformulation of the four thematic programmes and the early launch of the new ECDPM strategy (2005-10) in 2005 were the direct result of internal reflection and the intensive knowledge management approach of Centre leadership.

There is evidence that the Strategy and Innovation programme has been successful in contributing to innovations in the development field. The Centre's intensive involvement in the evaluation of the "3Cs" (complementarity, coherence and coordination) in the context of EU development cooperation is evidence of the leadership position that ECDPM has acquired in knowledge management. The Pelican Initiative further demonstrates this leadership role. The link between external learning and institutional learning, however, needs to be strengthened. This could be achieved by institutionalising processes and systems that go beyond capturing information to full integration of learning as an institutional culture. The programme must also work to maintain a balance between internal learning and external focus in knowledge generation and dissemination. This is an institutional development strategy.

The institutional relations component promotes close relationships between the Centre and its insti-

tutional funders. It is also a response to declining core funds and the need to be more proactive in fund-raising. Positive results have been achieved in that institutional funding was secured from the governments of Sweden, Belgium, Finland and Switzerland, among others, with further institutional financial support in sight. The programme has contributed to securing funds from new sources as well, especially the AU Commission and ACP networks. A case could be made for a more structured and enhanced fund-raising capacity. While programmes must be at the forefront in identifying viable sources of funds, accessing these funds through well structured plans and proposals calls for professional expertise. Such a dedicated approach, working in collaboration with the programmes, could be effective in mobilising institutional and programme resources.

8 Financial and fund-raising assessment: raising the "quality of income"

8.1 Achievement of financial targets

This chapter assesses the Centre's fund-raising and financial management situation and the link between these during the evaluation period. Broadly the Centre was responsibly managed and progressively achieved its objectives in fund-raising and financial management during 2001-05 (table 1). There was steady improvement in financial procedures and fund-raising capacity, as well as more solid strategy and practice in both areas. Nonetheless, ECDPM's staff and board are conscious of a number of key concerns. Significantly, income from the Dutch trust fund fell in absolute and relative terms from year to year during the evaluation period. This income is particularly important because it is "unrestricted" in nature, allowing the Centre to cover core costs and pursue its own strategy rather than being led by "the market" (box 4 explains the types of funding). The reduction of unrestricted funding (both

core and institutional) during 2001-05 was exacerbated by an increase in project-related income of the most restricted sort. Very limited progress was made in identifying and acquiring more flexible multi-annual programme funds. This scenario, growing more and more acute each year, placed a great deal of pressure on staff, institutional development and maintenance of ECDPM's overall strategy. Generally, this situation, which mirrors the global fund-raising climate, was well managed and would have been a good deal more acute were it not for good financial management and successful fund-raising. The 2001-05 financial strategy included no clear target percentages for the different types of funding: unrestricted (core and institutional), programme and project. Yet the evolution of the Centre's funding mix did have significant impact on its work during the evaluation period.

Box 4: Types of funding

In understanding ECDPM's financial and fund-raising situation it is absolutely crucial to fully appreciate the different types of income.

Project funding. The most restricted type of funding. Usually short-term and for specific tasks that are defined by the donor/contracting institution.

Programme funding. Funding that can be devoted relatively flexibly towards achievement of the goals of a particular ECDPM programme (i.e. the trade programme). Usually multi-year in nature.

Institutional funding. Multi-annual funding that is overwhelmingly unrestricted in nature, meaning that it can be used to achieve the goals of ECDPM as the Centre defines them.

Core funding. Unrestricted funding available to the Centre from the Dutch trust fund to pursue ECDPM's strategy and goals as it sees fit. It may be applied to cover more than simply core functional administrative costs.

Unrestricted funding. The mixture and combined total of fully flexible core and institutional funding.

Note: Different agencies and donors use the same funding terminology to mean quite different things.

Table 1: Strategic targets and assessment of results

Financial Strategic Targets	Assessment of Results
Increase institutional funding (outside Dutch core grant) from zero in 2000 to €700,000 in 2005.	<i>Good progress.</i> In 2005 institutional funding (in addition to the Dutch core grant) was €632,000.
Increase programme/project funding from €1,200,000 in 2001 to €1,800,000 million in 2005.	<i>Exceeded expectations.</i> Programme and project funding totalled €2,057,000 in 2005.
Increase proportion of programme funds.	<i>Very limited.</i> The Centre gained additional programme funding only from the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), for the trade programme.
Increase turnover from €2,300,000 to €3,500,000 by 2005.	<i>Exceeded expectations.</i> Turnover in 2005 was €3,747,000.
Balanced budget from 2003.	<i>Mixed.</i> Exceeded expectations in 2001, 2002 and 2003. In 2004 came in slightly below the target positive balance. Did not meet target in 2005 with deficit of €160,000 in that year (including debtors of €85,000) some of which was a resultant from previous years.

8.2 Evolution of the funding mix

The 2001-05 period saw considerable evolution of the "funding mix" that sustained the Centre. ECDPM struggled with the need to ensure the right blend and "quality" of funding to maintain its independence and its own strategic choices. Funding itself was not so much a problem, mainly because the expertise and quality of the Centre is well established. However, if funding becomes overwhelmingly restricted, directive and short-term, and does not allow for full cost recovery for implementation of particular initiatives, then the very identity, quality and sustainability of the Centre is fundamentally at risk. This issue became more acute in recent years (see table 2) as project funding (the most restricted type) increased to 48 per cent of income in 2005 compared to 30 per cent during 2001-03. This was accompanied by a reduction in total unrestricted funding (core plus institutional) by some 6 per cent from 2001 to 2005. Both these figures and their evolution over the 2001-05 period indicate a declining trend in unrestricted income and a steady increase in the proportion of project-specific funds.

8.3 Fund-raising in a challenging context

The challenging global funding context in which ECDPM finds itself must be appreciated. In terms of acquiring new sources of unrestricted financial resources, the Centre made some progress over the evaluation period. While direct comparisons are always difficult, given the relatively unique nature of the mandate and approach of the Centre (see box 5), global non-governmental institutes such as ECDPM have generally been significantly impacted by the donor trend away from "unrestricted" funding. Donors have either converted such support to more directive and restrictive funding, or have ceased such funding entirely.

ECDPM did successfully conclude multi-annual "unrestricted" funding agreements with Switzerland, Sweden, Finland and Belgium, and gained a smaller in-kind contribution from Portugal. This meant the emergence of the institutional type of income from zero in 2001 to 17 per cent of Centre income in real terms by 2005. The agreements include a limited service provision component which enables the involved agencies to directly avail of ECDPM's expertise. The Centre, because of its legal set-up, seems structurally unable to gain resources from certain potential sources, such as Germany. Other donor countries, such as Denmark, cannot give to ECDPM because political considerations make it nearly impossible to fund non-national non-intergovernmental institutes. Protracted courting of donors such as Luxembourg had not yet yielded results, while others did provide limited funds (such as Ireland in 2006). Indeed, the Centre's chosen ACP-EU focus rules out donors such as the United States, while Southern European EU countries seldom fund "Western" organisations based outside their own borders. However, to some extent many EU member states are "free riders". They benefit from ECDPM's unique work and focus, but do not wish (or have) to pay for it. Here there is possibly a political role for the Dutch government in attempting to convince at least "like-minded" donors to pay a fair share of the costs of an institute that has a European Union rather than simply a Dutch national focus.

It is a well known lament and constant irony that the biggest beneficiary of ECDPM in donor circles, the European Commission itself, provides no flexible resources and only a very small part of project funds (averaging around 10 per cent). This funding in itself does not allow for full cost recovery. The Commission has no mechanism by which it can flexibly fund the Centre. Any change to this situation would require high-level political consultation and considerable push from member states. ECDPM rightly views as undesir-

Table 2: Evolution in the funding mix

Type of Funding	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Core	51%	40%	34%	31%	28%
Institutional	0%	0%	9%	11%	17%
Programme	19%	30%	27%	16%	7%
Project	30%	30%	30%	43%	48%
Total	€2,400,000	€2,904,000	€3,292,000	€3,600,000	€3,747,000

Table 3: Comparison of ECDPM with various other institutes' funding mix and diversity of significant donors, 2004

Organisation	Unrestricted Income (Core + Institutional)	Restricted (Programme Project)	Significant bilateral donors + EC in 2004	Total revenue in 2004 in € and local currency
International Institute for Communication and Development, (IICD) Netherlands	69%	31%	69% from Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, also United Kingdom (DFID), Switzerland (SDC)	€5,944.913
Transparency International (TI), Germany	55%	45%	European Commission, United Kingdom, Finland, Switzerland, United States, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark, Canada	€6,500,000
Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD), Switzerland	42%	58%	25% from Switzerland (host country) (31% from Norway, 18% from UK, 6% from the European Commission, 5% from Sweden)	€5,400,000 (approx SFR 8,425,163)
European Centre for Development Policy Management, (ECDPM), the Netherlands	45%	58%	28% from Netherlands, 17% from Belgium, Sweden, Switzerland, Finland, and Portugal combined. Also the European Commission and United Kingdom	€3,600,000
International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD), Canada	18% specifically for core from Canada + 3% from interest and other sources. <i>Note:</i> It is not possible to decipher what other funds are "unrestricted" from their annual report, so this figure could be higher.	78%	Core 18% (from Canada)+ another 15% from Canada, all guaranteed multi-annually; also Switzerland 21% - Norway, Germany, France, the European Commission, United States, Netherlands and Sweden	€8,520,000 (approx CAN \$11,995,151)
International Alert (IA), UK	12% (see comments below)	88% (see comments below)	Primarily UK government, also Sweden, Netherlands, Canada, Denmark, Finland, the European Commission, Ireland, and US foundations	€8,220,000 (approx £5,632,000)

Sources: All information obtained was in the public domain and contained in the 2004 annual reports available on the agencies' own websites. Some other comparable agencies were not included because such a breakdown of data was unavailable.

Any comparative analysis between ECDPM's funding mix and the funding mix of other organisations risks comparing apples and oranges. Indeed, it is inappropriate to directly compare ECDPM's funding situation with that of operational NGOs or research institutes. Yet by comparing ECDPM with other institutes that are in some characteristics similar to ECDPM it is possible to sketch somewhat of a picture.

Characteristics in which organisations featured above are similar to ECDPM:

- non-governmental in nature (rather than inter-governmental)
- have a niche in the field of development cooperation (widely understood) and are seen as global leaders in this niche
- not primarily "national" centres like, for example, the Netherlands Institute for Multi-Party Democracy or the German Development Institute
- rely primarily on bilateral government funding (rather than foundation funds or funding from the general public)
- within the same size range (no larger than three times the size of ECDPM in income)
- based primarily in one location in an OECD country
- have a policy as well as an operational or research component

Compared to these other institutes, ECDPM would seem to be doing about average in the split between unrestricted and restricted income, and again about average to well in terms of attracting diversified sources of significant income from bilateral donors. Thus, while ECDPM's performance could be rated as average it must be noted that it is being "rated" against institutions and organisations that are established global leaders in their field. However, it should also be noted that both IISD and International Alert's programme/project income tends to be of the multi-annual type and for significant amounts that allow it to cover longer term staffing costs (often well over 100,000 in value) rather the consultancy type of project finance that ECDPM gains.

It can also be deduced from the above that global institutions of renowned international quality generally require a good percentage of unrestricted resources (or excellent multi-annual programme funds), and also significant backing from the government of their country of origin.

able the pursuit (however unlikely) of large amounts of restricted resources from the Commission, as it would certainly undermine its stated non-partisan role. Indeed, ECDPM needs to correct the entirely unfounded perception in some limited quarters that it is too much "in the pay" of the Commission. At the same time, there are some initial indications that new types of resources may be made available from the Commission, though these funds would likely be quite modest and earmarked for certain types of research activities. ECDPM should nonetheless closely monitor developments in this area.

The Centre fared considerably less well in raising programme funds, succeeding only with one new donor (DFID) during the period. Lack of success here is partly because many of ECDPM's natural programme funders became institutional donors. However, this alone cannot explain the lack of growth in programme funding. ECDPM should be more proactive in articulating aspects of its programmes and how they meet donors' goals and funding criteria, targeting fund-raising at specific sources and budget lines. ECDPM was not complacent about seeking new flexible resources. It did develop some institutional capacity and leadership in

fund-raising. Yet these developments were insufficient to counter the underlying negative trend in its funding mix, particularly the split between restricted and unrestricted funds.

8.4 Role of the Dutch Trust Fund

The Dutch trust fund is the most important source of income for the Centre. While providing only 25% of overall income in 2005, the fund's actual value to the Centre was considerably greater given that it is entirely flexible (unrestricted) in nature. Without the Dutch trust fund, the Centre would not be viable in any way other than to entirely reconstitute itself as a consultancy firm. Specifically, the value of the fund is two-fold. First, it is a multi-annual guaranteed source of income, allowing for longer term strategic and financial planning. Second, it is entirely flexible income, which allows the Centre to broadly follow its own strategy and way of working, rather than be driven by "the market" (i.e. those donors and organisations paying for particular services to meet their own, often short-term, agenda).

Table 4: Decreases in income from the Dutch trust fund

	1986	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Real interest/ core funding (€)	1,660,000	1,219,000	1,157,000	1,106,000	1,106,000	1,066,000
Decrease from 2001 unadjusted for inflation	-	-	-5%	-9%	-9%	-12%
Decrease from 2001 adjusted for inflation	-	-	-8%	-14%	-15%	-19%
Estimated in line with Dutch inflation from 2001 (€) (accumulated)	-	1,219,000	1,259,000	1,286,000	1,301,000	1,323,000
Dutch inflation	-	n/a	3.3%	2.1%	1.2%	1.7%

Source of inflation figures: Statistics Netherlands

In real terms income from interest on the Dutch trust fund has decreased. The Dutch trust-fund income unadjusted for inflation in 2005 was only 88 per cent that in 2001. This figure drops further, to 81 per cent, when adjusted for inflation (a drop of one-fifth). Overall, since 1986 the income in real terms (unadjusted for inflation), from the Dutch endowment has dropped 44 per cent, from €1,660,000 (guilder equivalent) in 1986 to €1,066,000 in 2005. The year-to-year fall in trust-fund income places a very real stress on Centre finances, and for the longer term raises questions of its very viability as currently mandated. In the present funding environment it is highly unlikely that other donors can be found to entirely make up the difference in unrestricted income for what is effectively a Dutch organisation.

8.5 Consequences of the change of funding mix

Each year, the Centre must meet certain financial targets to ensure its viability. The situation is such that near the end of any particular financial year, the Centre struggles to find funding to meet its costs. This results in it being much more market led in the

second half of the year as the quest for funds grows more pressing. Undoubtedly during 2001-05 pressure grew on all staff to raise funds, which increased stress and distracted programme staff from programme duties. While programmes have been circumspect about taking on projects for purely financial reasons, within all programmes there were activities planned within the strategy that could not be implemented due to lack of funds. All programme coordinators identified funding as, if not the most significant concern in terms of maintaining quality and strategy, certainly within the top three considerations.

While the Centre's main concern is to gain unrestricted resources, it should be recognised that it (and its stakeholders) believe that a certain amount of project work keeps the Centre policy-relevant, ensures it maintains accountability and brings the Centre closer to its stakeholders (particularly donors) on specific issues. Yet project funding often does not yield full cost recovery. While certain donors are content to pay for ECDPM's quality and added value, other donors cannot meet these costs (notably the European Commission and contract providers within the EC

Notes

- 6 Although ECDPM has an EU-ACP focus it must be noted that the Centre was founded on the initiative of the Dutch government in 1986. It is a foundation under Dutch law, the vast majority of the staff are based in Maastricht and its directors have always been Dutch.

framework). Projects may cost more to execute than the funding gained, leading to a structural underfunding, with unrestricted funding used to cover the difference from running projects at a "loss". Also, many small projects can be time-consuming to administer; and implementing too many small projects can blur strategic focus, as small projects (usually consultancies) take time away from activities leading towards achievement of ECDPM's overall strategy.

During the evaluation period, the Centre developed sharper mechanisms to assess the costs of undertaking short-term projects. Still, a very real tension remains between the need to maintain fiscal discipline and the obligation to pursue strategic opportunities for the Centre that offer no, or very limited, cost recovery. This tension became more acute during 2001-05. There is concern that this situation may hinder the Centre in taking on work or initiatives emanating from ACP stakeholders, as these are the ones least likely to be able to pay. This poses a direct threat to ECDPM's role as an independent broker, since its much-admired added value will be eroded if it is seen as serving only a donor agenda. Indeed, there is already some frustration and confusion among Southern stakeholders that are being asked to remunerate ECDPM for its work with them. Financial difficulties also threaten ECDPM's process-oriented approach, which is again a distinct added value of the Centre. It is difficult to imagine how ECDPM's challenging, unique and much-appreciated engagement with the African Union could have been financed entirely by project-type funding, as this would have demanded particular outputs at certain points in time, therefore steering work to a donor agenda rather than a joint AU-donor agenda. In addition, if ECDPM started to cut costs by charging for information (in the nature of publications), certainly those in the ACP who can least afford to pay would suffer most.

Unrestricted income also provides ECDPM "venture capital", that is, funds to engage in subjects and areas of work that currently are not in vogue. Yet involvement in new areas is key to remaining at the cutting edge of development cooperation, as many such new initiatives become mainstream in the longer term. For example, ECDPM used unrestricted funds to mount its engagement on non-state actors in EU-ACP development cooperation - this was long before donors had recognised the importance of supporting work in this area.

As the ratio between unrestricted and restricted funds deteriorates, the challenges to ECDPM's way of working will likely grow more acute. Also, as the overall pot of unrestricted resources is limited, the cost of pursuing strategic options with flexible money today impacts the Centre's ability to pursue similar options tomorrow. Cross-centre buy-in, strict and enforced programme alignment with Centre strategy and consultation are therefore needed before the Centre's limited flexible resources are used in this fashion.

8.6 Future fund-raising, financial management and maintenance of independence and strategy

If the current funding mix is far from optimal, the prevailing trend is even more disturbing. A number of possible future scenarios can be envisioned:

- If the Centre does not gain additional flexible resources it will be forced to restrict growth (in terms of project funds) or look more aggressively for efficiency and cost savings to maintain its independence and strategy.
- The Centre may choose to change the nature of the organisation, to become more of a market-led consultancy-like agency, thus enabling it to gain a larger proportion of project funds while concerning itself less with its own independence and strategy.
- Without effective management, the current situation will lead to a de facto erosion of the Centre's independence and ability to pursue its own strategy, leading to a quick unravelling of its added value (which is closely allied to the fact that it does not behave like a consultancy firm or operational NGO).
- The Centre could gain additional unrestricted and partially restricted (programme funding) resources and manage growth responsibility based on an agreed and realistic ratio between the different sources of income.

None of the first three options appear at all desirable. Indeed all violate the express wishes of key external stakeholders and the ECDPM board and staff. To avoid this, the Centre has now set itself

fund-raising targets of 50-60 per cent unrestricted (core and institutional), 20-30 per cent multi-annual programme funding and 20 per cent project funding. This appears to be broadly the right mix, yet represents a very ambitious goal given the challenging funding environment. The Centre may like to develop aspiration targets on one hand while also establishing clear minimum levels on the other hand. Maintaining an appropriate mix is more important than achieving overall growth, yet reducing the size of the Centre would be a disappointment, resulting as it would, in loss of impact. However, further significant growth of the type experienced over the past five years is also not recommended.

Achieving these percentage targets requires programme coordinators to be disciplined regarding taking on (unfunded or under-funded) project-related work, and ensuring that agreed initiatives stay on budget. In addition, the Centre should utilise its fund-raising capacity and develop it further, taking a more proactive approach to resource mobilisation which is particularly focused at the programme as well as the institutional level. Some programme coordinators are more strategic, organised and engaged in fund-raising than others. While the onus should not be taken away from programme coordinators to raise programme and project resources, they and their staff should be given some lessons and support (at the functional as well as the recently developed strategic level) as they raise funds and manage donor relations. All fund-raising efforts must be clearly coordinated across the Centre. While it would be a mistake to say that the Centre has been complacent about looking for new resources, it cannot rely on a return to its pre-2000 financially privileged position.

The Centre has not been particularly entrepreneurial in looking for new sources of flexible funding outside traditional bilateral donors. Various potential sources of income for the Centre have yet to be explored: foundations, the corporate sector, gifts-in-kind, premium memberships of the Centre, donor conferences, strategic partnerships (with institutions that can access resources that ECDPM can't including partner agencies within the ACP), leveraging ECDPM's unrestricted funds to secure co-financing and setting up a for-profit allied consultancy arm. Neither has the Centre sought professional fund-raising assistance, either by hiring a staff member with specialist fund-raising experience or by acquiring it

on a consultancy basis. The cost-benefit ratio of seeking professional assistance would have to be carefully assessed, and certainly not all fund-raising options are suitable for ECDPM. Moreover, any professional assistance must have a clear understanding of the unique type of institution that ECDPM is, since public fund-raising is not really an option. Assessing how other peer agencies are managing the "global" trend away from unrestricted funding would also be valuable, as some are clearly more advanced than ECDPM in dealing with the issue.

Investments in seeking out new areas and methods of fund-raising would move the basis of the Centre's pursuit (or non-pursuit) of potential fund-raising options from the realm of hesitancy based on hearsay and gut feelings to a sound footing. Crucially, finding new sources of unrestricted or programme funds from non-traditional sources requires the Centre to communicate clearly to a non-specialist audience what it is, what it does, what its added value is and how it delivers positive outcomes,.

The future sustainability of the Centre will also be impacted by the fact that ODA resources are increasingly decentralised to the country and regional level. Currently, ECDPM concludes most of its funding agreements with donor headquarters. The Centre will need to think about how to access resources at the country and regional level, and the dilemmas and challenges of doing so. Some options include developing new strategic partnerships and alliances with ACP institutions and some form of decentralisation or new kinds of partnerships for ECDPM. This is not merely a functional fund-raising issue, however, and may have much more profound implications for the future of the Centre.

Broadly, the challenge of achieving and managing the correct ratio between the different types of funding is one of the most significant challenges facing ECDPM. Meeting this challenge will require significant effort from all internal and external stakeholders.

8.7 Summary of key points

The financial strategy for 2001-05 did not include clear percentage goals for the different types of funding between core, institutional, programme and project finance. It is the percentage mix rather than the real totals in each area that are important.

The Dutch trust fund has not yielded the income envisaged upon its creation. The real and index-linked income that it has provided actually significantly dropped from year to year. However, the Centre heavily depends on the fully flexible unrestricted resources that the trust income provides, as they allow it to maintain its autonomy, way of working and strategy.

ECDPM successfully concluded multi-annual unrestricted funding agreements with Switzerland, Sweden, Finland and Belgium, as well as a smaller in-kind contribution from Portugal. This meant the emergence of the institutional type of income from zero in 2001 to 17 per cent of Centre income in real terms by 2005.

The Centre in 2005 was operating at the least favourable ratio of unrestricted funds to restricted funds since its establishment in 1986. Any further reduction in unrestricted income (from the Dutch trust fund, a successor mechanism or other source) would severely impact the quality and ability of the institution to fulfil its mandate and maintain its strategy.

ECDPM growth during the 2004-05 period came mostly from project funding. This is inherently risky and ultimately unsustainable. The Centre needs to adopt robust mechanisms to ensure that project income remains at appropriate levels. It must keep activities on budget and hold unbudgeted expenditure to an absolute minimum.

ECDPM has done well to diversify its funding base in a competitive and challenging global funding environment. Yet further significant growth is unlikely in terms of unrestricted funding from entirely new sources. ECDPM needs to enhance and explore options for raising all types of resources, particularly programme funds.

The Centre has now developed an appropriate way to estimate the real cost of projects, even though it cannot always achieve full cost recovery (as this is above market rates, particularly for senior staff members). This leads to some projects being rejected or run at a "loss".

While some strategy-aligned activities can be supported by unrestricted funds, the Centre is now less likely to take on projects or initiatives that do not lead to some or full cost recovery.

9 Assessing ECDPM's added value

The uniqueness of ECDPM was often mentioned in the stakeholder interviews as a special trait of the Centre. What is it that makes ECDPM unique in the eyes of its partners and users? What is the Centre's added value in relation to other comparable institutions?

The most common answer to the question of ECDPM's added value was its unique position at the interface between the European Union and the ACP. For ACP stakeholders the Centre's profound knowledge - nearly "insider" knowledge - of the European Union, its institutions, mechanisms and processes, is extremely valuable. The very complexity of the European Union makes it difficult to understand its functioning and dynamics, even for those who are well informed. The orientation and support that ECDPM provides to ACP actors in this respect helps them to see and make use of opportunities and to know and ponder the risks in their relationship with this powerful actor. Also, the Centre's primary focus on the European Union and not on its individual member states distinguishes it from comparable institutions like the German Development Institute and the UK Overseas Development Institute. For the European Union and its member states too, knowing and understanding how their ACP partners think and feel, their concerns and aspirations, helps them to be more sensitive in their policy and actions towards the ACP. ECDPM's information and sensitisation work in this regard is highly valued by both sides. As an example one interviewee cited the trade negotiations: 'Technical support is easy to find, but not the specific contribution of ECDPM, making us understand the other party's perspective.'

Another feature pointed out as positive is ECDPM's nearly ideal mix of policy, practice and research. The combination of these three elements uniquely positions the Centre in the political arena, bringing together the analytical and innovative potential of a think-tank with the experience and know-how of practitioners and feeding both of these qualities into the political process. Its holistic perspective and its endeavour to be strategic and not market-driven clearly distinguishes ECDPM from a consultancy firm. The third characteristic, closely related to that

described above, is ECDPM's methodological approach: its brokerage role, process orientation and partnership/network approach. Thanks to the Centre's authority, conveyed by its independence and credibility, ECDPM has the power and legitimacy to initiate and convene events involving certain stakeholders that would be difficult or impossible for other actors to organise.

Does ECDPM also have added value in its choice of key themes? With its steadfast focus on the innovative elements of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, the Centre has certainly found a niche in the development debate. While some themes, such as trade and development cooperation, are covered by many, ECDPM has been innovative in bringing up new themes such as non-state actors or shedding new light on "fashionable" issues such as governance. But the Centre's main added value lies not so much in its thematic as in its methodological choices. Many institutions might work on the same issues as ECDPM, but few combine this work with the methodology that ECDPM strives to apply.

The Centre's flexibility and responsiveness are also much appreciated by stakeholders: the non-bureaucratic way the Centre swiftly responds to partners' and clients' requests for information. Several com-

ments highlighted the timeliness, accuracy and quality of the ECDPM materials. Last but not least, the high quality, commitment and long-time experience of senior staff are seen as an unrivalled asset.

In short, ECDPM fills a gap in the development policy arena. If it did not exist, it would have to be created.

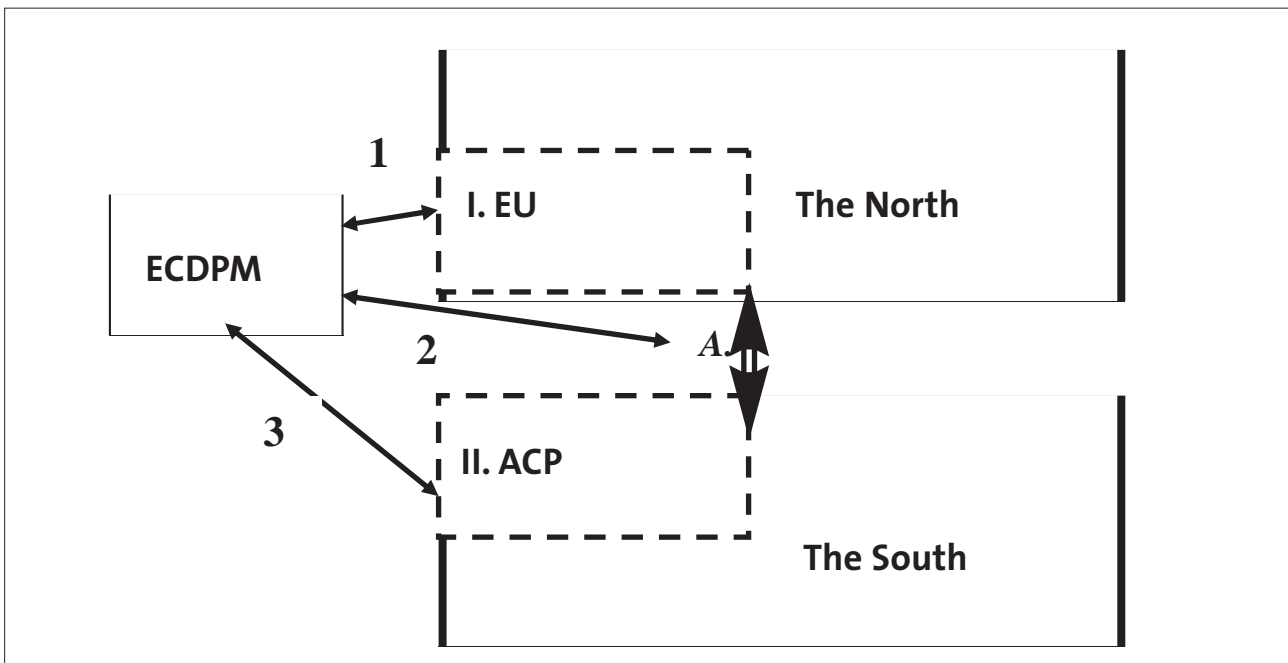
10 Assessing ECDPM's impact

10.1 "Routes" of impact

To understand ECDPM's performance, it is important to first look at the different focal routes of the Centre's impact, as these are quite different in nature. As figure 2 illustrates, the primary routes (and targets) of Centre impact are three:

- 1 EU actors and policies (indicated by arrow 1)
- 2 the interface of EU-ACP policy processes (arrow 2)
- 3 ACP actors and policies (arrow 3)

Figure 2. Routes of ECDPM influence and impact



Again with reference to figure 2, the rationale for the Centre's focus on these potential lines of impact are as follows:

- route 1, to indirectly improve "A" (the quality of dialogue and development cooperation) by improving EU actors' understanding and actions
- route 2, to directly enhance "A" (the quality of dialogue between the EU and ACP)
- route 3, to improve the capacity of ACP actors to engage with the European Union at "A"

It can be said that ECDPM's programmes generally have different emphases and therefore have various routes to impact, via routes 1, 2 or 3 or a combination

of these. (The current Development Cooperation and Capacity programme has also engaged more widely than simply the European Union and the ACP.)

10.2 Key elements influencing ECDPM's ability to have impact

ECDPM's actual impact is difficult to assess because it is almost impossible to establish watertight patterns of causality in processes and institutions that have many other powerful externalities. Indeed, any assessment of ECDPM's impact is riddled with dilemmas (box 5). The approach taken here is therefore

Box 5: Dilemmas in assessing ECDPM's impact

- *ECDPM's "impact" depends on the receptiveness of actors to the Centre's staff, products, events and ways of working. If actors are not receptive to these, then the Centre's potential impact will be limited or non-existent. Yet there is a danger of ECDPM focusing on preaching to the converted, i.e. concentrating its efforts on those who are more welcoming rather than those who are most pertinent or in need.*
- *There are often sensitive political considerations in formally acknowledging ECDPM's true "impact" on policy processes which are essentially the realm of states, multilateral institutions and professional bureaucracies.*
- *There are certain sensitivities about ECDPM claiming "impact" on ACP actors. Indeed, ECDPM prefers to see itself as a facilitator and broker of information, enabling institutions to fulfil their own goals, rather than itself "impacting" their direction.*
- *It is important to be realistic about judging the amount of impact that an institution the size and scope of ECDPM might have. After all, certain EU member states have tried to reform the European Commission, and with all their diplomatic, financial and human resources potential have had limited "impact".*
- *ECDPM cannot "officially" take credit for some of its impact on policy processes, as this would undermine its reputation as a trusted broker of information. It may also undermine the trust of key influential individuals (policymakers and their advisors).⁷*
- *On the more functional side it is possible to assess the number of publications downloaded and website hits. Yet it is quite plausible for a publication to be downloaded thousands of times while having less actual "impact" on a policy process or institution than an informal chat between an ECDPM staff member and a policymaker on that issue.*
- *ECDPM by its nature does not engage in advocacy (or advocacy alliances) which seeks a particular identifiable policy outcome that can be quantified, and progress and impact then assessed based on this.*
- *The overcommitted nature of ECDPM staff (often due to the need to chase project funding) may result in relatively low priority being given to the formal monitoring of potential impact and the development of "indicators" of impact.*
- *Institutionally, ECDPM is a unique "animal". It is not a research institute, a consultancy firm, or an NGO. Its EU-ACP focus is also unlike that of any other institution. Therefore, peer benchmarking to assess its performance in terms of impact is usually inappropriate.*

Notes

- 7 The evaluation team were provided credible examples of these in strict confidence.

concerned more with making credible and informed judgements from the information available than establishing clear, isolated and definable "input-to-output" relationships. Given the nature of ECDPM's work, that latter approach would be an exercise in futility. ECDPM's engagement has in certain instances clearly had an impact on a policy, an institution or a process (box 6 provides examples).

A more useful and informed judgement can be made about the Centre's impact by looking at the type and quality of its relationships. ECDPM might have impact and influence by providing timely, credible, relevant and quality information; by being seen as a trusted partner; by being actively consulted (informally and formally) by policymakers and institutions; by helping institutions build up the capacity to engage; and by convening (and getting organisations to attend) meetings with influential decision makers.

Box 6: A sampling of impacts

Given the cumulative nature of feedback from stakeholders, the Centre for its size makes an important contribution to North-South relations, and to EU-ACP relations in particular. The evaluation team heard a number of specific examples mentioned in the stakeholder interviews:

- ***EPA negotiations** are a good example of impact in two ways. The first is by "influencing" actors on both sides through raising awareness among negotiation partners and widening the scope of the debate. The second is by facilitating the dialogue through creating opportunities for exchanging ideas and for understanding each other better. ACP stakeholders often commented that the quality of ECDPM's information and analyses really impacted their ability to make informed decisions.*
- *The Centre's **governance** work provides an example of impact by "influencing" actors on the policy scene, mainly through awareness raising and helping to define the scope and agenda of the debate. On the side of the African partners, the Centre supported the Governance Network for Africa (a bottom-up initiative), assisting it to link with the African Union. On the European side, the Centre's evaluation of governance provided a warning to the European Commission that much damage could be done if governance issues are not approached properly. The fact that ECDPM was welcomed by the Governance Network and entrusted with the EC evaluation is a sign of impact in itself.*
- *ECDPM's part in putting **non-state actors** firmly and squarely on the EU-ACP agenda is clear. It has also promoted participation of non-state actors in the development debate through capacity building and networking. Indeed, if the ECDPM-produced NSA Guide were not available, it is credible to say that non-state actors in ACP countries would be considerably less aware and "armed" to engage in ACP-EU policy processes at the country level.*
- *Regarding the **new EU Development Policy Statement**, ECDPM presented a study in the Council that palpably influenced the discussion. Here the Centre was said to have made a real difference in its capacity as an honest broker - displaying very good brinkmanship. According to stakeholders, it is fair to say that things would have been different without ECDPM in this policy debate.*
- ***Capacity building** work influenced the world's most powerful collective donor forum, the OECD-DAC. Also the jointly run Capacity.org website has become a renowned source. It is the most-visited site (according to Google) of those searching for information on capacity building.*
- *ECDPM's role during the **South Africa-EU negotiations** for the TDCA (the Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement) was widely appreciated and noted as crucial for South Africans. Technical support was easy to find, they said, but not the specific contribution of ECDPM, which was to mediate between the parties, helping each to understand the perspective and thinking of the other.*
- *That the **African Union** has continued to work with ECDPM by its own choice is an indicator of the quality and trust the Centre has built. ECDPM is the only European organisation invited by the African Union to work directly with it, and also by the European Commission. The confidence garnered by ECDPM in its brokering role had some impact on the EC decision to programme €55 million for the African Union, an exercise for which the African Union itself asked ECDPM to assist.*

All of these factors constitute key qualitative indicators of whether the Centre is *likely* to have impact (if not of the impact itself). Again there is much evidence to suggest that ECDPM is a trusted partner which operates with and "inside" policy processes and institutions. These place it in a good, and sometimes unique, position to have potential impact. In most areas related to EU-ACP processes (and some OECD-DAC processes), ECDPM's work is generally impressive and often inimitable. It is the quality and focus with which the Centre maintains and undertakes its tasks that provides the clearest indication of its potential cumulative impact. However, no definitive and quantitative answers will be forthcoming.

Importantly, ECDPM seems to have developed a good analytical capacity to assess which short-term opportunities (particularly related to the European Commission and the African Union) are likely to yield some impact or influence, and to engage in these (rather than be led by the market). The evaluations of EC governance and the Africa Peace Facility are examples of ECDPM positioning itself to gain knowledge and insight and be "inside" a process so as to have impact. Indeed, engagement in a select number of strategically important evaluations could ensure the Centre impact, since evaluation findings should logically generate positive change based on evidence.

10.3 Looking forward and improving ECDPM's impact

Two questions can legitimately be asked of ECDPM with regard to improving its impact. Firstly, does it have the right strategy and relationships to generate

the maximum impact or optimum outcome for its inputs? Secondly, does it generate and collect the right type of information to make an informed and credible assessment of its influence/impact/outcome? The current very diffuse nature of ECDPM's "networks" and the Centre's assessment of these relationships as equal in value is a strategic and methodological error. For impact/influence and a realistic assessment thereof, it is important for ECDPM to be clearer about its absolute priority relationships within each "route". In these, more impact can be expected than in other types of relationships. Also, the limited and finite nature of these would make monitoring indicators of influence/impact methodologically and practically more straightforward. This approach does not mean abandoning the wider, more diffuse network. Nor does it mean a descent into a futile input-output quantitative exercise and the pursuit of valuing impact only where direct lines of causality can be clearly established. Rather, it amounts to choosing a smaller number of key partners and developing good, agreed, innovative and primarily specific qualitative and process indicators related to ECDPM's engagement.

There would certainly be some utility in ECDPM mapping the relationship between its key stakeholders and the potential avenues of influence/impact in a more sophisticated fashion than in Figure 2. This would allow the Centre to approach its understanding and monitoring more systematically, ensuring that its strategic emphasis (and institutional resources) are aligned to bring about optimal outcomes. This, in itself, would assist the Centre in making its case in terms of raising finances.

Box 7: Types of impacts expectable

In view of the Centre's past work and track record, various types of impacts are expectable, either by ECDPM itself or by ECDPM in collaboration with its partners:

- *impact on policy processes by providing quality and timely information*
- *impact on a process by facilitating knowledge*
- *impact on a process by providing a structured or semi-structured opportunity for learning, reflection and exchange of views among stakeholders*
- *impact on institutional capacity and processes by heightening awareness of opportunities*
- *impact on institutional positions and policies by providing knowledge from reflection, practice and comparable experiences*
- *impact on the ability of institutions to access learning and resources*
- *impact on institutional success of organisations by supporting the creation of appropriate capacity*

11 Acronyms and abbreviations

ACP	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
AU	Africa Union
C&I	Communication and Information Programme of ECDPM
CDI	Commissaire au developpement institutional, Mali
CTA	Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (Netherlands)
DAC-OECD	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DFID	Department for International Development (of the UK)
EADI	European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes
EC	European Commission
EPA	Economic Partnership Agreements
EU	European Union
Euforic	Europe's Forum on International Cooperation
EU-LDC	European Union - Developing Countries Network (Netherlands)
FTAA	Free Trade Area of the Americas
GDI	German Development Institute
GNP	gross national product
IA	International Alert
ICTSD	International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (Switzerland)
IEEI	Instituto de Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais (Portugal)
IFAP	International Federation of Agricultural Producers (France)
IISD	International Institute for Sustainable Development
iLEAP	International Lawyers and Economists against Poverty (Canada)
NAO	National Authorising Officer
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NSA	Non-State Actor
ODI	Overseas Development Institute, UK
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
PCM	Programme Coordinators Meeting of ECDPM
PMC	Performance Management Consultancy - West Africa
PSM	Programme Staff Meeting of ECDPM
RAO	Regional Authorising Officer
SAIIA	South Africa Institute of International Affairs (South Africa)
SNV	Netherlands Development Organisation
SWAPs	sector-wide approaches
TDCA	Trade Development Cooperation Agreement
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
WTO	World Trade Organization

Appendix I : Terms of Reference

1 General evaluation objective

Since 1986, the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) has established itself as an independent European centre of expertise on ACP-EU relations and development cooperation. Its independence is anchored in the composition and leadership of its Board of Governors. The Board expects the evaluation to critically review the context and performance of the Centre during the period 2001-2005, to assess how the Centre is evolving as an institution and to formulate recommendations for improvement.

Besides, it expects the evaluation to complement existing accountability mechanisms of the Centre vis-à-vis its institutional partners, in particular the Government of the Netherlands, the Centre's core funder, and DFID, one of its main programme funders; providing a strategic long-term view on the Centre's options for further institutional development.

2 Background of the Centre

2.1 ACP-EU relations and cooperation

The European Community and its Member States and the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific signed the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement in Cotonou on June 23, 2000, and ratified since. It sets poverty reduction, and ultimately eradication, as the central objective of ACP-EU cooperation, calling for an integrated approach to economic, social, cultural, environmental and institutional development centred on the human person. Respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, constitute essential elements. Cooperation is to provide a coherent enabling framework of support to the ACP countries' own development strategies, ensuring local ownership. On the EU side, the Maastricht Treaty of 1992 established development cooperation as a shared competence among the Member States and the Commission. The relationships between different fields of EU external policy, between EU Institutions and Member States, with third countries and competent international organizations, were addressed by including the principles of coherence, complementarity and coordination - the so called 3 Cs - in the Treaty.

2.2 ECDPM mission & strategic objectives

The mission of the Centre is to help build effective partnerships for development between public and private actors in the European Union and the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The Centre's strategic objectives are:

1. To strengthen the institutional capacity of public and private actors in ACP countries to manage development policy and international cooperation and,
2. To improve cooperation between development partners in Europe and the South.

The Centre uses a two-pronged approach to achieve these objectives: on the one hand, it aims at strengthening ACP institutional capacities in key areas of ACP-EU cooperation and, on the other it seeks to improve development policies and instruments used by the EU and its Member States.

2.3 A brief characterization of the Centre

Strategic choices for 2001-2005

Development policy management⁸ is a hugely diversified field. It may refer to policy processes at the regional, sub-regional, national, local and/or sector level; involving donors, regional organisations, national and local governments and/or private stakeholders or more generally, to the management of policies by public or private development agencies and organisations. To focus its interventions during 2001-2005 the Centre therefore made a number of strategic choices.

Notes

- 8 'Development policy management' is understood as the multi-stakeholder design, negotiation, implementation and evaluation of regional, national, institutional and/or organisational policies aimed at fostering sustainable development.

Firstly, the Centre concentrated on four areas of strategic importance to the implementation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement: (1) trade relations; (2) political dialogue; (3) multi-actor participation and (4) internal donor reform. The first three are innovative elements that set the Cotonou agreement apart as a development policy framework, reflecting an integrated European approach to reducing and eradicating poverty and to a gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy. The fourth one looks at the donor side, the effectiveness of donor policies, instruments and their implementation. Consequently, during the period 2001-2005 the Centre's four key programmes mirrored the above thematic focus.

Secondly, the Centre decided to strengthen its position as an independent broker institution by consolidating and further developing its open-ended, inclusive and non-partisan approach to stakeholder participation; by promoting diversity and creativity rather than exclusivity and adherence to existing patterns; by choosing a long-term engagement in strategic policy processes and ensuring full transparency of different roles and the application of democratic principles. To enable it to continuously earn the trust necessary for its work, the Centre carefully nurtures its operational independence, flexibility and high quality performance as well as full transparency and accountability to its many stakeholders.

Thirdly, in the complex and rapidly changing environment of ACP-EU relations the Centre feels that to be accountable not only a transparent management of the resources entrusted is needed but, a critical self-assessment, continuously applying lessons learned to our management, is equally important to gain and maintain the trust of our diverse stakeholders and partners. In other words, we feel that to maintain high quality performance organisational learning is a must.

The Centre's main stakeholders

Stakeholders are state and non-state development actors both in the ACP and in Europe. For evaluation purposes, our stakeholders may be subdivided into four categories:

- 1 **Indirect users: individuals**, organisations and networks who are not normally in direct contact with the Centre, but keep in touch with the Centre's dialogue and networking activities, and/or benefit from its (electronic) communications, printed and/or electronic publications; these include the many thousands of users of ECDPM publications, web sites and (electronic) discussion groups.
- 2 **Network partners**: ACP & EU individuals, organisations and institutions that on a regular basis take part in (electronic) dialogue and networking events organized by the Centre and use its printed and/or electronic publications; thus ensuring the outcomes and impact of the Centre. Network partners are listed in ECDPM Annual Reports under each programme.
- 3 **Strategic partners**: individuals, organisation and institutions, mostly from the ACP and EU, with whom the Centre collaborates in a reciprocal and complementary way to enhance the quality and innovation of its programs and activities. These include ACP governments and institutions, platforms and regional organisations; ACP and EU intergovernmental organisations, nongovernmental organisations and networks, academic and research associations and institutes, policy think-tanks, consultants, media initiatives and donor agencies. Current examples are: the ACP Secretariat, CTA, ACP Local Government Platform; COMESA; (.....) the Commonwealth Secretariat; the Agence de la Francophonie; European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI); the Overseas Development Institute (ODI); Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales (ICEI); Europe's Forum on International Cooperation (Euforic).
- 4 **Institutional partners**: Those EU, ACP and other donors that invest in the Centre's strategy, programs and activities through multi-annual funding and hence facilitate the strategic focus, policy relevance, autonomy and sustainability of the Centre. Currently, the ECDPM institutional partners include: the governments of the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Belgium, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Portugal; the African Union Commission, in Addis Abeba, and the Centre de Développement Institutionnelle, of the Government of Mali, at Bamako. Cooperation agreements are considered with the Governments of Ireland, Spain and Luxembourg.

The ECDPM approach

The Centre regards the design, negotiation, implementation and evaluation of development policy as well as international cooperation as autonomous processes owned and managed by their respective stakeholders. It sees its own role primarily as a facilitator of such processes. The centre is aware that policy outcomes depend upon the willingness and capacity of stakeholders to interact purposefully and effectively. Accordingly, it facilitates interactions by helping to structure the debate; to ensure effective participation by all and to identify relevant expertise and information in support of the process. The ECDPM acts also as a knowledge broker, supporting research and sharing of information on key issues among practitioners, policy-makers and specialists. Through a mainstream networking approach, the Centre permanently seeks to embed its activities in wider, on-going policy processes.

Over the years, the ECDPM has formulated a coherent package of five distinct capacity⁹ strategies to meet its objectives:

- 1 Strengthening multi-actor dialogue, networking and partnership development;
- 2 Practical policy-oriented research;
- 3 Communication and information sharing;
- 4 Facilitating institutional development, learning and change, and
- 5 Service delivery to institutional partners.

Each of the thematic programmes developed a particular 'mix' of these five strategies to maximize its outcomes and impact. In the Centre's view it is the skilful combination of these diverse instruments that ensures the gradual strengthening of the stakeholders' capacity to manage development policy and international cooperation effectively.

The Centre's business cycle

ECDPM plans its work according to a five-year strategy that sets out its mission, Centre-wide approach and a choice of thematic areas it intends to focus on; within this framework bi-annual rolling work plans specify general and specific objectives, activities and intended outcomes at the program level (the latter more specifically since 2004/2005). During the period 2001-2005, the ECDPM Strategy 2001-2005 is applicable, even though it was revised early, in 2004, given the new challenges emerging from a rapidly evolving EU-ACP policy context. Work plans for the period are available for consultation as are quarterly and annual reports that outline the work done and results achieved.

Annual all-Centre and program budgets lay out the expected balance, income and expenditures, in accordance with a five year financial strategy approved by the Board. The implementation of work plans and the realization of the approved budgets - expenditures as well as income - is followed closely by the management on the basis of monthly management meetings and quarterly reports. Mid-year and annual balance sheets and income and expenditure accounts are reviewed in the Board Executive Committee. The full Board convenes twice a year, once to review strategy, work plan and budget and once to review the annual report and financial results of the year.

3 Specific evaluation objectives

ECDPM is a small, independent operator at the complex interface between the European Union and its Member States and, the ACP and its member countries. As a facilitator of process and a knowledge broker, capacity or policy impact can not normally be attributed to the Centre alone. On the contrary, to be effective the Centre's activities are and should be embedded in multi-stakeholder policy processes in which the stakeholders call the tune and ECDPM plays a supportive role. Besides, as a small foundation the Centre can not on its own, mobilise the expertise and financial resources required for the entire range of support necessary. Systematically, it needs to draw upon other organisations and external resources, building partnerships to complete its contribution. The Centre's impact is therefore intrinsically related to the way it works together

Notes

- 9 The term 'capacity' is taken to refer to the ability of relevant stakeholders to (jointly) design, negotiate, implement and evaluate development policy effectively.

with others.

Given the above, this evaluation aims at addressing four specific objectives:

- 1 To assess the pertinence of the Centre as an independent foundation; taking into account its mandate, strategic and methodological choices, its networks, partnerships and stakeholders.
- 2 To evaluate the effectiveness of the Centre's positioning, external operations and networks.
- 3 To identify and trace plausible patterns of impact of the Centre regarding the policy processes it has directly been involved in; emphasising both strong and weak points.
- 4 To formulate recommendations for further institutional development of the Centre; providing feasible options and future scenarios for consolidation and improvement.

The evaluation team is expected to systematically consult with different groups of stakeholders of the Centre, in order to obtain and document their views. Besides, it is also expected to make full use of internal monitoring and evaluation systems and reports available from the Centre.

4 Scope of the evaluation

4.1 Key evaluation questions

- 1 In the light of evolving ACP-EU relations and international cooperation during the period 2001-2005:
 - 1.1 How pertinent were the strategic choices made by the Centre in its 2001-2005 Strategy Paper and Financial Strategy?
 - 1.2 How pertinent were the programmatic choices made by the Centre in its consecutive annual work plans and budgets?
 - 1.3 How pertinent were the choices made by the Centre regarding its focus on key stakeholders, networks and partnerships?
- 2 In the light of the chosen position of the Centre at the interface of ACP-EU relations and as a centre of expertise on international cooperation:
 - 2.1 How effective was the Centre in achieving outcomes in line with its mandate, strategic and programmatic objectives?
 - 2.2 How effective was the 2001-2005 Financial Strategy to ensure outcomes in line with its institutional objectives?
 - 2.3 How successful was the Centre in maintaining its independent broker status? And how important is this in view of fulfilling its mandate?
 - 2.4 What was the specific value added of the activities, outputs and outcomes of the Centre in relation to other relevant policy actors and/or service providers?
 - 2.5 How effective was the Centre in sustaining the quality of its performance?
- 3 With respect to possible patterns of impact regarding ACP-EU relations and international cooperation:
 - 3.1 What indicators exist for specific impact - positive or negative - of the Centre's outcomes, in collaboration with its partners, in the strategic areas of ACP-EU relations and international cooperation it focused on?
 - 3.2 How did the strategic choices made by the Centre affect its ability to improve its impact?
 - 3.3 How did the effectiveness of the Centre affect its ability to improve its impact?
 - 3.4 What are the key strategic areas in which the Centre presently adds most value to EU-ACP cooperation?
 - 3.5 What other strategic areas exist where the Centre should develop its capacity to intervene?
- 4 Regarding future institutional development:
 - 4.1 Did the changes in demand orientation during the period 2001-2005 affect the Centre's autonomy, strategic orientation, effectiveness or impact? And if so, in what ways?
 - 4.2 Did the changes in the level and mix of the Centre's funding during the period 2000-2005 affect its autonomy, strategic orientation, effectiveness or impact? And if so, in what ways?
 - 4.3 What was the role of the Dutch trust-fund? Has it contributed to ensuring multi-annual

programming and continuity of the Centre? Did it generate the level of funding expected at its installation? Does the continuous decrease of income from the trust-fund put in danger the quality of the products or the sustainability of the Centre in any way?

4.4 What level and mix of funding would the Centre need to ensure its institutional autonomy and viability, the quality of its products and services as well as its strategic focus into the future?

4.2 Key results expected

The evaluation is expected to take into account the internal assessment that took place recently and the existing management records up to outcome level and, to concentrate on evaluating the pertinence, networks, effectiveness and impact of ECDPM's work, in particular from the point of view of its diverse stakeholder groups. The evaluation will highlight strong and weak points as well as relevant dilemma's the Centre faces.

The results expected are:

- 1 An appraisal of the context of ACP-EU relations and international cooperation over the period 2001-2005, highlighting the elements and trends most relevant to the Centre's role and function.
- 2 An assessment of the way the Centre responded to the challenges emerging from this policy context and how it adjusted its position, networks, approach and activities accordingly.
- 3 An assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the Centre's approach to addressing the four key programmatic areas it intervened in;
- 4 Specific recommendations on how to improve the Centre's pertinence, responsiveness, effectiveness and impact within the framework of evolving ACP-EU relations and shifts in (funding of) international cooperation.
- 5 Specific recommendations on how to improve the monitoring of outcomes and impact in a practical way, as a part of regular management information systems.

5 Approach and methodology

The Strategy 2001-2005, (bi-)annual work plans, financial strategy, yearly budgets and income and expenditure accounts, annual and quarterly reports are available at the Centre. Management information systems, such as the activity, travel, documentation and administrative databases, monthly M&E overview, are available from the internal work space at the Centre. In addition, the Centre's staff has recently performed a self-assessment of all-centre and programme inputs, activities and outputs including, where possible, an appreciation of outcomes. As a result, ample recent information is at the disposal of the evaluation team.

The approach and methodology should therefore concentrate on breaking new ground with respect to stakeholder consultation and independent monitoring of possible patterns of outcomes and impact. It will have to identify both the intended and the unintended elements of pertinence, effectiveness, added value and impact of the Centre. The consultants are moreover requested to design an approach and methodology that within the time and budget constraints applicable, mobilises to the extent possible the diverse views and insights of the different groups of stakeholders of the Centre.

Given the rather unique position of ECDPM as an independent broker and the particular nature of its work at multiple interfaces among ACP and EU actors, the complexities involved in assessing the Centre's performance are considerable. This has also been the experience of earlier evaluation teams. Therefore, a four step approach is suggested:

- I. Desk study and initial consultations; resulting in a definitive design of the evaluation, its approach and methodology;
- II. Stakeholder consultation and data collection; documented in a preliminary evaluation report;
- III. Discussion of preliminary report; active involvement of Board and staff in discussing preliminary findings;
- IV. Completion and presentation to the Board of final evaluation report by the evaluation team.

The four steps are further elaborated upon below.

7 Management

7.1 Weeks 1-3: desk study and initial consultations

First, a desk study is proposed, including an initial consultation with a limited number of key informants from within and/or outside the Centre. This would enable the evaluation team (1) to design a coherent evaluation framework and methodology in line with the nature and complexities of the work of the Centre and (2) to assemble a comprehensive overview of the types of stakeholders the Centre addresses, possible outcomes and impact. During this period, the evaluation team would be able to benefit to the maximum from practical and up-to-date knowledge available among Board members, staff and selected stakeholders of ECDPM, both in Maastricht and Brussels.

Additional questions that may inspire the further specification of the approach and methodology by the evaluation team, include:

- What criteria will be used to select key informants and visits to different types of stakeholders?
- Is an adequate balance reached between ACP and EU stakeholders; in Brussels and elsewhere?
- In addition to the study of documentary information and the interviews, will other methods of data/information collection be required?
- What data/information processing techniques/procedures are going to be used?
- What verification methods will be used?
- Does the design ensure that conclusions and findings follow logically from the data analysis and interpretations based on transparent assumptions and rationale?
- Does the design ensure that recommendations will be fair, unbiased by personal views and sufficiently detailed to be operationally applicable?

The result of the first step would be a comprehensive evaluation framework, specifying the policy theory/intervention logic of the Centre; elaborating in detail the evaluation questions and the indicators to be used to inquire into pertinence, effectiveness and impact and, the type of recommendations foreseen. During this phase the different databases of ECDPM may be used to analyse operations, to list stakeholders of different types, while the Centre's publications and reports can provide an overview of the development of the Centre in terms of strategy and substance.

The evaluation team's design of the analytical framework, methodology and proposed selection of stakeholders to be contacted will be presented and discussed with the ECDPM Board Executive Committee, management and staff. Practical insight and inside knowledge on the role of the different stakeholder groups may be shared - see also Annex 1, geographic distribution of ECDPM beneficiaries/stakeholders.

The definition of the final version of the analytical framework, the methodology and the selection of stakeholders remains entirely the responsibility of the evaluation team itself.

7.2 Weeks 4-8: stakeholder consultation and data collection

Secondly, the evaluation team would engage in various ways with different types of stakeholders in accordance with the approach and methodology chosen; would pursue its analysis of documentary sources of information and produce a preliminary report that answers the evaluation questions. This preliminary report would include a critical assessment of the evolution of ACP-EU relations and international cooperation over the period 2001-2005, highlighting the elements and trends most relevant with a view at the fulfilment of the mandate of the Centre; a critical assessment of the way the Centre responded to these changes in the policy context in which it operates and where pertinent, adapted its approach and activities to fulfil its mandate and, a critical assessment of the effectiveness and impact of the Centre's approach to addressing the key policy areas in which it chose to intervene (results 1-3, as indicated in 4.2 above). Finally, it would include preliminary recommendations based on the conclusions from the evaluation (results 4, 5) as indicated in 4.2).

7.3 Week 9: discussion of preliminary report

Thirdly, the preliminary report would be presented and discussed with key members of the Board, management and staff of ECDPM. Without infringing upon the independence of the evaluation team, this will help the team to verify and/or complement the more factual elements in its findings. Also, a limited number of chief executives of comparable development policy centres active in the European area will be invited to comment upon and discuss the draft report, providing for a comparative inter-institutional look at the results presented. Both lines of activity would allow the Board, management and staff an early look at the emerging conclusions and recommendations, and help to promote to the extent possible, ownership of the evaluation results on their part.

7.4 Weeks 10-12: completion and presentation of Final Evaluation Report

Fourthly, the evaluation team would finalize the evaluation report after which it will be presented to the Board of Governors during its meeting in April 2006.

8 Criteria for assessing the quality of the Final Evaluation Report

- Have the terms of reference been applied adequately? Does the report reflect that?
- Does the report provide adequate insight in the evaluation design and methodology and its practical application?
- Are the research methods used, findings and the supporting evidence presented in a verifiable manner?
- Are the conclusions logically linked to (a) the evaluation questions and (b) the evidence collected?
- Do the recommendations follow from the analysis and conclusions presented?
- Does the report contain a comprehensive and clear summary?
- Have key stakeholders been consulted?
- Have relevant documents been reviewed and are the contents adequately reflected in the report?
- Is the report well written and ready for wider dissemination?

Appendix II : Elaborating key evaluation questions contained in TOR

Evaluation question	Assessment criteria	Relevant questions
<p>In the light of evolving ACP-EU relations and international cooperation during the period 2001-2005</p>		
<p>1.1. How pertinent were the strategic choices made by the Centre in its 2001-2005 Strategy Paper and Financial Strategy?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of strategy and strategic choices • Context in 2001 • Evolution of context 2001-05 • Evolution of strategy 2001-05 • Existence of financial strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the strategic choices (independent broker, networking approach, concentration on 4 themes, etc)? • Were strategic choices in line with mandate? • Did strategy respond to 2001 context? • Do mechanisms for strategy development exist? • Did strategy evolve with changing context 2001-05? • What was financial strategy? • Was financial strategy pertinent with regard to mandate?

9 Consultant(s) profile

The evaluation will be done by a team of 3 members. The team leader holds a post-graduate degree in social science, political science, economics and/or development studies with at least 10 years of practical experience, and longstanding involvement in development policy design and implementation as well as the management and evaluation of international cooperation.

Besides, the team as a whole needs to include members with substantive knowledge and experience in the following fields:

- ACP-EU relations and cooperation
- International relations and development policy
- International trade negotiations and economic partnership agreements
- Multi-actor participation, development programming and evaluation
- Development finance and new aid modalities

Also, the team needs to include members with considerable knowledge and hands-on experience with:

- Facilitating high level policy processes and debates
- Analysis and evaluation of policy-related multi-stakeholder processes
- Capacity issues within the framework of development cooperation
- Communication and information for development
- Knowledge, networking and learning for development
- Management, organisational learning and institutional change

Preferably, the team needs to include at least two ACP country members. The capacity to cover the Centre's activities in both Anglophone and Francophone countries is vital to the success of the evaluation.

Indicators	Documentary source	Informants
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context EU-ACP-Cotonou • Stated changes in institutional strategy • Evolution in programme focus • Views of stakeholders on pertinence of strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six fundamentals in Strategy 2001-05 p 5 • 4 key themes in Strategy 2001-05 p 8 ff • Revised strategy 2005-2010 • Internal Assessment p 106 (Financial strategy) • Internal Assessment p 78-78, 86 (Mechanism of strategy development) • Contextual assessment • ACP-EU Agreements 	Interviews with Director, Programme Coordinators, Board members Ex-Staff (and Board) members Institutional partners (donors) Strategic partners Network partners

<p>1.2. How pertinent were the programmatic choices made by the Centre in its consecutive annual work plans and budgets?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of programmatic choices and developments • Evolution of context • Evolution of programs • Financial evolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the programmatic choices? • Where the programmatic choices in line with the strategy? • Do mechanisms for program development exist? • Did the programs evolve (shifts in thematic orientation) in response to context? • Were activities coherent and continuous? • Were new activities undertaken as response of evolving strategy and context? • Was the financial programming able to sustain the programs?
<p>1.3. How pertinent were the choices made by the Centre regarding its focus on key stakeholders, networks and partnerships?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Existence of strategy with regard to focus on key stakeholders, networks and partnerships • Types of stakeholders/partners • Distribution of interaction with countries (North-South and within South) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does strategy define "key stakeholder"? • Is working through partnerships and networks a good tool for achieving the Centre's objectives? • How are the criteria/ mechanisms to select key stakeholders and partners? • Are the stakeholders key players in the policy processes ECDPM does engage in? • Is the choice to work with state and non-state actors pertinent with regard to the objectives? • Which are the criteria/ mechanisms to decide with which countries to work? • Are the country choices pertinent with regard to the mandate/objectives and responding to the evolving context? • How does the choice to operate outside the EU-ACP scope affect ECDPM effectiveness and impact?
<p>In the light of the chosen position of the Centre at the interface of ACP-EU relations and as a centre of expertise on international cooperation</p>		
<p>2.1. How effective was the Centre in achieving outcomes in line with its mandate, strategic and programmatic objectives?</p>	<p>Pertinence and plausibility of the expected outcomes in the perception of the stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capacity effects • Institution building and supporting institutional learning and change • Enhancing policy dialogue and improving quality of policy processes • Contributions to long-term partnerships and networks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is ECDPM recognized and perceived with a clear profile among the stakeholders? • Do stakeholders recognize the Centre's competence in its fields of activity (4 key themes)? • Do stakeholders feel ECDPM responds to their needs and interests? • Do they feel ECDPM offers effective support in capacity development? • In institutional development? • In stimulating partnerships and networks? • Are they satisfied with quality of ECDPM outputs?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolution in programme focus against context (ACP-EU relation), strategy and financial strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work Plans (not all have been made available) • Budgets/Financial reports • Annual reports • Quarterly internal programmatic reports • Internal assessment document 	<p>Director Programme staff Board Core donors Institutional donors Programmatic funders Strategic partners Network partners</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consistency and intensity in engagement with stakeholders • Changes in stakeholders, partnerships, networks 	<p>Internal Assessment section 3 p.13 List of stakeholders and partnerships 2001-2005</p>	<p>Director Programme staff Institutional partners Strategic partners Network partners</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patterns of demand • Level of demand 	<p>Strategy 2001-05; 2005-10 Quarterly reports Annual reports Internal assessment Feedback from stakeholders</p>	<p>Institutional partners (donors) Strategic partners Network partners</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How intensive is their demand for ECDPM support and services? • Is ECDPM material referred to and used? • Do they give feedback? • Are they willing to pay for services and support ECDPM financially (increased funding)? • Do they perceive ECDPM contribution to the policy dialogue and processes as meaningful and positive? • Do they feel involved as partners in ECDPM work; do they feel to be the owners of the processes ECDPM supports and co-owners of products? • Are partnerships long-term and continuous (high level of long term engagement)? • Do stakeholders feel the Centre has a clear and maintained focus on its key areas and offers follow up of initiatives?
<p>2.2. How effective was the 2001-2005 Financial Strategy to ensure outcomes in line with its institutional objectives?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial strategy • Funding structure: Sources of funding; categories and mix of funding (core, institutional, program, project) • Evolution of funding level and structure • Financial sustainability 	<p>How successful was financial strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve budget balance? • To finance the strategically defined programs and activities? • To ensure financial long-term sustainability (increased funding to sustain growth)? • To find new sources of funding and diversify the funding structure? • To find balance between strategy-, demand- and market drive?
<p>2.3. How successful was the Centre in maintaining its independent broker status? And how important is this in view of fulfilling its mandate?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of independent broker status • Pertinence and importance of status as "independent broker" in view of mandate • Effectiveness (successful implementation) of status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is status as independent broker understood by Centre and stakeholders? • Should and can ECDPM be and independent broker to fulfil its mandate and why? • Was it successful in obtaining and maintaining this status in the view of the stakeholders? (independent broker, non-partisanship)?
<p>2.4. What was the specific value added of the activities, outputs and outcomes of the Centre in relation to other relevant policy actors and/or service providers?</p>	<p>Value added as result of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positioning of ECDPM in the "development triangle" (policy - research - practice) • Positioning with regard to themes (focus on niches) • Unique methodological approach • Choice of partners and countries • Flexibility and responsiveness • Expertise and quality 	<p>Do the stakeholders perceive ECDPM offers value added and innovative ideas with regard to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its position in the "development triangle"? • To the themes it works on? • To its methodology (partnership, networking) • To its process approach • To its choice of partners (state and non-state actors) and countries? • To its flexibility and responsiveness to needs/demands of stakeholders?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial outcome against financial strategy 	<p>Financial strategy? Yearly financial plans Financial reports Internal assessment</p>	<p>Director Financial Manager Board members ECDPM staff</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance of demand between EU and ACP actors Level of stakeholder comfort with the "non-partisan" advice from ECDPM 	<p>Internal Assessment section 3 p 13 Annual Reports</p>	<p>Institutional partners Strategic partners Network partners</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterns and level of demand Specificity of ECDPM policy advice in comparison with other suppliers 	<p>Internal Assessment Strategy Papers</p>	<p>Institutional partners Strategic partners Network partners</p>	

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the expertise of its staff? • To the quality of its products/services? • Its particular geographical focus?
2.5. How effective was the Centre in sustaining the quality of its performance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring and evaluation system • Institutional knowledge management • Institutional learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is an M&E system in place and how is it applied? • Are partners involved in M&E activities? • Is a knowledge management system in place and how does it work? • How are lessons learned documented and how do they imprint planning and action? • How are lessons learned shared with partners?
With respect to possible patterns of impact regarding ACP-EU relations and international cooperation		
3.1. What indicators exist for specific impact - positive or negative - of the Centre's outcomes, in collaboration with its partners, in the strategic areas of ACP-EU relations and international cooperation it focused on?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on institutional level (strategic objective 1) • Impact on political level (strategic objective 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing knowledge base and awareness of stakeholders • Impact on ability of stakeholders to design, negotiate, implement and evaluate development policy. • Impact on institutional knowledge management, learning and change • Impact on multi-actor dialogue (including governments, private sector, civil society) • Impact on quality and relevance of policy processes, better informed negotiation parties and better informed debate • Better understanding of players for the position of the counterparts (e.g. EU understanding of ACP and vice-versa) • Ideas forwarded by ECDPM find their way in policy debate; new policy developments and practices • How can impact be attributed to ECDPM?
3.2. How did the strategic choices made by the Centre affect its ability to improve its impact?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent broker • Focus on four thematic programs • Mainstreaming partnerships and networking 	<p>Have these strategic choices affected any of the aforementioned impact patterns?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent broker: was it helpful to reach both poles of the ACP-EU world? • Thematic programs: was the choice helpful to optimize the resources? • Partnerships/networks: was the choice helpful to expand outreach?
3.3. How did the effectiveness of the Centre affect its ability to improve its impact?	Effectiveness as analyzed in 2.1	Has effectiveness of ECDPM affected its ability to improve any of the aforementioned impact patterns?
3.4. What are the key strategic areas in which the Centre presently adds most value to EU-ACP cooperation?	Key areas of ACP-EU relations (Cotonou Agreement): Political dimensions - Trade - Partnerships - Donor reform	Was ECDPM's adding value to these areas according to parameters analyzed in 2.4?

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholder perception of quality of ECDPM output Existence of M&E framework Existence of knowledge management system 	<p>Internal assessment p. 81 M&E reports Description of M&E system</p>	<p>ECDPM staff Institutional partners Strategic partners Network partners</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on capacity impact on policy processes 	<p>Internal assessment (annexes)</p>	<p>Institutional partners Strategic partners Network partners</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance in patterns of demand Efficiency in utilization of (human and financial) resources Sustainability of partnerships and networks 	<p>(AS comment - I am still confused by this question!)</p>		
<p>Refer to 2.1</p>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Patterns and level of demand of programs Specificity of ECDPM output in comparison with other suppliers 	<p>ACP-EU Agreement Annual reports Internal Assessment Attendance in ECDPM events</p>	<p>Programme Coordinators Institutional partners Strategic partners Network partners</p>	

<p>3.5. What other strategic areas exist where the Centre should develop its capacity to intervene?</p>	<p>Key issues that are not being addressed adequately by ECDMP and other actors and where demand/interest exists</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Which new key areas could be derived from mandate, strategic objectives and context? • Are there specific demands from partners with regard to new and highly relevant fields of activity? • Possibility of synergies with current programs/activities carried out by ECDPM or strategic partners? • Are there recurring themes mentioned by stakeholders not currently covered by ECDPM
<p>Regarding future institutional development</p>		
<p>4.1. Did the changes in demand orientation during the period 2001-2005 affect the Centre's autonomy, strategic orientation, effectiveness or impact? And if so, in what ways?</p>	<p>Analysis in demand orientation 2001-05 and its negative and/or positive effects on strategic focus, effectiveness and impact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did changes interfere with strategic focus (shift of focus not because of strategy decisions, but responding to market/funders demands)? • Did they result in neglect or abandonment of promising initiatives? • Did they impede follow up of initiatives and partnerships? • Did demand orientation present new opportunities for improving effectiveness and impact? • Was what was planned achieved - if not why not?
<p>4.2. Did the changes in the level and mix of the Centre's funding during the period 2000-2005 affect its autonomy, strategic orientation, effectiveness or impact? And if so, in what ways?</p>	<p>Analysis of level and structure of funding as in 2.2 and its effects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Did the changes in funding affect the Centre's autonomy (dependence on one or few funders who influence its policy)? • Did they affect the Centre's financial sustainability (dependence on short term funds)? • Did they affect its strategic orientation (shifting focus mainly due to market demand)? • Did they affect effectiveness (distract focus from core activities towards income generating activities)? • Did they affect impact (giving up of long term engagement with partners and processes)? • Did they impact the types of themes pursued and the ways in which they were pursued
<p>4.3. What was the role of the Dutch trust-fund? Has it contributed to ensuring multi-annual programming and continuity of the Centre? Did it generate the level of funding expected at its installation? Does the continuous decrease of</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of evolution of core funding and its effect on financial sustainability • Consider mechanisms of compensating loss in real value of endowment fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has endowment maintained or lost its real value? • Evolution of proportion (percentages) of programs financed by unrestricted funding • Has increase of project funding caused additional cost to the core funding (time and cost spent in project preparation)

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurring themes mentioned by stakeholders not covered by ECDPM • Key ACP-EU areas of activity not addressed by programmes 2001-2005 	<p>ACP-EU Agreement Annual Reports Internal Assessment</p>	<p>Institutional partners Strategic partners Network partners</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversion between planned and actual activities • Work interrupted due to changes in donors funding • Number and nature of consultancies taken on vs. projects originating from the Centre 	<p>Internal Assessment and reports Annual Plans assessed against Annual Reports Financial strategy Annual financial reports</p>	<p>ECDPM staff Financial Manager Ex-staff Board members Strategic partners Institutional partners</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % change in unrestricted funds (core + institutional donor funds) • % change in project funds • Evolution in funding mix (type and number of donors) • Number of activities not followed through • Number and nature of consultancies taken on vs. projects originating from the centre • Diversion between planned and actual activities • Work interrupted due to changes in donors funding 	<p>Internal Assessment and reports Annual Plans assessed against Annual Reports Financial strategy Annual financial reports</p>	<p>ECDPM staff Board members Financial Manager Director</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % change 2001-2005 in level of funding expected at installation • % change in core funding • % change in unrestricted funds (core + institutional donor funds) • % change in project funds drawing on unrestricted funds 	<p>Financial reports Internal assessment</p>	<p>ECDPM Staff Board members Financial Manager Director</p>

<p>income from the trust-fund put in danger the quality of the products or the sustainability of the Centre in any way?</p>		<p>and resulted in subsidizing projects by core funding? (vicious circle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See also questions in 4.2 • How could possible loss of real value of the endowment fund be compensated?
<p>4.4 What level and mix of funding would the Centre need to ensure its institutional autonomy and viability, the quality of its products and services as well as its strategic focus into the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Define optimum or limit of project funding as proportion of total turnover • Consider new forms and sources of financing with a focus on financial sustainability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considering the non-monetary benefit created by project funding (knowledge, innovation, good will), is the "eating" of core funds somehow compensated by these benefits? • Is there an optimum mix where these benefits and financial "loss" caused by project funding are in balance? • Is there an optimum mix where the Centre's autonomy and strategic focus are not at risk? • Are there new forms and sources of funding that can help to ensure financial sustainability of the Centre?

Appendix III - List of contacts interviewed by evaluation team

External Stakeholder Interviews:		
Name	Organisation	Location
Mrs. L. Rafamatanantsoa	Coordinator ACP Local Government Platform	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. P. Ymkers	Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the EU	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. A. Singh	ACP Secretariat	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. A. Bradley	ACP Secretariat	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. M. Githinji	ACP Secretariat	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. M. Frumerie	Permanent Representation of Sweden to the EU	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. H. Molenaar	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	The Hague, Netherlands
Mrs. C. Wiedenhof	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	The Hague, Netherlands
Mr. M. Brouwer	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	The Hague, Netherlands
Mr. Robert-Jan Scheer	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	The Hague, Netherlands
Ms. Hinke Nauta	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	The Hague, Netherlands
Mr. J. Ubels	SNV World	The Hague, Netherlands
Mrs. Dellicour	AIDCO	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. K. Richelle	AIDCO	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. S. Biesemans	Belgium Development Cooperation	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. K. Panneels	Belgium Development Cooperation	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. F. De Wispelaere	Belgium Development Cooperation	Brussels, Belgium
Ms. L. Reale	European Commission, Development Directorate	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. J. Lodge	Caribbean Regional Negotiating Machinery	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. J. Mfasoni	Permanent Representation of the ACP to the EU	Brussels, Belgium
Mrs. F. Moreau	European Commission Development Directorate General	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. H. De Backer	European Commission Development Directorate General	Brussels, Belgium

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolution in funding mix (type of donors) • % of core funding in overall turnover 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evolution of % of funding in core, institutional, programme and project • % of type of funding for each individual programme 	<p>Internal assessment Financial reports</p>	<p>Board members Director ECDPM Staff Senior Staff of Other Institutes Institutional partners(in relation to ECDPM and comparative perspectives on others that they fund) Strategic partners Network partners</p>

Amb. E. Humprey	Embassy of Barbados to the European Communities	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. W. Vetter	Council of the European Union, Africa Task Force	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. G. van Hecke	European Parliament committee on development	Brussels, Belgium
Mrs. E. Lithman	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency	Stockholm, Sweden
Mr. S. Maënpää	Finnish Department of Int. Development Cooperation	Helsinki, Finland
Mr. D. Jessop	Caribbean Council	London, UK
Mrs. M. Julian	Caribbean Council & ECDPM associate	Brussels, Belgium
Mrs. K. Manek	DFID	London, UK
Mrs. L. Kelly	DFID	London, UK
Mr. C. Wright	Commonwealth Local Government Forum	London, UK
Mrs. E. Brouwer	Commonwealth Secretariat	London, UK
Mr. A. Dunlop	Cable & Wireless Plc, former director Caribbean Council	London, UK
Mr. P. Kiriro	EA Farmers Association	Nairobi, Kenya
Mrs. Laititi	EA Framers Association	Nairobi, Kenya
Mr. J. Materu	Municipal Development Partnership	Nairobi, Kenya
Mrs. C. Ornemark	Former ECDPM Employee	Nairobi, Kenya
Mr. P. Mwaniki	Ministry of Trade & Industry	Nairobi, Kenya
Prof. Lyakurwa	African Economic Research Consortium	Nairobi, Kenya
Mr. C. Mboghor	Keplotrade Secretariat	Nairobi, Kenya
Mrs. I. G. Irungu-Mbungua	Keplotrade Secretariat	Nairobi Kenya
Mr. B. Kagri	Keplotrade Secretariat	Nairobi, Kenya
Mrs. V. Nagel Dick	EC delegation	Nairobi, Kenya
Mr. O. Ong'wen	Southern and Eastern Africa Trade, Information Institute	Nairobi, Kenya
Mr. G. Wane	African Union - Conflict Management Centre	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Mr. T. Clark	EC Delegate	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Ms. V Auricchio	EC Delegation	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mrs. A. Gosses	Netherlands Embassy to Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Amb. Renard	Belgium Embassy to Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mr. J. Astill-Brown	British Embassy to Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mr. D. Drake	British Embassy to Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mrs. B. Dillon	British Embassy to Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Dr. P. Schauer	German Embassy to Ethiopia	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mr. S. Djinnit	African Union	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mr. M. Submusho	African Union , Bureau of the Vice President	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mr. J. Adisa	African Union- Civil society, governance, ecosoc dept.	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mr. A. Dirar	African Union - UNDP	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mr. S. Sada Sall	African Union - Strategic Planning dept.	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mrs. C.7andouze	Formerly EC, now ECDPM Programme Associate	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Mrs. T. Hartzenberg	Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa	Capetown, South Africa
Mr. E. Links	Former Ambassador of South Africa to Belgium	Capetown, South Africa
Mr. D. Chiwandamira	DPC & Associates	Capetown, South Africa
Mrs. T. Bertelsmann	Imani Development	Capetown, South Africa
Mrs. E. Siridopoulos	South African Institute for International Affairs (SAIIA)	Braamfontein, South Africa
Mr. M. Pearson	Comesa Secretariat	Pretoria, South Africa
Mr. R. Hess	Imani Development	Pretoria, South Africa
Mr. G. Rayee	Embassy of Belgium to South Africa	Pretoria, South Africa
Mrs. R. Qualmann	South African Development Community Secretariat	Pretoria, South Africa
Mr. N. Charalambides	Independent consultant for ECDPM Trade Programme	Gaberone, Botswana
Mr. T. Farrington	South African Development Community Secretariat (SADC)	Gaberone, Botswana
Mr. I. Rossiter	South African Development Community Secretariat (SADC)	Gaberone, Botswana
Mr. M. Faessler	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation	Bern, Switzerland
Mr. Musonda	Comesa	Lusaka, Zambia
Mr. O. Sy	Alliance pour refonder la gouvernance an Afrique	Mali
Mr. O. Sidibe	Commissaire au developpement institutionel	Mali
ECDPM Board Members:		
Mr. L. Wohlgemuth	former director Nordic Africa Institute	Stockholm, Sweden
Mr. L. Cumberbatch	ACP EPA project management unit	Brussels, Belgium
Amb. P. Gomes	Embassy of Guyana to the EU	Brussels, Belgium
Mr. D. Frisch	Special Advisor to the EC	Brussels, Belgium
ECDPM Staff:		
Paul Engel	Director and Programme Coordinator Strategy & Innovation	
Jean Bossuyt	Programme Coordinator Governance Programme	
Geert Laporte	Programme Coordinator Institutional Relations	
James Mackie	Programme Coordinator for the Development Policy & EU External Action	
Heather Baser	Programme Coordinator Development Cooperation and Capacity	
Bridget McBean	Programme Coordinator Communication & Information Programme	
San Bilal	Programme Coordinator ACP-EU Trade relations	
Roland Lemmens	Head of Finance and Human Resources	
Volker Hauck	Senior Programme Officer Development Cooperation and Capacity	
Kathleen van Hove	Senior Programme Officer ACP-EU Economic and Trade Cooperation	
Jonas Frederiksen	Programme Officer Development Policy & EU External Action	
Gwen Corre	Programme Officer Governance & Multi-actor Partnerships	

Francesco Rampa	Programme Officer ACP-EU Trade relations
Ivan Kulis	Programme Officer Communication & Information
Davina Makhan	Junior Programme Officer ACP-EU Trade Relations
Marie-Laure de Bergh	Junior Programme Officer Development Cooperation and Capacity
Niels Keijzer	Programme Assistant Strategy & Innovation
Vincent Roza	Research Assistant ACP-EU Trade Relations
Frederic Ceuppens	Research Assistant Governance & Multi-actor Partnerships
Camille Donnat	Research Assistance Trade Relations

Appendix IV: List of principle documents consulted

1. ECDPM-*Internal assessment*, January, 2006.
2. ECDPM-*Centre Strategy, 2001-2005*.
3. ECDPM-*Annual Reports, 2001-2004*.
4. ECDPM-*Work Plans, 2003-2004; 2005-2006; 2006-2007*.
5. ECDPM-*Strategy, 2005-2010*.
6. Commission of the European Communities-*EU strategy for Africa*.
7. Africa Union Commission-*The strategic Plan, 2005*.
8. *ACP-EU Partnership Agreement*, June, 2000.
9. ACP/ECDPM-*A Users Guide for Non-State Actors*, 2003.
10. Selection of official publications for ECDPM programme 2001-2005.
11. Various evaluations conducted by ECDPM 2001 - 2005.
12. Answers prepared in response to additional questions posed by Evaluation team by ECDPM, 26th of April 2006.
13. ECDPM-*Alternative (to)EPAS, Possible scenarios for the future of trade relations with EU*, February, 2006.
14. ECDPM-*Infokit Cotonou*, December, 2002.
15. NEPAD Secretariat-*Nepad Strategic Framework Document*, October, 2001.
16. Annual Reports in 2004 of International Alert, International Institute for Sustainable Development, Transparency International, and Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue

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Created in 1986 as an independent foundation, the **Centre's objectives** are:

- to enhance the capacity of public and private actors in ACP and other low-income countries; and
- to improve cooperation between development partners in Europe and the ACP Region.

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- Development Policy and EU External Action
- ACP-EU Economic and Trade Cooperation
- Multi-Actor Partnerships and Governance
- Development Cooperation and Capacity

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The European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)
Onze Lieve Vrouweplein 21
6221 HE Maastricht, The Netherlands

Tel +31 (0)43 350 29 00 Fax +31 (0)43 350 29 02
info@ecdpm.org www.ecdpm.org