



ODI Global

ODI Global Strategy 2026–2031



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The context continuity and change



1 The context: continuity and change

We are at a decisive moment for global cooperation, for the credibility of expertise and for the prospects of equitable progress. The post-war, post-colonial settlement, the architecture, assumptions and hierarchies that underpinned global relations, is fraying under the combined weight of reconfigured geopolitics, financial pressures, climate change, rapid and unregulated technological transformation and new forms of social and political mobilisation. What is emerging is not a neat transition to a new order, but a volatile context in which old norms are ignored or more conditional, and where the costs of instability are pushed onto those with the least agency to manage them.

The immediate consequences of rupture are visible and stark. Financial, political and intellectual resources are being repurposed around new strategic interests, rather than collective progress. Value-driven frameworks are being displaced by transactional agendas, and the principles that make cooperation possible are weakening. Multilateralism is imperilled. Democratic norms are under strain. The political space for rights-based policy is narrowing, and there is growing public mistrust in political institutions.

Radical shifts in geopolitics are reducing the power of global governance institutions. The hierarchies that defined the post-Cold War order

are giving way to a more fluid and competitive multipolar landscape. Regional powers are asserting greater autonomy, reshaping global influence through economic statecraft, industrial policy and evolving security partnerships. Cooperation increasingly depends on alignment of interests, interdependence is used more actively as leverage, and multilateral institutions are being repurposed as tools of statecraft.

Power continues to disperse beyond states. Social movements, diasporas, philanthropies, private capital (particularly the tech oligarchs), non-state armed groups and digital platforms increasingly shape outcomes and policy directly, often without the accountability structures that once mediated public discourse and decision-making. Big Tech and AI are now central to how markets, information ecosystems, civic space and institutional legitimacy function.

The world has always faced shocks, but what is distinctive today is their scale, speed and confluence. Climate impacts, war, debt distress, technological disruption and geopolitical rivalry feed on one another. Tackling these challenges will require deliberate transformations in institutions and in ecological, economic and social systems at national, regional and global levels. Decisions taken by governments, markets and societies

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ODI Global is uniquely positioned to seize this moment. We work at the leading edge of many of these shifts, from reform of the multilateral system to regional and global trade, country-specific economic transformation, climate finance, gender and civic rights, great power competition, and humanitarian policy and practice. Across all this work, our advantage is our ability to translate evidence, analysis and convening power into actionable narratives for change.

The implications for ODI Global are two-fold.

First, there is continuity. Our fundamental mission remains valid: to generate evidence and ideas that inspire positive change. This means there is continuity in our commitment to intellectual rigour, transparency and independence.

Second, there is change: in pace, posture and approach. In a harsher landscape, analysis without purpose will not be enough. We will pair rigorous research with clearer strategies for influence, coalition-building, convening power and targeted advisory work, underpinned by deep communications expertise.

Over the last strategy period, we acknowledged the historical roots and privilege of ODI Global, examined our ways of working, and raised awareness of contemporary colonial dynamics and power structures. Through our involvement in ongoing definitional debates, we have listened carefully to allies and partners around the world, particularly on the relevance of decolonial language and framings to today's lived realities. We recognise that this is a journey. Our new

strategy positions ODI Global as a member of a global coalition challenging the abuse of power, discrimination, inequality and exclusion that characterise colonial systems. While we may not always adopt a specific decolonial lexicon, we are doubling down on our determination to translate these principles into practice in our research and policy work.

Equity and justice sit at the centre of our new strategy, as they did our last one, not as an add-on but as the organising principle. ODI Global will continue to champion the norms and principles underpinning collective action; to build coalitions against the continued regression of rights; and to bring to light and challenge global structural inequities, including by advancing more horizontal relationships grounded in mutual interest and respect. We will remain steadfast in the values that have defined our mission over decades and will not compromise them in the face of pressure.



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Our principles: how ODI Global works for change



2 Our principles: how ODI Global works for change

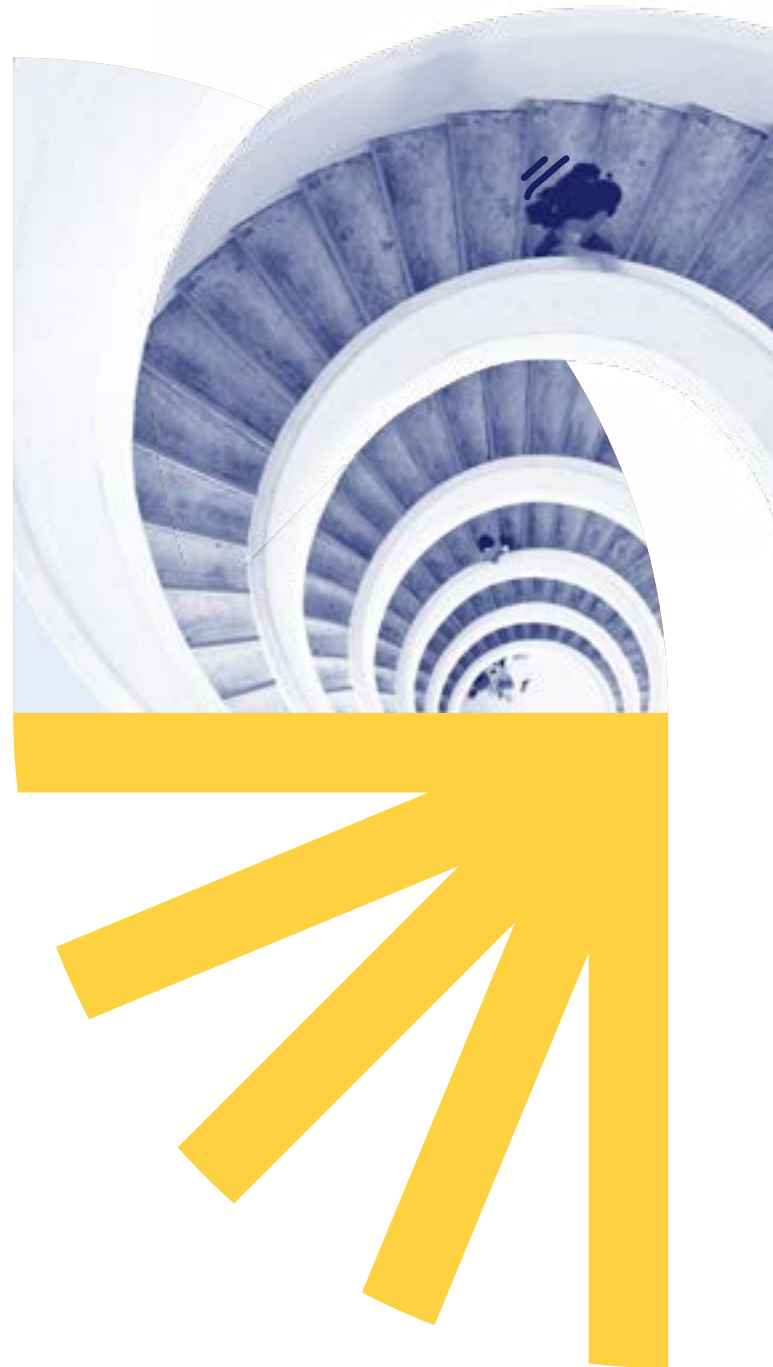
The strategic choices set out in this document are grounded in a clear view of how change happens in the current global moment. Our effectiveness in shaping change over the next five years will depend not only on the quality and precision of our evidence, but also on how convincingly we demonstrate its relevance, how we work, who we work with and whose voices shape agendas and narratives.

1 Robust and compelling evidence to inform our ideas and recommendations

High-quality evidence has long been the bedrock of our legitimacy, our influence and integrity. Intellectual rigour and analytical power are core to both our identity and our value.

At a time when evidence is increasingly contested and information circulates rapidly across fragmented audiences, the risks of poorly informed policy decisions are growing. Governments face pressure to deliver results that are not only visible, but also equitable and durable. Decisions shaped by political expediency, institutional inertia, or untested assumptions can carry significant financial and human costs.

Robust evidence sharpens choices, tests assumptions and exposes trade-offs. It enables course correction before failure becomes systemic. The reward is not just better policy, but more resilient institutions and systems capable of meeting the demands of an increasingly uncertain world.



2 Just and equitable partnerships: from aspiration to operating model

We will work through just and equitable partnerships and coalitions with think tanks, universities, civil society organisations and others who share our core values – particularly in regions and countries historically underrepresented in global policy and knowledge systems. Our aim is to co-define agendas, co-design research, jointly mobilise resources and collaborate on policy engagement, convening and advisory work. This is not a rhetorical commitment. It is a strategic choice grounded in effectiveness and legitimacy. ODI Global's experience demonstrates that analytical rigour is strengthened when research draws on diverse epistemologies, disciplinary traditions and contextual expertise. Equity and excellence are mutually reinforcing objectives.

Over the past five years, ODI Global has strengthened more collaborative research models, invested in longer-term institutional partnerships and examined power asymmetries in knowledge production. Continuing this journey, ODI Global's traditional advantages – positionality, convening power, analytical credibility and proximity to decision-makers – must increasingly be re-examined with partners and used to create or cede space to others. Recognising trade-offs, our ambition is to complement and amplify, rather than substitute for the knowledge and leadership of partners. Bringing real meaning to this will require us to review and transform our business model and processes, and in the long term will determine the shape and scope of ODI Global itself.



3 Acting as a connector in a fragmented global system

A third principle of the strategy is the role of ODI Global as a connector of people, ideas and institutions. As international relations become more transactional and policy arenas more siloed, influence depends less on singular expertise and more on the ability to organise and connect around shared problems, norms and reform opportunities.

We will focus on building and supporting coalitions that bring together actors who would not otherwise align, but whose combined leverage is essential to advancing equity, justice and sustainability. In so doing, we will link national and local realities to regional and global decision-making spaces and sustain engagement beyond one-off events.

We will leverage the ODI Global network to do this. From London and Brussels, we are well positioned to engage major policy and financing centres while bringing diverse global perspectives into these debates. The EU and the UK remain among the world's largest institutional investors in external partnerships, and how these resources are used will shape economic and governance trajectories in many regions. A further distinctive asset is the ODI Global Fellowship Scheme, a long-standing global network that provides a strong, rooted foundation for collaboration, learning and reform partnerships.

Our focus will be on coalitions that span sectors, reflecting the reality that today's most consequential challenges sit at the intersection of public policy, private capital, philanthropy and social movements. In addition, we will prioritise coalitions that ensure that those most affected by global challenges play a central role in shaping solutions.



 Narrative is not a substitute for precision: it is the means by which rigorous evidence acquires political and social relevance.

4 Shaping narratives for change

Finally, ODI Global's strategy is underpinned by a renewed commitment to shaping narratives for change. In today's contested information environment, evidence alone is rarely decisive. Trust in expertise is under pressure, information ecosystems are fragmented, and policy debates are shaped as much by identity, values and emotion as by analysis.

ODI Global's reputation is built on rigorous research and political economy insight to support justice, equity and transformative reform. That foundation will not change. But we will invest more deliberately in translating evidence into narratives that resonate beyond specialist policy circles and help shape the broader debates from which policy choices emerge. For ODI Global, narrative is not a

substitute for precision: it is the means by which rigorous evidence acquires political and social relevance.

We will work with communicators, artists, filmmakers and other cultural actors who can carry ideas into new spaces, and continue to experiment with formats that reach wider audiences. Initiatives such as the *Think Change* podcast, the *Dominica* documentary and the use of different formats by ODI Global, from visual storytelling to data visualisation, reels and other non-traditional communications, already successfully demonstrate how evidence, lived experience and narrative can combine to build empathy, shift perspectives, and open space for coalition-building around complex reform agendas.

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Our priorities:
where we can
make a difference



3 Our priorities: where we can make a difference

The global context is marked by geopolitical realignment, accelerating climate pressures, technological disruption and shrinking civic space. In this environment, ODI Global must make disciplined choices about where it can add distinctive value. Our priorities build on our comparative advantages: rigorous analysis, political economy insight, cross-disciplinary work, trusted convening and the ability to translate evidence into policy impact.

1 Change as a core focus

Helping leaders navigate and shape change will be central to ODI Global's work. We can help decision-makers by anticipating risks, interpreting trends and conceptualising alternative futures, recognising that turbulent times present opportunities as well as challenges.

Today's challenges – from climate impacts and displacement to debt distress, technological disruption and geopolitical rivalry – are increasingly interconnected and require systemic responses. ODI Global will therefore place greater emphasis on interdisciplinary research, coalition-building and advisory work that helps decision-makers navigate complex transitions. This also has implications for how we work and the capabilities we prioritise, strengthening staff profiles that combine analytical excellence with systems thinking, convening and policy engagement.

2 Impact: where we can make a difference

Generating meaningful impact is the ultimate purpose of ODI Global. Our priorities are guided both by what matters most to decision-makers and societies, and by where ODI Global's expertise and networks can make a tangible difference.

In a period of systemic crisis, impact cannot be measured solely by outcomes. The contribution of a think tank also lies in shaping how decision-makers understand complexity, risk and trade-offs, and ensuring that policies are grounded in rigorous analysis and institutional realism. In this context, strengthening the quality of decisions and governance may be a more meaningful and durable measure of impact. ODI Global will therefore organise its research, convening and advisory work around four interconnected dimensions of impact.

Priority 1: Institutions and power

Shaping transitions in global governance

Priority 1 is concerned with the institutions and systems of global power. We will analyse the wider geopolitical context around our work, with a particular focus on the distribution and acquisition of power in the global system by traditional and non-traditional actors, including movements and global corporations, and by new geographies and alliances, for example emerging Global South-led platforms. Increasingly, these determine the opportunities and challenges for reforming the architecture and institutions of the multilateral system. ODI Global will help stakeholders at all levels navigate systemic ruptures and emerging opportunities, ensuring that a balance of perspectives is heard as new global and regional governance arrangements emerge.

Priority 2: Equity and rights

Advancing rights, norms and inclusive societies

The rollback of democracy, individual and collective gender and civic rights, and international rights-based norms, and the rise of oligarchic power are fragmenting societies, shrinking civic space and deepening inequality. These reversions are reinforced in speed and magnitude by fractured social contracts and societal cohesion, and poorly regulated digital and AI systems. We will address how power is exercised and contested, and how rights and accountability, including in crisis situations, are protected, upheld or undermined. Our value lies in bridging analysis and practice and creating platforms for the voices and perspectives that are otherwise absent from global policy discussions to shape decision-making: connecting lived realities to institutional reform pathways.





Priority 3: Crisis, resilience and renewal

Promoting resilience, security and pathways out of crisis

We will explore the connections between conflict, humanitarian need and the deepening climate crisis. This builds on our strong record of research and convening on so-called fragile contexts, including work on bridging humanitarian action, recovery and political transition, climate action, development and peacebuilding, alongside a substantial concern for the drivers and consequences of displacement. While there is a recognition that the global crisis response architecture is not functioning effectively, there is a lack of vision and courage about what comes next. We intend to help shape this vision. For ODI Europe in particular, the growing prominence of security in European policy – from defence cooperation and geopolitical competition to economic security, critical supply chains and hybrid threats – makes the intersection between resilience, security and economic transformation an increasingly important area of work and engagement.

Priority 4: Sustainable economic transformation

Enabling sustainable and equitable finance and growth amidst changing rules

Under Priority 4 we will continue our work on international economics, trade and building a more equitable international financial architecture. We will remain focused on helping level the playing field for capital flows while tackling debt and fiscal pressures. We will explore more collaborative approaches on trade and supply chains, financing investment (increasingly with a private orientation) and technology transfers, alongside helping countries' growing domestic capacity and private sector depth. Technology (including the impacts of AI on growth and job creation) will be a crucial dimension, alongside resource governance and critical raw materials.

Alongside these four priority areas, we will systematically consider three key overarching trends across all of our work: rapid technological change, growing geopolitical tensions and accelerating climate change. Rapid technological change is creating new opportunities for innovation and productivity, while also helping fuel the assault on gender rights and civil liberties, as well as radically transforming the world of work; growing geopolitical tensions are defining the pace of national energy transitions and reshaping global trade; accelerating climate change is contributing to unsustainable debt levels, economic hardship and displacement.

Having framed our work around these core dimensions and themes, we will track progress over the life of the strategy by developing outcome pathways and indicators for how ODI Global contributes to addressing each challenge. Our impact will be assessed based on plausible narratives, drawing on metrics and indicators where possible, and inference where necessary.

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Our network: leveraging for impact



4 Our network: leveraging for impact

Alongside our Fellowship Scheme and long-standing partnerships with think tanks, civil society organisations and governments, we will leverage our presence in London and Brussels, our advisory offer, and communications and public affairs expertise. Together, these levers allow us to connect national rootedness with influence in the regional and global arenas where finance, norms, technology governance and multilateral reform are being contested and reshaped. This is not simply an organisational strength, but a strategic imperative.

- Being based in London, one of the world's most globally connected cities, gives us easy access to a critical mass of actors and institutions engaged in global affairs, including an international civil society, academia and polity, and a globally integrated financial sector.
- Our presence in Brussels enables us to bring global voices and perspectives to the European policy arena, combining deep regional insight and direct engagement with EU institutions with the analytical depth, global reach and convening power of ODI Global. Around nine in ten Europeans consider partnerships with countries beyond the EU to be important. At a time of geopolitical fragmentation and a renewed focus on Europe's strategic role in the world, this sustained public support for international engagement creates an important opportunity. ODI Europe will contribute to the debates shaping the global economic and political role of the EU, bringing rigorous analysis, country-based perspectives and a strong commitment to equity and accountability to policy discussions in Brussels and beyond.
- Our advisory work is a natural extension of evidence-informed policy engagement: it allows us not only to analyse change, but also to accompany governments and institutions as they navigate it, strengthening our relevance and deepening partnerships and insights. To scale this work, ODI Global Advisory will provide a clear institutional entry point for advisory engagements, including from the private sector; support business development in ways that reinforce our mission and research strategy; and curate and deploy expertise from across the ODI Global network.
- The ODI Fellowship Scheme offers space to build a stronger public sector advisory offer. This alumni network represents a unique connective tissue across regions, institutions and generations. We will more intentionally leverage these relationships as a foundation for long-term advisory engagement, peer exchange and reform coalitions.



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Our culture:
the organisation
we want to be



5 Our culture: the organisation we want to be

Analysing complex, systemic change has long been central to ODI Global's mission. What shifts now is our ambition: we will treat change not simply as an outcome of our work, but as a deliberate driver and core product of it. While ODI Global has a strong record of working across disciplines – one of our distinctive differentiators among global think tanks – we must go further, embedding interdisciplinary collaboration as a defining feature of how we operate and achieve influence. Aligning with the external priorities and areas of focus set out above will require us to strengthen our organisation: its structure, processes and culture. We are as ambitious about the organisation we want to be as we are about our mission of evidence-based change.

Our people are ODI Global's most important asset. By the end of this strategy period, we aim to be an organisation where people are empowered to do their best work, grounded in shared values and a strong sense of purpose. As we attract mission-driven staff, we will also ensure that ambition is matched by care, supporting staff well-being through realistic workloads, clear expectations about career pathways and an inclusive organisational culture. Ultimately, the organisation we build will determine the impact we can achieve. By strengthening our culture, leadership and financial foundations, we will ensure that ODI Global remains intellectually independent, globally connected and equipped to navigate uncertainty – able not only to respond to change, but to help shape it.



 We are as ambitious about the organisation we want to be as we are about our mission of evidence-based change.



ODI Global

ODI Global advises global leaders on driving positive change. We turn bold ideas, evidence, and broad expertise into actionable strategies for a more resilient, just and equitable future.

ODI Global

4 Millbank
London SW1P 3JA

+44 (0)20 7922 0300
info@odi.org

odi.org
linkedin.com/company/odiglobal/
instagram.com/odi.global/

