

AFIDEP

African Institute for
Development Policy



STRATEGY 2024

Using evidence consistently to transform lives

We aspire for

an Africa
where
evidence
is used
consistently to
transform
lives

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Foreword



A FIDEP's 2020-2024 Strategy outlines our priorities as well as how we seek to amplify the impact of our work, which focuses on advancing evidence for transforming lives across Africa. Developing this strategy involved a rigorous consultative process that included staff, the Board of Directors, and other key stakeholders. We extend our gratitude to everyone involved in the process, and appreciate their contributions to developing this strategy.

The implementation of our new strategy will commence in 2020, coinciding with our 10th anniversary. Since AFIDEP was established in 2010, the Institute has experienced significant growth, and our consistent promotion of evidence use in the

formulation and implementation of public policy has given us recognition as the go-to policy and research institute on the continent.

The implementation of our 2015-2019 strategic plan laid a solid foundation for us as a thought leader and promulgator in the evidence-informed decision-making field. We supported governments to enhance institutional and individual capacities for evidence use and enlisted many junior and senior scholars to actively promote evidence-informed policy making. Our work with parliaments at national and regional levels has enhanced the institutional autonomy and capacity of parliaments to use evidence in their oversight, representation and legislative roles.

AFIDEP's ground breaking work on the demographic dividend generated unprecedented traction with policy makers and other development actors across the continent. Consequently, many governments have adopted the demographic dividend framework as a guiding principle for their medium and long-term development plans, as they develop integrated policies and actions to slow population growth and turn their youthful populations into a driving force for socioeconomic transformation and sustainable development.

In the 2020-2024 period, we will build on these efforts to optimise use of evidence to accelerate progress towards achievement of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We will particularly emphasise five critical areas that are key to Africa's renaissance: population dynamics and the demographic dividend, education and skill development, health and wellbeing, environment and climate change, and governance and accountability.

AFIDEP will expand its work in strengthening institutional systems and mechanisms that facilitate consistent use of evidence in decision making processes, including linkages between academic institutions and governments. We will promote use of evidence and accountability tools to determine cost-effective interventions that should be scaled up to uplift lives of many people and resolve bottlenecks that undermine effective implementation of development policies and programmes. We will also expand our geographic presence by opening an office in West or Central Africa, and expand our engagement with the African Union and other regional bodies to extend lessons from our work to even more countries. Finally, we will

Francis Dodoo

**Chairperson,
AFIDEP Board of Directors**

enhance our expertise and internal administrative and performance management systems to enable us exceed expectations of our clients, funders and partners in the delivery of our work.

AFIDEP would not have attained the heights that we have without the dedication of its staff and board members who have demonstrated levels of commitment beyond the call of duty. The consistent strategic advice from board members, generous support of our funders, and the contributions of various partners that we have worked with have come together to provide the Institute with the requisite backing to transcend expectations. We have received particular inspiration from government policy makers who nudged us to extend the boundaries of our work and thinking to develop innovative approaches that enabled them put into action their commitments to place evidence at the centre of public policy formulation and implementation.

We are excited to embark on this new chapter of the AFIDEP journey and look forward to strengthening our current partnerships and forging new ones to optimise our synergies and magnify the impact of our work as we contribute to charting a positive development trajectory for Africa. We are confident that through such joint efforts with our partners, we will surely realise an Africa where evidence is consistently used to ensuring that the right development priorities are set, cost-effective interventions are designed, resources are allocated efficiently within and across development sectors, and where there is continuous performance monitoring and learning in program implementation.

Thank you for continuing to support AFIDEP.

Eliga Zulu

**Executive Director,
AFIDEP**

Executive Summary

OUR VISION FOR AFRICA

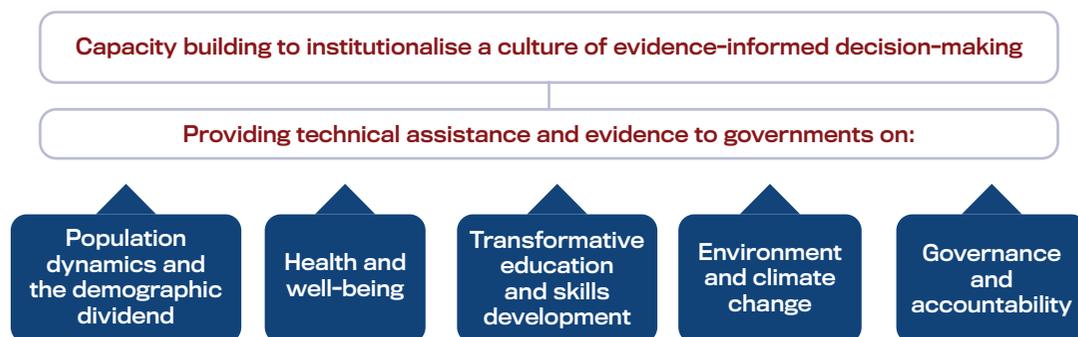
The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) was founded in 2010 as a non-profit research and policy institute to strengthen the use of evidence among decision-makers in Africa. To advance this goal, AFIDEP’s vision for Africa over the next five years is to promote a shift from a culture of low evidence use in decision-making, to a setting where policy and programme actors actively seek and routinely use evidence so that the right investments are made towards the transformation of people’s lives for the better.

This five-year Strategic Plan (2020-2024), hereafter known as ‘Strategy 2024’, consolidates the work that we started under the previous plan (2015-2019), where we supported the use of evidence in policymaking in the public sector. In Strategy 2024, we will expand our scope to institutionalising the use of evidence in decision-making and providing technical assistance, from the design of policies to monitoring and evaluation of development programmes aimed at accelerating the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through our

analysis of the political landscape and the external environment, combined with the lessons we have learnt from our previous strategy period, we have identified the following as our five priority areas under Strategy 2024:

- Population dynamics and the demographic dividend
- Transformative education and skills development
- Health and well-being
- Governance and accountability
- Environment and climate change

Figure 1: How we institutionalise evidence use in our priority areas



Gender equality is a cross-cutting theme across all of our programmes. We will place great emphasis on understanding how to accelerate gender equality, how to address barriers to female participation in all spheres of life, and how to improve health and economic outcomes for girls, boys, men and women.

In this strategic plan period, AFIDEP seeks to ensure that African decision-makers use evidence consistently so that the right policies, programmes and budget allocations are made to transform people’s lives for the better. We will **promote the use of evidence** in the design and implementation of policies and programmes and **support the use of data and evidence** to accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We will support decision-makers in the public sector to use credible evidence to decide what policies and programmes to implement in these priority areas, how to implement them, and how to use evidence to monitor project performance and accountability. AFIDEP will also collaborate with other stakeholders who play key roles in promoting Evidence-Informed Decision-Making (EIDM) and holding governments to account. These stakeholders include researchers, development partners and multilaterals, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), the private sector, the media, and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in the development sector. We believe that our focus on institutionalising a culture of EIDM is timely and critical to transforming Africa’s development prospects. As we approach the 2030 deadline for achieving the SDGs and the ten-year mark for the

African Union Agenda 2063, we anticipate that there will be **increased demand for evidence from policymakers** and development actors, to support decision-making and performance monitoring on these roadmaps.

The communication revolution, which has been propelled by growth in mobile telecommunications and social media, has **increased the demand by the public for accountability from governments, and evidence** to demonstrate the impact of policies and programmes. Many governments make specific commitments to adhere to EIDM but often have challenges making it a reality in practice. In developing Strategy 2024, AFIDEP is guided by **political and context analysis, external environment analysis**, our understanding of **how change happens**, lessons learned from our previous work, and our **comparative advantage**.

We have incorporated feedback from our stakeholders and partners to ensure efficiency and financial sustainability. Finally, we have enhanced our monitoring, evaluation and learning capacity to ensure that we can measure and demonstrate the impact of our own work, and to enable us continually improve our programmes.

Figure 2: AFIDEP at a Glance

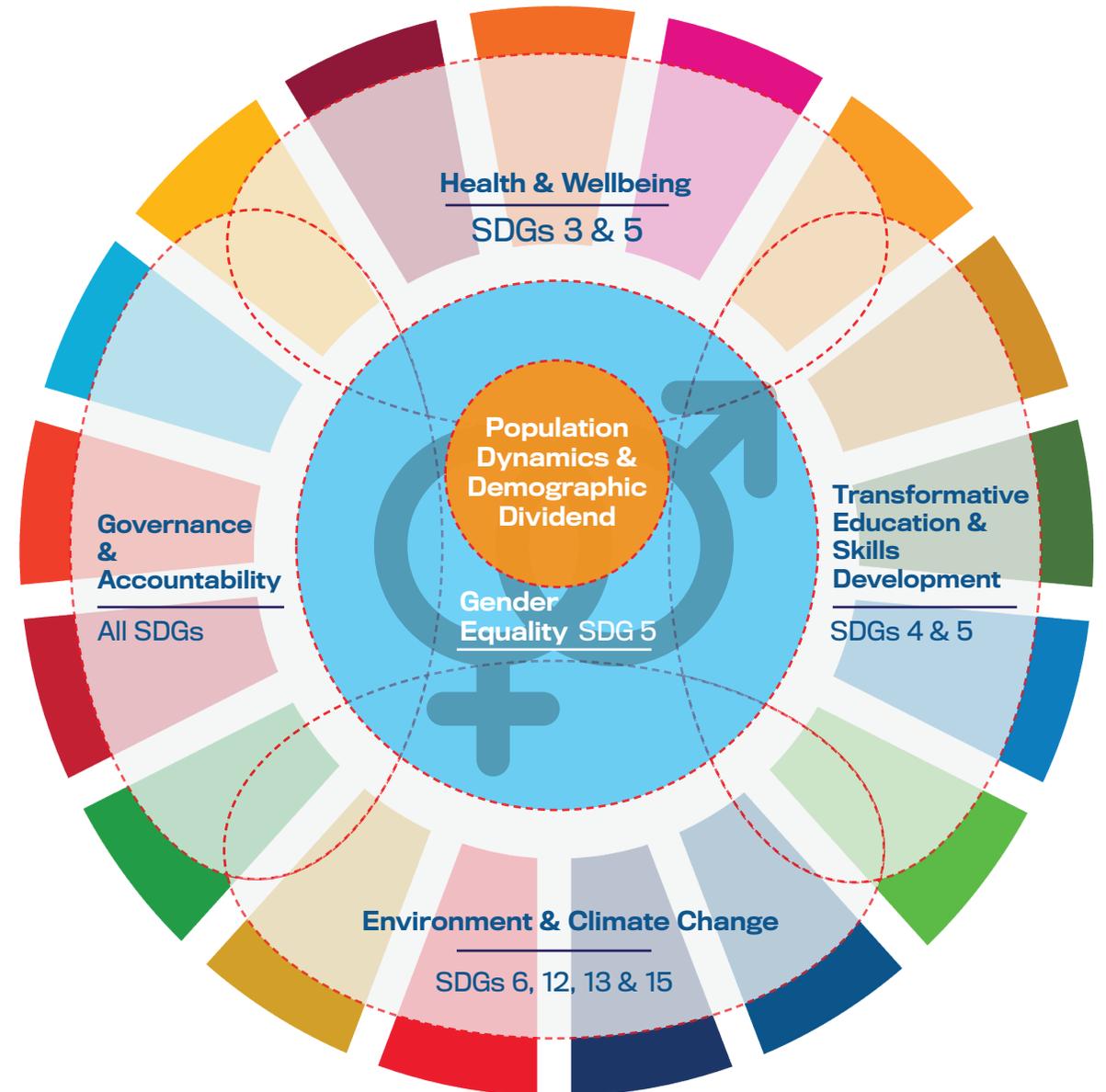
Our Vision for Africa
Evidence is used consistently to transform lives



Our Values

Accountability | Focus | Integrity | Diversity | Excellence | Passion

AFIDEP's Priority Focus Areas for Strategy 2024



Acronyms

ADB	African Development Bank	M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
AFIDEP	African Institute for Development Policy	MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning
AU	African Union	MoH	Ministry of Health
CEN-SAD	Community of Sahel-Saharan States	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations	NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
DD	Demographic Dividend	PBO	Public Benefit Organisation
EAC	East African Community	PESTEL	Political, Economic, Social and Technological, Environmental and Legal Analysis
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States	SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States	SMT	Senior Management Team
EIDM	Evidence-Informed Decision-Making	SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
FIR	Fourth Industrial Revolution	ToC	Theory of Change
FBO	Faith Based Organisation	UKAid	United Kingdom Aid
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	UN	United Nations
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
ICT	Information Communication Technology	USD	United States Dollar
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators		

Who We Are

1.1 ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

The African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) is an African-led, non-profit research and policy institute, established in 2010 to institutionalise a culture of evidence use in the public sector and to bridge the gaps between research, policy and practice in development efforts in Africa.



AFIDEP is registered as a Non-Governmental Organisation in Kenya and Malawi and as a non-profit institution in the USA, with 501 (c)3 status. We seek to contribute to the realisation of the SDGs and other development strategies by enabling the use of evidence in the formulation of development policies and programmes. To do this, we undertake activities in three areas:

- 1) enabling governments and other stakeholders to address individual, institutional and systemic barriers to evidence use in decision-making;
- 2) translating evidence and proactively promoting its uptake in decision-making; and
- 3) strengthening the capacity of researchers and knowledge intermediaries in evidence translation and policy engagement, and advancing learning and networking among Evidence-Informed Decision-Making (EIDM) experts across Africa.

Our research addresses specific questions to provide evidence that is relevant to the policy process and program implementation. Our unique approach, which puts policymakers at the centre of our interventions, and takes a holistic approach to addressing barriers to evidence use, makes us the region's thought leader in EIDM practices in Africa.

During the 2015-2019 strategic plan period, we focused on communicating our unique identity as a research and policy institute to science funders and researchers, partly because EIDM in the development field was relatively new in Africa.

Our pioneering efforts contributed to the growing recognition of the important role that EIDM actors and organisations such as AFIDEP can play to promote evidence use in development. Internally, AFIDEP sought to identify the type of research that we should engage in; where in the research-to-policy and practice process to place emphasis in our work, and whether to go beyond enabling evidence use in policy formulation to supporting programme implementation. Through these efforts, we have identified the following types of research that we should undertake to play our role effectively in promoting EIDM:



Focused empirical research, where we respond to specific policy questions.



Synthesis of evidence, including rapid evidence and systematic reviews.



Secondary analysis of data and comparative regional analyses.



Implementation research, to provide evidence on scaling up and contextualising interventions.



Policy analysis and evaluation

Our policy work is focused around **evidence use in decision-making** and **understanding the political processes and contexts** in policymaking. In the new strategy period, AFIDEP will put more emphasis on **analysing the political economy** to understand better the decision-making and policy formulation processes in the public sector. In a change from the previous strategy, we will go beyond informing policy formulation to providing **technical assistance in programme implementation and evaluation**.

Our revised mandate is defined as follows: *“to nurture a culture of evidence use in decision-making so that the right investments are made*

towards development, thus enhancing people’s general well-being”. In Strategy 2024, AFIDEP will strengthen this mandate and its position as the leading EIDM institute in Africa as described in Section 4.

AFIDEP’s sub-Saharan Africa regional impact has largely been limited to Eastern and Southern Africa, due to the Institute’s geographical presence in Kenya and Malawi. In Strategy 2024, we expect to have greater geographical reach by **building strong partnerships and strengthening the capacity of other knowledge experts** to expand our scope and vision continent-wide.

OUR MANDATE

To nurture a culture of evidence use in decision-making so that the right investments are made towards development, thus enhancing people’s general well-being.

1.2 OUR VISION, MISSION AND VALUES

Our Vision	An Africa where evidence is used consistently to transform lives.
Our Mission	<p>We promote the use of evidence in the design and implementation of development policies and programmes.</p> <p>We synthesise and translate evidence, analyse data, and strengthen capacity in evidence use for stronger political commitment to sustainable development, good use of resources, and greater accountability.</p>
AFIDEP Values	<p>Accountability we are accountable and transparent in all our dealings</p> <p>Focus we are focused and objective in our work</p> <p>Integrity we do what is right</p> <p>Diversity we value diverse opinions and inclusivity</p> <p>Excellence we continuously strive for excellence</p> <p>Passion we are passionate about our work</p>

1.3 KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Decision-making in the development policy space involves multiple actors, including state actors such as parliamentarians, and government officers; development partners; researchers; non-state actors such as Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), ecumenical/faith-based organisations (FBOs); the media, the private sector, and the public, all working to improve the quality of life of citizens. Regional economic bodies also play important roles in influencing or guiding national policies in health, education, agriculture, the environment, etc. Examples of such regional bodies include the East African Community (EAC); the Southern African Development Community (SADC); the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); the Economic Community of Central African States

(ECCAS), and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD). At continental level, the African Union Commission (AUC) is a key stakeholder in policy development. Globally, United Nation agencies and bilateral partners, including the World Bank, UNFPA, World Health Organisation, the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development, (USAID) the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and others, also influence some national policies.

While national governments (the executive, legislature, and judiciary) have the mandate to produce national public policies and to implement public programmes, these stakeholders play equally important roles such as:



Part of the more than 30 distinguished scholars from East and West Africa who convened for a workshop in Nairobi in May 2019 that sought to increase their capacity to drive evidence uptake in government decision-making, through knowledge sharing on the pathways to nurturing a culture of evidence-informed decision making (EIDM) in government. The workshop was co-convened by AFIDEP and the African Academy of Sciences (AAS).

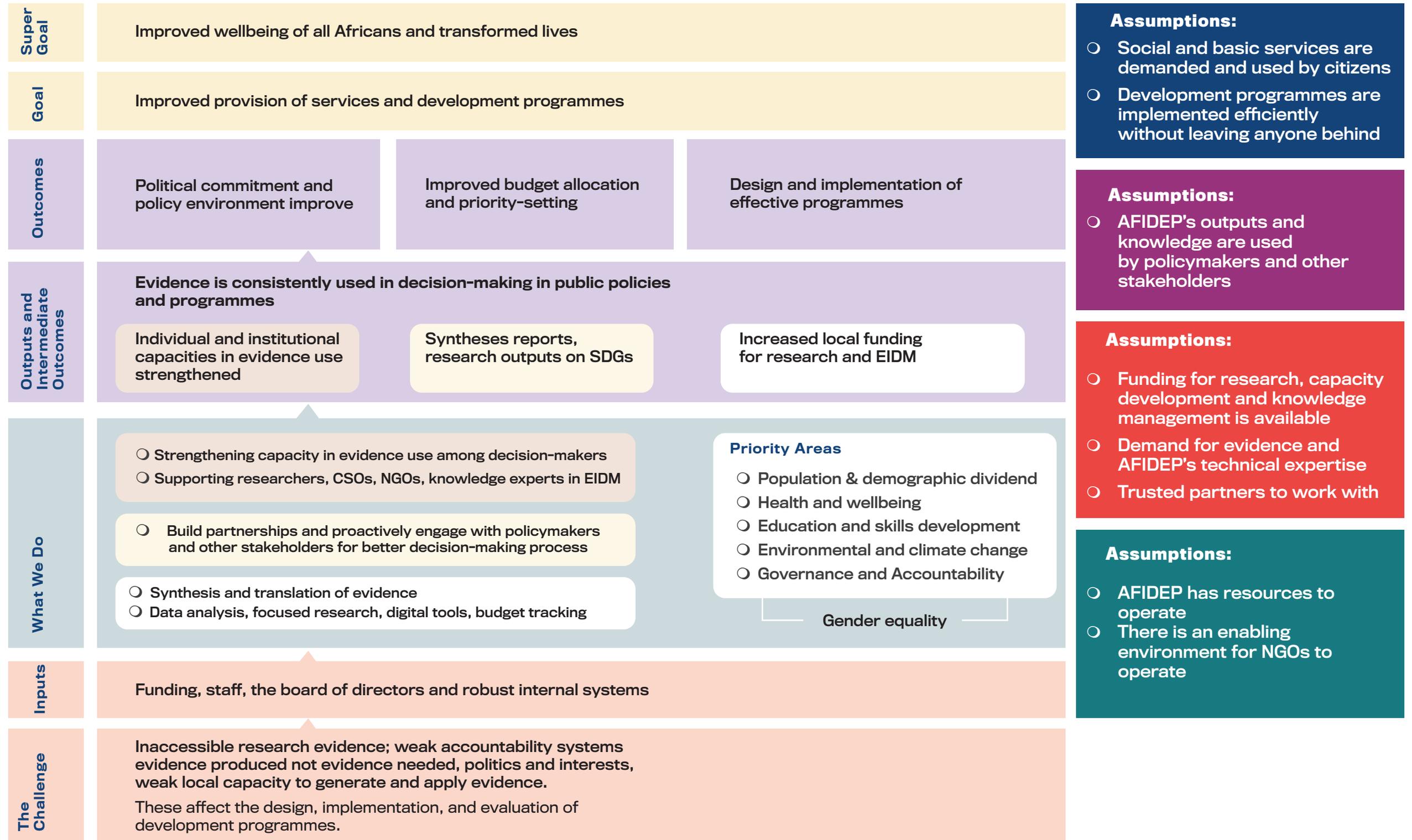
- Producing evidence to support the design and implementation of policies and programmes;
- Partnering with the government on programme implementation;
- Providing funding for public services;
- Making governments accountable to their commitments and to the people through citizen-led accountability mechanisms.

AFIDEP’s role is to empower all stakeholders to consistently use evidence in public policy decision-making for sustainable development and greater accountability. In Strategy 2024, AFIDEP will scale up its work with multiple state and non-state stakeholders, to **support evidence-informed decision-making in the public sector**.

1.4 OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

AFIDEP contributes to the achievement of sustainable development in Africa by promoting a culture of evidence-informed decision making, and empowering decision-makers to use evidence consistently. Our Theory of Change, illustrated in Figure 2, represents our assumptions of the linkages from the challenges to our inputs, then outputs, outcomes and goals.

Figure 3: Theory of Change: AFIDEP's Strategy 2024





1.5 OUR APPROACH

Our approach includes the following activities:

Synthesis and translation of evidence

We conduct systematic reviews and rapid synthesis of evidence. We also review policy documents, and study programme environments to identify opportunities where evidence can be used to improve the quality and reach of public services, especially to under-served populations.

Research

Our research addresses or anticipates specific policy questions. We conduct secondary analysis of data on the SDGs, to understand patterns and trends and compare and contrast with progress across the African continent. We also contribute evidence to discourses on topical issues through research publications, discussion papers, and conference presentations.

Providing technical assistance

We enable local, national, and regional governments to integrate various issues in their development plans and budgeting processes, and to manage programme implementation and performance. We support governments to conduct policy reviews, analyses of existing survey, census, and administrative data, scenario building and forecasting.

Bringing evidence directly to decision-makers in clear, usable formats

AFIDEP provides direct technical assistance in the use of evidence to government teams that design policies, strategies and intervention programmes.

Connecting researchers and decision-makers

Our approach of working hand-in-hand with decision-makers at sub-national, national and regional levels enables us to understand their evidence gaps, which we communicate to researchers, to ensure that they produce evidence that meets these needs.

Building EIDM expertise across the continent

We train policymakers to strengthen their leadership and skills for EIDM. We also strengthen the capacity and skills of researchers and knowledge translators in effective engagement with policymakers.

Partnerships

To multiply our impact, we partner with diverse stakeholders, including other knowledge experts, researchers, development partners, CSOs, NGOs, ecumenical bodies/FBOs, the private sector and the media.

Strengthening the African voice in global development discourse

We use the results of our analyses and our experience gained from working with decision-makers in Africa to inform the policies of the international development community and their investments in Africa, to ensure that their priorities for the continent take the perspectives of African professionals into account.



1.6 OUR EXPECTED OUTCOMES

We believe that increased consideration and utilisation of research evidence in policy-making will result in the following:



Increased political commitment to achieving the SDGs and addressing development challenges



Improved allocation of financial, technical and human resources to accelerate progress on the SDGs



Design and implementation of more efficient and evidence-informed interventions and programmes for achieving the SDGs

Consequently more people, particularly the poorest and marginalised, will have access to basic and social services which will ultimately contribute to improved quality of life and sustainable development in Africa.

1.7 CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

AFIDEP's Critical Success Factors (CSFs) are as follows:

Input to output level

- AFIDEP has the resources to support its work with governments, regional bodies, CSOs, NGOs, FBOs, researchers and the private sector.
- It continues to attract, develop and retain highly-qualified staff and has effective systems for managing finances and human resources.
- An enabling political and legal environment exists in Africa for AFIDEP's work.

Output to intermediate outcome level

- Funding is available for research, capacity development and knowledge management.
- There is demand for evidence and AFIDEP's technical expertise.
- Trusted partnerships exist with governments, research institutes, knowledge experts, and data tool developers.

Outcome level

- **Decision-makers can access and use evidence** in deciding budget allocation and the design and implementation of equitable development policies and programmes.

Goal level

- Development programmes are implemented efficiently and equitably.
- Citizens demand, access and use basic and social services including health facilities, water and sanitation and schools.

2

Strategic Focus

Over the next five years (2020-2024), AFIDEP will concentrate on strengthening the capacity of decision-makers to use evidence, and providing research evidence and technical support for actualising Africa's potential for sustained economic development. AFIDEP will also concentrate on strengthening its internal systems and processes in order to maximise the impact of its work. African Union's *Agenda 2063 - The Africa We Want* and the SDGs provide the framework for AFIDEP's work on the African continent.

2.1 PRIORITY FOCUS AREAS

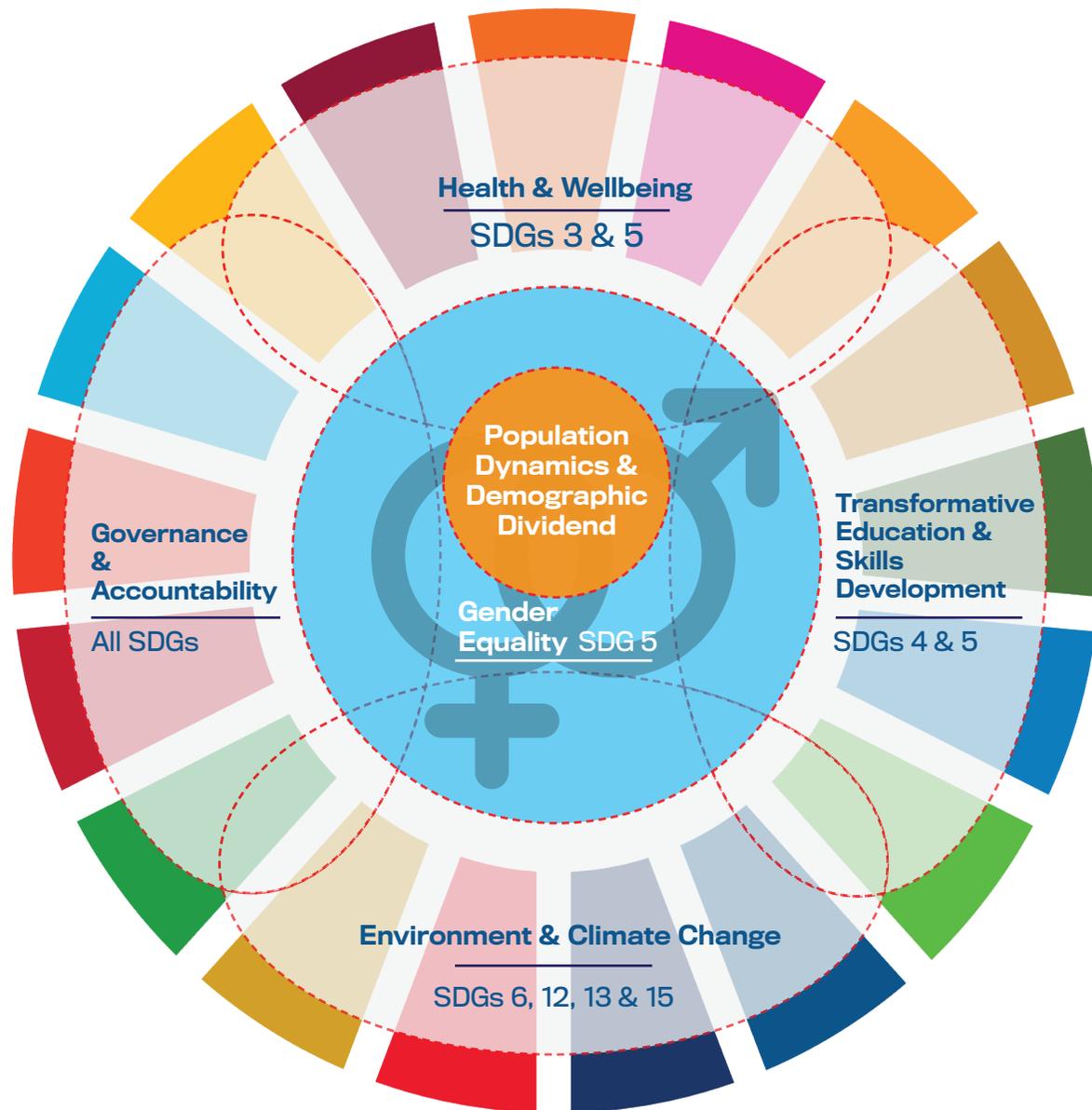
Our work with 13 African governments⁵ on harnessing the Demographic Dividend (DD) between 2015 and 2019 has led us to believe that accelerating the pillars of DD⁶ will also advance progress in achieving many of the SDGs and building human capital. Therefore, our priority focus areas for Strategy 2024 will be aligned to the pillars

of the DD framework, while at the same time we will remain responsive to requests to work on related development issues. Figure 3 highlights the alignment of our Strategy 2024 priority focus areas to the pillars for harnessing the demographic dividend in Africa and the SDGs.

⁵ List of 13 countries of AFIDEP project implementation: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Senegal, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

⁶ AFIDEP developed the first ever conceptual framework for understanding Africa's prospects of harnessing the demographic dividend. www.afidep.org. In the framework, we define the following pillars as necessary investment areas: Health and family planning; Education and skills development; Economic reforms that promote job creation; Female empowerment; Environment and Climate change; and Governance and accountability.

Figure 4: AFIDEP's Priority Focus Areas for Strategy 2024



PRIORITY 1: Population Dynamics and Demographic Dividend

Population issues are central to most of Africa’s challenges and therefore, population dynamics is a major cross-cutting factor in achieving the majority of the SDGs. Similarly, in the DD framework, achieving a population age-structure which has more economically productive people relative to dependents is a necessary pre-condition for harnessing the demographic dividend. Thus our first priority focus area will be population dynamics, focusing on the drivers of rapid population growth, especially high fertility, the status of women, unmet need for contraception, youth demographics, early childbearing and migration.

Under the 2015-2019 strategic plan, the Institute, working in collaboration with the African Union, a strategic regional stakeholder, played a key role in propelling harnessing the demographic dividend to the top of African governments’ development priorities. In Strategy 2024, we will consolidate this work and go beyond agenda-setting to help governments develop and implement integrated demographic dividend delivery systems with robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL). We will also highlight the dividend that can be gained by achieving gender equality in all spheres of life.



PRIORITY 2: Health and Wellbeing

Most African governments are not spending enough on health care. As a result, the SDG 3 targets of universal health coverage and financial risk protection by 2030 are unlikely to be achieved. Without strong health systems, African countries are unlikely to make significant progress on persistent health challenges as well as emerging epidemics such as non-communicable diseases, antimicrobial resistance, neglected tropical diseases.

Under Strategy 2024, we will reinforce our work in health by providing capacity strengthening and technical assistance for evidence-informed decision-making. Specifically, we will focus on:

-  Designing of **inclusive health policies** and **programmes** as well as performance monitoring of existing interventions
-  Achieving **universal access** to primary healthcare, health financing and financial risk protection, including access to health insurance
-  Addressing **inequalities in health outcomes**, including for under-served sub-groups such as people with disability and older people
-  **Universal access** to sexual and reproductive health and rights, elimination of harmful practices and gender-based violence, and promotion of adolescent's wellbeing



PRIORITY 3: Transformative Education and Skills Development

AFIDEP's strategy for Transformative Education and Skills Development (TESD) will have as its overall purpose the promotion of evidence use in education policymaking in Africa. AFIDEP's goal will be to strengthen Africa's education systems for inclusive, equitable, quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. The TESP strategy will also focus on how Africa's education systems can take advantage of technological advances to leap into the Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIR). AFIDEP's approach to education will be premised on supporting African governments to achieve SDG 4 and Agenda 2063. We will use our expertise in capacity strengthening, evidence synthesis and translation, technical assistance, and engagement with policymakers and other key stakeholders to improve evidence uptake in informing education policy in Africa.

Specifically, we will support the use of research evidence in teaching, learning and teacher development for:

-  **Curricula innovation**, improvements in teaching and learning outcomes to meet the minimum proficiencies in mathematics, science and reading
-  **Scaling up** high quality innovations, including use of online portals and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs)
-  **Improving skills for men and women** through Technical & Vocational Education Training (TVET) to ensure employment, decent jobs, & entrepreneurship
-  **Ensuring gender equality** in access to quality higher education and programmes in science, technical skills and mathematics
-  **Supporting African governments** to make the right investments to achieve universal access to at least 12 years of quality education



PRIORITY 4: The Environment and Climate Change

This priority is linked to SDGs 6, 12, 13, and 15. In Strategy 2024 we will build on our previous assessment of the readiness of African countries to deal with vulnerability to the combined effects of rapid population growth and climate change. We will support governments to apply systems thinking and planning in their efforts to address the two challenges. Focus in this area will be on promoting:



Multi-dimensional approaches to understanding intersections between population and gender dynamics and the environment in development planning.



Good stewardship of natural resources to halt environmental degradation (biodiversity loss, air pollution, desertification, and land degradation).



Equitable access to potable water and improved sanitation.



Monitoring of national and regional policies and action plans for sustainable agriculture, food security, environment and climate change and disaster preparedness.



PRIORITY 5: Governance and Accountability

Governance and accountability are linked to the achievement of all the SDGs and are focus areas in their own right. In the previous strategy period, we started work on governance and accountability by helping parliaments of Malawi and Kenya to institutionalise strategies to enable them to improve their oversight functions. In Strategy 2024, the Institute will step up its work on strengthening capacity for evidence-informed decision-making as a mechanism for enhancing better governance and accountability in service delivery and use of public resources. In governance, we will also look at its intersection with gender equality.

Specific attention will be paid to:



Optimising the effectiveness of African parliaments in enhancing democratic governance and accountability, through their legislative, governance, and representation roles.



Improving the capacity and functionality of sub-national and national governments for better decision-making.



Enhancing the role of non-state actors (media, NGOs, CSOs, the private sector and FBOs) in ensuring good governance and accountability.

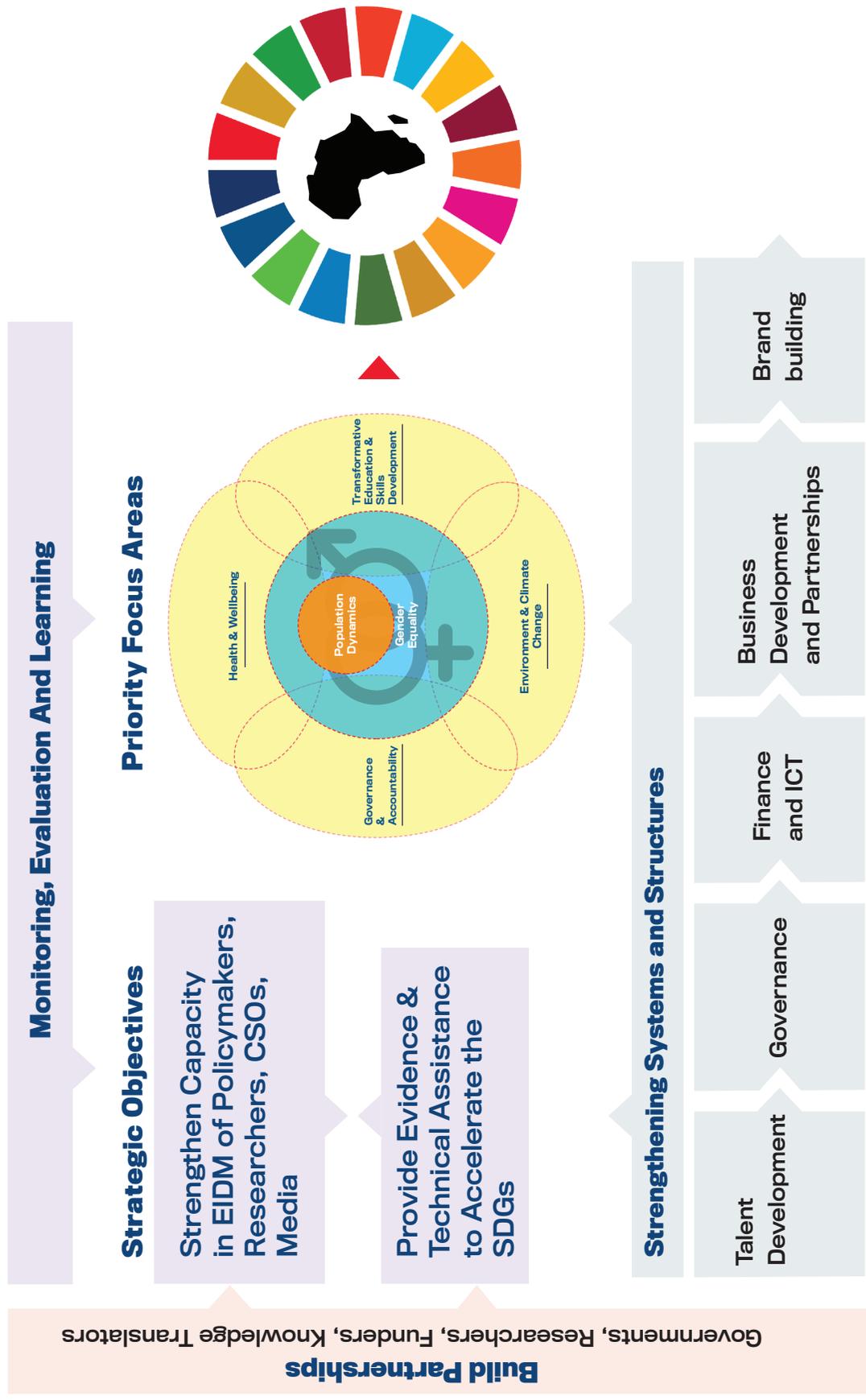


Working with stakeholders, including those who help to ensure that governments and decision-makers are accountable to their citizens.



Women in decision-making positions, women in political spheres, and accountability to regional and national commitments to gender equality.

FIGURE 5: AFIDEP'S THREE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES ARE INFORMED BY OUR STRATEGIC MAP



2.2 OUR STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

1. Strengthen Capacity in Evidence Use for Decision-Making

In order for Africa to achieve sustained, equitable development, the decision-making practices— especially in the public sector —should be underpinned by evidence. This requires **a culture of consistent evidence use**, especially in the public sector. Strategy 2024 will build on and expand efforts started in the previous strategic plan period, to strengthen the capacity for using evidence for decision-making. Specifically, we will focus on the following action areas:

Action 1.1

Institutional capacity development for EIDM in African countries

- Build partnerships with regional networks, government agencies and non-state actors for sustainable institutional systems and structures for EIDM.
- Conduct needs assessments, then design and implement appropriate interventions for **strengthening institutions' capacities for EIDM**.
- Support relevant government agencies to use administrative and other data for stronger monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Action 1.2

Empower individual African policymakers, CSOs and non-state actors on EIDM

- Deliver training and mentoring programmes to empower policymakers to use evidence in decision-making.
- In partnership with strong regional and global institutions, design and implement senior and mid-level professional fellowship programmes for peer learning.
- Train CSOs, the media and FBOs to enable them use evidence to strengthen scrutiny within their sectors and to promote greater government accountability.
- Develop a cadre of experts to play leadership roles in promoting EIDM across the continent.

Action 1.3

Develop the capacity of African and global researchers

- Train and mentor researchers on how to synthesise, translate and package evidence to enhance its use.
- In partnership with other institutions, train researchers on policy analysis, stakeholder engagement, and communication.

Action 1.4

Build a vibrant community of practice (CoP) in Africa for EIDM

- Convene meetings with other EIDM experts to facilitate exchange of ideas and learning.
- Document and share lessons on '*What works?*'

2. Provide Evidence and Technical Assistance to Accelerate Achievement of SDGs

During the previous strategic planning period, the Institute successfully supported many African governments in policy formulation. While the response was largely positive, **we identified gaps in the use of evidence for priority-setting, programme implementation and performance management**. Policymakers' requests for evidence to help them move from policy formulation to prioritisation of interventions further confirmed the existence of these gaps. Over the next five years, the Institute will respond to these gaps by providing technical assistance on **use of evidence throughout the policy-to-programme pathway** in our priority focus areas. Specifically, we will focus on **four key actions areas**:

Action 2.1

Synthesis, Translation and Packaging of Evidence

- Produce syntheses of evidence in response to specific demands for evidence from policymakers (e.g. for policy formulation, programme reviews, and evaluation or SDG reporting).
- Produce Green Papers – topical discussion papers to stimulate debate and agenda setting.
- Communicate evidence effectively through communication products (e.g. policy briefs, dashboards, infographics and maps).

Action 2.2

Data Analysis for Monitoring Development Efforts

- Analyse existing **survey, administrative and other data** to monitor progress of SDGs in our priority areas.
- Conduct sub-national, national and regional comparative analyses to inform national and regional tracking and monitoring of progress.
- Create accessible databases for 'at-a-glance' monitoring of the progress of projects.
- Create cost-effectiveness analyses and scenario modelling, to enable policymakers to prioritise and understand policy options.

Action 2.3
Focused Research

- Conduct research responding to, or anticipating specific policy questions in our five priority areas.
- Conduct demand-driven implementation research on how best to scale-up proven interventions.
- Develop innovative tools for performance management of policies and programmes, including budget tracking and resource mapping.
- Share our research through peer-reviewed journals and non-academic platforms.

Action 2.4
Digital Repository of Relevant Policies and Evidence

- Create a digital repository for relevant policies and key publications.
- Create digital platforms for annual monitoring of **core indicators** of inclusive development.
- Produce metadata and trend analyses of progress on SDGs.
- Organise online discussion forums to track progress on SDGs and related topics.

3. Strengthening Our Systems and Structures

Under the 2015-2019 strategic plan, AFIDEP grew in terms of human resources, income and in the portfolio of projects. The Institute continues to evolve and develop enabling systems and structures for staff and partners. Our SWOT analyses and stakeholder surveys helped the Institute to identify operational areas which require improved efficiency. Under Strategy 2024, the Institute will invest resources in **six action areas**, to maximise the impact of our work while continuously sustaining high performance standards and using resources prudently.

Action 3.1
Talent Management and Development

- Manage and develop talent to attract and retain the best people.
- Recruit and develop staff in diverse disciplines and to support our work.
- Improve our performance management system by training line managers and project leaders to conduct results-based performance management.
- Develop the capacity of partners and our short-term technical consultants to fill gaps in our expertise.
- Streamline the Institute’s Associate Fellows’ programme by engaging senior fellows to make substantive contributions to the Institute’s work.

Action 3.2
Strengthen the Institute’s Governance

The Institute will be led by a **Board of Directors**, comprising talented, experienced and internationally renowned professionals, who have complementary skills and experience. The Board’s role in executing Strategy 2024 will be to:

- Provide strategic oversight to the Institute’s work and monitor the delivery of this strategy.
- Keep abreast of best practices, including local, regional and international regulations and laws pertaining to NGOs/Public Benefit Organisations (PBO).
- Ensure that the Institute’s policies are benchmarked against the best in the sector and beyond.
- Serve as ambassadors of the Institute to funders and external stakeholders and champion its mission and vision.

Action 3.3
Strengthen Finance and ICT Systems

The Institute will prioritise the following:

- Enhancing efficiencies, audits, controls and decision-making and ensuring that financial management and reporting are of the highest standard.
- Strengthening the technical and human capacity of our Finance and IT departments.
- Strengthening the Institute’s Business Continuity Plan, ensuring that it addresses required aspects, including data back-ups, **risk** mitigation, financial resources and a recovery plan.
- Continuing the process of automation and integration of financial systems, human resources and administration systems.

Action 3.4
Business Development and Partnerships

As the funding environment becomes increasingly competitive, there is need for AFIDEP to increase its resource mobilisation efforts. The Institute will:

- Target funding opportunities that are aligned with its strategy and actively seek unrestricted funds.
- Train staff in grant-writing.
- Refine and fully implement the Resource Mobilisation Strategy to grow our pool of funders.

Action 3.4

Business Development and Partnerships (cont.d)

- Hire more business development officers and grants managers to strengthen the Business Development Office.

Our market analysis helped us to identify potential partners who we can work with, including research organisations, EIDM institutions, CSOs, state and non-state actors including NGOs. AFIDEP choose partnerships which:

- **Amplify or complement** our work in priority areas.
- **Contribute to major step-changes** in our technical competencies.
- **Expand the geographic reach** of our work, to include **West and Central Africa**.

We will also seek **partnerships that are key to co-development or implementation of programmes** such as placement of policy fellows and other joint programmes, and who expand **the impact** of our work.

Action 3.5

Brand Building

AFIDEP draws inspiration from the words of American author and speaker, Marty Neumeier, on brand strategies: *"It's not what you say you are, it's what they say you are"*. In this spirit, over the next five years, we will:

- **Establish a brand identity** aligned with Strategy 2024, ensuring a systematic approach to marketing AFIDEP as the **go-to policy institute in EIDM and SDG work**.
- **Create ownership** of the brand, by refining our core messaging on who we are and what we do.
- **Communicate the impact** of our work in a manner that is consistent and resonates with the ideals and emotions of both internal and external stakeholders.
- Invest in **relationships with media houses and online portals**, to ensure that AFIDEP's products and initiatives are highly visible.
- **Increase knowledge production** through publications in peer-reviewed journals, as well as publishing targeted, policy-specific products.
- Engage with **technical working or advisory groups** and ensure AFIDEP's active participation at EIDM events, conferences and other relevant fora in the development field.

Action 3.6

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Unit

Our new Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) unit will have two main functions:

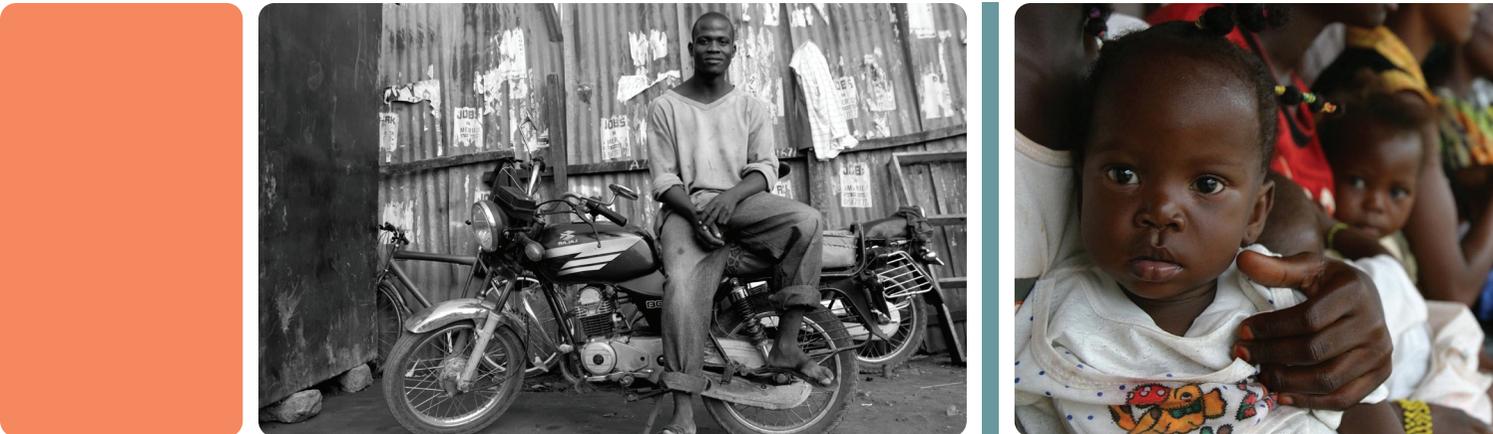
- To provide a **structure and framework for assessing our progress** in implementing this strategic plan, testing our theory of change and demonstrating the impact of our work.
- **Developing monitoring, evaluation and learning tools** which decision-makers can use for performance improvement of initiatives to support the SDGs.

We will invest in staff with expertise in Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) to lead this work and to ensure that we have robust systems for data collection, analysis, and reporting. We will participate in collective learning through interaction with other MEL experts and regular training.

3

Looking Back: Our Past Successes

3.1 INFLUENCING DIALOGUE AND POLICY IN POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT



**13 countries
in Africa have
adopted the
demographic
dividend reports
developed by
AFIDEP**

In the 2015-2019 strategic plan period, the Institute, working in partnership with strategic state actors, made tremendous progress in translating research evidence and enabling its uptake in decision-making processes in sub-Saharan Africa. In particular, **we provided leadership in the international discourse on the demographic dividend (DD) agenda.** A Demographic dividend is an economic benefit that countries can realise if they achieve a favourable population age structure that has more productive workers relative to consumers.

Our Impact on the Demographic Dividend Agenda

Demographic Dividend African Union's 2017 theme

The African Union's meeting of Heads of State in 2017 adopted the theme, "Harnessing the demographic dividend through investments in youth", following AFIDEP's work on DD and support to the African Union, through the Office of the President of Malawi.



13: Number of countries that have adopted DD

Thirteen countries adopted the DD reports developed by AFIDEP and six (Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia) have incorporated the recommendations into their medium-term or long-term development strategies.

Malawi commits to ending child marriage

The Malawi Minister of Gender, Children, Disability and Social Welfare committed to ending child marriages by 2027 following our challenge and engagement at the 2017 Gender Policy Dialogue.



UK Government prioritises population in their Africa Strategy

The UK Government included "population" as a priority area in its strategy for Africa, prompted by AFIDEP's study on Regional Analysis of Youth Demographics in East Africa and presentations on Africa's population growth trajectories.

Malawi Government increases budget allocation for health

The Malawi Government increased the budget allocation for family planning and the health sector as a result of AFIDEP's technical support to the Parliamentary Committee for Health.



3.2 ADVANCING EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

AFIDEP made considerable progress in developing capacity for evidence use in two African Parliaments (Kenya and Malawi,) and Ministries of Health. We also strengthened the capacity of researchers and other evidence-informed decision making (EIDM) experts in the region, and contributed to dialogue on the subject as thought-leaders. Examples of our success in this area are captured in Box 2 below.

Building the capacity for evidence-informed decision-making



Evidence use guidelines adopted by Ministries of Health

Guidelines for evidence use prepared by AFIDEP for the Ministries of Health and Parliaments of Kenya and Malawi are now widely in use. The first Africa Evidence Leadership award holder, the Head of the Research Department in the Malawi Parliament, was trained by AFIDEP.



Enhancing health accountability systems

The Government of Kenya incorporated a dashboard developed by AFIDEP into its National District Health Information System (DHMIS), to monitor performance and accountability for reproductive, maternal, neonatal, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH).



500: Number of policymakers trained on evidence use

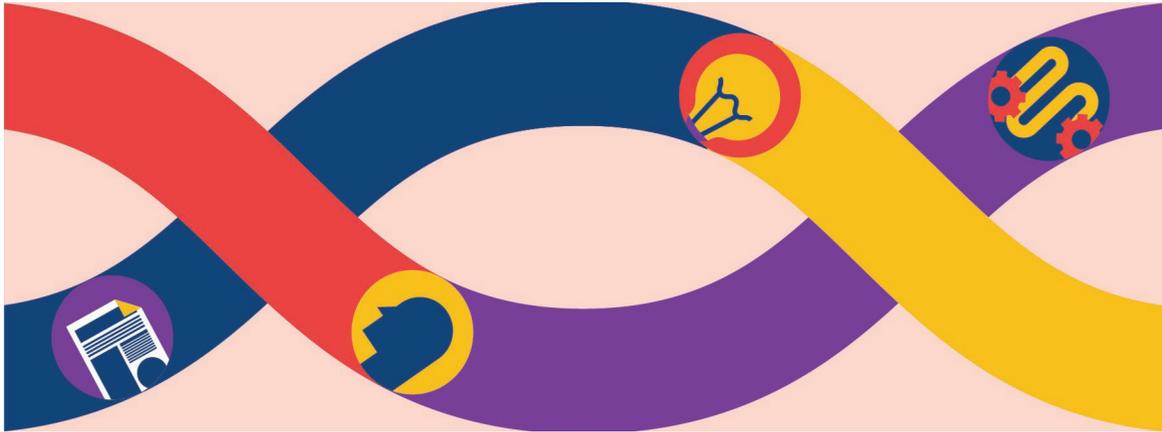
AFIDEP trained over 200 policymakers and researchers from Africa, Asia and Europe in EIDM. AFIDEP also trained over 300 government officials in 13 countries² to develop and interpret policy scenario modelling for the demographic dividend.



Enhancing the roles of African Parliaments

Malawi's Parliament adopted a report prepared by the Parliamentary Services Commission and the Parliamentary Legal Affairs Committee, with technical support from AFIDEP, to enhance its administrative and legal autonomy in discharging its duties.

² Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Swaziland, Senegal, Tanzania, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.



3.3 GROWING OUR ORGANISATIONAL CAPITAL

People, Growth, and Learning

Between 2015 and 2019, we expanded our staff by more than 60% to 35. We increased the number of PhD-trained staff from three to eight. The majority of our staff hold postgraduate degrees and are well-trained and skilled in systematic reviews, rapid synthesis, communications, writing, knowledge translation and packaging, and data analysis. We also expanded the membership of our Board of Directors to include eminent academics, professionals in strategy, finance, and operations research. We were supported in our work by 10 Associate Fellows.

AFIDEP partnered with the following global development funders: The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation; The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; the Grand Challenges Research Fund (UK); the National Institute for Health Research (UK); the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund; UNFPA (Global, regional and country-level); UNICEF; WHO; The World Bank; the Department for International Development (UK), (London and East African Research Fund); the United States Agency for International Aid (USAID); the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD);

the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Wellcome Trust. We developed a strategic partnership with UNFPA's East and Southern Africa regional office to support 24 governments in the region on population and development issues.

The Institute also strengthened partnerships with renowned research and development organisations, including the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM); the Malawi-Liverpool Wellcome Trust programme; the Population Reference Bureau (PRB); the Gutmacher Institute; the African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC); and the Palladium Group. In addition, AFIDEP established strategic collaborations with universities and other tertiary academic institutions including the University of Cape Town; the University of Southampton; London School of Economics (LSE); the University of Malawi; the University of Nairobi; the University of North Carolina; the University of Pennsylvania; Kenyatta University; and United States International University-Africa in Nairobi.

Branding and Products

In 2017, AFIDEP launched African Development Perspectives, a bi-annual magazine that publishes brief critical analyses of urgent policy issues on the continent to stimulate and inform policy and programme debate and decisions. In the 2015-2019 period, we participated in high-level meetings on evidence-informed decision making and UN meetings on the SDGs. AFIDEP staff were profiled on high-level platforms including the Lancet journal and on national television and newspapers in Botswana, Kenya and Malawi. We also participated in online discussions and dialogues on a range of topics including the demographic dividend, women in science, EIDM, gender-based violence (GBV), sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and education reforms. AFIDEP also won several accolades and awards. For example, in 2018 the Institute's essay on GBV in the work place was awarded 3rd place at the SHE³ Summit in Malawi.

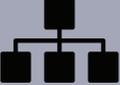
³ SHE stands for She, He, and the Equity of all people. SHE Summits offer training and conferences on inclusive leadership.

Internal Systems

A key part of AFIDEP's work during the 2015-2019 period was to make AFIDEP more efficient and effective. To this end, the Institute automated its financial and human resource operations; developed systems for internal project monitoring; and benchmarked its policies and guidelines on major international NGOs. We also developed and implemented strategies for communication, resource mobilisation and donor engagement. Between 2015 and 2019, our annual income grew by 36%, from USD 2.2 million to USD 3 million. About 66% of AFIDEP's financing from a diverse base of funders was restricted project funding.

3.4 LESSONS LEARNED FROM 2015-2019 PLAN PERIOD

The 2015-2019 strategic plan period was a time of considerable growth and successes for the Institute. We also learnt many lessons, which we have reflected on in developing Strategy 2024. Key among them are the following:

	The importance of the political economy in the policymaking process.
	The complexity of the policymaking process and its non-linearity.
	The challenge of attribution and measuring the impact of EIDM interventions.
	The importance of being clear about our niche in the development sector and not spreading ourselves too thinly.
	Managing the growth of the Institute to avoid over-commitment.
	The need to ensure that there is sufficient mentoring and support for early career policy analysts and researchers.
	Building partnerships to expand our work rather than having geographical presence in many countries.
	Strengthening our internal structures and systems.
	Strengthening our own technical competencies in EIDM, evidence synthesis, proposal writing, and monitoring and evaluation.

External stakeholders' perception of AFIDEP is very positive and highlights the need for the Institute's type of work on the continent. A challenge that external stakeholders have observed, which we intend to address in Strategy 2024, is the volume of work managed by the Institute, relative to the low number of senior staff. In **Strategic Objective 3** (Pg 40) we describe how we will address this.



4

The World We Work In

4.1 AFRICA'S DEVELOPMENT ROADMAP

In 2013, African countries made a 50-year commitment to implement the African Union's Agenda 2063: The Africa We Want, which is a framework for the continent's socio-economic transformation. The framework is founded on seven aspirations for the continent, which are inclusive growth and sustainable development; political integration; good governance and respect for human rights; peace and security; cultural identity and common values and ethics; people-driven inclusive and participatory development; and a united, resilient and influential global player and partner.

The countries reaffirmed these commitments in 2015 by signing the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) states that at goal level, there is **90% alignment between the two development frameworks**. However, at the turn of 2020, Africa's economic and social development progress is below what was envisaged in the SDGs and Agenda 2063. Currently, most of Africa is still classified as

low income (gross national income (GNI) per capita less than \$996). The 2018 World Bank income classification puts seven African countries in the upper-middle income category (GNI per capita between US \$3,896 and US \$12,055) and 19 in the lower-middle income category (GNI per capita between US\$996 and \$3,895). While all of the 17 SDGs and Agenda 2063 are important for Africa's development, the continent urgently needs to address five

major challenges if it is to catch up with other regions: **rapid population growth**; **low social and human development**; **non-inclusive economic growth**, characterised by **high levels of unemployment** and **under-employment** especially of youth (15-24 years) and women; weaknesses in managing vulnerabilities caused by **environmental and climate changes**; and **poor governance and accountability**.

4.2 WHY AFRICA NEEDS EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING

Globally, there is increasing importance for evidence-informed decision-making (EIDM) expertise. In particular, EIDM is being used to make decisions on critical aspects of development, such as developing public health guidelines, regulation of medicines, national school assessment methods, and global actions to address climate change. In Africa, the need for EIDM has never been greater than the present time. The ambitious targets of the SDGs and Agenda 2063, in a context of youthful and rapidly growing populations, low human capital and sluggish economic growth require African governments to carefully decide which programmes and interventions to invest in to get high returns. Yet, existing research evidence on Africa's development challenges and its potential solutions is not fully utilised.

There are many barriers to evidence use in the public sector in Africa, on both the supply and demand sides. On the supply side, most research that is produced is often not relevant to the specific policy questions that decision makers are grappling with. In addition, the evidence is often written in technical language and published in scientific journals. There is also a north-south imbalance in the production of research on Africa's developmental issues, whereby much of the highly cited research is led or authored by researchers from high-income countries. The result is that such research often does not reach the policymakers in Africa. When it does, there may be little engagement between the research producers and the policymakers, which is necessary to allow for deeper understanding of

the recommendations and options available to the policymakers. There is also a scarcity of experts who can synthesise, translate, and package the evidence for ready use by decision-makers.



Furthermore, most researchers do not consider that they have a role in enabling research uptake. On the demand side, policymakers' use of evidence is occasional, and rarely considered throughout the entire policy-making and implementation cycle. In part, this is because of the complex political context within which decisions are made and where evidence may be only one among many considerations, including political interests.

Evidence use is also often dependent on individuals and not institutionalised, so that when such staff leave, the practice disappears. Other barriers to evidence use include: low skills in evidence interpretation and use; under-utilisation of administrative, survey, census data; weak accountability systems; organisational systems and structures that do not incentivise EIDM; and lengthy bureaucratic processes when developing policies so that evidence used at the start often loses currency.

Failing to use credible evidence has consequences, such as resources being wasted on ineffective programmes, decisions made that perpetuate

inequalities, weak accountability mechanisms, and poor economic performance. Africa is at a crossroad - if the continent is to escape the legacy of extreme poverty and underdevelopment, it needs to embrace EIDM in planning and implementation, which can help governments set the right development priorities, design effective interventions, and improve performance of programmes.

⁴How to Note: Assessing the Strength of Evidence.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/how-to-note-assessing-the-strength-of-evidence>

What constitutes evidence?

When defining "evidence" most EIDM experts lean towards the broader definition: "the available body of facts or information indicating whether a belief or proposition is true or valid". This is the definition used in this document. AFIDEP assesses the quality of evidence using an adaptation of existing frameworks such as DFID's "How to Note: Assessing the strength of evidence."⁴

Policy-making involves a wide range of actors including technical experts, researchers, civil servants, parliamentarians, CSOs, NGOs, the private sector, development partners, the media and the public. EIDM interventions therefore need to engage with all these stakeholders and take into consideration the unpredictable influence of politics. AFIDEP, through its emphasis on use of credible evidence, is uniquely placed to support decision-makers in Africa to accelerate the achievement of the SDGs and Agenda 2063. The previous five years were of tremendous growth for AFIDEP in terms of strengthening our expertise and experience of supporting decision-makers to make better decisions for progress in achieving development goals. In this document we outline AFIDEP's priorities and goals for the period 2020-2024.

"...Failing to use credible evidence has consequences, such as resources being wasted on ineffective programmes, decisions made that perpetuate inequalities, weak accountability mechanisms, and poor economic performance."

4.3 OUR ANALYSIS OF THE DEVELOPMENT CONTEXT

AFIDEP's Strategy 2024 has been informed by our assessment of the context and environment that we work in as well as the feedback received from our stakeholders. The 17 SDGs launched in 2015 are a roadmap for addressing global challenges including poverty, food insecurity, inequality, poor health, climate change and the environment, peace and justice.

Reports by the World Bank and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) indicate that Africa's progress on the SDGs is already off-track in eradicating extreme poverty, provision of basic services, addressing vulnerability to environmental degradation, reducing child malnutrition, achieving gender equality, and good health. From our analysis of Africa's challenges and comparing with other regions of the world, we have identified five challenges that will be priority areas of engagement for the Institute over the next decade: **rapid population growth; weak social and human capital development; non-inclusive economic growth** characterised by high levels of unemployment and under-employment, especially among youth and women; weaknesses in managing vulnerabilities caused by **environmental and climate changes**; and **poor governance and accountability**.

CHALLENGE 1: Rapid Population Growth

Africa's population is projected to increase from about 1.3 billion people in 2018 to 2.2 billion people by 2050. However, the infrastructure and availability of basic services, such as schools and hospitals, are not increasing at the same rate as the population growth, which currently stands at 2% compared with the global rate of 1.1%. On average, an African woman has four children in her lifetime, compared to the global average of 2.5 children. Early marriages and teenage childbearing is widespread, which contributes to high achieved fertility. The demand for large family sizes is still high in parts of West and Central Africa. Although the use of modern contraception is increasing, there is still high unmet need for family planning in Africa. Indeed, more than 50 million married women in

sub-Saharan Africa, who would like to postpone the next birth or stop childbearing altogether, are not using a modern method of contraception. Lack of access to quality reproductive health services is most acute among young people and the poor. With about 60% of the population aged below 25 years, Africa's population is dominated by dependent children and youth, which hamper economic development. Making smart and equitable investments in reproductive health, education, skills development, innovation and job creation can unleash the potential of Africa's youth to propel the continent to accelerated economic development and attainment of demographic dividends in each country.

CHALLENGE 2: Weak Social and Human Capital Development

The 2018 World Bank Human Capital Index puts the majority of African countries in the bottom

quartile on social development and human capital investment. Although most African countries have

implemented free primary education (FPE) and some have introduced free secondary education, the level of investment in education has not matched the increase in the population of children and youth. Coupled with out-dated curriculum and teaching techniques, and inadequate technical and vocational education (TVET) opportunities for out-of-school youth, this has led to low quality of education. Subsequently, most youth leave school with insufficient skills to compete on the labour market. Africa is also not producing enough PhD graduates, meaning that there are insufficient numbers of people who can take up university faculty positions. In 2019, experts at the World

Economic Forum (WEF) predicted that the world is on the brink of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (FIR), which will be a fusion of technologies that will "blur the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres and [will] be disruptive to every industry and system." Despite the emphasis on technology, the WEF suggest that the Fourth Industrial Revolution will also need arts-based skills, including creativity, just as much as critical thinking and problem solving. The education systems in Africa will need to respond rapidly so that the continent's workforce can take advantage of the FIR. With respect to health, childhood mortality in Africa has fallen sharply in recent years. Between 1990



and 2017, under-five mortality in the continent fell by more than 50%, from 163 deaths in every 1000 live births to around 74 deaths. However, these averages mask wide disparities between and within countries. In particular, neonatal and maternal mortality rates have remained stubbornly high compared to other regions of the world. Similarly, access to sexual and reproductive health services is poor, especially for adolescents and youth, and HIV incidence rates are increasing amongst these sub-groups. The continent also faces the dual challenge of a high burden of communicable and non-communicable diseases. According to the 2017 *Global Burden of Disease* report by

the Institute of Health Metrics, non-communicable diseases are now the leading causes of mortality in Africa. However, the health sector remains critically underfunded and the continent's governments need to step up their efforts to fulfil their promises on health spending. Currently, African countries spend on average only 10% of their gross domestic product on health, well short of the 15% committed in Abuja in 2001. Furthermore, according to the 2016 World Health Organization report, Public Financing for Health in Africa, only 63% of the money allocated to health is spent, and less than 4% is spent on essential services.

CHALLENGE 3: Non-inclusive Economic Growth

A 2018 McKinsey report described Africa as “a 1.2 billion–person market on the cusp of transformative growth.” The report highlights the huge business potential of the continent and impressive GDP growth rates, notwithstanding its people, diversity, land mass, and natural resources. Yet, this economic growth is not inclusive as millions remain underemployed, unemployed and living below the poverty line, barely surviving on less than 1 US dollar a day. Youth in Africa face high unemployment, with an estimated 2.3 new entrants into the job market for every job created, a situation which will be exacerbated as the youth population reaches 830 million by 2050. While this youthful population has great potential to contribute to Africa’s economic growth, this resource is in danger of being squandered due to low levels of education, lack of employable skills, and the lack of paid work opportunities. Persons with disability also face significant disadvantage in employment opportunities in Africa.

African women also do not enjoy the benefits of economic growth equally with men.

In most of African countries and globally, women are paid much less than men for the same job. For example, the 2018 World Economic Forum report suggests that in Algeria, men earn on average 447% more than women. It is worth noting however, that some African countries such as Cameroon and Rwanda have made progress in reducing the gender pay gap. Women’s participation in the economy can be strengthened by ensuring that there are equal opportunities in education through to tertiary education, greater gender sensitivity and balance in politics and decision-making, and enacting gender equality policies and laws. The formal jobs sector in Africa is stagnant and future trends are unclear. The private sector, which

is a major source of formal jobs in other parts of the world, is heavily dependent on the public sector, so that the main growth in jobs is in low-paid informal work. Urbanisation presents an opportunity for economic growth and improved quality of life, if there is good infrastructure, employment opportunities, and skilled labour. By 2030, it is anticipated that more than half of all Africans will live in urban areas. Therefore, countries must accelerate urban planning to ensure that urban areas can cope with the increase in population.

Africa’s adoption of information technology (IT), especially mobile phones, has been rapid and innovative. The continent was first to use mobile money transfers (notably in Kenya, where AFIDEP was founded), an innovation now adopted globally. IT and mobile phones are also changing cultures, security, politics, education, communication, and connectedness. Yet, the use of technology in education, health, and manufacturing still lags behind, compared to other continents, in part because of low skills in IT. However, Africa is at the cusp of an economic transformation and it may well benefit from FIR through smart policies and investments. How the continent uses and manages its human resource and embraces opportunities such as foreign investment, FIR, and urbanisation will shape the economic development of the continent in the immediate and long-term future.



CHALLENGE 4: Environmental and Climate Changes

The African continent is endowed with precious natural resources and a large land mass and requires good stewardship so that these resources can be enjoyed by many generations to come. However, rapid population growth and urbanisation are putting a strain on the continent’s natural resources especially forests. The 2017 Brookings publication, Foresight Africa, predicted that Africa will be disproportionately affected by climate change in future through water shortages, food insecurity, extreme weather events, and rising sea levels. In fact, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations reports that Africa is already more food insecure than other regions of the world. In 2017, about 256 million Africans (i.e. 21% of the population) were undernourished and the predictions are that this trend will go up. However, while environmental issues are multi-dimensional and linked to development, population growth, food security, manufacturing, transport and other sectors, many of the approaches that seek to address environmental degradation and climate change fluctuations in Africa are limited by their narrow dimension.

CHALLENGE 5: Governance and Accountability

According to the 2018 Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Africa has registered very modest improvements in overall governance (around 1 percentage point increase) over a ten-year period, putting its overall index at around 50%. The index for safety and rule of law declined by 2.5% over the same period. Poor governance, low female participation in politics and decision-making and weak accountability erode much of the development efforts in Africa, leading to a very slow pace of development, compared to other regions of the world at the same level of national wealth. Public coffers are plundered with impunity by the very people appointed or elected to safeguard citizens’ welfare. While many countries have very good development policies, often cascaded from global and regional policies, their commitment to evidence-informed decision-making is weak. Data and evidence are not always prioritised by some state actors. As a result, inadequate resources are put into the generation and translation of evidence.

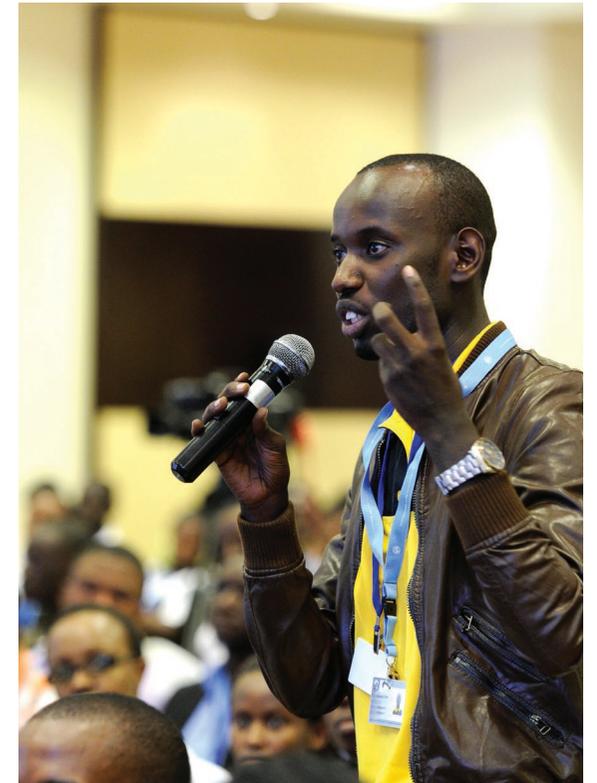
AFIDEP will seek to build a lasting legacy of evidence-informed decision-making

4.4 OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR EVIDENCE-INFORMED DECISION-MAKING (EIDM)

These foregoing development challenges underscore the importance and need for AFIDEP's work on EIDM. Our market analysis indicated high demand for EIDM by policymakers, development partners and multilaterals, researchers, NGOs, CSOs, and government departments. However, there are few organisations such as AFIDEP on the continent that have the capacity to meet this demand. This is an opportunity for AFIDEP to develop the capacity of knowledgeable African experts and researchers and expand the existing pool of EIDM experts who can support governments across the continent. In the Institute's last strategic plan period, we saw commitment from some African governments to develop local knowledge platforms, especially in the health sector. **AFIDEP is well-placed to support such initiatives** and we will continue to advocate for the creation of multi-sectoral knowledge platforms, which can support the use of evidence to address development challenges in a holistic way. There are also increased opportunities for working with a range of decision-makers including civil servants, parliament, programme implementers, CSOs, NGOs, FBOs, the private sector and the media to support evidence use.

AFIDEP's **financial health is heavily dependent on grant funding**, which is declining globally. Political instability, nationalistic politics and economic downturns have affected the readiness of major western countries to fund African development, including research and policy engagement. African governments themselves **provide extremely limited financial resources for research and knowledge translation**. Yet in order for African governments to achieve their development targets and be more accountable, they need to be equipped with credible evidence and to have the capacity to use this evidence in making decisions regarding what

policies and programmes they should implement, how to implement them, and how to assess their progress.



In summary, AFIDEP will pursue its goal of ensuring that African decision-makers use evidence consistently so that the right policies, programmes and budget allocations are made to transform people's lives for the better. The Institute will support countries to develop evidence-informed policies and programmes to address the challenges described above while remaining responsive to **other country-specific development issues**. Finally, **AFIDEP will seek to build a lasting legacy of evidence-informed decision-making even beyond the African Union's Agenda 2063**.

5

AFIDEP's Aspirations for 2024

At the end of Strategy 2024, we would like to look back in celebration at the changes that we made over the five-year period. Using the balanced scorecard framework, we expect to have achieved the following, among other changes.



5.1 EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

The Difference We Made to Our World

By the end of 2024, AFIDEP will have:

- 20 African states institutionalised EIDM**, with technical support from AFIDEP. Forums were created for research-to-policy engagement or funded knowledge platforms to enhance EIDM.
- 15 African countries implemented their demographic dividend plans of action**, with AFIDEP's evidence & technical assistance.
- AFIDEP supported the **African Union** and regional economic blocs (**EAC, SADC, and ECOWAS**) to improve performance monitoring of progress on SDGs.
- Five African countries pioneered using AFIDEP's prioritisation analysis tools** to select interventions for accelerating progress towards achievement of the SDGs.
- 500 researchers, 500 government officials, and 300 representatives of CSOs** and media networks were trained on the use of data to improve governments' accountability.
- Evidence-Informed Decision-Making is a distinct and valuable field**, institutionalised in learning programmes in at least 10 universities, with support from AFIDEP.
- Five African countries have set up **Evidence Use Parliamentary Caucuses**, with support from AFIDEP.
- Five African governments **passed legislation to increase funding for research** and knowledge platforms in national budgets

Our Growth and Learning

By the end of 2024, AFIDEP will have:

- A highly trained staff, with diverse skills in areas such as policy analysis, demography, econometrics, governance, data analysis, communications, finance, monitoring evaluation and learning.
- An increase in senior staff to 20 PhD holders, to lead work and to mentor junior staff.
- A rejuvenated Associate Fellows programme with 20 active fellows regularly supporting our work.
- Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) signed with eight complementary organisations**, including universities, research institutes and knowledge translation organisations.
- A post-doctoral fellowship programme and formalised internship opportunities.

5.1 EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS

Our Brand

By the end of 2024, the AFIDEP brand will be associated with the following:

- A thought-leader** in bridging the gaps between research, policy, and programming in Africa.
- A culture and reputation of excellence.**
- An employer of choice.**
- AFIDEP's work **features positively in the media** across Africa on a regular basis.
- Staff produce on average **two journal publications and four opinion pieces** every year.

Systems and Structures

By the end of 2024, AFIDEP will have:

- Built expertise of other organisations in **integration and automation of systems.**
- Strengthened project management and performance management systems.

Financial Sustainability

In 2024:

- We have a **strong Business Development Office.**
- Annual income is at least **USD 10 million.**
- We have **five funders** who provide unrestricted funding.
- We have built a reserve fund to run the organisation for at least **one year** in case of financial crisis.
- We are occupying **our own premises** in Kenya and/or Malawi.



6 Measuring Our Performance

Delivering this strategy will require AFIDEP to be accountable, effective and dynamic, with organisational structures, ways of working and behaviours that reinforce its goals. We will hold ourselves accountable to our partners who give us their resources and peer support. We will be dynamic, responsive and innovative, in relation to the ever changing and complex environment in which we work. This will be achieved through the following measures:



Oversight

The Board of Directors will have strategic oversight of the implementation and delivery of Strategy 2024.



Implementation

The Executive Director, supported by staff, will implement the strategy. They will draw on the expertise from a range of external partners and funders.



Mid-term Review

A mid-term review of Strategy 2024 will be conducted in 2022 to review progress on the implementation of the plan, and where necessary to refresh and/or course-correct the objectives and priorities. This process will be conducted with the support of an external consultant.



Evaluation

The evaluation of the strategy will be facilitated by an external consultant.

To measure our performance in implementing this strategy, we will continually review our Theory of Change, making course-corrections where necessary.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) plan. Table 1 lists the core key performance indicators aligned to our strategic objectives.

We have identified a set of indicators that will help us to monitor progress of Strategy 2024. These will be incorporated and tracked in an institution-wide

Our Strategy 2024 Implementation Plan document contains more details of how we will implement the strategy, as well as baseline values of our key indicators.



TABLE 1: STRATEGY 2024 CORE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Strategic Objective

Key Performance Indicator and Targets

Means of Verification

<p>1 Strengthen capacity in evidence use in decision-making</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of government departments that we support with capacity development activities increased by 30%. • At least 5 African governments whom we partner with increase funding for research and knowledge platforms by 20%. • At least 50% increase in the number of people trained in our capacity building programmes in EIDM. • At least 20 policy fellows placed in short-term fellowship programmes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports of capacity building development activities; emails or letters of appreciation from government departments. • Existence of knowledge platforms. • Government reports. • Training event reports. • Policy fellowship programme report.
<p>2 Deepen evidence use to accelerate achievement of SDGs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least five countries increase funding for monitoring SDGs. • Funding to AFIDEP to support African governments on monitoring SDGs increased by 50%. • At least eight SDGs syntheses reports produced and disseminated. • At least eight regional analyses of SDGs projects in our priority focus areas completed and disseminated. • Eight workshops on scenario modelling and prioritisation conducted. • Average number of peer-reviewed publications increased by 50%. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual financial reports. • SDG reports and reports of dissemination events. • Thematic SDG reports. • Workshop reports.
<p>3 Internal systems and structures strengthened.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of project reports or completion certificates rated 'good' or higher increase by 100%. • Grant income increasing at average annual rate of 30% to reach 10 million per annum by 2024 • Percentage of staff satisfied by working conditions increase by 60%. • Number of policy briefs and signature products increased by 50%. • Traffic to AFIDEP website and social media outlets increased by 100%. • MEL Unit established and running. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual report • Donor's certificates • Staff survey • Journal lists • Website • MEL Unit annual project reports

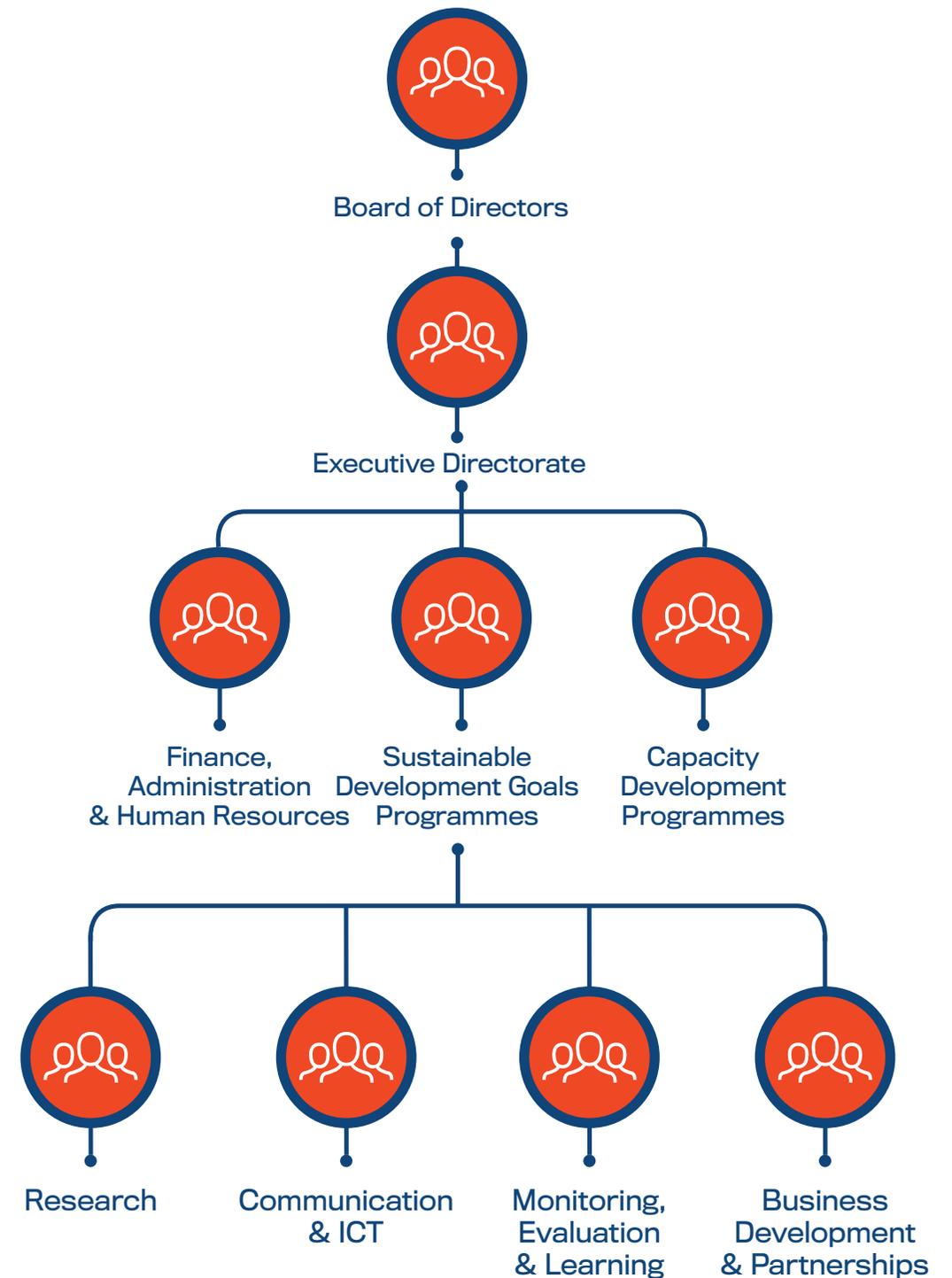
7 How we will organise ourselves

Our institutional organogram (Figure 5) shows the oversight role of the Board of Directors, and the leadership of the **Executive Directorate**, comprising the **Executive Director and a Deputy Executive Director (50% role)**, who will be appointed from members of the **Senior Management Team**. The Deputy Executive Director will deputise for the Executive Director and will have oversight of some of the technical programmes. Country Directorship roles will be 25% full-time equivalent. They will be appointed from among the Directors. SMT will consist of the Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Country Directors, Directors with oversight for SDG programmes and Capacity Development programmes, the Head of Human Resources (HoHR) and the Head of Finance and Administration (HoFaA).

The Middle Management Team (MMT) will comprise the individual programme heads, and managers of departments (Communication and ICT, Human Resources, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Unit, Business Development and Partnerships). The SMT's leadership role will focus on governance, strategy, institutional development, external liaison and donor engagement. SMT and MMT meetings will focus on operations, programme management, resource mobilisation and MEL.

The HoFaA will have oversight for all operations in finance and administration. The HoHR will oversee all HR and talent management aspects. Communication and ICT will be headed by one of the Directors as will the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning. The Business Development Office will be under the Executive Director's office. We will hire staff in areas where we have insufficient numbers to ensure that each work area has a head and a minimum of three people.

Figure 6: AFIDEP's functional organogram





8 The Strategic Planning Process



Strategy 2024 was developed in a participatory and consultative process that involved all of AFIDEP (the Board and staff) as well as external stakeholders such as researchers from within the African continent and abroad, consultants, and government officers.

AFIDEP staff were involved in initial scoping discussions, and conducted Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analyses, and also participated in a strategy planning retreat. We used the Political, Economic, Social, and Technological, Environmental and Legal (PESTEL) model to analyse the changing global and regional development context, including progress on the SDGs.

Using the Balanced Scorecard approach helped us to review the 2015-2019 strategic period, focusing on four aspects: people and partnership; products and branding; financial sustainability; and internal systems.

We also used the Balanced Scorecard to reflect on where we would like AFIDEP to be by the end of Strategy 2024.

We collected information through anonymous surveys administered to the Board, staff, and external stakeholders, including some of AFIDEP's funders and collaborators. Drafts of the Strategic Plan were reviewed by the Board, staff, and external reviewers.

The final version of the strategy was completed in September, 2019. An Implementation Plan for the strategy was developed to serve as a living document for use within the Institute.

Our Values

Accountability

Focus

Integrity

Diversity

Excellence

Passion

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