

The background of the cover features a dark blue field with abstract white and teal geometric shapes. On the left, a large teal semi-circle is partially enclosed by white lines that form a stylized globe or network structure. On the right, several thick white lines radiate upwards from a horizontal base, creating a sunburst or fan-like effect.

**STRATEGY
2021-2025**

Context

We are at a moment of deep socio-political uncertainty, marked by rapidly changing norms, technologies and power structures, affecting everything from consensus on the future of our planet to how people consume food, energy and information. Many of the challenges we face – climate change, violent extremism, polarisation, nationalism and populism, authoritarianism, financial instability, inequalities, pandemics, the future of work, a backlash against human rights, especially women’s rights, and racial injustice – affect both rich and poor countries alike, and the relationships between them. These challenges require creative and comprehensive approaches that acknowledge their deeply political nature, linked to vested interests resistant to change.

As a global organisation that seeks positive change in the world, ODI must understand, reflect and respond to this new reality. Global challenges will not be addressed through a narrow focus on development and humanitarian action. The alignment of national interests, international diplomacy and development assistance is becoming increasingly explicit. Therefore, ODI needs to move beyond the current development aid paradigm. We need to build new partnerships, strengthen our inter-disciplinary capacity, embrace new disciplines and expand into new areas of research to achieve our objectives. And we need to utilise innovative and cutting-edge public affairs and communications to strengthen the influence and intellectual leadership we have built up over the past six decades.

The stage will have to be global even as ODI continues to engage deeply at the country and grassroots levels. But our footprint, staffing and areas of activity must truly reflect this global engagement. We cannot be confined to thinking about, and working in, poor countries from a metropolitan capital.

ODI’s guiding long-term direction is:

A dynamic, global think tank that inspires people to act on injustice and inequality through collaborative research and ideas that matter for people and the planet.





A global, diverse organisation



Looking ahead, ODI will evolve to make the focus on equity, inclusive growth, social justice and sustainability even more central to what we do. To achieve this, we will need to become a truly global and diverse organisation, with presence and networks in Europe, the US and key emerging economies and markets. We will put greater emphasis on economic, foreign, security, social and other policies affecting marginalised and vulnerable populations.

The key elements of this strategy are:

- Expand our research and convening to influence global debates and address challenges facing rich and poor countries alike. We will engage beyond the traditional ‘development sector’ and lower-income countries, and ensure that our research remains ground-breaking and rigorous.
- Improve our ability to influence policy and practice. We will invest more, in more effective ways, in our strategic engagement and communications, policy outreach and advisory capacity.
- Invest in our people. Develop fit-for-purpose skills and experience, with the right expertise to deliver on our mission as a truly global think tank. Design and foster new, innovative ways of working and a motivated and forward-looking work culture.
- Strengthen ODI’s environmental sustainability by tracking, publishing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a result of our work practices.
- Strengthen our financial resilience by improving our business model and diversifying our client and funding base, as well as improving the efficiency, effectiveness and cohesiveness of our portfolio of projects and activities.
- Develop new collaborative partnerships with organisations and individuals in our global network, including private sector organisations that share our commitment and ethos. In low-income countries, we will consciously design collaborative programmes to promote shared objectives and research capacity, and advance mutual financial sustainability.
- Become a more diverse organisation, with staff from different countries and cultures, producing work and holding events in different languages and, potentially, representation in countries other than the UK. The new ODI website will showcase a more diverse organisation that features the voices of those we partner with.





Our long-term direction

ODI will lead new thinking and future agendas to deliver transformational change and bring back a global sense of resilient, just and equitable prosperity. We will focus on four overarching global challenges and priorities.





Shaping the future of global cooperation

The pandemic has put the crisis of multilateralism into stark relief. At the same time, it has shown that multilateralism is necessary if we are to overcome systemic threats. Multilateral cooperation must be revitalised and reset with human rights and justice at the centre, paying as much attention to community-level organisations and locally elected leaders like mayors as to the large global bodies. There is an urgent need to advance long-overdue reform of global cooperation structures, to which ODI can contribute through its research, global networks and convening power.



Tackling the climate, environment and biodiversity crisis

We must stay within planetary boundaries to ensure prosperous, inclusive and resilient societies. More resource-efficient economic and human development will allow people to live healthier, more productive lives, while protecting the planet for generations to come. But the required transformation will be disruptive: some will lose in the short run, while environmental disasters continue to erode development gains. Widespread support for more climate-conscious and biodiversity-friendly development will only succeed if founded in a new social contract that is genuinely inclusive and empowering for all sections of society. ODI can engage in this arena by helping navigate competing visions of a green future to achieve equitable, risk-informed and environmentally sustainable development.





Fostering a more equitable and sustainable global economic order

The problem of equity amid unprecedented global prosperity has acquired an immediate urgency during the pandemic. There is renewed attention to tackling the structural determinants of inequality while harnessing the opportunities presented by the future of work, finance, fiscal and social policy (taxation and social protection) and trade reform. Ideas for a just globalisation must now be the centrepiece of inquiry. ODI can promote and facilitate interdisciplinary engagement and evidence-based debates to advance a broad consensus on what constitutes a more equitable economic system that works for people and the planet, while acknowledging there can be no blueprint prescription for what this might look like across geographies.



Advancing human rights, addressing conflict and promoting peace

Seventy-five years after the UN was established, the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights remains largely unfulfilled for most people in the world. This is especially true for women, black people and other people of colour, who are at greatest risk of violence, and are either experiencing a backlash against hard-earned rights or whose rights have historically been largely ignored. Human rights and a rules-based order are fundamental to building peaceful, just and inclusive societies. Human rights battles are first and foremost political battles, and understanding how rights are acquired and withheld is key to expanding their reach. ODI will bring political economy perspectives to aid understanding of conflict and fragility, propose policies and actions to advance human rights, social justice and peace, and support humanitarian action and political change, particularly in conflict-affected and violent settings.



Digitalisation cuts across these global challenges. The power to gather, process and disseminate information through digital technology and systems can be a huge force for good. But it can also be misused, and its benefits are neither automatic nor evenly spread. The poorest and most vulnerable are least likely to benefit from the digital transition, raising the risk that it simply deepens marginalisation and entrenches inequality. Digitalisation can also be misused, to misinform, to create conflict, to engage in acts of cyber attrition, to deny identities and to restrict privacy and liberty. We will explore how technology can be harnessed for the greater good, and identify ways to monitor and reduce its potential to damage the positive outcomes – justice, equality and inclusion – that we seek.



Our five-year objectives

If we are to fulfil the long-term direction set out above, we must aim to meet the following medium-term objectives by 2025:



WE WANT CLIMATE ACTION

WHAT WE WANT

- A Green New Deal
- Respect of Indigenous Land and Sovereignty
- Environmental Justice
- Protection and Restoration of Biodiversity
- Implementation of Sustainable Agriculture



1

ODI delivers high-quality, internationally recognised research, informs policy design and convenes leadership across the five global challenges identified above

We will:

- Ensure that all ODI programmes focus on building resilient, just and inclusive economies and societies. We will engage in policy debates, open new conversations and strengthen global networks and partnerships in these areas, making a powerful contribution to our long-term direction.
 - Organise our programmatic work, advisory services and convening capabilities to deliver on our global priorities, with digital transition as a cross-cutting theme.
 - Broaden our remit beyond development, and reflect this in our work programme, partnerships and alliances. We will convene and publish non-ODI voices from countries less represented on the global stage and cultivate a wider, more geographically diverse pool of partners and collaborators from a variety of disciplines and backgrounds. We will engage funders actively to explore different ways of working and develop new forms of partnership.
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2

ODI is a global think tank with a global footprint

We will:

- Work closely with partner institutions to design and deliver outputs. We will recruit and locate more staff outside the UK and standardise multilingual dissemination of major research and communication outputs. We will work with non-English-speaking partners to improve dissemination of our work in their languages.
- Establish ODI presence in other global or regional hubs, either directly as in recently done in Brussels, or through strategic partnerships.



3

ODI is a financially sustainable and resilient organisation

We will:

- Continue to diversify our income base and engage with non-UK funding partners. We will deliver fee-based research to private sector partners, where this does not conflict with our core mandate.
 - Strengthen commercial advisory services and engagement with impact investors. This will be a key feature of our business development.
 - Increase cost recovery and margins on all ODI work through better costing and competitive pricing, better project budgeting and focused business development.
 - Secure a more cost-effective office arrangement for our London HQ.
 - Build our reserves to the levels mandated by the Board over the medium term.
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4

ODI is a more effective, sustainable, diverse and inclusive organisation

We will:

- Establish an agile organisation with clear roles, responsibilities and standards and manageable workloads for staff.
- Promote happy teams and a positive culture that celebrates diversity and promotes inclusion at all levels of the organisation.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management.
- Reduce paperwork and bureaucracy, devolving decision-making and empowering staff within a clear framework of behaviour, performance and accountability.
- Improve ODI's own environmental sustainability by tracking, publishing and reducing greenhouse gas emissions as a result of our work practices.



Think Change

ODI is a leading global affairs think tank. We inspire people to act on injustice and inequality. We focus on research, convening and influencing, to generate ideas that matter for people and planet.

203 Blackfriars Road London SE1 8NJ

+44 (0)20 7922 0300

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