

The role of *Caisses de dépôt* in mobilising domestic private resources for development financing

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5 key findings of the study

1. Africa faces a colossal challenge to finance its development and will not be able to do without mobilising domestic private resources.
2. *Caisses de dépôt* (national deposits), a well-established model in Europe since the 19th century, are emerging as a key solution in Africa to transform domestic savings into sustainable investments.
3. *Caisses de dépôt* rely on the resources entrusted to them by public authorities to invest in the economy over the long term.
4. To fully play their role, *Caisses de dépôt* in Africa must i) strengthen trust, ii) diversify their resources, in particular by collecting domestic and diaspora savings, and iii) integrate themselves in a complementary manner with local financial intermediaries.
5. *Caisses de dépôt* model, which is based on transforming domestic resources into long-term structural investments, can be adapted to different national circumstances.

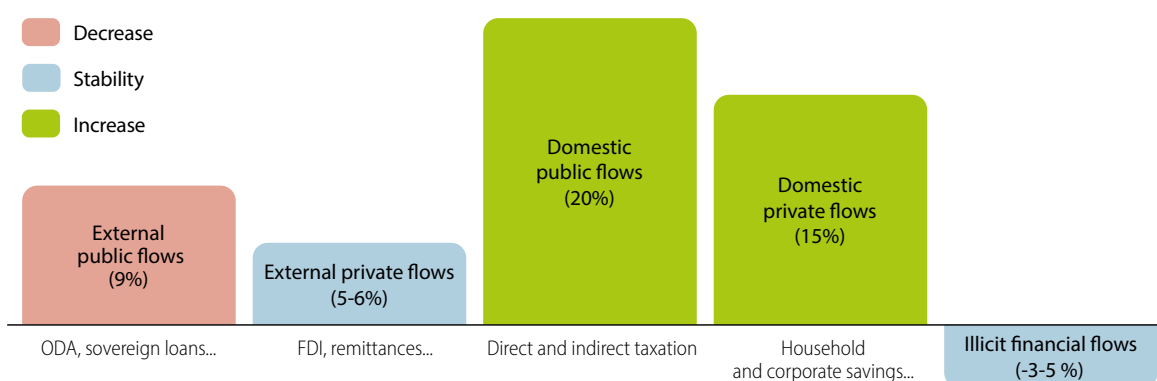
The key role of domestic private resources

To achieve the SDGs, Africa needs to raise an additional \$1.6 billion by 2030, which is equivalent to 7% of its GDP each year (source: AUC/OECD, 2023).

However, these figures do not take into account the financial needs induced by the energy, ecological and digital transitions, all of which are essential for the continent. Therefore, the challenge is even greater than it appears.

Faced with this gap, what room for manoeuvre?

Figure 1: Summary of the scale and expected evolution¹ of the main financing flows



Three levers can be activated to close this gap:

1. Mobilising domestic public resources;
2. Harnessing domestic private resources and resources from the diaspora;
3. Curbing illicit financial flows.

Domestic private resources: an underused lever

- a. **Potential:** estimates in the report suggest that 4 to 11 percentage points of GDP could be mobilised.²
- b. **Speed:** billions are already available (informal savings, dormant accounts, diaspora funds).
- c. **Stability:** financing in local currency, with no exchange rate risk or dependence on foreign currencies.
- d. **Sovereignty:** projects can be financed that are aligned with national priorities (e.g. agriculture, renewable energy) without relying on foreign funders.

Box 1: How can private savings be mobilised for development financing?

One approach consists of encouraging private financial intermediaries, such as banks, investment funds and institutional investors, to finance long-term projects through concessional credit lines or risk-sharing mechanisms. Such projects are often overlooked because they are considered too risky or not sufficiently profitable in the short term.

The second approach involves development finance institutions, which centralise part of domestic private savings so that they can invest in projects of general interest. This is the model on which the Caisse de dépôt and national development banks are based.

1. The expected evolution is based on an analysis of past trends and short- and medium-term forecasts.

2. These estimates (see page 39 of the report) assume a 10-percentage-point increase in either the deposits-to-GDP ratio or the transformation ratio (loans/deposits), or both. This increase has been chosen because it would enable Africa to reach the average for these two ratios among other developing countries.

A mixed approach to analysing Caisses de dépôt

The study covers **16 Caisses de dépôt** that are members of the **Forum of Caisses de Dépôt**, spanning a wide range of contexts.

Methodology: A three-step approach

Step	Actions carried out	Sources used
Desk research	Analysis of institutional documents (annual reports, founding laws, financial statements) Review of the scientific literature	Websites of Caisses de dépôt, reports produced by Caisses de Dépôt Academic articles and books
Data collections	Extraction of available data (balance sheets, resources, uses, governance)	Internal documents provided by Caisses or by the Forum
Interviews	Semi-structured interviews (duration: 1 hour each)	Discussions with staff members from 9 Caisses de dépôt that are members of the Forum

Data processing: towards a comparative analysis

The aim of developing a summary factsheet for each Caisse was to identify common characteristics and differences among the Forum's Caisses de dépôt.

Methodological limitations

Despite the rigor of the approach, two major limitations were encountered:

Limitation	Consequence	Mitigation strategy
Different depths of analysis	For some Caisses, particularly the newer ones, data remain limited, restricting the analysis	Supplemented with interviews and secondary sources (articles, expert reports)
Data heterogeneity	Caisses use different accounting categories, making comparisons difficult	Reconstruction of common categories to enable comparative analysis

→ These limitations highlight the need to improve **transparency** and **harmonisation of data** from the Forum des Caisses de Dépôt, a platform for dialogue between Caisses de dépôt, whose purpose is to promote the model and share best practices among them.

Caisses de dépôt: An innovative model for financing development

Originally created in Europe in the 19th century, Caisses de dépôt have experienced a revival in Africa since the 2010s.

An institution with a dual mandate: security and impact

Caisses de dépôt are public financial institutions with a dual mandate:

1. To collect, secure, and manage financial resources belonging to third parties;
2. To transform part of these funds into long-term financing for projects of general interest, such as infrastructure, energy transitions, social housing, and education.

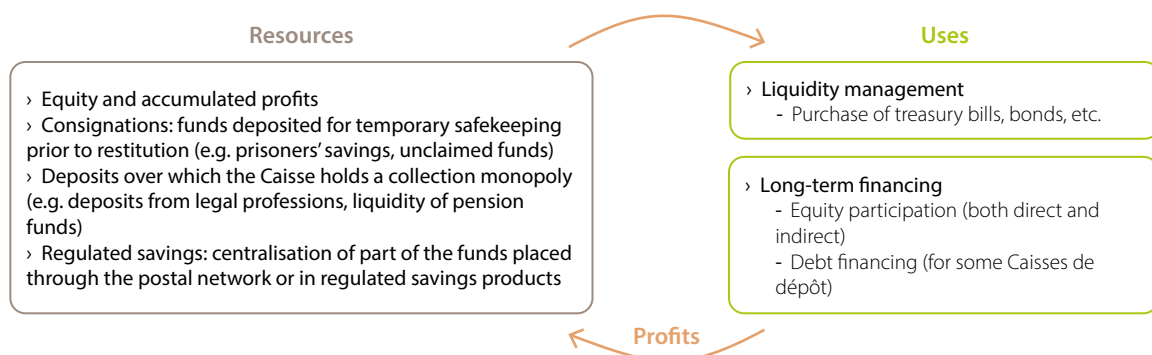
→ They act as a bridge between private savings and development needs, ensuring both the security of deposits and the social impact of investments.

A unique economic model: stable resources, long-term investments

Caisses de dépôt operate as a virtuous circle:

1. They collect stable and low-cost resources;
2. They transform these into long-term investments that serve the public interest and secure investments to ensure a return on their resources;
3. They reinvest profits to strengthen their activities.

Figure 2: Economic model of Caisses de dépôt



Box 2: Caisses de dépôt and national development banks, what are the differences?

Both Caisses de dépôt and development banks share a common mission of financing long-term projects of general interest. However, their economic models differ significantly, making them complementary tools for financing development.

Criterion	Caisse de dépôt	Development banks
Resources	Consignations, mandatory deposits, centralisation of regulated savings	Borrowing (financial markets, multilateral banks) on concessional terms
Mechanism	Transforms part of the private resources into long-term investments (equity participation)	Borrows at low cost to lend at preferential rates
Advantages	Enables the valorisation of domestic private savings	Can finance riskier projects

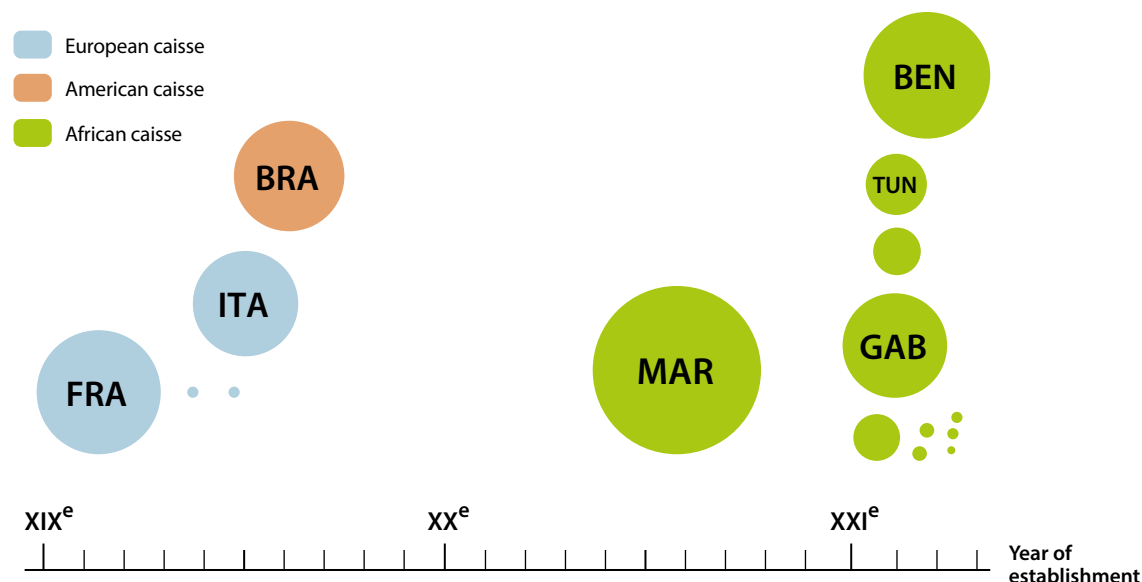
The two types of institutions complement each other to some extent in terms of the resources mobilised and financing instruments. Some structures combine the functions of Caisses de dépôt and national development banks.

One model, different realities: the diversity of Caisses de dépôt worldwide and in Africa

Caisses de dépôt are not a homogeneous group. Their size, resources and modes of intervention vary considerably depending on their level of maturity and the national context in which they operate.

Diversity shaped by history and local context

Figure 3 : Diversity and relative importance of Caisses de dépôt worldwide



The size of the bubbles represents the relative importance of each Caisse as a percentage of the country's banking assets (2024).

→ *There is a relationship between maturity and activity, but this relationship is not automatic.*

Two main models of Caisses de dépôt can be identified, reflecting different strategies and economic contexts

Criterion	Diversified model	Standard model
Geographic location	Mediterranean region (France, Italy, Morocco, Tunisia)	Sub-Saharan Africa
Resources	Mandatory deposits Consignations Regulated savings	Mandatory deposits Consignations
Financial products	Equity participation (direct and indirect) Long-term loans	Equity participation (direct and indirect)
Size	Large (10-20% of national banking assets)	Small (often less than 5% of banking assets)

Some atypical models

- Some Caisses do not fit into either of these two categories and have unique characteristics (Belgium and Brazil, for example);
- Some Caisses combine the functions of Caisses de dépôt and national development banks (France using its subsidiary Bpifrance, Italy, Mauritania).

Strengthening the impact of Caisses de dépôt in Africa: 3 levers for action

A triple benefit for the economy

1. **For the State:** financing projects of national interest without increasing public debt or drawing on tax revenues.
2. **For depositors:** access to secure and profitable solutions (stable returns, public guarantee).
3. **For companies:** freeing up dormant resources to finance the real economy (SMEs, agriculture, renewable energy).

→ A win-win model, but one that remains **underutilised** in Sub-Saharan Africa.

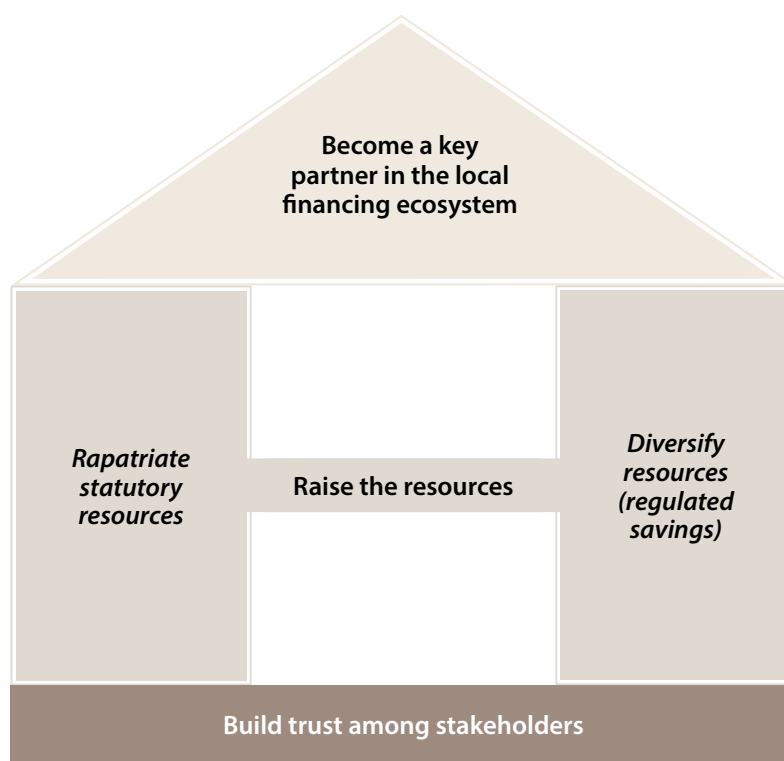
Persistent challenges in Sub-Saharan Africa

Despite their potential, African Caisses de dépôt struggle to fulfil their role due to limited resources, which stem from difficulties in mobilising statutory funds. This situation reflects a lack of political support, depositor mistrust and the reluctance of financial intermediaries (banks) to transfer their resources.

Three levers to strengthen the impact of Caisses de dépôt

To overcome these obstacles, a **three-step strategy** is required.

Figure 4: Three levers for action



Three recommendations

Build trust

- The essential foundation

For Caisses de dépôt to fulfil their role, they must be based on three pillars of trust: a solid legal framework, transparent governance and a credible strategy.

Build on solid foundations

Objective: create a stable, sustainable and predictable environment.

How: clear legal framework; appropriate regulation; rigorous risk management; governance that includes all stakeholders.

Establish a framework for transparency and accountability

Objective: demonstrate the reliability of the model and the credibility of the Caisse.

How: promote the model; communicate with the general public and stakeholders; establish a robust monitoring framework; use independent oversight mechanisms.

Define a clear and credible strategic direction

Objective: avoid unrealistic promises and build an ambitious yet pragmatic roadmap.

How: develop a plan for development aligned with available resources.

Increase resources

- Mobilise and diversify

To amplify their impact, Caisses de dépôt must fully mobilise their statutory resources and broaden their funding base.

Mobilise statutory resources

Objective: repatriate funds that are legally allocated but not yet transferred.

How: conduct a comprehensive diagnostic and develop a credible and gradual repatriation plan that takes constraints into account, such as absorptive capacity of the Caisse and reluctance of local actors (financial intermediaries, depositors).

Expand the range of available resources

Objective: diversify funding sources, particularly through the mobilisation of domestic savings, to reduce dependence on current resources.

How: identify resources that could be transferred to the Caisse; develop simple, secure, and remunerative regulated savings products in conjunction with local commercial banks.

Become a key partner and player

To maximise their impact, Caisses de dépôt must be fully integrated into the local financial system and complement existing actors.

Develop a strategic financing plan

Objective: identify and target market gaps and propose a complementary offering.

How: map financing needs that are not met by existing actors; offer innovative and differentiated products.

Support the local financial development

Objective: strengthen the financial ecosystem by collaborating with local and international financial intermediaries.

How: support local financial intermediaries and foster the development of currently non-existent segments.

Beyond Caisses de dépôt: an inspiring model for mobilising private resources

1. The core function of Caisses de dépôt: a powerful tool for development

Caisses de dépôt play a unique role in development financing, by mobilising domestic private resources to fund long-term projects of general interest. This is a high-potential model, but its success depends on three key conditions:

1. **Trust** from the State, depositors, and other financial intermediaries;
2. **Full mobilisation of resources**, both statutory and diversified;
3. **Integration** into the financial ecosystem.

2. Drawing inspiration from the Caisses de dépôt to mobilise dormant private resources

The Caisses de dépôt model is not limited to a specific institutional structure. It offers an operational logic that can inspire other solutions for mobilising dormant private resources (informal savings, diaspora funds, underutilised assets).

Why broaden the scope ?

→ *Billions of dollars remain untapped:*

- › In Africa, only 35% of households save through formal institutions (World Bank, 2024);
- › Diaspora funds (USD 54 billion in 2023) are mostly used for current consumption rather than long-term investment;
- › Informal financial assets (family savings, savings clubs) represent a significant potential that remains outside the financial system.

How can the Caisses de dépôt model be leveraged?

Two avenues can be explored to extend the logic of Caisses de dépôt to countries without such an institution:

- › Establish Caisses de dépôt or similar institutions whose mission would be to mobilise private resources for investment in development;
- › Building on existing institutions, such as using development banks to centralise and transform domestic private resources.

 **Read the report (in French)**



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