

# What About France?

## Responsibilities for development cooperation

The three principal institutions engaged in development cooperation are the Directorate General for Global Affairs, Development and Partnerships (DGM) at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (MAEE), the Treasury and Economic Policy General Directorate (DGTPE) at the Ministry of the Economy, Finance, and Employment (MINEFE), the Secretariat of State for Cooperation and Francophony and the French Development Agency (AFD).

Other actors in development cooperation include: i) ministries, ii) the International Committee for International Cooperation and Development (CICID).

The 2006 Institutional Act on Financial Legislation (LOLF) strengthened Parliament's ability to oversee development cooperation; nevertheless, a Development Committee is still lacking within the French Parliament.

The DAC recommends that France create a comprehensive framework setting out clear objectives and a strategy for development cooperation policy.

In addition, the DAC recommends that France establish institutional mechanisms to manage development cooperation, such as a strategic management centre.

## Contribution to the Millennium Development Goals (MDG's)

The key aims of French development policy are to foster growth, reduce poverty and give easier access to global public goods, thus helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals to 2015.

France's contribution to the MDGs can be illustrated by its participation to major initiatives to implement innovative mechanisms to finance development such as the leading group on Innovative Financing Mechanism to finance development, a platform with 59 member countries.

## France's record on aid

### Aid quantity

French ODA (Official Development Assistance) represented 0.47% of GNI (Gross National Income) in 2006, decreased to 0.38% in 2007, and 0.39% in 2008. This figure is below the EU-DAC average (0.42%).

In terms of volume, France gave 10.96 billion USD in ODA in 2008. This ranks France fourth among EU-DAC nations in terms of net volume of ODA.

The French government announced to postpone commitments, pledging to reach 0.51% of GNI in 2010 and 0.7% of GNI in

2015, in line with the undertaking of other EU members. While France has pledged to respect these revised commitments, according to the OECD/DAC 2008 Peer Review of France "the level reached in 2007 showed that even the interim objective of 0.51% of GNI in 2010 will be difficult to achieve."

Debt relief grants (form of debt reorganisation which relieves the overall burden of debt) comprised 8.2% of French ODA in 2008.

With regards to aid quantity, the DAC's main recommendation is that France should develop a "roadmap" detailing its plans for increasing ODA to fulfil its international commitments and the operational measures of support required to do so.

### Aid quality

France's share of bilateral aid (in this case, the aid given by France to a developing country) decreased from 75% in 2006 to 63% in 2007. In 2006-07, 19.2% of this bilateral ODA went to LDCs (least-developed countries). By region, Sub-Saharan Africa received the greatest percentage of French bilateral ODA (49.3%), followed by the Middle East and North Africa (23.6%). By country, top recipients of gross bilateral ODA in 2006-07 were Nigeria, Iraq, and Cameroon.

Country programmable aid (CPA) is the proportion of aid that developing countries can allocate according to their development needs. In 2007 it represented only 32% of French gross ODA. France's CPA remains below the combined average of OECD-DAC countries (47%).

In 2007, 92.6% of French aid was untied (tied aid is assistance given to developing countries which must be used to purchase goods and services from the donor country).

In 2006 and 2008, The OECD/DAC conducted a Survey on Monitoring the Paris Declaration to gauge the progress of donor nations toward improving aid effectiveness. The report finds that between 2005 and 2007, France made positive gains on most indicators of aid effectiveness (transparency and accountability of funding mechanisms, coordinated technical assistance, predictability of aid- precise time tables on aid delivery, harmonisation of donor procedures, number and extent of joint missions). However, France has yet to attain its targets for 2010 on any measure.

In order to scale-up the quality of aid, the DAC recommends that France concentrate on a smaller number of partner countries, particularly focusing aid on LDCs and fragile states.

## Policy coherence

Policy coherence for development does not refer just to aid policies: coherence of trade policies with development is key to help create livelihoods in poor countries.

Policy coherence is clearly not a political priority in France. The 2008 Peer Review of France notes that France does not have a general framework that provides a basis for structured interministerial work on matters relating to policy coherence issues.

Under its 2008 EU Presidency, France secured adoption of a Pact on Immigration and Asylum allowing Member States to tie aid funds to actions by the recipient country on migration and repatriations. Attaching such conditions to development assistance, challenges partner country ownership, aid effectiveness and is not good practice of policy coherence.

The DAC recommends that France improve policy coherence by establishing a permanent, high-level structure with a mandate to promote policy coherence for development.

## France's record on trade

As an EU Member State, France implements the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), providing subsidies and price controls on agricultural commodities. Despite gradual reforms the CAP continues to distort the market for a wide range of products of critical importance to developing countries, such as cotton, dairy products, rice, fruits and vegetables, etc.

France is the greatest beneficiary of the CAP and would like the overall structure of the CAP to remain unchanged beyond 2013 (i.e. review time). France made some concessions on decreasing direct payments but remains a strong advocate for "community preference", or agricultural tariffs protecting EU producers. This has also become a sticking point in the Doha round of negotiations at the WTO.

## Public Opinion

A 2009 Eurobarometer survey asked EU citizens "Have you ever heard or read about the Millennium Development Goals?" The vast majority of respondents (87%) were uninformed about the Millennium Development Goals, this figure remained relatively stable since the 2007 survey (88%).

According to France's 2008 DAC Peer Review, the French are strongly in favour of development assistance, yet a portion of the public remains sceptical about aid effectiveness.

In 2004, France initiated a development education effort. Despite these efforts, the 2008 DAC Peer Review notes: "... France is one of the DAC countries where awareness and understanding of the MDG is weakest."

## Commitment to Development Index

The Centre for Global Development (CGD) ranks 22 of the world's richest countries based on their dedication to policies that benefit poor nations. CGD's "Commitment to Development Index" (CDI) looks at seven policy areas important to developing countries: aid, trade, investment, migration, environment, security and technology.

CGD's 2009 Commitment to Development Index ranks France 12th among twenty-two OECD countries. This score represents a rise in the rankings since 2006, when France was ranked 18th among 21 nations.

France's overall score is kept down by low marks with respect to aid, migration and security.

On the positive side, France receives high marks for its support to research.

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For a more in-depth analysis and list of sources, please refer to the long version of the What About.

