

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

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Who are the main actors in Dutch development cooperation?

Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation leads; no implementation agency

Prime Minister Mark Rutte (People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, VVD) led a coalition government with the Labor Party (PvdA) until the elections in March 2017. As the VVD won the most seats in the general election, it is likely that Rutte will continue to serve as Prime Minister of the new government. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) defines priorities for Dutch development policy. Up until the elections, the MFA was headed by Bert Koenders (PvdA). The Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (MFTDC), Lilianne Ploumen (PvdA), who is part of the MFA, leads the MFA's work on development cooperation.

Within the MFA, the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) is responsible for designing and coordinating the implementation of development policy. Unlike many other donor countries, the Netherlands does not have an implementing agency. The Dutch em-

bassies are in charge of strategic planning and the administration of bilateral programs.

The role of Parliament is to scrutinize development policy and budget allocations. Parliament can annually amend the government's draft budget bill. Parliamentary debates in November/December can lead to significant changes to the ODA budget.

Dutch civil society organizations (CSO) play an active role in Dutch development cooperation. The development CSO umbrella association is Partos, representing over 100 such organizations. They lobby the Parliament and the MFA. Many CSOs implement their own programs in developing countries, and are funded by the Dutch government and through private donations. In 2015, 25% of the country's bilateral ODA was channeled through CSOs. However, since the end of 2015, program funding for CSOs has been sharply cut and a larger focus has been placed on strategic partnerships and advocacy.

THE NETHERLANDS' DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SYSTEM

