

KEY QUESTION

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Who are the main actors in Norwegian development cooperation?

MFA steers strategy, embassies execute bilateral programs

The minority government, formed by Prime Minister Erna Solberg's Conservative Party (H) and the Progress Party (FrP), has been in power since October 2013. Both coalition parties are traditionally skeptical of development assistance. The government is supported by the Liberal Party (V) and the Christian Democratic Party (KrF), which cooperate with the government on an ad-hoc basis and are both supportive of development assistance. The next parliamentary elections are set to take place on September 11, 2017, when a new government will be elected.

The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA), led by Minister Børge Brende (H), is responsible for setting the strategic direction of Norway's development cooperation. Within the MFA's administrative leadership, State Secretaries Tone Skogen (H), Laila Bokhari (H), and Marit Berger Røsland (H) support the Minister in handling the thematic development priorities. The directors of development policy in the Department for Economic Relations and Development, in the Section for Global Initiatives, in the Department of Regional Affairs are key civil servants dedicated to development cooperation.

The MFA and Norway's embassies administer the majority of development assistance. The MFA has more than 500 staff members working on development cooperation, half of whom are based in Norway's embassies overseas. Within the MFA, the Department for Regional Affairs manages bilateral development cooperation. The Department for Economic Relations and Development is in charge of development policies, climate and the environment, and multilateral development banks. The Department for UN and Humanitarian Affairs is responsible for multilateral cooperation with UN agencies, humanitarian affairs and global initiatives.

Other relevant ministries include the Ministry of Climate and Environment, which manages the budget for the Norwegian International Climate and Forest Initiative (NICFI), and the Ministry of Justice, which manages budget lines for costs related to hosting refugees in Norway, partly reported as ODA.

Norway's two major development agencies, Norad and Norfund, play key roles in policy development, priority

setting, and implementation. Both agencies operate under the supervision of the MFA.

- Norad is responsible for providing advice and quality assurance to the MFA and Norwegian embassies, conducting independent evaluations, communicating long-term development cooperation and results, and managing funds based on the strategic directions outlined in the appropriation letter from the MFA. Norad has a staff count of 230 and is led by Director Jon Lomøy. It has no country offices, but provides technical advice to embassies on the planning and implementation of bilateral programs. As of January 2017, Norad is responsible for the implementation of global health and education policies.
- Norfund is a state-owned investment fund. Established in 1997, it supports private-sector activities in developing countries and focuses on renewable energy, agribusiness, and financial institutions. In 2015, Norfund was managing investments worth over NOK15 billion (US\$2.4 billion) with a staff count of 68 employees; 10% (NOK1.5 billion; US\$0.24 billion) of this amount came from the ODA budget, a 25% increase compared to 2013.

Parliament: Within the Norwegian parliament, the Committee of Foreign Affairs and Defense is in charge of development policy. Its main role is to scrutinize government and prepare recommendations on draft legislation. For instance, it comments and votes on the government's 'white papers', which outline strategies regarding development and the MFA's budget. Usually, Parliament only passes minor amendments to government drafts. In May 2016, a parliamentary group focusing on Africa was established to keep parliamentarians updated about developments on the African continent through meetings, seminars, and delegation visits.

Civil Society: Norwegian civil society organizations (CSOs) and faith-based organizations play an important role in development policy. Domestically, Norwegian CSOs play an important role in educating the public about development issues, and act as watchdogs by critically assessing Norway's development policy and carrying out lobbying activities targeted at parliament and other governmental institutions. These organizations also implement development projects. In countries with regimes marked by oppression and discrimination, the

Norwegian government prefers to work with CSOs. In total, 50 CSOs coordinate their advocacy and research work within the umbrella association, Forum for Utvikling og Miljø (Forum for Development and Environment; Fo-ruM).

NORWAY'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SYSTEM

