Global health remains a key priority, reaffirmed by Norway’s leadership on the GFF replenishment

Over the past ten years, Norway has been an international champion and influential actor in the field of global health. Former Prime Minister (PM) Jens Stoltenberg placed global health high on the government’s agenda, and current PM Erna Solberg has maintained this focus during her two terms.

In 2016 (the latest year for which full data is available), Norway was the eighth-largest donor country to health. Its total ODA to the sector stood at US$568 million and accounted for 12% of its total ODA. This share is well above the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)’s Development Assistance Committee (DAC) average of 8% and ranks Norway sixth in relative terms. Norway has steadily increased its support for health since 2011 (when it was US$393 million), mostly due to increased engagement with health-related multilateral organizations. In 2019, the government’s total budget for global health is set at NOK4.8 billion (US$580 million).

Norway’s white paper, ‘Global health in foreign and development policy’ (2012), which remains the most relevant paper, outlines three priorities for the sector: 1. mobilizing at an international level for women’s and children’s rights and health; 2. reducing the burden of disease, with an emphasis on prevention; and 3. promoting human security through health.

It is still an accurate statement of the current government’s priorities. Norway also tackles global health issues through its work on gender equality: core components are sexual and reproductive health and rights, maternity health, and safe and legal abortions. Health is also a key component of Norway’s humanitarian efforts. In its 2018 humanitarian strategy, the government committed to provide support for lifesaving and basic health services in connection with Norway’s humanitarian efforts. This commitment aimed to increase support for SRHR in crisis situations, as well as to promote closer coordination between humanitarian and development efforts in health.

Much of Norway’s funding for global health goes through the multilateral system. In 2016, Norway channeled US$337 million of its health ODA to multilateral organizations as core contributions, or 59% of its total health ODA (DAC average: 56%). Key recipients of multilateral ODA to health are Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (Gavi); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund); and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

Gavi and the Global Fund will continue to be major partners for the country; Norway has pledged US$304 million to the Global Fund for 2017 to 2019, and US$1.0 billion to Gavi for 2016 to 2020, setting it to become the second-largest donor country to Gavi after the UK. In addition, it has committed US$285 million to the Global Polio Eradication Initiative for 2014 to 2019. Norway’s commitment to multilateral funding for global health was cemented in the whitepaper entitled “Norway’s Role and Interests in Multilateral Cooperation”, published in June 2019.

In September 2014, Norway co-launched the Global Financing Facility (GFF) in support of the ‘Every Woman Every Child’ initiative, in partnership with the World Bank and the governments of Canada and the US. In November 2018, Norway co-hosted the GFF replenishment conference in Oslo with the government of Burkina Faso, the World Bank Group, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. On this occasion, it pledged US$360 million to the organization for the 2018-2023 period, the largest commitment of all donors.

In 2017, Norway’s bilateral ODA to health amounted to US$258 million according to OECD data. More than half of this amount was channeled as earmarked funding through multilaterals (57%, or US$147 million).

Bilateral ODA investments focus on basic health care (34% in 2017), health policy and administration (16%), and infectious disease control (14%). Geographically, Norway prioritizes four countries for health cooperation, two in Africa (Malawi and Niger) and two in the MENA region (Palestine and Syria).
Strategic orientation for global health is set within the MFA

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) traditionally sets Norway’s global health priorities. Norway’s Ambassador and Permanent Representative to the UN and other international organizations in Geneva is a key actor in the implementation of Norway’s multilateral funding for health. The Mission in Geneva represents Norway at the World Health Organization (WHO) and participates in the governance of global health organizations. Within MFA, the Department for Economic Relations and Development has a Development Policy Section, which has responsibility over global health investments. Bilateral global health programs are handled directly by the individual bilateral departments, under the Department of Regional Affairs. At Norad, global health issues fall under the mandate of the Department of Global Health and Education.
RECIPIENTS OF NORWAY'S HEALTH ODA, 2016
Total: US$568 million

- Bilateral: 43.7% (US$231m.)
- GAVI: 26.4% (US$144m.)
- Global Fund: 13.2% (US$79m.)
- Other: 20.8% (US$118m.)

OECD CRS and imputed multilateral contributions to the health sector: DAC secretariat estimates. In 2017 prices.

NORWAY'S KEY GLOBAL HEALTH COMMITMENTS
US$ millions


Data from government and listed organizations.