United States Donor Profile

Agriculture integrated into overarching food-security focus

The US is the largest donor to agriculture and rural development, disbursing US$1.7 billion in official development assistance (ODA) to the sector in 2016, according to data from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). This represents 19% of the total agriculture ODA provided by OECD donor countries in 2016. However, relative to the size of its overall development funding, the US spends less than the average spent by members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (US: 5%, DAC average: 7%).

Food security is a key theme of the US’ work on agriculture. The focus on food security is reflected in the updated Strategic Plan FY2018-2022 from USAID and the State Department, which cites the US Global Food Security Strategy 2017-2021 as an instrument to implement its overall strategic objectives. US food security efforts encompass food assistance, agricultural and rural economic development, and nutrition.

The US’s flagship initiative is Feed the Future, which was codified in the Global Food Security Act of 2016 and in the Global Food Security Reauthorization Act of 2018. Feed the Future is the US’ largest bilateral agriculture program and uses a whole-of-government approach to align and coordinate various food and agricultural programs. USAID is the lead agency for the program. According to the US Government Global Food Security Strategy 2017-2021, Feed the Future focuses on 1) inclusive agriculture sector growth, 2) gender integration, 3) improved nutrition, 4) private sector, 5) research and capacity building, and 6) resilience. It places a special emphasis on smallholder farmers, especially women, the extreme poor, youth, other marginalized communities, and small and medium enterprises in 12 focus countries.

A critical part of the US’ agricultural and food security efforts are food assistance initiatives (in-kind food transfers and cash-based programs that provide means to acquire food). These functions, now part of Feed the Future, were authorized through 1) the Food for Peace Act (FFPA, also known as PL 480), 2) the Food for Progress Act, 3) the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program (McGovern-Dole Program), and 4) the Emergency Food Security Program, a growing component of US food aid (see table 1).

For FY2019, Congress once again rejected the president’s proposed cuts to agriculture and international food assistance, including Food for Peace and the McGovern-Dole program. Funding for the Food for Peace program stayed level at US$1.7 billion. There was a small increase in the McGovern-Dole program, raising the overall level to US$210 million in FY2019 from US$208 million in FY2018. In addition, the FY2019 State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs appropriations for the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) remained level at US$30 million. The House-passed FY2020 Agriculture-Rural Development-FDA appropriation bill increased Food for Peace to US$1.9 billion and the McGovern-Dole program to US$235 million. The Senate has not yet acted on either appropriations bills for FY2020.

In 2017, US$1.3 billion of US ODA to agriculture was disbursed bilaterally, according to OECD data. The top investment area was agricultural development, which received US$697 million, or 56% of US bilateral agriculture ODA. Other investment priorities include agricultural policy and administrative management (US$293 million, or 23%), agricultural alternative development (US$114 million, or 9%), and rural development (US$93 million, or 7%); this is more than double the amount the sub-sector
received in 2016). Agricultural alternative development describes projects which reduce illicit drug cultivation through other agricultural marketing and production opportunities. This is representative of the US’ overall policy focus on US national security concerns.

In addition to its bilateral support, the US provided US$276 million, or 16%, of its total agricultural ODA, in the form of core contributions to multilateral organizations in 2016. Well below the DAC average of 45%, this low share is mainly due to the US’ large bilateral portfolio on agriculture and food security. Key multilateral recipients are the World Bank, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the African Development Fund (AfDF), the Global Environmental Facility (GEF), and the African Development Bank (AfDB).

The US was the largest funder to the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program (GAFSP), a G20 initiative launched during the US presidency in 2009 to help implement the food-security pledges made that year. After providing a total of US$653 million to GAFSP between 2010 and 2017, the US announced in November 2017 that it would no longer fund the organization. Appropriations for FY2018 and FY2019 gave zero funding to GAFSP.

**USAID and Department of Agriculture lead food assistance and agriculture initiatives**

According to government data, US global agriculture efforts are implemented by 11 agencies. Key entities involved in decision-making and implementation are listed below.

**USAID** leads on strategy and implementation of the US’ food security and agriculture programming, primarily through Feed the Future. USAID coordinates the initiative through its administrator, who serves as the US Global Food Security Coordinator. USAID’s Bureau for Food Security (BFS) was established to manage Feed the Future, and the deputy coordinator for development for Feed the Future acts as the assistant to the administrator of the Bureau. If approved by Congress, the reorganization of USAID will create a new unit, the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security, which will include BFS.

**US Department of Agriculture** primarily provides international food assistance through its various programs. It is also responsible for some training, capacity-building programs, and research activities in the US food-security portfolio. The Foreign Agricultural Service is the department’s main international arm. It implements Food for Progress and the McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program, as well as the Agricultural Research Service (ARS).

**Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC)** administers the country-based Millennium Challenge Accounts, based on compacts to provide development assistance to low-income countries and lower-middle-income countries that have committed to political, economic, and social reforms on economic development.

**Table 1: US international food assistance programs and implementing agencies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program</th>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food for Peace Act (FFPA)</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture (FAS)</td>
<td>Provides funding for concessional sales program and Food for Progress (see below)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Title II: Economic Assistance and Food Security</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture (FAS)</td>
<td>Provides agricultural commodities for nonemergency assistance through eligible organizations and authorizes agricultural commodities for both emergency and development food assistance programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title III: Food for Development</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>Enhances food security and supports long-term economic development in the least-developed countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title V: Farmer-to-Farmer</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>Provides voluntary technical assistance to farmers, farm groups, and agribusinesses in developing and transitional countries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Food for Progress</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture (FAS)</td>
<td>Provides commodities on credit terms or on a grant basis to developing countries and emerging democracies</td>
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<tr>
<td>McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program</td>
<td>Department of Agriculture (FAS)</td>
<td>Aims to reduce hunger and improve literacy and access to primary education, especially for girls, through the provision of school meals and teacher training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emergency Food Security Program (EFSP)</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>Provides cash-based food assistance in response to international crises to complement FFPA Title II</td>
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**US Congress** is responsible for authorizing, overseeing, and funding the US’ agriculture and food security programs. There are several important congressional committees responsible for the authorization of programming: the Senate’s Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee and the House’s Agriculture Committee. As some food assistance is also authorized in foreign-assistance legislation, the Appropriations Subcommittees on State, Foreign Operations, and Related Programs in both chambers are also responsible for making relevant funding decisions.

Other institutions of relevance include the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC; to be replaced by the US’ new Development Finance Corporation, the DFC, in October 2019), as well as the Department of Commerce, Department of State, Department of the Treasury, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Environmental Protection Agency, Peace Corps, African Development Foundation, the US Geological Survey, the National Science Foundation, and the National Institutes of Health.
THE US' ODA TO AGRICULTURE
US$ millions

Bilateral agriculture ODA
Multilateral agriculture ODA
Agriculture ODA as % of total ODA

OECD CRS, and imputed multilateral contributions to the agriculture and rural development sector:
DAC secretariat estimates. In 2017 prices.

Total: US$1694 million

Bilateral
83.7% (US$1418m.)
IDA
9.1% (US$156m.)
IDR
7.2% (US$122m.)
Other

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