

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

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What are Italy's priorities for global development?

Focus is on tackling root causes of migration, particularly in Africa

Strategic priorities of Italy's development cooperation are spelled out in the three-year Programming and Policy Document and Directions for Italian Development Cooperation ('Documento Triennale di Programmazione e di Indirizzo'), developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI). The 2017-2019 Guidelines cover ten priority sectors, including humanitarian aid, migration, agriculture and food security, environment, energy, health, education, global citizenship education, culture and creative industry, and juvenile justice.

Italy overhauled its development cooperation system in 2014, the first major reform since 1987 (see Question 4: 'Who are the main actors in Italy's development cooperation?'). As part of this reform, Italy established its first-ever development agency, the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS), and created a new mandate for the Italian Bank of Deposits and Loans (Cassa Depositi e Prestiti, CDP) to function as an international financial institution (IFI) for development. AICS started operating in January 2016. In 2017 it operated with a budget of €545 million (US\$614 million, just over 10% of Italy's total net ODA. For 2018 AICS' planned budget h

AICS outlines five thematic areas on which it will focus its bilateral cooperation:

- economic development and opportunities;
- human development (including health and education);
- environment and use of natural resources;
- rural development and food security;
- conflict-affected and fragile states.

Due to Italy's position on the frontline of the refugee crisis, the government places strong focus on tackling the root causes of migration, particularly in Africa. In 2017 Italy hosted the Summit of the G7 Heads of State and of Government in the city of Taormina, Sicily. The resulting G7 Taormina Leaders' Communiqué agreed to strengthen dialogue and establish partnerships with African countries to improve socio-economic conditions and to reduce drivers of migration. The Italian government also reinforced its commitment to increase development finance to Africa at the Italy-Africa Conference in October 2018.

Italy's development priorities:

- **Migration:** Tackling root causes of displacement, particularly from Africa, was a key priority of Italy's G7 presidency in 2017 and remains high on the agenda. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs committed to increase development assistance and increase economic investments in Africa at the Italy-Africa conference in October 2018.
- **Agriculture, food security, and nutrition:** Italy has shown international leadership, e.g., through its G7 presidency in 2017. It maintains close relationships with the Rome-based Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), and International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte has called for greater European cooperation and investment to address the 'mass migration crisis' and deaths in the Mediterranean Sea. In this context, he has emphasized Italy's support for the EU's Trust Fund for Africa, which was established to address root causes of irregular migration. Nonetheless, Italy has so far not adopted the Global Compact on Migration, an intergovernmentally negotiated agreement that lays out objectives to facilitate legal migration prepared by the UN. Italian officials did not attend the conference in December 2018, instead opting for a discussion in the Italian Parliament first, as migration has become a highly controversial topic.

The country has shown international leadership on agriculture and the related areas of nutrition and food security. During the Italian G7 presidency, leaders highlighted agriculture, food security, and nutrition as crucial issues to address and committed to increase ODA to these sectors, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, as well as to strengthen humanitarian assistance to famine-stricken areas. Multilateral contributions in the area of agriculture and rural development are high, given Italy's close ties to the UN Rome-based agencies, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Food Programme (WFP), and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). Italy is starting to prepare for hosting the G20 Summit in 2021 where the focus is expected to shift to energy.