

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

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Who are the main actors in Japan's development cooperation?

MOFA steers policy; the JICA leads implementation

Japan's prime minister sets overarching priorities for development policy. Prime Minister (PM) Shinzo Abe (Liberal Democratic Party, LDP) has been leading a conservative coalition government with the National Komeito Party (NKP) since December 2012. Under the leadership of PM Abe, the Cabinet Office established the Sustainable Development Goals Promotion Headquarters (SDGs HQ) in May 2016. SDGs HQ is chaired by PM Abe and its membership includes all cabinet members. It was established to coordinate and align the government's efforts to achieve the SDGs.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA), led by Foreign Minister Taro Kono (LDP), sets development priorities in consultation with other ministries. Within MOFA, the International Cooperation Bureau (ICB) is responsible for designing development policy. ICB is currently led by Director-General Kazuya Nashida. ICB's Global Issues Cooperation Division is responsible for multilateral policy and some sector policies.

Other ministries are also involved in development policy: The Ministry of Finance (MOF), currently headed by Taro Aso (LDP) plays a key role, funding ODA loans that are implemented by Japan's development agency, the Japan Agency for International Cooperation (JICA). It also manages contributions to multilateral development banks. The Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare (MHLW), led by Takumi Nemoto (LDP), is a strong advocate of Japan's taking leadership on global health.

Under the supervision of MOFA and MOF, JICA is responsible for implementing bilateral development assistance through loans, grants, and technical cooperation. It is headed by Shinichi Kitaoka and employed almost 1,900 people in 2017, including staff located across 100 country offices.

Guided by the Development Cooperation Charter, MOFA Country Assistance Planning Divisions draft five-year Country Assistance Policies (CAPs) for selected partner countries. CAPs outline priority areas of Japan's bilateral development funding. CAP Divisions consult recipient governments and seek input from Japan's ODA Task Forces

when developing CAPs. ODA Task Forces are in-country teams that coordinate bilateral ODA, usually made up of staff from embassies and JICA country offices.

The last OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review of Japan, conducted in 2014, found that this mechanism increased coordination of Japan's development assistance and predictability for partner countries. However, it also criticized the fact that decision-making at MOFA and JICA remains centralized and recommended that decision-making and financial authority be delegated more to country offices.

Relevant stakeholders in country program planning are MOFA's Country Assistance Planning Divisions (for grant assistance and technical cooperation), MOF's International Bureau (for loans), and JICA's Human Development, Rural Development and regional departments.

Parliament: Japan's Parliament, referred to as the 'National Diet', is composed of two chambers: the House of Representatives and the House of Councillors. Members of the Diet debate and vote on the national budget, including for ODA. In the House of Councillors, the 'Special Committee on Official Development Assistance and Related Matters' reviews the budget before it goes to the Cabinet for approval. The committee is powerful in influencing the strategic direction of development policy.

Civil Society: Since 2000, MOFA has increasingly promoted partnerships between the government and Japanese civil society organizations (CSOs). In 2015, MOFA and CSOs jointly released a five-year plan for their collaboration on development activities. That said, CSOs were responsible for only 2% of ODA spending in 2017, well below the DAC average of 17%. This can be explained by the type of ODA Japan focuses on, i.e., infrastructure projects, that are more often implemented by private corporations. MOFA also organizes dialogues with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) seven times a year. Important players are the Japan NGO Center for International Cooperation (JANIC) and the Japan Platform (a humanitarian assistance organization), as well as three NGO networks: Ugoku, Japan Civil Society Network on Sustainable Development Goals, and the Global Compact Network Japan.

JAPAN'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SYSTEM

