

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

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

The Council and the European Parliament decide on strategy and budget; DG DEVCO of the Commission develops policies and programs jointly with European External Action Service (EEAS)

The European Council, currently chaired by President Donald Tusk and composed of all EU heads of state and government, meets regularly to set high-level political and budgetary priorities for the EU.

The Council of the European Union (Council; not to be confused with the European Council, see above) includes ministers of EU member states who define overall strategic priorities. The Council meets in different configurations, depending on the issue at stake. For development cooperation, the most relevant configuration is the Foreign Affairs Council. It includes ministers of foreign affairs and/or development from all member states, who vote on legal acts, coordinate policies, and decide on the annual budget in co-decision-making with the European Parliament. The Council's meeting agendas are set by the member state which has the presidency for six months; the presidency until June 2017 is held by Malta, to be followed by Estonia between July and December 2017.

The Foreign Affairs Council is chaired by the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini. She is assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS) to coordinate the EU's foreign policy tools, including development assistance and humanitarian aid.

Along with the Council, the European Parliament (headed by President Antonio Tajani), decides on the annual EU budget, which includes the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The Parliament cannot influence the European Development Fund (EDF), as it is not included within the EU's general budget – it is one of the issues that may come up in the course of the negotiations of the renewal of the Cotonou Agreement. The Parliament also scrutinizes the European Commission (Commission) during policy and program implementation.

Within the Commission (headed by President Jean-Claude Juncker), the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation – EuropeAid (DG DEVCO) is responsible for the formulation of EU development policy and the implementation of programs. DG DEVCO manages the EU's main external financing instruments, including the DCI and EDF. Other Directorates-General of the commission involved in ODA allocation include the Directorate-General Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO) and Directorate-General Research and Innovation. In her role as High Representative and Vice-President of the Commission, Mogherini coordinates the Commissioners' Group on External Action with the view to develop a joint approach to EU global activities. The EEAS is the diplomatic service of the EU. EU country offices (called delegations) are part of the EEAS structure and are responsible for the programming of development funding, together with the Commission, which is responsible for management and implementation.

The EDF is an extra-budgetary instrument that funds development activities in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Its programming and implementation structure is different from the instruments that are financed from the EU's budget (e.g., the DCI). The EDF is financed by direct contributions from the EU member states according to a contribution key, and approved by a Joint Council of Ministers of ACP and EU countries. It is not renewed every year: the current EDF (11th) was adopted for the 2014-2020 period. Most of the funding has already been allocated (see section four: 'How is the ODA budget structured?'). The EDF is established within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, which defines the EU-ACP relations and priorities. Management of the EDF is delegated to DG DEVCO and the EEAS, which take the lead on allocating funds to the specific countries and regions. Regarding implementation, each ACP country appoints a National Authorizing Officer who, together with the EU delegation, is responsible for all program-related matters. The EDF will face a mid-term review in 2017, which will allow for a reassessment of priorities and allocations.

THE EU'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SYSTEM

