

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

3



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

The Council and European Parliament decide on strategy and budget; European Commission develops policies and programs jointly with European External Action Service

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 above) includes ministers of EU member states, who coordinate member states' policies to define strategic priorities for the EU. 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 legislative acts, coordinate policies, and decide on the annual budget, usually 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; Bulgaria holds the presidency from January until June 2018, to be followed by Austria between July and December 2018. The Foreign Affairs Council meets once a month. Meetings of the Foreign Affairs Council are chaired by the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently Federica Mogherini. She is assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS) to coordinate the EU's foreign policy instruments, including development assistance and humanitarian aid.

Along with the Council, the European Parliament decides on the annual EU budget, which includes the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The Parliament has an exclusively advisory role vis-a-vis the European Development Fund (EDF), as the EDF is not included within the EU's general budget. The European Commission (Commission) has proposed that the EDF be 'budgetized' in the future multiannual programming period (MFF 2021-2027), and there seems to be significant support among the EU institutions for the increased efficiency,

coherence, and coordination this may provide. The Parliament also scrutinizes the Commission during policy and program implementation.

Within the Commission, the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation – EuropeAid (DG DEVCO) is responsible for the formulation and implementation of the EU's development policy. DG DEVCO manages the EU's main external financing instruments, including the DCI and EDF. Other Directorates-General 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, Federica 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. The current EDF (11th) was adopted for the entire 2014-2020 period. Most of the funding has already been allocated, but its accounts are reviewed every year, and adjustments are made (see question four: 'How is the ODA budget structured?'). The EDF is established within the framework of the Cotonou Agreement, which defines EU-ACP relations and priorities. Management of the EDF is delegated to DG DEVCO and EEAS, which take the lead on allocating funds to the specific countries and regions. A Joint Council of Ministers of ACP and EU countries approves budget allocations and strategic priorities. Regarding implementation, each ACP country appoints a National Authorizing Officer who, together with the EU delegation, is responsible for all program-related matters.

THE EU'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SYSTEM

