

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

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

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs steers policy; the Japan Agency for International Cooperation (JICA) leads implementation

The Prime Minister sets overarching priorities for Japan's 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, Labor, and Welfare (MHLW), led by Katsunobu Kato (LDP), is a strong advocate of Japan's taking leadership on global health.

Under the supervision of the MOFA and the MOF, JICA is responsible for implementing bilateral aid through loans, grant aid, and technical cooperation. It is headed by Shinichi Kitaoka and employs almost 1,900 people (2017), including staff located across 100 country offices. The division of labor between MOFA and JICA has become more defined in recent years: MOFA steers policy making and JICA takes the lead on implementation.

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 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) and in 2015, MOFA and CSOs jointly released a five-year plan for their collaboration on development activities. That said, CSOs are responsible for only 2% of ODA spending, well below the DAC average of 16%. This can be explained by the type of ODA Japan focuses on, e.g., infrastructure projects, that are more often implemented by private corporations. MOFA 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 (an emergency 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

