

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

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Who are the main actors in Dutch development cooperation?

Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation leads on strategy; embassies administer bilateral ODA

Prime Minister Mark Rutte (People’s Party for Freedom and Democracy, VVD) leads a coalition government with the social-liberal Democrats ‘66 (D66), the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) and the Christian Union (CU). The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) defines priorities for Dutch development policy. It is headed by Stef Blok (VVD) as of March 2018. Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (MFTDC), Sigrid Kaag (D66), leads the MFA’s work on development cooperation.

Within the MFA, the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS) is responsible for designing and coordinating the implementation of development policy. Unlike many other donor countries, the Netherlands does not have an implementing agency. The Dutch embassies are in charge of strategic planning and the administration of bilateral programs.

The role of Parliament is to scrutinize development policy and budget allocations. Parliament can annually amend the government’s draft budget bill. Parliamentary debates in November/December can lead to significant changes to the ODA budget.

Dutch civil society organizations (CSOs) play an active role in Dutch development cooperation. The development CSO umbrella association, Partos, represents over 100 organizations. They engage with the Parliament and the MFA for advocacy. Many CSOs implement their own programs in developing countries and are funded by the Dutch government and through private donations. In 2016, 26% of the country’s bilateral ODA was channeled through CSOs. However, since the end of 2015, program funding for CSOs has been sharply cut and a larger focus has been placed on strategic partnerships and advocacy.

THE NETHERLANDS' DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SYSTEM

