

Latvia

Reported ODA: EUR 104 million
0.26 % GNI (↓ from -22.10% in 2023)

Non-inflated ODA: EUR 72 million
0.18 % GNI (↑ from 0.05% in 2023)

Total inflated ODA: EUR 32 million
32.62 % of total



“Latvia is formalising its development role and maintains global commitments”

Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS)

Main trends

In 2024, Latvia made a major development by officially applying to join the DAC, setting the stage for its membership in 2025. The commitment raises hopes that Latvia will maintain its ODA as a percentage of GNI above pre-Ukraine war levels and move closer to the 0.7% international target. Although overall ODA declined compared to the previous year, primarily due to reduced expenditure for Ukrainian refugees and the absence of vaccine donations reported in 2023, support to Ukraine increased as a share of total aid, reflecting continued solidarity and commitment to addressing war impacts and supporting EU integration.

Although **bilateral ODA has remained stable and recent commitments are positive, there is room for improvement in aid delivery and priority alignment.** Only a small share of grant funding reaches partner countries, as projects remain largely led by Latvian implementers with limited local actor involvement, falling short of the localisation principle of shifting power to in-country stakeholders.

Historically focused on Eastern Partnership and Central Asia, **Latvia expanded its bilateral development cooperation more prominently into Africa in 2024.** It implemented eight projects in countries such as Ethiopia, Namibia and Rwanda, with a strong focus on delivery through civil society, targeting women's economic participation, digital skills, and entrepreneurship. **Although LDCs are defined as a priority, limited engagement and a broad regional focus raise doubts about their effectiveness and pose challenges for impact assessment due to the varying development contexts.**

Bilateral, **open-call project evaluation significantly improved with the introduction of more transparent and results-oriented criteria.** However, further improvement is needed by aligning project application and evaluation criteria with horizontal priorities and a focused subset of priority SDGs, as the current approach spans too many goals.

Government's relationship with civil society

Over the past 20 years, the relationship with governmental stakeholders has evolved from sporadic engagement to a more structured and value-oriented partnership, with greater recognition of civil society's role in shaping development policy. The positive shift is reflected in the allocation of 50% of bilateral project financing to civil society implementers.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also participates in sectoral events as well as supporting communication campaigns and educational events by CSOs, including the Global Education Week, which has been held for 12 years, organised in partnership with the Latvian Platform for Development Cooperation (LAPAS). Furthermore, LAPAS active involvement in the Foreign Policy Experts Council and the Development Cooperation Advisory Council, as well as discussions on the annual foreign policy report, demonstrates a welcome space for civil society input and constructive dialogue between parties.

Recommendations

- Increase the proportion of bilateral funding allocated through open calls to improve transparency and accountability.
- Set criteria for private sector involvement and explore new financing instruments, particularly within programmes supporting Ukraine.
- Review and define policy priorities for cooperation with countries in Africa, focusing more on LDCs.
- Increase direct support to LAPAS to meet the growing demand from NGOs for capacity building and partnerships with Ukraine and other Eastern Partnership countries.