

Portugal

Reported ODA: EUR 619 million
0.24 % GNI (↑ from 3.90% in 2023)

Non-inflated ODA: EUR 593 million
0.23 % GNI (↑ from 0.05% in 2023)

Total inflated ODA: EUR 26 million
5.07 % of total



“Portuguese ODA: Two Decades of Progress, Setbacks, and Structural Challenges”

Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD / Portuguese Platform of Development NGOs

Main trends

Over the past 20 years, Portuguese ODA has experienced progress and setbacks, marked by both international commitments and internal limitations. Before the 2011 financial crisis, Portugal strengthened its role as a donor, focusing on Portuguese-speaking African countries (PALOP) and Timor-Leste. Part of the high figures during this period resulted from the accounting of debt forgiveness as ODA, a common practice at the time. However, the economic crisis led to an abrupt decline in aid from 2011–2012, when the cooperation budget faced severe cuts.

Between 2016 and 2021, Portuguese ODA saw a modest recovery in absolute terms. However, the increase GNI during this period was not matched by a proportional aid rise, resulting in a stagnant ODA/GNI ratio. In 2021, the ratio remained below 0.2%, placing Portugal among the EU donors with the lowest relative effort. From 2022, ODA increased again, reaching EUR 619 million in 2024 (0.24% of GNI), but largely due to refugee-related spending following the invasion of Ukraine and not for structural cooperation improvements.

Since 2015, multilateral aid has dominated, due to growing commitments to international organisations and a decline in bilateral aid managed directly by Portugal.

Despite progress to engage civil society – including the recent strengthening of co-financing grant lines managed by Camões, I.P. – **the fragmentation of Portuguese cooperation, the low level of direct execution by the coordinating agency** (less than 7% of ODA between 2018–2020), and the **absence of binding commitments to the 0.7% GNI target**, continue to limit its reach and predictability.

In 2024, preliminary OECD data show that Portugal recorded an increase in its ODA. However, much of this growth resulted from increased multilateral contributions, while bilateral aid

declined. **Well-structured bilateral cooperation aligned with partner countries' priorities has a direct and transformative impact, and must be improved.**

In the coming years, Portugal must align its cooperation with the principles of policy coherence for development and aid effectiveness, strengthening the focus on human development, reducing inequalities, and promoting ownership by partner countries, as outlined in the **Portuguese Cooperation Strategy 2030**.

Government's relationship with civil society

Plataforma acknowledges the openness to dialogue shown by key actors within Portuguese development cooperation, including the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, as well as the national development agency, Camões I.P. In particular, the dialogue with Camões I.P. is not only open but also meaningful and impactful, often leading to tangible outcomes not only for Plataforma's member organisations, but for NGOs in general.

The 2024 funding for NGO projects remained at comparable levels in 2025. Nevertheless, there is still potential to enhance the support mechanisms for NGO work. Plataforma is concerned by the fact that the Development Cooperation Forum was not convened at all in 2024 (with the last one being held in September 2023). The Development Cooperation Forum is a consultation body with a crucial role in ensuring effective coordination between public institutions and the diverse stakeholders—particularly NGOs—who contribute to the objectives of Portugal's development policy.

Recommendations

- **Portugal must establish a timeline for the gradual increase of ODA**, as outlined in the Portuguese Cooperation Strategy 2030.
- **Processes postponed**, such as the approval of the National Strategy of Development Education by the Council of Ministers, should be promptly resumed.
- **Support for the activities of Portuguese NGOs should be strengthened** through the gradual increase of Camões IP's budget.
- **Civil Society should be consistently and systematically consulted about policy priorities**, especially through the Development Cooperation Forum, which should reconvene by the end of 2025.