

BELGIUM



0.40% GENUINE AID/GNI

0.46% TOTAL AID/GNI



There is agreement in the government to discuss the growth trajectory towards 0.7% as part of the preparation of the 2023 budget. [...] I am counting on my partners in government to support this approach.”

Minister for Development Cooperation
Meryame Kitir, 4 May 2022

MAIN CHANGES IN 2021

According to preliminary OECD DAC statistics, Belgian ODA increased by 2.3% between 2020 and 2021, rising from EUR 2.3 billion to EUR 2.4 billion in constant prices. However, this is largely due to an increase in in-donor refugee costs. After increasing by more than 80%, these costs represented 9.7% of Belgian ODA in 2021, that is almost double the international average of 5.2%. Excluding these costs, Belgian ODA would have actually decreased in constant prices by 2.1%. Furthermore, despite ethical concerns voiced by civil society at the DAC, in-excess vaccine donations to partner countries were also counted as ODA by Belgium in 2021, accounting for 1.3% of its total ODA. And even with such superficial inflation, Belgian ODA still decreased from 0.49% to 0.46% of its gross national income (GNI), largely as a result of rising GNI. Belgium thus moved even further away from the international target of 0.7%.

According to the European Union (EU) Annual Report on Development Aid targets, however, Belgium reached the international commitment of allocating 0.15% of its GNI to LDCs in 2020. On another positive note, the year 2021 witnessed the adoption of four new governmental development programmes, as well as an increased envelope for the future programme with Belgium’s most important partner country, the Democratic Republic of Congo. Belgian ODA can also be commended for its high proportion of formally untied aid and grants rather than loans.

BEST PRACTICE: SUPPORTING THE AFRICAN PRODUCTION OF VACCINES AND MEDICINES



New projects to strengthen local production of vaccines, medicines and other health-related products in South Africa, Senegal and Rwanda were announced in 2021, reflecting a willingness to go beyond the mere donation of COVID-19 vaccines and to fight against global vaccine inequality. As part of Team Europe Initiatives, Belgian development cooperation supported the structuring of the Senegalese pharmaceutical sector, the launch of a pharmaceutical production hub in Dakar, as well as capacity building on pharmaceutical regulation for the Senegalese Ministry of Health. In Rwanda, Belgium contributed to strengthening the Rwandan Food and Drugs Authority through capacity development in market registration and licensing, clinical trials and quality management systems, as well as the digitalisation of pharmaceutical systems. Finally, Belgium contributed to a technology transfer hub for mRNA vaccines in South Africa: in June 2022, the South African company Afrigen announced that it would start sharing mRNA vaccine technology with 15 local producers in low- and middle-income countries, including research into the application of mRNA technology to local health needs such as neglected tropical diseases.

THE GOVERNMENT’S RELATIONSHIP WITH CSOs

The government’s relationship with CSOs generally has a good track record in terms of dialogue, especially within the Development Cooperation Ministry and agencies. Belgian CSOs have, however asked to be more systematically and inclusively involved in consultations on governmental development programmes. In 2021, CSOs’ five-year funding programmes were also adopted. The funding for these programmes increased by 9%, and this can be commended. But in reality, this will not cover inflation during the five upcoming years and therefore does not represent a real increase.

TRENDS FOR THIS YEAR AND BEYOND

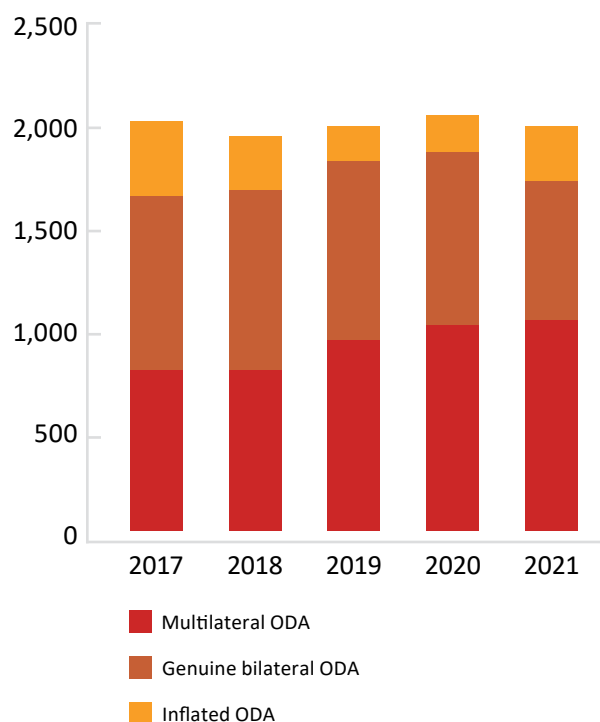
In June 2022, the Belgian government confirmed its October 2020 commitment to adopt a growth trajectory for the development cooperation budget, in order to reach the 0.7% target by 2030. This decision must be implemented together with the 2023 budget. The proportion of humanitarian aid in Belgian ODA has almost tripled in a decade. The war in Ukraine will certainly emphasise this trend and Belgium can be commended for mobilising EUR 25 million of additional funds for humanitarian aid and multilateral contributions to support Ukraine. Climate finance increased by 42% in 2021, although Belgium continues to count almost all of its climate finance as ODA (98% in 2020), running counter to the principle of additionality enshrined in the Paris climate agreement.

Another trend which will hopefully give rise to change in the coming years is the need to overcome the shortcomings linked to the principles of alignment and country ownership, as confirmed by several recent reports and indicators. The Belgian government's own evaluation of its cooperation strategies recommends that dialogue with partner countries be formalised further, to better respect the prioritisation of the partners' needs. This principle should be a priority in the development of the bilateral agency Enabel's new management contract, to be adopted at the end of 2022.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE BELGIAN GOVERNMENT

- Adopt a linear and binding growth trajectory to ensure that ODA reaches 0.7% GNI by 2030 at the latest. This entails a strongly increased budget for the Directorate-general of development cooperation as of 2023 and subsequent years.
- Enshrine this growth trajectory in law.
- Ensure that the Ministry for development cooperation (1) adopts a new management contract for its governmental development agency Enabel that ensures the dialogue with partner countries will be more formalised and systematic when developing bilateral programmes; (2) have as a longer-term ambition the strengthening of national systems in all partner countries, and to use these when possible in development cooperation management; (3) decide that Belgium will stop counting in-donor refugee costs, debt relief, surplus vaccine donations and imputed student costs as ODA.

BELGIUM – GENUINE AND INFLATED ODA (€ million, constant 2020)



ODA TO LDGS (€ million, constant 2020)

	ODA to LDGS	%GNI	% ODA
2017	601.55	0.13	29.19
2018	634.23	0.14	32.04
2019	685.29	0.14	33.70
2020	684.30	0.16	32.82

AID MODALITY (€ million, constant 2020)

	Bilateral (gross)	Grants	Loans	Loans (% of gross bilateral)
2017	1250.6	1232.2	18.4	1.5
2018	1139.0	1119.1	19.9	1.7
2019	1058.2	1040.2	18.0	1.7
2020	1031.9	1021.1	10.8	1.0

ODA TO CLIMATE FINANCE (€ million, constant 2020)

	ODA for mitigation	ODA for adaptation	Total climate finance	Adaptation finance as % of climate finance	Climate finance as % of ODA
2017	77.5	103.0	180.6	57.1	8.8
2018	95.1	100.4	195.5	51.4	9.9
2019	96.7	128.2	224.9	57.0	11.1
2020	87.8	117.3	205.1	57.2	9.8

ODA TO SUPPORT GENDER EQUALITY (€ million, constant 2020)

	Bilateral allocable	Total screened	Not screened	None	Significant	Principal	Significant (% of screened)	Principal (% of screened)
2017	819.9	819.9	0.0	289.6	502.9	27.4	61.3	3.3
2018	805.7	733.4	72.3	284.1	422.1	27.3	57.6	3.7
2019	790.7	716.4	74.3	200.8	486.9	28.7	68.0	4.0
2020	798.2	711.8	86.4	178.2	490.5	43.1	68.9	6.1

ODA TO SUPPORT CSOs (€ million, constant 2020)

	Non-CSO	CSO Earmarked	CSO Core funding	Total bilateral CSO support (% bilateral)	Total bilateral CSO support (% ODA)	Core bilateral CSO support (% bilateral)	Core bilateral CSO support (% ODA)
2017	959.7543	84.93985	170.5966	21.02676	12.40071	14.0375	8.278738
2018	870.9949	78.82869	176.4321	22.66459	12.8935	15.66539	8.911775
2019	796.0167	58.88736	191.8051	23.95057	12.32874	18.32461	9.432736
2020	759.7565	73.55578	185.5372	25.43	12.42489	18.21049	8.897499