

Global Trends in Development Cooperation budgets at a glance 2020-2025



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March 1 2025

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1. Background and justification

March 2025, when finalising this factsheet, the world is grappling with increasingly complex challenges, including rising conflicts, accelerating climate change, and significant (geo)political shifts. At the same time, a growing number of national governments are reassessing their development cooperation budgets and policies. Together, these trends signal a profound reorientation in how states shape their international relations and redefine their roles in global development. Consequently, many working in the field of development cooperation—whether in government institutions, NGOs, private foundations, or research institutes—are striving to understand the implications of these changes for their work and the broader global landscape.

We believe that factual insights into these developments can be helpful in this process. However, we have found that obtaining a comprehensive overview of key current changes can be challenging. This factsheet, therefore, aims to provide a concise overview of shifts in national development budgets from 2020 to 2025 for a selection of sixteen countries: Australia, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States¹.

These sixteen countries were selected either because they are major donors or because they have experienced significant budget cuts or notable increases in their Official Development Assistance (ODA) budgets. The United States, Japan, Australia, and the Republic of Korea have not formally committed to the 0.7% ODA/GNI target, whereas the other countries have.

We first present nine countries with decreasing development budgets (in alphabetical order), followed by seven countries with stable or increasing budgets (also in alphabetical order). Our primary data sources include the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) for the period 2020–2023 and Donor Tracker for 2024–2025. The figures for the latter years are, in some cases, projections and represent ODA commitments based on government announcements. In certain instances, we also incorporated data from national government documents, including policy papers, white papers, and evaluation reports. For each country, we present absolute ODA budget figures (in both euros and US dollars), percentage changes over the years, and ODA as a percentage of Gross National Income (GNI). This is followed by a discussion of key developments and suggested further readings we found helpful ourselves. The factsheet concludes with a typology that categorises countries based on two dimensions: their budgetary changes and the underlying rationales. We end with some brief overall remarks.

We include two important disclaimers. First, the factsheet is inherently time bound. Changes in the world at large and in this particular field are taking place at a rapid pace, so what we write ‘today’, might have changed by ‘tomorrow’. Second, we noticed inconsistencies in data across different official sources. For example, we observed slight variations in absolute ODA figures exist between different datasets—primarily due to the OECD’s use of 2023 as a base year for its calculations. We have made every effort to ensure consistency and accuracy in our data.

For a deeper understanding of countries’ development policies and budgets, we recommend consulting sources such as [OECD Peer Reviews](#), [Our World in Data](#), [DevelopmentAid.org](#), [Donor Tracker](#), or [Devex](#).

¹ While we recognise the growing role of emerging donors, such as [China](#) and some of the Gulf States (e.g. [Qatar](#) and [Saudi Arabia](#)) and Turkey, we have not included their data separately due to a lack of accessible and reliable data.

2. Countries with decreasing development budgets

Several countries, including some with a strong track record of commitment to development cooperation, have significantly reduced their development budgets and revised their related policies or are in the process of doing so.

Belgium

Table 2.1

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	2.10	2.29		0.47%
2021	2.00	2.18	-4.80%	0.46%
2022	2.00	2.18	0.00%	0.46%
2023	2.10	2.29	5.05%	0.47%
2024	1.90	2.07	-9.61%	0.43%
2025	1.80	1.96	-5.31%	0.41%

Key Developments:

- The government announced a 25% reduction in ODA over five years starting in 2024.
- Focus on addressing national budgetary constraints and reallocating resources towards domestic priorities.
- So far, Belgium's reductions do not reflect a strategic reorientation but are rather a response to domestic economic challenges. The cuts do not appear targeted towards reshaping Belgium's role in global development, and there is no major shift in Belgium's development priorities.

Further reading:

[Belga News Agency](#), Belgium to cut development cooperation funding by a quarter [11.11.11](#), Internationale solidariteit onder vuur terwijl de wereld in brand staat

Finland

Table 2.2

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	1.20	1.30		0.47%
2021	1.10	1.20	-7.69%	0.45%
2022	1.40	1.50	25.00%	0.57%
2023	1.30	1.40	-6.67%	0.42%
2024	1.10	1.20	-14.29%	0.40%
2025	1.06	1.10	-8.33%	0.36%

Key developments:

- The budget decreased in 2021 but saw a significant increase in 2022, mainly due to support for Ukraine.
- Finland plans to reduce its ODA budget with 25% over the period 2024-2027. The current government has a more nationalist and interest-driven approach to development cooperation, placing a stronger emphasis on security and Finnish economic and geopolitical interests.

Further reading:

[Ministry](#) for Foreign Affairs Finland, Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy submitted to Parliament

[Finnish Government](#), Report on International Economic Relations and Development Cooperation

[OECD](#) Development Co-operation Peer Reviews: Finland 2024

France

Table 2.3

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	14.01	14.70		0.44%
2021	14.64	15.36	4.49%	0.52%
2022	16.52	17.33	12.83%	0.55%
2023	14.34	15.05	-13.16%	0.56%
2024	15.57	16.35	8.64%	0.50%
2025	13.95	14.26	-12.78%	0.45%

Key developments:

- Significant budget cuts are being announced, with figures ranging from 18 up to 40%.
- The budget cuts are driven by national debt concerns and EU fiscal alignment. Not all budget items faced the same level of reduction - defence and domestic priorities received increased funding - indicating that the ODA cuts are also a matter of re-prioritization.

Further reading:

[Donor Tracker](#), ODA cut by 18% in France's 2025 draft budget

[Le Monde](#), En France, la chute des aides au développement consterne les ONG et complique encore la diplomatie présidentielle

[RFI](#), France's proposed budget cuts set to slash overseas development aid

Germany

Table 2.4

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	27.96	29.34		0.73%
2021	28.96	30.38	3.55%	0.76%
2022	34.73	36.44	19.96%	0.85%
2023	35.97	37.74	3.57%	0.82%
2024	28.32	29.71	-21.27%	0.64%
2025	27.34	28.69	-3.44%	0.61%

Key developments:

- Significant budget cuts in 2024 and 2025, primarily driven by economic constraints and fiscal policy decisions.
- Although so far less pronounced compared to other countries such as the Netherlands, the reallocation of funds also reflects a shift towards prioritizing national interests, such as increased defence spending.
- Projected cuts in humanitarian aid spending of over 50% by 2025.

Further reading:

[Centre for Global Development](#), German Parties' Vision for Development Policy: 2025 Federal Elections

[Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung](#), The German Government's Devastating Cuts to Foreign Aid

The Netherlands

Table 2.5

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	4.70	4.93		0.59%
2021	5.22	5.48	11.16%	0.52%
2022	6.81	7.14	30.29%	0.67%
2023	7.01	7.36	3.08%	0.66%
2024	6.94	7.28	-1.09%	0.62%
2025	6.87	7.21	-0.96%	0.61%

Key developments:

- In 2024, the Minister for International Trade and Development Aid announced a projected €2.4 billion annual reduction of ODA by 2027. At the same time, the government is introducing a cap on the In-Donor-Refugee Costs, at 10% of total ODA-spending. In recent years, IDRC had grown to some 25% of the ODA-budget.
- The focus has shifted towards Dutch national interests in areas like trade, security, and migration.
- Phasing out support for civil society organisations and gender equality projects.
- Funding for civil society organisations reduced from 1,4 billion euro for 5-year period to 0,4 billion from 2026 onwards. Civil society organisations can no longer use funding for advocacy in the Netherlands.
- The government will phase out projects aimed at gender equality, vocational and higher education and sports and culture; scale down efforts on climate, civil society and multilateral cooperation.

Further reading:

[Policy](#) Letter on International Development (2025): The Dutch government announces a structural reduction of €2.4 billion in development spending, emphasizing a shift towards national interests.

[NOS News](#), Zorgen over bezuinigingen ontwikkelingssamenwerking, 'arme landen kind van de rekening'

Switzerland

Table 2.6

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	3.54	3.69		0.49%
2021	3.75	3.91	5.96%	0.50%
2022	4.36	4.54	16.11%	0.56%
2023	4.26	4.44	-2.20%	0.54%
2024	3.93	4.09	-7.88%	0.49%
2025	2.30	3.86	-5.63%	0.48%

Key developments:

- Due to rising expenses from the COVID-19 pandemic, the global energy crisis, and the war in Ukraine, parliament has further reduced the 2025 budget by CHF 110 million, with an additional CHF 321 million in budget freeze savings projected for 2026-2028.
- Programs of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation Albania, Bangladesh and Zambia will be shut down in 2028.
- So far, there are no indications of a major strategic shift in its development policy focus.

Further reading:

[The Federal Council](#), Development cooperation: FDFA and EAER implement Parliament's decisions
[SWI](#), Swiss budget cuts increase pressure on International Geneva
[SWI](#), Foreign aid cuts: where does Switzerland stand?

Sweden

Table 2.7

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	6.07	6.32		1.14%
2021	5.15	5.36	-15.18%	0.91%
2022	5.28	5.50	2.61%	0.89%
2023	5.40	5.62	2.18%	0.93%
2024	5.54	5.77	2.67%	0.93%
2025	5.43	5.65	-2.08%	0.89%

Key developments:

- Budget cuts of SEK 3 billion annually (\approx €267 million) from 2026-2028.
- Shift from the traditional 1% GNI commitment due to domestic fiscal challenges and political shifts from 2021 onwards, with a more pronounced decrease in 2025.

Further reading:

[Donor Tracker](#), Sweden slashes ODA budget amid domestic priorities
[EADI blog](#), Swedish Aid Cuts Dent 'Decades of Work' in Global South

United Kingdom

Table 2.8

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	16.90	18.50		0.70%
2021	13.50	14.80	-20.00%	0.50%
2022	13.30	14.60	-1.35%	0.50%
2023	17.80	19.10	30.82%	0.58%
2024	16.20	17.40	-8.90%	0.50%
2025	16.70	17.90	2.87%	0.50%

Key developments:

- Reduced from 0.7% to 0.5% GNI in 2020 due to COVID-19 economic impacts.
- Reallocation of £900 million (\approx €1,08 million) from development cooperation to domestic asylum support announced in 2024.
- In 2025, the government announced that the development cooperation budget will be reduced from 0.5% of GDP to 0.3% by 2027 to fund an increase of defence expenditures. Minister for Development, Anneliese Dodds, has resigned in response to these budget cuts.

Further reading:

[UK Parliament](#), UK aid: spending reductions since 2020 and outlook from 2024/25
[UK Government](#), Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office main estimate memorandum 2024 to 2025
[The Guardian](#), Former Foreign Office head warns Reeves not to cut international aid
[The Guardian](#), Starmer's cuts to UK aid budget are 'cruel and shameful', say experts
[BBC](#), Minister Anneliese Dodds quits over aid cuts

United States

Table 2.9

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	39.38	41.32		0.17%
2021	50.60	53.09	28.50%	0.20%
2022	59.85	62.79	18.30%	0.23%
2023	61.65	64.68	3.00%	0.24%
2024	40.17	42.15	-34.80%	0.15%
2025	40.93	42.94	1.90%	0.15%

Key developments:

- Cuts of \$900 million (≈ €828 million) in 2021, with reductions totalling \$1.6 billion (≈ €1.47 billion) by 2025. Domestic priorities linked to the pandemic resulted in a focus on national economic recovery, and shifting geopolitical strategies under the "America First" policy.
- After a freeze on USAID operations initiated in the beginning of 2025, the Trump administration announced in February 2025 to cut its development cooperation budget with nearly 60 billion USD, including over 90% of the USAID budget. All part of the "America First" Policy,

Sources:

[Office of Inspector General](#), USAID Oversight of USAID-Funded Humanitarian Assistance Programming Impacted by Staffing Reductions and Pause on Foreign Assistance

[The Guardian](#), 'The impact has been devastating': how USAID freeze sent shockwaves through Ethiopia

[The Guardian](#), First Thing: Trump administration to cut more than 90% of USAid foreign aid contracts

3. Countries with stable or increasing development budgets

While many countries reduce their budgets for development cooperation, a few countries choose to increase or keep their budget stable.

Australia

Table 3.1

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	2.44	2.80		0.20%
2021	2.44	2.80	0.00%	0.20%
2022	2.44	2.80	0.00%	0.20%
2023	2.75	3.00	7.14%	0.19%
2024	3.05	3.20	6.67%	0.19%
2025	3.05	3.20	0.00%	0.19%

Key developments:

- **2020-2022:** Australia's ODA budget remained stable at A\$4.0 billion (US\$2.8 billion), maintaining an ODA to GNI ratio of 0.20%.
- **2023:** The budget increased slightly to A\$4.5 billion (US\$3.0 billion), but the ODA to GNI ratio decreased to 0.19%.

Further reading:

[Australian Government](#), Australia's Official Development Assistance Budget Summary 2024-25

[Donor Tracker](#), Australia at a Glance

Denmark

Table 3.3

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	2.70	2.94		0.74%
2021	2.80	3.05	3.74%	0.74%
2022	3.00	3.27	7.21%	0.74%
2023	3.10	3.38	3.36%	0.74%
2024	2.75	3.00	-11.24%	0.70%
2025	3.05	3.30	10.00%	0.70%

Key developments:

- Over the years, the Danish government managed to maintain its commitment to 0.7% of GNI. This includes increased support for Ukraine and other Eastern European neighbouring countries.
- The process of formulation a new government policy started early 2025.

Further reading:

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark](#), Priorities of the Danish Government for Danish Development Assistance

[Danish Institute for International Studies](#), Danish Development Cooperation Caught between Old Tropes and New Realities

Ireland

Table 3.4

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	0.93	0.97		0.31%
2021	1.16	1.10	13.40%	0.30%
2022	2.31	2.41	119.09%	0.64%
2023	2.54	2.64	9.54%	0.67%
2024	2.00	2.08	-21.21%	0.58%
2025	2.60	2.71	30.29%	0.69%

Key developments:

- Over the past years, the budget for development cooperation of the Irish government significantly increased and can be mainly explained by the improved economic situation of the country.
- Ireland is strongly and increasingly committed to the areas of climate change and humanitarian crises.

Further reading:

[Irish Aid](#), Ireland reaffirms commitment to ODA

[Politico](#), Ireland has a problem everyone wants: How to spend €14.1 billion windfall from Apple

Italy

Table 3.5

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	4.17	4.38		0.22%
2021	5.69	5.97	13.47%	0.29%
2022	6.79	7.12	2.51%	0.33%
2023	5.83	6.12	-10.56%	0.27%
2024	6.30	6.61	7.98%	0.29%
2025	6.35	6.66	0.76%	0.29%

Key developments:

- Italy has faced ongoing fiscal pressures and budgetary constraints, which have influenced its ODA commitments. Italy has expressed a commitment to increase its ODA/GNI ratio to 0.7% by 2030.
- A significant portion of Italy's ODA is allocated to in-donor refugee costs.
- In October 2022, Prime Minister Meloni launched The Mattei Plan, aiming to redefine Italy's relationship with African nations through equitable partnerships. The plan seeks to foster collaboration in key sectors such as energy, agriculture, infrastructure, and education.

Further reading:

[Italian Institute for International Political Studies Rebooting](#), Italy's Africa policy
[Istituto Affari Internazionali](#), Present and Future of Italy's Development Cooperation

Japan

Table 3.6

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	12.28	12.79		0.31%
2021	13.73	14.30	11.81%	0.34%
2022	16.27	16.94	18.46%	0.39%
2023	18.82	19.60	15.70%	0.44%
2024	16.76	17.45	-10.97%	0.39%
2025	16.81	17.51	0.34%	0.39%

Key developments:

- Since 2020, for the first time in 25 years a significant increase in Japan's ODA budget can be noted.
- Japan's development cooperation is characterised by a strong, but not exclusively, regional focus.

Further reading:

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#), White Paper on Development Cooperation 2023
[Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan](#), Annual Report on Japan's ODA Evaluation 2024

The Republic of Korea

Table 3.7

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	1.85	2.20		0.14%
2021	2.27	2.80	27.27%	0.15%
2022	2.62	3.10	10.71%	0.16%
2023	3.41	4.80	54.84%	0.25%
2024	4.62	4.80	0.00%	0.25%
2025	4.62	4.50	-6.25%	0.25%

Key developments:

- Over the past years, a significant increase can be noted in the ODA budget of the Japanese government.
- In 2025, despite fiscal challenges, the Republic of Korea allocated 6.5 trillion (US\$4.5 billion) on ODA, reaching its funding target five years ahead of schedule.

Further reading:

[Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), Republic of Korea, Korea’s ODA
[Korea Net](#), 2025 official development aid raised 3.8% to KRW 6.5T

 **Norway**

Table 3.8

Year	ODA Budget (€ billion)	ODA Budget (US\$ billion)	% Change (US\$)	ODA as % of GNI
2020	4.86	5.06		1.11%
2021	4.22	4.39	-13.24%	0.93%
2022	4.06	4.23	-3.64%	0.86%
2023	5.28	5.50	30.02%	1.09%
2024	4.75	4.95	-10.00%	0.96%
2025	4.64	5.01	1.19%	0.98%

Key developments:

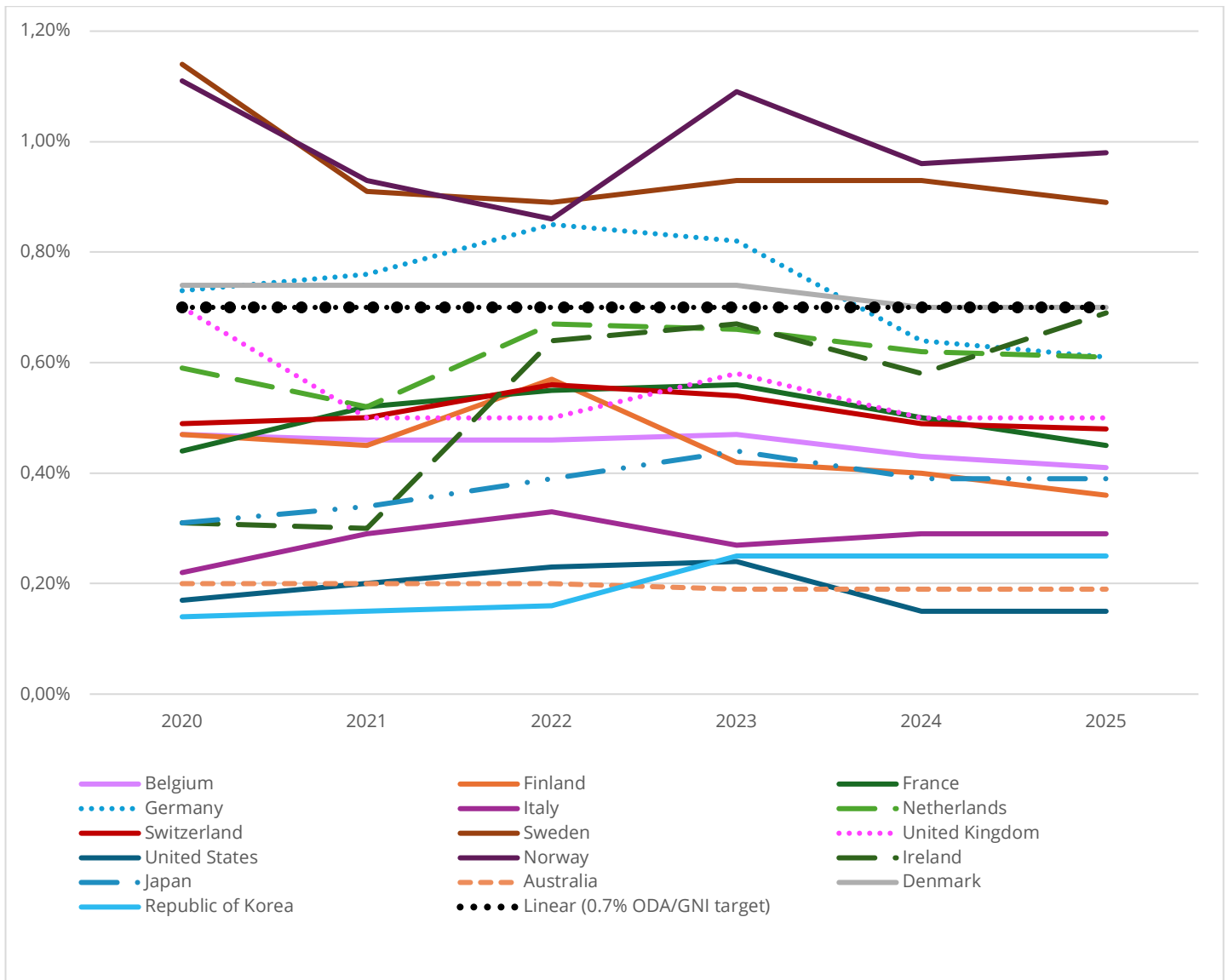
- Norway has consistently maintained ODA above the UN target of 0.7% of GNI, reflecting its strong commitment to international development.
- The gradual increase in ODA aligns with Norway's policy to support global humanitarian efforts and sustainable development.

Further reading:

[Donor Tracker](#), Norwegian government releases 2025 budget proposal
[Norwegian Government](#), Norway increasing contribution to fund for world’s poorest countries

The Figure below provides an overview of the sixteen countries' development budget as a percentage of their GNI for the period 2020–2025.

Figure 3.1 ODA as % of GNI 2020-2025

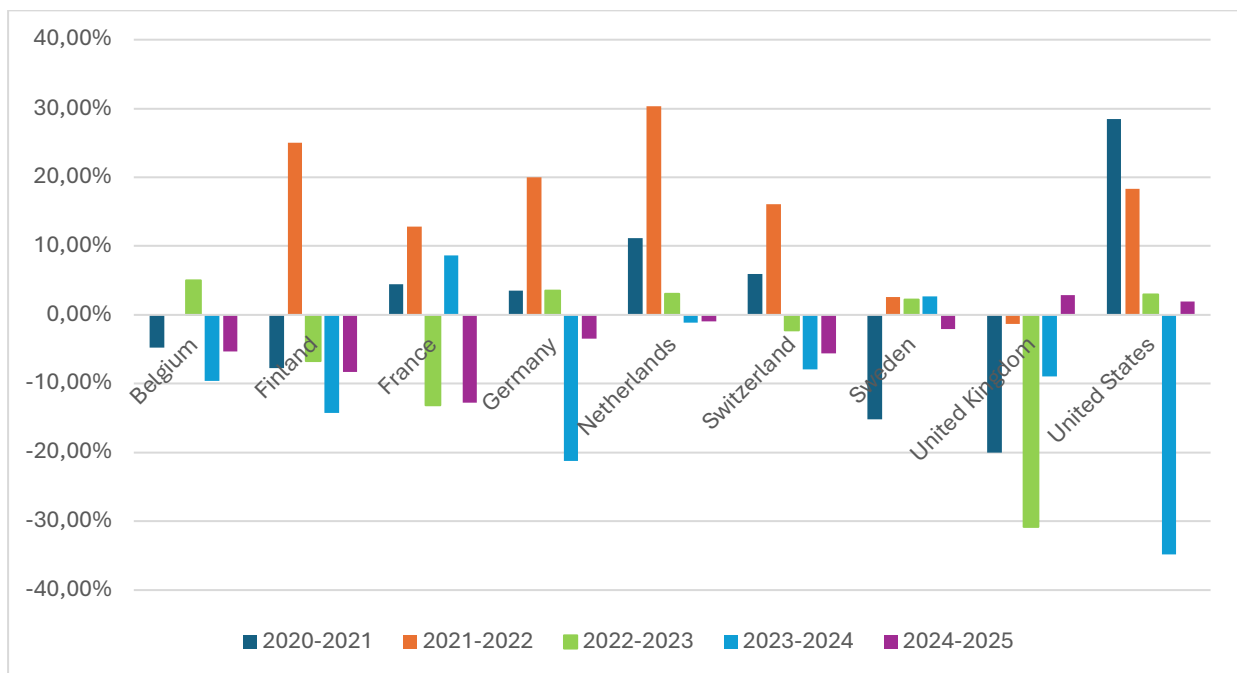


4. Overall development budget changes

To provide a clearer overview of recent shifts in ODA budgets across the sixteen countries covered in this factsheet, Figures 4.1 and 4.2 depict the percentage change in development budgets for the period 2020-2025. Figure 4.1 focuses on countries experiencing budget reductions, while Figure 4.2 highlights those with stable or increasing budgets.

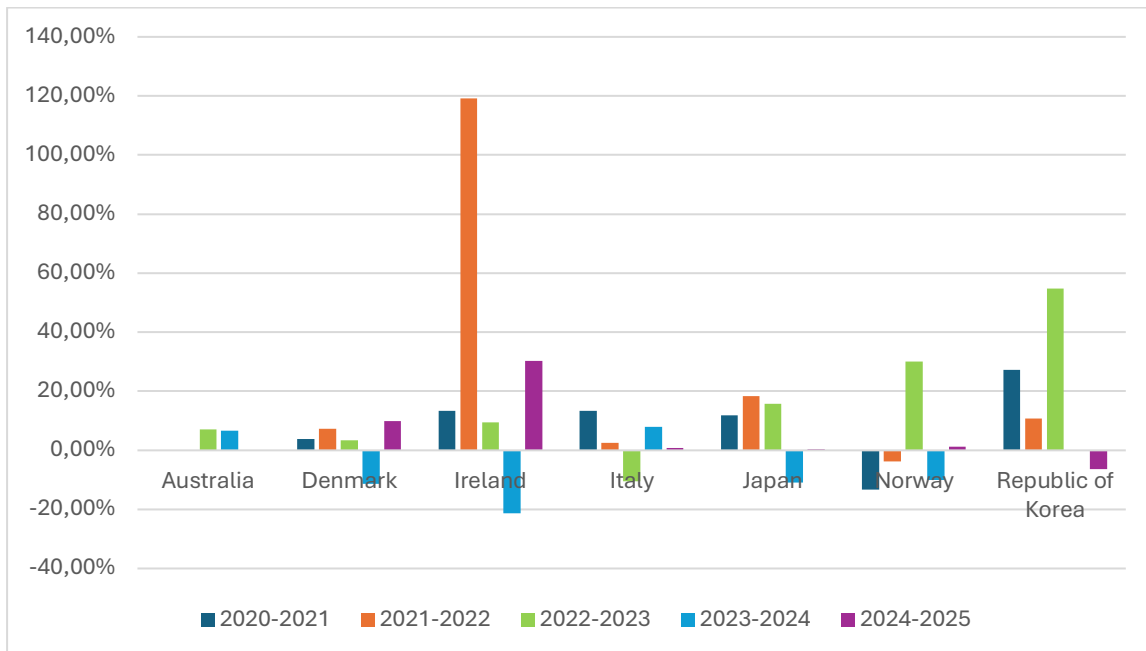
In recent years, several major donors have implemented substantial ODA budget cuts: France by over 10% in both 2023 and 2025, Germany by more than 20% in 2024, the United Kingdom by over 30% in 2023, and the United States by nearly 35% in 2024.

Figure 4.1 Changes in Development budgets 2020 and 2025 – decreasing ODA budgets



In contrast to countries experiencing significant ODA budget reductions, a few have substantially increased their development spending. Ireland stands out as the most notable case, with an almost 120% increase in 2022 and a further 30% rise in 2025.

Figure 4.2 Changes in Development budgets 2020 and 2025 – stable or increasing ODA budgets



The combined ODA budget of the sixteen countries dropped by \$34.61 billion from 2023 to 2024, reflecting a 17% decline from \$202 billion to \$168 billion. From 2024 to 2025, the total development budget further decreased to \$166 billion, a reduction of nearly 1%. Given that not all announced budget cuts have been fully detailed, the decline for 2025 could be even greater and will continue in the coming years.

5. A country typology of Development Cooperation and Finance

The data above highlights a global trend of significant declining development cooperation budgets and policy reorientations. However, a few countries stand out for increasing their development cooperation budgets. It also becomes clear that countries vary significantly in the motivations driving these budget adjustments.

To provide a clearer understanding of these shifts, we attempt to develop a typology that categorises countries based on two dimensions: their budgetary changes and the underlying rationales. While this typology offers a helpful framework for comparing countries and understanding broader global trends, it should be interpreted with caution for several reasons. First, the global development landscape is rapidly evolving—some countries (e.g. Denmark) plan to revise their development cooperation policies and budgets in the near future. This makes the typology inherently time sensitive. Second, the motivations driving these changes are often complex and multifaceted, with overlapping economic, strategic, and ideological factors. In some cases, these motives remain implicit or evolve over time. As such, we recommend viewing this typology as a time-bound snapshot rather than a definitive classification, acknowledging that both policies and motivations are likely to shift in response to global developments.

We distinguish between four types of countries:

Table 5.1 A country typology

Category	Countries
Persistent leaders	Denmark, Sweden, Norway
Strategic retreating donors	France, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States
Economically constrained donors	Belgium, Finland, Germany, Italy, Switzerland
Emerging contributors	Australia, Ireland, Japan, Republic of Korea

1. Persistent leaders

Countries that maintain or exceed the 0.7% GNI target for ODA, reflecting a long-term, stable commitment to global development efforts:

- Denmark
- Sweden
- Norway

Key traits:

- Stable-strong political and/or public support for international development
- Focus on solidarity, human rights, gender equality, and climate action
- Stable or growing development budgets despite global economic pressures.

2. Strategic retreating donors

Countries reducing or reorienting their development aid commitments due to domestic policy shifts, geopolitical priorities, or strategic re-alignments towards national interests (defence, migration, trade):

- France
- The Netherlands
- United Kingdom
- United States

Key traits:

- Reductions linked to shifts in political or geopolitical priorities
- Increasing focus on national economic and security interests
- Reorientation toward bilateral partnerships aligned with strategic goals

3. Economically constrained donors

Similar to retreating donors, these countries reduce their development budgets, but primarily due to economic pressures, budget deficits, or fiscal tightening, rather than (outspoken) ideological or policy-driven motivations.

- Belgium
- Finland
- Germany
- Italy
- Switzerland

Key traits:

- Cuts or not meeting intended commitments primarily driven by national budget deficits or economic downturns
- Budget reductions are typically part of broader austerity measures
- No (clear) indication (yet) of a significant shift in long(er)-term development policy focus despite financial limitations

4. Emerging contributors

Countries with rapidly increasing development aid commitments, positioning themselves as growing players in international development.

- Australia
- Ireland
- Japan
- Republic of Korea

Key traits:

- Rapid increases in development budgets over recent years
- Strong regional focus on partnerships, economic cooperation, or humanitarian objectives
- Expanding influence in global development cooperation

6. To conclude

As the United Nations continues to emphasize the need for trillions in additional funding to bridge the development financing gap and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a significant number of donor countries are simultaneously reducing their development budgets and/or reorienting their priorities toward national interests. This divergence between global needs and national agendas presents a pressing challenge for the future of international development cooperation.

It goes without saying that the landscape of development cooperation is undergoing profound shifts—both in terms of financial commitments and underlying policy rationales. While some longer-term implications remain uncertain, it is clear that these global realignments will impact individuals, programs, organisations, institutions, and partnerships and demand critical reflection from all stakeholders in the sector.