FINLAND

Leaving no one behind: Finland’s approach and priorities

Finland’s 2016 development policy is guided by a human rights-based approach and focuses on low-income countries. In line with these priorities, its development investments should comply with minimum standards, including adherence to human rights principles, equality, participation and non-discrimination, non-contribution to human rights violations or to existing discriminatory structures and norms. Finland is committed to mainstreaming leave no one behind in its development co-operation with a specific focus on the rights of women and persons with disabilities. It also promotes and funds universal and non-discriminatory basic services such as inclusive education and the right to education for children with disabilities. Finland is in the process of updating its guidelines for its policy’s three cross-cutting objectives: gender equality, non-discrimination and climate sustainability. The guidelines aim to collect and analyse disaggregated data in a systematic way and to better operationalise and monitor development outcomes from a leave no one behind perspective.

For Finland, key challenges to mainstreaming a leave no one behind approach across all development interventions are: 1) the absence of strategic and policy guidance; 2) modest incentives to systematically analyse inequalities and discriminatory structures to guide funding decisions and programming; and 3) incomplete accountability systems.

Financial flows from Finland to developing countries

Figure 21.1. Net resource flows to developing countries, 2006-16, Finland

Figure 21.2. Net ODA: Trends in volume and as a share of GNI, 2006-17, Finland

Finland’s performance against commitments for effective development co-operation

Table 21.1. Results of the 2016 Global Partnership monitoring round (updated), Finland

Note: Please refer to Annex B for details on the indicators. Data on untied ODA, retrospective statistics and publishing to the IATI have been updated according to the latest information available.
Finland’s official development assistance

In 2017, Finland provided USD 1.1 billion in net ODA (preliminary data), which represented 0.41% of gross national income (GNI) and a fall of 3.3% in real terms from 2016 due to a decrease in in-donor refugee costs. Finland, like other EU member countries, committed in 2015 to provide 0.7% of GNI as official development assistance (ODA) by 2030. In 2017, in-donor refugee costs were USD 77 million and represented 7.3% of Finland’s total net ODA, compared to 12.3% in 2016.

The share of Finnish ODA that is untied (excluding administrative costs and in-donor refugee costs) has increased, from 92.6% in 2015 to 95.3% in 2016, compared to the 2016 Development Assistance Committee (DAC) average of 81.2%. The grant element of total ODA was 100% in 2016. Loans amounted to 2.1% of gross ODA.

In 2016, 60.3% of ODA was provided bilaterally. Finland allocated 39.7% of total ODA as core contributions to multilateral organisations. In addition, it channelled 28.7% of its bilateral ODA for specific projects implemented by multilateral organisations (multi-bi/non-core).

In 2016, 42.1% of bilateral ODA was programmed with partner countries. Finland’s share of country programmable aid was below the DAC country average (46.8%) in 2016. Project-type interventions accounted for 66% of this aid.

In 2016, USD 117 million of bilateral ODA was channelled to and through civil society organisations (CSOs). ODA channelled to and through CSOs decreased between 2015 and 2016 as a share of bilateral aid (from 26.9% in 2015 to 18.3% in 2016).
Bilateral ODA was primarily focused on sub-Saharan Africa and south and central Asia. In 2016, USD 160.8 million was allocated to sub-Saharan Africa and USD 86.6 million to south and central Asia.

In 2016, 30.1% of bilateral ODA went to Finland’s top 10 recipients. All of its nine long-term partner countries are among its top 10 recipients of bilateral ODA. In 2016, Finland’s support to fragile contexts reached USD 251.3 million (39% of gross bilateral ODA). Support to fragile contexts consisted mainly of project-type interventions (65%) and contributions to pooled funds (27%).

The share of bilateral ODA that was allocated to least developed countries (LDCs) was 30.6%, amounting to USD 195.8 million in 2016. The share decreased from 32.8% in 2015, but remains higher than the 2016 DAC average of 21.9%. The LDCs received the highest share of bilateral ODA compared with other income groups in 2015, noting that 51% was unallocated by income group.

At 0.13% of GNI in 2016, total ODA to the LDCs was below the UN target of 0.15% of GNI.
In 2016, 25.8% of bilateral ODA was allocated to social infrastructure and services, amounting to USD 124.6 million, with a strong focus on support to government and civil society (USD 58.1 million). USD 75 million was allocated to humanitarian aid. In 2016, Finland committed USD 1.2 million (0.4% of bilateral allocable aid) to the mobilisation of domestic resources in developing countries. It also committed USD 63.8 million (21.2% of bilateral allocable aid) to promote aid for trade and to improve developing countries’ trade performance and integration into the world economy.

USD 159.6 million of bilateral ODA supported gender equality in 2016. In 2016, 53.2% of Finland’s bilateral allocable aid had gender equality and women’s empowerment as a principal or significant objective, compared with the DAC country average of 36.5%. This is an increase from 49.9% in 2015. A high share of Finland’s aid to population and reproductive health, education, and other social infrastructure focuses on gender.

USD 66.6 million of bilateral ODA supported the environment in 2016. In 2016, 22.1% of Finland’s bilateral allocable aid focused on the environment and 12.3% (USD 37.1 million) focused on climate change, compared with respective DAC country averages of 33% and 25.7%.

Note to reader: Annex B provides “Methodological notes on the profiles of Development Assistance Committee members”.

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