

# DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION PROFILES

## Italy

### Introduction

Italy's development co-operation promotes education, vocational training, creation of employment and work dignity, food security, clean water access, energy and gender equality. Italy works to combat all forms of violence and to guarantee access to sexual and reproductive health. Italy's total official development assistance (ODA) (USD 6 billion, preliminary data) decreased in 2023, representing 0.27% of gross national income (GNI).

Find the methodological notes behind the profile [here](#).

### Policy

[Law 125/2014](#) sets out the primary objectives of Italian development co-operation: poverty eradication, reducing inequalities, improving well-being, and sustainable development; human rights, including gender equality, equal opportunities for everyone, democracy and the rule of law; and conflict prevention, peacebuilding, reconciliation and stabilisation processes, as well as institution-building. The law also broadens partnerships, operationalises Italian development policy, and creates more accountability and transparency. [The 2021-23 Three-Year Programming and Policy Planning Document](#) establishes key priorities, focusing on 20 priority countries, 10 of which are least developed countries (LDCs). Its geographical focus is primarily on the African continent, the Middle East, Cuba and El Salvador.

Multilateral co-operation accounts for more than half of Italy's development co-operation. Italy aims to strengthen its role as a major player in addressing global challenges and promoting human, economic, social and environmental development through its multilateral engagement. Italy has prioritised strengthening health systems and supporting the research, production and fair distribution of drugs, treatments and vaccines to make them accessible to all. Italy demonstrates leadership in preserving cultural heritage and fighting tax crime. The review of the National Sustainable Development Strategy, which includes the [National Action Plan on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#) was approved in September 2023 by the Interministerial Committee on Ecological Transition. In 2024, Italy's new strategic plan for Africa "Piano Mattei" was launched during the Italy-Africa conference in January 2024 ([Law 2/2024](#)).

### Poverty and inequality reduction focus

[Article 1, Clause 2.a of Law 125/2014](#) states that "uprooting poverty and narrowing inequalities, improving the living conditions of peoples and promoting sustainable development" are fundamental objectives of Italy's international co-operation for sustainable development. Italy aims to take an intersectional approach to delivering on these objectives by identifying the most vulnerable situations in specific contexts. The Italian Agency for Development Co-operation (AICS) has specific guidelines [on poverty reduction, children and youth, disabilities, social inclusion, gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls](#), as well as an earlier [operational toolkit for gender equality and female empowerment](#). Italy's targeted interventions for poverty reduction take a sectoral approach, focusing on health, food security, access to water, gender violence and human rights.

### Findings from OECD-DAC reviews

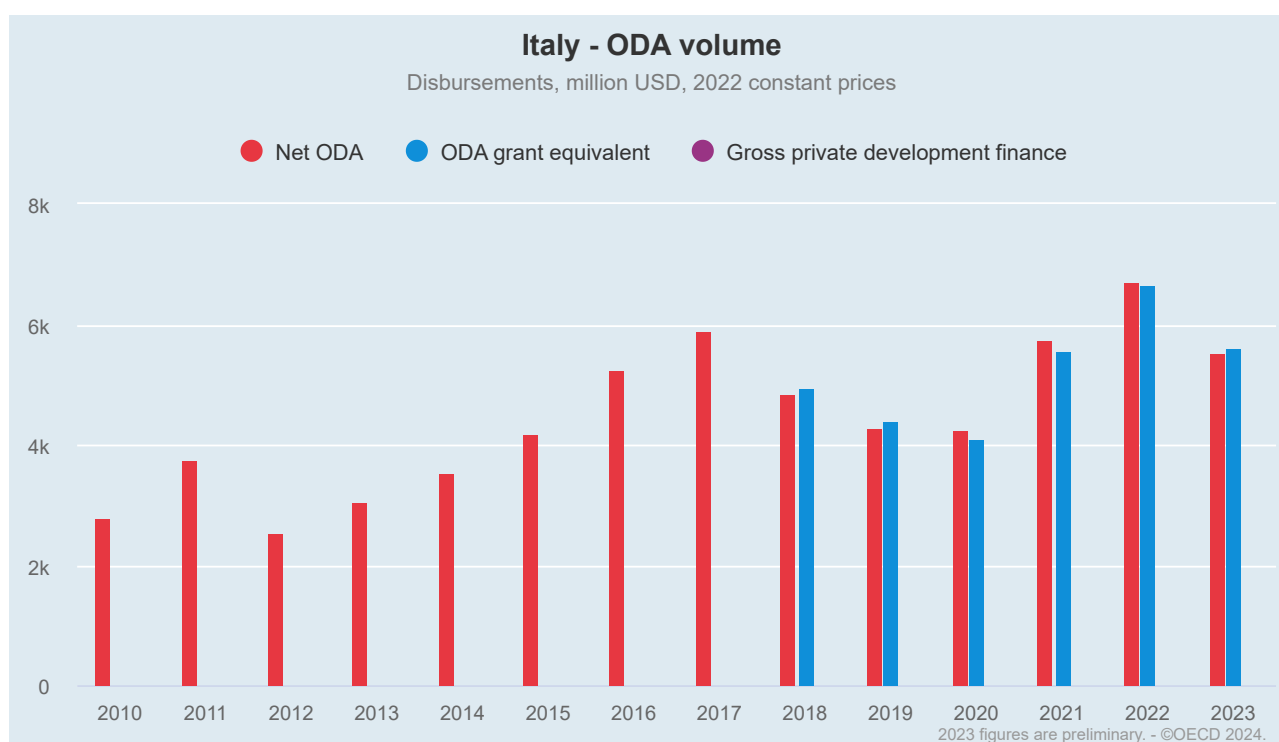
The 2022 OECD-DAC mid-term review commended Italy for its increase in ODA as per its road map to increase levels each year for the next five years, ensuring that humanitarian and development support to

Ukraine and Italy's commitment to triple climate finance remain additional. The mid-term review noted that Italy made progress on all 11 recommendations made in its 2019 peer review. The AICS continues to manage partnerships and projects under the guidance of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation with civil society, public administrations, regions and municipalities, plus European Union (EU) delegated co-operation and is piloting a path to managing for results. It, however, the mid-term review found that AICS faces challenges related to its fragmented approach lack of robust policies and guidelines, and limited human resources, which has taken since steps to address. Learn more about Italy's 2022 mid-term review [[DCD/DAC/AR\(2024\)3/12](#)] and [2019 peer review](#).

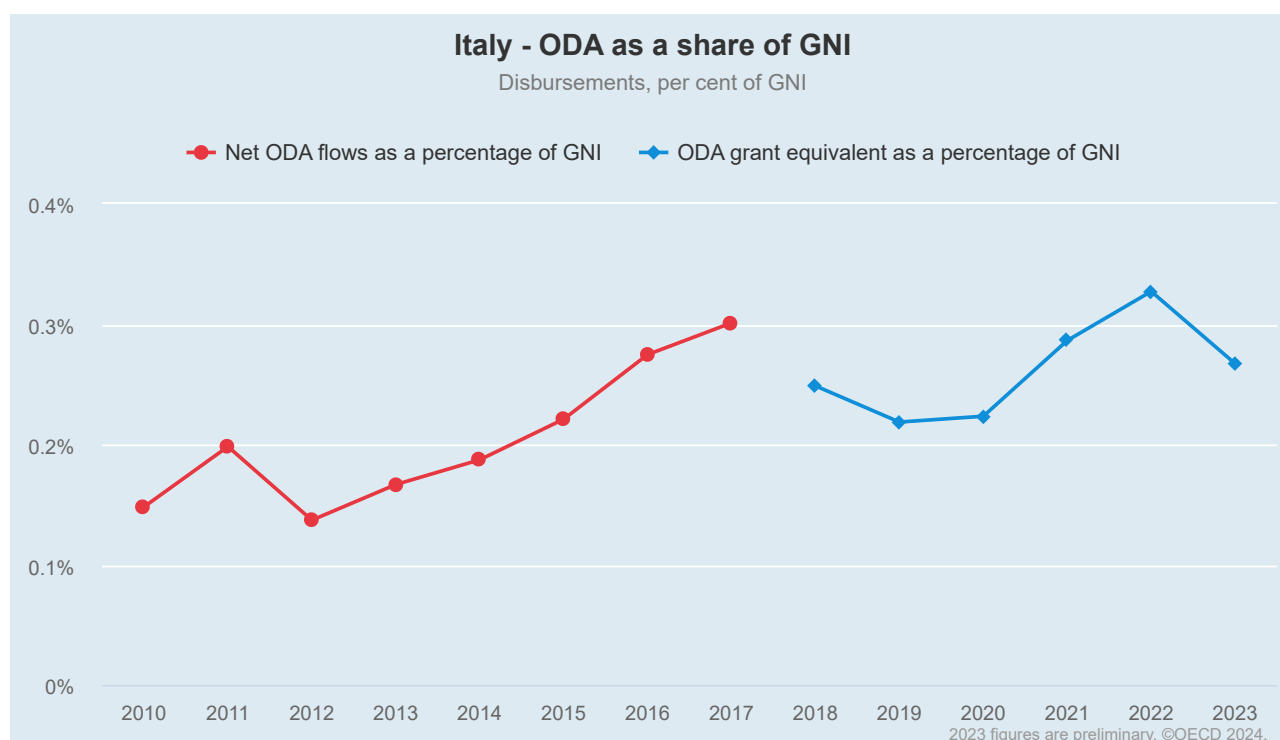
## ODA allocation overview

**Italy provided USD 6 billion (preliminary data) of ODA in 2023 (USD 5.6 billion in constant terms) representing 0.27% of GNI.**<sup>1</sup> This was a decrease of 15.5% in real terms in volume and a decrease in the share of GNI from 2022. Excluding in-donor refugee costs, its ODA also fell from 2022 to 2023. Italy is not in line with its domestic, international, and EU commitments to collectively achieve a 0.7% ODA/GNI ratio by 2030. Within Italy's ODA portfolio in 2022, 93.6% was provided in the form of grants and 6.4% in the form of non-grants<sup>2</sup>.

In 2023, Italy ranked 9th among DAC members in terms of ODA volume and 21st among DAC member countries when ODA is taken as a share of GNI. Italy stands out for its high share of gross bilateral ODA to fragile contexts (17% of Italy's gross bilateral ODA), the high volume of core multilateral ODA (USD 3.3 billion in 2022), and the high share of bilateral allocable aid for environment marker marked as a principal objective.



Notes: Data on official development assistance (ODA) volumes (figure above) are in constant 2022 prices. Data for 2023 are preliminary. See the [methodological notes](#) for further details.



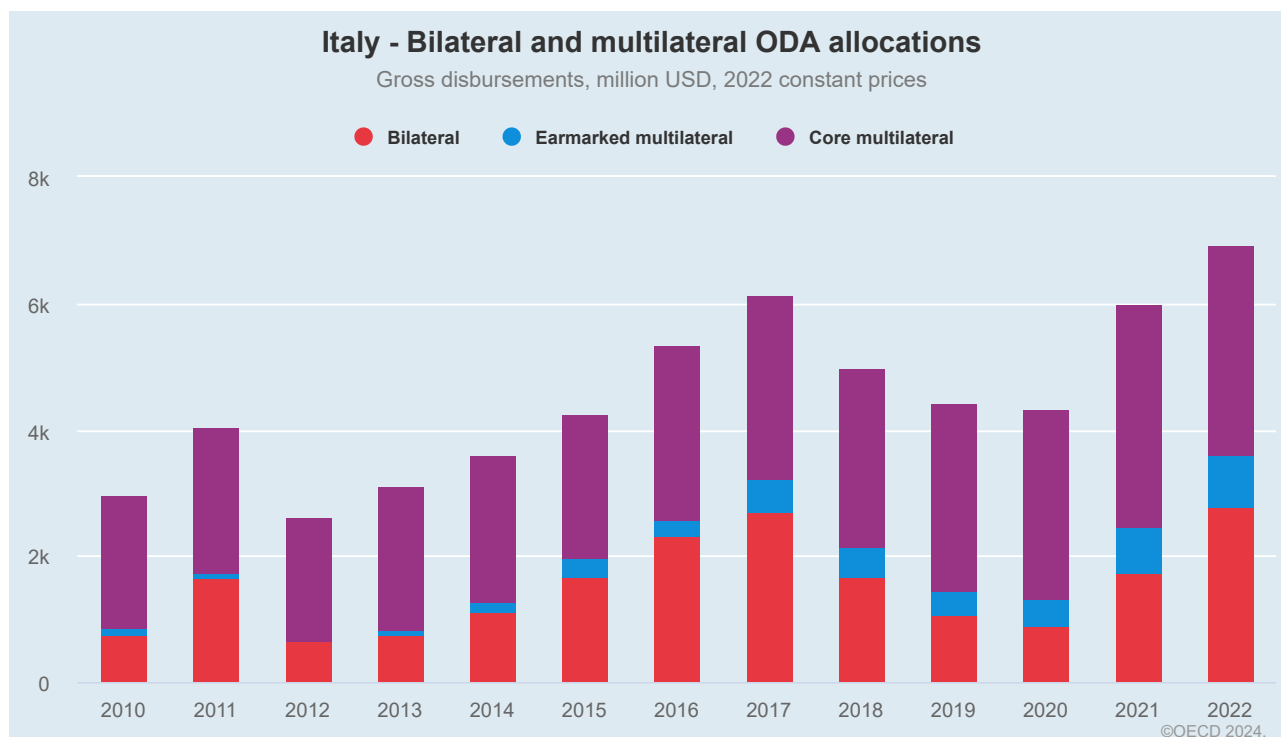
Italy is committed to several international targets and Development Assistance Committee standards and recommendations. Learn more about [DAC recommendations](#).

### Performance against commitments and DAC recommendations

Description	Target	2021	2022	2023, preliminary
ODA as a share of GNI (%)	0.7	0.29	0.33	0.27
Total ODA to least developed countries as a share of GNI (%)	0.15-0.20	0.09	0.05	
Share of untied ODA covered by the DAC Recommendation	100	49.4	80.8	
Share of untied ODA (All sectors and countries beyond the scope of the Untying Recommendation) (%)		75.9	82.2	
Grant element of total ODA (%)	>86	98.5	95.5	

Note: ODA: official development assistance; GNI: gross national income; DAC: Development Assistance Committee. This table only includes information about ODA data-related DAC recommendations.

**Italy provided a slightly higher share of its ODA bilaterally in 2022.** Gross bilateral ODA was 52.1% of total ODA disbursements. Twenty-three per cent of gross bilateral ODA was channelled through multilateral organisations (earmarked contributions). Italy allocated 47.9% of total ODA as core contributions to multilateral organisations.



### ODA for Ukraine

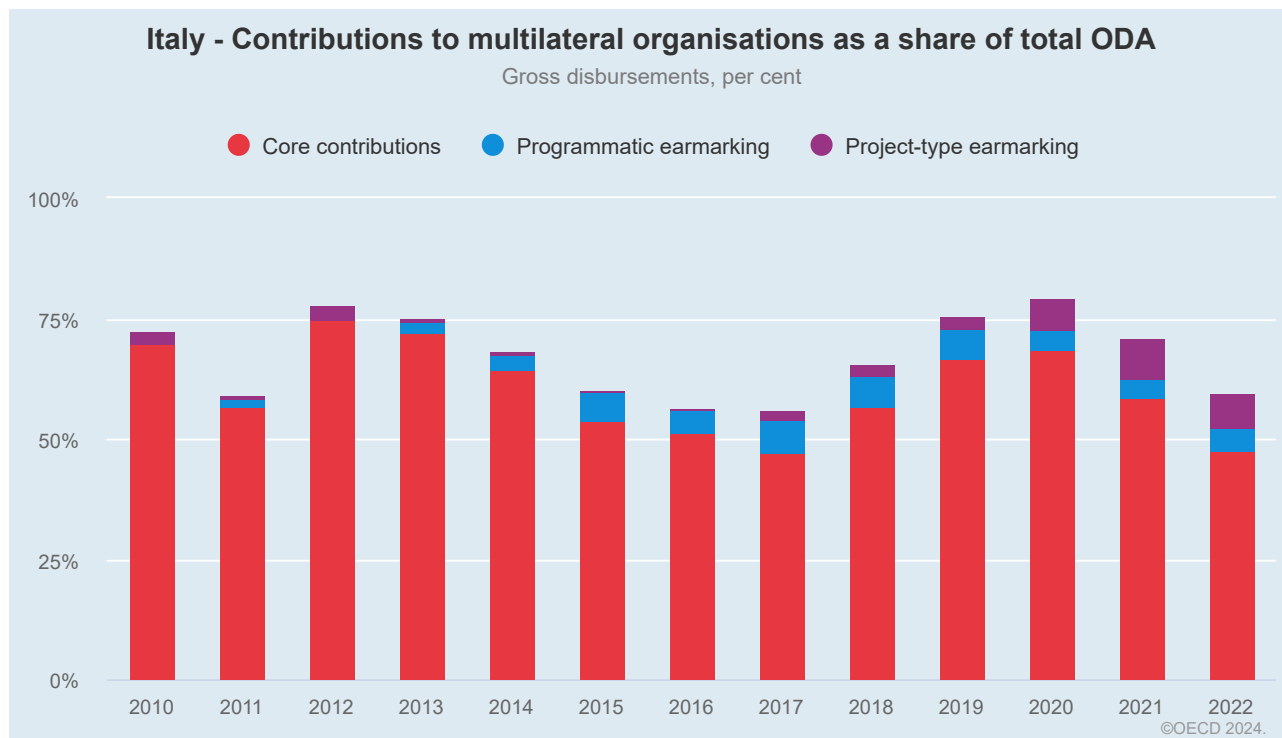
In 2023, Italy provided USD 78.7 million (preliminary data) of net bilateral ODA to Ukraine to respond to the impacts of Russia’s war of aggression, an 80% decrease from 2022 in real terms. USD 71.3 million of the amount was allocated to humanitarian assistance in 2023, a 171.1% increase from 2022.



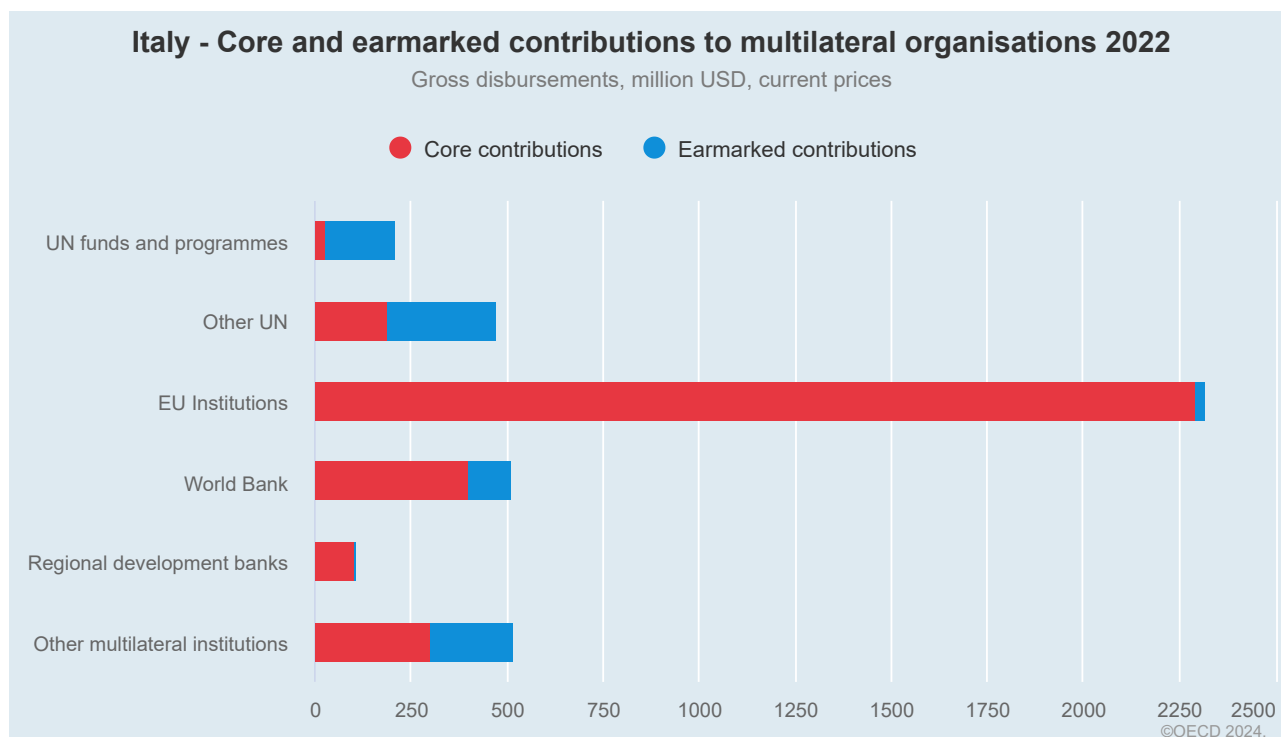
Note: The amount reported in 2023 is an estimate, based on preliminary figures reported to the OECD and published in April 2024.

## ODA to and through the multilateral system

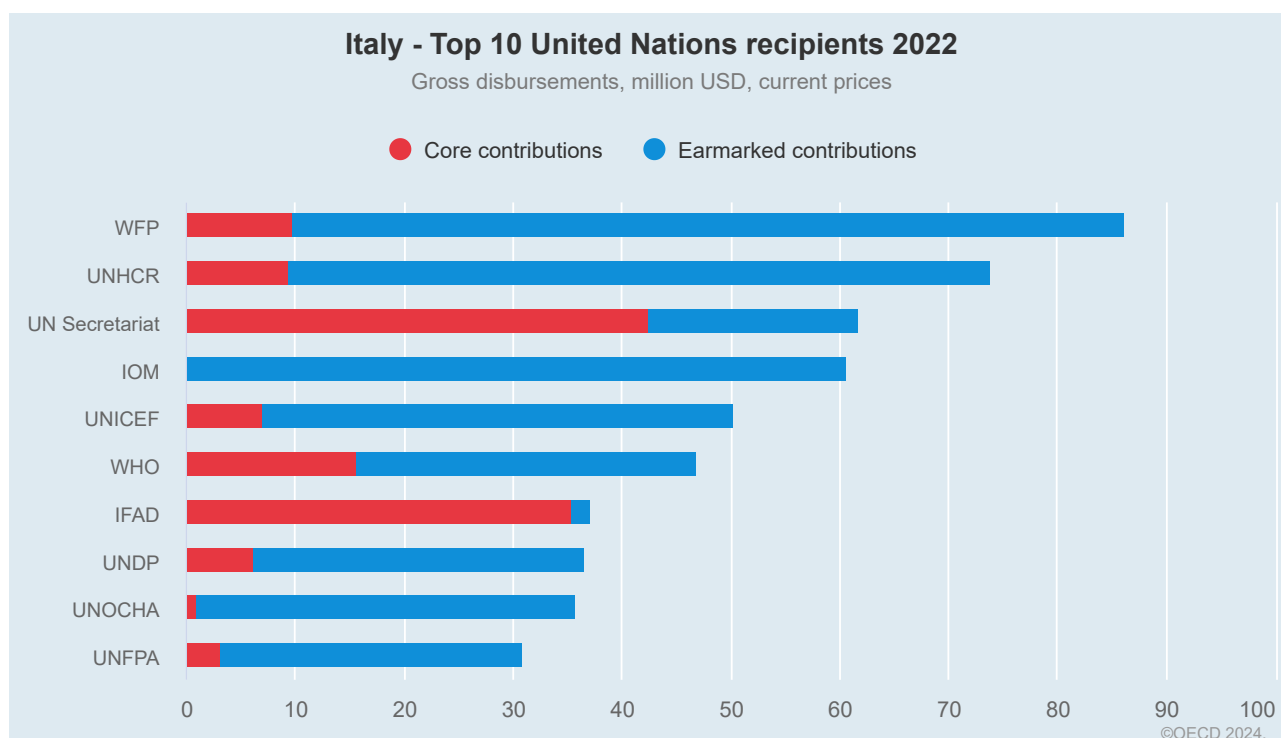
In 2022, Italy provided USD 4.1 billion of gross ODA to the multilateral system, a fall of 2.8% in real terms from 2021. Of this, USD 3.3 billion was core multilateral ODA, while USD 818 million were non-core contributions earmarked for a specific country, region, theme or purpose. Project-type funding earmarked for a specific theme and/or country accounted for 62.4% of Italy's non-core contributions, and 37.6% was programmatic funding (to pooled funds and specific-purpose programmes and funds).



**Fifty-six per cent of Italy's total contributions to multilateral organisations in 2022 were allocated to EU Institutions.**



**The United Nations (UN) system received 16.5% of Italy’s multilateral contributions, of which USD 467.6 million (68.4%) represented earmarked contributions.** Out of a total volume of USD 683.6 million to the UN system, the top three UN recipients of Italy’s support (core and earmarked contributions) were the WFP (USD 86.2 million), UNHCR (USD 73.9 million) and the UN (USD 61.8 million).

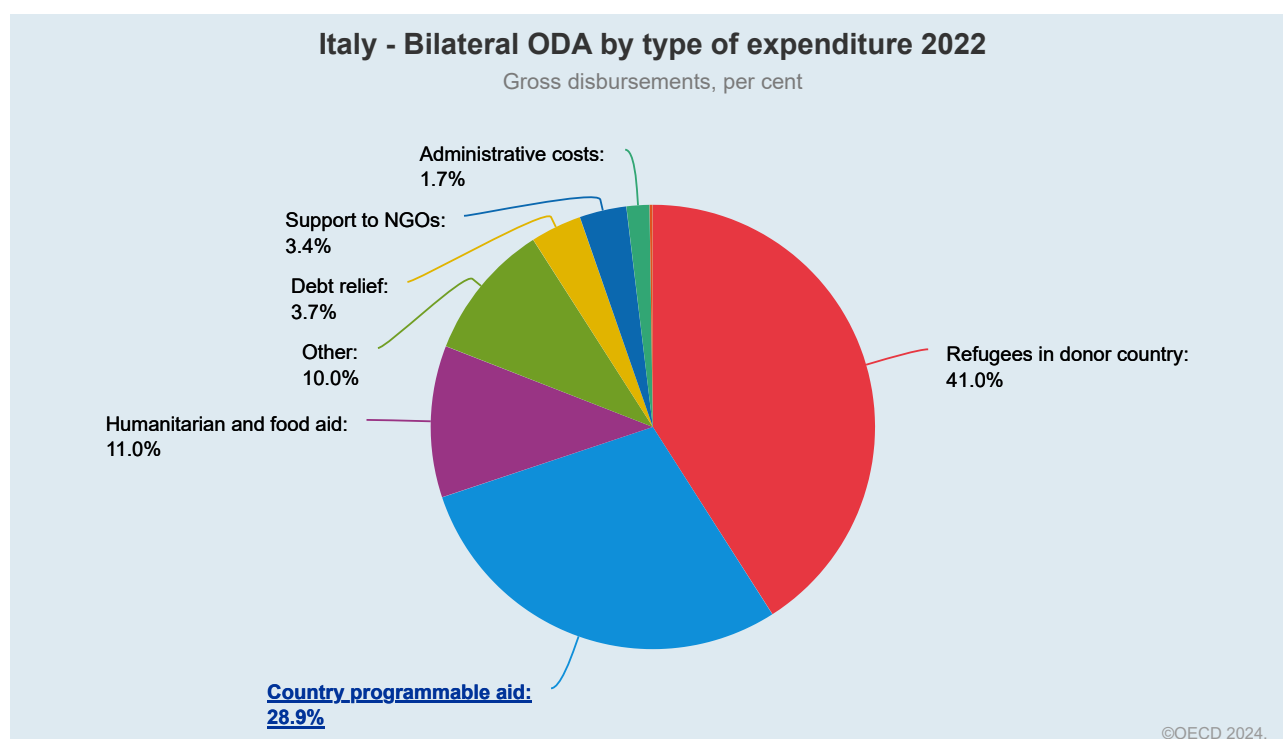


See the section [Geographic, sectoral and thematic focus of ODA](#) for the breakdown of bilateral allocations, including ODA earmarked through the multilateral development system. Learn more about [multilateral development finance](#).

## Bilateral ODA

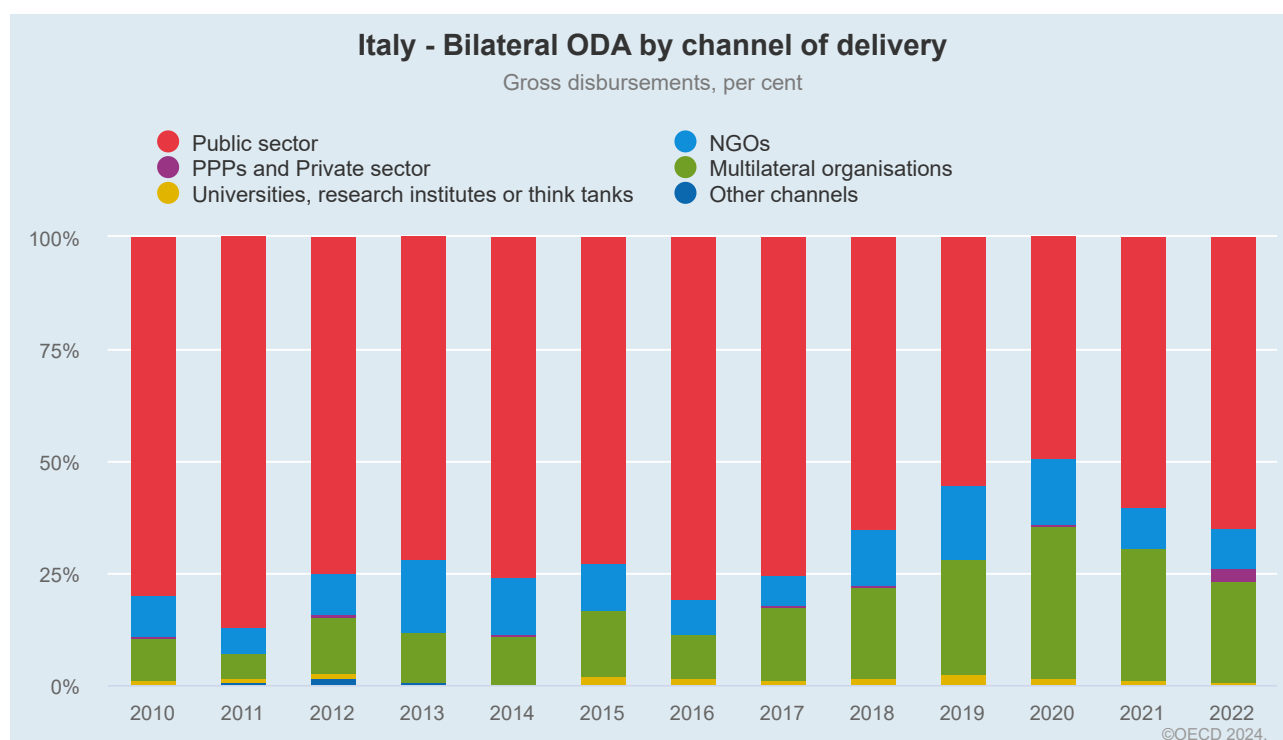
**In 2022, Italy's bilateral spending increased compared to the previous year.** It provided USD 3.6 billion of gross bilateral ODA (which includes earmarked contributions to multilateral organisations). This represented an increase of 46.8% in real terms from 2021.

In 2022, country programmable aid was 28.9% of Italy's gross bilateral ODA, compared to the DAC country average of 42%. In-donor refugee costs were USD 1.5 billion in 2022, an increase of 190.5% in real terms over 2021, representing 41% of Italy's total gross bilateral ODA.



Note: NGO: non-governmental organisation.

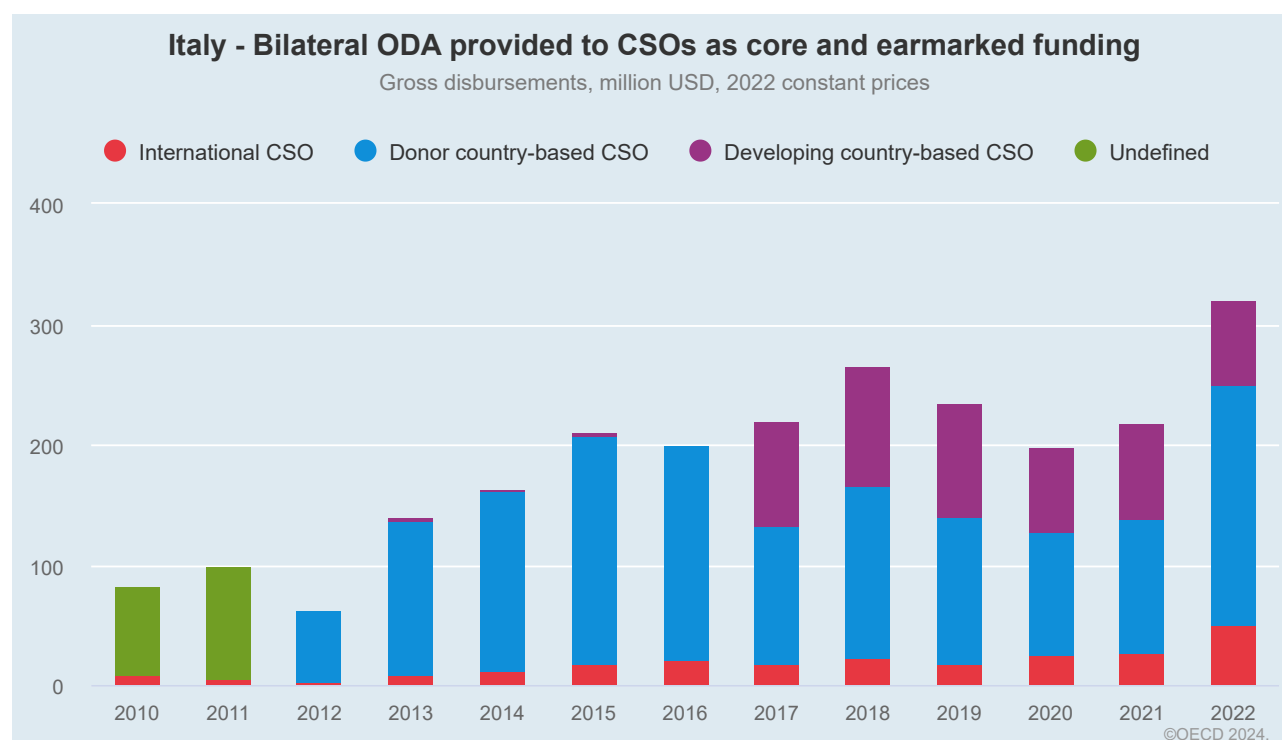
**In 2022, Italy channelled its bilateral ODA mainly through the public sector and multilateral organisations as earmarked funding.** Technical co-operation made up 4.7% of gross ODA in 2022.



### Civil society organisations

**In 2022, civil society organisations (CSOs) received USD 349.4 million of gross bilateral ODA, of which 21.8% was directed to developing country-based CSOs.** Overall, three per cent of gross bilateral ODA was allocated to CSOs as core contributions and 5.8% was channelled through CSOs to implement projects initiated by the donor (earmarked funding). From 2021 to 2022, the combined core and earmarked contributions for CSOs remained similar as a share of bilateral ODA, from 8.8% to 8.9%. Learn more about the [DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Aid](#).



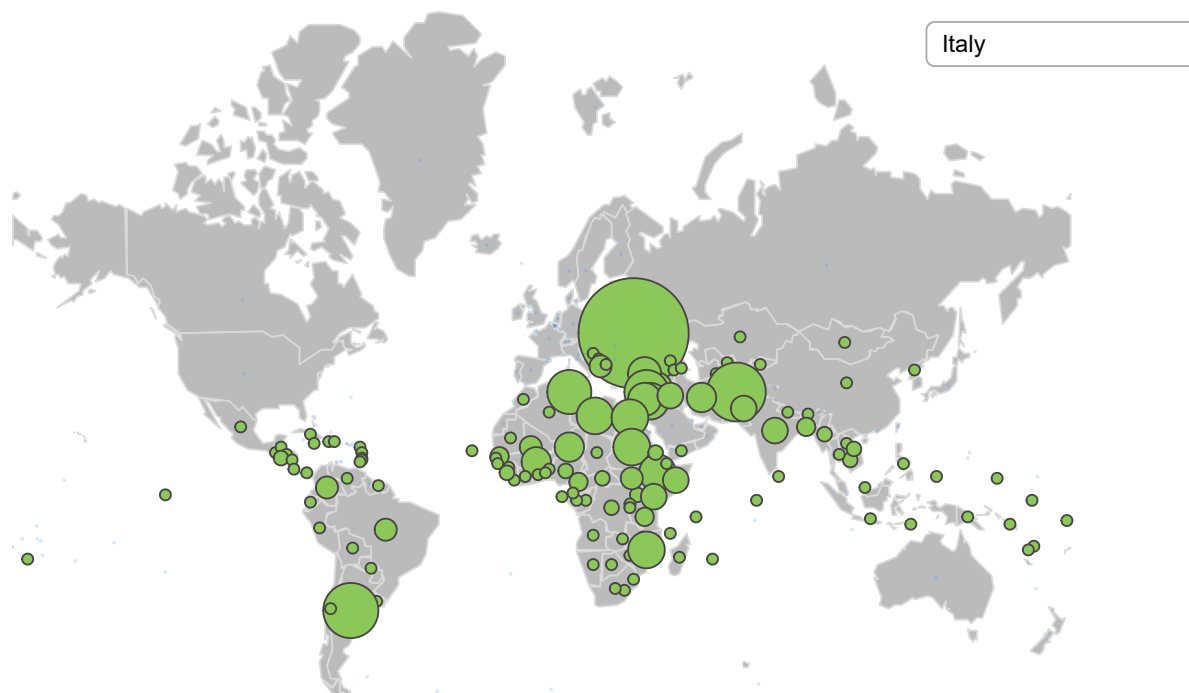


### Geographic, sectoral and thematic focus of ODA

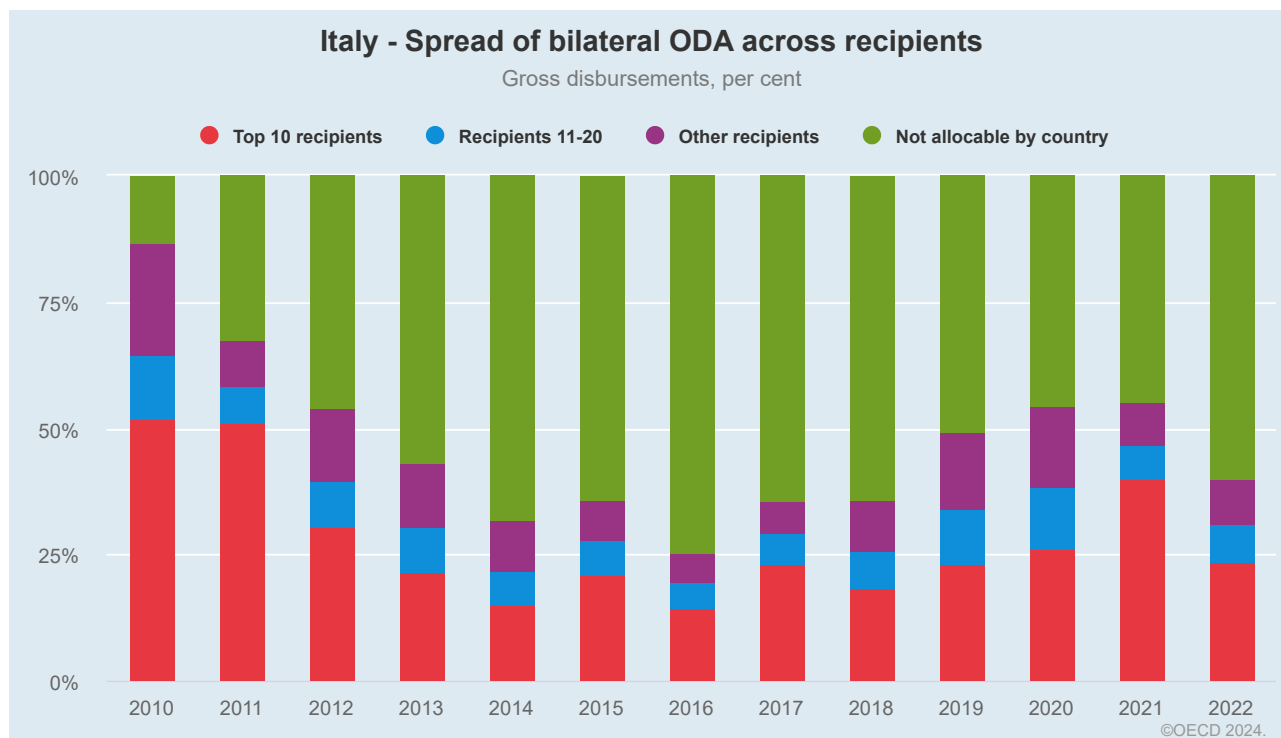
**In 2022, Italy's bilateral ODA was primarily focused on Africa.** USD 641.3 million was allocated to Africa and USD 466.4 million to ODA-eligible countries in Europe (of which 77.3% for Ukraine), accounting respectively for 17.8% and 12.9% of gross bilateral ODA. USD 208.5 million was allocated to the Middle East. In line with its priorities, Africa was also the main regional recipient of Italy's earmarked contributions to multilateral organisations.

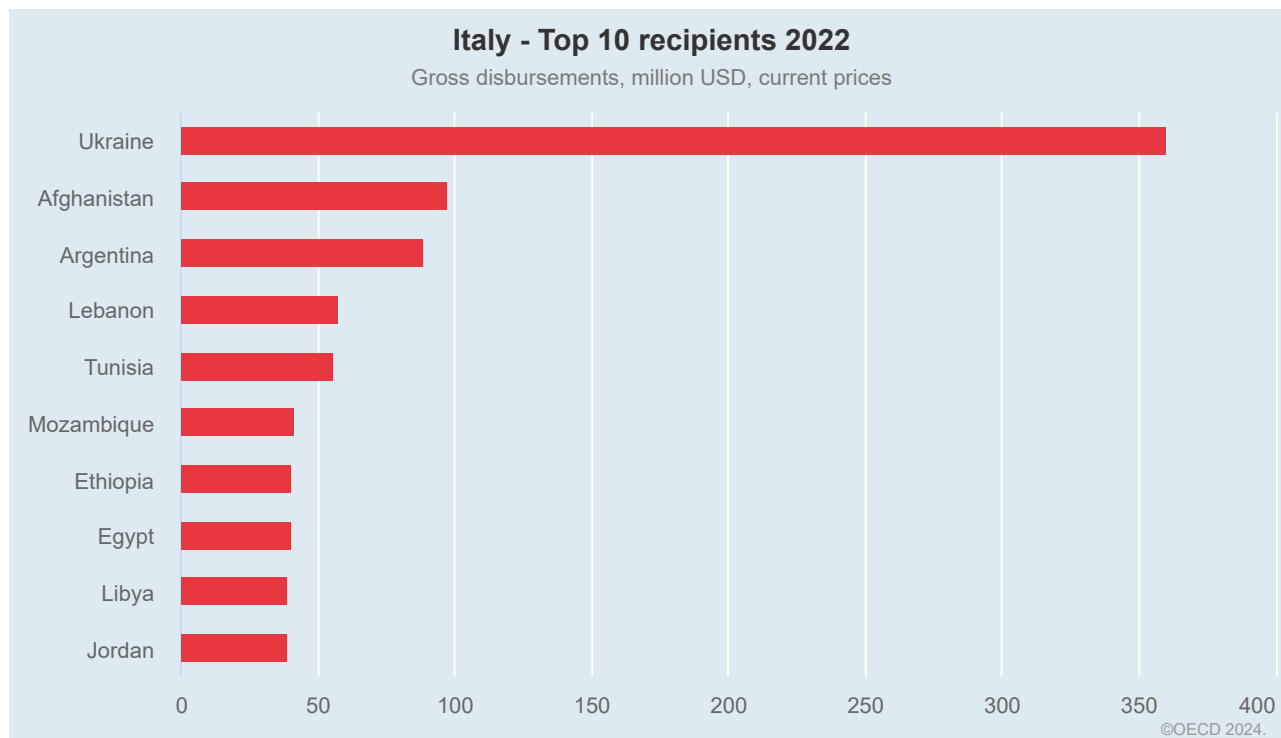
Italy

Bilateral ODA by recipient country

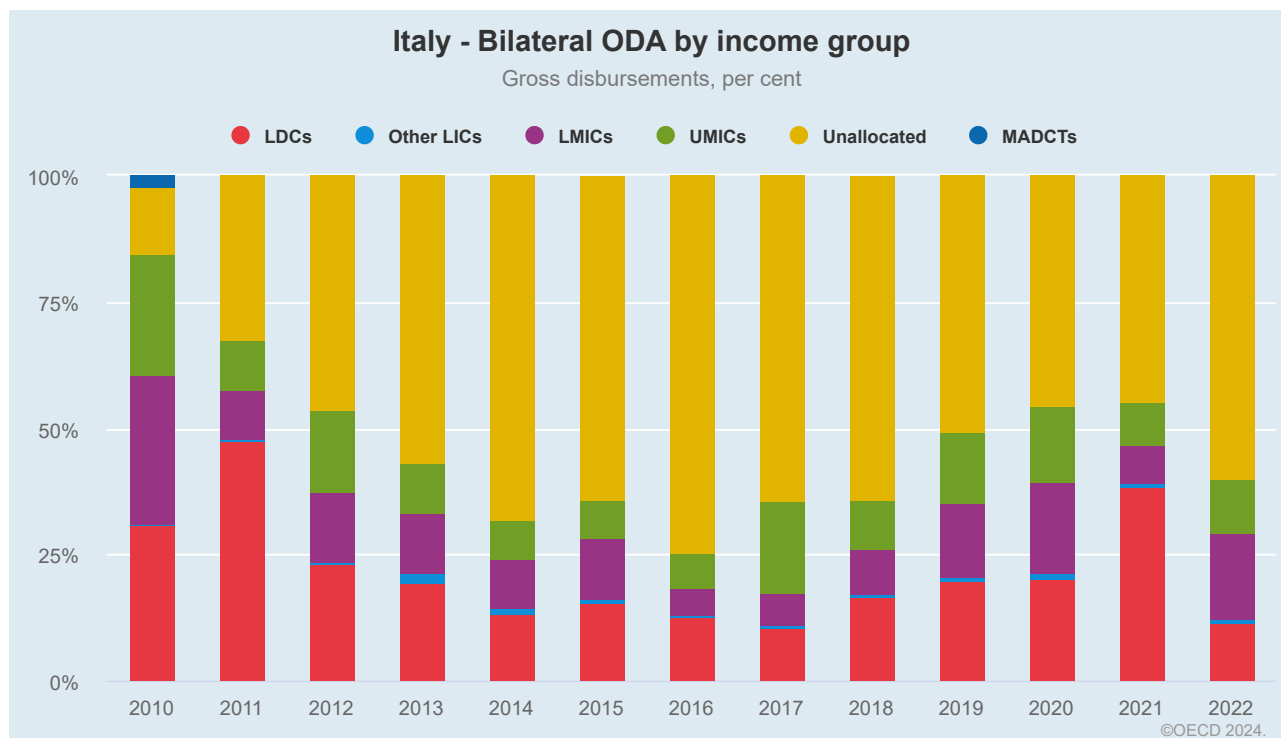


**In 2022, 23.8% of gross bilateral ODA went to Italy's top 10 recipients.** Besides the top recipients, Ukraine and Argentina are the other priority partners. The share of gross bilateral ODA not allocated by country was 60%, of which 68.3% consisted of expenditures for processing and hosting refugees in provider countries.





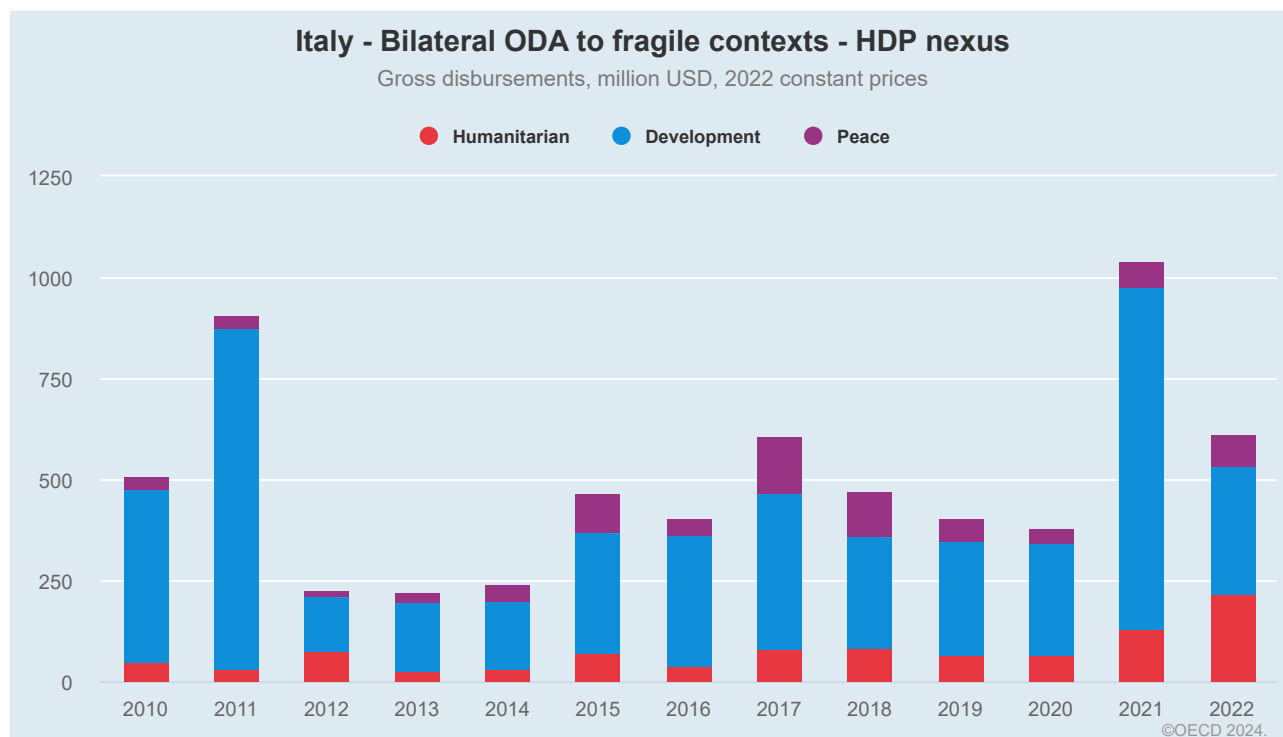
**In 2022, Italy allocated 0.05% of its GNI to the least developed countries.** Italy allocated the highest share of gross bilateral ODA (17.4%) to lower middle-income countries in 2022, noting that 60% was unallocated by income group. LDCs received 11.5% of Italy's gross bilateral ODA (USD 416 million). Additionally, Italy allocated 7.6% of gross bilateral ODA to land-locked developing countries in 2022, equal to USD 273.4 million.



Note: LDC: least developed country; LIC: low-income country; LMIC: lower middle-income country; UMIC: upper middle-income country; MADCTs: more advanced developing countries and territories.

## Fragile contexts

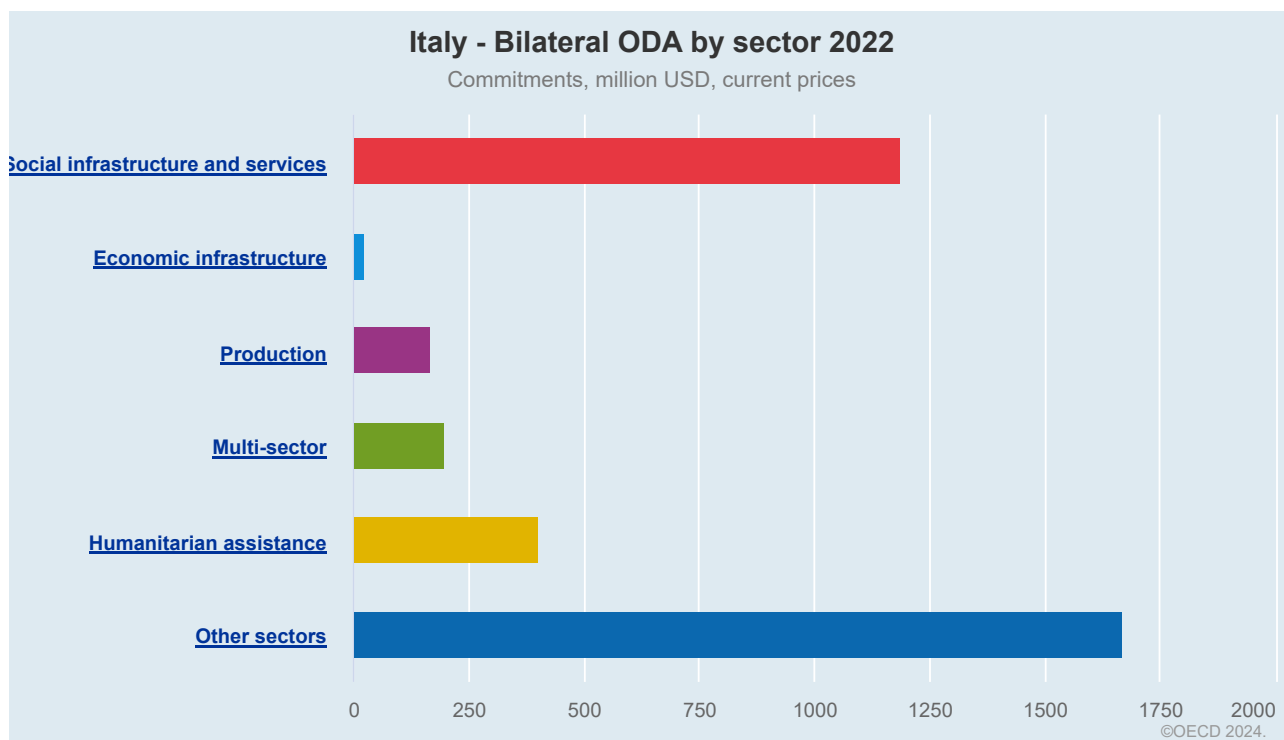
**Support to fragile contexts was USD 615.4 million in 2022, representing 17% of Italy's gross bilateral ODA.** Thirty-five per cent of this ODA was provided in the form of humanitarian assistance, increasing from 12.7% in 2021, while 13% was allocated to peace, increasing from 6% in 2021. Two per cent went to conflict prevention, a subset of contributions to peace, representing an increase from 0.6% in 2021. Learn more about [support to fragile contexts on the States of Fragility platform](#).



Note: HDP: humanitarian-development-peace. The chart represents only gross bilateral official development assistance that is allocated by country.

## Sectors

**In 2022, the largest focus of Italy's bilateral ODA was refugees and asylum seekers in donor countries.** Investments in this area accounted for 40.4% of bilateral ODA commitments (USD 1.5 billion). ODA for social infrastructure and services totalled USD 1.2 billion, focusing on education (USD 473.4 million) and health and population (USD 459.9 million), which accounted for 12.6% of gross bilateral ODA and increased by 333.3% from 2019 in real terms. Humanitarian amounted to USD 401.7 million (11% of bilateral ODA). Earmarked contributions to multilateral organisations focused primarily on social sectors and production sectors in 2022.



### ODA for COVID-19

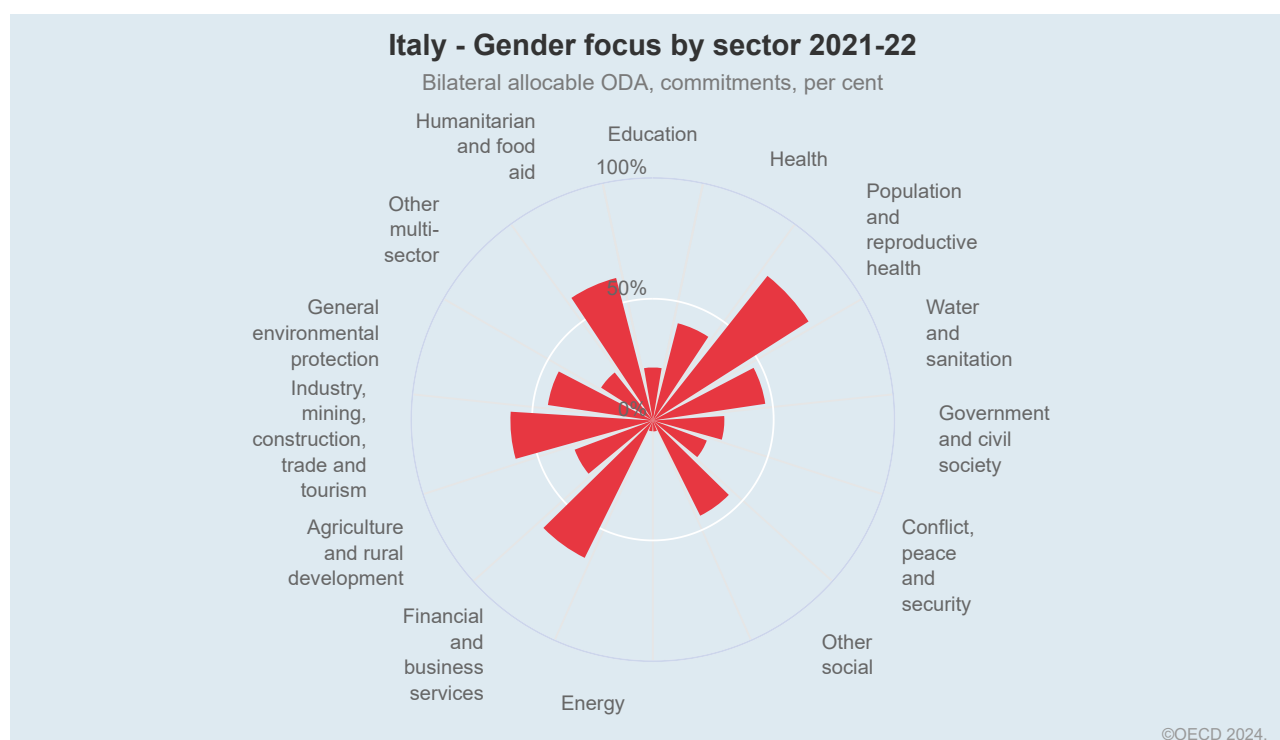
In 2022, Italy disbursed USD 235.7 million in ODA for the COVID-19 response, down from USD 364.1 million in 2021. Regarding COVID-19 vaccines, Italy provided USD 183.8 million in ODA for donations of doses to developing countries in 2022, down 11.7% from USD 208 million in 2021. All COVID-19 vaccines accounted for donations of doses from domestic supply in 2022.

### Gender equality

In the period 2021-22, Italy committed 39% of its screened bilateral allocable aid to gender equality and women's empowerment, as either a principal or significant objective (down from 52% in 2019-20), compared with the 2021-22 DAC average of 43.3%. This is equal to USD 446.5 million of bilateral ODA in support of gender equality. Unpacking the gender equality data further:

- The share of screened bilateral allocable aid committed to gender equality and women's empowerment as a principal objective was 5.3% in 2021-22, compared with the DAC average of 3.9%.
- Italy includes gender equality objectives in 51.9% of its ODA for humanitarian aid, above the 2021-22 DAC average of 17%.
- Italy screens the majority of their bilateral allocable aid activities against the DAC gender equality policy marker (67% in 2021-22).
- Italy committed USD 11.3 million of ODA to end violence against women and girls and USD 6 million to support women's rights organisations and movements and government institutions in 2021-22.

Learn more about [Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women and Girls: DAC Guidance for Development Partners](#) and [the DAC Recommendation on Ending Sexual Exploitation in Development Co-operation](#).

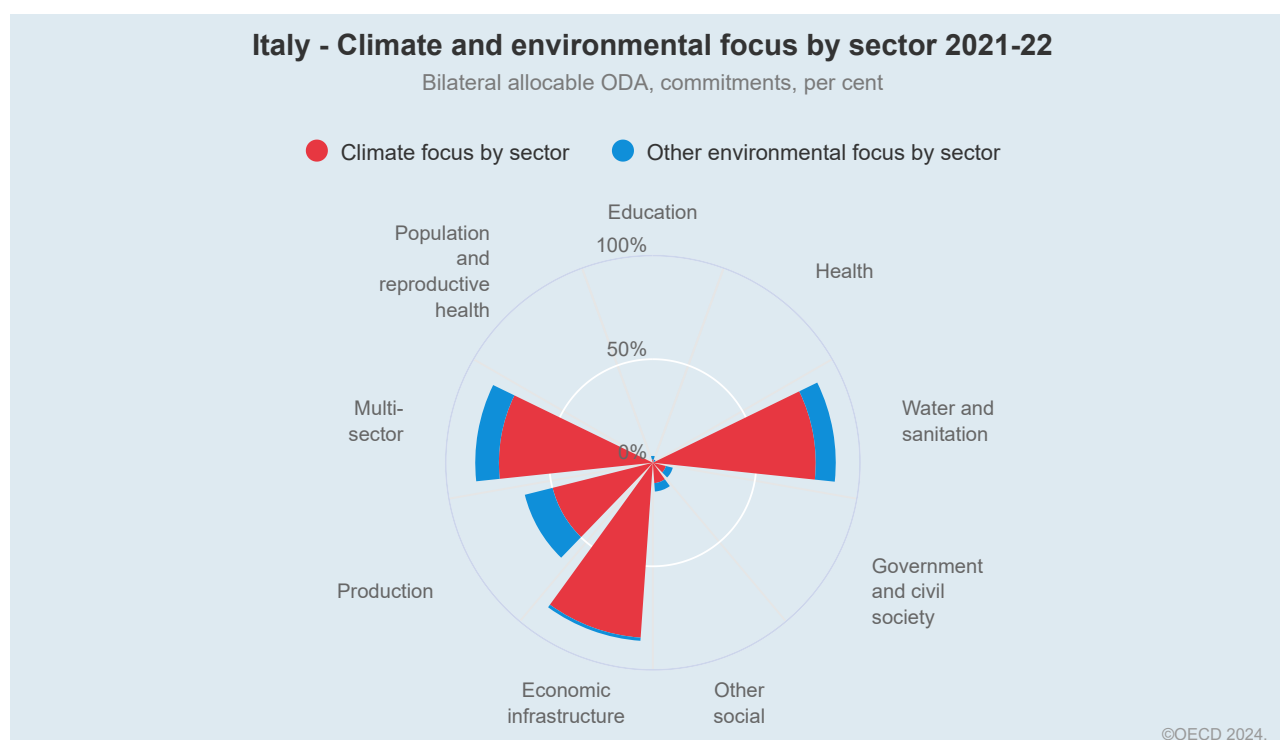


## Environment

In 2021-22, Italy committed 24.5% of its total bilateral allocable aid (USD 383.3 million) in support of the environment and the Rio Conventions (the DAC average was 35.1%), down from 48.7% in 2019-20. Unpacking the environmental data further:

- Seventeen per cent of screened bilateral allocable aid focused on environmental issues as a principal objective, compared with the DAC average of 11%.
- Twenty per cent of total bilateral allocable aid (USD 309.9 million) focused on climate change overall, down from 32.1% in 2019-20 (the DAC average was 30.5%). Italy had a greater focus on adaptation (26.1%) than on mitigation (22.6%) in 2021-22.
- Nine per cent of screened bilateral allocable aid (USD 93.5 million) focused on biodiversity overall, down from 21.4% in 2019-20 (the DAC average was 7.2%).

Learn more about the DAC Declaration on Aligning Development Co-operation with the Goals of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change [[DAC/CHAIR\(2021\)1/FINAL](#)].



Note: In this figure, the category climate includes climate change mitigation and climate change adaptation efforts.

### Performance against environment and Rio Markers, 2021-2022

Marker	Constant 2022 USD million	% of bilateral allocable
<b>Environment</b>	<b>359.7</b>	<b>32.5</b>
<b>Rio markers:</b>		
Biodiversity	93.5	8.6
Desertification	97	9.1
Climate change mitigation only	23.9	1.4
Climate change adaptation only	69.8	4.1
Both climate change mitigation and adaptation	244.4	14.3

Note: Individual Rio Markers should not be added up as this can result in double counting.

The OECD initiative Sustainable Oceans for All shows that Italy committed USD 9.4 million in support of the conservation and sustainable use of the ocean in 2022, USD 4.6 million less than in 2021. The 2022 value is equivalent to 0.5% of Italy's bilateral allocable aid.

### Other cross-cutting sectors and themes

In 2022, Italy also:

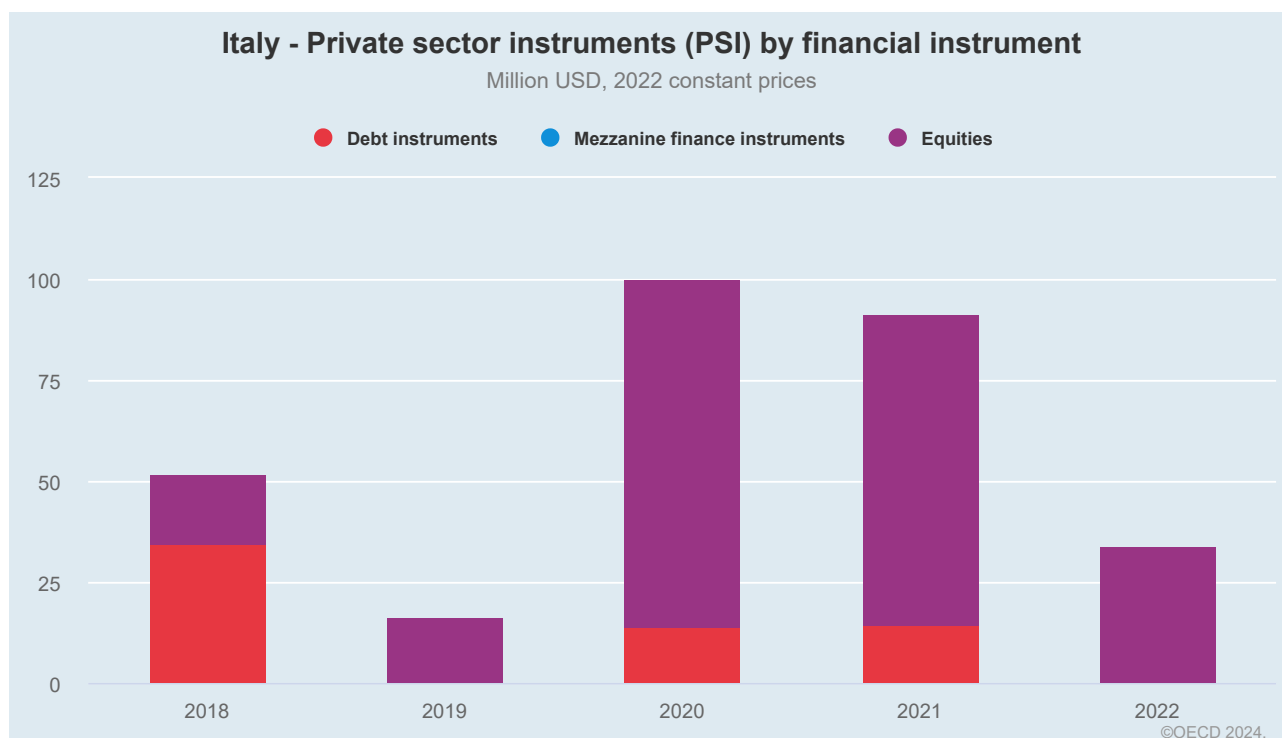
- Committed USD 0.2 million of bilateral ODA to the **mobilisation of domestic resources in developing countries**, amounting to a small share (less than 0.1%) of its bilateral allocable aid. Regarding the payment of local tax and customs duties for ODA-funded goods and services, Italy seeks exemptions. It does not make information available on the [OECD Digital Transparency Hub on the Tax Treatment of ODA](#).
- Committed USD 192.2 million (9.7% of its bilateral allocable aid) to promote **aid for trade** and improve developing countries' trade performance and integration into the world economy.

Italy

- Committed USD 379.4 million (19.1% of its bilateral allocable aid) to **address the immediate or underlying determinants of malnutrition** in developing countries across a variety of sectors, such as emergency response, agriculture, forestry, fishing and health.
- Committed USD 188.9 million (9.5% of its bilateral allocable aid) to development co-operation projects and programmes that **promote the inclusion and empowerment of persons with disabilities**.

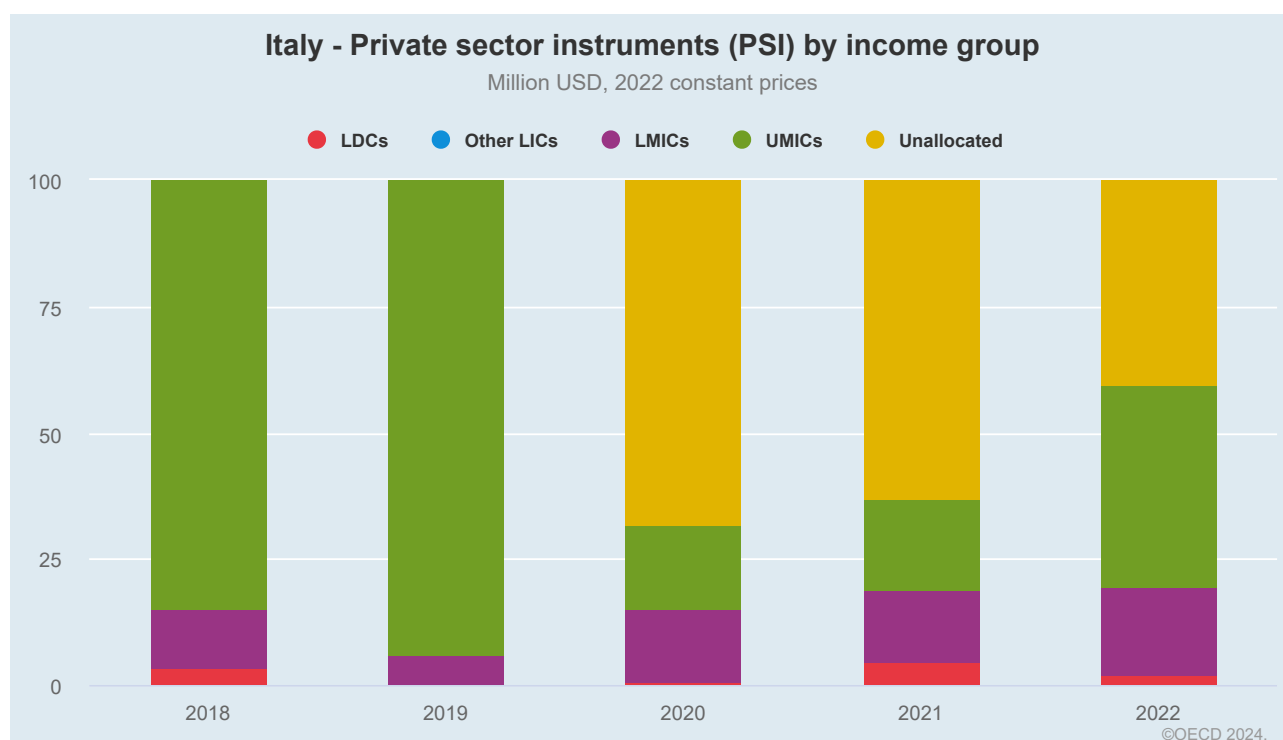
### Private sector instruments

In 2022, Italy's Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP) extended USD 34.1 million in the form of equities.



In 2022, USD 0.5 million (1.5%) of Italy's private sector instruments were allocated to the LDCs and other LICs, while 47.7% were received by middle-income countries and UMICs in particular (37.7%). Moreover, USD 17.4 million were unallocated by income. Italy's private sector instruments mostly supported projects in the industry, mining and construction (46.5%) and energy (35.5%).





### Effectiveness of development co-operation

The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation [monitoring exercise](#) tracks the implementation of the effectiveness commitments. Following the reform of the exercise over 2020-22, the 4th global monitoring round (2023-26) is underway. Information on partner countries' participation in the exercise, as well as their progress, is available at the [Global Dashboard](#). Italy's results from the 2016 and 2018 monitoring rounds can be found [here](#).

To help improve the transparency of development co-operation, The OECD provides regular feedback to members on the overall quality of their statistical reporting and works with each member to ensure the data meet high-quality standards before publication. Regarding DAC/CRS reporting to the OECD, Italy's reporting in 2022 was on time and complete, with some areas to improve in terms of the accuracy of the data.

### Total official support for sustainable development

[Total official support for sustainable development](#) (TOSSD) is an international statistical standard that monitors all official and officially supported resources for financing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in developing countries, as well as for addressing global challenges. It provides a broad measure of development finance with the objective of increasing transparency and accountability of all external support that developing countries receive. In 2022, activities reported by Italy as TOSSD totalled USD 7.3 billion, up from USD 7 billion in 2021, and Italy's TOSSD activities mostly targeted SDG 4 *Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all* and SDG 3 *Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*. Activity-level data on TOSSD by recipient are available at <https://tossd.online>.

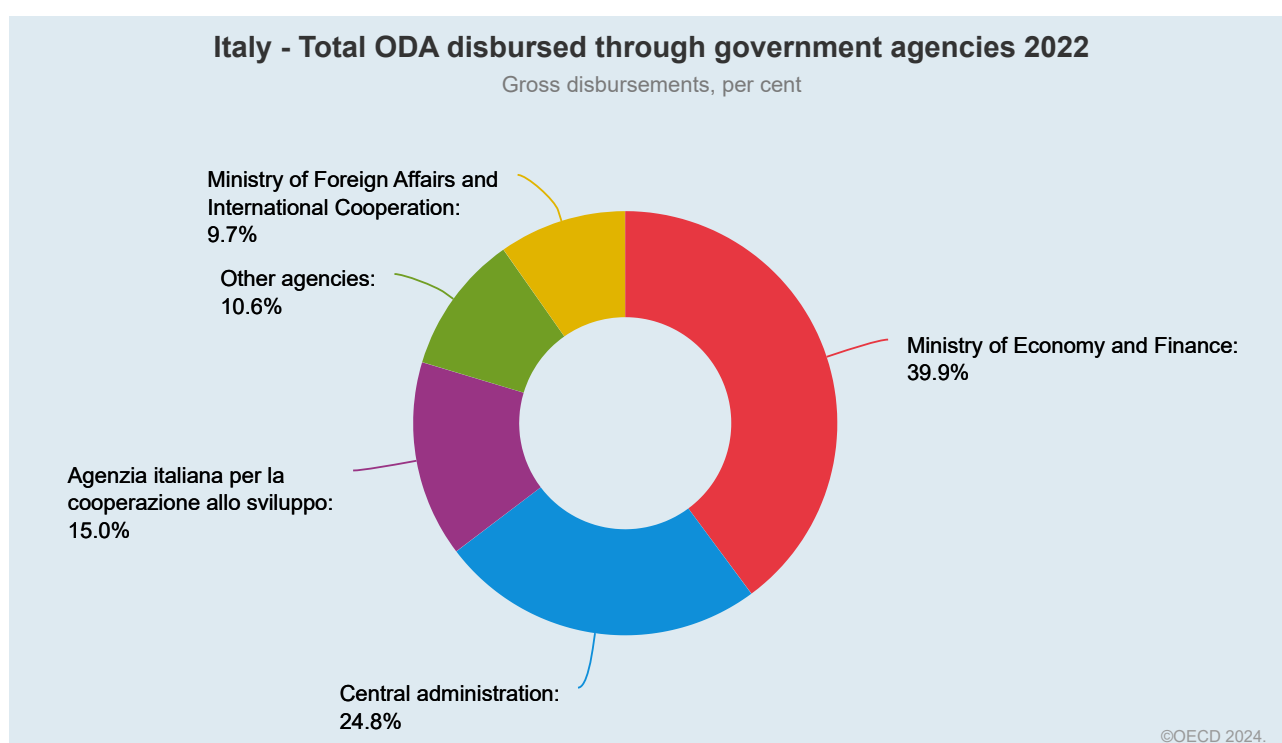
### Institutional set-up

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI), and notably its Directorate General for Development Cooperation, is responsible for development co-operation oversight, decision making, and co-ordination and political representation internationally in the broader context of Italy's support for

sustainable development. The Ministry of Economy and Finance is responsible for co-ordinating with the MAECI in relations with multilateral development banks and funds and debt relief operations. The Ministry of Environment and the Ministry of Interior have increasingly important roles in allocating ODA to multilateral entities and for in-donor refugee costs, respectively.

The AICS reports to the MAECI and is mandated to perform technical and operational activities related to programme implementation. It operates in partner countries through its 19 country offices. The CDP is Italy's development finance institution.

The MAECI has 113 staff working on development co-operation in headquarters. The AICS has 277 staff working on development co-operation, 34.66% of which are in country offices. The Ministry of Economy and Finance has 26 staff members working on development co-operation; none serve abroad. The CDP has 64 staff members working on development co-operation, 3 of which are abroad.



An important mechanism for consulting stakeholders is the National Council for Development Cooperation, a body established pursuant to Article 16 of Law 125/2014, which brings together 73 of the main public and private actors, both profit and non-profit, engaging in development co-operation. Most CSOs active in development co-operation co-ordinate through the umbrella body of Concord Italia.

### Quality and oversight

Internal systems and processes help ensure the effective delivery of Italy's development co-operation. Select features are shown in the table below.

## Italy

Quality assurance	Robust ex ante quality assurance for programme design and the integration of cross-cutting issues is in place. Focal points in country offices support the integration of gender equality in intervention design, budgeting and monitoring.
Risk management	Italy works with other development partners to identify risks, verify risk-control mechanisms, put in place mitigation measures, and – if necessary – redirect or repackage programming together with partners in settings with a high risk of corruption. Italy is updating its anti-corruption plan.
Innovation and adaptation	The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation and the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) focuses on involving the private sector in programmes on development innovation..
Results management	Italy is establishing its results system with guidance and incentives for staff to improve the collection and use of results information. It also plans to develop a corporate results framework. The AICS country offices identify indicators that align with country and national results frameworks in priority countries. Along with learning from peers, more personnel with monitoring and evaluation expertise have been recruited.
Evaluation	The Directorate General for Development Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MAECI) is responsible for the impact evaluation of development co-operation activities. Impact evaluations are guided by a <a href="#">rolling three-year evaluation plan</a> and 2020 <a href="#">guidelines for evaluations</a> . Learn more about Italy's <a href="#">evaluation system</a> . Visit the <a href="#">DAC Evaluation Resource Centre</a> for evaluations of Italy's development co-operation.
Communication and transparency	The AICS has <a href="#">communications guidelines</a> . Its motto is “Development creators, not planners”. The guidelines aim to update development communication and language through concepts like global co-development and “real partnership” and stories of change. The AICS also has its own <a href="#">openaid portal</a> .

### Additional resources

2022 OECD-DAC mid-term review of Italy: [DCD/DAC/AR\(2024\)3/12](#)

2019 OECD-DAC peer review of Italy: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/oecd-development-co-operation-peer-reviews-italy-2019-b1874a7a-en.htm>

Agency for International Development Cooperation (AICS): <https://www.aics.gov.it>

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation: <https://www.esteri.it/en/politica-estera-e-cooperazione-allo-sviluppo/>

Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (CDP): [https://www.cdp.it/sitointernet/en/cooperazione\\_internazionale.page](https://www.cdp.it/sitointernet/en/cooperazione_internazionale.page)

Italian Alliance for Sustainable Development (ASViS): <https://asvis.it/asvis-italian-alliance-for-sustainable-development>

Italy's practices on the Development Co-operation TIPS: Tools Insights Practices learning platform: <https://www.oecd.org/development-cooperation-learning?tag-key+partner=italy#search>

*Member of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) since 1960.*

The [methodological notes](#) provide further details on the definitions and statistical methodologies applied, including the grant-equivalent methodology, core and earmarked contributions to multilateral organisations, country programmable aid, channels of delivery, bilateral ODA unspecified/unallocated, bilateral allocable aid, the gender equality policy marker, and the environment markers.

### Notes

1. DAC members adopted the grant-equivalent methodology starting from their reporting of 2018 data as a more accurate way to count the donor effort in development loans. See the [methodological notes](#) for further details.
2. Non-grants include sovereign loans, multilateral loans, equity investment and loans to the private sector.