

SPAIN

0.13% Genuine aid/GNI

0.14% Total Aid/GNI

“As soon as the Spanish economy grows, the government will again support generous, intelligent and effective investment in development cooperation.”

Mariano Rajoy, Prime Minister of Spain, 68th UN General Assembly

Will your government meet the 2015 aid target?
NO

Main changes in 2014

In 2014, total Spanish aid stood at €1.4 bn, or 0.14% of GNI = 241 m less than in 2013. The drop was mainly felt in the bilateral ODA budget, in particular the grants provided by the Spanish aid agency, AECID, which continued to lose resources for assisting the 23 partner countries prioritised in the strategy, and for responding to worldwide humanitarian crises. Up to 70% of Spanish aid consists of compulsory contributions to multilateral institutions, including the EU – which shows a lack of political commitment to development cooperation.

PCD has also been weakened by the reforms in the regulatory framework introduced in 2014. Both the Law for External Action and the reform of the Development Promotion Fund (FONPRODE) have shifted the focus of development cooperation policy towards national economic interests. Decisions on financial cooperation, mainly channelled through FONPRODE, will now rely on COFIDES, whose main mandate includes the internationalisation of Spanish enterprises and the Spanish economy. Combined with the declared interest in focusing Spanish assistance on middle-income countries, this decision could lead to an increasing amount of informally tied aid, as the reform does not include clear provision to ensure that decisions on operations will be driven poverty-inspired development criteria.

Public support for CSOs continued to decrease. The AECID 2014-2017 multiannual call had a total budget of €170 million, three times smaller than the previous one. As a result, the work of civil society in both Spain and its partner countries depends on Spanish regional and local authorities. These actors also remain the primary supporters of Education for Global Citizenship.

Trends and projections for 2015 and beyond

Despite the promise made by Mariano Rajoy, there is no good news for ODA in 2015, irrespective of the government’s claims that the Spanish economy is back on track. In fact, 2015 will mark the end of a government term that has been downright harmful for development cooperation. Not only have financial resources dropped by 70% in real terms, but the quality of aid has been reduced and the institutional reforms put in place have not led to better aid management = a worrying plunge in the political relevance of development cooperation which needs to be reversed if Spain is to be regarded as a credible development actor within the framework of the 2030 Agenda. Democratic ownership should also be a priority for the new

government emerging from the elections in December 2015, as it is crucial to achieving development effectiveness. Over the last few years, both the parliament and CSOs have lost capacity to influence decision-making on policy, and all the relevant decisions are being taken without meaningful involvement by the Development Cooperation Council. As regards CSOs engagement in the policy, the government failed to follow the 2011 DAC Peer review recommendation to introduce an explicit policy framework for building a strategic relationship with CSOs which takes into account the diverse functions they perform.

Recommendations

The Spanish government should:

- Acknowledge the major role ODA and development cooperation can play in achieving SDGs as well as the importance of implementing policies that are consistent with sustainable development. In particular, the government should adopt concrete measures to advance the global fight against tax evasion and avoidance.
- Establish a credible roadmap for implementing the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, including scaling up quality ODA to at least 0.4% of GNI by 2019.
- Ensure that fighting inequality and upholding human rights remain the primary focus of development assistance in the ongoing discussion about modernising ODA. Any aid instrument focused on private-sector involvement has to be consistent with this objective.
- Put into practice all the institutional reforms needed to improve the performance of development cooperation in line with the 2030 Agenda. Those reforms should be defined through a broad and meaningful policy dialogue capable of informing decision-making.
- Resume the negotiations to build a new strategy for working with Spanish CSOs that will take into account the diverse roles of civil society, and that will create new financing instruments that reflect these roles.

Spain – genuine and inflated aid (€ million, constant 2013)

