



New Actors in International Development

The EDC2020 project¹ found that the diversification of the donor landscape provides a timely stimulus for increasing self-reflection on the goals and future direction of European development cooperation. New actors present a challenge for Europe to present a vision of its role in the world and to better embed development cooperation in European foreign relations.

Building on analyses of the global development engagement of a variety of actors outside of the OECD DAC community, including state actors such as China, India, Brazil, and South Africa and non-state actors, several conclusions can be highlighted in considering how Europe should respond to the changing donor landscape:

- The financial crisis has accelerated the power shift in the global political economy toward emerging economies. Europe needs to contribute to the adaptation of global governance frameworks to reflect this shift and should increasingly speak with one voice on the world stage.
- While studies of the actual development impact of new donors remain at an early stage, the examination of their potential impact highlights continuing deficits within the European development policy system. In Angola and Ethiopia, for example, the limited effectiveness of European policies to promote good governance may be linked more to problems internal to European development cooperation such as delays in implementation and the apparent absence of financial sanctions for non-compliance than to China's presence as an alternative development cooperation partner. Criticisms of fragmentation introduced into the development context by global vertical programmes are partly reflections of communication and coordination deficits between field offices and European donor headquarters.
- For both state and non-state development assistance providers, development cooperation flows continue to be inadequately reported. Investment in better data collection and encouragement for 'new' donors to improve financial reporting are essential in order for Europe to determine prospects for deepened cooperation or possible goal conflicts.
- New or re-emerging actors in international development are a heterogeneous lot. The varying nature of the impact of these actors on global governance and in engagement within developing country contexts implies a need to adopt flexible approaches to establishing partnerships built around common interests and to acknowledge the value of divergent perspectives on how to contribute to development goals.
- One key commonality among many 'new' state actors in development is that development cooperation is closely tied to foreign policy. This adds pressure for Europe to ensure that development goals are more firmly embedded in its emerging external action apparatus.

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