



# ITALY

## “ Taking advantage of development cooperation ”

By CONCORD Italia

### Main trends

The September 2022 general election ushered in a new political leadership with potentially significant changes in the area of development cooperation to safeguard Italy's national interests globally. The new government is fully cognisant of the role of the European Union in various key domains, from the post COVID-19 recovery and resilience plans to migration management, and of cooperative relationships with neighbouring countries, especially around the Mediterranean and in Africa.

The Annual Budget law 2024-2026 can be expected to give effect to the government's ambition to increase ODA levels, already inflated thanks to significant refugee costs, and increased by the support for Ukraine and the COVID-19 pandemic response. Prime Minister Meloni has been calling for a new “Mattei Plan” for Africa and has followed up with a dynamic agenda of meetings with the leaders of Algeria, Libya and Tunisia in 2023. The Mattei Plan seemed to get off to a good start and is intended to be a *model of non-predatory cooperation*; its practical implementation, on the other hand, seems to be fraught with risks, considering the most recent agreements with key Mediterranean partners on energy, trade and migration. The real nature of this plan can be expected to be fully unveiled in 2024. The Government's foreign policy strategy includes strong support for Ukraine against Russia's invasion as well as convening a new platform to address migration and development.

### Government's relationship with civil society

The 2014 legislation on development cooperation includes provisions for policies and frameworks that safeguard the role of CSOs and other development actors. The Italian Agency for Development Cooperation (AICS) leads on funding opportunities for CSOs, and maintains day-to-day dialogue on the activities under way. However,

Reported ODA: EUR 5958 million

**0.32%** GNI (↑ from 0.29% in 2021)

Non-inflated ODA: EUR 4466 million

**0.24%** GNI (↑ from 0.23% in 2021)

Total inflated ODA: EUR 1492 million

**25%** of total



the AICS is in the process of getting a new Director after a public selection process, slowing the pace of more ambitious plans: for instance, the latest call for proposal dates back to 2020. On the bright side, a wide array of stakeholders – including CSOs – have been involved in developing the National Action plan for Citizens Education; and we are expecting a relevant set of indicators to be agreed. On a more general level, the National Council for Development Cooperation (CNCS) has not been convened since October 2022; the Council working groups keep functioning thanks to their facilitators, drawn from the non-executive constituencies; as of July 2023, CSOs have still to officially meet the Deputy Minister Cirielli, who holds Development Cooperation portfolio.

### The Italian government should:

- **Implement a time bound plan to meet the 0.7% ODA target by 2030 with steady and programmable resources.**
- **Launch a new round of calls for proposals for CSOs and other non-executive actors, including global citizenship education.**
- **Endorse a new national plan on development effectiveness.**
- **Open up the multi-year planning process for 2024-2026, including consultations with the National Council for Development Cooperation.**
- **Implement the national plan for policy coherence.**
- **Consult with stakeholders on a regular basis, including timely meetings of the National Council for Development Cooperation.**