COOPÉRATION CANADA

November 2026

What Issues Are Driving the Changing Priorities in Canadian ODA?

Highlights of the 2025 Canadian Aid Trends Report

Canada's ODA is being reshaped by competing priorities. While total ODA has fluctuated considerably in recent years, a growing share is being directed toward refugee costs in Canada, Ukraine and climate finance. This is changing both where Canadian aid goes and what it is used for, with implications for resources available for long-term development, humanitarian assistance and poverty reduction.[1]

1 Resources for long-term development are increasingly constrained, reaching pre-pandemic levels

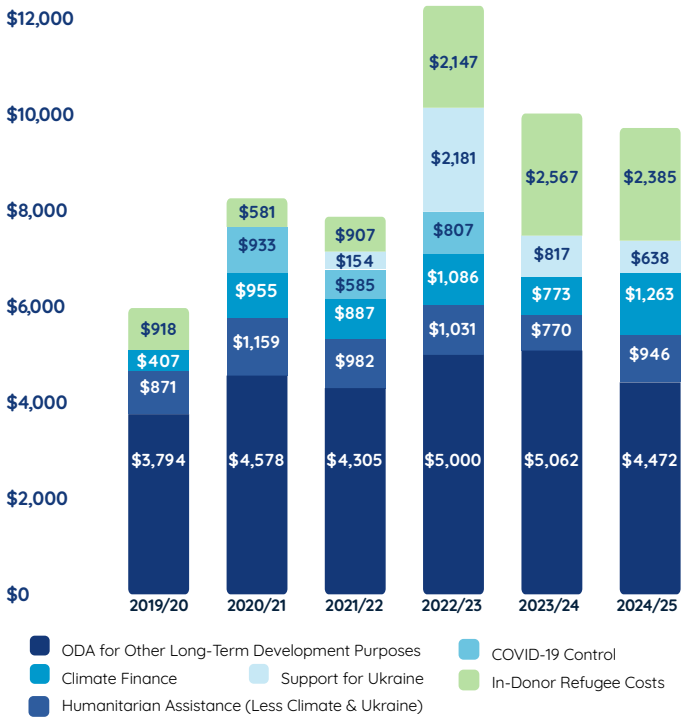
Resources for other long-term development purposes have declined since 2022/23. In 2024/25 alone, they fell by 12%, from $5.1 billion to $4.5 billion. Education saw the largest decline, falling by 46%, while general and basic health declined by 9% and agriculture by 10%. Population and reproductive health remained relatively stable.

More broadly, excluding in-donor refugee costs, Canadian ODA declined from $10.1 billion in 2022/23 to $7.3 billion in 2024/25. When support for Ukraine is also excluded, resources available for other humanitarian and development purposes fell by 16% over the same period, reaching their lowest level since 2019/20.

The implication: headline ODA figures can obscure the amount of funding actually available for ongoing development priorities. As new demands on ODA grow, long-standing investments in areas such as health, education and agriculture face increasing pressure.

Canadian ODA Disaggregated

Millions of Canadian dollars



2 In-donor refugee costs account for one out of every four dollars of Canadian ODA

In 2024/25, in-donor refugee costs accounted for 25% of Canadian ODA, largely reflecting support for Ukrainian refugees in Canada. In 2025, Canada ranked sixth among the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) providers in the total amount of in-donor refugee costs reported and third in terms of these costs as a share of its ODA. Across the DAC, in-donor refugee costs amounted to US$23 billion, or 13% of total ODA.

1 This document is part of a Canadian Aid Trends series produced by Cooperation Canada and AidWatch Canada. These highlights provide a snapshot of the analysis; for more detail, consult the full briefing note and related Canadian Aid Trends resources.

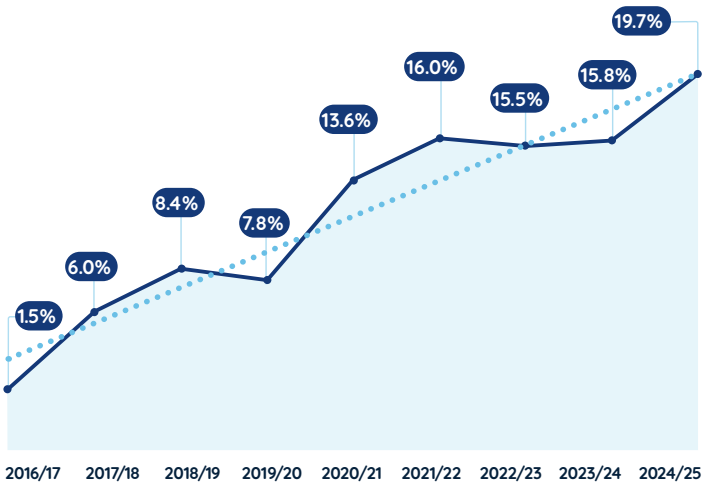
The implication: increases in reported ODA do not necessarily translate into additional resources reaching partner countries. Distinguishing between total ODA and resources available for international programming is therefore increasingly important.

3 Climate finance takes up 20% of Canada's aid budget, and is likely to keep growing

Climate finance has become an increasingly important component of Canadian ODA. In 2024/25, Canada allocated 24% of its bilateral aid to climate finance. On a two-year average, principal-purpose climate finance represented 20% of bilateral aid, up from 8% in 2019/20.

Canada's new $5.9 billion climate-finance commitment will further increase the role of climate finance within the aid portfolio, including through a substantially expanded role for FinDev Canada

Principal purpose climate finance disbursements as a share of total GAC bilateral ODA
Two-year running average



Bilateral ODA is net of in-donor refugee costs, COVID-19 Control and Ukraine

The implication: climate action is an essential development priority, but when climate finance is drawn from the same finite pool of ODA, increases can create trade-offs with other development objectives. This is particularly important for mitigation because, while urgently needed, using scarce ODA can displace resources from areas where countries in the Global South are the primary beneficiaries, including health, education, adaptation, and loss and damage.

4 Canada is increasingly using aid to mobilize private finance, with modest results

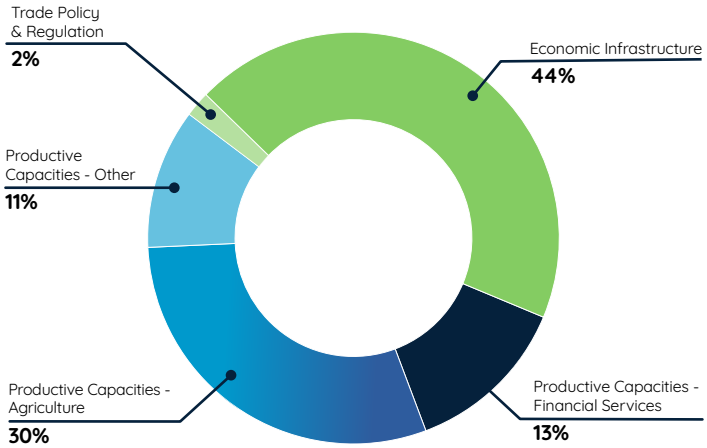
FinDev Canada has become a more significant channel for Canadian development finance. It has committed approximately US$2.4 billion across 70 clients, with its portfolio concentrated in middle-income countries and debt financing. In 2024, 65.1% of its transactions were in upper-middle-income countries, compared with 26.3% in lower-middle-income countries and 8.6% in low-income countries.

Private capital mobilization has so far been modest relative to official investment. Between 2022 and 2024, FinDev reported mobilizing $308.4 million in private finance alongside $950.1 million in new project transactions, equivalent to less than 33 cents in private finance for every public dollar invested.

The implication: the growing use of ODA to mobilize private investment changes both the instruments and geography of Canadian development finance. It also raises important questions about how private-sector approaches complement grant-based investments in lower-income and more vulnerable contexts.

5 Canada is pivoting towards trade-development partnerships, but Aid for Trade already accounts for 21% of its ODA

Allocation of Canadian ODA Disbursements for Aid for Trade
Three-year average, 2022/23 to 2024/25,
Share of total Aid for Trade



Canada is increasingly looking to align international assistance with trade and investment objectives, but Aid for Trade[2] is already a significant part of Canadian ODA. Between 2022/23 and 2024/25,

2 Aid for Trade seeks to align donor and partner-country strategies to build the capacity, infrastructure and institutions needed to benefit from trade and harness it as a driver of economic growth and sustainable development.

broadly defined Aid for Trade accounted for an average of 21% of Canadian ODA, excluding support for COVID-19 and Ukraine. A narrower measure of core Aid for Trade — focused more directly on trade policy, regulation and key economic infrastructure — accounted for 9%.

The composition of this spending is also important. Economic infrastructure, particularly renewable energy, accounted for 44% of Aid for Trade disbursements between 2022/23 and 2024/25, while agriculture accounted for another 30%. By contrast, direct support for trade policy and regulatory reform represented only 2%.

Aid for Trade is delivered predominantly through multilateral organizations, which accounted for 76% of disbursements, compared with 13% through CSOs and 6% through private-sector actors.

The implication: Canada's trade-development pivot is not starting from zero. A substantial share of Canadian ODA already supports productive sectors and enabling conditions for trade. The key question is how a stronger trade-development focus will build on these investments while remaining responsive to partner-country development and trade priorities.

6 Ukraine represented 15% of Canadian ODA over the last three years and became the largest single country recipient of aid in Canada's history

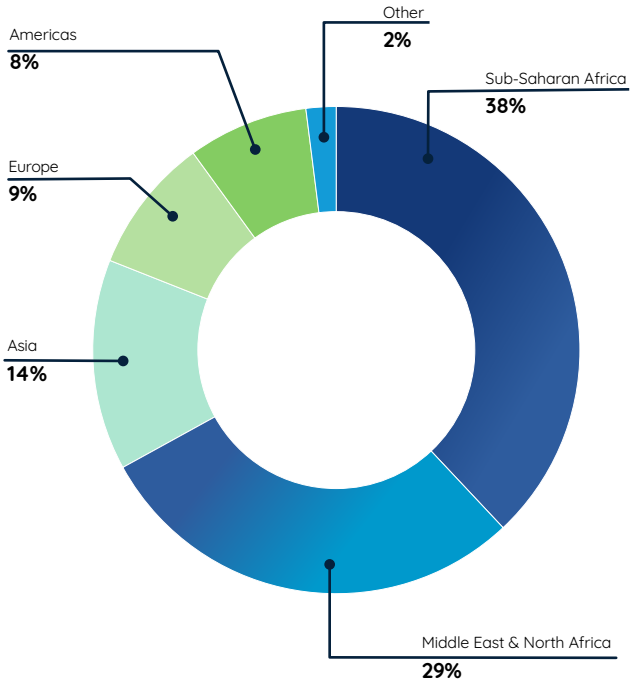
Ukraine has become an unprecedented Canadian aid priority. Between 2022/23 and 2024/25, Canada provided $10.7 billion in non-military assistance to Ukraine, including $3.7 billion in ODA. This represented 15% of Canadian ODA over the three years, excluding in-donor refugee costs.

In 2025, Canada was the largest individual DAC country provider of ODA to Ukraine, both in absolute volume and as a share of its ODA. EU Institutions, considered separately, were the largest overall provider, accounting for 77% of ODA finance to Ukraine as U.S. support declined.

The implication: Ukraine has changed not only the volume of Canadian ODA but also its composition and institutional delivery, with a much larger role for loans and the Department of Finance than is typical of Canadian development assistance.

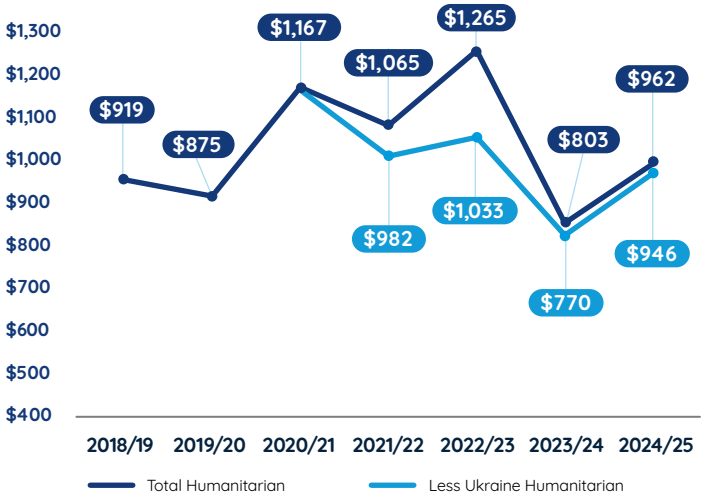
7 Humanitarian assistance remains focused on protracted crises but is declining as a share of ODA

Regional Allocation of Canadian Humanitarian Assistance
Average Disbursements, 2020/21 to 2024/25



Humanitarian assistance remains concentrated in countries facing prolonged crises. At least three-quarters of country-specific funding between 2022/23 and 2024/25 went to protracted-crisis settings, including nine of the ten largest recipients in 2024/25.

Total Humanitarian Assistance, 2018/19 to 2024/25
Millions of Canadian Dollars



Sub-Saharan Africa remained the largest regional recipient, receiving 38% of Canadian humanitarian assistance between 2020/21 and 2024/25, followed by the Middle East and North Africa at 29%.

At the same time, humanitarian assistance declined as a share of Real ODA[3], from 15% in 2018/19 to 8% in 2023/24, before increasing to 10% in 2024/25.

The implication: Canada's humanitarian assistance remains strongly targeted toward areas of acute and prolonged need, but it has not kept pace with the overall growth and changing composition of Canadian ODA.

8 Public support for poverty-focused aid remains strong, but engagement is falling

Most Canadians continue to see poverty reduction as a core purpose of aid. Close to seven in ten believe poverty reduction should either be the exclusive purpose of Canadian aid or be pursued alongside other objectives.

However, broader public engagement with global poverty appears to be declining. The share of Canadians identifying as fully or partially engaged with global poverty fell from 36% in 2023 to 26% in 2026, while only 12% reported having heard of the Sustainable Development Goals.

GAC investment in public awareness also remains limited. Between 2022/23 and 2024/25, it disbursed an average of $20.1 million annually for public-awareness programming, equivalent to 0.49% of its Real Bilateral ODA and placing Canada 17th among DAC peers.

The implication: there remains a substantial constituency for poverty-focused international assistance, but sustaining that support cannot be taken for granted. Limited investment in public engagement comes at a time when Canadians are becoming less connected to global poverty and development issues.

3 Real ODA excludes in-donor refugee costs, imputed student costs, and debt cancellation. It is ODA that is potentially directly accessible to country governments and partners in the Global South.