

France's Official Development Assistance for water, sanitation and hygiene in the SDG era: 2015-2021

Key findings

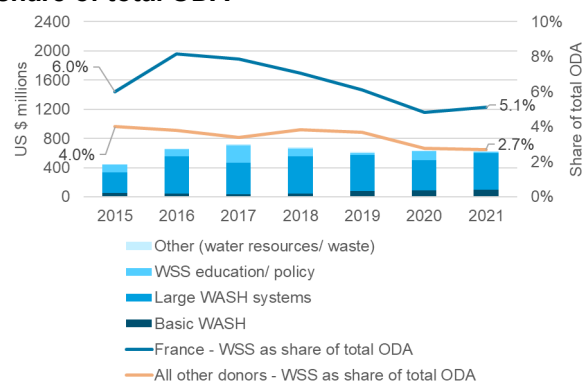
France has been a consistent and important supporter of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). From 2016 to 2020 the share of Official Development Assistance disbursed to the water supply and sanitation sector has tracked downwards (WSS, which includes WASH), but increased slightly in 2021. France has been a major provider of loan finance to the sector, though grant equivalent WSS ODA has generally increased and is more targeted to the poorest countries than in adjacent sectors. There may be scope to engage more with those countries currently most off-track on providing universal WASH access, and on helping to build strong WASH sector systems as well as supporting infrastructure investments. Integration of WASH within health, and attention to gender equality in WASH investments, show potential to be increased. Based on these findings, France has opportunities to:

- Increase the share of total ODA going to WSS, for example to 2016 levels (in the context of the commitment to achieve 0.7% of GNI for ODA overall).
- Review how WASH can contribute to France's objectives on global health and gender equality in the context of renewed strategies in these areas.

Trend in support

- Fifth largest provider of ODA to WSS (3rd in G7, excl. EU; 4th in G20).
- Provided a higher share of total ODA to the WSS sector than the average from other donors, though declining from 2016 to 2020 (Figure 1).
- WSS ODA p.a. during COVID-19 crisis stable relative to the preceding years (2020-21 vs. 2015-19), whereas ODA for all other social sectors increased, by at least 17%.
- Prioritised large WASH infrastructure considerably more than other donors (72% vs. 49%). Similar share went to sector strengthening (sector education/ policy) as from other donors: 16%.
- Grant equivalent WSS ODA, including grant element within loans as well as grant finance, averaged 57% of cash basis ODA and increased in most years during the period.
- Limited other official flows (OOF = 2% of ODA+OOF combined)

Figure 1: WSS ODA 2015-2021, in total and as a share of total ODA



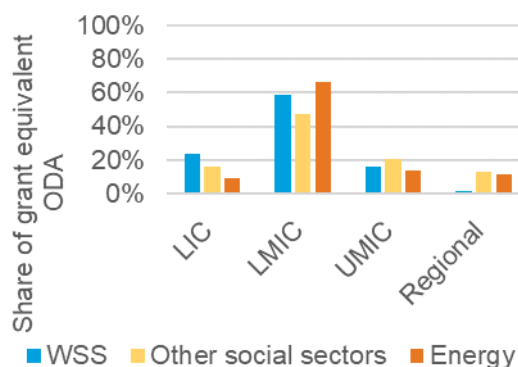
Source: OECD DAC CRS

Type of support/ countries supported

Donor profile: France

- A quarter of grant equivalent WSS ODA went to poorest countries (24% to low-income countries, LICs, a higher share than for ODA to other social sectors and to energy). Majority went to lower-middle income countries (Figure 2).
- Nearly half (49%) of country-specific WSS ODA went to fragile countries, a higher share than for France's ODA to other sectors (26%) and than other donors' WSS ODA (45%). Almost all France's WSS ODA was delivered as project-type interventions rather than budget support, core contributions or technical assistance (99% in fragile contexts; 94% in non-fragile contexts).
- Potential for better targeting to off-track countries: nearly a fifth of France's WASH infrastructure ODA (19%) went to 16 countries – all at least middle-income – that are currently on-track to achieve universal access to basic water and sanitation services, or have already largely achieved universal access.¹ A lower share (12%) went to 15 countries where progress is severely off-track (basic drinking water and/ or sanitation coverage is going in a negative direction).²

Figure 2: Country-specific WSS ODA 2015-2021 by region/ country group

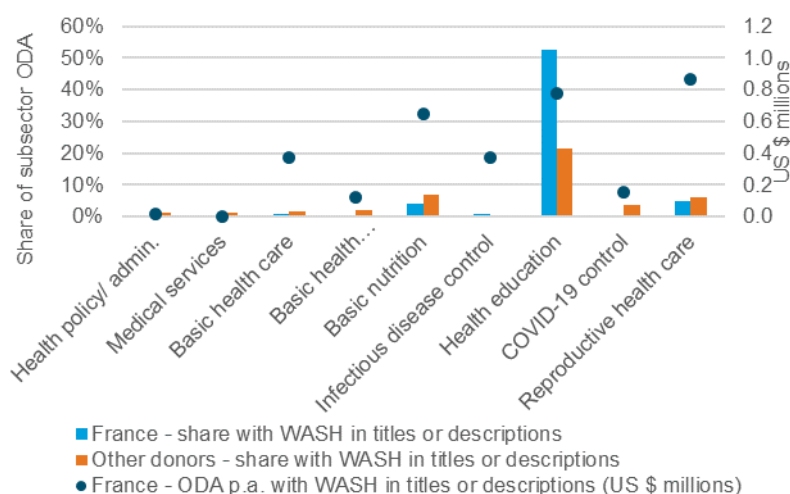


Source: OECD DAC CRS; World Bank country groups

WASH as an enabler: health, gender equality and climate resilience

- **Health:** Based on a keyword search, only 1% of France's ODA to relevant health subsectors features WASH in project titles or descriptions (equivalent to \$3m p.a.). The share is higher in some subsectors, notably health education, which includes hygiene and sanitation promotion activities. Over half of France's ODA in this subsector went to projects mentioning WASH terms in some way, vs. one fifth in the case of other donors (Figure 3).
- **Gender equality:** A lower share of France's WSS ODA deemed to have a focus on gender equality compared with other donors – based on projects

Figure 3: Health ODA with WASH focus, 2015-2021



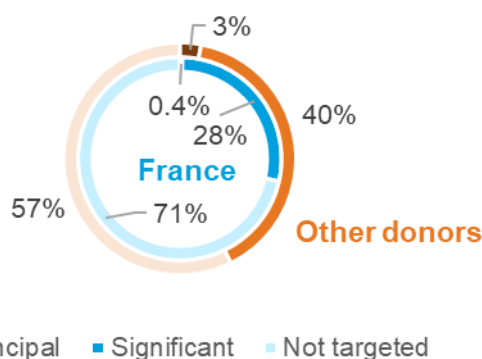
Source: OECD DAC CRS; authors' analysis

Donor profile: France

marked as having gender equality as either a principal or a significant objective (Figure 4).

- Climate adaptation:** The share of WSS ODA with climate adaptation as a principal objective is higher in most years than other donors, averaging at 33% vs. 8%. In real terms, WSS ODA with climate adaptation as a principal objective peaked in 2017 (Figure 5).

Figure 4: WSS ODA with gender equality objective, 2015-2021 (screened activities only)



Source: OECD DAC CRS

Figure 5: WSS ODA with climate change adaptation objective, 2015-2021 (screened activities only)



Source: OECD DAC CRS

Outlook

- In the context of the Law no. 2021-1031, increases in total ODA are expected, towards a target of 0.7% of GNI by 2025. The law also

provides measurable objectives for a shift towards greater use of grant finance and more prioritisation of least developed countries. Preliminary figures compiled by OECD DAC suggest France’s grant equivalent ODA was 56% of GNI in 2022, vs. 51% in 2021 and also increased in real terms, from \$15.5bn to \$17.4bn (constant 2021 prices).³ However, the effect on WSS and WASH remains to be seen. *NB Due to a unreliable IATI data there are insufficient data points to extrapolate WSS ODA disbursement estimates for 2022 or 2023.*

Donor profile: France

About this donor profile: Part of a series covering key donors' support to WSS in the SDG era. Produced by Manatee Insight for WaterAid. Unless otherwise stated, all data from Organisation for Co-operation and Development's Development Assistant Committee (OECD DAC) creditor reporting system (CRS) database for sector 140: Water supply and sanitation (includes some water resources and waste management along with WASH). These data may vary from those reported on the French Government's French Official Development Assistance Open Data Portal (<https://data.aide-developpement.gouv.fr/pages/accueil/>). Financial values are gross bilateral disbursements in US dollars. Core contributions to multilaterals excluded (30%-38% of France's total ODA p.a., 2015-2021). Trends and averages over multiple years use constant US dollar values normalised to 2020 prices. EUR to USD: 2015:0.9; 2016:0.9; 2017:0.89; 2018:0.85; 2019:0.89; 2020:0.88; 2021:0.85. 'Other donors' include OECD DAC, non-DAC and multilateral donors providing ODA. 'Other sectors' includes 'sector allocable' sectors 100-400. Country income group/ fragility status as categorised respectively by the World Bank/ OECD in 2021 (Analysis does not account for changes in category for some countries over the period). Figure 3: See accompanying briefing for WASH keyword search methodology within health ODA.

Notes:

¹ Countries: CHN, COL, ECU, EGY, IDN, IRQ, LAO, MDV, MEX, MUS, PSE, SYC, THA, TUN, UZB, VNM.

² Countries: BFA, CAF, CIV, COD, GEO, GMB, JAM, JOR, LCA, SLB, SLV, SYR, UKR, VUT, ZWE.

³ <https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=TABLE1>