

Development Cooperation Charter and Japan's Development Cooperation

Japan's development cooperation is founded on the Development Cooperation Charter ¹ (Cabinet decision on June 9, 2023). The Charter defines the objectives of Japan's development cooperation as follows: (1) to work together with developing countries to address their development challenges and global issues common to all humankind based on equal partnerships, and to contribute even more actively to the formation of a peaceful, stable, and prosperous international community under a free and open international order based on the rule of law; (2) at the same time, to contribute to the realization of Japan's national interests, such as securing peace and security for the country and its people and achieving further prosperity through economic growth, while creating a favorable international environment for Japan and the world, as well as maintaining and strengthening foreign relations based on trust. As the international community stands at a historic turning point and faces complex crises, Japan is committed to utilizing even more effectively and strategically development cooperation, one of the most important tools of Japanese diplomacy.

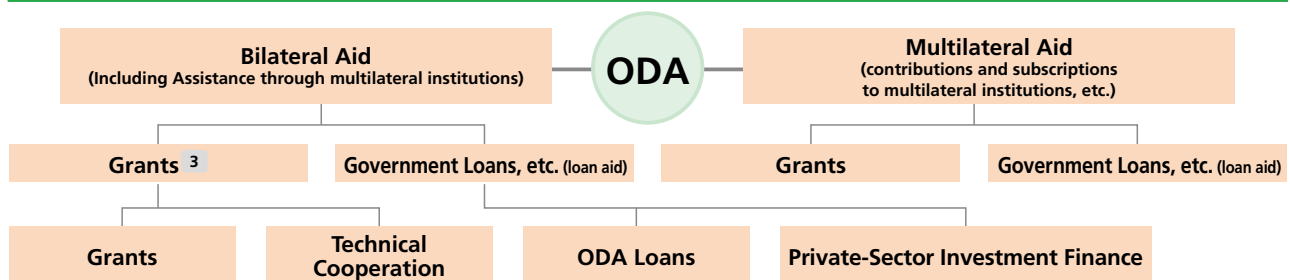
1 Basic policies of the Development Cooperation Charter

The Development Cooperation Charter sets out the following four basic policies in development cooperation: "contributing to peace and prosperity," "human security in the new era," "co-creation of social values through dialogue and cooperation with developing countries," and "leading the dissemination and implementation of international rules and guidelines based on inclusiveness, transparency, and fairness."

2 Priority policies of the Development Cooperation Charter

In line with these basic policies, Japan pursues the following three priority policies: "'quality growth' in the new era and poverty eradication through such growth," "realization of peaceful, secure, and stable societies, and maintenance and strengthening of a free and open international order based on the rule of law," and "leading international efforts to addressing increasingly complex and serious global issues."

Japan's ODA ²



● What is ODA?

Development cooperation refers to "international cooperation activities that are conducted by the government and its affiliated agencies for the main purpose of development in developing regions" (Development Cooperation Charter), and ODA is the public funding for those activities. The government and its implementing agencies provide ODA in the form of financial and technical assistance to the governments of developing regions, international organizations, NGOs, or the private sector, to promote "economic and social development projects," including peacebuilding, strengthening of governance, promotion of basic human rights, and humanitarian assistance.

The ODA recipient countries and regions are presented in the list (see Chart II-10 on page 26) compiled by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

● What types of ODA exist?

ODA is broadly categorized into bilateral aid and multilateral aid. **Bilateral aid** is a type of cooperation in which the donor country makes a direct intervention with the governments of a developing region (including cooperation implemented through multilateral institutions and NGOs at the initiative of the donor). **Multilateral aid**, on the other hand, involves contributions and investments towards international organizations and multilateral development banks that implement their own development projects. On that basis, ODA is further classified, based on whether or not the recipient has the obligation to repay, into **grants** ³ and **government loans, etc. (loan aid)**.

Grants ³ in bilateral aid are assistance provided to developing regions without repayment obligations for the purpose of economic and social development in those regions. The grant schemes implemented by the Government of Japan include: **grants**, which provide funds or other assets needed for the implementation of development projects to the government of the relevant region or settle debts on behalf of such governments; and **technical cooperation**, which develops human resources responsible for implementing development projects through the transfer of Japanese technologies and expertise. Among grants channeled through multilateral institutions or NGOs, those whose project content is specified at the initiative of the donor are counted as bilateral aid for the recipient country in the statistics (see Chart II-1 on page 17).

Additionally, Japan's **government loans, etc. (loan aid)** in bilateral aid include **ODA loans** that lend funds needed by developing regions on concessional terms and conditions regarding low interest rates and long repayment periods, and **private-sector investment finance**, which provides financial support (loans, guarantees, bond subscriptions, and equity investments) to private-sector corporations and other entities that implement development projects.

Most **multilateral aid** is provided as grants; however, for multilateral institutions, it may also be provided as **government loans, etc. (loan aid)**.

Various information about ODA is available on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. ⁴

¹ Development Cooperation Charter <https://www.mofa.go.jp/files/100514705.pdf>. It can also be accessed via the 2D code on page v.

² Unless otherwise stated, "grants" in this White Paper refers to Japan's aid scheme. The exception is Part II and Reference Statistics 2, where it indicates "grants" based on the OECD-DAC definition.

³ As defined by the OECD-DAC: "transfers in cash or in kind for which no legal debt is incurred by the recipient."

⁴ Various information on ODA <https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/index.html>. It can also be accessed via the 2D code on page v.

The 2023 revised Development Cooperation Charter is available here:

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/files/100514705.pdf>



The 2025 White Paper on Development Cooperation and previous editions are available electronically on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website.

https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/page_000017.html



ODA-related statistics and an overview of economic cooperation in other countries are presented in the Development Cooperation Statistics and Reference Materials (in Japanese only):

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/shiryo/hakusyo.html#section4>



Information on ODA for each recipient country is compiled in the ODA Country Data Book:

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/data/index.html>



Details on the ODA email newsletter are available here (in Japanese only):

<https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/mail/index.html>



[Cover Photograph]



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) providing oral hygiene instruction and distributing toothbrushes to elementary school students in Higüey City, Dominican Republic (Photo: JICA)

[Back Cover Photograph]



A Japan Overseas Cooperation Volunteer (JOCV) with infants who have received polio vaccines in Kenya (Photo: JICA)



More information on ODA-MAN can be found on MOFA's website (https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/press/event/page22_001008.html) (in Japanese only).



In principle, this White Paper records an overview of Japan's development cooperation from January 1 to December 31, 2025. However, it also includes some matters that occurred up to early 2026. Please note that all titles of individuals mentioned in the text are current as of the time of writing.