

Pacific Aid Map Methodology

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The Pacific Aid Map consists of data on more than 33,000 projects and activities across all Pacific Island nations from 82 development partners, with complete data from 2008 to 2021. This raw data is freely available on the Pacific Aid Map interactive platform, allowing users to drill down and manipulate the data in a variety of ways.

Key concepts

Official development finance (ODF) refers to public funds provided by governments and international organisations to promote economic and social development in low- and middle-income countries. It is the combination of official development assistance (ODA) and other official flows (OOF).

Official development assistance (ODA) is defined as financial flows that are provided by official agencies and are administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective and are concessional in character.

Other official flows (OOF) consist of financial flows that do not meet the conditions for ODA either because they are not primarily aimed at development or because they do not meet Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) concessionality standards.

Donors

A donor is an entity, such as a government or organisation, that provides foreign assistance to support economic and social development in other countries. The Pacific Aid Map focuses on 982 official agencies or partners, both bilateral and multilateral.

Recipients

The recipient countries in alphabetical order are: Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. Additionally, there is an Oceania regional recipient category that captures all regional and multi-country projects.

Committed vs. spent

There is an important distinction between what development partners have committed in the region and what they have actually spent. Large commitments, typically in infrastructure, can often take a long time to disburse, meaning commitments can often overstate a donor's overall footprint. Spent funds are a better indication of annual flows into the region.

Sectors

Sectors have been drawn from the OECD sector categories and condensed for formatting purposes. The sectors are: Agriculture, Forestry & Fishing, Communication, Education, Energy, Government & Civil Society, Health, Humanitarian Aid, Industry, Mining & Construction, Multisector/ Cross-cutting, Transport & Storage, Water & Sanitation, and other/unspecified.

Sources

There are two major existing databases for tracking aid and development finance: the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) and the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Unfortunately, neither dataset has comprehensive reporting on non-traditional partners such as India, China, and Taiwan. Steps have been taken by the Pacific Aid Map team to both fill the gaps in existing reporting mechanisms and validate what has been reported through official channels. The team collected, cleaned, and analysed data from open sources such as government budget documents, press releases, news media and social media, and websites of resident embassies. These sources are available via hyperlinks in the Pacific Aid Map database.

This approach, while detailed, will never be entirely comprehensive and some projects will likely be missing, especially from non-traditional partners. However, we are confident that this approach has produced the most complete picture of non-traditional development partner activities to date.

Climate and gender equality development finance

The OECD policy marker system provides an indication of the degree of investment a policy goal receives within an ODF project. A modified version of the OECD's marker system for climate and gender has been applied to all projects in the Pacific Aid Map dataset, sorting projects into three categories: 'principal', where climate change mitigation or adaptation/gender equality is explicitly stated as fundamental to the project; 'significant', where climate change mitigation or adaptation/gender equality is explicitly stated but not fundamental; and 'not climate related', where climate change mitigation or adaptation/gender equality is not targeted in any way. The Pacific Aid Map team has taken at face value the climate or gender equality relevance marking given to projects by those development partners who self-report using the OECD system. For those partners who do not report, each project has been allocated a rating based on relevant criteria such as partner information, Sustainable Development Goal indicators, and OECD sub-sectors.

Data caveats

The research covers the period from 2008 to 2021. Data for non-traditional development partners is likely to be incomplete. Additionally, the OECD relies on partner self-reporting of OOF, and partners report into it to varying degrees. It likely understates the actual volume of OOF being transferred to the region.

Review process

The clean dataset was provided to both recipient and main partner governments and organisations for confirmation. The full methodology and a representative subset of the data was sent to an independent, external organisation for robust peer review and to validate, test, and recreate the results.

Currency

All currency is quoted in constant 2021 US dollars.