





INNOVATING SOUTH-SOUTH COOPERATION

Policies, Challenges, and Prospects

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An Emerging Donor in Retrospect: Understanding Turkey's Development Assistance Activism

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Introduction

When the G20 asserted its position as the leading forum for debate on international cooperation and consultation at the Pittsburgh summit in 2009, it did not take long for scholars and experts in the field to reflect on the possible implications of this important new twist. The replacement of the G8 by a larger and more diverse group of countries not only rendered the traditional North-South paradigm out-dated, but also suggested a shift “as significant as the collapse of the bipolar world order after the fall of the Berlin Wall” (Kloke-Lesch and Gleichmann 2010, 13). The implications of this shift sparked countless analyses focusing on the role of the emerging powers in global finance, trade, development, and resources, and ignited prompt discussion on the role of these emerging countries in the international development assistance community (Mawdsley 2012; Manning 2006, 371–85; Woods 2008, 1205–21; Mohan and Power 2008, 23–42; Naim 2007, 95–96).

The growing number of emerging and non-traditional donors of official development assistance (ODA) is a major area of debate in development studies, with their increasing influence across the global South generating questions related to their adherence to existing international development aid norms, regimes, and institutions (Harmer and Cotterell 2009; Severino and Ray 2009). Many of these concerns are rooted in the fact that the aid provided by the new donors

does not meet the traditional criteria set by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). If the international development aid community is indeed witnessing a silent revolution by donors outside the Western-dominated DAC regime, a deeper insight into the policies, practices, and consequences pertaining to the aid activities of these donors is crucial (Woods 2008).

With a nearly fifteen-fold increase in its ODA spending over the past decade, Turkey—an emerging, non-traditional, non-DAC member donor of development assistance—is one of the many countries to claim a share from the wide pool of terms coined to identify the countries associated with the South-South Cooperation (SSC) agenda. Positioned in the epicentre of Europe, Asia, and Africa, Turkey has been a metaphoric bridge between the East and West for centuries. Concomitantly, it holds a hybrid and ambiguous identity within the global North-South divide. Its status as a middle-income country, its membership in the OECD and European Union candidacy, and its recent transformation from aid recipient to donor complicate its position within the framework of the conventional understanding of North-South relations. While the volume and impact of Turkish ODA is relatively modest in comparison with emerging donors such as China, Brazil, and Russia, the range and dynamics of its development assistance activities are rapidly increasing.

Changing Dynamics of International Development Aid

Alongside countless other fundamental rearrangements in the international institutional architecture, the end of the Cold War paved the way for the monopolization of development assistance by the DAC member states under OECD (Kragelund 2011, 585). With the previously influential eastern European donors having retreated from the international development community to concentrate on their arduous transition from planned to market economy, the international aid regime became exclusively dominated by Western donors—a situation that is rapidly changing, due to a flux of emerging donors, most of which are not native to the established aid regime, along with many DAC donors reducing their ODA budgets in order to implement financial austerity measures as a result of the financial crisis in the Eurozone (OECD 2013).

Within this context, South Korea's admission to the DAC as the first former aid recipient in 2010 denotes a significant point for the future of the international development aid regime. Others, including

Turkey, are aspiring potential DAC members waiting in line. The Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, held in Busan, South Korea, in December 2011, marked a further milestone for the future of development aid—establishing a new framework for development cooperation that brought together for the first time traditional and non-traditional donors, South-South cooperators, Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa (BRICS) civil society organizations, and the private sector as partners in international development cooperation (OECD 2013).

It is possible to view the emergence of new ODA donors as a new multipolarity in international development and as a growth of non-Western sources of development aid (Mohan and Power 2009, 27). This multipolarity, however, may be regarded as a contestation of the aid regime established by the traditional DAC donors (Tan-Mullins, Mohan and Power 2010, 857–81). Competitive pressures exerted by the emerging donors within the existing system pose a serious challenge to the current development assistance regime, and may lead to scrutiny on future trends in the donor community (Woods 2008, 2). Nevertheless, some remain cautious about the functions of the DAC, refraining from its dismissal as a mere “rich club” by drawing attention to the influence of DAC in promoting democratic values and defining central concepts and best practices in development assistance (Rowlands 2008, 555–84).

Emerging Donors under Scrutiny

Despite the growing challenges to DAC’s legitimacy and debates on whether conforming to the DAC standards is still relevant for the development community, emerging donors are not immune to critique. A major criticism has been their propensity to support rogue states and regimes. In a 2007 article in *Foreign Policy*, Moises Naim described the generous foreign aid programs of China, Venezuela, and Saudi Arabia as toxic (Naim 2007). The lack of attention paid by these emerging donor states to the established aid institutions and standards undermines important concerns about regional and global security and environmental protection. Naazneed Barma and her colleagues claim that evolving Western notions of liberal internationalism, particularly ideas like political conditionality on development aid, have no place in this framework and view emerging donors as a potential threat to the future of development aid (Barma, Ratner and Weber 2007, 27). Other observers warn that concerns over non-traditional aid are valid due to the potentially hampering social,

political, economic and ecological consequences they may yield for developing countries, and that these claims should not be dismissed altogether (Mawdsley 2010, 363). Such concerns are widely voiced when it comes to Chinese aid, which is often considered to be more efficient in reaching its target than the majority of Western aid countries (Brautigam 2009). The main hazard, however, is that efficiency is often a trade-off for central values and principles, as it occurs “at the expense of governance, human rights and the environment” (Tan-Mullins, Mohan, and Power 2010, 861).

Without a doubt, the policies and modalities of non-DAC donors and their practices in the field require thorough research if and when such claims are to be assessed. It remains an uneasy task to accurately judge the challenges and opportunities induced by non-DAC donors with the limited knowledge accumulated thus far. Therefore, the deeper analyses on the experiences, policies, and practices of new donors such as Turkey hold significant value.

Turkey as an Emerging Donor

In line with the broader changes in the Turkish economy following the 2001 crisis, and as a product of the renewed foreign policy outlook under the Justice and Development Party [*trans.*] (AKP), Turkey’s experience with development assistance has evolved considerably over the last decade. The country has effectively transformed from a former aid recipient into an emerging donor. Reported annual ODA figures rose from US\$85 million in 2003 to US\$339 million in 2004, with a further increase from US\$780 million in 2008 to nearly US\$1.3 billion in 2011 (TIKA 2012, 20). More importantly, Turkey’s ODA showed a striking 98.7 percent increase from between 2011 and 2012 (OECD 2013). As part of its recent proactive foreign policy shift, Turkey has also discovered new instruments to reinforce its renewed foreign policy, including but not limited to peacekeeping missions, post-conflict reconstruction efforts, and public diplomacy.

SSC constitutes an important aspect of Turkey’s development cooperation agenda. In an address delivered at the Least Developed Countries Conference Ministerial Meeting in New Delhi in 2011, Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu emphasized Turkey’s support for SSC while reminding the audience that Turkey’s experience as an emerging donor of development aid is rooted in the spirit of solidarity and common interests (Davutoğlu 2011). The Turkish Ministry of Foreign

Affairs reports that between 2002 and 2007, the amount of Turkey's net disbursements of SSC aid increased by twenty times, compared to four times for South Korea and three times for Colombia (MFA, n.d.).

Turkey's burgeoning economy makes it a major powerhouse in the region, fostering economic dynamism and creating spillover effects in favour of the surrounding developing economies. Historically, Turkey has maintained dynamic cultural and economic ties not only with its immediate neighbours—comprising the Middle East, Balkans, and the Caucasus—but also with Europe and Turkish-speaking Central Asia. Despite persisting regional inequalities, the country is no longer confronted by absolute poverty, with only 0.21 percent of the total population living under US\$2.50 per day (Turkstat 2012). Although it is still in a learning process when it comes to fully adopting the DAC guidelines in ODA provision, Turkey aspires in the medium term to become a member of the DAC once it achieves an annual ODA/GNI ratio of 0.2 percent (Özkan and Demirtepe 2012, 658). In other words, having endured years of poverty eradication efforts, and now emerging as a donor of development aid with a vibrant civil society and private sector acting as facilitators of development assistance, Turkey's history as an ODA recipient offers valuable insights.

Turkey's History as an ODA Recipient

Turkey's history as an ODA recipient country dates to the onset of the Cold War. In line with US foreign policy priorities of containing the spread of Soviet communism and rebuilding European economies after the Second World War, the Marshall Plan offered a substantial amount of ODA to Turkey and Greece in the 1940s. The total amount of aid received by Turkey during the 1950s within the framework of the Plan is calculated at US\$150 million (Marshall 2008, 99). In contrast, the total amount of all development-related loan and grant flows from the US to Turkey is reported to have surpassed US\$12.5 billion by the end of 2005 (USDoS, n.d.).

Two other major sources of ODA to Turkey—Japan and Germany—initiated technical cooperation with Turkey in the early 1970s through project-type activities administered by, respectively, the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and The German federally owned international cooperation enterprise or German Technical Cooperation Agency (Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit, GTZ). Although JICA's official engagement with Turkey started in

1965, the first technical cooperation project began in 1973, with the total budget allocated at about US\$286 million (Fidan and Nurdun 2008, 99). GTZ's technical cooperation activities with Turkey began in 1970 through the German-Turkish Technical Cooperation initiative and, as of 2003, provided a total of €271 million in technical assistance (Fidan and Nurdun 2008, 99).

Multilateral actors have also played a part in Turkey's development, the most visible being the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The program has played an active part in shaping and supporting Turkey's development agenda for three decades through the implementation of projects in various areas such as democratic governance, poverty reduction, and sustainable development. In 2000, the total technical assistance received by Turkey from the UNDP was US\$33.12 million (Fidan and Nurdun 2008, 99). Apart from UNDP, the Asian Development Fund (ADF), and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) have also contributed to Turkey's economic development.

Despite still being on the DAC list of ODA recipient countries, Turkey launched its own aid program in 1985 with a comprehensive aid package to the Sahel countries. Worth US\$10 million in total, aid consisted of institutional capacity-building projects in Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia, and Sudan (Birtek 1996, 37). One reading of this initiative has attributed its main motivation to the foreign policy activism during the Turgut Özal government in the 1980s, which prioritized the promotion of Turkey's positive image both domestically and in the international arena (Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun 2010, 133–134). The improved domestic economic environment enabled the utilization of foreign aid as an instrument to foster trade relations between Turkey and the less developed countries of Africa. After decades of import substitution policies, the export-oriented period following 1984 was regarded as one during which Turkey's economic policies were increasingly aligning with the realities and demands of globalization. This paved the way for the adoption of not only liberal economic policies, but also of ODA as a peaceful foreign policy instrument (Pamuk 2008, 268).

Turkey's role as an ODA donor, however, did not gain momentum until the establishment of the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency [*trans.*] (TIKA) in 1992, shortly after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. TIKA was originally founded to provide financial and technical assistance to the Turkic and neighbouring

countries in Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Balkans during their transition to a market economy (TİKA, n.d.). Although the need for immediate assistance to these countries was the official rationale for the establishment of TİKA, it is possible to read the actual motives of Turkish policymakers of the time as an attempt to contribute to the state-building processes that followed, and thereby to transfer Turkey's knowledge and experiences to these newly independent republics (Özkan and Demirtepe 2012, 649).

In spite of the initial hype and enthusiasm, TİKA remained an inactive and weakly organized aid agency throughout the 1990s. Constrained by a number of domestic and external factors, TİKA was unable to make adequate progress to fully meet its initial goals. It is possible to identify two important limitations as the major impediments to TİKA's performance during the 1990s. First, the Gulf War acted as a major source of vulnerability for the Turkish economy, which in turn had a negative impact on the ODA budget (Özkan and Demirtepe 2012, 652). Second, a change of government in 1995 and political turmoil as a result of the Islamist Welfare Party's (*Refah Partisi*) victory in the 1995 general elections further exacerbated the country's economic performance by increasing uncertainty and instability.

At the end of this turbulent decade, TİKA entered a phase of rebirth in 2003, shortly after the election of AKP to government. Major organizational changes took effect, paving the way for a rapid improvement in reporting schemes, a quick increase in ODA spending, and the diversification of development assistance activities. In tandem with the new foreign policy of the AKP government, TİKA widened its geographical scope, shifting its sole focus on the post-communist states of Central Asia and the Caucasus to also include the Middle East and North Africa, Balkans, South Asia, and, most recently, sub-Saharan Africa. In retrospect, it is indeed a fitting argument that the most important hurdle faced by TİKA as a development aid agency was in fact its own (as well as the other government institutions') "failure to understand how a modern development aid agency operated successfully" (Özkan and Demirtepe 2012, 648).

Proactive Foreign Policy and Shift to Development Assistance Activism

In order to make sense of the transformation of TİKA and the emerging development assistance activism pursued by the Turkish government,

it is essential to understand the recent changes in the Turkish foreign policy under the Justice and Development Party [*trans.*] (AKP) government. Following decades of a relatively static, reactive, and largely Western-oriented foreign policy agenda with marginal variance across different political parties, Turkish foreign policy is said to have experienced a paradigm shift with the AKP (Sözen 2010, 103–23).

Critics have approached this claim with caution, warning against a shift of axis, one suggestive of a departure from the Euro-Atlantic orientation prevalent since the end of the Second World War toward a more Eastern-oriented foreign policy (Loğoğlu 2009). Enthusiasts, on the other hand, responded with optimism, anticipating a deepening of Turkey's engagement with regional politics and international organizations (Aras 2009). A more cautious and moderate analysis suggests that although the AKP-style activism considerably differs from the previous wave of foreign policy activism in the 1990s, it is not free of elements of continuity, such as a multilateral approach to policymaking (Öniş and Yilmaz 2009, 7–8).

Moreover, Turkish foreign policy has experienced a proactive turn within the same period, with an increasingly assertive agenda that reflected “a desire to act as an independent regional power” (Öniş 2011, 50). This proactive shift in Turkish foreign policy has been a fundamental factor influencing the recent upsurge of ODA provision and development assistance activism in Turkey, along with a number of others. The resultant geographical reorientation within the foreign policy, favourable domestic economic conditions, and the vital transformation of TİKA comprise the crucial elements that have helped shape Turkey's recent international development agenda.

The strengthening of Turkey's cooperation efforts with developing nations, particularly with the Middle East, Central Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, is a clear manifestation of the shifting geographical priorities in Turkish foreign policy. The theoretical basis of this reorientation is often attributed to Ahmet Davutoğlu's seminal book *Strategic Depth: Turkey's International Position*, published in 2001. The book became an academic bestseller following AKP's election to government in 2002 and continued its popularity through Davutoğlu's appointment as Minister of Foreign Affairs in May 2009. In *Strategic Depth*, Davutoğlu (2001, 536) contends that Turkey's earlier foreign policies deprived the country of its “natural sphere of influence,” namely former Ottoman territories and regions with Turkic or Muslim populations). Davutoğlu (2008, 92) later stressed that “Turkey's natural

interest lies in the proper utilization of its geography,” pointing to a perceived need to re-engage with the geography with which Turkey possesses cultural, religious, and historical ties. Some policymakers and external aid agencies greeted this as a new geographic imagination—one that sought Turkey’s real interests in the Eurasian region (Aras and Fidan 2009, 193–215). Other scholars received it with more caution, interpreting it as the Middle Easternization of Turkish foreign policy and its disassociation from the West (Oğuzlu 2008, 3–20). By all means, the revised geographical priorities were concretely manifested in the top ODA destinations after 2005.

Economic recovery and political stability have been key factors that paved the way for the AKP government to pursue a proactive foreign policy and to overcome the obstacles that had prevented previous governments from engaging in a more active overseas development agenda. Following its election to government in 2002, AKP continued the economic stabilization program designed by Kemal Derviş in the wake of the banking crisis of 2001, and committed to fiscal discipline and tight monetary policies as proposed by the program (Özkan and Demirtepe 2012, 655). Moreover, an IMF-EU-US nexus was key in the restructuring of the post-crisis economy, where the International Monetary Fund’s active involvement shaped by the post-9/11 security concerns of the US and with the EU conditionality served as an anchor for political and economic reform in the country (Öniş and Şenses 2008, 271). As a result, inflation decreased to 8.39 percent in 2007 from 68 percent in 2001 (Özkan and Demirtepe 2012, 655). Fiscal balances improved as well and the share of budget deficit in overall GDP was reduced to 41 percent in 2007 from 90 percent in 2001 (Özkan and Demirtepe 2012, 655).

The restructuring of the economy and political stability prepared a suitable domestic setting for financing ODA programs. Combined with the proactive turn in foreign policy and new geographic priorities, TİKA became a key soft power instrument for the AKP government’s new foreign policy vision (Özkan and Demirtepe 2012, 648). Following more than a decade of modest ODA programs with little international visibility, TİKA entered a phase of reorganization in 2003. Due to a considerable budget increase and as a result of complying with the DAC guidelines for data collection and reporting, a sharp increase in ODA was recorded between 2003 and 2004, rising from US\$76 million to US\$339 million (Figure 12.1) (Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun 2010, 138). However, effective data collection remained

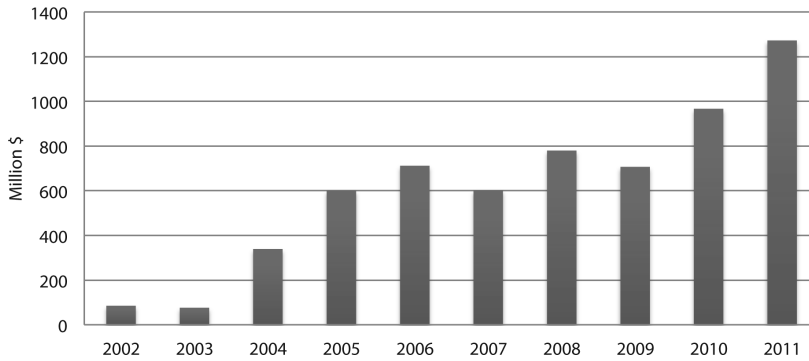


Figure 12.1 Turkish ODA, 2002–2011

Source: TİKA Development Assistance Report 2011

a persistent difficulty due to the lack of awareness on coordination, inadequate communication between different state institutions, incomplete data, and under-reporting (Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun, 2010, 138). In order to overcome these issues, TİKA was designated as the central institution to collect and report all ODA data in 2005, replacing the Turkish Statistical Institute [*trans.*] (TÜİK) (Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun, 2010, 138).

Following the centralization of aid coordination under TİKA, ODA figures went up dramatically, displaying a nearly ten-fold increase from US\$76 million in 2003 to US\$601 million in 2005 (Figure 12.1). In previous years, annual ODA figures were reported as less, as the aid provided by numerous other state institutions were not being reported to TÜİK (Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun, 2010, 138). As a result, the reported ODA figures for 2002 and 2003 remained as low as US\$85 million and US\$76 million, respectively.

In accordance with the new foreign policy vision of the AKP, geographical trends for Turkish ODA also portrayed a visible change. While the Central Asian countries continued to receive substantial amounts of ODA, the distribution of recipient regions underwent a noticeable diversification after 2003. In 2011, the Middle East claimed the second highest share of Turkish ODA at US\$292.64 million, next to South and Central Asia, which received US\$572.05 million, and followed closely by Africa, which received US\$269.68 million of Turkish ODA (Figure 12.2). Meanwhile, Pakistan was the top ODA recipient in 2011, receiving US\$204.95 million as part of an urgent aid scheme following the floods of 2010, and Syria came second, receiving US\$162.03 million following

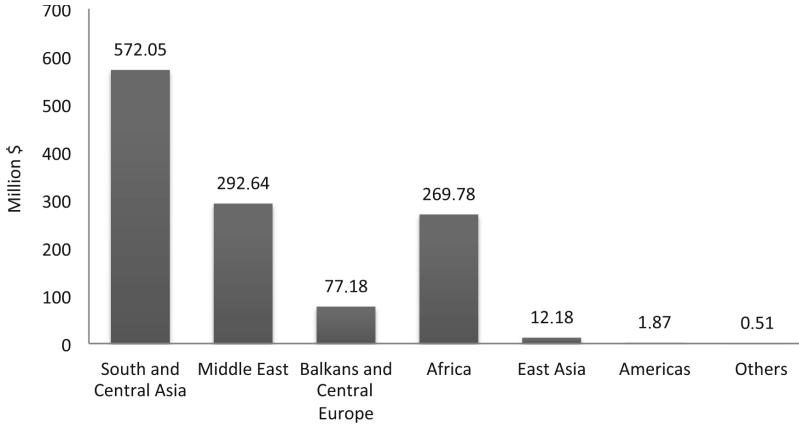


Figure 12.2 Top recipients of Turkish ODA by region in 2011

Source: TİKA Development Assistance Report 2011

the political uprising in 2010 (Figure 12.3). Among all regions, African countries constitute a significant figure, given that TİKA’s encounter with Africa prior to its restructuring was limited. The ODA figures of 2011 to Somalia and Sudan (although not as high as those to Pakistan, Syria, and Afghanistan) therefore suggest an interesting breakthrough in Turkey’s development assistance experience in Africa.

In addition to the improvements in data collection and reporting, the private sector and civil society have been crucial factors for

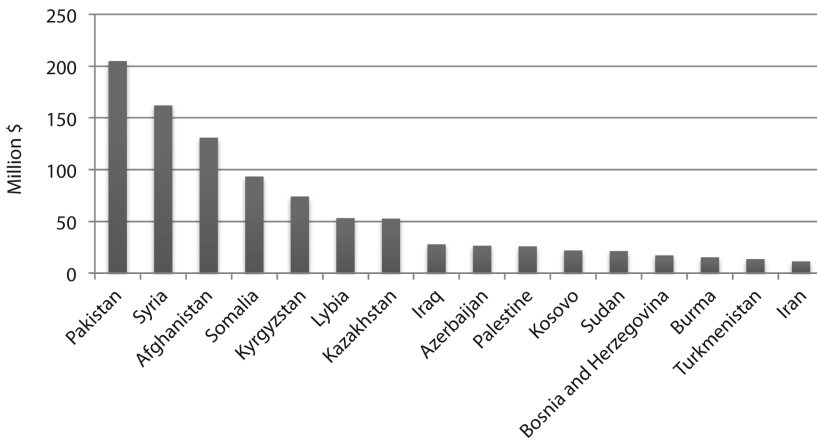


Figure 12.3 Top recipients of Turkish ODA by country in 2011

Source: TİKA Development Assistance Report 2011

the increase in ODA spending. Following the post-crisis economic restructuring, the private sector's recovery enabled Turkish firms to make direct investments in developing countries. Civil society and non-governmental organizations, on the other hand, also contributed to this change, as TİKA started collecting aid data from NGO providers in 2005. Growing cooperation between TİKA and NGOs resulted in an increase in the number of NGO-led projects financed by public funds (Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun, 2010, 138).

The shifting geography and evolving priorities of Turkey's development assistance have also signalled the role of ODA as an effective instrument to elevate Turkey's presence in regional affairs. Turkey has been an active contributor in peace-building and post-conflict reconstruction activities in neighbouring countries, including in the South Caucasus, the Balkans, and the Middle East (Murphy and Sazak 2012). Afghanistan, as a case in point, became a central focus of Turkey's reconstruction and peace-building efforts after the collapse of the Taliban regime in the country in 2001. According to figures reported by TİKA, Turkey's contributions to Afghanistan totalled nearly US\$20 million between 2006 and 2011 (TİKA 2006). Its contributions to Afghanistan continue on a multilateral basis, both in military (through NATO) and non-military (post-conflict reconstruction) terms.

In line with its proactive foreign policy vision, and its role as a rising international player, Turkey has relied on ODA to extend its global reach and to actively attend to issues of global concern. With its commitment to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Paris Declaration, and Monterrey Consensus, eradication of extreme poverty has recently been an area of focus for Turkey's development assistance agenda, along with a new and unprecedented focus on Africa. In 2011, ODA disbursements to the African continent totalled US\$269.78 million, with the majority being channelled to projects in Somalia and Sudan (Figures 12.2 and 12.3). This tendency complies with the main concerns of the MDGs as Turkey has also taken Africa as a focus region. The year 2005 was declared The Year of Africa in Turkey, as a concrete continuation of its Opening Up to Africa policy, which was initiated by a policy document from 1998 (Özkan and Akgün 2010, 532). Particular importance was attached to capacity development projects in Africa, with vocational training courses targeting specific sectors according to the needs and priorities of the partner countries (Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun 2010, 137). Furthermore, TİKA opened

offices in Ethiopia, Senegal, and Sudan to improve the coordination of its development projects across the continent.

Non-governmental Organizations as Aid Providers

Non-governmental organizations have played a key role in facilitating the recent development assistance activism in Turkey. The total aid provided by Turkish NGOs nearly quadrupled in six years, increasing from US\$56.7 million in 2005 to almost US\$200 million in 2011 (Figure 12.4). The total contributions of various Turkish NGOs (including the Turkish Red Crescent) are estimated by the Turkish Foreign Ministry to surpass those made by the government (MFA 2013). The comparative flexibility of NGOs in comparison with national donor agencies and their low profile in aid delivery have made them well-received actors in recipient countries (Fidan and Nurdun 2008, 98). It has been argued that Turkey's interest toward Africa was driven to a large extent by the agenda-setting efforts of Turkish humanitarian NGOs, as a result of their growing influence in policy processes (Kardaş 2013, 4). A concrete example for this influence was the appointment of Kani Torun, a former medical NGO official with Doctors Worldwide, as Turkey's first ambassador to Mogadishu.

Due to the increasing role of Turkish NGOs as providers of international development and humanitarian assistance, TİKA set up the Department of Coordination and Cooperation with NGOs in 2009 (TİKA 2010, 21). This was an important organizational arrangement to harmonize TİKA's official aid programs with those of various NGOs operating in the same sectors, and hence to avoid project overlaps and

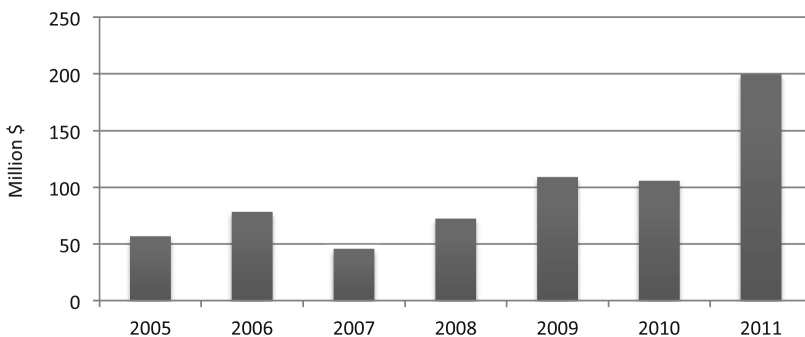


Figure 12.4 Aid by Turkish NGOs, 2008–2011

Source: TİKA Development Assistance Reports 2010, 2011

minimize transactional costs (Kragelund 2008, 557). The accommodation of non-governmental and private donors as partners was motivated by TİKA's aim to incorporate sector-wide approaches (SWAs) in its ODA management (Apaydin 2012, 8). SWAs have been identified as a departure from an orthodox aid modality focused solely on project-based aid toward a mixed modality, integrating project-based aid with a sector-wide approach (Kragelund 2008, 557). By definition, SWAs involve cooperation between governmental and non-governmental donors at a sectoral level (for example, health care, education) and within a common sectoral policy, where the government plays a key role in setting standards and priorities (Foster 2000). In sum, with the attention it has paid to align non-governmental aid donors with its own ODA activities through the adoption of new approaches, TİKA has taken an important step in diversifying its ODA modalities.

Health Care Aid

An important field of humanitarian and development assistance in which Turkish NGOs have been active is health development. As part of the extensive Turkish mobilization for Somalia in 2011, Doctors Worldwide Turkey launched a comprehensive medical project, which included the construction of Shifa Hospital in the Hodan district of Somalia. With a capacity of sixty-two beds, the hospital aims to provide health care to 300,000 patients annually (Reliefweb 2012). Humanitarian Aid Foundation [*trans.*] (IHH) also provides health care assistance. For example, accounting for 27 percent of the total Turkish NGO aid in 2011, it has provided Libya with 682 tons of food and medical supplies and a €2 million mobile hospital during the country's political crisis, and built 340 clean water supply systems for Somalia (TİKA 2011, 73).

Educational and Cultural Aid

Education and culture are also important areas of aid provision for Turkish NGOs. Türk Dünyası Araştırmaları Vakfı (Turkish World Research Foundation Humanitarian Aid Foundation [*trans.*], TWRF), a close partner of TİKA, has implemented educational projects in developing countries, such as opening and supporting numerous schools, faculties, and public programs across the Turkish-speaking developing world, including the Jalalabad Faculty of Social Sciences in Kyrgyzstan, the Baku Faculty of Management in Azerbaijan State

University of Economics, the Turkish Language and Literature Department in Kazakhstan's Kyzylorda State University, and Baku Atatürk High school in Azerbaijan (TİKA 2011, 74). Türk Diyanet Vakfı (Turkish Religious Foundation [*trans.*], TRF) has opened schools and provided scholarships for Turkish-speaking or Muslim students in Bulgaria, Romania, Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı 2013). TRF has also undertaken several restoration and renovation projects for public buildings, schools, historical sites, and mosques in these countries (TİKA 2011, 77).

TİKA's Partnerships with Non-Governmental Agencies

The majority of Turkish non-governmental aid providers with which TİKA has cooperated are Islamic charity organizations, including the Kimse Yok Mu (Anybody Out There?) Association, Deniz Feneri (Light House) Association, Doctors Worldwide Turkey, and Humanitarian Aid Foundation (IHH). Although most of these organizations, most notably IHH, state that their aid activities have a universal focus, their activities are shaped by Islamic discourse, and the majority of their regular aid recipients are Muslim communities around the world.¹ The religious inclination of these organizations has met with criticism: the Deniz Feneri Association has been involved in a major corruption scandal,² and IHH's active participation in the 2010 Gaza flotilla incident caused controversy.³

Certain aspects of TİKA's partnership with NGOs, however, have been subject to criticism. A major source of controversy has been the Africa Cataract Project of IHH. The project started in April 2007 with the aim of treating 100,000 cataract patients across Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan, Ghana, Benin, Togo, and Chad. Between 2007 and 2012, a total of 68,035 cataract surgeries and 270,194 eye examinations across all ten of the target countries were performed.⁴ However, both the project and IHH's presence showed an expansion in Sudan that was facilitated by the shared legacy of Sunni Islam between the two countries⁵—which drew criticism as a means to help Sudanese leader Omar Al-Bashir's efforts to gain external support and legitimacy for his regime's controversial practices.⁶

Role of the Private Sector and Non-ODA Financial Flows

Despite pertaining to a sphere outside of official development assistance (ODA) activities, the private sector in Turkey has played an important role in the provision of development assistance to a number of developing countries, particularly in the Middle East and Africa. It was constrained by the increasingly uneasy global economic climate and fuelled at the same time by the fundamental transformation of small- and medium-sized businesses at home. Indeed, some recent accounts of Turkish foreign policy activism have carefully drawn attention to the crucial role played by economic factors, both at the global and domestic levels, in helping to shape AKP's foreign policy vision, which prioritized international development assistance (Öniş 2011, 33–55; Ayata 2004).

The global financial crisis of 2007–08, in parallel with the Eurozone crisis, has had a consolidating effect on the new Turkish policy as well as on the promotion of international development assistance. While the economy of the EU as Turkey's main trade partner was troubled by the difficulties stemming from the crisis, the need to reach new markets became a primary driver of Turkey's foreign policy activism toward neighbouring countries (Öniş 2011, 56). This activism has proven to be an important tool in the ability of the AKP government to maintain domestic popularity during a difficult phase marked by the negative impact of the global financial crisis (Öniş 2011, 56). In other words, Turkey's new regional orientation and its revival of international development assistance as a central component of foreign policy is significantly owed to the interplay of global structural conditions.

At the domestic level, the Turkish business sector was as influential in the blooming of Turkish international development assistance. Starting as early as the 1990s, the rise of a new wave of industrialization in Turkey spurred the emergence of new centres of capital across different cities of Anatolia, marked by an increasing interest in non-European markets such as the Middle East and Africa (Tok 2008, 81–89). This wave (commonly referred to as the "Anatolian tigers") was aided by a firm coalition of civil initiatives such as the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), the Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association [*trans.*] (MÜSİAD), and the Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON), all of which have helped shape the direction of Turkish foreign policy in recent years. Rather than being confined

by a mere interaction with government agencies, these interest groups enjoy a visible ease of access to the government itself (Kirişci 2011, 46).

The influence of private sector actors in Turkish foreign policy has been highly visible through the recent business cooperation events involving the Middle East and Africa. One of the most prominent of these initiatives has been the Turkish-African Business Forum of August 2008 in Istanbul, organized jointly by the TOBB, the Turkish Foreign Economic Relations Board [*trans.*] (DEİK), and the Under-Secretariat for Foreign Trade. This forum was held in tandem with the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit, a meeting of high-level government representatives hosted personally by Turkish President Abdullah Gül. The summit provided bilateral meetings between African representatives and Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan as a way to facilitate relations and increase cooperation (Özkan and Akgün, 2010, 536). As Africa had previously not been perceived as a region where Turkey held visible geopolitical interests, this move was interpreted as a manifestation of the private sector shaping foreign policy (Kirişci 2011, 50). Indeed, Foreign Minister Davutoğlu acknowledged that private business actors had become a major driver of Turkish foreign policy (Kirişci 2011, 42).

The influence exerted by the private sector on the direction of Turkish foreign policy has been moreover visible in the foreign direct investment (FDI) and credit flows from Turkey to its development partners. For the first time in 2006, TİKA's annual report included data on private flows to partner countries as a new field of development assistance activities. As a result of consultations with government organizations such as the Central Bank of Turkey, direct investments made by Turkish businesses and entrepreneurs were recognized as part of the national development assistance program (Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun 2010, 140).

Recent FDI data reported by TİKA suggest a close relationship between the changes in Turkey's outward FDI and its foreign policy initiatives. Following a slight decrease between 2007 and 2010, Turkey's total outward FDI flows have made a quick return in 2011 (Figure 12.5). The geographical breakdown of outward FDI since the Turkey-Africa summit of 2008 particularly pointed to an increasing share of FDI flows to Africa (Figure 12.6), with total FDI to Africa more than doubling in two years, from US\$89.78 million in 2009 to US\$224.6 million in 2011.

In addition to ODA and FDI flows, TİKA also reports non-ODA flows to its partner countries. These are primarily constituted by the credits made available by the Turkish Export-Import (Eximbank)

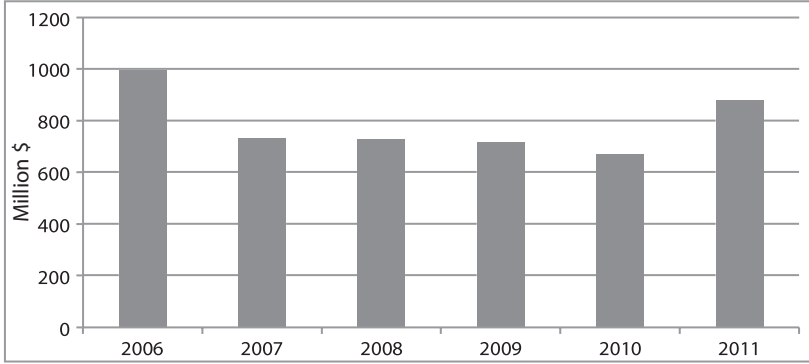


Figure 12.5 Turkey’s total outward FDI, 2006–2011

Source: TİKA Development Assistance Reports, 2006–2011

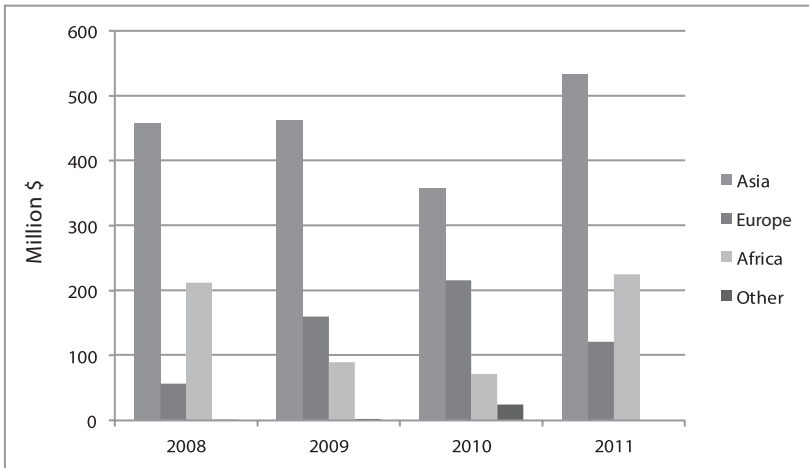


Figure 12.6 Turkey’s outward FDI by region, 2008–2011

Source: TİKA Development Assistance Reports, 2008–2011

within the Country Credits and Guarantees Program for Turkish firms investing abroad (Eximbank, n.d.). In the recent years, the Turkish Eximbank has continuously provided credit for projects being implemented in Sudan, where TİKA and partner NGOs—most notably IHH—have been actively carrying out development assistance projects. The Turkish Eximbank provided €21.13 million in credit to the Sudanese Ministry of Finance in 2011 to be used in the construction of a centralized sewer system in the Bahri region of Khartoum (TİKA 2012, 63). The project is expected to serve 134,000 people following its

completion. The Turkish Eximbank has also provided credit for the construction of the Al Halafaya bridge in the north of Khartoum. This project received €13.9 million in 2009 and US\$1.4 million in 2010 (TİKA 2011, 36). Overall, the credit flow data reported by TİKA provide further evidence that the geographical orientation of Turkish exports and investments abroad intersect with those regions prioritized by Turkey's recent foreign policy initiatives and development assistance targets.

Conclusion

Starting from the Cold War era and throughout most of the past century, Turkey has been a net recipient of development aid. Its recent economic revival and increasingly proactive foreign policy orientation have transformed the country into a new and rising player on the international development assistance scene. As an emerging donor, Turkey's experience holds great potential and promise for the future of South-South Cooperation (SSC). The increasing role of local and transnational civil society organizations and the active contribution of the private sector are useful tools in efforts to boost more effective and elaborate development assistance policies within the framework of SSC. As development assistance constitutes an essential component of SSC, a retrospective look at Turkey's evolution in ODA provision is important to pinpoint the policies and practices within this framework.

Although it is still a learning process, Turkey's recent performance in developing and implementing aid policies sets a useful example to other emerging donors. Given that it has aimed to reach an annual ODA/GNI ratio of 0.2 percent, it is clear that Turkey aspires to become a DAC member while continuing its quest to improve the application of DAC guidelines. What stands out in Turkey's progress as an emerging donor is its commitment to cooperate with civil society and business actors in the field, while also focusing on capacity-building measures at home. Indeed, Turkish foreign policy as a whole is "no longer the monopoly of politicians and diplomats," but gradually more driven by civil society and economic factors (Öniş 2008, 55). As more recipient countries begin to look beyond DAC donors for assistance, and as the framework of SSC gains further momentum within global dynamics, understanding the development assistance activism pursued by new aid donors such as Turkey will likely generate a growing need for further research in this field.

Notes

1. For a detailed analysis on whether DAC norms remain relevant, see Kim, Soyeun, and Simon Lightfoot, 2011, "Does 'DAC-Ability' really Matter? The Emergence of Non-DAC Donors: Introduction to Policy Arena." *Journal of International Development* 23, no. 5: 711–21.
2. Sahel countries: Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Chad, Sudan, and Eritrea.
3. For a detailed account of the 1995 general elections, see Carkoglu, Ali, 1997, "The Turkish General Election of 24 December 1995." *Electoral Studies* 16, no. 1: 86–95.
4. Davutoğlu was formerly a professor of international relations at International Islamic University Malaysia and Marmara University, and chief foreign policy advisor to Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.
5. "Direct investments [...] are evaluated within the development assistance context due to their potential to trigger economic development in the target country." Kulaklıkaya and Nurdun, 2008, 145, ff 6.
6. For a detailed account of Turkey's presence in Afghanistan, see Bayer, Reşat, and E. Fuat Keyman, 2012, "Turkey: An Emerging Hub of Globalization and Internationalist Humanitarian Actor?" *Globalizations* 9, no. 1.

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