



The European Commission's Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security



The Impact of Official Development Assistance (ODA) cuts on food security and nutrition - a Knowledge Review

2025



Highlights

- Major cuts to Official Development Assistance (ODA) are taking place in the United States of America (US), with the dismantling of the US Agency for International Development (USAID). This is expected to have major impacts on food security and nutrition worldwide.
- Decreases in ODA are also taking place in other OECD countries. Total ODA from OECD countries of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) declined by 7.1% in 2024, compared to 2023. It is projected to decline by around 28% by 2026, compared with 2023.
- Based on the latest available data, cancelled USAID awards represent at least 86% of its programmes. In monetary terms, based on fiscal year 2024 data, the cut is at least 38% of obligated funds.
- The US is the world's largest ODA donor; in 2024, it contributed to 25% of total ODA. Food security was the sector with the highest funding, with over \$4.6 bn.
- The areas most affected by USAID cuts in relative terms include education, private sector competitiveness, conflict mitigation and reconciliation, and infrastructures.
- The sector of agriculture has experienced the highest cut in absolute terms and an 81% reduction. The area of "protection, assistance and solutions", has the second largest cut in absolute terms but a lower relative share (13%).
- The nutrition sector will be cut by at least 39%. Other program areas related to HIV/AIDS and malaria will experience cuts estimated between 20 and 40%; maternal and child health by 92%.
- Sudan, Palestine, South Sudan, Haiti and Mali will face funding cuts from the US ranging from 8% to 66% of their total funding for 2024. These countries are of highest concern for acute food insecurity, the main sector targeted by US support.
- Cuts threaten to reverse progress in data collection on health and food security by dismantling critical data infrastructure, compromising data quality, and impairing the ability to respond to crises.
- The shortfall of the US cannot be offset by other ODA donors, which shift their priorities from development aid towards strategic national interests, notably migration control and defence.
- The main recommendations from key players to address the current challenges include reducing the fragmentation of the ODA landscape; finding innovative, low cost and technology-based sources of data; enhancing ownership and leadership in development assistance by national states; and joining forces with private donors.

1 Background and objective of the review

This knowledge review provides an overview of initial analyses on the impact on food security and nutrition due to the sudden cuts in Official Development Assistance (ODA) in the USA and to reductions by other OECD countries. The review identifies the sectors most affected by expected cuts; it then examines the potential disruptions to the collection of critical data used to inform emergency responses and assess emergency situations in vulnerable countries. It explores the possible role of key global players in the wake of the US's sudden withdrawal. Finally, the review brings together recommendations from key stakeholders, offering a comprehensive perspective on the topic. The aim is to provide timely insights and inform discussions among policymakers, practitioners, and stakeholders working to address the challenges posed by reduced development assistance. The knowledge review is based exclusively on publicly available information, published before 14/05/2025.

2 US ODA under review: a Timeline of Events

On January 20, 2025, the US President issued an executive order titled “Reevaluating and Realigning United States Foreign Aid”, determining **a 90-day pause on US foreign development assistance**. The reason stated was that US foreign aid was “not aligned with American interests and in many cases antithetical to American values” ([source](#)).

As a result, the website of the US Agency for International Development (USAID) went offline on February 1st. In the forthcoming days, most USAID personnel were placed on administrative leave, triggering protests in the US ([source](#); [source](#)) and legal actions by aid organisations ([source](#)). Following court battles, district courts ordered to unfreeze the payments ([source](#)) but the US President appealed to the Supreme Court. On March 5, the latter upheld the orders by lower courts ([source](#)), ordering the US administration to settle outstanding payments of around \$2 billion.

The US administration announced on March 10 that 83% of the programmes at USAID had been cancelled after a six-week review. On March 26, the US Administration shared with the US Congress a list of cancelled and retained programmes, amounting to **5,314 (86% of the total) and 898 respectively**. On March 28, the State Department notified Congress to dissolve USAID and moving some of its functions under the Department. The reorganisation is announced for July 1st ([source](#)).

A new wave of cuts was announced on April 4, hitting particularly emergency food assistance and the World Food Program (WFP). On April 9, some of the announced cuts to the WFP were reversed. As of the time of closing this brief, the exact amount of the April's cuts is still unclear. The 90-day freeze period ended on April 20th with no official statement or updated figure by the US government. Media report an internal email from the Department of State saying that the review has been extended by 30 days ([source](#); [source](#)).

On May 2, the White House released a **preliminary request** for the fiscal year 2026 budget ([source](#)). The proposal includes significant **reductions** for the USAID and Department of State budget: Economic, Democracy, & Development Assistance: -\$8.33 bn; Global Health Programmes & Family Planning: -\$6.2 bn; International Disaster, Migration, Refugee Assistance: -\$3.21 bn; State and USAID Operations: -\$2.46 bn. Contributions to International Organizations: -\$1.7 bn (this includes the WHO and UN agencies); Food for Peace: -\$1.62 bn. The budget request proposes to **increase** by \$2.9 bn the America First Opportunity (A1OF) Fund, to support “enduring and critical partners such as India and Jordan” and to fund the US Development Finance Corporation (DFC) with additional \$2.8 bn, to support US interests “through billions in loans and guarantees that would generate returns to the taxpayer”. The DFC mission is to “partner with the private sector to advance U.S. foreign policy and strengthen national security by mobilizing private capital around the world” ([source](#)).

3 Cuts to ODA in the US

3.1 THE US PLAYS A CRITICAL ROLE IN ODA

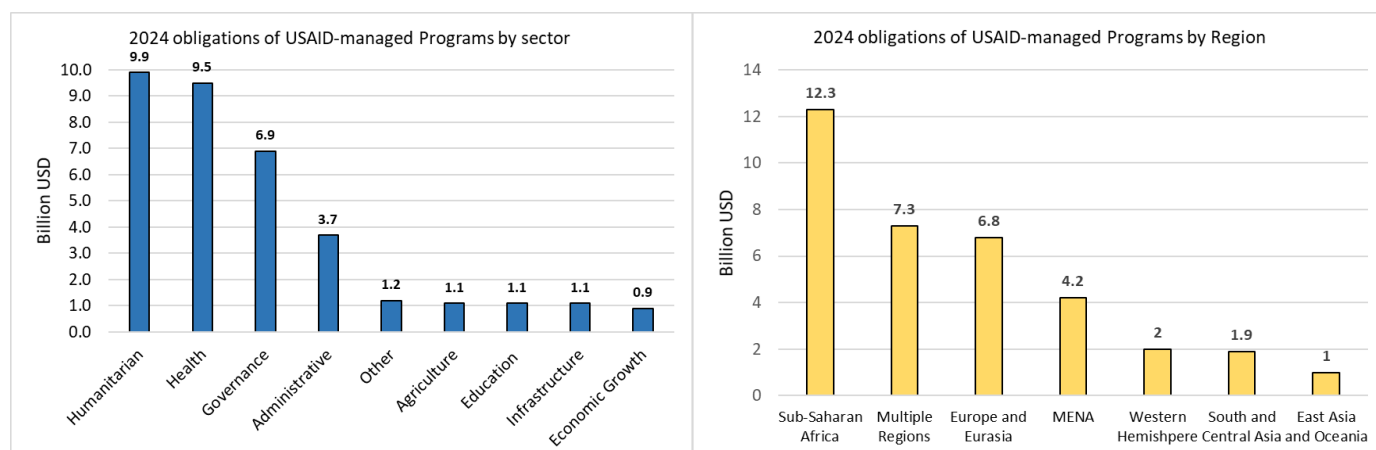
Based on preliminary 2024 data by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC), total ODA in 2024 from DAC countries reached \$212.1. **The US continues to be the largest donor country with \$63.3 bn,**

i.e. 30% of the total. Germany is second with \$32.4 bn, (15.2%), followed by the United Kingdom (\$18.0 bn, 8.5%), Japan (\$16.8 bn, 7.9%), and France (\$15.4 bn, 7.2%). ODA from the US decreased by 4.4% in 2024 compared to 2023 due to a decrease in bilateral grants in particular for humanitarian aid and aid for Ukraine ([source](#)). Considering the contributions from EU institutions (\$27.7 bn), OECD non-DAC members, DAC-participants countries and other non-OECD Members, the total ODA figure for 2024 is \$252 bn. Team Europe (EU institutions and EU Member States) contributes with \$117,3 bn to this amount (46.6%); **US contribution was 25%.**

3.2 WHERE DO USAID FUNDS GO BY SECTOR AND GEOGRAPHICALLY?

In 2024, prior to the cuts, USAID managed around \$35 bn. As some accounts have been co-managed with the Department of State, the calculation of USAID's exact budget are imprecise ([source](#)). Considering 2024 obligations, humanitarian assistance got the highest share of funding (\$9.9 bn), followed by health (\$9.5 bn) and governance (\$6.9 bn) (Figure 1, left panel) ([source](#)). Agriculture, Education, Infrastructures and Economic Growth all accounted for around \$1 bn. Geographically, Sub-Saharan Africa is the first recipient with \$12.3 bn, followed by funds to multiple regions (\$7.3 bn) and Europe & Eurasia (\$6.8 bn), the latter including Ukraine (Figure 1, right panel) ([source](#)). Health aid to Sub-Saharan Africa amounted to \$42.3 m in 2024.

Figure 1 Financial year 2024 obligations of USAID-managed programmes funding by sector (left panel) and region (right panel).



Source: own graphical elaboration from ForeignAssistance.gov, assessed on February 26, 2025 and CRS calculations.

3.3 ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF USAID CUTS

Estimating the financial amount of cuts is highly uncertain due to the constant back-and-forth from the US administration, as well as incompleteness of the data available so far. The data shared with the Congress on March 26th are currently the main source of information, but they report figure on terminated obligations – funding that have been committed, but not necessarily paid – and not actual disbursements. It is thus not possible to know which share of cancelled obligated funds had already been paid ([source](#)). In addition, inconsistencies and potential errors in the list submitted to the Congress have been reported ([source](#)) and those data did not include yet the round of waves of April 4-6th. Therefore, any estimate at this time shall be taken with caution.

Subject to the above considerations, the following estimates can be provided, based on the March 26th list of terminated and retained programmes:

- The value of terminated awards is \$75.9 bn ([source](#)). This is the highest theoretical amount that USAID could have disbursed for the terminated programmes across their lifetime. Part of this money has already been disbursed, and part would have never been obligated, so this cannot be considered an estimation of actual “cuts” but provides the order of magnitude of the values at stakes.
- The cut of **obligated amounts** i.e. assigned or committed, but not necessarily paid out, of all terminated programmes across their lifetime is **\$48.2 bn** ([source](#)). This is a better approximation of actual

“cuts” than the above one, as it refers to committed funds; however it has to be considered an overestimation because part of this amount (unknown) has already been disbursed.

- A less uncertain estimation is possible focussing on obligated funds in fiscal year 2024: in this case, the cut amounts to **\$13.2 bn on a total obligated figure of \$34.6 bn, i.e. 38%** ([source](#)).

The **new wave of cuts announced on April 4th, hit particularly emergency food assistance**. Cuts to the World Food Program alone reportedly amounted to \$ 808.4 m across 14 countries including Syrian, Afghanistan, Yemen, Gaza, Haiti ([source](#)). In an official statement on social media, the WFP wrote that “If implemented, this could amount to a death sentence for millions of people facing extreme hunger and starvation” ([source](#)). On April 9th, some of the announced cuts to WFP were reversed, i.e. in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Ecuador and Somalia, but **the termination of programmes in Afghanistan and Yemen was confirmed** ([source](#)). According to a declaration by the State Department spokesperson, 85% of USAID programmes with the WFP remain active ([source](#)), but at the time of closing this brief, the exact financial amount of the April’s cuts is unclear.

The 2026 fiscal year budget proposal (see section 2) presents overall a \$31 bn decrease for international programmes, which is estimated to be 47% less than in 2025 ([source](#)). The proposal also aims to cancel \$20 bn in international program previously authorised by Congress. If approved, the total foreign affairs budget would be reduced to just \$9.6 billion in new spending, representing an overall cut of 84% compared to 2025. ([source](#); [source](#)).

4 Impact of cuts on food security and nutrition

4.1 Impacts on multilateral organisations

The US administration is conducting a 180-day review of its involvement in all multilateral institutions, DEVEX reports that the main cuts in absolute terms, concerned the following organisations: GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance (\$2.63 bn), global education via the World Bank (\$1.3 bn), the World Health Organisation polio and immunization work (\$1 bn) and more than 80 United Nations programmes, including those at UNAIDS, UN Refugee Agency, and the Food and Agriculture Organization. Preserved funds include \$1.3 bn for HIV epidemic control to the international organisation FHI 360, \$7.6 bn for Chemonics’ HIV supply chain project and \$13.4 bn for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria from 2017 until 2027, which had already been obligated ([source](#)).

Related to **food and agriculture programmes and multilateral organisations**, the US was the largest contributors to FAO, supporting 14% of agency’s total budget. FAO’s Director-General reported on April 7th that 106 projects were terminated due to recent decisions of the US government, with a total value of \$348 m ([source](#)). This includes \$250 m under the Global Health security Program, focused on monitoring and rapid response to transboundary animal diseases. Terminated programmes include surveillance of avian flu in Central America, monitoring of avian flu outbreaks in key Asian hotspots (Cambodia and Vietnam), and support to veterinary laboratories to quick diagnose avian influenza in Western and Central Africa ([source](#)). FAO recently announced that it would eliminate 600 staff positions due to funding cuts ([source](#)).

The **World Food Program (WFP)** funding outlook in 2025 shows a reduction of 34%, decreasing from \$9.8 bn last year to \$6.4 bn this year ([source](#)). The agency will slash 25% to 30% of its workforce, or up to 6 000 jobs, by next year ([source](#)). Large donors reviewing their contribution to WFP are the reason for this expected drop in funding forecasts. With a total of \$4.4 bn the US was in 2024 the biggest donor of the WFP ([source](#)). However, other countries are also decreasing their budget for multilateral development cooperation. In Germany the contribution to WFP is expected to drop from €58 m to €28 m (-51.7%) ([source](#)). According to WFP’s estimates, the agency might reach 21% less people with emergency assistance in 2025 compared to the 80 million assisted in 2024: up to 16.7 million people risk losing their food assistance. 11 countries could drop over 500 000 people from assistance, with Yemen seeing the biggest impact. The extent of the cut will also impact population in IPC 4 ‘Emergency or worse’ level of food insecurity: up to 3 million people could be removed from assistance. Cuts in assistance increase the severity of food insecurity ([source](#)).

Similar effects will be on UNICEF who has lost 36 awards amounting to \$65.8 m of funds left unobligated ([source](#)). In its budget request for fiscal year 2026 to the congress, the US administration proposes to eliminate, inter alia, contributions to IFAD and the Global Agriculture and Food Security Program ([source](#)).

The new US “America First” policy will also affect **international initiatives**. The US signals no further support for the Sustainable Development Goals. At the Nutrition for Growth Summit in 2025, the US did not pledge (compared to their engagement at the summit in Tokyo 4 years earlier where they committed to \$11 bn) which will heavily affect the fight of malnutrition. No signals are received for other upcoming international initiatives in 2025, such as the World Health Assembly (May 2025), the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (June 2025), the UN Food Systems Summit Stocktake +4 (June 2025), the UN Ocean Conference (June 2025), the International Conference on Financing for Development (July 2025) and the COP 30 (November 2025). The budget request to the congress proposes to **eliminate contribution to the Global Environmental Facility and Climate Investment Funds** ([source](#)).

4.2 Impact on the sector agriculture, food security and nutrition

The analysis by the Centre for Global Development shows that in absolute terms, the sector hit the most is agriculture (\$117 bn), followed by *Protection, Assistance and Solutions*, which includes humanitarian relief and refugee assistance (\$1.11 bn), HIV/AIDS (\$1.09 bn), macroeconomic foundations for growth (\$0.965 bn), good governance (\$0.963 bn) and Maternal/Child Health (\$0.877 bn) (Table 1) ([source](#)).

As a relative share, the main affected sectors with 100% cuts include Basic and Higher education, Infrastructures (%), private sector competitiveness, conflict mitigation and reconciliation, civil society. Maternal and child health was reduced by 91.7%, the Agricultural sector by 81%. Funds to nutrition were reduced by 39%, while, comparatively, Protection, Assistance and Solutions was affected to a lowed extend (-12.7%) (Table 1).

Table 1 Proposed USAID cuts by sector (Million \$) Based on documents shared with Congress on March 26, 2025

Sector	Total	Preserved	Cut	% cut
Protection, Assistance and Solutions	8 756.94	7 644.60	1 112.34	12.7%
Macroeconomic foundation for growth	8 301.17	7 336.49	964.68	11.6%
HIV/AIDS	5 432.93	4 342.14	1 090.79	20.1%
Agriculture	1 440.73	268.12	1 172.60	81.4%
Good governance	992.42	29.24	963.18	97.1%
Maternal and Child Health	956.21	79.15	877.06	91.7%
Pandemic Influenza and Other Emerging Threats	899.61	146.85	752.76	83.7%
Infrastructure	793.03	0.00	793.03	100.0%
Basic and higher education	904.40	0.00	904.40	100.0%
Private Sector Competitiveness	728.89	0.00	728.89	100.0%
Malaria	715.47	458.43	257.04	35.9%
Disaster Readiness	614.48	350.44	264.04	43.0%
Family Planning and Reproductive Health	471.29	28.42	442.87	94.0%
Conflict Mitigation and Reconciliation	368.06	0.00	368.06	100.0%
Nutrition	338.58	205.67	132.91	39.3%

Source: own graphical elaboration based on [Centre for Global Development](#)

USAID’s food security and nutrition programmes, which include emergency food assistance, agricultural development initiatives, and efforts to build resilience in food systems, are also at risk, especially after the latest round of cuts in early April. Funding cuts could undermine USAID’s Feed the Future initiative, which has supported smallholder farmers, improved agricultural productivity, and reduced poverty in several countries.

The US has been a key player in global health, funding programmes to prevent mortality and support lifesaving health services among women and children in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) through USAID. In all, the US spent more than \$10 bn on health aid around the world in 2024. A recent study estimated that US health investments in 16 LMICs from 2005 to 2019 resulted in a significant reduction in mortality rates among women of reproductive age, with 1.0-1.3 million deaths averted between 2009 and 2019 ([source](#)).

However, the sudden US budget cuts threaten to undermine these gains, particularly in the area of nutrition. In 2022, total donor aid for nutrition programmes aimed at achieving World Health Assembly goals reached \$1.6 bn, with \$591 m specifically allocated for the treatment of acute malnutrition ([source](#)). Recent estimates suggest that USAID budget cuts alone could have devastating consequences, potentially cutting off treatment for up to one million children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) and resulting in an additional 163,500 child deaths per year. Furthermore, when combined with significant reductions in other donors' aid budgets, the numbers could more than double, leaving 2.3 million children with untreated SAM and causing an estimated 369,000 additional child deaths per year in the near future ([source](#)).

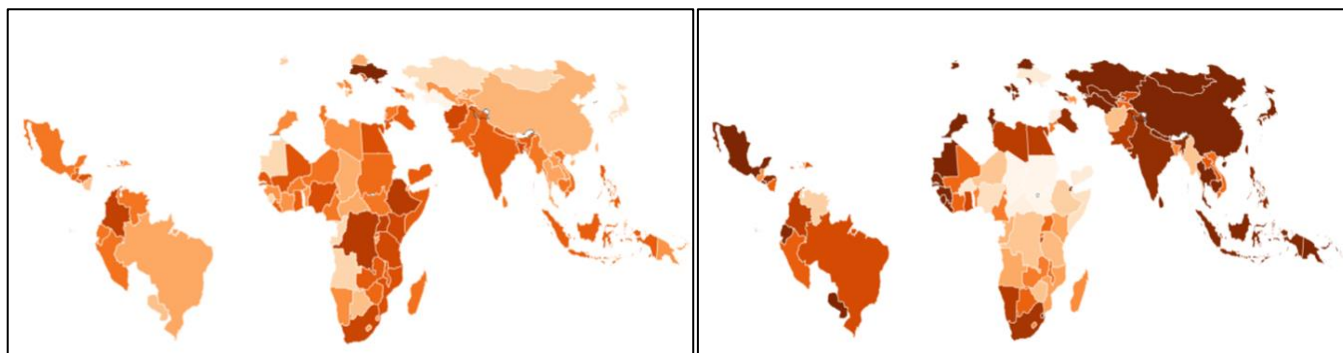
4.3 Impacts by country

The analysis by the Centre for Global Development ([source](#)), based on the March 26 list, shows that considering the **absolute amount** of cuts, the most affected country is by far Ukraine (**\$1.4 bn**). US support to Ukraine channelled through USAID includes humanitarian aid, development assistance, economic assistance, transition assistance, and other assistance to include direct budget support, including to local authorities ([source](#)). The Ukraine agricultural sector was a major beneficiary of USAID, which has been supporting farmers with seeds, fertilisers, financing, legal services and consultancies ([source](#)).

The second most affected country is Ethiopia (\$386.9 mn), followed by the Democratic Republic of Congo (\$386.7 mn) Colombia (\$309.3 mn), Uganda (\$306.8 mn), South Africa (\$260.6 mn), Palestine (\$240 mn) Bangladesh (\$229.2 mn), Kenya (\$224.7 mn), Afghanistan (\$223.1 mn) and Tanzania (\$215.7 mn) (Figure 2, left panel).

Looking at cuts **as a % of recipient Gross National Income (GNI)**, the highest figures are in Liberia (2.59%), Afghanistan (1.29%), Somalia (1.03%), Malawi (0.94%), Mozambique (0.9%), Ukraine (0.78%), and Mali (0.76%). To put these figures in context, the average share of total ODA on GNI in 2019 was 3.07% in Eastern and Southern African countries and 2.29% in Central and Western Africa. Figures can be significantly higher in individual countries though: in 2022 it was 12.9% in Liberia, 26.8% in Afghanistan, 19% in Somalia, 11.2% in Malawi, 14.7% in Mozambique, 16.9% in Ukraine and 6.66% in Mali.

Figure 2 Proposed USAID cuts by country based on documents shared with Congress on March 27, 2025. Left panel: absolute value; right panel: as % of USAID programmes.



Source: [Centre for Global Development](#)

Still, USAID cuts account for a significant share of the ODA/GNI ratio in these countries, ranging from 4.6% in Ukraine to 20.6% in Liberia ([source](#)). Cuts as **% of the existing USAID programmes**, shows that several countries will experience more than 95% reduction, including in Africa: Mauritania, Senegal, Morocco, Tunisia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia; in Asia: China, Nepal, Mongolia, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Papua Nuova Guinea; and Mexico, El Salvador, Ecuador and Paraguay in Central and South America (Figure 2, right panel).

Notably, countries such as South Sudan, Somalia, and Democratic Republic of Congo, which have a significant percentage of their GNI accounted for by aid, are also among the most heavily exposed to US global health aid cuts, making them particularly vulnerable to the consequences of the funding shortfall. In fact, these countries, along with others like Malawi, Mozambique, and Tanzania, are likely to experience significant disruptions to their health and social sectors and may struggle to respond to the loss of aid.

4.4 Impact on Hunger HotSpots of highest concern level

Sudan, Palestine, South Sudan, Haiti and Mali are reported by FAO and WFP in their last edition of the Hunger Hotspots **at highest concern level for acute food insecurity during the outlook period from November 2024 to May 2025**. Available analyses ([source](#); [source](#)) show that they will face funding cuts from the US ranging from 26% to 50 % of their total program funding for the fiscal year 2024 (Table 2).

Table 2 Countries of highest concern level in the last Hunger Hotspots Report and impact of US programme cuts in 2024 (in million USD and in percentage)

Countries of highest concern level	Financial cut by US (million USD)	US Share in total programmes (in percent)
Sudan	74.1	8%
Palestine	240	29%
South Sudan	54.4	8%
Haiti	164	50%
Mali	149	66%

Sources: [Centre for Global development](#); [World Food Program](#)

In all these 5 countries, the US was a major contributor of humanitarian funding, ranging from 28% of total humanitarian funding received in Palestine, to 59% in Haiti.

These cuts are likely to affect significantly humanitarian funding targeted towards food security and nutrition, as illustrated in Table 3.

In Sudan, where at least 10 areas are projected to be in Famine between December 2024 and May 2025, a lack of clarity about stop-work orders and financial implications has paralysed organisations. As a result, many have cut programmes or staff, with ACAPS reporting that 60% of community kitchens have stopped operating, including in areas with the highest food insecurity ([source](#)).

In Haiti, nearly half the population faces acute food insecurity, with 2 million in Emergency phase. The halt of US aid, which provides around 30% of food assistance, will have a severe impact, affecting food security and livelihood support, particularly during key sowing periods ([source](#)).

Table 3: Countries of highest concern level in the last Hunger Hotspots Report and impact of US programme cuts in 2024 on food security and nutrition humanitarian funding (in million USD and in percentage).

Hotspots with highest concern	Share of total humanitarian funding received from the US in 2024	Humanitarian funding contributed by the US in 2024 (million USD)	Sectorial humanitarian funding contributed by the US in 2024 -Food Security (million USD)	Sectorial humanitarian funding contributed by the US in 2024 -Nutrition (million USD)
Sudan	43%	828.5	440.3	64.3
Palestine	28%	806.8	356.9	13.2
South Sudan	53%	705.6	334.9	120.7
Haiti	59%	207.9	107.8	10.9
Mali	46%	141.5	59.6	21.3

Sources: [Centre for Global development](#); [World Food Program](#)

4.5 Impact on data for assessment

USAID's and other countries' cuts threaten to reverse progress in data collection on health and food security. Expected cuts are dismantling critical data infrastructure, including surveillance systems, affecting surveys and programmes like Demographic and Health Surveys. This will compromise data quality, limit coverage, and impair the ability to track progress and respond to crises, undermining early warning systems and emergency responses.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports that **data about 'people and how a crisis is affecting them' have the highest risk to continued availability in 2025**. This includes **data feeding the IPC/Cadre Harmonisé acute food insecurity and acute malnutrition analyses**, with no existing comparable data available. UNOCHA warns that data accuracy in humanitarian contexts may decline over time, compromising life-saving efforts ([source](#)). Table 4 reports UNOCHA's assessment of risk to data availability.

Table 4 Risk to data availability.

Risk to data availability in the Data Grids								
HDX organization	Data Grid sub category	Available as 2024	Update frequency	Information focus	Resources to produce	Funding exposure	Comp . data	Level of risk
IOM	Returnees	50%	Quarterly	Crisis Impact	High	High	NO	High
IOM	IDPs	59%	Quarterly	Crisis Impact	High	High	NO	High
OCHA	Humanitarian Needs	59%	Annually	Crisis Impact	High	High	NO	High
IPC/FSNWG WA	Food Security	53%	Biannually	Crisis Impact	High	High	NO	High
IPC	Acute Malnutrition	62%	Annually	Crisis Impact	High	High	NO	High
OCHA	Climate Impact	64%	Annually	Crisis Impact	Medium	High	YES	Medium
OCHA	Funding	100%	Daily	Response	Medium	High	NO	Medium
OCHA	Humanitarian Access	45%	Quarterly	Response	Medium	High	NO	Medium
OCHA	Operational Presence	68%	Quarterly	Response	Medium	High	NO	Medium
UNHCR	Refugees	100%	Biannually	Crisis Impact	Medium	High	YES	Medium
WFP	Food Prices	50%	Monthly	Context	High	High	YES	Medium
ACLED	Conflict Events	100%	Weekly	Context	Medium	Low	NO	Low
AER	Climate Hazard	95%	Daily	Context	Low	Low	YES	Low
EC JRC	Climate Hazard	95%	Monthly	Context	Low	Low	YES	Low
HOT	Education Facilities	100%	Monthly	Context	Medium	Low	YES	Low
HOT	Health Facilities	100%	Monthly	Context	Medium	Low	YES	Low
HOT	Populated Places	100%	Monthly	Context	Medium	Low	YES	Low
HOT	Roads	100%	Monthly	Context	Medium	Low	YES	Low
OCHA	Admin Boundaries	73%	Annually	Context	Medium	Medium	YES	Low
OPHI	Poverty Rates	18%	Annually	Context	Medium	Low	YES	Low

UNFPA	Baseline Population	86%	Annually	Context	Medium	High	YES	Low
WFP	Climate Hazard	95%	Fortnightly	Context	Low	High	YES	Low
WORLDPOP	Populated Places	100%	Annually	Context	Medium	Low	YES	Low

Source: [United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(UNOCHA\)](#)

The IPC stresses that many of the partner organisations collecting data for analyses are currently facing severe funding cuts, putting the IPC's functioning at risk. This is particularly the case of FEWS NET, Action Against Hunger, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation, and Oxfam, as they conduct surveys that form the foundation of the IPC's food security assessments. The IPC will continue its analysis, but with reduced inputs. IPC reports that in their current form, they don't have capacity to quickly fill the gap left by FEWS NET, in particular in terms of reporting frequency. IPC typically publishes about two reports per geography per year, far fewer than FEWS NET's minimum of quarterly updates. Even if FEWS NET restarts, it is unlikely that it will quickly return to its previous levels of capacity, and the likelihood that the world could overlook a major hunger crisis will rise. Experts are particularly concerned about what that could mean in Sudan ([source](#)).

5 Cuts to ODA in main OECD donors

Recent OECD data show that total ODA from OECD DAC countries in 2024 was 7.1% less than in 2023. ODA from the 22 DAC countries that are EU members decreased by 8.6% on aggregate. Conversely, the amount of total ODA by EU Institutions remained constant compared to 2023 ([source](#)). It does not seem that the shortfall of the US can be offset by other countries, as ODA is declining worldwide: according to an analysis that used OECD data and projections based on announced cuts to ODA by the main 17 DAC countries (accounting for 95% of total ODA from DAC), to decline from \$213.1 in 2023 to \$152.7 bn in 2026, meaning -28.3% ([source](#)).

ODA donors are shifting priorities to national interests, notably migration control. The EU's increasing emphasis on defence may divert funds from development aid ([source](#)), with more aid going to Ukraine, a middle-income country which in 2023 became the largest-ever recipient of foreign aid. Poorer countries will likely receive less, with a significant portion of aid budgets being spent on hosting refugees domestically ([source](#)).

Germany is the World's second largest donor and the first one in the EU, with total ODA in 2023 amounting to \$37.9 bn; however, in 2024, **ODA dropped by 17.2%** ([source](#)). Robust estimates for 2025 are not available yet since the final budget will be passed on later this year due to the recent formation of the new government's coalition. However, additional significant cuts are expected: the prior draft budget proposed a EUR 836 mn cut to the Federal Foreign office including a 53% reduction in humanitarian assistance and a cut of EUR 937 mn to the Development Ministry (BMZ) ([source](#)).

In France, total ODA in 2024 was unchanged compared to 2023, when, however it had already declined by 27% compared to 2022. The new financial bill for 2025 provides a €3.6 bn reduction (37%) in the state ODA budget cline (representing about a third of total France's ODA) ([source](#)). Cuts will significantly affect Humanitarian aid (-44% and of the programmes of the *Agence Française de Développement* (AFD) supporting international civil society organisations (-42% in total) ([source](#)).

United Kingdom reduced ODA by 10.8% in 2024 compared to 2023 bringing it to 0.5% of GNI (it was 0.7% in 2021). The UK government announced it will further reduce it by 40%, i.e. 0.3% of GNI by 2027, to rise defence spending. The Prime Minister said that savings will be made from reduced spending on refugees in the UK and some efficiencies, but acknowledged the move "remains a cut". He cited Sudan, Ukraine, Gaza, climate finance and global health as areas the UK would continue to support. The UK Minister of State for International Development and for Women and Equalities, resigned on 28 February, saying that it will "be impossible to maintain these priorities given the depth of the cut" ([source](#)).

Japan also reduced ODA in 2024 by 10.3% compared to 2023, to \$16.8 bn, (0.39% of GNI), due primarily to lower multilateral and bilateral aid. In the same period, Canada decreased ODA by 8.1%, to \$7.3 bn. This was mainly due to exceptional payments in 2023 as well as a decrease in its humanitarian assistance ([source](#)).

6 Possible Role of other global players

6.1 NATIONAL STATES

The sudden US pullback from global humanitarian aid has raised questions about whether other global players will step in to fill the void, and potentially reshape the global aid landscape.

Many commentators have pointed to **China** as a potential candidate to fill the void left by the US, highlighting how the Chinese government had sharply criticised US foreign aid policy in the past. ([source](#)). Examples of China already “stepping in” to replace USAID’s support are reported e.g. for Nepal, Cambodia ([source](#)) and the Cook Islands ([source](#)).

Over the last decade, China has intensified its strategic relationship with Africa. During the latest Forum on China–Africa Cooperation held on 4–6 September in Beijing, China pledged \$51bn over three years in loans and traditional aid, an increase compared to 2021 (\$40 bn) but it is still lower than the \$60 bn pre-pandemic commitments of 2015 and 2018. However, the key difference with US is that the large majority (85%) of its financial flows is in various forms of debt at market conditions (mostly loans), while for the US, this share is much lower.

Over the past two decades, the **Gulf States**— among them Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Kuwait, and Qatar— have emerged as humanitarian actors both regionally and globally ([source](#)). Saudi Arabia increased its ODA from \$0.99 bn in 2015 to a peak of 7.4 in 2021. The figure decreased to \$5.5 bn in 2023 (last available data source). The ODA from UAE was \$1.6 bn in 2024, 20.6% lower than in 2023. Kuwait’s ODA was at \$1 bn ([source](#)). Vulnerable countries such as Jordan, Lebanon and Syria are likely to seek more support from Gulf States. During the period 2011–22, Gulf States provided at least \$94 bn to Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, Sudan, Turkey and Yemen. But, it is also said, that they historically have been known to bail out Arab countries in times of crisis ([source](#); [source](#)).

Over the past 2 decades **Turkey** has emerged too as a world player in the development assistance landscape. From 2004–2019, Turkish ODA increased almost 18-fold ([source](#)). As of 2024, total ODA amounted to \$7.4 bn or 0.56% of its GNI. This is 5.4% lower compared to 2023 and significantly lower than the peak reached in 2020 (around \$10 bn) ([source](#)). Additionally, it must be recalled that Turkish ODA is almost exclusively bilateral ([source](#)) and largely non-transparent according to the Aid Transparency Index ([source](#)).

In conclusion neither China, the Gulf States nor Turkey can alone or together fill the void in ODA’s funds left by the US to a large extent.

6.2 INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

The World Bank and the African Development Bank have registered financial commitments at the latest Nutrition for Growth Summit (Paris, March 27–28 2025) amounting to \$14.5 bn for 2025–2030. In particular the World Bank Group expects to spend at least \$5 bn in nutrition related activities in the next 5 years, led by country demand and availability of financing. The African Development Bank commits to increasing nutrition-smart investments by at least 20% annually, aiming for a cumulative total of \$9.5 bn by 2030. The investment will prioritise interventions targeting women and children, to reduce malnutrition stunting, anaemia, wasting and low birthweight. At the recent annual meeting of the Asian Development Bank, the bank announced it would expand its food systems investments to \$26 billion by 2030. It’s a significant acceleration of the bank’s funding in the area. The bank also announced several new initiatives, including the \$150 million Natural Capital Fund, a blended finance mechanism targeting agrifood system investments ([source](#)).

While this is a sign that the financial institutions are increasing their efforts for food and nutrition security, the financial institutions might themselves be under financial pressure. E.g. the U.S. are the **World Bank**’s largest shareholder with more than 17%, meaning that it holds considerable sway at the institution. Some experts worry that the US could diminish or rescind its membership in the bank ([source](#)). The future of the **International Development Association (IDA)** — the World Bank’s concessional fund for the poorest countries — is another open question. Replenishment discussions for IDA took place last December, just over a month before US President Donald Trump took office on January 20. At the time, the US pledged \$4 bn to the fund, but the

contributions of the US are still under review ([source](#)). In the budget request to the Congress, \$3.2 bn are being proposed ([source](#)). The African Development Fund (ADF), the arm of the African Development Bank that supports the region's 37 poorest countries, faces problems to meet the financial goals of its replenishment negotiations as key donors are expected to reduce their pledges, potentially by significant amounts ([source](#)).

6.3 PHILANTHROPIC FOUNDATIONS

Private philanthropic Foundations are a relevant player in international development. Based on latest available OECD data, the 40 largest foundations donated in 2023 \$11.62 bn, slightly less than \$11.75 of 2022 (-1.1%) and significantly less (-7.2%) than the peak of \$12.52 bn reached in 2022. Geographically, the largest share (37.2%) went to Africa, followed by Asia (10.6%) ([Source](#)).

During the latest Nutrition for Growth Summit, six donor organisations, comprising philanthropic foundations and other non-government actors, have announced financial commitments amounting to \$4.2 bn, of which \$2 bn from philanthropic foundations, the largest amounts coming from:

- the Gates Foundation (\$750 m), to improve mothers' and children's access to essential nutrition, fortifying foods and expanding access to healthy diets
- the Bezos family (\$500 m) to UNICEF USA for the UNICEF-led Child Nutrition Fund.
- The Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF) committed \$400 m by 2028 to scale-up high-impact evidence-based nutrition interventions across the lifecycle, including for adolescents, pregnant women, and children.

The Network for Empowered Aid Response (NEAR), a network of civil society organisations supported by philanthropic foundations has announced funds "to address the massive impact from the 90-day pause in US Government Foreign Aid on our members and the communities they serve. The Bridge Funding Window is meant to help local organisations, that are members of NEAR, to ensure they can continue providing services" ([source](#)).

However, according to Bill Gates, no foundation has that capability to replace the role of the US government. At the same time, many Gates Foundation top priorities like polio and malaria will be hit by the US pullback. The Foundation would have to decide if and how it can keep those programmes on track ([source](#)).

7 Recommendations

Most sources come to the conclusion that there is no simple way to mitigate the impact of the latest wave of ODA cuts on food and nutrition security and that other donors cannot directly replace the amount of the decreased funds. However, the sources consulted for this review call for a number of actions that can be grouped under four main categories: i) data and evidence, ii) improved coordination, iii) refocussing aid and iv) funding. In the next four subsections we provide a synthesis of such recommendations from key players – researchers, international organisations, foundations and non-profit organisations. When relevant, we link them to key upcoming event such as the **4th International Conference on Financing for Development** taking place in Seville, Spain from June 30 to July 3, or the COP 30 on climate change in Belem, Brazil, in November 2025.

7.1 Data and evidence

The scientific community has voiced concern about the impact of recent cuts on data collection and the possibility of providing timely information. Already in November 2024 an editorial in the Lancet journal warned that the results of the US election puts health and science in a deeply concerning position, arguing for the value of science to be defended and promoted, and urging US scientists to continue generating evidence, correcting misinformation and creating accountability ([source](#)).

Different sources **recommend resorting to new, low-cost and alternative data sources, taking advantage of new technologies and AI**. In particular:

- The editors of the scientific journal *Population Health Metrics* affirm that the health impact of the US withdrawal from the WHO and the dismantling of USAID must not go unexamined. They suggest that even simple methods such as basic before-and-after comparisons, can yield valuable evidence, while

the global health research community mobilises to apply rigorous accountability research frameworks to assess the damage already unfolding ([source](#)).

- The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), in its latest report on the state of open humanitarian data, calls on “governments and partners to continue investing in the data that underpins crisis response”. It also underscores how, in contexts with limited data, non-traditional data shared by private sources coming from advanced statistical methods, satellite images and Artificial Intelligence, can act as crucial proxies ([source](#)).
- A group of well-known nutritionists, including Saskia Osendarp, executive director of the Micronutrient Forum, and Lawrence Haddad, executive director of The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition, recommend in a Nature comment to rebuild and strengthen nutrition data collection and monitoring systems, such as FEWS-NET, using innovative low-cost technologies, including “mobile-phone-based surveys, satellite imaging and artificial-intelligence-powered predictive analytics, to guide timely responses to food crises using fewer resources” ([source](#)).

Some stakeholders underline how the recent crises revealed structural fragility of the current global data collection systems and calls for rethinking the entire system. For example, Development Gateway, a no-profit organisation that provides technical advice to national governments, advocates for a shift from an aid-funded data model to a new systems where countries have more agency and ownership. They argue that public and private partners should support the transition to locally owned systems emphasizing domestic resource mobilization, interoperability of core systems, and alignment of data collection to national strategies ([source](#)). Similarly, some African scientists see an opportunity in the current situation to become less reliant on external aid ([source](#)).

The **first draft of the Outcome document of the Seville conference** on Financing for Development recommends and commits to strengthening the SDG indicator framework, **broader reporting by South-South providers**, promoting open, interoperable data platforms to improve data sharing and accessibility, **and enhancing coordination on data** among IFIs, national and international statistical agencies, the United Nations, Member States, development agencies and relevant stakeholders ([source](#), section II, point no. 57). It recommends that investments in data and statistical systems be enhanced, including implementing the Medellín Framework for Action on Data for Sustainable Development, support be strengthened for data and statistical capacity building in developing countries (III 56 a-c).

7.2 Improved coordination

The fragmentation of data collection outlined in the previous sub-section is one aspect of the more general fragmentations of development assistance, as highlighted by several sources who call for enhanced coordination among donors and players at different levels.

The recent **Development Cooperation Forum** held on 12-13 March 2025 in New York, provided recommendations to feed the Seville conference, mainly focussing on better coordination, avoidance of duplications and enhanced ownership by countries. In particular:

- The President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), urges to avoid duplications and competitions for scarce resources, urging partners to establish a more co-operative and efficient system that is **country-led**, highlighting how the most successful actions are those that have been led by states themselves. ([source](#))
- A Senior Fellow at the Centre for Global Development (CDG) emphasized the need to decrease fragmentation, strengthen country ownership and make funds available for long-term development ([source](#)).
- The Under-Secretary General and High Representative of UN OHRLLS called for enhancing the quality, effectiveness and impact of development co-operation by reforming its architecture to be more inclusive, responsive and aligned with the needs of countries in special situations ([source](#)).

Improved coordination and country ownership are also central points in the first draft of the Outcome document of the Seville conference. In particular, section II.C commits to strengthening the effectiveness of development cooperation, including by reducing fragmentation and **elevating country ownership and leadership** by developing countries, policy and system coherence by development partners, as well as **strengthen existing national systems** rather than establishing parallel systems ([source](#)).

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the global consortium of all agencies and organizations engaged in humanitarian work, put forward a 10-point plan that focuses on two core actions: regrouping and renewal ([source](#)).

7.3 Refocussing aid

Calls for a refocussing and more targeted aid in light of the recent events have been made by different sources. From the research community, a correspondence paper by the Lancet acknowledges that the existing humanitarian system is not fit for purpose in the current geopolitical landscape of and that reform is needed, but it should be rooted in evidence and accountability, and with affected populations at the centre: “This is not the moment for political opportunism or ideological posturing—it is the moment for decisive, principled action that prioritises the people whom humanitarian assistance was designed to serve” ([source](#)).

Along similar lines, a paper from the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) assessing the implications of the US assistance reduction in Malawi, recommends that government evaluate the vulnerability of crucial services to aid cuts and prioritize those with the most severe impact, targeting cuts at services that deliver the lowest value for money if reductions are unavoidable ([source](#)).

From the financial world, The Financial Times argues that the goal should be to invest in projects that will have the largest impact on the quality of life of poor people around the world, including saving lives during environmental catastrophes, vaccinations or epidemic control, and on training local actors to learn from each other and adopt best practices ([source](#)).

From the policy side, the policy director at the Wilfred Martens Centre, the European People's party official think tank, affirms that the EU should not try to fill the gaps which they cannot fill, but have to reflect on what is good work and what is not going well ([source](#)).

The executive director of the Global Alliance for the Future of Food and a food policy expert at the University of Brasília link the current ODA crises with the upcoming COP 30 conference on climate change in Brazil, underlying the role of food systems in the intertwined crises on climate, poverty and hunger, arguing that putting the transition to sustainable and regenerative food systems as a priority for COP30 is key also with regard to the objectives of ending hunger and malnutrition ([source](#)).

7.4 Funding

The report *Global Outlook on Financing Sustainable Development 2025*, published ahead of the upcoming Conference on Financing for Development in Seville, calls for redirecting the capital available globally, starting with balancing ambition and practicality in addressing sustainable development priorities. Inclusive governance and policy coherence are critical to overcoming the hurdles, as disparities in decision-making structures and resource allocation undermine global trust and co-operation. It also includes the mobilisation of national funds through improved tax collection and private investments. To enhance accountability and transparency in resource allocation, the report urges strengthening the global financing for development monitoring system to restore trust among all countries ([source](#), [source](#)).

The European Union commented at the 2nd Intersessional Negotiation on the Financing for Development that aid will have to be targeted to where they are most needed and be used more effectively and efficiently. At the International Conference on Financing for Development in Seville the question will be tackled of how to catalyse that largely untapped potential of private and domestic resources and how to channel it towards sustainable development while strengthening social rights and protection ([source](#)).

The First draft of the Outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development calls for actions that strengthen domestic public resources, including adopting a whole-of-government approach, to strengthen tax systems and to ensure transparency and accountability in public financial

management (II22 a-f). The actions include the scaling up and aligning of foreign direct investment and private business and finance with sustainable development impact (II28-29). The draft also proposes the undertaking of “**every effort to reverse reductions in ODA**” and the **re-commitment to the ODA target of 0.7% of GNI**. In this respect, also the long-term sustainable development that responds to the needs and priorities of recipient countries is mentioned (II31 a-c). For this, the development cooperation architectures at both national and global levels shall be strengthened (II33) ([source](#)).

Leading nutritionists commented on the journal *Nature* that the unprecedented crisis requires the world to re-think aid to nutrition, as well as to prioritize and expand financing options; saying that global development partners, governments and donors should mobilize immediately to safeguard nutrition for the world’s most vulnerable populations. Governments in Low and Middle Income Countries should be supported and development-finance institutions should further increase global funding for nutrition programmes. Funding from outside the nutrition sector could be leveraged by accelerating efforts to make agricultural, workforce and climate investments more ‘nutrition smart’ ([source](#)).

CONTACT INFORMATION

Knowledge Centre for Global Food and Nutrition Security
EC-KCFNS@ec.europa.eu

https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/global-food-nutrition-security_en

EU Science Hub

https://joint-research-centre.ec.europa.eu/index_en

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