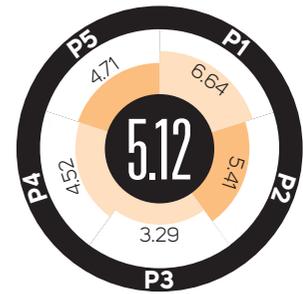


ITALY

Group **3**
ASPIRING ACTORS

HRI 2011 Ranking
19th

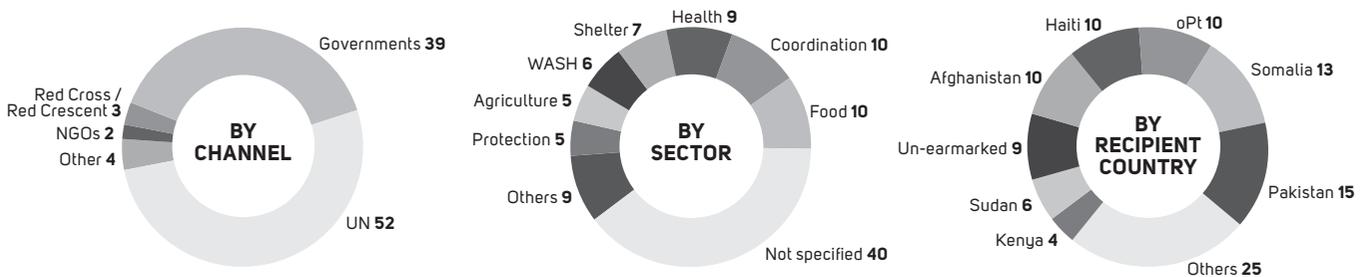


OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE
0.15%
 of GNI

HUMANITARIAN AID
6.3%
 of ODA

US \$3
 Per person

HUMANITARIAN AID DISTRIBUTION (%)



GENDER RATING

POLICY →

FUNDING →

FIELD PERCEPTION →

STRENGTHS

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% above OECD/DAC average
5	QT	Funding accountability initiatives	10.00	+143.1%
2	QT	Funding reconstruction and prevention	10.00	+123.1%

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

Pillar	Type	Indicator	Score	% below OECD/DAC average
5	QT	Participating in accountability initiatives	0.14	-96.9%
3	QT	Funding UN and RC/RC appeals	0.50	-87.8%
3	QT	Funding NGOs	0.60	-86.7%
3	QT	Un-earmarked funding	1.20	-76.8%
2	QT	Reducing climate-related vulnerability	1.37	-65.9%

OVERALL PERFORMANCE

Italy ranked 19th in the HRI 2011, improving one position from 2010. Based on the patterns of its scores, Italy is classified as a Group 3 donor, "Aspiring Actors". Donors in this group tend to have more limited capacity to engage with the humanitarian system at the field level, but often aspire to take on a greater role in the sector. They generally focus on a few core strengths, such as in the area of prevention, preparedness and risk reduction, or on specific geographic regions. Other donors in the group include Australia, Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Luxembourg and Spain.

Italy scored below the OECD/DAC and Group 3 averages in all pillars, with the exception of Pillar 2, where it scored above both averages, and Pillar 5 (Learning and accountability), where it was below the OECD/DAC average yet above the Group 3 average.

Italy did best compared to its OECD/DAC peers in the indicators on *Funding accountability initiatives* and *Funding reconstruction and prevention*. Its scores were relatively the lowest in indicators on *Participating in accountability initiatives*, *Funding UN and RC/RC appeals*, *Funding NGOs*, *Un-earmarked funding* and *Reducing climate-related vulnerability*.

AID DISTRIBUTION

In 2010, Official Development Assistance (ODA) comprised 0.15% of Italy's Gross National Income (GNI), a drop from 0.16% in 2009. Humanitarian assistance represented 6.3% of Italy's ODA in 2010, or 0.009% of its GNI.

In 2010, according to data reported to the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs' (OCHA) Financial Tracking Service

(FTS), Italy channelled 51.6% of its humanitarian assistance to UN agencies, 39.1% bilaterally to affected governments, 3.5% to the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement and 2.0% to NGOs. In 2010, Italy supported 41 crises: 17 in Asia, 14 in Africa, nine in the Americas and four in Europe, with Pakistan, Somalia and the occupied Palestinian territories receiving the greatest amount (OCHA FTS 2011).

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs' Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) manages Italy's humanitarian assistance. DGCS Office VI focuses on emergency operations and food aid, overseeing Italy's humanitarian action. Though Italy has not created a humanitarian policy, Italy asserts that principles contained in the *Good Humanitarian Donorship Initiative* (GHD) and the *European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid* guide its humanitarian action (MFA 2009). Office IV of DGCS specifically focuses on saving lives, alleviating suffering and protecting human dignity during humanitarian emergencies. *Law 49/1987* forms the legal basis of Italian foreign assistance, describing conditions for the involvement of Italian non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil protection assets in delivering aid. Article 1 emphasises the importance of humanitarian action, while Article 11 governs Italy's bilateral emergency responses. Italy's 2009 *Action Plan on Aid Effectiveness* seeks to ensure

the effectiveness of Italy's development and, to a minor degree, humanitarian assistance, and the *2011-2013 Programming Guidelines and Directions* chart plans for aid policies and activities for the next three years. A yearly parliamentary financial law determines the quantity of Italy's humanitarian assistance, but specific laws can be issued in parliament to increase funding for unexpected emergencies.

Italy uses its 20 Local Technical Units (LTUs) to manage operations at the field level. However, Italy's *2011-2013 Programming Guidelines and Directions* announce a scaling down of ODA. As part of this downsizing, the number of countries where DGCS operates will be reduced by 15% and the network of Local Technical Units revised; indeed, six LTUs have been made inactive in the past two years. Furthermore, Italy has declared it will not commence operations in new countries unless dire humanitarian needs arise "consistent with available resources," (DGCS 2011).

HOW DOES ITALY'S POLICY ADDRESS GHD CONCEPTS?

GENDER

DGCS has long recognised the importance of incorporating gender equality and women's empowerment within its programmes and in 1998 published *The Guidelines for Empowerment of Women and the Mainstreaming of a Gender Perspective in Development Co-operation*. The *2011-2013 Programming Guidelines and Directions* likewise state that gender equality and empowerment of women will be prioritised within individual sectors and country strategies, particularly in reconstruction work in conflict affected countries. The *DAC Peer Review 2009 Memorandum* also mentions gender as a "key," "cross-cutting" element of Italy's humanitarian action and describes Italy's support for gender-oriented programmes through earmarking multilateral aid contributions.

PILLAR 1

RESPONDING TO NEEDS

Although Italy has no policy framework for ensuring its humanitarian action responds to needs, in the *DAC Peer Review 2009 Memorandum*, Italy stresses its commitment to *GHD Principles* and its intention to respond to needs in an impartial, neutral and independent manner (MFA 2009). In addition, DGCS strives to target the most vulnerable populations, address the most urgent and severe needs and support forgotten crises (MFA 2009). Italy has established funding mechanisms to ensure timely funding for unanticipated emergencies, whereby specific laws can be issued by the Parliament to finance humanitarian action. Italy has also set up an "emergency bilateral fund" to provide financial withdrawals for swift transfer to specific international organisations during humanitarian crises (MFA 2009).

PILLAR 2

PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Italy strives to strengthen preparedness for both manmade crises and natural disasters and supports a response depot of emergency supplies in Brindisi (MFA 2009). The *DAC Peer Review 2009 Memorandum* explains that though Italy does not specifically carry out risk reduction activities, it recognises these as an important component of humanitarian action and supports activities to reduce vulnerability through collaboration with UN agencies and NGOs (MFA 2009). After approving *The Hyogo Framework for Action*, Italy launched its National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in 2008, led by the Civil Protection Department, to support the integration of risk reduction activities into international development policies and programmes (Protezione Civile 2011); however, it is unclear whether this goal extends to humanitarian assistance as well. DGCS has stressed the need to involve beneficiaries in disaster risk reduction (DRR), promoting activities where local communities are encouraged to identify strategies for vulnerability reduction. Beneficiary participation is also encouraged in finding solutions to problems in the

initial and rehabilitation phases of humanitarian action (MFA 2009), and the *DAC Peer Review 2009 Memorandum* and *Aid Effectiveness Action Plan* both highlight the value of capacity-building. Italy underscores the importance of maintaining a “development perspective” in humanitarian action and using emergency programmes as bridges toward longer-term development programmes (MFA 2009).

PILLAR 3

WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

Italy stresses its commitment to collaborating with multilateral organisations and recognises OCHA’s leadership in coordinating humanitarian emergencies. Though 95% of Italy’s humanitarian aid is earmarked (MFA 2009), Italy upholds the importance of pooled, multi-donor emergency funds, and supported the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in 2010 (OCHA FTS 2011). Italy also established a revolving DGCS-International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) Emergency Trust Fund in 2008 (MFA 2009). Italy emphasises the need for collaboration with NGOs, especially for long-term projects, and the 2009 *Action Plan on Aid Effectiveness* prioritises collaboration with NGOs. DGCS has signed a partnership agreement with the Italian Agency for Emergency Response (ACT), a coalition of 12 Italian NGOs, to improve the monitoring of humanitarian emergencies and better coordinate responses (MFA 2009).

PILLAR 4

PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Italy’s humanitarian assistance strives to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of manmade crises and natural disasters (MFA 2009). Italy affirms that it supports protection and international humanitarian law by funding UN Flash and Consolidated Inter-Agency appeals and ICRC emergency appeals (MFA 2009). It also calls for facilitating protection of civilians and humanitarian workers (MFA 2009), and the *DGCS 2011 – 2013 Programming Guidelines and Directions* and *DAC Peer Review 2009 Memorandum* describe measures for collaboration with the Ministry of Defence to ensure safety of aid workers in unstable contexts. Italy insists security measures established by the United Nations Department for Safety and Security are applied when Italian NGOs are involved in UN emergency programmes (MFA 2009).

PILLAR 5

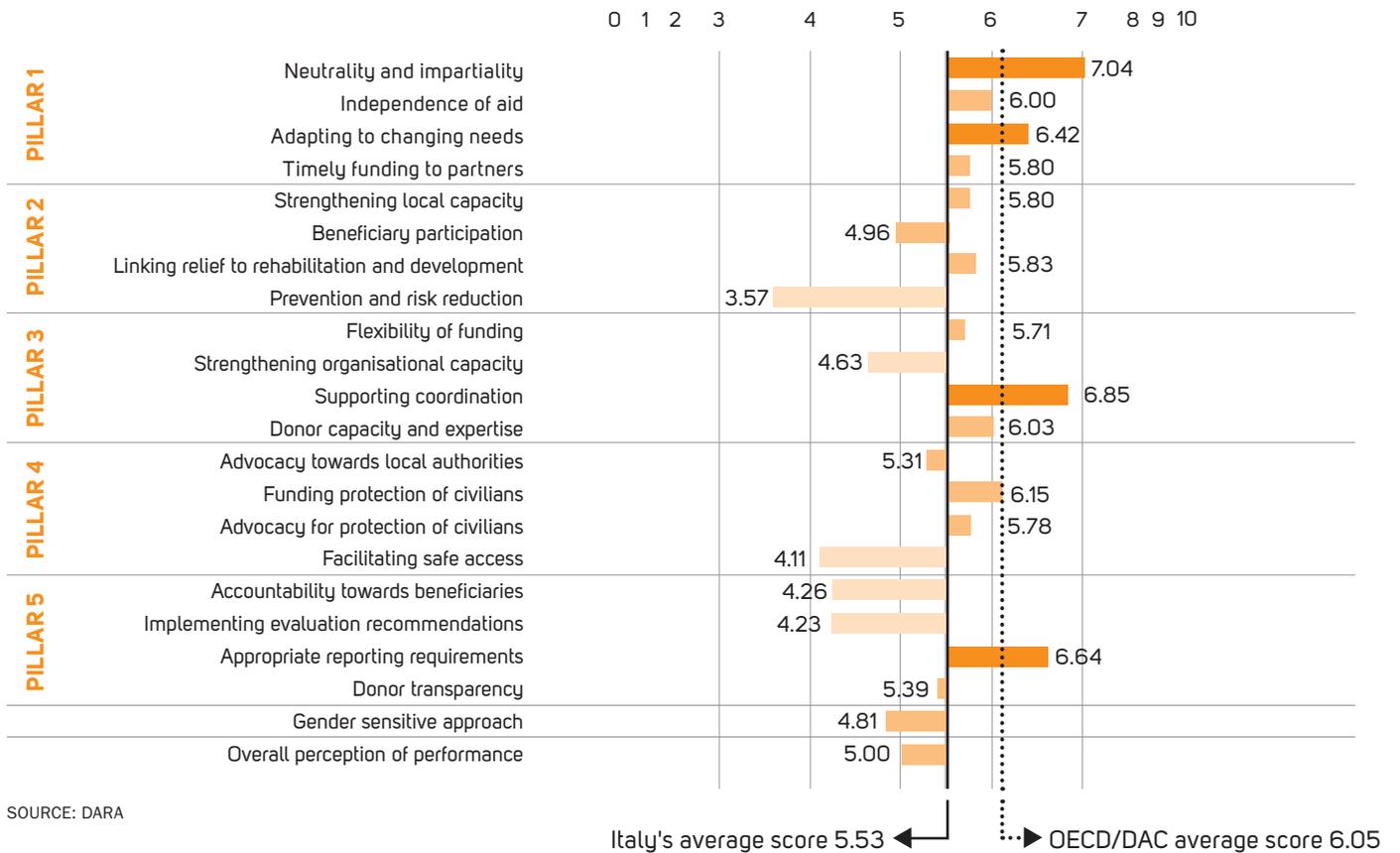
LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Both the *Aid Effectiveness Action Plan* and the *DGCS 2011 – 2013 Programming Guidelines and Directions* announce plans to increase transparency of DGCS activities. The *DAC Peer Review 2009 Memorandum* highlights Office VI’s press releases to OCHA and the MFA as a means of informing the public on crisis management activities and emphasises the importance of monitoring programmes through sound evaluations and annual reports. The MFA has not yet joined the International Aid Transparency Initiative. Italy’s position on accountability toward affected populations is not clear.

FIELD PARTNERS' PERCEPTIONS

ITALY'S FIELD PERCEPTION SCORES

Collected questionnaires: 22



SOURCE: DARA

Colours represent performance compared to donor's average performance rating:

Good Mid-range Could improve

HOW IS ITALY PERCEIVED BY ITS PARTNERS?

GENDER

Italy's partners held varied opinions regarding its requirements for gender-sensitive approaches. Some criticised Italy, among others, for not verifying that the programmes it supports integrate gender-sensitive approaches; one interviewee, for example claimed it was "all rhetoric."

PILLAR 1

RESPONDING TO NEEDS

Many organisations interviewed in the field felt that Italy's humanitarian aid was not sufficiently neutral, impartial and independent. One interviewee mentioned Rome when underlining that "the political agenda determines everything at headquarters level," and commented that "Italy is not always neutral." On a more positive note, interviewees conveyed that Italy's humanitarian action does reflect a concern with properly addressing needs. An organisation in the field mentioned Italy as a donor that "follow[s] up with needs assessments" and expresses a desire to "check" and "know" needs, while another explained that "Italy was very

involved” with verifying that programmes adapted to meet changing needs but also questioned the constructiveness of this involvement. Several organisations, however, complained about the poor timeliness of Italian funding. Interviewees also mentioned “a total lack of response from the donor” and late funding “with unclear conditions.”

PILLAR 2

PREVENTION, RISK REDUCTION AND RECOVERY

Feedback from organisations in the field generally recognised Italy’s support for local capacity. However, not all organisations held this positive view regarding beneficiary participation, especially in the monitoring and evaluation stages. One interviewee suggested Italy was “very far away from beneficiaries, with many stages and processes between them and the needs [of the affected population].” Another pointed to Italy’s “little concern for beneficiary participation, both in design and evaluation of programmes.” Though Italy’s policy upholds the use of a “development perspective” when applying humanitarian aid, an organisation in the field criticised Italy as “only focused on supporting service delivery for life-saving activities,” which perhaps contributed to its low score for *Prevention and risk reduction*.

PILLAR 3

WORKING WITH HUMANITARIAN PARTNERS

Italy generally received positive feedback from its field partners for its support for coordination among actors. Interviewees in several crises also singled out Italy for its capacity and expertise, especially at the field level. However, feedback on the flexibility of Italy’s funding was varied. Some organisations criticised its inflexible funding arrangements, which were described as “very attached” and changeable only with “extensive administrative processes”.

PILLAR 4

PROTECTION AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

Italy received mixed reviews from organisations in the field for its performance in advocating toward local authorities. One interviewee criticised Italy for its tendency to “operate outside the usual networks and ‘break rank,’” suggesting that Italy’s “strong political interest” coloured its advocacy to local authorities. Other interviewees were more positive in this regard; one organisation commented that DGCS had “very well prepared staff” for advocating for local governments and authorities to fulfill their responsibilities in the response to humanitarian needs.

PILLAR 5

LEARNING AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Similar to many donors, Italy could improve its efforts to ensure accountability towards beneficiaries. While most organisations generally felt that Italy did not do enough to ensure learning from evaluations, one interviewee did highlight the importance Italy grants to evaluations: “independent evaluations are compulsory, they are very strict on this.” Organisations also held contrasting opinions regarding Italy’s reporting requirements. Although most agreed that they are appropriate, several interviewees considered Italy’s reporting requirements “excessive” and “not very reasonable”.

RECOMMENDATIONS

● FORMALISE COMMITMENT TO HUMANITARIAN PRINCIPLES IN A COMPREHENSIVE HUMANITARIAN POLICY

Italy would do well to create an official humanitarian policy which explains its commitment to *Good Humanitarian Donorship Principles* and unites the information from various web pages and documents into a common humanitarian policy.

● PROTECT THE NEUTRALITY, IMPARTIALITY AND INDEPENDENCE OF HUMANITARIAN AID

Italy should engage with its partners to discuss practical measures to ensure the neutrality, impartiality and independence of its humanitarian aid, as it received the lowest score of the OECD/DAC donors⁵ for these indicators. Its scores were particularly low in the occupied Palestinian territories and Somalia, followed by Sudan.

● ENHANCE SUPPORT FOR NGOS, UN AND RC/RC APPEALS, COORDINATION AND SUPPORT SERVICES AND POOLED FUNDS

Italy channelled only 2.0% of its funding through NGOs, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 15.3%. Italy also received the third-lowest score of the OECD/DAC donors for *Funding UN and RC/RC appeals*, which measures the extent to which donors provide their fair share³ of funding to UN and Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) appeals, coordination and support services and pooled funds. Italy scored well below average in all components that comprise this indicator. It provided only 6.8% of its fair share to UN appeals, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 41.0%; 5.6% of its fair share to coordination and support services, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 47.5%; 8.3% of its fair share to Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC/RC) appeals, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 117.1%; and 11.7% of its fair share to pooled funds, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 298.0%.

● LOOK FOR MEASURES TO EXPEDITE FUNDING TO COMPLEX EMERGENCIES

Italy is fairly timely in its response to sudden onset disasters, but provided only 42.5% of its funding to complex emergencies within the first three months following a humanitarian appeal, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 59.4%. Although still low, this is an improvement from 2009 when Italy provided only 26.5% of its funding within this time frame. Italy's partners were critical of the delays in Italy's funding; it received the lowest score on this qualitative indicator of the OECD/DAC donors.⁵

● INCREASE FLEXIBILITY WHILE MAINTAINING PROGRAMME FOLLOW-UP

Italy received the fourth-lowest score for *Un-earmarked funding*. Italy provided only 7.2% of its funding without earmarking to ICRC, UNHCR, WFP, OHCHR, UNICEF, IFRC, OCHA and UNRWA, compared to the OECD/DAC average of 33.2%. Italy's partners seem to confirm this, as Italy received the third-lowest score for the qualitative, survey-based indicator on funding flexibility.



Please see www.daraint.org for a complete list of references.