



THE CENTER FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

Commitment to Development Index 2023

20TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

The **Commitment to Development Index (CDI)** ranks 40 of the world's most powerful countries on policies that affect global development. In an increasingly interconnected world, decisions made by the richest countries have impacts far beyond their borders, and often disproportionately affect the world's poorest and most vulnerable. Yet greater global prosperity is in the common interest of all, creating new economic and trade opportunities, increasing innovation, and reducing risks posed by global health, security, and climate crises.

Because development depends on much more than just how foreign aid budgets are spent, the CDI covers eight distinct policy areas:

DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

Quantity and Quality

EXCHANGE

Investment
Migration
Trade

GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS

Environment
Health
Security
Technology

What does the CDI measure?

We assess countries across more than 40 indicators to come up with rankings for each of the eight policy components, as well as each country's overall commitment to development. Countries score well for things like generous and high-quality finance for development, transparent investment, low barriers to trade for developing countries, and migration policies which are open and promote integration. Policies that enhance global public goods—such as fostering global health through disease prevention, supporting technological research, protecting biodiversity and the climate, and contributing to global security—also contribute to high scores.

How are countries doing?

Sweden tops this year's CDI, followed by **Germany** coming in second and **Norway** in third place. Sweden ranks first in development finance, migration, and environment, and second in health. Its performance in technology, however, remains relatively weak with low levels of research collaboration. Though Sweden

also finished top in the previous CDI, its lead over the next-best-performing countries has shortened.

Germany comes second overall, improving five places since the previous CDI. This is thanks in part to a substantial increase in its Finance for International Development, which rose from 0.46 percent to 0.61 percent of its Gross National Income (GNI). **Norway** ranks third, performing well in development finance and technology—and ranking first for investment—but underperforming on trade and environment due to high agricultural subsidies and fossil fuel production.

Finland and **France** complete the top five; the former also

COUNTRY REPORTS & FULL RESULTS

Visit cgdev.org/cdi to explore the interactive web portal and see how your country is doing. The full data model and more information on the CDI is available on our project site at cgdev.org/project/commitment-development-index.

COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT INDEX 2023

Each of the components is underpinned by a series of indicators of policy effectiveness which are standardized and weighted according to their importance in development.

DEVELOPMENT FINANCE

Development Finance	Development Finance Quantity
	Development Finance Quality

EXCHANGE

Investment	Financial Secrecy
	Business & Human Rights
	Natural Resources
	Anti-corruption
	Investment Agreements
	Corporate Tax Rate Alignment
Migration	Migrant Inflow
	Female Immigrants
	Refugee Hosting
	International Migration Agreements
	Integration Policies
Trade	Tariff Average
	Tariff Peaks
	Agricultural Subsidies
	Trade Logistics
	Services Trade Restrictiveness

GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS

Environment	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
	NDC Ambition
	Fossil Fuel Production
	Fossil Fuel Support
	Carbon Pricing
	Fishing Subsidies
	Biodiversity and Environment Agreements
Health	Antimicrobial Resistance
	Vaccination Coverage
	Pandemic Preparedness
	Treaties
	Export Restrictions on Food and Health Related Goods
	Tobacco Supply Chains
Security	Peacekeeping Contributions
	Female Peacekeepers
	Sea Lanes Protection
	Arms Trade
	International Security Conventions
Technology	Government Support
	Tax Incentives
	Foreign Students
	Female Students
	Research Collaboration
	Intellectual Property Rights

comes first on health, while the latter scores strongly on its policies supporting investment in developing countries.

The **United Kingdom** has dropped two places overall, in part due to a series of cuts to its aid budget—with Finance for International Development falling from 0.63 percent to 0.41 percent of GNI—but also because that aid is now less focused on poorer recipients.

Given the economic importance of countries in the G20, we include nine middle-income countries in the ranking. Among this group, **South Africa** ranks highest, in 25th place, with above average contributions in technology, security, and migration. **Brazil** and **Türkiye** were next highest with relative strengths on investment and migration respectively.

Changes in rank can reflect policy changes or improvements in data. The **United Arab Emirates** has risen seven ranks to 32nd overall but comes top on technology. With the publication of new data, we see that it hosts the highest number of foreign tertiary students relative to its domestic student population, while average incomes of the countries of origin of these students is the sixth lowest among CDI countries. **Greece** and **Switzerland** also rose by five or more places.

Collective progress or decline?

While the rankings highlight how individual countries are doing relative to other powerful economies, looking across the indicators can shine a spotlight on areas of collective progress or decline.

Across all components, most indicators measuring countries' spending saw upward movement, with mixed results for development. In line with the post-COVID-19 fiscal expansion, over half of CDI countries increased their climate-harming fossil fuel subsidies, trade-distorting agricultural subsidies, and fishing subsidies encouraging stock depletion. On the upside, however, a similar proportion of CDI country governments also increased spending on technological research, with substantial efforts especially on tax incentives for private companies.

On development finance, we see a mixed picture. Although a majority of CDI countries increased spending relative to the size of their economies, including to meet the challenges of the continuing fall-out of the COVID-19 crisis, at the same time, several players with larger development budgets on an absolute scale—such as the UK, Norway, and China—have cut back.

Notably, more than three-quarters of CDI countries reduced migrant inflows, with movement restrictions implemented during COVID-19 disproportionately affecting immigration from lower-income countries.

Half of CDI countries also saw declining domestic vaccination rates for non-COVID-19 vaccines, marking a reversal of long-term gains in expanding coverage.

Development Trends and Insights

The 20th anniversary of the CDI coincides with the mid-way point to achieving Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), yet this year's publication occurs against a backdrop of major challenges, from the fiscal impact of COVID-19 and cost-of-living pressures, to surges of refugees, and the increasing frequency of climate-driven events. In this section, we highlight **three major areas** where countries' responses to these challenges are being captured.

1. Countries' development focus challenged amidst Russia's disastrous invasion of Ukraine

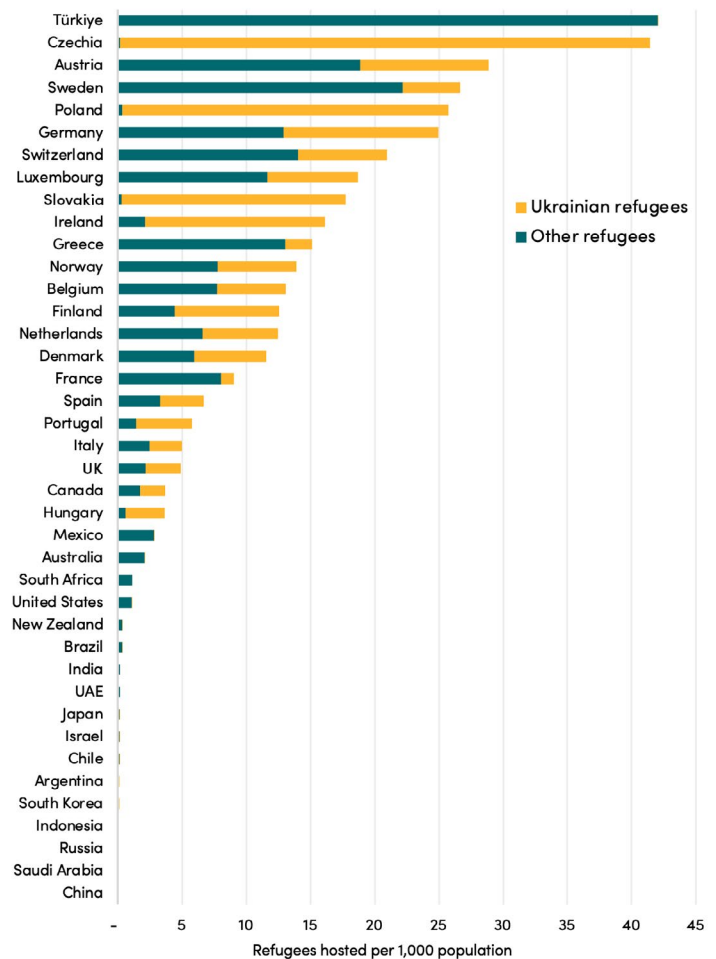
Russia's invasion of Ukraine has not only had a devastating impact on Ukraine's people, but has had major effects worldwide, enabling some countries to step up, but also challenging the development focus of others. Previous editions of the CDI have reflected Russia's low commitment to development—it scored near the bottom in every year it has been assessed, with particularly low scores on security for the notably **high "conflict-potential" of its global arms sales**. This year, we've adjusted Russia's score on two indicators so that its peacekeeping contribution is negative, and we do not give it credit for hosting Ukrainian refugees. Along with Russia's wider scores reflecting its lack of commitment to development, it comes last on the CDI.

In the wake of the invasion, other countries have been forced to step up their commitment to development, most immediately by **receiving refugees**. **Czechia, Poland, the Slovak Republic, and Ireland** have each seen at least an eight-fold increase in the number of refugees they accept since before the war. Even so, these efforts put into context just how significant **Türkiye's** ongoing hosting of Syrian refugees is, as it remains the top-ranking country on this indicator. Still, many of these countries have not scored as well on their migrant integration and protection policies, and it remains to be seen whether recent surges in refugee inflows will ultimately lead to improvements on their integration efforts in the future.

Food shortages resulting from the invasion have also led some countries to implement new **food-related trade restrictions**, exacerbating inflation elsewhere, and impacting the nutrition and health security of lower-income countries. Even with the effect of sanctions targeting Russia excluded, we find that countries such as **Argentina, Canada, India, Indonesia, Türkiye, and New Zealand** have placed export restrictions on over 10 types of food products, with an impact on developing countries in the last two years.

While much of the knock-on impact of the war is yet to feed into the available data used in the CDI, **we expect to see negative effects on cross-border development finance** as funding is diverted to hosting refugees and

Figure 1. Refugee hosting in 2022



Note: Ukrainian refugees to Russia are excluded from Russia's score

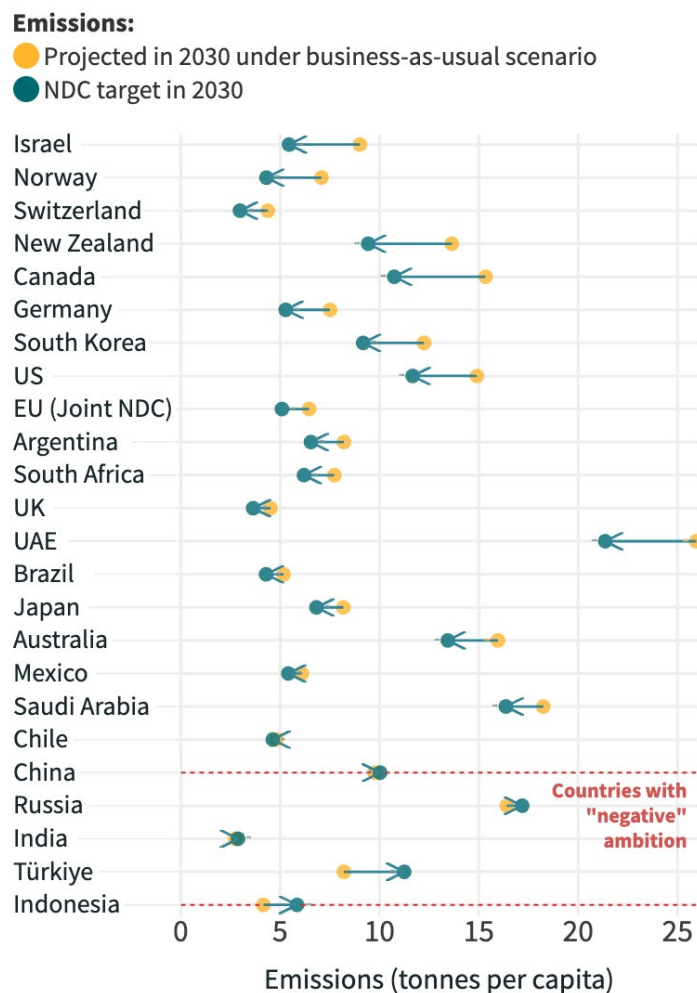
rebuilding Ukraine, as well as **growth in fossil fuel subsidies** as governments respond to high energy prices.

2. Climate: words versus action

Climate change is increasingly recognized as the most serious threat to development and humanity; climate-related disasters, such as the 2022 floods in Pakistan, are becoming more frequent and severe, and threaten to undo years of hard-won development progress. Though much of the discourse has focused on volumes of climate finance going to developing countries, in the CDI's environment component we look at how the most powerful countries' policies at home support (or hinder) global climate goals. The countries we assess have an outsized impact on global climate trends, accounting for some 74 percent of current global greenhouse gas emissions.

We see mixed trends. On the one hand, during COVID-19, emissions (excluding those from land use) generally fell across the CDI countries—in the latest data, **37 countries reduced their emissions per capita**. On the other hand, across all CDI countries with available data, government

Figure 2. Planned GHG emissions reductions in 2030



Note: Countries are ordered from best to worst, by the % reduction which meeting the NDC target would represent beyond current projections.

subsidies for fossil fuels increased between 2019 and 2021 to \$322 billion (an increase from 0.28 percent to 0.38 percent of GNI), even before accounting for measures taken after the most recent spikes in energy costs.

This year, we also incorporated a new indicator which looks at the level of ambition in emissions reductions plans (Nationally Determined Contributions, or NDCs, submitted by countries to the UNFCCC). It assesses the degree to which these plans represent a reduction in emissions beyond what the countries are projected to be emitting in 2030 given current policies. Though the average CDI country plans to reduce emissions by 17 percent relative to projections, some countries—including **Indonesia, Türkiye, Russia, India, and China**—show little to no ambition to reduce emissions, and their NDC targets would represent an increase in emissions above current projections.

Even some “ambitious” countries may be unrealistic—**Israel** and **Norway** have ambitious climate targets, but they are not backed up by key policies. Israel, for

example, is one of just nine CDI countries which does not implement a carbon pricing scheme, and Norway has the highest rate of fossil fuel production of any country in the CDI. This may highlight policy incoherence—challenging lower-income countries to avoid fossil fuels while doing little to reduce them in high-income countries.

3. Technology is everything, and “traditional” development actors are lagging

At one level, the creation and spread of knowledge is everything for development—from basic healthcare practices to keep children and mothers alive, to the underpinnings of manufacturing and skills-based economies, or renewable technologies to achieve sustainable development. But against the backdrop of COVID-19, many countries have expressed concerns that **access to vital new technologies**, such as vaccines, is not being shared equitably.

This year, the technology component is led by the **UAE, South Korea, and Austria**. **South Africa** comes 6th, **Saudi Arabia** comes 8th, and **China** comes 15th, while the **United States**—often seen as the world’s innovation hub—comes in 28th. **Sweden**, which comes 1st on the CDI overall, also comes in the bottom half on technology. So, what drives these results?

While the technology component assesses policies which support domestic research and development (R&D)—and therefore, in the long-term, policies that expand the global pool of knowledge—the majority of the component assesses policies encouraging the transfer and diffusion of technology, especially with poorer countries. **South Korea** has the highest R&D expenditure across the CDI, and many “traditional” actors—including **Austria, Norway, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Japan**—also spend at least one percent of their GNI on R&D.

But many of the emerging economies lead on technology diffusion. The **UAE** accepts more foreign students than any other country, with over 70 percent of its tertiary student population coming from abroad, and most of these coming from relatively poorer countries. **Saudi Arabia** and **South Africa** are this year’s leaders on research collaboration, with their academics co-authoring research with partners from lower-income countries more so than do other CDI countries. Meanwhile, **China** and **Indonesia** are assessed as having the most developmentally friendly provisions on intellectual property rights within their free trade agreements with developing countries, while EU countries and the United States are more restrictive than is the norm under the World Trade Organization. This also reflects a missed opportunity for many CDI countries—economic growth depends on trade and shared technological progress.

20 Years of Assessing Commitment to Development

It is 20 years since the CDI was first published. Since 2003, the development landscape has changed, and the CDI has evolved alongside new understandings of what and who matter most for development.

The first edition of the CDI—published just a few years after the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were established—only looked at six components and assessed just 21 countries. Figure 3 shows how those founder countries perform over the entire period. The **Netherlands** was top in 2003 with strong scores on both aid (now development finance) and trade, but it has since fallen. This year's top-ranked country, **Sweden**, was ranked 8th in 2003, with lagging performance on security and investment.

Two decades ago, the Iraq War underscored the importance of security for development. Russia's invasion of Ukraine last year serves as a stark reminder of the harmful impacts of armed conflict, with the resulting surge in oil and food prices undermining development. As in the early 2000s, debt sustainability has become an urgent concern, with the debt burdens of many countries exacerbated by rising interest rates, but on the back of a recovery from a global pandemic rather than the sustained economic growth of the earlier period.

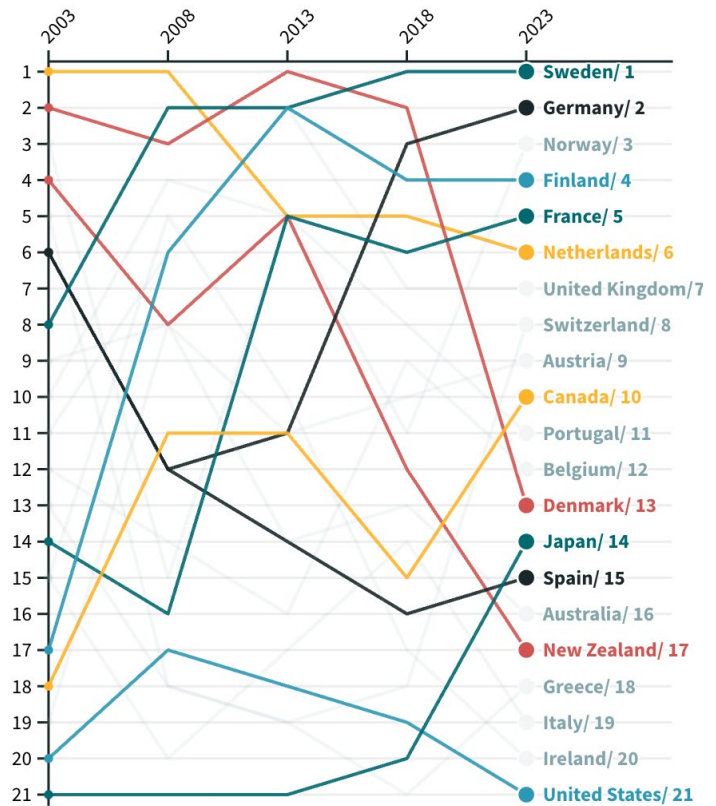
Other notable movers over the 20 years are **Japan**, which was regularly last in the first decade, and **Finland, France, and Germany**, who each improved significantly. **Denmark, the Netherlands, New Zealand** and **Spain** have waned in their commitment. The **US** has consistently ranked in the bottom quarter, but **Canada** has improved.

We've been able to assess a handful of key CDI indicators over the full 20 years, and they tell a surprisingly positive story. For example, annual migration to the 40 CDI countries has increased by almost half, from nearly 4 million per year to 5.9 million. Research and development expenditure has risen from 0.66 percent of GNI to 0.75 percent. On trade, 33 out of 40 countries now have lower average tariffs.

On finance for development, the efforts of traditional providers—those in the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC)—outpaced GNI from 2003 to 2013, rising from 0.24 percent to 0.30 percent, but cross-border finance has flatlined since. Still, **China** and other middle-income economies had added around a further sixth to total finance by the end of the period. Aggregate greenhouse gas emissions have gone up by 40 percent; but 30 countries (not the largest) have reduced per head emissions.

Over two decades, convergence between “emerging economies”—especially the BRICS—and traditional

Figure 3. CDI ranks over the years for the original 21 countries



Note: Changes in rank reflect not only changing performance but also successive methodological improvements undertaken by the Index

development actors has prompted us to expand the CDI's coverage. What's more, the transition from the MDGs to the SDGs recognised a more holistic development agenda, which has always been a key focus of the CDI. With the growing importance of global public goods, two components were added since 2003: Technology (in 2004), and Health (in 2021). But while the SDGs focus on outcomes and all nations, the CDI emphasizes how the policies of the most powerful economies can have an outsized impact. Today, the 40 CDI countries include all G20 members, and collectively account for 88 percent of the world economy, 74 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, and 73 percent of world trade.

As the 2030 deadline for achieving the SDGs draws closer, CGD will continue to quantitatively assess powerful countries and their policy effort in supporting development.

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CDI 2023

Country	Overall rank	FINANCE				EXCHANGE				GLOBAL PUBLIC GOODS				Income-adjusted rank
		Finance	Investment	Migration	Trade	Environment	Health	Security	Technology					
Sweden	1	1	5	1	6	1	2	11	26	1				
Germany	2	5	4	6	4	6	4	19	9	3				
Norway	3	3	1	9	31	17	6	6	4	20				
Finland	4	9	12	10	7	16	1	7	29	10				
France	5	14	2	23	14	5	13	24	7	4				
Netherlands	6	6	27	14	1	10	9	12	16	13				
United Kingdom	7	11	7	22	8	12	10	2	17	5				
Switzerland	8	12	13	16	21	7	5	22	18	29				
Austria	9	22	14	12	15	14	14	9	3	14				
Canada	10	16	3	15	10	34	18	13	5	12				
Portugal	11	20	24	5	18	2	19	10	12	2				
Belgium	12	7	26	7	12	24	8	25	20	16				
Denmark	13	4	17	26	13	20	17	8	27	27				
Luxembourg	14	2	37	4	23	21	15	27	14	32				
Japan	15	17	10	32	5	29	3	17	13	15				
Spain	16	21	11	13	9	3	23	23	33	7				
Australia	17	31	6	27	2	38	7	14	10	25				
Czechia	18	26	18	8	20	13	12	20	23	6				
New Zealand	19	33	16	18	3	27	27	16	11	22				
Greece	20	24	15	2	27	9	37	18	32	8				
Italy	21	15	8	20	17	11	29	21	38	17				
Slovak Republic	22	25	21	31	24	4	11	1	37	11				
Ireland	23	8	22	19	22	28	22	3	36	35				
South Korea	24	32	20	29	34	26	28	31	2	24				
South Africa	25	23	35	17	32	31	21	15	6	9				
United States	26	18	25	28	11	37	30	5	28	38				
Hungary	27	30	29	35	30	8	20	4	31	19				
Poland	28	28	19	21	26	18	32	26	34	18				
Chile	29	34	28	11	16	15	39	32	35	23				
Brazil	30	29	9	25	38	25	36	28	21	21				
Türkiye	31	19	30	3	33	35	38	35	39	26				
UAE	32	13	40	30	19	40	26	38	1	37				
Saudi Arabia	33	10	39	36	28	39	16	37	8	34				
Indonesia	34	27	31	39	37	30	33	29	24	28				
Mexico	35	36	33	34	35	22	24	30	40	30				
China	36	39	32	40	29	23	35	36	15	33				
Israel	37	40	23	33	25	32	34	39	22	40				
India	38	38	36	38	40	19	25	34	30	31				
Argentina	39	35	34	24	39	33	40	33	25	36				
Russia	40	37	38	37	36	36	31	40	19	39				

About the CDI

The Center for Global Development has compiled the Commitment to Development Index since 2003. CGD works to reduce global poverty and improve lives through innovative economic research that drives better policy and practice by the world's top decision makers.

Ian Mitchell directs the CDI with significant contributions from Beata Cichocka and Edward Wickstead. The 2023 CDI builds on the work in earlier editions by Lee Robinson, Anita Käppeli, Owen Barder, David Roodman and Nancy Birdsall. The CDI is supported by funding for CGD Europe's development effectiveness programme, including contributions from the governments of Australia, Canada, Germany, Luxembourg, and Sweden. The CDI does not reflect the official opinion of funders. The authors are responsible for all methodological decisions and for the information and views expressed here.