

Consultation paper for the review of the White Paper on Irish Aid

SUMMARY DOCUMENT

Full Consultation Paper available at <http://www.irishaid.ie/whitepaper>

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Irish Aid

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

The Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid

Irish Aid is the Government of Ireland's programme of assistance to the poorest people in the world. It is Ireland's contribution to the fight against global poverty and a practical expression of our values as a nation. The Irish Aid programme is delivering €639 million for poverty reduction in 2012.

The White Paper on Irish Aid was published in September 2006. A statement of Government policy, the White Paper places the fight against world poverty at the heart of Ireland's foreign policy and sets out the guiding principles of the aid programme.

A Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid was announced in June 2011, following a commitment set down in the Programme for Government. This Review is looking at the progress made by Irish Aid, and the changing national and international context. It will help to shape the policy direction for the coming years.

The Review is being led by the Minister of State for Trade and Development, Mr. Joe Costello, T.D. at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Independent oversight is being provided by the Irish Aid Expert Advisory Group (see <http://www.iaeag.ie>). It will consist of broad consultation with all key stakeholders including the general public, civil society, partner countries, the private sector and the Oireachtas.

Progress Made

Since the publication of the White Paper, Ireland's aid programme has become more focused and effective. Irish Aid is now recognised as a champion in making aid more effective. Ireland has taken a leadership role in the fight against global hunger; improved ways of preventing and responding to humanitarian emergencies; and developed strong oversight mechanisms and systems of accountability.

There were some areas where progress was less than expected. The White Paper on Irish Aid was developed at a time of rising levels of economic growth, and it set out a broad and ambitious agenda. The reductions in public expenditure – resulting from the difficult economic situation - have resulted in a decline of 30% in Ireland's aid budget between 2008 and 2011.

Whilst the Irish Government has reaffirmed its commitment to the UN target for Official Development Assistance of 0.7% of GNP, the Review of the White Paper needs to reposition planning within a context of the current budget and human resource challenges.

The Changing Context

The world is changing - and with it the context for international development.

Global poverty is reducing and we are on target to achieve the Millennium Development Goal of halving world poverty by 2015.

Where progress is being made, aid is playing a key role in achieving that.

- ✓ 40 million more children are going to school today than in 2000.
- ✓ Health programmes and vaccinations mean 12,000 fewer children are dying every day.
- ✓ Since 1990, 1.6 billion people have gained access to clean drinking water
- ✓ Malaria cases are down by over 50% in 11 African countries.

It is, however, becoming clear that poverty is more persistent and concentrated in particular regions and localities. Sub Saharan Africa continues to bear the greatest poverty burden and it is estimated that by 2030 half of the world's poor will be found here.

Cities in middle-income countries are also home to increasing numbers of the world's poor where rising levels of inequality and social exclusion are becoming a major concern.

The global financial crisis, rising food and energy prices and climate change are all having harmful effects while issues of poor governance, insecurity and corruption persist in many countries.

At the same time, many developing countries are experiencing high levels of economic growth and reducing their reliance on donors. Similarly political, economic, social and trading relationships worldwide are changing very rapidly with countries such as Brazil, India, China, Russia and South Africa playing an increasingly prominent role.

The future direction of Irish Aid will need to take account of this changing context. It also needs to be based on the financial and human resources that are likely to be available in the coming years. This will require a greater focus on key priorities and the achievement of maximum value for money for every cent spent – with clear accountability and measurable results.

Key Issues

Key issues that the Review of the White Paper could usefully consider include:

- **Hunger** – almost one billion, one in seven of the world’s population, are hungry today.
- **Situations of fragility** – more than 1.5 billion people continue to live in countries affected by violent conflict.
- **Climate change** – poor countries and people are the most dependent on environmental assets and vulnerable to the negative impacts of climate change.
- **Responding to basic needs** –protecting health, responding to HIV/AIDS, and providing quality education are essential to human welfare and lasting economic and social development.
- **Good governance and human rights** – respecting human rights, preventing corruption, and improving accountability are all central to development.
- **Gender equality** – while some progress has been made, gender inequality continues to be a key dimension of poverty and vulnerability and a major violation of human rights.
- **The private sector** – the private sector has a central role in advancing innovation, creating wealth, income and jobs, mobilising domestic resources and in turn contributing to poverty reduction.

Ways of working

Over the last five years there have been many changes in how aid is delivered. Making aid more effective is vital: this will better support poverty reduction, lead to real results for poor people on the ground, and deliver better value for money.

Recognising that aid is only one part of the solution, the Government’s new Africa Strategy (available at <http://www.dfat.ie>) provides a framework for a coherent approach to Ireland’s political, development and business relations with Africa.

In considering how the Government can further strengthen its ways of delivering an effective aid programme, the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid will look at how to:

- Ensure the maximum **impact of development aid** in improving lives, cutting poverty and helping to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
- Achieve better **policy coherence** – ensuring that government policies across the board support positive development outcomes.
- **Work better with our key partners**. This will include looking at the Irish Aid support for **partner countries** (including the nine designated Programme Countries of Ethiopia, Lesotho Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Timor Leste, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zambia), **civil society organisations**, and **multilateral organisations** (each of which get around a third of Irish Aid funding).
- Achieve **developments results** and account for them.
- Ensure **public engagement** on development issues and ownership of the aid effort.
- Place **the financing of aid** on a more predictable footing.



Questions for the Review

In the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid, a number of key questions are being posed and the views of stakeholders – including the general public – are being sought on these:

Progress Made

Has the Government been successful in implementing the commitments contained in the White Paper on Irish Aid?

Changing context

What are the implications of the changes in the global and domestic context for the Government's aid programme in the future and how will these affect current priorities?

Key Issues

How should the Government respond to the key issues of hunger, fragility, climate change, basic needs, governance & human rights, and gender equality? Are there other issues?

Given the limited resources and the need to focus these, which issues should the Government prioritise in its future aid programming?

Ways of Working

How can the Government further strengthen its ways of working in delivering an effective aid programme, with a view to delivering real results in poverty reduction?

The Consultation Process

The public consultation for the Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid will take place between February and April 2012. The identified stakeholders can get involved in the process by availing of a wide range of opportunities including by:

Participating in one of the public consultation meetings, as follows:

Venue	Date	Time
Strand Hotel, Limerick	6 th Feb 2012	19.00 - 21.00
Clarion Hotel, Cork	5 th March 2012	19.00 - 21.00
Radisson Blu Hotel, Golden Lane, Dublin	26 th March 2012	15.00 - 17.30
Glasshouse Hotel, Sligo	16 th Apr 2012	19.00 - 21.00

Responding in writing to the Review.

Further details are available at www.irishaid.ie/whitepaper.

A Review Report will be published by the Government in autumn 2012. This will set out the way ahead for the aid programme over the coming years.

How to make a written response

Written responses can be submitted by post or preferably email to:

Review of the White Paper on Irish Aid
Irish Aid
Riverstone House
23-27 Henry Street
Limerick
Ireland
WhitePaperReview@dfa.ie

Written responses should be submitted by
5pm on 25th April 2012.

Please ensure that responses adhere to the guidelines on written responses. See Consultation Paper (Annex B) at www.irishaid.ie/whitepaper.

If you have any questions, please contact: WhitePaperReview@dfa.ie or call: 01 408 2000