

HCMC Grantmakers Forum 2010

To Promote Meaningful Dialogue Among Grantmakers

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PANEL 4: Best Practices in Grantmaking - Monitoring & Evaluation

Irish Aid - Development Cooperation Ireland

1. Irish Aid is the Government of Ireland's programme of assistance to developing countries. Approximately 80% of Ireland's Overseas Development Aid goes to Africa. Amongst nine country programmes, seven are in Africa. Timor-Leste and Vietnam, both in Asia, are Ireland's remaining programme countries. The Irish Aid programme has as its absolute priority the reduction of poverty, inequality and exclusion in developing countries. Irish Aid works in cooperation with governments in other countries, other donors, NGOs and international organisations as part of the global effort to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.
2. The Embassy was established in Vietnam in 2006. The Country Strategy Paper (CSP) sets out Irish Aid's development aid programme for Vietnam for the period 2007 – 2010. It describes the overall policy approach to be adopted and outlines the expenditure proposals. It is expected to deliver €87.5 million in direct bilateral support for the period to 2010. The CSP defines Irish Aid's overall goal "to promote and support the equitable reduction of poverty and vulnerability in Vietnam".

Civil Society Facility

3. Supporting the emerging civil society sector in Vietnam is particularly strategic in the context of the country's recent and on-going economic growth. As the country is attaining Middle Income Country status, the architecture of development assistance will change. High growth rates frequently lead to increased vulnerability, shocks, inequality and marginalisation of weaker social economic groups. New approaches to poverty reduction and social protection may be required to address pockets of entrenched poverty and support to extremely vulnerable groups. It is important that non-state civil society organisations define and fulfil a strong role in ensuring access to support services needed by these groups.
4. Under the Vietnam Country Strategy Paper, a Civil Society Facility (CSF) was established at embassy level with an envisaged budget of €1-1.3 million per year to support innovative development activities of civil society organisations. The activities supported should contribute towards the achievement of the CSP goal. Supporting civil society groups offers Irish Aid an opportunity to target extremely vulnerable people and communities that may not yet be in a position to fully benefit from the broader processes of growth and development being effected through the programmes of Government.
5. Irish Aid priorities support to promote a greater acceptance of vulnerable and excluded groups (including people with disability and people and children living with and affected by HIV and

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AIDS); to promote interventions which contribute to a comprehensive approach, moving from welfare and charity to right-based and community-based approaches; to enhance shared accountability to citizens between the government and the civil society; and to strengthen the voice of civil society organisations so they can influence policy, both at local and national levels, for the promotion of sustainable development, social inclusion and the improvement of livelihood security.

Monitoring of grants

6. Irish Aid monitors all of the projects and programmes it funds for accountability, effectiveness, value for money, organisational and development learning, and to inform decision making. The CSF is funded by Irish tax payers and Irish Aid has a responsibility to the Irish Public to ensure that those funds are being used effectively and efficiently in compliance with the agreements governing their use. Irish Aid has to ensure that projects supported through the CSF are contributing to achievement of the CSP's objectives in a cost effective manner.
7. Irish Aid also monitors for its own, its CSF partners' and the broader development community's learning. Irish Aid recognises that civil society organisations implement innovative programmes and projects, documenting and sharing these experiences is therefore important to ensure that the lessons-learnt can be shared with a wider audience. Monitoring is also used to inform decision making on improvements to systems and processes, on continuing support for an organisation or project, and on overall programme design.
8. The CSF is monitored through (i) progress reports from grantees; (ii) verification of the Logical Framework; (iii) financial reports from grantees; and (iv) field monitoring visits. Progress report is a description of what is being or has been achieved by the use of the grant, and if appropriate whether the objectives of the project are or have been met, to highlight difficulties or challenges that have arisen during implementation and explain any changes to the project design. Progress report would also refer to how the principles of partnership, participation, and capacity building have been applied in the implementation of the project.
9. In preparation of the progress report, grantees would also refer to and comment on any risks identified in the project proposal or newly arising, including a rating on probability and impact. It is suggested that risks are rated against both variables (probability and impact) on the simple scale of low, medium and high. The report also describes the progress towards establishing the capacities, structures, and systems necessary to ensure that the project outcome(s) will be sustained, institutionally and financially, beyond the life of the project.
10. Field visits are an important part of Irish Aid's monitoring strategy. During field visits Irish Aid can develop a better understanding of the grantee, its partners and beneficiaries; understand the context in which the grantee is working; verify grantees progress reports and compliance with contractual obligations; explore lessons learned from the project; and discuss challenges and any changes to the project design.

Evaluation of grants

11. The two main objectives of evaluation of CSF's grants are for accountability and learning. Evaluation is an instrument used for documenting the usage and results of Irish Aid's development assistance in order to account for its own performance and that of the agencies and partners it supports, and to help establish whether value for money is being achieved. In this

regard, proper and rigorous evaluation of development interventions serves the public interest in Ireland and in its partner countries. Evaluation also seeks to explain to the key stakeholders the extent to which development interventions and their modalities have succeeded or failed and the reasons why. In Irish Aid, the knowledge generated from evaluations is used to inform its decision making and policy processes for the purposes of increasing the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of its development assistance.

12. Irish Aid evaluates projects to assess the relevance of the project outputs and outcomes to the goal and objectives of the project as well as to Irish Aid’s overall policy goal and objectives. An evaluation is also used to determine the long-term impact and sustainability of the project; the value of the results to the intended beneficiaries, in particular the most vulnerable groups (e.g., the chronically poor, women, minorities, people with disabilities). Evaluations also generate learning that can be applied to other projects and also inform policy and programme development.

RISER of evaluation

<i>Relevance</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • address the needs and priorities of the target • fit in with the priorities and policies of the country and of Irish Aid
<i>Impact</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • long-term effects of the project • positive or negative, intended or unintended
<i>Sustainability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sustained outcomes and impacts without continuing external financial or technical support
<i>Effectiveness</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • most effective means of achieving the objectives in project design • Best use of inputs (financial, technical and human) to contribute or hinder the achievement of objectives • Justification of costs, taking into account results and alternatives
<i>Replicability</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Successes, best practices and lessons-learnt could be replicated