

# *Building Good Governance through Development Cooperation*

## *Policy Orientations for Irish Aid*



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## Foreword

Since my appointment as Minister of State for Overseas Development, I am increasingly conscious of the need to address governance issues in all areas across the development programme. This applies to our work at country level and internationally. Good governance is central to delivering on our overarching objective of reducing poverty. Without it, development cannot be sustained. It influences the environment for economic growth, the way that resources are allocated and distributed, and how essential services are delivered. In short, it impacts directly on the lives of poor people in developing countries.

*Irish Aid* has been active in this area for many years, providing assistance for institution building and helping to deliver the quality of governance which can have a real and lasting positive impact on the lives of people in developing countries. The *White Paper on Irish Aid* renewed that commitment. It is useful then to take stock of what we have learned from our work to date, and to map out how we plan to deliver on this into the future. With that in mind I am pleased that we have been able to set out in this document a framework to guide our overall approach.

Clearly, this is a complex and challenging area. There are no quick fixes or easy solutions. And while resources can be of assistance in improving capacity and strengthening institutions, they are not sufficient in themselves when addressing the problem of weak governance. Ultimately what is needed is the political will to bring about change. This cannot be imposed; it must come from within.

But donors can help. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the more recent Accra Agenda for Action challenges donors to help strengthen governance through greater country ownership, the inclusion of all development actors in policy dialogue and better accountability in the oversight of aid.

In spite of the many challenges, there are encouraging signs of progress. Recent research compiled for the Mo Ibrahim Foundation by the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University demonstrates that standards of governance are improving in almost two thirds of sub-Saharan African countries. Almost all of the countries where Irish Aid works in Africa have shown an improvement. This research shows that the trend in Africa is in the right direction. Research from the World Bank Institute also confirms that many developing countries are making good progress in governance.

It is important to acknowledge progress and Ireland's part, with others, in helping to bring about this slow but steady transformation. We owe it to those who face the greatest challenges of all, the poor, to continue this work for better governance and the elimination of poverty.

Peter Power, T.D.

*Minister of State for Overseas Development*

## Executive Summary

The *White Paper on Irish Aid* emphasises the importance of good governance for poverty reduction and achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It highlights the relationship between governance and human rights, drawing attention to international human rights standards that apply both to donor countries and recipient countries.

While the main focus of the work of donors in this area is at country level, governance is a global issue and the international community too has a responsibility to ensure that it also practises good governance.

The countries where Irish Aid works face a number of governance challenges. These can include political systems that are not yet sufficiently accountable to their citizens, capacity constraints within public institutions, weak civil society, a poor human rights culture and internal conflicts. Corruption and the abuse of power can thrive in such environments.

Irish Aid has been supporting good governance work for many years and has learnt important lessons in that time. This experience will inform the approach in the future.

Universal rights provide the signposts for good governance. However, circumstances differ and there is no single prescription for good governance. Real change takes time. At country level, partner governments must be accountable in the first instance to their own citizens. They, along with donor countries, also have a

responsibility to respect internationally accepted governance norms.

Irish Aid will shape its approach in this area around clearly-identified principles, in particular participation, partnership, transparency, accountability, efficiency and effectiveness, and equality.

*Irish Aid* will support specific good governance interventions drawn from among the following thematic areas:

- fighting corruption
- building democratic systems of government
- building effective institutions for service delivery
- promoting and protecting human rights
- building strong civil society
- strengthening the rule of law
- strengthening media and access to information
- strengthening global and regional governance

Irish Aid will strengthen and focus its institutional capacity in governance, especially in the priority areas identified above.

Irish Aid will work closely with partner governments, international organisations, and civil society organisations. It will help to advance good practice on governance with and in the international donor community.

An appropriate framework will be developed to monitor progress in implementation and ensure that best practice is applied throughout the programme.

## Part I: THE ISSUE

### 1. Introduction

Building good governance is central to the work of *Irish Aid* across the development programme. Without good governance, long-term sustainable development is not possible.

The *White Paper on Irish Aid* describes governance as “the political and institutional capacity of a country to elect accountable government, create and uphold laws, promote and protect people’s rights, meet people’s needs and effectively and fairly manage the resources of the state”.

Good governance is about helping to create the conditions in which women and men are empowered to participate freely in their political, social and economic development and, in so doing, to achieve their potential. It is about helping to achieve proper mobilisation and allocation of public funds, and effective delivery of public services. Essentially it is about helping to build a society where women and men can exercise their rights and lead fulfilling lives. Fighting corruption is an essential element of the pursuit of good governance.

The main focus of the work of donors in this area is on the actions of governments. But the responsibility for delivering good governance is not the preserve of governments alone. It is also the responsibility of citizens, civil society and the private sector. The international community too has a responsibility to ensure that it not only promotes but also practises good governance.

This document describes how the *White Paper’s* commitments on governance can be put into practice. It takes as its starting point the experience that *Irish Aid* has built up over the years in helping developing countries address governance. It develops the idea of governance as a cross-cutting issue to be taken into account in the planning, implementation and evaluation of all *Irish Aid* interventions. It identifies a range of possible governance support measures. It provides guidance on the questions of choice and priority which will vary according to needs and situations. And it addresses the structures within *Irish Aid* which will act as a focal point and help ensure that governance issues are taken into account across the work of the programme.

Other *Irish Aid* policy documents such as the Gender Equality Policy, the Local Development Policy and the Civil Society Policy also inform the approach to governance adopted here and should be read in conjunction with this document.

The extent of the challenge of delivering a balanced, coherent and effective contribution in this area is not to be under-estimated. And the importance of meeting that challenge is clear. It is one which *Irish Aid* must address effectively if it is to succeed in its overarching objective of reducing poverty in developing countries.

## **2. Why Promote Good Governance?**

Addressing governance is critical to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. It is fundamental to all poverty reduction efforts. It is central to improving aid effectiveness. Good governance can yield a powerful development dividend.

Good governance is ultimately about enhancing peoples' rights – the right to security, to a decent life, to basic services such as education, health and clean water, the right to vote, to organise and freely express opinions, and the right to be treated with respect, to seek redress and to due process in law. The international community, including Ireland, has a shared legal responsibility under international law to promote and protect these rights.

Ireland works in the poorest countries. Many of these have, to varying degrees, institutions and governments that are either unable or unwilling to deliver on their responsibilities to their citizens. They frequently suffer from capacity constraints within the executive and other branches of government, weak opposition and civil society, poor human rights culture, and corruption.

The question of 'why address governance' becomes easier to answer when we consider key factors at play in this context.

### ***The Problem of Corruption***

Corruption is a major obstacle to poverty reduction. Both a symptom and a cause of poor governance, it subverts the democratic process and the institutions of government, undermines the rule of law, and erodes public confidence. It discourages investment, reduces economic growth and impacts negatively on service delivery. In particular, it affects the poor by diverting scarce resources from poverty reduction and by increasing inequality.

### ***Incomplete State Formation***

Many states continue to struggle with the legacy of incomplete state formation. Boundaries defined during the colonial era were drawn up with the interests of the then imperial powers in mind. The institutions established during that time superseded traditional ruling systems and in many cases were never fully legitimised in the eyes of citizens.

### ***Conflict and Governance***

Weak governance results in a loss of state legitimacy and can ultimately lead to conflict. An insecure environment often leads to the breakdown of law and order, and can undermine the institutions of the state. Moreover, it inhibits economic development and discourages investment. Competition for natural resources can drive conflict and corruption, and at times seriously undermine governance.

### ***Meeting Basic Needs***

Governments should have the capacity to provide essential services to their citizens and promote an environment conducive to pro-poor economic growth.

### ***Accountability***

Governments in receipt of development assistance have obligations to donors and to the international community to use this assistance for the benefit of their people. This calls for proper systems to safeguard and account for resources in a transparent manner, and the political will and mechanisms to address corruption whenever it arises.

### ***Social exclusion***

Certain groups can be excluded from decisions that affect them, especially women, indigenous communities and people living in chronic poverty. The benefits of development and economic growth need to be distributed equitably in order to reduce poverty. Good governance has an important role to play in fostering greater participation and inclusiveness for marginalised groups.

## **3. Lessons and Challenges for Donors**

The collective experience of the international development community, as well as Ireland's own experience, point up a number of lessons and challenges in designing governance interventions.

### ***Analysis***

Support for good governance must be informed by cogent, clear and comprehensive analysis. Donors need to understand the political, social and economic context when planning and prioritising support. They need to take account of external factors that can impact on the quality of governance such as regional and international conflicts, the arms trade, and the influence of organised international criminal networks. Sound interventions call for careful planning and coordination based on well-informed local knowledge.

### ***Blueprint Approaches***

Universal rights provide the signposts for good governance. However, there is no single blueprint for promoting good governance. What is best practice in one context may be ill-suited in another. National and regional differences are important. The approach adopted in Southeast Asia for instance, follows a different path than that in Africa.

### ***Prioritising***

Donors may find it difficult to prioritise from amongst the reforms to support. But priorities must be identified, and hard choices made, taking into account local needs, the work of other donors, comparative advantages, and strategic entry points. Where the needs are great, the temptation to take on too much should be resisted.

### ***The need for Realism***

Properly crafted good governance interventions can have a sustainable impact, but the timeframe for achieving real progress in weak governance environments is usually long-term. Gains may not be immediately visible. Expectations about what is achievable can often be unrealistic. Capacity can be built and systems improved, but ultimately the achievement of good governance is about leadership and political will. Ireland works in the poorest countries where the need is greatest and where results are most difficult to achieve. While expectations should be tempered with realism, there will be a consistent drive towards incremental progress.

### ***Dialogue***

The balance between raising legitimate governance issues on the one hand, and interfering unduly in a state on the other, is a sensitive one. For instance, whilst channelling aid through government systems provides a platform for direct policy dialogue with partner governments, it also increases the risk of accountability being skewed towards donors. Donors must use their influence to ensure that partner governments are accountable to their own citizens. Irish Aid will ensure its interventions on governance are legitimate and respectful of partner governments' obligations to their citizens.

### ***Do No Harm***

Interventions, although well-intentioned, can have unintended and harmful consequences. The general scaling-up of aid, for example, requires careful handling. Done properly it will accelerate progress towards the Millennium Development Goals. However, the potential impact of additional aid on domestic resource mobilisation must be carefully taken into account, in particular to ward against it becoming a disincentive to revenue-raising, with the result that governments become more accountable to donors than to their own citizens. Governance interventions can be enhanced by sound gender analysis to ensure that they help to promote rather than hinder progress towards gender equality.

### ***Aid Effectiveness***

Donors should ensure the effective delivery of assistance and eliminate overlap and duplication of effort. The *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness*, to which Ireland is a signatory, challenges donors to align their assistance with recipient countries' national strategies and systems and to work together through common arrangements in planning, financing, monitoring and evaluating development interventions. The *Accra Agenda for Action* strengthens the Paris Declaration and makes a strong

commitment to accountability and transparency. It envisages a greater role for parliaments in mutual assessments and in the oversight of aid. It also challenges signatories to broaden country level policy dialogue by including all development actors – parliaments, local governments, civil society organisations, research institutes, media and the private sector. Mutual accountability places obligations on donors, including Ireland, to ensure that their aid practices are consistent with international good practice.

## Part II: IRISH AID RESPONSE

### 4 Objective

The objective for *Irish Aid* is to contribute to reducing poverty by improving the quality of governance at global, regional, national, and sub-national levels. This document helps to shape Irish Aid's approach in this, identifying clear signposts for our action, by:

- Setting out the principles which underpin *Irish Aid's* support for good governance
- Identifying critical interventions that impact positively on governance at global, regional, national and local level
- Providing guidance for engagement in the countries where *Irish Aid* works and with its partners
- Ensuring best practice informed by the lessons of research, experience and clear analysis
- Identifying management arrangements to give effect to *Irish Aid* commitments.

### 5 Principles

The approach of *Irish Aid* to good governance is guided by a clear set of principles:

- *Participation* - women and men should be enabled to influence and share control over the decisions that affect them
- *Partnership* - a shared vision of development that involves a mutual commitment to poverty reduction through dialogue, where the primary responsibility is with the implementing partner
- *Transparency* - a willingness to provide accurate and accessible information
- *Accountability* - a willingness to submit to public scrutiny
- *Efficiency and effectiveness* - institutions should meet their objectives and provide value for money whether in the delivery of services or in building democratic systems
- *Equality* - equal treatment and non-discrimination on the basis of ethnicity, gender, political allegiance, religion, language or other factors

## 6 Priorities

*Irish Aid* will support specific good governance interventions. It has to be selective in its approach, by identifying priority areas where it can add value and make an effective contribution. The choices to be made will reflect needs and circumstances, based on analysis and local knowledge. They will be informed by the principles of aid effectiveness, especially division of labour and comparative advantage, and drawn from among the following thematic areas:

- Fighting Corruption
- Building Democratic Systems of Government
- Building Effective Institutions for Service Delivery
- Promoting and Protecting Human Rights
- Building a Strong Civil Society
- Strengthening the Rule of Law
- Strengthening Media and Access to Information
- Strengthening Global and Regional Governance

### ***Fighting Corruption***

Corruption - the abuse of power for private gain - is undermining development efforts and impacting especially on the poor. In practice it can range from high level corruption involving major procurement and infrastructure contracts, especially those relating to natural resources, down to petty bribes for access to basic services such as health or education.

Tackling corruption effectively is a global challenge. It calls for active involvement and collaboration at the different levels where it occurs, between governments, civil society, the private sector, and the international community. It requires coordination amongst donors. The presence of a democratic culture, allowing the political space for a well-informed and critical citizenry to demand accountability, is critical to addressing corruption. Leadership and political commitment, as well as institutional capacity are needed.

Strengthening public financial management systems in partner countries is particularly important, along with oversight bodies such as auditors general and government inspectorates. Anti-corruption agencies too, if properly resourced and afforded genuine political independence, can have an important impact. Civil society organisations have a comparative advantage in the fight against corruption and must be supported and protected in carrying out their work. Obviously, they are not

exempt from the obligation of putting in place effective internal governance arrangements, and indeed have a particular responsibility in this respect.

This applies also in the case of private business interests. Private sector investors in developing countries should adhere to the highest standards of governance both internally and in their dealings with state institutions and others. The OECD Foreign Bribery Convention, the UN Human Rights Norms for Business, and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative, provide, among others, important reference points for promoting these standards.

Donors too, within their organisational structures, have a responsibility to guard against corruption. They should have systems to account for the proper use of development aid. Governments should ratify and implement the international conventions in this area including the UN Convention on Corruption. Ireland has signed the Convention and work is underway to identify and put in place any domestic legislative requirements that may be needed to allow for its ratification.

Regional initiatives make an important contribution in this area. The Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, in which Ireland is actively involved, helps to improve coordination and advance best practice.

***Irish Aid will fight corruption by:***

- *Helping to put in place the necessary legal frameworks and institutional capacity to fight corruption*
- *Strengthening public financial management systems*
- *Strengthening official oversight mechanisms such as parliamentary committees, an independent auditor general, ethics and anti-corruption commissions and ombudsmen*
- *Supporting access to information to ensure a well-informed and critical public*
- *Supporting governance and specific anti-corruption work of civil society organisations and international NGOs active in this area*
- *Supporting transparent funding of political parties and election campaigns*
- *Applying the highest standards of oversight and accountability to track Irish Aid funds*

## ***Building Democratic Systems of Government***

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights affirms that the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. Governments must be, and must be seen to be, freely and fairly elected. Elections should offer genuine choices to citizens and allow for representation of women and marginalised groups. For democracy to flourish governments must be responsive to the interests of their citizens; they must govern fairly, respect human rights, and uphold the rule of law.

Properly functioning parliaments are critical to ensuring that the voice of citizens is heard and governments are held to account. In many developing countries legislators lack the resources and training to exercise their role effectively. More importantly, excessive concentration of power in the executive branch of government weakens parliament's oversight role.

The participation of women and marginalised groups in the formulation and implementation of government policy and in holding public office is also important.

### ***Irish Aid will help to build democratic systems of government by:***

- *Strengthening electoral processes including legislative frameworks, independent electoral commissions, civic education programmes and election monitoring*
- *Supporting measures to allow women and marginalised groups to organise and develop a political voice around elections*
- *Strengthening the independence and capacity of parliaments*
- *Strengthening independent institutions of redress*
- *Supporting measures to build capacity for independent policy analysis and debate within government, academia and civil society at country level*
- *Supporting governments to mobilise domestic resources through equitable taxation systems*
- *Supporting civil society initiatives that monitor and hold to account the work of governments and public bodies*

### ***Building Effective Institutions for Service Delivery***

Good governance requires effective government machinery to deliver services to citizens, especially to the poor. This includes education, health, water and sanitation, as well as infrastructure and utilities. Responsibility for regulating and providing these services lies with governments, but civil society organisations and the private sector play a complementary role. Citizens, especially women and men living in poverty, have a right to contribute to decisions about resource allocation for service delivery.

Good governance requires a commitment to a robust public financial management system, including public procurement and contracting, to ensure transparency and accountability to citizens and to the donor community.

Patronage and the politicisation of the public sector undermine accountability. Weak capacity, especially in planning and analysis, is a major challenge. Poor conditions of service create particular problems and often lead to a haemorrhaging of skilled professionals from poor countries where they are most needed.

Public sector reform has traditionally focused on the twin aims of reducing the public sector to an affordable level and improving quality. With some exceptions, these efforts have not met with much success. Reforms have often been imposed from outside without adequate consideration for either the political realities in the countries concerned or the need for locally-designed and owned processes.

Decentralising authority for public services delivery to local level, involving responsibility for fiscal resources, revenue generation and decision-making requires careful handling but can help to reduce poverty by providing for greater local involvement and making services more effective.

#### ***Irish Aid will help to improve service delivery by:***

- *Improving capacity in key ministries within governments, especially finance, planning and public service, as well as health, education, and water and sanitation*
- *Building capacity in areas such as planning, analysis and public financial management*
- *Supporting decentralisation of service delivery to local level and building the capacity of local governments and non-governmental organisations*
- *Promoting accountability to public service users, especially women and men living in poverty*
- *Strengthening management for results, including the identification of indicators related to the priority issues of good governance, gender, HIV/AIDS and environment*

### ***Promoting and Protecting Human Rights***

Respect for human rights - civil, political, economic, social and cultural leads to better governance. Certain groups experience violations of their basic rights, especially women. Advancing these rights is more challenging in countries where political, economic and administrative systems are weak, and especially among vulnerable groups such as those affected by HIV/AIDS. While there has been progress in establishing the necessary legal frameworks and institutions, this has not yet translated into real change for the poor in many parts of the world. The right to basic services such as health and education for all is still a long way from being realised.

Access to justice too is far from being achieved. Freedom of association and expression is still severely curtailed in many countries. Human rights abuses, especially gender-based violence, are prevalent in conflict and post-conflict situations.

#### ***Pastoralist Land Rights Project***

*Pastoralism is a nomadic way of life centred around the ownership and care of animals. It is particularly suited to dry-land areas.*

*In Tanzania, pastoralists are amongst the most marginalised groups. They are remote from centres of support and authority, making it difficult for them to access public services such as healthcare and education. They are isolated from political life, with little representation in decision-making processes. They face competition for their traditional grazing lands from commercial farming, mining and small-scale agriculture.*

*Irish Aid has helped set up a support mechanism to improve the livelihoods of pastoralist communities, by strengthening their capacity to engage with national and local development processes.*

*The critical issue which needs to be urgently addressed for pastoralists is land rights. Capacity is also being built in conflict resolution and mediation, especially around sharing of natural resources between crop farmers, local government and pastoralists.*

***Irish Aid will promote and protect human rights by:***

- *Strengthening legislative frameworks for human rights, as well as national and international governmental and non-governmental human rights institutions*
- *Strengthening institutions and building capacity to enable all those responsible for fostering human rights to carry out their responsibilities*
- *Supporting human rights education and awareness-raising programmes*
- *Promoting initiatives to monitor, document and publicise human rights abuses*
- *Identifying measures to protect human rights defenders in conformity with the relevant EU Guidelines adopted in 2004*
- *Providing legal aid programmes for victims of human rights abuses*
- *Engaging in dialogue with partner governments, especially where they fail to uphold human rights norms and values*

## ***Building a Strong Civil Society***

Within the governance arena, civil society can be seen as the space in which citizens exercise their right to participate and hold government to account. A strong civil society can help to deliver good governance. Civil society organisations can input into policy formulation and generate demand for better service delivery, in particular where opposition politics is weak. It can also help to strengthen democracy by exposing corruption and human rights abuses and by challenging governments to be more transparent and accountable.

Civil society organisations bring a unique experience and perspective to development that enables the voice of communities to be heard and understood in a way which is often not possible at the national level. This places an onus on governments to allow for a multiplicity of voices in the national development effort by encouraging civil society involvement and fostering a culture of partnership.

Civil society cannot and should not take the place of governments. They should not build parallel systems that undermine government systems or distort democratic institutions. Civil society organisations also have obligations to apply the highest standards of good governance in their own institutions, including facilitating the equal participation of women and men.

### ***Irish Aid will help to build a strong civil society by:***

- *Strengthening the capacity of civil society to engage in oversight activities, policy analysis, debate and advocacy*
- *Engaging in dialogue with governments and civil society to improve the regulatory environment within which civil society operates*
- *Facilitating participatory development and greater involvement in decentralised structures*
- *Fostering pluralism and acceptance of the concept of lawful opposition*
- *Supporting organisations which provide a voice for weak and marginalised groups*
- *Encouraging equal opportunity for women and men to participate in dialogue between government and civil society*

### ***Strengthening the Rule of Law***

The rule of law provides the necessary framework within which states, institutions and citizens must operate. Responsibility is shared with, amongst others, justice ministries, public prosecutors, police and prison services. Coordination between them is often weak. Reforms of these institutions need to be carried out across the board in a coherent way.

In many developing countries, legal and judicial systems are very weak. Institutions are poorly equipped and legal frameworks often outdated and bureaucratic. Custom and tradition can sometimes offer accessible and credible options for dispute resolution but this is not always recognised or incorporated within the formal legal system. Ultimately, formal legal systems based on internationally agreed norms, should be the most important source of protection and redress.

An effective, functioning legal system is essential not only for protecting rights but also for creating the conditions to enable investment and promote sustainable economic growth. Sound, reliable property rights, effectively enforced, help to stimulate domestic and foreign investment. They also provide special protection for marginalised groups, particularly indigenous people, whose livelihoods are threatened by the absence of formal title to traditional lands.

Progress in rule of law is also dependent on a commitment to freedom of expression and association, as well as to the protection of human rights defenders.

#### ***Strengthening Justice, Law and Order in Uganda***

*A reform programme in the Justice, Law and Order Sector was started in Uganda in 2000 to help the system recover from years of civil strife and under-development. With the support of Irish Aid, significant reforms have taken place since then in the judiciary, government ministries, public prosecutors, police and prison services.*

*Training has been provided, courts have been constructed and public awareness has been increased. Outdated laws are being changed. Law reports and journals are now being published. Prison facilities have been rehabilitated and community service is being introduced as an alternative. The length of stay on remand has reduced from an average of 24 months to 15 months for serious offences. Civil society organisations are helping to provide legal aid and promote juvenile justice.*

*As a result, Uganda now has a stronger and more independent judiciary, a grassroots system of local courts, and a functioning police force and prison system.*

***Irish Aid will support strengthening the rule of law in partner countries through:***

- *Legal reforms that help to promote pro-poor economic growth and facilitate investment*
- *Legal education, for both professionals and citizens on their legal rights and obligations*
- *Institutional capacity building across the justice sector including the judiciary, prosecution, police and prison services, bar associations, and legal aid services, as well as measures to enhance coordination and coherence within the sector*
- *Improving access to both formal and informal systems of justice that can deliver redress consistent with universal human rights and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women*
- *Providing technical support to institutions engaged in support to the justice sector in developing countries*

## ***Strengthening Media and Access to Information***

Media freedom and access to information - important dimensions of freedom of expression – are powerful forces for better governance and sustainable development.

Critical, well-informed, well-resourced and responsible media can be a vital agent of change in developing countries. Both state-owned and independent media play a key role in support of democratic processes - in fostering debate, providing the public with accurate information and in increasing public understanding on the decisions that affect peoples' lives.

### ***Media in Africa***

*Historically, print and electronic media in many parts of Africa have been dominated by government ownership and, for reasons of cost, distance, language and illiteracy, have been beyond the reach of many. Journalists are poorly trained and badly paid. The quality of reporting is often poor.*

*Radio has the potential to reach more people than any other medium in Africa. Zambia's relatively liberal media regime has permitted the licensing of nearly 30 private radio stations, most of them community based and broadcasting in local languages. Irish Aid is assisting a number of these stations to reach many thousands of poor people living in isolated communities who would not otherwise benefit from this medium. A longer term objective is to make these stations self-sustainable.*

*The media has begun to play a more prominent role in strengthening public accountability in Africa. In Tanzania, Irish Aid and other donors will help to develop the capacity of the media to undertake investigative journalism and provide more independent and reliable information of public interest.*

In many developing countries, journalists work in challenging environments. Capacity, especially in training, analysis and investigative journalism, is a major challenge. The free flow of information can be restricted by legislation or by practical factors such as cost and distance.

In recent years there have been improvements in this area in some countries. State monopolies on print and electronic media have been broken. Privately-owned print media have grown in number and importance. International support has rallied behind journalists imprisoned for political reasons. Privately-owned radio stations, especially community-based ones, have proliferated - a promising development in societies with low literacy rates and average daily incomes less than the price of a newspaper. Satellite radio and television have broadened information horizons as has the growth of internet access.

Already these trends are having a significant positive impact on governance. But much remains to be done, particularly to bridge the "digital divide" which excludes the poorest of the poor from the benefits of the information revolution.

It is critical that donors advocate for greater openness, greater access and increased freedom for the electronic and print media in their dialogue with partner governments.

***Irish Aid will help to promote access to information and to build professional media by:***

- *Encouraging legislation conducive to the development of a vibrant independent media sector, including access to the Internet*
- *Supporting reforms to improve the environment for journalists to operate freely, responsibly and professionally*
- *Building the capacity of the media, especially in professional ethics, analysis and investigative journalism including through training and research support in partner countries and in Ireland as required*
- *Encouraging greater cooperation between the media and civil society organisations*
- *Encouraging equal participation of women and men in the media*

## ***Global and Regional Governance***

The international community has a responsibility to promote good governance. It must also ensure that the structures through which it works reflect the highest standards of good governance.

Organisations such as the UN, OECD/DAC, Council of Europe, as well as the World Bank play essential roles in their respective areas of competence.

The European Union is increasingly active in the area of governance. It has put in place further mechanisms in favour of good governance in the framework of the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund covering the period 2008-2013, including incentive mechanisms to encourage reform.

Regional and sub-regional initiatives are important too in promoting good governance. Peer pressure within a region is often more effective and politically acceptable than pressures applied from outside by the international community. A number of regional governance initiatives have been established which give cause for optimism about improvements in governance in the long term.

Within Africa, regional initiatives include the Pan African Parliament, the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights, and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). The APRM was launched in 2003 in the framework of the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD). It is intended to monitor progress on governance and to ensure compliance by participating states with agreed political, economic and corporate governance values, codes and standards.

In Asia, the Asian Development Bank has adopted good governance as one of three pillars of its Poverty Reduction Strategy.

### ***Irish Aid will strengthen global and regional governance by:***

- *Harmonising governance work with other donors, in particular through the OECD DAC and EU*
- *Supporting the work of international organisations in promoting good governance*
- *Supporting regional initiatives engaged in promoting good governance*
- *Advocacy work to allow developing countries a greater influence at international level*

## **7. Ways of Working**

### ***Mainstreaming Governance***

Governance is mainstreamed across the programme, in line with the commitments in the *White Paper* and the Irish Aid Mainstreaming Strategy. This involves building up institutional competence and increasing the understanding of the causes of poor governance, both internal and external, and how these affect partner institutions. It also involves identifying entry points through which good governance can be advanced. In doing so, *Irish Aid* will work with international organisations, with partner governments and with civil society organisations to build networks to advance good governance.

### ***A Coherent and Harmonised Approach***

A coherent and consistent approach to good governance will be applied across *Irish Aid*. It will be informed by the principles and will address the priority areas identified above. The approach adopted will be aligned with partner countries' national development plans and will incorporate systems of accountability. This will involve joint analysis and dialogue at international, national, and sub-national level, as well as engagement with civil society organisations both at home and abroad.

*Irish Aid's* engagement will be determined mainly by the quality of governance in partners' institutions. It will take into consideration the level of commitment to the principles set out above, as well as internationally recognised governance criteria and benchmarks. In particular, the commitment to promoting and protecting human rights, to democratic processes, to transparency, accountability and sound financial management will be central in assessing the form and scale of *Irish Aid's* engagement.

### ***A Mix of Modalities***

Official development assistance can be delivered in various ways, ranging from technical assistance to commodities or cash; from individual projects to general budget support; from bilateral programmes to participation in multilateral consortia; from assistance delivered by organs of governments to programmes carried out by non-governmental organisations. *Irish Aid's* experience has been that recourse to a mixture of modalities strikes a good balance by allowing donors to engage at several levels in society and to monitor the impact of aid effectively.

The modality chosen will depend on the particular context. Where possible, programmatic approaches will be used. Pooled funding arrangements with other donors will be the preferred option for channelling support. However, support to individual projects is not excluded.

### ***Advancing Policy Dialogue***

Policy dialogue will continue to provide an important channel for promoting good governance. This will include direct engagement with partner governments through national poverty reduction strategies, through budget support mechanisms, at sectoral

and district level with government ministries and local authorities, and through individual programmes and projects.

Irish Aid will encourage the involvement of civil society organisations, especially critical voices and those representing marginalised groups, in policy processes that affect their lives.

Governance indicators will provide a reference point and will be used in monitoring and evaluating the impact of *Irish Aid's* work, including where appropriate those drawn up with development partners.

*Irish Aid* will engage in policy dialogue with international organisations and civil society institutions. This will include dialogue on improving the governance of these institutions, through for instance ensuring democratic representation and ownership on the part of developing countries.

## **8. With Whom Will *Irish Aid* Work?**

Irish Aid will build on the existing partnerships and networks that it has developed over the years. It will work directly with governments, through multilateral and international organisations, and civil society organisations. It will also explore opportunities to work with Irish institutions that can assist in building capacity to improve governance in developing countries.

### ***Global and Regional***

At international level, *Irish Aid* will work with multilateral and intergovernmental organisations that are directly involved in promoting good governance.

*Irish Aid* will also work with bodies engaged in promoting good governance at regional level such as the African Union/NEPAD. It will work to advance policy and best practice in its engagement with institutions such as the World Bank and the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD.

The EU has stepped up its action in support of good governance, in particular through the Governance Initiative for the Africa. Ireland will work with the Commission and other Member States to enhance policy coherence in the EU approach to governance.

### ***Bilateral***

*Irish Aid* will support partner governments in addressing the ‘supply side’ of good governance under the priority areas highlighted above. This will include partnerships with government ministries and local authorities, parliaments, human rights commissions and other oversight institutions. The main entry point at country level will be the country strategy planning process which sets out a mid term strategy of up to five years.

*Irish Aid* engagement at country level will be influenced by factors such as commitment to democratisation, respect for human rights, the quality of financial management systems, and commitment to fighting corruption. Indicators will generally be agreed between partners and the donor community as part of a quality assurance framework. At country level these will often be linked to a National Development Plan.

### ***Civil Society***

*Irish Aid* will help to strengthen the ‘demand side’ of good governance through its work with both the Irish NGO community and local civil society organisations. Both the Multi-Annual Programming Scheme (MAPS) and the Block Grant Scheme will continue to provide important mechanisms for support to good governance through civil society organisations in Ireland.

## Part III: MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT

### 9. Management Structures

In line with the *White Paper*, the internal organisation of *Irish Aid* will be adapted as necessary to reflect the commitment to supporting good governance. Responsibility for work on governance – as a mainstreamed area - will be shared across the various sections within *Irish Aid*. Specific focus will be given to it through a Governance Team comprising officers from a number of sections in *Irish Aid*. The Team will work closely with the Human Rights Unit and the Conflict Resolution Unit to develop programme strategies in the area of human rights and support to peace-building and post-conflict governance.

The Governance Team will oversee implementation of the approach set out in this document, and ensure coherence across the range of *Irish Aid* activities. It will provide advice and support on good governance across the organisation. It will provide a planning resource for *Irish Aid* as a whole in making choices and identifying priorities among possible governance interventions.

The Team will monitor research, lessons-learned, evaluation and best practice on governance ensuring that this informs *Irish Aid's* actions, taking account of the linkages between good governance and the other cross-cutting issues.

Management of the programme will require specialist expertise in good governance, particularly in political analysis and in the priority areas that will be supported by *Irish Aid*. At country level, locally-recruited governance advisors will provide advice and support to the management team in implementing the programme.

Ultimately, promoting good governance is a responsibility for all staff. They will be provided with the necessary competencies and skills to ensure that good governance is mainstreamed at all levels across the *Irish Aid* programme.

Given the scope of the governance agenda, it will be important that the *Irish Aid* engagement is tailored to take account of its capacity to deliver effectively and to ensure thorough oversight of its activities.

## 10. Monitoring

In undertaking this work, it is essential to have an appropriate framework to monitor progress in implementation of the approach and ensure that best practice is applied throughout the programme. Benchmarks will be developed to monitor the implementation, in particular its relevance and practical utility, the extent to which good governance is prioritised as a cross-cutting issue across the programme, and the extent to which the lessons and experiences of research and best practice are reflected in *Irish Aid's* good governance work.

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## **Acronyms**

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
APRM	African Peer Review Mechanism
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
EU	European Union
JLOS	Justice, Law and Order Sector
MAPS	Multi-Annual Programming Scheme
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme