## Fact sheet: Disability inclusiveness of development and humanitarian aid in **IRELAND**

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| [**Irish Aid**](https://www.irishaid.ie/)**’s strong policy focus on putting the “furthest behind first” offers a natural opportunity for Ireland to become a leader in disability inclusion. The evidence reviewed for this fact sheet does not suggest that Irish Aid has yet made the most of this opportunity: policies and processes rarely emphasise disability, and more could be done to engage with organisations of persons with disabilities (DPOs). But Irish Aid has begun to make promising improvements on some important procedural drivers of inclusion – guidance, approval processes, and expenditure tracking (with particularly rapid uptake of the** [**disability ‘DAC marker’**](http://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2020/12/information_disability_marker_may_2020.docx)**). These improvements could be the first step towards a more ambitious approach to disability in future.** |

**Methods used:** review of documents in the public domain ; review of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Creditor Reporting System database ; interviews with Irish Aid ; exchange with CBM Ireland. The review took place between July and September 2020.

For important context on the scope of the work, please refer to the [methodology document](https://www.edf-feph.org/content/uploads/2020/11/Mapping-inclusivenss_methodology_final.docx)

### **Key facts**

### **STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP**

Clear commitments in strategy documents and leaders’ statements have a key role to play in driving the department-wide changes needed for disability inclusion.

* **Ministry in charge of international development and humanitarian action**: [Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade](https://www.dfa.ie/our-role-policies/irish-aid/). [Irish Aid](https://www.irishaid.ie/) is a division within the Department. Spending through the Department amounted to around 97% of Ireland’s total allocable Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending in 2018.[[1]](#footnote-1)
* **National strategy/policy on disability**: Ireland has a 49-page [National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021](https://assets.gov.ie/18901/26182a87ecf84ddd8d60c215c0ce2520.pdf), but it does not cover international cooperation.
* **Law on ODA:** There is no separate law on ODA. The Irish Parliament rules on Official Development spending every year through its annual budget.[[2]](#footnote-2)
* **Overall strategy/policy on international cooperation and humanitarian action**: Ireland’s policy for development cooperation and humanitarian action, [A Better World](https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/aboutus/abetterworldirelandspolicyforinternationaldevelopment/A-Better-World-Irelands-Policy-for-International-Development.pdf) (2019) has “a focus on the furthest behind first” as its central theme.[[3]](#footnote-3) The policy says that Irish Aid plans to reach persons with disabilities (as part of a list of different disempowered groups) through its work on strengthening institutions, and its work on enhancing access to social services, though it does not go into detail on how it will do so.[[4]](#footnote-4)
* **Strategy/policy on disability in international cooperation and humanitarian action:** Ireland does not yet have a strategy or policy on disability in international cooperation and humanitarian action.
* **Charter on inclusion of persons with disabilities in humanitarian action:** Ireland has not yet endorsed the [Charter](http://humanitariandisabilitycharter.org/), but during interviews it was confirmed that Irish Aid supports the Charter’s principles and hopes to sign in future.[[5]](#footnote-5)
* **Evidence of senior commitment to disability inclusion in international cooperation and humanitarian action:**  In July 2020, shortly after coming into post, the Minister for International Development Mr Ciaran Cannon took part in a high-level round table to highlight the importance of including persons with disabilities in COVID-19 response and recovery.[[6]](#footnote-6)
* **Engagement in the** [**Global Action on Disability (GLAD) Network**](https://gladnetwork.net/): Ireland is a member of the GLAD Network.
* **Other engagement on disability inclusion with international actors in the fields of development cooperation and humanitarian action**: When Ireland was chair of the advisory group for the UN’s Central Emergency Response Fund, it supported proposals to include disability as one of four ‘underfunded priority areas’ for country-based pooled [humanitarian] funds.[[7]](#footnote-7)

### **ENGAGEMENT WITH DPOs**

High-quality engagement with DPOs is fundamental. Not only does it make development cooperation and humanitarian action legally compliant and technically stronger in the short term. By strengthening the disability movement and making space for real participation – as the “subject of action”, not the “object of intervention”,[[8]](#footnote-8) it also contributes to the redistribution of power that is a pre-requisite for sustainable disability-inclusive development in the long-term.[[9]](#footnote-9)

* **DPO engagement in Ireland’s ODA:** Irish Aid regularly engages with the Dóchas Disability in International Development Working Group – a group within the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Associations that includes both DPO and NGO membership – on policy issues.[[10]](#footnote-10) But the review undertaken for this fact sheet did not find evidence that Irish Aid routinely involves DPOs in the design, implementation and monitoring of its mainstream programmes. During interviews an example of Irish Aid engagement with DPOs in Ethiopia was mentioned,[[11]](#footnote-11) but based on the documents reviewed for this fact sheet it was not possible to conclude how far DPOs in the Global South have the opportunity to engage with Irish Aid systematically across its whole portfolio. Available data from the OECD Creditor Reporting System database suggests that Irish Aid did not allocate any grants directly to DPOs in the Global South in 2018, although the database does not contain sufficient granularity to tell whether such funding reached DPOs through sub-grants.[[12]](#footnote-12)

### **INTERNAL CAPACITY**

Successfully implementing disability-inclusive development cooperation and humanitarian action requires sufficient staff with relevant skills and experience.

* **Human resources for work on disability**: One advisor has lead responsibility for disability inclusion (alongside some other responsibilities); there is also an official with responsibility for disability-inclusive human resourcing (in line with broader cross-public sector commitments on employment of persons with disabilities). Other staff across Irish Aid’s geographic and thematic teams also work on disability in collaboration with the lead advisor, but it is difficult to quantify the total staff time devoted to disability exactly.[[13]](#footnote-13) Irish Aid is exploring setting up a system of disability champions across the division in future.[[14]](#footnote-14) In making comparisons it should be noted that Irish Aid’s total staff complement is relatively small compared with some other ODA providers, although it was not possible to isolate a precise Irish Aid staff number from the larger total who work at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in general.[[15]](#footnote-15)
* **Tools and guidance for work on disability:** Irish Aid has drafted a guidance note, which gives practical advice on making different types of programmes inclusive of and accessible to persons with disabilities. It is also developing a guideline to support use of the disability DAC marker in the humanitarian sector. The guides are not yet in the public domain.[[16]](#footnote-16)
* **Recognition for staff work on disability:** This review did not find any evidence of specific performance incentives for staff work on disability.

### **MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING**

It is essential for management and reporting processes to create positive incentives that foster disability inclusion, and avoid perverse incentives that lead to exclusion.

* **Budgeting for disability inclusion:** There is not yet a policy on budgeting for additional costs of inclusion. However, during the interview with Irish Aid it was suggested that the aid programme’s overall ethos of reaching the furthest behind first may act as some control against any perverse incentive to work only with the people who are cheapest to reach.[[17]](#footnote-17)
* **Programme management:** Before funding is approved, Irish Aid requires staff to justify (among other factors) how proposed programmes will address cross-cutting issues. Once the guidance note on disability is finalised, Irish Aid plans to include disability in the list of cross-cutting issues that must be considered before a programme can be funded (although it has yet to decide whether this will be as a stand-alone issue or part of a wider heading on ‘the furthest behind first’).[[18]](#footnote-18)
* **Grant management:** Grantees are sometimes asked to share details of their policy on disabiity, and some larger scale grant schemes include a question on disability, but disability inclusion is not yet a formal requirement.[[19]](#footnote-19) (Please note that in examining this indicator the review focused on civil society organisations and multilateral agencies. Incentives to include persons with disabilities in other channels of ODA spending were beyond the scope of this work, although that would be an important area for future research).
* **Procurement:** Based on documents found online, it was not possible to conclude whether Irish Aid’s procurement policy includes any requirement that the goods and services procured must be accessible for persons with disabilities.
* **Disaggregated data and other reporting:** Irish Aid is currently reviewing its results framework, so it was difficult to conclude on this indicator in detail. The new framework is likely to include some mention of disability, although it will not yet include disability disaggregated data.[[20]](#footnote-20) (Please see ‘spending’ section below for reporting using the ‘DAC marker’).
* **Checks to detect and prevent ODA spending on activities that contravene the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) - e.g. forced psychiatric treatment:[[21]](#footnote-21)** In principle, spending that contravened the CRPD would be detected through Irish Aid’s field monitoring processes. However, it was beyond the scope of this review to check whether all staff have sufficient familiarity with the CRPD to detect all risks of contravention in practice.

### **SPENDING**

Spending data shows the scale of an ODA provider’s investment in international cooperation and humanitarian action. Subject to some limitations, it also gives a snapshot of how much that ODA provider’s spending aimed to be inclusive of persons with disabilities.

* **Ireland’s total Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending**: US $ 935 million (822 million Euros) in 2019. This was 0.31% of Gross National Income.[[22]](#footnote-22)
* **Percentage of allocable ODA spending screened using the disability ‘DAC marker’ in 2018:[[23]](#footnote-23)** 99%.[[24]](#footnote-24)
* **Percentage of total allocable ODA spending[[25]](#footnote-25) with disability inclusion as at least one objective in 2018**: 25%.[[26]](#footnote-26) (In interpreting this result, please note that reporting is based on self-assessment and there is no ex-post process to check different ODA providers’ reported results for methodological consistency). [Please see this link for listings of the individual projects](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1SGKDb6IYAEV3KjkH5U_aGDpxaUSXBTiZohVs4MehWUo/edit?usp=sharing) that had disability inclusion as at least one objective [please note the link contains two separate sheets].[[27]](#footnote-27)

**Annex A: Key questions for future analysis and advocacy[[28]](#footnote-28)**

1. Ireland’s current National Disability Inclusion Strategy, which covers the period to 2021, does not cover international cooperation. What plans are there to include development cooperation and humanitarian action in the next strategy?
2. Irish Aid is taking some positive steps to increase the emphasis on disability inclusion in its work, such as its forthcoming guidance note. What consideration has been given to formalising these recent steps into a strategy or action plan that would signal Irish Aid’s ambitions on disability inclusion and allow it to set timescales for action?
3. What steps does Irish Aid plan to take to ensure that organisations of persons with disabilities systematically participate throughout its policy and programme work (mainstream work as well as disability-specific)?
4. Please could you share an update on the progress of Irish Aid’s guidance note on inclusion of persons with disabilities? Please could you share more about how the guidance note will be incorporated into the process for considering cross-cutting issues before spending is approved?
5. We understand that some Irish Aid grant schemes include a question on disability. What plans does Irish Aid have to build on this and make disability inclusion a requirement for grantees in future?
6. Please could you share an update on how disability will be included in the next version of Irish Aid’s results framework? Does Irish Aid have plans to work towards reporting disability disaggregated data?

**Annex B: Ireland’s priority countries**

Ireland’s ‘key partner countries’ for development cooperation are: Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia. Ireland also has bilateral programmes in Liberia, Palestine, South Africa and Zimbabwe.[[29]](#footnote-29)

Ireland allocates humanitarian ODA to countries and crises through a ‘categorisation of need’ process.[[30]](#footnote-30)

### **Annex C: key DPO and other contacts**

### Key DPOs and DPO-civil society alliances: [Disability Federation of Ireland](https://www.disability-federation.ie/), [Dochas disability in international development working group](https://dochas.ie/our-work/working-groups) (the group includes both DPOs and NGOs)

1. Source : Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development’s Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC), [Creditor Reporting System](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1). Calculated on a commitments basis. ‘Allocable’ ODA spending is a category defined by the OECD – it is this category that the OECD deems most relevant for analysis on disability inclusion. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Interview with Irish Aid. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Page 13. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Pages 21 and 29. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Interview with Irish Aid. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. GLAD, 2020, ‘[Press release: virtual high level roundtable on the issue of COVID-19 and disability](https://gladnetwork.net/search/news/press-release-virtual-high-level-round-table-issue-covid-19-and-disability)’. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Interview with Irish Aid. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Quote from Giampiero Griffo (DPI Italia), personal correspondence [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. See for example European Disability Forum, [Guidance note on the role of European organistions of persons with disabilities in development cooperation](http://www.edf-feph.org/sites/default/files/guidance_note_on_dpo_involvement_in_international_cooperation_0.pdf), pp. 6-7. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Exchange with CBM Ireland. The Disability in International Development Working Group works to influence Irish Aid and other state organisations, decision makers and policy makers to take action to integrate disability as a key issue for future development interventions and funding; raise awareness among Irish development organisations on the position of persons with disabilities in the Global South with the aim of these organisations mainstreaming disability into their development and humanitarian programmes; and to share best practice and knowledge in order to build capacity for disability inclusive development and humanitarian programming. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Interview with Irish Aid [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Source: analysis of the [Creditor Reporting System](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1) database. [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Interview with Irish Aid. For the public sector commitments, see National Disability Authority, ‘[Employment of people with disabilities in the public service](http://nda.ie/Publications/Employment/Employment-of-people-with-disabilities-in-the-public-service/)’ [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Interview with Irish Aid. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. As at the end of 2018, the total number of staff working for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade was around 1800, but this covers a wide variety of functions besides Irish Aid work (source : [DFAT Annual Report 2018](https://www.dfa.ie/media/dfa/aboutus/annualreport2018/DFAT-Annual-Report-2018.pdf), p.49). [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Interview with Irish Aid [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Interview with Irish Aid [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Interview with Irish Aid [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. Exchange with CBM Ireland and interview with Irish Aid [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Interview with Irish Aid [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. This indicator looks at what ODA is spent on, and whether this directly contributes to activities that are contrary to the provisions of the CRPD. For the wider questions of whether ODA spending contributes to activities that fulfil the CRPD, and whether the **way** that ODA is spent complies with the CRPD by enabling the active involvement of DPOs, please refer to the other sections of this fact-sheet. [↑](#footnote-ref-21)
22. Source: OECD DAC, [2019 preliminary ODA data](https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-data/ODA-2019-detailed-summary.pdf), Table 1. Exchange rates calculated using the [IMF’s data tables](https://www.imf.org/external/np/fin/data/rms_mth.aspx?SelectDate=2019-06-30&reportType=REP) (data for the mid-point of the year, 28 June 2019). [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The ‘**DAC marker**’ is a new tool introduced to the OECD DAC’s ODA database. It allows ODA providers to flag whether their spending aims to be disability inclusive. ([More information on the DAC marker is available here](https://inclusive-policy.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/OECD-DAC-data-guide-disability-marker_1.0.pdf)). **Allocable ODA spending** is a category defined by the OECD. It describes types of ODA spending that can more easily be controlled and monitored directly by ODA providers (e.g. project spending is easier to control and monitor directly, compared with debt relief). [↑](#footnote-ref-23)
24. Source : OECD DAC [Creditor Reporting System](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1). Calculated on a commitments basis. [↑](#footnote-ref-24)
25. For full accountability, this calculation includes **all** allocable ODA spending – both that which Irish Aid screened using the marker, and that which it did not. [↑](#footnote-ref-25)
26. Source : OECD DAC [Creditor Reporting System](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1). Calculated on a commitments basis. The 25% figure includes spending with disability inclusion as its « principal objective » and spending with disability inclusion as a « significant objective ». In Ireland’s case the vast majority of such spending falls into the second of these two categories – « significant objective ». [↑](#footnote-ref-26)
27. Source : derived from OECD DAC [Creditor Reporting System](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=CRS1). [↑](#footnote-ref-27)
28. Please note readers are advised not to draw comparisons between different ODA providers on the basis of the questions in this annex : the questions have been tailored to individual contexts and are not an indication of relative performance. [↑](#footnote-ref-28)
29. Irish Aid, ‘[Countries where we work](https://www.irishaid.ie/what-we-do/countries-where-we-work/)’ page. Irish ODA also flows to other countries through implementing partners such as multilateral agencies and civil society organisations (source: Irish Aid ‘[international organisations](https://www.irishaid.ie/what-we-do/who-we-work-with/international-organisations/)’ page; analysis of OECD DAC [Creditor Reporting System](https://stats.oecd.org/Index.aspx?DataSetCode=crs1) database). [↑](#footnote-ref-29)
30. Irish Aid, 2015, [Humanitarian Assistance Policy](https://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/20newsandpublications/publicationpdfsenglish/Humanitarian-Assistance-Policy-2015.pdf), pp. 15-16. [↑](#footnote-ref-30)