

Grand Bargain in 2021:

Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: Ireland

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Grand Bargain in 2021

Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2021?

In 2021, Ireland made significant progress to further improve the quality of funding. Some key actions and results are summarised below;

Ireland has continued to strengthen the quality of its funding. In 2021, we reached 100% of our humanitarian funding as flexible, and over 50% was core funding. In addition, over 51% was multi-annual (MA). We made deliberate choices to support funding mechanisms that promote anticipatory action (such as START Ready and CERF) and encouraged our NGO partners to use Ireland's pre-positioned funding for anticipatory action.

In 2021 Ireland designed a new funding mechanism for our NGO partners, Ireland's Civil Society Partnership (ICSP) brings together funding for acute humanitarian crises (short term), chronic humanitarian crises (long term) and development programming. It will facilitate NGO partners to strengthen linkages across humanitarian and development programming and brings our humanitarian funding into the same five-year cycle as our development funding.

The ICSP promotes responsive and adaptive programming, particularly in fragile contexts. NGOs can (if they wish) submit a joint proposal for humanitarian and development programming and report jointly. We are making important internal changes to facilitate flexibility between humanitarian and development budget lines and to have a more coherent approach to managing our NGO partners.

Ireland's progress on quality funding underpins progress across many of the Grand Bargain commitments. Our 100% flexible funding facilitates, for example, our partners to support cash programming as appropriate. The provision of MA funding facilitates better context analysis and planning – a pre-requisite for more inclusive, participative and accountable humanitarian action. It also supports longer-term approaches to partnerships that support and empower local actors and promote civil society space.

Question 2: Briefly explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority 1 (quality funding).

All the actions outlined above contribute to Ireland making strong progress on the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority of quality funding. Despite the very challenging economic climate, Ireland increased its humanitarian funding in 2021. Across the board, we maintained levels of funding to our partners, and in many cases, we increased levels of funding.

The ICSP is a significant restructuring of NGO funding that makes an important contribution to this enabling priority. It represents a major funding mechanism (over €450 million over five years) that supports our NGO partners to strengthen approaches and deepen focus on issues that underpin strong humanitarian and development programming and will support programmes that work across the nexus and respond to dynamic and evolving needs

Ireland's high levels of flexible (100%) and MA funding (over 51%) make an important contribution to an effective and efficient response. It allows our partners – NGOs, UN agencies and the Red Cross Family – to respond quickly and appropriately, where the needs are greatest. In 2021, we saw how important this was as the context changed in Ethiopia and Mozambique.

Question 3: Briefly explain how the outcomes contribute to achieving the Grand Bargain 2.0 enabling priority 2 (localisation and participation).

Supporting localisation and participation is central to Ireland's decision-making process regarding which partners to fund and what type of funding to provide.

Flexible and MA funding is vitally important to support localisation and participation. Our experience over the years is that this approach supports more meaningful and equal partnerships with communities, local authorities and local and national NGOs. MA and flexible funding provides the necessary space and time to identify, invest and partner with local actors and stakeholders.

Ireland's funding provides overheads and institutional strengthening of local actors – supporting an important shift from local partners as short-term sub-contractors to local partners at the centre of the humanitarian response. In Yemen for example we have re-designed our grant to the GNC Technical Alliance to deliver capacity support and technical knowledge to national organisations to support them to respond to nutrition emergencies and our MA funding to IRC supports long-term partnerships with local NGOs.

Ireland keeps a close eye on the level of on-granting across its range of partners and funding mechanisms. The Country Based Pooled Funds, the IFRC, the START Fund and the NGOs all exceed (in many cases significantly) the target of 25%.

The Stability Fund has increased the number of local partners it supports, including women's organisations such as the Federation of Women Associations of Turkey, Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund and Reaching Critical Will. Some international partners, such as Crisis Action, have a strong focus on building the capacity of local civil society actors in conflict-affected countries.

Grand Bargain and cross-cutting issues

Question 4: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (Please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results).

Gender equality and women's empowerment is at the core of Ireland's work in humanitarian settings and fragile contexts. Our humanitarian NGO funding has a strong focus on gender, targeting women and girls in conflict and protracted crises. Programmes prioritise protection, gender mainstreaming, and prevention and response to GBV. At the end of 2021, our partnership with IRC was renewed for another multi-annual period from 2022 – 2024 with a budget of €5.4m (increase of €0.9m) for transformative GBV standard-setting programming.

Ireland was a member of the Board for the WPS-Humanitarian Compact that we formally signed in June 2021 at the Generation Equality Forum and committed to invest at least €42m in feminist and women's rights organisations and women peacebuilders over 5 years.

Ireland has maintained our strong commitment to the Call2Action on Protection from GBV in Emergencies. We actively engage with the States and Donors Working Group and reflect progress made every year in our Self Reports which we share with other partners as part of our

accountability to each other and continue advocacy both collectively and at all possible opportunities in our bilateral engagement at the highest levels.

Ireland's membership of the UN Security Council in 2021 was an opportunity for us to highlight and focus on women, on gender equality, and how women contribute to achieving peace and security in conflict. During our Security Council presidency in September 2021, 16 of the 17 briefers we brought before the Council were women. We have applied a gender lens to our contributions to resolutions and other Council work.

Ireland puts women and girls at the heart of our work to prevent and resolve conflict. The peacebuilding efforts in Northern Ireland gave us a valuable insight into the impact of conflict on women and girls, and the contribution they can make to peace. Our cross-Departmental Stability Fund supports conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts to support the implementation of Ireland's NAP in fragile contexts, including several women led organisations.

A key learning in 2021 has been the importance of strengthening women's representation, which we have taken into our international development work, and Ireland's wider foreign policy, striving to amplify women's voices and to help ensure inclusion and participation. The aim is to give women a stronger voice in their communities, in political decision-making and international peacebuilding.

Question 5: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?

Ireland's institutional approach to the nexus is informed by our International Development Policy 'A Better World'. This document captures the full range of policy and programmatic tools available for humanitarian, development and peacebuilding initiatives in protracted crises. Reducing Humanitarian Need is one of four policy priorities and marks an important shift towards a stronger focus on prevention and preparedness.

In 2021, Ireland made significant progress in developing a strategic framework for how we mainstream the nexus across our work. We developed draft guidance on Reducing Humanitarian Need and a draft note on the Humanitarian-Development Peace Nexus. This latter took the OECD DAC Recommendation as a starting point, but discussed what the triple nexus means for Ireland's work in fragile contexts. These documents will be finalised following extensive consultation across the Department, including missions.

Ireland also adjusted internal structures and ways of working to ensure that the nexus was appropriately mainstreamed across all areas of work. We established a Peace and Stability Coordination Mechanism for strategic level engagement and a fragility working group that provides technical advice and support.

Ireland's commitment to flexible and MA funding is an important way of mainstreaming the implementation of the nexus. This allows our partners, many of whom are multidimensional, to respond in the manner most appropriate to the context. Our partners' scale-up of cash and shock responsive social protection mechanisms has been an important part of this. It also supports our partners to develop meaningful partnerships with local actors, who are often best placed to work across the nexus.

In 2021, Ireland placed emphasis on the peace part of the triple nexus. We pledged €10m to the Peacebuilding Fund over the lifetime of its strategy (2020-204). This represents a 33% increase in Ireland's average annual contribution and an extension of our commitment from three to five

years. The Stability Fund has grown steadily over the years and supports a wide range of organisations involved in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. In 2021, the dedicated peacebuilding window of the Stability Fund expanded and supported new partnerships. Much of Ireland's funding to OSCE projects also supports the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security.

In 2021, Ireland engaged in the operationalising of the nexus at country level. This was context specific and led by our missions, with guidance from headquarters. Ireland's programme in Mozambique provides an excellent example of how we advanced the nexus at country level – across programming, policy work, advocacy and political engagement. We did this a co-lead of the Crisis Task Force, working with donors, government and key stakeholders to encourage a response that addressed the diverse range of humanitarian, development and peace needs across the country.

Question 6: Has your institution taken any steps towards improving risk sharing with its partners? If so, please describe how.

Ireland is very supportive of the inclusion of risk in the Grand Bargain 2.0 and was a signatory to the statement on risk that was discussed at the Grand Bargain Meeting in June 2021. We believe that this is a vitally important discussion to have if we are to make tangible progress on the Grand Bargain 2.0 commitments.

Ireland comes to this discussion from a strong starting point. The 2020 OECD DAC Peer Review noted that Ireland's tools for programme design are well adapted to developing a risk informed strategy for individual fragile contexts. It highlighted Ireland's strong focus on the drivers of fragility and consideration of power dynamics – that links our political engagement with our development inputs. Ireland's recent whole of mission strategy guidance supports this approach.

Ireland's high-level organisational risk register recognises that humanitarian assistance is inherently risky. This organisation-wide acknowledgement of the inherent risks in the provision of humanitarian assistance is a strong basis for internal discussions about risk sharing as well as with our partners.

We understand that a clear risk appetite is a pre-requisite to working effectively in fragile contexts and reaching the furthest behind first. This means supporting innovation and new ways of working. There are many ways we have done this over the last few years – we were one of first donors to support the START Fund (as well as its localisation pot and the innovation pot), we advocated for use of CERF funding for anticipatory action (as Chair of the CERF Advisory Group), provided our NGO partners with pre-positioned funding and supported one of our INGO partners to establish a localisation hub in the global south.

We are a partnership-based organisation – for Ireland that means investing in our partnerships and sharing rather than passing on risk. We do this by understanding our partners' approach to risk at both organisational and programme level and by providing core and MA funding that supports our partners to strengthen approaches and systems to ensure effective risk management. Our Standard Approach to Grant Management notes that this approach is key to effective sharing and management of risk.