

Grand Bargain in 2020:
Annual Self Report – Narrative Summary

Name of Institution: [Italian Cooperation \(Government of Italy, AICS and MFAIC\)](#)

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(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **5 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

Grand Bargain in 2020

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 2020?

Localization.

After approving new procedures in 2016 to make local CSOs eligible for humanitarian funding, the Italian Cooperation Action Plan on Aid Effectiveness 2020-2022 includes a commitment to translate Call for proposals and formats into English and French, in order to facilitate the participation of local and national responders.

In 2020, Italy substantially increased its direct support to local and national responders, funding IFRC, CBPF and local CSOs for a total amount of 14.1 million euro (+46% compared to 2019 - 9 million euro). Namely, Italy supported: 1) IFRC (6 million euro); CBPFs in CAR, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Ukraine (for a total amount of at least 6.75 million euro); 3) local CSOs, namely SOS Children's Villages Somalia and Caritas Mali (total amount of 1.4 million euro).

Besides receiving direct funding, usually local CSOs actively participate as partner in the projects of the Italian Cooperation. The participation of local CSOs has a positive impact on: sustainability, quality of needs assessments, monitoring (especially during the pandemic and in hard to reach areas); communication with local authorities; stakeholders and conflict analysis. The participation of women groups is strongly encouraged. Some examples of the involvement of local women organisations can be found in Myanmar, Somalia, Mali, Mozambique.

Unearmarking:

Italy increased total unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions, reaching in 2020 the amount of 20,637,526 euro (16% of total budget; +27% compared to 2019). Namely, Italy:

- i) increased its support to CERF (total 2020 - 5 million euro, +42% compared to 2019; total 2019 - 3.5 million euro);
- ii) increased its support to CBPFs (6.75 million euro; +13% compared to 2019; total 2019 - 6 million euro - see also paragraph on localization);
- iii) contributed to the ICRC GBV special appeal with a softly earmarked contribution (1 million euro);
- iv) continued supporting the WB GFDRR, UNDRR, UNHRD, UNMAS and GICHD with softly earmarked contributions.

Common Reporting. Italy participated to the "Harmonized Narrative Reporting Pilot" and launched Call for proposals adopting the 8+3 formats in 2 countries (Somalia and Iraq). In 2020, Italy worked to develop an IT platform for project management, including the 8+3 Template - to harmonise reporting and to incentivise participation of local organisations. The new platform is still to be finalised. CSOs appreciated the introduction of a common template by different donors and the use of the English language, as it enabled Programme managers to involve local/field staff in the phase of collecting and writing the information and reviewing data.

Question 2: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women's empowerment¹ 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). Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

Italy adopted in December 2020 new Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowerment. The new version includes: i) a focus on GBV in emergencies, prevention and early action; ii) commitments to develop gender analysis in every humanitarian aid program; iii) the promotion of an active role of women and local women organisations in disaster response and in the decision making process to foster peace and stability in fragile situations. Such guidelines include specific targets on gender mainstreaming and funding.

In 2020, Italy renewed its commitments to the Call to Action on Gender Based Violence in emergency. In particular, Italy committed to produce operational manuals on gender equality and gender based violence in line with its results-based management approach. Such manual shall promote the collection of data disaggregated by gender and age, encourage the development and use of the Gender Policy Marker as well as adequate indicators.

Country offices generally include the participation of women association in development and humanitarian interventions. For instance, AICS Country office in Khartoum published a Gender Toolkit to support gender mainstreaming, which was developed with the active participation and counselling of female headed organisations in Port Sudan. The toolkit was distributed to local counterparts active in the prevention of gender-based violence during the International Day Against Violence Against Women (25/11/2020). Selected people from women's associations, ministry members, health staff, community youth, received a two-day training on the toolkit and key findings. These people will be responsible for raising awareness among communities, associations, and colleagues about the toolkit, particularly about gender-based violence and gaps.

Question 3: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments? Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other workstreams.

Italy is drafting Guidelines on Humanitarian/Development/Peace Nexus, which will be approved by 2021. Such guidelines are in line with Grand Bargain commitments, with the New way of working and with the DAC Recommendation on Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus. They contain concrete commitments to improve coordination among humanitarian, development and peace interventions, and include a context analysis tool to support joint analysis. Moreover, the Guidelines comprise specific reference to multi-year planning, flexibility and quality of aid, localization and people centred approach.

¹ Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

Moreover, Italy participates in coordination meetings at local level. For instance, together with EU and EU Member States, Italy participates in the nexus meetings carried out in pilot countries and to the Team Europe Initiative (ex. in Sudan and Afghanistan). In Amman, Italy contributes along with other partners to a specific Task Team on Humanitarian-Development Nexus established within the Humanitarian Partner Forum. Italy is participating in the Nexus Working Group for Libya.

Most GB commitments are implemented through development as well as humanitarian aid funds. In Sudan, for instance, in the framework of a development programme, AICS Country office established a partnership with the local CSO SUDO, which was shut down in 2009 and recently re-opened after the '19 revolution. SUDO was the largest NGO with branches all over Sudan and has a sound knowledge of local dynamics.

Grand Bargain 2016-2020: Overall achievements and remaining gaps

Question 4: What are the 2-3 key achievements/areas of most progress by your institution since 2016? Please report on your institutional progress for the period 2016-2020, **even** if your institution did not become a signatory until after 2016.

Quality of funding: flexibility and multi-year.

The development and humanitarian aid offices of the Directorate General for Development Cooperation (DGCS) of the Italian MFAIC collaborate in order to strengthen the complementarity of the different dimensions of the Nexus in the Three-Year Programming and Policy Planning Document for Development Cooperation.

Moreover, since January 2016, AICS organizational structure includes an office with both humanitarian aid and development cooperation tasks – which works not only to respond to crises but also to tackle fragility and building resilience with medium- long term perspective. In 2016, humanitarian programmes had a maximum duration of 12 months, unless the crisis persisted. In 2017 Italy approved new procedures to finance LRRD programmes with development funds and to extend project maximum duration to 24 months for humanitarian interventions and 36 months to LRRD programmes. Further steps will be realised in the framework of the Aid Effectiveness action plan, approved in 2019, which includes commitments to introduce tools for fragility and conflict analysis.

The Italian Cooperation steadily increased unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions, which in 2016 counted 4,340,000 euro (2% of total humanitarian budget), up to reach 16% of humanitarian budget (more than 20 million euro) in 2020. In addition, Italy supports humanitarian agencies through core contributions out of the humanitarian budget (approx. 60 million euro in 2020).

Localization:

In 2015, Italian law and regulation did not allow direct funding to local responders. In 2015: Italy funded IFRC programmes for a total amount of 1,695,000 Euro; Italy did not fund CBPFs.

Starting from 2016, local CSOs are eligible to direct humanitarian funding. Since 2016, Italy:

- more than tripled its contribution to IFRC (up to 6 MEURO);
- steadily increased funding to CBPFs (up to 6.75 MEUR in 2020);

- directly funded local CSOs for a total amount of 5.5 MLN€ (11 projects; 7 local CSOs; 5 countries - Amel and Lost in Lebanon, Maan and YWCA in Palestine; ARKDR and Caritas Mali in Mali; Kids Paradise and ACSAD in Syria, SAILD in Cameroon, SOS Children's Villages in Somalia).

Question 5: What, in your institutional view, have been the main achievements of the Grand Bargain signatories, as a collective, since 2016?

The Grand Bargain started a very important process to overcome the humanitarian and development divide, including development (but also peace actors) on a debate on how to tackle the root causes of crisis.

The Grand Bargain contributed to underlying the importance to promote the role of local actors and first responders. Local organisations are more and more recognised as fundamental active actors in the humanitarian response and not only as partner of international organisations.

In addition, the Grand Bargain emphasised – once again - the need to integrate gender in all humanitarian commitments and actions.

Question 6: What has the Grand Bargain not been able to achieve in its five year tenure? What outstanding obstacles, gaps, areas of weakness still remain after five years, in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action? Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think there remain key gaps or obstacles.

Despite the steps forward, a lot can still be done in relation to localization of aid. Donors and agencies should increase efforts to enhancing the ownership of humanitarian aid interventions. Local organisations need to be supported with capacity building initiatives and donors and agencies should increase efforts to provide direct funding to national and local responders. There are still obstacles to significantly increase unearmarked funding, since many Member States need to earmark their funds at country level and have specific requirements in terms of visibility and accountability for their unearmarked funds.

Risk and the Grand Bargain

Question 7a: How has risk (financial, operational, reputational, etc) affected your institution's implementation of the core commitments since you became a signatory to the Grand Bargain?

Accountability and transparency to taxpayers are fundamental for the Italian Government and all the actions take into consideration the risk of diversion of funds, which in some cases (i.e. on earmarking) can hinder the implementation of commitments. In those countries where Italy does not have either an Embassy or an AICS office, localization agenda cannot be implemented.

Question 7b: How has your institution sought to mitigate or address these risks to enable implementation of the core commitments?

Country offices have a fundamental role in monitoring aid activities and keeping an active communication with organisations in the field. More shall be done in the future to use information received from the field to inform program planning and financing.