



GUIDELINES ON
PARTNERSHIPS WITH
SOUTHERN CSOs



The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

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workshop with Dóchas members**

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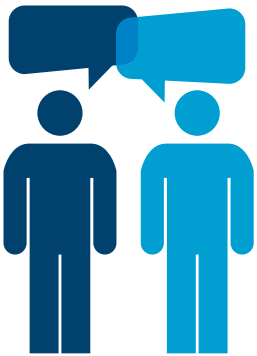
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LIST OF ACRONYMS

- AIDS: Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
- CBO: Community Based Organisation
- CSO: Civil Society Organisation
- DE: Development Effectiveness
- EU: European Union
- HIV: Human Immunodeficiency Virus
- INGO: International Non-Governmental Organisation
- MDG: Millennium Development Goal
- MoU: Memorandum of Understanding
- NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation
- OCA: Organisational Capacity Assessment
- OD: Organisation Development
- OSA: Organisational Self-Assessment
- PLWHA: People Living with HIV & AIDS
- US: United States

FIGURES

1. Dóchas Partnership Assessment and Development Process
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DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

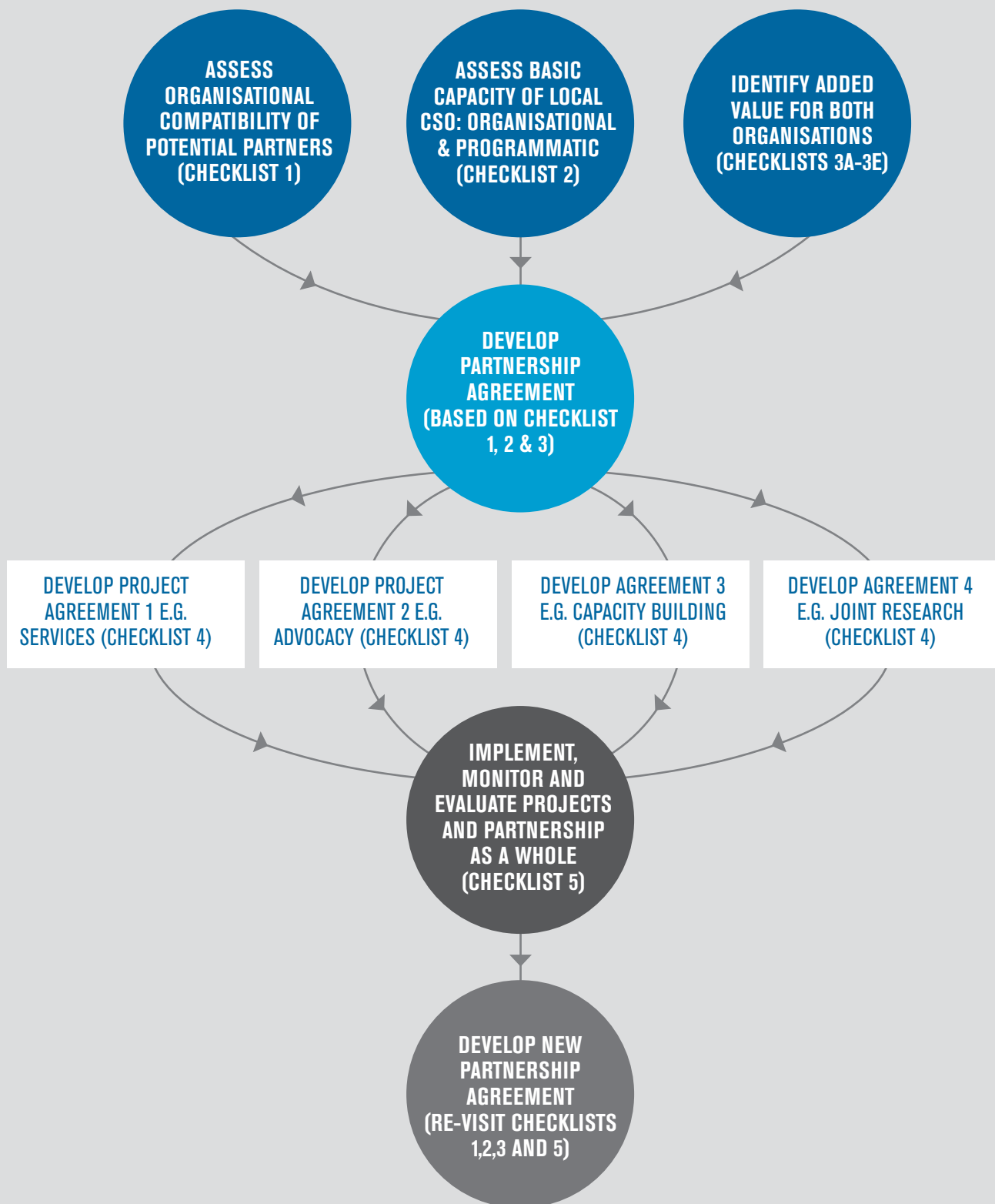
For the purpose of these guidelines the term partnership refers specifically to: 'a formal relationship with a local (southern) Civil Society Organisation that a Dóchas member supports or collaborates with in some way.'

The approach of Dóchas members towards their work with Southern CSO partnerships is based on 10 principles:

01. Partnerships are based on a shared vision of development
02. Partnerships are based on shared organisational values
03. Partnerships are based on an agreed strategy
04. Relationships are based on mutual accountability and trust
05. Partnerships are based on a mutual commitment to long-term change
06. Expectations from partnerships will be set at a realistic level
07. Partnerships are based on clear roles and responsibilities
08. Partnerships are flexible and adaptable to change
09. Partnerships respect difference and recognise power imbalances
10. Partnerships ultimately deliver positive change for intended beneficiaries of projects.

FIGURE 1: DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP ASSESSMENT AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Context: Dóchas Partnership Principles (10)





One of the key aims of Dóchas is to lead and support the Irish NGO international development sector in moving towards higher standards of practice in its work.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations, Dóchas provides a forum for consultation and co-operation among its members, and enables them to speak with a single voice on development issues.

One of the key aims of Dóchas is to lead and support the Irish NGO international development sector in moving towards higher standards of practice in its work. The Dóchas EU Presidency Project aims to articulate a civil society vision on what the core elements of the 'post-2015 global development framework' should be. The development of partnership guidelines is seen as a starting point in ensuring that civil society organisations in the global South can have an equal voice in this debate.

The guidelines are intended to support Dóchas members in developing and implementing high-quality partnerships with local (Southern) Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) at field level, in line with best practice in the international development sector. They are provided for use by all Dóchas member agencies on a voluntary basis. The range of partnerships that Dóchas members already have, or intend to develop, with local CSOs is very broad in both nature and content. The guidelines provide an outline of the different types of partnership that are possible, and the key principles that should govern partner relationships. A set of basic checklists is provided to support members in developing and maintaining good partnerships.

'Inclusive development partnerships' is one of the four key principles on which the multi-agency Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011) is based. The related International Framework for CSO Effectiveness (2011) advises CSOs to 'pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity' as a key guiding principle for their work. In 2009, Dóchas commissioned a study of the partnership approaches of its members in Kenya. The report from the study highlighted the fact that the values, objectives and priorities of Irish NGOs tended to dominate their relationships with local partners. Some Dóchas members also participated in an international partnership study undertaken by Keystone Accountability in 2010.

THERE ARE THREE PRIMARY REASONS FOR UNDERTAKING A PARTNERSHIP APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT:

- The need for strong local ownership of programmes, resulting in greater overall sustainability of interventions;
- The need to support the capacity of local CSOs at both individual and collective levels to lobby for the rights of citizens, and for broader change in society;
- The particular niche which Dóchas members (and other international NGOs) have as CSOs in their own right, and as natural allies and counterparts of CSOs in the South.

For Dóchas, a partnership is defined as ‘a formal relationship with a local (southern) Civil Society Organisation that a Dóchas member supports or collaborates with in some way. The purpose of this relationship is to achieve mutually-agreed objectives that serve the needs and / or rights of poor, vulnerable or marginalised people in developing countries’. Local partner CSOs can vary widely in both their nature and capacity, from small community based organisations (CBOs) to NGOs or other entities operating at community, district, regional, national or even international level.

A partnership between a Dóchas member and a local CSO is a two-way process, with benefits to both sides. The arrangement may work in three ways:

- Specific support from the Dóchas member to the local CSO partner;
- Specific contribution from the local CSO partner to the work of the Dóchas member;
- Specific collaboration on an equal basis between the Dóchas member and the southern CSO.

Support from a Dóchas member may include programme or project support, advocacy or networking support, and / or organisational capacity support. Project or advocacy support typically includes funding, but can also consist of technical support or placement of volunteers. Capacity support can include contribution to the organisational overheads, or technical support for the development of organisational capacity in particular areas. Local CSOs can implement projects that Dóchas members wish to fund. They can also contribute to wider programmes involving other partners at local level in a variety of ways. Some local CSO can contribute to the broader agenda of Dóchas members at Irish or international levels, including support for advocacy, campaigning, fundraising and development education activities. CSOs can also provide significant logistical support to Dóchas members at field level. Dóchas members and local CSOs can work equally together on joint research, joint programming or joint advocacy.

THE 10 DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

01. Partnerships are based on a shared vision of development
02. Partnerships are based on shared organisational values
03. Partnerships are based on an agreed strategy
04. Relationships are based on mutual accountability and trust
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10. Partnerships ultimately deliver positive change for intended beneficiaries of projects.

In a broader context, partnerships also need to be looked at from the perspective of local CSO being firmly rooted in local communities, and fully able to represent them. Individual partnerships need to be seen in the context of a wider programme of work by CSOs to bring about change at various levels of society. Individual partnerships are also influenced by other partnerships that a local CSO may have with other international NGOs or donors. Hence, there is often a need to streamline the various relationships to avoid unnecessary workloads of local CSOs.

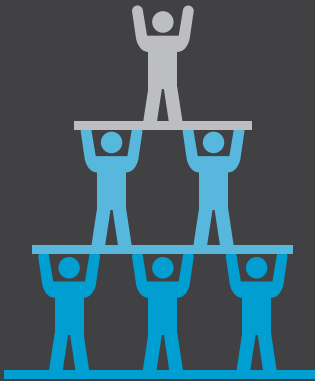
Specific guidance on the development and implementation of partnerships is provided in relation to three areas, with accompanying checklists to highlight the key issues to be addressed in each case:

- The identification and assessment of potential new partnerships;
- The development of programme and project agreements with partners;
- The delivery of effective partnerships to achieve sustainable development results.

The identification and assessment of potential new partners is in itself considered at three levels:

- a. The compatibility of the two organisations to work together, with particular reference to the Dóchas Partnership Principles;
- b. The overall capacity of the potential partner at organisational level, and in relation to its ability to deliver particular projects or programmes;
- c. The potential added value of the partnership arising from the projects and activities of the two organisations.

The compatibility exercise is designed to ensure that there is sufficient common ground between the two organisations to enable them to work together, and that any potential areas of conflict (e.g. in organisational values) are addressed. The capacity assessment is intended to ensure that the local CSO has the minimum basic level of skills, experience, and systems in place at the beginning of the partnership to manage the organisation as a whole, and to implement to a satisfactory degree the specific projects that it is planning. Additional capacity-building can take place at a later stage as the partnership develops. Potential added value is assessed from the perspectives outlined previously above. Guidelines and checklists are also provided for the development of partnership and project-level agreements, and for the implementation of effective partnerships to deliver development results for poor, vulnerable and marginalised people.



One of the key aims of Dóchas is to enhance Ireland's contribution to sustainable human development by leading and supporting the Irish NGO international development sector.

1. INTRODUCTION

As the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations, Dóchas provides a forum for consultation and co-operation among its members, and enables them to speak with a single voice on development issues.

One of the key aims of Dóchas is to enhance Ireland's contribution to sustainable human development by leading and supporting the Irish NGO international development sector, and its own members in particular, in moving towards high standards of practice in its development work.

These partnership guidelines are intended to support Dóchas members in developing and implementing high-quality partnership relationships with local (southern) Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) at field level, in line with best practice in the international development sector. The guidelines are provided for use by all Dóchas member agencies on a voluntary basis. They are particularly intended to provide support for members that are currently starting to develop partnerships for the first time, but can also provide useful guidance for members that have existing partnership models in place.

The range of partnerships that Dóchas members already have or intend to develop with local CSOs is very broad in both nature and content, and is heavily influenced by local context. Hence there is no single perfect model for partnership. The guidelines are intended to provide a broad framework within which partnerships should be developed. More in-depth research and discussion may be necessary to address particular aspects of partner relationships and support for CSOs. The guidelines provide an outline of the different types of partnership that are possible, and the key principles that should govern partner relationships. A set of basic checklists is provided to support members in developing and maintaining good partnerships.

2. BACKGROUND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARTNERSHIP GUIDELINES

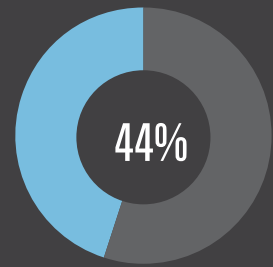
2.1 INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

2.1.1 THE EU PRESIDENCY PROJECT

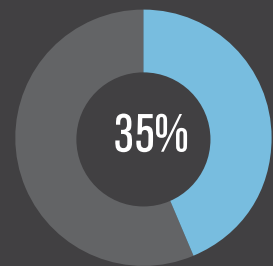
The Dóchas EU Presidency Project aims to articulate a civil society vision on what should be the core elements of the ‘post-2015 global development framework’ that is to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The project does that primarily by promoting a dialogue within Irish civil society. As a secondary strand of work, it also hopes to encourage and support the voice of civil society organisations in the global South. For policy dialogue between Southern and Irish-based CSOs to be effective, there is a need for a common understanding of the principles and practices involved in such dialogue. The development of a set of partnership guidelines for Dóchas members is seen as a starting point to progress this understanding.

2.1.2 THE DEVELOPMENT EFFECTIVENESS AGENDA

The international ‘development effectiveness¹’ agenda that has emerged over the last decade sets out how development programmes should be delivered by multilateral and bilateral agencies, host governments in the South and CSO in the North and South. At the heart of this process is the understanding that for development interventions to be successful, it is not sufficient to focus solely on the delivery of projects or programmes. The development of strong and productive relationships among the various development agencies and stakeholders is essential. Partnership is seen as a key development approach within this agenda. ‘Inclusive development partnerships’ is one of the four key principles on which the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011) is based². This principle states that ‘Openness, trust and mutual respect and learning lie at the core of effective partnerships in support of development goals, recognising the different and complimentary roles of all actors’.



44% of Dóchas members work exclusively through a partnership model



35% adopt a mixture of operational and partnership and direct implementation on the ground

¹ The Development Effectiveness agenda has its origin in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness from 2005 involving five key themes: Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability. This agenda has been built on at subsequent International High Level Fora, resulting in the Accra Agenda for Action (2008) and the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (2011).

² The other three principles on: ‘Ownership of development priorities by developing countries’; ‘Focus on results’; and ‘Transparency and accountability to each other’, are also highly relevant to organisations involved in North-South CSO partnerships.

The related International Framework for CSO Development Effectiveness (2011) as set out by CSOs themselves globally under the Open Forum for CSO Development Effectiveness³ includes a set of eight ‘Istanbul Principles⁴’ and guidance notes on development practice. The sixth of these principles: ‘Pursue equitable partnerships and solidarity’, states that ‘CSOs are effective as development actors when they commit to transparent relationships with CSOs and other development actors, freely and as equals, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organisational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship’.

‘CSOs are effective as development actors when they commit to transparent relationships with CSOs and other development actors, freely and as equals, based on shared development goals and values, mutual respect, trust, organisational autonomy, long-term accompaniment, solidarity and global citizenship’

Both the Busan Partnership and the CSO Development Effectiveness Framework are key guiding documents and processes for Dóchas members in relation to working with partners, as they reflect extensive reflection and discussion within the sector, and are based on decades of experience of development work by a wide variety of agencies. While the specific principles that refer directly to partnership (as outlined above) are particularly important in this regard, many of the other principles within these frameworks are also highly relevant to a partnership approach⁵.

2.2 DÓCHAS MEMBERS AND PARTNERSHIP

Partnership is a well established way of working among Dóchas members. The 2012 Dóchas Members Survey indicated that 44% of Dóchas members work exclusively through a partnership model. A further 35% adopt a mixture of operational and partnership and direct implementation on the ground. In total, 64% of all of the field programmes / projects of Dóchas members are implemented under a partnership model.

³ The Open Forum on CSO Effectiveness was established by CSOs (from the global South and the North) in response to the emergence of the broader ‘aid effectiveness’ agenda, as a means for CSO from North and South to improve the effectiveness of their own specific programmes and relationships, and to contribute collectively to the broader global development effectiveness agenda.

⁴ The Istanbul Principles were initially agreed at the First Global Assembly of the Open Forum in Istanbul in 2010. The International Framework for Development Effectiveness was agreed at the Second Global Assembly in Siam Reap in 2011, during which the Istanbul Principles were endorsed, accompanying guidelines were produced, and mechanisms for strengthening CSO accountability and the critical conditions for enabling CSO development effectiveness (via government policies and practice) were set out.

⁵ The other seven Istanbul Principles refer to respecting and promoting human rights and justice; embodying gender equality and equity; focussing on people’s empowerment, democratic ownership and participation; promoting environmental sustainability; practicing transparency and accountability; creating and sharing knowledge and committing to mutual learning; and committing to realizing positive sustainable change.

2.2.1 KENYA PARTNERSHIP STUDY

In order to see how these partnership relationships were working in practice, Dóchas commissioned a research study on the nature of the partnerships between Kenyan organisations and Irish NGOs in 2009-10⁶. The study focused on the perspective of the Kenyan CSOs regarding the nature of their relationships with Irish NGOs. The study revealed some significant insights into those relationships. Firstly, Kenyan NGOs highlighted the fact that they generally had limited knowledge of the Irish NGOs that supported them. They also highlighted the fact that Irish NGOs did not always know their Kenyan partners very well either, and were in exceptional cases supporting Kenyan CSOs of dubious background or reputation. Irish NGOs were generally seen as being flexible, collaborative and knowledgeable, but some other, non-Irish, international NGOs (INGOs) were seen as having a better awareness of local culture, better language skills, more innovative approaches towards their work, and to have better learning and mentoring approaches.

Kenyan CSOs also noted that the values, objectives and priorities of the Irish NGOs tended to dominate their relationships with local partners, with a lesser priority given to the values, objectives and priorities of the Kenyan partners. Kenyan CSOs also commented that their relationships with Irish NGOs were overly focused on funding, programme delivery, and donor requirements rather than on capacity-building or organisational development. The priorities, targets and timeframes of programmes also tended to be focused on short-term engagement. Systematically agreed or applied principles of partnership were rare.

A key comment from Kenyan CSOs was that they valued non-financial support as much as programme or project funding. In particular, they would like to develop long-term collaboration with Irish NGOs for sustained change under more formalised, mutually agreed and transparent partnership agreements. They called for better mutual accountability and downward accountability, and a greater emphasis

on learning, capacity development and Organisation Development (OD).

The results of a general survey of partner views in one country need to be treated with some caution as they cannot be applied universally to the work of each Dóchas member. Nevertheless, the research study did highlight some significant areas that Irish NGOs could usefully work on to improve their existing relationships with Southern partners. Equally, the survey highlighted many areas that Dóchas members intending to establish new partnerships should take on board in identifying new partners, and in establishing relationships with them.

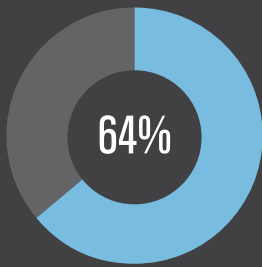
2.2.2 KEYSTONE PARTNER SURVEY

A number of Dóchas members (or their international counterparts / networks) participated in the 2010 Keystone Partner Survey⁷, which assessed and summarised the views of 1,000 southern partners on the partnership approaches of 25 international NGOs based in Europe and the US. The survey provided valuable data on the INGO approaches, both on an individual basis and in terms of general trends in terms of partnership practice. A key finding was that the southern CSOs want support from northern NGOs in order to become strong, independent and influential organisations in their own right. They contrasted this with being contracted to implement the projects and priorities of northern NGOs.

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⁶ Partnership in Practice – A Kenyan Perspective on the Nature of Relationships with Irish NGO www.dochas.ie.

⁷ Keystone Performance Surveys: NGO Partnership Survey 2010, Public Report. Keystone Accountability, in association with NIDOS, BOND and Inter-Action, January 2011. www.KeystoneAccountability.org.



64% of all Dóchas member projects now being implemented via partnership

3. RATIONALE FOR WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

Some Dóchas members were initially founded as partnership-based organisations and have operated on that basis from the beginning. Many others started off with their own operational projects or programmes on the ground. In line with the international trend, many Irish NGOs have moved either partly or fully from an operational approach towards partnership in recent years, as reflected in the earlier statistic of 64% of all Dóchas member projects now being implemented via partnership (Section 2.2, above).

THE PRIMARY REASONS FOR THE MOVE FROM AN OPERATIONAL APPROACH TOWARDS PARTNERSHIP ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- The need for strong local ownership of programmes, resulting in greater overall sustainability of interventions;
- The need to support the capacity of civil society organisations at both individual and collective levels to lobby for the rights of citizens and for broader change in society;
- The particular niche that Dóchas members have as civil society organisations in their own right, and as natural allies and counterparts of local CSOs in the South.

3.1 LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

In implementing an operational programme (e.g. building and running a school or health centre) it is usually possible to build the capacity of the local community to implement the project to a certain degree. However, when the international NGO implementing agency (e.g. a Dóchas member) moves on, a project can often decline or collapse completely without external support.

For this reason, it is crucial to build up or support a local structure or organisation that will have the capacity to take over the programme at some stage. This can be very difficult to do when there has been a high level of dependency on external sources from the beginning. It is much easier to achieve when a local organisation or structure is supported to deliver the programme from the very beginning. Working through support for a local partner may be more complex and slower in the early stages, but is ultimately more likely to achieve sustainable results when the external NGO leaves. In supporting the development of local capacity, Dóchas members need to look beyond the activities of the project, to supporting the capacity of the local organisation itself, so that it will be sufficiently strong to implement similar projects and activities on an ongoing basis.

3.2 CIVIL SOCIETY VOICE

Development organisations have realized through long experience that the provision of services such as water, housing, education or healthcare through individual programmes or projects may be very important to address community needs in the short term, but may have little impact in the longer term if broader issues regarding the overall allocation and management and of resources by government (at both central and local level) are not addressed. A lack of proper governance, and the issue of corruption in particular, is often highlighted as a major obstacle to development progress.

The only way to overcome this major obstacle is to build and support the capacity of civil society at local and national levels, so that citizens in developing countries are fully informed on their rights and entitlements, and are equally informed on government policy and the level of resourcing available. Civil society organisations then need to have the capacity to challenge both government and other interests (e.g. internal or external private companies) on how those resources are being managed and accounted for in the implementation of projects, and how the rights of citizens are being protected in the process (e.g. in relation to ownership of land, access to services, protection from harm etc.).

3.3 NATURAL CSO ALLIES

As civil society organisations in their own right, and operating on an independent basis from governments or international donors, Dóchas members are natural counterparts and allies for southern based CSOs. They share many of the aspirations and objectives of southern CSOs, and are well placed to interact with, support and learn from them on an equal basis, through funding of projects, individual or linked advocacy or mutual exchange of knowledge and resources. Some Dóchas members and some southern CSOs may approach their work from a particular perspective e.g. a rights-based, social justice, needs-based, or solidarity approach. However, this does not prevent them from working with organisations that have different perspectives or approaches, as long as there is sufficient common ground between the two potential partners in relation to the principles outlined later in Section 7.

For all of these reasons, international NGOs, including Dóchas members, have invested heavily in supporting local partner CSOs in order to ensure greater sustainability of programmes, and a strong voice for civil society in articulating the rights of citizens. A move towards partnership does not mean that operational programmes are completely ruled out. Operational programmes may still be very appropriate in certain circumstances e.g. in emergency contexts, or where short-term gains are needed to complement longer-term capacity support work. A move to a partnership approach may well result in a sense of a certain loss of control by the Dóchas member in the first instance, but is much more likely to yield greater benefit in the longer term.



The partner is based in and has its origin in a developing country (i.e. the definition does not include an international NGO working in the country);

4. DEFINITION OF PARTNERSHIP

Partnership is a term that is widely used (and often over-used) in the international development sector to describe relationships with and among a very broad range of organisations and actors. It is sometimes used to describe relationships that international development NGOs, including Dóchas members, have with government departments or agencies at home or abroad, donors or funding agencies, other international NGOs or networks, private sector companies or local civil society organisations (including local NGOs, community based organisations (CBOs) and others).

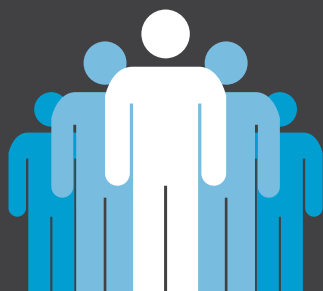
For the purpose of these guidelines the term partnership refers specifically to: 'a formal relationship with a local (southern) Civil Society Organisation that a Dóchas member supports or collaborates with in some way. The purpose of this relationship is to achieve mutually-agreed objectives that serve the needs and / or rights of poor, vulnerable or marginalised people in developing countries.'

SOME KEY POINTS TO EMPHASISE HERE ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- The relationship is formalised in some manner i.e. it is not based on casual acquaintance or brief interaction;
- The partner is based in and has its origin in a developing country (i.e. the definition does not include an international NGO working in the country);
- The partner is a CSO of some form (i.e. it is not a government agency, nor is it a private sector company);
- The Dóchas member provides support to the partner in some way , or collaborates with the partner in some form;
- The Dóchas member and the partner have an agreed set of common objectives;
- Those objectives are focused on the needs or rights of poor, vulnerable or marginalised people.

Some of the principles and guidelines outlined here may well apply to relationships with other stakeholders e.g. with other international NGOs, or with local government agencies on the ground, but the focus of the guidelines is on the relationship with local CSOs. It should be noted here also that the guidelines are not designed to cover the relationship between the head office of a Dóchas member and its own field offices, as this relationship does not fall under the definition of partnership.

For the purpose of these guidelines the term partnership refers specifically to: ‘a formal relationship with a local (southern) Civil Society Organisation that a Dóchas member supports or collaborates with in some way. The purpose of this relationship is to achieve mutually-agreed objectives that serve the needs and / or rights of poor, vulnerable or marginalised people in developing countries.’



CBOs are not always small organisations, and can have a membership of hundreds or thousands of people

5. THE RANGE OF PARTNER ORGANISATIONS

Local partner CSOs can vary widely both in their nature and in capacity from small community based organisations (CBOs)⁸ to NGOs operating at community, district, national, regional or even global level. CBOs are not always small organisations, and can have a membership of hundreds or thousands of people.

Partners can also include local networks, local missionary or church organisations, trade unions, research, training or capacity-building organisations, or independent (non-profit) media organisations. It should be noted that while the majority of partners of Dóchas members may be relatively small or weak organisations operating at local level (and hence require support from INGOs and others), some partners may be very sophisticated organisations. Some partners may have greater capacity than the Dóchas members themselves, or may already be working independently at international level e.g. southern based advocacy organisations working to influence international agendas.

INDIVIDUAL DÓCHAS MEMBERS MAY FORM PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARTICULAR ORGANISATIONS DEPENDING ON THEIR OWN PARTICULAR BACKGROUND OR INTERESTS. FOR EXAMPLE:

- Dóchas members may have particular partnerships with local members of the same international alliance or network;
- Dóchas members with an interest or expertise in a particular theme or programming area may well form partnerships with organisations that have a similar interest or competency (e.g. on HIV & AIDS, rural livelihoods, or micro-finance).
- Church-based Dóchas members often form partnerships with local agencies from a similar church background (but usually do not limit their partnerships to this type of agency);

⁸ In this context, CBOs are understood to be organisations whose primary aim is to support the needs or rights of the members themselves e.g. a farmers' co-operative, or a women's income generation group. In contrast, NGOs are organisations that are established to support the needs or rights of others, outside of the NGO itself.

6. MUTUAL SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION IN PARTNERSHIP



A partnership relationship between a Dóchas member and a Southern (local CSO) is a two-way process, with benefits to both sides.

A partnership between a Dóchas member and a local CSO is a two-way process, with benefits to both sides.

THE PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENT MAY WORK IN THREE WAYS:

01. Specific support from the Dóchas member to the local CSO partner
02. Specific support from the Southern partner to the Dóchas member
03. Specific collaboration between the Dóchas member and the Southern CSO

Each of these three types of relationship is outlined in the following sections.

6.1 SUPPORT FROM A DÓCHAS MEMBER TO A SOUTHERN CSO

Dóchas members broadly provide three types of support for local CSOs:

- Programme or Project Support
- Advocacy or Networking Support
- Organisational Capacity support

6.1.1 PROGRAMME / PROJECT SUPPORT

The most common form of programme or project support often takes the form of the Dóchas member providing funding (either from its own resources or from another donor) for the local CSO to implement a particular programme or project. However, programme support does not always consist of funding. Technical support may also be provided in addition to, or instead of, funding e.g. through back-up from a thematic specialist in the design or implementation of a programme (e.g. support from an agronomist for an agriculture project), or more general technical support in programme design. The development or implementation of projects may also be supported through the provision of volunteers with relevant programming skills and experience to the partner organisation⁹. A criticism of programme support at times is that it may be prioritised over other forms of support, such as for equally important advocacy work, or for building the overall capacity of the partner organisation (see below).

⁹ As for programming, advocacy or capacity-building work, some Dóchas members have a particular competency and capacity for the provision of volunteers, while others do not utilise this approach.

6.1.2 ADVOCACY OR NETWORKING SUPPORT

Some Dóchas members support CSO partners in-field in the development and implementation of advocacy programmes. Again, this form of support often comes in the form of funding for a particular advocacy initiative or an advocacy programme. However, it may also consist of technical backstopping or support from an advocacy specialist or a thematic specialist from the Dóchas member. Technical support can also be provided via a third party that has the required knowledge and skills. Networking support from a Dóchas member may be particularly useful in putting a local CSO in contact with other agencies working on similar issues, perhaps in another part of the same country, or even in other countries. The provision of volunteers with particular knowledge of advocacy is also an option.

6.1.3 ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY SUPPORT

In order to fully empower Southern CSOs, it is not sufficient just to provide funding for programming or advocacy activities. The organisations themselves will often need to be supported institutionally to build their own capacity and to gain greater independence over time. Northern INGOs are sometimes reluctant to provide this form of support, but it is crucial to take a ‘whole of organisation’ approach if partnership is to really work. Organisational capacity support may be provided in a number of ways:

- Though the provision of funding for staff costs or overheads that are not directly related to a programme being supported by the Dóchas member;
- Institutional support for the development of organisational¹⁰ capacity in a particular area e.g. on financial management or gender mainstreaming;
- Organisational development (OD) support for the broader development of the partner organisation as a whole, including (but not confined to) areas such as governance and strategic planning

Partners (and Dóchas members themselves) should be encouraged to undertake an organisational capacity assessment (OCA) to identify the most urgent capacity needs in the organisation as a whole, and leading to the development of a capacity-building plan that prioritises the most urgent capacity needs, and the means to address them. Capacity support may be provided by the Dóchas member itself, subject to it having the resources and time to do so, but it may also be provided by a third party e.g. a local capacity-support or training organisation, or a volunteer with particular capacity-building skills and experience.

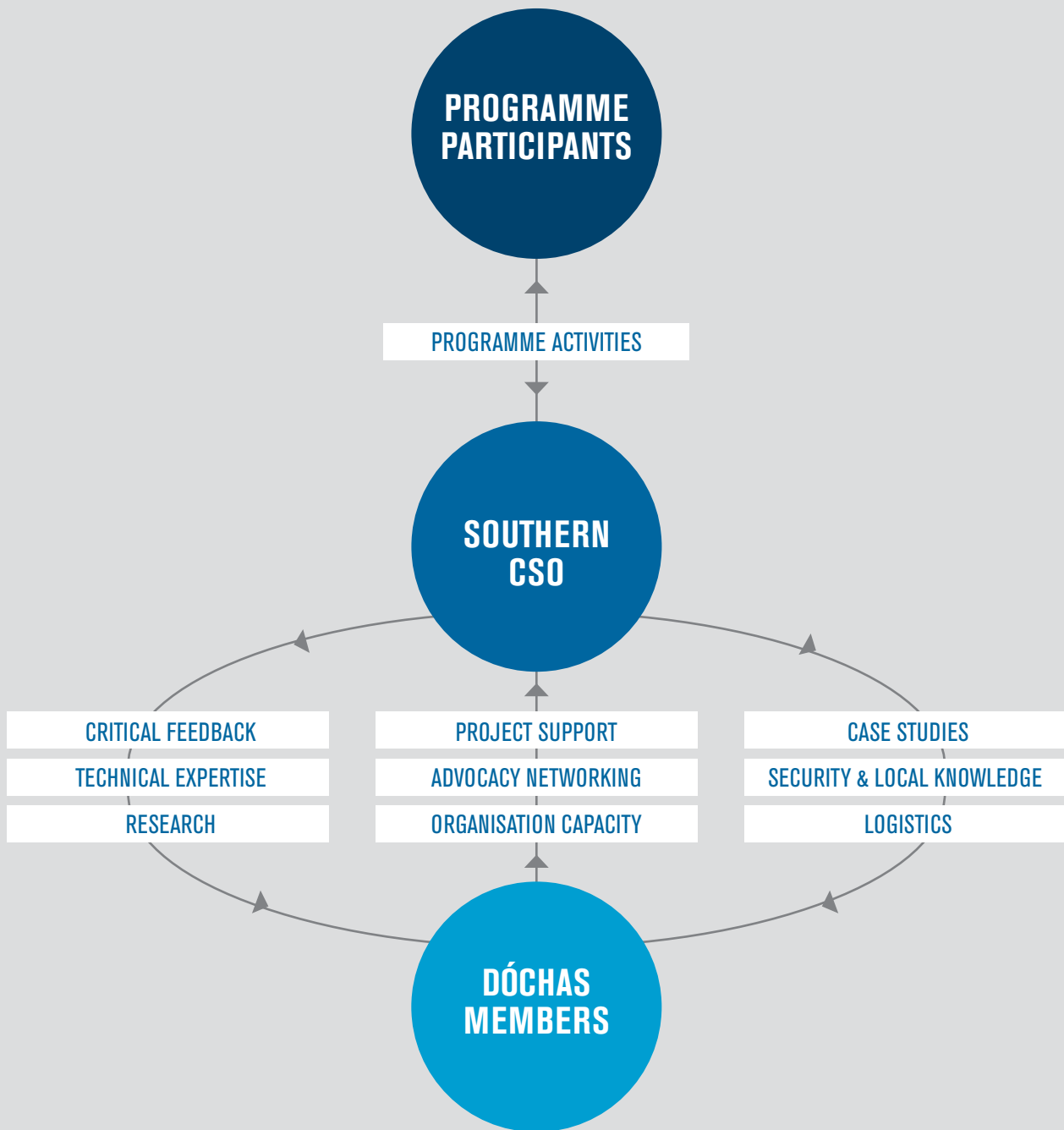
¹⁰ Staff costs or overheads that are directly related to the programme are usually considered as part of the programme funding rather than as institutional capacity support

6.2. SUPPORT FROM A SOUTHERN CSO TO A DÓCHAS MEMBER

A Southern CSO partner will not usually be funding the work of a Dóchas member, but it can provide support to the Dóchas member in a number of ways:

- A CSO partner may provide particular research that is of specific interest to the Dóchas member;
- A CSO partner may be able to provide technical or thematic support or expertise to other partners of the Dóchas member (e.g. support from a local capacity-building CSO for other partners);
- Local partners may provide resources or information that legitimises and support the broader advocacy or campaigning work of Dóchas members at Irish or European levels;
- Local partners can provide case studies or materials to support the fundraising or communications activities of Dóchas members;
- Local partners can provide logistical support for field visits from staff or guests of Dóchas members (including transport, accommodation or language support);
- A local partner can utilise its local contacts and reputation to facilitate easy access to particular communities or government agencies for Dóchas members;
- Local partners can help to provide safe access for the staff of Dóchas members to areas affected by conflict or natural disasters, and to provide ongoing information on security issues in-field;
- A local partner can utilise its knowledge and understanding of the local context and culture to support the design and implementation a Dóchas member's broader field programmes;
- Local partners can provide useful critical feedback on the work and approaches of the Dóchas member from a field perspective (e.g. as in the Dóchas Kenya research project);
- Local partners can on occasion provide a staff member or volunteer to work with the Dóchas member, either at field level or in head office, to share experience and provide a local perspective to the work of Dóchas members.

FIGURE 2: MUTUAL SUPPORT AND COLLABORATION IN PARTNERSHIP



6.3 COLLABORATION BETWEEN A DÓCHAS MEMBER AND A SOUTHERN CSO

Apart from the ways in which a Dóchas member and its Southern partner can support each other, as outlined in the two preceding sections, they can also collaborate on an equal basis without specific financial or technical support flowing in either direction. They can do this through programmatic or advocacy work, for example:

- By sharing their experiences of complementary programming work, and building on this shared experience for increased synergy and expanded development outcomes;
- By working to develop joint programming (jointly funded) either alone or in conjunction with others;
- By undertaking joint research projects or initiatives;
- By engaging in joint advocacy initiatives, or by working together within advocacy networks in-country or at international level;
- By working jointly to support the capacity development of third parties e.g. other local CSOs.

The sharing or placement of staff or volunteers in each other's organisations (as referred to in Sections 6.1 and 6.2, above) is a particularly useful way of increasing mutual understanding and collaboration, but is not by any means the only way to so.

6.4 MUTUAL BENEFITS OF PARTNERSHIP

One of the most important issues for Dóchas members to consider in developing their relationships with Southern CSO partners, is not to assume that partnership is a one-way process. On most occasions, the Dóchas member will be providing funding for a financially-weaker Southern partner. The Dóchas member may also be providing technical or capacity support to a local partner that is relatively weaker in those specific technical / capacity areas also. However, as indicated in Section 6.2 above, there are many non-financial ways in which Southern partners can also contribute significantly to the progress and development of Dóchas members.

Both parties benefit from the delivery of programming or advocacy work that is based on mutually agreed objectives. The southern partner will also benefit organizationally from capacity support from the Dóchas member in a way that can enable it to develop into a vibrant independent organisation over time. The Dóchas member can benefit directly from the supports provided by the southern partner, while also seeing its vision of a flourishing independent southern civil society movement emerging over time.



Partnerships are based on a shared vision of development

7. DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

THE APPROACH OF DÓCHAS MEMBERS TOWARDS THEIR WORK WITH SOUTHERN CSO PARTNERSHIPS IS BASED ON 10 PRINCIPLES, AS OUTLINED BELOW:

01. Partnerships are based on a shared vision of development
02. Partnerships are based on shared organisational values
03. Partnerships are based on an agreed strategy
04. Relationships are based on mutual accountability and trust
05. Partnerships are based on a mutual commitment to long-term change
06. Expectations from partnerships will be set at a realistic level
07. Partnerships are based on clear roles and responsibilities
08. Partnerships are flexible and adaptable to change
09. Partnerships respect difference and recognise power imbalances
10. Partnerships ultimately deliver positive change for intended beneficiaries of projects.

Each of these principles is outlined briefly below:

7.1 PARTNERSHIPS ARE BASED ON A SHARED VISION OF DEVELOPMENT

While the Dóchas member and Southern partner may be coming from very different contexts and backgrounds, they have similar views on how development is to be progressed, through people being empowered to take control of their own lives and circumstances. Both partners believe that all citizens should have equal access to resources, services and power, with a particular priority being given to the needs and rights of the poorest, most marginalised and most vulnerable people. Some Dóchas members and / or local partners may express this commitment from a rights or justice perspective, while others will express it from a needs perspective. Similarly, some organisations may work from a 'solidarity' perspective, while others do not. Either way, they share the same commitment to equality, and expressing it in slightly different ways will not prevent them from working in partnership. The vision and mission statements of the two organisations are sufficiently compatible to allow them to work together.

7.2 PARTNERSHIPS ARE BASED ON SHARED ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

The Dóchas member and the southern partner operate to a similar system of organisational values. They may (or may not) operate from different religious or belief systems, but there is sufficient compatibility in their overall values and approaches that will allow them to work together comfortably. For example, a Dóchas member that places a strong emphasis on participative approaches and solidarity with beneficiaries, may not wish to work with a southern CSO that adopts a top-down non-consultative approach to its work, or vice versa. Both parties will adopt a non-discriminatory approach, so that support is not confined to particular groups, based solely on their particular ethnic or faith origins, when other groups in the same situation also have the same basic needs (e.g. in an emergency situation). In line with their common commitments to equality (Principle 1) both parties will place a particular value and emphasis on gender equality, both in their programming work, and in their organisational systems, structures and approaches as a whole.



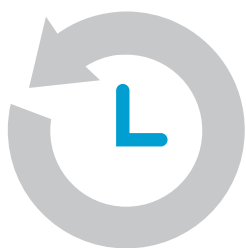
Partnerships are based on an agreed overall strategy

7.3 PARTNERSHIPS ARE BASED ON AN AGREED OVERALL STRATEGY

The Dóchas member and the Southern CSO Partner will each have their own strategic plans or strategy document which sets out their organisational objectives, and guides their overall approach to their work. The overall scope of their plans may be quite different, but there is sufficient compatibility in strategy to allow them to work together. In particular, the Southern CSO partner will not have to change the overall strategic direction of the organisation, or the direction of a major component of its work, in order to accommodate a new partnership, or specifically to meet the needs of the Dóchas member.

7.4 PARTNERSHIPS ARE BASED ON MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRUST

Both partners are committed to being fully accountable to each other. This will include full transparency in reporting and upward accountability to the funding partner, and to other donors. It will equally include downward accountability to the supported partner in terms of the provision of information and good consultation processes. It also refers in particular to downward accountability to programme beneficiaries as the primary focus of the partnership, through good consultation, information and feedback processes. Where particular issues of financial concern arise, the partner agency will be informed immediately. Accountability requirements processes and tools will be agreed between the parties, and with other relevant stakeholders in advance of signing agreements at both organisational and project levels.



The Dóchas member and the Southern CSO partner both recognise that development is a long-term process

7.5 PARTNERSHIPS ARE BASED ON A MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO LONG-TERM CHANGE

The Dóchas member and the Southern CSO partner both recognise that development is a long-term process, and that significant positive change in terms of development outcomes for poor and marginalized people can take years if not decades to achieve in some cases. Because of this, both parties are committed to a long-term engagement in development processes. The Dóchas member may provide short term support to CSO partners in some cases (e.g. in emergency situations, or in the early stages of a relationship) but will generally take a broader, long-term view of partnerships, beyond the life of a particular project implementation cycle.

7.6 EXPECTATIONS FROM PARTNERSHIPS WILL BE SET AT A REALISTIC LEVEL

Expectations from partnerships with Southern CSOs will be set at a level that reflects the current capacity of the partner, and the level of support that will be provided by the Dóchas member during this phase of the partnership. Similarly, expectations of support from the Dóchas member will be set at a level that reflects its capacity to support and respond to the Southern CSO in a realistic and timely manner.

The Dóchas member should not expect a local CSO partner to deliver to higher standards that it currently meets itself. For example, where a Dóchas member has a weak financial management system, it would be disingenuous of it to expect a partner CSO to improve its financial management, without undertaking a similar improvement exercise within the Dóchas member itself. In looking at expectations from partners, Dóchas members also need to identify their own shortcomings, and to take action to address these shortcomings, while also supporting local partners to build their own capacity at the same time.

7.7 PARTNERSHIPS ARE BASED ON CLEAR ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The expected roles and responsibilities of the Dóchas member and the Southern CSO partner will be agreed and clearly set out in an overall partnership document / Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at organisational level, above and in addition to any specific programme proposal or documents that apply. In developing partnership agreements, or in developing their own systems and structures (e.g. in the establishment of field offices) it is particularly important for Dóchas members to ensure that they are not competing with or crowding the space of local CSOs, for example in seeking funds from donors in-field, in developing competing services, or taking the place of local CSOs on civil society representative bodies.

7.8 PARTNERSHIPS ARE FLEXIBLE AND ADAPTABLE TO CHANGE

Dóchas members recognise that the context in which they and their partners are working can change significantly, and sometimes quite suddenly, due to unforeseen circumstances (e.g. an emergency situation generated by a natural disaster or conflict situation, a sudden change in donor funding, significant fluctuations in exchange rates etc.). Allowance will be made in partnership agreements and programme proposal documents for reasonable changes in activities, approaches or objectives due to unforeseen changes in the context or in the circumstances of the partner. Also, if both partners agree that some of the original intentions or plans in a partnership agreement are no longer relevant or of sufficient priority, the plans may be adapted or dropped by mutual consent. Both partners should be committed to a learning approach, within in which the design of future interventions is adapted to accommodate the lessons from previous actions.

7.9 PARTNERSHIPS RESPECT DIFFERENCE AND RECOGNISE POWER IMBALANCES

While the two partners have sufficient common ground in terms of vision, values, strategy and approaches to allow them to work together, as outlined above in these principles, they both accept that their organisations are different in some ways, and that those differences will be fully respected. Dóchas members recognise that there is often a significant power imbalance between relatively large or strong international INGOs that have significant levels of funding and influence, and smaller or weaker local CSOs that are often very dependent on funding from outside agencies. Hence, Dóchas members will not try to force change on CSO partners as long as they are continuing to operate in line with these partnership principles, and in line with the requirements of any specific project or organisational agreements that have been made. Given the level of access that INGOs generally have to significant donor funding, Dóchas members need to be particularly careful that they do not treat local CSOs

as mere contractors for the implementation of their own donor-funded programmes. Rather that should recognise them as equal partners, even if those partners currently have significantly less capacity in some areas.

7.10 PARTNERSHIPS ULTIMATELY DELIVER POSITIVE CHANGE FOR INTENDED PROJECTS BENEFICIARIES

The ultimate aim of a partnership arrangement is to deliver real and lasting benefits to the intended beneficiaries of all programming work, advocacy or campaigning initiatives undertaken under the partnership. Both partners will take steps to ensure that all projects are designed, resourced and implemented in such a way that the intended development results are achieved, and that appropriate systems are in place to set clear targets and to measure results. Notwithstanding the need to take a long-term approach (Principle 5) and to adapt to changing circumstances (Principle 8), where a partnership it ultimately not producing specific benefits for intended beneficiaries within an agreed timeframe, it should be terminated. Apart from evaluations of individual projects, the overall relationship between the two partners should be subject to review at the end of each agreement period (e.g. every three years), with specific reference to the impact of the partnership on intended beneficiaries of projects.



The ultimate aim of a partnership relationship is to deliver real and lasting change for beneficiary individuals, communities and populations (Principle 10).

8. PARTNERSHIP IN A BROADER CONTEXT

In the early stages of a partnership between a Dóchas member and a southern CSO, the focus on the relationship will often be on delivery of one project. Over time the partnership arrangement may well involve support for a number of projects or programmes.

Regardless of the number of projects being supported, the partnership and projects must also be seen in the context of a broader development picture, including the following:

- The degree to which a local partner organisation understands and is able to meet the needs and support the rights of the intended local beneficiary communities;
- The relationship and linkages that the Dóchas member has across a number of individual partnerships and projects with a variety of local CSOs in the same area or country; and
- The impact of partnerships established by other international NGOs with the same local CSOs.

8.1 PARTNER RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

The ultimate aim of a partnership relationship is to deliver real and lasting change for beneficiary individuals, communities and populations (Principle 10). It is often assumed that, because a partner or potential partner is from the same location or the same country as the intended beneficiaries, the organisation fully understands the needs of the intended beneficiaries and issues facing them. In many instances this is true, and a local organisation will have a much better understanding of the local context than a Dóchas member or other international NGO will have.

However, this is not always the case, so that for example an NGO working exclusively on national-level advocacy issues might have a very good understanding of the broader context on a particular theme (e.g. gender) and of how to undertake advocacy initiatives, but in some cases might have very little understanding of the specific issues facing communities at local level. Similarly, a locally-based CSO might have a great interest in working on a particular issue for the community it is based in, but may not have the technical competency or project management skills to work on that particular issue. Furthermore, some organisations (like some of their international counterparts) may take a very top-down approach towards a project, and implement it with minimal input from the community.

IN ENTERING INTO PARTNERSHIPS WITH LOCAL CSOs, DÓCHAS MEMBERS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES THAT THE INTENDED PARTNER AGENCIES HAVE THE FOLLOWING ATTRIBUTES:

- They fully understand the local context including specific local culture, customs and traditions;
- They are sufficiently rooted in and take account of the needs and rights of local communities;
- They adopt a fully participative approach to projects, including full involvement of communities in the design, implementation, monitoring and review of projects, and have systems for downward accountability to beneficiaries (Principle 4);
- They take particular account of the participation of the most marginalised individual and groups in the community, including women and girls, PLWHA , orphans and vulnerable children, female headed households, disabled people, the sick and the elderly, among others.
- They have the particular skills and experience to implement the intended project to a good standard;
- Where the organisation is lacking in any of the above skills, competencies or approaches, it is willing to invest in its own capacity to ensure it can deliver the project to a good standard, with or without some outside support.

Where a partner or intended partner may not have all the requisite skills, or is lacking in some local knowledge, it will often be possible for a Dóchas member to provide a degree of capacity support for them to acquire those skills or knowledge. This is an integral part of the partnership approach (See Section 6.1, above). Where the skills, experience or knowledge is completely lacking, or the partner is unwilling to adopt a participative approach with beneficiaries, support for that particular project should not be considered any further.

8.2 PARTNERSHIPS WITHIN A PROGRAMME APPROACH

As development needs and rights of poor or marginalised people in relation to a particular theme (e.g. on food security) are often complex in nature, the underlying problems can rarely be solved through one specific intervention at one level (e.g. through the sole provision of seeds and tools for agriculture at local level). For this reason, Dóchas members or other international NGOs may often support a number of different local partners on a particular theme at a variety of levels (e.g. at community, district or national level and in some cases at international level) and through a number of approaches (e.g. through support for service provision, advocacy, networking, capacity-building and / or research initiatives of partners)¹¹, so that a series of related problems or issues can be addressed by a range of partners in a coherent manner, in order to achieve real and lasting change for intended beneficiaries. Such a series of coherent interventions of this nature is generally known as a 'programme approach'. The development of a programme approach requires regular dialogue and close collaboration among all partners, and good co-ordination by and support from the Dóchas member, so that all interventions within a programme complement each other, each individual partner has a clear role to play, activities and projects are well planned and delivered, they make the best use of available resources, and ultimately deliver on the needs of intended beneficiaries.

8.3 PARTNERSHIP INTERVENTIONS OF OTHER INTERNATIONAL NGOS

In many cases, local CSOs that are being supported by a Dóchas member may also be in receipt of support or have partnerships with other international NGOs or donors. In this context, it is incumbent on the Dóchas member to ensure that all external supports and relationships with the local CSO are conducted in a co-ordinated and efficient manner. Such co-ordination is necessary to avoid unnecessary overloads for partners e.g. through duplication of activities or multiple reporting requirements. In initiating or developing their partnerships with local CSOs, Dóchas members should discuss and review all of the activities and projects that a partner is undertaking, including those with other INGOs or donors. In some cases it may be necessary for all of the 'donor agencies' and the partner to engage in a joint discussion in order to avoid overlaps and to ensure maximum coherence and complementarity of projects / activities. Avoiding overlaps and duplication is particularly important where a partner is participating in a programme approach (as outlined in Section 8.2, above) with a number of different INGOs. Issues of potential duplication and overload may also apply in relation to the provision of capacity support by a number of external sources, and should be addressed in a similar manner.

¹¹ For example, through the provision of seeds, tools and agricultural extension services at local level; support for agricultural research or the development of markets at district level; advocacy at national level on agricultural policy and / or land rights of women; and advocacy on specific food-related trade issues at international level.

9. DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING PARTNERSHIPS



A SERIES OF CHECKLISTS ARE PROVIDED IN THE ANNEXES TO PROVIDE FURTHER GUIDANCE IN RELATION TO THREE SPECIFIC ASPECTS OF PARTNERSHIP:

- The identification and assessment of potential new partnerships (Annexes 1-3);
- The development of programme and project agreements with partners (Annex 4);
- The delivery of effective partnerships to achieve sustainable development results (Annex 5).

The guidelines and checklists are not intended to be fully comprehensive on each topic, but to highlight the key issues that need to be considered and addressed. Each checklist consists of a series statement to be considered by the Dóchas member, and by the potential (or existing) partner, and should be the subject of some discussion between the two parties.

Each checklist consists of a series statement to be considered by the Dóchas member, and by the potential (or existing) partner, and should be the subject of some discussion between the two parties.

9.1 IDENTIFICATION AND ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL NEW PARTNERSHIPS

THE POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP SHOULD BE ASSESSED ON THREE LEVELS:

- a. The compatibility of the two organisations to work together, with particular reference to the Dóchas Partnership Principles in Section 7;
- b. The overall capacity of the potential partner at organisational level, and in relation to its ability to deliver particular projects or programmes;
- c. The potential added value of the partnership arising from the projects and activities of the two organisations.

9.1.1 COMPATIBILITY OF THE TWO ORGANISATIONS

Discussions between the parties should be conducted in an open and honest manner with equal consideration given to the requirements and perspectives of both parties. In assessing the compatibility of the two organisations, the key issue is to ensure that there are no major differences between them (e.g. in relation to values or vision) that might make the relationship unworkable, or that might cause the partnership to unravel. There will inevitably be some differences between the two organisations, and there is no such thing as a perfect partner or perfect partnership. The aim of the exercise is to ensure that any potential areas of conflict have been identified (e.g. in relation to religious beliefs or practices), mechanisms to address those potential conflicts have been established, and that there is sufficient common ground between the two organisations that will enable them to work together in a fruitful partnership. Partnerships should not be entered into where there are significant and irreconcilable differences in relation to key principles e.g. in relation to development vision, organisational values or accountability measures. Issues relating to compatibility of the two organisations are referred to under Checklist 1 in Annex 1.

9.1.2 CAPACITY OF THE POTENTIAL PARTNER

A basic capacity assessment of the potential partner is conducted in order to identify its strengths and weaknesses at both organisational and programming levels.

a. Organisational capacities are assessed in relation to the following areas:

- Organisational vision, mission and values;
- Organisational strategy and plans;
- Governance, accountability and risk management;
- Management and leadership;
- Financial management and reporting;
- HR management and staffing capacity;
- Funding and other physical or technical resources (e.g. IT).

The focus here is on the actual quality of these internal resources, as opposed to their compatibility with those of the Dóchas member (as reviewed previously in Section 9.1.1, above). Capacities on each of these areas are assessed in relation to the technical skills, experience and attitudes of staff, and the overall quality of structures, systems and procedures in place to deliver the functions.

b. Programming capacity is assessed in relation to the following areas:

- The technical knowledge, skills and experience of staff that are required to deliver the particular thematic projects or programmes that the partner is working on, or plans to work on;
- The particular policies, strategies, manuals, methodologies and procedures that the organisation utilises to deliver those projects;
- The particular knowledge, skills, experience and resources that the organisation has in relation to the programming approaches that it uses, e.g. service-provision, advocacy, research, community mobilisation, campaigning etc
- The level of technical skills and experience that the organisation has in relation to project cycle management (PCM), and the procedures that it has in place to design, monitor, evaluate and report on the projects.

In conducting the capacity assessment, it is to be expected that many potential partners will have weaknesses in several areas. This is not a problem in itself, as a key purpose of entering into a partnership is for the Dóchas member to support the local CSO in the development of its own capacity (Section 6.1).

THE PURPOSE OF THE BASIC CAPACITY ASSESSMENT IS THEREFORE THREE-FOLD:

- Firstly, to ensure that the potential partner has the minimum basic level of skills, experience and systems in place to run the organisation as a whole in a proper manner.
- Secondly, to ensure that the potential partner has a minimum basic level of skills, experience and systems in place to implement the existing or planned projects to a satisfactory standard
- Thirdly, to identify the most urgent capacity-building needs of the potential partner, (at both organisational and programming levels) so that these gaps can be addressed as quickly as possible by the organisation itself, with possible support from the Dóchas member or other external sources.

The capacity assessment process in the initial assessment stage may be quite a light one, as the purpose is only to ensure that the local CSO has the minimum basic level of capacity in place. A more in-depth partner capacity assessment may take place after the partnership has been established, with a view to developing a longer-term partner capacity development process at that stage. The preferred methodology for capacity assessment processes is an organisational self-assessment (OSA) where the process is led by the partner itself with support from the Dóchas member, and with possible support from an external facilitator. The involvement of particular external specialists may also be necessary to assess capacity in certain areas e.g. an accountant may be required to review financial management capacity, or an HIV & AIDS specialist to assess HIV & AIDS programming capacity. Issues relating to the capacity of the potential CSO partner are referred to under Checklist 2 in Annex 2.

9.1.3 POTENTIAL ADDED VALUE OF THE PARTNERSHIP

Having assessed the compatibility of the two potential partners and the basic capacity of the local CSO, the potential added value of the partnership is then considered on five levels:

- a. The potential added value of the local CSO's projects and initiatives at field level to complement the existing partnerships and projects of the Dóchas member in the same area, district or country (Checklist 3A);
- b. The potential added value of the partners projects or initiatives in relation to the wider agenda (regional, global or Irish) of the Dóchas member (Checklist 3B);
- c. The potential logistical support and local knowledge that the local CSO can provide for the Dóchas member (Checklist 3C)
- d. The potential areas for support from the Dóchas member to the local CSO (Checklist 3D);
- e. The potential for specific joint initiatives between the two parties (Checklist 3E);

The first three of these areas focus on the added value and support that the local CSO can provide to the Dóchas member. Added value of interventions at field level relates to the potential for coherence and synergy with existing (or planned) programmes and projects of the Dóchas member in that country, regardless of whether there is a formal 'programme approach'¹² in place or not. Most partnerships with local CSOs are likely to focus heavily on this issue.

Possible contributions that the local CSO can make to the wider agenda of the Dóchas member could include contributions to global or regional-level programming, fundraising or development education in Ireland, or to international-level advocacy or campaigning. These types of contributions are more likely to apply to relatively well-established or sophisticated local CSO, though this is not always the case. Potential logistical support from the local

¹² See Section 8.2.

CSO would not normally be the decisive factor in deciding to enter a partnership, but it could be in exceptional cases (e.g. for a project in a conflict-affected area). The various forms of logistical support could however be of considerable overall benefit in many partnerships.

The potential areas of support from the Dóchas member to the local CSO may draw considerably on the areas for capacity support already identified under Section 9.1.2 and Checklist 2 (Annex 2). Joint initiatives between the two parties will generally refer to situations where the two organisations work coherently as equal partners (i.e. one is not supporting the other) in developing joint programming, advocacy, campaigning or research initiatives either at field level or internationally. This form of relationship is also more likely to apply to relatively well-established, stronger local CSOs.

9.1.4 MAKING A DECISION ON A POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIP

Having assessed the compatibility of the two organisations, the current capacity of the local CSO, and the potential added value to both parties from the partnership, a decision is then made on whether to proceed or not with the relationship, and if so what form the initial partnership should take.

As mentioned previously, the key issue in relation to compatibility / coherence is that there is sufficient common ground between the two organisations, and that any potential areas of conflict can be addressed. In relation to local CSO capacity, the key issue is that any significant gaps in basic capacity can be addressed quickly, so that the potential partner has a minimum basic level of skills and experience and systems in place to enable the organisation to function properly, and to implement its proposed projects. Additional capacity-building beyond the basic requirements can take place at a later stage.

A partnership should not be entered into where there is a glaring weakness at organisational level within local the CSO (e.g. in relation to governance or financial management) and the potential partner

is not committed to addressing that weakness. Similarly, a general partnership might be agreed (assuming that there are no particular capacity issues at organisational level), but support for a particular thematic project (e.g. on HIV & AIDS) should not be provided if the local CSO does not have the basic minimum level of capacity to deliver that project, and is not committed to addressing that weakness in the short-term. Hence, the commitment of the local CSO to addressing its current capacity gaps is a critical factor in deciding whether to proceed. For the partnership to be worthwhile, there must be clear added value on both sides.

A summary table is included at the end of each checklist in Annexes 1-3, so that they key conclusions and issues emerging from the analysis can be highlighted, and a decision made as to whether to proceed or not with the partnership.

9.2 DEVELOPMENT OF PARTNERSHIP AND PROJECT AGREEMENTS

9.2.1 DEVELOPING THE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The analysis conducted with Checklists 3A-E in the assessment stage should provide clear indications on the particular roles that the two partners can play within a partnership, and provide the basis for the development of the partnership agreement in a formal document. The rationale behind the partnership and basis for collaboration should be included in the document. The partnership document should set clear objectives for the development of the full relationship in a dynamic and flexible manner over time. However, it should also set broad objectives in relation to the expected impact of the partnership over time, in terms of benefits to a range of beneficiary groups or populations. The broad financial envelope should be included in the agreement document.

Expectations should be kept at a realistic level, but with clear plans to develop the capacity of the partner CSO on an ongoing basis (where required), so that it can become a thriving, independent

organisation over time. Full participation by target groups / intended beneficiaries at all stages of project development, implementation and review is a critical aspect of the agreement. Consideration of how the partnership will impact on the wider development agenda is also a key factor to be addressed in the agreement. Checklist 5 in Annex 5 may also be used to identify issues to be addressed in the partnership agreement document.

9.2.2 PROJECT AGREEMENTS

An outline of the key issues to be included and addressed in a formal project agreement, is outlined in Annex 4 (Checklist 4), including the basic information on the project itself; the specific commitments of the Dóchas member; the programming and financial commitments of the local CSO; and the other documentation that should accompany the project agreement (including the approved proposal, budget and logframe). The checklist assumes that the agreement will include project funding from the Dóchas member to the local CSO in the first instance, as this is the most common form of relationship, but other forms of collaboration are also reflected in the agreement. The project agreement should set the project in the context of the wider partnership agreement, so that the partnership as a whole is seen as a dynamic and effective relationship, rather than just a series of projects funded by the Dóchas member.

9.2.3 TERMINATING PARTNERSHIPS

Consideration should be given to terminating a partnership where the two organisations no longer trust each other, or where there is no evidence over a significant period of time of actual impact on the lives of poor people (Checklist 4). A partnership where relationships are progressing very well over several years, but there are no tangible benefits for poor people, is not a successful one. Termination of the partnership may also be appropriate where the particular circumstances of either partner, or the operating context, has changed radically to make the relationship no longer viable or productive. An appropriate phase-out process should be put in place when terminating a partnership.

9.3 EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Checklist 5 in Annex 5 highlights the issues to be considered in ensuring that, when a partnership has been developed and agreements have been signed at partnership and project levels, the partnership will develop fully and evolve over time. The checklist provides prompts to ensure that the partnership continues to meet its original expectations, with reference to both the development of the partner relationship, and to the delivery of impact for target communities or populations.

A process for annual monitoring of the partnership progress should be included in the agreement, with a formal review of the partnership as a whole taking place at approximately three-yearly intervals. The review should include an appraisal of progress in line with the 10 Dóchas Partnership Principles, and an evaluation of overall impact on target groups. A decision is then made on whether to continue with the partnership in broadly the same form as before, to adjust the partnership in line with the learning from the review, or to terminate the relationship at that point. In most cases, Dóchas members will be seeking to develop partnerships that will last well beyond the first three-year cycle.



ANNEXES

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ANNEX 1: ASSESSMENT OF ORGANISATIONAL COMPATIBILITY (CHECKLIST 1)

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 1: COMPATIBILITY OF THE POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS¹³

Principle	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Potential Solutions
Shared Vision (P1)	1.	The potential partners (i.e. the Dóchas member and the local CSO) broadly share a similar vision of development, based on people being empowered to take control of their own lives, and all citizens having equal rights to resources, services and power		
	2.	The visions of both organisations are compatible in terms of prioritising the needs and / or rights of the poorest , most vulnerable and most marginalised groups in society.		
	3.	The particular perspectives or approaches towards development (e.g. the use of rights-based, needs-based, social justice or solidarity perspectives / approaches) of the two organisations are sufficiently compatible to allow them to work together without major conflict.		
	4.	The existing vision statements and / or respective 'theories of change' and / or general 'logic of intervention' of the two organisations (where they exist) are broadly compatible.		
Shared Values (P2)	5.	The two organisations operate from broadly similar sets of organisational values (regardless of whether these values are officially documented or not).		
	6.	The particular belief systems, faith-based approaches or guiding philosophies from which either of the two organisations operates have been explored: no potential areas of conflict or tension have been identified as a result of this discussion. OR Some potential tensions or conflicts have been identified during the discussion, but adequate measures can be put in place to ensure that these differences can be reconciled or managed.		
	7.	The two organisations take a broadly similar approach towards the empowerment of individuals, communities and citizens, and the active participation of target beneficiaries in all phases of projects.		

¹³ This checklist is primary concerned with the thinking, values, and commitments that drive the two organisations, and the potential for collaboration between them. The actual capacity of the local CSO partner to deliver on its commitments is assessed later under Checklist 1B.

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 1: COMPATIBILITY OF THE POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS¹⁴

Principle	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Potential Solutions
Shared Values (P2)	8.	Both organisations take a non-discriminatory approach to targeting of beneficiaries.		
	9.	The two organisations give a similar commitment and priority to promoting gender equality as a key development issue, both within their programme work, and within their respective organisations.		
	10.	Both organisations are highly committed to the protection of all programme participants (including staff), and to safeguarding children in particular.		
Coherent Strategy (P3)	11.	The overall strategies of the two organisations (through which they articulate how they aim achieve their organisational missions and objectives) are broadly compatible with each other, even if there are significant differences in terms of the overall scope, content or priorities of the respective strategic plans i.e. there are no obvious conflicts between the strategic plans of the two organisations.		
	12.	The two organisations are able to agree on a broad coherent joint strategy for collaboration (potentially but not necessarily including programming, advocacy, and or capacity-building work components) in order to achieve their mutual aims.		
	13.	The joint strategy will not encourage or force the local CSO partner to deviate in any way from its currently articulated strategy or projects, unless it already has the clear intention and the capacity to do so.		
Mutual Trust and Accountability (P4)	14.	Exploratory discussions between the two potential partners are conducted in an open, honest and constructive manner , with both organisations being frank about their own needs, strengths and weaknesses. Both partners have indicated any limiting factors from their perspective in a potential relationship.		

¹⁴ This checklist is primary concerned with the thinking, values, and commitments that drive the two organisations, and the potential for collaboration between them. The actual capacity of the local CSO partner to deliver on its commitments is assessed later under Checklist 1B.

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 1: COMPATIBILITY OF THE POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS¹⁵

Principle	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Potential Solutions
Mutual Trust and Accountability (P4)	15.	The local CSO is committed to using all funds provided by the Dóchas member in an appropriate and transparent manner , in line with the agreed activities and / or projects agreed between the parties. The local CSO and the Dóchas member are able to agree on a basic standard and frequency of reporting , and a reasonable schedule for field monitoring visits, as required to meet both the internal needs of the Dóchas member, and the requirements of any external donors.		
	16.	The Dóchas member is committed to providing full downward accountability to the local CSO in relation to how its own projects and activities are funded and implemented, and on any external conditions relating to the funding. It is also committed to providing funding on a timely basis, as soon as the basic reporting requirements have been met. It is equally committed to making reporting requirements as simple as possible (as appropriate to the nature and scale of the projects, and any back-donor requirements), and to provide capacity support on proposal writing, financial management and report writing, where necessary.		
	17.	Both organisations are committed to providing full downward accountability to project beneficiaries , including regular reports to them, and specific opportunities for beneficiary consultation, feedback and critique of the work of both the local CSO and that of the Dóchas member.		
Realistic Expectations (P5)	18.	The scale and content of the potential partnership agreement being discussed, including the level of potential funding, is realistically proportionate to the current capacity of the local CSO, its ability to deliver project of that scale and nature, and the capacity of the Dóchas member to provide the required level of support.		

¹⁵ This checklist is primary concerned with the thinking, values, and commitments that drive the two organisations, and the potential for collaboration between them. The actual capacity of the local CSO partner to deliver on its commitments is assessed later under Checklist 1B.

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 1: COMPATIBILITY OF THE POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS¹⁶

Principle	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Potential Solutions
Realistic Expectations (P5)	19.	The establishment of this partnership and the work generated by it will not create any unnecessary workloads or duplication of activities for the local CSO, particularly in the context of existing partnerships or relationships it has (or is planning to have) with other agencies.		
Long-term Commitment (P6)	20.	Both partners are actively interested in the possibility of engaging in a longer-term partnership , where it is appropriate to do so, subject to the initial engagement being of a fruitful nature for both organisations.		
Clear Roles and Responsibilities (P7)	21.	The two parties are able to reach broad agreement on a potential set of initiatives and actions that might form the basis of an initial partnership, including ways in which the Dóchas member could support the local CSO (Section 6.1), ways in which the local CSO could support the Dóchas member (Section 6.2), and other ways in which they could collaborate on an equal basis (Section 6.3).		
	22.	The Dóchas member is committed to ensuring that any action on its part (e.g. in opening a field office, seeking funding from external donors at field level, or engaging in field level advocacy) will not compete with or undermine the activities or opportunities of the local CSO in any way.		
Flexibility and Adaptability (P8)	23.	Both parties are committed to a learning approach, within which the design of future interventions is adapted to accommodate the lessons from previous actions, or significant changes in the context surrounding the partnership (including changes within either organisation). Some potential scenarios that might require change (e.g. the occurrence of natural disaster or conflict situation) have been discussed, and potential changes have been considered.		
Respecting Difference (P9)	24.	The Dóchas member and the local CSO view each other as equals from a relationship point of view, regardless of potentially significant differences in their respective levels of resources, capacity and influence. The Dóchas member will not enter into a relationship where a local CSO is treated solely as a contracting agent.		

¹⁶ This checklist is primarily concerned with the thinking, values, and commitments that drive the two organisations, and the potential for collaboration between them. The actual capacity of the local CSO partner to deliver on its commitments is assessed later under Checklist 1B.

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 1: COMPATIBILITY OF THE POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANISATIONS¹⁷

Principle	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Potential Solutions
Delivering Positive Change (P10)	25.	Both parties are looking beyond the mechanics of any potential partnership agreement, to ensure that their collaboration will ultimately lead to the delivery of real and lasting changes in the lives of the target beneficiaries within a realistic timeframe. Both parties are committed to setting clear targets for achievement of results within all projects, and within the partnership as a whole, and to the establishment of systems and processes to deliver and measure those results.		

SUMMARY TABLE 1: COHERENCE ASSESSMENT

Conclusion on overall level of coherence between potential partners:	
Main issues for Dóchas member to address:	
Main issues for Potential Partner to address:	
Conclusion on whether to proceed (Yes / No / Why/ not)	
Key actions required before signing a partnership agreement:	

¹⁷ This checklist is primary concerned with the thinking, values, and commitments that drive the two organisations, and the potential for collaboration between them. The actual capacity of the local CSO partner to deliver on its commitments is assessed later under Checklist 1B.

ANNEX 2: BASIC CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF A POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANISATION (CHECKLIST 2)

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 2: BASIC CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF A POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANISATION

Capacity	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Potential Solutions
Governance	1.	The potential partner organisation has a formal legal status , is registered with government ¹⁸ (or is in the process of obtaining registration) and is compliant with the legal requirements in relation to finance and human resources (e.g. on labour law).		
	2.	A basic governance structure (i.e. a board of directors, or equivalent) and systems in place to oversee the management and functioning of the organisation on an independent basis, including the oversight of strategy and accountability systems, and the performance of the Director. The board meets on a regular basis, but does not interfere in the day-to-day running of the organisation.		
Vision, Mission and Values	3.	The potential partner has a broad vision of development that guides its work, and is clear on what it is trying to achieve (i.e. its mission) even if this is not articulated formally in a mission statement at this point.		
	4.	The organisation operates to a set of internal values that guide how it does its work in line with good practice in the development sector (even if these organisational values are not articulated in written form at this stage). Refer to Checklist 1, Nos. 6, 7, 8 and 9.		
Strategy	5.	The potential partner has a basic strategic plan or strategy document in place that guides its overall approach to its work, including the projects that it implements, the development approaches that it uses, the resources and systems required to deliver them, and an overall funding plan for a three-year period (at least). The strategy has clear objectives for each project and area of work, and is a live working document. All projects and activities are reflected in the overall strategy.		

¹⁸ In exceptional circumstances, it may not be possible to have formal registration e.g. in a conflict zone / disputed territory where there is no clear governing authority.

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 2: BASIC CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF A POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANISATION

Capacity	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Potential Solutions
Leadership and Management	6.	The Director provides clear leadership and management for the organisation in line with the strategic plan. Basic management structures and systems are in place, and are appropriate for the scale, depth and nature of the operations.		
Financial Management	7.	The organisation has a basic financial management system in place, that reflects the overall scale and nature of its operations, and enables it to provide full accountability for the use of funds, and to develop financial reports in line with the requirements of its donors (potentially including the Dóchas member).		
	8.	The financial management system includes the following: basic budgeting systems at organisational and project levels; a cashbook system for transactions; a requirement for separate signatures for request and approval of transactions; supporting documentation for receipts and payments; bank accounts in the full ownership of the organisation, and requiring at least two signatories; monthly account reconciliations to provide specific evidence on the flow and use of funds for each donor and project; monthly cash checks; and an annual external audit.		
HR and Staffing	9.	The organisation has a basic human resource management system in place. The overall staffing capacity and structure is appropriate for the scale and nature of the operations.		
	10.	The organisation has a basic policy in relation to the protection of programme participants in place, with particular reference to safeguarding children. The policy is being actively implemented on an ongoing basis.		
Funding and Resources	11.	The organisation has adequate funding in place to meet its operational requirements over the next year at least (including potential funding from the Dóchas member), and has a basic fundraising plan in place.		
	12.	The organisation has the essential resources and logistics in place to implement its activities as planned e.g. basic equipment, supplies, storage, transport, IT, and security systems.		

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 2: BASIC CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF A POTENTIAL PARTNER ORGANISATION

Capacity	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Potential Solutions
Programming	13.	The potential partner organisation has the basic technical programming knowledge, skills and experience in each thematic area that it is implementing (or plans to implement) projects ¹⁹ , with particular reference to the projects planned with the Dóchas member.		
	14.	The potential partner organisation has a basic policy, strategy, manual, planning tools and / or systems , which guide its work sufficiently on each project theme, and enable it to implement its projects to a good standard, with particular reference to the projects planned with the Dóchas member.		
	15.	The potential partner has the basic knowledge, skills and experience and systems in place in relation to each of the development approaches (e.g. service-provision, advocacy, campaigning, research, community development) that it uses, or plans to use, with particular reference to approaches planned with the Dóchas member.		
	16.	The potential partner has a sufficient level of PCM knowledge, skills and experience in the design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, learning and reporting on development projects, to enable it to deliver its proposed range of projects to a good standard, and to meet the proposal writing and reporting requirements of its donors, with particular reference to the requirements of the Dóchas member and its donors.		

¹⁹ The Dóchas member may not have a direct interest in other projects of the potential partner, apart from those that it is planning to support or link with. However, a significant lack of capacity in relation to those other projects could have a negative impact on the overall functioning of the organisation, and might therefore have implications for the potential partnership.

SUMMARY TABLE 2: CAPACITY ASSESSMENT OF POTENTIAL CSO PARTNER

Conclusion on the overall level of capacity:	
Most urgent capacity areas to be addressed:	
Specific capacity issues for potential partner to address internally:	
Potential areas for the Dóchas member to provide capacity support:	
Potential areas for capacity support from other external parties	
Conclusion on whether to proceed (Yes / No / Why/ not)	
Key actions required before signing a partnership agreement:	

ANNEX 3: POTENTIAL ADDED VALUE OF A PARTNERSHIP (CHECKLISTS 3A – 3E)

This annex contains five checklists to be used in assessing potential added value of the possible partnership, as follows:

Checklist 3A: Potential Added Value of Local CSO Interventions at Field Level

Checklist 3B: Possible Areas of Support from the Dóchas Member to the Local CSO

Checklist 3C: Potential Contribution of the Local CSO's Work to the Broader Agenda of the Dóchas Member

Checklist 3D: Possible Joint Initiatives between the Dóchas Member and the Local CSO

Checklist 3E: Potential Logistical Support from the Local CSO to the Dóchas Member

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 3A: POTENTIAL ADDED VALUE OF LOCAL CSOs INTERVENTIONS AT FIELD LEVEL

Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
The potential partner is implementing (or planning to implement) development projects or activities that have the potential to add a new dimension or value to the existing partnerships and programme of work of the Dóchas member in the same area, district or country, by utilising some or all of the following approaches:		
a. Working on a similar theme (e.g. livelihoods) and with similar beneficiaries to effectively replicate existing projects and increase the overall scale of a programme of work on a particular theme (i.e. more of the same).		
b. Working with a new type of beneficiaries that have a similar or greater level of needs as the existing beneficiaries (e.g. adding a livelihoods project for disabled people).		
c. Expanding the geographic spread of the overall programme by implementing similar projects in new locations (i.e. new communities, or districts)		
d. Implementing projects that utilise a new sub-theme or technical dimension (e.g. adding a micro-finance dimension to a livelihoods programme)		
e. Addressing immediate needs of the same population (e.g. through emergency interventions)		
f. Addressing the root causes of problems by adding advocacy and / or campaigning dimensions to complement existing service-provision work of other partners.		
g. Working on the same issues at a different level to provide a dual or multi-level response e.g. bringing community-level advocacy issues (e.g. land rights) to district, regional, national or international level.		

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 3A: POTENTIAL ADDED VALUE OF LOCAL CSOs INTERVENTIONS AT FIELD LEVEL

Statement		Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
h.	Supporting and enabling the Dóchas member to obtain project funding from an external donor.		
i.	Undertaking research that will inform or complement existing projects.		
j.	Introducing new programming methodologies or approaches (e.g. participatory rural appraisal, gender mainstreaming) to improve the quality of work.		
k.	Providing specific organisational capacity assessment and support for other partners of the Dóchas member (as a capacity-building agency)		
l.	Sharing technical skills with other partners of the Dóchas member.		
m.	Contributing its experience and insights to the overall development of the Dóchas member's programme of work in the country.		
n.	Contributing to or undertaking evaluations of the other projects, and / or the overall programme of work of the Dóchas member in-country.		
o.	Participating in peer learning and review exercises with other programme partners in-country.		

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 3B: POTENTIAL ADDED VALUE OF LOCAL CSOs WORK TO THE BROADER AGENDA OF THE DÓCHAS MEMBER

Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
The potential partner can provide direct support to the Dóchas member itself more broadly at Irish, international or global programming levels by undertaking some or all of the following initiatives:		
a. Undertaking specific research that is of use to the Dóchas member for in the design or implementation of its global or regional programming work , or across several countries.		
b. Contributing to the development of specific global programming policies and strategies of the Dóchas member.		
c. Providing specific resources or information to support and legitimise the international advocacy or campaigning work of the Dóchas member e.g. at Irish, EU or UN level.		
d. Providing case studies or materials to support the communications, fundraising or development education activities of the Dóchas member in Ireland.		
e. Providing feedback and critique on the quality of the Dóchas member's general programming work or partnership approaches (i.e. as in the Kenya or Keystone reviews).		
f. Participating in planning meetings to inform the strategy development or review processes of the Dóchas member at global, regional or country level		
g. Engaging in peer learning and review processes with other partners of the Dóchas member at regional or global level.		
h. Visits by or placement of a staff member or volunteer from the potential partner in the head office (or other field office) of the Dóchas member, for the purpose of mutual learning, joint working, technical support, or assistance in fundraising or communication or development education.		

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 3C: POTENTIAL LOGISTICAL SUPPORT FROM THE LOCAL CSOs TO THE DÓCHAS MEMBER AT FIELD LEVEL

Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
The potential partner can provide in-field logistical support to the Dóchas member by some or all of the following means:		
a. Providing logistical support for field visits by staff from the Dóchas member, or third-parties related to them e.g. (board members, supporters, journalists).		
b. Providing safe access and security support in emergency or conflict areas.		
c. Facilitating the presence or visits by volunteers from the Dóchas member.		
d. Facilitating access to communities, local authorities or government agencies, or other key development actors.		
e. Supporting the development or running of a field office of the Dóchas member (e.g. by providing office space and / or transport).		

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 3D: POTENTIAL SUPPORT FROM THE DÓCHAS MEMBER TO THE LOCAL CSO

Statement		Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
The Dóchas member can provide support to the local CSO in some or all of the following ways:			
Projects	a.	Providing funding from its own resources, or from a third-party donor, to support a particular project or programme of the CSO.	
	b.	Providing technical support (through personnel or materials) for the development or implementation of particular projects .	
	c.	Funding third-party organisations to provide technical support to the local CSO for projects.	
Advocacy & Networks	d.	Providing funding from its own resources (or from a third-party donor) to support the development or implementation of a particular advocacy project or initiative.	
	e.	Providing technical support (through personnel or materials) for the development of a particular advocacy project e.g. an advocacy specialist.	
	f.	Providing contacts and networking support to enable the local CSO to work closely with other CSO in the country or at international level.	
Volunteer	g.	Providing one or more volunteers to support the local CSOs projects or advocacy work.	
Institutional Support	h.	Providing funding for staff costs or overheads that are not related to particular projects (i.e. institutional costs) ²⁰	
Research	i.	Funding or providing technical support for the research work of the local CSO.	
Donors	j.	Supporting the local CSO to obtain direct or indirect funding from a third-party donor .	
Prog. Approach	k.	Supporting the local CSO to participate in a programme with other partners of the Dóchas member in the same country (i.e. as part of a ' programme approach ').	

²⁰ Local CSOs often struggle to fund their overall operations, including management and administration costs, as many short-sighted donors will only fund direct project activities. Hence, if developing a partnership agreement with a local CSO, serious consideration should be given to providing substantial support for the institutional costs of the CSO.

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 3D: POTENTIAL SUPPORT FROM THE DÓCHAS MEMBER TO THE LOCAL CSO

Statement			Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
The Dóchas member can provide support to the local CSO in some or all of the following ways:				
International	l.	Inviting the local CSO to participate in peer learning initiatives at regional or global level.		
	m.	Inviting the local CSO to participate in the evaluation or review of the work of the Dóchas member in-country or in other countries.		
	n.	Inviting the local CSO to participate in the strategy development and / or planning processes of the Dóchas member at national or international levels.		
	o.	Facilitating / funding the presence of the local CSO at national or international conferences or events.		
Capacity-Building	p.	Providing support for a general organisational development (OD) exercise for the local CSO.		
	q.	Providing specific capacity support for the local CSO at organisational level (as identified under Checklist 2) in one or more of the following areas: mission, vision and values; organisational strategy; governance, accountability and risk management; leadership and management; financial management and reporting; HR management and staffing; and fundraising and resourcing.		
	r.	Providing support in general programming capacity on a particular theme (e.g. education) – as identified in Checklist 2		
	s.	Providing capacity-building support on general Project Cycle Management (PCM) e.g. on setting baselines or measuring results – as identified on Checklist 2		

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 3E: POTENTIAL JOINT INITIATIVES BY THE DÓCHAS MEMBER AND THE LOCAL CSO

Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
The Dóchas member and the Local CSO can work together as equal to implement some or all of the following joint initiatives:		
a. Develop a joint programme or project at field level, either alone or in conjunction with other CSOs to which both organisations make specific contributions on an equal basis, and with a clearly defined joint management structure.		
b. Develop joint advocacy and / or campaigning initiatives in-country or at international level either alone or as part of a broader advocacy / campaigning network.		
c. Develop joint research and / or learning projects on specific issues of mutual interest in-field or at international level.		
d. Develop joint funding proposals to external donors, where both partners play equal and complementary roles in the project		

SUMMARY TABLE 3: POTENTIAL ADDED VALUE OF PARTNERSHIP

Added value of local CSO initiatives at field level:	
Added value of local CSO to Dóchas Member at Irish, global, international levels:	
Possible logistical support from local CSO.	
Overall added value to Dóchas member:	
Added value from Dóchas member to local CSO:	
Potential for Joint Initiatives:	
Overall Conclusion on Added Value:	

ANNEX 4: PROJECT / GRANT AGREEMENTS WITH PARTNERS (CHECKLIST 4)

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 4: ITEMS FOR INCLUSION IN A PROJECT OR GRANT AGREEMENT²¹

No.	Item	Details	Check
A. Project Details			
1.	Organisational Details	Names and Addresses, e-mails, faxes, phones, official registration numbers of both parties	
2.		Names & roles of individuals representing each organisation	
3.	Purpose	Purpose of Agreement: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To outline commitments and responsibilities of both parties in relation to a specific project /activity / programme of work. Set within context of the broader partnership agreement 	
4.	Project Description	Project Title	
5.		Reference No.	
6.		Full Narrative Proposal – Agreed Version (in Annex)	
7.		Full Project Budget – agreed version (in Annex)	
8.		Project Logframe (if required) – in Annex	
9.	Timing	Length of Project (months / years)	
10.		Proposed Start Date	
11.		Proposed End Date	
12.		Date of Approval of Project	
13.		Flexibility on start and end dates - clarify	
14.		Clarify policy on no-cost extensions	
B. Commitments of Dóchas Member to Project			
15.	Funding	Actual Funding Approved for Year 1, Year 2 & Year 3 (as relevant). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multi-year agreements preferable for well established partnerships Usually one-year agreements for initial funding / new partnership 	

²¹ Each project / grant agreement is developed within the broader context of a partnership agreement between the two agencies.

16.	Funding	<p>Sources of funds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How much from Dóchas member? • How much from external donors? • Any conditions for release of funds by external donor? • External donor requirements during implementation? • Will Dóchas member fund all if external funding does not come through? • Clarify intentions / policy in relation to possible applications to other donors during implementation. 	
17.		<p>Clarify conditions for release of funding each year, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subject to performance / reports; • Subject to funding being raised / available from Dóchas member or external donor; • Partnership and project in a position to continue (i.e. no dramatic changes in context); • Project still needed / makes sense. 	
18.		<p>Release of Funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely release of funds each year – within X days of receipt of satisfactory reports; • Release of funding in tranches e.g. quarterly / six monthly (include schedule of proposed funding); • Release of funds subject to expenditure progressing at agreed level; • Release of funds subject to no unauthorised expenditure. 	
19.	Project Support	<p>Clarify specific support to be provided by Dóchas member in relation to the project implementation (Checklist 3D):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific technical support for project • Advocacy / networking support • Research / learning support • Possible volunteers / secondment of staff • Institutional support e.g. funding of admin costs / overheads • Linkages / invitations to broader international / regional initiatives 	
20.	Programme Approach	<p>Clarify how project may fit within a broader programme including other partners (Checklist 3A):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify how it adds value to the broader programme • Clarify expectation for participation with other partners • Clarify benefits to CSO from the broader programme • Check how it relates to other partnership commitments of local CSO (e.g. partnerships with other INGOs) 	
21.	Organisational Capacity Support	<p>Relate to broader organisational capacity support being provided by Dóchas member (Checklists 2 & 3D) where relevant.</p>	

22.	Project Visits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm frequency and nature of monitoring visits (preferably twice yearly at a minimum); • Confirm agreement on visits by other stakeholders e.g. supporters, donors, journalists, fundraisers. 	
23.	Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm details of reporting requirements (interim and final) to Dóchas member: with reference to initial objectives, activities, budgets and targets; • Commitment to keep reporting as light and practical as possible; • Streamline reporting requirements with other parties i.e. INGOs / external donors; • Commitment to providing onward reports to external donors, based on material provided by local CSO. 	
24.	Evaluation & Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify evaluation type (interim and final), timings and requirements; • Specify audits to be undertaken internally by CSO and / or externally commissioned by Dóchas member or external donor. 	
C. Commitments of Local CSO to Project			
25.	Implementation	<p>Commitment to implementation of project as described:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In line with the proposal, budget, this agreement and external donor requirements • Meeting agreed technical and quality standards; • Aiming for maximum benefit to beneficiaries. 	
26.	Financial Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarification on CSO's own financial contribution; • Clarification on financial or in-kind contributions from communities / beneficiaries; • Confirmation of any other financial or material contributions sought or received; • Confirm that direct applications to additional donors will be subject to prior discussion with Dóchas member. 	
27.	Personnel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment of personnel and resources to deliver project; • Commitment to safeguarding children and project participants (Checklist 1), including compliance with Dóchas member protection policy (Policy attached in Annex); • Specific security protocols for implementation. 	
28.	Wider Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm how this project or activities within it may contribute to the wider agenda of the Dóchas member at international level, as part of the broader partnership between the organisations (Checklist 3B) 	
29.	Support to Dóchas Member	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm how the local CSO may provide logistical support to the Dóchas member in-field (Checklist 3C). 	
30.	Compliance / Ethics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with national law / procedures; • Commitment to payment of taxes and social insurance; • Declaration on no conflicts of interest for organisation or individual staff. 	

31.	Co-ordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitment to co-ordination within broader programme (No. 20, above); • Co-ordination with government agencies, other CSOs; • Co-ordination with other donors / capacity support agencies. 	
32.	Participation & Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify role of community / beneficiaries in implementation and monitoring ; • Outline process for community feedback; • Confirm frequency and type of project monitoring by CSO itself; • Confirm support for monitoring visits by Dóchas - logistical or otherwise - (Checklist 3C) or other stakeholders as agreed (No.23 above); • Confirm policy on seeking permission for major changes to activities (to be agreed in writing). 	
33.	Reporting & Evaluation & Audit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm commitments to reporting requirements (frequency, type and content); • Confirm commitment to facilitation of evaluations and audits (as per No. 24 above); • Ensure full participation of communities / beneficiaries in evaluation. 	
34.	Completion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to a review discussion with Dóchas member on completion of final evaluation & audit; • Keep all project documentation for a minimum period of six years, or as required otherwise by donors; • Retain or dispose of all project assets as agreed at start, and in compliance with legal requirements and donor policies. 	

D. Financial Requirements for Local CSO Partner

35.	Bank Account	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bank account details to be provided at time of agreement: name, type, sort code, swift code, IBAN, intermediary / correspondence bank (if required) etc; • Account type to be organisational (not personal) with at least two confirmed signatories who are board members / senior managers; • Agree and clarify currency of account (may depend on legal requirements); • Clarify other donor funds that may be in the same account; • Provide monthly account reconciliations that explain all transactions relating to funds from Dóchas member and other sources for project. 	
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36.	Requests & receipt of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All transfer of funds to be requested in writing from the Dóchas member; • Each request to include a new copy of the bank account details; • Requests to include a copy of a recent bank statement on each occasion; • Request to confirm preferred method of payment (e.g. transfer, cheque); • Any special instructions for transfer to be confirmed; • Receipt of funds to be confirmed to Dóchas member within X days – using a 'receipt of grant' form if required, with bank statement attached. 	
37.	Use of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm funds will be used only for intended purposes as per agreement; • Costs incurred before signing agreement will not be allowed unless agreed in writing in advance; • Policy on gains or losses from currency fluctuations to be agreed in advance, including process for reporting on them; • Bank transfer costs to be included in overall budget of project and borne by the CSO; • Unspent funds at end of project will be returned to Dóchas member, unless otherwise agreed in writing. Unapproved spending to be refunded also. 	
38.	Financial Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All report to detail expenditure against each budget heading and sub-heading i.e. planned V actual; • Opening and closing balances on the account to be included in the report; • Details of currency gains / losses to be included in the report; • Confirm commitment to or facilitate external audits and submit audit reports, as required. 	
39.	Budget variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm level of variation on main budget lines that is acceptable (e.g. 10% up or down) – subject to donor requirements also; • Confirm whether greater variations can be agreed in writing in advance or not; • Confirm level of variation on budget sub-headings (e.g. no restriction subject to objectives and results not affected); 	

E. Liability of Both Parties

40.	Liability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No liability is usually accepted by either party against any losses or costs arising out of or connected with the project; • Neither party generally agrees to indemnify the other party against any losses or costs arising out of or connected with the project; • No liability or indemnity for either party due to accidents, death or injury arising from, or in connection with the project; • Both parties agree not to provide any support for individuals or organisations that are known to advocate for, sponsor or engage in unlawful activities, violence or terrorist activities.
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F. Termination or Extension of Project Agreement

41.	Termination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify minimum period of notice required in writing; • Clarify possible reasons for termination e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Poor performance / lack of reporting ○ Failure to commence / implement on time ○ Lack of accountability (finance) / potential fraud / insolvency ○ Unlawful or unapproved activities ○ Intervention no longer relevant ○ Intervention no longer feasible (e.g. war / conflict situation) ○ Local CSO not in a position to continue. • Clarify conditions on termination: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Return of all remaining funds within a specific timeline ○ Full narrative and expenditure reports within specified period ○ Return of all assets / equipment, or agreement on disposal.
42.	Extension	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any extension to be clarified in writing (in addendum); • Any new conditions / issues to be clarified; • Confirm whether no cost extension or specific additional funding.

G. Annexes to be included with Project Agreement

43.	Annexes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of the wider Programme Agreement between the two organisations • Copy of the full (approved) Project Proposal • Copy of the full (approved) Project Budget • Copy of the Project Logframe if required) • Funding and Reporting schedule • CSO Partner Bank Details • Copy of Safeguarding Children / Protection Policy of CSO.
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ANNEX 5: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS (CHECKLIST 5).

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 5: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Item	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
Basis of Partnership	1.	The basis for collaboration between the two partners, as reflected in the written partnership agreement , continues to reflect clearly the compatibility of the two organisations (Checklist 1), the current capacity of the local CSO (Checklist 2) and the added value of the relationship from both perspectives (Checklists 3A-E).		
Objectives based on Impact	2.	The partnership agreement has clear objectives that are based (not just on the relationship between the two organisations but) on the delivery of real and lasting change for a clearly defined range of poor and marginalised people across the series of projects and initiatives conducted within the partnership.		
Targets & Results	3.	All projects or interventions undertaken within the partnership are based on the following (Principle 10): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear targeting policies, with priority given to the poorest and most vulnerable and most marginalised people; • Analyses of vulnerability and needs, and the establishment of baselines and clear objectives for delivery of results; • Establishment of clear and measurable indicators, and means of verification that are used to measure progress on a continual basis; • An overall results management framework to measure outcomes and development results across all aspects of the partnership. 		
Strategies & Best Practice	4.	All projects and initiatives within the partnership are delivered in line with clear strategies and best practice in the development sector, including well developed thematic strategies, and mainstreaming or integration of critical issues such as gender equality, HIV & AIDS, climate change / environment and governance / human rights.		
Capacity and Performance Development	5.	Continuing support to the local CSO in the development of its own capacity to become a vibrant, dynamic and independent organisation over time is a core component of the partnership. Expectations from particular phases of the partnership are set at a level that reflects the capacity of both parties to deliver at that point. (Principle 6)		

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 5: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Item	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
Evolving Relationships	6.	There is open, continuing and frank dialogue between the two parties throughout the life of the partnership, and both maintain high levels of accountability to each other (Principle 4) and to other external stakeholders.		
	7.	The relationship between the two parties deepens over time in a dynamic and effective manner, as reflected in an increasing number of added value initiatives (Checklist 3A - 3E) between the parties.		
	8.	Differences in capacity and power are fully recognised, but discussions and decision-making is made on an equal basis to promote a shared programme of work (Principle 9). The Dóchas member is also seeking to improve its own capacity, where needed.		
	9.	Roles and responsibilities evolve over time and actions such as development and approval of proposals, reporting on progress, and release of funds, are implemented in a quick and efficient manner by both parties.		
Participation	10.	All projects and interventions within the partnership place a high premium on the full participation of local communities at all stages of projects, from the initial design, to implementation, monitoring, evaluation and feedback on the performance of both partners. Specific opportunities are created for communities / beneficiaries to provide feedback on the overall partnership also.		
Contribution to Broader Devt. Agenda	11.	<p>The partnership continues to evolve with the local CSO itself, and the projects and activities it implements, fitting clearly with and adding value to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The overall programme of work supported by the Dóchas member in that district / country (Programme Approach); • The work of CSOs as a whole in the same district or country; • Initiatives of other external development in the same district / country (government, donors, INGOs); • The broader work of the Dóchas member at regional, Irish and or international levels. 		

DÓCHAS PARTNERSHIP CHECKLIST 5: EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS FOR DEVELOPMENT RESULTS

Item	No.	Statement	Yes / No	Issues / Possibilities
Monitoring the Partnership	12.	The overall partnership agreement and specific project agreements are monitored regularly and adapted to changing circumstances and events (Principle 8). A partnership review meeting takes place on an annual basis, with a clear focus on the whole relationship, and the delivery of results for intended beneficiaries. Individual project review meetings take place on a twice-yearly basis at least.		
Evaluation & Review of Partnership	13.	A major review of all aspects of the partnership takes place at least every three years. The strength and the progress of the partnership is tested against each of the 10 Dóchas Partnership Principles as part of this exercise. The impact of the overall partnership on the intended range of beneficiaries is formally evaluated at the end of the period. Lessons from the evaluation are utilised in the development of the next phase of collaboration.		

OVERALL SUMMARY OF EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPACT OF PARTNERSHIP

Summary of overall effectiveness of the partnership:	
Key achievements for poor vulnerable and marginalised People (numbers, quality, locations):	
Main issues for Dóchas member to address:	
Main issues for Local CSO to address:	
Conclusion on whether to renew, revise or terminate partnership:	
Key actions required before signing a new agreement (if applicable):	



Every effort has been made to ensure that this document complies with the NCBI Clear Print Guidelines. Should you encounter a difficulty in accessing this publication please inform Dóchas at media@dochas.ie as we will be continuing to work to improve our documentation.



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