

# Dóchas

## The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

Dóchas Board 95 (4-23)  
29/09/23

### Dóchas Board

held in offices of McCann Fitzgerald, Riverside One, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2  
on Friday, 29<sup>th</sup> September 2023, from 09:30 to 13.00

### M i n u t e s

**Present:** Rosamond Bennett (Christian Aid Ireland) Chairperson  
John Moffett (Misean Cara) Vice Chairperson  
Siobhán Cassidy (Trócaire) Treasurer & Company Secretary  
Karol Balfe (ActionAid Ireland)  
Lucia Ennis (Concern Worldwide)  
Bobby McCormack (Development Perspectives)  
Martina Fitzgerald (External Board Member)  
Grace Milton (External Board Member)  
Paul Donnelly (External Board Member)

**Apologies:** Eamon Sharkey (GOAL)

**In attendance:** Jane-Ann McKenna (CEO of Dóchas)  
Anna Farrell (Finance & Operations Manager, Dóchas)

#### 1. Meeting Opening and Standing Items

The Chairperson opened the meeting, welcoming those present and thanking McCann Fitzgerald for hosting us today.

##### a. Apologies and Agenda

There was one apology (noted above) and no changes to the agenda as circulated. One member (Bobby) was unable to stay for the Risk Review session and left at 11.10am.

##### b. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

All members present confirmed that there were no conflicts of interest.

##### c. Minutes of Board Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting, held on 22/06/23, were approved: Paul Donnelly (Proposed), Lucia Ennis (Seconded).

##### d. Notes on Irish Aid Exchange

The notes on the Exchange, which took place on 22/06/23 were taken as read.

In response to a question from Bobby, the CEO said that some members were having difficulties making international payments to countries where sanctions are in operation. The issue centres around International Banking Federation rules around such payments. We raised the issue with DFA and they followed up with the Regulator, explaining that they are funding the organisations in

question and that they have no cause for concern. Both Dóchas and DFA continue to follow the matter.

#### e. **Matters Arising and To-do List**

All of the items under Matters Arising or on the to-do list have either been completed or will be addressed during this meeting.

The CEO said that the Reserves Policy has been updated to include a paragraph around alerting the Board should the target level of reserves fall below the minimum requirement and Mísean Cara has shared their cyber security service level agreement.

#### **Action:**

- Dóchas to look at cyber security issue to ensure that its systems are robust.

## 2. Reports and Updates

### a. **CEO Report**

The **CEO Report**, which was circulated in advance, was taken as read.

The CEO highlighted some key areas of focus during the period covered by the Report:

- **Pre-Budget Campaign:** During a meeting with CEO's of Dóchas, Mísean Cara and ActionAid Ireland, Minister Sean Fleming TD indicated that there will be an increase in ODA spending in budget 2024. There have been a number of engagements with the Tánaiste during which we raised budgetary asks informally. Our social media campaign (launched 11<sup>th</sup> Sept.) centres on a video featuring spokespersons from members based in the global south describing the impact of climate, conflict and hunger. We are running this as a paid ad on Facebook and Members are being encouraged to share the content on line in the run up to budget 2024 (10<sup>th</sup> Oct.).
- **Sustainable Development Goals:** The Head of Programme and Policy attended the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (New York, July) as part of a Coalition2030 delegation. The event provided opportunities to engage with Minister Ryan and with Marc Ó Cathasaigh TD. The CEO attended the SDG Action Weekend (New York, Sept.). The event provided opportunities to engage with civil society groups, the Irish Mission at the UN, the DFA delegation and the Tánaiste regarding SDG implementation.
- **OECD DAC midterm peer review of Ireland's ODA programme:** Dóchas met with the peer-review team in July. We brought twelve members together in advance of the meeting to discuss progress since the last review was published (2020) and to identify key talking points.

In response to a question from Grace, the CEO said that the informal engagements with politicians referenced above will be added to the lobby register.

### b. **Funding Strategy**

The *Dóchas Income Strategy 2023-2026* was circulated to members in advance. The CEO said that the document, requested by DFA as part of our funding application process, was submitted in July. Its content was derived from conversations that have taken place at FARC and Board meetings over the last number of months.

### c. **Emerging Issues**

- **Climate Financing:** There was a discussion on climate financing, climate adaption and Ireland's climate policy. Karol said that climate should be separate from ODA and ODA should be climate-proofed. The CEO said that while we are collectively strong on climate financing advocacy, we need to bring the members together to be more propositional on where Ireland

should spend its climate funding. As a starting point we have reached out to a number of organisations to bring them together to discuss further. The issue is on the agenda for our meeting with the Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (7<sup>th</sup> Nov.) and in advance of that we would like to bring together members perspectives on where Ireland should focus its climate funding.

- **Leaving Certificate Exam papers:** The CEO said that Dóchas and the Worldview project were prominently featured on the 2023 Politics and Society Leaving Certificate exam paper. There are plans to introduce a new Leaving Certificate subject focusing on climate and sustainability. We will follow up with DFA and with the Department of Education in that regard.

### 3. Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

#### a. Report from Committee

The minutes of the last meeting (06/09/23) together with the January to August financial report and narrative were circulated to members in advance. All three documents were taken as read.

Siobhan said that the committee was very pleased to welcome a new member (William Byrne, Special Olympics Europe/Eurasia) who brings a range of financial experience. The meeting focused on the financial report, cash flow forecast, review of the Risk Register, Risk Review Process, Fraud Risk Assessment. The committee was comfortable with the year to date expenditure against budget. There are no concerns around cash flow as we have received our Irish Aid grant and the 2023 membership fees process is underway. Much of the spend on upgrading our digital infrastructure won't happen until 2024, which will impact our year-end reserves, which isn't cause for concern. The Risk Review Process is the subject of our session with McCann Fitzgerald later this morning and the committee will review a second draft of the Fraud Risk Assessment as well as the draft budget for 2024 at its next meeting (21<sup>st</sup> Nov.).

- b. **Risk Register:** The Risk Register was circulated in advance. It was noted that risks 11 (Fraud, theft by 3<sup>rd</sup> parties) and 12 (Staffing gaps or turnover) remain Amber for the reasons identified in the 'Actions to be taken/or taken since last review' column.

#### Decision:

- There were no changes to the Risk Register as presented.

### 4. Governance Committee

#### a. Report from Committee

The minutes of the last meeting (05/09/23), which were circulated to members in advance, were taken as read. It was noted that the meeting elected Paul to chair the committee going forward.

Paul said that the committee was very pleased to welcome one new member (Renée Zandvliet, Trócaire), who brings a range of governance and compliance experience. At its last meeting the committee reviewed the Compliance Record Form, discussed next steps in relation to the review of our Constitution, reviewed the Conflict of Interest Policy and discussed the process for the review of the Dóchas Charter.

#### b. Dóchas Charities Governance Code Compliance Record Form for 2022

Copies of the completed form, which has been reviewed and approved by the sub-committee, were circulated in advance.

#### Decision:

- The Board approved the CRF for 2022. John (Proposed). Karol (Seconded).

**Action:**

- Dóchas to submit Annual Return to the CRA, declaring full compliance with the Charities Governance Code, in line with the 31 October deadline.

**c. Constitutional Review Process**

It was noted that the revised Constitution, which has been signed off by the office of the Charities Regulator, will be brought to the 2024 AGM for discussion and adoption if approved.

**d. Review of Dóchas Conflict of Interest Policy**

It was noted that the Policy was reviewed by the Governance committee at its last meeting.

During a general discussion the following amendments were agreed:

- The version control section will be updated to note that the policy was reviewed by the sub-committee on Governance.
- A note will be added to indicate that the Policy does not apply to external consultants and service providers as they are covered separately.

**Decision:**

- The Dóchas Conflict of Interest Policy, incorporating the above alterations, was approved. Paul (Proposed). Siobhan (Seconded).

**Action:**

- Dóchas to finalise Dóchas Conflict of Interest Policy

**5. Remuneration and HR Committee****a. Report from Committee**

The Minutes of the last meeting (28/08/23), which were circulated to members in advance, were taken as read. The CEO said that the meeting noted that: we currently have a full team in place; our three most recently appointed staff members have successfully passed their probationary period; and some staff are availing of training opportunities. The meeting also reviewed Dóchas Health and Safety Policy, Dóchas Volunteering Policy, and Dóchas Code of Conduct.

**b. Review of Policies**

Copies of the Dóchas Health and Safety Policy, Dóchas Volunteering Policy, and Dóchas Code of Conduct were circulated to members in advance. The CEO outlined the main changes in relation to each policy.

During a general discussion the following comments were made:

- The addition of a version control section to each policy would ensure consistency with other Dóchas policies;
- The Dóchas Health and Safety Policy should include a reference to the protection of volunteers using Dóchas' facilities; references to the Finance and Operations Manager should be replaced with Dóchas Health and Safety Representative; and the personal pronouns in the 'Responsibilities of Dóchas Employees' and 'Security' sections should be revised.
- The declaration around membership of a political party and/or a political affiliation in the Dóchas Code of Conduct may need to be amended to include a reference to roles relating to policy and public engagement.

In relation to the Health and Safety Policy, the Vice Chair said that it is the responsibility of Dóchas to provide a safe place to work for all employees/volunteers. This responsibility extends to hybrid working and includes a risk assessment of home working environments.

The CEO said that we currently have a note on hybrid working, which will be developed into a hybrid working policy and will require team members to complete a Home Working Risk Assessment.

In response to a question from Siobhan, the CEO said that we don't currently have travel insurance in place for staff travelling for business purposes.

**Decision:**

- The Health and Safety Policy, Volunteering Policy and Code of Conduct, incorporating the comments outlined above, were approved. Karol Balfe (Proposed). Paul Donnelly (Seconded).

**Actions:**

- Paul to send comments/suggested edits on all three policies to Jane-Ann and Anna for review and action if required.
- Dóchas to finalise all three policies.
- Dóchas to develop hybrid working policy.
- Dóchas to request all team members to complete a Home Working Risk Assessment.
- Dóchas to look into travel insurance for staff travelling for business purposes and discuss same with FARC.

**6. Other Business**

There was no other business.

**7. Dates for meetings in 2024**

**Decisions:**

- Board meetings will take place at 10am on the following dates in 2024: 25<sup>th</sup> January, 26<sup>th</sup> March, 27<sup>th</sup> June, 26<sup>th</sup> September and 28<sup>th</sup> November.
- The 2024 AGM and Conference will take place on 9<sup>th</sup> May.

**Action:**

- Anna to send diary notices to all Board members for meeting dates in 2024

**Risk Review Process**

The meeting was followed (11.20am to 1pm) by a session, led by McCann Fitzgerald, on our Risk Review Process.

Chairperson:.....

Date:.....