

# Dóchas

## The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

Dóchas Board 97 (1-24)  
25/01/24

### Dóchas Board

held on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 at 10:00 in the Dóchas office, Suite 8, Olympic House,  
Pleasants Street, Dublin 8

### Minutes

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

**In attendance:** Jane-Ann McKenna (CEO of Dóchas)  
Anna Farrell (Finance & Operations Manager, Dóchas)  
Gillian Ivory (Head of Membership Engagement) - for item 3 only

#### 1. Meeting Opening and Standing Items

The Chairperson opened the meeting, welcoming those present.

##### a. Apologies and Agenda

There were no apologies and no changes to the agenda as circulated.

##### 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 12/12/23, were approved: Karol Balfe (Proposed), John Moffett (Seconded).

##### d. Matters Arising and To-do List

All of the items under Matters Arising or on the to-do list have been completed, are in progress or will be addressed during this meeting. It was noted that: the CEO will meet with Trócaire's Head of IT (26/01/24) to discuss the cyber security issue; the hybrid working policy will be considered after new staff have settled in; and we have sourced a company to provide business travel insurance and expect to have cover in place over the coming days.

##### Action:

- CEO to organise a meeting of sub-committee on Remuneration and Human Resources

## 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:

- Preparations are underway for our **AGM & Conference**, entitled [\*Dóchas at 50: Sustainable Development in a Time of Climate Crisis\*](#). The event, which will take place on 09/05/24 in the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, Kildare Street, will be followed by a reception to mark our 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Please save the date in your diary as we would very much welcome a large Board presence on the day.

The CEO said that Irish Aid will also mark its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2024 but there are no plans for a specific event.

- The **revised Charities Bill** has been published and will be debated in the Dáil later today. The Wheel & CII, together with Mason, Hayes & Curran are reviewing the revised Bill, and we will continue to work with them, and other key stakeholders on how the inclusion of human rights as a charitable purpose should be interpreted.
- Following an approach from **CIVICUS** we have partnered with them on a pan-European project. We will continue to work with them to develop the proposal.

### b. Emerging Issues

The CEO said that we will have **significant changes in the team** over the coming months:

- Our Head of Programme and Policy will be on maternity leave for approx. 12 months from the end of February. Simon Murtagh will take on the interim role and is due to start on 20 February.
- Our Programme Support Officer (PSO) has resigned and will leave in mid-March.
- Our Head of Communications and Public Engagement has also resigned and will leave us on 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

The CEO is in the process of revising the Communications & Public Engagement job description with a view to increasing the focus on our positioning, media presence, social media presence, as well as on amplifying the voice of the sector.

## 3. Strategic Topic

Gillian Ivory, Head of Membership Engagement, joined the meeting for this section only.

### a. Dóchas Member Survey Results

The findings of the Dóchas Member Survey 2023 were circulated to Board members in advance. It was noted that this second wave of the survey was carried out in November 2023.

Gillian gave an in-depth presentation of the key findings, which focused on measuring our impact and progress against our strategy and on the connections and collaborations that exist between members and with other key stakeholders.

During a general discussion the following comments were made:

- Overall, feedback from the survey was very positive, which is very welcome.
- The Worldview project has developed over the past 18 months and 2024 is the last year of the project in its current format. We are engaging with members and with DFA on the future

of the project. Case studies focusing on how organisations are using and applying Worldview research findings might be useful.

- The development of scenarios for future proofing ODA will be very important in advance of the various election processes in 2024.
- The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dóchas provides opportunities to highlight the contribution civil society has made.

#### **b. Update on Locally Led Development Series**

Gillian gave a presentation on our Locally Led Development project outlining activities in 2023 and plans for 2024. As part of the project we ran a series of six workshops (Sept-Oct 2023) focusing on six topics. The workshops, which were facilitated by Global Mentoring Initiative, were well attended and participants included ICSP and non-ICSP partners. Workshop participants came together again last week and during the discussion it was noted that 7 (of 10) ICSP partners now have LLD policies/positions in place and the remaining 3 indicated that they were close to sign-off. Other plans for 2024 include: engagement with the DAC Peer Learning Exercise, developing our medium to long term vision and structured collaborative engagement with DFA. Further initiatives are open to members for discussion.

### **4. Finance, Audit & Risk Committee**

- a. 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. In relation to Risk 12, the CEO said that we will need to bring in some buffer capacity to cover some key pieces of work that fall under the remit of the Communications and Public Engagement role.

The CEO said that she will engage with the Treasurer and FARC on follow up actions in relation to the Risk Review Process, which we worked on last year with McCann Fitzgerald.

**b. Fraud Risk Assessment:**

It was noted that copies of the Fraud Risk Assessment were circulated to members in advance. The Treasurer said that the checklist was developed by our Auditor (Crowe) and they have recommended that Dóchas complete the assessment. The CEO has done a lot of work on the *Organisational Counter Fraud Checklist* section, which was discussed in detail by the FARC in September 2023. We will look at the *Key Fraud Questions for Boards* section today and the *Cyber Risk* section will be addressed over the coming weeks.

The CEO said that we have reviewed our Anti-Fraud and Anti-Corruption Policy to include a reference to legislation, to the CRA and to the Fraud Risk Assessment. We have also developed a Fraud Incident Log which we will maintain and bring to the Board then in the event that there is an incidence of fraud.

**Actions:**

- CEO to engage with Treasurer and FARC on follow-up actions around the Risk Review Process.
- Point 7 on the *Organisational Counter Fraud Checklist* section will be amended to read 'Any lessons learned brought to FARC for discussion and action'.
- Dóchas to organise anti-fraud training for staff on a biennial basis.

**Decisions:**

- There were no changes to the Risk Register as presented.
- The Fraud Risk Assessment was approved. Lucia Ennis (Proposed), Karol Balfe (Seconded)

## 5. Governance

### a. Board Nominee Process & Succession Planning

A briefing note on board nominations and succession planning was circulated to members in advance.

The CEO said that four member Directors and one external Director are due to step down at this year's AGM. The four member Directors are eligible for re-election and the External Director, who has served two terms, has indicated that she will not seek re-election for a third term. All full members will be invited to nominate candidates for the member vacancies and if it is decided that we should open recruitment for the external vacancy then that process will be advertised through Boardmatch.

**Decision:**

- A vacancy for an External Director with experience in Political Engagement and Public Affairs will be opened and will be advertised through Boardmatch.

**Actions:**

- **Dóchas** to invite members to nominate candidates for member Director vacancies on Board.
- **CEO** to publish vacancy for External Director vacancy on Boardmatch

## 6. Other Business

- **Meeting with Tánaiste on Gaza:** It was noted that following a Dáil debate on Gaza (24 Jan), Christian Aid, Action Aid, and other members were invited to meet with the Tánaiste on the issue.

## 7. Date of next meeting

The next meeting will take place on Tuesday, 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024 at 10am.

Subsequent meetings in 2024 are scheduled for 10am on the following dates: 27<sup>th</sup> June, 26<sup>th</sup> September and 28<sup>th</sup> November.

Chairperson:.....

Date:.....