

Terms of Reference

Evaluation of Dóchas' Strategic plan 2015-2021

1. Background

Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation, collaboration and co-operation between its members, and helps them speak with a single voice on global development and justice issues. Our vision is a world where poverty and marginalisation are unacceptable and where every person has the right to live a life of dignity. Further information is available at www.dochas.ie.

Dóchas' current strategic plan was developed in 2015, to run until 2020 but it was then extended by a year, until 2021, to allow for a deeper period of reflection about the future of INGOs. The new strategy is expected to cover 2022-2026.

2. Purpose of the evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to provide Dóchas, our members and Irish Aid with an independent reflective assessment of the work of Dóchas over the period of its Strategic Plan - in particular through the implementation of its partnership agreement and associated annual Results Frameworks agreed with Irish Aid.

The main objective of this formative evaluation is to ensure our next strategy builds on learning what has worked well, less well or could work better across our four strategic pillars. It therefore needs to include an assessment of the opportunities and limitations facing Dóchas.

This evaluation will help inform the future strategic direction for Dóchas and any future partnership arrangements with Irish Aid, by providing an assessment of the relevance and effectiveness of Dóchas' work to date, and by identifying outcomes and indicators that can help shape the development of a new strategy for the network.

3. Scope of evaluation

In the context of this assessment the central question is: ***Since 2015 has Dóchas, the organisation, contributed to a more effective and collaborative Irish development sector, as set out in its strategic plan and annual Results Frameworks?***

In particular, this evaluation will:

1. Assess progress against the objectives and outcomes of the strategic plan, including what has/hasn't worked well in the delivery of the plan and reasons why.
2. Assess the financial and operational effectiveness of Dóchas to deliver on its strategy

3. Provide recommendations for strengthened delivery of the strategy, including financial and resource requirements

Specific questions that the evaluation may look at include:

Relevance

- Did the strategy provide an adequate response to the strategic challenges faced by Dóchas' internal and external environment?
- Did the assumptions underlying the plan prove correct?
- Did the Strategy provide Dóchas with a clear role and focus?
- Did it focus on the correct themes and strategic challenges?
- Were the activities plausibly linked to the intended effects?

Effectiveness

- What worked well, and why?
- Did our 'big' ticket events, eg conference & awards bring sufficient value to the membership?
- Were the outputs and outcomes achieved, as identified in the results framework, and to what degree?
- Were the indicators appropriate and adequate in light of the desired outcomes?
- What were the main challenges or gaps in the delivery of the strategy? Were they 'known' or new?
- What are the key lessons learned in the delivery of the strategy?

Efficiency

- Were the outputs achieved on time?
- Was the capacity of Dóchas sufficient to deliver on the programme required?
- How have we managed our finances and reserves, and assess our value for money and efficiency?
- Are organisational systems aligned to deliver the strategy in terms of finance, HR, governance etc.

Impact

- Has members' engagement in the network remained consistent? And if membership levels have fallen, why?
- What is the level of satisfaction within the membership on the functions of Dóchas ?
- Who are our key Stakeholders and how have we engaged with them?

Sustainability

- Is Dóchas' value proposition, clear and achievable?
- Can we clearly define our niche, and if not, why not?
- How should we do more of?
- What do we need to avoid and/or do differently?
- Which findings have most relevance for future programming?
- Is there sufficient oversight of the strategy?

4. Methodology

A detailed proposal of methodology should be included in the consultant/s proposal. For the successful candidate this will be further developed and finalised in the inception phase.

The evaluation will need to be conducted virtually, and it is expected to be a pre-dominantly desk-based. It's important to note that it will be running in parallel to the collaborative process to engage our members in our 'Re-imagining the Irish NGO sector' project.

It is envisaged this evaluation will take a maximum of **15 working days** to complete and that the consultant(s) will:

- Review relevant documentation including the mid-term review, financial and audit reports, results frameworks, annual reports, and Operational plans, and other relevant documents for the period covered by the Strategic Plan.
- Design a membership survey to assess the views of our members, with no more than 2-5 follow-up interviews with members.
- Hold interviews with selected internal and external stakeholders including:
 - Staff (focus group)
 - Board Members (min. 3);
 - Irish Aid civil society unit;

Administrative support to host zoom meetings, and administer the survey will be provided.

5. Timing & Deliverables

The evaluation needs to be completed no later than mid/end of April, so that the findings can be shared with Dóchas members during our AGM on 12 May.

The evaluation report should include an executive summary of no more than 3 pages, to include clear recommendations.

The overall report should be no more than 15 pages in length. It needs to be written clearly and without jargon in English, to a standard suitable for publication.

6. Key reference documents

- Dóchas Mid-term review 2018
- Dóchas Interim Strategy 2021
- Review of Working Groups 2020
- Results Framework
- Financial statements
- Irish Aid annual reports
- Report into Value of Small INGOS

7. Consultant/s Specifications

The person or people hired to undertake this consultancy should possess the following qualifications and skills, at a minimum:

- Experience in conducting evaluations of programmes demonstrated through the provision of previous evaluation reports.
- Demonstrated track record in results-based monitoring and evaluation, organisational level performance management.
- Experience of working in or with network platforms
- Experience of working in a development/humanitarian INGO.

- Experiencing of strategic planning and execution and carrying out strategic plan reviews.
- Good project management skills.
- Research experience and the ability to analyse qualitative and quantitative data and compile and summarize results.
- Strong writing and communication skills.
- Strong relationship management skills.
- Adherence to agreed-upon timeframes and deadlines.

8. Application process

Consultant(s) are invited to submit a tender document, max 1000 words, detailing the proposed approach to the evaluation including:

1. Their understanding of the ToRs;
2. The relevance of their previous experience for this particular assignment;
3. A short methodology showing how they plan to approach the assignment;
4. Indicative timetable for the conduct and completion of the assignment;
5. Budget.

Consultant(s) will be selected according to the following criteria:

- Understanding of the Terms of Reference
- Relevance of previous experience
- Proposed methodology and planning of the assignment
- Experience in the evaluation of such programmes/projects
- Overall balance of skills being brought to the assignment
- Overall quality of the proposal
- Cost.

Please submit your tender to Anna Farrell, Finance & Operations Manager, anna@dochas.ie by Friday 19 March, cob. If you are shortlisted, you should expect a call the following week, when selection will be made. For queries contact Suzanne Keatinge at suzanne@dochas.ie.