

# dóchas

The Irish Association  
of Non-Governmental  
Development Organisations

## **Membership Handbook**

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## Introduction

Welcome to the Dóchas Membership Handbook, which contains everything you need to know about being a member of the Dóchas network.

Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations (NGDOs).

We are the collective voice of the international development sector in Ireland, influencing policies and behaviours for a better world. As a network we aim to connect, inspire and represent people and organisations working for global justice. Our vision is of a world where poverty and marginalisation are unacceptable and where every person has the right to live a life in dignity. We differ in many ways, but we recognise that we cannot achieve the society we want on our own.

### **Purpose of this Handbook**

This handbook gives an overview of the type of services Dóchas provides, an outline of our peer learning groups, as well as the types of membership available, your rights and responsibilities as a member, our complaints procedure and our Data Protection policies.

Other relevant documents related to membership of Dóchas include:

- [Dóchas Constitution](#)
- [Dóchas Charter](#)
- [The Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages](#)
- [Dóchas Safeguarding Code](#)

We expect our members to follow local laws and legislation, including relevant Charity regulation, such as the [Charities Governance Code](#) issued in 2018 by The Charities Regulator, Ireland's national statutory regulator for charitable organisations.

Guidance documents related to ensuring that we each strive for best practices and standards, should also be considered, including:

- [The Comhlámh Code of Good Practice](#)
- [Code of Good Practice for Development Education \(2019\)](#)

Your questions and feedback about this Handbook are welcome at any time, along with suggestions for further inclusions. Contact: [membershipengagement@dochas.ie](mailto:membershipengagement@dochas.ie).

### **Dóchas' history**

The precursor to Dóchas, CONGOOD, first opened its doors in 1977, bringing together 16 Irish Non-governmental organisations working in three main areas of development: (1) raising and disbursing funds to support projects in developing countries; (2) supporting development education, policy issues and/or research; and (3) special interest groups such as returned development workers or students from developing countries.

The key issues CONGOOD engaged in were:

- Informing and engaging with the public on development and humanitarian issues
- Lobbying Irish Aid for substantial and targeted increases in Official Development Assistance

Dóchas was formed in October 1993, following a merger between CONGOOD and the Irish National Assembly - which connected Irish NGOs to a European Union NGO network.

## Dóchas Today

Today Dóchas is a network of 47 full members and 12 associate members<sup>1</sup>, supported by a small secretariat team. It has an active Board, all of whom are elected at the AGM. Dóchas is funded through a strategic partnership grant with Irish Aid, fees from members, and other fundraising efforts<sup>2</sup>.

Please find our latest five year [Dóchas Strategy](#), covering the period 2016 to 2020.

## Section 1: Why join Dóchas?

Dóchas provides a forum for learning, consultation and collaboration, bringing members together to collectively effect change on development issues.

Membership of Dóchas provides opportunities to:

### **Collaborate & Learn**

- Engage with fellow member organisations with shared values
- Work together to improve accountability, governance, programme quality, coordination and learning between members
- Get advice and support on how to develop and future-proof your organisation
- Meet your peers, network and learn from technical experts

### **Access & Influence**

- Be part of a real movement for social justice
- Engage with the Irish Government on a wide range of policy areas, and other key Irish stakeholders
- Strengthen your policy position within wider networks at EU and international levels, by linking and aligning with other key civil society networks, such as Concord
- Raise awareness and advocate in Ireland for your specific priorities
- Input into shaping the values that underpin Irish development work

### **Pooled Resources & Shared Analysis**

- Build skills and knowledge through Working Groups, meetings and training workshops
- Promote events and employment/volunteering opportunities through the Dóchas weekly bulletin Wednesday News
- Access services available to members only (e.g. analyses and policy positions, regular updates etc.)

### **Visibility & Credibility**

- Be formally connected with Dóchas campaigns and policy positions
- Promote mainstreaming of approaches to development, including in relation to gender and disability
- Demonstrate strong commitment to the highest standards of governance, financial management, safeguarding and the use of messaging and images
- Showcase your work among members and other stakeholders at Dóchas events

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<sup>1</sup> As of September 2020

<sup>2</sup> In 2019, the ratio was 69%, 24% and 7%.

### **Shape the direction of Dóchas and the sector**

- Contribute to the strategic direction of Dóchas by participating on our 12-member Board, where 9 Directors are drawn from our full members
- All members contribute to shaping the focus of Working Groups and the direction of advocacy efforts

## **Section 2: Peer Learning**

### **2.1 Peer learning Groups**

#### **Purpose**

Dóchas offers a critical space for members to come together to collaborate, learn and engage on issues of concern to their organisation and to the wider development and humanitarian sector. It does this primarily through three type of peer learning groups:

- Working Groups
- Task Groups
- Community of Practice

#### **Peer Learning groups include<sup>3</sup>;**

1. Humanitarian Aid Working Group (HAWG)
2. Disability in International Development Working Group (DIDWG)
3. Development Education Working Group (DEG)
4. Finance, Governance and Compliance Working Group (FGCWG)
5. Results-based management Working Group (RWG)
6. Policy Working Group (PWG)
7. Safeguarding Task Group (since 2018)
8. Institutional Funding Task Group (since 2019)
9. ODA Task Group (2020)
10. Food Security, Livelihoods & Nutrition (Community of Practice, 2019)

Our peer learning groups are open to all Dóchas members and we aim for as many members as possible to participate by ensuring these spaces are relevant to the current context and to the members' needs.

#### **2.1.1 Working Groups**

Working Groups remain the most active and formal space for learning, and influencing policy. They offer:

- A space for sharing, learning and creating solutions to common challenges
- A space for developing models of best practice and innovation
- A space to identify and represent the needs of the sector with stakeholders such as Irish Aid, the Charities Regulator etc. in relation to a thematic/specific issue

Working Groups are also essential in shaping a collective Dóchas response on key policy issues. As such, Dóchas shapes its own policy positions from our members, so that we can speak collectively to a variety of stakeholders, including Irish Aid and politicians.

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<sup>3</sup> Groups in 2020. There are usually eight to ten active groups at any one time

On average, Dóchas has eight active Working Groups at any one time. The working groups generally meet three to four times a year, depending on the urgency of the issue.

### **Structure of Dóchas Working Groups**

Working Groups are formed when a sufficient number (three or more) of member organisations demonstrate a sustained interest in a particular issue or a need for learning and exchange in a thematic area. As such these groups are membership-led – whilst also aligning to the overall strategic direction of Dóchas.

A Terms of Reference based on the Dóchas working group template is developed by founding members to guide the work of the group and its scope. The Terms of Reference for each new working group are then approved by the Dóchas Board.

Each Working Group is in principle established for three years, which is renewable subject to review. Working Groups may appoint sub-committees and ad hoc groups as required. A Working Group will be retired if (1) the group cannot elect a chair (2) cannot agree upon and execute a work plan with defined outputs and/or (3) fail to secure commitment of more than three members to take part.

### **Membership of Working Groups**

Membership of Working Groups is open to all Full and Associate Member organisations. Members are asked to notify the Dóchas secretariat and the chair of the working group in writing of the name (or names) of those representing their organisation. Representation from agencies must be confined to staff or council members of the member organisation. Each Working Group can propose that non-Dóchas members join for a specific purpose of sharing information, collaboration and the building of expertise, but this would be time-bound and subject to approval by Dóchas.

### **Working Groups Officers**

Each Working Group elects a Chairperson and Vice Chairperson annually. Officers are elected as representatives of organisations and not in an individual capacity. If a chair steps down during their term, elections will be held to nominate a new chair. Elections are held by working group members on the basis of one vote for each agency participating in the group.

#### **Chairperson:**

- Oversees, supports and leads the work of the Working Group;
- Sets the tone for the Group's work;
- Convenes meetings and coordinates follow up with members;
- Ensures that Working Group members have the information needed to fulfil the aims of the Working Group;
- Works closely with Dóchas staff to ensure the smooth running of the group;
- Participates in a joint-chairs' meeting, hosted by Dóchas, during the first quarter of each year, to discuss future plans and synergies between groups.

#### **Vice Chairperson**

- Performs Working Group Chairperson responsibilities when the Chairperson is not available.
- Performs other responsibilities as assigned by the Working Group members.

### **Dóchas Working Group Operations**

**Annual Plan:** Each Working Group is required to submit a work-plan, estimates of any associated costs and a schedule of meetings to the Dóchas secretariat by the end of the first quarter of every year. It should be clear that any proposal or project emanating from a

working group is undertaken in the name of Dóchas in general rather than of a particular working group.

Dóchas is expected to brief its Board, at least once a year, on these plans, as well as policy positions taken by working groups. (See also protocol on policy statements below.)

**Reporting:** Dóchas secretariat will work closely with working groups to ensure clear work-plans are in place, which include achievable aims and activities. On occasion Dóchas may require written reports on working group activities, such as in advance of the Annual General Meeting.

**Evaluation:** Each Working Group needs to carry out some form of review of its progress annually, in order to update work plans, which will be shared with the Board.

It is then required to carry out an evaluation every three years in order to review the relevance of the group, and assess achievements and impact. This will be shared with the Board, who are expected to review the mandate of each Dóchas Working Groups every three years.

**Role of Dóchas:** The Dóchas secretariat, principally through the Head of Policy and Programmes and the Head of Membership Engagement, is available to support the creation, development and growth of working groups. Dóchas is available to facilitate working groups meetings virtually or physically, as well as to maintain up to date mailing lists of working group members. Dóchas will also facilitate information sharing between working groups through joint meetings and virtual communication and will endeavour to attend at least two meetings of every working group per year.

### 2.1.2 Task Groups

From time to time Dóchas Working Groups may wish to establish Task Groups for shorter periods to carry out specific functions or projects. These groups have a defined and time bound task and will cease to exist once that task has been carried out.

### 2.1.3 Communities of Practice

Members may also wish to establish Communities of Practice where the focus is on knowledge sharing and exchange. These groups come together as needed to work on a specific issue, but for the most part they interact via email and regular thematic updates.

## 2.2 Public Statements and/or submissions

In order to develop public statements or submissions, Dóchas and/or its Working Groups need to provide sufficient notice for consultation and feedback with members. The report/brief/policy statement or submission will be circulated to the membership and/or the Working Group with a time limit for feedback, agreed at the start of the process. If feedback isn't received during that time period, it is taken as given that the position is agreed.

All public communications developed by Dóchas peer learning groups are developed on behalf of Dóchas. Therefore, any public communication will be issued in the name of Dóchas, rather than in the name of a specific Working Group.

However, if working groups develop submissions to Irish Aid or to political processes where (1) only one submission is allowed or (2) the subject matter is technical, then Dóchas may

submit it in the name of that Working Group. Should a member wish to 'opt-out' of adopting a particular position, the position may be issued on behalf of a 'coalition' of named Dóchas members.

All external communications and submissions, must be signed off by the CEO of Dóchas or by a designated staff member. Where a policy statement or position is new to Dóchas Board approval will be required in line with Dóchas governance and external communication protocol.

## **Section 3: Dóchas as a Voice for the International Development Sector**

As stated in our Mission statement, Dóchas is the national voice of the international development sector in Ireland, influencing policies and behaviours for a better world.

### **What does this mean in practice?**

Dóchas takes a lead on analysing key trends in the sector, monitoring relevant Government policies and developing strategies to influence policy and decision-makers. Dóchas develops coordinated policy positions and messaging and brings members together for collective action and joint advocacy initiatives on key issues of relevance to the sector. The on-going advocacy campaign on Overseas Development Assistance is an example of this work.

Dóchas also aims to represent the members in a number of national and international fora (e.g. CONCORD<sup>4</sup>, Foras<sup>5</sup>), as well as with key stakeholders, such as the Charities Regulatory Authority.

Dóchas also supports members to strengthen their ability to advocate on particular niche issues via channels such as the Working Groups.

### **Dóchas Annual Conference**

Each year Dóchas aims to convene a conference which brings together upwards of 200 representatives of the international development sector. Civil society, government representatives, academia and a diverse range of internationally-regarded speakers and experts come together to discuss challenges, celebrate successes and inspire greater collaboration. The theme of the conference is relevant to the current context within the development sector and is an exceptional opportunity for members to network and exchange with peers and experts in the international arena.

## **Section 4: Dóchas Representation on External Bodies**

### **4.1 Procedure for Dóchas representation on other organisations**

Dóchas members are encouraged to collaborate with other external networks on behalf of the network. Members wishing to represent Dóchas should request permission for a specific period of time. Where an official nomination by Dóchas is required, it will need to be approved by the Board.

Any member representing Dóchas is required to report back and/or pass on information on activities to Dóchas and, through Dóchas, to its members. Members interacting with

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<sup>4</sup> European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs. <https://concordeurope.org/>

<sup>5</sup> Global network of Civil Society Platforms <http://forus-international.org/>



external bodies or networks are doing so on behalf of Dóchas and not on behalf of an individual agency.

## 4.2 Procedures for appointing Dóchas representatives to CONCORD and other platforms

Dóchas can nominate people to the Board or Hubs of CONCORD, and other relevant academic or network platforms. The terms for participation are set by the platform in question, but agreed with Dóchas.

We currently have Dóchas representation on CONCORD Hubs, Department Studies Association of Ireland and on the CSO Partnership for Development Effectiveness (CPDE).

The mandate of anyone appointed to represent Dóchas may be withdrawn in the event that the person ceases to be either a staff or a council member of a Dóchas member or ceases to be represented on the relevant Dóchas Working Group.

It is expected that any member representing Dóchas on an external platforms will provide a verbal or written report, at least once a year, and should inform Dóchas in a timely manner with requests for support and the sharing of time sensitive information.

## 4.3 Procedures for Dóchas representation on official delegations

Dóchas will continue to request CSO representation at high-level events, such as the United Nations General Assembly, ECO-SOC or other similar international fora. All requests for Dóchas representation will be channelled through the Dóchas secretariat.

The final decision on the composition of the delegation lies with a selection committee from the Dóchas Board. If there is a limited number of places available, as is often the case, the nomination procedures set out below will apply:

- Dóchas' CEO, as a representative of the sector, will automatically be offered a place if he/she opts to attend. This needs to be clearly communicated to members before the formal nomination process. Dóchas may also decide to nominate a Board or staff member, but in that eventuality, they will need to go through the nomination process, as seniority of representation from the Irish NGDO sector is an important criterion.
- Dóchas will send an invitation for nominations to full members within the time frame allowed. It will be clearly stated that the composition of the delegation needs to be balanced on the grounds of gender equity and diversity but also seek strong leadership and seniority from the sector as well as expertise on the issue.
- The nominee will be expected to provide the following details (one-page maximum):
  - Reasons for the organisation's interest in being part of the delegation
  - The organisation's previous involvement in the issue
  - The organisation's intended role in ensuring their participation benefits the wider Dóchas network.
- Two members of the Dóchas Board will be asked by the Dóchas CEO to form a selection committee. They will be selected on the basis that there is no possible conflict of interest. They will evaluate and rank the applications according to:
  - the degree to which the nominee meets the person specification
  - the degree of expertise of the nominated person and organisation
  - gender equity/diversity in overall Dóchas representation
  - balance in representation from interested organisations
  - level of Dóchas engagement on the issues to date, as appropriate

- In the event that the number of nominees still exceeds the places available, as a last resort, the selection committee has the authority to make a final decision on the composition of the delegation.
- The process will be reported on at the next meeting of the Dóchas Board to ensure full transparency.

## **Section 5: Membership, Criteria & Accountability**

### **5.1 Types of membership**

Dóchas has two types of membership:

- A. Full Membership** is open to organisations whose primary focus and spend is on international development work. Applicants for this category of membership must be non-profit International Development NGOs independently established and located in the Republic of Ireland or in Northern Ireland and who regard international development cooperation – including development education – as a primary aspect of their aims and work. A key value of this membership will be voting rights on issues such as new Board Directors, constitutional changes etc. Rules for membership are laid down in the Dóchas Constitution and in the Criteria for Full Membership of Dóchas.
  
- B. Associate Membership is open to organisations whose international focus and spend is less than 50% of its overall activities.** This category of membership is aimed at those organisations who do not meet the criteria for full membership but that work in related or similar fields to that of Dóchas members, with a linkage to International Development. This may include academia, civil society/voluntary and community organisations, Trade Unions, Charitable Trusts and Foundations, etc. Associate Members cannot nominate candidates to serve on the Board of Dóchas and are not eligible to vote at the AGM. Associate Membership is expected to be reviewed every 2 years. Rules for this form of membership are laid down in the Criteria for Associate Membership of Dóchas.

### **5.2 Criteria for membership**

#### **5.2.1 Criteria for Full Membership**

Organisations are eligible to apply to join Dóchas as full Members if they meet the following criteria:

- (i) The applicant Non-Governmental Development Organisation (NGDO) should be non-profit making, non-governmental and non-partisan in its aims.
- (ii) The applicant NGDO should exercise its activities at a national, or in any case at a wider than local level.
- (iii) The applicant's primary focus, expenditure and resources are targeted at international development (such as overseas programmes and projects, development education, emergency aid or volunteering, member of international development coalitions).
- (iv) The organisation is headquartered in the State or in Northern Ireland, or, if it is not, the Irish branch has substantial powers of decision-making in its own right, including control and disposal of funds and appointment of personnel.

- (v) The organisation has been established in the State or in Northern Ireland for at least two years.
- (vi) The organisation commits to upholding a commitment to the highest levels of accountability, including in relation to governance, financial management, safeguarding, and promoting positive images and messaging.
- (vii) The applicant agrees to comply with Dóchas policies and Codes of practice.

If organisations meet the above criteria they may pursue an application for Full membership of Dóchas.

**NB:** Criteria for full membership may be amended by a simple majority vote of the General Assembly (AGM) convened on three weeks' notice.

### 5.2.2 Criteria for Associate Membership

Organisations are eligible to apply to join Dóchas as Associate Members if they meet the following criteria:

- (i) Engage with or support Dóchas mission, and do not meet the criteria for full membership.
- (ii) Their international development programme focus and spend is less than 50% of their overall activities.
- (iii) Work in related, supportive or otherwise similar fields to that of Dóchas or of Dóchas Full Members (development projects, development education, emergency aid or volunteer sending).
- (iv) Agree to comply with Dóchas policies and Codes of practice.
- (v) Headquartered in Ireland (or, the Irish branch has substantial powers of decision-making in its own right, including control and disposal of funds and appointment of personnel).
- (vi) Are established in Ireland for at least two years.
- (vii) The organisation commits to upholding a commitment to the highest levels of accountability, including in relation to governance, financial management, safeguarding, and promoting positive images and messaging.

**Associate Members may be:** University departments or research centres, Colleges /other Third Level Groups or associations, Medical / Nursing organisations, charitable trusts and foundations, Trade Unions / representative organisations, private sector organisations or associations, Civil society / voluntary/ community organisations, other NGOs.

Important: If an organisation is eligible to be a Full Member it cannot apply for Associate Membership

### 5.2.3 Application process for Full Membership

As Dóchas is a membership organisation, an organisation can only become a Full Member if their application **is approved by the membership at the Annual General Meeting**. Applications are brought to the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for approval, usually in May each year.

Existing members must be satisfied that the aims, objectives and practice of the applicant organisation reflects the spirit and intention of Dóchas. In particular, that the organisation

commits to upholding a commitment to the highest levels of accountability, including in relation to governance, financial management, safeguarding, and promoting positive images and messaging.

Applicant organisations must indicate compliance with the following standards:

- (a) [The Charities Governance Code](#) (if they are a charity)
- (b) [Dóchas Charter](#)
- (c) [The Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages](#)
- (d) [Dóchas Safeguarding Code](#)

The applicant is expected to complete a short **application form**, as well as sign the Dóchas Charter, Code of Conduct on Images and Messages and Safeguarding Code. It is also expected that they have read, and are familiar with, the rules for Membership as outlined under Article 5 (a)-(k) of the [Constitution of Dóchas](#).

In addition, the following documentation is required:

- Letter of application (on organisational letterhead).
- Copies of constituting document, financial statements and annual reports for the two most recent years.
- Details of two referees, who need to be existing full members. They will be asked to provide a reference. In the unlikely event that a new applicant cannot provide two references from the current Dóchas membership, the board may agree to accept references from alternative sources.

The closing date for the receipt of Applications is **31 January** each year.

Applications for Full Membership are processed by Dóchas staff to ensure that all the required documentation has been received, and the criteria has been met. In the event that further information and/or clarification is required Dóchas may write to and/or meet with the applicant's representatives.

Following this review process, the application will be brought to the Board. If upon scrutiny it is clear that the application does not meet the criteria for membership, the Board may turn it down.

A two-thirds majority decision of Members present and voting at the AGM shall be required for approval of membership (Article 4 (i)).

**Article 5(g)** states that “Every application for membership of the Company shall be considered by the Board which shall have regard to any criteria for membership adopted by the General Assembly and for the time being in force.

If, upon scrutiny, it is clear that the application does not meet the criteria for membership, the Board, without any obligation to assign a reason therefor, shall turn it down.

In all other cases the Board shall pass the application for consideration to the General Assembly, with or without a recommendation.”

#### 5.2.4 Application Process for Associate Membership

If organisations meet the above criteria (5.2.2) they may pursue the following application process. It is important to note that applications for Associate Membership are approved by the Board, rather than by the membership at an AGM. Applications can be received throughout the year and will be brought to the Board as soon as practical.

Applicant organisations must indicate compliance with the following standards:

- (a) [The Charities Governance Code](#) (if they are a charity)
- (b) [Dóchas Charter](#)
- (c) [The Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages](#)
- (d) [Dóchas Safeguarding Code](#)

Each new applicant is expected to complete a short **application form**, as well as sign Dóchas' Charter, Code of Conduct on Images and Messages and Safeguarding Code. It is also expected that they have read, and are familiar with, the rules for Membership as outlined under Article 5 (a)-(k) of the Constitution of Dóchas.

In addition, the following documentation is required:

- Letter of application (on organisational letterhead).
- Copies of their constituting or governing document (if none exists, a copy of the strategic plan), most recent financial statements or operational budgets for their two most recent financial years of operation, clearly showing their spending on International Development Programmes.
- Details of two referees, who need to be existing full members. They will be asked to provide a reference.

## 5.3 Rights & Responsibilities of Members

The main rights & responsibilities of Dóchas members are detailed in *Article 5* of our Constitution. Main considerations include:

### 5.3.1 All Dóchas members (Full and Associate) have the right to:

- Receive information: Information supplied by the Dóchas office is intended to help members understand the activities of Dóchas as it delivers on its strategy. The minutes of each Board meeting are on our website. Members may request other information from the Dóchas office.
- Participate in events, and to be listened to: Dóchas events and services are open to Dóchas members. Members can join any of Dóchas peer learning groups, and can request participation by teleconferencing if the venue allows.
- Participate in the Annual General Meeting: The Dóchas AGM is the highest decision making body in the association, and it is the prime forum for members to have influence on the work of Dóchas. ONLY full members can nominate candidates for election to the Dóchas Board and can vote at the AGM.
- Retire from membership upon giving one year's prior notice in writing to the Company but no part of any annual subscription paid or due shall be refundable.

### 5.3.2 All Dóchas members (Full and Associate) have responsibilities and are expected to:

- Comply with the Rules for Membership as laid down in the Constitution and in the criteria for membership. In paying their annual fees, members will be expected to reaffirm this commitment (as stated in the invoice process).
- Ensure that the organisation's aims, objectives and practice reflect the spirit and intention of Dóchas.

- Participate, where possible and applicable, in Dóchas' governance structures, peer learning groups and common activities, in line with our organisational capacity.
- Consider including participation in Dóchas activities in the job descriptions and annual work plans of relevant staff.
- Inform Dóchas in a timely manner of any changes to relevant staff including participants on our membership or peer learning group lists
- Submit relevant information to enable Dóchas to calculate the appropriate membership fee for the current financial year, and pay membership fees within 30 days of receiving the invoice.

## 5.4 Accountability of Membership

The strength of the Dóchas network, remains in the active participation and good practices of all its members. As noted above, it expects members to continue to comply with the general requirements for membership, and demonstrate a continuing interest in active co-operation and involvement with Dóchas and its work, including regular attendance at its AGM.

*Any member organisation facing a serious governance or any other related issue that could pose a reputational risk to Dóchas, its members or the Irish international development sector, is required to notify Dóchas in a timely manner in order to help mitigate the risk. Any information will be treated in confidence.*

5.4.1 A **review** of their membership may be necessary if:

- (i) Members fail to attend three successive Annual General Assemblies.
- (ii) Members fail to pay their Annual Membership fee in the required 30 days from the date on which the invoice is issued may forfeit membership. (See Section 5.5)
- (iii) Any member organisation which appears, in the Board's opinion, to have ceased to comply with the requirements noted above (5.4.1) or which by its actions, statements, activities or behaviour is considered to bring Dóchas, its members or the Irish International development sector into disrepute shall have its membership reviewed.

5.4.2 Full membership can only be **revoked** by prior approval of the members as stated in Article 5 (i) of the Constitution (see text box below). Associate members may have their membership revoked by the Board.

5.4.3 **The Board shall have sole discretion as to what it considers to be disrepute and its decision shall be final.**



Article 5(i) of Dóchas Constitution stipulates that “subject to the prior approval by a two-thirds majority decision of Members of the Company in General Assembly, the Board may at any time by notice in writing:

(a) require any [full] Member whom they in their absolute discretion deem unfit or unsuitable to be a Member to withdraw from the Company and such member shall cease to be a Member of the Company upon service upon it of such notice;

OR

(b) suspend any [full] Member, provided that the reasons for such suspension and the conditions on which the suspension may be revoked are notified to the Member concerned.

## 5.5 Membership Fees

### 5.5.1 Key Principles:

As approved by the Dóchas membership, at its AGM in May 2019, our fee structure is based on four key principles:

- A transparent and fair fee system that respects and encourages a diverse and inclusive network committed to international development and humanitarian action.
- A fee structure that allows appropriate and sustainable income growth for the Dóchas Secretariat so that it remains fit for purpose to meet the needs of its members.
- A structure that maintains the members’ ownership and independence of the network by ensuring an appropriate balance between ‘membership funding’ and ‘institutional grants’.
- A system that is efficient and clear in order to minimise administrative costs, and allow multi-annual planning for both members and the Secretariat.

### 5.5.2 Fee calculation

Fees for Full membership are calculated based on an organisation’s total income in the previous financial year. Full Members must submit Annual Audited Accounts that clearly show the organisation’s total income figure for the previous financial year, by 30 June each year, for the purpose of calculating fees.

Fees for Associate membership are based on an organisation’s income spent on their international development programmes in the previous financial year. Associate Members are required to provide Dóchas with a copy of their most recent financial statement or operational budget, clearly showing their International Programme Spend, by 30 June each year, in order to calculate the fee.

Associate Members must submit their audited accounts or budgets for the previous financial year to Dóchas by 30 June each year.

From 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020 **Full Member fees** will be based on the following band system:

Band	Total Income		Membership Fee €
	Min Income	Max Income (<)	
1	€0	€100,000	€250
2	€100,000	€500,000	€500
3	€500,000	€1,000,000	€800
4	€1,000,000	€1,500,000	€1,800
5	€1,500,000	€2,000,000	€2,500
6	€2,000,000	€5,000,000	€3,000
7	€5,000,000	€10,000,000	€4,500
8	€10,000,000	€20,000,000	€5,500
9	€20,000,000	€40,000,000	€8,500
10	€40,000,000	€60,000,000	€15,000
11	€60,000,000	Upwards	€20k+0.25% of Unrestricted Income. Fee capped at €30,000

For **Associate Members**, the same bands and fees apply, but income levels are based on international programme spend rather than on total income.

### 5.5.3 Fee payment

All members must pay their Annual Membership fee within 30 days from the date on which the invoice is issued and adhere to Dóchas' Debt Collection policy.

Full members failing to pay their Annual Membership fee shall have their membership reviewed by the Board.

Unless the Board consider there to be exceptional mitigating circumstances, a motion will be put to the next Annual General Meeting (AGM) that the member be either suspended or required to withdraw from membership for non-payment of membership fees (Ref: Article 5(i) as detailed above in 5.4.3).

Associate members are admitted by the Board and may be removed by the Board.

In the event that an organisation decides to re-apply for membership in the future any outstanding fees must be paid before any new application for membership can be considered.

## Section 6: Disputes and Complaints

Dóchas is committed to providing the highest standard of service to its members and other stakeholders. We always listen to feedback and complaints and use them to improve our work.

If you have a complaint about Dóchas, we will ensure that it is listened to, dealt with promptly, and responded to in full.

**6.1 For a general complaint about Dóchas**, the process is as follows:

Complaints should be addressed to:



CEO of Dóchas

**Postal address:** Suite 8, Olympic House, Pleasants Street, Dublin 8, Ireland

**Email:** [ceo@dochas.ie](mailto:ceo@dochas.ie)

**Phone:** 01-405 3801

If you do not feel comfortable about making a report directly to the CEO then you can report instead to the Chairperson of Dóchas' Board's Sub-committee on Governance (whose email will be provided on request to [info@dochas.ie](mailto:info@dochas.ie)).

Any complaint will be acknowledged within five working days, and we will do our best to resolve it within 21 days. If the complaint is likely to take longer than 21 days to resolve, we will advise you of this and provide an explanation.

If you do not feel your complaint has been resolved adequately, you should submit a second report explaining why this is the case. This report may be escalated to a higher level of authority for review. For example, the Chairperson of the Board.

Your complaint will be investigated again and will be considered at Board level if there is good reason to do so. You should expect a response within two weeks of receiving a full and satisfactory description of the issue.

**6.2 For a complaint in relation to the Dóchas Code of Conduct on Images and Messages**, the process is as follows:

The member organisation's own feedback mechanism is the first point of contact for those who wish to make a complaint. However, where an organisation fails to respond or where their response is not deemed satisfactory by the complainant, they may choose to initiate the Dóchas complaint's process outlined in the Code of Conduct on Images and Messages.

6.3 If appropriate you may make a complaint may also wish to make a complaint under **Dóchas' Whistleblowing policy**, which relates to any material allegations of irregularities related to the running of the organisation or to the activities of management, staff, contractors, or suppliers where such activities adversely affect the work of these parties with Dóchas. The CEO is typically the first point of contact, but it will depend on the seriousness of the malpractice and who you think is involved in it.

## **Section 7: Data Protection**

As outlined in the [Dóchas Data Protection Policy](#), Dóchas will comply with the requirements of the relevant Irish legislation, including the Data Protection Act (1988), the Data Protection (Amendment) Act (2003), the Data Protection Act (2018) and the General Data Protection Regulation (2018). The Dóchas Data Protection Policy applies to all Personal Data collected, processed and stored by Dóchas in relation to its employees, service providers, members and others (e.g. event participants) in the course of its activities. Dóchas makes no distinction between the rights of Data Subjects who are employees, and those who are not. All are treated equally under this Policy. Dóchas' [Privacy Policy](#) illustrates our practices in connection with our website(s).

## **Document Review**

The Membership Handbook will be reviewed every three years.