

# Re-imagining the role of Irish NGOs, 2030

## Terms of Reference

### 1. Background

Dóchas is the Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation 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](http://www.dochas.ie).

Dóchas' current strategic plan runs until 2020 but we've agreed to extend it 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.

To ensure the strategy responds to the external environment and builds on the collective strength of its members, we want to invest in a collaborative process. It needs to create a strong vision for what the Irish NGO sector aspires to be by 2030, as well as ensuring a deeper commitment to working together for change. Following this 'Reimagining to Build Back Better' project, we will develop a theory of change for how Dóchas will support its members.

### 2. Context

The strategy process is being developed at a time of huge uncertainty for Irish international development and humanitarian organisations ("the sector") because of the disruption created by the COVID-19 pandemic. As well as creating its own specific set of challenges, particularly in relation to the huge economic fall-out of lockdowns, the pandemic has magnified unresolved underlying systemic issues: social and economic inequality and injustice, the climate crisis, unsustainable food systems, gender-based violence, unprecedented levels of forced and long-term displacement, and an outdated international financial and trade system. The need to protect and support marginalised communities and protect human rights has never been more important.

We have seen also an accelerated shift of geopolitical realities, as well as severe economic turbulence. At the start of 2020 we were imagining a context where both the global and Irish economy was growing, both have now faltered. Political turmoil and large scale conflicts have led to a weakening resolve towards multilateralism, and a questioning of the liberal frameworks in relation to the rule of law and democratic systems. There have also been intensified questioning of the role, shape and diversity of INGOs, as well as renewed attention on the importance of having a stronger, more connected international civil society voice against a backdrop of contested civil society space. In particular, there has been a renewed urgency for localised responses, greater diversity in the sector and a shifting of power. Meanwhile INGOs are having to adapt quickly to remote working, and new funding models, which in themselves have thrown up opportunities and challenges.

Against this backdrop, this 'Reimagining' project needs to bring a wide and diverse group of Dóchas stakeholders into a deep and open conversation about the challenges and opportunities, to identify a collective understanding about the value, contribution and impact of the Irish NGO sector. With a clear vision about the future role of Irish NGOs, Dóchas can then hope to maximise the potential of our network to bring about transformative change to the lives of people we aim to serve.

### **3. Purpose & Scope of work**

This Reimagining project is an opportunity to draw together some "big picture thinking" including in relation to the impact of COVID-19 on the sector, so that we can rethink our role within this rapidly changing context. It will also be important to reflect on, and build from horizon scanning analysis that has already been developed by our members and/or other alliances.

This consultancy will:

- Design and implement a collaborative process to engage our members and other key stakeholders and critical friends, in order to analyse the main themes and concerns about the external international development landscape and the future role of INGOs.
- Design a framework to deliver robust analysis of member and stakeholder responses and provide advice to Dóchas as to the relevance/impacts of same in the context of its strategy development
- Support Dóchas to present the findings/final report during its virtual conference in May 2021

### **4. Methodology, Contract and Timing**

We envisage a combination of one to one interviews, and larger group sessions which would engage a wide spectrum of members and critical friends in Ireland and overseas, as well as a review relevant Horizon Scanning work from members and other key stakeholders. However, the scale and scope of this work will depend on the timing and resources available.

We ask that interested consultants suggest a possible methodology, time needed and rate, including VAT. A short list and follow up meeting will take place before awarding the final contract.

We expect the consultancy to start in January, and be completed by early May, allowing time and space to ensure collaboration and reflection.

The work will need to be designed for 'virtual' sessions given the ongoing COVID-19 restrictions. The consultant will need to work remotely.

### **Confidentiality and Data Protection**

A normal duty of confidentiality is expected in relation to Dóchas business, both during and after this consultancy. All documents (e.g. records, reports, plans, policies, papers, files)

relating to work carried out in the course of this consultancy with Dóchas will remain the property of Dóchas at all times. The consultant will not retain copies of such records.

The consultant will not at any time either during the period covered by this contract or after its termination make use of or communicate to any unauthorised person/body any confidential information about Dóchas which may have obtained during the course of this consultancy. On termination of this contract by either party the consultant will deliver to Dóchas all records, documents, equipment, etc. in their possession or control relating in any way to this consultancy with Dóchas.

Confidentiality relating to Dóchas data and processes not in the public domain will be respected by the consultant.

Dóchas will not be liable for payment of PAYE, PRSI or USC in respect of this consultancy. Payment of all appropriate taxes remains the responsibility of the Consultant.

Payment for the days worked will be made on the production of an invoice when work is completed to the satisfaction of Dóchas.

### **Application process**

Please submit your expression of interest, including a brief outline of the methodology and timeframe you propose in line with this ToR, to [niamh@dochas.ie](mailto:niamh@dochas.ie) no later than 8 January 2021. Or please call Suzanne to discuss at 0871221752.