



**Trinity College Dublin**  
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath  
The University of Dublin

## Trinity International Development Initiative

Submission on International Development Policy – Public  
Consultation Paper.

‘Transforming Our World: Help Ireland Make A Difference (New International Development Policy – 2018)’

23 August 2018

Trinity International Development Initiative - TIDI

Submission on International Development Policy – Public Consultation Paper.

Table of Contents:

Table of Contents: ..... 1

Introduction: ..... 2

Q. 1What elements of Ireland’s international development experience should the new policy reflect? ..... 3

Q II: What are the implications of the changing global context for Ireland’s international development cooperation and humanitarian action? ..... 5

Q III: Do the proposed priorities respond to the changing context and contribute to the achievement of our vision of a more equal, peaceful, sustainable world ..... 6

Q IV: How can we improve delivery of Ireland’s international development cooperation and humanitarian action? ..... 8

Conclusion ..... 8

Trinity International Development Initiative – TIDI ..... 8

Contributors ..... 9

Contact Details: ..... 9

## Introduction:

This submission includes observations, feedback and recommendations on Ireland's New *International Development Policy Public Consultation Paper* on behalf of Trinity International Development Initiative (TIDI). We enthusiastically welcome the opportunity to review, and to provide input into, the International Development Policy at this crucial early stage of formulation. We believe that the recognition of the role of the academic research and higher education community in Ireland as key stakeholders is essential for the successful formulation and implementation of national strategies, priorities and policies.

The vision of the new policy is bold and ambitious. Already recognized for excellence and best practice by peer states, Ireland's new development policy and approach could (and should) become a leading influence on the global stage. Development of this new policy offers the opportunity to scan the horizon and search for new ways of designing, managing and monitoring processes. It also offers scope to increase crucial citizen engagement in the search for new solutions, at national and international levels.

The submission begins with an overview of our key messages and then provides responses to the specific questions raised in the International Development Policy – Public Consultation Process.

## Key messages:

The following key messages are intended to support the deepening and enhancement of the policies to be promoted through the document. They seek greater clarity on the link between ethics and action; and to explore the relationship between stated intentions, priorities, and methods of cooperation across the humanitarian-development nexus.

### ***We advocate that the new policy should:***

**Have an ambitious vision:** Encourage a bold and ambitious transdisciplinary approach that provides space for inclusive participation, co-design and co-produced humanitarian and development planning and practice. The new policy should 'take into account specific situations and needs of developing countries' and adhere to the principle of policy coherence for sustainable development – PCSD<sup>1</sup>; adopted in the European Consensus on Development<sup>2</sup>. This can be supported through the engagement of researchers in gathering the experiences and learning from all parties (including practitioners/policy-makers/private sector/INGO's, and partner populations). Encouraging adaptive approaches can and should

<sup>1</sup> Perspectives for export-oriented industrial policy strategies – Research Paper 10/2018 – Austrian Foundation for Development Research.

<sup>2</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/publication-the-european-consensus-on-development-200606\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/publication-the-european-consensus-on-development-200606_en.pdf)

Sourced 16 August 2018:15.00pm.

aim towards contextually situated, appropriate, relevant, and sustainable development outcomes.

**Recognise complexity and interconnections:**

Explicitly recognise the complexity of development and humanitarian practice, and the integrated and interrelated nature of the ambitions of the Sustainable Development Goals across the economic, societal and ecological pillars of sustainable development and humanitarian practice.

Set out exactly how such complexity will be reflected in policy and addressed in practice.

**Actualize an ethical and principled approach:**

- 1) Outline precise plans to realize the commitment to **‘leave no-one behind’** and to **‘start with the furthest behind first’**; and explain how this marks both a continuation of a long-standing tradition in Irish Aid practice, and also a new point of departure in Irish Development Cooperation.
- 2) Apply the **principle of ‘well-focused effort’**: Rather than seeking to dilute the focus and expertise of Irish development cooperation by expanding the number of partner countries, we suggest consideration of carefully selected partner countries, based on a set of transparent selection criteria, and a primary focus for Development Cooperation efforts in areas of national strength such as education.

**Build a robust and broad-based evidence basis:** Ensuring data sources and methods allow for the collection of a rich, diverse, and detailed evidence basis, using state-of-the-art scientific research methods, to inform policy formation, action planning and monitoring, evaluation and learning from outcomes throughout the policy.

**Focus on education:** Long term sustainable change rests with the capacities of a population to drive their own development pathways. Education and learning are recognized as core and necessary elements in achieving this at multiple levels within partner states.

**Focus on research:** Recognize the need for deeper understandings of what constitutes research, including the importance of translational research which entails collaborating with local partners to translate evidence based insights into viable operational activity / programs / policies. We encourage a national dialogue on this matter.

## Q. 1 What elements of Ireland’s international development experience should the new policy reflect?

**Independent thinking and Global Thought Leadership:** Ireland has a demonstrated willingness and ability to lead public debate and guide global policy discussions and negotiations on some of the most contested global phenomena, including contemporary

trends in migration and large-scale population movement. However, it also recognises the weaknesses and constraints of the current multilateral institutional order and structures.

Thus, we would encourage Ireland to be strong in its engagements at the multilateral and bilateral levels. Rather than only seeking solutions to support multi-lateral institutions in their current form, Ireland should seek to guide in **the transformation** of these institutions, to facilitate collective action to global challenges on a **basis of fairness** in global development cooperation. This would also entail parallel transformation in capacity / governance / vision of the INGO sector

*Building Capacity & Influence:*

- I) Support development of robust governance processes and capacity building initiatives at the national, international and global levels to guide in the development of institutional solutions that can address the most pressing transnational matters.
- II) Demonstrate a continued willingness to lead public dialogue and policy discussion, which actively embrace diverse perspectives from a wide network of actors, at multiple scales, to inform institutional responses and transformation.

**A needs-based ethical approach to development practice:** Ireland has a long history of engaging in needs-based development cooperation demonstrated by Irish Aid's commitment to untied aid flows targeting the lowest income least developed communities and those 'furthest behind' – the most marginalized populations. There is, and should continue to be, an ethical commitment to 'leave no-one behind, placing the furthest behind first'. Irish practices of humanitarian-development cooperation can and should lead and inform at the global level, determining key elements for successful achievement at every stage of policy and practice.

*Building Capacity & Influence:*

Support extensive research to extract key learning from historical practices and shape new thinking to ensure that Ireland continues to identify, access, and engage with those furthest behind, wherever they may be.

**Education & Learning:** It is widely accepted that education, research and learning are critical enablers for sustained and sustainable development. Indeed Ireland's development experience points to an enduring commitment to education, research and learning at all levels. It is thus imperative that education and learning are central pillars of Ireland's international development agenda, building educational capacities of partner states.

*Building Capacity & Influence:*

- 1) Recognise that long term sustainable change rests with the capacities of a population to drive their own development pathways. Education,

learning and research are recognized as core and necessary elements in achieving this at multiple levels within partner states.

- 2) Recognize the need for deeper understanding of what constitutes research, including the importance of translational research which entails collaborating with local partners to translate evidence based insights into viable operational activity / programs / policies. We encourage a national dialogue on this matter.

## Q II: What are the implications of the changing global context for Ireland's international development cooperation and humanitarian action?

Across the document key development challenges are considered and include (2.4) ***persistent gender inequality***; (2.5) ***rising economic inequality within and between states***; (2.6) ***persistence of extreme poverty and new forms of in-flows into poverty driven by mass displacement and population movements***; and (2.7) ***uncertainty and unpredictability of global politics***. Although these are important trends the list is not definitive and does not yet capture the broader context within which development cooperation and humanitarian action now rests. We encourage reflection on the following explicit challenges:

- Weakening multilateral institutions and influence; increasing moves by dominant states to focus explicitly on national interests over and above collective global challenges; and a worry overarching trend towards increasing securitization of the development space.
- A problematic trend of increasing levels of mistrust in humanitarian and development processes, practices, and a significant gap between principles and action. Urgent action is required to stimulate creative engagement responses – without trust and participation of local communities, international development cooperation and humanitarian action cannot be successful in attaining its objectives and goals.

### Q III: Do the proposed priorities respond to the changing context and contribute to the achievement of our vision of a more equal, peaceful, sustainable world

The conceptual framing presented in the paper provides important clarity. However, a distinct gap in ambition between priorities outlined and interventions identified seems to be evident.

| Priority areas identified<br>*                                                                                | Interventions                                                | Criteria for Action                        |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Leave no one behind</b><br>(NB: people with disabilities; hidden and marginalised communities and groups). | <b>Protection:</b> peace, conflict prevention and fragility. | Build our capacity                         |
| <b>Gender equality</b>                                                                                        | <b>Food:</b> Nutrition, Agr. & inclusive eco. growth         | Deepen the coherence of Ireland's policies |
| <b>Reducing humanitarian need</b>                                                                             | <b>People:</b> Social protection, education and health....   | Reinforce collective action                |
| <b>Climate Action</b>                                                                                         |                                                              | Strengthen public support and engagement   |
| <b>Governance</b>                                                                                             |                                                              | Enhance research and learning.             |

\*Public Consultation Paper - Transforming Our World 2018

The priority areas listed are ambitious and far-reaching, however the three intervention categories represent, we suggest, a business as usual approach. We suggest that there is need to avoid creating a siloed approach and strongly encourage consideration of **integrated** approaches. For example, utilizing an intersectionality informed gender equality approach could integrate poverty, rural development, and gender equality through a priority focus on rural (young) women (and sub-groups of same, such as rural young women migrating to cities etc.). An integrated approach would allow for consideration of the interconnections between poverty, marginalization, youth opportunity, and peace and conflict prevention. Further, recognition of climate change as a core driver of humanitarian and development need is lacking in both the proposed interventions and the criteria for action.

The importance of a stronger focus on education is encouraged, in particular in light of high value placed on education within Irish culture, the legacy internationally of the work of Irish missionaries in the field of education, the central role of education in Ireland's own development experience, and more importantly, the potential demographic dividend that could be harnessed through investment in education in key partner states. We suggest that

the focus on education should also consider a potentially enhanced role for Irish institutions in helping to build capacity for quality education provision in partner states and institutions; and research capacity building in-country through partnership.

Finally, the criteria for action are too heavily focused on internal action and national concerns, rather than considering how to better support local communities and actors in partner countries to build their development pathways. If the policy is to achieve long term, sustained and sustainable transformational change, then greater attention to the local context and local actors is required. For example, rather than focusing only on building capacities of Irish development cooperation and humanitarian actors, a sustainable approach would suggest that it is imperative that we also reflect upon the capacity needs of our partners at multiple levels.

**The following areas are also identified as requiring further review:**

***(3.10: Protection: Peace, Conflict Prevention & Fragility)***

A degree of ‘caution’ should be exercised and further clarification sought so as to determine what experiences of peace building will the new policy promote – what are ‘successful’ stories / experiences? This is particularly the case where an exporting of the Northern Irish peace model has, for some NGOs, become big business and is contributing negatively to the propagation of an overly simple narrative that is potentially unhelpful for achieving meaningful resolution in these defined regions.

***(3.12: Food: Nutrition, Agriculture and Inclusive Economic Growth)***

Greater attention ought to be paid to *alternative* modes of food production, particularly when conflict, fragility and ongoing occupation in a ‘region’ greatly impact on the ability to control import/export of food and produce. There should be greater focus on examining creative ways of developing sustainable urban agriculture models, and exploring collaborative measure between public/private Irish and country partners.

***(4.5: Strengthen Public Support & Engagement)***

Many doctors, nurses, teachers, etc., have worked in areas where Irish Aid already has a presence. It would be beneficial – in terms of dissemination activity / consultancy data base - if Irish Aid could bring together those who have expertise in working in humanitarian crisis areas and establish a more formal platform in terms of exploiting these skill sets for the benefit of delivering on the policy ambitions. Often these experiences are lost with many professionals working in isolation seeking to continue their own public outreach activity. The Irish people’s history of supporting international development and humanitarian crises can and should be show-cased. Better engagement with Irish people with relevant ‘on the ground’ experience could assist this process.

## Q IV: How can we improve delivery of Ireland's international development cooperation and humanitarian action?

1. **Policy coherence, coordination, and alignment with National Implementation Plans on Sustainable Development & Climate Action (mitigation & adaptation)** – Provide and cultivate leadership in the development of enhanced cross departmental institutional arrangements and structures to facilitate governance and oversight over the SDG national action plans and Paris Agreement national voluntary contributions.
2. **Building national capacities**
  - a. Within Irish Aid, enhance human resource management capacities to reduce staff turn-over; enhance and train staff in monitoring, evaluation, and learning; and deepen the engagement between researchers and policy experts to translate research findings into meaningful actions.
  - b. Within the research community, invest in Irish programs to appropriately engage and network in key partner countries and which support both Irish 'local' PhD students and locally registered partner country PhDs; and cultivate opportunities for this cohort of PhD graduates to continue in the field of international development policy and scholarship.

## Conclusion

TIDI welcomes the opportunity to review the *International Development Policy - public consultation paper* and to provide feedback and input at this crucial early stage of formulation. We believe recognition of the academic & research community role in the formulation of national strategies is necessary for successful achievement of Government priorities.

The vision of the new policy is bold, and if delivered appropriately, could promote an ambitious transdisciplinary approach that provides space for inclusive participation, co-design and co-produced humanitarian and development planning and practice.

## Trinity International Development Initiative – TIDI

**Trinity International Development Initiative (TIDI)** was established in 2007 as a multidisciplinary initiative supported by researchers in schools across TCD's three faculties to coordinate research activities in and engagement with international development.

**TIDI's mission** is to maximise the university's contribution to understanding and addressing the major global development challenges of our time through research, teaching and outreach activities, a mission that is aligned with the College's strategic objectives as defined in the college's Strategic Plan 2014-2019<sup>i</sup>.

**TIDI's vision:** To drive excellence in development research and education at Trinity that aim towards providing practical solutions to real-world challenges.

Funded initially through the Programme of Strategic Cooperation (PSC) between Irish Aid and Higher Education and Research Institutes (2008 – 2011), TIDI has since secured funding through research activities and College supports.

**TIDI's strategy:** is based on equity, justice and strategic, sustainable, partnerships with academic institutions, NGOs, government, and the commercial sector, in Ireland and internationally, to drive new and innovative forms of University Development Cooperation.

Trinity College Dublin, the University of Dublin is a research-led university of global consequence that undertakes research for impact.

<https://www.tcd.ie/tidi/>

## Contributors

TIDI Steering Committee members

- Dr Susan Murphy, Director of TIDI & Lecturer in Development Practice, School of Natural Sciences, Faculty of Mathematics, Engineering and Science
  - [susan.p.murphy@tcd.ie](mailto:susan.p.murphy@tcd.ie); <http://naturalscience.tcd.ie/people/murphs64>
- Prof Robbie Gilligan, Professor of Social Work and Social Policy, School of Social Work and Social Policy, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
  - [rgillign@tcd.ie](mailto:rgillign@tcd.ie) <http://people.tcd.ie/Profile?Username=rgillign>
- Dr Gillian Wylie, Assistant Professor, International Peace Studies, Irish School of Ecumenics, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.
  - <http://www.tcd.ie/ise/staff/g-wylie.php>; [wylieg@tcd.ie](mailto:wylieg@tcd.ie)
- Dr Brendan Ciaran Browne, Assistant Professor, Course Coordinator, MPhil Conflict Resolution and Reconciliation, Fellow at Centre for Post-Conflict Justice, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences
  - [brbrowne@tcd.ie](mailto:brbrowne@tcd.ie); [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Brendan\\_Browne](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Brendan_Browne); <http://qub.academia.edu/BrendanBrowne>
- Dr George Dunwoody, TIDI Research Project Coordinator
  - [DUNWOODG@tcd.ie](mailto:DUNWOODG@tcd.ie)

## Contact Details:

---

Linda Lumbasi - TIDI Coordinator  
 Tel: 00 353 1 896 3668  
 Email: [tidi@tcd.ie](mailto:tidi@tcd.ie)