Development Cooperation Ireland

synthesis report on the expenditure review of the Development Cooperation Ireland in-country micro projects scheme

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the evaluation and methodology used

An evaluation of the Ireland Aid¹ in-country micro projects scheme was undertaken from February to May 2002 to review the scope and guidelines of the scheme, examine how it has operated to date, assess its relevance and effectiveness, its efficiency and its coherence with Ireland Aid objectives. The methodology involved a review of all relevant documentation both in Dublin and in nine of the countries where the scheme operates, meetings with senior management staff in Ireland Aid, Dublin and in the field. It also included meetings with personnel from other missions operating similar schemes in the countries visited and visits to a wide variety of projects funded under the scheme, including meetings with beneficiaries.

Origins of the scheme

The scheme was established in 1994 and gave, for the first time, delegated sanction to missions to support small-scale development projects implemented by local NGOs or those with an Irish link. As currently defined, the scheme aims to address basic needs and alleviate poverty and is mainly intended for once-off grants up to a maximum of €26,000. A total of €12 million (IR,9.5 million) has been allocated to projects in 14 countries since the beginning of the scheme.

Overview of the scheme

The period covered by the evaluation was 1998-2001 inclusive during which a total of €7,175,688 (IR,5,651,314) was spent. Sixty-four per cent was channelled through indigenous organisations, 27% through projects with an Irish link and 9% through projects with a non-Irish expatriate. Irish missionaries accounted for 25% of the total budget. A total of 918 projects were supported and of these 58% of the applicants were indigenous organisations, 33% were Irish applicants and 9% were non-Irish expatriates. Irish missionaries accounted for 29% of all approved projects. However, the pattern across countries varied.

The main sectors supported were education, health care and income generation. However, a significant number of projects did not fall within the guidelines. The size of the grants varied greatly and some projects were supported on more than one occasion or received funding from other Ireland Aid budget lines. In a number of countries there was a strong concentration on projects in or near capital cities. Of the projects visited during the evaluation the results were mixed, with a number that were particularly impressive, while others were weak or had collapsed.

Management and administration of the scheme varies from mission to mission in terms of who is responsible for day-to-day operations, their development experience, the administrative systems in place, the decision-making process and the level of project monitoring.

Other donor schemes tended to be divided into two categories, those that lacked a clear strategy but were seen as important in enhancing the profile of a donor or embassy, and those that had a clear strategy and were felt to be intrinsically useful in their own right.

¹ On the 3 July 2003 Ireland Aid was renamed “Development Cooperation Ireland”
Key issues arising from the evaluation

The consultants acknowledge that there is clearly a role for local NGOs to implement small-scale development projects, particularly in areas where they have a comparative advantage. The scheme has been relevant in countries where there is no bilateral aid programme because it is the only aid instrument that allows a mission discretion to approve grants in country. However, the scheme could be more relevant if its purpose was more clearly defined and if it was managed more strategically. In countries where there is a bilateral aid programme in place, some missions do not see the scheme as a priority and question its added value when civil society organisations are already being supported through the country programme. In other programme countries the scheme is seen as useful but it tends to be a low priority.

A major issue that arose in many countries was a lack of clarity on the purpose of the scheme and, in the view of the consultants, the scheme is a reactive one lacking a clear strategy to engage with civil society. The guidelines also lack clarity.

Some indicators on the effectiveness of the scheme are highlighted in the report, such as the degree to which it followed a basic needs approach, whether it addressed some of Ireland Aid’s core objectives, the extent to which it benefited projects implemented by local NGOs as opposed to Irish missionaries or other expatriates and the geographical concentration of projects.

A number of issues around the management and cost-effectiveness of the scheme are discussed. Management costs incurred by missions appeared to be quite modest and some missions had good systems in place. However, others had administrative weaknesses and some lacked experienced staff with a development background.

The scheme was found to be in line with two out of the three Ireland Aid’s key objectives. However, in countries where there is a bilateral aid programme, the scheme operates independently of country strategy plan and in the non-programme countries it lacks a clear strategy and overlaps with some of the other Ireland Aid budget lines.

Key recommendations

The recommendations are divided into three sections. Section one sets out a framework for future Ireland Aid support to civil society in the programme and non-programme countries. It recommends that where there is an existing country programme in place, the in-country micro projects scheme should be phased out and that missions should instead develop a clear strategy throughout the country programme for working with civil society. The lead consultant is of the view that this strategy should, as one of its elements, include support to small-scale development projects and build on the existing experiences from the micro-projects scheme. Other team members felt that this should be left to the judgement of those developing the civil society strategy. It is also recommended that the scheme should be continued in non-programme countries but within a three-year strategy that is prepared with support from Dublin. It is further recommended that serious consideration be given to having a Head of Mission discretionary fund in programme and non-programme countries up to a maximum of €20,000 in order to support small projects that fall outside their strategy plan. Section two outlines the recommended focus and purpose of the micro projects scheme in the new framework and suggests both an appropriate definition for local-non-governmental organisations and a clearer purpose for the scheme. Section three makes recommendations on some of the key management and administrative issues that need to be addressed in the revised scheme.

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2 Programme countries are those where a bilateral aid programme is in place
1. PURPOSE OF EVALUATION

The purpose of the evaluation is to gain an overview of how the in-country micro projects scheme operates in the various countries with a view to reviewing the schemes’ scope and guidelines, assessing its the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency together with its overall coherence with Ireland Aid objectives.

2. METHODOLOGY

The methodology used included interviews with senior management staff in Ireland Aid as well as a review of relevant documentation there. It also included visits to nine countries where the scheme operates namely Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, South Africa, India and Nigeria for the purposes of obtaining information on implementation of the scheme at mission level; gaining an overview of the quality of projects supported; assessing the extent to which they are consistent with the guidelines of the scheme; and feeding back relevant lessons on issues arising for incorporation into the findings of the Review. In each country interviews were held with senior management and local staff in the missions and other Ireland Aid offices etc; documentation and files were reviewed; meetings were held with representatives of other missions and, in some cases, with umbrella organisations of NGOs. Visits were also made to a selection of projects and meetings were held with beneficiaries of the scheme.

Children in Development Cooperation Ireland supported school Kibaale, Uganda. Carol Lee
3. HISTORY OF THE IN-COUNTRY MICRO PROJECTS SCHEME

The In-country Micro Projects Scheme (the Scheme), which commenced in 1994, was designed to give delegated sanction to Missions and Development Cooperation Offices in ten countries enabling them to directly support, for the first time, the work of indigenous non-governmental organisations, as well as projects with an Irish link. Each Mission /DCO received an allocation of €63,500 (,50,000) and all grants approved at mission level were to be on a ‘once-off’ basis. Irish organisations based in these countries also had the opportunity to apply to Dublin for funding under the NGO Co-Financing Scheme. Initially the new micro projects scheme was intended to be used for capital spending such as, for instance, on schools and health clinics.

In 1995 the amount allocated was increased to €95,230 (IR,75,000) per country, with the exception of Egypt which remained at €63,500 (IR,50,000) and Sudan which was pegged at €50,790 (IR,40,000). Two new countries, Ghana and Zimbabwe, were introduced and €31,750 (IR,25,000) was allocated to each and was managed by the missions in Nigeria and Zambia respectively. All Missions involved were free to support projects at their own discretion up to a limit of €10,160 (,8,000) per project.

In 1997 Mozambique was added to the list of countries to benefit under the scheme and the total global allocation in that year was €889,000 (IR,700,000). China was included the following year. Bangladesh was also added to the scheme. With the exception of India, Bangladesh and China, all the beneficiary countries under the scheme are in Africa. The total allocation for the years 1994-2002 amounts to €12 million (IR,9.5m). The years 1998-2001 are examined in more detail in this evaluation, both in the text and in the statistical annexes.

4. THE CURRENT PURPOSE OF THE MICRO PROJECTS SCHEME

The current Ireland Aid guidelines for the in-country micro projects scheme state that it is designed to provide funding for projects proposed by local non-governmental organisations in 14 countries. The aim of the scheme is to address basic needs and alleviate poverty, with priority being given to water and sanitation, primary health care, basic education, rural development, urban community development, income generation and training. Meeting basic needs, employment creation and capacity building are to be given priority in these sectors and the emphasis is on small-scale projects or small components of larger projects. Key criteria for assessment of project applications are that: they have a poverty focus; they are capable of being sustainable after Ireland Aid funding has ended; beneficiaries actively participate in all stages of the projects; special measures are adopted to ensure the full participation of women and, projects are effective and efficient in meeting their objectives. The scheme is mainly intended for once-off contributions with up to 75% of the total cost of the project eligible for funding and subject to a maximum grant of €25,400 (IR,20,000).

These were Tanzania, Ethiopia, Uganda, Lesotho, Sudan, Zambia, Nigeria, South Africa, Egypt and India.
5. OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEME

5.1 Summary analysis

The scheme has been operating in 14 countries to date\(^4\) including three countries, Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Ghana that are managed by missions in neighbouring countries. A total of €7,175,689 (IR,5,651,314) was spent in all the countries covered under the scheme over the four year period from 1998-2001. Of this, 64% was channelled through indigenous organisations, including local faith-based organisations and NGOs. A further 27% was channelled to projects where the applicant was Irish, while the remaining 9% went to projects where the applicant was a non-Irish expatriate.

Faith-based organisations, including Irish and Non-Irish missionaries and local churches, accounted for 43% of the total budget - the Irish missionary community accounted for 25% of the total budget.

A total of 918 projects were supported of which 58% were through indigenous organisations, 33% were through Irish applicants and 9% were through non-Irish expatriates. Forty-eight per cent of all approved projects were from faith-based organisations while Irish missionaries accounted for 29% of all approved projects.

However, the breakdown of support varied widely between countries. While faith-based organisations accounted for a significant level of approved applicants across all the countries, the pattern with Irish missionaries was different. In some countries such as Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia, Irish missionaries accounted for a high percentage of approved applicants compared to the global average while in other countries such as Mozambique and Lesotho, they are not significant. Given the high age cohort in the Irish missionary community globally, the numbers will continue to decline and it is likely to be a small group in ten years time\(^5\).

The main project categories supported, with total budget allocation appearing in parenthesis, were education (27%), training (17%), primary health care (15%) and income generation (12%)\(^6\). In most countries the guidelines were interpreted liberally. Over 10% of projects supported did not fall within the guidelines and these included projects of a welfare nature, emergency projects, secondary schools, projects of a cultural nature and HIV/AIDS\(^6\). However, this figure is probably significantly higher as many projects categorised by the missions under the various headings set out in the guidelines were not correctly listed and should really have appeared under the ‘other’ category\(^7\). In many countries projects were supported on more than one occasion and often the same project received assistance under the NGO co-financing scheme or a country programme budget line\(^8\). The size of grants varied greatly from as little as €150 (IR,120) to those which were in excess of the ceiling of €25,400 (IR,20,000)\(^9\).

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\(^4\) These are Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zimbabwe, Zambia

\(^5\) Many of the traditional missionary orders have now opened new seminaries in developing countries and will have a considerable number of non-Irish members in the future.

\(^6\) A number of HIV/AIDS projects were supported, although HIV/AIDS is not yet specifically mentioned in the guidelines. However, this report will recommend that it should be a priority area.

\(^7\) When compiling the statistics on the breakdown of expenditure, it was necessary to account for projects that did not fall within the sectors listed in the guidelines. Two separate project categories were inserted, the first for HIV/AIDS projects and the second for ‘other’ projects.

\(^8\) In one country, an Irish missionary received 31 grants under the NGO co-financing scheme and the micro-projects scheme in the four-year period from 1996-1999. Another figure on file indicated that the same missionary received €419,000 (IR,330,000) in the period 1994-1998.

\(^9\) A number of grants were in excess of the ceiling, including one for over €34,280 (IR,34,280).
In a number of cases there has been a geographical concentration on projects in or near to capital cities, obviously influenced by the proximity to missions. While many of these projects have been in poor areas, there is nevertheless an imbalance in favour of locations that are more accessible and have easier access to missions.

Visits were made to a large number of projects in all of the countries covered by the review and the results were mixed. Some projects were particularly impressive, targeting very poor communities and were having a positive impact on the lives of these communities. Others were poorly conceived, some were too dependent on charismatic individuals, had run into difficulties or collapsed or were having problems in sustaining themselves in the long term. With the exception of one mission, the scheme is very much a reactive one with no particular strategy behind the projects being supported. In all countries the scheme was only one of a number of aid instruments used for supporting the work of civil society organisations and there was considerable overlap between budget lines. These issues are discussed in more detail in section 6 of the report.

It is important to underline the fact that the main purpose of the evaluation was to gain an overview of how the whole scheme operates. The visits to a sample of projects supported under the scheme were one part of this process and were intended to give a sense of what was being supported rather than being an evaluation of each project.
Case Study 1

Canning Swanirbhar, Nikarighata, West Bengal, India

"All the wealth of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are not taught to help themselves"

Swami Vivekananda

The village of Nikarighata is situated about 80 kilometres to the west of Calcutta in an agricultural area close to the town of Canning. Members of the scheduled castes, who were formerly known as the untouchables, inhabit the village and the surrounding area. Most of the adults do not have enough land to sustain their families and have to rely on work as daily wage labourers, either for local landlords or in the nearby towns. Many of the women take the one and a half hour train journey to Calcutta to work in domestic service.

Canning Swanirbhir is a voluntary self-help organisation working with the poor in the area, drawing its inspiration from the teachings of the nineteenth century Bengali philosopher and social reformer, Swami Vivekananda. The organisation has received assistance from the Ireland Aid micro projects scheme on a number of occasions, including support for the construction of tube-wells and low-cost latrines, as well as a school and health centre, all of which have made a discernible impact in the village of Nikaraghata. Over 1000 families now have access to safe drinking water and sanitation since the introduction of the tube-wells and latrines and there are now 500 children attending the school, most of whom would not have been able to receive an education in the past.

This is a locally owned initiative that is well rooted in the community. All of the committee members are drawn from the community and there is a high level of participation at all stages, from problem identification through to planning, implementation and review. The organisation generates most of its revenue from its own resources through income-generating activities such as vegetable production and fish-farming.

5.2. Management and administration of the scheme

Overall responsibility for the scheme is with Bilateral 2 section of Ireland Aid in Dublin but the actual management of the scheme at country level is delegated to participating missions who have the authority to approve projects that fall within the micro project guidelines. Each mission is advised of its budget at the beginning of the year by Dublin and can request additional funds at a later stage if it requires provided, of course, that resources are available. All missions must submit a report to the Bilateral 2 section at the end of every year outlining a list of projects supported and the amounts provided. In countries where there is a bilateral programme, the scheme is operated independently of the programme. While there has been some individual country reviews/monitoring visits of the scheme, it has not however been monitored on a regular basis from Dublin. This review is the first major exercise of its kind since the establishment of the scheme.

The management and administration of the scheme varies from country to country. In most but not all cases, a locally employed member of the mission staff is responsible for the day-to-day management of the scheme, usually reporting to a programme officer or another senior member of the management team. In a number of cases, those responsible for the scheme at mission level do not have a development background.

11 In India, the first secretary has sole responsibility for the management of the scheme.
Most missions do not advertise the scheme but still receive many more applications than they would consider funding, a large number of which are usually turned down at an early stage. Application forms are not normally given out until a mission is satisfied that the organisation is *bona fide* and often a certificate of registration is requested when an application is being made. Many missions depend on contacts with Irish missionaries, NGOs or other expatriates, while countries where there are area-based programmes often make use of the local office to appraise a project.

In some cases a formal committee, comprising local staff, a programme officer and sometimes the head of mission, meet on a quarterly or monthly basis to consider applications. In other cases the procedure is less formal and may involve recommendations being made to a programme officer, first secretary or the head of mission, one of who will sign off on the decision. Most missions do not keep a formal record of the approval process but some have now begun to institute systems.

Projects are not generally visited in advance of approval and there has been no uniform policy across countries for monitoring of projects. The level of monitoring varies from country to country with some missions visiting a large number of projects while others visit only a small number, often on an ad hoc basis. Monitoring can be carried out, often in the course of their other work, by local staff members, by programme officers, by a first or second secretary, and occasionally by heads of mission when they are asked to formally officiate at a project or are visiting an area where a micro project is located. Some missions ensure that their accounts section scrutinises project financial reports but this is not a uniform practice. The scheme is not considered a part of the normal audit in countries where there is a bilateral programme and does not appear to have a formal audit procedure in other participating countries.

The quality of the filing systems in missions varies from country to country with some having particularly good systems in place that are accompanied by spreadsheets giving an up to date account of the status of the projects supported. In some missions however, there are a significant number of projects with outstanding reports that require follow up.

The number of projects supported on an annual basis at country level is in some cases in excess of 30 which have implications for management time at a mission, even though the size of the grants may be small. A number of missions, and particularly those with country programmes, feel that the management of the scheme is very time consuming for the size of the budget they are handling.

### 5.3. Comparison with other donor schemes

With the exception of Japan and the European Union which have sizeable micro projects schemes in some countries, most donors met in the course of the review were operating modest micro project schemes with budgets in the region of €100,000- 200,000. In general these schemes could be broken down into two types - those whose primary objective was to enhance the profile of a donor or a mission and those that were seen as having an intrinsic value in their own right. In the former case, the schemes did not have any clear strategy, the budgets were small and the guidelines tended to be more flexible. The management of these schemes was usually lean. In the latter case, the schemes tended to focus on a small number of sectors, targeted particular geographical areas in the country concerned and were more management intensive. While a number of donors were positive about their schemes, these tended to be the ones that had a clearer strategy. A number of others were sceptical of the value of micro projects schemes.

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12 In one case, all projects are visited on at least three occasions, during the pre-appraisal stage, during the implementation stage and post implementation.

13 In one country, the scheme was only targeting HIV/AIDS, while in another country a small projects scheme was focused specifically on good governance.
Case Study 2

Tebellong Agricultural Project, Lesotho, Mr. August Basson, Dutch Reformed Church

Mr. August Basson is a South African missionary with the Dutch Reformed Church who has been working at Tebellong for approx. 10 years. Tebellong is an isolated area situated across the river from Qachas Nek on the southern border of Lesotho. A substantial amount of food is being imported into the area, yet there is considerable potential for growing the same food locally if the appropriate technology and skills are in place. At the same time, there is high unemployment in Tellebong and fewer opportunities now for work in the mines in South Africa than in the past.

As a result, an agricultural project was started in 1998 with the overall aim of providing employment locally and training the community in agricultural skills which they could apply in their own fields. The project began with the cultivation of 700 fruit trees, followed by onions, butternuts, potatoes and tomatoes. An irrigation system provides water throughout the year. Ireland Aid grants were used to procure shade cloth for the tomato cultivation and for the construction of a greenhouse tunnel in the expansion phase. Revenue has been generated from the sale of produce locally and the project provides full-time employment for four people, as well as a number of part-time staff. The surplus income has been ploughed back into the project for support including training programmes, a pre-school run by the church and for school bursaries.

The project is currently dependent on imported fertilisers, pesticides and an irrigation scheme which appears to require a level of technical expertise and infrastructure that might be difficult to replicate throughout the community. The irrigation scheme also had to be replaced with an expensive and technically demanding system just 1-2 years after it had been installed. The project is not yet financially self-sustaining but Mr. Basson is confident that it can be in a short period.

Mr. Basson is clearly a very enthusiastic and dedicated missionary who has, along with his wife and family, given up a more comfortable life as a pastor in South Africa in favour of working in a poor, remote area of Lesotho. With little or no previous background or training in community development or agriculture, he has put an enormous amount of personal energy and hard work into this project and he sees himself staying in Tebellong for many years to come. He clearly has the best interests of the local community at heart and has a good relationship with the people.

However, the energy, the ideas and most of the technical input appear to come from him. It is doubtful if the project would survive in his absence and even though he is firmly committed to staying at Tebellong, it is still inappropriate to have the project dependent on him. If the project is to survive and grow and to achieve its aims of providing continuing employment and transferring skills to the local community, it would be very important to ensure that the ownership of the project is ultimately with the community, it is engaged in a process of identifying its own needs and addressing those needs, albeit with technical and financial support from outside. This is a process that takes time but it is more sustainable and empowering in the long term. Mr. Basson expressed a desire to find out more about participatory community development approaches that seek to empower communities to identify their own needs and to plan and manage their own programmes.
6. KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE REVIEW

6.1. Relevance of the Scheme as a Funding Mechanism in Ireland Aid

6.1.1. The relevance of the scheme as a mechanism for supporting local NGOs.

The consultants acknowledge that there is clearly a role for local NGOs to implement small-scale development projects that are strategic, consistent with local priorities and with government policy and are likely to be sustainable within a reasonable period. Civil society organisations have particular comparative advantages especially in the area of good governance, human rights, advocacy and HIV/AIDS, but also in certain other sectors. The Ireland Aid micro projects scheme should be targeting those areas where civil society organisations have a particular added value and it should also be assisting these organisations to develop their own capacities to engage in activities that are consistent with Ireland Aid objectives. Typical examples would be:

- Advocacy organisations which are involved in policy dialogue, particularly in the formulation of government policy and the budgetary process;

- Organisations which are implementing programmes that government is either unable or unwilling to become involved in, where there is a clear need to complement the activities of government, or where Ireland Aid feels it is unable to work through government;

- Community based organisations that are responding to needs identified by local communities.

The introduction of the in-country micro projects scheme in 1994 represented the first attempt on the part of Ireland Aid to provide direct support to the work of indigenous NGOs. This support has since extended through the country programmes, the human rights and democratisation budget line and the emergency and recovery budget line in areas such as good governance, de-mining, health, water and sanitation, HIV/AIDS and emergency/recovery activities. In one country, Tanzania, a special fund has been established through the area-based programmes to support the work of local NGOs and community associations.

A key question is how relevant has the micro projects scheme been as a mechanism for supporting local NGOs? In countries where there is no bilateral programme, the scheme is the only instrument that allows a mission to have discretion in approving grants in-country without submitting applications to Dublin for approval. It is, in effect, the

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14 As the individual country reports show, it is often unrealistic to expect a project to become sustainable after a once-off intervention.

15 This topic is covered in detail in an issues paper entitled 'Ireland Aid and Civil Society in the context of the Bilateral Aid Programme', presented at an Ireland Aid meeting in November 2001.
more visible expression of Ireland Aid in a country where there is no bilateral aid programme. Essentially this refers to countries such as Nigeria, India, Egypt and China. While the scheme has been relevant in these countries, this could be increased if (i) its purpose was better defined, (ii) made more coherent and coordinated with other budget lines administered from Dublin and (iii) managed more strategically in the future.

Some of the bilateral programme countries do not see the scheme as a priority and if it were to be discontinued, Ireland Aid staff would probably raise few objections. This is because missions are now beginning to engage with indigenous civil society organisations through the country programme. While it may have been a relevant intervention at the time of its inception, some missions in the programme countries feel that the added value of the scheme is now questionable when civil society organisations are already being supported through the country strategy. What may be necessary is a small discretionary fund to support activities that are deemed important for political purposes by missions - but this should be a different scheme entirely.

In some of the other programme countries the scheme is seen as useful but it tends to be a low priority. This is understandable when the budget for the scheme is very small in comparison to the country budget\textsuperscript{16}. Nevertheless, any scheme like this, no matter how small, should have a strategy and it needs to be managed. Again, all of the programme countries that expressed a preference for the scheme are already working with civil society organisations through the country programmes.

In some cases, the micro projects scheme appears to have been used to fill gaps or provide a ‘top-up’ to a project when needed. For example, in one case a project had received €880,000 from the education component of the country programme budget and a further €11,000 (IR,8,700) later from the micro projects scheme. In a case like this there is little added value in having a scheme that is independent of the country programme.

Many NGOs had positive comments to offer on the scheme, in particular the relative simplicity of the application procedures and the courteous manner in which they were treated by staff at the missions and other Ireland Aid offices. A number felt that decisions on applications were made speedily while others felt that the waiting process was sometimes long. Other concerns were expressed about the scheme. For instance, the once-off nature of the grants was an issue for a number of organisations and it was felt that this militated against sustainability. One organisation commented that Ireland Aid needed to have a clear policy on how to work with civil society organisations and that such a policy should ensure capacity was being built in this sector. A strategy is probably needed now for working with civil society organisations that is consistent with national priorities, with Ireland Aid policy and that clearly adds value to the Ireland Aid programme in each country.

Another issue concerns the guidelines. These specify that the scheme is designed to support the work of local NGOs. When the scheme was initially designed Irish missionaries and other expatriates working in the countries concerned were considered to be part of this group, although this was not clearly spelt out in the guidelines. In the last four years, the global figures show that a significant level of support has been channelled through Irish or other expatriates, who accounted for 36% of the budget and 42% of all approved applicants. Of course, this figure varied between countries depending on the number of missionaries and expatriates involved in development work in each country. The importance of being able to give visible support in a timely manner to the development work of Irish missionaries was one reason for this. Another was the ‘safety’ factor - the feeling that funds would be used appropriately and properly accounted for.

These were legitimate reasons and indeed many of the projects implemented by Irish missionaries and other expatriates down the years have been impressive. However, now that the principles of partnership and local ownership are central to Ireland Aid policy, it is no longer acceptable to rely heavily on expatriates as a channel for disbursing resources.
through this scheme, when the real challenge in the long term is to build the capacity of indigenous organisations. Any support to civil society organisations in the future should focus on local non-governmental organisations. Secondly, a special budget line will soon be established in Ireland Aid to support the development activities of the Irish missionary community and it makes little sense for the in-country micro projects scheme to overlap with this new line. The details of this scheme have yet to be worked out and the transition from support to missionaries in favour of indigenous organisations will obviously have to take place over an acceptable period of time, particularly in countries with a large number of Irish missionaries.

Case Study 3

Kibuga Gravity Flow Scheme, Kigezi, Uganda

This project is situated in the mountainous region of south-west Uganda, close to the border with Rwanda. The Anglican diocese of Kigezi has been implementing a water and sanitation project in the area since 1986 as part of an overall programme to improve the quality of health for the local population. In 1999, the Ireland Aid micro projects fund provided support for a water-gravity scheme in the diocese at Kibuga valley. The project took six months to complete and involved the local community in laying out 12 kilometres of pipe, constructing three tanks with a total capacity of 56,000 litres each, and installing 37 community taps outdoors.

The scheme utilised the existing gravity flow from springs high up in the mountainous terrain, with the result that no expensive motors were required to pump the water. An estimated 27,000 people have benefited from the scheme, including 366 small farming households in the valley and two schools. Each household is required to pay 1000 Ugandan Shillings per year, which is equivalent to 70 cent.

While the project has been a success, a major challenge that has yet to be overcome is to ensure that the important lessons on hygiene education provided by the community educators are understood and practised in the community. A significant number of households have not yet sufficiently absorbed these lessons.

6.1.2. Clarity on the purpose of the scheme

The issue that has surfaced in many countries throughout the evaluation was a lack of clarity on the actual purpose of the scheme, particularly in countries where there is an existing bilateral programme. On the positive side, some senior management and local staff in a number of missions felt that the scheme has an intrinsic value in its own right by providing an important entry point to civil society, by getting resources to the poor quickly and easily, offering opportunities to reach grassroots communities that would not normally be reached under national programmes, learning from what people are saying on the ground and being able to feed back lessons from these experiences at national level. On the negative side, staff in a number of missions did not see the scheme as being particularly useful. The budget for the scheme is very small, it is not a part of the country strategy in countries where there is a bilateral aid programme in place, it is time consuming to operate and it is difficult to see where it actually adds value to the work of the mission - all the more so in countries where Ireland Aid is already significantly engaged with civil society organisations.

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17 The high age profile of Irish missionaries will at any rate result in a diminishing number of applications from this community in the coming years.
In the view of the consultants, a weakness of the scheme is that it is essentially a reactive one, lacking a clear strategy to engage with civil society. This may not have been an issue when the scheme was first established and the budgets were very modest, but the situation has now changed with more countries entering the scheme and countries, such as, India experiencing significant growth in their budgets. While the budgets within a number of countries are still relatively modest, global expenditure on the scheme is now sizeable when looked at over a three-year period. It is important therefore at this stage to suggest a more clearly defined purpose for the scheme.

6.1.3. Clarity on the guidelines

A lack of clarity also exists with respect to the guidelines, which need to be updated. As noted below, these guidelines are interpreted liberally and do not offer sufficient clarity on what can and cannot be supported under the existing categories and the kinds of budgeted activities or items that should be given priority. The guidelines now need to be revised to take into account the changing development context.

6.2 Effectiveness of the Scheme in Achieving its Objectives

An assessment of the effectiveness of the scheme will examine whether the overall objectives have been achieved. A number of indicators are relevant. One might be the extent to which the scheme succeeded in addressing poverty alleviation through basic needs. As outlined in section 5.1 of this report, 27% of the budget was spent on basic education, 17% on training, 15% on primary health care, 12% on income generation and 8% on water and sanitation projects. However, while the evaluation did include visits to a selection of projects, it was not a detailed evaluation of projects per se. Furthermore, where individual projects were seen to have a poverty impact, there was often no clear poverty alleviation strategy behind an intervention. Hence, it is difficult to generalise from the statistics on the breakdown of expenditure per sector, although some comments are pertinent.

As already indicated, many of the projects supported did not fall within the guidelines and were categorised in the analysis as ‘other’. In addition, it is likely that a significant number of projects that were categorised by missions under headings listed in the guidelines were in fact outside the guidelines. In a number of countries, it was felt that the scheme offered flexibility to respond to requests that might not normally be eligible for consideration by Ireland Aid. However, while there can be flexibility within guidelines, they are designed to give guidance and not to be ignored, as they were on some occasions.

A second indicator might be the extent to which the scheme addressed some of Ireland Aid’s other core objectives such as partnership and sustainability. As mentioned earlier, a number of projects had performed well and were having a positive impact on the target group. These included water schemes, rural development and skills training projects. What differentiated these projects from others was the level of community involvement from the earliest stages of a project through to the implementation phase. Often, a considerable amount of work had gone into the mobilisation process with local people taking a strong leadership role in the projects. However, a significant number of projects visited during the evaluation were poorly conceived and weak, had run into difficulties or had failed. Income generation projects were problematic because in a number of cases they had not achieved their aims of providing a realistic income for the intended beneficiaries, while in other cases they were benefiting individuals who probably could have accessed capital for their businesses elsewhere. A number of skills training, health care, and water and sanitation projects were also weak. In many cases, these were projects that were led by one charismatic individual with little or no

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18 For instance, whether they should give priority to vehicles, building construction, capacity-building activities etc.

19 Such as for instance, secondary schools, scholarships for third level training courses, income generation programmes targeting private individuals or institutions or support for non-primary health care activities in hospitals.
participation on the part of the supposed beneficiaries in the planning and management of the project. These projects did not succeed in achieving their overall objectives.

A third indicator might be the extent to which the scheme benefited local NGOs, as opposed to Irish missionaries and other expatriates\textsuperscript{20}. As indicated in section 6.1.2 above, 64\% of the budget was targeted at local NGOs and 58\% of successful project applications came from local NGOs during the four-year period analysed in the scheme. These figures do need to be treated with further caution however, as some projects categorised as local NGOs included private sector organisations and government schools\textsuperscript{21}.

A fourth indicator might be the geographical concentration of projects, although this is a somewhat arbitrary distinction and does not represent a true picture of the extent to which the scheme has actually targeted the poorest communities in a country. Many cities in Africa have very wide disparities in income distribution and one can find levels of poverty in an urban slum that is as bad or worse than in some of the poorest provinces in a country. As the analysis shows however, there has been an emphasis in a number of countries on supporting projects that are close to capital cities and in provinces where standards of living are higher than the average. Obviously, the number of organisations based in cities and their proximity to missions are reasons for this, as well as the fact that those working in the poorest areas are often weak or very few in number. There is no evidence that geographical focus has been based on a poverty strategy.

\textsuperscript{20} As noted in section 6.1.1 above however, local NGOs were deemed to include Irish missionaries and other expatriates from the beginning of the scheme, although this was not clearly stated.

\textsuperscript{21} Although support for these schools is often provided at village level through parent teacher associations. These could justifiably be considered as community based organisations.
6.3 Efficiency of the Scheme in Terms of its Management and Cost Effectiveness

In many missions where there is a micro projects scheme in place, it has been difficult to give high priority to the scheme in the overall work of the mission. In a number of cases, staff responsible for the management of the scheme do not have a development background and are at a major disadvantage, particularly when it comes to appraisal of projects. In other cases, responsibility for management of the scheme has been delegated to experienced, locally recruited staff, who are also involved in a variety of other duties but find it difficult to give sufficient time to the scheme. In most cases, the scheme has been reactive and lacking a clear strategy, the appraisal process has often been weak, there has been limited monitoring of projects and outstanding reports have not always been followed up on. The scheme does not appear to be audited on a regular basis in any of the countries. However, any micro projects scheme, no matter how small, needs to have basic systems in place, as well as some level of management. Overcoming these weaknesses in a country where there is no mission presence becomes an even bigger challenge.

The role of Bilateral 2 in the management of the scheme appears to have been a limited one, confined to monitoring the extent to which the various countries have operated the scheme in a way that is consistent with the guidelines. The annual reports submitted to Dublin by each mission is the main source of information for monitoring. It is not easy to carry out such a task efficiently by relying solely on these reports, which are of limited use. Occasional monitoring visits are also necessary.

A number of missions had particularly good systems in place and elements of these could contribute to good practice in the future management of the scheme. These included: (i) procedures to eliminate, at an early stage, applications that would clearly not be supported under the scheme thereby allowing time for consideration of those that were more likely to be funded; (ii) more structured approval mechanisms that allowed for occasional specialist support from mission staff when necessary; (iii) transparent decision-making processes that recorded decisions and who had made them; (iv) the use of detailed spreadsheets that tracked the status of projects; (v) well organised filing systems that were easy to access and (vi) appropriate disbursement procedures. Moreover, the management costs incurred by missions appeared to be quite modest in terms of the overall budget.

6.4 Coherence with Ireland Aid Objectives

In all countries the main reference point for the scheme, in terms of coherence, should be overall Ireland Aid policy. As defined, the scheme is certainly in line with two of Ireland Aid’s key objectives of reducing poverty and promoting sustainable development, and contributing to building civil society and social solidarity. The focus in the scheme on basic needs and the emphasis on strengthening civil society is consistent with these objectives. However, the current guidelines in the scheme do not cover support to good governance and human rights projects, which are key elements of the third Ireland Aid objective, although many country programmes now have a specific budget line for this category. Another weakness perhaps, is the once-off nature of the grants. This is not a realistic requirement in the case of many of the projects supported and does not enhance the possibility of ensuring sustainability in the long term.

Within the programme countries, it also makes sense for the scheme to be consistent with the country strategy plan but this has not been the case. The scheme is seen very much as separate, operating independently of the country strategy and reporting to Dublin on an annual basis, even though in some cases individual projects have received funding.

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22 In programme countries, this is not helped by the fact that the scheme is considered to be outside the country programme.

23 This objective is to assist in establishing and maintaining peace in developing countries by fostering democracy, respect for human rights, gender and social equality and protection of the environment.
through the country programme budget, as well as through the micro projects scheme. In one country, the area-based programmes have their own budget line for supporting civil society organisations although it is felt to have limitations24.

In non-programme countries, there is no particular strategy as such for prioritising Ireland Aid support to any of these countries, with each of the budget lines managed from Dublin and operating independently of each other. One of the consequences of this has been a significant overlap between budget lines, with some projects receiving grants from two separate lines within the same year. Moreover, unlike other missions where the main role of the mission is to manage the aid programme, missions in non-programme countries have tended to operate in isolation from Ireland Aid in Dublin, particularly when it comes to interpreting the guidelines and keeping abreast of changing development practice. There is a need therefore for greater coherence in the non-programme countries, as well as more co-ordination with Ireland Aid in Dublin.

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**Case Study 4**

*Cassava Processing Project, Justice Development and Peace Commission, Diocese of Abeokuta, Nigeria*

Abeokuta is a new Catholic diocese established in 1998 with a justice development and peace office responsible for promoting development in the diocese, in partnership with a local NGO. A dynamic Nigerian priest who is also the administrator of the local hospital is responsible for the development programme and he has managed to establish a good partnership with Trocaire, as well as receiving support from the German agency, Misereor. The ‘Deles’ model of leadership training, along with participatory rural appraisal, is used to mobilise local communities. One village that the diocese works with is located in a remote area close to the Benin border.

The people came to the area from Benin about twenty-five years ago and are very isolated with no access to clean water, to schools or to a health service. Following a participatory rural appraisal, the community identified cassava processing as a priority, along with clean water, as these would save a lot of time on labour, provide a source of income from the sale of garri (a derivative of cassava), and lead to an improvement in the health status of the community. A diesel-operated cassava processing machine was installed in a newly constructed building in the village and a hand dug well was also built. A member of the community was trained in the management of the machine and the local elders are responsible for the management of the finances.

The diocese and Ireland Aid contributed financially to the project and the local community contributed labour. The processing machine is working well and the villagers now hire transport to bring their surplus crops to sell at the nearest market. People from other villages also come to have their cassava processed. However, production has been lower than capacity because of security problems in the area as a result of incursions by Fulani cattle herders who have destroyed many of the crops. In addition, the well ran into problems as it was not deep enough because of the rocky nature of the terrain. Consequently, there is no water available in the dry season. The development office feels that in hindsight, a geo-physical survey should have been done in advance of selecting a location for the well. However, the community will try to deepen the well to obtain a year round water supply.

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24 It has a joint steering committee that includes government representatives, which some NGOs do not want and secondly, it is confined to the geographical areas in question.
Despite the problems, it is evident that the diocesan team has established a good relationship with this community and that the village has benefited from the project. There is also a strong sense of local ownership and commitment in the community and it is now anxious to move forward with other initiatives. The process involved in mobilising the community has probably been an important factor here and it will be important for the development office to stay with a group like this for some time and help it to grow.

This project is encouraging in another respect in that it illustrates good locally managed projects are being implemented in Nigeria. At the same time, the Abeokuta justice, development and peace office needs to grow at a pace that it can manage. One of the risks with new organisations that establish a good name is their propensity to attract large amounts of money from different donors when their capacity does not develop at the same time. Strong, accountable systems of financial management are an important part of capacity development.

7. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE SCHEME

The key recommendations are broken down into three sections, the first section setting out a possible framework for future Ireland Aid support to civil society in both the programme countries and the non-programme countries, the second section outlines what the focus and purpose of the remaining micro projects scheme should be in the non-programme countries in this new framework, and the third section suggests the necessary administrative and management changes that need to be made to the scheme in the future.

1. A framework for future Ireland Aid support to civil society in programme and non-programme countries

A. In countries where there is an Ireland Aid country programme in place, missions should now be required to have a clear strategy throughout the programme for working with civil society. Each country that is entering into the next planning stage of its support should develop this strategy within the country plan and budget accordingly. The lead consultant is of the view that this strategy should, as one of its elements, include support to small-scale development projects and build on the existing experiences from the micro-projects scheme. Other team members felt that this should be left to the judgment of those developing the civil society strategy. The focus should be on indigenous organisations. The in-country micro projects scheme should be discontinued when the current strategy plan in each of these countries comes to an end.

B. In the medium term up to the conclusion of an existing plan, each programme country should be required to develop a strategy for implementing an interim micro projects scheme that is consistent with the country strategy plan and is approved by Dublin prior to implementation. Pending the introduction of the new budget line for Irish missionaries, a transitional arrangement would need to allow for some continuing support for the work of the missionary community. A report on the implementation of the scheme should be included in the annual mission report to Dublin.
C. The micro projects scheme in the non-programme countries should be continued but needs to have a more strategic direction. Each of the non-programme countries should be required to develop a three-year strategy for the scheme from 2003 onwards that is consistent with Ireland Aid policy and reflects the strategic priorities in the country as well as the comparative advantages of civil society organisations working in that country. The strategy plan should be prepared with support from Ireland Aid in Dublin and submitted to Dublin for approval before the end of the year. A report on the implementation of the scheme should be included in the annual mission report to Dublin.

D. Serious consideration should be given to the establishment of a Head of Mission discretionary fund. Such a fund should be independent of the micro projects scheme, with an annual budget of €20,000 that allows a mission discretion to support a limited number of small projects that are deemed to be important to the mission but would fall outside their strategy plan. The management of such a scheme should be lean but applicants should be required to submit applications in writing, a record should be kept of all decisions and a short narrative and financial report should be provided within an agreed time frame.

2. The focus and purpose of the micro projects scheme in the new framework

A. The focus of support in both the interim micro projects scheme in programme countries and the future scheme in the non-programme countries should be on local non-governmental organisations, but taking into consideration the transitional arrangements suggested in 1B above. However, there is a need for greater clarity on what is meant by a local NGO because this term has been interpreted very liberally. For the purpose of this scheme, it is suggested that local non-governmental organisations should be defined as:

Indigenous, locally managed, not for profit organisations that are independent of the state and are formed voluntary by members of society to address the root causes of poverty in their respective communities.

This can include registered NGOs, community based organisations, faith-based organisations involved in development work, cooperatives, farmer associations and trade unions.

B. The purpose of the scheme needs to be redefined and the following definition is suggested:

The aim of the scheme is to work in partnership with local non-governmental organisations in support of projects that address the root causes of poverty in a way that is strategic and cost effective, enhances local capacity and ownership, and is consistent with Ireland Aid’s other programme of work in the countries concerned.

3. Management and administrative issues

The guidelines need to be clarified and revised in consultation with the Specialist Support Unit. The revised guidelines should be adhered to with immediate effect. Key areas in need of clarification and revision include the following:

- Water and Sanitation projects, particularly issues around community involvement and management, as well as priority areas for consideration.
- Basic education such as for instance whether it includes support for nursery/preschool education, how many years it covers, the importance of focusing on quality, access and equity etc.

25 Different countries use different definitions on what constitutes basic education, particularly the number of years it covers.
A clear definition on what constitutes primary health care, with examples.

Income generation projects. This is a particularly difficult area and very clear criteria would need to be met in advance of providing support to projects of this kind. Given their complexity and the high failure rates, applicants would need to demonstrate that they have carried out a thorough feasibility study in advance of designing and submitting a project for approval.

Rural development and urban community development projects. These terms are too broad and have been used in the past to categorise projects that are often outside the guidelines. It might be simpler to eliminate them and to make the guidelines more specific in the giving priority to poor rural and peri-urban communities in the selection process.

The training category is too broad and needs to be narrowed down to more specific activities that are strategic and clearly in line with priorities. Examples could include community leadership training projects, capacity building and non-formal skills training projects that clearly demonstrate the linkages between training and employment opportunities and target groups such as women, unemployed youth, street children and the disabled.

Inclusion of new project categories, specifically HIV/AIDS and good governance/human rights that are now priority areas in Ireland Aid’s work. Certain types of cultural projects that are clearly developmental should also be considered.

Clarity on what budget items should be eligible for support. Vehicles and building construction should be low priorities.

The once-off restriction on grants should be abolished and project applicants should be allowed to apply for funding up to a maximum of three years.

B. The person responsible for the management of the micro projects scheme in each mission should have a strong development background, preferably in the NGO sector.

C. In order to manage the scheme more strategically and efficiently, countries that are developing interim strategies or longer three-year strategies should ensure an appropriate geographical focus in the scheme and consider limiting the number of projects supported to make the most efficient use of administrative resources.

D. Each mission should ensure that it has a proper management systems in place, including adequate project appraisal, a system for recording all decisions made, appropriate disbursement procedures that are consistent with best practice and a strategy for monitoring and audit that targets, as a priority, high-risk projects and a random sample of lower risk projects.

E. The micro projects scheme should be audited on a regular basis, either as part of the country programme or independently.

F. Missions, particularly those in non-programme countries, should adopt a more proactive role in seeking out projects for support. There is also a value in having greater co-ordination and information sharing among donors involved in micro project schemes. Ireland Aid missions could take a proactive role in strengthening this coordination.

G. Any expansion of the scheme, either in terms of budget increases or extension to other countries, should be considered only in the context of a clearly defined strategy prepared by a mission in each country.

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26 Another possibility in the case of the rural development category would be to narrow it down and rename it as agricultural development.
Table 1: Summary global analysis of expenditure on micro-projects scheme for the years 1998 – 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of Project</th>
<th>Total number per sector</th>
<th>Total expenditure per sector in Euros (Irish £’s)</th>
<th>Total number projects with an Irish link</th>
<th>Total expenditure Irish linked</th>
<th>Total number of projects through non-Irish expatriates</th>
<th>Total expenditure through non-Irish expatriates</th>
<th>Total number through indigenous organizations</th>
<th>Total expenditure through indigenous organizations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Education</td>
<td>232</td>
<td>1,904,920 (1,500,247)</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>713,750 (562,122)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>164,360 (129,425)</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1,026,850 (808,699)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water/Sanitation</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>582,410 (458,683)</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>152,800 (120,340)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>27,400 (21,579)</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>402,200 (316,764)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Health Care</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>1,042,520 (821,051)</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>256,325 (201,872)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>112,605 (88,683)</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>674,000 (530,496)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Development</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>527,800 (415,67.)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>111,067 (87,472)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21,245 (16,732)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>395,500 (311,469)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Community</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>307,360 (242,062)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>98,275 (77,396)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>27,900 (21,968)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>181,200 (142,698)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Generation</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>861,250 (678,288)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>145,000 (114,013)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>116,360 (91,638)</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>600,125 (472,637)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>1,195,000 (940,991)</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>300,430 (236,608)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>113,600 (89,465)</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>780,780 (614,916)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>302,350 (238,120)</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>40,500 (31,890)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26,075 (20,535)</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>236,000 (185,695)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>456,100 (356,195)</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>106,450 (83,822)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>59,300 (46,686)</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>325,000 (255,687)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>918</td>
<td>7,179,710 (5,651,314)</td>
<td>304</td>
<td>1,924,597 (1,515,536)</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>668,845 (526,713)</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>4,621,655 (3,609,064)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Summary global analysis of faith-based projects supported under the Micro-projects scheme from 1998 – 2001

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of project</th>
<th>Total number per sector which are faith based organizations</th>
<th>Total expenditure per sector through faith based organizations € (Ir£)</th>
<th>Total number per sector which are Irish faith based organizations</th>
<th>Total expenditure per sector through Irish faith based organizations € (Ir£)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic Education</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>1,124,295 (885,45)</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>687,345 (541,326)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water/Sanitation</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>302,200 (237,998)</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>152,075 (119,769)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Health Care</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>417,175 (328,550)</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>223,330 (175,885)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Development</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>202,100 (159,160)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>97,000 (76,422)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Community Development</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>109,875 (86,532)</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>92,475 (72,827)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income Generation</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>220,450 (173,612)</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>140,000 (105,699)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>438,425 (345,288)</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>295,000 (232,020)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIV/AIDS</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76,930 (60,585)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>40,450 (31,890)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>170,000 (133,855)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>90,705 (71,436)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>437</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,061,450 (2,411,033)</strong></td>
<td><strong>288</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,818,380 (1,427,274)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ANNEX 2
TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of In-country Micro Projects Scheme

1. Background

The In-country Micro Projects Scheme is designed to provide co-funding for projects proposed by local Non-Governmental Organisations in the following countries: Bangladesh, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Lesotho, Mozambique, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The aim of the scheme is to address basic needs and to alleviate poverty. Priority is given to projects under the following sectors:

- Water/Sanitation
- Primary Health Care
- Basic Education
- Rural Development
- Urban Community Development
- Income Generation
- Training

The budget for the scheme averaged over £1 million a year in the period 1999-2001.

2. Reasons for evaluation

The evaluation will be used by management to gain an overview of how the scheme operates in the various countries with a view to reviewing the scope and guidelines for the scheme.

3. Scope and Focus of the Evaluation

The evaluation will look at:

(i) The relevance of the scheme as a funding mechanism in Ireland Aid and its relevance at country level in meeting the needs of the local NGO sector;

(ii) The effectiveness of the scheme in achieving its objectives;
(iii) The efficiency of the scheme in terms of its management and its cost-effectiveness;

(iv) Coherence with Ireland Aid objectives.

4. Methodology, Evaluation Team and Time Schedule

Review of documentation and reports, interviews in Dublin and at Embassy level, meetings with other donors, meetings with project partners and NGO coordination bodies and visits to selected projects.

The team will consist of a team leader and a support consultant, local or regional consultants will be employed for each country exercise, a member of the Evaluation and Audit Unit or a member of Bilateral 2 will company each phase of the evaluation.

A programme of country evaluations will be carried out in the first half of 2002. Each country evaluation will take 7-10 days. At the end of the exercise a synthesis report will be prepared giving an overview of the scheme and making recommendations for its future development.

4. Reporting

A brief report (not longer than 10 pages) will be produced for each country. It will give an overview of Ireland Aid’s involvement in the NGO sector, the purpose of the scheme, an analysis of the scheme over the last three years by partner and by sector, analysis of the management of the scheme (guidelines, decision making process, documentation, monitoring, reporting, audit and evaluation), consistency with Country Strategy and with other Ireland Aid guidelines, future options for the scheme in-country. An appendix will contain brief (1 page) reports on individual projects visited during the evaluation. Draft country reports will be produced within ten days of the field visits.

There will also be a synthesis report (not more than 12 pages), which will cover the relevance of the scheme for Ireland Aid, the overall management of the scheme, the appropriateness of the guidelines, lesson learning on relationship with NGOs, best practice on administration of the scheme and possibilities for expansion of the scheme.
ANNEX 3
MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Material on Review of Micro-Projects Scheme

Following the comprehensive Review of the In-country Micro-Projects Scheme, Ireland Aid accepted all the recommendations of the report and management issued its response in January 2003 in the form of

(i) The issuing of new instructions to all relevant missions on the operation of the scheme
(ii) Distribution of detailed revised guidelines for the scheme, and,
(iii) The introduction of a discrete Heads of Mission Fund;
(iv) Identification of examples best practices with regard to management of the programme will also be incorporated into future revisions of the guidelines.

Programme Countries

In line with the recommendations of the Review, the Scheme is being phased out in countries where a full country programme is implemented. In these countries, support for activities currently covered by the Scheme will, in future, be an integral part of a Civil Society component of the Country Programme. This will be taken into account in all new Country Strategy Papers (CSPs).

The need to establish monitorable and evaluative indicators is also being examined and, where possible, will be identified and incorporated.

Non-programme Countries

In non-programme countries the Scheme will continue to operate under the new guidelines and within the context of a strategic approach developed by the local mission. Brief Strategy Papers are now being prepared for each country outlining intentions for effective implementation of the Scheme locally in order to ensure coherence with overall Ireland Aid activities and objectives.

Heads of Missions’ Fund

In line with the recommendations of the Review Report, a small Fund for Heads of Mission to facilitate support for projects which do not fall within the strict terms of existing Schemes has been established.

Civil Society Unit
25th July 2003