

Evaluation of the Irish Aid Ethiopia Country Strategy 2008-2012

Main Report

Submitted by



ITAD Ltd

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

ABP	Area Based Project
AfDB	African Development Bank
AGP	Agricultural Growth Programme
AIDS	Acquired Immuno-Deficiency Syndrome
APR	Annual Progress Review
BoA	Bureau of Agriculture
BoFED	Bureau for Finance and Economic Development (Regional level)
BoLSA	Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs
CCC	Community Care Coalition
CCI	Complementary Community Initiatives
CCRDA	Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association
CDF	Community Development Fund
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CIP	International Potato Centre
COPCU	Channel One Program Coordination Unit
CPMA	Complementary Poverty Monitoring Approach
CRC	Citizen Report Card
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
CSA	Charities and Societies Agency
CSO	Civil Society Organisation(s) (includes NGOs for the purpose of this paper)
CSP	Country Strategy Paper
CSSP	Civil Society Support Programme
DA	Development Agent
DAG	Development Assistance Group
DCT	Donors Coordination Team (for PBS and PSNP)
DDBS	Development Database System
DfID	UK Department for International Development
DIP	Democratic Institutions Programme
DKT	DKT International is a USA-based private provider of family planning and reproductive health products and services
DRMFSS	Disaster Risk Management and Food Security Sector Institutions Program
DSA	Decentralised support activities
EC	European Commission
EDACP	Ethiopian data collection framework paper
EDHS	Ethiopian Demographic and Health Survey
EDQAF	Ethiopian Data Quality Assessment Framework
EEA	Ethiopian Economic Association
EMCP	Expenditure Management Control Programme
EPL	Ethiopian Programme Lending
EPRDF	Ethiopia People's Revolutionary and Democratic Front
EPS	Electronic Payment System
ESAP	Ethiopian Social Accountability Programme
ESMF	Environmental and Social Management Framework
ETB	Ethiopian Birr
EU	European Union
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
FGAE	Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FLS	Food and Livelihood Security (FNLS - Food, Nutrition and livelihood Security after 2010)
FRA	Fiduciary Risk Assessment
FSCD	Food Security Coordination Directorate
FSS	Forum for Social Studies
FTA	Financial Transparency and Accountability
GDP	Gross Domestic Product

GHI	Global Health Initiatives
GOE	Government of Ethiopia
GTP	Growth and Transformation Plan
HABP	Household Assets Building Programme
HAPCO	HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Office
HEP	Health Extension Programme
HEW	Health Extension Workers
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
HMDG	Health MDG Fund
HR	Human Resources
HSDP	Health Sector Development Programme
IA	Irish Aid
IBEX	Integrated Budget and Expenditure
ICBPWD	Integrated Community Based Participatory Watershed Development
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research Institute
IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
JRIS	Joint Review and Implementation Support
Kebele	The lowest unit of government administration in Ethiopia comprising a group of contiguous villages.
LIG	Local Investment Grant
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAPS	Multi-Annual Programme Scheme
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFI	Microfinance institution
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoH	Ministry of Health
MoLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MTR	Mid-term Review
NAP	National Action Plan for Gender Equality
NEWA	Network of Ethiopian Women Association
NEX	National Execution (a UNDP implementation modality)
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHRC	National Human Rights Commission
NSDS	National Statistical Development Strategy
OFSP	Other food security programme
<i>OFSP</i>	<i>Orange flesh sweet Potato</i>
ONLF	Ogaden National Liberation Front
OR	Operational Research
OVC	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PAF	Performance Assessment Framework
PAM	Project Appraisal Memorandum
PANE	Poverty Action Network Ethiopia
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
PASS	Payroll and Attendance Sheet System
PBS	Protection of Basic Services
PCS	Proclamation on Charities and Societies
PEFA	Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability
PFM	Public Finance Management
PIM	Programme Implementation Manual
PLWHA	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PMF	Performance Management Framework
PSNP	Productive Safety Net Programme
PVS	Participatory variety selection

PW	Public work
RBM	Results-Based Management
REB	Regional Education Bureau
RED & FS	Rural Economic Development & Food Security
Regional State	There are 11 regional states in Ethiopia's federal system of government
REST	Relief Society of Tigray
RHB	Regional Health Bureau
RRT	Rapid Response Teams
SA	Social Accountability
SACCO	Saving and Credit Cooperative
SIDA	Swedish International Development Agency
SLIP	Sustainable Livelihood Programme
SLM	Sustainable Land Management
SNNPR	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region
SSA	Social Service and Accountability
SSI	Small Scale Irrigation
SWC	Soil and water conservation
TAG	Transparency and Accountability Group
TARI	Tigray Agricultural Research Institute
TECS	Tracking Ethiopian Civil Society (a project)
TF	Task Force
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UEWCA	Union of Ethiopian Women Coalition Association
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WAT	Women Association of Tigray
WCBS	Woreda and City Benchmarking Survey
WFP	World Food Programme
Woreda	Equivalent to a county, main unit of administration and local government

Terminology:

The designation Irish Aid is now used for what was formerly Ireland Aid and Development Cooperation Ireland.

Calendar:

Irish Aid's fiscal year runs from 1st January to 31st December.

The Ethiopian Fiscal year runs from 8th July– 7th July (Hamle 1 to Sene 30 in the Ethiopian calendar). The Ethiopian calendar is 7 years 113 days behind the Gregorian calendar.

Currency:

The March 2012 exchange rate was approximately 21.73 Ethiopian Birr to the Euro (16.13 Ethiopian Birr to the US dollar).

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Summary

S1 This report sets out the findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations from an evaluation of the Irish Aid Ethiopia Country Strategy 2008-2012. The evaluation was designed to provide an independent assessment of the performance of the strategy, accountability and lesson learning to the Governments of Ireland and Ethiopia to help inform future strategy for Irish Aid programming in Ethiopia.

The context

S2 Ethiopia remains the 14th poorest country in the world, according to the latest UNDP Human Development Index (2011). It faces immense challenges in addressing chronic food security and providing access to quality basic services. Ireland has had a long history of solidarity with Ethiopia. Design of the bilateral assistance programme is rooted in the Ethiopian government's own national Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty Programme, which spanned the period from 2005 - 2010.

S3 The 2008-12 Country Strategy was a significant departure from the previous one with a longer duration, simplified programme structure and clearer distinction between programmes, cross-cutting issues and processes. The goal was to reduce the vulnerability of the poorest Ethiopians by increasing (a) their livelihood security and resilience in the face of food scarcity, natural disasters etc., and (b) their use of health, education and HIV/AIDS services.

S4 The programme concentrates on two core areas or pillars - food and livelihood security and access to social services. The bulk of Irish assistance under these two pillars is implemented via multi-donor trust funds using local or regional government delivery channels, with around 16 per cent channelled through Civil Society Organisations. The Country Strategy also has a particular focus in two regions of the country: Tigray and the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR).

The evaluation

S5 The evaluation addressed a set of nine core questions which were set out in the Terms of Reference, these were grouped into four clusters dealing with: development strategy, development results, development processes and development management. The four clusters are used to present findings in the text below and the main report.

S6 An evaluation framework was developed to organise the questions. A theory-based approach was chosen, using the logic models from the mid-term review as a structure for enquiries. A mixed methods approach was taken to collect data, combining secondary data on outcomes and impact with additional qualitative data collection and analysis. In view of the wide range of activities supported under the programme, a sample of projects was evaluated covering two thirds of all budget lines and nearly 90 per cent of Irish Aid expenditure. Information was gathered mainly by reviewing reports and interviewing people. Four original analyses were undertaken on the country strategy, theories of change for some sampled budget lines, the added value from Irish Aid's contribution, and a survey of development partners. The evaluators took positive actions to minimise any effects of bias or limitations in the analysis.

Findings for development strategy

S7 The 2008-2012 Country Strategy is a comprehensive document that tackles strategy issues systematically. It displays clear alignment with Government plans. Background analysis seen by the evaluation team reveals care to harmonise with the work of other development partners and learn from sector analysis. Core strengths of Irish Aid were identified and used to develop a vision for building 'a recognisable niche'.

S8 The analysis confirmed the continuing move away from projects to more programmatic interventions. The Country Strategy also restated Irish Aid's commitment to maintain the reality check of local engagement, with the intention for staff to prioritise 'field level engagement'. The total budget of €122m for the first three years was divided equally between the two pillars, Social Services & Accountability, and Food & Livelihood Security. Nearly two thirds of it was allocated to the two large government programmes, Protection of Basic Services (PBS) and Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). The remaining funds were to be allocated among 20 budget lines, with an average expenditure of around €750,000 per year, but many much smaller.

S9 The analysis in the Country Strategy, while comprehensive, is relatively descriptive. It provides a clear rationale for 'what' Irish Aid will do, but contains few insights into 'how' Irish Aid should operate in terms of aid modalities, choice of partners and engagement in policy dialogue. This omission comes despite clarity over Irish Aids' experience with all levels of government and at regional level, strong relationships with civil society, its place as a medium sized donor, and its flexibility.

S10 The strategy gives little prominence to the resource allocation among projects and programmes; nor is there any overview of how the smaller budget lines complement the large-scale social programmes; nor too, of the rationale and intended purpose of the regional support. A recent mid-term review of support to SNNPR identified the lack of a clearly articulated or documented strategy as a factor in reducing Irish Aid's effectiveness.

S11 The effects of the financial crisis in Europe were felt early in 2009, only the second year of the strategy. Expenditure in 2009 and 2010 was reduced to 70 per cent and 56 per cent respectively of the envisaged levels. Annual expenditure since 2011 has been around €26 million, about half the original intentions.

S12 Irish Aid supports development in Ethiopia through three distinct channels: funding of international, mainly United Nations organisations; the bilateral programme itself, planned and managed through the Irish Embassy in Addis Ababa; and a third group of programmes funded directly from Irish Aid Headquarters. Excluding the international organisations, some 25 per cent of Irish Aid support to Ethiopia is controlled directly from Irish Aid Headquarters, which is a significant amount. There are a number of areas of potential overlap and yet this work is not formally reviewed for coherence with the bilateral programme as part of the Country Strategy.

S13 Irish Aid has adopted a results-based approach to planning, and staff have a good grasp of the logic of the work they manage. The evaluation team explored this in detail for some programmes and found that more could be done to identify gaps and opportunities for complementary interventions. It was also found that staff are not using that logic in dialogue with partners, thus missing a potentially valuable tool for indicators and monitoring.

S14 Responding to guidance in the Terms of Reference to 'examine strategy as the evaluand'¹ documented decisions were analysed in order to examine strategy behaviour. Judging by the nature of decisions made, the Country Strategy has been a robust guide for Irish Aid, even having to cope with funding cuts.

Findings for development results

S15 The Country Strategy set out 12 performance indicators at the highest levels of programme goal and outcomes. Data are not available for all, nor is it all up to date at the time of the evaluation. But of the ten indicators for which some data are available, eight have improved in line with target values or at least show a positive change, if at a slower than planned rate.

¹ Evaluating 'strategy as the evaluand' implies taking the strategy as a unit of analysis to assess its quality and how it was received and understood, by the individuals concerned and by development partners, including the Government of Ethiopia.

Two indicators show deteriorating or flat performance. The goal level indicators reflect changes in Ethiopia as a whole, to which Irish Aid contributes in support of Government programmes and alongside other development partners. Progress is seen in the fight against poverty and improving health. One indicator for good governance shows a deterioration. (See tables inset below.)

Goal: To reduce vulnerability of poor Ethiopian women and men, boys and girls	
Indicators	Performance
Proportion of rural households that perceive they are 'Doing Well' (i.e. 'can get by', 'comfortable' or 'rich')	Data scheduled for 2014
Proportion of population below the national poverty line	A reduction in the percentage of population living below \$1.25/day
Improvement in Global Hunger Index ratings for Ethiopia	An improvement in the Index and Ethiopia's relative ranking amongst other countries
Maternal mortality ratio	Survey data show an improvement but the figures remain very high
Improvement in Ibrahim Index of African Governance score for Ethiopia and/or improvement in 'Voice and Accountability', and 'Government Effectiveness' in the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators for Ethiopia	Ibrahim Index shows a small deterioration between 2010 and 2011

Outcome objective: Increased utilisation of and satisfaction with basic services by the poor	
Indicators	Performance
Health utilisation rate (OPD attendance per capita)	A small improvement
Citizen reported improvement in health services over the previous 2 years (rural/urban)	No direct data. However other studies indicate an improvement
Citizen confidence in local government to address service quality concerns	No data

Outcome objective: Increased resilience to climate change and shocks with enhanced livelihood security for the poor	
Indicators	Performance
Percentage of PSNP households retaining assets	Target for 2012 reached in 2010
Improvement in value of productive assets (livestock) owned by chronically food insecure households	No increase in asset value but some increase in ownership
Reduction in prevalence of stunting nationally	Very small improvement
HH perception around benefits from the construction and maintenance of Soil & Water Conservation (SWC) infrastructure on communal and private lands	Small improvements

S16 The Protection of Basic Services programme has succeeded in enabling a major transfer of resources down to local level with documented benefits in health, education, water and sanitation, and agricultural extension - key services for rural communities. Support to the Protection of Basic Services not only gave Irish Aid a simple conduit to support social services, but in the absence of general or sector budget support, it was anticipated that the discourse between donors and government on the Protection of Basic Services programme would become *de facto* a major development forum for dialogue. This has not turned out to be the case. The PBS programme does serve as an important forum for discussion around PFM and to a more limited extent macro-economic issues but is one of a number of spaces used for such dialogue. The Development Assistance Group (DAG) of which Ireland is an active member remains the main development forum for dialogue. A recent study concludes that overall the Protection of Basic Services programme is an operationally efficient means of supporting decentralised service delivery.

S17 The question of Irish Aid's specific contribution as a development partner, over and above financial support was examined by the evaluation team. Development partners confirmed a number of areas including Irish Aid contribution to expenditure control, providing advice to the auditor general and helping roll-out Integrated Budget and Expenditure (IBEX) accounting systems. Irish Aid also made a major contribution to Joint Review and Implementation Support visits and other pre-review field monitoring.

S18 The Social Accountability component of Protection of Basic Services uses local civil society organisations to survey citizens about the quality of public service delivery. The approach has been inclusive, raised awareness and provided a safe space for dialogue at woreda² level. The social accountability component of Protection of Basic Services has opened the door to demand-side interaction and negotiation on quality of services between government and citizens. Irish Aid's participation in this is in direct response to its strategy objectives to promote demand-side governance, lesson learning and policy dialogue.

S19 Projects supported in the health sector have contributed to improving health outcomes but investments are fragmented and there is little overall dialogue about sector policy, even with the regional government of SNNPR where Irish Aid is an active partner. Maternal mortality remains a major national challenge. Small projects dealing with nutrition are innovative and have potential to tackle both food security and nutrient deficiency problems if they are successful and taken to scale.

S20 The largest investment by Irish Aid under the Food, Nutrition and Livelihoods Security pillar has been the Productive Safety Net Programme which has been effective in providing a targeted safety net in food insecure woredas, with investments in public works and arrangements to help households graduate from food insecurity.

S21 Ireland had a particular interest in this programme because many aspects of the design built on its previous experience with Integrated Community Based Watershed Management schemes in Tigray. Irish Aid has been one of the more active Productive Safety Net Programme donors since the inception of the programme, as a financial contributor and participant with the Donor Working Group and several of the technical sub groups that report to it. Irish Aid provided the chair of the Donor Steering Group for a period, the only one of the 'smaller' donors to have played such an important role. Irish Aid staff members have made notable contributions to the implementation manual, drafting of Terms of Reference for specific studies and facilitating review missions.

S22 The most recent review mission in November 2011 observed that the trend in year-on-year livelihood deterioration prior to the launch of the Productive Safety Net Programme in 2005 appears to have been reversed for participating households. This is a significant step forward in the country's fight against food insecurity and poverty. Perhaps the most visible manifestation is that the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa did not become a crisis in Ethiopia and this has largely been attributed to the Productive Safety Net Programme enabling poor populations to withstand this significant shock, although there is no hard analysis to reinforce this claim.

S23 Graduation³ is the higher level goal to which the Productive Safety Net Programme contributes, but for which other programmes and investments are required. The strategy to achieve graduation has focused on overlapping the Programme with other initiatives.

S24 The Household Assets Building Programme is a large scale initiative intended to provide credit and technical support to farmers. Irish Aid is one of a number of donors that funds the capacity development component of this Government led programme. Irish Aid also supports a number of complementary small-scale interventions assisting and diversifying income generating activities.

S25 The portfolio of small, sometimes experimental projects, especially dealing with food security and nutrition, is innovative and plays to Ireland's strengths of flexibility, ability to work with both government and civil society partners, and familiarity with state systems at federal,

² Woreda is the name for a district

³ Graduation is the process by which households become food secure and are able to exit from the safety net and other food security programmes

regional and local levels. Continuing high levels of food insecurity, limited livelihood opportunities, and low productivity in agriculture provides strong justification for this work.

Findings for development processes

S26 The mix of aid modalities reflects the recommendations of an Irish Aid policy paper dating back to 2005. The smaller, complementary projects all deal with issues that are relevant to achieving sustainable development from public services. In the case of health services, and the Protection of Basic Services more generally, they tackle quality of service provision, especially in areas where Civil Society Organisations can deal with issues more effectively than the state. For livelihoods, they tackle questions of alternative sources of income, both farm and off-farm, that could help farmers achieve food security. Working with civil society is central to Irish Aid's programme. In the aftermath of the Proclamation on Charities and Societies, which has restricted the work of some Civil Society Organisations, Irish Aid has taken a lead role among six donors in a new Civil Society Support Programme.

S27 Irish Aid has long been involved at the regional level, originally through area based programmes. Support has continued in SNNP and Tigray regions but to some extent the direction and purpose of this work has lost focus. Regional work is seen as providing a reality check and learning experience to help inform dialogue with development partners and the Federal Government. Informants recognise the historical role played by projects in Tigray, but examples of influence are now quite dated. Reviews of both the SNNP and Tigray regional programmes note that learning has not taken place systematically. The aid modalities used during the Country Strategy, a regional block grant plus small projects to Tigray region; sector programme support and small projects in SNNPR, all have some disadvantages and in SNNPR in particular, have been neither very coherent nor stimulated a close relationship with the regional government, an area of success in Tigray.

S28 Working in partnership is a cornerstone of the Irish Aid strategy. Development partners are overwhelmingly positive about the experience of working as a partner with Irish Aid and contrast it favourably with other donors.

S29 Irish Aid elected to mainstream gender, governance, HIV and environment as a positive attempt to move upstream and influence partners. Some success can be seen with gender, but a lack of mainstreaming strategies in the Ethiopia programme for governance, HIV and the environment has left the programme dealing with issues piecemeal as they arise in the relevant sectoral context.

Findings for development management

S30 Irish Aid introduced a new approach to the Country Strategy incorporating results-based management following OECD/DAC principles. Part of that approach includes development of a logic model, which proved very effective. Support from Irish Aid headquarters was concentrated on developing the Country Strategy. There has been less guidance in some challenging technical areas such as developing indicators, risks and assumptions, and in the need to establish an organisational culture to manage for results.

S31 Annual reports provide a systematic narrative account of performance, structured along the lines of the logic model, and are valuable resources. Only since the Mid Term Review in 2010 has there been an attempt to report on indicators, with an annual update against the performance management framework, where data are available. Despite the advent of a results-approach, findings from the evaluations of support to the SNNPR and Tigray Region both indicate weaknesses in monitoring and the use of information for learning.

S32 Irish Aid has given a high priority to monitoring and evaluation. An experimental monitoring approach in Tigray has generated lessons but it has not proven suitable for scaling up. Support to a national monitoring and evaluation pooled fund has been discontinued

following unsatisfactory management arrangements but Irish Aid has more successfully contributed to development of practical indicators for the Government's Growth and Transformation Plan.

Conclusions

S33 The evidence presented in the report shows a clear and convincing picture about the Irish Aid programme in Ethiopia. This is a successful aid programme, valued by development partners, that recognises challenges and has followed a mix of aid modalities in order to help meet its objectives.

Development Strategy: Strategic analysis and choice

S34 The Country Strategy document helped improve clarity of presentation and structure of the programme. It was less successful in charting how Irish Aid would respond to the political and developmental context and in particular how the Embassy should staff and manage its activities.

Development Strategy: Understanding the theories of change

S35 Logic models developed for the CSP present a coherent structure, have enabled a complex programme to be understood 'at a glance', and provide a basis for testing the fit of proposed activities. The results-based approach was not passed on to project partners and an intended emphasis on lesson learning did not fully materialise although the mid-term review in 2010 provided valuable reflection and adjustment to the programme.

Development Strategy: How did the CSP perform?

S36 Decision-making during implementation followed the objectives of the planned strategy despite having to cope with a substantial cutback in financial resources early in the period. The realised strategy is coherent and consistent with the planned CSP. The scope and content of the strategy were highly *relevant* to context and policies.

Development Results: Contributions to objectives and outcomes

S37 In terms of *effectiveness*, there is evidence of performance from nearly all the evaluated programmes. These show positive development results helping poorer and more vulnerable sections of society with access to basic services and improved livelihoods and food security. At a relatively modest financial scale, by working in partnership with other donors through large-scale programmes, Irish Aid has contributed positively to improving the lives and welfare of the Ethiopian people.

S38 In addition to improved development outcomes, Irish Aid has added value to the way in which programmes have been planned, implemented and evaluated. These *efficiency* gains are hard to quantify, but development partners are consistent in their praise for Ireland's contribution, which has helped make programmes more effective at improving the welfare of poorer people through better financial management, attention to targeting, and feedback on quality.

Development Results: Sustainability of results

S39 Irish Aid's approach to analysis and programming has created mechanisms which acknowledge and take into account risks to *sustainability* in several dimensions, especially concerning organisational, and social aspects and project results. There is concern about the long-term financial sustainability of governments' large-scale social programmes, but overall, Irish Aid's approach makes development results more likely to be sustained.

Development processes: Coherence and effectiveness of aid modalities

S40 Irish Aid has followed a people-centred form of engagement. Despite being a small financial provider to the Protection of Basic Services and Productive Safety Net Programme,

Irish Aid staff have been very active in donor coordination and implementation mechanisms. But the mix of aid modalities and decision to support two large-scale federal programmes, two regions and up to 20 smaller budget lines is a strain on resources, especially since the financial crisis in Ireland. Recent changes in staff have left the embassy under-resourced and development partners expressed concerns that Irish Aid will not be able to maintain its highly productive participation.

Development processes: Working in partnership

S41 Working in partnership is a cornerstone of the Irish Aid strategy. The concept of partnership connotes shared goals, common responsibility for outcomes, distinct accountabilities and reciprocal obligations. Irish Aid's familiarity with the detail of projects, allows it to have sufficient knowledge to give technical advice and also to use findings in other settings. Irish Aid staff are comfortable in a field situation, local staff and CSO partners are empowered and listened to.

Developmental processes: Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues

S42 Irish Aid has successfully supported gender through mainstreaming. Less progress has been made with HIV, governance and environment, which lack a clear plan and resourcing under the CSP.

Developmental management: Usefulness of Irish Aid's corporate approach to RBM

S43 The evaluation team found that overall the results-based structure of the Country Strategy provided a sound logic against which to plan how to cope with a reduction in the aid budget. However, the incorporation of results-based management has not enabled Irish Aid staff to meet the challenge set out in the Country Strategy to prioritise lesson learning and build policy messages based on evidence.

S44 As staff in the Irish Aid office in Addis Ababa prepare for the next Country Strategy, decisions will need to be made to find an appropriate balance of support across the federal projects, regions and complementary interventions. A set of lessons is summarised here and given fuller treatment in Chapter 8. They are followed by a summary of the recommendations.

Lessons

- *A country strategy should build on analysis of context to identify how the programme will respond and what skills mix of staff is necessary.*
- *Constructive engagement is as important as size of budget to make aid effective.*
- *Historical comparative advantage either needs to be maintained through judicious recruitment of staff and choice of programmes or the new strategy should identify future actions on the basis of need and actual staff capacity.*
- *Financial cutbacks might be better managed by doing something different rather than less of the same.*
- *Clarity of purpose rather than historical relationships should guide regional support.*
- *Small complementary projects are a valuable part of the programme but should be planned to address gaps and opportunities, and build-in lesson learning and communication.*
- *Mainstreaming would benefit from better planning.*
- *The RBM approach has been a positive influence on the CSP plan, but not brought guidance or tools to help partners with indicators and managing for results.*

Recommendations

S45 We do not see any requirement for a major change of direction to the programme, more an adjustment of interventions and ways of working.

S46 **Planning the CSP:** The results based management approach to the Country Strategy should continue with improved guidelines that give support for development of indicators, devote more attention to managing assumptions and risks, and help formalise the use of information in reporting, lesson learning and communication. Relationships with partners should be used to develop a closer link to the results framework. Analysis of context can help identify entry points and strategy to interact with the Government of Ethiopia over economic and social policies as well as how to continue to support civil society.

S47 **Mixture of aid modalities:** Difficult choices need to be made about the future mix of modalities and interventions under the likely aid envelope of finance. If Irish Aid could associate its funding of federal programmes with specific regions, that would enable continued involvement in federal schemes with an operational focus. This would allow Irish Aid to build on its existing regional experience and continue with complementary investments.

S48 **Working in the regions:** The rationale behind regional engagement remains valid. There is a small danger of Irish Aid suffering a reputational risk of being too closely associated with Tigray. If offsetting is unavoidable, this should not deter Irish Aid from allocating a part of its funds to support for regional government, as long as it provides a mechanism for constructive dialogue. This may be facilitated by working through an intermediary agent, or continuing with a field office presence. Irish Aid should consider targeting within regions selecting the poorer woredas based on sound analysis. The work should include arrangements for a lesson learning and communication strategy.

S49 **Managing the portfolio:** Analysis of risks was well presented in the CSP and should be continued in the next strategy period. The programme needs to link regular analysis of risks to ways of working through implementation of programmes or dialogue with partners and government. Adoption of a subjective rating assessment of project performance could enhance the results focus of the strategy and provide a guide on how well interventions are doing. By using a common rating scale, performance can be assessed across all projects under each pillar, for a rapid assessment of where problems exist and more support is needed.

S50 **People-centred approach:** A people-centred approach builds on Irish Aid strengths. As part of preparations for the next Country Strategy, the Embassy should commission an analysis of human resources to make a case for future staffing and look at ways of working in light of the current constraints of the Irish public sector.

S51 **Mainstreaming:** Mainstreaming is a potentially powerful approach that builds core principles into all work. However, to be effective it needs planning and management. The next Country Strategy would benefit from a background assessment and strategy for each of the four areas that would allow prioritisation.

S52 **Governance and civil society:** Irish Aid should continue to support civil society through a variety of means. This may mean adjustments to areas of emphasis. Governance is a sensitive issue in Ethiopia and it is difficult to make recommendations on how Irish Aid should be engaged. More political analysis could be done to better understand the situation and identify areas of effective engagement. Several points are put forward for consideration.

S53 Given the constraints around limited political space, effective partnership is essential for successful implementation and influence. This has largely been recognised by Irish Aid staff and opportunities for linkage across projects and programmes should be maximised. CSOs remain essential to Irish Aid for implementation and learning at the sub-woreda level, in reaching vulnerable people and in allowing the piloting of areas of innovation.

1 Introduction

1.1 Ireland has been a development partner of Ethiopia since 1994 and the work of Irish non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and missionaries predates that. The support has been an important component of Irish Aid's global programme and is highly valued by the GOE for contributions to development at local, regional and federal levels. Regular independent evaluation is a feature of Irish Aid's work.

1.2 This report sets out the findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations from an evaluation of the Irish Aid Ethiopia Country Strategy 2008-2012. The country strategy describes Ireland's strategy for bilateral development assistance to Ethiopia and was the first of a new approach adopted by Irish Aid with a five year planning period, a clear policy agenda, taking a whole programme approach and applying the RBM initiative within Irish Aid, leading to stronger indicators and monitoring.

1.3 Planning for the evaluation started in 2011, with an evaluation preparation workshop held in Babogaya Resort, Debre Zeit, Ethiopia, 10th-11th August, 2011. A Concept Note⁴ written from that workshop examined evaluability of the country programme and defined the scope of the evaluation, leading to the development of a Terms of Reference (TOR) reproduced in Annex 1.

1.4 The evaluation provides an independent assessment of accountability and lesson learning, with its purpose stated as:

- To provide Irish Aid management with an independent, evidenced-based assessment of the performance of the Irish Aid Ethiopia Country Strategy 2008-2012.
- To provide accountability to the Governments of Ireland and Ethiopia for the funds expended during the period and identify lessons learned that will help inform future strategic decision making for Irish Aid programming in Ethiopia.

1.5 Following a competitive tendering process, ITAD Ltd was appointed to carry out the evaluation in February 2012. Work started immediately with visits to Irish Aid Headquarters at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in Limerick and to the Irish Embassy and offices of development partners in Addis Ababa. The findings from those visits formed an Inception Report that reviewed the scope and TOR as well as put forward a plan of work and methodology.⁵ The main fieldwork for the evaluation took place during March. A team of three consultants reviewed documents and interviewed key informants amongst development partners and aid agencies in Ethiopia. The visit included a short field trip to Tigray Region to visit projects and meet regional government officials and other key informants. The country visit ended with a feedback workshop, presented simultaneously in Addis Ababa and by video link at the offices of Irish Aid in Dublin and Limerick.

1.6 This report follows the structure of questions in the TOR:

- Chapter 2 describes the methodology for data collection and analysis;
- Chapter 3 sets out the context for the evaluation;
- Chapter 4 examines the country strategy and presents an analysis of how effectively the strategy has been used to guide the programme;
- Chapter 5 presents development results for a sample of programme objectives;
- Chapter 6 looks at development processes, aid modalities, partnership work and mainstreaming;

⁴ Evaluation of the IA Ethiopia Country Strategy 2008-2012. Concept Note- FINAL

⁵ ITAD Ltd, March 2012. Evaluation of the Irish Aid Ethiopia Country Strategy Draft Inception Report

- Chapter 7 turns to the adoption and use of RBM under the programme;
- Chapter 8 draws together conclusions from the analysis, puts forward lessons learned, and closes with a set of recommendations directed towards planning the next country strategy.

1.7 In addition to this main report from the evaluation, the team has prepared:

- An abridged version in non-technical language
- Three learning briefs on the topics of
 - Contribution of a RBM approach to strategy development
 - Regional programming – reality check and policy channel
 - Aid effectiveness under the challenge of fragile governance

2 Evaluation methodology

Summary of methodology

- ❖ The approach adopted for the evaluation was theory-based, using the logic models set out in the Country Strategy Paper (CSP).
- ❖ Data collection was by document review, group and individual interviews and original analyses of strategy, theories of change, contribution analysis and a survey of partners.
- ❖ Positive actions were taken by the evaluation team to overcome limitations to data collection and mitigate against bias.

Approach to the evaluation

2.1 A set of nine core questions for the evaluation to address were set out in the TOR and modified slightly during the inception phase. The modified version is reproduced in Table 1.

Table 1 Core questions and evaluation criteria

Development area and weighting	Core Evaluation Questions	DAC Evaluation Criteria ⁶
Development Strategy {30%}	1. To what extent was the design of and strategic choices made within the CSP based on good contextual, political economy, poverty & vulnerability analyses? [10%] 2. To what extent was/were the Theory/ies of Change (explicit as expressed in the logic models and/or implicit) underpinning the strategy relevant, valid and understood by Irish Aid and its partners? [10%] 3. What has been learned about CSP performance from the relationships between the planned, emergent, dropped and actual implemented strategies? [10%]	<i>Relevance</i> <i>Relevance</i> <i>All DAC criteria</i>
Development Results {40%}	4. To what extent did the Irish Aid CSP contribute to the stated objectives and intended outcomes? [30%] 5. To what extent are the results and achievements to date likely to endure in the longer term? [10%]	<i>Effectiveness</i> <i>Sustainability</i>
Development Processes {25%}	6. How coherent and effective was the mix and range of aid modalities adopted? [10%] 7. How effective was the approach to partnership adopted in the CSP? [10%] 8. To what extent were the cross cutting issues of Gender, HIV, Governance and Environment effectively and appropriately mainstreamed across the programme [5%]	<i>Coherence, Effectiveness</i> <i>Effectiveness</i> <i>Relevance, Effectiveness</i>
Development Management {5%}	9. How useful was the Irish Aid corporate approach to Results Based Management with regard to Irish Aid Ethiopia and its partners [5%]	<i>Relevance, Effectiveness</i>

2.2 The table includes a guide to the relative effort given to each question (expressed as a percentage) and indicates how the questions relate to standard evaluation criteria. Questions concerning development strategy and development results are given a higher priority, accounting for some 70 per cent of the effort.

⁶ For a description of these criteria see: *OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management* (English/ French/ Spanish and other languages, OECD DAC, 2002-2008)

2.3 In order to devise an approach and methodology, the consultants prepared an evaluation framework, which appears as Table 2 in the Inception Report. A framework is a means of translating questions into a data collection and analysis strategy that is part of the process of discussion with stakeholders to achieve clarity and agreement as to what is required from the evaluation.⁷ The framework identifies the nature of evidence that will be used to assess each question, and outlines tools and methods for data collection.

Establishing a framework for an evaluation provides a consistent and systematic means to designing the evaluation, collating and analysing the existing evidence and the new data created, and generating and interpreting the results. (UNDP Handbook on Planning Monitoring & Evaluation for Development Results)

2.4 The approach adopted was a theory-based evaluation, using the logic models set out in the CSP and subsequently revised at the MTR as a structure for enquiries. The approach to data collection was by mixed methods, combining secondary data on outcomes and impact with additional qualitative data collection and analysis. In view of the wide range of activities supported under the programme, a decision was taken to sample groups of budget lines clustered under 'objectives' in the logic model.

2.5 The basis for sampling objectives and projects was first; sampling Objectives 1 and 6 under which are the two large financial allocations to the Protection of Basic Services programme (PBS) and Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP). Two further areas were chosen: support to M&E under Objective 4, as this is a cross-cutting objective and core strategy of the whole programme. Additionally, support to Health and Nutrition under Objectives 3 and 5 was sampled as these reflect Irish Aid's key focus on hunger and respond to major development challenges around maternal and child mortality in Ethiopia. Collectively, the sample accounts for approximately 88 per cent of the 2012 country budget and two thirds of all budget lines. The main omissions included work supporting civil society development under Objective 2 and Food Security under Objective 7. However, to a large extent they were to be covered with the visit to Tigray and evaluation of partnerships under the country strategy.

Data collection and analysis

2.6 Data collection for the evaluation was based around two primary procedures:

- Document review of Irish Aid strategy, programme and project reports including background studies, M&E reports and reports from development partners.
- Group and individual interviews with key informants using semi-structured topic lists and participatory tools such as strengths and weaknesses analysis.

2.7 In addition, four original analyses were undertaken:

- Examination of the use of the country strategy for decision-making, described in Annex 4.⁸
- Development of Theories of Change (TOC) for a small number of budget lines from the sampled objectives, described in Annex 5.
- Contribution analysis of specific areas of involvement by Irish Aid, described in Annex 6.
- A survey of a sample of development partners using a proprietary Internet questionnaire instrument, described in Annex 7.

2.8 The evaluation team has attempted to identify and mitigate against bias and limitations in the data collection. Problems arise in this type of evaluation from several sources. Limitations come from practical problems of gaining access to key informants who are knowledgeable about the programmes being evaluated and whose experience relates to the time period of the country

⁷ See for example, *UNDP Handbook on Planning Monitoring & Evaluation for Development Results*

⁸ This responds in part to the guidance in the TOR to encourage examination of 'strategy as the evaluand'

strategy. The relatively short periods in post experienced by international staff in development agencies means that few people span all the strategy years. A similar problem arises with rotation of posts in government. In a similar but different way, Internet-based surveys, which rely on voluntary responses, have an unknown limitation. The extent to which the responses received reflect the population being surveyed is uncertain.

2.9 Biases can arise with both qualitative and quantitative analysis based on small samples of interviews and observations. There is a danger of a systematic tendency to either under or over-estimate the strength of a causal relationship, either arising from the evaluator or from the nature of data collection. Courtesy bias can lead a respondent to tell you what they think you want to hear and is particularly relevant for qualitative interviews when asking about the influence of a particular agency or programme. A similar bias arises from social acceptability or political correctness where people reflect what they regard as being the acceptable point of view. Attribution biases arise where respondents are more likely to attribute changes to individuals than to contextual factors. Evaluators themselves can be biased, with well documented examples of greater weight being given to people with whom the evaluators make personal contact and identify with, in some social or cultural manner.⁹

2.10 The evaluation team took action to minimise the effect of bias and limitations:

- Interviews were held with international and former national staff of Irish Aid who had previously worked on the programme but had left before the evaluation.
- A small number of respondents who were not directly connected with the Irish Aid programme were sought out via personal contacts of the evaluation team members.
- Findings were subject to triangulation - seeking answers from people with different backgrounds and from a range of partners and organisations; and using different means of data collection such as face to face interview and the Internet survey.
- Question phrasing was careful to avoid leading questions and make maximum use of probing and reflecting-back to cross check the basis for respondents' replies.

2.11 Overall, the evaluators believe that their actions have minimised the effects of bias and limitations commensurate with the scale and nature of this type of programme evaluation.

⁹ For a comprehensive overview of possible biases see White, Howard and Daniel Phillips (2011) *Addressing attribution of cause and effect in small n impact evaluations: towards an integrated framework*. International Initiative for Impact Evaluation (3ie)

3 Context

Summary of context

- ❖ The development context and poverty in Ethiopia is characterised by a high degree of vulnerability, of which food insecurity is particularly acute: more than 30 million people live below the national poverty line and over 8 million people annually are at risk of hunger.
- ❖ Ethiopia has achieved sustained and rapid economic growth, per capita GDP has increased significantly since the end of the 1990s and this growth has contributed to significant progress in reducing poverty and improving living standards.
- ❖ Ethiopia has many elements of a democratic state, but concern persists over the close relationship between the dominant political party and state structures. Opposition parties, the press and civil society organisations have faced a narrowing of available political space since 2005.
- ❖ Irish Aid's programme has the goal of '*reducing vulnerability of poor Ethiopian women and men, boys and girls*'. The country programme concentrates on two core areas - food and livelihood security, and access to social services, supported mainly through multi-donor trust funds using local or regional government delivery channels.

Social and economic development

3.1 Ethiopia is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranked 14th poorest in the UNDP Human Development Index (2011), and 105th out of 108 countries according to the Human Poverty Index (2007/08). Ethiopia has a relatively high annual population growth rate and many of its development indicators are below average for the sub-Saharan Africa region, which is itself the poorest region in the world.

3.2 The development context and poverty in Ethiopia is characterised by a high degree of vulnerability, of which food insecurity is particularly acute: more than 30 million people live below the national poverty line and over 8 million people annually are at risk of hunger. Ethiopia's health indicators are also still significantly worse than the average for sub-Saharan Africa, with HIV and AIDS posing a major threat to development and constituting an additional major source of vulnerability.

3.3 Ethiopia has achieved sustained and rapid economic growth, the highest of any non-oil resource rich economy in Africa over the last three years. As a consequence, per capita GDP has increased significantly since the end of the 1990s and this growth has contributed to significant progress in reducing poverty and improving living standards. According to Government figures, the poverty headcount index declined from a high of 45.5 in 1996 to 38.7 in 2008 and evidence suggests that this poverty reduction has been broad-based.

3.4 While these improvements are positive, significant challenges remain. For instance, growth is threatened as a result of internal and external financial imbalances, with the IMF predicting in 2011 that growth may slow to 6 per cent from double digit growth in previous years. Inflation and low levels of foreign exchange reserves are of most concern, with inflation largely being driven by recent global increases in the price of food and oil. In this context, it is noteworthy that industry contributes a significantly lower proportion of GDP than in other low income economies; including in sub-Saharan Africa, negatively affecting Ethiopia's balance of trade. Agriculture is also largely rain-fed and even though government expenditure on agriculture is high by regional standards, small farmers continue to face poor access to credit

and markets, poor extension services and high costs of inputs. In this context, food insecurity has continued to increase.

Politics and governance

3.5 The economic challenges faced by Ethiopia have consequences for the political sphere. While Ethiopia has many elements of a democratic state, with a constitution, key institutions and a highly decentralised governance structure, concern persists over the close relationship between the dominant political party and state structures, and the weakening position of opposition parliamentary parties. Opposition parties, the press and civil society organisations have faced a narrowing of available political space since 2005.

3.6 Between 2008 and 2012, the Government’s primary developmental objective has been to arrest and reverse rising food insecurity through agricultural and industrial development. The national Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) sets out goals to:

- Build an economy which has a modern and productive agricultural sector with enhanced technology and an industrial sector that plays a leading role in the economy;
- Sustain economic development and secure social justice; and
- Increase the per capita income of citizens so that it reaches the level of those in middle income countries.

Aid and aid architecture

3.7 Official Development Assistance to Ethiopia increased more than three-fold between 2002 and 2010, with the amount disbursed by OECD DAC donors more than doubling between 2002 and 2003 alone. ODA disbursements from all sources reached a peak of US\$3.8 billion in 2009.¹⁰ Ethiopia is now the largest recipient of development assistance in Africa, yet given the size of the country’s population per capita aid is one of the lowest on the continent.

3.8 Ireland ranks 7th among OECD DAC bilateral donors based on average ODA disbursements from 2008 to 2010, with a peak of US\$73 million in 2008 falling to US\$49 million in 2010. This represents 3.1% of total DAC bilateral ODA in the years 2008-2010. (Table 2)

Table 2 Official Development Assistance disbursements by donor

ODA disbursements by donor (DAC countries top 10)	Year								
	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	Ave 2008 – 2010
United States	567.80	402.30	608.61	315.78	371.73	811.37	726.04	875.34	804.25
United Kingdom	62.92	147.13	75.48	164.61	291.07	253.68	342.92	406.95	334.52
Canada	38.02	59.48	64.93	62.48	90.52	152.55	87.18	140.38	126.70
Germany	47.61	126.09	49.85	56.76	96.48	98.25	79.82	96.45	91.51
Netherlands	57.23	57.52	58.66	49.76	50.76	113.63	85.90	53.24	84.26
Italy	47.57	11.21	86.93	105.39	75.47	65.86	53.97	93.89	79.59
Ireland	33.38	42.44	44.10	50.63	58.94	72.67	52.47	49.23	58.12
Japan	56.53	33.33	34.17	57.85	36.03	47.12	97.76	18.31	46.05
Sweden	28.63	50.76	68.37	41.53	44.72	46.94	44.60	39.42	43.65
Norway	37.18	34.04	38.07	41.80	34.14	37.28	37.81	32.56	27.66
DAC countries total	1034.38	1026.81	1186.78	1026.38	1244.89	1843.42	1816.56	1926.71	1862.23

Source: [OECD Stats website](#) (USD Millions)

3.9 Donors have significantly changed their approach to aid disbursement in Ethiopia in recent years, with the political crisis of 2005 having a particular impact on the design of their

¹⁰ OECD “Aid at a glance” <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/21/7/1880804.gif>

aid modalities. All major donors to Ethiopia withdrew General Budget Support in response to the crisis as a common response to concerns about political governance. Donors have continued to support anti-poverty programmes through a range of other modalities, including targeted support for basic service delivery and for government-led poverty reduction initiatives, especially the Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) and its successor Growth and Transformation Plan.

3.10 Donor investment in PASDEP has focused primarily on the social sectors and related infrastructure, with donors actively engaging government in dialogue on scaling up to meet the financing needs of PASDEP. This has precipitated a search for new aid instruments that are attuned to governance concerns while also allowing donor alignment around Ethiopian growth policy objectives.

3.11 Analysis of the strategic objectives of five large sources of development finance: USAID, World Bank, African Development Bank, European Commission and DFID reveals a mixture of consistency and expansion in the range of objectives. In the early years 2007 to 2008, donors focussed on three key areas of growth: (1) economic planning, (2) government capacity building and (3) agricultural transformation. To stimulate economic growth, donors backed macro-economic and social reform programmes creating private sector competitiveness that enhanced foreign trade and investment in Ethiopia. Within governmental institutions, donors emphasised good governance mechanisms such as strengthening the rule of law, adhering to international human rights standards, reforming the justice sector and bolstering the democratic electoral process for the 2008 local elections. The European Commission (EC) backed programmes realising fundamental freedoms such as an enabling environment for the media. To overcome a constant threat of famine, donors backed agricultural livelihood programmes that improved the supply, effective demand and crisis management of food. Further emphasis was placed on developing rural food economies and improving Ethiopia's management of natural resources.

3.12 In 2009 the strategic objectives remained the same but with increased attention to governing justly and democratically, fostering political competition and building institutional capacity. Within governance, donors such as USAID shifted focus to bolstering civil society programmes that developed institutional capacity and facilitated the restructuring of political processes in preparation for Ethiopia's 2010 national elections. An added objective of enhancing infrastructure arrangements such as roads, power, water and sanitation was also adopted. DFID prioritised water security with a goal of increasing the number of people with sustainable access to clean drinking water sources. The EC expanded its rural development and food security policies by supporting agricultural markets and livestock development as well as providing support for private sector-based trade inputs and marketing agricultural produce.

3.13 In 2010, a new objective was added that focused on investing in people. This included bridging gaps in education as well as improving access to and the quality of basic services. Investing in people continued through 2011 with further emphasis on wealth creation. For example, DFID hoped to raise household incomes by 20 per cent or more and enable Ethiopia's business climate to improve.

Ireland in Ethiopia

3.14 Ireland has had a long history of solidarity with the peoples of Ethiopia. Since the famine of 1984, Ireland, through its NGOs and official development assistance has sought to respond appropriately and effectively to poverty and inequality in Ethiopia. The Irish Aid bilateral programme was initiated in 1994 and in 2008 the first Ambassador of Ireland was accredited. See Box 1 for a statement of Irish Aid Mission and Aims.¹¹

¹¹ http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/about_mission.html

Development cooperation is an integral part of Ireland's foreign policy.

Poverty reduction, to reduce vulnerability and increase opportunity, is the overarching objective of Irish Aid.

Ireland will support the promotion of human development, human security and justice, the building and strengthening of democracy, the promotion of gender equality and the promotion and protection of human rights.

3.15 The programme is rooted in the Ethiopian Government's PASDEP, which spanned the period 2005 - 2010. Over the programme period, Ethiopia's economy has grown steadily and made significant strides in prioritising resources for tackling poverty and improving human development outcomes. However, Ethiopia faces immense challenges in addressing chronic food security and providing access to quality basic services. Expenditure under the current CSP will have reached a total of €142 million by the end of 2012.

3.16 The 2008-2012 CSP was a significant departure from the previous one (see inset text) with a longer duration, simplified programme structure and clearer distinction between programmes, cross-cutting issues and processes. The goal was to **reduce the vulnerability of the poorest** Ethiopians by increasing their livelihood security and resilience in the face of food scarcity, natural disasters etc., as well as by increasing their use of health, education and HIV/AIDS services. The programme therefore concentrates on two core areas or pillars - food and livelihood security and access to social services. The bulk of Irish assistance under these two pillars is channelled through multi-donor trust funds using local or regional government delivery channels, with around 16 per cent channelled through CSOs.¹² The programme, in particular following its 2010 MTR, constitutes a move away from a broad commitment to poverty and inequality reduction and inequality by deepening of Ireland's focus on hunger, poverty and vulnerability.¹³

3.17 Halting and reversing Ethiopia's food insecurity is a key priority for the Ethiopian Government and development partners. Some 85 per cent of Ethiopia's population live in rural areas and the government invests heavily in agriculture and rural development. Irish Aid's support aims at increasing the resilience and security of the poorest households to cope better with shocks like failing rains or rising food prices and, in this way, avoid resorting to short term coping mechanisms such as selling off livestock. Ireland contributes to an extensive programme of public works, which offers cash or food in return, called the **Productive Safety Nets Programme** (PSNP). Humanitarian response programmes are also delivered and a co-

The previous CSP had an overarching goal to 'reduce poverty and promote sustainable development for women and men in Ethiopia in line with GOE's own poverty reduction strategies, through the provision of financial resources and engagement in policy dialogue.'

Six overall strategic objectives were defined:

1. To support the **reduction of poverty**, inequality & exclusion, and promote environmentally sustainable development and empowerment of Ethiopian women and men
2. To champion **harmonisation and broader partnership approaches** to development assistance
3. To promote **participatory development** (for both women and men) and strengthen accountability and the quality of **governance** in Ethiopia
4. To promote **gender equality** and the empowerment of women in order to redress the imbalance between Government policy and practice
5. To contribute to the **reduction of HIV/AIDS** in Ethiopia through strengthening and supporting leadership, coordination, planning and monitoring of the impact of the HIV/AIDS pandemic
6. To encourage **innovation and lesson learning** by Development Cooperation Ireland and partners (IA CSP 2005-07)

¹² In fact Ireland's contribution to the PBS is paid directly to the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development, rather than through the trust fund

¹³ Irish Aid (2010) Ethiopia Mid-term Review Report page 5

ordinated programme of support is provided in the Tigray region. In addition, NGOs provide alternative livelihood opportunities to generate income, as well as supporting agricultural research.

3.18 Irish Aid supports the increased use of basic social services with a particular focus on health and HIV. Based on the analysis undertaken by the Embassy (in preparation for the CSP) it noted that while the Government has made substantial progress in deploying basic services across the country, there is still a relatively low uptake of basic services by poorer sections of society, especially women. There are various reasons for this, including the poor quality of services, inability to pay, gender, social and cultural obstacles, and the distance from isolated households. Irish Aid supports efforts to address underlying issues by improving the capacity of service providers and quality of the basic services themselves, as well as tackling the barriers and obstacles poor people face when accessing services. Support for improved social services is advanced through a special programme known as **Protection of Basic Services (PBS)**. Irish Aid also promotes greater accountability and transparency from service providers through support for civil society in order that citizens can exercise their rights to improved and accountable service delivery.

3.19 The Irish Aid CSP in Ethiopia also has a particular focus in two regions of the country: Tigray and the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). Irish Aid operates a small sub-office from Mekelle, the regional capital of Tigray.

3.20 Working with civil society has been a cornerstone of Irish Aid’s approach and has been a difficult area during the period. The country analysis in the CSP identified ‘bleak prospects’ for civil society following a weakening commitment to political and democratic governance by the GOE. Anticipated prohibitions in areas of work for organisations receiving foreign funding came to fruition and necessitated efforts by all donors to reconfigure their support.

3.21 The structure of the country programme following the logic revised after the MTR in 2010, is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Country strategy goal, outcomes and objectives

Goal: To reduce vulnerability of poor Ethiopian women and men, boys and girls						
Pillar 1: Social services & accountability Outcome: Increased utilisation of and satisfaction with basic services by the poor			Objectives 4 & 5 contribute jointly to Pillars 1 and 2		Pillar 2: Food, nutrition & livelihood security Outcome: Increased resilience to climate change and shocks with enhanced livelihood security for the poor	
Objective 1: To increase access and quality of basic services at sub-national level	Objective 2: To enable CSOs to contribute to local and national development and good governance	Objective 3: To increase access to and improved quality of maternal, child and HIV services	Objective 4: To improve quality and use of poverty monitoring data (gender disaggregated) in health and food security	Objective 5: To strengthen multi-sectoral Responses against maternal and child malnutrition	Objective 6: To protect and enhance local ecosystems and the assets of chronically food insecure women and men	Objective 7: To diversify and improve chronically food insecure women and men’s livelihoods

3.22 There are seven areas of work designated with their own objectives. Three contribute to the support for basic services; two contribute to livelihoods and food security; and two are joint contributors.

3.23 Table 3 summarises the main programmes under each objective, with an indication of actual expenditure from 2008 to 2011. The table uses the structure of objectives adopted after the mid-term review in 2010.

Table 3 Summary of Irish Aid programmes, partners and expenditure

Objective	Programmes	Partners	Actual expenditure ¹⁴ €million 2008-2011
1	Protection of Basic Services and PBS Social Accountability	Government of Ethiopia; 10 bilateral and multilateral donors - the World Bank, the UK, the African Development Bank, the European Commission, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, and Canada	35.29
2	Support to Civil Society	Civil Society Organisations; DFID	3.08
3	Health MDG Fund Maternal and child health and HIV programmes	Government of Ethiopia; Government of SNNP Region; NGOs - FGAE, DKT and CRDA; VSO	8.83
4	Support to M&E and Research	Development Assistance Group; PBS and PSNP Secretariats; Government of Tigray Region; UNICEF	3.75
5	Support to improving maternal and child nutrition	Government of Tigray Region; Government of SNNP Region	0.66
6	Productive Safety Net Programme	Government of Ethiopia; bilateral and multilateral donors - Canada, the Netherlands, the European Commission, Denmark, Sweden, United States, United Kingdom, World Bank, and World Food Programme	48.63
7	Support to and diversification of income sources	Government of Ethiopia; University of Tigray; NGOs -: SOS Sahel, Farm Africa; Civil society organisations - Tesfa; Mass organisation - Women's Association of Tigray	14.86

¹⁴ See details in Annex 8

4 Findings for development strategy

Summary of findings for development strategy

- ❖ The CSP was well aligned with national plans and harmonised with actions of development partners
- ❖ The analysis in the CSP leads to a clear rationale for ‘what’ Irish Aid will do, but contains few insights into ‘how’ Irish Aid should operate
- ❖ CSO partners felt the choice of sectors was good but had only a moderate grasp themselves about the objectives and approach adopted by Irish Aid
- ❖ Logic models developed for the CSP present a coherent structure; enable a complex programme to be understood ‘at a glance’; and provide a basis for testing the fit of proposed activities. However they do not take account of Irish support direct from headquarters
- ❖ Irish Aid staff have a good grasp of theories of change for their interventions, especially in the implementation and management stages, but have not used this analysis in dialogue with their partners
- ❖ The realised country strategy is a logical development from the planned CSP and remains true to the original goal and outcomes

4.1 This chapter deals with the development strategy. The Ethiopia Country Strategy 2008-2012 was the first of Irish Aid’s country programmes to adopt new principles and approaches including RBM, which is reviewed in Chapter 6. This chapter examines four aspects of strategy: the underlying analysis and strategic choices made; the composition of the programme; the use of Theory of Change (TOC) and how the strategy has performed as a guiding framework.

Strategic analysis and choice

4.2 The 2008-2012 CSP is a comprehensive document that tackles strategy issues systematically with sections on country analysis, development context, and lessons from Irish cooperation, before setting out the planned objectives and programme of the strategy period.

4.3 A succinct but comprehensive overview is given of the political and economic context, governance and the state, progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), poverty and vulnerability in the development context. The underlying source of the analysis is not always made clear, but many of the issues raised have been borne out by subsequent events.

4.4 The strategy displays clear alignment with the government national Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP). Background analysis seen by the evaluation team reveals care to harmonise with the work of other development partners and learn from sector analysis. Core strengths of Irish Aid were identified and used to develop a vision for building ‘a recognisable niche’. Comparative advantage was claimed in four areas: working with civil society; mainstreaming policy priorities of gender, governance, HIV and environment; working in the social sectors (especially health and HIV); and influencing through local knowledge. The analysis confirmed the continuing move away from a projectised approach seen prior to 2005, to more programmatic interventions; and led directly to a strategic decision to reduce sectoral engagement that was considered to be too broad, by withdrawing from education. The CSP also restated Irish Aid’s commitment to maintain the

The programme during this CSP 2008-2012 is greatly simplified and streamlined compared with previous years. As recently as 2004 Irish Aid was working in 19 sectors with over 80 components and many more individual budget lines. (DCI Aid Modalities in Ethiopia)

reality check of local engagement, with a commitment to *'rebalance time allocation (of staff) in favour of field level engagement'*.¹⁵

4.5 The analysis in the CSP, while comprehensive, is relatively descriptive. It leads to a clear rationale for 'what' Irish Aid will do, but contains few insights into 'how' Irish Aid should operate in terms of aid modalities, partnerships and policy engagement and cross-cutting ways of working. This despite clarity over experience with all levels of government and at regional level, strong relationships with civil society and its place as a medium sized donor, able to be flexible in response.

4.6 The adoption by the ruling party of a distinctive political ideology of revolutionary democracy creates challenges for development partners because the chosen approach prioritises economic growth at the expense of political liberalisation and western ideas of good governance. Donors need a clear strategy to work in such an environment. The CSP correctly identifies these issues of governance but does not build on them to present a case for how Irish Aid will play a part. The implications of the political context in Ethiopia could have been developed further to consider entry points and means of engaging with political actors, especially within the Ethiopia People's Revolutionary and Democratic Front (EPRDF). More recently this has been recognised by Irish Aid headquarters where an initiative has been taken to strengthen political economy analysis, including training for staff.¹⁶

4.7 Within the CSP, a sub-section of the document details the implementation strategy to be followed and identifies a number of defining characteristics: partnership working; field monitoring and lesson learning; mainstreaming; coherence; and alliance building. Partnership working, alliance building and mainstreaming are such 'permissive' descriptions of implementation, that they provide little guidance to how Irish Aid staff might make decisions.

4.8 Analysis of the planned resource allocation suggests the strategy could have been expressed in different language. For example, the evaluators see the programme as being:

- Direct support nationwide targeted to poor people through government-implemented service delivery and safety-net programmes
- Regional level engagement with Tigray and SNNPR
- Support to civil society for service delivery and demand-side governance
- Support to small-scale innovative or experimental interventions
- Promotion of M&E for lesson learning and policy dialogue
- Active engagement in multi-donor fora through support to the PBS and PSNP Secretariats and working through pooled funds

4.9 The strategy text gives little prominence to the skewed distribution of resource allocation; nor is there any overview of how the smaller budget lines complement the large-scale social programmes; nor too, of the rationale and intended purpose of the regional support. A recent MTR of support to SNNPR identified the lack of a clearly articulated or documented strategy as a factor in reducing Irish Aid's effectiveness.¹⁷ There is no discussion about the implications for how staff from Irish Aid plan to use their time, despite the noted comment about balancing time in favour of the field. Paradoxically, the decision to take active roles in the management of both PBS and PSNP may have worked in direct opposition to the field imperative. Without a record of time management, this will never be known. Clearly, there are trade-offs between managing a few large-scale projects and many smaller ones. Also, donors can operate passively or actively in different sectors. Despite being a medium-sized donor Irish Aid elected to be actively involved in management of both PBS and PSNP as well as interacting in

¹⁵ CSP 2008-12 para 79

¹⁶ Dónal Cronin - Policy, Planning and Effectiveness (PPE) Section. Ethiopia Visit Report, September 5th to 9th 2011

¹⁷ MTR review of the Partnership between Irish Aid and the SNNPR, 2009-2012, Feb, 2012

the management of pooled funds. That reasoning is not presented in the CSP, nor are the implications for the skill mix and complement of staff at the Embassy.

4.10 The CSP document is silent about the skills support necessary for the major programmes (PBS and PSNP). Irish Aid was well represented in PSNP working on a team basis that draws staff with a range of skills led by a senior expatriate and a well experienced national expert. However, the sustainability of engagement is highlighted with recent staff changes resulting in the current situation whereby Irish Aid is less well represented in PSNP after the departure of two senior people. Irish Aid is able to continue on-going support, in particular the financial management aspect. But how soon Irish Aid will replace the departed experts, especially the local position, is not clear and was raised as a point of concern by development partners for the continuity of the well-regarded Irish Aid contribution.

4.11 Respondents to the evaluation survey summarised in Annex 7 felt overwhelmingly that Irish Aid's strategy had led to a good choice of sectors.¹⁸ A minority of 28 per cent considered that the choice was too broad and did not reflect sufficient focus. However, when asked how well they understood the objectives and approach of the CSP on a rating scale, the majority, 64 per cent, rated a modest grasp; 28 per cent were more positive; and 8 per cent less.¹⁹ Irish Aid's strengths as a partner are revealed in responses to the evaluation survey. Flexibility, working in partnership with CSOs and developing long-term relationships such as with Tigray region are all highlighted as positive characteristics of the approach and are reflected in the strategy.²⁰

Programme funding and coherence

4.12 Analysis in Annex 8 shows the original budgets and actual expenditure for the years 2008-2011. Several important trends can be seen. The total budget of €122m for the first three years of the CSP was divided equally between the two pillars, SSA, and FLS. Nearly two thirds of that budget was allocated to the two large government programmes PBS and PSNP, supported through multi-donor trust funds administered by the World Bank. The remaining funds were to be allocated among 20 budget lines, most with annual spending of less than €500,000 per year, and many less than €200,000.

4.13 The effects of the financial crisis in Europe were felt early in 2009, only the second year of the strategy. Expenditure in 2009 and 2010 was reduced to 70 per cent and 56 per cent respectively of the levels envisaged in the CSP. Annual expenditure since 2011 has been around €26 million, around half the original intentions when the CSP was drafted. The cuts in programme funding appear to have been greatest for the SSA pillar, which received around two thirds of planned amounts. Some smaller budget lines also experienced cutbacks and a few partnerships were terminated at the MTR. Overall, for the period 2008-2010, the programme funded three quarters of the original intention.²¹ A key feature of the approach was the decision to cut back rather than cut out whole programmes, which led to a reduced financial contribution but maintained the breadth of programme coverage to be managed by Irish Aid staff.

4.14 Figure 2 presents the range of funding streams by Irish Aid in support of work in Ethiopia. There are three main groups: a) multilateral organisations with programmes in Ethiopia; b) the Irish Aid bilateral country programme; and c) support for emergencies, funding to international NGOs and direct support to other civil society organisations managed directly from Irish Aid Headquarters.

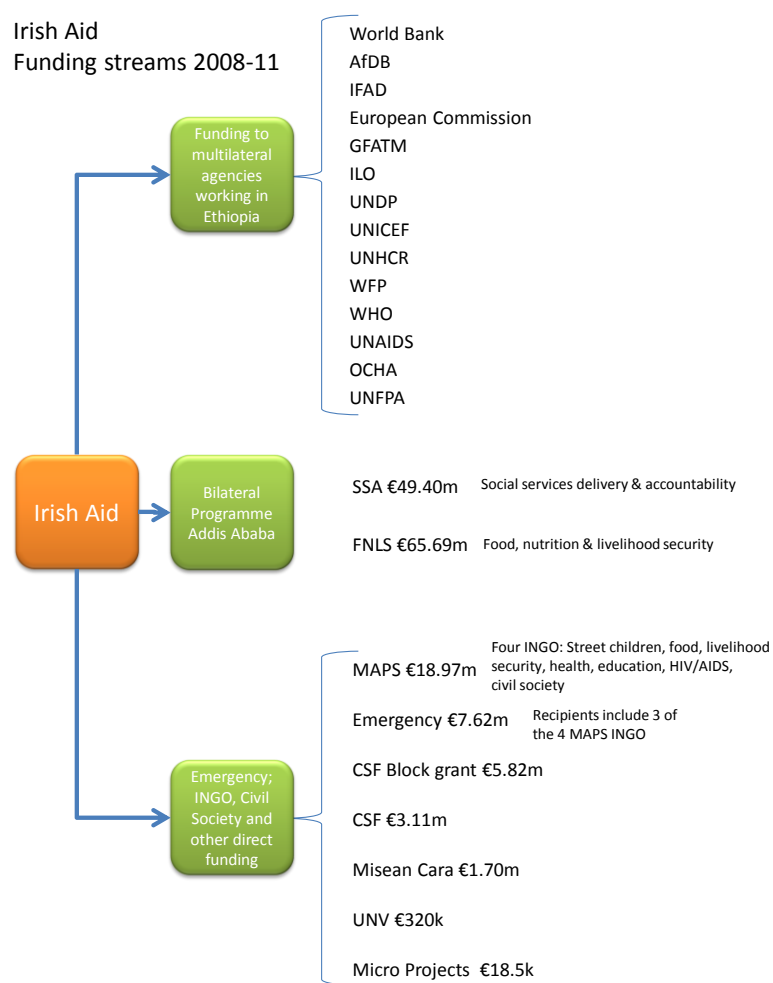
¹⁸ Annex 7, Q4

¹⁹ Annex 7, Q5(a) The rating scale was 1 to 6 where 1 is poor and 6 is very good, the majority, 64 per cent, rated 3 or 4; 28 per cent 5 or 6; and 8 per cent rated 1 or 2

²⁰ Annex 7, Question 8

²¹ The programme was re-budgeted for the years 2010 and 2011 during the MTR and so it is not possible to estimate the shortfall over original intentions when the CSP was planned

Figure 2 Distribution of funding to Ethiopia by Irish Aid 2008-2011



Note: Funds shown are total actuals for 2008-2011 inclusive except for schemes that were not in operation in all of those years

4.15 The volume of funds from Irish Aid as a percentage of the total funding of the international organisations is small and has not been reviewed under this evaluation. The question of coherence affects mainly the funding in the second and third cluster. Work under the bilateral programme deals with social service delivery including health and HIV/AIDS, social protection, food, nutrition and livelihoods security. Some of these areas are also the subject of work by International Irish NGOs funded under the Multi Annual Programme Scheme (MAPS) scheme.²² Areas of possible overlap are those concerning health, HIV/AIDS and livelihoods security. The main recipients of MAPS funding in Ethiopia were four international NGOs. Three of those were also supported under Irish Aid emergency programmes dealing with drought and humanitarian crises. There is direct funding from Irish Aid Headquarters to other CSOs, which are also channels for programme funding through the bilateral programme. The grants managed directly from Dublin and Limerick totalled €37.56 million between 2008 and 2011.

4.16 No specific examples of contradictory programming were revealed to the evaluation team, but recipients of MAPS funding and funds through Misean Cara argued that they felt their work would benefit from closer interaction with staff in the Embassy who manage the bilateral programme. Coherence with these programmes is not discussed in the CSP nor is there reference to budget allocations. Yet the data reveal that some 25 per cent of the total

²² Now renamed Irish Aid Programme Grants

expenditure in Ethiopia is controlled directly from Irish Aid Headquarters, a significant proportion. A recent global evaluation of the MAPS covering the period 2007-2011 stated that *'the lack of clear linkages at the country level between partner programmes and Irish Aid's country strategies represents a missed opportunity to have a more coherent approach to poverty reduction and perhaps achieve greater impact'*.²³

Understanding the theories of change

4.17 Prompted by the adoption of RBM, the CSP included a diagrammatic logic model illustrating the relationship between planned actions by Irish Aid and strategy outcomes and goals. The logic was revisited during the MTR and reformulated. Analysis in Annex 5 explores that evolution.

4.18 The logic models present a coherent structure for the programme. They enable a complex programme to be understood 'at a glance' which is an asset for communication. They provide a basis for testing the fit of proposed activities. The changes after the MTR reflect rationalisation of the programme, improved clarity of wording, which aids management and evaluation, and a simplification for better understanding. The addition of indicators in the revised version also helps link to the results framework, which beforehand was documented separately.

4.19 The evaluation team explored more detailed theories of change for a sample of budget lines under five of the seven objectives. The exercise was constructive and straightforward. It was clear by the speed and nature of response that staff have a good grasp of how the interventions are planned to work. Two interesting aspects emerge from the exercise. Firstly, much more detail was offered about those parts of the process concerned with planning, management and supervision than with the realisation of progress towards outcomes. To some extent this is inevitable, because Irish Aid staff deal with their development partners on issues concerning management and supervision and Irish Aid had chosen to engage at this level. However, part of the purpose of developing TOC is to understand the assumptions implicit in how interventions will give rise to desired outcomes - improved access to and satisfaction with basic services; and new technologies or income-generating activities for improved livelihoods and food security. Considering that Irish Aid wants to mainstream cross-cutting issues, achieve coherence and complementarity through a programme approach, engage with poorer sections of society and improve impact monitoring, greater attention to the constraints affecting achievement of outcomes is needed.

4.20 Secondly, interviews revealed a relatively low grasp of the logic underpinning the Irish Aid strategy among government, bilateral donor and civil society development partners, a finding confirmed in the web survey of NGO and CSO partners.²⁴ This suggests that even though Irish Aid staff are well-versed in their TOC, they are not using them in dialogue with partners, thus missing a potentially valuable tool.

How did the CSP perform?

4.21 The CSP document mixes up the language of strategy, objectives and programme content. The word strategy is used variously as a) an overarching descriptive term that sets out what the objectives of Irish Aid support are; b) a description of what activities will be financed under the programme; and, c) in a different (and more limited) sense to describe how Irish Aid will work in Ethiopia, in the sense of which organisations to partner with, what emphasis to put on aspects such as research, impact monitoring, lesson learning etc., and how and in what fora to engage in the coordination of development programmes and discussions on development policy. From consultations with staff in the Embassy, it is clear that the latter purpose is more in

²³ IOD Parc (2011) MAPS II Evaluation Synthesis Report para vii

²⁴ Annex 7 Q5(b)

line with their sense of strategy for the country programme and yet this is the least evident part of the CSP document itself.

4.22 If strategy is about *how* Irish Aid operates, then evaluating strategy can take an approach which examines patterns of behaviour; what decisions are taken and what the organisation actually does. This is complementary to following a results-based approach for evaluating what the programme has achieved.

4.23 Documented decisions taken during the implementation of the CSP were analysed in order to examine strategy behaviour. The source material used was the Irish Aid Ethiopia Annual Reports for the four years 2008 to 2011 inclusive, plus the report of the CSP MTR in 2010.²⁵ The reports were scrutinised for all statements that presented a decision or action during the reporting period. Annex 4, Table 2 summarises the findings.

4.24 The findings reveal some clear and interesting trends. Firstly, the majority of the 81 decisions examined were classified as nonstrategic. This means they were decisions about actions within the scope of the existing country strategy, in other words, routine management.²⁶ Nine decisions, comprising 11 per cent, were assessed as being strategic, meaning development of a new direction to the programme. Of these, two thirds involved changes to the way in which the strategy was implemented and one third concerned what was to be done or the context of the activities.

4.25 Judging by the nature of decisions made, the description of the country programme and country strategy in the CSP has been a robust guide for Irish Aid, even having to cope with the cutback in funding. A clear and deliberate approach was set out and the majority of actions documented in programme reports suggest that this was followed. The MTR concluded that the programme remained relevant to the needs of the country and to Irish Aid priorities, including the prioritisation of hunger as a key component. Where strategic decisions were taken, most concerned ways of working in order to react to changing opportunities. Of the three that involved a change in what the programme would do, two were necessitated by external events: the changing Ethiopian context, especially with regard to CSOs and Ireland's economic circumstances. The realised strategy is a logical development of the original CSP and remains true to the original goal and outcomes.

²⁵ A draft version of the 2011 report was used.

²⁶ In this analysis the term strategy is used loosely to encompass all of the objectives, programme and ways of working set out in the CSP.

5 Findings for Development Results

Summary of findings for development results

- ❖ Assessment of available data for the 12 performance indicators at the level of goal and programme outcomes finds that eight demonstrate change in line with target values or at least positive, if at a slower than planned rate. Two indicators show deteriorating or flat performance and there are no data for a further two.
- ❖ The Protection of Basic Services programme has succeeded in enabling a major transfer of resources down to local level with documented benefits in health, education, water and sanitation, and agricultural extension - key services for the rural community.
- ❖ The social accountability component of PBS has opened the door to demand-side interaction and dialogue on quality of services between government and citizens.
- ❖ Projects in the health sector have contributed to improving health outcomes but investments are fragmented and there is little overall dialogue about sector policy, even with the Regional Government of SNNPR where Irish Aid is an active partner. Maternal mortality remains a major national challenge.
- ❖ Small projects dealing with nutrition are innovative and have potential to tackle both food security and nutrient deficiency problems if they are successful and taken to scale.
- ❖ The Productive Safety Net Programme has been effective in providing a targeted safety net in food insecure woredas, with investments in public works and arrangements to help households graduate from food insecurity.
- ❖ Interviews with government and development partners confirm that Irish Aid's contribution is identifiable in a number of key areas and brings added value over and above the contribution to programme funding.
- ❖ The portfolio of small, sometimes experimental projects is innovative and plays to Ireland's strengths of flexibility, ability to work with both government and civil society partners, and familiarity with state systems at federal, regional and local levels. Continuing low productivity in agriculture is strong justification for this work.
- ❖ Irish Aid's approach demonstrates a structured analysis of risks for the programme as a whole and some good design features to foster sustainability, but little use is made of that analysis.
- ❖ There is concern about the long-term financial sustainability of governments' large-scale social programmes, but overall, Irish Aid's approach makes development results likely to be sustainable.

5.1 This chapter sets out the main results available for a sample of programmes and projects supported by Irish Aid. Specifically, it asks the questions *'To what extent did the Irish Aid CSP contribute to the stated objectives and intended outcomes; and how sustainable are the results?'* It draws on secondary data from management reports and monitoring and evaluation studies. The text also reports findings from a contribution analysis presented in detail in Annex 6. The presentation works systematically through the sampled budget lines from the two pillars, starting with the overall goal of the programme then moving on to social services and accountability.

Results for the Goal of the CSP

5.2 Progress towards the programme goal is a long-term objective of the CSP and something that Irish Aid contributes to as part of the concerted national development effort and support by

other donors. Table 4 sets out the goal, indicators and the most up to date information available to the evaluation team.

Table 4 Progress towards programme goal

Goal: To reduce vulnerability of poor Ethiopian women and men, boys and girls			
Indicators ²⁷	Baseline (date)	Target 2012	Performance
Proportion of rural households that perceive they are 'Doing Well' (ie 'can get by', 'comfortable' or 'rich')	74% (2009)	N/A	Data scheduled for 2014
Proportion of population below the national poverty line	44.2% (2000-2008)	(GTP national target)	39% (2011) (percentage of population living below \$1.25/day)
Improvement in Global Hunger Index ratings for Ethiopia	GHI: 29.8 Ethiopia ranks 80/84 (IFPRI, 2010)	No official target set, Irish Aid target: GHI: 25	GHI: 28.7 (an improvement) Ethiopia now ranks 77/81 (slight improvement)
Maternal mortality ratio	730 per 100,000 live births (2005)	(GTP national target)	676 per 100,000 live births (DHS 2010)
Improvement in Ibrahim Index of African Governance score for Ethiopia and/or improvement in 'Voice and Accountability', and 'Government Effectiveness' in the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators for Ethiopia	Ibrahim Index score of 44 (2010). WB Governance indicators; less than 15% percentile rank (Voice and Accountability) and 40% percentile rank (Government Effectiveness)	No official target set, Irish Aid target: Above the respective Sub Saharan African averages by 2012	Ibrahim Index score 46 (out of 100) for 2011 (a deterioration)

5.3 Of the five indicators for programme goal, data are available for four. Three of the four show a positive trend, with 2010 or 2011 performance in line with or better than target for 2012. Success has come in the areas of poverty and health. In contrast, the indicator for good governance suggests a deterioration. These findings are in accord with the contextual analysis in Chapter 3.

Social services and accountability

5.4 Table 5 lists the outcome objectives and indicators for this pillar. The evaluation sampled two interventions under Objective 1: the support to PBS and to PBS Social Accountability. Three outcome indicators have been set. Reporting against these shows mixed results, with data available for two only. One suggests improvement but at a level below the rate needed to meet the 2012 target; no direct data are available for the other, but secondary data suggests a positive improvement.

²⁷ There are differences in the indicators quoted in the Post MTR Logic Model and the Post MTR Performance Management Framework. This and subsequent tables uses the longer or more comprehensive list wherever there is a choice.

Table 5 Sampled outcome and objective 1

Pillar Outcome: Increased utilisation of and satisfaction with basic services by the poor			
Indicators	Baseline (date)	Target 2012	Performance
Health utilisation rate (OPD attendance per capita)	0.2 (2008)	0.5	0.3 ²⁸ (2011)
Citizen reported improvement in health services over the previous 2 years (rural/urban)	No information	To be set	No direct data. However from WCBS IV: <i>“Comparison of the 2008, 2010 and 2011 CRC²⁹ data reveals a continuing increase in the proportion of citizens using government health facilities. For City Administrations the figures have risen from 50% in 2008 to 73% in 2010 and 84% in 2011. In primarily rural Woredas the corresponding increase is 77% to 87% to 94%”.</i>
Citizen confidence in local government to address service quality concerns	No information	To be set	No data
Objective 1: To increase access and quality of basic services at sub-national level			
1a) Ratios of public service delivery agents to population in PBS supported sectors, and ratio of recurrent to capital expenditure at decentralised levels	No information	No information	<i>Some indirect information from WCBS IV Synthesis Report: “Around 70 per cent of the sample jurisdictions spent less than 50% of total actual income on salaries - allowing for adequate operational and capital expenditures”</i>
1b) Deployment of front line service providers at local level in PBS supported sectors.	HEW 1:3,224 (2008) Proportion of qualified primary school teachers (38.4 – 2002) Woreda roads desks with appropriate resources (8 -1999) Development agents	1:2,500 61 190 71,000	

²⁸ Source Irish Aid Ethiopia 2011 Annual Report

²⁹ CRC: Citizen’s Report Card

Pillar Outcome: Increased utilisation of and satisfaction with basic services by the poor

Indicators	Baseline (date)	Target 2012	Performance
	deployed (49,946 -1999) Proportion of malfunctioning water supplies (20% - 1999)	16% ³⁰	
2) Allocation of federal block grant to regions and verification of their commitment to basic service financing	Basic service spending has increased by 40% in EFY 2000 as compared to EFY 1999	Awaiting information from PBS II	
3) Type and number of basic service units that have developed joint action plans for service quality improvement based on interface meetings between service users and providers	Baseline to be developed	Target to be set	Not reported
4) Number and quality of specific studies in PBS which Irish Aid ensures look at disaggregated pro-poor information on service utilisation	Social Accountability Evaluation; JRIS field visits; FTAPS PBS Social Inclusion and Gender equality assessment	No clear target	Not reported

5.5 Most indicators at the level of Objective 1 summarise output targets rather than outcomes. The evaluation team has been unable to source information to make a judgement on performance.

5.6 The **Protection of Basic Services (PBS)** is a nationwide government programme supported by a multi-donor trust fund managed by the World Bank. The programme was developed in the aftermath of the 2005 elections when donors withdrew from budget support but wanted to retain a channel of support for social services. The programme is in its second phase³¹ and has an annual budget of € 900 million (65 per cent financed by GOE and the remainder by donors). Irish Aid is a small contributor, amounting to around 3 per cent of the total budget and less than 1 per cent in 2011.³² But as noted in Chapter 3, Ireland contributes financially to the management secretariat in the World Bank and plays an active role in the steering group. Irish Aid has been active in its participation in meetings (also appreciated by COPCU and Secretariat) and in JRIS visits. This has allowed Irish Aid to take part in discussions affecting the future directions of PBS. Support to the PBS not only gave Irish Aid a simple conduit to support social services, but in the absence of general or sector budget support, the

³⁰ The Implementation Completion & Results Report, 2010: Protection of Basic Services Project of the World Bank provides figures for 2009 on p. ix. Unfortunately the sentence in the document is incomplete. Therefore impossible to assess values provided. However the target had been surpassed by 54 per cent.

³¹ PBS I was from 2006-2009 and PBS II 2009-2012

³² PBS is supported by eleven donors: the World Bank, the UK, the African Development Bank, the European Commission, Ireland, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, and Canada. The figures from the PBS secretariat are for 1.6% from Irish Aid block grant in 2010/11 as compared with 37.7% IDA, ADB 29.3% and DFID 20.2%. Over period 2008/9 to 2010/11 contributions to PBS Block Grant 17.3 million US\$ in 2008/9 (3.3%) and 8.9 million US\$ in 2010/11 (1.6%).

dialogue between donors and government on the PBS has become *de facto* the main development forum for sectoral dialogue.³³

5.7 The most recent independent review took place in 2012. That review demonstrated that over the period of the two phases the PBS succeeded in enabling a major transfer of resources down to local, woreda level, rising from €700,000 in 2005 to €980 million in 2009/2010 – said to be an increase of 29 per cent annually in compounded growth.³⁴ The great majority (94 per cent) of the funds are used for recurrent expenditure out of which 68 per cent is spent on salaries of regional and local level government staff. The PBS has contributed directly towards the MDG goals. Major achievements include increases in the number of teachers and health staff in post; increased enrolment in primary schools, a narrowing of the gender gap; improved performance against health indicators; and improvement in access to water and sanitation, and contacts with agricultural extension workers. For more details see Box 2.

Box 2 Performance improvements in the social services³⁵

Education:

Primary school (grade 1-8) net enrolment rose from 68 per cent in 2004/5 to 82 per cent in 2009/2010; and primary school completion rate (grade 8) increased from 34 per cent to 48 per cent during this period. Indicators of education quality also suggest some progress: student-teacher ratio fell from 66:1 in 2004/05 to 51:1 in 2009/10 for primary education, and the ratio for secondary education fell from 51:1 to 36:1. Despite increases overall, progress on education access has slowed with questions about the quality of education.

Health:

Between 2005 and 2010, the number of health posts rose from 4211 to 14,416; the number of health centres increased from 519 to 2,689; and public hospitals rose from 79 to 111. Contraceptive prevalence increased to 29 per cent from 15 per cent and coverage of at least one antenatal visit reached 34 per cent from a baseline of 28 per cent.

Remarkable improvement have been achieved in the under-5 mortality rate, with the rate declining from 123 (per 1000 live births) in 2005 to 88 per 1000 live births in 2010. Infant mortality dropped from 77 to 59.

Major challenges remain, particularly in maternal mortality, which remains at 676 per 100,000 live births, roughly equivalent to where it was in 2005 (EDHS). Skilled attendants at delivery remains very low, although it has improved to 10 per cent in 2011 from 6 per cent in 2005 (EDHS).

Agriculture and Natural Resources:

The sector remains crucially important for the economy, especially employment, poverty reduction and food security; and will be central to the implementation of the country's plans for a Climate Resilient Green Economy. Average productivity of major food crops is around 16 quintals/hectare and has risen little in recent years. Low productivity is a continuing challenge.

Water and Sanitation:

By 2010, the proportion of the rural population with access to potable water rose to 65.8 per cent, from 46 per cent in 2006.

Roads:

The average distance to an all-weather road decreased to 3.5 hours in 2011 from 4.5 hours in 2007.

5.8 A recent study on Value for Money by DFID concluded that overall the PBS is an operationally efficient means of supporting decentralised service delivery – as seen in the execution rates for this programme as compared to sector programmes. By making full use of government systems it has provided a good incentive to accelerate activities aimed at improving

³³ As well as PBS forum, there is the DAG forum (including the High Level Forum with the Minister for Finance) and Ambassador dialogue including through EU article 8 dialogue.

³⁴ Mokoro presentation at PBS retreat

³⁵ Sources: World Bank (2012) Draft Project Appraisal Document for Promoting Basic Services (PBS) Phase III Project

GOE MoFED presentation Progresses on PBS II Indicators (2010/11) 7th May 2012

DFID Ethiopia (2012) Understanding VfM in the Protection of Basic Services (PBS) Programme

public financial management and through this is probably delivering efficiency gains in and of itself.

5.9 In health, education and agriculture the relatively large shares of resources for personnel (significantly supported by PBS) are consistent with the way in which these services are delivered although the shares are still on the whole considered high. Continued and improving collaboration between PBS and sector programmes, to understand sector financing policies, trends and challenges should be a key means of monitoring overall allocative efficiency across decentralised service delivery and seeking improvements over time.

5.10 The PBS programme has undoubtedly played a significant role in helping to deliver basic services (particularly recurrent cost-intensive basic services) in Ethiopia. However, PBS is but one of a number of programmes contributing to improved basic service delivery – and to improvements in public finance management (PFM).

5.11 These findings are broadly supported by independent studies under a project called the 'Woreda and City Benchmarking Surveys'. In education, for example, in some areas local people were struggling to pay teachers' salaries and this burden has been removed. Averaged across 256 locations (WCBS IV³⁶) recurrent block grant received from the region makes up 45 per cent of jurisdictions' income. All regions show, for example, an increase in the number of development agent staff between 2005/6 and 2009/10.

5.12 The question of Irish Aid's specific contribution was examined by the evaluation team. Key contributions self-identified by staff from Irish Aid included work on public financial management (PFM), providing inputs into TOR for reviews, and to audits. Irish Aid believed they had contributed to expenditure control, provided advice to the auditor general and helped roll-out IBEX accounting systems. Irish Aid also argued they had made a major contribution to JRIS visits and other pre-review field monitoring (see Box 3).

Box 3 Example Irish Aid contribution to PBS JRIS

A typical example is the Irish Aid initiative to question and follow up an apparent decline in PBS Woreda spending between JRIS November 2010³⁷ and May 2011.

"Following a commitment made at the November 2010 JRIS, joint missions involving Government and donor partners visited Somali Region, SNNPR, and Tigray to examine what appeared to be reductions in the share of woreda-level basic service spending....The perceived decline in woreda spending on basic services was found to be less severe than originally thought as closed accounts (vs. pre-actual reports that are the basis of JRIS tests) more accurately captured capital spending from all sources. The joint missions were very useful as they helped PBS Donor and Government participants alike gain a more detailed understanding of the specific budgeting, accounting, and reporting issues at sub-national levels" Protection of Basic Services (PBS) Program, Phase II. JRIS, May 9 – 19, 2011. Aide Memoire. p.3, para 4.

5.13 Irish Aid has promoted and supported the roll-out of computerised budget management software to 800 woredas and provided training for auditor general and finance staff at regional and woreda levels. IBEX systems were funded by Irish Aid and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Under a former staff member, Irish Aid "was at the core of public financial management (PFM)". Irish Aid is still in PFM forums although they are not providing direct funds. They have contributed to supporting the audit structure of PBS, reviews,

Irish Aid staff were strong and capable of leading PFM discussions. They influenced the design of PBS II - the Financial Transparency and Accountability component can be traced back to them. (Interview with PBS Secretariat)

³⁶ WCBS IV presentation – Supply-side data 2011. GoE, World Bank

³⁷ JRIS Joint review and Implementation Support Mission (JRIS), MTR, and Appraisal for World Bank Additional Financing. JRIS: November 8 - December 9, 2010. Appraisal for Additional Financing: December 14 – 15, 2010. Aide Memoire. "At the Woreda level, however, the share of spending on basic services to total spending is declining". P.4, para. 4

reports and TOR for studies.³⁸

5.14 PBS donor partners largely confirmed those self-identified areas and added further examples. Donors³⁹ have appreciated specialist audit expertise and inputs into financial matters - issues around financial transparency and the accountability dialogue provided by Irish Aid, although GOE⁴⁰ seemed less aware of this input. Spreading of the work load is appreciated by donors. Irish Aid is said to be less self-interested than some other donors. Irish Aid were said to continue to prompt on cross cutting areas such as gender, and technical exchanges that have included Irish Aid have often led to policy adjustment. For example the introduction of grievance procedures has resulted from discussion on practical issues. Irish Aid was seen as a reliable, consistent and energetic donor that is perceived as having little “baggage”, i.e. explicit or implicit socio- or geo-political agendas over and above development progress.

5.15 Four areas of specific input were identified by the PBS Secretariat as areas of particular contribution by Irish Aid. These were: the follow-up of the apparent decline in woreda spending; re-energisation of a number of thematic working groups; taking on a co-chair role at a time when communications between donors and government was not working well; and co-chairing the M&E group in PBS III design.

5.16 A PBS donor discussion group convened for this evaluation⁴¹ highlighted that development in Ethiopia is “about working in partnership”. They saw it as important to have Irish Aid involved as they “leverage discussion within PBS” – an example is discussions around PFM where Irish Aid staff would politely but consistently raise issues around audits, social accountability and citizen engagement. Irish Aid was seen as having high credibility, partly due to the experience gained from their relationship with Tigray Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED) and having deep, local knowledge. JRIS has been asking for regional voices and regional input and Tigray BoFED has been one of the most vocal.

5.17 One area that has been less harmonious was Irish Aid’s decision to withdraw from the Local Investment Grant (LIG) complementary fund in light of LIG’s evolving focus on the regions where the government’s resettlement programme is being rolled-out.⁴² A number of possible weaknesses were also identified by the PBS Secretariat. The current lack of a macro-economist on the Irish Aid staff may have resulted in less input into what the Secretariat sees as the bigger issues concerning macro-economic policy. Although Irish Aid has supported a number of analytical studies undertaken by the Secretariat, and contributed to financial analysis, there are no known analytical studies undertaken by Irish Aid.

5.18 A supplementary programme that accompanies PBS is the **Ethiopian Social Accountability Project (ESAP)**, also abbreviated to **PBS SA**. Irish Aid’s participation in this is in direct response to its strategy objectives promoting demand-side governance, lesson learning and policy dialogue.

5.19 The Social Accountability component of PBS uses local Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to survey citizens about the quality of delivery of public services. Within the context of Ethiopia it is thought to be a considerable achievement. Evaluation of the pilot phase of Ethiopian Social Accountability Programme (ESAP) (known as ESAP I) drew a number of conclusions:

- ESAP I engaged with 86 woredas over 18 months in cooperation with 45 CSOs
- Pilot SA initiatives improved basic services in target areas as a result of joint action plans

³⁸ Independent verification that work on PBS has helped improve PFM systems can be found the recent DFID study on Value for Money (DFID Ethiopia 2012), Box 3

³⁹ Discussions with PBS Secretariat, 21/3/12

⁴⁰ Discussions with Head of COPCU, Ministry of Finance and Economic Development

⁴¹ World Bank, EC, CIDA, DFID

⁴² Human Rights Watch (2012) “Waiting Here for Death” Forced Displacement and “Villagization” in Ethiopia’s Gambella Region

- Quality of engagement between citizens and service providers became more constructive because of face-to-face meetings prompted by ESAP
- Financial Transparency and Accountability (FTA) tools were designed and validated
- Budget literacy training was received by more than 70,000 citizens
- Woredas beginning to explore budget/expenditure information using mass media
- A study on grievance mechanisms was completed identifying the existence of a number of “home-grown” grievance mechanisms – expected to be built into PBS III.⁴³

5.20 In the way it works, ESAP uses a simple and fairly clear set of tools for enhancing dialogue between government and citizens. The approach has been inclusive by providing platforms (separate focus group discussions) for different sectors of the community: women, men, elderly, youth and the disabled. ESAP has raised awareness and provided a safe space for dialogue at woreda level, an acknowledgement of the importance of the demand side. Previously there was a belief by Federal Government that accountability was handled sufficiently through the supply side, by councils and parliament. ESAP has shown that constructive dialogue between government, citizens and civil society is possible and has challenged CSOs – making them re-evaluate how they are accountable to their constituents.⁴⁴

5.21 The PBS SA coordination group highlighted that as a result of experience with the social accountability project, a ‘safe space’ has been created in which to discuss governance at woreda level; demand-side experiences are increasingly being accepted by GOE; it has provided evidence that confrontational relationships can be avoided and that CSOs could be held accountable while improving the capacity of some community-based organisations such as Iddrs⁴⁵ to interface with service providers.

5.22 An evaluation carried out in June 2010⁴⁶ compared ESAP and non-ESAP areas using key informant interviews and focus group discussions. The report concludes that even simple tools like the community score card led to a considerable sense of empowerment (98 per cent female, 99 per cent male) as compared to non-ESAP areas (36 per cent female, 44 per cent male).

5.23 The Woreda and City Benchmarking Surveys (WCBS) also supports findings showing an increase in awareness among citizens. For example:

- Awareness of budget allocation has risen from 13 per cent in 2008 to 20 per cent among citizens in 2011 (though much higher in urban than rural areas)
- From qualitative studies under Woreda and City Benchmarking Survey (WCBS), there is some evidence that knowledge of details of budgets had improved
- There would appear to be an increase in the use of various types of mass media (radio, newspapers, television) for disseminating such information (as reported by non-state actor key informants).⁴⁷

5.24 Under PBS SA, Irish Aid self-identified programme design, issues around gender and social inclusion, and TOR finalisation as their key contributions. The assessment of Irish Aid’s contribution by the PBS SA Coordination Committee largely reflects Irish Aid’s own self-assessment. Irish Aid was an originator of the approach to social accountability under PBS, along with CIDA and DFID. Those donors believed that Irish Aid had a bigger impact than its actual funding and Irish Aid has been active in planning Phase II, providing a co-chair. Irish Aid

⁴³Powerpoint presentation: PBS-3 Component B1: Demand for Good Local Governance by PBS Transparency and Accountability Group (TAG) February 24, 2012

⁴⁴Ibid

⁴⁵Iddrs are traditional local institutions used for social services such as funeral. The iddrs are now being used as vehicles for development in many places

⁴⁶Evaluation Report Final: Evaluation and design of Social Accountability Component of the Protection of Basic Services, Ethiopia. June 2010

⁴⁷Woreda and City Benchmarking Surveys GoE, World Bank, 2011

is seen as particularly strong on pushing gender aspects, being a trusted partner of government, and having long-standing experience in dealing with and understanding CSOs. This has been helpful in forming links between the PBS SA and the CSSP. However members stressed it was difficult to see the role of one donor apart from the others – progress has been through team work and Irish Aid is a strong team member.

Health and nutrition

5.25 Table 6 shows the two objectives from the CSP dealing with health and nutrition. Detailed targets have been set, most drawing on national plans. Data on performance are limited and relate to a variety of years. The trend in service expansion for prevention of mother to child transmission of HIV (PMCTC) is clearly positive and ahead of the target at national level. Indicators about health workers show a positive movement, but at a rate below that necessary to meet the target figures. No data are available for the nutrition objective.

Table 6 Sampled objectives 3 and 5

Objective 3: To increase access to and improve the quality of maternal, child and HIV services			
Indicators	Baseline (date)	Target 2012	Performance
1) Percentage of health facilities providing BEmONC (national + SNNPR) and PMTCT	11% (National) 9% (SNNPR); baseline from EmONC assessment report	37% (national) ⁴⁸	National: Some data on PMTCT Service Site expansion ⁴⁹ from 719 in 2007/8 to 1,445 in 2010/11
	⁵⁰ 24% (National) ⁵¹ N= 719 (National) ⁵² N= 186 (SNNPR)	77 % ⁵³ N=320 (SNNPR)	SNNPR – no data in SNNPR MTR
2) Number of health workers trained and deployed in SNNPR by cadre	National Total - 57,433 Specialist 1001 (1:78,921) GP 1151 (1:68,635) Nurses BSc, & Diploma 20,109 (1: 3,928) Midwives 1353 (1: 57,354) HEW 33,819 (1: 2,335) SNNPR Total - 13,859	National Total-76,637 Specialist Drs 5,811 GPs 10,846. Midwives 8,635 HEWs 45,000 HOs 6,345 SNNPR Total - tbd	National ⁵⁴ in 2009/10 Total: 69,865 Specialist: 1151 (1:62,783) GP: 1001 (1:76,302) Nurses BSc & Diploma (except midwives): 20,109 (1:4,895) Midwives (senior): 1379 (1: 57,354) HEW 31,831 (1:2,437) ⁵⁵ SNNPR: Total: 12,673 Physician (GP & specialist): 242 (1:65,817) HO: 220 (1:72,398)

⁴⁸ The Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2011 provides data around this area but the unit of measurement is the citizen not the health facility.

⁴⁹ Country Progress. Report on HIV/AIDS Response, 2012. FDRE, 2012.

⁵⁰ HSDP IV baseline

⁵¹ Number of HF providing PMTCT services (Health and Health Related Indicators 2000)

⁵² Number of HF in SNNPR providing PMTCT services (Health and Health Related Indicators 2000)

⁵³ 2003 Regional target

⁵⁴ FDRE Ministry of Health October 2010. Health Sector Development Program IV 2010/11 – 2014/15, Table 2, p.19

⁵⁵ Note slightly different figures are given in the text – 33,819 HEW on pp14 and 15 of FDRE Ministry of Health October 2010. Health Sector Development Program IV 2010/11 – 2014/15

Objective 3: To increase access to and improve the quality of maternal, child and HIV services			
Indicators	Baseline (date)	Target 2012	Performance
			Nurses: 3,980 (1:4,002) Midwives: 316 (1:50,404) HEW: 7,915 (1:2,012)
3) Contraceptive Acceptance Rate	56% (EFY 2002)	74%	56.2 (2009) ⁵⁶
4) Percentage of schools providing life skills based HIV education (national + SNNPR)	38% (national) 1,405 (SNNPR -2009)	90% (national) 4,608 (SNNPR) ⁵⁷	
Objective 5: To strengthen multisectoral responses against maternal and child malnutrition			
1) Improved national strategies and frameworks for a cross sectoral response to under-nutrition	2008 National Nutrition Strategy 2011 GTP	Revised NNS Revised NNP Annex or revision to GTP	Irish Aid is continuing to scope out new partnerships & areas of engagement. Therefore no measurable progress against as yet. ⁵⁸
2) National Strategy for Food Fortification in place	none	Strategy defined and being implemented	
3) Increase in dietary diversity, specifically consumption of sweet potato in Tigray	pending	Regular consumption of sweet potato by women & children in 100 vulnerable households	No direct measures of increased dietary diversity recorded.

5.26 Other budget lines sampled under this pillar concern **health and nutrition**, with a significant element related to work in the SNNPR. The health projects are listed here with footnoted reference to the most recent review or evaluation:

- **Health MDG Fund** in support of the Health Sector Development Programme (HSDP),⁵⁹ to improve access to services, quality and utilisation of services; strengthen systems for planning, budgeting and financial management; and provide demand driven technical assistance
- **SNNPR Regional Health Bureau and Regional Education Bureau**,⁶⁰ increased and improved capacity of front line and mid-level staff in health and HIV and AIDS; improved access to and quality of health services for poorer sections of society with particular focus on maternal, newborn and child health; and increased capacity in the education sector to respond to HIV and AIDS.

⁵⁶ Reported by DKT, see Box 4

⁵⁷ Multi-sectoral HIV/AIDS Response Monitoring & Evaluation Report 2003 EFY (July 2010 – June 2011), Federal HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Office July 2011, Addis Ababa, and Country Progress Report on HIV/AIDS Response, 2012, FDRE says "HIV/AIDS life skills education and school community conversations are the two major interventions that focus on students and the broader school community". However only results for Schools Implementing Community Conversation are reported. At a national level these have risen from 3,255 schools in 2007/8 to 15,305 in 2010/11. No data against this in SNNPR

⁵⁸ Update on Irish Aid Ethiopia's response to 'nutrition', 18 April 2012, IA

⁵⁹ Joint Financing Arrangement between Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Development Partners on support to MDG Fund 2009 (from IA files)

⁶⁰ Learning from the Ground. MTR review of the Partnership between IA and the SNNPR, 2009-2012, Feb, 2012

- **FGAE** - Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia,⁶¹ increased access to gender sensitive and quality sexual and reproductive health information and services among under-served population groups with particular focus on the youth, married couples, and rural residents.
- **DKT**⁶² - Improved enabling environment and access to reproductive and child health products, in particular contraceptives⁶³
- **Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association (CCRDA)** - Support to HIV/AIDS prevention, vulnerability reduction and care and support, interventions through CSOs in SNNP and Tigray Regional States ⁶⁴
- **Barriers**⁶⁵ A study to identify barriers to health service utilisation in the region with a particular focus on the poor, the vulnerable and underserved areas.

5.27 Progress under Health Sector and Development Programme (HSDP) III has been observed in terms of implementing key activities of harmonisation and alignment. A Joint Financing Agreement has been agreed and signed by seven development partners. The total pledged resource for the Health MDG Fund has reached €500 million. Many of the indicators set to measure harmonisation and alignment which include planning, budgeting and reporting have improved although some problems still linger.⁶⁶ Challenges are said to include getting information from the regions and difficulties in hiring health information technicians. Reported achievements include:

- 31,831 health extension workers have been so far trained. This is 103 per cent of the target of 30,786.⁶⁷
- Reduce stunting, wasting and low birth weight of children by half of its current status of 47 per cent, 11 per cent and 13.5 per cent respectively – “No survey conducted to show the current status. However, early detection and rehabilitation activities are widely undertaken at community level. The trend is positive. The prevalence of stunting, wasting and low birth weight among children is expected to significantly decline”⁶⁸
- Under 5 mortality rates have fallen from 123/1000 in 2005 to 88/1000 in 2010⁶⁹
- Unmet contraceptive need has dropped from 34 per cent to 25 per cent⁷⁰

Development partners find they have a better dialogue with government over health sector issues through the PBS forum, where interaction has brought mutual confidence and willingness to challenge performance, compared with the Health MDG Fund, where a positive spin is put on results.

⁶¹ Mid Term Review Report 2009-2013 Strategic Plan. Brhan Research and Development Consultancy (BRDC) plc, January 2012

⁶² DKT International is a USA-based private provider of family planning and reproductive health products and services. DKT International was named in honour of D.K. Tyagi. Mr. Tyagi was Assistant Commissioner of Family Planning in charge of public motivation and education aspects of India’s Family Planning Programme when he died of cancer in October 1969 in New Delhi.

⁶³ Evaluation of DKT’s Joint Grant – RNE, IA, DFID “Enhanced Social Marketing Activities in Ethiopia”. Evaluation Period: June 2009-May 2010. Dr Assefa Seme and Carol Squire, June 2010

⁶⁴ Midterm Evaluation of CCRDA/IA HIV and AIDS Prevention, Care and Support Collaborative Program in Tigray and SNNP Regional States (2009-2010). First Draft Report, Kana Public Health and Development Consultancy, January 2011.

⁶⁵ Understanding Barriers to Health Service Utilisation in SNNPR, Ethiopia: A Study for IA, Ethiopia & SNNPR Health Bureau, Ethiopia, Haile Mariam, D. & Wamai, G. October 2011

⁶⁶ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Health. Review of the Implementation Status of HSDP III (A Synthesis Report) Final, January 2010 p.44, Table 6.3

⁶⁷ Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Health. Review of the Implementation Status of HSDP III (A Synthesis Report) Final, January 2010 p.37 Section 3.6

⁶⁸ Ibid. P.51, Unnumbered table

⁶⁹ From copy of figures provided by Rebecca Yohannes from Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Health. Health and Health Related Indicators 2010

- Underweight children has dropped from 39 per cent to 29 per cent⁷¹

5.28 From the Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey (EDHS) 2011 (preliminary results)⁷² there is a decline in age-specific fertility rates between EDHS 2000, EDHS 2005 and EDHS 2011: *“The decline in fertility in the last 5 years is due to a decrease in fertility in rural areas; among rural women the total fertility rate decreased from 6.0 children in 2005 EDHS to the current level of 5.5”*.

5.29 A number of areas where Irish Aid hoped to contribute or influence are laid out in “Irish Aid Options Paper for Financing the Health Sector”.⁷³ The paper summarises key findings and recommendations of the Health MDG Fund appraisal (no reference given), highlights the outstanding issues to be addressed and compares two funding options: MDG Fund and PBS Sub-Programme B. In this document Irish Aid hoped to contribute in a number of areas through the MDG Health Fund.

5.30 Irish Aid staff reported some progress and achievements in a number of areas such as meeting the needs of the poorer sections of society and improved action planning. But challenges remain in strengthening financial management, access to policy discussions, quality of reporting, effectiveness of targeting, gender and equity analysis, and making links to capacity in Ministry of Women’s affairs or Ministry of Capacity Building. MDG reporting has been poor and oriented towards lists of expenditure, but is said to be improving. Insufficient information at outcome level means that dialogue on annual or strategic directions remain poor. Irish Aid has tried to make linkages with support to the health sector under the PBS programme – but the Ministry of Health (MoH) has not yet been responsive to this line of thinking with the view that the PBS should feed into health rather than the other way around.

5.31 Data about health outcomes in SNNPR are not readily available against some indicators from either the Regional Health Bureau (RHB) or Regional Education Bureau (REB), particularly the latter. Even where available, evaluators⁷⁴ questioned the quality of data collected from the zones and woredas and collated at regional level. A summary of results presents a picture of reasonably positive change:

- Utilisation of curative services has increased for outpatients but overall, including inpatients has stayed very similar
- Health service utilisation per capita has hardly changed from 0.44 visits per capita per year in 2008 to 0.45 visits in 2011 thus falling short of the target of 0.8 visits
- The ratio of mid-wives to women of reproductive age has improved dramatically (and exceeded the target) but the number of deliveries taking place in facilities has only increased by a very small percentage over the period 2008 to 2011. However the percentage of deliveries attended by skilled attendants has increased from 20 per cent in 2008 to 50 per cent in 2010 and 43 per cent in 2011, though the 2011 figures falls below the target of 50 per cent for 2010.
- The percentage of HIV positive pregnant women receiving prophylactic treatment has risen from 62 per cent in 2008 to 74 per cent in 2010 and 67 per cent in 2011. (also reflected in the number of pregnant women tested)
- Proportion of allocated resources utilised for HIV/AIDS at regional, zonal and woreda level are reported verbally to have been 100 per cent. Hence this target has been achieved.

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² Ethiopia Demographic and Health Survey 2011 Preliminary Report, Central Statistics Agency, Addis Ababa and MEASURE DHS, ICF Macro Calverton, Maryland, USA, September 2011

⁷³ Irish Aid Options Paper for Financing the Health Sector – undated - possibly 2008

⁷⁴ Learning from the Ground. MTR review of the Partnership between Irish Aid and the SNNPR, Francesca Stuer and Dr Erssido Lendebo, 2009-2012, Feb, 2012

- Number of teachers trained in life skills education and Community Conversation facilitation has exceeded targets (181 per cent of HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO)'s annual plan in 2010). A similar exceeding of target was seen with students (146 per cent of plan). Note that indicators do not show knowledge gained.
- Against the indicator: current school attendance among orphans aged 10-14 (grades 4 to 8) – numbers attending actually went down by over 6,500 between 2008 and 2010
- From MoH figures for SNNPR contraceptive prevalence rate was 14 per cent in 2005 and is 29 per cent in 2010 and unmet contraceptive need has dropped from 34 per cent to 25 per cent

5.32 Specific areas where Irish Aid self-identified clear contributions to SNNPR Regional Health Bureau were i) complementary support via Voluntary Service Overseas for training health clinicians; and ii) complementary interventions such as solar panels and model health facilities with future scope to initiate pilot schemes. The TOC developed as part of this evaluation⁷⁵ identified a number of areas where Irish Aid has supported the bureau through funds provided by Irish Aid through the regional BoFED. These were assisting the Bureau of Health to reach its targets (notably funds were transferred to build 82 Health Facilities), joint supervision meetings have been held, and there is some health service dialogue. A big challenge exists in the area of financial management.

5.33 Results from the support to FGAE, DKT and CCRDA are summarised from recent reports in Box 4.

Box 4 Results from three health projects

FGAE

The conclusions of the MTR which covers the whole country are:⁷⁶

- There was increasing awareness of young people on their SRH rights during the two and a half period
- The plan for increasing access to comprehensive, integrated, quality, gender sensitive and youth friendly sexual and reproductive health services was achieved successfully
- The plan to involve young people in governance and programme management and to reduce gender-related barriers and practices was achieved fully
- FGAE targeted to increase access to quality SRH services and to reach 2.5 million new clients during the strategic plan period (2009-2013). However the association achieved only 24.5 per cent of what was planned during the two and half years implementation – this is a direct quote but in table a figure of 40.2 per cent is given – a figure much closer to the target (p. 78).
- The plan for achieving male involvement in SRH was achieved by more than six fold when compared with the target set.
- The overall efforts in HIV prevention and providing safe motherhood services was successfully achieved when compared to the plan for these programmes.

DKT

- Purpose Level: Using GOE reports contraceptive acceptance rate in 2009 was 56.2 per cent while the target was 49 per cent
- Output 1: "Ethiopians have increased access to condoms by 2011. Sales indicators for Year two exceeded".
- Output 2: Women have improved access to RCH products. Sales indicators for year two exceeded.
- Output 3: Increased informed demand for condoms and contraceptives. The team is unable to measure at this time. It requires appropriate research. However, sales indicate increased demand.
- Output 4: Improved supportive environment for social marketing of sexual and reproductive health commodities. There was strong government support and cooperation through Drug Administration

⁷⁵ See annex 5

⁷⁶ Mid Term Review Report 2009-2013 Strategic Plan. Brhan Research and Development Consultancy (BRDC) plc, January 2012. P.7, para 5

Box 4 Results from three health projects

and Control Authority. However, policy changes permitting out of pharmacy sale of oral contraceptives and Oral Rehydration Salt not yet achieved.⁷⁷

CCRDA

10 CSO were supported in Tigray and 14 in SNNPR. Conclusions from the MTR are as follows:

- “the project outcomes are, on the whole, found to be more than expected. The component has resulted in large scale awareness and behaviour change of communities, which led to taking voluntary counselling and testing *en mass*, formulation of local laws that banned certain social practices that thought to be contributing to the spread of HIV infection. Indeed, in some cases graduated CC groups have decided to continue CC sessions by themselves, without external support. Despite the inherent difficulties of implementing income generating activity schemes, it was possible to save the lives of several AIDS patients and change the livelihoods of several others in most project sites. Home based care in Tigray has resulted from house to house HIV&AIDS education, while in Wolaita it is a pre-IGA service”⁷⁸
- “It is only the environmental protection and rehabilitation component where the least success was registered. Both the school and community based tree planting programs did not produce the desired results, mainly because of problems inherent in communal management of projects”⁷⁹

5.34 A smaller set of innovative projects have been developed to test or promote new work with a view to finding products and approaches that benefit nutrition and especially child nutrition.

5.35 Support to complement the **International Potato Centre (CIP)** for work promoting potato and sweet potato; and for **Operational Research (OR)** with the Tigray Agricultural Research Institute (TARI) are associated with objectives to improve food security, and technology with benefits to nutrition and livelihoods. Independent evaluation of the OR indicates that “*About 740 households have benefitted directly and an unknown number indirectly.... in four watersheds*”.⁸⁰ And the report states that “*Survey evidence and feedback from direct beneficiaries indicate OR technologies have had a major impact on food security status and livelihood chances for direct beneficiary households*” (P. vi, para 3).

5.36 The extension department of the regional Bureau of Agriculture (BoA) in Tigray is a partner for the promotion of sweet potato. The promotion focuses on the environmental conservation and the uses of the leaves for animal feed. For this particular research activity, Irish Aid has seconded a researcher who is working with Tigray Agricultural Research Institute (TARI).

5.37 The promotion of the sweet potato is on its nutritional component for children and for pregnant and lactating women. Promotion has been done by radio broadcast and the selection of the woredas is based on the accessibility of FM radio service. Demonstration for the preparation of sweet potato is handled by the CSO Mums for Mums using mobile kitchens.⁸¹

5.38 In Tigray, 31 of the 33 rural woredas are chronically food insecure and are covered by the PSNP. The scaling up of the sweet potato production could be a good opportunity to

⁷⁷ Evaluation of DKT’s Joint Grant – RNE, Irish Aid, DFID “Enhanced Social Marketing Activities in Ethiopia”. Evaluation Period: June 2009-May 2010. Dr Assefa Seme and Carol Squire, June 2010. P. 4, para 3

⁷⁸ Midterm Evaluation of CCRDA/IA HIV and AIDS Prevention, Care and Support Collaborative Program in Tigray and SNNP Regional States (2009-2010). First Draft Report, Kana Public Health and Development Consultancy, January 2011. P. 6, para 4.

⁷⁹ Ibid P. 6, para 6

⁸⁰ Operational Research for Food Security and Capacity Building Programmes in Tigray and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People’s Regions, Ethiopia, Final Evaluation. Report by Roman Moges Asefaha and Ray Purcell Mokoro Limited. 18 January 2011, P. vi, para 1

⁸¹ Interviews with TARI researchers and Mums for Mums staff member.

diversify household food sources and help them to eventually graduate from the PSNP. Thus, create a potential of linking sweet potato with food security, especially since it is a drought resistant crop.

Food and livelihood security

5.39 Table 7 shows the Pillar Outcome and two objectives dealing with food security from the CSP. Of the four outcome indicators one shows a clear achievement of the 2012 target ahead of time, and two dealing with conservation issues suggest a positive trend but at a lower than target rate. One indicator of the prevalence of stunting shows little improvement between 2005 and 2010. The choice of this indicator raises the question of how appropriate it is for this outcome. Is a reduction in stunting likely to be an outcome closely linked to the work on livelihood security under this pillar, or a result that will emerge from a much wider combination of development improvements, and therefore more relevant at the level of programme goal?

Table 7 Sampled outcome and objectives 6 and 7

Pillar Outcome: Increased resilience to climate change and shocks with enhanced livelihood security for the poor			
Indicators	Baseline (date)	Target 2012	Performance
Percentage of PSNP households retaining assets	60% (2008)	No target set by Gov't Irish Aid target: 70%	Both beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries experienced large losses of assets in 2008, however PSNP beneficiaries suffered fewer losses (9.6%) compared to non-beneficiaries (19.6%). Forced sales of assets declined from 48% in 2006 to 30% in 2010. ⁸² Target of 70% was met in 2010.
Improvement in value of productive assets (livestock) owned by chronically food insecure households	3.96 TLU (2008)	30% increase in value of assets	Value of livestock held remained more or less constant around 3,500 birr between 2006-2010. 4.34 TLU (2010) ⁸³
Reduction in prevalence of stunting nationally	47% (2005)	No national target, Irish Aid target: 30%	44% (DHS, 2010)
HH perception around benefits from the construction and maintenance of Soil & Water Conservation (SWC) infrastructure on communal and private lands	SWC on communal land 57% (2008)		56% (2010)
	SWC on private land in 56% (2008)		41% (2010)
Objective 6: To protect and enhance local ecosystems and the assets of chronically food insecure women and men ⁸⁴			

⁸² Source IFPRI PSNP Impact Evaluation 2010

⁸³ Source IFPRI Ibid; TLU - Tropical Livestock Unit

1) Percentage of PSNP households receiving food/cash transfers in a timely manner	35% (2010) and 55% (2008 & 2009).	65%	
2) Percentage increase in land covered with multi-purpose/versatile trees	6 million ha (2010)	11 million ha (2012)	
3) Perceived improvement in implementation of PSNP graduation	Perception currently worrying but unclear	Substantial improvement in clarity and current perception	Regions reported that of their 2010/2011 target to graduate 370,980 Households, only 152,006 HH (41% of the plan) were actually graduated. ⁸⁵
4) Area of land developed through community based watershed management	3.77 million ha	5.7 million ha	
5) Average increase in the number of months of food security annually	0.40 months	2 months	
Objective 7: To diversify and improve income sources of chronically food insecure women and mens' livelihoods			
1) Percentage food insecure households with access to financial services attributable to HABP and other Irish Aid supported programmes	4.64% (2010, HABP)	50%	HABP has been slow to get started and is behind schedule
2) Percentage poor households reporting on- or off-farm income attributable to HABP and other Irish Aid supported programmes	~0% (2010)	50%	HABP has been slow to get started and is behind schedule
3) Percentage of poor households reporting satisfaction that their business plans reflect their priorities, needs and capabilities	~0% (2010)	50%	HABP has been slow to get started and is behind schedule
4) Percentage increase in the supply/availability of improved seed	0.56 million quintals (nationally)	2 million quintals (nationally)	No data

5.40 There are insufficient data for the evaluation team to comment on progress against output indicators for objectives 6 and 7.

5.41 The major investment by Irish Aid under the Food, Nutrition and Livelihoods Security pillar has been the **Productive Safety Nets Programme (PSNP)**. The programme has, in effect,

⁸⁴ PSNP is due to have a Mid-term Review in 2012, when more data will be collected to report against these indicators

⁸⁵ Source Irish Aid Ethiopia Annual Report 2011

three complementary objectives: firstly, to provide a targeted safety net by which food insecure households get access to money or food in exchange for labour on public works;⁸⁶ secondly, to develop the physical capital and productivity of land by using labour to create soil and water conservation structures and feeder roads; and thirdly, to facilitate households to escape from food insecurity by ‘graduating’ out of the programme. There is some tension between these objectives with different stakeholders prioritising the importance of each objective to a different extent.

5.42 The PSNP to date covers 319 chronically food insecure woredas out of a national total of around 800. The number of beneficiaries varies from year to year depending on the rainfall and crop yields. For 2011/12, the plan was to provide support to 7,642,068 clients in 319 woredas in Tigray, Afar, Amhara, Oromiya, SNNP, Somali, Harari and Dire Dawa Regions.⁸⁷

5.43 Irish Aid has supported the PSNP since its inception. Starting from € 3.3 million in 2004, it has increased from year to year peaking at € 21.9 million in 2008. As a result of the financial crisis, the support was cut back and was € 8 million in 2011 which is about 2 per cent of the total PSNP budget. It has contributed nearly € 64 million for the programme so far.

5.44 Ireland had a particular interest in this programme because many aspects of the design built on the experience of Irish Aid with Integrated Community Based Watershed Management (ICBWM) schemes in Tigray. Irish Aid has been one of the more active PSNP donors since the inception of the programme. Irish Aid is a financial contributor and participant in the Donor Working Group (DWG) and the financial management task force. Irish Aid provided the chair of the Donor Working Group in 2006 and again in 2010, the only one of the ‘smaller’ donors to have played such an important role. Irish Aid staff members self-assess their contributions as being to the programme implementation manual preparation, financial management, drafting of TOR for specific studies (eg. PSNP impact evaluation), inputs to relevant technical fora on gender and nutrition, and facilitating the rapid response teams (RRT) and JRIS missions. Irish Aid has also been vocal in policy dialogue with Government on some of the more challenging issues such as evidence based graduation, the primacy of transfers, the slow roll out of the HABP and the need for an alternative approach.

5.45 The PSNP is part of a strategy by the GOE to tackle food insecurity. It works in company with the ‘Other Food Security Programmes’ (OFSP)⁸⁸ and the Household Assets Building Programme (HABP), described below. Although there are significant improvements in the concentration of both PSNP and OFSP resources on target households, there remain significant numbers of people yet to be targeted with household assets (seen to be the main approach to building assets, and therefore the most likely path to graduation).

5.46 Evidence about the performance of PSNP comes from a number of sources: regular joint programme reviews by government and donors; and an independent evaluation carried out by the Central Statistics Authority (CSA) in partnership with the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). We present firstly, an overview and then specific findings about resource transfers, targeting, public works and graduation.

5.47 The most recent donor-government JRIS mission in November 2011 observed that the trend in year-on-year livelihood deterioration prior to the launch of the PSNP in 2005 appears to have been reversed for households participating in the PSNP. This is a significant step forward in the country’s fight against food insecurity and poverty. Perhaps the most visible manifestation is that the 2011 drought in the Horn of Africa did not become a crisis in Ethiopia and this has largely been attributed to the PSNP enabling poor populations to withstand this significant shock, although there is no hard analysis to reinforce this claim. Despite these

⁸⁶ Citizens who are chronically food insecure and unable to do physical work, such as pregnant or lactating women and others with disabilities can receive ‘Direct Support’ without a labour contribution

⁸⁷ MoA, 2012. PSNP annual report.

⁸⁸ More recently this has been renamed the Ethiopia Food Security Programme

positive elements, the progress of the programme towards closing the food gap of PSNP clients is slower than expected owing to shortcomings in the implementation of the programme.

5.48 The November 2011 Aide Memoire identified the following outcomes in chronically food insecure woredas:

- Food consumption assured and asset depletion prevented for food insecure households
- Markets stimulated and access to services and natural resources enhanced for PSNP and other households, and
- Natural environment rehabilitated and enhanced

5.49 More specific results of the PSNP were recorded during the 2010 Irish Aid MTR which reported the following encouraging data:⁸⁹

- PSNP beneficiaries increased their calorie availability from 2028 to 2138Kcal
- Forced sales of assets decreased from 51.3 per cent to 47.5 per cent
- Productive assets (e.g. livestock) increased from 3.71 to 3.96 units per household
- Households perceiving they are 'doing well' improved from 51 per cent in 1994 to 74 per cent in 2009.

5.50 The donors, particularly Irish Aid, believe that 'transfer comes first' since the PSNP is geared as a safety net towards supporting chronically food insecure households. Thus, timely transfer is a key indicator of performance. To ensure that transfers are delivered on time in all woredas, there is a 'primacy of transfers' principle: (i) that the annual transfers plans with the dates for the each of the monthly transfers would be made public by woredas in advance of the transfers season; (ii) any delay due to administrative reasons should not delay the transfers to clients, and (iii) significant attention would be devoted to addressing continued weakness in food management, as food transfers are more likely to be delayed than cash. In addition, "Notes on the Primacy of Transfers and the Cash First Principle" are supposed to be translated into local languages and disseminated to all PSNP implementers.⁹⁰

5.51 However, in some regions (e.g. Amhara), labour poor households were excluded from the programme. In other words, those households who are chronically food insecure but not able-bodied for labour were excluded, which contradicts the principle of transfer comes first. This problem led to tension between donors and government and provides a simple example of Irish Aid's style of interaction. Correspondence between donors and government over this issue had deteriorated until Irish Aid staff became involved, took a more diplomatic approach and served as an honest broker, resolving the impasse.⁹¹

5.52 At the initial stage of the PSNP implementation, targeting was an issue for the government and the development partners. Some people who were eligible for the programme were excluded, while those not eligible were included. Most exclusion errors arose from inadequate administrative quotas. Full family targeting is practised in most areas, even though officials acknowledge that it implies that fewer households are targeted. Kebele officials frequently request additional funds, but invariably these requests are denied.⁹²

5.53 The impact assessment study has revealed that gender dimensions present a mixed picture. In nearly all (98 per cent) of surveyed kebeles, there is at least one woman and at least one Development Agent (DA) on the Kebele Food Security Task Force and women are fairly represented (at least one woman per kebele) in the Kebele Appeals Committee. But both women and men report that women experience significant difficulties in balancing required

⁸⁹ Ethiopian MTR Report, 2010 (page 9). We have been unable to find more up to date figures.

⁹⁰ Ibid

⁹¹ Evidence from interviews with IA staff and PSNP Donor Coordination Team.

⁹² IFPRI, 2011. Evaluation of Ethiopia's Food Security Program: Documenting Progress in the Implementation of the Productive Safety Nets Programme and the Household Asset Building Programme, page xx.

participation in public works (PW) with other household responsibilities. Relative to male-headed households, female-headed households were less likely to lodge a complaint if they perceived that selection processes were unfair, had less contact with DAs, and were less likely to use the credit facilities established under the HABP.⁹³

5.54 The impact evaluation by IFPRI shows that there are some challenges in relation to the implementation of the public works:⁹⁴

- There is considerable variation in the extent of community involvement in the selection of public works projects. There are clearly cases where these have been decided upon by the woreda and consultation with kebeles and communities seems notional. But there are other instances where development agents and community members have had a significant say in deciding priorities and plans for public works.
- Public works projects are generally perceived to assist in supporting livelihoods. Work on roads is seen as particularly positively. Views on other activities, such as soil and water conservation and natural resource management, are more mixed.
- A number of implementation problems associated with lack of technical skills, difficulties in supervision, and delays in receipt of funds for capital expenditures were noted. The tension between the use of public works as a means of transferring funds to poor households and as a means of strengthening community assets was also highlighted.
- Participation in public works activities puts considerable strain on women. There appears to be little willingness to address this.

5.55 Graduation⁹⁵ is the higher level goal to which the PSNP contributes, but for which other programmes and investments are required. The strategy to achieve graduation from PSNP has focused on overlapping the PSNP with the OFSP and household asset building initiative. A recent study confirms that this targeting overlap has largely been achieved, but overall coverage remains low at an estimated 21 per cent.⁹⁶ Regions are also planning to target OFSP support to households recently graduated from the PSNP.

5.56 The total number of households graduated in 2010/11 is estimated at 152,006 (equivalent to 760,030 individual beneficiaries) and the plan is to graduate 308,381 households (1.5 million beneficiaries) in 2011/12 which seems to be an ambitious increase placing an enormous burden on support programmes such as the HABP. (See Box 5)

Box 5 Challenges with graduation from PSNP

The impact evaluation of the PSNP shows that while graduation is progressing slowly, there are still some shortcomings:⁹⁷

- There is a good understanding of the concept and mechanisms of graduation at regional level and fair at woredas. But at kebele and community levels, the understanding of the concept becomes very loose, at times completely uninformed, and sometimes completely incorrect. The graduates interviewed appeared to be the least informed of why they were graduated.
- There are variations of knowledge at community level regarding the process by which people graduate, with some thinking that it was time-dependent, others believing it to be political, quota-driven, and others knowing the specific benchmark value for graduation. The experience of graduates themselves indicated that the process was in most cases not transparent or well-explained.

⁹³ Ibid, page xvii.

⁹⁴ Ibid, page Xxi.

⁹⁵ Graduation is the process by which a food insecure household achieves a sufficient level of food security that it no longer needs to participate in the programme

⁹⁶ Devereux S. *et al.* *Ethiopia's Productive Safety Net Programme: 2008 Assessment. Draft Report.* Brighton

⁹⁷ IFPRI, 2011. *Evaluation of Ethiopia's Food Security Program: Documenting Progress in the Implementation of the Productive Safety Nets Programme and the Household Asset Building Programme*, page 174.

Box 5 Challenges with graduation from PSNP

- Officials at most levels are well informed of the actual graduation benchmarks. However, when the official regional benchmarks are translated into specific criteria for targeting potential graduate households at the kebele and community levels, a plethora of criteria result.
- Given the intention of the government to meet and fulfil the graduation targets, there is an imperative that graduates are increasingly identified and taken off the programme. This imperative is a reality and is felt and discussed at all levels, from regions right down to the communities. Sometimes respondents, particularly at the regional level, discuss these targets in relation to quotas and required future rates of graduation. However, at lower levels, these “quotas” are often seen as administratively imposed and at odds with the time required for sustainable graduation.
- There are some incentives for graduation which include (1) the promise (or expectation) of material incentives; (2) the non-equivalence and fungibility of different transfers; and (3) regional/woreda-level incentives. These incentives may increase the incidence of benchmark graduation, but may undermine sustainable graduation. The main finding on disincentives for graduation has to do with a reluctance to be self-reliant.
- A number of constraints/enablers of sustainable graduation were identified, including (1) full family versus partial family targeting; (2) the level of household and community assets, particularly land; (3) price changes and (4) natural, climatic shocks. Many respondents believed that if sustainable graduation was to be achieved at scale, then large investments in community-level agricultural technologies and irrigation are critical. This is keeping with the vision of Complementary Community Initiatives (CCI), however CCI is currently intended for lowland areas only.
- While support is available for new PSNP graduates, little evidence of graduate households receiving this support was observed.

5.57 Graduation is an issue for the donors and the government. The benchmark for graduation, keeping them for one year in the public works activities after graduation so as to ensure that they do not fall back are some of the issues of discussion. Irish Aid has been one of the donors which stressed evidence based graduation and sponsored a graduation study.⁹⁸

5.58 Evidence suggests that beneficiaries have limited confidence in their ability to graduate from the PSNP (80 per cent of beneficiaries have no or limited confidence according to the CSA/IFPRI impact study). Given the seriously depleted resource base and limited opportunities in most of the food insecure areas combined with population growth and an ongoing reliance on farm-level income. This probably reflects household perceptions of the limited extent graduation can happen beyond the remit of the PSNP and the wider food security programme. The government’s Growth and Transformation Plan (GTP) and other initiatives (such as the Economic Growth Corridor approach) recognise the need for broader approaches, in particular the importance of economic and market oriented interventions.

5.59 The experience of the PSNP implementation suggests that it is unlikely that all current beneficiaries will graduate (in particular direct support beneficiaries). The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MOLSA) has recently announced a plan to develop a social protection action plan for Ethiopia. Such a strategy is likely to look at a broad set of issues and initiatives including pensions, compensation from the military for fighting related disabilities, school feeding, and support to HIV affected households as well as the PSNP.

5.60 More positively, there is evidence to suggest that the PSNP is increasing households’ access to and uptake of basic service. 80 per cent of respondents to the public works impact assessment stated that their children went to schools which had classrooms constructed through the PSNP, while, after one year of programme implementation, 32.6 per cent of respondents said that they had enrolled more children in school as a result of the PSNP (with a further 43 per cent stating that children stayed in school longer). In recent years the

⁹⁸ Interview with former IA staff responsible for PSNP. Assessment of Graduation Report 2010. The IDL group in association with A-Z Consult and ODI.

government has designed a new National Nutrition strategy and developed a National Nutrition Project. This provides further opportunities to develop synergies related to the achievement of PSNP objectives, which in part are measured by nutrition outcomes.

5.61 PSNP graduation was very slow and the OFSP was not strong enough to support speeding up the graduation process. Thus, in 2009, the **Household Asset Building Programme (HABP)** was designed to diversify income sources and increase the productive assets of food insecure households in PSNP woredas. To this end, it was planned that the Government will provide credit through financial service providers to food insecure households, supplemented with a grant through Government systems for the poorest households. To complement this, the extension system will provide technical advice and guidance that responds to the needs, capacities and interests of food insecure households. The combination of the financial products and technical advice will enable households to make investments that strengthen their livelihoods over time.⁹⁹

5.62 HABP has been slow to get going. It is hampered by a combination of organisational and policy issues that present an enormous challenge. HABP is managed from a different directorate within the Ministry of Agriculture than the PSNP. The two strands of work, credit and technical support are again managed by two different organisations: the Federal Cooperatives Agency and the Agricultural Extension Directorate in the Ministry of Agriculture. The targets for household participation are very demanding, Gender disaggregated targets were set for 419,275 households in 2010/11, tripling to 1,594,757 in 2011/12.

5.63 Donor support is limited to the organisation, management and capacity development of HABP, not the credit fund, which the GOE has decided to fund from existing resources. Capacity development is a major challenge. In order to qualify for credit, a development assistant must prepare a business plan for each household. Clearly this is very demanding. At woreda level, the permanent staff are supplemented by four contract workers. According to government, Irish Aid has been an important contributor to the technical committee for HABP with specific inputs concerning market value chain analysis, input delivery, and M&E.

Attribution and Contribution analysis

5.64 To the extent that the development results presented here are reliable findings from rigorous and independent analysis, Irish Aid can reasonably be credited with supporting a proportion of the benefits at least commensurate with Ireland's share of financing. Ireland's involvement has directly enabled more people to have access to and benefit from basic services; has improved health outcomes; and has helped households battle against food insecurity. But there is a good case to be made that Ireland's contribution is worth more than its proportion of aid finance alone.

5.65 The sections above have contained references to Irish Aid's self-assessment of added value. The evaluation team has been able to confirm that assessment for a majority of the instances quoted. Annex 6 groups together these self-assessment actions in a contributions issues matrix. Some 21 self-assessed actions were recorded, mainly during the participatory TOC exercise conducted by the evaluators early in the assignment. Of the 21, we were able to cross check their validity for 19 actions. Some five were confirmed only from a single source and all of these relate to projects which the evaluation team were unable to follow-up in person. A total of 14 actions were all confirmed by two or more types of independent respondent (federal government staff, donor agency etc.) and, or by more than one respondent within any category.

5.66 In the judgement of the evaluators this is plausibly convincing evidence of the value added role Irish Aid staff have played and is very much in line with part of their *de facto* strategy actions to make use of M&E for lesson learning and policy dialogue, and pursue active engagement in multi-donor *fora* through support to the PBS and PSNP Secretariats and working

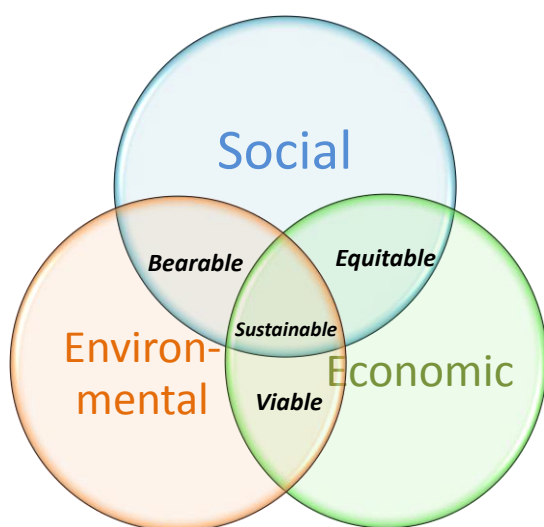
⁹⁹JRIS Aide Memoir May 2009.

through pooled funds. There is no counterfactual suggestion that actions would not have been taken at all without Ireland’s involvement, but there is clear recognition that actions by Irish Aid have had a distinctive impact on the planning, management and implementation of these programmes.

Sustainability

5.67 Sustainability concerns the extent to which results and achievements to date are likely to endure in the longer term. There are a number of dimensions to this, illustrated in Figure 3. The text explores aspects of: organisation, social, financial, aid dependency, risk analysis, Irish Aid donor support and scaling up.

Figure 3 Aspects of sustainability¹⁰⁰



5.68 Irish Aid is fully committed to the idea of ‘one plan, one budget, and one report’ and the use of government systems. Examples are clear from the PBS, PSNP and MDG Health Fund, and implicit in their work on auditing and help to roll-out IBEX accounting systems. By linking with government systems, organisational sustainability is more likely.

5.69 Interventions outside of government systems with CSOs will inevitably have questions over organisational sustainability within the context of Ethiopia and the aftermath of the 2009 Proclamation on Charities and Societies. However, Irish Aid has taken a number of steps to help ensure organisational sustainability by providing: i) financial and capacity support at the time of the Proclamation;¹⁰¹ ii) support to the CSSP;¹⁰² iii) support to TECS¹⁰³ which is designed to analyse the implications for civil society in Ethiopia, although the Irish Aid financial contribution is small (at 5 per cent compared to DFID’s 95 per cent);¹⁰⁴ iv) an unwritten exit strategy to disengage if other funds are available to support the organisation.^{105 106}

¹⁰⁰ From: Adams, W.M. (2006). "The Future of Sustainability: Re-thinking Environment and Development in the Twenty-first Century." Report of the IUCN Renowned Thinkers Meeting, 29–31 January 2006

¹⁰¹ Discussions held with representatives from DKT and FGAE, 3/4/12, Discussions with CS Task Force, 22/3/12

¹⁰² Discussions held CSSP team, 3/4/12

¹⁰³ Tracking Trends in Ethiopia’s Civil Society Sector (TECS) Project

¹⁰⁴ Summary of TECS, ATOS Consulting sent by Ann Condy, November 2011

¹⁰⁵ Discussions with Farm Africa, 23/3/12

¹⁰⁶ “with Irish Aid exiting from the HIV sector over the remainder of the CSP due to the existing resources available in relation to the needs and Ireland’s minor role in the sector” Irish Aid: Ethiopia Mid Term Review Report 2010, for example p. 4, 2nd bullet point

5.70 Irish Aid's emphasis on gender and poorer sections of society as evidenced in the project analysis above goes some way to enhancing social sustainability. In terms of Irish Aid's own social capital which is assessed by respondents as being strong with both civil society and government, this will probably imply a need for continued engagement with civil society and government at all levels for the foreseeable future.

5.71 Both PBS and PSNP are highly leveraged investments by GOE and dependent on large-scale donor funding. The ability of Government to manage the macro economy and generate growth that will enable the state to take over the financing of these programmes is very much in doubt given current government policies regarding state control over sectors of the economy such as banking, ownership of land and telecommunications. Some critics regard the government policy of democratic developmentalism as excessively reliant on budget support from international donors and fundamentally flawed by perpetuating a patrimonial state with patronage through the governing political party.¹⁰⁷ Government policy is also contingent on regional and geopolitical risks concerning relationships with both Eritrea and Somalia.

5.72 A paper that considers Irish Aid options for financing the health sector¹⁰⁸ looks at 'Pros' and 'Cons' of two financing mechanisms. Although not all the 'Pros' have yet to come to fruition, four 'Cons' are given against the MDG health fund – auditing, weak capacity in finance and procurement, poor functioning of governance structures, and a high number of financing mechanisms in the health sector (all of which have come up in discussions with the evaluation team).

5.73 The Evaluation and Audit Unit of Irish Aid recently conducted a PFM assessment in Ethiopia. Whilst a number of specific concerns were raised, especially concerning procurement, the overall conclusion was broadly positive, arguing that the basics of a reasonably well functioning PFM system are in place in Ethiopia and noting that these have improved greatly over recent years. Those issues that require attention are acknowledged by government and donors working jointly together as the priority areas, and credible plans are in place to deal with them through structured reform programmes.¹⁰⁹

5.74 Risk analysis is a feature of both the Irish Aid country strategy document and individual programme appraisal document. A typical appraisal document follows a fairly standard format including a section on critical success factors and assumptions. However there is little analysis or suggested mitigating actions against these. Actions to counter risks are also less well developed. In most project documents and partnerships, there is little evidence of documented exit strategies and Irish Aid on-going discussions around Tigray may be a consequence of this. In a similar way, the CSP document contains a risk analysis table which does include consideration of mitigating actions. This is updated annually as an annex to the Annual Report. The analysis takes account of new developments whilst maintaining the main issues and sets out contingency actions for Irish Aid. There is no discussion of how issues identified in previous reports have been handled.

5.75 A number of development partners have commented favourably about Irish Aid's empowerment of and involvement of national staff as a benefit to their knowledge of local contexts and their relationships with government. Some consider that Irish Aid experiences lower turnover with national staff as a result of this policy, even though

Sustainability under PSNP is helped because there is a reasonable degree of ownership at grass roots level. The programme has a component for repair and maintenance of works. (Interview, IA national staff)

¹⁰⁷ See for example Hyden, G., 2008. Institutions, power and policy outcomes in Africa. Discussion Paper No. 2, Power and Politics in Africa; Kelsall, T., 2011. Developmental patrimonialism? Rethinking business and politics in Africa. Policy Brief 2. Africa power and politics, June 2011; Revolutionary democratic state-building: party, state and people in EPRDF's Ethiopia, Vaughan, S. 2011. Journal of East African Studies Vol. 5, No. 4 November 2011, pp 619-640

¹⁰⁸ Irish Aid Options Paper for Financing the Health Sector (undated).

¹⁰⁹ Barry, A (2012) Public Financial Management Assessment; Ethiopia February 2012 Irish Aid

remuneration is said to be less competitive than with some of the higher-paying donors. It is thought that government reacts well to working with national staff in donor offices. However, staff observe that owing to the small office staff complement and limited career development opportunities national staff reach a promotional 'ceiling' beyond which it is not easy to progress. This is a challenge shared by other bilateral donors as well as other Irish Aid missions.¹¹⁰

5.76 Sustainability of project results is complex, embracing the organisational and financial aspects noted above as well as aspects of the environment and economic attractiveness. For example, about 80 per cent of the PSNP resources are used for public work activities. Most of the public works are focused on activities to protect or rehabilitate the environment and there is evidence that there are significant positive impacts of the work done to date. However, given the scale of some of the investments and the potential to alter water courses and affect drainage and groundwater, it is important that environmental protection measures are in place. The PSNP has an Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) which includes procedures to limit potential negative programme impacts. There have been challenges in ESMF screening of the PW projects. Good progress has been made in the screening of PW sub-projects but further improvements could be made in the follow-up of the identified mitigating measures. PSNP management is planning to strengthen the integration of social issues (like gender, HIV/AIDS, etc.) and monitoring of mitigation measures and follow-up.¹¹¹

5.77 An element of sustainability is scaling up of pilot or small-scale initiatives assessed as successful. Both SOS Sahel and Farm Africa¹¹² are able to provide examples of scaling up. The SOS Sustainable Livelihood Programme (SLIP) project has been expanded by the regional government from three to 26 woredas. Poultry keeping has been expanded to adjacent areas in SNNPR and to Oromia Region. Farm Africa provided an example from Bale – where the Eco-region Sustainable Management Programme now has major funding (particularly from the European Union (EU) and the Netherlands) and the lessons are being extended to other parts of the country. As already noted, watershed development in Tigray has been a model for schemes in other parts of the country by both governmental and non-governmental partners.

5.78 By extending audiences for results from projects, there is greater likelihood that learning is not only invested in Irish Aid. A few examples were found from learning events. Farm Africa commented that the transmission of messages is a key impediment and Irish Aid take lessons (often anonymously) to transmit to the "big table" – an example was an analysis of rural women's empowerment. However, overall, partners were not aware of any documented learning or analytical papers produced by Irish Aid despite the intention in the CSP that "*this country programme will prioritise lesson learning and building policy messages based on evidence*".¹¹³

5.79 Irish Aid's approach to analysis and programming has created mechanisms which acknowledge and take into account risks to sustainability in several dimensions, especially concerning organisational, and social aspects and sustainability of project results. There is concern about the long-term financial sustainability of governments' large-scale social programmes, but overall, Irish Aid's approach makes development results likely to be sustainable.

¹¹⁰ PBS SA Coordination Group discussion, 29/3/12 and former IA staff

¹¹¹ JRIS Aide Memoir November 2011.

¹¹² Meeting with livelihoods CSOs, 23 March 2012

¹¹³ Irish Aid (2008) Country Strategy Paper Ethiopia para 78

6 Findings for Development Processes

Summary of findings for development processes

- ❖ The mix of aid modalities reflects the recommendations of a policy paper dating back to 2005: support to government budget lines for basic services and food security balanced by support to NGOs working in demand-side governance, health and food security, plus work at regional levels.
- ❖ Smaller projects help tackle issues that are germane to achieving sustainable development from public services: quality of service provision and alternative sources of income. Some have an experimental aspect to them.
- ❖ Active involvement in the coordination of both the PBS and PSNP brings heavy demands on staff time.
- ❖ The continuation of support to two regions, Tigray and SNNP offers the potential to maintain Irish Aids' understanding of development and public administration at grass roots level. Partners broadly credit experience in Tigray as a valuable influence but Irish Aid has not been able to capitalise so effectively on its experience in SNNPR.
- ❖ Development partners are overwhelmingly positive about the experience of working as a partner with Irish Aid and contrast it favourably with some other donors.
- ❖ Mainstreaming of gender, governance, HIV and environment is a positive attempt by Irish Aid to move upstream and influence partners. To date, more progress has been made with gender. Country specific strategies would help advance progress in the other areas.

6.1 This section deals with three broad issues concerning development processes: firstly, questions about how coherent and effective was the mix and range of aid modalities adopted; secondly, the approach to partnership adopted in the CSP; and thirdly, the effectiveness of mainstreaming gender, HIV, governance and environment across the programme. We start with a look at coherence and aid modalities.

Aid modalities

6.2 Irish Aid Ethiopia commissioned an interesting report on aid modalities in 2005,¹¹⁴ which was influential in the background to the 2008-12 CSP. The authors argued that Ethiopia received significantly less aid per capita than other Sub-Saharan Africa countries despite the exceptionally deep and widespread poverty in addition to the Government of Ethiopia being a credible partner for aid agencies. In order to absorb increasing volumes of aid a shift to sector programmes and direct budget support was called for. Budget support foundered with the repression that followed the contested results of the 2005 general election. However, the architecture set out in the 2005 report was retained in large measure. Box 6 quotes salient observations from the assessment in that report (emphasis added in boldface).

Box 6 Assessment of aid modalities in Ethiopia, 2005¹¹⁵

5.17 As an illustration of complementarities: it would make sense to balance **multi-year support to a government budget line** for cash safety nets (provided concerns about appropriate programme design and consultative arrangements can be resolved), with **modest support to NGOs working in food-security** related programmes at district level, and also to a continuation of some form of **agro-ecological programme** (drawing

¹¹⁴ DCI (2005) Aid Modalities in Ethiopia

¹¹⁵ Ibid, Chapter 5

on experiences from the current agricultural operational research programme), while the budget support relationship with Tigray will enable food security and related issues (resettlement) to be raised at regional as well as federal level.

5.18 With budget support instruments, **collaboration with other donors** becomes the rule rather than the exception, and the correlation between management requirements and levels of funding becomes less certain (the staff input and management requirements for a grant of €10 million may not be much more than for a grant of €1 million), so that staff time is likely to be a more binding constraint than finance. The CSP should therefore give **careful attention to the allocation of staff time, taking account of the scope for division of labour among donors** (as already happens with DFID for health and infrastructure), and for joint activities with like-minded donors.

5.19 Support to civil society is an appropriate aid modality for donors in Ethiopia. The need to strengthen accountability structures – particularly in a country like Ethiopia with little or no democratic tradition – requires **support to government (supply side) to be balanced by support to civil society (demand side)**. However, donors also need to recognise the weaknesses inherent in Ethiopian civil society and to unpack assumptions about their capacity to encourage ‘better governance’.

5.27 A related issue is the geographical balance of support across Ethiopia. As noted in Chapter 4, the share of the programme that is targeted on Tigray has held up, while the share targeted to SNNPR has declined. There would be several drawbacks if Ireland's support were to be unduly focused on Tigray. Tigray is closely identified with the dominant party in the ruling coalition; moreover, Tigray is a rather untypical region in other ways. For both reasons **it would be good for the programme to maintain support to, and the opportunity of drawing contrasting experiences from, another region.**

6.3 The realised strategy through to 2012 has many of these characteristics. Large-scale sector or quasi-sector support to PBS, PSNP and the MDG Health Fund is complemented by support to NGOs working in food security agro-ecological and health programmes. Irish Aid has collaborated closely with other donors and shouldered the burden of management inputs to multi-donor coordination mechanisms. Support to civil society has balanced support to government in the PBS Social Accountability work and through the Civil Society Support Programme. The programme has also retained an interest in two regions, albeit under declining terms.

Coherence

6.4 In developing TOC for budget lines under the Irish Aid programme, the evaluation team saw that Irish Aid staff offered more detail about their contributions to design, management and implementation than to mechanisms to help improve quality of social services or to tackle the sustainability of livelihoods. This seemed to imply that insufficient attention was paid to gaps in the intervention logic where arguably, a medium-scale donor with a flexible approach to programmes could make a positive contribution. However, examination of the small budget lines in the portfolio reveals a somewhat different picture.

6.5 The make-up of the portfolio includes a number of smaller interventions that have a potential to provide direct support to the outcome objectives of both pillars through connections with the PBS and PSNP programmes. The health and nutrition interventions have been discussed earlier in Chapter 4. To these can be added a set of interventions linked to food security. These include:

- SOS Sahel Sustainable Livelihoods Improvement Project (SLIP). This is creating alternative sources of income from improving productivity and quality of selected high value products (pepper, honey, sheep and goat) and improved access to markets.
- SOS Sahel and Farm Africa, Bale Eco-region Sustainable Management Programme.
- Farm Africa Rural Women's Empowerment Project.

- Tourism in Ethiopia for Sustainable Future Alternatives (Tesfa). This is providing alternative income opportunities through ecological tourism.
- Woman’s Association of Tigray (WAT) providing credit to women for income generating activities.
- A pilot social cash transfer scheme in Tigray with UNICEF. The purpose is to “serve as home-grown social protection committees accountable for putting in place community managed care for those who are unable or should not work, such as orphans, the elderly, disabled, or those who are sick.” The main mechanism is Community Care Coalitions (CCCs) made up of different institutions or groups that exist in the community.¹¹⁶
- Complementary Poverty Monitoring Approach (CPMA). A detailed panel study of poverty conducted in Tigray and although seen as too detailed, too location specific and resource-intensive for replication has contributed to understanding qualitative dimensions of M&E by both Irish Aid and Tigray State government.¹¹⁷

6.6 These share some characteristics with the health and nutrition projects. They are relatively low budget, most less than €500,000 per year and some much less. They are often innovative, testing new technology or social mechanisms, have a strong gender component; and in some instances incorporate learning to understand better the nature of poverty and pathways out of it.

6.7 Viewed in some respects as a risk-reducing strategy of diverse aid modalities, these projects all deal with issues that are germane to achieving sustainable development from public services. In the case of health services, and the PBS more generally, they tackle quality of service provision, especially in areas where CSOs can deal with issues more effectively than the state. For livelihoods, they tackle questions of alternative sources of income, both farm and off-farm, that could help farmers achieve food security. Working with civil society is central to Irish Aid’s programme. Irish Aid has taken a leading role in the CSSP despite being a small financial contributor (Box 7).

Box 7 Support to civil society

Activities during the CSP period have been dominated by managing a response to the Proclamation on Charities and Societies (PCS). A review reporting in January 2011 had the following findings:¹¹⁸

Prior to the PCS taking effect a CSO Task Force was created that provided information to CSOs about the legislation and liaised with GOE in an attempt to foster a functional environment for CSO adaptation. Partners who maintained a communicative role with GOE seem to have had a smoother transition process. After the PCS took effect, some Irish Aid-supported organisations were required to change their legal status, change their focus, limit their former activities, or alter their operating structure in order to comply with this law. As a result, some groups have been significantly challenged in their mission and others limited in their functions; but with some rare exceptions. In general, the situation for CSOs at the national level has become more restrictive, but opportunities for positive engagement exist at the regional and sub-regional levels, a situation that Irish Aid is aware of, but has not exploited more fully to date.

Irish Aid’s approach was lauded by CSOs and partners for being pro-active, flexible in terms of financial and non-financial support, and innovative and generous in terms of the quality of its relationships in civil society. Flexibility has fared well during the period of transition to the PCS, but a specific strategy for civil society support could have generated a more programmatic and interconnected approach that would have enhanced impact and contributed to a more efficient allocation of resources.

For CSOs, the focus should be on improving transparency and accountability and fostering closer relations with relevant government ministries. In the wake of the PCS and the need to rapidly adapt to a radically-changed

¹¹⁶ Leaflet (undated) provided by BoLSA. P.1, para 1

¹¹⁷ IA FNLS team and discussions with Ato Daniel Asefa, BoFED, Tigray

¹¹⁸ Coughlin, John and Abeje Teferra (2011) Review of Irish Aid Ethiopia’s Partnership with Civil Society Organisations

Box 7 Support to civil society

operating environment, networks should re-visit where they are best placed to provide benefits for their members.

Irish Aid's main vehicle for supporting CSO is the Civil Society Support Programme, implementation of which started in 2012. The CSSP will provide grant support for capacity building of CSO and will work in parallel with a similar scheme operated by the European Commission. Although Irish Aid is a minority funder, Irish Aid has the lead role among donors and at the time of this evaluation was working with the managing agent which was handling the first substantive round of grants.

6.8 To some extent those projects concerned with livelihoods, slightly more so than those in the health sector, can be thought of as development experiments. They work to test and try out ways of providing new income generating activities which although not institutionally linked to PSNP are tackling the same issues as faced in PSNP woredas - how to find improved and alternative sources of income to keep rural families out of food insecurity. Supply of solar panels and support for model health facilities are comparable examples in the health sector. This approach plays to Ireland's strengths of flexibility, ability to work with both government and civil society partners, and familiarity with state systems at federal, regional and local levels. They are much more than just a way of balancing aid modalities. That said, there is a sense that some of the projects could be better focused had they emerged from gap analysis of the constraints to achieving outcomes under the two pillars. Work on micronutrients, sweet potato and eco-tourism, for example, are not closely linked to the pillar logic models and could be better structured with partners for scaling up and lesson learning.

Working at regional level

6.9 A prominent strand of the Irish Aid portfolio has been support directed through regional government and projects at regional level. Ireland has become associated with Tigray Region partly for historical reasons dating back to the 1984 famine, to the regional focus of Irish international NGOs and to early work when the aid programme started in 1994. In fact, it has been strongly involved with work in SNNP Region as well, but are better known for the relationship with Tigray. The evaluation has not been able to find a complete analysis of expenditure, but for example, in the recent past from 2002 to 2004 out of a total programme of €77.8 million 29 per cent was targeted at SNNPR and 23 per cent at Tigray.¹¹⁹

6.10 Irish Aid has had a partnership with the Regional Government of the SNNPR since 1994. The modalities of support there have evolved over time. Initially, from 1994 to 2002 Irish Aid supported two Area Based Programmes (ABP), in the Sidama and Silti Zones. Since 2003, the programme in SNNPR has consisted of support to the regional government's efforts to provide social services in health, education and HIV; and support to civil society efforts to address HIV and AIDS, improve sexual and reproductive health specially among youth, and combat poverty. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed in 2005, €3.25 million was provided each year; the health sector receiving the largest portion (€1.75 million), HIV and AIDS €700,000 and education €800,000. Since 2010, funding levels have been reduced to €600,000 per year, of which €500,000 per year for health and €100,000 per year for HIV mainstreaming in the education sector.

6.11 Changes in the 2008-12 CSP programme were guided by the Ethiopia national strategy to move away from a broad commitment to poverty reduction and inequality towards deepening Irish Aid's focus on extreme poverty, hunger and vulnerability. The programme focused on:

- Increasing and improving capacity of front line and mid-level staff in health and HIV and AIDS. To focus on human resources for health, training midwives and mid-level health

¹¹⁹ Development Cooperation Ireland (2005) Aid Modalities in Ethiopia, Box 4.5

workers and health sector managers, strengthening supportive supervision in the health system with a focus on the health extension programme.

- Improving access to and quality of health services for the poorest with particular focus on maternal, newborn and child health. The programme was also to support the Regional Health Bureau (RHB) in translating the fee waiver¹²⁰ policy into practice.
- Increasing capacity in the education sector to respond to HIV and AIDS. To focus on mainstreaming HIV and AIDS throughout the education sector, by supporting the rollout of the HIV and AIDS Strategy and Policy.

The MTR highlights a number of areas where Irish Aid partners were unaware of others working in related areas. E.g. 'the regional DKT manager was not aware of other Irish Aid funded programmes in SNNPR' – he pointed out that greater programmes could achieve greater efficiency if they collaborated. A similar finding emerged with other CSO partners working in SNNPR "SOS Sahel staff stated that they had no current knowledge of other programmes funded by IA in SNNPR, but pointed out that about 1.5 years ago IA organised a forum for experience sharing between NGOs they support in Ethiopia". In the case of Farm Africa's Women's Empowerment Project, the SNNPR MTR found that links with the health bureau were missing and concluded that this was a missed opportunity to assist with screening for Fee Waiver beneficiaries and the establishment of community-based health insurance schemes. Although these partners share a single aid modality and lack of awareness does not necessarily mean a lack of coherence, there may have been loss of effectiveness as opportunities for knowledge sharing were reduced.

The relationship with SNNPR is seen as a 'loose connection' which involved some joint decision making and some innovative ideas. SNNPR is said to provide balance to Tigray but funding for SNNPR has been more limited in recent years and health has been the main focus. To provide such a balance there would have to be greater coherence to the SNNPR programme.

6.12 The most recent evaluation, a MTR covering the years 2009-2012 found *"it is clear that Irish Aid's partnership with the SNNPR state is of strategic importance, addresses Irish Aid Country Strategic Plan priorities, and enables specific development challenges to be addressed. However, the learning objective of the partnership – the ability to learn lessons from the ground and feed these into policy dialogue - has been compromised because the structure of the partnership did not really serve this purpose. Also, the effectiveness of Irish Aid's portfolio of government and civil society programmes in SNNPR in terms of contributing to the objectives stated in the Country Strategic Plan is undermined by the lack of cross-programme linkages and collaboration towards the achievement of a shared goal. Finally, while Irish Aid's support and partnership approach are highly valued by all - both government and civil society partners – it is difficult to validate this added value due to inadequacies in documentation and reporting."*¹²¹

6.13 In a similar way to SNNPR, Irish Aid support to Tigray was characterised by area based projects in Central Tigray, East Tigray, and South Tigray. As the report on Aid Modalities noted: *"For the donor they provided a predominantly one-to-one relationship with the zones/woredas involved, away from the congestion of multiple donors in Addis Ababa; they provided opportunities to work at local (including community) level, while supporting the government system in the delivery of basic services; there were opportunities to innovate and to evolve the programmes over time (including adaptations to make them fit better into government systems). Long term relationships (social capital) could be developed. The geographical focus simplified monitoring and tracking of funds and made activities attractively simple to explain to the Irish public."*¹²²

¹²⁰ The fee waiver is a strategy to improve access to quality health care for those who cannot afford to pay whereby the woreda reimburses the health facility the costs of health services for identified eligible poor people.

¹²¹ Stuer, Francesca and Dr Essido Lendebo (2012) Learning from the ground. A midterm review of the partnership between Irish Aid and the SNNPR, 2009-2012

¹²² DCI (2005) Aid modalities in Ethiopia, para 4.10

6.14 But as decentralisation took effect, the ABP structure, based on a zonal tier of government became less viable and trying to work with a woreda-level focus was unmanageable. The ABPs were subject to offset, which was more disruptive at lower levels of administrative disaggregation. Eventual adaptation to regional or sector support was much smoother and more successful in Tigray. Tigray is a smaller region, ethnically homogeneous and politically cohesive. SNNPR is much larger and more diverse – in effect, a confederation of ethnicities.

6.15 The years 2008/9 and 2009/10 saw annual funding to Tigray of €4 million and €3 million in a regional block grant; supplemented by four small capacity building programmes and a small liaison office. After the financial crisis the block grant was cut to €2 million and €1 million for 2011 and 2012.

6.16 There is a body of opinion in Irish Aid that considers the Tigray regional dimension to be of fundamental importance to the strength and value of Ireland’s contribution to Ethiopia as a whole. The thrust of the argument is that initiatives first tested in Tigray have been adopted elsewhere in the country and that Ireland’s understanding of the challenges facing development at regional level and below has helped inform discussions with the Federal Government and other development partners, to mutual benefit.

6.17 The 2010 review identified seven distinct aspects where Irish Aid staff and colleagues in the regional Government of Tigray have used their shared experiences at field level to influence donor and Federal Government thinking on major development challenges since 1994.¹²³

Experiences from Tigray are said to have contributed to how IA understands development. It allows IA to see achievements on the ground and provides a qualitative benchmark for work elsewhere. An example of this is watershed management and terracing supported by IA. Discussions with livelihoods CSOs also said that IA “likes to see change at the grass roots level”. Dr Shitaye (MOA) remarked that GOE was more conscious of environmental issues (as seen in articles, presentations in the media) particularly in Tigray where IA’s work on watershed management has had an influence. Experiences of both bio-physical and social issues 20 years ago in Eastern Tigray have been adapted and adopted in most regions of the country. Discussing PSNP theory of change, it was also noted by IA FNLS team that experience from Tigray allowed IA “to know the grassroots” which allows them to understand financial systems, the implementation of public works and allows the identification of blockages. In 2008 there was an evaluation of the safety net programme and IA’s experience of watershed management in Tigray was used to inform national programme.

The PBS Secretariat said that IA contributed to JRIS conducted in the regions – particularly in Tigray and it is known that IA ‘know Tigray’. The PSNP coordination team also believed that IA’s experience in Tigray contributed to the development of training within PSNP, again the watershed experience was mentioned.

- Integrated watershed management experience has helped transform national policy
- Experience with food security influenced the design of PSNP
- Public Health Care strategy
- Irish Aid experience with the Decentralisation Support Activity laid public financial management foundations for design and implementation of PBS
- Influence on DFID and the World Bank over regional approaches
- Longitudinal poverty monitoring
- Field experience from Ethiopia influencing organisational policy processes in Irish Aid

6.18 To a large extent, we have heard the same messages during this evaluation and whilst hard evidence of policy influence is difficult to find, some confidence comes from the widely-held perceptions of government and donor staff. However, as the authors of the 2010 review note, posts in both Irish Aid and in the regional government are subject to turnover and change. Staff who had personal familiarity with the area based programmes will diminish in number. Already it is claimed there has been a reduction in the regular interface between embassy and

¹²³ IA 2010: A Review of the Tigray Region Support Programme 2006-2010. By Beverly Jones and Chekol Kidane. Page 12

Regional Government staff which characterised earlier periods. Personal knowledge of the relationship and hence an ability to make use of it is already falling away. The recent confirmation that 100 per cent of donor funding to regional programmes would be subject to offsetting marks the effective end for block grants to regional programmes and raises the question of what type of modality will be effective for Irish Aid to bring additionality to activities at regional level.

6.19 The absence of a well-structured approach to lesson learning; the mix of modalities in the era following area-based programmes; and the lack of clear regional strategies leads the evaluation team to conclude that focus has been lost in the purpose and content of work at regional level. The historical perception about the advantages of the regional experience has resulted in a continuation of that orientation but without clarity over how it fits alongside the federal PBS and PSNP programmes. A strategy is needed to reconcile Irish Aid’s wish to create added value with government policy on offsetting.

Working in partnership

6.20 Working in partnership is a cornerstone of the Irish Aid strategy. Irish Aid uses the term in its broadest sense as defined by the OECD/DAC: “*The individuals and/or organisations that collaborate to achieve mutually agreed upon objectives.*”¹²⁴ That definition goes on to note that the concept of partnership connotes shared goals, common responsibility for outcomes, distinct accountabilities and reciprocal obligations.

We work as a team with Irish Aid, right up to the Head of Development. There is high quality backstopping. They are not like other donors, just interested in reporting. (Interview CSO Director)

6.21 Those additional, more demanding elements, are where added value comes in partnerships. Interviews with donors and government for this evaluation find that Irish Aid has been an effective partner and within the constraints of the Ethiopian context has been able to influence policy in conjunction with other external partners. Practical entry points have been employed which are seen as successful when engaging with the Government of Ethiopia. On a few occasions, Irish Aid has been seen as weak in holding GOE to agreements made. For example, weaknesses in the MOU with SNNPR are seen as contributing to some shortfalls in performance. Where expectations of a partner are not fulfilled Irish Aid may need to assess what actions will be taken under the current situation of severe constraints.

6.22 The survey of mainly NGO and CSO partners reported in Annex 7 includes a set of questions about partnership that are summarised here in Table 8.

Table 8 Working in partnership with Irish Aid - percentage from 25 respondents

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
The people I deal with in Irish Aid are very reliable	78	22	0	0	0	100%
Irish Aid meets its obligations regarding my organisation's work	70	22	9	0	0	100%
There is a high degree of trust between my organisation and Irish Aid	87	9	4	0	0	100%
My organisation and Irish Aid share common objectives about the sector in which we work	74	26	0	0	0	100%
We undertake priority-setting, planning and	48	35	13	4	0	100%

¹²⁴ OECD/DAC 2002-8 Glossary of key terms in evaluation and results based management

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
management of activities jointly						
Irish Aid is flexible in the implementation of our relationship	65	30	4	0	0	100%
When we have been unable to meet our obligations, Irish Aid has been firm but fair in response	26	57	0	0	17	100%

Source: Annex 7, Table 6

6.23 Responses are overwhelmingly positive about the experience of working with Irish Aid. To some extent this is to be expected and may reflect an element of courtesy bias. However, the results are borne out by face to face interviews across a range of respondents. It is interesting as well, that some disagreement is recorded, most prominently about the extent to which priority setting, planning and management of activities is handled jointly and this may be an area for Irish Aid to examine a little more closely. All of the disagreement responses came from organisations classifying themselves as international NGO.¹²⁵

6.24 The positive approach to partnership by CSOs is reportedly often in contrast to their experience with other donors. One factor of this is Irish Aid's familiarity with the detail of projects, allowing them to have sufficient knowledge to give technical advice and also to use findings in other settings. Irish Aid staff are comfortable in a field situation, local staff are empowered and listened to (as are CSO partners). Other donors apparently show less interest in community-based initiatives and sometimes attempt to micro-manage. In looking at proposals Irish Aid focuses on the approach taken and on how impact will be tracked but is respectful enough to allow the organisation to get on with implementation. It acknowledges an organisations' chain of command and deals with staff at appropriate levels.

Irish Aid is good because it stays close to civil society, so knows the issues; and close to government, so knows the space for dialogue (CSO interview)

Mainstreaming

6.25 As the Irish Aid programme has developed and shifted from a portfolio geared towards area development projects and small sectoral projects towards sector support, it has tended to give more prominence to upstream concerns, and seek to engage with government (and fellow donors) at a higher level and over broader policy issues. This reflects trends in general approaches as well as responses to the particular issues that arise in Ethiopia. The programme's commitments to mainstreaming gender, HIV/AIDS, environment and governance all imply efforts to influence fellow donors as well as partner countries. So far, it has been possible to treat gender more systematically than the other three areas. Table 9 summarises findings from a checklist used for interviews and scrutiny of documents.

6.26 Irish Aid sees gender as an area of comparative advantage and as such is aware and continues to promote issues relating to gender. Donor partners also have highlighted gender as an area of focus for Irish Aid in a way that they do not for the other areas.¹²⁶ There are numerous tools, checklists, and entry point identifications available. Gender is successfully mainstreamed throughout Irish Aid. However there is no gender strategy document which outlines Irish Aid's understanding in any depth about GOE's position on gender or Irish Aid's key areas of focus. Gender is seen as an area of comparative advantage by Irish Aid – to maintain this there may need to be specific analysis, for example in the PSNP, see above, if it is to continue

¹²⁵ Not necessarily MAPS recipients

¹²⁶ With the exception of M de Jong (Health MDG Fund partner, Royal Netherlands Embassy) who was asked the question but said he did not think it was a particular area for IA

to contribute to improving design and implementation from a gender perspective, rather than just working to ensure results and indicators are disaggregated by gender.

6.27 At the moment, Irish Aid does not have mainstreaming strategies in Ethiopia for governance, HIV and the environment and tends to deal with issues as they arise in relevant sectoral programmes. It is questionable whether all four topics should be treated only as cross-cutting issues or as objectives in their own right. To a certain extent Irish Aid is already treating gender, governance and environment both as a cross-cutting issue and as a specific target, and was previously taking the same approach to HIV, which would seem to be the way forward as one does not exclude the other. What is perhaps needed as pointed out by Doody for gender,¹²⁷ are more explicit TOC which would clearly relate to the Government's GTP, detailing the gains that might be expected from more systematic treatment.

¹²⁷ Back to office Note - Technical Support Visit to Irish Aid Ethiopia by Áine Doody - Gender Advisor (HQ) – February 6th – 10th 2012. P. 1, para 1

Table 9 Summary of mainstreaming features

Mainstreaming characteristics	Gender	Governance	HIV and AIDS	Environment
Scope and content of a policy framework	Clear Irish Aid policy framework with guidance on what mainstreaming means. Additional analysis specific to Ethiopia (2012)	Irish Aid headquarters guidance links governance with poverty. In the CSP, governance is considered as relevant in the social services and accountability pillar. Political engagement at the embassy level has been critical in terms of the overall operating environment. ¹²⁸	There is an Irish Aid policy document and the personnel manual at the embassy includes guidance on HIV.	There is an environmental policy for sustainable development prepared by the headquarters. The scope and the content of the policy are well stated and clear with links to poverty.
Existence of a mainstreaming strategy	A strategy for mainstreaming gender equality, HIV, environment and governance was developed in March 2007 by external consultants and expected to cover the period to 2009. ¹²⁹ The approach taken was to 1) set out gender equality-poverty linkages (as well as for HIV/AIDS, environment, governance); 2) Describe a number of levels of engagement from the global to the sub-national; 3) describe internal and external mainstreaming, before outlining ‘what Irish Aid will do’ (p. 8) over the next two years. Although rather a generic document it does clearly set out steps required but there is a need for a more specific document relevant to each topic and to the context of Ethiopia. A supplementary cross-cutting analysis was developed in 2011. Advisors examine which cross-cutting issues are most applicable to which programmes.			
Identification of entry points	Recent examples lists: PBS SA, CSSP, TECS, CSO bilateral support, Health MDG, SNNPR – Health, SNNPR – education, CSOs- CRDA, FGAE, DKT, VSO. Entry points are identified but staff say ‘follow through of issues during implementation is less thorough’. This is attributable to over-burdening the target groups with too many cross-cutting issues to manage– ‘how do we track so many cross-cutting issues?’	Irish Aid is promoting the agenda through PBS (co-chair of the Transparency and Accountability Group, TAG), CSSP, PSNP, CSO task force (adaptation facility). It is also co-funding the TECSS through which some research is being done on governance issues. Irish Aid was co-funding the public sector capacity building programme (PSCAP) and democratic Institutions programme (DIP), both of which deal with governance, until its withdrawal in 2008 and 2009 respectively.	Primary entry points identified are CSO dealing with SRH; the PSNP; and monitoring of PMTCT through work on mother and child health.	Irish Aid closely work with PSNP donors and the Ministry of Agriculture on the environmental issues of the public works programme. But apart from that there are no specific entry points.

¹²⁸ Donal Cronin: Ethiopia visit report, September 5th to 9th 2011.

¹²⁹ Towards Poverty Reduction: Mainstreaming Strategy by Cathy Gaynor & Mary Jennings, March 2007

Mainstreaming characteristics	Gender	Governance	HIV and AIDS	Environment
Use of a communications framework both internally for Irish Aid staff and for development partners	Gender issues are said to be explicit in project cycle reviews and checklists are available. However there is little or no training for staff and much of the communication is informal. International Women's Day is marked with a reversal of traditional roles – men serving the women.	Irish Aid staff internally exchange information on mainstreaming especially during development team meetings which take place every two months. There is no mechanism or framework for communicating mainstreaming with development partners.	The office has an HIV Day annually timed on or close to World AIDS Day. There is an item in the staff Induction Manual.	For partners (NGO/CSOs), there have been communications, mainly verbal, regarding the environmental issues of their interventions. For instance, SOS Sahel, which is working on red pepper production, has been communicating with the concerned Irish Aid staff regarding environmental issues and sustainability said to be easily picked up by the partner and followed accordingly.
Linkages to partners' programmes	There is no document or arrangement for induction of new partners.	The linkage of Irish Aid governance mainstreaming with partners' programmes is rather weak compared with gender sensitivity (which is both governance and gender mainstreaming).	The linkage of Irish Aid HIV mainstreaming with partners' programmes is rather weak compared with gender sensitivity. Linkages are more prominent in health-related programmes.	There is no formal mechanism for linkages. Environmental issues are dealt with on a case by case basis, mainly related to programmes dealing with the natural environment such as PSNP.
Arrangements for and evaluation of capacity building	Gender issues are said to be explicit in project cycle reviews and checklists are available. With partners gender issues are always included in CSO reviews, in day to day management and at specific junctures.	Irish Aid (Headquarters) has supported <i>capacity development</i> and training of staff on mainstreaming in almost all country programmes and at headquarters, including the development of tailored materials and tools. Irish Aid Ethiopia did not have a strategy for capacity building programme for mainstreaming governance except that there was a one-day an internal workshop in 2008 on mainstreaming of all the four cross-cutting issues, including governance.	No formal training has been given to staff (recently) since the office last had a HIV adviser and a Health adviser.	We have not seen any arrangements for the evaluation of capacity building in relation to environmental mainstreaming. Irish Aid works with bilateral and multilateral organisations as well as government and CSOs through which environmental mainstreaming is handled but has not sponsored any specific capacity building. In October 2011, there was a training workshop on environmental mainstreaming by an external consultant.
Examples of the development and use of tools	There is a 'summary of recommended tools for mainstreaming' which provides brief notes for gender. This document makes good use of checklists	There are no specific tools for mainstreaming governance within Irish Aid.	There are no specific tools for mainstreaming HIV within Irish Aid. There is expected to be treatment in the revised project cycle management document under	There are no specific tools for mainstreaming environment within Irish Aid.

Mainstreaming characteristics	Gender	Governance	HIV and AIDS	Environment
	developed by other organisations, providing references and website links – for example CIDA (2007) and DFID (2008) gender manuals and toolboxes. ¹³⁰		preparation.	
Extent to which the topic is incorporated in indicators	Indicators in the logic model show some gender disaggregation but there are no gender-specific indicators.	TAG did not have specific indicators of governance to measure progress. There are plans to establish indicators for social accountability.	Apart from projects which had a specific focus on HIV and sexual and reproductive health indicators are not generally incorporated in programmes.	The creation of community assets (PW) constitutes about 80 per cent of the PSNP resources. In the Irish Aid logic model, there is an attempt to link the output indicators with that of the PSNP document indicators. However, while the PSNP document has specific output indicators for environment, the Irish Aid final logic model does not provide such specific output indicators.
Evidence of orientation in monitoring reports	PBS, PBS SA and PSNP JRIS reports have regular notes about gender and include disaggregated and gender-specific indicators.	There is no monitoring system for governance mainstreaming. Periodic reports are received from PSNP and PBS. Irish Aid staff acknowledge that clear governance indicators are needed and say that discussions are underway with other donors.	There is no monitoring system for HIV mainstreaming. Consideration is being given to developing HIV-related indicators for the UNICEF pilot social cash transfer project.	Irish Aid as one of the 10 PSNP donors has a mechanism of monitoring the environmental issues in the PSNP. There is an agreed system for the biannual reviews of the PW. The environmental sustainability is well addressed in the reviews of the plans and implementation of the public works. ¹³¹ In addition, the ESMF screening and consistencies with the watershed guides are closely followed by the Irish Aid. ¹³²
Roles and responsibilities, leadership	Irish Aid guidance is that role profiles should be as explicit as possible on mainstreaming responsibilities but staff at the embassy think they are not always clear about responsibility.			

¹³⁰ Recommended Resources & Tools for IA-E's Mainstreaming Processes (undated – but developed to support IA Mainstreaming Strategy 2009)

¹³¹ Example: MMA Development Consultancy, 2011: Public Work reviews in Ethiopia.

¹³² Interview with IA Staff, Leulseged Asfaw.

7 Findings for development management

Summary of findings for development management

- ❖ Irish Aid introduced a new approach to the CSP incorporating results-based management following OECD/DAC principles.
- ❖ Presentation of the CSP includes a very effective logic model but results and indicators are scattered across text and annexes.
- ❖ The approach to RBM gives little guidance in some challenging technical areas such as indicators, risks and assumption; and in the need to establish an organisational culture to manage for results.
- ❖ Annual reports provide a narrative account of performance, structured along the lines of the logic model. Since the MTR in 2010, there has been an attempt to include indicators, but no systematic reporting against the performance management framework.
- ❖ Findings from the evaluations of support to the SNNPR and Tigray Region both indicate weaknesses in monitoring and the use of information for learning.
- ❖ Partners claim to understand the Irish Aid results framework and how their project links to it; and there is some evidence of Irish Aid interaction with partners over design.
- ❖ An experimental monitoring approach in Tigray has generated lessons but not proven suitable for scaling up. Support to a national M&E pooled fund has been discontinued following unsatisfactory management arrangements but Irish Aid has contributed to development of practical indicators for the GTP.

7.1 This evaluation is not concerned with the overall efficiency of the Irish Aid programme. However, in view of the new-style strategy document the evaluation examines the question of how useful was the Irish Aid corporate approach to RBM with regard to Irish Aid Ethiopia and its partners. The chapter reviews the approach to RBM taken by the mission in Ethiopia, examines the planning prepared for the CSP and how the results frameworks were used in practice. Observations from interviews and the web-survey are also reported.

Results based management and the country strategy

7.2 The approach to RBM adopted by Irish Aid is set out in a guidance document that presents RBM firmly in the context of country strategy papers.¹³³ This practical orientation ensures that the concepts and principles are grounded in actions that plan and guide the aid programme. The approach is based on the OECD/DAC guidance on management for development results with five key principles, also included in the Paris Declaration (Box 8).

Box 8 Five principles of managing for development results

- Focus the dialogue on results
- Align programming, monitoring and evaluation with results
- Keep measurement and reporting simple
- Manage for, not by, results
- Use results information for learning and decision-making

¹³³ Irish Aid (n.d.) A results-based management approach to country strategy papers. Dublin

7.3 The guidance document contains detailed procedures for the CSP cycle as well as information about RBM and the use of logic models. Planning a CSP is broken down into stages; roles and responsibilities that are defined and explained for 17 different organisational entities; planning is described in the context of Ireland's international obligations; and step-by-step instructions are given for the CSP itself. The exposition, whilst thorough and practical, is strongly oriented towards the planning phase of a CSP, with a relatively brief treatment of evaluation and lesson learning.

7.4 Experience with the use of RBM in development organisations suggests that among the many challenges to success, organisations find difficulties in three areas: the development of indicators; handling of assumptions and risks; and establishing an organisational culture that is conducive to a results orientation.¹³⁴ None of these three aspects receives much treatment in the guidance document and all have a bearing on how the CSP has been used.

7.5 Results management is presented in the CSP in five ways:

- Development of a logic model following CSP guidelines (CSP Annex 1)
- Overview of goal and outcomes (CSP main document part 5)
- Narrative description of strategies, activities and outputs expected for each objective defined from the logic model (CSP main document part 6)
- A results framework setting out annual Irish Aid actions and external results, together with a statement of strategies and baseline conditions (CSP Annex 2)
- A performance management framework showing for each objective some performance indicators, data sources and responsibility for collection (CSP Annex 3)

7.6 The documentation is clear and the logic models in particular convey a complex programme with great clarity.¹³⁵ However, the scattered, multiple presentations do not make it easy for the reader to grasp what are the key results that Irish Aid is working to contribute to in Ethiopia. The results framework is strongly action-oriented, with statements of intended actions for three years ahead, probably an ambitious time-span given the uncertainties facing any development programme. Because the results framework is presented separately from the logic models it is difficult to see how budget lines contribute towards outcomes. The performance management framework does include indicators at the levels of objectives and outcomes. At the time of the CSP preparation these indicators were devoid of baselines, targets and timeframes. These have been developed for some indicators in the post-MTR Performance Management Framework.

Managing for development results focuses on development effectiveness and incorporates collaboration, partnership, harmonisation and alignment aspects. It provides a high management standard because it asks all stakeholders to focus continuously on country outcome performance rather than on short-term results. (Irish Aid guidance)

7.7 A critical gap appears to be in the way in which performance of individual budget lines contribute to the objectives under the CSP. The presentation of the revised post-MTR logic model goes some way to tackling this by inserting output statements under each objective and adding indicators from the performance management framework to the logic model. However it

¹³⁴ See for example: Office of Internal Oversight Services. (2008). Review of results-based management at the United Nations. A/63/268. New York: UN General Assembly
Mayne, John (2008) Building an evaluative culture for effective evaluation and results management. ILAC Brief 20 (www.cgjar-ilac.org)
Drew, Roger & Rachel Albone, (2008) Baseline audit of the state of monitoring and evaluation in DFID. Internal review

Agulhas, (2007) Assessing the quality of DFID's project reviews. DFID

NAO (2002) DFID Performance Management - Helping to Reduce World Poverty. HC 739 Session 2001-2002

¹³⁵ The logic model was revised after the CS MTR in 2010 to an improved format that more closely follows the guidance from IA headquarters

is not clear if the outputs are supposed to be indicators or performance targets and the indicators for each objective are predominantly output statements.

7.8 What is the purpose of results-based management? The Irish Aid guidelines are relatively silent on this. There is clarity about what managing for development results means, but not how it might affect the design and management of the programme. In text summarising problems found with previous CSPs, only one of the eight items seems to refer to results, saying that '*CSPs did not always establish the goals and objectives for sectoral engagement. As a consequence there was focus on inputs rather than results*'.¹³⁶ The implication is that the RBM approach would enable managers to focus more on results, but the mechanisms to achieve that are not described.

7.9 Writers on RBM have drawn attention to the fact that adopting a results orientation is not only about designing new means of measurement, but implies a change in the way people work and manage. Mayne contrasts *traditional management* which focuses on ongoing activities and use of resources - inputs and outputs - with *managing for outcomes*: establishing what outcomes are sought; knowing and questioning the theory of change and the evidence for it; measuring and analysing actual outcomes/impacts in light of expectations; assessing the contribution the programme is making; reporting on the extent of attainment of performance expectations; and deliberately learning from evidence and analysis. This implies a different sort of management culture, something that is not explored in the CSP guidelines.¹³⁷

How results have been used

7.10 Two levels of periodic performance reports are generated within the embassy: quarterly and annually. The annual provides the main summary statement of performance. In addition, there was a large-scale review of the CSP at mid-term. Inspection of all the annual reports reveals a consistent approach. The reports are largely narrative-based. They are structured around the outcome and objective pillars of the CSP and present progress systematically against budget lines under each objective. Prior to 2010, the text does not contain any direct statements against the indicators listed in the Performance Management Framework (PMF). The 2010 Annual report, which coincided with the MTR, does include outcome statistics reporting against indicators in the PMF, but as there were no targets or baseline parameters it is not possible to make a judgement about whether or not the programme is on target or behind.

7.11 The most recent Annual Report for 2011 (reviewed in a draft version) appears to be tackling some of these deficiencies by presenting performance statistics for selected budget lines where data are available. There is also a summary table showing the most recent statistics for the outcome indicators in the logic model together with baseline figures but no target values. We have not seen any evidence of systematic reporting against the output statements.

7.12 Managing the link between individual projects, for which periodic monitoring reports should be available, and performance against higher level programme objectives is tricky. In order to convey how successfully or otherwise the supported budget lines are performing consideration might be given to specific reporting of project data combined with the use of ratings to summarise at higher levels. Outcome indicators would still be used to reflect real development change.

7.13 When asked how useful the results frameworks had been during the MTR, senior staff replied that overall the structure of the CSP provided a sound logic against which to plan how to cope with a reduction in the aid budget. Information about results was said to be a significant part of that process, but only one element alongside wider policy considerations and the

¹³⁶ Irish Aid (n.d.) A results-based management approach to country strategy papers. Box 2

¹³⁷ Mayne, John (2008) Building an evaluative culture for effective evaluation and results management. ILAC Brief 20 (www.cgiar-ilac.org)

changing context in Ethiopia. Decisions were taken not to continue financing some projects but results was not the major consideration for any of these.

7.14 The incorporation of results-based management in the CSP has not enabled the Irish Aid staff to meet the challenge set out in the CSP: *“This country programme will prioritise lesson learning and building policy messages based on evidence”*.¹³⁸ Weaknesses in arrangements for learning were identified in both regional reviews commissioned by Irish Aid. The SNNPR review concluded that *“ability to learn lessons from the ground and feed these into policy dialogue - has been compromised because the structure of the partnership did not really serve this purpose”*.¹³⁹ The Tigray report argued that the information coming out of Tigray made it hard to grasp the achievements of the programme as a whole, and in turn made recommendations linked to learning. It did however, note some areas of better practice in the use of information from sentinel woredas, TARI and the CPMA.¹⁴⁰ The changing format of the annual reports might signify a fresh look at the use of information.

Supporting poverty monitoring and Monitoring and Evaluation

7.15 The quality and utility of results depends on the extent to which Irish Aid has been able to work with development partners. Attention to results can be seen firstly, in the interaction with project partners about the design, M&E of their projects, and in activities under Objective 4, *‘to improve the quality and use of poverty monitoring data’*. Under this objective, budget lines were established to improve IAs’ research and documentation; to fund small scale studies through the PBS and PSNP donor coordination teams; to support M&E through the Donor Assistance Group (DAG) M&E Pooled Fund; and to fund an experimental Complementary Poverty Monitoring Approach (CPMA) to track poverty at woreda level in Tigray.

7.16 Evidence about interactions with development partners was sought through interviews and documentation. Irish Aid self-identified support to information and results as areas of added value for the evaluation contribution analysis. Findings in Annex 6 identify clear validation of examples of attention to lesson learning from past experience, promotion of RRT and field monitoring in support of JRIS missions, and impact evaluation of the PSNP.

7.17 A survey of mainly NGO and CSO partners asked about familiarity with Irish Aid’s results framework. Details of the responses can be found in Annex 7, Table 7 and are summarised here in Table 10.

Table 10 Working with the Irish Aid results framework - percentage from 25 respondents

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don’t know	Total
I am aware of the results framework in the Irish Aid Country Strategy for 2008-2012	26	61	0	0	13	100%
I know how the results of my Irish Aid-supported project contribute to the overall results in the Irish Aid Country Strategy for 2008-2012.	48	30	4	0	17	100%
The indicators for my project are linked to indicators in the results framework for the Irish Aid	39	35	9	0	17	100%

¹³⁸ Irish Aid (2008) Country Strategy Paper Ethiopia para 78

¹³⁹ Stuer, Francesca and Dr Essido Lendebo (2012) Learning from the ground. A midterm review of the partnership between Irish Aid and the SNNPR, 2009-2012

¹⁴⁰ Jones, Beverly and Chekol Kidane (2010) A Review of the Tigray Region Support Programme 2006-2010

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	Total
Country Strategy for 2008-2012.						
Working with staff of Irish Aid, I and my colleagues planned the results of my project to show the linkages to the results framework in the Irish Aid Country Strategy for 2008-2012.	26	39	13	0	22	100%

Source: Annex 7, Table 7

7.18 More than 70 per cent of respondents agreed that they were aware of the Irish Aid results framework and how their project results contribute to them. They also agreed that their results indicators were linked to Irish Aid results framework indicators. For these three statements there was a large minority of 'Don't Know' responses. A lower proportion of respondents (65 per cent) agreed with the fourth statement that they had worked with Irish Aid staff to plan their results to demonstrate links to the Irish Aid CSP and some 22 per cent said they didn't know. Some of the 'Don't Knows' might reflect turnover in staff appointments implying the work was carried out by a different person. These responses are more positive than the evaluators found in face to face interviews and are encouraging, suggesting that Irish Aid staff are trying to interact with their partners.

7.19 Limited documentary evidence was found to support these views. The best example found by the evaluators comes from the SOS Sahel SLIP where file correspondence shows clear interactions dealing with: links between the project and PSNP beneficiaries in the same woredas in 2008; documentation of experiences for learning and evidence-based advocacy in 2009; quality of the project logframe and the need for baseline data for an extension phase in 2011. Interestingly, there is no explicit mention of indicators, nor of links to the Irish Aid results framework.¹⁴¹

7.20 The evaluation team observed that the advent of a RBM approach has not prompted any change to basic documentation in the agreements between Irish Aid and partners. MOUs include a brief note on reporting (Section 8) but neither make a reference to projects following Irish Aid's results frameworks, nor to the use of information for learning.

7.21 Budget lines supported under Objective 4 demonstrate a diverse approach by Irish Aid, at both federal and regional levels. Taking the regional level first, Irish Aid supported the CPMA in Tigray starting in 2008. Arising out of the CSP focus on food security and vulnerability a new monitoring approach was piloted, derived from the WIDE¹⁴² studies. The emphasis of this approach is in-depth qualitative data collection with a view to revisiting baselines and tracking changes at household level over time.

7.22 The investment in the CPMA, which seeks to establish longitudinal monitoring of development impact at household level, has generated much interest from the regional government and the participating woredas. The technical consultants who led the process are also working on a World Bank-supported country-wide longitudinal survey which gives the potential for this initiative to have wider influence in the year ahead. The distinctiveness of the Tigray experience, according to the lead researcher, was the genuine interest of the regional government to integrate this approach into its M&E system, making it more likely that reforms will result from monitoring.¹⁴³ However, by the time of this evaluation the regional government

¹⁴¹ IA file correspondence Smallholder Livelihoods Improvement Project

¹⁴² Long term perspectives in development impacts in rural Ethiopia – longitudinal studies of households in 20 kebeles across Ethiopia by Mokoro Ltd.

¹⁴³ Ibid

had decided the CPMA was too detailed and not appropriate to integrate in regular woreda monitoring.

7.23 Despite this disappointing outcome, the experience was directly in line with CSP strategy and fits the pattern of Irish Aid taking an innovative or experimental approach to development challenges.

7.24 The other major initiative for M&E was Irish Aid support to the DAG M&E Pooled Fund. Set up originally in 2005, it was supported by a pool of donors including Irish Aid. It was designed to support monitoring of the national poverty reduction strategy (originally SDPRP and later PASDEP) and with a strong link towards budget support. More recently the focus changed to the National Statistical Development Strategy (NSDS) and the monitoring of the GTP. Over the years a number of successful outputs were generated, including Welfare Monitoring Surveys and Household Income, Consumption and Expenditure Surveys; citizen report cards; and basic service delivery monitoring. However, concerns began to emerge among donors over the timeliness of analysis; an apparent focus more on data collection than poverty analysis; limitations on the levels of disaggregation of data, reducing the scope for geographical analysis; and limited interaction by donors with the management of the fund, handled by UNDP under its National Execution (NEX) modality.

7.25 Following an external review, donors decided in October 2011 to discontinue the fund. Support to the CSA for poverty monitoring is more likely to continue through the PBS, which has already funded the successful creation of an Ethiopia Data Quality Assessment Framework (EDQAF) for the CSA to provide a mechanism for improving the quality of administrative reporting by government.

7.26 A final example of Irish Aid support to M&E has been work through the DAG to refine indicators for monitoring the GTP. The Head of Development at Irish Aid took a personal interest in this and working with other partners was able to reduce the candidate list from about 800 indicators down to a more workable number of 70. The utility of this for government has yet to be seen.

8 Conclusions, lessons and recommendations

Conclusions

8.1 The evidence presented in the preceding chapters shows a clear and convincing picture about the Irish Aid programme in Ethiopia. This is a successful aid programme, valued by development partners and making a clear contribution to development results, that recognises challenges and has followed a mix of aid modalities in order to help meet its objectives.

Development Strategy: Strategic analysis and choice

8.2 Implementation during the evaluation period was steered by a Country Strategy Paper developed according to new guidelines from Irish Aid Headquarters and with a focus on results. This helped improve clarity of presentation and structure of the programme. It was less successful in charting how Irish Aid would respond to the political and developmental context and in particular how the embassy should staff and manage its activities. The results-based approach was not passed on to project partners and an intended emphasis on lesson learning did not fully materialise although a mid-term review in 2010 provided valuable reflection and adjustment to the programme.

Development Strategy: Understanding the theories of change

8.3 Logic models developed for the CSP present a coherent structure, have enabled a complex programme to be understood 'at a glance', and provide a basis for testing the fit of proposed activities. They deal only with the bilateral programme managed in Addis Ababa and do not take account of Irish support to Ethiopia managed directly from headquarters.

8.4 Changes made after the MTR in 2010 reflect rationalisation of the programme, improved clarity of wording, which aids management and evaluation, and a simplification for better understanding. The addition of indicators in the revised version also helps link to the results framework, which beforehand was documented separately.

8.5 Irish Aid staff have a good grasp of theories of change for their interventions, especially in the implementation and management stages. Much more detail was offered about those parts of the process concerned with planning, management and supervision than with the realisation of progress towards outcomes. Considering that Irish Aid wants to mainstream cross-cutting issues, achieve coherence and complementarity through a programme approach, engage with poorer sections of society and improve impact monitoring, greater attention to the constraints affecting achievement of outcomes is needed.

8.6 Interviews revealed a relatively low grasp of the logic underpinning the Irish Aid strategy among government, bilateral donor and civil society development partners, a finding confirmed in the web survey of NGO and CSO partners.¹⁴⁴ This suggests that even though Irish Aid staff are well-versed in their theories of change, they are not using them in dialogue with partners, thus missing a potentially valuable tool.

Development Strategy: How did the CSP perform?

8.7 The documentary record reveals that decision-making during implementation followed the objectives of the strategy despite having to cope with a substantial cutback in financial resources early in the period. The realised strategy is coherent and consistent with the planned CSP.

8.8 Programmes supported by Irish Aid continued a trend from previous years and followed a mixture of modalities identified during a previous strategy period: support to government sectoral programmes; smaller scale individual investments in health, food security, nutrition and livelihoods, complementary to the sector programmes and sometimes experimental in

¹⁴⁴ Annex 7 Q5(b)

nature; a balance between supplying services by government with demand-side work by civil society organisations; and continued involvement at regional level. The scope and content were highly **relevant** to context and policies.

Development Results: Contributions to objectives and outcomes

8.9 Assessment of available data for the 12 performance indicators at the level of goal and programme outcomes finds that eight have improved in line with target values or at least show a positive change, if at a slower than planned rate. Two indicators show deteriorating or flat performance and there are no data for a further two. Progress is seen at goal level in the areas of poverty reduction and health. In contrast, the indicator for good governance suggests a deterioration. These findings are in accord with the contextual analysis in Chapter 3 where there is a discussion of the deteriorating governance in Ethiopia.

With modest financial resources, working in partnership with others, Irish Aid has contributed positively to improving the lives and welfare of the poorer and most vulnerable sections of Ethiopian society.

8.10 One outcome indicator is the prevalence of stunting. The choice of this indicator raises the question of how appropriate it is and reflects on the challenges in adopting results management, noted in a later section. A reduction in stunting is not likely to be an outcome closely linked to the work on livelihood security but is a result that will emerge from a much wider combination of development improvements, and therefore more relevant at the level of

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8.11 Important challenges remain: to improve quality of social services; and to find the alternative income generating activities or means of achieving food security that will create sustainable benefits for citizens. Irish Aid is well placed to continue supporting these efforts, either through Federal programmes or by complementary investments.

8.12 In addition to improved development outcomes, Irish Aid has added value to the way in which programmes have been planned, implemented and evaluated. These **efficiency** gains are hard to quantify, but development partners are consistent in their praise for Ireland's contribution, which has helped make programmes more effective at improving the welfare of poorer people through better financial management, attention to targeting, and feedback on quality.

8.13 Not all the smaller projects are equally successful and the rationale for some owes more to historical partnership and opportunism than to a rigorous analysis of gaps and opportunities to support the service provision and livelihoods programmes.

Development Results: Sustainability of results

8.14 Irish Aid's approach to analysis and programming has created mechanisms which acknowledge and take into account risks to sustainability in several dimensions, especially concerning organisational, and social aspects and project results. There is concern about the long-term financial sustainability of governments' large-scale social programmes, but overall, Irish Aid's approach makes development results more likely to be sustained. There is some evidence of potential improved **sustainability** of benefits and some of the smaller, more innovative complementary projects have been scaled up to larger populations.

Development processes: Coherence and effectiveness of aid modalities

8.15 Irish Aid has long been involved at regional level, originally through area based programmes. The absence of a well-structured approach to lesson learning; the mix of modalities in the era following area-based programmes; and the lack of clear regional strategies leads the evaluation team to conclude that focus has been lost in the purpose and content of work at regional level. The historical imperative of the advantages that regional experience brought to Irish Aid has resulted in a continued regional orientation but without clarity over how that fits alongside the Federal PBS and PSNP programmes which absorb the majority of

Irish Aids' bilateral funds. A strategy is needed to reconcile Irish Aid's wish to create added value with government policy on offsetting.

8.16 Regional work is seen as providing a reality check and learning experience to help inform dialogue with development partners and the Federal Government. Informants recognise the historical role played by projects in Tigray, but examples of influence are now quite dated. Reviews of both the SNNP and Tigray regional programmes note that learning has not taken place systematically. The aid modalities used during the CSP include: a regional block grant plus small projects to Tigray region; sector programme support and small projects in SNNPR. Whilst pragmatic, all have some disadvantages and in SNNPR in particular, have neither been very coherent nor stimulated a close relationship with the regional government, an area of success in Tigray.

8.17 Although not expressed in these words in the CSP, Irish Aid has followed a people-centred form of engagement. Despite being a small financial provider to the PBS and PSNP, Irish Aid staff have been very active in donor coordination and implementation mechanisms. National and international staff are highly regarded by development partners for their contributions. The Irish Ambassador is personally recognised for her energy and commitment to development issues. However the mix of aid modalities and decision to support two large-scale federal programmes, two regions and up to 20 smaller budget lines is a strain on resources, especially since the financial crisis in Ireland. Recent changes in staff leave the embassy under-resourced and development partners express concern that Irish Aid will not be able to maintain its highly productive participation.

Development processes: Working in partnership

8.18 Working in partnership is a cornerstone of the Irish Aid strategy. The concept of partnership connotes shared goals, common responsibility for outcomes, distinct accountabilities and reciprocal obligations.

8.19 Responses are overwhelmingly positive about the experience of working with Irish Aid. To some extent this is to be expected and may reflect an element of courtesy bias. However, the results are borne out by face to face interviews across a range of respondents. The positive approach to partnership reported by CSOs is often in contrast to their experience with other donors. One factor of this is Irish Aid's familiarity with the detail of projects, allowing them to have sufficient knowledge to give technical advice and also to use findings in other settings. Irish Aid staff are comfortable in a field situation, local staff are empowered and listened to (as are CSO partners). Other donors apparently show less interest in community-based initiatives and sometimes attempt to micro-manage. Irish Aid staff acknowledge an organisations' chain of command and deal with staff at appropriate levels.

Developmental processes: Mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues

8.20 Irish Aid has also supported gender, HIV, governance and environment through mainstreaming. Work on gender has been quite successful and Irish Aid is a recognised proponent of gender analysis and an advocate for gender balance in development programmes. Less progress has been made in the other three areas, which lack a clear plan and resourcing under the CSP.

Developmental management: Usefulness of IA corporate approach to RBM

8.21 Newly adopted logic models under this CSP convey a complex programme with great clarity. However, the scattered, multiple presentations do not make it easy for the reader to grasp what are the key results that Irish Aid is working to contribute to in Ethiopia. The evaluation team consider that more support is needed in the areas of development of indicators, handling of assumptions and risks, and establishing an organisational culture that is conducive to a results orientation.

8.22 When asked how useful the results frameworks had been during the 2010 mid-term review, senior staff replied that overall the structure of the CSP provided a sound logic against which to plan how to cope with a reduction in the aid budget. However, the incorporation of results-based management in the CSP has not enabled Irish Aid staff to meet the challenge set out in the CSP to prioritise lesson learning and build policy messages based on evidence.

Lessons

8.23 As staff in the Irish Aid office in Addis Ababa prepare for the next CSP, decisions will need to be made in order to find an appropriate balance of support across the federal projects, regions and complementary interventions. This section draws out some lessons from the current CSP and is followed by recommendations for planning the next one.

8.24 ***A country strategy should be based upon analysis of context to identify how the programme will respond and what skills mix of staff is necessary.*** The purpose of analysing context in a strategy document is to help devise ways of responding. Analysis in the 2008-2012 CSP was sound but not taken into the programme strategy. In particular, no guidance was given on how to make the most productive use of staff time. Plans included giving priority to field-level engagement, but support to PBS and PSNP led to more upstream interaction. Concerns about the Government's development philosophy were already being identified but the CSP did not include any guidance or proposed research on how to find entry points for dialogue.

8.25 ***Constructive engagement is as important as size of budget, in making aid effective.*** Irish aid was only a small contributor in financial terms to the PBS and PSNP. But development partners including the Government of Ethiopia regard Irish Aid as a much more important partner than the size of their budget would imply.

8.26 ***Historical comparative advantage either needs to be maintained through judicious recruitment of staff and choice of programmes or the new strategy should identify future actions on the basis of need and actual staff capacity.*** During implementation Irish Aid got involved in areas where staff could add value, such as support to financial management and audit. That built success and was effective but arguably reversed the historical trend of Ireland having strong field-level engagement. Somewhat perversely, a programme that emphasised comparative advantage of working with civil society, good local knowledge and working in social services came to devote more staff time and energy to interaction among development partners and Federal Government at a central level.

8.27 ***Financial cutbacks might be better managed as doing something different rather than less of the same.*** When the financial crisis led to cutbacks in programmes, the approach was to reduce across the programme as whole (with proportionately greater cuts in the SSA pillar). That left a programme structure designed for a larger volume of aid now with reduced resources. An alternative approach could have been considered to withdraw from one large programme in its entirety and maintain effort in the others.

8.28 ***Clarity of purpose rather than historical relationships should guide support to the regions.*** The principles behind engagement at regional level are clearly expressed and make good sense. Now the challenge facing Irish Aid is how to find a delivery mechanism that minimises the effects of offset and provides opportunities for innovative and constructive dialogue with regional government. Capacity building support to, for example, Bureaus of Health, and Finance and Economic Development might be an incentive. Continuation of historical arrangements alone is not a sound enough basis of support.

8.29 ***Small complementary projects are a valuable part of the programme but should be planned to address gaps and opportunities, and build in lesson learning and communication.*** The decision to support a number of small complementary projects was good in that it enabled Irish Aid to contribute to more areas of work and partner programmes. But opportunities were missed to plan these interventions to tackle gaps and opportunities in their

sectors and there was very little sharing of information across projects so that development partners were not aware of each other's activities. Greater use of theories of change could help identify barriers to sustainable development results and they should be complementary to larger investments within their pillar.

8.30 **Mainstreaming would benefit from better planning.** Cross-cutting issues need a clear strategy and plan to build on and adapt entry points in the light of experiential learning to guide how and where staff should interact. Treating gender, HIV, governance and environment as mainstreaming topics allows Irish Aid to promote these important cross-cutting issues widely. But the absence of a strategy, and in some cases a technical lead member of staff, left some work without a clear structure and focus.

8.31 **The RBM approach has been a positive influence on the CSP plan, but not brought guidance or tools to help partners with indicators and managing for results.** The adoption of a results-based approach to the CSP brought evident improvement to the clarity of expression of the programme and to measurement. But apart from decisions taken at the MTR there is no evidence a results-based approach influenced the way the programme was managed. Managing for development results implies changes in ways of working, in relationships with partners, in the reporting of performance, in lesson learning and in new resource decisions. These elements have yet to be brought into play.

Recommendations

8.32 The recommendations offered here are relatively few and designed to offer guidance at a more strategic level rather than details of individual interventions. We do not see any requirement for a major change of direction to what is essentially a sound programme, more an adjustment of interventions and ways of working.

8.33 **Planning the CSP:** Four main points are identified for planning:

- The RBM approach to the CSP brought benefits and helped inform the MTR. This approach should be continued. But to help improve the application of RBM, Irish Aid Headquarters should look to produce improved guidelines that give support in three areas: for development of indicators; better management of assumptions and risks; and, to help formalise the use of information in country and back at Irish Aid headquarters in reporting and for lesson learning and communication.¹⁴⁵
- Relationships with partners should be used to develop a closer link between partner programmes and the CSP objectives through the results framework. Particular emphasis should be given to the output-to-outcome logic to identify where there are gaps in understanding and where new programme initiatives would be worthwhile.
- Consideration should be given to ensuring that arrangements for budgets and finance permit flexibility to manage for results. The annual budget structure creates some limitations here but there should be scope for managers to be flexible in response to events.
- Planners in Addis Ababa should use analysis of context to help identify entry points and strategy to interact with the Government of Ethiopia on economic and social policies and how to continue to support civil society.

8.34 **Mixture of aid modalities:** Choices need to be made about the future mix of modalities and interventions. The decision in the CSP to support both PBS and PSNP was taken when the annual bilateral programme was expected to rise to around €50 million. After the financial crisis it is closer to €25 million and unlikely to rise in the near future. PBS is a simple, relatively

¹⁴⁵ The document 'Programme Cycle Management Guidelines (Updated May 2012)' for the Irish Aid Programme Grant 2012-2015 may offer some insights and relevant approaches.

low-cost mechanism, ideally suited to a donor with a large aid programme. PBS provides a major forum for discussion with Government but in spite of this policy dialogue is minimal. The true benefits and sustainability of improved social services are still largely unknown. The PBS Social Accountability work plays directly to some of Irish Aid interests and skills, but hitherto donors have only been able to participate in it if they contribute to the PBS. That limits room for manoeuvre. Irish Aid needs to decide if it is effective in continuing as a small donor to PBS.

8.35 PSNP is a closer fit with the historical experience and interests of Irish Aid and builds on the regional experience and hunger agenda. Graduation of beneficiaries is a major challenge going forward and offers scope for complementary smaller investments of an experimental nature that might increase sustainability and diversity of income sources. If Irish Aid could continue to complement its funding of federal programmes with technical assistance and complementary projects in specific regions, this would enable it to build on its existing regional experience and continue with complementary investments at regional level. Planning of the bilateral programme should take into account activities funded from Irish Aid Headquarters, especially those that are implemented in regions of interest to the country strategy.

8.36 **Working in the regions:** The rationale behind regional engagement remains valid. The costs of changing to different regions would be high and both SNNP and Tigray have substantial poverty to be tackled. There is a small reputational risk of being too closely associated with Tigray but overall the regional orientation provides a sound basis for the future.

Four specific aspects make up the recommendation.

- Irish Aid should continue to support both regions with a mixture of modalities as discussed above.
- Attention should be given to forging links between the work at federal level and regionally, and to keep partners informed about complementary work in the regions so that experience can be shared and lessons learned with partners. In both Tigray and SNNPR, collaboration has been established with agricultural research centres: Hawassa University Agricultural Research Centre through SOS Sahel in SNNPR, and Tigray Agricultural Research Institute. CCRDA has had programmes in both regions. PBS and PSNP are operational in both regions. All have the potential to provide comparisons and systematic learning, an opportunity that has not been maximised to date.
- If offsetting is unavoidable, this should not deter Irish Aid from allocating a part of its funds to support regional government, as long as it provides a mechanism for constructive dialogue. This may be facilitated by working through an intermediary agent, or continuing with a field office presence.
- To avoid reputational risk, ensure a pro-poor approach and maximise use of scarce resources, Irish Aid should consider targeting within regions selecting the poorer woredas based on sound analysis. The work should include arrangements for a lesson-learning and communication strategy.

8.37 **Managing the portfolio:** Analysis of risks was well presented in the CSP and should be continued in the next strategy period. But little use was made of monitoring and updating risks in the annual reports. The programme needs to link analysis of risks to ways of working with specific assessment of implications for implementation of programmes or dialogue with partners and government.

8.38 Use of results frameworks for projects can be difficult when data and information are not available on a regular basis to fit with annual reporting. One approach that is widely used by donors and could be considered by Irish Aid would be for staff in the Embassy to make a subjective 'rating' assessment of project progress towards outcome objectives, using a simple ordinal scale. As long as the assessment is supported by reference to available evidence, and

updated when data is available for outcome performance indicators, this approach would provide a guide on how well interventions are doing year on year. By using a common rating scale, performance can be assessed across all projects under each pillar. This would give a rapid assessment of where problems exist and where more support is needed. The approach would also permit summary of results globally for reporting by Irish Aid.

8.39 **People-centred approach:** A people-centred approach builds on Irish Aid strengths. But there is a danger of a hit or miss element in the skills mix. As part of the preparations for the next CSP the Embassy should commission an analysis of human resources for planning within the current constraints of the Irish public sector. Particular attention should be paid to the challenges of providing a career path and incentives for national staff who are key to continuity and provide long-term 'institutional memory' in the Embassy. It might also be worth consulting with other Irish Embassies facing the same challenge.

8.40 **Mainstreaming:** Mainstreaming is potentially a powerful approach that builds core principles into all work. But to be effective it needs planning and management. Two specific actions are recommended.

- The next CSP would usefully benefit from a background assessment and strategy for each of the four areas. This would allow for some prioritisation and agreement about the level of effort and focus of actions.
- A member of staff with appropriate skills and access to a small but flexible budget line should be appointed to lead in each topic with a programme of work to develop internal capacity and ensure that cross-cutting issues are being taken up in all interventions.

8.41 **Governance and civil society:** Over many years, Irish Aid has built up considerable social capital with the civil society sector. Disengagement would mean considerable loss of trust. It is therefore recommended that Irish Aid continues to support civil society through a variety of means. This may however mean adjustments to areas of emphasis. For example: greater engagement at regional and sub-regional level, where regional states' have a right to localise legislation and greater proximity and trust may exist between authorities and CSOs than at the federal level; or greater emphasis on governance issues within CSOs in an attempt to increase CSO accountability and credibility with government.

8.42 A number of features underline the need for a strategy on governance specific to Ethiopia. Key ones include a federal structure of government, limited political space, a lack of appreciation of diverse demand-side voices, government-control over a large state-owned enterprise sector, tight regulation of financial and other key institutions and control over substantial regional development organisations. A strategy on governance to guide Irish Aid needs to be based on sound political analysis together with a need for realism – for example, progress with PBS SA accountability might be seen as modest in other contexts but within the context of Ethiopia represents a considerable achievement. As such Irish Aid mainstreaming strategies for governance need to be adapted to the context of Ethiopia and less generic in nature.

8.43 More political analysis, as suggested by advisors at Irish Aid headquarters,¹⁴⁶ would help the programme to better understand the situation and identify the areas of effective engagement. Several points should be taken into consideration. Firstly, to prepare a country analytical paper on governance and develop the mainstreaming strategy in the upcoming CSP as already noted above; secondly, there is a need to build staff capacity for mainstreaming governance so that approaches are consistent; thirdly, working with the demand side of governance through the PBS Social Accountability is a good strategy to contribute to citizens' engagement and there is a need to continue with that and where possible extend into other

¹⁴⁶ Policy, Planning and Effectiveness (PPE) Section, Irish Aid

public service delivery; fourthly, although the effectiveness of the CSSP is at present unknown, the next strategy should maintain this commitment and build capacity of civil society organisations; lastly, promotion of good governance should continue in the PSNP, particularly in support of evidence-based graduation, ensuring that women are included as beneficiaries and providing a check on timely transfer of resources to beneficiaries.

8.44 Working on governance issues in Ethiopia entails a degree of risk. There is reputational risk in being seen as too compliant in relations with GoE. There is also the risk of inability to engage with GoE through being too robust in response to areas of disagreement. To manage this risk, it is important that Irish Aid continues to engage through a range of modalities with both governmental and non-governmental partners.

8.45 Given the constraints around limited political space, effective partnership is essential for successful implementation and influence. In general, a donor working alone is likely to be marginalised within the context of Ethiopia.¹⁴⁷ This has largely been recognised by Irish Aid staff and decision makers. However opportunities for linkage across projects and programmes should be maximised. This has not always been the case, as reported, for example, in the MTR of SNNPR where the evaluators found that interventions were operating in isolation from each other.

8.46 Areas of engagement with civil society have been severely restricted since the start of the CSP 2008-12. Many CSOs have shown considerable agility in responding to the current restrictive environment, and some have been supported in this adaptation through flexible responses by Irish Aid. This flexibility in approach should be continued. CSOs remain essential to Irish Aid for implementation and learning at the sub-woreda level, in reaching vulnerable people and in allowing the piloting of innovative approaches.

¹⁴⁷ There may be exceptions that need to be assessed on a case by case basis. For example, IA support for work in prisons is on-going despite the current political context. This is based on strong relationships formed over time. However it is the exception rather than the rule.

Annex 1 Terms of reference

Terms of Reference for an Evaluation of the Irish Aid Ethiopia Country Strategy 2008-2012 FINAL DRAFT for re submissions of Mini Tenders January 2012

1. Background

Ireland's people and government have had a long history of solidarity with the peoples of Ethiopia. Since the famine of 1984 especially, Ireland, through its NGOs and official development assistance have sought to respond appropriately and effectively to poverty and inequality in Ethiopia. The Irish Aid bi-lateral programme was initiated in 1994 and in 2008 the first Ambassador of Ireland presented credentials. The current Country Strategy Paper (CSP) will have expended a total of €142m by the end of 2012

While several major parts of the Irish Aid programme have been externally evaluated in the past, a full Country Strategy has never been evaluated.

Major Components of the current CSP

The current Country Strategy Paper sets out Ireland's strategy for bilateral development assistance to Ethiopia over the period 2008 to 2012. The programme, in particular following its 2010 mid-term review, constitutes a move away from a broad commitment to poverty reduction and inequality towards a deepening of Ireland's focus on hunger, poverty and vulnerability.

The CSP is rooted in the Ethiopian Government's Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty Programme (PASDEP), which spanned the period from 2005 - 2010. Over the programme period Ethiopia's economy has been growing steadily and it has made significant strides in prioritising resources for tackling poverty and improving human development outcomes. However, Ethiopia remains the fourteenth poorest country in the world, according to the latest UNDP Human Development Index (2011) and faces immense challenges in addressing chronic food security and providing access to quality basic services.

The overall goal of the programme is to **reduce the vulnerability of the poorest** Ethiopians by increasing their livelihood security and resilience in the face of food scarcity, natural disasters etc., as well as by increasing their use of health, education and HIV/AIDS services. The programme therefore concentrates on two core areas or pillars - food and livelihood security and access to social services. The bulk of Irish assistance under these two pillars is paid into multi-donor trust funds using local or regional government delivery channels, with around 16% channelled through Civil Society Organisations.

Food and Livelihood Security Pillar:

The CSP analyses show that although agricultural productivity has increased significantly in Ethiopia in recent years, the sector and the millions who depend on it are vulnerable to erratic seasonal rainfall. Productivity is also constrained by limited soil fertility and severely constrained access to inputs and markets. Arresting and reversing Ethiopia's food insecurity is a key priority for the Ethiopian Government and development partners. Some 85% of Ethiopia's population live in rural

areas and the Government is investing strongly in agriculture and rural development. Irish Aid's support aims at increasing the resilience and security of the poorest households so that they can cope better with shocks like failing rains or rising food prices and, in this way, avoid resorting to short term coping mechanisms such as selling off their livestock. Ireland contributes to an extensive programme of public works, which offers cash or food in return, called the **Productive Safety Nets Programme**. Humanitarian response programmes are also delivered, and a co-ordinated programme of support is provided for the Tigray region. In addition NGOs are assisted in providing alternative livelihood opportunities for income generation as well as support for agricultural research.

Social Services and Accountability Pillar:

Irish Aid supports the increased use of basic social services, with a particular focus on health and HIV. Based on the analysis undertaken by the Embassy (in preparation for last CSP) it noted that while the Government has made substantial progress in deploying basic services across the country, there is still a relatively low uptake of basic services by the poorest, especially women. There are various reasons for this, including the poor quality of the services, inability to pay and the distance from isolated households, gender, social and cultural obstacles. Irish Aid supports efforts to address these by improving the capacity of service providers and the quality of the basic services themselves, as well as tackling the barriers and obstacles that face poor people when accessing these services. Support for improved social services is advanced through a special programme of support known as **Protection of Basic Services (PBS)**. Ireland also promotes greater accountability and transparency by service providers through support for civil society and other implementing partners in order that citizens can exercise their rights to improved and accountable service delivery.

Regional Programming

The Irish Aid CSP in Ethiopia also has a particular focus in two regions of the country: Tigray and the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples region (SNNPR). Irish Aid operates a small sub-office from Mekelle, the regional capital of Tigray.

Tigray Regional Programme

One of the enduring characteristics of the Irish Aid programme in Ethiopia since its inception has been a longstanding partnership with the Tigray Regional Government and people. An external review of the Irish Aid programme in Tigray was carried out in June 2010. The programme has worked to enhance assets and capacity in the region in a number of areas; capacity of watershed communities, sectoral bureaus and local administrators; schools and clinics; environmental protection; systems development in terms of financial management, monitoring and evaluation, and public health; policy improvements in relation to social inclusion, such as the passing of the progressive 'family law' legislation.

One new area of work undertaken in Tigray over the duration of this CSP has been the development of a Complementary Poverty Monitoring Approach (CPMA). This builds on an earlier and intensive process of 'sentinel woreda' monitoring undertaken by Irish Aid personnel. The CPMA seeks to develop a more qualitative understanding of the barriers to and impact of various national policies and programmes for poor men and women. Another particular area of work was to expand the Irish Aid supported organisation, Tourism in Ethiopia for Sustainable Future Alternatives (TESFA) community tourism programme into Tigray. Two new tourist sites have been developed in the region, linking with two more funded by another organisation, and operations began in the 2010 trekking season. Irish Aid also supports the Bureau for Women's Affairs and Women's Association in Tigray which seeks to assist the social and economic empowerment of women in the region.

Southern Nations Nationalities and People's Region Programme

Irish Aid has worked with SNNPR since 1994 providing a variety of support including, in the health sector: expanding health professional training institutes, upgrading qualifications of health

professionals, immunisation of children and construction and equipping of village level health posts. Irish Aid continues to support regional local authorities in the delivery of health and HIV services focusing in particular on improving the number and capacity of staff at health clinics, increasing the number of expectant mothers who are tested and treated for HIV and expanding the number of health centres in the region. Irish aid also supports the roll out of HIV prevention and care activities and services for children and teachers throughout the region’s education system.

For management purposes of the CSP, the SNNPR programme comes under the Social Services Accountability pillar and the Tigray programme comes under the Food and Livelihood Security Pillar.

For further information on Irish Aid’s work in Ethiopia please visit: www.embassyofireland.org.et

Results Based Management

Ethiopia was one of the first of Irish Aid’s programme countries to apply a Results Based Management (RBM) approach from which a series of management tools were developed (Logic Model (see Annex B for most recent Logic Model), Results Frameworks and a Performance Measurement Framework). A set of eight objectives were set for the original CSP for which target indicators and baselines were identified. A Mid Term Review of the CSP took place in September 2010 as a result of which the set of objectives and higher level outcomes were reformulated. The table below presents both the original and revised objectives.

Irish Aid Ethiopia CSP Objectives

Pillar	Original CSP Objective	New CSP objective agreed at the MTR
Social Services and Accountability	Pro-poor planning and accountability structures and systems for public service delivery in place and operational (Obj 1)	To increase access and quality of basic services at sub-national level (Obj 1)
	Increased capacity and space for civil society to engage in partnerships at the sub-national level (Obj 4)	To enable CSOs contribute to local and national development and good governance (Obj 2)
	Increased and improved capacity of frontline and mid-level staff in health and HIV and AIDS (Obj 2) Increased capacity in the education sector to respond to HIV and AIDS (Obj 3)	To increase access to and improved quality of maternal, child and HIV services (Obj 3)
Social Services and Accountability and/or Food and Livelihood Security	Specific policy responses to chronic poverty and gender inequality integrated into the new National Development Plan (Obj 8)	To improve quality and use of poverty monitoring data (gender disaggregated) in health and food security (Obj 4)
		To strengthen multisectoral Responses against maternal and child malnutrition (Obj 5)
Food and Livelihood Security	Long-term multi-annual Productive Safety Net operating with appropriate levels of coverage and linked to well functioning disaster risk management mechanisms (Obj 5) Sustainable improvements to communal natural resources, in particular for women and the vulnerable (Obj 6)	To protect and enhance local ecosystems and the assets of chronically food insecure women and men (Obj 6)
	Food insecure households, in particular female headed households, start to build assets and have access to services appropriate to their needs (Obj 7)	To diversify and improve chronically food insecure women and men’s livelihoods (Obj 7)

While it is judged that these changes have not adversely affected the general evaluability of the CSP, they will nonetheless have to be considered by the evaluation in an appropriate manner. The general application of the RBM approach in Ethiopia will also be examined.

The CSP document also identified a number of core approaches and strategies that are common across the CSP activity streams and results. These strategies include:

- Partnership with government, at federal, regional and woreda level
- Partnership with civil society organisations at federal, regional and woreda level
- Field monitoring, research and documentation of lessons and experience for influencing policy and implementation strategies
- Mainstreaming governance, HIV and AIDS, gender and environment
- Coherence and complementarity between programmes through a programmatic approach
- Alliance building with like-minded partners, government, civil society and development partners

2. Purpose of the evaluation

The **purpose** of the evaluation is given as;

- ▶ To provide Irish Aid management with an independent, evidenced-based assessment of the performance of the Irish Aid Ethiopia Country Strategy 2008-2012.
- ▶ To provide accountability to the Governments and peoples of Ireland and Ethiopia for the funds expended during the period and to identify lessons learned that will help inform future strategic decision making for Irish Aid programming in Ethiopia.

3. Principles

A number of principles to help guide the evaluation process are set out below.

Mutual Accountability and Government Ownership

The Paris Declaration identifies mutual accountability as an integral part of the partnership process where donors and recipient countries hold each other to account for mutual commitments into which they have entered. The evaluation will therefore seek to respond to both the Government of Ethiopia's need to be accountable to its citizens and the Government of Ireland's responsibility to account to its taxpayers. The evaluation will maintain clear communications with the Government of Ethiopia and other Development Partners and encourage their engagement with the evaluation. An initial meeting with the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development took place with the Head of the Evaluation & Audit Section and the Head of Development at the Embassy in August 2011.

Alignment

The evaluation, in so far as possible, will link with any relevant regional, national or international review or evaluation processes. It will also take note of any relevant DFA/Irish Aid review processes or strategies- e.g. the Africa Strategy and the review of the Local Development policy.

Independence

Those carrying out the evaluation must be objective and independent and cannot previously have had any involvement in developing or managing the Ethiopian Country Programme.

Evaluation Principles, Criteria and Quality Standards

The evaluation will be guided by the OECD-DAC internationally accepted evaluation principles, performance criteria (Relevance, Efficiency, Effectiveness, Sustainability and Impact. The extended criteria of Coherence and Coverage may also be included) and quality standards, as well as the processes and standards set out in the Irish Aid Evaluation & Audit Unit Evaluation Operations Manual.

4. Scope of the Evaluation

The scope of the evaluation will first be defined through evaluation questions identified for a set of four development categories- Development Strategy, Results, Processes and Management. These categories have been proposed based on positive experiences of their use within other Irish Aid evaluations and other development partners and are defined below.

Although all four development categories will be addressed, it is intended that the emphasis of evaluative effort will be placed on **Development Strategy** and **Development Results**. This is to help focus the scope of the study but also to encourage examination of 'strategy as the evaluand' as discussed by some practitioners within the international evaluation community¹⁴⁸. In this regard, contractors are invited to give methodological consideration to the challenges of taking such an approach.

Development Categories

Development Strategy:

This category summarises issues related to strategic analysis and related decisions, Irish Aid's comparative advantage and position in relation to the set of Development Partners in Ethiopia, Irish Aid policies and overall direction.

Applicable DAC Criteria: Relevance, Coherence and Effectiveness

Development Processes:

This category examines aid effectiveness with specific reference to the Accra Agenda and the Division of Labour between Development Partners in Ethiopia. It looks at collaboration with partners of various types.

Applicable DAC Criteria: Effectiveness and Efficiency

Development Management:

This category looks at management within the Mission, including Ways of Working, and Managing for Development Results. It also analyses relationships with HQ and other Missions.

Applicable DAC Criteria: Relevance, Effectiveness and Efficiency

Development Results:

This category captures the intended and actual results at objective and outcome levels of the programme logic model. It reviews progress made against indicators set within the Results Frameworks and Performance Measurement Framework.

Applicable DAC Criteria: Effectiveness, Sustainability, Impact and Coverage

Evaluation Questions

¹⁴⁸ See for example, Patrizi AP & M Quinn Patton(eds), *Evaluating Strategy: new Directions for Evaluation*, No 128, winter 2010, Jossey-Bass and the American Evaluation Association

The overarching evaluation question is given as;

To what extent did the Irish Aid Country Strategy contribute to the reduction of vulnerability of the poorest Ethiopian women and men, girls and boys?

A set of indicative core evaluation questions which will help address the overarching evaluation question is presented below.

Indicative Core Evaluation Questions

Development area	Core Evaluation Questions	Dac Criteria
Development Strategy	1.To what extent was the design of and strategic choices made within the CSP based on good contextual, political economy, poverty & vulnerability analyses?	<i>Relevance</i>
	2.To what extent was/were the Theory/ies of Change (implicit and/or explicit) underpinning the strategy relevant, valid and understood by Irish Aid and its partners?	<i>Relevance</i>
	3.What has been learned about CSP performance from the relationships between the planned, emergent, dropped and actual implemented strategies?	<i>All Dac criteria</i>
Development Results	4 To what extent did the Irish Aid CSP contribute to the stated objectives (which objectives tbc), and intended outcomes?	<i>Effectiveness</i>
	5. To what extent are the results and achievements to date likely to endure in the longer term?	<i>Sustainability</i>
Development Processes	6. How aligned, coherent and effective was the mix and range of aid modalities adopted?	<i>Coherence, Effectiveness</i>
	7. .How effective was the approach to partnership adopted in the CSP?	<i>Effectiveness</i>
	8. To what extent were the cross cutting issues of Gender and Environment effectively and appropriately mainstreamed across the programme	<i>Relevance, Effectiveness</i>
Development Management	9.How useful was the Irish Aid corporate approach to Results Based Management with regard to Irish Aid Ethiopia and its partners	<i>Relevance, Effectiveness</i>

It is also intended that during the inception phase, the scope of the evaluation will be further refined with regard to choosing which objectives or component activities of the CSP to focus on commensurate with the contracted resources available. Contractors are invited to propose objective criteria or a sampling frame upon which this refinement might be made as part of their methodology within their ‘mini- tender’ submission (see section 8. Evaluation Team selection below). During the inception phase, the set of core evaluation questions may also be refined.

5. Methodology

To ensure the credibility of the **'Strategy- Results'** focus of this evaluation, it will be important that sufficient evidence and rigour of analysis is presented especially concerning causal claims. The contractor will be expected to propose and adopt an underpinning approach which can be reasonably applied within the resources available and which will provide this credibility to process and end products.

It is envisaged that the evaluation will consist of three broad phases;

Phase I Inception

The first phase will consist of a first review of documentation -reports, reviews, evaluations and other documents related to the Ethiopia CSP. This phase will also involve interviews with initial key informants from Irish Aid and other stakeholders- in particular an Inception meeting with Evaluation & Audit unit will be arranged. A pre-visit to Ethiopia will also be arranged. Ethiopia based stakeholders during the inception phase may also be interviewed by telephone or VC if appropriate. Refinement of the methodology and detail planning for the field mission will be completed during this phase. The evaluation process will have a strong orientation towards Learning. It is therefore intended to produce as early as possible in the reporting phase, several **Evaluation Learning Briefs** (See Annex A for definition) on themes/subjects that will be identified during the inception phase. The consultant will present to Evaluation & Audit section of DFA&T an **Inception Report** detailing the output and their analysis/reflections from the above activities in a concise and coherent manner.

Phase II Documentary Review and Field Mission

The second phase will involve further review of documentation and a field visit to Ethiopia where relevant evaluative work will be carried out. The consultant will take primary responsibility for the overall planning of the field visit. Embassy Addis Ababa will provide close support and will be able to set up individual meetings and logistics. It is envisaged that the in-country field visit will be of three weeks duration. The visit will validate, or otherwise, the evidence arising from the documentation review and inception work and may identify new evidence or issues. It is envisaged that this phase will include a visit to one of the regional programme areas of the Ethiopia CSP. It is intended that an in-field de-briefing prior to departure will be held with key stakeholders outlining key/emergent findings.

Phase III Reporting

The final phase will consist of an in-Ireland/or video based debrief from the field visit, any follow up work with Irish Aid staff , production of the Learning Notes/Briefs, writing of the draft and final reports, writing of the 'abridged' version of the evaluation report, and an in-Ireland final presentation/debrief of the evaluation report.

Data Collection and Analysis

The approach to data collection and analysis will primarily consist of a review of secondary data sources verified by qualitative evidence gathered through fieldwork. Where available and relevant, attribution studies will also be gathered. It is likely that the field work phase of the evaluation will include a visit to at least one of the regional programmes of the CSP.

It will be important for the evaluation process to also optimise links with other processes/reviews/evaluations that will be ongoing or moving towards completion during the evaluation period.

Some of these processes and data sources at the regional, national levels within Ethiopia and at the international level are identified below.

International/Irish Aid:

- Busan Outcome Document, Accra Agenda for Action, Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness
- DAC Peer review 2009 and Mid Term review of Irish Aid 2011
- Irish Aid White Paper 2006 and Review 2012
- Irish Aid Local Development Review (to begin late 2011)
- DFA&T Africa Strategy 2011
- Irish Aid Visioning toward 2015
- Irish Aid sector/thematic policies (various)

Ethiopia - National:

- Demographic Health Surveys 2005 & 2011
- Household Income and Consumption Survey 2011 (tbc)
- Welfare Monitoring Survey 2011 (tbc)
- WB & IMF review;
- WB Public Expenditure Review
- Community Based Nutrition Programme Impact Assessment (date tbc)
- PSNP Impact assessment 2005, 2008 and 2011 & MTR (2012)
- Local Investment Grant evaluation 2011
- Ethiopia CEDAW Report 2011
- Well being & Ill Being Dynamics in Ethiopia (WIDE) Research (2010 and on-going)
- Woreda City Benchmarking Surveys (dates tbc)
- Financial Transparency and Accountability Survey (date tbc)
- PBSII Implementation Completion and Results Report (June 30, 2010)
- PBS Environment and Social Sustainability study (July 9, 2011)
- PBS Health Commodity Tracking and Stock Management Study (May, 2011)
- Irish Aid Public Financial Management Assessment (due January/February 2012, which will cover:
 - i. Public Expenditure and Financial Accountability (PEFA) Assessment (2010)
 - ii. Channel 1 Financial Management Study (draft 2011)

Ethiopia - Regional:

- SNNPR review (date) and MTR 2011 (tbc)
- SNNPR Health Service Utilisation Study 2011
- SNNPR Human Resources for Health Study 2009
- Tigray Reviews 2008 and 2010

Ethiopia – Sources from the CSP Performance Management Framework:

- PBS and PSNP Joint Review & Implementation Support Mission Aide Memoires and annual reports
- MOH Annual reports and Health and Health Related Indicators report
- SNNPR Regional Annual Health reports
- Federal Hiv Aids Prevention Control Office/Regional Health Bureau periodic reports

- Irish Aid annual and quarterly reports
- Growth & Transformation Plan Annual Progress Reports
- National Nutrition Strategy and Policy
- PSNP Impact assessment 2005, 2008 and 2010 & MTR (2012)
- PSNP Public Works Impact Assessment and Reviews
- Project and programme annual reports (PBS SA, Civil Society Support Programme CSSP, CSO Taskforce, Tracking Trends in Ethiopia Civil Society (TECS) etc)
- Project and programme reviews/evaluations (SoS Sahel 2010, Operational research 2011, CSO Review 2011, Tesfa mid-term 2010 and final review 2011 (tbc), SDCC 2011 (tbc))

6. Outputs

The expected outputs of the assignment are as follows:

1. At the end of Phase I, an **Inception Report** (not more than 20 pages) will be submitted that sets out inception activities and analyses, refines the methodology, identifies themes for the Learning Briefs, proposes further refinement of the evaluation scope, summarises key issues to be addressed during the second phase of the evaluation, and presents a refined work plan for the remainder of the assignment.
2. Three **Evaluation Learning Briefs** (see Annex A) on themes to be agreed
3. A **final report** (of about 60 pages, excluding appendices) that will include findings, analyses, key lessons and recommendations for Irish Aid both in Ethiopia and at Headquarters. The report should be structured around the four **Development Areas** for the **Core Evaluation Questions**, with proportionate attention given in particular to the Strategy and Results categories. The primary audience for this report is the Ethiopia mission staff and technical and desk staff in Irish Aid Headquarters.
4. An **abridged** version (max 15 pages) of the final evaluation report. More than an executive summary, this report should capture concisely, clearly and in so far as possible in non technical language, the main findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned of the main report in a manner that preserves the evidential integrity of the evaluation. The primary audience form this report is Irish Aid and DFA&T senior management, other bi-lateral donors, and Government of Ethiopia.
5. Debriefing /stakeholder sessions and notes as indicated in the phasing outlined above.
6. Throughout the process short reports tracking progress of the evaluation process will be required.

Reports should demonstrate familiarity with the revised OECD-DAC *Evaluation Quality Standards* and be written to a high standard, ready for publication. The contractor should provide its own internal quality assurance for all products before they are forwarded to DFA&T. A maximum of **116 consultancy days** will be available for this assignment.

7. Timeframe

In order to maximise learning and utility for planning of the next CSP cycle for Irish Aid in Ethiopia, this evaluation exercise will start as soon as the relevant procurement processes are completed. Immediate availability of the contractor will therefore be important in order to expedite a rapid start

of the process. The Evaluation & Audit unit anticipate that the first phase of the evaluation will begin in February 2012. A **pre-visit** to Ethiopia will be arranged for **22nd-24th February** and a field visit over three working weeks will be arranged during the period **March 19th to April 20th**. The first draft report will be expected to issue by **end of June 8th** and the final draft by **end of July**. Evaluation Learning Briefs will be submitted prior to the first draft of the main report. The service provider must be able to confirm that they can meet this timeframe.

8. Evaluation Team selection

The Evaluation Team, given the resources available and the technical requirements of this TOR, is likely to consist of two international consultants and one local (based in Ethiopia) consultant. In addition to strong general development evaluation skills, the team should collectively be able to demonstrate;

- a range of knowledge and the skills appropriate to the sectoral areas of the Irish Aid Ethiopia CSP.
- experience of evaluating complex donor country level programmes and/or their component parts, including aid modalities and effectiveness aspects
- strong political economy analytical skills and strong and recent specific experience of the Ethiopia development context

The selection of the contractor for this evaluation will be through the ‘mini- tender’ process established as part of the main Framework contract for future evaluation services for the Evaluation & Audit section of DFA&T. Contractors accepted under the Framework Contract procedure have already provided information related to methodology and proposed teams. For this country specific evaluation, contractors are now asked to make a submission (not exceeding 10 pages) providing the following additional information;

- A brief statement of their understanding of the Ethiopia country-specific context
- A brief re-elaboration of the methodology they envisage taking cognisance of the context and their understanding of Irish Aid’s Ethiopia country specific programme and any other methodological information and requirements indicated in this TOR. The methodology should name the evaluation tools that will be used. If an evaluation framework or matrix is to be used, an overview of what that framework/matrix will look like should be provided.
- A time-specific plan to implement the evaluation, within the outline timeframe indicated
- The proposed team for the evaluation with details of the responsibilities of each team member. A short ToR for the team leader should be provided (if not already provided in the main submission). If the details of the team members have been already provided in the original framework submission, there is no need to re-submit this information.
- Costs- with details of proposed consultancy days/costs across team member

The service provider must be able to demonstrate how it can assure quality control of both the process and the outputs described above.

Consultants will be selected according to the following criteria:

- Understanding of this Terms of Reference (10 %)
- Proposed methodology and planning of the assignment (20 %)
- Ethiopia country experience and understanding of the Ethiopia development context (15%)

- Experience of evaluating complex donor country level programmes and/or their component parts, including aid modalities and effectiveness aspects, or multi -country evaluations (10%)
- Overall balance and complementarity of the proposed team regarding the desired expertise (10 %)
- Experience and suitability of the Team Leader (10 %)
- Cost (25 %)

9. Management Arrangements

The evaluation will be managed by an officer of the Evaluation and Audit Unit of DFA&T. A Reference Group¹⁴⁹ (to be made up of staff from Evaluation & Audit unit of DFA&T, and the Programme Countries desk, Policy Planning & Effectiveness section, and the Thematic & Special Programmes section of Irish Aid), will support the overall exercise. Other key stakeholder points of contact will be clearly identified. Irish Aid Ethiopia will assist with all arrangements and logistics for the field visit. Irish Aid HQ and Ethiopia will provide all necessary briefing material related to Irish Aid programmes and policies. The consultant should make clear its own internal management arrangements to DFA&T and identify the points of contact for management, administration and logistics, and quality assurance.

The Evaluation and Audit Unit will also draw up and manage a **Communications Strategy** for the evaluation process and end products.

¹⁴⁹ A TOR defining the purpose of the group and roles of members will be drawn up.

Annex 2 List of people met¹⁵⁰*Irish Aid Dublin*

Name	Job Title
Michael Gaffey	Deputy Director General, Irish Aid
William Carlos	Head, Evaluation & Audit Unit
Patrick McManus	Development Specialist, Evaluation & Audit Unit
Laura Leonard	Development Specialist, Evaluation & Audit Unit
Kevin Colgan	Senior Development Specialist, Policy Planning and Effectiveness section
Kevin Kelly	Head, Emergency & Recovery section
Liam Mac Gabhann	Head, Programme Countries section
Finbar O'Brien	Head, Multi-lateral section
Anne Barry	Audit Specialist, Evaluation & Audit Unit

Irish Aid Limerick, by video conference

Name	Job Title
Elise Cevacece	Policy Planning & effectiveness
Paul Sherlock	Policy Planning & effectiveness
Grainne O'Neil	Desk Officer, Ethiopia, Programme Countries section
Damien Cummings	Assistant Desk Officer, Ethiopia, Programme Countries section
Fiona Quinn	Development Specialist, Thematic Sectors and Special Programmes
Fionnuala Gilsenan	Head, Civil Society section

Addis Ababa

Name	Job Title
Silé Maguire	Ambassador, Embassy of Ireland
Colleen Wainwright	Head of Development, Irish Aid
Anne Holmes	Food, nutrition and livelihoods, Irish Aid
Ben Siddle	Social services and accountability, Irish Aid
Leulseged Asfaw	Agriculture and Rural Development, Programme Manager, Irish Aid
Meron Gezahegn	Internal Auditor, Irish Aid
Martha Gebremedhin	Programme Officer, Irish Aid
Rebecca Yohannes	Programme Officer, Irish Aid
Bizuwork Ketete	Governance Programme Manager, Irish Aid
Betty Kassa	Programme Officer, Irish Aid
Hiwot Mebrate	PBS Programme Manager, Irish Aid
Ayuba Sanny	PSNP Programme Manager, Irish Aid
Tewelde Gebreselassie	Manager, Tigray office, Irish Aid

Federal Government of Ethiopia

Name	Job Title
Mitiku Kassa	State Minister, Ministry of Agriculture (MoA)
Melaku Kifle	Head of COPCU, MoFED
Berhanu W/Michael	Director, Food Security Coordination Directorate (MoA)
Dr Edimealem Shitaye	Acting Director of Extension Directorate (MoA)
Dagnew Menon	Technical Advisor (HABP), Extension Directorate (MoA)

¹⁵⁰ The list includes people met during the Inception phase and the main visit and others contacted by telephone for follow-up interviews

Annex 2 List of people met

Abate Mamo	HABP M & E officer, Extension Directorate (MoA)
Tesfa Teferi	HABP Capacity Building Officer, Extension Directorate (MoA)
Abiot Wondie	HABP Agri Business Officer, Extension Directorate (MoA)
Yacob Mudises	Central Statistics Authority (CSA)
Tilahun Tadesse	Ministry of Finance & Economic Development

Regional Government of Tigray

Name	Job Title
Gizachew Gebru	Head, Tigray Food Security Coordination Directorate
Hashe Lema	Head, Bureau of Labour and Social Affairs (BoLSA)
Daniel Abraham	Social Protection Representative (BoLSA)
Daniel Asefa	Head, Bureau of Finance and Economic Development (BoFED)
Dr Haile Tesfay	Irish Aid CIP Nutrition Project, Tigray Agricultural Research Institute (TARI)
Gebrehiwot H/Mariam	USAID CIP Project (TARI)
Dr Eyasu Abraha	Director General (TARI)

Donors

Name	Job Title
Xavier Furtado	Coordinator, PBS Secretariat, World Bank Country Office
Demelash Demissier	Procurement specialist, PBS Secretariat
Samuel Mulugeta	Senior economist, PBS Secretariat
Demelash Alem	PFM Specialist, PBS Secretariat
Wondimsiamregn Mekasha	M & E Specialist, PBS Secretariat
Matt Hobson	Donor Coordinator Team (DCT), Productive Safety Net and Household Asset Building Programmes, World Bank Country Office
Melaku G/Michael	PSNP DCT (pastoral program specialist)
Begashaw Woldu	PSNP DCT (Public Work Specialist)
Michael Addisu	PSNP DCT (Procurement Specialist)
Shimelis Asefa	CIDA
Per Wam	The World Bank
Abeje Tefera	ESAP2
Mario Clausen	ESAP2
Paul Walters	Acting Head of Office, DFID Ethiopia
Ahmed Mohammed	DfID
Rob Chase	The World Bank
Benedetta Mussilo	EC
Mike McDonagh	Head of Office, UNOCHA
Tim Mander	Humanitarian Response Fund Manager, UNOCHA
Kristen Knutson	Public Information and Reports Officer; Head, Information & Analysis Section, UNOCHA

NGO and CSO

Name	Job Title
Amede Gubena	CSO Task Force Secretariat
Mamusha Lema	PANE
Dr Assefa Admassu	Ethiopian Economic Association (EEA)
Azeb Kelemework	UEWCA

Annex 2 List of people met

Saba Gebremedihin	NEWA
Zerihun Mohammed	Forum for Social Studies (FSS)
Feyera Abdia	SOS Sahel, Country Director
Michelle Winthrop	FARM Africa, Country Director
Zenaye Tadesse	EWLA, Executive Director
Pastor Daniel	Director, Prison Fellowship
Kinfe Abraha	WAT, Program Coordinator
Ashenafi	Mums for Mums, Mekele
Meuz Miruts	Relief Society of Tigray (REST), Social Accountability
Etenesh Abraha	Chairperson, Wukro Women Association
Genet Degu	Member of the Wukro Women Association
Kedir Mohammed	Chairman of Agula kebele and the CCC (Kilte Awlalo woreda)
Mekonnen Teferi	Woreda Office of Labour and Social Affairs (Kilte Awlalo woreda)
Hailemariam Berhe	Manager of Agula town
Mohammed Awol	Accountant of the CCC (Agula kebele)
Sue Edwards	Director, Institute for Sustainable Development
Itana Ayana	Consultant on microfinance and credit system (HABP)
Dr Chekol Kidane	Consultant, CSSP and co-Author of the Irish Aid Tigray Evaluation
Irish NGOs	
Dr Woubshet Berhanu	Country Director, Self Help Africa
Linda Horgan	CONCERN Ethiopia
Tamrat Terefe	Christian Aid
Askale Aderaw	Trocaire/CAFOD
Jonathan Garrad	GOAL Ethiopia
Father Patrick Moran	Misean Cara (Friend of the Mission)

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Annex 4 Analysis of strategy decisions

What is strategy?

Strategy is generally about where an organisation is headed and how it intends to get there. Strategy can be presented in a variety of forms and for a range of time-scales: simple statements of intent; detailed programmes of work; key criteria against which to judge what activities an organisation undertakes; and a horizon spanning anything from a single year to very long-term.

The Ethiopia CSP was one of the first of a new generation of Irish Aid country strategies working towards a five year period, having a clear policy agenda, taking a whole of programme approach and applying the Results Based Management (RBM) initiative within Irish Aid, leading to stronger indicators and monitoring.

This foundation led the TOR for this evaluation to encourage the evaluation team to examine the *'strategy as the evaluand'*.¹⁵¹

A great variety of approaches to strategy have been taken in the public and private sectors. A central question is to ask what is understood by strategy. The Ethiopia CSP is a good case in point. The CSP starts by equating country strategy with country programme, thus the strategy can be interpreted as the contents of the programme.¹⁵² The programme itself is described as a logical formulation of objectives consisting of one goal and two final outcomes. These were to be achieved through a set of activities grouped under a collection of eight objectives which contribute to four subsidiary outcomes.¹⁵³ They form a detailed and comprehensive logic structure.

Yet written within the text on goal outcomes and objectives is a short section entitled 'strategy' that lists six elements:¹⁵⁴

- Partnership with government, at federal, regional and woreda level
- Partnership with CSOs at federal, regional and woreda level
- Field monitoring, research and documentation of lessons and experience for influencing policy and implementation strategies
- Mainstreaming governance, HIV and AIDS, gender and environment
- Coherence and complementarity between programmes through a programmatic approach
- Alliance building with like-minded partners, government, civil society and development partners

The next paragraph also includes four more key ways of working:

- a firm engagement with the poorest women and men,
- a coherent lesson learning strategy,
- multi-level engagement¹⁵⁵ in the system to track progress, and
- a focus on improved impact monitoring with partners

These statements are about ways of working and target groups. If strategy is about how to achieve objectives, this 'strategy within a strategy' seems a closer fit than either the description of goals or the planned programme of work.

¹⁵¹ See TOR at Annex 1

¹⁵² Irish Aid Country Strategy Paper Ethiopia (CSP) 2008-2012, 24 June 2008, para 1.

¹⁵³ Analysis of the logic model and structure of objectives can be found in the main report, Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid CSP para 87

¹⁵⁵ Multi-level including engagement at kebele, woreda, regional and federal level while working with government and CSO partners

The CSP document mixes up the language of strategy, objectives and programme content. The word strategy is used variously as an overarching descriptive term that sets out what the objectives are, what will be done under the programme and in a different sense to describe how Irish Aid will work in Ethiopia. Talking to staff in the Embassy, it is clear that the latter description is more in line with their sense of strategy for the country programme.

If strategy is about how Irish Aid operates, than evaluating strategy can take an approach which examines patterns of behaviour; what decisions are taken and what the organisation actually does. This is complementary to a results-based approach for evaluating what the programme has achieved.

Evaluating strategy behaviour

Following a behavioural approach, strategy can be defined as ‘pattern: consistency in behaviour over time’.¹⁵⁶ Thus strategy is manifest in decisions made by an organisation. This has been recognised as an influential approach in the private sector and has been advocated as being applicable and well suited to the public and non-profit sectors as well.¹⁵⁷ The approach taken in this annex builds on published work by Mintzberg as described in Patton and Patrizi, both referenced in footnotes below.

In order to evaluate strategic behaviour, it is first necessary to distinguish between the types of decision being adopted. Decisions about nonstrategic change (improvement within an existing strategy) can be separated from strategic change which is development of a new direction. These describe the *degree* of change. Within either strategic or nonstrategic change, the *kind* of change can be about *position*, which focuses on what is done and the context in which it is done; or *perspective*, which focuses on how something is done.¹⁵⁸

In the language of the CSP, a strategic change would be something like the decision to set a new objective covering nutrition, to pilot some small-scale initiatives in order to inform the next CSP, as reported in the 2010 Annual Report. That would be a change in *position* as it affects what will be done and the target population and context. But it is not a change in perspective as Irish Aid plans to work in an established way, following normal practices. Annex 4, Table 1 illustrates types of strategic decisions using examples from analysis of implementation under the CSP. Strategic decisions must involve change to either position or perspective, or both. Nonstrategic change need not, as the change might be entirely within the declared strategy.

Annex 4, Table 1

	Position	Perspective
Strategic change	Setting a new objective covering nutrition, to pilot some small-scale initiatives in order to inform the next CSP	To mainstream HIV/AIDS in the PSNP
Nonstrategic change	Set a new reduced budget (with consequential changes to composition of the programme)	Continued support to partner CSO in the promotion of gender equality and women’s empowerment; human rights monitoring and reporting; social and economic research; and, voter and civic education pending setting up the CSSP

Source: Analysis by the evaluation team

¹⁵⁶ Mintzberg,, H. (2007) Tracking Strategies. New York, Oxford University Press

¹⁵⁷ Patton, M. Q., & Patrizi, P. A. (2010). Strategy as the focus for evaluation. In P. A. Patrizi & M. Q. Patton (Eds.), *Evaluating strategy. New Directions for Evaluation*, 128, 5–28.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

Analysis of strategy decisions

In order to examine strategy behaviour during the CSP period an analysis was undertaken of documented decisions. The source material used was the Irish Aid Ethiopia Annual Reports for the four years 2008 to 2011 inclusive, plus the report of the CSP MTR in 2010.¹⁵⁹ The table of analysis follows this text at Annex 4, Appendix 1.

The reports were scrutinised for all statements that presented a decision or action during the reporting period. The relevant text is quoted in the Appendix, together with a reference to the source document. Each decision was assessed as being either strategic or nonstrategic; and about position or perspective. Annex 4, table 2 summarises the findings.

Annex 4, Table 2

Assessment	Number	Percentage
Number of decisions analysed	81	100
Number assessed as strategic	9	11
Number assessed as nonstrategic	72	89
Number assessed as strategic and of position	3	4
Number assessed as strategic and of perspective	6	7
Number assessed as nonstrategic and of position	1	1
Number assessed as nonstrategic and of perspective	8	10

Source: Analysis by the evaluation team

The findings reveal some clear and interesting trends. Firstly, the majority of the 81 decisions examined were classified as nonstrategic. This means they were decisions about actions within the scope of the existing country strategy.¹⁶⁰ Nine decisions, or 11 per cent, were assessed as being strategic. Of these, two thirds involved changes to the way in which the strategy was being implemented (perspective) and one third concerned what was to be done or the context of the activities (position). Among the non-strategic decisions, eight involved ways of working and only one dealt with scope or context.

The nine strategic decisions are listed here by year. The three decisions affecting scope or context of work (position) are underlined.

- 2008 to fund a child caring practices project by Save the Children UK
- 2008 to conduct joint sentinel woreda monitoring in Tigray
- 2010 to cease funding the Health Pooled Fund
- 2010 to set a new objective covering nutrition, to pilot some small-scale initiatives in order to inform the next CSP
- MTR 2010 to rationalise the number of Irish Aid partners and programmes
- MTR 2010 to exit from the HIV sector and reduce the number of sectors to three
- MTR 2010 to add aid effectiveness as a new strategy
- 2011 to partner with VSO to build health capacity in SNNPR
- 2011 to start a nutrition intervention with United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) in Tigray

Assessment and conclusions

The CSP document for 2008-2011 is described by staff of Irish Aid as being a logical continuation of a process of rationalising the programme that had been in place for some years. Interviews with staff who participated in the process of preparing the strategy found it protracted and demanding, partly as a result of being the first country to implement the new RBM approach and much attention was taken up by defining objectives results and indicators. That may account for the structure in which

¹⁵⁹ A draft version of the 2011 report was used.

¹⁶⁰ In this analysis the term strategy is used to encompass all of the objectives, programme and ways of working set out in the CSP.

strategy actions are subsumed within a wider framework of goals and objectives. However, even if that suggests a structural confusion, staff feel that the approach did help to clarify thinking around the poor and target beneficiaries.

Judging by the nature of decisions made, the description of the country programme and country strategy in the CSP has been a robust guide for Irish Aid. A clear and deliberate approach to ways of working was set out and the majority of actions documented in programme reports suggest that this was followed. The MTR concluded that the programme remained relevant to the needs of the country and to Irish Aid priorities, including the prioritisation of hunger as a key component. Where strategic decisions were taken, most concerned ways of working to react to changing opportunities. Of the three that involved a change in what the programme would do, two were necessitated by the changing Ethiopian context and Ireland's economic circumstances. The realised strategy is a logical development of the original CSP and remains true to the original goal and outcomes.

Annex 4, Appendix 1

Decisions identified from annual reports and MTR	Strategic ¹⁶¹	Non-strategic ¹⁶²	Position ¹⁶³	Perspective ¹⁶⁴
2008				
Irish Aid, in line with the new CSP, successfully advocated for more focus in PBS Phase II on monitoring results and outcomes, emphasising social inclusion issues to focus on vulnerable groups and the poorest in accessing and utilizing basic services, and ensuring linkages between PBS and basic service sectors as well as other programmes such as the Democratic Institutions Programme and public financial management support. SSA 01 2008 p6		✓		
Irish Aid also worked to ensure the programme document adequately reflects the governance context in which PBS II will be implemented, including concerns around the Proclamation for Charities and Societies. SSA 01 p6		✓		
Irish Aid consistently highlighted the need for increased quality of services to improve health services utilisation and for strategies to ensure the poorest are reached, such as a fair and inclusive health care financing strategy. SSA 01 p7		✓		
Irish Aid was instrumental in ensuring that the MDG appraisal included a social impact assessment. SSA 01 p8		✓		
Irish Aid and Italian Cooperation worked closely with the HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Office (HAPCO) to strengthen its capacity to coordinate the multi-sectoral response by establishing a Governance Pool Fund SSA 01 p8		✓		
The (strategic plan) process provided Irish Aid an opportunity to influence the focus on the poorest, vulnerable and marginalized people. SSA 02 p10		✓		
Irish Aid has been promoting the <i>mainstreaming of HIV and AIDS in the Productive Safety Nets Programme</i> (PSNP) SSA 03 p11		✓		✓
a decision was reached by participating donors to re-design the CSSP within the parameters of the legislation once enacted. SSA 04 p12		✓		✓
upon request of the DAG, Irish Aid, as chair of the Civil Society Sub-Group (CSSG) ¹⁶⁵ led the preparation of a joint-donor strategy for response (to the PCS) SSA 04 p13		✓		
The SSA team played an active part in shaping and directly participating in the poverty monitoring exercise in Tigray		✓		

¹⁶¹ Strategic: development of a new direction

¹⁶² Non-strategic: improvement within the existing strategy

¹⁶³ Position: changes in what is done, such as target group and outcomes

¹⁶⁴ Perspective: changes in how things are done, the way of working

¹⁶⁵ The CSSG is one of a series of sub-groups of the Governance Technical Working Group of the Donor Assistance Group (DAG)

Decisions identified from annual reports and MTR	Strategic ¹⁶¹	Non-strategic ¹⁶²	Position ¹⁶³	Perspective ¹⁶⁴
Support was also provided to facilitate the Rule of Law project. SSA 04 p14		✓		
The HIV and AIDS workplace programme continued to be implemented in 2008. A staff awareness-raising workshop was held. SSA p14		✓		
Irish Aid Ethiopia funded a Child Caring Practices Project implemented by Save the Children UK. This is an action research programme which supports local communities FNLS 05&6 p17	✓			✓
Food Security Programme Review process. Irish Aid managed to position itself strategically to engage closely with this review and in the re-formulation process. FNLS 05&6 p19		✓		
Irish Aid conducted joint sentinel woreda monitoring in Tigray to better understand to what extent the agricultural extension service provides relevant services for the chronic poor, especially women FNLS 05&6 p19	✓			✓
an external consultant was recruited to develop a Poverty Monitoring system within the Tigray Regional Development Programme FNLS 07 p23		✓		
Irish Aid Ethiopia agreed to support a one-off study on public expenditure in the agriculture sector which will be carried out by IFPRI and co-funded with the World Bank in the first quarter of 2009. The study entitled "Making Rural Services Work for the Poor and Women in Ethiopia FNLS 08 p23		✓		
2009				
As a result of Irish Aid's consistent inputs, the PBS II High Level Development Objectives explicitly reflect issues of access and utilization and ensuring quality of basic services SSA 01 p5		✓		
PBS Social Accountability pilot project. This pilot is presently being reviewed and then next phase is expected to start in mid 2010. Irish Aid will input here to ensure that issues observed in field monitoring, such as limited participation of women, are prioritised in the next phase. SSA 01 p5		✓		
Irish Aid has been active in the monitoring the PBS Public Financial Management sub programme and has input into a series of upcoming countrywide diagnostic studies: a Country Integrated Fiduciary Assessment, Public Finance Review and a series of regional public expenditure reviews. SSA 01 p5&6		✓		
Irish Aid has been involved in the monitoring and evaluation working group of PBS and the broader donor M&E DAG technical working group and continues to be a member of the donor sub-group, the Financial Transparency and Social Accountability Group SSA 01 p6		✓		
During 2009 Irish Aid worked with the HIV and AIDS Coordination Office (HAPCO) and other		✓		

Decisions identified from annual reports and MTR	Strategic ¹⁶¹	Non-strategic ¹⁶²	Position ¹⁶³	Perspective ¹⁶⁴
partners on developing its interim Strategic Plan for Multi-Sectoral HIV response (SPM II) for 2009-2010/11 SSA 01 p6				
Irish Aid expressed their commitment to the implementation of the recommendations of the annual (HABCO) joint review with a focus on Most at Risk Populations. In the third quarter, Irish Aid participated in the national PMTCT planning workshop and provided technical support to this planning process SSA 01 p7		✓		
The Ministry (of women's affairs) is in the process of revising the scope of the pool fund to accommodate its one plan, one budget strategy. Irish Aid is part of the committee working on this and will participate in the review and design of the programme in 2010 SSA 01 p7		✓		
Irish Aid is also supporting the Ministry of Health to prepare a gender disaggregated national study on health service utilisation, morbidity and mortality. SSA 01 p7		✓		
Irish Aid uses its partnership with Family Guidance Association of Ethiopia to see some of the challenges faced in provision of services at local level. As part of this, a joint supervision was conducted with the Association in April SSA 02 p8		✓		
Irish Aid commissioned a study on Human Resources for Health in SNNPR SSA 02 p8		✓		
Irish Aid participated in the joint annual supervision of (CRDA) grantees in SNNPR SSA 03 p8		✓		
(Response strategy to PCS) three core priorities were identified and pursued throughout 2009: (i) maintaining dialogue with Government and civil society groups; (ii) putting in place mechanisms to support civil society to adapt, adjust and respond to the law, and (iii) designing a monitoring mechanism to assess the impact of the Proclamation. Under the first area, Irish Aid provided leadership, funding, technical and strategic inputs particularly with regards to analysis of the new Proclamation for Charities and Societies in order to inform dialogue, by the DAG and the Ethiopian Partner's Group, on concerns and issues relating to space for civil society. As a result of these inputs, discussions about the impact of the Proclamation and the development of civil society have since April 2009 become a standing item for the quarterly High Level Forum between donors and Government. SSA 04 p9		✓		
With the delay in the setting up of the Civil Society Support Programme due to the CSO Proclamation, Irish Aid continued to provide bilateral technical and financial support to nine partner CSOs engaged in the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment; human rights monitoring and reporting; social and economic research; and, voter and civic education SSA 04 p9		✓		✓
Irish Aid was one of two selected donors to work intensively with government to		✓		

Annex 4 Analysis of strategy decisions

Decisions identified from annual reports and MTR	Strategic ¹⁶¹	Non-strategic ¹⁶²	Position ¹⁶³	Perspective ¹⁶⁴
development the second phase of the national Food Security Programme. FNLS 05&6 p11				
With regard to mainstreaming of gender and HIV/AIDS, Irish Aid engaged in the thematic technical group on gender and contributed to the preparatory documents for the new Food Security programme. The group also developed gender and HIV/AIDS action plans for thematic groups such as public works, pastoral pilot programmes and monitoring and evaluation related activities. The group also fed into the revised 'programme implementation manual' FNLS 05&6 p 11		✓		
Irish Aid provided assistance to the World Food Programme and UNOCHA's Humanitarian Relief Fund through the country programme budget and HQ Emergency and Recovery Unit FNLS 05&6 p11		✓		
Irish Aid and the Region tested a Complementary Poverty Monitoring Approach using household and community baselines and a specialised livestock and credit protocol FNLS 07 p12		✓		
Irish Aid is also specifically supporting the Women's Association with their women's empowerment activities that will improve the livelihoods of destitute members FNLS 07 p12		✓		
Irish Aid supported Farm Africa to empower poor rural women in SNNPR by setting up small-scale saving and lending groups known as Village Saving and Loan Groups FNLS 07 p13		✓		
Irish Aid, in collaboration with other donor partners, supports the Ethiopia Strategy Support Programme II that aims to promote sustainable development and poverty reduction in Ethiopia through policy-oriented research, institution strengthening, capacity building and dialogue on economic and agricultural policy issues. FNLS 08 p14		✓		
2010				
Irish Aid actively engaged and inputted in the joint monitoring instruments ; PBS learning and results reports, joint fiduciary and public financial management assessments and qualitative perception surveys. SSA 01 p6		✓		
(SA Phase II) Irish Aid will continue to advocate for a more robust M&E system and subsequently the refinement of SA indicators, disaggregated by gender and poverty levels. SSA 01 p7		✓		
In the design, Irish Aid successfully sought to ensure a phased approach with clear deliverables, guiding principles, an emphasis on gender issues, and on linking SA with the government civil service reform SSA 01 p7		✓		
Irish Aid lobbied for the improvement of programme management and results monitoring		✓		

Annex 4 Analysis of strategy decisions

Decisions identified from annual reports and MTR	Strategic ¹⁶¹	Non-strategic ¹⁶²	Position ¹⁶³	Perspective ¹⁶⁴
through its engagement in the broader donor M&E DAG, PBS M&E, Public Financial Management and Transparency and Accountability groups. As a result PBS field visits are now moving from input monitoring to output monitoring SSA 01 p7				
Three core activities were pursued in 2010: (i) continuing dialogue with Government and civil society groups particularly on difficulties and challenges observed following the implementation of the new Proclamation and issuance of two regulations; (ii) following up implementation of the Adaptation Facility (AF) and reviewing progress against objectives, and (iii) providing technical inputs to the design of the post-Proclamation monitoring of the operating environment for civil society to assess the impact of the Proclamation and to highlight issues of wider trends in the development of the sector. SSA 02 p7		✓		
a (CSSP) programme document (the Joint Programme Memorandum-JPM) and ToR for the Management Agent was drafted, with Irish Aid taking the lead, assisted by an international Procurement Advisor SSA 02 p8		✓		
Irish Aid provided input to the HSDP IV on incorporation of issues of social inclusion, gender and equity in the planning and monitoring mechanisms of the sector. The national nutrition program was also given increased emphasis in this cycle of HSDP SSA 03 p8		✓		
Irish Aid initiated a discussion among current and potential contributors to the (MDG Performance) fund to improve on adherence to the Joint Financing Agreement on the part of the Ministry of Health. SSA 03 p8		✓		
Irish Aid was a member of the national Technical Working Group on Human Resources for Health (HRH) and in that capacity contributed towards the finalisation of the HRH strategy and the development of a strategic plan for the next five years, highlights of which were included in the HSDP IV plan. SSA 03 p9		✓		
Programme Partnership document was signed between Irish Aid and the Regional SNNPR government SSA 03 p9		✓		
Following Irish Aid's mid-term review (of the Health Pooled Fund), Ireland will cease financing this fund, instead consolidating Irish funding for health through the MDG Performance Fund. SSA 03 p9	✓			✓
Based on the National HIV Roadmap, Regions enriched their plans in working groups - Irish Aid working with the SNNPR team. SSA 03 p10		✓		
The SNNPR Education Bureau started rolling out of the HIV/AIDS mainstreaming strategy which was developed with the support of Irish Aid during the previous programme period. SSA 04 p10		✓		
Irish Aid was nominated by donors to be an M&E Champion in order to revitalise the M&E Pooled Fund that supports government institutions tasked towards the improvement of the		✓		✓

Decisions identified from annual reports and MTR	Strategic ¹⁶¹	Non-strategic ¹⁶²	Position ¹⁶³	Perspective ¹⁶⁴
country's M&E system. ... As champion of M&E, IA brought the agenda at the DAG Ex-Comm level and organized donors to discuss moving to a sector-wide approach for supporting the Central Statistics Agency SSA 04 p10				
There will also be an increased focus on improving the capacity of Irish Aid and its partners in the area of monitoring, evaluation, communication and documentation. Short term technical assistance will be sought to assist with this area in early 2011 SSA 04 p11		✓		✓
An internal Nutrition Paper reviewing accomplishments and gaps in the national nutrition programme and proposing possible areas of engagement for Irish Aid was prepared with contributions from the food and livelihood security team as an input to the mid-term review. As a result, a new objective was set covering nutrition, to pilot some small-scale initiatives in order to inform the next CSP. Funding from the Hunger Unit was sourced in late 2010 to fund a food consumption study with the Micro-nutrient Initiative and a project promoting orange flesh sweet potato with the International Potato Centre (CIP) in Tigray. 05 p11	✓		✓	
Irish Aid took over the (PSNP) donor chair role in July for a six month period. During this period, Ireland organised a two day donor retreat to reflect on the history and future direction of the programme. In addition Ireland resumed high level meetings with government, including with the Minister for Agriculture. This resulted in an accelerated transfer rate from June onwards; more active engagement of key government directorates in programme management (extension, natural resource); and, the improvement in the consistency of Financial Management Task Force meetings, which should improve the quality and timeliness of financial and audit reporting. 06 p12		✓		
Technical support was also provided jointly through participation in relevant task teams and working groups: financial management, programme implementation, M&E and reporting, public works and gender. The Food Security and Livelihood team played an active role in many of the task teams and took part in the three regional visits of the rapid response team (RRTs) that were deployed to the regions, in the months of February, June and September. 06 p13		✓		
Irish Aid was also involved in the steering committees of two important studies this year: the 2010 impact assessment and the graduation study, both of which represent important monitoring and management inputs to the programme. Technical inputs were also given to a transfer study undertaken by the Gates Foundation, which aims to pilot new approaches to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the transfers in the regions through the use of mobile phone technology. 06 p13		✓		
2011				

Annex 4 Analysis of strategy decisions

Decisions identified from annual reports and MTR	Strategic ¹⁶¹	Non-strategic ¹⁶²	Position ¹⁶³	Perspective ¹⁶⁴
Irish Aid has been actively engaged in the (PFM) related diagnostic studies O1 p6		✓		
follow-up of audit findings remains weak. Irish Aid has been instrumental in flagging this issue at the high level joint review forums and as a result a regular discussion between development partners and Government Finance Bureaus has been set up to follow-up some of the identified challenges O1 p6		✓		
Irish Aid is part of the sub group committed to further the managing for development results. This group has a regular dialogue with line ministries and Central Statistics Agency to support data quality improvement, management information systems, and enhanced monitoring of PBS. O1 p6		✓		
This issue (70:30) is being taken up with the Government through the Civil Society Sector Working Group, launched in November, of which Ireland is one of three donor representatives. TECS, the Tracking Trends in Civil Society programme funded by Ireland and DFID, also plans to study this issue O2 p7		✓		
Ireland is the lead donor of this (CSSP) substantial multi-donor programme O2p7		✓		
Irish Aid initiated a discussion with the Minister for Health and among DPs contributing to the Health MDG fund to discuss challenges and opportunities in the fund management, facilitating important progress in the dialogue. O3p8		✓		
Triggered by the continued low utilisation rates for health services in SNNP region, Irish Aid commissioned a study on ' Understanding Barriers to Health Service Utilisation '. O3p9		✓		
Irish Aid has entered into partnership with Volunteer Services Overseas (VSO) to place health professionals to build the capacity of front-line and mid-level staff in health in SNNP region. O3p9	✓			✓
Over the year, Ireland entered into discussions with the Tigray Regional Government aimed at further refining our engagements with them around poverty monitoring. O4p10		✓		
Efforts were made throughout the year to build the Embassy's capacity for documenting and reporting on the results of its work. O4p11		✓		✓
This year, Ireland and EC Delegation led on the rationalisation and increased poverty focus of the Growth and Transformation Plan indicators on behalf of the Donor Assistance Group (DAG). O4p11		✓		
In 2011 the DAG, with Ireland in a lead role, coordinated a review of all DAG pooled funds including the M&E and gender funds O4p11		✓		
A nutrition specific intervention was identified and funded with Unicef . The programme will allow for the generation of evidence around the contribution that cash transfers can make to reducing child under-nutrition in Tigray. O5p11	✓			✓
An extensive planning process was undertaken over the year resulting in the development of		✓		

Decisions identified from annual reports and MTR	Strategic ¹⁶¹	Non-strategic ¹⁶²	Position ¹⁶³	Perspective ¹⁶⁴
the Operational Research Technology Dissemination (ORTD) programme. 07p15				
There were concerns throughout the year regarding the slow take-off the Household Asset Building Programme (HABP). Irish Aid funded the HABP in 2010 and had earmarked further support for 2011. In the event these monies were re-allocated to humanitarian activities and to a new programme with SoS and Farm that intends to deliver similar results to PSNP and HABP beneficiaries. 07p15		✓		
MTR 2010				
The mid-term review concluded that the programme remains relevant to the needs of the country and to Irish Aid priorities, including the prioritisation of Hunger as a key component. Clear and evident results had been achieved which have led to a reduction of poverty and vulnerability				
There was acknowledgement that the changing Ethiopian context and Ireland's economic circumstances demand a thorough revision of the original budget, logic model and results framework:				
- Retaining the original two mutually reinforcing pillars		✓		
- Restating programme objectives and indicators to be more realistic and measurable ¹⁶⁶ (includes changing poorest to poor)		✓		✓
- Rationalising the number of Irish Aid funded partners and programmes, resulting in increased capacity and reduced spend in certain areas	✓		✓	
- Reducing the number of sectors Irish Aid is involved in to three (food security, health and governance), due to our comparative advantage in these areas, with Irish Aid exiting from the HIV sector over the remainder of the CSP due to the existing resources available in relation to the needs and Ireland's minor role in the sector	✓		✓	
- Setting a new reduced budget for 2011-2012		✓	✓	
A partner survey confirmed that Irish Aid's comparative advantage and strategies remain relevant and well implemented.				

¹⁶⁶ This included reducing the number of objectives from 8 to 7. This was achieved by:

- merging Health and HIV activities under one objective with an explicit focus on maternal and child health;
- reducing the food security objectives to focus on the safety net programme and on diversifying livelihoods for the rural poor;
- adjusting the problematic objective on policy influencing to focus more on poverty monitoring and learning as a cross-cutting objective; and,
- a new cross-cutting objective on nutrition was agreed to fit with the Hunger priorities and needs of the country and climate change is now captured at the outcome level.

Annex 4 Analysis of strategy decisions

Decisions identified from annual reports and MTR	Strategic ¹⁶¹	Non-strategic ¹⁶²	Position ¹⁶³	Perspective ¹⁶⁴
Aid effectiveness was added as a new strategy, and weaknesses which were observed in the collection and use of evidence for decision-making were addressed in the new monitoring cross-cutting objective	✓			✓
Policy influencing at a national level was reviewed, with agreement to continue to work at regional level (Tigray and SNNPR), but with a greater emphasis on capturing impact and changes in policy and practice, for use by government staff within their own system, as well as by Irish Aid at all levels		✓		
Ways of working will need to be revised in light of the revised logic model, with specific focus on monitoring and communication capacity, partnership management and nutrition		✓		✓
The timing of the next CSP period should synchronise with the timing of Ethiopian's Government's National Development Plan. A three year interim CSP from 2013 to 2015 should be considered and a separate workshop to plan a CSP evaluation framework should be held by Evaluation and Audit Unit in Ethiopia in early 2011		✓		

Annex 5 Theory of change analysis

Any development intervention has a theory or model behind it that explains how the intervention will lead to a desired outcome. This TOC or program intervention logic is not always explicit. Some planning tools such as the logical framework present a simplified and summarised version. But often the complexities of intervention strategies require a less structured approach.

A well-developed TOC can help stakeholders reach consensus about how change is supposed to occur; provide a causal model that can guide implementation, M&E; and highlight assumptions and necessary conditions for success.

Annex 5, Box 1 What is a theory of change

Theory of change is an on-going process of reflection to explore change and how it happens - and what that means for the part we play in a particular context, sector and/or group of people.

- It locates a programme or project within a wider analysis of how change comes about.
- It draws on external learning about development.
- It articulates our understanding of change - but also challenges us to explore it further.
- It acknowledges the complexity of change: the wider systems and actors that influence it
- It is often presented in diagrammatic form with an accompanying narrative summary.

(James 2011)

Theory of change (TOC) is currently undergoing a resurgence of interest among development agencies. It is seen as providing a flexible tool to understand how change comes about in a project intervention and can be used as a complement to or replacement for a logical framework.

In fact, TOC has its origin in the development of theory-based evaluation in the 1980s, which was a response at that time to concerns that evaluation by randomised control trials, or quasi experimental designs, whilst being powerful in judging whether an intervention works or not, explains nothing about *why* an intervention works, and hence when and where it might be replicated.¹⁶⁷ Understanding the theory of a process of change enables evaluators to test the assumptions behind the intervention and explore causal pathways. Theory-based approaches have long characterised evaluation of development interventions owing to their ease of application where a logical framework has been used in the intervention design. TOC is a key element in Realistic Evaluation and in analytical approaches such as contribution analysis. Theories of development also provide a basis for social learning and action.

The utility of causal inference for social science evaluation is well recognised (examples include: Pawson and Tilley 1997; Maxwell, 2004a & 2004b; Astbury and Leeuw, 2010). At the heart of the approach is the idea that outcomes can be explained by seeking to discover the processes which drive causal pathways. A process consists of individual 'elements', each with its own properties and these act, or interact, to bring about outcomes. Each of these parts could be said to be individually insufficient but collectively necessary for outcomes to occur. The outcomes that are produced will depend on the properties of these parts – their structure, duration and sequencing, but also on the context in which they operate (Hedström & Ylikoski, 2010). In a situation such as a country

¹⁶⁷ See Chen, H and Rossi, P (1983) 'Evaluating with sense: the theory driven approach', *Evaluation review* 7: 283-302; and Pawson, Ray and Tilley, Nick (1997) *Realistic Evaluation*. London, Sage

programme, where the use of either a randomised trial or a quasi-experimental design are clearly impractical, evaluation against a TOC offers the best alternative.

Theories of change in the Irish Aid Country Strategy

As part of the new style approach to country strategy, the CSP incorporated a logic model to describe the structure of the country programme. Two versions have been prepared; an original and then a revision after the MTR in 2010. The changes made at mid-term respond to learning during the first three years and take account of changes in both Ethiopia and Ireland. A comparison of goals and outcomes is shown in Annex 5, Table 1, and of objectives¹⁶⁸ in Annex 5, table 2.

Annex 5, Table 1: CSP goal and outcomes

Irish Aid Ethiopia CSP Objectives Pillar	Original CSP statement	New CSP statement agreed at the MTR
Goal	Reducing the vulnerability of the poorest Ethiopian women and men, girls and boys	To reduce vulnerability of <u>poor</u> Ethiopian women and men, boys and girls
Social Services and Accountability	Final Outcome Increased utilisation of health, education and HIV and AIDS services by the poorest	Outcome 1 Increased utilisation of <u>and satisfaction with basic services</u> by the <u>poor</u>
	Outcome 1 Increased capacity, responsiveness and accountability of service providers to the poorest	
	Outcome 2 Increased demand by the poorest for basic services and rights	
Food, <u>Nutrition</u> and Livelihood Security	Final Outcome Increased resilience and livelihood security for the poorest	Outcome 2 Increased resilience <u>to climate change and shocks</u> with enhanced livelihood security for the <u>poor</u>
	Outcome 3 Assets of chronic food insecure households are protected and enhanced	
	Outcome 4 Improved enabling environment for rural growth	

Note, text that has been reworded at or after the MTR is indicated by being underlined.

Annex 5, Table 2 CSP pillars and objectives

Irish Aid Ethiopia CSP Objectives Pillar	Original CSP Objective	New CSP objective agreed at the MTR
Social Services and Accountability	Pro-poor planning and accountability structures and systems for public service delivery in place and operational (Obj 1)	To increase access and quality of basic services at sub-national level (Obj 1)
	Increased capacity and space for civil society to engage in partnerships at the sub-national level (Obj 4)	To enable CSOs contribute to local and national development and good governance (Obj 2)

¹⁶⁸ The term 'objectives' is used undefined in the logic model, representing a level between outputs and outcomes

Irish Aid Ethiopia CSP Objectives Pillar	Original CSP Objective	New CSP objective agreed at the MTR
	Increased and improved capacity of frontline and mid-level staff in health and HIV and AIDS (Obj 2) Increased capacity in the education sector to respond to HIV and AIDS (Obj 3)	To increase access to and improved quality of maternal, child and HIV services (Obj 3)
Joint Social Services and Accountability and/or Food, Nutrition and Livelihood Security	Specific policy responses to chronic poverty and gender inequality integrated into the new National Development Plan (Obj 8)	To improve quality and use of poverty monitoring data (gender disaggregated) in health and food security (Obj 4)
		To strengthen multisectoral Responses against maternal and child malnutrition (Obj 5)
Food, Nutrition and Livelihood Security	Long-term multi-annual Productive Safety Net operating with appropriate levels of coverage and linked to well-functioning disaster risk management mechanisms (Obj 5) Sustainable improvements to communal natural resources, in particular for women and the vulnerable (Obj 6)	To protect and enhance local ecosystems and the assets of chronically food insecure women and men (Obj 6)
	Food insecure households, in particular female headed households, start to build assets and have access to services appropriate to their needs (Obj 7)	To diversify and improve chronically food insecure women and men's livelihoods (Obj 7)

Both logic models present a coherent structure for the programme. The changes after the MTR reflect some rationalisation of the programme, improved clarity of wording which aids management and evaluation, and a simplification for better understanding:

- A change of emphasis from targeting the 'poorest' to the 'poor' in goal and outcome statements¹⁶⁹
- Rationalisation to two outcomes
- Inclusion of indicators for goal and outcomes
- Incorporation of a beneficiary perspective ('satisfaction with basic services')
- Orientation of resilience as being to climate change and shocks
- Adding 'nutrition' to the Food and Livelihood Security pillar
- Simplification from six to two outcomes

Greater changes were made at the level of objectives. The original logic model showed activities linked directly to objectives. The post-MTR revision made a small simplification from eight to seven objectives but then introduced a more detailed presentation for each objective:

- Indicators at the level of objective
- Three or four outputs
- A list of activities
- A statement of strategies
- Budget lines allocated to each objective

¹⁶⁹ The justification given in the MTR was that 'Whilst the latter remain a target group of Irish Aid, rewording to the former was more realistic and coherent in terms of actual programming and measuring results.' (page 10)

Both logic models have strong positive features. They enable a complex programme to be understood ‘at a glance’ which is an asset for communication. They provide a basis for testing the fit of proposed activities. The addition of indicators in the revised version also helps link to the results framework, which beforehand was documented separately.

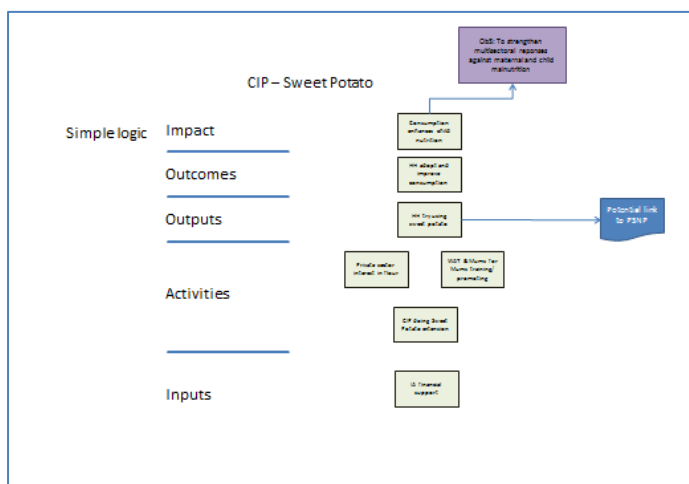
But these logic models are unavoidably at a high level of generalisation. They illustrate the structure of the programme, but cannot give the level of detail that illustrates how activities supported by Irish Aid contribute towards the objectives and outcomes. Nor is it clear which levels of objectives are directly generated by Irish Aid budget lines and which are at a higher level of aggregation.

The TOR for this evaluation include the question: *To what extent was/were the Theory/ies of Change (explicit as expressed in the logic models and/or implicit) underpinning the strategy relevant, valid and understood by Irish Aid and its partners?* To explore these, the evaluation team undertook a small workshop exercise with Irish Aid staff to explore TOC for a sample of budget lines.

Developing detailed TOC for specific budget lines

The approach was to ask staff to describe the intervention as a series of logical steps written on paper cards, which could then be sorted into a causal sequence. The underlying structure is illustrated in Annex 5, Figure 1. Staff were not asked to identify outputs or outcomes, just to convey how an intervention gave rise to outcomes and impact.

Annex 5, Figure 1 - Logic structure for TOC exercise



The results for the sampled budget lines are in Annex 5, Figures 2 and 3.

The sampled budget lines were chosen to reflect the proposed sampling in the Inception report (Table 4) and availability of Irish Aid staff when the workshop took place:

- Objective 1: Protection of basic services
- Objective 1: Protection of basic services - social accountability
- Objective 3: Health MDG Fund
- Objective 3: Support to the SNNPR Regional Health Bureau
- Objective 5: Support to Sweet Potato extension linked to research by the CIP
- Objective 6: Protective Safety Nets Programme
- Objective 7: Smallholder Livelihood Improvement Project by SOS Sahel

Each diagram shows the following:

- In square boxes, statements describing the actions or steps of activities, output delivery and progress towards outcomes
- Links shown by arrows towards the CSP objectives, to indicate the logical progression

The exercise was used as a stimulus for discussion about how the various budget lines contribute towards high level objectives and whether there were any cross-linkages or complementarity among them. For each change pathway, staff were asked to indicate where Irish Aid has made a distinctive contribution, over and above funding the activity. These are indicated as orange coloured ovals on the two figures.

Distinctive contributions by Irish Aid

A total of 21 specific distinctive contributions were identified in the discussion. These shed light on the extent to which actions identified as Irish Aid strategy were being put into practise and formed the basis for assessment of contribution, described in Annex 6.

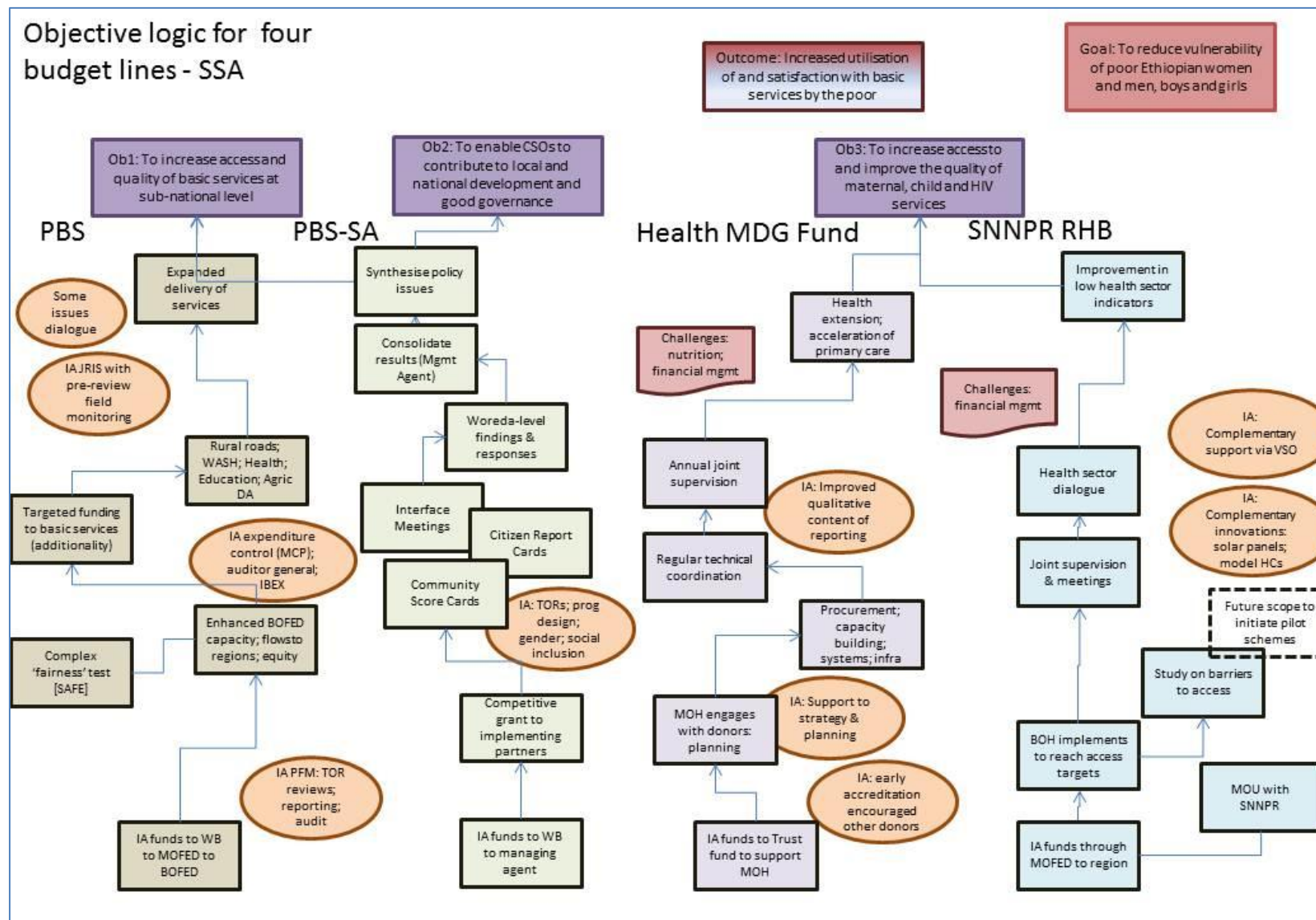
Assessment and conclusions

The exercise to develop these logic models was constructive and straightforward. It was clear by the speed and nature of response that staff have a good grasp of how the interventions are planned to work. Two aspects emerge from the exercise. Firstly, much more detail was offered about those parts of the process concerned with planning, management and supervision than with the realisation of progress towards outcomes. To some extent this is inevitable, because Irish Aid staff deal with their development partners on issues concerning management and supervision. However, part of the purpose of developing TOC is to understand the assumptions implicit in how interventions will give rise to desired outcomes. Considering that Irish Aid wants to mainstream cross-cutting issues, achieve coherence and complementarity through a programme approach, engage with the poor and improve impact monitoring, greater attention to the constraints affecting achievement of outcomes is needed.

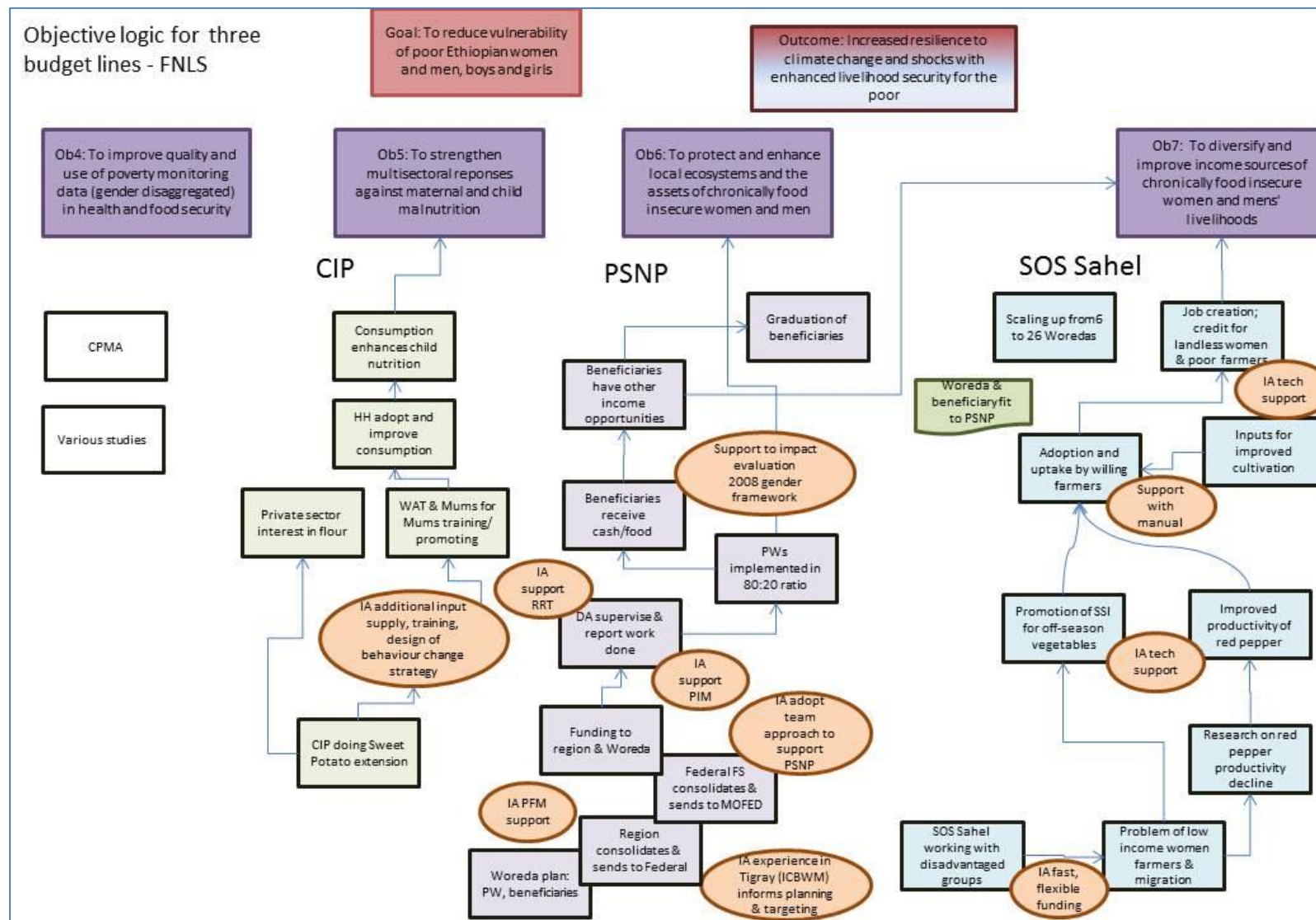
Secondly, a survey of partners, drawn mainly from civil society,¹⁷⁰ reveals a relatively low grasp of the logic underpinning the Irish Aid strategy. This suggests that even though Irish Aid staff are well-versed in their TOC, they are not using them in dialogue with partners, thus missing a potentially valuable tool.

¹⁷⁰ See Annex 7 for full analysis

Annex 5, Figure 2



Annex 5, Figure 3



Annex 6 Contribution analysis

Contribution Analysis is an approach to evaluation developed by Mayne (2001, 2008, and 2011) which aims to compare an intervention's postulated TOC against the evidence in order to come to robust conclusions about the contribution that it has made to observed outcomes (Annex 6, Box 1).

The aim of Contribution Analysis is to critically construct a 'contribution story' which builds up evidence to demonstrate the contribution made by an intervention whilst also establishing the relative importance of other influences on outcomes. The approach draws on the idea that an intervention's TOC can be used to infer causation by assessing whether the mechanisms or processes that it aims to initiate have in fact occurred.

Annex 6, Box 1 Contribution analysis

- Step 1: Set out the attribution problem to be addressed
- Step 2: Develop a theory of change and risks to it
- Step 3: Gather the existing evidence on the theory of change
- Step 4: Assemble and assess the contribution story, and challenges to it
- Step 5: Seek out additional evidence
- Step 6: Revise and strengthen the contribution story

Steps 1 and 2 were carried out at part of the TOC analysis in Annex 5. The 21 distinctive contributions self-assessed by Irish Aid were then subject to validation through interviews with key informants during the evaluation. The aim was to triangulate each contribution with informants from different perspectives: federal and regional governments, the donor community, international NGOs and CSOs. Clearly, not all parties would be aware of Irish Aid's contribution to any one particular area. Annex 6 Table 1 presents a summarised note about the findings.

All the examples identified relate to issues of process, whereby Irish Aid has intervened or provided technical and other resources.

Annex 6, Table 1 Ethiopia CSP evaluation contribution issues matrix

Contribution Issues from Pillar Team Discussions	Documents	Donor	Federal Government	Regional Government	NGO	CSO
PBS: TOR reviews; reporting; audit	A specific example of a contribution made by Irish Aid is the questioning and follow up of an apparent decline in PBS Woreda spending between JRIS November 2010 ¹⁷¹ and May 2011 ¹⁷² . – found to result from the way data was reported	PBS Secr. confirms unique role of Meron among donors	CoPCU – Ato Melaku Kifle – less clear – was probably unaware that she was the only one. Thought EU also had an accountant. CIDA also bring auditing skills (though may have background in public finance) Irish Aid role acknowledged by CSA			
PBS: expenditure control (MCP); auditor general; IBEX; FTA	See above	PBS Secr. Ditto Managing agent regards Irish Aid role as a key contribution to link across sectors WB - especially influence with mgmt. down to woreda level EC - especially with	Confirmed by Melaku (COPCU)			

¹⁷¹ JRIS Joint review and Implementation Support Mission (JRIS), Mid-Term Review, and Appraisal for World Bank Additional Financing. JRIS: November 8 - December 9, 2010. Appraisal for Additional Financing: December 14 – 15, 2010. Aide Memoire. “At the Woreda level, however, the share of spending on basic services to total spending is declining”. P.4, para. 4

¹⁷² Protection of Basic Services (PBS) Program, Phase II. Joint review and Implementation Support Mission (JRIS), May 9 – 19, 2011. Aide Memoire. “Following a commitment made at the November 2010 JRIS, joint missions involving Government and donor partners visited Somali Region, SNNPR, and Tigray to examine what appeared to be reductions in the share of woreda-level basic service spending....The perceived decline in woreda spending on basic services was found to be less severe than originally thought as closed accounts (vs. pre-actual reports that are the basis of JRIS tests) more accurately captured capital spending from all sources. The joint missions were very useful as they helped PBS Donor and Government participants alike gain a more detailed understanding of the specific budgeting, accounting, and reporting issues at sub-national levels” p.3, para 4.

Contribution Issues from Pillar Team Discussions	Documents	Donor	Federal Government	Regional Government	NGO	CSO
		PFM early in PBS, and continuing				
PBS: JRIS with pre-review field monitoring		PBS Secr. Agrees on role, though less specific on the pre-review initiative EC notes Irish Aid strength with M&E				
PBS: Some (but limited) issues dialogue		Confirmed by meeting with PBS donors (RC & BM). An entry point is through discussion of "technical" issues		Confirmed by the Tigray BoFED		
PBS-SA: TORs; prog design; gender; social inclusion		PBS Secr. Agreed with special emphasis on gender PBS donors agree Irish Aid jointly with CIDA EC notes Irish Aid role with planned socio-econ study Along with DFID, CIDA, Irish Aid is said to have come up with the concept of SA within PBS. Irish Aid are said to have been instrumental in pushing GOE to include an aspect of SA in the PBS (discussions with PBS SA donors)	No contact name given within government			
Health MDG Fund: early accreditation encouraged other donors						

Contribution Issues from Pillar Team Discussions	Documents	Donor	Federal Government	Regional Government	NGO	CSO
Health MDG Fund: Support to strategy & planning	An evaluation of HSDP was carried out in 2006 covering the period (2002/3 to 2004/5). Hiwot Tadesse contributed to this study as part of the Joint Core Coordinating Committee. In this document (Table 25, p.75) figures from a MOFED Budget and Irish Aid mapping study (no date given) are used to show number of donors and projects in the health sector from 1994 to 1997 (EFY). In the annex of documents listed is a 1998 document by Jowett, M. "Economic Analysis of HSDP Ethiopia 1997-2002 by Irish Aid	A significant problem with MDH Health fund for Dutch is financial reporting – said to be better but not perfect but not specifically attributed to Irish Aid input (Marius de Jong, Dutch Embassy). The DAC HPN group has been poorly functioning and this has meant weak dialogue structure. Now said to be improving attributed to having 2 more donors (DFID and UNFPA) on board. In the past there has not been much room to discuss pro-poor, gender, etc. but more scope in last few months. Feels there should be more discussion in the health sector on policy, planning and indicators.				
Health MDG Fund: Improved qualitative content of reporting	Comparing 2 quarterly reports - the first from MDG Fund Report (January to March 2011), the second (most recent) from October 12,					

Contribution Issues from Pillar Team Discussions	Documents	Donor	Federal Government	Regional Government	NGO	CSO
	<p>2011 to January 9, 2012 confirmed that the first comprises of a list of actual expenditure against planned, the second provides some brief explanation of why expenditure did or did not happen.</p>					
<p>SNNPR RHB: Complementary innovations: solar panels; model HCs</p>	<p>In 2010, the Regional Government requested Irish Aid to contribute to the building of 82 new health centres in the region. This was not included in the original partnership agreement and an amendment was made to incorporate this request. Accompanying this, agreement was reached for Irish Aid to monitor a select number of these health centres to measure their contribution to health outcomes. In addition, climate change funding from HQ may be directed towards some of these same health centres to provide</p>					

Contribution Issues from Pillar Team Discussions	Documents	Donor	Federal Government	Regional Government	NGO	CSO
	<p>solar power and water. Both of these ideas are still under discussion (From ToR MTR of the Partnership between Irish Aid and the SNNPR, 2009-2012)¹⁷³. In the body of the report it says ‘VSO to assist the regional Health Bureau to strengthen clinical supportive supervision systems, and GiZ for solar energy provision to selected health centres’ are both under consideration. They are not evaluated but the VSO partnership is further discussed see below.</p>					
SNNPR RHB: Complementary support via VSO	<p>The SNNPR MTR says ‘The upcoming partnership with VSO should take account of the clinical mentoring role which NGOs are currently playing, and focus on developing other complementary and innovative</p>					

¹⁷³ Note this is from January 2012 version of MTR with which I have annexes. I do not have annexes for February 2012 version of this report

Contribution Issues from Pillar Team Discussions	Documents	Donor	Federal Government	Regional Government	NGO	CSO
	approaches to clinical mentoring. Whilst we recognise that many hospitals are already overwhelmed with the delivery of specialised health services, they must also play a role in contributing to clinical mentoring of lower level health facilities' (p. 30 Jan. version)					
PSNP: Finance & planning		PSNP Secr. confirms Irish Aid involvement, not strongly CIDA confirmation	MoFED and MOA confirm the engagement of Irish Aid as one of the donors	Tigray Food Security Directorate confirms		
PSNP: Tigray ICBWN lessons		PSNP Secr. strong agreement over this contribution	Not known to State Minister but strong confirmation from HABP in MOA DFSC confirms contribution to original design	The Tigray regional Food Security Directorate strongly confirms this		
PSNP: Team working approach			DFSC confirms (without any prompting)	Their roles as team leaders/members acknowledged by Tigray FS		
PSNP: Development of PIM		The DCI (PSNP secretariat agrees with the inputs of Irish Aid	Not known to State Minister but strong confirmation from HABP in MOA DFSC confirms contribution	The inputs of Irish Aid confirmed by the Tigray Food Security Directorate		
PSNP: Support to RRT		PSNP Secr. confirms	Not known to State	The leadership roles		

Annex 6 Contribution analysis

Contribution Issues from Pillar Team Discussions	Documents	Donor	Federal Government	Regional Government	NGO	CSO
		Irish Aid involvement, not strongly	Minister but strong confirmation from HABP in MOA DFSC confirms contribution	of Irish Aid confirmed by the Tigray Regional FS Directorate		
PSNP: 2008 impact evaluation		PSNP secretariat confirms that Irish Aid involved in ToR development and reviews of reports	Not known to State Minister	Direct and indirect inputs confirmed		
PSNP: Gender framework		PSNP Secretariat agrees	Not known to State Minister	Irish Aid contribution to all aspects of the PSNP mentioned but the gender framework not known/may be forgotten to mention		
SOS: Fast, flexible partner					SOS and Farm Africa gave examples	
SOS: Technical support for agric					SOS and Farm Africa gave examples	
SOS: Implementation manual						
SOS: Cross linkages to PSNP beneficiaries	Letter to Fiona Quinn on file and confirmed by telephone interview				Confirmed by SOS but sort of ad hoc and not systematic	

Annex 7 Partnership survey

Towards the end of the country visit and after face to face interviews had been held with key informants a short questionnaire survey was designed and distributed to a group composed mainly of international and national NGOs and CSOs. The purposes of the survey were:

- To contact some organisations that the team had not been able to interview in person
- To ask questions in a structured format enabling simple quantitative analysis of responses

The survey was distributed to 39 organisations. The organisations were identified from those listed for partnership analysis at the time of the MTR. Some organisations were added after consultation with Irish Aid staff at the embassy.

A total of 27 people responded to the survey, making a response rate of 69 per cent.

Results from the survey are set out in full, question by question, over the following pages in this annex. The first three questions establish the nature of the respondents. Questions 1 and 2 asked respondents to self-identify the type of organisation they work for and main area of engagement with Irish Aid. Question 3 asked which year they first became involved with Irish Aid.

- 10 respondents were from international NGOs
- 10 were from national NGO or CSO and the remainder from donor offices, government, university and researchers
- The largest single group, six respondents, were from the livelihoods and food security sector.
- Next most prominent were four from civil society
- The remainder covered a wide range of sectors including governance, gender, environment, nutrition and more
- Four respondents had been involved with Irish Aid since before the year 2000
- A further 12 also predate the CSP period of 2008-12
- 10 started their involvement with Irish Aid during the CSP period

The range of respondents reveals a broad sample reflecting a wide range of organisations, subject areas and history of involvement with Irish Aid. As such, the evaluation team does not consider that the survey suffers from any obvious bias in the composition of respondents. Although 27 people started the survey, some skipped some questions and the numbers of valid responses are noted in the tables.

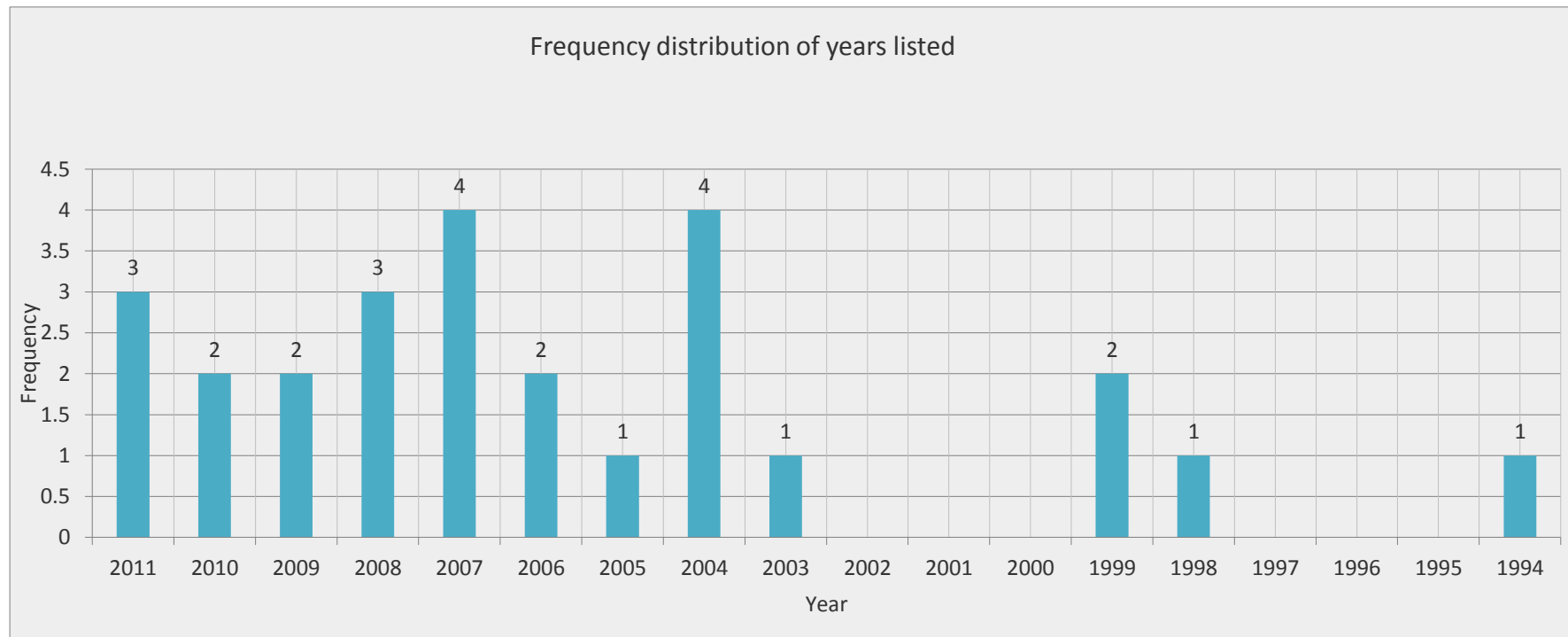
Q1. For what type of organisation do you work?

Answer Options	Q1. For what type of organisation do you work?							Response Percent	Response Count
	Government	Private sector	International NGO	National NGO or CSO	Bilateral donor office	Multilateral donor office	Other		
Government	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.7%	1
Private sector	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3.7%	1
International NGO	0	0	10	0	0	0	0	37.0%	10
National NGO or CSO	0	0	0	10	0	0	0	37.0%	10
Bilateral donor office	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	7.4%	2
Multilateral donor office	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%	0
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	11.1%	3
<i>answered question</i>									27
<i>skipped question</i>									0

Q2. What is the main area of your engagement with Irish Aid?

Answer Options	Q1. For what type of organisation do you work?							Response Percent	Response Count
	Government	Private sector	International NGO	National NGO or CSO	Bilateral donor office	Multilateral donor office	Other		
Non-specific	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	11.1%	3
Education sector	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3.7%	1
Health Sector	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	3.7%	1
HIV/AIDS	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3.7%	1
Good governance	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	11.1%	3
Gender Equality	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	7.4%	2
Environment	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	7.4%	2
Livelihoods and food security	0	0	3	3	0	0	0	22.2%	6
Agriculture	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	3.7%	1
Nutrition	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	7.4%	2
Social accountability	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	3.7%	1
Civil society	0	1	0	1	1	0	1	14.8%	4
<i>answered question</i>									27
<i>skipped question</i>									0

Q3. In which year did you first become a partner or be involved with Irish Aid in Ethiopia?



Q4. Do you think that Irish Aid's choice of sectors:

Answer Options	<i>Is based on good contextual, political economy, poverty and vulnerability analysis</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	
International NGO		5	3	0	0	1	9	56%	33%	0%	0%	11%	100%
National NGO or CSO		7	2	0	0	0	9	78%	22%	0%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		4	3	0	0	0	7	57%	43%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		16	8	0	0	1	25	64%	32%	0%	0%	4%	100%
	<i>Reflects its comparative strength and advantage</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
International NGO		3	1	2	0	3	9	33%	11%	22%	0%	33%	100%
National NGO or CSO		5	4	0	0	0	9	56%	44%	0%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		3	4	0	0	0	7	43%	57%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		11	9	2	0	3	25	44%	36%	8%	0%	12%	100%
	<i>Fills gaps where few development partners (DP) are active</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
International NGO		1	4	2	0	2	9	11%	44%	22%	0%	22%	100%
National NGO or CSO		4	3	2	0	0	9	44%	33%	22%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		5	1	1	0	0	7	71%	14%	14%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		10	8	5	0	2	25	40%	32%	20%	0%	8%	100%
	<i>Enables Irish Aid to be actively pro-poor in it's approach</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
International NGO		5	2	0	0	2	9	56%	22%	0%	0%	22%	100%
National NGO or CSO		6	3	0	0	0	9	67%	33%	0%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		5	1	1	0	0	7	71%	14%	14%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		16	6	1	0	2	25	64%	24%	4%	0%	8%	100%
	<i>Adds value where a number of DPs are active</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
International NGO		3	5	0	0	1	9	33%	56%	0%	0%	11%	100%
National NGO or CSO		5	3	1	0	0	9	56%	33%	11%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		5	2	0	0	0	7	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		13	10	1	0	1	25	52%	40%	4%	0%	4%	100%
	<i>Reflects a desire to avoid overlap</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
International NGO		1	4	1	0	3	9	11%	44%	11%	0%	33%	100%
National NGO or CSO		3	5	0	0	1	9	33%	56%	0%	0%	11%	100%
All Other		4	3	0	0	0	7	57%	43%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		8	12	1	0	4	25	32%	48%	4%	0%	16%	100%
	<i>Is too broad and does not reflect sufficient focus</i>	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
International NGO		1	1	2	3	2	9	11%	11%	22%	33%	22%	100%
National NGO or CSO		0	3	4	2	0	9	0%	33%	44%	22%	0%	100%
All Other		0	2	3	2	0	7	0%	29%	43%	29%	0%	100%
Response Count		1	6	9	7	2	25	4%	24%	36%	28%	8%	100%
					skipped		2						

Q5(a). How well do you understand the objectives and approach of the Irish Aid Country Strategy for 2008-2012? (Please rate your answer on a scale of 1 - 6 where 1 = no understanding, 6 = complete understanding)

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
International NGO	1	0	2	5	1	0	9
National NGO or CSO	0	0	2	3	2	2	9
All Other	0	1	2	2	0	2	7
Response Count	1	1	6	10	3	4	25
						<i>skipped</i>	2
Percentages							
Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
International NGO	11%	0%	22%	56%	11%	0%	100%
National NGO or CSO	0%	0%	22%	33%	22%	22%	100%
All Other	0%	14%	29%	29%	0%	29%	100%
Response Count	4%	4%	24%	40%	12%	16%	100%

Q5(b). How familiar are you with the logic models or theories of change underpinning the strategy? (Please rate your answer on a scale of 1 - 6 where 1 = no familiarity, 6 = complete familiarity)

Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
International NGO	2	2	1	3	1	0	9
National NGO or CSO	0	1	2	4	1	1	9
All Other	0	1	2	2	0	2	7
Response Count	2	4	5	9	2	3	25
						<i>skipped</i>	2
Percentages							
Answer Options	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
International NGO	22%	22%	11%	33%	11%	0%	100%
National NGO or CSO	0%	11%	22%	44%	11%	11%	100%
All Other	0%	14%	29%	29%	0%	29%	100%
Response Count	8%	16%	20%	36%	8%	12%	100%

Q6. How much do you agree with the following statements about your way of working with Irish Aid?

Answer Options		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know		Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	
	<i>The people I deal with in Irish Aid are very reliable</i>												
International NGO		6	2	0	0	0	8	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	100%
National NGO or CSO		7	1	0	0	0	8	88%	13%	0%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		5	2	0	0	0	7	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		18	5	0	0	0	23	78%	22%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	<i>Irish Aid meets its obligations regarding my organisation's work</i>												
International NGO		5	1	2	0	0	8	63%	13%	25%	0%	0%	100%
National NGO or CSO		6	2	0	0	0	8	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		5	2	0	0	0	7	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		16	5	2	0	0	23	70%	22%	9%	0%	0%	100%
	<i>There is a high degree of trust between my organisation and Irish Aid</i>												
International NGO		7	0	1	0	0	8	88%	0%	13%	0%	0%	100%
National NGO or CSO		7	1	0	0	0	8	88%	13%	0%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		6	1	0	0	0	7	86%	14%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		20	2	1	0	0	23	87%	9%	4%	0%	0%	100%
	<i>My organisation and Irish Aid share common objectives about the sector in which we work.</i>												
International NGO		7	1	0	0	0	8	88%	13%	0%	0%	0%	100%
National NGO or CSO		5	3	0	0	0	8	63%	38%	0%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		5	2	0	0	0	7	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		17	6	0	0	0	23	74%	26%	0%	0%	0%	100%
	<i>We undertake priority-setting, planning and management of activities jointly</i>												
International NGO		2	2	3	1	0	8	25%	25%	38%	13%	0%	100%
National NGO or CSO		4	4	0	0	0	8	50%	50%	0%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		5	2	0	0	0	7	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		11	8	3	1	0	23	48%	35%	13%	4%	0%	100%
	<i>Irish Aid is flexible in the implementation of our relationship</i>												
International NGO		4	3	1	0	0	8	50%	38%	13%	0%	0%	100%
National NGO or CSO		6	2	0	0	0	8	75%	25%	0%	0%	0%	100%
All Other		5	2	0	0	0	7	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		15	7	1	0	0	23	65%	30%	4%	0%	0%	100%
	<i>When we have been unable to meet our obligations, Irish Aid has been firm but fair in response.</i>												
International NGO		1	5	0	0	2	8	13%	63%	0%	0%	25%	100%
National NGO or CSO		2	5	0	0	1	8	25%	63%	0%	0%	13%	100%
All Other		3	3	0	0	1	7	43%	43%	0%	0%	14%	100%
Response Count		6	13	0	0	4	23	26%	57%	0%	0%	17%	100%
							skipped						4

Q7. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements about development results:

Answer Options	I am aware of the results framework in the Irish Aid Country Strategy for 2008-2012	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
								Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know	
International NGO		1	6	0	0	1	8	13%	75%	0%	0%	13%	100%
National NGO or		1	5	0	0	2	8	13%	63%	0%	0%	25%	100%
All Other		4	3	0	0	0	7	57%	43%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		6	14	0	0	3	23	26%	61%	0%	0%	13%	100%
	I know how the results of my Irish Aid-supported project contribute to the overall results in the Irish Aid Country Strategy for 2008-2012.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
International NGO		3	2	1	0	2	8	38%	25%	13%	0%	25%	100%
National NGO or		3	3	0	0	2	8	38%	38%	0%	0%	25%	100%
All Other		5	2	0	0	0	7	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		11	7	1	0	4	23	48%	30%	4%	0%	17%	100%
	The indicators for my project are linked to indicators in the results framework for the Irish Aid Country Strategy for 2008-2012.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
International NGO		2	3	1	0	2	8	25%	38%	13%	0%	25%	100%
National NGO or		2	3	1	0	2	8	25%	38%	13%	0%	25%	100%
All Other		5	2	0	0	0	7	71%	29%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		9	8	2	0	4	23	39%	35%	9%	0%	17%	100%
	Working with staff of Irish Aid, I and my colleagues planned the results of my project to show the linkages to the results framework in the Irish Aid Country Strategy for 2008-2012.	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know							
International NGO		0	4	2	0	2	8	0%	50%	25%	0%	25%	100%
National NGO or		2	2	1	0	3	8	25%	25%	13%	0%	38%	100%
All Other		4	3	0	0	0	7	57%	43%	0%	0%	0%	100%
Response Count		6	9	3	0	5	23	26%	39%	13%	0%	22%	100%

Three questions at the end of the survey explored perceptions about strengths, areas where respondents would like to see changes or improvements in the way Irish Aid works and evidence of strategic change at Irish Aid.

Question 8 asked respondents ‘what are the three main strengths of working with Irish Aid?’

A total of 58 responses were received. 60 per cent of these were clustered among four themes: the relationship of working with Irish Aid; the degree of flexibility Irish Aid shows with its partners; the strategic orientation of the Irish Aid programme; and the degree of responsiveness to partners’ needs. A selection of comments is listed in Annex 7, Box 1.

The remaining 40 per cent of responses were scattered among 14 topics ranging from learning, through results focus to gender orientation and participatory working.

Annex 7, Box 1 - Qu 8. What are the three main strengths of working with Irish Aid?

- Flexibility in the implementation of projects
- Reliable and responsiveness from staff
- It is very thematic and strategic
- Transparency, supportive and honesty with development partners
- Irish Aid is primarily a development organisation and is perceived not to have hidden agendas (eg security/trade)
- Willingness and commitment to work in partnership with CSOs
- Indulgent
- Develops long term relationships and invests in partnership development e.g. Tigray Regional Government
- Flexible, accommodative and logical
- A culture of warmth, lack of bureaucracy, openness and humour, pragmatic

Question 9 asked respondents ‘what are the three main areas where you would like to see changes or improvements in the way Irish Aid works with you?’

A total of 31 responses were received. The only theme to attract many similar responses was concerns about the reliability of funding, and associated aspects of budgets and financial procedures which were mentioned by 25 per cent of respondents. The remaining comments were widely distributed across a range of topics including closer linkages to international NGO programmes funded from Limerick, for Irish Aid to take a firmer stance on rights-based issues and governance, to make more of Irish Aid’s relationships in the regions and improved communications. Annex 7, Box 2 contains a selection of comments.

Annex 7, Box 2 - Qu 9. What are the three main areas where you would like to see changes or improvements in the way Irish Aid works with you?

- Irish Aid is an unreliable partner - multi -annual funding has never been that, funding from one year to the next is not determined until March of the year in question. Irish Aid has consistently broken contractual funding pledges - amounts, transparency. I would like to see all these issues resolved
- Remain firm on right based programming and addressing governance issues despite new CSO law
- Closer in-country ties with IPDF recipients including engaging on specific thematic issues e.g. maintaining pro-poor focus of the Africa Strategy
- Don't underplay its advantage in relation to regional engagement - don't underestimate the Irish Aid capital already in the bank with Ethiopian leadership
- Yearly commitment cannot be strategic, better to commit for at least three years
- Irish Aid to use their leverage as donor in difficult environment for Civil Society

Question 10 asked respondents to comment on any strategic changes they have noticed in the way Irish Aid works in recent years. Only 16 respondents answered this question, the lowest of all

responses, perhaps reflecting the proportion of respondents whose experience of Irish Aid only started during the current strategy period. The responses are all listed in Annex 7, Box 3.

Annex 7, Box 3 - Q10. Please indicate any strategic changes you have observed in the way Irish Aid works since 2008 with regard to sectoral approaches and financial or technical support?
There has been a <u>shift due to the economic crisis to strategic areas like HIV/AIDS and at a sub-national level</u> instead of a more national approach. I am not sure what has been the results of such an approach though during this time.
<u>Written strategy</u> has developed significantly - however, <u>implementation of these is lacking</u> . For example we have been asked to produce a four year plan for IAPF 2012 - the timeline means it is 100% impossible to have community, government stakeholder consultations and planning - hence it is a purely desk based plan, which undoubtedly will draw criticisms from the donor and evaluators in years to come -very disappointing.
The <u>Africa Strategy</u> and the emergence of <u>Trade</u> as a key driver for engagements/visits from Ireland
The engagement of <u>civil society organizations</u> as development partners is increasing as compared to the budget support system that only had partnership with government organizations. This will have a paramount importance both in strengthening the civil society organizations in delivering services to their constituencies and playing important role both in poverty alleviations as well as good governance.
Regarding our cooperation, there no much change. Its <u>demand driven approach</u> is what I can see developing.
The financial contribution to the UNDP's Democratic Institutions Programme got exhausted before end of the programme but was a critical contribution to the programme. <u>Technical contribution</u> from Irish Aid colleagues were <u>immensely helpful</u> all the time. I wish IA has a full time dedicated staff who works through the programme and ensures close linkage with IA results.
Irish Aid tend to review its strategy every 2 or 3 three years. I think longer term funding agreement was not possible do to this reason. I think that is related to existing and changing global situation. It looks <u>logical and sensible</u> .
I feel that the <u>financial support of Irish Aid has declined</u> significantly since 2008. In addition it has stopped the bilateral relationship with individual CSOs.
<u>Harmonisation and coordination</u> of donors engagement with <u>civil society</u> in Ethiopia.
The <u>shift from bilateral donor partnership in the form of consortium of partners to civil society organizations to the Civil society Support programme (CSSP) scheme</u> is a key change we observed. This shift entailed problem of coordination and lack of speedy and timely approval and execution of projects mainly due to two major reasons. (1) lack of experience in CSSP in working with civil society organizations in Ethiopia; and (2) the tendency in the part of CSSP to view CSOs in Ethiopia as homogenous. This has created problem in funding arrangements and project identifications.
1. Giving <u>more emphasis to nutrition</u> security in order to address malnutrition on children, pregnant mother and lactating mothers using food based approach 2. channelling its resource by working with international organization like International Potato Centre.
1) General observation that the <u>Results Based Management framework</u> has distracted Irish Aid staff from the direct and sustained engagement which it used to have more time for prior to 2008. The RBMF does not seem to facilitate the development of a coherent narrative about the difference Irish Aid is making - and this is compounded by a lack of capacity for communications in Irish Aid. Its communications products don't yet seem to do justice to its investments. 2) <u>Gender focus has grown</u> since 2008 - but wonder whether this needs to be mainstreamed more, going beyond women's rights to a more in-depth understanding of how gender works in Ethiopia. IA can sometimes be considered 'too predictable' on gender. 3) The Addis environment of <u>harmonisation generates high transaction costs</u> for a small agency. With further reductions in IA senior management, IA risks losing its advantage by neither engaging sufficiently in its regions nor engaging sufficiently in the right Addis-based fora.
<u>Support to civil society</u> in Ethiopia
The strategy on Education, Heath and rural development supports with the Federal and regional governments has helped sectors to bring quality service and better be strengthened. Irish Aid also is working with NGO's and CBO's especially in rural development which was so important, in addition if Irish Aid also mucus to address the rural poor challenges in its future strategy it will be advisable. I really appreciate the technical and financial support of Irish Aid, the way of monitoring and evaluation systems and the technical supports to stake holders and communities.
Nothing specific

Annex 8 Analysis of budgeted and actual expenditure 2008-2011

Objectives (pre/post MTR)	2008		2009		2010		2011		Total		% of budget
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	
I/1	14.33	2.09	14.09	14.37	16.58	10.33	8.50	8.50	53.5	35.29	66%
IV/2	1.27	0.65	2.67	1.34	2.67	0.52	0.57	0.57	7.18	3.08	43%
II & III/3	2.40	1.30	3.25	1.54	3.75	1.93	4.06	4.06	13.46	8.83	66%
VIII/4	0.48	0.40	0.49	0.44	0.49	0.30	2.66	2.61	4.07	3.75	92%
5							0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	100%
V & VI/6	13.91	27.87	13.87	4.45	15.88	8.31	8.00	8.00	51.66	48.63	94%
VII/7	3.61	3.63	5.64	5.68	6.64	4.42	1.22	1.13	17.11	14.86	87%
Total	36.00	35.95	40.00	27.84	46.00	25.81	26.0	25.80	147.64	115.10	78%
% of budget		99%		70%		56%		99%			

Notes:

Objectives are mapped from pre to post MTR using information in the MTR report

Budget data for the years 2008-2010 are the indicative figures quoted in the Country Strategy Paper

The budget figures for 2011 are data supplied by Irish Aid Addis Ababa

All actual data are supplied by Irish Aid Addis Ababa

Programme admin costs were distributed between objectives in year 2008 - 2010 and are not shown separately. They were €261,414 in 2011.