



**Irish Aid**  
Department of Foreign Affairs  
An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha

**Environmental Policy**  
for Sustainable Development





SUDAN Gereida, Southern Darfur  
Women carrying water collected from taps installed by international aid agencies in a camp for internally displaced persons (IDPs). They fled their homes after being attacked by Janjaweed militias.

Photographer Sven Torfinn

**Environment Policy**  
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“Avoid sacrificing the interests of future generations to meet the needs of current generations”  
*Bruntland Commission, 1987*



Ethiopia: Teshoma Abera stands in his stony and infertile field. Looking up at the sky, he explains that there have been just two days of rainfall all year. His crops have failed, leaving his family dependent on food aid.



# Foreword

Environment Policy  
for Sustainable Development



## Foreword



It gives me great pleasure to introduce Irish Aid's Environment Policy for Sustainable Development. Irish Aid is committed to reducing poverty through environmentally sustainable development – only by caring for our environment can the livelihoods of the poorest members of society be safeguarded and improved.

Irish Aid recognises that poverty reduction requires the essential resources and services provided by the environment (for example, water, fertile soil, forests and fisheries). The recent Government White Paper on Irish Aid highlights four priority issues that inform all aspects of development cooperation. These are gender equality, HIV/AIDS, good governance and environmental sustainability. This policy outlines how we will address the environment through all aspects of our work – by mainstreaming and by supporting environment programmes.

It is fair to say that the environment has been neglected by many donors to date, despite the role of natural resources in helping people to climb out of poverty. This policy offers a fresh opportunity to demonstrate our commitment to the environment as a central element of poverty reduction and as a key factor in achieving the Millennium Development Goals.

This Environment Policy focuses firstly on raising awareness of the links between environment and development, both in our own organisation and with our partners. Only by understanding how the environment is linked to poverty reduction can we effectively engage with the issues. Using this knowledge we will strive to integrate the environment into Irish Aid policies and programmes and to work with partner governments to help

them to better address environmental issues in their national development plans.

Central to our actions on the environment is engagement at the international level, as many of the most critical environmental problems facing the world are global in nature. Tackling climate change, for example, requires the commitment of all the nations of the world; one country simply cannot do it alone. Compounding the problem is the fact that developing countries are most at risk for the impacts of climate change, although they have contributed little to the problem. Engaging with multilateral agreements and agencies to address global environmental problems is an essential part of our commitment to improve the lives of the poorest people throughout the world.

As Ireland moves towards its target of meeting 0.7% of GDP on Official Development Assistance by 2012 there are real opportunities to integrate the environment into strategies and plans to achieve the MDGs. Careful use of these resources to balance the social, economic and environmental aspects of development can make sustainable development a reality.

In working towards this objective we will continue to work closely with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. We will also work closely with other donors and multilateral agencies to harmonise our support at country level and we will engage with civil society to build constituencies with an active voice on environmental issues.

I believe the implementation of this policy will greatly enhance the work of Irish Aid and reinforce our efforts to reduce poverty and vulnerability.

Conor Lenihan  
Minister of State for  
Development Cooperation and Human Rights

# Executive Summary

Environment Policy  
for Sustainable Development



## Executive Summary

*Poverty reduction, to reduce vulnerability and increase opportunity, is the overarching objective of Irish Aid, as stated in the White Paper (2006).*

As such it recognises the importance of sustainable development and the role of the environment in assuring the livelihoods and well-being of the majority of the world's poor men and women. It also acknowledges the risks to human development if environmental considerations are not taken into account. This policy builds on Irish Aid's experience to date and outlines goals and objectives for addressing the environment as a policy priority. The strategy for delivering these objectives is 'mainstreaming', whereby the environment is recognised as a critical part of sustainable development and is taken into account in all policies, programmes, activities and funding decisions.

### Policy Goal

*To promote environmentally sustainable development that is consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs and priorities of people in developing countries and contributes to poverty reduction.*

Strategic entry points for mainstreaming environmental sustainability are identified by focusing on recent aid modalities and harmonised approaches such as budget support and sector programmes, as well as multilateral assistance and partnerships with civil society organisations. A strong emphasis is placed on institutional development through capacity building and new institutional arrangements. This will ensure broad organisational ownership, effective resource allocation and commitment to time-bound targets.

In this first generation policy the focus is on raising awareness, building capacity, creating strategic partnerships and enhancing institutional ability for environment mainstreaming. The first phase will also provide opportunities to enhance the strategy and provide lessons to inform second-generation environment policy. Innovative activities that focus on the environment, influence policy and inform and complement the mainstreaming strategy are encouraged where bilateral country programmes identify a specific need (e.g. action research, capacity building for environment authorities). Action at country level will be enhanced by strategic engagement in key Multilateral Environmental Agreements and with key international agencies and civil society organisations.

#### Policy Objectives

- To raise awareness of the links between environmental sustainability and poverty reduction and to inform development policy
- To integrate the principles of sustainable development into Irish Aid policies and programmes in order to ensure environmental sustainability
- To continue to engage with key multilateral environmental agreements and agencies, and to demonstrate commitment to resolving global environmental problems
- To assist developing countries to prepare for and adapt to changing environmental conditions while taking action to reduce negative impacts on the most vulnerable members of society



Sudan: Internally displaced persons stand in Garsila, Darfur.







# 1. Introduction

*Poverty reduction, to reduce vulnerability and increase opportunity, is the overarching objective of Irish Aid, as stated in the White Paper (2006).*

With this in mind Irish Aid is committed to sustainable development and recognises the vital role of the environment in combating poverty and meeting the MDGs.

We are committed to reducing poverty through environmentally sustainable development. We recognise the role of the environment in assuring the livelihoods and well-being of the majority of the world's poor.

*White Paper on Irish Aid, 2006*

Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.<sup>1</sup> Only actions that take into account the interplay between the three dimensions of environment, economy and society, and protect and strengthen each dimension, can be sustainable in the long-term.

## Key Concept - Sustainable Development

Sustainable development is an integrated, systematic approach to development that takes a long-term approach and balances its different dimensions – economic growth, social equity and long-term environmental sustainability.

It is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

*World Commission on Environment and Development, The Brundtland Commission, 1987*

It is within the context of sustainable development that Irish Aid has committed itself to addressing the environment as a priority issue. Experience has shown that treating the environment as a sector has limited effectiveness as it fails to influence the wide range of activities that can impact positively and negatively on the environment. A cross-cutting approach lends itself to more strategic engagement with the environment, as a key element of sustainable development.

The integration of the principles of sustainable development into Irish Aid policy and programmes is the first step in honouring our commitment to sustainable development.<sup>2</sup> The second is putting in place a mainstreaming strategy that recognises that the environment is integral to all Irish Aid development objectives and that implementing the policy is the responsibility of all members of staff. This policy will build on experience to date to enhance IA's commitment to environmental sustainability and elaborate strategies to achieve these commitments.

## Key Concept – Environment

The environment is the combination of external physical conditions that affect and influence the growth, development and survival of organisms. In the context of Ireland's development cooperation, caring for the environment implies that actions supported and carried out by Irish Aid minimise damage to the environment and /or result in positive environmental benefits.

Caring for the environment is an integral component of development; it is not an add-on, another layer or another sector. Rather, it must be addressed in balance with people's social and economic needs in a way that ensures environmental sustainability (i.e. that the environment continues to play its role in maintaining human life into the future).

<sup>1</sup> Brundtland Commission, World Commission on Sustainable Development, 1987.

<sup>2</sup> Ireland Aid review, 2002. Page 27.



This policy will identify ways in which Irish Aid can enhance environmental sustainability through its development programme. It will move beyond a desire to do no harm to find ways to benefit the environment, and it will do this in a holistic way through all aspects of its programme rather than choosing isolated issues.

**Key Concept – Environmental Sustainability**

Environmental sustainability implies living within the ecological capacity of the biosphere (Caring for the Earth, IUCN/WWF 1993). It requires the management and protection of ecosystems to maintain both their ecological functions and their diversity of life in both managed and natural systems.



Tanzania: Firewood distribution to refugees who fled Rwandan genocide. The massive influx of refugees to the Ngara region led to widespread deforestation.









## 2. Poverty - Environment Linkages

The majority of the world's poor men and women are directly reliant on their environment for survival. Their livelihoods are based on the use of natural resources for agriculture, fishing, livestock rearing, forestry and traditional medicines. A reduction in the quantity or quality of these resources has a direct impact on the well-being and vulnerability of the poorest members of society. In addition, poor men and women tend to live in the most marginal, degraded and polluted environments, such as densely populated inner cities and areas prone to flooding. This puts them at high risk from disease and the impacts of natural and man-made disasters.

While environmental degradation and change can lead to the spread of diseases such as malaria and cholera, diseases such as HIV/AIDS can also increase vulnerability to environmental degradation. AIDS affected households that rely on subsistence farming are particularly vulnerable to food shortages in times of drought, locust invasion or severe storms. Food shortages due to environmental conditions have been so extreme in six countries in Southern Africa that women and girls have been driven into transactional sex for both food and cash.

The gender roles assigned to women mean that the impact of environmental degradation is greatest on them; they have responsibility for collecting fuel wood, fetching water and caring for livestock. As the environment is degraded, women and girls spend more time on these tasks giving them less time for education and other activities.

Poor men and women, particularly those in rural areas and indigenous communities, are caretakers of the environment. To fulfil this role to the best of their ability these men and women need full access and ownership rights to control and manage their natural resources. The empowerment of these communities is critical to ensuring their participation in the mechanisms that decide on use and ownership rights. Decision-making must be based on equity and social justice to assure

the rights of marginalized groups such as women and indigenous people. There are numerous examples of situations where resource use and management rights have been taken away from local and indigenous communities with devastating environmental impacts (e.g. logging in the Amazon, oil exploitation in the Arctic).

An environmentally sustainable approach to development is based on recognition of key poverty-environment linkages such as those outlined above. Box 1 below outlines examples from Ireland's programme countries, while Figure 1 illustrates environmental links to various dimensions of poverty.

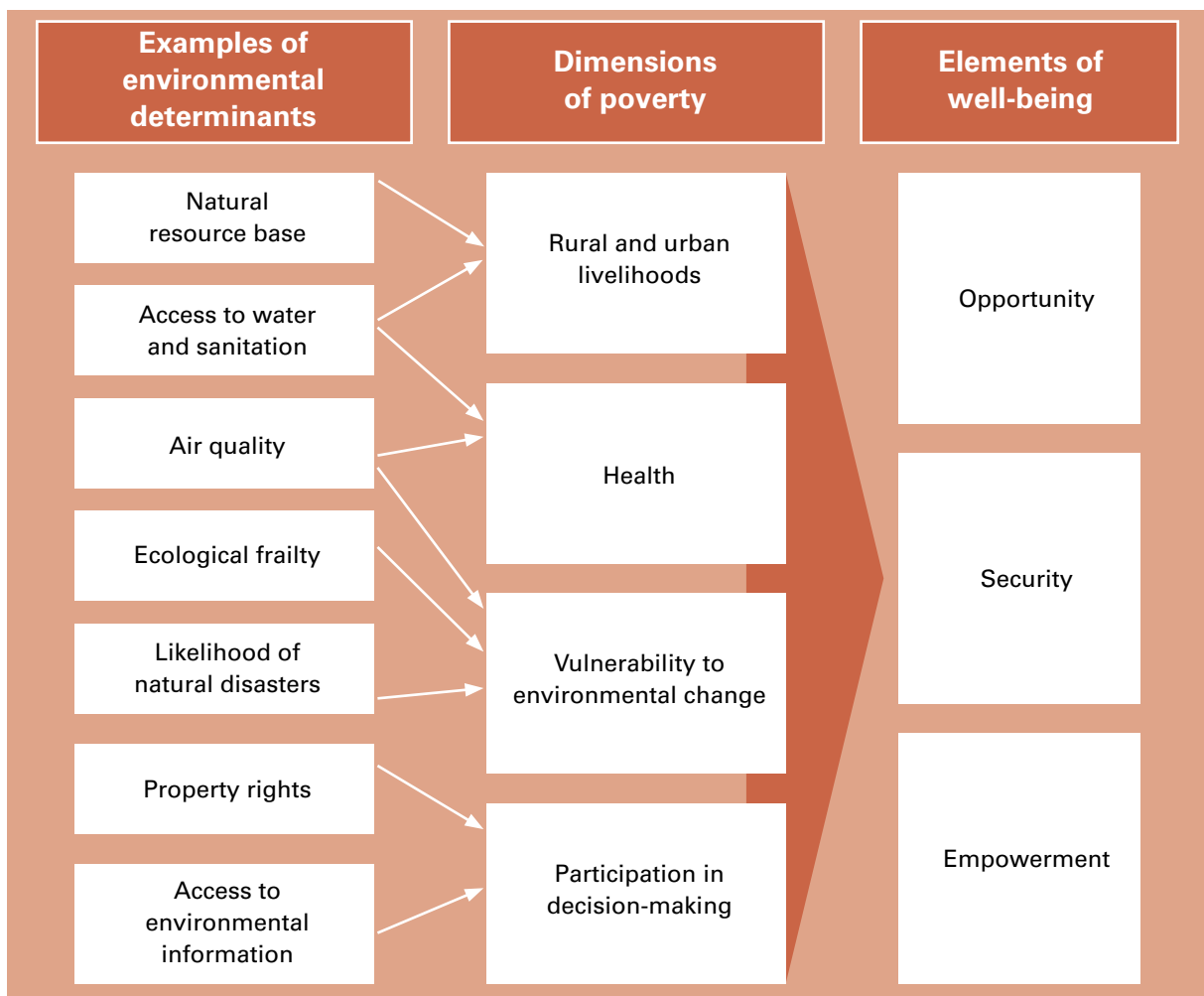
### Box 1: Examples of poverty-environment links

- A high rate of population growth in **Ethiopia** has resulted in increased pressure on natural resources. With an average farm size of only half a hectare it is impossible to feed an average family of five for 12 months of the year (even in a year of good rainfall) resulting in chronic food insecurity. Irish Aid Ethiopia is using a sustainable livelihoods approach to find long-term responses to famine and hunger (Irish Aid Ethiopia CSP 2005-2007).
- In **Lesotho**, less than 10% of the land area is arable, making it impossible to achieve self-sufficiency in cereals. As a result of increasing pressure on scarce land resources, soil erosion is now undermining the very resource on which so many lives depend. Creating off farm employment opportunities and better land management are key strategies pursued by the Government of Lesotho to tackle this problem (Irish Aid Lesotho CSP 2005-2007).



- In **Tanzania** in 2000, over 4 million people were treated for malaria, 1.5 million for respiratory diseases<sup>3</sup> and over 600,000 for diarrhoeal diseases. Environmental conditions coupled with poor land management, water and air quality are the root causes of these illnesses. The results are a weakened and declining workforce, rising healthcare costs and increasing poverty (Tanzania Participatory Poverty Assessment, 2002/03).
- Irish Aid and partner civil society organisations have been key providers of humanitarian relief to the conflict stricken region of **Darfur** in Sudan. One of the root causes of this conflict is a quarrel over access and ownership of natural resources aggravated by a period of drought. Improved understanding of the links between human and environmental vulnerability are at the core of conflict prevention and disaster reduction

**Figure 1: Environmental links to dimensions of poverty<sup>4</sup>**



<sup>3</sup> Women are at greatest risk of respiratory diseases as it is they who spend time indoor over smoky fires with little ventilation.

<sup>4</sup> From “Making Sustainable Commitments. An Environmental Strategy for the World Bank”. World Bank July 2001



Kenya: Women harvesting pyrethrum flowers









### 3. International commitments to environmental sustainability

At the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992, the international community declared its commitment to sustainable development.<sup>5</sup> This commitment continues to be monitored by the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) which ensures effective follow-up of UNCED and reports on the implementation of the Earth Summit agreements at the local, national, regional and international levels.

In 2002 a ten-year review was conducted at the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg. The Summit reinforced the initial mandate and functions of the CSD as a high level forum on sustainable development, and drew up the WSSD Plan of Implementation to guide future actions. The Plan of Implementation (see Box 2) commits all countries to formulate national strategies for sustainable development and to implement them from 2005. These can be stand alone strategies or be incorporated into Poverty Reduction Strategies (PRS) and should be supported by development assistance. Developing countries and donor agencies will be invited to provide information on their efforts to meet this goal as the Plan of Implementation is evaluated.

#### Box 2: WSSD Plan of Implementation

##### Paragraph 145, Johannesburg Plan of Implementation<sup>6</sup>

(a) Continue to promote coherent and coordinated approaches to institutional frameworks for sustainable development at all national levels, including through, as appropriate, the establishment or strengthening of existing authorities and mechanisms necessary for policy-making, coordination and implementation and enforcement of laws;

(b) Take immediate steps to make progress in the formulation and elaboration of national strategies for sustainable development and begin their implementation by 2005. To this end, as appropriate, strategies should be supported through international cooperation, taking into account the special needs of developing countries, in particular the least developed countries. Such strategies, which, where applicable, could be formulated as poverty reduction strategies that integrate economic, social and environmental aspects of sustainable development, should be pursued in accordance with each country's national priorities.

The UN Millennium Declaration reaffirms the international commitment to poverty eradication and sustainable development and sets out 8 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

#### Box 3: The Millennium Development Goals

- Goal 1:** Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
- Goal 2:** Achieve universal primary education
- Goal 3:** Promote gender equality and empower women
- Goal 4:** Reduce child mortality
- Goal 5:** Improve maternal health
- Goal 6:** Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases
- Goal 7:** Ensure environmental sustainability
- Goal 8:** Develop a global partnership for development

*For further information on the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs see <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>*

<sup>5</sup> United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/summit\\_docs/2309\\_planfinal.htm](http://www.johannesburgsummit.org/html/documents/summit_docs/2309_planfinal.htm)



All of these goals address aspects of the environment. For example, MDG 1 on eradicating poverty and hunger can only be achieved if the resource base on which so many of the world's poor rely is sustainably-managed. MDG 3 on gender equality can only be achieved if the role of women as caretakers of the natural environment is matched by increased access to and control over natural resources and increased participation in and influence on environment policy. MDG 7 addresses environmental sustainability specifically and must be achieved in parallel with the other goals if poverty reduction is to become reality.

**Table 1: MDG 7 Ensure Environmental Sustainability**

<b>Target 9</b>	Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the losses of environmental resources.
<b>Target 10</b>	Halve by 2015 the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.
<b>Target 11</b>	Have achieved by 2020 a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.

MDG 7 is composed of three targets (Table 1). Targets 10 and 11 refer directly to elements of our development cooperation programme, while the target 9 also refers to our domestic actions to protect global commons. The indicators for target 9 are:

1. The proportion of land area covered by forest;
2. The ratio of area protected to maintain biological diversity to total surface area;
3. Energy use (kg oil equivalent) per \$1 GDP;
4. Carbon Dioxide emissions per capita and consumption of ozone-depleting CFCs;
5. The proportion of the population using solid fuels;

In September 2005 the UN reviewed progress towards meeting the Millennium Development Goals. Ireland was part of a collation of donors, multilateral and civil society organisations that held high level events during the summit to raise awareness of the role of the environment in meeting the MDGs. Irish Aid continues to work with the Poverty Environment Partnership<sup>7</sup> to find ways to raise the profile of the environment as an essential element of poverty reduction and supports UNEP and UNDP to help developing countries integrate the environment into their strategies to achieve the MDGs.

Our partner countries<sup>8</sup> in Africa have signed up to the NEPAD Environment Action Plan (2003) which reaffirms the need to “*ensure that the continent is able to confront its short-term economic growth challenges without losing sight of the long-term environmental, poverty eradication and social development imperatives*” (paragraph 11). The Action Plan is organised into clusters of programmatic and project activities to be implemented over an initial 10-year period by African nations in collaboration with development partners.

In April 2006 the OECD/DAC held a joint meeting of Environment and Development Ministers at which Ireland reaffirmed its commitment to the environment. At the meeting OECD members signed up to the *Declaration on Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Cooperation* and agreed on a *Framework for Common Action around Shared Goals*. These latest commitments illustrate the increasing attention being attributed to the environment in development cooperation by Ireland and the rest of donor community.

7 Poverty Environment Partnership website: [www.povertyenvironment.net/pep](http://www.povertyenvironment.net/pep)

8 At the time of writing Irish Aid has 8 programme countries, 6 of which are in Africa: Lesotho, Mozambique, Zambia, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Uganda. The other two are in Asia - Timor Leste and Vietnam.

Niger: Girl selling reeds in Tahoua village.







## 4. The changing context and new aid modalities

Despite IA's commitment to environmental protection and the environment as a cross-cutting issue<sup>9</sup>, in the past mainstreaming as a strategy has met with limited success. This was largely due to weak political and organisational commitment, the absence of clear policy orientation, the lack of dedicated and skilled staff and the absence of dedicated resources.<sup>10</sup> The 2003 DAC Peer Review of Ireland's development cooperation programme recommends that Irish Aid build on experience gained in mainstreaming HIV/AIDS to improve its mainstreaming of gender, environment and governance.<sup>11</sup> It also recommends that Irish Aid continue promoting the mainstreaming of cross cutting issues in its co-financing schemes with NGOs.

### Key Concept – Environment Mainstreaming

Environment mainstreaming implies the incorporation of environmental sustainability into development policy, planning and programmes for long-term poverty eradication. It requires staff to carry out the necessary analysis to assess the environmental implications of their work and to take the necessary steps to ensure that the environment is safeguarded.

Irish Aid adopted environment guidelines to guard against negative environmental impacts in 1996.<sup>12</sup> These guidelines were appropriate and relevant when implementing projects, but are less useful in the current Irish Aid programme where aid is

delivered to partner countries through locally-owned, harmonised approaches such as budget support and sector wide approaches. This means that a new approach to the environment is required, focusing on effective mainstreaming through increased awareness, capacity and decentralised responsibility (i.e. environment is the responsibility of all staff not just environment specialists).

The transition to these new aid modalities offers both challenges and opportunities to the way we address environmental issues. The challenges are in finding new ways to ensure that the environment is taken into account in partner's policies and programmes. This involves a greater emphasis on policy dialogue and a lesser emphasis on direct engagement. For example, instead of carrying out an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on a project proposal, Irish Aid would support the development of national legislation on environmental assessment or finance Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of a sector policy. The most significant challenge lies in raising the policy profile of the environment as it is generally of low priority in national development plans.

New aid modalities present important opportunities to enhance environment mainstreaming. PRSPs offer the possibility of addressing the environment in nationally-owned policies and programmes and of placing environment in the development arena. Environmental concerns can be mainstreamed into Sector Wide Approaches; and support to local government through decentralised structures offers possibilities to enhance the sustainability of local development plans and enhance community involvement.

This policy presents Irish Aid's approach to the environment in the context of these emerging aid modalities. It is a first generation policy, which will be built on, enhanced and further developed in the coming years. The implementation of the policy will be greatly facilitated by the **Irish Aid Mainstreaming Strategy** which presents a common strategy for addressing all four of Irish Aid's priority issues.

<sup>9</sup> Report of the Ireland Aid Review Committee, February 2002, Department of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>10</sup> Ireland Aid and Agenda 21, N. Chisholm 1998; Environmental Best Practice in Development Programmes, IAAC (prepared by EDC, TDI Group) 2000; Irelands Overseas Aid Programme and Agenda 21, M. Gorman and D. O'Connor, UCD 2001; OECD/DAC Peer Review 2003; Irish Aid to Developing Countries: An Assessment of Environmental Sustainability, Joanne Davidson, TCD 2004.

<sup>11</sup> OECD/DAC Peer review: Review of the Development Cooperation Policies and programmes of Ireland, 2003, DAC Journal Volume 4, No.4.

<sup>12</sup> Irish Aid Environment Guidelines, 1996.



#### **Box 4: What happens when the environment isn't taken into account?**

##### **The Poverty/ Environment/Gender linkage**

Irish Aid supported the Programme for Rural Development at Village Level (PRDVL) in Tanzania in the early 1990's. The programme provided funding to local groups to identify and develop small businesses. One scheme involved a group of women who produced sweet potatoes to sell to truckers on route to Dar es Salaam. In the first two years the scheme was very successful and profitable. It then failed because environmental factors and gender issues had not been taken into account.

A routine review noted that land for the project was allocated to the women's group by the all male local committee. The absence of women in decision-making and the failure to consider environmental factors resulted in the group being given very marginal, sandy land on a steep slope. This meant that by the third year in operation the land couldn't produce a crop due to severe erosion and soil degradation.

Mauritania: Villagers securing sand dunes in an attempt to stave off desertification.









## 5. Guiding principles

### The environment is a key component of sustainable development and a critical element of poverty reduction

Poverty reduction depends on good stewardship of the environment. The natural resource base on which so much of poverty reduction depends satisfies multiple needs such as water, medicine, food and building materials. Sustainable management of natural resources is critical as their degradation increases the vulnerability of poor men and women, puts their livelihoods at risk and exacerbates poverty.

### Development activities should minimise negative environmental impacts and maximise environmental benefits

Appropriate levels of analysis and assessment will be carried out to ensure that development programmes and policies do not result in harm to the environment. This applies to all sectors of development and to all levels of intervention. It includes measures such as participation in the development of environmentally sustainable sector policies, support to institutions responsible for environmental assessment, strategic environmental assessment of policies and programmes and the identification of environmental watchdogs.

In addition, steps should be taken to ensure that opportunities to benefit the environment through sustainable development are enhanced. Analysis of environment–poverty linkages and a review of national environment policies and strategies will help to identify these opportunities.

### The most effective way to ensure environmental sustainability is through integration into national development plans

In order to ensure environmental sustainability the environment must be integrated into national Poverty Reduction Strategies and national strategies for

sustainable development. This increases ownership of the issues, enhances links with poverty reduction and avoids treating the environment as a stand-alone, marginalised subject. Irish Aid will work with partner governments and other donors to address environmental issues throughout national policies and strategies. A strong focus will be put on participation so that civil society organisations, interest groups and communities have the opportunity to voice their concerns and priorities.

### Local ownership and management of natural resources contributes positively to environmental sustainability

The principle of subsidiarity implies that nothing should be done by a larger and more complex organisation, which can be done as well by a smaller and simpler organisation. In this way the principle recognises the rights of resource users and communities to manage their natural resources. Access, ownership, partnership and human rights are key elements of sustainable resource use and good environmental management. Irish Aid will work at all levels with communities, civil society, local and national governments to ensure that the necessary frameworks are put in place to ensure sustainable, equitable and just management of natural resources.

### Integrated, multi-sectoral approaches are the most effective way of assuring environmentally sustainable outcomes

Multidisciplinary approaches that go beyond a single sector have the most positive sustainable development outcomes as they address all aspects of a development question. A good tool in this regard is the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach<sup>13</sup> which focuses on enhancing the livelihoods of poor people through a better understanding of the

<sup>13</sup> For information on the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach, see [www.livelihoods.org](http://www.livelihoods.org)



range of assets available to meet everyday needs and to cope with and recover from shocks. The framework deals with five types of asset, human, natural, financial, social and physical and assesses the interplay between these in assuring well-being and income generation (see Box 3).

### Good governance is a critical element of environmentally sustainable development

Access to information on the environment and the right to participate in environmental management and policy-making is an essential element of good governance. Awareness-raising to highlight the causes and consequences of environmental damage including the impacts on livelihoods and human well-being is an essential part of sustainable development. All levels of society from central and local government, to the men, women and children making up rural and urban communities, need reliable information on the value of their environment and the role it plays in reducing poverty. Information on access and ownership rights and the right to influence legislation on natural resource management is of critical importance to sustainability and poverty reduction.

### An international response is required to global environmental problems which pose a significant risk to development

Global environmental problems cannot be solved by one country alone. They are problems that are global in cause and in effect, but which disproportionately affect the poor and risk undermining development. The poorest countries of the world and the poorest members of society are most at risk from the impacts of, for example, climate change (increased frequency of drought, flooding and storms) and biodiversity loss (bush meat, famine foods, medicinal plants). A commitment to environmental sustainability entails a commitment to take positive action on global environmental problems. As with other

environmental issues, they are best addressed through national sustainable development plans and programmes supported, where appropriate, by international cooperation.

### Irish Aid acknowledges an institutional mandate to promote environmental sustainability

Irish Aid through its senior management holds all those who work in development cooperation accountable for the implementation and success of the environment policy. Every individual has a role to play in making sure that Ireland's development cooperation is environmentally sustainable.

### Coherence with internal Irish Aid policies and programmes and Irish domestic policies is critical to the success of this environment policy

Coherence with policy objectives such as gender equality, the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS and humanitarian response, or sector policies on health, agriculture, water and trade is critical to the implementation of the environment policy. Irish Aid through the Senior Management Group and the proposed policy coherence unit is committed to assuring coherence between the policies guiding its development programme.

At the national level, Ireland's domestic and international policies have a direct impact on the environmental sustainability of our development cooperation. Policies on trade, agriculture, fisheries, climate change etc. have a direct impact on our developing country partners and Irish Aid will work with other government departments to minimise contradictions and enhance synergies. The newly established Inter-Departmental Committee on Development will also provide opportunities to ensure coherence in the area of the environment, as will regular meetings with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

### **Box 3: Using the Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) in Ethiopia**

The Vulnerability and Social Protection Programme is a central part of the Ethiopia 2005-2007 CSP tackling chronic food insecurity and poverty. The programme aims to protect a range of the household and community assets in order to reduce vulnerability and increase resilience to crisis. As a secondary objective the programme aims to build community and household assets.

The Sustainable Livelihoods Approach (SLA) is a key tool employed to enhance understanding of poverty and food insecurity. The approach is founded on several key principles: to be people-centred and participatory, holistic and dynamic; to build on strengths; to make linkages between macro and micro aspects, and to ensure sustainability. It emphasises the complexity of poverty and the multiple interactions that affect people's livelihoods.

The SLA does not claim to offer a panacea for the complex question of poverty and vulnerability in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, it does provide a framework for analysis, policy and practice to guide work with communities faced with multiple deprivations in the area of food security, education, health, support, infrastructure, markets, power, authority, etc. As a tool it aims to empower and mobilize people to identify strategies that can work for progressive social change and thereby give people a greater say in the running of their own lives and communities.

Adapted from the Ethiopia CSP 2005-2007







## 6. Policy Goal and Objectives

### 6.1 Policy Goal

*To promote environmentally sustainable development that is consistent with the economic, social and environmental needs and priorities of people in developing countries and contributes to poverty reduction.*

### 6.2 Policy Objectives

*a. To raise awareness of the links between environmental sustainability and poverty reduction and to inform development policy*

The success of the environment policy will rely on increased awareness of poverty-environment linkages throughout Irish Aid (HQ and embassies), partner governments and civil society. The current level of institutional awareness will be assessed and appropriate activities and measures put in place to raise awareness.

*b. To integrate the principles of sustainable development into Irish Aid policies and programmes in order to ensure environmental sustainability*

Sustainable development is a fundamental objective of IA's programme and a key principle guiding strategies to achieve poverty reduction. Increased emphasis will be placed on integrating the principles of sustainable development throughout the programme in order to ensure effective and environmentally sustainable development.

*c. To continue to engage with key multilateral environmental agreements and agencies, and to demonstrate our commitment to resolving global environmental problems*

Irish Aid will strategically engage with key Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) and demonstrate commitment to their implementation. As a small donor Irish Aid will prioritise a number of key global environmental issues and focus on raising awareness and integrating appropriate responses throughout its policies and programmes.

*d. To assist developing countries to prepare for and adapt to changing environmental conditions while taking action to reduce negative impacts on the most vulnerable members of society*

Despite international efforts to reverse environmental change and degradation, growing environmental threats and the increased incidence of natural disasters hit the poor hardest. Although poor men and women in developing countries are the victims of these events, they contribute least to the causes of the problems (CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, over-consumption, waste creation, energy consumption). While the world prepares to take action we have a role to play in helping partner countries to prepare for environmental change and disasters, to adapt to changing conditions, to reduce vulnerability and to recover from external shocks.





Guinea Bissau: Fulani villagers carry water back to village in early morning.

## 7. Strategy

Irish Aid will implement this environment policy in partnership with national governments, multilateral and international agencies and civil society organisations. Mainstreaming is the strategy that will be used to implement the policy in a decentralised fashion across the programme. Irish Aid’s **Mainstreaming Strategy** will be instrumental in guiding staff through this process, through provision of information, training and specialist support. The identification of strategic entry points will help to highlight opportunities to mainstream environmental sustainability at all levels of intervention.

In addition, multilateral channels will provide opportunities to target the environment directly, through support to and engagement in fora such as the GEF and UNEP. Bilateral assistance can also be directed to environment issues where country programmes identify the need.

Mainstreaming is a strategy which allows us to take the factors which are critical to achieving effective development into account in every part of our work. So whether the issue is environment,

governance, gender equality or HIV/AIDS, the incorporation of these issues into our work is critical to achieving sustainable development.

Mainstreaming requires three key steps: 1) Information; 2) Analysis and 3) Appropriate Action (Figure 2).

Irish Aid staff need to understand the links between the environment and their area of work, and they need to have the confidence and ability to ask the right questions. They also need support through the provision of tools and guidance specific to their area of work (see section 8.6). There is no standard outcome from this analysis, just as there is no standard mainstreaming action. This will vary according to local and national circumstances and the sector or programme involved. Analysis at different levels from local to national is critical in forming an understanding of environment-poverty links.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>14</sup> See ‘Analysing the Political Economy of Poverty and Ecological Disruption’, David Reed, Macroeconomics for Sustainable Development Program Office, World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF).

**Figure 2: The mainstreaming strategy**



Individuals applying a mainstreaming approach need:

- an understanding of the issues involved and the links to poverty reduction;
- the skills and competencies to carry out analysis and identify actions;
- institutional commitment and support; and
- financial and technical resources.



The focus in the first three years of policy implementation will be on raising awareness, building capacity, creating strategic partnerships and enhancing institutional ability to mainstream environmental sustainability. It will also provide opportunities to enhance the policy and provide lessons to inform future generations of environment policy. Catalytic and innovative environment activities that inform and complement the mainstreaming strategy will be encouraged where country programmes identify a specific need (e.g. action research, capacity building for environment authorities). These could focus on building partner government capacity to mainstream environmental sustainability at central and local level, and sustainable natural resource management through community level initiatives carried out in collaboration with local NGOs.



Kenya: A woman transports water in jerrycan in North Eastern Province. Most of the wells in the region have dried up or the water has become too salty for human consumption.





## 8. Strategic entry points

*This section outlines key opportunities within the Irish Aid programme for environment mainstreaming.*

### 8.1 Bilateral Assistance

The close relationship between Irish Aid and its programme countries offers many opportunities to promote greater respect for the environment and to encourage sustainable development. Increasing harmonisation of assistance to partner countries requires careful analysis of the competencies and comparative advantage of the donor agencies involved.

The environment is not an area where Irish Aid tends to have a strong comparative advantage and in many instances it may not be a leading actor. In this case it has an important role to play in raising the policy profile and supporting other donors with greater competency in the area of the environment. Irish Aid also has a responsibility to be well informed of the issues affecting environmental sustainability and to build capacity to engage constructively with the issue.

#### 8.1.1 Policy dialogue

Raising the profile of the environment is one of the key challenges in the transition from project to programmatic approaches to development cooperation. With a long list of development priorities including HIV/AIDS, health and education, the environment often appears low on the list and environment ministries are often marginalized with little influence on decision-making. Irish Aid can provide valuable support to raise the profile of the environment through its interaction with partner governments. It can:

- Promote analysis and greater understanding of the links between environment and poverty;
- Ensure that the principle of sustainable development is reflected in all Irish Aid Country Strategy Papers and PAEG documents, including environmental indicators for evaluation and review;

- Acknowledge the environmental priorities of partner governments as identified in national policies and plans such as National Environment Action Plans (NEAP), national strategies for sustainable development (nssd), National Adaptation Plans of Action (NAPAs) and support their integration onto PRSPs;
- Work with like-minded donors to raise awareness of the need to mainstream environmental sustainability into all development policies and programmes;
- Work with other donors to encourage the integration of the Rio Conventions into partner country PRSPs;
- Share examples of international best practice in environment mainstreaming with partners as a basis for developing policy;
- Encourage the creation of an enabling environment for environmental protection with a focus on the legal framework (such as, land tenure, access rights, EIA legislation, water quality etc);
- Encourage the inclusion of a wide range of actors (government, academics and civil society organisations, in particular women's groups) in policy dialogue, and ensure that a diversity of interests are represented, including those of indigenous people.

#### 8.1.2 General Budget Support

General Budget Support is a key instrument of aid delivery which is becoming increasingly important within Irish Aid as a modality that can make a significant impact on poverty reduction. It presents challenges to addressing environmental concerns as they must be raised in the Poverty Reduction Strategy and reflected in the national budget in order to receive funds. However, this also provides incentives to mainstream the environment and environmental sustainability should be an objective of all budget support agreements.



### All General Budget Support should:

- Work with partner governments and other donors to analyse environment/poverty linkages and their impact on national development planning;
- Support the integration of environmental sustainability into Poverty Reduction Strategies and matrices;
- Encourage Ministries of Finance to ensure that budgets are environmentally sustainable and that resources are allocated to the environment and included in Medium Term Expenditure Frameworks;
- Work with other donors to support the development of capacity in environment ministries to enable them to raise the policy profile of the environment at national level;
- Work with other donors to support the development of capacity in ministries of planning and finance and other line ministries to mainstream environmental issues;
- In cooperation with other donors lobby for the inclusion of environmental indicators in reviews of Poverty Reduction Strategies and budget support agreements;
- Clarify responsibility for environment mainstreaming and assign environmental watchdogs where appropriate;
- Work with other donors to build capacity in government departments and the private sector to carry out Strategic Environmental Assessment of policies and programmes;
- Work with other donors to encourage partner governments to introduce Environmental Fiscal Reforms.

### 8.1.3 Sector Wide Approaches

Increasingly Irish Aid is channelling funding into sector wide approaches in programme countries. This approach allows multiple donors to support a sector, thereby empowering the relevant government authority to develop and implement its programme of work. Sector wide approaches

provide opportunities to include cross-cutting themes in sector specific programmes. For instance, the environment can be integrated into the health sector through guidelines for waste disposal, sanitation and water supply.

### All Sector Wide approaches should:

- Work with partner governments and other donors to recognise the environment as part of each sector objective and to integrate environmental issues into sector policies;
- Strengthen institutional capacity to enable environment mainstreaming throughout sector policies;
- Develop Irish Aid staff capacity to identify links between different sectors and the environment and develop sector environment guidelines (e.g. health, education, water and sanitation);
- Develop and disseminate practical information on environmental linkages with the sectors supported by Irish Aid as part of capacity building for environmental mainstreaming (including case-studies);
- Encourage partner governments to carry out environmental assessments of capital investments associated with sector policies;
- Encourage the inclusion of environment indicators in reviews of sector policies.

### 8.1.4 Support to Local Development

Support to local development is delivered through Area Based Programmes (ABPs), budget support to regions and capital grants to decentralised authorities. Development cooperation at local level provides the opportunity to prioritise environmental problems and to integrate these into provincial and district level development plans. Many environmental problems such as soil erosion and land degradation, coastal erosion, water pollution and declining natural resources such as fish and fuel wood, are rarely a high priority at national level. Their importance at local level means that they can be prioritised to receive provincial and district funds.

### Opportunities and strategic entry points for Irish Aid:

- Analyse local environment–poverty linkages.
- Through support to decentralisation, encourage the integration of environmental sustainability into local development plans.
- Support the participation of a wide range of stakeholders (particularly women and indigenous people) in local development planning so that community level environment priorities are reflected in local development plans.
- Strengthen the capacity and representativeness of community institutions to manage their natural resources and to work effectively with the local authorities.
- Build the capacity of provincial and district natural resource and environment officers to raise the profile of the environment at local level and to raise awareness in other sectors of the local administration (roads, water supply, health etc.).
- Improve access for all to information and resources, such as national legislation pertaining to natural resources and the environment, national databases, international environmental agreements etc.
- Include environment indicators in reviews of local development plans and programmes supporting local development.
- Promote innovation and research by civil society organisations and research institutes to find new ways to address local environment and development issues (e.g. EZCORE client oriented research and extension in Tanzania or Operational Research Programme in Tigray, Ethiopia).

## 8.2 Multilateral Assistance

Ireland is committed to numerous Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs) designed to protect the local and global environment and has obligations to take action domestically and internationally to meet the objectives of these

conventions. Global environmental threats disproportionately affect poor men and women and honouring our obligations under the MEAs is essential if we are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals and MDG 7 in particular. In addition, Ireland supports multilateral agencies that provide funds, technical advice and leadership, and encourage partnership in caring for the environment (e.g. UNEP, GEF).

Key challenges facing Irish Aid are to a) improve coherence between bilateral and multilateral assistance in the area of sustainable development, and b) to improve policy coherence with other government departments working on the environment.

### Opportunities for Irish Aid:

- Strategically engage with a limited number of multilateral environmental agreements to meet our obligations and commitments from Agenda 21 and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation.
- Strategically engage with international agencies such as UNEP and the GEF so that Irish Aid’s multilateral assistance compliments and informs the bilateral programme.
- Address environmental sustainability in dialogue and agreements with non-environmental multilateral organisations (UNDP, UNIDO, UNICEF, etc.)
- Integrate the Rio Conventions into Irish Aid’s development objectives (Climate change, Biodiversity and Desertification) and increase understanding of the risks to development if these issues are ignored.<sup>15</sup>
- Work to increase national policy coherence through intensifying links with other Government Departments and agencies (e.g. Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, National Parks and Wildlife Service)
- Actively work with EU partners to advance our commitments under the MEAs and EU action

<sup>15</sup> Guidance available from OECD/DAC Guidelines in Integrating the Rio Conventions into Development Cooperation, 2002.



plans (e.g. EU Action Plan on Climate Change and Development, Biodiversity Action Plan)

- Continue to make funds available to assist developing countries to implement the MEAs and to allow the Least Developed Countries to participate fully in international negotiations.
- Address the recommendations of the OECD/DAC Joint Ministerial in Irish Aid programmes as expressed in the *Declaration on Integrating Climate Change Adaptation into Development Cooperation and the Framework for Common Action around Shared Goals*.
- Develop capacity in Irish Aid to commence Rio marking in OECD/DAC reporting (spending related to meeting the objectives of the 3 Rio Conventions will be marked at source and reported to the DAC). Steps involved include capacity building for staff and designating a focal person to provide advice and oversight.

## 8.3 Partnership with civil society organisations

Irish Aid reflects its philosophy and policy objectives in its partnerships with civil society organisations.

Those receiving and applying for funding from Irish Aid must show evidence of commitment to the ultimate goal of poverty reduction and cognisance of the need for sustainable development.

At present applications for the Civil Society Fund, Block Grants, the Irish Missionary Resource Service, and MAPS<sup>16</sup> agreements request information on the environmental risks associated with projects. The challenge ahead is to strengthen the analysis of environmental sustainability throughout project and programme design, implementation and evaluation.

### Opportunities for Irish Aid:

- The Civil Society policy and modalities for engagement with NGOs provides opportunities to enhance the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues, including environment.
- Raise awareness of the links between poverty reduction, humanitarian response and the environment with civil society partners so that they can better address environmental sustainability in their policies and programmes.
- Encourage civil society partners and NGOs to enhance the participation of women in the development of environmental policies and programmes.

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<sup>16</sup> MAPS Multi-annual Programme Scheme.

### Box 5: What are the Rio Conventions?

The Rio Conventions resulted from the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992. They address three global environmental threats: climate change, biodiversity loss, and land degradation and desertification. All three Conventions have been ratified by Ireland.

The Conventions recognise that the world's poor are most reliant on natural resources for their livelihoods (approx 1 billion households) and that they are the most at risk from global environmental threats. They also provide a legal framework to address these threats and to reverse current trends of environmental degradation. The Conventions require international commitment, government-wide coordination and cross-sectoral responses if they are to succeed. Hence the importance of integrating the objectives and principles of the Conventions into all development programmes and policies.

*See the OECD/DAC guidelines on 'Integrating the Rio Conventions into Development Co-operation' OECD 2002, for further information.*

- Share the sector-specific environment briefing sheets prepared for Irish Aid with civil society partners.
- Support the provision of training on the environment and other cross-cutting issues, when requested by civil society organisations.
- Share Irish Aid briefing sheets on the Rio Conventions with partners and invite NGOs to Irish Aid environment seminars.
- Require analysis of environmental sustainability in applications for funding from civil society organisations.
- Include environmental sustainability as a criterion when evaluating Irish Aid support to civil society programmes and projects (include in TORs for consultants).
- Encourage civil society partners to share experiences in addressing cross-cutting issues such as the environment (this has been successful in the case of the Dóchas working group on HIV/AIDS).
- Support civil society organisations in the programme countries to carry out innovative and catalytic environment and natural resource management projects which inform and complement Irish Aid's engagement with the country.
- Recognise the importance of, and support indigenous people's groups working in the area of natural resource management and environmental protection.

## 8.4 Development education

Irish Aid has a strong programme of support for development education with a central focus on sustainable development. The Development Education Unit supports a range of NGOs who deliver education programmes on sustainable development. Experience has shown that environmental issues provide useful ways to link local and global development issues (e.g. biodiversity loss, water scarcity) for a very broad

target group including the formal education sector, trade unions, youth groups, informal education, adult education etc.

### Opportunities for Irish Aid:

- The UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development started in 2005. Ireland is engaging in this process through a multi-disciplinary team comprising IA, the Department of the Environment, the Department of Education and others including relevant government agencies and NGOs. This forum provides opportunities to demonstrate the importance of sustainable development in reducing poverty and achieving the MDGs.
- The publication of this environment policy and an increased focus on the environment in Irish Aid will be used to enhance the focus on sustainable development in development education.
- Irish Aid will continue to provide funds to Civil Society organisations and international agencies that promote and provide education for sustainable development within Ireland and in partner countries.

## 8.5 Emergency and recovery response

Natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes and droughts are on the increase and conflict over ownership and access to natural resources is a common cause of conflict. In addition, political unrest and wars result in environmental destruction and the loss of species, habitats and livelihoods.

Protracted humanitarian emergencies have many complex and often highly political causes. The focus of this policy is on reducing the environmental impacts of relief and recovery measures. In the case of natural disasters there are opportunities to reduce negative impacts through increased understanding of the environmental



causes and investment in disaster risk reduction.

#### Opportunities for Irish Aid:

- Enhance environment mainstreaming in the review and reformulation of Emergency and Recovery funding mechanisms and humanitarian policy. This will also provide opportunities to strengthen Irish Aid's focus on disaster prevention, preparedness and reduction
- Require analysis of environmental issues and impacts in the revised guidelines for Emergency and Recovery response
- Raise awareness of the links between the environment and natural disasters and the environment and humanitarian crises amongst Irish Aid staff and partners<sup>17</sup>
- Highlight the environmental causes of vulnerability and the need to address these as part of both development and humanitarian relief, as expressed in the White Paper and Irish Aid's commitment to Linking Relief and Recovery
- Promote the use of vulnerability assessments which incorporate environmental (susceptibility to natural hazards, environmental degradation), social (disease, social status, tensions and conflict) and economic (poverty, access to resources) factors as part of country level planning and disaster risk reduction
- Use opportunities like the World Conference on Disaster Reduction to raise awareness of the links between natural disasters and the environment.

## 8.6 Institutional development

Staff in Irish Aid HQ and the field must be aware of the links between poverty and the environment, and of the issues associated with environmental

sustainability. The environment is an integral part of sustainable development and critical for poverty reduction, hence it is the responsibility of every member of staff. Institutional capacity and commitment are prerequisites for the implementation of the environment policy, as is access to funds and environmental expertise.

### 8.6.1 Capacity-building

An understanding of environmental sustainability and the skills necessary to analyse environment-poverty links is essential to the success of the mainstreaming strategy proposed in this policy. Staff need to have confidence to address the environmental issues associated with their sector or area of work.

#### Capacity-building opportunities:

- Identify capacity building needs in Irish Aid HQ and in the field
- Develop easy to use materials such as key sheets and short case studies focusing on environmental links with particular issues and sectors (e.g. environmental governance, health and the environment and gender equality/environment linkages)
- Develop user-friendly information and provide easy access to information on global environmental issues, focusing on the three Rio Conventions (include Department of Foreign Affairs diplomatic core in target group)
- Hold seminars and provide training on environmental issues. Use existing fora such as lunchtime seminars, sector advisers meetings and Heads of Development and Heads of Mission meetings where possible (Irish Aid HQ and field offices)
- Develop user-friendly sector environment guidelines
- Include a module on environmental sustainability and implementing the environment policy in staff induction courses

<sup>17</sup> Guidance available from the OECD/DAC Guidelines on Aid and Environment No. 7: Guidelines for Aid Agencies on Disaster Mitigation.

- Strengthen the environmental aspects of mainstreaming training
- Provide training for accounting staff in HQ and in the field on assigning DAC Rio Markers
- Develop strategic links with like-minded donor agencies to share information and experiences in environment mainstreaming
- Start to build awareness and capacity in the area of Strategic Environment Assessment (SEA) and Environmental Fiscal Reform (EFR).

### 8.6.2 Institutional arrangements

A high-level management commitment and a supportive organisational structure and culture within Irish Aid are necessary for a policy on the environment to be successful. Irish Aid will demonstrate its commitment to the environment through the following measures:

- It is recommended that an Environment Team, similar to the recently established Gender Team be established to take responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the environment policy. Given that the task of implementing the policy is too large for the environment focal person alone, and that the SMG cannot be expected to implement all of the policies coming online, the model established by the Gender Equality Policy seems appropriate.

The team should have a cross-directorate membership and include representatives of the Department of the Environment and Civil Society. The Environment Team could double-up with another policy team if this is deemed more effective and efficient (e.g. agriculture/natural resource management or water and sanitation).

- Overall responsibility for monitoring and reporting on the policy will be the remit of the Environment Team at headquarters with oversight from the Senior Management Group.

- The divisional-team with responsibility for cross-cutting issues within Irish Aid will provide support on mainstreaming and on enhancing linkages with other cross-cutting issues.
- At embassy level, a team structure with responsibility for environmental sustainability will be set up where the country programme identifies this need. The membership and functioning of the team is to be determined locally according to resource availability and national priorities. Possibilities include a mainstreaming team (for all 4 cross-cutting issues), a joint environment and gender/governance/agriculture/water/etc. team, or a dedicated environment team.
- The environment teams at headquarters and the embassies will exchange information and lessons learned on a regular basis.
- The appointment of a Senior Development Specialist or Development Specialist with particular responsibility for providing oversight and building capacity on environmental issues in Irish Aid HQ and the field.
- Environment advisers, advisers with dual responsibility (e.g. natural resources and the environment) or shared advisers (sharing an adviser with another like-minded donor) should be assigned at country level where the country programme identifies the need.
- Irish Aid will develop a strategic relationship with one or more institutions to provide specialist advice and act as an environment helpdesk for HQ and the field. The chosen institution(s) will also be commissioned to carry out research on environment-poverty issues relevant to IA's programme, in conjunction with partners in the programme countries.
- Where appropriate similar strategic relationships will be established with academic institutions and civil society organisations in the programme countries, to provide advice and to carry out research.



- A budget will be established for the mainstreaming strategy and activities associated with its implementation.
- The environment team in headquarters will develop and work to a three-year action plan with annual time-bound targets and reporting procedures. The budget for the implementation of the policy will be reviewed annually and the action plan will be evaluated at the end of the third year.
- IA's communication strategy will reflect the directorate's commitment to environmental sustainability.

### 8.6.3 Workplace policy

In order to demonstrate Irish Aid's commitment to sustainable development and caring for the environment, a workplace policy will be developed and introduced by the end of 2007. To this end Irish Aid will:

#### Irish Aid HQ

- Develop an environment workplace policy for Irish Aid HQ and work with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to learn from their experience in developing an Environment Management System (see below).

#### Programme Countries

- Embassies will need to put in place their own workplace policies according to the facilities available in programme countries. The policies should draw on both Irish Aid and national policy guidelines. Simple steps can be taken in the areas of energy efficiency (switching off lights and appliances when not in use, particularly air conditioners), reusing paper and reducing volumes used, finding out where embassy waste is disposed and exploring alternatives, improve water efficiency by repairing dripping taps, regulating car washing and the watering of lawns and gardens.

### Possible elements of a Irish Aid HQ workplace policy

- a) **Energy efficiency (reducing CO2 emissions)** – encourage staff to switch off computer monitors when not in use, turn off all PCs, photocopiers & printers at night (note a good deal of good practice exists in this area already – e.g. sensor lights)
- b) **Transport** – provide adequate secure bicycle parking, showers and lockers, promote the use of public transport, encourage visitors to use sustainable transport, provide e-working alternatives for staff, investigate opportunities for carbon off-setting for air travel.
- c) **Water** – insert water saving devices in WC cisterns, if replacing cisterns buy double flush systems, report and repair all dripping taps.
- d) **Green procurement** – extend the range of environmentally –friendly or superior products purchased by IA, develop guidelines on incorporating environmental guidelines into tender documents.
- e) **Waste Management** – aim to reduce volumes of paper purchased by 2009, replace old printers and photocopiers with new models that print both sides, recycle printer and photocopier ink cartridges, recycle and dispose of old electrical equipment safely, reduce the number of plastic bags used in office waste disposal, provide recycling facilities in canteens for plastic, cans, etc.
- f) **Information** – provide information on environmental good practice to staff and keep them informed of progress. Put the workplace policy and progress updates on the Irish Aid website.

*NOTE: Decentralisation offers opportunities to greatly enhance environmental performance through green procurement, clean energy and energy efficiency.*





Mauritania: A young sorghum seed struggles to grow in parched earth.







## 9. Performance Management

The objectives and principles of Irish Aid’s Environment Policy are the baseline against which results from implementation will be assessed. The environment team will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the policy and its outcomes. This will include commissioning work to develop quantitative and qualitative indicators of environmental sustainability and identifying an independent environmental watchdog to oversee IA’s performance in the areas of the environment and sustainable development.

### 9.1 Evaluations

The environmental objectives and principles set out in Country Strategy Papers and PAEG documents will form the basis of evaluation. This implies that emphasis on the environment in evaluations will vary from programme to programme in accordance with the planning documents and this should be taken into account when deciding on resources and expertise needed. Terms of Reference for studies, reviews and evaluations should provide explicit and appropriate direction on environmental issues.

**It is recommended that:**

- Evaluations include assessment of actions taken to address the environment as a cross-cutting issue;
- Evaluation teams have the appropriate level of expertise to assess the environmental sustainability of programmes;
- Particular attention is paid to assessing how analysis of the links to, and impacts on the environment were carried out;
- Where appropriate, participatory methodologies are used to enable local/community participation in analysing environmental sustainability and identifying the environmental impacts and benefits of programmes;
- Existing national evaluation tools are used where possible. For example:

- PRS reviews – the matrices accompanying many PRSPs contain environmental and sustainable development indicators. Where these don’t exist Irish Aid and the donor community should encourage their inclusion
- Budget Support Agreements –environment indicators should be included as benchmarks and in the review process
- SWAps – Sector policies also have their own indicators and review systems. Irish Aid should work with partner governments and other donors to include environment indicators in sector policy reviews
- Support to local development – this is delivered through local development plans which have their own monitoring and evaluation systems. Irish Aid should work to ensure that these include analysis of environmental sustainability
- Qualitative and quantitative environmental indicators are included in CSPs to assist evaluation of the environmental sustainability of the country programme. These will draw on the indicators developed for performance assessment (see section 10.2).

### 9.2 Review mechanisms for the Environment Policy

A review mechanism for the environment policy and strategy will be established which will include internal monitoring and the identification of an environmental watchdog to oversee overall performance in the area of the environment. The environment team, in collaboration with the Evaluation and Audit Unit, has overall responsibility for reviewing the policy. A full review should be carried out at the end of the third year of implementation leading to the reformulation of the policy as appropriate.



**It is recommended that:**

- The environment team organise an external evaluation of policy effectiveness and lessons learned after 3 years of implementation;
- Qualitative and quantitative indicators are developed to aid performance assessment;<sup>18</sup>

18 See 'Developing and Applying Poverty Environment Indicators' (2004), Macroeconomics for Sustainable Development Program Office, WWF; 'Indicators of Environment and Sustainable Development: Theories and Practical Experience' (2003), World Bank; 'Poverty-Environment Indicators' (2002), World Bank; 'Applied Poverty-Environment Indicators' (2002), World Bank. See also Comhar's Principles for Sustainable Development.

- A monitoring framework is developed based on principles and objectives stated in the environment policy;
- Feedback channels are put in place to receive inputs from partners including Irish government departments and agencies, civil society organisations in Ireland and the programme countries, partner governments, bilateral and multilateral donors.



Ethiopia: A woman and son herd their livestock through the dust in the desert back to their village in Gode. The region has suffered overgrazing during drought and the soil has become unstable.





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# Acronyms

ABP	Area Based Programme	SLA	Sustainable Livelihood Approach
CSD	Commission on Sustainable Development	SMG	Senior Management Group
CSP	Country Strategy Paper	SWAps	Sector-Wide Approaches
DAC	OECD's Development Assistance Committee	TORs	Terms of Reference
DCD	Development Cooperation Directorate	UN	United Nations
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs	UNCBD	United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity
EFR	Environmental Fiscal Reform	UNCED	United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
EHAF	Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Fund	UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
EPPR	Emergency Preparation and Post-emergency Recovery	UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
EU	European Union	UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
GEF	Global Environment Facility	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
HAPS	HIV/AIDS Partnership	UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organization
HQ	Head Quarters	USD	United States Dollar
IMRS	Irish Missionary Resource Service	WSSD	World Summit on Sustainable Development
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation		
MAPS	Multi-annual Programme Scheme		
MDF	Missionary Development Fund		
MDG	Millennium Development Goal		
MEA	Multilateral Environmental Agreement		
NAPA	National Adaptation Plan of Action		
NEAP	National Environment Action Plan		
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development		
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation		
nssd	National strategy for sustainable development		
ODA	Official Development Assistance		
OECD	Organisation for Economic Development and Cooperation		
PAEG	Programme Appraisal and Evaluation Group		
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy		
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper		
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment		

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