



Support to Tsunami Affected Countries

A Value for Money Review

IRISH AID'S SUPPORT TO TSUNAMI AFFECTED COUNTRIES

A Value for Money Review

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A female work team cleaning up the communal shower and latrine area in a Trócaire supported camp for people displaced by the tsunami, Sri Lanka. Photo: Anne Holmes



Prologue

Irish Aid's Support to Tsunami Affected Countries
A Value for Money Review

Prologue

The establishment of a formal process for reviewing government expenditure was proposed in a document *Delivering Better Government* in 1997. Now known as the *Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative* the objectives of this Initiative are to analyse in a systematic manner what is being achieved by Exchequer spending and to provide a basis on which more informed decisions can be made on priorities within and between programmes.

Value for Money reviews move the evaluation of public expenditure away from a focus on inputs (the traditional audit perspective) towards a focus on outcomes and effects.

Purpose and Scope:

This report is an independent review of the Irish Government's support to countries affected by the earthquake and tsunami of December 26th, 2004. The purpose of the review is to:

- Inform Irish Aid and the Irish Oireachtas about the overall quality of Irish Aid's response, and the management of Irish Aid's tsunami response programme;
- Provide a systematic analysis of what was achieved by Irish Aid's support for the tsunami affected countries;
- Provide a basis on which more informed future decisions and processes are prioritised within Irish Aid.

Methodology:

This review was essentially a desk study, building on the considerable evaluation work already undertaken by individual agencies and by the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (TEC), a major international multi-donor learning and accountability initiative in the humanitarian sector established in February 2005. Ireland was included in the funding studies undertaken as part of the TEC and the TEC has received funding from Irish Aid.

The review looks at the relevance, effectiveness, cost-efficiency, and sustainability of the programme of assistance. In addition, it gives consideration to the key Irish Aid cross-cutting issues of Gender, Governance, HIV/AIDS, and Environment. Finally, the review examines management issues, informs the development of indicators for future operations, identifies key lessons, and assesses Irish Aid's overall contribution to the tsunami response. The full Terms of Reference are to be found in Appendix 5.

The review was carried out by external consultants, INTRAC, with the assistance of a member of the Evaluation and Audit Unit of Irish Aid. The report was subjected to a quality review by an additional external consultant from a panel nominated by the Department of Finance. **Irish Aid's management response to the main findings and recommendations is to be found in Appendix 1.**

The temporary memorial erected to commemorate the 8,212 national and international lives lost during the tsunami in Thailand. Wreaths have been laid by visiting Irish in memory of the four Irish victims. Photo: Anne Holmes.



WALL OF REMEMBRANCE
VICTIMS OF THE TSUNAMI DISASTER 26TH DECEMBER 2004

กำแพงแห่งการรำลึก
ผู้เคราะห์ร้ายจาก คดียักษ์สึนามิ 26 ธันวาคม 2547

This Wall of Remembrance represents a memorial to the victims, families and relatives whose lives were so devastated by the Asian tsunami disaster of December 26 2004. Our heartfelt condolences are offered to all who visit this site in order to pay their respects to their loved ones. Fraudily erected on behalf of the people of Thailand and the international community by Keeyon International.

AUSTRALIA
EGYPT





Executive Summary

Irish Aid's Support to Tsunami Affected Countries
A Value for Money Review

Executive Summary

Introduction

This report is an independent review of the Irish Government's support to countries affected by the earthquake and tsunami of the 26th December 2004. It is estimated that the tragedy left some 227,000 people dead and missing in the countries affected with around 1.9 million people displaced from their homes and livelihoods. The scale and geographical scope of the disaster, its swift communication across the world, its timing during the Christmas holiday period and its widespread impact resulted in an unprecedented international humanitarian response.

The review covers the Irish Aid component of the €20 million assistance pledged by the Irish Government in the hours and days immediately following the disaster. Total Irish Aid expenditure at the time of conducting the review was €18.545 million. Expenditure incurred by other Government Departments in relation to the €20million pledge is not covered in this review.

The review assesses the appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of Irish Aid's response to the tsunami and makes recommendations in respect of future emergency responses and strategies.

Conclusions

The review determines that Irish Aid made a prompt and appropriate response, and, overall, managed its programme of support in an efficient and effective way. The programme of response has been competently monitored and no cases were found of any funds being wasted.

Findings and Recommendations:

Appropriateness

The review finds that the Irish Government responded appropriately in establishing clear guidelines for its funding strategy that were in line with the principles and standards of the *Good Humanitarian Donorship* initiative endorsed in 2003 by 17 major donors, including Ireland. The funding strategy included a commitment to support the efforts of the United Nations in co-ordination, to complement the efforts being made by the governments of the affected countries, and to support NGOs with a strong track record in relief and recovery work. The Irish Government also appointed a Special Envoy to monitor and report on the progress of the recovery effort.

The review finds that Irish Aid's support for UN agencies was comprehensive (covering all the agencies involved), flexible, and strategic in the sense that it prioritised funding for the UN's co-ordination efforts which have been historically under-funded. Despite the prioritisation by Irish Aid of its cross-cutting issues (Environment, Gender, Governance, & HIV/AIDS) the review finds that these were relatively neglected in the programmes of recipient agencies. The review recommends that Irish Aid continues to advocate that recipient agencies take greater account of Irish Aid cross-cutting issues such as HIV/AIDS.

Efficiency

In terms of overall efficiency, the review finds that Irish Aid responded promptly, especially in the initial stages of the tsunami response, and funding was disbursed in a timely manner. A key factor in terms of tackling the volume of work and increasing efficiency was the appointment of a Technical Advisor in March 2005. At approximately 1.8% of programme expenditure, Irish Aid's administrative

costs were considered very low. The review recommends that Irish Aid allocates more funds for monitoring and technical support in future large-scale emergencies

With respect to the efficiency of the agencies funded by Irish Aid, the review draws attention to the administrative costs associated with funds passing through many different organisational layers of the agencies themselves. In addition, efficiency was affected by the agencies having to pay high prices for materials in the tsunami affected areas and by difficulties in retaining appropriately qualified staff for their recovery activities.

The review makes a number of detailed recommendations for Irish Aid, including greater standardisation of reports and contracts, more use of evaluations, and increased engagement with joint funding mechanisms where appropriate.

Effectiveness

The review finds that Irish Aid has been most effective when meeting needs or resolving problems not covered effectively by other donors. The review also notes that agencies in receipt of Irish Aid funds were highly effective in the relief phase, though the same levels of effectiveness were more difficult to maintain in the recovery phase due to the difficult and complex operating environment. Supporting multi-donor, co-funded initiatives is an effective approach for Irish Aid and the review recommends that this be continued in the future.

While regarding Irish Aid's overall response as appropriate and strategic, the agreed strategy did come under pressure to provide funding to a relatively large number of NGOs. It is recommended that in supporting future emergencies, a smaller number of partner agencies with specific expertise are selected to ensure that Irish Aid's support does not become fragmented.

Sustainability

The review finds that those agencies with a prior presence in the countries affected were best placed to contribute to sustained recovery. The review finds that some agencies in focusing on service delivery and immediate tasks did not always pay sufficient attention to the wider political context and the threat this may have posed to the sustainability of their activities. However, the review finds that Irish Aid encouraged the agencies it funded to take the wider context into consideration and adopt a more flexible approach including assisting conflict affected people in the tsunami affected areas. This flexible approach has been much appreciated by both UN agencies and NGOs, and the review recommends that this flexibility be maintained in future emergency responses.

Impact

The review finds that the outcomes of the programmes funded by Irish Aid were almost entirely positive since both survivors' relief and recovery needs were met, albeit with some longer than expected delays in the recovery process.

The review finds that Irish Aid's impact and value added was greatest when meeting needs not covered by other donors.

Acknowledgements

The Review Team is extremely grateful to all those in Irish Aid who gave their time and/or provided information for this report so willingly, as well as the representatives of aid recipient agencies who met or corresponded with the team members. The list of those who helped us is long, and we are

concerned that in trying to name them all, we run the risk of missing key people out. However, we would like to single out the help of Donal Murray and Anne Holmes of Irish Aid, including the comments of the former on an earlier draft of the report.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

BRR	Badan Rehabilitasi dan Rekonstruksi Government Reconstruction Authority (Aceh, Indonesia)	MDF	Multi-Donor Fund (in Aceh: previously known as the 11 Multi-Donor Trust Fund)
CAP	Consolidated Appeal Process	NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
CFW	Cash For Work	OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
DAC	Development Assistance Committee	ODA	Official Development Assistance
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee (in the UK)	P-TOMS	Post-Tsunami Operations Management Structure
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs	TEC	Tsunami Evaluation Coalition
EHAF	Emergency Humanitarian Assistance Fund	ToR	Terms of Reference
GOSL	Government of Sri Lanka	TTVI	Thai Tsunami Victim Identification
ICRC	International Committee for the Red Cross	RTE	'Real Time' Evaluation
IFRC	International Federation of the Red Cross	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
ILO	International Labour Organisation	UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
INGO	International NGO	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
GHD	Good Humanitarian Donorship	UNJLC	United Nations Joint Logistics Centre
LRRD	Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development	WFP	World Food Programme
		WHO	World Health Organisation

Goal staff assisting tsunami-affected community members to plant coconut trees in Ampara District, Sri Lanka. The trees serve the function of marking out boundaries of homes that have been washed away, while the fruit helps generate income for the affected families. Photo: Anne Holmes





Introduction

Irish Aid's Support to Tsunami Affected Countries
A Value for Money Review

Background, Objectives and Methodology

Background and Objectives

This report is an independent review of Irish Aid's support to the countries affected by the earthquake and tsunami of December 26th, 2004. The purpose of the review is to:

- Inform Irish Aid and the Irish Oireachtas regarding the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, attentiveness to cross-cutting issues, and the management of Irish Aid's tsunami response programme.¹
- Provide a systematic analysis of what was / is actually being achieved by Irish Aid support for the tsunami affected countries.
- Provide a basis on which more informed future decisions and processes are prioritised within and between expenditure programmes of Irish Aid.

The **Scope of the Review** is on the Irish Aid component of the €20 million of assistance, which was pledged by the Irish Government in mid-January 2005 within 17 days of the disaster. This review does not cover other assistance financed by the Irish Government (including a financial contribution from the Department of Agriculture and the secondment of 4 Logistics Personnel from the Department of Defence). Full details of Irish Aid's expenditure are supplied in Appendix 2.

Overall Irish Government Expenditure for the Tsunami Response at time of the Review

Programme Expenditure	€
Irish Aid Programme Expenditure	18,161,217
Dept. of Justice (Garda Síochána)	27,505
Dept. of Defence	150,000
Dept. of Agriculture	1,000,000
Programme Expenditure Sub-Total	19,338,722
Irish Aid Evaluation Costs	152,518
Direct Administration Costs	
Dept. of Foreign Affairs	231,984
Depts. of Justice and Defence	134,944
Administration Costs Sub-Total	366,928
Total Dept. of Foreign Affairs Expenditure	18,545,719
Other Departmental Expenditure	1,312,449
Total Tsunami Response Expenditure	19,858,168²

Structure of the Report:

The analysis of the review is undertaken at two levels. Firstly, the review is required to look at the efficiency and effectiveness of Irish Aid itself in responding to the tsunami. The tsunami was an unprecedented and challenging event, and the review both describes this challenge briefly, and then goes on to assess how well Irish Aid was able to respond to this challenge in relation to its human resources and management systems, especially those related to assessment, planning, monitoring and reporting, and evaluation (Section One).

1 For clarity, these terms are all defined at the start of the relevant sections.

2 The €20 million pledge was for use over a two year period to end 2006. This review was conducted on disbursements made up to September 1st 2006.

In Section Two, the review tries to analyse the performance of the 35 agencies which received funding from Irish Aid. This is done with reference to five key criteria for evaluation as defined by the DAC:

- Relevance and Quality of the Response
- Efficiency
- Effectiveness
- Sustainability and 'Connectedness'
- Impact of Interventions

In addition, the review also considered Ireland's Tsunami Response Programme from the perspective of the cross-cutting issues of gender, HIV/AIDS, conflict sensitivity³, and the environment.

Section Three aims to consolidate the analysis of the first two sections and draws out general conclusions, lessons, and recommendations.

The Review Team

The International NGO Training and Research Centre (INTRAC), based in Oxford, UK, was commissioned by Irish Aid to undertake this review, and this report has been written by Hugh Goyder with assistance from Jerry Adams and Michael Richards. Hugh Goyder is an independent humanitarian consultant with over 30 years experience of international development and relief operations, including pre-tsunami experience in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. Jerry Adams is a monitoring and evaluation specialist with humanitarian experience. Michael Richards is Consultancies Manager with INTRAC, with a research background in natural resource economics and management.

In relation to possible biases in this team, we have all worked both as programme staff and/or

³ Irish Aid's official priority issues include gender, HIV/AIDS, governance, and the environment. In the context of the response to the tsunami, conflict sensitivity replaced governance as a key consideration.

evaluators for International NGOs, bilateral donors, and UN agencies, but our combined experience is weighted towards working with International NGOs. In addition, we have worked on two different reports for the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (the TEC - see below). All team members worked in one or more of the tsunami-affected countries before the tsunami, and have visited affected areas since the disaster.

The TEC is a multi-donor learning and accountability initiative in the humanitarian sector established in February 2005. It aims to improve the quality of humanitarian action and increase accountability, both accountability to donors, and accountability to survivors of the tsunami. The TEC has produced five thematic evaluations on different aspects of the tsunami response and an overall Synthesis Report.⁴ Ireland was included in the funding study undertaken as part of the TEC and the TEC has received funding from Irish Aid.

Methodology

Not only was the tsunami the best funded emergency response ever, but given the number of agencies involved and the amounts of money they have spent, it is also likely to be the most evaluated. This influenced the design of this study in that Irish Aid decided at an early stage that this study would not involve field visits to tsunami-affected countries. Instead, INTRAC was commissioned to design and undertake a Desk Study, making full use of the reports available within Irish Aid, agency evaluations, and the published reports of the TEC.

The TEC studies constitute a considerable donor investment in evaluation and provide a wealth of data on the overall response to the tsunami. The major themes covered are Assessment, Donor

⁴ See www.tsunami-evaluation.org

Funding, Co-ordination, Local Capacities, and Linking Relief, Recovery and Development (LRRD). The funding both from the Irish Government and Irish NGOs was the subject of two reports written for the Donor Funding Study.

Since the INTRAC consultants have visited the areas affected by the tsunami in both Sri Lanka and Indonesia in the last year on other evaluations, the lack of direct contact with beneficiaries was not considered a major constraint, especially as their views have been extensively canvassed during other evaluations. In addition, the consultants interviewed representatives of agencies funded by Irish NGOs either in person or by telephone, and also conducted a short survey of almost all the NGOs funded. However, a problem we encountered was the very wide variation in the quality of documentation available, both within Irish Aid files and in the public domain. Though 85% of NGO partners have supplied reports in compliance with agreed schedules, these varied widely in quality: some NGOs have submitted detailed evaluations of international quality and other excellent internal evaluations and analytical reports. At the other extreme, reports are much more sketchy and it is difficult to establish how exactly Irish Aid's contributions have been utilised. Reports from the UN and Red Cross agencies funded are due on an annual basis; interim reports have been supplied and final reports are not due until the end of 2006.

The review aims to look at the performance of Irish Aid recipients in the broadest sense, and the provision of reports or evaluations is only one indicator of this performance: agencies with very weak programmes can supply convincing reports, while many agencies doing excellent work on the ground may be weak on reporting, or have poorly formulated policies with regard to evaluation. We examine these issues in more detail in Section One.

As this review is primarily focussed on Irish Aid's response and is not an evaluation of the performance of its implementing partners we do

not usually mention individual NGOs by name. Instead, we use the following generic terms for the three main types of NGO that Irish Aid supports:

1. Irish NGO – e.g. Concern, Goal, Trócaire;
2. International NGO with a base in Ireland, e.g. Plan Ireland, World Vision, Habitat for Humanity, Voluntary Services Overseas, Oxfam Ireland;
3. International NGO – i.e. Mercy Corps.

The different methods used in this review are as follows:

- Meetings with Irish Aid;
- Meetings with Irish NGOs;
- Phone interviews with UN, Red Cross, & NGO staff in Head Offices, Regional Offices, Sri Lanka, and Indonesia;
- A questionnaire of Irish NGOs;
- A review of reports by Irish Aid, by the Irish Special Envoy, and by the agencies funded by Irish Aid;
- A review of agencies' internal and external evaluations, where available.

Women displaced by the tsunami in Tamil Nadu, south east India, pictured during a consultation to discuss needs. Photo: Anne Holmes





Section One

The Tsunami and Irish Aid's Response

1.1 Introduction

A powerful earthquake measuring 9.1 on the Richter scale struck off the coast of Aceh Province, Sumatra in Indonesia at 0800 hours local time on 26th December 2004, setting off a series of large tsunamis across the Indian Ocean region. Tidal waves, up to 15 metres in height, had the most devastating impact on the city of Banda Aceh, but quickly spread across the Indian Ocean to Thailand, Burma/Myanmar, Sri Lanka, India, and continued to the Maldives, Somalia and other countries of East Africa. The death toll from the tragedy was estimated at some 227,000 people dead and missing in the regional countries affected, with the highest number of victims being recorded in Indonesia. In addition, around 1.9 million people were displaced from their homes and livelihoods, and many more were affected by the disaster, either directly or indirectly.

The drama and huge geographical scope of the event itself, its swift communication across the world, its timing during the Christmas holiday period, and its widespread impact on local people as well as tourists, all resulted in an unprecedented international response. The United Nations launched a US\$800 million 'Flash Appeal'⁵ for the tsunami-affected countries; funding received in response to the Flash Appeal was the best ever for any such appeal. By June 2005, it was estimated that NGOs around the world had raised a total of US\$1.5 billion, compared to about US\$600 million raised by the UN system. By the end of 2005, it was estimated that over \$14 billion had been raised from all sources, with the response being led by a unique level of public and media interest. The TEC estimated that if this amount was divided between the 1.9 million people directly affected, there would be \$7,100 per person available – far more than for any other emergency.⁶ This compares with a figure of \$115 per head raised for the Somalia drought

in 2005, and only \$3 per head for the 36 million people affected by the 1998 floods in Bangladesh.

A consequence of this was an unprecedented flow of relief goods that quickly congested key airports such as Banda Aceh (Indonesia) and Colombo (Sri Lanka). This was followed by an influx of individuals and NGOs with widely varying levels of expertise and experience of this kind of disaster. This put an immediate strain on the political and local government systems of the tsunami-affected countries, especially those of Indonesia and Sri Lanka. While there has been some limited Irish NGO involvement in Sri Lanka (mainly through international NGOs), Aceh Province in Indonesia had been the scene of a long running civil war, and had been 'off-limits' for most UN agencies and NGOs before the tsunami. In both countries, co-ordination of the efforts of all the key actors has remained a huge challenge; for instance (though the exact numbers change frequently), in March 2006, it was estimated that in Aceh there were 124 international NGOs and 430 formally registered local NGOs, as well as a plethora of donor, United Nations and government agencies, all working collectively on reconstruction efforts.⁷

1.2 The Irish Response

Unlike some donors, Irish Aid does not have in place a formalised Emergency Response Team on 24 hour standby. But even though the disaster struck on a public holiday, the heads of the relevant sections of Irish Aid responded within hours and formed an informal working group. The first pledge of €1 million was made on the 26th of December; this was quickly increased to €2 million on the 27th of December and to €10 million by the 31st of December (including €1 million pledged by the Department of Agriculture). On the 31st of December, An Taoiseach confirmed that the first pledge of €10 million would be additional to the budgeted allocation for Overseas Aid for 2005.

⁵ A Flash Appeal refers to an urgent fund-raising appeal document produced in response to a sudden onset humanitarian crisis.

⁶ TEC Synthesis Report p.87

⁷ UNDP Aceh Evaluation 2005. There were also many more organisations which never registered.

The first tranche of almost €2 million was allocated among the International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC), Oxfam, Trócaire and Goal, for immediate relief in Sri Lanka and Indonesia. The UN put out a special appeal, to which Irish Aid responded with an immediate grant of €1 million for the World Food Programme (WFP), which was disbursed on the 31st of December 2004.

Given the perceived scale of the humanitarian disaster, unprecedented levels of public and media interest, and the involvement of Irish citizens⁸, the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr Dermot Ahern, and the Chief Executives of Concern, Goal, Trócaire and the Irish Red Cross visited the area. During this mission, the Minister pledged a further €10 million. In parallel with this mission, a technical assessment mission was conducted including senior staff of Irish Aid and a logistics specialist from the Department of Defence. These high level visits combined with the early decision to make extra funding available, the appointment of a Special Envoy, and the later appointment of a technical advisor, all indicate the extent to which the Irish Government appreciated that the tsunami was an unusual event requiring a different kind of response.

In its report, the technical assessment mission recommended some key guidelines for Irish involvement, both in the relief and recovery phase. For the **relief phase** the mission recommended that:

- Action should be guided by the humanitarian principles of humanity (saving lives); impartiality (aid given solely on the basis of need); neutrality (aid should not favour any side in a conflict situation) and independence (the protection of aid from political, economic, military or other factors).
- The response should reaffirm the primary responsibility of the Governments of the countries affected to deal with the crisis within their own borders. Emphasis should be given

⁸ Four Irish citizens were killed in the tsunami and their bodies were recovered and repatriated.

to strengthening the capacity of the affected countries and local communities to prevent, prepare for, mitigate and respond to future crises.

- Support should be given for the central and unique role of the United Nations in providing leadership and co-ordination of international humanitarian action and to the special role of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC).

For the **recovery phase** the mission emphasised that:

- Ireland's assistance should be directed at reinforcing Government leadership in overseeing the recovery plan, strengthening the capacity of local government and Non-Governmental Organisations, and flexibly responding to emerging needs. The assistance should be delivered through key United Nations agencies, international organisations and Non-Governmental Organisations that are supporting Governments in implementing the national recovery programme in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner, have a proven track record, and are responding to basic needs of those most impacted by the disaster.⁹

The inclusion of NGOs in this recommended strategic framework was consistent with the findings of the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Peer Review of Irish Aid (November 2003) which observed that:

“By comparative DAC standards, Ireland devotes a large share of its Official Development Assistance (ODA) to co-financing activities by NGOs. Irish Aid should continue promoting more strategic approaches, greater mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues (gender, governance, HIV/AIDS and the environment) and more systematic auditing, monitoring and evaluation by NGO partners.”¹⁰

On the 26th of January, it was announced in the Oireachtas that the Government would appoint

⁹ Report of Government of Ireland South Asia Technical Assessment Mission Sri Lanka, Thailand and Indonesia, 7 - 21 January 2005

¹⁰ OECD: DAC's 2003 peer review of Irish Aid – 20/11/03.

a “Special Envoy to the Region” for a period of six months. His Terms of Reference (ToR) were to report on the status of the recovery effort, the extent to which Irish agencies co-ordinated with local organisations and the relevant governments, as well as *‘the scale and effectiveness of the international response to the tsunami... and advise on lessons that could serve to inform and develop responses to future disasters’*.

Subsequently, the Special Envoy, Mr Chris Flood, has made three trips to the affected areas and has published his final report with recommendations, to which we refer at the end of this Review.

1.3 The Response in the Context of International Humanitarian Standards

Since the critical evaluation of the international response to the genocide in Rwanda in 1994, the international humanitarian sector has taken a number of initiatives to lay down clear, ethical and technical standards for all agencies responding to major emergencies. The basic framework of these standards is set out in the ‘Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief’ (known as the Red Cross Code). This code asserts the key principles of humanitarian response, for example, aid must be given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients; and, aid must not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint. Signatories to the Code of Conduct – which include all the major International NGOs and UN Organisations funded by Irish Aid – also commit themselves to try to build disaster response on local capacities, and to involve beneficiaries in the management of relief aid. Supplementing this code are internationally agreed minimum standards, known as the Sphere Standards, covering the main sectors of humanitarian

work, with relevant indicators for each sector. Other internationally recognised standards and guidelines for good practice exist, such as those prepared by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies. This combination of ethical and technical standards offers a useful basis for the implementation of programmes by agencies and for the monitoring and evaluation of any emergency response by donors. Standards also exist to guide donor behaviour: Ireland is a signatory and an active participant in the 2003 Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) initiative. Members of the GHD initiative commit themselves to wide-ranging principles, including making funding proportionate to need; using emergency funding to promote local capacity and recovery efforts; and ensuring that donors support and promote the central and unique role of the UN in providing leadership and coordination in response to emergencies.

Broadly, therefore, this Expenditure Review tries to take account of the extent to which, both in intention and in practice, Irish Aid, in response to the tsunami, was consistent with the principles of GHD and the ideals enshrined in the Red Cross Code of Conduct.

1.4 Relevance and Appropriateness

As observed in Figure 1 and Table 1, the overall allocation of Irish Aid was roughly proportionate to the damage and needs in each of the affected countries. Thailand and India did not formally request international assistance for the tsunami, and the large allocation for the regional programmes of selected UN agencies allowed those agencies considerable flexibility in where they spent the funds. In terms of the geographical distribution, most of the funding has gone to Indonesia and Sri Lanka, with less going to Thailand, India, and the Maldives (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Irish Aid Tsunami Response by Country

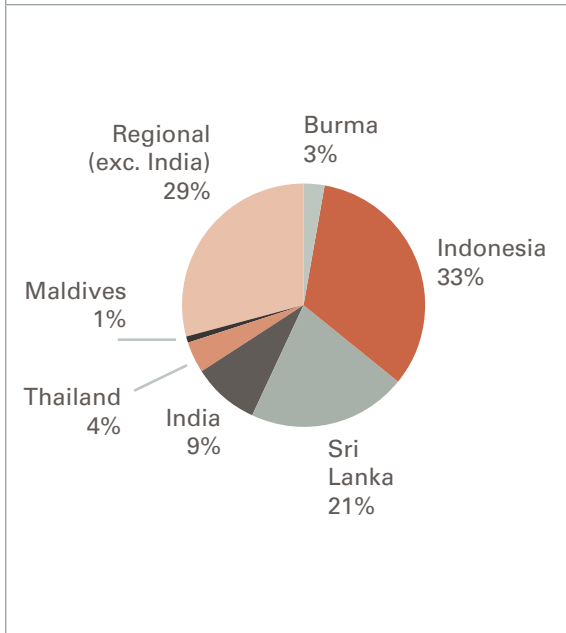


Table 1. Irish Aid Tsunami Response by Country (€)

	€
Burma	500,000
Indonesia	6,523,284
Sri Lanka	3,802,500
India	1,720,993
Thailand	737,176
Maldives	220,000
Regional (exc. India)	4,657,264
Total	18,161,217

The appointment of a Special Envoy to the tsunami affected region acknowledged the unique nature of the tsunami in terms of the extent of damage to life and property, the number of countries and nationalities of people affected, and the strong public interest in the relief and recovery process. All

the agencies consulted welcomed this appointment, and it was pointed out that while many other senior politicians from donor countries paid single visits to the tsunami area, few made repeated visits or had such clear Terms of Reference.

Box 1. Phases of Disaster Response – some definitions

In responding to a disaster, there are usually a number of distinct (but often concurrent) phases, which can be defined as follows:

Search and Rescue: The immediate, often spontaneous response to rescue and assist the living, and bury the dead in the case of sudden on-set crises;

Relief: Meeting the survivors' immediate needs required to protect and sustain life; for example, the provision of water, food, shelter, and health care;

Recovery: The processes and activities undertaken to return crisis affected communities to the pre-crisis state. This would involve assisting survivors and the State to reconstruct houses and schools, and the restoration of income generation and services. Activities, undertaken as part of recovery, are often also referred to as 'rehabilitation' and 'reconstruction'.

It is important to note that relief and recovery needs and response programmes can co-exist; i.e. there is not always a smooth and time-bound transition from the relief phase to the recovery phase.

What has become clearer in retrospect, but was very difficult to establish at the start, was that the tsunami's 'profile' as a humanitarian disaster to some extent exceeded its reality. In the media frenzy of early 2005, it would have been impossible to justify this statement, but the reality was that, although the tsunami was on a huge geographical scale with very high mortality and severe damage to housing, livelihoods and infrastructure, *actual relief*

needs (as defined in the box above) were far less and far more limited in time than in many other humanitarian emergencies, especially those relating to conflicts in Africa, such as would be the case in Sudan or the Democratic Republic of Congo. Cruelly, the tsunami meant that the majority of people involved either died or survived: there were relatively few people with life threatening injuries, and for many survivors, 'recovery' could and indeed did start soon after the wave receded.

The Red Cross Evaluation noted how Red Cross Appeals, in common with those of other major agencies, tend to over-emphasise relief needs, while not addressing recovery issues early enough.¹¹ And the TEC studies, especially the study of Local Capacities, document how the humanitarian sector and international media underestimated the ability of local people and local institutions to provide relief and comfort to tsunami survivors in the two weeks or so it took to organise international relief.

In the light of this, Irish Aid's response appears to have been something of a 'balancing act' between different forces. It is Irish Aid's normal practice to use a mix of funding partnerships for emergencies – UN/ Red Cross/NGOs, and it has continuing relationships with all three groups of agencies. In an emergency, these relationships enable Irish Aid to access different 'layers' of the response. On the one hand, Irish Aid was acutely aware of its responsibilities as a 'good humanitarian donor', which required it to provide aid on the basis of need. It also wanted to support the UN Appeal and organisations like the IFRC with which it had built up a strong relationship.

In Irish Aid's distribution of funds to NGOs, it aimed to fund agencies which:

- i) were well known to Irish Aid;
- ii) had demonstrated experience and a successful track record in effective and efficient delivery of emergency assistance, and

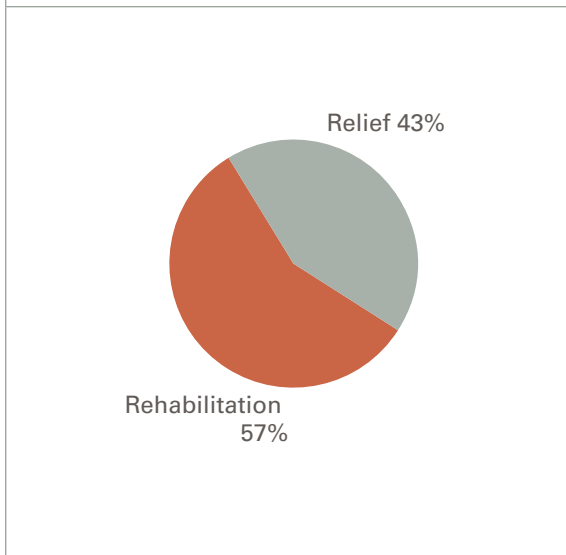
iii) were in a position to allocate assistance impartially and on the basis of needs.

On the other hand, there was huge public interest in Ireland on a scale perhaps not seen since the response to the Ethiopian famine of 1984. There was strong pressure from the public and media for Ireland 'to do more' and to do it 'sooner'. Completely new NGOs were formed and started putting demands for support to Irish Aid; individuals and churches began their own private collections, including inappropriate items like clothing. The TEC Donor Funding Studies have documented how in many donor countries, including Ireland, the different fund raising efforts 'became a story in themselves', and helped maintain the media interest for much longer than with most disasters.

We believe that the impact of Irish Aid could have been even greater if it had followed an even stronger strategy of adding value and complementing the huge public interest. Under this kind of approach, there could have been an earlier switch of Irish Aid funding into recovery, with less being used for the brief, and very well funded, relief phase. Within recovery, there was a case for being more selective in the allocation of funds, and perhaps reserving a greater proportion of funding for the multilateral, World Bank co-ordinated, Multi-Donor Fund for Aceh, discussed in more detail below.

¹¹ IFRC – Asian Tsunami Response 'Real Time' Evaluation (1st round – March 2005)

Figure 2. Relief and Recovery/Rehabilitation as Proportions of the Irish Aid Response



However, in the light of the strong political pressures, the overall amount allocated by Irish Aid appears appropriate. In adhering to the requirement for needs-based and proportionate responses to crises as outlined in the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative, the Irish Government avoided the ‘dollar for dollar’ approach adopted in Canada in which the Canadian Government pledged to match all public contributions to the tsunami. In fact, the Irish Government’s contribution was 26% of the Irish public’s. This was a relatively modest response compared to other official donors: in terms of € per head in donor countries, the highest amounts were donated by the Australian government, which gave €42.9 per head, followed by Norway which contributed €29.3. The Irish Government gave the equivalent of €5.1 per head to be programmed over a two year period.¹²

Even so, in the context of the amounts of Irish humanitarian aid given to other disasters, the overall assistance of nearly €20 million for the Tsunami Response was still a relatively high figure, and can be compared with the €19.7 million of official Irish assistance to Afghanistan over the four year period

¹² See J. Cosgrave *Civil Protection Audit Final Report – 2006*, p.10

2000-3, and the €19.2 million which represented all of Ireland’s humanitarian aid given in 2001.¹³

Normally, when there is an emergency in a distant part of the world, Irish NGOs and official agencies struggle to raise and sustain public and media interest. In this case, both Irish Aid and many NGOs found themselves struggling to cope with the flow of donations and the demands from the media for very rapid action. In this review, we take the view that, as both the tsunami and the tremendous public response around the world were unique events unlikely to be repeated, it would be unwise to use this emergency response experience as the basis for too many policy prescriptions.

However, as it is a relatively small donor, there is a case for Irish Aid to take a more careful look at the concept of the *value added* by its contributions. This is important since the allocation of the funding to 34 different agencies suggests an implicit or explicit pressure to fund almost all UN agencies and reputable NGOs with Irish links. While the number of UN agencies is relatively stable, the number of International NGOs (both ‘home-grown’ and those with an Irish base) has increased rapidly in recent years, and this trend seems likely to continue. Thus, without corrective action, in any similar emergency in the future, there is a danger that Irish Aid’s support will become fragmented between a large number of recipient agencies.

The initial round of funding on December 30th went to four agencies (IFRC, Oxfam, Trócaire and GOAL). These are all experienced humanitarian actors, and all had previous programmes in a least one of the affected countries. Also, at this stage, the scale of the international funding response was unclear. The second round of funding, dated 17th January 2005, was allocated among the major UN organisations and six International NGOs. By this time, enormous amounts of funding were being raised internationally, and we have to ask what was the particular value added by these relatively small Irish donations?

¹³ Ireland Aid Review Committee 2002

A key question for this review is the extent to which the January allocations were consistent with the strategy laid down by the initial Technical Assessment Mission, or whether an alternative pattern of allocations might have done more to achieve the objectives proposed by this Mission.

In terms of political realities, and given the extent of public and media interest already described, it would have been very difficult for Irish Aid to refuse funding to any of these large International NGOs. However, for the future, Irish Aid would do well to acknowledge more explicitly the potential conflict between wanting a strategic and focused programme, and wanting to respond positively to applications from the growing number of Irish-based NGOs. **For future emergencies, we recommend that Irish Aid considers a more selective approach** in which there is a clearer distinction between agencies with real expertise in the relief phase, and those whose proven comparative advantage lies more in the recovery and reconstruction phases.

1.5 Funding of NGOs in the Tsunami Response

Figure 3 and Table 2 show the distribution of Irish Aid's Tsunami Response between different types of agencies. The greater the number of aid recipients, the more difficult it becomes for Irish Aid to monitor grants effectively and efficiently. In addition, it becomes harder to maintain an overall sense of strategic purpose in the funding pattern. A solution would be for Irish Aid to initiate, with the help of Dóchas¹⁴ a wider debate about how Irish Aid and the wider Irish NGO community should respond to future emergencies.

The aim of this debate (which would need at some point to involve the media) would be to enable Irish Aid to take a more strategic approach to future

emergencies, and to move away from the sense of 'entitlement' amongst both Irish NGOs and their supporters, which underlay its allocations following the tsunami. An idea to discuss in this debate would be for Irish Aid to focus its own funding on emergencies like the current conflict in Darfur, for which International NGOs have found it extremely difficult to raise funding; and it should give proportionately less to dramatic and well publicised emergencies like the tsunami or South Asian Earthquake, where there is a strong interest from the Irish public. Alternatively, in situations in which there is a strong relief response, it might choose to allocate more funding to recovery activities for which funding is often much harder to secure.

Table 2. Irish Aid Tsunami Response by Agency Type (€)

	€	Number of agencies
Larger Irish NGOs	6,915,493	9
Smaller Irish NGOs	550,000	5
IFRC/ICRC	1,250,000	2
Other NGOs	1,403,284	3
UN agencies	6,848,750	11
MDF Indonesia	1,000,000	1
Other	193,690	5
Total	18,161,217	36

¹⁴ Dóchas is the umbrella organisation of Irish Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involved in development and relief overseas

Figure 3. Distribution of Irish Aid Tsunami Response by Agency Type

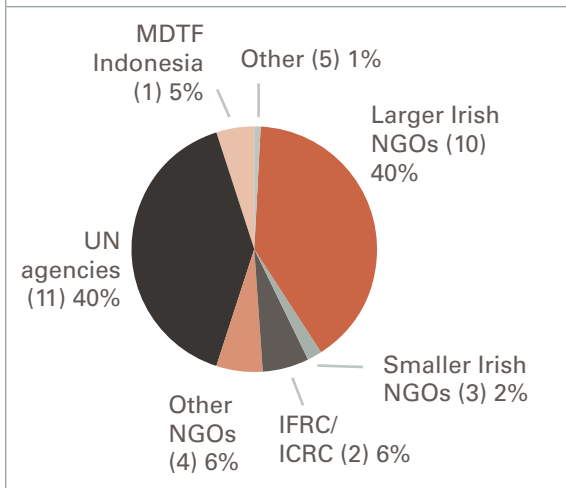
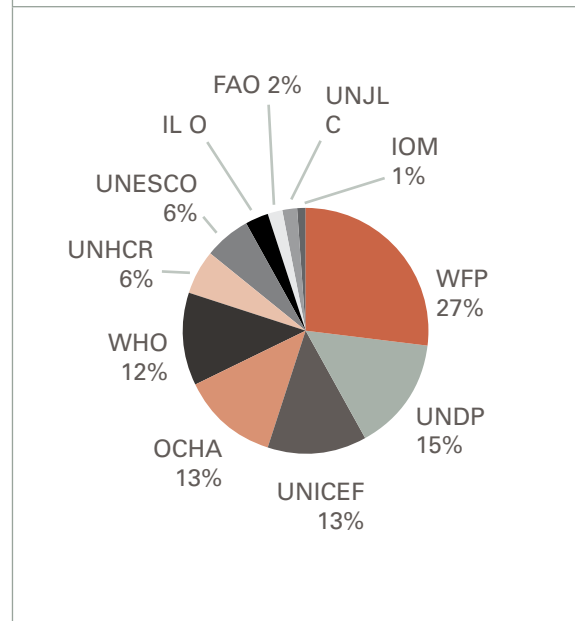


Figure 4. Distribution of Irish Aid Tsunami Response among UN Agencies



1.6 Funding of UN Agencies

Irish Aid funding to the UN agencies (Figure 4 and Table 3) and the Red Cross appears in general to have been both relevant and appropriate. The two grants to the Red Cross were €750,000 for its relief operations in Sri Lanka, and €500,000 for the ICRC in Burma/Myanmar (discussed below).

Table 3. Irish Aid Tsunami Disbursement to UN Agencies (€)

	€
WFP	1,000,000
UNDP	1,150,750
UNICEF	1,000,000
OCHA	1,000,000
WHO	898,000
UNHCR	500,000
UNESCO	500,000
ILO	250,000
IDLO	300,000
FAO	150,000
IOM	100,000
Total UN agencies	6,848,750

It was especially important, in our view, that the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) received as much as the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and WFP (€1 million), given both its key coordination role and the fact that it has been historically under-funded by international donors. As regards WFP, Ireland was among the first countries to respond to its appeal for the tsunami with €2 million. €1 million was confirmed from the Department of Agriculture and Food for the special operation for WFP's air operations on the 7th January 2005; and a further €1 million was initially earmarked to the general emergency operation. As this operation rapidly became fully funded, WFP requested permission to transfer this second grant to air support, which was agreed. WFP welcomed this flexibility on the part of Irish Aid. The UN air service operated by WFP, which received 10% of the total Irish Aid tsunami funding, was vital to the initial relief operation on the west coast of Aceh where the coast roads had been severely damaged by the tsunami. We will further review the UN agencies in Section 2.

1.7 Efficiency

Efficiency measures the outputs – qualitative and quantitative – achieved as a result of inputs.

This section reviews two aspects of efficiency. The first part analyses how the money was divided between programme and ‘administrative’ expenses, while the second reviews the overall efficiency of the response.

1.7.1 Funding issues

The overall amount approved by the Irish Government for programme activities was €19,344,122, with an actual expenditure of €19,338,722. Of these figures, Irish Aid approved €18,166,617 for the tsunami programmes, and Irish Aid actual expenditure was €18,161,217.

The administrative costs and support for the TEC amounted to €384,502 to September 2006 (further costs will be incurred for monitoring and for the cost of the specialist, but these cannot be estimated with precision). Thus, the overall Irish Aid expenditure for the tsunami response up to September 2006 is:

Programme Activities	€18,161,217
Admin/TEC (2005 and 2006)	€ 384,502
Total:	€18,545,719

These administrative and TEC support costs are broken down as shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Irish Aid Administrative and TEC Support Costs to September 2006

	2005	2006	Total
	€	€	€
Assessment Missions and Special Envoy costs	101,071	15,000	116,071
Technical Assistance and Monitoring Costs	65,064	50,849	115,913
TEC related costs	132,521	19,997	152,518
Total	298,656	85,846	384,502

As shown in Table 4, the TEC related costs of €152,518 constitute about 40 percent of the €384,502 expended to date for “administrative/TEC costs”. However, Irish Aid’s support for the TEC should be seen as support for an important international initiative aimed at learning lessons from the tsunami response; therefore, they should not be seen as administrative costs in the strict sense. When the TEC costs are removed, Irish Aid’s administrative costs, including the Special Envoy’s costs, amount to €231,984, or only 1.2% of the total expenditure. To this should be added the other tsunami-related costs; for example, time committed to tsunami-related work by staff of the Emergency and Recovery Section and, to a lesser extent, the Technical Section. These other costs have been roughly estimated by Irish Aid to amount to about €100,000, and if this figure is included, overall administrative costs rise to about 1.8% of programme expenditure.

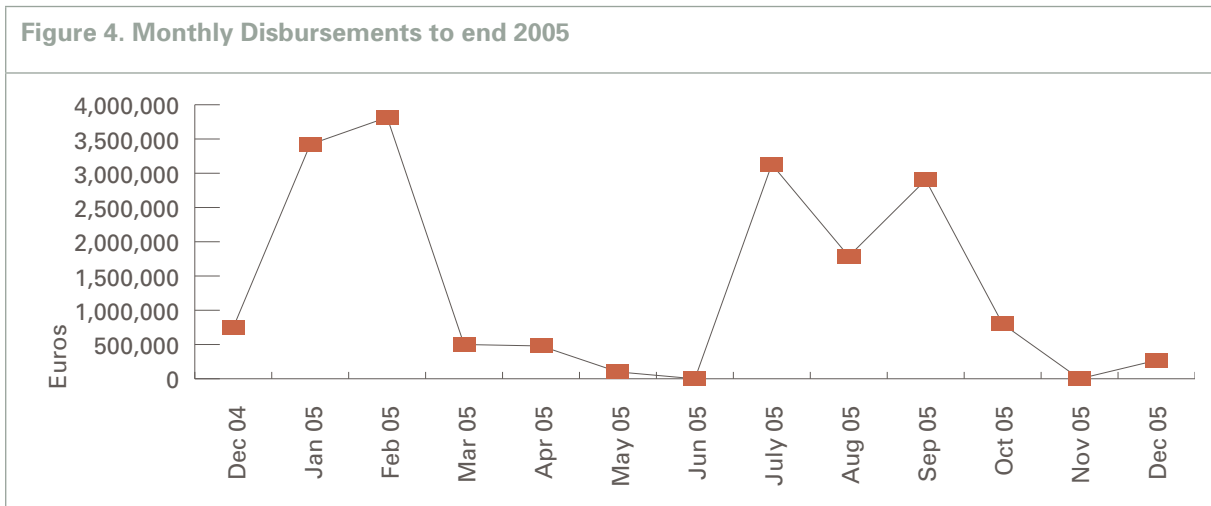
By any standards, this is a very low ratio for administrative costs. While this might be considered good news for the Irish taxpayer, our conclusion, to which we return below, is that this ratio is in fact too low and that **Irish Aid could have been even more effective in its response to the tsunami with a greater allocation of funds for monitoring and technical support, while still keeping administrative costs to 5% of total programme expenditure.**

1.7.2 Overall efficiency of the response

In terms of overall efficiency, Irish Aid responded promptly in the initial stages of the tsunami response. In terms of disbursement of pledged funds, €1.9 million was immediately allocated to five NGOs and €4.6 million was given to UN agencies and the ICRC in response to the UN’s Flash Appeal. The disbursements from Irish Aid in Figure 3 show two definite ‘peaks’ – the first in January-February 2005, and the second from July-September after the announcement of a further tranche of funding amounting to just over € 9 million.

One reason for the pause in disbursements in May and June was the lack of staff capacity in Irish Aid for the first two months after the tsunami, which we discuss below. Another reason was that, while initial funding to NGOs was given on the basis of brief concept notes, Irish Aid rightly required more detailed applications before making further commitments. We believe that the third reason was that, following the appointment of a Technical Advisor, it was decided to take stock and adopt a more strategic and value-added approach to disbursement.

Figure 4. Monthly Disbursements to end 2005



However, in addition to disbursing funds, Irish Aid had to assess applications, provide feedback to applicants, and monitor the work undertaken by recipient agencies. There is wide agreement that, at least in the first two months, Irish Aid lacked the staff and systems to cope with the enormous pressures it faced. The Technical Assessment Mission recommended the appointment of a specialist advisor to help assess requests for Irish Aid assistance and monitor the relief and recovery efforts. Given the huge geographical sweep of the tsunami, it was optimistic to assume that one person, however expert, would be sufficient to cover the extra workload caused by the tsunami: the recruitment of two or three specialist advisors (one for Sri Lanka, one for Indonesia, and a third for the other affected countries) would, in our opinion, have been a sensible investment for maximising the effectiveness and relevance of the Irish Aid response.

Secondly, recruitment was relatively slow for an emergency situation, and the advisor was only appointed in March 2005. It was only after this appointment, and the advisor's initial visit to the area, that Irish Aid's contribution to the tsunami areas could be allocated more strategically. NGO responses to our questions revealed that Irish Aid's response became far more efficient once the specialist Advisor was appointed in March 2005. The problem was that by this time, just over half of Irish Aid's funding had already been disbursed. Even so, the Advisor's monitoring visits enabled Irish Aid to monitor reasonably effectively (considering that one person had to cover all the tsunami affected countries) performance of its partners on the ground as well as the wider context. All the NGOs contacted appreciated this direct contact in the field with Irish Aid, and several particularly commented on the very useful advice or support provided, although some commented that it was a pity that the technical advisor did not have more time to make field visits.

In the first two months after the tsunami, like many other agencies, Irish Aid found it difficult to

organise a sufficient 'surge capacity' – the ability to scale up rapidly and coherently in response to an unexpected event. The perception of some Irish NGOs was that it was at this time easier for the well-established, larger agencies to get funds approved than smaller agencies whose proposals required more scrutiny. The result was a mixed picture: some proposals from NGOs submitted in January were dealt with promptly, while others were only approved in April 2005 (in some cases this delay was caused by perceived deficiencies in the NGOs' proposals, while in other cases the proposals were misplaced, with one NGO resubmitting its proposal after a two month delay). This time scale might be quite acceptable for development funding, but it is too slow for a fast moving emergency response.

From our review, we found that the systems of the Emergency and Recovery Section may be adequate to cope in 'normal' times, **but need to be improved to cope more efficiently with large-scale emergencies in which a large number of grants have to be approved and monitored in a very short time.**

In particular, we recommend that:

1. Irish Aid should review its contract format and aim for greater standardisation across the board. At present there appears to be too wide a variety of contracts being used with different partners.

2. Follow-up (or 'tracking') systems need to be reviewed. Due to the changing nature of needs and responses, several agencies changed the specific details of what they had outlined in their proposals. This is quite normal in a disaster situation, but when reviewing reports, the review team found a number of instances where the activities and target groups reported on differed from those proposed. The problem was that Irish Aid does not appear to have a sufficiently robust system for tracking such changes, and such monitoring becomes more challenging when there is a large number of grant recipients.

3. Irish Aid puts in place clearer guidelines on what it expects NGO reports to contain, and insists on compliance to these guidelines. We understand that the majority of NGOs have an overall understanding of Irish Aid's reporting requirements as these are specified in Irish Aid's funding agreements with NGOs. The problems are: firstly, there is a lack of clarity about the format and length of these reports; and secondly, as these reporting requirements are not strictly enforced and there are no sanctions for agencies whose reports are inadequate, there seems to be no particular incentive for an agency to submit a good or detailed report. The result was an extremely wide variation in the quality and quantity of reports. While some recipients provided excellent and detailed reports, including internal evaluations, others supplied only very general and sometimes inaccurate reports.

Some of the NGOs which took their reporting obligations seriously felt that they got little or no feedback to their reports from Irish Aid, so that there was little incentive for them to put more effort into such reports in the future. One explanation for this lack of feedback may be the overloading of administrative and filing systems caused by having so many grant recipients, and different types of contract.

4. Given the need to scale up quickly in response to 'sudden impact' disasters, the Emergency and Recovery Section should also review its staffing requirements and maintain a short register of experienced consultants with the appropriate geographical and sectoral expertise, who can be mobilised at short notice.

5. A serious gap in Irish Aid's procedures is the lack of any requirement for grant recipients to supply either an internal or external evaluation of their response to an emergency. While in terms of external audit, Irish Aid is very specific in its demands, including

agreement to access all of a partner's financial records if necessary, it has until now been less rigorous about the need to get an external perspective on the effectiveness of its humanitarian aid.

Reports are necessary but not sufficient, as they only give an agency's own view about the effectiveness and impact of a particular grant, and may not always even refer to those parts of a programme which did not receive Irish Aid support. Some UN agencies (e.g. WFP, UNICEF) and the IFRC have completed thorough evaluations of their tsunami response and made them publicly available. Some of the NGO partners, including Concern and Trócaire, have undertaken highly informative evaluations, but there was no requirement for them to forward them to Irish Aid.

We believe that with the increasing amounts of funding going to humanitarian work, **Irish Aid should, in addition to asking for reports on individual projects, also request external evaluations of the overall programmes to which it is contributing.** The key point is that most experienced humanitarian actors are now undertaking such evaluations, either on a country or thematic basis, as a matter of course, and some are co-operating in joint evaluations, whether in the DEC or the Emergency Capacity Building Project (ECB).¹⁵

These programme evaluations would greatly enhance Irish Aid's understanding of the performance of its partners, and could form the basis for a useful dialogue with the implementing agencies once an emergency operation is finished. This dialogue could enable Irish Aid to build up a clearer picture of the key strengths of different agencies (for instance whether their competencies lie in immediate relief, or longer-term recovery activities), and the extent to which these strengths match up with Irish Aid's own strategic priorities.

¹⁵ The ECB is an inter-agency initiative aimed at building improved capacity in humanitarian response. Its members include Oxfam, Care, and World Vision.

6. Irish Aid should, therefore, consider making all grants of €300,000 and above conditional on such an overall and external programme evaluation being undertaken and submitted. The easiest way of implementing this recommendation would be for Irish Aid, as part of its normal funding agreements, to require grant recipients to budget for an outside evaluation at the time of preparing the initial proposal and budget. This amount would only be released once the recipient agency commissioned the evaluation. In some cases, there could be both significant cost savings and enhanced lesson learning if a joint rather than an agency-specific evaluation is undertaken.

Irish Aid should, with respect to its funding of NGOs, review the feasibility and desirability of 'contracting out' responsibility for assessing applications, disbursing funds, monitoring, and reporting on any future large scale emergency to an independent third party. We do not at this point consider it so feasible for Irish Aid to contract out its funding of UN Agencies, as these grants tend to involve lower transaction costs than its funding of NGOs. In addition, Irish Aid has long-term relationships (or partnerships) with a number of agencies, and it might not be feasible to delegate funding decisions for these agencies to an intermediary. At this point, we would emphasise that this is an idea to be investigated rather than a strong recommendation.

Restoring access to clean water: A Goal supported work team clearing tsunami debris from a well in Ampara District, Sri Lanka.

Photo: Anne Holmes





Section Two

Review of the Performance of Agencies Funded by Irish Aid

The focus of Section Two is the performance of the agencies which received funding from Irish Aid. It draws on the TEC studies, and a variety of agency reports, internal and external evaluations. We first sketch out some key features of the operating context in the four countries covered, and explain how these contextual factors impacted on the performance of all agencies.

2.1 The Operating Context

2.1.1 Country Specific Observations

In **India**, the damage, though large by normal standards, was relatively less than in the other countries. The tsunami struck an area where there were many competent local NGOs and a strong State Government, which maintained a firm control of the relief and recovery operation. This was not always an advantage for the tsunami survivors: for instance, the Government of Tamil Nadu insisted on designing temporary shelters with corrugated iron roofs which did not meet Sphere minimum standards and became intolerably hot. NGOs, which already had Indian staff, and local partners (eg, Hope Foundation, Goal, Oxfam and Christian Aid) were able to respond promptly.

Thailand received much initial publicity due to the deaths of at least 1,953 foreign tourists out of a total death toll of 8,212 Thai nationals, Burmese migrants, and tourists. However the relief and reconstruction operation was well within the response capacity of the Thai State. Irish Aid initially limited its help to a total of €500,000. This later increased to €770,000, including a Micro-Projects fund of €55,400 administered by the Irish Embassy in Kuala Lumpur.

As regards the two worst effected countries, **Sri Lanka** has through its long years of civil conflict, developed a relatively tightly controlled system of government, which is well prepared to respond to major challenges and gives a prominent role to the

Ministry of Defence. The tsunami struck several areas with different socio-economic and political contexts: the tourist areas in the south, the poorer government-controlled coastal area in the east, and the Tamil-controlled northeast coast.

Initially, it was harder for the Government of **Indonesia** to develop a coherent response in Aceh, given the scale of destruction there, the distance between Banda Aceh and Jakarta, lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of different government agencies, and the long-running separatist war in the Province.

According to the TEC Needs Assessment Report, the initial response was based much more on comprehensive media coverage rather than expert assessments. One principle of GHD is that donors should '*allocate humanitarian funding in proportion to needs and on the basis of needs assessments*'.¹⁶ This was difficult to ensure in the tsunami. While agencies' own internal (and unpublished) assessments may have been used, the formal inter-agency humanitarian assessments were produced too slowly, and the initial response was driven not by these formal assessments but by the huge amounts of funding that were being pledged.

In spite of these difficulties, the overall relief effort was remarkably successful in both Sri Lanka and Aceh. There was no 'second wave of deaths' despite the destruction of the government health structure in Aceh and some initially alarmist predictions by the World Health Organisation (WHO), and there was unprecedented co-operation between the military of different nations in the first few days after the disaster. But in both countries, there was already a hint of some of the problems to come – too many humanitarian actors, too little co-ordination (with an uncertain start by OCHA) and an energetic but confused initial response from the governments of both countries.

¹⁶ GHD *Principles & Good Practice of Humanitarian Donorship* (2003)

2.1.2 Co-ordination

The co-ordination problems, which are highlighted in most of the TEC studies¹⁷, were observable at many different levels. It is clear from the different evaluations (eg, the IFRC, Caritas Sri Lanka) that it was challenging for the many different international networks even to co-ordinate their own members effectively: thus, the IFRC had difficulties trying to organise and direct the various national Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies that wanted to start work in Sri Lanka. Many of these had no previous experience of the country, and little or no experience of how to respond appropriately to such a disaster. Next, there needed to be strong co-ordination between local NGOs, international NGOs, the IFRC, the UN and the many different Government agencies; and this co-ordination needed to work in a manner that effectively linked the response in the central, provincial, district, and local levels.

Though the UN was expected to take a lead role in co-ordination, it was hampered by a lack of strong and consistent leadership and conflicts of interest within the UN agencies (between their sectoral co-ordination responsibilities and their own operational programmes). The pressures for all agencies were made more acute by the initial intensive media coverage and strong pressures for information and news stories from regional and head offices.

The generous funding for the tsunami also reduced incentives for co-ordination, and the pressures for rapid disbursement from head offices also created a strong, but not universal, tendency in most agencies to give greater importance to upwards accountability (to their donors) rather than downwards accountability (to beneficiaries and their local communities). This was an issue raised in several of the TEC reports and frequently emphasised by Irish Aid's Technical Advisor as in the example below.

'Practical applications of downward accountability measures by the NGOs during the relief phase seem to have been extremely limited. Those organisations with a pre-existing presence in the affected area, and which remain engaged in the recovery processes, demonstrated a commitment to employing community consultative processes which would have gone some way towards addressing the needs of downward accountability. Due to the newness of many organisations to the area and the pressure they were under to be seen to be providing relief, stakeholder consultation and information sharing was frequently less than is usually considered acceptable in the relief context. Even straightforward and visible accountability measures, such as signboards detailing project specifics, were not employed by any of the Irish-Aid supported agencies.'

(From Irish Aid internal monitoring report on tsunami response in India – June 2005)

2.1.3 Conflict

Conflict was another key contextual issue. In Aceh, the potential threat from conflict has receded with the signing of the peace agreement between the Aceh Independence Movement and the Government of Indonesia in August 2005. There is still, however, a need for all agencies involved in the reconstruction process to understand the historical political sensitivities in Aceh, and to appreciate that what may be perceived as excessive amounts of aid to the coastal areas may cause tensions with inland areas unaffected by the tsunami, but most affected by the long-running civil war.

In Sri Lanka, the trend has been the other way with the breakdown of the Norwegian-backed cease-fire between the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) and the Tamil Tigers, and the recent

¹⁷ See TEC Study on Co-ordination (2005)

resumption of violence¹⁸. This has had a direct impact on the Irish Aid Programme: in June 2005, Irish Aid allocated €1million for a World Bank administered Multi-Donor Trust Fund in Sri Lanka which had proposed a mechanism, known as the Post-Tsunami Operations Management Structure (P-TOMS), to distribute the large sums available for reconstruction between the GOSL and the Tamils. This mechanism tried to include a peace building dimension, but it was challenged in court, and subsequently scrapped. As a result, it has been impossible to establish a Multi-Donor Fund (MDF).

2.2 Relevance and quality of the response of agencies funded

This section reviews the relevance and quality of the Irish response against the criteria proposed by the DAC of the OECD: efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and connectedness, cross-cutting issues (gender, HIV/AIDS, conflict, the environment) and impact.

2.2.1 Efficiency¹⁹

The efficiency of Irish Aid was examined in Section 1.7. At the level of implementing agencies, this review found little evidence on the issue of efficiency. There was a huge number of 'outputs', ranging from relief items through to housing, public infrastructure and cash for work programmes. But, as noted in the TEC reports, there is a shortage of agency-specific information about what exactly was achieved with what resources. The media had a negative impact on efficiency, especially later in 2005 when agencies feared being criticized for not rebuilding communities more quickly despite the huge funding they had received. This meant there was a pressure for speed rather than cost-effectiveness.

¹⁸ The recent killings of 15 local staff of the agency Action Against Hunger in August 2006 suggest that aid workers may now be targeted by both sides in the conflict.

¹⁹ See definition in 1.3.2 above

Also, with so much funding available, there was little incentive for managers to find the lowest cost way of achieving results, and the competition between agencies to engage in rapid reconstruction led to rapid inflation in the cost of building materials and labour. In Sri Lanka, the costs of house construction almost doubled after the tsunami, and an additional problem, particularly in Indonesia with its notorious problems of illegal logging, has been the difficulty of sourcing legal and/or sustainably produced timber for building. In some cases, this has had to be imported from Australia.

Even so, the reports from several NGOs show some awareness of efficiency issues and the need to control costs, with the smaller NGOs tending to be better at reporting this level of detail than the larger Irish International NGOs.

A key issue for efficiency is the many layers through which funding passes. In the case of the UN agencies, for example, funds go first to HQ, and are then passed to the countries concerned via head and regional offices. Even when they reach the country, they may be sent first to a local partner or other subcontractor before they reach the final beneficiary. These many layers all absorb a percentage of the available funding. Some NGOs also sent funds to an affiliate or another international agency with which they were associated in the tsunami areas, which in turn passed the funding on to a third implementing agency.²⁰

There is a need for greater transparency about the financial implications of passing funding through these different agencies and, in particular, on whether or not the intermediary agencies retain a proportion of the funds to cover their administrative costs. The overall picture is mixed, with some transparent relationships, but Irish Aid has also faced significant problems in terms of the quality and frequency of reporting of some of the large International NGOs.

²⁰ For Aceh, Trócaire sent funding to Jesuit Relief Services and to Cordaid

The reconstruction of settlements and public infrastructure after a disaster as devastating as the tsunami would be most efficiently co-ordinated through a single, pooled fund under government control. From the perspective of a relatively small bilateral donor like Ireland, the Multi-Donor Fund (MDF) in Indonesia co-ordinated by the Badan Rekonstruksi dan Rehabilitasi (BRR - the Government's Reconstruction Agency) and the World Bank, to which Ireland gave €1 million, appears to be an efficient mechanism for channelling funding to the reconstruction process.²¹ An important feature of this kind of pooled fund is its low administration costs (currently below 2%) compared to trust funds managed by UN agencies, where such costs range from 5% to 12%.

By July 2006, the MDF had received pledges of \$547 million, of which \$392 million had been allocated to projects. The MDF is currently implementing projects worth \$432 million jointly with BRR, with the recovery of communities and transport as its major priorities.²² As noted by Irish Aid's Technical Adviser in a report of July 2005, *'by contributing to this mechanism, Ireland is ensuring a longer-term commitment to the reconstruction process and indicating its support for the central role of the state of Indonesia'*. We review the effectiveness of the MDF below.

In terms of the overall management of operations, all the major agencies faced very similar challenges due to the vast geographical spread of the disaster. While most UN agencies and International NGOs have been delegating authority to country and regional offices in recent years, an efficient response requires strong central co-ordination from the start. However, the TEC Co-ordination Study found that most HQs, especially of UN agencies, put excessive information demands on field staff, leaving them little time to make strong external linkages with government structures and other agencies. Some UN agencies also have internal approval procedures

that are too cumbersome for emergencies, and operating these procedures takes up too much time both of UN staff and that of their partner agencies.

Human resources proved a critical constraint issue for all agencies. It was not difficult for them to find staff to go for the first month of the relief operation, but it became very hard for them to retain staff for the full duration of the relief phase and for the transition to recovery operations. The different evaluations show that almost all agencies had to cope with an extraordinarily high turnover of staff at least for the first six months. One International NGO reported that, in the first five months in Aceh, it employed four country directors. This turnover not only had high costs (e.g., air fares) but also a strong impact on the effectiveness of many operations since it takes time for international staff to gain a good understanding of the local context and build up strong relations with local colleagues, let alone with communities, local government and other agencies. Initially, far too much time of international and local staff went into receiving visiting delegations. Also unrealistic, media-driven expectations about the pace of reconstruction put further pressure on staff.

There was also a strong competition for local staff, especially in Aceh. This resulted in higher local salaries, and meant senior staff spent disproportionate amounts of time on recruitment. We also found a very rapid turnover of staff in the Irish offices of some of the International NGOs, which made it difficult to obtain informed perspectives on their own and Irish Aid's performance.

Another variable influencing efficiency is the ability of an agency to procure relief items locally, rather than relying on imported goods. The Red Cross evaluation found that the *International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC)* imported too much and could have made more use of local procurement. It also notes the initial chaos caused by some less experienced National Societies sending inappropriate relief material, including warm

²¹ The fund is now called the Multi-Donor Fund (MDF)

²² Source: www.MDFans.org/documents/071406_2ndreport_0407.pdf

clothing. But it also notes that the IFRC quickly recognised these problems and was able to improve its internal co-ordination in the recovery phase.

In summary, the evidence suggests that despite these constraints, recipients of Irish Aid were conscious of the need to make the most efficient use of the human and financial resources at their disposal. The next section will assess whether these same resources were used effectively.

2.2.2 Effectiveness

Effectiveness measures the extent to which an activity achieves its purpose... Implicit within the criterion of effectiveness is timeliness

As Figure 2 on page 26 shows, Irish Aid was divided almost equally between relief and rehabilitation. This brief review of effectiveness will, therefore, look at both phases of the operation.

As noted above, and in other documents including the Special Envoy's reports, overall the relief phase was effective in treating the injured and assisting survivors with their basic needs. The response was not without its problems, including delays in the distribution of relief goods in the worst affected areas due to problems of access and co-ordination. By the time relief items got through, survivors had often found their own ways of coping with the tragedy and were already receiving food, clothes and temporary shelter from friends, neighbours, and the local administration.

In this fast changing situation, agency effectiveness was much enhanced by the fact that Irish Aid was flexible and did not insist on recipients using its funds precisely for the budget heads originally proposed. Thus, GOAL in Sri Lanka found an initial shortage of non-food items and redirected Irish Aid funds to meet this need.

Irish Aid displayed similar flexibility in the case

of its donation of €500,000 to the *International Committee for the Red Cross* (ICRC) in Burma. The damage to the Burmese coastline from the tsunami was much less significant than in other countries in the Region, but it is notoriously difficult for agencies to have access to most parts of Burma, and at the time of the grant, there was concern that the Burmese Government might be concealing the extent of the damage. Irish Aid, therefore, agreed to release early funding to allow for a quick response to needs as they became clear. Built into the decision was the agreement that any monies determined to be surplus to the eventually determined tsunami related needs could be used to cover ICRC's on-going humanitarian programme costs in Burma. While Irish Aid approved and released funds in a timely fashion, and it has a long established relationship with the ICRC, it would have been better if the ICRC had shared with Irish Aid its assessment of the tsunami damage in Burma sooner and then made a specific request to transfer the entire amount to their long-term humanitarian programme in the same country.²³

Some distinctive relief responses included the decision by one Irish agency to supply water and sanitation in the controversial temporary shelters built by the authorities in Aceh. Initially, given the background of civil war in Aceh, it was feared that these shelters, locally known as 'barraks', would be used as a way of controlling the population. In the end, this work in these shelters was seen as very helpful by OCHA. Oxfam had a large-scale water and sanitation programme in Aceh with no less than 58 engineers employed. These interventions in water and sanitation were vital in helping reduce the spread of infection, especially since this was a sector in which UN agencies did not perform strongly.²⁴

This emergency was notable for an increased use of Cash-for-Work (CFW) by Irish-funded agencies. As the example below indicates, at their best these activities were not only useful in themselves, but

²³ ICRC will submit a full report on how this funding was used at the end of 2006.

²⁴ See UNICEF Evaluation Synthesis.

also had a positive psychological impact. In Sri Lanka, one Irish NGO used CFW to organise communities to clear debris, dead bodies and reconstruct bunds. A lesson documented by Mercy Corps is that CFW works better when people have a regular supply of food aid (as they did in Aceh): they argue it should be seen as complementary to food aid rather than a substitute for it, and the agency must be able to monitor the exact use that people make of the cash. And agencies embarking on CFW need to make a full analysis of what other work opportunities people have in the area.

The initial work on clearing the tsunami debris from a number of schools in Banda Aceh, implemented through Cash-For-Work, was particularly appropriate and effective in relation to the needs at the time, not only in terms of its material outputs and cash injection, but also as a positive contribution to the psycho-social status of the tsunami survivors. This work contributed directly to the Government of Indonesia being able to reopen schools in the affected area on 26th January 2006, just one month after the tsunami. The wider impact of this was to provide a tangible contribution to an early return to normality for the children of the area.

Source: Concern Evaluation

We recommend that **Irish Aid should facilitate NGOs to make selective use of Cash For Work in future emergencies**, bearing in mind the dangers of inflating local wage rates, and drawing on the lessons documented by Mercy Corps and the Humanitarian Policy Group of the Overseas Development Institute, London.²⁵

However, the **recovery phase** has been problematic for all agencies. Though there have been slightly different problems in Sri Lanka, Aceh and India, there are also some common factors which have tended to reduce effectiveness, many of which were documented in the

Technical Advisor's reports. From the perspective of the Review Team these include the following:

- A general failure both by NGOs and UN agencies to understand the time that reconstruction would take, especially in Aceh. While the authorities in both Aceh and India gave initial priority to building temporary shelters, their quality was often poor. Much time was lost in planning for permanent housing, rather than working with survivors on the construction of temporary shelters near their original homes. This meant that people remained in tents for longer than necessary.
- There is arguably some bias in the whole humanitarian sector against shelter, in that while there are strong UN agencies and NGOs working in other sectors, there is no single agency with a strong track record on shelter (UN Habitat has been criticised in Aceh for demanding too elaborate a community planning process before it would start construction²⁶). Though shelter was an early and clearly expressed priority of tsunami survivors, it was some time before this priority was reflected in agencies' plans.²⁷
- All agencies raised far more funds than they expected, but (as already noted) early assessments tended to over-emphasise the amount of money that would be needed to meet relief needs. This left many agencies with a large and potentially embarrassing surplus of funds.
- These high levels of funding meant that agencies had no alternative but to go into areas like permanent housing, in which most of them had little previous expertise. In Sri Lanka, no less than 258 different organisations committed themselves to building permanent houses, but by the end of 2005, due to uncertainties over the buffer zone, while most interim shelter was complete, few permanent houses had been completed. By April 2006, about 6% of the 98,000 houses required had been built.

²⁶ UNDP Aceh MTR

²⁷ See TEC Report: *Links between Relief, Rehabilitation, & Development in the Tsunami Response*, p.48.

²⁵ See [www.odi.org.uk](http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg/Cash_vouchers_tsunami.html) give this link instead: http://www.odi.org.uk/hpg/Cash_vouchers_tsunami.html

In fact, only a very small proportion of Irish Aid's contribution has been earmarked for housing, although there may be some under-reporting due to incomplete reporting by some agencies. Irish Aid records suggest that €849,000 (4.2% of the total) was allocated to housing through four NGOs.²⁸

A further issue constraining effectiveness has been the **lack of integration of interventions**. As argued in UN Development Programme (UNDP)'s evaluation:

*"In order to facilitate the transition from relief to recovery, livelihoods' rehabilitation, income generating activities, and the reconstruction of shelter need to be coordinated to motivate people to return to their villages. Locating temporary shelter for Internally Displaced Persons within their villages of origin or close to their main productive assets would have accelerated their return to pre-tsunami livelihoods. For example, in Siglie, Pidie District, many people whose tambaks (temporary shelters) have already been rehabilitated are still living... some distance from their villages"*²⁹

In addition to shelter, **livelihoods** has been a problematic sector, with too much expenditure on new fishing boats with too little analysis of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of this kind of investment. While this has not been a major area for Irish Aid funding, Concern, Oxfam, World Vision and UNDP have been working on livelihoods. The most common problems reported relate to starting interventions without proper analysis and feasibility studies, and difficulties of recruiting suitably qualified staff, both local and international.

However, in 'middle income' countries like Sri Lanka and Indonesia, it is questionable whether International NGOs or UN agencies, some of them with little previous experience in the areas, are better than 'local capital' at generating sustainable employment. A finding of this review is that the most promising mechanism for recovery, at least in

²⁸ Habitat for Humanity, Hope Foundation, Plan, and the Human Development Foundation, Thailand.

²⁹ UNDP Aceh Mid-Term Review

Aceh, is likely to be the World Bank/BRR Multi-Donor Fund to which Irish Aid gave €1 million. Its success, after a faltering start, can be attributed to:

- Strong and consistent support for the MDF from the World Bank, BRR and the top levels of the Indonesian Government;
- BRR, not donors, lead decision-making;
- Sufficient donor support to provide 'critical mass';
- An early commitment to transparency and fighting corruption.

These factors have enabled the MDF to resolve crucial issues, including involving the President to ensure a more rapid release of 'on-budget' funding through the Central Ministry of Finance. While there are still challenges ahead, and a final judgement can only be made after a full external evaluation, the MDF does appear at present to be an effective funding mechanism. This raises the question of whether, once initial relief needs had been met in Aceh, Irish Aid should have made an even greater contribution to the Trust Fund. After many major disasters, there is a danger that reconstruction funding becomes fragmented between too many different agencies, and there is thus a strong case for Irish Aid supporting such multilateral mechanisms even more strongly in future

In addition to its relief oriented grants to the UN made through the early appeal mechanism (the Flash Appeal), Irish Aid approved four specific recovery oriented grants for UN agencies on the basis of needs identified during field missions:

- Food and Agriculture Organisation to assist agricultural recovery in Sri Lanka;
- The WHO to improve mental health services in Sri Lanka;
- UNDP's Capacity Building Programme in Aceh;
- The International Labour Organisation's (ILO) Women's Livelihood Programme in Aceh.

To date, only UNDP's work has been independently evaluated, although both the ILO grants, focussing on skills training for women and the support for WHO on mental health, appear to be valuable inputs in two sectors relatively neglected by other donors. WHO in Sri Lanka was able to recruit, train and deploy 500 mental health workers and is now trying to get the Government of Sri Lanka to take them on permanently. As part of its long-term partnership with these UN agencies, **we recommend that Irish Aid requests an evaluation of these projects.**

Overall, the evidence collected in this review suggests that Irish Aid has been most effective when meeting needs or resolving problems not covered effectively by other donors. We note that it has been a deliberate policy, particularly championed by the Technical Advisor, to identify niche or gap areas where a small donor like Irish Aid can have an important impact. As well as the ILO and WHO programmes, Irish Aid gave €300,000 to support an International NGO to run legal advice and training programmes, especially around land tenure, redistribution and conflict issues in Aceh. Compared to other grants, where Irish Aid contribution was a tiny proportion of the total, this was a significant contribution amounting to 14% of the total budget. Another good example of a niche project was the decision to fund the psychological counselling of children in Sri Lanka through another International NGO.

The independent evaluation of UNDP's programme in Aceh concludes that there was too much emphasis on planning and 'capacity building' (which was not always clearly defined) when initially the real need was for direct support for the Provincial Government which had been so badly devastated by the tsunami. While Irish Aid funded UNDP because it was particularly interested in helping the Provincial Government's capacity, the programme has gone off in too many different directions, and pursued other objectives like access to justice and election monitoring. Also far too much effort has gone into producing planning guidelines and sophisticated databases, neither of

which have so far been found to be especially useful.

The overall conclusion on effectiveness is that the agencies' operations in the relief phase were highly effective. It has, though, been more difficult to maintain the same level of effectiveness into the recovery phase due to a combination of problems, including some internal constraints (e.g., lack of skilled staff, agencies taking on projects in sectors in which they had too little experience) and some strong external constraints – especially the well documented problems of co-ordination and political uncertainty. Through 2005 and the first nine months of 2006, these uncertainties tended to decrease in Aceh but increased in Sri Lanka. As most agencies are still continuing to work in the tsunami-affected countries, it is too early to make a final judgement on their overall effectiveness.

2.2.3 Sustainability and Connectedness

Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether an activity or an impact is likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn

Since emergency funding is by its nature often perceived to be limited in time, the concept of 'connectedness' is often more relevant. This has been defined as *ensuring that emergency activities are carried out in a context which takes longer term and interconnected problems into account.*³⁰ As this is a broad topic, this section will focus on only two key issues in relation to connectedness - conflict and reducing the risk from future disasters.

Firstly, as regards **conflict**, the impacts of the tsunami were most severe in two areas: Aceh in Indonesia and in the north and east of Sri Lanka, with long histories of internal conflict. In Sri Lanka, some of the agencies which had been working on both sides of the conflict for many years, like the Trócaire partner Caritas Sri Lanka (SEDEC), had

³⁰ Both definitions quoted in UNICEF Evaluation Synthesis p.22

an instinctive understanding of the need to be even-handed in the distribution of relief between the government controlled areas of the south and the Tamil areas in the north and east. It was much harder for those NGOs, which only came into the country after the tsunami, to be aware of all the tensions and potential dangers; working in the south was far easier than in the Tamil areas where access was often difficult and the Tamil Relief Organisation maintained tight control on agency activities. Even so, there are no examples of individual agencies being insensitive to the conflict, and as yet no strong evidence that the relief and recovery work since the tsunami exacerbated the breakdown in the Sri Lankan peace process.

Most International NGOs working in Sri Lanka have had to face up to the problem that many of those affected by the tsunami or *'touched by the water'* (as it was locally described) were not necessarily the poorest. Especially in the north and east, the many people displaced several times by the civil war have never received anything approaching the scale of assistance offered to tsunami victims. At least during the Advisor's visits, Irish Aid was able to encourage agencies it was funding to take a more flexible approach. **This flexible approach has been much appreciated by both UN agencies and NGOs and should be maintained in future emergency responses.**

There is, though, evidence that agencies implementing recovery programmes have been very focused on service delivery and immediate tasks, and have not always paid sufficient attention to the wider political context and the threat this might pose to their activities.

2.2.4 Risk Reduction

Risk reduction means reducing people's vulnerability to future disasters. This means combining 'hardware' (improved housing, planning, social infrastructure and the technical aspects of a tsunami early warning system) with improved 'software' (greater awareness of risks, improved community and local government organisation so that people know what to do once they receive a warning). Given the money raised for the tsunami, there should have been plenty of opportunities in the recovery process for reducing vulnerabilities to future disasters. As regards the 'hardware' side, Irish Aid made a grant of €500,000 to UN Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to enable it to start work on a 'fast-track' tsunami early warning system. Though the system has yet to prove itself, this seems a worthwhile use of Irish Aid's tsunami funds.

In Sri Lanka, the concept of risk reduction lay behind the government's initial decision to declare a 'buffer zone' along the coast in which no reconstruction was allowed. The extent of this zone became a highly contentious issue which delayed reconstruction work. The concept was finally dropped in October 2005.

The key question for this review is how far agencies funded by Irish Aid have been able to take account of risk reduction issues. In Sri Lanka and Aceh, both the reconstruction sites and the design of housing and schools are set by Government. NGOs should have a comparative advantage in building community awareness about risks, and helping people think through how they would respond to a fire or flood – both of which are greater and more likely risks than further tsunamis. The answer is that more 'task-oriented' agencies which focus on completing a specific reconstruction project and then leaving, are unlikely to have an impact on risk reduction. However, those that have local partner NGOs, like Concern with Sewa Lanka, should have a greater long-term risk reduction impact as the local NGO should remain active after

its international partner withdraws or reduces its involvement.

As regards connectedness more generally, a key question is the extent to which all agencies gave priority to the general effectiveness of the whole recovery effort, as opposed to only ensuring that their particular projects achieved their immediate outputs. Indeed, because of the large amount of funding received after the tsunami, the role of many international NGOs has changed, especially in Aceh, in that they are working more like private contractors trying to complete project outputs within a limited time span (this seems to be particularly the case in the shelter or house building projects), rather than promoting wider developmental objectives; for example, by increasing participation and building the capacity of civil society.

A lesson for Irish Aid is that while it should continue to support International NGOs for relief purposes, it should be hesitant about making grants that encourage the recipients to become contractors in sectors in which they have no particular expertise. In its assessment of proposals for the recovery phase in particular, it should check both the previous expertise of the agency in the proposed area of investment, and also assess which other agencies are working in the same sector, as there may be alternative and sometimes more efficient mechanisms available to achieve the same results. In the case of Aceh, the MDF offered an alternative mechanism by which Irish Aid could achieve its recovery objectives.

2.2.5 Cross-cutting issues (Environment, Gender and HIV/ AIDS)

As regards **environmental** issues, the major concern has been the source of the wood used for reconstruction, especially in Aceh. The environmental expertise amongst Irish funded agencies is mixed, with Mercy Corps taking the greatest interest in this issue. All agencies involved in construction face a dilemma between trying to complete projects quickly and at a reasonable cost, and the need to source timber from sustainable/legal sources (these sources are scarce in south-east Asia and hard to verify). In general, agencies still see environmental issues in rather narrow terms, and much more could be done by agencies engaged in recovery programmes to build greater awareness of the environmental issues relevant to their sector. We found little discussion of environmental issues in agency evaluations or reports.

Gender has also been relatively neglected by many agencies. The tsunami killed far more women than men, but there seem to be very few examples of programmes aimed at assisting the very large number of bereaved fathers (though crèches and other child caring services run by Irish Aid-funded agencies have obviously been very helpful). What is still missing in many assessments is any degree of gender analysis, or programmes that address the very different needs of, for instance, adolescent boys as compared with adolescent girls. In Aceh in particular, the idea of 'building back better' needs to apply as much to gender relations as it does to physical reconstruction, but there have been few agencies willing to take up these issues.

As regards **HIV/AIDS**, the tsunami caused a high degree of social disruption, and increased the movement of people both out of and into the affected areas. One would expect this increased movement to have implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, there seems to be little discussion of this issue either from UN agencies or NGOs, even though the actions of these agencies

(for instance, bringing in construction or other staff from other areas) could have the indirect affect of increasing the spread of HIV/AIDS. We recommend that Irish Aid continue to advocate that agencies receiving its funding take a greater account of HIV/AIDS, even in countries where the incidence of the pandemic is relatively low.

2.2.6 Impact

'The wider effects of a project (social, political, environmental, and institutional)'

This section of the review will briefly examine the overall effects of the Irish Aid supported interventions, positive and negative, intended and unintended, long-term and short-term.

Impact needs to be reviewed at the two levels of analysis already used in this review:

- the particular impact of, or value added, by Irish Aid's funding;
- the impact of the programmes themselves.

In terms of the **value added by Irish Aid**, we find this was highest when Irish Aid was making a significant contribution to a particular project that might not have proceeded without this assistance. This kind of 'higher impact' project was usually identified during one of the Technical Advisor's missions, and was linked to some of the major longer-term problems of the recovery process. In addition to the UN projects in mental health and women's employment mentioned above, Irish Aid also supported VSO in its efforts to develop the capacity of local NGOs and local government agencies in Sri Lanka. This input complemented the work of agencies like Concern, which emphasised the need to raise the capacity of its local partner Sewa Lanka, and it also offset the negative impact that the tsunami relief effort may have had on the long-term capacity of local NGOs, especially those not 'adopted' by International NGOs.

On the other hand, we conclude that Irish Aid's

impact was far less when it made a relatively small contribution to the very large and well-funded programmes of the major International NGOs. While it was understandable that major International NGOs should have been included in the initial allocation of €2 million, by the time of the second round of funding on 17th January, Irish Aid must have been aware of the extraordinary success of the overall tsunami fundraising effort. Irish Aid's grants to the major International NGOs were a tiny fraction of the total amounts they raised globally. We accept, however, that these agencies tended to spend Irish Aid money well, and all these agencies have now submitted detailed reports.

An argument in favour of the broad distribution of funds was that Irish Aid needed to some extent to follow the current of public opinion, and to support some of the agencies receiving the most support from the Irish public. One NGO view was that there has been a *'political element that complicated matters when the level of public interest pushed the government into allocating additional funds.'* Our research shows that while there was a wide variation in the significance of Irish Aid funding for the NGOs, some of the best known International NGOs did not raise large amounts from the Irish public. By contrast, four agencies (Red Cross, Trócaire, GOAL and Concern) raised 90% of all the NGO funding raised from private sources. **We conclude that the need to appear 'even handed' in distributing funds was a greater motivating factor than strategic considerations regarding impact.**

Many of the **programme impacts**, as well as some of the key external factors influencing impact, are covered in earlier sections of this review. In assessing impact, one needs to look at both the positive and negative, as well as direct and indirect, impacts. Some of the impacts we have identified are listed in Table 6.

Table 6. Some positive and negative programmatic impacts

Positive impacts	Negative impacts
Immediate relief needs promptly met.	High levels of initial confusion due to large number of agencies and individuals wanting to assist.
With abundant funding, longer term needs for shelter and employment were also met, albeit with some delays.	Co-ordination problems at all levels.
Local NGOs were strengthened when Irish Aid funds were channelled through them.	Local capacity and key role of local authorities not sufficiently acknowledged by most international agencies.
Irish Aid money was able to target important gaps, eg, children's mental health protection (Sri Lanka) and legal issues surrounding land conflict, tenure and redistribution (Indonesia).	Some relief (eg, food aid) continued for longer than needed.

As regards indirect impacts, a general concern of the whole humanitarian sector is what have been, and continue to be, the impacts of the tsunami programmes on agencies' abilities to respond to serious humanitarian challenges elsewhere in the world? Even though agencies are using earmarked funds for the tsunami work, these programmes still demand considerable inputs of management time, both from Head Office staff (including those in Irish Aid) and field staff at all levels. These constraints are likely to ease as more nationals are trained to fill jobs, but recent reports suggest continuing problems in some agencies with recruiting and retaining suitably experienced senior management staff.

A major issue for some of the UN agencies is the indication that tsunami food aid has continued for far too long in these food surplus countries. Also, beyond a narrow coastal strip, the agricultural sector was hardly touched by the tsunami. **We recommend that Irish Aid raises this as part of its long term dialogue with WFP** as there are other related issues about how long WFP should maintain operations in food surplus, middle income countries when it is struggling to raise funding for critical relief operations like Darfur.

Cooperative fish farm, near Meulaboh, Indonesia - a successful income generating project undertaken with tsunami affected communities by Mercy Corps. Photo: Anne Holmes



Section Three

Conclusions, Lessons, and Recommendations

3.1 Conclusions

The tsunami was an exceptional event unlikely to be repeated on the same scale for many years to come. The TEC studies have shown how it exposed generic weaknesses in the whole humanitarian response system. Similarly, this review reveals that, while Irish Aid made a prompt and appropriate response, the tsunami has revealed areas where Irish Aid can improve its efficiency, effectiveness and 'value-added'.

This report has argued that, as a relatively small donor, Irish Aid needs to take a more careful look at the concept of the *value added* of its contributions. This is important since the allocation of the more than €18 million from Irish Aid to 34 different agencies suggests an implicit or explicit pressure to fund almost all UN agencies and reputable NGOs with Irish links. While the number of UN agencies is relatively stable, the number of Irish NGOs (both 'home-grown' and those with an Irish base) has increased rapidly in recent years, and this trend seems likely to continue. Thus, without corrective action, in any similar emergency in the future, there is a danger that Irish Aid will become fragmented between a large number of recipient agencies.

This report has shown that while the extent of media interest in the tsunami was unusual, the extent of public interest generated put Irish Aid under considerable pressure. Though the programme has been competently monitored, and we have found no cases of any funds being wasted, the large number of grant recipients has placed administrative strains on Irish Aid.

3.2 Principles, Standards and Indicators

Irish Aid's Tsunami Response was guided by the principles and standards of the *Good Humanitarian Donorship* initiative endorsed in 2003 by 17 major donors, including Ireland. The response was also guided by the Sphere Standards (1997) and the associated indicators of the Sphere Project³¹. These principles, standards and indicators continue to be fully relevant for guiding Irish Aid's response to humanitarian emergencies and adequately serve as measures for current and future performance.

3.3 Lessons learnt

3.3.1. There has been significant change in the approaches to humanitarian aid, with many more actors and much greater sums of money becoming available, especially in the cases of the more highly publicised and 'dramatic' disasters. The tsunami experience revealed the power of the international media to increasingly determine both the size of the public's response and the resulting level of domestic pressure on Irish Aid. By contrast, it seems harder than ever to generate strong public and media interest in continuing 'complex emergencies' in many parts of the world, especially Africa. This review, therefore, strongly supports the second recommendation in the Special Envoy's final report that the Irish Government should:

'Engage the public, the media, and the formal humanitarian community in an effort to work towards much greater co-ordination for future crises'

³¹ The Sphere Project is a multi-donor initiative involving international and national NGOs, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, United Nations agencies, donor agencies, host governments, and representatives from affected populations. The aim of the Sphere Project is to improve the quality of assistance to people affected by disaster and improve the accountability of states and humanitarian agencies to their constituents, donors and the affected populations.

Much of this debate will of course have to take place at the international level, but there is scope for a debate within Ireland about how Irish Aid, the NGOs, the public and the media can work together to restore a greater sense of 'proportionality' in the response to disasters. There is a need for Irish Aid to explain more clearly, both between and immediately after major disasters, why it needs to take a more strategic approach in its response.

3.3.2. As in the case of the Tsunami Response, the provision of funding to both a large number and a broad range of organisations needs to be refined. Irish Aid should not feel a sense of obligation to fund almost every International NGO with an Irish base. With the UN and IFRC, it makes sense for Irish Aid to continue to make funding decisions consistent with the Government's long-term partnerships with these agencies, but even here greater selectivity may be required with some emergencies. As proposed by the Special Envoy, it makes sense for Ireland, as a relatively small donor country, to channel funding through reliable multilateral mechanisms like the MDF in Aceh, where these are available.³² **We recommend that, in any similar emergency in the future, Irish Aid should give priority to supporting similar multilateral mechanisms.**

It is clear from the TEC studies that there is a need for a wider understanding among donor governments, private donors and the agencies themselves about the 'added value' of different agencies in response to a disaster. Each agency claims in its resource mobilisation efforts that it has a unique role and that lives will be lost unless money is provided rapidly. If Irish Aid has no assessment of its own, or no rapid access to the assessments of its key UN, Red Cross, and NGO partners, it is in a weak position to respond to these pressures.

This suggests that **Irish Aid should in future have an even clearer and more carefully**

³² Special Envoy's Final Report – p. 47 - Recommendation 9

nuanced strategy about what should be funded in each phase of an emergency.

With sudden impact disasters, we recommend a greater distinction between the initial round of funding aimed at meeting immediate relief needs, and a second round which should follow a detailed assessment of continuing relief needs, recovery and reconstruction needs, and the likely size of the international response. **This review concludes that Irish Aid needs increased capacity to make this detailed overall assessment and related funding strategy at a much earlier stage than was possible in the case of the tsunami.**

3.3.3. Irish Aid places a lot of emphasis on trust in its established partnerships, and other evaluations of this overall approach have concluded that this is appropriate; some Irish NGOs also emphasise the importance of trust in the relationship with Irish Aid, implying that they should not have to go through all the hoops that are necessary where there is less trust.³³ However, the expansion both in the numbers of agencies applying for assistance, and in the overall amounts available, require that for improved accountability and a level playing field, more appropriately qualified staff, systems and improved procedures are needed. As proposed in Section 2, we recommend that Irish Aid should introduce:

- Standardised contracts with all NGO recipients;
- Clearer proposal and reporting systems;
- Improved tracking systems for proposals and reports;
- Improved systems for addressing technical questions and issues (including a more strategic use of consultants).

³³ see INTRAC 2006: *Evaluation of the Irish Aid Multi-Annual Programme Scheme 2003-05*

3.3.4. As regards project cycle management, Irish Aid needs a clear structure for Monitoring and Evaluation, from 'ex-ante' (appraisal) through to 'ex-post' (evaluation and lesson-learning).

The current system of submitting proposals, receiving approval, reporting and undertaking evaluations, discourages higher levels of accountability and lesson learning – both for the recipient agencies and Irish Aid. We, therefore, recommend that Irish Aid introduces:

- Improved guidelines for proposals and reporting;
- Some consideration of penalties for non-compliance with these guidelines (for instance not being eligible for further funding for a period of time);
- An improved internal filing system with improved systems for logging proposals, reports, and email correspondence;
- A requirement that grant recipients commission external evaluations on all grants of €300,000 and above.

3.3.5. Irish Aid needs an enhanced capacity to address and resolve technical issues in the event of a major emergency.

The single technical consultant recruited after the tsunami was very effective in managing a complex set of relationships. However, a staff of seven or eight people in the Emergency and Recovery Section, three of them new, during most of the tsunami response period, has been insufficient. One indicator of this is the lack of feedback mentioned by most agencies after they submitted their reports to Irish Aid: there is at present insufficient time for staff to read and respond to these reports. Thus, the lack of adequate capacity and the large number of organisations supported made it difficult to follow up all issues which arose.

We, therefore, recommend that Irish Aid should maintain a register of consultants with appropriate geographical and sectoral expertise, who can be mobilised at short notice.

In addition, there is a need for improved technical support in these situations. This should perhaps be a notional proportion of the total value of grants being allocated. Similarly, an appropriate percentage of any grant to an implementing agency should be earmarked for evaluations and lesson learning. Due to popular misconceptions about aid effectiveness and efficiency (e.g., associated with the proportion of aid reaching the 'beneficiaries'), Irish Aid should do more to educate the general public that a minimum level of 'administration cost' is essential for an effective and efficient response. The Review Team is also concerned that a 'management light' approach is not conducive to Good Humanitarian Donorship. Irish Aid's administrative costs, including the Special Envoy's costs amount to €231,984, or only 1.2% of the total expenditure. By any standards, this is a very low ratio for administrative costs. While this might be considered good news for the Irish taxpayer, our conclusion, to which we return below, is that this ratio is in fact too low and that **Irish Aid could have been even more effective in its response to the tsunami with a greater allocation of funds for monitoring and technical support, while still keeping administrative costs to 5% of total programme expenditure.**

3.3.6 Ireland demonstrated a flexible approach to its funding. For example, it allowed implementing agencies to allocate funding to tsunami affected districts so that the wider community would benefit equitably from their support. **This flexible approach has been much appreciated by both UN agencies and NGOs and should be maintained in future emergency responses.**

3.3.7 A major issue for some of the UN

agencies is the indication that tsunami food aid has continued for far too long in these food surplus countries. Also, beyond a narrow coastal strip, the agricultural sector was hardly touched by the tsunami. **We recommend that Irish Aid raises this as part of its long-term dialogue with WFP**, as there are other related issues about how long WFP should maintain operations in food surplus, middle income countries when it is struggling to raise funding for critical relief operations like Darfur.

3.3.8 While Irish Aid should continue to support International NGOs for relief purposes, it should be hesitant about making grants that encourage the recipients to become contractors in sectors in which they have no particular expertise. Ireland's comparative advantage lies in its ability to support innovative and niche-type activities. **We recommend, therefore, that Irish Aid should facilitate NGOs to explore appropriate and innovative approaches in future emergencies such as Cash For Work activities**

Overall, the evidence collected in this review suggests that Irish Aid has been most effective when meeting needs or resolving problems not covered effectively by other donors.

(The main recommendations of this review for the Emergency and Recovery Section are also summarised in Appendix 1).

Appendix 1

Summary of Main Findings, Recommendations and Management Responses

■ **Finding:** Pressure from the public and media for Ireland 'to do more' and to do it 'sooner' led to some inconsistencies in the Irish response. The strategy recommended by the first Technical Mission was sound. Though funding was very considerably channelled through well established organisations with proven track records (See table A2 in Appendix 3), some of the NGOs supported had little experience of responding to a disaster of this magnitude. The impact of Irish Aid could have been even greater if it had followed an even stronger strategy of adding value, targeting the more neglected issues which the interventions, stimulated by the huge public interest, were not adequately addressing. Under this kind of approach there could have been an earlier switch of Irish Aid funding into recovery, with less being used for the brief, and very well funded, relief phase. Within recovery, there was a case for being more selective in the allocation of funds, and perhaps reserving a greater proportion of funding for the multilateral, World Bank co-ordinated, Multi-Donor Fund for Aceh, Indonesia. There is a potential conflict between wanting a strategic and focused programme, and wanting to respond positively to applications from the growing number of Irish-based NGOs

Recommendation: For future emergencies, Irish Aid should consider a more selective approach in which there is a clearer distinction between agencies with real expertise in the relief phase, and those whose proven comparative advantage lies more in the recovery and reconstruction phases. Irish Aid should even more strongly support reconstruction efforts through multilateral mechanisms

Management Response: Irish Aid's Emergency and Recovery Section has embarked on a process of enhanced dialogue with NGO, UN, and Red Cross partner agencies for the purposes of developing greater understanding of relative competencies and strengths of these agencies. This process will result in better and more supportive partnerships, and contribute to more appropriate and strategic funding relationships.

Pursuing this approach with partner agencies is in line with our commitments under the Good Humanitarian Donorship initiative. Similarly, Irish Aid is increasing its engagement with pooled and multi-donor funding mechanisms for major crises such as in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. By increasing our engagement with and support for these mechanisms, Irish Aid is allowing for more needs and capacity-based funding allocations.

■ **Finding:** In the first two months, Irish Aid lacked the staff and systems to cope with the enormous pressures it faced. Irish Aid's administrative costs, including the Special Envoy's costs, amounted to €32,638, or only 1.2% of the total expenditure. By any standards, this is a very low ratio for administrative costs. While this might be considered good news for the Irish taxpayer, Irish Aid could have been even more effective in its response to the tsunami with a greater allocation of funds for monitoring and technical support. Irish Aid needs increased capacity at a much earlier stage than was possible in the case of the tsunami.

Recommendations: Given the need to scale up quickly in response to 'sudden impact' disasters and the demands of monitoring and technical support, the Emergency and Recovery Section should review its staffing requirements, in addition to maintaining a short register of experienced consultants with the appropriate geographical and sectoral expertise, who can be mobilised at short notice.

With respect to its funding of NGOs, Irish Aid should review the feasibility and desirability of 'contracting out' responsibility for assessing applications, disbursing funds, monitoring, and reporting on any future large-scale emergency to an independent third party.

Management Response: The experience of responding to the tsunami has resulted in some valuable lessons learnt within Irish Aid with regard to the structuring of a response to a major emergency. There now exists greater clarity regarding roles and responsibilities, as

well as reporting lines, within the Emergency and Recovery Section. This is reflected both in the Section's business plan and individual role profiles for staff members. Work is on-going to enhance the skills and competencies of the Section's members to engage in rapid humanitarian response, as well as follow-up and monitoring.

Additional expertise is now available, on a draw-down basis, from a number of humanitarian consultants.

In addition, a Rapid Response Initiative has been devised comprising a number of elements aimed at enhancing Irish Aid and partner agencies' capacities to respond rapidly and effectively during a major crisis. This Initiative will allow Irish Aid to draw upon a wider range of actors and agencies, including the Department of Defence and the private sector.

- **Finding:** At present, there appears to be too wide a variety of contract formats being used with different partners.

Recommendation: Irish Aid should review its contract formats and aim for greater standardisation across the board.

Management Response: The Emergency and Recovery Section is actively participating in Irish Aid-wide efforts to standardise formats.

Specifically, within the Emergency and Recovery Section, progress has been made in refining administrative procedures and processes. This has included a reduction in the number of project-specific funding decisions and related contracts, as well as on-going efforts to adopt more user friendly and agency-appropriate funding application formats and processes.

- **Finding:** Due to the changing nature of needs and responses, several agencies changed the specific details of what they had outlined in their original proposals. This is quite normal in a disaster situation. However, Irish Aid does not appear to have a sufficiently robust system for tracking such changes, and monitoring becomes

more challenging when there are a large number of grant recipients

Recommendation: Irish Aid follow-up (or 'tracking') systems need to be reviewed.

Management Response: A Strategic Management Review is being conducted during 2007.

Amongst other things, the review will consider whether or not current coordination structures are sufficiently effective. It is anticipated that this finding will feed into that process.

- **Finding:** There is a lack of clarity about reporting requirements and formats. Reporting requirements are not strictly enforced and there seems to be no particular incentive for an agency to submit a good or detailed report. The result was an extremely wide variation in the quality and quantity of reports.

Recommendation: Irish Aid should put in place clearer guidelines on what it expects partner reports to contain, and insist on compliance to these guidelines.

Management Response: Work is on-going within the Emergency and Recovery Section in relation to the issue of reporting. Under the current Departmental Strategic Plan, a revised humanitarian policy is being developed. This policy will then give rise to revised funding and reporting guidelines for implementing agencies. The experience of the tsunami response, and follow-up, will be reflected in the same.

- **Finding:** A serious gap in Irish Aid's procedures is the lack of any requirement for grant recipients to supply either an internal or external evaluation of their response to an emergency. While in terms of external audit, Irish Aid is very specific in its demands, including agreement to access all of a partner's financial records if necessary, it has until now been less rigorous about the need to get an external perspective on the effectiveness of its humanitarian aid.

Recommendation: Irish Aid should request external evaluations of all programmes to which it is contributing and make all grants of 300,000

and above conditional on such an overall and external programme evaluation being undertaken and submitted.

Management Response: Irish Aid concurs with the principle of this recommendation: it is consistent with the commitments of Irish Aid to evaluation and financial accountability. This commitment is reflected across the entirety of the Irish Aid Programme, and work is led by Irish Aid's Evaluation and Audit Unit. At Section level, the Emergency and Recovery Section has increasingly encouraged and funded implementing agencies to conduct evaluations and submit findings. The emphasis upon accountability will be reflected in the forthcoming Humanitarian Policy and related funding and reporting guidelines.

- **Finding:** The Tsunami caused a high degree of social disruption, and increased the movement of people both out of and into the affected areas. One would expect this increased movement to have implications for the spread of HIV/AIDS. However, there seems to be little discussion of this issue either from UN agencies or NGOs, even though the actions of these agencies could have the indirect affect of increasing the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Recommendation: Irish Aid should continue to advocate that agencies receiving its funding take a greater account of HIV/AIDS related issues, even in countries where the incidence of the pandemic is relatively low.

Management Response: Irish Aid concurs with this recommendation, and would further note that other priority issues, such as Environment and Gender, need greater attention in the responses of implementing agencies. Irish Aid is tackling priority issues such as HIV/AIDS within the context of its recently completed Mainstreaming Strategy. Our commitment to these issues is reflected in the recently published White Paper on Irish Aid, as well as in the individual policies and strategies that are being developed for cross-cutting or

priority issues. The forthcoming Humanitarian Policy and the related funding guidelines have strongly addressed these issues.

- **Finding:** Because of the large amount of funding received after the tsunami, the role of many international NGOs has changed, in that they are working more like private contractors trying to complete project outputs within a limited time span rather than promoting wider developmental objectives, for example, by increasing participation and building the capacity of civil society.

Recommendation: While Irish Aid should continue to support International NGOs for relief purposes, it should check the previous experience of agencies in proposed areas of investment, and be hesitant about making grants that encourage the recipients to become contractors in sectors in which they have no particular expertise.

Management Response: Irish Aid acknowledges that the exceptional circumstances generated by the tsunami caused some agencies involved in the response to venture into areas where they previously had only limited experience. Irish Aid is confident, however, that its processes of appraisal and monitoring ensured that inappropriate implementation or activities were avoided.

- **Finding:** A major issue for some of the UN agencies is the indication that tsunami food aid has continued for far too long in these food surplus countries. Also, beyond a narrow coastal strip, the agricultural sector was hardly touched by the tsunami.

Recommendation: Irish Aid should raise these issues as part of its long-term dialogue with WFP.

Management Response: The Irish Government maintains a strong partnership with the World Food Programme, both through the Irish Aid Programme and the Department of Agriculture. WFP has been identified as a strategic partner

for Irish Aid under a recent review of Irish Aid's engagement with UN Agencies. In furthering the strategic partnership with WFP, this and other issues will form part of our on-going dialogue.

- **Finding:** The tsunami emergency was notable for an increased use of Cash For Work (CFW) by Irish-funded agencies. These activities were not only useful in themselves, but also had a positive psychological impact.

Recommendation: Irish Aid should facilitate NGOs to make selective use of Cash For Work in future emergencies, bearing in mind the dangers of inflating local wage rates.

Management Response: Irish Aid concurs with this recommendation, noting that funding has been provided to a number of agencies in several countries in recent years to encourage engagement in new and innovative approaches to humanitarian and recovery action, such as that offered by Cash For Work schemes. In its forthcoming Humanitarian Policy, Irish Aid specifically highlights its commitment to supporting ground-breaking or pioneering approaches to meeting needs in humanitarian contexts. Such approaches are becoming increasingly necessary and relevant, given the complexities of humanitarian crises and the finite capacity of the humanitarian community to respond. There is a high demand for approaches that will contribute towards enhanced effectiveness, coverage and sustainability.

- **Finding:** The greater the number of aid recipients, the more difficult it became for Irish Aid to monitor grants effectively and efficiently.

Recommendation: It is recommended that Irish Aid initiates, with the help of Dóchas, a wider debate about how Irish Aid and the wider Irish NGO community should respond to future emergencies.

Management Response: Irish Aid now regularly meets with NGOs bilaterally and collectively (under the auspices of Dóchas) to discuss several

aspects of humanitarian response capacities, policy and practice.

- **Finding:** Irish Aid was able to encourage agencies it was funding to take a more flexible approach, which was much appreciated by both UN agencies and NGOs.

Recommendation: This flexible approach should be maintained in future emergency responses.

Management Response: Irish Aid acknowledges its comparative advantage as a flexible and supportive donor, and intends to maintain this advantage as much as is possible and appropriate within its commitment to the principles of Good Humanitarian Donorship.

- **Finding:** The tsunami experience revealed the power of the international media to increasingly determine both the size of the public's response and the resulting level of domestic pressure on Irish Aid.

Recommendation: In future crises, Irish Aid should engage the public, the media, and the formal humanitarian community in an effort to work towards much greater co-ordination

Management Response: Irish Aid has already (Sept, 2006) facilitated a large-scale meeting of the NGO community, as well as the media and public, to discuss the international and Irish response to the tsunami. The issue of coordination received particular attention during this seminar.

Irish Aid, through its support of Dóchas and the Connect World initiative amongst other things, is contributing towards enhanced communication and coordination between various stakeholders.

The recently published White Paper on Irish Aid, and the consultation process that preceded it, represent a significant effort by Irish Aid to engage the public, media and formal humanitarian and development community to develop a shared understanding and approach to development and humanitarian processes, including coordination.

Appendix 2

List Of Documents Consulted

Irish Aid Reports

Internal Reports of Irish Aid (not listed)
 Agency Reports to Irish Aid (not listed)
 Chris Flood, Government Special Envoy: (2005)
The Tsunami: Ireland & The Recovery Effort
 John Cosgrave, *Civil Protection Audit Final Report*
 (2006)
 Development Co-operation Ireland Aid Review
 Committee Report (2002)

Tsunami Evaluation Coalition Reports (2006):

(www.Tsunami-evaluation.org)
*Joint Evaluation of the International Response to
 the Indian Ocean Tsunami - Synthesis Report*
*The Role of Needs Assessment in the Tsunami
 Response*
Funding the Tsunami Response
*Links between Relief, Rehabilitation, and
 Development in the Tsunami Response*
*Impact of the Tsunami Response on Local &
 National Capacities*
*Co-ordination of International Humanitarian
 Assistance in Tsunami-affected Countries*

Agency Evaluations:

Caritas Sri Lanka: One Year Evaluation Report
 Caritas Thailand: Phuket Closing Evaluation
 Report
 Concern (2006): *Mid-Term Evaluation of Concern's
 Response in Indonesia and Sri Lanka to the Indian
 Ocean Tsunami*
 IFRC: *Asian Tsunami Response Real Time
 Evaluation (2005)*
 UNDP Indonesia (2006): *Emergency Response and
 Transitional Recovery Programme for Aceh and Nias
 Mid-Term Assessment*
 UNICEF (2005): Evaluation Synthesis
 WFP: *Real Time Evaluation of Tsunami Response*
 (2005)

Other Reports:

World Bank: *Report on Multi-Donor Trust Fund*
www.MDFans.org/documents/071406_2ndreport_0407.pdf
 ALNAP(2006): Evaluating Humanitarian Action
 Using the DAC criteria
 OECD: Development Assistance Committee 2003:
Peer review of Irish Aid

Appendix 3

Financial Details of Irish Aid Tsunami Response

Table A1. Irish Aid Tsunami Disbursements by Agency and Programme (July 2006)

Agency	Description	Country	Amount €
Internat. Fed. Red Cross	Bay of Bengal Tsunami Appeal	Sri Lanka	750,000
Trócaire	Tsunami Emergency Relief	Indonesia	300,000
Trócaire	Short to mid-term Response	Sri Lanka	200,000
GOAL	Emergency Relief Tamil Nadu	India	485,000
Concern Worldwide	Emergency relief Tamil Nadu+Pondicherry	India	435,993
UNICEF	Basic Needs & Protecting Children	Regional	1,000,000
Internat. Org. for Migration	Health Care Assistance	Regional	100,000
World Vision Ireland	Food, Non-Food and Dry Rations	Sri Lanka	200,000
Christian Aid	Emergency Humanitarian/Basic Needs	India	250,000
Oxfam Ireland	Non-Food items for affected populations	Indonesia	250,000
Plan Ireland	Rehabilitation of infrastructure	Sri Lanka	200,000
UNHCR	Indonesia & Sri Lanka Flash Appeal	Regional	500,000
World Health Organisation	Health Care Assistance	Regional	500,000
Oxfam Ireland	Non-Food items Tsunami victims	India	250,000
Childfund Ireland	Care & Protection of Children IDP Camps	Indonesia	165,500
GOAL	Emergency Humanitarian Assistance IDPs	Sri Lanka	400,000
OCHA	Immediate Relief Assistance	Regional	1,000,000
World Food Programme	Food Assistance	Regional	1,000,000
Internat. Comm. Red Cross	Emergency Assistance	Burma	500,000
Hope Foundation	Tsunami Disaster Relief	India	200,000
Mercy Corps	Midwives Livelihoods Recovery Program	Indonesia	278,784
Gorta	Emergency Relief Programme	India	100,000
Concern Worldwide	Integrated Recovery	Indonesia	1,979,000
Trócaire	Integrated Recovery	Indonesia	750,000
UNDP	Livelihoods Recovery	Thailand	150,750
Trócaire	Integrated Village Recovery	Thailand	250,000
Human Dev. Foundation	Village Support	Thailand	100,000
Mercy Corps	Livelihoods Recovery	Indonesia	350,000
Home Life Foundation	AIDS Care Programme	Thailand	100,000
TTVI	Identification Process	Thailand	60,000
TTVI	Identification Process Technical Assistance	Thailand	6,426
Childfund Ireland	Livelihoods Recovery	Sri Lanka	200,000
VSO	Capacity Building for Reconstruction	Sri Lanka	305,000
VSO	Reconstruction of Health & Educ. facilities	Maldives	220,000
ILO	Women's Livelihoods	Indonesia	250,000
Embassy Malaysia	Micro-Projects' Fund	Thailand	50,000
FAO	Agricultural Recovery	Sri Lanka	150,000
UNDP	Capacity Building for Reconstruction	Indonesia	1,000,000
WHO	Mental Health Care	Sri Lanka	398,000
Concern Worldwide	Emergency Rehabilitation & Recovery	Sri Lanka	500,000
IDLO	Legal Aid Programme	Sri Lanka	150,000

Agency	Description	Country	Amount €
IDLO	Legal Aid Programme	Indonesia	150,000
World Bank MDTF	Trust Fund	Indonesia	1,000,000
UNESCO	Early Warning System	Regional	500,000
Grants to Relatives	Grants to relatives	Thailand	20,000
Oblates	Programme Support	Regional	44,500
Habitat for Humanity	Housing Programme	Sri Lanka	249,500
Develop. Education	Development Education	Regional	12,764
Ringsend	Community Infrastructure	Indonesia	50,000
ISLTF	Housing construction	Sri Lanka	100,000
			18,161,217

Table A2. Irish Aid grant received by NGOs as a percentage of total funding (based on response to email questionnaire)

	Irish Aid grant	All sources	Irish Aid %
	€	€	
Larger Irish NGOs			
Concern	2,914,993	5,773,000	50
Trócaire	1,526,250	30,226,250	5
GOAL	885,000	25,000,000	4
VSO	525,000	1,030,376	51
Plan Ireland	200,000	1,038,333	19
Oxfam Ireland	500,000	1,774,000	28
ChildFund Ireland	365,500	375,822	97
Christian Aid	250,000	3,599,340	7
Habitat for Humanity Ireland*	249,500	268,745	93
World Vision Ireland	200,000	328,767	-
Smaller Irish NGOs			
Hope Foundation	200,000	652,046	31
Gorta	100,000	200,000	50
Oblate Fathers (IMRS monies)	44,500	44,500	-
Other NGOs			
Mercy Corps	628,784	2,688,076	23
Internat. Development Law Organisation (IDLO)	300,000	2,150,000	14
Home Life Foundation	100,000	100,000	100
Human Development Foundation	100,000	1,060,000	9
* Note: the Irish Aid grant was 93% of the funds raised by the Ireland Habitat for Humanity office, but it composed only 4% of the funding of Sri Lanka Habitat for Humanity which carried out the work.			

Appendix 4

The Sphere Standards and Indicators

Irish Aid's Tsunami Response was guided by the internationally accepted standards, and associated indicators, of the Sphere Project (see footnote page 35). The associated indicators are further elaborated by guidance notes prepared by the Sphere Project.

There are 64 standards and nearly 300 indicators covering 8 critical areas typically encountered in emergency and relief situations. For the purposes of illustration, here below is a selection of standards and indicators relevant to the initiatives supported by Irish Aid. Full details of the standards, indicators and associated guidance notes are available at www.sphereproject.org

Common standard 2: initial assessment

Assessments provide an understanding of the disaster situation and a clear analysis of threats to life, dignity, health and livelihoods to determine, in consultation with the relevant authorities, whether an external response is required and, if so, the nature of the response.

Key indicators (to be read in conjunction with the guidance notes):

- Information is gathered using standardised procedures and made available to allow for transparent decision-making.
- The assessment considers all technical sectors (water and sanitation, nutrition, food, shelter, health), and the physical, social, economic, political and security environment.

Water supply standard 1: access and water quantity:

All people have safe and equitable access to a sufficient quantity of water for drinking, cooking and personal and domestic hygiene. Public water points are sufficiently close to households to enable use of the minimum water requirement.

Key indicators (to be read in conjunction with the guidance notes):

- Average water use for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene in any household is at least 15 litres per person per day.
- The maximum distance from any household to the nearest water point is 500 metres.
- Queuing time at a water source is no more than 15 minutes.
- It takes no more than three minutes to fill a 20-litre container.
- Water sources and systems are maintained such that appropriate quantities of water are available consistently or on a regular basis.

Food aid planning standard 1: ration planning

Rations for general food distributions are designed to bridge the gap between the affected population's requirements and their own food resources.

Key indicators (to be read in conjunction with the guidance notes):

- Rations for general distribution are designed on the basis of the standard initial planning requirements for energy, protein, fat and micronutrients, adjusted as necessary to the local situation.
- The ration distributed reduces or eliminates the need for disaster-affected people to adopt damaging coping strategies.
- When relevant, the economic transfer value of the ration is calculated and is appropriate to the local situation.

Health systems and infrastructure standard 1: prioritising health services

All people have access to health services that are prioritised to address the main causes of excess mortality and morbidity.

Key indicators (to be read in conjunction with the guidance notes):

- The major causes of mortality and morbidity are identified, documented and monitored.
- Priority health services include the most appropriate and effective interventions to reduce excess morbidity and mortality.
- All members of the community, including vulnerable groups, have access to priority health interventions.
- Local health authorities and community members participate in the design and implementation of priority health interventions.
- There is active collaboration with other sectors in the design and implementation of priority health interventions, including water and sanitation, food security, nutrition, shelter and protection.

Appendix 5

Terms of Reference for a Value for Money Review of the Irish Government's Support to Tsunami Affected Countries

Background:

The Tsunami Disaster

On the 26th of December 2004, a massive underwater earthquake occurred off the coast of Northern Sumatra, Indonesia. This was followed three hours later by a second earthquake west of the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. These earthquakes triggered a series of tsunamis which hit the coasts of thirteen countries including Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, Maldives, Thailand, and Malaysia. The effects were felt as far away as Tanzania and Somalia. This catastrophic event left approximately 228,000 people dead.

The worldwide response to this tragedy was unprecedented. It is estimated that between \$14-18.5 billion was raised to support victims and to assist in the relief, recovery and reconstruction of the *Tsunami Affected Countries (TAC)*. In Ireland, an estimated €10million was raised, including Irish Government funds.

The Irish Government's Response

Within hours of the disaster, Ireland announced immediate assistance of €1 million. This was quickly doubled to €2 million as the death toll began to rise. A pledge of €10 million in funding was announced on the 31st December 2004. Responding to the urgency of the crisis, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Dermot Ahern, T.D., accompanied by the chief executives of three Irish NGOs and the Irish Red Cross visited Thailand, Indonesia and Sri Lanka from 8-13th January, 2005. A further €10 million was announced by the Minister during this visit, bringing Ireland's total pledge of assistance to €20 million, the largest ever response to an emergency by the Irish Government.

Simultaneously, a series of joint technical assessment missions were undertaken by members of the Department of Foreign Affairs Development

Cooperation Directorate with representatives from the Department of Defence. Further follow-up was conducted in early February. These missions gave rise to a comprehensive framework for response, which has been used to inform the allocation of the Government's pledge.

A Special Envoy was appointed by the Minister for Foreign Affairs in consultation with the Minister of State, to report on the aid effort undertaken in response to the tsunami. The Envoy conducted a series of monitoring missions throughout 2005 and presented a final detailed report to Government in December 2005.

The response of the Government took place within the context of a highly pressurised environment. In addition to the existence of enormous sudden on-set humanitarian needs spread across a massive geographical area, there was unprecedented pressure to respond placed on donors and implementing agencies. This pressure emanated from media, public, and political sources and added another dimension to the efforts required to ensure a quality response was pursued.

Between the 26th of December 2004 and the 31st December 2005, the Irish Government disbursed €9,693,517 in support of relief and reconstruction efforts in the TAC. All commitments were made before December 2005.

Of the funds disbursed at 31st December 2005, €8,423,358 was provided through **Irish Aid** under different budget lines. The remaining €1,270,159 was provided by the Departments of **Agriculture and Defence**, and by the **Garda Síochána**.

Management Arrangements

The management of Irish Aid budget lines is located in Dublin. The implementation of the various initiatives funded by the Irish Government is conducted by the partner organisations. Partners include Irish and International NGOs as well as the

Red Cross and UN agencies. Implementing agencies receive grants under the different budget lines according to the relevant Irish Aid guidelines for that budget. Reporting is provided in accordance with contractual agreements entered into between Irish Aid and the implementing agency.

Management and oversight arrangements for the Irish Aid contribution to the tsunami include the following:

- The inclusion of all tsunami related activities in the normal appraisal, approval, monitoring and follow-up procedures of Irish Aid's Emergency and Recovery Section;
- The appointment within the Emergency and Recovery Section of additional and dedicated technical support to reinforce existing capacities for appraisal, monitoring and follow-up of tsunami related activities;
- The inclusion of the Irish Aid tsunami response programme in the monitoring and review duties of Ireland's Special Envoy to the tsunami affected region;
- The participation of Irish Aid in the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition (for more details see appendix one);
- The inclusion of the tsunami response programme in this value for money review.

Value for Money Review

A review of public expenditure is mandatory under the Irish Government's *Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative*. This initiative is coordinated by the Department of Finance and all reports are presented to the Irish Parliament. In keeping with its obligation, Irish Aid now wishes to conduct a Value for Money Review of the Irish Government's assistance given to the tsunami affected countries.

Purpose

The purpose of this review is to:

- Inform Irish Aid and the Irish Parliament regarding the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, attentiveness to cross-cutting issues, and the management of Irish Aid's tsunami response programme;
- Provide a systematic analysis of what was / is actually being achieved by Irish Aid support for the tsunami affected countries;
- Provide a basis on which more informed future decisions and processes are prioritised within and between expenditure programmes of Irish Aid.

Scope of the Review

The review will consider:

1. **Relevance and quality of the response:** Against the background of Irish Aid policy and international standards and indicators for best practice in humanitarian assistance, the review will look at the relevance and appropriateness of the programme funded. Specifically, it will consider the extent to which Irish Aid support to tsunami affected countries was/ is appropriate to beneficiaries' needs, and coherent with national and international policies. The review will carefully assess Ireland's performance against international performance standards and indicators.
2. **The efficiency of the response:** The review will examine the efficiency of the response (including timeliness) and the extent to which cost efficiency issues were/are addressed at all stages of implementation. In addition, the review will examine the management arrangements within Irish Aid in relation to funding allocations, planning, monitoring and reporting systems (including financial and audit

systems) for humanitarian, relief and recovery responses.

3. **The effectiveness of the response in achieving its objectives:** The review will assess the evidence available to show the extent to which the response is equitably achieving its objectives and will identify any barriers to achieving these objectives. The review will also consider if the partners have implemented projects in accordance with the objectives agreed with Irish Aid, and if the funded activities are coherent with Irish Aid's overarching objectives.
4. **Sustainability:** The review will examine the issue of connectedness including taking into consideration pre-existing security considerations and developmental needs and processes in the tsunami affected countries.
5. **Impact:** The review will briefly examine the overall effects of the Irish Aid supported interventions, positive and negative, intended and unintended, long-term and short-term.
6. **Lesson Learning:** The review will identify lessons specifically relevant to Irish Aid for use in other humanitarian, relief and recovery situations, and will identify areas for improvement in Irish Aid policies, strategies, organisational approaches, and the use of international best practice indicators.

The review will *briefly* analyse all support (including support for long-term development) from Irish Aid to tsunami affected countries considering the context, and will utilise comparisons and best practice.

Methodology

The study is essentially a desk review that will involve comprehensive consultation with Irish Aid personnel, representatives from implementing agencies, and Ireland's Special Envoy to the tsunami affected area. It will utilise existing tsunami response programme documentation to inform the analysis. The study will draw heavily on the work of the *Tsunami Evaluation Coalition* (TEC) especially where it relates to organisations in receipt of Irish Aid funding. Other sources of information include the following:

- Policy documents in which the objectives of Irish Aid are articulated;
- The report of Ireland's *Special Envoy to the Tsunami Region*;
- The reports of the Irish Aid assessment and follow-up missions, as well as those of the Irish Aid Technical Advisor for tsunami follow-up;
- Irish Aid files;
- Analyses of the commitment and actual utilisation of the Irish Aid grants disbursed as at 31st December 2005.

Reporting

The review will be overseen by a Steering Committee, which will include a representative from Emergency and Recovery Section and Evaluation and Audit Unit of Irish Aid.

The exercise will be managed and facilitated by the Evaluation & Audit Unit. The study will be conducted by a consultant.

The consultant will produce a concise report of less than 50 pages. The report will include economic and quantitative analyses. The consultant will be responsible for the drafting of the report.

It is essential that the report is drafted to the highest standards as it will be published in full and presented to the Irish Parliament. Irish Aid retains the right to edit the report in preparation for publication as the report will be subject to an external quality review under the Irish *Value for Money and Policy Review Initiative*. The recommendations of this external quality reviewer will be incorporated into the report.

Expertise Required

- The consultant to be engaged is required to have considerable experience in humanitarian, relief and recovery situations.
- Familiarity with the work of the TEC would be a considerable advantage.
- The consultant must have proven previous experience in conducting similar exercises.
- The consultant must be aware of best practice in humanitarian, relief and recovery contexts.
- Familiarity with and understanding of Irish Aid's organisational structure, policies and aid modalities would be a considerable advantage.
- The consultant must have excellent English language writing skills.

Timing

The consultancy will be 25 working days. The consultant will be required for a one day briefing session in Dublin before the commencement of the exercise. The review of Irish Aid internal documents and interviews with Irish Aid personnel will take place in Dublin and will ideally commence before the start of August 2006.

Ideally, the draft report will be presented to the Steering Committee by mid- September 2006.

Criteria for assessing Tenders:

- Experience in Tsunami Affected Countries or similar environments;
- Experience in conducting evaluation exercises in emergency situations;
- Quality of the proposal, including demonstrating an understanding of the requirements of the ToR;
- Understanding of best practice in emergencies;
- Excellent English language writing skills;
- Ability to meet the timeframe of the exercise;
- Familiarity with and understanding of Irish Aid.

