

## 2.0 Response:

### Introduction

Self Help Africa's mission is to develop enterprising solutions that enable smallholder farmers to achieve a better quality of life. We work with rural communities in eight African countries<sup>1</sup> to help them to grow more food, diversify their farm production, develop off-farm enterprises, and sell their surpluses. We have over 25 years' experience of strengthening agricultural systems, improving access to services and inputs, and providing rural African communities with the opportunities to market and sell their produce. We support access to rural micro-finance, assist producers to organise into farmers associations and co-operatives, enable farm families to access markets and add value to their produce, and promote low-cost sustainable solutions to the management of natural resources, community adaption to a changing climate, and the challenges of gender inequality.

We have learned a great deal from that experience and we are committed to using that experience to advocate in support of the interests of African smallholder farmers, to ensure that there is a long-term commitment to aid and investment in them, to ensure the sustainable development of agriculture and food production in the countries of sub-Saharan Africa.

We have worked closely with Irish Aid over many years, including as one of its funding partners. The submission below is therefore based on our experience of Irish Aid's work in the countries where we work. In compiling this submission, we have consulted with staff at various levels throughout the organisation, in Africa and Ireland.

As a result, we are making the following recommendations. The remainder of this submission will be used to explain them:

- Irish Aid should reduce the number of 'priorities' it has and focus on hunger as its main priority. It should do this by committing to spending more than 20% of its future budget on tackling hunger and set a timetable for meeting that commitment.
- Irish Aid should be more transparent on what it classifies as spending on hunger and about how any future targets will be achieved.
- Irish Aid should maintain and build its focus on smallholder farmers as key beneficiaries of its

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1. Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Togo, Uganda and Zambia.





programmes.

- Irish Aid should establish innovative and scaleable programmes that have a measurable impact on smallholder farmers, which others can learn from and help to scale up.
- Irish Aid should work more effectively with the private sector to help smallholder farmers gain access to markets.
- Irish Aid should lead the way in developing mechanisms to track funding to smallholder farmers and its impact.

### Progress Made

We recognise that there have been significant achievements since the White Paper was published in 2006, in particular the work done by the Hunger Task Force and the commitment to spend at least of 20% of Ireland ODA by 2012 "to alleviate and eradicate hunger".

The 2010 report of the Hunger Envoy Kevin Farrell states that "the pledge made on several occasions to spend at least 20% of ODA on hunger by 2012 would appear to be on track". It is not clear, however, what expenditure on hunger is understood to include. The table below provides our analysis of Irish Aid's expenditure on agriculture from 2005 to 2010. This is derived from OECD DAC data. There is no data beyond 2010.

**Figure 1: Irish Aid's expenditure on food security, agriculture and rural development, 2005-2010 (\$US millions)**

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Sector(s)</b>						
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing	16.45	26.67	33.57	56.42	53.72	54.98
Rural development	4.31	4.51	13.02	31.49	8.04	5.86
Food aid/Food security programmes	18.69	9.93	13.23	17.11	4.43	12.82
Total excluding emergency food aid:	39.45	41.11	59.81	105.02	66.19	73.66
Emergency food aid	7.05	4.48	6.4	9.49	10.6	3.11
Total including emergency food aid	46.5	45.58	66.22	114.51	76.78	76.76
Total aid	482.67	632.61	826.4	930.6	697.07	587.04
% total aid (emergency food aid excluded)	0.08	0.06	0.07	0.11	0.09	0.13
% total aid (emergency food aid included)	0.1	0.07	0.08	0.12	0.11	0.13

The percentage of the total had therefore reached 13% by 2010. However, overall aid levels have dropped since 2008, as has expenditure on hunger in cash terms. As a result, cash expenditure on



role NGOs could play in capacity building and catalysing such relationships. We believe that Irish Aid needs to invest significantly more in building production, value addition and business skills of smallholder farmers if they are to successfully integrate in value chains in collaboration with the private sector.

Self Help Africa is impressed by Irish Aid's efforts to support fair trade for least developed countries but we believe there is still more to be done to empower developing countries to have a fair deal. Countries like Ethiopia are exporting raw products and importing back high-priced, value-added products: the case of coffee is a clear example.

### **Ways of Working**

As stated above, we believe greater investment in fewer priorities will improve the impact and effectiveness of Irish Aid's programmes. Ending hunger and ensuring that smallholders are increasing their productivity and incomes depends on the actions of many other actors. By focusing on hunger and becoming a centre of knowledge and excellence, Irish Aid can also become a champion, by, for example, encouraging others to end the anti-rural bias in the delivery of their services and aid programmes.

Our country teams note the high quality of Irish Aid's staff in country and the contribution Irish Aid has made in the field of food, agriculture and rural livelihoods.

The effectiveness of Irish Aid's support to programmes was improved by the move towards strategic funding through multi-annual commitments. This provides added value as it enables organisations to build their effectiveness, helps them leverage additional resources, leads to improved programme quality and impact and enables investment in innovation, learning, research and advocacy.

There is need for continued and even strengthened support to civil society, ensuring that governments respect and promote the role and independence of civil society in development, as well as encouraging private sector players to understand the advantage of working in partnership with civil society. Civil society can play a vital role in helping farm households connect to domestic and regional markets.

We therefore suggest that Irish Aid continues to make strategic funding to relevant civil society organisations based on results-based management systems.