

Achieving Policy Coherence for Development through a Whole of Government Approach

Recommendations

Since Ireland adopted PCD in 2007, some progress has been made in building awareness across government departments. In order to move forward, however, and address the weaknesses identified for addressing PCD, the institutional mechanisms need to be strengthened. Some recommendations on how this can be done include:

1. Assign responsibility for PCD to the Department of the Taoiseach
2. Establish a strong monitoring and evaluation framework
3. Development focal points within Government Departments
4. Promoting Parliamentary Oversight and Legislative Competences
5. Facilitate Partner Country Engagement
6. Promote engagement with civil society organisations on PCD

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Introduction

Ireland's relationship with the developing world takes many forms. Development aid is a critical dimension of this, but broader policies relating to environment, energy, trade, taxation and investment are equally important. In an increasingly interdependent world, relationships with developing countries involve a growing number of government policies and departments.

Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is a process which seeks to ensure that investments in overseas aid are supported, or at the very least, not undermined by non-aid policies implemented by national governments, such as Ireland, and blocks like the EU.¹ Over the past decade, Trócaire has been an advocate for Ireland to strengthen its approach to PCD.² Trócaire's submission on the White Paper on Irish Aid (2006) argued for PCD to be a central organising principle of Irish Aid policy, a call which it reiterated in its' 2012 submission to the White Paper Review. The submission called for strengthened institutional mechanisms that deliver on PCD in Ireland.

Many of Trócaire's advocacy priorities are concerned with the impacts of government policies which sit outside the remit of Irish Aid, such as climate change, agricultural investment or humanitarian and security policies.³ Given the changing external context, the ongoing financial crisis, the increasing pressures from climate change, Ireland's new Africa Strategy and the Post-2015 discussion, it is timely to review what PCD means and how can Ireland make meaningful progress.

This briefing paper⁴ assesses the current strengths and weaknesses of Ireland's institutional mechanisms to ensure PCD. A key finding is that whilst the institutional structures in Ireland have been raising awareness and sharing information on PCD across government departments, that is not enough to actually drive greater coherence for development. Ireland now needs to lay out a specific framework and timeline on how it will deliver its commitments on PCD.

The paper outlines proposals on how Ireland can enhance its institutional mechanisms for PCD. By making progress on the outlined areas, such as the adoption of a coherent set of indicators for assessing policy coherence, Ireland will be at the forefront of mainstreaming responsibility on PCD across whole of government.

¹ Barry, F., King, M., Matthews, A. (2009) "Policy Coherence for Development: The State of Play in Ireland." Institute for International Integration Studies, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland. http://www.tcd.ie/iis/documents/discussion/pdfs/PCD_report.pdf. Pg. 207

² Trócaire was the first Irish NGO to highlight PCD during a conference on the MDGs as part of the Irish Presidency of the EU in 2004. Its paper "More than A Numbers Game?" in preparation for the MDG Review Summit in 2005 highlighted policy coherence around MDG 8.

³ This briefing paper focuses on the institutional mechanisms that underpin Ireland's overall approach to PCD, rather than on any policy in particular. For specific analysis and recommendations on policies relating to the environment, energy, agriculture and finance see: <http://www.trocaire.org/resources/policy-papers>

⁴ Trócaire would like to thank Eoghan Molloy and Christine Matz from the TCD-UCD Masters in Development Practice for carrying out excellent research for Trócaire from which this briefing is based on. Their paper, "Policy Coherence for Development: What Institutional Framework will support a coherence agenda for development in Ireland" can be found at, <http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/20newsandpublications/publicationpdfsenglish/whitepapersubmissions/christine-matz-and-eoghan-molloy.pdf>.

PCD: an obligation under EU law

PCD makes sense, but from the perspective of effective policy making, it is more than just a 'good thing' to do. Since the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, PCD has become a legal obligation of all EU member states. Article 208 states that all EU policies must take into consideration development objectives: at best, this means that all EU policies must be in support of developing countries' development needs, or at least not contradict the aim of poverty reduction and eradication.

Whilst the EU sets this legal framework, the onus is on individual countries to transpose this into national frameworks, leaving much scope for interpretation. A recent discussion paper on national systems for PCD finds that the linkages between national systems on PCD and the EU structures on PCD remain weak.⁵ Furthermore, there is limited national level awareness on PCD commitments made at the EU level and these commitments have minimal impact on the member countries PCD processes.⁶

Trócaire, in line with CONCORD, the European confederation of development NGOs, believes that a human-rights based approach is central when defining and implementing this PCD obligation. Development and human rights are intertwined: without respect for human rights it is hard to achieve sustainable development. Therefore, human rights should be used as objective criteria, amongst others, to evaluate the impact of the policies and the extent of the policy coherence.

Three categories of mechanisms for promoting PCD:

An evaluation study of twelve EU Member States (Mackie, J. et al 2007) identified specific 'mechanisms' for promoting PCD. These mechanisms can be divided into three categories:

1. Explicit policy statements of intent
2. Administrative and institutional mechanisms (such as inter-departmental coordination committees and specialist coherence units)
3. Knowledge-input and knowledge-assessment mechanisms (information and analysis capacity)

The Irish Institutional Framework for PCD

"In the coming period, we will specify policy areas where coherence can be enhanced, as well as indicators to track performance.... We will also promote greater coherence of EU policies, as reported on annually in the EU Report on Policy Coherence for Development."
*One World, One Future, (2013)*⁷

Formal and informal mechanisms across government departments have existed over the years to ensure a coherent approach across a number of issues, as seen by the box on the National Action Plan (NAP) for UNSCR 1325. PCD became official government policy in the White Paper on Irish Aid (2006) which explicitly committed to taking a PCD approach across government departments.⁸ This commitment is restated in Ireland's new policy for development, "One World, One Future", where coherence is listed as one of the seven values underpinning the overall policy.

As a result of the 2006 White Paper, the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development (IDCD) was set up in 2007 as the main institutional mechanism for supporting PCD. It is chaired by the Minister of State for Trade and Development, consists of representatives from each relevant government department, and Irish Aid provides the Secretariat of the Committee.

The Terms of Reference of the IDCD defines its role as a consultative and advisory forum for inter-departmental coherence, and as a forum to facilitate the best use of expertise across the public service in Ireland's development aid programme.⁹ In this capacity, the IDCD provides an administrative and institutional support mechanism for promoting PCD across government departments.

The IDCD initially met quite regularly, with fourteen meetings since its inception in 2007.¹⁰ These meetings have taken place on average three times per year, starting off with good representation across most government departments. In the last few years, however, the frequency of meetings has declined substantially. In addition, the actual consistency of representation by individual attendees varied between departments and over time.

A key focus of the IDCD has been knowledge gathering and information sharing across Government departments. The Committee received at least fifteen presentations on various issues throughout its initial period. One of these presentations was given by umbrella NGO organisation Dóchas, none were given by individual NGOs, and there were no presentations made by representatives of Irish Aid's nine partner countries.

⁵ Galeazzi, Greta et al. 2013. "Insights from Development in National Policy Coherence for Development Systems: Key Cross Cutting Issues and Dilemmas." Discussion paper No. 144, April 2013. European Centre for Development Policy Management, Netherlands. Pg. 24

⁶ Ibid. Pg. 24

⁷ Irish Aid. 2013. "One World, One Future: Ireland's Policy for International Development." Government of Ireland. Dublin, Ireland. Pg. 28

⁸ Irish Aid. 2006. "White Paper on Irish Aid." Government of Ireland, Dublin, Ireland. <http://www.irishaid.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/20newsandpublications/publicationpdfsenglish/white-paper-english-2006.pdf> Pg. 9

⁹ Matz, Christine and Eoghan Molloy, "Policy Coherence for Development: What Institutional Framework will support a coherence agenda for development in Ireland." pg. 45

¹⁰ The minutes of these meetings are published on the Irish Aid website along with Annual Reports.

Subgroups have been an important mechanism through which the IDCD has carried out its work. Two subgroups were established to look at skill sets and multilateral organisations. These subgroups have played an important role in increasing awareness across government departments of Irish Aid's work, for example the subgroup on skills hosted lunchtime educational seminars in each Government department.

In addition to this formal process on PCD, as mentioned at the beginning of this section, there already exists a number of cross-departmental processes that touch on development and coherence but that may not be on the IDCD's agenda. These processes offer both lessons on how to strengthen the work of the IDCD, as showcased by the box on the NAP, as well as opportunities to link these processes together with formal mechanisms addressing PCD.

Assessment of the Current Institutional Framework

In Ireland's new policy for international development, "One World, One Future", the Government recognises the need for PCD mechanisms to be strengthened. This is backed by a number of independent studies of Ireland's PCD mechanisms that have been undertaken in recent years.¹¹

On the whole, Ireland has been commended for its action on policy coherence. It is still one of a small number of countries who have taken this issue seriously. In its Peer Review of Irish Aid in 2009, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC) recognised Ireland's progress on policy coherence. The review acknowledged that dialogue among government officials on PCD issues had increased since the IDCD's creation.

Whilst acknowledging the positive steps taken towards PCD, the independent studies also point to the underlying issues in the current mechanisms and ways to address these. Overall, there is agreement that the role of the IDCD has been useful, but limited. Whilst it provides a formal institutional mechanism for PCD and has facilitated the publishing of several reports, it has yet to play an active role in actual policy assessment and review.

The IDCD, as currently formulated, does not have the mandate to actively assess policies. Moreover, as it meets too infrequently, it is unable to review issues of policy coherence systematically.¹²

Before new mechanisms are implemented, it is therefore timely to consider the research findings on PCD which have emerged in the past few years so as to ensure that any new measures will address the weaknesses in the existing Irish PCD mechanisms.

Key role of informal mechanisms

An OECD Policy Brief (2008), 'Policy Coherence for Development – Lessons Learned', explicitly states that "informal mechanisms have tended to be seen as sufficient" for Ireland.¹³ An evaluation study of twelve EU Member States recommended that the importance of such informal mechanisms should not be underestimated and that the use of such linkages both internally within government and externally with other stakeholders should be encouraged at all levels.¹⁴

Whilst informal mechanisms can go a long way to 'oil the wheels' and ensure that policy objectives are progressed, the same study cautions that such mechanisms do not guarantee that sufficient staff time and capacity is allocated to securing adequate knowledge input and assessments of PCD.¹⁵ It goes further in suggesting that the complexity and time consuming nature of the processes required to promote PCD means that informal processes are clearly insufficient on their own. There is therefore a need for both an informal PCD system and a formal PCD system made up of several complimentary mechanisms working in tandem.¹⁶

¹¹ Main studies done on PCD include: Galeazzi, Greta et al. 2013. "Insights from Development in National Policy Coherence for Development Systems: Key Cross Cutting Issues and Dilemmas."; Barry, F., King, M., Matthews, A. (2009) "Policy Coherence for Development: The State of Play in Ireland."; OECD DAC Peer Review, Ireland 2009; King, M., Matthews, A. (2011) "Policy Coherence for Development: Indicators for Ireland.

¹² Galeazzi, Greta et al. 2013. Op Cit. Pg. 17

¹³ OECD. 2008, "Policy Coherence for Development – Lessons Learned", Policy Brief."December 2008. <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/32/8/41866464.pdf>. p.5

¹⁴ Mackie, J. et al (2007) "Evaluation Study on the EU Institutions & member States' mechanisms for Promoting Policy Coherence for Development." Studies in European Development Co-operation Evaluation 7. Amsterdam: Aksant Academic Publishers. <http://www.three-cs.net>. p.16, p.32, p.72, p.78

¹⁵ Ibid. p.32

¹⁶ Ibid. p.72

Sweden's approach to PCD

In 2003, the Swedish parliament adopted a new and groundbreaking Policy for Global Development (PGD) that placed policy coherence for development at the heart of Sweden's approach to development. The PGD encompasses all areas of policy and proposes one common objective: to contribute to an equitable and sustainable global development. While the Department for Development Policy at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs is responsible for the coordination of Sweden's Policy for Global Development, all policy areas and ministries share the responsibility for the implementation of global development policy.

The Swedish government's efforts in institutionalising PCD have been highly commended in the OECD-DAC Peer Review of Sweden in 2009. The OECD-DAC peer review affirms that Sweden has a strong policy and legislative basis for PCD, however, it notes that implementation has been challenging, most notably in the area of monitoring and reporting. The Peer Review also noted that there was a lack of sufficient awareness of the Policy for Global Development outside of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Though Sweden has yet to identify indicators for the monitoring of the PGD or to engage external assessors,¹⁷ various NGO's and Civil Society Organisations in Sweden have provided comprehensive PCD monitoring of Swedish policy in the Coherence Barometers. The Barometer reports

grade specific policies across government departments in an accessible and user-friendly format. The report has generated strong media interest and government dialogue in parliament on issues such as tax evasion, arms trade, and trade agreements.

Swedish CSOs have argued that while the Government has been strong on promoting synergies between policy areas, it hardly addresses the fundamental challenge of handling inconsistencies. Despite the strong legislative base for policy coherence, incoherencies still remain with regard to issues such as the Swedish arms trade, investments and conditionalities on poor country policies. The policy has helped to make this lack of coherence more open and transparent, but done little to address deep rooted conflicts of interest.

A key lesson from Sweden's experience is that without other building blocks in place, relating to systematic inter-departmental coordination and incentives and a framework for monitoring and reporting progress, incoherence will remain. Moreover, they have learnt that it is much more difficult to achieve coherence in some policy areas than in others. This led to a significant rethink and in its 2008 communication on the implementation of the PGD, the Swedish government presented a reformed policy that aimed to be more results-based. This was followed by subsequent communications in 2010 and 2012 which proposed further amendments to PGD implementation measures.

Ownership across government

The issue of where responsibility for driving PCD sits is another key issue. At present, despite the existence of the IDCD, Irish Aid is still regarded as the main government department driving PCD. This has clear benefits. Above all, there is a clear understanding that poverty eradication and human rights are at the centre of PCD as this is what explicitly drives Irish Aid policy. Secondly, Irish Aid has the legitimacy to champion PCD and engage with other government departments on priority issues.

The drawbacks of this, however, are that progress on PCD could be seen by others as the responsibility of Irish Aid and therefore limits the buy in of these departments.¹⁸ This also may limit knowledge of PCD outside of Irish Aid, as was the case in Sweden's experience, where knowledge on PCD and its implications remain limited outside of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The risk is therefore that PCD remains at a level of information sharing against a background of divergent and possibly conflicting policy objectives.

At best, it may lead to a series of initiatives where synergies are identified on a 'win win' basis. Where there are critical, systemic factors thought to be undermining PCD out of Irish Aid's control, it may have a limited mandate to intervene in the absence of a clear policy assessment framework.

Addressing internal analytical capacity

Making the shift from information sharing, to addressing potential areas of policy incoherence requires analytical and research capacity on which rigorous assessment can be based. Until now there has been no means of measuring progress (or the lack of it) towards PCD. Assessment and evaluation are fundamental aspects of any PCD mechanism and this is reflected in the explicit mention of monitoring and evaluation in the Terms of Reference of the IDCD.¹⁹

¹⁷ OECD. 2011. "DAC mid-term review of Sweden." <http://www.regeringen.se/content/1/c6/17/30/04/40322a14.pdf>

¹⁸ Galeazzi, Greta et al. 2013. Op Cit. Pg. 16

¹⁹ Terms of reference for the IDCD can be found at: <http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/media/irishaid/allwebsitemedia/20newsandpublications/publicationpdfsenglish/whitepapersubmissions/christine-matz-and-eoghan-molloy.pdf>

The lack of this research capacity was identified by the OECD Peer Review in 2009. While Irish Aid acts as the IDCD's Secretariat, according to the Peer Review, they lack the required ongoing institutional capacity to conduct research and analyse policies for coherence or to trace policy coherence impacts once these have been identified.²⁰ Irish Aid currently relies on outside sources for analytical inputs and research relevant to its policy agenda. It is unclear, however, to what extent the recommendations from such external bodies are implemented.

Two major studies into PCD were commissioned from the Institute for International Integration Studies (IIIS) at Trinity College Dublin. The second study, 'Policy Coherence for Development: Indicators for Ireland',²¹ presents and discusses 52 indicators across eight policy areas. In addition to proposing a monitoring framework, the first IIIS report recommended the use of development impact assessments (DIAs) by all government departments as a means of ex-ante policy evaluation.²² Such measures would require a reliable set of indicators such that the forecasting of possible effects of different interventions could be determined at the policy design phase. This would also require ongoing internal analytical capacity to implement as well as rigorous training of departmental officials across all government sectors.

Building Political Support for PCD

By its nature, PCD can be contentious as it identifies inconsistencies and potential conflicts between departments that might adversely affect developing countries. Addressing such conflicts may not result in a "win win" situation and the objectives of one policy may need to be altered to take account of the development objective. As well as strengthened internal research and analytical capacity, this requires guidance from the highest levels of government as well as the Oireachtas.

The DAC Peer Review suggests that institutionalised reporting to Parliament on PCD would help facilitate this process.²³ For this to happen, the Oireachtas in general, and the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade in particular, need to play a stronger role in the institutional PCD structure.²⁴ The first IIIS report also recommends parliamentary oversight as a means of improving PCD mechanisms in Ireland.²⁵

In its new policy for International Development, the Government explicitly identifies a role for the Oireachtas, where the biennial report on Ireland's progress on PCD will be submitted to the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade by the Minister of State for Trade and Development.²⁶ This report will also be submitted to the Government. This step is a much needed and welcome step forward. Though for the Oireachtas to play a meaningful role, lessons should be learnt from countries that are already doing this, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, because even in these cases where reports on PCD were presented to the Parliament, their role on PCD was still seen as under-utilised.

Engagement of Key Stakeholders

The current mechanisms for PCD in Ireland allow limited scope for the engagement of key stakeholders such as developing partner countries and NGOs, especially Irish Aid partner agencies. There is a clear rationale for engaging partner countries in PCD, in the first instance to gain a clearer understanding of the overall "footprint" of different national government policies and how these impact developing countries. Very little knowledge has been gained in this area.²⁷ The first IIIS report recommended that engagement with Irish Aid partner countries be strengthened and encouraged. This engagement is supported at the EU level, where at the May 2012 EU Development Council the conclusions called for a country-based dialogue on PCD.

A number of NGOs such as Trócaire are partners of Irish Aid and in receipt of significant funding. PCD related issues regularly surface in NGO advocacy work on areas such as taxation, climate change and food security for developing countries. There is an opportunity here for engagement, especially if NGOs can bring to the IDCD's attention where these issues of incoherence exist and concrete implications of it for the communities and countries they work with. In addition, NGOs can raise awareness and sustain the visibility of PCD on national and international levels, and work with the Oireachtas in relation to ensuring oversight of government policies on PCD. Lessons in this regard can be learnt from other countries. Finland has developed mechanisms for engaging civil society in PCD.²⁸ Sweden, on the other hand, as can be seen from the box, has produced a coherence barometer which civil society can use to hold the government to account.

²⁰ OECD DAC Peer Review, Ireland. 2009. Op Cit. p.12

²¹ King, M., Matthews, A. 2011. "Policy Coherence for Development: Indicators for Ireland. Institute for International Integration Studies, Trinity College Dublin, Ireland.

²² Barry, F., King, M., Matthews, A. 2009. Op Cit. Pg. 163

²³ OECD DAC Peer Review Ireland. 2009. Op Cit. Pg.13

²⁴ Ibid. Pg.31

²⁵ Barry, F., King, M., Matthews, A. (2009) Op Cit. Pg. 163

²⁶ Irish Aid. 2013. Op Cit. Pg. 28

²⁷ Galeazzi, Greta et al. 2013. Op Cit. Pg. 28

²⁸ Ibid. Pg. 20

**Lessons on cross-department coherence:
The National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325²⁹**

In 2011, Ireland produced a National Action Plan (NAP)³⁰ to implement its UN obligations on women, peace and security under UNSCR 1325. The NAP runs from 2011-2014, and as a policy mechanism provides a common framework to increase coherence, action and visibility on women, peace and security work with specific actions assigned to relevant departments and agencies. While it is still a new initiative, this experience provides lessons on which to draw for institutionalising PCD.

Delivery of the NAP is the responsibility of a range of government departments and agencies. Implementation is a key priority for most divisions and units in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. It is equally a priority for the Department of Defence and the Irish Defence Forces, and An Garda Síochána – both of which deploy personnel to conflict-affected countries. The NAP also touches on domestic policy through the experiences of migrant women in Ireland affected by conflict, for whom relevant decisions are made by the Health Service Executive and the Department of Justice and Equality. The NAP offers a good example of how to embed PCD across the various government departments.

The Conflict Resolution Unit in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has responsibility for leadership and oversight of the plan; however, it is not clear exactly who is responsible for implementing NAP actions across government. This may be a similar problem to what the IDCD faces.

A significant innovation of Ireland's NAP is the Monitoring Group, which oversees the implementation and monitoring carried out by departments and agencies and reviews the

outcome through reports from the respective bodies. Membership of the Monitoring Group includes relevant government departments and agencies, and representatives of civil society and academia. The group is chaired by an independent chair. At present, the Monitoring Group is the only space in which all government departments with responsibility for delivering the NAP meet.

The NAP comprises a strategy with five pillars, with a monitoring framework outlining responsible statutory actors with indicators and timelines. An 18 month mid-term progress report was carried out and reviewed by the Monitoring Group; this was then presented to the Tánaiste, the President, and the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade. In this way, the Monitoring Group through its chair works to ensure involvement and ownership by parliamentarians. As a mechanism for accountability the Monitoring Group serves as an example to draw on for operationalising PCD.

The process is in very early stages. Strengths include the strong commitment to UNSCR 1325 across the lead departments; the involvement of civil society and academia both in the drafting of the strategy and its monitoring; the existence of a strong monitoring and evaluation framework; mechanisms to ensure parliamentary oversight and ownership; and promotion of UNSCR 1325 in international and regional arenas. Weaknesses include the lack of baseline data against which to monitor, and inconsistencies in the level and nature of monitoring data; a somewhat ad hoc approach to implementation across different departments and agencies, which do not meet regularly outside of Monitoring Group Meetings; and a lack of clarity on the relationship between this National Action Plan and those of conflict-affected countries with which Ireland interacts. It is important that in developing a framework for delivering PCD, this experience is reflected and drawn on.

²⁹ This box is based on the Mid-Term Progress Report on the Implementation of Ireland's National Action Plan for UNSCR 1325, 2011-2014 by Bronagh Hinds and Karen McMinn

³⁰ The National Action Plan can be found at [http://www.dfa.ie/uploads/documents/CRU/national%20action%20plan%20\(web\).pdf](http://www.dfa.ie/uploads/documents/CRU/national%20action%20plan%20(web).pdf)

Recommendations

Since PCD became official policy in 2006, some progress has been made in building awareness across government departments. In order to move forward, however, and address the weaknesses identified above, the mechanisms need to be strengthened.

In the recent Policy, four practical proposals to strengthen PCD: i) to identify specific policy areas where coherence will be enhanced, ii) identify indicators to measure performance, iii) produce a biennial report on Ireland's progress on PCD which will be submitted to the Government and the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade and iv) finally that the oversight role of the IDCD will be strengthened.³¹ Trócaire recognises that these measures, when implemented, will significantly improve the PCD mechanisms and address many of the issues highlighted above. Trócaire welcomes these proposals and will seek to support their implementation.

In addition to these measures, Trócaire recommends the following to specifically address weaknesses highlighted in this briefing:

1. Assign responsibility for PCD to the Department of the Taoiseach

In the absence of overarching legislation that Sweden has, one way forward is to have ultimate responsibility for PCD resting with the Department of the Taoiseach, thereby ensuring an all-of-government approach to policy coherence. At present, it is not clear whether Irish Aid has sufficient political backing and institutional support to effectively address any inconsistencies and potential conflicts between departments that might adversely affect developing countries.

In assigning responsibility for PCD with the Department of the Taoiseach, it is important for the department to bring together parallel cross-department initiatives that address development issues but that may not have previously sat in the IDCD.

2. Establish a strong monitoring and evaluation framework

Effective monitoring and evaluating procedures and mechanisms must be in place so that policies can be effectively implemented and assessed as to how they are performing. This information is important to policy makers and can help them to refine or re-prioritise policy instruments and objectives as needed to maintain their coherence over time. Furthermore, the adoption of a comprehensive set of indicators for assessment of policy coherence would place Ireland at the forefront of evaluative PCD measures.

The new policy on international development clearly states that Ireland will develop indicators to monitor its progress on PCD. This could be accomplished by creating another subgroup within the IDCD with the specific task of monitoring and evaluation of policy coherence for development. It would be important that input and feedback from civil society and partner countries are looked for in identifying and developing these indicators. Human rights needs to be at the heart of this framework.

3. Development focal points within Government Departments

At present, responsibility for development issues in the Irish Government rests solely within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, specifically within Irish Aid. One way to broaden this responsibility is to select a 'Development Focal Point' or Representative within each government department, with the responsibility for development issues concerning their respective departments. Sufficient time and resources should be allocated to these individuals so that they have adequate capacity to deal with the relevant issues.

These Focal Points should then represent their respective Departments on the IDCD. From the analysis of the IDCD meetings minutes, it seems that departmental representation on the Committee varied from meeting to meeting, whereas a designated Departmental Development Representative would ensure consistency. A similar system of development representation across government ministries has worked in Sweden and has been praised by the OECD-DAC peer Review of Sweden (2009).

³¹ Irish Aid. 2013. Op Cit. Pg. 28

4. Promoting Parliamentary Oversight and Legislative Competences

It is critical that there is sufficient parliamentary oversight of PCD mechanisms in Ireland, this will be partially achieved through the Minister of State for Trade and Development submitting biennial reports to the Oireachtas. At the same time through, the IIS report suggests that as PCD is a policy agenda that spreads across a number of Oireachtas Committees, and not just the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Trade, more stringent parliamentary oversight may be needed.³²

This could be complemented by Ireland setting up a similar framework to the European Parliament (EP), where an MEP, who is on the Development Committee, is appointed as standing rapporteur on PCD, with a two year mandate. The task of the standing rapporteur is principally to promote PCD in the Parliament, across committees and across political groups. The standing rapporteur is the author of the EP's PCD report, which is published usually every 2 years, following the EU's report on PCD. In addition, the biennial report on PCD should be the topic of a Dail debate.

5. Facilitate Partner Country Engagement

There is significant scope to strengthen the mechanisms on PCD engagement with Irish Aid's nine partner countries. Such engagement could take the form of evaluative case studies within partner countries whereby the impact of Irish policy, particularly in agricultural and trade policies, could be assessed in a developing country context. This will help maximize the positive impact of Ireland's approach to development cooperation and help create a much clearer understanding of the impact of incoherence.

6. Promote engagement with civil society organisations on PCD

It is important that both Irish Aid and civil society organisations work together in greater collaboration to achieve a stronger approach in promoting development concerns at a policy level. To this end, the IDCD could facilitate greater interaction through creating a mechanism for facilitating systematic engagement on PCD issues with civil society organisations. At the same time, civil society organisations need to take a more proactive stance in seeking engagement with the IDCD. Civil society organisations could also provide a valuable evaluative service in the form of a shadow coherence barometer report, similar to the Swedish collaboration.

**For further information
please contact:**

Susan Cullen
IMIS and Logistics Support
Policy & Campaigns

Trócaire Maynooth,
Co Kildare, Ireland

Tel: +353 (0)1 629 3333
Email: scullen@trocaire.ie

www.trocaire.org