

# Dóchas

## The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

Dóchas Board 106 (5-25)  
24/11/25

### Dóchas Board

held on Thursday, 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025 at 10:00 in the Dóchas office, Suite 8, Olympic House,  
Pleasants Street, Dublin 8

### M i n u t e s

**Present:** Rosamond Bennett (Christian Aid Ireland) Chairperson (Virtually)  
Siobhán Cassidy (Trócaire) Treasurer & Company Secretary  
Karol Balfe (ActionAid Ireland)  
Frank Long (Oxfam Ireland) (Virtually)  
Olive Moore (Front Line Defenders)  
Paul Donnelly (External Board Member)  
David Donoghue (External Board Member)  
Martina Fitzgerald (External Board Member) (Virtually)

**Apologies:** John Moffett (Misean Cara) Vice Chairperson

**In attendance:** Jane-Ann McKenna (CEO of Dóchas)  
Anna Farrell (Finance & Operations Manager, Dóchas)

#### 1. Meeting Opening and Standing Items

##### a. Welcome

The Chairperson opened the meeting, welcoming those present.

##### b. Apologies and Agenda

There was one apology, noted above. There were no changes to the agenda as circulated.

##### c. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

It was noted that representatives of all Dóchas members present at this meeting have a potential conflict of interest in relation to Agenda Item 3b (Dóchas and other networks) as their organisations are also members of one or more of the networks under discussion.

##### d. Minutes of Board Meeting

The Minutes of the last meeting, held on 25/09/25 were approved: Paul Donnelly (Proposed), Siobhan Cassidy (Seconded).

##### e. Matters Arising and To-do List

All of the items under Matters Arising and on the to-do list have been completed or will be addressed during the meeting.

#### 2. Reports and Updates

##### a. CEO Report

The **CEO Report**, which was circulated in advance, was taken as read.

The CEO highlighted some key areas of focus during the period covered by the Report:

- **Global Philanthropic Foundations:** There has been an increase in global foundations interested in working in Ireland and seeing Ireland as key to influencing on key areas (e.g. ODA, MFF, etc).
- **Budget 2026:** The €30m increase for ODA doesn't go far enough - more is needed to get Ireland on track to reach 0.7% of GNI.
- **Advancement of Human Rights as a Charitable Purpose:** Dóchas participates in a consultative panel established by the Charity Regulator to determine how the regulator should interpret human rights as a charitable purpose. We will bring a small group of human rights focused members together over the coming months to inform our position on this issue.

During a general discussion it was noted that there has been a huge amount of high quality events and activity during the period covered by the report, with a lot more planned over the next two years, particularly around the Gates and EU Presidency projects. It will be important to assess the impact this increased workload will have on the team and on our strategy and to ensure that we have the right roles in place to deliver on these projects.

In terms of capacity, the CEO said that we are at a pinch point as we are taking the lead on the network piece, which has been very time consuming. The application to the EU for the Presidency Project, which will be submitted in mid-December, will include extra capacity. The team is enthusiastic about engaging in this piece of work.

In response to a question from Martina, the CEO confirmed that Dóchas is registered with the EU's Transparency Register.

The Chairperson thanked the CEO and the team for the enormous amount of work that has taken place over the last number of months and added that it is great to hear that the team is energised around plans for 2026.

## **b. Emerging Issues**

There were no emerging issues.

## **3. Strategic Topics**

### **a. EU Presidency Update**

The CEO gave an update on the EU Presidency Project, during which she explained that there have been consultations with members as well as with CEOs and key themes have been agreed (i.e. Civil Society, the MFF and Climate & Food Security). Activities will include events, capacity building training workshops, advocacy meetings, policy papers and a study visit to Brussels. The budget will be teased out over the next two weeks and the final proposal will be submitted in mid-December. A launch event is planned for 24 June 2026.

### **b. Dóchas and other Networks**

The CEO referred members to the position paper, circulated in advance, which outlines the background, Dóchas' engagement with the networks concerned, DFA's position on the issue and recommended next steps for Dóchas.

A lot needs to happen before this proposal can be realised. Consideration needs to be given to representative, reputational, governance, employment rights, financial and legal issues. Dóchas will need to engage with its members as well as with the five networks. Due diligence on each network will need to be conducted before we consider entering into a hosting arrangement with them. Given the scale of what needs to happen and the complexities involved and the fact that we have the Presidency Project in 2026, we simply wouldn't have the bandwidth to take on this additional work until 2027.

#### **4. Finance, Audit & Risk Committee**

##### **a. Report from Committee**

The committee met on 19/11/25 to review the January-October financial report (copy circulated in advance), cash flow forecast, budget 2026, process for drawing down overdraft facility, Data Incident Log, Register of Interests and Risk Register. The Treasurer said that in reviewing the 2025 financials, the committee noted that income and expenditure is on track with budget figures and that the year-end deficit will be less than previously planned.

##### **b. Process for drawing down overdraft facility**

The document was circulated to members in advance and was taken as read. The Treasurer said that the document has been discussed by the FARC and the committee recommends that it be approved by the Board.

##### **c. Budget 2026**

The Treasurer presented the budget for 2026, copies of which were circulated in advance, noting that there will be a significant increase in income and expenditure, mainly due to the EU Presidency and Gates projects. These will add a level of complexity to finances that mustn't be underestimated. The team is encouraged to reach out to the FARC should additional support be required. The committee isn't concerned about the planned deficit (approx. €93k), is comfortable with the budget as presented and recommends that it be approved by the Board.

The CEO noted that we have managed to secure over €1m in income from other sources (i.e. the EU and Gates) for 2026-27 and will be looking at other options to diversify our income sources over the coming months.

In response to a question from Olive, the CEO said that we will be moving offices in 2026 because our current lease expires at the end of June but also because additional space will be required to accommodate 4-5 extra staff for the Presidency project.

##### **d. Risk Register:** The CEO presented the Risk Register, copies of which were circulated in advance, noting that:

- Risk 5 (Anti-NGO and civil society sentiment amongst Irish public and EU): Remains Amber. Anti-civil society and anti-ODA sentiment has died down for the moment and we aren't seeing it translating into government policy.
- Risk 13 (Decline in Member Income) – previously Risk 12: remains Amber to reflect concerns that funding cuts and pressures on fundraising might impact members contributions to Dóchas.

##### **Decisions:**

- The process for drawing down overdraft facility was approved. Paul Donnelly (Proposed). David Donoghue (Seconded).
- The Budget for 2026 was approved. Paul Donnelly (Proposed). Siobhan Cassidy (Seconded).
- There were no changes to the Risk Register as presented.

## **5. Proposed Meeting Dates for 2026**

Board meetings in 2026 will take place at 10am on the following dates: 29<sup>th</sup> January; 26<sup>th</sup> March; 25<sup>th</sup> June; 24<sup>th</sup> September and 26<sup>th</sup> November.

The AGM and Conference will take place on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2026.

### **Decision:**

- The above dates were agreed

### **Actions:**

- Anna to send diary notices for Board meetings and AGM to all Board members.
- Chairperson to come back to CEO re: rescheduling the Board Away Day, which was postponed from 06/11/25.

## **6. Other Business**

There was no other business.

## **7. Private Business**

The Board met for a private discussion.

The CEO and Finance and Operations Manager left the meeting for this agenda item.