



THE BEST IRELAND CAN BE FOR FOOD AND NUTRITION SECURITY

**Irish Official Development Assistance
for Nutrition Interventions**

CONCERN
worldwide

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Cover photo: Women return from farmland with baskets of vegetables and firewood, Kapotongo village, Manono Territory. The village is home to many beneficiaries of Concern Worldwide’s Food for Peace program, which aims to build sustainable agricultural practice in the region, and allow communities here better access to nutritious and more profitable crops. . Photo: Hugh Kinsella Cunningham/Concern Worldwide

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ACRONYMS

AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency - New Partnership for Africa's Development
COP	Conference of Parties Bodies
CoPPI	OECD DAC Community of Practice on Poverty and Inequality
CRS	Creditor Reporting System
DAC	Development Assistance Committee of the OECD
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DSAI	Development Studies Association Ireland
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
ENN	Emergency Nutrition Network
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
FCAS	Fragile and Conflict-Affected States
FfD	Financing for Development
GNI	Gross National Income
HDR	Human Development Report
HIPC	Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (Initiative)
HTF	Hunger Task Force
IARDC	Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee
IFI	International Financial Institution
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFIAD	Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development
IFN	Investment Framework for Nutrition
LSHTM	London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
MAMI	Management of at-risk Mothers and Infants
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MUAC	Mid Upper Arm Circumference
N4G	Nutrition for Growth

NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NUIG	National University of Ireland, Galway
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
RBA	Rome Based Agencies
RUTF	Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SUN	Scaling Up Nutrition
TD	Teachta Dála (Member of Irish Parliament)
UCC	University College Cork
UN	United Nations
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
WASH	Water Hygiene and Sanitation
WFP	World Food Programme
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organisation

INTRODUCTION

About this Discussion Paper

This Discussion Paper, commissioned by Concern Worldwide and developed with analysis by Ideas and Action for Public Good, seeks to capture Ireland's efforts over the past two decades to address global hunger and malnutrition. Drawing only on publicly available data and informed by the perspectives of various stakeholders through a series of collective consultations, the paper provides an analysis of Ireland's efforts to address the global burden of food and nutrition security. It also serves as an opportunity to reflect on themes, highlight potential actions, and further reinforce Ireland's commitment to maintaining its leadership in food and nutrition security. Concern is producing two papers ahead of N4G 2025; this discussion paper incorporating data on Ireland's Official Development Assistance (ODA) spend, and perspectives and recommendations shared during the detailed consultative process and a short advocacy position paper to the Irish Government. This paper is the product of wide consultation including with the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) who have provided very helpful feedback and reflections. The Development Studies Association Ireland (DSAI) hosted a consultation session in collaboration with University College Cork (UCC) at its annual conference in October. A consultation meeting with NGOs was held in November and Concern and Public Good have held several one-to-one discussions with individuals and organisations, including with Alliance 2015 who host Generation Nutrition in Brussels, Eleanor Crook Foundation, the Irish Forum for International Agricultural Development (ITFIAD) and individual NGOs and academics.



Kulsum* (28) a Rohingya mother visits Concern nutrition centre with her fourth child (15 months) for health examination and to receive ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) in the nutrition centre at Camp 19, Rohingya camp, Ukhiya, Cox's bazar. Photo: Saikat Mojumder/Concern Worldwide

2025 will see four major opportunities for international influence and leadership on nutrition: the Nutrition for Growth Summit (N4G) in March (France) followed by the Food Systems Summit + 4 in April (Vietnam), Financing for Development (FfD) Conference in June (Spain), COP 30 hosted by Brazil in November and SUN global gathering in November (Rwanda). The case for an integrated strategy covering all four events has been laid out by the Chair of the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee, Tom Arnold.¹

Although Ireland is not a large donor in volume terms, it rightly has a reputation for being poverty focused, for prioritising nutrition and food systems and for reaching those left behind, and especially the furthest behind first. The Tánaiste said early in 2024, “The eradication of hunger and tackling undernutrition have been core principles of Ireland’s international development programme since its inception. Promoting good nutrition is a central goal of ‘*A Better World*, Ireland’s policy for international development, which prioritizes reaching those furthest behind first.”²

Ending hunger and reducing poverty have long been core to Irish development cooperation – reflecting Ireland’s own experience. Historically the Irish Government have supported NGOs that are working in the food and nutrition security sector. For government, it is also in Ireland’s interests: to trade and cooperate with partners – especially Africa, our nearest continental neighbour, with a market of 1.7 billion people. For business – especially the farming community, for universities, colleges, and researchers, collaborating and sharing Irish knowledge and expertise is important. The question now is how we can all do more, to build on our track record and show Irish leadership. Ireland’s leadership on hunger and nutrition reflects the commitment of the Government, as well as the commitment and capacity of academics and researchers, Irish businesses and the farming community. It is underpinned by the demonstrable and long-standing commitment of the Irish people to ending hunger.

The paper aims to provide a ‘stocktake’ of Ireland’s contributions to nutrition and food security³. It provides a detailed examination of Ireland’s ODA drawing on the high-water marks of Ireland’s leadership on nutrition over the past 20 years across programming and partnerships, policy, research, advocacy, influencing and impact. It also proposes a set of opportunities that the Irish leadership must leverage to accelerate progress and be the best that it can be to end malnutrition and extreme hunger.

1. 7 Nov 2024 <https://www.irishtimes.com/food/2024/11/07/ireland-can-play-pivotal-role-in-ensuring-global-food-security-while-meeting-challenge-of-an-overheating-planet/>

2. Remarks by the Tánaiste at the Child Wasting Event, Nairobi, 16 July 2024 Available here; [Remarks by the Tánaiste at the Child Wasting Event.pdf - Google Drive](#)

3. [A Better World Ireland’s Policy for International Development | Ireland.ie](#) More detailed information on the aims of this project and its approach can be found here.

IRELAND'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE FOR NUTRITION

Definitions: Understanding Official Development Assistance (ODA)^{4 5}

Bilateral ODA: Bilateral ODA refers to financial aid, technical assistance, or other forms of support provided directly from one country to another. It is often tailored to the specific needs of the recipient country and can include initiatives such as funding for education, health, or infrastructure development. For example, Ireland's bilateral ODA focuses on key partner countries, addressing poverty, hunger, and inequality.

Multilateral ODA: Multilateral ODA is funding provided by donor countries to international organizations, such as the United Nations, World Bank, or regional development banks, which then allocate these resources to development programs in various countries. This approach allows pooling of resources and expertise to address global challenges such as climate change or food security.

The 0.7% Target: This target, set by the United Nations, calls for high-income countries to allocate 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) to ODA. While some countries include refugee costs within their borders in ODA calculations, others report these separately. Ireland has committed to reaching the 0.7% target by 2030, reinforcing its dedication to global solidarity and sustainable development.

Nutrition and the OECD Nutrition Policy Markers

The OECD's Nutrition Policy Markers help track how development projects and funding contribute to nutrition outcomes.

- **Principal Nutrition Marker:** This indicates that the primary objective of a project or intervention is to improve nutrition.
- **Significant Nutrition Marker:** This refers to projects where nutrition is a key, but secondary objective.

⁴ OECD. (2023). "Official Development Assistance – Definition and Trends." Retrieved from OECD website.

⁵ UN. (2022). "History of the 0.7% Target." Retrieved from United Nations website

HOW MUCH AID FOR NUTRITION IS IRELAND PROVIDING?

Ireland’s performance against its own commitments

At the 2021 Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit 396 new nutrition commitments made by a total of 181 stakeholders across 78 countries.⁶ The 396 commitments included 809 commitment goals. Of those commitment goals, 370 (46%) were Programmatic, 210 (26%) were Impact, 162 (20%) were Policy and 67 (8%) were Financial. Ireland pledged⁷ to allocate at least €800m to nutrition over five years amounting to €160 million a year of Irish ODA which would have nutrition as either a principal or a significant objective – based on the OECD’s Nutrition Policy Marker⁸.

The policy marker applies to any project or activity with a clear and explicit nutrition outcome, whether as a primary (“Principal”) objective or a secondary (“Significant”) objective. Under this framework, the entire value of an activity is accounted for, even if nutrition represents only a small component of the overall project⁹. Ireland has met this pledge. ODA marked for nutrition has risen every year since reporting began in 2019, reaching €218 million in 2023. This amounts to 17% of total ODA excluding refugee hosting costs. (See Figure 1).

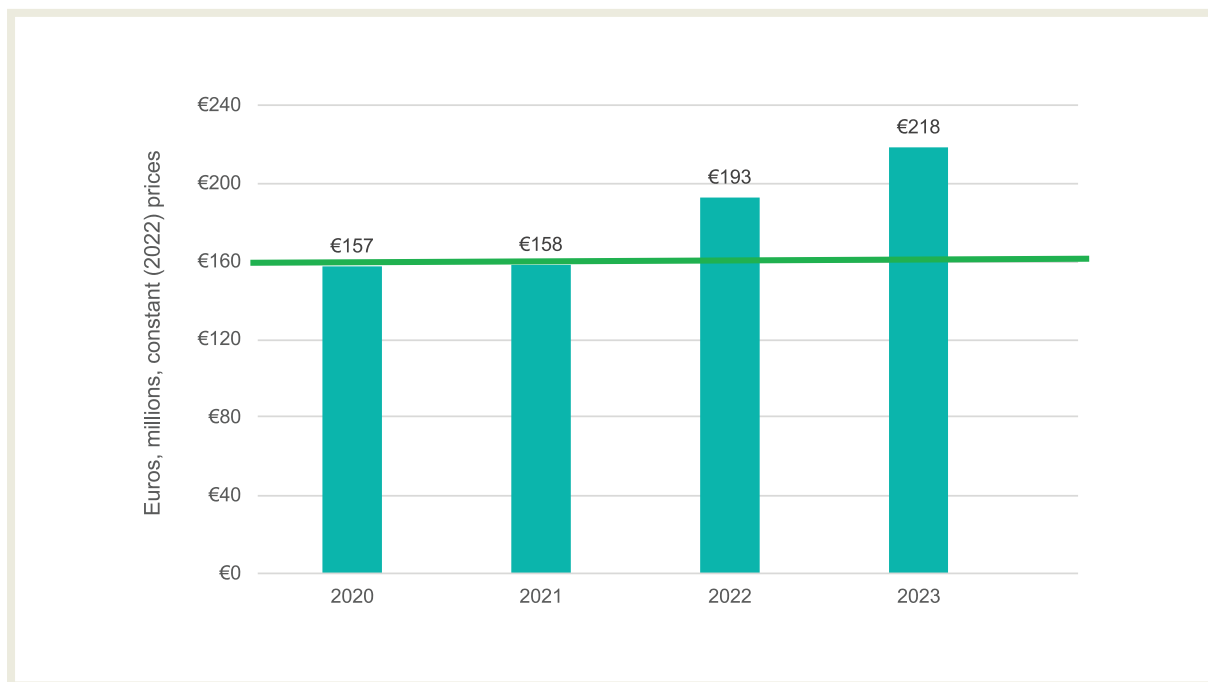


FIGURE 1 Irish ODA marked for Nutrition 2020 – 2023 (The Green line depicts the average 800M/5 year)
 Source OECD Data Explorer, Other Markers: Aid Activities Targeting Other Policy Objectives

⁶. Tokyo Compact on Global Nutrition for Growth, Annex: Commitments, 14 December 2021. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications>
⁷. https://nutritionforgrowth.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Tokyo-Compact-on-Global-N4G_Annex_Dec-14.pdf
⁸. Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement. (n.d.). What is the OECD nutrition policy marker (NPM)? Retrieved from <https://scalingupnutrition.org/resource-library/briefs-fact-sheets/what-oecd-nutrition-policy-marker-npm>
⁹. Further details are available in the Annex 1 methodology



GatmaiTap in Site E. Photo: Jon Hozier-Byrne/Concern Worldwide

This is close to the Hunger Task Force indicative recommendation that 20% of spending should be on actions to alleviate and eradicate hunger.

In 2022, Ireland allocated €63 million – or 11% of bilateral ODA¹⁰ - to investments which had nutrition as the main (Principal) objective. This puts Ireland at the top of the list of the 25 donors who reported. (Figure 2)

A further €130 million (22% of bilateral ODA) was allocated to activities with a significant nutrition objective – making Ireland the third largest on the list of 20 donors who reported spending marked as Significant for nutrition. (Figure 3)

¹⁰. Note that all bilateral ODA data is shown net of spending on in-donor-country refugee costs – see Annex 1,

Ireland's performance in comparison with other donors

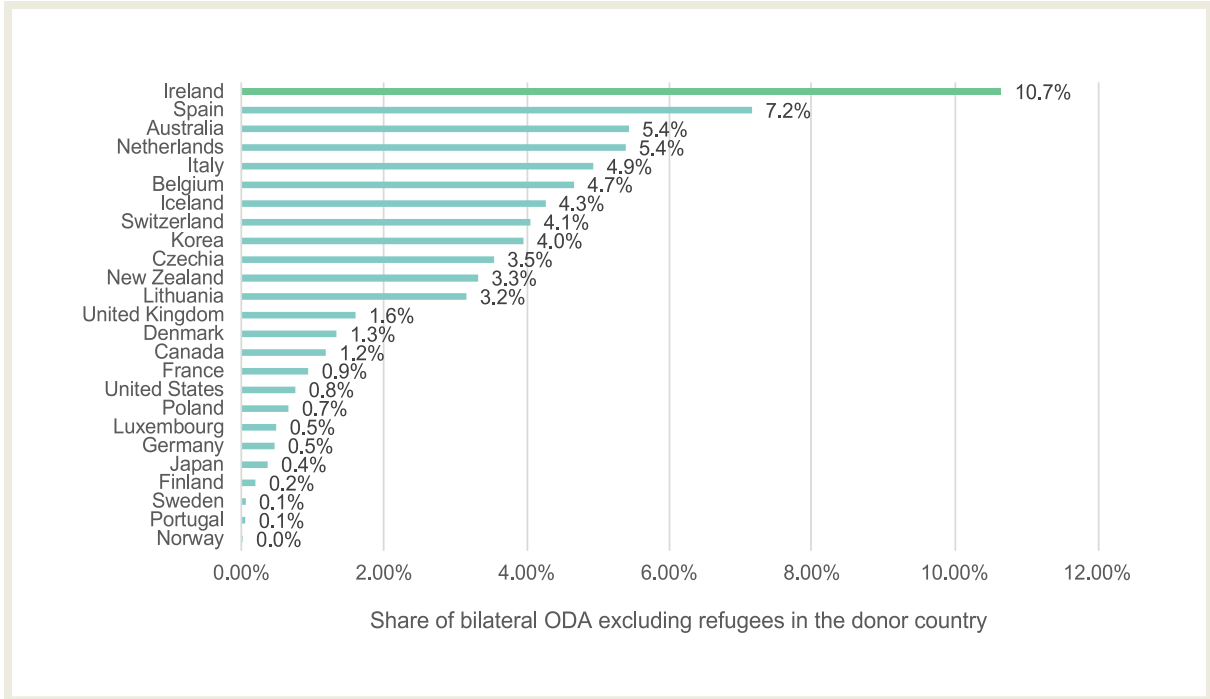


FIGURE 2 Share of bilateral ODA with nutrition as a Principal (Level 2) objective 2022.

Source: OECD Data Explorer, Other Markers: Aid Activities Targeting Other Policy Objectives

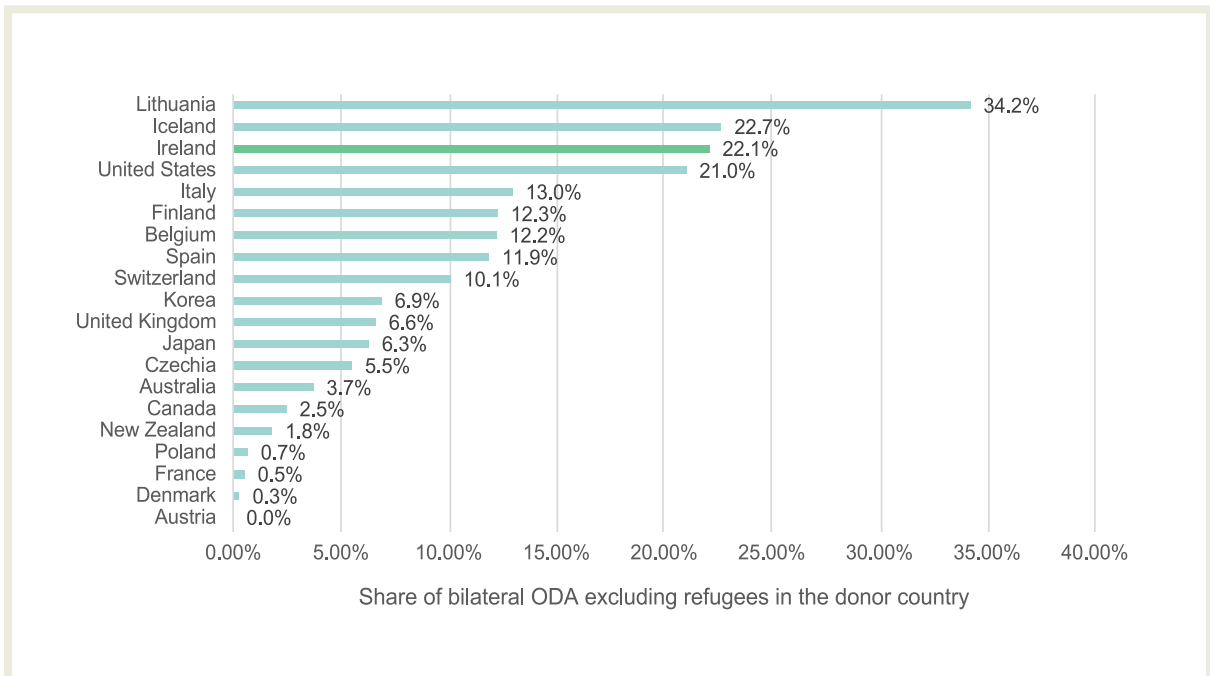


FIGURE 3 Share of bilateral ODA with nutrition as a significant (Level 1) objective 2022.

Source: OECD Data Explorer, Other Markers: Aid Activities Targeting Other Policy Objectives

WHAT TYPES OF INVESTMENT DOES IRELAND MAKE IN NUTRITION?

Basic Nutrition

A more focused way of capturing investments intended to make an impact on nutrition is to look at spending allocated specifically to Basic Nutrition.

“Basic Nutrition” is the OECD DAC code that is applied to ODA for spending that is focused exclusively on nutrition and that is mostly likely to finance the World Health Assembly (WHA) basic nutrition interventions.¹¹

Definition of Basic Nutrition spending

“Micronutrient deficiency identification and supplementation; Infant and young child feeding promotion including exclusive breastfeeding; non-emergency management of acute malnutrition and other targeted feeding programs (including complementary feeding); Staple food fortification including salt iodization; Nutritional status monitoring and national nutrition surveillance; Research, capacity building, policy development, monitoring and evaluation in support of these interventions.”

Under the DAC nutrition marker system, as reported above, all ODA for Basic Nutrition is included as Level 2, Principal.¹²

Spending on Basic Nutrition increased by 60% between 2022 and 2023 to reach a new high of €24 million in 2023 (Figure 4).

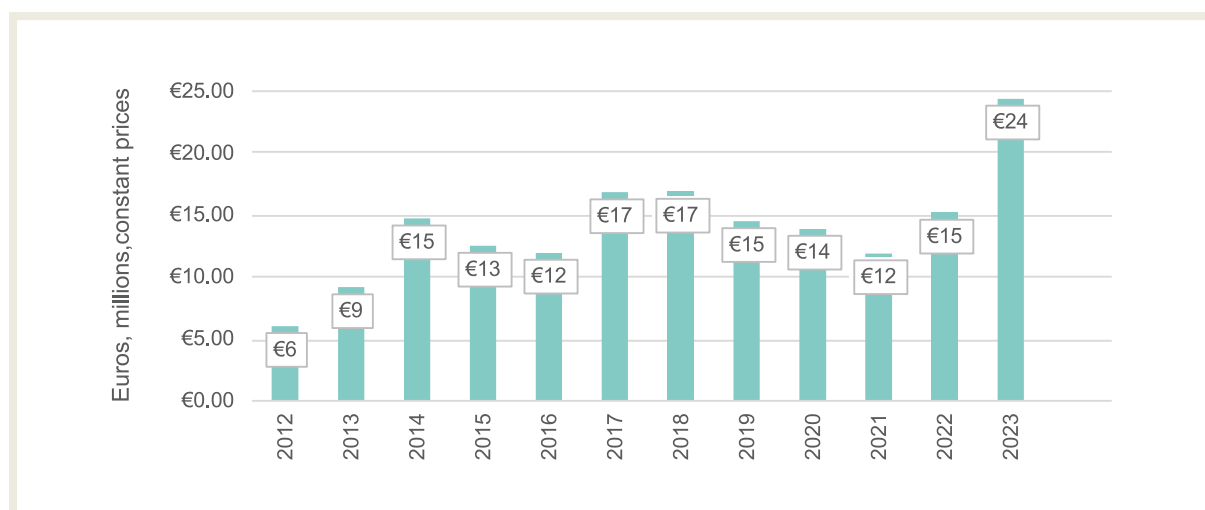


FIGURE 4 ODA from Ireland for Basic Nutrition 2012 to 2023

Source OECD Data Explorer Creditor Reporting System (CRS)

¹¹ World Health Organization, *Global Nutrition Targets 2025: Policy Brief Series* (WHO/NMH/NHD/14.2), Geneva: WHO, 2014. Available at: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-NMH-NHD-14.2>.

¹² While the marker can be applied to any ODA activity, donors can only allocate spending to one purpose code, which explains why nutrition spending as tracked by the DAC marker system is much greater than allocations specific to basic nutrition.

In 2023, Ireland allocated nearly 4% of bilateral ODA (net of in-donor-country refugee costs) to Basic Nutrition– more than double the percentage achieved by any other donor and five times the average of 0.52% for the DAC as a whole. (Figure 5)

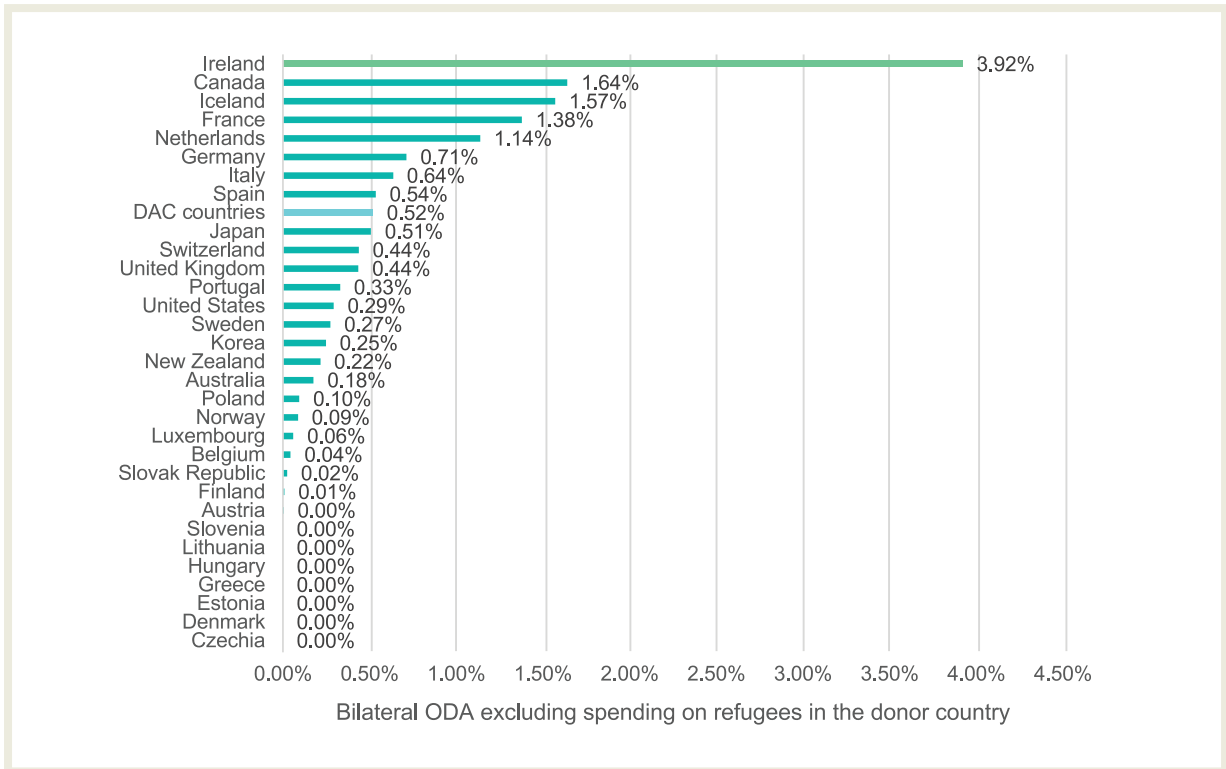


FIGURE 5 Basic Nutrition as a share of bilateral ODA 2023 for DAC countries¹³

Source OECD Data Explorer Creditor Reporting System (CRS)

Ireland has contributed a higher share of ODA to basic nutrition than most donors, with a consistent long-term record over more than 20 years and has been the largest donor as a share of ODA since 2017. (Figure 6)

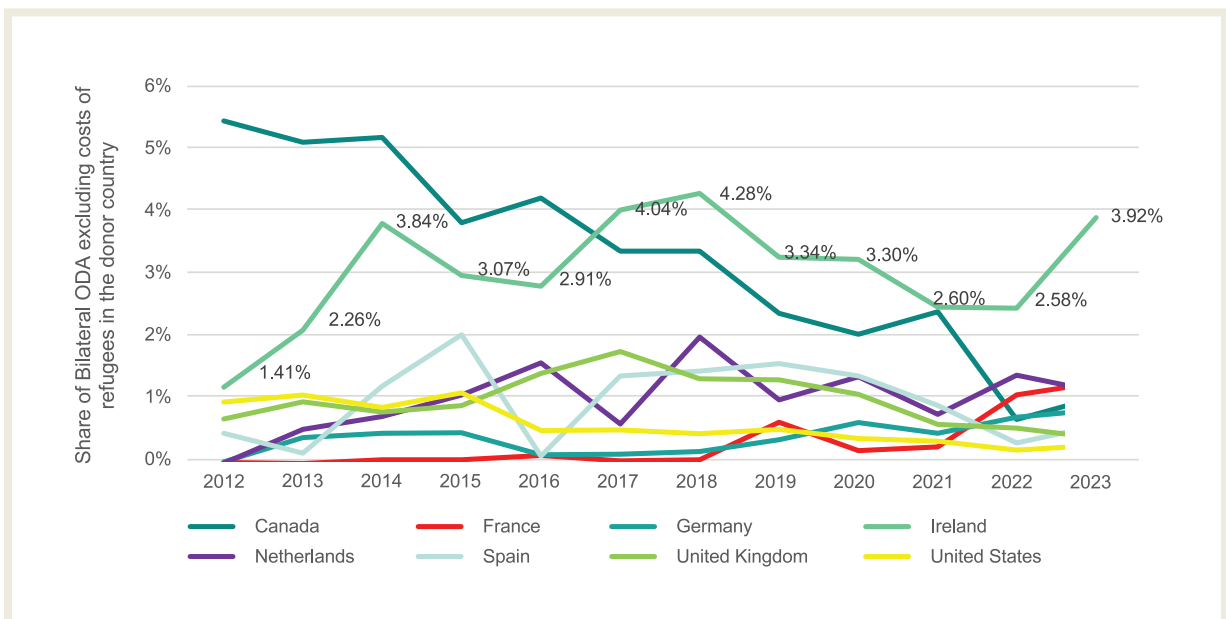


FIGURE 6 Share of bilateral ODA allocated to Basic Nutrition, Ireland and selected donors.

Source OECD Data Explorer Creditor Reporting System (CRS)

¹³. DAC Countries refers to the total for all countries that are members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee. See <https://www.oecd.org/en/about/committees/development-assistance-committee.html>

The share of ODA allocated to basic nutrition from DAC donors as a whole has declined steadily and is now just half of one percent of bilateral ODA excluding refugee costs (Figure 7). Ireland is well placed to advocate for other donors to reverse this decline in nutrition spending.

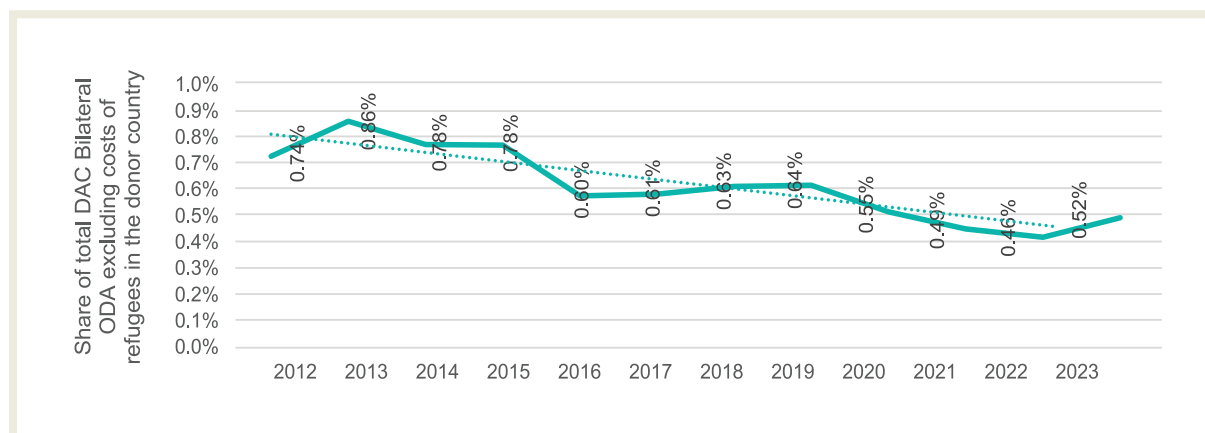


FIGURE 7 Share of DAC Bilateral ODA allocated to Basic Nutrition ODA excluding in-donor-country refugee costs. Source OECD Data Explorer Creditor Reporting System (CRS)

Enabling Investments: agriculture, WASH and social protection

Improving nutrition depends on a whole range of factors – income, livelihoods, health including reproductive health and the first 1000 days, water and sanitation, as well as improved agricultural productivity, access to affordable nutritious foods, better diets and behaviour change.

Since 2016, Ireland has significantly increased investments in social protection, which contributes to improved nutrition outcomes through enhanced access to household resources. However, during the same period, spending on water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) has declined substantially. It is well documented that as access to safe water, adequate sanitation, and hygiene services are fundamental components of a multisectoral approach to addressing undernutrition.¹⁴ Inadequate WASH services exacerbate the risk of infections and diarrheal diseases, which are underlying causes of malnutrition, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. A systems-based approach that integrates the five systems WASH, social protection, food, education and health interventions is essential to sustainably reduce the burden of undernutrition and improve overall health outcomes in vulnerable populations.¹⁵

Since the 1990s, ODA from both OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors and EU member states on agriculture has declined substantially. The Hunger Task Force¹⁶ noted this neglect of agriculture and called for a “strong and renewed focus on food security and agriculture”.

So how has Ireland performed in terms of its investments in enabling better nutrition through support for agriculture and rural development, social protection and WASH?

- Irish support for agriculture reached its highest level in 2015 at €36 million. In 2023, despite the emphasis on food systems, Irish bilateral ODA for agriculture had fallen to €26 million, its lowest level since 2012, and amounted to 4% of bilateral ODA.
- Twenty years ago, Ireland allocated over €20m to water and sanitation. The recent high point was €6.3 million in 2015 and in 2023 it was €800,000 or 0.13% of bilateral ODA. Ireland should review its approach to ensure that its investments in nutrition are matched by investment in water and sanitation – either directly or by collaboration with other agencies.
- Investment in Social Protection had its high-water mark in 2017 with €25 million but fell to €18 million in 2022. However, it increased once again to €23m in 2023 or 3.7% of bilateral ODA.

¹⁴ UNICEF’s Conceptual Framework on the Determinants of Maternal and Child Nutrition, 2020.

¹⁵ [UNICEF 2020-2030 Nutrition strategy](#), UNICEF, 2020.

¹⁶ [Hunger Task Force Full report](#), 2008.

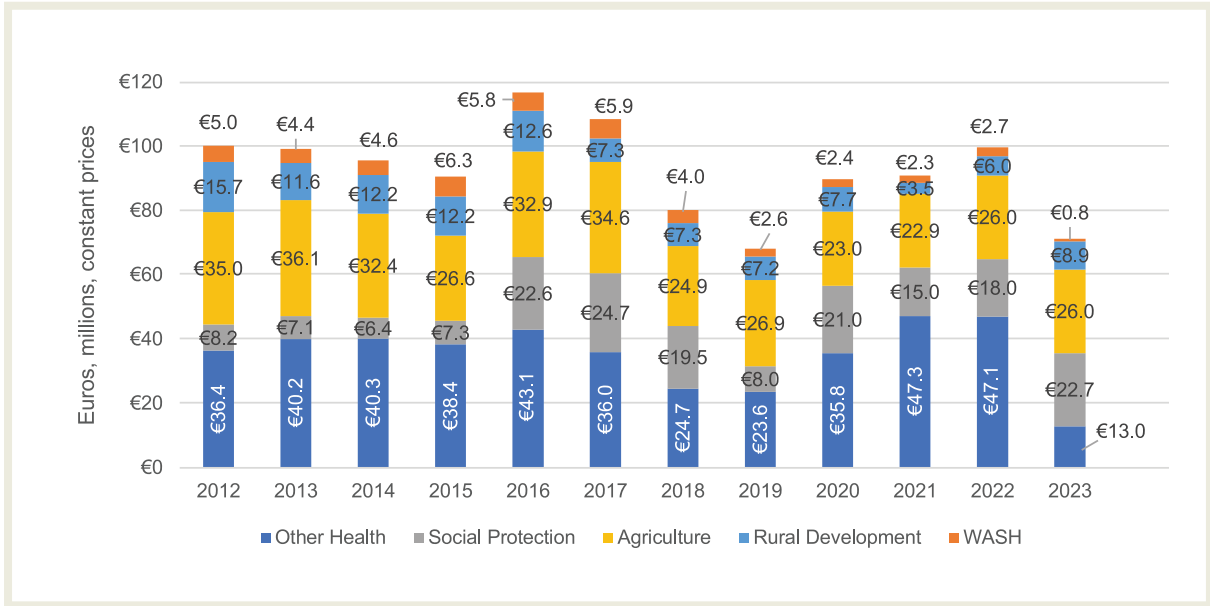


FIGURE 8 Irish ODA to sectors that contribute to nutrition and food security.
 Source OECD Data Explorer Creditor Reporting System (CRS0 C24 Sectors 2000-2023 Enabling)

High Impact and nutrition specific Interventions

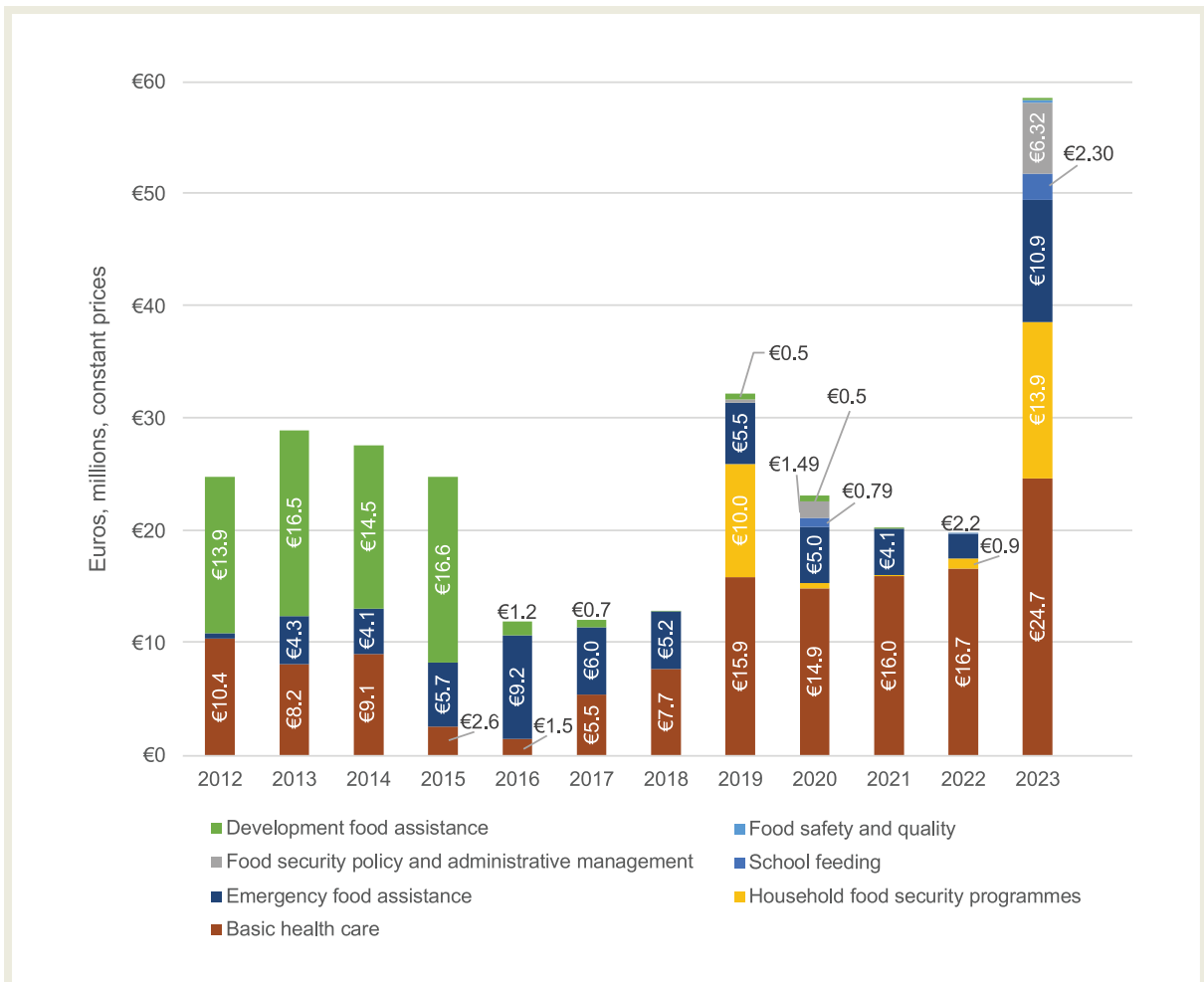


FIGURE 9 Irish ODA allocated to additional specified investments which contribute to nutrition.
 Source OECD Data Explorer Creditor Reporting System (CRS)

In addition to Basic Nutrition, there are several other sectors of investment that very specifically contribute to improved nutrition. For example, the activities classified by Ireland as “Basic Health Care” are strongly oriented towards nutrition.¹⁷ Other activities include school feeding, food security and emergency food assistance.

In 2023, Irish ODA for these nutrition-focused activities totalled over €60 million – a record high - and nearly three times 2022 allocations.

In 2024, the World Bank updated its Investment Framework for Nutrition¹⁸, highlighting the scale of the nutrition challenge, the costs and benefits of financing nutrition, and the range of interventions needed. Included in these were a set of High Impact Interventions, including Vitamin and Zinc supplementation, nutrition supplements, food fortification.¹⁹

Using data downloaded in January 2025 from the OECD DAC Creditor Reporting System (CRS) we analysed approximately 2500 lines of data showing Ireland’s ODA spending commitments totalling €2.6 billion gross or €1.24 billion excluding in-donor refugee costs. Within this total, 307 commitments mentioned nutrition in the Project Title, Short or Long Description of the allocation.²⁰ Total spending on these nutrition commitments was €107 million. This is 11.62% of Irish ODA net of in-donor-country refugee costs.²¹ The largest single allocation is €8 million to the PROSAUDE III Common Budget Support Fund for the health sector in Mozambique. The fund covers interventions to reduce maternal, neonatal and infant mortality; malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV, and the treatment of acute malnutrition in children under 5 years of age.

Other contributions over €5 million covered:

- €7.2 million in the form of a voluntary core contribution to UNICEF to support their strategic objectives which include access to essential services including health and nutrition, education and skills, protection, environment, social protection and poverty reduction.
- €5 million to the Muti-Donor Trust Fund supporting the Government of Ethiopia’s Productive Safety Net Programme, which supports 7.9 million extremely poor and vulnerable people in drought-prone rural districts of Ethiopia. The PSNP’s specific focus is on reaching poor women-headed households and empowering women. Beneficiaries receive cash and/or food transfers, linked to a range of social services and livelihoods support and community infrastructure.
- €5 million for UNICEF’s Global Action Plan child wasting programme, using social protection type assistance to accelerate actions on nutritional wasting in Madagascar, DRC and Malawi.
- €5 million for Concern Worldwide to implement the Horn of Africa Child Wasting Initiative²² to preventing wasting in the Mander Triangle (Ethiopia, Kenya, and Somalia). The focus of the work covers improved feeding and caring behaviours; improved food security and climate resilient livelihood strategies; influencing country and regional strategies to prevent wasting
- €5 million to a climate hunger trust fund under a World Food Programme Strategic Partnership Agreement.

¹⁷ Under the Basic Health Care code – 71% is 5 projects worth \$13 million for health systems, \$2.5 million or 13% is via 45 projects specifically about neo natal care and reducing infant mortality – which could equally well have been put in basic nutrition. See <S:\JRTG-2023\C24 Project level sheets.xlsx>

¹⁸ World Bank, Investment Framework for Nutrition: Revisited and Updated 2024. Washington, D.C.: World Bank, 2024

¹⁹ For details of these interventions see, for example, Investment Framework for Nutrition 2024, Shekar et al, World Bank. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/nutrition/publication/investment-framework-nutrition>

²⁰ 12.3% of the number of commitments.

²¹ Overall, we analysed the CRS data against the following terms, which include elements associated with High Impact Interventions: Nutrition - including malnutrition, MAM, SAM, hunger, undernutrition, stunting, wasting, supplements including vitamins, therapeutic, including RUTF, diet, Community health workers, antenatal, breastfeeding, micronutrient, fortification, anaemia, birthweight. These are consistent with the methodology used by R4D to track nutrition specific interventions based on the Global Investment Framework for Nutrition Priority Package.

²² Ireland. *Tánaiste Announces €15 Million to Combat Child Hunger*. Irish Aid, 2023. Available at: <https://www.ireland.ie/en/irish-aid/news-and-publications/latest-news/news-archive/tanaiste-announces-15-million-to-combat-child-hunger/>.



Mothers Group member Martina Myers at a food and nutrition diversification session in Gborgar, Grand bassa, Liberia, supported by Concern under the Irish Aid funded LIFE programme. Photo: Kieran McConville/Concern Worldwide

Initial analysis of Ireland's ODA spending in 2022 and 2023 showed very few specific, stand-alone allocations to High Impact Interventions such as food fortification or lipid-based nutrient supplements. This is partly a reporting issue but also reflects where and how Irish organisations work. The experience of pioneering and implementing CMAM was about how interventions can be delivered in the context of remoteness, fragility and chronic poverty. This requires support for family, community and government action on malnutrition in the context of food systems and reaching those furthest behind. The 2023 WHO guidelines identify a lot of innovative approaches for new, cost effective and simplified ways to deliver services in fragile contexts but roll out will depend on support for ministries of health and local NGOs, who can be the only agencies on the ground. But this also reflects a change – originally CMAM came out as a ground-breaking, almost self-contained, package to bring treatment to communities. Now the approach is much more about integration of acute malnutrition services into the basic health package.

It is also important to acknowledge that the accuracy and reliability of such an analysis depend heavily on the quality and consistency of data entry within the reporting system. One of the keywords associated with High Impact Interventions appear in the Project Titles, Short or Long Description fields of the 2023 Irish projects in the DAC CRS database. Yet Ireland's funding is expressly supporting some of these High Impact Interventions – for example through UNICEF in DRC, Madagascar and Malawi.²³ To definitively assess Irish support for these interventions, would require analysis of project documentation of the 300 plus allocations which mention nutrition in Ireland's CRS reporting.

Information beyond CRS reporting shows a more nuanced picture. Ireland's support and partnership with NGOs is both creative and dynamic, demonstrating a collaborative and innovative approach to addressing nutrition challenges. Through diverse initiatives, Irish NGOs are making significant contributions to improving nutrition globally. For example,

- Trocáire is engaging with communities in work on nutrient dense crops to support better nutrition.
- Concern is collaborating with University College Cork on the cost of diets and application of Vitamin A; Irish NGOs have been working with Harvest Plus to promote Orange fleshed sweet potato (OFSP), Vitamin A maize, Fe+ beans, Zn+ pearl millet.

²³ A collaboration between UNICEF and Ireland to accelerate the GAP for Child Wasting. Progress Report, January 2024.

- The University of Galway (NUIG) is working on Fe+ beans and other legumes.²⁴
- Self Help Africa's work includes food fortification policy and practice – for example in Kenya and Malawi, plus germplasm work in support of community access to dietary diversity.
- GOAL have substantial engagement with MAMI (management of small and nutritionally at-risk infants under 6 months) in Ethiopia and South Sudan and are partnering with Save the Children, MOMENTUM, Jimma University and ENN and LSHTM on MAMI and Multi-MUAC tape.²⁵

In 2023, Ireland allocated €3 million to support Community Health Workers (CHWs), recognising their role in improving healthcare access, particularly in underserved and resource-limited settings. CHWs are known for their efficiency in delivering essential healthcare services, with studies highlighting that CHWs can improve cost-effectiveness, enabling healthcare systems to reach 20% more children for the same financial outlay.²⁶ The WHO continues to recognise the importance of CHWs, particularly for uncomplicated cases, and advocates for their integration into health systems. In sub-Saharan Africa alone, there is a recognized need for approximately two million CHWs to address the region's healthcare gaps effectively. This investment aligns with broader international efforts to strengthen health systems.

Ireland's experience in key agricultural sectors such as dairy, potatoes, animal health, and soil fertility contributes significantly to a variety of development initiatives. For example, VITA leverages Ireland's expertise to implement projects focused on enhancing food security and nutrition outcomes in various regions. Through partnerships with sector leaders like Devenish, a company renowned for its sustainable agriculture practices, and Sidae, a non-governmental organisation focused on improving rural livelihoods, Ireland's agricultural knowledge is shared across communities, companies, researchers, and government bodies.

As the above interventions and Ireland's other allocations illustrate, Ireland favours addressing hunger and nutrition through interventions which support family, community and governmental action on malnutrition, within the context of wider action on food systems. This approach draws on Ireland's experience. Drawing on the experience of developing Community Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM), where interventions such as MUAC and RUTF can be transformative and lifesaving, Ireland's approach is that scaling up such action is most effective as part of wider action on food systems, social protection, community and government capacity. Ireland's community level engagement also relates to the policy commitment to reaching the furthest behind, including with knowledge and behavioural inputs related to nutrition, where remoteness, fragility and chronic poverty may impede delivery of High Impact Interventions.

²⁴. Note that NUIG funding recorded in the CRS for 2023 did not relate to nutrition.

²⁵. <https://www.ennonline.net/fex/73/trialling-a-multi-muac-tape-to-screen-at-risk-infants-under-six-months-in-east-africa>

²⁶. International Rescue Committee, 2023

IS IRELAND'S ODA FOR NUTRITION GETTING TO THE RIGHT PLACES?

Fragile and Conflict-affected States

Improved nutrition requires peace. Conflict drives food insecurity and malnutrition, both acute and chronic, with long-term consequences for human development—particularly for children, who suffer irreversible physical and cognitive impairments due to undernutrition. At the same time, climate change is intensifying food insecurity and undermining nutrition gains, disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable populations. Rising temperatures, extreme weather events, prolonged droughts, and irregular rainfall patterns disrupt food production, reduce agricultural yields, and deplete natural resources, driving food prices up and pushing communities into hunger. These climate-related shocks interact with conflict dynamics, exacerbating displacement, resource scarcity, and competition over land and water, which in turn fuel instability and deepen vulnerabilities.

Ireland's ODA for nutrition has been focused strongly on the places with the greatest need.

- Over the past 20 years 68% of Ireland's ODA for Basic Nutrition has been spent in Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCAS)²⁷, compared with 55% for other DAC donors.
- 79% to Africa compared with 53% for other DAC donors.
- 79% to Least Developed countries compared with 49% for other DAC donors.
- 73% to Highly Indebted Poor countries (HIPCs) compared with 42% for other DAC donors

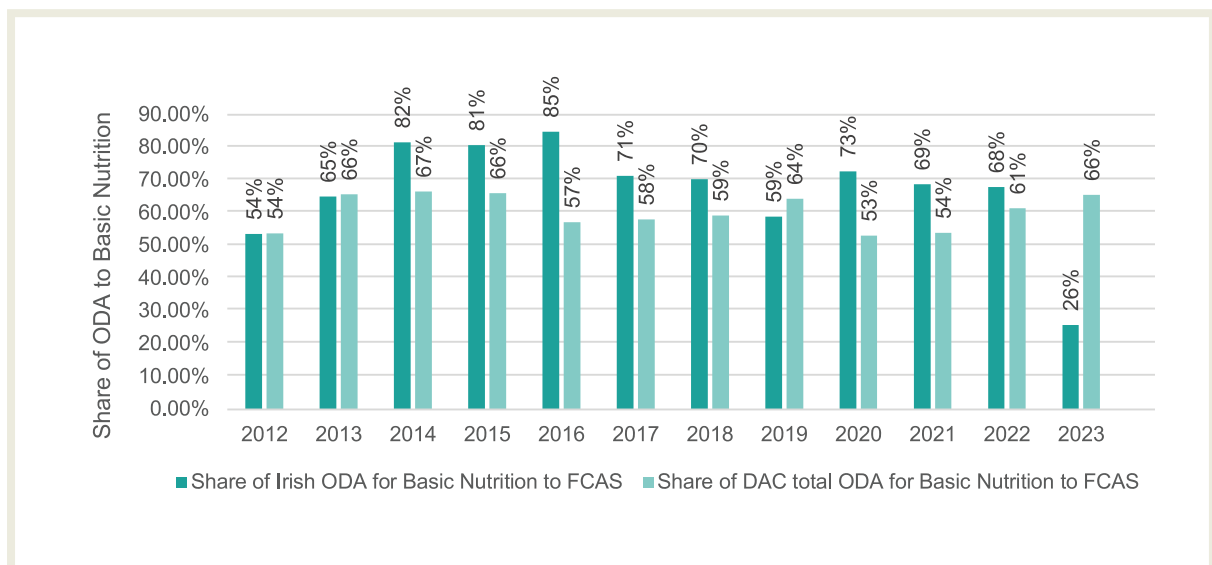


FIGURE 10 Shares of ODA for Basic Nutrition allocated to Fragile or Conflict-affected States.

Source OECD Data Explorer DAC Table 1.

²⁷ **Fragile and Conflict-Affected States (FCAS):**

World Bank, *Fragility, Conflict, and Violence: Overview*. World Bank, 2023. Available at: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence>.

In 2023, the share specifically allocated to fragile or Least Developed Countries dropped to 26%. This partly reflects the changes in the agencies that are implementing Irish ODA for nutrition. The last three years have seen an increase in the share of ODA for Basic Nutrition which is not specified to a particular country. This amounted to €11.4 million in 2023, or roughly half of all Basic Nutrition spending. However, within this “unspecified” pot, €7.6 million was allocated WHO, UNICEF and ENN to address child wasting in fragile and crisis situations. If this is included, the share of Ireland’s ODA for Basic Nutrition allocated to FCAS would go up from 26% to 59%, compared with 66% for DAC countries as a whole.

Three quarters – 74% of Ireland’s ODA for basic nutrition has been spent in 10 countries: Sierra Leone, Malawi, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Zambia, Liberia, South Sudan, Mozambique, Uganda and Vietnam, with most of those countries having allocations for basic nutrition every year. In recent years Sierra Leone, Liberia and Tanzania have been the largest recipients. Many of these countries are affected by conflict and/or climate-related shocks, facing floods, and extreme weather events that erode food security and exacerbate malnutrition. In such contexts, nutrition responses must be integrated within broader resilience-building strategies, including climate adaptation measures, sustainable food systems transformation, and social protection mechanisms that shield vulnerable populations from environmental and economic shocks.

Recognizing the growing overlap of conflict, climate, and nutrition crises, Ireland’s approach to nutrition ODA should continue to emphasize resilience-focused interventions that address the root causes of food insecurity and malnutrition. Strengthening local food systems, supporting climate-smart agriculture, and scaling up anticipatory action for climate-induced food crises is critical to long-term nutrition security and stability in FCAS.

WHO IMPLEMENTS IRISH ODA FOR NUTRITION?

Governments, NGOs and public institutions

There is a strong consensus ranging across the Hunger Task Force, the SUN movement, the Food Systems approach, that the best way to support sustained progress is to back country national plans, localisation and to use multisectoral approaches. Ireland has declared its support for this approach, including in its 2021 N4G pledge.

However, over the past three years, there has been a marked decrease in the reported spending channelled through institutions in partner countries, including governments – with a marked increase in the spending channelled through multilateral organisations.

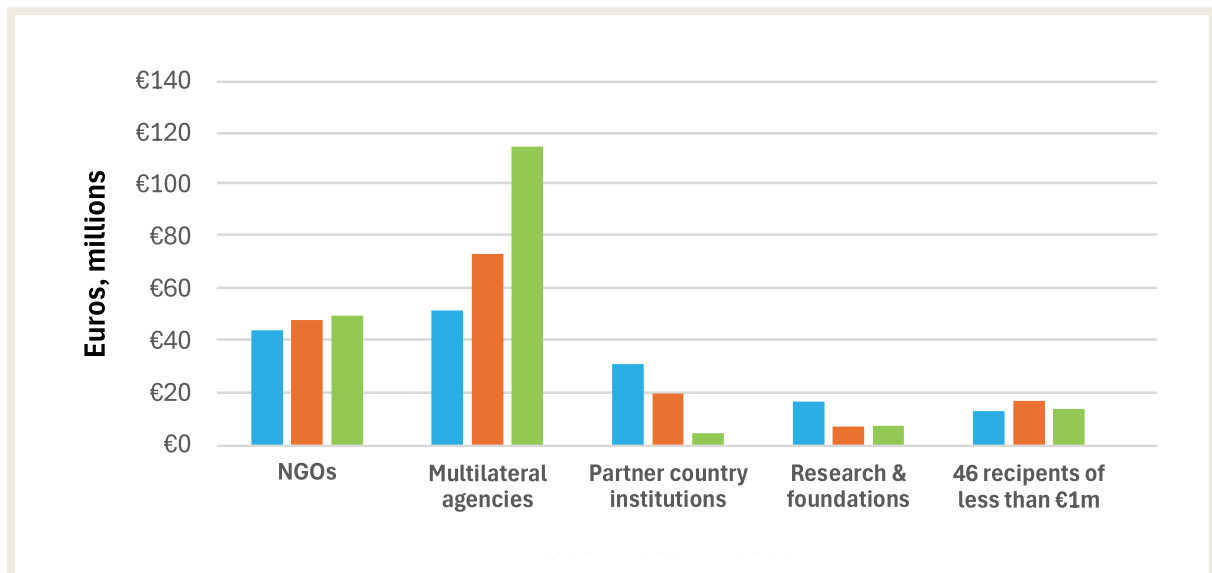


FIGURE 11 Channels of Delivery for Irish ODA marked for nutrition.

Source OECD Data Explorer, Other Markers: Aid Activities Targeting Other Policy Objectives

Looking at the picture over the longer term, Ireland's total health spending – which includes basic nutrition and basic health care – shows the same decline in allocations to the public sector in favour of more spending through multilateral agencies. (Figure 12)

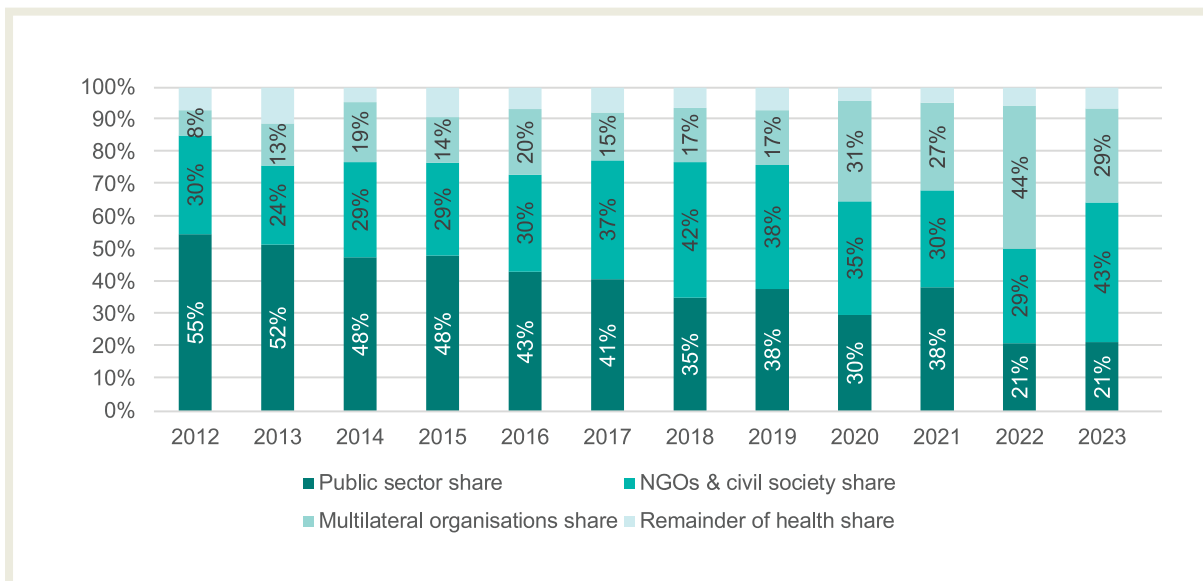


FIGURE 12 Shares of Irish ODA to health channeled through public sector, NGOs and multilaterals.
 Source OECD Data Explorer Creditor Reporting System (CRS)

This pattern is equally visible when looking at the top 20 agencies delivering Irish ODA marked for nutrition with nearly two thirds of the collective funding for the top twenty agencies going through multilateral bodies.

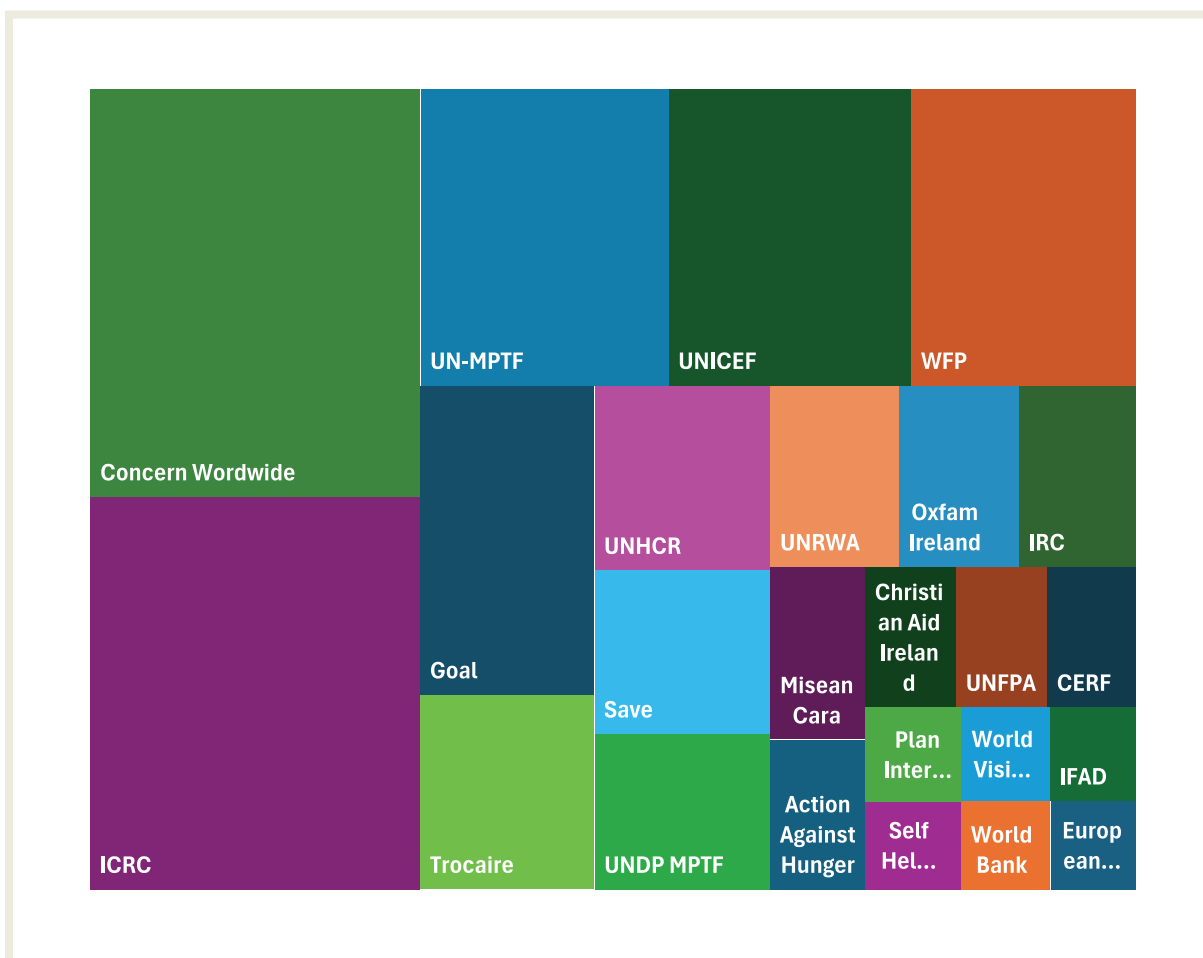


FIGURE 13 Agencies delivering Irish ODA marked for nutrition 2020 to 2022.
 Source OECD Data Explorer, Other Markers: Aid Activities Targeting Other Policy Objectives

Looking at the mechanisms used, nutrition resources appear to have shifted away from pooled funding mechanisms as well as away from delivery through the public sector or institutions in partner countries.

Historically, Ireland used general and sector budget support including for health and agriculture. Budget support is when ODA is not earmarked to a particular project but supports either a specific ministry (Sector Budget Support) or the government budget as a whole (General Budget Support). General budget support was used from 2006 to 2015, with amounts ranging from \$11 million to \$89 million a year. Sector budget support was used from 2010 to 2013 with amounts ranging from \$21 million to \$59 million a year. But the more recent data shows a shift away from the use of core contributions, pooled and basket funds and towards project-type interventions, which have been around 80% of Basic Nutrition spending for the past 4 years.

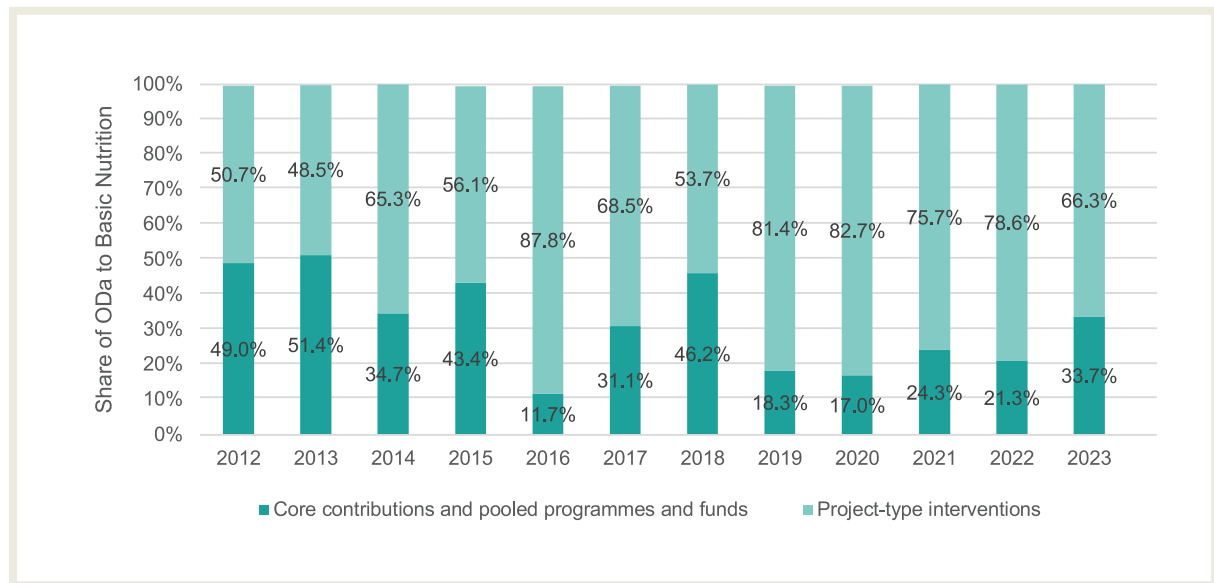


FIGURE 14 Modalities for Irish ODA for Basic Nutrition: core contributions and projects.

Source OECD Data Explorer Creditor Reporting System (CRS)

Multilateral Agencies and International Finance Institutions

In 2008, multilateral ODA from Ireland was 30% of total ODA. In 2022, multilateral ODA had grown to 49% of ODA.

Even within bilateral ODA the share channelled through multilateral agencies has grown from 27% to 35% between 2007 and 2022.

By contrast the amount of bilateral ODA channelled through NGOs peaked in 2008 at \$303 million, falling to \$237 million in 2022 – a very slightly larger share of a smaller overall pot.²⁸

²⁸ Because the amount of bilateral ODA overall has fallen, the share has increased slightly from 35% to 38% of bilateral spending.

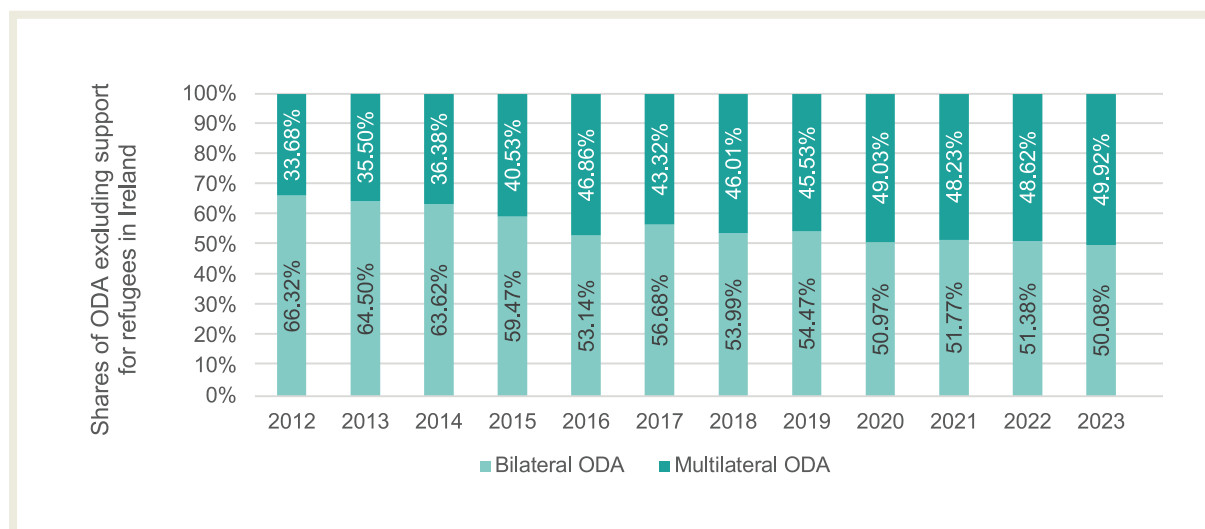


FIGURE 15 Shares of bilateral and multilateral spending in Ireland’s ODA

Source OECD Data Explorer DAC Table 5

International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and multilateral agencies play a pivotal role in financing and supporting improved nutrition. The Rome-Based Agencies (RBAs) – the World Food Programme (WFP), the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) – are particularly focused on food, agriculture, and nutrition. Irish financial contributions to individual RBAs ranged from under €5 million each reported for IFAD and FAO in 2023 to €37 million to WFP.

However, as Figure 16 shows, despite Ireland’s strong engagement with the RBAs and alignment with their priorities, Ireland’s share of Official Development Assistance (ODA) to these agencies is only mid-table and significantly below the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) average.

The economic case for investing in nutrition has been strongly articulated, most recently by the Investment Framework for Nutrition (IFN) and the World Bank. However, achieving widespread traction remains challenging. Governments are often reluctant to borrow for nutrition or agriculture, as the returns on investment can be difficult to demonstrate, especially within a typical political cycle.

Ireland – government, NGOs, scientific, business and practitioner communities - can be the voice at the table for the economic as well as the human capital case for investment in nutrition and food systems.

The key opportunity to promote investment in nutrition as part of the growth and human capital agenda is the Financing for Development Summit in Spain in 2025. Necessarily much of this will be about domestic resources and mobilising the private sector, but ODA (both multilateral and bilateral) remains an important resource with unique characteristics enabling it to be targeted on the poorest. The Investment Framework for Nutrition (IFN) has called for ODA for nutrition to increase from around 1% of the total each year to 2.8% of the total. Ireland’s share of these additional resources needed is €42.7 million.²⁹

²⁹ 2.8% of total ODA from official donors in 2023 was €6.1 billion. In 2023 Ireland’s total GNI was 0.7% of the combined GNI of all DAC members. Ireland’s pro rata share of the 2.8% of ODA needed is therefore 0.7% of €6.1 billion or €42.7 million.

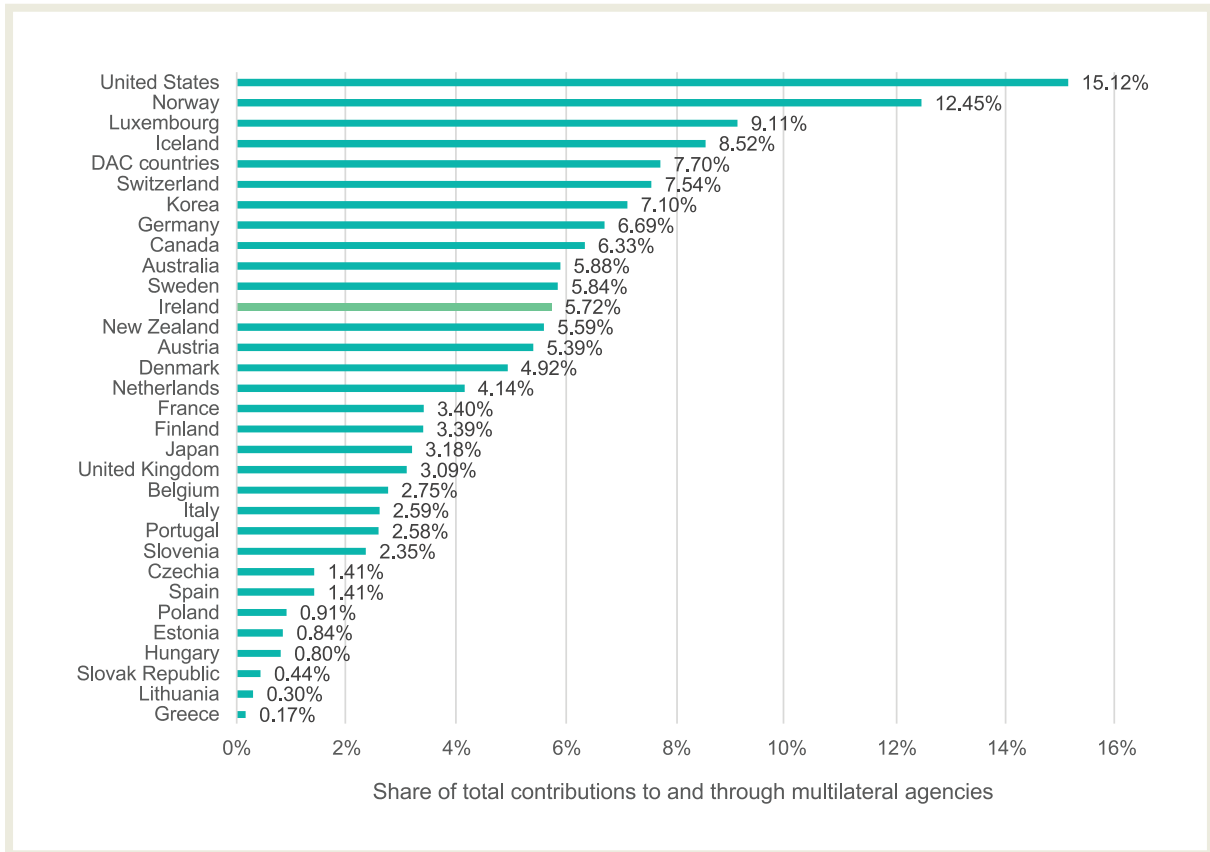


FIGURE 16 Total ODA to Rome Based Agencies (FAO, IFAD and WFP) as a share of multilateral contributions 2023.
 Source OECD Data Explorer Providers Total Use of the Multilateral System.

Ireland has taken proactive steps on engagement with the Africa Union and AUDA-NEPAD. It should continue to deepen these relationships especially on food and nutrition issues in pursuance of real opportunities to develop the potential for economic, as well as human capital, returns from investments in nutrition outcomes and food systems.

Ireland can also take opportunities to embed nutrition into the general discourse of effective development cooperation. It is worth noting that the Human Development Report 2024 had only 8 mentions of nutrition, of which 7 are in notes and 3 about missing data. In the last four World Bank World Development Reports (WDRs) (2021 – 2024) there are 4 mentions of nutrition in total. Consultations and discussions of these key reports are an opportunity to raise attention to nutrition, much as attention to gender was raised ten or twenty years ago.

IRELAND'S INVESTMENT IN ODA

As the evaluations of the European Commission's Nutrition Action Plans – among others - have made very clear, nutrition outcomes are the product of a wide range of social and economic improvements. The economic benefits associated with investment in nutrition far outweigh the costs of inaction. For every \$1 invested in addressing undernutrition, a return of \$23 can be expected. In contrast, undernutrition costs the global economy \$2.1 trillion every year in lost economic productivity. Nutrition is intimately connected with economic growth and with human capital. The scale and quality of ODA as a whole is therefore very significant for nutrition outcomes in resource-poor and fragile countries.

While Ireland's contributions to nutrition are relatively strong in percentage terms compared to other donors, the actual monetary amounts remain small. This is not only because Ireland is a relatively small economy but also because its total ODA -excluding spending on refugee support within Ireland -has not consistently aligned with its longstanding commitment to allocate 0.7% of GNI to ODA. Ministers, including the Tánaiste and the Minister of State for International Development, frequently reaffirm this 0.7% target. The small overall ODA allocation means that, despite Ireland dedicating a higher percentage of its ODA to nutrition than many other donors, the total funding volume remains lower than it should be.

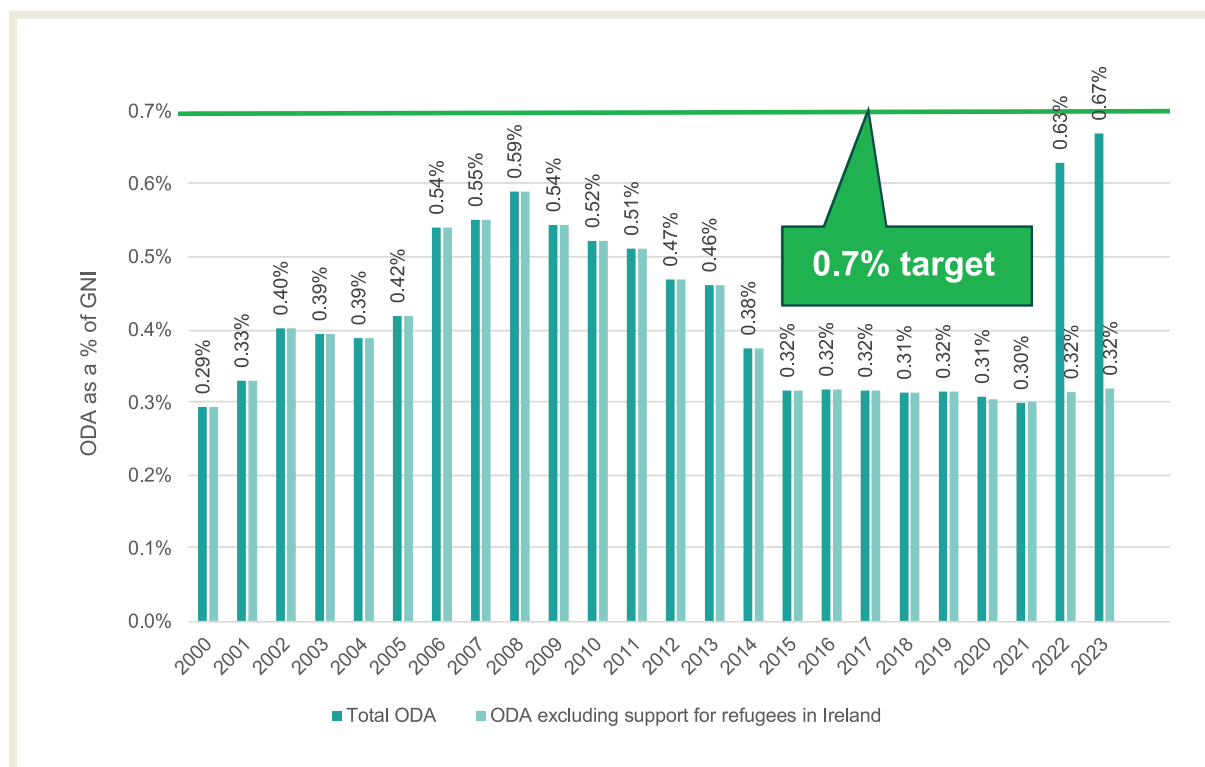


FIGURE 17 Ireland's aspirations to lead on ending hunger not yet matched by ODA as a share of GNI. Source OECD Data Explorer DAC Table 1

Ireland's progress towards achieving the 0.7% ODA target presents an area for continued improvement in its aspiration to demonstrate leadership in delivering on global nutrition and supporting those furthest behind. However, Ireland's significant increase in funding for in-donor refugee costs highlights its capacity to act and mobilize resources when urgent action is required. Having risen from 0.29% in the year the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were agreed, ODA grew to an all-time high of 0.59% in 2008. Following the economic crash, Ireland's ODA experienced a decline. Since 2015, when the SDGs were adopted, Ireland's ODA as a share of GNI has remained largely unchanged.

As a small donor in volume terms, Ireland aims to take every opportunity to use partnerships, memberships and multilateral engagement (for example with the USA and European Union) to prioritise food, nutrition and a focus on those furthest behind. Examples of Ireland’s effort to champion food and nutrition include President Higgins’ personal engagement and advocacy, Ireland’s IFAD and WFP Board membership and renewed engagement with CGIAR as well as strong support for the SUN movement, The Global Action Plan on Wasting and the Food Systems Summit process.

But Ireland’s leverage and influence is limited by the consistent failure to deliver on its repeated commitment to reach the UN 0.7% target for ODA.

Net of in donor refugee spending, Ireland’s ODA in 2023 was 0.32% GNI, far below its highpoint of 0.59% GNI reached in 2008 and less than half of where it needs to be to deliver on often repeated commitment to reach 0.7% GNI by 2030. This is Ireland’s Achilles heel when it comes to influencing global and multilateral action on food and nutrition.

At the Financing for Development Conference in 2025, and under Ireland’s EU Presidency in 2026, it will be difficult to persuade EU members such as Sweden, Denmark, Germany, Netherland, Finland and France to increase their spending on nutrition, when Ireland’s spending on ODA spending net of refugee hosting as a share of GNI is well below all those EU members³⁰ and just at the DAC average of 0.32%.

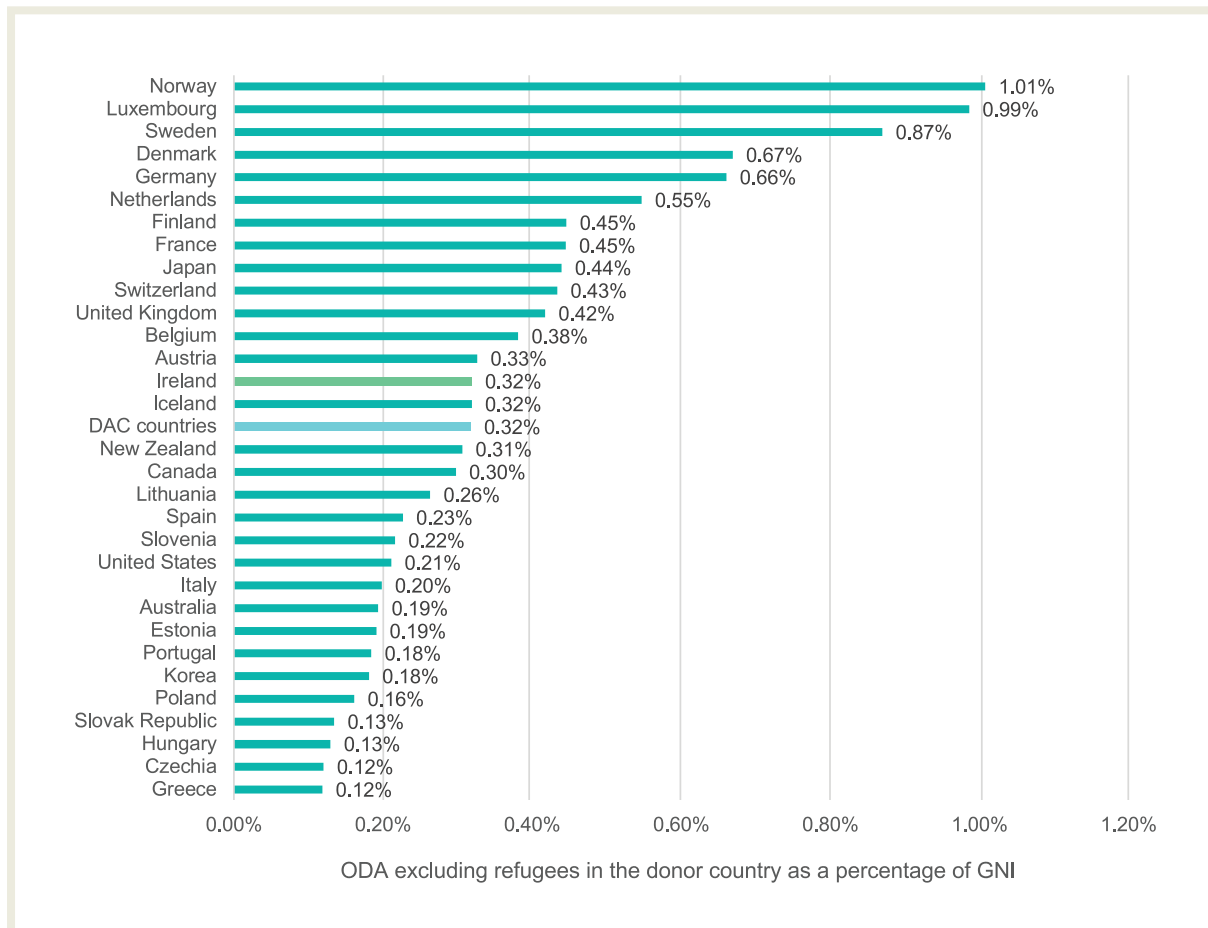


FIGURE 18 ODA 2023 net of the costs of supporting refugees in the donor country as a share of GNI.

Source OECD Data Explorer DAC Table 1

³⁰ Sweden 0.87%, Denmark 0.67%, Germany 0.66%, Netherlands 0.55%, Finland and France both 0.45%.

The Hunger Task Force in 2008, chaired by the late Joe Walsh TD, Minister of Agriculture, proposed: “Work towards an indicative target of 20% of its ODA to actions to alleviate and eradicate hunger - this target to be achieved on a phased basis by 2012, in the context of Ireland’s commitments to reach the 0.7% GNI target by that date”.

Ireland has shown commendable leadership in advancing food systems and nutrition, underpinned by its financial commitments, but more consistent and substantial progress is required. The pledge to reach 0.7% of GNI by 2030 is a notable commitment, but the slow practical implementation of this goal raises concerns about political will and the challenges of translating intentions into concrete actions. While the incremental increases in ODA are welcomed, the growth has been minimal, highlighting a need for a more robust, sustained effort. The new government’s first budget should address these issues by setting clear, measurable year-on-year increases that will guide Ireland toward meeting the 0.7% target. This will not only reinforce Ireland’s commitment to multilateralism and a rules-based order, but also strengthen its global leadership, particularly in a shifting geopolitical landscape where power and trade dynamics are increasingly shifting south and east.

The HTF has called for a doubling of Irish ODA for food assistance and other types of nutritional support and safety net programmes, a recommendation that has largely been met. However, the HTF also suggested that Ireland aim for an indicative target of 20% of its ODA for actions to alleviate and eradicate hunger, while addressing the historic underinvestment in agriculture. Although Ireland’s ODA for food systems and nutrition is approaching 20%, it is essential to note that overall, ODA is currently lower than it was in 2008, and less than half of the UN’s 0.7% target. These figures indicate that while progress has been made, there is a significant gap in fulfilling Ireland’s financial commitments.



Refugees from CAR working on a community farm. This farm is run by refugees near Wedweil displacement site. Photo: Jon Hozier-Byrne/Concern Worldwide

THE BEST IRELAND CAN BE – OPPORTUNITIES TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS

Ireland has a strong track record, and many assets laid out clearly in its 2021 pledge at N4G, in Food Vision 2030³¹, in government documents and commitments - and notably in the 2008 Hunger Task Force (HTF). Ireland's leadership on food systems and nutrition, especially wasting, is widely acknowledged. There is now the opportunity to do more and be bolder. There is an opportunity to build on past successes including CMAM, and to make use of all Irish assets – ranging from scientific expertise to NGO practice, policy engagement and individual leadership from The President to the Taoiseach and Tánaiste. It has a bedrock of public support, a large and well-connected diaspora and a reputation on human rights and peacekeeping. Additionally, Ireland has a business and research sector in food and agriculture, which is well placed to lead on ending hunger and delivering on food and nutrition security for all.

Ireland should continue to

- Advance the integrated approach to food systems and nutrition, as expressed in the 2021 N4G commitment, recognising that zero hunger is ultimate test of the food system.
- Leverage Ireland's established leadership in nutrition and food security to enhance global advocacy efforts to champion innovative, evidence-based approaches in the fight against malnutrition and food insecurity in FCAS.
- A consistent priority to child wasting and improved nutrition in FCAS, in line with commitments to reach the furthest behind first.

Financing policy to ensure quality and impact:

Maintain leadership on food systems and nutrition and ensure that this is backed up by specific investments and delivery on ODA commitments. This may be realised if Ireland can.

- Achieve 0.7% GNI for ODA: Lay out a clear, budgeted, year-on-year plan to meet this target by 2030, strengthening credibility and multilateral influence.
- Deliver Targeted Nutrition Funding: Maintain at least 20% of ODA for hunger and nutrition-related actions, as recommended by the 2008 Hunger Task Force. Ireland could enhance the impact of all Irish ODA on nutrition by setting targets for the share of investments in each sector that should have nutrition objectives.³²
- Commit to Ireland's fair share³³ (€42.7 million) of additional nutrition investment, as outlined in the 2024 Investment Framework for Nutrition.

³¹ Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM). (2021). *Food Vision 2030: A 10-year strategy for the Irish agrifood sector*. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/fe42f-food-vision-2030-agrifood-strategy-2021-2030>

³² For instance, IFAD has had the target that a minimum of 60% of its new investments should be nutrition sensitive. Progress can be monitored using the Nutrition Policy Marker and the process can be used to raise awareness and levels of knowledge about achieving nutrition outcomes

³³ Investment Framework for Nutrition (IFN) has called for ODA for nutrition to increase from around 1% of the total to 2.8% of the total. 2.8% of total ODA from official donors in 2023 was €6.1 billion. Ireland's 2023 GNI was 0.7% of the combined GNI of all DAC members. So, Ireland's fair share of additional resources is €42.7 million.

- Ireland should at least maintain, if not increase, its current spending of at least 60% of its ODA for Basic Nutrition in FCAS. Given the importance of investing in in-country capacity and multi-stakeholder mechanisms, Ireland should consider how its channels of delivery and modalities for implementing ODA could do more to support country ownership and reverse the trend of reduced spending through institutions in partner countries or pooled mechanisms.
- Review the declines in funding for systems that support the multisectoral approach to nutrition and plan for increased investments in agriculture, WASH, and social protection both directly and in collaboration with others. Specifically, restoring agriculture funding to €35 million and reassessing WASH investments.

Influencing and representing:

- Position Ireland as a leader in advocating for nutrition investment at global forums, including the Financing for Development Summit (2025). It can be the voice at the table for a new narrative that highlights the economic as well as the human capital case for investment in nutrition and food systems.
- Ireland is well placed to advocate for increased commitments from other donors, reversing the current decline in global nutrition spending and driving collective action to achieve the SDGs.
- Deepen partnerships with the African Union and AUDA-NEPAD emphasizing economic and human capital returns from putting nutrition at the centre of policy.
- Promote the integration of nutrition into international development reports, consultations, and IFI priorities to encourage investment. There are opportunities for Ireland to assert its influence in budget discussions as part of its Board memberships. This includes finding ways of maintaining the grant share of IFI financing, ensuring long maturity and high levels of loan concessionally and ways to respond to debt distress, as well as, building and communicating the case for investment.
- Despite the priority to food systems and nutrition, Ireland's contribution to RBAs is relatively low. Ireland could consider whether increased financial contributions would be effective and/or give Ireland more influence.

Leveraging existing capacity and resources:

- Ireland's NGOs, higher education institutions, and research communities lead in innovation and advocacy on nutrition and food security, with strong international connections. While nutrition is central to Irish CSO policy work, establishing a dedicated food systems and nutrition policy group within an existing Irish forum such as Dóchas, IFIAD or DSAI could further enhance coordination and impact.
- The Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee (IARDC) offers a valuable opportunity to strengthen interdepartmental coordination. To maximize its impact, it is essential that relevant departments are resourced. The appointment of the first Chair in 2024 is a positive step forward in this process.
- To enhance the visibility of Ireland's contributions to global food and nutrition security, increasing the frequency and depth of nutrition-related content, can further improve coherence and collaboration within the sector.

ANNEX I: METHODOLOGY NOTE

Unless otherwise stated, data for this analysis is taken from the Development Data section of the OECD Data Explorer.

Note that analysis is based on 2023 data from the OECD DAC CRS, except where analysis relies on policy makers, where the analysis uses data up to 2022.

It uses three key datasets: the CRS to which donors report their expenditures line by line; the OECD DAC statistics tables for data on ODA and GNI; the dataset “Other Markers, Aid Activities targeting other policy objectives” and “Providers’ Total Use of the Multilateral System” which tracks both contributions to multilateral agencies, which are unearmarked and reported in DAC Statistics as “multilateral ODA” and contributions channelled through multilaterals, which can be earmarked and are reported in DAC Statistics as “Bilateral ODA”.

ODA rules allow the first year of support for refugees in the donor country to be counted as Bilateral ODA. Over the past 3 years, the volume of spending has increased dramatically with the increase in the numbers of people coming from both Ukraine and other crisis-affected places. Ireland has hosted an exceptionally large number of refugees, resulting in roughly half of all of Irish ODA being allocated to refugee support within Ireland. The aid budget per se has not been asked to meet these costs from its resources and has remained at around 0.32% of GNI. For comparisons over time and with other donors, this report uses bilateral ODA excluding refugees in the donor country.

Data showing trends over time is in constant (2022) prices.

Where we have converted USD to Euros, we have used the OECD annualised exchange rates.

The most recent OECD data is for 2023, which was published at the end of December 2024. There remain some queries over the marker data – noted under the relevant charts. As a result, some of the charts are only for or up to 2022.

It is important to distinguish between data based on policy makers and data based on the purpose codes.

The purpose code shows which sector of the economy the ODA allocation is intended to benefit – for instance, nutrition or school feeding or agriculture. Until recently, individual aid activities could have only one purpose code but, following a change in the rules, some donors, such as Canada, are now using multiple purpose codes. Ireland is not currently using multiple coding.

The Policy marker system allows donors to mark any of their spending against a particular policy priority. An ODA activity can be scored as having either a Principal Objective (Level 2) or a Significant Objective (Level 1). There are policy markers for nutrition, governance, gender, climate and environment, disability and others. The entire value of the activity is scored, even if only a part of the activity is related to the objective. The first reporting on the Nutrition Policy Marker was in 2018. In this report we use only data from 2019 onwards. Reporting is voluntary and not all donors report and many do not score all of their ODA. Ireland reports very thoroughly on the Nutrition Policy Marker.

The primary indicator that we use to assess progress on nutrition is spending coded “Basic Nutrition”. The definition aligns very closely with the World Health Assembly Targets.

However, ODA nutrition investments need to be made far beyond this specific set of activities. Nutrition sensitive investments need to be made in agriculture and economic development, water and sanitation, health systems and social protection. Nutrition is also profoundly linked with climate and environment, gender, crisis and insecurity. The Nutrition Policy Marker provides a tool to show much

ODA in any sector aims to achieve a nutrition outcome.

On 28 January 2025, Concern hosted a Round Table in Dublin to discuss the Best that Ireland Can be on Food and Nutrition security.

Key insights from panellists and participants:

Building blocks in place

- Ireland's new government faces a world of uncertainty and crises. But Ireland has a reputation on hunger and food systems. And it has a sustained commitment to staying the course, to focus the world's attention on work to tackle poverty and hunger - and in doing so to reach the furthest behind first.
- The new 2025 Programme for Government includes a clear commitment to annual increases in ODA, with a view to making progress to the UN 0.7% target. Concrete steps will include doubling funding for IFAD and increasing WFP support from €75 million to €105 million. This is alongside a strengthened partnership with the AU, to support development of the new Kampala framework.
- As Ireland's EU Presidency approaches, Ireland will insist that nutrition is not a niche issue. Ireland will emphasise food systems, food security and nutrition, the need for sustained effort and long-term investment.
- Ireland's work with Ethiopia and WHO, proposing a resolution on extending the global nutrition targets for the World Health Assembly illustrates Ireland's continued effort to work with partners and support multilateral action on food systems and nutrition. Engagement with the G20 Task Force on Food Security, following Ireland's guest membership at the G20 in South Africa, illustrates practical development-diplomacy linkages, taking an integrated approach across Food and Nutrition Security, climate and gender equality, education and health as well as peace and security.
- Ireland's advocacy on nutrition is underpinned by being well on track to deliver the 2021 N4G Tokyo pledge to spend €800 million on nutrition interventions over 5 years – with a new pledge at N4G Paris being anticipated.

Attention, communication, public commitment, political action

- For more than 15 years Ireland has been in the forefront of global efforts on nutrition. Other countries "are inspired by Ireland's commitment to keep nutrition at the heart of our development policies". People are looking to Irish agencies to keep encouraging others to be ambitious. (Michael Gaffey, Director General, DCAD)
- At home, sustained political support and placing food and nutrition at the heart of all government policy – not just development policy – remains critical. Policy coherence across both domestic food systems and foreign and development policy is key – with a consistent advocacy thread on women.
- In Ireland, IARDC and IFIAD, NGOs, research institutions and extensive farming and private sector expertise and experience on food and nutrition make Ireland very well placed to make a global contribution.
- At European level, the EU has been a leader, more than delivering on its 2013 funding pledge on stunting. But nutrition, WASH and agriculture are now struggling to get attention. The old language on hunger and nutrition is not delivering the attention these issues deserve. The EU has recognised that its global gateway approach is not fit for purpose in Fragile and Conflict Affected States. So, Ireland has a role on influencing the new Fragile States policy, which is vital to ensuring that nutrition is included as a major sectoral focus.

- A new, updated narrative – alongside the principled and moral reasons to deliver on SDG 2 - needs to make a modern investment case. Nutrition as an essential and cost-effective investment in the human capital on which equitable development and shared prosperity is based. Ending stunting and wasting is a prerequisite for a healthy and educated workforce – a core investment in human capital and, evidence suggests, a smart investment in stability, peace and security.
- The links between peace and nutrition are starkly shown in Sudan. The impact of conflict – fields not planted, health facilities looted, villages burned and roofless – is hunger.
- Ireland’s standing as a small, agile, neutral and well-respected country, vocal on human rights and with a history of peacebuilding, should inspire Ireland to even greater effort to use its weight and moral standing to keep conflicts like Sudan on the agenda - and to protect the humanitarian space.
- The commitment to take a chance on a concerted effort in the Mendera triangle, to treat and prevent malnutrition in a region which has been ‘a no man’s land with constant cycles of emergency response’ can be seen against the pioneering by Ireland of CMAM two decades ago. A groundbreaking initiative which has influenced others and saved lives, now needs to be integrated into primary health systems.
- With under 5 years to deliver on SDG 2, can Ireland find the finance and the bandwidth and the public and political support, to build on its many partnerships and achievements, to further step up its leadership on ending hunger and delivering on healthy, affordable nutrition for all.



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This discussion paper, ***The Best Ireland Can Be for Food and Nutrition Security***, was prepared by *Ideas and Action for Public Good*, with support from *The Eleanor Crook Foundation*.

It is informed by a consultative process with expert nutrition NGOs and civil society in Ireland, including academia and independent food and nutrition experts. Contributors include members of DSAI and FIAD, as well as representatives from Trócaire, GOAL, World Vision, Save the Children, Self Help Africa, SFSI, VITA, Alliance 2015, and Tom Arnold (Chair of the Ireland Africa Rural Development Committee)