

Other countries





Balkans/ Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS)

Bilateral Aid to Balkans/CIS in 2005

€6.528 million

Countries of the Balkans and of the CIS

Ireland's aid to countries in Eastern Europe and Central Asia is provided mainly through multilateral institutions, especially the European Union, United Nations and World Bank. Irish Aid also provides bilateral funding for countries of the Balkans (which includes many of the countries of the former Yugoslavia) and the Commonwealth of Independent States (former Soviet Union) through a scheme which seeks to address poverty reduction and support democratic transition in the region.

The transition to democracy in the Balkans and CIS proved difficult and gave rise to significant increases in poverty in many countries. There were also major humanitarian consequences of conflicts within the Balkans, the South Caucasus and Central Asia, resulting in increased flows of refugees and economic migrants, people trafficking and the spread of HIV/AIDS.

Even though the political situation in the West Balkans has become more stable, it is still one of Europe's most crisis-vulnerable areas and there is a concentration of Irish Aid funding in that region. Outside of the Balkans, Irish Aid also seeks to contribute to stability, security and democratic transition in countries bordering the expanding European Union.

Our main partners are international organisations and registered national and international charities. Ireland also has specific funding obligations in the

region arising from the Stability Pact for Eastern Europe and expectations linked to our Council of Europe and Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) membership and support for the European Neighbourhood policy (ENP). In addition, the Balkans/CIS scheme seeks to support the fundraising and advocacy work of Irish NGOs in the region.

As a small but successful EU country, Ireland is politically and morally committed to play its part in assisting these countries.

Irish Aid support for activities in these countries maintains a focus on:

- > Government capacity-building,
- > Capacity-building in civil society,
- > Democratisation and the protection of human rights,
- > Economic development, and
- > Helping disadvantaged/vulnerable groups.

Assistance for Government capacity-building usually goes through UN agencies; assistance for capacity-building in civil society is channelled through selected international NGOs; support for democratisation and protection of human rights is done in cooperation with organizations such as the Council of Europe and the OSCE; economic development is assisted by Irish Aid-funded projects of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the OECD's Investment Compact; services to disadvantaged groups are provided direct by international or Irish NGOs.

The breakdown of funding for the year was as follows:

- > €3,013,657 for projects in countries of the former Yugoslavia
- > €377,580 for projects in Russia
- > €1,457,676 for projects in Georgia and other Caucasus countries
- > €336,100 for projects in Central Asian countries and
- > the remainder for projects that were not country specific i.e. covered a number of countries.

Zimbabwe

Bilateral Aid to Zimbabwe in 2005 **€0.78m**
 Population **13 million**
 2005 HDI **145**

Programme Summary

The political, economic and humanitarian situation within Zimbabwe continues to deteriorate with serious adverse effects on already vulnerable populations, especially as regards access to basic health and social services. The current political climate is extremely difficult for donors and aid agencies.

Zimbabwe has now slipped from 117th on the United Nations Human Development Index (HDI) to 145th in 2005.

Humanitarian Support

Ireland continues to assist many of the poorest and most vulnerable communities in Zimbabwe. Our humanitarian support is delivered through UN agencies and NGOs with a proven track record of meeting the needs of the poorest. During 2005, Irish Aid funded emergency and recovery projects in the amount of **€1.97 million**. This money funded humanitarian projects under the auspices of GOAL, Trócaire, UNICEF and the World Food Programme. These projects supported school feeding and child protection, as well as food security programmes. The high level of food insecurity has arisen from the collapsed economy and the large numbers of internally displaced people.

HIV/AIDS

Zimbabwe is also one of the countries most affected by HIV/AIDS with an estimated 25% of the population infected. Life expectancy has fallen below 40 years. The Irish Aid office in Zambia has funded a major programme of assistance in Zimbabwe over the past five years with a strong focus on HIV/AIDS.

The programme mainly supports local NGOs and community groups delivering home-based care. An assessment in 2005 concluded that the programme's impact is significant: with a budget of €1 million, approximately 23,000 people living with HIV/AIDS were able to receive treatment and other benefits. This is an estimated 10% of the country's total need. The assessment also showed that Irish-funded NGOs accounted for an estimated 20% coverage of home-based care work in Zimbabwe.

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Palestine

Bilateral Aid to Palestine in 2005 **€2,350,000**
 Funding to UNRWA **€1,500,000**
 Irish Aid Civil Society Funds **€427,727**
 Stability Fund in support of the EU Border Assistance Mission (EU BAM) **€200,000**
 Population: **3.8 million** (Palestinian Bureau of statistics 2005)

Programme Summary

The current cycle of Irish Aid's assistance to Palestine was initiated by Ireland's pledge at the international donor conference on economic assistance for the Palestinians held in Washington in October, 1993. Subsequent to the Wye River Agreement of October 1998, Ireland pledged to maintain its annual contribution to the Palestinians at US\$2 million during the period 1999-2003. Ireland's contribution to Palestine over this time has greatly exceeded the pledge. In 2000, the Irish Government opened a Representative Office in Ramallah.

The goal of the Irish Aid 2005-2007 Country Strategy Programme is:

“ To alleviate the material consequences of the ongoing conflict, by enhancing the capacity of Irish Aid's partners, while ensuring support for the emergence of a prosperous and democratic Palestinian state by supporting the delivery of basic services; and by responding to the humanitarian consequences of the crisis”.

The guiding principles for Irish Aid's approach in Palestine is to:

- > Work through and strengthen local institutions to maintain basic services in the existing environment;
- > Work to ensure that humanitarian responses to the current emergency needs address immediate problems within the context of longer-term development programmes;

- > Encourage and facilitate donor coordination and cooperation in support of locally-owned plans and institutions; and
- > Work with other donors to assist the UN agencies (UNRWA and UNDP) in the development of effective relief instruments for the Palestinian people.

Country Strategy Programme

The principal components of the 2005-2007 Irish Aid Country Strategy Programme for the provision of support are basic education (the main focus of the strategy), health, local government, human rights and democratisation and economic and social regeneration.

Education

Funding in 2005 was provided to the Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education to support the development of the new Palestinian curriculum for the printing of textbooks for use in Government and UNRWA schools in Gaza and the West Bank.

Health

Funding was provided during 2005 to Bethlehem University for community outreach programmes in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, water quality, neonatal nursing, midwifery and education development.

“Funding was provided to Palestinian and Israeli NGOs focusing on Palestinian prisoners, women and children and also on reconciliation and the building of democratic institutions”

Local Government

In 2005, funding was provided to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for local rural development programmes in the Jenin region.

Human Rights and Democratisation

Funding was provided during 2005 to Palestinian and Israeli NGOs, which focus on the rights of Palestinian prisoners, women and children and also on reconciliation, civil society and the building of democratic institutions.

Palestinian Development Assistance Programmes

Funding was provided to local civil society groups for economic and social regeneration.

UNOCHA

Funding was provided in 2005 to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to assist it in its on-going monitoring and advocacy work in Palestine.

The Bilateral Aid budget for 2005 (excluding funding to UNRWA) was as follows:

Funding Programme	Allocation
Basic Education	€800,000
Bethlehem University	€150,000
Support for Local Government (UNDP)	€500,000
Human Rights & Democratisation	€400,000
PDAPS (Palestinian Direct Action Programme)	€200,000
UN OCHA	€100,000
Administration	€200,000
Totals	€2,350,000

Support to UNRWA¹

The United Nations Relief Works Agency is the key UN Agency with responsibility for delivering humanitarian assistance to approximately 4 million refugees. UNRWA's relief efforts are focused on education, health, basic services and the provision of micro-finance facilities. Irish Aid's assistance to UNRWA is delivered through core funding and in response to UNRWA's emergency appeals.

¹ Although it is not formally part of the Country Programme, support to UNRWA's core budget and annual emergency appeal is expected to continue via the Emergency and Recovery budget subheads.

Sierra Leone/ Liberia

Bilateral Aid to Sierra Leone in 2005 **€2.87m**

2005 HDI **176**

Bilateral Aid to Liberia in 2005 **€1.13m**

2005 HDI **no rating**

Background

Sierra Leone and Liberia are two small neighbouring countries in West Africa, which have both suffered the devastating effects of years of civil conflict.

Formerly a British colony, **Sierra Leone** achieved independence in April 1961. It emerged from a brutal 11-year civil war in 2002, in which Sierra Leone saw some of the worst atrocities witnessed in any conflict. Between 1991 and 2002, over 50,000 people were killed, thousands mutilated, up to 40% of the 5 million population displaced and a high proportion of the female population raped.

Although endowed with significant natural resources (diamonds, forestry, marine), the country has been blighted by poor governance, poverty and severe income inequality, weak public management and service delivery, weak judiciary, limited civil society, widespread human rights abuse, high gender inequality and abuse, severely limited infrastructure, ethnic competition and strife and widespread corruption.

Sierra Leone ranks among the world's least developed countries and is positioned at number 176 of 177 countries on the UN's 2005 Human Development Index - second only to Niger - having occupied the bottom position for over a decade.

Following 14 years of civil war which formally ended with the signing of a Peace Agreement in August 2003, **Liberia** continues to face extensive humanitarian challenges. During the conflict, an estimated 250,000 people were killed and over 500,000 displaced. The security situation has largely stabilised since and a disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme (DDRR) has been completed.

However, the situation remains fragile because of extreme poverty, massive unemployment and infrastructural devastation. Irish peacekeeping troops serving with the United Nations in Liberia have been widely commended for their contribution to the restoration of stability to the country.

Opening of Irish Aid Office

Ireland opened an Irish Aid office in Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone in February 2005. This office covers the Irish Aid recovery programmes in both Sierra Leone and Liberia.

Funding in 2005

Irish Aid's recovery programmes in both countries focus on meeting basic humanitarian and recovery needs through UN agencies and NGOs. In tandem with the opening of the Freetown office, a separate budget for both Sierra Leone and Liberia was provided in 2005. Additional funding for Liberia continued to be provided from the Emergency (EHAF) and Recovery (EPPR) budgets. Both Sierra Leone and Liberia are also in receipt of Irish Aid funding through the Multi Annual Programme Scheme for Irish NGOs.

In all, total Irish Aid funding to **Sierra Leone** was approximately €5 million and total funding to **Liberia** was of approximately €2.5 million.

Activities supported in **Sierra Leone** in 2005 included basic healthcare, agriculture and food security, capacity building for the electoral process, and support for the United Nations Special Court for Sierra Leone. This support was provided to United Nations agencies (UNDP, FAO and UNAIDS), the Special Court for Sierra Leone, the National Electoral Commission and

NGOs (Médecins Sans Frontières, Irish Red Cross, Trócaire and Partnership Africa Canada).

Activities supported in **Liberia** in 2005 included basic health care, water and sanitation, support for the electoral process, and micro-projects carried out by the Irish peacekeeping troops in the country. This support was provided to NGOs (Merlin, Concern and the Carter Centre) and to the Irish UNMIL batallion.

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South Africa

Bilateral Aid to South Africa in 2005 **€10.68m**
 Population **47.4 million**
 2005 HDI **120th**

Programme Summary

While South Africa continues to make great strides in building a democratic state and setting the economy on a sustainable growth path, the country still faces significant challenges in terms of poverty and inequality. HIV/AIDS, high unemployment, and poor access to basic services for large numbers of the population continue to be constraints to broad societal improvement.

Through its programme in 2005, Irish Aid supported the South African Government and Civil Society to address these issues, with an increasing focus on Limpopo Province, the second poorest of the country's nine provinces. The year saw the consolidation of a number of interventions initiated in 2004.

In a major initiative advanced towards the end of 2005, Ireland was among a number of donors who, in conjunction with the South African Government, began a process to develop a joint EU/South African framework for development cooperation.

Health and HIV/AIDS

Despite signs that the HIV/AIDS epidemic is slowing down in some Sub-Saharan African countries, there was no evidence that this was the case in South Africa during 2005. Figures released during the year estimated that 5.2 million South Africans, or 11% of the population, are infected with HIV. In response to the escalating numbers, the National Department of Health intensified its HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment programmes in the country.

The Irish Aid HIV/AIDS programme encouraged partnership and strengthened a coordinated response to HIV/AIDS by working closely with Provincial Departments of Health and Civil Society organisations. Irish Aid engaged with the Department of Health in Limpopo Province and in the Free State, with the aim of building the capacity of the health systems and strengthening partnerships between NGOs and the Government to tackle HIV/AIDS.

Irish Aid also provided support to innovative HIV/AIDS interventions that encompassed awareness-raising and information dissemination, voluntary counselling and testing, community-based palliative care, care of orphans and vulnerable children, research and advocacy for access to affordable drugs and the promotion of human rights.

Education

Irish Aid has worked with the Department of Education in Limpopo since 1998. In 2005, a two-year exit phase of the current programme commenced, focusing on the consolidation of progress and achievements to date. Activities centred on literacy acquisition, improving school governance and supporting the development of HIV/AIDS and gender strategies in the Provincial Department of Education.

Irish Aid also maintained its support for bursaries aimed at encouraging disadvantaged women and men to gain access to higher-level education.

Good Governance, Democracy and Human Rights

Irish Aid recognises the important role played by civil society in the promotion of human rights and the democratic processes. To this end, the Irish Aid programme supported a number of well-established partners, who are contributing to the overall policy environment and strengthening the interface between Government and its citizens. These partners included the Centre for Conflict Resolution, the Institute for Democracy in South Africa, and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation.

Irish Aid also assisted the Department of Justice as it works to undertake fundamental reforms aimed at improving the fairness, accessibility and efficiency of the justice system, specifically pertaining to the administration of the estates of deceased citizens.

Water and Sanitation

Access to safe water and sanitation for all in a sustainable manner is seen as a priority for the Government of South Africa. Irish Aid provided €3.1 million in 2005 to support the Government's water supply and sanitation programme known as *Masibambane*. Specifically, Irish Aid support focused on the provision of sanitation in schools, job creation through the Sanitation Initiative and the promotion of links between sanitation, health and hygiene. Other priorities included the cross-cutting issues of gender, appropriate technology, the role of civil society in the sector and environmental management.

Local Economic Development

Towards the end of 2005, Irish Aid launched its local economic development programme with a budget of €1.7 million. This two-year pilot programme aims to improve the livelihoods of selected communities in Limpopo Province, through building the capacity of two local municipalities to promote tourism-based local economic development.

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