

**Written Submission to the Joint Committee of Foreign Affairs and Defence
Irish Emergency Alliance
April 2024**

Summary

The Irish Emergency Alliance (IEA) is a joint appeals mechanism in which Irish humanitarian organisations consolidate their fundraising efforts for greater long-term efficiency and impact. The purpose of our presentation to the Joint Committee is to outline how our joint appeal mechanism works, and why it is a structure which should be supported by the Government of Ireland.

Given our world is experiencing unprecedented crises resulting in 362 million people worldwide requiring humanitarian assistance and protection, the necessity for a new approach is evident. The IEA model has been proven to work both in Ireland and internationally. It has the support of the public and key media partners. In this submission, we respectfully ask that the Joint Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence writes to the Tánaiste and Department of Foreign Affairs to support our request for matched-funding for IEA humanitarian emergency appeals.

Who is the Irish Emergency Alliance?

1. The [Irish Emergency Alliance](#) (IEA) is a joint appeals mechanism where Irish humanitarian organisations agree to consolidate their fundraising efforts, demonstrating to the public that we can work together to fundraise more effectively and reduce our administrative and fundraising costs. It is a membership organisation, made up of seven leading Irish registered charities working on international humanitarian emergency relief. Our members are ActionAid, Christian Aid, Plan International, Self Help Africa, Tearfund, Trócaire and World Vision. These members have programmes in a total of 93 different countries across the globe collectively giving us a very significant presence, and enabling members to respond quickly and effectively when an emergency occurs.
2. At times of major humanitarian emergencies, Alliance members come together to raise money from the Irish public in a coordinated and more efficient manner. The overarching aim of the Irish Emergency Alliance is to continue its growth and development strategy in order to become the trusted and 'go-to' emergency response entity in Ireland. Having launched four successful appeals since our formation in 2019 raising in excess of €6.35million¹, we have proven that the concept works and that there is strong public support for the initiative.

¹ We raised €350,000 for Coronavirus; €1.1 million for Ukraine; €650,000 for our Horn of Africa appeal; and €4.25million for the Syria-Turkey earthquake response.

Why was the Irish Emergency Alliance established?

3. The establishment of a joint appeals mechanism was included in the 2011 Programme for Government in Ireland and has since been successfully established by the Irish Emergency Alliance. It was formed to fill a gap in the Irish charity fundraising environment, namely to bring the leading humanitarian agencies together into a single campaign at times of major international humanitarian crisis with the aim of reducing competition between charities; increasing funds available for disaster response; and improving accountability to the public².
4. Independent public opinion surveys conducted in both 2020 and 2023 found almost two thirds of people thought it was better to support a joint appeals mechanism in a humanitarian crisis rather than give to an individual agency. Almost two thirds (65%) of adults agree that the Irish Government should actively support the Irish Emergency Alliance when it launches appeals in response to international emergencies, with those aged 18-24 (74%) even more likely to agree.

Evidence which demonstrates the Irish Emergency Alliance is effective

5. In addition to cost efficiencies, our Alliance also has the advantage of a coordinated approach to communications and media engagement which is beneficial for the public who are bombarded by campaign messaging resulting in emergency fatigue and reduced donations. It demonstrates to the public that we can and do work together and provides the platform to advocate and communicate as one voice on key humanitarian issues.
6. The Irish Emergency Alliance has an agreement with RTÉ whereby the national broadcaster have committed to support our joint appeals.³ We have also received considerable support from other broadcast partners including Newstalk, Virgin Media, DMG Media as well as numerous radio stations across the country.
7. Evidence shows that appeal mechanisms in other countries are highly effective and through pooling of resources, knowledge and effort, a greater number of disaster-affected populations can be assisted. The Irish Emergency Alliance is a member of the [Emergency Appeals Alliance](#) – an organisation representing 14 joint appeals mechanisms from around the world⁴. Collectively, these 14 Alliances raised in excess of €1.2billion in 2022 in response to the conflict in Ukraine.

Proposal for Government Support

8. The Irish Emergency Alliance is seeking matched-funding support for our joint appeals from the Department of Foreign Affairs. A commitment was made to establish a joint

²Our goal is to be a 'one-stop shop' and united voice that will result in: an increase in donated income for people in need; reduced administrative and fundraising costs; enhanced partnerships with the private sector; increased brand awareness and recognition; improved public perception; and enhanced visibility, coherency and messaging to the public.

³ The Irish Emergency Alliance has a documented protocol in place with RTÉ which sets out how the national broadcaster will support our major appeal by airing a Public Service Announcement.

⁴ Most of these Alliances have been established for decades and are hugely successful, e.g. the [DEC](#) in the UK; [ADH](#) in Germany; and [Giro555](#) in the Netherlands.

appeals mechanism in Ireland and was included in the 2011 Programme for Government.⁵

9. Evidence from other jurisdictions demonstrate that where the respective governments support similar joint funding initiatives, it significantly enhances the trust and confidence the public and other key stakeholders have in the national appeal mechanism. This in turn results in a far greater impact (cost efficiencies, higher number of disaster-affected populations being reached; reduced number of ads being aired to the public, etc.). As in the UK, Germany, Canada, the Netherlands and many other countries, it provides the ideal platform for Ireland to respond collectively and in a coordinated manner to major international disasters⁶.
10. It provides the government with the opportunity to help direct the Irish public to an approved platform, a 'one stop shop' for donations which is mutually beneficial for the government, the broadcasters, the public, corporate partners and most importantly, for vulnerable populations in need of support⁷.

Conclusion

3. We would like to thank the Joint Committee for Foreign Affairs and Defence for the opportunity to present on our work. We respectfully ask that the Joint Committee writes to the Tánaiste and Department of Foreign Affairs to recommend that the Department introduce match funding for IEA Appeals. A Joint Appeals Mechanism was included in the 2011 Programme for Government and has been operationalised by the Irish Emergency Alliance. The Irish Emergency Alliance is based on a model proven in a large number of OECD countries to provide a 'one-stop shop' for the media, corporate partners, the public and International humanitarian organisations. Bringing reputable, effective and efficient humanitarian organisations together under one umbrella increases engagement from the Irish public, the media and corporate partners, resulting in a greater spread and impact of government funds.

⁵ It was noted in the 2011 Programme for Government that the parties would create '*a single appeals mechanism for national fundraising and public response. This will maximise publicity for the cause, the receipt of emergency funds and ensure the effective and co-ordinated dispersal of emergency aid. The State will financially support these NGOs in their response*'.

⁶ The Irish Emergency Alliance provides the government with the opportunity to lead the support of a single national response entity for Ireland during times of major international humanitarian crisis. This has been achieved by a number of other countries who are supported by their respective governments (e.g. [DEC](#) in the UK; [ADH](#) in Germany; [Giro555](#) in the Netherlands; [Humanitarian Coalition](#) in Canada; [Emergency Action Alliance](#) in Australia, etc).

⁷ The Irish Emergency Alliance provides the government with a coordinated vehicle in which to invest its funds rather than a process for disbursement of grants to individual agencies. It provides the opportunity to work with a single, reputable and impartial emergency response organisation rather than having to decide between multiple partners. There will be excellent visibility for Irish Aid and the Government as we will be able to say on all our campaign messaging that 'your donation is matched by the Irish Government'. This will be mutually beneficial – it will bring trust and confidence to the Irish public that the Irish Emergency Alliance is the 'go to' entity in Ireland in times of major international crisis and it will be an approved platform for the government to channel relief funds through in an efficient, timely and accountable manner.