



Scottish Government International Development Programming: a new way forward for global solidarity?

Draft discussion paper for consultation with members and partners



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Summary:



This paper makes the case for a new Scottish Government (SG) 'Global Solidarity Strategy' that coordinates and aligns external affairs, climate justice and international development programming.

It also puts forward a number of practical recommendations on how to improve and develop its financial contributions to global development, particularly on:

- Ensuring additional resources to support continuity and coordination between all the new elements of SG's international development and wider external affairs programming
- Ensuring systematic learnings across the portfolios of international activities, including the Climate Justice Fund (CJF), to improve co-ordination and coherence
- Ensuring transparency in how and why all grants are made to ensure trust and support from all stakeholders
- Continuing to support civil society directly and championing a strong, vibrant civil society here and elsewhere as the most effective vehicle for global solidarity
- Developing suitable mechanisms to support funding local organisations directly in partner countries
- Focussing more SG resources into influencing the national and global context on international issues such as vaccine equity, climate justice and gender equality
- Pioneering new approaches and solutions and by doing so leveraging support from other national, sub-national and private actors in global development



Introduction and approach



This short paper outlines the Alliance's broad position on how the Scottish Government (SG) should design and implement its contribution to global solidarity, including but not limited to, direct financial support to partner countries through its International Development Fund (IDF) and Humanitarian Emergency Fund (HEF).

The paper is set out as a draft discussion paper and all views put forward can only be attributed to the Alliance. Any statement herein cannot be attributed to any particular Alliance member. However, the vision laid out is informed by views and insights from a range of Alliance members and external stakeholders gathered informally over the past year, including from a range of current/recent SG grant holders in the early part of 2022.

Positioning this draft discussion paper to stimulate input and idea creation, the Alliance now seeks the views of all its members, and crucially the views of their partners across the world, to inform the development of this discussion paper into a clear set of recommendations for the Scottish Government.

After each section, we outline consultation questions for stakeholders to consider. These questions are designed to support more focused feedback, and all questions can be found in [this online form](#) on our website.

The questions are not designed to limit the scope of feedback - you can also provide direct feedback on any issue this paper raises by emailing us at admin@intdevalliance.scot. We are seeking views until 1st of June 2022, after which we will finalise this paper and present it to the Scottish Government.

1. Is our consultation approach appropriate? If not, how could it be improved?

Background to SG international development funding



The Scottish Government (SG) started toward funding international development programming, in addition to Scottish taxpayers' contribution to UK Aid, in 2005. This was initially focused on Malawi and was initiated by the then First Minister, Lord Jack McConnell.

From 2007, the work and budget expanded, with £9 million for projects in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Following a consultation in 2016, SG then produced a new strategy and limited the focus of the IDF to Malawi, Rwanda, Zambia, and Pakistan. In 2017, the SG increased the IDF to £10 million a year, and continued to support more initiatives alongside it including the CJF (Climate Justice fund) and the HEF.

In the December 2021 Scottish Budget, SG announced that the IDF would increase to £11.5M from April 2022 – this reflects the pre-election 2021 SNP manifesto and subsequent Programme for Government 2021-22 commitment to start to raise the IDF to £15m.

SG state that all their international development work contributes to sustainable development and the fight against poverty, injustice, and inequality internationally, within the framework of the UN Sustainable Development Goals. More info available on SG website [here](#).

2. How do you think SG have done in communicating to the wider public how they contribute to international development/global solidarity?



In 2021, ahead of the Scottish Election, SG published [a summary report](#) of their review of their approach to international development in light of COVID-19. This review set in motion a number of plans including:

- A set of **new principles** guiding their overarching approach to global solidarity across portfolios
- A commitment to establish a **Global South Panel** that will advise on creating a new Equalities Programme
- Working towards **refocusing different funding streams**, and transitioning IDF programmes to meet the revised asks of partner countries on programme themes.
- Creation of new funding streams around ‘Sustainable Recovery’, ‘Institutional Resilience’ & ‘Reducing Inequalities’
- A decision to support a **mix of competitive and non-competitive funding** across two of the three streams with non-competitive only for the ‘institutional resilience’ stream.
- designing a new **Equalities Funding Stream** into the programme, in particular to promote equality for women and girls

In the [2021-22 Programme for Government](#), SG then committed to:

- a **new global affairs framework this year to guide Scotland’s international engagement**, grounded in a value-based approach, and a feminist approach to foreign policy.
- establishing a **new £500,000 International Development Women and Girls Empowerment Fund**, funding local organisations in partner countries to ensure women and girls are safe, equal, and respected. It is assumed this is a more explicit articulation of the new Equalities funding stream previously announced.
- **establishing a Peace Institute**, with a focus on human rights, that enables SG to develop further understanding of conflict resolution and peace.
- reconstitute the **Ministerial Working Group on Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development**.
- **support the establishment of a Scottish Council for Global Affairs** – a new think tank which will coordinate Scottish expertise and research on global issues and their impact on Scotland.
- **double the Climate Justice Fund to £6 million per year, providing £24 million across this Parliament**.
- **establish a new Global Renewable Centre**, working with international development partner countries to exchange knowledge and research in renewable technologies.

Following the co-operation agreement between the SNP and the Scottish Green Party, there was a further commitment in the [Shared Policy Programme](#) to:

- review approaches to future policy and economic engagement with a view to enhancing Scotland’s global reach and presence over this parliamentary session. This will include **an increased focus in the Global South including across Africa, Asia, and South America**, as we strengthen our relationships with emerging markets and developing countries.

The Alliance broadly welcomes all of these commitments over the past 18 months, many of which were recommendations in our own [2021-2026 Policy Priorities Report](#) published in 2020 ahead of the last Scottish Election.

However, the devil is in the detail and the practical implementation of most of these commitments is yet to be seen, providing strong motivation and rationale for the development of this paper.

Draft recommendation: Many of our members and wider stakeholders have repeatedly expressed concern that the SG ID team do not have sufficient human resources to ensure continuity and coordination between all these new elements of their international development and wider external affairs programming. Therefore, SG should commit a small proportion of its increased IDF budget to ensure its own team are properly resourced to do necessary co-ordination and knowledge-building in the coming years.

3. What elements of SGs recent commitments are most important to ensure robust, transparent, and accountable contributions to global solidarity?

4. Do you have any thoughts on the practical implementation of any of the above policy commitments?

5. How should SG involve civil society to contribute to the implementation of these commitments?

The broader context – Climate, COVID-19, decolonisation, anti-racism, and humanitarian crises



COP26 underlined the importance of challenging injustice & inequality in our approach to the climate crisis both domestically and internationally. It helped many of us in Scotland understand that individual action and daily decisions on consumption have a profound effect on the lives of people in different parts of the world. This increased awareness offers an opportunity for SG to build on the leadership shown in Glasgow to determine new more coherent policies that can potentially encourage change elsewhere.

We have also become ever more aware that international development programming does not sit in isolation from broader international relations, external affairs, and humanitarian action. The current Ukraine crisis highlights this acutely, as prices for basic commodities like wheat soar, leading to major food insecurity across the world.

Our collective response to the Ukraine crisis has also emphasised the need to build better understanding of and response to other humanitarian crises across the world as comparisons are made between those suffering in Ukraine, Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen and elsewhere. At least some of the difference is built on lack of knowledge, understanding and information. As with the broader understanding of climate change's global reach, there is a space to build on human compassion to extend our notion of global citizenship.

The heightened attention to institutional and systemic racism across the world following the tragic murder of George Floyd at the hands of police in the USA in 2020 challenged the 'Global North' based international development and humanitarian sector to examine more deeply their own practices, organisations, and structures.

Reckoning with the fact that international development work is defined by the historical legacies of colonial rule and shaped by the enduring global inequalities and injustices that it left behind, requires much broader systemic changes to policy and practice.

Our collective commitment to global solidarity must, now more than ever, take on a variety of forms. This includes, but is not limited to:

- changing narratives on what 'aid' actually is and what it should evolve into
- 'Shifting the power' – ensuring decision-making and power structures move away from the Global North
- Building truly equitable partnerships with 'global south' civil society
- supporting locally led and self-defined sustainable development

We must also see actions across these areas as inextricably linked to our longstanding collective push to 'Leave No One Behind' and achieve gender equality.

In this sense, the 2016 ID strategy requires reflection. Can we say it is fit for purpose in 2022, and sits naturally alongside the recent review and other new commitments?

This all sits against the backdrop of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic that has heightened social and economic inequalities globally, slowing and in some cases, reversing progress towards achieving the UN SDGs globally. The pandemic has shone a spotlight on the unfathomable health inequalities between high income and low-income countries, especially in relation to vaccine access and cost. The pandemic has also underlined the vital need to rethink the care economy, and its reliance on women's unpaid work globally, and has demonstrated the need for new approaches to social security globally to support those in the informal sector.

The UK government is likely to publish shortly a new International Development Strategy that may consolidate cuts to UK commitment to global health and multilateralism in general whilst retaining a commitment to some funding for gender equality and simultaneously moving to a more commercial approach to aid. The Scottish government should rethink its own stance in response.

Draft recommendation: All these contextual changes and the wide array of planned new external affairs activities, lead us to believe that it is appropriate to build a new overarching 'Global Solidarity Strategy'. A new strategy of this kind would sit alongside, not below the new planned global affairs framework, and should support coordination between distinct policy portfolios (e.g. CJF) while also taking full account of the broad contextual changes outlined above.

This new strategy would build on work undertaken and progress already made through the international development review in 2021 but would also reflect more recent changes mentioned above. A full consultation should be carried out to inform this new strategy.

6. Do you agree that the broader context and recent SG commitment merits a new 'Global Solidarity Strategy' that should be widely consulted upon? Why? If not, why?

Improving SG's direct financial contributions to global solidarity



This section outlines a number of recommendations that can practically improve the co-ordination, implementation, and support for international development programming. These recommendations are informed by the views and insights from a range of Alliance members gathered informally over the past year, most recently from a range of organisations who have worked with SG in some capacity.

1. Meaningfully align climate action, international development, and humanitarian programming

This would be the clearest example of policy coherence for sustainable development. It would mean:

- All IDF programmes need to be climate sensitive or "climate-proofed". Climate adaptation must also be a cross cutting issue and not just something for CJF to address.
 - This would mean that IDF spending should demonstrate climate impacts of both grants programming and organisational operations in relation to environmental sustainability.
 - This would mean explicit data collection and publication requirements in all IDF programmes, for both competitive and non-competitive grant awards.
- Education has an enormous role to play in making climate commitments a reality. Funding that recognises the knowledge/experience/resilience of affected communities, utilises indigenous knowledge and that is gender focused would see enormous and long-lasting benefits. Drawing upon education focused NGOs/INGOs experience in Scotland could support this.
- Learning from the CJF review should inform the IDF. These two portfolios of activity must not be siloed and must actively support one another. The Alliance believes there is value in having these two areas under different ministerial portfolios but, ensuring co-ordination (e.g., not running competing calls for applications or events) and coherent messaging is an important starting point. Collaborative learning from both funds exchanged and built upon transparently is also recommended.
- The Humanitarian Emergency Fund should be complimentary to the new Loss and Damage fund and vice-versa. By clarifying the distinction between the two, SG can inform global work on loss and damage as this is a new area that is gaining traction.
- To ensure coherence with a proposed feminist foreign policy, all funding (CJF included) should include clear provisions for ensuring a clear gender analysis forms part of all programming with funding allocated accordingly.

7. Do you agree with these recommendations? Yes/no/why? How else would you like to see the commitments made by the Scottish Government at COP26 reflected in future international development programming? How could climate justice funding and international development funding be coordinated to ensure complementarity and cohesion?

2. Ensure fully open and transparent processes for all grant-making, whether competitive or non-competitive

Transparency is vital for improving policy coherence, in terms of demonstrating good practice in governance and to improve scrutiny of decision-making by civil society and others.

It would mean:

- Clear, timely and transparent communication to Scottish public over all spend, including clear rationale and justification of why projects/organisations are selected, particularly for non-competitive grants
- Setting out a Terms of Reference and criteria outlining the conditions in which a non-competitive funding allocation might take place is important too. When a non-competitive funding allocation does take place, then an explanation should be given of how the above conditions were met. The relevant applications and reports should be published to increase transparency.
- Regular and predictable competitive funding rounds to maximise impact.
- Grant-making should be in line with a coherent strategy based on proper consultation.
- Where possible, planning should be published well in advance with clear timelines and then adhered to – this is important as time/space is vital to provide for proper consultation with communities and partners for proposal design and preparation, which in turn vital for sustainable and successful projects.
- Publishing clear plans on how the new ‘Global South Advisory Panel’ could play an important role in democratising decision making.

8. Do you agree with these recommendations? Yes/no/why? How else would you like to see open and transparent allocation of resources?

3. Support civil society (in Scotland and directly in partner countries) first and foremost to drive Scotland’s global solidarity

SG’s added value to global solidarity continues to be demonstrated most clearly through its small but significant impact directed through civil society, this should be lauded, particularly at a time in history when the civil society operating environment continues to shrink globally.

This should mean:

- Ensuring the vast majority of Scotland’s direct financial contribution being spent through open, transparent, competitive calls for funding.
- Ensuring grant-making flows to a mix of different types of large and small NGOs, social enterprises, purpose driven businesses, research institutions etc.
- Mapping available funding in target countries and identifying gaps through a consultative process that meaningfully involves civil society partners, particularly those who work with underrepresented groups.
- Ensuring the views of local (in-country) organisations and other relevant and representative non-governmental civil society and grassroots groups are prioritised in any consultation process.
- Offering specific thematic competitive funding rounds to fill identified gaps that reach underrepresented groups
- ring-fencing a proportion of resources for wider capacity development of local (in-country) civil society organisations, who may not necessarily be grantees, to enhance locally led approaches within the Scottish Government target countries.
- Ensuring complementarity with other non-SG programming in targeted countries and/or thematic areas

9. Do you agree with these recommendations? Yes/no/why? How else can SG better support civil society?

4. Develop suitable mechanisms to support funding local organisations directly in partner countries

In principle, the Alliance sees the desire to fund organisations directly in partner countries as the right thing to do to both support the decolonisation agenda and to support genuine locally led and self-defined global sustainable development. However, in practice, this needs careful planning and additional resourcing, so it doesn't end up doing the exact opposite.

This would involve:

- Ensuring all information is clear, translated and easily accessible, and providing appropriate tailored support to organisations in both applying to and implementing awarded grants
- Ensuring increased staff capacity within SG ID team to provide tailored support as appropriate
- Ensure grant-management contractor is staffed with people experienced at working with local civil society partners (in-country) to ensure the entire grant-making process is fully accessible and consultative for low-resource partners, underrepresented groups, and those most marginalised, including women and girls with disabilities.
- Allow applications and proposals to be developed in local languages.

10. Do you agree with these recommendations? Yes/no/why? What other mechanisms would you like to see in place to ensure partners can access funds in an easy to use and transparent way?

5. Support COVID-19 recovery through holistic SDG implementation

COVID-19 has emphasised and highlighted stark global inequalities, and direct support for vaccine rollout and medical supplies remain important. However, COVID-19 has also slowed, and in some cases reversed, progress on virtually all other areas of SDG implementation. Yet the SDGs remain the best global roadmap for a more prosperous, safe, and sustainable planet, so the Alliance firmly believes the SDGs should continue to underpin all of SGs global sustainable development programming, including ongoing COVID-19 recovery.

In practice this means:

- Ensuring programming always supports holistic solutions that seek to address multiple SDGs, including SDG 5
- Ensuring direct COVID-19 response includes Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and livelihoods development focus
- Mainstream education & messaging on importance of vaccine & preventative measures (hygiene) across all programming
- Existing projects should integrate COVID-19 messaging & response measures

11. Do you agree with these recommendations? Yes/no/why? What would be the best way to ensure recovery from COVID-19 in the communities you are working in?

6. Commit resources to international advocacy to influence and leverage support for global solidarity

SG should commit increased resources to global advocacy on issues that matter. This would not only support the alignment of domestic and international priorities, but also support a joined-up approach on cross-cutting issues. In practice, this means taking strong, public positions and actively seeking to influence the UK Government and others on issues where global consensus does not align with their own International development principles.

This should include, but is not limited to:

- Vaccine access inequity. Importantly, this work, could and should, have knock on effects for improved access to other medicines for low-income countries.
- Business and Human Rights
- Aid for trade

12. Do you agree with this recommendation? Yes/no/why? What other issues should SG seek to influence in their global advocacy?

7. Re-imagine grant-making to support arising need and a broader understanding of who is a 'partner'

The Alliance represents a diverse range of organisations who work on a diverse range of issues with partners in over 100 countries. Therefore, we intrinsically support the idea of broadening the SG understanding of what makes a country 'a partner' and how to best support arising need.

This links to our overarching recommendation that Scotland needs a new 'Global Solidarity Strategy' which is rooted in an understanding that SG's relatively small contribution can be greater than the sum of its parts if we work to find synergies and leverage support from other sources, including geographically.

However, this does not mean that we advocate for a wholesale increase in the number of countries SG prioritises in its IDF (a low number makes sense given the sums involved). Rather, we support a blended model whereby some grant-making actively seeks synergies, leverage and learning across a range of countries in a range of geographical regions.

In practice this could mean:

- Changing the grant-making model from 3-5 yearly rounds to annual rounds, ensuring each grant covers a minimum 3-year period. This would mean a smaller number of awards are made in any given year, but would allow grant-making to be more responsive to arising issues. This is much more labour intensive from a grant management perspective and would require increased resourcing within the SG ID team, in line with earlier recommendations.
- Creating some open and competitive funding rounds that allow some opportunity for innovation outside current partner countries (like the Small Grants Programme Pilot), that aims to actively diversify the range of civil society engagement on issues underexplored in our sector, such as decolonisation or the economic consequences of the slave trade.
- Ensuring framing of grants, whether thematic (e.g., gender) or type (e.g., innovation, institution-building, etc.) is directly and explicitly linked to a clearly defined 'global solidarity strategy' and that all programmes are strategically evaluated against this strategy.
- Through the Scottish Funding Council, transparently support research for development and fill some of the gap left by the termination of the Global Challenges Research Fund. a small investment could do a lot to raise awareness of Scottish universities impact in LMICs and our research excellence more generally.

13. Do you agree with these recommendations? Yes/no/why? How could SG better support global solidarity with its limited financial contribution?

8. Innovate and pioneer new solutions and approaches to global development finance

Scottish Government's leadership at COP26 on Loss & Damage demonstrated how Scotland can have a positive impact on the global stage with its relatively modest financial contributions. Future international development programming should take heed of this in recognition that Scotland can maximise its contribution to global sustainable development by innovating and pioneering new solutions, principles, and approaches.

This could mean:

- Creating a new role in the ID team that specifically focusses on research on innovation global development finance

- Exploring and championing concepts such as ‘Global Public Investment’ and working with other national, sub-national and private actors in global development global development, such as Norad (Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation) to build consensus on new finance models that support the provision of global public goods.
- Exploring how to ensure all development finance is gender sensitive in line with a new feminist foreign policy, including examples of gender bonds and other initiatives instigated elsewhere.

14. Do you agree with these recommendations? Yes/no/why? What other areas might be useful to explore?

Conclusion and next steps



We have outlined several practical and systemic changes that we believe are necessary to enhance Scotland’s role as a global citizen. Above all, we are clear that a new ‘Global Solidarity Strategy’ is vital for a more joined up approach to Scotland’s contribution to global sustainable development, humanitarian support, climate justice and more.

A new strategy of this kind would sit alongside, not below the new planned global affairs framework, and would support coordination between distinct policy portfolios (e.g. CJF), support better policy coherence, lay out mechanisms to ensure transparency and provide clear parameters on funding criteria.

This new strategy would build on work undertaken and progress already made through the international development review in 2021 but would also reflect more recent changes mentioned above. A full consultation should be carried out to inform this new strategy.

Here at the Alliance, we expect to publish our final recommendations and share these with the Scottish Government in June 2022.

We seek the views of all of our members and their partners to inform the final report.

15. Do you agree with our conclusions and overall thinking? Yes/no/why? What have we missed?

