



intrac
for civil society

Trustees' Report 2019-20

Charity number	1016676
Company number	2663769
Registered office	Oxbridge Court, Osney Mead, Oxford, OX2 0ES
Auditor	Ross Brooke Ltd, Chartered Accountants Suite I, Windrush Court, Abingdon, Oxfordshire, OX14 1SY
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The Financial Statements for the year ended 31 March 2020 contained in this report have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the Financial Statements, and comply with INTRAC's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice" applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard RRS 102, applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland, effective 1 January 2015.

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As we enter a new period of deep change for the civil society sector, it remains important for INTRAC to look back on our recent achievements as we re-focus on the challenges ahead.

In 2019-20, we continued to work with other organisations and networks to create the conditions in which civil society can thrive. We did this through our participation in civil society programmes such as The Development Alternative, which is developing and testing models to help youth monitor development projects in their communities. We did this through evaluations that help organisations to listen and to learn. This year we shared learning on sustainability and responsible exit strategies in a series of online webinars - this is a topic of increasing relevance.

INTRAC also continued to professionalise our support to civil society. In 2019-20, this has meant a particular focus on working with grant-makers to improve how their programme staff support grantees and civil society partners. We have also co-designed new capacity-strengthening initiatives with organisations based in the global South, and expanded our strong programme of innovative and dynamic training – both face-to face and online.

Promoting rigour in the production and use of evidence is vital in a climate of scepticism about aid as well as to improve practice. INTRAC has provided its experience in monitoring, evaluation and learning to many organisations in 2019-20. In May 2019, we launched the M&E Universe – a major and still-growing resource comprising over 100 free guidance papers on aspects of M&E practice. This forms a key part of INTRAC’s commitment to helping practitioners strengthen their own capacity in this area.

2019-20 was a year of change for INTRAC itself. Mid-way through the year we said goodbye to Chief Executive Helen Mealins who retired. No sooner had the new Chief Executive settled in, than the COVID-19 pandemic began. In response we changed the way we work. Very quickly we were able to ensure all staff could work from home. We adapted our training courses for online delivery and in consultation with partners and clients we made adjustments to enable us to deliver work. Staff did an outstanding job in adapting to the situation, drawing on their resilience and experience of remote working. Through their efforts, we finished the year with a modest surplus and a good pipeline of activities for 2020-21.

While much has changed, some things remain the same - including INTRAC’s commitment to and focus on civil society. The need for a strong civil society is greater than ever, as the pandemic adds urgency and complexity to the array of challenges we already face: climate change, inequality, demography, security, and geopolitical shifts. While civil society is profoundly affected by these challenges, we believe that its unique capacities are needed to make sure we reach and include those who are being left behind.

In response we have refined our strategy and how we support civil society. Directly we are working to strengthen networks of experts and organisations in the south and increase access to support services. Indirectly we continue to support international civil society organisations and funders to build the capacity and to reinforce the agency of their local partners, and ensure that they have the resources and authority they need. We engage with donors to influence policy and the fair allocation of resources and we contribute to emerging thinking on what organisations of the future will look like. In order to do this we will adapt and strengthen our structures and ways of working.

In offering our unwavering support to civil society, especially in the global South, INTRAC aims to assist not a return to “normal” but a push on to societies that are changed for the better.



Jim Emerson
Chief Executive



Carolyn Miller
Chair of the Board

INTRAC's mission is to strengthen and support the capacity, engagement, and effectiveness of civil society, especially in the global South - in order to change societies for the better.

We help organisations to develop and grow

We provide services which actively strengthen civil society, and we accompany organisations as they develop and achieve their goals.

We support learning and adaptation

We promote the gathering and use of information to ensure quality, accountability, and evidence-based decision-making. We listen, facilitate learning, and share knowledge and insights.

We influence and inspire

We champion policy, practices, and learning that enable civil society to operate freely.

Who we are:

INTRAC is a not-for-profit organization, which has been supporting the work of civil society around the world since 1991. We have a small staff headquartered in Oxford, UK. We collaborate with an extensive global network of trainers, consultants, researchers and like-minded organisations who share our passion for civil society. Over the past 30 years we have worked directly in 120 countries. We stand out as a reliable and trusted partner. We are dedicated to co-creating innovative ideas to enhance civil society programmes, and to providing practical solutions to tackle challenges.

Who we work with:

INTRAC works with all forms of civil society organisations, including emerging forms of civil society, movements, solidarity groups, and their support networks in the south. We also work with institutions like NGOs, donors and foundations, the private sector, research institutes, and governments. We work with individuals who share our goal of a stronger civil society, and who share our values.

The British Council Premier Skills programme in action in Jinan, Shandong Province, China in May 2019. Run in partnership with the Premier League, the programme aims to build brighter futures for young people. INTRAC conducted an evaluation of this programme, which also involved visits to India, Egypt, and Uganda. INTRAC found that 92% of the young participants reported increased self-esteem and improved life skills.



Photo - © Rod MacLeod 2019

INTRAC believes that an independent civil society is an essential contributor to social change, and that people have to take responsibility for the change they want to bring about. We also believe that sustainable solutions to poverty and inequality require changes in wider systems and structures.

We therefore engage across multiple fronts with actors working with or for civil society. This might be a donor funding a programme to strengthen civil society, a university undertaking research to address the Social Development Goals, or an INGO delivering services in partnership with local organisations.

In everything we do, we take a participatory and collaborative approach, facilitating but not imposing ideas. We combine learning from practical experience with analysis and evidence from research. We seek to ensure that local practitioners and civil society actors have agency and voice, and that those funding civil society are accountable to the people they aim to support.

A central approach is our consultancy services. We provide impartial advice through evaluations and impact assessments, strategy reviews, governance support, design of organisational systems, organisational assessments and planning, project and programme design, and coaching and mentoring of individuals.

We are involved as partners in large civil society programmes, designing and delivering capacity strengthening and monitoring support throughout the life cycle of a programme.

We provide accessible, high-quality training. In addition to scheduled training courses, we produce bespoke courses for organisations. INTRAC also produces and fosters research and learning on issues affecting civil society, producing short publications and facilitating learning events.

In 2019-20 we structured our work around three objectives. The following pages offer highlights of our activities:

Creating the conditions for civil society to thrive (pages 10-11)

Professionalising support for civil society (pages 12-15)

Promoting rigour in the production and use of evidence (pages 16-19)

Photo opposite: INTRAC meets with staff from Community World Service Asia (CWSA) in Oxford, September 2019.
Photo - INTRAC

Communicating learning and best practice

In 2019-20, the INTRAC website received over 320,000 pageviews. Our website offers practical advice and examples, and shares knowledge and opportunities. Its reach is global; in the South it has a particularly strong base of users in Nigeria, India, Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania. Our blogs seek to influence behaviour through the sharing of insights from practice. We published 13 blogs in 2019-20, covering topics including strategic alliances, civic space, and INTRAC's role in a changing aid sector.

Our full-length papers offer deeper advice rooted in experience. We published two in 2019-20: on action learning with the INGO PAX; and one on leadership transition in CSOs. The M&E Universe was INTRAC's major resource output during the year (see page 17).

We use social media to share our materials and those of partners and likeminded groups. Our LinkedIn following grew during the year by over 94% and our tweets were seen 230,000 times.



INTRAC in 2019-20 at a glance



16 Countries worked in - 52 including multi-country programmes



22 In-house training courses delivered, plus 11 open scheduled courses



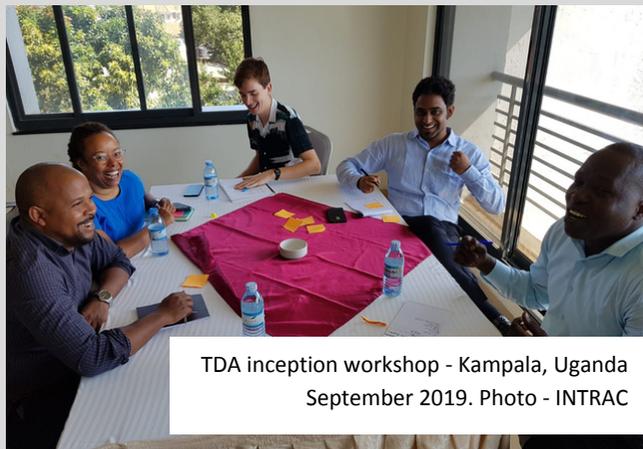
40 Unique clients provided with consultancy or in-house training support



32 Distinct consultancies undertaken, excluding training courses

Creating the conditions for civil society to thrive

In everything we do, INTRAC promotes practices and behaviours that enable civil society actors to achieve their own stated goals. We come at this from different angles: as a partner within civil society programmes; as an evaluator of projects and programmes that support civil society; and as an active member of civil society representative networks and bodies. Through these actions we influence the wide range of actors that affect civil society and civic space: policy makers, government regulators, institutional donors, international NGOs, and private funders.



TDA inception workshop - Kampala, Uganda
September 2019. Photo - INTRAC

The Development Alternative

Now in its second year, The Development Alternative consortium (Restless Development, INTRAC, Y-Care, War Child, Integrity Action, Accountable Now, DOT Lebanon), moved into full implementation in 2019-20. The programme is developing and testing models for youth to monitor development projects in their communities and hold those with power to account.

Following inception and design workshops in Uganda in November and February, INTRAC's team has now expanded to include consultants based in Madagascar and Uganda who are supporting the developmental evaluation in these pilot countries. We also helped produce a [research study on youth civil society](#).

Amplifying civil society voice

By collaborating with our peers, INTRAC shares and shapes best practice in development partnerships. Three examples from 2019-20 are:

International Civil Society Week, Apr 2019

INTRAC convened a session on organizational development support for civil society. Since then, in collaboration with CIVICUS, we have been developing a programme of support to strengthen the capacity and impact of the Affinity Group of Network Associations (AGNA).

Pathways to Power, Nov 2019

INTRAC has joined a growing informal network of civil society actors committed to changing power dynamics in the international system, sharing thinking, tools and advocacy messages.

Stopping As Success, Nov 2019 and Mar 2020

INTRAC participated in workshops, then facilitated two webinars to develop and promote the messages of the [Stopping As Success project](#) on responsible exit and transition. This project built on INTRAC's portfolio on sustainability and exit, which also featured highly in a [K4D Helpdesk Report](#) in April 2020.



In Belgrade in April 2019, INTRAC signed a Call to Action which called on UN Member States to accelerate work to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and “take concrete steps to protect and enable space for civil society.”

INTRAC is one of 135 civil society organisations to sign the Call to Action, which is accompanied by an Action Agenda outlining the practical steps needed. Photo - INTRAC

Over 120 civil society professionals from large and small CSOs registered for the two Stopping as Success webinars run by INTRAC in March 2020.

Professionalising support to civil society

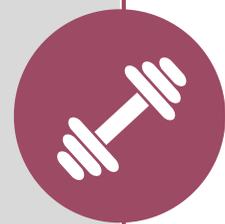
INTRAC continues to be a pioneer of approaches and tools for organizational development and capacity building. Our emphasis is on issues that have an impact on the legitimacy and strength of CSOs, including leadership, integrity, accountability to multiple stakeholders, and resilience in the face of political pressure or funding fluctuations.

In 2019-20, two aspects of our work stand out in particular. Firstly, we've been working closely with grant-makers to improve how programme staff support grantees and civil society partners. This includes initiatives with the Oak Foundation (see opposite), C&A Foundation, and iCS Brazil

Secondly, we're building partnerships with organisations based in the global south to co-design new initiatives. This includes with CIVICUS, AGNA and Community World Service Asia (CWSA). Improving accountability and partnership practices is another area of focus, with support to Helvetas and the Swiss Red Cross in 2019-20 on this issue.



INTRAC and representatives of the Affinity Group for National Associations (AGNA) came together for a two-day workshop in Oxford in January 2020 to scope out a collaborative programme aimed at strengthening AGNA and its members. Photo - INTRAC



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unique clients provided with bespoke capacity development support in 2019-20. Clients including INGOs, academic institutions, and funders.

How INTRAC has worked with the Oak Foundation to help shape their strategic approach to capacity building

In 2018, Oak Foundation asked INTRAC to help strengthen its capacity building support to grantees. We focused initially on developing programme staff understanding and skills in catalysing organisational change. The success of the first year's support led to a second phase starting in February 2019. As well as continuing to develop staff capacity, we assisted Oak at a more strategic level helping it:

- Consolidate its learning about what works in capacity building in a staff 'playbook'
- Articulate its underlying theory of change for the programme
- Prioritise its direction in a new capacity building strategy for 2020 to 2022

Oak staff have responded favourably to their experiences of the collaboration with INTRAC. Some particularly emphasised the value they gained from online training.

Additionally, the second phase began to extend outside Oak to those delivering capacity building support on the ground. For example, INTRAC trained an Oak-supported grant maker in Brazil to integrate effective capacity strengthening into its work with environmental NGOs. We also co-designed and secured funding for a "capacity building for exit" programme in Ethiopia, but implemented and managed by INTRAC's Ethiopian associates as part of our commitment to #shiftthepower.

We are now planning with Oak Foundation a third phase of support, investing more time and energy in strengthening national providers of capacity building, whether individual consultants or NGO support organisations like ourselves.

"Thank you for your work and for the wonderful training experiences, they were a highlight of my year!"

An Oak Foundation Programme Officer

Innovating and expanding our training for civil society

INTRAC continued to expand and develop its portfolio of training services in 2019-20. Designed by and for civil society practitioners, both INTRAC's open and in-house courses are attuned to the specific needs of the sector. In 2019-20, there has been a particular emphasis on online and blended learning, with a view to maximising our impact on clients and their work.

58 Civil society professionals trained in scheduled online courses

81 Civil society professionals trained in scheduled face-to-face courses

8.5 Average participant score for INTRAC's courses out of 10

98 Unique organisations represented in scheduled training

51 Countries represented in our diverse training cohorts

Highlights of training, 2019-20

Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL)

- Advanced M&E scheduled course (May and Sep 2019)
- Online MEL scheduled course (Jan to Feb 2020)

Programme Strategy and Design

- Theory of Change for Planning and Impact Assessment scheduled course (Jun 2019)
- Theory of Change training and follow-on support for Rutgers (Oct 2019)

Organisational and Capacity Development

- OD and partner capacity development for iCS Brazil (August 2019)
- Consultants for Change (C4C) online scheduled course (Jan to Mar 2020)



ADRA advocacy participants, South Africa, June 2019.
Photo - Helen Collinson

"The course was very useful since it allowed me to take a step back from my professional practice, to put concepts on things that I already did sometimes, to acquire new tools, to meet and share problems specific to the job of consultant with my colleagues. The course was dense, but very diverse and dynamic, with many practical case studies that I had to deal with in my own practice. "

Emmanuel, participant on the January to March 2020
Consultans for Change (C4C) course

In-house advocacy training including whole teams: ADRA

Training that is tailor-made to the specific needs of organisations is key to our provision of relevant and targeted capacity strengthening for practitioners. One example is our work with the Adventist Development and Relief Agency who commissioned INTRAC to support the development of their country programmes' new advocacy strategies. The most innovative aspect of the course was the way in which the development of the national advocacy strategies was combined with advocacy capacity-strengthening activities. Participants were asked to complete a series of exercises in the months leading up to the training course. This made it possible to involve ADRA's whole country teams and local church leaders in the early stages of developing the national strategies and to build team capacity in advocacy at the same time. All participants returned to their offices with a strong draft advocacy strategy to share with their teams and churches.

Promoting rigour in the production and use of evidence

In a climate of scepticism about aid, and increased pressure on civil society organisations from governments and the public alike, it is vital that CSOs use evidence to improve their effectiveness and impact. Civil society policy and practice needs to be informed by methodologically sound evidence.

This is an area where INTRAC excels, and in 2019-20 we once again supported hundreds of individuals, organisations and institutions to improve their practice in planning, monitoring, evaluation, impact assessment, research and learning. We have done this in several ways, including through open and bespoke training courses; through providing accessible and free knowledge products and resources targeted at practitioners; through providing independent evaluations of civil society projects and programmes to assess performance and impact; and through championing research that builds capacity and leaves a lasting impact.

We can have a significant impact by designing robust MEL systems for programmes, and

providing the monitoring and learning function as a partner within programmes. In 2019-20 we played this role in multi-year programmes with the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (Inclusive and Accountable Politics programme), the British Council (Media for All - Supporting Greater Media Independence in the Western Balkans), the British Red Cross (Action for Migrants: Route-based Assistance Programme (AMIRA)), Norwegian People's Aid (PPIMA project in Rwanda), as well as in The Development Alternative programme.

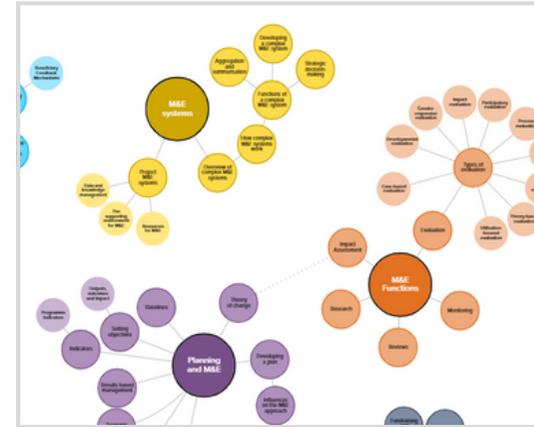
Wherever possible, when working on multi-country MEL initiatives, we work with consultants based in the relevant country or region, enabling us to deliver high-quality support that combines local and international knowledge whilst strengthening local capacity.



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unique clients provided with MEL support in 2019-20, of which 66% were national or international INGOs. Bespoke, in-house training was delivered to 12 clients.

The M&E Universe



Over 90 papers have now been made freely available to civil society professionals via the M&E Universe, with more planned for 2020-21.

"I find the M&E Universe easy to navigate, logical and clear to understand. As the MEL Adviser for Practical Action's Renewable Energy for Refugees project, I found the evaluation and complex methodology guidance particularly helpful during the initial design stages of our mid-term evaluation. We were keen to ensure we aligned with best practice within the MEL community and we wanted to find suitable tools for understanding systems change. The complex methodologies guidance notes were clear and insightful."

Sarah Begg, Practical Action

A major achievement this year was the launch of the M&E Universe in May 2019. The M&E Universe is a free, online repository of over 90 short papers on a vast range of M&E topics, primarily written by Nigel Simister.

The papers are concise and accessible, intended for civil society practitioners with varying levels of experience in monitoring and evaluation. Introductory papers on core topics like the planning of M&E are particularly useful for those who are new to the field, while more experienced practitioners are catered to with papers on more advanced subjects. These include sampling methods, different forms of evaluation, organisational M&E systems, and complex methodologies for data collection and analysis.

Several years in the making, the M&E Universe is a significant offering to the civil society sector. It provides access to the knowledge and experience of many INTRAC experts, as well as third parties. As feedback shows, it can help practitioners build their own capacity to strengthen their accountability and impact. Our thanks go to the many contributors, readers and users, and we look forward to sharing new sections in 2020-21.

In its first year, the M&E Universe had over 31,000 unique page views. In September 2019, 86 civil society professionals, from over 60 countries, joined a webinar on the Universe.

Advancing MEL methods

By using robust, but participatory methods for evaluations, we can provide an accurate picture of the performance (both positive and negative) of civil society programmes. Methods that promote reflection and learning, and that engage project staff and partners in the analysis of data and how it can be used to make changes, ensure that recommendations will be acted upon.

Methods we've used regularly this year include Outcome Mapping and Outcome Harvesting, for example in a review of a Norwegian Peoples' Aid programme on influencing political decision-making and on an evaluation for PAX.



For Bridging the Gaps, a multi-agency programme led by Aidsfonds, INTRAC designed an outcome harvesting approach with their partners in Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan, Kenya and Indonesia. These methods help to explore the contribution of organisations, programmes or projects to identified changes.

For complex programmes, we continue to innovate with ways to summarise and aggregate results across project portfolios and to enable adaptations based on the monitoring and learning cycle. Often this leads to repeated requests for INTRAC's support to programmes over a period of time.

Our engagement with the British Council's Active Citizens programme is one example. Over five years we have used a variety of approaches to gather different perspectives on what the programme is achieving and how.

In Indonesia, consultant and member of INTRAC's network Ibnu Mundzir conducts an interview for an evaluation of the Voice for Change Partnership (V4CP). Indonesia was the focus of one of three detailed country studies of the programme, which supports CSOs to foster collaboration aimed at holding governments and the private sector to account. Photo - Ibnu Mundzir

Promoting learning and sharing of knowledge

Research for impact

As an active member of the [Rethinking Research Collaborative](#), INTRAC is shaping best practice in research partnerships, grounded in principles of equity, participation and development impact. We ensure that these principles underpin our collaborations with academic partners. This year, this has included working with the [UKRI GCRF Water Security and Sustainable Development Hub](#), where INTRAC acts as a MEL partner, and the [Gobi Framework project](#), where INTRAC is providing support on civil society engagement.

Together with other Oxford-based organisations we have formed the Oxford Forum on Research for Development (OX4RD). The central aim is to ensure that development research and knowledge exchange build capacity and contribute to positive change in the global South.

Development in Practice

In 2019-20, INTRAC continued the editorship of Development in Practice, one of the world's foremost academic journals on international development.

In October 2019, Development in Practice produced a major, open-access [special feature on gender and financial inclusion](#), guest-edited by Julia Arnold and Sarah Gammage from the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW).

Development in Practice, in numbers

 **Over 250,000** article downloads during the year

 **Almost 50%** of contributors and editors are from the Global South

Activities and operational priorities for 2020-21 are guided by INTRAC’s Mission, Aims and Strategic Priorities approved by the Board in July 2020. Our overarching strategic priorities are:

1) Increase access for civil society actors to support services in the global South, by working with existing networks and structures, to strengthen organisational resilience and health, effectiveness, leadership, integrity, and accountability.

2) Support INGOs and funders to examine and adapt their strategies, accountability mechanisms, funding policies, power distribution, and governance structures to enable equitable relationships with, and increase the agency and voice of, civil society in the south.

3) Facilitate cooperation and exchange and contribute to policies informed by a global, holistic perspective that builds on local knowledge, agency, and leadership. Engage with emerging thinking on what organisations of the future will look like.

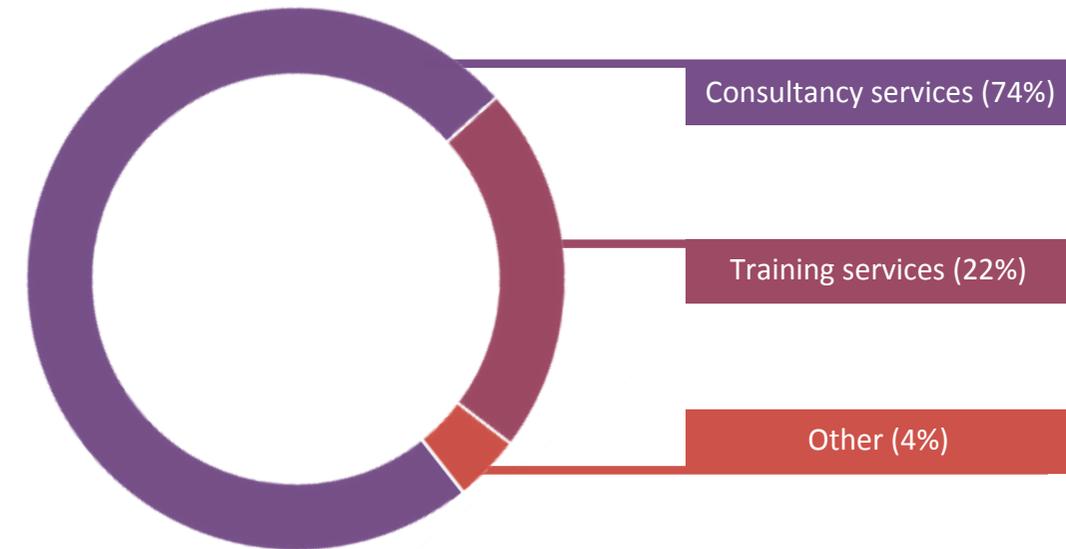
INTRAC will undertake a number of priority activities in 2020-21 to support the achievement of these strategic aims.

In order to help increase access to support services in the global South, we will strengthen our engagement with our network of non-staff consultants. In working with an extensive and diverse network of consultants, especially in the south, we aim to support the localisation and shift-the-power agendas. We will also build upon our training offer, using an even wider range of virtual approaches.

To support the building of equitable relationships between northern organisations and their southern partners, we will expand our proactive engagement with foundations, donors, and INGOs. We will continue to share our evidence and insights from practice, in order to foster debate, exchange knowledge and influence policy.

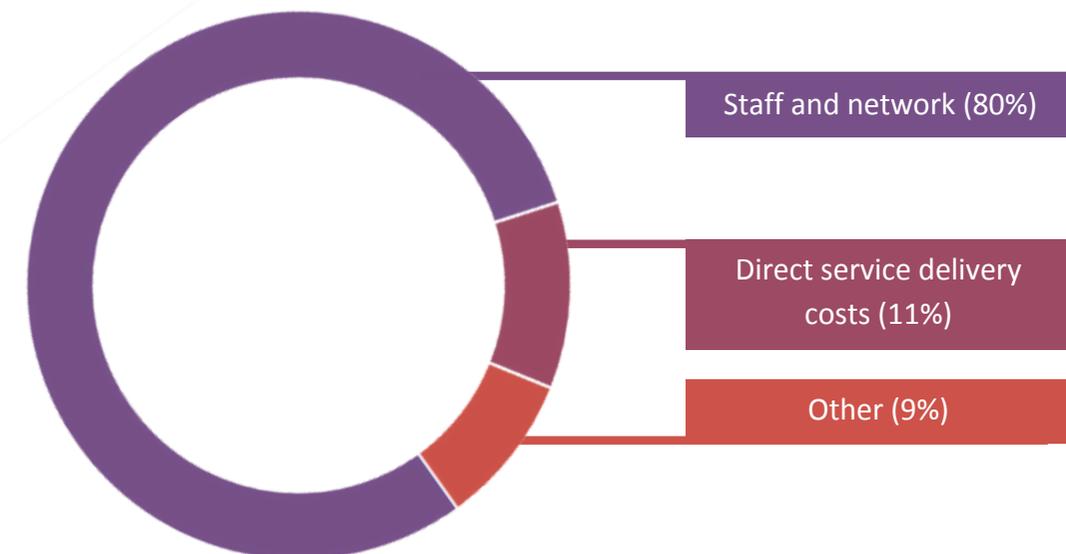
Income 2019-20

INTRAC’s funding model is based primarily on fees for work delivered on behalf of clients, and earnings from delivering training. The majority of our income is earned from general consultancy and research-focused consultancy services. Other forms of income include grants and funds in support of research and programmes.



Expenditure 2019-20

INTRAC would be unable to deliver the support it provides without the skills and knowledge of its staff and network of external consultants. This is reflected in the breakdown of its cost structure. Staff and external consultants account for 80% of our costs.





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