



An Coimisiún um Thodhchaí na Meán The Future of Media Commission

Public Consultation

Have Your Say: Share your views on the Future of Media in Ireland

Are you worried about fake news? Is independent journalism important to you and to society? Do the media reflect your experience of the world? What could they do better?

The independent Future of Media Commission has been set up by the Irish Government to assess the public service media and the challenges they face. It is asked to make recommendations to set the media on strong foundations for the future.

The media are important for our democracy and society. They inform public debate through independent journalism. They reflect and promote the lives, language, art, sport, music, culture, traditions, and identities of Irish people at home and around the world.

The Future of Media Commission invites you to tell us what you think the future of the media should be. We want to hear your views on public service media in Ireland, wherever you live in Ireland or around the world.

As an initial step, the Commission is conducting a public consultation by inviting your views on the on the key questions to be addressed in its work. The Commission will follow up this initial consultation with further consultation initiatives including webinars and small group engagements.

How to make a submission

There are four different ways you can send us your submission:

1. Email your submission to info@futureofmediacommission.ie
2. Post your submission to Future of Media Commission, Birmingham Tower West, Dublin Castle, Dublin 2, D02R866
3. Upload your submission via our website www.futureofmediacommission.ie
4. Input via our online form on www.futureofmediacommission.ie

Please note that there is an 8,000 word limit for submissions.



An Coimisiún um Thodhchaí na Meán The Future of Media Commission

Optional template to guide your submission

While you can make any submission you wish, to assist you in exploring the issues which are relevant to the Commission's work, you might like to consider the template below.

It divides the areas to be addressed by the Commission into three broad questions with some sub-questions, which are simply intended as prompts for the issues you may wish to look at in answering the broad questions.

Feel free to answer all, some or none of the questions, or to add issues and thoughts of your own. As the Commission expects to receive many submissions you are asked not to exceed eight thousand (8000) words.

Further information

Background Information about the Commission

The Future of Media Commission has been set up by the Government to assess the current state of public service media and the challenges they face, and to make recommendations to set the media on a stable footing for the future.

The Commission is independent of Government and will draw on the expertise of its members to make that assessment and recommendations. It has 10 members, who have been chosen because of their expertise and experience across the media.

Commission's Terms of Reference

The Commission is asked to:

- Identify what the Irish experience has been in delivering public service aims through public service broadcasters, other broadcasters, print and online media at all levels
- To look at the challenges created by new global platforms and changing audience preferences;
- Consider if the current models are the appropriate ones the next 10 years;
- Review best practice internationally for meeting the public service aims in light of changing audience expectations, in particular younger audiences.

Arising from that work, the Commission is tasked with:

- proposing how public service aims should be delivered over the next ten years;
- how this should contribute to supporting Ireland's cultural and creative sectors;



An Coimisiún um Thodhchaí na Meán

The Future of Media Commission

- how this work can be funded in a way that is sustainable, secure way that ensures editorial independence and delivers value for money to the public;
- making recommendations on RTE's role, financing and structure within this framework;
- How this is overseen and regulated, having regard to our EU obligations;

Working Definitions

The Commission has agreed working definitions of “Public”, “Public Service Media” “Public Service Content” and “Public Service Content Providers” as follows:

Working definition of ‘the Public’

For the purposes of the Future of Media Commission, the term ‘public’ is used in its broadest sense, meaning the total population that is the intended recipient of media content generally, and public service content in particular.

However, the public should also be considered as more than simply the consumer or passive recipient of media. As technological innovation continues to reshape public behaviour and preferences, the public is also, increasingly, both a stakeholder and active participant in the media system generally, and in public service content provision in particular.

The public should be considered with regard to the principles of universality, diversity and inclusivity. In terms of universality, the public includes people resident in Ireland and Northern Ireland, the Irish diaspora abroad and anyone abroad who has an interest in learning about or staying informed about Ireland.

In terms of diversity and inclusivity, the public includes particular groups within society and classes of person that may require special provisions to ensure equity of access to, and treatment by, media. In this regard, the Employment Equality Acts, which define nine grounds of discrimination including Gender; Civil status; Family status; Sexual orientation; Religion; Age; Disability; Race and Membership of the Traveller community, may be instructive. Other factors known to impair equitable access to the media include socioeconomic status, educational levels, literacy levels (including digital literacy), language barriers and infrastructure or technological deficits (which can be shaped by geographical considerations such as regional or urban/rural disparities).



An Coimisiún um Thodhchaí na Meán The Future of Media Commission

Working definition of ‘Public Service content’

Public Service content, in an Irish context, refers to media content (digital, print or broadcast) that has the public service characteristics set out in the Future of Media Commission’s terms of reference; namely, content that:

- Informs, educates and entertains the Irish public with regard to matters of Irish culture, identity, sport, language and other matters inherent to Ireland and the Irish people;
- Provides the public access to high quality, impartial, independent journalism, reporting on matters of local, regional, national, European and international importance in a balanced way and which contributes to democratic discourse;
- Brings the nation, including the diaspora, together at moments of great national importance;
- Ensures that creative Irish talent gets the opportunity to have their work reach audiences in Ireland and, where possible, further afield.

Public service content has a distinct public value, is produced to clearly-defined professional and ethical standards, is an important public source of unbiased information and diverse opinions.

Working definition of ‘Public Service Media’

Public Service Media (PSM) are publicly-owned, publicly-funded media organisations that primarily provide public service content. PSM have a clear focus on responding to and serving the needs of the public.

PSM have a statutory remit to provide widely-accessible content across broadcast, digital and/or other formats and platforms as appropriate, producing and/or providing content intended for public benefit, operating with a public service ethos, guided by clearly-defined standards of professional ethics, enabling public debate, subject to regulatory oversight, and free at the point of consumption.

Working definition of ‘Public Service Content Providers’

Public Service Content Providers refers to other, non-publicly owned, media organizations across the print, online, television and radio sectors that provide public service content to directly to their audiences, or via other providers.



An Coimisiún um Thodhchaí na Meán The Future of Media Commission

Questions

Question 1. How should Government develop and support the concept and role of public service media and what should its role in relation to public service content in the wider media be?

- How should Government develop and support the concept and role of public service media and what should its role in relation to public service content in the wider media be?
- What can be learned from the evolution of public service media over the last decade?
- What systems may be required to support and sustain public service content, e.g. high quality, independent journalism, in an increasingly competitive and consolidated market?
- How might public service media be more effective in promoting the Irish language, sport and culture?
- How might public service media better respond to the needs and expectations of the public?
- What can we learn from other jurisdictions?

Question 2. How should public service media be financed sustainably?

- What is the best model for future funding of public service media in Ireland? What approach best supports independent editorial oversight while achieving value for money and delivering on public service aims?
- What opportunities exist to develop and implement business model and organisational changes within the public service broadcasters (RTÉ and TG4)?
- How might content commissioning, including by RTÉ, TG4 and the BAI Sound and Vision scheme, be adjusted/improved/reformed to better achieve public service aims?
- How should public funding or tax reliefs be apportioned to Public Service Content providers?
- What does the shift in advertising revenues towards big tech firms mean for the future of print, online and broadcast media?



An Coimisiún um Thodhchaí na Meán

The Future of Media Commission

- What role is there for alternative funding models for Public Service Content providers – voluntary, cooperative, crowdsourcing, subscription?

Question 3. How should media be governed and regulated?

- What regulatory changes at EU or global level might impact on the governance of public service media in the period ahead?
- What challenges are posed to a vibrant, independent public service media by increasing consolidation / declining plurality of ownership in the Irish market?
- Are current legislative and regulatory controls for public service media adequate?

Terms and Conditions

- All submissions and comments submitted to the Future of Media Commission Secretariat for this purpose may be published on the Commission's website, and are subject to release under the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act and the European Communities (Access to Information on the Environment) Regulations. Submissions are also subject to Data Protection legislation.
- The names, addresses and other personal details of private individuals who make submissions will not be published on our website without their consent.
- The identity and relevant details of companies, unincorporated bodies, NGOs, or organisations and any officers or employees making a submission on their behalf may be published on our website.
- Submissions may be made anonymously.
- Sensitive, confidential or commercially sensitive information should not be included in your submission and it will be presumed that all information* contained in your submission is releasable under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.
*(except for the names, addresses and personal details accompanying submissions from private individuals)
- The Secretariat will use your response to inform the work of the Future of Media Commission in reaching its findings and making recommendations to the Government in its report.