



14-16 Lord Edward St,  
Dublin,  
D02 YC63  
8<sup>th</sup> January 2021

### **Commission on the Future of Media Commission submission**

**Animation Ireland** is the trade association for the leading Irish animation production companies, working together to promote Ireland's world-class sector internationally. It is the voice of the Irish animation sector endeavouring to enhance Ireland's reputation as a world leading creative centre for content and technology by focusing on growth, developing an innovation culture and creating competitive advantage for members. With millions of viewers watching Irish produced animated programmes, Ireland is a recognised leader for TV, Film, Games and Visual Effects.

The Irish animation industry has experienced substantial growth since 2010 and has emerged as a central component of Ireland's digital and creative economy. Animation Ireland has 35 members, accounting for 49% of production spending in Ireland in 2019 (Screen Ireland, S481 figures 2019) and employing more than 2,000 full time staff.

Ireland is one of the best places in the world to produce animation and has one of the best tax credits available internationally, with up to a 32% tax credit available on eligible Irish expenditure. The Irish passion for storytelling and the arts, combined with its entrepreneurial background, has created a culture perfectly suited for world-class animation studios to thrive.

Animation is an expensive medium to produce and projects are normally financed from a number of sources both domestic and international. 2D animated television series cost on average €8k/ minute; 3D costs €8k to €10k plus/minute and animated features costs range from €2m to €13m plus in the European film co-production context.

A typical Irish finance plan will have funding from RTE, Screen Ireland, The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, S481 tax credits (Revenue) and the WRAP fund. This combination of funding may amount to less than 50% of the overall budget so international finance partners are also required.

Irish animation producers take their projects to market by attending various markets and festivals throughout the year e.g. Kidscreen in Miami in February, Cartoon Movie in March, Annecy in France in June, CMC in the UK in July, Cartoon Forum in Toulouse in September and MIPCOM in Cannes in October.

International broadcasters, SVODs (Subscription Video on Demand services) and distributors also attend, and Irish producers pitch at these markets. For an Irish project to have the imprimatur of a national broadcaster gives it more credibility in the marketplace. Although the funding contributions of Irish broadcasters are modest by international standards, their support can unlock funds from other territories, as the support of the national broadcasters is seen as a stamp of approval, therefore the converse is also true of the industry's practices in the marketplace.

A greater financial commitment to the animation sector would be a welcome development, commensurate to the audiences generated by animation content. It is important to note that this would allow Irish animation companies to hold on to a greater percentage of their Intellectual Property (IP) with respect to projects developed in Ireland, thereby also increasing the amount of work carried out in Ireland, as well as enhancing the ability of our more service focused studios, to secure investment, to carry out project work in Ireland, for the international studios.

The national broadcasters also support the animation industry in other ways.

FRAMEWORKS is an initiative for the support of short animation film-making. It is a flagship scheme for the Irish animation sector that has produced global, award-winning films to a consistently high standard. It is jointly funded by RTE and Screen Ireland.

The scheme normally funds 2 x 2 minute shorts with a budget of €20k each and 2 x 5 minute shorts with a budget of up to €70k each.

RTE also commissions 10 Christmas short animations in the “Shorts Yule Love” series. This is a great opportunity for new animators to cut their teeth on a project and for existing studios to hone skills, develop talent and try out new ideas.

Animation Ireland also receives funding from RTE in the amount of €25k per annum. This contribution is allocated to the running costs of the organisation.

Public broadcasters also provide letters of support to animation producers when making funding applications to the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. Although a producer can apply for funding without a letter ultimately one is required to draw down the funds.

Public service broadcasters are an essential element of the ecosystem that supports the production of animation in Ireland including Screen Ireland, The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland, Enterprise Ireland, Animation Skillnet, IDA Ireland, Revenue and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

In an increasingly globalised world dominated by private media companies, it is therefore vital that Ireland’s public service broadcasters, RTE and TG4, are properly funded, to preserve and enhance the values and remits that reflect our culture, heritage, language and people.