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To: info@futureofmediacommission.ie
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Submission by BioAtlantis: "The Future of Media in Ireland"
Date: Friday 8 January 2021 19:21:55

To whom it concerns,

BioAtlantis Ltd. wish to make a submission in relation to the "Future of Media in Ireland". The submission is outlined as follows, in accordance with the template provided:

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?

Recommendation:

- There are currently no penalties or consequences for program makers who breach the Broadcast Act. To ensure the integrity of the public service media, the Government should be given the power to withdraw or seek a return of funding from media organizations who breach the Broadcast Act.
- The Government should not fund media organizations or documentary makers that disseminate false information or create programmes that lack fairness, objectivity and impartiality.

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

Recommendation: The financing of public service media in Ireland needs to be reformed urgently. In particular, the continued funding of RTE is not sustainable for the following reasons:

- RTE is a poorly run organization. Despite decades of funding from the taxpayer, the quality of programming has drastically deteriorated.
- RTE has blatantly avoided the issues concerning the over-payment of key staff. None of the key staff should be on salaries above €150K. However, 24 of RTE's staff earn >€150K, with a further 5 on salaries >€300K. This is not sustainable (see table below). In contrast to RTE, TG4 is a well-run broadcaster, without inflated salaries. In addition, TG4 create higher quality programming, of greater relevance to the general public. It is astonishing therefore, that RTE received €189 M in licence fee income in 2018, while TG4 just received approximately €40M in State funding.

No	Salary range in 2019	No. staff in RTE on salary range
1	€80-100K	170
2	>€100K	122
3	€100-150K	98
4	€150-250K	24
5	>€300K †	5

† Salaries of over €300K are based on 2016 figures. RTE has not disclosed salaries since this time.

BioAtlantis is a company that employs over 70 people, none of which earn over €100k, and have much higher qualifications than RTE's staff.

- RTE has not hired staff with knowledge or expertise in important areas encompassing scientific, legal or ecological matters. This has led to extremely poor programming on technical matters. For example, the coverage of Covid-19 by RTE has been shocking and has

created considerable hysteria and confusion amongst the general public.

Question 3. How should media be governed and regulated?

Recommendation: An authority with robust powers is required to properly regulate the public service media. The Broadcast Act and BAI should be amended and reformed as follows:

- The BAI is currently tasked with: (a) adjudicating whether or not programs are in breach of the Broadcast Act and (b) providing funding to radio and TV program makers. This dual role may create the potential for conflicts to arise when assessing complaints about programs. To ensure independence when assessing the compliance of programming with the Broadcast Act, the BAI should not be involved in the issuance of funding to programme makers.
- The BAI should be given powers to financially penalize media organizations that are in breach of the Broadcast Act, intentionally or otherwise.
- The BAI should be better equipped to deal with serious complaints. To achieve this, the organization should recruit personnel with strong scientific and legal backgrounds.
- In some cases, the BAI can take up to a year to reach a decision on foot of a complaint. Therefore, the procedures within the BAI should be reformed to deal with complaints in an expeditious manner.
- Dissemination of false information is unacceptable and should be addressed in a revised Broadcast Act. The BAI should have power to issue significant penalties to media organizations or program makers engaging in this behaviour.
- Any relationship between a program maker and interviewee should be clearly disclosed in any program. Failure to do so should represent a serious breach of the Broadcast Act.
- The marketing and promotion of public broadcasting programmes online should be regulated as part of the Broadcast Act.

Should you have any questions or require further information regarding this submission, please get in touch.

Your sincerely,
BioAtlantis Ltd.

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