

**SCREEN DIRECTORS
GUILD OF IRELAND**

Screen Directors Guild of Ireland

Submission to the Future of Media Commission

January 2021

Introduction

The Screen Director's Guild of Ireland (SDGI) is the representative professional body for Irish directors working on feature films, documentary, animation, television drama, short films and commercials. We aim to empower directors so they can fully realize their creative projects, work as advocates to continually improve their working environment, and promote and celebrate the achievements of our directors on a national and international scale.

- To promote the economic and creative rights of the screen directors of Ireland and raise awareness of their status as artists.

- To create a comprehensive information sharing resource, and improve the funding infrastructures, pay conditions and general working environment for directors.

- To facilitate more effective dialogue, co-operation and clarity between the film community and other arts organisations.

- To promote greater gender equality and diversity in the industry.

The Screen Directors Guild of Ireland is a member of the European Federation of Directors Organisations (FERA) Membership currently stands at 304 members.

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?

The positive nature of the national and international identity of Ireland is intrinsically linked to our unique and powerful contribution to storytelling through National dramatic and factual television programming. Film and television storytelling is essential for the development of a healthy democratic society and is a powerful means of self-reflection and delivers a genuine record for future generations. Television has the power to transform every part of our lives and as television becomes the dominant medium of our present and future, it is the bedrock on which the consciousness of the nation is built.

Dedicated support of the independent TV content creators such as directors and writers is essential as it is their vision and energy that will help shape the Ireland of the future. Supporting the ecosystem that serves the broadcasting sector is crucial.

Increased government support for the development and production of Irish television programming is essential if the vision and energy of its creators is going to continue to shape our future identity on a national and global stage.

Irish talent, directors and writers are global innovators reimagining the future of screen entertainment by creating films and television shows that are enjoyed by millions of people around the world. Irish directors can rise to the opportunity to develop content to meet global demand in this time of disruption and potential growth. SDGI believes that investment in broadcasters is only effective if there is in tandem, robust investment in the independent production sector and developing long term talent.

Key recommendations:

1. Licence fee reformation is urgently needed to bring Irish broadcasting into the present day. The current Irish licence fee structure is not fit for purpose and collection method inefficient in today's digital age and recommend an exploration of other member states as examples that already implement a culture tax.

2. Robust investment is needed in Irish Broadcasting. In 2018 the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland recommended an increase of investment is needed to sustain RTÉ's vital services. A vibrant national well resourced broadcaster is a key service for any nation.
3. Increased investment in the talent driven ecosystem that produces TV drama is crucial engage in opportunities from European co-productions. This ecosystem supports the employment of directors, writers, producers and crew.

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

New innovative ways of funding broadcasters are being used in Europe and globally.

Key Recommendations:

4. SDGI fully endorses all the recommendations in the Indecon Report on The creation of a National Media Creative Content Fund on behalf of representatives from the Irish creative audio visual sector.
5. Licence Fee/equivalent fee must be increased to finance Irish Broadcasters adequately.
6. RTÉ's and TG4's independent production budget is not sufficient for the development and production of Irish drama by our national broadcaster. Funds such as the BAI Sound and Vision Fund, Screen Ireland TV Drama Development Fund are vital supports in the development of Irish television content. RTÉ's/TG4's contribution is a small but very significant catalyst in starting TV productions in Ireland this can unlock European partners and international investment.
7. The generation of intellectual property through TV content and the resulting revenue from the exploitation of this copyright plays an important part in long term sustainability the entire sector. SDGI recommends the full implementation of the EU Copyright Directive in Ireland that will support key talent in sharing in the economic life of their work. For example directors, writers and producers can retain rights from European broadcasters/SVODS and participate in ongoing sales returns.
8. In line with the full implementation of directors creative copyright for sustainability of the industry. SDGI recommends national terms agreement between directors and broadcasters. An agreement to the current agreement between Irish producers and broadcasters and in

line with the current UK Broadcasters have with directors.
<http://downloads.bbc.co.uk/commissioning/site/directors-uk-pan-industry-agreement-2019.pdf>

9. SDGI recommends Revenue clarify the Artists Exemption Scheme, to include all creative and original audiovisual works of cultural merit, either through interpretation or technical amendment. Currently writers for TV qualify for the scheme but directors do not. Formal Artists Exemption recognition for directors would support the sustainability of directors working in the industry.

Question 3. How should media be governed and regulated?

10. Broadcast media is at an inflection point globally. There is a potential for untapped growth for Ireland if we seize this opportunity for more production. There are macro questions we are asking such as, how will broadcasting impact our stories for the next decade and beyond? We need a strong regulator and that is focused on broadcasting that can adapt with the future changes and give equal resources to the regulation of broadcasting as to online regulation.

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