

14<sup>th</sup> January 2020

Future of Media Commission,  
Birmingham Tower West,  
Dublin Castle,  
Dublin 2,  
D02R866

**RE: Public Consultation on the Future of Media in Ireland**

To whom it concerns,

Ibec welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the Public Consultation on the Future of Media in Ireland. Ibec acknowledges the challenges faced by public service media and is happy to make recommendations to ensure it has a sustainable future.

To cover the wide scope of this consultation we have provided feedback based on a number of key headings:

➤ **Economic Stability & Certainty**

The importance of high quality, independent and well-resourced public service media cannot be overstated. It is the bedrock of a healthy democracy and a fair and equitable society which in turn ensures peace and stability.

Though its value has been long overlooked, our societal certainty and political stability gives Ireland a major advantage when competing for business investment internationally. Our peaceful society is one of Ireland's most important economic and societal assets and should be protected in multiple ways including through public service media.

Public service broadcasting in English and Irish is part of the national public infrastructure and the importance of it being appropriately resourced and sustained cannot be over emphasised.

Strong public service broadcasting is required to ensure quality journalism and reporting. The provision of reputable news and current affairs sources underpins a well-functioning democracy and is a critical standard setter for the integrity of information and reputable commentary. This is particularly relevant to an organisation like Ibec which takes an evidence-based approach in all of its communications and policies.

From a political perspective, the importance of sustainable national public service broadcasting is crucial at a time when global trends of populism and extremism can undermine democracy as many recent events and developments have illustrated.

Social media channels are now an established part of the media landscape. It is vital that national public service broadcasting embraces these platforms and is active in disseminating quality, balanced and well researched information across these channels.

➤ **Ireland's Reputation**

From a business perspective, quality programming and reporting also has a key role to play in the promotion of Irish business, particularly indigenous SMEs including sectors particularly negatively impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic like tourism and food.

Indigenous public service media foster the promotion of Irish brands and products effectively to relevant audiences. The brand value, editorial standards, reach and quality are all important components in maintaining Ireland's strong reputation.

Quality programming and reporting are also pivotal in portraying Ireland internationally. Showcasing our 'Experience Economy' through television drama and other programming inspires tourism both domestic and international as well as being a critical source of investment. Public service media are a crucial source of commissions for the wider screen industry (animation, independent film and television production, post-production and VFX). It must be adequately resourced to engage in such commissioning in view of the screen sector's contribution to economic and regional development and its role in skills and talent incubation.

For the Irish diaspora, a significant engine of economic growth, a reputable and reliable information source on Irish business, politics, health, sport and culture is an invaluable resource to keep them connected with and invested in Ireland.

➤ **Funding Support**

Given the exponential growth of social and mainstream media content over the past decade, public service media has never been more important. The role of Government in supporting, funding and regulating public service media should therefore be clearly established as a key public policy objective.

➤ **Long-Term Sustainability of Public Service Media**

The State must continue to prioritise direct Exchequer funding for public service broadcasting in English and Irish in a manner that provides certainty for those organisations producing that content and facilitates stable and long-term planning for its production and delivery.

The level of funding should be proportionate to the overall level of resources available to the Exchequer and should reflect the prosperity and increasing wealth of the State. In short, public policy should support the direct Exchequer funding of a volume and quality of public service broadcasting content which is commensurate with the prosperity and income levels of the State.

Business also supports the continuation of the licencing regime in a format which minimises evasion and provides a stable revenue stream to support public service broadcasting content while also reflecting the dynamics of new media technologies and delivery.

Ibec wishes the Commission well with this valuable work and looks forward to reviewing its recommendations in due course.

Yours sincerely,



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Danny McCoy  
CEO  
Ibec