



Coimisiún  
na Meán

# Local Democracy Reporting Scheme:

*Round 2*

## Guide for Applicants

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## 1. Introduction

Coimisiún na Meán (“An Coimisiún”), Ireland’s commission for regulating broadcasters, online media and supporting media development, is committed to ensuring a thriving, diverse media. It is responsible for operating various funding schemes including the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme.

The Local Democracy Reporting Scheme (“LDRS”) is a journalism scheme which aims to support the media to perform its vital role in reporting on public institutions and authorities where issues of importance to the public are considered, such as Local Authorities, Municipal District Councils, Joint Policing Committees, Regional Health Forums and other fora.

It is designed to provide targeted financial support for media providers and practitioners of at-risk local public interest journalism and to support and increase the availability of high-quality, accurate and fair local public interest content for citizens.

This is the second iteration of the Scheme. Please note that there are a number of changes from Round 1, which can be found on page 8.

## 2. Broad Aims and Themes

The broad aims of the LDRS are:

- **Safeguarding and enhancing local democracy:** Offer the media sector the opportunity to enhance the quality and level of local democracy reporting to produce content that will help local communities better understand public policy decisions and better engage with democracy.
- **Safeguarding, enhancing and promoting media plurality:** Support and promote a diverse range of sources of content and voices to safeguard and enhance pluralism in the media environment, including in the Irish language.
- **Enhancing quality and representation:** Support quality independent journalism on local public affairs that is accurate and fair, and is appropriately diverse, accessible, inclusive and representative of contemporary Ireland, including in the Irish language; encourage and support environmentally sustainable practices.
- **Supporting & capacity building:** Offer support to the media sector in these challenging times to ensure that they have the capacity to inform and educate their audiences about local issues, including holding publicly elected representatives and public policy decision-makers to account.

The underlying theme of this funding round is local democracy reporting. While the core purpose of the LDRS is to fund reporting of local authority meetings, journalists engaged under the scheme may carry out other tasks, including reporting on the functions and activities of local authorities, investigating local-authority publications and records to identify stories of public interest and reporting on other matters relevant to local democracy.

### 2.1 Ancillary Measure

An Coimisiún may assign up to 10% of the €6m allocated for 2025 to projects or thematic works further to the themes of local democracy and may do so on a national basis. In this context, the ancillary measures element of the Scheme is being retained and is aimed primarily at funding content. It will be implemented concurrently with Round 2 and is intended for public interest journalism in long-form. Unlike the main LDRS and CRS Schemes, the Ancillary Measure will fund up to 95% of project costs.

Funding is available to assist media service providers undertake in-depth focus pieces or series on a broad range of issues arising from coverage of local authorities or other democratic fora, or related matters. An



Coimisiún would encourage proposals that aim to provide cross-platform long-form content. Applicants for the ancillary measure should complete a separate application form, which is available on [cnam.submit.com](https://cnam.submit.com). For more information on the objectives, scope and funding of the Scheme please read the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme Document (“the Scheme Document”) which is available [here](#).

### 3. LDRS – Round 2

An Coimisiún must allocate a minimum of 30% of the €6m allocated for journalism schemes in 2025 to the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme. This funding covers the grants and the administration costs of the scheme.

## 4. Procedures for Making an Application

### 4.1 Submitting an Application

All applications must be made via the online form at [cnam.submit.ie](https://cnam.submit.ie) by 12 noon on the closing date for the funding round, unless otherwise stated. Applications can only be submitted when a funding round is open. Each funding round will be open for a minimum of four weeks prior to the published closing date. Incomplete applications will be disqualified. An Coimisiún’s decision in this regard will be final.

### 4.2 Registration

New applicants who wish to apply to the Scheme as an individual/sole trader, or on behalf of a company or a media service provider must register as an Applicant on [cnam.submit.com](https://cnam.submit.com). Applicants who applied to Round 1 of the Scheme via [submit.com](https://submit.com) will already be able to access the application platform. If you are unsure how to submit an application, please contact An Coimisiún at [journalism@cnam.ie](mailto:journalism@cnam.ie) for information and assistance. An Coimisiún will also host information sessions and regularly publish FAQs.

### 4.3 Application Checklist

To make an application for funding, you must answer ‘yes’ to the following 12 questions:

1	I have read the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme and the current Guide for Applicants – LDRS Round 2	Y/N
2	I have registered on the online platform as an applicant and the media provider/s is / are also registered as a provider on <a href="https://cnam.submit.com">cnam.submit.com</a> .	Y/N
3	I will complete the online application form and will ensure that all third-party confirmations are included within the application. Any material considered confidential will be marked and the rationale for seeking confidentiality clearly set out.	Y/N
4	The proposed journalism hours or position/s is/ are additional and will aim to support and/or build capacity to cover local democracy matters in the relevant local authority area.	Y/N
5	I can supply appropriate information and data to demonstrate the necessary editorial expertise and strong track record of commitment to public interest journalism, as well as editorial accountability / responsibility in the provision of such journalism in the relevant local authority area.	Y/N
6	I will provide information to demonstrate, if possible, the experience and track record of the proposed journalist/s in producing local public interest journalism in the relevant local authority area.	Y/N
7	I will provide appropriate information and data to demonstrate the audiences served, including the level of reach, in the provision of local public interest journalism in the relevant local authority area.	Y/N
8	All funded content will be made publicly available free of charge and not behind a paywall.	Y/N
9	All funded content will be shared and also submitted to the <a href="https://journalismschemes.cnam.ie">journalismschemes.cnam.ie</a> portal to facilitate the 7-day publication requirement. .	Y/N
10	The Applicant is a regulated entity, and the funded project will be subject to the relevant codes and standards of a recognised EU media regulator such as An Coimisiún or the Press Council.	Y/N



11	I and the Applicant Team have the current capability and capacity to deliver the project as set out, including ability to handle the HR obligations such as payroll, holiday cover, sick leave and also, appropriate management and duty of care.	Y/N
12	The proposed project is ready to go.	Y/N
<i>The answer to all the above questions should be 'yes'. When you are satisfied 1-12 are complete, you are ready to submit your application via <a href="https://cnam.submit.com">cnam.submit.com</a>.</i>		

#### 4.4 Accuracy of Information

All information submitted as part of an application for funding must be true and correct.

#### 4.5 Closing Date

The application and relevant attachments must be submitted via [cnam.submit.ie](https://cnam.submit.ie) by 12 noon on Tuesday, September 23, 2025.

#### 4.6 Confidential Material

Information which an applicant considers to be confidential should be highlighted and marked as '**Confidential Material**'. An Coimisiún will ensure that such information is appropriately handled including on completion of the application process.

#### 4.7 Freedom of Information

An Coimisiún undertakes to use its best endeavours to hold confidential any material provided in response to this process, subject to An Coimisiún's obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act 2014 ("FOI Act"). Applicants and grantees are asked to consider if any of the information supplied to An Coimisiún in an application or during subsequent contracting should **not** be disclosed because of its sensitive content, to identify this content and to specify the reasons for its sensitivity. An Coimisiún will consult with applicants about confidential, personal or commercially sensitive information before making a decision on any request received under the FOI Act. Such information may be released in response to an FOI request.

#### 4.8 Data Protection

To operate this funding round effectively, we will require information about the applicant and detailed information on the proposed content. This data and documentation will include personal information such as job titles, salaries and e-mail addresses.

An Coimisiún shall comply with its obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation Directive, the Data Protection Act 2018 and any other applicable data privacy laws and regulations when handling and processing any such personal information submitted to this funding initiative.

The information submitted in an application, including any personal information, will be used to process the application and to liaise with the applicant.

Any personal information submitted (excluding the Contractor's contact details used for the purposes of the round) will only be retained in the event that the application is successful. Such information would be required for the funding contract and subsequent measuring of the performance of the grant and the associated outcomes. The information may also be used for the purpose of reviewing the scheme and by external researchers. In such instances all personal information would be anonymised.

An Coimisiún is obligated and committed to protecting all personal data submitted in response to a call for applications to this funding round. An Coimisiún has an appointed Data Protection Officer who is registered with the Data Protection Commission.



You can find out more on how An Coimisiún processes personal information at: <https://www.cnam.ie/en> and An Coimisiún's terms and conditions at: <https://www.cnam.ie/en>.

#### **4.9 Conflicts of Interest**

An Coimisiún must comply with the Ethics in Public Office Act (1995) and the Standards in Public Office Act (2001). In this regard if, as an applicant, you become aware of circumstances which might give rise to a conflict of interest in the context of your application, you must promptly bring such circumstances to the attention of An Coimisiún.

#### **4.10 State Aid Funding**

Further to the Services of General Economic Decision (2021/21/EU) ("SGEI decision"), full transparency is required of An Coimisiún in relation to all funding provided under this Scheme with publication of funding awards on the internet and inclusion in a report submitted to the European Commission every two years which will be co-ordinated by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. An Coimisiún must also keep available, during the period of entrustment and for 10 years afterwards, for potential EU external audits to consider if '*all the information necessary to determine whether the compensation granted is compatible*' with the SGEI decision. Accordingly, An Coimisiún will ensure that all relevant records are retained for inspection for the aforementioned period.

#### **4.11 Children First Act**

As a public body, An Coimisiún has obligations under the Children First Act (2015). Where an Coimisiún is funding a project or activity which involves children or vulnerable adults, both an Coimisiún and the grantee are obliged to comply with the provisions of the Act. If one or more of your proposed activities involve children or vulnerable adults, this should be indicated in the application form. Please note that as a condition of funding you will be asked to provide a copy of your Child Protection Policy/Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy and to provide assurances that your project is operating in compliance with the Children First Act. A National Guidance document in relation to Children First can be found [here](#).

### **5. Assessment Procedure**

There are four stages in the assessment process and each stage involves the assessment of an application against predetermined criteria which are underpinned by the report of the Future of Media Commission, the Broadcasting Act 2009, as amended, and the objectives of An Coimisiún. The assessment and decision phases are:

- Qualification (Preliminary Assessment)
- Qualitative Assessment
- Strategic Assessment
- Commissioner Ratification

For the guidance of applicants, An Coimisiún sets out below how the procedures for each of the stages will be applied in assessing applications.

#### **5.1 Preliminary Assessment**

Applications must meet a number of minimum criteria to be considered for funding. Applicants to the scheme must be eligible to apply, and the application must be for journalism positions (LDRS) or projects of work (Ancillary Measure) and the associated permitted costs.



In this context, the journalist(s) to be employed or the enhanced journalism role(s) to be funded under the Scheme must provide **additional** local democracy reporting for the media service provider. Applicants who received funding in Round 1 must demonstrate that they will maintain or enhance the level of additionality achieved under their previous award.

Further guidance on these criteria is set out below and the Preliminary Assessment Scoring Matrix is set out at Appendix 1 for information and reference.

If any of these minimum criteria is not met, applications will be disqualified. An Coimisiún's decision in this regard will be final.

#### 5.1.1 Who can apply for funding?

- Established legal entities who can demonstrate editorial oversight and a track record in covering local democracy matters in the relevant local authority, and who are subject to a relevant standards regime of a relevant EU media regulator, are eligible to apply for funding under the Scheme.
- Freelance journalists who partner with established legal entities as set out above.

The journalist/s and media service provider/s and all other persons/organisations involved in the project shall endorse and adhere to the relevant standards or codes and complaints procedures to which they are subject.

#### 5.1.2 What can the Scheme fund?

##### *Round 2*

Funding is available to resource journalist positions (100% of costs) and the associated costs for the creation and publication of new articles or reports covering Local Democracy matters.

The Scheme will only accept applications for positions that are additional to the applicant's current staffing structure and/or provide the opportunity for full-time work for a current part-time staff member and/or a freelancer who currently covers such matters for the applicant or another media outlet on a more structured basis. The Scheme does not accept applications for journalist positions and/or coverage/reportage that already exists and/or is standard content.

**New or Enhanced Posts:** All the positions funded must be new and/or enhance the employment conditions of the proposed journalist and an applicant is required to set out how the proposed position is 'new' or 'enhances' the proposed journalist's employment conditions.

In this context, funding can be sought for:

- Freelance journalist
- Part-time journalist
- Additional journalist on fixed-term contract
- Enhanced working terms for a staff journalist (additional hours)

##### *Ancillary Measure*

The Ancillary Measure can fund up to 95% of all costs associated with a project to assist media service providers undertake in-depth focus pieces or series on a broad range of issues arising from the coverage of local authorities or other local democratic fora, or related matters. The preference is for cross-platform long-form content.





### 5.1.3 Changes for Round 2 of the Scheme

#### *Funding allocation*

For Round 1, An Coimisiún allocated a minimum of 50% of the €6m allocated for journalism schemes in 2024 to the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme (LDRS). Considering the high level of interest in, and oversubscription of the Courts Reporting Scheme (CRS) in Round 1 and the acknowledged need for ongoing training for the CRS, a minimum of 30% each of the €6m will be allocated to the LDRS and CRS for Round 2.

#### *Greater weighting in assessment marking for projects focused on local democracy documentation*

In keeping with the aims and objectives of the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme (LDRS), greater weighting will be given in the assessment marking scheme to incentivise projects which propose to use local authority documentation (reviewing publications and records), follow-ups from council meetings, etc to identify and generate stories of public interest, on top of straightforward reportage on meetings.

#### *Photography*

For Round 1, photography was an ineligible cost for both the LDRS and the Ancillary Measure.

For Round 2 applicants to Ancillary Measure Scheme **only** will be allowed to apply for funding for photography, with the stipulation that the images, alongside the written content, are made available, free of charge and without restrictions to other parties wishing to re-use the relevant news report.

This change has been introduced for the ancillary measure only as a means of enhancing those long-form content-focused projects.

### 5.1.4 What are the Scheme's themes and language requirements?

The theme is Local Democracy Reporting, and in this context, funded content must deal with local public affairs matters such as:

- Proceedings of local authorities and associated committees.
- Reporting on the functions and activities of local authorities.
- Investigating local democracy publications and records to identify stories of public interest.
- Reporting on other matters relevant to local democracy which are in the public interest.
- Any of the above content in the Irish language.

Content can be published in Irish or English. The first language will be determined primarily by the language of the nature of the report or article, ie, if covering a local council meeting which is conducted as Gaeilge, the report must be initially available in the Irish language, and conversely, if covering a meeting that is conducted in English, the initial report can be in English. For local authority areas encompassing a Gaeltacht, consideration will include regard to the creation and distribution of local public interest journalism in the Irish language.

An Coimisiún will ensure that content funded under this Scheme is available in both Irish and English. Irish language content will be made available, on request, by regulated entities.

### 5.1.5 What are the requirements regarding publication?

The content should be published/ broadcast as soon as possible after the local authority or other local forum meeting. An Coimisiún has an online portal to enable the funded journalism to be made freely available to media organisations and the public. The link to the article or report should then be uploaded to the dedicated portal within seven days of publication/ broadcast.





The journalism funded by the Scheme should be available to all (ie, not held behind a paywall), and free to use (including free from the obligation to register for a free account).

An Coimisiún will only fund journalism positions that produce reports and articles that are shared in this way. At the application stage, An Coimisiún requires applicants to confirm their commitment to several conditions that are attached to any funding award:

- **Publicly available:** All funded content will be made publicly available free of charge, ie not behind a paywall, as soon as possible.
- **Ethics:** All funded content will be produced to the highest editorial standards.
- **Shared content:** Agree to all funded content being uploaded to the dedicated portal within 7 days of the publication/broadcast date.

An Coimisiún will issue instructions on how funded content should be tagged (including text, audio, audiovisual etc). Funded content must be rights-free.

**Credits:** Any funded content re-used should credit the source of such content, this should include the name of the reporter and the title of the funding source, ie, Local Democracy Reporting Scheme. An Coimisiún will provide guidance to this effect.

**Complaints:** Members of the public must have a course of redress in terms of due process, and in this context, the media service provider must be subject to a relevant standards regime and provide a written commitment to the complaints process as set out by the relevant regulator.

**Corrections & Clarifications:** It is imperative that any corrections or clarifications relating to the journalism after it is delivered (article, report, audio, audiovisual etc.) are dealt with promptly and clearly. An Coimisiún must be notified as soon as practicable of any amendments to the journalism, or of a need for correction or clarification, and be provided with an amended copy of the journalism.

#### 5.1.6 Access

To facilitate the accessing of content by people who are blind or with visual impairments, or who are deaf or hard of hearing, funded digital content should be made available in a format that follows current industry best practice. An Coimisiún is currently developing access guidelines and will share these once they are available. Costs relating to all access services are deemed to be eligible costs and should be included in the application budget (see 5.1.8). Applications that include a plan for access services will be considered favourably.

#### 5.1.7 Transcripts

Any funded content created in audio or audiovisual formats must be accompanied by a transcript when being shared through the [journalismschemes.cnam.ie](http://journalismschemes.cnam.ie) portal. Costs for transcripts are an eligible cost within the application budget (see 5.1.8).

#### 5.1.8 What are eligible costs?

The only costs that can be funded under the Scheme are eligible costs. For Round 2, eligible costs are the costs associated with the journalist's role/s and the delivery of the local democracy reporting content. For the Ancillary Measure, eligible costs are the costs associated with the project, including journalist hours, production, administration and delivery of the local democracy reporting content.

In addition to general employment costs including government levies, eligible costs may include editorial costs such as production of content; financial costs including the M45 grant claim report

required for all public-sector grant monies; and access provisions (website access measures, transcripts of audio/ audiovisual content etc.).

Applicants must provide detailed budget notes relating to all costs in the budget submitted with their application. These budget notes will be taken into account during the qualitative assessment phase and the more detail that is provided, the more useful it will be to assessors.

Ineligible costs are costs related to the creation and delivery but not directly related to the creative process or delivery. Examples of ineligible costs include photography (LDRS and CRS only – photography is an eligible cost for the Ancillary Measures), equipment purchase, depreciation, general website costs, training and capital costs.

## 5.2 Qualitative Assessment

If the applicant and application are deemed eligible following the Preliminary Assessment, the application qualifies for consideration for the award of funding. The next stage is the Qualitative Assessment, during which each application is assessed on its own merits, against predetermined qualitative criteria, which are embedded in the objectives of the LDRS. The applications submitted for Round 2 funding (apart from the Ancillary Measure, which is assessed on a national basis) will be grouped by local authority. The Qualitative Assessment Scoring Matrix is set out in Appendix 1 for information and reference.

We will assess how the application will, in the outcomes it proposes, enhance plurality of sources and content for audiences, including the level of reach; the quality of the application, including demonstration of editorial expertise and codes; track record in covering matters of local public affairs; the partnerships proposed, including how it will support maximising the potential audience reach and the achievability of what is proposed; demonstration of value for money; and how well the applicant has demonstrated that they will adhere to the highest ethical and professional standards in journalism and employment practices.

There are 3 mandatory criteria. An applicant must achieve a score of 50% or more in each mandatory criterion to qualify for further assessment for the award of funding. The mandatory assessment criteria are:

- Public Interest Journalism Value, Additionality & Quality of the Application
- Feasibility, Resources & Case Made for Funding
- Ethics

## 5.3 Strategic Assessment

In instances where there are more qualifying applications than funds available, An Coimisiún will have a further assessment phase. This will focus on the quality of individual applications and the overall package of funding awards that best fulfils the aims of the Scheme collectively. A final package of recommendations is then submitted to the Commissioners for consideration and ratification. The Strategic Assessment Scoring Matrix is set out in Appendix 1. The assessment criteria for this phase are:

- Diversity of sources (plurality) and content
- Diversity & level of creation of new opportunities and/or enhanced employment conditions
- Level of collaboration and content-sharing demonstrated and associated audience reach
- Level of engagement with local-democracy documents and reports
- Recommendations from the qualitative assessment panels
- Environmental Sustainability
- Irish Language



## 5.4 Commissioners' Ratification

The final stage involves the Commissioners' consideration of the package of recommendations emerging from the previous assessment phases. Following ratification, each applicant is notified by e-mail of the funding decision pertaining to their application.

## 5.5 The Decision-making Process

The following procedures will be followed by An Coimisiún in determining the suitability of an applicant for the award of funding:

5.5.1 A preliminary assessment will be made of each application to ensure that it meets the qualifying criteria of the scheme, including applicant eligibility, and that all the information and documentation required has been submitted. Any applicant who does not meet all the listed criteria will be disqualified and will be excluded from the application process (see Appendix 1).

5.5.2 An Coimisiún staff will check for any potential conflicts of interest with assessors prior to distributing any applications to the next stage of assessment. The eligible applications will then be arranged in groups and assigned to a Qualitative Assessment Panel.

The Panel will be made up of An Coimisiún staff and external assessors, and in the formation of each panel, An Coimisiún will take into account the appropriate skills and experience required to assess the projects. Each external panel member assesses each application independently.

A meeting is then convened to discuss each application, where the panel will agree on a score for each application and a list of funding recommendations. On completion of all panel assessment meetings, including signoff on the assessment meeting documentation and recommendations from the panel, the complete list of funding recommendations is compiled. A funding award should be considered for each local authority area and awarded to the strongest application, as agreed by each panel. There will be two separate lists: those qualifying under the Round 2 general funding stream and those qualifying under the Ancillary Measure funding stream.

The total funding awards will then be considered for both Round 2 and the Ancillary Measure. If the recommended amount of funding exceeds that available for Round 2 or the Ancillary Measure, a strategic assessment phase will be required.

5.5.3 A Strategic Assessment Panel will be established comprising senior members of An Coimisiún management and staff members involved in running the Scheme. This forum will consider collectively the Qualitative Assessment scores, the panel recommendations and the strategic criteria. An Coimisiún is obligated to aim for a balance of content outcomes that facilitates the best mix of sources of high-quality journalism based on the applications received for the funding round.

For Round 2 funding, a funding award should be made for each local authority area subject to meeting the appropriate standards. The applications which best fulfil the objectives of the funding round and scheme and accordingly achieve the highest scores will be awarded funding. In this context, and noting the level of overall funding available, there may be the potential for some local authority areas to receive more than one funding award. Similarly, the applications that best fulfil the objectives of the Ancillary Scheme, and accordingly achieve the highest scores, will be awarded funding.

5.5.4 The Commissioners then make the final decisions on the applications, considering the recommendations emerging from the previous assessment phases.



## 5.6 Funding Decisions

### Successful applications

Where An Coimisiún has approved an application for funding, the following steps apply:

- A Coimisiún will inform the applicant of the decision, setting out any condition(s) attached to the funding offer.
- An Coimisiún will make public a list of the funding offers ratified by the Commissioners.
- The successful applicant must confirm acceptance of the offer of funding and any condition(s) stipulated by An Coimisiún.
- A successful applicant is required to enter into a contractual agreement with An Coimisiún, on terms to be specified by An Coimisiún. Such terms include the provision of contract deliverables by the successful applicant, and a schedule relating to the drawdown of funds by an applicant. Funds are administered by An Coimisiún in accordance with the terms of the contractual agreement.

### Unsuccessful applications

Where An Coimisiún has rejected an application for funding, applicants are notified individually and provided with feedback on the merits/quality of their application in the assessment process. The notification of the funding decision to the applicant will indicate at what stage the application was rejected:

- If the application is rejected during the Qualification Assessment, the notification will indicate 'Rejected - Preliminary'.
- If an application is rejected during the Qualitative Assessment, the notification will indicate it as 'Rejected – Stage 1' when the Round has been ratified.
- If an application is rejected during the Strategic Assessment, the notification status will indicate it as 'Rejected – Stage 2' when the Round has been ratified.

## 5.7 Contracting

When contracting with An Coimisiún, a successful applicant will be required to provide certain deliverables to An Coimisiún. For information, below is a **non-exhaustive** list of what would be required at contracting. Note that these documents do not have to be in place when making an application; they are included here for guidance only.

- Budget
- Finance Plan (Ancillary Measure only)
- Journalism and Grant Details
- No Set off Letter from the relevant bank
- Tax Clearance Information

### Reporting

The grantee must report on the expenditure of the grant to confirm that it has been used for the purpose as outlined in the application for funding and as approved by An Coimisiún on the award of funding. Project outcome reports will be required. An Coimisiún will provide outcome report guidelines.

In this regard, all grantees must submit a final report within two months of the completion date of the project and grant agreement. All reports should contain information on how the money has been spent and the outcomes achieved. This should include evidence of reach across platforms, including readership, listenership, viewership and online interaction, any feedback including social media and copies and/or extracts of any particular articles or reports you want to highlight. Please use the Final Project Report form published by An Coimisiún.

### Audit



All grantees must retain documentary evidence of expenditure incurred against the grant for audit purposes. An Coimisiún will conduct random audits as provided for in An Coimisiún's funding contract. All funding contracts and associated deliverables and financials are also open to EU audits.

#### Duplication of Funding

If successful you will be asked to certify that the costs of the activities proposed are not being met from any other source.

### **5.8 Disclaimer**

The information supplied in this document is not an exhaustive account of the statutory requirements and legal obligations on applicants for funding under the Scheme. It should not be regarded as a complete or authoritative statement of law.

Persons to whom the present document is made available must make their own independent assessment after taking their own professional advice and making such further investigations, as they deem necessary on all relevant matters. An Coimisiún makes no representation or warranty, express or implied, with respect to the information contained in the present document or with respect to any oral or written information made or to be made available to any potential applicant or its professional advisers. Any liability in this regard is expressly disclaimed.



## Appendix 1 – Assessment Scoring Matrices

### Preliminary Assessment Scoring Matrix

Criteria	Yes/ No
<b>Eligibility:</b> <i>Is the applicant eligible to apply for funding under the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme and does the application comply with the fundamental requirements of the Scheme? This has regard to whether: the status of the applicant complies with the requirements of the Scheme and the funding stream; and is the applicant an entity that is subject to a relevant standards regime or a freelance journalist that has partnered with such an entity.</i>	
<b>Enhancement of public good through Local Democracy Reporting:</b> <i>Has the applicant provided confirmation that the proposed project is directly related to this theme and aims to fulfil this public interest objective?</i>	
<b>Is the application complete?</b> <i>Has the applicant complied with all the competition guidelines and submitted all the relevant documentation?</i>	

***If any of these minimum criteria are not met, applications will not be considered further. An Coimisiún will provide the applicant with detailed feedback on any issues identified.***



## Qualitative Assessment Scoring Matrix

Criteria	Available Score
<p><b>Public Interest Journalism value, Additionality &amp; Quality of the Application:</b></p> <p><i>To what extent does the proposal demonstrate that it will further the creation of additional public interest journalism for citizens and further the aims and objectives of LDRS Round 2?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent does the proposal address diversity of content and provide clarity and evidence of intended audiences, accessibility of content and what it offers these audiences in terms of local democracy?</i></p> <p><b>LDRS Round 2</b> – <i>To what extent does the applicant demonstrate an ability to contribute to coverage that is at risk or currently missing in the relevant local authority area and strengthens local democracy in the relevant local authority area?</i></p> <p><b>Ancillary Measure</b> - <i>To what extent does the applicant demonstrate an ability to contribute to long-form content that is at risk or currently missing locally, regionally and/or nationally and strengthens local democracy for citizens on a locally, regional or national basis?</i></p>	50
<p><b>Feasibility, Resources &amp; Case made for funding (including track-record, both editorial and provision of PIJ):</b></p> <p><i>To what extent does the proposal demonstrate ability to support the ‘additional’ funded journalism role/s or ‘additional’ journalism hours, including financially and legally, also duty of care and level of knowledge and editorial capacity to support the funded project in the relevant local authority area?</i></p> <p><i>To what extent does the proposal demonstrate knowledge and experience of creating and producing PIJ?</i></p> <p><i>Has the applicant demonstrated that it has the editorial expertise and capacity to deliver the proposed high-quality journalism, and that it is ordinarily considered as a trusted source of local democracy content? Has the applicant provided evidence of such expertise and consistency in delivering local public interest journalism in the relevant local authority area?</i></p> <p><i>Are the resources proposed clearly explained, and are they adequate and realistic in the context of the proposal? Do the budget and budget notes explain why particular cost lines are necessary and justified in the context of the proposed PIJ? Does the proposal represent value for money and is the amount of funding requested from An Coimisiún realistic? Has the applicant concluded any formal or informal partnerships with relevant third parties? If yes, what level and type of resource is involved and what level of enhancement does it bring to the proposal?</i></p> <p><i>Does the application address the track record of the applicant and key personnel involved in the project, including supporting details such as CVs, and has the applicant demonstrated capacity to deliver? What is the indicative number of Local Authority Meetings and other relevant local / regional for meetings in the proposal?</i></p>	40
<p><b>Ethics (Editorial &amp; Journalistic Standards):</b></p> <p><i>To what extent does the proposal demonstrate that the applicant has the capacity and requisite skills to ensure that all funded content will adhere to best practice in editorial and journalistic standards and in employment practices for any funded journalism post/s?</i></p> <p><i>Is there a clear editorial policy provided for any funded post/s to ensure quality of content, adherence to relevant codes and standards and a detailed redress / complaints process?</i></p>	10

**An applicant must score a minimum of 50% under each criterion to qualify for consideration of award of funding.**





## Strategic Assessment Scoring Matrix

Criteria	Available Score
<b>Diversity of sources &amp; content:</b> <i>To what level does the applicant demonstrate diversity in the proposal, both in approach and implementation?</i> <i>To what extent does the proposal demonstrate or promote a creative or innovative approach to local democracy reporting?</i> <b>LDRS Round 2</b> - To ensure a diverse range of public interest journalism (PIJ) is created and published for citizens throughout the country, a balance of the award of funds across the local authority areas, sources and audiences needs to be achieved. <b>Ancillary Measure</b> - To ensure a diverse range of public interest journalism (PIJ) is created and published for citizens throughout the country, a balance of the award of funds across areas (local, regional or national), sources and audiences needs to be achieved.	20
<b>Diversity, new opportunities &amp;/or enhanced employment conditions:</b> <i>To what extent does the applicant demonstrate the additionality the proposal will facilitate in terms of diversity and new opportunities and /or enhanced employment conditions for any identified and/or potential journalist/s?</i>	20
<b>Collaboration &amp; content-sharing (including across platforms):</b> <i>Has the applicant proposed any partnerships and if yes, how does it /or do they strengthen the application in terms of the aims and objectives of the funding round including the extent and diversity of audience reach?</i>	15
<b>Level of engagement with local democracy reports and documentation:</b> <i>Has the applicant proposed any reviews and/ or investigations of local authority documentation (publications and records), follow-ups from council meetings, etc to identify and generate stories of public interest, in addition to straightforward reportage on meetings?</i>	15
<b>Environmental sustainability:</b> <i>Has the applicant provided details of an approach to environmentally sustainable content creation and any initiatives that help lessen the impact of the Applicant's activities on the environment?</i>	10
<b>Irish Language:</b> <i>An Coimisiún must ensure that a minimum of 25% of the funding awarded is for Irish language public interest journalism (PIJ). The applicant must clearly demonstrate that the content created in the Irish language will meet the needs of audiences, including Irish language speakers, and that any identified or proposed journalist/s will have the minimum level of competence at level B2 of the Common European Framework of Reference and at level C1 in Planning Areas Language, in the Gaeltacht Service Towns and Irish Networks. Regard will also be given to how the proposed PIJ in the relevant Gaeltacht Language Planning Area will benefit the Irish speaking community in that area.</i>	10
<b>Qualitative Assessment Score:</b> Score awarded by the Qualitative Assessment Panel.	10

