

Media Skills and Development - Programme Policy

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Introduction

Supporting the development of Ireland's media sector is a key area of responsibility for Coimisiún na Meán. We do this in a [range of ways](#). We administer various funding schemes, for example to support the production and preservation of culturally valuable and inclusive content, digital transformation projects, and the creation of high quality and accessible journalism. We support and promote awareness of media related events such as festivals, awards, and conferences, and work to advance gender, equality, diversity and inclusion, the Irish language, and environmental sustainability practices across the media industry.

Cognisant of fast-paced changes within the sector, we also recognise the importance of ongoing training, learning and development for those working in media, and the value of engaging and working with the sector to understand and address specific needs. As a regulator we do not deliver training courses ourselves, however we are committed to supporting training, learning and development activities that, in line with our [Strategy Statement](#), nurture a vibrant and trusted media landscape that is sustainable, pluralistic and participative, and that reflects and shapes who we are as a society.

We recognise that many of those working across media already play a key role in helping foster such an environment, for example through the creation of content that reflects diverse viewpoints and voices, the delivery of trusted journalism that supports democratic society, and through supporting the development and creative potential of children and young people.

We likewise understand the media sector is well placed to identify particular training and development needs and acknowledge the importance of flexibility to facilitate industry led training and development initiatives that seek to address specific challenges.

This Policy sets out our approach to supporting training, learning and development under our **Media Skills and Development Programme**. In doing so, we consider the media landscape as a whole and the range of ways that people participate in media and consume and create content. Accordingly, we have adopted a platform-neutral approach and will consider applications from across the media ecosystem, keeping in mind regulatory constraints.

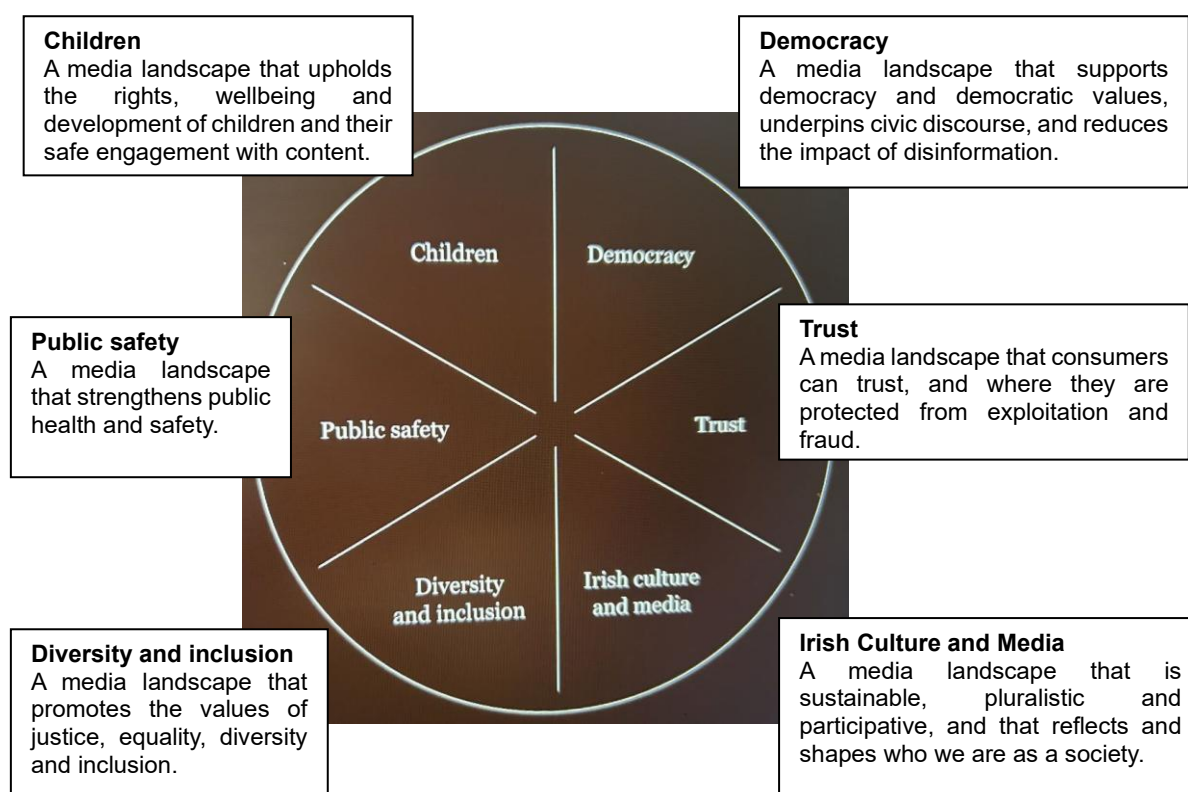
This Programme aims to complement our broader media development role and other available funding schemes. The Programme will therefore be aligned with other supports available from the Commission, and those that might be available in the future. It is advised that potential applicants look at the range of supports available on our website to determine which may be appropriate for their needs.

This Policy should be read and interpreted in conjunction with organisational policies about related matters.



Aims & Objectives

Coimisiún Na Meán's vision is for a thriving, diverse, creative, safe and trusted media landscape. Determining support for training, learning and development activities will therefore be primarily guided by our [Strategy](#), and in particular the following **Outcomes** it seeks to progress.¹



¹ Page 16 of our [Strategy Statement](#)



Programme Objectives

In tandem with the above, the key objectives of this Programme are:

- To support activities that enhance the sector's sustainability and capacity to progress the Strategic Outcomes noted above. Examples could include, but are not limited to, support for training that alleviates skills shortages in the sector, or provides professional development opportunities that help generate and sustain leadership and management in certain areas.
- To encourage cooperation, collaboration and partnership on training and development initiatives across the media sector to address identified challenges and advance An Coimisiún's strategic aims.
- To encourage training, learning and development initiatives that focus on maximising impact across a relevant area, rather than an organisation alone.
- To encourage innovation that enables media to be responsive to new and emerging technologies and continue to reach and develop new ways of engaging audiences.
- To promote and support training, learning and development activities where the desired outcome is clear and measurable.
- To promote the development of standards and governance in media organisations, including in areas of environmental sustainability, equality, diversity and inclusion, and the Irish language.

As noted above, support offered will be primarily guided by our [Strategy](#). Accordingly, applicants will also be required to identify a minimum of one of the Strategic Outcome their proposal aims to progress.

Who We Support

The *Media Skills and Development Programme* is open to the following types of organisations / registered businesses that work across the media sector or with media:

- Representative organisations
- Advocacy organisations
- Training and support bodies
- Educational organisations that work to address media related matters.

Applications from individual media organisations will be considered. However given funding limitations, those above, or collaborations or partnerships will be given priority.

How We Support

Support is primarily offered via funding rounds, where eligible applications are sought for training, learning and development activities.

- Funding opportunities are announced on our website and guidance documentation and related application forms are published for each funding round.
- There will be a minimum of one funding round a year.
- Rounds will generally be open for all eligible application types, however An Coimisiún may offer direction on priority areas of interest relating to its Work Programme, Strategy or other nominated areas.
- Subject to the availability of funding, An Coimisiún may run dedicated rounds or strands targeting certain areas of interest in line with its Strategy and Work Programme. For example, along with other areas, initiatives that advance the use of Irish language in media, environmental sustainability practices, and creative careers or career progression for a diverse range of groups could be targeted for support.
- An Coimisiún operates this Programme having regard to EU State Aid Rules, and uses the [De Minimis Regulation \(EU\) 2023/2831](#). Under this regulation, aid granted to one 'undertaking' cannot exceed €300,000 in a rolling 3-year period. It should be noted that De Minimis payments to one undertaking under a number of measures or schemes have to cumulatively observe the €300,000 limit. For further information: [De Minimus Aid](#)
- Grant aid of up to 95% of the project / activities may be sought. It is advisable that other sources of funding, including a contribution from the applicant, forms part of a proposed Finance Plan.



What We Support

The purpose of the *Media Skills and Development Programme* is to support specific training, learning and development activities that align with our work as a regulator and media development agency.

- Funding can be sought to help deliver specific and measurable training, learning and development activities in a particular timeframe.
- Operational and overhead costs associated with the delivery of such activities, for example the coordination and implementation of training initiatives, are permissible.
- Applicants are expected to contribute some funding to the proposed activities concerned and should not seek to use this Programme as their only source of funding.
- Applicants are encouraged to explore other Funding supports offered by An Coimisiún, for example under the Media Fund schemes before applying to this programme.
- If an Applicant is in receipt of funding under another Coimisiún na Meán scheme, for example to support a festival, the Applicant cannot apply to this Programme to support the same activity / activities or event that is in receipt of funding via the other support mechanism.
- This Programme is not designed to support the day to day running costs of an organisation. Funding for such operational or overhead costs outside identified training and development activities is not permitted.
- Funding for capital or infrastructure costs is not permitted.
- Over reliance on this Programme should be avoided as previous funding does not guarantee future funding.



How We Operate

The implementation of this Programme will be guided by our values as an organisation. With this in mind:



Impact

We will aim to maximise impact when supporting projects or activities and will work with stakeholders to set clear goals, and measure and evaluate outcomes.



Independence

We will be impartial and objective when considering proposals and transparent and clear in setting out the rationale for decisions.



Courage

We will welcome change and new ways of delivering training, learning and development in proposals.



People Focused

We will engage positively with stakeholders and listen respectfully to help ensure best outcomes for the sector, and by extension people in Ireland who engage with media.



Trust

We will be consistent, proportionate and fair in decision making and our engagement with stakeholders.



Integrity

We will be honest and transparent in what we do, and how we do it.



Coimisiún
na Meán

Assessment Information

The assessment phase will consist of the following potential stages.

- *Preliminary Evaluation:* To ensure that an applicant is eligible for funding under the programme. The focus here is to ensure that minimum criteria have been met and all required documentation / information has been submitted.
- *Qualitative Assessment:* Each application is assessed on its own merits in the context of the assessment criteria which are set out in An Coimisiún's published guidance documentation for the funding round concerned.
- *Strategic Assessment:* In instances where there are more qualifying applications than funds available, there will be a second evaluation phase. This will focus on achieving a balance in the overall package of funded projects in the context of the Programme. The recommendations from the qualitative phase will be considered here.
- *Ratification:* Final recommendations are submitted to the Commission for ratification.
- Successful Applicants must confirm acceptance of the funding offer and any condition(s) attached, and are required to enter into a contractual agreement with An Coimisiún within a specified timeframe.
- Unsuccessful Applicants will be provided with details of the assessment of their application.

Quality Assurance and Evaluation

Applicants in receipt of funding are expected to outline their evaluation methods as part of their proposal, and, if successful, report on outcomes in a manner specified by An Coimisiún.

We also understand the importance of measuring and assessing the outcomes of training, learning and development activities in the context of the Programme objectives. We are committed to working with the sector to explore suitable evaluation mechanisms where possible, and the potential for a more systemised approach for reporting on activities to help measure the value of the Programme, and support provided.

Programme Duration and Review

The duration of the Programme will be determined by Coimisiún na Meán, taking into consideration changes in the regulatory environment, other funding supports available, and developments and challenges in the sector. The Programme Policy will be reviewed by Coimisiún na Meán at a minimum every four years, to measure its effectiveness and take account of developments across the media landscape.



Appendix

Background and Development of Programme

Coimisiún na Meán was established in March 2023 further to the provisions of the [Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022](#), and replaced the previous regulator, the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland. As part of its media development role, Coimisiún na Meán initially maintained and continued to operate the *Sectoral Learning and Development Programme*, established by the previous regulator. The *Sectoral Learning and Development Programme* supported industry networks and representative organisations to provide training and development support for the Irish broadcasting, audio and audiovisual sectors. The Programme was implemented in line with the *Sectoral Learning and Development Policy* developed by the BAI.

An Coimisiún recognises the value of this Programme in its delivery of support to enhance the sustainability, creativity and innovation of these sectors. To build on this strong foundation and also reflect the expanded remit of An Coimisiún as a regulator and media development agency, a review was undertaken to inform the development of a revised Programme and Policy.

This review focused on applicants to the *Sectoral Learning and Development Programme*, the majority of which had applied to the Programme on an annual basis since its establishment. Undertaken with the support of An Coimisiún's research division, the review comprised a Survey Phase where applicants were asked to respond to a range of issues regarding the overall Programme and an Interview Phase that elicited additional qualitative feedback and context. The survey was conducted between December 2024 and January 2025 and the Interview Phase took place in March and April 2025.

The establishment of the *Media Skills and Development Programme*, and this related Policy, was informed by the above review, An Coimisiún's media development role and [Strategy Statement](#). The basis for the programme takes account of An Coimisiún's responsibilities set out in the [Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022](#).

These responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:²

- Encourage research, promote or endorse educational and training initiatives and activities, including in media literacy, and co-operate for that purpose with educational and training bodies, sporting bodies and community, local and representative bodies, and otherwise promote public awareness, knowledge and understanding, in relation to matters connected to its functions.
- Stimulate the provision of high quality, diverse, and innovative programmes by providers of broadcasting services and audiovisual on-demand media services.
- Promote and encourage the use of the Irish language by communications media operating in the State.

² Section 7(3) of the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022



- Provide a regulatory environment that will sustain independent and impartial journalism.
- Promote and stimulate the development of programmes in the Irish language, and programmes relating to climate change and environmental sustainability.
- Promote and encourage environmental sustainability in the policies and practices of providers of broadcasting services, audiovisual on demand- media services, and relevant online services.

