

Coimisiún
na Meán

SOUND & VISION

Round 52: Social Benefit Round

Guide for Applicants

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Section 1: Introduction

Sound and Vision 4 (“the Scheme”) is a funding scheme for television and radio programmes and developing broadcasting, established under the provisions of the Broadcasting Act 2009 as amended (“the Act”). There are six stated objectives for the Scheme set out in Section 155 of the Act, one of which is to develop local and community broadcasting. The 2009 Act makes a further provision that Coimisiún na Meán (An Coimisiún), *in preparing a scheme may have regard to the developmental needs of community broadcasters.*

To further the achievement of this objective and cognizant of the provision to have regard to developmental needs, An Coimisiún is implementing this funding round to support the development of the community media broadcasting sector in Ireland.

Community Media Broadcasters are expected to serve a clearly defined geographical community or community of interest; promote and support active participation by this community at all levels in the operation and operate in a manner which is in keeping with the ethos or value system which underpins community activity.

An Coimisiún understands the financial pressures on community TV and radio broadcasting contractors and in particular, the level of focus that must be given to securing funding for the ongoing staffing and operations of the community broadcasting services. For a number of such services, this leads to less capacity to progress other areas of the service such as outreach, training and development, recruitment, and retention of volunteers. In this regard, it can limit the level to which a community broadcasting service fulfills its social benefit objectives.

An Coimisiún is making funding available under this funding initiative with the purpose of supporting the development of community broadcasting, the ‘Social Benefit - Community TV & Radio Funding Initiative (“Funding Initiative”)’. In line with the published Strategy Statement, the objective of this ancillary measure will be to facilitate better access to, and representation of, the diversity of local communities / communities of interest / communities of special interest in their respective community broadcasting station. This active participation and representation will assist in the creation of more diverse broadcast content, in stronger community engagement and inclusiveness, and support for communities to develop a greater understanding of, and participation in, the production and dissemination of broadcast content through their engagement with community broadcasters.

This initiative should also provide an opportunity for the community TV and radio broadcasting contractors to focus on building capacity to support the achievement of greater sustainability.

Section 2: Aims and Objectives of the Round

The aims of this Funding Initiative are to:

- Offer stations the opportunity to build capacity to better fulfil their social benefit objects as set out in their Programme Policy Statements and Service Descriptions.

The definition and types of social benefit are set down in the Social Benefit Framework for community broadcasters, published on the 19th June 2020:

Definition

“Benefits to individuals or collective actors in the community that enhance their lives socially, culturally or economically, or in terms of development, empowerment and/or well-being, that otherwise would not have come about.”

Social Benefit Types

1. Individuals, especially minorities and those marginalised, are growing in confidence and creativity and/or reinforcing a sense of belonging, directly from engaging with the Station.
2. Individuals are enhancing their employment prospects, through gaining skills and confidence.
3. Community members are informed and aware of what is happening around their community.
4. Community members are responding more effectively to issues—local to global— because they have access to diverse viewpoints and to more and better information.
5. Collective actors (CBOs, NGOs etc.) are facilitated, and reinforced in their capacity, to achieve their goals.
6. The community sense of identity and cohesiveness is enhanced.
7. Support the development of the community broadcasting sector by helping to improve outcomes across the management, operations, production and broadcasting in community radio stations and assist in their sustainability.

Section 3: Eligibility / Who can apply for funding?

The Funding Initiative is open to An Coimisiún licensed community television broadcasters and community, community of interest, and community of special interest sound broadcasting services and the special interest Christian / religious sound broadcasting service only.

In this regard, the measure offers grant funding to community broadcasting services licensed by An Coimisiún and which:

- Demonstrate effective Corporate Governance & Financial Management.
- Publish compliant annual accounts; and,
- Have a good compliance track record with An Coimisiún.

Section 4: How much funding is available?

Up to €750,000 being made available under Round 52 of the Scheme for Community broadcasters to support Social Benefit projects in line with the [Community Media Policy](#).

In line with the aims of this Funding Initiative, An Coimisiún has agreed that the award amounts will be made having regard to the community broadcasting service type. A higher level of funding is potentially available to television community broadcasting services. Also, a higher level of funding is potentially available to community sound broadcasting services that are tasked and committed to providing social benefit to the wider local community than to community of interest / special interest that are tasked and committed to providing social benefit to a community of interest / special interest. This approach acknowledges the differing additional structural supports available, and provided to, community of interest / special interest services. In this context, the maximum funding award amounts are set out in the table below.

Sound Broadcasting Content	Maximum € Award
Community Television Broadcasting Services	€75,000
Community Sound Broadcasting Services	€40,000
Community of Interest / Special Interest	€30,000

An Coimisiún reserves the right to offer a lower amount of funding to an applicant than is requested. Where this occurs, An Coimisiún will offer feedback and rationale for this decision.

What can be Funded?

The ultimate aim of this Funding Initiative is social gain at a local level, and among communities and communities of interest / special interest, by providing financial support for the development of community television and community / community of interest / special interest sound broadcasters that positively impacts their capacity and sustainability.

As this is only the fourth round of this new Funding Initiative, the scope of what will be funded is broad. The key is that the funding is sought for an activity or activities, the outcomes of which are grounded in added social benefit for the community. For illustrative purposes only, examples of what funding can be sought for are set out hereunder.

Funding could be sought to cover the costs of running the station such as lighting and heating and rent (however, no capital costs would be permitted). Or funding could be sought for a new outreach staff position and/or activity. It could aim to improve volunteer recruitment / community group partnerships, training and retention. In this regard, it could look to improve community access and active participation in the management, operations and/or programming of the service.

This could be achieved through the introduction of a staff position that focuses on outreach activities or through providing mentoring and training and development initiatives and opportunities through partnerships with local voluntary groups and societies. Alternatively, a community television or sound broadcasting contractor may wish to add to the diversity of existing programming within the franchise area and assist in promoting and protecting cultural diversity within the community to be served. Activities could include training, mentoring, workshops, media literacy initiatives, programme production, broadcasting and partnering with independent television or radio producers.

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Applicants should note that the resulting programming should include active participation by the community members, individual/s and/or collective actors involved. An Coimisiún would encourage programming in the Irish language. It should be noted that An Coimisiún would require adherence to the requirements set out under the 2009 Act and Sound & Vision 4, including the acceptable range of genres and formats as set out in the table below. The only exclusion is programming which is produced primarily for news and current affairs.

Accepted Formats:	Documentary; Education; Animation; Drama; and, Entertainment
Accepted Genres:	Children's; Arts/Culture; Contemporary Society; History/Heritage; Science/Nature/Environment; and, Adult/Media Literacy
Excluded Genres	News and Current Affairs

The types of costs that the Funding Initiative will cover are:

- Staff & Salary costs for workers assigned to the delivery of the projects / activities (excluding any funding received from other sources that cover staff and salary costs).
- Associated administrative costs (excluding any funding received from other sources that cover administration & overhead costs).
- Associated utilities / running costs (excluding any funding received from other sources that cover administration & overhead costs).
- Project delivery costs.
- Relevant studio space costs.
- Station communications and promotions for awareness of station's activities relating to the funded project and/or activities.
- Training and development and mentoring costs.
- Programme production costs, including any required measures that must be applied in response to National Emergency obligations.
- Volunteer Expenses.
- Travel and expenses for participants involved in the project/s.

The funding initiative will not cover the following costs:

Capital or Office Equipment Costs, Sponsorship/Fundraising Events, Debt and debt service charges, interest owed, Bad debts, Work that has already taken place, Projects / activities / positions that are already receiving ongoing public funding from the Irish Government, or any other public source or the EU, charges / costs for any other projects funded by commercial or public (government & EU) sources, statutory fines, License fees / copyright, VAT, Shareholder costs / loans and any such types of costs.

Section 5: How to apply?

Complete an application form, attach accompanying documents (audited accounts etc.) and submit it through www.cnamonline.ie. Your application will be assessed against the scheme criteria with regard to the specific themes of this round. Opening on the 3rd of January 2024, this round will close at 12 Noon on **Thursday 8th February 2024**. Application Forms will be published on www.cnam.ie the Coimisiún na Meán website when the round opens. It is envisaged that the decisions for this round would be available in March 2024.

An application submitted for the award of funding under this Funding Initiative must comply with all the requirements set out in this Guide.

Application Form: An Coimisiún publishes a tailored application form and potential applicants to the Funding Initiative should complete the application form.

Application Form: S&V4 Round 52 – Social Benefit - Community TV & Radio

The Application Form requires certain information under a range of headings to enable An Coimisiún to assess the application. Please ensure all relevant sections are complete.

- **Application Checklist:** To be in a position to make an application for funding, you should be able to answer 'Yes' to the following 6 questions:

1	I am applying on behalf of a broadcasting service that holds a community sound broadcasting contract with An Coimisiún to provide a community / community of interest / community of special interest sound broadcasting service or a special interest sound broadcasting service contract for a Christian / religious quasi national service or holds a provision of community content contract with An Coimisiún to provide a community TV broadcasting service.	Y/N
2	I have read and understood the current guide for applicants Round 52 Social Benefit Round Guide for applicants.	Y/N
3	I will complete the application form template and save it as a pdf prior to attaching it to my www.cnamonline.ie application record. Any material considered confidential will be saved as a separate pdf and will provide a rationale setting out why the material is confidential.	Y/N
4	I have completed all mandatory fields on the application form.	Y/N
5	The information provided in the completed form has been verified as true and correct by two authorized signatories from the station, including at least one member of the Board / Management Committee.	Y/N
6	I have prepared and included all of the required documentation within my application pdf and/or my confidential material pdf (i.e. Staff list; Annual Audited Accounts or equivalent; Management accounts or equivalent; if training & development, an outline plan and expected outcomes).	Y/N

- **Applying:** An Coimisiún will only accept one application form per station to this Funding Initiative.
- **Applications must be submitted via www.cnamonline.ie**
- **Verification of Information:** All information submitted as part of an application for funding must be true and correct. You are required to include with your application a declaration by a suitable authorised person that the information contained in the application and in the additional documentation accompanying the application is true and correct to the best of that person's knowledge and belief. Should any amendments need to be made by the applicant to the Application or its accompanying documents, An Coimisiún should be informed immediately.

- **Confidential Information:** Information which an applicant considers to be confidential should be presented in an annex to the application which is clearly marked 'confidential'. An Coimisiún will ensure that such information is appropriately handled during and on completion of the particular application process.
- **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 Contractors 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 information content, to identify same and to specify reasons for its sensitivity. An Coimisiún will consult with applicants about confidential, personal or commercially sensitive information before deciding on any request received under the FOI Act. Such information may be released in response to an FOI request.
- **Data Protection:** In order to operate this funding initiative effectively, we will require information about the applicant, partner applicants and detailed information on the proposed project/s. 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 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 funding initiative and by external researchers. In such instances all personal information would be anonymised.

Coimisiún na Meán is obligated and committed to protecting all personal data submitted in response to a call for applications to this funding round. Coimisiún na Meán has an appointed Data Protection Officer who is registered with the Data Protection Commission. You can find out more on how Coimisiún na Meán processes personal information [here](#) and terms and conditions [here](#).

Section 6: How will my application be assessed?

An Coimisiún will process applications per the evaluation process as set out below which involves the assessment of an application against predetermined criteria which are underpinned by the 2009 Act as reflected in the policies of An Coimisiún.

The assessment and decision phases are:

- Qualification
- Qualitative
- Strategic
- Commissioner Consideration

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

Qualification Phase: Applicants must meet a number of minimum criteria to be considered for funding. This includes that Applicants to the Funding Initiative must be eligible to apply and the application must be for activities that are permitted under this funding initiative (please refer to [Section 3: Eligibility / Who can apply for funding?](#)) and the funding sought must be within the limits permitted. The Qualification Scoring Matrix is set out at [Appendix 1](#). If any of these minimum criteria are not met, applications will not be considered further. An Coimisiún will liaise with the Applicant and provide detailed feedback on any issues identified at this stage of the process. The applicant may then be permitted to resubmit the application.

Qualitative Assessment Phase: If the applicant and the application are deemed eligible in the Qualification Assessment Phase, the application qualifies for consideration for the award of funding. The next stage is the Qualitative Assessment Phase during which the application is assessed on its own merits in the context of the funding initiative objectives and predetermined qualitative criteria. The Qualitative Assessment Scoring Matrix is set out at [Appendix 1](#). We will assess how you demonstrate that the outcomes of what you propose will provide added social benefit, how necessary the funds are for the station and the level to which the application demonstrates that you meet with the other criteria.

The criteria are grouped into mandatory and supplementary categories. The mandatory criteria are fundamental to the Funding Initiative. An applicant must achieve a score of 50% or more in each of these criteria to qualify for further assessment for the award of funding. The supplementary criteria reflect the funding initiative requirements and also, importantly, reflect the current strategic objectives of An Coimisiún and wider societal and industry concerns. The mandatory assessment criteria are as follows:

- Social benefit
- Diversity
- Resources & Need for Funding
- Feasibility & Track Record

Supplementary criteria:

- Irish language
- Gender Equality
- Skills & Personal Development

6.3 Strategic Assessment Phase: In instances where the total amount of funding requested from the Round exceeds the total available, An Coimisiún will have a second evaluation phase. This will focus on the quality of the individual applications as well as on the overall package of funding awards that best fulfils the aims of this funding initiative. A report in this regard is then submitted to An Coimisiún for ratification. The Strategic Assessment Criteria are set out at Appendix 1, which are:

- Additionality & diversity of participants / participation or representation and programme content i.e on-air and off-air
- Sustainability & Capacity
- Recommendation of assessment panels

6.4 Commissioner Consideration: The final stage sees An Coimisiún ratify the package of recommendations arising from the previous assessment phase.

Section 7: 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:

7.1 An internal panel of An Coimisiún staff will firstly consider whether the application satisfies the qualification criteria as set out. This will include consideration of the application against the qualifying criteria and a summation of the application in this regard prepared by the Executive.

7.2 The internal panel, following discussion, will assign a Pass or Fail classification under each of the qualification criteria set out in the Scoring Matrix on page 13 of this Guide. Any applicant that does not meet with any one of the listed criteria may be disqualified and will receive detailed feedback from An Coimisiún.

7.3 An eligible application is assigned to a Qualitative Assessment Panel by An Coimisiún staff comprised of staff with appropriate skills and any appropriately qualified external assessor when required. An application will be assessed by each panel member independently and then a meeting will be convened to discuss each application. The panel will agree a score for each application and determine the suitability of the application for the award of funding. The Executive will then circulate a draft of the matters agreed to each panel member for consideration and approval. On completion of the panel assessment meeting, including signoff on the assessment meeting documentation, a list of the funding recommendations is compiled. If the recommended amount exceeds that which is available for the round, a strategic assessment phase will be required.

7.4 A Strategic Assessment Panel, comprised of An Coimisiún staff is convened to consider outcomes and recommendations from the Qualitative Assessment Phase. This discussion includes regard to the applications, the strategic criteria and the recommendations of the assessors. The panel agrees the final assessment and corresponding score for each application and a package of funding recommendations is agreed. The panel members consider and approve the meeting documentation. On signoff of this documentation, a report is submitted to An Coimisiún for consideration and ratification.

7.5 Following ratification of the overall package by An Coimisiún, the Executive will notify each applicant on the outcome of their submission. Where An Coimisiún has awarded funding, the applicant is notified, provided with feedback and informed of the requirements for the next phase of the process, the contracting phase.

Where An Coimisiún has rejected an application for funding, the applicant is notified and provided with information on the performance of their application in the assessment process.

For information, only the funding offers ratified by An Coimisiún will be made public. Any applications rejected for funding will not be individually publicised.

Section 8: Contracting and drawdown of Funds.

The award of a funding contract will be subject to the successful applicant confirming their acceptance of the offer of funding and any condition(s) attached thereto by An Coimisiún. In this regard, a successful applicant is required to enter into a contractual agreement with An Coimisiún, on terms to be specified by an Coimisiún.

On signing of the funding contract, An Coimisiún will agree the drawdown schedule for release of funding.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Assessment Criteria

Qualification Scoring Matrix:

CRITERION	Yes/ No
<p>Eligibility: Is the applicant eligible to apply for funding under the Funding Initiative and does the application comply with the fundamental requirements of S&V4? This has regard to whether:</p> <p>a) the status of the applicant complies with the requirements of the scheme and Funding Initiative; is the applicant an entity holding a current fulltime community sound broadcasting contract with An Coimisiún or holding a provision of community content contract with An Coimisiún</p> <p>b) the community / community of interest / community of special interest sound broadcasting contractor or community television broadcaster demonstrates effective Corporate Governance and Financial Management</p> <p>c) the funding amount requested falls within the limit permissions of the Community TV & Radio Fund.</p>	
<p>Development of Community Sound Broadcasting: Has the applicant provided confirmation that the proposed project is directly related to the development of community TV or Radio broadcasting? Does it specifically address the interests of, and seek to provide a social benefit to, the community concerned?</p>	
<p>Is the Application Complete? Has the applicant complied with all of the competition guidelines and submitted all the relevant documentation? (this includes signed declaration from two authorised individuals)</p>	

If any of these minimum criteria are not met, applications will not be considered further. An Coimisiún will liaise with the Applicant and provide detailed feedback on any issues identified at this stage of the process. Applicants can resubmit completed applications at any time.

Qualitative Scoring Matrix

MANDATORY CRITERIA	Available Score
Social benefit: To what extent does the proposal provide a social benefit to the community /community of interest / community of special interest (such as through social inclusion, audience empowerment, opportunities for community members and/or individuals to enhance and improve their personal and social skills, training and workshops, facilitation of collective actors, and so forth)? Will the project lead to greater representation of and accessibility to a greater diversity of the community to the community television or sound broadcasting service? Will it improve accountability? Has the applicant concluded any partnerships, formal or informal, with relevant third parties / actors? What level of enhancement will it bring to the project; greater diversity, community participation, social inclusion etc.?	45
Diversity: To what extent does the proposal add to the range of groups or individuals actively participating in the station? Does the proposal involve the making of a programme by a community group that seldom engages, and/or is seldom heard in the media? Is the approach likely to lead to the development of a greater understanding of, and community participation in, the production and dissemination of broadcast content?	20
Resources & Need for Funding: Are the resources proposed clearly explained and are they adequate and realistic in the context of the proposed proposal? Does the proposal represent value for money? What is the level of need for this funding? Regard will be given to the level of funding structures at the station, including funding allocated under Sound & Vision generally and in particular, recent / ongoing funding contracts.	10
Feasibility & Track Record: Does the proposal clearly demonstrate in terms of objectives, approach and planning that the project outcomes are feasible? Regard shall be given to the qualifications, experience and suitability of the person or team who will manage implementation. The track record of the applicant with its current Broadcasting contract, any S&V funding contracts, and the capacity of the applicant to deliver the project outcomes will be considered.	10
SUPPLEMENTARY CRITERIA	
Irish Language: If the project includes the production of audiovisual or audio content, to what extent is it intended to use the Irish language (A minimum of 30% of the proposed programming must be in Irish for the proposal to be assessed and awarded marks under this criterion)?	5
Gender equality: To what extent does the project support and encourage gender equality?	5
Skills & Personal Development: Does the application provide an opportunity for local individuals or groups to learn new skills and/or support personal development? What is the extent of the support initiatives proposed?	5

An Applicant must score a minimum of 50% under each of the mandatory criterion to qualify for consideration of award of funding.

Strategic Assessment Scoring Matrix

Criteria	Available Score
<p>Additionality & Diversity of participants / participation, representation and content: The extent to which the proposal will add to the diversity of community members / actors participating in programme-making and/or station activities, and the impact on the diversity of programming and/or representation at the community station i.e. across both on-air and off-air activities.</p> <p>The extent to which the proposal will achieve the introduction and retention of new volunteers, including regard to training and development, and the impact on diversity of participation or representation and broadcast content. The extent to which the applicant has demonstrated the likelihood of the proposal meeting community needs and strengthening links within the community franchise area.</p>	40
<p>Sustainability / Capacity: The extent to which the applicant demonstrates that the funding sought is necessary.</p>	10
<p>Qualitative Assessment Panel recommendation</p>	/100

Appendix 2 Useful Information for Applicants

Media Literacy

Media literacy is the key to empowering people with the skills and knowledge to understand how media works in this changing environment, to interrogate the accuracy of the information, to counter unfair and inaccurate representation, to challenge extremist views and, ultimately, to make better-informed media choices. This is especially significant for those who might otherwise need help navigating an increasingly noisy media landscape and sound-bite-orientated society. In addition, media literacy can help people develop much-needed skills in the areas of creativity and problem-solving in technology-rich environments – an area that Ireland scores below average compared to other developed nations.

[The Media Literacy Policy](#)

Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

In 2018, the BAI developed a [Gender Action Plan](#). The Plan addresses four key areas in promoting greater gender equality. These are Data collection and publication, Supporting Research, Encouraging the development of gender initiatives internally and with stakeholders and Enhancing accountability processes, including monitoring and reporting.

Future of Media Commission Report

Established by Government in September 2020, the Future of Media Commission was tasked with developing recommendations on sustainable public funding and other supports to ensure media in Ireland remains viable, independent, and capable of delivering public service aims. The Commission's report, which was published on 12 July 2022, contains a total of 50 recommendations, which in effect, constitute a strategic agenda for transforming Ireland's media sector. The Report can be accessed here: <https://assets.gov.ie/229731/2f2be30d-d987-40cd-9cfe-aaa885104bc1.pdf>

Appendix 3 Budget and Budget Notes Guidelines

- The budget form template (part of the application form) provides the category of costs that the applicant must set out. If you wish to use a software programme to compile your budget, you may do so, but please ensure that it follows the structure as set out on the following page and includes budgetary notes for each line item. You should then attach the completed budget to your application form and clearly mark the attachment as 'Budget'.
- If the application is a group application, please provide a separate budget for each station in the group. If there are shared resources, please identify the associated costs and how they have been apportioned across the group.
- Explain how you are going to achieve the proposal described in the application using the resources listed in the budget. Applicants must adequately justify the costs indicated (e.g. by way of the assumptions underpinning the projected costs), and where necessary, provide a breakdown of each input.
- Staff costs can include those assigned to the project and also, other staff costs, including any costs relating to the staffing, including management or supervision costs, excluding any funding received from other sources to cover staff costs.
- Clearly identify where the same person fulfils more than one role, and indicate rates per day paid and the number of days proposed for each role.
- The notes should provide a breakdown of any costs that are 'bundled' in the budget, e.g. travel and subsistence, and they should explain why particular cost lines are necessary and justified in the context of the proposal.
- The programme production costs should be based on the total number and hours of programme content that you propose to make.
- If digital first costs are included, a rationale for same must be provided and breakdown for such costs must be indicated, including, separately, any access provisions if applicable.
- Administrative and overhead costs can include any such costs required to support the proposal such as office materials and supplies, phone, reception, insurance and utilities excluding any funding received from other sources that cover administration and overhead costs.
- Applicants should also include a summary of the items that have been included in the overhead costs and detailed insurance cost indicated.
- A note for any "other" line included must be provided.