



Coimisiún
na Meán

Local Democracy Reporting Scheme:

Round 1

Guide for Applicants

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1. Introduction

Coimisiún na Meán is Ireland's commission for regulating broadcasters and online media and supporting media development. 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 local 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 and 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.

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 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 scheme 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, reviewing publications and records to identify stories of public interest and reporting on other matters relevant to local democracy which are in the public interest.

2.1 Ancillary Measure

An Coimisiún may assign between 5% - 10% of the €6m allocated for 2024 to projects or thematic works further to the themes of local democracy or courts reporting and may do so on a national basis. In this context, an ancillary measure is being implemented concurrently with Round 1 and this ancillary measure is open to proposals for public interest journalism in long-form. In this context, 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. There is a specific application form to be completed for this ancillary measure available on cnam.submit.com.

For more information on the objectives, scope and funding of the Scheme please read the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme (“the Scheme Document”) which is available at www.cnam.ie.

3. LDRS – Round 1

An Coimisiún must allocate a minimum of 50% of the €6m allocated for journalism schemes in 2024 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.com 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

Anyone who wants to apply to the Scheme as an individual/sole trader, or on behalf of a company or a media service provider must be registered as an Applicant on cnam.submit.com. If you are unsure how to submit an application, please contact An Coimisiún at journalism@cnam.ie for information and assistance.

4.3 Application Checklist

In order to be in a position to make an application for funding, you should be able to answer 'yes' to the following 14 questions:

| | | |
|---|--|-----|
| 1 | I have read the Local Democracy Reporting Scheme and the current Guide for Applicants – LDRS Round 1 | Y/N |
| 2 | I have registered on the online platform as an applicant on cnam.submit.com . | 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 appropriate information and data to demonstrate the experience and track record of the proposed journalist/s in providing local public interest journalism in the relevant local authority area when known. | Y/N |
| 7 | I will provide confirmation that the employment terms and conditions for the proposed journalist/s are known to, and accepted by, the proposed journalists. | Y/N |
| 8 | 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 |
| 9 | All funded content will be made publicly available free of charge. | Y/N |
| 10 | All funded content will be shared and also submitted to An Coimisiún to facilitate the 7-day publication requirement in both Irish and English. | Y/N |
| 11 | 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 |
| 12 | 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 |
| 13 | The proposed project is ready to go. | Y/N |
| 14 | Any personal information included with the application is necessary. | Y/N |
| <i>The answer to all the above questions should be 'yes'. When you are satisfied 1 – 14 are complete, you are ready to submit your application via cnam.submit.com.</i> | | |

4.4 Verification 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.com](https://www.cnam.ie/en) by 12 noon on Tuesday, 17th September, 2024.

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 particular 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 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 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

In order 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 in An Coimisiún's policy 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 Interest 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 contractor 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 Procedures

There are several stages in the evaluation 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
- Qualitative
- Strategic
- Commissioners

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 Evaluation Phase

Applications must meet a number of minimum criteria to be considered for funding. This includes that Applicants to the scheme must be eligible to apply and the application must be for journalism positions and costs that are permitted by the scheme.

In this context, the proposed role/s of the journalist/s or enhanced journalist/s role/s to be funded by the Scheme must provide additional Local Democracy Reporting for the media service provider/s.

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

If any of these minimum criteria are 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 1

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:

1. Freelance journalist
2. Part-time journalist
3. Additional journalist on Fixed-Term Contract
4. Enhanced working terms for a staff journalist (additional hours)

Ancillary Measure

The Ancillary Measure can fund 90% 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 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.
- Reviewing 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 i.e. 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 all content funded further to this Scheme is available in both Irish and English.

5.1.4 What are the requirements regarding publication?

The content should be published as soon as possible after the local authority or other local forum meeting. This publication includes sharing the article or report within seven days of your publication.

An Coimisiún will only fund journalism positions that produce reports and articles that are shared in this way and subsequently also made available publicly by An Coimisiún. 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 as soon as possible.
- Ethics: All funded content will be produced to the highest editorial standards.
- Shared content: Agree to all funded content being also shared by An Coimisiún in both Irish and English within 7 days of the publication date.

An Coimisiún will deliver an online portal to make the funded journalism freely available to news organisations across the media industry and the public. While this online portal is being developed, An Coimisiún will use its website for sharing the content.

Please note that An Coimisiún will issue instructions on how content should be tagged (including text, audio, audiovisual etc) and it must be rights-free.

Copyright: A content-sharing licence agreement will be published by An Coimisiún.

Credits: Any funded content used should credit the source of such content, this should include the name of the reporter and the title of the funding source, i.e. Local Democracy Reporting Scheme. An Coimisiún will issue 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 previously published content funded by this scheme (article, report, audio, audiovisual etc.) are dealt with promptly and clearly. The amendment needs to be highlighted and captured in the title of the relevant file and the opening lines and issued as soon as practicable to the identification of the need for corrections or clarifications.

5.1.5 Access

To facilitate the understanding of content by people who are blind or with visual impairments, or who are deaf or hard of hearing, funded content must be made available in a format that is accepted by An Coimisiún's Access Rules. An Coimisiún will issue further guidelines on this requirement.

Costs relating to all access services are deemed eligible costs and should be included in the application budget.

5.1.6 Transcripts

Any funded content created in audio or audiovisual formats must be accompanied by a transcript when being submitted to An Coimisiún.

5.1.7 What are eligible costs?

The only costs that can be funded under the Scheme are eligible costs. For Round 1, 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 staffing, production, administration and delivery of the local democracy reporting content.

In addition to general employment and editorial costs, they may include financial, transcripts and access provisions (sign language, AD, etc.).

Applicants should provide a rationale for all costs in their budget notes/ detailed budget breakdown.

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 equipment, depreciation, general website costs, training, and capital costs.

5.2 Qualitative Assessment Phase

If the applicant and application are deemed eligible in the Preliminary Evaluation Assessment Phase, the application qualifies for consideration for the award of funding. The next stage is the Qualitative Evaluation Phase, 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 the Round 1 funding will be grouped by local authority. The applications submitted for the Ancillary Measure Funding Stream may be grouped by proposal type, format, amount requested and so forth. The Qualitative Evaluation Scoring Matrix is set out in Appendix 1 for information and reference.

We will assess how you demonstrate that the outcomes of what you propose will enhance the 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 of the mandatory criteria to qualify for further assessment for the award of funding. The mandatory assessment criteria are as follows:

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

5.3 Strategic Assessment Phase

In instances where there are more qualifying applications than funds available, An Coimisiún will have a second evaluation 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
- Recommendations from the assessment panels
- Environmental Sustainability
- Irish Language

5.4 Commissioner Consideration

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 An initial evaluation 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 have been submitted. Any applicant who does not meet any one of the listed criteria will be disqualified and will be excluded from the application process (refer to Appendix 1). An Coimisiún staff will check for any potential conflicts of interest with the assessors prior to distributing any applications to the next stage of assessment.

5.5.2 The eligible applications are then arranged in groups and assigned to a Qualitative Assessment Panel. For information, for Round 1 funding applications, the groupings will be informed by the local authority area. For the Ancillary Measure funding applications, the groupings may be informed by proposal type, format, amount requested and so forth.

The Panel could be made up of An Coimisiún staff or 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 panel member assesses each application independently and then a meeting is convened to discuss each application. The panel will agree on a score for each application, and a list of the funding recommendations will be agreed upon. The Executive will then circulate a draft of the matters agreed upon to each panel member for consideration and approval. On completion of all the panel assessment meetings, including signoff on the assessment meeting documentation, the complete list of funding recommendations is

compiled. A funding award should be considered for each area and awarded to the strongest application, as agreed by the panel. There will be two separate lists: those qualifying under the Round 1 general funding and those qualifying under the Ancillary Measure funding stream.

For the Round 1 funding generally, a funding award should be considered for each area and awarded to the strongest application subject to achieving the required standards, as agreed by the panel. The total funding awards will then be considered for both Round 1 funding and the Ancillary Measure funding stream and if the recommended amount of funding is less than or exceeds that available for the round or the Ancillary Measure Funding Stream, a strategic assessment phase will be required.

5.5.3 A Strategic Assessment Panel is established of senior members of An Coimisiún management and staff members involved in the running of the Scheme round. This forum considers collectively the Qualitative Assessment Phase 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 round. For the Round 1 funding, a funding award should be made for each local authority area subject to meeting the appropriate standards. The applications that 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 measure and scheme and accordingly achieve the highest scores will be awarded funding.

5.5.4 The final stage sees the Commissioners 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 informs the applicant of the decision, setting out any condition(s) attached to the offer.
- An Coimisiún will make public a list of the funding offers ratified by the Commissioners.
- The successful applicant must confirm his/her acceptance of the offer of funding and any condition(s) attached thereto 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 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 information on the performance of their application in the assessment process. The notification of the funding decision to the applicant will indicate at what stage your application was rejected:

- If the application is rejected during the Qualification Assessment Phase, the notification will indicate 'Rejected - Preliminary'.
- If an application is rejected during the Qualitative Assessment Phase, the notification will indicate it as 'Rejected – Stage 1' when the Round has been ratified.
- If an application is rejected during the Strategic Assessment Phase, 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
- Project plan, including milestones, outputs and outcomes
- Grant Details
- No Set Off letter from the relevant Bank
- Tax Clearance Information
- Insurance

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 the 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

Qualification Assessment Scoring Matrix

| Criteria | Yes/ No |
|---|---------|
| <p>Eligibility: <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:</i></p> <p><i>a) the status of the applicant complies with the requirements of the scheme and the funding stream; is the applicant an entity that is subject to a relevant standards regime or a freelance journalist that has partnered with such an entity; that has editorial expertise, capacity and codes and is ordinarily considered as a trusted source of local democracy content and has provided evidence of such expertise and consistency in delivering local public interest journalism in the relevant local authority area; that has a track record of delivering such content to the public / audience in the relevant local authority area.</i></p> | |
| <p><i>b) the applicant demonstrate/s effective Corporate Governance and Financial Management and capacity to support the additional journalism post/s or hours;</i></p> | |
| <p><i>c) the funding amount requested is reasonable.</i></p> | |
| <p>Enhancement of public good through Local Democracy Reporting: <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></p> | |
| <p>Is the Application Complete? <i>Has the applicant complied with all of the competition guidelines and submitted all the relevant documentation?</i></p> | |

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 Mandatory | Available Score |
|--|-----------------|
| <p>Public Interest Journalism value, Additionality & Quality of the Application: <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 1? 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><i>Round 1 Funding Stream - To what extent the applicant demonstrates 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><i>Ancillary Funding Stream - To what extent the applicant demonstrates 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 local, regional or national basis?</i></p> | 50 |
| <p>Feasibility, Resources & Case made for funding (including track record, both editorial and provision of PIJ): <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? To what extent does the proposal demonstrate knowledge and experience of creating and producing public interest journalism?</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? To what degree is the public interest journalism content committed to under threat? The track record of the Applicant and key personnel involved in the project, including supporting details such as Biogs set out in the application, and has the applicant demonstrated capacity to deliver? What are the indicative number of Local Authority Meetings and other relevant local / regional for a provided for in the proposal?</i></p> | 40 |
| <p>Ethics (Editorial & Journalistic Standards): <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? 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 |
|---|-----------------|
| <p>Diversity of sources & content: <i>Regard will be given to the level the Applicant demonstrates diversity in the proposal, both in approach and implementation, and the access services that will be provided for any funded audio or audiovisual content.</i></p> <p><i>Round 1 Funding Stream - To ensure a diverse range of public interest journalism 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.</i></p> <p><i>Ancillary Funding Stream - To ensure a diverse range of public interest journalism 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.</i></p> | 30 |
| <p>Diversity, new opportunities &/or enhanced employment conditions:</p> <p><i>The extent to which the Applicant has demonstrated 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></p> | 30 |
| <p>Collaboration & Content-Sharing (including across platforms): <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></p> | 20 |
| <p>Environmental Sustainability: <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></p> | 10 |
| <p>Irish Language: <i>An Coimisiún must ensure that a minimum of 25% of the funding awarded is for Irish language public interest journalism. The Applicant must clearly demonstrate that the content created in the Irish language will meet with 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></p> | 10 |
| <p>Qualitative Assessment Score: <i>Score as awarded by the Qualitative Assessment Panel.</i></p> | |